

# Sebenzi Selena

## Let US Work Together

**Fall, 1990**

A newsletter of the  
Committee on Southern  
Africa of the Peace  
Commission of the Diocese  
of Washington.

Contributors to this edition of the ECOSA newsletter include:

Bob Smith Gina Jenkins Ted Lockwood JoAnn Jones and Russell Ayers.  
Canon Winston Ndungane sent us written comments about violence in South Africa from  
which we have quoted.

*To the Diocese of Washington and Friends,*

*Welcome to the first issue of Sebenzi Selena, the newsletter of the  
Committee on Southern Africa of the Peace Commission (ECOSA). We  
want to share with you what is happening in that region and what we are doing  
to support our brothers and sisters in the struggle to end apartheid. The title,  
in Xhosa, a major South African language, means "Let us Work Together."  
That is exactly what we hope to do.*

*We plan to publish three times a year*

*At a later stage, we hope to involve you more directly with the  
Committee's work, through periodic gatherings.*

*Your comments will be most welcome.*

*Robert S. Smith, Chair*

## Fr. Lulama Ntshingwa & Church of the Ascension, Silver Spring

The Church of the Ascension in Silver Spring became involved in the issue of apartheid in South Africa in 1984 when Bishop Desmond Tutu spoke at the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C. The rector at that time and other members of the congregation joined Bishop Walker in demonstrating in front of the South African Embassy in 1985. An annual program on South Africa was begun in Adult Education that culminated in the spring of 1988 with parishioners deciding that they wanted to do something concrete for the people of South Africa.

A delegation from the parish met with Bishop Walker in September, 1988 to discuss ways to connect with the people of South Africa, including a companion parish relationship. At the annual parish meeting in December it was voted to authorize the relationship with a Christian congregation in South Africa. In March, 1989, Bishop David Russell of Grahamstown, South Africa spoke to the Committee on Southern Africa of the Peace Commission. Rector Emmett Jarrett and several members of Ascension were able to meet with him and asked him to help establish ties for Ascension with one of his parishes.

That summer, two members of the Committee on Southern Africa visited Grahamstown. One subsequently met with the Ascension South Africa Committee and reported on the trip and the stresses that Anglican clergy were experiencing. A letter was sent to Bishop Russell offering to host a clergyman for a respite visit. Shortly thereafter, Bishop Russell asked Ascension to host Fr. Lulama Ntshingwa as soon as possible. He had been detained in a government prison, and members of his family had received death threats, and his wife had been fired from her job because of Fr. Lulama's leadership in the justice and reconciliation efforts of the diocese. A week later, Bishop Russell asked if the parish could also host Mrs. Nomhle Ntshingwa as he felt that separating the couple at this time would be counterproductive. The Ascension committee felt somewhat overwhelmed by this request but agreed to sponsor both the Ntshingwas. The response was wonderful. The parish raised over \$3,000 in a very short time and by the end of November the Ntshingwas were here.

They stayed in parishioners' homes for six weeks over the Christmas season, participated in the life of the parish, and made many friends. They spoke at other area churches and schools, saw the sights of Washington, and visited in West Virginia and Delaware. After they left Ascension, they were hosted by Trinity Church in New York for several more weeks. Fr. Lulama was advised by Bishop Russell to explore the possibilities of graduate study in an American seminary so they visited New Haven and Boston, as well as Virginia and General Theological seminaries. They returned to South Africa at the beginning of March.

Upon their return to Holy Name Church in Mlungisi, the black township of Stutterheim, the vestry of the Church of the Ascension requested a formal relationship with Holy Name. The wardens of Holy Name Church accepted in April. Since then, Ascension sent parish intern Tim Rich to Mlungisi for several weeks this summer, and has sent Sunday school materials and books for the parish library. In addition, money has been raised and sent to assist in the expansion of the Church, to pay for gas for the priest's car so that he can visit his far-flung parishioners who come a long distance.

In August 1990, the Ntshingwas returned to New York with their two children with the assistance of Trinity Church. Fr. Lulama has begun a two-year program at the General Theological Seminary, the two children hope to finish high school in the Anglo-American School in New York, and Nomhle is working and hopes to continue her studies in accounting. The Church of the Ascension is looking forward to welcoming them back to Silver Spring and the Washington area at Thanksgiving.

## The ECOSA Report

◆ **Sarafina** - Our benefit presentation of Sarafina was a great success. We sold 1,713 tickets, netting \$14,525.50 in profit. The Committee has committed the money as follows: this publication and other awareness raising and information disseminating activities; support for bringing South African clergy and their spouses to parishes in our diocese for rest and relaxation (See above); refugee resettlement in South Africa; and committee administrative expenses.

- ◆ **Speaker's Bureau** - The Committee continues to provide programs of various kinds, mostly Sunday forum speakers and evening study sessions for parish outreach groups. There have been more than 25 parish presentations during 1990. Parish leaders are encouraged to call Russell Ayers (see back page) to schedule speakers or inquire about educational materials.
- ◆ **Sanctions Resolution** - The Committee drafted a letter to President Bush urging him to maintain sanctions. Bishop Haines presented this letter to the House of Bishops at its meeting and succeeded in obtaining 56 signatures.
- ◆ A retreat was held at the Deanery on 14 July, 1990, for ECOSA. The speakers were Dr. Charles Villavicencio, Chair, Department of Religious Studies, University of Cape Town and Aubrey McKutcheon, Executive Director, The Washington Office on Africa. The speakers discussed the role of the church in transition to and in post-apartheid society and the current status of sanctions. The Committee discussed its future plans.

## South Africa's Killing Fields

Violence has killed more people in South Africa's Natal Province in the last three years than have been killed in Lebanon and Northern Ireland combined in the same period. More than 4,000 persons have perished including many prominent church leaders. Thousands have lost their homes. In late July, the slaughter spread to the Johannesburg area's townships, and in six weeks another 750 persons died.

Bishop Bruce Evans, of South Africa's Port Elizabeth diocese, visiting with ECOSA members recently, emphasized the importance of understanding and interpreting this tragic conflict, which threatens to derail any progress toward a negotiated, peaceful transition to a democratic, non-racial society.

The violence is often portrayed as "black on black" or "tribal clashes" between Zulu and Xhosas. These interpretations miss the point. What is going on is a political power struggle between the African National Congress, the oldest and broadest movement for national liberation, and its allies, and Chief Mongosuthu Buthelezi's political movement, Inkatha, which has its constituency and base in the Zulu homeland area of Natal, and its allies.

Buthelezi is a descendent of Shaka, the black Napoleon who founded the Zulu nation, centralizing military power organized around regiments called "impis" and appointing subchiefs responsible only to him. Bishop Evans emphasized that the image which Chief Buthelezi promotes is that of a warrior nation which was never conquered. (Although Zulu armies were defeated by the Afrikaners and British, the legend of Zulu invincibility and bravery, and ultimate triumph, is a powerful force for Inkatha.)

The African National Congress, on the other hand, is a national liberation movement (that is multi-ethnic in purpose). It is very strong in the eastern Cape, where Xhosa-speakers are predominant. Nelson Mandela and Walter Sisulu, and other top leaders of the Congress, are originally from Xhosa-speaking areas, the Transkei or eastern Cape. They represent a tradition of political leadership and skillful diplomacy which Xhosa people have developed. But, Bishop Evans pointed out, the Congress is not a tribal organization. It embraces many ethnic groups and in the middle echelons of leadership, particularly, young men and women who are active and represent many different ethnic traditions. They are united around ANC goals as it seeks to establish itself as the political party representing all South Africans who support a non-racial democratic society. In Natal itself the ANC and its allies are composed primarily of Zulu speakers.

What this tribal analysis overlooks also is the role of the apartheid government's own security forces in taking sides with Inkatha. In April, church leaders wrote to President De Klerk that "events in Edendale and Vulindlela [in Natal]...leave us with the overwhelming impression that there has been at least a decision by the security forces to turn a blind eye to the attacks by the [Inkatha] impis involving thousands of fighting men.....At worst there may have been collaboration.....As a result.....approximately 14,000 people have been displaced."

Subsequent events in the Transvaal townships have only strengthened this analysis.

Recently, an Anglican delegation led by Archbishop Desmond Tutu and including Bishop Evans, investigated the fighting on September 4th in Sebokeng where 19 people were killed in a hostel for migrant workers by Inkatha vigilantes and 11 more people were massacred by South African Defense Forces who intervened. Bishop Evans described clear evidence that white men, wearing black head masks [balaclavas] had distributed guns from the trunks of cars to Inkatha vigilantes and accompanied the Inkatha fighters. Police forces were

present but did nothing to intervene. Bishop Evans believes with many others that there is now a "third force" operating to train and arm Inkatha in its fight with ANC and its allies. Other analysts raise a more sinister scenario: that the government is pursuing a double track: negotiations on the one hand and covert operations to weaken the ANC and its allies on the other. There are reports that members of Koevoet, the vicious counter-insurgency unit which operated in Namibia under South African police command to disrupt and kill supporters of SWAPO, and also members of Renamo, the terrorist organization which has sustained a ten-year long war against the government of Mozambique, are operating in South Africa at the behest of some of those opposed to establishment of a non-racial government there.

When we raised with Bishop Evans the issue of whether President De Klerk was unable to control the security apparatus or simply unwilling to, he upheld the President's sincerity but pointed out that the security force representatives in his Cabinet have a very strong political constituency which limits his capacity to take a softer line. The police have been trained for years to see the ANC as the ultimate evil, to be eliminated by any means necessary. They cannot easily shift gears now that the ANC is an unbanned, aboveground organization, operating legitimately, having suspended armed struggle.

Meanwhile, the African National Congress and church groups have called for dismantling the institutions of "apartheid terror," strict control of the security forces and stamping out of "independent" pro-apartheid forces whether they be vigilantes, warlords, or rightwing groups. With such action, the need of people in the grass-roots to protect themselves will mean that warfare will continue, for without security there can be no peace. Church leaders were led to conclude that the security forces were involved in this war, either by direct collaboration, or by default. This led to people taking the law into their own hands by organizing to defend themselves and to avenge the deaths of their friends and family members.

*"..the best way to pursue the Peace Plan was to handle security and peace within the same plan. For to pursue the Peace Plan without addressing the question of security for all the people of Natal, would be a futile exercise."*

—the Rev'd Frank Chikane, General Secretary, South African Council of Churches, August 28, 1990.

*"The recent wave of violence in South Africa has caused tremendous pain and distress. It is true that there are ideological differences between the African National Congress...and Inkatha. Such differences in themselves would never ever have resulted in such atrocities. Those elements in the South African society which benefit from the policy of 'Divide and Rule' have used such differences to continue the oppression of the black people of South Africa. There are three key people to the solution of that violence. They are President De Klerk, Dr. Nelson Mandela and Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi. Our prayers should be directed towards finding an immediate solution to the end of violence, total dismantling of apartheid, and the total liberation of the Black people of South Africa."*

—Canon Winston Ndungane, Executive Officer, Church of the Province of Southern Africa. October 15, 1990.

Comments and suggestions may be made in writing to:

Russell Ayers, 1525 H Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005 or by calling 202-783-3639 • fax 202-783-3641



## COMMITTEE ON SOUTHERN AFRICA

Commission on Peace  
Diocese of Washington

Episcopal Church House  
Mount Saint Alban  
Washington, DC 20016

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