

ORGANIZATIONS CONCERNED WITH RACE RELATIONS

THE CHURCHES

Ecumenical moves

As mentioned in previous issues of this *Survey*, a Church Unity Commission has been meeting at intervals over some years to lay the groundwork for a possible future union of the Anglican, Methodist, United Congregational, Presbyterian, Bantu Presbyterian and Tsonga Presbyterian Churches. According to the issue of *EcuNews* for 9 February, this Commission completed a draft "Declaration of Intent to Unite". The next step was for each church to consider this. Comments on the draft were requested.

A church has been established in Sandton, adjoining Johannesburg, to serve all four denominations.

For the first time an African, the Rev. James J. R. Jolobe, has been appointed as Moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa. The Rev. J. C. Mvusi, elected president of the Methodist Church during 1972, took the chair at the church's annual conference in October.

Justice and Reconciliation

The S.A. Council of Churches has established a Division of Justice and Reconciliation to investigate questions of racial justice, particularly within the churches themselves. It is composed of black and white representatives of member-churches.

Discussions with the World Council of Churches

EcuNews Bulletin for 29 January stated that the World Council of Churches (WCC) reported that grants had been made from a special fund to combat racism to organizations in five continents, to be used for humanitarian, and not military, purposes. Organizations in Southern Africa that had received grants were:

Luthuli Memorial Foundation—R1 750

Mozambique Institute of Frelimo—R17 500

Pan-African Congress—R1 750

South West Africa People's Organization—R14 000

National Union for the Total Independence of Angola—
R4 200

People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola—R7 000

Revolutionary Government of Angola-in-Exile—R7 000.

The WCC reported, too,¹ that it had issued lists of more than 1 000 corporations or firms in the United States, Britain, European countries, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand that were directly involved in investment or trade in Southern Africa. It announced that it had sold its holdings in these bodies, amounting to about \$1.5 million.

Previous issues of this *Survey* report the opposition of churches in South Africa to both these decisions. The Prime Minister announced during 1971 that he would not allow any affiliation fees or other funds to be sent to the WCC from South Africa.

A meeting of the central committee of the WCC was held in Geneva during August. Member-churches in South Africa decided to send representatives, who would have observer-status, with the right to speak but not to vote. The S.A. Council of Churches stated² that the churches concerned had agreed on three main areas which would form the basis of their representations:

- (a) the rejection of violence and terror in all forms as a means to political change and of maintaining oppression;
- (b) the need for continuing dialogue with the WCC;
- (c) a commitment to combat racism, injustice, and oppression by all means consistent with the Gospel.

The delegation from South Africa was composed of five white and six black members. One of them was Mr. John Rees, secretary-general of the S.A. Council of Churches. He is reported to have said, before leaving,³ "The S.A. Council of Churches is opposed to violence in all its forms, and this includes the violence of our Government in its handling of blacks in this country. But we are equally against the type of violence perpetrated by terrorists".

Mr. Rees added, the report stated, that he believed the WCC was being naïve about the ultimate destination of some of the grants it made to certain organizations. It should be ensured that the funds were used for the purpose for which they were intended—for humanitarian, health, and educational projects. In a formal statement issued earlier⁴ the (Anglican) Church of the Province of South Africa had expressed a similar view — that the WCC's representation of the special fund as being simply for humanitarian purposes was unsatisfactory, and some would say even dishonest.

Mr. Rees pointed out that much larger grants than those distributed from the WCC's special fund to combat racialism had been made to South African agencies from the WCC's division of inter-church aid and refugee world service. Over the past ten years, probably about R3½-million had been contributed towards

¹ Above-quoted report as supplemented in *The Star*, 25 August.

² *Star*, 26 July.

³ *Rand Daily Mail*, 11 August.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 30 June.

the building of churches, theological seminaries, and mission hospitals, and towards the salaries of church, health, and agricultural officers.

The central committee of the WCC discussed the work and future mandate of the Programme to Combat Racism. According to various Press reports of 25 to 29 August, the director of the Programme pointed out that racism and social injustice were not confined to certain countries or continents, but were world problems. In a study document presented to the committee reference was made to the existence of oppressive social and political structures in Asian countries as well as in Southern Africa, and to discrimination by Eastern European and other post-revolutionary governments against those who dissented from official doctrines. Strong objection was raised by Orthodox Church members to the mention of Eastern European countries, and they succeeded, by majority vote, in having the relevant paragraph deleted from the document. But a number of speakers warned that failure to pursue the Eastern situation would draw into question the WCC's integrity and credibility. Dr. Alex L. Boraine from South Africa registered his dismay at the deletion of this paragraph, and pleaded that the WCC should be consistent.

The central committee accepted recommendations in the report that a continuing study be made of the relation of Christians to violence, and of appropriate initiatives to stimulate and assist churches in more courageous non-violent action in support of the oppressed. Dr. Boraine is reported to have expressed appreciation of the emphasis placed on non-violent action. "We are agonising in South Africa," he said, "and it is certainly no easy decision that has been taken by the churches we seek to represent. And in that kind of agony, the helpful study that has been proposed is going to be of inestimable value to us".

Statement issued by the S.A. Council of Churches in October

On 5 October, the executive of the S.A. Council of Churches issued the following statement to the Press:

"The executive discussed at considerable length and with a deep sense of urgency many of the situations facing the church in South Africa at present, as well as issues involving the total life of the country.

"Detailed discussions centred around the question of the issue and withdrawal of passports and the refusal of visas, the impact of the Schibusch commission, the situation among students in S.A. and police action in the recent Carletonville shootings.

"The executive viewed recent actions of the Government, especially the withdrawal of the passport of Dr. Beyers Naudé, in a serious light and noted a request contained in an urgent telegram from the Netherlands Council of Churches that the SACC inter-

cede on Dr. Naudé's behalf. It was felt that these actions by the Government would lead to growing tension between church and State in South Africa.

"However, it was also felt that there was a communications gap between the parties involved in this tension and that they often operated from different premises.

"In an attempt to bridge this gap the executive decided to seek an interview for leaders of the churches with the Honourable the Prime Minister and members of his Cabinet as soon as possible to convey to them the views and feeling of the council on the above-mentioned issues and on many disturbing elements emerging within the life of South Africa. The executive also felt it necessary to discover at first hand the premises on which the Government was taking its actions.

"The executive further decided that it should communicate the deep concern felt by churches in the council to opposition political parties in South Africa.

"In addition, the executive felt that an urgent meeting of the leaders of the various churches in South Africa should be summoned to discuss the many matters requiring serious attention touched on at the executive meetings. Steps are immediately being taken to arrange meetings with all the parties mentioned in this statement."

Manifesto by the Christian Institute

During June, the Christian Institute of Southern Africa released its manifesto of Christian principles, which had been under preparation for about a year. Christians in South Africa were called upon to obey God rather than man, and to reject racism, apartheid, and Christian nationalism even if this meant civil disobedience or passive resistance. Guidelines were suggested for action in bringing about Christian change in the fields of opportunity, fellowship, sharing, caring, authority, responsibility to oppose and suggest, and the existing South African society. The proposals would open the way for the establishment of confessing communities.

African Independent Churches

As mentioned on page 31 of last year's *Survey*, in 1965 the Christian Institute helped to found the African Independent Churches' Association (AICA), but the latter became autonomous from the beginning of 1973. According to *EcuNews Bulletin* for 25 May and 7 September, two splinter groups have broken away from it, the Reformed Independent Churches Association (RICA) and the African Independent Churches Movement (AICM). It is being suggested that the three should form a federation. Together they represent about one-third of the African independent

churches in South Africa, and have more than a million members. It was widely reported, later in the year, that AICA was in serious financial difficulties, and there were allegations of mismanagement. According to *EcuNews* for 5 October, the General Synod of the Bantu Presbyterian Church had appointed a commission to inquire into the affairs of the AICA.

Subsequently, on 28 November, it was announced that the president of the AICA could not be traced and had been deposed. All the members of the staff were being dismissed because there were no funds to pay their salaries.

In a doctoral thesis, Dr. Martin West of the School of African Studies at the University of Cape Town predicted that the increase in the membership of independent churches would continue at the expense of support for established mission churches in the African community. The main reason he advanced was the appeal of the prophetic healing services held by the independent churches.⁵

The Dutch Reformed Churches

A wide-ranging series of 15 resolutions dealing with race attitudes and relations was discussed at a meeting of the Reformed Ecumenical Synod held in Sydney during August 1972. They were published in full in South Africa late that year. The resolutions were accepted, by majorities of delegates in one or two cases, but were advisory until they had been considered by the synods of the respective member-churches.

Leaders of two South African Dutch Reformed Churches were present — the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk and the Gereformeerde Kerk. It was widely stated early in 1973 that they had accepted 14 of the 15 resolutions, rejecting only one that dealt with racially mixed marriages. Later, argument developed over whether another resolution dealing with mixed worship had been accepted. The Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk was not present, as it is not a member of the ecumenical movement.

Among the resolutions that were accepted by the South Africans was the final one, reading, "Recognising that the real problem of race relations in member churches of the Reformed Ecumenical Synod lies not so much in the area of the acceptance but in that of the application of the above principles, Synod urges its member churches:

- (a) to put forward renewed efforts to live wholly in accord with biblical norms;
- (b) to reject every form of racial discrimination and racism;
- (c) to reject every attempt to maintain racial supremacy by military, economic, or any other means;
- (d) to reject the subtle forms of racial discrimination found in

⁵ *Star*, 8 and 9 March.

The Internal Situation in South West Africa, by Chief Clemens Kapuuo (RR. 12/1973), with a lead-in paper by Advocate Bryan O'Linn (RR. 13/1973).

Die Arbeidsituasie² in Suid-Wes Afrika, by Miss Rauha Voipio (RR. 2/1973), with a lead-in paper by Mr. John Kane-Berman (RR. 10/1973).

A one-and-a-half day conference on "Closing the Wage Gap" was held to follow the Council meeting, arranged jointly by the S.A. Institute of Personnel Management and the Institute of Race Relations. Dr. Arnt Spandau spoke on *The National Income in South Africa: its Growth and Distribution* (RR. 3/1973), comment being led by Professor Sheila T. van der Horst (RR. 11/1973). This was followed by a symposium on "Patterns of Progress", dealing with characteristics and trends evident in wage negotiations in South Africa, the participants being Mr. J. H. Thomas, Mr. B. Nicholson, and Dr. L. Cortis.

Mr. D. A. Etheredge gave a paper entitled *Wages, Productivity, and Opportunity* (RR. 1/1973), comment being led by Mr. J. A. Horner. Finally, there was a panel discussion on "Labour Relations and the Future of Trade Unions". The members of the panel were Mr. J. H. Liebenberg, Mr. R. Webb, and Mr. R. V. Sutton. Chairmen during the proceedings were Mr. D. C. Grice and Mr. S. R. Back.

The Institute of Race Relations has published *The Road Ahead*, which is an up-dated statement of its standpoint and policy. Further publications produced during the year are listed in its Annual Report.

Other work of the Institute is mentioned in relevant chapters of this *Survey*.

ABE BAILEY INSTITUTE OF INTER-RACIAL STUDIES

The Abe Bailey Institute of Inter-Racial Studies held its annual research workshop on "The responsibility of organized labour in South Africa". It continues to hold regular seminars, bringing together research scholars in various fields and a cross-section of the community of various language, racial, political, and religious groups.

Among the research grants made during the year was one for a major work on the socio-cultural and political history of the Coloured people. The Institute is engaged in a study of social and occupational mobility among the various population groups in South Africa.

SPRO-CAS

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Africa's Political Alternatives, and a comprehensive book called *A Taste of Power*, by Peter Randall, drawing together the major conclusions and recommendations contained in the ten reports.

The study project, sponsored jointly by the S.A. Council of Churches and the Christian Institute of Southern Africa, comes to an end at the close of 1973. Its director, Mr. Randall, has launched a Programme for Social Change, which will take over the publishing role of Spro-cas, and plans to develop research and action programmes, and promote communication and co-operation among groups and individuals who become members.

WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS

The Black Sash continues to run Advice Offices for Africans in Johannesburg and Cape Town (the latter in co-operation with the Institute of Race Relations); and has opened a similar office in Durban. Another has been opened in Grahamstown, with the help of the Institute of Race Relations and Rhodes University.

It continues, too, to hold protest demonstrations to keep members of the public aware of matters for concern. During 1973 demonstrations have been held against the breaking up of African families, against continued bannings and restrictions imposed by the Government, and against the Gatherings and Demonstrations Bill.

The National Council of Women of S.A. has interested itself, among other things, in family life, schooling and recreation for children in places of safety, and the supply of text books to African pupils. Various local branches have undertaken such activities as organizing home industries at the Limehill re-settlement area for Africans, assisting with welfare work at the Dimbasa re-settlement area, running literacy classes, and establishing a library for Coloured people and Africans.

OTHER ORGANIZATIONS³

The South Africa Foundation was founded some 13 years ago "to promote international understanding of South Africa, her achievements, her problems, and her potential, and by so doing to advance the welfare of all her peoples." Its trustees include many of the country's leading professional, business, and academic leaders. Until recently it was an all-white body, but at a meeting in March it was decided that its Council "should give early consideration to the nomination as trustees of suitably qualified persons from all or any of the racial or ethnic groups of South Africa". It was announced in June that eleven prominent Africans, Coloured, and Indians had accepted invitations to become trustees.

The South African Bureau of Racial Affairs (Sabra), assisted

³ Voluntary organizations concerned with education, welfare, etc. are referred to in subsequent chapters.

by the Department of National Education, has continued to arrange congresses for white high school pupils at which officials and Afrikaner academics give addresses on aspects of the Government's racial policies, stressing the task of young people in promoting separate development. It also arranged five congresses on national development for high school pupils in various African homelands.

At a multi-disciplinary conference held in Grahamstown early in 1973 an African Studies Research Association was established. The chairman of the first committee is Professor C. Webb of the University of Natal.

South Africa Voluntary Service has branches among students at all the English-medium "white" universities. Members run tutorial schemes for Africans, and spend vacations and weekends working with members of local African communities in South Africa and neighbouring countries in building classrooms, clinics, storerooms and other projects needed locally.

Similarly, students from Afrikaans-medium universities such as Stellenbosch, Pretoria, and Potchefstroom have undertaken projects such as building classrooms for a community of Bushmen, a community centre for Coloured people, and schools for Africans. Tutorials are organised.

Medical students continue to run clinics for black people in various areas, and to spend vacations assisting at hospitals in the homelands and neighbouring countries. The voluntary work done in Swaziland and Lesotho by teams of medical personnel from the Republic has been described in previous issues of this *Survey*.⁴

CONFERENCE ON FEDERALISM⁵

A conference on federalism was convened in East London during November by Mr. Donald J. Woods, editor of the *Daily Dispatch*. There were some 45 delegates, including six African homeland leaders, representatives of various schools of thought among the Coloured and Indian communities, members of the Progressive Party, Verligte Action, and Mr. Theo Gerdener's group, and prominent academics. The editors or political commentators of at least five other newspapers attended as observers.

The purpose of the conference was to explore what common ground existed on the idea of federalism as a solution to the country's problems. The Africans had come straight from a summit conference of homeland leaders, where most of those present agreed in principle to promote the concept of a federation of black states. Chief Gatsha Buthelezi told the East London conference, however, that as he saw it, if such a federation were established the door would be open for non-black states to join. He outlined the idea of a "Federal Union of Autonomous States of Southern Africa",

⁴ e.g. 1971 *Survey* page 56.

⁵ Compiled from various Press reports between 9 and 12 November.

which would "guarantee the identity and cultural autonomy of every racial or ethnic group".

The delegates issued a declaration of consensus, which stated,⁶ "This conference of South Africans of all races affirms the need for urgent change in South Africa.

"It declares its belief in the fundamental right of each citizen, irrespective of race, creed, or colour, to live a full life with dignity, opportunity, and justice under the Rule of Law. It agrees, against a background of the realities of South Africa, that the federal form of government, embodying autonomous states free of racial exclusiveness, is most likely to create the conditions under which these rights will be achieved. In view of fears of group domination and discrimination, the right of each individual should be protected by a bill of rights entrenched in the federal constitution."

⁶ *Sunday Times*, 11 November.