

MR. HORST-KLAUS HOFMANN OF THE GERMAN INSTITUTE
FOR YOUTH AND SOCIETY ON HIS VISIT WITH
DR. WERNER WEYGCA, DR. SIEGFRIED ERNST
AND MR. KUNZE

ULUNDI. 2ND APRIL 1985

A FEW WORDS OF WELCOME AND APPRECIATION TO MR. HORST-KLAUS HOFMANN OF THE GERMAN INSTITUTE FOR YOUTH AND SOCIETY ON THE OCCASION OF HIS VISIT TO ULUNDI WITH DR. WERNER WEYGCA, DR. SIEGFRIED ERNST AND MR. KUNZE BY MANGOSUTHU G. BUTHELEZI, CHIEF MINISTER KWAZULU, PRESIDENT OF INKATHA AND CHAIRMAN, THE SOUTH AFRICAN BLACK ALLIANCE ULUNDI. 2ND APRIL 1985

The words of our Lord "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me" came so clearly to my mind when I was thinking about you the other day, Mr. Hofmann. For all those who do not understand the mystery of the Cross and have not experienced the love of Christ, you would be a mystery. You live in one of the most advanced industrial States in the world and you live in an era of vast technical achievements, and your inherent intelligence and your abiding practical competence would have gained you a place in your society which could have been the envy of a great many. You are the kind of person who can climb the ladders of success and had you sought acclaim, you would have found it. And yet you are here today with us evidencing a deep love and concern for my people and not for any personal reason.

We appreciate your devotion to us and we are aware that that devotion is displayed so constantly and with such endurance that we feel you have become part of us. We do not feel you have returned to visit us. Our experience is that you went from our midst and you returned from our midst.

Very few understand the loneliness of Christian leadership in the South African struggle for liberation. Our Black townships are again going up in smoke and once more Black anger is boiling beyond the levels of human control and is being directed by self-seeking people to further aims and objectives which are in fact remote from the interests of the people who suffer so terribly under the yoke of apartheid. Once more we see Black killing Black and the spectacle of civil war raises its ugly head from just beyond our horizon. Perhaps never before has there been such a need for Christian reconciliation in the midst of death and violence as there now is in this country. Quite often the need for reconciliation comes when it is just too late. The need for reconciliation is at its highest when people are preparing to kill each other and that is what people in South Africa are now doing.

The loneliness of a Christian leader watching youth turning to violence and turning to burning people alive for political purposes, and watching the brute force of the State harassing, jailing, maiming and killing people because they are angry, is a loneliness few can comprehend. I yearn for the politics of reconciliation but in all the things which I see happening around me, I find so little evidence that reconciliation is thought of beyond the kind of so-called reconciliation which notches up power

advantages for selfish or ideological gains. Reconciliation must be pursued because love demands it. Reconciliation as part of power-mongering is alien to true human morality, and it is anathema to Christian morality.

While so many people who call themselves leaders spurn reconciliation in favour of heightening conflict, the ordinary people of this country continue to suffer poverty, want and disease and continue to carry the real burden of the failure of those who should be involved in the politics of national reconciliation.

You Mr. Hofmann understand this, and when you come here you come here because you have a deep personal faith, and a personal love for Christ which makes you want to stretch out your hands, not only to all those who suffer under the yoke of apartheid, but you want to stretch out your hands to those who are not power-mongering. Your thoughts are not motivated by the need to follow newspaper heroes; you do not come here as a representative of that category of European Christians who do what they do so that they can enjoy derived importance which comes from a greater concern with bandwagon politics and celebrity leaders, than it comes from a concern for suffering humanity.

We, Mr. Hofmann, are aware of your courage in Europe as you tackle the meaning of the Cross in your own society. You do not come here because you cannot achieve anything where you are. You come here because you want to share that which you have achieved in the name of Christ.

As a Christian leader in this country Bensheim is an oasis where I feel the healing balm of love and the strengthening force of fellowship. When I have to travel abroad to bring the urgent cries of Black South Africa to the attention of the international community, I meet a lot of Church people but the distinctive Christian-ness of what you have done and continue to do is so absent in many of the churchy places I have gone to. We are separated by thousands of kilometers. We are separated by culture, history, language, but when I meet you these all amount to nothing and I meet you as a Brother in Christ.

You Mr. Hofmann have not jockeyed for power in your own country and you do not have the many millions of marks to dispense in Christian largesse, but you put your hand in your pocket, and you put your arm around other shoulders and they put their hands in their pockets and you have brought to us urgent practical relief in a demonstration of how practical Christian love is. You must understand, Sir, that that which you have given weighs as millions of rands with us. Every rand that you have given is a rand which has come with love and which has made that rand far more productive because it is a rand blessed indeed by God.

The practical nature of your Christian commitment is now yet again demonstrated over your concern with the sick and needy. The scheme you are spearheading to make doctors available to the poor and suffering amongst us is a scheme conceived in love and blessed by God. We thank you for what you are doing and I believe that in the end what you are doing in South Africa is perhaps more important than what a great many of your fellow Europeans are doing.

I do not believe that we have already passed a threshold in this country beyond which there is nothing left to do but to kill each other for political purposes. I believe that the politics of reconciliation are still possible and that non-violence will still triumph. And I want you to know, Mr. Hofmann, that one day when the victory has become ours, the process of reconstructing this society will be enhanced by those who remember your kindness in these days, and by those who will then turn to adopt the idiom of your love in their own lives.
