

South African cleric Beyers Naude succumbs

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa (AP) - Beyers Naude, an Afrikaner cleric who spent half his life using the bible to justify apartheid before becoming one of the anti-apartheid movement's most important moral voices, died early Tuesday, a family spokesman said. He was 89.

Naude had grown increasingly frail over the past six months and was taken to hospital last week with circulation problems blamed on his advanced age. He died around 4 a.m. at a retirement village in Johannesburg, said family spokesman and longtime friend Carl Niehaus.

South Africa's former White rulers denounced Naude as a traitor and tried to prevent him from spreading his message of racial tolerance. His church marginalized him and many Whites ostracized him.

But with the fall of apartheid a decade ago, Naude went from outcast to hero, and then President Nelson Mandela praised the "Afrikaner prophet" as a living spring of hope for racial reconciliation.

"His life is a shining beacon to all South Africans - both Black and White. It demonstrates what it means to rise above race, to be a true South African," Mandela said in a speech in 1995, marking Naude's 80th birthday.

Christiaan Frederick Beyers Naude was born in 1915 to a leading Afrikaner nationalist cleric who fought the British in the Boer War and helped found the Broederbond, or "Brotherhood," a secret society of Afrikaner leaders that eventually became synonymous with the apartheid government.

Naude followed his father's path, getting a degree in theology from the University of Stellenbosch, a center of Afrikaner nationalism, and becoming the youngest member of the Broederbond.

As a cleric in South Africa's Dutch Reformed Church, Naude spent years as an unquestioning spiritual leader for Afrikaners - the descendants of Dutch and French settlers - and their deeply religious National Party.

The church, which created biblical justifications for South Africa's brutal apartheid racism, was often called "the National Party at prayer," and Naude was seen as a rising religious and political star.

But after attending mixed-race church services in the 1950s, he began to have doubts about his church's doctrine.

The 1960 Sharpeville massacres, where government troops killed 69 Black demonstrators, sent Naude into an intense bout of soul searching and Bible study ending with his development of an alternative church theology that condemned racism.

When, with Naude's support, the World Council of Churches issued a statement rejecting apartheid, Prime Minister Hendrik Verwoerd led a protest that ended with the South African church withdrawing from the council. Naude refused to change his position.

"It was the beginning of loneliness and isolation, something that I would experience again and again in the years ahead,"



Former South African President Nelson Mandela (in the back) pushes wheelchair-bound fellow recipient and anti-apartheid stalwart Beyers Naude, after Mandela was granted the Freedom of the City of Johannesburg in a special ceremony in Soweto, South Africa, in July.

Naude once said.

He later helped found the Christian Institute, an organization that worked to promote reconciliation through interfaith dialogue.

In punishment, the church stripped him of his status as a minister. The government harassed him, and security police raided his home.

In 1977, authorities "banned" Naude for five years, a punishment that severely restricted his movement and his ability to meet with people.

Naude was later ordained in the African Reformed Church and succeeded Archbishop Desmond Tutu as head of the South African Council of Churches.

In 1987, Naude was part of an Afrikaner delegation which met Mandela's then banned African National Congress in exile in Dakar, Senegal.

After Mandela's government took power in 1994, Naude was hailed as a hero.

He was given a series of local and international awards and had streets, schools and a major square in Johannesburg named after him.

Naude said he was never bitter toward those in the apartheid government that harassed him. His only real regret was waiting so long to fight for his nation's oppressed.

"I'm grateful I managed to help some people at least," he said.

Funeral arrangements were not immediately announced.

He is survived by his wife, Ilse, and four children.

Victims of Sudan's other wars getting neglected

Related conflicts ongoing for the last 18 years

NAIROBI, Kenya (AP) - While the world focuses on the crisis in Darfur, three times as many people have been suffering for many more years in two other conflicts involving the Sudanese government.

And, while money has flowed in to help the 2 million people in Sudan's Darfur region who have been caught in 18 months of civil war, few funds are available for the 6 million Sudanese and Ugandans affected by related conflicts that have lasted more than 18 years.

"The magnitude of these other problems has been lost a bit because of the intensity of Darfur," said Dennis McNamara, the top U.N. official dealing with people displaced within their own country by war.

"You've got to deal comprehensively and even regionally if you want to stabilize these situations," he told a small group of foreign journalists Friday.

McNamara recently returned from a trip to northern Uganda, where more than 1.6 million people have fled their homes because of an 18-year-old civil war between government forces and the rebel Lord's Resistance Army.

The rebels, operating from bases in the southern region of neighboring Sudan, rarely try to hold territory in Uganda and concentrate their attacks on civilians. The group has abducted more than 30,000 women and children to use as servants, concubines and child soldiers, according to UNICEF.

As a result, more than 90 percent of the population in northern Uganda has taken shelter in 180 refugee camps.

"We're very concerned about (northern Uganda) being neglected. It's been very hard to maintain international attention and donors haven't funded it adequately," McNamara said.

Only 43 percent of what is needed to meet the minimum humanitarian needs in northern Uganda has been donated, he added.

In the 1980s and 1990s, the Ugandan government supported the southern-based Sudan People's Liberation Army in its battle with the

Sudanese government in Khartoum. Sudan's government, in return, backed the Lord's Resistance Army, a cult-like group that has little contact with the outside world.

Sudan and Uganda normalized relations in 2001 - and Ugandan troops have been allowed to operate in some parts of southern Sudan - but reports persist of senior Sudanese officials protecting Joseph Kony, the Ugandan rebel leader, as recently as last month.

Most observers agree that until Kony, who claims to be the messiah, surrenders, dies or is captured, the war in Uganda will continue.

While diplomats have focused on ending the fighting in Darfur in western Sudan, little is being said about the wars in northern Uganda and southern Sudan, which are both also linked to the Sudanese government, McNamara said.

"We can't be politically selective if we want to have a solution when the causes are inter-linked," he said. "If we stabilize one part, and not the other, the un-stabilized bit may destabilize the stabilized bit."

That seems to be happening in southern Sudan, where the southern rebels appeared to be within weeks of reaching a final peace agreement with the northern-based government and ending 21 years of civil war. Since the crisis escalated in Darfur, the southern peace talks have broken down.

The rebels, who have been fighting for greater autonomy from the north, said last week that government negotiators had unofficially told them the peace talks would not resume

until the Darfur crisis was solved.

The southern war has left more than 2.5 million people dead, mostly from hunger and disease, and has driven more than 4 million people from their homes.

The United Nations has appealed for \$153 million, but has received only \$17 million in donations, said Ben Parker, spokesman for the U.N. humanitarian coordinator in Sudan.

He said most of the funds have been withheld in anticipation of a final peace deal, but that donor spending on Darfur has also had an impact.

Geographically, the three wars are also inter-linked. The fighting in Darfur is within 310 miles of southern rebel bases and the Ugandan rebels are based in mountains located between Sudanese rebel and government forces.

The Darfur rebels started their offensive just as the southern talks were bearing fruit, a fact that few observers think is an accident. The southern rebels had won important concessions from the government, which are very similar to what the western rebels demand for Darfur.

In the meantime, more than 6 million people live in squalor under plastic sheets, crammed into camps without basic security. But while Darfur gets headlines, the chronic problems in Sudan and northern Uganda are overlooked.

"It's one of these typical, lingering, painful, nasty conflicts (the donors) are fed up with, to be honest," McNamara said. "But the people on the ground are suffering, they are paying a very high price."

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