

## Land Summit Report

### **New Nation Movement Christ-centered Land Summit 28 Feb – 1 March, Every Nation Parktown**

The subject of land is often seen as a sensitive, emotive and even divisive, but this was not the case at the recent Land Summit hosted by the New Nation Movement and Amos Agrimin. The summit brought together farmers cross the breath and length of the nation who shared the different solutions they have been implementing in their farms.

#### **Land, Identity and the national narrative**

Ben Alberts, the convener of the New Nation Movement explained that big challenge South Africa faces is that it does not have one single narrative that bring the nation together.

Currently the three dominant narratives that are pulling the nations in different directions, these are: the Liberation Movement Narrative, the Liberal and the Afrikaner narrative and it is all connected to the land. Others talk of being disposed, while others believe it was their divine right to take it away. As a result discussions on land become difficult because of the different point of departures that people come from.

He emphasized the need for a new narrative, of a new nation where all groups in South Africa will find a place of belonging.

#### **Land: Spiritual and Sacred**

Denise Woods, author of the book Reaping the Whirlwind of National Idolatry shared about the idolatrous practices that held the land captive over years. However, there has been a lot of prayer and intercession by different prayer groups in the nation to redeem the nation from idolatry. These prayers have served as a processes of plowing of the land and making it ready for a new season.

Dr. Alexandra Chisango shared the journey of Zimbabwe and land explaining that there is always a social and spiritual mandate when land is given. Land, explained responds like people, its speaks and if not cared for will vomit the people.

Land is a resource that can bring quick returns, address the issue of unemployment even of those who are no educated.

He commended the meeting saying, there was a time when Church community contributed to the nation building through education and provision of health services, but now the Church needed to provide leadership in the of economic development.

#### **General themes from the different speakers**

The general theme that came across all speakers was an acknowledgement that the land does not belong to anyone man but it belongs to God. God then gives land to people to steward and if they fail to use it in line with his principles, they lose it. The was also an understanding that God had given the farmers a role of stewardship as well as to be fathers in the nation because a farms is a best place of discipleship, training and development of the youth; as farms are also an important place for taking care of the poor and vulnerable in our communities.

Many of the speakers shared their personal journeys with God that brought them to a place of repentance for not fulfilling the mandate and valuing the land and profits above the people; as a result many of the farmers who were in that meeting had already begun changed the way they do business and their focus was now on unlocking the potential of the people who work in their farms.

- **New Prerogative (to give and serve as primary driving factor)**

Amongst the first speakers was Hennie Viljoen, founder of Amos Agrimin who spoke of a Radical Land Reform that Proposed at everyone must Give. In his proposal, he urged farmers to embrace a new model to transformation by Shifting the obligation to support Land Reform in the commercial agricultural sector from owners (who keep on changing) to the land that they own. Each farm needs to contribute a % of it's value to a land fund to buy commercial farms in the free market to establish young black and brown commercial farmers who are comprehensively trained and selected based on objective criteria. Those who own more than one farm, needs to give a % of the value of each farm.

Each farm that contribute to the land fund, according to the negotiated %, in return receives recognition by adding an entry on the title deed (as in the case of water rights) of that specific piece of land which confirms that this land has made it's final contribution to the solution for LR and therefore should be exempted (for at least for 99 years) from being expropriated without compensation. Hence, gives surety of ownership to farmers who seek it and voluntary give to the land fund. This will add value to the specific farm in the same way as water rights add value to farms.

If farmers were to lead in this initiative, they would be able to choose the right partners who would be able to ensure that agricultural production on the farms is not adversely affected, as opposed to land being grabbed by those who would not have the same level of commitment to the farm and the communities around. Other stakeholders such as government, financial institutions and mining companies also needed to give in order for a successful land reform. Commercial Farmers and agriculture value chain to give access to small farmers; Government to give security and acknowledgement, Banks to give favourable interest rates, Mining companies to give unused lands towards the overall project of land reform. At the end of this project someone in the audience from Zimbabwe shared how the farmers in Zimbabwe who had taken this approach found favour and communities protected their farms.

- **A change of hearts is needed not laws**

Annelise Crosby of Agri-SA spoke on the subject “ The heart of the law, and the law of the heart” highlighting that oppression and subjecting people to do anything against their will is not a long-term solution, and will eventually result in revolts, and revolutions. The other problem was that by changing the wording of the constitution will not solve the land question, and satisfy the frustration of the people and emphasized the need for sharing, mentorship, knowledge transfer coming from the hearts of people.

These words were echoes by Hannes Pretorius who said, farmers are the solution despite having been caused the problems. All that was needed was a change of heart, and as farmers come to accept that they are only stewards of God's land. And ought to focus their business in serving the communities. “We need a national change of heart in order to see transformation” said Pretorius who gave testimony of how this has changed their business model and the lives of farmers and the community in Ficksburg through their work called Missio Dei Foundation <https://youtu.be/TJ4w0W5ca-M>.

Kosie Van Zyl also testified how lives have been changed when he realised that he was loving the land and managing the people instead of loving the people and managing the land!” (Kosie van Zyl

<https://youtu.be/69v5QszDCRo>). He has since help people who were farmer workers on his farm to be farm owners and together they are making an enormous contribution to the community.

- **Mining and Agriculture**

Mining and Agriculture at the dawn of democracy were major contributors to the country's economy, and the contribution of mining to the development of the country cannot be ignored. The relationship between mining companies and farmers need to be developed in order to find solutions. Bernard Swanepoel former CEO of Harmony, spoke of the need to find win - win solutions between agriculture and mining, without anyone being exploited. This requires continued dialogue and building of bridges between mining companies and farmers, as well as government. In responding to a question from the audience the need to consolidate government planning for mining & energy, water, agriculture, rural development to one department of land affairs, he agreed there was need to review the way government is organized highlighting that some of the challenges and structures were inherited and that it was time to reflect on such.

- **Thoughts of moving forward: Next steps**

There is a need to address the youth unemployment rate in the nation and agriculture is key sector to address this issue as well as challenge of fatherlessness in the nation. Without being guided young people are susceptible to being recruited to criminal activities and being involved in many other social ills.

Mkangeli Matomela spoke farmers about the current court case that the New Nation Movement has taken up to challenge the inconsistencies between the Constitution and the Electoral Act of 1988 which does not allow independent candidates, to stand for public office, even though the Constitution Section 19 makes such provision. This removal of power from the voter to political parties has enabled corruption because public representatives are not accountable not accountable to communities but to political parties. The result is that community developments have not moved as they should, but are often politicized. He proposed the solution will be for South Africans to be able to vote directly for their representatives given the exposure of corruption in political parties.

Many other solutions were proposed, such as Land Value Tax, new incentives that government can give for the social responsibility CSI projects as well as pulling in resources to give greater access to the rest of the community. Many other speakers were given the platform to share their projects, as well as a young people who have an interest in agriculture as well as small scale farmers. Many were able to be paired with partners and a retired teacher turned small farmer shared her experiences and challenges with borehole water. She also received support from some of the water specialist that were in the room and there was a commitment to use this platform to connect people and bring solutions.

Amongst the closing speakers of this summit was Patrick Kuwana of Crossover Transformation Leadership, who spoke about a restorative economics. A new approach to economics must ensure there is a balancing of economic across the nation, where more people are able to work and have access to economic resources, training and skill development. Because a nation that has many people not working and without economic resources cannot prosper. He also highlighted that South Africa needed to deal with institutional structures that limit transformation as well as the spatial landscape.

Patrick also shared light to the unique role of the Khoi San people in South Africa's history, as the only group of people that has not shed blood for economic advancement, a result God has given them special grace and spiritual authority over the land, and it is for that reason they have come under massive attacks.

Hein Holm, who works with many different rural communities also reiterated the need to change the negative narrative around traditional tribal leadership. Sharing from his experiences that them as people who deeply desire to see their communities transformed. He concluded by saying.

*“I believe that this summit represented a fraction of the multiracial people of South Africa, processed and prepared by God, to tread outside of their own interest to pursue God’s agenda for the restoration our nation. Hope is rising through the voice and actions of the body of Christ. There is hope for our nation!”*

More details and detailed report of the Summit will be published on the website [www.landsummit.co.za](http://www.landsummit.co.za)

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