

## The Road to Righteousness in our Land

Emmanuel Temple, 10-03-55.

Intro: I wish to express my sincere gratitude to Rabbi Dr. Mendel and The Emmanuel Temple for creating this opportunity to discuss an issue of such importance. Regret the fact of speakers & audience being exclusively / predominantly white - through no fault of the organizers but it nevertheless reflects part of the situation of estrangement & polarization between black & white which we have reached in our country. For I believe that our country finds itself in a situation of serious national crisis and I think there will be general agreement to -right on this statement. The variance or disagreement will arise when we try to ascertain what the nature & extent of this crisis is. The central theme of to-night's meeting: "The Road to Righteousness in our Land" implies the acknowledgement that our society is an unjust one, a land lacking in true righteousness!! For those of us who are adherent to either ~~the~~ Jewish Judaism or the Christian faith this raises an important ~~issue~~ <sup>question</sup>: to what degree are we concerned about the issue of justice in our land? And to what degree do we believe that the issue of justice is of crucial importance in determining the future of our land?

I believe there are 5 important principles [2]  
~~not stated for~~ every religion & every faith claiming to  
have a concern for justice & wishing to promote  
the cause of justice: (as reflected in the teachings of O R M I)

1. God as a God of love and justice always takes  
the side of all those who are oppressed, who are deprived  
of justice, who become the victims or the sufferers  
under acts or systems of injustice. This does not  
imply that God does not love or has a concern  
for the oppressor but his love is one for the person  
over against his actions, his policies, his practices of  
injustice.

2. Basic to God's sense of justice is his insistence that  
every human being, espec. those who believe themselves  
to be the victims of oppression & injustice, should  
be granted the free & unrestrained opportunity to  
express in a responsible way, his view of the  
injustice inflicted upon him, his group, his com-  
munity. A truly just society should not only  
create such platforms but protect & cherish them  
en help people to express their convictions without  
fear of reprisal or revenge.

3. God as a God of love & justice wishes us, his followers,  
to stand in solidarity with all individuals & com-  
munities who suffer under oppression & injustice  
& to give them visible, concrete proof of such  
solidarity.



God's  
4. Justice requires that we do everything in our 3  
power to remove every form of injustice and dismantle  
every system sustaining or entrenching structural  
forms of injustice.

5. God's justice requires that we continually look  
for, seek & put into practice efforts to affect  
true reconciliation between opposing or conflict-  
ing groups or individuals standing in fear  
or enmity towards one another. For God is the  
God of love & peace, <sup>mercy</sup> but He is also the God of justice  
and therefore constant that no reconciliation is  
ever possible as long as injustice has not been  
honestly faced & removed.

Turning now to South Africa I would wish to  
3 fundamental convictions which I hold which I regard  
to be fundamental prerequisites if we wish to  
build a society of peace with justice:

1. In the sphere of politics, <sup>rightly</sup> There can never be peace  
with justice in our land as long as a substantial  
section of the total community of S.A. regards it as  
be in conflict with a political system which it  
regards as basically unjust. Could I provide you  
with just 3 examples to prove my point (there  
are many more):

1.1 - The greater majority of the people of our  
land does not believe that the new constitution or

the present process of reform could provide the solution to the or the basis for peace with justice in our land 14

1.2 - The greater majority of the people of our land does not believe that any meaningful dialogue between white & black is possible as long as the people they regard as their true leaders remain imprisoned or in exile

1.3 - Requesting the treason trial starting in Muth on March 29, a trial which could last between one to 3 years - some or all of the 16 NDF & Trade Union traitors are found guilty of treason it will make no difference to the feelings of millions of people in the country who regard these 16 as authentic leaders, as fighters for justice - as heroes in the struggle for liberation

2. In the sphere of econ. rights: There can never be peace with justice in our land as long as a substantial sector of the total worker community of S.A. regards itself to be exploited by an economic system which it believes to be fundamentally unjust. If you wish to have the proof of this statement just look at the large number of strikes in 1984 and the ongoing number of strikes in 1985 despite the econ. recession, despite retrenchments & dismissals



3. In the sphere of educational rights: There can never be peace with justice as long as a substantial sector of the student community regards itself to be at war with an educational system which it rejects as totally or basically unjust. Do I need to prove my point? During 1954 we had almost 200,000 students (scholarships) boycotting schools & universities at some stage and currently 24 schools <sup>& education</sup> with over 40,000 scholars or students are closed.

### Initial Concrete Steps ~~towards~~ on the Road towards Righteousness in our Land:

1. We have to start with an honest and open confession on the part of all religious bodies, including the churches, that by our silence, our compromise or our fear of taking a stand through action, we have betrayed not only our faith but also our country.
2. We have to set as a primary goal of justice the most urgent & disparate need for channels of trusted communication between white & black - for whites to discover the deepest feelings of anger & bitterness in the hearts of blacks and for blacks to discover the terrible fears and myths prevailing in the hearts of whites. One of the major stumbling blocks - our biased or misinformed media (SABC/SATV, white-controlled press (both government & anti-government))

3. The road to justice can only be found if the people controlling the econ. wealth & resources of the country begin to redress the fundamental econ. injustices under which the majority of the people suffer.

4. The road to justice is only to be found if the loss of faith in the present legal system of S.A. in the hearts of the greater majority of the people of our land is restored. Do we realise how many members of our black community have lost so much faith in our legal system that they no longer regard it as a system of justice in 2 crucial areas of their lives: Pass laws & die flux control & security legislation? How does one build a just society if some of the crucial pillars of justice are absent or cracked and crumbling?

5. The road to justice can only be found if there is a deep conviction in the hearts of all those who are prepared to walk that road that people of widely differing cultures, customs, races & beliefs can build a common society in the land they love & serve (based on justice)