CHURCH BRIEFS

SALVADOR - Salvadorian President Alfredo Cristiani said on Tuesday there were no obstacles to an official probe into the killings of six jesuit priests last November, although evidence in the case has dissapeared and key witnesses are currently unavailable to testify.

a year ago.

MEXICO CITY - Mexico which used to boast an anti-Catholic constitution and a largely catholic population, has come a step closer to diplomatic relations with the Vatican. A meeting between Pope John Paul 11 and President Carlos Salinas De Gortari was held recently.

The Pope emphasised his efforts to improve the lot of Mexico's poorest residents such as those of Chalco, one of several sprawling slums that have sprung up.

CAPE TOWN - Cardinal Owen McCann, the Roman Catholic Cardinal of Cape Town, will be celebrating his 40th year as a Bishop this week. Functions, to which all bishops have been invited, will be held in Cape Town on Thursday and Friday to mark the event.

LOS ANGELES - The mayor and people of Los Angeles have donated adult literacy tapes worth R40-million to the Archdiocese of Cape Town. Just about all the people and organisations involved in adult literacy are very excited about this, says Archdiocese spokesperson Syd Duval.

JOHANNESBURG - The general Secretary of the SACC in a press statement condemned the right wingers of "militarization of the right wing as evidenced by the public display of AWB training operations at the weekend".

TEMBISA - The youth section of the Africa Evangelical Church in Tembisa is extending invitations to members and non-members of the congregation to a meeting that will be held at the Lutheran Church on Saturday April 19.

Pastor B Vusi Mdlalose said that there will be two services starting at 3pm and 7pm respectively and that the purpose of the meeting is to discuss all issues that affects the youth.

BIBLE READING

Arise, o Lord, let not man triumph; let the nations be judged in your presence. Psalm 9:19

Please send your church news and events to: **NEW NATION** PO Box 10674 Johannesburg 2000

or contact the Religion reporter at (011) 23-2721/5

PE residents stay over in townships

WHITE and "coloured" people of all ages in Port Elizabeth sampled a taste of life "on the other side" when they spent last weekend in kwaZakhele township.

The second encounter of its kind, the visit was aimed at people of all ages. The first encounter, last October, was aimed at youth. Both were organised by Koinonia and the National Institute of Reconciliation.

More than 100 white and "coloured" people - wearing T-shirts with the words "Comrades of the cross" and "Lam an African like you" spent the weekend with families in the township.

One white visitor said: "We are breaking the devil's wall and making the govern-

ment confused." On the first day the visitors were taken on a township tour and shown places like Red Location, New Brighton, kwaZakhele, Veeplaas and Soweto-by-the-Sea.

On the last day, they and their hosts converged on the Holy Spirit Church to express their views.

The De Wet family, who were hosted by the Mbeki family, said although they

were born and bred in South Africa, it was the first time they had knowledge of black people.

De Wet said the first time she entered the township, she was moved by the spontaneous greetings of the people, who were all friendly.

Those who participated said the experience showed them how they wanted to be -sharing everything together. One of them said: "South Africa can become what we have experienced this week."

A young "coloured" girl urged Christians to continue praying for the people of Natal. She said she was distressed by the growing

number of dying people. Koinonia, which means fellowship, was awarded the "Beyond War Award" by a US group last year for "laying a foundation for reconciliation between blacks and whites in Southern Afri-

According to Rev Andrew Jantjies, the Eastern Cape regional co-ordinator of NIR, blacks will be visiting the white, Indian and 'coloured" areas in two weeks' time.

Churches must CAPE TOWN - The Archdiocese of Cape Town is planning to hold a memorial service next month for Archbishop Stephen Naidoo, former Roman Catholic Archbishop of Cape Town, who died in London almost a year ago.

THE president of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, Allan Boesak, says right-wing political leaders like Eugene Terre'Blanche and Andries Treurnicht should go somewhere else if they do not want to face the realities of a new South Africa.

Boesak was addressing an open-air church service attended by more than 10 000 people from regional congregations at Port Elizabeth's Dan Qege Stadium last Sunday.

The rally was hosted by the Interdenominational African Ministers of South Africa (Idamasa).

He said those who were afraid of justice, humanity and peace should go away and find a place where they could be "bosses".

"They are afraid of reconciliation because they think

THE fast-rising tide of expectations and hopes, at the same time clouded by fear and uncalled for violence, constitute the main fabric of the present reflection of events in South Africa.

For this reason Father Lafont Emmanuel of the St Philips Catholic Church at Moletsane in Soweto seeks to draw parallels with the struggle waged by Israelites against the repressive rule of Pharaoh King of Egypt, and the oppressed people of South Africa, who are on the brink of realising a longcherished goal.

Moses returned to Egypt from exile in the desert, and found there that his people were still in bondage.

He started talking with Pharaoh. His demand was: "In the name of Yahweh, the Lord of Israel, Let my people go!"

Unfortunately the first

mate outcome is justice in the land, a national Muslim conference was told in Cape Town recently.

The conference, on the theme "Muslims in a future South Africa", brought about 700 delegates and 200 observers from organisations throughout South Africa under one roof recently.

The objectives of the conference were:

• To provide a forum for consultation on issues facing the Muslim community relating to their role in change and in a post-apartheid South Africa.

 To provide an opportunity for an exchange of views and education through consultation in the Muslim community.

• To discuss the Islamic vision of justice in a future South Africa and to consider a programme of action which will convey an Islamic vision, values and principles to all South Africans,



Dr Alan Boesak and Beyers Naude.

we will do what they have done to us," he said.

Boesak continued by saying people like PW Botha and Adriaan Vlok should not tell people that this was not

their country and that they had no right to live in it.

He praised the role played by the church and called on the Eastern Cape clergies to speak for the people.

They should not be afraid of being intimidated by those who camouflaged the apartheid system because "God will help them".

He said that churches standing for the truth must continue fighting for the total dismantling of apartheid because the government had at last recognised the demands of the people.

It was as if "God had sent Christ" to set free those who had been jailed.

Meanwhile, the president of Idamasa, Rev de Villiers Soga, told the people that recent changes were indications of the society that would be born.

He said the recent changes by president FW de Klerk were happening at a time when "bad things" were being revealed by the agents of apartheid.

A God of freedom

round of talks was not a success. Pharaoh increased his oppression over the shoulders of the Israelites.

Moses did not give up; negotiations went on painfully. He received help by way of sanctions (known in the Bible as plagues or disasters) which God applied repeatedly to pressurise Pharaoh.

Of course, their liberation had a counterpart, and the economic situation of the people did not improve at first. They incriminated their leaders for that.

Emmanuel says he often meditates on these events of the exodus, so beautifully expressed in the Bible for our education. When he tries to understand where we are and where we go today,

Emmanuel does not think that in South Africa we have reached the crossing of the reeds yet.

Yes, leaders have been released and people have started slowly to come back from exile, but all the structures of apartheid are still in place and the realities of unemployment, homelessness, starvation wages, bantu education, with all its consequences of frustration, violence and insecurity are still the order of the day.

Moses tells us that the challenges did not come only from Pharaoh; they came from people themselves. They had to be informed, conscientised, educated so as to become active participants in their libera-

He also tells us that challenges do not come only before liberation, but also after liberation. This to him is the humble task the churches can offer to help the leaders of the people.

The task is of providing our people with a true reflection about the present situation, its possibilities and dangers.

God is definitely at work to free his people today in South Africa. He knows the ways and the rules. He wants total liberation.

He speaks to us. Let the churches help the people to co-operate with the God of freedom and liberation. God wants to be worshipped by people who are free.

oppressive regime are acceptable provided circumstand the ulti-

To discuss concerns regarding the Islamic way of life in a future South Africa and the place of these concerns in the constitution of a new South Africa.

A statement issued after the conference said that there was a general feeling that Muslims should inter-act with other communities in order to promote social justice in South Africa:

"On the issue of negotiations, some delegates expressed their view that negotiations with an oppressive regime is acceptable provided circumstances permit and the ultimate outcome is justice in the land.

Fatima Meer also told the conference that there should be a move toward negotia-

"Delegates in commission also deliberated on the following issues in the context of the constitution of a future South Africa: Muslim personal law, education,

health and social welfare, Muslim institutions, political rights and the economy.

"Women delegates held a special session on the issues facing women and expressed the need for representation in decision-making forums,

"The conference succeeded in promoting the tradition of SHURA (mutual consultation) and it is hoped that this spirit prevails and develops in the broader Muslim community," the statement concluded.

Yusuf Saloojee, convener for the Transvaal, described the conference as historic as it expressed a diversity of views prevalent in the Muslim community in a spirit of goodwill and tolerance.

The ANC also expressed its wishes in a statement to the Muslim community of South Africa on the celebration of Eid-Ul-Fitr on April

"We believe that the Mus-

lim community has played an important role in the struggle against apartheid.

"The ANC would also like to utilise this opportunity to announced that it has met with President Arap Moi of Kenya to discuss the problems facing South African Muslim pilgrims going for Haj via Nairobi.

"Various Muslim organisations as well as UDF affiliates like the Natal and the Transvaal Indian Congress and the Call of Islam have raised this matter with a view to resolving it.

"The ANC believes that freedom of religion is a basic human right and is committed to removing all obstruction facing pilgrims as soon as possible

"President Moi has assured the ANC that he will remove all difficulties facing pilgrims. He is sympathetic to the plight of such pilgrims," the statement said.