

**THE CHURCH AND POLITICAL VIOLENCE IN KWAZULU-
NATAL: AN EVALUATION OF THE NATAL CHURCH
LEADERS GROUP ECUMENICAL RESPONSE (1987-1996).**

BY

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DECLARATIONS

I hereby declare that unless specifically indicated to the contrary in the text, the whole thesis is my own original work and has not been submitted elsewhere for a degree.



Michael Mbona



Date

As the supervisor, I have agreed to the submission of this thesis.



Professor Philippe Denis



Date

DEDICATION

To my beloved parents and to the Natal Church Leaders' Group

ABSTRACT

Clashes between supporters of the United Democratic Front, the Congress of South African Trade Unions and later the African National Congress on the one hand and Inkatha Freedom Party on the other hand from the mid 1980s to the late 1990s cost the province of KwaZulu-Natal thousands of lives. Individuals, families and communities lost lives, property, and essential services were disrupted. Church leaders from some mainline churches in the Natal Province resolved to respond to the crisis ecumenically by creating a forum to share ideas and coordinate action. The churches included the Methodist Church of Southern Africa (MCSA), the Anglican Church (CPSA), the Roman Catholic Church (RCC), the Presbyterian Church (PC), the United Congregational Church of South Africa (UCCSA) and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Southern Africa (ELCSA). An informal ecumenical body known as the Natal Church Leaders' Group (NCLG) was formed in 1988, and was renamed KwaZulu-Natal Church Leaders' Group (KNCLG) in 1994. Para-church organisations like the Pietermaritzburg Agency for Christian Social Awareness (PACSA), Diakonia, and the Vuleka Trust, among others, were co-opted into the group. They probably acted under the inspiration of contextual theology.

A close study of both oral and written sources established that the NCLG adopted a threefold strategy, identified as mediation, being prophetic, and pastoral care. This study seeks to evaluate the initiatives undertaken by the Church in response to the political violence. Political mediation takes place when there is consensus between warring parties on the choice of a mediator who should be trusted by both and seen as non-partisan. The Church's understanding of its call to being prophetic was at conflict with its mediation role. This was coupled with internal dynamics within the NCLG membership. The problem was how the Church could reveal the truth about a conflict and yet at the same time promote dialogue between the warring parties. An illustration of this dichotomy dominated the scene from 1988 to 1996. The NCLG did not work in isolation of the government, political parties, the South African Council of Churches (SACC) and the local and international community. The findings demonstrate the value of historical methodologies by engaging both oral and written primary and secondary sources to evaluate the role of the NCLG within the context of history of Christianity in South Africa.

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I am grateful to all staff of the various libraries and archives for assisting me to access essential reading materials. I salute them for all their patience and kindness. Special mention is made of the staff of the Natal Diocesan Archives not only for assisting me with papers from the Bishop Nuttall Collection, but for affording me with the liberty to use their office as a venue to three of my interviews. In the same regard Bishop Michael Nuttall deserves my sincere appreciation for having deposited papers of the Natal Church Leaders Group in the archives and that has made them accessible for this research. I am indebted to him for interest in the topic and on a number of instances he availed me his time to respond to questions.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AE	African Enterprise
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
AMEC	African Methodist Episcopal Church
ANC	African National Congress
APC	Alan Paton Centre and Struggle Archives
BHL	Bessie Head Library
CFG	Church Facilitators Group
COSATU	Congress of South African Trade Unions
CPSA	Church of the Province of Southern Africa
DDCC	Durban and District Council of Churches
EASA	Evangelical Alliance of South Africa
ELCSA	Evangelical Lutheran Church of Southern Africa
EMPSA	Ecumenical Monitoring Programme of South Africa
EPP	Ecumenical Peacemakers Programme
FEDSEM	Federal Theological Seminary of Southern Africa
HIV	Human Immuno-deficiency Virus
ICT	Institute of Contextual Theology
IDAMASA	Interdenominational Ministers Association of South Africa
IFP	Inkatha Freedom Party
JWG	Joint Working Group
KZN	KwaZulu-Natal
KZNCC	KwaZulu-Natal Christian Council
KNCF	KwaZulu-Natal Crisis Fund
KNCLG	KwaZulu-Natal Church Leaders Group
LDRC	Local Dispute Resolution Committee
LTI	Lutheran Theological Institute
MCC	Mennonite Central Committee
MCSA	Methodist Church of Southern Africa
MDM	Mass Democratic Movement
NBA	Natal Baptist Association
NDA	Natal Diocesan Archives

NCF	Natal Crisis Fund
NKG	Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk
NPA	National Peace Accord
PAC	Pan African Congress
PC	Presbyterian Church
PCA	Presbyterian Church of Africa
PACSA	Pietermaritzburg Agency for Christian Social Awareness
PM	Practical Ministries
PWG	Peace Working Group
RCC	Roman Catholic Church
RDC	Regional Dispute Committee
RDRC	Regional Dispute Resolution Committee
RPC	Regional Peace Committee
RPCSA	Reformed Presbyterian Church of South Africa
VT	Vuleka Trust
SA	Salvation Army
SACBC	Southern African Catholic Bishops Conference
SACC	South African Council of Churches
SADF	South African Defence Force
SFT	Standing for the Truth
UCCSA	United Congregational Church of Southern Africa
UKZN	University of KwaZulu-Natal
URCSA	Uniting Reformed Church of South Africa
WCC	World Council of Churches

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1: Background

This study focuses on how Churches responded to political violence from the last years of apartheid to the first few years of democracy in KwaZulu-Natal province, South Africa. Between 1985 and 1996 the total number of deaths from political conflict violence in KwaZulu-Natal alone was twelve thousand.¹ At first this involved the United Democratic Front (UDF), the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and later the African National Congress (ANC) (from 1990 when it was unbanned), on the one hand and Inkatha (later the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) in 1990), on the other hand.² Statistics will show later how deaths from these political clashes rose significantly after September 1987 onwards. By the end of 1990, political violence had claimed over 4000 lives, destroyed an immense amount of property and turned thousands of families into refugees.³ The Natal Church Leaders' Group (NCLG) was formed on the 7th of May 1988 in response to a political crisis in the province. It was constituted by provincial leaders of the Church of the Province of Southern Africa (CPSA), the Methodist Church of Southern Africa (MCSA), the Roman Catholic Church (RCC), the Presbyterian Church of Africa (PCA), the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa (UCCSA), and later, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Southern Africa (ELCSA). The directors of the Vuleka Trust (VT), Diakonia in Durban, and the Pietermaritzburg Agency for Christian Social Awareness (PACSA) were incorporated. The NCLG mission was stated as follows:

The NCLG sees its mission as being the body through which the Church leaders can act decisively in crisis situations, through informing themselves of the issues underlying the crisis, supporting each other in collective or denominational action, and through collective attempts at mediation, peacekeeping, crisis relief, solidarity with the victims of violence, and prophetic challenge.⁴

These church leaders had over the years realised that dealing with the crisis single-handedly had proved futile. Concerted effort was therefore set into place to discuss a way forward amid increased tension between warring parties.

¹ P. Denis, "Indians versus Russians: An Oral History of the Political Violence in Nxamalala", in *Journal of Natal and Zulu History*, 24 & 25 (2006-2007), 64.

² *Ibid.*

³ Natal Diocesan Archives, Pietermaritzburg (NDA) DN/DR/B/17.15.2.47, Mission Statement of NCLG, 31 January 1991. See also DN/DR/B/17.15.1.2 Minutes of NCLG Meeting of NCLG, 7 May 1988.

⁴ DN/DR/B/17.15.2.47, Mission Statement of NCLG, 31 January 1991.

1.2: Statement of the Problem

The major question that the study seeks to answer therefore is: *What were the achievements and shortcomings of the NCLG in the KwaZulu-Natal political violence from 1987 - 1996?*

The purpose of the research is to show some of the possible undercurrents that were responsible for the NCLG's achievements and limitations. In line with that the study seeks to critically analyse the nature and level of support given to members of the NCLG by member churches, other churches and religious faiths, political parties, the government, the generality of society in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, and the international community.

The hypotheses are as follows:

- (i) Internal and external factors were responsible for the limited achievements of the NCLG in its mediation and pastoral efforts to curb political violence in KwaZulu-Natal.
- (ii) The neutrality of the members of the NCLG was held in suspicion and the perception that some of them might have been partisan was an impediment to their mediation efforts.
- (iii) The alleged complicity of the state was perceived by the NCLG as a contributing factor in the political violence.

1.3: Theoretical Framework

This study falls within the broad context of the history of Christianity in South Africa and will use contextual theology as its theoretical framework. Contextual theology in South Africa was initially developed as part of the Church's response to apartheid. However, the worrying rise of political violence presented another unique context for churches. This theology asserts that the Christian faith has to be married to the realities of life experiences in which the believers find themselves. Albert Nolan asserted: "Contextualisation, then, is the process of discovering 'what the Spirit is saying to the Churches' in our own context today and this is done in the light of what the Spirit said to the Churches and the prophets and Jesus in the past."⁵ From a South African point of view, contextual theology was characterised by the Church's critical analysis of the political, social and economic situation and its advocacy for practical

⁵ A. Nolan, *God in South Africa: The challenge of the gospel* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1988), 27.

action.⁶ The Church practising contextual theology has to wrestle with the socio-political and economic situation. According to John de Gruchy this situation provided the context for the life and mission of the Church.⁷ Thus, after an analysis of the situation in Kwa-Zulu-Natal, the NCLG sought to wrestle with a political crisis that threatened peace and the well-being of ordinary people. Life among church members and the rest of the community was adversely strained as suspicion and tension swept across parts of the province. In some instances people allegedly took advantage of political conflict by opening up old wounds but at times mere hatred led to victimisation.⁸ Clergy were 'expected' to conduct funerals for all victims of political violence regardless of political affiliation.⁹

Contextual theology entailed that the Church had to play a prophetic role by fearlessly denouncing the massive killings of people and the growing numbers of refugees. The Church, which confesses the incarnation of God in Christ, had to be involved in a political struggle for justice and human rights, for peace and reconciliation.¹⁰ Basic human rights, like freedom of choice and association came under severe threat in Natal, as in some other parts of the country. Martin Luther suggested that church leaders who decide to be prophetic must have a right relationship with God, need to be prayerful, and finally they should speak up in the name of Christ.¹¹ In the subsequent chapters we shall draw attention to some of the methods and activities that bear a reflection of this point. Avery Dulles also argued that it is part of the Church's role to discern the signs of the times and to offer guidance and prophetic criticism to the world.¹² Therefore if the Church has to be contextual it cannot afford to ignore situations like political violence. The NCLG had to deal with the context of massive killings, loss of property and displacement in rural areas and black townships.

⁶ M. M. Mpumlwana, "The Road to Democracy: The Role of Contextual Theology", *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 85, (December 1993), 7.

⁷ J. de Gruchy, *The Church Struggle in South Africa*, 25th Anniversary Edition, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005), 151.

⁸ Dorcas Mkhize, interview by author on 13 October 2008 in Pietermaritzburg.

⁹ P. Kerchhoff, "The Role of the Churches: Natal Church Leaders Group" in L. Levine (ed) *Hope Beyond Apartheid: The Peter Kerchhoff Years of PACSA, 1979-1999* (Pietermaritzburg: PACSA, 2002), 169.

¹⁰ W. Huber, "The Role of the Church in Situations of Transition", in *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 74, (March 1991), 14.

¹¹ K. Nürnberger, *Martin Luther's message for us today: A perspective from the South* (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 2005), 260.

¹² A. Dulles, *Models of the Church* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1976), 91.

William Temple, who served as Anglican Archbishop of York in 1941, and subsequently Canterbury in 1942, spelt out his perception of the Church's role in politics. His views were probably influenced by his reflection on World War I and World War II.¹³ He argued that the Church could play a role wherever and whenever political conflict developed. Though his ideas were shaped by events in Western Europe and not in a South African context, his argument that the role of church leaders is to bring conflicting political parties to a negotiation table is relevant for this topic. He made a critical observation that the Church should not undertake to give judgement between contending parties. The Church leaders' role was to be promoters of good will.¹⁴ This view is critical for this research because the task of the Church is to announce Christian principles and point out where the existing social order at any time is in conflict with such principles.¹⁵ In Bob Clarke's view there was a misconception that if the Church speaks prophetically on some issues of justice or civil rights, it is mixing religion and politics. He argued that Church leaders must address relevantly the critical social-political and ethical issues of society but advised that they need to be set apart from the party-political debate.¹⁶

Although debatable, the response of the NCLG to the outbreak of political conflict and violence in Natal was reminiscent of *The Kairos Document*. It was initiated and published in September 1985 by members of the Institute of Contextual Theology (ICT) and signed by over 150 Church leaders and theologians in South Africa.¹⁷ The Kairos theologians identified three theological responses by the Church to the apartheid regime in South Africa. These were State Theology, Church Theology and Prophetic Theology. State theology tended to justify apartheid in the name of God while Church theology was implied in the Church's engagement with the call for justice, reconciliation and non-violence. Prophetic theology tended to be more radical.¹⁸ This development within contextual theology provided a framework to discuss the NCLG role amid political conflict and violence. However, this should not

¹³ W. Temple, *Christianity and Social Order* (London: Shephard-Walwyn, 1976), 6.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 43.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 58.

¹⁶ B. Clarke, "Confronting the Crisis: Church-State relations" in F. England and T. Paterson, (eds) *Bounty in Bondage: The Anglican Church in Southern Africa: Essays in honour of Edward King, Dean of Cape Town* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1989), 130.

¹⁷ <http://cache.search.yahoo-ht2.akadns.net/search/cache?ei=UTF-8&p=the+kairos+doc>, accessed on 17 July 2008.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

be regarded as a claim that all Church leaders agreed completely with the principles set out by the *Kairos Document*. A number of Church leaders including Bishop Michael Nuttall expressed discomfort with its prophetic emphasis.¹⁹ Those whose words and actions were guided by Prophetic Theology read the 'signs of the times', meaning that they carried out a critical analysis of any given situation in order to understand what was happening and then act in the context of the Bible.²⁰

Finally, *The Road to Damascus* document developed by Christians from the Philippines, South Korea, Namibia, South Africa, El Salvador, Nicaragua and Guatemala²¹ as part of contextual theology had a bearing on the NCLG response too. Its main emphasis was that Christians should see the continuous need for self-criticism and conversion as they face the road ahead of them like the road to Damascus where Paul received his conversion. It entails that Christians who had previously compromised their position for political, economic and selfish reasons should have a decisive turnabout.²² In South Africa alone 475 signatories from a variety of churches or denominational traditions including the so-called mainline churches, African Initiated Churches, and Evangelical and Pentecostal churches acceded to *The Road to Damascus: Kairos and Conversion* document.²³

One of the relevant issues identified by this document was low intensity conflict in which the apartheid government discredited all those involved in seeking to bring about positive change. The government presented itself as democratic and yet the ANC and those who strove for the liberation of all people were labelled as communists. "In highly repressive and polarised situations, it promotes reformist alternatives or a "third force."²⁴ Members of the NCLG shared a perception that the government was involved in the political conflict between the UDF/COSATU/ANC versus Inkatha as a third force. Government neutrality was held in question.²⁵ This

¹⁹ Michael Nuttall, interview conducted by author on 10 October 2007 in Pietermaritzburg.

²⁰ The ICT, *The Kairos Document: The Challenge to the Church*, Revised Second Edition, (Braamfontein: Skotaville Publishers, 1986), 2.

²¹ R. M. Brown, (ed), *Kairos: Three Prophetic Challenges to the Church* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1990), 113.

²² *Ibid.*, 114.

²³ The ICT, *The Road to Damascus: Kairos and Conversion* (Braamfontein: Skotaville Publishers, 1989), 24-32.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 5.

²⁵ Nuttall, same interview. See also John Aitchison, interview conducted by author on 18 August 2008

was relevant to the NCLG on the basis of their sympathetic attitude towards victims of political violence and the subsequent mediation role and pastoral efforts. Self-criticism and conversion on their part was critical if no fingers were to be pointed at them as individuals or as a group. We need to appreciate that as individuals they were entitled to freedom of political association but how far they could do so and still be seen as non-partisan remains to be revealed.

1.4: Limitations and Delimitations

A major limitation of this research is its lack of capacity to give a detailed analysis of political violence in KwaZulu-Natal because that was out of its scope. This aspect has been dealt with by others elsewhere. The ideal thing to do was to visit all the archives of the member churches of the NCLG but this was limited by practical constraints. However, maximum usage of the Natal Diocesan Archives (NDA) was made. It is conveniently located in Pietermaritzburg and most relevant written papers were accessible. The use of five interviews limited the scope of views from oral sources but there were a few logistical problems, which might affect the depth of work. However those that were chosen and interviewed provided crucial input. The findings of the study have therefore been affected by these limitations.

The research focussed on the role played by churches in response to political violence from 1987 to 1996. It was important for this study to establish a link between the increase in politically motivated violence in 1987 and the formation of the NCLG in May 1988.²⁶ The year 1990 was significant due to the unbanning of all political parties and the release of political prisoners including former president Nelson Mandela in February and the study examined how that impacted on political violence in KwaZulu-Natal. The research unpacks key developments during the period of transition from 1991 until the first democratic elections of 1994. Finally 1996 has been selected for this research because it was the year when the local government elections were held in KwaZulu-Natal. An interest in the pattern of political violence and the role of the NCLG during those elections is the findings.

in Pietermaritzburg.

²⁶ DN/DR/B/17.15.1.2, Minutes of NCLG Meeting, 7 May 1988.

1.5: Key Questions

This research describes and analyses the role played by the NCLG during the political violence in KwaZulu-Natal. After being established the NCLG availed itself to the warring parties and sought to play a mediation role by seeking to bring the political parties to negotiations for a peaceful solution. In this light the research seeks to establish the legitimacy of the NCLG as a political mediator in the conflict and violence and analyse how that impacted on its efforts. The study also investigated the extent to which inner dynamics within the NCLG affected its political mediation, prophetic role and pastoral work. The findings of this research were useful in highlighting the complexities of the dynamic relationship between standing for the truth and being mediators. It also established the nature of pastoral activities and highlight sources of support. This study will also discuss the perceptions of the NCLG on the alleged complicity of the state in the political violence.

The work of the NCLG was voluntary and its success hinged on the willingness by the political players to come together for peace talks or their ability to mobilise their members and supporters to stop violence. Major political developments such as resistance to apartheid, release of former president Nelson Mandela, unbanning of political parties in February 1990,²⁷ and the first democratic elections of April 1994, had direct and indirect influence on violence in KwaZulu-Natal. The key issue for the research will be to investigate and evaluate to what extent the NCLG fulfilled its mission statement. Thus the findings of the research will bring fresh insights on how Church leaders engaged in peace initiatives, pastoral work, and being prophetic in an attempt to deal with acts of politically motivated violence. Through the NCLG the Church became an active partner engaged in contemporary issues by siding with those suffering. This was despite lack of support and participation by some churches that remained at the periphery of the disastrous situation.

Sub-questions included the following:

- (i) To what extent was the NCLG a suitable mediator and how did the various role players perceive the legitimacy of its mediation role?
- (ii) Did the NCLG achieve its goals? If yes, with what level of success and if not, with what level of failure?

²⁷ Bessie Head Library (BHL), *The Natal Witness*, "The President's opening address", 3 February 1990, 3.

- (iii) How effective were the strategies used by the NCLG in peace mediation and pastoral work?
- (iv) What were some of the major obstacles to conflict mediation and how did the NCLG attempt to address those obstacles?
- (v) How relevant was the NCLG role in contributing to political tolerance and multi-party democracy in KwaZulu-Natal and South Africa?

1.6: Broader issues and Objectives

Related to the threefold strategy of the NCLG mentioned above we examine the effectiveness of each action in the context of addressing the effects of political violence, and initiatives to broker peace. The chief objective of the research was to carry out an evaluation of the role of the NCLG in the political violence in KwaZulu-Natal between 1987 and 1996.

This main objective was been broken down into the following specific objectives:

- (a) To establish how and why the NCLG was formed.
- (b) To establish the work of the NCLG from 1988-1996.
- (c) To investigate how the ANC, COSATU, UDF and IFP responded to the NCLG mediation efforts.
- (d) To investigate how the state responded to the work of the NCLG.
- (e) To establish how internal dynamics within the NCLG might have positively or negatively affected its role.
- (f) To establish the amount of support received by the NCLG from organisations based in Natal, South Africa and the rest of the world.
- (g) To find out the kind of pastoral support given to victims of political violence.
- (h) To briefly investigate why some Christian churches and organisations were not keen to join the NCLG in this context.

1.7: Methodology

The research will adopt a qualitative methodology approach by integrating input from written and oral sources.

1.7.1 Primary Written Sources/ Archival Material

The major findings of this research were drawn from archival materials in the form of minutes of meetings of the NCLG and other correspondences related to political

violence in Natal. A collection of the said documents was deposited with the Natal Diocesan Archives (NDA) in Pietermaritzburg. This centre was quite accessible to the researcher by virtue of its location in Pietermaritzburg. The fact that the researcher is an Anglican priest from Zimbabwe had a positive influence on my being granted unlimited access to the documents. Four boxes on the NCLG from Bishop Nuttall's papers were the major primary source. Most of the papers were catalogued and indexed which made it easy to reference but in a few instances one would get lost. For instance, minutes of a meeting dated 4 September 1989²⁸ were wrongly dated as July but a correction was made on 3 October 1989.²⁹ Papers for the Standing for the Truth (SFT) for a "Mass Action" of 2-7 July 1990 were not separately indexed. A letter to the Honourable State President³⁰ and a letter to clergy in Pietermaritzburg³¹ were examples. That some documents were not properly dated placed a difficulty on the archivist's work. Frank Mdlalose's letter to Bishop Nuttall fell under the 1989 catalogue.³² The contents reflect a relationship with events of the said mass action of July 1990 mentioned above.³³ Accurate documents and documentation systems contribute to fewer challenges for historians and researchers.

Some materials used for this research were obtained from PACSA with the assistance of Lou Levine, who is part of the staff, and has edited two books used in this research. It was important for the researcher to visit PACSA because Peter Kerchhoff who was its founding director was also one of the secretaries of the NCLG and its treasurer from 1988.³⁴ On an initial visit, no one seemed to know where the papers could be found until an encounter with Levine on the next visit. Although the researcher hoped to get access to official signed copies of the minutes they were not available here. Patience and persistence paid when the researcher got access to some relevant papers from a box that could not be found elsewhere. The official minute book of the NCLG was deposited in the archives of the KZCCC as stated by Kearney.³⁵ This was

²⁸ DN/DR/B/17.15.1.24 Minutes of NCLG Meeting, 4 July 1989.

²⁹ DN/DR/B/17.15.1.49 Minutes of NCLG Meeting, 3 October 1989.

³⁰ DN/DR/B/17.15.1.140 SFT to the State President, (n. d. but c.a. June 1990).

³¹ NDA SFT to all Ministers and Clergy in Pietermaritzburg, 22 June 1990.

³² DN/DR/B/17.15.1.64 Dr F. T. Mdlalose to the Right Reverend Michael Nuttall, Re: Peace Talks between UDF/COSATU/ANC/ and Inkatha, July 1990 (n. d.).

³³ DN/DR/B/17.15.1.147 Minutes of NCLG Meeting, 23 July 1990.

³⁴ M. Nuttall, "Peter Kerchhoff and the KwaZulu-Natal Church Leaders' Group", in Levine, *Hope Beyond Apartheid*, 189.

³⁵ Kearney, information supplied to author on 10 November 2008.

confirmed by a visit to the KZNCC offices in Pietermaritzburg but the minutes only started from 1994. The other minute book(s) could be located somewhere else if they still exist. The fact that they were missing demonstrated how hazards of conservation affected access to critical information.³⁶

Papers from John Aitchison, Mary de Haas, and Gerhard Mare from the Alan Paton Centre and Struggle Archives (APC) provided critical socio-political insights of the research context. One of the interviews from the APC identified Khoza Mgojo and other clergy who were involved in the September 1989 marches in Pietermaritzburg. This was important because Mgojo was the first convenor of the NCLG and he addressed a crowd twice on that day.³⁷ The South African Conflict Monitor highlighted cases of peace initiatives by independent bodies and the state. The NCLG was mentioned in connection with its request to have an urgent meeting with national and regional leadership of the ANC and IFP in an effort to end violence in the province.³⁸ Much of the NCLG work was not publicised on Internet but in church magazines and newspapers, especially the *Natal Witness*.

The Archives of the Catholic Archdiocese of Durban contain similar papers but in addition have diaries of Archbishop Denis Hurley, which were important in validating dates and other related concerns. A different indexing system is in use but documents are quite accessible. The researcher also used the archives of the Lutheran Theological Institute (LTI), which is part of the Pietermaritzburg Cluster of Theological Institutions. Use of a computerised documentation system enabled the researcher to access archived papers expeditiously. A handful of very informative papers relevant to the topic were found in the Wolfram Kistner Collection. Apart from the archives mentioned above, access to the Bessie Head Library Newspaper section provided relevant articles. Finally the Anglican House of Studies had a handful number of books and articles that were relevant for this research.

³⁶ Based on lecture notes from Advanced Research in History of Christianity at UKZN, May 2008.

³⁷ APC, 98 APB 4 Michael Worsnip, interview conducted by Ruth Lundie on 26 February 1998 in Pretoria,

³⁸ The South African Conflict Monitor, Durban: Centre for Social and Legal Studies, (October 1992), 44.

1.7.2 Oral Sources

Oral history has been defined as a complex interaction between an interviewer and interviewee about events of the past, which requires questioning, as well as listening, on the part of the interviewer and such an encounter shapes the story.³⁹ That such interaction is a complex was valid for the interviews conducted for this research. While some interviewees tended to focus on the subject matter, others like one particular case almost ignored the schedule of questions for part of the interview and this called for a redirecting of the narrative.⁴⁰ For each interview key themes and specific areas of focus had to be sent and acknowledged by interviewee two to four weeks in advance. This is a basic requirement as noted by Benedict Carton and Louse Vis who advised: "Using background information, the researcher might draft some open-ended questions that are intended to invoke the fullest response from the interviewee."⁴¹ A factor which might have been of assistance to the researcher was that the Church leaders and other interviewees had a network that made it possible for the researcher to get acceptance for an interview with less hassles.

The interviews focused on specific issues raised or ignored by the primary sources of data in response to the key question of the research. In order to obtain such input the study targeted some former members of the NCLG, whose interpretation of events was seen by the researcher as being critical in evaluating its achievements and limitations. Bishop Nuttall, now in retirement was selected for interviewing because of his substantial role as a former bishop of the Diocese of Natal 1982 to 2000 and as Dean of the CPSA from 1989 to 1997.⁴² He is one of the few former members of the NCLG who has written a book and articles that have informed this study. As a founder member of the group living in Pietermaritzburg he was quite accessible and assisted with locating the other members. An interview with Paddy Kearney who was then director of Diakonia was vital due to the support given to the NCLG through his involvement as secretary.⁴³ He was actually involved in a number of other initiatives

³⁹ P. Denis, "Introduction", in P. Denis and R. Ntsimane (eds), *Oral History in a Wounded Country: Interactive interviewing in South Africa* (Pietermaritzburg: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2008), 3.

⁴⁰ Mkhize, same interview.

⁴¹ B. Carton and L. Vis, "Doing Oral History", in Denis and Ntsimane, *Oral History in a Wounded Country*, 44.

⁴² See back cover of M. Nuttall, *Number Two to Tutu: A Memoir* (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications), 2003.

⁴³ Paddy Kearney, Interview conducted by author on 21 August 2008 in Pietermaritzburg.

that were linked to the SACC and the NCLG. The Revd Professor John Aitchison was chosen for an interview for two reasons. Firstly, during the period of political violence he was stationed at the Centre for Adult Education, University of Natal (now KwaZulu-Natal) from where he wrote several articles on the war. Secondly, he was co-opted into the NCLG as a resource person or consultant whose contribution provided essential on-the-ground information for the NCLG use.

To broaden the scope of oral sources, an interview with Mrs Joan Kerchhoff, the widow of Peter Kerchhoff was conducted.⁴⁴ Although at first she was hesitant to accept an interview, the outcome of the interview proved that she had a unique story to tell about how fellow white Christians perceived the role of PACSA and the NCLG. Her contribution as a white South African woman, mother, and wife reminded the interviewer of what women went through in such painful times. An interview with Mrs Dorcas Mkhize materialised through the researcher's contact with the KZNCC, where she had served as a former executive committee member in the 1990s.⁴⁵ The interviewee revealed how political violence affected women, children and young people and what actions were taken by Christian Women's groups to deal with those issues. None of the male interviewees spoke about programmes run to assist victims. This was influenced by her former employment as a nurse, a social worker at Bonginkosi that was run by African Enterprise, her leadership role in Methodist Manyano (Mothers Union) and her current attachment to Jabulani Children's Home in Pietermaritzburg. Athol Jennings keenly provided relevant information through e-mail⁴⁶ He is a former director of the Vuleka Trust at Koinonia, Botha's Hill who heard about this research from Paddy Kearney. Georg Scriba, a Lutheran Church minister and Simangaliso Kumalo of UKZN voluntarily gave informative insights through conversation with the author.

1.8 Literature Review

There is a large collection of books and papers that focus on political violence in KwaZulu-Natal from 1985 up to 1997 but the NCLG has not been given adequate attention. In *Hope Beyond Apartheid: The Peter Kerchhoff Years of PACSA, 1979-*

⁴⁴ Joan Kerchhoff, interview conducted by author on 22 August 2008 in Pietermaritzburg.

⁴⁵ KNCC, "Executive Committee as at 31 December 1999", in *KZNCC Annual Report, 1999*.

⁴⁶ Athol Jennings, information given to author by e-mail on 15 October 2008.

1999, edited by Lou Levine, the NCLG came under spotlight in an article by Peter Kerchhoff of PACSA. Kerchhoff highlighted the formation of the NCLG and summarised its activities in three pages.⁴⁷ The said book also contained pictures that highlighted some of the visits undertaken by the NCLG to areas of pain. Though relevant, the attention given to the NCLG was rather inadequate. In the same book Michael Nuttall discussed the life of Peter Kerchhoff as founding director of PACSA and also a founding member of the NCLG. Kerchhoff was remembered by NCLG through his network of contacts with areas of political violence especially in the Pietermaritzburg and Midlands area.⁴⁸ Nuttall traced Kerchhoff's crucial role in organising pastoral visits for the NCLG to some places of political violence.⁴⁹ In an article entitled "Mediation efforts in turbulent times"⁵⁰, Nuttall discussed the role of the NCLG in mediation but gave no attention to its prophetic and pastoral roles. His contribution has relevance for this topic. Michael Nuttall, *Number Two to Tutu: A Memoir*, discussed the work of the churches in the KwaZulu-Natal political violence from a participant point of view.⁵¹ Though quite informative, these were his personal experiences as an Anglican bishop who whose episcopacy coincided with the period of the political violence. It would be interesting for this research to analyse those experiences and compare them with other written and oral sources.

In *Faith in Turmoil: The Seven Days War*, Lou Levine brought together testimonies from victims of the "Seven Days War", March 25 – 31 1990. These highlighted the way some Church leaders responded to the political violence in specific areas like Caluza and St Albert's Mission, Esigodini. They visited families and participated in some funerals.⁵² Mediation efforts by the NCLG fall out of the scope of this book. Relying on this information alone denies the public of a comprehensive picture that would assist in an evaluation of the NCLG. In *The Church Struggle in South Africa*, John W de Gruchy briefly highlighted on the role of the NCLG as part of regional peace initiative structures within the context of political violence in KwaZulu-Natal. Specific names stated included Bishop Michael Nuttall, Archbishop Denis Hurley,

⁴⁷ Kerchhoff, "The Role of the Churches", 172-174.

⁴⁸ Nuttall, "Peter Kerchhoff", 188-192.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ M. Nuttall, "Mediation efforts in turbulent times", in *Natalia* 30, (December 2000), 24-30.

⁵¹ M. Nuttall, *Number Two to Tutu*, 53-103.

⁵² L. Levine, (ed), *Faith in Turmoil: The Seven Days War* (Pietermaritzburg: PACSA, 1999), 35- 67.

and PACSA and Diakonia as having played a key role in the mediation process.⁵³ No detailed attention was given to the mediation role the NCLG.

Matthew Kentridge, in *An Unofficial War: Inside the conflict in Pietermaritzburg*, discussed the early years of the political conflict and mentioned early attempts by individual churches to broker peace but without success. The NCLG and a UDF – COSATU delegation met the minister of Law and Order to establish a commission of enquiry into the violence. He noted that although that initiative faltered, the NCLG comprising representatives from the major churches in Natal continued to work towards the settlement of the conflict.⁵⁴ Beyond these observations the book does not address the achievements of the NCLG and only covered events of violence up to June 1990. Primary documents showed that the NCLG was involved in mediation and pastoral work beyond democracy in 1994 indicating that there was a gap of missing information in the existing body of literature.

There are many original records like minutes of meetings and letters and other documents that provide information on activities carried out by the NCLG. The research sought to make a contribution to this discourse by evaluating the role played by the NCLG more holistically. This was done by way of analysing achievements and limitations in mediation and pastoral work at the time of political violence. The research used written documents to analyse the historical process of the mediation. By analysing original documents and the memories of participants this research intended to substantiate or dismiss claims of both successes and failures by accounting for either of the two. High levels of confidentiality for security reasons possibly surrounded the mediation process and this research seeks to revisit the NCLG twenty years after it was formed.

1.9: Motivation.

The writer is a Zimbabwean national and comes from a country whose political situation has remained very volatile and uncertain for the last five years or more. One of the key challenges was to locate the role of Christian and other faith communities

⁵³ De Gruchy, *The Church Struggle*, 217-218.

⁵⁴ M. Kentridge, *An Unofficial War: Inside the conflict in Pietermaritzburg* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1990), 128, 170, 241.

within that context and seek to appreciate what role they could play to bring peace. Interest to undertake this research was set aflame by Bishop Nuttall, who testified on the role that was played by some mainline churches during political conflict and violence in Natal from the mid 1980s to the mid 1990s. He spoke as a witness to the events of February 1990 in South Africa.⁵⁵ Curiosity to investigate more about the response of Christian churches to conflict and violence contributed to the researcher's choice of this field. Mention of the NCLG mediation, prophetic and pastoral roles stirred my interest in seeking to appreciate the challenges faced by Christian communities in politically volatile times. This study was undertaken to draw lessons on what churches can achieve or fail to achieve when they decide to get involved in a polarised political situation. Personal interest in this research anchors on the role of the Church in Zimbabwe's turbulent moments. It seeks to draw lessons from the NCLG who responded to the voices of the suffering victims of political violence. The study therefore seeks to provide a voice for the church by acknowledging its contribution while at the same time making the church aware of its weaknesses.

⁵⁵ Michael Nuttall, seminar presentation to History of Christianity class at UKZN, 20 March 2007.

CHAPTER TWO: THE NATAL CHURCH LEADERS GROUP

2:1 Introduction

An unprecedented stalemate over dialogue between Inkatha and the other political players soon grew into an open battle for political turf in KwaZulu-Natal. Nuttall confirmed: "A battle for turf in Natal had, by 1987, led to the first incidents of violence and death. These were to escalate hugely in the years which immediately followed. The increase was seriously influenced by a state security establishment that almost invariably took sides with Inkatha in this struggle."⁵⁶ Based on this observation, the writer's interpretation is that from the onset of the NCLG there was shared conviction that the government and Inkatha were to blame for all that was happening. According to this view, the UDF/COSATU and later the ANC were innocent players, but this was not valid. The ANC and its supporters were equally engaged in garnering support.⁵⁷ Inkatha might have sensed this attitude, which could explain why there was little co-operation from its side. Commenting on this notion, the NCLG admitted that they were more supportive of the party that was fighting for the true freedom of all South Africans. However, it was unsafe to be seen as aligned to one political party.⁵⁸ Some of its misgivings arose from the fact that the involvement of Church leaders such as Archbishop Desmond Tutu (patron of UDF), and Archbishop Hurley was also seen in the same light.⁵⁹

The NCLG tried to work with Inkatha and the UDF, COSATU and the ANC when it was unbanned in February 1990. In fact, as stated earlier on there was an outbreak of more violence experienced after the unbanning of the ANC. One reason for this was that Inkatha had up to now, enjoyed political dominance in the Natal province.⁶⁰ A letter written by the president of the UDF, Archibald Gumede, to Chief Buthelezi of Inkatha, was found among the NCLG documents. The letter focused on violence in the province but accused Inkatha as the major culprit.⁶¹ Either Inkatha or the UDF passed this on to the NCLG for information's sake. Our observations were that

⁵⁶ Nuttall, same interview.

⁵⁷ Mkhize, same interview.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ DN/DR/B/17.15.1.160 Report on NCLG and Inkatha delegation Meeting, 13 August 1990.

⁶⁰ Nuttall, same interview.

⁶¹ DN/DR/B/17.15.1.1 A. Gumede, UDF President, to Dr Mangosuthu Buthelezi, President of Inkatha, 19 November 1987.

Inkatha alone was not response for the violence because the UDF also was equally to blame as already noted above.

2:2 Origins

Church leaders' groups in South Africa were formed at various levels to deal with specific issues. Political violence in Natal was one such an issue that prompted the coming together of the Church leadership at various levels. According to De Gruchy Church leaders' groups were formed at various levels to deal with the State of Emergency and the increasing violence in townships in South Africa. "Many church leaders, congregations and Christian activists played an indispensable role in seeking to deal with the violence, not least through the various National and Regional Peace structures which were established."⁶² With the rise of incidents of political violence KwaZulu-Natal, leaders of some of mainline churches and para-church organisations within the then Natal province initiated the establishment of an ecumenical forum. The mission statement gives a hint on when the NCLG was formed. After August 1994, as a result of the dawn of democracy and the creation of new provincial structures, the NCLG subsequently became known as the KwaZulu-Natal Church Leaders' Group (KNCLG).⁶³

This ecumenical body of Methodists, Anglicans and Catholics Church leaders championed the cause. Among them were Presiding Bishops of the Methodist Conference including Khoza Mgojo and Stanley Mogoba. Bishop Michael Nuttall and Archbishop Denis Hurley together with directors of the Vuleka Trust Diakonia and PACSA were at the forefront.⁶⁴ It was noted: "The NCLG was formed on 7 May 1988 in response to the crisis in the province arising out of the political violence that by the end of 1990 had taken over 4 000 lives, destroyed immense amounts of property and turned thousands of families into refugees."⁶⁵ Nuttall acknowledged the same observation but further highlighted that Khoza Mgojo initiated the first meeting of the NCLG. He pointed out how Mgojo who was then President of the MCSA and former president of the Federal Theological Seminary (FEDSEM) in Imbali became increasingly concerned about the violence. "He invited Archbishop Denis Hurley and

⁶² De Gruchy, *The Church Struggle*, 217.

⁶³ DN/DR/B/17.15.3.54 Minutes of NCLG Meeting, 24 August 1994.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ DN/DR/B/17.15.2.2 Minutes of NCLG Meeting, 31 January 1991, with Mission Statement.

myself [Nuttall] to meet with him to just talk about how can we as Church leaders make some sort of response to this violence that seems to be growing amongst us. And so that was the seed.”⁶⁶ This should not be taken as an omission of Stanley Mogoba’s role because he was increasingly involved in peace initiatives regionally in Natal and nationally too. He was one of the recognised voices of the Church at national level like Desmond Tutu and Denis Hurley. For instance, in 1990, Mogoba was aware of the challenges that lay ahead of South Africa when Mandela was released from prison and he warned the nation to restrain from violence.⁶⁷ This was a sign of foresightedness on his part because that turned out to be the reality. He attended some of the meetings of the NCLG and contributed to the groups’ proceedings. Mgojo was more or less a KwaZulu-Natal leader of the MCSA. However, he was also well-known within ecumenical circles through his involvement with the SACC. Peter Kerchhoff of PACSA, Paddy Kearney of Diakonia and Athol Jennings of the Vuleka Trust were incorporated as already noted above.⁶⁸

Briefly we gained insight into the relationship between the NCLG and the three ecumenical agencies. Nuttall stated: “Paddy was Catholic, Peter was Anglican and Athol was Methodist. So we had three Church leaders who belonged to these three churches meeting. We drew in these three ecumenical organisations where the same three churches were represented in their sort of “chief” officers”⁶⁹ Accordingly the group was started by people who knew each other well and perhaps had a close working relationship dating from years before. One would want to understand whether membership was open to Church leaders from other denominations. Further to this, one would like to probe how other church leaders responded to this initiative. A voice from inside the group recalled: “And when we did consult more widely we found that there was general agreement across the body that we should form such a group. We held our first meeting and Khoza Mgojo was our first chairperson.”⁷⁰ The said meeting was chaired by Revd Mgojo and attended by Archbishop Hurley, Bishop Nuttall, Revd Mogoba, Revd John Borman, Revd Lizo Jafta, Revd Athol Jennings and

⁶⁶ Nuttall, same interview.

⁶⁷ BHL, *The Daily News*, “Bishop’s warning of long, hard road ahead”, 14 February 1990, 4.

⁶⁸ Kearney, same interview.

⁶⁹ Nuttall, same interview.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

Peter Kerchhoff.⁷¹ The group was small but offered an opportunity for the Church to face the crisis from an ecumenical perspective.

The exact date of the said first formal meeting of the NCLG has not been easy to establish because the written sources tend to disagree particularly on the year. According to a record of the proceedings of the first meeting held at the Anglican Church Diocesan Office in Durban the date was 7 May but the year was not formally indicated.⁷² None of the interviewees remembered the exact date when the first formal meeting of the NCLG was held and this is possible twenty years later. From a manual inscription of the date of the next meeting being 29 October 1988 at the PACSA Office in Pietermaritzburg, there is likelihood that the possible year was 1988. Kerchhoff who delivered a paper at a conference on political violence in the KwaZulu-Natal Midlands made the following relevant observation: "As a result of the ongoing consultations, a small Church Leaders' group was established in May 1988 under the convenorship of Dr Khoza Mgojo."⁷³ This view supported the 7 of May 1988 as the date of formation. We assume that Kerchhoff, as the first secretary-cum treasurer of the NCLG had access to the original records. This was in contrast to Bishop Nuttall statement that the NCLG had come into existence in 1987.⁷⁴ However, more evidence indicated that the first formal meeting of the NCLG was held on 7 May 1988. This was further supported by diarised entry by Archbishop Hurley, in which this said meeting was recorded and a few notes written.⁷⁵ This formal meeting does not rule out the possibility of prior informal discussions on the issue of political violence in Natal that were stirred by the Revd Mgojo.

Further to that he was already in contact with the minister of Law and Order in regard to the subject. Mgojo advised the meeting that he had written to Mr Vlok in Cape Town on 15 April stating that the Church leaders were still willing and available to help with any peace making effort and indicated to Mr Vlok that the UDF leadership be released from detention to participate fully in the discussions.⁷⁶ This concern on the part of Mgojo and others should be understood on the basis of the fact that

⁷¹ DN/DR/B/17.15.1.2 Minutes of NCLG Meeting, 7 May 1988.

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ Kerchhoff, "The Role of the Churches", 169, 172.

⁷⁴ Nuttall, "Peter Kerchhoff", 188.

⁷⁵ Archives of the Catholic Archdiocese of Durban (ACAD), Archbishop Denis Hurley's Diary 1988.

⁷⁶ DN/DR/B/17.15.1.2 Minutes of NCLG Meeting, 7 May 1988.

political violence in Natal had started as early as 1985 but grew to a magnitude of higher proportion in September 1987. The Pietermaritzburg Chamber of Commerce was invited to attend the Church leaders' meetings. However, the Chamber of Commerce's presence at the NCLG meetings was not documented.

2.3 Purpose

Sources generally concur that increasing concern for political violence in KwaZulu-Natal gave rise to the NCLG. There was a connection between the regional Church leaders' group like the NCLG and a national body called the National Church leaders together with the SACC office. Aitchison argued: "At both levels there was an appeal to churches to play a positive role in society based on their self-confessed nature as agents of God's redemptive concern for suffering humanity."⁷⁷ One of the key tasks of the NCLG at its first meeting was to set up a peace working team. "Authority for the setting up of this team and its co-chairs emanated from the Natal Church leaders, based on the recommendation from the national Church leaders meeting that regional bodies be established."⁷⁸ One of the pressing issues that led to the establishment of the group was a concern in the increase in the number of funerals for victims of the political violence and that the local clergy were being confronted with demands to conduct funerals for the members of families who belonged to their churches."⁷⁹ Clergy especially in rural areas and townships whose ministration at funerals of victims of political violence was demanded were caught up in a trap. The presence or absence of the clergy and what they said at the funerals was often under tight scrutiny and used against them.

Bishop Nuttall echoed similar sentiments when he pointed out that one of the immediate practical concerns that led to the formation of the group was the complexity arising from conducting funerals for members of different political parties.⁸⁰ This saw the straining of relationships among members of the same family and members of the same congregation due to affiliation to different political parties. The real issue in Natal was that there was a lack of political tolerance of one another's

⁷⁷ J. Aitchison, "The Conflict in Natal-prospects for democracy", in K. Nürnberger, (ed), *A Democratic Vision for South Africa: Political realism and Christian responsibility*, (Pietermaritzburg: Encounter, 1991), 375.

⁷⁸ DN/DR/B/17.15.1.2 Minutes of NCLG Meeting, 7 May 1988.

⁷⁹ Kerchhoff, "The Role of the Churches", 169.

⁸⁰ Nuttall, same interview.

view or support. Many other people were simply caught up in crossfire. The scope of the current discussion is not to delve into the details of the relationship between Inkatha and the UDF/COSATU/ANC but an appreciation of the issues is equally important. The two opposing movements were at each others' throats as described by Nuttall who wrote: "What emerged in the ensuing conflict between Inkatha and the UDF in Natal was a struggle for political turf, indeed for a political soul of the people of this province."⁸¹ Communities were split alongside support for the Inkatha movement, a predominantly Zulu cultural organisation (later the IFP), an ethno-nationalist party, opposed to the UDF/COSATU and ANC.

Though it showed deep concern for general peace, the Church as a collective body of Christ's followers was divided and hatred among its membership was on the increase. We have noted above that this was further complicated by the fact that if clergy conducted a funeral service for a former deceased supporter of Inkatha there was the danger that supporters from the UDF/COSATU/ANC group would allegedly be suspicious of the clergy and vice versa. This saw the turning of funerals into political rallies and many a clergy felt insecure and were often labelled or attacked. A number of clergy who ministered impartially to victims of both sides were allegedly labelled as 'traitors' and therefore killed. The Revd Victor Africander of St Mark's Anglican Parish in Imbali was an example.⁸² There was a growing need for some kind of intervention and protection and the concerned clergy and congregations naturally looked their bishops and moderators for a solution.

Besides the effect of political violence on church communities it would be naïve to ignore or deny that the livelihoods of ordinary citizens were equally endangered and normal life disrupted. The former first black president of a democratic South Africa, Nelson Mandela expressed his concern over this matter in a letter dated April 7 1989 to the then Chief Minister of the KwaZulu Homeland and leader of Inkatha, Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi in the following words:

In my entire political career few things have distressed me (so much) as to see our people killing one another as is happening now. As you know the whole fabric of community life in some of the affected areas has been seriously disrupted, leaving behind a legacy of hatred and bitterness, which may haunt us for years to come. It is a matter which requires

⁸¹ Nuttall, *Number Two to Tutu*, 55.

⁸² R. Lundie, *Victor* (Howick: Brevitas, 1995), 23.

urgent attention of all people in this country.⁸³

It was very likely that while he was still in prison Mandela received worrying news about political violence in general in South Africa but was referring to the case of the rapid increase of such cases in the province. This task called upon the NCLG to be both pastoral and prophetic. Thus so far it can be stated that the NCLG originated from a background of political violence in Natal.

2.4 Membership Dynamics

A survey to establish the membership of the NCLG showed that this was quite dynamic coupled by an element of voluntary attendance and by invitation. However, certain participants were permanent members as confirmed by minutes of meetings. One way of looking at the membership is by denomination or church. Not all churches in the Natal province were members as some were reported to have declined the appeal to form the group while others were left out because they did not have a leadership structure similar to the of the mainline churches. As already noted above the founding mainline churches were the RCC, the MCSA, and the CPSA. However, by January 1990 the Presbyterian and the UCCSA had joined and met regularly in an attempt to keep in touch with the situation in the region and to ascertain how and where it can respond effectively.⁸⁴

Though these details were relevant they were somewhat inadequate because they were too precise and not specific about some of the member churches. One example was the Presbyterian family of churches. If attendance by the leadership of the Presbyterian Church of Africa (PCA) and the Presbyterian Church (PC) is anything to go by these two churches joined the NCLG in 1989 and not in 1988.⁸⁵ By the end of 1991 two more churches had affiliated to the NCLG one of them being the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Southern Africa (ELCSA).⁸⁶ Figure 1 below shows us the profile of the NCLG/KNCLG by denomination.

⁸³ J. Aitchison, *Numbering the Dead, the course and pattern of political violence in the Natal Midlands 1987-1989* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal, 1993), 60.

⁸⁴ DN/DR/B/17.15.1.82 "The Natal Conflict Crisis", A paper presented to Minister Vlok by the NCLG at a meeting on 29 January 1990.

⁸⁵ DN/DR/B/17.15.1.21 Minutes of NCLG Meeting, 21 April 1989.

⁸⁶ DN/DR/B/17.15.2.2 Minutes of NCLG Meeting, 31 January 1991, with attached Mission Statement.

Figure 1: MEMBERSHIP OF NCLG/KNCLG BY DENOMINATION 1988-1996⁸⁷

CHURCH	CONSTITUENCY/ AREA	YEAR	MEMBERS
RCC	Archdiocese of Durban	1988	Archbishop Denis E Hurley
		1988	Bishop Dominic Khumalo
		1992	Bishop Wilfrid Napier
		1994	Fr Paul M Nadal (short time) Fr Clem Lazarus (Justice and Peace)
	Diocese of Marianhill	1988	Bishop Paul Temba Mngoma
	Diocese of Eshowe	1994	Bishop Mansuet Biyase
	Diocese of Dundee	1995	Bishop Michael P Rowland
MCSA		1988	Bishop Stanley Mogoba (Presiding Bishop 1989 and later)
	Natal Coastal District	1988	Bishop John Borman
	Natal Coastal District	1989	Bishop Norman Hudson
	Natal West District	1990	Bishop Brian Fennell
	Pietermaritzburg West District	1988	Bishop Khoza Mgojo (Also Presiding Bishop in 1988)
CPSA	Diocese of Natal	1988	Bishop Michael Nuttall
		1988	Bishop Alfred Mkhize
		1990	Bishop Mathew Makhaye
		1989	The Very Revd John Forbes
		1990	Revd John Aitchison
		1992	Venerable Rubin Phillip
		1994	Revd Canon Elijah Twala
	Diocese of Zululand	1993	Bishop Peter Harker
		1993	The Very Revd John Salt.
UCCSA	Natal Regional Council	1989	Revd Bheki Dlodla
		1992	Revd Samuel Marais
		1994	Revd Ian Booth
PCA	Natal-KwaZulu Presbytery	1989	Revd Sam Khumalo
PC	Presbytery of Durban	1989	Revd James Elias (Presbyter)
		1989	Revd Robin Marshall
		1993	Revd D Gevers
		1994	Revd Ian Thompson
ELCSA	Natal South Eastern Diocese	1991	Revd Fred von Fintel
		1993	Bishop Simon P Zulu
		1994	Revd Georg Scriba
AMEC	Natal	1991	Revd Freddy Mayekiso
RPCSA	Natal	1992	Revd Bonginkosi Shangashe
NGK	KwaZulu-Natal	1995	Ds Lukas Meyer
NBA	Natal	1995	Revd Brian Jardine
SA	Natal Area	1995	Major Roy Bungay
URCSA	Durban	1995	Revd Goodman Khuzwayo

⁸⁷ Information sourced from attendance records of Minutes of Meetings from 1988-1996.

We need to note here that Georg Scriba, a Lutheran minister stationed in Pietermaritzburg, was not actually a member of the NCLG. He only attended its functions for a very short time in 1994.⁸⁸ The African Methodist Episcopal Church (AMEC) was the other one.⁸⁹ In 1992 the Reformed Presbyterian Church of South Africa (RPCSA) joined the NCLG.⁹⁰ The remaining four joined the NCLG in 1995 namely the Uniting Reformed Church of South Africa (URCSA), Natal Baptist Association (NBA), the Salvation Army (SA), and the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk (NGK).⁹¹ By 1996 the membership had increased to sixteen churches and para-church organisations from just three in 1988.

What has to be noted is that any discrepancies in the statistics can be explained by the observation that both membership and attendance were quite dynamic.⁹² Effort to track down representation in terms of denomination revealed a pattern described above. The table shows that the CPSA (Diocese of Natal) had the highest number of participants though it was unlikely that all could be present at any one of the meetings. The Catholic Archdiocese of Durban followed this closely and the MCSA combined districts. To show the imbalance in participants it has to be pointed out that seven out of thirteen, which was more than 50% of the NCLG denominational membership had one individual in the representation. Perhaps the reason for such large attendance by the leadership of the Anglican, Roman Catholic and Methodists churches was due to a track record of ecumenism. All three churches had long established themselves in this part of South Africa and were the pioneering members of the NCLG. Affiliation to the NCLG was voluntary and so was the attendance of meetings.⁹³ The table also reflects that at least four out of the thirteen denominations joined the NCLG in 1995 after the first democratic general elections.

Although the relationship between the NCLG and ecumenical agencies will receive further attention later, it is important to point out that some of these were not Church leaders per se; but they were incorporated into the team and attended meetings regularly. Considering the total number of participants one can note that about

⁸⁸ G. Scriba, information supplied to author, 3 November 2008.

⁸⁹ DN/DR/B/17.15.2.21 Minutes of NCLG Meeting, 10 June 1991

⁹⁰ DN/DR/B/17.15.2.86 Minutes of NCLG Meeting, 2 July 1992

⁹¹ DN/DR/B/17.15.3.97 KNCLG Pentecost Pastoral Letter, 4 June 1995.

⁹² DN/DR/B/17.15.3.51 Minutes of NCLG Meeting, July 1994.

⁹³ Nuttall, same interview.

twenty-one out of sixty-one were from para-church organisations, which was a third of the total composition. This should not lead us to believe that attendance was quite high at any point. According to Appendix 1 the highest recorded attendance for a formal NCLG meeting was 25 participants on 4 May 1990.⁹⁴ This particular meeting, and the one before it, had drawn together representatives of the SACC, Regional Councils of Churches from Natal, and the NCLG.⁹⁵ Coincidentally this was the day when Africander was assassinated at Imbali. He may have attended the meeting as chairperson of the PCC had he not met with his death in the morning.⁹⁶ The SACC was included here because of the occasional presence of members of its National Executive Committee especially Virginia Gcabashe, Frank Chikane and Manas Buthelezi, and later Brigalia Bam. A record attendance of fifty people at Estcourt was for a public meeting that brought together NCLG representatives, government and municipal leaders and the community. Revd L Sibisi (CPSA), Fr M Moore-Cory (RC) and Fr Timothy Smith were not regular members of the NCLG. They were co-opted into the delegation to a meeting with minister of Law and Order, Adriaan Vlok in January 1990 in order for them to give first hand testimonies of political violence in townships and rural mission stations.⁹⁷ This can be further evidenced by a testimony delivered by Fr Smith before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. "I am a Roman Catholic priest. I was stationed at Elandskop, Upper Vulindlela from August 1983 until March 1990. During that time I witnessed the beginnings of the conflict between Inkatha and the UDF which culminated into the Seven Days War of March 1990."⁹⁸ His recorded assistance to victims was quite outstanding.

An appreciation of the NCLG without any consideration to the issue of eligibility for membership would be incomplete. The general impression from the initial moves to establish the group gives a picture of open voluntary membership but a few cases are indicative of the contrary. A possible screening process was probably in place as some came through invitation after the house reached a consensus as asserted by the following statement: "It was agreed that Bishop Ross Cuthbertson and Revd D.

⁹⁴ DN/DR/B/17.15.1.129 Minutes of NCLG Meeting, 4 May 1990.

⁹⁵ DN/DR/B/17.15.1.125 Minutes of the SACC representatives, Regional Councils of Churches of the Natal region and the NCLG Special Meeting, 4 May 1990.

⁹⁶ PC 57 N. Mashengu, "The Revd V. Africander's involvement with the PCC", 11 May 1990.

⁹⁷ DN/DR/B/17/15.1.85 Record of NCLG delegation with and the Minister of Law and Order Meeting, 29 January 1990.

⁹⁸ T. Smith SJ, "The Seven Days War, 1990" in Levine, *Faith in Turmoil*, 104.

Chetty from Practical Ministries (PM) be invited to attend future meetings.”⁹⁹ When Kearney was about to go on sabbatical an agreement was made to replace him not with Revd Rubin Phillip and this suggestion was altered. Archbishop Philip Russell who was invited to join the NCLG replaced Kearney.¹⁰⁰ We also note that The Venerable Rubin Phillip submitted a request to Bishop Nuttall that he may join the NCLG. He had written: “I wonder, however, if in my capacity as Chairperson of the Natal Crisis Fund I should not be a permanent member of the Church leaders’ meeting. If you think that makes sense please will you raise the matter at the next meeting or perhaps there is another way of dealing with it.”¹⁰¹ Indeed this matter was drawn to the attention of the NCLG that conceded to his request.¹⁰² He was accepted as a member and welcomed at a later meeting.¹⁰³ In a number of instances membership was by invitation possibly due to a need for confidentiality.

An individual church’s influence on membership could not be ruled out as noted from the following observation: “Kerchhoff advised that contact had been made with the head of the RPCSA – Revd B Shangashe, and he was invited to attend as an observer until his church authorised his participation in the NCLG.”¹⁰⁴ There must have been a bottom line for a Church to be considered a member of the NCLG. The desire to expand the NCLG was perhaps to strengthen its representation but the new recruits had to meet a selection criterion. “A call was made to involve churches working at grassroots level with the mainline churches in NCLG so that the group could be as representative as possible.”¹⁰⁵ Support for what the mainline churches were doing in dealing with the crisis resulting from political conflict and violence in both mediation and pastoral work was considered as a positive mark on the part of that church and therefore it was called into the fold (NCLG).

However caution was also exercised as part of the work such as mediation involved confidentiality. “The invitations to join the NCLG should wait until after the elections

⁹⁹ DN/DR/B/17.15.2.12 Minutes of NCLG Meeting, 25 April 1991.

¹⁰⁰ DN/DR/B/17.15.2.26 Minutes of NCLG Meeting, 11 July 1991.

¹⁰¹ DN/DR/B/17.15.2.46 The Venerable Rubin Phillip to The Right Revd M. Nuttall, 6 November 1991.

¹⁰² DN/DR/B/17.15.2.48 Minutes of NCLG Meeting, 5 December 1991.

¹⁰³ NDA, Minutes of NCLG Meeting, 30 January 1992, (Not indexed).

¹⁰⁴ DN/DR/B/17.15.2.68 Minutes of NCLG Meeting, 9 March 1992.

¹⁰⁵ DN/DR/B/17.15.2.175 Minutes of NCLG Meeting, 14 September 1993.

and should be issued with the NCLG Mission Statement.”¹⁰⁶ Before one could be invited to join seating members often consulted with each other to ensure the groups integrity. However, it later emerged that most of its members were from a handful of churches as Kearney argued:

The NCLG was specifically established to help the churches respond more effectively to the violence. Despite its name, however, it consisted only of five denominations and the leadership of those denominations in the Durban and Pietermaritzburg areas. After meetings held with both the ANC and the IFP leadership towards the end of 1992 it had become clear that there was a need to consult with church leaders in other parts of Natal: the Northern Natal inland area and Northern Natal coastal areas.¹⁰⁷

This observation was valid if we remind ourselves that most of the membership of the group up to this stage was from around Pietermaritzburg and Durban but political violence was occurring in other places too. The input of Church leaders in those areas was also critical and that accounted for the need to draw others in. On another note, that Anglicans had a wider representation was evident from both Figure 1 above and Figure 2 below. Bishop Russell was a retired Archbishop of Cape Town and served as a Patron of Diakonia Ecumenical Centre. Bishop Cuthbertson was one of the Suffragans of Natal, Reverend Africander, Michael Cassidy, leader of African Enterprise (AE), Peter Kerchhoff and Rob Bulman, were all Anglicans though representing other organisations. If we were to add the others from the Church leadership in Figure 1 and the occasional presence of Archbishop Desmond Tutu further their number was high. A comment from Bishop Nuttall indicated that this of course was not by design but only by a mixture of mere coincidence and commitment.¹⁰⁸ In terms of gender, males dominated the NCLG and Yvonne Spain, Virginia Gcabashe and Vuyi Nxasana were among the few local women who attended some of the meetings. The low number of ordained women in Church leadership in Natal accounted for this situation.¹⁰⁹ However, they were involved in pastoral work as churchwomen movements.¹¹⁰

Another critical dynamic was skin colour. At a meeting in 1992 where Bishop Makhaye and other black church leaders were a not present, “K Mgojo expressed

¹⁰⁶ DN/DR/B/17.15.3.1 Minutes of NCLG Meeting, 14 January 1994.

¹⁰⁷ DN/DR/B/17.15.2.125 Minutes of NCLG and Northern Natal Church Leaders Meeting, 23 February 1993.

¹⁰⁸ Nuttall, information supplied to author on 19 November 2008.

¹⁰⁹ P. Denis, “Introduction”, in P. Denis, T Mlotshwa and G. Mukuka, (eds) *The Casspir and the Cross: Voices of Black Clergy in the Natal Midlands* (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 1999), 3.

¹¹⁰ Mkhize, same interview. See also Nuttall, information supplied on 23 November 2008.

concern regarding black participation in this group and this was noted.”¹¹¹ We cannot determine with precision what this concern was leading to but he might have been genuinely worried about the contribution of black Church leaders. We could not establish any connection between Mgojo’s comment and his lack of attendance at the next six consecutive meetings, three meetings in 1991 and three in 1992. His next attendance was at the meeting of March 1992.¹¹² Makhaye was also absent in the same period. We cannot convincingly establish that this was a deliberate action by black Church leaders to show any misgivings against their white counterparts. Using whatever definition of blackness, the issue of skin colour on the part of the NCLG was not misplaced. It had to be borne in one’s mind that the war was by blacks on blacks and therefore black Church leaders certainly had a role to play. At least many of the mainline churches had white Church leaders. A streak of discrimination of black clergy ran through some of their testimonies. Alison Chonco of the MCSA confirmed: “During those times there was a clean divide between blacks and whites. The black Methodists could not worship comfortably with whites in town. The master – servant attitudes permeated the relations.”¹¹³ Thus white Church leaders were held in suspicion in black communities. The rich mixture of race and colour in the NCLG could have overcome this. Later we shall see how Chief Buthelezi challenged the involvement of white Church leaders in mediation.¹¹⁴

2. 5 Para-Church Organisations

Both written and oral sources revealed that there were a number of para-church organisations, whose leadership worked very closely with the NCLG/KNCLG. They played a number of roles as experts in their own areas but mainly as advisors, facilitators, and consultants.¹¹⁵ The main ones included the Vuleka Trust (VT), Diakonia Council of Churches (DCC), PACSA, the South African Council of Churches (SACC), and the Standing for the Truth Campaign (SFT) and representatives of the regional Councils of Churches in Natal.¹¹⁶ The regional Councils of Churches were the Pietermaritzburg Christian Council, the Durban and District Council of Churches and the Northern Natal Council of Churches. All three

¹¹¹ DN/DR/B/17.15.2.26 Minutes of NCLG Meeting, 11 July 1991.

¹¹² See Appendix 3.

¹¹³ A. Chonco, “Testimony”, in Denis, Mlotshwa and Mukuka, *The Casspir and the Cross*, 34.

¹¹⁴ Chapter four. See also Nuttall, *Number to Tutu*, 65.

¹¹⁵ DN/DR/B/17.15.2.2 Minutes of NCLG Meeting, 31 January 1991, with attached Mission Statement.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

were amalgamated into one organisation in 1995 and became known as the KwaZulu-Natal Christian Council (KZNCC).¹¹⁷ The first executive committee meeting was held on 21 June 1995 in Ladysmith.¹¹⁸ Two additional organisations namely the Evangelical Alliance of South Africa (EASA) and the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) were accepted as para-church partners by the KNCLG as noted on the mission statement.¹¹⁹ Both oral and written sources had very limited information about these two organisations. The table below shows the para-church agencies.

Figure 2: PARA-CHURCH ORGANISATIONS (1988-1996)

ORGANISATION	LOCATION/AREA	YEAR	MEMBERS
VT	Koinonia Conference Centre: Botha's Hill, Natal Area	1988	Revd Athol Jennings Ms Vuyi Nxasana
DCC	Diakonia Ecumenical Centre, Durban	1992 1988	Bishop Philip Russell Mr Paddy Kearney Ms Yvonne Spain
PACSA	Pietermaritzburg and Natal	1988	Mr Peter Kerchhoff
SFT	Para-Church	1988	Revd Ben Nsimbi Mr Rob Bulman
PCC	Pietermaritzburg and Midlands	1989 1988	Revd Victor Africander Revd Dr Lizo Jafta
PM	Natal Area	1991 1991	Bishop Ross Cuthbertson Revd Danny Chetty
DDCC	Durban and District Area	1992 1993	Revd Lincoln S Makhubu G Irvine C Xaba
AE	Pietermaritzburg: African Enterprise	1990 1995	Dr Michael Cassidy Mr N du Preez
SACC	South Africa Council of Churches (National body)	1990 1989 1990 1991	Ms Virginia Gcabashe (Honorary Life President) Revd Dr Frank Chikane Bishop Manas Buthelezi Brigalia Hlope Bam

African Enterprise and the EASA had a close working relationship. However, an intended move by the EA to openly support the Evangelical Alliance' position on mediation was seen in a negative light. "It appears that an Evangelical Alliance is to

¹¹⁷ DN/DR/B/17.15.3.77 Minutes of KNCLG Meeting, 18 January 1995.

¹¹⁸ DN/DR/B/17.15.3.107 Minutes of KNCLG Meeting, 19 July 1995.

¹¹⁹ PACSA Archives, The KNCLG – a mission statement, May 1996.

be formed and the KNCLG will not encourage the formation of another group of Church leaders if this can be avoided.”¹²⁰ This was confirmed by the degree of attention given to EASA’s call for international mediation as proposed at a meeting of the KNCLG. The response of the house was that the international mediation issue would be on the agenda for the 18th April meeting.¹²¹ In subsequent meetings of the KNCLG held in April, June, September, and November 1996, there was complete silence over the issue of EASA’s proposal. Either they got discouraged or simply gave up and served to as an example of internal dynamics within the NCLG.

Of the ecumenical agencies noted above PACSA, Diakonia, and the VT had a stronger working relationship with most of the mainline churches and subsequently the NCLG. We can draw some light from PACSA, whose mission was to facilitate healing and transformation development by accompanying communities as they took control of their situation to affect change, based on principles of freedom, equality, human dignity and mutual respect.¹²² This mission placed PACSA in the middle of communities affected by political violence where it brought relief and promoted peace discussions. In a tribute to PACSA’s twentieth anniversary in 1999, Joan Kerchhoff expressed compassion with victims as she emotively noted:

Through all the years of political violence and upheaval, PACSA was a place where the poor came – distressed and traumatised youngsters, parents searching for missing sons and daughters, refugees with little more than the clothes they wore, activists seeking support. They needed food and shelter as much as legal and medical assistance and money for bail and for funerals.¹²³

It was for this very reason that the NCLG fell on PACSA for support because it had the requisite and relevant experience. Essentially therefore, Kerchhoff [Peter] became a critical person in organising pastoral visits.¹²⁴ He was an important voice and a valuable resource in the NCLG as its treasurer and alternate secretary. Nuttall sheds more light by highlighting that Kerchhoff had both a network of contacts with a wide range of people, both in the townships and in the often forgotten rural hinterland, as well as officials at the level of public administration and political life. “We also

¹²⁰ DN/DR/B/17.15.3.63 Minutes of KNCLG Meeting, 19 October 1994.

¹²¹ DN/DR/B/17.15.4.15 Minutes of KNCLG Meeting, 23 March 1996.

¹²² PACSA, Information Flyer, 2006.

¹²³ J. Kerchhoff, “Standing with Marginalised People: A Thread Running Though 20 Years”, in Levine, *Hope Beyond Apartheid*, 7.

¹²⁴ Nuttall, “Peter Kerchhoff”, 189. See also Kerchhoff, “The Role of the Churches, 173, 174.

appreciated his passion for justice, and his desire to see action on the ground, both pastoral and prophetic, in pursuit of a just peace.¹²⁵

The Vuleka Trust, for example, was an ecumenical educational venture set up by the Anglican, Methodist and Roman Catholic Churches, owned and administered by the Koinonia Conference Centre at Botha's Hill.¹²⁶ Its programmes were open to all but offered specialised services to the NCLG in this particular context of political violence. Among its activities were facilitating workshops and promoting conflict resolution and mediation, skills training in basic human relations, handling conflict creatively, and developing effective negotiating skills.¹²⁷ This centre hosted a total of close to 50% of recorded meetings of the NCLG for the period under review (see Appendix 3). Its midway proximity between Pietermaritzburg and Durban was convenient for members from both cities. Jennings had a very diplomatic character and had wide experience in mediation and the NCLG would stand to benefit from his experiences.¹²⁸ It was against this background that the NCLG relied on Vuleka Trust for training in mediation and conflict resolution through workshops not only for the ecumenical body but for community members too. Bursaries were offered to deserving needy participants.¹²⁹

Diakonia was an ecumenical institution established in 1976 by Durban churches at a time of great injustice and repression to help Christians and people of good will to speak out and to act prophetically against the evil of apartheid.¹³⁰ Among some of its full members were the following churches: CPSA, ELCSA, MCSA, RCC, SA, UCCSA, UPCS, and URCSA.¹³¹ These were also member churches of the NCLG and that connection influenced their perceptions of issues of common concern including political violence. The inclusion of Diakonia was strategic because the NCLG needed support for victims of political conflict and violence in KwaZulu-

¹²⁵ Nuttall "Peter Kerchhoff", 188.

¹²⁶ Vuleka Trust, Information Flyer.

¹²⁷ <http://cache.search.yahoo.net/search/cache?ei=UTP-8&p=Vuleka+Trust&fr=yfp-t-50...> accessed on 10, August 2008.

¹²⁸ Aitchison, same interview.

¹²⁹ DN/DR/B/17.15.1.33 Vuleka Trust "Effective Negotiating Skills for Community Leaders", 15 August to 18 August 1989.

¹³⁰ http://www.diakonia.org.za/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=21&Item, accessed on 10 August 2008.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

Natal. Diakonia was already involved in providing practical support to disadvantaged communities.¹³² Together with PACSA, they formed what was known as the secretariat of the NCLG with Kearney and Kerchhoff at the helm and with Jennings, they were responsible for arranging meetings for the Church leaders.¹³³ In this light Nuttall acknowledged their role and continuously emphasized that Paddy Kearney of Diakonia, Athol Jennings of Koinonia and Peter Kerchhoff of PACSA rendered solid practical and ecumenical skills and support to the NCLG.¹³⁴

From a record of attendance of meetings it was noted that some people from outside KwaZulu-Natal got closely involved in the affairs of the NCLG. Reverend Chikane attended seven recorded meetings of the NCLG in 1990 alone. His continued presence in 1990 could have been necessitated by the growing complexity of the violence in Natal. One of the major contributions of the SACC was securing of funds, clothes and other materials for victims of political violence in Natal.¹³⁵ On 30 March 1990, for example, his presence was part of a delegation of national Church leaders, including Bishop Manas Buthelezi, president of the SACC, Bishop Wilfred Napier OFM, president of the Southern African Catholic Bishops Conference (SACBC) and twelve other Church leaders.¹³⁶ Professor John Aitchison became a consultant member of the NCLG due to his academic contribution as a researcher of the Natal violence. He had a keen interest in the violent situation from earlier days and wrote some articles that exposed details of what he called the war. His major area of coverage was Pietermaritzburg and the Midlands. Nuttall recalled that Aitchison was included in the delegation to meet the minister of Law and Order in Cape Town on 29 January 1990 because he was the most suitable person to present a detailed analysis of the war.¹³⁷ In checking the validity of this statement, Aitchison admitted that he used to provide fairly accurate reports on the political violence that the Church leaders found useful. It was probably for that reason that the other members of the group selected him and

¹³² Kearney, same interview.

¹³³ *Ibid.*

¹³⁴ Nuttall, same interview.

¹³⁵ DN/DR/B/17.15.1.125 Minutes of the SACC representatives, Regional Councils of Churches of the Natal region, and the NCLG Special Meeting, 4 May 1990. See also

DN/DR/B/17.15.1.138 F. Chikane's Report on formation of the Natal Crisis Fund, 18 June 1990.

¹³⁶ Minutes of National Church Leaders' delegation and the NCLG Meeting, 30 March 1990.

¹³⁷ Nuttall, same interview. See also DN/DR/B/17.15.1.84 Minutes of NCLG and Minister of law and Order Meeting, 29 January 1990.

Archbishop Hurley to make a presentation on political violence in Natal to the Goldstone Commission.¹³⁸

2.6 Structure

The NCLG was administered by four office bearers namely the convener, the chairperson the secretary and treasurer. The most central office bearer was the convener because of the responsibility to convene and meetings and represented the Church leaders at various forums. During the period 1988 to 1996 four of its leaders were nominated and agreed to be conveners. Mgojo's term of office as convenor stretched from 1988¹³⁹ to 1991 as confirmed by the following statement: "K Mgojo advised that he wished to handover the convenorship of this body. It was agreed that this would be dealt with at the next meeting and that Archbishop Hurley would act in the interim."¹⁴⁰ He performed this role until he was formerly nominated and accepted as convenor six months later¹⁴¹ and served until the appointment of Bishop Hudson in 1993.¹⁴² After serving in that capacity for two years Bishop Hudson handed over the office of convenor to Bishop Fennell at the beginning of 1995¹⁴³ and he remained so until the close of 1996.¹⁴⁴ The title was often used for the chairperson although in a few instances the convenor nominated one of the senior Church leaders present to chair meetings, or in the absence of the convenor the house appointed any member present to do so. Kerchhoff and Kearney alternated the office of secretary but Kerchhoff was also the treasurer for the period covered by this study. That the group had some money was noted from a few financial statements. Member churches made contributions but received support from para-church organisations.¹⁴⁵

Although the NCLG held general meetings where all members were free to attend, there was a special inner core that became known as the "Think-Tank". In 1990 this referred to an initiative of KwaZulu Christian Ministries (KCM) convened by Revd

¹³⁸ Aitchison, same interview.

¹³⁹ DN/DR/B/17.15.1.2 Minutes of NCLG Meeting, 7 May 1988. See also DN/DR/B/17.15.1.10 Minutes of NCLG Meeting, 24 October 1988. See also Nuttall, same interview.

¹⁴⁰ DN/DR/B/17.15.2.2 Minutes of NCLG Meeting, 31 January 1991.

¹⁴¹ DN/DR/B/17.15.2.21 Minutes of NCLG Meeting, 10 June 1991.

¹⁴² DN/DR/B/17.15.2.132 Minutes of NCLG Meeting, 9 March 1993.

¹⁴³ DN/DR/B/17.15.3.78 Minutes of KNCLG Meeting, 18 January 1995.

¹⁴⁴ DN/DR/B/17.15.4.52 Minutes of KNCLG Meeting, 14 November 1996.

¹⁴⁵ DN/DR/B/17.15.1.56 Minutes of NCLG Meeting, 11 December 1989. See also DN/DR/B/17.15.2.69 NCLG Income and Expenditure Account, 31 December 1991. See also DN/DR/B/17.15.2.120 NCLG Budget 1993, 7 January 1993.

Lawrence Buthelezi for Church leaders and political parties to discuss political violence.¹⁴⁶ The NCLG had reservations towards that initiative because some significant Church leaders were not part of it. Possibly they generally felt that the church leaders should hold meetings on their own and only meet with politicians when it was planned to do so. At the said meeting, Bishop Nuttall was given a mandate to discuss the issue further with Revd Zulu and thereafter it took a different twist.¹⁴⁷ Later on in 1994 the NCLG established its own inner group to coordinate a number of initiatives as was noted:

Revd Stanley Mogoba is to draw together a "Think-Tank" comprising some members of the KNCLG (P Kearney and A Jennings) to network initiatives already in action and produce some guidelines. A meeting is planned for 13 October 1995. There has been a vacuum caused by the closing of peace structures at the end of last year [1994] and the coming into being of the Peace Bill for KwaZulu-Natal.¹⁴⁸

At a meeting held on 13 October 1995, Archbishop Napier, Bishops Mogoba, Nuttall, Fennell, Biyase, Makhaye, Revd Jennings, and Messrs Kearney and Kerchhoff were present.¹⁴⁹ Its composition reflected an element of exclusion because Methodists, Catholics and Anglicans bishops and directors of PACSA, Diakonia and Vuleka Trust who were by and large the original founding members of the NCLG constituted it. This would serve to suggest that some matters were a privilege of selected members while others were on the receiving end. A possible reason to justify this arrangement was the need for more focus on peace building strategies. We note that a second meeting was held on the 13 November 1995 and among the Royal Family saga, peace and pastoral concerns were discussed.¹⁵⁰

2.7 Mission

Our understanding of the NCLG would be incomplete without further appreciation of its mission statement. By mission statement it is implied the official statement of its aims as an organisation. The earliest documented discussion around the formulation of a mission statement was in November 1990, three years after its formation.¹⁵¹ A sub-committee of the NCLG known as the Church Facilitators Group (CFG) coordinated the mediation function. Jennings developed this as a result of the

¹⁴⁶ DN/DR/B/17.15.1.90 Minutes of NCLG Meeting, 13 February 1990.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁸ DN/DR/B/17.15.3.113 Minutes of KNCLG Meeting, 20 September 1995.

¹⁴⁹ DN/DR/B/17.15.3.115 Minutes of KNCLG "Think Tank" Meeting, 13 October 1995.

¹⁵⁰ DN/DR/B/17.15.3.122 Minutes of KNCLG "Think Tank" Meeting, 13 November 1995.

¹⁵¹ DN/DR/B/17.15.1.174 Minutes of NCLG Meeting, 28 November 1990.

complexities arising from a presentation on the role of the Church. The paradox centred on the separation of prophetic and mediation roles. One suggestion was that the prophetic role was to be handled by Standing for the Truth (SFT), whereas in terms of a mediation role, the task was passed on to the CFG. This was seen as an incoherent approach and Aitchison suggested that it was necessary for the group to issue a simple document identifying and clarifying its functions for its own use, and the purpose of providing information to others outside of the group.¹⁵² A sub-committee consisting of Aitchison, Jennings and Kerchhoff was asked to prepare a draft statement for the next meeting.¹⁵³ The draft mission statement was ready by the start of 1991 as noted: "A draft of this was circulated for discussion and a number of suggestions were made together with the addition of other possible interventions."¹⁵⁴ Thus, the NCLG mission statement was developed as a result of a crisis within the organisation as to who would be responsible for what role. As will be noted in section 3.3 of chapter three below, there was probable validity for the SFT to take the prophetic role because of its history of open campaigns against the injustices of the apartheid regime. The CFG understood itself as a mediation facilitator.

The mission statement showed major developments in the life of this ecumenical body. A change of name from the Natal Church Leaders' Group in 1988¹⁵⁵ to KwaZulu-Natal Church Leaders Group from August 1994¹⁵⁶ was evident from a comparison of the two copies. The second notable change was the increase in the number of member churches from six in 1991 to twelve or more by 1996. Aware of the need to state whom precisely this ecumenical group represented, the NCLG described itself as an informal and autonomous association of recognised leaders of named churches operating in the province of Natal [later KwaZulu-Natal]. This ecumenical initiative endeavoured to focus on responding to the crisis by adopting the following interventions:

- (a) Offering to mediate and facilitate peace talks between warring parties.
- (b) Negotiating with the state and challenging it to take appropriate action to resolve the conflict and its causes.
- (c) Informing clergy and lay people of the issues that underlie the violence so that more

¹⁵² Aitchison, same interview.

¹⁵³ DN/DR/B/17.15.1.174 Minutes of NCLG Meeting, 28 November 1990.

¹⁵⁴ DN/DR/B/17.15.2.2 Minutes of NCLG Meeting, 31 January 1991.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, with attached Mission Statement.

¹⁵⁶ PACSA Archives, The KNCLG – a mission statement, May 1996. P. Kerchhoff's copy as secretary of the KNCLG, 1996.

- informed decision-making may be made by the Christians at every level of involvement.
- (d) Training in conflict handling.
 - (e) Supporting each other in crisis situations.
 - (f) Supporting interventions by other bodies aimed at addressing the crisis.
 - (g) Acting through immediate responses, pastoral visits and crisis relief (usually through the Natal Crisis Fund) to bring care and hope to the victims of violence.
 - (h) Promoting reconstruction in every respect.¹⁵⁷

An analysis of the interventions indicated that three major tasks were to be performed, which were; caring out mediation between warring parties, being prophetic about the violence, and providing pastoral support to victims. In order to achieve their aims there was need for support from local communities, political parties and the state. They were all centred on resolving a conflict situation and bringing normality to the lives of communities torn by political violence. Based on the recommendations of the KNCLG, there were a few notable changes to the latter mission statement in respect to intervention (b) in which the 'Government of National Unity' replaced the term state.¹⁵⁸ This was a reflection of the trends in the historical developments in South Africa after the first democratic elections of April 1994 when a government of national unity was formed and the violence was over.

The annotated mission statement showed a shift of focus from being primarily concerned with political violence to broader social issues like domestic violence, crime, HIV/AIDS. It would also act as a lobbying organisation for the expansion and development of better education and health facilities and employment creation within the province. No more pastoral letters were to be issued by the KNCLG but its support to victims of political violence was to be ongoing. Political violence related incidents as noted in the deliberations of the last meeting in 1996 were testimony to the observation that inter-party clashes involving the National Party (NP) and IFP, and possibly the ANC were still taking place in sight in selected areas. Mentioned areas were Wembezi Shobashobane, Ezigolweni, and Mpumalanga.¹⁵⁹ The adjustments made to the mission statement were in line with responding to the challenges of a changing society. In the subsequent chapters we shall attempt to establish a link between the mission statement and the various activities carried out by this ecumenical body and evaluate such effort accordingly.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, See also NDA DN/DR/B/17.15.4.32 Minutes of NCLG Meeting, 20 June 1996.

¹⁵⁹ DN/DR/B/17.15.4.52 Minutes of KNCLG Meeting, 14 November 1996.

2.8 Conclusion

We have tried to highlight the circumstances that were responsible for the formation of the NCLG. It has been noted that the major reason was the increase in political violence-related deaths. The group was informal and that means it operated without a constitution and received support and encouragement from member churches. For many of them it was almost voluntary work outside their roles as clergy in charge of parishes and other responsibilities. Most of the members knew each other quite well and had been involved in a number of other ecumenical ventures.¹⁶⁰ The strength of the group rested on the support drawn from one another but there were internal differences too. The Southern African Catholic Bishops Conference (SACBC) worked quite closely with the group and showed appreciation for the NCLG and the SACC. In support of current interventions in political violence the Bishops wrote: “We earnestly hope and pray that their efforts will be blessed by God and bring peace to Natal.”¹⁶¹ Para-church organisation like Diakonia, PACSA and the Vuleka Trust became handy due to their specialised experience in ecumenical services. We have also noted that Standing for Truth was taken on board for its prophetic role. How all they functioned will be the next task as will be discussed below.

¹⁶⁰ Nuttall, same interview.

¹⁶¹ SACBC, “Statement on the Political Climate, 13 August 1990”, *The Bishops Speak* 5, (1988-1990), 170.

CHAPTER THREE: RISING TO THE CHALLENGES (1987-1990).

3.1: Introduction

This present chapter focus will be on the strategies that the NCLG adopted to deal with the political violence. What informed their initiatives for this and the subsequent chapter was an alleged complicity of state involvement. There was an admission that power struggles contributed to the deaths but also accusations those elements within the security either allowed or instigated violence and loss of life.¹⁶² Several meetings were held as shown in Appendix 3. Firstly, the NCLG was to promote dialogue between the warring parties in the hope of getting them to understand one another to achieve peace. Secondly, it sought to seek the truth about the violence and its causes and making this known, thus was being prophetic. Thirdly, it was to give pastoral and relief assistance to victims from whichever side of the conflict.¹⁶³ Although resources were not always readily available, providing support to victims of political violence was not as challenging as the other two roles. Being prophetic about the cause of the conflict and mediation were held in contradiction and often presented a complexity for the NCLG. The major concern for the group was to seek a way of bringing the warring parties together and therefore mediation will be discussed first followed by its prophetic role and finally pastoral work.

This chapter will focus on how the NCLG took initiatives to bring peace by seeking dialogue with and between political parties and organizations. Much of what will be discussed is based on meetings held by the NCLG as detailed from minutes of meetings (Appendix 3). The increase of political violence in KwaZulu-Natal kept the Church on its toes by mobilising resources for pastoral work and mediation between warring political parties and organizations in a bid to end violence. It attempts to show that mediation was not to be taken for granted as unfolding events were to later prove. Besides meeting with the leadership of the COSATU/UDF/ANC and Inkatha the NCLG drew the attention of the government to political violence. Two separate meetings were held with minister of Law and Order, Adriaan Vlok, and the State

¹⁶² J. Pieterse, Secretary General of the SACBC in *The Bishops Speak* 5, (1988-1990), (vi).

¹⁶³ DN/DR/B/17.15.1.9 Paddy Kearney's contribution to "What is the role of the Church in situation of Conflict?", 3 November 1988.

President, Mr F.W. De Klerk, all in 1990. We proceed by way of analysing and evaluating the threefold role of the NCLG amid political turmoil.

3.2 Mediation

We need to design a working definition for mediation before examining its application in the context of the NCLG. Kenneth Kressel defined mediation as “a process in which disputants attempt to resolve their differences with the assistance of an acceptable third party, and the mediator’s task is to help the parties search for a mutually acceptable solution to their conflict.”¹⁶⁴ This definition implies that unresolved conflict creates a basis for inviting someone else to break an impasse. This can apply to the workplace, home or any other social set-up. However, we need to further appreciate that our context involved a deepening political rift. In relation to this John Burton observed: “Conflicts are struggles between opposing forces, implying that the issues are more serious than those relating to disputes, possibly stimulating physical confrontation.”¹⁶⁵ This point is valid on the basis of the observation that the relationship between the COSATU/UDF/ANC and Inkatha in Natal deteriorated to the point of bloodshed as figures below indicated.

According to John Aitchison deaths in Pietermaritzburg had the following trend: 12 in 1985, 13 in 1986, 413 in 1987, 691 in 1988, 696 in 1989 and 488 by end of April 1990. The figures for Durban indicated that from 1987 to March 1990 a total 1150 had been killed with 550 for 1989 alone.¹⁶⁶ There was a marked increase of deaths from 1987 as these figures confirm and the situation became more worrying. Political conflict was identified as the root cause as acknowledged by Luarie Schlemmer who alluded: “...it is a power struggle for authority over that province. That is what it is basically about. The violence has become entrenched and has taken the form of a feud. Many of the massacres that one reads about are revenge attacks.”¹⁶⁷ Studies

¹⁶⁴ K. Kressel, “Mediation Revisited”, in M. Deutsch, P. T. Coleman and E. C. Marcus (eds.), *The Handbook of Conflict Resolution: Theory and Practice*, 2nd ed. (San Francisco: John Wiley and Sons Inc, 2006), 726.

¹⁶⁵ J. W. Burton, *Conflict Resolution: Its Language and Process* (London: The Scarecrow Press, 1996), 7.

¹⁶⁶ DN/DR/B/17.15.1.152 J. Aitchison, “Interpreting violence: the struggle to understand the Natal conflict”, Centre for Adult Education, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg (July 1990), 1.

¹⁶⁷ L. Schlemmer, “Political violence in South Africa: Can it be resolved?” in A. Minnar and M. Hough (eds.) *Conflict, violence and conflict resolution: Where is South Africa heading?* (Pretoria: HSRC, 1997), 7. See also Nuttall, “Peter Kerchhoff”, 188.

done elsewhere on political violence in this part of South Africa, confirmed that Africans carried out many of the killings on fellow Africans. Neville Richardson argued that a case of such conflict was in KwaZulu-Natal, between the Inkatha movement of Chief Buthelezi and supporters of the African National Congress.¹⁶⁸ Mediation by the NCLG was therefore an attempt to broker peace between the COSATU/UDF/ANC and Inkatha later the IFP.

A basic requirement to any mediation process is that conflicting parties identify someone who is impartial, fair, principled, and committed to the legitimate needs of all.¹⁶⁹ These essential qualities suggest that mediation calls for people of a very high level of integrity from far or near. The bottom line is that conflicting parties have to agree on the ideal person or persons to facilitate their discussion. A warning in the form of a weakness among those who initiate dialogue between the conflicting parties was noted: "The initiators who have successfully brought parties to this point must be careful not to assume that they are the best persons to play this role."¹⁷⁰ As the research will confirm later, churches had been involved in seeking to bring the COSATU/UDF/ANC and Inkatha together and the NCLG were inclined to see themselves as mediators. The mediator acts as a facilitator of communication who is not empowered to render a decision but merely guides the parties to their own voluntary settlement.¹⁷¹ Communication can take the form of letters, telephonic conversations, consultations, and face-to-face meetings with all disputing parties. In this regard the process of mediation works to reframe the context of the conflict, to move actors from away from positions of incompatibility and opposition towards a dialogue focusing on interests, similarities and goals.¹⁷² Involvement in mediation requires patience because it may take time since each party carefully negotiates its position as none is prepared to lose.

¹⁶⁸ R. N. Richardson, "Nonviolence at Apartheid's End: A Theological Retrospect", in *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 116, (July 2003), 86.

¹⁶⁹ R. S. Kraybill, R. A. Evans and A. F. Evans, *Peace Skills: A Manual for Community Mediators* (San Francisco: A Wiley Company, 2001), 20.

¹⁷⁰ Kraybill, *Peace Skills*, 35.

¹⁷¹ J. W. Zigler, *The Mediation Kit: Tools to Solve Disputes* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc, 1997), 7.

¹⁷² K. F. Brand-Jacobsen, and C. G. Jacobsen, "Beyond Mediation: Towards More Holistic Approaches to Peace-building and Peace Actor Empowerment", in J. Galtung, C. G. Jacobsen and K. F. Brand-Jacobsen (eds) *Searching for Peace: The Road to Transcend* (London: Pluto Press, 2000), 52.

To do this task well, James Zeigler has suggested six stages which could be observed by the mediator and they are as follows: (1) Mediator orientation; (2) Statements of the Parties; (3) Questions from the Mediator; (4) Private Sessions with Each Side Separately; (5) Negotiations; and (6) Joint Wrap-up for Agreement, Resetting or Termination.¹⁷³ Briefly, what appears from these stages is that the mediator should have full detailed information regarding to conflict, seek the views of each side and then hold joint meetings to resolve the crises. Any mediator therefore needs to appreciate the situation and take these appropriate steps. Gregory Tillett also noted that there is no simple formula that makes conflict go away, but there are approaches that can minimise the destructive effects of conflict and maximise the possibility of resolution.¹⁷⁴ We shall keep these six points at the back of our minds as we examine the NCLG but one would wonder whether they had the patience and skills called for. In the light of the above submissions we shall then turn to an analysis of their mediation efforts between 1987 and 1990.

3.2.1 Early Moves

The deliberations of the first meeting give the impression that this was not the first attempt to broker peace between the UDF/COSATU and Inkatha. It was noted: "In November 1987 the churches held a Peace Rally at Edendale Ecumenical Centre outside Pietermaritzburg. Later that week, Church leaders met Chief Minister Buthelezi, Archie Gumede, the president of the UDF and others."¹⁷⁵ The fact that church leaders and politicians had come together to share common concerns was a sign of goodwill by both groups. Kentridge enlightened on the deliberations by stating: "... speakers made it clear that both parties faced a common enemy, namely apartheid, and should not be fighting each other. After the ecumenical service there was a smaller meeting between Church leaders and some community leaders which Inkatha did not attend."¹⁷⁶ An undisclosed agenda of such small meetings in the absence of a critical player was likely to create suspicion on the part of Inkatha. The Pietermaritzburg Chamber of Commerce involved John Radford and Phil Glaser as

¹⁷³ Zigler, *The Mediation Kit*, 8

¹⁷⁴ G. Tillett, *Resolving Conflict: A Practical Approach*, 2nd Edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 1.

¹⁷⁵ The ICJ, *Signposts to Peace: An independent Survey of the Violence in Natal, South Africa*, (December 1990), 21.

¹⁷⁶ Kentridge, *An Unofficial War*, 127.

mediators between the UDF/COSATU and Inkatha. There was optimism that the NCLG peace initiative would only be acceptable to Inkatha and the minister of Law and Order, if Radford and Glaser were to be part of it.¹⁷⁷ This statement suggested that mediation in the increasing political conflict required state approval. Radford and Glaser were local mediation experts of standing experience in community based conflict in South Africa.¹⁷⁸ This indicated how much the NCLG was aware of the need for professional competence and acceptability of a possible mediator for the warring parties. Working closely with the Vuleka Trust, Radford and Glaser were instrumental in providing skills in mediation as facilitators at workshops for members the NCLG.¹⁷⁹ We shall examine the plausible value of those skills.

3.2.2 Towards a Peace Conference

In strategising on mediation, the NCLG tasked the Church Facilitators Group (CFG), a sub-committee consisting of Vuyi Nxasana, Paul Graham, Douglas Muller, Ben Nsimbi, Alfred Mkhize, and Athol Jennings, as the coordinator.¹⁸⁰ Later the CFG fell under a committee of convenors nominated as Archbishop Hurley, Bishops Nuttall and Mogoba, and Athol Jennings and Paddy Kearney.¹⁸¹ Aitchison pointed out that Jennings, as director of the Vuleka Trust and coordinator of the CFG was better placed to forge ahead with providing training skills in crisis intervention and mediation based on what we have already noted about him above.¹⁸² Jennings submitted the following observation: "The Church Facilitators Group was the result of an attempt to co-ordinate the wide range of skills involved in attempts to mediate in conflicts from leadership to grassroots level."¹⁸³ Whether this strategy was able to deliver the expected outcome remains to be discussed here. As part of its support for peace the CFG sought to convene a Peace Conference aimed at bringing COSATU/UDF and Inkatha together. Unfortunately Hurley's invitation to a meeting with Inkatha was met with mixed feelings.¹⁸⁴ COSATU/UDF was quite keen in

¹⁷⁷ DN/DR/B/17.15.1.2 Minutes of NCLG Meeting, 7 May 1988.

¹⁷⁸ DN/DR/B/17.15.1.16 "The Psychology of Mediation", paper presented by J. Radford and P. Glaser NCLG Workshop, 20 January 1989.

¹⁷⁹ DN/DR/B/17.15.1.15 Report on NCLG Workshop, 20 January 1989.

¹⁸⁰ DN/DR/B/17.15.1.2 Minutes of NCLG Meeting, 7 May 1988.

¹⁸¹ DN/DR/B/17.15.1.21 Minutes of NCLG Meeting, 21 April 1989.

¹⁸² See Aitchison, same interview.

¹⁸³ Jennings, information given to author on 15 October 2008.

¹⁸⁴ DN/DR/B/17.15.1.21 Minutes of NCLG Meeting, 21 April 1989. See also Nuttall, *Number Two to Tutu*, 64.

pursuing the committee of convenors' meeting in preparation for a suggested a Peace Conference on 14 May [1989]. Inkatha delayed the decision to participate and eventually backed out.

According to Chief Buthelezi's reply, dated 28 March [1989], apart from other concerns, he suspected that the proposal had been worked out by COSATU and the UDF and presented to him as a *fait accompli*, and gave him no time to consult with the KwaZulu Legislature or to suggest additional convenors. He was only invited to suggest two or three names, almost as an after thought.¹⁸⁵ Somehow Buthelezi's concerns were valid if we consider that this plan had been carved by COSATU and UDF, after probable prior consultation with their leadership.¹⁸⁶ As a crucial part to the proposed peace conference Buthelezi deserved a better deal and perhaps one of the ways would have been a discussion with him to hear his mind without an imposition of what COSATU and the UDF had proposed. If the convenors were to be appreciated as attempting to be mediators they bore the brunt of failure by being prescriptive to Inkatha, which was unfortunate. It was noted: "A mediator avoids imposing decisions and helps the parties find mutually acceptable solutions."¹⁸⁷ Although Archbishop Hurley and members of the CFG acting on behalf of the NCLG had not yet been declared to be the mediators in this ongoing conflict, chances were that they were likely to be seen in that light by both sides involved in the conflict. We would not be surprised if the Church leaders shared the same perception.

If the NCLG was to gain any mileage there was need to win the confidence of Inkatha and UDF/COSATU/ANC and avoid blaming any one of them. Kearney made this observation when he argued:

The problem is how the Church can reveal the truth about a conflict and at the same time promote dialogue between the conflicting parties. As soon as revealing the truth means making known the atrocities committed by one or other of the parties, the "accused" party will see the Church as biased and will therefore refuse the good faith of the Church – a fundamental requisite for successfully promoting talks.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁵ P. Kearney, "Civil War", in P. Kearney, *Guardian of the Light: Archbishop Denis Hurley, A Life Against Apartheid*, Forthcoming, 24.

¹⁸⁶ DN/DR/B/17.15.1.11 Minutes of NCLG Meeting, 3 November 1988.

¹⁸⁷ Kraybill, *Peace Skills*, 17.

¹⁸⁸ DN/DR/B/17.15.1.9 P. Kearney's contribution on "What is the role of the Church in a situation of conflict?", 3 November 1988.

He expressed caution on how revealing of the truth was detrimental to the negotiation process. Jennings had observed that the Church was publicly accused of desiring a quick-fix solution through large meetings addressed by well-known authorities, hoping for an instant result. He added: "Many are calling upon the Church as the impartial body left in order to diminish the killings and violence, whereas others scoff at the church as ever being able to fulfil an impartial role."¹⁸⁹ The credibility of the NCLG as a mediator was at stake. Naivety led them to ignore Jennings' earlier concern and they ran into a blunder by calling for a public meeting to resolve the political conflict without holding private prior meetings with all the warring parties. The intended peace conference was one such an example and Inkatha was not too desperate or keen to participate.

We need to explore further the possible circumstances why Chief Buthelezi was reluctant to accept the proposal for a peace conference. Hurley and Buthelezi had a long established friendship up to the last five years of his Archbishopric, from 1987 to 1992. Both of them agreed that apartheid was evil but Buthelezi held Hurley in suspicion because of his involvement with Diakonia and the UDF, that were perceived as enemy organisations by Inkatha.¹⁹⁰ Briefly, COSATU and the UDF had adopted a strategy of mobilising masses against apartheid and through marches. They supported the armed struggle and sanctions while Inkatha felt that sanctions and violence were detrimental to the lives of ordinary people. Buthelezi's attitude towards Hurley and other white Church leaders was rather negative as was noted: "I told Archbishop Hurley and I have repeated it since, that black brother now needs to meet black brother, and that we do not need white midwives – or any midwives – not involved in the violence that is taking place."¹⁹¹ Asked whether this was not to be a source of discouragement for the mediation process, Bishop Nuttall's response was full of optimism and he argued that their concern was for peace, and whether the midwives were to be black or white, was insignificant. "The key thing was would it bring that peace that we were looking for. And sometimes if he looks back now, he realises that midwives, black or white, were needed in that situation."¹⁹² This view

¹⁸⁹ DN/DR/B/17.15.1.9 A. Jennings' contribution on "The role of the Church in the conflict situation in Natal", 3 November 1988.

¹⁹⁰ Kearney, "Civil War", 17.

¹⁹¹ Nuttall, *Number Two to Tutu*, 65.

¹⁹² Nuttall, same interview.

was an indication of the level of optimism with which the NCLG faced the crisis. No matter the challenges, peace was desirable regardless of the cost. Accordingly peace would not have come without the intervention of others, including the Church leaders. However, Chief Buthelezi was not the only one to mention the issue of skin colour in reference to the Church leaders. As already noted in section 2.4 of chapter two above, some black church leaders were equally concerned about the low turnout at meetings and participation of blacks within the NCLG.

The likelihood of the proposed peace conference grew weaker and weaker as no reply was received from Buthelezi until April 21[1989]. During this meeting several options were explored to establish a way forward but one was to draw the attention of the Johannesburg Church leaders and the SACC. The willingness of its secretary general, Revd Chikane, to assist wherever necessary, and to communicate with the UDF leadership was appreciated: "It was felt that Revd Chikane could facilitate intra-group communications."¹⁹³ The call for the SACC's support was either due to resistance by Inkatha or because Chikane's presence as a national Church leader would give the mediation process clout. Meanwhile, the Church was divided because another separate peace initiative was on the cards as was noted from Kerchhoff's remark: "No further information had been received from Messrs Cassidy and Styne regarding their possible initiatives with Mr Vlok concerning the conflict."¹⁹⁴ The NCLG could not stop this initiative but saw it as having a weakening effect on their initiative and throughout the coming years it proved difficult to establish Cassidy's position in relation to solutions for the political violence in Natal. A united response could have been a better way though, but certain differences often stood in between Cassidy and the NCLG. This has been noted this in chapter two above but shall explore this issue further in the subsequent chapters.

3.2.3 Five-a-side Peace Talks

An attempt to revive the peace talks was this time undertaken by a delegation of Anglican bishops of the CPSA after a resolution at their synod in June 1989. Sigisbert Ndwandwe, Zambuhle Dlamini, and Michael Nuttall and Alfred Mkhize (from the

¹⁹³ DN/DR/B/17.15.1.21 Minutes of NCLG Meeting, 21 April 1989.

¹⁹⁴ DN/DR/B/17.15.1.23 Minutes of NCLG Meeting, 3 July 1989.

Diocese of Natal) were delegated to meet with Chief Buthelezi at Ulundi.¹⁹⁵ The mission to Ulundi came after Chief Buthelezi had sent greetings to the synod of Anglican bishops in Durban who used the said communication to open a line of dialogue with him. Alfred Mkhize and Sigisbert Ndwandwe were both Zulu speaking and the latter had connections with the Zulu Royal Family. According to Bishop Nuttall, Zambuhle Dlamini and Mangosuthu Buthelezi had grown up together as small boys and attended the same school. Dlamini's presence was perceived as useful in persuading Buthelezi to accept peace talks. The meeting became less formal and that made it easier for the delegation to put across their case. Nuttall felt that this made the Ulundi mission a success.¹⁹⁶ The outcome of said meeting was considered as a positive step towards peace at a time when all hope was lost. Nuttall noted:

Buthelezi agreed, with the support of his cabinet, to ask one or two of his colleagues to meet at any agreed venue with the UDF and COSATU for an initial exploratory meeting. Added to this, he indicated his readiness for meetings thereafter to be at alternate venues, such as Ulundi and the COSATU headquarters.¹⁹⁷

The scheduled meeting between Natal leaders of Inkatha and UDF and COSATU was hosted by the NCLG in the Anglican diocesan office and Bishop Nuttall was asked by the two sides to chair the meeting.¹⁹⁸ This role could have been either a sign of being trusted or a moment of being tested. At least there was a score of success though it was to be short-lived. It was instrumental in setting up five-a-side peace talks between Inkatha and the UDF – COSATU. After this development all hope was not lost due to the feeling that Inkatha's participation guaranteed a brighter future for peace talks and the Anglican Churchmen were commended.

At the encouragement of the NCLG the outcome of the five-side peace talks provided a peace plan that was officially accepted and endorsed at the national conferences of the UDF, COSATU, and Inkatha. The peace process would start with a meeting of the four presidents including that of the ANC in exile. This was to be followed by a peace conference, a peace rally, the establishment of Joint Peace Monitoring Committees, rehabilitation of victims, and co-existence.¹⁹⁹ Unexpectedly the Inkatha Central Committee made fresh demands which included twenty Inkatha representatives and

¹⁹⁵ Nuttall, *Number Two to Tutu*, 62. See also ICJ, *Signposts to Peace*, 22.

¹⁹⁶ Nuttall, same interview.

¹⁹⁷ Nuttall, *Number Two to Tutu*, 64.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 65.

¹⁹⁹ DN/DR/B/17.15.1.156. Report For Consideration by Presidents of ANC, COSATU, UDF and IFP Meeting, 4 August 1989.

twenty *in toto* from UDF/COSATU/ANC, a letter of invitation to the meeting from the President of the ANC and that the venue for the meeting of presidents should be London.²⁰⁰ This was a reversal of the original plan as agreed to by the five-a-side team. One mistake made by the NCLG was that it accepted an agenda generated by the UDF/COSATU/ANC side and imposed it on Inkatha. This placed the mediator under suspicion.

Jennings had hinted that if the Church is to mediate it must hear from the two opposing sides of the conflict, but again this was somehow disregarded. Progress in the peace talks at this stage suffered a hard blow from Inkatha's decision at its Central Committee meeting in September 1989 to declare a moratorium.²⁰¹ There was ongoing political violence and lack of progress, a vitriolic attack on Buthelezi by exiled Tambo Mbeki and the contents of a detestable document associated with UDF/COSATU.²⁰² Inkatha was not ready to take its own share of the blame for the ongoing political violence and the slow pace of the talks. Its response to the proposed peace plan was delayed and somewhat confusing because it had given an initial nod. Goal posts were shifted when consultation had to be made with the Central Committee. Inkatha insisted that if COSATU and the UDF were treated as separate from the ANC then its affiliate trade union, the United Workers' Union of South Africa and an exiled Natal PAC would also be represented on the same basis as the others.²⁰³ The other parties to the peace talks did not quite agree with this move but Inkatha saw itself as being disadvantaged. Logically, Inkatha's point of view was partially valid. The element of 'being dominated' was something it was not ready to accept and Buthelezi never trusted anyone.²⁰⁴ This created an impasse that the church leaders could not break and it only demonstrated that the NCLG was unaware of how warring parties pay attention to particular major and minor details in a mediation process.

Another significant factor that might have angered Buthelezi was the participation of some church leaders like Archbishop Hurley and Bishop Nuttall in a defiance

²⁰⁰ DN/DR/B/17.15.1.24 Minutes of NCLG Meeting, 4 July [September] 1989.

²⁰¹ Nuttall, *Number Two to Tutu*, 66.

²⁰² Bessie Head Library, The Editor "Even the Soviets support such moves: Guidelines for comrades", *Ilanga*, September 28-30, 1989, Ikhasi 5.

²⁰³ Nuttall, *Number Two to Tutu*, 66.

²⁰⁴ Aitchison, same interview.

campaign march organised by the Mass Democratic Movement (MDM) on Friday 22 September 1989. Among the demands were: “We call for an end to violence in the townships, the arrest of warlords and vigilantes who terrorise our people.”²⁰⁵ In Pietermaritzburg, a similar march led by clergy dressed in cassocks, singing freedom and church songs, and was addressed by Mgojo at the Anglican cathedral and at the police station.²⁰⁶ Indirectly the message was clearly attacking Inkatha and Buthelezi responded by showing his might. It was unfortunate not only for COSATU/UDF but for the NCLG because that made them to be seen as openly pro-COSATU/UDF. However, we need to appreciate that a strong element of mistrust between Inkatha and people like Mgojo had a long history dating as far back as the mid 1980s. Philippe Denis argued that Inkatha shared police belief that weapons were kept at FedSem and described how the police invaded and searched Mgojo’s house.²⁰⁷ At that time Mgojo was the convenor of the NCLG that was involved in mediation of the said peace talks. Inkatha was reportedly unhappy that the marches were taking place whilst peace talks were going on.²⁰⁸ It can be concluded that in this regard Inkatha felt demonised by the marching public and the Church leaders were not an exception because of their participation.

3.2.4 Two-a-side Peace Talks

With the blessing of the NCLG, Anglican bishops Nuttall and Mkhize made another attempt to reach out to Inkatha by visiting and holding a meeting with Chief Buthelezi. Asked why Anglican bishops continued to visit and try to persuade Chief Buthelezi to come to the negotiating table, Nuttall remarked that Chief Buthelezi was a licensed Lay Minister of the Anglican Church and therefore he was expected to listen to his bishops.²⁰⁹ Buthelezi’s Anglican identity was something that he was never prepared to hide and some trust had been bestowed upon him by the CPSA. As an Anglican Lay Minister, he had served on the Council of St Peter’s College from 1961 to 1963.²¹⁰ Ben Temkin elucidated on Buthelezi’s positive relationship with

²⁰⁵ DN/DR/B/17.15.1.38 Q. Patel, “Archbishop Hurley to lead ‘freedom march’”

²⁰⁶ APC 98 APB 4, Michael Worsnip, Interview conducted by Ruth Lundie, 26 February 1998 in Pretoria.

²⁰⁷ P. Denis, “‘Men of the Cloth’: The Federal Theological Seminary of Southern Africa, Inkatha and the Struggle against Apartheid” in *Journal of Southern African Studies* 34, No 2, (June 2008), 322.

²⁰⁸ DN/DR/B/17.15.1.56 Minutes of NCLG Meeting, 14 November 1989.

²⁰⁹ Nuttall, same interview.

²¹⁰ Denis, “Men of the Cloth”, 309.

former Archbishops of the CPSA, which had deteriorated in Tutu's time. However, he pointed out that in spite of the current scenario, Buthelezi still looked up to the Church for guidance and support and that it pained him when he found himself to be in conflict with its leaders.²¹¹

The NCLG was fully convinced that their mission had not been in vain as Nuttall wrote: "Yet all was not lost. We managed to persuade the Chief Minister to allow two-a-side talks to take place in order to ensure continuing contact between the parties concerned."²¹² On board from the Inkatha were Oscar Dhlomo and Frank Mdlalose and from COSATU and the UDF were Alec Erwin and Diliza Mji respectively. The Inkatha delegation also welcomed the possibility of the Church leaders being used as mediators. "Both Bishops indicated that they had offered themselves as mediators in the situation, and it seems that both sides were appreciative of this offer."²¹³ Whether the Church leaders were the best mediators or not would be another issue but at least they had the confidence of both sides and were involved in the two-a-side talks. Apart from Christian ecumenical initiatives, support for peace was also drawn from members of other faiths including Jewish, Muslims and Hindu believers.²¹⁴ An inter-faith service was held in the Emmanuel Cathedral in September 1989 with a call to love one another. This was in the light of the observation that political violence threatened all people regardless of religious or political affiliation.

Towards the close of 1989 Revd Frank Chikane attended a meeting of the NCLG where his direct input was tabled. In his opinion the local regional councils had been overwhelmed by the problem of political violence. Archbishop Hurley reiterated the complexities of bringing the opposing groups together and it was here that the NCLG had failed and asked whether a more effective peace process could be initiated through the SACC.²¹⁵ There was validity in this observation but the NCLG had not actually failed. Here and there they had their own internal differences as some believed in diplomacy while others advocated for a more confrontational approach. One example was Jennings insistence that the Church was in a special position and

²¹¹ B. Temkin, *Buthelezi: A Biography*, (London: Frank Cass, 2003), 252.

²¹² Nuttall, *Number Two to Tutu*, 67.

²¹³ DN/DR/B/17.15.1.56 Minutes of NCLG Meeting, 14 November 1989.

²¹⁴ DN/DR/B/17.15.1.43 Inter-Faith Service at Emmanuel Cathedral, 22 September 1989.

²¹⁵ DN/DR/B/17.15.1.60 Minutes of NCLG Meeting, 11 December 1989.

that the NCLG should consider challenging the situation by speaking out against Chief Buthelezi.²¹⁶ This of course was contrary to his image of a diplomat as was suggested by Aitchison earlier. Jennings's opinion was in line with the Church's call to speak the truth by naming the evil but that was detrimental to mediation. Chikane reiterated the importance of confidentiality and only going public if nothing happened.²¹⁷ If the NCLG were to continue as mediators it was necessary to earn the trust of the parties, especially that of Inkatha. As a sign of this trust in Bishops Nuttall and Mkhize, they were invited to attend the two-a-side talks on 25 January 1990 though other members of the CFG preferred group involvement.²¹⁸

Two meetings with Adriaan Vlok in January and another with F W De Klerk in April respectively, overshadowed mediation in the early part of 1990. However, Bishop Hudson's pastoral visit to Ulundi gave an impression that the Chief saw church leaders as taking sides.²¹⁹ The relations between COSATU/UDF/ANC and Inkatha continued to deteriorate and reached peak levels in the 'Seven Days War' from March 25 to 31 1990, in Edendale. Inkatha supporters attacked residents of the Edendale Valley believed to be predominantly UDF and the police allegedly supported them. Levine wrote: "It was an event of enormous public significance. Over 100 people were killed, a large number of houses were destroyed by fire and approximately 20 000 people fled their homes as a result of the violence."²²⁰ The NCLG decided to issue a statement on political violence but the house could not quite agree on the wording and the timing. There were fears that any statement not carefully phrased was likely to be of counter effect to ongoing peace talks.

Two separate meetings were arranged for 2 April [1990] and a group of national and Natal Church leaders engaged in a long day's shuttle diplomacy, meeting with Chief Buthelezi in the morning at Ulundi and with Mandela in the afternoon in Pietermaritzburg. Frank Chikane and Manas Buthelezi (president of SACC and half brother to Mangosuthu Buthelezi) represented the SACC, Nuttall and Hurley represented the NCLG, and Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu (ANC), and Harry Gwala

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*

²¹⁸ DN/DR/B/17.15.1.90 Minutes of NCLG Meeting, 13 February 1990.

²¹⁹ DN/DR/B/17.15.1.122 Minutes of NCLG Meeting, 28 April 1990.

²²⁰ Levine, *Faith in Turmoil*, 12.

led a team of Natal ANC leaders.²²¹ SACC's mediation attempt was gathering momentum and Chikane held several meetings with the UDF, COSATU, ANC and Inkatha. The NCLG offered him support but mediation efforts were disrupted by a joint mass action organised by the SFC. It had the approval of COSATU, ANC, UDF, Inkatha and the NCLG from 2-7 July.²²² The main concerns were disbanding of the KwaZulu police, arrest and trial of 'war-lords', police neutrality, the State of Emergence and freedom of political activity.²²³ To show its disapproval of what went on during the mass action, Inkatha wrote to Bishop Nuttall expressing its lack of confidence in the on-going peace talks, citing abusive statements made by national demonstrators against the party. Inkatha resolved to stay out of the peace talks by stating:

We are now inclined to say, "here we stand and we can say no more". Let history judge us harshly if we reneged culpably when we could have stopped the gushing streams of blood from becoming a deluge that will surely drown us all. The meeting we were due to hold on 5 July was postponed to 16 July; but that probably means *sine die*. It is therefore with sad hearts that we have to tell you Sir, that we are back to square one.²²⁴

Inkatha's mistrust of the NCLG increased and its credibility was held in question. This does not suggest that Inkatha's position relating to the violence was justified. This placed the NCLG in a difficult position because some of the members were also the patrons of the SFT in Pietermaritzburg namely Dean Forbes, Peter Kerchhoff, Dr Mgojo, Revd Nsimbi, and Bishop Nuttall.²²⁵

Events in the subsequent weeks proved that all was not lost. A strategy of reviving separate mediation meetings was drawn up. At a meeting between the ANC and the Joint Working Committee (JWC) of COSATU and UDF and the NCLG it was generally agreed that blaming Inkatha alone in this current spat of violence was not enough. Thabo Mbeki, who was present, argued that the government is the main target because they are the only group that can address the conduct of security forces and the police.²²⁶ For this group the mediation talks bore little results and attention

²²¹ Nuttall, *Number Two to Tutu*, 74, 75.

²²² DN/DR/B/17.15.1.142 South African Council of Churches: Press Statement and Code of Conduct during the Week of Public Demonstrations, 27 June 1990.

²²³ DN/DR/B/17.15.1.140 STF to the Honourable State President, Re: Mass Action 2-7 July 1990, c. a. June 1990.

²²⁴ DN/DR/B/17.15.1.64 Dr F T Mdlalose to the Right Reverend Michael Nuttall, Re: Peace Talks between UDF/COSATU/ANC/ and Inkatha, c. a July 1990, (n. d.)

²²⁵ NDA, STF to all Ministers and Clergy in Pietermaritzburg, Re: Joint Mass Action 2-7 July 1990, 22 June 1990.

²²⁶ DN/DR/B/17.15.1.157 Report of the ANC, Joint Working Committee of COSATU/UDF (JWC) and

was directed to the government. The NCLG successfully encouraged the two warring parties to meet. This resulted in a joint peace committee meeting on 8 August 1990. Alec Erwin, Diliza Mji, Willis Mchunu and Jacob Zuma represented the ANC/COSATU/UDF while Frank Mdlalose, Denis Madide, E. S. Sithebe, V. B. Ndlovu, Musa Zondi and Nqobizizwe Nkehli represented Inkatha. That political violence was to stay in Natal and as long as the two major parties remained hostile to each other was reflected on. Sithebe observed: "In a violent situation one could never succeed to stop it until the leaders from both sides got together. Faction fights could only be stopped by leaders of both sides coming together."²²⁷ In this meeting one member raised the issue of neutrality of the mediator as critical for the current spell of talks. "Posturing will not work. If we work as mediators we do not mention one death caused by the other side."²²⁸ This statement was an indirect acknowledgement by Inkatha that at least it shared part of the responsibility for the political violence but did not condone NCLG's prophetic role. It only served to confirm a perception by Inkatha, that the Church leaders were closer to the ANC.²²⁹

In subsequent meetings with the NCLG and Inkatha the usual blame game was once again at play and Inkatha expressed reservations on vilification of its members by the ANC. Oliver Tambo (President of the ANC) had not responded to a letter from Chief Buthelezi and Church leaders were not spared of the blame.²³⁰ Sithebe saw the Church leaders as an extension of the ANC and felt that any mediation on their part was not possible. Although Bishop Nuttall tried to defend the NCLG's position Ndlovu argued that the NCLG group was a mere extension of the five-a-side and Nuttall should be asked to participate as a representative of the other side. In response, the NCLG defended its position and reiterated the various moves that it had taken with Inkatha, SACC and the State President F.W. De Klerk but the Inkatha delegation was quite apprehensive. "D. Madide recommended that the discussion be aborted because an impasse had been reached. He suggested that these documents clearly showed partisanship on the part of the Natal Church Leaders' Group."²³¹ The

NCLG, 7 August 1990.

²²⁷ DN/DR/B/17.15.1.159 Report on Peace Committee of UDF/COSATU and Inkatha Meeting, 8 August 1990.

²²⁸ *Ibid.*

²²⁹ Kearney, same interview.

²³⁰ DN/DR/B/17.15.1.160 Report on NCLG and an Inkatha delegation Meeting, 13 August 1990.

²³¹ *Ibid.*

allegations against the NCLG by Inkatha in a way were not completely unfounded because up to that day there was no recorded mention of the UDF/COSATU/ANC faults by the Church leaders as if to suggest that they were perfect. Here and there some evidence showed that the opposite was actually the case. The NCLG admitted that they were more inclined to the party that was fighting for the true freedom of all South Africans but it was dangerous to be seen as aligned to one party.²³² This is not of course to exonerate Inkatha's allegations. Madide remarked: "...the Church must understand that there is a culture of violence in this region and that the Church must help to eliminate this. We need to reflect and come together and meet to talk about peace."²³³ Admittedly violence was entrenched but the need for mediation that the NCLG was engaged in was a way forward.

Lack of trust on the part of the mediator, mainly by Inkatha, hindered any progress. This was aggravated when the Church leaders went public to speak what they perceived to be the truth. This time around Jennings reminded the NCLG that it essentially appeared to have two possible roles, namely reconciling/mediation and the prophetic or standing for the truth role. There was a lack of clarity as to what the role of the Church leaders was, and he felt that the NCLG had adopted both roles on different occasions. He saw this particularly in the meeting between the NCLG and Inkatha.²³⁴ By the close of the 1990 it had become evident that not much had been achieved through mediation and the NCLG fell on Archbishop Tutu. He had always been quite enthusiastic about peace in Natal and therefore extended an invitation to Buthelezi and Mandela to a meeting at the Bishops court, Cape Town.²³⁵ Buthelezi was suspicious of Tutu for a long time since Sobukwe's funeral in March 1978 and was therefore not keen to attend.²³⁶ Sobukwe was an assassinated leader of the Pan African Congress (PAC). Chief Buthelezi left the funeral unceremoniously on the advice of Desmond Tutu (who was then secretary of SACC) as youths jeered to humiliate him.²³⁷ Such a humiliating experience created tension and mistrust between them. Despite the Tutu's attempts at reconciliation the Buthelezi felt betrayed. It was

²³² Nuttall, same interview.

²³³ DN/DR/B/17.15.1.160 Report on NCLG and an Inkatha delegation Meeting, 13 August 1990.

²³⁴ DN/DR/B/17.15.1.167 Minutes of NCLG Meeting, 17 September 1990.

²³⁵ DN/DR/B/17.15.1.172 Points arising out of meeting between Bishops Michael Nuttall, Lawrence Zulu and Dr M. G Buthelezi, Re: Proposed meeting at the Bishops court, 23 November 1990.

²³⁶ Nuttall, same interview.

²³⁷ Nuttall, *Number Two to Tutu*, 62.

therefore difficult to bring the two leaders together. Mediation had therefore proved to be futile and the NCLG sought contact with the State President.

3.3 The Prophetic Voice

Reference to communication with the government by the NCLG has already been alluded to above. There was a perception that the police officers in Natal favoured Inkatha in the political violence. In a letter to Vlok, the NCLG called for the release of detained UDF leaders in order for the resumption of peace talks. During the meeting it was reported that though the letter had been acknowledged, no action had been taken.²³⁸ In many of its discussions, alleged police partiality in Pietermaritzburg had received no clear answers from the minister.²³⁹ Several failed attempts were made to hold meetings with Vlok in Pietermaritzburg. The intention was to seek his support and probably reduce incidents of police brutality and alleged partiality. David Robbins once confided: "There's a lot of evidence of police assisting Inkatha, but we can't report it. I mean it gets ridiculous: last year the mayor went to see Vlok and said, "Look, can't you stop this?" and Vlok says to him, "You mean to tell me that you don't want Inkatha to win?"²⁴⁰ If the mayor received no respect from the police, Church leaders would not be to either. The next move was to contact the State President. "It was agreed that a request by fax be sent to the State President asking for an urgent meeting with him to discuss the Natal violence."²⁴¹ He referred this matter to Mr Vlok who called for a meeting with all groups involved in the Natal province peace talks on 25th of January 1990 in Durban.²⁴²

The NCLG declined to attend the scheduled Durban meeting because they felt that it was the wrong forum for presenting their case. A separate meeting was booked with the minister in Cape Town on 29 January 1990.²⁴³ A memorandum highlighting major trends of political violence in the Pietermaritzburg Natal Midlands region was presented. Aitchison did not spare the pen but he categorically pointed out how the state, the judicial system, and business sector all appeared paralysed to halt the violence. Further to that he reiterated Inkatha's aggressive membership drive and

²³⁸ DN/DR/B/17.15.1.2 Minutes of NCLG Meeting, 7 May 1988.

²³⁹ DN/DR/B/17.15.1.11 Minutes of NCLG Meeting, 3 November 1988.

²⁴⁰ Kentridge, *An Unofficial War*, 138.

²⁴¹ DN/DR/B/17.15.1.60 Minutes of NCLG Meeting, 11 December 1989.

²⁴² DN/DR/B/17.15.1.72 Minutes of NCLG Meeting, 22 January 1990.

²⁴³ DN/DR/B/17.15.1.81 Minutes of NCLG Special Meeting, 26 January 1990.

more importantly, cited incidents of alleged partisanship by the police.²⁴⁴ The Church leaders capitalised on Aitchison extensive research about the war and that helped in having access to facts on the ground regarding trends of political violence.²⁴⁵ The NCLG in seeking to expose the 'truth' about who was perpetrating violence insisted on a judicial commission of inquiry but Vlok was reluctant for a reason. "The police were naturally reluctant to accede to such a request, in the knowledge that any formal enquiry would be bound to reveal police improprieties."²⁴⁶ The police as a law-enforcing agent was in danger and if this was to be confirmed by an enquiry their job was at stake. The NCLG continued to persist with the 'noble' initiative.

The release of political prisoners including Nelson Mandela and the unbanning of all political parties in February 1990 created fresh hopes and challenges to the Natal peace talks.²⁴⁷ The impression of the NCLG was that there was need for a high level delegation to draw the attention of President De Klerk to an effective solution to political violence in the province.²⁴⁸ This meeting occurred on the 11th of April 1990 at the Union Buildings, Pretoria. Present from the government's side were President F.W. De Klerk, Minister Vlok, Minister Stoffel Botha, and from the Church side were Archbishop Hurley, Bishops Nuttall and Mgojo (NCLG) and in the company of some national Church leaders.²⁴⁹ Attention was given to key issues like the establishment of a peacekeeping force, and a declaration of affected areas as disaster zones. Again the request for a judicial commission of enquiry was a top priority solution of the NCLG but was deferred. Naturally that should have been well discussed between Vlok and De Klerk before, weighing some of its possible implications. The NCLG was aware that once the government sanctioned this commission, the rate of violence was likely to drop. Perpetrators would be scared of exposure and persecution by the law. From a report given later, the impression of the NCLG delegation after the said meeting showed some reservations. "We did not feel that we came away from the meeting with positive fruit in terms of decisions made. Perhaps this could not be expected. As

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁵ Aitchison, same interview. See also Nuttall, same interview.

²⁴⁶ Kentridge, *An Unofficial War*, 129.

²⁴⁷ A. V. Minnaar, *Conflict and violence in Natal/KwaZulu: historical perspectives* (Pretoria: Human Sciences research Council, 1990), 50.

²⁴⁸ DN/DR/B/17.15.1.115 Report of National Church Leaders delegation and Local Church Leaders' Meeting, 30 March 1990.

²⁴⁹ DN/DR/B/17.15.1.114 Synopsis of NCLG delegation and State President Meeting, 11 April 1990.

a communications exercise we believe it was a very important and worthwhile meeting.”²⁵⁰ However, in August 1990 an International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) whose findings confirmed the involvement of the government in the Natal violence, came into being.²⁵¹

Campaigns organised by SFT were supported by the NCLG and served as a vehicle used to denounce the apartheid government for its repressive policies nationwide. However, in Natal this took a unique flavour because it served as a platform for the public to denounce all other forms of injustice including alleged brutality of KwaZulu police and lack of political toleration by Inkatha.²⁵² By 1988 two such campaigns were operating in Pietermaritzburg and Durban with some marches joined by Church leaders like Archbishop Hurley. The involvement of the NCLG and other clergy was to show solidarity with the victims of the ongoing violence. One of the campaigns supported by the SFT lasted one week. It started with biblical devotions that focused on “Liberation and the Struggle for Justice and Freedom” as a theme.²⁵³ It was designed in such a way that every single step was guided and well explained. The campaign was to be used by people from a variety of backgrounds and situations involving everyone regardless of status.

The NCLG was convinced that citizens could positively influence the situation by calling for an end to political violence if given correct orientation. Church services were encouraged to focus on peace, love and justice.²⁵⁴ It is not easy to assess the effectiveness of this strategy at the Church or parish level but the use of particular pre-planned liturgies focusing on peace was meant to draw congregations to contextual challenges. Prophetic theology encouraged people to be hopeful, to confront evil, be ready to suffer for justice, and be willing to forgive, grounded in a spirit of prayer and action.²⁵⁵ To keep the public informed the NCLG made press statements in the local newspapers and gave the media houses specific instructions on when to do so. To this effect the editors of *Ilanga*, *Natal Mercury*, *Natal Witness*,

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁵¹ The ICJ, *Signposts to Peace*, 28-29.

²⁵² NDA, Letterhead of the SFT campaign.

²⁵³ NDA, SFT campaign, 1 July 1990.

²⁵⁴ Kentridge, *An Unofficial War*, 129.

²⁵⁵ The ICT, *Kairos Document*, 18. See also DN/DR/B/17.15.1.92 NCLG Pastoral Letter, 1 March 1990

Sunday Tribune, and *Daily News* were approached and given specific instruction for a pastoral letter dated 17 July 1989 that was to be published on the 6th of August 1989.²⁵⁶ In this and other similar attempts, the NCLG made use of the media to inform and positively influence public opinion. A press statement that focused on peace talks was issued to the public through newspapers. One of the paragraphs read: “Enough blood has been shed in the political struggle in South Africa. As a Christian nation we must begin to act like Christians and love our neighbours – not kill them! We must work together for the future of our children.”²⁵⁷ There was an oversight in assuming that South Africa was a Christian nation. The reality on the ground was that it was a multi-faith country and Christians did not even speak with one voice. Some Christian churches supported and justified the injustices of apartheid through ‘State Theology’. It was defined as the State’s use of the name of God in its oppression of the people and saw no evil in the ongoing violence.²⁵⁸ It was responsible for giving theological justification to the status quo and was used by military and police chaplains and cabinet ministers in their propaganda speeches.

From 1 July to 7 July 1990 the people in Natal were engaged in a mass action that called for the disbanding of the KwaZulu police, the arrest, trial and disarming of ‘Warlords’, police neutrality to all people, lifting of the State of Emergency, and guaranteeing free political activity. On the 7th of July 1990, the people then took to the streets in a planned march of protest that sent shock waves.²⁵⁹ Many of the Church leaders naively thought that by accepting to participate in such marches that served as a prophetic voice, there was a cost to mediation. Urban areas offered the most conducive environment because of the large masses that were a stronghold of the ANC. Inkatha and Chief Buthelezi were often vilified and that compromised the position of the NCLG because the media would display pictures of Hurley, Mgojo, Nuttall and others right in front of the marches. Nuttall explained that the organisers of such marches approached church leaders to join in to give respectability by being at the forefront.²⁶⁰ It was possible that many of the marchers were not necessarily Christians and the presence of Church leaders was to create a face. However, some of

²⁵⁶ DN/DR/B/17.15.1.32 Bishop Michael Nuttall to Editors of *Ilanga*, *Natal Mercury*, *Natal Witness*, *Sunday Tribune*, *Daily News*, Re: NCLG Pastoral Letter, 28 July 1989.

²⁵⁷ DN/DR/B/17.15.1.92 Press Statement by NCLG, 13 February 1990.

²⁵⁸ The ICT, *Kairos Document*, 7.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁰ Nuttall, same interview.

them were keen to play this role as part of the fight against apartheid's repressive laws and the call for freedom and justice for all.

3.4 Addressing Pastoral Challenges

The NCLG was challenged by the message of prophetic theology which called upon the Church to go out and meet people in areas affected by violence in order to offer them hope and courage at a time when they were losing their loved ones. To carry out its ministry to victims of conflict and violence the NCLG was probably inspired by the following words:

The Church should challenge, inspire and motivate people. It has a message of the cross that inspires us to make sacrifices for justice and liberation. It has a message of hope that challenges us to wake up and act with hope and confidence. The Church must preach this message not only in words and sermons and statements but also through its actions, programmes, campaigns and divine services.²⁶¹

These actions were a fulfilment of the prophetic theology that called the Church to avail itself to where the suffering was, rather than observing from a distance. It gave the NCLG an opportunity to gain first-hand experience of how political violence affected individuals, families and communities. According to Archbishop Hurley, by pastoral work the Church was fulfilling its mandate. For him the mission of the Church was: "To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom; to teach, baptise and nurture new believers; to respond to human need by loving service; and to seek to transform structures of society. The mission of the Church is the mission of Jesus who came both preaching and serving."²⁶² Within this particular context the NCLG was responding to human needs by showing love and seeking an end to political violence. They understood that God was on the side of the poor, the oppressed²⁶³, and the persecuted whose lives were not only threatened by the effects of apartheid but also by political conflict.

PACSA organized pastoral visits for the NCLG. Apart from other accounts, one of the most detailed attempts at describing the pastoral aspect of the NCLG was given by Nuttall in memory of Peter Kerchhoff's twenty years at PACSA. Emphasis was given on pastoral visits to Bruntville, Wembezi, Nhlalakahle, Loskop, Richmond and Hammarsdale, among others. Some places like Nhlalakahle were reported to be quite

²⁶¹ The ICT, *The Kairos Document*, 30.

²⁶² D. Hurley, "Christianity, Evangelisation and the Social Factor in South Africa" in P. Denis (ed), *Facing the Crises: Selected Texts of Archbishop Denis Hurley* (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 1997), 173.

²⁶³ The ICT, *The Road to Damascus*, 9.

frightening as gunshots were fired when a NCLG delegation visited that township. This exercise was quite risky at times, as expressed by Nuttall who said: "It's true, when we heard gunshots during one of our visits we became so terrified that we almost gave up that mission. Later on we realized that it was a moment to prove how committed we were."²⁶⁴ Kerchhoff conceptualised pastoral work of the NCLG by mentioning that other initiatives of the NCLG included visiting areas where violence had led to many deaths, destruction and forceful removals.²⁶⁵ The situation had grown out of hand for clergy in townships and they demanded for support.

In evaluating the effectiveness of pastoral visits it was noted: "Though it was difficult to point out tangible results from these sorts of visits, they seemed to have a pacifying effect on the political conflict, and they certainly brought hope and encouragement to Church people in the areas concerned."²⁶⁶ Taking time out to see and speak to victims of violence was a great source of comfort and consolation in times when a brother was an enemy of a fellow brother. Political violence brought trauma because some people witnessed the killings. Talking to victims and counselling them were some ways of assisting them to cope.²⁶⁷ As confirmation of fulfilling their pastoral mandate Bishops Matthew Makhaye, Michael Nuttall, Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Dr Khoza Mgojo were photographed in early April 1990 on a trip to victims of the 'Seven Days War'.²⁶⁸ Clergy conducted funeral services for victims. A photograph of Rev Ben Nsimbi at a mass funeral of the "Seven Days War" victims, in April 1990, confirmed this. The NCLG through the NCF provided funeral grants of up to three hundred rand (R300) each.²⁶⁹

The NCLG took pastoral outings as opportunities to meet with local leadership structures including those from warring political parties. They shared concerns for peace with the people they spoke to. This was also done through publishing of pastoral letters that were meant to give insight into the concerns for peace. In line with such concerns, the pastoral letters called Christians to be focused and prayerful.²⁷⁰

²⁶⁴ Nuttall, same interview.

²⁶⁵ Kerchhoff, "The Role of the Churches", 173-174.

²⁶⁶ Nuttall, "Peter Kerchhoff", 190.

²⁶⁷ Mkhize, same interview.

²⁶⁸ Kerchhoff, "The Role of the Churches", 173.

²⁶⁹ I. Ndlovu, Testimony in "Through Stained Glass Windows" in Levine, *Faith in Turmoil*, 60.

²⁷⁰ DN/DR/B/17.15.1.23 Minutes of NCLG Meeting, 3 July 1989. See also DN/DR/B/17.15.1.31

Many churches at both denominational and ecumenical level from within Natal supported the work of the NCLG but others did not. They distributed goods such as clothing, food, and money and gave shelter, all in the name of the Church. According to Nuttall, pastoral work never ceased during the violence. The NCLG members continued to offer normal Church services and took that as an opportunity to pray for peace and show solidarity with communities.²⁷¹ The areas mentioned here were not the only places that received pastoral support, but many other local initiatives by churches and other Christian groups we carried out as well. We shall continue to review developments on this aspect as the study progresses.

3.5: Conclusion

Looking back at mediation by the NCLG between 1987 and 1990 we notice a trail of failed attempts. Bishop Nuttall agreed with this observation by stating: “Our achievements were very limited and it was almost a failed attempt. The end of violence only came with democracy.”²⁷² One of the reasons was that the Church leaders were dealing with politicians who had their own interests in the violence. From the findings it can be concluded that each of the groups involved took advantage of the situation to advance its own interests. The work of political mediation was complicated by a suspicion that the mediators were perceived as favouring one of the parties involved. There was validity in this allegation on the basis of the fact that the ANC was seen by the NCLG as a party that was to bring total freedom to all South Africans. The writer concludes that this perception by the NCLG was partly responsible for hurdles in the mediation process. We have also shown at various stages how being prophetic became a stumbling block as Inkatha often felt betrayed. Instead of having prior consultations the NCLG often used shortcuts. There were dangers in being both a mediator and a prophet simultaneously.

That the NCLG held meetings with different political leaders in order to get their side of the story and finally arrange for a common meeting was step in the right direction. Pastoral visits by the NCLG to places of pain were a sign of solidarity with victims of

NCLG Pastoral Letters on the Natal Peace Talks, 6 August 1989, DN/DR/B/17.15.1.66 NCLG Pastoral Letter on the Natal Violence and the Peace Talks, 19 November 1989 and DN/DR/B/17.15.1.92 NCLG Pastoral Letter, 1 March 1990.

²⁷¹ Nuttall, same interview.

²⁷² Nuttall, same interview.

political violence. By harnessing support from clergy and parishioners and the general public the NCLG was credited for being a channel through which *ubuntu* was expressed. Reasonable efforts to communicate with the government about the situation brought very limited success. On these grounds we may conclude by pointing out the members of NCLG were not mediation experts but were simply reacting to a situation out of pastoral concern. The issues raised so far shall receive further attention in the subsequent chapters.

CHAPTER FOUR: RUN-UP TO THE GENERAL ELECTIONS (1991-1994)

4.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with a critical period in the history of South Africa and that of Natal in particular. The journey towards the first general democratic election was marked by further incidents of political violence and the situation in the province grew worse. Strong tension and suspicion between the unbanned ANC and now the IFP remained a challenge for those who were concerned with peace for the region like the NCLG. Inkatha transformed itself from a cultural movement to a political party, the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP). Towards the end of 1990 there had been a major discussion on the future existence and role of the group especially in consideration of the lack of real progress in mediation for the past three years.²⁷³ Some members of the group felt that in the face of previous frustration the group should disband. Others argued that the ecumenical spirit was enhanced by combined action at regional or national level and the Church seems to work better ecumenically at social issues. "The conflict is not likely to go away, and although the group is perhaps not fully equipped for the mediation role, it is effective in its ecumenical activities."²⁷⁴ What appears to be of interest here was the admission to the complexities of mediation by the group and this chapter will explore how they moved on.

Amid growing pessimism among members of NCLG and the general public that the warring parties would never come together and enjoy peace this chapter will explore how the top leadership of IFP and the ANC finally came together. It will also examine the establishment of the National Peace Accord (NPA) and the role of the NCLG within its structures. In that capacity we shall delve to analyse the role of the NCLG in assisting to create an enabling environment for a peaceful election in a war-torn Natal region. It appears that the need for more pastoral work grew and this chapter will seek to explore some of the major aspects of this initiative. There was no way the local churches could manage this alone and the SACC availed itself through the provision of mainly financial resources channelled through the NCF. We will also examine some of the complexities that arose in the administration and distribution of

²⁷³ DN/DR/B/17.15.1.174 Minutes of NCLG Meeting, 28 November 1990.

²⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

the said resources. Finally this chapter will analyse the achievements and shortfalls of the NCLG in the light of its own limitations within the given period.

4.2: Mediation

Renewed commitment to broker peace talks between the IFP and the ANC were echoed by the newly founded mission statement. Among the variety of interventions open to the NCLG the first one was that it offered to mediate and facilitate peace talks between warring parties.²⁷⁵ Although Nuttall observed the NCLG had no direct input into the meeting between Nelson Mandela and Chief Buthelezi in Durban on 29 January 1991, we cannot rule out the subtle pressure that Church leaders had put behind the scenes prior to this historic event. Both parties had committed themselves to political tolerance and freedom of political activity.²⁷⁶ As noted earlier in chapter three above, a series of meetings had been held to try and bring the warring parties together though with limited success. Nuttall noted:

Church leaders had no direct role in arranging or facilitating this meeting, but Diakonia – an ecumenical agency in Durban strongly committed to the pursuit of justice and peace – published the agreement in both Zulu and English, while the Natal Church Leaders' Group, representing a wide cross-section of mainline churches, gave it their wholehearted support. Unfortunately the noble aspirations of the accord were not put into effect, and the violence continued.²⁷⁷

The sentiments expressed by this statement somewhat indicated a level of disappointment on the part of the NCLG. If it had succeeded the need for further mediation would have fallen off since the parties would have committed themselves to stop violence and strive for peace.

In a small but significant way the NCLG supported the move by Bishop Nuttall and John Forbes (Dean of the Cathedral) move to host the leadership of the ANC and IFP in a joint short service in the Anglican Cathedral. This was to be done prior to embarking on a planned joint tour of areas affected by political violence around Pietermaritzburg.²⁷⁸ Though this was a noble and subtle way of creating a new spiritual feeling between these estranged bedfellows, that was likely to strengthen their relationship, a mistake was made somewhere. The invitation letter had an

²⁷⁵ DN/DR/B/17.15.2.2 Mission Statement of the NCLG as discussed at the meeting, 31 January 1991.

²⁷⁶ W. Kistner Collections 1971A Joint Statement of the IFP and ANC, 29 January 1991.

²⁷⁷ Nuttall, *Number Two to Tutu*, 79.

²⁷⁸ DN/DR/B/17.15.2.2 Minutes of NCLG Meeting, 31 January 1991. See also DN/DR/B/17.15.2.7 Minutes of meeting of the NCLG, 14 March 1991.

accusing message to one of the parties by pointing out previous events in which Inkatha and Buthelezi were negatively portrayed. "We had the Cathedral grounds available for Mr Mandela's press conference during his visit in April 1990 and we were accused of being an ANC church. We have had the sadness of an attack on our Cathedral receptionist as a message to the Bishop that this is an ANC church."²⁷⁹ That the IFP and the Anglican Church were not in good books with each other was apparent. This estranged relationship had a negative impact on the mediation front. Aitchison admitted that although Chief Buthelezi was an Anglican, some Anglican bishops found him to be difficult because "personality wise he was slightly paranoid, very suspicious and reacted badly to criticism."²⁸⁰ However, the Church leaders were equally responsible for some of the negative outcomes. Mediation and being prophetic at the same time could not work out easily in this conflict.

Following an escalation of violence in some rural areas and the perceived failure of an agreed joint monitoring forum by the ANC and IFP the group agreed to task Bishops Nuttall and Makhaye to "arrange a meeting with Dr F Mdlalose as a first step in setting up further meetings with both Inkatha and the ANC."²⁸¹ Remarks made by Mdlalose at a "World Conference on Religion and Peace: Briefing on the IFP/ANC Peace Accord", in Durban were taken as undermining the NCLG peace initiatives. Nuttall reported on this meeting and informed them of Mdlalose's continued accusations of some of the Natal Church leaders.²⁸² Meanwhile, there was little progress in the attempted mediation by the SACC represented by Bishop Buthelezi and Revd Chikane in the company of Bishop Nuttall and Revd Mgojo at Ulundi. Two dynamics were at play. One was that some people like Jacob Zuma of the ANC felt that it was more convenient to keep the national Church leadership out of this initiative and give full backing to the local Church leaders. Perhaps he was confident that the local Church leaders had the capacity to manage this situation but that was not going to be the case. The second dynamic was that within Natal the Tugela River divided the Church leaders into two camps. Admittedly and sadly it was difficult for the Church in Natal province to speak against violence with the same voice. Philippe

²⁷⁹ DN/DR/B/17.15.2.6 Dean Forbes and Bishop Nuttall to Chief Buthelezi and Mr Mandela, 8 March 1991.

²⁸⁰ Aitchison, same interview.

²⁸¹ DN/DR/B/17.15.2.7 Minutes of NCLG Meeting, 14 March 1991.

²⁸² DN/DR/B/17.15.2.12 Minutes of NCLG Meeting, 25 April 1991.

Denis citing Sipho Sokhela confirmed that the Zululand Council of Churches included several Inkatha members.²⁸³ There was nothing sinister in clergy being supporters or members of the IFP because that was an expression of their freedom of political association. As an illustration, Kearney elaborated further on this when he stated:

And the flavour down here was UDF, ANC and the flavour on the other side of the Tugela River was Inkatha. That was what the Church was like. Because one of the strange things that happened was that when the Church leaders would go to see Chief Buthelezi he would surround himself with six, seven, nine or ten clergy who were sympathetic to him as if he had his own Church leaders' group up there.²⁸⁴

They would side with Chief Buthelezi and Inkatha as noted above and so gave the impression of what Kearney meant by a divided Church. One of the initiatives to bring the Church leaders groups together was after realising that politicians were using this rift to their advantage. He noted: "After meetings held with both the ANC and IFP leadership towards the end of 1992 it had become clear that there was a need to consult with Church leaders in other parts of Natal: the Northern Natal inland area and the northern Natal coastal area."²⁸⁵ The move to coordinate the clergy from both sides of the Tugela River into one team from 1993 was an effort to resolve this crisis. A more united church approach was called for.

In the eyes of Inkatha SACC was an enemy since 1983. In that year Jean Francois Bill from the Alliance for Black Reformed Christians in South Africa (ABRECSA) aborted a planned conference hosted at KwaNzimela near Ulundi by the Zululand Council of Churches (a SACC affiliate), chaired by James Massey.²⁸⁶ Chief Buthelezi felt betrayed when the delegates turned away a welcome gesture because of the presence of a group of armed Inkatha supporters and members. Despite an apology to ABRECSA by the Zululand Council of Churches, Desmond Tutu's withdrawal of SACC staff from a proposed meeting at Ulundi in September 1983 worsened the relationship between the SACC and Chief Buthelezi. Hostility grew when church organisations joined the newly formed UDF, which Buthelezi considered as the worst enemy.²⁸⁷ Efforts by the NCLG through the SACC to resuscitate mediation talks continued to be futile and a special meeting was convened to improve the relationship

²⁸³ Denis, "Men of the Cloth", 316.

²⁸⁴ Kearney, same interview.

²⁸⁵ DN/DR/B/17.15.2.125 Minutes of NCLG and representatives of Northern Natal Church Leaders Meeting, 23 February 1993.

²⁸⁶ Denis, "Men of the Cloth", 315.

²⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 316.

between the SACC and the IFP. The IFP group would consist of ten members and the NCLG had five delegates. The main purpose of the meeting was to improve relations between IFP and the SACC because dialogue between the NCLG and IFP had almost ceased thereby making mediation impossible.²⁸⁸ No progress was made as the IFP recalled the deterioration of its relationship with the SACC since 1970s.

Keith Zondi, popularly known as Revd Musa Zondi, of the Lutheran Church, wrote an article in which it was pointed out that the SACC accused Buthelezi of being an apartheid stooge by exercising leadership in the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly and discriminated against Inkatha. "The SACC did not only discriminate against the IFP politically but also made sure that the IFP never received any material or moral assistance from the SACC or from any of its worldwide ecumenical partners."²⁸⁹ Under this atmosphere there was very little that the NCLG and the SACC could do unless some of the issues raised by IFP were addressed. The NCLG was quite open about their frustrated mediation attempts citing meetings with the ANC, IFP, minister of Law and Order and the State President. Again this was another failed attempt at peace building that was closely linked with the issue of trust on the mediator's part. That the IFP opened an old wound was a sign of lack of political will to change the situation. It was noted: "It has not been easy to for the Church leaders who have tried to play both a facilitation role and a mediation role."²⁹⁰

Meanwhile the National Peace Accord was signed on 14 September by a wide cross-section of political parties including the IFP and the ANC. Its mandate was to end political violence throughout the country. Though the NCLG was not directly involved, the fact that the one-day summit was jointly sponsored and presided over by an unusual and effective combination of business and Church leaders was an indication of how far the Church was willing to work for peace.²⁹¹ Room for Church leaders' involvement was created within the national, regional and local structures. However, in Natal "the IFP felt that the Church leadership was biased, and that was

²⁸⁸ DN/DR/B/17.15.2.21 Minutes of NCLG Meeting, 10 June 1991.

²⁸⁹ K. M. Zondi, "The Relationship Between the South African Council of Churches and the Inkatha Freedom Party", in G. Besier (ed), *The Churches, South Africa and the Political Context* (Atlanta: Minerva Press, 1999), 164.

²⁹⁰ DN/DR/B/17.15.2.33 NCLG Memorandum to Provincial Administrator, Re: The Natal conflict and reconstruction, 28 August 1991.

²⁹¹ Nuttall, *Number Two to Tutu*, 81

why they would not accept church involvement, except for having clergy say a prayer at the opening of the meetings.”²⁹² In contrast, Oscar Dhlomo was one of those from the IFP side who argued for greater Church involvement as noted: “I would have no hesitation in suggesting that the Church should gear itself to play a more prominent role in the negotiations.”²⁹³ Perhaps there was also a division in the IFP camp about its attitude towards the NCLG as mediators and that could account for the reasons why Dhlomo left the IFP to establish the Institute for Multi-Party Democracy, which sought to foster a spirit of tolerance, among other things, in South African political life.²⁹⁴ His new institution was quite in line with what the NCLG and SACC were trying to encourage in KwaZulu-Natal. However this remained a dream as violence continued with the NCLG mediation efforts being shot down.

For some time there was a marked shift from mediation to the resolution of political conflict through the Regional Dispute Resolution Committees (RDCs). Reports from NCLG representatives Archbishop Hurley, Jennings and Nxasana indicated a general lack of skills in conflict resolution on the part of the recently established RDC and that affected the whole initiative.²⁹⁵ The aim of this initiative was to empower local committees within the community to handle political and other related disputes in order to reduce violence and further loss of life through killings. The effectiveness of this initiative was held in question because the hostilities between the ANC and the IFP were building up. Admittedly, Stanley Mogoba who was vice chairperson of the NPA was fully aware of the fact that the political leaders who had signed it were violating its very principles.²⁹⁶ Reportedly the ANC had planned a ‘march to Ulundi’ and IFP had remarked that ‘they were ready to receive them’.²⁹⁷ Whatever that meant for both parties and the ongoing attempts at peace will be left to guesswork. Perhaps the intervention of the NCLG helped to save the situation as they communicated with the leadership of both parties and the state. “The Natal Church Leaders Group resolved to request meetings with the ANC and IFP to discuss concerns about the proposed ANC march to Ulundi and the IFP’s response to that proposed ‘march’ as

²⁹² DN/DR/B/17.15.2.43 Minutes of NCLG Meeting, 5 December 1991

²⁹³ Nuttall, *Number Two to Tutu*, 79.

²⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 68.

²⁹⁵ DN/DR/B/17.15.2.68 Minutes of NCLG Meeting, 9 March 1992. See also DN/DR/B/17.15.2.75 Minutes of NCLG Meeting, 9 April 1992.

²⁹⁶ DN/DR/B/17.15.2.102 Minutes of NCLG Meeting, 16 September 1992.

²⁹⁷ DN/DR/B/17.15.2.102 Minutes of NCLG Meeting, 16 September 1992.

reported in the media.”²⁹⁸ We are not too certain as to whether this intervention by the NCLG was of any significance but no such march ever took place and maybe the ANC took heed.

Back at the drawing board the NCLG initiated separate meetings with the ANC and IFP in order to facilitate improvement in the relations between the two political movements. For the first time the NCLG realised that no headway could be made without working closely with clergy from Ulundi. For that reason Mogoba proposed the involvement of Bishop Lawrence Zulu who was to be asked to make suitable arrangements for a meeting.²⁹⁹ This move would give the Northern Natal Church leaders a feeling of being involved and to start seeing issues from another angle, unlike when no communication was there with the NCLG. Asked why the ANC needed the Church as a mediator the answer given was that it saw the NCLG as having no political ambitions or allegiances and it has a human face only. The validity of this perception needs to be put to test. Some former members of the NCLG stated that their sympathies were more with the ANC than IFP.

Nuttall observed: “They [IFP] tended to see us as favouring the UDF first of all and then the ANC. Of course we favoured the liberation struggle. We favoured the struggle for liberation in our own land and we couldn’t be unsympathetic towards the activities of the liberation struggle.”³⁰⁰ The ANC was seen as the torchbearer of freedom and some liberal whites found themselves in love with its policies. At least one of the sources confirmed: “In my earlier days I had been a member and even a local leader of the Liberal Party, which had given me my first experience of inter-racial collaboration around a common cause”³⁰¹ Some members of the NCLG supported the ANC, which they perceived as speaking a language that could be understood by the Church leaders because it was a modern liberal party. The IFP was perceived as traditional rural oriented and conservative and out of touch with modern politics. Zulu identity was at the core of the IFP and that received stronger support from rural communities. “Even so, Zulu identity constituted a powerful appeal,

²⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁹ DN/DR/B/17.15.2.104 Minutes of NCLG Meeting, 19 October 1992.

³⁰⁰ Nuttall, same interview.

³⁰¹ Nuttall, *Number Two to Tutu*, 57, 59.

mobilising large numbers of mainly rural people.”³⁰² However, there was little admiration for IFP among some members of the NCLG as noted from Aitchison’s sentiments. “When those Church leaders came to vote in the next election, if they did, I think they would have voted for the ANC but it’s not that they were not honest brokers. I think it was more in terms of their personal convictions. They were more in harmony with the other side.”³⁰³ Real tactfulness on the part of the Church leaders was at stake and this had a cost on their part as mediator.

Under these circumstances we cannot blame IFP for its misgivings towards the NCLG but at the same time we need to admit to the fact that no mediator can go into this process without preconceived thoughts. Sharon Leviton and James Greenstone supported this when they argued:

Reality would indicate that the mediator comes to the session with her [or his] personal history, value system, perceptions about the world. These qualities are intrinsic to and individual’s humanness. The key is not whether the mediator has strong feelings or bias toward the parties or toward the positions being taken or toward the issues at stake. Rather, the key is that she [or he] be able to make the separation behaviourally between her [or his] needs and those of the parties.³⁰⁴

In IFP circles the image of the Church leaders regionally and nationally was not above reproach. In a welcome address to Anglican Bishops who were attending a meeting in KwaNzimela, Chief Buthelezi did not mince his words by openly reiterating what he saw as the Church’s weakness. Though addressed to the leadership of a particular denomination these remarks are no doubt relevant to our appreciation of his perception of Church leaders including the NCLG. He categorically stated:

For many years I have been disowned by great personages in the Anglican Church and the South African Council of Churches. I have had to face hostile a SACC which stood with the ANC/SACP alliance in their vilification of me, and their condemnation not only of the detail of what I was doing, but also the condemnation of my very existence as Chief Minister of KwaZulu and as President of the IFP.³⁰⁵

A long-standing relationship of polarisation had existed between him and Archbishop Desmond Tutu and he was perhaps one of the personages he referred to. However, Buthelezi still had respect for the Archbishop Tutu as noted: “I also wish to put on

³⁰² T. Waetjen and G. Maré, “Shaka’s Aeroplane: The Take-off and Landing of Inkatha, Modern Zulu Nationalism and Royal Politics” in B. Carton, J. Loband and J. Sithole, (eds), *Zulu Identities: Being Zulu, Past and Present* (Pietermaritzburg: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2008), 354.

³⁰³ Aitchison, same interview.

³⁰⁴ S. C. Leviton and J. L. Greenstone, *Elements of Mediation* (Pacific Grove: Books/Cole, 1997), 24-25.

³⁰⁵ DN/DR/B/17.15.2.107 Mangosuthu Buthelezi, Chief Minister of KwaZulu and President of IFP, Greetings to the Bishops of the CPSA, 11 November 1992.

record my appreciation that His Grace has within his tight schedule taken time to come and minister to me this way as a member of his flock, and as a fellow Black South African.”³⁰⁶ Archbishop Tutu did not give up easily even when he was aware that Chief Buthelezi had very strong reservations.

The contacts initiated by Archbishop Tutu over the last five years were likely to be responsible for his acceptance to meet with Nelson Mandela of the ANC in 1993. Before we look at the events that followed we should remind ourselves of how religion was also used in this context. It was not unusual for both Church leaders and politicians alike to claim inspiration by God. Chief Buthelezi for instance made an open statement implicit of his Christian conviction. “I come to this meeting from a prayer-filled night and I come humble in the knowledge that nothing I can say here would be of any value if it were not said in obedience to Jesus Christ, and if what I said was not conveyed to you by the Holy Spirit in South Africa today.”³⁰⁷ It is beyond our case in this discussion to analyse the meaning of Buthelezi’s Christian claims but what stands out is how he used this to open the message as if to impress on the guest bishops his own religious convictions and piety. Notwithstanding whatever explanation given, we are persuaded to think that he was seeking to be seen in a positive light by his bishops, something that would be questionable.

By the close of 1992 another mediation initiative was undertaken by the NCLG by holding separate consultative meetings with the ANC and its alliance partners, and the IFP. A summary of the issues from the ANC side highlighted a calling for Church support to access public space for political rallies in Natal and KwaZulu that was denied by the IFP.³⁰⁸ The ANC expressed appreciation towards the Church leadership for its participation in mediation. There was a general consensus that the government forces were allegedly involved in atrocities and the NCLG undertook to be prophetic by agreeing to expose alleged culprits in these crimes and call for public apologies for any mistakes made. Such a prophetic stance had limitations especially where IFP supporters would be implicated and that was likely to affect mediation and peace building. We also wish to record the contribution of some women to a local mediation

³⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁰⁸ DN/DR/B/17.15.2.111 Record of NCLG and ANC & IFP Meetings, October-November 1992. See also NDA Minutes of NCLG and ANC Meeting, 19 October 1992 (Not indexed).

initiative. There was a failed attempt by Methodist Manyano Natal West District under the leadership of Dorcas Mkhize. In 1993 an invitation was extended to the two most outspoken political stalwarts around Pietermaritzburg to discuss ways of securing peace. David Ntombela of IFP and Harry Gwala of the ANC initially accepted to attend the planned meeting but both absconded and the women were very disappointed.³⁰⁹ Sadly though, the two men were well known to Dorcas Mkhize and her late husband as family friends for many years.

4.3 The “Breakthrough”

The historic meeting between Nelson Mandela and Chief Buthelezi became a reality in June 1993 and we need to examine what role the NCLG played in securing it. “We are encouraged by the moves of both parties towards a meeting between the Chief Minister and Mr Mandela and commend the preparatory work being done to make this meeting productive.”³¹⁰ Since their engagement in political mediation the NCLG had always been keen to find a lasting solution to the political conflict in Natal and they saw this planned meeting as a total breakthrough of their mediation efforts. According to Nuttall, the Church deserved credit for the said meeting that was finally brokered by Archbishop Desmond Tutu who used his skilled craftiness to persuade the two opposed political leaders to a meeting in his presence on 23 June 1993 in Johannesburg.³¹¹ Bishop Nuttall further submitted:

The fact is that we managed to get Nelson Mandela and Mangosuthu Buthelezi in a one on one, but with their teams, with their colleagues in June 1993, at a time when there was a deep rift still between the IFP and the ANC. And the two organisations had not themselves succeeded to have a meeting between the two leaders other than a very brief one in January 1991 in Durban. Church leaders got them together in 1993 to talk, to try and cross the gulf that existed between them. During that nine-hour meeting of intense discussion, we arranged for Mandela and Buthelezi to have lunch on their own for a whole hour.³¹²

We cannot dismiss the NCLG’s claim that they were part of the process, which culminated in this meeting, but its involvement must have been part of team playing with politicians, SACC, and prominent Church leaders like Archbishop Tutu, and Bishop Mogoba. Bishop Nuttall’s view should be seen in the spirit of crediting the Church for its mediation effort. The contents of the meeting are not for our

³⁰⁹ Mkhize, same interview.

³¹⁰ DN/DR/B/17.15.2.119 Responses of the NCLG to the various requests made by the IFP and the ANC at meetings held towards the end of 1992, (Not dated).

³¹¹ Nuttall, *Number Two to Tutu*, 86.

³¹² Nuttall, same interview.

consumption here but what seemed eminent was the excitement with which NCLG received news of the event as noted from a draft letter. Bishop Hudson, who was then convenor, wrote: "On behalf of the Natal Church Leaders' Group I write to congratulate you on your recent meeting with Mr Mandela/Chief Buthelezi. We are greatly encouraged to hear about the matters on which you were able to agree, and pray that God will bless each of you carrying out the commitments made on that occasion."³¹³

It would have been a miscalculation on the part of the NCLG to imagine that after the above said meeting, peace was going to prevail, but the opposite was to be anticipated. This can be understood in the context of multi-party negotiations that were going on in readiness to proposed general elections. It is worth noting here that the IFP misgivings created another rift and threatened its participation. About the divisions between the ANC and IFP, Mdlalose stated: "The IFP felt "mauled", "eaten up", "destroyed." The attitude of the majority party seemed to be "destroy Inkatha and then you can have a better South Africa". The IFP was being projected as a "spoiler" and they were thought to be opposed to democratic elections."³¹⁴ Inkatha grew bitter and somehow threatened with secession. Possibly this move would have created an autonomous Zulu state from the rest of South Africa. "This threat of secession was abated rapidly, though Inkatha's commitment to participate in the 1994 elections remained tenuous right into the eleventh hour."³¹⁵

With fears of a probable out-break of a full-blown civil war, the Church leaders were on their feet again trying to mediate and persuade the IFP to participate in the coming democratic elections. A gulf of mistrust separated Mandela and Buthelezi and the former was reportedly frustrated with the latter. Faced with this new situation amid growing political tension the NCLG declared: "The official stance of the NCLG was to fully support the talks at Kempton Park. Monitors were encouraged to relay this to their Governments. There is a perceived need for the Church leaders to play a growing leadership role as well as to continue in a mediation role."³¹⁶ Foreign peace

³¹³ DN/DR/B/17.15.2.157 NCLG to Chief Buthelezi and Mr Mandela, 1 July 1993.

³¹⁴ DN/DR/B/17.15.2.160 Minutes of NCLG Liaison Committee and representatives of the IFP Meeting, 14 July 1993.

³¹⁵ Waetjen and Maré, "Shaka's Aeroplane", 359.

³¹⁶ DN/DR/B/17.15.2.181 Minutes of NCLG Meeting, 20 October 1993.

monitors were already in the country to assess the pre-election period in order to ascertain the credibility of the democratic elections. For the Church leaders democracy would only be achieved in South Africa if all political parties participated in the general elections. A public statement on elections read: "We call on all political parties to participate in the elections. This will enable all voters to exercise their right to vote and to do so secretly."³¹⁷ Chief Buthelezi responded by challenging the NCLG, accusing it of being partisan in dealing with matters without considering the views of IFP and the KwaZulu Government.³¹⁸ It is not clear what kind of response the NCLG anticipated from the IFP, and as shown, this initiative backfired. The so called mediator was seen as pushing the situation in favour of one side by not issuing a statement condemning the ANC's Umkhonto WeSizwe which was seen by IFP as the source of killings for its supporters in Natal. In Inkatha's opinion, the NCLG supported violence indirectly through its association with SACC and the World Council of Churches (WCC) programme to combat racism. The ANC in South Africa, for example, was a beneficiary of the WCC special fund for liberation movements fighting against an apartheid government.³¹⁹ Buthelezi and the IFP were totally opposed to this because they perceived it as violence.

However, the NCLG reaffirmed its commitment to peace by issuing a statement declaring its total support through mediation and affirmed further dialogue in pursuit of political calm.

Even at this stage we would be willing to play whatever mediatory role might be deemed appropriate and are sure that national church leaders would undertake a similar commitment. We would however ask you to recognise that there are two aspects of the churches' pastoral role: a mediation aspect and a prophetic aspect and we would be untrue to the gospel if we neglected either. As you are aware we have gone out of our way over the years to seek to mediate both at national and regional level.³²⁰

It may not be fair to describe the NCLG as being naïve in what it entailed to be both prophetic and be a mediator. Up to this time history had shown that a combination of these two aspects had never proved successful. Its engagement in seeking to mediate between the warring parties in Natal was futile. Problems arose when the Church

³¹⁷ DN/DR/B/17.15.2.194 NCLG to Chief Buthelezi, Re: Statement on Elections, 24 November 1993.

³¹⁸ DN/DR/B/17.15.2.195 Chief Buthelezi to Norman Hudson, Convenor of the NCLG, Re: Response to Statement on Elections, 25 November 1993.

³¹⁹ De Gruchy, *The Church Struggle*, 126. See also AHS, "The Enthronement Charge of Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Sermon of The Archbishop of Canterbury", 7 September 1986, 17.

³²⁰ DN/DR/B/17.15.2.196 NCLG to Chief Minister Buthelezi, 2 December 1993.

acting in another instance used its prophetic voice by implicating the IFP in a number of cases. Buthelezi was not convinced that the NCLG was non-partisan. In mediation that becomes a source of contention. This was in line with the argument that "Mediators cannot advocate a particular party or point of view, but rather we can and often advocate particular processes for making decisions."³²¹ In support of the same observation Burton also argued: "The intervention of a third party into relationships between others is a delicate task and can easily do more harm than good, especially when the relationships touch upon deeply felt issues, as is the case with [political] conflicts."³²² We should remember that this was part of a perception on the part of Buthelezi and the IFP and its validity could be treated elsewhere.

The last mediation attempt in this period came about as a result of Inkatha's standoff position in relation to participation in the general elections. A team of invited international mediators arrived in Johannesburg on 12 April 1994 and we take note Buthelezi's words in his welcome address:

We pray the Almighty Lord that through the efforts of the mediators, a miracle can be produced to bring back South Africa on the path of long-lasting peace and democracy... We wanted a Constitution which establishes a federation of states, entrenching social, cultural and economic pluralism... Meaningful amendments to the Constitution will enable the Inkatha Freedom Party to participate in the elections.³²³

Though this was a national exercise it must be borne in mind that the local and national Church leaders had almost given up. Political violence in Natal could not be treated outside that because it was posing a threat to the elections with Inkatha having not declared its participation. Evidently there was a very strong Christian appeal in this message as Buthelezi often did when addressing religious dignitaries as noted above. Quoting from his words, the IFP was on a drive of establishing KwaZulu as a federal state which others saw as secession and division of the country. On the basis of Zulu predominance in Natal we cannot rule out the possibility of an intention to create a separate state in the name of a Zulu kingdom similar to Swaziland and Lesotho. However, it was public knowledge that for many years Buthelezi had resisted the idea of declaring the KwaZulu homeland into a self-governing territory.

³²¹ Kraybill, *Peace Skills*, 20.

³²² Burton, *Conflict Resolution*, 45.

³²³ W. Kistner Collections, 3226A, A word of welcome to International Mediators by Mangosuthu Buthelezi, President of IFP, 12 April 1994.

Bishop Nuttall and others had disagreed with this notion fearing that South Africa would be divided into self-governing regions.³²⁴

In the mean time the NCLG accepted to be part of a joint spiritual initiative spearheaded by Cassidy and African Enterprise known as the “Natal for Jesus Peace Rally”, to be held in Kings Park Stadium, Durban on 17 April 1994. In an invitation letter to the NCLG Cassidy had argued:

Arising out of the Natal/KwaZulu Leaders Forum (February 24th), plus conversations with various Natal Church Leaders, plus a meeting with the Durban Churches Task Force, some of us have come to believe that the urgent need in our province right now is for a “Natal for Jesus Peace Rally”, to call all Christian believers together from all over Natal on 17 April (possibly at Kings Park Stadium) – time uncertain, maybe shortly after midday. This would be for a great act of prayer, penitence, praise and proclamation.³²⁵

Based on this statement, we have no reason to doubt that a separate mediation or peace initiative spearheaded by Cassidy had been going on. This was in spite of the NCLG desire to have all churches rally behind it and speak with one voice. Cassidy’s letter to Bishop Nuttall expressed his belief in the power of prayer and the Bible, and for him the violence was seen as part of human folly, which could only be defeated, by true penitence and confession.³²⁶ The main speakers were Bishop Mogoba of the NCLG and Cassidy from AE.³²⁷ Kearney remembered Cassidy as someone who had always believed in adopting a different style to the political crisis in Natal. He stated: “I think as a mediator he became aware of the fact that if he became a member [of the NCLG] he might destroy his potential for being a mediator, and especially for relating to Buthelezi because he was somebody who kept throughout all these troubles an open door with Buthelezi.”³²⁸ This would imply that there was more trust and respect between Cassidy and Buthelezi than there probably was between the latter and members of the NCLG. Linked to this initiative was the contribution of a relatively unknown person, Washington Okumu, a private diplomatic figure from Kenya and a devout Christian who had come in his personal capacity to give assistance.³²⁹

³²⁴ Nuttall, same interview.

³²⁵ NDA Michael Cassidy to Michael Nuttall, 1 March 1994.

³²⁶ *Ibid.*

³²⁷ DN/DR/B/17.15.3.33 Church leaders of KZN and AE, Open invitation to the Jesus Peace Rally, KwaZulu-Natal, 17 April 1994.

³²⁸ Kearney, same interview.

³²⁹ Nuttall, “Mediation Efforts”, 29.

The coincidence between the presence of Jacob Zuma of the ANC, Chief Buthelezi of the IFP and Danie Schuttler of the National Party on this day with the IFP's acceptance to participate in the elections at the eleventh hour has remained a mystery. The decision by IFP came amid prayers and biblical messages and all shared credit. However, Kearney felt that more credit was due to Cassidy: "And it was seen like a kind of miracle rally: the evangelicals were particularly happy about it. I think he did a great job. I have great admiration for Michael Cassidy."³³⁰ There was no mention of a physical presence of any Church leader in the meeting of the trio but as already noted the Church saw itself as having created an enabling atmosphere. The final outcome was that within two days an agreement was publicly announced and signed in Pretoria by De Klerk, Mandela and Buthelezi in the presence of Okumu.³³¹ The NCLG perceived this as a major breakthrough amid fears of a civil war had IFP remained out of the elections. However, it would be improper to credit the NCLG for this because Cassidy who was not a full member of the group engineered much of this rally.³³² He only co-opted them into his initiative with Okumu. "The Peace Rally on the 17th April will be attended by a wide range of Church leaders and political party representatives"³³³ We also acknowledge an observation that AE was quite close to IFP. After the elections in which IFP won the Premier position in KwaZulu-Natal the AE was invited to conduct a short prayer service at the inaugural meeting of the Provincial Legislature and Cabinet.³³⁴ This did not go down well with members of the NCLG who were left out of an important provincial function.

4.4 Other Peace Initiatives

In the next few years the NCLG peace initiatives were overridden by the NPA, signed on 14 September 1991 by a wide cross-section of political parties,³³⁵ including the ANC, the IFP and the NP.³³⁶ It provided a framework of working towards political tolerance and peace that would create an enabling environment for holding the elections. De Klerk instituted the Goldstone Commission of Inquiry in October 1991 in order to investigate incidents of public violence and intimidation prior to the 1994

³³⁰ Kearney, same interview.

³³¹ Nuttall, "Mediation Efforts", 29

³³² DN/DR/B/17.15.3.10 Minutes of NCLG Meeting, 14 February 1994.

³³³ DN/DR/B/17.15.3.20 Minutes of NCLG Meeting, 23 March 1994.

³³⁴ DN/DR/B/17.15.3.54 Minutes of NCLG Meeting, 24 August 1994.

³³⁵ Nuttall, *Number Two to Tutu*, 81,

³³⁶ <http://www.hurisa.org.za/Goldstone/Goldstone.htm>, accessed on 4 November 2008.

general elections. It was reported that within Natal the commissioners spent most of their time investigating allegations of security force involvement in violence.³³⁷ The establishment of the said commission had been lobbied by the NCLG as was noted in chapter three above. However the NPA lacked clarity on the role of churches within its structures. The NCLG claimed that the NPA was as a result of Church leaders' earlier efforts but current structures left out churches whose role should be prophetic.³³⁸ Although Archbishop Hurley, Nxasana and Jennings were appointed to be members of the RPC in the province, they cited lack of proper channels of communication as an impediment to its role. They alleged: "There had been no proper feedback mechanism between the NCLG and the Regional Peace Committee."³³⁹ Very little was achieved by way of handling political conflict locally and the NCLG was quite disappointed because no specific requests were made to churches other than the general issues for the rest of the public.

The NCLG issued public statements denouncing violence that were used as a voice to call warring political party supporters to refrain from killing each other. It also condemned the killing of three children and shooting of innocent school children in Pietermaritzburg in February 1992. "The Church leaders, in expressing their sympathy with and concern for the families most recently affected, also remember with deep concern all those families of the more than 5 000 people killed in the Natal region alone, since the violence began."³⁴⁰ For them peace could not be achieved as long as the perpetrators of political violence were not brought to book. They were comforted to receive news of the Trust Feed Convictions where evidence produced at the trial proved that the deaths were a result of a joint police and Inkatha plan to make the political party headed by KwaZulu homeland leader, Mangosuthu Buthelezi, the dominant force in the rural township against the will of the people living there."³⁴¹ At least the judgement confirmed a perception by the NCLG that the police and Inkatha

³³⁷ *Ibid.*

³³⁸ DN/DR/B/17.15.2.178 NCLG Guidelines for Official representation on the Peace Accord Structures (n. d.).

³³⁹ DN/DR/B/17.15.3.4 Report on National Peace Accord representatives, Regional Peace Secretariat and NCLG Meeting, 24 January 1994.

³⁴⁰ DN/DR/B/17.15.2.56 NCLG Statement on violence in the Pietermaritzburg Region, 7 February 1992.

³⁴¹ DN/DR/B/17.15.2.80 Southern Africa Church News to Editors and Africa Desk Re: Natal Church Leaders React to Trust Feed Convictions – Call for Thorough Cleansing of Police, 5 May 1992.

were major players in the political violence. However, as noted in the previous chapter, being prophetic also had its counter effects.

A number of peace rallies and prayer services were lined up for various venues at different times. These activities gave the Church the opportunity to theologise on the political situation by invoking the presence of God in the context political violence. In support of this approach, Mpumlwana stated that contextual theology pays due attention to real life experiences that people are going through and people share their experiences together as a community of faith.³⁴² By addressing the political realities in this particular way the NCLG and the churches were showing that to preach the Gospel means to proclaim God's solidarity in Jesus Christ with those who are suffering under political violence.³⁴³ This approach of sensitising Christian believers regardless of whether they were in white congregations or black congregations did not of course allegedly make much sense to white parishioners. For many of them especially those living in urban areas, political violence was far-fetched since they were not directly affected. Kerchhoff [Joan] described how fellow parishioners used to be indifferent about political violence and described Peter and her as supporters of communists.³⁴⁴ The NCLG made special preparations for a Christmas Peace Service on 13 December 1992 by offering buses to all who wished to travel from the major four regions of Natal to Westridge Park Tennis Stadium, Durban. In his sermon, Bishop Nuttall invoked the spirit of *ubuntu* as a basis for community life and called on people to embrace peace by destroying weapons.³⁴⁵ The Church was worried about people carrying weapons that were often used to attack and kill fellow humans. Mandela had made the same plea at the Kings Park Stadium after his release in 1990 but this had not made sense to many.³⁴⁶ A reflection of the rally showed that over 6 000 people had been in attendance although some members argued that more could have been done to make the liturgy more friendly to blacks.³⁴⁷

Subsequently, in a bid to spread the message of peace, more peace services were held in Pietermaritzburg, Estcourt, Ladysmith, Durban, and the South Coastal areas.

³⁴² Mpumlwana, "The Road to Democracy", 7.

³⁴³ Huber, "The Role of the Church in Situations of Transition", 15.

³⁴⁴ Kerchhoff, same interview

³⁴⁵ DN/DR/B/17.15.2.116 Bishop Michael Nuttall's Sermon, Natal Peace Service, 13 December 1992.

³⁴⁶ BHL, *The Daily News*, V. Hanna, "Acclaim for Mandela Speech", 26 February 1990.

³⁴⁷ DN/DR/B/17.15.2.122 Minutes of NCLG Meeting, 20 January 1993.

Diakonia supported this peace initiative by a special publication under the theme: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God" and "Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me."³⁴⁸ As momentum was building towards the election dates, the NCLG agreed that 24 April 1994, a week before elections be declared a "Day of Prayer" for peaceful election.³⁴⁹ An extract from the "Special Prayer for Elections", read:

O God of justice righteousness and peace we long to put behind us all the pain and division of apartheid, all the violence that ravages our communities. We long to be a new united people. And so we ask you to bless our elections as a crucial step in establishing a society more in keeping with your will. Help us to ensure that they are free, fair and peaceful.³⁵⁰

The Church leaders' appeal through this prayer reflected disillusionment and yet expressed hope. They were hopeful that divine intervention would bring a renewal of life to the people of South Africa and their province. We cannot measure the impact of this initiative but we cannot rule out how it was likely to positively influence Church members in particular.

4.5 Contact with political party leaders

Though no longer as frequent as was before, the NCLG maintained contact with the leadership of the ANC and the IFP. A fax was sent to both parties registering the NCLG concern about the loss of life and continued violence. They asked for meetings with each party in order to clarify their perceptions on the escalation of violence, impasse on the Constitutional negotiations and proposed march on Ulundi.³⁵¹ As events were to prove later, such meetings were difficult to organise, as political party leaders grew scarce. However, it should be noted that 90% of meetings with the IFP focussed on issues about peace.³⁵² Contact with local ANC leadership was also maintained, especially with Jacob Zuma. At times Mandela initiated some of the meetings as part of maintaining contacts with heads of churches. He argued that the Church seemed to have withdrawn from its prophetic role and that he would like to continue receiving the critical support of the Church.³⁵³ It was agreed that such a meeting would be accommodated within the ongoing policy of meeting from time to

³⁴⁸ DN/DR/B/17.15.2.114 The Diakonia Community Newsletter, December 1992.

³⁴⁹ DN/DR/B/17.15.3.1 Minutes of NCLG Meeting, 11 January 1994.

³⁵⁰ DN/DR/B/17.15.3.15 NCLG Prayer for Elections, (n. d.).

³⁵¹ DN/DR/B/17.15.2.104 Minutes of NCLG Initial Meeting, 19 October 1992.

³⁵² DN/DR/B/17.15.2.160 Minutes of NCLG Liaison Committee and representative of IFP Meeting, 14 July 1993.

³⁵³ DN/DR/B/17.15.3.10 Minutes of NCLG Meeting, 14 February 1994.

time with the different political parties. Mandela was unable to come but Zuma was delegated as his replacement.³⁵⁴ This served to illustrate a close working relationship between the ANC and Church leaders. We question whether the NCLG would have accepted a similar meeting with Chief Buthelezi.

More evidence confirmed a closer working relationship with the ANC as was noted: "As agreed at the meeting of the NCLG on August 3, there will be a special meeting of Natal Church leaders with Archbishop Tutu, Revd Frank Chikane and Bishop Mogoba to discuss further pastoral approaches to Chief Buthelezi and other political leaders to break the current impasse re negotiations and the elections."³⁵⁵ The said meeting took place and Tutu and Mogoba were to act in the absence of Harker to institute the next step in helping reach an agreement.³⁵⁶ Later, Mandela approached the NCLG to arrange a meeting with IFP to initiate negotiations. "It was hoped that the Church leaders would arrange joint meetings between the ANC and IFP and that pastoral concern be shown by representatives of the NCLG at regional level."³⁵⁷ On the contrary the working relationship between the NCLG and IFP was not as warm as that with the ANC. We would like to imagine that it was not that easy for the Church leaders to convince the IFP on a number of related issues.

4.6 Preparations for the Election

The first democratic elections in South Africa and in Natal in particular were almost marred by political violence. As momentum was building towards the elections an Ecumenical Monitoring Programme for South Africa (EMPSA) was established nationally and the NCLG and Natal benefited from it. The main thrust of this programme was to provide local and international peace monitors to hot spots during preparation to the 1994 elections.³⁵⁸ It was important for the province but especially more for the NCLG because that provided requisite support. A workshop was held in preparation for the oncoming elections. The purpose was to provide an opportunity for Church leaders to explore what role they would play in regard to conflict in KwaZulu-Natal with particular emphasis on the elections. The period before and after

³⁵⁴ DN/DR/B/17.15.3.20 Minutes of NCLG Meeting, 23 March 1994.

³⁵⁵ DN/DR/B/17.15.2.169 Paddy Kearney to Bishop Michael Nuttall, 6 August 1993.

³⁵⁶ DN/DR/B/17.15.2.175 Minutes of NCLG Meeting, 14 September 1993.

³⁵⁷ DN/DR/B/17.15.2.181 Minutes of NCLG Meeting, 20 October 1993.

³⁵⁸ Kerchhoff, "The Role of the Churches", 176.

was critical because violence was anticipated to increase. An agreed way forward included; a voter education programme, offered political parties open space to address parishioners within a church context, recruit and train observers, issue out statements on elections, participate in the Peace accord, and hold four to five meetings before and a total of at least nine meetings for 1994.³⁵⁹

The NCLG had a very strong drive on most of these strategies and received considerable international and local support.³⁶⁰ Amid growing fears that IFP would not participate in the approaching elections and as a way of encouraging their own people the NCLG issued a joint pastoral letter on elections.³⁶¹ There was a strong conviction among the NCLG members that elections would bring peace to Natal and the rest of South Africa as expressed by Bishop Nuttall.³⁶² Out of excitement and the desire to have all political parties to participate in the election the NCLG fully supported multi-party negotiating council resolution in 1993.³⁶³ Chief Buthelezi was totally opposed to this action but the NCLG was prepared to defend its position. In response Hudson wrote to Chief Buthelezi explaining the context of the statement on participation in the election and stated:

Our statement on of 24 November stems from our pastoral assessment that participation in the elections will be the most effective way for all to make known their views. We do not in any way associate ourselves with the statement that army tanks should be sent to homelands which do not accept the new dispensation. This is a militaristic statement which we condemn as unacceptable.³⁶⁴

Little were the Church leaders aware of how IFP would react to their media statement. Perhaps one needs to bear in mind the observation that this was a period of transition and quite critical in determining the future of democracy in South Africa. The dawn of a new era had just arrived and for many blacks it was to be the first time they would participate in a general election for which they had struggled.

The NCLG was part of a national initiative to prepare voters by being part of the launching of the "Educate for Democracy" programme on 21 April 1993 in

³⁵⁹ DN/DR/B/17.15.2.191 NCLG Workshop on Natal Conflict and the Elections, 22 November 1993.

³⁶⁰ Nuttall, same interview.

³⁶¹ DN/DR/B/17.15.2.155 NCLG Joint Pastoral Letter on Elections, 15 June 1993.

³⁶² Nuttall, same interview.

³⁶³ DN/DR/B/17.15.2.192 NCLG Media Statement on the 1994 Elections, 23 November 1993.

³⁶⁴ NDA Norman Hudson to Chief Minister Buthelezi, 2 December 1993.

Durban.³⁶⁵ Supported by civic organisations and the business community, at the national level it was co-ordinated by the Justice and Peace Commission (JPC) of the SACBC in cooperation with the SACC.³⁶⁶ However, each province was expected to be actively involved in supporting this programme. In a politically violence-torn province like Natal, this programme was important in educating people about how they could express their democratic right to elect a new government without the use of force. The NCLG also tried to prepare the public for the elections by compiling special information booklets that covered what they perceived as key issues, including questions which people were asking, questions for political parties, resources and ideas for action.³⁶⁷ Diakonia provided support services to ensure that all relevant resources were available and accessible to the public.

Meanwhile the Vuleka Trust embarked on an intensive programme of providing short training courses geared towards the elections. Its former director, Jennings stated:

In the time being Vuleka Trust had developed training courses for Negotiating, Mediation and Creative Conflict Handling Skills which were being offered to N.G.O. Groups throughout the region. Each course was five days in length with most participants covered by bursaries from USAID. Early in 1994 we trained 1 200 Peace Monitors for the elections. I believe that a large number of people at grassroots level were key in dealing with and in some instances containing further mayhem.³⁶⁸

As part of its support to the NPA the NCLG targeted to train 3000 monitors for KZN and again this was co-ordinated and run by the VT. The NCLG also set up six Co-ordinating Committees for Peace and Elections (COPE) for Newcastle, Empangeni, Port Shepstone, Diakonia and Durban and District Council of Churches (DDCC), and Pietermaritzburg.³⁶⁹ It was hoped by the NCLG that beneficiaries of these courses would make a positive impact in conflict transformation at local area and community level. Elsewhere mainly in chapter five below, local people's initiatives to establish peace committees at grassroots level, will receive further attention.

The run up to the 28 April elections saw a dramatic increase in tension, conflict and deaths. Perhaps this was also linked to the fact that by then IFP had not yet decided to join the elections while the ANC saw itself as being in command of the situation. In a

³⁶⁵ DN/DR/B/17.15.2.141 Launch of "Educate for Democracy" by Natal Churches, 21 April 1993.

³⁶⁶ P. Walshe, *Prophetic Christianity and the Liberation Movement in South Africa* (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 1995), 149.

³⁶⁷ DN/DR/B/17.15.2.202 NCLG, "Preparing Our Churches for the Elections", (n. d.).

³⁶⁸ Jennings, information given to author by e-mail on 15 October 2008.

³⁶⁹ DN/DR/B/17.15.3.10 Minutes of NCLG Meeting, 14 February 1994.

media release statement the NCLG appealed for restraint on all sides and for great discipline and responsible action by political leaders in particular. It further observed:

In conclusion we call on all people of faith to intensify personal and public prayers for peace. We also urge support for the ecumenical Good Friday Services in Port Shepstone, Pietermaritzburg and Durban; the "Jesus Peace Rally" at Kings Park Stadium on Saturday 17 April; the Day of Prayer for Peaceful Elections on Sunday April 24 and the Easter-Pentecost vigil of continuous prayer in the Anglican Cathedral, Pietermaritzburg, from April 3 to May 22.³⁷⁰

Former members of the NCLG were somehow convinced that these initiatives made a positive contribution to a general peaceful election.³⁷¹ They embarked on all such initiatives in order to support the elections. The Church in such a political situation had to be relevant by addressing the issues that were pertinent to the context. Probably they drew inspiration from Nolan who argued that contextual theology challenged Christians to deal with the problems and issues within their particular context. Political violence prior to the elections was an example.³⁷² This role was not without challenges such as life threats especially in Zululand where IFP was resisting the election.³⁷³ However, the NCLG encouraged one another by arguing that the Church should be at the forefront of upholding democratic rights and encourage people to vote despite intimidation of whatever nature.

4.7 Pastoral Challenges

Pastoral visits to places of pain remained a priority for the NCLG but because of practical considerations we cannot account for all of them here. In a crisis moment like that of political violence, the NCLG continued with pastoral visits to places of pain. Richmond was one of those areas where the level of violence was quite severe during the Christmas and New Year season. The local clergy appealed for support from senior Church leaders in Pietermaritzburg and Durban. A small group of NCLG representatives comprising of Revd Dr Mgojo, Revd Dr Jafta, Fr Patterson, Messrs Ndlovu and Kerchhoff, visited the area on 24 January 1991. At least some Government officers and personnel were also in the same area including the police, the SADF, and social welfare staff. The NCLG held meetings with the Police, SADF, Refugees and Church workers. At this stage there was evidence that some effort was

³⁷⁰ DN/DR/B/17.15.3.22 NCLG Media Release, Re: The Present Political Situation, 25 March 1994.

³⁷¹ Nuttall, same interview. See also Kearney, same interview.

³⁷² A. Nolan, "Kairos Theology" in J. de Gruchy and C. Villa-Vicenceo (eds), *Doing Theology in Context: South African Perspectives* (Cape Town and Johannesburg: David Philip, 1994), 213.

³⁷³ DN/DR/B/17.15.3.29 Minutes of NCLG Meeting, 23 April 1994.

being made to contain the violence though with limited success. The team noted: "Our first observations were of people, mainly women and children, leaving the area and of men of various ages standing around in large groups, many of them armed with a variety of weapons."³⁷⁴ Like in many other similar incidents, probably the men were involved in the attack and yet women and children were often victims.³⁷⁵ That women and children went through hell during the political violence cannot be overemphasised. In support of this observation, Ashnie Padarath argued: "It was women who faced rape, that particularly gendered form of 'punishment', for belonging to either ANC or the Inkatha Freedom Party. It was women who kept families together and hope alive during those dark days."³⁷⁶ Dorcas Mkhize confirmed that Richmond was a very hot spot and at times the NCLG organised joint pastoral visits that included staff from the police, social welfare and health, of which she was part.³⁷⁷ This was in an effort to bring comfort and assurance.

Church leaders from Durban and Amanzimtoti made a similar visit to Umgababa on 1 February 1991.³⁷⁸ Diakonia was requested by the NCLG to organise Church delegations to visit violence-stricken areas to find out causes of the violence and assess what sort of support was needed from the Church. Conflict between ANC and Inkatha made the residents to feel insecure in the absence of the SADF. Brief discussions with security personnel showed that residents were concerned about an attack that was to take place that night.³⁷⁹ Pastoral presence by the Church was likely to reassure the residents that somehow they were not alone in the turmoil but could have not been a remedy for the ongoing violence. Kerchhoff from PACSA continued to monitor the situation in Richmond, which was reportedly serious by 25 April 1991.³⁸⁰ A planned joint visit by IFP and the ANC failed to take off and the NCLG was overwhelmed by an influx of refugees from that area. At the initiative of the NCLG a delegation met with the Administrator of Natal Mr Con Botha.³⁸¹ Though some attention was given to the issue there were no immediate solutions.

³⁷⁴ DN/DR/B/17.15.2.1 Report of NCLG visit to Richmond, 24 January 1991.

³⁷⁵ Kerchhoff, same interview.

³⁷⁶ A. Padarath, "Women and Violence in KwaZulu-Natal", in M. Turshen and C Twagiramya, (eds), *What Women Do in Wartime: Gender and Conflict in Africa* (London: Zed Books Ltd, 1998), 65.

³⁷⁷ Mkhize, same interview.

³⁷⁸ DN/DR/B/17.15.2.3 Report of Church delegation visit to Umgababa, 1 February 1991.

³⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁸⁰ DN/DR/B/17.15.2.12 Minutes of NCLG Meeting, 25 April 1991.

³⁸¹ DN/DR/B/17.15.2.21 Minutes of NCLG Meeting, 10 June 1991.

The NCLG also showed their pastoral concern for families and survivors of an ambush attack that claimed the lives of six school children on a steep lonely road near Magqongqo in Table Mountain area in March 1993.³⁸² According to Bishop Nuttall who was a participant on that visit, the bereaved families belonged to the IFP. His observation was that: "...in their shock and brokenness they welcomed our prayers and words of comfort and were clearly grateful that we had come. We ourselves were always moved and troubled after such visits."³⁸³ Pastoral work within such a context meant that at times one could be labelled but from these experiences the NCLG was focussed on an attempt to bring comfort and healing to communities broken by political violence. However, this was despite strong feelings that the church could do more in this respect as noted by Virginia Gcabashe (Honorary president of SACC), and a member of the NCLG. She suggested that the Church leaders should go to the areas and see for themselves what was happening.³⁸⁴ While this point was valid, the Church leaders had local and other responsibilities to shoulder and perhaps they did their best under the circumstances.³⁸⁵ Clergy in Zululand needed special pastoral support because they were being victimised and most were unwilling to participate in Voter Education for fear of being labelled by political parties.³⁸⁶ This was a fairly politically sensitive area, being the IFP's stronghold.

Availability of resources was one of the major challenges in making pastoral work worthwhile, but as already noted in the forgoing two chapters, victims and communities benefited from the NCF. It got support from the SACC, WCC, other international donors, and from local fundraising initiatives. The use of the fund was not without problems as pointed out by Ms Oliver who was the secretary. At one point she had to travel to Lindelani to keep an appointment with Mr Shabalala (IFP) who had made a press statement that the NCF and the churches were biased in awarding grants.³⁸⁷ The following serves to illustrate how the funds were used as approved by the NCF at its meeting on 3 August 1993:

CRD: Family Assistance Grants

23/6/1993: R3060.00

21/7/1993: R8460.00

³⁸² Nuttall, "Peter Kerchhoff", 190.

³⁸³ Nuttall, *Number Two to Tutu*, 85.

³⁸⁴ DN/DR.B/1715.2.59 Minutes of Diakonia Special Meeting, 11 February 1992.

³⁸⁵ Kerchhoff, same interview. See also Aitchison, same interview.

³⁸⁶ DN/DR/B/17.15.3.10 Minutes of NCLG Meeting, 14 February 1994.

³⁸⁷ NDA Minutes of NCF Meeting, 3 August 1993, (Appendix to DN/DR/B/17.15.2.168 Minutes of NCLG Meeting, 3 August 1993).

Northern Natal Council of Churches: Funerals	16/7/1993: R2700.00
DDCC: Funerals	22/7/1993: R15000.00
Food	28/7/1993: R16648.00
NMCC: Funerals and Food	January-June 1993: R17726.00 ³⁸⁸

Allegations of bias were a common occurrence as was also expressed by some of the interviewees. Joan Kerchhoff who was at one point a staff member of PACSA was also on the NCF committee in 1993.³⁸⁹ She recalled that many of those who came for support were from the ANC but no deliberate attempt was ever made to discriminate against Inkatha victims.³⁹⁰ In such and similar circumstances one should not be surprised to hear dissenting voices.

During an interview, Kearney realised that perhaps the fact that the fund was administered from Diakonia was a deterrent to Inkatha because of a longstanding negative relationship. Again Diakonia was considered in Inkatha circles as pro-UDF and the ANC.³⁹¹ Such a perception was not far-fetched and in a way tended to impact negatively on pastoral work. In some cases people who needed help refrained from asking for it for fear of being victimised. This mainly affected those from the IFP side who were allegedly warned against accepting such support.³⁹² Locally some churches and para-church groups were involved in supporting victims of political violence including carrying out pastoral work. On the other hand there were efforts to assist victims of political violence coordinated by the Natal Provincial Administrator in 1991. It was noted that R76m and other funds were available to assist destitute people including victims of political violence.³⁹³ The purpose of the meeting was to share ideas on how best to address the plight of destitute people, most of who were affected by the political crisis. It was hoped that churches would become part of a joint steering committee to tackle current social concerns. The churches were not alone in providing support to victims of political violence but the government also got involved. Examples cited were that in October 1992 the government provided R500 000 and increased that to R1m in November 1992 administered through the Social

³⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁹⁰ Kerchhoff, same interview.

³⁹¹ Kearney, same interview.

³⁹² Kearney, same interview.

³⁹³ DN/DR/B/17.15.2.37 Notes of NCLG and Administrator of Natal Meeting, 29 August 1991.

Relief Fund.³⁹⁴ However, all these funds were administered separately from what the NCLG and the NCF provided.

4.8 Conclusion

The transitional period covered by this chapter was the most critical for the future of peace in Natal and democracy in South Africa. The NCLG adopted a new strategy in mediation and that was to involve high-profile national Churches leaders like Archbishop Tutu and Bishop Mogoba. The meeting between Mandela and Buthelezi in Durban did not give much hope until these two leaders met in June 1993 and signed what became known as the NPA. However in a small or big way the Church leadership in Natal continued to see itself as part of the initiative. We have also acknowledged that one of the reasons why the NCLG failed in mediation was that the Church itself was divided between the ANC and IFP, as much as the community was. Politicians took advantage of such divisions and used the Church to attain gains. The IFP's decision not to participate in the election was a real threat to peace and democracy. Cassidy's initiative of the "Jesus Peace Rally" and the contribution of Okumu of Kenya made a contribution to IFP's acceptance to take part. This does not rule out the possible influence of other forces behind the scenes. The NCLG perception of a 'third force' in the violence received confirmation. Preparations for the elections were very central to the activities of this period, as we have tried to demonstrate. This time the prophetic voice of the NCLG was still heard but not as much as it was in the foregoing in the late 1980s. It has also become evident that the political parties perceived pastoral support differently.

³⁹⁴ APC, D. Quin (ed) "Peace Initiatives and the Prevention of Public Violence", in *The South African Monitor*, 45, 67

CHAPTER FIVE: LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS (1994-1996)

5.1 Introduction

In the foregoing chapter we highlighted the role of the NCLG during the election period. The province was renamed KwaZulu-Natal and so was the NCLG in August 1994. Its new name was the KwaZulu-Natal Church Leaders Group (KNCLG). Similarly the Natal Crisis Fund (NCF) thereafter was to be known as the KwaZulu-Natal Crisis Fund (KNCF). Political violence remained a threat to the achievements enshrined by the new democratic order. That skirmishes of political violence were experienced during the elections in some parts of the province was known. In a report the Peace Working Group (PWG) observed that by 9 November 1994, 460 politically related deaths had occurred in KwaZulu-Natal and 840 nationally.³⁹⁵ This figure was a record of what had transpired within seven months after the election and seemed to confirm the same trend in the following year. The figure for 1995 alone indicated that a total of 837 politically related deaths were recorded.³⁹⁶ The KwaZulu-Natal Crisis Fund Committee argued: "Although the factors contributing to political violence are manifold and complex, the most obvious is the persistent antagonism between the African National Congress and the Inkatha Freedom Party. Inter-party rivalry continues to produce tension in many communities, enhancing the volatility of related issues."³⁹⁷ This was an admission to the reality that political violence needed further attention and that justified the need for further funding.

This chapter will therefore seek to evaluate the role of the KNCLG in peace building efforts and the development of a culture of political tolerance and democracy. This was done through involvement in a number of church-related and state supported peace structures, as the discussion will show. The programme known as "Educate for Democracy" received renewed support. The KNCLG was found to be a critical tool for political transformation within a highly charged political context. There were strong fears among the KNCLG members and other concerned parties that a civil war was likely to breakout. Within the province IFP had commanded a majority but battles still ranged on. According to Dorcas Mkhize it was not easy for anybody to stop these

³⁹⁵ DN/DR/B/17.15.3.70 Report of Peace Working Group to KNCLG for November 1994.

³⁹⁶ DN/DR/B/17.15.3.133 KNCF Report for 1995.

³⁹⁷ DN/DR/B/17.15.3.114 KNCF Proposal for a One-Year Extension of Services, September 1995.

two parties from clashing but it was actually up to the leaders to stop the violence.³⁹⁸ The relationship between the two dominant political parties, the IFP and the ANC continued to be a cause for concern at the grassroots level.

5.2 Peace building

When the Church leaders met a week after the general election, there was jubilation in the comfort that God had answered their prayers. It was noted that the Day of Prayer, the Prayer Vigil at the Cathedral of the Holy Nativity and the Jesus Peace Rally were a success. All agreed: "The vigil has proved a tremendous success and is an ongoing testimony to commitment and discipline. The Dean [of the Cathedral], John Forbes and his team were commended for the hard work."³⁹⁹ There were assumptions on the part of the NCLG that political violence was over and peace would rule. It was soon realised that more work needed to be done on developing a culture of peace. They noted:

Great honesty needs to be shown by all parties and what is expressed at the top levels needs to be communicated to grassroots – there must be no double standards. We need to find out what is happening in political circles, especially as the IFP and the ANC have expressed the need for backing from the churches.⁴⁰⁰

Mandela appointed Buthelezi as minister of Home Affairs while in KwaZulu-Natal Jacob Zuma was minister of Tourism in an IFP led Provincial Executive Committee but attitudes at grassroots level did not reflect peace and harmony. However, divisions within the Church meant that it was also not a house at peace with itself. The NCLG noted: "We should actively encourage a linking of the areas South and North of the Tugela, to break down the divide in the Church as well as in society in general."⁴⁰¹ We shall return to this later in the discussion.

As part of peace building the NCLG successfully invited the political leadership of the two major parties in KwaZulu-Natal to a thanksgiving service in May 1994 in the Anglican Cathedral, Pietermaritzburg. The ANC and IFP sought to maintain this contact.⁴⁰² However, in a subsequent meeting about the future of the RPC it was observed that little could be expected from political parties, as was noted: "Political

³⁹⁸ Mkhize, same interview.

³⁹⁹ DN/DR/B/17.15.3.44 Minutes of NCLG Meeting, 5 May 1994.

⁴⁰⁰ DN/DR/B/17.15.3.46 Minutes of NCLG Meeting, 17 May 1994.

⁴⁰¹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰² DN/DR/B/17.15.3.49 Minutes of NCLG Meeting, 22 June 1994.

parties are not well placed to project the peace plan whereas the Church is respected and trusted to fill this role as part of the spreading of the Gospel of Christ.”⁴⁰³ The validity of this observation has to be questioned but no peace could be attained without the full participation of political parties. That the Church could take a lead was beyond question and the Vuleka Trust was already involved in training of community mediators under the peace accord. As part of the NCLG, the Vuleka Trust might have foreseen the need for such people in KwaZulu-Natal. In a contribution to peace the Anglican Cathedral in Pietermaritzburg organised a peace vigil. “The vigil for peace in the land is continuing commencing at mid-day on the third Friday of every month and continuing until mid-day the following day.”⁴⁰⁴ This served as a reminder to the community that peace was still far, and to be aspired for. It gave Christians the opportunity to focus their prayers on this theme. This initiative was open to all people around the city who wished to participate.

Suggestions to replace the RPC with the KwaZulu-Natal Regional Parliament were made but the NCLG was sensitive to this move. It was felt that the appeal for funding would be supported by the NCLG.⁴⁰⁵ This time any unnecessary bureaucracy was to be cut out leaving volunteers only, together with the peace workers trained by Vuleka Trust to continue the work in rural areas where hardship could rise if they were withdrawn. The NCLG also supported a National Peace Secretariat organised initiative for “Day of Peace and Reconciliation” on 2 September in the form of a sponsored walk from Johannesburg to Durban. This had a special significance to KNCLG and KZN province. Meanwhile mediation training run by the Vuleka Trust was still going on.⁴⁰⁶ Value was seen in the future use of this training for conflict handling. Nxasana reported that they had a target of training 3 000 people by the end of the year.⁴⁰⁷ The KNCLG was invited by the ANC and the IFP for a meeting. This created an opportunity to talk about peace in the province. The KNCLG had a representation on the RPC chaired by Archbishop Hurley.

⁴⁰³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰⁴ DN/DR/B/17.15.3.51 Minutes of NCLG Meeting, 12 July 1994.

⁴⁰⁵ DN/DR/B/17.15.3.54 Minutes of KNCLG Meeting, 24 August 1994.

⁴⁰⁶ DN/DR/B/17.15.3.60 Minutes of KNCLG Meeting, 26 September 1994.

⁴⁰⁷ DN/DR/B/17.15.3.63 Minutes of KNCLG Meeting, 19 October 1994.

Peace was a subject of discussion at the special meeting between members of the KNCLG and a delegation of the KZN Legislature. Frank Mdlalose as Premier acknowledged that he and Jacob Zuma were members of the RPC but hardly had time for meetings. His message was a plea for Christian support and there was strong belief on “prayer” on his part. “He asked for help and guidance from the churches particularly in the matter of violence, as “we are not conquering”.”⁴⁰⁸ In 1990 the sentiments expressed by Inkatha’s six participants to the five-side peace talks meeting with the NCLG had a vilifying tone towards Church leaders. Mdlalose had been a key person in that team but was appreciative of the Church. It was noted that Mdlalose in closing, expressed appreciation for calling them to this meeting. He said he knew that the NCL was concerned. “He suggested that it should be checked to see if there is anything that can be discussed together as to how to sort out things at the grassroots level.”⁴⁰⁹ The new challenges facing the Premier and his team looked insurmountable without support from others, Church leaders included. Zuma’s remarks were even more interesting as noted:

The church has a very important role to play in the lives of ordinary people. Politicians make mistakes, incite people, argue about certain matters without realising what effect this has on the people. The Church shouldn’t allow this to continue unchallenged. This is why the participation of Church leaders, their counsel and their criticisms was very valuable. The most important role of the churches was that of reconciliation.⁴¹⁰

It would appear as if, indirectly Zuma, was exonerating the churches for the way they had worked with the ANC and yet challenging them to help bring about reconciliation and peace in a politically violence-torn province. While the Church seemed to have received praise, there was also a danger of compromising its prophetic voice. Allan Boesak argued that the danger for the Church in South Africa and elsewhere was in accepting an agenda dictated by the state because the former will be manoeuvred to the latter’s advantage.⁴¹¹ If the Church accepted being regarded as a junior partner by the state its critical or prophetic voice would be silenced. This was a danger that not many of the Church leaders were allegedly aware of.

⁴⁰⁸ DN/DR/B/17.15.3.65 Minutes of KNCLG Meeting, 25 October 1994.

⁴⁰⁹ DN/DR/B/17.15.1.160 Report of NCLG and Inkatha delegation Meeting, 13 August 1990.

⁴¹⁰ DN/DR/B/17.15.3.65 Minutes of KNCLG Meeting, 25 October 1994.

⁴¹¹ A. Boesak, *The Tenderness of Conscience, African Renaissance and the Spirituality of Politics* (Stellenbosch: Sun Press, 2005). 164.

The KNCLG was concerned about the future of the RPC under the Peace Accord and they felt that its services were still desirable. The Church was prepared to take an initiative in ensuring the survival of the peace process as stated:

Revd Jennings noted that the church had great resources in this Province in terms of people who have been trained in conflict handling. In a recent pastoral letter the KwaZulu-Natal Church Leaders' Group had called on these people to make themselves available for peace making and peace building. However what was necessary was for the churches to have an indication of where they could fit in to what was being thought of by way a comprehensive peace plan for the Province.⁴¹²

As was noted, the Church committed itself to work for peace in the province as long as it received the blessing of the political administration because it was aware of the challenges resulting from political violence. A request was sent to President Mandela to have further support for a peace fund in the province. This might have been the basis of "Operation Peace Ukuthula: A Peace Initiative of the KwaZulu-Natal Church Leaders and African Enterprise" that was launched in KwaZulu-Natal in 1996 and was supported by the State President.⁴¹³ We shall return to this matter later in the chapter. Subsequent to the joint meeting mentioned above, a joint media release statement was issued on 26 October 1994. It stated that the KwaZulu-Natal cabinet and the KNCLG noted that political tension was expected to increase during the run-up to the elections and both sides felt the peace structures could help reduce conflict during this difficult period. "The Church leaders expressed their concern about continued violence in Umlazi schools, in which school children have been murdered, teachers harassed and buildings burnt. They urged vigorous investigation of these incidents to prevent escalation of this violence."⁴¹⁴ It only confirmed that political tension was still an issue and that could have been the reason why the KNCLG was advocating the existence of a peace initiative. In line with this, a resolution was passed to allow the KNCLG to act as patron to a Peace Working Group and the VT, PACSA, and Diakonia were to be among the organisers.⁴¹⁵ Thus while the RPC structures became defunct the churches had an alternative plan.

Despite what seemed to be a good working relationship with political parties during the course of the year there were numerous outcries by the Church against political

⁴¹² DN/DR/B/17.15.3.65 Minutes of KNCLG Meeting, 25 October 1994.

⁴¹³ Nuttall, same interview. See also DN/DR/B/17.15.4.20 Dr Michael Cassidy, Bishop Matthew Makhaye and Bishop Stanley Mogoba to President Nelson Mandela, 4 May 1996.

⁴¹⁴ DN/DR/B/17.15.3.67 Media Release: KwaZulu-Natal Cabinet, Church Leaders strongly back Peace Structures, 26 October 1994.

⁴¹⁵ DN/DR/B/17.15.3.71 Minutes of KNCLG Meeting, 29 November 1994.

parties holding rallies on Sundays as that affected church attendance.⁴¹⁶ This was not unusual, as the same concerns had been raised prior to the elections. In a situation of a similar nature, failure to attend a political rally could be misconstrued to suggest that one is undermining political interests. This point is valid based on personal experiences from Zimbabwe especially towards and after the June 2008 election. This is more pronounced where the political space is heavily contested. At one point the KNCLG threatened to seek drastic action against political parties holding rallies on Sundays but one would wonder whether that could have led to an improvement of the situation. If anything it was likely to create an antagonised atmosphere, more difficult to initiative peace.

Out of growing concern the KNCLG submitted a proposed “Promotion of Peace Bill” to the Provincial Cabinet in January 1995. The Church leadership did not mince their words as it argued:

The KNCLG is deeply concerned that political tension between the two main parties in this province is preventing effective governance and that political violence is jeopardizing development and the possibility of economic justice and prosperity. We are convinced that an effective peace process could be central to the reversing the current negative trends in this province.⁴¹⁷

The new thrust of the peace process was not to be peace keeping (role of the police) but peacemaking (conflict resolution, mediation, and negotiation) and should involve local communities. “This is to ensure that the peace process is rooted in grassroots communities rather than being a “top down” process.”⁴¹⁸ There was no action on the part of the state and the province and yet peace was still far from being achieved, as was the case in KwaZulu-Natal.

Through Kerchhoff’s overseas contacts the KNCLG received support for peacekeeping and voter education. The Church undertook to be proactive in the wake of elections nine months away.⁴¹⁹ The KNCLG was conscious of how internal divisions within the church were inhibiting attainment of peace. In KwaZulu-Natal the Church was highly politicised and polarised. To break this situation the KNCLG engaged the services of a foreigner, Bishop Lislørud to carry out consultations and

⁴¹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴¹⁷ DN/DR/B/17.15.3.76 KNCLG Submission to the Provincial Portfolio Committee on Safety and Security, KwaZulu-Natal, (n. d.).

⁴¹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴¹⁹ DN/DR/B/17.15.3.77 Minutes of KNCLG Meeting, 18 January 1995.

seek to heal the divisions.⁴²⁰ One of Bishop Lislerud recommendations was that the Church should make its premises available as meeting places for both victims and perpetrators of oppression so that the need for true repentance and restitution is recognised as a biblical value in the seeking of forgiveness and consequent healing.⁴²¹ We cannot rule out the possibility that some churches were no go areas for supporters of opposition political parties and in that case the church was seen as siding with a particular political voice. This was unhealthy for peace.

Reports of a deteriorating situation in Zululand were received and the Church was looked up to as a beacon of hope. People literally feared the coming local government elections, dreading an increase in violence in the context of a long history of tribal and faction fighting. "Liz from Zululand said that the situation could only be resolved by the coming together of the Government, the Church and the development agencies and appealed to Church leaders to reach out and encourage the people in Zululand."⁴²² At the same meeting the KNCLG resolved to offer any assistance but expressed the view that churches were never seriously taken care of by political parties and the government. They were only appealed to when things went wrong. This time a call was made to put the Church at the centre because it stood for peace.⁴²³ Others called for the involvement of the youth in any of these meetings for them to gain confidence and assume responsibility. Mkhize also supported this by arguing that it was important to target the youth because they had a future.⁴²⁴

The image cast by the ANC top leadership showed that the party was interested in peace in the province. Out of this concern, President Mandela had invited a small delegation of members of the KNCLG, namely Paddy Kearney, Bishop Nuttall and Revd Mgojo to Johannesburg for a briefing in 1995.⁴²⁵ Blame was laid on IFP leadership for using inflammatory speech but the church was ready to assist despite disappointment of many meetings that had been postponed. We note that the ANC was equally to blame because its known armed resistance against IFP membership

⁴²⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴²¹ DN/DR/B/17.15.3.84 Minutes of KNCLG Meeting, 8 March 1995.

⁴²² DN/DR/B/17.15.3.92 Minutes of KNCLG Meeting, 17 May 1995.

⁴²³ *Ibid.*

⁴²⁴ Mkhize, same interview.

⁴²⁵ DN/DR/B/17.15.3.92 Minutes of KNCLG Meeting, 17 May 1995.

drive.⁴²⁶ Three teams were set up each led by the aforementioned leaders who had met with the State President. Nuttall was in charge of a team to meet with ANC leadership, a team led by Kearney would meet with the National Party and Mgojo would head a team to meet with the IFP. All this was in a bid to create dialogue that would see support for peace in KwaZulu-Natal. This became the basis of Operation Ukuthula in KwaZulu-Natal. It was led by Cassidy, Bishops Mogoba and Makhaye but supported by the KNCLG and AE.⁴²⁷ Its programme of action included offering special peace prayers, visiting some areas and giving addresses on peace, training community leadership in peace and other mass media activities.⁴²⁸ It was run for two months from May to June during the local government elections.

A strong belief in the power of prayer was again evident from a pastoral letter sent to churches. It was noted: "Prayer and action led to a wonderful outpouring of God's Spirit of peace on the whole of the province. We therefore turn to God again in prayer and urge all people to commit themselves to be peacemakers in what ways they can: in their own families, work places, church and communities."⁴²⁹ Besides this spiritual call the KNCLG also encouraged Christian communities to take a proactive stance in issues of peace and democracy. "In the life of our own congregations and groups we should set an example of tolerance for different points of view. We can hardly expect that people in ordinary society will show a higher level of tolerance than we ourselves are able to demonstrate in the life of our churches."⁴³⁰ This was a more pragmatic approach because instead of looking at those outside the Church, the KNCLG encouraged Christians by whatever definition to lead by good example as Jesus had taught in the Beatitudes.⁴³¹ One example to be noted was an initiative by Methodist, Lutheran, and Anglican clergy from the Hillcrest area who formed a Local Peace Committee. It incorporated churches, political parties, development committees, schools and youth, education authorities, businesses, civic associations, South African Police Services, local authorities and service organisations.⁴³²

⁴²⁶ B. Freund, "The Violence in Natal 1985-1990", in R. Morrell (ed), *Political Economy and Identities in KwaZulu-Natal: Historical and Social Perspectives* (Durban: Indicator Press, 1996), 191.

⁴²⁷ DN/DR/B/17.15.4.22 "Operation Ukuthula", 3 May 1996.

⁴²⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴²⁹ DN/DR/B/17.15.3.97 KNCLG Pentecost Pastoral Letter, 4 June 1995.

⁴³⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴³¹ Matthew 5: 9ff.

⁴³² DN/DR/B/17.15.3.102 Revd Nick Kerr to Bishop Michael Nuttall, 9 June 1995.

The Peace Working Group called on the KNCLG to urge political parties to consider more carefully what is said on public platforms because inflammatory talk gave a very wrong signal to people on the ground.⁴³³ The discussions of a meeting held between the KNCLG and Zuma reflected on political parties' general lack of control of the situation and the KNCLG expressed its willingness to assist. Zuma admitted that there was a connection between political tension and violence and called on the Church to continue with its prophetic role. As an illustration, "Bishop Michael Nuttall referred to the "rise and resist" speech of Chief Buthelezi and also Mr Mandela's "war on no go areas" speech. The top leaders needed to be advised to be cautious in their choice of words."⁴³⁴ The IFP was not particularly supportive of the KNCLG as was noted: "Particularly disturbing had been the public statement by Minister Buthelezi, made during an address at a funeral on 23 December 1995 that the mainline churches were not interested in the many violent deaths."⁴³⁵ This was despite the Chief Minister's knowledge of how Church leaders had sought to play a role to end political violence and support victims since 1987. Its critics would see silence by the Church in this context as being supportive of the killings. Such was the case with the Anglican Church in Rwanda during the genocide in 1994. Archbishop of Canterbury, George Carey, declared that the church lost an opportunity to be prophetic. It "should have been calling out for justice. It should have been pointing out some of the atrocities that were done, but by and large its voice was silent."⁴³⁶ The Church had failed to maintain a critical voice at a time when it was most expected to do so. However, the Church's ability to maintain a critical voice has a lot to do with the support given by political parties to the same cause.

The KNCLG also got involved in a Royal Family conflict at the invitation of King Goodwill Zwelithini. Diakonia was approached to offer prayers for the Royal Family to resolve a political sensitive situation between the king and Chief Minister Buthelezi.⁴³⁷ We shall not discuss the issue here but it was worthwhile to note how internal conflict affected the Zulu monarchy at this time of political violence. a number of Church leaders who were members of the KNCLG were approached for

⁴³³ DN/DR/B/17.15.3.105 Peace Working Group Memorandum to the KNCLG, c. a 1995.

⁴³⁴ DN/DR/B/17.15.3.99 Minutes of KNCLG and ANC Meeting, 12 June 1995.

⁴³⁵ DN/DR/B/17.15.4.8 Minutes of KNCLG Meeting, 1 February 1996.

⁴³⁶ DN/DR/B/17.15.3.106 ENI, "Rwandan church 'did not speak out'", *Anglican Update* 2, No. 6 (July 1995), 1.

⁴³⁷ DN/DR/B/17.15.3.60 Minutes of KNCLG Meeting, 26 September 1994.

prayers and possible intervention. The Church leaders vowed to tread with caution: "Members felt that care needed to be exercised to prevent the perception that the KNCLG were taking side. However an opportunity exists to get to the core of the problem and minister to both parties."⁴³⁸ The Church leaders resolved that Bishops Makhaye, Mogoba and Mgojo would carry out this pastoral role to the Royal Family. Bishop Biyase was also part on the initiative at the invitation of the Royal Family.⁴³⁹ Later Cassidy was incorporated and they sought the mediation services of Prince Dhlamini [from Swaziland].⁴⁴⁰ This had a negative effect on peace initiatives of the province because the Royal Family was at war with itself. At least the king trusted some of the members of the KNCLG to the point of inviting them to offer prayers and mediate in a family dispute. We shall not trace how the dispute was finally resolved since that is beyond the scope of the present work.

5.3 Preparations for Local Government Elections

As noted in the foregoing chapter, "Education for Democracy" was initiated by the SACC but the KNCLG found it very useful and passed a resolution to continue with it in KwaZulu-Natal. Church leaders felt that it was the right time to start preparing people for citizen responsibility in future elections further arguing that democracy should be understood in all life spheres. The NCLG was quite pleased with the outcome of a workshop held by "Educate for Democracy" because it supported the development of strategies for the forthcoming local government elections. "The major thing that came from almost all the groups was that the short term focus should be on the forthcoming local government elections, then the human rights bill and democracy education with a special focus on political tolerance."⁴⁴¹ By supporting this programme the Church was committing itself to enlightening the public on civic responsibility matters and that was likely to flow over into a healthy political climate in the province.⁴⁴² This programme received a renewed launch on 26 September 1994 in KwaZulu-Natal. It was anticipated that the programme would have some challenges, especially financial as was stated: "It will be more difficult to appraise

⁴³⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴³⁹ DN/DR/B/17.15.3.63 Minutes of KNCLG Meeting, 19 October 1994.

⁴⁴⁰ DN/DR/B/17.15.3.71 Minutes of KNCLG Meeting, 29 November 1994.

⁴⁴¹ DN/DR/B/17.15.3.47 Minutes of "Educate for Democracy, A Campaign of Natal Churches", Steering Committee Meeting, 15 August 1994.

⁴⁴² *Ibid.*

people of their role in the local government elections than was the case for the April elections, and it will be more difficult to raise money for the campaign but it will be going ahead.”⁴⁴³ The KNCLG had an ongoing campaign of voter education as noted from the following dates: “27 February, Ulundi, 28 February, Durban, 2/3 March Ladysmith and Eshowe, 6 March Port Shepstone, 7 March Pietermaritzburg. (9am-12 noon).”⁴⁴⁴ The churches were once again engaged in civic education, building towards local government elections.

The KNCLG planned a meeting with Zuma, Mdlalose, and others to share peace concerns and political agendas of parties.⁴⁴⁵ This was important because the political parties were going to contest again for various posts from the ward upwards. Once again that was likely to generate hostilities and increase the already existing political tension. The KNCLG was concerned about the logistics of the local government elections regarding the use of a voter’s roll and whether people in temporal settlements were eligible to vote. In response the church was asked to play a helpful role in encouraging people who lived in such settlements to register.⁴⁴⁶ Thus the role of the Church and more precisely the KNCLG was seen to be critical in preparation towards the local government elections.

The KNCLG assisted refugees and those without permanent residential addresses to be registered for the participation in the local government elections. At Kearney’s insistence and arrangement it became acceptable for Church ministers to collect forms in bulk for distribution in their churches. The names of those in temporary shelters like refugees would now appear on the voter’s role. Giving refugees and displaced persons a right to vote in the election was a chance of promoting peace.⁴⁴⁷ This provided a platform for the politically marginalized to express their opinion and reduce resentment in the long term. To this effect the KNCLG strongly called on people to take part in the elections and to pray that they would be peaceful. But it further suggested: “We also want to encourage those of our members who have the skills and qualities to stand for office in local government to do so with a strong sense

⁴⁴³ DN/DR/B/17.15.3.60 Minutes of KNCLG Meeting, 26 September 1994.

⁴⁴⁴ DN/DR/B/17.15.3.77 Minutes of KNCLG Meeting, 18 January 1995.

⁴⁴⁵ DN/DR/B/17.15.3.59 Minutes of NCLG Meeting, 22 June 1994.

⁴⁴⁶ DN/DR/B/17.15.3.65 Minutes of KNCLG Meeting, 25 October 1994.

⁴⁴⁷ DN/DR/B/17.15.3.84 Minutes of KNCLG Meeting, 8 March 1995.

of Christian responsibility.”⁴⁴⁸ The Church was therefore interested in seeing people of reasonable standing take responsibility in community leadership in the hope of peace and development.

The KNCLG launched an Ecumenical Peacemakers Programme (EPP) for KwaZulu-Natal on 9 March 1996. Again it was to be focused on the local government elections scheduled for 29 May 1996. Its purpose was to create the right climate for local government elections on 29 May and recruits were local and international as was the case in the 1994 election.⁴⁴⁹ The lessons and liturgy focussed on being sent as peacemakers with the following commissioning words: “We commission you as Ecumenical Peacemakers to work for peace, political tolerance and justice and to strive energetically towards free, fair, just and peaceful community elections. You are mandated to this task for the next three months.”⁴⁵⁰ Areas covered were Ladysmith, Port Shepstone, Durban, Pietermaritzburg and Eshowe. The VT was in charge of all requisite training. An evaluation by the Revd John Parkin, who was a participant in the EPP from Ireland, gave the impression that the Church’s ecumenical peace programme made a positive contribution to peace during the local government election. “Once again South Africa had delivered the unexpected. There were no reports of shooting; peace seemed to be the order of the day – or at least not too much violence. My gloomy promotions were misplaced. I was surprised by peace.”⁴⁵¹ This should not be taken to imply that there was no political violence at all because at times the peacemakers were often attacked.⁴⁵²

Views from an interim report compiled on 4 June 1996 also highlighted the positive input of ecumenical peacemakers. “According to security and other sources, the presence of our Peacemakers has made a significant contribution to the growing climate of peace in the region.”⁴⁵³ We are obliged to accept as valid the notion that if this programme had not been introduced by the KNCLG during the local government elections more bloodshed could have been experienced in KwaZulu-Natal. To justify

⁴⁴⁸ DN/DR/B/17.15.3.97 KNCLG Pentecost Pastoral Letter, 4 June 1995.

⁴⁴⁹ PACSA, Nhlanhla Radebe, “The Ecumenical Peacemakers Programme”, *PACSA Newsletter* 66, (Easter 1996), 10.

⁴⁵⁰ DN/DR/B/17.15.4.13 KNCLG Ecumenical Peacemakers’ Programme, 9 March 1996.

⁴⁵¹ PACSA, John Parkin, “Surprised by Peace”, *PACSA Newsletter* 66, (Easter 1996), 8.

⁴⁵² *Ibid.*

⁴⁵³ DN/DR/B/17.15.4.29 Ecumenical Peacemakers Programme, Third Interim Report, 4 June 1996.

its positive impact we cite a few cases of their success. "In the Ladysmith region, Peacemakers helped to bring about the signing of the Ezakheni Peace Accord by local political parties and has been asked to intervene in disputes in farming areas."⁴⁵⁴ Like many other accords signed, it was up to the parties to show goodwill by respecting the terms of the agreement. There was a notable drop in levels of political tension in the Wembezi and Donnybrook areas through a joint effort between the ecumenical peacemakers and other peace structures.⁴⁵⁵ A detailed programme showing monitoring and mediation events showed that 81 cases were covered between March and June 1996. International Peacemakers passed on skills to local people who, it was hoped, would continue the programme after their departure. In this light the work of the KNCLG was not only on peace building but also on ushering democracy.

5.4 Pastoral Challenges

Foreign donor support in 1994 was forthcoming but later there was a drop such support. The KwaZulu-Natal Crisis Fund (KNCF) as a subcommittee of the KNCLG continued to provide some resources in support to victims of political violence.⁴⁵⁶ Its operations were decentralised to the level of local area crisis committee and Estcourt was an example. "When Fr Clancy who was treasurer was transferred he returned R6 000 to the central KNCF treasurer until a replacement for Estcourt had to be found."⁴⁵⁷ Local church groups were also involved in providing support to victims of political violence but received support from the NCF to augment their own resources. In May 1994, a group of churchwomen from Empangeni were presently looking after 110 families categorised as 'refugees'. Thwala as chairperson of the KNCF encouraged them to continue their work on its behalf.⁴⁵⁸ However, it was noted that funding must be targeted to genuine cases of those people who have suffered through the violence. It was likely that some people were taking advantage of the fund and would make false claims. In an interview, Mkhize confirmed that there was a group of churchwomen from mainline churches who were involved in supporting families and individuals affected by violence.⁴⁵⁹ She remembered having been a member together

⁴⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵⁶ DN/DR/B/17.15.3.59 Minutes of NCLG Meeting, 22 June 1994.

⁴⁵⁷ DN/DR/B/17.15.3.60 Minutes of KNCLG Meeting, 26 September 1994.

⁴⁵⁸ DN/DR/B/17.15.3.44 Minutes of NCLG Meeting, 5 May 1994.

⁴⁵⁹ Mkhize, same interview. See also Kerchhoff, same interview.

with Mrs Africander, widow of Revd Victor Africander, who had been assassinated in Imbali in 1990. This group operated locally and at a provincial level.

Increasing concern for refugees led to a meeting convened by Bishop Hudson under the auspices of the Church leaders group on 16 November 1994.⁴⁶⁰ KwaZulu-Natal had many refugees from political violence. They had various needs including shelter, land, food, clothing and other vital resources lost in political violence. The Church had no resources that could meet all these needs as noted by Dorcas Mkhize.⁴⁶¹ However it had the capacity to mobilise and gain international and local support and could benefit from a close working relationship with para-church agencies like Diakonia, PACSA, and SACC among many others. Political violence remained a problem and people were supported by the KNCF as was noted: "Subsidies for funerals have risen from R300 to R400 and food parcels to the value of R3 per person per day. Assistance with food parcels is given for 14 days." It was not easy to differentiate between deaths caused by political violence and those caused by criminal elements.⁴⁶² In Port Shepstone, Practical Ministries, affiliated to the KNCLG, did the same work. Members of the team working with Chetty were in attendance at the KNCLG meeting on 18 January 1995. It was noted that they were involved amongst other initiatives, in assisting in the refugee camps outside Port Shepstone in which there are 600 adults and 200 children. "Women's self help groups have been introduced both as stimulation to self-esteem and to supplement the low pension received. A children's desk has been set up to deal with orphans and street children."⁴⁶³ In this regard the Church was showing care to victims of political violence but credit should also be given to the local women's groups.

Churches remained on the lookout for the outbreak of political violence and checked on the level of support that was needed. When the Red Cross organisation dropped its support in KwaZulu-Natal, the KNCLG appealed to local churches to chip in with moral and financial resources. One question we could ask ourselves is whether local black parishes were in a position to support one another because most of them were equally struggling. We have earlier on noted that white parishes were less keen to

⁴⁶⁰ DN/DR/B/17.15.3.71 Minutes of KNCLG Meeting, 29 November 1994.

⁴⁶¹ Mkhize, same interview.

⁴⁶² DN/DR/B/17.15.3.77 Minutes of KNCLG Meeting, 18 January 1995.

⁴⁶³ *Ibid.*

support what they perceived as a situation created by a black-on-black violence.⁴⁶⁴ This would need further investigation to establish its validity. It was somewhat difficult to ascertain because other sources said the opposite. On the other hand, however, some churches were able to render such support by providing fees for children as Mkhize expressed.⁴⁶⁵

In Northern Natal the Interdenominational Ministers' Association of South Africa (IDAMASA) also did outstanding work. Bishop Harker confirmed this when he admitted that IDAMASA was carrying out the work of the former Zululand Council of Churches.⁴⁶⁶ Its members were invited by the KNCLG to attend an extraordinary meeting and others that followed. Mkhize who was working as a nurse at Emmaus Hospital, Winterton, in Bergville area also confirmed this. She reiterated that the group had a ministry similar to that of the KNCLG.⁴⁶⁷ Patty Joshua from Zululand spoke on behalf of IDAMASA women's group. "She drew attention to the trauma of the victims, many of whom are women and girls and underlined the fear experienced by many over the coming elections. Refugees are a growing problem in the area and there is little being done to meet their needs beyond feeding them for 14 days."⁴⁶⁸ The KNCLG worked with many Christian groups that shared its perception of the political violence.

There was a limit to what funds for victims of political violence could cover in terms of the ongoing needs of beneficiaries. It was noted: "The money is used to pay for funerals, food and some transport but money has been available to channel into reconstruction or for bursaries for children affected by violence. The fund has therefore; been limited in the assistance it can offer."⁴⁶⁹ In instances where breadwinners were killed one would have to imagine that families were experiencing real hardships. The support given was only meant to cushion families for a very short time and one would wonder how families were expected to cope. However, we need to remember that to cater for all such needs for as long as the political violence was going on would have cost millions of rand. Sources for such support were increasing

⁴⁶⁴ Kerchhoff, same interview.

⁴⁶⁵ Mkhize, same interview.

⁴⁶⁶ DN/DR/B/17.15.3.92 Minutes of KNCLG Meeting, 17 May 1995.

⁴⁶⁷ Mkhize, same interview.

⁴⁶⁸ DN/DR/B/17.15.3.92 Minutes of KNCLG Meeting, 17 May 1995.

⁴⁶⁹ DN/DR/B/17.15.3.113 Minutes of KNCLG Meeting, 20 September 1995.

appreciated the services of the SADF but further testified: "Threats of having their houses burned was pressuring the residents to attend rallies in place of Church services. The situation in Impendle and Bulwer is very tense and a visit to that area should be organised."⁴⁷⁵ Meanwhile more political violence was reported in several parts of the province including Mandini, Estcourt. IFP and ANC supporters cited police partiality and lack of professionalism as sources of discontent.⁴⁷⁶

The same observation was also acknowledged by the mayor of Estcourt, D M Vahed who confirmed: "The violence is also affecting the smooth running of my Council as councillors from Wembezi are not able to travel in safety and there is not much in the protection given by the Police."⁴⁷⁷ Bishop Nuttall urged the police to take a more positive stance in support of peace. In a letter to the police he noted: "In Wembezi and its neighbouring area serious violence and killing have been going on for a long time. The situation seems to be getting worse, not better. An investigation unit will hopefully be able to lead the decisions regarding security there, which will facilitate restoration to peace."⁴⁷⁸ A joint meeting between residents, civic leaders, government security agencies and Church leadership was held on 21 May 1996. Political parties, civic leaders and the police tended to blame one another but the KNCLG resolved to assist in peace building.⁴⁷⁹ Eventually peace returned to the troubled township.

While members of the KNCLG met with local communities to address issues of peace, Kearney observed that at times local Church leaders who seldom attended such meetings disappointed them.⁴⁸⁰ The reasons why they did not come to KNCLG meetings could be that they had some reservations about the group or were afraid of being exposed if they had a role in the political violence. Kearney spoke of a weakness among members of the KNCLG during pastoral visits. He 'accused' the church leaders for being keener to preach first than to listen to the peoples' stories.

⁴⁷⁵ DN/DR/B/17.15.3.113 Minutes of KNCLG Meeting, 20 September 1995.

⁴⁷⁶ PACSA, Revd R. Morgan to P. Kerchhoff, Report on Peace Meeting held at Wembezi on 25 March [1996], 24 April 1996.

⁴⁷⁷ PACSA D. M. Vahed to Mr P. Kerchhoff, Report by R. Morgan on Wembezi Violence, 6 May 1996.

⁴⁷⁸ PACSA, Bishop Nuttall to Commissioner G. Fivaz Re Violence in Wembezi/Estcourt, 16 May 1996.

⁴⁷⁹ DN/DR/B/17.15.4.24 Minutes of KNCLG and Estcourt/Wembezi Community Meeting, Re: Political Violence, 21 May 1996.

⁴⁸⁰ Kearney, same interview.

Later this situation was reversed and it was a great relief to hear the stories of pain, pray and share the good news and hold discussions.⁴⁸¹ This was a difference in approach between members of the same group but such diversity only served to make it richer and not poorer.

5.5 Conclusion

In conclusion we have tried to show that peace was not something that could be achievable overnight, especially within a context of political violence. It has been possible to trace some of the major initiatives taken by the KNCLG including the establishment of Peace Working Group and their involvement in Operation Ukuthula. However peace suffered much from lack of political will by party structures from top to grassroots. The Church leaders were able to openly challenge some of the perceived weakness of politicians. The element of police impartiality again featured and in one case there was cooperation from a number of stakeholders. The two programmes namely “Educate for Democracy” and the EPP were noted for their contribution to peaceful local government elections. Internally the Church had its own challenges including division between the North and the South, which it sought to resolve. This tended to impact negatively on the strategies adopted and had a compromising effect on achievements of the KNCLG. On the pastoral side there were not enough resources to meet all the needs of the victims and that negatively impacted on its ministry.

⁴⁸¹ *Ibid.*

CHAPTER SIX: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

6.1 Brief Summary

At the onset of this study the aim was to explore the role played by the NCLG in the context of conflicts and violence in the KwaZulu-Natal Province of South Africa during the years 1987 to 1996. In chapter one the purpose was to introduce the research by way of giving a brief overview and statement of the problem. In this regard emphasis was given to the key question that determined the parameters of the study and shaped the research findings. Contextual theology was identified as the theoretical framework upon which the study was based despite the fact that at times the Church leaders acted subconsciously. Primary sources of data were critical for this study due to the limited nature of secondary sources on this field. Minutes of meetings and letters and the use of interviews was both challenging and exciting. In chapter two the main task was draw the reader's attention to the Natal Church Leaders Group later the KwaZulu-Natal Church Leaders Group. The rationale behind this attempt was to show how its origins, purpose, composition and mission were responsible for possible achievements and limitations. Despite the informal nature of the group it became a voice through which church leaders could speak and act in response to the ongoing political violence.

The Church's response has been drawn up in three chapters with each covering a significant period. In the third chapter, we have attempted to shown how the Church entered the playing field with limited skills and resources. The adoption of mediation as a peace making strategy, seeking to tell the truth by being prophetic, and meeting pastoral needs of victims proved a challenge to the Church leaders. That effort was made to reach out to the warring parties and organisations and draw them into dialogue has to been highlighted on. Factors such as naivety, the lack of conflict handling skills, and divisions within the group received considerable attention. For instance, we have noted how Church leaders north and south of the Tugela River were allegedly split between supporting the IFP and ANC respectively. The absence of good will on the part of political leaders only made this task worse than was expected. The same issues were discussed in chapter four but with a greater focus on the democratic elections. One of the major issues for the Church was to convince the IFP

to join the first democratic elections as a way of averting an a
Pastoral work received considerable attention though it was
Church leaders were biased against IFP supporters. Throughout
was focused on the post-general election period. The ANC an
remained estranged after April 1994. This further threatened
government elections in 1996. The Church found itself also b
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local, regional, and national para-church agencies
partners helped to provide essential resources.

6.2 Brief Evaluation

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to join the first democratic elections as a way of averting an anticipated civil war. Pastoral work received considerable attention though it was often alleged that the Church leaders were biased against IFP supporters. Throughout chapter five, attention was focused on the post-general election period. The ANC and IFP in KwaZulu-Natal remained estranged after April 1994. This further threatened peace during the local government elections in 1996. The Church found itself yet in another peace making and peace building endeavour. Their efforts should also be understood in the light of the need for peace in the province as a necessary condition for post apartheid development initiatives. Throughout chapters two, three, four and five, the role of local, regional, and national para-church agencies including the SACC and external partners helped to provide essential resources.

6.2 Brief Evaluation

Having drawn a summary of the research findings, it remains imperative for us to briefly examine what lessons can be drawn from the work of the NCLG. Firstly the Church in KwaZulu-Natal has been appreciated for having had the courage to stand up to the socio-political challenges of her time. The members of the NCLG were ready to throw behind their denominational and individual differences in support of a more noble cause to which they responded ecumenically. Similarly the Church today can learn to work together ecumenically to address political or other related situations. Secondly, the Church should appreciate the limitations of being a mediator whilst also seeking to be prophetic about a conflict. This study has shown that the two roles were quite incompatible. Through mediation the Church plays a reconciliation role that is critical in a moment of political conflict and violence. Being honest and prophetic about a situation is what the Church may understand its role to be but there is certainly a prize to pay for it. However, the complexities of the dual task can be reduced if the Church is conscious of the dangers in being openly seen to be sympathetic to one political party and demonise the others. The ecumenical voice in Zimbabwe has been riddled with internal divisions and that has affected the role of the Church amidst the ongoing political crisis. Thirdly, the Church has a pastoral responsibility to victims of political conflict and violence regardless of political persuasion. The Church leaders were caught napping though at times it was beyond their intentions. There is a strong temptation to offer pastoral support those who are

sympathetic to the Church political views and are part of its membership. Lastly the Church has to guard herself against being used by politicians for selfish gains regardless of which side they belong. As human beings, Church leaders have shortcomings and they do not have to be naïve about it.

6.3 Conclusion

Despite of some of the possible limitations regarding the availability of research materials, this study has shown that the Christian communities and the public in general were negatively affected by political violence. Within that context, Church leaders from some mainline churches and denominations took the initiative to respond to the crisis. Tribalism in Natal was not necessarily at the centre of this political violence as was noted: "In Natal everyone involved, both attackers and victims were Zulus. But what we have seen is that tensions between rural and urban Zulus, between squatters and residents, between supporters of Inkatha and supporters of the ANC, have been exploited by warlords to fuel the fires of violence and bloodshed."⁴⁸² Rural areas and townships were more adversely affected than large urban areas especially those where many whites lived. These protracted clashes were initially between the UDF/COSATU and Inkatha and later between the ANC and the IFP. A general observation was that the clashes were as a result of a battle for political control of the province. The Church found itself in that volatile situation.

Essentially, we showed that Church leaders were involved in contacts with the UDF and Inkatha, all present at a peace rally held at the Lay Ecumenical Centre in Edendale in 1987. We did show that besides the Church there were other players in the same field, including the business community and well-known experts in community mediation like Radford and Glasser. It was noted that this initiative had been valuable in the initial peace talks between the various groups.⁴⁸³ According to Kearney the conflict and violence had continued unabated and Church leaders decided to make a concerted approach by establishing the NCLG in 1988.⁴⁸⁴ We have also identified and discussed the group's threefold response, highlighting its achievements and limitations between 1987 and 1996. In line with this observation one of the

⁴⁸² The ICT, *Violence and the New Kairos* (Braamfontein: Institute of Contextual Theology, 1990), 5.

⁴⁸³ DN/DR/B/17.17.1.2 Minutes of NCLG Meeting, 7 May 1988.

⁴⁸⁴ Kearney, same interview.

former members had this to say: "Our achievements were very limited and it was almost a failed attempt. The end of violence only came with democracy."⁴⁸⁵ Findings from this research confirm that the peace efforts by the NCLG did not bring immediate results. One of the reasons was that the church leaders were dealing with politicians who had their own interests in the violence. From the findings it can be concluded that each of the groups involved took advantage of the situation to advance its own territorial space at whatever cost.

We may also appreciate the mediation role of the Church leaders in the light of insights from "Third Way Theology", coined in by Walter Wink.⁴⁸⁶ This theology was totally against Christians who sided with those who used violence as a means to political change.⁴⁸⁷ It has been noted above that the SACC and some members of the NCLG had thrown their weight behind the prophetic theology of the *Kairos Document*. This was evident in their support of the ANC, the UDF, COSATU and other liberation or leftist movement that sought to bring about positive political change. The apartheid regime had imposed a state of emergency as part of repressive measures to curtail black resistance.⁴⁸⁸ Within the context of political violence in Natal the Church could not be seen as sitting on the fence because that would have indicated its silence in terms its prophetic role. They did not just sit back and watch as political violence increased while Inkatha resolved to withdraw its participation from the elections. The Church leaders realised that political mediation was complicated by suspicion that the mediators belonged to or favoured one of the parties involved but did not take it into account sufficiently. We noted earlier that the NCLG was seen as more sympathetic towards the UDF/COSATU/ANC and this was confirmed by testimonies from interviewees. In addition to this we are reminded of Bishop Nuttall's words again: "Of course it was known and well understood that we favoured the liberation struggle because we believed it would bring true freedom to our people. However we knew it was dangerous to be close to one side, but our profound concern was peace."⁴⁸⁹ The prophetic role of the church therefore tended to be seen as progressive by the UDF/COSATU/ANC and yet Inkatha was demonised in the

⁴⁸⁵ Michael Nuttall, same interview.

⁴⁸⁶ http://www.csec.org/esec/sermon/Wink_3707.htm, accessed on 21 February 2009.

⁴⁸⁷ A. Balcomb, *Third Way Theology: Reconciliation, Revolution, and Reform in the South African Church during the 1980s* (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 1993), 63.

⁴⁸⁸ De Gruchy, *The Church Struggle*, 196.

⁴⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

process. This accounted for Chief Buthelezi's concerns that the Church leaders were partisan and could not be acceptable as mediators.

While the mediation process took long and almost proved a failure, the NCLG had some limited achievements. The NCLG was able to bring politicians together to the negotiating table to discuss the subject of violence in KwaZulu-Natal. The Church leaders' initiatives were to create peace and this could not be achieved without the political will of leadership of the political parties and organizations involved. The NCLG was concerned that people were dying and being displaced at the grassroots level. At the same time political parties were in pursuit of a very different agenda. What they were interested in most was political power.⁴⁹⁰ The political leadership of both sides were no strangers to each other.⁴⁹¹ Zondi stated: "The IFP, which Buthelezi led as an internal successor to the banned ANC, was just as much of an anti-apartheid organisation. The IFP and the ANC were two sister organisations in the same struggle to liberate South Africa."⁴⁹² However, it must be noted that the author is an IFP stalwart. We need to be aware that the Church was caught up in the scheme of things because of its multiple roles in society. If it did one thing and left out the other the church might have felt guilty and yet not much was achieved from doing both. However, the Church enjoys certain privileges in any society because it is one of the very few institutions that have people of all races, political persuasions and class as members. "The churches are such and should, in theory, have an immensely powerful role to play in recivilising, resocialising a polarised society. Churches are particularly important here because of the conflict between old and young, between tradition and the future."⁴⁹³ Although there is validity in this observation we cannot rule out the possibility that the Church itself was overwhelmed. Its own membership was politically divided and intolerant of each other's views.

That the Church in KwaZulu-Natal was divided had direct bearing on initiatives undertaken to broker peace between the ANC and IFP. One saying states: "A house divided against itself will fall." Not only were they divided by the Tugela River as

⁴⁹⁰ Aitchison, same interview.

⁴⁹¹ Mkhize, same interview.

⁴⁹² Zondi, "The Relationship Between the SACC and the IFP", 164.

⁴⁹³ DN/DR/B/17.15.2.29 J. Aitchison, "Natal: Prospects for democracy and reconstruction", Memorandum presented to the Administrator of Natal by the NCLG, 28 August 1991.

north and south, but within the south the relationship between the NCLG and African Enterprise left a lot to be desired. We have shown that they often came together when it was convenient to the latter. However we need to acknowledge that Cassidy seems to have been a well-respected Christian leader.⁴⁹⁴ Claims made to this effect centre around his input in the Jesus Peace Rally held in Durban in April 1994 and his connections with Washington Okumu noted above. He was also a key partner in the Operation Ukuthula project prior to the local government elections in KwaZulu-Natal together with Bishops Mogoba and Makhaye. Many people including Church leaders had come to believe that Okumu's input seemed to have had some magical powers. However, this view is contested in the light of the observation that Buthelezi was under political pressure to join the elections and only used religion as a face. Alexander Johnson argued that the Inkatha lost support from the Freedom Alliance and the white right. At the same time, the IFP was performing poorly in opinion polls and the credibility of its leader outside his own party was at a very low web.⁴⁹⁵ This of course does not rule out any other reasons for Chief Buthelezi joining the elections. It was feared that a civil war like what was happening in Mozambique and Angola was likely to take effect.⁴⁹⁶

Without depriving the NCLG of anything one of its major weaknesses was in the area of mediation. According to the minutes for the period covered, discussions held confirmed that this was a difficult concept to handle. Not many of the members seemed to appreciate its complexities. NCLG grew impatient but were naïve to the fact that mediation and being prophetic were not incompatible. Comments from IFP and from some members of the NCLG especially Kearney and Jennings showed an awareness of the dilemma of being both. A number of them were in full agreement with a view from Nhlanhla Radebe of PACSA who called for Christian participation in peacemaking: "We must remember that we can never be neutral in situations of injustice and we must speak in a strong voice to fulfil our mission."⁴⁹⁷ The emphasis on speaking with a strong voice meant openly denouncing perpetrators and yet subsequently seeking to persuade them to talk over the same issues. This should not

⁴⁹⁴ Kearney, same interview.

⁴⁹⁵ A. Johnson, "Politics and Violence in KwaZulu-Natal", in W. Gutteridge and J. E. Spence (eds), *Violence in Southern Africa* (London, Frank Cass, 1997), 86.

⁴⁹⁶ Aitchison, same interview.

⁴⁹⁷ PACSA, N. Radebe, "Peacemaking: A Challenge to the Church", *PACSA Newsletter*, 64, (1995), 6.

be misconstrued to imply that the Church was to turn a blind eye on evil but to create an awareness of the dangers in combining the roles. Relations between these two political parties after the local government elections in KwaZulu-Natal continued to be a matter of concern. At one point they attempted to form a coalition government but chaos about organising meetings reigned. There were counter accusation between the ANC and IFP. It was noted this level of chaos affected service delivery in the province and the intervention of the KNCLG had not been successful.⁴⁹⁸

Despite these shortfalls it would be unfair to dismiss the role played by the NCLG as insignificant. The fact that they were able to draw the attention of opposed political parties was by itself an achievement. By and large the political leaders became aware that at least they were being watched and made to look at their actions and those of their supporters on the ground.⁴⁹⁹ They also acted as an avenue of communication between the warring groups and this was achieved through holding meetings with different political leaders. This was done in order to get their side of the story and finally arrange for a common meeting. Many challenges were faced in trying to bring political leaders to the same table. Despite these challenges the church leaders were for most of the time optimistic. The NCLG made efforts to communicate with the government about the situation although with limited success. This has been shown from the reports of meetings held with the minister of Law and Order and later with the State President, where they tabled the plight of the KwaZulu-Natal people. Though peace did not come immediately, the NCLG deserve public respect for any accomplishments under the given circumstances regardless of how insignificant that could be for us today.

Visiting places of pain was one way to show solidarity with those who had been affected by the violence. This work has shown that pastoral visitations were not often easy but the NCLG showed love and concern for people in their moment of need. Both clergy and laity who were not members of the NCLG offered valuable support to victims in their areas of operation. The principles of the prophetic theology of the *Kairos Document* were influential in this regard because the NCLG denounced violence, called for peace and acted in support of victims. At least some of the victims

⁴⁹⁸ <http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/pr/2003/pr0217.html> accessed on 2008/03/14.

⁴⁹⁹ Kearney, same interview. See also Aitchison, same interview.

were given a decent burial and their families assisted though only in a small way. Kearney recalled how even to this present day he is often stopped by a handful of people who praise Diakonia, and the NCLG for assistance, especially in burying the deceased, and as refugees.⁵⁰⁰ The Church leaders also empowered local churches to respond to the plight of their fellow brothers and sisters who were in need of all kinds of support. Regions and sub-regions were encouraged to hold some meetings on matters relating to action against political violence throughout the province so that the group could become more representative. The rotation of venues in the last two years was complementary to building a strong ecumenical team. These were Port Shepstone, Eshowe/Empangeni/Ulundi, Ladysmith, Pietermaritzburg, and Durban.⁵⁰¹ The input of ecumenical agencies like Diakonia, PACSA, Vuleka Trust, Practical Ministries, regional Christian Councils and SACC cannot be overemphasised. Behind it all was a strong bond of teamwork.⁵⁰²

We cannot give credit to one particular church or denomination and claim that it did more work than others. This was an ecumenical initiative drawing mainline and other churches to a common problem and seeking to speak with one voice. As noted by Bishop Nuttall, some churches were more affected by the political violence than others, especially those with congregations in rural areas and townships. Some clergy were killed because they were presumably doing their best to promote peace and to mediate neutrally between the conflicting parties.⁵⁰³ However, there is need to point out that the interests of local clergy in mediation were often not divorced from their relationship with other third parties including the SACC and the NCLG. Besides mediation for humanitarian purposes we have argued that they were also motivated by seeking to influence the substantive outcome to the conflict and therefore promoted issues of salience to them.⁵⁰⁴ Church and politics often find some common ground in that they are both in the midst of people. The Christian in the Church is a member of a political party and the reverse is also true. However, at times politicians claim to

⁵⁰⁰ Kearney, same interview.

⁵⁰¹ DN/DR/B/17.15.3.69 KNCLG Proposal concerning meetings in 1995 (n. d.).

⁵⁰² Nuttall, same interview.

⁵⁰³ PACSA, Bishop Michael Nuttall to Commissioner George Fivaz on Violence in Wembezi/Estcourt, 16 May 1996.

⁵⁰⁴ S.Chan, V. Jabri and A. Pisan, "Introduction: Mediation Theory and Application", in S. Chan and V. Jabri (eds), *Mediation in Southern Africa* (London: Macmillan Press, 1993), xiv-xv.

possess people and dismiss the Church's involvement and yet Christians too, may forget that life is social and political.⁵⁰⁵

The fate and role of the KNCLG in the new political dispensation in KwaZulu-Natal and South Africa needs our attention before we conclude. The group continued to function but its activities were overshadowed by the KZNCC which was established in 1994.⁵⁰⁶ The KZNCC annual report for 1999 acknowledged a strong working relationship with the KNCLG. Evidently, Bishop Makhaye who was then chairperson remarked: "I am glad to report that the hard work of the Executive Committee of the KZNCC, working closely with different ecumenical groups, not forgetting the significant support of KwaZulu-Natal Church Leaders Group, has paid significantly."⁵⁰⁷ We shall not discuss the contribution of the KNCLG implied by this statement because it is beyond the present scope, but it is worth noting that it was actively involved ecumenically on some issues. Comments from former members of the group reflected a mixture of opinions. According to Bishop Nuttall though the group continued to exist, its focus was weak because there was no crisis to face unlike in the 1990s when political violence was at its peak.⁵⁰⁸ Though there could be validity in this view, we have to appreciate this assertion in the light of memory dynamics as it reconstructs the past which is often projected as obviously better than now.⁵⁰⁹ Kearney submitted that the KNCLG continued to be a significant platform for Church leaders to interact on issues of common concern and its dissolution in 2008 was totally a disaster and a lack of foresight.⁵¹⁰ His comment was supported by a similar sentiment from concerned quarters who felt that the Church leaders in KZN had actually done some wonderful work in the past but had more work to do even now. It was sad that they had closed down.⁵¹¹

However, before the final word we hasten to point out that the Church leaders were not only concerned with political violence. Among social and economic issues were

⁵⁰⁵ S. R. Kumalo "Theology must be practiced if you want to make a difference", in *Southern Anglican* 17, (July 2008), 55.

⁵⁰⁶ DN/DR/B/17.15.3.71 Minutes of KNCLG Meeting, 29 November 1994.

⁵⁰⁷ KZNCC, M. Makhaye, "Chairperson's Report", in *KZNCC Annual Report, 1999*, 1.

⁵⁰⁸ Nuttall, same interview.

⁵⁰⁹ R. J. Grele, (ed), *Envelops of Sound: the Art of Oral History*, 2nd Ed., (New York: Praeger, 1991), 217.

⁵¹⁰ Kearney, same interview.

⁵¹¹ S. R. Kumalo, information supplied author, August 2008.

land distribution, unemployment, aids and gender equity. A workshop on churches and land was held in 1993. It focused on land ownership, usage and land claims court.⁵¹² This was out of an awareness of the fact that land was one of the contested resources that had potential to stir further violence if not addressed. After the elections in 1994 the group concerned itself with being relevant to the changing needs of society especially in respect to gender and youth. It was noted: "Gender and youth also need to be considered in membership of the NCLG, as well as what sort of relationship would be possible with leaders of other faiths."⁵¹³ The KNCLG felt it was necessary to relate to the context of HIV/AIDS and the Church. A retreat on the prevention of Aids and care for sufferers was planned for 25 March 1995 mainly for the leadership of churches.⁵¹⁴ Despite our inability to determine the success of these programmes we credit the KNCLG for seeking to look at life in a more holistic way and turning themselves to the evolving challenges of society.

This research concluded that it would be unrealistic to declare that the NCLG failed in its effort to minister to political violence. At least their presence helped to reduce the impact of the violence. The group's concern for peace was ongoing through its participation in annual reconciliation services.⁵¹⁵ We cannot be surprised to note a strong sense of appreciation from the former members of the NCLG, political party leaders and the public. Finally, we admit that the Church leaders were not a perfect group of people but their work can be useful for similar political conflict situations. If they had been afraid of making mistakes the impact of political violence could have been worse than it actually was. This is the lesson Church leaders elsewhere may possibly learn. Kerchhoff remarked: "The Church leaders couldn't get the blame...I can't see how it could have been done in another better way. Everyone did his or their best. Every one did what they could."⁵¹⁶ One would be persuaded to agree with Aitchison who pointed out that the Church leaders were fair-minded people who put the Christian duty above others.⁵¹⁷ That they put others first especially victims of

⁵¹² DN/DR/B/17.15.2.124 NCLG Churches and Land Workshop, 17 February 1993. See also DN/DR/B/17.15.2.168 Minutes of NCLG Meeting, 3 August 1993.

⁵¹³ DN/DR/B/17.15.3.51 Minutes of NCLG Meeting, 12 July 1994.

⁵¹⁴ DN/DR/B/17.15.3.71 Minutes of KNCLG Meeting, 29 November 1994. See also DN/DR/B/17.15.3.92 Minutes of KNCLG Meeting, 17 May 1995.

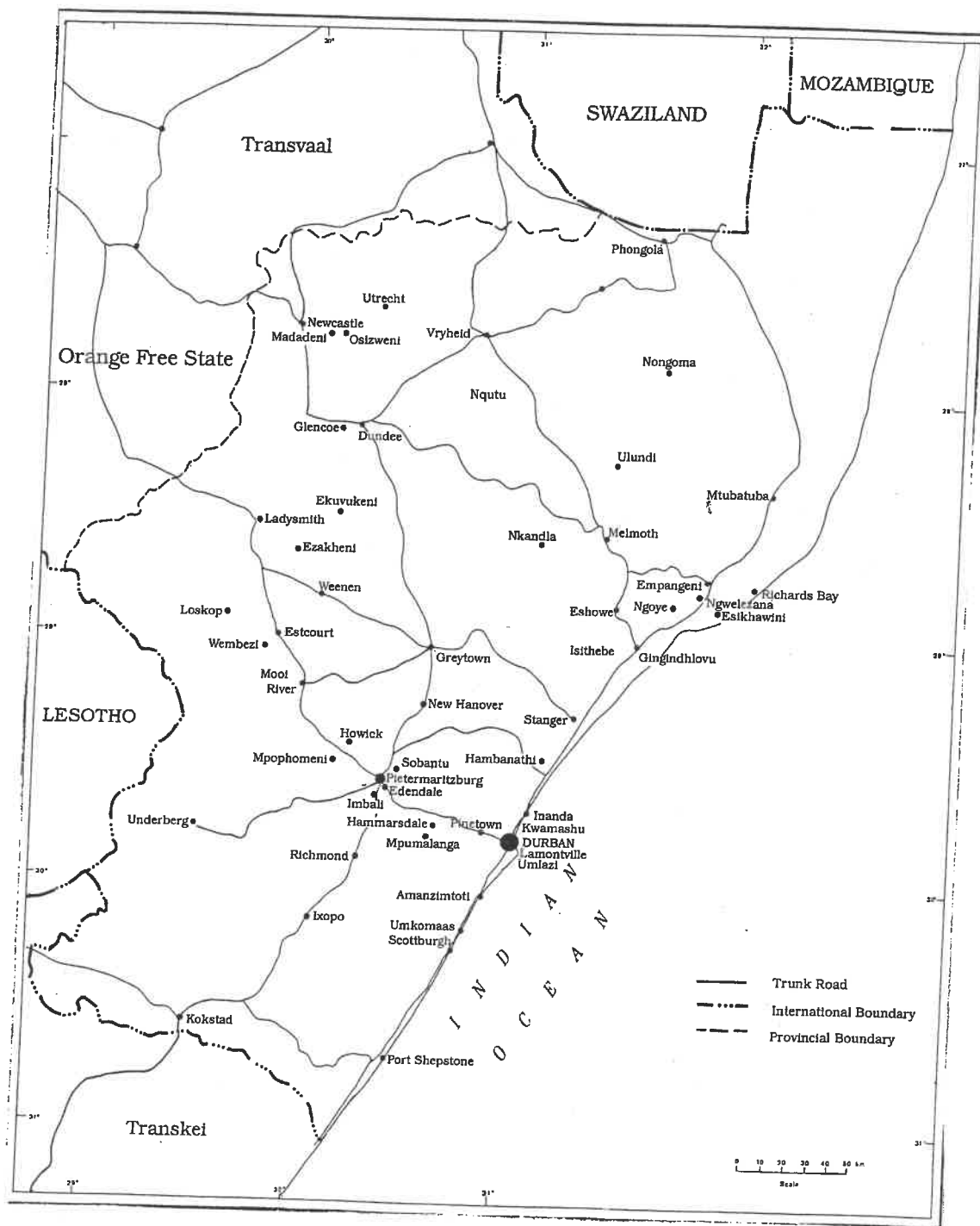
⁵¹⁵ KZNCC, *KZNCC Annual Report, 1999*, 7.

⁵¹⁶ Kerchhoff, same interview.

⁵¹⁷ Aitchison same interview.

political violence deserves public acknowledgement. Perhaps the overall work of the NCLG as mediators, prophets and pastors during the KwaZulu-Natal political violence should be evaluated in the context of building towards peace in the province and to South Africa's democracy.

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⁵¹⁸ R. Morell, (ed), *Political Economy and Identities in KwaZulu-Natal: Historical and Social Perspectives* (Durban: Indicator Press, 1996), iv.

APPENDIX 2: INTERVIEW GUIDE

THE QUESTIONS WERE FORMULATED AROUND THE FOLLOWING THEMES

- a) Formation of the Natal Church Leaders' Group
 - Membership
 - Dynamic of membership
 - Publicity
 - Purpose

- b) Involvement in political mediation
 - Response from COSATU, UDF, ANC and Inkatha (IFP in 1990)
 - Achievements
 - Limitations
 - Relationship with state
- (c) Pastoral work
 - Resources
 - Visits and meetings
 - Pastoral letters

- d) Role in elections
 - Education for democracy campaign
 - General elections in 1994
 - Local government elections in 1996

- e) Support received
 - Local churches
 - Para- church organizations: PACSA, Vuleka Trust and Diakonia
 - The South African Council of Churches
 - Other local support and international support.

- (f) Other issues.

APPENDIX 3:

SYNOPSIS OF MINUTES & REPORTS FOR THE NCLG: 1988-1996⁵¹⁹

	DATE	ATT END ANC E	VENUE	KEY ISSUES	COMMENTS
1	07/05/88	9	CPSA: Diocese of Natal Offices, Durban	Formation of NCLG, Peace initiatives in Natal. Open line communication with Minister of Law and Order and other political organisations	First Meeting on the initiative of some church leaders. Rev Dr Khoza Mgojo initiated meeting. Negotiation process was already in existence.
2	24/10/88	5 (2 apol)	PACSA office Pietermaritzburg	Second formal meeting of the NCLG. Peace initiatives with COSATU and Inkatha and formation of Stand for the Truth campaign.	How would these work together? What kind of truth was being referred to? PACSA was a crucial partner to NCLG.
3	03/11/88	8 (1 apol)	Catholic Archdiocese of Natal Offices, Durban	Meeting with lawyers from Inkatha and COSATU. Received reports on conflict in Natal. Called for wider participation by Church Leaders.	Initiative for peace with lawyers of Inkatha and COSATU very interesting. Shows strong contacts. Not much achieved.
4	20/01/89	18	Koinonia Conference Centre, Botha's Hill	Workshop on conflict resolution Facilitators: John Glaser and Phillip Radford. Copy of notes available.	Important for Church leaders to receive training in conflict management because of mediation involvement. Vuleka Trust offered skills.
5	21/04/89	11 (4apol)	Anglican Cathedral, Pietermaritzburg	Conflict resolution, involvement of Paul Graham and others was suspicious. Concern over Inkatha's negative attitude. Plans to involve Rev Chikane of SACC. Gave support for CFG.	NCLG aware of problems of communication with political parties like Inkatha. Called for support from SACC.
6	03/07/89	10 (2 apol)	Anglican Cathedral, Pietermaritzburg	Anglican bishops' visit to Ulundi report. Political violence in Edendale and Inkatha prayer meetings. Workshop planned and Pastoral letter to be circulated.	Support from Archbishop D. Tutu and CPSA Episcopal Synod. First pastoral letter of this type. Other leaders resisted.
7	04/09/89	14 (3 apol)	Koinonia Retreat Centre, Botha's Hill	Reporting on peace talks and plan for proposed meeting with Presidents of UDF, COSATU and IFP. Local peace initiatives success story. Raised concerns for interference during prayers in Mpumalanga area.	Attempts to reach leaders of political parties as dialogue initiatives. But more violence in Mpumalanga in July. No respect given to church services.

⁵¹⁹ Sourced from minutes of meetings, letters, reports and other correspondences.

8	04/09/89	As above	Koinonia Retreat Centre, Botha's Hill	Consideration of progress report by CFG on proposed meeting with 4 presidents: IFP, ANC, UDF, and COSATU.	Group communicated with all the 4 presidents. Shows that the NCLG was keen to resolve the crisis.
9	03/10/89	12 (1 apol)	Koinonia Retreat Centre, Botha's Hill	Contact Chief Buthelezi again. Planned visit by Bishop Nuttall's team. Establishment of a commission of inquiry. Disruptions of church services and violence in Trust Feed area.	Anglican bishops to meet Chief Buthelezi. Value of Commission of inquiry. Churches were to draw international attention on political violence.
10	14/11/89	14 (1 apol)	Koinonia Retreat Centre, Botha's Hill	Pastoral letter sent out on 6 th August 1989. Sunday morning rallies. Reports on political violence. Commission of enquiry from outside the province. Progress report on Inkatha and NCLG meeting.	Chief Buthelezi's attitude difficult. Clash of interest with the CFG looming. CFG not clear of its mandate. Payment for meals now organised.
11	11/12/89	11 (1 apol)	Koinonia Retreat Centre, Botha's Hill	Delegation set to meet State President. Support by SACC given. Information from Natal churches. Contact with Walter Sisulu. Value of confidentiality.	Visiting Judge. Presence of SACC to improve the situation of negotiations. Involvement of Walter Sisulu is noted.
12	22/01/90	10 (4 apol)	PACSA, Pietermaritzburg	Letter to State President and to Minister Vlok. Involvement of Lawyers for Human Rights. Copies of letter to President taken to press. NCLG and Minister Vlok's meeting.	Attempts to meet State President show courage. Private church inquiry put on hold. Why make the press aware of intended meeting with State President?
13	26/01/90	9 (6 apol)	174 Berg Street, Pietermaritzburg	To plan for meeting with Min. Vlok in Cape Town on 29/01/90 Delegation to include Rev Professor J. Aitchison for analysis of the situation in the PMB region.	Breakthrough for the NCLG. Careful strategizing was done. Inclusion of J Aitchison for analysis of the war would give more factual account.
14	29/01/90	9 (3 Government Officers)	Minister of Law and Order offices, Cape Town	Judicial enquiry debate. Effects of political violence. Minister's concern on disturbance of Church services. Each of the leaders spoke about the situation at home. J Aitchison presented paper. Way forward.	Minister to consult with State President. Bishop Nuttall remembers that the Min had come back smiling from President De Klerk's Office during their meeting. Why?
15	13/02/90	16 (5 apol)	Koinonia Retreat Centre, Botha's Hill	SACC and NCLG joint operation. Rev Chikane working on issue. Mr Nelson Mandela was now free after release from prison. Report on meeting with Minister Vlok.	Response to Mandela's freedom. Effects on way forward. Effects on political violence. NCLG not impressed by meeting with Minister Vlok.

16	30/03/90	7 (3 National Church Leaders)	Metropolitan Methodist Church, Pietermaritzburg	National Church Leaders like Bishop Manas Buthelezi, Rev Frank Chikane and Bishop Wilfred Napier had toured the province assessing the situation of violence.	Link with national church body was essential. Natal situation seen as critical. 1 st meeting held at the Methodist Church up to now.
17	02/04/90	9	No venue given	Faxed document to Bishop Nuttall. Summary of the main points contributed by Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu, Manas Buthelezi, Frank Chikane, Michael Nuttall, Desmond Tutu and Harry Gwala.	Minutes of meeting were confidential. Important contributions are noted from all the speakers. No representation from IFP. Meeting of ANC, NCLG, SACC leadership.
18	11/04/90	3 NCLG + NCL President	President's offices, Cape Town	Synopsis of a meeting held with the State President, F.W. De Klerk. Political violence was top on the agenda. Role of the police. Judicial enquiry. State President's response.	Determination of the NCLG was seen here. The use of a consultative approach was noted. NCLG impression of the meeting.
19	28/04/90	9 (7 abs)	174 Berg Street, Pietermaritzburg	Report on meeting with State President. Judicial enquiry on hold. Natal violence showed a marked increase. Mood of NCLG shows that they expected more from the meeting with the State President. Report on SACC meeting given.	Rise in displaced people as victims of the Seven Days War. The challenges are enormous for NCLG. More violence in the South Coast.
20	04/05/90	25	Anglican Cathedral Hall, Pietermaritzburg	Meeting of SACC and NCLG, and Regional Church Councils. Murder of Anglican priest, Victor Africander of Imbali. Rev F. Chikane on financial support to NCLG from Canada and Australia for victims of political violence. Formation of Natal Crisis Committee and The Natal Crisis Fund.	Support from SACC. NCLG recognised for effort. Victor Africander death a mystery. The NCLG was also giving up on Chief M. Buthelezi's negative attitude because not much was coming from efforts made so far.
21	04/05/90	23	Same venue as above	Reviewed the political violence situation in the province. Inkatha's attitude and way forward. Use of the funds given by SACC. 3 NCLG members on Natal Crisis Fund Committee (NCF).	Lack of trust between IFP and NCLG. Challenges of mediation. Chief Buthelezi very critical of NCLG. Look at effect on future peace talks.

22	23/05/90	12 +3Vis (4 apol)	Koinonia Retreat Centre, Botha's Hill	Proposal for Judicial Commission of Enquiry. Rev Chikane reported involvement with IFP and ANC. Church's approach to be pastoral by naming the evil. NCF and its accessibility. Statement by Church leaders on violence drawn up.	Rev Chikane attending NCLG meetings as part of SACC. Involvement showed support for the peace engagement. Church leaders were almost giving up. Funds for relief availed but taking time to be used.
23	21/06/90	10 (5 apol)	Koinonia Retreat Centre, Botha's Hill	Considered Rev Chikane's model for peace. Still to meet Chief Buthelezi. Peace campaign organised by STF group. Monies not yet used. Possible attack of Mpophomeni.	Bank Acc opened for crisis fund on 12/06/90. Flyers made to avail support to victims. Rev Chikane quite pro-active in relief work. NCLG's support for SFT activities compromised mediation.
24	23/07/90	15 (2 apol)	Koinonia Retreat Centre, Botha's Hill	Report on contact with State President by letter. Rev Chikane and the two political parties. Violence at Inkatha rally anticipated. International support from UK and the E U sought. Composition of NCLG membership.	Methodists, Anglicans and Catholics were the founding members. But what could be done if others were afraid or unwilling? Some churches were more outspoken than others.
25	07/08/90	Not Speci fied	Koinonia Retreat Centre, Botha's Hill	Report of joint meeting of ANC and COSATU/UDF Joint Working Committee (JWC) with NCLG. ANC cooperation noted. Solutions promised. Meeting with the State President and the ANC top leadership proposed.	Conflict on the rise and no permanent solution yet found. Commitment of Government and IFP to ending political violence questionable.
26	13/08/90	12	As above	Inkatha delegation present for special meeting with selected members of NCLG. Inkatha argued that the NCLG was not neutral for reasons given. Generally Inkatha was quite defensive, making many accusations and allegations	Church leaders' efforts were not appreciated. How true could they be labelled as ANC or UDF? Tutu was patron of UDF and this was known. How would that affect the talks for peace?
27	20/08/90	12 (5 apol)	As above	Considered practical solutions of housing and education for victims and handling returnees. Report on meeting with ANC and IFP considered. Confidentiality of information was breached and was cause for concern. Hot debate about reports	Members were cautious of confidentiality. Minutes had leaked through Peter Kerchhoff unintentionally. This would result in a compromise of the whole issue.
28	17/09/90	14 (5 apol)	As above	Report received from the Church Facilitation Group. Talked about dismissal of teachers from Pietermaritzburg and need for support.	Links with attack by Inkatha and use of Inkatha membership card system for entry into a school. Confirmed by some testimonies in the main text.

29	28/11/90	13 (2 apol)	Koinonia Retreat Centre, Botha's hill	Churches absent from scene of violence. Church leaders called upon to be more pro- active. Concerns for situation in Greytown, Estcourt discussed.	Seems valuable work was being done. The Church the NCLG was overtaken by events. Peace still far to be achieved.
30	31/01/91	12 (2 apol)	Koinonia Conferenc e Centre	Mission Statement report. Reports on violence in rural areas mainly Nxamalala, Richmond, Umgababa, Table Mountain and Wembezi were discussed.	Evidence of pastoral work and its challenges. Establish why the NCLG mission statement was important at this stage.
31	01/02/91	13	Umgabab a Visit report	NCLG members and others local church leaders visited this area. Met 40 residents who made suggestions on way forward.	Pastoral work and support given by local churches was evident. ANC and IFP conflict as source of conflict.
32	14/03/91	5 (8 apol)	Koinonia Conferenc e Centre	Mission Statement discussed and report of International Commission of Jurists was distributed, Call for joint visit to areas by ANC and IFP was expressed.	P Kerchhoff in touch with rural areas. Joint peace initiative did not take off the ground. IFP was blamed by ANC.
33	25/04/91	8 (6 apol)	Koinonia Conferenc e Centre	Mission Statement was finalised. Mandela keen on joint visit. Contact and meeting with Chief Buthelezi reported. More violence in Richmond was reported.	Belief in power of prayer noted. PACSA in touch with areas of political violence. Vuleka Trust giving skills in conflict resolution.
34	10/06/91	12 (5 apol)	Koinonia Conferenc e Centre	Feedback on meetings with Chief Buthelezi needed, Lack of open dialogue for NCLG and IFP. More violence in Richmond reported.	Dig deeper into attitude of IFP towards the NCLG. Examine internal dynamics within the group.
35	11/07/91	15 (1 apol)	Archdioce se Chancery Durban	Report of IFP and SACC given. NCLG to be involved in peace working groups. Consultation with media was on. Address by local PAC representatives as on report.	Intention of PAC. Link with Stanley Mogoba? NCLG accusing SACC of communication breakdown over contact with Chief Buthelezi.
36	11/07/91	13+ 6 Medi a Reps	Archdioce se Chancery Durban	Analysis of media and NCLG concerns on political violence coverage was done. Risks of safety discussed. Church media desks important.	Examine dangers of media coverage. Look at the motives for seeking coverage and publicity by the NCLG.
37	16/08/91	5+ 7 Medi a Offic ers	Archdioce se Chancery Durban	Follow up meeting on Church and media. Church concerns raised and media limitations explained.	Similar to above. NCLG intention to seek more media cooperation. Call for more coverage.

38	29/08/91	4+ 2 Admin of Natal	Natalia Building, Pietermaritzburg	Meeting between Administrator of Natal, Mr C Botha and NCLG. Projects under the NPA and role of churches discussed.	Contact with government provincial office was maintained. Analyse the possible motives behind.
39	29/08/91	12+ 1 SACC (5 apol)	Koinonia Conference Centre	WCC Secretary to visit political violence affected areas. Also visit by Danish Parliamentarians. Revd Chikane's input on progress discussed.	International contacts useful for funding. NCLG and SACC ties beneficial for mediation and pastoral work.
40	24/10/91	11 (7 apol)	Koinonia Conference Centre	SACC and IFP meetings failed. Address by John Hall and Stanley Mogoba of NPA called for. Invitation extended beyond the NCLG.	NCLG using SACC for contacts with IFP. Role of the NCLG in NPA from interviewees. Meeting was held.
41	05/12/91 4.30 pm	11+ 2 vis (6 apol)	Ukuthula Room Ecumenical Centre, Durban	SACC+WCC met Chief Buthelezi. SACC actively involved. NCLG failed meeting with Mr Jacob Zuma (ANC), Bruntville under IFP attacks. State of NCF discussed.	Contact with IFP was achieved. Examine role of Mr Jacob Zuma in the mediation process and future meetings held by NCLG with him.
42	05/12/91 7.30 pm	As above	As above	NCLG addressed by Mr John Hall of NPA. Questioned raised on role of the Church. More discussion on political violence.	NCLG concerned with role of the Church in the NPA. Agreed to contribute regionally
43	30/01/92	10 (6 apol)	Koinonia Conference Centre	SACP member present, meeting with IFP achieved. IFP and NCLG relationship rather strained. Natal political violence discussed.	Need for close attention to the IFP perception of the NCLG. Examine the possible effects to the mediation process.
44	12/02/92	10 (3 apol)	Koinonia Conference Centre	Special meeting on Report of Regional Dispute Resolution Committee (RDRC). Memorandum, Pastoral Letter	Involvement of NCLG was hoped to speed up the peace process. Evaluation of pastoral letters.
45	27/02/92 before 1000 hrs	8 (3 apol)	The Chancery Offices, Gordon Road, Durban	Preparatory work prior to meeting Media representatives. Feedback on experiences with RDRC.	Preparatory meeting as part of strategic planning. Examine comments after RDRC meeting.
46	27/02/92 1000 hrs	8 8 Media Houses Reps	The Chancery Offices, Gordon Road, Durban	Major focus was NCLG concern on media reporting about ongoing political violence. Media gave own side of story. Summary of points drawn up.	Media is important for publicity to draw sympathy and expose perpetrators of political violence.
47	09/03/92	13+ 3 vis (3 apol)	Koinonia Conference Centre	Reports on political violence in Impendle, Wembezi, South Coast and Mpumalanga. New members for NCLG, behaviour of political activists at funerals.	Need to examine criteria used to draw up membership to the NCLG.

48	09/04/92	10 (6 apol)	Koinonia Conferenc e Centre	Visit of ICJ to Natal, ANC and IFP conflict, role of security forces. NCF discussed. Political funerals.	Eligibility for NCLG membership unclear. Hard time for clergy in townships.
49	26/05/92	11 (7 apol)	Koinonia Conferenc e Centre	Address by visiting American Lutheran Pastor. Work of RDRC and LRDC discussed. Report on stay away, SAP, NCF.	Sharing of experiences. Examine the purpose of the stay away. NCLG involvement in stay-away and IFP response.
50	02/07/92	10+ 1 vis (8 apol)	Koinonia Conferenc e Centre	Report by ICJ, no report on SACC IFP meeting. NCLG. Membership issues, SACC Peace Conference and political funerals discussed. Political violence.	Report by ICJ confirmed NCLG perception of the SAP role in political violence. Not clear what criterion was used to join the NCLG.
51	06/08/92	11 (6 apol)	Koinonia Conferenc e Centre	RDRC and LDRC involvement, political funerals, conduct of SAP discussed, NCF, Land allocation, and political violence, refugees reported on.	Effective of NCLG role in RDRCs and LDRCs needs attention. Political violence creating more refugees.
52	16/09/92	16+ 1 vis (4 apol)	Koinonia Conferenc e Centre	ANC planned march to Ulundi. Behaviour of activists at funerals. RDRC LDRC involvement. Peace monitoring programme. Peace Accord	Confrontational attitude towards IFP but others preferred mediation. Task was proving to be more complex.
53	08/10/92	13	Koinonia Conferenc e Centre	Proposed march to Ulundi and growing tension. Increased cases of political violence. Press Statement. What is the role of the Church? Urgent meetings with IFP and the ANC	Mediation skills were did not support NCLG participation in marches. Relate this to the <i>Kairos Document</i> . Clergy were affected by tension.
54	19/10/92	17	Ecumenic al Centre, St Andrew's St Durban	Initial meeting of NCLG to plan for meeting with ANC and prepare a Press Statement	First meeting with ANC since July 1990. Explore reasons for this. More regular meetings called for with the ANC.
55	19/10/92	13+ 16 from SACP , ANC, Cosatu Deleg	Ecumenic al Centre, St Andrew's St, Durban	Meeting with representatives of the ANC from COSATU, SACP and ANC regional representatives, EMPISA SACC members.	ANC alliance partners and organs present. Blame placed on IFP and state by ANC. Church seen as mediator. Battle for political turf noted.
56	19/11/92	17+ 2 Int Vis (2 apol)	Koinonia Conferenc e Centre	Report on communication with State President, Preparation for Peace Rally. Church buildings and political rallies. Report on SACC and IFP meeting read.	State President responded to some issues. Political parties overpowering the Church. Evaluate Peace rallies strategy by NCLG.

57	12/01/93	Not specified	Not specified	NCLG met to consider issues from IFP and ANC and make responses.	IFP raised 4 issues but ANC raised 8. NCLG called to action by both sides. Evidence of different concerns needs further analysis.
58	20/01/93	10+ 2 Int Vis 7 apol	Koinonia Conferenc e Centre	Meeting if 12/01/93 analysed. Structure of NCLG, NCF, Peace Service, Finance, Goldstone Commission report discussed	See attached responses list by NCLG to issues raised by ANC IFP. Analyse the responses.
59	23/02/93	12+ 5 Int Vis 2 Local s (1 apol)	Archdioce san Chancery, Durban	Purpose was to broaden the NCLG to include churches from Northern Natal including the KwaZulu Homeland and Zululand.	IFP put pressure in 1992 to include Northern Church Leaders. Assess response given and effect on IFP's attitude.
60	01/03/93	19 (1 apol)	Edendale Lay Ecumenic al Centre	Preparatory Meeting for a NCLG peace service. Election of steering committee. Date, time and venue agreed upon.	NCLG was involved in Peace Service. Seen as an effective strategy but political violence was increasing.
61	01/03/93	Atten Regis Not Attac hed	Koinonia Conferenc e Centre	Discussion of IFP and ANC requests with for ANC Natal regions. Fears of a post election civil war in KwaZulu-Natal. Sunday services. ANC and IFP joint meetings.	Explore the motives for more NCLG and ANC contact. The ANC was denied political space in Natal by IFP. The IFP was hostile towards the NCLG.
62	09/03/93	10+ 1 loc vis (11 apol)	Koinonia Conferenc e Centre	Reports on peace services given Plans drawn for future peace services, Report on ANC meeting discussed.	Mediation noted but from one side. Fate of mediation talks was not discussed. Use of public statements on political violence e.g. Table Mt.
63	27/04/93	15+ 6 Int Vis 1 loc vis (3 apol)	Koinonia Conferenc e Centre	EMPSA group present. Report on Peace Services given. Pastoral letter, planned meeting with IFP at Ulundi on 12 May 1993.	Possible contact with IFP as mediation. Did this take place or not? Evaluation of Peace Services. Involvement in other social issues.
64	10/05/93	3+ 1 Int Vis 4 SAP Com munit y Relati ons	Not stated	Violence and security concerns raised with police. NCLG offered themselves mediators. Police reform plan unveiled. Lack of trust by public but need for open forums as new strategy.	Dialogue between NCLG and SAP. Both sought image protection. NCLG exposed police and role in the political violence.
65	15/06/93	16+ 4 Int Vis (2 apol)	Koinonia Conferenc e Centre	Meeting with IFP postponed. NCLG part of Educate for Democracy Campaign (EDC).	Mediation noted but IFP delayed meeting. More peace initiatives on the ground.

66	14/17/93	3+ 2 IFP Reps (1 apol)	Anglican Diocesan Office, Greyville, Durban.	NCLG initiated to meet with IFP delegation. Suggested regional meetings.	Important issues on way forward discussed. Multi-party negotiations progress was reviewed. Openness of IFP noted.
67	31/07/93	Open	Durban	Workshop on the role of the Church in the Peace Accord Structures. Peace Accord was also critiqued.	Church was keen to be involved in the peace Accord structures. Initiated by NCLG.
68	03/08/93	15+ EMP SA 1 SAC C (6 apol)	Koinonia Conferenc e Centre	Planned for another meeting with IFP and set up another team. NCLG working through EDC. Analysis of AE initiative.	EMPSA's presence was regular. NCLG reserved on AE initiative. More contact with IFP planned.
69	14/09/93	13+ SACP , ANC (8 apol)	Koinonia Conferenc e Centre	Political violence affecting workers in Northern Natal. Peace services ongoing, NCLG meeting with IFP achieved on 26/08/93.	No discussion on minutes of meeting with IFP. Various peace strategies were used. Note response to SAP request.
70	20/10/93	13+ 5 EMP SA (7 apol)	Inman Room, Anglican Cathedral Centre, Pietermar itzburg	NCLG to facilitate joint ANC and IFP meeting. Third force confirmed by Goldstone Commission. Peace Service reports received.	ICJ interest in Church's role in current political situation. NCLG valued workshops and supported many peace initiatives.
71	22/11/93	17 (7 apol)	Koinonia Conferenc e Centre	Workshop on Natal conflict and the elections. NCLG analysis of operations to date and strategic planning. NCLG Statement on Elections draws controversy.	Evaluation of progress revealed weaknesses and strengths of NCLG. Draw attention to report.
72	14/12/93	10 (3 apol)	Koinonia Conferenc e Centre	Letter to Chief Buthelezi, Day of Prayer, Voter education, NCF and Peace Accord discussed.	See response by Chief Buthelezi and reply by the NCLG. There was growing tension between IFP and the NCLG.
73	11/01/94	18+ 5 EMP SA (3 apol)	Cathedral of the Holy Nativity, Pietermar itzburg	Preparation for election, Day of Prayer and the Peace accord and membership of NCLG, Prayers for elections were discussed.	No discussion on Chief Buthelezi's letter Membership expansion expected after elections.
74	24/01/94	5+ 3 NPC 1 RPC	Louis Botha Airport	NCLG concerns on role within Regional and National Peace Accord structures.	Acknowledged role of NCLG in the Peace Accord was noted.
75	14/02/94	11+ I EMP SA (6 apol)	Koinonia Conferenc e Centre	Peace Accord and peace monitoring. Voter education. Political violence reports and Nelson Mandela's requested meeting were discussed.	Relationship between Mandela and the NCLG was positive. Involvement in peace was part of mission.

76	23/03/94	16 (9 apol)	Cathedral of the Holy Nativity, Pietermar- itzburg	Day of Prayer and peace vigil initiative ready. Vuleka Trust to train Peace monitors. Strategic planning for elections.	Value of prayer, training and planning by NCLG. Excitement building towards the elections.
77	13/04/94	16 (4 apol)	Koinonia Conferenc e Centre	Strategic planning for elections, booklet on role of the churches and Jesus Rally discussed.	IFP participation in elections not yet certain. Check on rally influence from interviewees.
78	05/05/94	20 (2 apol)	Cathedral of the Holy Nativity, Pietermar- itzburg	Review of Day of Prayer and Jesus Rally and Assessment of the Elections discussed.	Attendance quite high. Involvement of the IFP in the elections highlighted.
79	17/05/94	17 (7 apol)	Cathedral of the Holy Nativity, Pietermar- itzburg	Review of political situation in Natal and future role of the NCLG discussed.	Political violence continued beyond the elections. Was this the end of political violence?
80	22/06/94	19 (2 apol)	Koinonia Conferenc e Centre	Special thanksgiving service for the elections on Pentecost Day. Political situation in KwaZulu-Natal reviewed.	Presence of leadership of IFP and ANC was noted. Was this the end to political violence?
81	12/07/94	10 (10 apol)	Cathedral of the Holy Nativity, Pietermar- itzburg	Broadening of NCLG. Monthly vigil for peace planned. Review of KwaZulu-Natal situation. On going restructuring of church councils. Pastoral Letter.	NCLG conscious of need for peace through prayer vigils. Further meetings With ANC and IFP though a sub-committee.
82	24/08/94	14 (4 apol)	Koinonia Conferenc e Centre	Restructuring of the regional church councils. Political situation in KwaZulu-Natal. Peace initiatives.	Drop in cases of political violence reported by the NCF. NCLG keen on development projects.
83	28/09/94	16 (6 apol)	Cathedral of the Holy Nativity, Pietermar- itzburg	New name KNCLG. Report restructuring consultations. NCLG invited to meet with ANC and IFP. Prayers for King and Chief Buthelezi.	Need to check on source of invitation. NCLG and AE relationship proved difficult. King and Chief Buthelezi relationship.
84	19/10/94	12 (14 apol)	Koinonia Conferenc e Centre	Membership issues. Evangelical Alliance and AE. Regional Peace Committee. Intervention in Royal house division.	KNCLG had interior dynamics. Trust of the KNCLG by Zulu King needs investigation.
85	25/10/94	11+ KZN Provi ncial Reps	Natalia Building, Pietermar- itzburg	Joint meeting. Praised support from churches. Peace process. Violence in Umlazi schools. Local Government Elections.	Meeting initiated by political leadership. Cabinet was mixed with IFP Premier.

86	29/11/94	21 (2 apol)	Cathedral of the Holy Nativity, Pietermar- itzburg	Regional Peace Committee. Intervention in Royal House conflict. Plight of refugees. Work in resettlement areas.	New church groups coming up considered as divisive. Royal House intervention by KNCLG.
87	18/01/95	11 3	St Kathrine's Anglican Church, Port Shepstone	AE's response. Regional Peace Committee and voter education. Refugee. Political rallies on Sundays. Pastoral letters.	No discussion on political violence. Assistance given to refugees.
88	08/03/95	15+ 2 Int Vis 1 loc vis	Methodist Church, Musgrave Road, Durban	Draft constitution on new church structures. Regional Peace Committee. Bishop Lislerud report.	Closeness of KNCLG to King. No word from Chief Buthelezi. AE peace rally in Durban.
89	17/05/95	15 8 loc vis (12 apol)	The Anglican Cathedral, Eshowe, Zululand	Ongoing political violence. Report on meeting with state president. Peace working committees. Resolutions on political violence by church synods.	Use of Zululand venue. Participation by local churches noted. Political violence noted. Note large number of apologies.
90	12/06/95	7	Truro House, Durban	Address by Mr Jacob Zuma. Critical role of KwaZulu- Natal. Failure of the political parties. Need for Church involvement. Governance. Response from KNCLG delegation.	Contact with local ANC leadership e.g. Zuma. How important was the Church? He admitted failure of political parties and need for support.
91	19/07/95	12+ 1 Int Vis 2 loc vis (11 apol)	All Saints Anglican Church, Ladysmith	Violence reported in Loskop. Reports of meetings with ANC, IFP and NP. Membership of KNCLG.	Need to examine the IFP, NP meetings report. Involvement in the Peace Bill.
92	20/09/95	16+ 2 Int Vis (2 loc vis)	Cathedral of the Holy Nativity, Pietermar- itzburg	Visit by Pope John Paul II. Violence. SACC visit. Peace Initiatives. KNCLG Think Tank. Royal Family crisis solution. Cosatu and political violence. State and purpose of NCF.	Interest in visit by Pope. Violence growing again. Direct involvement in the Royal Family saga was discouraged. Consider contributions to NC.
93	13/10/95	8 (1 apol)	Not disclosed	Prepared for proposed meeting for President Mandela, Mr T Mbeki, MR F W De Klerk, King G Zwelithini and Chief M Buthelezi.	1 st Think Tank meeting. Seeking to facilitate talks to resolve Royal House saga. Examine the why this was very important.
94	31/10/95	15+ 1 Int Vis (12 apol)	Methodist Church, Manning Road, Durban	Report back of Think Tank sub-committee. AE Initiative on provincial issues. Political violence. Peace Summit. Clergy situations.	AE had own strategy but consulted the KNCLG. Role of B Fennell is noted. Mediation efforts by the KNCLG.

95	13/11/95	8 1 (abs)	Koinonia Conferenc e Centre	New strategy for Royal Family conflict. Pastoral visit to Wembezi. Preparations to monitor Local Government Elections.	2 nd Think Tank meeting. Mandela's opinion was respected. Take note of other initiatives. Violence still going on.
96	29/11/95	20 (8 apol)	Koinonia Conferenc e Centre	Security matters in KwaZulu-Natal. Extension of KNCF. Think Tank report. Political violence. Stress workshop.	Police worried about security issues. Foreign funding coming. Political violence and stress.
97	01/02/96	24 (6 apol)	Musgrave Road, Methodist Church, Durban	Political violence. Royal Family conflict. Pastoral work. Peace Making programme. KNCF report.	Political violence and allegations from Chief Buthelezi. Need for peace in Royal Family. Seek to understand why the NCLG were sympathetic to the King and his family.
98	28/03/96	17+ 2 loc vis (9 apol)	The Anglican Cathedral, Eshowe, Zululand	State of the KNCF. Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). Think Tank. Evaluation of 1995. HIV/AIDS and the Church.	Decline in funding was noted. Involvement in the TRC. More churches joined group in 1995. SACC cleansing service. Make use of points in the evaluation report.
99	18/04/96	11 3 vis (6 apol)	All Saints Anglican Church, Ladysmith	Peace Action. Violence in Estcourt. Local Government Elections. TRC workshop. Domestic violence and the KNCLG.	Relationship between political violence and domestic violence. Role of the clergy in both. Dress code for election day as peace campaign.
100	21/05/96	55	Side Hall, Estcourt	Joint peace meeting. Role of the Church. Role of the political parties. Way forward after the meeting. IFP and ANC clashes still going on.	Estcourt remained affected by political violence. Example of team effort. See register for identity of attendants.
101	20/06/96	19 (8 apol)	Musgrave Road, Methodist Church, Durban	Election plans. Peace Initiatives. Project Ukuthula. Area reports on political violence. KNCLG Mission Statement update. Cleansing service organised by SACC. Report by Ecumenical Peacemakers' Programme (EPP) 04/06/96.	Political violence was anticipated in Local Government Elections. Link between KNCLG and Project Ukuthula. EPP report needs further scrutiny.
102	05/09/96	16 (9 apol)	Cathedral of the Holy Nativity, Pietermar itzburg	Evaluation of election strategies. Project Ukuthula, Post election situation. TRC Seven Days War hearings in Pietermaritzburg.	Careful follow-up needed on issues raised. KNCLG and the TRC. Political tolerance still to be achieved. Investigate the effectiveness of Project Ukuthula through interviews.
103	14/11/96	18 10 apol	Koinonia Conferenc e Centre	Evaluation of the KNCLG since its formation to date. Report of the Peace Committee. TRC, Area reports. Prayer Summit Day. Finances 1996.	KNLG self-evaluation was important. Need for counselling of TRC participants. Issues are summarised but detailed. KNCLG beyond 1996.

NOTES

KEY TO ATTENDANCE

Abs.....absentees

Apol.....apologies

Deleg.....Delegation

Int Vis.....International Visitors

Loc vis.....local visitors

Reps.....Representatives

Vis.....visitors whose identity was not specified

SUMMARY OF MEETINGS BY YEAR

YEAR	NUMBER OF MEETINGS
1988	3
1989	8
1990	18
1991	13
1992	14
1993	16
1994	14
1995	10
1996	7
TOTAL	103

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