Strategies for Action on NAMIBIA

Purpose: To combat the evils of the apartheid system in South Africa and Namibia, to stand in solidarity with fellow believers and all people who suffer oppression in those lands, and to respond faithfully to our understanding of God’s call to love mercy and seek justice.

The American Lutheran Church (ALC), in general convention has called for its members and congregations to become advocates for justice for all people in Namibia and South Africa (see “Apartheid: Statements and Actions of the ALC” - Augsburg Publishing House). Because apartheid is contrary to the Gospel, the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and the ALC have said that in order to make a clear confession of faith, “status confessionis”, Christians everywhere must witness against apartheid and work for change.

Advocacy as an integral part of the church’s ministry involves partnership on the national, district, conference and congregational levels. Outlined below are six major strategies for action (prayer, education, support of the Namibian church, political advocacy, economic pressure, and the ALC’s commitment intended to assist you in responding faithfully to the “cries for freedom” of our sisters and brothers in Namibia. Begin where you are able—but begin!

Strategy #1: PRAYER

Our Namibian sisters and brothers live under constant terror and in fear for their lives. Their source of hope in this seemingly hopeless situation is the biblical witness of our God who promises and brings life from death, freedom from slavery, light from darkness and hope from despair. Claiming God’s promises, let us join with the Namibian church in prayer for:

- justice, peace and freedom for Namibia;
- the safety of church leaders and all courageous Namibians;
- freedom from the bondage of apartheid, both for the oppressors and the oppressed;
- the church and for those tortured and in prison;
- all persons, agencies and governments involved in the struggle;
- forgiveness for the ways in which we profit from and perpetuate racial oppression in southern Africa, in the United States and elsewhere.

Suggestions:

1. Plan to include these concerns regularly in your individual and family prayer, and in the Sunday prayers of the congregation.

2. Plan a special worship service around commemorative dates, i.e.:

   - Kassinga Massacre May 4 (1978)
   - Soweto Uprising June 21 (1976)
   - Women’s Day August 9 (in honor of the 20,000 women who gathered for the Pass Law Protest in Pretoria in 1956)

3. Plan to follow through on your prayer with concrete actions that allow you to become a part of God’s bringing life and freedom to people in Namibia.

Strategy #2: EDUCATION

As Jacob wrestled with God in the night, we are called to wrestle with what it means to be God’s faithful people in our world today. Advocacy involves commitment to ongoing study of our faith story and of the story of the struggles in southern Africa. It also means sharing those stories with others.

A. The ministry which Jesus affirmed—see Luke 4, John 13—was the biblical call to love mercy and seek justice (Micah 6, Amos 5). In light of this we need to ask difficult questions of ourselves and of each other: What is the church and its mission (I Cor. 12, Gal. 3:28)? Does not our confession of Jesus as Lord demand our continuing battle against oppression in Namibia and South Africa? Does not the division in the churches which the apartheid system perpetuates (black and white) need to be called the heresy that it is? (The “status confessionis” issue)

B. We need to keep informed and to study the political and economic developments in southern Africa: South Africa’s role, SWAPO’s role, the Western Contact Group, U.S. policy, United Nations involvement, the Namibian church, our own church’s statements and actions.

1. Obtain reliable sources of information that have not been censored by South Africa (S.A.). Get on the mailing list of newsletters, i.e. Dateline Namibia (Lutheran Church in America, 231 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10016), Namibia Concerns Newsletter (Wartburg Seminary, 333 Wartburg Place, Dubuque, IA 52001), Episcopal Churchmen for South Africa (Room 1005, 853 Broadway, New York, NY 10003). Subscribe to a periodical, i.e. Africa News (P.O. Box 3851, Durham, NC 27702). Good books and films are available. For an annotated list of resources and addresses see ALC Namibia Packet, (Augsburg Publishing House), or contact Namibia Concerns, 333 Wartburg Place, Dubuque, IA 52001.
2. Begin a study group or adult class in your parish or area. Share information, invite speakers, schedule films, read and discuss books, etc.

3. Organize educational events for parish, conference or district. Invite Namibians or other resource people. Plan and encourage workshops at church conventions, conferences, retreats and in the curriculum of schools and colleges. For assistance, write to Lutheran Coalition on Southern Africa (3800 Bridge Ave., Cleveland, OH 44113) or Namibia Concerns.

4. Follow the coverage of Southern Africa in the news media. Write letters or call TV/radio/newspaper editors and newscasters, praising well done stories and protesting incorrect or biased coverage. Encourage more in-depth reporting. Offer resources. Suggest specials around significant events or anniversary dates.

Strategy #3
SUPPORT FOR THE NAMIBIAN CHURCH

A. Solidarity

Letters of encouragement to our Namibian sisters and brothers are a tremendous source of hope. Write directly to church leaders, assuring them:

- that you know of their struggle and are concerned;
- that you are praying for their safety and freedom;
- that you are spreading the word here in the U.S.;
- that you and others are urging the U.S. to work for U.N. supervised elections (UNSC Resolution 435) and freedom for Namibia.

Our letters are translated and read in many congregations, becoming a part of God's gift of hope to this people. Your letters will also be read by the South African security police. Such outside support serves to let South Africa know we are concerned and are not unaware of what is going on. These letters may decrease the chance that church leaders will be killed or imprisoned.

Church leaders' names and addresses:

Bishop Kleopas Dumeni
Evangelical Lutheran Ovambokavango Church
Onipa, Private Bag 2018
Ondangwa 9000
Namibia/South West Africa

Rev. Hendrik Frederik, President
Evangelical Luth. Church in SWA/Namibia
P.O. Box 5069, Windhoek 9000
Namibia/South West Africa

Dr. Abisaï Shejavali, Exec. Secretary
Council of Churches in Namibia
P.O. Box 57
Windhoek 9000
Namibia/South West Africa

Rev. Zephaniah Kameeta, Vice-President
Evangelical Luth. Church in SWA/Namibia
P.O. Box 5069, Windhoek 9000
Namibia/South West Africa

B. Material Aid

There are many critical needs for the Namibian people—both inside the country and for those in exile or in refugee camps. Suggestions for responding include:

1. Education is hard to come by for Namibians and is desperately needed. Consider raising money for Namibians and South Africans to study in the U.S. or in their own country. Work through ALC colleges or seminaries in your own area to coordinate or initiate efforts. Contact LWF, Namibia Concerns and ALC Division of World Mission and Inter-Church Cooperation (DWMIC) for information on already existing scholarship programs.

2. The Namibian churches attempt to provide high school education for a limited number of students. You, or your group, could provide the salary for one teacher at Oshigambo or Martin Luther High Schools.

3. Your congregation/women's group/Sunday School may wish to raise money or collect items (ie. books) needed in refugee camps or in the Namibian church. Used textbooks, especially mathematics, English, literature, and science, could be put to good use by Namibian children. Check with Namibia Concerns, and DWMIC for current material aid avenues and shipping information.

4. Especially in northern Namibia, daily warfare causes loss of life, damage to property, and widespread suffering. The Evangelical Lutheran Ovambakavango Church (ELOC) maintains a "Humanitarian Aid Fund" to aid children who have lost their parents, and persons whose crops or homes have been destroyed. Contributions to that fund are always needed.

5. In order to help people become more self-sufficient, the Lutheran churches have organized sewing classes. Sewing machines and sewing materials are a real need.

For information on these, or similar projects, contact Lutheran World Ministries (Office on World Communities, 360 Park Ave. South, New York, NY 10010) or Namibia Concerns (333 Wartburg Place, Dubuque, IA 52001).

Letters, phone calls, telegrams and personal visits to U.S. government officials are urgently needed. If the U.S. chooses to, it can bring pressure upon the South African government. Keep up on the issues in order to know what to write about.

Strategy #4
POLITICAL ADVOCACY

A. Issues to be addressed:

These issues are of primary concern in your letters and communications (as of summer, 1983).


2. Urge the removal of any precondition that links Cuban withdrawal from Angola with the implementation of UNSC Resolution 435.
3. Urge the U.S. to join U.N. efforts to impose economic sanctions against South Africa.

4. Express concern as a Christian (South Africa contends that people opposing apartheid are communist.)

5. Write a personal letter that is brief, courteous and specific, rather than a form letter.

6. Refer to resolutions and statements of your church (see "Apartheid: Statements and Actions of the ALC"). The ALC urges its members to support and work for both economic sanctions and implementation of UNSC Resolution 435.

B. People to contact in the U.S.

1. Write: The Honorable ____________:
   U.S. House of Representatives
   Washington, D.C. 20515
   Dear Representative ________________:

   The Honorable ________________:
   U.S. Senate
   Washington, D.C. 20510
   Dear Senator ________________:

   The President
   The White House
   Washington, D.C. 20500
   Dear Mr. President:

   The Honorable George Schultz
   Secretary of State
   Washington, D.C. 20520
   Dear Secretary Schultz:

   Ambassador Jeanne Kirkpatrick
   U.S. Representative to the U.N.
   799 United Nations Plaza, New York, NY 10017
   Dear Ambassador Kirkpatrick:

2. Wire: 20 word public opinion telegrams are available at reasonable rates through Western Union, (800) 257-2241.

3. Phone: Call the local office of your congressperson. A staff person will relay your message to Washington. Or call their Washington office. Capitol Switchboard: (202) 224-3121.

4. Meet: Arrange a meeting with your congressperson during a recess.

5. Members of the House Committee on Foreign Relations, Subcommittee on Africa:
   
   **Democrats**
   Howard Wolpe, Michigan
   George Crockett, Michigan
   Howard L. Berman, Calif.
   Ed Feighan, Ohio
   Harry Reid, Nevada
   Ted Weiss, New York

   **Republicans**
   Gerald Solomon, NY
   Olympia Snowe, Maine
   Ed Zschau, California

   Members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Subcommittee on Africa:

   **Republicans**
   Nancy Kassebaum, Kansas
   Jesse Helms, North Carolina
   Charles Mathias, Maryland

   **Democrats**
   Paul Tsongas, Mass.
   John Glenn, Ohio
   Christopher Dodd, Conn.

C. Communicating with South Africa

Write to the South African government and to the South African Ambassador.

1. Tell of your solidarity, love and concern for Namibian Christians, mentioning church leaders by name (to help insure their safety).

2. Communicate outrage regarding specific incidents, arrests, etc.

3. Send copies of your letters to your U.S. congressperson.

4. Addresses:
   - Prime Minister Pietr Botha
     Government Building
     Pretoria
     South Africa
     Dear Mr. Prime Minister:
   - Mr. B. G. Fourie
     Embassy of South Africa
     3051 Massachusetts Ave., N.W.
     Washington, D.C. 20008
     Dear Ambassador Fourie:
     (202) 232-4400

D. 1984 Elections

Raise Namibia, South Africa, and apartheid as 1984 campaign issues. Prepare questions for candidates. Write "letters to the editor" of your local newspapers.

Strategy #5:

**ECONOMIC PRESSURE**

The United States is one of the largest economic supporters of the apartheid system through our trade, investments and bank loans. Profit is the largest reason for U.S. support of the South African government. Money = Power. Applying economic pressure can help to break the back of the apartheid system. There are 3 major avenues for applying economic pressure.

A. Economic Sanctions

The U.S. continues to block U.N. efforts to impose economic sanctions against South Africa. (Disgraceful) Contact legislators, administration and our U.N. ambassador urging implementation of sanctions.

B. Divestment

There is a growing movement of universities, trade unions, cities, states and churches that are divesting from companies that do business in South Africa and from banks which loan to the South African government or to South African government related corporations. The ALC and the LCA are a part of this movement.

How to get involved:

1. Examine your individual, congregational and district investments and relationships with banks--and act accordingly.
2. Participate in efforts to get your state to adopt divestment legislation. To find out if divestment legislation is pending or will be introduced in your state, and for a listing of U.S. banks who loan to South Africa, contact:

American Committee on Africa (ACOA)
198 Broadway, New York, NY 10038 (212) 962-1210

3. Urge the ALC Board of Trustees to complete divestment (as voted at the 1980 general convention) in order to state publicly in a symbolic yet concrete way that the church will not profit from the apartheid system. Write to:

President David W. Preus
422 South Fifth Street
Minneapolis, MN 55415

Rev. David Rokke, Executive Secretary
Board of Trustees, The American Lutheran Church
422 S. Fifth Street, Minneapolis, MN 55414

C. Boycotts

ALC members are urged to refrain from economic support of South Africa in the following ways:

1. Refrain from purchase (boycott) of South African exports ie. gold, diamonds, wines. Three fourths of the world's diamonds are mined by South Africa. The U.S. is the world's largest buyer of Krugerrands (South Africa gold coins). The sale of Krugerrands is one of the economic bases of the apartheid system.

2. Choose not to attend South Africa entertainment and sports groups or U.S. groups who perform or compete in South Africa.

3. Choose not to travel to South Africa as tourists.

D. Organize and Apply Economic Pressure

For more information and assistance in organizing and applying economic pressure contact:

Lutheran Coalition on Southern Africa (3900 Bridge Ave., Cleveland, OH 44118)
Office of Church and Society (The ALC, 422 S. Fifth Street, Minneapolis, MN 55415)
Washington Office on Africa (110 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, DC 20002)
American Friends Service Committee (1501 Cherry Street, Philadelphia, PA 19102)

Strategy #6:
THE ALC'S COMMITMENT

We have made a commitment through general convention and Church Council action to work against apartheid and for independence for Namibia. In order to join in ministry with and through our church structures:

1. Study "Apartheid: Statements and Actions of the ALC" to learn what the actions, promises and commitments are that we have made as a church.

2. Then, work together with the national and district church structures to help carry through these commitments. Some suggestions:

a. Voice your support of these actions and promises, and urge a strategy for their implementation. Write to the following ALC units: Office of the President, Division for World Mission and Inter-Church Cooperation (DWMIC), Division for Life and Mission in the Congregation (DLMC), American Lutheran Church Women (ALCW), Luther League, Office of Church and Society (OCS), (422 S. Fifth St., Minneapolis, MN 55415)

b. Pray for persons and agencies involved in this issue.

c. Urge church leaders to continue to pressure the U.S. government to work to implement UNSC Resolution 435 without amendments or preconditions. Also urge that economic sanctions against South Africa be implemented.

d. Urge the Board of Trustees to complete divestment quickly.

e. Urge the church to provide avenues for material aid to refugee camps and to the Namibian church.

f. The American Lutheran Church Women (ALCW) has published a study guide titled: "Black Women Under Apartheid". Use this resource booklet. Contribute to and participate in the ALCW "Woman to Woman" exchange program.

g. Write to the Lutheran Standard with your views and urge continued and expanded coverage of the plight of Namibian Christians.

This resource prepared by
Susie Burchfield for: Namibia Concerns,
333 Wartburg Place, Dubuque, IA 52001
Extra copies of Strategies for Action available at $5.00 per hundred.