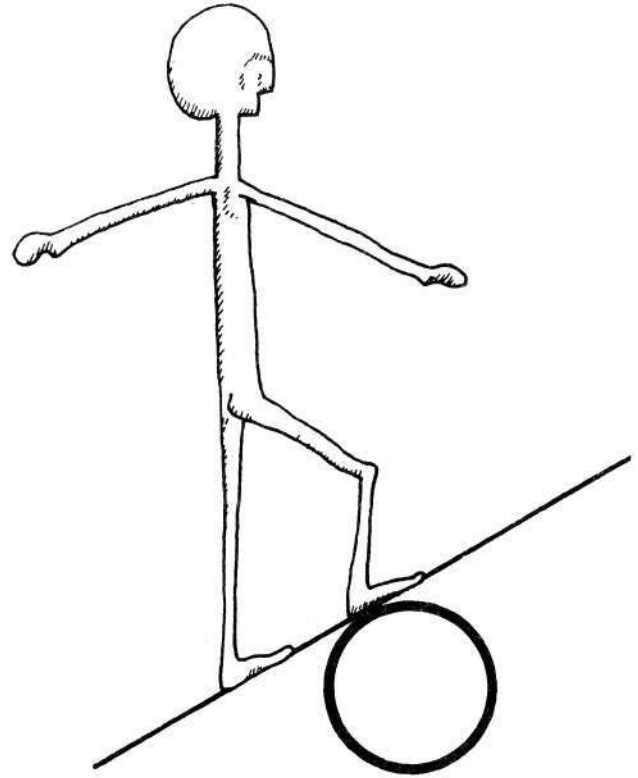


SELF-TAX

A DIAKONIA PUBLICATION



Most white and a few black South Africans enjoy an abnormally high standard of living, at the cost of the vast majority of the country's population.

This harsh fact is borne out by comparisons such as the following:

	A	C	I	W
Per capita monthly income	R10	R29	R37	R184
Expenditure per pupil	R28	R109	R141	R484
Infant mortality rate in Durban municipal area	72,69	23,75	29,36	15,20
				(per 1000 live births)

Radical redistribution of the country's resources and the establishment of a just economic system depend on political change. Many white people who are opposed to apartheid feel helpless since their votes do not affect the government. They protest against injustice and deny that they are responsible for it; but they also continue to enjoy the benefits and privileges of wealth.

At the same time, many black people who are trying to establish self-help projects – which not only meet material needs but also help people to develop new and positive

attitudes towards themselves – are desperately short of resources.

Sunday by Sunday, we Christians go to church and celebrate our solidarity with Christ and with one another: but through lack of appropriate social action we run the risk of finding that our worship itself will fall under God's judgment (I Cor. 11:23 – 30).

One way in which the privileged can integrate their beliefs about justice and the struggle for liberation into their ordinary lives is to give over part of their wealth and make it available – without strings – to black self-help projects and programmes and especially to the training of community development workers for the Durban townships. This is not a form of charitable giving – but **RESTITUTION** of money unjustly given to some people by an unjust system.

The Self-Tax Movement, begun by a small group of people in Johannesburg in 1975, provides a practical way of doing this. Through it, people can:

1. Obtain relevant information and guidance.
2. Receive encouragement and support from others already engaged in self-taxing. Some of our ideas of what are indispensable necessities in our style of living are quite false – this can become clear from discussion with other members of the movement.
3. Support positive black action.

It should be pointed out that joining the Self-Tax Movement does not dispense anyone from public action for human rights, but it can help to make such action credible and integrated.