

# HERALD

EDITORIAL PAGE

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# Liberty isn't free

LIBERTY is often demanded as if it were some quality easily and cheaply bestowed on people. It is much more than a political concept.

Political freedom is important, but everyone needs to find the way to true freedom that liberates the human spirit. My own road to that goal has not been easy.

I am grateful for the many privileges into which I was born. Our farm was high in the mountains, with a severe climate, subject to droughts, far from town. My father was strict, hard-working and progressive. Establishing and developing a farm in those days demanded thrift and determination. The care, struggle and responsibility of my parents made it possible for me to go to a good school which should have equipped me to enjoy true freedom.

Though I was eligible to vote, to speak at meetings, I

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**East Cape farmer Roland Kingwill writes of his personal battle for freedom, justice, fair dealing and respect for human dignity.**

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kept silent. I took no responsibility because I lacked inner freedom; bound by self-consciousness and fear.

For me this was one of the most difficult bonds to break. For a lonely farm child to be thrust among a group of school children was overwhelming. I was so shy that when asked my first name I gave a false one, Piet, which followed me all my schooldays. I overcame this self-conscious syndrome only when I found an idea bigger than myself and became part of a force of men and women dedicated to building a

world of peace and freedom, under God's direction.

This concept so caught my imagination that I was prepared to take any steps needed for effective action. I realised I needed to be honest about hidden thoughts, feelings and actions. To measure my past and to base my future on absolute standards of honesty, purity, unselfishness and love. This was the first step towards a liberating freedom.

A second step was to face bitterness in my heart, and especially in regard to one man whom I felt had cheated me in a business deal. I

visited him and apologised for my feelings. I expected hostility, but found a friend, and freedom from hate.

I began to mend other relationships. There were my farm workers... to ensure discipline I used to give them, each morning, detailed orders for the day's work. I would berate them soundly if any detail had not been obeyed implicitly. This led to strained relationships, and even resignations. Came the day when I met the men one morning and apologised for my rough treatment and told them I wanted to start a new co-operative style of management. This led immediately to happier and more efficient work on the farm.

It was more than a step toward better farm relationships. I had broken the binding power of my sense of superiority towards black people, and a communication barrier.

Having embarked on the voyage of exploration to find the treasure of peace and freedom for my country, it became clear that to remain a slave to cigarettes, beer and brandy was illogical. This further battle had to be fought and won — but not without wounds and pain.

Though my first hesitant steps on the farm had broken wrong attitudes toward other races it was not until I attended a conference in another African country that I learnt I could work on a basis of freedom and equality with African leaders.

The conference included white and black South Africans, besides many from other countries.

One day a thick-set black man spoke for the first time at the conference. He said: "Here I have seen black men change and white men change, and I myself have decided to change."

He made an impassioned plea for our finding together the liberty God ordained for man.

The speaker was Dr William Nkomo, from Pretoria. He had grown up in poverty, but had worked hard, and risen to a place of leadership among his people and in his church. He had been one of the founders of the ANC Youth

League. I had the privilege of working with him often and know that from that day until his death he fought with great courage a continuous battle against division and discrimination.

He often said publicly: "I still fight for the rights of my people, but I fight with clean hands and a pure heart."

I have learnt that everyone can find the way to true liberty. It does not depend on education, colour or creed, but on a sincere, open-hearted commitment to work for God's rule in the lives of men — liberated from fear of domination by race, class or colour, but determined to be governed by people who respect and apply the standards of integrity, justice, fair-dealing, and respect for human dignity.

We can win this battle for freedom if enough of us decide to do it together.