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Lynton Road,  
KLOOF,  
Natal.

25th January, 1957

The Archbishop of Capetown,  
CAPE TOWN.

My dear Archbishop,

I beg to approach you in my capacity as National Chairman of the Liberal Party of South Africa on a matter which I believe is of great importance to our country.

You will know that the Interdenominational African Ministers' Federation (IDAMF) had a Conference in Bloemfontein in October 1956, and issued a call for another Conference more widely representative of South Africa, to discuss the question of our future, and those problems which seem so difficult of solution. The Conference also issued a noteworthy report, dignified in language uncompromising on principle, conciliatory in tone. To many of us who had observed with anxiety the growing estrangement between white and non-white, the report seemed hopeful and important, and there seemed to be a grave duty laid upon us to support IDAMF in its suggestion that a wider conference be called.

You may remember a passage of the report which read as follows:-

"This Conference does not subscribe to the view that the choice before South Africa consists only of the two cast-iron alternatives, viz: "Ultimate complete integration" or Ultimate complete separation between European and Bantu". Conference maintains that a proper reading of the South African situation calls for cooperation and inter-dependence between the various races comprising the South African Nation, and denies that this arrangement would constitute a threat to the survival of the White man in South Africa."

The Liberal Party, while wishing to respond wholeheartedly to the call of the Conference, did not wish itself or any other political or non-political body to be too prominently associated with its organisation. We therefore suggested to IDAMF that it should approach other leading Christian organisations to help it



in organising the conference, and that political and semi-political bodies should not play any prominent part in this field. Nevertheless, we offered to IDAMF all the support we were able to give.

Since October the entire scene has changed. Some of those on whose advice IDAMF would have leaned, notably Chief Luthuli and Professor Matthews, have been arrested on charges of high treason, and are no longer able to lend IDAMF their full support. We ourselves sent Mr. Patrick Duncan, our National Organiser, to see the Rev. Z.R. Mahabane, to reiterate our offer of help, because we were afraid that IDAMF might drop the whole project in despair. It now seems possible that this might happen.

Mr. Mahabane still hopes for the support of the Christian Council, and he told Mr. Duncan that without its help, he would find it difficult to go on. But he would still be willing to proceed if he could have the support of prominent Church leaders, such as Your Grace.

I am convinced, your Grace, that your offer of help would be of great value at this stage. There is no Christian leader in the country who so commands the esteem of non-white people, or whose offer of help would give such immediate encouragement. Therefore I am writing to ask whether you would feel able to make one, and if so, whether you would write as soon as possible to Mr. Mahabane, and promise him your encouragement and support. His address is:- Rev. Z.R. Mahabane, Methodist Church, The Location, Brandfort, O.F.S.

In the meantime I am writing to Rev. Arthur Blaxall and urging him to use his full influence to bring in the Christian Council. It would I think be calamitous if the conference were not held. This may not be the last chance, but it is certainly one of a dwindling number of chances.

I hope and pray that you will be able to accede to this request.

Yours with filial respect,

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