

International Federation of Christian Churches, Represented by Pastor Ray McCauley. East London, 18 November 1999. [disclaimer](#)

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PASTOR McCAULEY: Thank you very much Archbishop, I'd like to introduce - on my left is Pastor Mosa, the Vice President of the International Federation of Christian Churches, Ron Steele, one of our Pastors, Pastor Chris Lodewyk, who is the General Secretary of our organisation.

CHAIRPERSON: Thank you very much. Gentlemen, you are welcome, will you please stand? I assume that all four of you will at one time or another speak, so - Bongani Finca please?

RHEMA BIBLE CHURCH/IFCC: (sworn states)

CHAIRPERSON: Thank you. Right you are Ray?

PASTOR McCAULEY: Commissioners, religious leaders, special guest, ladies and gentlemen, I must say that this is a first for me - that half the congregation left before I even started preaching, normally they go about halfway through.

I'm here today in my capacity as President of the International Federation of Christian Churches, it's an organisation that came into being in 1984 and consists in excess of 400 churches countrywide. Rhema, my own church, is a member of the organisation and incidentally also this church which is hosting these TRC hearings. We also have close links with the larger Pentecostal and Evangelical fraternity in South Africa and the South African Council of Churches.

We're often boastful about our spirituality but today we come in humility, as we have to confess our shortcomings of the past. It's sad to admit that we often hid behind our so-called spirituality and ignored the stark reality of the dark events of the apartheid age. And as Pastors we delighted in preaching and teaching about the good samaritan and pointing the finger at others, while all the time we should have applied the lesson to ourselves.

Paralysed by false respect for government authority, most of your White charismatic and Pentecostal church followers were simply spectators to the horrible acts of abuse to humanity in this country. When we should have been comforting and praying for those in desperate need, we sometimes joined the cheering crowds and urged on the gladiators who in this modern day was a ruthless security force machine that crushed any foe that dared to shout freedom.

We must confess that many of us allowed ourselves to be swayed and manipulated by a government propoganda machine that tried to portray freedom fighters as the enemies of the church and of Christianity in particular. We, the White members of

our leadership of our charismatic and Pentecostal churches, sincerely seek the forgiveness of our Black counterparts within the church.

Many of these Black leaders tried to show us the error of our ways but pride and often a sense of superiority blinded us. Instead of hearing the cry of their hearts, we rebuked, offended, and even at times ostracised them for their honest efforts to speak truth in love.

We seek the forgiveness of our colleagues within the larger religious community for the times when we lacked the courage and conviction to walk alongside you in your demands for justice and righteousness. We seek the forgiveness of those who are willing to bear the scars of rejection, humiliation, persecution for their campaign to isolate through sanctions, a minority government and by this peaceful means bring into submission. Forgive us for our short-sightedness and selfishness.

The tragedy of this ineptness and sometimes callous attitude of hundreds of thousands of Christians will forever stain the history of Christianity in South Africa. The guilt of many South African Christians is even greater because of the laws of apartheid and the subsequent abuse of power by a security system. And a police force that at times seemed to come from the pit of hell, was aimed at fellow Christians.

Like the madness of Northern Ireland, we saw Christians persecuting Christians in Southern Africa. Men who sang the same hymns and said the same prayers and belonged even to the same denominations became mortal enemies outside of the sanctuary of God but God's seen it all, not one of those evil deeds of the apartheid era has gone unnoticed.

We know that many Christians within our constituency still to this day, find it hard to accept any responsibility for what happened in the past. In 1990, when I attended the historic Rustenberg Conference, I was challenged by the willingness of Professor Willie Jonker to make a bold confession on behalf of the Dutch Reformed Church. This forced me to consider the part that our constituency had played during the apartheid era and it was in a hotel room at Rustenberg, that I got together with other leaders of Pentecostal denominations.

I felt this was an important moment in time for us to confess our failure, to oppose apartheid and take the challenge to our various constituencies. Unfortunately, we could not all agree that it was the right time for confession and only one other grouping joined me in making a confession at Rustenberg.

As much as the Commission's work has to do with the past, I'd like to read that confession made in Rustenberg just over seven years ago. It reads:

"Despite our short history we recognise our guilt in that for some of us our opposition to apartheid did not go far enough, nor was it effectively expressed. While others of

us adapted a so-called: "neutral stance" which resulted in complicity in the system. Our statements and conviction were often not adequately put in practical action and as a result we were often silent when our sisters and brothers were suffering persecution.

We confess that our silence in this area was in fact sin and that our failure to act decisively against all forms of apartheid made us party to and inhuman political ideology. We therefore confess our failure and repent of our sin, declare our complete rejection of all forms of racism and evil unjust system of apartheid. Please, forgive us.

Further, as part of the family of God, we declare our resolve to play an active and positive role in ensuring that all people receive an equal opportunity to take part in all forms of political, economical and social life in the post-apartheid South Africa. Please, forgive us".

Looking back at those words, I thank God for his generous grace for helping me and the leadership to make that confession then. The reason why I say this is because it cleared the way for us to go forward. I'm not for one moment suggesting that it absolved our people of personal responsibility because confession and repentance is a very personal matter but it helped me to help others to not only face the past but to have a positive vision for the future.

Much of the work of this Commission and the majority of the presentations and hearings, have dealt with the problems of the past but I think we would be naive to believe that these hearings have achieved everything that we may have prayed for and hoped for. In fact, I believe that the TRC is the starting point for true reconciliation in our country.

Confession of past sins - whether of commission or omission, may bring pardon but confession is not complete without two vital components. They are powerful theological words which religion knows well, they are repentance and forgiveness. The act of confession does not mean that the person has really repented, confession is a starting point to a process that should lead to lasting reconciliation. This is why repentance is so important in the vocabulary of the church, it is through the act of repentance that we see the fruit of our confession.

The thief no longer steals the lie, tells the truth, the cheat becomes an honest person. Repentance means a complete turn around. Sadly, though the repentance is not forthcoming because the confession has not been what we in the church would recognise as a confession of sin. Many people in our society are prepared to admit that apartheid was a mistake and offer a half-hearted apology for the past.

That sort of confession in my mind, is cheap and it fails to get to grips with a true confession which leads to repentance and that in turn leads to meaningful forgiveness, followed by restitution and reconciliation. There is no easy road to reconciliation, in fact we may be deceiving ourselves to even talk about reconciliation for apartheid has been so successful in keeping generations of South Africans apart, that only now are we setting off on a journey to truly find each other.

The road to true reconciliation is signposted with confession of your past sins, repentance, forgiveness and restitution. One of the most beautiful pictures of this is found in the Bible account of Jesus and the Tax Collector, Zakeus. It is a story of an extraordinary conversion by a man who held a privileged position in society, he was wealthy - and if he was alive today, most probably will look like Danny de Vito, but from the story we gather that he abused the trust and authority he had in society.

When he was confronted with his sin he repented and the outcome was a voluntary offer to make restitution to those he had taken advantage of. The evidence of a sincere confession and repentance should always be followed by a desire to make amends wherever possible. We would be doing an injustice to the TRC if we simply remembered it as an event that only exposed the evil of our past. Without this necessary exposure of the past, we would have built our future on lies, deceptions and half truths.

It may be that we have not brought out all the truth of the past but there can be no denying that all South Africans now know that the history of apartheid is not golden but rather that our past is clouded with tragedy and shame. But as dark as our past may have been, I believe we now have a sufficient foundation of truth on which to build a future that will never allow an ideology to rob millions of it's citizens of it's basic human rights.

I think it's most fitting that the churchmen have been given this opportunity to speak at the TRC because I believe that we, more than the politicians or the business world, have the spiritual capacity to rebuild the moral fibre and the dignity of the people in our nation. Christianity, despite the failings of it's followers, offers new beginnings, new life and it's faith that believes in redemption. It is a faith that cares and has compassion for human kind, it is a faith that inspired hymns like: "Amazing Grace", that gave us the words: "Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound, save the wretch like me. Once I was lost but now I'm found, once I was blind but now I see".

To many of us in this room today the transition to our fledging democracy has been a divine miracle, it has been amazing grace that saved our land from civil war. The shameful wretch of apartheid is behind us, we are finding our way and the scales are falling from our eyes day by day. I have no hesitation in saying that only God's amazing grace is going to carry us further on the road to reconciliation where dignity and prosperity will be freely available to all our people.

A political revolution has taken place in our nation. What I plead for today is that, out of the pain and suffering - cauldron of the TRC hearings, we begin a moral revolution that will break the curse of poverty and pain. A moral revolution that will eradicate corruption from business, government and the services of law and order. Our own President stated that approximately 80% of the police are some way involved in corruption.

A moral revolution that will teach young people right from wrong, a moral revolution that will cherish human life and dignity, a moral revolution that will treat all South Africans - young and old, as valuable and precious in the sight of God. Deliverance from the yoke of apartheid has brought freedom, now we need to honour that freedom by acknowledging that it comes to us with a high price.

South Africans' road to true reconciliation means a new appreciation of freedom. Countless horror stories have been told to the TRC of young men and young women, of mothers and fathers who died and suffered to bring down apartheid. It is a present tragedy that the blood spilt by so many to win freedom, is being trampled underfoot by criminals who terrorise our streets and by white collar crooks who salt away the wealth of our land by devious and unethical business tricks.

And we can point a finger at government departments as well but I'm ready to acknowledge that the church too has its responsibility to challenge its congregations to live lives worthy of their faith. It was Jesus who said: "Why do you look at the speck of the sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you save your brother? - let me take the speck out of your own eye, when all the time there is a plank in your eye. You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye"

So I think it is only right that the church has been called to make its confessions here at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and I'm also saying that we as Christians who believe in the higher laws of God, must set the tone and the value system for reconciliation to become a reality within our congregations. There is no place for prejudice and racism within our sanctuaries. The Bible may have been abused in the past to bolster a manmade ideology but let's get back to what God intended for his people and that is peace, joy and ...[indistinct] in the Spirit of Christ.

Church leaders - especially those who still have predominantly White congregations, are going to have to challenge their people to be peacemakers, to stretch out their hand of fellowship. The church has so much to offer South Africa and it must not fail in its God-given opportunity to share the love, compassion and healing of the gospel.

This is going to have to mean a lot more than just loving - having a loving sermon. As I said earlier: "Heartfelt confession will bring forth truth repentance which in turn produces a new outlook and a changed attitude", this must result in restitution and

good works. Faith says the Bible is dead without works. When we use faith and works together, we have a dynamic force for change and for good in our nation.

Restitution or reparation has to happen. There is hardly a White person in South Africa who did not benefit in some way - no matter how small, from apartheid. We benefited in the field of education, business, sports, arts and in everyday life by having better bus services, train services - and I'm the first to admit today, that I got benefits from the apartheid system.

Maybe I didn't get it deliberately to mistreat or deprive others but Black people certainly never enjoyed the rights and privileges that I did when I was at school and when I was a young man. So we have to face the challenge of restitution head-on. The issue of land acquisition is key to giving people a sense of dignity and belonging, and my sincere prayer is, that those church organisations that hold unused property will generously show the hand of true christian charity - this is could be - in some areas, a wonderful example of restitution.

For younger organisations like the one I lead, the challenge is to give back something to our communities and that is not hard to do if there is a willing heart and a willing spirit. The poor are all around us, homeless people are dumped on the pavements and street children wander aimless through our cities' streets - these are all opportunities for restitution.

And because of the past failures in the country, we who believe in the christian faith carry a heavy responsibility to be the shepherds that lead South Africa into the pastures of peace and prosperity. And I personally have a dream of a nation that will hold it's head high, where the dignity and life of each individual regardless of colour, is recognised as a sacred gift from God Almighty.

In closing, we commit our churches and our congregations to boldly walk the road of reconciliation, to build a nation under God that will be a growing testimony to the international world. We applaud the TRC and it's dedicated members for taking on this most difficult task of opening up the soul of the nation, but we believe that the people of faith with loving and caring hearts, will soothe the wounds and help dry the tears of our nation.

I have a very short addendum which will take another minute or two and I'm nearly on time - blessed are the short-winded. This section is added to our statement to give some practical idea of what steps our churches are taking to make restitution in a way that adds value to the lives of those who are marginalised for so many years.

One of these areas - we feel that our network of churches can make a really significant contribution to the upliftment of the less privileged, is in the area of housing. Besides trying to help the homeless and the poorest of the poor with soup kitchens, literacy classes and clinics, we are gearing up for a pilot project in Gauteng where we'll work with the local government authorities to provide a housing estate.

The concept is simply to enter into a partnership with local authorities who will provide land and services while we as the church, will raise the finances for the houses. Besides this, we will call on our congregational members to provide their skills on all the various areas of building and work with the local people on a self-help scheme that will see people building their own homes and owning them.

This project has been on ice for two years because of the difficulties that the local authorities had in getting suitable land for development, but we believe that this will be able to start with a pilot scheme in Gauteng next year. Once this pilot scheme has proved itself we plan to roll out the project across the country to other cities, towns where they have churches and where our partnerships can be established with local authorities.

Part of this scheme is also to provide small business opportunities nearby the proposed estates, so that the areas will be economically sustainable. We believe this project - using the volunteer expertise available among the privileged members of our congregations, will make a valuable contribution to uplifting our local communities and of giving Whites in particular a practical way of making restitution.

In the meanwhile, some of our churches have come to the rescue of some homeless groups which have been evicted and have offered shelter on their own property. The measures of course are only short-term and our main focus is on providing permanent homes. Besides our proposed housing scheme, some of our churches in the cities are involved with street children.

In Johannesburg we have the establishment of an orphanage which already is producing wonderful results among the children who were once lost in the streets of Hillbrow. In Mpumalanga Province our churches have been engaged in a water scheme and has seen the establishment of clean fresh water tanks. Boreholes are now available in many villages and this has helped to reduce - in our small way, sickness in those areas which previously came from using polluted water.

Like many, many other churches that have done more than us, we are continually engaged in running literacy classes, doing our best to help in the clinics and particularly getting involved in the informal settlements. We believe that our churches can and will make a substantial contribution to improving the living standards of the poor and the homeless. It is the least we can do for those who are deprived of so much by our failures and sins in the past.

CHAIRPERSON: Thank you very much. I don't know whether there is anything your colleagues ...[intervention]

PASTOR McCAULEY: No.

CHAIRPERSON: No, you're not going to add? Thank you very much indeed. Doctor Mgojo?

DR MGOJO: Thank you Mr Chairperson, I just want to commend this presentation. First it starts with confession and it goes deep in the confession, so that by the time the plan is given or the programme, one has already been touched by the sincere confession of the church. We just thank the Rustenberg Conference which became ...[indistinct] a damascus road for you for the experience.

And we thank you too for the kind of programme which you have suggested here, it is not something which is abstract, it's there. I just have one question. In the Black communities - especially in these townships and rural areas, you find that sometimes the signs of the kingdom are missing.

You know that the gospel has to plan certain signs of the kingdoms of hope and I'm saying this because I find that most of the Black communities find it to have been very hard to have the worship in places - the churches where they can assemble together and share this kind of experience. What provision is going to be made by your church to address this as a type of restitution during this time?

PASTOR McCAULEY: Pastor Mosa, would you like to just put input on the changes that we've made and the direction we're going?

PASTOR MOSA: One of the things we've had a problem with in trying to get land and whatever - you know sites in places, is that we come in as churches, we don't have funds and particularly in the past, we didn't have connections with the right people and so on and IFCC has come in to put us in contact with the right people. And where necessary, if they were to stand in as guarantors to the fact that we would be able to execute what we promised to do, they would come in.

Right now, coming from Soweto ourselves - our church being in Soweto, recently we were able to get some piece of ground through the help that we have received - not necessarily financial help, but it was in terms of them putting us in contact with the right people and so on.

PASTOR McCAULEY: Could I just answer that a little bit better and say that from our past history, we were very close in losing our Black constituency and nearly becoming all White at one time - not our local church, but the organisation. On the basis of the Rustenberg, Boipatong and Bisho incidents, my eyes were opened dramatically on the role of the church on a social gospel.

We then began to address these very things that you're talking about and it's a process now that's starting to come into being on the basis of addressing rural areas. How can we get a redistribution programme going from our White churches that have finances, to help the ones who do not have any?

We're in the process right now of doing very practical things, we're restructured everything, we have a broad leadership of our communities where there are respected

people - where we never had that before, and leadership that will bring true redistribution of those finances.

And we at this time think that's a major, major way of restitution in our own organisation with our own people, is to make sure that the ones who have had the opportunity to have more finances than the others, to help them now achieve the goals that they have to.

DR MGOJO: The last question Sir, is on the leadership. Is there any attempt made by your church to reflect a type of leadership which would reflect our situation as it is in South Africa - if I finish, I mean racially and gender?

PASTOR LODEWYK: Chairperson, the way has been paved - a few years ago, for every single person as an ordained minister, to stand for any available post. We have a national executive of 24 people of which the majority is Black, including ordained woman ministers up to the highest level.

We have a number of ordained ministers throughout our churches serving right up to executive level, so we have moved in that direction. However, we will endeavour to ensure that a true reflection of the nation is shown within all of the bodies of the IFCC.

CHAIRPERSON: Thank you. Thomas?

DR MANTHATA: Sorry, I am just adding to the list of what you are doing which are very important, they're quite laudable. I am saying: "Can you please consider putting up schools for formal education because in that regard, you are teaching the communities how to fish"? The moral values at this stage which are in tatters, can best be restored when we begin to teach the youth at an early age and let them grow up with sound moral standards, thank you.

PASTOR McCAULEY: A good illustration - and I agree with you 100%, is someone once said: "If you went into the camps where the people have no housing or anything - the squatter areas, and you told them that if the crime did not decrease then we would have a real problem with our economy", that would be the same as telling your children not to kick or hit the neighbours when they visit you.

So a moral revolution I believe, is the major strength and force that we have to look at as the role of the church and religious leaders in the future and one of them is education. And how we see the moral revolution taking place is in the format of a very strong educational programme for the disadvantaged and those who do not have the opportunity to have the same schooling as others do in other areas. And we take to heart what you've said, and we realise that is a major, major challenge for us to put into substance.

CHAIRPERSON: Bongani?

REV FINCA: Thank you. Pastor Ray, your submission has dealt very practically with the issue of restitution, in fact I started wondering whether I'm listening to a Pentecostal person because normally you deal with the matters in a very spiritual level and very practically you have dealt with this matter.

I would like to just put a question that I put through to Chief Rabbi Harris yesterday. In our Business Hearing there was a practical proposal of how we could deal with the fact that this country happens to have the biggest gap between those who have and have in abundance and those who are having very little, in fact subsist from day to day. The proposal was that of a wealth tax which was put through by Professor Terblanche, I would like to hear what your comment is personally - if not representatively, of the group you are representing.

PASTOR McCAULEY: I've been very frustrated in addressing and visiting with wealthy business on the basis that I was hoping that would come forth voluntarily, that we shouldn't have to have gone to the place now where we are going to enforce certain things. I think that it is very important that we do that and I wish that certain people would take that initiative without anybody making them do it.

One of the reservations that have come up - which I believe then we should put conditionally into that, is that we need to make sure that the funds are distributed to those who need to get it - I don't want the gravy to get any thicker if it is in anyway there, so I think we'll have to build in some conditions.

CHAIRPERSON: Thank you very much. I think Chief Rabbi Harris will be glad to have you join his ...[indistinct] team because he says he's had a bit of a thing since he testified in favour, so you'll have to put on your tin hat. But I just want to add again my own deep appreciation.

I remember how we walked together in Boipatong after the massacre there and how you assisted church leaders to have a chartered plane when we were trying to douse fires in all sorts of places - flying to Ulundi and rushing from there elsewhere, and I just want to pay a very warm tribute to the fact that I have seen how God has worked in and through you, as a changed person with eyes that could now see.

Some of the letters that you wrote to the then government, I wouldn't have written - I mean, I was quite surprised at the language that you used. I just think that we need to give thanks that God is so good to us, God really loves us here in South Africa and we are sometimes not aware of it.

God loves us in a way that is quite extraordinary because when you think of the hell that we nearly experienced in 1994 - people forget easily, this country nearly went up in flames. And we forget that we sighed with relief when we heard that the IFP was coming into the elections and that happened just on - I mean, we were on the verge of total catastrophe and we don't give enough thanks to God and that God said: "I will show you a new thing".

And we must make ourselves available to God and let this miracle happen because God wants it to happen also - not just for South Africa, God wants it to happen for other parts of the world.

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