

Frontline Fellowship missionary, Charl van Wyk was invited this last weekend to speak at a political gathering of those who attacked the St. James Church, Charl was the one who shot back at the terrorists. Here's his report:

Dear Friends

Imagine being asked by the leader of the terrorist group, which attacked your church, to come to a political rally celebrating his home coming, in his home village! I had met Letlapa Mphahlele several times before – the first time was in Parliament. I also took him to my home church for a Sunday morning service and visited Victor Verster prison with him to share the Gospel with the Azanian People Liberation Army (APLA) terrorist whom I had shot during the [St. James Massacre](#). But this time it was 1700 km from Cape Town, in his home village at a Pan African Congress (PAC) political meeting, surrounded by 1000 PAC adherents who probably saw me as an enemy! (APLA is the military wing of the PAC)

The Bloemfontein Court has withdrawn charges against Letlapa. I struggled with whether I should attend or not. I believe that the Civil Magistrate has the Biblical responsibility to punish the guilty, yet we as the Church are God's ministers of grace who have to "forgive those who trespass against us". I understood that attending the meeting was controversial but I saw this as a great opportunity to take a stand for the Gospel and show the forgiveness we can have through Jesus Christ our Redeemer and Lord.

Our Director, Dr Peter Hammond, read the first verses of Psalm 27 as the Frontline Fellowship office staff prayed me off on this outreach: "...The Lord is the strength of my life; Of whom shall I be afraid? ... Though an army may encamp against me, My heart shall not fear ..."

What an experience it was to attend the home coming ceremony of Letlapa, the APLA Commander. After flying 1400 km from Cape Town to Johannesburg, an old school friend, Theunis Roux, who initially talked me into going to the meeting, drove me the 4 hours to get there and all the way back to the airport again.

Our arrival at Letlapa's home was uneventful. The excitement only started when I was introduced to the President and Vice-President of his Pan African Congress political party and didn't know who either of them were, even when he said: "Do you know him?" My answer was: "No!" - Great start!

Shortly afterwards Theunis got into a conversation with the vice-president who brought up the explosive issue of 'land reform'. The political argument, which Mugabe has so exploited in Zimbabwe, goes that the Whites stole all the land from the Blacks. Theunis was not impressed by the political rhetoric and started correcting the vice-president on points of fact. Now there isn't much you can tell Theunis about the land reform laws because he has a "Doctorate in Constitutional Law" specialising in property and he sat on the committee that drafted the law under discussion – Greater start!

Thankfully Letlapa took us away to meet the Queen; that's right, we went to the home of the Queen of the Mphahlele People. Letlapa brought greetings and we thanked her for the privilege of coming to visit. We then left to meet with other dignitaries and all of us went together to her home again and she joined the front of the party and we walked to the hall for the meeting. We were ushered onto the stage and were seated. Soon over a thousand people had filled the hall.

It was a frightening experience, walking into a jam-packed hall with revolutionaries in the audience, many of whom would happily see me killed at any moment and probably be proclaimed a hero for it; people who were known to be violent and who hated Whites. The hall was overflowing, the aisles were full, and people were standing in the doorway and peering through windows from outside.

The local tribal chief was the MC. He was brilliant; he made it very clear that all 22 speakers at the meeting would not be allowed more than 3 minutes each, and he strictly enforced discipline on the speakers. Seeing that most of the time I didn't understand the language of the speaker, I set about whilst on stage, to reduce my speech for the announced time limit.

My turn came to speak and the MC introduced me as a survivor of the APLA attack at the St. James Church. I mentioned to Theunis that I am relieved that they introduced me in this way and not as the person who shot back at the APLA assailants. Theunis answered that they would hardly introduce me as the man that shot back at the APLA cadres and chased their heavily armed "soldiers" away. The MC then proceeded, stating that I would be given 15 minutes to speak. What? I'd just reworked my speech to fit in with his stated time limit!

I based my speech on the Gospel leaflet written by Dr. Peter Hammond: "**The World's Greatest Revolutionary**"

. The full document is attached to this e-mail.

In summary, I mentioned The World's Greatest Revolutionary was a second-class citizen in an oppressed nation under foreign occupation. It was a time of violence and hatred but yet He lived a life of love. He was arrested, beaten, whipped, spat at, thorns shoved into His head, nails driven through His hands and feet and a sword thrust into His side. His message was so revolutionary and the authorities so threatened that they posted guards to guard His corpse in the grave. Those present listened intently and even groaned as I mentioned the suffering this Revolutionary went through.

I carried on that the grave was later found empty and that He is believed to have risen from the dead.

The revolution grew after His death, even though vicious persecution of His followers took place. The Empire tried to destroy His teachings; His followers were stoned, burnt and eaten by wild animals in stadiums while crowds cheered on. Other followers were tortured and massacred yet they returned good for evil, love for hate and lived lives of joy and faith. The blood of the martyrs appeared to be the seed for the continuation of the revolution. It is said that for every one that died in the Arena, 10 stood up in the stadium to replace them.

The Empire was defeated from within and taken over by those peace-loving people.

I ended: "A revolutionary life, with a revolutionary message, Jesus Christ has continued to make a revolutionary impact on millions of people all over the world. I call on you to join me in this revolution."

I delivered two boxes of Gospel literature, including the Jesus film in the English and Afrikaans languages and 58 N.T. Bibles for the community.

I further explained that I had a historical document; in fact it was in their local Northern Sesotho language, which covered the life of this Revolutionary. I handed the Bible over with a handshake to Letlapa. In it was written: "Dear Letlapa, I pray that you will join me in following '[The World's Greatest Revolutionary](#)', Jesus Christ. Yours, Charl van Wyk. (John 3:16).

Letlapa was very happy that I had come to this event. Try and imagine a White man arriving in a township, in the middle of nowhere, driven to on some dirt roads, to meet with people who believe that the Whites have been the cause of all their suffering and pain and were willing to murder for their 'just cause.'

Letlapa in his speech said, "Let us follow the example of Ginn Fourie and Charl van Wyk, the two tireless builders of bridges who are today here with us.

"Charl had survived Azanian People Liberation Army (APLA) attack on the St James Church. He has every reason to hate me, the person who ordered the attack. But he chose to understand and forgive. Thank you Charl for your understanding and forgiveness."

They were to plant a tree in remembrance of those who died in the [St James Massacre](#) after I had to leave to get my flight back home. The following day, Letlapa left a message on my phone thanking me on behalf of him and his family for my attendance and also for the gift (Bible) I had given him.

I am grateful to those who played a part in this outreach, for their time, money, prayers, etc. Thank you to all who made this a successful outreach. May the Lord be pleased to bring many of these people to repentance and faith in Christ that we may welcome them into God's family.

May Jesus Christ be glorified and "...the earth be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." Hab 2:14

Yours in His service

Charl van Wyk

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PS The background to this event is detailed in my book “Shooting Back – The Right and Duty of Self-Defence” available from [Christian Liberty Books](#) in South Africa (Tel: 021-6897478).