

**The speech that finally brought the debate out into the open**

# **“DO CHURCH LEADERS BACK VIOLENCE?” — ZULU KING ASKS**

**“... beware of preachers of the Gospel that will increasingly be seen urging our people to support the politics of desperation, and the politics of violence, under the cloak of religion . . .” King Goodwill Zwelithini ka Bhekuzulu**

**I**n the tiny town of Matabele in the Ndwedine District of KwaZulu, an address to fellow Christians by His Majesty King Goodwill Zwelithini ka Bhekuzulu of the Zulus created headlines throughout South Africa.

At the July festival of the church of Nazareth, to which thousands of worshippers from throughout the country had flocked, the King (an Anglican) asked simply: “Do the Anglican and Catholic churches support violence?” He then gave his reasons for his “grave concern” over this issue.

Emphasising that his role was not a political one he added, however, that it “. . . is my duty to promote the unity of all people.”

It was time there was honesty within the Christian churches on the issue of violence.

He said that although the Zulu nation and its Kings had fought in the forefront of the liberation struggle for more than 100 years, he refused to call on his people to adopt violence at

this stage.

There were preachers, however, who “. . . will increasingly be seen urging our people to support the politics of desperation, and the politics of violence, under the cloak of religion . . .”

“My family and the Zulu nation do not need mentors to tell them about the liberation struggle . . . we have been in the thick of it for more than 100 years. It was, in fact, Dr Pixley ka Isaka Seme, King Dinuzulu’s son-in-law, who came up with the idea of founding the now banned African National Congress.”

The King said he did not fear asking his subjects to die for their freedom although he did



*King Goodwill Zwelithini ka Bhekuzulu*

**“... there have been definite efforts to use mainline Churches as a cover for party political thinking and action. Nowhere is this more demonstrated that it is by the South African Council of Churches which has today a list of political organisations which they designate as true or authentic liberation movements . . .”**

**“My grievance is only that this makes political ideology the centre of the people’s religion instead of making Christ the centre-piece of each Christian’s life.”**

not believe that the stage had been reached when he could call on them.

“I come from a stock of people who know how to fight for freedom. I would, however, be irresponsible to call on my people to take up arms in order to be mowed down by the South African Defence Force — and to die futilely without us achieving our freedom.

“In the same way, the mainline Protestant Churches and the

Catholic Church have now called for sanctions and economic pressures on South Africa without carrying out any survey amongst Christians who belong to these Churches on whether ordinary Christians do support disinvestment and sanctions . . .”

The King said that when President P W Botha had recently unveiled the SAAF’s new Cheetah fighter aircraft, he had well appreciated what his uncle, Chief Mangosuthu

Buthelezi, meant when he emphasised that “the present white minority in South Africa” was armed to the teeth.

“As a descendant of warrior Kings, I consider it childish to indulge in sabre-rattling games with someone who is far better armed than you are,” he added. Black churches had to brace themselves to offer greater resistance to campaigns — in which the South African Council of Churches (SACC) and the SA Catholic Bishops’ Conference were in the forefront — which were bound to worsen deprivation and further compound the problems of black poverty.

# **Righteous indignation ... or hypocrisy?**

**T**he Anglican and Catholic churches wasted little time in replying to the King of the Zulus.

The Rt. Rev. Michael Nuttall, the Anglican Bishop of Natal, brought Archbishop Desmond Tutu into the debate by saying he had called for sanctions in “his personal capacity” and had reasons which “ought to be respected and not condemned . . .”

The Anglican Church (in SA) had not called for economic sanctions against SA, he said. (Anglican leaders in the UK did, however, vote overwhelmingly for economic sanctions in July this year — Editor.)

The Churches made no reference to their involvement with the South African Council of Churches (SACC).

Bishop Nuttall added: “I just don’t know how he could have said that the Anglican and Catholic hierarchies are supporting violence to bring about change . . . we have consistently condemned repressive violence on the part of the State, and what we call,

*“The Anglican church is an affiliate of the South African Council of Churches. The SACC has passed a resolution supporting sanctions. Furthermore, the actions of the SACC and its office bearers indicate support for the External Mission of the ANC. It is the official policy of the ANC to kill people . . . The Anglican church has never, to my knowledge, distanced itself from stances taken by the SACC . . .”*

Chief M G Buthelezi.

retaliatory violence.” (At the Anglican synod in York in July, an amendment condemning acts of violence by the SA Government and the African National Congress was rejected — Editor.)

The Catholic newspaper, The Southern Cross, commented that it was

“amazed” at the King’s charge and “refute it outrightly . . .” (The Catholic Archbishop of Durban, Denis Hurley, openly supports the United Democratic Front which in turn supports the pro-violence ANC. Archbishop Hurley has also stated that he believes violence is “inevitable . . .” — Editor)

A lengthy editorial in the Southern Cross went on to say that “injustice is a form of violence” and that “denial of fundamental rights is a form of violence.”

“It is legitimate to resist aggression,” the editorial continued.

“Christ tells us to turn the other cheek. He also said: I did not come to bring peace but a sword (Mt 10:34).

“. . . to take up arms to secure rights is a most serious matter. It can only be legitimate when all peaceful negotiations have failed. It can be called for only by those who are recognised as leaders.”

Clarion Call asks the question: Who decides on those “who

# OPEN BACKING FOR THE ANC — DO MEMBERS SUPPORT THIS?

are recognised as leaders"? The Church and other church organisations — or the broad mass of black South Africans who have voted on the issue? The South African Council of Churches (SACC) has a list of political organisations which they designate as true or authentic liberation movements and those that they regard as not true liberation movements. On top of their favoured list is the pro-violence External Mission of the African National Congress (ANC) and the United Democratic Front. The national cultural liberation movement, Inkatha, with 1.3 million members and elected officials, is not considered a "true" liberation movement by the SACC. As the King of the Zulus does not engage in public political debates, his uncle, Chief M G Buthelezi, "put forward His Majesty's viewpoint" and responded to Bishop Nuttall's denial of church involvement in sanctions and violence. Chief Buthelezi, like the King, is also an Anglican. "It is high time that South African churches were forced to state, quite unambiguously, exactly where they stand on these issues and the King has wisely brought this out into the open," Chief Buthelezi said in a Press statement. "Bishop Nuttall attempts to disassociate the Anglican Church from the stance taken "in his personal capacity" by Archbishop-elect Desmond Tutu regarding sanctions. This line of thought and explanation is patently ridiculous — apart from the fact that the King made no mention whatsoever of Bishop Tutu in his address." The King, as the head of the Zulu nation numbering seven million people, had every right to articulate his distress about issues such as sanctions and violence which would affect his people.

Bishop Nuttall knew "full well" that the Anglican church was an affiliate of the South African Council of Churches. The SACC had passed a resolution supporting sanctions. Furthermore, the actions of the SACC and its office bearers also clearly indicated support for the External Mission of the ANC. It was the official policy of the ANC to kill people. During various "consultations" with overseas church groups including the Netherlands Council of Churches, the SACC had openly identified itself with the ANC, UDF and SACTU. Chief Buthelezi said he was forced to remind Bishop Nuttall of a document drawn up by the Netherlands Council of Churches following its consultation with the South African Council of Churches in November last year. The document, entitled "The Hour of Truth", reported that "... one can no longer speak of peaceful change — there is a fundamental difference between the primary violence of the oppressors and the counter violence aimed at the liberation of the oppressed." "It should be emphasised that this document was drawn up by the Dutch Council of Churches from views expressed during their consultation with the South African Council of Churches. The SACC therefore, in effect, put its name to the document," Chief Buthelezi added. "During the consultation the SACC openly identified itself with the ANC, the UDF and SACTU. I have the translated document in my possession. "The document reports that contacts between the ANC and political forces in the Netherlands need to be encouraged and to be revalued. It adds that the Dutch Council of Churches could co-operate by listening to the ANC and by admitting

representatives into their delegations. The consultation between the Dutch Council of Churches and the South African Council of Churches resulted in an open statement declaring that the liberation struggle of the South African people was "represented by the ANC and the UDF." Inkatha was viciously maligned in the document as being a "collaborator" and "serving white masters." Chief Buthelezi asked "Bishop Nuttall — and the Anglican Church — is associated with the SACC. Does he or his Church believe that Inkatha, with 1.3 million members, "collaborates" with the SA Government?" Why has Bishop Nuttall and the SACC not spoken out against this document which is so overt in its support for the ANC and so vicious with regard to Inkatha and Kwa Zulu? It dealt directly with people who form part of Bishop Nuttall's diocese. Does the SACC not consult with its affiliates about consultations and their consequences? "The Anglican Church has never, to my knowledge, distanced itself from stances taken by the SACC. The involvement of the Catholic church is the same and the Catholic Bishops' Conference supports economic pressures," Chief Buthelezi continued. "There is a considerable amount of hypocrisy connected with the political actions of the Anglican and Catholic churches in South Africa. It seems to me that Bishop Nuttall is trying to deny this." "Let the debate begin... let the broad mass of Christians in this country speak out now. Do they support disinvestment and sanctions? Do they support violence? It is time their voice was heard."