

A TESTIMONY TO THE AUTHORITIES

The Church believes that the authorities have the responsibility to govern in such a way that the safety and quality of life of all citizens are safeguarded and promoted. We are thankful that we have a Constitution entrenching the rights of citizens. As believers we want to abide by the laws of the country and we are strongly opposed to any form of anarchy.

At present most of the people in our country experience worry, uncertainty and even fear. The following trends contribute to this:

- **Crime, violence and corruption.** The prevalence of crime, violence and corruption has reached a stage where many people have lost all confidence in the authorities. Notwithstanding many representations made by many different sectors of our society and calls that the authorities have to do something decisive about the situation, there is no improvement. Innocent people are subject to crime and violence. Inhabitants of our country are senselessly and cruelly murdered daily. Rape, child molestation and corruption have become an integral part of our daily lives. People come to the conclusion that the authorities are not able to maintain law and order. This untenable situation causes people to take the law into their own hands to protect themselves. This is a prelude to anarchy and unnecessary bloodshed.
- **Shortage of skills and infrastructure.** There is a perception among most South Africans that the country is deteriorating rapidly as a result of bad management and a shortage of skills. These factors cause a collapse of the infrastructure in many areas such as the provision of electricity, health care, education, the road network and the increase of poverty and HIV/Aids. Injudicious transformation and affirmative action are partly to

blame for this. An ever-increasing stream of people emigrating gives rise to a further loss of necessary expertise.

- **Racism.** Instead of reconciliation racism is escalating (white on black and black on white). Stereotyping and the inclination to blame racism for everything that goes wrong, heightens the tension and leads to conflict. The disparagement of language rights and home language teaching of minority groups as well as irresponsible affirmative action heightens the feeling of powerlessness.
- **Agriculture and food supply.** The excessive rises in input costs, for example fertiliser and fuel prices in the agricultural sector, make it impossible for producers specifically in the corn trade to survive financially. This fact, coupled with an increase in the violent and cruel murders on farms, uncertainty concerning ownership rights and an apparent lethargy on the part of the authorities to support and protect them, lead to the fact that many farmers leave the sector. This can give rise to food shortages, calamity and famine on a scale never before seen in South Africa and the rest of Africa.
- **Crisis in Zimbabwe.** The hesitancy of the authorities and the President to take a strong and clear stand on the immoral and undemocratic actions and accompanying violation of human right of the ruling party in Zimbabwe strengthens the perception that in time the same will also occur in South Africa.

A call on the President and the government

On behalf of millions of Christians in South Africa (75% of the population) we beseech you to take drastic measures to restore law and order according to the Constitution. We assure you that we pray for you and the government continually. Hear the desperate plea of the largest part of the population of South Africa before it is too late!

A call on all fellow believers and citizens of South Africa

Many people are traumatised and suffering. Many people live in poverty, fear and uncertainty. Pessimism is rife. We call on all people in South Africa to work together to eradicate all wrongdoing in our society. We want to urge members of our various churches and all fellow believers to be strong in the faith in these difficult circumstances and to put our faith in God. Our future is in his hands now and always. As believers we have to live responsibly before God in all circumstances. Maintain the values and virtues found in the Word of God. Comfort, console and support one another. Pray for and help those that suffer. Pray that God will give his wisdom to those that govern us. May God grant that we will live in freedom and peace in our beautiful country!

On behalf of:

The Dutch Reformed Church

The Netherdutch Reformed Church in Africa

The Reformed Churches of South Africa

Pretoria

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