

The Promise of Life in All Its  
Fulness

Alexandra  
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John 10 vs 1-16

John 10 vs 10 - I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly (K.J. version) Or: "I have come that men may have life, and may have it in all its fulness" (New English B)

What an incredible statement! This is the utterance of either a super-arrogant, boastful person who wants to boost his ego - or it is the utterance of a person who has at his disposal a power and a commitment far above that of ordinary human beings!

I have come that men may have life, and have it in all its fulness <sup>not</sup> abundantly!"

These words are of Christ - they reflect in his own words the central purpose of his life & ministry. In order to understand and grasp the full truth contained in this momentous announcement two things need to be remembered:

1. In referring to life & life more abundantly, Christ is not referring here only to the life hereafter, to life after death. For centuries a these words of Christ have inter-

1. <sup>the</sup> <sup>church in its</sup> preaching and ~~church~~ practice to refer | 2  
only or mostly to life after death - thus  
making of it a spiritualized faith in  
the hereafter having little relevance or mea-  
ning for life here and now. Nothing  
could be further from the truth; if Christ  
states that He has come <sup>to</sup> that men  
may have life & life abundantly, he first  
and foremost refers to this life with all  
its needs: bread and butter, clothing and  
housing, health and security - they all  
form an essential part of a <sup>human</sup> life and Christ  
has a concern for all these needs as his  
ministry has proven so clearly: he fed the  
hungry, he healed the sick, he protects the  
helpless, he raises the dead.

2. In referring to life and life more abun-  
dantly Christ does not refer to one group,  
one class, one race, one nation only:  
He uses the general word men, they thereby  
stating God's purpose for all his children,  
for all human beings, all classes, all races,  
all nations.

(3)

But when we look around us, at our own lives and daily experience, can we truly say that we experience that Christ is giving us life - and that more abundantly? If we just think of so much poverty & hunger, so much sorrow and sickness, pain and distress where there is this life in all its fullness?

This question becomes even more pertinent if we contemplate on what large numbers of our black community in S.A. have experienced over the past few years: the constant conflict and crisis in which they live, the detestation of thousands amongst them, the people, especially young people who have been wounded and killed, houses which have been burnt and bombed, hundreds and possibly thousands of young people who have fled the country and many others living in hiding: Is this life as God intended it for his people, his children? // Is this the fullness that Christ talks about? The life abundantly? If this is what God has intended then I for one do not want to acknowledge and worship such a God!

Thousands of black people, over the past decades <sup>(4)</sup>  
of apartheid rule, but especially over the past 3  
years of emergency rule, have asked the same  
question: what kind of a God is this? It  
seems to us, they say, there is one God for the  
white man and another God for the black  
man. The God of the white man looks very  
well after his children: they enjoy many more  
privileges, they earn a larger income, they  
live in bigger ~~the~~ houses, they have better schooling  
and education, they are given large support  
by the other white nations (esp. the 3 great  
Western powers). // It seems, they say, as if this  
God favours the white man more because He  
loves them more! If this is so, ~~that~~  
this is a white God supporting the white  
man, then see, the black people, have got  
to find another God - our own God for the  
blacks. That is why so many of our young  
people in the black community, have lost their  
faith in the God of the white community.  
They say: He cannot be our God - we  
must find another God!

Our text tells us a totally different ~~story~~<sup>message</sup>. [5  
(as the whole Bible does):

1. There is only one God - the God of love and justice, ~~for all~~ who loves all his children because they have all been created in his image, who seeks justice for all his children, who promises life (and that abundantly) for all his children not only in the life hereafter but also in the life here and now!

2. This God wants us to know and understand that all suffering caused by the injustice created by man is not of God, is not willed by God and not wanted by God!

If man through his greed, his fear, his prejudice, created conditions, customs, laws & systems which lead to injustice and oppression God is not on the side of such injustice & oppression