

**where
there's growth
there's a branch**



**where
there's special growth
there's bound to be
a special branch**



julie

1977

july

BY DIE POSKANTOOR AS NUUSBLAD INGESKRYF

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EDITORIAL

A COUNTER CULTURE

Evil done in the name of Christianity is part of history. The Crusades butchered and bankrupted their way through the Middle Ages; the Inquisition was hideous to the body and mind; Christian civilisation in America and Europe slaughtered sold and subjugated millions of slaves and bitterly resisted emancipation; six million Jews were exterminated by Christian Germany and Hiroshima obliterated by Christian America; Zulus were killed at Blood River, Boers died in the Concentration Camps and British at Bronkhorstspuit — all in the defence of Christian civilisation.

Of course many disagreed. Of course — Christianity is not really like that at all. Of course — there is another way of looking at it.

But millions of blacks in Southern Africa today believe they are held in cruel subjection, denied justice and freedom, and suffer constant exploitation under a system which whites designed to preserve "Christian civilisation."

Apartheid supporters may not die to prevent blacks going into lifts, but they will kill to prevent blacks going into Parliament. For Jesus sake. Amen.

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Such attempts to make Christianity provide a cultural support for the Establishment are very old. People have little difficulty in giving to Caesar the things that are God's, once they decide that God wants to support Caesar anyway.

Give politics a religious veneer; identify Church with State; endow relationships between them with a superstitious content; and before long Christian witness becomes treason and patriotism another name for apostacy.

The fundamental error is to think that a Christian country or a Christian civilisation is possible at this stage in history. Until the Kingdom of God is established for all men on Earth, the kingdom of men will be substandard and can never claim to be "Christian." Christianity must always be a counterculture until the Kingdom comes.

The followers of Jesus must therefore guard against such concepts as "Christian National Education," "Christian Socialism," or "Christian Culture" because these are claiming more than is possible, and a person who gives his total allegiance to such calls, instead of to God, will end in chaos, confusion and calumny.

Christianity must always be positively critical, always in opposition, always an alternative to the status quo, whatever encouraging tactics may be opportune. The people of God must always be under judgement, always repenting and believing, always being reborn, until the Kingdom comes. Discipleship means being out front, experimenting with new ways of living; yeasting liberation into the lump of a society which conforms to subchristian ways.

When they become the religious arm of a national culture, subjected to secular aims — whether it be the British Empire, Afrikanerdom, Pan Africanism, or the Great American Dream — Christians lose their authenticity and give birth to abominations like Naziism, Apartheid and Watergate.

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So be not dismayed when Christians refuse to take up arms, reject racism, refute national or denominational schisms, give up privilege, proclaim different money values, practice different life styles, love without reserve, and find themselves jailed, ostracised, or insulted. They are probably just following Jesus.

Be dismayed with those who buck not the system and challenge not their culture, who bow to ministerial edicts and flee from confrontation, who persecute peace makers and boast of defending their Christian Heritage. Such good guys often do evil.

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Like gassing kids at funerals.

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Or doing nothing.

REDAKSIONEEL

'N KONTRA-KULTUUR

Kwaad wat gedoen is in die naam van die Christendom is deel van die geskiedenis. Die Kruistogte het gedurende die Middeleeue hulle pad oopgeveg deur slagting en bankrotskap; die inkwisië was afskuwelik vir liggaam en gees; die Christelike beskawing in Amerika en Europa het die bloed van miljoene slawe vergiet, hulle verkoop en onderwerp en het hulle vrystelling bitterlik teengestaan; ses miljoen Jode is deur Christelike Duitsland uitgewis en Christelike Amerika het Hiroshima vernietig; Zulus is by Bloedrivier gedood, Boere het in die konsentrasiekampe en Britte by Bronkhorstspuit gesterf — alles ter verdediging van die Christelike beskawing.

Natuurlik — baie het ne saamgestem nie. Natuurlik — die

Christendom is nie werklik so nie. Natuurlik — daar is 'n ander manier om daarna te kyk.

Maar miljoene swartmense in Suider-Afrika glo vandag dat hulle in wrede onderdrukking gehou word, geregtigheid en vryheid van hulle weerhou word en dat hulle aan gedurige uitbuiting blootgestel is onder 'n sisteem wat witmense ontwerp het om „Christelike beskawing“ te bewaar.

Apartheidsondersteuners sal heel moontlik nie sterf om swartmense te verhoed om in hysbakke in te gaan nie, maar hulle sal doodmaak om swartmense te verhoed om deel te hê aan die parlement. Om Christus wil. Amen.

Sulke pogings waardeur die Christendom kulturele ondersteuning vir die bestaande order moet voorsien, is baie oud. Mense het min moeilikheid om aan Caesar die dinge wat aan God behoort, te gee sodra hulle besluit dat God in elk geval Caesar wil ondersteun.

Gee aan politiek 'n godsdienstige vernis; identifiseer kerk met staat, skenk aan verhoudinge tussen hulle 'n bygelowige inhoud en kort voor lank word Christelike getuienis verraad en patriotisme 'n ander naam vir geloofsversaking.

Die fundamentele dwaling is om te dink dat 'n Christelike land of 'n Christelike beskawing in hierdie stadium van die geskiedenis moontlik is. Totdat die Koninkryk van God vir alle mense op aarde gevestig is, sal die koninkryk van mense onder-standaard wees en sal hulle nooit aanspraak kan maak om 'Christelik' te wees nie. Die Christendom moet altyd 'n kontra-kultuur wees totdat die Koninkryk kom.

Die volgelinge van Jesus moet dus op hulle hoede wees vir sulke begrippe soos „Christelik Nasionale Opvoeding“, „Christelike Sosialisme“, of „Christelike Kultuur“ omdat hierdie begrippe aanspraak maak op meer as wat moontlik is, en 'n persoon wat sy trou volkome aan sulke oproepe in plaas van aan God gee, sal in chaos, verwarring en laster eindig.

Die Christendom moet altyd positief krities wees, altyd 'n alternatief tot die status quo, watter bemoedigende taktiek ook al gunstig blyk te wees. Die volk van God moet altyd onder die oordeel wees, altyd berouvol en gelowig, altyd weergebore word totdat die Koninkryk kom. Dissipelskap beteken om op die

voerpunt te wees; met nuwe lewenstyle te eksperimenteer; as suurdeeg tot bevryding deur te werk in 'n samelewing wat tot sub-Christelike weë konformeer.

Wanneer hulle die godsdienstige arm van 'n nasionale kultuur word, onderworpe aan sekulêre doelstellinge — ongeag of dit die Britse Ryk, Afrikanerdom, Pan-Afrikanisme of die groot Amerikaanse Droom is — verloor Christene hulle betroubaarheid en word geboorte gegee aan gruwels soos Nasisme, Apartheid en Watergate.

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Moet dus nie ontsteld wees as Christene weier om wapens op te neem nie, rassisme afwys, nasionale en kerklike skeuringe verwerp, voorregte prysgee, ander geldwaardes aankondig, ander lewenstyle beoefen, lief-hê sonder voorbehoud en bevind dat daardeur hulle in die gevangenis gewerp, verstoot of beledig word. Heelwaarskynlik volg hulle slegs Jesus.

Wees ontsteld met hulle wat nie die sisteem teengaan en hulle kultuur nie uitdaag nie, wat buig onder ministeriële decrete en wegvlug van konfrontasie, wat vredemakers vervolg en spog dat hulle hulle Christelike erfenis verdedig. Sulke goeie mense doen dikwels kwaad.

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Soos gasbomme op kinders by begrafnisse gooi.

* * * * *

Of niks doen nie.

A LETTER TO MY WHITE SISTERS

Greetings in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I write to you as a sister in Christ and your neighbour. If perhaps you do not accept that a Black could be your sister or neighbour, then do not read this letter. It is not meant for you.

At this time when our country is faced with internal strife, I feel compelled to question the standpoint of the Christian white woman of S.A. I specifically refer to the *white* women because she has a say in the law making of this country. A Black women gets banned or detained if she dares to question the status quo.

Since 16 June 1976, Black children have been trying, peacefully, to show that they want an equal share in the land of their birth. When *your* children demonstrate for or against anything, as children all over the world do, they are detained for a few hours and then released. Our children have been shot, gassed and imprisoned.

A few months back many white husbands, sons, fathers, brothers demonstrated against the Prime Minister — remember the HNP demos! No action was taken against them. Can you visualise what would have happened if these had been our menfolk?

Constant dehumanising treatment is meted out to Blacks by our wholly Christian Government. "For as much as you do it unto the least of these, you do it unto me."

My people — or should I say our children — have reached a point

of no return. For them death has no sting, but their untimely deaths, brought about through the actions of a callous society will be an indictment on Christianity. The Christian church will never outlive *the shame of 16 June 1976 — South Africa*, and the road to Calvary will never have an ending and Christ will continue, ad infinitum, to hang on the Cross, unless we live the Gospel and make changes.

It is said that a nation is as strong as its women will allow it to be. As a Christian South African woman I call on you as sister Christians to stand up NOW and speak out against all unjust laws.

You have the power to change the laws and to bring peace to our beloved land but much more than that, you can bring Christ's Kingdom to South Africa. Politics do not enter into it. The only politics that count is "LOVE GOD AND ALSO LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOUR AS YOURSELF."

If I did not love my neighbour I would not dare to write to you. If you do not feel that you can love me then of course you also cannot love Christ. Unless we have enough love to obey God before man we will all perish and peace will never come to South Africa.

Vesta Smith

Noodgesig

Soweto, South Africa.

16 June 1977

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There is a very simple criterion for probing the democratic institutions of a nation. You just ask:

"Where is your opposition?

In parliament or in jail?"

Dom Helder Camara

Golda Meir

PROPHETS AND PRIESTS

-Brian Brown

The author examines one of the insights he has gained whilst working with the Christian Institute.

I am particularly thankful for having gained an understanding as to what constitutes Prophetic Religion through participation in the C.I.'s family.

It is in terms of prophetic religion that I have come to see how Christianity in South Africa can be so largely unrelated to life while still claiming to be Biblical. This concept has also helped me to discover both why Christ suffered and why the Body of Christ in a blatantly unjust South African society remains relatively devoid of the marks of the Master's suffering.

In the early days of my discipleship "the priesthood of all believers" was a doctrine much proclaimed. My religious mentors told me that Protestants believed every disciple to be a priest, not just those chaps with their collars the wrong way round, and through holding fast to this doctrine we were first class Christians, and Roman Catholics second-class at best or heretics at worst. I diligently practiced priestly ministry, understood as bringing ones fellow man into relationship with God through conversion and trust in Christ. The priestly was "in" and very little was heard of the prophetic. When it was mentioned, prophetic ministry was understood as seeking to "prophesy" when the world was to end. Every earthquake was greeted with glee as a sign of the times and wars (the Korean) and rumours of wars (that day's headline) pointed to the imminent return of Christ, presumably to deal effectively with the Anti-Christ, then fashionably the Yellow Peril of Communist China. Prophecy was rather like a Divine crystal ball.

Within the fellowship of the Christian Institute in particular, a re-interpretation of prophecy took place. I discovered that true prophetic ministry is one of the many ways in which the Church of Christ ought to fulfil its ministry to the world. As the community raised up by God to offer Christ to the world, the Church must offer *faith* (hence its priestly role) and must also offer the world *justice* (hence its prophetic discipline). In a desire to make this offering the C.I. does battle with the Biblical understanding of the prophetic.

Contrast

In the Old and New Testaments both priestly and prophetic ministries are obviously presented, and much as one might anticipate their complementing each other, Scripture reveals that they sadly and invariably oppose and contradict each other in the persons of prophets and priests.

If in priestly ministry something is done whereby man is brought into relationship with God, in prophetic ministry it is God's commands which are brought to bear upon the human situation. As priestly ministry ushers man into the presence of an accepting and forgiving God, it is a re-assuring and comforting message. By contrast the prophetic word brings God's judgment to bear upon our human situation and this is disturbing and challenging. Preachers invariably stress the priestly word to the virtual exclusion of the prophetic, for this is the desire and expectation of their congregations which they are anxious to meet. Nor should it be felt that the preacher deliberately compromises his message purely for the mess of pottage which is popular approval; none but the most insensitive of souls wish to deliberately antagonise and disturb, and the preacher who is never prophetic could be silenced by his very sensitivity. This does not condone his unfaithfulness but seeks to understand that which motivates it.

Scripture abounds in instances of the Jewish Church yielding to the temptation to offer a priestly promise of peace where there was

an absence of either peace or that justice which is its foundation. The history of the Christian Church is little different, and the priestly often predominates to the exclusion of the prophetic.

Because the preacher who is only priest neither challenges nor offends, we should expect him to be a defender of the status quo, and well accepted by the rulers and authorities. Scripture reveals the priests to be pillars of the (corrupt) establishment and Jesus is constantly doing verbal battle with the lawyers, Pharisees and Sadducees who conspired to put him to death. Annas and Caiaphas as priestly rulers are far more deserving of dishonourable mention in the creeds than the relatively innocent Pilate whom the Church denigrates Sunday by Sunday. The condemnation by Christ of the priests of his day in passages like Matthew 23:13-39 and Luke 11:37-54 is of such terrifying intensity that one could imagine a Sunday school placing an age-restriction on the reading of these woes. Significantly, the one passage concludes "O Jerusalem, you who stone the prophets (not priests!) and kill those who are sent to you, how often would I have gathered you unto myself as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings, but you would not." **It is the priests who kill the prophets**, says Christ.

When we turn to the Scriptures to see how the prophets fare, we find that far from being hand in glove with officialdom, they are invariably in opposition to the powers that be. Elijah the prophet denounces Ahab over his theft of Naboth's vineyard; Nathan the prophet declares David's guilt for his murder of Uriah; John the Baptist exposes Herod's sin of adultery and loses his head in the process; and Amos, Isaiah and Jeremiah share in the prophet Daniel's courage, confronting entire Governments with their injustice and oppression which must lead to the judgment of God in history. Sins personal and sins social are a denial of that justice which alone can exalt and save a nation, and in the fervent "thus saith the Lord" of the prophets' wilderness voices we ought to be as truly challenged to pursue justice as the kings and rulers whom they initially confronted. Unfortunately, when the modern day Isaiah says "your houses are full of what you have taken from the poor", or a twentieth century Micah says to the ruler, "you skin my people alive and tear the flesh off their bones", or today's Amos declares, "you refuse to admit that a day of disaster is coming but what you do only brings that day closer", then those conditioned by false priests to discount the prophetic will cry out: "What have such political comments got to do with Biblical religion?"

Reasons

Ironically it is this very Bible which they have read and yet not read which gives the reasons why prophets get stoned:

1. Those in authority are obviously those in whom power resides, and to challenge the power-structure's injustices is to become vulnerable and invite action against the prophet.
2. Whereas the priestly word of comfort is conducive to our sense of well-being, the prophetic word of challenge incenses, leading to commendation of the priest and repudiation of the prophet.
3. The priestly word, whether theologically true or false, is largely irrelevant to the power-structures, as witness the easy toleration of sects and heresies. The prophetic word is offered in a real situation and relates to a real evil, the charge being empirically verifiable and thus both relevant and embarrassing.
4. As the prophet's call for justice on behalf of the oppressed inevitably requires his identification with the oppressed, his role

is seen as being supportive of the oppressed over and against the oppressor.

5. Prophetic proclamation combines both promise and judgment: "if my people will repent then I will heal their land, but if not, then I will destroy..." A word of promise is always welcome, but a word of judgment, particularly if the prophet pronounces God's doom upon his own people, is traitorous.
6. Finally, prophets get stoned because false prophets and priests of the household of faith, who preach peace where there is no peace, are always around to throw the first stone.

Conscripts

If the prophetic calling is as precarious as described, who would ever consider volunteering for its ranks? A study of Scripture leads to the answer: nobody.

As the prophetic utterance is God's, only God can make a prophet and Scripture testifies that his spokesmen are invariably unwilling conscripts. Moses claims a speech impediment will prevent his going before Pharaoh; Jeremiah pleads excessive youthfulness to prophesy against his own people; Isaiah bemoans that he is "undone"; and as Christ assumes the prophet's mantle to denounce his beloved Jerusalem, the judgment is choked in his own tears.

True prophets are neither *masochists* delighting in their self-chosen and self-inflicted martyrdom, nor are they *sadists* who rejoice to see their people squirm under a Divine tongue-lashing. True prophets know that they are called of God and prophesy *despite* themselves. It is Divine constraint which leads him to say both woe is me if I prophesy not, and woe is me when I do!

Just as God calls prophets, so *history* confirms the call. Prophets are neither honoured in their own country, nor recognised in their own time. Amos, Jeremiah and company, were doubtless regarded as over-dramatic moralists, lacking in both loyalty and perception, disturbers of personal and national peace; ridiculed at best and persecuted at worst. Had anyone suggested that their utterances would one day be venerated and studied they would have revealed their distraught state by unbelieving laughter. God and history combine to make prophets. The God who judges through the historical process, throwing down that which is a denial of His nature, is the maker of prophets, but always long after they have been ridiculed, vilified and stoned.

Because the prophet speaks God's word of challenge in the society where he lives and loves, it is a word against his own, hence his being a dishonoured figure. As Jesus well knew, it is seldom that he is ever honoured in his lifetime or within his own country. Jesus needed the Resurrection to be acclaimed as *Prophet* by his own.

Misconceptions

Given this understanding of prophecy, certain misconceptions concerning prophetic religion are more clearly seen:

1. If one must concern oneself with seeking to guess when the Lord is to return, then at least one should talk of "foretelling" rather than biblical prophecy. Significantly, no one gets stoned for declaring that the world is to end in either 1984 or 2004, and corrupt Governments can thrive on this religious escapism for it diverts attention from the real issues of social oppression and need.

In a world which is increasingly overwhelmed by the magnitude of national and global problems it is natural for man to look to the heavens for some supernatural deliverance; but without in any way belittling the Christian belief in the end things, obsession with that which is to come, to the detriment of neighbour love and responsibility, is both unscriptural and sinful. The biblical prophets were not concerned with whether the Lord would return on a Nimbus, Cirrus or Cumulus cloud, they were concerned as to the sins of their people, individual and social, with the inevitable consequences of national suicide if repentance, individual and social, did not ensue.

2. When a preacher gives offence, perhaps emptying his church in the process, he can readily believe that he is being truly prophetic.

One must always ask, what is giving offence, the message or the messenger? If it be the Gospel message which offends he is in a worthy tradition. But if it be his personality or presentation, his beligerence or arrogance which is off-putting, then God help and forgive him. The true prophet has to be a more diligent pastor, a more fervent pray-er and a greater lover of his fellows than his non-prophetic brethren if his utterances are to be heard. The prophetic word can prove redemptive because of the prophet's spirituality, but hardly despite it.

3. Another misconception is that the prophet is an economic expert and political genius who knows all the biblical answers to the world's problems. No true prophet would arrogantly claim to know everything, rather he poses the questions — searching, probing, embarrassing questions in the hope that the "experts" will find just and honourable solutions. This, says Colin Morris, was very much the method of Jesus who, as prophet, posed some 150 questions to his hearers in the Gospels.

4. Morris reveals a further misconception when he reminds us that the true prophet is not a moralist always spelling out what ought to be but rather a realist, telling the story like it is. This "warts and all" mentality is disturbing because it reveals the hurts and injustices which prevail. No-one gets stoned for declaring the perfect and moral blueprint for society — every government would endorse its utter belief in such! Nathan would have been an admirable moralist had he lectured David on the sanctity of married life. David might even have written a Psalm to endorse the homily. But Nathan the prophet told it like it was and confronted his King with the specific sin.

5. A final misconception is that when we preach prophetically we "preach politics". The prophets would have been astounded to hear that they were political pundits. For them God was Lord of the universe and the One who ruled over the wholeness of life. For the Christian who calls Jesus Lord, this yielding of all facets of life to His rule must be even more marked. Education, Politics and Economics, the Church, Society and Law, all of these disciplines are subject to God for the Christian and to be prophetic is to seek to discover the "thus saith the Lord" for all of these aspects of life. If my proclamation has something to say about the migrant labour system and its sinful effect on family togetherness, this is not a political but a prophetic word. If I decline to bring the Mind of Christ to bear on this topic then I am suggesting Christ's relevance is limited, or the Gospel is in certain spheres ineffectual. It's strange that while all Christians profess to believe in preaching the justice and righteousness of God, some wish to limit God's justice to the personal (e.g. drinking and gambling) and so ignore the social (e.g. migrant labour and arrest without trial). This distinction implies that the Church can be discriminatory in its challenging of evil. It also fails to acknowledge the degree to which sin and oppression are bound up in the social structures which assault our neighbours.

Prophetic Preaching

I recall being asked by an anxious leader of a church to which I had been invited whether it was my intention to "preach politics". To his initial relief I replied, no, for I was not inclined to push any one political viewpoint or policy. There is quite enough of this in many South African pulpits, where an apartheid ideology has long been presented to the faithful as divinely sanctioned. I then asked my friend if he would expect me to be silent on issues of justice and compromise myself in prophetic proclamation concerning God's demands? I would preach prophetically, not politically. He got the message, if not satisfaction.

The starting point for the prophetic preacher is his belief that all of life is subject to the Lordship of Christ; that life cannot be compartmentalised into a sacred domain in which Christ is interested and a secular domain over which Christ has neither interest nor control. As Christ is Lord and has a relevant word to assist us in life's stewardship, we can confidently look to the Scriptures for a prophetic word of guidance in all disciplines and facets. Guidelines, not answers, are given.

We have suggested that a Church which is not prophetic is both

irrelevant and unfaithful. The malady goes further still — it is decidedly dangerous.

Christianity which is not prophetic is opium of the people and the merely priestly ministry of recent years has perhaps done as much to discredit Christ and promote Communism as all of the atheistic propaganda combined. The promotion of Communism by a non-prophetic Church is greatly enhanced when in a situation of blatant injustice and oppression the church takes sides with the oppressor over and against the oppressed. This is the crucial challenge for the Church in South Africa today.

Jesus died at the hands of a tyrannical state, and although the result of his death was to pursue a priestly function (Christ being our High Priest who ushers us into the Holy of Holies) yet the reason for his death was largely his prophetic proclamation. The attitude of Jesus to the authorities was to be uncompromised and unsilenced before them. In response to the religio-political leaders, the Jewish Sanhedrin, he was devastating in his denunciation of their sins, personal and particularly social. It is true that before a Roman ruler like Pilate he said nothing, but it was pointless for Jesus to make prophetic demands of a ruler who did not acknowledge the Divine standards. To the Jewish rulers who claimed obedience to God's rule Jesus used a quite different response and it should be no different for his Church today.

For those who live in a society like South Africa, which in common with the Jewish Theocracy claims to be under God, the prophetic response must be akin to that of Jesus before the Sanhedrin. It is the call to relate religious profession with the practice of justice in the laws and fabric of society.

Symbolic proclamation

What happens when that call continuously falls on deaf ears? The Biblical prophets knew the experience only too well and they have left a rich heritage of example; the prophet then begins to symbolically present and interpret Divine truth, ultimately becoming a symbol of that truth.

So it is that Jeremiah places the yoke upon his shoulders and walks the cities of Jerusalem to the derision of a hostile crowd of religious phonies. Symbolically the coming enslavement of Judah, the people of God, is spelt out in terms clear enough to earn him imprisonment and near death at the hands of a degenerate and unrepentant state.

Surely it is not different today. The Church is a sign and symbol of the alternative society God seeks to create. As symbol it should be living out the message of God for South Africa, and by its scars and its suffering the legitimacy of its message and its Master will be evident to all who crave for that alternative society.

In some small way the Christian Institute has sought to proclaim prophetically, and when verbalising has become impossible, to be that alternative society. The C.I. does not claim any prophets — but it does seek to take the prophetic discipline seriously and to compensate for a frightful lack of the prophetic in a priest-obsessed South African Church. Its unapologetic commitment to an imbalance of emphasis, namely a bias or obsession with the prophetic, is not to be viewed as a repudiation of the priestly but as a challenge to priests to also assume the mantle of the prophetic.

Hopefully, the doctrine of the "prophethood" of all believers will yet be as enthusiastically embraced as that of the priesthood. And when priests become prophets and prophets become priests, the Kingdom will be very near — at the risk of seeking to prophesy.

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The well known American preacher, Bishop Gerald Kennedy, drew up a 'Preacher's Dictionary' some time ago. In it, he tried to translate the special vocabulary that laymen use about their ministers. Slightly adapted, here it is.

- 'He is a spiritual preacher'
(He does not jar my conscience)
- 'He is not a spiritual preacher'
(His message gets under my skin)
- 'He brings politics into the pulpit'
(I do not agree with him)
- 'He speaks out courageously'
(I agree with him)
- 'He is liberal'
(He criticises the status quo)
- 'His position will divide the church'
(We conservatives are displeased)
- 'His attitude will make people stop giving'
(I will drop my pledge from 25 cents to 5)
- 'I will not stay in this church'
(If I can't have my way, I quit)
- 'He is sowing dissension'
(Some people are waking up)

- 'He is after the money'
(He thinks his family should have a reasonable standard of living)
- 'His ministry is successful'
(The accounts show a healthy credit)
- 'He lacks judgement'
(He takes Jesus seriously)
- 'He will ruin us financially'
(The tightwads have a guilty conscience)
- 'At least he is a good pastor'
(He can't preach)
- 'He disturbs me'
(I am beginning to grow spiritually)
- 'He upsets my faith'
(He is clobbering my prejudices)
- 'The whole church is upset'
(I am causing all the trouble I can)

— Christian Leader
June '77

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During the last two centuries Europe, and particularly industrial Europe, has seen the development of a society in which what is called personal religion continues to be taught as the rule of individual conduct, but in which the very conception of religion as the inspiration and standard of social life and corporate effort has been forgotten. The phenomenon is a curious one. To suggest that an individual is not a Christian may be libellous. To preach in public that Christianity is absurd is legal blasphemy. To state that the social ethics of the New Testament are obligatory upon men in their business affairs which occupy nine-tenths of their thought, or

on the industrial organisation which gives our society its character, is to preach revolution. To suggest that they apply to the relations of states may be held to be seditious. Such a creed does not find it difficult to obey the injunction "Render unto Caesar, the things that are Caesar's and unto God the things that are God's. To their first hearers, the words must have come with a note of gentle irony, for to the reader of the New Testament the things which are Caesar's appear to be singularly few. The modern world is not seriously inconvenienced by rendering to God the things which are God's. They are not numerous, nor are they of the kind which it misses. (from R.H. Tawney: *The Acquisitive Society*).

I.F.O.R.

The International Fellowship of Reconciliation:

News of the 1977 IFOR Council meeting in Schoorl, Holland April 22-26. The Christian Institute is the IFOR contact in South Africa.

The International Fellowship of Reconciliation is a transnational religious community committed to nonviolence as a principle of life for a world community of peace and liberation. Our vision is rooted in the various traditions of faith from which we are drawn: We who are **Christians** have found our way to this community through the teaching and example of Jesus, the power of self-giving love made visible on the cross and in the new life of the resurrection. We who are **Jews** have found our way through the interventions of God in our history, in our journeys out of captivity to the God who offers liberation. We who are **Buddhists** have found our way through the path of compassion and service. We who are **Gandhians** have found our way in such experiments with truth as were begun by Gandhi in South Africa and India.

Whatever our convictions, whether traditional or non-traditional, we know we have in common membership in one creation, one family, one deep longing for a world of sharing and community.

We share in the human anguish of being in an historical reality so distant from our hopes: a humanity in which two-thirds of the people of the world are deprived of the basic necessities of life and thereby kept in a state of dependence, with economic exploitation accelerating the arms race, with proliferating nuclear plants and weapons, increasing use of torture and repression, continuing dehumanization for racial and sexual reasons, the militarization of states, and a destructive relationship with the earth itself. All these factors cause a convergence of dangers without precedent in human history, putting us all on a suicidal course.

There is, as a result, an additional crisis: a crisis of hope, particularly in the northern hemisphere — a widespread tendency to despair, to imagine ourselves "the last generation" and without hope of reprieve.

In this context religious peacemaking plays a special part, nourished as it is by a certainty that crisis and suffering are the midwives of history, that God calls us to create history by accepting the challenge to transform ourselves through a new consciousness of the liberating power of justice, truth, nonviolence and reconciliation, and by committing ourselves to the struggle against unjust structures built upon class concepts and relationships of dependence.

IFOR has a profound responsibility to deepen these liberating religious affirmations within its community, to re-discover our own wellsprings of hope, to make present in spirit and action a confidence and commitment that can be contagious to others who are presently too exhausted and dispirited to respond. Thus we see the IFOR not only as a series of programs or a network of community and communication, but a kind of leaven in a wider movement of social change and liberating work.

Yet we also have our work priorities. Small as we are, we know that we are large enough to accomplish significant results in several areas.

Disarmament work is of particular importance during the coming year, as preparations are made for a Special Sessions of the United Nations on Disarmament, with a preceding NGO conference and related meetings, as well as the World Council of Churches' consultations on militarism and disarmament.

IFOR remains committed to universal disarmament with unilateral initiatives toward that end by individual states. We are committed to cooperative efforts to reduce the real level of world

armaments and to re-channel human energies and planetary resources to meet human needs.

Human Rights. The flagrant violation of human rights around the world continues unabated. Therefore we call on our branches to work actively with the International Campaign for Human Rights, a project co-sponsored by IFOR, and with promotion of the observance of "Human Rights Week" from December 4-10, 1978, the culmination of the Campaign as presently planned.

Specific IFOR human rights concerns include:

- * active participation in the international campaign to appoint a UN High Commissioner on Human Rights as proposed by the International Campaign for Human Rights.

- * continuing support for the right of conscientious objection to participation in war or preparations for war and in affirming the rights of draft resisters.

- * support for nonviolent movements suffering repression.

- * support of movements resisting military taxes.

- * support for the struggles of minority groupings.

We affirm the importance of supporting human rights in their totality, including economic as well as political rights, the right to work, to food and shelter, to immigrate, the right to free expression all rights that are binding no matter what is a state's official ideology or economic system.

Anti-Nuclear Issues. The development of nuclear energy plants poses problems that threaten peace in several ways:

- * In order to prevent unauthorized possession of plutonium, crucial to manufacture of nuclear weapons and a by-product of nuclear energy, states will be forced to increase security actions and give further occasion for the suppression of human rights.

- * Despite increased security, each new nuclear plant and waste processing facility increases the potential for nuclear weapons manufacture, both by states and terrorist groups.

- * Nuclear plants, in addition, are profoundly dangerous to the environment, both because of immediate side effects and accident possibilities and because of the difficulty of safely storing highly toxic radioactive wastes over a period of centuries.

- * Nuclear plants increase the tendency towards a total reliance on technology stimulating a society of over consumption destructive of the environment and the resources of our world.

Work in the Churches

IFOR has a special commitment to foster evangelical nonviolence in the churches. Encouraged by the heightened awareness among Christians of the meaning of nonviolence for individuals and society, we shall give special attention to developing persevering relations with the World Council of Churches and the Pontifical Commission on Justice and Peace.

IFOR continues its support of the Church and Peace initiative in Europe. We support as well, through national branches, various programs to challenge religious believers and to be present in theological institutes. Theological reflection on such issues as liberation and the just war should be given special attention.

Education for Peace and Nonviolent Training

A responsibility to promote programmes for Peace Education in theory and practice and develop Nonviolent Training Programmes

to apply to practical situations.

Crisis Intervention

Collaboration with appropriate other groups in endeavors to prevent wars from occurring or to bring them to an end (as occurred recently with the WCC's intervention in the war in the Sudan). IFOR should seek backing for the formation of crisis intervention teams.

New Life Style

We understand that working on these priorities requires that we accept for ourselves a new style of life which fosters communities which strive to create a nonviolent culture.

Invitation to Community

"I was hungry and you fed me," says Jesus when teaching that love is the measure in religious matters rather than skill with words or

fame or power or activity in religious buildings. Today many people who think of themselves as religious might more truly say, "I wasn't especially hungry, but I fed myself." Until there is a conversion of those who think of themselves as religious to the deepest roots of their religious traditions, we can hardly be critical of others for dismissing the religious dimension from radical responses to suffering. We begin with ourselves, asking to be instruments of peace and reconciliation. We ask those who share our faiths to join us in reaching more deeply into the teachings we treasure but so often ignore. We call on our communities to turn outward, ending theological squabbles at least until murder is no longer normal, either slowly in destitution or quickly in war. We ask you to join with us in a hope that, out of our prayers and communities and labors, out of our celebrations and even our defeats, may at last emerge a human community in which weapons and war and starvation will be as unfamiliar as cannibalism and slave markets are already — that we will be living what Martin Luther King called "the creation of the beloved community."

INTERNATIONAL STUDY DAYS FOR A SOCIETY OVERCOMING DOMINATION. DISCUSSION TEXT

Interest in the International Study Days project, which we reported in our April 1977 edition, appears to be spreading. PRO VERITATE does not necessarily agree with the opinions expressed but publishes two comments on the original document for readers information. Comments will be welcomed.

Remarks on the document entitled: "Basis for the Project"

I. Comments by F. Rigaux, Professor, Faculty of Law, Catholic University of Louvain, Belgium.

The note appears to me to be confused or debatable with regard to three main points. The three themes that need to be clarified are:

- 10- The choice between an individualistic approach (psychological or moral) and a sociological perspective;
- 20- the exclusion of any determined ideological position at the same time as references to underlying values;
- 30- the stated neutrality with regard to structures of oppression in the East and in the West.

I. If I understand correctly, the object of the study is an analysis of society and the search for "alternatives in order to arrive at a social order which transcends domination." It is relevant, therefore, on the one hand to analyze the structures of society — which implies the utilization of an instrument of analysis — and on the other hand, to infer from this analysis and notably from the objective causes of domination the mechanisms upon which one must act in order to set up another scheme for society.

On the diagnostic level ("deviations in human behaviour") as well as on that of remedies ("conversion of the mind and of the heart") all psychological or moralizing visions must be excluded. There is no doubt that the mentality of domination corresponds to certain human tendencies, but it is an explanation without import and above all demobilizing: to change society is not to convert the human heart but to redistribute social power. Ethics certainly has its place in a plan for society but everything can not be included at the same time. The danger of referring to this in a document which intends to lay the foundations of a structural analysis of society is to encourage the search for easy explanations or illusive solutions: those which are found outside of the social structures it is advisable to study.

II. It is contradictory to pretend to associate with the analysis "a global vision of all of society in relation to the realization of the ideals and desires of each man and of all men" while excluding any

"determined ideological position." This latter claim is also inconsistent with the theological reference contained in the document (see paragraph 5) and which, moreover, appears to me by nature to hinder the sufficiently wide or pluralist character of the groups supporting the project.

To the contrary, the possible role of ideologies in the support of structures of domination ought to be specified. In the same way, the function of ideological positions among the instruments of analysis ought, as well, to be elucidated.

Rather than reject any ideological position which, right from the beginning "isn't very serious" and leaves one assuming the pretention of judging things from the point of view of Sirius (or as a perfectly perspicacious and truly independent arbitrator), it seems to me to be necessary to include in the analysis the various ideologies which support the structures of domination and above all to declare oneself attentive to the difficulty of passing a calm and impartial judgment on a society to which one belongs and whose culture has shaped the instruments of analysis and reflection of those who pretend to study it.

III. Can we observe a position of "neutrality" with regard to the East-West ideological conflict and weigh on the same scale the structures of oppression that one has unveiled in the various societies belonging to one or the other group? Once again, it is a question of a very difficult problem and I regret that the "Basis of the project" resolves it in an apparently impartial but very superficial way.

The principal danger is to transform Eastern oppression into an alibi. A little like in the book of President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing who throws out all the challenges, the injustices of our society in posing one sole alternative, between "the liberal society" and the Goulag.

Supposing that the investigation of facts and the analysis of

societies reveal structures of oppression in capitalist countries and in communist countries (and without even wanting to unify the very different situations that one finds on the one hand and on the other: Brazil is not France, the USSR is not Vietnam), the structures, the causes and the extent of oppression risk being very diverse on one and the other side of the line which separates the two great models of society that are offered to us.

As for me, I would like to avoid the concealment of the conflict, either in blurring the differences (there would be at the extreme, as many different structures as countries, and one would pass, by imperceptible degrees, from one to the other: for example, in the Western hemisphere, from Denmark to Chile, passing by France, the United States and Brazil), or in asserting that every social structure is, by nature (and because of human nature), oppressive (see I), which, in the extreme, would dispense with analyzing the structural causes of oppression. If these are different according to the capitalist or socialist character of a society, one could not confuse them in the analysis nor in placing them back to back in one's judgment.

As the project initiative came from people or groups living in capitalist countries and it is the same for those who will be carrying out the management and the execution of the project, no light will be cast from the inside, on the social systems of other regions of the world. Observers living in capitalist countries and principally those who have seen the misery and the progressive degradation of the Third World from up close, will be divided between two equally regrettable perspectives: either to place the emphasis on what they know best and that for which they feel most directly responsible, the oppression of the popular masses in the Third World under capitalist domination, or to judge the oppression of the individual, inseparable from the structure itself of a socialist society.

For this reason, I would be rather inclined to limit the investigations to what we know *from the inside*, for that which concerns the gathering of facts as well as the mastery of the instruments of analysis. The question, however, ought to be discussed by those who will carry on the execution of the project, whereas the initial document replies in terms which give the impression that this solution was irresistible.

Comments by Joe Ferdinandusz, "People Organisation for Development and Export," Sri-Lanka.

It is undoubtedly true that "we need a global vision of society in terms of fulfilment of the values and aspirations of each human being and all mankind." However, it is this very need which demands the transformation of the "present oppressive structures" to pave the way for the true liberation of all mankind. If violation of human rights today "are inherent in the economic and social structures themselves" we must first realise that such structures are inextricably woven with the social system of which they are an integral constituent. The individual himself is conditioned by the system and its structures, but at the same time is capable, by a conscious, collective and organised effort to transform the system. In doing so he can transform himself. But the vital point is that, while the individual cannot be transformed as a social type without the corresponding transformation of the Social System and its structures which are necessarily integrated within it, neither can the system and its structures be transformed without a corresponding transformation of the individual or rather at least of a number of individuals consciously dedicated and organised for the task of leading and directing the whole process of Social Transformation. In this context therefore, this whole process is one which has to take place by the close interaction between the system, its structures and the individual. In relation to this process ideology, itself, also becomes vitally important, not in the commonly understood sense of the term as a particular system of ideas, but as certain ideas which are predominant in a set of material practices which are essential for the maintenance of a particular social system and its inherent structures.

Today one has to recognise the ineluctable fact that there is a global system of capitalism geared to the selfish motivation of

maximising profit, which prevails in different countries and is historically adapted in varying forms to suit their own particular needs. It is also a system which necessarily has produced its own structures of domination, oppression and exploitation, as well as its own ideology in all spheres be they economic, political, social, religious, cultural etc., which themselves are closely interrelated in a mutual interaction.

In certain countries of the World the first pioneering yet faltering steps have been taken to liberate man from the now obsolescent and iniquitous system of Capitalism and transform it into a Socialist one as the one and only alternative choice for all mankind. It is of course true that in all attempts so far made in the Socialist-oriented countries of the world new structures of domination and oppression keep manifesting themselves, but this has to be so in the human situation. For the process of liberation can and will only proceed through a series of conflicts and contradictions which we have to understand and learn to resolve through a process of real revolutionary praxis. This is the social reality we face the world over. The emergence of a new man and a new social order for the liberation of mankind can only take place through a long and arduous process. In our very attempts to liberate ourselves from an anti-quoted social system, we have to be aware that its injustices and iniquities and its structures of domination, oppression and exploitation continue to burden and hamper us. The reactionary attitudes prejudices and practices it breeds cannot be sloughed off overnight. For as Paulo Freire has observed there is always the danger that the oppressed in attempting to liberate themselves, may themselves internalise the oppressor breeding their own structures of domination and oppression. Hence, the movement for liberation demands unceasing vigilance of fundamental human rights and create a new man "not submerged in the mentality of individual possession" and no longer an "object of manipulation" and what is more "capable of taking his destiny into his own hands and of forming truly human communities." Indeed in the struggle to liberate itself, mankind will have its moments of triumphal achievement and dismal reverses, but for its survival and even more, to bring its liberation to total fulfilment, it must continue to strive suffering and enduring its woes, but still having the hope, courage and strength to work tirelessly and unceasingly for the realisation of the Kingdom of heaven on earth with the inspiring vision of a "clear bright and indestructible future" for all humanity. For Jesus, crucified yet risen, redeemed all mankind, which must ultimately triumph through its own endeavours.

Pope Pius XI in his encyclical on "Atheistic Communism" ("Divini Redemptoris") condemned communism as "intrinsically evil." This however, could be contested. Although Karl Marx was an atheist himself, he condemned those intellectual champions of the capitalist system, who vigorously attacked religion, as an anti progressive force against economic liberalism and free enterprise. On his part he characterised religion as the "opium of the masses" and the "heart of a heartless world." Today we can boldly affirm that it is Capitalism which girdles the globe that is "intrinsically evil" with its economic system based on the selfish exploitation and oppression of man by man for the accumulation of private profit with its attendant evils of cut-throat competition, the glorification of Mammon, imperialism and war that threatens to annihilate all humanity.

Although the marxist revolutionary movement did at first foster the spread of militant atheism, this was mainly due to the somewhat narrow and negative attitude of the early Bolsheviks enhanced by the dogmatism of the Stalinist regime and no less to the reactionary role played by the institutional church before, during and after the Russian Revolution. While Capitalism breeds systems and structures completely at variance with the essence of the Gospel Message, Marxist humanism is on the other hand, very close to the Christian vision of the Kingdom with its concepts of Justice, Sharing in Love and the Universal Brotherhood of Man. Marxist humanism in theory very strongly up holds the inviolable dignity of the human person, and it is precisely because of this, it does not

tolerate the exploitation of man by man, yet unfortunately, in almost all the so called socialist countries, in practice it has fallen far short of the ideal. However, as one cannot reject Christianity because of the atrocities committed by the Church down the centuries so also we cannot reject socialism because of the crimes committed by the socialist oriented regimes of the world today. This indeed is unavoidable in the human situation. Therefore, our main task should be to struggle unceasingly for the abolition of

Capitalism in the world as an "intrinsically evil" system and work strenuously to bring about the fulfilment of a World Socialist Order so that we may the more quickly approach the ideal of a "World without Domination." This for the Christian is nothing but the fulfilment of his primary obligation, which is to build the Kingdom of God on Earth.

Kudapaduwa, Negombo, Sri-Lanka
5th April 1977

"INTERNATIONAL DAYS FOR A SOCIETY OVERCOMING DOMINATIONS"

Suggestions for the analyses of specific situations of oppression and violations of Human Rights

Those who are collaborating in the International Days Project will find below some suggested questions which could be transmitted to the groups and institutions willing to make specific studies within the framework of the Project.

The outlined questions regard only the analysis of specific situations of domination or violations of Human Rights. Both the study of educational methods to overcome these situations and the research on the social conditions leading to such overcoming would naturally give rise to other types of questions.

Insofar as the questions presented here are concerned, their use will be very flexible. It is not necessarily a matter of answering all the questions nor all the points contained in each one nor of examining thoroughly any one of them. An eventual thorough scrutiny of only one question may, on the other hand, require general information on subjects tackled in other questions (those which, for example, would give the general characteristics of the situation and would allow the other Projects participants to better situate it in its context.) It will also certainly be necessary to re-write the questions in a language facilitating their comprehension by the groups to which they are presented. Furthermore, approximative answers to certain points can be considered valid as outlines for a more elaborate answer.

It is possible that this questionnaire — or the way the questions are posed — is marked by a specific cultural or professional approach. Any suggestion aiming at completing or adapting them to make them more universal, will be welcome. We also request that the re-writings of the questions made in a simpler language are sent to us, for a possible diffusion among the groups who might be interested.

1. Concretely, what does it mean to find oneself in a situation of oppression or domination? What are the needs which become difficult or impossible to satisfy? What rights are no longer or with difficulty respected? What would overcoming this situation mean to those who are dominated or oppressed? What would they gain?
2. Who are the oppressed? How many are they? What proportion of the population do they represent in the society in which they live? What roles do they play in this society?

3. Does the satisfaction of their needs or the respect of their rights in question become difficult or impossible because of the action of other groups or social sectors? Who are these groups or sectors? What proportion of the population do they represent in the society to which they belong? What roles do they play in this society?
4. Why do those who impose this situation do this? What is their advantage in doing so? What do they gain or what motives do they obey? To what extent are they dependent on the domination they exercise? What would they lose (or gain) if the situation in question were overcome?
5. In what manner, by what means, instruments or mechanisms of social organisation are the needs of the oppressed not satisfied and their rights not respected? How and due to what necessity or lack on the part of the oppressed has this "de facto" situation come about?
6. By what means, in what way and by which mechanisms and instruments of social organisation does the situation of domination under consideration maintain itself? What obstacles prevent the situation from being overcome?
7. In the society and the situation of domination under consideration, who takes the side of the oppressed and who takes the side of the oppressors? Why are these choices made?
8. What level of awareness do the oppressed have of their situation? How do they consider it? How do they see their oppressors? What knowledge do they have of the mechanism, the manner of exercise and the maintenance of the domination they undergo? What solutions do they envisage to change the situation?
9. What level of awareness do the oppressors have of the domination they exercise? How do they consider it? How do they see those whom they dominate? How do they see their position in regard to a possible end to the situation of domination?
10. What are the links between the situation of domination under examination and other forms of existing oppression in the same society or in others parts of the world? How are these links established?

Groups who are interested in keeping contact with the 'International Study days' project may do so through PRO VERITATE in South Africa, or with the Secretariat, 14, Rue Saint Benoit, 75006, Paris, France.

ADOLFO PEREZ ESQUIVEL

He was a sculptor and architect. He became leader of 'Servicio', a non-violent movement to bring Peace and Justice to Latin America. He was arrested in Argentina in April 1977 and is held for "subversion". PRO VERITATE publishes an interview he gave in the USA last year, and a letter from prison this Easter. Do bells ring?

Interview with Adolfo Perez Esquivel

—by Phyllis Sanders, translated from the Spanish.

PS: Adolfo, what is Servicio?

Adolfo: The full name is "Peace and Justice Service for Liberating Action in Latin America — by nonviolent means". Our central office is in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Our organization grew out of our experience that in all of Latin America there are church groups, village groups, labor union members, students, and intellectuals working for change and development in Latin America basically through a process of nonviolent liberation. To bring together people with this concern, a gathering was called in Montevideo in 1968, where the basic structure of Servicio was established. Directing the work was Pastor Earl Smith. He began with a newsletter and an exchange of information among the groups which were working in Latin America.

Later, in 1974, we had another international gathering (in Medellin, Colombia) at which we studied the needs of the continent and decided to focus on the need for coordination, for support, and for better understanding among groups working for nonviolent change. Better understanding is particularly important, because we Latin Americans find that we do not really know each other; we need to dig a little to find the things we have in common. Many times we tend to focus on our differences and not our similarities, when, actually, on deeper analysis, we find that our similarities are greater than our differences. Fortunately, logic is finally prevailing, and we can now see our common needs, the problems we share, and the necessity to join forces to be able to move ahead.

PS: Is Servicio political, religious, or how would you describe it?

Adolfo: That makes me think of the criterion of Mons. Proano, the Bishop of Riobamba in Ecuador, when he speaks of the devaluation of words — of how, many times, words like "liberation," "religion," and "politics" are devalued (like money) and used with good or bad implications. We need to re-evaluate their meanings. Our organization is ecumenical. It is also the sum total of people of good will, who have as their basic objective the well-being of humanity. It does have a political (but not partisan) aspect, if by this we mean the search for the common good. The fact that it represents the concerns of many groups does not take away the right of individual movements and groups (who are part of Servicio) to act as part of the political process within their individual countries.

These are the basic directives: We believe that in the process of liberation there must be agreement between means and ends. We believe that to create a transformation in society the means must be consistent with the ends — basically because we are more concerned with human beings than with programs, although we agree that programs are also important. We also share a belief in and a dependency on a Spirit which nourishes us and gives us strength in the midst of our struggle in Latin America.

PS: You are a sculptor and have been a professor of architecture — a professional. What other kinds of persons work with Servicio?

Adolfo: Membership in Servicio is very broad and diversified, and we can say that all levels of society — social, intellectual and

religious elements — are included. There are persons from all levels of society: some Catholic Bishops and leaders of the Evangelical churches — from Bishops like Mons. Proano of Ecuador, who is developing an evangelistic program on liberation in his Diocese (working mainly with rural Indians) to Bishops like Mons. Antonio Frago in the Grateus Diocese in Brazil and world-renowned Dom Helder Camara of Brazil, Cardinal Don Pablo Evaristo Arns of Sao Paulo; also Bishop Gattinoni of the Methodist Church in Argentina, and others who support our work. There are priests and nuns, peasants, workers, and professionals who join forces in the struggle for liberation by means of nonviolence.

PS: Do you plan to schedule other gatherings like the one in Medellin?

Adolfo: We are planning several conferences. In Buenos Aires last year we had one at the Latin American level, to talk over the situation in each country, to exchange experiences and ideas, and to look ahead and map out some common action projects. We expect to have more. (*Servicio was in fact involved in organizing the conference in Riobamba in August 1976 which was disrupted by police. Seventeen Catholic bishops from throughout Latin America and the US were arrested. Adolfo Perez Esquivel was one of the other participants who was also arrested at that time.*) We are planning an international seminar for next year to look over the direction of our work, to make a critical analysis of it and see where we should be going. That must be done regularly because there are no static situations in the world in which we live.

PS: What were your purposes for making this trip to the United States?

Adolfo: There were various objectives. But I would like to make something clear: Many times when people like ourselves who live in the Third World arrive in countries like the United States, it is thought that our only objective is to find some money. I want to say quite clearly that our objective is not to look for money, although of course money is necessary for the continuation of our work; that is not the principal issue. Our major objective is to draw together many countries — to work to make clear the problems faced in Latin America so that industrialized nations might come to see that they have a great responsibility, when they see the situation in those countries and understand the relationship between the politics of their governments and the situation in which these countries find themselves. One thing that concerns us fundamentally is the arms race. The last word we have received is that the House of Representatives of the United States has assigned \$5 million for arms in our continent — in countries where the people live on the fringes of society, exploited and in living conditions which are inhuman, suffering so much that they can barely survive. They know that if they don't eat today, they won't eat tomorrow either, nor the next day, and all they can expect is death, slow but inexorable.

We see also that the situation in Latin America is every day more critical, with dictatorial governments where the only channels of

communication left for the people are through the churches. And yet, it is the people of each country who should have the right to decide the kind of life they will have, and not be subject to patterns imposed by international economic interests and the actions of multinational corporations.

One has to remember that Latin America is already a continent aroused which can no longer be ignored. There is a sharpened critical conscience and a readiness to fight on every level. What we are working for is for that struggle to be one not of confrontation but of working out together the basic problem areas — that there be a more equitable distribution of goods and a fairer application of justice.

The support which is given (principally by the United States) to many of those dictatorships is extremely serious. What we are trying to do is to open all possible avenues of understanding and of conscience and to take to international organizations those problems which are part of the life of our people.

PS: What kinds of things can we outside of Latin America do to help and give you support?

Adolfo: I would like to see the formation of a Commission to study the situation in Latin America. It should visit the countries, and it should be made up of international representatives who would be from various segments of society, to observe the situation of political prisoners, labor union members and other groups within the countries to try to end the use of torture and spotlight repression which has already been institutionalized on the continent. It is not enough to attack the results; we must attack the causes which generate so much injustice in the continent.

PS: Would this be through the United Nations?

Adolfo: I am proposing this idea to different groups at the United Nations and at the Commission for Human Rights. I would also like to see the formation of a Committee of Jurists for Latin America so that the relationships between the people and their government can be studied in light of international law. And as a fundamental objective we should work towards the celebration in 1978 of thirty years of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (passed by the UN in 1948). Here there is a Declaration which is very courageous, very positive — but its implementation must be more effective. With this in mind, we are raising our concern that the General Assembly of the United Nations be called together in a special session to reflect on what has happened in the field of human rights since the Declaration was made. In this effort — which should be the effort of us all — people outside Latin America can help by exhorting the governments of the world (and their own government in particular) to see that this Assembly is called. It is urgent!

We cannot continue as we are. You must understand that in many countries in Latin America torture and repression are indeed already institutionalized. To maintain the privileges of those in power, every day the people are being repressed more. The situation is not improving. But from our experience we see that the work which must be done should not be done unilaterally — only within Latin America. To be effective, it is necessary that it be the joint effort of many groups and not the work of only one organization or one country.

* * * * *

We are participants in the story of the good Samaritan. Changing the scene and the characters the story reads: "A man was going down the road from birth to death, and he fell into the fortunes that afflict two-thirds of humanity, and he was left stripped of decent clothing, and half fed. Now by chance a minister was going down that road, and when he saw him he arranged for a thanksgiving collection. Doing anything more would be 'politics' and would mean getting involved in Government policy, so he walked by on the other side. So likewise an active layman, when he came to the place and saw him, said to himself how thankful he was that he lived in the suburbs where one doesn't see this kind of thing. 'He ought to

PS: What do you consider to be the most serious problem in the United States in relation to Latin America?

Adolfo: I believe the people of the United States should become more informed about the relationship of your government to the situation in Latin America. This lack of depth of understanding of the people, and the problems which are created by the government of the United States in their relationship to the countries of Latin America . . . I feel that this uninformed attitude is the best way of helping Communism. By allowing the support of oppressive regimes in Latin America, people in the United States allow Communism to become attractive in contrast. The support which your government gives to the governments who systematically violate all Human Rights — to denounce this would be a first step of the people of the United States towards the peoples of Latin America.

I believe there will not be freedom for anyone as long as there are countries that are not free.

Letter from Adolfo Perez Esquivel in Buenos Aires Prison

20 April 1977

Dear friends,

I don't want to talk to you of suffering, but of hope, of the grace of the Lord in sharing, in living together with those who suffer injustice, with those who — after two or three years of prison — do not know why they are being punished.

Yet there remains the struggle to illumine so much darkness . . . the presence of God in each moment, in each act. The God of Love who forgave on the cross and for all time: "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." Here, in this prison, I lived Holy Week with the grace of understanding more deeply the engagement, the sacrifice, the love that Christ has for all people, for humanity in its entirety. What Easter joy: Christ the victor through Love is resurrected and present. Hallelujah!

Evil cannot stop the working of the spirit and the love of Christ — its permanent and infinite presence in each of us. Even those who doubt God will receive God's grace. The prison cells are covered with inscriptions of prayers, with expressions of faith and of hope.

To live, to suffer, to go forth together with those who suffer: blessed are those. We can be sure of the promise that we are living in God's love. Here everything seems to disappear; we are naked before God, gripped by fear, uncertainties, anguish, and yet with full faith in God.

This is my hope!

I don't know what is going to happen. I wait with faith; but the work must go on, to witness for Christ in spite of our limitations and our weaknesses.

May God calm you and give you peace, strength, and joy.

United in prayer,

Adolfo.

help himself,' he said, as he walked by on the other side.

But a Chinese Communist, when he saw him . . . "

You don't like this particular version, and neither do I — neither did Christ's listeners enjoy hearing a Samaritan take the role they should have had.

Your brother or sister is in desperate need of someone who cares. You will respond either by doing something, or by walking by on the other side.

(Paul Simon).

If records were established for ministers attending court, *Dr. Naudé* would surely hold the championship. He was in dock again recently, as Director of Zenith Printers who do most of our printing work, charged with printing literature for the Union of Black Journalists which was declared undesirable by the Publications Board — *six weeks later!* (you misread not). The case was adjourned until October.

Beyers and Ilse Naudé have moved from Greenhill Road to a smaller house in Johannesburg, no doubt causing much work for the authorities in refixing bugs, wire taps, tape recorders, hidden cameras, laser beams, and a whole new set of local surveillancers.

The *phantom phoner* at our *Cape Office* continues to ring on both lines with monotonous frequency — and put the phone down. On special days he also speaks — abusively. This has gone on for two years but neither the Post Office nor the S.A. Police have been able to lay the ghost. (You misread not). The Cape office telephone numbers have been changed to 66-8884 and 66-8970. The phantom picked them up immediately.

Theo and Helen Kotze were invited to Europe by the West German Government during June, but the South African Government refused to give Theo a passport. The case has received wide publicity in the press at home and abroad — as much as would have been given to Theo's pronouncements had he been permitted to travel — which was to be expected, and we ponder anew at the crass folly of the Government in adopting such tactics. We are also sorry for Theo and Helen.

Facing the Future with Hope Courses, at which about 30 people of varied backgrounds spend a weekend working through the tenseness of the present S.A. experience towards hope for the future, have been held in recent months at Hammanskraal, Transvaal (2), Durban (2), Cape Town (2), Transkei (1), and Namibia (1).

Details vary each time with leaders, participants, and purpose, and they have had wide and varied results. Some far reaching developments have arisen in the Transvaal.

In the *Transvaal*, apart from the *Iziko laMakrestu Conference* reported previously in *Pro Veritate*, 9 Symposia have been held at different centres to enable members and staff to discuss the present witness of C.I., and examine issues which have arisen, particularly among white members who are out of touch with black thinking, and heavily pressurised by the insidious propaganda of the Government. Some of the issues raised are reported in detail elsewhere. Similar meetings have been held with clergy C.I. members and friends.

A *Regional Meeting* on Thursday July 14th is expected to be well-attended — Percy Qoboza and Finbar Synnott are to talk on "Another Sort of Society". Regular monthly meetings of the Transvaal Regional Committee have resulted in increased activity. *Mashwabada Mayatula* — who runs the *Iziko laMakrestu Programme* — has been appointed to the Soweto interim Council. *Cedric Mayson* attempts to hold the Transvaal work together until a new Regional Director is appointed.

Reinier Holtz, now settled in as our Field Worker in Durban, has formed a new Committee and is seeking ways to help the local members to build C.I. work after a difficult period caused by several key members moving away at the same time. Reinier is also

awaiting a Court action — for distributing leaflets days *before* they were banned. (You misread not).

In the *Netherlands office*, *Horst Kleinschmidt* has been joined by *Oshadi Jane Phakathi* to make a formidable team — but we miss them sorely in the Transvaal.

Pro Veritate continues to receive increasing criticism, increased sales, and banning orders. (You can still possess all copies of *Pro Veritate*: but you must not distribute the banned issues which now include December 1976 and February to April 1977).

We attempt to answer specific comments, but spare little time over generalised denunciations. We have much sympathy for those who agree with our sentiments but dislike the strong tone — we don't like it either. We do not think that Jesus liked the words he used to awaken Herod or the Pharisees; or what he set his hands and feet and lips to in the Temple Court yard. But sometimes we must follow him there, if we are to enjoy him also in the gentler and happier places. Forgive us if we seem unjust or cruel — and write something for us the way you want it.

As to the banning of P.V., we are not surprised.

The Government cannot accuse us of false testimony; it cannot refute the truth of Christ which makes men free, to which we witness; it dare not give us the opportunity to proclaim the Gospel in open court; therefore it must resort to totalitarian measures and ban us.

But we would commend a word of scripture to the Publications Board:

"If this enterprise, this movement of theirs, is of human origin it will break up of its own accord; but if it does in fact come from God you will not only be unable to destroy them, but you might find yourselves fighting against God."

A. J. G. Lang,
Salisbury, Rhodesia.

Acts 5.38.

Please discontinue sending the journal to me immediately. In every issue I find matters which is downright false and offensive and I am wearied by the unceasing stream of denigration of the white man on the one hand and the uncritical adulation of all attitudes and achievements of non-whites on the other. Particularly obnoxious is your belief in your monopoly of true realisation of what Christianity ought to stand for today and sneering contempt for those professing Christians who disagree with you. In fact I can phrase in my mind quite easily the scorn with which you will greet a letter of this kind. I have meant to write to stop your paper for some time but could not wait a moment after reading your May issue which arrived today and contains the pernicious nonsense entitled "African culture" containing such wicked falsehoods as "Instead of sowing love the white missionaries sowed hatred, distrust, suspicion and introduced racism, even in Christian circles."

Yours faithfully,

Mr and Mrs D. Hacking,
Fish Hoek, Cape.

We want you to know what a source of strength and encouragement *Pro Veritate* is to us. We . . . get a real spiritual uplift every time we read in it what, for us at any rate, are basic truths. We have just received and read the April 1977 issue and particularly commend your Editorial . . . and 'Christian Ministry in a time of crisis'.

Sincerely yours,

-John Hawkrige

-Christian Leader, June 1977

The Transvaal staff of the Christian Institute met twice recently with their clergy members in the Johannesburg area. They expressed concern over the evident communication gap between C.I. and the institutional churches, and in the ensuing discussions some useful pointers emerged.

For instance, everyone knows that the C.I. is popular with some, castigated by others, and under profound suspicion from yet more; and that it publishes 'Pro Veritate', (with whose views it is possible to agree or disagree violently); and that it has had its Transvaal Director banned.

But not everyone knows that the C.I. still sees itself as very much a part of the Body of Christ and therefore wishes to serve him by serving his churches. It asked how this goal was to be achieved, and invited constructive criticism, as well as offering its staff's services to the churches in their task of reconciliation.

Yet the Institute lost credibility in the minds of many South Africans because of its supposed identity. For the proponents of Black Power it did not go far enough: for the White conservatives it

had gone too far already. This loss arises from viewing the Institute exclusively in political terms — a view its activities have often encouraged, but not finally justified.

As a political force, the C.I. is suffering the same pressures, and decline, as the White liberals; for today only the extremist tends to be heard. This may be no serious loss if it serves to expose once again the Institute's theological identity.

The Christian Institute has always had a vital role serving as interpreter between Christians, both of thought and of feeling, across the colour lines. In this it has the advantage over institutional churches, that it still embraces many less biddable Christians of all races and retains their confidence. Further, it is at heart concerned, not with politics for their own sake, but with a contemporary expression of the Biblical doctrine of the Kingdom of God.

This, as every church knows, has political implications, but should not result in total ideological alignment with black or white. Has the C.I. managed to escape this alignment? Has our own church? Only time will tell. But to me it is quite clear that there is a place and a need today within the Christian Institute for those who 'seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness', and who wish to 'speak the truth in love' to all sections of South African society in Christ's name.



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5th Floor, Diakonia House, 80 Jorissen Street, Braamfontein Johannesburg. Box 31910, Braamfontein, 2017. Tel.: 724-0346.

ZINDZISWA MANDELA

He lay on the ground
face down
A hole in his back
blood
on his starched white shirt
he fell with his placard
and
he fell with his fist
a stone
was just out of his reach
and the wind
was soft and silent
ruffling his trousers
very slightly
too slightly
and Soweto was dark
and Soweto was suffocating
even the chimneys coughed
elsewhere
in every black street
a similar sight
tears fell from heaven
tears fell from earth
tears fell onto
a million bodies
soothing pains
encouraging men
shouldering women
but still
another sound was heard
a shot had been fired
a black policeman
a boy
a white policemen
afraid
disturbed
somebody's journey
peaceful to eternity
O Azania
When you are reborn in truth
will you remember
those who conceived you
with a last
choking breath
O Azania
let me weep on your shoulder
O Azania
let me weep on your shoulder
let heaven and the earth
of suffering
be one.

F524 MABOPANE

Archbishop J. P. Fitzgerald, OMI.

President: S.A. Catholic Bishops Conference.

It has been brought to my notice that the Secretary-General of the Conference, Fr. A. D. Scholten, OP, has been receiving anonymous telephone calls threatening his life if he does not leave the country within 24 hours. The caller, speaking in English in a carefully dissimulated voice, presented himself as speaking in the name of

"The Society".

It is further reported to me that two members of the Security Police whose names have been given to me, posing first as "telephone officials" and then as "members of the local Gezina Police Station in Pretoria" gained illegal access to the premises of the Administrative Offices of the S.A. Catholic Bishops' Conference in Pretoria. When this was brought to the notice of the Security Police it was admitted that these men have acted wrongly and dismissed the incident with the remark to forget the whole thing.

Finally, I have personally made an on the spot visit to F 524 MABOPANE where Father S. P. Mkhathshwa has been banned to acquaint myself with the living conditions there. He is also Secretary of the Conference in South Africa and to the regional body of Bishops covering 8 countries. It was distressing and embarrassing to know that the previous owners of the F 524 house had been ordered by the authorities to vacate the house to make room for Fr. Mkhathshwa.

A water tap, the only one, fixed outside the house was removed the day after the banning. No electricity is laid on. No inside doors, not a stick of furniture is provided. Neither is there a ceiling or inside doors.

I want to express my grave concern at this state of affairs which smacks of intimidation and harassment. It seriously hampers the work of the Church in South Africa and its role in Africa as a whole.

W.C.C. AND ETHIOPIA

The World Council of Churches is involved in the struggle in Ethiopia.

Geneva, 2 June (EPS) -- "We are alarmed and saddened by the information we have received" concerning conditions in Ethiopia, is how **Dr Philip Potter**, general secretary of the WCC expressed the concern of the WCC Executive Committee in a letter to **Lieutenant-Colonel Mengista Haile-Mariam**, the chairman of the Provisional Military Administrative Council in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, the text of which was released here today.

The letter appeals to the government to spare no effort to reverse the present violent trend, to ensure the rule of law; to see to it that innocent civilians are not brutally mistreated or "liquidated" for their suspected political views, and that loyal Ethiopian citizens are not set against one another in the service of narrow political aims.

"Most regrettably", the letter continues, "reports emanating from your own government... give evidence that violations of human rights in your country not only continue but have become much more grave and widespread".

Dr Potter's letter underscores the fact that the WCC seeks to be faithful to the Christian gospel in defending justice and human dignity and that the council is bound to no particular ideology. He points out that member churches are to be found on all continents, and in all countries, of very different political and economic systems. "It is out of our faith and our commitment to uphold the value of human life and the inherent dignity of every person that I write to you now", continues Dr Potter.

Acknowledging that there are strains in transforming Ethiopian society from a feudal state to one of economic and social justice for all, Dr Potter's letter goes on: "We cannot accept the argument that this inevitably leads to death, terror and the arbitrary administration of justice for the people whose well-being is sought."

Listing some officially released figures of killings in the country the letter notes that 971 "counter-revolutionaries" were "liquidated" in Gondar Province, 3 000 "insurgents" killed by military forces in 1976 and 300 young persons killed on 1 May in Addis Ababa. "According to other reports we have received", continues the letter "these numbers are only indicative, and the loss of life in your country has in fact been much greater."

EPS

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