



THE UNIVERSITY OF WINNIPEG

**September 23, 2004
News Release**

Archbishop Pius Ncube of Zimbabwe: Human Rights Champion To Visit University of Winnipeg

WINNIPEG— Hidden from a world whose gaze has been fixed on Iraq, a full-scale reign of terror has been unleashed on opponents of the Zimbabwean President, Robert Mugabe. Or so says writer Basildon Peta in the London-based news.independent.co.uk/

Archbishop Pius Ncube of Bulawayo, Zimbabwe would not disagree.

Mugabe has relied on violence and routine misuse of official power to stifle dissenters, but Ncube will not be silenced. And for his stand against human rights violations in Zimbabwe, Ncube has been subject to smear campaigns, official obstruction, and death threats. And yet, the Archbishop continues to lead Zimbabwe's embattled human rights movement, speaking out for justice, truth, and an end to political violence.

Ncube is widely respected in his home country and internationally for his efforts to draw attention to the breakdown in the rule of law in Zimbabwe and for challenging these violations. "I am not going to be quiet when my people are suffering," Archbishop Ncube has said. "I have a right to talk. That is why I was called to this office—to talk on behalf of the suffering."

As part of the University's Quest Series and in conjunction with the History Department, **Archbishop Ncube** will be at **The University of Winnipeg** to discuss human rights in Africa today on:

Monday, September 27, 2004

- ***Human Rights in Africa Today* w/Archbishop Pius Ncube
12:30 p.m. -1:20 p.m.**
- ***"I will not shut up": Human Rights in Zimbabwe* w/Archbishop Pius Ncube
7:30 p.m.-9:30 p.m.**

**Both lectures will be held in Room 113 Lockhart Hall at
The University of Winnipeg, 515 Portage Avenue. Admission is free.**

The University of Winnipeg, located in the heart of the city, is a compact, caring community committed to access and excellence in the arts and sciences. Ranked by Maclean's magazine as one of Canada's top ten undergraduate universities, The University of Winnipeg is home to more than 8,600 full- and part-time students.

Established in 1871 as Manitoba College, The University of Winnipeg has a proud tradition preparing students to think critically and creatively, and to live fully in the world.

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BACKGROUNDER: ARCHBISHOP PIUS NCUBE

Zimbabwe today is a country in crisis. In recent years, the government of Robert Mugabe has relied on violence and routine misuse of official power to stifle dissent. Human rights activists are attacked and jailed, women are raped because of their family's associations with government opponents, and those in the political opposition are arbitrarily detained and tortured for their peaceful political activities. The government has severely undermined the independence of the judiciary, enacted repressive legislation, and forcibly shut down the independent press.

These and other rights violations have contributed to an escalating humanitarian crisis. Today there are serious food shortages in Zimbabwe, massive job losses, and a collapse in the country's public health system at a time when the HIV/AIDS pandemic afflicts tens of thousands of Zimbabweans.

In the midst of this crisis, Archbishop Ncube has emerged as one of the leading champions of human rights in Zimbabwe. His has given voice to thousands of Zimbabweans whose daily suffering is too often dismissed or ignored in Africa and elsewhere.

Earlier in the summer, in an op-ed in the *New York Times*, Secretary of State Colin Powell decried the situation in Zimbabwe, writing:

“A brave man recently met with me and described how life in his country has become unbearable. ‘There is too much fear in the country, fear of the unknown and fear of the known consequences if we act or speak out,’ explained Pius Ncube, the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Bulawayo, Zimbabwe. Yet Archbishop Ncube speaks out fearlessly about the terrible human rights conditions in Zimbabwe, and is threatened almost every day with detention or worse.”

Archbishop Ncube was ordained in 1973. He became the first black prelate of the Bulawayo diocese in 1998. He became the Chairperson of the Amani Trust (Matabeleland), an organization that assists victims of torture and documents political violence. Using this platform, he systematically reported on a pattern of gross human rights violations. The Mugabe government responded with threats and intimidation, and in 2002 the Amani Trust was forced to suspend its operations. Earlier this year Archbishop Ncube became Chairperson of a new organization, the Solidarity Peace Trust, which has been created to assist victims of human rights violations and to promote justice and peace in Zimbabwe.

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