CLERGY AND LAITY CONCERNED

COVENANT AGAINST APARTHEID AT HOME AND ABROAD

Local congregations working to end apartheid in South Africa and Namibia and for racial justice at home
Introduction

Millions of Americans have seen on television and in the press the massive protests against the apartheid regime in South Africa. They have seen non-violent demonstrators (including children) being whipped, tear-gassed, and killed by the South African police and military. In addition, South Africa continues to occupy Namibia illegally, ignoring United Nations resolutions and calls for internationally supervised elections.

In response to these events (and sparked by the Free South Africa Movement), the anti-apartheid movement in the U.S. has grown tremendously. Demonstrations and protests against apartheid have taken place in every state. Many local and state governments are divesting or considering divesting public funds from corporations and banks which invest in South Africa. Increasingly, and with growing success, college students are pressing reluctant boards of trustees to divest. When mounting calls for economic sanctions in the Congress promised to produce a strong bill, President Reagan threatened a veto, and at the last minute, agreed to mild sanctions to avoid a confrontation with Congress.

Meanwhile, the struggle for racial justice continues here at home. While much has been accomplished, much remains to be done, especially in the areas of equal opportunity in employment and housing, education, voting rights enforcement and the deepening problem of poverty among people of color. Despite this “unfinished agenda,” attempts are now being made to erode and even roll back the gains of the civil rights movement, as can be seen in the lack of enforcement of Voting Rights laws and the weakening of affirmative action and bi-lingual education.
Challenge to the Religious Community

Apartheid is one of the major moral challenges facing humanity today. Not since the rise of Nazism in the 1930’s has a theology of racial superiority been used to sanctify and legitimize an entire social system and government apparatus. Since Christianity is the dominant religion in South Africa among both the oppressors and the oppressed, and since the supporters of apartheid claim it is based on “Christian theology,” it is the world Christian community whose integrity is most challenged. Judaism is challenged because of the similarities between apartheid and Nazism. Islam is challenged because the Moslem community in South Africa is non-white and thus also suffers from the system of apartheid.

Apartheid is not primarily a political problem or a social question. It is deeper than that, going to the nature of men and women as creatures of God and equal in God’s sight. It is founded on the belief that white people are inherently superior to people of color, have a divine right to rule over them and are entitled by right to the lion’s share of wealth and privilege. Such a doctrine is an affront to the God of justice and love which the world’s great religions proclaim. Like slavery, apartheid is a system which wounds both oppressor and oppressed, and infects all who are associated with it. Americans who remember how slavery nearly divided our nation in two and are conscious of how racism continues to afflict our common life should have a deep desire to oppose apartheid.

Because apartheid contradicts the basic teachings of every major faith and because the end of apartheid and racial injustice will mark the dawn of a new day of promise for humanity, CALC is initiating the Covenant Against Apartheid at Home and Abroad Program.
The COVENANT Program

The COVENANT Program offers local congregations a faith-based and action-oriented way to express solidarity with the struggling Black majority in South Africa and Namibia and to engage in the struggle for racial justice here at home. Through it, your members can translate their religious beliefs into action, and in so doing deepen their own spiritual life. Specially prepared resources will enrich programs of religious education and strengthen social justice ministry in your congregation.

As a COVENANT congregation, you will receive:

1. An organizing packet designed for use by local congregations. The packet includes background information on apartheid and racial injustice, a theological critique of apartheid, bulletin inserts, action suggestions, a poster, decal and button.

2. Personal assistance from CALC national staff and local CALC chapters in initiating the Program and in identifying resources and speakers.

3. The COVENANT Newsletter which will provide you with updated information on the situation in South Africa and Namibia, action-oriented suggestions and what COVENANT congregations around the country are doing.

NO PEACE UNDER APARTHEID
COVENANT

As human beings, we confess our own involvement, by silence, consent or active participation, in the continuation of racism in human society. As people of faith, we proclaim the power of God, working through human hands, to overcome racism and usher in a new era of equality and justice. As a community of faith we gladly accept our responsibility to deny apartheid or racism any semblance of legitimacy deriving from religious doctrine or morality in general. To this end, we declare ourselves to be a

COVENANT CONGREGATION AGAINST APARTHEID AT HOME AND ABROAD

As a COVENANT congregation, we will:

1) Seek to deepen our own commitment to end racial injustice by programs of education and study, and by including concerns of apartheid and racism in our worship and prayer life.

2) Strengthen efforts of our own denomination or parent body in the struggle against apartheid in South Africa and Namibia by urging divestment and other appropriate actions upon agencies of our national body.

3) Involve ourselves as a congregation in local and national activities, vigils, actions and campaigns against apartheid and racial injustice, including financial support.
Benefits of Becoming a COVENANT Congregation

The COVENANT program involves congregations and their members directly in the struggle against apartheid and racism, through both education and action. Participation of local congregations in the program will support similar efforts in their communities, and will strengthen and undergird statements and actions of the national religious bodies of which they are a part. In becoming a COVENANT congregation, local congregations work across denominational and faith lines to bring meaning to the Biblical imperative that “We are all God’s children” with the same rights for freedom and justice.

How to become a COVENANT Congregation Against Apartheid at Home and Abroad

1) Discuss the COVENANT on the back of the registration form and submit it to your governing body for adoption.

2) Complete the COVENANT Congregation registration form and mail it with your $25.00 registration fee to:

   Covenant Against Apartheid
   Clergy & Laity Concerned
   198 Broadway, Room 302
   New York, NY 10038

   You will receive your COVENANT Organizing Packet and COVENANT Certificate. Your congregation will be added to the Roll of COVENANT Congregations, and will be placed on the mailing list to receive the COVENANT Against Apartheid Newsletter and Updates.

   If you want to order the Organizing Packet before adopting the COVENANT, use the registration form and send $5.00 (for resource packet only).
Charter Congregations

The following congregations have adopted the COVENANT as Charter Congregations:

Riverside-Salem United Church of Christ, 
Buffalo, NY

The Arlington Street Church (Unitarian), 
Boston, MA

St. Andrews Roman Catholic Church, 
Oakland, CA

St. Gregory the Great Catholic Church, 
Baltimore, MD

Ben Hill United Methodist Church, 
Atlanta, GA

Mt. Zion Second Baptist Church, 
Atlanta, GA

North Decatur Presbyterian Church, 
Atlanta, GA

Clifton Presbyterian Church, 
Atlanta, GA

The Dean and Chapter, 
Cathedral of St. John the Divine, 
New York, NY

Washington Square United Methodist Church, 
New York, NY

Broadway Temple United Methodist Church, 
New York, NY

House of the Lord Pentecostal Church, 
Brooklyn, NY

First United Methodist Church, 
Jamaica, NY

Congregation Or Shalom, 
Libertyville, IL

The Cape Cod Synagogue, 
Hyannis, MA

The COVENANT program is sponsored by Clergy and Laity Concerned (CALC).

CALC is an inter-faith peace and justice organization with 54 chapters located in 28 states. Our two program areas are Human Rights and Racial Justice (which is coordinating the COVENANT Program) and Militarism/Disarmament and Economic Justice.
Registration Form

- Please enroll us as a COVENANT Congregation Against Apartheid. Enclosed is our $125.00 registration fee. Please mail the Organizing Packet.

- We are still considering the COVENANT. Please send Organizing Packet only. Enclosed is $55.00 for the packet.

Congregation Phone No.  
Address  
City  
State  
Zip Code  
Contact Person  

Send to: Covenant Program, Clergy and Lay Concerned, 198 Broadway, Room 302, New York, NY 10038