

AFRICAN CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY

SUBMISSION TO THEME COMMITTEE ONE BLOCK TWO

2. EQUALITY

The ACDP agrees that equality is central to a Bill of Rights. We further believe that all shall have equal access and protection of the law.

Equality before the law is beneficial to all and is principally aimed at enhancing the esteem of the value of all human beings, essentially in the understanding that we are created in the image of God. (Genesis 1:26 27).

Equality before the law means that as Christ is no respecter of persons, so the law should be no respecter of persons (James 2:8-9). The ACDP maintains that because all are born sinners, no one is to be considered to be superior to any other by birth or by nature.

Although we are all equal in value before God, we are at the same time different. We are different in our colour, belief, size, talent, attitude, gender, strengths, interests and so on. We have separate bathrooms for men and women to endorse this fact. This differentiation is not discrimination. The ACDP would like the Bill of Rights to recognise this differentiation in some cases and that, in such cases, it be justified.

The ACDP endorses Chapter 3:8.2 of our interim constitution that says "no person shall be unfairly discriminated against, directly or indirectly, and, without derogating from the generality of this provision on one or more of the following grounds in particular: race, gender, sex, ethnic or social origin, colour, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture or language. The clause "sexual orientation" is dropped because it is misplaced.

As God-loving Christians, we in the ACDP cannot endorse or condone what God calls abomination. Attempts to legalise what we view to be perversion is an attempt to impose on Christians, religious people and those who still maintain their cultural beliefs and traditional values, that which is unacceptable, unhealthy, immoral, sinful and unnatural.

The ACDP opposes giving unacceptable and sinful lifestyles like homosexuality, lesbianism, sodomy, bestiality and paedophiles any constitutional protection. It is wrong to legalise immorality. People involved in these lifestyles have chosen to do so and they are protected already by Chapter 3:13, that guarantees the right to privacy. We do not want our country to be another Sodom and Gomorrah. (Gen. 19: 1-25, Rom. 1.-25-32). Our right to freedom of conscience, religion, thought, belief

AFRICAN CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY

Affirmative Action

The ACDP believes that affirmative action should be defined as a temporary measure to make right the wrongs of the past in order to ensure individual family and nation building and human resource development. It should aim at making people self-sufficient and to contribute to the running of the country in all its sectors. We do not wish to see this concept written into the constitution as a permanent right because in a few years time, it may no longer be necessary.

The ACDP applauds the approach taken by Dr M. Ramphela of Idasa. We wish to express our appreciation for the pragmatic and thorough presentation she made to Theme Committee One. She cautioned us against applying the imported concept of affirmative action from the USA because their social conditions are different to ours.

Dr Ramphela continued to say that affirmative action must be "situated within an equity framework to ensure that it is an appropriate strategy in a given case, and that it achieves the oasis of making equal opportunities accessible.

A free standing affirmative action programme runs the risk of bedevilling social relations. "An equal opportunity environment must be created to bring out the best in all citizens."

3. SINGLE "SOVEREIGN" STATE

We as the ACDP agrees with the concept of a "sovereign" state, only in the context of an independent country within a prescribed jurisdiction. We do not believe a state should be absolute, all powerful, unlimited or supreme, but rather, it should be the constitution that is supreme.

The ACDP recognises the state as a God-ordained institution. Along with the institutions of the family (marriage and home), the church, religious organisations, the state occupies an important place in God's order of things. The ACDP believes that government is established with limited powers to do only certain things in society. We call for limited government, failing somewhere between no government (anarchy) and total government (totalitarianism). Caesar has his role, but other institutions like the family and the church have their roles too.

A good government is one that administers justice, protecting the weak from the bully, the poor from the rich and powerful, the innocent from the criminals. It will promote equality before the law, working diligently to restrain evil - raising revenues; avoiding deficit spending and so on.

Within the single "sovereign" state, the ACDP would like to see a small, but effective, central government and strong provincial and local governments. We believe strong provincial and local governments bring the government closer to the

people and help create effective governing and improved administration and communication. In this case, decision making is allocated to the lowest level where it could best be exercised and it allows for improved identification of needs and for the development of local and provincial leadership.

Secular State

The ACDP vehemently rejects any plan to turn South Africa into a secular state. It is totally unacceptable and undemocratic. According to statistics, about 80% of South Africans believe in the teachings of the Christian faith. Their voice must be heard. We do not want to have a constitution that does not acknowledge God the Almighty in its preamble because of a few politicians who do not believe in a sovereign God. Most South Africans believe in God and that must be reflected in the constitution.

It is inconceivable that an attempt can be made by members of this parliament to deny Christians, who are the majority of tax payers, from using State institutions that are built and maintained with their tax money for religious observances. Millions of Christians who voted for the ANC are using school classrooms and community halls for their church services. Is the ANC now turning their back on them, attempting to deny them that right by calling for a secular state?

A secular state would bar Christian leaders and religious office bearers from holding offices of State. This would be highly unconstitutional, undemocratic and the worst form of discrimination. The ACDP totally rejects such plans. Those who claim to support the concept of participatory and representative democracy must live up to their claims. South Africans must be allowed to exercise their democratic right of choosing who should represent them in any office of State, without any State interference.

The ACDP is calling for a Constitutional State, based on Christian principles like honesty, truth, love, respect for life, law and properly, justice, reconciliation and

many more that are universally accepted as indispensable for building a healthy, prosperous and normal society.

Golden rules like "love your neighbour as yourself" (Matt. 22:39) and "do to others what you would have them do to you" (Matt. 7:12) would save the world from poverty, misery, rape, murder and all other evils that are destroying precious lives, if they can be taught and applied. All nations of the world would agree that these rules can make our world a peaceful and better place to live.

These are some of the biblical principles that we, the ACDP would like to see undergirding our constitution.

Rev. K. R. Meshoe
15 March 1995