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## Botha Introduces Apartheid at Dordt

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## Botha Introduces Apartheid at Dordt

Once in a while our academic routine and intellectual humdrum is interrupted by a visiting lecturer. Recently Dr. M. Elaine Botha, professor of philosophy at the Potchefstroom University of South Africa, introduced the topic "Apartheid" to the Dordt faculty:

Professor Botha asserted that the word Apartheid is being used more outside of South Africa than in South Africa itself. The idea of Apartheid was actually introduced during the days of British Colonialism. Around 1948, government officials felt that the white and the black cultural groups should develop apart or entirely separately. This policy had built in the idea of baasschap, the whites being baas (boss) over the blacks.

Professor Botha also pointed out that, although South Africa is being labeled a Christian country, the government is not more Christian than any other government, but the South Africans do try to face their racial problems sincerely. In the fifties and sixties the government started to work out policies which recognized not only the differentiation of the cultural groups, but also the equality of the black and the white people. This, of course, is quite a challenge for people whose way of life has been arranged around the idea of the whites being baas and the blacks being the knecht or servant.

In the early seventies, after some experimentation (e.g., with giving independence to some of the cultural minority groups, they were given their own "homelands"), the new policy was redirected to differentiation and to unity.

Professor Botha went on to indicate what some of the problems were. The racial problem in South Africa is entirely different from the one in the U.S.A.

First, the various Bantu groups have different lingual and cultural backgrounds. In the past, the various indigenous groups have had their tribal wars and feuds.

Besides such internal differences, these Bantu groups started to migrate to the South, where they came in contact with the Boers, who already had seventeen centuries of Western Civilization behind them. This cultural input could not be forced upon these indigenous Bantu tribes. Although the white and black races have been living together for two centuries, there still exist cultural gaps today.

Moreover, a large number of Asiatics have emigrated to South Africa from India. These English-speaking Asiatics have never given up their Indian culture.

A group which cannot identify itself with any of the above are the Coloreds, people from "mixed" marriages. In many cases, these people have lived lives of servitude to the Boers for many generations, and for that reason they also speak Afrikaans.

Within the white race there is also much friction. This can be traced to South Africa's political history. The rich gold and diamond deposits around Johannesburg have stimulated the political interference of Great Britain. Today, most Afrikaners of British descent belong to the wealthy class; the Boers, by and large, to the middle class; and the other groups to the working class. Because of the long history of oppression, the Boers find it difficult to communicate with the British Afrikaners. Add to this the stubbornness which is so much a part of the Afrikaner—the Dutch or the Frisian—and the walls between the two groups become thicker and thicker. Professor Botha does not approve of these thick-walled, everyone-for-himself kinds of groupings, but she believes that the King-

dom of God transcends such differences. Of course, she asserted, you can't stop being a Bantu, a Britisher, an Indian, or a Boer, but all these ethnic groups have a place in the Kingdom of God. This view necessarily relativizes one's own position and requires humility.

One may ask, What really has been done to give independence to some of the Bantus? Transkei, a new nation in the northeast, held its first Bantustan election in 1963. Under the new law, ethnically-defined "Bantu homelands" are assigned to the Bantus, where they can develop their semi-autonomous states of "Bantustans." These nations are semi-autonomous, because the South Africans will temporarily control the military and the external affairs. There is a total of 18 million Blacks, to whom 13% of the total land area has been designated. Some of this land is very fertile soil. The 5 million whites, Asiatics, and Coloreds will remain on the remaining 87%. During the period of transfer, people will not be able to exercise their voting rights outside their own territory.

Still the problems are very complicated. Many whites, who for generations had worked the fertile fields in the north, were forced to give up their farms. Years later they found that the Blacks had not worked the fields properly and neglected the upkeep of the buildings. Of course, this is due in part to the lack of finances,

but mainly due to the lack of initiative. Professor Botha feels that total segregation will fail, because both races need each other. The white government should legislate heavier taxation for the whites to make it possible for the Blacks to maintain a respectable standard of living. Often the Blacks do not have the same opportunities that the whites have. The leaders in the white churches should expose the abuser. The blacks must be taught how to take the initiative by instilling within them a feeling of worth.

Professor Botha concluded by stating that there must be found a way of genuine communication between the various groups. She also suggested that evangelical Christians should lead the way to find these channels of communication. Some evangelical young people are working very hard on these problems. The need is urgent. Prime Minister Vorster has said that a solution to these problems must be found within the next five years. If it is not found soon, it will be too late.

It was refreshing to share some of these concerns with a representative of one of our sister-institutions. It reminded us again not only that there are problems all over the world, but that Christians on every continent have a task to fulfill, also a political task.

by Kornelis J. Boot

## **Greece 1975 - A Translator's Wife's View**

For the men in the group, work began at 6:30 A.M. the day after we arrived in Athens and ended at 5:30 P.M. the day before we left. The alarm clock jarred us to consciousness shortly after 5:00 A.M. so there could be an hour of private study before committee work began. Work ended at 6:30 P.M. They did stop for breakfast, lunch and a brief rest. After the evening meal there was time for a short

walk, and then the men studied again to get ready for the next day.

Not much more can be said about the exciting schedule of the translators, except that they all finished their work assignments, and at the end of the summer the third-level translation was completed on the books of Exodus, Numbers, Zephaniah and Obadiah. It might be added that one committee rebelled against such regimen-