

Tutu Supports ANC But Not Its Methods

*Church "understands" support
for violence*

The world's Anglican Bishops attending the Lambeth Conference in Britain in August passed a resolution on "war, violence and justice" saying they "understood" the feelings of those who, "after exhausting all other ways, choose the way of armed struggle as the only way to justice..." The resolution caused immediate controversy and the Conference was charged by some newspapers as "blessing terror". A second resolution was then passed condemning all violence in Northern Ireland. The Conference was then accused of "inconsistency" as far as South Africa was concerned. The Conference resolution said war was "incompatible with the teaching and example of Our Lord Jesus Christ." It added "there is no true peace without justice" and that reforming unjust systems was "an essential element of our Biblical hope..." In subsequent interviews, the Archbishop of Cape Town, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, said that he condemned all violence, whether employed by those who wanted to overthrow an unjust system or those who defended it. However, he understood the motivations of those who, as a last resort, had turned to violence against an unjust government. "I say times without number until I have driven people to distraction that I am opposed to all forms of violence," he said. "That is why I have said I support the ANC insofar as it aims to

bring about a new kind of society in South Africa, but I do not support its methods. Yet I would say again without any sense of contradiction that I understand (them when) they say that they have exhausted all options and that is why they have chosen the way of the armed struggle." Although no Anglican church in South Africa has voted support for sanctions, the Lambeth Conference called on churches to support sanctions calculated to have the maximum effect in bringing apartheid to an end. It also voted overwhelmingly for church disinvestment from corporations with a "substantial" stake in

South Africa. At the same time, in the United States, Dr Mangosuthu Butheki warned of the dangers of a Christian absolutism leading churches to take sides in a South African situation in which there were no exclusively right or wrong sides. The church would err if it was not there on every side, encouraging all to do what they could in their own particular circumstances, he told ministers of the United Methodist Church in Dallas, Texas. He also cautioned against "Christian adventurism" on the part of what he called way-out church leaders. "The church errs when it abandons ordinary

folk to a fate of dying in a prematurely-called just war which cannot be won," he said. There was no one organisation which could bring about the liberation of South Africa on its own. Apartheid was an evil which had to be fought on every level at all times. For him this spelt out the need for black unity based on a common acceptance of the need for a multi-strategy approach. He said: "I cannot say that Christ is not there across our borders where revolutionaries are being trained. I cannot say that He is not there on our borders where soldiers are deployed against the revolutionaries. South Africa is a deeply polarised society and I know that Christ is there on both sides of every conflict. He is therefore in every organisation because no organisation is totally right and none is totally evil."

No cosmetic words can conceal the ugliness of what happened at the Lambeth Conference last week. No excuses will absolve the bishops of the Anglican Church of the evil they have done in proclaiming their "understanding" for murder, maiming and torture.

It does not matter that they immediately panicked over the uproar they had caused, and declared that they condemned all violence in Northern Ireland. They still offer their tacit support for terrorism in

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