

*are
you
a
christian*

*or
merely
religious*

?

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HOPE FOR '77

We South Africans are fond of insisting that our problems are private, peculiar, and particular. No mere visitor or sojourner on the subcontinent can possibly understand our situation, we say, so they can keep their comments. Unless they like us.

This insistence is unfounded. Our problems are the common problems of mankind, and it is foolish stupidity for us to maintain that racism is an excuse for claiming that we are not as other men are.

Most of the action in this first issue of PRO VERITATE for 1977 does not take place in Southern Africa. We carry comment upon world development from North America and Australia; report on torture in the Argentine and the clash of students and the militarists in Thailand; read discussions on Christianity and Socialism, and the morality of military chaplaincies from Britain.

And it is all very very relevant.

We share a common nature upon a common Earth. We are manipulated by the 'principalities and powers', try to pretend that godly protestations are a substitute for godly living, and that our part of the world does not need a God to save it, because our national and ecclesiastical institutions are what He is seeking.

We share the same burdens. Plenty of people are subject to political domination, oppression, and the exploitation of natural resources. They battle against the power and greed and guilt of the richer, are encumbered by the weakness and hopelessness of the poorer, suffer from the refusal to rid their societies of poverty and ignorance, and subject their spiritual

leaders to disfiguring pressures. They torture men, discriminate against women, and make children cry.

Racism is not a reason for condoning our participation in the personal and social sins of mankind, but a crucible in which they are precipitated. In the harsh black and white contrast of Africa it is hideously easy to see what a foul up good Christian men can make of human life.

But the most important part of the story is still to come.

We share one God. For black and white, rich and poor, Vorster (K) and Mandela, Treunicht and Tambo, Oppenheimer and Mashinini, Burnett, Van Der Berg and Biko, there is only one God and we know him through Jesus Christ. He lives in his world, though neither recognised nor accepted, and shares his peoples sufferings, and exerts his Lordship amongst them.

Following Jesus means seeking to interpret in word and deed what his Lordship means in the events of our time, and if it is true that the Southern African crucible reveals the problems of the world in greater poignancy, we can also expect to see the purposes of Christ with greater clarity.

PRO VERITATE sets off into 1977 inspired by this quest to discover what the Jesus we know in the New Testament, history, and the rest of the world, is doing in South Africa today.

If our witness is true we can expect to bear something of the persecution and brutality being handed out by the authorities in so many parts of the world. But **Christianity is built on resurrection, and it is for the joy that is set before us that we go into the new year.**

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HOW IRRELEVANT CAN YOU GET?

This incredible letter is reprinted from the Christian leader, December 1976. Readers are invited to submit their comments!

I am tired of the continual criticism of our church. I am thankful for those who have shared the Lord Jesus Christ with me, and those thousands who gave their lives so that the people of South Africa could hear the Gospel, receive education and medical help.

Let us grow up a bit and begin to praise the Lord Jesus Christ for all He has done for us in His Church in our land.

I am not interested in being relevant to the situation in this country. Those who want to use the church as a political platform had better leave.

If young blacks are going to leave if we do not join the black power movements, perhaps we are better off without them.

Jesus resisted this temptation to initiate a political uprising throughout His life.

On the other hand if whites are not prepared to share in fellowship with blacks, in Christian love, perhaps we should lose them too.

Please, let us not make martyrs of those who get into trouble, because of their political outbursts.

These people are not detained for standing for the Lord Jesus Christ, they have usually taken uncompromising stands and are now paying the price.

There are those who are suffering for the Lord Jesus Christ and there are those who I believe are using the church for the political gain that they can get from it.

Finally, please let us sometimes tell the government when they have done a good job. Much has been done in schooling and housing in this country for all races. Let us say so! Let us be thankful for the stand that they have taken on drugs and pornography. Just visit Maseru if you want to know what it can be like without these controls.

Let us say thank you to the government, to the armed forces and police for their part in trying to contain the riots, in this way they will be willing to listen to us when we have some suggestions to make.

Peter D. Anderson (Revd)
Johannesburg.

HOOP VIR '77

Ons Suid-Afrikaners volhard daarin om ons probleme as privaat, besonder en buitengewoon te beskou. Ons sê dat die gewone besoeker of reisiger in hierdie wêrelddeel nooit die situasie sal kan verstaan nie—daarom kan hulle maar hulle kommentaar vir hulle self hou. Tensy hulle van ons hou.

So 'n volharding is ongegrond. Ons probleme is die gewone probleme van die mensdom. Dit is dus dwaas van ons om vol te hou dat rassisme 'n verskoning is vir die bewering dat ons nie soos ander mense is nie.

Die meeste van die gebeurtenisse in hierdie eerste uitgawe van PRO VERITATE van 1977 vind nie in Suider-Afrika plaas nie. Ons lewer kommentaar oor wêreld-ontwikkelinge vanuit Noord-Amerika en Australië; lewer verslag oor marteling in Argentinië en oor die botsing tussen studente en die militariste in Thailand; besprekings vanuit Engeland i.v.m. Christendom en sosialisme en the moraliteit van militêre kapelaanskappe.

En dit is alles baie, baie ter sake.

Ons deel 'n gemeenskaplike aard in 'n gemeenskaplike wêreld. Ons word gemanipuleer deur die „owerheid en magte” en probeer voorgee dat vrome verset 'n plaasvervanger is vir 'n godvrugtige lewe; dat ons geen God nodig het om ons deel van die wêreld te red nie, omdat dit ons nasionale en kerklike installings is wat Hy begeer.

Ons deel dieselfde laste. Daar is talle mense wat onderworpe is aan politieke oorheersing, onderdrukking en die uitbuiting van natuurlike hulpbronne. Hulle veg teen die mag en hebsug en skuld van die rykes; word belemmer deur die swakheid en hopeloosheid van die armes; ly as gevolg van die weiering om hulle samelewing van armoede en onkunde te verlos en onderwerp hulle geestelike leiers aan druk wat verontmenslik. Hulle martel mense, diskrimineer teen vroue en laat kinders huil.

Rassisme is geen rede om ons aandeel aan die persoonlike en maatskaplike sondes van die mensdom goed te praat nie, maar is 'n smeltkroes waarin alles gelouter word. In die skerp teenstellings tussen swart en wit in Afrika is dit ontsettend maklik om te sien hoe goeie Christene met menslike lewes kan knoei.

Maar die belangrikste gedeelte van die verhaal moet nog kom.

Ons deel aan een God. Vir swart en wit, ryk en arm, Vorster (K) en Mandela, Treurnicht en Tambo, Oppenheimer en Mashinini, Burnett, Van den Bergh en Biko, is daar slegs een God en ons ken hom deur Jesus Christus. Hy leef in sy wêreld, en, alhoewel die wêreld hom nie geken en aangeneem het nie, deel Hy in die lyding van sy mense en beoefen sy heerskappy oor hulle.

As ons Jesus wil volg moet ons probeer om deur woord en daad uit te leef wat sy Heerskappy in die gebeurtenisse van ons tyd beteken. As dit dan waar is dat die Suider-Afrikaanse smeltkroes die probleme van die wêreld met groter skerpheid blootlê, kan ons ook verwag om die plan van Christus met meer helderheid raak te sien.

PRO VERITATE begin 1977, geïnspireer deur die begeerte om te ontdek wat dié Jesus, wat ons in die Nuwe Testament die geskiedenis en die res van die wêreld leer ken, vandag in Suid-Afrika besig is om te doen.

As ons getuienis getrou aan die waarheid is, moet ons sommige van die vervolging en wreedheid wat deur die owerhede in so baie dele van die wêreld toegepas word, verwag. **Die Christendom is egter op die opstanding gegrond; daarom kan ons met vreugde vir dit wat ons voorgehou word die nuwe jaar ingaan.**

PRIEST TORTURED IN ARGENTINE

The Southern Cross reports a common event from the South American Continent.

Robert Nowell

Father Patrick Rice has told reporters here that he was beaten and subjected to water torture and electric shock treatment by Argentine police during the first three days of his eight-week imprisonment before he was released and deported last month.

At about 8.30 pm on October 11, the 31-year-old Irish priest said, he was walking in a dark part of Villa Soldati with an Argentinian girl, Fatima Cabrera, who had come to him for help and advice. They were bundled into a van by armed men and taken to Police Station 36.

Asked his name and where he lived, Fr Rice said, he identified himself as a priest and was then beaten up. "Now you'll find out that the Romans were very civilized towards the early Christians compared with what's going to happen to you", he was told.

Much worse than being tortured oneself, he said, was hearing the screams of another being tortured. The whole of Wednesday, October 13, Miss Cabrera was being tortured: "I could hear her screaming", he said.

Throughout his torture, the priest said, he was kept blindfolded with a canvas hood or, during the electric shock treatment, with a smaller blindfold. It was understood that to catch a glimpse of one's

torturers so as to be able to identify them afterwards meant one would be shot.

At his press conference he was adamant that he had not been engaging in any subversive activities. He identified himself completely with the Catholic Church in Argentina, which he said was the one institution in the country which had the confidence and the respect of the people. He said the Church did not endorse violence but pleaded for social justice for all.

In a sense, Fr Rice said, it was not surprising that he had been treated badly by the Argentinian armed forces, "since any Christian minister who has taken a stand with the poor can expect it."

He still does not know what has happened to the girl arrested with him.

According to estimates quoted by Amnesty International, there are between 6 000 and 8 000 official detainees in Argentina, while over the past two and a half years thousands more have disappeared.

The number of priests detained is thought to be around 10 to 20, but a number of others are missing. The government refuses to release figures on detainees.

CLERGYMEN GO TO WAR

—Paul Oestreicher

This examination of the morality of chaplaincies first appeared in The Times of London. It refers to America, Asia and Europe—but is particularly relevant to Southern Africa today.

The end of a decade of American bombing of Indo-China takes my mind back seven years to an air-conditioned penthouse bedroom in sweltering Manhattan, looking across to the United Nations Building. My room-mate in the guest suite of the affluent headquarters of American Anglicanism didn't exactly fit my penthouse dream. An air force uniform, heavy with brass, isn't my idea of glamour. Having come for two church conferences both of which had the Vietnam War high on their agenda, I found myself spending my first night in New York with one of the senior chaplains of the United States Air Force. But it needed little reflection to be glad to be sharing with a fellow priest who would surely be able to give me a picture of the war which I might otherwise never have encountered. Many of America's Christian leaders—certainly those I'd be likely to meet—had by then already made up their minds that the war was immoral and had become part of the peace lobby which, a few years later, virtually forced a President out of office and his successor, by stages, out of Indo-China.

Questions

My companion's work obviously included the Church's ministry to air crews who had by then already made many parts of Vietnam uninhabitable. In fact, it was partly the nature of the bombing and its effect on the civilian population which finally pushed as conservative a body as the American Conference of Catholic Bishops into condemnation of the war. In that summer of 1966, the arguments were at their height. So I started to put some obvious questions to my colleague. Pyjamas had by now put us on a level.

It was not for him, he argued, to figure out the rights and wrongs of the war. "If the State Department and the Pentagon think we've got to go through with it, who am I to question their judgment? As an officer I am under discipline." His job was to minister to fighting men, to help make life bearable for them and their families and, where possible, to give them moral guidance and keep them out of trouble. Here he mainly had drugs and VD in mind. But the war itself, a moral problem that was tearing America apart was, it seemed, not his problem.

God's side

I had no good reason to be shocked or surprised. **I had stumbled on a situation that is inevitable wherever it is not thought incongruous that a priest should hold military rank and thus be subject to military discipline.** The chaplain in that situation is free to pursue any line of moral argument provided it does not impair the fighting fitness of his flock. In other words the one thing he must not think too deeply about or at any rate open his mouth too widely about is the moral dilemma of the business of soldiering—unless, of course he is certain that God is unreservedly on his nation's side. In the First World War, dedicated clergy on both sides invoked the same God with fanatical fervour. That, of course, was part of the churches' descent to the semi-pagan tribalism to which many monuments in our English cathedrals bear witness. Mars obscuring Christ. That sort of blasphemy, one should think, started bleeding to death in the fields of Flanders.

But even in the last war, Hitler's armies had their full complement of Catholic and Lutheran chaplains. Only a few were deluded enough to believe that Hitler was God's anointed, to save the world from bolshevism. But none would dare to have quarrelled with the words *Gott Mit Uns* (God with us) engraved on the belt-buckle of

every soldier. In America, "In God We Trust" is on the coins instead. Britons don't seem to need such immodest reassurance.

Church and State

Since the conversion of the Roman Emperor Constantine, the tie-up between Church and State has become so intimate that parsons parading about with service medals, amidst weapons and regimental standards, raise few eye-brows. **Yet, as Kenneth Leech points out in his book *Youthquake* (Sheldon Press) on the aspirations of the young, such goings-on do incalculable damage to Christianity in the minds of the many young people who look once more to the poor man of Galilee for their standards.**

Every industrial chaplain worth his salt today will try to apply the insights of the Gospel to the problems of modern industry. He will, if need be, say hard things to those with power both in labour and management. But how does a naval chaplain preach to the crew of a Polaris submarine, or to their political masters? Should Whitehall so decide, it will be their duty to "take out" whole cities. A Christian might just conceivably—in fear and trembling—take on such a chilling assignment praying that he will be helping to maintain peace. But what if the deterrent fails? No doubt sensibly, naval discipline reportedly demands that if a crew member develops serious moral doubts he must be replaced. What role is there in that situation for a priest determined to wrestle with the ethics of nuclear warfare? Can he possibly do other than raise disturbing thoughts, if he is not to evade the real issues?

A study of RAF chaplains made by the American Catholic sociologist Professor Gordon Zahn and published by the Manchester University Press shows that their attitudes are remarkably similar to that of my American companion. Most of them felt themselves to be priests, friends, colleagues and pastors to airmen and their families, but without feeling any obligation to relate the Gospel directly to the life and work of their congregations. Many did think it part of their task to help maintain good morale. What would they have made of Martin Luther King's conviction that **"the Church must be reminded that it is not the master or the servant of the state, but rather the conscience of the state. It must be the guide and critic of the state, and never its tool."**

I do not for a moment doubt that, like other men, members of the armed services need and should be offered the Church's ministry. The integrity, humility and humanity of many professional soldiers is beyond question. So is the sincerity and pastoral zeal of the great majority of chaplains. **The theological question which remains unanswered is whether a priest under military discipline is free to perform his ministry fully, particularly in situations of conflict when proclaiming the truth might even come close to treason.** Looking back, what should the word of God have been to the bomber crews who reduced Dresden, crowded with refugees, to a raging inferno? Could chaplains have prayed publicly for forgiveness for this British war crime?

Subversive Love

I believe that only in Germany, after the trauma of Hitler, has this problem been seriously debated among Christians, and they have not reached a common mind. There, at least, the Church has accepted its full share of great guilt. This is a subject with which our churches still need to grapple. The service chaplaincies deserve to be taken much more seriously by the Church as a whole. The results

might be disturbing, but not more disturbing than the Gospel itself. **How potentially subversive is the command to love one's enemies?** What is the relevance of Christ the bringer of conflict and Christ the "Prince of Peace" to those on whom society places the terrible burden of handling weapons that are made to kill—if need be thousands?

The Times published a cartoon in 1967 in which one American Air Force officer says to another: "I can't see the objection to spraying people with napalm if it makes the world a better place to live in." Cartoonists often preach the best sermons. Certainly my American room-mate of the summer of 1966 could hardly, without quitting

his job, have allowed newsreel films of dying, napalmed children so to affect him that he would have gone straight to the generals and cried: "This, in the name of Christ, must stop!"

Freedom

Perhaps the last bombs have fallen in Indo-China. But the arsenals of the nations remain full. Who will minister Christ's judgment and forgiveness to the custodians of tomorrow's death—and how? **We know that where communists rule, the Church will not even be consulted. Christians there will merely be given a choice of applauding the state or remaining silent. Are western churches by their integration into the military structures not in danger of volunteering for just such a limitation on their own freedom?**

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THE FACTS OF LIFE

Dr Charles Birch examined the neutral facts of the world in which South Africa also lives.

-The Christian Citizen

Facts to Face . . .

The world's most pressing political, social and economic problems have their origin in science and technology. Existing structures are powerless to deal with these problems. Goals such as world brotherhood, international peace, distributive justice and human development have ceased to be rosy ideals on the far horizon. They have been overtaken by the facts, facts produced by the momentum of science and technology meeting the inertia and impotence of outmoded political and economic structures. **It is the facts, not the ideals, that have gone far, far ahead of us.**

We need to take a cool look at these facts.

Political Power

Three-quarters of the world's income, investment, services, and 90% of the world's resources are in the hands of one-quarter of its people. The gross annual sales of the large multi-national corporations are on a par with the gross national products of all but a few of the largest nation-states. **Does it make sense for a powerful multi-national corporation to spend more on advertising in a developing country than that country spends on education?** Why produce and advertise such goods in a developing country when the social system perpetrates distributive injustice? Governments go through the constitutional motions of governing while decisions that affect the vital concerns of citizens are made by those who control the technology of production, transportation, communication and warfare.

Economic Growth

The rate of global economic growth (averaging 4-5% annually since 1950) is doubling the size of the world economy every 14 years. From 1950 to 1975, the rich countries grew richer. Some of the poor countries grew richer; their added riches made a few people rich but left poverty unchanged. The absolute increase in per capita income of developing countries was less than 15p per year.

The average fuel consumption per person of the poor nations is one-fourteenth that of the rich; yet these 'poor' are seven-tenths of the world's population. If the poor suddenly used as much fuel as the rich, world fuel consumption would treble right away. Proven oil reserves would then last no more than a dozen years.

Resources

At present rates of use, minerals essential for existing types of

technology and most fossil fuels will be exhausted within the next few hundred years. Natural gas, mercury and copper will be exhausted quite soon. All arable land will be used up by the end of the century.

Food

Despite the Green Revolution the amount of food per person has barely increased since 1950. Even so, there is possibly enough food to sustain all the people alive today, yet over 500 million people suffer from chronic hunger, 400 million suffer acute undernourishment, hundreds of thousands are starving, 2 000 million live at subsistence levels, 1 000 million have far more than enough to eat.

Population

The next 40 years will add more people to the world than the whole history of mankind to now, 1 000 million people are added every 15 years. **By 1984 half the world's population will be urbanised.**

Environmental Deterioration

Environmental deterioration is doubling every 14 years. In 1950 stresses on the environment were few. In 1970 the list of ecological disasters was endless. By the year 2000 life-support systems will be stretched to their limits, perhaps some will snap under the strain.

The Accidental Revolution

When the facts of the world are put together, the result looks like an awful accident. The sweeping and unprecedented technological transformation of the world came about by an "accident revolution" in science and technology.

Jacques Monod, the biologist, has argued that the "success" of science and technology has undermined and unsettled every faith and creed in the West.

The escalating pursuit of material goods has not brought the promised paradise. Instead it has thrown into the clearest, coldest light the spiritual, ethical and philosophical hunger of mankind.

Affected with an infinite itch, modern man continues to scratch in the wrong place. His frenetic clawing is drawing blood not only from his own life but from the circulatory life systems of the planet.

What are people for? That is the question underlying all genuine concern about resource depletion, distributive injustice, population

explosion, environmental deterioration and food crises. These are not fundamentally issues of quantities and numbers but of quality of life; the means to survive in place of poverty, education in place of ignorance, health in place of illness, adequate food in place of hunger, work in place of unemployment, sustainable environment in place of environmental deterioration, opportunity for the next generation in place of deprivation, life in place of death, fulfilment in place of emptiness, purpose in place of meaninglessness.

These are ideals the world desperately needs to be pulled out of the woodwork of Christianity and other movements that claim to work for the transformation of the world.

The Sustainable Society

There can be no change in the meaning of the facts without ideals and purposes that inspire enough people to put a human face on to the world system. No one knows yet what the design of the new world order will be or how it could be implemented. This will take years or even decades to work out. But one central aspect is becoming clear. **The world has to be ordered as a sustainable global society as opposed to the accidental, non-sustainable society which inevitably will be shattered by war, famine, environmental deterioration and death.**

Our world is an ecologically disordered world. The sustainable society will be an ecologically ordered world. The emphasis will be on people not goods, on growth in quality not quantity.

An equilibrium between people and resources must ensure that one does not outstrip the other. This must eventually involve stable numbers of people and a stable production of goods per person. The rich countries must decrease their rate of economic growth in many areas so that poor countries can increase theirs, until some sort of equality is approached.

The traditional economists say it cannot be done, that sharing is a myth. But if we do not do the impossible we shall face the unthinkable. Or as the French activist student said "Be realistic—do the impossible!"

In the New International Order (the U.N. is talking about one) the present system of marketing will give way to a global reallocation of resources based on human need. Development will be equated not with economic growth but with the alleviation of poverty, hunger, disease and injustice. Environmental policy will require managing the world's resources in a way that will maintain environmental quality.

The emerging world system is already struggling to be born as nations discover their interdependence and self-reliance. These are complementary concepts. Self-reliance does not mean self-sufficiency. It does mean that structures within countries are such that the people can participate fully in the process of development at the grass-roots level. Aid without that has simply reinforced existing illiberal systems.

The sustainable society is like a living body whose parts grow and develop in a co-ordinated way until growth ceases. It gives way to maintenance and qualitative enrichment of the mature body. Now read I Corinthians 12:14-26.

People And The Creation

A ground plan for the sustainable society can be found in the sustainable systems of nature, the tropical rain forests and the coral reefs that have survived for millions of years. Life evolved in self-sustainable recycling systems. That is how we got here. To deliberately recreate such a system globally is the only way we shall stay here.

We would learn to do that better if we had a rapport with the natural world, a sense of oneness with the whale, with the tree and even with the tiniest micro-organism fixing nitrogen in the depth of the sea. The whole of creation groans with us waiting for the day of renewal.

This is not to put the clock back. The Kingdom of God will be built of steel and wood and oil and computers and trees and birds and people, insofar as the ideals of the Spirit are let in by us to do its work. If this sounds utopian it is far less utopian than the supposition that our present society, geared to uncontrolled economic growth, will permit mankind to sustain life of any quality on this earth. As Dr E. F. Schumacher said, "The earth cannot afford the modern world, it requires too much and accomplishes too little. It is too uneconomic."

There has to be a better way. An ecological way will have much to commend it morally. It may have little to commend it economically. Economic man had his chance and failed, he has estranged man and the world from the creation. **Ecological man in rapport with the creation may yet have time to discover a power that will transform himself and his institutions into the new creation. Now read Romans 8:18-28.**

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PRACTISING OUR FAITH IN A HUNGRY WORLD

-Ralph L. Moellering

Dr. Moellering, a pastor in Alberta, Canada, published this article in the Lutheran Standard. His world is 10,000 miles to the West, but the message seems familiar.

Who can doubt that the prophets of the Bible would castigate the jet-setters and playboys of our society? Who can deny that those Old Testament preachers would reject our value systems? They would question our notions of success, and they would disapprove of fantastically high salaries for movie idols, TV performers, sports heroes, and business executives.

Riches are a hindrance to a self-sacrificing discipleship. Jesus made this clear in his parables. In the story of the wealthy farmer, for example, the man who trusts in riches is pictured as a fool. Most poignant is the saying, "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye

of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God" (Matt. 19:24).

Jesus had no permanent home and no private possessions. Judged by today's standards of success—money in the bank, a swimming pool in the backyard, and the latest style of clothes in the cupboard—Jesus was a failure.

In the midst of our affluence, many of us have a hard time seeing clearly our role as followers of Jesus. To be a faithful disciple means to be a servant—one who ministers to the needs of suffering humanity.

A strange demand

Some declare pastors should confine themselves to so-called spiritual issues and avoid so-called worldly matters. Stick to the "simple gospel" and leave economic or ethical questions alone, preachers are told.

I find it strange that some of these demands come from individuals who urge unwavering faithfulness to Scripture and who warn against departing from the Bible's norms. But large portions of the Bible would have to be discarded if we in the church were to ignore social and political problems.

God our Creator and Redeemer is repeatedly portrayed in the Bible as the supreme defender of the oppressed. And in many instances, the biblical writers relate their message of salvation to the cause of social justice.

Love shown in deeds

The point is clear: A person cannot be in a right relationship of love and trust with the source of goodness and trust—God—if that person is acting unjustly toward other human beings. "He who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen" (1 John 4:20). "If any one has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? Little children, let us not love in word or speech but in deed and in truth" (1 John 3:17-18).

Deeply ingrained in our North American way of life are the ideas that "our goal is more" and "bigger is better." Although our vision of economic progress was temporarily shattered by the Great Depression of the 1930s, we turned to the theories of Lord Keynes who wrote: "Avarice and usury . . . must be our gods . . . for only

they can lead us out of the tunnel of economic necessity into daylight. . . ."

A new challenge

Now Christians are being challenged to renounce this outlook, to reconsider assumptions about unrestricted growth and ever-increasing prosperity, and to practice the Bible's teachings on social justice in new ways.

Nobel laureate Gunnar Myrdal has said, "Without radical changes in the consumption patterns in the rich countries, any pious talk about a new world economic order is humbug." **To practice Christianity in our hungry world means acting against our own self-interests.**

This is what we face, and the dismal facts are indisputable: Unless present trends are reversed, the rich will tend to get richer, and at least part of their gains will come at the expense of the poor who are getting poorer. Half the world's population of four billion lives in nations where the gross national product (GNP) per person is below \$200 a year. At the same time, 600 million persons live at the other extreme in nations where the GNP per person is between \$2 000 and \$5 600.

Drastic changes are needed if global wealth is to be shared more equitably. Trading and economic patterns currently are stacked against Third World countries. But these patterns cannot be altered unless the population of wealthier countries supports such change.

Is it not at precisely this point where the church must face its obligation to the oppressed and take the lead in preparing Christians for change? The time to begin is now.

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POPE PAUL ON PEACE

The concept of Peace as the ideal that gives direction to the concrete activity of human society seems destined to succumb to an inevitable victory of the world's incapacity to govern itself in and through Peace. Peace does not generate itself, even though the deepest impulses of human nature tend towards Peace. Peace is order, and order is what everything, every reality, aspires to as its destiny and the justification for its existence. Order is a pre-established destiny and justification for existence, but it is brought about together with and in collaboration with many factors. Thus Peace is a pinnacle that presupposes a complex inner supporting framework. Peace is like a flexible body that needs a stout skeleton to give it strength. The stability and beauty of the structure of Peace depend on the support of various causes and conditions. These are often absent. Even when they exist, they are not always strong enough for their function of ensuring that the pyramid of Peace should have a solid base and a lofty summit.

In this analysis of Peace we have seen again its beauty and its necessity, but we have also noted its instability and fragility. We conclude it by reaffirming our conviction that Peace is a duty, Peace is possible. This is the message we keep repeating, a message that makes its own the ideal of civilization, echoes the aspirations of peoples, strengthens the hope of the lowly and weak, and ennobles with justice the security of the strong.

It is a message of optimism, a presage of the future. Peace is no dream, no utopia, no illusion. Nor is it a labour of Sisyphus. No, Peace can be prolonged and strengthened. Peace can write the finest pages of history, inscribing them not only with the magnificence of power and glory but also with the greater magnificence of human virtue, people's goodness, collective prosperity, and true civilization: the civilization of love.

MOVEMENT FROM UNION

There is a movement away from plans for union of churches, the Secretary of the Church Unity Commission (CUC), the Revd Joe Wing, told the December meeting of the Commission in Johannesburg.

He also noted that although all the Churches had re-affirmed their commitment to the Search for Union at their recent meetings, this was to a large extent 'a commitment entered into without enthusiasm or a definite sense of purpose'.

That was the dark side of the picture on Church Unity. There were however, also some bright spots, such as the considerable interest in union as a process to be entered into by churches, especially at grassroots level.

This, said Mr Wing, was evident in the support given to CUC sponsored Clergy Consultations and Lay Leaders' Conferences scheduled for next year.

Another encouraging sign was the willingness of a majority of Christian Educational Departments to share in a Joint Educational Council, with a view to forming a united Christian Education Department for Churches involved in the CUC.

One of the major issues facing the CUC was that of the form of ministry in a united Church. 'Ministry is a live issue which must be resolved without disregarding the 'catholic' heritage or denying 'reformed' principles', said Mr Wing.

That this issue is not going to be easy to resolve was indicated by the fact that four documents on episcopacy produced by the CUC have been described as 'Anglican triumphalism' on the one hand, and 'pure Presbyterianism' on the other, according to Mr Wing.

He also reported that social and political matters within South Africa were taking priority over formal church union negotiations, indicating that 'pragmatic considerations will play a decisive role in future union negotiations'.

—"Kairos". The S.A. Council of Churches. December 1976.

SERVICE TO THE DOWN-TRODDEN

-Dr Manas Buthelezi.

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN SOUTHERN
AFRICA CENTRAL DIOCESE

Service of Bishop's Consecration
St. Mary's Cathedral, Johannesburg, 12.12.76
Gospel reading: Matthew 25:31-46

It is difficult to preach on a day that comes once in a lifetime, especially if the setting is Johannesburg during the year 1976 when so many things have happened and are happening. That is so because, while one tries to sum up the vision for the future, one also tries to relate the message of the text to the situation of the hearers.

I am going to preach on the theme, "SERVICE TO THE DOWN-TRODDEN." This sermon is dedicated to all those whom I shall serve near and far. I further dedicate it to the representatives of our sister churches overseas who cannot be with us because they were denied entry visas. Among those absent I include my friends and colleagues through out the country who would have definitely joined me on this occasion had it not been for the fact that they are in detention. Indeed serving the down trodden may mean sharing in their suffering.

The text that was read is telling us that we can truly serve God by serving those around us, especially the down-trodden and unimportant. The place of serving God is not only in church sanctuaries, but also in the dust and dirt of daily life, where tears are often shed and hopes frustrated.

There is something magical about serving other people. When you serve the unimportant you make them important. Kings can only remain kings while there are people who are prepared to serve them as their subjects. In other words service is an important device of king-making. Those whom we serve we make important and hence kings. I will return to this thought later.

The church is challenged by the times we live in to be the servant of the people rather than their lord. In a manner of speaking, Christ equates service done to the poor, the hungry, the imprisoned and the suffering to that done to him.

The church in this country has done a lot for the down-trodden. It has built schools and hospitals for them in its ministry of charity. The times we live in demand more than a ministry of charity on the part of the church. In the ministry of charity you first accumulate the goods and other forms of material benefits to be distributed to the needy. What you give away is goods accumulated for the sole purpose of giving away. You can then afford to give things away while you yourself remain in tact. True service should mean giving a certain portion of yourself to others. This is another way of saying that in the course of helping others you must identify yourself with them.

It is not enough for the church, for an example, to do something for the poor and the oppressed in this country; the church must also *become* the poor and the oppressed. This is the form of service God rendered when he became man in order to save us. He shared our life in order to enable us to share the benefits of his own. In the course of doing this he was maligned, harrassed, arrested, beaten and killed.

If the church is to render true service to the underdogs of this land, it must be prepared to be maligned, harrassed, have its representatives arrested, beaten or even killed if that becomes

necessary. There is something wrong in a situation where the church can afford to live in comfort and enjoy social and political respectability while a large portion of its members suffer and enjoy none of those things. That would mean that that church has become irrelevant.

The truth is that, as soon as the church in this country identifies itself with the poor and the oppressed in their struggle, it will no longer be immune to the kind of experiences such categories of persons are subjected to. A living church cannot afford to immunise itself against the painful hardships of the people who are its members. A church that strives to cultivate and preserve a certain type of respectability that is beyond the reach of its own members can only succeed to do so at the cost of cutting itself from the reality of the life of the people. There is something wrong when the church succeeds to be respectable while its rank and file membership is subjected to all forms of human indignity such as black people experience in this country.

One has heard talks like: what should the church do for the people of Soweto. The impression created in stating things this way is that the church does not live in Soweto since it has to move in from outside in order to minister to people who are other than itself. Does the church not live *with* the people of Soweto? Has the church deserted the people of Soweto so that it has to reach them from outside?

True service includes that the church must not just help the people of Soweto, it must also *become* the people of Soweto, sharing their sufferings and indignities.

You can never wipe away tears from the eyes of those who cry without getting your hands wet. You can never truly impart hope among those who suffer without sharing a bit of their hopelessness and dilemmas, especially when obstacles appear to be impossible to remove.

The more the church tries to identify itself with the people of Soweto ministry-wise, the more its representatives are going to share the suffering of the people. I can foresee a time when church members and leaders are going to be subjected to increasing government sanctions the more they identify themselves with the people of Soweto. This has started already, especially if you think of the unprecedented police raid of Diakonia House (on 25 November 1976—ed). Perhaps this painful incident is a sign that the church is beginning to move closer to the people; hence a slight taste of what the people actually experience. The church must brace itself for difficult times ahead.

The motto for each member of our church should be: I would rather suffer with the people than enjoy life without them; I would rather be nothing with the people if being something and somebody means that I should be cut off from their experience of life which is not their making; I would rather suffer with the people than reign without them. This is my motto as well, and a fair description of my life commitment, even for this office.

THE RADICAL IMPERATIVE:

A CELEBRATION OF THE GOSPEL

—Paul H. Sherry in *“Christuanity and Crisis”*

John Bennett's latest book, *The Radical Imperative* (Westminster Press, 1975), is a cry of pain in response to the inhuman conditions in which so many people around the world exist and a protest against distortions of Christianity that, in the face of such suffering, encourage religious privatism and promote social irresponsibility. It is a self-criticism that allows for continuing reevaluation of perspective in light of new insights and changing situations and a celebration of the Gospel that sustains and provides hope “for future embodiments in history of justice and reconciliation.”

Both terms in the book's title are key to understanding its purpose. The term “radical” implies the need for fundamental change if justice is to be served. The word “imperative” emerges from Christian revelation regarding the nature of personal and social reality as supported by the demands of conscience and the confirmation of experience. Given the current situation, John Bennett argues, if the Gospel imperative is not to be denied, radical change is the order of the day.

The last sentence of chapter 6 perhaps best describes the basic motivation behind the writing of this book: **“Two things are at stake: The survival of a large part of humanity, and the humanity of those who survive because they live in privileged and protected countries.”** In this sentence, as throughout the book, we sense the anguish of one who feels deeply both the magnitude of the suffering that haunts the globe and the extent to which this suffering defaces our God-given humanity. The Christian faith affirms the unity of all people: “There are no ‘gooks’”; “no ‘lesser breeds within the law’”; “the billion or more people who are most threatened in our world are with ourselves and we with them.” Why then do we continue to deny the very intention of our creation?

But anguish is very different from despair, and one of the book's most helpful qualities is its basically hopeful character, a quality made more impressive by the fact that analysis of the seriousness of our national and international situation is never compromised. **The root of Bennett's hopeful view is at least threefold: the growing power of the world's exploited peoples, his own observations of the current political scene in the US, and his Christian faith.**

He states in chapter 2 that perhaps the most important fact of our time is the growing unwillingness of exploited peoples to accept the domination of most of the world by white men in the northern hemisphere. This new assertiveness will change the face of the globe. He believes that the “possibilities for radical change by means of the political process still remain in the United States,” and “the widespread tendency to despair of politics is certainly premature.” He is certainly right! Finally, his Christian faith tells him “(a) that we avoid panic and an ultimate fear; and (b) that we see the future as partly open” (chapter 8). Anyone who is versed in the history of social change knows the wisdom of such comments. Change lies always on the other side of a politics of possibility, not one of despair. Possibility sharpens perspective, despair distorts it; and without perspective victory is denied.

Anguish is also to be distinguished from guilt, and here again Bennett is helpful. “Hopeless guilt,” he argues, needs to be transformed into a “future-oriented sense of responsibility.” The vehicle of transformation is the Christian doctrine of grace. Action borne of grace transforms the compulsive acts of the guilty into the joyful acts of the faithful.

What Can Be Expected of the Church?

According to Bennett, there are three basic reasons why the churches fail to be aware of and heed the radical imperative: (1) They—particularly the white churches—are captured by their social position as institutions peopled by persons who benefit most from the status quo. (2) They are seduced by a tendency to read the Bible as a book of private religion or of religion involving responsibilities limited to the church's internal life; this conservative tendency has been intensified recently because of the growing strength of those churches that are both theologically and socially conservative. (3) A number of churches that do seek to emphasize the radical imperative have lost legitimacy in the eyes of many because they have failed to set that imperative in the context of the larger human search for meaning, purpose, support and forgiveness.

Nonetheless, Bennett detects more encouraging signs, particularly if one views the church globally. For one thing, in many other countries conservative theologies often are not so closely tied to conservative or reactionary politics. Second, the long-term trend in theology, despite the current mood, is toward intellectually self-critical and ecumenical forms of Christianity rather than uncritical orthodoxy and exclusivism. Third, Protestantism increasingly is infused with “ethical inspirations and stimuli” from the Roman Catholic community in the US and around the world. Finally, the emergence of a new generation of conservative evangelicals committed to a radical understanding of Christian social responsibility reflects a modification, at least to some degree, of the monolithic social conservatism of the evangelical churches.

Surely Bennett is right that the church remains basically a nonradical institution despite the radical impulses, growing out of the Gospel, that convulse it time and again. And despite his hopes to the contrary, I see little reason to believe that this reality will change very much in the foreseeable future.

Since strategy is based so much on perception of social context, our judgment of what can and cannot be expected from the churches in pursuing the radical imperative becomes an important consideration. Such judgment affects level of expectation, style of approach and amount of effort to be expended in varying arenas competing for limited amounts of personal time and energy.

For example, churches and synagogues are equipped, perhaps better than any other institutions, to legitimate issues of conscience. They can be places where for the first time many see the moral demands of an issue and, in so doing, help create a climate in which the more active struggle for human decency can go forward. Though many of us would wish for more, this is no small accomplishment, especially in a society that increasingly ignores the moral dimensions of issues. Some churches will do more, but the others should be commended for doing this much.

A few persons in each congregation will go further. Grasped by the radical imperative, they will be compelled by faith to pursue actively the changes that the time demands. I think this number will always be smaller than Bennett hopes, but it is significant nonetheless. Those who would lead these groups are responsible to put them in touch with each other and, just as important, with other, nonchurch, groups across the country that are pursuing similar social goals. **Coalition is the key to change but with a few**

with a few notable exceptions this key has remained unturned. Churchpeople committed to radical change should actively pursue this strategy rather than the more dubious attempt to radicalize the entire church.

Theologians, like the rest of us, are not prone to point up the errors of their ways. Bennett goes against this tide. In the book's preface he states that he accepted too blandly national trends in the United States in the 1940's and 1950's, including a too-simple harmony between his ethical convictions and US cold war policy as well as an excessive optimism about the effects of the "mixed economy." Whereas five years ago he would have doubted Rosemary Ruether's statement that "the oppression of women is undoubtedly the oldest form of oppression . . ." today that continuing oppression has been made real for him.

In chapter 6 Bennett tells us that in the last two decades he has neglected economic ethics, and then makes what I believe to be one of the most important statements in the book: "Today I believe that I need to return to economic issues as having central importance for Christian ethics." Finally, he says that until recently he was inclined to dismiss civil religion as a form of idolatry. Today, he has begun to see that at its best American civil religion does point to the transcendent and thus can be "a great moral resource, and for me it is a ground for affirming American patriotism" (chapter 7). Oh, that *all* of us had the humility to remain open to new invasions of the spirit!

The Power of the Gospel

Bennett's return to economic issues is well placed. They are the key to social change, both because justice is dependent on fundamental economic change and because economic issues alone provide the possibility for the majoritarian coalition necessary for change. His approach is sound in that he deals both with incremental changes immediately possible—universal health care, income maintenance, tax reform and employment legislation—and with more long-term necessities such as the need to strengthen the public sector and curb the excessive power of large corporations. However, his argument would have been fortified if he had dealt more fully with the potential role of national planning in addressing these issues, particularly since this issue is once again surfacing for the first time in many years. Also, strategically I would have emphasized more than Bennett does the importance of a full employment economy, agreeing with Coretta Scott King and a host of others that "full employment is the single most effective cure for the whole host of urban problems that exist." And I would not necessarily see, as does Bennett, the Government only as "the

employer of last resort." In particular instances we should think of government as the employer of first resort.

One final comment regarding economic issues: Bennett's statements on the US trade union movement. Although recognizing the continuing importance of trade union organization, Bennett tends to see the role of the nation's trade unions in promoting social justice in the past tense; he states that "today organized labor is relatively conservative," and that "they have often become static institutions with limited objectives and with little concern for those outside their membership, especially racial minorities." Space prevents a detailed response to these comments, but I do believe they are misleading and unfortunately tend to divide further two potential allies: religious people concerned for social change and progressive elements in the trade union movement. **A critical need at this juncture of political history is for these two groups to sit down together, state frankly their perceptions of each other, determine if sufficient commonality of purpose exists for joint action, and get on with the task of social justice.** A limited amount of this activity is already underway.

Above all else, *The Radical Imperative* is a celebration of the power inherent in the Christian Gospel that has sustained John Bennett all his life and has made him one of the most eloquent Christian spokespersons for justice and human decency for over 40 years of our nation's history.

Two themes seem especially pertinent for those of us who continue to learn from him. First is his contention that Christians must avoid identifying the Christian faith with any political judgment at the same time that we bring the insights of the Gospel to bear on all political judgments. **The Gospel is both more and less than any political system. It is more in that it provides profound insights into the nature of human beings and societies against which all systems may be judged. It is less in that it does not pretend to have specific answers to the particularities of every historical moment.** As Bennett states, "There is no Christian system, but there are motives, criteria, goals and forms of self-criticism inspired by their faith by which Christians should test all institutions and systems."

The second theme of import for us today is Bennett's contention that **those who respond to the radical imperative "need to be grasped by the reality of God's presence regardless of which way the tides of history flow."** God knows we need that presence in a world that always seems to elude our grasp. This is the ultimate celebration—communion with God—not at the expense of social justice but in and through it, whether we win or lose, whether we live or die.

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COUP IN THAILAND

Thailand lies thousands of miles to the east, yet this report of recent events (from the International Documentation Centre) seems strangely topical.

The coup that restored military rule to Thailand October 6 was not a spontaneous reaction to leftist student agitation. It was a carefully engineered seizure of power by Thailand's extreme right-wing military and police leaders, backed by neofascist political organizations—elements in Thai society that have been carefully cultivated by the CIA and the Pentagon. But unlike previous military governments in Thailand, this junta appears to be highly ideological and well-organized to carry out a nationwide purge of the left. Many observers suggest that Thai society has become so polarized that a return to parliamentary democracy is highly unlikely, while the right-wing military takeover has given the communist-led guerrilla insurgency a major, if not decisive, boost.

The military takeover was planned well in advance. *New York Times* correspondent David Andelman reported from Bangkok October 8 that "plans for the coup had apparently been formulated in January", and that "sources close to the junta" said that the "first nine major directives the body issued had been drafted in January". Senior military officials were reportedly involved in lengthy meetings at Thailand's military headquarters for some days before the coup. As long ago as last July, writes *Washington Post* correspondent Lewis Simons, a Western ambassador said, "Make no mistake about it. The army intends to come back. But not yet. First they want to make things a lot worse so they'll be able to claim

they're taking power in response to popular demand".

The pretext for the coup—a nation-wide student protest which culminated in a sit-in at Thammasat University, brutally broken up by police and right-wing students—had all the appearances of a setup. The student protest was sparked by a decision—clearly made at a very high level—to allow former right-wing dictator Thanom Kittakachorn to return home.

With the student protests underway, the right-wing went into action, charging that the students had maligned the widely revered monarchy—a charge apparently without foundation. For a full day before the coup, right-wing groups appealed over the radio for supporters to take action against the students. By evening, 2 000 right-wing students, some armed, had gathered outside the university.

Who fired the opening shot is unclear—police claim it came from students inside the university. What is clear is that the students were virtually unarmed and so could not have engaged in a battle with police, and that the police made no effort to clear the campus with teargas or other riot control methods. Instead, they launched a massive military assault, which seemed aimed at liquidating the leftist student movement. Officials say 41 persons were killed. Several diplomatic sources put the figure nearer 100. The *Washington Post* gave this description: "Units of airborne, border patrol, marine, riot and other specialized police sprayed protesting students with heavy automatic weapons fire. Sharpshooters carrying high power rifles equipped with sniper scopes picked off individual targets. A team of airborne police fired an eight-foot recoilless rifle, normally an antitank weapon, at a building occupied by students". The right-wing students, whose numbers grew to 20 000, were allowed to join in the assault, carrying out much of the extreme savagery that was depicted in news photos.

Junta: Right-Wing, Pro U.S.

Thanin Kraivichien, chosen by the military to head what is expected to be a largely ceremonial civilian cabinet, reflects the extreme right-wing views of the junta. Formerly a supreme court judge, Thanin is a psychological warfare expert and a strident anticommunist. He has lectured on anticommunist tactics at the National Defense College and the CIA-connected Internal Security Command. He has also lectured on communist affairs at four major universities. According to the *Post*, Thanin "has a reputation among leftists as a witch hunter in the style of the late Sen. Joseph McCarthy". In his first address Oct. 13, Thanin said that it would be more than a decade before democratic rule would be restored.

Most democratic rights were eliminated in the junta's initial decrees. The constitution was abolished, political parties and unions banned and a censorship committee set up to review press, radio and television. A catch-all decree, "Order No. 22", issued October 13, authorizes arrest for up to 20 days without bail or charges. Prisoners who have "shown no sign of repentance" can be sent to what are described as "re-education and vocational camps". Nine categories of potential inmates were listed, ranging from common criminals and brothel owners, to the unemployed, striking workers, and opponents of the military government.

There are also indications that the junta is preparing a stepped-up anti-guerrilla campaign in the rural areas of northeastern Thailand. A new decree, reminiscent of tactics used by the Saigon regime in South Vietnam, authorizes regional authorities to cordon off "communist infiltrated areas", detain anyone living in the zones or traveling there for up to 18 months without trial, and control the flow of food and other supplies to keep them from the guerrillas.

The ruling junta is strongly pro-American. The *Los Angeles Times* reports that Adm. Sangad Chaloryu was chosen to head the junta in part because he was the most easily identifiable pro-American member of the senior command group. For the Thai military the massive U.S. presence of the late '60s and early '70s are "the good old days". The junta's chief foreign policy advisor, Thanat Khoman, told the *Washington Post* that the expulsion of

the U.S. forces was a key factor in alienating the senior officers who staged the coup. Another was Thailand's improved relations with its communist neighbors, especially Vietnam. Although a return to large-scale U.S. presence is "out of the question", Thanat said, Thailand still offers some advantages to the United States. "For example, temporary use of our air bases".

The U.S. Connection

The military and police forces that launched the coup were created, financed, and trained by the CIA and the Pentagon over the past 25 years, according to Thai expert Thadeus Flood of the University of Santa Clara. Flood told *Internews* that the CIA has also been deeply involved with the neofascist organizations—created after the October 1973 student uprising—that served to polarize and destabilize Thailand prior to this year's coup.

Tom Loeb, an expert on U.S. involvement in Thailand at the University of South Dakota, told *Internews* that the U.S. "created all the conditions" for the coup, adding that the CIA and Pentagon had politicized the military and police through training in counterinsurgency leading to the highly ideological right-wing politics of the coup makers and the neofascist civilian organizations behind the junta.

Next Domino

The leftist students are bitter over the coup, which they blame on the United States. Hundreds of them—along with leftist intellectuals and politicians—have fled the capital to Laos or the jungles of north-eastern Thailand where they hope to take up armed resistance against the regime. Thai expert David Morell of Princeton told the *Christian Science Monitor* Oct. 14 that the coup could provide the Thai insurgents with something they always sought: "a sizeable number of educated young people with an inside knowledge of the Thai establishment and a commitment to destroy it".

The International Bulletin published, on 5 November 1976, the following news item on continuing repression in Thailand.

Thailand's new rulers have announced plans to build five detention, or "reeducation", centers to house some of the thousands of prisoners arrested since the Oct. 6 military coup. The new civilian government, installed Oct. 22 under the watchful eye of the military, says officially that 4 289 people have been arrested since the coup, with 2 647 still in jail. The *New York Times* reported Oct. 31 that unpublished police figures show 5 300 arrested in the first two weeks after the coup. The paper reported that round-ups and searches continue daily, creating a climate of fear—"fear of arrest and imprisonment, or of losing jobs".

Targets of the police raids have been students, teachers, journalists, authors, labor unionists and professionals, many of them moderate liberals, who are accused of having "communist affiliations". All, in the words of one observer, are being painted with "the same red brush". One result, a Western ambassador told the *Washington Post*, is that "the army has succeeded in driving hundreds, even thousands of Thailand's best minds into the embrace of the Communists". The crackdown has been particularly harsh on journalists. Among those still being held without formal charges is prominent Thai journalist Pansak Vinyaratn. "The once-lively Thai press", says the *Post*, "has been reduced to insipidity by official structures". Military authorities are continuing to burn thousands of books considered "pro-communist".

On Oct. 20, the military issued a set of new decrees, including one which authorizes detention without trial for six months. All of those arrested since the coup will have their cases decided by a military tribunal without right of appeal. And the teaching of any political theory "including democratic concepts" is banned by national schools. Under the decrees, wide areas of the country can be designated as "communist-infested". Thais can be forbidden to enter or live in them. Each area of Thailand will have its own "director of anti-communist suppression".

GOD AND THE S.A.P.

During interrogation at John Vorster Square, the Editor was asked why PRO VERITATE did not publish articles about the good work of the South African Police. He responded by inviting the Police to submit some manuscripts. Since none have been received, we publish some extracts from an engaging pamphlet entitled: "Communism and the Police" by H. R. Pike of the Christian Mission to the Communist World, Johannesburg.

It is our pious hope that all black and white racists, leftwing liberal clergymen, unsaved ecumenists, and ignorant youth of our Universities and townships (the list is not complete) will give it their serious consideration.

Communism and the Police

When the entire human race fell into sin, (through the transgression of Adam the first man) God Himself responded to this calamity. Firstly, he provided a means of forgiveness for man's sin, and secondly, He gave to the human race a system to help keep wicked and godless men under control. This was the system of Law and Order.

A Servant of God

The Bible describes members of Government and Police as "ministers of God for our good" (Romans 13:4a). Except for the influences of the Christian homes and the Bible believing and living churches, no institution anywhere in the nation, has a more serious and responsible duty than that of the Government and Police. There is a special sense in which they are to serve the entire nation, directly under the hand of the Almighty God! God foresaw that within the systems of earth's nations, Law and its enforcement would be necessary to keep evil men in restraint and provide a maximum of peace and security for all.

Without Law and Order

What would happen if the local Police forces and various branches of Security and Defence, across the country, were suddenly eliminated or reduced to a position of utter weakness and impotence? Such an eventuality is too horrible even to contemplate, and yet that is exactly what a large activist segment of our population is working for day and night! The lawless element in our country would shout with joy; the black racists and white racists would both dance with delight; the gamblers, law-breakers, anarchists, thugs, hoodlums, murderers, rapists, homosexuals, drug peddlars, prostitution racketeers, sex deviates, draft-dodgers, flag burners, long-haired and short-skirted revels marching in the streets; the publisher and promoters of pornographic literature, and above all, the criminal Communist conspiracy would rejoice beyond all others. Satan himself would direct this voice of joy and praise! Should this happen, or even partially happen, the forces of evil and crime would rejoice with unbounded enthusiasm. The country would become a sheer hell on earth!

Yet this is exactly what the elements named above (the list is not complete), would like to see occur. Of course, each group would like to see all the other groups restrained by the Police and Security but they themselves would plead freedom from Police arrest in order that they might pursue their devilish and godless desires and aims.

Communism hates Police and Security

The largest force in the list just given, is beyond any doubt the Communist Party. It is true that they will bless, support and encourage all or any of the abovelisted gangster movements or objectives, as long as it will further assist them towards reaching their ultimate goal of complete and final world conquest. There is no organization on earth today, so dedicated to the utter destruction of our Police and Security, like the Communist Party. Even the leftwing liberal clergymen and the unsaved ecumenists, who likewise share in resentment for enforced Law and Order, cannot match the sheer hatred of genuine dedicated Communists for our systems of Government and Police. The Communists have

designed a highly specialised programme to "finish off" our Police and Security. Every citizen of the free world must be awakened to this fact, or we shall find ourselves in serious trouble in the very near future!

University publications depict the Police as "pigs" and the swapword of many of the ignorant youth today, in speaking of a Policeman, is "fuzz". Such smear and slander terms, have originated in the wicked hearts of our enemies. They serve to only further discredit and slander our needed and God-appointed Police and Security. But, in full compliance with Communist plans, thousands of our ignorant and uninformed youth propagate these dirt terms! God help us!

Never in modern world history have the forces of Law and Order been placed under such merciless, vicious attacks. Never have the youth of our western world, lost so much respect and understanding of the God-given need for obedience to, and respect of, Government, Law and Order. The laws of our country would be meaningless and mockery, were it not for the continuous efforts of the various law enforcement agencies who are making such noble efforts to keep peace and make our beloved country a safe place in which to live.

It has been accurately stated that our Police, etc., constitute the last line of defence against a total breakdown of all law and order. The time is long overdue for every honest citizen to give every possible form of encouragement and support that can be provided. It is utterly impossible for the Police, Intelligence, Security and Defence to operate effectively without the whole-hearted confidence and support of the citizens of the country in which they serve. We must give our full support to these brave men and women of Law and Order. They are in one sense "God's guardians" of our security!

It would be a wonderful thing indeed if we would hold annual or semi-annual "Police days" across our country in our various churches! On these very special occasions our lawmen should be honoured and reassured that we are with them and for them, and that we appreciate more than we can tell all they are trying to do on our behalf. Best of all, such grand events would provide us with unique opportunities of preaching the saving Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ to these unsung heroes of our country. From this, they too, would be given the opportunity of finding Christ as their own personal Lord and Saviour! Those among their ranks not saved, would then have the privilege of trusting Christ as their Saviour.

Gentlemen of the Law, we salute you and pray that Almighty God under Whom you serve, will direct and protect you, as you carry on this holy duty, under God, towards mankind. You, too, must stand someday before the Eternal Judge of all men. Are you prepared for this fearful event? Every deed will be called into God's searching judgement! Prepare now for this sure occasion. Fall on your knees and turn from your sins, reaching out by faith, receive the Son of God, Jesus Christ, as your own personal Lord and Saviour. His blood will cleanse you from every sin, His Holy Spirit will make you new within. Do your work well, for you serve both God and man. God Bless our Police! We pray for you.

H. R. Pike

PUTTERILL—CHRISTIAN AND SOCIALIST

Father Jack Putterill, Vicar of Thaxted in England interviewed on some of his beliefs a generation ago, comments on issues which are topical in South Africa today.

Father Jack Putterill, you have always been a militant Christian teacher and a militant Socialist. Christianity and politics obviously mix but on that score alone you must have met with considerable criticism. How have you dealt with such criticism?

As you suggest I have frequently been criticised for bringing politics into religion and into the pulpit. My answer has been that politics and economics have always had a central and vital place in the Christian religion, as will be seen by a study of the Bible.

Isaiah and the prophets were religious politicians concerned with the freedom of their nation and the well-being of their people. They were champions of the poor against their rich oppressors. This challenge was carried on by John the Baptist and by Jesus himself — a challenge, in fact, which led to his crucifixion.

Any religion which does not concern itself with politics and social justice is the most dangerous spiritual dope. "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His Justice."

Prior to the last war the Church of England as a corporate body had taken no stand against Fascism, against the savagery perpetrated on Jews, Abyssinians and other minorities on the continent. For that reason I ceased to be a member of the Church, seeing it as something hollow and ineffectual. But one cannot dispense with Christ that easily. Do you find that people are again looking towards the Church for guidance and enlightenment?

The fact that the Church of England and all the churches concern themselves so little with the great evils of our time, such as the H-bomb, rearmament, race hatred, is indeed a great stumbling block to many.

There is a number of clergy and ministers who do see that these matters are their concern, but few people look to the churches for a lead in these matters, and it is not surprising in view of the past record of the churches.

But the Church hasn't changed all that much. On no grounds, dialectically speaking, can it defend the H-bomb, but it supports it.

While I think it is true that the organised churches have made but a feeble protest against the H-bomb, I do not think it is true to say

they have supported it. In the **Lambeth Report of 1958, Resolution No. 106 of the Anglican Bishops** states:

"The Conference reaffirms that war, as a method of settling international disputes, is incompatible with the teaching and example of Jesus Christ and declares that nothing less than the abolition of war itself should be the goal of the nations, their leaders and all citizens.

"As an essential step towards achieving this goal the Conference calls upon Christians to press through their governments, as a matter of the utmost urgency, for the abolition by international agreement of nuclear bombs, and other weapons of similar indiscriminate destructive power, the use of which is repugnant to the Christian conscience . . ."

What seems a just criticism is that there has been no adequate leadership to implement this resolution to rally all Christendom against war and the bomb which threatens world devastation.

Do you consider the Welfare State in any way connected with the increase in crime and delinquency and the general lowering of moral standards?

I rejoice in all that has been achieved in the Welfare State; the free health service has been an inestimable boon to the poor as also the provision against unemployment and accident — and of course the pensions. All this I think should be applauded.

The cause of crime and delinquency must be sought elsewhere. I should say in the uncertainties of our economic system — and its

"get all you can spirit" — its lack of planning and purpose. Broken homes are also a cause and this stems from a lack of discipline and morality in the home. More provision should be made for the youth to occupy its time in creative pursuits. The low sensationalism found in the Press, radio, cinema and television — all these have a demoralising effect on youth.

Do you feel that the Socialist Party has largely served its purpose?

The Socialist Party has not served its purpose until it has achieved its programme of socialism — Namely that the main industries of the nation shall be brought under common control and planned for the common good. We are a very long way off from that goal.

The Labour Party (if that is what you mean by the Socialist Party) is in the doldrums because the leadership has passed into the hands of men who seem to love capitalism and its spurious freedom and democracy more than a planned socialist society.

As I see it, it is almost inevitable that in the next 25 years a religious revival will occur. Is the Church ready to take the initiative?

I see no real grounds for accepting your forecast that there will be a revival of religion in the next 25 years. If you mean that there will be a sort of American Revivalism, with its soul-saving and other worldliness and glory-for-me, with its sentimental hymns and worse tunes, you may be right, but I should not regard this as a desirable thing.

The only revival I should welcome would be a revival of the Christian religion which seeks to set up a real Commonwealth of Nations; to share the wealth of the world; to abolish oppression and classes; to outlaw war and poverty and help to establish the "Acceptable Year of the Lord" on this planet.

What do you think of the New English Bible?

I think the new translation of the New Testament, like all fresh translation, is interesting and stimulating. I do not think, however, we gain very much by just saying the same thing in different words. This new effort seems to me to have very little literary merit — I suspect the literary experts have tried to play down to the masses. The Pauline Epistles are more easily understood in the New translation. For the rest give me the Authorised — I enjoy poetry and music.

I am very grateful for one text, "The Kingdom of God is *among* you." This is better than "within you" of the Authorised. I am sorry that the prophetic aorist of the Magnificat is still given in our past tense — not only is this (it seems to me) a mistake but obscures Blessed Mary's programme for her Son, who *shall* put down the mighty from their seats and exalt the humble and meek, rather than *has* put down. The fact is that they are not put down yet. This is our task, and the task of the Church.

* * *

NOTE. To dusty archivists yet unborn.

We regret that December 1975 and January 1976 issues of PRO VERITATE were both numbered Vol. 14 No. 8, and the error remained uncorrected even unto December 1976 which was numbered Vol. 15 No. 7. Order has been resumed by numbering January 1977 Vol. 15 No. 9.

RESPONSIBILITY.

In order to keep its readers informed on different viewpoints, PRO VERITATE sometimes prints articles revealing opinions with which it does not agree, a fact which is stated regularly on our back page. We welcome comment from critics who object to the tone or content of an article, and maintain it is part of our duty to report attitudes which are important, even if they are unpopular. If you have any comment to make, either appreciative or critical, please do not hesitate to write to us.

P.C.R.: FROM STATEMENT TO ACTION

Lieke Frese

Lieke Frese is a Dutch journalist working with IKON Radio in Holland. She comments on the Programme to Combat Racism of the World Council of Churches.

"We do not think you can claim to have faced squarely the implication of your current policy unless you acknowledge your own interest in the present status quo in South Africa, and the degree to which your interest would be threatened by the precipitate disappearance of the existing South African Government. Were that Government significantly to modify its apartheid policy your interest would also suffer, as the profits to be made in South Africa depend on apartheid. The fact of the matter is that you have no choice but to accept the laws and practices of apartheid in South Africa. Dealing with symptoms and effects in such situations will only reinforce the system".

This is part of a letter WCC General Secretary Philip Potter wrote to the Dutch AMRO bank trying to convince it of its moral obligation not to grant any loans to the SA government. Boycotting banks like AMRO, if they refuse to withdraw from granting loans, and discussions at shareholders meetings of firms investing in SA are the latest activities of the WCC and its member churches in their combat against racism. In addition the PCR Special Fund distributes a few hundred thousand dollars a year among groups opposing all kinds of racism all over the world.

History

To understand the World Councils commitment to combating racism, we have to go back more than 20 years before the WCC even started its existence to the publication in 1924 of J.H. Oldham's "**Christianity and the race problem**". He wrote in a period when the tension between western imperialism and colonialism and the urge for national self-expression of the peoples in Asia and Africa dominated the race issue.

The history of the ecumenical movement records many statements, both by individuals and groups, denouncing racism as being incompatible with the Christian doctrine of man and with the nature of the church of Christ. In their statements the churches insisted that "any form of segregation based on race, colour or ethnic origin is contrary to the Gospel" (**Evanston 1954**). "We have to learn afresh together to speak boldly in Christ's name both to those in power and to the people, to oppose terror, cruelty and race discrimination, to stand by the outcast, prisoner and the refugee". the WCC stated at its **First Assembly in Amsterdam in 1948**. Statements like these were made against the background of the then recent experience of the Second World War: "racial discrimination" in these texts almost equals antisemitism. **The Evanston Assembly (1954)** sought to put forward some basic principles for Christians living in the midst of racial and ethnic tensions as in the USA, Africa and Asia, but the years following Evanston saw a change in the tensions.

Sharpeville, 1960, opened the eyes of the world and of the churches to the real face of apartheid in South Africa. The WCC felt that in the gravity of that hour, a mere statement would not be helpful, and sought to hold a consultation with its SA member churches. It was held in that same year at **Cottesloe**. Maybe the statement made on racism in **New Delhi 1961** reflects some of the experiences with the Cottesloe consultation: "On race issues the Church usually reflects the pattern dominant in the community. Most church members are apathetic and too many are easily intimidated or manipulated by a vociferous minority of racialists inside and outside the church."

Such statements reflect the moral indignation and deep resentment concerning the racial dimensions of conflicts in various

parts of the world. The churches often took quite radical positions and in some instances moral exhortations were backed up by ecumenical programmes in support of the needs of the victims of racial injustice. But on the whole the distance between word and deed lengthened. The **Church and Society Conference held in Geneva in 1966** recognised that racial discrimination is based also on the economic self-interest of the white race dominating the world economically and politically: "It is not enough for churches and groups to condemn the sin of racial arrogance and oppression. The struggle for radical change in structures will inevitably bring suffering and will demand costly and bitter engagement. For Christians to stand aloof from this struggle is to be disobedient to the call of God in history".

The Church and Society conference had a great impact on the **WCC Uppsala Assembly held in 1968**. It was not until then that the urgency for the churches to undertake a vigorous action programme was recognised. Speeches by the black US writer **James Baldwin** and president **Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia** had their influence on the decisions taken at this meeting. At the **Nottingham consultation in 1969** delegates not only discussed combatting racism, but listened to representatives of the oppressed, like **Oliver Tambo, the ANC president**. "We were shaken", stated one of the church delegates, "but in the midst of the tumult of human voices it sometimes seemed as if the voice of the living God sounded like in the old days of the prophets." The US "Black Manifesto" was also discussed at Nottingham, claiming "reparations" in money for the injustice done over generations to black people around the world. **The W.C.C. Central Committee meeting in Canterbury 1969** rejected the idea of reparations as inadequate, but called on the churches "to move beyond charity, grants and traditional programming", and "to become agents for the radical reconstruction of society". It was in the Canterbury meeting that the WCC chose to set up a programme which would attempt to express the churches' solidarity with the struggle for liberation of the racially oppressed.

PCR Outline

"Any discussion about policies and programmes in support of the racially oppressed should start with the assumption that the liberation of oppressed peoples is an act that can only be validly undertaken by the oppressed themselves". This is one of the PCR basic principles. Since no well-meaning outsider can liberate the racially oppressed, the outsider's role can only be a supportive one. Thus the churches questioned how they could positively support the liberation struggle, and at the same time, how they could be involved in a process of liberation of the oppressors.

The PCR since coming into operation in **January 1970** has developed a series of programmes, policy actions and guidelines in

fulfilment of the Canterbury mandate. At the **Addis Ababa Central Committee meeting** the following major emphases for the PCR were formulated:

- * White racism in its many organised ways is by far the most dangerous form of present racial conflicts;
- * It is institutional racism, as reflected in the social, economic and political power structures, which must be challenged; moreover, it is the power structures which use racism to empower themselves which must be challenged;
- * Combating racism must entail a redistribution of social, economic, political and cultural power from the powerful to the powerless;
- * No single strategy to combat racism is universally appropriate;
- * The need to analyse and correct the churches' complicity in benefitting from and furthering white racism is an absolute priority if the churches want to make any contribution to the solution of the problem of society.

PCR Action

Since the famous \$200,000 grant from the WCC reserve funds that formed the start of the PCR activities the PCR Special Fund has given more than 2 million dollars for humanitarian aid to liberation movements and to various groups in different situations of racial discrimination. These included not only movements in Southern Africa, but also movements of Latin Americans and North American Indians, Australian aboriginals, migrant workers in Europe and the USA, and groups assisting Koreans in Japan. One of the important functions that PCR has performed has been in providing opportunities for contact, consultation and dialogue with the leaders of the oppressed.

PCR also had its influence on decisions taken by the World Council itself. In 1972 the **WCC Central Committee in Utrecht (Holland)**, decided that the WCC should disinvest from corporations directly involved in investments or trade with SA. Member churches, Christian agencies and individual Christians, were urged to use all their influence as stockholders in such corporations to press for a withdrawal of these corporations from SA.

As a result of a study on international banking in SA, the **WCC Central Committee in 1974** decided to undertake action against the European American Banking Corporation (consisting of 6 banks, including the above mentioned AMRO-bank), if it would not assure that no further loans would be granted to the SA government. At the **1975 Nairobi Assembly** the PCR of the last six years was accepted and endorsed. Attempts to change the programme failed clearly. A theological study on the roots of racism, begun just before the Assembly, was committed to the churches for further study and implementation.

PCR Criteria

The Special Fund of the PCR has developed the following criteria for assisting movements of the racially oppressed and organisations supporting the victims of racial injustice:

- * The purpose of the organizations must not be in conflict with the general purposes of the WCC and its units, and the grants are to be used for humanitarian activities (i.e. social, health and educational purposes, legal aid, etc.)
- * The proceeds of the Fund shall be used to support organizations that combat racism, rather than welfare organizations that alleviate the effects of racism and which would normally be eligible for support from other units of the World Council of Churches.
- * The focus of the grants should be on raising the level of awareness and on strengthening the organizational capability of the racially oppressed people. In addition they recognize the need to support organizations that align themselves with the victims of racial injustice and pursue the same objectives.

- * The grants are made without control of the manner in which they are spent and are intended as an expression of commitment by the PCR to the cause of economic, social and political justice, which these organizations promote.
- * The situation in Southern Africa is recognised as a priority due to the overt and intensive nature of white racism and the increasing awareness on the part of the oppressed in their struggle for liberation.
In the selection of other areas they have taken account of those places where the struggle is most intense and where a grant might make a substantial contribution to the process of liberation, particularly where racial groups are in imminent danger of being physically or culturally exterminated.
- * Grants should be made with due regard to where they can have the maximum effect: token grants should not be made unless there is a possibility of their eliciting a substantial response from other organizations.

PCR Criticised

The PCR has met severe criticism especially in the German, English, Dutch and South African churches. Many feared that the WCC would directly or indirectly support violent action and bloodshed. From the WCC's view, the support to the liberation movements in Southern Africa is given because the WCC sees them as the real representatives of the oppressed, who attack the structures of white racism. This activity of the WCC was only chosen after many years of futile attempts at dialogue with white dominators. The WCC does not completely identify with any political movement, and does not judge victims of racism who are driven to violence as the only way open to them to end injustice.

The Gereformeerde Church of Holland recently withdrew its contribution from the Special Fund. It did so with the argument that it did not want to support violence, but rather reopen dialogue with the NG churches in SA.

PCR Effect

The effect of the PCR should not be overestimated. It has not succeeded in making the churches contribute extensively from their own funds. The churches often fear the right wing opposition inside their ranks more than revealing a lack of loyalty to their black brothers and sisters abroad. As Philip Potter declared in September 1976, the multinational corporations often listen more seriously to the voice of the WCC than many church members. The financial contribution PCR had been able to make to the liberation struggle is extremely small, if compared with SA defense budgets.

Notable effect was made in desinvestment and bank actions, especially in arousing awareness with public opinion. Many firms and banks start to reconsider new investments in SA, because they fear demonstration of public opposition and negative publicity.

The strongest effect of PCR has been on the moral level. The fact that the WCC dared to support liberation movements and act instead of continuing to make radical statements opened contacts with oppressed groups and shocked established churches. In this way the PCR has caused a relatively large scale conscientization (and polarization) in western churches.

In historical terms, the basis for the PCR action so far, though criticized by a minority in the West, remains within the spectrum of the minimum demands made by racially oppressed and colonized people in their struggle for liberation. The PCR has no choice between merely demanding standards of minimum treatment, or identifying with the victims of racism. The latter course is the only one possible for a Christian church community.

It was the right decision if only because the oppressors wrongly claim that human rights can be donated by the powerful to the powerless.

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CONTENTS ● INHOUD

Editorials	2	SERVICE TO THE DOWN-TRODDEN	
LETTER	3	—Manas Buthelezi	8
CLERGYMEN GO TO WAR	4	THE RADICAL IMPERATIVE	
—Paul Oestreicher		—John Bennett	9
THE FACTS OF LIFE	5	COUP IN THAILAND	
—Charles Birch		—I.D.C.	10
PRACTICING OUR FAITH IN A HUNGRY WORLD	6	GOD AND THE S.A.P.	
—Ralph Moellering		—H.R. Pike	12
POPE PAUL ON PEACE	7	PUTTERILL—CHRISTIAN AND SOCIALIST	13
MOVEMENT FROM UNION	7	P.C.R.	
		—Lieke Fraser	14