

## Prayers for peace and unity

# Call for Christians to act now

**T**oo few people appreciated just how difficult it was to retain a sense of Christian balance in Black politics in South Africa. Chief M G Buthelezi told guests at the recent 12th prayer breakfast of the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly held in Durban.

"There is around me vast suffering and it is among a people who are given so little hope that their future — and worst still the future of their children — will be improved...

"There are Black South Africans who do not experience the country's churches bringing them the protective arm of the Lord, but only experience the brutality of the police enforcing influx control laws and pass laws..."

Chief Buthelezi said he believed that the present constitution of South Africa was no more than cries of fear by those who had too little faith to turn the other cheek and go just that extra mile which would make so much difference.

Distinguished guests from throughout the country attended the breakfast. The message was read by Archbishop Stephen Naidoo, Catholic Archbishop and Metropolitan of Cape Town. Ministers representing many religions were present.

Chief Buthelezi said that every time he arrived at the Prayer Breakfast he was yet again reminded of the inadequacies of South Africa's Christian life, of his own inadequacies in terms of the Christian faith and the extent to which the Church was only now beginning to grapple with the definition of responsibility in apartheid society.

"At present our country looks like a country of lost opportunities merely because up to now we have lacked the courage to demonstrate God's Kingdom here on South African soil," he added.

"I offer as my central thought in this

address that were it not for Christianity we in this country would have long since torn the very fabric of our society apart and set upon each other in violent confrontations of the kind which are catastrophic...

"I believe that in terms of the rawness of human nature; in terms of man's mental make-up, Black South Africa would long since have exploded were it not for the guiding hand of God..."

"I offer as my second thought that God's love is both reconciliatory and also at times judgemental. Prominent theologians have seen God's judgement in action in times of war and revolution — the wrath of God, I believe, would be terrible to behold in South Africa if we continue to presume on His patience..."

Chief Buthelezi said that as a Christian he was not a racist and he was not a racist when he said that White South Africa had a particular responsibility to play.

"White South Africans scoff at the anti-South African resolutions passed at the Organisation of African Unity or at the United Nations and they scoff at the resolutions of the Security Council — little knowing how Black South Africans are turning more and more to scoff at the pious utterances of White Christians who have so much, share so little and dare even less to risk what they have got in the fight to implement the spirit of our Lord and to execute His will here on earth."

Chief Buthelezi said that for most Black Christians, when they prayed "Give us this day our daily bread", they meant it literally.

Christian definitions of the evils of South Africa should also contain in them urgently needed remedies.

Explaining this Chief Buthelezi said: "If a man has fallen by the wayside and

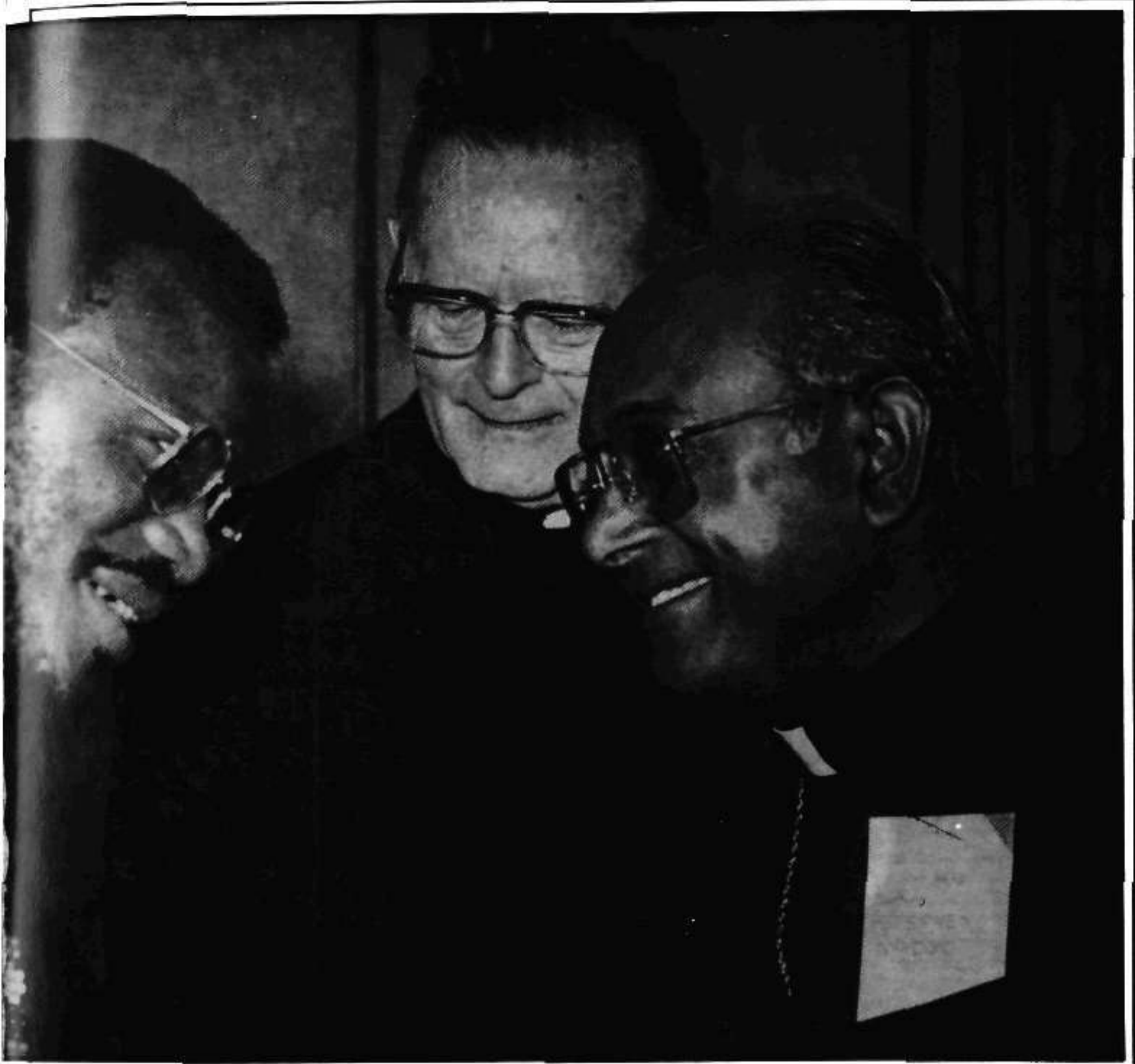


a traveller passes and defines the man's position as a man who has fallen by the wayside, he is not a good Samaritan.

"If on the other hand a man passing someone who has fallen by the wayside defines his problem as someone needing a helping hand there and then, his is the definition of a good Samaritan.

"We can define the evils of apartheid in such a way that we blame racism..."

"But until such time as we define the evils of apartheid that we blame ordinary people living under it and supporting it and benefitting from it, our



**Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi greeting the Archbishop of Cape Town, the Most Rev. Stephen Naldoo, and the Most Rev. Dennis Hurley, Archbishop of Durban, to the Durban prayer breakfast.**

definition is not the definition which the parable of the good Samaritan teaches us to have..."

He went on to say that he and his colleagues in Inkatha and the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly carried a heavy load in trying to strive to achieve those things that Christendom decreed were worth achieving.

"As I struggle to avoid the escalation of violence; as I struggle to bring about change through peaceful means; as I strive to further the politics of negotiation, I am intensely aware that there will be victory in none of these strivings unless God's hand is here in South Africa to guide the Government,

our captains of industry and the ordinary public to lend a hand, to love their neighbours and to love them as a good Samaritan should love them."

He said he believed that one could possibly say with truth that there were in churches in South Africa, preachers and few few prophets.

There were teachers but there were none to lead the people out of the wilderness of race hatred. He feared that there were no prophets because the people did not deserve them.

"I fear sometimes that there are too few who attempt to gather together the Christian offerings that have been made.

"There are too few who see the need to gather together decency wherever it exists and there are too few who demand that that which has already been done by Christians, and that which is already established as decent, be enshrined in our institutions, in our law and in our constitution.

"I believe that the present constitution is a barrier against Christian wisdom ... that reforms so often talked about these days are no more than cries of fear..."

Christ, he concluded, was a great reconciler and in South Africa there was a unique opportunity for His reconciliation to bridge divisions.