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Dear Friends,

On January 1, the people of Namibia celebrated their first New Year in over a century as citizens of a free and sovereign nation. The lowering of the South African flag over Windhoek on March 21, 1990 was an historic victory for all of the peoples of southern Africa, a dramatic high point in a year of unparalleled political change around the world.

Namibia's transition from apartheid colony to constitutional democracy has enormous implications for South Africa, where the search for a negotiated end to white domination has finally begun. A peaceful, prosperous and non-racial Namibia, with its system of one-person, one-vote, majority rule, would be a powerful model for change in South Africa.

The first months of Namibian independence are the subject of the new edition of the ecumenical newsletter Dateline:Namibia. It chronicles the impressive progress made by the liberation movement SWAPO in knitting together a government and a people deeply divided along racial, regional and economic lines. The issue also examines the changing role of the church, the international community and the solidarity movement in supporting economic and social transformation in Namibia and South Africa.

But it will also be the last issue of the newsletter devoted exclusively to Namibia. For years Dateline sought to penetrate the veil of official censorship and lack of media interest, to expose South African colonialism in Namibia. With independence, that task is complete.

The task ahead is to redouble our efforts to support the South African people, together with their brothers and sisters in Namibia, Angola, and the other Frontline States, in the final struggle against the last bastion of white supremacy in Africa -- apartheid South Africa itself.

In solidarity,

Jennifer Davis
Executive Director