



John 13:15

The Bishop of Grahamstown

The Rt. Revd. David Russell

Bishopsbourne • 17 Durban Street • P.O. Box 162 • Grahamstown • 6140 • Tel. (0461) 22500 • Office 23460 • Fax. 25231

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The Co-Chairpersons,  
CODESA.

10.4.92.

Dear Sirs,

Ending of Apartheid and the Lack of Basic Human Rights  
For Farmworkers

I am writing from St. George's Cathedral in Cape Town where I have undertaken a fast for seven days in connection with this urgent issue.

I enclose a copy of my letter to the State President dated 24th March, and also a copy of my Statement dated 6th April, in which I enlarge on the matter and suggest what needs to be done.

I am appealing to you, Sirs, to see that this remaining legacy of Apartheid, which affects millions of our citizens, is brought onto the agenda of Codesa.

There will be no justice nor lasting peace and stability in the agricultural sector until farm workers and their families are given the basic human rights which they presently, cruelly, lack.

Thank you for your help in this matter.

Yours sincerely in Christ,

*+David Grahamstown.*

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24 March 1992

The State President  
The Hon Mr F.W. de Klerk  
House of Assembly  
P O Box 15  
8000 Cape Town

Dear Mr de Klerk

ENDING OF APARTHEID AND THE LACK OF BASIC HUMAN RIGHTS FOR FARM WORKERS

The response to my letter to you of 25 October last year has come to me through the Minister of Local Government and National Housing and of Public Works, Mr L. Wessels, I regret to say that I found his letter most disappointing. I do not think that he seriously addressed the issues I raised in my letter to you. On the contrary, he dashed my hopes. He said that the Prevention of Illegal Squatting and Trespass Acts are not even under revision. How can you, Sir, say to this country and to the world that the book on apartheid has been closed, while this legislation remains unamended on the statute book, and when there is no intention even to revise it. With respect Sir, this is nothing less than scandalous.

Added to this there have been reports in the press quoting the Director General of Manpower, Mr Joel Fourie, which raise grave doubts as to whether the Labour Legislation to protect farm workers, will be brought onto the statute book after all.

I have come to the conclusion that simply to write letters of appeal to you will get nowhere. I wish to share with you that I believe God is calling me to undertake a fast for seven days in the Cathedral in Cape Town. I will be making a public appeal to you to address this national scandal. I call upon you Sir to take definite and specific steps to restore and uphold the basic human rights of the hidden and isolated people living on the farms of this country. They continue to experience the realities of apartheid with cruelly little change. You cannot say that the book of apartheid has been closed until you take up this matter with courage and integrity.

With warm wishes,

Yours in Christ

+ David Grahamstown

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6/4/92

WEEK OF PRAYER AND FASTING  
FOR  
BASIC HUMAN RIGHTS  
FOR  
FARM WORKERS AND THEIR FAMILIES

For generations farm workers and their families have been living virtually without any legal rights. A worker can be dismissed, and almost overnight he and his family can be turned out of their only house and home. If he stays where he is, he can be arrested and imprisoned for trespass. If he stays on the roadside with all his belongings, he can be arrested for illegal squatting. He and his family have no legal right to live anywhere.

Laws which allow people to be treated like this are cruel, inhuman and unchristian. These laws hover like a sword of Damocles over the lives of too many of the poorest, most hidden and isolated people in South Africa.

It is high time that this injustice was addressed and rectified. We cannot talk of a New South Africa while people are so cruelly vulnerable, are denied basic human rights.

President de Klerk has promised first class citizenship to all South Africans. If this promise is to be fulfilled, then he must make a public commitment to ensure that simple human justice is done to the farmworkers and their families.

Our Christian conscience impels us to speak out on this issue. To keep silent would be sinful neglect.

God sees what is happening, and his compassionate spirit calls for our response.

Our discipleship of Christ draws us into this action of prayer and fasting.

We need to hear the voice of his people; his Holy Spirit cries in them.

What then are we calling for:

1. Farm Workers should be included in all the Labour Legislation which presently covers industrial workers. Some obvious adjustments may be necessary to take into account the special circumstances of the Agricultural sector.
2. Administrative procedures should be set up which ensure that those retrenched and turned off farms are given a place to live, and which enable a dignified human existence.  
South African citizens must have the right to live somewhere!
3. The rule of law must be restored.  
The Prevention of Illegal Squatting and Trespass Acts must be drastically amended.  
The poorest of our land must have effective access to the Courts.  
People must be protected from the abuse of power  
People should not be turned into criminals for being poor and homeless.

Only in these ways will justice be done, and will apartheid become something truly of the past for people living on the farms.

There can be no peace without justice.  
There can be no peace until all South Africans can feel secure.  
Reconciliation cannot be built on unjust laws.  
Good Relationships need Good Laws.

I appeal to President de Klerk to act.  
I appeal to all concerned South Africans to do what they can to see that these wrongs are put right.

+ David Grahamstown

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