



#### Beyers Naude-

Reverend Beyers Naude was born on 10 May 1915 in Roodepoort. Named after Christiaan Frederik Beyers, a Boer general who was close to his father, Jozua Naude, Beyers was one of eight children born to the family who were fully committed to the preservation of Afrikaner nationalism.

#### Education-

After matriculating from the Afrikaans Hoër Volksskool in Graaff-Reinet in the Eastern Cape in 1931, Beyers followed in his father's footsteps and enrolled to study Theology at the University of Stellenbosch where he received his degree in 1939. He also completed a Master's degree in languages during this time. At the age of 25 Beyers became the youngest member of the Broederbond, a secret society aimed at the promotion of Afrikaner nationalism. In September 1972, Beyers was awarded an honorary degree in Theology from Amsterdam's Free University and in 1974 received an honorary doctorate of law from the University of the Witwatersrand. He was also honoured with the Reinhold Niebuhr Award, an award that is bestowed for "steadfast and self-sacrificing service" in South Africa for his efforts for universal justice and peace.

#### Life, religion and politics-

In 1940 Beyers was appointed Assistant-Minister at the Dutch Reform Church (DRC) in Wellington, Cape Town. During this year he married Ilse Weder, the daughter of a Moravian missionary. Over the course of the next 20 years, Beyers ministered to various congregations across the country. Although he followed the political philosophy of the National Party, the Sharpeville Massacre of 1960 was a turning point for Beyers who had already begun to question the morality of apartheid after witnessing the destruction of Black family life under the South African migrant labour system. It was during this time Beyers experienced inner conflict regarding the church's support of apartheid and his own Christian principles. In 1961, Beyers became the acting moderator of the Southern Transvaal DRC synod despite his outspoken opposition of apartheid. In April of the same year he was appointed moderator. He was also the founder member of the Christian Institute, a non-racial inter faith organisation that provided humanitarian relief. He was also the editor of the Christian Institute's publication, Pro Veritate.

In 1963, Beyers was forced to resign as minister and his induction as an elder of the Parkhurst DRC in March 1965 caused upheaval in the church community. While addressing youth, he was harassed and forced out of the DRC building in Belgravia but continued in his position as Director of the Christian Institute until May 1965 when the Security Police raided the organisation's premises.

Naude was opposed to violence as a means of change and in 1972 he travelled to Europe where he delivered a sermon at Westminster Abbey, London becoming the first Afrikaans Theologian to be honoured in this way. He continued on to West Germany for talks with church leaders there. In September 1972 he was awarded an honorary doctorate in Theology by the Amsterdam's Free University for 'exceptional merit for the development of theological science'.

In 1973 Naudé refused to give evidence to the Schibusch Commission, a parliamentary Commission, which had been established to investigate the Christian Institute, the University Christian Movement, the National Union of South African students and the Institute of Race Relations.

In 1974 Beyers received an honorary doctorate of Law from the University of Witwatersrand and was also honoured with the Reinhold Niebuhr Award for 'steadfast and self-sacrificing services in South Africa for justice and peace'. His passport, which had been confiscated, was returned so that he could travel and receive the award at a ceremony in Chicago. On his return it was once again confiscated.

In October 1975 he was fined R50 or one month imprisonment for refusing to testify before the Schlegelbusch Commission and was arrested on 28 October 1976 for refusing to pay the fine. After spending the night in jail the DRC minister, Dr. Jan van Rooyen, paid the amount and he was released. In December 1975 Naudé was refused a passport to travel to London to address the Royal Institute of International Affairs; however his speech was presented in his absence.

In October 1977, Beyers and his Christian Institute were banned. Despite the continual persecution he established a ministry to counsel pastors. He was not allowed to leave his house, or speak to more than one person at a time but continued to speak to other anti-apartheid activists like Archbishop Desmond Tutu on a one to one basis.

Naudé was awarded a prize for reconciliation and development from the Swedish Free Church and an award from the Bruno Kreisky Foundation in recognition of his 'untiring work in race relations'. In February 1980 Naudé broke away from the DRC and was admitted to the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk (NGK) in Africa. His banning order was renewed for a further three years in 1980, but was eased allowing him to leave his home, but not the Johannesburg magisterial district. In June 1983 Dr. Naudé was awarded an honorary Doctorate from the University of Cape Town.

After seven years, Naudé's banning order was lifted in September 1984 and he immediately threw himself back into the struggle against apartheid. He succeeded Archbishop Tutu as the secretary-general of the South African Council of Churches in 1985. In 1987 he formed part of the Afrikaner group that met with ANC representatives in Senegal.

After hearing F W de Klerk's speech in 1994, declaring a new South Africa, he said 'Gee, at last! What I had dreamt, hoped and worked for is becoming a reality.'

The demise of apartheid and the move to democracy turned Naudé from pariah to hero. President Nelson Mandela called him a "living spring of hope for racial reconciliation" At his 80th birthday, Mandela said:

"His life is a shining beacon to all South Africans – both Black and White. It demonstrates what it means to rise above race, to be a true South African."

In June 1999, despite failing health, he opened the inauguration ceremony for President Thabo Mbeki. By the end of the same year he returned to his old congregation of Aasvoëlkop as worshipper.

In 2000 he signed the Declaration of Commitment by White South Africans, a public document that acknowledged that apartheid had damaged black South Africans. [

In 2001 Naudé was granted the freedom of the City of Johannesburg and one of its busiest roads was named after him.

Naudé's contribution in the fight against oppression in South Africa and his challenge to the establishment from which he came makes him one of the country's most courageous heroes.

Following his death at the age of 89 on 7 September 2004, Nelson Mandela eulogized Naudé as "a true humanitarian and a true son of Africa." Naudé's official state funeral on Saturday 18 September 2004 was attended by President Thabo Mbeki, other dignitaries, and high-ranking ANC officials. His ashes were scattered in the township of Alexandra.