

# Is This Justice: A Christian Statement on South Africa - July 1987

Can Christians support South African government policy?

The most recent election in South Africa saw a marked swing of the white electorate to the right. Undoubtedly much of this was caused by the government playing on the fear of the white minority — fear of communist-inspired domination by blacks, of continued African National Congress (ANC) violence.

## Lost dignity

For all its vain boasts of Christian standards, it is a government that continues to withhold from the (black) majority the freedoms and dignity enjoyed in true democracies. Through the Group Areas Act, coloureds, Asians and blacks are forbidden to live in white areas. In the weeks preceding the election hundreds of people were informed that they would have to move into segregated housing districts. Blacks in South Africa are denied parliamentary representation. The prosperous white minority support this racist government's domination of the deprived, and economically disadvantaged.

## Confused church

The NGK Dutch Reformed Church recently called for all its churches to open their doors to people of every race. This has provoked a serious split with a significant number of churches continuing to refuse blacks or coloureds into their services. This is a complete denial of the message of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Many people defensively support these injustices by pointing to the one-party communist dictatorships of other African countries and to the undeniable higher standard of living for blacks in South Africa. It's as though the oppression, greed and injustices of others somehow justifies their behaviour, which is blatantly unjust.

## Taking a stand

It's time for Christians of all races in South Africa to make their voice heard.

- We cannot accept in the church such injustices.
- We cannot accept in the nation of God a Group Areas Act.
- We cannot tolerate segregation in the church of Jesus Christ.
- We will not support or excuse white supremacy to the loss of the dignity of any man.

- As long as these gross injustices continue, it is nonsensical to ask God to save the nation from violence or economic collapse. Such injustices cannot be excused, even though South Africa has more Bibles and greater church attendances than most other countries.

### **Pray for change**

The Word of God is clear: 'He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and for ever' (Isaiah 9:6-7). A people cannot be righteous while being unjust.

It's time to stop excusing the government, supporting its policies, or praying for God's blessing on it. We need rather to pray and work for long overdue legislative change.

Meanwhile the church must be seen as a prophetic community pointing the way forward to a better, stronger, safer, more just South Africa, by being what we really are: one family, one nation, espousing one faith under the God and Father of us all — a just and righteous people of the kingdom.