

ARTHUR KANODEREKA

"You can hardly make your enemy a friend if you won't meet him. If we are people who listen to God and want to strive ahead, we have got to love those who shoot us, who put land-mines for us - men who you know killed your father."

These were some of Arthur Kanodereka's last words, in a talk to a group of young people, two days before he died. They included students, black and white, from the University of Rhodesia. In this suffering land, where private armies as well as guerilla forces are killing and terrifying the villages and now entering the cities, and where passions of hate, revenge and fear assail every heart daily, Arthur's challenge points the way ahead. In the same talk, he said, "Thank God for the four moral standards, and for listening to God every morning, when He says, 'My son, there is something for you to do.'"

The full story of his last, daring journey to Lusaka and Maputo, and then of his bid to reach and win the leaders inside Rhodesia who had opposed him, has yet to be told. His passion was to end the anguish of his people, to give the young men of Zimbabwe a better road to the future, and to "raise a standard to which the wise and honest can repair."

Since his death, messages have come from the ends of the earth to Gladys and the family. Many say simply, "We shall never forget him." A cable from Britain, from the King and Queen of Roumania and others who had worked with Arthur in Rhodesia in recent years, said, "He lives. He followed his Master's footsteps. His victorious love, courageous fight and forgiveness are a pattern for the Zimbabwe he lived and died for. His death will not be in vain. He joins a noble army."

Newspaper tributes from India, the United States, Britain, Denmark and Sweden bear witness to his world-wide influence. The Salisbury "Herald", in a leading editorial, wrote, "The yearning for peace, shared by the great majority of people in Rhodesia, should be harnessed into something great and powerful. For this to happen, we need leaders able to talk freely to all the factions involved - men like the Rev. Arthur Kanodereka. Surely there must be some with both the courage and conviction to inherit the mantle?"

The challenge to take up Arthur's task rang through two great Memorial Services. The Trinity Methodist Church in the centre of Salisbury was filled by an unprecedented gathering, almost equally white and black; his own church in Harare, where he had led so many people of all races to find God's uniting plan, was packed; the women in their red Methodist uniforms and white caps on one side of the aisle, the men crowding the benches on the other.

So many spoke in heart-felt tribute. Stan O'Donnell, who was Secretary of Foreign Affairs for eight years, said, "Arthur was my friend. He helped me to move away from bitterness." With him spoke Alec Smith and Sir Cyril Hatty. The President of the Methodist Conference, the Rev. Andrew Ndhlela, led both services; and national, district and circuit leaders of the Methodist Church all honoured him. Isaac Samuriwo, a prominent figure in business and public life, told how he had introduced Arthur to Moral Re-Armament, in his home in 1975. "I always knew Arthur was meant to be a great leader for our people," he said. "When he met Moral Re-Armament, he found absolute honesty and purity, and became that leader." Arthur's colleague in Harare, the Rev. N. Chiyoka, said, "Arthur knew how to forgive and be forgiven. If there are any who still oppose him, it is because they have refused his outstretched hand."

On the morning before he was killed, Arthur told some friends, "I want a quiet Christmas, when I can let God show me what more I can shed from my life so that I can be more like Christ."