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J.F. where you were born and perhaps locate for me a bit.

F.B. O.K. Well, I was born in the Northern Transvaal. My parents came out from Switzerland as missionaries to South Africa, in what was then the Swiss Mission in South Africa. It's the Reformed or Presbyterian Church of Switzerland that for over a hundred years now has been present in South Africa, and out of which grew this church of which I am the moderator - it's basically a black church.

J.F. What year were you born?

F.B. In 1934. Now, I consider it a privilege that I grew up in the area that I did and that I was brought up the way that I was brought up, because we lived in a mission station which was fairly isolated and so there were no whites on that mission station.

J.F. Whereabouts in the Northern Transvaal?

F.B. It was near Dzenine (072) - a place called Shillovan.

J.F. Shillovan?

F.B. S h i l l u v a n e. Now, my parents were there and there were one or two other - there was a nurse at the hospital and somebody helping out - kind of a parish assistant - a lady, and my parents.

It was a black community, so I grew up speaking French, which was my home language, and the local African language, which was Shangaan or Tsonga, to be more correct, to the extent that when I went to school in Pietersburg - I had to go there - there was no school for whites in the area. I always regret the fact that my parents didn't just put me in the local black school, but they were too sort of law abiding so they sent me to the nearest English medium school in the area, which was in Pietersburg, Northern Transvaal, and I had to go to the hostel there.

When I got there I couldn't speak English or Afrikaans, and I had to actually learn English and Afrikaans while I was at school, because my two languages were French and Tsonga.

Now, I say this because, for me, and as you know, many of the impressions on your life are made in the early years of your childhood.

That, in a sense, stamped me, in terms of my attitudes, in terms of the kind of relationships that I've built up with people, in terms of my values - that helped to create the very framework within which eventually I developed, because then going to school in a white set-up, it actually cut me off from the environment that I had known, and it was a strange environment for me.

Ultimately, when my parents were transferred to the city, in Pretoria - my father had to go and be a missionary there - I never - we didn't live in a black community any more.

F.B. We lived in a white suburb, and that became a very difficult thing because then the contact was really broken. While I was at school it - you know, at least I went home for the holidays and I met all my friends again and so on, but now this was a complete break.

J.F. How old were you then?

F.B. This was in 1946 - I was twelve. Now that was a traumatic experience because then, having lost that contact, not being able to live within the black community that I'd become accustomed to, because we were isolated in a white suburb - my father had to go out from the white suburb into the black townships, into the black areas to minister, and we simply stayed at home, went to school and so on, and we were no longer able to have that contact.

The whole set-up was artificial. I actually lost the language, and it was only much later I then went to university - Rhodes University in Grahamstown, where I did my two basic degrees, and it was only in later years, when I had to make a choice now, and I decided to go into the ministry.

Had to make a choice as to whether I was going to go into the white church - the Presbyterian Church, under whose auspices I had trained, or whether I was going back to my church, the church that I'd grown up in, but here I was, in effect, an alien in that church because I had had that period of alienation - of not being within that community.

And there was an experience that I had where I went back to one of our churches - a friend of mine was the chaplain to the students in a big institution, and he asked me just to conduct a service there, and that was the moment when I knew that this was where I belonged.

And the amazing thing was that when I finally was ordained, and I was the first white guy to be ordained in the black church. All the other white guys were sent, as missionaries, from overseas, and I refused.

They said : Well, we'll ordain you - come overseas, and we said : No, what for? I grew up in this church; it's my church; I know no other - this church will ordain me - even though they didn't train me, but they will ordain me.

So I was ordained, and when I began my ministry it's as if having - you know, being immersed back into the situation. All of a sudden the language came back. I'll never forget.

It was a most incredible experience, because I remember being received into the church by the then moderator, who's now the chief minister of Gaz Nkulu (121) who's a layman, Profession Samwisi (121) and before he got into politics, homeland politics, he was a very devout - devoted layman of our church, and he was the moderator at the time, and he said : No problems about the language - it's in his blood and it'll come out - and in fact, that's exactly what happened.

I remember one day being asked to say a prayer, and it's as if - you know, just like that, I suddenly found myself praying in

F.B. the language that I thought I had forgotten, and so I'm saying this to show that I - when I look back on this experience I realise that my roots were really within that community - a rural, ethnic, tribal community, if you like, but amongst the Tsonga people.

Now, the result of that has been - and I can look at certain incidents when I was at school, for example, where somehow I was always resisting the attitude of whites.

I'll give you one example of that. We were asked one day to write up some story in a class when I was at high school, and I wrote up a story about the iniquity of the Jacaranda Festival, which is celebrated in Pretoria every year in October when the Jacaranda blossoms come out, of spending so much money on that festival when there was one tap with thirty thousand people - one tap per three thousand people at Lady Selborne - a township which, at that time, had thirty thousand people.

So I said : You know, I've been into that township with my father, and I think it's an absolute scandal to think that the City Council of Pretoria, which was then responsible for Lady Selborne which was subsequently removed, should spend so much money on celebrating (the) blinking Jacaranda Festival and there are people - ten taps for that whole township.

Now, I wrote this, and I remember the teacher saying : You're writing on a political issue and you shouldn't be delving in political issues. I said : It's not a political issue - it's an issue of life - it's a fact.

That's just an example of the kind of things that I was concerned about, and I found myself somehow different from my white friends, not to say - and I don't want to claim that at all - that I've escaped the mentality of white people.

No white South African, however close his background may have been to that of the black people - no white South African can escape being stamped and marked by the racist mentality of South Africa. You just can't escape that, and I had to go through a whole lot of things in my life/to overcome that.
/in order.

Eventually, later on in life I began to feel very guilty, almost cursing God that he hadn't made me black because my feelings were more black than white, and yet here I had this damn white skin until I was confronted by blacks who said : Look, we can't stand your attitude - this kind of bending over backwards to accommodate us, because you are now renouncing your own humanity and if you do that, in fact, you are also renouncing ours, and we want to relate to a human being so don't apologise for being white.

Now these, perhaps, kind of experiences explain something of my background, of I believe the reason why, for example, in a black church. We've got no white membership in our church.

As a mission church, as a missionary society, it established a black church. The missionaries have now all gone.

F.B. There are four white families left, and they elected me by an overall majority - 81 votes to 86 when any one vote out of eighty six : Correction - eightyone votes out of eighty six, as their moderator - a white guy.

And when I said : Look, why - you know, the time has gone - for twenty years you've had black leadership in the church, and all of a sudden you want to choose a white guy. They were very angry with me.

They said : Because, if you say that then you are, in fact, a racist, and we've never accepted that you - you're one of the people who wasn't a racist. You're one of the people we felt you were really part of us, and here you are introducing a racist element.

So I said : O.K., I apologise for that - I was simply making you aware of the fact that, you know, the leadership, as far as I'm concerned should be in black hands. They said : No, we're not looking at that - we are a black church, yes, but we not looking at it that way.

Then I said : And why don't you give the opportunity to the younger generation? They said : You see, you still a racist because you want to tell us what is good for us.

So the fact, in other words, to me, was that I was fully accepted as part of them. I daresay that my three colleagues - other white guys - probably would not have been chosen.

Now, I'm not trying to say that to show that I'm better than they are. What I'm trying to say is that their background is totally different. They came from - well, one guy not quite - he was born and brought up in this country but he wasn't - he didn't have the privilege of the kind of background that I had. He was very much brought up in a white situation, and I think that this is what has helped me to understand what non racialism is all about.

That you no longer think in race categories, and they taught me that lesson. Here I was trying to sort of say : Look, you know. They said : No, we don't - we just see you as a person, as one of us. Now that, I think, is part of my background, which, ja - which I think what I've always said I consider a tremendous privilege. There's no merit. There's no merit in that.

It's just the way I was brought up and the way I grew up.

J.F. Are your parents still here in South Africa?

F.B. No, they've gone back. They retired, stayed in South Africa, became very frustrated because they just felt that having spent their lives amongst black people, having to retire in a white suburb, being cut off from the environment that they had had before.

It's not that they hadn't lived in white suburbs before but, because they no longer had the involvement of their work with the black community, they were now cut off from the black community and they couldn't stand that, and of course, they wanted to go back and see some of their relatives so they went back to Switzerland.

- J.F. And when you said the Presbyterian Church and my church - what's the name of it officially?
- F.B. My church - Evangelical Presbyterian Church.
- J.F. So the Evangelical is the different part of it - the other is the regular Presbyterian?
- F.B. Ja, it's the Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa. We used to be a Swiss mission in South Africa, then one of the missionaries said : Let's call it Tsonga Presbyterian Church, and we were very unhappy with that name because it actually gave it a tribal name, and I was the one who actually suggested that we should change the name - made a proposal to the church that we take the word Evangelical, because the roots - if you wanted to go back to the roots of the missionaries that came out, they came from an Evangelical tradition in the Swiss context, meaning Evangelical as against the state church.
- Not Evangelical the state of - in the sense of a kind of charismatic or...
- J.F. So you went to Rhodes - if I could just trace - and from Rhodes did you go directly where?
- F.B. I went then to - as chaplain of this very school where I'd had this kind of confirmation of the fact that this is where I belong - up in the Northern Transvaal near Louis Trichard at a place called Elam.
- J.F. Oh, Elam Mission.
- F.B. Ja.
- J.F. So you went - that's where your parents had sent you for boarding school?
- F.B. They'd sent me to Pietersburg in that area, ja.
- J.F. So why do you say Elam - Elam was where you had gone as a small child?
- F.B. No, we were staying at Shiluvane which is near Dzenine - went to school in Pietersburg, you see. In fact, you know, my mother gave birth to me at Elam Hospital, but went back home to Shiluvane because that was the hospital that everybody went to, and that's where I grew up.
- Then I went to school in Pietersburg, and when I was studying at Rhodes I had the opportunity of taking my fiancee, who didn't have this background that I have, to go and show her some of the places that I had grown up in or was familiar with in terms of my whole missionary background, and so we went to visit the school at Lamana, which is in the Elam area, and I was asked to take that service and, in fact, that was where I was appointed as my first charge in the ministry, as chaplain at the school at Lamana at Elam.
- J.F. How do you spell Lamana?

F.B. L e m a n a .

J.F. And what year was this that you went up there?

F.B. I went up there in 1959. I was ordained in November, '59 and started my ministry in October, '59, in fact.

J.F. And how long were you up at Elam?

F.B. And I was there until 1968. I had a year away on sabbatical. I went to the States and did another degree. I came back in '68. Then I was transferred to Pretoria, and I had two years in Pretoria, in fact, in the very house that my parents had been.

I told you after Shiluvane they were transferred to Pretoria, and it was the most frustrating two years of my life because, again I went through that experience that I'd gone through in my childhood, of being - living in a white suburb and working amongst black people - the total frustration.

I accepted it in the sense that I realised, well, black people have to commute every day from their homes into the white world because of the stupid laws in our country.

Here I am, forced to live in a white area and having to go into their areas, but in actual fact you could do very little during the week because they were all away, and it was a frustrating kind of ministry, because if you're not with people in their community, and you just come in - parachute into their situation at week-ends to be with them, it was so artificial, and only lasted two years, and then I was asked to go and teach at the theological seminary.

J.F. In?

F.B. In Alice - FEDSEM - Federal Theological Seminary, and so I became part of that whole traumatic time of the Federal Seminary, when we were finally expropriated. I started at the seminary in 1971, and 1974 we were expropriated....

J.F. What do you mean expropriated?

F.B. The government decided to take over the land and the buildings of the seminary under the pretext that they needed the land for the expansion of Fort Hare University. We knew that that was only a pretext - that the real reason was they didn't like the influence of the seminary on the students at Fort Hare, and regarded us as a kind of subversive element.

I mean, the students at Fort Hare were always at the seminary to hear all sorts of speakers who used to come from overseas, and it was the home base for many of the - I mean SASO had a very strong base at the theological seminary, Biko used to come there regularly, and I think that's basically the reason. They'll never admit to that but I mean it's true.

J.F. And so what happened in '74?

F.B. So then we - oh, there was a big debate about whether we should move or not. Some of us said : Look, we don't move - if they want to move us they must force us out - they've done that with the people. The members of our churches have taken a strong stand and said we will not move, and they've come

F.B. and they've forced removed them. Here we are as part of the institutional church who have condemned those things and we want to run away. Unfortunately, as very often in the church, the voice of caution is stronger than the voice - the more radical voice, and so they won the day and they said : No, we must go out with dignity and we'll go on a kind of great trek, and we moved to Untata in vans and caravans and lorries and so on with all our stuff, and we were kicked out by Matanzima.

J.F. Right away?

F.B. It didn't take too long. We got there in March, '75 and by July, '75 he'd already told us to pack our bags and go at the end of the year. In fact, he didn't tell us directly. He threatened the Anglican church, who had given us a kind of haven, and said : If you don't get rid of them we going to shut you down, so the bishop was made to tell us to go.

And then we moved at the end of the year, having established a kind of temporary campus in caravans and mobile units and so on, had to move again, dismantle all that, and we found a refuge in the lay ecumenical centre of Pietermaritzburg in Edendale, and from there we then negotiated and found a site in Umbale and rebuilt the seminary and I -

I left the seminary when I was called by Desmond Tutu to become a member of his staff at the S.A.C.C. in July, '79, so I was eight years at the seminary, and then went to work for the S.A.C.C., and I was there for two and a half years, and my church had elected me moderator and there was a difficulty in sort of being a member of the S.A.C.C. - a staff member and at the same time having to have the latitude and the flexibility of moving around as moderator.

So in a sense, you know - in one sense I was Tutu's boss and in another sense he was my boss, so I resigned from the S.A.C.C. in 1981 - at the end of '81.

J.R. And went?

F.B. And I stayed in Johannesburg. It was then that I was elected the secretary, with Boesak as chairman, of the Alliance of Black Reform Christians, which was the whole movement of the black Reform or Black Presbyterian Churches.

That was an interesting development because it was prior to Ottawa. Now Ottawa, as you remember, was the big get together of all the reformed churches, that issued that statement of apartheid being a heresy and suspended the membership of the two Dutch Reform Churches, after twenty years of negotiating with them to try and get them to change their ways, the moment came for us to suspend them.

Now that - much of the preparation for that - for that debate and/that resolution, was done already back home, and it was done by the black churches of the Dutch Reform Church and these mission churches - Rev. Finca - I think you interviewed him - he's a member of the Reform Presbyterian Church which is the mission work of the Church of Scotland, and there's another church - the Presbyterian Church of Africa, which was a break-away from that in revolt against those missionaries and their authoritarian kind of ways, so there's a kind of

/for.

F.B. balkanisation of the reformed or the Presbyterian tradition, either because of ideology, as in the case of the Dutch Reform Church where they willed separate churches, or for historical reasons because in the case of the so-called English speaking black churches because that's the way the missionaries came. Each one carved up a little piece of the land and started his own church, and the blacks became conscious that you cannot condemn apartheid and yet live in terms of the church within apartheid structures, and a meeting was called to look at this.

And that is where Boesak gave his famous address : Black and Reformed - is it a burden or a challenge, and that was the launching, in fact, of that alliance.

We didn't think that it would result in that but the people said, no, we need to keep together and we going to need to work towards overcoming these apartheid things, and the strange thing again, you see is it's the black Reformed Christians, and they elected me as a white man, because Boesak gave the definition of black as a matter of condition and not of colour.

J.F. Expand a little bit.

F.B. He said, and we adopted this as the definition of blackness, that, while it is recognised that the pigmentation of your skin, in terms of black people, means that you are the oppressed, the dispossessed, the unprivileged, the exploited, and while it is accepted that if you have a white pigmentation you are privileged and you have power and you have all the facilities and so on, nonetheless we also recognise that there are those who are black who have chosen to stand...

J.F. Who are white?

F.B. Who are white who have chosen to stand with blacks, and those who are black who have chosen to be on the side of the oppressor, and therefore ultimately blackness in our understanding of the term is not so much a matter of colour as a matter of condition or attitude.

J.F. So that's where you remain today?

F.B. So I'm still the secretary of Abrexin (376) and still moderator of my church because moderator's not a job, it's a function.

J.F. Abrexa is Alliance...

F.B. Of Black Reform Christians in Southern Africa.

J.F. O.K. - what was it like being at - just turn this over....

END OF SIDE ONE.

J.F. What was it like being there in the early '70's with all the challenges to whites and in some sense anti whitism and that kind of thing - did you experience that at all?

F.B. Yes, I did.

J.F. Did people say : Look, this non racialism idea is not what we...

F.B. Right (Over your last word) Yes, I went through that. In fact, I had some very hard experiences in some ways but very salutary experiences in other ways at the federal seminary, because I went to the seminary in the early '70's, and that is where the break with NUSAS came and the formation of SASO and Biko, of course, was very active at that time, first of all before he was banished to King Williamstown, and he used to come and visit us quite often.

So I got to know Steve Biko very well and, in fact, I became - this is not part of that story - involved in one of his trials as one of the major, or one of the chief witnesses, which I think I must tell you because that talks about non racialism, and that talks about the real understanding of this B.C. the way I came to understand it, in a man like Biko.

Anyway it was at that area - that part of the history of our country, where it was within the university circles, within the student circles, that this whole B.C. became the philosophy and was expressed very strongly.

Being in an educational institution, I was chaplain to Fort Hare University for Presbyterian students and I was teaching here at the theological seminary, so these currents were very much in the fore, and there were a lot of debates.

Now, I remember one day when Sono - Themba Sono, who was then the chairman of SASO, came to address a meeting at the Federal Theological Seminary. Now Themba Sono I knew very well because I had been his chaplain when he was in high school at Lemana, and I went to listen to him.

Now, usually when they had these kind of meetings there was a division in our community. Most of the students supported SASO, but there were a few who were very anti this because they saw this as reverting back to a new kind of racism - anti whitemism and pro blackism, and the staff were still very much a white staff and they didn't bother to go and listen.

But I thought, no, I want to go and listen to what these guys are saying, and I sat there, and he expounded the whole B.C. philosophy and said the time has come where we've got to say : White man, get off our backs - we want to have nothing more to do with you - we going to do it on our own and we reject you.

If you want to go and do something, you go and do it in your own community, but you not going to do it with us. And I got up at the end and asked the question. I said : Look, Themba, I just want to ask a question - how do you think that the white man is ever going to be able to find out what the hell he's got to do even within his own circles unless he's challenged by black people, because his whole mentality has been that there's nothing wrong with him and that he's O.K., he's superior, and it's you black guys who've got to sort of come up to his standard, be absorbed in some kind of white society - now unless he's challenged by the continuing contacts with black people he's not going to be able to do the exercise that you expect him to do.

And he took the opportunity of saying : You know, you are my old chaplain and my old pastor and so on, but this is where you reveal just what a bloody racist you are - and he just

F.B. lashed out at me - it hurt. I understood afterwards that he was having to do this also in order to reinforce this kind of : Look, I've just told you that we've got to reject the white man, and I'm not even afraid to reject this man who was my tutor, my chaplain, my minister - but it hurt.

And, basically what he then said to me is the isolation of whites is part of our dialogue - that we are not at the stage where we can talk about what the future is going to be like in terms of accepting one another.

We are in a phase now where we've got to say we've had too much of white people riding on our backs, who, when they are with us always take the initiative - never respond, listen to us, never, in fact, seriously listen to the kind of issues that we bring up, so that we begin to feel always as though we are the second class citizens of whatever happens and we're tired of this, and so we saying : Look, bugger off! We don't want you - leave us alone - we going to do our own thing.

If we fail that's our business; if we succeed that's our business. Just get right off our backs, and if you can't work out for yourself, if you can't sit down and ask yourself why you are being rejected, then there's something wrong with you and your mental processes, so just go and do your thing - whatever that thing is, and get right out of it.

And eventually I came to understand this, and I came to understand how important it was for black people to undergo that process of psychological liberation. That process - and I understood now more clearly than ever at that point in time - how absolutely necessary it was for black people who had, in fact, accepted white values, who are, in fact, regarded the way that white people did things, regarded the kind of aspirations that white(s) had, the structures of society, whatever it was - the educational standards - everything was white.

And they were trying to lift themselves to become black whites, and this was a process of saying : To hell with that - we're not going to be carbon copies of the white man. We, as black people, have our own values, we have our own ways of understanding things, we have our own world view, and what's wrong with it?

Why can't we give value to that as well? And we cannot give value to that in a - as long as we continue this kind of co-operation with whites where we haven't had a chance to assert our own identity, and find ourselves and know who we are.

And I came to accept that, and I came to realise how important it was, and that we, as whites, had been insensitive, and that we were actually - those of us whites who were feeling that we needed to be with blacks were actually also projecting our guilt onto blacks, and that this was also a rejection by blacks of the sick white liberal attitude, who always rush and want to be on the side of blacks instead of looking at themselves and saying : If we really are against all this then what are we doing to change ourselves, to change our attitudes

F.B. to change our way of doing things, in response to what blacks are saying to us when they say : Get off our backs.

And so that's why I say it was - you know - it was a traumatic experience in one way - it felt like rejection, and specially for a person like myself who had been so much part of a black community, but it was a very salutary experience because you work through it and began to realise absolute value and the necessity of that, both in terms of blacks for themselves, but in terms of yourself as a white person.

One other experience I had at Fort Hare was when there were a lot of boycotts, uprisings in the university. The police used to come every now and again, surround the place, beat up the students and so on, and because I was chaplain our home became a regular haven of students who ran away.

My wife used to come, used to bandage students and so on, and I used to dash off in the middle of the night to go and see lawyers with students in the car and so on, and here we were doing all this, (and) at the same time there was this strong B.C. feeling, and I'll never forget a big fellow - strapping fellow from the university, and the seminary was on the other side of the university.

You had the town, the university, and then the seminary, so if you wanted to go to town you had to go through the university grounds, and I was walking through with someone from the seminary, through the university, and this big, strapping fellow comes along and he grabbed me here, and he just took my cheek here and he started shaking my head, and he was such a big guy, you know, I sort of felt as though I was a little bird in his hand just sort of being shaken around, and we walked about twenty yards while he was shaking me like this, and he vented all his anger and all his bitterness about the system, about the authorities at the university, about the brutality of the police on me, and that's how I analysed it at the end.

He said : I hate you bloody whites - you bastards - the things that you do to us - I hate you - I (can) (508) could kill you - and he was angry. And then all I could say to him - I said : You know, I understand - I know how you must feel. I don't feel it the way you do, but I really understand. If I was in your position I'd be just as angry.

And all of a sudden (he) let me go. He looked at me. He said : I hate you even more because you don't even bloody well react! I said : What do you want me to do? He said : Why don't you hit me?. I said : What must I hit you for. He said : But, you know, here I am - I'm - I'm - and I said : Look, I really, really understand how you feel, and I feel very deeply involved in this because I understand what you're saying, but how else do you want me to react?

And this is when I suddenly realised what he was really - you know - I was an easy target. If he had gone to do that to a policeman he would have been shot. I was an easy target because here I was walking through. He could come to me. He knew who I was, and he knew that I wasn't going to - in a sense he knew that he wasn't going to get hurt by the reaction,

F.B. but at the same time he was hoping to vent his feelings of anger and bitterness and hostility by maybe me having a fight with him, and so that he could get the satisfaction of really beating up a white man in a good fight, and all I was saying is : Ja, ja, sure, I understand.

And I realised then also the depth of the anger that was in these black students, and it was frightening in one way because it was an anti white thing, but in another way it was actually not anti white. It was anti the white attitude, it was anti the white structures, the way that whites with those attitudes have structured the whole system that was denigrating and dehumanising*them -*this person, and that's basically what he was expressing.

And that was confirmed to me when I went to Biko's funeral, because at Biko's funeral there was 30,000 people in that football ground with a sprinkling of whites, and I'll never forget standing with a friend of mine in this sea of black people, and they were singing and shouting - singing a song.

The one particular song they were singing was (.....) (537) which means whites are dogs, and there was this guy standing next to me singing for all he was worth, and then he turned to me with a beautiful smile and he said : Ja, they are dogs - I don't mean you.

And it suddenly dawned on me, because when they were singing I said : Ja, well, we are dogs. And all of a sudden I realised the anger they have against the - this white system that is so dehumanising, and yet here I was with my white skin, standing next to this guy who was singing this song and he would - this fantastic - you know, I mean the way he looked at me - there was no personal bitterness against me standing next to him - was this beautiful smile on his face.

And it confirmed the experience that I had before, that in fact, it was the anger directed against this very evil system and not against persons - people, and this is where I believe that blacks have a hell of a lesson to teach us.

That they are far more human than white people are. We are the people who are inhuman. We are the people who don't understand what real deep humanity is all about, and I've had to sort of say this to myself over and over again - what a - I mean if I was in their position why should I have any damn dealings with these whites - but they're not like that.

You see it here in Zimbabwe. You walk around here and it's - you have a feeling of total freedom, total acceptance (558) Nobody looks at you because you white, and we not like that - white people.

We've got - I don't know - we've got some bloody obsession about race. They just look at a person as a person, as a human being. So these kind of experiences have taught me a lot, and I really believe that black people are so much more understanding, magnanimous, than we are, and if only white people in South Africa could know that.

I mean I've been to I don't know to how many meetings where I've been the only white guy there. I've never felt threatened. I've never felt uneasy. Been into packed halls - the one and only white in that hall. White people that I don't

- F.B. have much contact with whites but they said : Aren't you scared - aren't you scared of going into Soweto - aren't you scared of going to these meetings - won't they do something to you? Never felt that.
- J.F. Has it gotten at all more difficult now - the tension and the unrest?
- F.B. Well, it has, ja, sure. I mean I've now been told by my black friends, you know, be very careful about coming into Soweto because either the young people are going to blast your car with stones, because what the hell's this white man doing here, or you going to get hammered by the police because you supposed to have a permit now just to go in there - well, I've just refused to comply with that.
- J.F. I thought they dropped that so that you didn't need a permit (578)
- F.B. They did drop it but with the state of emergency you now need a permit. It's reintroduced under the state of emergency.
- J.F. Can you tell me about the Biko trial?
- F.B. Yes, I'll try and be brief on this one, but what actually happened was that - ja, I think what the important thing that I want to tell you about that is the way in which Biko - this is where I have so much respect for that man - showed how absolutely non racial he was.

He's regarded as the father of B.C., and I believe very, very firmly that he - yes, he is the father of B.C. in the sense of B.C. as a process, and a necessary process which I believe is still a necessary process, but I don't believe that he ever saw that as an end in itself.

Now, what happened was I had to go and see, with a group of students - I had to go and see someone in King Williamstown. It was a Friday evening. On the way back the students said they wanted to call in at Biko's house. In actual fact the one student had his eye on Biko's secretary, and it was Friday night and Friday night is always gumba night in the townships, and he thought, you know, still early - maybe we can go there and he could see this girl and just chat to her for a while and so on.

So O.K. we said we'll call. We got there. Biko wasn't there. This girl was there with a friend. She was playing records so that suited these guys down to the ground. It was pleasant so we just sat around in Biko's mother's house.

More and more people started coming in until the room was full, and much later in the evening Biko came. So he got into the room and he greeted us all and he sat down and chatted, and it must have been two o'clock in the morning when his mother came out of her room and just gave him a sign.

He went out and went into his room, and maybe a minute later there was a knock on the door which was always kept locked, and in walked four policemen, and they saw this crowd and they saw me - the only white guy there, and they came straight to me, and they started shouting at me and telling me who the hell am I - what am I doing here - I'm not supposed to be here

F.B. - I'm in a black township and as a white person I'm not (allowed) - and I just took this very calmly and coolly and I said : Look, I've every right to be here etc. But they were shouting and shouting.

Biko burst out of his room and he said : You are disturbing the peace here - and he knew these guys personally, and he just told the captain - he said : Get out of this house or else I'll lay charges for disturbance of the peace. You have no business to come and disturb this group of people who are peacefully sitting here enjoying each others company in my mother's house. Now, if you have nothing else to do here then get out.

And they said : Look, Biko, you banned - you not allowed to be here - get into your room. He said : I will not get into my room until I've seen you out of this house - now will you go?

So a whole debate started between them and Biko and (I - they 623) say : Well, what are you doing - why aren't you asleep and so on, and he said : Well, I'm studying - and he had a book in his hand and (they) said : What - studying what? And he said : Economics you wouldn't know what it's all about anyway.

And he took his book and he went to the captain and he said - when he said : What do you say you're studying? He said : Economics, you fool!, and he just put the - this was Biko now - just took the book right into the guy's face.

This is where I learned something else about Biko. That he was totally fearless, and that's why they killed him. He had no fear of these people. He was never intimidated. In fact, he intimidated them.

Now, to cut a long story short, they took down our names and all that sort of thing, and it was clear that they were going to bring charges that Biko was in the room and had broken his banning order.

I was called to the police station in Alice, and I hesitated - I thought : Damn it, if they want to see me why don't they come to my house? Then I thought : No, I don't want them in my house. So I went to see them, and the one guy tried to take the tough line on me and said to me : We have called you here because we want you to make a statement about that meeting that you had on such and such a day - I don't remember the dates now - in Kind Williamstown with Biko.

So I said : I'm not making a statement. : What do you mean you're not making a statement? I said : No, I'm not making a statement - what for? They said : But you've got to make a statement. I said : I don't have to make a statement - the only statement that I can make is to tell you who I am and you know that, and give you my address and you know that - further than that I'm making no statement.

So the guy pulls out a book - great big volume - and he says : Let me just read this to you. And he reads a paragraph about if I refuse to make a statement this is regarded as a criminal offence and I can be charged for blah blah blah, you see. So I thought this is rubbish. I said : May I see

F.B. this book, please - just give it here - let me read it for myself. So he passed the book onto me and I quickly looked up to see what section this came out of, and it came out of the section dealing with your - if you give witness in court, and if you refuse to make a statement in court you can be had up for contempt of court - like people who refuse to give witness and then they have themselves a charge laid against them.

So I said - I just closed the book like that - handed it back to him. I said : I am under no obligation to make a statement here - this has nothing to do with me being here - it has everything to do with being in court - I'm not in court here.

So the guy realised that he hadn't been able to fool me so he got cross - he walked out. So I sat there and in came a big fat guy who tried the soft line on me. Took me to his office, started telling me all about my family and how he knew my father - they had records on what my father was doing, and my brothers and so on and so on, and just sort of spoke about kind of social things.

He says : You know, it's interesting family you've got, and where you came from and how you people have been very close to black people - all this kind of stuff. I said : Ja, you seem to do your job very well - you know a lot of things.

And I said : Ja, you know, but you haven't finished doing your job because you mention my father and two brothers - I've actually got three brothers, so you guys are falling down on your job (Laugh)

So anyway, to end that kind of conversation which was about nothing, he then said : Well, you still refuse to make a statement? I said yes. : Well, I suppose we better not waste time any more - I have to enter into my book here that you were called, and are you prepared to sign what I'm going to write here? I said : Well, what are you writing?

And all he basically was saying was, I, Francois Bill, of such and such an address, was called to the police station on such and such a day and was asked to make a statement in connection with a meeting that took place in King William - Insburg (682) King Williamstown, in the house of Mrs. Biko, and that I refused to make a statement.

He said : Is that a correct, factual statement of where we are? I said, sure. He said : Can you sign this if you agree with it? And I, like a fool, signed it. So I signed it.

Then what happened was, the people in that room that night - some of them I didn't know from a bar of soap - they were friends of the Biko's and so on - just people who came in on Friday evenings and just sat around and talked - they were being harassed by the police, and they had gone to Biko and said : You know that white guy that was there - do you really think we can trust that guy? Biko said : Absolutely - no doubt - don't worry about that.

Now what the police then did was to go round to these people, take my signature and show them my signature - not the statement I made - just show them my signature and say : Bill

F.B. has spilt the beans, and he's told us all about what you guys were discussing - you are plotting to disrupt the university and to plant petrol bombs, and I don't know what not all, you see - and there we are - there's his signature - he signed it.

And they were so angry, and they went to Biko and they said : You said we can trust that guy - he's a bastard - he's let us down like all these whites - they all the same.

Biko said : I don't believe it - I'm telling you I don't believe it - that guy will never do that. They said : Nah, you're a fool - you're a fool, and you shouldn't be trusting whites and so on.

He 'phoned me. He said : Francois, will you please come to King Williamstown - it's urgent. There's something that we've got to settle. I got into my car, I rushed over to King Williamstown, walked into his office and he said : Listen, before you tell me I want to tell you what I think has happened.

You've been called to the police station to make some kind of statement, ja, and you've signed something - I said, ja, but I just signed to say that I wasn't making a statement. He said : That's good enough - that's the trick of these guys - I know them - they always will find a trick. O.K., tell me your story.

I told him my story, and he says : O.K., because what they have done now is to use your signature with these guys and they are making them believe that you have, in order for them to talk - he says : I knew - you made one mistake - you shouldn't even have signed that - there was no reason - there was no need for you to sign that -

I can understand why you made that mistake - because you thought it was a totally harmless kind of statement - a factual statement about refusing to sign, but this is the way these bastards work.

I said then - but I knew - I knew that I could trust you. And I thought : Hell - here was this guy, Biko, the father of B.C., defending me, a white guy, against his fellow blacks, and for me at that moment - not that I had no esteem for him - his esteem just you know - my esteem of him just went right up, because I thought all these people who complain about B.C. as an anti white thing are talking rubbish.

I've experienced it myself - that this is nonsense. That these people are simply asserting their own dignity, and that part of that dignity is to assert this deep feeling of humanity and of being able to relate to other people on the basis of their dignity, and of recognising because they can now be proud of their own dignity they can recognise the dignity of another person.

And so this, for me, was a tremendous kind of experience of knowing that this is nothing which is anti white. Of course they express feelings of anger and bitterness against the way whites behave, but it's not basically an anti white thing, and it's something that I've never forgotten - this.

And that's why for me it was so important that I had to be there at that funeral, because that man was one of the

F.B. greatest persons I've ever met in my life.

J.F. Who was Themba Sona who spoke initially?

F.B. He was one of the chairmen of SASO at...

J.F. Uhuh.

F.B. He was consequently kicked out, but....

J.F. And I actually like....

END OF TAPE.

J.F. O.K., so you saw where B.C. was at that time, but - and you saw the way Biko related - did you have - I don't know - maybe you should just tell me more about your relationship with B.C. people and how you saw it developing - did you ever have any criticism of it or did you feel - are you saying that you think B.C. is an end in itself - what did black people - if you could talk more about that.

F.B. Well, let me put it this way - that in a funny kind of a way I have been involved in all these multi or, ja call them multiracial in the sense that, within the church where they've had groups of people trying to work together, and I've been extremely upset by the insensitivity of whites who somehow just don't know how to interpret. first of all I don't think they listen.

White people are not good at listening. They very good at telling other people what to do. Now - and I'm talking about church circles mainly here - so that when black people are articulating - and don't forget that they articulate in the language which is not their mother tongue - they are having to use English.

Now, they articulate issues. They articulate some of the very deep things that disturb them, and white people somehow just ride rough over that kind of articulation or the expression of black feelings, and then try to think, you know, that we've got to be so non racial - we mustn't look at race - and then do things in a typical white way.

They either elect more whites than blacks, so that the voice of the white man is then again heard more than that of the black man, or they push certain things in the direction that they want them to be pushed, and they haven't responded to what blacks are saying.

And I've had quite often to say : But I'm sorry I can't accept this. We should remember that the black people are saying this and this and this. We should remember that, in fact, we are now being racists in reverse, or that we are, in fact, racist by not giving due weight to the voice of the black people. In a sense, if you like, I'm saying and I'm pleading with white people to give blacks their due place.

F.B. This is why I can understand that even with the development of B.C. to where its become, and I think it's - they've turned this whole thing into an end in itself, or it's become their ideology, but I can understand their frustration.

I can understand the deep feeling that : Damn it, we will never - we can't, at this stage, be doing things with white people because they always take the damn initiative.

J.F. O.K., let me focus it to say what - first of all what year was that - this whole thing of Biko's - that...

F.B. This was in 1974, I think - beginning of '74.

J.F. And did it go to a trial or...?

F.B. Yes, went to a trial.

J.F. And were you subpoenaed?

F.B. Yes, I had to go - well, no, I was witness for him, you know, with his defence.

J.F. Uhuh - so you testified?

F.B. I testified.

J.F. And when was the trial - that - '7....

F.B. It was in that - in '74 in - or was it August.

J.F. So was it one of many trials or was it for breaking a banning order?

F.B. Ja, that's right - that's right.

J.F. And what happened at....

F.B. He was acquitted.

J.F. Uhuh - and was your testimony important?

F.B. Yes, and he was acquitted - I mean the police made a total mess of that case - they were such bloody idiots. And in fact, you see, what we actually did at that rial was to say, when they asked - questioned us and said you know, did Biko come into the room, we said : Yes, he did. We were there - he wasn't at home. Ultimately he came back during the evening. He came into the room - because he - there was no way, we knew, and the police knew that - there was no way to get to his room without coming through the main room - the main living room.

He came into the room, he greeted us, and he went to his room. The idiots never probed, you know, but how long did he stay in the room - did he sit down and talk to you and so on.

J.F. O.K., let me ask it by saying - you had that period of understanding what B.C. people were saying, and did you have relationships with people in B.C. who said : Look, we're moving somewhere else - this is just kind of a stage - do you think that if Biko was alive today you would disagree with him and you'd say : Look, that's not an end in itself - or do you think these people were moving and are moving and have moved - how did you progress - did you break with B.C. people and say : Look, I understand what you said about black men being on your own, but where's the content - how did you and them relate?

F.B. Well, first of all I think that I don't think Biko would have been where B.C. people are today, in the sense that I think he would have been very much with the UDF today, because Biko was that kind of person, that he didn't make of B.C. - of this whole process an end in itself, but saw it as a necessary process in order to enable black people to take their - assert themselves and take their own role.

Now of course, one realises that he had such a strong personality and he was such a very incredible man that that was not too much of a problem with him, but when they started decimating the leadership of people of his calibre from the B.C. movement who would have, I think, led it to that stage, the people that have come into the leadership I don't think have quite the same calibre of personality.

I'm not denigrating them and their leadership in the sense that, but I think that it's generally true to say that in any movement if you start just chopping off the leadership, the next line of leadership comes in, they chop that off - The next line comes in - that ultimately you are, and that's part of the whole strategy of the system - you are taking away those who've got to the leadership precisely because of their leadership qualities, and that the other people who come in have not got the same kind of qualities.

Now, I think that the present B.C. movement, while I recognise the value of that B.C. being, and I can understand the reasons for it, has made B.C. - at least that's my way of seeing it - into a kind of ideology an end in itself, and I'm afraid that - you know, I don't have much contact with say, AZAPO as such. I know one or two individuals in AZAPO.

I know Ishmail Mkhavela (074) for example, quite well, and quite honestly I don't find him, you know, threatening or - I mean they talk about to hell with the whites and so on, but when you talk to him and so on you don't feel threatened by him at all.

My contacts - I have a lot of contacts with people who I know are pro B.C. and I've argued with them about certain things, and I think that I've come to the conclusion, in fact, this is the position of ABRECSA. ABRECSA didn't join UDF because we realised that if we joined UDF, as much as we wanted to do that, we're going to exclude all the AZAPO people who are part of ABRECSA and that would have created a problem, and this, in fact, is what we said.

- F.B. We said we welcomed the fact that UDF has brought all the progressive elements in our society together in fighting apartheid, and we also welcome the emphasis on B.C. insofar as this is a necessary process in our liberation, but we simply would not want to see that kind of B.C. as an end in itself, which in other words, perpetuates a kind of new racism, if you like. Now -
- J.F. Did...
- F.B. Sorry.
- J.F. I was just going to say did the Biko you knew - was he in any way anti A.N.C. or anti any of the ideals of UDF or anti - do you think that he would have not agreed with where the struggle has progressed to now in terms of...
- F.B. I don't think so - I don't think so. I mean he - he was actually making contact with various A.N.C. people at the time, and you know - he was an open kind of guy and he - I certainly don't think he was anti A.N.C., but what he saw was the necessity of getting black people, if they were going to be part of that movement, and if it was going to be a grassroots (movement) - you see, the B.C. thing - this is what was the strength of it at that time - was/that he popularised B.C. and said B.C. may have arisen out of the student circles. /the fact

People who could reflect and articulate on what was happening in these so-called multiracial groups like NUSAS and others, and the UCM, because that's really when it was born, but black people not simply in those circles but the peasants, the workers, need to go through that whole process, and this is how he popularised it - by having actual projects.

I mean Dr. Mampela Rampela (104) was in the Northern Transvaal and bears his child. She was very much part of that whole movement. She worked with him in King Williamstown, as you know, and the tremendous work she did in the Northern Transvaal with that whole clinic centre, which was not simply medical but which was a whole conscientisation process of those people - those rural people.

- J.F. Let me ask you - was it you yourself coming to these ideas that made you have a bit of a parting of the ways with B.C., or were there any black people who are also moving away from it - if one looks now Barney Pitsoana and as many of the important people who were because (.....) (112) had moved - some of them haven't - Terror Lekota hasn't moved - did you know any of the blacks who also moved, or did you know any blacks who maybe looked at it from the outside and said : Oh, these B.C. people - was it only you and - white people or were there blacks?
- F.B. No, no, no, it - I think it was part of the general development that one became a little distressed about the present kind of B.C. thing which tended to say : Look, we have nothing to do with you - so O.K., you accept that, and also in discussions with people who I know that are B.C. but who are posing all these questions, and Barney Bichana is one of them, for example.

Gerry Musala was a good friend of mine and he's B.C. but he's also asking a lot of questions about it in its

F.B. structural form. These just to name some of the people that one discusses these things with, so it's understanding that and understanding the fact that there was a new front that grew up, and was being born, which gave rise to the UDF which was being experienced at other levels before UDF came into being, through the kind of alliances that were being made across the colour line.

Having to work through the kind of definition that I gave you about black - having to realise that in actual fact the skin colour is no longer simply that while it is an extential conditioning of the person, because there's no doubt about it that black skins means that you are the oppressed, however high up you may be in the social scale, however much power you may have in terms of the power structures that are being created by the system - even Gacha Buthelezi, because he's black, is discriminated against in South Africa in all sorts of ways.

Now, even while you accept that, you also had to realise that there were people who were still nonetheless - who had, in fact, chosen to be on the side of the oppressed, so that all your homeland leaders, your Matanzimas, your Sebe's and so on have become as oppressive as the white regime, and so that you could no longer now - with this whole development, with this whole understanding, there's been a shift, and this shift has taken, not just because I sat back and reflected on it but because of one's involvement with people who help you to understand that.

J.F. O.K., I'm going to deal with lots of interviews with people that would be talking about that and I think you've expressed it well - what I think you could offer that would be quite unique would be to let me understand about non racialism - in the beginning when you were talking about being up in the Northern Transvaal, I got a bit of a sense that you were saying it very much a bit in a vacuum, like they accepted whites and they said : Don't be a fool - we don't care about the colour of your skin - then you have the B.C. that moves to non racialism that has quite a political content - you would have maybe the A.N.C. or the Communist Party's understanding of it, and I'm just wondering if, from your experience with the non racialism, specially because you had that unique experience of seeing it in the rural areas, and they're so often the kind of the simple people in bit of a paternalistic kind of dismissive attitude - O.K., and it also ties in - this isn't very well formulated but I'm also remembering that there's another kind of problem I'm trying to look at - area - is, is non racialism a tactic, or is it actually integrally tied to ideology - is non racialism just kind of the nice aspect of the South African struggle - is it - did the Biko's saying : Look, we're not going to get anywhere if we just put ourself in a corner - black man you're on your own - five or ten years later he's still on his own - or have you seen non racialism as actually being part of an overall national democratic, some would say revolutionary social change - however you want to put it - move to change, and from your experience - and I think it would be good to have you speak about those people in the rural areas - does this tie in with a receptiveness to mass organisations like the UDF and the A.N.C., or is it something that's just kind of a nice attitude they have to life - a humanitarian thing.

F.B. Well, I think that as far as the rural people are concerned - let me put it this way - their kind of awareness of the political dimensions or the ideological dimensions of non racialism I think would be very low. It's a very - I mean there would be some who would understand maybe that it's part of that particular ideology, but I think that for the most part, the kind of rural people who would tend to not worry too much about race, and in fact, I don't think that a sufficient number of those rural people, except for the younger generation - I'm thinking of the older generation - have actually gone through the process of B.C., you see, because in the strange kind of way that it's precisely those who've gone through the process of B.C.

In other words, the process of being able to accept their own dignity over against this whole system that has de-humanised them - that has denied them their dignity and their value as human beings.

It's only those who've gone through that who can then begin to understand the necessity for some kind of non racialism in terms of an ideology.

Those who haven't gone through that process simply don't think of it in that way. They simply - it's the kind of respect for life - it's the kind of saying a person's colour doesn't really matter - you see what I'm trying to get at.

It's not a conscious articulation of an ideological stance or an ideological line that you going to follow. It is more, perhaps in a very naive, religious way of saying : Well, we're all created in the image of God and therefore we must all be nice to one another - we're all brothers and sisters, you see, and at the same time realising that they are the little brothers and sisters, or maybe they're not - you see what I mean. They don't realise it.

In other words what I'm trying to say, if I can put it more concretely, that I can be accepted and they will say it's not important, and they've often said to us : And of course, you one of us - you're a Tsonga - you've just got a white skin, that's all, but you really got a black heart - but when they say that they being nice.

They being nice in the religious sense of the term. They being nice - they upholding that kind of value, but deep down they haven't gone themselves through the process which says : Yes, I can accept you because I know who I am - you see what I'm trying to get at?

Now, I think that in terms of the ideology - you see, I think ultimately I - B.C. is - to me's not a frightening thing at all. I think that in some cases, you know, maybe when it's pushed to its logical extremes, can be very negative - I haven't made any sufficient analysis of this whole black ecumenical consultation thing that took place, you see, but - let's take that as an example.

That where white people - and maybe what you need is a kind of white consciousness movement, of white people being forced to look at themselves and go through a kind of - how could you call it - in the sense of B.C. it's an

F.B. affirmation of their dignity. In terms of white consciousness maybe it's a kind of dealing with one's guilt, superiority complex or all that kind of thing.

Maybe you need that before there's going to be any real kind of non racialism, because, you see, the black ecumenical consultation is a protest against the fact that when you try to move into you are meeting a - into a non racial situation of co-operation with people like the whites, you are actually not getting anywhere because the whites haven't changed, you see.

J.F. Ja - I guess what I'm also getting at is, have you seen it relate to class - the kind of the big questions in the history of South Africa - class and colour, and I think the critique of B.C. was that it disregarded class and was an unsound analysis - because you have this*underground experience, have you seen it ultimately coming back to class - have you seen blacks picking up and saying - tying it into an ideological framework? * on the ground.

F.B. Ja, but you see, what I think is interesting is that - well, first of all that AZAPO has shifted on that one about the class. I mean, O.K., maybe they've shifted only in terms of the statements that they make, but they do accept class now as a criteria in terms of the analysis of the situation.

Maybe they don't put it quite in the same way as say, UDF or other people would put it, and namely that it's really a class struggle in South Africa, which is exacerbated by a racial factor.

Maybe AZAPO - and then I can't claim to be really a spokesman for AZAPO so I may be totally misinterpreting them. My impression is that AZAPO would say there is the racial thing which is the basic (thing) and in addition there is the class thing, whereas UDF would say it's basically a class thing which has the dimension of race to exacerbate it.

Now, to get back to that question I think, you see, that a very interesting thing is the development, for example, of COSATU, you see, where the analysis - the class analysis of the problem, which I think is a very real one because ultimately you dealing with - and that's where you pick up the racial thing in it, but it's actually a class thing.

You're dealing with the question of land, which is the basis of the whole economy, that people who are dispossessed or their land are dispossessed of the basis of the wealth which they can produce, and that this is basically a class thing.

It happens to coincide, by and large, with the racial category but could - need not be that exclusively because you are now beginning to see the emergence of the very self same problem in the homelands where it's not the whites who possess the - or have control over whatever pseudo economy there is in there in terms of who owns the businesses, who owns access to - well, it's not so much the land in that question although they have been given that kind of - but in other words, who owns access to that economy, that which produce.

It's a black bourgeoisie, and so now you have a class distinction within the very homelands, so I think that

F.B. - ja - the non racial aspect of it is becoming evident, perhaps through those who've gone through the process of B.C., and because they have done so, and analysed what the basic problem is - that it's no longer simply a racial problem, and have analysed that in terms of a struggle between those who possess and those who are dispossessed.

J.F. Just a couple of other little points - when you - throughout your experience have you been aware, specially say, up in the sixties and the Elam area, and then in the '70's there has been political activity - overtly political to some degree - I don't know much about the A.N.C. in the '50's and '60's in the Northern Transvaal, but even in the '70's, or was it 1980 you had an attack in Zanine - (.... 277) and so obviously that must - and it was tied in, apparently, to - against removals activity - would you say you'd ever had any evidence the people would support the A.N.C., or would be open to supporting - just interesting because especially with these new attacks with the land mines - clearly they had support from the people to have done that, and yet the government tries to say that the rural people are passive and they don't know from politics and they're just agitators like people like you have you ever seen anything?

F.B. Well - you see, I must be honest with myself as well as with you, to say that when I was up at Elam at that time I was actually very - I was politically very naive, because it was only after I left - well, it was in 1964/65 when I went to the States that I underwent a whole kind of change in my whole attitude and thinking because I had been trained, as I told you, at Rhodes, and Rhodes was very traditional in terms of the kind of theological education that they gave us, and didn't - there was no kind of social analysis, political dimension to our training.

And going to the States in a theological seminary where that was a very important part of the way they did their theology, and being immersed in that whole kind of civil rights movement and coming into contact with Jesse Jackson.

Jesse Jackson was a student at the seminary when I was there - you know, just threw me completely because...

J.F. Where was this?

F.B. In Chicago Theological Seminary which was next door to the Chicago University, and I did courses in both. And you know I went through a whole trauma in trying to relate my theological thinking to political realities, and I, to this day, am so the hell in with this stupid kind of training that I got, and the way I was led to be trained.

What I should have done is, instead of doing all this rubbish about classical studies, Latin and all that kind of stuff. If I'd done my first degree in sociology, politics, economics and so on would have been a far better way of being trained for the ministry, because that's what the trouble is with the church - we never do our analysis properly.

We bring Christian solutions to economic and political problems. Now, because of that - you know, as I say,

F.B. I was politically naive and I wasn't really analysing, I wasn't really aware of the political undercurrents.

And also because our church - there's been a shift in our church in the sense that - well, people say it's largely due to my moderatorship that I have introduced a political element into the church, whereas with the tradition of the early missionaries you never dealt with those things.

The church was the church and when you dealt with spiritual things and pastoral matters and that was that, so the people wouldn't talk to you, as their pastor, about their political inclinations, activities or whatever.

And I'm ashamed to say that when I exercised my ministry at Elam I was very much part of that pattern of the old missionaries, and it was only afterwards, when I came back from the States, that things changed and then my exposure at the seminary, where then you came into contact with a you know sort of - helped to affirm that.

Now I think that today I will be able to tell you that particularly in the young generation there's a strong support for A.N.C. - that there's no doubt about.

Just recently I went to a conference - a youth conference of our church. They were celebrating International Youth Year and they put on - they had messages from the different groups

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F.B. They had messages from different parishes and different groups that came, and one of the local groups from a rural place had a play, and basically the play was a message about the hope for the future, and the hope for the future was tied to the soldiers of Mkonto we swizwe fighting the Botha terrorists.

You know, I just sat there and I thought, My God - totally fearless in expressing this in this big gathering of young people which was obviously riddled with informers as well, and absolutely fearless in saying: Look, this is the situation we in - we know we're in a fight - we know we have to overcome it, and we know that our people are really the ones who are the soldiers who are fighting for our liberation against the true terrorists who are Mr. Botha's so-called soldiers, and linked up their whole hope for the future as young people to the victory of their soldiers.

J.F. Do you get the sense that there is the support in terms of people putting themselves on the line, whether it means that the few take the big risk to join or whatever, but the others that would support - obviously it's going to mean that people are going to have to open up their houses and just do little things along the way - do you get the sense from people that that's there?

F.B. I think people, ja, sure, because look - there was - you talked about (..... Suk Somebody) (455) and so on, but much more recently there were the discoveries of caches (?) in the Nelspruit - well, in that district, but actually some of them were very close to, and involved some of the people in our church who had had people who had come from outside into the country - guerillas and so on, and had hidden them in their homes and had accepted them with their weapons.

And one of the guys actually, who was shot by a policeman, was because when the police came - found this - the guns and the ammunition in the house, you see, and the people actually had fled, so there seems to be an underlying understanding but people don't talk, and obviously they not going to talk about that, and they're not going to tell you : Look, you're - we supporting - we unprepared to - they going to do this because you just don't trust anybody.

And you don't know who you're talking to and whether that person's not going to go and reveal you and say here, there's a guy that is prepared to harbour so it's - my impression is is that there is some kind of understanding but that it's perhaps a little more sophisticated than we think.

It's not a kind of general thing, but that there is the network that people know that they have contacts, and they know O.K., if you go there there's so-and-so and that person will put you in contact with so-and-so - it's that kind of thing.

J.F. And did that at all rock the church - did you hear about it from Buzz inside the church circles or are you just repeating what you saw in the papers?

F.B. No, no, this was what I got from the people themselves. My colleague was a minister there and some of the people there and you know who talk about - they say, The boys are busy - in a very kind of low (voice) they say, Hey, did you see what the boys did.

J.F. And it wouldn't be the kind of thing where a minister would say : I can't - was there - do you think it's a kind of thing that people are in different positions - different class positions in the community would be involved - was it the kind of thing that you got the sense that it was a no-no in the church, for example?

F.B. No, well, no - in this particular case the minister was very much behind this. He's very much - well, I won't say behind this - he was very approving. I'm quite sure, had it been I think of another guy who happens to be a minister in the capital of Gazankulu (479) and who's so scared of upsetting the authorities of Gazankulu -

- F.B. He would never be - I mean if he heard this he would have been shocked - his reaction would be, Oh, no - my God, no, this is bad now.
- J.F. And do you encounter any more whites than you might have in the past who know and understand that the boys are busy and wouldn't be shocked or wouldn't certainly inform if somehow they ever caught wind of it - do you think there's any awareness more among whites?
- F.B. No, I don't - I haven't*counted that. *encountered. What I have encountered is that whites are aware of the fact that things are happening, and that obviously if they're happening they're happening because these people are coming in somehow or other, but not in the sense that they - very few whites that I've come across, apart from - I mean if I talk to Villa Vicencio or people like that, sure, but -
- But you know I - we have very little contact with whites...
- J.F. You're not in JODAC or anything?
- F.B. No - in fact we - my wife and I are asking ourselves just to what extent - it's a question of time really. One was so involved in other things that we've never considered that a priority, and we were actually asking ourselves whether we not making a mistake, but the few whites that we've come into contact with the - you pick up a sense of paralysis almost, you know - they actually afraid.
- One or two will say to you : Oh, well, it's inevitable - it must happen and you know, but most of them are really terrified.
- J.F. Where do you live in Jo'burg?
- F.B. Greenside.
- J.F. So do you not come into contact with progressive whites or they're none - your church circles are totally black...
- F.B. All totally black.
- J.F. So when you say you're asking - you're thinking there is this exhorting of whites to get involved in the white community by groups like JODAC and the UDF area committees?
- F.B. Ja, you see, for example, there's **this new thing** called concerned citizens, you see, and well, you read some of the things that they - I mean they planned this bloody fun run of Sunday which was banned, you see.

Now, I mean that banning was bad because it gave it credibility and I - when I got this invitation to go to this fun run I said : What the hell - you know, a run for peace, and we're going to run five kilometres - how the hell does that bring peace - it's rubbish.

Now from their point of view it's a conscientisation process, you see, of getting whites involved in doing something, and I then said : Well, maybe we should get involved there because we sit from the outside and criticise the whites for their inactivity and that's bad. Rather get in there,

F.B. get involved with them and say : Look, this is not the way to conscientise people. One of the things, for example, I've been very critical of in terms of the church circles with the liberal whites who've been sort of - all these initiatives for reconciliation and so on, been to say : Look, forget about reconciliation - it's a waste of time - if you really are serious about what is wrong in this country then it's - we've got to find ways and means of how we begin to take action in opposition to the system.

And the kind of things that I've been looking at, for example, or at least that I've noticed happen, are the kind of things that ought to happen on a wider scale.

That woman who went to jail because she refused to be involved with the you know - if you multiply that kind of action. The women who went to stand in front of Moroca Police Station, and it's interesting that the women have more courage.

They went to Moroca Police Station, linked up within the Black Sash with those nuns and said : We've come to protest against the presence of police and S.A.D.F. because it's our boys killing those - the children of the black mothers.

J.F. When was that?

F.B. This was about, what, four weeks ago - it's that ki(nd) - Wendy Orr, you know. Now if that kind of action - not a bloody fun run in the zoo lake!

J.F. But that kind of action - is it actually what the initial B.C. people used to say - go conscientise your own white community?

F.B. Ja, sure, it's that kind of action, if you like, but I think, you see, that you will - this is what I was talking about - a kind of white consciousness - of people not feeling guilty about being white and therefore trying to jump on the bandwagon of helping blacks.

I mean this lady (who) was here was a very nice and well meaning person but she keeps on saying at the meeting here - the - what's her name - Jennifer Kinghorn (529) you know, you must think of those poor kids on the streets, and who are suffering so much, and what can we do to alleviate their suffering and so on.

To hell with that! Those kids have decided they going to fight - for us to go and alleviate that, you know, is actually to prolong their agony and their suffering. What she must say is : No, what can she do - what can we do - I must include myself - what can we do in the white s to make them understand that they are the ones who causing that suffering, you see, and that's that kind of thing.

And I think if there was that effort as part of the wider front like the UDF saying : We are looking for ways in which, because we are in separate communities, nonetheless it's part of the wider democratic front for what ultimately must be a totally non racial society.

J.F. So - one final question then - do you have confidence that what's the - if the future of South Africa is a non racial future?

F.B. I think so - I think so, because I think that there is enough evidence for me personally, anyway, that the kind of people who at least articulate that as their goal actually also practice it, and I think we going to have other kinds of problems.

I think the racial problem - that will not be the issue. I mean it's like I think here - I've not been in Zimbabwe long enough to be able to assess the situation here, but I think for example, that here in Zimbabwe it's not a question of race, it's not a question that you are white.

The problems they're having is this - it's the racism and the arrogance of Smith, for example, which to me is not an expression of them being anti white but they're anti the attitude of this guy who actually has not undergone a change and has not understood that he must be part of for - because for those whites who have accepted that they can be part of Zimbabwe, well, here they are, and they don't seem to be having any problems.

J.F. O.K. - when were you chaplain at Fort Hare?

F.B. This was '71 to '74.

J.F. So that was - were you still at FEDSOM?

F.B. Ja, that was when I was at FEDSO, and I was actually kicked out from being chaplain by the rector because he objected to the kind of sermons I was preaching and he actually 'phoned me and said : You are a saboteur.

You sabotaging this university and I have now decided that you may not set your foot - your feet on this campus any more.

END OF INTERVIEW.