

# Christian tradition backs a "just war", says Hurley.

**T**he Archbishop of Durban and Chairman of the Catholic Bishops' Conference, the Most Rev. Denis Hurley, responded publicly to his meeting with Chief M G Buthelezi and Inkatha officials.

Chief Buthelezi had asked him to state whether the church regarded the ANC's programme of using violence to bring about a dictatorial socialist one-party state in South Africa as morally legitimate.

In an interview with the Durban Daily News (August 23, 1986) Archbishop Hurley was quoted as saying that the church had never approved of violence in South Africa — "neither the institutionalised violence of the state nor the violence of the ANC armed struggle."

He added, however, that the church had to respect the consciences of people who came to a different decision from church leaders in this matter.

Archbishop Hurley said in his statement that in responding to Chief Buthelezi he would like to refer to a meeting held between representatives of the SA Catholic Bishops' Conference and the ANC in Lusaka in April.

"One of the ANC delegates referred to a recent publication of the Holy See on liberation theology in which it was stated that if all other means failed recourse could be had to violence in the struggle against oppression.

"We conceded that this was a position accepted in traditional Christian theology — the theology of a just war and the

**"We do not approve of violence . . . however, we have to respect the consciences of people who have come to a different decision from church leaders in this matter . . ." Archbishop Denis Hurley.**

overthrowing of tyranny or just revolution. The ANC representatives said they did not expect us to support them in their decision to wage the armed struggle but that we had to admit that they had Christian tradition on their side."

Archbishop Hurley said that he had told Chief Buthelezi that the church had never approved of violence in South Africa, neither the institutionalised violence of the state nor the violence of the ANC armed struggle.

"But, we had to respect the conscience of people who come to a different decision from church leaders in this

**"ANC delegates justify their recourse to the armed struggle because they have got nowhere after 50 years of attempted peaceful persuasion . . . they (told us) they did not expect us to support them in their decision to wage the armed struggle but that we had to admit that they had Christian tradition on their side . . ."**

matter . . .

"I also stated that there was an abundance of evidence in history concerning recourse to violence in an attempt to right wrongs. It would be naïve to believe that such violent reactions could be easily eliminated.

"I also mentioned that in our Lusaka conversation the Catholic Bishops had raised the issue of indiscriminate bombing and attacks on civilians and mentioned that the ANC delegates had replied that it was not their strategy to make direct attacks on civilians but that they were not always able to control their representatives.

"I recalled also that we had endeavoured to persuade the ANC that they should deplore and repudiate indiscriminate bombings."

Archbishop Hurley added that in the meeting with Chief Buthelezi and Inkatha officials he had pointed out that the Zulu King had said: "I myself believe that we have not yet reached a stage when I can call on my people to take up arms. I do not say that such a time will never come. It may well come but this is not yet the time."

The Archbishop said Chief Buthelezi had told him that this was also the position of Inkatha. It had never ruled out violence entirely.

"I replied to Chief Buthelezi that the difference therefore between Inkatha and the ANC was a matter of timing. The ANC had judged that the time for the armed struggle had already come. Inkatha had not."

**The crucial central issue has been avoided:**

# Is the ANC fighting a just war?

**VIOLENCE**  
**NEGOTIATION**

**C**hief M G Buthelezi says he believes that Archbishop Hurley has avoided several crucial questions in the church/violence debate. Every Christian knew that there was a division between pacifists who did not believe in a just war under any circumstances and those who believed a just war was morally justifiable. Archbishop Hurley had correctly pointed out that he and Inkatha had never precluded the possibility of a day when black South Africans would have to fight a just war. Inkatha, however, believed that the time had not yet come for a just war.

The Archbishop's remark was, in the circumstances, glib.

**Does Archbishop Denis Hurley mean that the Church has taken a stand in opposition to violence but believes that individual Christians are free to adopt a contrary stand?**

Archbishop Hurley still did not say whether the Catholic Church believed a just war was at present being fought by the External Mission of the ANC and others.

**Is what the Archbishop says not a round-about way of saying that the Catholic Church does not know where it stands on the issue of violence? (See opposite page, statement by Archbishop Hurley)**

He avoided stating whether the Catholic Church believed a just war was being fought. Now was not the time for theological semantics.

"We need the Churches to boldly proclaim Christian responsibility in this time of crisis. Christians need the guidance of their Churches.

"If, in the view of the Catholic Church, a just war is not now being waged, then the Arch-

bishop should say so simply and boldly." If there was not a just war, then the External Mission of the ANC needed to be condemned for resorting to violence and others needed to be praised for not succumbing to the temptation of seeking recourse against injustice through violence.

**The Catholic Church must surely by now either believe that a just war is being fought or that a just war is not being fought.**

The other issue which Archbishop Hurley avoided in this debate was whether the Church was bound by its own perceptions and its own responsibility to the Gospel to stand by the poor and the oppressed who had not yet turned to the use of violence for political purposes.

"I see no encouragement in Archbishop Hurley's statement directed at the millions of black South Africans who cling tenaciously to the view that it is right to continue employing democratic and non-violent means to bring about radical change."

Archbishop Hurley had said in a statement that the Church did not approve of violence but it had to "... respect the consciences of people who have come to a different decision from Church leaders in this matter ..."

Meanwhile, statistics showed that 335 people had died from the horror of "necklacing" (car tyres filled with petrol, placed around a victim's neck, and set alight) and that a further 269 people had been burnt to death by other means since the eruption of violence.

Chief Buthelezi said: "My question to Archbishop Hurley and to the Catholic Church remains: Where is the Catholic Church's total condemnation of this kind of brutality? Does Archbishop Hurley also leave it to individual Christian consciences to decide whether they tolerate their Church member's consciences approving of the "necklacing" of people? It is this kind of question which Archbishop Hurley avoids."

Archbishop Hurley had said that the Catholic Bishops had raised the question of indiscriminate bombing and attacks on

# Will the Church encourage blacks who cling to non-violent tactics?

civilians when they had met officials of the ANC Mission in Exile in Lusaka.

The ANC had replied that they were not always able to control their representatives.

"Naivety can sometimes be profound but this naivety in which Archbishop Hurley extricates himself from the question of the moral justification of "necklaces" and indiscriminate bombing is very, very irresponsible," said Chief Buthelezi.

"It is as though indiscriminate attacks on civilians are rare slips of control. They are, in fact, the name of the game.

"In broadcasts to black South Africa, the ANC Mission in Exile says the "necklace" is their weapon. Mr Oliver Tambo told British parliamentarians that it was not their weapon but he could not condemn the "necklace" method of burning people alive. The ANC Mission in Exile does not condemn what Archbishop Hurley regards as lapses of discipline.

**More than 600 people have been burnt to death since the eruption of violence in South Africa. Where is the Catholic Church's total condemnation of this kind of brutality?**

"The ANC Mission in Exile broadcasts to black South Africa that they should kill black town councillors and others they label "stooges". In their broadcasts they exhort black South Africans to spread civil war and to spread violence from black townships into white areas.

"Archbishop Hurley is very quiet on the

question of whether or not the Catholic Church agrees that black town councillors should be murdered."

**Does Archbishop Hurley also leave it to individual Christian consciences to decide whether they tolerate people "necklacing" people? And do they tolerate their Church members' consciences approving of the "necklacing" of people?**

The ANC had referred Archbishop Hurley and the Catholic Bishops to a recent publication of the Holy See on liberation theology.

Archbishop Hurley had said: "The ANC's representatives had said they did not expect us to support them in their decision to wage the armed struggle but that we had to admit that they had Christian tradition on their side."

Chief Buthelezi said the time had come when the Archbishop could not escape the question about the theological possibility of a just war. "Quite independently of whether or not a just war could now be morally justified in South Africa, my question is and I repeat it: Is the ANC Mission in Exile right now waging a just war?"

Chief Buthelezi said just wars did not give licence to immoral behaviour. The question of whether a just war could be waged should be separated from the question of whether the ANC Mission in Exile was actually waging a just war.

"Both these questions need to be answered and they need to be answered separately and clearly."

## Who Hurley supports

Archbishop Hurley acknowledges that he identifies with the United Democratic Front (which in turn supports the External Mission of the ANC) but says the UDF is not a political party but a coalition of associations.

At the same time he defends his flat refusal to conduct a prayer meeting at the April launch of the KwaZulu/Natal Indaba and to allow the Catholic Church to be observers because "this would amount to taking a political stand . . ."

The Indaba, meanwhile, is not a party political event. The Indaba is a non-racial cross-section of political opinion seeking to define non-violent changes that can be brought about at first and second tier levels of government.

Why can't Archbishop Hurley give his blessing to a sincere attempt by men and women of goodwill to do what the Indaba is doing?

Is the answer not to be found in the fact that he identifies with the UDF and the ANC Mission in Exile who have refused to participate in the

Indaba? Is this not party political?

Is it not true that Archbishop Hurley gauges black public opinion and the will of the black public in general to be truly reflected by black activists in the UDF and the ANC!

Archbishop Hurley knows that UDF leadership has no means of gauging the feelings of the membership of the conglomerate of organisations which have affiliated to the UDF.

And yet, he disregards Inkatha in spite of the fact that Inkatha has well worked democratic mechanisms to ensure that its leadership reflects the will of members.

He disregards the fact that Inkatha's members number over 1.3 million which makes it the largest black organisation ever to have emerged in the history of this country.

Is it not time that Archbishop Hurley named the countries in which the kind of struggle now being waged by the ANC Mission in Exile has actually produced the kind of justice the absence of which justified the armed struggle? Does not one armed struggle only lead to another armed struggle?