

**by Jo-Ann Downs**

In 1996 when the South African constitution was passed most of the country celebrated. There were a few who mourned. Those who were devastated knew that whilst 90% of the ideas were good the other 10% would result in serious consequences for Christians. The moment that the country refused to acknowledge submission to God, allowed special rights for homosexuals and institutionalized the murder of children the writing was on the wall for Christians.

Nine years later the effects of these ideas are being felt in our daily lives. A recent front page headline in the Natal witness shouted "Gvt too Pro-Christian". The paper was reporting on the first submission of the commission on cultural linguistic ethnic and religious rights. The complaints were that our holidays are Christian celebrations and other religions are not included. The other complaint was that the government is funding "Christian universities". The findings were sent to the home affairs and education departments for their consideration.

On the following Monday the letters page of the Daily News carried complaints about the UKZN and their practice of holidays following a too pro Christian agenda.

In parliament in response to question no. 162 in June 2001 the then minister of education Kader Asmal replied that "never again would any South African child have to be indoctrinated by Christianity." What did he mean? In answer to this an incident in the Northern Cape at Ansori school may provide some insight .A pastor's daughter did not want to participate in a life skills and social science class which was teaching aspects of other religions including Islam, ancestor worship, and Buddhism. The teacher threatened the 10 year old with an F if she did not learn the material and write the exam. The father called the school and the headmaster and arranged that the child would not participate and would receive an average grade on her year marks in this subject as their right to freedom of religion allowed for a free choice. Two weeks later the child was called in to the headmaster's office and informed that she had to complete the classes and write the exam or get an F.

She was extremely upset and intimidated so her Father once again called the headmaster who was very abusive and slammed the phone down. The father then received a fax from the governing body of the school demanding that the child attend classes and write the exam or receive an F. The family is considering taking the case before the constitutional court. Under Christian Democratic governments there has always been a tolerance for other religions so why does a curriculum for 10 year olds have to include multi-religious studies? Tolerance can easily be taught using other methods.

In another incident this time in KwaZulu Natal a pastor's wife was attacked by men dressed as Muslims as she was leaving the church building. A couple of weeks before the church had run a seminar on Islam and preaching the gospel to Muslims. The men knocked her around and destroyed the video machine and other equipment which was used to run the tapes. They left after making further vicious threats. Why did this happen as Christians and Muslims have lived together in total peace in this province up to now?

In the UK a street preacher was convicted of a public order offence for holding a placard saying which said 'Stop Homosexuality' 'Stop Immorality' 'Turn to Jesus' and the court said those words were abusive and insulting' to a certain section of the community and churches have been asked to remove signs saying the "Jesus is the way the truth and the life "in case they offend the surrounding communities. A recent front page headline in the International Express says "Christ Banned "and over the page "Taxman bars Christmas Charity Boxes ". Both describe incidents of political correctness gone mad. The first article tells of a museum who has banned the term BC (before Christ) and replaced it with the term BP (before present) so that no offence is caused. The second article relate hoe bosses at Revenue and Customs have prevented staff from collecting gifts for an organization called Operation Christmas Child because the organization is overtly Christian. Revenue staff had been supporting this charity since the late 1990s.

We will follow a similar path in South Africa if political correctness is allowed to continue unconstrained. It was reported recently in a Cape newspaper that the Mayor of Cape Town upon discovering that many churches hire community halls on a Sunday where they hold services, threatened to put a stop to this as it was not "balanced " . During elections President Mbeki joked that he would beat his sister if she voted for the ACDP. There was outrage at the referral to beating a woman but not that he stated that the ACDP was a "silly" party. He has attacked the ACDP in parliament lashing out at dearly held Christian beliefs about the sanctity of life and the place of the Church in society. He chooses a man like Zuma to head up the moral regeneration program and HIV council knowing that he had four wives and that his lifestyle does not provide the best role model.

Proposed new laws are being considered which could have a major impact on church activity and the practice of Christianity in South Africa. Similar bills have been passed in other countries with serious results for churches. The proposed hate speech bill has serious consequences.

Under the same type of legislation Pastor Daniel Scot of Australia was convicted of hate speech for a church seminar on the tenets of Islam. In the Mercury on Nov 10 th it was reported that pastor Ake Green in Stockholm has been found guilty under that countries hate speech legislation for preaching against homosexual practices.

This trend in South Africa springs directly from the ideas contained in the constitution and expanded by activist Judges. Judge Edwin Cameron who is a outspoken and well known Gay rights activist ruled in favour of same sex marriages in the high court. Prayer has been removed from parliament, schools and other institutions and the name of Jesus are considered an offense. We need to take note of the wave of Christohobia (anti-Christian) and political correctness which is sweeping our country and do some thing about it. We must complain about blasphemy being broadcast on SABC and stand up for our religious freedoms. If we do not wake up and rally we will find preaching the biblical gospel impossible without being prosecuted.