

Sizwe

-South African News-

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Editorial

Sizwe is now up to its third edition which I'm sure must give it veteran status! Such an auspicious occasion gives me an opportunity to outline what I hope to achieve by this type of newsletter.

In essence, I hope to educate and challenge Australians by presenting the "real" South Africa as I am experiencing it. That means I want to show you the issues which are on my mind, but I want to report those issues as accurately as possible so that you may safely quote any of my facts and figures.

Consequently, though I write from a personal perspective, I aim to report rather than editorialise.

Of special interest to myself (and most of you I imagine) will be where the gospel fits into the situation here. That's a big field to grapple with - how is it possible that a society so influenced by Christianity was lead by the church into Apartheid? What role is the church playing in reversing that situation? What does it mean to be a Christian for those caught in poverty and violence? How can the Gospel be presented in a relevant way to the various cultures here?

In Aus-Watch I list virtually all news stories which I see in the South African media (except for sporting results). I probably won't keep that up much longer since there's too much else begging to be included in the two pages. But I hope you've noticed a couple of things -

First, you probably immediately recognised that if a typical South African reads such an untypical selection of news stories about Aus, then their view of Aus would be pretty warped. But the situation is the same in the other direction too - how reasonable is it to form views on SA if the only source of information available to you is the Australian media.

Second, the paucity of detailed reporting here limits my knowledge of recent events in Aus. It would be kind if you would keep me up to date with Australian events in your letters.

Lastly, please distribute these personal ravings to anyone else with interests in SA. (Backissues are now available on request at a special discount rate!)

Kwasizabantu

Several weeks ago I visited Kwasizabantu mission in rural

Natal. This is one of the major independent churches amongst the Zulus. It voices a clear evangelistic call and stands fairly and squarely in the politically conservative camp. The recent "Kwasizabantu Affirmation" proclaims good Evangelical doctrine and rejects New Age, racism, violence, abortion, evolution, and humanism. From this, one suspects they follow a Reconstructionist theology along the lines of the Logos Foundation, the Moral Majority and Fred Nile's Call to Australia Party.

The mission was founded in ??? by a German family. Their centre has now grown into a huge complex which includes a conference centre, free short term housing and counselling to anyone in need, kitchens capable of feeding an army, and a massive church to seat 10,000!

On an average Sunday you may find 1,000 attending the morning service, but there are frequent conferences and special functions which attract far more. The Sunday on which I attended was the start of a conference on the role of youth in today's world, and the church was totally full. That may have had something to do with the fact that the Hon. Chief Dr M.G. Buthelezi was the guest speaker, which leads me to the next item ...

Buthelezi

I was surprised to find myself given a yellow sticker when I arrived at Kwasizabantu, apparently indicating that I was a special guest. As such I was seated near the front as Buthelezi gave his speech.

“I come to you as your fellow Christian”, he said “who has devoted his live to the political and economic upliftment of my people.” Although he threw in a few Biblical quotes, his speech was primarily political. He spoke strongly against violence and said that it was Christ “who brought sanity and love where there was hatred and fear”.

If this speech was all I knew about Buthelezi I would be quite a fan.

Not only did a yellow sticker entitle me to a seat near the front, but also guaranteed entrance to the special guests’ dinning room! And there, with heart a-flutter, I asked to be introduced to the man himself.

He gave a warm smile (as politicians are well trained to do) and spoke lightly of our unpleasant Foreign Minister. (Three cheers for Gareth Evans!)

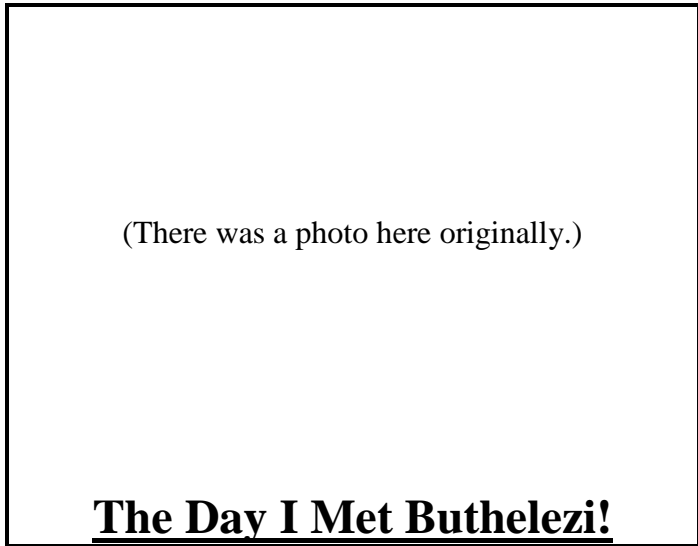
The title “the Hon. Chief Dr M.G. Buthelezi” is somewhat anomalous. Everyone agrees on the “Buthelezi” part, but the rest is a source of several confusions.

First, the “M.G.” stands for “Mangosuthu Gatsha”. You may hear him called “Gatsha”, but in

recent years he has preferred “Mangosuthu”.

Second, educationally, Buthelezi has completed only a B.A. However, he has been presented with three honorary doctorates (from the University of Zululand, Tampa University in Florida and Boston University).

Third, the accuracy of the appellation “Chief” may be debated. If you read *favourable* biographies such as Ben Temkin’s “Gatsha Buthelezi: Zulu statesman”, you find that Buthelezi is a hereditary leader of



the Zulu people, a direct descendant of King Cethswayo and that Buthelezi’s have commonly held the post of senior adviser to the King.

[It should be noted that the KwaZulu constitution acknowledges King Goodwill Zwelithini as monarch. However, his constitutional power is restricted to ceremonial occasions: in all other situations the Chief Minister (ie Buthelezi) has precedence.]

But if you read reports *antagonistic* to Buthelezi, such as

Mzala’a controversial biography “Gatsha Buthelezi: Chief with a double agenda”, you find that only one other Buthelezi has ever been senior adviser to the King. Buthelezi is not the senior prince and only holds the position of senior adviser to the King because of his position in the government.

This brings us to “the Hon”. It is true that Buthelezi is Chief Minister of the KwaZulu government, and hence may be called “the Honourable” (to more or less the same degree as any MP may be called “honourable”!).

However, he holds this position neither by hereditary right nor by electoral right. Rather, he was appointed by Pretoria (ie the White South African government) in 1970.

In order to explain Buthelezi’s position properly, I’ll need to explain the two organisations he represents: the KwaZulu government and the Inkatha Freedom Party.

KwaZulu

KwaZulu (literally “the place of the Zulus”) is a bantustan (a Black homeland) which was created by Pretoria and given internal self-government.

Buthelezi has always seen KwaZulu as part of South Africa and has rejected the White government’s intention of giving it full independence. However, although he has opposed this key

Apartheid principle, he has nevertheless gained as much as possible from the system which supports him.

Geographically, KwaZulu is comprised of 26 districts scattered throughout the state of Natal. Hence, it is common to talk about Natal/KwaZulu as though it were one region (and indeed, that will probably become true, sometime).

KwaZulu has a population of almost five million - the largest of any bantustan. It has its own parliament, police force, education system, health department etc, though economically it is still part of SA.

Inkatha

In 1970, at the same time as the KwaZulu bantustan was formed, Buthelezi founded the Inkatha Cultural Movement. In 1990, after President de Klerk opened the way for multi-racial political parties, the Cultural Movement was changed to the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP).

The word "Inkatha" (in-kart-ha) comes from the piece of padding women place on their heads when carrying heavy loads. ("Heavy loads" is an understatement - I've seen teenage girls carrying 20 litres of water on their heads and one older lady carrying a huge iron cooking pot which took two men to lift!) The symbolism of this name is that the IFP helps to reduce the pain of a heavy burden.

It is difficult to keep a clear distinction between Inkatha and the KwaZulu government. Buthelezi is the head of both and

most members of one are also members of the other. Inkatha is the only political party in KwaZulu. The extent to which the KwaZulu police are used as one of Inkatha's political weapons is much debated.

Funding Scandal

A frequent accusation against Inkatha is that they are supported by government funding. The accusers claim that Inkatha is manipulated by the White government as a way of opposing the ANC and hence preventing the Black population from forming a united front.

Certainly Pretoria finances the KwaZulu government (to the tune of R1.8 billion in 1989/90), but it has consistently denied giving any money for Inkatha's political activities.

Recently, however, a leak from the police has proved that R250,000 was given in mid-1990 to help pay for two Inkatha political rallies. This has been admitted by the Minister for Law and Order, Mr Adrian Vlok, but Buthelezi has denied any knowledge of it.

The ANC have been calling for Vlok's resignation for other reasons for a long time and now other groups have added their weight to the call. However, resignations or sackings from cabinet are virtually unknown in SA and it is likely that Vlok will be disgraced yet remain in his position.

Inkatha on the other hand has found a scapegoat in Buthelezi's assistant Zakhele Khumalo. Khumalo admits to receiving the

money and says that he didn't tell Buthelezi about it because he knew Buthelezi would not accept money knowingly from the government.

In such a summarised form, I probably haven't conveyed the significance of this issue. It constitutes yet another proof of the White government's underhandedness and diminishes their credibility with all parties. It not only casts doubts on the integrity of Inkatha but of Buthelezi personally. Consequently, it will alter the terms under which negotiations are possible.

In particular, it will again be asked "Why should Buthelezi have a place at the negotiating table?" If he is a government appointed leader of a government instituted and financed bantustan and head of a government supported political party, what claim does he have to represent the Zulu people? Some say that the only reason why Buthelezi has gained national attention is Inkatha's involvement in the inter-black violence (but I'll comment further on that in the next issue).

Aus-Watch

Natal witness 20 June

(Front page) Melbourne football club Williamstown United sign a 4 year sponsorship deal with Spellbound - a new brothel!

Natal Witness 27 June

The rate at which Australian men die from lung cancer is declining, which shows that the anti-smoking campaign is working.

Natal Witness 6 July

Liquidator appointed to Alan Bond's Dallhold Investments

Darwin may soon open a brewery. NT annual beer consumption per capita is 260 litres, compared with the Aus average of 120.

Natal Witness 17 July

Lindy and Michael Chamberlain to receive \$19,000 damages

Normie Rowe and Ron Casey have a scuffle on the Ray Martin Show (including a photo).

The Labour Party proposes to declare Aus a republic before the centenary of Federation. However, a Morgan Gallup poll showed that 56% of Australians prefer to live under the monarchy.

Natal Witness 22 July

Major oil spill off the coast of Perth.

Natal Witness 24 July

An unfortunate Sydney bank robber was crushed to death by a security screen while trying to jump over the counter.

Natal Witness 25 July

(Front page) Nurses in a Tasmanian psychiatric hospital say they have been terrorised by a ghost who threw one male nurse against a wall.