

NATIONAL INITIATIVE FOR REFORMATION OF SOUTH AFRICA

NIRSA

A CHRISTIAN COALITION FOR NATIONAL RENEWAL AND INTEGRITY

DECLARATION OF INTENT



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National Initiative for the Reformation of South Africa (NIRSA)

DECLARATION OF INTENT

1st Edition

We, the 450 participants in the National Initiative for the Reformation of South Africa, meeting on April 22 - 23, 2008 at the Birchwood Conference Centre in Boksburg, Ekurhuleni, representing different areas of leadership in all domains of South African national life, hereby declare afresh our commitment to Jesus Christ as Lord, Saviour and Coming King. We reaffirm our confidence in the Bible as the inspired Word of God and as our supreme authority in all matters of life and faith. (CF. 2 TIMOTHY 3: 16 -17). Said Jesus: "The Scripture cannot be broken." (CF. JOHN 10:35).

We have come together with great urgency at a mere few weeks' notice, and sometimes a few days', out of deep concern for the grave state of South African society to seek God's way forward for us as members both of the Body of Christ and of our nation. We acknowledged and felt constrained as we met in the spirit of Jehoshaphat to pray: "We are powerless... we don't know what to do...but our eyes are upon Thee." (2 CHRONICLES 20:12). We sought to submit ourselves to Almighty God and to the rule of God's ways and Kingdom.

We have celebrated the power and sovereignty of our God in both creation and history. We have sought to see His face afresh and to turn our eyes upon Jesus. We have come afresh to the foot of the Cross and this has humbled us and brought us to a new place of repentance for our sins, whether personal, church or national. It has also led us to see in new ways that our sins, failures and disunities as Christians have diminished our authority to speak prophetically with one voice to either the nation or the government. We have sought to repent of this. We seek in the light of God's mercy and forgiveness to move forward humbly, positively, and with ongoing repentance both as a NIRSA fellowship, a network of committed believers, and as an informal Christian coalition committed to the reformation of South Africa. We thank God for a rebirth of hope, faith, confidence and renewed vision of what our nation can be under God. And we worship and praise Him for who He is.

Acknowledging the foundations laid by past and present Christian initiatives, building on those foundations and committed to strengthening existing initiatives without compromise for God's standards and Word, we issue a prophetic and urgent call to Church, Government and Society at large,

- to apply themselves with all diligence to the reformation and renewal of South African society
- to commit themselves to finding effective solutions to community and national problems
- to apply themselves with intentionality to more effective nation building.

Accordingly, together and from within our various churches, organizations, associations, groupings and work places, and in order to achieve the kind of reformation God covets for this nation:

1. We resolve to remain prayerfully committed to one another for the journey forward.
2. We resolve to renew our commitment to prayer for our country and its leaders and to support both current and new prayer initiatives in our land which call on God for a revival which manifests both personal conversion and societal transformation..
3. We resolve in new ways to obey the Great Commission of preaching the Gospel to all and making disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:18 - 20). This will call for a rolling out all across our land of new initiatives of:
 - Evangelism which stresses the new birth in Christ through repentance, faith and conversion, along with the Person and Work of the Holy Spirit
 - Bible reading,
 - Bible teaching,
 - Discipleship focused on our role and responsibility as Christians to be a reforming societal presence in our community and nation.
4. We resolve to continue to work within and between different sectors of the Body of Christ towards unity, thereby focusing on what unites us, while continuing to dialogue respectfully and in humble submission to God and His Word about the things on which we disagree. We believe, as Christians, that if we are not concerned for the growth and well being of all the churches in our area and beyond, we know little of the Spirit of God.

5. We resolve to strengthen the hand of biblically committed theologians and call on all such to come together in conferences and consultations to explore how, from a biblical worldview, to undergird theologically the new initiatives and understandings which need to be released into the Body of Christ to maximize the effectiveness of its witness in these times.
6. We resolve to call on all, especially leaders, in church, state and society with God's help to lead exemplary lives of moral purity, financial integrity and family stability so that our nation may have a secure moral foundation and that the younger generation may have sound and godly role models on which to build their own lives and the SA of the future.
7. We resolve to affirm to one and all that both the Bible and history conclude that nations without solid family units providing a safe, loving, nurturing environment are no longer sustainable and in imminent danger of demise. Therefore we affirm the sacredness of marriage between one man and one woman and the biblical ideal of fathers and mothers in binding covenants of intimacy and faithfulness, raising children with love, security, respect, trust and understanding.
8. We resolve to hold faithfulness in marriage and sexual abstinence before marriage as the only effective way to stop the HIV and AIDS genocide of the human race and to terminate sexual violence. We note further that the Bible holds men primarily responsible for upholding these virtues.
9. We resolve to support current and new initiatives out of the church in tackling and eliminating the HIV/Aids pandemic.
10. We resolve to call on all fathers in our nation to commit to the high biblical responsibility to care for, lead, listen, and give sacrificial time to both their daughters and sons.
11. We resolve to honour all mothers in their sacrificial roll and celebrate the increasingly significant roles generally of women in society. As a corollary we resolve to condemn and oppose all forms of sexism and gender - based violence along with the devaluation and diminishing of women.
12. We resolve to affirm with new dedication and seriousness the sanctity of life, especially for the unborn and the elderly. Beyond that we deplore and condemn the cheapening and trivialisation of life manifest in so many of the crimes so callously committed daily in our country.

13. We resolve to explore how the church, along with the government and appropriate NGO's can embrace in a new way the huge challenges before our nation of dealing with the poor, marginalised and destitute, most especially orphans, widows and refugees. One logical extension of this concern is for Christian couples to be open in new ways to adopting orphans.
14. We resolve to move forward with the current and where necessary expanded NIRSA leadership, which includes the Advisory Council and the Executive, to develop and maintain the current and already established NIRSA informal coalition and networks. We will seek to make known the many initiatives of every sort currently in place which are supportive of the NIRSA resolutions. Where appropriate we will encourage the linking of some of these projects to existing government programmes of action. The benefit of such is to give people immediate inspiration and opportunity to find a way to get involved.
15. We resolve to develop a NIRSA communications desk that conveys reactions and interactions that are Christian in world - view and biblically based to unfolding issues and developments in our country and region.
16. We resolve to develop NIRSA think tanks and working groups which will operate out of a biblical worldview and which will work with similar existing groups. The purpose would be to grapple with biblical positions, values and principles relating to issues arising in all sectors of society.
17. We resolve to communicate by assorted NIRSA delegations our national concerns to:
 - a.) The President and Deputy President of South Africa
 - b.) The heads of South Africa's political parties
 - c.) The Chief Justice and Justices of the Constitutional Court
 - d.) The leadership of the church in South Africa as well as their related associations, such as SA Council of Churches, The Evangelical Alliance of SA (TEASA), SA Christian Leadership Assembly (SACLA), and others.

In all this we would be seeking to listen, build bridges, understand the issues and burdens all these leaders are carrying, and discover how we, the wider Body of Christ, may help them build this nation.

18. We resolve, via assorted NIRSA delegations, to visit Cabinet Ministers and relevant portfolio committees to lobby for the application of biblical principles to current

and future issues in all sectors of life. We would seek to come in humility and encouragement and acknowledging the complexity of systemic cause and effect realities to many of these issues. For example, we would hope to see the Ministers of:

- **Education** (e.g. Re: Biblical sexuality, religious education and moral instruction, as well as encouraging parents and educators to operate in partnership to give children an excellent education within a biblical framework along with adequate life skills to prepare them for responsible adulthood.)
 - **Health** (e.g. Re: Properly trained and remunerated medical staff with a respect for the dignity and welfare of those in need of health care; Infant mortality; the sanctity of life - especially the unborn and the elderly; responsible stewardship of existing medical facilities and equipment in both hospitals and clinics.)
 - **Housing** (e.g. Re: The Biblical ideal of every family having their own home; to ensure sufficient land is available for new housing, and to hold government accountable in this regard.)
 - **Land Affairs** (e.g. Re: Responsible and just management of the land reform process. See also Clause 36.)
 - **Safety and Security** (e.g. Re: Upholding the rule of law; adequate protection of citizens.) While holding the minister to account we must do this in a spirit of service demonstrated both in supportive language as well as participating in community forums and initiatives to help fight this scourge.
 - **Justice and the Judiciary** (e.g. Re: In particular to have legal authorities register our resolve to be heard in the Constitutional Court and to endeavour to assist the court in the amicus curiae capacity whenever we believe it to be appropriate; severe sentences to be passed on public officials involved in corruption or any criminal offences; ensuring the law does not favour the criminal over the victim while acknowledging and protecting the rights of both, and that the judiciary dispenses justice without prejudice or favour, ensuring adequate protection for witnesses.)
 - **Environment Affairs** (e.g. Re: Conveying the Biblical understanding of ecology, stewardship of the environment and responsible dominion over creation. See also Clause 37.)
 - **And others as may arise**
19. We resolve to call on public servants to fulfil their roles as servants of both God and the State and within the framework of the law do their jobs with integrity and in obedience to God. This could be facilitated in a series of workshops and / or consultations.

20. We resolve to protect and advance our democracy by encouraging every citizen to engage in the affairs of this nation and to hold government and public officials accountable to the people. We therefore support any initiative that increases voter registration and voter participation in local and national elections, and urge all citizens to make their voting responsible, informed and based on an understanding of the issues and we encourage Christians in all political parties to bear faithful witness.
21. We resolve to celebrate freedom of the press as an essential pillar of any just society, and to encourage, support and strengthen all media professionals, especially Christians, in whatever medium, to influence with ever greater effectiveness all programming and messages, and to publicise and communicate the good done by Christians and all South Africans. We encourage all media to be fair, balanced and objective in their reporting.
22. We resolve to support and to agree with the basic fundamentals of credible journalism that purpose to communicate truth with integrity, while exposing corruption, championing justice and communicating hope.
23. We resolve to acknowledge the need for a biblical foundation for an economic system that works for the prosperity of all in society and the economic sufficiency of every household.
24. We resolve to embrace and call for the highest standards of integrity and biblical ethics in all areas, especially in business practice, first within the Christian community and then in the broader society, thereby ensuring that the economy is built on a morally trustworthy foundation. And we will embrace any initiative which promotes and furthers these aims.
25. We resolve to motivate and encourage entrepreneurs and business people to impact the market place by founding enterprises, creating wealth and employment, and by living with integrity and generosity. Accordingly, we urge business leaders, starting with the Christian ones, to convene a major summit and consultation on job creation and the eradication of poverty.
26. We resolve to support any good governance initiatives that are true to biblical principles.
27. We resolve to call every citizen, Christian or not, to play their part in reducing crime and stopping violence by:

- Responding to cries for help,
 - Stepping forward as witnesses,
 - Reporting crime,
 - Participating in community self-watch programmes,
 - Supporting and encouraging neighbourhood, local and national initiatives such as Community Policing Forums, Police Reserves, Business against Crime etc.,
 - Supporting and serving the local police in prayer, encouragement, appreciation and other appropriate ways.
28. We resolve to call on all South Africans to seek out and expose systemic fraud, corruption and organized crime.
29. We resolve to support all housing initiatives that will effectively move us towards everyone living in a home in South Africa.
30. We resolve to encourage all pastors and church leaders to challenge and teach their membership what it means in biblical terms to be good citizens in this African context. We would hope to produce and identify helpful teaching and training material to facilitate this process.
31. We resolve to develop, empower and release servant - hearted leaders for all areas of society and accordingly will support and encourage all leadership development and training programmes that produce high quality leaders who will impact both this and the next generation.
32. We resolve to seek new and practical Christian obedience and discipleship at all levels in living out our citizenship and responsibilities positively in this land and region, with everybody “doing their bit”.
33. We resolve to encourage all young Christians and our extraordinary younger Christian leaders to apply themselves with all Christian diligence to making a real difference for Christ in this country. We celebrate the great thing God is doing amongst so many young people. We also urge on younger leaders a major NIRSA Youth consultation to look at the nation’s needs, challenges and opportunities from the young person’s perspective.
34. We resolve to urge on all Christian churches to look seriously at their racial composition, especially if they mainly comprise of one race group and to work with serious commitment to build integrated and non - racial churches.

35. We resolve to commit ourselves with new seriousness to the eradication of racialism in every area of our society and to condemn racism of any sort wherever it occurs.
36. We resolve to seek with integrity to examine what is involved spiritually, practically and economically to bring forth a just, godly, biblical, appropriate land reform and restitution process. Indeed, we believe all issues of restorative justice need to be tackled with intent and the application of Christian principles.
37. We resolve to encourage all endeavours, whether from individuals, NGO's, government, or society at large, and as part of our divinely assigned mandate to have dominion over creation, to be ecologically responsible and protect our God - given environment from exploitation and abuse. Human beings are guardians and stewards of nature and in the last analysis are not dealing with their own possessions but with God's. We are provisionally in charge but are not free to exploit. Our dominion is subsumed under God's.
38. We resolve to pray for other African nations in deep need and crisis (eg Zimbabwe) and to urge on them NIRSA - type gatherings and if need be, help them to organise such.

We determine to be a united prophetic church that is neither subservient to the state nor its master but its active conscience; a church that works with transparency, integrity and accountability to its own tenets and the God we proclaim; a church that is committed to discipling and releasing the body of believers to their full service of both God and society.

Having said all this, we want to declare that we will be persistent about our Christian role in this society, we will persevere in the face of opposition and we refuse to back down about our vision for a prosperous, safe, healthy and godly nation. To this, under our Lord Jesus Christ and with the help of His Spirit, we commit ourselves.

We likewise call on our Lord to bring forth His Word for us:

"Fear not... for the battle is not yours but God's... take your position, stand still, and see the victory of the Lord on your behalf." (2 Chronicles 20: 15, 17)

Finally, we remember with thanksgiving our Lord's words: "...without Me you can do nothing" (John 15:5) ... "All power in Heaven and on earth is committed to Me... and lo, I am with you always, even to the very end of the age." (Matthew 28: 18, 20)

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