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pro veritate

GRACE OR GENOCIDE

*— 'The devil is your father, and you prefer to do what your father wants'
— Jesus to the Pharisees. John 8.44.*

Religious people can be the very devil. And the greatest saints. They rejected Christianity, hounded Jesus to death, and caused catastrophe through the ages. Yet religious people light the pages of history by a luminosity that glows with godliness. Being religious, of itself, obviously proves nothing.

Jesus did not try to make religious people, but loving people, and Paul expounds the relationship in Corinthians 13, setting out four false religious priorities.

● Ecstatic emotionalism — 'Speaking with the tongues of men and angels' — can lead to the ineffective sentiment of many modern religious people.

● Intellectualism — 'knowing all mysteries' — can make a godless ideology out of a denominational cult, a political conviction, or a sociological theory.

● Practical religion — 'moving mountains' — can become a lifeless do-goodism.

● Asceticism — 'giving away all that I have' — can be a mortifying self-love that corrupts all it touches.

It is *Love* that matters. Our relationship to people is more important than anything else, and when sentiments blind people to the evils of society, or ideologies demand the suffering of God's children, they are damning heresies, even if done in God's name by Ministers of Church or State.

South Africa has as high a percentage of religious people as any nation on Earth, but it means little to God — unless they are loving people.

We need peace makers; kindness; understanding of the

other point of view; patience to listen and to explain; generosity and humility; courage to reject traditions which enhance division and privilege; boldness to ask others to unmask our prejudices; sense to learn to simply be human together and experience the love which casts out fear; determination to tear down a social structure built on religious devilry, and build a new one out of human togetherness; the humility to acknowledge that we make our religion a part of politics, instead of making politics part of our loving; we need to forgive one another, and seek to make others joyful; to learn to laugh and labour together.

Either we build a new society on such living, or we destroy ourselves. We must either learn to live by grace, or attempt to kill off all blacks and whites who stand in the way of white top-dog-man-ship. There is no alternative.

Black militants have no hope but blood and anguish whilst they attempt to enforce western concepts by western methods on the people of our continent: will capitalism, communism or the arms race save us? We perish — unless we learn from the loving amongst us how to build a new society out of a new people. There is no alternative.

In a world ruled by the God we know in Christ, racism and violence cannot produce peace, and no amount of hymns and prayers rising round the laager can prevent the blood flowing beneath it.

The choice is simple.

Grace or Genocide.

REDAKSIONEEL

GENADE OF GROEPSMOORD

— 'Julle het die duiwel as vader, en die begeertes van julle vader wil julle doen' — Jesus vir die Fariseërs. Joh. 8.44.

Godsdienstige mense kan die duiwel self wees. En die grootste heiliges. Hulle het die Christendom verwerp, Jesus tot die dood toe vervolg en het deur die eeue katastrofe veroorsaak. Tog verlig godsdienstige mense die geskiedkundige bladsye met 'n glans wat met goddelikheid gloei. Om op sigself godsdienstig te wees, bewys klaarblyklik niks nie.

Jesus het nie probeer om godsdienstige mense te maak nie, maar liefhebbende mense en Paulus het die verhouding in Korinte 13 uiteengesit deur vier vals godsdienstige prioriteite te vermeld.

● Ekstatiese emosionalisme — 'die tale van mense en engele

spreek' — kan tot die ondoeltreffende sentiment van baie moderne mense lei.

● Intellektualisme — 'al die geheimenisse weet' — kan 'n goddelose ideologie laat ontstaan uit 'n kerklike kultus, 'n politieke oortuiging of 'n sosiologiese teorie.

● Praktiese godsdienst — 'berge kan versit' — kan 'n leweloze goettoenerigheid word.

● Askese — 'al my goed uitdeel' — kan 'n kastydende selfliefde wees wat alles bederwe wat dit aanraak.

Dit is *Liefde* wat tel. Ons verhouding tot mense is meer belangrik as enigiets anders en wanneer sentimente mense

verblind t.o.v. die euwels van die samelewing, of ideologieë die lyding van God se kinders vereis, dan is hulle verdoemende ketterye, al word dit gedoen in die naam van God deur predikante van die kerk of ministers van die staat.

Suid-Afrika het net so 'n hoë persentasie godsdienstige mense soos enige ander nasie op aarde, maar dit het min betekenis vir God — tensy hulle liefhebbende mense is.

Ons het vredemakers nodig; vriendelikheid; begrip van die ander se standpunt; geduld om te luister en te verduidelik; grootmoedigheid en nedrigheid; moed om tradisies wat skeiding en bevoorregting vermeerder, te verwerp; dapperheid om ander te versoek om hulle vooroordele te ontmasker; insig om te leer om eenvoudig soos mense saam te wees en die liefde te ondervind wat alle vrees uitdryf; vasberadenheid om sosiale strukture wat op godsdienstige duiwelswerk gebou is, af te breek en 'n nuwe struktuur op te bou uit die saamwees van mense; die nedrigheid om te erken dat ons ons godsdiens deel van ons politiek moet maak, in plaas van om ons politiek deel van ons liefhê te maak; ons behoort mekaar te vergewe en te soek om ander blymoedig te maak; leer om saam te lag en

saam te werk.

Of ons bou 'n nuwe samelewing op die basis van so 'n lewe of ons vernietig onself. Ons moet leer om of deur genade te lewe of probeer om al die swartes en wittes wat in die pad staan van die wit baaskneg-verhouding te dood. Daar is geen ander alternatief nie.

Swart militantes het geen hoop behalwe bloed en pyniging nie solank hulle probeer om westerse begrippe deur westerse metodes op die mense van ons vasteland af te dwing: sal kapitalisme, kommunisme of die wapenwedloop ons red? Ons vergaan — tensy ons leer van hulle wat onder ons liefhet hoe om 'n nuwe samelewing bestaande uit nuwe mense te bou. Daar is geen ander alternatief nie.

In 'n wêreld wat deur God regeer word, weet ons deur Christus dat rassisme en geweld geen vrede kan voortbring nie en geen getal lofliedere en gebede wat rondom die laer opstyg, kan verhoed dat bloed daaronder sal vloei nie.

Die keuse is eenvoudig.

Genade of Groepsmoord.

ALTERNATIVES IN SOUTH AFRICA

— Percy Qoboza

An address to the Transvaal Region of the Christian Institute July 1977, by the Editor of the WORLD newspaper

When one ventures into the arena of speaking of alternatives in South Africa, one invariably moves on thin ice. For we have developed, over the years, the type of society that equates alternatives with subversion and communism.

Indeed, if ever there was a time that demonstrates firmly, the desire for change and the inability of the government here to provide the channels and motivations for that change, it is the last twelve months.

There is loose talk of change in this country. Everybody is sounding off about its desirability if the growing aspirations of the black people here can be realized and if we are to make a successful bid of avoiding a bloody racial confrontation across this nation.

Yet all that is happening is a lot of talk. No action at all. Cabinet Ministers engage in all types of kiteflying and retract their statements only the following day. I do not believe that such statements like the one Mr Schoeman issued on the whole question of the Immorality Act and the Mixed Marriages Act, were a slip of the tongue.

On the contrary, it was a deliberate attempt by the government to test public opinion and when the forces of darkness and racism reared their ugly heads, the Minister was forced to backtrack.

This is a damning indictment on the type of leadership this country can produce at a critical time of our history: men who cannot display the moral courage to lead the country out of the dangerous path we are trudging at the moment.

For at the middle of our problems lies racial discrimination. Whatever attitudes we hold and whatever legislation we put forward at the centre of it all we are a society motivated by colour consciousness.

We have ceased to see human beings as God's own creation but as members of a certain colour group. One shudders at the thought of the vengeance that God must have for this nation. Any indignity and any humiliation we impose on anybody simply because of the colour of his skin, is an affront and assault on God Himself.

For any country that professes to be Christian but will deny an injured man the opportunity of saving his life simply because the

ambulance or hospital nearby is reserved for people with the wrong colour must in itself emphasise the problem of that country.

How can we continue to profess our faith and loyalty to God, while at the same time and in the same breath we show acts of extreme cruelty, not in line with people who are Christian, by daily locking up thousands of people in jails — not because they are criminals — but simply because they fall foul of technicalities of the pass laws and influx control legislation.

How can we even claim to follow Christ when we sit idly by while hundreds of citizens have their freedom taken away from them in terms of the country's massive security laws, simply because they believe in the brotherhood of man?

Indeed how can we face God when we allow hundreds of children to die of malnutrition and kwashiorkor, while white South Africa wallows in luxury and, in fact, dies from luxury?

It seems to me that our salvation lies not in paying lip service to the processes of change, but by being engaged in genuine efforts to establish a new society; a society where the colour of a man's skin will not be the deciding factor; a society in which suspicion and fear do not play an important part in the hearts of man if and when they have to take decisions.

A society where the people of Soweto can have hope. Today the people of Soweto live in a vacuum. They do not belong. They have nothing to lose. They have no sympathy for the country at the moment because this country has not given them anything to identify with. When the country goes through economic problems, they say it is the white man's problem.

When White South Africans threatens them with mass employment unless the economic situation improves, they tell you that they have suffered and are suffering and a little more suffering will not do them any harm. They delight in seeing White South Africa joining in that suffering.

When South Africa is kicked in the teeth at the United Nations they delight in it. When a South African white sports team gets beaten by another country, they cheer the foreign country. When the American community starts its human rights campaign and

forces American companies on to a moral code, they shout: 'Right on!'

This demonstrates the tragic divisions among the peoples of our country. We cannot at the moment share a common national concern and loyalty.

This is the type of bridge we need to build. The bridges of brotherhood and of national loyalties. It can be done. It must be done. For failure to achieve this can only condemn our country to perpetual strife and ultimate destruction.

This is why the church must start getting involved. I have always been disappointed at the role of the church in South Africa over the decades. For I believe in my heart that the church must realize that compromising on matters of principle is an exercise in futility. We must realize that racial discrimination is something that should send the church, with thousands of their followers, to the streets of Johannesburg, marching down there, black and white people holding hands together and condemning our national policies while expressing their solidarity in Christ.

The time has come for the church to assign black clergymen to administer to the spiritual needs of the white community in as much as the church sends white priests to administer to the needs of the black community. For far too long in this area we have tended to play the same part as is played by white politicians in this country. We have found it more convenient to send black priests to the black community, and white priests to the white community; and it is a serious indictment on the church that you have never had a black man holding a position of serious administrative power like the Bishop of Johannesburg or Pretoria.

It may be there has been no qualified black man.— but I have serious doubts deep in my heart. Do we fear upsetting the white man if we put a black man in charge of his spiritual succour? Until such time that we can convince people that this can be achieved, the church will remain imbued with the type of suspicion through which the young people view it at the moment.

In fact, it will become an irrelevant institution, that gives spiritual tonic to a lot of people who declare their faith with Christ on a Sunday morning, whilst spending the next six days of their lives destroying that type of faith with their fellow human beings.

The time has come for the church to look at these things in a more realistic, in a more pragmatic, in a more aggressive manner. It is a good thing to have white priests ministering to spiritual need in the black community. I do not object to that. In the same sense I urge that black priests could minister to the needs of the white community.

Around our personal daily relationships with people we may well begin the processes of saving South Africa. But we have very little time left as everybody does know.

The processes of polarisation between the races are escalating with each day passing. With each day that a brother falls from the tenth floor of John Vorster Square, under most mysterious circumstances, the polarisation process goes on. For every child locked up in the cells of our goals, kept away from the world outside; for the anguish and the agony of their parents as they take in fresh clothes for their children but do not get the old clothes back; for the suspicion that surrounds these circumstances; for all these things the problem of polarisation grows in our country.

Apartheid as a philosophy is in ruins because it was immoral. Separate Development as a concept is in ruins for the simple reason that it was an innovation of the immorality of apartheid. Differentiation is in ruins simply because it was an immoral concept that emphasised racism as a way of life. Plural democracy, I predict will also lie in ruins, because it is based on a philosophy of entrenching white privilege while perpetuating black denigration.

What we need to replace those philosophies that are pushing our country to national suicide and bloody confrontations and hardships, is a National Convention. A Convention of Faith in which South Africans of all persuasions can come together around the conference table and together map out a future based on human dignity and recognition for the rights and protection of all our

peoples.

It is the only way. There is no short cut to it. For in the epic words of the late Dr Martin Luther King: 'Unless we learn to live together as brothers, we will all perish together as fools.'

PERCY QOBOZA ANSWERS QUESTIONS

Men and women seem to have lost their will to fight for what is just in our nation. They seem to have been overwhelmed by the massive problems that this nation faces, to have resigned themselves to let this country go drifting on into the hands of people who would lead this nation to a bloody confrontation.

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People in this country are becoming disorientated over the philosophy of black consciousness. They see black consciousness as a big monster which preaches nothing but black power and black exclusivism.

Black consciousness means what it says, the consciousness of a people whose dignity and manhood have been so brutally assaulted by a system over decades that many of them have developed a slave mentality in which they strongly believe deep in their hearts, that black is inferior and wrong, and white is right and represents power.

The whole Black Consciousness Movement is designed to help people find themselves, their dignity, to redefine their own values in terms of their own aspirations — and this is good for anyone to recognise.

For far too long we have been judged against values that are very foreign to our circumstances.

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People have generalised on black people, whilst they have individualised on white people. If a black man is found guilty of theft at the O.K. Bazaars it is because: 'All blacks are thieves'. If a white man steals they say: 'He has a social problem'.

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The hue and cry in the American community was: 'Seek ye first the kingdom of politics and all these things shall be given to you'. The black American got the vote, but this did not solve his problem: the system still beat him.

The vote does solve some things, but not everything. I'm not one of those people who spend sleepless nights thinking about votes because looking at one-man one-vote in the white community does not inspire confidence in me. There are far more urgent and important things to do.

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Unless you come to terms with Black Consciousness you will be faced with the next thing: **Black Power**. You don't have black power problems in South Africa yet: the day you get Black Power then your problems have really started. The only way Black Power is going to come is for the white community and the Government to adopt the stupid attitude to the Black Consciousness Movement as they do at the moment. If you come to terms with Black Consciousness you will expedite the day when you have in this country a South African consciousness.

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A lot of our people have lost faith in the capitalist system. They see the free enterprise system as nothing else but a system in which the economic power of one section of the community is being entrenched and used to oppress the aspirations of the 'have nots'.

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Black people are not so stupid as to be dictated to either by the Marxism that comes out of Moscow, or the super-Capitalism that comes out of Washington. I think they will develop their own system to suit the conditions that prevail in their own circumstances.

Black morality has always insisted that the 'haves' bear a responsibility towards the 'have nots'. When the head of a family

died, the whole community around went to the aid of that family. It continues today. When a guy down my road dies, I may not have known him from Adam, but black morality demands that I get into my car and drive down to his house and for the first time meet these people and say: 'what can I do for you?'

I cannot see why the church in South Africa at the moment must g cap in hand and ask for permission to do what is essentially right from the Government.

Why should the church maintain great institutions and keep them black or white, while there are white or black communities who should go to those schools and make them really representative of what the church is.

People say: 'It is easy to say that, but the Government will close the schools'. Maybe it would be a good thing if the Government closed the schools, because those schools will stand there as monuments to the courage and determination of the church to fight all types of evil.

Churches do not need to ask the Government's permission to do

what is their God-given task. By conforming to the system of separation of people, the church has become part and parcel of our so-called 'traditional way of life'.

I think we have passed the stage when you could create a middle class of black people and put them in to (support) the white system. In today's context, irrespective of what inducements you could give me, as long as my brother is still down at the bottom of the ladder, then forget it. You have not solved the problem at all. The number of people gullible enough to be used in this particular manner represent a very very small minority in the black community. You cannot divorce my dignity from my brother or sister's indignity.

I know that whites have said a black middle class could be a very viable weapon. Forget it. Forget it. There is no middle-class black man now. We are in this together and we shall go up out of it together.

Liberation is only a small part of the struggle: the biggest struggle comes after liberation.

ALTERNATIVE SOCIETIES IN SOUTH AFRICA

Finbar Synnott

An address to the Transvaal Region of the Christian Institute. Fr. Synnott is Secretary to the Catholic Bishops Justice and Reconciliation Commission.

My title puts societies in the plural, and the meaning is that there may be societies within societies. We tend nowadays to think only in terms of the whole thing, the State, or nation-wide systems. I do not want to disagree with this form of thinking, which is necessary. But there are two other forms to be thought of: **small groups** which can create a special way of living within a larger society sociologically; and a special form the church may need to take at times.

The reason for thinking much in this line is that we all tend to be evolutionary utopian in our thinking, and presume it is only a matter of time before we produce the right social system. But I find no promise of this in the Gospels; nor in a good deal of the history of world cultures which I have had to teach in sweeps for many years; nor in church history.

When the whole of Europe was Christian it continued with slavery, torture and fratricidal wars for a millenium, and then turned to ruthless colonial and economic exploitation. This worried me until I realised that the assumption that Christianity would come to control 'principalities and powers', which we could translate in modern terminology as 'societies and cultures at mass psychology level', arose from a nineteenth century evolutionary optimism rather than from the Gospels. It worried me that it is not clear that any moral progress equivalent to the technical progress of the world had taken place (that the average Johannesburger or New Yorker was no more unselfish than the average Bushman) until I noted that Jesus was not only a sign of hope but one to be contradicted, and that he questioned whether, when he returned, he would find faith on earth.

I even began to wonder if I should want the future in this dimension to be better than the past, or want the people of the past to be stepping stones to better things for those of the future?

What I am to say therefore is based on hope, rather than expectation, on what the Lord may yet grant, rather than what I expect.

Social System

I will speak only briefly of the sociological communities within larger communities, or micro societies within macro societies. The

point is only that, even within a corrupt macro-society, by means such as co-operative action people can greatly improve the quality of their life. It is a simple fact that Soweto could raise its standard of living 40% by turning itself into a co-op. As all wider political and economic black action is more and more squashed, some blacks are working on this. But they rightly see it not only as something that can be done while other things cannot, but also as a more fundamental social training for when change in the macro-society has come. To say much about it now might seem for me an evasion of the major issue, so I should say what my faith, my church, holds about the whole social system.

1. What it has to say is not the offering of alternative political or economic plans, but something far more radical: a statement about values and god-given personal and community rights which can be either an aspiration or a judgement to any society according as it is taken.
2. It can best be put in terms of the Second Commandment of love translated into social terms: **Whatever right or opportunity I wish for myself, I must wish for, must will and must labour for every other person exactly as for myself and, moreover, offer him the affection and forgiveness for failures, which I hope for.** This means the opposite of the competitive system in which everyone tries to get ahead of the other. It means a system in which no one is willing to move forward without taking all others equally with him, in opportunity, influence, money, everything. This is not based on any social theory but on the belief that God has made all men with the same fundamental humanity and rights, and has given man a faculty — call it empathy — by which he can know there is in the other a self with exactly the same aspirations and hopes as his own, and of exactly equal value before God as his own. **Anything I want for myself I should equally want for him.**
3. Although the individual's rights are sacred and can be taken away by no human authority, all except the most fundamental such as that of conscience, can be suspended in use at times for the good of the community, which is a larger total of persons,

and whose right thus supercedes the individual's in general. Pre-commercial societies understood this. From the beginning of commercial societies about 6000 years ago this was lost. **The community right supercedes that of the individual in everything except conscience:** for example, a man can be called from his family to die for his community in war.

Very interesting sub-conclusions follow:

4. All education apart from spiritual should be primarily civics, how to behave in community, and only secondarily for personal career or culture.
5. Since persons are always more important than things, a less efficient and productive culture that is warm and friendly is better than a more efficient and better organised one which is cold. **Human relations in what you do are more important than what you achieve.**

Alternative Societies

From this can be judged what an alternative society would be in South Africa; one in which everyone black and white had the same right of access to land and economic opportunity; in which the majority of persons had the controlling say in government — in this case the blacks, as the Catholic Bishops recently made clear in their February Statement; and one in which all culture not interfering with community friendship and peace and rights, was free: but with the predominant culture a black one.

As far as the Catholic Church was concerned it would not matter whether it was a rule by majority vote or a one-man rule of a man placed there by some sort of acclamation; it would not matter whether it were private enterprise or socialist; provided it were equitable to all, respected the rights of all and protected those of the community. It would not matter if in an interim period under less trained rulers the whole system were less efficient, provided it were friendly. I am convinced that one complete gesture of trust and friendship from whites could create such a society — in so far as it is within human limitations — in 24 hours. This is the tragedy, we are always 24 hours away from something which is totally human.

Christian Micro-Societies

In my more immediate terms of reference as a minister of the Gospel I must state that in nearly forty years I have seen Christianity make no impact whatever on the system at mass psychology level in South Africa, nor do I see any likelihood of it within another decade or two. Now that we, as guardians of the Cape route, have become so essential to western strategy, the west will support any government here, however unjust, provided it guarantees that Route.

But there is something strongly convinced. But there is something strongly convinced Christians can do, that they did originally, which pushed up like grass through the concrete of the Roman slave empire. They did not begin by making appeals to Caesar to change his ways, but offered among themselves an alternative society within the macro-society which was so inspired, loving and true that people came to join it.

This we could do in groups, small enough to remain completely uncompromising. Things are bad enough, and the misunderstanding about Christianity great enough, to need the whole Gospel and the folly of the Gospel, as it began. We have been 'established' churches so long we have the dangerous attitude that we must offer only formulas acceptable to public opinion, and so are hamstrung in doing our own thing.

Years of observation and thought have brought me to the conclusion that what we need first is **small groups of people**, interracial, who make simply meeting (as God is 'with us' in Christ) a priority over any form of propaganda or action. This should be unselective in social status or education, implying a test, number one, in getting over language and culture difference problems.

Such groups in South Africa could not legally be residential so should be as we see them in Acts 2:42-47 and 4:32-37: **meeting communities**, implying a second test, number two, in problems of

places and times and travel.

They should have the three elements insistently stated in these two passages, the first being **meeting simply in order to meet**, 'being of one mind and heart'. Love is 'being with', not only 'giving to' or 'working for'.

The second element is **seeking power in the Spirit**, a prayer and liturgy, which might have to be very widely adapted to include non-Christians, who are often more generous than we are in these matters.

The third, which is always so conveniently left out when the other two are mentioned, is **property sharing**. This does not mean only giving, but some measure of sharing, surrendering title to decide how you use or even give away your money. Nor should it create a new privileged group profiting by it, (as religious orders which become rich although their members are poor) but share with the whole social community, and see this not as largesse but as restitution and redistribution.

For this reason, I have thought at times that the most significant Christian groups in South Africa are the Self-Taxers and Commune-livers. But they have an immense step yet to take, crossing the colour-bar, and if it comes to that, the education and culture bars.

Priority

These three elements should take priority over other meetings, lectures, organisation, or anything **done**, thus establishing human relations in action as more important than the action. (Scientists, the ecologists and anti-productionists, are now on the side of voluntary poverty and simpler life-styles).

On the other hand, Christians now have a different range of duty from those in their first communities. No one in the Roman system had a vote, or a right of speech and association (except for burial!) but everyone of us now has a responsibility under the second commandment. It would be false and tragic if what I am saying were used as an excuse for not participating in the most total manner in the campaign for human rights and social reform. It should **increase** public action. But when it comes to anything organisational, as distinct from the 'being one', an opposite principle seems necessary. It is now clear that blacks want to organise separately in public action, and this should not be judged ethically, but taken as a simple and inevitable fact-in-situation, and respected.

As I see it from a Christian ministry point of view, and the belief that this sort of action is the fundamental reform point in human affairs, those undertaking this should make it absolute priority, even over attending a cousin's, if not a father's funeral. But it is not necessarily for all. Communes exist under Christian inspiration overseas which have a wider associate membership, even if relying on a totally committed core.

Demonstration

While we wait to see how the God of history will move, and while we take the fullest part in acting to shape that history, it is possible in small groups to demonstrate the entirely new values introduced into the world by Christ. If no peaceful solution comes, and the blind forces of history solve South African problems, (and I know of no exception in history where privileged groups have given in, except by force) it is possible to show something so rightly true and warm that it will be given a hearing in any new order to come.

It is also my private belief that the Afrikaners who rule us, now driven by some strange sense of duty into isolationism and a domination mentality, will not be moved by threats or sweet reasoning, but only as Saul of Tarsus was in a similar frame of mind. Inwardly, they are as other humans, lonely and seeking warmth, possibly the loneliest people on earth. To SEE something new in the name of Christ, with whom they associate their ideal, might change them.

PRAYER AND PRAXIS

- Archbishop Denis Hurley

An Address for a Service of Intercession, at City Hall, Durban, 6th June, 1977

There is nothing that men dread more than violence, yet there is nothing more unavoidable than violence. The last thing a human community wants to inflict on a neighbouring community is violence, yet violence is the last thing it can avoid inflicting. For some deep, demonic reason we seem condemned to violence, to suffering it or to inflicting it.

We cannot believe that our community is to blame. The other community always starts it. If we want to survive we have to retaliate. Our understanding of violence is a one-way window. We can see out to the guilt-ridden violence of others. Looking in all we can see is the reflection of our nobility and course and courage in self-defence. With this shining halo in position we embark on the descent into violence. Once embarked there is no easy way back.

It is obvious that in some cases the violence of self-defence is more excusable than in others. There could even be a consensus that in certain cases such violence is unavoidable. The horror is that judgement in this matter is normally clouded by passion, prejudice and self-and group-interest. There is just no proportion between the physical psychological and social damage wreaked by violence and the extent to which people are really responsible for it in the true sense of moral responsibility, based on reason and reflection. Only too often the violence comes first and the reflection afterwards. The human race still has a long way to go in its pursuit of humanness.

It is because there is so much violence in South Africa that we are gathered here for this Service of Intercession.

Intercession

The more popular, more traditional attitude sees prayer mainly as pleading with God for benefits that he may bestow or withhold and which he is more likely to bestow the more we pray. This is a simple, popular and traditional attitude and I would be the last to find fault with it, except to say that it must fit into a broader vision, a vision in which the purpose of prayer is much more to change us than, so to speak, to change God. At the heart of the best known prayers, the Lord's Prayer, comes this plea: 'Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven'. We are asking that there be changes on earth, that is, among people, to bring the earth into closer conformity with the mind of God.

Let that be the spirit of our Service of Intercession here this evening. May our prayer, through the opening of our hearts to the Almighty, contribute to changing us insofar as we need to be changed and in the ways we need to be changed, to enable us to make our small contribution to the vast changes needed in South Africa to guarantee a growth towards peace.

Prayer that would bring change must be prayer of reflection, not merely prayer of petition. Our greatest claim to nobility is based on the belief that we are made in the image and likeness of God and on the belief too, if we are Christians, that we are redeemed by Christ so that the image and likeness may be enhanced. To be like God means to know, to love, to create — to know with God, to love with God, to create with God. So prayer that changes, prayer that creates, must be not merely petition but reflection also — reflection leading to conversation and creative response.

Such prayer is not without pain, for pain is the built-in accompaniment of all growth. When God created us to create with Him, He made suffering our lot. And to emphasise that, there is no

creation without love and no love without pain it is the belief of Christians that the death of Jesus is the supreme lesson — a death that does not end in the tomb but in the glory of Easter Sunday and the power of Pentecost.

What needs to be changed? Much. So much that in the few minutes I speak to you I can mention only a little of it. Let me approach the issue this way: Firstly, let me attempt to describe the situation as Black South Africans see it, secondly, as White South Africans see it and finally let me suggest a few conclusions that may be of some value to all of us in our reflective prayer, a prayer that is immediately concerned with people in detention but of sheer necessity goes beyond them to the social and political context in which they suffer detention.

Black Viewpoint

In regard to the first undertaking, that of trying to give a brief description of our situation as Black South Africans see it, I am not likely to prove very successful. I have not shared the experience of a Black South African so I cannot speak from first hand knowledge, but if there is any meaning in human understanding and human sympathy it must be possible for someone who has not undergone an experience to express what comes through to him from those who have.

I detect a feeling of desperation in my Black brothers and sisters arising out of a long experience of humiliation and oppression which, despite endless appeal and exposure, pleading and protest, seems to draw no closer to relief.

In a world in which the conviction is growing that every person has a right to be recognised as a full member of the community and a partner in social undertakings, Black South Africans find themselves in a two-tier society.

In the top tier are the Whites with full citizenship and the voting power at national, provincial and local level that guarantees a fair share, a fair hearing and full participation in whatever a person wants to participate in — except freedom to live and visit and work in African homelands and Black townships, a privation that causes sleepless nights to few Whites.

In the lower tier everything is restricted, everything is subject to the oppressive weight of a White society that uses its power, privilege and wealth to ensure that nothing is shared that might cause the slightest inconvenience to Whites. South Africa is governed, developed and utilised primarily for White enjoyment and secondarily for what can be offered to Blacks without undue restriction on this enjoyment.

No plea or protest or representation seems to make the slightest difference. Only when outside pressure, as in the matter of sport, constitutes a sufficient threat does the White power yield grudgingly.

People have a right to political participation. People feel that all over the world. The feeling is frustrated in many countries by dictatorships of the left or of the right. South Africa shares with these dictatorships in denying real political participation to 83% of its citizens. When the frustration of those denied becomes unbearable and they give some expression in word or deed, in individual action or corporate protest to their painfully felt aspirations the response is immediate, absolute and relentless: police harassment,

interrogation, banning, house arrest, detention, imprisonment, beating, shooting and, in the course of interrogation, torture.

It is claimed by many representatives of the White establishment that allegations of torture cannot be proved. This may be true in many cases of legal procedure and rules of evidence drawn up when there was no call to guard against systematic police torture. In South Africa today there is such a depth of conviction among Blacks (and among Whites as well) concerning torture as almost standard procedure in political cases that any honest government would either admit it or carry out an ordinary enquiry, equipped with the best possible safeguards to ensure reliable evidence and to guard against intimidation and retaliation.

In this situation more and more Blacks look to the history of Angola, Mozambique and Rhodesia and say: this is the only way for us, the way of violence. Nothing will bring real change to South Africa until violence on our part can be mounted and sustained, strong enough and long enough, to contain, and eventually crush, the violence of the White side.

White Viewpoint

Looking at things from the White point of view, the South African situation is troubling. Some, a minority, possibly a very small minority, would accept the kind of Black opinion I have portrayed as a fairly reliable and objective assessment of the situation as it really is.

Most South Africans would reject it indignantly. They don't feel like an oppressive people. They have no quarrel with their Black neighbours, no desire to hurt them. In fact, they can tell you of their acts of kindness to Blacks and how such acts have often met with little appreciation.

Whites just see the situation as they think it is: a developed White population that has made South Africa, living among a Black population that has helped by giving its labour but is quite incapable of doing things as Whites do them. The Whites owe something to the Blacks no doubt, but the Blacks owe much more to the Whites, and, as long as they have Whites to govern them and lead them in industry and commerce, they should be grateful and content with their lot. There is, without doubt, poverty among Blacks and much hardship; but the Whites cannot be blamed for that. Blacks are undeveloped, have not the necessary skill and education and do not know how to work productively and earn better money. It is up to them: if they learn to work hard the situation will improve.

Changes will come in the future but that future is very far away. In the meantime the situation must go on very much as it is with a few gradual minor adjustments here and there.

The only people who want to change the situation rapidly are communists and a few radical churchmen and deluded political idealists who are easily duped by communists.

The communist danger is great. We have seen what it has done in Mozambique and Angola and is doing in Rhodesia. South Africa must arm and prepare itself for a fight to the finish. There is no other way out. We fight and we conquer or we die, but do not yield to the horror of communist-inspired Black terror.

A somewhat simplistic view, no doubt, but one that is common enough.

Polarisation and Praxis

In this situation of fearful polarisation, with Blacks fiercely resenting the oppression they suffer at the hands of Whites and Whites seeing themselves as relatively benign trustees of Blacks undeservedly threatened by Communist-inspired terrorism, we celebrate this Service of Intercession, praying for those in detention and praying too that such change may come as will make it possible for the two sides to draw closer to each other.

From the rather superficial description I have given, such drawing closer would constitute a miracle of the first order — but if we did not believe in miracles we would not be here.

Where must the miracles start? In the prayers of all of us certainly, but especially in the prayers of White South Africans, whose prayer must be one of great openness to the revelation of God, great willingness to pray in the light of the Gospel, which says in Matthew, chapter 5: *'So then, if you are bringing your offering to the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your offering there before the altar, go and be reconciled with your brother first, and then come back and present your offering'*.

This kind of prayer, interwoven with reflections on the Gospel and on life, is not a prayer that ends as we rise from our knees. It is a prayer that must follow through to change, conversion and praxis.

With such prayer on the part of Whites there is hope. Without it, none. For Blacks cannot pray for justice and reconciliation without expecting that their prayers too follow through into praxis. What praxis? If everything you do peacefully ends in suspicion, interrogation, banning, detention, imprisonment and torture, what is left for you to do?

LISTEN TO VICTIMS, TAKE SIDES IN PRESENTING FAITH, UMC URGED

—Ecumenical Press Service.

Atlantic City — In one of two major addresses during their spring meeting here, members of the Education and Cultivation Division (United Methodist Church) were urged by a former United Presbyterian missionary, the Rev. Frederick Bronkema, *'to listen to what leaders of revolutions are trying to tell us'*.

'The living God is working in and through the victims in our society', Mr Bronkema said. *'To be fully human,'* he added, *'is to express anger at wrongs in our world.'*

In another address, the World Council of Churches' director of communication warned against development of a professionalism in communications that *'forgets on whose behalf we communicate'*.

'Proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ is not impartial', asserted Jürgen Hilke. *'We must take sides in presenting the Christian faith.'* Referring to denominational differences around the world, Mr

Hilke said, *'the witness of the Church lies in how it struggles with its diversity and copes with the conflict it has, and should have, in its own ranks.'*

He also cautioned against *'looking at our differences in terms of the smallest common denominator'*. This, he said, is one of the major threats to the ecumenical movement and the World Council of Churches, because *'what holds the Church together is our common struggle, not our least common denominator'*.

The World Council official also stressed that a *'church in Indianapolis needs to be concerned about, in prayer for and in relationship with a church in Nairobi, Kenya, or somewhere else'* because *'the coming of the Kingdom is not just to one local church, but . . . to the whole world'*.

THE INVOLVEMENT OF THE CHURCH IN THE COMMUNITY

An Address to the AME Church Laymen's Annual Conference

- Dr. Oscar D. Wollheim

When Jesus Christ was walking about Palestine one thousand, nine hundred and seventy years ago, the authorities regarded him as a revolutionary and a subversive agent. In the end the authorities tried him before a phoney court and condemned him to death by crucifixion together with common thieves.

We do not crucify people today for holding views which do not conform with those of the authorities, but our authorities do detain them for almost indefinite periods, ban them from meeting with more than two people and from schools, universities, factories and other places, confine them to limited areas of operation, silence them by making it unlawful to publish what they say and write, banish them to remote areas or deport them from the country.

But then, of course, values have changed and many of the things Jesus said and did in those days are today accepted as proper and perfectly lawful. We have developed a different set of norms and standards which our authorities wish us to conform to and for which we are punished if we reject them or try to change them.

Jesus relevant

Perhaps it may be interesting to look in modern language at some of the things Jesus did say and do to which the conformists took exception.

When He said: 'Render unto Caesar, etc.', he was really saying that we must obey the law of the state except where this is in conflict with basic ethical and moral principles and that the State should keep politics out of religion. Many churches, notably the Church of the Province, have warned the State that they would not be in a position to ask their members to obey certain laws like those which would have prevented members of a congregation from attending services merely because they were the wrong skin colour.

He was concerned with the evils of prostitution and showed great insight and understanding of the problem when he lifted Mary Magdalene from her misery and took steps to rehabilitate her through love and understanding of her problems — not through punishment or imprisonment or retribution.

He took practical steps to meet the needs of the poor and the hungry when he fed the masses who had gathered to hear him preach and he caused a very little food to go a very long way to meet their needs.

He was deeply angered and upset at the growing commercialisation and institutionalisation of the church itself and not only spoke fully and often both inside and outside the church against this, but he went further and drove out the money changers and dealers who infested the church and its immediate environs, and who made money out of religion.

His Sermon on the Mount is today a most moving and practical plea for justice, concern and action with a view to removing the disabilities of those around us. If He were here today he would be found among the squatters at Vrygrond, Modderdam and Crossroads; he would be pleading for equal pay for equal qualification and work; he would be demanding a say for all in the decision-making machinery of our government and for the lifting of the colour bar.

I could speak for hours on this theme and multiply these examples a hundredfold. I am merely mentioning them because we so often think of Jesus as a Man who lived nearly two thousand years ago and whose preachings may be relevant to the salvation of our souls, but have little validity in 20th. century industrial economies and in our daily lives and work in shop and factory. This is not so;

they are as relevant today as they were then and point clearly where we must go.

19th Century

I now want to turn to times a little more near to our own. Some 200 years ago Britain began a process of making by machines that which people had made at home by hand before. Machines could spin yarn and weave cloth a thousand times faster and at a tenth of the price that individuals could do it on their little hand spinning wheels and handlooms.

The country folk who had made their living in this way found themselves unable to market their products in the face of the competition of machine-made goods and they were forced to leave their country homes and move to London, Liverpool, Manchester, Bradford and Northampton to look for work in the factories there. Although the factory owners were glad to have this labour, the authorities were caught unawares and made no preparation for providing for all these millions of extra people in their out-of-work hours. There were no homes, no schools, no hospitals, no clinics and no churches or recreational facilities.

By 1840 — The Hungry Forties — the most appalling slums and squatter camps had developed around all these and other cities. Dickens wrote about them in *Oliver Twist* and many other books.

The Infant Mortality Rate grew to some 500 per thousand live births; prostitution was rife; crime lurked around every corner; it was not safe to go out at night; little children were forced to work fourteen hours per day; women were paid threepence per day for full time work.

The same story repeated itself in Paris, Brussels, Milan, Rome, Hamburg and Berlin; later it was again repeated in New York, Boston, Los Angeles and Pittsburgh; today it is repeated in South Africa's big cities of Cape Town, Johannesburg, Durban and Port Elizabeth.

For a long time the churches did little or nothing about the problems pressing all around them. They tended to act like the Pharisees who pulled their skirts aside when they saw the victim of robbers at the side of the road. He was at long last saved by the Good Samaritan who picked him up and took him to the inn where he fed him and dressed his wounds. The Good Samaritan of the late 18th. century was John Wesley who saw the plight of the worker and realised his helplessness. He was the founder of the Methodist Church which grew from strength to strength for the simple reason that it concerned itself with the plight of the worker and with the every day problems of the underdog.

This identification with those who suffered brought great strength to this Church which grew so rapidly in membership that it posed a threat to other churches and especially to the established church.

Church decline

Unfortunately even the Methodists ran out of steam towards the end of the 19th. century and all churches began to experience great losses in membership and an even more alarming lessening of interest. Empty pews were the order of the day and the call to worship remained unheeded.

Why was this? What had gone wrong? There was a general heart searching among churchmen and it took two world wars and the holocaust of the atom bomb falling on Hiroshima before they began to come up with the answers. Even the oldest and most

conservative of them all — the Roman Catholic Church — began to search its soul with the Council called by Pope John.

The answer they came up with were that the church had become irrelevant. They were more concerned with their own survival, their own prestige, their own doctrines and themselves as institutions than they were with the teachings and examples of Jesus Christ.

They quarrelled continuously among themselves; they damned and excommunicated any member who preferred to join another church; they conducted campaigns of hate against Muslims, Jews, Hindu and Buddhist; they supported the Establishment on every occasion against the ordinary man — even to the extent of supporting Hitler, Mussolini, Franco and Salazar; they were unconcerned at the everyday problems of their members; they were powerless to stop the two World Wars.

What were some of these everyday problems? Wages were well below the breadline; there was often forced labour; at one stage churches even found texts to justify the owning of slaves; there was little or no recreation for labouring classes, no clinics, health centres, family planning, creches or nursery schools; there was no outcry against deportation to Australia for stealing a sheep or public execution by beheading or hanging for quite petty crimes; houses were scandalously overcrowded; illegitimacy rates were extremely high; employers often provided houses for their workers and then forced them to work for sweated wages on pain of losing their homes at a time when none other could be found; workers often had to put in 60 to 70 hours per week.

Throughout all this the church remained unperturbed. It felt that its main concern was to save the soul of man. It sent out missionaries to the most outlying parts of the world who destroyed every ethical value or moral code ever possessed by those to whom they preached the Gospel and who tried to impose upon simple and primitive people — not the love, concern and the tolerance on which Jesus insisted — but the narrow doctrines of their own particular interpretation of what Christ meant.

They did not realise that you cannot save a man's soul if he possesses no body in which it can reside, that a man cannot be expected to grasp higher theological values while his tooth is aching so badly as to exclude every other thought or while his stomach is screaming for food or while he is covered in veld sores owing to lack of vitamins. They did not realise that Jesus would have castigated them and ordered them to get out of their richly ornamented cathedrals and to identify with suffering — as He did — as He asked his disciples to go out into the world and teach.

Church changes?

It has been only since the end of the last world war — since 1945 when I was already a middle-aged man with a wife and two children — that things began to change.

Coventry Cathedral had been bombed and burned to the ground. A new and magnificent Cathedral was built in its place — but with a difference. The new building was people orientated and not altar orientated. Although the normal services continued to be held, the building remained open daily and purposefully put to work to serve the everyday man in the street; the Cathedral reached out into the slums and the poorer people and asked what they could do to help them solve their problems.

Soon other churches were doing the same. The Church of the Province was the trigger of a place like CAFDA. St Saviour's has an Open Door where anybody can go for a cheap and nourishing meal without anybody bothering about the colour of his skin; the Methodists opened The Carpenter's House in Buitenkant Street; and so on and so on.

Not only this, but the churches began to see that continual quarrelling with each other was getting them nowhere and they began to realise that hate campaigns against Jews, Moslems, Catholics/Protestants were not only paying no dividends, but were absolutely contrary to Christ's basic philosophy of love, concern and tolerance of another man's view. And so churches began to band together in Councils of Churches in the various countries and

a World Council of Churches.

This movement has gained strength and the philosophy of Ecu-
menism began to take root. This means that the basic ethical and moral values of religion transcend the individual interpretations of differing churches, religious groups and denominations. Integrity, love, concern tolerance and faithfulness are common to all the great religions and should form the binding common denominator which transcends differences of opinion about precise detailed interpretations.

Church Involved

And so I begin to take hope again that the church may yet once more become relevant — become a force to be reckoned with. I think that I may be able to speak in this way about the church because I belong to none. I was born into the Dutch Reformed Church with all its narrow and exclusive and intolerant Calvinism. I resigned from it in disgust when that church persecuted unto death the only man who was trying to bring some light and modern thinking of the 20th. century into its teachings. He was the late Professor du Plessis, Head of the Theological Seminary at Stellenbosch, who was tried for heresy in 1929, found guilty and dismissed, won his appeal in the Supreme Court, but died of a broken heart because of the ostracism and persecution to which he was subjected. I joined no other because at that time there were few if any churches that I found to be relevant to the society in which I was living.

I taught for many years at the Wesley Training College in Salt River in those years and many of my pupils were Muslim, others were Hindu or Buddhist or Confucist; many of my friends were Jews. I found it hard to reconcile what I understood Christ's teaching to mean with that which the churches were doing.

When Jesus was asked what was the greatest commandment, he replied: 'Love God with all your heart and strength and love your neighbour as yourself'. This is a twofold command. We have to pray for and worship that which is good on the one hand. But on the other we have to love our neighbour as ourselves.

If we look upon our church and our religion as an opportunity to make our marble good with God by singing lusty hymns and hallelujah choruses, then we are only being half-Christians because we are only carrying out one half of Christ's command. We have to get out into the highways and the byways to see what is happening to our neighbours and to express in practical terms our concern and love for them, if we want to realise the other half of Christianity.

What wages do they earn? Can we help them to organise for better wages and conditions of service? Have they got proper houses in which parents have privacy, the children have ample sleeping space and cleanliness becomes possible and easy? Do they know anything about nutrition, family planning and the like, and can we do anything to help them. Is there a creche or nursery where working mothers can leave their pre-school children without neglecting them? If not, can we start one? Are we doing anything about the School Feeding Scheme or CAFDA or SHAWCO or the Islamic Welfare Society? Can we start our own welfare and counselling service, or at least start something which will help the ignorant and helpless to find the right place to go to? Do we ever look outside the strict bounds of our own congregations to see what is happening to our neighbours? Because our own congregations are our family — our neighbours live in another house.

You belong to a great church — the church for so long presided over by my old friend Bishop Francis Gow. The roots of your church lie in a powerful country — probably the richest country in the world over the other side of the Atlantic. Have you looked at the involvement of your parent church in the United States in the affairs of the man in the street, in the NAACP, the Urban League, the Southern Regional Council? You may find inspiration there and a finger to point the way for you to go.

That way may not be the most comfortable way to go because we live in perilous times as I indicated at the beginning of this speech. But that way can be followed without trauma as I have found. The way does not involve confrontation, disobedience of the law or

direct action. But the way may involve consultation, discussion, negotiation and sacrifice.

It is a long way because you must first abolish poverty and illiteracy; then you must begin to agitate for the development of a middle class and a professional class with money in their pockets and skills in their hands and brains; when these things have been

achieved, then the rest follows as the day follows the night. Political rights never in history preceded the things I have mentioned; they *always* followed them.

If the church wishes to become a force in the land and relevant to the people it seeks to serve, then it must involve itself in these things and then it will become the handmaiden of its Master.

O. D. Wollheim

PHAKAMILE MABIJA

phakamile mabijs

On Thursday, July 7, 1977, Mr Phakamile Mabijs (27), a youth worker for the Anglican Diocese of Kimberley, fell to his death after allegedly jumping through a louvered window on the sixth floor of the Transvaal Road Police Station where he had been held in detention since June 27, 1977.

Phakamile had been detained at his home on June 27 after alleged involvement in a stoning incident in Vergenoeg, the Black 'township' near Kimberley. He had been due to appear in Kimberley Magistrate's Court on a charge under the Riotous Assemblies Act the day after his death.

As a member of the Anglican Church's Nomad programme (a team of young people selected and trained to do full-time youth work on a diocesan level) Phakamile had undergone an intensive 3½ month experiential training course run by the interdenominational National Youth Leadership Training Programme (NYLTP) earlier this year. Fellow-participants on this course remember Phakamile (Pax) as a forceful, strong yet gentle person totally committed to a radical but non-violent liberation in South Africa. Those who knew Pax intimately doubted that he was the kind of person who would commit suicide.

At a memorial Service held in Durban on Friday, July 8, a group of friends subscribed to the following statement:

'We pledge ourselves, with others, to find out the circumstances surrounding the death of Phakamile Mabijs. We re-affirm our belief in the Love of God to save our Land and all its people and we renew our pledge to serve Him regardless of the cost. There will probably be more who will be detained and there will probably be more who will die in detention, but we will continue in the name of Jesus Christ to work for the removal of the rank injustices of discrimination in South Africa until our beloved country is cleared of this disease. We will never give up.'

Revd Dr. Donald Veysie	Vish Supersad
Derek Kotze	Vuyi Nxasana
Jaye Joubert	Gail Gibbs-Jones
Reinier Holst	Pam Braadvedt
Nick Smith Margaret Moore	Anne Mullins
Charles and Celia van Heerden	Bruce Jenniker
Heather Thompson	Anne Kroon
	Sue Britton.

—Pope Pivs XI, 28 March 1937.

If a situation arises when the duly constituted authorities oppose justice and truth to the extent that their destructive acts affect the very basis of authority, one cannot see how one should condemn those citizens who unite to defend the nation and themselves, by legitimate and appropriate means, against those who take advantage of their power to lead the country into ruin.



PHAKAMILE HARRY ka MABIJA

The first time that I met Phakamile Mabijs I was left with an image of a dynamic, energetic and articulate man. He was occupied with his greatest interest — speaking to young people. The scene was St Cyprian's Cathedral, Kimberley.

Dynamic people are sometimes hard, but Phakamile was a gentle person. Born and bred in Kimberley, educated at St Paul's Primary School, Barclay Road High School and Bensonvale Training Collège, he was a teacher of five years experience at the time he applied to serve in the NOMAD PROJECT. His Bishop, Graham Chadwick, accepted him, and sent him for training. Following this he was commissioned in St George's Cathedral, Cape Town, by Archbishop Bill Burnett and Bishop Philip Russell. I recall the blessing:

'Go forth into the world in peace, be of good courage, fight the good fight of faith that you may finish your course with joy.'

Phakamile was a churchwarden in his home Parish, St James, Galeshewe, under his rector, Simon Lucas. The people of St James recognised Phakamile's spiritual leadership. I remember him as a man who deeply loved and studied God's Word. He was happiest when communicating his vital faith to young people. In fact, the weekend before his detention (on Monday 27th June) he was running a youth leadership training weekend in Douglas. Ten days later, Thursday 7th July, he died in detention.

I have a firm and unshakeable confidence in Phakamile's integrity. I am left with a deep admiration for a man who will be an example to me my whole life through.

I close with a quotation from one of the many letters that I have received:

'I believe Phakamile is with Christ where he belongs. I need to be doing something about the other Phakamiles.'

J. D. Stubbs
DIRECTOR DEPARTMENT OF YOUTH C.P.S.A.

WORLD CONFERENCE AGAINST APARTHEID RACISM AND COLONIALISM

Lisbon, Portugal June 1977

This conference, widely reported in the world press at the time, was attended by 203 representatives from many countries, and produced the type of resolutions to be expected from a conference dominated by the 'Socialist Countries', South African ANC, SWAPO, and the Rhoesian Patriotic Front.

Our report is different. It comes from a group of churchmen who met there and expressed concerns which are of essential importance to Christians in Southern Africa.

In a corner of the downstairs bar of the Penta Hotel, Lisbon, where some 400 delegates from 72 countries had gathered for the World Conference Against Apartheid, a strange tri-lingual discussion was being carried on by a group of ten men and women. In a mixture of French, English and Portuguese they were discussing the challenge of such a conference to the Christians present, and the responsibility of the churches in the liberation struggle in South Africa.

In the hallway outside the bar, conference officials were preparing the table for the press conference the next morning which would be attended by Oliver Tambo, Acting President of the ANC (SA); Sam Nujoma, President of SWAPO; and Robert Mugabe and Joshua Nkomo, joint leaders of the Patriotic Front of Zimbabwe... What was the challenge to the churches?

Significantly, three of the liberation movement leaders referred to the role of the churches in Southern Africa, but the aspects which they saw fit to mention were those which were born out of the pain and suffering of a Church-State confrontation: the trial and deportation of Bishop Lamont and the arrest of other priests in Zimbabwe by the Smith Government; the leading role played by the Namibian churches in opposing the illegal South African administration and the puppet Turnhalle consultations there, a role which has caused detention, deportation, torture and harassment for church officials. It was the Church as a Witness against Oppression and for Liberation which caught the imagination of these future Southern African leaders.

But it was not this side of the churches' role that was being discussed by the group of men and women in the corner of the bar. It was the decades old role of the church as the supporter of colonial domination, the fear of the church to speak out, the racist structure of the church hierarchies and the continuation of the myth of Christianity as the religion of the oppressors that caused concern to the group of Christians and church workers at the conference.

The main Conference was unwieldy. After the initial opening speeches (which lasted till 2 a.m.) the conference split into five commissions, political, economic, legal, military and action. Each commission was asked to produce a declaration or series of resolutions on their own particular subject using suggestions put forward by the liberation movements.

Against this background the group came to the basic decision that if church workers in Southern Africa were not actively promoting the cause of racial equality they should be strongly encouraged to leave, or be withdrawn. The church cannot compromise with the forces of racism and exploitation. This was the case in Mocambique and Angola, and there Christianity lost credibility as a religion of liberation. Thus the draft submission on Church Responsibility was brought to the conference by the church representatives.

This submission was then taken to both the political and action commissions where the churches submission was partially included in the final conference documents.

Thus at a conference which envisages a new order in Southern

Africa, an order where racism is abolished and foreign economic exploitation is no more, the churches were seen to have played a part. 'Which is important,' as Sam Nujoma of SWAPO said on a visit to the Netherlands immediately after the Lisbon conference, 'because after liberation the churches will also enjoy the benefits of the new society'

DRAFT SUBMISSION ON CHURCH RESPONSIBILITY

The World Conference against Apartheid, Racism and Colonialism in Southern Africa meeting in Lisbon, Portugal, June 16-19, 1977 addresses a special word of concern to the churches and mission agencies operating in South Africa, Namibia and Zimbabwe.

The western Christian world is held in suspicion by the oppressed people of Southern Africa. They have been seen for too long to be on the side of the oppressing powers. Numbers of blacks have turned for the help they need to progressive socialist states and organisations, and the churches have become almost irrelevant for the liberation struggle. This is the feeling of many Christians, especially of black Christians in the Republic of South Africa.

In the present situation there is an urgent need for the Christian churches to reassess their responsibilities, to enter into dialogue and also actively co-operate with those who, as progressive movements, are fulfilling their humanitarian aims and working for justice.

The Conference also issues an appeal:

- to all Christians in South Africa, Namibia and Zimbabwe — being the largest group in these countries — to resist all kinds of racial separation, both in private and in public life;
- to all churches, mission-agencies and related organisations, operating from outside South Africa, Namibia and Zimbabwe to see that their personnel — either in fulfilling their functions or in their private lives — actively promote the cause of racial equality and the struggle against racism. Those of their non-South African co-workers who by their behaviour have shown themselves to be unable or unwilling to take serious steps towards the ending of the existing 'status quo' (viz., the maintaining of racial separation as the ruling and legally accepted political principle) should be strongly encouraged to leave the country or even be withdrawn by their authorities;
- to all churches, mission agencies and other Christian organisations in these countries to remove immediately and completely all kinds of racial separation in their organisations, works and teaching and to resist such separations in public as well as in private;
- to all individuals, groups and organisations of whatever conviction in the named countries, to follow the same principles and attitudes against racial separation;
- to all individuals and organisations of a religious nature and conviction in all countries, to support strongly this struggle against racism in South Africa, Namibia and Zimbabwe, and to unite for this purpose with all people engaged in liberation.

AN OPEN LETTER TO MEMBERS OF THE RENEWAL MOVEMENT

— James Moulder

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

I have taken the liberty of writing this open letter to you because I share your hope that God will use the Renewal Conference from 29 August to 5 September to challenge and to heal the South African churches by challenging and healing us. And this is not an idle hope. Members of the Renewal Movement helped to draft the PACLA Pledge — a document which is full of hope and challenge. In addition, members of the Renewal Movement know that God the Holy Spirit does liberate us from 'the alien spirits of hatred, vengeance and violence which dehumanise all who are gripped by them'. (Paragraph 4 of the PACLA Pledge.)

For all these reasons, therefore, I hope and pray that God will use your Conference to affirm, and to draw the consequences of, the hope and the challenge which are contained in the PACLA Pledge. More specifically, I hope and pray that God will use your Conference to help us understand what the idea of God's alternative society requires us to believe and to do. And because I have this hope, I want to discuss some of the questions and answers which have arisen from my own reflection on the PACLA Pledge and, especially, on the idea of God's alternative society.

But before I begin may I state the obvious: *my questions are no more than examples of the kind of questions we have to ask ourselves about what this idea involves. And my answers are no more than examples of the kind of answers God may want to give to our questions.*

Firstly, what, if anything, is God's alternative to the Day of the Covenant? I ask this question because Easter and the Day of the Covenant are both about a covenant. But the two covenants are very different. Easter is a Eucharistic covenant; a thanksgiving. Anyone who repents and believes the Gospel is invited to celebrate this covenant. And at the height of the celebration Christ speaks to us: 'This is my blood of the new covenant which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins'. The Day of the Covenant, however, is a cause of great unhappiness to the majority of South Africans. They see it as the celebration of racial domination. In addition, the celebration is clothed in Christian words and symbols. And so racial domination appears to be what the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit want for our country.

This conception of the Day of the Covenant may be something which God wants us to challenge. And so he may want to transform the day into an occasion on which Christians of all races affirm that there is only one covenant which we may celebrate because there is only 'one mediator between God and men, Christ Jesus, himself man, who sacrificed himself to win freedom for all mankind'. (1 Timothy 2:5-7) At the same time, he may want to use this occasion to demand that we dedicate ourselves to do justice, and to love kindness and to walk humbly with our God. (Micah 6:8) In other words: God may want us to celebrate the Easter Covenant on the Day of the Covenant.

Last year Diakonia gave us a good example of the kind of celebration which may be God's alternative to the Day of the Covenant. They invited Christians from all over the greater Durban area to hold very simple 'covenant meals' in their homes at midday on December 16. And they encouraged the people who accepted this challenge to invite a group of about a dozen people from different sections of the community to this meal. Diakonia provided a litany people could use: a blessing, a grace, and a dedication. And in the afternoon everyone who wished to do so worshipped together in Emmanuel Cathedral.

Secondly, what, if anything, is God's alternative to combat training and service in the South African Defence Force? I ask this question because, whatever God's alternative society is, it is not a sentimental community. There are ways in which we can test whether or not our actions and ideas are incompatible with the way of life which is demanded by God's alternative society: 'Here is the test by which we can make sure that we are in him; whoever claims to be dwelling in him, binds himself to live as Christ himself lived.' (1 John 2:6)

These words underline the uncomfortable phrase in the PACLA Pledge which challenges us to resist 'any methods which violate Calvary love and the peaceful ways of the Cross'. (Paragraph 3 of the PACLA Pledge.) And John's words underline the PACLA challenge because they remind us that our Lord, Jesus Christ, spent a great deal of his time healing people. And so anybody who binds himself to live as Christ lived, binds himself to try to bring physical and spiritual health to people. On the other hand, the head of the Citizen Force, Major-General Neil Webster, was simply being honest when he commented on what combat training and service in the SADF involves: 'We take a chap out of his civil life and train him to be an aggressive killer'. (*Sunday Tribune*, 7 November 1976. Compare *Rapport*, 6 March 1977: Na grens haat hul al wat swart is.)

John's epistle and Major-General Webster's statement are equally frank and straightforward. But their words are incompatible. And no stretch of the imagination can remove the incompatibility. Whoever claims to be dwelling in him, binds himself to live as Christ lived. Whoever allows himself to be trained as a combatant — whether by the SADF or by the guerilla movements — binds himself to be trained as an aggressive killer.

For all these reasons, therefore, we need to ask ourselves what, if anything, is God's alternative to combat training and service in the SADF? And as we seek for an answer it is important to remember the generous interpretation which the Minister of Defence has placed on section 67(3) of the Defence Act. He has declared that it is his Department's policy to grant all applications for exemption from combat training under this section of the Act, provided that an applicant's request is supported by his religious convictions; and that he is prepared to be trained and to serve in the Medical Corps of the SADF. (Hansard, 1974: reply to question 20 and South African Defence Force Order 42/70.) In other words: there is a perfectly legal arrangement whereby Christians can seek to express their conviction that the idea of God's alternative society requires us to refuse to submit to combat training. And this legal arrangement enables us to meet both the demands of the SADF and the demands of the Gospel of Christ.

And so one could continue. For example, what, if anything, is God's alternative to the structures and arrangements which govern the Chaplains' Corps of the SADF? Does he, perhaps require the churches to provide chaplains for the Black soldiers of the SADF? And what, if anything, is God's alternative to the economic inequalities which exist in our land? Does he, perhaps, require us to give one per cent of our income to a scholarship fund for Black education? or to the Black Community Programme?

I will not try to answer these questions. I mention them for the same reason I discussed the other two questions in some detail: if we believe that the PACLA Pledge and the idea of God's alternative society ought to guide what we believe and what we do, then these

are the kinds of questions we need to ask ourselves and these are the kinds of answer God may give us.

And so I want to end in the way in which I began. I have tried to explain why the PACLA Pledge and the idea of God's alternative society contains so much hope and so many challenges. I have also tried to give some examples of the kind of hope and challenge which

this pledge generates. But my examples may, of course, not be any good. And I may have misunderstood what the PACLA Pledge and the idea of God's alternative society involves. I therefore hope and pray that God will use your Conference to help me discover what this pledge and this idea are all about.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and fellowship in the Holy Spirit, be with you all.

A STAND ON CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTION

- Richard Knottenbelt

Quakers - members of the Society of friends - refuse to take up arms on the grounds of conscience. The author recalls his experience with the Rhodesian authorities.

Richard Knottenbelt received call-up papers for 'one day National Service in the army; a medical examination and attestation' (taking the required oath) for 16th April 1977. He writes:

I applied for exemption from all forms of National Service, but the call up for 16th April was only withdrawn after sustained intervention with the Registrar of Manpower by my lawyer. The call-up was to be postponed till after a hearing on the application for exemption before the Conscientious Exemption Board. This took place on 20th June in Salisbury.

In my letter of application for exemption I recalled my two previous applications; in 1963 when I was refused total exemption and was subsequently fined for not reporting for non-combatant duty in the medical corps; in 1964 I was granted one year exemption. I also stated that my membership of the Society of Friends and the religious experience in it had deepened and verified my beliefs, in particular the experience of 'that of God in everyman' led me to refuse to engage in any activity directly or indirectly which leads to others' lives being taken or violated. This applies especially to war where one cannot know the 'enemy' personally.

Over the past 15 years I have tried to live a way of life that removed the causes of war and have spent a lot of time and effort trying to persuade others to commit themselves to achieve their ends by non-violent means. I also stated that life cannot be divided up into compartments — personal, work, family, religious or political. All of life is religious in nature.

Finally, once engaged in National Service, one loses the right to future application for exemption as a C.O.

My lawyer was with me in the hearing and urged the granting of total exemption on legal grounds. But most of the one hour was taken up with questioning based on the points raised in the letter of application. Although the tone of the hearing was cordial and I felt I had the opportunity to say most of what I wanted to, the Board did not seem to understand the religious basis of the refusal to serve nor the feeling that the whole of the Armed Forces, whether combatant or not, exists to achieve its purpose by killing and the threat of killing. Presumably this is why I was 'ordered to serve in non-combatant duty when instructed'.

This seems to bear out the previous experience that the Board sees its role as channelling all applicants into some 'alternate service' in the war effort, despite the fact that the Minister of Manpower has not issued a directive to this effect.

The only form of non-combatant duty discussed in the hearing was ambulance work in the army — apparently because the Board's chairman had admired the voluntary and independent Friends Ambulance Unit in his military activity in the First World War.

One of the Board's standard techniques is to ask hypothetical questions. 'What would you do if . . .' On this occasion — a guerilla abduction, attack on the family, violence in society, the possibility of a Marxist state — were all used. In each case I simply affirmed

that it was difficult to predict what one would do in the future but that I would seek imaginative responses to the situation which respected the people involved and tried to answer that of God in them. These answers seemed to be met with amused disbelief.

I spoke about approaches made to R. F. Ministers, including the Prime Minister, on concrete actions on the part of the administration which would have made the situation develop less violently and in a more peaceful way. An example I cited was the number of books on non-violence that were banned from use in school libraries. The authorities had not acted on any of these suggestions.

I also spoke about my conversations with African Nationalist leaders on non-violent approaches to the struggle for a just independence and stated that although I had considerable sympathy for their cause, I could not join in support, directly, for any of the parties who do not reject violent means. It is interesting that they seemed most interested in Robert Mugabe!

There was also considerable questioning on the practicality of non-violence. I said clearly that I could not decide for society what means of control and defence it would chose for itself, but that my feelings and religious beliefs lead me to work for a society without armed forces. In such a society the citizens would be trained and be knowledgeable in asserting their rights knowing what these were and the non-violent action based on respect for others would lead to an improvement in everyone's lot. When non-violence is used on as large a scale as violence today, and as committedly, it could be seen whether it were more effective. Until then I would continue working in this way convinced of its rightness.

The Conscientious Objectors Exemption Board has three members. The chairman, Sir Ernest Fallow, fought in the First World War; Major Hein is a retired army officer, and the District Commissioner of Salisbury who is ex officio a member. It is strange that the Board whose duty is to consider applications for exemption based on religious beliefs does not include someone like a minister of religion.

On returning home I found a new set of call-up papers for a one day call-up on 16th July. On 22nd June written confirmation of the Board's decision arrived by post together with another set of call-up papers for the 16th July one day call-up.

It is my intention not to report for this call-up and to refuse to take an oath of attestation.

The recently issued Emergency Powers Law and Order Maintenance Regulations make it impossible to restrain the Armed Forces from implementing call-ups by court orders. Maximum penalties under the National Service Act are \$1000 and/or two years' imprisonment.

- from the S.A. Quaker Newsletter

THE CHALLENGES TO A CHRISTIAN TEACHER IN SOWETO TODAY

A Soweto teacher, concerned for the faith, looks at his task

T. Mkwanazi

The June 16, 1976 riots shook the world — parents, teachers, authorities, students, and Pastors. It was not only shaken but it took a dramatic turn. To some people, teachers were held responsible, for obvious reasons.

Many things that used to be the order of the day before the riots, were questioned and doubted after the riots: Black students started questioning the black education system; the role of the Church; government created bodies; white values; the role of their parents in the liberation struggle; the role of black students in the oppressive situation; whether God is concerned about the plight of the oppressed majority in this country and the destiny of the black man. Some of these things were not only questioned, but ultimately had to give way, like Afrikaans as a medium of instruction.

If the black man, especially the black student, is experiencing some renaissance of self-awareness, and demands human dignity for himself, political expression and human rights, what then is the role of a black Christian teacher? He is faced with some difficult challenges: Educational, religious, social and political.

Educational

The Bantu Education system was tailored to domesticate blacks.

An education should teach in order to develop the dehumanised black student mentally, physically and spiritually.

The demand is for the abolition of Bantu Education. What does the teacher do? He should engage himself in public discussions of the topic and get to know the philosophy and aim of the education system. He should suggest ways of bringing about a better education system that should have as its aim the development of the individual taking into consideration the important role the educated individual must play in uplifting the nation, especially during post-liberation times.

Sometimes during assembly and devotions, he should relate biographies of past and present black heroes and heroines to show that a black man is worth his salt, in spite of the deliberate stumbling blocks in his way. Suitable persons would be John Tengo, the first black newspaper owner; Jake Tuli, first South African British Flyweight Champion; Miss Soga, founder of the National Council of African Women; Mirriam Makeba, world renowned African song-bird; Dr. E. Sithole, amongst the very few Africans holding LL.D.; Chief Albert Luthuli, Nobel Peace Prize winner; John L. Dube, founder of Ohlange High School; Mr S. Motsuenyane, first chairman of the African Bank of South Africa; Prof. Zeke Mphahlele; Mr Nimrod Mkele M.A. Industrial Psychology; Prof. Bopape, the first black professor of social work; Winston Ntshona and John Kani, actors; B. B. Myataza, musician and composer; the late Mr W. Tshazibane, engineer; Advocate Mabiletsa S. C. and Dr Marengwa, the first black geologist.

The teacher should encourage students to read newspapers, and magazines and lead them in community development projects. Students should be reminded that culturally the black people are communalistic and therefore instead of buying unnecessary items they should save the few cents to buy useful commodities like tea, sugar, and soap to supply the needy in transit camps, old age homes and orphanages.

He should encourage objectivity amongst the students by arranging different speakers who are authorities on different educational subjects to give addresses. Students should be encouraged to discuss freely and speak their minds on the subjects.

He should opt to offer Religious Instruction at school even if it

may be a non-exam subject, or get some willing horse to assist. The presentation should be properly done so as to excite and provoke thinking. Above all the teaching should relate to the present society and be correlated with other subjects, especially History. He should emphasise the good points found in black culture. He should be a sympathetic listener as well as a wise adviser.

Spiritual

The Bible has been negatively presented and as a result it has become a closed book, a book of the past. Christianity is taken as a white man's religion.

To meet this challenge, the teacher should aim at making the Bible an open book by inviting speakers to read papers on topical subjects: 'The Christian and sexual morality'; 'The Christian and politics'; 'The Role of Christian students in the changing society'; 'The political responsibilities of Christian students'; or 'Is revolution christian?'. He should encourage them to be involved in community development projects thereby matching their words with deeds. Black Theology should be correctly presented to counter the negative way in which the Gospel was presented.

He should encourage, guide, and develop their talents by making them run their programmes in the local S.C.M. branch, and instil in them, through prayer and bible study meetings, the spirit of love for their Saviour and fellow students.

Mention can be made of a few black Christians before the advent of the white men, like Simon of Cyrene, or Jesus of Nazareth himself, to show that Christianity is not a white man's religion.

Social

We have been made to believe that liquor drinking is the only way of entertainment. The teacher should encourage students to be active socially by becoming members of cultural, or sporting clubs. Raise funds to organise picnics to impress on their minds that liquor drinking is not necessarily the only way of recreation, but can be in fact a way of destroying the black nation. He should take keen interest in their recreation by visiting and co-operating with the leaders of youth clubs.

Political

We have been made to believe that a black man is in the custody of the whites — therefore the whites always decide without consulting the black man on this destiny. We have been dehumanised by the devil-inspired apartheid policy of separate development.

Teachers should encourage students to join Student political movements where other students discuss topics like 'Students march towards liberation', 'Towards the practical manifestation of Black Consciousness'. He should also encourage them to follow political affairs through newspapers, magazines, discussions and reading books.

As a Christian, he should be on the side of the students when they take part in peaceful demonstrations for justice, law and order, human rights and human dignity.

The Christian teacher should also be careful not to over-emphasise man's ideology above that of his Master.

In conclusion, the teacher must be a faithful Christian who lives close to the people and their problems and close to the Lord and His powers. The 'Jesus-kind' of teacher is attractive if he is both involved and yet clean. He must have both a silent witness through a moral life and kindly acts, and a verbal witness for Christ.

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