If the so-called politicians desire that the Church of Jesus Christ should not do or say anything in the political field, then they also should do nothing in God-created heaven and earth, and if God is the creator of heaven and earth, and if he is the Father of Jesus Christ, and Head of Jesus Christ, why should the Church of racism, exploitation, and violence, when these are committed in God's world?
A LETTER FROM NAMIBIA

The Rev. Zephania Kameeta is principal of the Lutheran Church's Paulinum Theological College at Otjimbingwe in Namibia. He was detained in late August under terms of the South African regime's Terrorism Act, and held incommunicado for three weeks, a seriously ill man. After his release, he was approached again by South African security police who demanded he sign a 50-page statement. Pastor Kameeta refused. He did compose the following letter to all of good heart, to those who value freedom:

To all who by word and deed stand by us in the struggle;
To all who by day and by night bring our case before the Lord!

Dear brothers and sisters,

Right at the outset I should like, on behalf of my wife and children and all Namibians, to thank you all most sincerely for your prayers and support during the past days and weeks. Once more it has become clear that the South African Government is not dealing with just "a small band of agitators and terrorists", but with thousands of Christians around the world, and with all who, irrespective of their faith or nationality, stand for what is right and just.

Through this letter I wish to share with you some of the thoughts which I had while, like many others, I was locked up in solitary confinement. Many questions were roused in me, and I want to discuss these with you.

Have these events not perhaps estranged me from Jesus our Saviour? Many people must have put this question to themselves and come to the conclusion, "These people are only interested in politics and are far removed from Jesus and his Church," or, "These people no longer know the Lord as their personal saviour!" My purpose here is not to bring accusations against anyone or to defend myself: I myself had to face these questions, be it in a different form. But allow me to share with you what I experienced in jail.

I tried to look back on my life; and here I must honestly say that I have never lived so closely - day and night - with the Word of God as I did during the three weeks of my detention. Before I had always read the Word with an eye to other people. I always asked, "What does the word of God say to 'them'?'" But in these three weeks I began to ask, "What does the Word of God say to me in this situation?" I not only studied his Word I experienced it! Every word and sentence took on a new meaning for me in those days. I felt very strongly that the Lord himself was speaking to me. I know no language or words in which I could describe what I experienced in those days with the Word of God. In these days Jesus became anew my Saviour.
There were days during which I experienced great doubt. Especially when I thought of his words, "Ask and you shall receive". Why does he not free us, I asked myself. I thought of my wife and children, and I thought of the scores of wives and children and girl friends of my fellow prisoners. O Lord, how long! I asked accusingly and doubtingly. I argued aloud with the Lord in my cell: Lord, if you are a God, then you must liberate Namibia now! In those days I expected that the Lord should act according to my will.

There were also moments when anxiety took over. My hands sweated with fear. In such moments I did not want to open my Bible; and when I tried to pray my mouth felt dry and I could find no words. This fear especially descended on me before the interrogations. My unease was at times so great that I feared that there was something wrong with me. But then a great calmness came upon me. I was strongly aware of the many prayers going up to God. I took up my Bible and from it drew endless reassurance. With new strength I called on the Lord in the words of the Psalmist:

In God I trust without a fear.
What can flesh do to me? (56: 4 & 12)

The comfort and power which I got from these words is indescribable! I thought of my fellow prisoners and those outside full of worry. I brought them before the Lord. In this power I sat before my interrogator. The Word of God in Matthew's Gospel became a tangible reality to me:

Behold I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves;
so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves...
When they deliver you up, do not be anxious
how you are to speak or what you are to say;
for what you are to say will be given to you
in that hour. (Matthew 10: 16-20)

And so let me get to the next question: Can us preachers not leave this struggle to the politicians?

The struggle in our land has not only to do with the liberation of Namibia, but it goes further and deeper than that. The presence of the South African Government is not just a political question, but it is a threat to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Thus I see it as the task of every Christian to work for the knocking down of this government. In this country which claims to be Christian you can be a Christian ten thousand times over, but if you are not white you are treated like a dog. I know that at this moment much propaganda is being made abroad about the "new era which is dawning in Southern Africa". The Government of South Africa is doing everything in its power to blind the already blinded eyes of the Western World. In Windhoek this Government is committing the greatest political deceit of the century. While they are busy removing the Apartheid signs from the buildings (but not from their hearts!), high officials are still fighting for the superiority and dictatorship of the so-called white man. They are convinced that the well-being and future of the whole world is in the hands of the white man. They are working to keep the white race "pure". The so-called "new era" which according to the South African Government is busy dawning, is based on the policy of Separate Development which is nothing but a synonym for racial discrimination.
In his editorial in *Pro Veritate*, September 1975, Roelf Meyer discusses the motive behind this policy as follows:

The basic question which must be asked is, what is the motive behind the policy? Once again everyone will more or less agree that it is an attitude towards man in which the background differences of race and culture and language are more important than that which is held in common. Therefore the identity of people, which exists in their race, culture and language must be protected. One group, such as the Afrikaners, should not be exposed to an open community, where such a unity between people of different backgrounds may come about to the detriment of their original identity, which may be diffused or even disappear. A further conviction behind the motivation is that other population groups can enjoy more rights and privileges provided this does not threaten the right of other groups, for example the Afrikaners, to be themselves.

Let me add to this what I once said: The South African Government and its supporters proclaim - especially by what they do - a message which is diametrically opposed to the Gospel. While God tells us that in Jesus Christ he has broken down the wall of separation between himself and us, and between us and our fellow men, the South African Government proclaims and builds the wall of separation which brings about alienation, mistrust, prejudice, fear, hatred and enmity between man and man, and therefore between man and God. This message stands in direct opposition to the Gospel of Reconciliation, love, peace, brotherhood and justice. The different languages, races and cultures are gifts bestowed by God in his mercy, but become an abomination in the eyes of the Lord when they are used as building blocks in the wall which divides man from man; when they do not lead to brotherhood, peace and reconciliation. And worse still is when Race, Language and Culture take the place of Yahweh! In Southern Africa this has already happened, as it is just these three Gods who decide where I should live, where I should sit, eat or relax; whom I may love and whom I may marry or not marry; whose hospitality I may enjoy and whose I may not enjoy; where I must worship and even where I must be buried!

Therefore, I see the struggle in Southern Africa, and especially here in Namibia, not merely as a political struggle, in which only politicians may participate, but as a struggle in which all Christians are called to participate. And if this should happen, an armed struggle can be avoided, because the Word of the Cross is enough for us to be able to tackle this task!

And here of course the already boring question of the Church and Politics must be raised. I want to be short and simple. If the so-called politicians desire that the Church of Jesus Christ should not do or say anything in the political field, then they also should do nothing in the God-created world. If God is the creator of heaven and earth, and if he is the Father of Jesus Christ, and if Jesus Christ is the Founder and Head of the Church, why should the Church be silent and do nothing in the face of racism, exploitation and violence, when these are committed in God's world? Alternatively, should God withdraw from the history of this world, hand it over to the Devils, and restrict himself to the Temples and Church buildings?
On the other hand it is not surprising that when the pro-Government churches proclaim a day of prayer for the 'Constitutional Talks', this is not politics. But when the Churches who reject the South African Government and its policy intervene and speak for the thousands who are exploited, humiliated and trodden underfoot day and night, this is politics and subversion!

In past months and weeks, and presently too, numbers of people have been locked up in jail under the provisions of the so-called "Terrorism Act". Why does the South African Government seek in others that which it itself? Is this what the psychologists call projection? If anybody should be charged with terrorism then it is most surely the South African Government!

For instance let us look back at the events of 24 August. In the days preceding this date an appointed band went about in one part of the location and assaulted people. On Sunday the 24th of August the Namibia National Convention called a public meeting with the aim of informing the public about these happenings, and to express their strongest condemnation of what was happening; furthermore the NNC wished to make known the steps which it would take. The speakers made their judgement and condemnation of these events known in clear language, and they called on the public to remain calm.

The South African Police - as always - took up their positions with dogs, batons, firearms and pick-up vans - amongst people who stood there quite empty-handed! Immediately after the third speaker had finished his address they attempted to violently disperse the crowd. The speakers and other leaders who were present at the meeting were arrested under the "Terrorism Act". To save time I leave it to your judgement.

Is it worth continuing with the struggle? Is there still hope? This is a very serious question for many, myself included. If the passage of world history were in the hands of men, I would have said that we should rather fold our hands and wait until the world either sinks or is saved. But precisely the fact that I believe that history and the existence of the world are in the strong hands of God make it impossible for me to leap back and withdraw to "safety". It was especially while I was in jail that this conviction became even stronger in me.

In answer to this question, and as a conclusion to this letter, allow me to greet you with a quotation from the prophet Isaiah:

For the Lord is our Judge,  
the Lord is our Ruler,  
the Lord is our King,  
he will save us.

So be greeted in the name of our Master.

Your brother,  
ZEPHANIA KAMEETA
TERRORISM TRIAL IN NAMIBIA

Three women (one of them 18 years old) and three men went on trial in the Supreme Court in Windhoek on 1 December 1975 charged under the South African regime's Terrorism Act. "The main charge...is that they allegedly committed in South West Africa and in Angola terrorist acts with the aim of endangering the maintenance of law and order in South West Africa" and that they are members or supporters of SWAPO.

The accused are: Ms Rauna Nambinga, Ms Naimi Nombowa and Ms Anna Nghihondjwa - all nurses at the Lutheran hospital at Engela in the northern region; Mr. Hendrik Shikongo; Mr Aaron Mushimba; and Mr Andreas Nangolo. Johannesburg attorney David Soggott is defense counsel. Among the terrorist acts - providing some people with blankets and presenting a dress, soap and sanitary towels to "a female member of the group of people who intended to violently overthrow the South West African state".

An unknown number of Namibians are held incommunicado. Of 22 names available, 6 are also nurses from Engela, 4 are Lutheran pastors.

ANOTHER ANGLICAN CHURCHPERSON EXPELLED

Ms Margaret Valentim, staff member of the Diocese of Damaraland, was ordered out of Namibia on 5 December. A British citizen, she had her temporary residence permit withdrawn - without reason - by South African Minister of the Interior (and Information) Cornelius P. Mulder. Ms Valentim had recently arranged travel for mothers and wives to visit Namibians imprisoned on South Africa's Robben Island.

The Rev. Edward Morrow, vicar general of Damaraland diocese, has once again been refused permission to visit the northern region. St. Mary's, Odibo, and other churches there are threatened by the creation of a 5 km deep 'security zone' by South African occupation officials along the Angola border. It is estimated that 20,000 people face removal in a scheme already underway.

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Address Correction Requested

—For A Free Southern Africa—