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Botha Bids Prayerful Support for South African Situation

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breakfast meeting on Monday morning. Based on his six months in Washington as a representative for the Association, he called for the following actions: "Organizationally, we need to take our vision, our research, and our message of public justice to legislators and decision makers. We must simultaneously inform our constituency about the issues. . . . As we grow, our staff and research associates should spread the news of our organization and explain its basis, plans and achievements. Finally, we must be directly involved on the Washington

scene. . . . We can research, lobby, educate, cooperate with other groups and promote public justice in our time; this is our mandate. . . ."

Conferees then attended seminars on moving ahead as a Christian community. After a final challenge by Dr. James Skillen, the conference ended. The conference, but not the work. Those attending had been called like the Old Testament Israelites to sound the trumpet of jubilee throughout the land—the trumpet of a jubilee for justice.

Carol Van Klompenburg

Botha Bids Prayerful Support for South African Situation

During her two-day stay on Dordt's campus, Dr. Elaine Botha gave three public lectures and three class lectures, as well as various interviews. Miss Botha is Doctor of Interfaculty Philosophy at Potchefstroom University in South Africa. It is understandable therefore, that one of her talks was entitled "Philosophy and the Special Sciences." In this talk she pointed out that it is the task of philosophy to integrate the whole body of knowledge, a

task for which the cooperation of the special scientists is indispensable. Dr. Botha emphasized that a theoretical articulation of our Christian world and life view is necessary to show the unity of all knowledge.

In her speech, "School and Society," Dr. Botha claimed that the Christian school needs an academic creed, just as the church has a creed. This creed should state the principles which are to determine the norms for

academic activity and the goals toward which the school should strive. Dr. Botha emphasized that the Christian school can neither accommodate itself to a "sick society," nor be radically opposed to that society. The Christian school has to speak out on societal problems and engage in "academic foolishness" for the sake of Christ.

Dr. Botha's other speeches included "The Christian Philosophy of Dr. Stoker" and "Christianity in South Africa." Receiving special attention was her moving address entitled, "Conflict and Reconciliation in South Africa."

In this speech she related some of the significant events that took place during the Pan-African Christian Leadership Assembly held in Nairobi in December, 1976. Among the 900 delegates, which included about a hundred whites, there was an 80-member South African delegation, of which 12 were Afrikaner Christians and 13 were English Christians. The South African Christians had had no real contact with each other, and, since the conference was not going all that well, black African Christians said to the South African delegates, "Why don't you at least get together and start talking about the problems in your country?" The ensuing meeting was "one of the most awful experiences" of Dr. Botha's life. For three hours black and white Christians blamed each other for their problems, and the meeting ended in "shambles and confusion." It seemed as if a revolutionary bloodbath would be inevitable.

It was Sunday, and that evening a white South African minister had to preach the sermon at the assembly worship service. What could he say? His audience knew what had happened among the South African delegates. Reverend Bosch, said Botha, delivered a simple sermon. His theme was

Christianity as an alternative community in Africa today. Botha reported the essence of the sermon as follows: "We, as the body of Christ, are called to be the people of the cross, the people who are called to be God's reconciliation to mankind and the people who are called to be the reconciliation between man and man. That means that our primary allegiance has to be to Christ, and not to my race, or my nation or my tribe." The audience, hearing this Word of God expounded in very simple language, was moved by the Holy Spirit to understand something of what reconciliation in Christ means.

The next day, said Botha, when the South African delegation came together again, black and white delegates were able to hug each other. A black observer from the States remarked, "If reconciliation is possible in South Africa, then it is possible in America too." The South Africans went home full of new hope. Some delegates had already sold their houses in order to emigrate abroad to avoid the forthcoming bloodbath; they bought other homes again, determined to stay.

Eventually the group of delegates reassembled and decided that fellow Christians in South Africa ought to share in this reconciling work of the Holy Spirit. To that end there is now in the planning stages for July, 1979, a South African Christian Leadership Assembly where it is anticipated that some 10,000 Christians will get together for a week to talk from a Christian perspective about the problems of South Africa.

Dr. Botha asked her audience to accompany this project prayerfully, and to consider how the Gospel of Jesus Christ is the only source for real reconciliation. Dr. Botha added that as a Kuiperian Christian she realizes that this reconciliation has to become part

of the economic, political and racial situations, but that a start has to be made somewhere. The South African Leadership Assembly may provide the beginning of reconciliation. For that

start our prayerful support was solicited.

Dr. John Struyk