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**UPDATE**



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**October 2022**

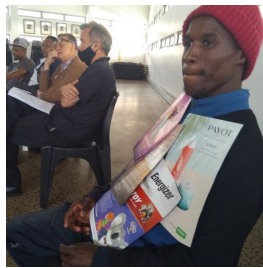
*Happy Diwali* for our Hindu readers

**New Trustees for the Board**

**Tribute to Albert Nolan**

**Understanding Jewish traditions**

**Praying for the Dept of Home Affairs**



**We mourn a great theologian**

**Varied training sessions for our staff**

**The importance of an ID in South Africa**

**NEW TRUSTEES FOR THE DHC BOARD**

The Denis Hurley Centre is set up as an Independent Trust overseen by a Board of up to 12 Trustees. Three of these are specific appointments, reflecting the especially close relationship we have with the Catholic community: the Administrator (Dean) of the Cathedral, a representative from the Cathedral Parish Council (PPC), and a representative of the Archbishop of Durban. The other Trustees are general appointments elected by the existing Trustees. We have always tried to ensure that we have a good mix in terms of the cultural and religious backgrounds of our Trustees while also accessing specific skills that we need.

In recent years, we have seen two of our longest-standing Trustees retire: Bishop Emeritus Rubin Phillip (who stays on as a Patron) and Hester Joseph (who has been a Trustee since 2012). Plus we are about to lose Siphon Phakathi who has been our Treasurer since the Trust started in 2010: he definitely deserves time off!

We are thus delighted to announce that we have six new Trustees joining the six who are continuing. One is a specific appointment since the PPC have nominated Hlonie Mthethwa as their representative. She is a forensic auditor working for SARS with qualifications from DUT and UKZN and has been a 'Cathedralite' for a number of years. She replaces Nomfundo Dlamini and we want to acknowledge the five years of excellent service Nomfundo has given. One of the new general Trustees was in fact Nomfundo's predecessor: Nondumiso Shangase. Though a 'Doctor' (she just received her PhD from

UKZN), Nondumiso is actually a nurse and indeed vice-principal of KZN College of Nursing.

Also joining are one other woman (Dr Farida Patel) and three men. Farida is a retired teacher and the current Chair of Lifeline. She is of mixed Hindu and Muslim parentage and with a strong Christian education. Fanie Nothnagel is a member of Grace Family Church and a Chartered Accountant with a passion for development work. He has experience helping NPOs with their financial management, both in South Africa and in Europe. Dr Jairam Reddy is a well-known figure in Durban circles having been Vice-Chancellor of UDW as it merged to help create UKZN. He has also held a number of positions in, and received honorary doctorates from, universities in the UK, USA, Canada, Japan, Jordan and Australia. He has been an advisor to the South African Government and to various UN bodies.

And our last new Trustee is virtually a member of the family since Arn de Haas is the husband of Paddy's niece, Ursula. He is currently Managing Director of Mr Price Sport and has been COO of Mr Price Group. He will take over as Treasurer in due course.

We are immensely grateful that people of such talent and experience are willing to serve us as Trustees and reassure them of the prayers of our readers from across the faith traditions.

*Trustees pictured in the top row: Nondumiso Shangase, Arn de Haas and Hlonie Mthethwa; in the second row: Farida Pillay, Fanie Nothnagel and Jairam Reddy.*



### **ALBERT NOLAN (1934-2022)**

We were saddened to hear of the passing on 17 October of a truly extraordinary man, honoured by Church and State and mourned across the world. Albert Nolan was probably the South African theologian who had more influence on Archbishop Hurley and Paddy Kearney than any other. His ground-breaking 'Jesus Before Christianity' in 1976 challenged readers to peel back the historic layers of Greek and Roman interpretations of Jesus and return to the original figure presented in the Gospels. It was – and remains – an eye-opener for Christians and a bridge to help non-Christians find a connection.

Albert's role in the Struggle has been well documented in the many obituaries and public tributes. He was key to the drafting and signing of the 1985 'Kairos Document' and its 1989 follow-up 'Road to Damascus' which prompted Church leaders to get off the fence about Apartheid. These political statements only made sense because they drew on the deep incarnational theology he expressed, for example in his 1988 'God in South Africa' and more recently in the 2006 'Jesus today – a spirituality of radical freedom'.

When, in 2005, Paddy posthumously published +Hurley's memoirs of the Second Vatican Council, it is not surprising that Albert was asked to write the preface. He described Hurley as 'a giant in the Church and in Society – but not only in South Africa and not only in the Catholic Church'. And he then offered this caution:

"We do not want to be people who live in the past and who remain nostalgic about past events. The challenges we confront are here and now. But we are certain to flounder and to repeat the mistakes of the past, unless we know and appreciate what has gone before us."

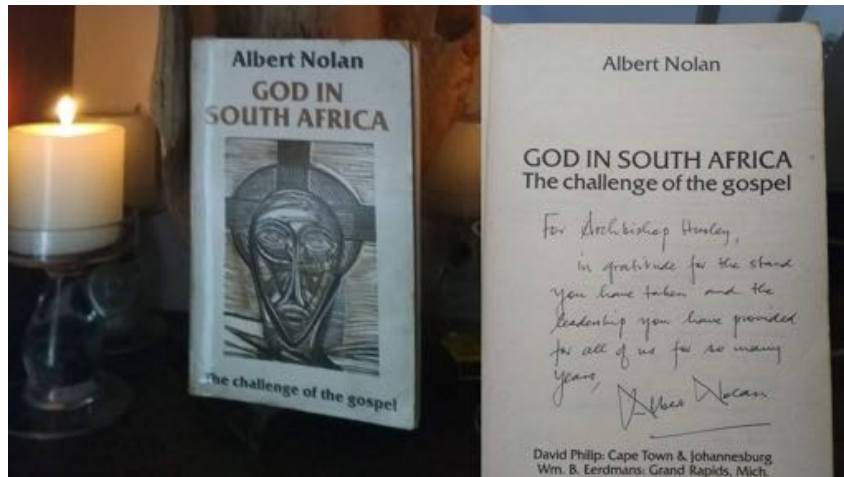
Albert's stance against Apartheid, and his huge reputation around the world, meant that the Special Branch had him on their watch list. For example, Paddy recalls that when he was kept in detention his interrogators specifically asked for information about Albert. In conducting research for a PhD about

Paddy, our Director recently interviewed Albert and gleaned a story about him which has not previously been published.

It seems that the Calvinist Nationalist Government did not understand that, in Albert's generation, when people joined Catholic religious orders they took a new name: so while the police were anxiously searching for 'Albert Nolan' at checkpoints and borders, he could innocently hand over his documents because they still showed him listed by his birth name: 'Denis'!

We are sure that +Denis, Paddy and now Albert (aka Denis Nolan) are reunited in heaven laughing over such incidents. But also that they are watching us, and encouraging us, not to 'repeat the mistakes of the past'. We offer our deepest sympathy to all who mourn him especially his Dominican brothers.

*The photograph shows the copy of 'God in South Africa' that Albert dedicated to Archbishop Hurley and - thanks to the keen eye of Ikes Bookshop - has now come into our hands.*



## **BROADENING THE MINDS AND EXPERIENCES OF OUR STAFF**

Nolan's 'Jesus Before Christianity' came out a few years after an equally ground-breaking book, 'Jesus the Jew' (written by Geza Vermes in 1973). Whilst subconsciously aware of the Jewish religious heritage of Jesus of Nazareth and all the early disciples, it is perhaps something that most Christians do not fully appreciate. As part of our monthly 'First Thursday' learning sessions for staff, we were thus delighted recently to welcome a group of young Jewish people who could talk about their faith.

The eight are part of an international Israeli volunteering programme called Project TEN. Their Durban cohort has returned after the disruption of COVID and we were able to give them a tour recently not only of the DHC, but also of the Cathedral and the Mosque. For some of them this was especially insightful given how difficult it would be for them to visit a mosque in Israel.

An informal session was then offered for members of our staff and volunteer teams - most of them Christian but from a wide range of denominations - to sit down in small groups and hear about Judaism. This was soon after the 'high holy days' of Rosh Hashanah (new year) and Yom Kippur (the day of atonement) and it was interesting to compare different customs of celebrating, praying and fasting. Most of our staff had never met a Jewish person before so they had lots of questions. They were particularly interested to note the parallels between Jewish customs and some of the religious practices of the Shembe and the Zion Christian Church.

In turn, our visitors could ask about Christian beliefs and have some of their misunderstandings clarified. A fervent monotheistic Christian will always struggle to explain the Trinity to an equally fervent monotheistic Jew - but at least we clarified that the three persons are not 'the Father, the Son and the Mother'!

Young, skilled, enthusiastic volunteers are always welcome at the DHC. Some of our previous 'First Thursday' staff sessions have been led by the UKZN Occupational Therapy students (example pictured above); throughout the year they have also been working with our booksellers and the children in our crèche. We have written before about the work done by law students from UKZN and trainee homeopaths and chiropractors from DUT. We continue to benefit from Social Work interns (UKZN and UNISA) and also home-based care students from Abafundi. Many thanks to the students - and the faculty - who make such a difference for the people who come to the DHC.

*Photo: Our Israeli visitors met up at the Cathedral with some American students (from the School for International Training) also doing an internship*



### **PRAYING FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF HOME AFFAIRS**

Stuart Talbot, our empowerment officer, has seen some strange sights in his time. But even he was taken aback when a man in his office got on his knees and started praising God. It was because Lucas Ndlovu had just received an ID!

Readers who reside in South Africa know how important an ID is to life here: you need it to open a bank account, drive a car, book a bus ticket, apply for a job, or get paid legally. More significantly, a whole host of Government services to which you are entitled are not accessible if you do not have an ID – grants for children, the disabled and the elderly; primary healthcare and non-emergency treatment in a hospital; voting in an election; even sitting a Government exam. Initially, access to a free COVID vaccine required an ID (or passport) until the Department of Health realised that this would not work and so made a special provision for undocumented people, piloted with the DHC since we drew the problem to their attention.

The Department of Home Affairs which issues IDs thus holds the key to large parts of life. One would hope that they understand the huge moral responsibility that has been entrusted to them.

We know from research that 50% of homeless people in Durban – almost all of whom are South Africans – do not have an ID. In some cases, they were lost; in many cases, they were stolen or destroyed when the police raided their possessions; in a few cases, they have never had one. The hard lockdown in 2020 thus seemed like a perfect opportunity to remedy this gap in their human rights. At the request of the Municipality, we patiently collated the details of more than 700 homeless people staying in emergency camps who needed IDs. Home Affairs offices were closed to the public but the staff were still being paid: now was a perfect opportunity quickly and efficiently to provide IDs. We even raised the R100,000 to pay for them since Home Affairs would not waive the usual charge of R140 for a replacement. But at the end of the 4-month period, at most 100 IDs were issued!

But we have soldiered on: we have a staff member who spends an inordinate amount of time liaising with our local Home Affairs office; we have used the



services of law students to pre-collect information to make the process smoother; we have had people waiting in queues from 3am so they will get seen. And, if we are really lucky, we might get between 10 and 20 back each month. And now – in a claimed attempt to make the process more streamlined – there will be no queuing outside offices and instead you can book an appointment on line. Our social worker – keen to get the ID sorted for a desperately disabled person so he can access a grant – was recently offered an appointment but in 6 weeks' time and 120 km away!

We know that there are many people of faith working in Home Affairs – on the ground and at the very highest levels. Their religious convictions tell them they will be judged on how they treat others, especially the most vulnerable in the community.

Lucas was on his knees giving thanks to God. But he was probably praying that Home Affairs might actually deliver on the life-changing task they have been given; or perhaps he was praying that God will show mercy to those who refuse to adapt their systems to help people in need.

*Photo: Lucas praying in Stuart's office!*



**In November, it is the Catholic tradition to remember those who have died and, as usual we will be holding a special memorial Mass on 30 November for deceased staff, service users and benefactors. If you would like someone you have lost to be remembered at that Mass, please email us their name by 28 November.**

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