


 Die Protestantiese Kerk in Suid-Afrika
 april
 1974

PRO VERITATE

PRO VERITATE

CHRISTELIKE MAANDBLAD
REDAKTEUR: ROELF MEYER V.D.M.

15 APRIL 1974
JAARGANG 12 NR. 12.

INHOUD

REDAKSIONEEL:

Die Toekoms van S.A.: Nekrofilie of Lewel 1

EDITORIAL:

The Future of S.A.: Necrophilia or love of Life! 3

Violence, Non-violence and the Struggle for Social Justice 5

A South African View of Violence 13

Walking Tall in Christ 15

A Giant Step Towards Church Unity in S.A. 18

The Need for Black Theology 20

Weighed and ...?/ Geweeg en ...? 25

SUBSCRIPTION payable in advance. Surface mail S.A. and S.W.A. R3, airmail R4.20. Surface mail African States and Rhodesia R3.50, airmail R6. Seamail United Kingdom and Europe R3.50, airmail R6. Seamail America R3.50, airmail R7. Cheques and postal orders to be made payable to Pro Veritate (Pty) Ltd., P.O. Box 31135, Braamfontein, Transvaal. Price per single copy 25c.

NEDERLAND: Zeepost f 14.50, Luchtpost-editle f 24.50. Alle Betalingen voor Pro Veritate of het Christelijk Instituut voor Z.A. kunnen geschieden op Giro 8685 t.n.v. de Generale Diaconale Raad der Ned. Herv. Kerk te Utrecht—met opgave doel der betaling.

PLEASE NOTE: The Editorial Staff of Pro Veritate are not responsible for opinions and standpoints which appear in any article of this monthly other than those in the editorial statements. Printed by: Lippy's Printing Press (Pty) Ltd., 1st Floor, Energy House, 14 Moseley Street, Doornfontein, Johannesburg. Tel. 22-8611.

PRO VERITATE appears on the 15th of every month.

DIE TOEKOMS VAN SUID AFRIKA - NEKROFILIE OF LEWE!

Die verkiesing het 'n klein, maar betekenisvolle verandering in die parlementêre verteenwoordiging gebring, maar as 'n mens op die veldtog van die politieke partye en die verkiesing self terugkyk, is dit weereens duidelik dat die blanke politiek in Suid-Afrika verreweg deur die meeste vanuit 'n bepaalde lewensopvatting en-ideologie gevoer word. Die ideologiese strydpunte en-verskille wat hoofsaaklik oor die boeg van kleur-, klas-, kultuur-, stand-, of inkomsteverskille gegooi word, het 'n steriele uitwerking op ons lewe. Die gevolg daarvan is dat die nood, die behoefte en die probleme van die mens, ja, al die mense in al hul lewensituasies, nie in die middelpunt van die denke staan nie.

Die lewensopvatting wat agter dié houding verberg is, is die pessimistiese, nekrofilistiese lewenshouding; dit beteken dat, aangesien die lewe wesenlik versteur of deur die sonde aangetas is, nou daarby, by die gebroke werklikheid finaal aangepas moet word. Dit is 'n aanvaarding van die hopeloosheid van die situasie wat in elk geval tot ontbinding bestem is. Diep verskuil daaragter lê die preokkupasie met die dood (nekrofilie). Dit sal natuurlik nie erken of teogeggee word nie omdat die strydpunt van die verkiesing juis om die *veiligheid* van die staat sou gegaan het. Ons wil juis ons voortbestaan, ons lewe en die toekoms van ons kinders verseker.

Maar juis dit, naamlik dat ons ons eie ondergang, chaos, verwerping en einde so fanaties in die oog hou, is die beste bewys daarvan dat ons deur vrees, vrees vir ons ondergang, gemotiveer word. Daar word vanuit die sonde en die gebrokenheid, vanuit die situasie gere-deneer en geleef. Daarom moet alles in die stryd gewerp word om alles te beveilig; niemand kan vertrou word nie; ons word vervolg; daar is 'n wêreldkomplot teen ons; ons bestaan as sodanig is in dié weegskaaf en word bedreig.

Daarmee word die bestaan van van moontlike en werklike gevaar vir Suid-Afrika nie ontken nie, maar word alleenlik aangetoon dat ons ons lewe en ons uitgangspunt vir die lewe wesenlik deur dié vrese laat beïnvloed, laat kondisioneer het en ons daarby aangepas het.

Een uitvloeisel van dié houding is die ontsettende begeerte tot besitlikheid. Die mens voel onveilig en daarom moet hy so veel as moontlik besit. Daarom móét ons die mag in die hande behou; daarom móét ons Suid-Afrika beheer. Daarmee kan ons eintlik niemand anders

vertrou nie, want „bedrieglik” is die hart bo alle dinge.

Die basis van die lewe word dan egoïstiese self-beveiliging, wat feitlik geen ruimte laat vir ander lewenswaardes soos wedersydse aanvaarding, vertroue en liefde nie. Daarom moet Suid-Afrika se lewenswaardes met sy Westerse Christelike beskawing ten diepste bevraagteken word—teoreties mag daar veel oor die Christendom en sy beginsels gesê word, maar in praktyk moet gevra word hoeveel van dié beskawing werklik met die evangelie ooreenstem.

Dit klink bv. pragtig om te sê dat „The family that prays together, stays together”. Tog moet besef word dat om as familie saam te bid, moet die wet die familie toelaat om saam te wéés; ook dat die familie 'n huis benodig, voldoende werkgeleentheid, voedsel, kleding, gesondheid, opvoeding. Ja, dat die mens homself as mens, as God-geskape mens in sy lewe moet kan uitleef om sy wêreld te help skep en herskep. As dit nie gebeur nie, kan 'n familie moontlik nog bid, maar miskien dan nie eers saam nie, en slegs dan in uiterste wanhoop, lyding en ellende.

Geen wesenlike verlossing sonder politieke bevryding

In hierdie situasie probeer die kerk in die algemeen gewoonlik „neutraliteit” handhaaf. Die uitgangspunt hier is weereens die nekrofilistiese lewenshouding, wat uitgaan van die standpunt dat dié lewe en samelewing tog nie volmaak gemaak kan word nie, en daarom moet die gebroke werklikheid so aanvaar word—dit is onherroeplik bestem om uiteindelik te ontbind. Daarom is die konklusie van dié kerk dat hy die staat so vêr as moontlik moet steun om die maksimum „stabiliteit” te verkry sodat „orde” gehandhaaf kan word. Wat so 'n kerk of groep Christene nie besef nie, is dat hulle hul siele aan 'n orde, wat vanuit die vlees, die aarde geïnspireer word, verkoop. Sy wesenlike profetiese dimensie is onkrag, omdat hy ook uit vrees lewe; vrees vir verandering; vrees dat 'n onregverdige orde radikaal verander sal word en hy in 'n onseker toekoms verlore sal raak. Die lewe van so 'n kerk gaan uiteindelik op in formalisme met burokratiese rites en moralisme, waar die Christelike hoop op vernuwing slegs 'n lewensvreemde abstraksie in die hiernamaals word. So 'n kerk leer dan ook dat ons ons lot geduldig moet aanvaar en nie in „opstand” moet kom

nie, want dit is nou maar eenmaal 'n sondedeurdrenkte wêreld waaraan ons nie kan verander nie.

Die gevolg van só 'n kerklike optrede is die mees ontstellende wat 'n mens jou kan voorstel. Die mense wat in so 'n samelewing ly, word deur die kerk geleer dat dit God se beskikking is waaraan niks gedoen kan word nie. Aangesien baie mense verskriklik ly, word hulle indirek deur dié houding geleer om hulle wrewel teen die lewe en wêreld as sodanig te rig en nie teen die sosiale of politieke orde wat die lewe prakties beheer nie. Die orde word gesien as 'n Godgegewe en onveranderlike grootheid, wat nie basies verander kan word nie. Dit beteken ten diepste dat die lydende mens sy wrewel en „opstand” teen God rig en God blameer vir sy situasie. Omdat hierdie 'n proses is wat hom in die mens voltrek, kom so 'n persoon tot die onstellende moment dat hy God verwerp en nie meer in hom wil glo nie. En die tekens is daar dat die proses hom in meer mense in Suid-Afrika begin voltrek as wat ons wil raaksien.

In dié situasie is die kerk, wat die status quo wesenlik steun, se antwoord dat die gegewe situasie God se wil is en dat dit as sodanig aanvaar moet word. Tog moet die mens in sy lyding en nood 'n oplossing deur die kerk gebied word. Immers hy leer dat „Christus die oplossing vir elke probleem” is. Die kerk gee gevolglik die oplossing, nl. om nie die situasie hier te probeer verander nie, om wesenlike verandering van die wêreld te ontken en na „geestelike verlossing” te reik. Hulle moet dan gryp na die bo-wêreldlike, die transendente, die meta-historiese, na dit wat agter en bo die historiese is. Dit sal geestelike verlossing bring. *Dié kerk leer dus verlossing sonder bevryding.*

Dit werk egter nooit uit nie omdat die één noodsaaklike skakel uitgelaat en oorgeslaan word—die aardse dimensie van geestelike verlossing kan nie sonder rampspoedige gevolge weggelaat word nie. In wese kom dit neer op 'n verloëning van die vleeswording van Jesus Christus as die Verlosser, Heer en Bevryder van die ganse mens in al sy verbande, wat in hierdie wêreld sy ryk stig.

Daar is begin met 'n afwysing van 'n bepaalde lewenshouding wat volgens ons beskeie mening verreweg die meeste blanke kiesers beheer, nl. die nekrofilistiese lewenshouding. Dit sal alleen billik wees om te vra na die alternatief.

Slegs bevrydes verlang vryheid

Die lewenshouding wat die evangelie van Jesus Christus as uitgangspunt neem, is die een van historiese verlossing. Bevryding van politieke onderdrukking en -diskriminasie is daarby ingesluit. Dié *nuwe lewe* (in teenstelling tot die doodsaanvaarding—nekrofilistiese houding) het die kruis en opstanding van Jesus Christus as uitgangspunt. In sy kruis het Hy die wêreld, sy probleme, lyding en sonde, aangepak, en versoening en bevryding bewerk. Die opstanding is die finale oorwinning ook van die historiese dood, disintegrasie, wanverhoudinge, sonde en onreg. Die uitvloeiende daarvan is dat die huidige sosiale of politieke situasie nie as statiese Godgegewe ordes gesien moet word nie. Dit was *mense* wat so by die stembus besluit het vir dié bepaalde mensgemaakte beleid. As die beleid en die toepassing daarvan onreg in sy wette en uitgangspunte insluit, *kan* en moet dit verander en omvorm word.

Dit is in besonder die taak van die Heilige Gees, die handelende God, in die wêreld om dit te omvorm. Die mens se verlossing en bevryding, wat 'n eenheid vorm, is nie slegs 'n verhaal van die verlossing van Christus, 'n oordra van die magtige daad van die evangelie nie, maar dit is self *nou* die magtige daad van Gods Gees in die wêreld, in die geskiedenis. Natuurlik sal die finale volmaakte herstel eenmaal bewerk word ook wanneer die menslike keuse nie meer saam 'n beslissende rol speel nie. Maar solank die mens sy verantwoordelikheid onder God se beskikking moet nakom, is die Gees van God werksaam om sy Koninkryk in die wêreld, ook in die politiek te laat kom. Die Gees gebruik die mens en is oral aan die werk om ook die *tirannie* van klasse, sekse, kleur, die staat, kultuur, armoede, siekte, onwetendheid, die natuur, militarisme en geld te verbreek.

In dié verband is dit belangrik om te let op die taal wat ons gebruik. As daar slegs van die *armes* en die *onontwikkeldes* gepraat word, sien ons nie die verlossing en bevryding van Jesus Christus as allesomvattend en relevant vir hierdie lewe nie. As ons hulle egter ook sien as die *onderdrukte* en die *verworpenes*, toon dit dat ons 'n evangeliese verantwoordelikheid teenoor hulle het. In Suid-Afrika, soos ook op baie ander plekke, het ons gekleurde mense in blote arbeidsmasjiene en verbruikers van ons produkte probeer omskep; bes moontlik omdat ons lewensimpotent geraak het en nie 'n kreatiewe menslike samelewing kan bou nie.

As ons nie deur Christus verlos en bevry is nie, sal ons nie hoop hê om iets van dié oorwinning in ons wêreld te bewerkstellig nie omdat ons ons by die status quo neerlê. Dit is alleenlik die bevrydes wat vryheid verlang, alleenlik dié wat versoen is, wat versoening verlang, dié wat kreatief is wat die ruimte vir kreatiwiteit begeer, dié wat ware gesag en mag het, wat ook aan ander gesag en mag wil verleen, dié wat waarlik ryk is wat ook met ander hulle skatte wil deel.

Vir die toekoms staan Suid-Afrika voor 'n keuse: 'n Nekrofilistiese lewenshouding of 'n gelowige lewenshouding. Een of ander tyd, ook in ons geskiedenis, sal 'n stadium, 'n tydgrens bereik word waarvandaan ons nie kan terugkeer as ons nie die evangeliese vernuwingsweg, ook in ons politiek volg nie. Dit is daarom op hierdie tydskop niks anders as 'n keuse tussen lewe en dood vir Suid-Afrika nie—die een sal wees „'n reuk van die dood tot die dood”, maar Goddank, die ander sal wees „'n reuk van lewe tot die lewe” (2 Kor. 2:16).



THE FUTURE OF SOUTH AFRICA - NECROPHILIA OR LOVE OF LIFE!

The election brought about a small but very significant change in parliamentary representation and once again, in looking back at the campaigns of the political parties and the election itself it is clearly demonstrated that in relation to the vast majority of the people, white politics in South Africa is based on an ideology and a very specific concept of life. The ideological points of conflict and difference which in the main follow the line of colour, class, culture, caste and level of income, have had a negative and sterile effect on our life. The result is that the needs and wants of the people—of all the people in all their life-situations—do not occupy the central position in our thought.

The concept of life hidden behind this attitudinal facade is pessimistic and morbid; it means in effect that, while the life of the people is assailed and fundamentally disturbed by sin, now a final and complete adaptation must be made to a fragmented reality. It is an acceptance of the hopelessness of the situation which in any case inevitably leads to our own disintegration. Buried deep within it lies the unconscious preoccupation with death (necrophilia). The existence of this unconscious death wish will naturally not be acknowledged or admitted, and it is perhaps paradoxical that the point in question in the election hinged on the issue of the security of the state. We, the people, want precisely that—to ensure our survival, our life and the future of our children.

But in reality we concentrate our attention so fanatically on our own ruin, on chaos, rejection and extinction, for the very reason that we are motivated by fear—fear of our own destruction. This situation of sin and of fragmentation becomes our very *raison d'être*. It follows that everything must be sacrificed in order that everything may be safeguarded; no one can be trusted; we are the victims of persecution; there is a universal conspiracy against us; our very existence is being weighed in the balance and is threatened.

We do not mean to imply that no danger, potential or actual, threatens South Africa; we merely wish to show that we have allowed our life and our very starting-point for living to be influenced and conditioned by fear and that we have adapted ourselves to this unhealthy situation.

One result of this attitude is the appalling lust for possession. People feel insecure and for this reason must possess themselves of as much as possible. For this

reason we must hold the reins of power in our hands; for this reason we must control South Africa. Power and control can be trusted to none other because "the heart is deceitful above all things. Who can know it." (Jer. XVII: 9).

The basis of life becomes completely egoistic in its search for self-protection; in fact it leaves no room for other values such as mutual acceptance, trust and love. Therefore South African life-values based on Western Christian civilization must be questioned. Theoretically much may be said about Christianity and its principles, but in practice the question must be put: To what extent does this civilisation really accord with the Gospel?

It sounds very pretty, e.g., to say: The family that prays together, stays together. But it must be realized that if the said family is to pray together, the law must in the first instance allow them to be together; it must allow the family to acquire a house; sufficient work, opportunity, food, clothing health and education must be available. A man must be able to live his life to the full as a man created by God in order that he may help to create and re-create his world. If this does not happen, a family may possibly still be able to pray, but not to pray together as a family, and not before it is reduced to utter despair, suffering and distress.

No true redemption without political emancipation

In these circumstances the Church in general tries to maintain its accustomed 'neutrality'. The starting point here again is the unconscious 'death wish', which emerges from the belief that life and society cannot be made perfect and therefore the fragmented reality must be accepted; this reality is destined irrevocably to lead to disintegration. Therefore this Church concludes that it must support the state as far as possible so as to obtain maximum 'stability' that 'order' can be maintained. What such a Church or group of Christians does not realize is that they are selling their souls for sake of 'order' inspired by the flesh and gross materiality. Its essential prophetic dimension is vitiated because its life also is motivated by fear—fear of change, fear that the system, albeit it essentially unjust, will be radically changed and that it will be left desolate in an uncertain future. The life of such a Church degenerates ultimately into formalism, bureaucratic rites and moralism whilst the Christian hope of renewal deteriorates into no more than a lifeless abstrac-

tion belonging to the hereafter. Such a Church teaches also that we must accept our lot with patience, and must not rebel against it since this is but a sin-ridden world which we are powerless to alter.

The outcome of such an attitude in the Church is most alarming. The people who suffer in such a society are taught that this state of affairs exists by Divine Providence and that nothing can be done about it. Many people suffer greatly and they are taught indirectly through this attitude to direct their bitterness against life and the world as such, and not against the social and political order which, in practice, controls life. Systems are seen as a God-given and immutable quality which cannot be altered basically. It implies that suffering mankind directs his bitterness and 'rebelliousness' against God and blames God for the situation in which it finds itself. Because this is a process which is conceived and reaches finality within a person, such a person comes to the distressing moment when he rejects God, and no longer believes in Him. And the signs are there that this process has reached finality in more people in South Africa than we would like to acknowledge.

In this situation the answer of the Church which supports the *status quo* is that the existing state of affairs is God's will, and that as such it must be accepted. Nevertheless, in their suffering and great need, the people must be offered a solution by the Church. They are taught to believe that 'Christ is the solution of every problem', and therefore the Church offers this solution—namely, not to try to alter the situation here and now; to deny radical change in this world; and to strive for 'spiritual redemption'. They must then grope towards the beyond, the transcendent, the meta-historical, towards that which lies behind and above the historical. This will bring about spiritual redemption and *thus the Church teaches redemption without liberation*.

This however does not succeed since the one necessary link which is disregarded and omitted—the worldly dimension of spiritual redemption—is in reality indispensable; it cannot be overlooked without dire consequences. This amounts to a denial of the *incarnation* of Jesus Christ who establishes his Kingdom in this world, as Lord and Deliverer of the whole of mankind in every context.

We began with a rejection of a definite attitude towards life which in our humble opinion guides the vast majority of voters, namely, the necrophilic attitude towards life. It would be only fair to consider the alternative.

Only the free desire freedom

The attitude towards life which takes the Gospel of Jesus Christ as its starting point is that of historical redemption. Liberation from political oppression and discrimination is one of its factors. The new life (as opposed to the acceptance of death—the necrophilic attitude) takes the Cross and the Resurrection of Jesus Christ as its starting point. Through the Cross He took the world, its problems, sufferings and sin upon himself and brought about reconciliation and redemption. The resurrection is the final overcoming of death in the historical sense as well, the overcoming of disintegration, despair, sin and injustice. Its outcome is that the present social and political situation is not to be seen as a static God-ordained order. The situation as it exists was

brought about by *people*, human beings, who made their decision through the ballot box, in favour of a definite man-made policy. If the policy and its application involve injustice in its point of departure and in the legislation relevant to it, then it *can* and must be changed and transformed.

It is specifically the task of the Holy Ghost, the God who acts in the world, to transform it. The people's deliverance and liberation which form a unity, is not only related to Redemption through Christ, in the context of the great deeds of the Gospel; it is here and now the mighty action of the Divine Spirit in the historical world of to-day.

Of course, the final and complete reparation will be brought about only when the human choice no longer plays a decisive role. But as long as man's responsibility is there under God's ruling, for so long is the Holy Ghost active in establishing His Kingdom in this world, a world which includes the sphere of politics. The Spirit uses people and is everywhere at work to dissolve the tyranny which encompasses class, sex, colour, the state, culture, poverty, disease, ignorance, nature, militarism and finance.

In this connection, it is important that we heed the language we use. If we speak only of 'the poor' and the 'under-developed', we do not see redemption and liberation through Christ as all-embracing and relevant to this life. If, however, we envisage them as the 'oppressed' and the 'rejected', then this indicates that we have an evangelical responsibility towards them. In South Africa, as indeed in many other places, we have transformed black people into mere labour machines and consumers of our products—quite possibly because our own lives have become sterile and are incapable of producing a creative human society.

If we are not redeemed and liberated through Christ, we shall have no hope of bringing about this victory in our world because we are adamant in our resolve to accept the *status quo*. It is only those who have been freed who desire freedom; it is only those who are reconciled, who desire reconciliation; those who are creative who long for the opportunity of creating; those who have true authority and power who will grant authority and power to others; those who are truly rich who will share their treasure with others.

For the future South Africa is faced with a choice—a necrophilic attitude towards life, or the attitude of the true believer. If we do not follow the way of renewal, not only in our every day life, but in politics as well then at some stage along the line, we must reach the point of no return. At this juncture in South Africa, it amounts to nothing less than a choice between life and death—a 'fragrance from death to death' on the one hand or on the other, thanks be to God, a 'fragrance from life to life'. (2 Cor. 2:16).





VIOLENCE, NON-VIOLENCE AND THE STRUGGLE FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

In response to the Uppsala Assembly's Martin Luther King resolution (1968), and the controversy provoked by the World Council of Churches' humanitarian aid to groups combatting racism (1970), the WCC Central Committee (Addis Ababa, 1971) asked its sub-unit on Church and Society to conduct a two-year study on the problems and potentialities of violence and non-violence in the struggle for social justice.

The main part of the report took the form of a statement drawing on work done during the previous years. It was prepared, as 'an attempt to clarify (not to terminate) the churches' debate. We underline the need for further work on the disagreements and unclarity which remain, and for the kind of genuinely ecumenical perspective on the whole problem without which none of our churches can escape from their various parochialisms.'

Pro Veritate made extracts from the report published by the Ecumenical Review, October 1973; the paragraph numbers therefore do not agree with those of the original document.



THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE ACTION

Having considered the statement, the problems and potentialities of violence and non-violence in the struggle for social justice, the Central Committee on 28 August 1973 resolved that the Central Committee commend the statement to the churches for study, comment and action, taking account of the following observations:

The New Context

1. We note that, while violence is by no means a novel problem for the Christian conscience, our perception of the problem is in some respects new.

In earlier years, the discussion focused almost exclusively on the 'just war' and whether, or under what conditions, the Church should sanction the use of violence by sovereign states. The Christians were deeply concerned about the morality of their individual participation in warfare, or in particular wars. The present document sets the whole issue in the wider context of the struggle for social justice, as it affects both oppressors and oppressed.

Repentance

3. We accept, and indeed would strengthen, the call to repentance. The churches, as well as individual Christians, too often have been participants in or beneficiaries of violence in its many forms. Before

presuming to speak to the wider community on the issue, the churches must become more aware of their own involvement and commit themselves to actions of repentance.

Theology

4. Valuable theological work has been stimulated in the churches by this debate. Nevertheless, there are important issues which require further attention: for example, the relation between Jesus and power, his solidarity with the oppressed and in that respect the meaning of the Cross for the life of the contemporary Church in the context of today's power structures (technocratic, economic, social, etc.); the Old Testament understandings of violence; insights which have emerged from the thought and experience of Christians through the Church's history; the apparent inescapability of violence in a world of sin; the opening up of creative conflict as part of the Church's ministry of reconciliation; the possibility of violence being seen not only as an option but as a duty; the validity of the claim of a conscience which rejects the use of violence in any circumstances; the relation between *ecclesia* and *kosmos* in terms of power and power structures; the significance of the Resurrection in the context of these dilemmas.

Concepts and Terminology

5. In recent years, we have learned that violence has many faces. It is not merely a matter of physical harm intentionally inflicted upon an individual in an obvious, dramatic way. The ecumenical encounter, especially since the World Conference on Church and Society (Geneva 1966), has sharpened our awareness of the violence which is built into many of the world's existing social, political and economic structures. There is no easy way of defining precisely this enlarged concept of violence and the terminological problem becomes infinitely more difficult when moving from one language, culture or distinctive political situation to another. There is need for continued work at this level of conceptual and semantic clarification.

Non-violence

7. We welcome the statement's clarification of the nature of non-violent action. Non-violence must not be equated with mere passivity or disengagement in the face of injustice. On the contrary, understood in the tradition of Gandhi, King and Luthuli, it is an active, highly political, often controversial and sometimes very dangerous form of engagement in social conflict. The resolutions which follow are to be read in the light of this understanding.

Local Situations

8. The statement is couched in the kind of generalized language necessitated by the scope of the problem and the wide range of situations in which it occurs. However, we recognize the urgent need for such generalities to be translated into the specifics of local situations. What, for example, is the pastoral role of a Christian congregation in extending compassionate care to people participating in a revolutionary struggle?

THE STATEMENT

1. The problem of Christian responsibility in a world of force and violence is as old as the Church itself. It has appeared in ever-changing forms through the centuries: in the suffering but triumphant martyrdom of the early Church, in the question of Christian military service from the time of the Roman Empire, in the question of the 'just war', in the justification of tyrannicide, or in the limits of obedience to unjust political authority and the means by which it may be resisted, to mention only a few. In all these forms the agonising question is the same: how can Christians, children of God's love and followers of Jesus Christ, live and work in a world where the use of force and violence against the countless forms of human sin seems unavoidable?

2. Today, however, this problem has taken on a new urgency for several reasons. Among them:

2.1 Churches and Christians are realizing that they have too seldom been on the side of the poor and the oppressed. They have too often supported the powers of an unjust social order. They often have profited from the poverty of others. They have in the past used force when they were in power, against those who differed from them in belief or ideology. Their first word to this problem must be one of repentance. Repentance however means a change of mind and heart, and new forms of action for justice.

2.2 Millions of Christians are confronted with the question in their own lives today: should they join the poor and oppressed of their countries in a violent movement to overthrow an unjust order that seemingly cannot be changed in any other way, or should they remain passive and therefore responsible for the continuing injustice? In their dilemma of conscience they look for guidance and help from the Church.

2.3 Christians and churches find themselves engaged with those of other beliefs and ideologies in working for the whole future of mankind. They cannot be content merely with binding up human wounds. The causes of suffering in the collective selfishness and unjust structures of society must also be attacked in the name of Christian love. This leads to choices about the use of force and violence which cannot be avoided, in



conditions which Christians cannot always control, but where they must act.

2.4 Violence today has become demonic in its hold on human life. In the life of some nations and among many severely oppressed peoples, it seems more like an addiction than like rational behaviour. Television, film and literature have accustomed us to violent scenes and actions. Police brutality and the use of the gun have become widely accepted in civil life. In many nations military considerations increasingly dominate economic and political life. In some, military regimes have taken over. Among poor and young people in many lands there exists an unusually high rate of murder, assault and petty crime. With such pervasiveness, violence conditions people in a fashion that makes it extremely difficult for them to see peaceful options even in personal relationships.

2.5 The world and the churches have been both inspired and challenged in recent years by examples of new and sophisticated non-violent movements for justice and freedom. Some of these—for example the Gandhian movement—have been non-Christian. Others—such as that of Martin Luther King—have been Christian. Together their witness has brought the churches of the world to examine anew the style of their involvement in the struggle for world justice and peace.

The Christian's Hope

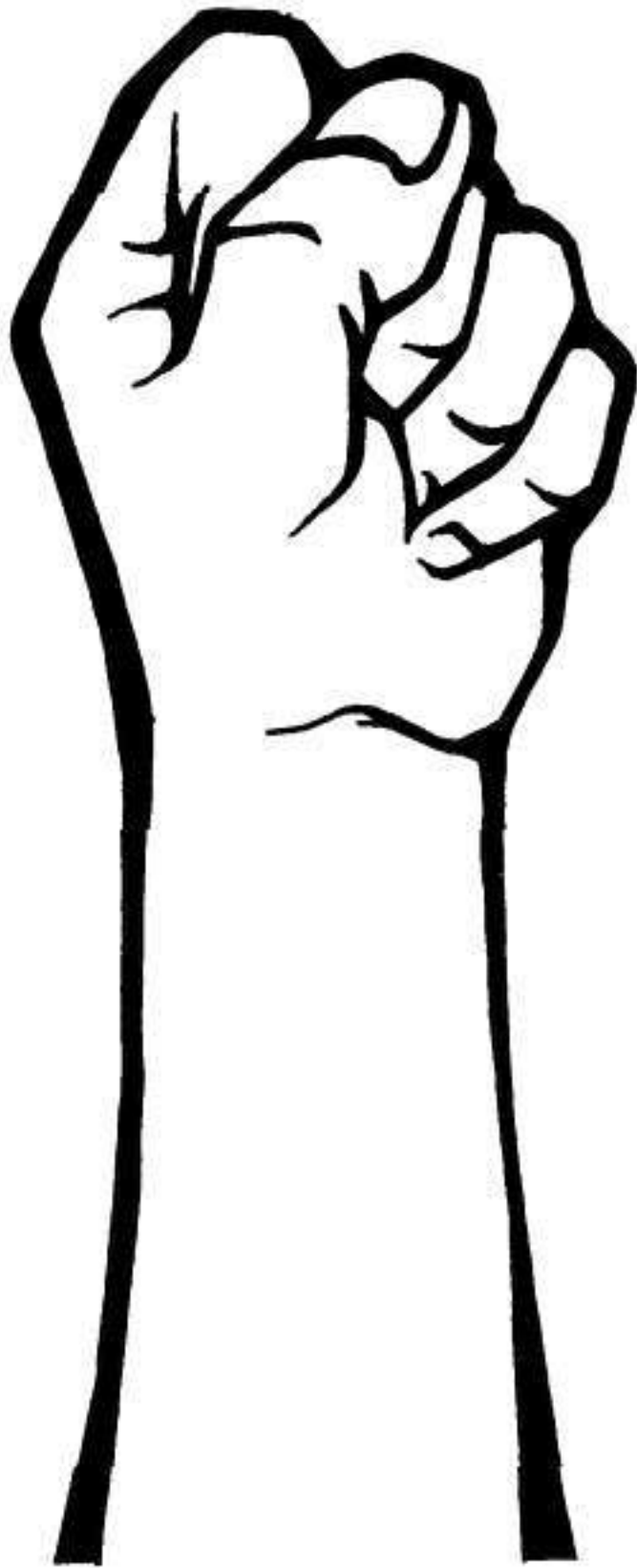
3. We believe that the fundamental reality which should govern our thinking and our acts if not some ideal form of behaviour, but the promise of God in Jesus Christ that the future is in his hands, that his kingdom is at work, and that his power will prevail over the forces of

this world. This promise gives us strength and confidence for work for relative justice, liberation and peace here and now, with hope and with integrity. We believe that this promise is special good news to the poor, to the victims of injustice and to the suffering in this world, whose condition Christ shared and redeemed. We believe that for our time, 'the goal of social change is a society in which all the people participate in the fruits and the decision-making processes, in which the centres of power are limited and accountable, in which human rights are truly affirmed for all, and which acts responsibly toward the whole human community of mankind, and toward coming generations'. (Nemi Report, para. 17c.) Such a society would not be the kingdom of God, but it might reflect within the conditions of our time that subjection of the powers of this world to the service of justice and love, which reflect God's purposes for man.

4. The question before us then is: how do we discern God's working in this world where force and violence are so strong, and by what means can we serve him by our actions or our suffering?

The Christian's Dilemma

5. Violence is not an abstract issue for Christians. As persons and communities, Christians live daily in the midst of violence. They often find themselves, willingly or unwillingly, participating in social organizations that embody and practise violence. They may deliberately act in violent or non-violent ways to preserve law and order, or to bring about change. They may use the power of government or the law to promote justice, or they may fight government and break the law in the name of justice. We cannot speak in general about their



dilemmas until we take account of real situations in which Christians are trying to live their faith. In 1971 the Central Committee of the WCC endorsed a letter of the General Secretary to the Secretary-General of the United Nations in which he called attention to the increasing use of violence and brutalities within many countries in all parts of the world, belonging to various power blocs and governed by various ideologies and social systems. We cannot here speak of the dilemmas of Christians in all of these lands. In order that our reflections may be rooted in real experience, however, we remind ourselves here of a few specific areas in which Christians agonize over questions of violence today.

6. In the Republic of South Africa many Christians support a government representing a white minority that imposes its will upon a black majority by coercion, threats and frequently overt violence, to protect their privileged status, because they are afraid of total loss and anarchy should the present power structure

crumble. Other Christians seek to oppose and change the government policies in some respects, but face well-nigh complete frustration in their non-violent and legal efforts. In the same country many black Christians and *even some whites find themselves pinning their hopes on* or taking part in liberation movements which aim at the overthrow of present oppressive authority, as the way to justice and freedom. These movements, which in other countries in southern Africa have liberated territory and set up de facto governments of their own, use many tactics ranging from education to military action.

7. In Latin America many Christians feel themselves to be in the midst of violence which has a long history. It shows itself in very different forms—through oppressive acts such as unjust imprisonment of opponents by the government, torture, censorship of the communications media and through economic exploitation backed by political power. Malnutrition, high infant mortality, illiteracy, cultural discrimination, *exploitation of workers and increasing inequality* between rich and poor are all seen as aspects of a violent *situation* in which millions of Latin Americans are involved. The question they face is how to overthrow the forces perpetuating this situation. The consciousness of violence and injustice is rising in the masses. Ruling groups in their turn, feeling menaced in their privileges, build even more oppressive and violent systems of power. Movements for constructive change, even when legal and peaceful, may bring further repression. The Church has been challenged to denounce this situation and to define a clear option for the liberation of the people and the construction of a more just and human society. What forms should this option take? How can Christians in solidarity with the people work effectively to counter the forces of a violent status quo?

8. In Northern Ireland, Christians oppose Christians in sustained, communal violence, in which all limiting controls have broken down. Economic and political issues are being fought out and atrocities committed by groups wearing labels inherited from the Church's past. The appalling irony of the situation is that those who seek justice and reconciliation find themselves accused by Christian voices at both extremes of betraying their faith.

9. In these and many other situations which could be described, Christians find themselves on opposing sides of conflict. In all they—at least many of them—feel a burden of conscience, in agony that cannot be healed with easy slogans, and a call to a better way of life.

Commitment to Christ

10. What guidance, then, can we find when we turn to the situation from which our faith springs?

11. As Christians we seek in Jesus Christ clarity about our action in a world of violence. We seek this

clarity both in his words and in his deeds. God's love comes to all human beings in their suffering and needs, in their poverty and powerlessness, but also in the confusion which comes with wealth and power. Christ stands with the poor and suffering and he confronts with God's judgement those who are causing poverty and suffering by the selfish use of their wealth or their political or religious power.

12. We have clear evidence that Jesus of Nazareth did not use violence on behalf of the weak, the poor and the suffering against the powerful even though he identified himself with them and found them especially ready to hear the Gospel. The record rather shows that he himself suffered the unjust violence of the powerful to the point of dying on the Cross. This is the condition of his authority and power as the risen Lord, who overcomes all powers and all the forces of suffering, and even death itself.

13. What is the consequence of this example for us today? On this, Christians, including those in this committee, do not agree. Some argue that Jesus' renunciation of violence was incidental or situational, and that in other contexts the same commitment to justice and responsiveness to human need might lead to quite different imperatives, including violent measures either to preserve a relatively just order or to attack an unjust order. Others see in Jesus' rejection of the Zealot option a choice so basic in the definition of his ministry, so typical of the ethical problematic of every situation, and so firmly supported by the rest of Scripture and the churches' experience, as to present guidance of continuing validity.

14. We do agree, however, that Jesus' commandment to love all human beings must be the strong basis of all our action. It means love for enemies as well as friends. It excludes all hatred against persons, groups, classes, peoples or races. 'I say to you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you and pray for them that spitefully use you.' (Matt. 5:44)

15. This is a social as well as a personal commandment. Liberation of human beings is both an internal and external task. They may not be separated; neither may either be absorbed into the other. Inner freedom from hate and fear is a preparation for the work of social liberation, never a substitute for it. The destruction of structures of injustice and violence in a society prepares the way for covenants of peace among people, but these covenants must be sealed by individuals inwardly free of violence toward the neighbour.

16. We agree that all struggle against the misuse of power must include the concern to realize justice and freedom according to God's purpose for all people, even our enemies, in the present and in the future (Rom. 12:19-21).

17. We agree, furthermore, in our confidence that

God himself will realize this purpose for all people. His work will be complete when his victory over all the powers of the world is made manifest. This confidence prevents us from standing aside and seeking peace only for ourselves. It leads us into the world and into the battle for justice and freedom for all people in order to have a humble part in God's work.

Human Power Under God's Commandment

21. There is still more that we can say together on the basis of our faith, concerning human power.

19. We agree that under God's mandate governments have a legitimate function to restrain private power in the interests of justice for all, to assure human rights, and to serve public welfare. To this end they use force governed by law. When a government does this it has authority, which is to be recognized, even though we may object to some laws and seek to change them. A just government provides a legal framework within which opposing interests and points of view may work out their conflicts. Its processes are not only coercive but also persuasive and facilitating at many levels: in education, in public works and investment, in planning for and regulating the economy, in promoting peace and harmony among different groups in society.

20. All human powers, however, are tempted to misuse and exceed their authority. Government, almost by definition, is the executor of powers that it may wield violently. Government may serve the common good or may serve unjust privilege—and often serves both. Enforcement is a function of government, and the force in enforcement frequently includes the reality or the threat of violence. Since no government is ideal, citizens usually feel obliged to accept imperfections before they tear down a government—especially when they realize that the government that replaces it will also be imperfect. But government can become so tyrannical and so hostile to its own people that citizens feel a duty to resist it or overthrow it. Their decisions may depend largely upon the opportunities for free expression and peaceful change that are incorporated in the government.

21. Some forms of power, furthermore, especially economic and technological, are inadequately controlled by any just law. These forces are even more tempted to violence, and to control them requires effective opposition from those who are hurt by their actions, and from all who are concerned for justice.

22. Such powers as these are rooted in human ambitions and desires, fears and hopes. But they also transcend individual human beings and subject them. The New Testament, when it speaks of the principalities and powers of this world, recognizes this ambiguous character. The principalities and powers of the world can oppose God and human justice. They can become

violent and in that case Christians must resist them (Eph. 6). At the same time Christians are called to bear witness to these powers of God's purpose for this world in Christ to which they, when redeemed, belong (Eph. 3:9-11). The Church has this ministry to the structures and powers of politics and economics, which are often violent in their way of operating. As Christians we must resist the evil of structured violence. We must stand with the poor and oppressed. We do so in obedience to our Lord. We do so as the Church which includes the affluent and the poor. We do so as a ministry to these powers seeking their transformation into servants of the covenant relation into which God seeks to bring all people in freedom and mutual responsibility.



23. We agree therefore that the goal of resistance to unjust and illegitimate power should be not the destruction of any enemy but a more just order within which different groups and powers agree to live in peace reconciled to each other. God alone, and no human ideology or institution, is the measure of justice. None of us is righteous enough to seek total victory or to demand a society in which our ideas of justice or our ideals alone will prevail. Therefore Christians will seek a society in which all persons and groups may participate in decisions that affect the common good.

24. We also agree in recognizing that no human institution or movement is without sin. Those who uphold the powers that be as well as those who attack them bear their various measures of guilt for the evils of society. We who live by the forgiveness of our sins must translate this into a humble awareness of the judgement of God, a full sense of identity with the oppressed and an ongoing responsibility toward the enemies we fight. We expect that God will transform our struggle for justice into the realization of his justice which includes the reconciliation of all humanity in him.

Action: Violent and Non-violent

25. It is in the context of this reality that the methods of resistance to unjust and oppressive political or economic power must be considered. There are among us three distinct points of view about methods:

25.1 Some believe that non-violent action is the only possibility consistent with obedience to Jesus Christ. They recognize that this discipline is hard and will often be unsuccessful. They object to justifying non-violence *only by its success as a strategy for solving social problems*. Non-violent action is for them a witness to the transcendent power of God in Jesus Christ, a way of faith which will be justified by him and his power alone.

25.2 Some are prepared to accept the necessity of violent resistance as a Christian duty in extreme circumstances, but they would apply to it criteria similar to those governing a just war. Not only must the cause be just and all other possibilities exhausted, but also there must be reasonable expectation that violent resistance will attain the ends desired, the methods must be just and there must be a positive understanding of the order which will be established after the violence succeeds. Violence will then be understood as the *ultima ratio*. It is the act of freedom which can only be undertaken, with the guilt it brings, confident in the final judgement of God.

25.3 Some find themselves already in situations of violence in which they cannot help but participate. Non-violence does not present itself as an option unless they would withdraw totally from the struggle for justice. In this situation the problem becomes to reduce the sum total of violence in the situation and to liberate human beings for just and peaceful relations with each other. Some form of relatively just order must first be created before violence can cease. The problem of Christian responsibility, then, is to humanize the means of conflict and to build structures of peace wherever possible within it.

26. *We have not been able to reduce these three radically different points of view to agreement. We are convinced however of three things:*

26.1 There are some forms of violence in which Christians may not participate and which the churches must condemn. There are violent causes—the conquest of one people by another or the deliberate oppression of one class or race by another—which offend divine justice. There are violent means of struggle—torture in all forms, the holding of innocent hostages and the deliberate or indiscriminate killing of innocent non-combatants for example—which destroy the soul of the perpetrator as surely as the life and health of the victim.

26.2 We are convinced that far too little attention has been given by the Church and by resistance movements to the methods and techniques of non-violence, in

the struggle for a just society. There are vast possibilities for preventing violence and bloodshed and for mitigating violent conflicts already in progress, by the systematic use of forms of struggle which aim at the conversion and not the destruction of the opponent and which use means which do not foreclose the possibility of a positive relationship with him. Non-violent action represents relatively unexplored territory: initiatives being taken by various groups and individuals to help the exploration happen deserve the strongest possible support from the WCC and the churches.

26.3 We reject, however, some facile assumptions about non-violence which have been current in the recent debate. Non-violent action is highly political. It may be extremely controversial. It is not free of the compromise and ambiguity which accompany any attempt to embody a love-based ethic in a world of power and counter-power, and it is not necessarily bloodless. Moreover, most struggles for freedom—and most government actions—have been, as a matter of fact, mixtures of violent and non-violent action. A non-violent movement may produce peripheral violence and have the problem of controlling it. An armed struggle may also have non-violent dimensions such as education designed to persuade and win over the enemy. In one movement violent and non-violent groups may be working for the same ends. In all of these Christians will have hard choices to make. The more these choices are *informed by a responsible spirit and knowledge of constructive non-violent options*, the more creative they will be.



Mutual Challenge and Help

27. Christians reflecting on these dilemmas must avoid the trap of seeming to dictate strategies and tactics to people living in distant and different situations. No single one can have universal validity; and those who live outside a particular social conflict do well to be wary of handing out advice, whether towards violent or non-

violent strategies, when it is not they, but others, who will be called upon to pay the price of following it. In particular those who sit comfortably close to the top of the world's socio-economic pyramid must be sensitive to the severe limitations their affluence places on their giving moral advice to others less well placed.

28. Yet, with this qualification in mind, it is essential that the process of mutual challenge and help should continue and grow. Many of these seemingly different local situations have in fact a great deal in common, and human feelings of fear and frustration are shared the world over, and by those on both sides of conflicts. Furthermore, the dialogue between Christians needs to take place on the widest scale, because Christians associated with the world's power centres bear more responsibility for hidden or open violence in distant places than they often realize. Also the ecumenical movement has taught us the importance of hearing uncomfortable questions which challenge our facile compromises with the various cultures within which we live and witness; and it has brought home to us that Christians cannot remain indifferent to these issues of political and social justice.

29. Violence should not be equated with radicalism and revolution, nor non-violence with gradualism and reform, nor vice versa. Either or both forms of struggle may be used with a wide range of intention, from the revolutionary overthrow of a whole system to relatively minor alterations within a social system.

30. Those who are prepared to use violence against the established order need to ask themselves such questions as:

- Have you really explored the potentialities of non-violence for your situation, or are you simply assuming in advance that it won't work?
- Is your choice of strategies alienating public opinion more than it is enlisting support?
- How are the means you use being kept from themselves becoming an instrument of dehumanization and thus engulfing the ends you seek? Are you contemplating too lightly the taking of life of another human being?
- Have you considered how to integrate former oppressors (and their families and friends, who may themselves have been victims of violence) into the liberated society you are fighting for?

31. Advocates of non-violence as a matter of principle need to ask themselves such questions as:

- Are you taking with sufficient seriousness the tenacity and depth of violence in the structures of society, and the social disruption its diminution is likely to require?

- May non-violent action emasculate effective resistance at crucial points in a struggle?
- In adhering to this as an absolute principle are you not in danger of giving the means (non-violence, i.e. reduced revolutionary violence) priority over the end sought (justice, i.e. reduced structural violence)?
- Are you more concerned with your own 'good' conscience than with the good of the oppressed?

32. Those who, by whatever means, work for the destruction of an existing power structure in order to build a better one need to face such questions as:

- Toward what expected results is your struggle directed, and how does the cost to be paid balance against the benefit expected?
- How is your power kept accountable in terms of this avowed purpose so that your victory will not mean the emergence of yet another oppressive system?
- How will those against whom the struggle is directed be integrated into the new society?

33. Those who basically are concerned with preserving the institutions of an existing society when its power structures are challenged, and commit themselves to its defence, need to face such questions as:

- Are you acting in the light of the Biblical concern for the poor and oppressed, or for the preservation of your own self- or group-interest?
- How far does your own violence differ from that of revolutionary groups?

34. Those Christians who live in countries where established institutions are open to pressure to effect change in the structures of government, industry and society in the interests of social justice, need to face such questions as:

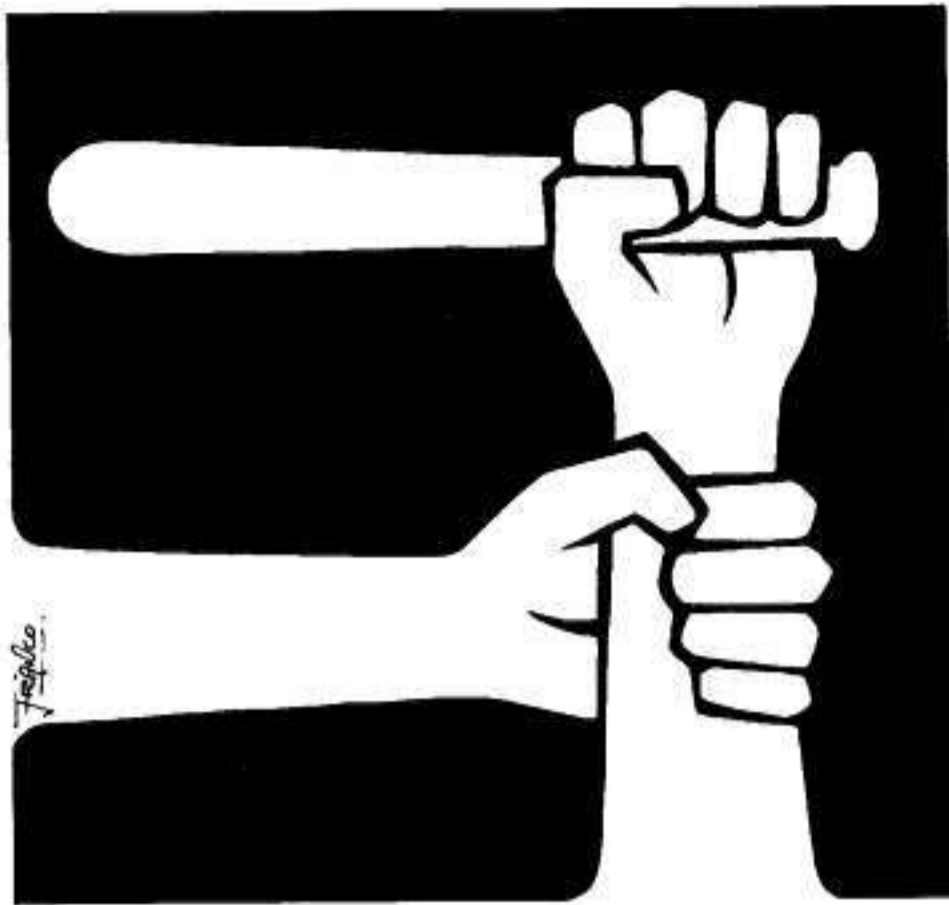
- Do you take the tenacity and depth of structural violence seriously enough?
- Are there groups in your society permanently excluded from voice and influence? How far are the rich and powerful in fact favoured?
- How far is a fundamental dislocation of the 'powers that be' needed if justice is to be achieved?

35. The most important question, however, is not raised by any one of these groups to any other, but by all



of them together to the whole Church. Certainly the fact that some Christians are acting violently for justice and peace whilst others are acting non-violently is a problem. But *the greatest problem is that most of those who name Christ as Lord are not consciously acting on the matter at all.* It is vital, therefore, that the widespread concern about violence and non-violence should not obscure but rather highlight the larger challenge to which the ecumenical movement in recent years has given increasingly clear expression. This is the challenge to all Christians to become wiser and more courageous in translating their commitment to Jesus Christ into specific social and political engagement for social justice; and in this sphere to find their place as servants of the servant Lord with people of other beliefs concerned with human freedom and fulfilment.





He wrote that "the Transvaal people's sense of their own national worth was stimulated by the First Transvaal War of Independence ... Lustre was added to the name of 'Boer' and 'Afrikaner' ... They thought with pride on war successes such as Amajuba, and recalled how a handful of burghers had defeated the mighty Albion".

Recalling also the revolts of 1914 and 1922 and the anti-Government activities of the Stormjaers during the Second World War, the Commission says: "It is untenable to condemn *on moral grounds* those who see no alternative to violence as a means of change if at the same time one refuses to condemn those who were similarly motivated in the situations cited. Either violence can be justified *in some situations* by some universal criteria or it must be totally condemned in all situations."

The Commission recognises that, on the face of it, violence negates the Christian virtues of hope and love and may represent the abandonment of hope. But they quote Archbishop Helder Camara of Brazil who, while saying that he himself must "go the way of a pilgrim of peace", nevertheless respects "men who, driven by their own conscience, decide to use violence: not the cheap violence of a drawing-room guerilla, but the violence of those who have testified to their sincerity by sacrificing their lives".

The conclusion of the Commission at this point is that "in abstract and philosophical terms...violence can be justified in situations where there is no alternative means of changing an intolerably unjust situation in which violence is done spiritually and materially by unjust rule, *and* where there is a reasonable chance that violence may succeed in its aims *and* achieve a more just social order".

But the Commission goes on to add: "Such situations are likely to be exceedingly rare. We believe that the great danger of violent revolt is that it will brutalise both sides and thus render oppressor and oppressed indistinguishable".

The Commission repeats that it does not consider revolution a desirable form of change in South Africa. "Even if a revolution in South Africa were a real possibility, which we do not think it is, we believe that the cost in terms of human life, suffering and bitterness which a revolutionary civil war in South Africa would involve, would be overwhelmingly great."

The Commission's last word on the subject, however, is a warning against complacency. "It may be said," they warn, "that these bands of guerillas and other revolutionaries are small and unrepresentative of the feelings of the African population among whom they are likely to find their major source of support. This may well be true, but nevertheless there is no telling how this may change in the future if nothing is done to redress the grievances of the African people and to assure to them the dignity which is violated by the policy of apartheid." ★



walking tall in christ

WILLIAM
ILLSLEY

Rev. William Illsley is a past President of the Methodist Church of South Africa.

★ ★ ★

A few years ago I was appointed by the Synod to take a service in the Methodist Church in Guguletu, an African township in the Cape peninsula. In the vestry the society steward welcomed me and said: "Sir, our people need a message of hope." So I read and expounded the Acts of the Apostles, chapter 16, vv 16-40. This story offers deliverance to the oppressed and to the oppressor; it indicates a way of escape from our rapidly increasing South African dilemma.

a challenge to the traditional way of life

Paul and Silas were in prison. When you hear of someone being in prison you assume they are guilty of a serious crime, but this is not always true. Mr. Justice Steyn has frequently protested against the alarming fact that our prisons are spilling over with people guilty of trivial offences, many of them black people guilty of not carrying a piece of paper which you and I do not have to carry. Someone has said: "Laws should be like handrails, not like handcuffs". Like handrails, helping people to climb upwards, not like handcuffs, limiting freedom and depriving them of dignity. Churchill said that "legislation should expand life, not contract it."

Paul and Silas were guilty of preaching the gospel. Their real offence was its effect on a slave-girl "who brought large profits to her owners by telling fortunes." It is surprising how many people will pay good money to get a glimpse into the future through tea-leaves, stars, crystal balls, horoscopes and similar witch doctors bones.

Of course, if Paul and Silas had tailored down their gospel to make it fit in with the traditional way of life in Phillipi, if they had toned it down to healing the sick and telling their hearers to be kind to Granny and dumb animals, if they could have presented their message in such a way that it comforted the afflicted without afflicting the comfortable, and if they could have avoided turning people inside out and the world upside down with their preaching they would never have been charged with creating a disturbance and then thrown into prison. But it is surprising how many of the apostles, and how often, were in prison for preaching a gospel with spiritual and social implications. It was the effect of their preaching on the traditional way of life in Phillipi which landed them in trouble with the authorities. The slave-girl, possessed with an uncanny instinct for witchcraft, had fallen into the hands of unscrupulous men who commercialised her gifts of fortune-telling. When, in the Name of Jesus Christ, she was delivered from the evil spirit and was no longer usable to her owners, they dragged Paul and Silas before the magistrates and charged them with "advocating customs contrary to our way of life". The crowd joined in the attack and the magistrates "tore off their clothes and ordered them to be flogged, and to be kept under close guard". There are still good people who do not mind the gospel being preached, provided it does not become too personal, and affect their profits, or politics, or their particular way of life, and leaves them stewing happily in their own prejudices. An Orange Free State farmer advised me to tell his workers to work harder. He wanted me to preach a modified gospel that would put more pep into his workers and more profit into his pocket. Farm labourers were then receiving ten shillings a month.

turning the world upside down

Of course religion should make a man a more conscientious worker. Every trade unionist believes in a fair day's work for a fair day's pay. Christianity should make people honest, sober, clean, reliable and industrious, whether they are servants or masters. But there is far more to the gospel than that. When the good news begins to work like leaven in a man's soul it plants within him the desire to become a full-grown man, walking tall, moving through the scenes of time as a child of eternity. Martin Luther was "guilty of putting little people in mind of their prodigious dignity before God". This surely is of the essence of our gospel.

But this is where trouble started in Phillipi. The owners of the slave-girl resented the transformation in her life which stopped all future exploitation of her gifts. In every generation owners of slaves have protested against preaching which shakes foundations, unlooses bonds, and enables people to walk tall, with dignity before God and men. "These men are turning the world upside down" is a cry which has rung through world history. Its echoes are still heard in our own land.

So Paul and Silas were cast into prison, and the jailer, well indoctrinated with the traditional way of life in Phillipi, "threw them into an inner prison and made their feet fast in the stocks". Note carefully what they did in prison. They didn't cry for sympathy or complain of unfair treatment; or curse their persecutors; or call for revenge. No, "at midnight they prayed and sang praises to God". *"They set their religion to music.* This is religious history in a nutshell. Countless numbers of our fathers in the faith have met their adversities, disasters, oppressions, not with stoicism, passive acceptance or resignation, but with triumphant joy, with prayer and praises unto God. Today we honour those who for conscience sake, and because of their loyalty to the truth suffer restrictions, yet remain triumphant with joy and peace. We must honour the African Christians who are conscious of terrible restrictions, yet remain triumphant with joy and peace. We must honour the African Christians who are conscious of terrible restrictions, yet pray and sing praises unto God.

The next thing to underline in this story is that God answered their prayers and responded to their needs. There is no individual sufferer, nor any oppressed people, whose prayers will ultimately go unheeded. In His own time and way God intervenes in human affairs and demonstrates His Power, Love and Righteousness. Running through all history we hear His voice: "I have surely seen the affliction of my people, and have heard their cries and know their sorrows ... and am come down to deliver ... and to bring them up". The sequel to the apostles' prayers was "a violent earthquake and the foundations of the jail where shaken; all the doors burst open and all the prisoners found their fetters unfastened".

Prayer is dynamite. It shakes foundations, opens doors, loosens bonds and sets men free. The black and brown people of South Africa are a praying people. In their midnight hour they pray for deliverance from the yoke of bondage, and sooner or later (perhaps sooner than we think) their prayers will be answered.

the jailer in bonds

It is a matter of interest that it was the jailer who was afraid, not the prisoners. The man with the feather bed and full stomach, the man without any bruises or bleeding wounds, the man with the keys to all the doors,

the man with freedom of access to the outside world. It was this man, living on the right side of the food and freedom boundary, whose lips trembled, whose hands shook, whose voice was terrified as he called for lights and asked: "What must I do to be saved?" Throughout history the jailers and dictators have all been afraid. They have all built prisons and fortresses, and protected themselves with guns and harsh legislation; but they have all, without exception, been terrified when their kingdoms have been shaken. In our affluent society many are like the jailer, with plenty of social security, but with no feeling of security, no freedom from their guilty consciences. They are neither safe nor saved, and when the crisis comes they have no way of escape, excepting that which the jailer wanted to take. "Seeing that the prison doors were open, and assuming that the prisoners had escaped, he drew his sword, *intending to kill himself.*"

It is astonishing how many people who have failed, (or imagine they have failed) can find no way out of their dilemma, except by suicide. Isn't this the sickness of our society? *Isn't this the sickness of our racial policies, that they are suicidal policies?* That in the coming confrontation with Black and Brown people, who are claiming their God-given rights, we have not yet adopted a Christian policy which will ensure non-violent change?

Now listen to what the apostles said to the terrified jailer when the tables were turned, and he was about to destroy himself. "Do thyself no harm for we are all here." What a lovely Christian spirit! What freedom from vindictiveness and from revenge. Now that they are the acknowledged masters of the situation they do not hurt and humiliate the jailer. On the contrary, they prevent him from destroying himself. They offer him life and salvation, for himself and his household, which he accepted and "rejoiced in his new-found faith in God".

I do not forget that there is a vital message here for individuals. It answers the crucial question: "What must a man do to be saved?" The answer is clear: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ." I have a letter which I cherish from a medical student who went out of Church one day "rejoicing in his new-found faith in God". This process of individual conversion continues, but it is inextricably related with social implications.. Dr. Alex Boraine made a great impact on the Billy Graham congress in Durban when he said: "We must show a holy impatience with those who talk about conversion as though it were a contradiction of social concern, and about social concern as though it were a contradiction of conversion." He was applauded for a full two minutes.

"the gift without the giver is bare"

Now read what the converted jailer did. *"At that late hour of the night he took the prisoners and washed their*

wounds ... brought them into his house ... set a meal before them." We are being told on every hand that "time is running out in South Africa". Prof. Monica Wilson, addressing the Annual General Meeting of the S.A. Institute of Race Relations in the Cape recently, took a text from Isaiah as her theme: "Watchman, what of the night? What is left of the night?" The State President, Mr. J. Fouché, says: "We are standing at a point of great decisions and adjustments which could lead either to South Africa becoming a great nation or to our own destruction." After his return from Europe, some few years ago, Mr. Fouché said: "It is nearly midnight. We must do something."

What can we do? We cannot just depend on our white skins because at midnight colour loses its distinctiveness. We can do what the converted jailer did, as a witness to our conversion.

"He washed their wounds." Have you ever seen the wounds inflicted on African and Coloured people by our stupid, sinful legislation? Have you seen the suffering in the eyes of people whose only offence is the colour of their skin? Have you seen the effects on black people, by the flogging they receive daily to their dignity? Chief Mangope considers that "there is nothing more degrading for a human being than to be arrested for a pass". If we are ever to succeed in washing away the hurt and humiliation from the hearts of black and brown people we shall need the compassion of Christ.

"He took them into his house". What a priceless privilege to have black and brown people in one's house, praying and singing praises to God, and having happy fellowship in Christ.

"He set a meal before them". It stands to the credit of many white congregations that they give generously to the poor and the under-privileged. But we must move to the next stage and train them to produce their own food and other requirements. "Give a man a fish. He has a meal for the day. Teach him how to fish and he has a livelihood."

The converted jailer brought them into his family circle, into his friendship and fellowship, after which he could "rejoice in his new-found faith in God". We white Christians in South Africa could bring about a peaceful settlement of all our differences if we all showed Christian love (kindness plus justice) to our neighbours, the black and brown people of our land. Russell Lowell saw the Risen Lord in a needy beggar with whom a Knight shared his solitary crust and bowl of water at the stream. A halo appeared around the beggar's head and the divine voice came to the humbled Knight:

"Whatsoever we share with another's need
There the Holy Supper is kept indeed.
Not what we give, but what we share
For the gift without the giver is bare.
Who gives himself with his alms feeds three
Himself, his hungering neighbour, and ME."

A prayer by Thomas a Kempis says "Let not thy Word, O Lord, become a judgment upon us, that we hear it and do it not, that we know it and love it not, that we believe it and obey it not." ★

FILM ON S.A. PROBLEMS BANNED

"Land Apart", a semi-documentary feature film in which South Africans analyse the country's current problems, has been banned by the Publications Control Board.

Scripted by Allister Sparks, Deputy Editor of the Rand Daily Mail and produced by Sven Persson, well-known filmmaker, "Land Apart" was last night described by Mr. Persson as "an attempt to put today in front of South Africans."

Mr Persson, who worked for nearly 18 months on the film, said it was also a sincere attempt to show several sides of South Africa's problems.

"The film itself does not try to state a point of view as such, but it allows people of different political persuasions and of different colour and social backgrounds to make their own comments."

The film, which deals with the political realities of the country, includes interviews with Chief Gatsha Buthelezi, Chief Councillor of KwaZulu, Mr. Japie Basson, United Party MP for Bezuidenhout, and Mr. D.P. de Villiers, managing director of Nasionale Pers.

The Editor of the "Mail", Mr Raymond Louw, said last night: "If ever one wanted a clear indication that the issues facing South Africa should be brought to the attention of the people of this country, this banning gives it."

"The film outlines the problems which the country has to face up to, after tracing how they were brought about by historical and political factors.

"The Censor Board could obviously not stomach the prospect of South Africans learning in some detail all the problems facing the country and the consequences of no realistic solution being found at the very time when South Africa is most in need of it, just before a General Election.

"So another freedom goes—the freedom to learn about ourselves."

Mr Louw said he was commenting because Mr Allister Sparks, as Deputy Editor of the "Mail", had been given time off from his usual duties to participate as scriptwriter in the making of the film, though the "Mail" was not directly involved.

Last night Mr Jannie Kruger, chairman of the Publications Control Board, refused to confirm the banning.

Mr Persson said he would appeal to the Minister against the banning.

Mr Sparks said from London last night: "It will be a tragedy for South Africa if the showing of this film is prohibited because it was a serious attempt to focus public attention on the vital problems which the people of South Africa must face.

"It will also be a tragedy for the film industry in South Africa because it means that a serious look at the social and political problems in South Africa is illegitimate territory.

"This means the industry will have to confine itself to banalities and Government propaganda. You can imagine then what sort of television we will get."

—Rand Daily Mail, 26.3.74





A GIANT STEP TOWARDS CHURCH UNITY IN SOUTH AFRICA

**africa acts
feature service**

Anglicans gave their agreement to the intention of six South African Churches to unite their one million black and white members.



The cause of church unity took a giant step forward in South Africa (November 1973) when the Provincial Synod of the (Anglican) Church of the Province of South Africa overwhelmingly accepted the Declaration of Intention to seek union with five other Churches in the Church Unity Commission. It was the last of the six Churches to do so.

The size of the majority in favour—139 votes to 21 surprised even the optimists among the motion's supporters. Opposition was expected from Anglo-Catholics within the Church who were opposed to union with the Methodist, Congregational and Presbyterian Churches through the Commission because the Roman Catholic Church was not included.

It was significant, though, that the synod of the Anglican Diocese of Johannesburg, meeting a month before the Provincial Synod, had voted in favour of full inter-communion with other churches and given its "sympathetic consideration" to the Declaration of Intention. This despite the fact that the Bishop of Johannesburg, the Rt. Rev. Leslie Stradling, had announced that he was against the Declaration of Intention to unite.

The Provincial Synod also agreed to admit members of the other Churches to its communion tables and went a "second mile" by accepting a motion proposed by a Rhodes University lecturer in Church History that ministers of the other uniting Churches might celebrate communion together with Anglican priests.

While the other Churches in the Church Unity Commission have maintained open communion tables, the Anglican decision will, even before formal union, remove one of the biggest obstacles to Christian fellowship between the Churches.

There is no doubt that Anglican Archbishop Robert Selby Taylor, who announced his retirement at last month's Provincial Synod, has been instrumental in moving his Church towards its significant vote. His friends say that he came back from the Lambeth Conference of Anglican Bishops in 1958 as an "apostle of unity", and he has been a dedicated chairman of the Church Unity Commission.

reconciliation between black and white

The Commission was formed in 1968 by the Church of the Province, the Methodist Church of South Africa, the Bantu Presbyterian Church, the Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa, the Tsonga Presbyterian

Church and the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa. It began by meeting twice yearly "to investigate the possibility of a union".

By about 1970, however, a new urgency had been added to the discussions by the growth of black consciousness in the Churches. Black Christians were asking what the idea of union meant to them—especially in view of the fact that most of the uniting Churches had a majority of black members.

"The Church Unity Commission came to see," says Dr. John de Gruchy, its secretary until this year, "that it was no longer simply concerned with unity between different denominations but with reconciliation between black and white members of the churches. Suddenly the unity proposals were no longer a document to be approved but human relationships which had to be put right before God."

The concern of black Christians has pervaded other church union discussions in South Africa in recent months. A proposal to unite three Presbyterian Churches—the Bantu Presbyterian Church with 45,000 members, almost all black, the Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa with 63,000 members, most of them white, and the Tsonga Presbyterian Church with 16,000 black members—founded largely because the black Churches feared assumptions of leadership superiority by the whites.

A more hopeful initiative is now under way in which the three Presbyterian Churches are together discussing union with the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa, a union which is likely to be complete by 1976. The United Congregational Church—itsself the product of two other union schemes in recent years—is a mixed Church with a large black majority and a good record of power-sharing between black and white, and this fact has reassured the black Presbyterian Churches.

The Presbyterian-Congregational union is now seen as a stage on the way to the fuller union of the six Churches. It has already hammered out its draft basis of union in the areas of theology and Church government, though church boundaries, legal, financial and staffing questions remain to be decided.

Setting down the uniting Church's theology has helped to establish whether there are likely to be theological difficulties in the wider six-Church union when it comes to be proposed. In fact a remarkable similarity of view seems to have been found in both sets of unity talks.

concern for human rights

The Draft Plan of Union published by the Church Unity Commission last year talks of "real disagreement" in the areas of Ministry and the Word and Sacraments, but before the booklet was printed it was possible to add

in a footnote that many of the disagreements had been overcome.

It is especially interesting to note that the Commission has chosen for its statement on the Eucharist the statement on the Doctrine of the Eucharist agreed by the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission meeting in England in 1971. There are other indications that the fears of Anglo-Catholics about creating obstacles to a wider union of the Churches may be groundless.

The Declaration of Intention to unite will now be accepted publicly by members of the six Churches on Trinity Sunday 1974. The new Congregational-Presbyterian Church, uniting some 244,000 full church members, the Anglican Church of the Province, with its 350,000 members, and the Methodist Church, with 400,000, are likely to be well on the way to union by 1976, though no timetable has been set and all the Churches are already looking beyond their own union to the hope of a wider union with Lutherans, Catholics and others.

Meanwhile Christians of the six Churches will be able to receive communion together and from each other's ministers. The little Presbyterian Church in Oudtshoorn in the Cape, looked after by an Anglican priest, will now be able to take communion from him also.

If black consciousness has had a powerful effect on the progress of church union in South Africa, there is no doubt that Christian concern for human rights in South Africa is also a factor. As the Churches of English origin in particular found themselves increasingly opposed to the pattern of legislation and government in South Africa, they inevitably moved closer together. Ministers and leaders of almost all the uniting Churches have suffered from bannings and various other forms of Government pressure in recent months.

As the Plan of Union states:

"At a time of tragic divisions in the world and in our own society, not least of all because of racism, the unity of the Church becomes an imperative ..."





ENOS SIKAKANE

the need for black theology

Theology may be defined as the study of God. *Theos* means God and *Logos* here means study. According to St. Augustine it means reasoning or discourse about divinity.

St. Thomas Aquinas refers to theology as a science that investigates the contents of belief by means of reason enlightened by faith in order to acquire a deeper understanding of revelation.

In the thirteenth century the term *theology* was applied to the whole body of revealed truth. Scriptures in the Christian era are sources of revelation. Modern secular theologians like Harvey Cox in his 'Secular City' (p. 116) refer to theology as an encounter of God by man.

"Man repeatedly encounters God in the Bible as the One who beckons him to come."

There is evidence in the New Testament that the Gospel is preached to meet specific situations and, therefore, in the African situation the Gospel must be related to the situation peculiar to Africans. Black theology is a process of reasoning about God in the context of black experience.

For instance in South Africa white denominations segregate their black members at the level of the local congregation, even though their representatives might have some contact with white Christians in Synods, Conferences or Assemblies. Some whites say black people like to worship in their own Churches. The truth is that black people would prefer their own Churches to inferior status in white congregations.

BLACK LIBERATION

Afro-Americans define theology as Black Liberation. In the first place the Gospel is a message of freedom to which Christ is a *Black Liberator*.

The time has come and the Kingdom of God is close at hand, repent and believe the good news (Mk. 1. 14-15).

He had sent me to bring the good news to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives and to the blind new sight, to set the down trodden free, to proclaim the Lord's year of favour (Lk. 4. 18f).

Secondly the Gospel *reconciles*. It breaks down the dividing wall and unites people as children of God. "Those who are far are brought near."

White theology has failed to reconcile black and white Christians, let alone other people of God who are not Christians. Black theology, as I understand it in the light of the *New Testament*, is a proclamation to *reconciliation* and a call to *love* that supercedes faith and hope.

For better understanding in this country white Christians have to learn and practise to accept a black man as their equal. The black people should not be expected to work out their own salvation in order to earn the right for acceptance by whites in the fellowship of believers.

Christianity has given us the ministry of reconciliation. At Calvary we have a picture of Christ reconciling the world to Himself.

For He is our peace, who has made us both one, and has broken down the dividing wall of hostility.

He reconciled us both to God in one body through the cross thereby bringing hostility to an end ...

So then we are no longer strangers and sojourners but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God. Built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone in whom the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord.

There is division and hostility in the Christian Church today. The black and white members are divided in Churches and in schools. There is also hostility experienced only by the black Christians. Because black people suffer humiliation and discrimination they are the only people in this country who can make a contribution to black theology and be honest about their feeling in the light of the scriptures. The word of God offers us the great consolation and hope that God is with us.

"It is time for black theologians to begin to state what they are for, and not merely what they are against."

Like Dr. Roberts, I am convinced that the position we should take should be *pro-black but not anti-white*. Moreover it should be interpreted as meaning that separation and estrangement among black and white is indeed estrangement and separation from God Himself. Reconciliation between blacks and whites in this country is also reconciliation with God who is, according to Paul Tillich, *The ground of our being*. The feeling of estrangement is to be associated with guilt, the refusal to acknowledge the presence of God in both *Black and White men*. The Word was made flesh in Jesus Christ and dwelt amongst all men in this world. Grace and truth were seen in Jesus Christ *the Son of man, the Son of God*.

Some of you will say surely this is not new to us, *we know all these things*, but I would like to stress that knowing and doing in our corporate life among Christians in this country is unknown. In Africa today we are very much concerned with *concrete models of reconciliation and corporate life*. Christ is not divided. There is no God of whites and a God of blacks. If we continue to live and work as we do in our South

African Christian Community we shall indeed be saying *peace through the cross has not been offered to those who were far off and to those who were near*. The crucial point in the creation of the community of believers is *reconciliation*, the breaking down of the dividing wall of hostility so that *one new man* may be created in the place of *two separate men*.

I believe in the community of believers which has its roots in the early Christian Church in agreement with the message of the Apostles:

And all who believed were together and had all things in common ...

Attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes ...

... Praising God and having favour with all the people.

This was the corporate life of believers, the doing of theology, rather than the preaching that ends with the benediction after worship.

WALKING WITH CHRIST IN AFRICA

It is the painful experience of most black Christians that the greater number of white Christians who give us a warm reception within the four walls of the Church House will not extend this warm reception to the outside. For us it is very difficult to identify a white Christian in the streets and public places and where we work. The kind of theology coming from a man who is frustrated and discriminated against is quite different from the theology of a man who is secure and free to speak and express himself.

Therefore black theology has its place and it can only be expressed by a black man or woman.

Black theology is a proclamation of what *we have seen and heard and touched with our hands* which no white man can express for us; he has no experience of what it means to be a black Christian. We have to tell the world what God says and has said to us. We have to write theological books even before we are rated as theologians. If you want to learn how to swim you must go into the water.

"Particular responsibility of black church leaders is to contribute to the needs of black people and, therefore, to society as a whole." (Dr. James Gardiner).

God speaks to a man within the context of his being. We know that we were created in the image of God and that we are equal to all men on earth. For this reason and many others our frustration becomes a very painful one.



William Johnson, "Jesus and the Three Marys"
Barnett Aden Gallery, Washington, D.C.

Nobody knows the trouble we have seen, said the Negro, but why Black Theology?

All the great theologians, as they are called, are whites from Europe, America and other white countries. These have produced *White theology*. There is white theology and there is *Black Theology*. White theology comes from white theologians who wrote as they were inspired by God in their situation. Circumstances and conditions under which they lived determined the type of theology they contributed. At Pentecost, all those who attended heard the word of God from Jewish preachers, in the language they understood. Jesus Christ was localised in order that He may be known as the saviour of the world. There were men and women from every nation under heaven who heard the Gospel in their own native language.

One of the greatest themes of the All Africa Conference of Churches *Walking with Christ in Africa today*. We still owe the world our own contribution in theology which expresses our encounter with Christ and His world. Very few Africans have written theo-

gical books. We still preach the Christ we have heard and read from *White theology*. The world now seems to be turning against us in the same way as the evil spirits rebuked and attacked the itinerant Jewish exorcists and the seven sons of Sceva saying: *Jesus I know and Paul I know but who are you?* They were rebuked and attacked because they preached about the Jesus they heard of from St. Paul. This is our African dilemma. Having read what western theologians have written we would like to write *Black theology* as we meet and hear Christ himself.

AFRICA IN DEBT TO THE WORLD

We have yet to appear upon the mountain in view of all the nations of the world and relate our personal encounter with Christ. We have yet to meet the western theologians and exchange notes of our own experience with Christ and the world in the light of the scriptures.

One of the African theologians said recently: "*The Glory of God is in man being made fully alive. Enable man to be fully what he ought to be.*"

No nation can claim Christ, not even His own

Hebrew nation. He came to His own ... and His own people did not accept Him. They crucified Him. History tells us that the western missionaries had considerable difficulty in westernising Christianity, that is, in the first place adapting it to Greek philosophy. Recently one theological professor revealed that Christianity is alien to westerners because the Hebrew culture is not western culture.

Italians, Spaniards, Germans and the Slavs had great difficulty in accepting Christianity. They would not part with their Gods. Their pagan gods were given Christian names. The missionaries in Southern Africa and perhaps in the whole of Africa had a far greater advantage than the missionaries in Europe. Africans had a highly developed and deep insight of God's character as compared with Italians, Spaniards, Poles, Russians and Teutonic races.

Christianity, as we have received it from the western missionaries, has not yet developed the African people to manhood. We have been conditioned to follow rather than being assisted to participate in leadership. We are not yet free even among our own Christians within the same denomination. It is our feeling that we have been placed in the category of second class Christians who must be instructed and not consulted. Let me be plain and say, we feel very much excluded. Things are done or just about to be done for us, but seldom or not at all done with us in the same Church.

It is important to mention that when the missionaries came to Africa South of the Zambezi they found that the Africans knew God already. Their conception of God Almighty was so high that the African names of God were adopted in the translation of the Bible. The Zulu name *Unkulunkulu*, the Xhosa name *Uthixo* and the Sesuto and Sechuana name *Molimo*. In the Church in South Africa, what the Gospel teaches about the family of God has not been realised. We recite the Creed every Sunday but we have never lived by its teachings. It is also the fault of the African himself who has accepted the role of recipient. Black theology should bridge this gap.

A THEOLOGY OF DOING

Judging from the teaching of the Bible, especially the Old Testament, discrimination is between believers and non-believers. It is the role of Christianity to develop one community of believers who share all things in common. All along we have lived in great expectation of the emergence of the family of God but division is still our stumbling block. There is need for black theology to help white theology so that there should be a two-way function of give and take. Our own interpretation and application of the Gospel are indispensable. We are also agents of reconciliation.

Within the Protestant and Roman Catholic Churches we experience inequalities in sharing roles of leadership and service. Administration and leadership on the whole are exercised by white priests and white

ministers. Black Church leaders are often given the secondary role. If our leadership is confined to the black Church members only, and the leadership of both black and white Christians is the privilege of white Church leaders, the *doing of theology* leaves much to be desired.

Students advocated for full participation of African Leadership in all aspects of Church activity. They stressed, however, that the criteria should be merit and efficiency. Concern for adequate training was expressed. Inadequate remuneration was cited as one of the major obstacles preventing Africans from responding to the call to the Ministry.

We still need the kind of theology that would express itself in concrete models, the kind of theology expressed in our living relations, that is Christianity as the way of life. How do we do theology in our South African situation? Moreover, black theology should be welcomed by all white Christian members who should view it as a contribution of black people to enrich theological understanding in this country. Standards and norms of our black theology are rooted in scriptures.

In conclusion I would like to quote again from Dr. Roberts' book *Liberation and Reconciliation*:

"A black theology that takes reconciliation seriously must work at the task of intercommunion between blacks and whites under the assumption that for those who are open to truth, there may be communication from the outside in. In the latter sense, white Christians may be led to understand and work with blacks for liberation and reconciliation on an interracial basis."



NO S.A. INVESTMENTS FOR US SAYS VOLVO

STOCKHOLM.—Sweden's Volvo car firm announced yesterday it would not make any future investment in South Africa, citing the Republic's racial and political situation.

The managing director, Mr Pehr Gyllenhammer, said business factors favoured Volvo setting up its own subsidiary in South Africa.

But he said: "We have chosen not to make any investments, due to the racial and political situation in the country."

—*Rand Daily Mail*, 20.3.74.

VIOLENCE IN SOUTH AFRICA

**phyllida
bullen-smith**

Why
are women and children
assaulted—
because
they are weaker
and
until we have learned
to live to the capacity
of our
divine
potential
we will use violence
against the weaker
women and children
and
the have-nots—
like for instance
the blacks
and the coloureds.

That we have
the sensibility to suffer
at the news
of rape
and stabbings
is by the grace
of an infinitely
sensitive
Creator.

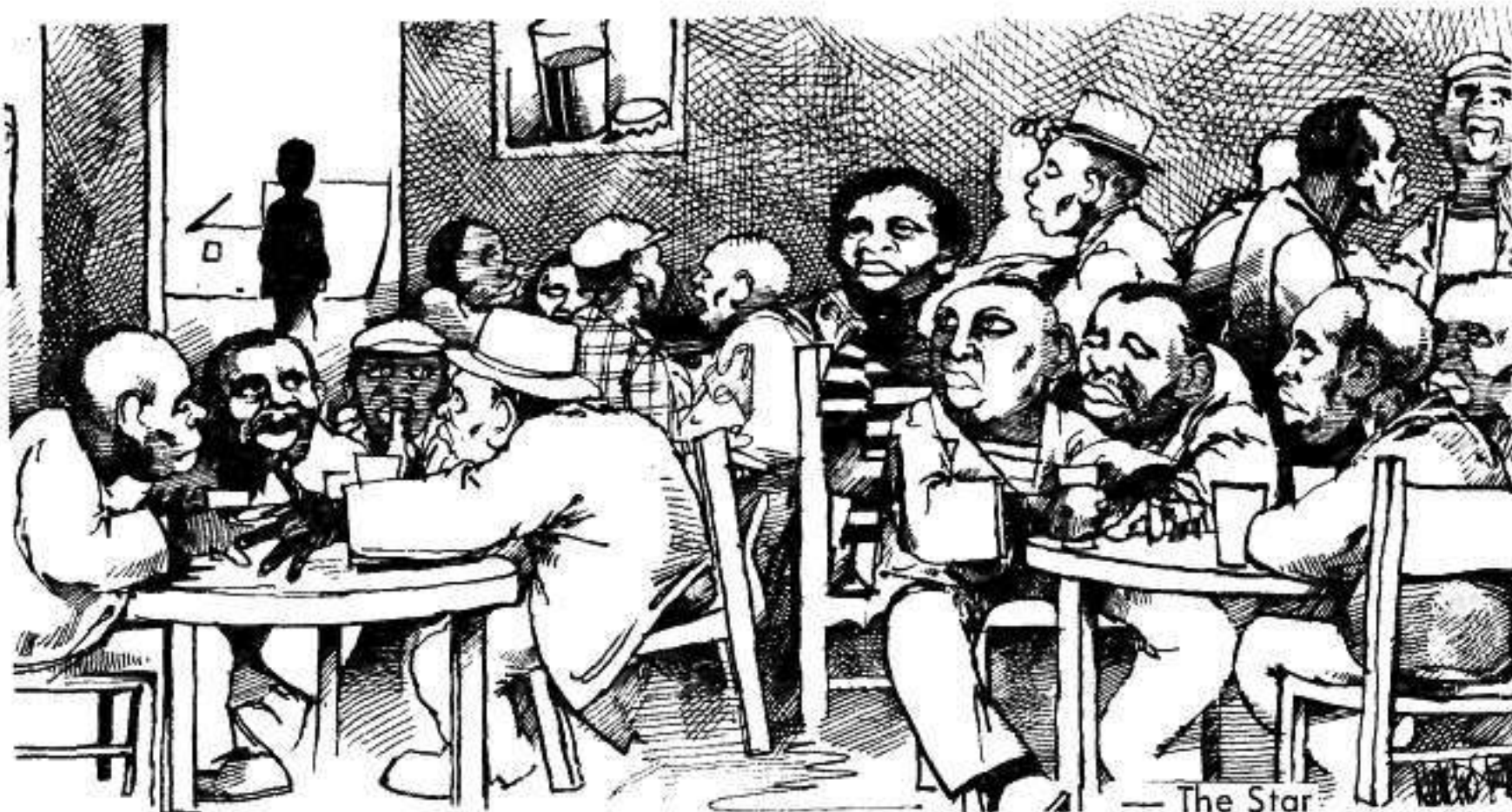
But
we must

learn
to be sensitive
to the horror
that produces the hate
that produces
the dreadful deed.

The lack
of love, white love
that drives the minds
of lonely
coloured and African children
to
hate-filled insanity
the revenge of rejection
on unsuspecting
lonely
white children.

WE WHITES
are producing
this abyss of hatred
this violence is
our own doing
to
our own people.

Are comfort and pseudo-security
more insistent
than love and concern
in this
our poisoned country?



— The Star

WEIGHED AND ...?

NEW ATTITUDE TO BLACKS AT DRC MEETING

Some Black clergymen of the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk van Afrika (NGKA) believe there are signs that White ministers are changing their attitude towards Blacks.

They base their opinion on the new quality of dialogue at the recent Federal Council of the Dutch Reformed Churches in Pretoria, which brought together Black and White delegates from eight churches in South Africa, Rhodesia, Zambia and Malawi.

Before the council met there was speculation on a possible confrontation between Black and White delegates—particularly in view of the public rejection of apartheid by 100 NGKA ministers last year.

The confrontation did not materialise because, as a senior NGKA minister said, there was a noticeable change of heart among White delegates to the council meeting.

"Unlike in the past, the Whites were willing to listen to us on a man-to-man basis," he said.

In marked contrast to previous meetings, Black delegates adopted an outspoken stance and showed a mind of their own. It was through their insistence that the Press was allowed into the meeting.

According to the S.A. Council of Churches news bulletin, *Ecunews*, the Black daughter-churches also made their feelings heard on the position of White missionaries working within those churches.

As a result it was agreed that in future White missionaries seconded to the daughter churches would be regarded as full members of these churches.

This decision implied the strong possibility of the missionary's wife and children being obliged to attend Black Sunday schools. However, a final decision can be made only by the General Synod of the N.G. Kerk in Cape Town in October.

—*Rand Daily Mail*, 5.4.74

ETHNIC POLICY SLATED

Government schemes of separating Africans into separate ethnic groups were abhorred by urban Africans, the Rev. E.M. Tema, a pastor of the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk in Afrika, said at a Verligte Action meeting in Johannesburg last night.

The meeting, held in the Selborne Hall, Johannesburg, drew only about 60 people, although there is seating for about 500.

Verligte Action officials said it was not intended to be a public meeting; and that invitations had been sent to members who were asked to bring their friends.

However, at previous Verligte Action meetings, organised on the same basis, crowds have ranged from 800 to more than 1 000. The poor attendance does seem to indicate a drop in interest in the organisation.

Mr Tema said that to commit urban Africans to the cause of the Government's homeland policy was an offence to their humanity.

To continue removing Africans to the homelands was to degrade these areas to the status of "perfect dumping grounds for human flesh."

He said the homeland governments were doing nothing more than acting as clerks for what had already been decided in Parliament.

The secretary of Verligte Action, Mr Francois de Villiers, referring to the resignations of Professor Willem Joubert, Professor Nic Olivier and Mr Elias Olivier emphasised that Verligte Action was not a political party and had no connection with any political group.

—*Rand Daily Mail*, 26.3.74

GEWEEG EN ...?