RELIGIOUS ACTION NETWORK HOSTS SUMMIT CONFERENCE ON APARTHEID

Keynote Address by Rev. Gardner C. Taylor (Excerpts)

"There is really no mystery why our nation has been so loath to be forthright about South Africa. We gave in this country the example upon which South African apartheid is instituted, so that our history is the history of what South Africa is in this immediate moment, and for this country to renounce, as under God it ought, this obscenity, would be to renounce, as we ought to, much of our own history . . .

We stand almost in the immediacy of the time when we remember our Lord's death and resurrection . . .

The threat of death is the last strategy of Satan, no power beyond that . . . I stood

(continued on last page)
Dr. Kofi Opoku

"To uproot any system that denies our freedom is to uphold our faith in God who never compromises with evil and oppression. As God did not reconcile Moses and Pharaoh, and throughout the Bible revealed Himself as the One who was on the side of the oppressed because oppression and tyranny negated His intention in creating human beings, so must we who claim to believe in God do whatever we can to remove the tyranny in apartheid as our Jewish, Christian and Muslim duty."

Rev. Mary Anne Belinger

"Apartheid in its own unique evil is peculiar to South Africa but apartheid is there and here — as long as we don't realize we are enslaved, limited, boxed in, and labeled, we will not be able to free each other."

FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE

Nearly two hundred religious leaders from twenty one states and a dozen representatives from Southern Africa, gathered in New York April 4-6 to attend a Summit Conference on Apartheid hosted by the Religious Action Network, a project of the American Committee on Africa.

The conference was initiated by Rev. Wyatt Tee Walker, Rev. Frederick B. Williams, and Rev. M. William Howard, to re-energize a network that first came together ten years ago at a national conference of Black religious leaders also held in New York. They wanted to consolidate that group into core support for the Religious Action Network.

The conference was made possible by support from the United Nations Special Committee Against Apartheid and the United Methodist Office for the United Nations.

The meeting was also a religious response to the South African Government's increasingly brutal repression against those opposed to its policies. With much of South Africa's anti-apartheid leadership either in jail or in exile, the churches have become one of the last unmuzzled voices speaking for freedom. Their position has become increasingly dangerous, and they have appealed for help from the religious community in the United States. The conference brought together clergy and activists from a wide ecumenical background, including representatives from five of the seven historic Black denominations. They also came from cities where there had been recent action against South Africa. This created a rare opportunity for the frank sharing of ideas, individual experiences, strategies and suggestions for action among people in the pulpit and the pews.

The connection between apartheid in South Africa and the ongoing civil rights struggle in the United States was underlined by the 12 southern Africans attending the conference. They included Evangelical Lutheran Dean Zephaniah Kameeta who came especially from Windhoek, Namibia, Rev. Canon Mcebisi Xundu, Director of the Peace and Justice Office of the Anglican Diocese of Port Elizabeth, South Africa, and Rev. Tshenuwenni Farisani, author of Diary from a South African Prison.

“One participant came to me half way through the conference and said this was the first time I've had a chance to ask my own questions about apartheid,” said Dumisani S. Kumalo, coordinator of the conference. “That pastor told me he had finally understood the difference between South Africa and Southern Africa because for once he had not been too embarrassed to ask!” said Kumalo.

It is impossible to detail all the outstanding participants. An opening
session at the United Nations conveyed the breadth and depth of potential impact represented by uniting these forces in action against apartheid. Among the speakers were:

- Rev. J. Alfred Smith, Allen Temple Baptist Church, Oakland, who is the former President of the Progressive Baptist Convention which has 1.5 million members and 1200 churches. Rev. Smith is a central figure in California, Oregon and Washington. The Free South Africa movement in the Bay Area was launched out of his church.

- Rev. Charles Adams, Senior Pastor of the Hartford Memorial Baptist Church in Detroit, and current First Vice President of the Progressive National Baptist Convention, who is listed by Ebony Magazine as one of the 15 top Black preachers. He is a key figure in the midwest — Michigan, Illinois, Ohio — and his church has a famous history dating back to before the Civil War, when it was a stop on the underground railroad.

- Rev. Darrell Rollins of the Thirty-first Street Baptist Church in Richmond, Virginia, and Rev. Mary Anne Bellinger representing the Newberry Chapel, AME, Atlanta, Georgia, who are both very respected figures, with particularly strong outreach in the south.

- Rev. Hayward Wiggins, Senior Minister of the Gethsemane Baptist Church, Houston, Texas, who is closely connected to churches in the southwest, stretching across Texas, Louisiana and Arkansas.

Rev. Gardner C. Taylor of Brooklyn's Concord Baptist Church preached a sermon in which he said that the U.S. gave South Africa the example on which apartheid is instituted. As the U.N. peace plan began in Namibia, Zephaniah Kameeta, calling for support, warned that evil forces still threatened Namibian independence. Dr. Kofi Opoku, Visiting Professor of Religion and Culture from the University of Ghana, affirmed the religious imperative for action against apartheid. Manhattan Borough President, David Dinkins called for comprehensive sanctions against apartheid at city, state and federal levels.

Rev. Jesse Jackson and Dame Nita Barrow, President of the World Council of Churches and Ambassador of Barbados to the United Nations, delivered keynote addresses. Representatives of both the African National Congress and the Pan-Africanist Congress spoke in plenary sessions. The topics covered in the workshops included the situation inside Southern Africa, sanctions, and religious action.

"The important thing about this conference was that we attracted people who can actually implement actions with their congregations, and that is unusual these days," said Kumalo. As a result of the Conference, we now have over 100 members in the Network."
ACOA's Executive Director emeritus George Houser pictured here at a book party to launch his account of Africa's liberation struggles "No One Can Stop the Rain." Also pictured are Executive Director Jennifer Davis, President of the Mozambican People's Assembly Marcelino Dos Santos and O.A.U. Ambassador Oumarou Youssoufou.

In early 1989 ACOA also hosted a book party for Board Member Stephanie Urdang's "And Still They Dance. Women, War and the Struggle for Change in Mozambique." Both books are available from the office for $12 each plus postage.

**UNLOCKING APARTHEID'S JAILS**

Early in the year we had news that detainees determined to focus attention on their desperate situation had initiated a hunger strike. Many activists held without charge or trial for more than 1000 days. The U.S. press was silent for weeks. We worked very closely with the Human Rights Commission in Johannesburg monitoring and publicizing the hunger strikes which rocked South Africa's jails eventually involving hundreds of prisoners.

Aside from providing constant updates to Human Rights Watch groups and anti-apartheid organizations ranging from high school groups in Westchester to the Carter Center in Atlanta, the Africa Fund produced three Action Alerts each of which reached nearly one thousand people.

We also helped coordinate activities for National Detainees Day here in the United States which was marked by solidarity fasts, special church services and petition campaigns from California to Massachusetts.
Divestment Campaign '89: Pressure Escalates

With their sales personnel running up against state and local anti-apartheid purchasing policies fifty times a day, Hewlett-Packard decided to pull out of South Africa. "The problem was measured in millions," a spokesperson for the company explained, adding that they are now seeing in Europe the same kind of selective procurement legislation effectively utilized by anti-apartheid activists in the United States.

New proposals for local laws limiting purchases from companies involved in South Africa were backed by expert testimony from ACOA recently in New York City, Philadelphia and Boston. The bills tighten up earlier legislation by restricting city ties not only with companies with direct investments in South Africa, but with companies which have tried to evade such restrictions through licensing and franchising arrangements.

A similar law in Dade County, Florida, recently led Motorola to announce that they would not renew a licensing agreement they have with a company in South Africa. Motorola, which had in the past sold communications equipment to the South African Police, has been a special target for anti-apartheid activists for some time.

At the end of 1988, a state law in Michigan mandated the divestment of holdings in companies with licensing and franchising arrangements in South Africa. Among the targets of the Michigan legislation is some $1.3 billion in state funds invested in Ford and General Motors, both of which are based in Michigan and lobbied hard against the bill.

In the first few months of 1989, researchers at the Africa Fund have fielded dozens of calls from companies seeking to discuss their involvement in South Africa and figure out ways of avoiding being targeted by local legislation. In just one day in May, researchers helped local activists seeking legislation in Austin, Texas, talk to staff drafting a bill before the Connecticut legislature, discussed strategy with people in Oregon, and organized testimony for hearings in New York City, while another staff member was testifying before a state commission in Massachusetts and someone else was sitting down with lawyers from the mayor’s office in Los Angeles. Digital Equipment Corporation and Philip Morris even went so far as to fly Senior Vice Presidents to New York to meet with Africa Fund corporate researcher Richard Knight. Other companies feeling the heat include Unisys and Memorex.

In response to such pressure, IBM is spending thousands of dollars sending its Vice Presidents around the country to argue that it should be exempt from selective purchasing legislation because it invests in Black-ruled countries that border South Africa and provides financial assistance to Black-owned business in South Africa. In talks with legislators in Florida, New Orleans, Massachusetts and New York, IBM has also hinted that it “may” be ending its last remaining franchising agreement within the next few years, while stopping short of a firm commitment. IBM has no such hesitancy about confirming its commitment to continue to supply a company half-owned by one of South Africa’s largest military contractors.

Countering efforts to weaken sanctions, a delegation of “eminent church persons” including South African Council of Churches leader Rev. Frank Chikane and Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu, visited government leaders in South Africa’s major trading partners. Their message: tougher economic sanctions against South Africa can help bring a more rapid end to apartheid and more equitable representation for the country’s Black majority.

An updated list prepared by the ACOA-associated organization, The Africa Fund, reports that local sanctions bills now require the sale of more than $20 billion from companies that do business in South Africa. By early 1989, 24 states, 19 counties and 79 cities had passed binding legislation in just one day in May, researchers helped local activists seeking legislation in Austin, Texas, talk to staff drafting a bill before the Connecticut legislature, discussed strategy with people in Oregon, and organized testimony for hearings in New York City, while another staff member was testifying before a state commission in Massachusetts and someone else was sitting down with lawyers from the mayor’s office in Los Angeles. Digital Equipment Corporation and Philip Morris even went so far as to fly Senior Vice Presidents to New York to meet with Africa Fund corporate researcher Richard Knight. Other companies feeling the heat include Unisys and Memorex.

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New Jersey Completes Sale of $4 billions

While some states and cities are just considering new legislation, others are already beginning to report the results of successful divestment programs. Late last year the state of New Jersey announced it had completed a three-year, four-billion-dollar divestment program.

California announced in early April that since state divestment legislation was passed in 1987, they have already sold off one-third of their holdings in South African affiliated companies. And even as the city of Philadelphia was debating new purchasing legislation, the city treasurer announced they had just finished selling off the last of their pension fund investments in corporations in South Africa without suffering adverse financial impact.
Rev. Wyatt Tee Walker presents a check for the Religious Action Network to ACOA Executive Director Jennifer Davis from offerings at Canaan Baptist Church. Also pictured are Rev. Frederick B. Williams, RAN Coordinator Dumisani Kumalo and Rev. M. William Howard.

CONFERENCE RESOLUTIONS (EXCERPTS)

1. Isolate South Africa: work for comprehensive mandatory sanctions by engaging in ongoing dialogue with Members of Congress and other sectors of the government of our nation.

2. Press our city, county and state elected officials to implement divestment and selective purchasing measures.

3. Provide urgent assistance to the people of Namibia by meeting with the US Ambassador to the United Nations and the UN Secretary General to request that the United Nations:
   a. immediately increase the United Nations Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG) forces to 7,500.
   b. immediately demobilize all South African military forces in Namibia.
   c. provide adequate financial and political support for the UN Peacekeeping process.

4. Recruit, train and fund African-American leaders to monitor the election process to ensure fairness and give an accurate interpretation of the events which take place.

Conference Officers

HIS EXCELLENCY MAJOR GENERAL JOSEPH N. GARBA
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Gardner Taylor (continued from cover)

in this very room when Martin King was on his way to Europe to receive the Nobel Prize and heard him say that when one is delivered from the fear of death, there is no fear... Here is where our hope stands in the face of the massive political and military might of South Africa. When Sunday's morning came, there leaped out of the darkness a bright cry, and in the capital of despair hope is heard. I think I see my Lord now. Standing on the stricken power of the grave, with the powers of hell fallen, declaring all power, all power is in my hands. And so South Africa.

Write for more information.

YES, I am ready to heed the call from our brothers and sisters in southern Africa. Send me information on the Religious Action Network.

Name/Title ____________________________

Congregation __________________________

Address ______________________________

City/State/Zip _________________________

Telephone ____________________________

Mail to:
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