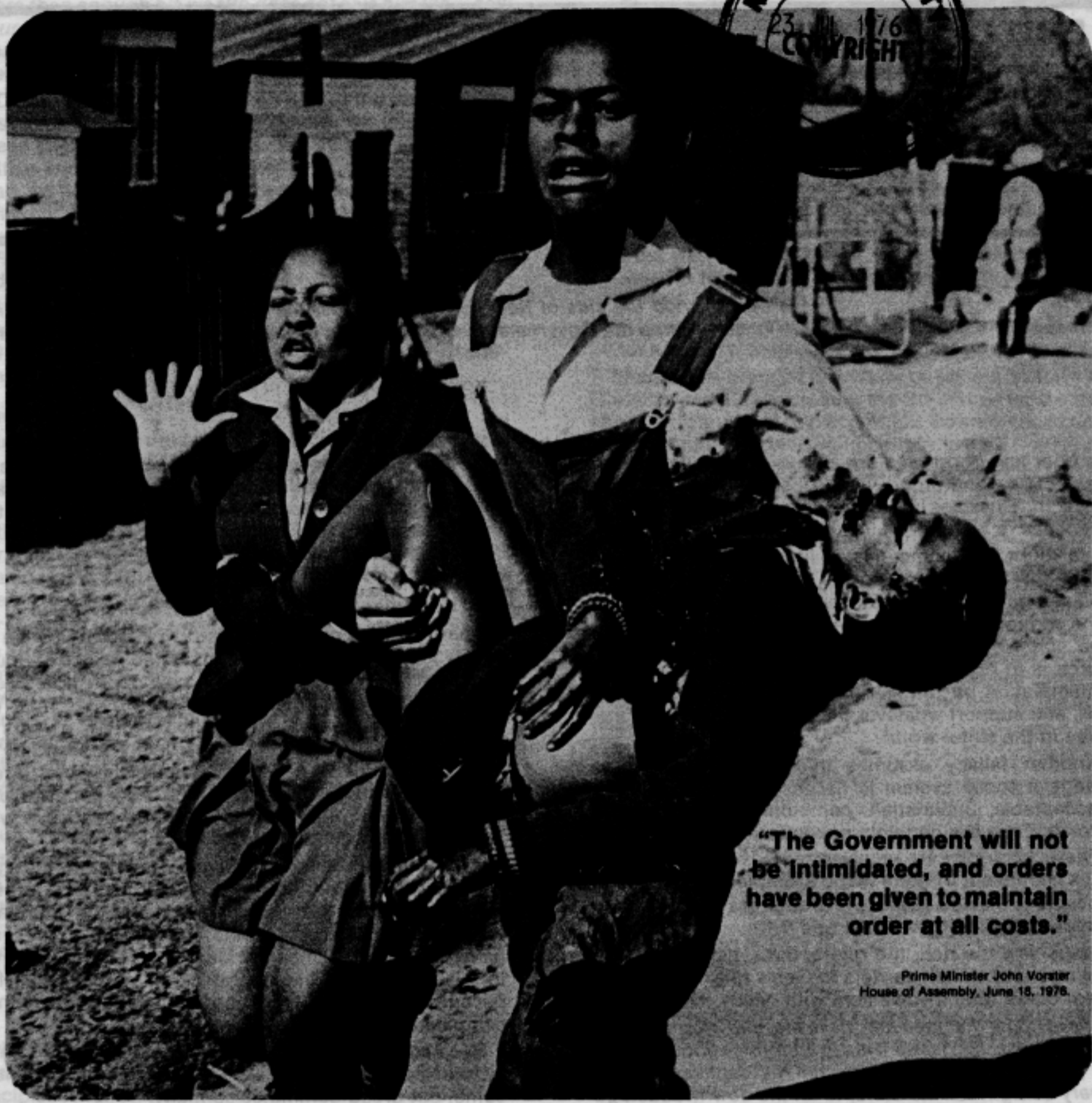


NAIJA SOCIETY
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"The Government will not be intimidated, and orders have been given to maintain order at all costs."

Prime Minister John Vorster
House of Assembly, June 18, 1976.

With acknowledgement to the WORLD

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BY DIE POSKANTOOR AS NUUSBLAD INGESKRYF

pro veritate

SOWETO — SO WHAT?

"Power!" cried the kids of Soweto. "Power!" spat the guns. "Power!" said the Prime Minister, stating the Government would maintain order at all costs. But what power?

The poor and oppressed are always being killed by the forces of 'law and order'. The British did it in India and Kenya; the Russians in Eastern Europe; the Chinese and Americans in Vietnam. In Uganda Amin does it; in Chile the far-right, anti-communist militarists do it. They say **we** did it in Soweto, Alexandra, Mamelodi ...

False theologies prop up these excesses of power. One is the comfortable respectable murderous theology that 'God' and 'World' are to be separated, that the task of the church is to draw sinful men from the world into holy contemplation on the spiritual life and religious practices, and support whatever the secular authorities prescribe in the sinful world.

Another fallacy assumes that anyone seeking to change a social system is necessarily unrespectable, unacceptable, unchristian, communist, militarist, and terrorist. They are certainly uncomfortable.

These theologies are widely accepted by sincerely religious people but they are tragic examples of the corrupt convictions that led Jesus to give such grave warnings to religious people. (Matt. 21:31 and 8:12).

Jesus saw the rich, the rulers, the satisfied, and the religious as the main barriers to God's rule. He came to reveal God's total involvement with needy men.

I have come that men may have life, and may have it in all its fullness. He has sent me to announce good news to the poor, to proclaim release for the captives and recovery of sight for the blind, to let the downtrodden go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour. (John 10:10; Luke 4:18).

The God of Africa is vitally concerned for the poor and oppressed. The search for justice and liberation in Soweto is not a sign of communist agitators but of the presence of the Spirit of God in the townships.

This does not mean that blacks are perfect: a black is a damned sinner who needs salvation as much as a white man. The reference is to God's purpose for mankind, for society, for the world, for the kingdom, the 'basileia', the theology of liberation which includes the total review of the sort of structures that rule men in Soweto.

You will have to kill blacks to maintain separate development; that is the message of Sharpeville and Soweto.

Separate development means you must fight the

Spirit of God in men; that is the message of Soweto. Separate development must be destroyed to save South African society from destruction; that is the message of the Gospels.

Why?

Why do whites continue to support such policies?

Apartheid has obviously failed to keep the peace or satisfy the needs and aspirations of the people of South Africa for every new law brings new opposition. Every apartheid step must be accompanied by stronger repressive legislation to enforce it. Twenty-five years of undisputed leadership and unrestricted opportunity to make apartheid work have culminated in the worst unrest we have known. Despite unremitting propaganda no one can believe that apartheid is achieving peace, so why does the policy continue in power?

Why do not members of English-speaking churches and white opposition parties campaign for full rights for blacks, demonstrate in support of blacks, bombard Parliamentarians with demands for blacks, act in sympathy with blacks, sincerely identify with blacks, and go to jail until blacks are liberated? They talk against it because they believe it is wrong: why do they not mount a campaign to end it?

Because of greed. There is fear, prejudice, uncertainty, lack of direction, cowardice, a desire for improvement in some: but greed dominates so many.

For greed, we will twist our childrens' minds through indoctrination, send our sons to die on the border, perpetuate poverty and ignorance in the wealthiest city on the continent, believe blatant propaganda, cleave to religious concepts that cannot stand a second in the light of Christ, and permit authority to get away with anything provided it appears to contribute to the maintenance of our standard of living.

Apartheid goes on because white voters love their homes, cars, comforts, fancy churches and colour televisions more than their fellowmen or their God. **Fundamentally, white fingers tighten onto triggers because they see black fingers reaching for the money; everything else is rationalisation.**

You cannot serve God and Money ... be on your guard against greed of every kind, for even when a man has

more than enough his wealth does not give him life ... sell your possessions and give to the poor, for where your wealth is, there will your heart be also ... how hard it is for the wealthy to enter the kingdom of God.

Disaster looms over South Africa, for the doom which Jesus read over Jerusalem hangs over us. It is built into greed itself. Our 'South African way of life' is avaricious, selfish and immoral; our insistence on getting out more than we have put in perpetuates our suicidal clutch on inflation; our expenditure on 'defence' is a fearsome investment in our own destruction; our injustice towards 80% of the population incurs the direct and inescapable judgment of God.

What does a man gain by winning the whole world at the cost of his true self? We have lost our souls when we kill kids to maintain 'law and order' in the name of 'Christian civilisation'.

Churches?

Can the churches break the power of greed and lead men to identify with the poor and needy? Their record is not impressive. They have often preferred to be known for their good works rather than serving anonymously with the poor, so that spreading Christianity has been a scramble for wealth and sites and souls and recognition that has besmirched Christ. The churches can be as greedy for power as any other organisation.

The reluctance of some churches to be identified with the Black Parents Association, a representative grass roots movement that has arisen in the midst of the Soweto situation, is a tragic demonstration of the manner in which some churchmen throughout history have sought to "lord it" over the poor and oppressed instead of giving themselves to them, as Jesus did.

What theological justification can there be for setting up a separate fund which gives the impression of a church seeking a position of power, wholly inimicable to the Master's methods?

Can the churches find the courage to call their members to a total abject repentance, a radical re-think and re-action to the whole position of white and black people in our land? There is no role for the church unless we begin there.

Communities

Jesus spoke of the power of love. He called a group of disciples to follow that way of life. Can we build communities of people in Southern Africa that find the power of God which Jesus proclaimed and offered?

It is the way of **poverty** — the kingdom of the poor — so we begin by giving a great deal away.

It is the way of **identification** — so we can expect new friendships and new objectives in living.

It is the way of **compassion** — so we shall put ourselves in the hands of those we love without retaining any power to tell them how to love us back.

It is the way of **persecution** — for 'the time is coming when anyone who kills you will suppose he performs a religious duty' and 'you will suffer insults and persecution and every kind of calumny for my sake'.

It is the way of **justice** — so we can find a new level to start charity.

It is the way of **humility** — so we can expect to learn our

Christianity all over again from the poor and oppressed.

It is the way of **happiness** — so we can expect to laugh a lot: at ourselves, at the system, and with a bubbling over joy amongst our brothers.

It is the way of **love** — so we can unbutton our cold superior and inferior attitudes and expect to become warm human beings.

It is the way of **God's kingdom** — so we can reject all our nationalisms and nicities and expect to enter a world of political and social effectiveness.

It is the way of **God's power** — so we shall certainly be weak in the eyes of the world, for his power is made perfect in weakness.

And there is a long way to go, so we can expect to stand for a lot, and, having done all, to just go on standing.

Sharpeville brought hundreds of people to form the Christian Institute searching the Scriptures for the truth about God's way in society. Might Soweto cause us to start communities who will begin to live it?

This month the young people of Soweto — first the scholars and then the tsotsis — cried "Power" and burnt the signs of oppression in the townships when the guns of authority turned on them in the name of law and order.

One day, the adults of Soweto may cry "Power" and burst out of the townships into the industrial and civic and white areas. Will it be to meet with whites who are also crying "Power" in the name of Christ, seeking together to turn the authority of a greedy soulless society towards the kingdom of God? "**The time has come: the kingdom of God is at hand: repent, and believe the good news!**"

So what?

So it starts with repentance.



VERKLARING: DIE BROEDERKRING-BESTUUR VAN DIE N.G. KERK IN AFRIKA (SWART) EN N.G. SENDINGKERK (BRUIN)

Die gebeure van die afgelope weke in ons land het ons met skok en afsku vervul. Die huidige beleid, waardeur die geregverdigde eise van die swart gemeenskap met geweld beantwoord word, is tekenend vir die plofbare toestand waarin ons land hom bevind.

Ons is daarvan oortuig dat die beleid van apartheid die grondoorsaak is van die diepgewartelde frustrasie en ontevredenheid van swart mense wat sy uiting gevind het in die opstand van die afgelope weke.

Ons stel onself ondubbelsinnig agter die geregverdigde strewe van die swart gemeenskap tot bevryding vir 'n Suid-Afrika waar swart en wit in volle menswaardigheid kan lewe.

Die argumente van minister Kruger om die massa begrafnis waarom aansoek gedoen is te verbied is vir ons onaanvaarbaar en ons versoek hom om rede in te sien en te verander.

SOWETO — EN NOU?

„Mag!” het die kinders van Soweto geskree. „Mag” het die gewere gevuur. „Mag”, het die eerste Minister gesê en gekonstateer dat die regering orde ten alle koste sal handhaaf. Maar watter mag?

Die armes en onderdrukte word altyd deur die magte van „wet en orde” uitgewis. Die Britte het dit in Indië en Kenia gedoen; die Russe in Oos-Europa; die Sjinese en Amerikaners in Viëtnam. In Uganda doen Amin dit; in Chile doen die vêr-regse anti-kommunistiese militariste dit. Hulle sê ons het dit in Soweto, Alexandra en Mamelodi ... gedoen.

Valse teologieë steun hierdie uitwasse van mag. Een daarvan is die gerieflike gerespekteerde moordende teologie dat „God” en „wêreld” geskei moet word; dat dit die taak van die kerk is om sondaars uit die wêreld na heilige besinning van die geestelike lewe en godsdienstige praktyke te trek, en wat ookal die sekulêre owerhede en die sondige wêreld mag voorskryf, te ondersteun.

'n Ander dwaalbegrip veronderstel dat elkeen wat verandering in 'n sosiale sisteem nastreef, noodwendig onrespekterbaar, onaanvaarbaar, onchristelik, kommunisties, militaristies en terroristies is. Sodaniges voel gewis ongemaklik.

Hierdie teologieë word algemeen deur opreg-godsdienstige mense aanvaar, maar hulle is tragiese voorbeelde van die korrupte oortuigings wat Jesus daartoe gelei het om sulke ernstige waarskuwings aan godsdienstige mense te rig. (Matt. 21:31; 8:12).

Jesus het die rykes, die heersers, die tevredenes en die godsdienstiges as die belangrikste hindernisse van God se heerskappy gesien. Hy het gekom om God se totale betrokkenheid met mense in nood te openbaar.

Ek het gekom dat hulle lewe en oorvloed kan hê. Hy het my gesalf om die evangelie aan die armes te bring. Hy het my gestuur om die wat verbrysel van hart is te genees; om aan gevangenes vrylating te verkondig en aan blindes herstel van gesig; om die wat gebroke is, in vryheid weg te stuur; om die aangename jaar van die Here aan te kondig. (Joh. 10:10; Luk. 4:18).

Die God van Afrika is intens besorg oor die armes en onderdrukte. Die soeke na geregtigheid en bevryding in Soweto is nie 'n teken van kommunistiese agitators nie, maar van die teenwoordigheid van die Gees van God in die Swart woonbuurtes.

Dit beteken nie dat Swartmense volmaak is nie; 'n Swartman is 'n veroordeelde sondaar, wat redding net so veel as die Witman nodig het. Die verwysing hierbo is na die goddelike doel vir die mensdom, vir die gemeenskap, vir die wêreld, vir die Koninkryk, die Heerskappy, die teologie van bevryding, wat die totale hersiening van die

soort van strukture wat die mense van Soweto oorheers, insluit.

'n Mens sal Swartmense moet uitwis om afsonderlike ontwikkeling te handhaaf: dit is die boodskap van Sharpeville en Soweto.

Afsonderlike ontwikkeling beteken dat jy die Gees van God in mense moet beveg: dit is die boodskap van Soweto.

Afsonderlike ontwikkeling moet vernietig word om die Suid-Afrikaanse gemeenskap van ondergang te red: dit is die boodskap van die evangelie.

Waarom?

Waarom hou Blankes vol om hierdie beleid te ondersteun?

Apartheid het klaarblyklik misluk om die vrede te bewaar, of om die behoefte en strewe van die mense van Suid-Afrika te bevredig want elke nuwe wetgewing veroorsaak hernude teenkanting. Elke stap i.v.m. apartheid moet met 'n sterker onderdrukkende wetgewing gepaardgaan om dit af te dwing. Vyf-en-twintig jaar van onbetwiste leierskap en onbepaalde geleentheid om apartheid te laat slaag, het in die ergste onrus aan ons bekend, gekulmineer. Ondanks aanhoudende propaganda kan niemand glo dat apartheid vrede bereik nie, dus waarom bly die beleid sy mag handhaaf.

Waarom voer lede van Engels-sprekende kerke en blanke opposisie-partye nie 'n veldtog vir die volle regte van die Swartmense nie; demonstreer hulle nie ter ondersteuning van die Swartes nie; word parlementariërs nie oorval met eise t.o.v. Swartes nie; tree hulle nie op in simpatie met Swartes nie; identifiseer hulle hulleself nie heelhartig met Swartes nie en gaan hulle nie tronk toe nie totdat Swartes bevry word? Hulle praat daarteen omdat hulle dink dat dit verkeerd is: waarom loods hulle nie 'n veldtog om dit te beëindig nie?

Omrede van hebsug. Daar is vrees, vooroordeel, onsekerheid, gebrek aan koers, lafhartigheid, 'n verlange na verbetering by sommige, maar hebsug oorheers by so baie.

Vir hebsug sal ons ons kinders se denke deur indoktrinering verwing, ons seuns na die grens stuur om te sterf, armoede en onkunde steeds in standhou in die rykste stad op die vasteland, blatante propaganda glo, godsdienstige begrippe, wat nie een oomblik in die lig van Christus kan standhou nie, vasklou en die owerhede

toelaat om met enigiets weg te kom, mits dit blyk dat dit 'n bydrae lewer tot die instandhouding van ons lewenstandaard.

Apartheid duur voort omdat blanke stemgeregtigdes hulle huise, motors, gerief, opgesmukte kerke en kleur-televisie meer liefhet as hulle medemens of hulle God. **Fundamenteel sluit blanke vingers stywer om snellers omdat hulle swart vingers sien reik na geld: enigiets anders is rasionalisering.**

'n Mens kan nie God en Mammon dien nie ... wees op jou hoede teen hebsug van enige aard, want selfs as 'n mens oorgenoeg het, gee hierdie rykdom hom nie die lewe nie ... verkoop al jou besittings en gee dit aan die armes, want waar jou skat is, daar sal jou hart wees ... hoe moeilik is dit nie vir die ryke om die Koninkryk van God binne te gaan nie.

Onheil dreig oor Suid-Afrika, want die oordeel wat Jesus oor Jerusalem uitgespreek het, hang oor ons. Dit vorm 'n inherente deel van hebsug. Ons „Suid-Afrikaanse lewenswyse” is gierig, selfsugtig en immoreel; ons volharding om meer te bekom as wat ons daarin belê het, verstewig ons selfmoordende greep op inflasie; ons uitgawe aan „verdediging” is 'n kommervolle belegging in ons eie ondergang; ons ongeregtigheid teenoor 80% van die bevolking veroorsaak die direkte en onontkom-bare oordeel van God.

Wat baat dit 'n mens as hy die hele wêreld wen ten koste van sy ware self? Ons het ons siel verloor as ons kinders „doodmaak” om „wet en orde” in die naam van “Christelike beskawing” te handhaaf.

* * * * *

Kerke?

Is die kerke daartoe instaat om met die mag van hebsug te breek en mense te lei om hulle met die armes en die behoeftiges te identifiseer? Hulle rekord is nie indrukwekkend nie. Hulle het dikwels verkies om vir hulle goeie werke bekend te staan eerder as om die armes naamloos te dien; gevolglik het die uitbreiding van die Christendom ontaard in die najaag van geld en kerkpersele en siele en erkenning waardeur Christus beswadder is. Die kerke kan, wat mag betref, net so hebsugtig wees as enige ander organisasie.

Die onwilligheid van sommige kerke om met die Black Parents Association, 'n beweging verteenwoordigend van die algemene volksgevoel, wat direk vanuit die situasie in Soweto ontstaan het, is 'n tragiese demonstrasie van die wyse waarop sommige kerkmense dwarsdeur die geskiedenis probeer het om te „heers” oor die armes en onderdrukte, in plaas daarvan om hulleself aan hulle te gee, soos Jesus gedoen het.

Watter teologiese regverdiging kan daar wees vir die stigting van 'n aparte fonds wat die indruk skep van 'n kerk wat 'n magsposisie verlang wat geheel en al strydig is met die Meester se metodes?

Kan die kerke die moed vind om hulle lidmate tot algehele gebroke boetedoening op te roep, 'n radikale heroorweging van en nuwe aksie t.o.v. die hele situasie van Wit en Swart in ons land? Daar is geen rol vir die kerk tensy ons hier begin nie.

* * * * *

Gemeenskappe

Jesus het van die mag van liefde gepraat. Hy het 'n groep dissipels byeengeroep om hierdie leefwyse te volg. Kan ons gemeenskappe, wat die krag van God, wat Jesus aangekondig en aangebied het, in Suider-Afrika opbou?

Dit is die weg van **armoede** — die Koninkryk van die armes — daarom begin ons om 'n groot deel weg te gee.

Dit is die weg van **identifikasie** — daarom kan ons nuwe vriendskappe en nuwe doelwitte in lewenswyse verwag.

Dit is die weg van **barmhartigheid** — daarom sal ons onself in die hande stel van dié wat ons liefhet sonder om enige mag te behou om aan hulle te sê hoe om ons lief te hê.

Dit is die weg van **vervolg** — want „daar kom 'n uur dat elkeen wat julle om die lewe bring, sal dink dat hy 'n diens aan God bewys”, en „wanneer die mense julle beledig en vervolg en valslik allerhande kwaad teen julle spreek om My ontwil”.

Dit is die weg van **geregtigheid** — daarom kan ons 'n nuwe vlak om liefdadigheid te begin, vind.

Dit is die weg van **nederigheid** — daarom kan ons verwag om ons Christelikheid van nuuts af van die armes en onderdrukte te leer.

Dit is die weg van **geluk** — daarom kan ons verwag om baie te lag: vir onself, vir die sisteem, en met 'n oorborrelende vreugde in die kring van ons broers.

Dit is die weg van **liefde** — daarom kan ons van ons kille meerderwaardige en minderwaardige houdinge loskom en verwag om hartelike mense te word.

Dit is die weg van **God se Koninkryk** — daarom kan ons al ons nasionalismes en kieskeurighede verwerp en verwag om 'n wêreld van politieke en sosiale doeltreffendheid binne te gaan.

Dit is die weg van **God se mag** — daarom sal ons definitief swak wees in die oë van die wêreld, want sy krag word in ons swakheid volbring.

En daar is 'n lang pad om te gaan — daarom kan ons verwag om vir baie in te staan en, nadat ons alles gedoen het, steeds te bly staan.

Sharpeville het honderde mense aangespoor om die Christelike Instituut te vorm om die waarheid van God's weg in die gemeenskap vanuit die Skrif te soek. Sal Soweto ons nie aanspoor om gemeenskappe te begin wat dit sal begin uitleef nie?

Hierdie maand het die jongmense van Soweto — eers die skoliere en toe die tsotsies — „mag” geskreeu en die tekens van onderdrukking in die swart woonbuurtes verbrand toe die gewere van die owerhede op hulle gerig was in die naam van wet en orde.

Eendag mag die volwassenes van Soweto „mag” uitroep en uit die swart woonbuurtes uitbars na die industriële, burgerlike en blanke gebiede. Sal dit wees om die blankes wat ook „mag” in die Naam van Christus uitroep, te ontmoet, om saam te soek om die gesag van 'n gulsige, siellose gemeenskap na die Koninkryk van God te laat omdraai? **„Die tyd is vervul en die Koninkryk van God het naby gekom; bekeer julle en glo die evangelie.”**

Daarom wat nou?

Daarom begin dit met boetedoening.

SOWETO, 16TH JUNE, 1976

Diakonia House, Braamfontein, Johannesburg, has an ear to the ground of Soweto — the SOuth WEstern TOWnships where over a million black people live. Little happens outside the knowledge of the large black staff employed by the ecumenical bodies in this building. For weeks, staff members were sharing stories of the rising tension amongst the young people which the authorities refused to consider. Within minutes of the shooting residents were on the telephone, and within an hour the first eye witnesses were in the office telling their parents what had happened. Tens of thousands of people could tell stories like this one, of events which changed a people.

The 16th June 1976 morning dawned well. It was calm and peaceful when train commuters rushed to various stations to catch up with trains to work — least suspecting that there would be any unrests in Soweto.

About 10 a.m., I drove from the city back to Soweto. On arrival in Dube, I met a "swarm" of school children (Primary school) with age ranging from 10 yrs. - 15 yrs. walking in procession down the streets in a peaceful protest against the use of Afrikaans language as a medium of instruction in their schools.

As I drove into their midst, they made way and stood on both sides of the road — forming a "mock" guard of honour, with their fists raised up and shouting POWER! at the top of their voices. They raised the protest posters made out of exercise book covers, torn card-boxes, white materials, etc. They were really in an extremely jovial mood. The whole atmosphere was quite a happy one — depicting the playful attitude and age of kids. They enjoyed the moment and of course, I enjoyed driving through the "POWERFUL" guard of honour.

Some of the posters read: "DOWN WITH AFRIKAANS", "AFRIKAANS IS DIRTY", "WE DON'T WANT TO LEARN AFRIKAANS THROUGH THE MEDIUM OF AFRIKAANS", "TO HELL WITH AFRIKAANS", "BLACKS ARE NOT DUSTBINS — AFRIKAANS STINKS". "AFRIKAANS IS TRIBAL LANGUAGE", etc.

Then I drove back into town — almost forgetting that there was anything like a protest by kids. On my way to town, passing through Orlando West, next to the High School, I met a convoy of police cars racing to the scene of demonstration. It was the sight of Police and their cars that infuriated the kids. Police fired shots into the air ordering the pupils to disperse. Kids replied back with the throwing of stones at the Police — wounding one Black and one White Policeman. Police retaliated by firing at the kids — killing the initial 4 pupils, including a 13-year-old kid. This sparked off the riots... Within minutes cars — police cars, and commercial vehicles were stoned, damaged and burnt by the revolting students. The first day, 16th June 1976, of the riot had started. It took the pattern of violent destruction aimed at the police and all Government property.

On the first day as I drove round the townships,

- (i) I was several times stopped, rioters asked if the car belonged to me, and allowed to pass with the show of the Power sign.
- (ii) The rioters stated that they were looking for White man's cars — which they destroyed to ashes. Thus nearly

all commercial vehicles were destroyed or badly damaged. Drivers of these vehicles, were pulled out of the vehicles, not hurt, unless they resisted.

- (ii) No school, no church, no clinic, no shop was damaged nor burnt down despite the fact that some were adjacent to Municipal or Bottle Stores.
- (iv) All administrative offices, Post Offices, Beer Halls and Bottle Stores were destroyed. The rioting kids were quite clear of where to spend their fury which was inflamed by the presence of police and their shooting and killing of black kids. The destruction spread as the rioting got out of hand. Most of the buildings destroyed were done in broad day light from 12 noon onward into the night.
- (v) The so-called "looting", on the first day of the riot was really committed on the Bottle Stores. I saw rioters taking out beer bottles in cartons and breaking them on the pavements. Some were shouting "LESS LIQUOR, BETTER EDUCATION", "WE WANT MORE SCHOOLS AND NOT BEERHALLS!", and of course others helped themselves to the booty.

It was at this point of burning any building that was a symbol of Government oppression and the breaking of Bottle Stores that the police started to shoot indiscriminately — mowing down quite a number of teenagers and by-standers. Hundreds of youth were killed. I was, personally, nearly shot down when I started taking photos of police and the smouldering buildings. At the Dube Office and Bank, my camera was taken by police and the film was destroyed.

The night of the 16th June, was marked by Soweto being turned into an inferno of the burning "official" buildings. No residential houses were burnt down, and no Black officials, teachers, leaders, etc. were harmed. We moved around freely fearing no evil — except from police who even shot down the car of the President of the Black Peoples Convention, Mr Kenneth Rachidi, and also shot and killed a local teacher, who was driving home.

The second day, 17th June, 1976 was marked by uncontrollable fury and burning hostility of the people. Other elements — mainly the "tsotsi" element took over from where the students left off. It was on this day that certain shops were destroyed. The rioters went to shop-keepers and asked them to show their trading licences. If the shop was found to be owned or partly owned by a White man, it was burnt down forthwith. All shops

which were suspected to be owned by or in partnership with Whites were destroyed. Shopkeepers (Black) were not harmed unless they resisted.

Police, also, assumed another attitude. They shot at random, and at anyone who would raise a fist and shout "Power" into their face. I got into one area of the Township

where the residents alleged that the young White police (average 18 - 25 yrs.) shot and burnt the fallen corpses on the spot. Some Black police protested against this ruthless method of callous murder. I didn't see this personally, but the rumour was quite too strong. The riot then spread to the rest of the Reef townships — Alexandra, Krugersdorp, Springs, Germiston, Pretoria. The chain reaction was quite spectacular.

THE CHRISTIAN INSTITUTE

AND THE 'SECURITY' OF THE STATE

cosmas desmond

The Natal Regional Director of the Christian Institute examines the relationship of the Christian to society.

The aims of the Christian Institute are stated in its proposed new Constitution as being:

- to witness to Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord;
- to seek the coming of His Kingdom on earth-
- to serve the Church in its vocation as the Body of Christ.

That statement sounds innocuous enough and there would appear to be no reason for an organisation pursuing such aims to merit the constant attention of the security forces of the State. But in a totalitarian State such aims are in fact, or certainly should be, political dynamite. They mean that the organisation is not prepared to accept the State's claim to complete control over every facet of an individual's life and the State's design to make the rights of the individual subservient to, and expendable for the sake of, the furtherance of an ideology. This is not the same as saying that the good of the individual is not subservient to the common good. The furtherance of an ideology is usually for the good of an in-group, be it the Party or a White minority, not for the common good. This is true whether the ideology is of the extreme right or the extreme left. An organisation with the aims of the Christian Institute would be as much in conflict with a Russian-type of communist ideology as it is with the Nationalist ideology.

In fact, one can go further and say that a Christian must have some criticism of any form of society since, in the light of his belief in the Kingdom of God, by definition no society is perfect. This does not mean that a Christian's role is purely negative. He also has the duty of working with others for the building of a better society. The Churches have always recognised this to some extent; hence their efforts in the fields of education, medical and welfare services. Their motives have, however, sometimes been questionable in that their primary concern has often appeared to be the furtherance of Christianity rather than the services themselves. Further, their approach has been, and often still is, politically simplistic and naive.

A Christian Society?

Christians certainly should play a positive role in working for the creation of a better, more just society as something to be striven for in its own right and not as a means of converting people to Christianity. It is likely, however, that in a totalitarian society, particularly one with sophisticated methods of oppression such as our own has, the negative role will be the predominant one. But this role is not purely negative. For any denunciation of the present system to be valid it must include an announcement of a better future and for any announcement of a better future to be anything more than idle dreaming it must be based on a realistic denunciation of the present, as Paulo Freire makes clear. It may not be possible to describe in detail what the better future will be like and I doubt whether it is the role of a specifically Christian organisation like the Christian Institute to spell out the practical politico-economic implications. The fact that we are Christians does not necessarily make us the best economists, political scientists, sociologists, etc. and it is these sciences we must employ to work out the details. While we judge the findings in the light of our basic Christian principles, these principles do not render these sciences unnecessary. (The CI, through its sponsorship of Sprocas, was of course instrumental in gathering together experts in such fields to perform this task.)

The negative role — the denunciation of the evils of the present system — is probably even more important in our own particular society, which claims to be upholding Christian values. Even if there were no injustices in this society, the claim that it is a Christian society would be, in Christian terms, heretical, since it is an implicit claim that the perfect society, (in theological terms, the Kingdom), has already been established. There is no such thing as a Christian society. To say that a society is Christian and has no need for change is the antithesis of Christianity. To say, therefore, that to work for social and

economic change is an act of terrorism and that the prohibition of such efforts is necessary in order to maintain a Christian society is a contradiction in terms. Christianity always demands change.

Intense dislike

This, in general terms, is what the Christian Institute stands for. In theological terms, it tries to give a prophetic witness by condemning the present evils and holding out a hope for a better future- in political terms it seeks to conscientise by 'annunciation-denunciation'. It believes that man can and must have a better, more just society here and now and that this cannot be brought about by any totalitarian ideology. It is what the Christian Institute stands for rather than anything which it does that is the important thing about it and which is the reason for the Nationalist Government's intense dislike of it.

There are very few practical actions which the Christian Institute has engaged in — it hasn't built schools, hospitals, community halls, it hasn't helped to form trade unions or political parties, it hasn't organised public demonstrations, or rallied the masses in any way. There are few, if any, very great achievements to which it can point. Yet it has for many years been harrassed, smeared, and directly acted against both by the government and other right-wing organisations. Few of its present senior staff members are still in possession of their passports; former staff members have been deported or banned. The Institute itself was subjected to the Schlebusch/Le Grange Commission of Enquiry, as a result of which it was declared an Affected Organisation and as such prohibited from receiving money from overseas. Now we have Mr Kruger, in the context of the proposed new State (Internal) Security Bill making what appear to be thinly veiled threats that the new powers with which he is to be invested might be exercised against the Christian Institute. This statement, in which he charged the CI with furthering the growth of a Black Power movement, was a smear on the Black Consciousness movement rather than on the CI. It is they who should object to it rather than us. It is interesting, however, that Mr Kruger should name Beyers Naudé and the Institute in this context and it is a further indication of the seriousness of the threat which the government attaches to the CI.

Why act against C.I.?

Why all this interest in and action against the Christian Institute? One personal and emotional reason is doubtless the resentment of the powers that be towards Beyers Naudé himself. In their eyes he, a true Afrikaner of impeccable background, has become a traitor to his own people and their cause. But that alone is not sufficient reason.

More important, I think, is the fact that the Nationalist government, either in misguided sincerity or for purely practical purposes, need to have a moral basis for their policies. They want to convince the rest of the world, and perhaps themselves, that apartheid, Separate Development, or whatever the current expression for it is, is the only just and equitable solution for the unique problems of South Africa. Their propaganda machine, from the ambassador at the United Nations to the SABC, seeks to whitewash the inherent injustices of the system and to present the Nationalist solution as the only

bulwark against communist domination. To preserve peace and good order, they say, the ultimate political and economic power must remain in the hands of the Whites, but this can be done justly by giving such powers to Blacks in their 'independent homelands'.

What the CI stands for is the antithesis of this and, particularly as our basis is an explicitly Christian one, vitiates the Nationalists' attempts to provide a moral basis for their policies. We believe that no individual, let alone whole 'nations' in the South African sense, can be expended in the cause of furthering any ideology. We attempt to keep alive the hope that we can have a society where there is no domination, discrimination, or exploitation and we believe that this is an essential part of the Christian message. Further, by continually highlighting not only particular examples of injustice but also the fact that these injustices are an integral part of the whole political system we interfere with the smooth running of their propaganda machine.

However, to date the government has not, as it could easily have done under existing security legislation, tried completely to suppress the CI by, for example, declaring it a banned organisation. Such action would have had to be taken under the Suppression of Communism Act and it would have been difficult for them to have done that and still to have retained some credibility for their claim to be upholding Christian values. (It might even be that the CI, together with other opposition groups, has been used by the government to improve their image.) Whether more drastic action will be taken under the new Security Bill remains to be seen. But whether it is or not, is basically irrelevant to the CI. Whatever they do, they cannot in fact suppress what the Christian Institute stands for and that, as I have said, is the important thing about the CI.

C.I. cannot be suppressed

The action taken so far has stopped the CI **doing** various things, but has made it a much more relevant movement. Since we no longer have the funds to maintain a large organisation we have to see ourselves more in terms of being a small prophetic movement, which is what I think we should be. Any further action would, I am sure, serve to increase the value of what we stand for both in the eyes of people here and throughout the world.

Even if any future action were to prevent the CI from doing **anything**, the CI would not be suppressed. If Mr Kruger is contemplating any action he should be aware of what he is attacking. The CI is not an organisation which is seeking to be part of the political power structures. It is a movement of people whose belief in the Christian gospel leads them to commit themselves to working for a better, more just, more human society in South Africa. The hope that is inspired by this belief cannot be extinguished by any form of violence. You cannot suppress people's beliefs. Detention for whatever period as provided for in the new Bill would serve only to deepen these beliefs.

We believe that Christianity demands a more just society. We believe in the God-given power of people to determine their own destiny in a free society. No security legislation can suppress the expression of this belief or its ultimate realisation in our society.

CONFESSING CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES IN SOUTH AFRICA

finbar synnott

Father Finbar Synnott of the Roman Catholic Church has been a leader in the Self-Tax movement, and here shares his thoughts on a new Way of Life for South Africans. Do readers believe this is possible?

For thirty years, since the failure of wartime promises of Trusteeship, I have watched race relations get steadily worse in the Republic. In an interim period around 1960, as a sort of despairing second best, I hoped to see the country equitably divided up. Then the unanswerable statistics appeared: three black workers in the Republic itself for one white, all bound together for ever.

Christian witness has failed to make any difference over these years. This need not surprise us. We are not taught in the Gospels to **expect** that Christianity will take control of nations or cultures, of the "will of man" at mass psychology level, only to **hope** for it. The true ground of that hope does not lie in argument, or trying to find and prove principles different from the mass psychology motivations, but in demonstrating a way of life more like Christ, more just and warm, and a unity of men through which men can recognise their one Father. Moreover only by fully living it can those who have the burden of seeing the thing make their witness credible to others or even to themselves.

What I think we need specially is the formation of **small communities, living rather than explaining** Christian unity, and at least initially separate from set parish formations. The Editor asked me if I could give some examples of happenings to back this up. But I can think of no parallel.

Various forms of basic community in S. America or Africa are chiefly concerned with economic- and self-development, which are also needed here, but they are not concerned with the urgent need to meet across colour-bar. The same applies to Christian communes, on the pattern of Acts 2:42-47, formed by Protestants or Catholics in Europe. C.I. and other concern groups in S. Africa meet across colour-bar, but are only just beginning, tentatively, to get onto the matter which the Self-Taxers have taken as basic to integrity: recognition of the two wholly separate strata of access to wealth and the need to refuse privilege in this line first. The Self-Taxers have not yet succeeded in linking across the colour-bar.

Confessing communities

When Beyers Naudé brought out the idea of **Confessing Communities** a number of ideas clicked into place in my mind and I thought such communities should have a number of characteristics. I give them here for what they are worth.

1. They should be formed on the understanding and profession of a wholly abnormal situation for Christianity in South Africa, not permitted to demonstrate the unity which is of its essence. It is a form of persecution of charity if not of faith, forbidding those who profess themselves one in Christ to meet freely and give each other hospitality in their houses. An **abnormal form of witness** against this is necessary.

2. This would make the simple fact of **meeting and being together**, where it is legal and possible (as on church sites near main transport centres for all races) priority number 1 over any form of organisation or propaganda. So much so that invitations to meetings, lectures, cousin's weddings, or the Springboks, would be refused on certain regular dates if conflicting with this one purpose. It would mean not just a church service but a real long, non-purposive, social meeting, inevitably in small groups at first, and with willingness to overcome (laugh at) all problems of communication and language, so as not to be selective to the highly educated only. Western 20th century man often does not realise how just to **be**, and be friendly, may be more important than activity.

3. An equal determination to carry on a **ceaseless proclamation** of human and citizen rights, by every channel: social, industrial or political. Meeting cannot substitute for this citizen duty of the Christian, and could be seen as a final form of evasion if it did.

4. In anything organisational however, adopting a principle almost the opposite of 2. Blacks particularly may have good reason to wish to organise separately and autonomously. Whites now owe them this liberty if they desire it, and it is a matter of common experience that deep friendship such as should exist between Christians can and does exist where one cannot be a member of the other's organisation.

5. A **self-tax** to give a hard edge to resolve, and make those concerned refuse unjust privilege in the only sphere where they legally can. They cannot share their right to vote, to reserved work or residential areas. But the government does not tell them how to use their cheque, and they can refuse privilege here, and make the point clear by handing undue income not as "charity" but as restitution to black development agencies. The Self-Taxers have discovered that this must be very flexible in degree once the principle is accepted and publicly recognised, allowing for the person who has chosen a low income job for idealist reasons, the student, the widow putting in her mite, while the tycoon (white or black) might put in what he would have given to have his name inscribed on a hospital wing. It can compass anyone from those earning ten rand a month to those with two thousand or more. One of the experiences of the Self-Taxers is the level of confidence which comes from being able to question and discuss the matter so sacred to western man, his income and his sole and absolute right to consider how he uses it.

6. To find a **spiritual power** beyond ordinary human generosity by shared prayer. Again an abnormally free spirited attitude would be necessary. Often the agnostic or Hindu or follower of an ancient African faith or Moslem is demonstrably more generous in these matters than those formally

declared Christian. Yet such experiments in inter-faith prayer have worked in our strange and confused modern religious ferment, even in South Africa. The word "Christian" in the title should be understood in this sense, meaning chiefly anyone willing to prove the love of God whom no one sees by love of the brother human whom he does see — child of God also, however different and strange.

7. It might be advantageous to the degree of being necessary that groups with such ideals should have **some link between them**, not as organisation, but by post or a periodical or mutual visiting as occasion serves. The level of intensity of life demanded would need all possible sense of support in going so much against the stream.

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THE LAND IS GOD'S

p. allen myrick

This article was first published in PRO VERITATE in July 1965. Some of its phraseology is dated, but its theology is very relevant in the new Homeland situation.

The desire for land lies close to the heart of South Africa's racial problems. It has been the cause of conflict between racial groups from the first Dutch settlement at the Cape until the present day. Whatever other issues may divide South Africans, until this land conflict is resolved the country will have no peace.

The claim to land

The white man has had an almost insatiable hunger for land in South Africa. This hunger drove colonists eastward from the Cape, to carve out huge farms and to kill or enslave any native inhabitants who stood in their way. It set Boers upon the Great Trek to escape British restrictions upon the land. It led them to resist any Boer republican Government's attempts to limit property rights, for they held that government existed to protect the farmer's claim to the land.

This white passion for land continues today. Thousands of urban whites long for a farm of their own. The whites will only support a Government which protects their stake in the soil of South Africa. For nearly thirty years the rulers of this country have tried to purchase "white" farm land for inclusion within African reserves; but no Government dare expropriate such land. For to take land from a white man and to give it to a black runs counter to the whole course of South African history. "The land is ours!" cries the white man — we fought for it, we have a right to it, and we will not give it to the black man.

A similar passion for land exists in the African community. More than at any other point, perhaps, African resentment at white rule focuses upon the land question. "The land was ours, and the white man robbed us of it." The division of the country

I am afraid some people will think this rather a priori. But it is only an assembling of elements that already exist. Others may think even these itemised points too many. But it is one of the lessons of Church History that, man not being pure spirit, some limited formalisation is needed to hold him to the works of the Spirit, even if there has often been too much formalisation also.

One thing I feel most strongly. If the privileged white South African is to be helped out of his dilemma, which is either to overburden his conscience with power or to fuse into a wider humanity, it will not be arguments or threats, but demonstration of a new warmth of life in Christ, which will help him.

into "black" and "white" areas, with Africans forbidden to own land in the latter but confined to the crowded reserves, arouses great hostility. Many is the African who has asked me bitterly: "Why should a white man own a vast farm of thousands of acres, while I am confined to a tiny plot in the reserve?"

The Africans' desire for land is particularly centred upon the question of freehold rights. To own land in freehold is to gain a special status in the community. Groups which are especially restricted in their opportunities to own property, such as most African independent churches, feel a particular resentment against the authorities and those groups which possess land. Like any other folk, Africans hate being moved from one area to another for the sake of "Group Areas" — but never is the hatred so strong as when such removal means the loss of freehold property. If an African owns a piece of land, however small, he will often resist selling it, no matter how much sale may be to his financial advantage. For that bit of land is a symbol of what his people once had, a sign that he has a bit of security for the future. "The land was ours!" — and if I can hold on to a part of it, I have not quite been defeated.

Land in the Old Testament

The desire for land is not confined to South Africa. It has been the source of conflicts in many parts of the world. In the little country of Palestine, centuries ago, the hunger for land was very keen, and it led to much conflict. The experience of ancient Israel is dealing with this problem can teach South Africa a good deal today.

The Israelites, like white South Africans, owned a land

which was coveted by others. Their continued control of the land was challenged by other peoples, within and without their borders. Good land was scarce in that dry and barren area; and those who held it never lacked enemies who were eager to lay their hands upon it.

In this situation of land-hunger and land-conflict, Israel held a fundamental belief: **the land is God's**. It does not belong to a nation or a Government or a tribe or an individual — it belongs to God. He has given the land to his people for their use. But their property rights are limited by the will of God and the needs of others. And if they abuse the land or their neighbours, or deny the will of God, God will throw them off his land, and give it to someone else.

The Bible repeatedly asserts that the land is God's. "... the land is mine: for you are strangers and sojourners with me", says God to Israel (Lev. 25:23). The tribes are told to "Pass over the Lord's land" (Josh. 22:19). God emphasises his ownership of the country when he declares through his Prophet that he will punish Israel "... because they have polluted **my land** ..., and have filled **my inheritance** with their abominations." (Jer. 16:18).

This God, owner and ruler of the soil, graciously permits his people to use the land. The soil is one of the gifts which the Lord gives to those who serve him. This conviction is expressed frequently in the Old Testament, in the words of prophets, psalmists and historians. But nowhere is it more eloquently set forth than in the Book of Deuteronomy:

"For the Lord your God is bringing you into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and springs, flowing forth in valleys and hills, a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive trees and honey, a land in which you will eat bread without scarcity, in which you will lack nothing, a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills you can dig copper. And you shall eat and be full, and you shall bless the Lord your God for **the good land he has given you.**" (Deut. 8:7-10).

Because God is the Lord of the land, the right of land ownership within the community is a limited one. A man does not so much own land, as hold it in trust from God. And this trust is often exercised with careful regard for family tradition. From the time of the conquest of Palestine each family was entrusted by God with a certain portion of land. And this land must stay in the family if at all possible. Thus if a man wishes to sell his land, he must first approach his relatives, to see if they want to purchase it so that it may stay in the family (see Jer. 32:7-8). And no one, not even the Government, can break these traditions by expropriating land without the family's approval (see 1 Kings 21:3). For God himself has given this land into the keeping of this family. This belief stands in stark contrast to the way in which many whites wrested South African soil from Africans without regard for tribal and family traditions.

Furthermore, the man or family to whom the land is entrusted is responsible to God for the way in which he uses it. He cannot do what he likes with it, but must take account of the will of God and the needs of the community. Here the needs of the poor and the unprivileged were a special concern. The poor have a right to the gleanings, after the harvest (Deut. 24:19-21). The traveller may ease his hunger by eating from the fields (Deut. 23:24-25). The harvest is taxed heavily (10%) every three years, for the sake of "the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow ..." (Deut. 14:28-29). In short, the soil is not to be used only for the profit or convenience of the land-owners. The whole community, landless as well as landed, has a stake in the soil and must be cared for. And in all that the land-owner does

he is accountable to the Lord who is the real owner.

What if the people misuse the land, or break God's will? The Old Testament gives a clear answer: **They will lose the land**. The land is the gift of God to his covenant people. But if they are unfaithful, the gift is withdrawn — they are thrown off the land. Deuteronomy states repeatedly that those who disobey God will lose the land:

"Take heed lest your heart be deceived ... and the anger of the Lord be kindled against you, and he shut up the heavens, so that there be no rain and the land yield no fruit and **you perish quickly from off the good land which the Lord gives you.**" (Deut. 11:16-17).

The destruction of Israel and the deportation of its people to Assyria are not an accident; Israel is not the innocent victim of power politics. Israel loses her land to Assyria "... because the people of Israel had sinned against the Lord their God ..." (2 Kings 17:7 — see the whole of 17:1-23). And Jeremiah declares that the land of Judah is ruined and desolate, without inhabitants, "Because they have forsaken My law which I set before them, and have not obeyed my voice ..." (Jer. 9:13ff). In short, God has not promised the people permanent possession of the soil — they have no "natural right" to the land. It is theirs only so long as they serve God. And He will not hesitate to tear the land away from those who defy His will.

Naboth's vineyard — and South Africa

This Biblical understanding of land is clearly expressed in the story of Naboth's vineyard (1 Kings 21:1-24). King Ahab of Israel wants Naboth's field for his own use. And he offers him compensation, either a better field or cash. But Naboth refuses. It should be noted that the will of the Government is not absolute; the king cannot simply take the land, to suit his own desires or policies. He must follow God's way of dealing with the community; and in this case that means he must respect the traditions whereby God has entrusted this field to the family of Naboth. Arbitrary expropriation suits the king's convenience and policy; but it does not suit God's will, and so Ahab cannot take the field.

It is Jezebel, the pagan queen who respects neither the will of God nor the rule of law, but insists that the Government's rights are absolute, who seizes Naboth's field. For Jezebel, to give in to Naboth's traditional rights is a sign of weakness: "Do you now govern Israel?" she mocks at Ahab. So Naboth is trampled under foot to serve the pleasures of the Government.

It is impossible to read this story without thinking of South Africa today. Queen Jezebel would permit nothing to stand in the way of Government power; and this is precisely the position of our Government. To modify one's policy or to compromise for the sake of Christian tradition or human dignity is a sign of weakness: "Is not Parliament sovereign?" the Government echoes Jezebel. And so in the name of the godless policy of white supremacy, thousands of Non-Whites have lost their land. Government policy demands that people be moved. At least King Ahab had the decency to offer Naboth fair compensation for his land. In South Africa, Africans have been moved from property to which they held freehold title, without being given freehold rights elsewhere; and the mass removals demanded by the Group Areas regulations have meant the rapid decline in property values, so that people have had to sell their property at a heavy loss.

King Ahab was weak, but at least he began by trying to be just to Naboth. White South Africa rather chooses to imitate the pagan Jezebel, who cynically destroyed Naboth for his opposition to the Government. One is reminded of the ruthless

destruction of Sophiatown a decade ago, and of the cynicism (or the pettiness) of a Government which proclaimed its victory over that ruined community by re-naming the white suburb which was built on its ashes, "Triomf".

The Naboth story ends on a note which South Africa must heed well. After Ahab takes possession of Naboth's vineyard, "The word of the Lord came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, "Arise, go down to meet Ahab king of Israel, who is ... in the vineyard of Naboth, where he has gone to take possession'." And Elijah says to Ahab "... You have sold yourself to do what is evil in the sight of the Lord. Behold, I will bring evil upon you; I will utterly sweep you away, and will cut off from Ahab every male, bond or free, in Israel ..." (1 Kings 21:17-21). A Government which wantonly disregards the rights of the poor and deprives them of their land without compensation, falls under the wrath of God.

The land is God's

In their conflicts over land, South Africans, white and black, must listen to the Old Testament when it asserts that God is the owner and ruler of the soil, and man is accountable to God for the way he deals with the land.

This means that white South Africa has a terrible guilt, for which it must atone. Because of the white man's ruthless plunder of millions of acres of land from the Africans who owned it, he stands condemned before God. In addition, white South Africa continually mocks God by its Group Areas policy, by which it deprives folk of their land without giving them either a voice in that decision or adequate compensation for their property. And the "Bantu Homeland" policy defies the Biblical concern for justice in land distribution and for the protection of the poor, by confining the vast majority of the people of this country to a tiny minority of the land.

Furthermore, the white farmer bears an especially heavy

burden of guilt. He has scorned the freedom of his Non-White workers, through his use of the pass laws and farm gaols to confine them to his farms. He has denied their humanity by the fearfully low wages and poor housing which he provides. (There are some notable exceptions to this rule, but they remain exceptions). The fact that the platteland farmer is noted for his devotion to the Church does not lessen his guilt, but makes it all the worse.

In relation to its land policy, the prophet Isaiah speaks directly to white South Africa:

Woe to those who join house to house, who add field to field, until there is no more room ... The Lord of hosts has sworn in my hearing: "Surely many houses shall be desolate, large and beautiful houses, without inhabitant." (Isa. 5:8-9).

(Isa. 5:8-9)

The Non-European also, in his hunger for property, should remember the Biblical teaching concerning land. The African farmer however small his plot in the reserve, is accountable to God for his use of the soil; and to rob it of its fertility through owning too much stock or failing to check erosion is as much an offence against God as is the white man's greed and exploitation. Perhaps one can hardly blame the African farmer for his slowness to modernise his farming, since he has so very little land to work with and he is encouraged to reform by a Government which oppresses him. Yet the Biblical imperative remains the same for all: the land is God's and must not be abused.

Thus man has no "natural right" to the land. He is God's steward, privileged to tend the soil in God's name. His stewardship must be exercised with careful regard to the fertility of the soil and the needs of the community. He who exhausts the soil carelessly or for his own profit, or who uses the land to exploit others, or who renders them landless for his own wealth or power, abuses one of God's great gifts. The judgment of God will fall upon him. And he will lose the land.



NEWS REPORT

The Cape Town Diocesan Council recently approved the appointment of a full-time worker for the Board of Social Responsibility. This Board, established in 1967 and composed of 15-16 clergy and lay people, has a threefold task: to examine matters involving social responsibility from the standpoint of the Christian Faith; to make the Church and wider public aware of the issues involved; and to take such action as it deems necessary.

In recent years the Board has concerned itself with wages and terms of employment (especially of domestic workers, and of non-stipendiary church employees); migrant workers, particularly those in Crossroads squatter camp; detainees and their dependants; self-help projects in the Homelands, and community development.

In addition, it has tried to help parishes to take an active and informed interest in local as well as wider social issues; but this liaison with the parishes still requires considerable development.

In view of the major socio-economic changes taking place in

the Western Cape and the escalating political crisis in the country, a diocesan board of this nature has an important part to play in helping the Church to witness effectively to the Lordship of Christ over the whole of life.

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Board of Social Responsibility
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is required for secretarial, executive and liaison duties in the field of Christian social responsibility.

Salary R300-450 inclusive, according to qualifications. Closing date: July 30, 1976. Inquiries and applications to:

The Chairman BSR, Box 263, Cape Town 8000.

S.C.M. INTER-COLLEGE AND VARSITY CONFERENCE

The University Section of the Students' Christian Movement of South Africa met at Cyara, Transvaal earlier this month. Their Declaration is of profound importance to those who would know the thinking and support the dedication of the strongest movement of young Black Christians in the country.

Comment and enquiries are welcome, and can be forwarded through the offices of PRO VERITATE.

THE CYARA DECLARATION

We, members of S.C.M. from different Black universities and colleges, participants in the annual S.C.M. inter-college and varsity conference at Cyara, accept and believe the fact that Christians all over the world have the same message of salvation to preach to the world and that the Gospel is God's Good News for the whole world and also that this Gospel is dynamic enough to suit all situations, needs and circumstances of man, be they spiritual, economic, political and social needs. We feel challenged by the Holy Spirit of God to be true disciples, that is, hearers and doers of the word.

That is our case in South Africa, the Black Christian finds himself in an unjust, racist and oppressive society to which he has to relate the message of salvation; also that the Black man finds himself in a predicament because he being the oppressed, has first to relate to his situation while at the same time trying to reach the oppressor who is both reluctant and unwilling to change his ways.

That these circumstances impede the promulgation of the Gospel while at the same time it strains relationships of Black Christians and Christians of other colours and races. That the Black Christian in South Africa finds himself greatly alarmed by the continuance of institutionalized violence in the country and also incredibly shocked by the whole South African status quo. We therefore unanimously accept the following Declaration, July 1976:

1. The authority and power of the Bible

We affirm the divine inspiration of the whole Bible and therefore adopt it wholly as a measuring rod for our faith and our social conduct.

While accepting this truth, we regret the part played by the churches in compromising and distorting the Bible to suit their own personal and denominational needs. We therefore feel that although our State is said to be a Christian State, it has failed to practice such vital Scriptural issues as freedom, truth, justice, and reconciliation, or to create platforms for their development thereby making the whole Biblical message of no effect. We are deeply repentant because we have also failed to proclaim the whole truth of the Gospel. As a Christian body, we accept the Biblical prophetic message and we pledge to tell the Scriptural truth in prosperity or in adversity. We also feel that the Western interpretation of the Bible is both irrelevant and uncalled for in the explosive situation of South Africa. We therefore call for a faithful and radical re-interpretation of the Scriptures by the whole Church.

2. God's Plan for man

We affirm our belief in the one Eternal God, who governs the Universe according to His purpose. We believe that the Eternal God has a plan for all races including Blacks. We therefore register our detestation of the distortion of God's plan among

Black people in South Africa. Many missionaries prevented them from seeking God's plan in their history, and the Government has denied them the possibility of following God's plan by rendering them useless and incompetent in the decision-making structures of their God-given country.

3. The uniqueness and universality of Christ

We affirm that there is only one Saviour and only one Gospel although there is a wide Scriptural diversity of evangelistic approaches. We reject the presentation of a Western-robed Jesus who has been preached by the missionary to the detriment of the God-given Black dignity and presenting Blacks as sub-human, second grade creatures of God. So because of Christ's universality and uniqueness, we affirm that Christ has a unique way of approaching the Blacks as He has in approaching the other races of the world.

4. Nature of evangelism

We uphold our apostolic belief that all have sinned and thereby become objects of God's judgment and wrath; we accept the commission of our Lord to bring the message of salvation to the whole human race. We believe that the Gospel is directed to the whole man. We therefore accept our Christian social responsibility to improve human conditions especially among our Black fellowmen who have been made sojourners in the land of their birth. We denounce with no reservation the unscriptural nature of much missionary evangelism which has made Biblical evangelism so difficult and unreal to our Black community. As Blacks, we accept the commission of our Lord to evangelize the world as something of first importance and feel the need to break away from the traditional order of evangelism in order to pluck and harvest fruits of our radical discipleship.

5. The Christian Social Responsibility

We affirm that God is both the Creator and the Judge of all men and consequently we should share His concern for justice, freedom, truth and reconciliation throughout the whole world. We affirm that since man has been created in the image of God, every man regardless of his colour, race, culture, sex or age has an intrinsic dignity and value because of which he should be respected and not exploited or eliminated. We assert that in South Africa this has not been the case, so we feel it is our Christian responsibility and duty, in the name of Jesus, the Son of God, to condemn the status quo as irreligious, anti-God, demonic and anti-man. This is our responsibility as prophets according to God's way.

6. Evangelism and black culture

Because man is God's creature, his culture reflects godly aspects in a limited way, no matter the degree of its

differentiation, and therefore no culture can be wholly condemned as evil. Because man has fallen these cultures are spotted, tainted with evil and subject to God's reproach. Our Black culture should be transformed by the Gospel just like it does in other cultures and Blacks themselves should busy themselves with this transformation.

7. Unity in evangelism

We pledge to seek the deepest and most meaningful unity in the light of the Scriptures. As Black Christians we know that genuine unity has been hypocritically practised with colour bars which we are not ready to accept. If there is to be any continuous fellowship and unity in evangelism, we feel the following terms should be met:

- (a) We should meet as equals free of fear, complexes, suspicion, and insecurity and we should be truthful as well as reflect the image of God
- (b) Such a unity should be mutually beneficial to all Christian groups irrespective of their colour and race.
- (c) Conscious and unconscious paternalism which for a long time has been a common feature in such meetings and fellowships should completely be done away with.
- (d) Such a unity should be Biblically based and genuinely practised here in South Africa before we can think of practising it anywhere else.
- (e) Other Christian groups who will want to have fellowship with us should show their truthfulness by releasing a truthful and sincere statement of faith condemning the existing political evils and social sins in our present government so as to make their standpoint clear and unhyprocritical.
- (f) They should also sincerely endeavour to continually stand for the truth not only by preaching the salvation of the soul, but also by showing concern for the social and political position in this land.

8. Church unity

We abhor the spirit of dividing that unity for which Christ had to die, as perpetrated and forced by western missionaries for their own selfish ends. This spirit is presently making it difficult for Black Christians to have solidarity as a nation oppressed and discriminated against by the racist, oppressive ruling regime. We therefore, pledge ourselves to the dogma of ecumenism, that through God's help we shall endeavour to achieve the glorious ideal and bring the demon of denominationalism to its knees.

9. Our concern for the future

- (a) Whereas we Christian students realise that the future coming together of Christians of all races and colours is natural and inevitable, we maintain that this coming together or fellowship should be under perfectly normal conditions and circumstances, and should be realistic and practical, even if it be against some institutions and churches. That the importance of this fellowship must be genuinely practised within the country.
- (b) We also realise that the Christian Church in South Africa can never be consolidated unless the Church in trying to meet man's spiritual needs should also condemn and transform the social evils and political sins existing in our country so as to have the same dynamic message of salvation for the South African people.
- (c) That without realizing the importance of the recommendations of this declaration the future is too ghastly to contemplate.

10. Conclusion

We, members of the Church of Christ, participants in the Inter-college and Varsity Conference held at Cyara, as delegates from our various universities and colleges, feel from this day, bound to live and toil to propagate the Christian message according to this declaration. We also sincerely call upon all other Christians of conscience to pledge and commit themselves equally with us in this noble course.

THE CROSS IN THE WORLD

z. kameeta

This sermon was preached by Pastor Z. Kameeta at a meeting of the Namibia National Convention on Easter Sunday, 1976. Pastor Kameeta is Principal of the Paulinum Theological College at Otjimbingwe. (This is a translation from the original Afrikaans text.)

MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAST THOU FORSAKEN ME?

As the world sees it, this happening is the greatest tragedy of all time. We can discern this in the mocking, despising shouts directed at the one up on the cross: Come down from the cross and save yourself! ... He saved others, but he cannot save himself. ... King of Israel, indeed! Let him come down from the cross, then we will believe him.

Scandal

The cross of Golgotha is in the eyes of the of the world an indication of defeat and scandal. It is impossible for the world to believe that a Son of God the Almighty could hang from

such a shameful pole. He ought to be living in a magnificent and well-defended palace. He should have a defence budget of millions of Rands, from which to purchase the most modern military weapons available and train the mightiest of armies. And his person should be guarded day and night by his soldiers. Indeed his power should be so great that, if need be, he could declare the truth to be a lie, and lies to be the truth; acts of love as acts of violence, and acts of violence as acts of love. He should have enough power to persuade God to change his mind.

In the eyes of the world, therefore, this man on the cross is a deceiver and a blasphemer, a threat to law and order. He is a weakling trying to assume the position and power of a king. But he doesn't have what it takes.

In the face of what the world requires of those who wield power, Jesus calls out from the cross in a loud voice, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

The apostles of "law" and "order", the protectors of Israel's identity, race and culture, hear in this cry an acknowledgement of defeat and despair. It is a confirmation of what they think of this man: a complete failure. But for those who yearn for liberation from the poisonous clutches of the evil powers it is the triumphant shout of a victorious hero! God be praised, he did not carry out only half of Yahweh's commission to liberate the world, but steadfastly went on to its completion, even to the cross. God be praised, he did not get down from the cross, he did not leave the field before the deciding battle could be fought. But he stood firm until he had won the victory and so confirmed for once and for ever the reality of God's liberating will in this world! God be praised for leaving him there to accept me. He himself went through hell to bring me out of there.

Liberation

May the name of the Lord be praised because this shout of Jesus Christ is the fulfilment of God's promise of salvation. Each punch in the face, each mocking word, each blow of the hammer mercilessly driving the nails through his hands was a determined step towards his goal, the liberation of the world! His suffering was not in itself his aim, which was the liberation of the whole creation and the establishment of God's rule in this world. That is the rule of justice, truth and peace. Not that peace which is imposed upon people by armoured cars, batons, guns and dogs, but that peace which like a clear stream flows from the inexhaustible spring of God's love, from self-surrender and service to God and neighbour.

Those who love this truth, justice and peace, follow in these determined footsteps of Christ to liberation. Each restriction or banishment which they endure, each cuff or kick, each day in the cells of loneliness, each electrical shock, each barbaric method suffered by a prisoner to make him give false evidence against his fellows in the struggle, each humiliation met on the roads (for instance when women are examined by male so-called officials), each one who dies as a result of beatings, each tear shed in this fight against evil, for the sake of peace, truth and justice, is a determined step forward in the footsteps of our Hero and Victor. Through all this wrongdoing the structure of oppression places itself under the judgment of God. All these deeds done in the hope of self-preservation are deeds of self-destruction. The tension of this battle here on Golgotha is so great that it takes one's breath away. It makes the most modern atomic war look like child's play. The revolution which it brings about is incomparable, it is deep and comprehensive. It doesn't change either the hearts or the structures, but both.

The events of Golgotha do not take place in a vacuum, but in the midst of a crowd which cries out, "Crucify him! crucify him!"; in this world which hates the truth and prefers the lie, rejects unity and sees in division the ideal. The events of Golgotha shake the foundations of my life. Its violence is so great that nothing and nobody can be unaffected by it. The Roman officer with a troop of 100 soldiers, whose responsibility it was to see that all went smoothly with the crucifixion, was so struck by the violence of the cross that he totally forgot his armoured cars, his guns and dogs. He was only aware of this liberating violence of the cross. And he could do no other than call out, "Truly this man was the Son of God." It is true as this man said, he **was** the Son of God, and he is the Son of God **today**, and he will be the Son of God to all eternity. This

powerful man was the first witness under the cross. He was not afraid to testify to what he had experienced, in front of the mockers.

Creation freed

The battle of Golgotha was felt not only by those who stood around the cross or by those who stood in the Temple, but by the whole creation. God's promise to free his whole creation was being fulfilled. For three hours the light of the sun was withheld. Nature, which had been defiled by evil, was now caught up into the liberating grasp of God, and recreated by the cross. Those who forbid me to proclaim this Gospel of the re-created creation of God, who wish to chain me to the altar and pulpit, these are the ones who would banish God from his own creation! Nature is also liberated by the blood of Jesus Christ, and those who exploit it to the advantage of a certain race and colour at the expense of others, the one who uses some people because of their race and colour as slaves to extract the riches of nature to his own benefit, places himself directly under the judgement of God.

Curtain

The curtain which is spoken of here separated the holy of holies from the sanctuary. It was only the high priest who, once a year, was allowed to go in there, bearing an offering. Now the Evangelist reports that the curtain that served as a division between these two places was torn in two, from top to bottom. Heaven and earth are reconciled to one another! Through Christ, God has made his peace with us. Now we no longer need a special person to intercede for us once a year by way of an offering. Because heaven and earth have been reconciled to one another through Jesus Christ we can now go to God through Christ at any time. The wall of enmity which we ourselves erected between God and ourselves, has been cast down by the violence of the cross. But that is not all: there are other consequences. The same wall between race and race, between colour and colour, has been cast down. In this is the revolution of the cross. This is the deep and all-embracing revolution. It is inclusive in the sense that it is not restricted to the altar or pulpit, but extends through the history of this world, through the powers and structures of injustice, oppression and exploitation. Every system and government which builds up these separating walls between man and man stands in direct confrontation with the revolution of the cross!

This revolution goes deep, in the sense that it converts the heart, the whole personality of the person. And those who are so converted are used by God himself as instruments of liberation, to cast down the powers, structures and governments which build these walls between man and man, and between man and God, by the word of the cross, the sword of the Spirit.

Torn free

Dear friends, this is what the Gospel is about. It tells us what God has done to us through his Son, Jesus Christ. Our guilt is washed away if we believe in him. The Gospel calls us to conversion. And conversion is a painful process. An indescribable challenge. In this conversion I am torn free of the lie; injustice; hatred, exploitation and oppression of my fellow men; and racism. This tearing free leaves bleeding wounds behind. That is why we fear conversion. That is why we flee from the face of God and his Word. One may even go so far as to defend oneself with all that one has at one's disposal. One can defend the evil in which one is caught up with automatic weapons, dogs and batons. And worse than that, one can go so

far as to create a god who is in favour of lies, injustice, hatred, exploitation, oppression and the separation of people. And those who oppose this god are looked upon as blasphemers and a threat to Christendom.

My fellows in oppression, you who are treated as strangers in your own country, return to the Lord! You cannot effectively work and struggle for liberation if you are yourselves living in that which you are fighting. So come back to him who is the liberator of Israel. When he calls you to him, he does not do this so that he can store you up somewhere safe in heaven, but to liberate you and send you back with the word of truth to those powers from which you were liberated.

Stand by one another then, as children of the one mother and father. Serve God, as those women did of whom we have read, at the foot of the cross, and if it must be, to the grave. Never cease, by word and deed, to carry the Gospel of liberation and reconciliation into the world, especially to those

who oppress and persecute us. Fight this fight soberly, call upon God without ceasing.

For our fight is not against human forces, but against cosmic powers, against the authorities and potantates of this dark world, against the superhuman forces of evil in the heavens. Therefore take up God's armour; then you will be able to stand your ground when things are at their worst, to complete every task and still to stand. Stand firm, I say. Fasten on the belt of truth; for coat of mail put on integrity; let the shoes on your feet be the Gospel of peace, to give you firm footing; and, with all these, take up the great shield of faith, with which you will be able to quench all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take salvation for helmet; for sword, take that which the Spirit gives you — the words that come from God.

Then you will be on the victorious side!

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