

# **THE ELCIC POSITION ON SOUTH AFRICA AND NAMIBIA**

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Endorsed by the ELCIC National Church Council  
October, 1986

*"Suffering is our daily bread. We suffer economically, socially and spiritually. I think you hear our voice. It is very important for you to do something freely and motivated by love."*

*The Rt. Rev. Kloopas Dumeni, Bishop, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia, speaking in Ottawa, November, 1986.*

## **The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada Position on South Africa & Namibia**

### **A. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada**

1. affirms the 1977 declaration of the Lutheran World Federation that apartheid constitutes a "status confessionis," this meaning that on the basis of faith and in order to manifest the unity of the church, churches should publicly and unequivocally reject existing apartheid systems;
2. repents of our complicity in apartheid and the presence of racism in our own country and pledges to work to affirm continually the "oneness of the human family" and the "unity of God's creation"; and
3. pledges our commitment to stand in solidarity with the oppressed people in South Africa.

### **B. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada with respect to its own life**

1. asks its members in all expressions of the church to pray fervently for their brothers and sisters in South Africa and Namibia in their struggle to maintain the integrity of the Gospel, the unity of the Church, and the realization of justice for all the people of south Africa;
2. will continue to make its members aware of the continuing crisis in southern Africa by circulating information to its synods and by participating in special events that lead to increased understanding of the issues and strategies to address the crisis;
3. will engage in a broad based study of racism and its manifestations in Canada. This study should engage local, regional, and national expressions of the church and should provide opportunities for special events to consider this important question;
4. requests the Committee of Pensions to put in place a "referendum process" or "optional program" for socially responsible investment as determined by the participating members of the Pension Plan;
5. requests the Committee of Pensions to put in place a system consistent with this church's statements of corporate social responsibility through proxy voting and shareholder resolutions;
6. will monitor developments in southern Africa, and through Canadian Lutheran World Relief provide for special needs that may arise due to international actions in the "front line states," in Namibia, and in South Africa;
7. will seek to provide financial support for the training and education of pastors and lay people from South Africa and Namibia to assist them in the transition to self-determination; and
8. will participate in programs whereby pastors and lay people from the churches in southern Africa come to Canada and share their faith and experiences with our members at all levels of the church's life.

### **C. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada as a public witness to support the people of South Africa and Namibia**

1. calls for an end to the state of emergency and the release of all persons held in detention under this legislation;
2. calls for the release of Nelson Mandella and all political prisoners;
3. calls for the establishment of conditions that will enable the return of all those who live in exile;

4. calls for a beginning of serious negotiations with the authentic leaders of the people (including those banned, imprisoned, or in exile) with a view toward the transition to a non-racial, just, and fully democratic society;
5. renews a call for the implementation of U.N.S.C. Resolution 435 without preconditions and allow for internationally-supervised elections;
6. endorses the application of limited sanctions by Canada and other nations and pledges our support for total comprehensive sanctions until South Africa:
  - dismantles the "homelands" policy
  - abolishes the migrant labour system
  - rescinds the Group Areas Act.
  - abolishes influx control measures under whatever name
  - establishes a unitary and equal systems of education
  - rescinds its draconian security laws
  - removes its illegal occupation from Namibia and operates with the implementation of U.N.S.C. Resolution 435.
7. encourages the Prime Minister and Minister for External Affairs to continue to encourage and call upon the governments of Britain, Japan, Israel, West Germany, the United States and others to cease their involvement that supports the government of South Africa;
8. endorses the recommendations made by President Donald W. Sjoberg and the other church leaders in their letter to the Prime Minister on July 10, 1987; and
9. calls upon the Canadian government to firmly reject the policy of "constructive engagement" by withdrawing from the "Contact Group" on Namibia and seeking a new mandate for the implementation of U.N.S.C. Resolution 435.

**D. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada with respect to the private section will**

1. encourage "disinvestment" by companies doing business in South Africa;
2. continue to discuss with companies that fail to disinvest and will encourage them to publicly pledge themselves to
  - declare their opposition to apartheid and work actively for dismantling of apartheid laws.
  - declare their intention and work to prepare all their workers for responsible citizenship in a non-racial society,
  - make no sales to the military police, or to the nuclear sector;
3. direct, through the Church Council, the Office for Finance and Management to "divest" itself of any share or other holdings in companies not prepared to meet these criteria and will publicly explain the reason for this church action; and
4. will remain in conversations with these companies to the extent possible through the Task Force on the churches and Corporate Responsibility, to raise the important ethical questions in this important crisis.

## INTRODUCTION

Day by day the profound crisis in southern Africa grows worse. The "stage of emergency" imposed in June 1986 has led to increasing unrest and dissent within South Africa and Namibia. In response to the violence of the government of South Africa, both against its own population and against the population of Namibia, churches have been called upon to stand in solidarity with the oppressed people of southern Africa. In the face of this call for support by our brothers and sisters in South Africa and Namibia, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada has undertaken to articulate again the teachings and positions of the Lutheran church which vigorously call for an end to the institutional racism that governs the daily life and thwarts the hopes of the majority of Namibians and South Africans.

The main purpose of the paper is to review the policy positions of the churches, particularly within the Lutheran family, in order to develop effectively a policy for the ELCIC. It does not present a picture of the dynamics of the current crisis in southern Africa. Excellent background material can be obtained from

the Division of Church and Society, the Inter-Church Coalition on Africa, or the Taskforce on the Churches and Corporate Responsibility.

This document is far from complete. What began as a modest enterprise to review the positions of the churches has resulted in a much larger paper than anticipated. Despite its length it does not include all that the church has done to support the aspirations for liberation of the people of southern Africa. Some parts of this analysis could be greatly expanded. We hope that the conversation which occurs in response to this presentation will help us to grow in our understanding of being a church.

### **THE FOUNDATION OF APARTHEID; A Conjunction of Theology, Culture, and Politics**

*"A Church which no longer takes the rejection of false teaching seriously no longer takes truth, i.e. its salvation seriously, and ultimately no longer takes the community seriously...Anyone who follows false teaching indeed who simply supports it and furthers it no longer obeys Christ.*

*(Dietrich Bonhoeffer)<sup>1</sup>*

The fact that apartheid exists should not surprise the global human family, for its abhorrent and repugnant character is but a reflection of the potential of the darker side of human nature. People, because of their fallen nature, have a need to divide humanity into groups and to impose on these groups a "we-they" syndrome. Racial prejudice is but the first step in one expression of the human tendency to separate people. When that "racial prejudice," with its attitudes of superiority over others, remains uncontested and unchallenged, "racism" as a dogmatic worldview is a likely consequence. When political power is added, apartheid is a possible demonic result.

When we think of apartheid today, the policies of the Nationalist Party of South Africa immediately come to mind. However, it is important to remember that this human tendency to separate people into groups on the presumption that one race, due to heredity, is superior to another, is not alien to Canadian experience. In a report commissioned by the Canadian Council of Churches in 1980, we are reminded

*"...the fact remains with us, both internationally and within the boundaries of our own country, Canada, today. In fact we are witnessing in the final decades of the twenties century forms of racism more powerful and destructive than could have been imagined in earlier centuries."<sup>2</sup>*

Similarly, in a paper written for The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Canada's Board of Social Service, Pastor Michael Nel warns,

*"Our Canadian society is becoming increasingly aware of racial prejudice lurking within it. In addressing this particular problem the Church needs to become aware of the process and the development of racially prejudicial attitudes in order that it may warn its members and call the whole society to repentance."<sup>3</sup>*

Canadians only need to look at our treatment of the aboriginal people of Canada, or of Japanese Canadians during World War II, or of the new immigrants arriving today, to realize that we are not immune to the disease of racism.

Within the human family a "solidarity of sinfulness" exists concerning racism. This finds its most demonic expression in the systematic implementation of South African government policies. Racism in South

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<sup>1</sup>"Apartheid is a Heresy," *United Church of Canada*, p.6.

<sup>2</sup>"Taskforce on Racism Report," Canadian Council of Churches, 1980, p.1.

<sup>3</sup>"Racism," The Rev. M. Nel, Paper commissioned for E.L.C.C., p.1. (available upon request from the Division for Church and Society, ELCIC)

Africa is more than just dogmatic cultural world view. Apartheid was institutionalized and systemized with the electoral victory of the Afrikaner National Party. It was given a constitutional mandate and legislative power through the enactment of successive apartheid laws. By these laws the 73.8% of the population which was black and the 11.4% of the population which was coloured and Indian were kept separate in all aspects of their life, both from each other and from the 14.8% of the population that was white. Nor was this imposed policy of separation equitably based. The Land Act of 1913, central to apartheid intentions, gave 87% of the land, that which was most fertile and richest in resources, to the white population for its exclusive use. The remaining 13% of the land was not as fertile, often barren, and not as rich in resources. It was available for the remainder, the majority, of the population,<sup>4</sup> though even "black areas" were controlled by the whites. The litany of injustice that has been inflicted on the majority of the South Africans and Namibians serves to reveal that apartheid is not only a policy of separate development but also a policy which insures that only one minority in the country will benefit.

If it were to consider only the facts already mentioned, the church would have ample grounds to condemn apartheid based upon the Law of God. According to the first use of the law expressed in the Formula of Concord, the church has a responsibility to "...maintain external discipline and decency against dissolute and disobedient people"<sup>5</sup> The unjust imposition of apartheid violates the most basic international standards of the global community, and of the churches. A global consensus has developed that apartheid must be dismantled. This consensus has been expressed in such international conventions and covenants as the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.<sup>6</sup> The churches share with all people a common rejection of the system of apartheid.

The policies of apartheid imposed in South Africa and Namibia are unacceptable to the church not only because they violate the Law of God in contravening commonly accepted standards of human rights, but even more importantly because apartheid is a direct challenge to the fundamental teaching of the Gospel. South Africa is a theocratic republic, that is, it makes ultimate claims about its mandate to exist and its right to impose apartheid upon its citizens. South Africa represents a diabolic conjuncture of theology, culture and political power. The theology provides a religious imperative for apartheid; the Afrikaner culture provides through its history a cultural imperative toward survival; and the political power provides the ability to enforce oppressive laws and unjust policies. The challenge posed to the church is that apartheid is essentially a theological system manifest in a political and economic system.

The basis of apartheid's theological assertions poses a challenge to essence of the church. Therefore the church must oppose it. Apartheid reflects a theology which maintains that people find God within their particular race and culture. A Calvinistic concept, "election," has been misappropriated based on ethnic distinctions. The Dutch Reformed Church adopted this concept of "autogenous development" as church policy at its synod convention in 1974.<sup>7</sup> This policy asserts that while there is a unity among people based upon their common descent from Noah, at the same time, there is a diversity which is based upon the biblical record of the genealogical split (see Genesis 11).<sup>8</sup> This paradox of unity and diversity is not superseded by the incarnation of God in Jesus Christ.

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<sup>4</sup> The New Internationalist, May 1986, p.16.

<sup>5</sup> Tappert, T, The Book of Concord (Fortress Press, Philadelphia; 1959) pp.563ff.

<sup>6</sup> "Human Rights in South Africa and the Question of Sanctions," Consultative Committee on Human Rights of the Canadian Council of Churches, p.2.

<sup>7</sup> "Christianity and Crisis," March 13, 1978, p.46.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

This theological system of scriptural interpretation has created a self-image for Afrikaners of being God's elect people chosen for the holy calling of creating the new Israel. This misappropriated self-image has given Afrikan culture a will to survive and to adapt in order to serve its religious-political mission in spite of the judgement of the rest of the world. This religious-political sense of mission was expressed by Dr. Hendrik K. Verwoerd, the legal architect of apartheid,

"South Africa has a greater task than that of establishing a Christian civilization in Africa. It must become a firm base for the white man when he has his back to the wall from which he can advance again."<sup>9</sup>

Although the language has changed and there is talk of reforms in South Africa, this underlying sense of mission has not disappeared. In the new constitution announced in 1984, the preamble still reflects this religious-political mission. It is written:

"In humble submission to almighty God, who controls the destinies of nations and the history of peoples; who gathered our forebearers together from many lands and gave them their own; who has guided them from generation to generation; who has wondrously delivered them from the dangers that beset them."<sup>10</sup>

The 1985 "Kairos Document" has described this Afrikaner-type theology as "STATE THEOLOGY" which "...is simply the theological justification of the status quo with its racism, capitalism, and totalitarianism."<sup>11</sup> The Rev. Dr. Allan Boesak, President of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC), in 1982 also observed this marriage of theology and politics:

"In South Africa apartheid is not just a political ideology. Its very existence had depended and still depends on the theological justification of certain member churches of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches."<sup>12</sup>

## **A CONFESSION OF FAITH**

In 1977 the Lutheran World Federation Assembly declared that

"... the situation in southern Africa constitutes a 'status confessionis.' This means that, on the basis of faith and in order to manifest the unity of the church, churches should publicly and unequivocally reject the existing apartheid system."<sup>13</sup>

Then in 1984 on the basis of 1977 resolution and after intense efforts to encourage changes, the L.W.F. at its Budapest Assembly, suspended the membership of two white South African Lutheran churches. Other denominations and ecumenical organizations took similar action.

The concept of status confessionis, which means literally "a state of confession," is a recognition of a serious moment in history when the essential truth of the Gospel is threatened and the confessional basis of the church is in jeopardy. For Lutherans, the concept of status confessionis emerged in the 1570s with the development of the Formula of Concord. In response to attempts by various princes and governments to impose particular worship practices, the reformers responded,

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> "Challenge to the Church," A theological comment on the political crisis in South Africa (also known as the Kairos Document). p.6. (available upon request from the Division for Church and Society, ELCIC)

<sup>11</sup> Ibid p.3.

<sup>12</sup> "Apartheid is a Heresy," p.7.

<sup>13</sup> Lutheran World Federal Report, 11/12, 1982, pp.50-54.

"We believe, teach, and confess that at a time of confession, as when enemies of God desire to suppress the pure doctrine of the holy Gospel, the entire community of God, yes, every individual Christian, and especially the ministers of the Word as leaders of the community of God, are obliged to confess openly, not only by their words but also through their deeds and actions, the true doctrine and all that pertains to it, according to the Word of God. In such a case, we would not yield to adversaries even in matters of indifference..."<sup>14</sup>

In taking these actions, the Lutheran family of churches and their ecumenical partners, have recognized that apartheid makes ultimate claims. These claims undermine the community of faith and the faith of the believer by calling into question the reconciliation to God and to our neighbour which Jesus Christ accomplished for our sake by his life, death, and resurrection. This is the message of salvation! The theological foundations of apartheid maintain that the human family is still divided. This contradicts the Gospel affirmation of the unity of God's creation and the oneness of the human family. As we read in scriptures:

"From one single stock (God)...created the whole human race." (Acts 17:26a Jerusalem Bible)

"For Christ himself has brought us peace by making Jews and Gentiles one people...with his own body he broke down the walls that separated them ... in order to create out of two races one new people in union with himself. (Ephesians 2:14-15 TEV)

"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus." (Galatians 2:28 RSV)

In adopting the aforementioned resolution the delegates to the Budapest Assembly recognized an important reality about the church's existence in the world. Namely that a

"... socio-political problem can also in certain circumstances become an occasion for special confessing of faith, namely, when the Gospel itself is endangered by these circumstances and the being of the Church as Church is at stake as a consequence."<sup>15</sup>

## **THE AFRICAN WITNESS**

The Christian community in southern Africa has produced a wealth of theological materials to help others in the global family of faith understand the current crisis. These materials are the result of much theological research and reflection. In turn they have caused churches outside the region, particularly in the northern industrialized countries, to review the teachings of the church in the light of this crisis. In addition there have been many consultations, exchanges, visits, conventions, and assemblies, which have led to enriching dialogue and increased understanding. The following is a brief review of a few of the many important theological comments which have emerged from southern Africa.

"A Message to the People of South Africa" which was published in 1966, was the work of the Theological Commission of the South African Council of Churches. It raised essential questions concerning apartheid's ultimate claim to divine legitimation and exposed apartheid as a "false faith" and "novel gospel." It warned that

"If the church fails to witness for the true gospel of Jesus Christ, it could find itself witnessing to a false gospel. If we seek to reconcile Christianity with the so-called 'South African way of life' (or any other ways of life), we shall find that we have allowed an idol to take the place of Christ."

It further challenged the church and individual Christians to answer the question, "... to whom or to what are you truly giving your first loyalty, your primary commitment?" Through the process of answering this

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<sup>14</sup> Tappert, T. The Book of Concord (Fortress Press, Philadelphia; 1959 p.612.

<sup>15</sup> Lutheran Forum, Advent 1983, Quotation from L.W.F. Geneva Consultation in 1982.

important question churches and individual Christians, both within southern Africa and around the world, we led to oppose the principalities and powers" which supported apartheid.

In 1975, the Swakopmund in Namibia, the Federation of Evangelical Lutheran Churches in South Africa (FELCSA) at its Annual Conference, with both black and white delegates participating, adopted the Swakopmund Declaration. This statement rejected many of the essential teachings of "STATE THEOLOGY." It warned of the dangers posed to the unity of the church by apartheid insistence on "loyalty to an ethnic group" and the suggestion that "unity is spiritual and not to be manifested." It advocated that the love of God had a creative role to play in the shaping of society. After identifying threats to unity, the Declaration went on to present nine theological affirmations by which the members of FELCSA would "... pledge to work for a true and credible expression of our unity in faith and witness. This document played an important formative role in shaping the resolutions presented to the I.W.F. Assembly in Dar es Salaam in 1977.

More recently, through the Institute of Contextual Theology, another important theological document has emerged from the South African experience. It is entitled CHALLENGE TO THE CHURCH - A Theological Comment on the Political Crisis in South Africa, though it is more popularly referred to as the "KAIROS DOCUMENT," ("Kairos" meaning "the moment of truth"). It is a biblical and theological comment on the current crisis, and while not an official document, it has been signed by more than 150 theologians, pastors, and lay people. It presents and critiques three "models of theological response to the present crisis. We have already mentioned "STATE THEOLOGY" which essentially supports the status quo, asserting the need for law and order and seeing any opposition as evil and communist. The second model is "CHURCH THEOLOGY" which is not really the church's theology, but rather that of church leaders who make statements against apartheid and call for reconciliation, peace, justice and non-violence without an adequate understanding of which these terms mean in the actual context of the situation in South Africa. Their calls are viewed as inadequate, irrelevant, and ineffective. Their theological response lacks, "social analysis" and often reflects a "spirituality" that is other-worldly and without practical application.

The KAIROS DOCUMENT calls upon the churches to adopt a "PROPHETIC THEOLOGY" which clearly and unambiguously takes a stand." As a first step, it recommends "...what Jesus would call 'reading the signs of the times' Matt. 16:3)" or "...interpreting this Kairos (Lk. 12:56)." It states that churches need to teach the central theme of the biblical message that "... throughout the Bible, God appears as liberator of the oppressed." Because of their pastoral concern for all people, the churches need to identify the enemies of the Gospel who are "tyrants and once we have identified them, we must love them for

"...the most loving thing we can do for both the oppressed and our enemies who are oppressors is to eliminate the oppression, remove the tyrants from power, and establish a just government for the good of all people."

The signatories to CHALLENGE TO THE CHURCH call on the churches to take a decisive action by siding with the oppressed, participating in the struggle, transforming our own church activities, offering moral guidance, and, when necessary, engaging in acts of civil disobedience. The KAIROS DOCUMENT should help the churches to focus on the current state of the moral question raised by South Africa's determined measures to retain the essence of the political theology of apartheid, and to identify and to implement appropriate strategies with which to address this political theology.

### **SOME IMPLICATIONS FOR MISSION AND MINISTRY**

The challenge posed by apartheid and the response of the church to this challenge have revealed some important understandings which the church has of its ministry. The persistence of apartheid has provided an important occasion for the church to test its theology in the crucible of reality.

The experience in southern Africa has caused the Lutheran family of churches to assess the limits of the "two-kingdom" distinction between the role of the church and the role of the state. A rigid distinction has been customary between these two realms and has led to a Lutheran aversion to involvement in political questions. However, the Sixth Assembly of L.W.F. in Dar es Salaam approved the following resolution: "... that the Assembly call upon its member churches to recognize that from the point of view of Lutheran theology, the present government of South Africa has consistently violated the proper role of government and of law in relation to basic human rights"<sup>16</sup>

In reaching this decision, the church acknowledged that it has an important moral role to play in the political functioning of the state.

Interestingly, the resolution on "status confessionis" also acknowledges this same moral role for the church. For, the member churches of the W.F., in defense of the integrity of the gospel and for the sake of the unity of the church, were compelled to take an unequivocal stand on a social and political issue. The link between the proclamation of the Gospel and the pursuit of human justice destroyed the illusion that the church could remain aloof from political and economic systems. As Namibian Pastor Zephania Kameeta observed;

"In South Africa, it is not a question of Church against State, but of Christ and the struggle against the powers of evil..."<sup>17</sup>

As the churches adopt this renewed understanding as their own, the decisions made at Dar es Salaam and Budapest may have even more far reaching implications for the mission and ministry of the church. The liberating proclamation of the Gospel will be confirmed by our proclamation of an ethic of liberation and will be demonstrated by our vigilant pursuit of social justice for all people.

### **CHURCH ACTIONS TO OPPOSE APARTHEID**

"BUDAPEST, AUGUST 1 (Reuters) - The World Lutheran Federation suspended two white South African churches today for failure to reject the nation's apartheid system.

The federation, holding a world assembly for the first time in a communist country, voted 220 to 23 against the Evangelical Lutheran Church in southern Cape Province and the German Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia..."

On Thursday, August 1, 1984, the New York Times ran a small article on the action by the L.W.F. Assembly to suspend the membership of two churches in southern Africa who had not rejected the apartheid system. The report did not convey the prolonged anguish the churches suffered in reaching this decision, the deep commitment of the churches in their opposition to apartheid, nor their pastoral concern for both the victims and the oppressors, those who persisted in their support of the system of apartheid.

The Christian community has had an enduring concern for the reality of apartheid in southern Africa. Initially the churches realized that apartheid was a serious obstacle to missionary work in that region. Missionaries reported the serious difficulties which arose from this system of enforced segregation which necessitated the development of separate church structures and caused the fragmentation of families due to a labour system which took husbands away to work in other regions for months at a time. They recognized the ever increasing resentment toward any white institutions.

Deeper analysis made it apparent that the system of apartheid was irreconcilable with the Gospel imperatives of the church for ministry. In an article published in Lutheran World in 1955. "The Church

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<sup>16</sup> Lutheran World Federation Report, 11/82, 1982, p.52.

<sup>17</sup> Lutheran World, 4/1975, "A Black Theology of Liberation," The Rev. Zephania Kameeta, p.278.

amidst National and Racial Tensions," Gerhard Brennecke made some observations about the differences between racism in the United States and South Africa. He observed that the trend in the United States, as limited as it was, was toward breaking down the barriers of racial separation. In South Africa the trend was just the opposite, toward establishing more policies and laws to separate the races. His conclusion was based on his theology:

"... all humanity is one and that the differences that the world knows are if not abolished, at least overcome in the Church...The Church cannot and must not deny that it is a part of His Kingdom here and now ... this means that the Church of Jesus Christ cannot allow its life to be determined by racial separation. The Church must not allow itself to be made into a national or racial unity that would cut itself off from other members of the church and draw its strength from some thing else than the word of God."<sup>18</sup>

This growing awareness by the churches was furthered greatly by the courageous witness of the pastors, theologians, and lay people of Namibia and South Africa. They produced theological statements which captured the attention of international church bodies. These documents and conversations called the church to articulate its opposition to apartheid and develop strategies to work for its elimination. Some of these important documents were: A MESSAGE TO THE PEOPLE OF SOUTH AFRICA" published by the Theological Commission of the South African Council of Churches in 1968, 'AN OPEN LETTER TO PRIME MINISTER VORESTER" sent in 1970 by Bishop Auala of the Evangelical Ovambokavango Lutheran Church and Pastor P. Gowaseb, Moderator of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in South West Africa, and the "SWAKOPMUND DECLARATION" adopted in 1975 by the Federation of Evangelical Lutheran Churches in Southern Africa (FELCSA). Briefly, these documents reaffirmed the basis for the tradition of faith; they declared apartheid to be a "false faith" and a "novel gospel;" they reasserted the right of Namibians to guaranteed basic human rights including the right to economic and political self-determination which had been upheld by the World Court in 1966; and they called for "... a reappraisal of the system in southern Africa based upon biblical revelation and the experience of mankind."<sup>19</sup>

Implicit in the theological discussions was the call for international solidarity with the oppressed people of southern Africa. During the early 1970s the churches moved to provide greater support for their brothers and sisters afflicted by these policies of racial separation and domination.

In the United States in the fall of 1973, the Lutheran Church in America and the American Lutheran Church, through the offices of the U.S.A. National Committee of the L.W.F. and the Lutheran Council U.S.A., held a consultation to develop a joint strategy to address the situation in Namibia. The strategy which was developed opposed both the imposition of apartheid within South Africa and South Africa's illegal occupation of Namibia in defiance of the World Court ruling.

In 1973, President Otto Olson noted in his report to the Canada Section, L.C.A., the concern expressed by the Western Canada Synod in its memorial on Namibia. Growing awareness in Canada was translated into an effort to raise the consciousness of church members concerning issues in southern Africa, particularly in Namibia, and to develop strategies by which to oppose South Africa's intentions in the region.

The growing international Lutheran consensus against apartheid continued to gain support as the time for the Sixth Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation approached. As this paper noted earlier, this Assembly, at Dar es Salaam in 1977 adopted a very significant resolution. It was entitled "SOUTHERN AFRICA; CONFESSIONAL INTEGRITY" and it established a confessional foundation for the L.W.F. and made the rejection of apartheid a "status confessionis." Furthermore, the delegates to the Sixth Assembly also adopted the "SWAKOPMUND APPEAL" which called on member churches of the L.W.F. to witness actively to their confessional integrity by working for the dismantlement of apartheid.

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<sup>18</sup> Lutheran World, Vol. 1, 1954-55, pp. 62-63.

<sup>19</sup> "A Message to the People of South Africa. (prepared by the Theological Commission of the South African Council of Churches, 1968)

Dr. W.A. Visser't Hooft, first General Secretary of the World Council of Churches, called this action by the L.W.F. "... the boldest step that any international organization had yet dared to take."<sup>20</sup>

During the years immediately preceding the L.W.F. Assembly, North American Lutherans had begun to work for the elimination of apartheid on two fronts: political and economic. Respective expressions of the church (international, national, regional, and local) had been able to convey the church's opposition to apartheid. This public witness was also accompanied by dedicated prayer for the victims and the perpetrators of apartheid. There had been exchanges and visits between the churches of North America and southern Africa by pastors and lay people who had preached the Gospel, celebrated the Eucharist and shared information about events in southern Africa. Additionally, the international Lutheran family had sent material support and had assisted in providing scholarships to educated both lay people and pastors in preparation for responsible roles in the creation of a new society when apartheid had come to an end.

## **THE CHURCH'S WITNESS TO THE POLITICAL PROCESS**

In the years following the 1977 Assembly, the L.W.F. vigilantly urged member churches to work for change in southern Africa by making political interventions with their own governments, especially those churches in countries which were members of the "Western Contact Group" (the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, France and West Germany). On behalf of its member churches, the L.W.F. maintained regular contact with all the Lutheran churches in southern Africa, and, in 1979 the L.W.F. Executive requested that these churches place before their membership "... a status confessionis resolution ... for their consideration and action ... and provide reports to L.W.F. on the status of these considerations."<sup>21</sup> The decision at Dar es Salaam thus provided a focus for the special pastoral concern of the international Lutheran community for those churches that had acquiesced to the idolatry of apartheid, but it concurrently emphasized the need to stand in solidarity with the oppressed majority. To this end, the L.W.F. Executive continued to urge international support and interventions with governments, including the government in South Africa. It also calls for prayers. Through visits it tried to demonstrate its support by standing with those oppressed, monitoring human rights abuses and making direct appeals on specific cases.

Many resolutions concerning Namibia and South Africa were made by North American Lutheran churches. Most of these included a clear mandate to make interventions on behalf of the church to the Canadian and U.S. Governments to express the church's fundamental opposition to apartheid, and to call for economic and political self-determination for Namibia, universal suffrage and protection for basic human rights, and the adoption by respective governments of appropriate foreign policy toward South Africa to ensure these objectives. Through the offices of Lutheran World Ministries in New York, the church maintained both an active presence at the United Nations and contact with officials and liberation movements of South Africa and Namibia. The Office of Governmental Affairs (LCUSA) in Washington, D.C. maintained a similar presence with the government of the United States.

These political interventions were supported by definite policies adopted by the various churches at their conventions or through their respective administrative boards. For the sake of this analysis we have chosen to consider the political and the economic strategies in separate sections of this paper. However, it should be noted that these policies evolved together and often there was interaction between the economic considerations and the political strategies, for example, the implementation by the Canadian government of the "Code of Conduct," a government policy which affected the church's economic strategy towards businesses operating in South Africa.

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<sup>20</sup> "Swakopmund Declaration." (prepared at the Annual Conference of the Federation of Evangelical Lutheran Churches, 1975 at Swakopmund, Namibia)

<sup>21</sup> Lutheran World Federation Executive Minutes, 1979, p. 61.

In 1978, the L.C.A. adopted a social statement entitled, "HUMAN RIGHTS: DOING JUSTICE IN GOD'S WORLD." Within a theological framework this document enunciated a specific code of human rights to be advocated for all people. The statement itself contains no direct mention of Namibia or South Africa, but the church made its implications for political intervention explicit in the enabling resolution which accompanied the statement's adoption. This resolution dealing with political oppression asserted the right of Namibia to self-determination and pledged the L.C.A. to support Namibians in the transition toward independence and majority rule.<sup>22</sup> In 1978 the L.C.A. also adopted memorials from the Minnesota Synod and the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod supporting Namibian self-determination. At the L.C.A. convention in 1980, the delegates affirmed the resolution on "status confessionis" taken by the delegates to the Dar es Salaam Assembly.

In that same year the A.L.C. adopted two statements: "HUMAN RIGHTS OF THE PEOPLE OF NAMIBIA" and "OPPOSITION TO APARTHEID."

In the statement "HUMAN RIGHTS OF THE PEOPLE OF NAMIBIA," the A.L.C. urged the South African government to agree to proposals for the implementation of U.N. Resolution 439, which, like the similar U.N.S.C. Resolution 435, calls for the withdrawal of the illegal occupation of Namibia by South Africa, the transfer of power to the Namibian people, free and fair elections under United Nations supervision, and a cease fire with the military wing of the Southwest Africa People's Organization (S.W.A.P.O.). The A.L.C. statement also recommended that the church urge the President of the U.S. and the Congress to "bring pressure to bear on the Republic of South Africa" to ensure compliance with the U.N. resolutions, and that this pressure should include the use of economic and other sanctions as necessary. I also urged all jurisdictional levels of the church to engage in an intense lobby campaign.

In "OPPOSITION TO APARTHEID," the A.L.C. resolved to express its "... unequivocal rejection of apartheid and all other forms of racial discrimination in our own society as well as other nations" and declared apartheid to be a "status confessionis," thereby endorsing the L.W.F. decision.

The L.C.A., in response to eleven memorials from its synods, at its 1982 convention adopted a far ranging resolution on southern Africa. In this resolution the delegates reaffirmed apartheid as evil and contrary to God's intention for the human family, called for an end to the illegal occupation of Namibia, and endorsed selective economic and diplomatic sanctions. At the 1984 convention, the delegates again called for the implementation of U.N.S.C. Resolution 435.

In 1983, in anticipation of the Seventh L.W.F. Assembly, a consultation was convened in December in Harare, Zimbabwe to assess developments in southern Africa since the adoption of the 1977 "status confessionis" resolution. The consultation regretfully concluded that there had been no substantive changes in the case of two churches. Therefore, it recommended that they be suspended until they publicly reject apartheid and make unequivocal moves toward greater unity. In accepting these recommendations from the Harare consultation, the Executive sent a delegation to the churches in question to see if they would undertake these two conditions.<sup>23</sup> The Harare recommendations were put to the Budapest Assembly and in a vote of 222 to 23, the Seventh Assembly suspended the membership of the 6000 member Evangelical Lutheran Church in South Africa (Cape Province) and the 15,000 member German Evangelical Lutheran Church in South West Africa (Namibia).<sup>24</sup> This suspension also included the provision to monitor developments, and if by 1987 these churches had not demonstrated any change

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<sup>22</sup> L.C.A. "Social Statement on Human Rights," 1978, Implementing Resolutions for Human Rights Social Statement.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> "L.W.F. Information," 32/84, p.22.

in attitude, there would be a call for withdrawal of financial and physical support from the partner Lutheran churches which support them.<sup>25</sup>

The delegates hoped this decision would serve as a "... help to those churches to come to a clearer witness against the policy of apartheid and move to a visible unity of the Lutheran churches in southern Africa."<sup>26</sup> This action also was a very public witness that the Lutheran churches were serious in their opposition to apartheid.

Another resolution approved by the Budapest Assembly called the church to focus its attention on specific ways of putting pressure on South Africa. The delegates resolved to ask each member church to "... urge their own governments, business organizations, trade unions especially to observe strict enforcement of oil embargoes, transfer of nuclear technology, and importation of nuclear material ..." and asked each church "... to take visible and concrete steps including boycotts of goods and withdrawal of investments to end all economic and cultural support of apartheid."<sup>27</sup>

This resolution demonstrates the two dimensions of government policy important to the church's strategy: foreign policy, and domestic policies governing business involvement in South Africa.

Before we look at the economic strategies of the churches, it is important to realize that the Canadian Lutheran community at the same time was very active in raising the concern of the church with the Canadian government. Following the 1982 Vancouver convention the E.L.C.C. formed the "NETWORK" which informed its readership in congregations of the E.L.C.C. and L.C.A.-Canada Section of developments in southern Africa and encouraged them to write to the Members of Parliament, the Minister of External Affairs, and the Prime Minister to communicate their concerns. This E.L.C.C. convention also adopted a statement of biblical justice, which stated that "... racism denies the human essence." The concerns of the E.L.C.C. were communicated in a letter from the president to the Government of Canada.

The Canada Section of the L.C.A. was also involved in direct discussions with the Canadian government, such as the meeting with External Affairs Minister Joe Clarke in presentation of briefs to the federal government in concert with its ecumenical partners in the Canadian Council of Churches, the Taskforce of the Churches and Corporate Responsibility, and the Inter-Church Coalition on Africa. The President of the Canada Section also sent numerous letters both to the federal government concerning specific issues and human rights cases, and also to the churches in southern Africa extending support. As well, on several occasions, representatives met with visitors and representatives from the churches in Namibia and South Africa and from various liberation movements, for example, in February, 1984, representatives from the Canadian churches met in Ottawa with Mr. Sam Nujoma, President of the South West Africa People's Organization.

In the new Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, this concern for South Africa and Namibia has continued, as evidenced by the adoption by the 1986 Saskatchewan Synod convention of two important resolutions:

"RESOLVED that we encourage the National Church to take appropriate actions against South Africa until apartheid is dismantled."

AND

"RESOLVED that the Saskatchewan Synod communicate its solidarity with the oppressed people of South Africa and Namibia to the executive of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa and the

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

Evangelical Lutheran Church, South West Africa (Namibia) and a gift of money, the amount to be determined by the Synod Council, be forwarded."

A similar motion which was moved at the Eastern Synod convention was referred to the Synod Council due to the lack of time.

## **POSITIONS OF CANADIAN ECUMENICAL PARTNERS**

The Lutheran witness must be seen in the context of the witness of the church catholic, for there has been a strong ecumenical consensus in opposing apartheid. In reviewing the Lutheran strategies, it is important not to overlook the important formative role the perspective of other churches has played in shaping what Lutherans have said and done against apartheid. We trust the reverse is perceived to be equally true.

The World Council of Churches Assembly held in Vancouver, B.C., in 1983 was an important event not only because it brought the international ecumenical community to Canada and exposed Canadians to many new ideas, but also because it adopted a "STATEMENT ON SOUTHERN AFRICA". The members of the W.C.C. have shared a long standing concern over developments in southern Africa and in this statement have reiterated the conviction that "apartheid stands condemned by the Gospel." Additionally, this comprehensive statement called for the independence of Namibia, disinvestment, mandatory and comprehensive sanctions, and an oil embargo, to mention a few of its key recommendations.

More recently, in December, 1985, leaders from many churches met in Harare, Zimbabwe under the auspices of the W.C.C. to consider the crisis in southern Africa. Among the participants were the Rev. Dr. David Preus, President of the American Lutheran Church and the Rev. William Herzfeld, President of the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches. These representatives issued what is known as the "HARARE DECLARATION." This declaration recognized that the ongoing presence of racism caused the meeting to be an occasion of repentance. It reiterated the conviction that apartheid stands condemned by the Gospel, and went on to recommend an end to the state of emergency, withdrawal of the troops from the townships, release of Nelson Mandella and all political prisoners, conditions that would enable the return of exiles, release of movements, and negotiations with the genuine leaders of the people with a view toward the transfer of power to the people. It also recommended divestment by churches in corporations continuing to do business in South Africa, sanctions and support for front-line states, support programs for youth particularly in the area of education, and pastoral ministry to exiles.

The Canadian Council of Churches has also made numerous interventions based on the experiences of its member churches and of coalitions such as the Taskforce on the Churches and Corporate Responsibility (TCCR) and the Inter-Church Coalition on Africa (ICCAF). The most recent submission was "HUMAN RIGHTS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA AND THE QUESTION OF SANCTIONS" which was presented to the Parliament's Standing Committee on Human Rights in July, 1986. Based on communication with the churches in southern Africa, this submission presents a picture of the current human rights situation in South Africa. It concludes:

"The call for sanctions is a call to governments and to the private sector to recognize that the situation in South Africa has openly and rapidly deteriorated from legislated repression to a war waged by the South African government against its own population and their aspirations to participate in shaping the circumstances of their lives." The submission went on to outline a number of recommendations which could be taken by the Canadian government as a "next step" in efforts to bring an end to apartheid.

Also in July, 1986, as a reflection of its concern, the Canadian Council of Churches coordinated a letter from the leaders of Canada's major denominations to Prime Minister Mulroney on the eve of his departure for the mini-summit of Commonwealth leaders. The church leaders, among them the Rev. Dr. D. Sjoberg, President of the ELCIC, wrote to the Prime Minister.

"We call upon you to take steps to show that Canada is prepared to act unilaterally to disassociate our country from the present government in South Africa and its policy of apartheid."

These two recent interventions were preceded by a major brief presented in April, 1986 to the Special Joint Committee on Canada's International Relations entitled Canada's International Relations: An Alternative View - An Enhanced Role for Canada. In this brief, prepared in response to a Foreign Policy Review being conducted by the federal government, the churches set out some of the standards which they hoped might provide a basis for conducting Canada's international relations. This brief utilized internationally accepted standards and definitions and included a specific section on South Africa. It called upon the Canadian government to seek a clear indication of basic changes that must occur in South Africa, such as lifting state of emergency, having constitutional discussions with authentic black leaders, and dismantling the laws and policies which form the cornerstone of apartheid.

The Canadian Council of Churches was supported in these interventions by the very able research of the participating coalitions and by the firm consensus which had emerged among its member churches on the issues of apartheid. In 1984 both the United Church of Canada at its General Council and the Presbyterian Church of Canada at its General Assembly had endorsed the following 1982 statement by the World Alliance of Reformed Churches:

"Apartheid ... is a sin, moral and theological justification of it is a travesty of the Gospel ... its persistent disobedience of the word of God is a theological heresy."

At the Morden General Council, the United Church passed resolutions that the struggle in southern Africa for liberation was a just and humanitarian struggle worthy of the support of the churches; that there should be full economic sanctions against South Africa; that External Affairs should ask the governments of Britain, Japan, the United States, and West Germany to cease and desist from trade and commerce with the government of South Africa, and that the Canadian Jewish Congress should call upon the government of Israel to cease and desist from its activities with the government of South Africa.

More recently, in 1986, the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Canada recommitted the church to the struggle against racism and apartheid. The Assembly called for negotiations with all sectors of South African society, endorsed limited sanctions against South Africa, declared its support for increasing sanctions, and recognized the African National Congress as the legitimate voice of the black population in South Africa.

The Anglican Church of Canada at its 1986 General Synod in Winnipeg also approved a number of resolutions on South Africa. The delegates reaffirmed the church's belief in the "oneness of the human family" as a central understanding of the faith. They repented of their failure to provide a pastoral and prophetic witness against racism which threatens this "oneness" and they remembered especially Canada's treatment of native peoples as evidence of our own sin in this regard. They called upon the federal government to impose full economic sanctions and to ban trade with and investment in South Africa. They also called upon the South African government to release Nelson Mandella and to begin a dialogue with the legitimate black leaders.

In summary, the churches have raised a consistent witness to their hopes for the people of southern Africa. Through their public witness to governments, the Lutheran and other churches have made a strong case for the dismantlement of apartheid to policy makers. The church catholic has rejected universally the concept that apartheid can claim any theological or practical legitimacy. Apartheid is a vicious expression of the latent racism that pervades human societies because of fallen human nature. Churches have realized that it is not sufficient merely to point an accusatory finger at an evil system, but that judgement must also be self-critical of the ways in which our society sanctions racism. It is the hope of the churches that a genuine peace might be achieved and a life of fulfilment may be possible for all the people in that troubled region. It is the common conviction that this is only possible through the establishment of a non-

racial society which allows for political and economic self-determination characterized by justice for all the people.

## **THE CHURCH'S WITNESS TO THE PRIVATE SECTOR**

*"Those who invest in South Africa should not think they are doing us a favour; they are here for what they get out of our cheap and abundant labour and they should know they are buttressing one of the most vicious systems."*

*(Bishop Desmond Tutu)<sup>28</sup>*

The witness of the church's opposition to apartheid has also included a very active dialogue with the private sector. Awareness has been increasing that, due to linkages within the international economy and to the church's possession of various investments, the church and its individual members are also indirectly beneficiaries of apartheid through participation in the economy. This occurs through the cheap labour used in the production of manufactured goods and of agricultural products for our markets, through the importation of natural resources for our industries, and through investments which have bolstered our portfolios.

To address this situation, the church's first step was to acknowledge that we benefit from this system of injustice. Most church resolutions that were adopted, acknowledged and repented of our participation in this system of injustice in which we were involved, whether knowingly or unknowingly. Once this complicity was acknowledged, the church began to look for ways to limit its financial support for apartheid. Churches began to consider the entire question of "corporate social responsibility." For example, the L.C.A.'s Board for Social Ministry presented a report in 1972 to the convention on "SOCIAL CRITERIA FOR INVESTMENTS" and urged all segments of the church to give serious consideration to the criteria in their investment decisions. Churches began to take a more active interest in their portfolios and to ask moral and ethical questions of the management of the companies in which they had shares.

In 1978, the L.C.A. in convention received a memorial from the Michigan Synod which called upon the church "... to investigate its financial investments which may aid and/or perpetuate the practice of apartheid in South Africa." In response to this memorial it was reported to the convention that the L.C.A. had "... vigorously made known its position ..." by co-filing shareholder resolutions with CITIBANK and the First National Bank of Boston and by being in communication with 19 other corporations. The A.L.C. had embarked on a similar course expressing its concerns to 30 corporations between 1978-80. In subsequent years through various convention resolutions, a strategy emerged for encouraging "corporate social responsibility." Its components included management meetings, (church representatives would meet with the management of companies to raise ethical questions); shareholder resolutions at Annual General Meetings (churches could use the opportunity provided by their own shares or by proxies which they held to propose to companies resolutions for morally appropriate actions); pressure on governments to change laws concerning business practice; the action of divestment of shares in companies which refused to agree with certain principles of corporate behaviour, (churches would sell their shares to protest continued support of apartheid); and public calls by the churches for disinvestment, (churches would ask companies to withdraw their interests from South Africa in protest of apartheid).

During the late 1960s and early 1970s, the "Corporate Social Responsibility Movement" began to take shape. In 1971 the churches in the United States sponsored their first "shareholder resolution" at the Annual Meeting of General Motors on the issue of South Africa. By 1980 the number of "shareholder resolutions" had climbed to 80 resolutions to 60 different corporations. In the U.S. the Interfaith Centre for Corporate Responsibility was established under the auspices of the National Council of Churches. It currently has 235 member organizations. In Canada in 1974, the Taskforce on the Churches and Corporate Responsibility was created by the mainline churches (Anglican, Roman Catholic, Presbyterian, Lutheran, and United) to cooperate in addressing corporate social responsibility issues. The common

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<sup>28</sup> *"The Corporate Examiner," Vol #14 No. 6, 1985, p. 1. The Interfaith Center for Corporate Responsibility.*

agenda that brought the churches and these organizations together was the tacit support given to apartheid by business through its economic relationships with South Africa.

As Richard Arnett and Ronald Mueller point out in their book, *The Global Reach: The power of the Multinational Corporation*, "The struggle for political legitimacy is the most important task that faces the global corporation." Corporate Social Responsibility is a moral question which calls those who are shareholders to be accountable as "good stewards" for the consequences of their investments. It also invokes both a commitment from corporations to the principle of "shareholder democracy"<sup>29</sup> so that people may exercise this stewardship, and an accountability to all the members of a society in which business is privileged to function.

Willingness to participate in the political process of business and to raise moral questions was demonstrated by the Rev. Leon Sullivan, who was committed to the dismantlement of apartheid and who saw U.S. companies as partly responsible for its continuation because of their involvement in the South African economy. When he became a member of the Board of Directors of General Motors in 1971, he was unable to persuade any of his colleagues that a change in corporate behaviour was necessary. As a compromise he developed the "SULLIVAN PRINCIPLES." As signatories, corporations could voluntarily demonstrate their opposition to apartheid and have a standard by which to participate in change within South Africa.

In 1978, the government of Canada enacted its own voluntary Code of Conduct. It was designed primarily to enable Canadian corporations, by their adherence to the Code, to appeal to South Africa to repeal the repressive and discriminatory legislation which denied equal rights and protections to South African workers. Since the announcement of the Code of Conduct, Canadian churches have called for provisions that would increase its effectiveness, recommending that the Code of Conduct be mandatory; that investors be required to take a pro-active stand against apartheid laws; that there be full disclosure by companies of all direct or indirect sales to police, military, or nuclear sector; and that elected representatives of black workers be included in monitoring and signing the compliance reports of Canadian companies.

The Code of Conduct has been largely ineffectual because of the lack of a reporting process and because there has been no way to encourage compliance. However, Mr. Hart was appointed in August 1985 to improve the reporting process and made his first report to External Affairs Minister Joe Clarke in May, 1986. He has made numerous recommendations for amplifying the Canadian Code, but has pointed out that the Code "... cannot replace or be a substitute for initiatives which companies may and should consider themselves morally and socially bound to undertake on behalf of their employees..."<sup>30</sup>

The Canadian Code of Conduct and the Sullivan Principles are growing evidence of the increasing awareness that according to society's "cost-analysis," the protection and enhancement of basic human rights are essential for the political legitimacy of any corporation. Since its inception the Corporate Social Responsibility Movement has expanded its focus to include other areas such as fair employment practices, plant closings, environmental issues, human rights criteria in international lending, and the impact of the world debt crisis on third world development.

With particular respect to South Africa, in 1980 the L.C.A. convention approved a resolution that asked for criteria by which divestment from corporations would be an appropriate strategy with corporations. By early 1982, the Executive Council had adopted a document called "CRITICAL QUESTIONS REGARDING INVESTMENT AND DIVESTMENT" and had established a "Committee of Social

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<sup>29</sup> "The Corporate Social Responsibility Movement," David Snider, The Interfaith Center for Corporate Responsibility.

<sup>30</sup> "Code of Conduct, Canadian Companies in South Africa," The Report of Mr. Albert Hart to External Affairs Minister J. Clarke, 1986, p.26.

Responsibility" within its Division for Mission in North America. Subsequently, the 1982 convention adopted a resolution that said,

"... that the recognize divestment as an option effective in publicly expressing solidarity with the people of South Africa but not always advisable as it may minimize or eliminate opportunity for the church's dialogue and presence with boards of corporations engaged in business with South Africa, however at this time, the Office of Administration and Finance should exercise the option of divestment in regard to those funds under the direct control of this church..."

The effect of this decision was to place in motion a "Two-Track Policy" in approaching corporations. The first track was to approach companies to leave South Africa in order to press the South African government to abandon apartheid, that is, 'disinvestment' by the companies. The second track was to ask those companies who would not disinvest themselves, to prepare their employees for responsible citizenship in a non-racial society. If in the course of the conversations with the corporations, there were not publicly prepared to engage in this role, the L.C.A. would divest itself of its shares and issue a public statement explaining why.<sup>31</sup> This strategy was reaffirmed at the 1984 Toronto convention. In support of this strategy, the L.C.A. also established a "NETWORK ON CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY" comprised of all agencies, organizations and institutions of the church which held investments. The Network published an "Advisory Letter" and had an "Advisory Committee" to assist participants in voting on shareholder resolutions and in soliciting proxies by which to sponsor shareholder actions.

The A.L.C. at its 1980 convention adopted resolutions recognizing "divestment" as a legitimate strategy to encourage business to withdraw from South Africa. The delegates

"RESOLVED that the A.L.C. declare its judgement that at this moment in history in South Africa, divestiture is the most legitimate strategy in opposing apartheid and the most effective consequence of a declaration of 'status confessionis' ..."

The convention called upon the Board of Trustees and its investment committee to divest of all shares in corporations doing business with South Africa in a "... prudent manner consistent with legal requirements ..." Based on this convention action the Board of Trustees adopted a statement of principle entitled "SOUTH AFRICA: DIVESTMENT." These formal positions were incorporated into the specific in 1981 as "GOALS FOR COMBATING APARTHEID THROUGH THE AMERICAN LUTHERAN CHURCH AND ITS MEMBERS." Goal #6 in this document was "To encourage economic behaviour by U.S. consumers and by U.S. business/financial entities which will reduce support for the apartheid system." A 1985 supplement to this document called for greater legislation regarding business activity and provided recommendations for companies still in South Africa and guidelines for concerted consumer actions. By 1985 the A.L.C. had retained only three shares of its original thirty in corporations with operations in South Africa.

In Canada there was also an awareness of the importance of business investment in South Africa. In 1974, the Eastern Canada Synod of the L.C.A. - Canada Section adopted the following resolution;

That the Eastern Canada Synod approach the Canadian government - to explore the possibility of ceasing Canadian commerce with South Africa as long as effective apartheid remains a policy ... and that the synod urge the people of Canada to take a careful look at their investments and purchases of products from companies operating in South Africa which take unfair advantage of black and coloured labour.

The synod purchased a number of shares in Falconbridge Nickel Mines Ltd. in order to raise its concern over its business practices in South Africa and Namibia. The L.C.A. - Canada Section voted to become a member of the Taskforce on the Churches and Corporate Responsibility. Through this ecumenical partnership, the Canada Section was able to support a number of shareholder resolutions and thereby

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<sup>31</sup> Lutheran Church in America Corporate Social Responsibility: South Africa," The Rev. Phil Johnson, March 21, 1985.

express the church's concerns about apartheid. T.C.C.R. was the vehicle by which the Canada Section and other churches were able to press for changes in Canadian Law regarding business practices in South Africa and Namibia.

This ecumenical forum also helped each of the participating churches to shape its own policies on South Africa and to develop appropriate strategies. A great deal of "cross-fertilization" took place. The principle thrust was to increase economic pressure so that Pretoria would feel the indignation of the world's rejection of apartheid. At the same time, the churches were reviewing their understanding of the nature of their stewardship with respect to corporate social responsibility.

The Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, for example, through its Social Affairs Commission in 1979 adopted "SOCIO-ETHICAL GUIDELINES ON INVESTMENT," a review of the basic social teachings of the Roman Catholic Church and the resulting principles for investment. More recently a delegation from the C.C.C.B. went to South Africa in January 1986 and its report, "NO NEUTRAL GROUND," recommended no further investment in South Africa until apartheid is dismantled; disinvestment by companies that do business with the military police, or nuclear sector; a proactive stand against continued imposition of apartheid laws; consultation with black organizations; and disinvestment in Namibia until the implementation of U.N.S.C. Resolution 435. These recommendations have been adopted by the Executive of the C.C.C.B.

The United Church of Canada has also adopted numerous resolutions on corporate practices and their relationship to the church's concerns. For example, in November 1985, the Division of Finance in consultation with the Division of World Outreach presented the document "South African Investment." It presented a detailed strategy for investment along with a helpful summary of some actions taken by the United Church in concert with the other churches. It also provided an outline for the strategy of divestment: first the church would call on companies to disinvest in order to put pressure on the South African government; if companies were not prepared to disinvest, the church would urge them to demonstrate publicly that they were working to improve the human rights situation, and not supporting government repression of the non-white population; if any company was not prepared to meet these two criteria, the church would be forced to divest itself of its shares as an "action of last resort." However, at the General Council in August 1986, the delegates took this "action of last resort" and voted to divest the United Church all shares and holding of companies with investments in South Africa.

The Anglican Church of Canada has also adopted resolutions regarding corporate social policy in South Africa. In October, 1985, the Program Committee of the National Executive Council, as one of a series of resolutions, called for the revision of the Canadian Code of Conduct, also that its provisions be mandatory; so that Canadian companies be required to take a proactive stand against apartheid; and so that Canadian companies with investment in South Africa be required to make full disclosure of all sales to the South African military and police and to industries which supply these systems. In conclusion it was also recommended

"That the investment subcommittee of the Administration and Finance Committee recommend to the Board of Trustees of the Pension Committee that investment in support of the South African government be terminated."

The Canadian Council of Churches reiterated the general position of its members churches in its submission to the Special Joint Committee on Canada's International Relations in April 1986. On that occasion the churches recommended that the Canadian government "... halt further Canadian investment in South Africa and call ... Canadian companies to lessen their involvement ...

From this experience in the arena of corporate social responsibility, the churches have developed a new sense of stewardship with respect to their participation in the economic system. The churches are defining a more active role for themselves in matters of government policies and business practices. While at times the churches have received criticism for their involvement, increasingly their advice is being sought by pension fund managers, socially responsible investment fund developers, governments, and even

corporations which have come to recognize the church's expertise and responsible manner in dealing with important social and ethical questions. For the churches in Canada, this partnership has also proved an important vehicle for ecumenism which will certainly enhance the "unity of the church. Most importantly, it has been an important avenue for solidarity with the oppressed people of southern Africa.

## **CONCLUSION**

In November 1986, The Rt. Rev. Kloopas Dumeni, Bishop, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia challenged a Canadian church leaders' meeting with the following words: "Suffering is our daily bread. We suffer economically, socially, and spiritually. I think you hear our voice. It is very important for you to do something freely and motivated by love."

This ELCIC position on South Africa and Namibia, and the background paper, are an attempt by the ELCIC to do something toward justice for our sisters and brothers in South Africa and Namibia.

## **A BRIEF GLOSSARY OF TERMS**

**CONSTRUCTIVE ENGAGEMENT** - This has been the policy of the United States toward South Africa which operates on the premise that through diplomatic encouragement South Africa will dismantle apartheid. It has been the principal strategy with respect to apartheid due to the absence of other alternative initiatives by members of the Contact Group or other nations. The recent Commonwealth initiative has been, to a limited extent, a departure from this previous pattern which allowed the United States to set up the direction of foreign policy initiatives by other Contact Group members.

**STATE OF EMERGENCY LAWS**-These laws are in effect an increased level of "martial law." South Africa has always had special security laws that have been extreme. These new laws have had an even more severe impact in eliminating any opposition voices. They put severe restrictions on the media thereby limiting the flow of information. Further, they allow for the detention of anyone who opposes the government. People can be detained without legal counsel or access to the judicial process. Some estimates indicate that over 12,000 persons have been detained under these laws. Most families have no way of determining if family members have been detained and if they have, where they are being held.

**U.N.S.C. RESOLUTION #435** - The United Nations has passed numerous resolutions concerning South Africa and Namibia. This resolution was passed on September 29, 1978. It is the mostly commonly cited on the question of South Africa's illegal occupation of Namibia as judged by the World Court. The Resolution calls for the withdrawal of the illegal occupation of Namibia by South Africa, the transfer of power to the Namibian people, free and fair elections under the supervision of the United Nations, and a cease fire with the military wing of the Southwest Africa People's Organization (SWAPO).

**DISINVESTMENT** - This term is generally used to mean the withdrawal of investments from South Africa by companies. This would include the sale of a subsidiary or a minority interest in a corporation as well as loans or other investments.

**DIVESTMENT** - This term is generally understood to mean the sale by a shareholder of shares of the stock of a corporation which is seen to have an inappropriate relationship with the government of South Africa and the apartheid system.

**WESTERN CONTACT GROUP** - This is a group of five western industrial countries (the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, France, and West Germany), all members of the U.N. Security Council, which was formed in 1977 to negotiate the implementation of U.N.S.C. Resolution 435. It has been inactive and ineffective in recent years due to the unwillingness of the government of South Africa to agree to the implementation of the resolution.