



january . januarie . 1976

REGISTERED AT THE GPO AS A NEWSPAPER BY DIE POSKANTOOR AS NUUSBLAD INGESKRYF

pro veritate

PRO VERITATE

CHRISTELIKE MAANDBLAD
REDAKTEUR: CEDRIC MAYSON

JANUARIE 1976
JAARGANG 14 NR. 8

CHRISTIAN MONTHLY
EDITOR: CEDRIC MAYSON

JANUARY 1976
VOLUME 14 NO. 8

INHOUD • CONTENTS

Redaksioneel:

SAGTE VOETSTAPPE EN HARDE STEMME 1

Editorial:

SOFT FEET AND STRONG VOICES 2

NAMIBIA — A CALL TO RECONCILIATION 4

MOCAMBIQUE : A LESSON TO THE CHURCH — Ted Smith 5

A CONCERN FOR HERE AND NOW — Cosmos Desmond 8

THE SELF TAXERS — by one of them 9

CHRISTIAN COMMUNE — A Poem 10

Letter to the editor;

RESIGNATION OF EDITOR ROELF MEYER 10

SUBSCRIPTION payable in advance. Surface mail. SA and SWA - R3, airmail - R4,20. Cheques and postal orders to be made payable to Pro Veritate (Pty) Ltd., P.O. Box 31135, Braamfontein 2017. Price per single copy - 25c.

OUTSIDE SOUTH AFRICA: Africa and the Far East: Please contact Ms. Muriel D. Bissell, P.O. Box 214, Lusaka, Zambia.

The rest of the world: Please contact Pro Veritate, c/o The Administration Department, "G.D.R." P.O. Box 14100, Utrecht, The Netherlands. The Christian Institute, an "affected organisation" by Government decree, cannot receive money from outside South Africa.

PLEASE NOTE: The Editorial Staff of Pro Veritate are not responsible for opinions and standpoints which appear in any article of this monthly magazine other than those in the editorial statements. Printed by Zenith Printers (Pty) Ltd., 80 Jorissen Street, Braamfontein 2001.

PRO VERITATE appears on the 15th of every month.

SAGTE VOETSTAPPE EN HARDE STEMME

Pro Veritate kom suutjies met sagte voetstappe die nuwe jaar binne. Hy het 'n nuwe redakteur, wat deeglik bewus is van die hoë teologiese en literêre standaard wat hy geërf het. Pro Veritate ontvang baie nuttige en teenstrydige advies van sy lesers; hy het 'n slegte oom wat vir hom vanaf Pretoria se rigting frons; en hy het die feëtjiepeettante, wat voorheen vir hom met 'n pot goud vanaf anderkant die horison bedien het, verloor. Tog is hy nie verbluf nie: Dit is Pro Veritate se taak om met sagte voetstappe te loop.

Die moderne samelewing kom steierend met harde voetstappe 1976 binne. Dit is 'n dinosaur-samelewing, wat toegewy is aan groeikoerse, 'n domastrante kapitalistiese, nasionalistiese, winsbejaagte, besoedelingbevorderende, mense-verterende monster, wat 'n obsessie het om beter en beter en groter en groter to word. Dit probeer almal gulsig te verslind.

Die apartheid-variasie van hierdie wêreldvernietigende dinosaur (prehistoriese monster) het sy eie eienaardige neigings tot uitbuitende verontmensliking omdat dit deel van beskermde wild is wat deur die staat beskerm word en 80% van die bevolking is deur die pigment van hul vel bestem tot diens van die samelewing om op hulle vet te word. Terwyl die samelewing deur sy eie vernaamheid mislei is, gefop deur sy eie propaganda, regverdig hy sy eie dikvellige manipulasie van die armes en onkundiges deur belangrik-klinkende vroompraatjies oor kultuur, bekwaamheid en die instandhouding van die Westerse Christelike beskawing.

Dit lyk of die samelewing geweldig oorhel na sy eie ondergang met 'n klassieke uiteensetting van die Toring van Babel, rassemoordende ryke van mense en die subtiële misleiding van die owerhede en magte.

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Die blye boodskap van Jesus in 1976 is die belofte van die konstruktiewe, mense-georiënteerde, Christo-sentriese koninkryk van God, wat daarop ingestel is om sy heerskappy in die sake van mense te openbaar. Dit kan nie in religieuse, rasse- of nasionalistiese terme uitgedruk word nie. Terwyl die Ryk demonstreer dat liefde tot jou naaste beteken dat jy betrokke raak in sy stryd om lewe, identifiseer dit Jesus met die verontregtes. Dit verwerp die magspel geheel en al.

Die gemeenskap van Jesus is rondom die krip, die huis en die heuwel gesentreer — nie in die tempel, die burg of die barakke nie. Sy inspirasie ontspring in die Bo-kamer en nie in die Raadskamer nie, in die byeenkoms van die avondmaal en nie in die byeenkoms van 'n politieke party nie, in briewe en nie in ooreenkomste nie, in die Handeling van die Apostels en nie hulle manifeste nie.

Die Christendom is stil, vol vertrou, sonder hoë toon. Dit is nie die hammer van die Here wat sy opponente in die grond indryf nie, maar die dun kant van die wig wat Hy gebruik. Hy loop suutjies.

* * * * *

Is die kerke die instrumente van die Koninkryk, of is dit nie vir hulle 'n werklike versoeking om godsdienstige ratte van 'n dinosaur-samelewing te word, waarvan 'n mens bevry moet word nie? As hulle voor so 'n versoeking swig, sal hulle nie geneig wees om groeikoers aan lidmaatskap en begrotings, in plaas van hulle lojaliteit aan die evangelie te meet nie; of aan wat hulle ontvang in plaas van wat hulle gee nie; deur konflik met outoriteit te ontwyk eerder as om dit uit te daag nie? Hulle sal heelwaarskynlik baie onwillig word om hulle hele gewig agter die uitwissing van kleurdiskriminasie onder predikante of die verteenwoordiging van hulle lede op kerkbesture te plaas. Doen die kerke se bewaring van groot eiendomsbesit en geldbesit afbreuk aan hulle toewyding aan 'n samelewing wat radikaal in Christus verskil?

* * * * *

Kan ons wat lede van Christelike organisasies is, ons vryheid en integriteit in die evangelie handhaaf? Kan ons geregtigheid en barmhartigheid bemin en nederig met ons God wandel?

* * * * *

Sagte voetstappe kan egter 'n harde stem ondersteun en daar is sake wat Pro Veritate steeds so sterk as moontlik sal verkondig.

In die *eerste plek* is Pro Veritate hoofsaaklik betrokke by die boodskap van Christus in die samelewing. In 'n wêreld van veel behoeftes en by 'n geloof met baie fasette is die spesifieke besorgdheid van hierdie blad die menslike samelewing.

Die mensdom word deur institute sowel as individue saamgestel. Heiliges en sondaars worstel in 'n gemeenskap van sosiale sisteme, wat die konteks vorm waarin God bekend gemaak word, ja, die realiteit waarin persoonlike verlossing en ekklesiologie relevant moet word.

In die eerste plek wil Pro Veritate niks te doen hê met die valse vorme van godsdienstigheid wat probeer om die Christendom tot 'n „geestelike" sfeer te beperk nie. Van die begin tot die einde gaan die evangelie oor iets

wat in die samelewing tot stand kom: 'n Koninkryk. (Slaan dit na!) Die Christendom gaan oor die bevryding van die wêreld, 'n boodskap aan die nasies oor die redding van die mensdom.

Gevolgtrek is ons eerste taak in Pro Veritate om die sosiale vraagstukke in Suid-Afrika in verband met die koninkryk van God te bring en om die weë van Christus in terme van die Suid-Afrikaanse samelewing te interpreteer.

In die *tweede plek* spreek ons in hoop. Omdat Christus in 'n menslike samelewing gebore is, weet ons dat dinosaurs gedoem is en dat die lewe die moeite werd is.

As jy van al die stof wat opgeskop word om „dit wat God ons gegee het” te verdedig, ontslae raak, is die blote feit oor dat apartheid die Christelike beskawing vernietig, en dat dit mense as mense verneder en dat dit gedoem is. Teologie en geskiedenis stem ooreen dat jy nie mense kan onderdruk en daarmee wegkom nie al is jy wie ookal binne of buite Suid-Afrika. Dit kan nie werk nie omdat dit verkeerd is.

Ons weet dat Christus in ons samelewing aan die werk is. Ons hoop is dat selfs as 'n verskriklike nadraai van apartheid onontwykbaar is, Christus suksesvol sal wees. Die stryd om geslagte, wat deur vrees, heksug en skewe gedagtes geïndoktrineer is, herop te voed; die verandering van 'n samelewing wat rykdom op wapens verkwis, en verryking van sommige, na 'n samelewing wat besorg is oor die welsyn van al sy burgers; ingespanne om 'n bevolking wat in een deel verbrysel en verdeel is en in 'n ander deel op jaloesie en hoogmoed gevoed is, te heel; die weerstand teen die aas van die dinosaurs buite ons grense wat ons as voer vir hulle eie onmenslike winste wil gebruik — in hierdie hele toekoms leef Christus. Vanuit die harte van miljoene mense van Suid-Afrika bring God die samelewing tot stand wat die samelewing se antwoord op die mense se behoeftes is. Dit is ons hoop en ons bied geen verskoning vir die feit dat ons daar oor bly is nie.

In die *laaste plek* sal Pro Veritate voortgaan om mense

op te roep om hulleself aan 'n Christelike Suid-Afrika toe te wy in 'n stryd wat op baie fronte met baie strategieë gestry word.

Die regerende party het die weg van geïnstitusioneerde geweld gekies. Hy het werklike opposisie onwettig verklaar, hy verwerp ope politieke debat, sensor gedagtes wat nie sy eie is nie en as hy nie 'n morele of wettige antwoord kan vind nie, verbrysel hy sy opponente met inperkings, aanhoudings, ontnemings en statute. Ons staan die regering se gebruik van hierdie soort geweld volkome teë.

Stel so 'n samelewing nie 'n lokval waarin leraars kan val en hulle van enige getuienis, wat hulle lewensonderhoud of aansien in gevaar mag stel, afweer nie? Dan ontdek hulle 'n obsessie met kleinlike probleme wat geen ruimte vir werklike Christelike sake laat nie. Sosiale lafhartigheid is 'n siekte wat leraars en lidmate, swart en wit, kan affekteer en wie kan ontsteld wees as die gevaar van vervolging so groot is? Christus kan.

Ons weet Pro Veritate is nie immuun teen hierdie gevare en versoekings nie, maar hy sal voortgaan om 'n plek saam met dié te soek wat vra vir volledige betrokkenheid met Christus se weë in die samelewing. Ons sal probeer om eenvoudig en reguit in ons benadering te wees en probeer om getrou die behulpssame spanning in bewegings weer te gee, en probeer om met geweldige probleme te worstel op 'n relevante wyse vir klein menses om klein dingetjies in klein groepies te doen.

Ons verwag min leiding van die dinosaurs in die samelewing, of dit nou politieke, ekonomiese of enige ander soort „dier” is. Diere is veronderstel om mense te dien, maar hierdie soort diere het beheer oorgeneem en verwag dat ons hulle moet dien.

Onder hierdie enorme dierasies, wat die aarde laat bewe met die dreuning van hulle voetstappe tot ondergang, is daar miljoene gewone mense wat suutjies loop. Ons wil graag saam met hulle loop, na hulle luister, ons stem saam met hulle verhef, terwyl ons maand na maand die weë van 'n wêreldgerigte God naspeur.

EDITORIAL

SOFT FEET AND STRONG VOICES

Pro Veritate comes tip-toeing into the new year on very soft feet. She has a new editor, acutely aware of the high theological and literary standard he has inherited; she has much helpful and conflicting advice from her readers; she has a wicked uncle frowning upon her from the direction of Pretoria; and she has lost the fairy godmother who previously provided her with a pot of gold from over the horizon. But she is not abashed: it is the task of PV to walk on soft feet.

Modern society has come lurching into 1976 on very noisy feet. It is a dinosaur society, dedicated to growth rates and expansion, dominated by high-pressure, big-

power, highly financed methodologies, a brash capitalistic, nationalistic, profit-based, pollution-promoting, people-consuming monster, obsessed with getting better and better at being bigger and bigger. It seeks to gobble up everyone.

The apartheid version of this world-destroying dinosaur has its own peculiar propensities for dehumanising exploitation because it is royal game, protected by the State, and 80% of the population is designated by pigment for the system to grow fat on. Deluded by its own grandeur, fooled by its own propaganda, it justifies its callous manipulation of the

poor and ignorant by high-sounding claptrap about culture, efficiency and maintaining white western Christian civilization.

Society seems to be crashing heavily towards its own destruction in a classic exposition of the Tower of Babel, the genocidal kingdoms of man, and the subtle deceits of the principalities and powers.

* * * * *

The good news of Jesus in 1976 is the promise of the constructive, people-based, Christ-centred Kingdom of God, concerned to manifest his sovereignty in the affairs of men. It cannot be expressed in religious, racial, or nationalistic terms; in demonstrating that loving your neighbour means becoming involved in his struggle for life it identifies Jesus with the deprived. It rejects the power game out of hand.

The fellowship of Jesus is centred in the manger, the home and the hillside — not the temple, the citadel or the barracks. Its inspiration is in the Upper Room not the Board Room, in the meeting of the Last Supper not in the meeting of a political party, in letters not treaties, in the Acts of the Apostles not their Manifestos.

Christianity is quiet, confident, low-key stuff. It is not the hammer of the Lord beating his opponents into the ground, but the thin end of the wedge he uses. It walks on soft feet.

* * * * *

Are the churches the instruments of the Kingdom, or is it not for them a real temptation to become religious bits of the dinosaur society from which men need to be liberated? If they yield to such temptation would they not tend to measure growth by membership and budgets instead of their loyalty to the gospel; by what they receive instead of what they give; by avoiding conflict with authority rather than challenging. They would very likely become reluctant to put their whole weight behind the eradication of colour discrimination among the clergy, or the representation of their members on church bodies. Does its custodianship of vast holdings in property and rands detract from its commitment to a radically different society in Christ?

* * * * *

Can we who are members of Christian organizations, maintain our freedom and integrity in the gospel? Can we love justice and mercy and walk humbly with our God?

* * * * *

Soft feet, however, can support a loud voice and there are matters which Pro Veritate will continue to proclaim as strongly as possible.

Firstly, Pro Veritate is mainly concerned with the message of Christ for society. In a world of many needs and a faith of many facets the particular concern of this journal is for human society.

Mankind is made of institutions as well as individuals. Saints and sinners struggle in a community of social systems which is the context in which God is made known, the reality in which personal salvation and ecclesiology must find relevance.

Pro Veritate will have nothing to do with that specious form of pietistic religiosity which seeks to confine Christianity to a "spiritual" sphere. From start to finish the gospel is about something happening in human society: a kingdom. (Look it up!) Christianity is about the

liberation of the world, a message to the nations about the salvation of mankind.

Thus our first task in Pro Veritate is to see the social issues of Southern Africa in the context of the Kingdom of God, and to interpret the ways of Christ in terms of Southern African society.

Secondly, we speak in Hope. Because Christ is incarnate in human society we know that dinosaurs are doomed, and life is worth living.

When you have worked off all the steam about 'defending what God has given us', the clear fact is that apartheid destroys Christian civilization, and is dehumanizing and damned. Theology and history agree that you cannot oppress men and get away with it whoever you are within or outside South Africa. It cannot work because it is wrong.

We know that Christ is working in our society. Our hope is that even if a ghastly aftermath of apartheid is inevitable, Christ will succeed. Struggling to re-educate generations indoctrinated by fear and greed and twisted thinking; changing a society which squanders wealth on arms and affluence to one concerned for the welfare of all its citizens; straining to heal a population that has in part been smashed and divided, and in part nurtured on jealousy and pride; resisting the bait of dinosaurs beyond our borders who would use us as fodder for their own inhuman gains — in all this perilous future, Christ lives. From within the heart of millions of people of Southern Africa, God is bringing about the society which is her answer to their need. That is our hope: and we make no apology for being happy about it.

Lastly, Pro Veritate will continue to call men to commit themselves to a Christian South Africa in a battle fought on many fronts with many strategies.

The governing party has chosen the way of institutionalised violence. It has outlawed real opposition, rejects open political debate, censors thoughts which are not its own, and when it cannot find a moral or legal answer, it smashes its opponents with bannings, detentions, deprivations and statutes. We totally oppose the Government's use of this kind of violence.

Does not such a society spring a trap into which churchmen may fall thereby withdrawing from any witness which might affect their livelihood or prestige? Then they discover an obsession with petty issues which leaves them no time for real Christian affairs. Social cowardice is a disease which may affect clergy and laity, black and white, and who can be dismayed when the perils of persecution are so great? Christ can.

Pro Veritate, we know, is not immune from these dangers and temptations, but it will continue to seek a place with those who call for total involvement for Christ's ways in society. We shall try to be simple and straightforward in our approach, seek to represent faithfully the helpful tensions in movement, try to grapple with the mighty issues in a relevant way for small people to do small things in small groups.

We expect little leadership from the dinosaurs in society, be they political, religious, economic, or any other kind of animal. Animals are meant to serve humans, but these animals have taken over and expect us to serve them.

Beneath these huge creatures who make the earth tremble with the thunder of their tread towards destruction are millions of ordinary people who walk on soft feet. We wish to walk with them, listen with them, raise our voice with them, as month by month we seek the ways of a very down-to-earth God.

NAMIBIA : A CALL TO RECONCILIATION

As the culmination of the Holy Year proclaimed by Pope Paul VI, the Catholic Church in SWA/Namibia held a special Reconciliation Service on Sunday 30 November 1975. The service was held outside the Catholic Cathedral in central Windhoek and about 3 500 people of all races attended.

At the end of the service a number of leading Catholic priests issued the statement which is presented here in an English translation.

To all who love the truth and seek after reconciliation

We, a group of priests of the Catholic Church in SWA/Namibia, wish to take the opportunity which we have in this Day of Reconciliation to give our views on the meaning of Reconciliation for this country.

We address ourselves to all the people and all the groups of the country.

A MISSION OF LIBERATION

The Church has the mission of making the whole liberating work of Christ available to all people. Christ wishes to liberate all people from the shackles which prevent them from living full human lives.

In particular it is his desire to break down the walls which separate men one from another and from the fulfilling power which is the Life of God.

OUR OWN SHORTCOMINGS

Right at the outset we must admit that we have often failed in this mission. We, priests, are also sinners, and no better than other people. In addition to our personal failings and faulty relationships which have contributed to mistrust and division, we, leaders of the congregation of Christ, have done many things (and failed to do others) to the discredit of the Gospel of Christ.

Our dealings with people have not always reflected the priorities of Christ: for him the poor and the oppressed always come first.

We have not done everything in our power to make our Church — against the pressure of a separating society — an instrument of God's reconciliation.

We did not take all the opportunities which we had of joining the other Christian Churches in exposing how the unjust use of 'law and order' clearly, and daily, means the humiliation of people.

We remain sinners. Nevertheless we ask God to make us instruments of his liberating work and participants in his work of reconciliation.

And we ask the people of this land, in spite of our poor witness, to see the Hope of the Gospel, and the Power of God's work.

He shall — also in this country — in spite of our shortcomings, fulfil his task of liberating all men and lifting them to the fullness of humanity.

RECONCILIATION: WHOSE RESPONSIBILITY?

Reconciliation with God is a work of God. But he makes it clear that reconciliation with him is impossible so long as we refuse to be reconciled with one another.

Christ wishes to liberate us into a willingness to accept one another unconditionally.

While there are still reservations, he says, "if you are offering your gift at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother..." (Mt. 5:23, 24).

When Jesus talks of reconciliation, he speaks of 'brothers', of people who undoubtedly regard one another as equals.

This earnest call of Jesus to immediate reconciliation, on the basis of complete equality, is directed to everyone, to all groups of people.

Those who understand Christ cannot any longer point to one particular group and say, "It's all their fault, they are the unjust ones!"

Injustice, exploitation of the powerless, contempt for people who belong to other groups, are not the fault of one group only, they are *the* Sin of the World, they occur within every national group, and within itself every group has smaller groups who are not treated on the basis of equal worth.

Even those who suffer injustice are themselves often guilty of injustices committed against those weaker than themselves. Those who are exploited in their turn exploit those who are yet weaker than themselves, their fellows and members of other groups.

Each one of us should individually answer the question: how should I change to make reconciliation possible?

RECONCILIATION IN OUR COUNTRY?

In truth, the centre of our concern and attention is the difficult task of reconciliation between privileged and 'unprivileged' in our country.

The social and political order existing in our country, apparently, excludes the possibility of reconciliation. To many people the word "reconciliation" is a mockery for as long as the minority by the use of political and military power suppresses and excludes the broad majority from participation in public life. Reconciliation, which is demanded by Christ, can only be achieved in our country if:

- the ruling minority ceases its use of violence in keeping the majority down.
- all people in the country are immediately granted equal human rights in the political and social fields.
- any person detained for political reasons is allowed immediate access to the legal defence of his choice, and brought to a fair trial as soon as possible.
- the true leaders of the people can be found by means of free, general and supervised elections, and these freely elected leaders can — without manipulation — co-operate in planning the future of our country.

We would see it as a real step towards true reconciliation if the authorities in our country were to grant a large-scale amnesty for political prisoners.

Reconciliation is only possible where those who come together do so freely and believing in their equality. If such preconditions are not met today, reconciliation cannot be possible. Hatred, violence and warfare are the nihilistic alternative.

TRUE RECONCILIATION IS POSSIBLE THROUGH CHRIST

We have spoken of preconditions which have to be fulfilled here and now before real reconciliation can be achieved.

We wish to state clearly that reconciliation as the Gospel of Christ intends it, is indeed relevant to, and includes, the social and political order, *but* the true brotherhood of mankind cannot be guaranteed exclusively from the political plane.

The hope that we shall have created paradise once we have one day changed the political order in our country is a dangerous imagining. No political system in this world is capable of bringing people to a final fulfilment. This is clear from a 3 000 year history of political systems, and from an examination of systems of our present world, all of which fail to deliver the new, liberated, and true social orders which they promise.

This does not mean that we should give up our efforts to bring about fundamental changes in our social and political life, but to point out clearly where that eventual fulfilment actually lies: it is Christ alone, *his* Gospel, and *his* work of liberation, who can set us free as whole persons in harmony with God's plan. Only GOD himself guarantees the freedom of men from bondage to other people or other powers.

A HOPE WHICH CANNOT BE OVERCOME

Our inspiration is a hope which cannot be overcome:

Jesus was the victim of the inhumanity of human beings.

God made it clear that any inhumanity affects Him. And therefore it has no future. God raised Christ to new life, to make the firstborn of a new humanity. Our stratified order of oppression has no future. The future for which we live and work is the total raising of the people by God.

Reconciliation is therefore not a dream, but it is the ultimate reality, which today demands of us that we should devote all our energies to it, that our time and our country should not be deprived of this reality.

Thus we appeal to all people of good will to join this movement for human liberation, and together with Christ to struggle for true humanity, total equality of rights and responsibilities in the community, and for the participation of all in the building up of our common future.

We are inspired by a hope which cannot be overcome. Christ is the unshakable fact of history, the guarantee of liberation, reconciliation, and the raising of the new humanity.

Our wish is to work and fight on the side of Christ. Peace and reconciliation is possible through him, it is a task for us TODAY.

Signed:

H. Henning (Vicar General), H. Hunke (Provincial), H. Duttmann, H. Knuff, V. Makabanyane, J. Mensink, B. Nordkamp, H. Steegmann, H. Ueberall.

MOCAMBIQUE : A LESSON TO THE CHURCH

ted smith

Most of the enquiry that has come to us about Mocambique has been born out of a deep concern for the survival of the Church, and out of a deep fear that the Church would not be able to withstand the pressures that are being placed upon it.

I want to affirm that the Church, the living organ and instrument of God, will not die, and it cannot die; but the Church as an institution, the Church as an organization, will undergo radical change if in fact, it is not entirely dismantled. That dismantling will not destroy the Spirit of Christ, who will still move and work in the lives of those who respond to him, and give to him their total allegiance. The Church of Christ will continue to exist, but the form in which it will exist will be determined by our obedience to what the Holy Spirit is saying to us in a new situation.

What we presently recognise as the Church in Mocambique in its various divisions began quite some time ago. Most of the main Protestant denominations were planted by foreign missionaries about the year 1880, and the history of the Roman Catholic Church goes back much further than that, when the cross and the canon arrived simultaneously 500 years ago. The Missionary Concordat gave the Roman Catholic Church a free hand in establishing and expanding its work, and at the same time deliberately impeded the work of the Protestant Churches. From the late fifties, the Church came under a new harassment — in the form of the PIDE or the DGS, the ruthless State Security Police, and under their reign of terror, Churches were closed, travel curtailed, members arrested, some of them, including Zedekie Manganela, who was Moderator of the Presbyterian Church, died in PIDE prisons as a result of torture.

Need of liberation

The country needed to be liberated, it needed to be set free, and the turn of events came from a most surprising source, when Portugal felt that it could no longer survive through military strength, and this change was felt immediately in Mocambique. For the first time as members of a Christian community, we felt free to speak openly with one another. You will have no idea of the sense of strain that we felt for all the years, not knowing with whom one could speak openly even about Christian matters, but the moment this restraint was removed from us, we immediately entered into a new spirit of fellowship and understanding and progress.

Members of the various denominations lost no time in making journeys to Dar-es-Salaam to exchange ideas with Frelimo leaders, and that's when the first shocks began to ripple through the Church. The delegates were well received, but not warmly. Frelimo leaders began to make reference to the divisions within the Church, and to the dividing influence which the Church had upon the community life of the people. We were told that Samora Machel said to one of the delegations: "You Christians claim to be united beneath a cross, but you are divided; we Frelimo have no cross, but we are united," and this was a damning statement to make, but we knew that it was true.

Nevertheless, during the period of the interim Government, we were given to understand that we would be able to carry on with our work unmolested. There would be a sharp division between Church and State but we would be able to continue our religious activities. We knew then that all social work

would soon come under the control of the Government, and recently the nationalisation of schools and hospitals took place. During the weeks immediately prior to Independence, the aspirant President Samora Machel attacked the Church, mainly the Catholic Church, because of its exploitation of the population, using schools and hospitals to buy professions of faith, baptizing people so that they could receive education, and wedding them to a system from which they could not break free. We all felt concern, because this was not only an indictment of the Catholic Church. In some measure we all felt a sense of guilt and we felt that there was a certain amount of justification in what the future President was saying.

And then Independence came on the 25th June, and Christians joined with the general populace to celebrate an experience which can never be forgotten, because nothing that has happened since the 25th June can detract from the joy and the sense of justice we experienced in the founding of a new nation. Independence was something which came to the joy and satisfaction and relief of all people, including the Church. With Independence came the new Constitution, and one of the liberties guaranteed to citizens by the Constitution is that they shall be free to practice or not to practice religion. We have worked on that basis, although we know that there have been many speeches which have led us to believe that possibly the Constitution is saying one thing, and reality is going to lead us somewhere else.

The next jolt came on July 24 when the Churches were criticised because they had their head in America, in Switzerland, in Sweden, in South Africa, and their body in Mocambique. They were being criticised because they were un-Mocambican in their structure and in their orientation.

Church drawn together

During all this time of change and crisis, the Churches in Mocambique have felt the need to draw together. Would to God that we had felt that need many years earlier! We found the need to try and find our own identity in the changes that were surrounding us, and the Christian Council became an effective organisation for the first time. In August this year a Resolution was passed to set up a permanent Secretariat, and Isaac Mahlalela was chosen to be Mocambique's first General Secretary of our Christian Council, in a full-time capacity.

Because of the attacks that have been made upon the Church, membership and attendance statistics have been affected. Many members who, during the days of oppression, saw in the Church the only small area where they could find some sense of dignity, and some sense of belonging, now saw in Frelimo the new Saviour, the new Messiah, and they no longer needed the Church for their salvation did not go beyond that. But others have joined the Church during this period of crisis and trial and those within the Church, old and young alike, have found a far deeper faith, and a far deeper meaning in this faith. On the 16th October the Political Commisar, who is also the Minister of Interior in Mocambique, Armando Gabuza, issued a statement which will have the effect of undermining the confidence of the people in the Church, and in particular the leaders of the Church. I quote — "Today, we need to remember more than ever before that the enemy, the agents of Imperialism, are attempting to enter all our ranks in the midst of religious sects, through the Intervention of national and foreign missionaries. To manipulate the followers of these sects to better serve the interest of the exploiters, the enemy is using a false and a suspect concept of religion, preaches as being inevitable the existence of a world divided between some

rich and millions of exploited, and blinds the people into an unscientific understanding of the world. They are trying to enslave us into believing that the oppression and the misery in which we lived were immutable, which only the religious sects with their Gods could remedy, by creating a reign of love."

The statement went on to attack the Catholic Church for its involvement with the Portuguese Government in the war against those who were seeking to liberate Mocambique from oppression. The Church was condemned because whenever the soldiers went out into battle and when they came back from having violated Mocambique's women, the chaplains were there to bless them when they went, and to absolve them when they returned.

The statement included a confession by the leader of the Apostolic Faith Church, in which he said "I collaborated with the Secret Police. I was an informer, and I did this to safeguard the interests of the Church".

The next attack was directed against the Jehovah's Witnesses, who were sharply criticised because of their anti-national stance.

Then the attack moved to the Literalist Conservatist, the denominations which are more fundamental than others and they were accused of maintaining the people in obscuratinism.

"All religious sects in close collaboration attempted to throw doubt on Frelimo's ability to govern. We do not know from whence this evidence comes, but this is important — during the armed struggle, none of them joined in the fight against colonialism, nor even publicly opposed the oppression of the people."

The statement went on to attack financial malpractices on the part of some of the Churches, particularly some of the sects which encouraged people to give one-tenth of their income to the work of God and Ministers who were banking very little of this money and putting the rest in their pocket.

Correspondence between the Nazarene Church and its headquarters was quoted and it was alleged that large sums of money had been shipped back to the U.S.A. either immediately before or since independence. We do not know if these things are true, but these are the things that are being alleged in the statement.

The article says: "Why don't the missionaries stay at home, why don't they save the souls of the people in their own country, in America, in Switzerland, in South Africa. Don't these countries have lost souls? Drug addicts? Corrupt people?" The statement closes with a warning to the people to be vigilant of those who wish to disseminate an ideology contrary to that of Frelimo. Several missionaries and ministers have been placed in detention with no charges laid against them and no trial nor any condemnation.

I am becoming clearer in my mind now that the missionary presence in Mocambique, certainly in a controlling capacity, is not to be desired, neither is it needed. If missionaries are to be there at all, they are to be there because they can be as useful there as they can be in any other place, and perhaps a little bit more useful there than in some other places. And so we do not know how much longer we, in fact, are going to be permitted to stay there. This statement, coming as it does as a direct attack upon missionaries, seems to me to be the rather thicker edge of the wedge. But it is in this situation in which the Church finds itself that it must also find a way, and it must ride the storm. It will look for guidance.

Church with Revolution

This is not the first time the Christian Church has been brought

into difficulty, and I begin to wonder if this is persecution, or if it is not in fact, the judgment of God upon the Church, to make it what he meant it to be in the first instance. We shall take what action we can take, not against the State except to clear up wrong impressions, but action we must take to see how the Church can continue within the New Order. It may no longer need special buildings — if ever it really needed special buildings. It may no longer need salaried clergy (and I'm a clergyman myself so I can say this) — if indeed it ever really needed salaried clergy.

The Church will have to go with the revolution, not against it. The Church must not develop a persecution complex within the Revolution. The Church, and by the Church I do not mean the power group but Christians who are committed to Christ and to their fellowmen, must play its own active part in the national reconstruction and I believe that there is possibly far more scope to express our Christian behaviour in the socialistic system than there is in the capitalist system. In a system which has as its aim the care of all its people, Christianity can inject a very worthy motive — I will share what I have, I will give what I have, I will help you all I can, and sacrifice all I can, not because there is a rifle in my back, but because I love you, and because we love God. We hope that within the system we will still have the right to believe, and that we will still have the right to share that faith with others, and we hope that it will always be a faith that is relevant to the needs of the nation, as well as to the needs of the individual. Tanzania is a socialistic state and in Tanzania the presence of the Church is respected. It plays a vital but not a prestigious role in the national life. Many party and government leaders are committed Christians, and it has been jokingly said that President Nyerere is more Catholic than the Pope. That's Tanzania.

In Mocambique the Church has lost its credibility with most of the leaders and a large majority of the population, because of the identification of the Catholic Church with oppressors, and because of the silence of the Protestant Churches. We did not collaborate with PIDE; but neither did we protest when wrong and injustice were flaunted before our eyes, because it was far too dangerous to do so. We had to safeguard the few privileges which we still held, so that we could go on preaching, go on baptizing, go on erecting buildings, raising denominational banners, counting statistics ... for a few men God became real, but for many more our God became irrelevant.

Church in South Africa

Can we as a Church in South Africa get the message of Mocambique? Has it been spelled out so that we can understand it? If we want to be relevant in a changing Africa, and in a South Africa in which change *will* come, we will have to relate to the aspirations of a people who now want to be free. If we believe that the society in which we live is unjust do we also believe that liberation is part of God's plan for his people? and for our society?, and for all people in our society? Or do we believe that the prophets and Our Lord Himself are merely to be "spiritualised" when they speak about liberation?

Listen to Isaiah, Chapter 58, 6 and 7.

"Is not this what I require of you as a fast,
To loose the fetters of injustice, to untie the knots of the yoke,
To snap every yoke, and to set free those who have been crushed,
Is it not the sharing of your food with the hungry,
Taking the homeless, poor into your house,
Clothing the naked when you meet them, and never evading a duty to your kinsfolk,

Then shall your life break forth as the dawn."

Listen to our Lord Himself in Luke, 4:18.

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, Because he has anointed me,
He has sent me to announce good news to the poor,
To proclaim release for prisoners and recover their sight for the blind,
To let the broken victims go free,
To proclaim the year of the Lord's favour."

This theme runs right through the whole of the Old and New Testaments and we ask ourselves: "Do we have a theology of this kind of liberation, or is our liberation simply a spiritual liberation, to keep people contented and above all quiet in their oppression?" Do we have a theology of liberation that we can proclaim prophetically from our pulpits not as a political alternative, but as the explicit Word of God? Of a God who yearns over the physical man in whom he has planted his image?"

We may stand in doubt now about the rightness or wrongness of violence in liberation, (perhaps a little bit more doubt now than we had in 1940). Whether it is right to kill for one's belief as much as it is right to die for one's belief, is a question which it is not easy to answer, but if we are not doing anything, or if we are not doing enough, ourselves, to liberate the oppressed, can we criticise those who sincerely believe that all other courses open to them outside of violence have been exhausted? If the Church rejects violence it must find alternatives which are effective and which are rapid. This is not something which the Church can pass to a Standing Committee, this is something which has to be dealt with *now*, because the time is urgent, and we must go far deeper than ever before in a total and fearless opposition to the dehumanising policies and laws and practices within our society.

These exist not only within the nation, but within the Church structures, and they exist where the Church is supposed to be more visible, and where it is always under far greater scrutiny, in the home, in the office, in the shop. They exist in the way we practice discrimination and violence ourselves, and in the way in which we keep silent when other people are doing the same thing because we are afraid to stand up and be counted.

I urge the Church not to be ambivalent nor ambiguous in its attitude towards liberation. We must do it because we take God seriously, because we understand that the Kingdom of God is a spiritual domain, with an immediate and visible expression in a physical world inhabited by people who bleed when they are pierced! *

A CONCERN FOR HERE AND NOW

cosmos desmond

While childlikeness is undoubtedly a Christian virtue, naivete, which is sometimes confused with it, is not. Yet many Christians seem to have a deliberately naive approach to social and political questions. They see no need for either theological or political analysis. "All we have to do is fulfil Christ's commandment to love one another"; the implication being that we can do this regardless of the actual situation in which we are placed. St. Paul warned against such shallow thinking when he told the Corinthians: "Do not be children in your thinking, be babes in evil but in thinking be mature." It is necessary therefore to consider what loving our neighbour means and how we are to do it in this particular South African situation.

All Christians would agree that Christianity is concerned about love of one's neighbour, but there are widely differing interpretations as to what is meant by this love and how it relates to one's life. For many it is a purely personal and secondary activity following from their love of God.

In the "Star" the other evening the "Love is ..." cartoon said: "Love is ... like a battery — it needs an occasional recharge". This is, I believe, an utterly false and misleading simile, but it does illustrate the attitude of many Christians to the relationship between love of neighbour and love of God. Their main concern is their love of God and their personal relationship with him. They therefore "charge themselves" by means of all sorts of so-called religious acts and are then able to bestow some of this love on their neighbour. But the battery image is false because it means that the battery is not connected to the generator all the time. The attitude which this illustrates is false because it implies that love of God and love of neighbour are separate actions; one is the input and the other the output. But not only are they not separate, but the love of God is unavoidably expressed through love of neighbour — through a genuinely human love of one's neighbour. *To love another is to love God* and we have in fact no other way of expressing this. That this is so, is clear from St. Matthew's account of the last judgment and it is spelt out even more clearly in St. John's first epistle. It is God's love for us that makes our love for God possible in and through our love for others. The pursuit of the love of God as a separate religious activity has no foundation in Christ's teaching; it is the product of the individualistic form of religion which was the response to an earlier form of society placing all the emphasis on the individual.

Even when we accept that love of neighbour is the very essence of Christianity we are still left with the question of how to practice it here and now. We Christians sometimes falsely assume that we have a readymade, divinely revealed solution to all problems and that all we have to do is spread the message of love to everybody else. It is not enough simply to say that we must love our neighbour; the question is how to do this in this particular situation. And the answer to that question is political, sociological, economic, cultural — almost anything but theological and specifically Christian.

If we are to love our brethren in a particular situation we have first of all to understand that situation, to identify the factors which prevent a fully human existence and to determine ways of overcoming it. As the South American theolo-

gian, Gustavo Cutierrez says "to be converted is to commit oneself lucidly, realistically and concretely. It means to commit oneself not only generously but with an analysis of the situation and a strategy for action." The Gospel provides neither the analysis nor the strategy for such action. The Christian has as little positive idea of what is worthy of man as the non-Christian and must work this out together with him. It is begging the question to say that our strategy for action is simply to love our neighbour.

In today's society, effective and genuine love of neighbour demands political action. This is particularly true of South Africa where every facet of our lives is determined by political considerations and where many of the injustices and hardships suffered are the direct result of the implementation of a political ideology. If there were a famine or earthquake in some part of the country, probably we could do no more than share what we have and alleviate the suffering. But when people are forcibly uprooted from their homes and thrust into conditions of abject poverty without even the barest essentials for human living, it is not enough to offer charity to help them come to terms with their situation, we must endeavour also to eliminate the cause of their suffering and deprivation. *In this case the root cause is a political system which is the antithesis of Christianity.* This system is the antithesis of Christianity not simply because of all the acts of injustice such as arbitrary removals, migratory labour, detentions without trial, which it perpetrates, but because all of these are performed *in order to avoid change*, to preserve what is called our western Christian heritage. To say that we have a Christian society that must be preserved is literally heresy. To make such a claim is directly contradictory to Christ's teaching on the coming of the Kingdom. It is to claim that the Kingdom has already been realised here and now and this is described in the Gospels as the work of the anti-Christ.

The Kingdom has only been fully realised in Christ himself. Its realisation in Christ gives us the hope and the faith that ultimately the Kingdom of peace, justice and love will be established; that the possibilities for improvement are limitless. Because of this hope we can never be satisfied with what has already been achieved and must therefore not only be critical of any social or political system, but must seek to change it. In our society such activity could very well fall under the definition of Terrorism. The fact that we have not all been arrested shows that either the Security Police or we ourselves have not been doing our job properly. The Security Police have been so assiduous in recent months in implementing the Terrorism Act that we cannot accuse them of failing in their duty. So it must be that we are not really working for that transformation of our society which is demanded by Christianity.

For many people the Christians' belief in God and in a life to come destroys the credibility and effectiveness of their concern for man here and now and many Christians do in practice use such a belief as a shield against the realities of the world. In fact this very belief should radicalise our commitment to a better society here and now. Firstly, because we know that it is

possible and that nothing experienced so far remotely resembles "a new Heaven and a new earth". Secondly, if Christ's teaching about the establishment of the Kingdom is to have any credibility for modern man, those who believe in the God who makes all things new must be seen to be doing something about it now.

Our concern for our neighbour and for the building up of a better world is not simply the fulfilment of an ethical demand made by Christ: in fact we cannot love in fulfilment of a command. Nor are actions performed towards our neighbour "for the love of God" acts of love of neighbour. In all such actions we are thinking more of ourselves than of our neighbour. St. Paul tells us that it is even possible for us to give ourselves to be burned at the stake and for this not to be an act of love. Love of our neighbour as a person in a concrete, historical, cultural situation is the Christians' part in God's plan for the final manifestation of his Kingdom. We cannot bring about the Kingdom; that is God's work. But our hope in this God of the future motivates our commitment to improving this present order, which can be the obscure beginning of that final revelation.

Christians share with Marxists and others a belief in the need for the transformation of the world, but the Christian's commitment should be even more radical. Whereas Marx defines the transformation and puts a limit to its realisation, the Christian's commitment is completely open-ended. For the present it is clear that to create the conditions where man might be able to love, it is necessary to rid the world of all forms of exploitation and oppression, and in particular the exploitation of the poor by the rich, of the third world by the first. However, even if this were achieved and a completely egalitarian society established, it would be only another step for the Christian. We believe that there are even greater possibilities for man, but there is no point in believing this if we are not prepared to do something about it. Today that "something" means seeing our neighbour not only in the individual oppressed person and responding on the level of personal charity, but also in the oppressed community. We must both seek and use the means to continue Christ's mission of proclaiming liberty to the captive and setting the downtrodden free. *

THE SELF-TAXERS

by one of them

A group of people in Johannesburg have come together to tax themselves. A similar group is to start in Durban.

Their concern is to tax themselves on a part of their income which they explain is not due to them. In two ways the South African social system delivers money to whites, and a few better off blacks, which is really due to the ordinary black worker. Firstly, it pays the unskilled worker (unprotected by unions) too small a proportion of the money paid out in wages. In Europe an assistant to a brickie or an electrician receives 80-85% of the skilled man's wage. Here he gets 20-25%, yet he does the same work. Secondly, the effect of job reservation is to establish the same sort of proportions in industry, because the black is not allowed to compete for the better work.

The self-taxers will not accept the benefit of this money unjustly delivered to them, and voluntarily tax themselves, handing the amount to black development agencies as "restitution". The self-tax is without strings, for the recipients do not have to account to the payers for its use, but to their own black community.

Real religion is to make yourself "undefiled" by the system even whilst you try to change its injustices. People who are not professing Christians are in the van in this search for integrity which is not an escape, or a handout, or an evasion of the risky duty of social action to change the system. It is a way of "cleaning yourself" from the attitude of "liberals" who take full advantage of their privileges while denouncing them. The self-taxers are all intensely active for human rights.

On the basis of this community of understanding the self-taxers are becoming an unstructured, free community group. A high measure of trust is appearing, with frank discussion of those who "tax" themselves by accepting socially orientated

work providing much less than they might earn, with frank discussion of personal living standards, and how the ideal might have meaning for low income groups. The group, which has so far been white, is convinced of its need to be inter-racial.

The self-taxers have chosen a strategic stance because no white can surrender his vote or job or place of residence to a black: the black will not be allowed to have it. But the government leaves him free to do what he will with his cheque (after they have taxed it!) and in this way he can be truly involved in the struggle for justice.

It is equally strategic by going to the roots of the moral sickness of the western world over money and the conveniences and status symbols it can buy. The first Christians realised that the Gospel blesses the poor, literally as well as figuratively, and made themselves into a voluntary sharing group. In seeking to get to the roots of man's ultimate moral infrastructure in his attitude to wealth the self-taxers are seeking what may be the chief means of renewal of friendship and love in God.

There come moments in movements of the spirit when it is more important for a few to intensify their life and witness until it becomes a living challenge and attraction to others, rather than asking many to profess vague formulae. Something with a hard edge which leads people to a positive change in their way of living and makes visible a more human and right system of values may even alert those hardened by habit to resist all verbal persuasion. Everyone is looking for more warmth, and a demonstration of it may draw anyone.

Perhaps there will yet be a link between the self-tax movement and the "confessing communities" so often discussed in Christian Institute circles. *

CHRISTIAN COMMUNE

(Acts 2:44-45)

If I want him
to have as much as me
of Grace or Money
is it a sin?

Can I keep my faith
with walls of love
or must the walls
be property?

Are my brain
and energy and heart
chiefly for one Me
or many They?

If my taxes give
his children opportunity
equal to mine
are mine swindled?

If I want him
to have the job, not me
if he is better at it
am I a fool?

If I'm allowed
more interesting work
is not this reward
without more money?

If the plant belongs
not to shareholders
but to the workers in it
where's the wrong?

If we are less productive
less efficient
but all friends
can we be saved?

If arts and racehorses
have fewer patrons
and the poor more food
it's full — for whom?

Must I be an atheist
to want to share
or is it still allowed
to Christians?

letter to editor:

RESIGNATION OF

EDITOR ROELF MEYER

Dear Sir,

I have read with great regret in this morning's press that you have resigned your post as Editor of this journal for full-time study reasons. I cannot but write to express my extreme appreciation of the quality of P.V. It is rare to receive monthly a paper so vital to the moment that one is immediately stimulated into a wider sharing and recommendation of its articles and editorial acumen. It is not surprising that the daily press clamour for it and an eminent overseas subscriber has described it as "unquestioningly the most alive and relevant grass roots ecumenical journal anywhere in the world."

Over the years it has affirmed increasingly the values of right, justice and honesty in a society that is busy swamping itself with distractions and evasions of the facts. Readers respond not only to words and ideas but to the obvious courage of the editor and his absolute commitment to the truth in examining and questioning our patterns of upbringing, education, Christian mores and our national and social assumption so that 'change' in the final event will not be a mindless reaction, but will spring from an intelligent appraisal; an "opening of blind eyes" in the sense enjoined by Jesus. We respond in deepened commitment ourselves.

I conclude with the hope that the new editor will in no way compromise the nature and quality of this paper until there is only a sort of unpenetrating and unimaginative mediocrity left in a possible attempt to gain a wider readership, but rather let the present readers who find it so exceptional and inspiring, take upon themselves the responsibility of building up subscribers who will likewise make it their monthly priority reading! Thank you, Roelf.

— Evelyn Cresswell,
Parktown.