



**A NEW DAY DAWNS FOR AFRICA AND AFRICANS
IN DIASPORA:
THE LARGEST AFRICAN-AMERICAN RELIGIOUS BODY
IN THE USA CONSIDERS NEW POSSIBILITIES
*THE NATIONAL BAPTIST CONVENTION USA, INC. AND
CHURCHES THROUGHOUT THE WORLD***

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“We welcome our African-American brothers and sisters said the Rev. Dr. Frank Chikane, Chief of Staff to the President of South Africa. We are eager to know your concerns and experiences of the last 14days. Your views can help assist us.” The Rev. Dr. William J. Shaw, President of the National Baptist Convention USA, Inc. welcomed the invitation and the substantive dialogue that followed about the increasing role the South African government and the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) are playing on the global stage.

With national church bodies throughout Africa, the AACC is a continental wide body that seeks to create a forum/instrument for churches to organize the churches,” said Bishop Mvume Dandala, AACC General Secretary. The delegation had opportunity to meet with the General Secretary and related staff of the AACC and their partners that include: Church World Service, Christian Organizations Research and Advisory Trust of Africa (CORAT), Programme for Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa (PROCMURA), EHHIA (HIV-Aids Program) and FECCCAHA (Regional Body of Christian Fellowship). The issues of HIV-AIDS, Christian-Muslim relation in an increasing multi-faith environment in Africa, conflict resolution and peacemaking, good governance as well as church and community empowerment.

This chorus of concerns was also affirmed in the context of South Africa. Mr. Eddie Makue, General Secretary of the South African Council of Churches (SACC) provided an historical perspective of the role of the South African Council of Churches in the anti-apartheid struggle and its role today. He pointed out the important role of leadership of past General Secretaries such as Archbishop Desmond Tutu, the Rev. Dr. Frank Chikane, and Dr. Brigalia Bam. Many youth and church leaders are serving the South African government as well as in business and civil society. There is, however, a major concern about the youth in the country. Unemployment is widespread and crime is well known. The delegation was invited to further pursue this discussion with another

delegation visiting the SACC, church leaders from Congo, and the Executive Committee of SACC at luncheon, reception and dinner.

During a meeting with the Rev. Dr. Chikane and the Minister to the President and Deputy President of South Africa at the National Union Building of the President, there was an invitation to reconsider how Africans and Africans in Diaspora can engage a more systematic approach to building up Africa in the 21st century. He made mention of a host of consultations in the Americas and Africa seeking to address this. Dr. Chikane affirmed South Africa's concern to be economically self-reliant and made mention of South Africa's refusal to receive assistance from International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. To date, they have not only been able to sustain their own economic base but are projecting a surplus that will fuel job creation.

The delegation also met with officials at the Embassy of the United States of America in South Africa. Officials shared the role of the Embassy in South Africa and indicated their concern for two South Africas: 1) A South Africa with the same kind of access and privilege one would find in the USA; 2) A South Africa with widespread unemployment especially among the youth, high incidences of HIV-AIDS, remaining vestiges of apartheid, sustained social development and poverty. The delegation witnessed this firsthand in Soweto. They took time to visit and have prayer in one of the homes and neighborhoods. They also prayed prayers of remembrance and thanksgiving for the precious lives of South African youth that were gunned down by the police in South Africa on June 16th, 1976. They visited the Hector Pieterse Museum and Memorial in honor of the youth, ages 13-17. The delegation also visited the old home of Nelson Mandela and passed by the home of Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Winnie Mandela. They visited the Apartheid Museum and the renowned Wandies for lunch.

The delegation looks forward to further systematic considerations and future partnerships that can be initiated and deepened from this global visit. The delegation has been moved by the host of invitations and hospitality extended to them. The delegation is and will be prayerfully reflecting on its response and official proposals about how to systematically address its global church future in the 21st century. The delegation gives thanks to God and their hosts for a most informative and inspiring encounter that will have a long-term affect on the life of the National Baptist Convention USA, Inc. and its members. Much is expected in light of the delegation's visits as the delegation moves back home to the USA. The founding of the "Convention" was rooted in its concern for our African brothers and sisters and thus this has been a historic concern.

Official Delegation of the National Baptist Convention USA, Inc. Ecumenical Journey:

- **The Rev. Dr. William J. Shaw, President of the National Baptist Convention USA, Inc. (HEAD OF CHURCH) and Pastor, White Rock Baptist Church, Philadelphia, PA.**

- **The Rev. Dr. Angelique Walker-Smith**, the Convention's Ecumenical representative and the Executive Director of The Church Federation of Indianapolis (Facilitator/Organizer of the Ecumenical Journey)
- **The Reverend Dr. Harry Blake**, General Secretary of the National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc.
- **Dr. Hugh Dell Gatewood**, President of the Woman's Auxiliary of the National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc.
- **Dr. Kenneth Lyons**, President of the Moderator's Department of the National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc.
- **Mrs. Sallie Titus**, President of the Ushers and Nurses Auxiliary of the National Baptist Convention
- **The Reverend Alvin Love**, State President of the Baptist General Convention of Illinois and Chairman of the TOPIC Technology Ministry of the Convention
- **The Reverend Dr. Randy Vaughn**, President of the Texas Baptist State Convention, Regional Vice President, Congress of Christian Education
- **The Reverend Dr. John Ringgold**, Pastor of the Bethel Baptist Church, San Diego, CA
- **Mrs. John Ringgold**, First Lady of the Bethel Baptist Church
- **Mrs. Vanessa Tavares**, President of the Women Mission Union of the White Rock Baptist Church, Philadelphia, PA
- **Mrs. Jeanette Cooper**, member of the Board of Trustees of the White Rock Baptist Church, Philadelphia, PA.

ITINERARY HIGHLIGHTS:

April 22-24: Visit at World Council of Churches, Bossey Institute (University of Geneva), Orthodox Institute in Chambèsy, United Nation High Commission of Refugees.

April 24-26 Vatican City: Papal Audience, Pontifical Council on Christian Unity, Pontifical Council on Interreligious Concerns.

April 27-29: South Africa: Vice Chancellor's Residence of the University of South Africa, Site of the Children's/Youth Massacre on June 16, 1976 @ Hector Pieterse Museum, Anti-Apartheid Museum.

April 29-May 2: Nairobi, Kenya: All Africa Conference of Churches, Africa Union, Kenyan Baptist Convention, Church World Service, Sudanese Refugees (Darfur Genocide).

May 3-4: South Africa: Chief of Staff of the President of South Africa, USA Embassy visit, Electoral Commissioner for South Africa, South African Council of Churches.