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BY DIE POSKANTOOR AS NUUSBLAD INGESKRYF

pro veritate

EASIER FOR A CAMEL

'How hard it is for those who have riches to make their way into the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.'

Luke 18:25

Easier for a camel? The shattering truth, said Jesus, is that rich people are almost incapable of entering God's kingdom.

Adultery, murder, theft, lying, dishonour do not prevent them. But possessions! These present an almost insuperable barrier. And we are rich indeed.

Religion.

Linking wealth with power, prestige, status and authority, Jesus applied the stricture particularly to religious people (who because of their virtue are more likely to secure riches) and, in fact, the rich, religious and respectable were most resistant to Jesus and instigated his death.²

Are we modern churchmen also incapable of seeing the Gospel? Does fatness preclude faith? If people may be full of charity creeds and charisma, yet dedicated to the support of an evil system and blind to God's kingdom, may it not be happening to us — and we cannot see it?

We wag our heads wisely and declaim: 'Ofcourse, wealth can be used well.' Jesus says point blank to most whites and some blacks in South Africa that it is impossible for them to enter the Kingdom. Only God can work the miracle required.

It is easier for a camel . . .

The covetous society

We live in a money-motivated society designed to make the rich richer and the poor poorer. Financial institutions are the centre of our cities. Education is designed to enable children to earn money. Increased possessions produce cheers in churches, which register growth by financial statements and property reports. Progress is measured in profits. Policemen are justified in killing people to protect property (like Beer Halls). Entertainment, the media, sport, banking, insurance, transport, and manufacture depend on an advertising industry lauding the single commandment: THOU SHALT COVET THY NEIGHBOURS GOODS.

It is an evil and a damned enterprise, this society of ours, solidly supported by many churchmen. The scriptures speak of giving possessions away, or putting them at the disposal of the brethren; and warn of the peril of piling up goods on your own behalf.³

It is easier for a camel . . .

Wealthy churches

The churches themselves dispose of millions in hard cash, usually through a few men working behind closed doors and criticism.

We spend years and thousands providing ministers with training to defend dogmas and perpetuate practices which are largely irrelevant to the poor and oppressed of the world to whom we are sent, and a psychological approach and material background which leads them to perpetuate the evils of a rich society, and blinds them to the activity of God in the world, in direct contrast to the methods and teaching of Jesus.⁴ They do not see it.

The Scriptures announce⁵ that the erection of the Temple

was a major barrier to the work of the Holy Spirit of God, carried out by a stubborn people with pagan hearts and pagan ears, yet the work of our church centres on churches. The value of church property in Johannesburg, untouched by human feet for much of the time, is enough to change the whole system of education in South Africa, or rebuild Soweto as a total modern city with full facilities for any who live there. Are these thousands of church buildings necessary for the worship of Christ, or of riches power and status?⁶ With cathedrals, halls, cinemas, and schools scattered throughout the cities for people to meet in large numbers when necessary, can they not meet usually in their homes and smaller buildings where the real work of the New Testament is done?

It is a sick event when some of us speak, in Jesus name, in buildings costing thousands, and used once a week, to well dressed self-satisfied people, all anxious to get home for Sunday lunch beside their swimming pools.

Is it not its wealth and status that destroys the image of the churches in the eyes of the people, and also prevents the churches from seeing the kingdom? Can the church proclaim the kingdom — or even understand the phrase — when its priorities are determined by its possessions?⁷

Blindness

People cannot see that the criteria of a credit-rating social-status society blinds them to the ways of Christ.

Obsessed with the notion that God works through converted individuals in churches, they are incapable of seeing that the focus of his saving work is in secular society, not religious institutions.⁸ That the work of God in the world proceeds independently of religious organisation is anathema to devoted souls who have spent much of their lives supporting churches.⁹ The Kingdom is a terrifying attack upon beliefs focussed on possessions, and it is impossible for some to accept that the object of their devotion may blind them to the subject of it.

Truly sincere churchmen cannot see that God has little interest in their sacrifices, masses, communions, nagmaals, hymn singing and prayer meetings — unless they are concerned with love and justice and mercy. And is that where the churches' money is?¹⁰

Learned theologians and preachers, skilled in the scriptures, rich in culture, protected by the respectability accorded them, cannot see¹¹ that the Christ they study is actually known in those lacking substance, status, or seniority: like he was born in a manger. Or in a black student.

People cannot see that most church activities are not an involvement in saving the world, but an escape from it: listen to the sermons, the prayers, the list of notices, the financial statements.

Churches burdened with the support of possessions, dependent upon the support of authorities for interest rates, group areas approvals, sites, permissions to occupy, bond payments, banning orders, marriage licences, and all, are so integrated with the present system that they find it impossible to see the totally other system of the kingdom of God.¹²

To go for the Kingdom would mean giving up so much.
It is easier for a camel . . .

Kingdom in Society

Preoccupation with maintaining an ecclesiastical institution to help people who are sinners to go to heaven effectively precludes people from a prime concern for the liberating experience of sharing in Christ's activity on Earth. The argument that the churches task is to save individuals, and then individuals will change society, is as falacious as saying that the only way to change society is to change individuals. It attracts, because it avoids the problem of becoming involved.

Millions of people can be converted and become stalwart church supporters, being kind to their neighbours and servants, without changing society one jot. The whole evil apartheid system is the product of a deeply christian people whose possession of this sub-continent has blinded them to the kingdom of God. Most whites do not want society to be changed: they just want to clean it up a bit.

Society is not changed as an offshoot of personal goodness. It is changed when men and women set out to change the structures which control it. Believing that God is at work in his world, and bent on discovering the precise points on his current agenda, Christian people should be able to interpret what is happening, clear objectives and policies, build out from true communities, and be the interpreters, proclaimers, enablers, and disciples of the kingdom.

The idea that Christians are the light of the world is open to grave distortion. Christ is the light of the world, and the light shines in the darkness and the darkness has never put it out.¹³ Our task is to tell people about the light that comes into the world and shines on all men, i.e. to perceive and proclaim what Christ is doing in the world, and the direction in which his disciples must follow him to his kingdom.

It is not our task to build a massive organisation to teach men Christ's blue print for organising his world. There is no such blueprint. Christ is at large in the world, working in the secular affairs of men: this is the secret that Christians know, the Good News which they should proclaim, and the direction in which they should point his disciples. If the nations are to recognise his work and follow him, he must be revealed by people who are in touch with where God is — amongst the masses, in areas where church bodies seldom penetrate, and church priorities are irrelevant.

Whilst the church is burdened with the necessity of administering vast foundations, resources, and structures, such riches impose an enormous and sinful detachment from the Kingdom on Earth.¹⁴

And if it means that white western society is producing the problems, and that Christ is producing the answers in black society . . . ?

It is easier for a camel . . .

Looking

Pro Veritate does not presume to tell churches what to do in this matter, not because we seek to hide behind an arrogant

humility, but because we do not know. Only the churches can find the answers: we can merely suggest how they might look for them.

1. Let the churches examine the structures of Jesus on rich, respectable, religious people to pin point the danger areas in their priorities and organisation: and let them invite the assistance of non-church going students, black and white, in the enquiry, at every level.
2. Let the churches make public the results of this exercise, with full facts of its past practice and the fundamental redistribution of power and possessions it proposes in its own ranks: remembering that the Acts of the Apostles is not concerned to acquire wealth for religious structures but to dispose of it for the common good: and let them do this: no strings.¹⁵
3. Let the churches examine their indentification with the poor and oppressed¹⁶ and the captive in our apartheid society: and let them seek advice in this matter from those discriminated against. The Black Peoples Convention or similar bodies could provide the necessary input for church conferences and assemblies on the matter.
4. Let the churches turn again to the Gospels, to rediscover the first works of Jesus, and seek to recognise what he is doing in the world: and let them ask gatherings of laymen — politicians and reporters and school teachers and academics and business men and workers and farmers — to assist them.
5. Let the churches reassess the task of christian disciples in the world¹⁷
 - relinquishing their proud boast that their task is to bring a christian influence to bear on Government and other organisations, since they have neither the ability nor the calling to do so.
 - relinquishing their practice of giving critically negative judgments on politicians hard work without making any positive contribution.
 - and let them ask the "black theologians," "political priests," sociologists, social workers, and students to assist them to hear what God is saying through the oppressed.
6. Let the churches examine the purpose and validity of their ministry and organisation in the light of the New Testament and the needs of the kingdom, and let them seek guidance from the people who have left their congregations and the men who have left their ministries.
7. Thus let the people of God, freed from the encumbrance of their possessions and pretensions, put themselves in a position to see and enter Gods rule.

But if they thwart what God has in mind for them,¹⁸ let them not be surprised if the present rejection of the church continues until they find themselves shouldered onto the verges of life like wayside shrines to an ancient superstition — and watch the terrorists and students and unemployed and outcasts and detainees and draft dodgers and workers go into the Kingdom before them.¹⁹

It is easier for a camel . . . hairy hump and all.

FOOTNOTES:

1. Lk. 18:25.
2. Mk. 3:6
3. Lk. 16:15; Lk. 19:8; Acts 2:44.
4. Mk. 6:7-9.
5. Acts 7:47-51.
6. Matt. 6:1.
7. Lk. 16:13.
8. Jn. 9:16.

9. Jn. 1:10-11.
10. Micah 6:6-8; Amos 5:21-24; Lk. 18:9-14.
11. Jn. 9:39-41.
12. Jn. 11:47-53; Jn. 12:42-43.
13. Jn. 1:4-9.
14. Lk. 12:32-34.
15. Acts 4:32.
16. Matt. 25:31ff.
17. Matt. 28:19.
18. Lk. 7:30.
19. Matt. 21:31.

MAKLIKER VIR 'N KAMEEL

„Hoe beswaarlik sal hulle wat goed besit, in die koninkryk van God ingaan, want dit is makliker vir 'n kameel om deur die oog van 'n naald te gaan as vir 'n ryk man om in die koninkryk van God in te gaan.”

Luk. 18:24-25.

Makliker vir 'n kameel? Die verpletterende waarheid is, het Jesus gesê, dat rykes feitlik nie instaat is om die Koninkryk van God in te gaan nie.

Owerspel, moord, diefstal, leuens, skande sal hulle nie verhoed nie. Maar besittings! Laasgenoemde bied 'n bykans onoorkoomlike hinderpaal. En ons is inderdaad ryk.

Godsdiens

Terwyl Jesus rykdom met mag, prestige, status en gesag verbind het, het Hy die afkeurende kritiek in besonder toegepas op godsdienstige mense (wat omrede van hulle deugszaamheid rykdom makliker kan verkry) en in werklikheid het die rykes, godsdienstiges en fatsoenlikes die meeste weerstand teen Jesus gebied en sy dood bewerkstellig.²

Is ons moderne kerkmense ook onbevoeg om die Evangelie te verstaan? Verhinder oorgewig geloof? As mense vol is van barmhartigheidsleerstelling en charisma, maar tog toegewy is aan die ondersteuning van 'n bese sisteem en blind is vir Gods Koninkryk, kan dit nie ook met ons gebeur nie — en dat ons dit nie kan sien nie? Ons skud ons koppe wyslik en deklameer: „Natuurlik, rykdom *kan* goed gebruik word”. Jesus sê prontuit vir die meeste witmense en sommige swartmense in Suid-Afrika dat dit vir hulle onmoontlik is om die Koninkryk binne te gaan. Net God kan die nodige wonderwerk verrig.

Dit is makliker vir 'n kameel . . .

Die geldgierige samelewing

Ons lewe in 'n samelewing wat deur geld gemotiveer is en beplan is om die rykes ryker en die armes armer te maak. Finansiële instellings vorm die middelpunt van ons stede. Opvoeding is beplan om kinders te bekwaam om geld te verdien. Vermeerderde besittings veroorsaak toejuiging in kerke wat groei meet aan finansiële verslae en eiendomsberigte. Vooruitgang word gemeet volgens winste. Poliesmanne word geregverdig as hulle mense dood maak deur eiendom te beskerm (soos bv. biersale). Vermaak, die media, sport, bankwese, versekering, vervoer en vervaardiging hang af van 'n advertensiewese wat die een gebod verheerlik: **JY MOET JOU NAASTE SE GOED BEGEER.**

Dit is 'n bese en 'n vervloekte onderneming, hierdie samelewing van ons, wat deur baie kerkmense blokvas ondersteun word. Die Skrif praat van besittings weggee of om hulle tot beskikking van die broeders te plaas: en waarsku oor die gevaar om goedere vir jouself op te gaar.³

Dit is makliker vir 'n kameel . . .

Ryk kerke

Die kerke self beskik oor miljoene in harde kontant, gewoonlik deur middel van 'n paar mense wat agter geslote deure werksaam is.

Ons bestee jare en duisende om predikante van 'n opleiding te voorsien om dogmas te verdedig, en praktyke in stand te hou wat in 'n groot mate nie relevant is nie, ten opsigte van die armes en onderdrukte van die wêreld na wie ons gestuur is,

en 'n sielkundige benadering en materiële agtergrond wat hulle lei om die euwels van 'n ryk samelewing te bestendig en hulle verblind vir die werksaamheid van God in die wêreld in direkte teenstelling met die metodes en lering van Jesus.⁴ Hulle sien dit nie.

Die Skrif kondig aan⁵ dat die bou van die tempel 'n belangrike hinderpaal vir die werk van die Heilige Gees van God was, wat uitgevoer is deur 'n koppige volk met heidense harte en heidense ore, nogtans is die werk van ons kerk toegespits op kerkgeboue. Die waarde van kerkeindom in Johannesburg wat vir 'n groot gedeelte van die tyd nie deur mense-voete betree word nie, is genoegsaam om die hele sisteem van opvoeding in Suid-Afrika te verander, Soweto tot 'n totaal moderne stad, met volledige fasiliteite vir almal wat daar woon, te herbou. Is hierdie duisende kerkgeboue noodsaaklik vir die aanbidding van Christus, of van rykdomme, mag en status?⁶ Met katedrale, sale, bioskope en skole wat oor die hele stad versprei is, waarin mense in groot getalle kan vergader wanneer nodig, kan hulle nie gewoonweg in hulle huise en kleiner geboue waar die ware werk van die Nuwe Testament gedoen word, vergader nie?

Dit is 'n siek verskynsel wanneer sommige van ons, in Jesus se naam, praat in geboue wat duisende kos en eenmaal per week gebruik word vir goedgeklede selftevrede mense wat almal gretig is om huis-toe te gaan vir hulle Sondagete langs hulle swembaddens.

Is dit nie hulle rykdom en status wat die beeld van die kerke in die oë van die mense vernietig en ook die kerke verhinder om die Koninkryk te dien nie? Kan die kerke die Koninkryk verkondig — of selfs die sinsnede verstaan — wanneer haar prioriteite deur haar eiendomme bepaal word?⁷

Blindheid

Mense *kan nie sien nie* dat die maatstawwe van 'n samelewing wat berus op 'n kredietbewuste sosiale status hulle *verblind* vir die weë van Christus.

Vervul met die obsessie dat God in kerke deur bekeerde individue werk, is hulle *onbevoeg om te sien* dat die fokus van sy reddende werk in die sekulêre samelewing is, nie godsdienstige instellings nie.⁸ Die feit dat die werk van God in die wêreld onafhanklik van godsdienstige organisasie voortgaan, is 'n vervloeking vir toegewyde siele wat 'n groot deel van hulle lewes gewy het om kerke te ondersteun.⁹ Die Koninkryk is 'n skrikaanjagende aanval op geloofsoortuiginge wat op besittings toegespits is en dit is onmoontlik vir sommige om te aanvaar dat die voorwerp van hulle toewyding hulle kan *verblind* vir die ware inhoud daarvan.

Waarlik, opregte kerkmense *kan nie sien* dat God min belangstelling in hulle offers, mis, nagmaal, die sing van gesange, en bidure het — tensy hulle besorgd is oor liefde en geregtigheid en barmhartigheid. En is dit waar die kerke se geld is?¹⁰

Geleerde teoloë en predikers, vaardig in die Skrif, ryk in

kultuur, beskerm deur die agting wat aan hulle bewys word, *kan nie sien nie*¹¹ dat die Christus wat hulle bestudeer in werklikheid herken word in diegene wat gebrek het aan besittings, status of senioriteit: soos Hy in 'n stal gebore. Of in 'n swart student.

Mense *kan nie sien nie* dat die meeste kerklike aktiwiteite nie 'n betrokkenheid om die wêreld te red is nie, maar 'n ontvlugting daarvan: Luister maar na die preke, die gebede, die lys van kennisgewings, die finansiële state.

Kerke belas met die onderhoud van besittings, afhanklik van die ondersteuning van owerhede vir rentekoerse, goedkeuring van groepsgebiede, terreine, verlot tot okkupasie, verbandsbetalinge, inperkingsbevele, huweliks-lisensies, en dergelike, is so geïntegreer met die huidige stelsel dat hulle dit *onmoontlik vind* om die totaal ander sisteem van die Koninkryk van God te sien.¹²

Om die Koninkryk na te strewen sal beteken om so baie prys te gee . . .

Dit is makliker vir 'n kameel . . .

Koninkryk in die samelewing

Besorgdheid oor die handhawing van 'n kerklike instelling om mense wat sondaars is te help om hemel-toe te gaan, sluit mense effektief uit van die primêre besorgdheid vir die bevrydende ondervinding om te deel in Christus se werksaamheid op aarde. Die argument dat dit die kerke se taak is om individue te red en dat individue dan die samelewing sal verander, is net so bedrieglik as om te sê dat die enigste weg om die samelewing te verander, is om individue te verander. Dit is aantreklik omdat dit die probleem van betrokke te raak ontwyk.

Miljoene mense kan tot bekering kom en getroue kerkondersteuners word, vriendelik teenoor hulle bure en bediendes, sonder om die samelewing een jota of titel te verander. Die hele bose apartheidsisteem is die produk van 'n diep-Christelike volk wie se besit van hierdie subkontinent hulle verblind het teenoor die Koninkryk van God. Die meeste witmense wil nie dat die samelewing verander word nie: hulle wil dat dit net 'n bietjie opgeruim word.

Die samelewing word nie verander as 'n uitvloeisel van persoonlike goedheid nie. Dit word verander as mans en vroue doelbewus die strukture, wat dit kontroleer, begin verander. Deur te glo dat God besig is in sy wêreld en ingestel is om die presiese punte op sy huidige agenda te ontdek, behoort Christenmense in staat te wees om te vertolk wat besig is om plaas te vind, doelstellinge en beleid duidelik aan te dui, suiwer gemeenskappe uit te bou en om vertolkers, aankondigers, helpers en dissipels van die Koninkryk te wees.

Die idee dat Christene die lig van die wêreld is, is vatbaar vir ernstige verdraaiing. Christus is die lig van die wêreld en die lig skyn in die duisternis en die duisternis het dit nie oorweldig nie.¹³ Ons taak is om vir mense van die lig, wat in die wêreld kom en op alle mense skyn, te vertel, i.e. om waar te neem en te verkondig wat Christus besig is om in die wêreld te doen, en die rigting waarin sy dissipels hom na sy Koninkryk moet volg.

Dit is nie ons taak om 'n massiewe organisasie op te bou om aan mense Christus se bloudruk vir die organisasie van sy wêreld te leer nie. Daar is nie so 'n bloudruk nie. Christus beweeg vryelik in die wêreld, is besig om in die sekulêre sake van mense te werk: dit is die geheim wat Christene ken, die Goeie Nuus wat hulle behoort te verkondig en die rigting wat hulle vir sy dissipels behoort aan te dui. Indien die nasies sy werk sou erken en hom sou volg, moet Hy bekend gemaak word deur mense wat weet waar God is — tussen die massas, in die gebiede waar kerkliggame selde deurdring en kerklike prioriteite nie relevant is nie.

Terwyl die kerk belas is met die noodsaaklikheid om groot skenkinge, hulpbronne en strukture te administreer, word deur sulke rykdomme 'n enorme en sondige afgetrokkenheid

aan die Koninkryk te laste gelê.

En indien dit beteken dat die wit westerse samelewing die probleme veroorsaak en dat Christus die antwoorde in die swart samelewing oplewer . . . ?

Dit is makliker vir 'n kameel . . .

Besig om te kyk

Pro Veritate wil nie voorgee om aan kerke voor te skryf wat hulle in dié verband moet doen nie, nie omdat ons probeer skuil agter 'n arrogante nedrigheid nie, maar omdat ons nie weet nie. Alleen die kerke kan die antwoord vind: ons kan slegs aandui hoe hulle daarvoor moet soek.

1. Laat die kerke die afkeurende kritiek van Jesus op ryk, eerbare, godsdienstige mense ondersoek om die gevaarpunte in hulle prioriteite en organisasies duidelik aan te dui: en laat hulle die hulp van studente, swart en wit, wat nie kerk-toe gaan nie, inroep by hierdie ondersoek — op elke vlak.
2. Laat die kerke die resultate van hierdie ondersoek openbaar maak, met al die feite van hulle vorige gebruike en die fundamentele herverspreiding van mag en besittings wat hulle in hulle eie geledere voorstel: terwyl hulle onthou dat die Handeling van die Apostels nie besorgd is om rykdom vir godsdienstige instellings te verwerf nie, maar om dit uit te deel vir die algemene heil: en laat hulle dit doen: geen voorwaardes nie.¹⁴
3. Laat die kerke hulle identifikasie met die armes en verdruktes¹⁵ en die gevangene in ons apartheidsamelewing ondersoek: en laat hulle in hierdie aangeleentheid raad soek by hulle teen wie daar gediskrimineer word: die Black Peoples Convention of soortgelyke liggame sal oor dié aangeleentheid die nodige inligting vir kerkkonferensies en sinodesittings kan voorsien.
4. Laat die kerke weereens hulle tot die Evangelies wend om die eerste werke van Jesus te herontdek en soek om te erken wat Hy besig is om in die wêreld te doen: en laat hulle byeenkomste van leke vra — politici en verslaggewers en skoolonderwysers en akademici en besigheidsmense en werkers en boere — om hulle by te staan.
5. Laat die kerke die taak van Christen-dissipels in die wêreld heroorweeg¹⁷
 - deur af te sien van hulle trotse aanspraak dat dit hulle taak is om die Christelike invloed te laat geld op die Regering en ander organisasies omdat hulle nóg die vermoë nóg die roeping het om dit te doen;
 - deur af te sien van hulle gebruik om kritiese negatiewe oordele oor die harde werk van politici te lewer, sonder om enige positiewe bydrae te doen;
 - en laat hulle die „swart teoloë“, „politieke priesters“, sosioloë, sosiale werkers en studente vra om hulle te help om te hoor wat God besig is om te sê deur die onderdruktes.
6. Laat die kerke die doel en geldigheid van hulle bediening en organisasie ondersoek in die lig van die Nuwe Testament en die behoeftes van die Koninkryk, en laat hulle die leiding soek van die mense wat hulle gemeentes verlaat het en diegene wat hulle bediening prysgegee het.
7. Daarom laat die volk van God, bevry van die oorlas van hulle besittings en aansprake, hulleself in 'n posisie plaas om die heerskappy van God te erken en binne te gaan.

Maar as hulle dit wat God vir hulle in gedagte het, sal dwarsboom¹⁸ laat hulle nie verbaas wees nie as die huidige verwerping van die kerk sal voortduur totdat hulle hulleself verdring sal vind tot die rand van die lewe net soos heilige plekke langs die pad van 'n ou bygeloof — en kyk hoe die terroriste en studente en werkloos en uitgeworpenes en aangehoudenenes en diensweieraars en werkers voor hulle in die Koninkryk sal ingaan.¹⁹

Dit is makliker vir 'n kameel . . . harige skof en alles inbegrepe.

GREETING FROM BISHOP DESMOND TUTU

-to the Soweto Students June 16th 1977

Friends, I greet you in the name of our blessed Lord Jesus Christ who died in order to set us free from all that enslaves us and which makes us less than what God intends us to be. I would have loved to be present with you today in your prayer meeting as you commemorate all those courageous children who died on June 16th, 1976. I will be attending a rally in Maseru at the same time as you are meeting in prayer, and we will all be bringing before God the needs of our dear and beloved South Africa, for which we desire only the best -- justice, peace, love and true reconciliation.

The God in whom we believe is a God of righteousness and justice. He is the God of the Exodus who led a group of slaves out of bondage into his glorious liberty. He is the great liberator God who is always setting all his people free. He is always on the side of the oppressed and the exploited, not because they are morally better than their oppressors. No, he is on their side simply and solely

because they are oppressed. He wants them to be fully human. And when he liberates the oppressed he also liberates the oppressor because the whites in South Africa will never be truly free until all of us are free. So I am concerned for the liberation of all of us, black and white together. There can never be separate freedoms. Freedom is indivisible.

Our God reigns and we shall be free. There is no doubt at all in my own mind. God is on our side because ours is the cause of righteousness, of justice and of peace, for all of us together black and white together.

Freedom is coming for all of us together black and white together; because if we are not free together, then we are going to perish together. (That is the alternative too ghastly to contemplate).

"If God be for us, who can be against us?"

QUESTIONS CHILDREN ASK

-from a Soweto mother.

One evening, we had just finished prayers when my 10-year-old son asked a very stunning question: "Mom, is there a God?" I was knocked cold! My mind went back to when my son was 2 years old. I started teaching him about God. Taking the present moment I felt the church, school and my teachings had been in vain. With disappointed down-heartedness I asked why does he ask. He told me if God was fair, why does he allow the police to shoot, kill and arrest small children, not even stopping there, throwing teargas to 3 and 4 year olds playing in their yards?

"One other thing, Mom, I have been praying almost a long time, asking God to protect my family, dear friends and those who are

our leaders, only to see my friends and relatives arrested, shot, especially my cousin who died a day after his arrest. And when going to bury him we were shot at in the graveyard, some even fell in a grave. If He is there why does He allow the police to kill?

THOU SHALL NOT KILL.

Why kill? Why not punish them if the children are naughty? If he is there then, why can't He stop these naughty daddies, because they also have children? Or perhaps I do not pray correctly or hard enough so that my prayers reach Him in Heaven?"

Those are hard facts.

I did not know what to say.

THE CHRISTIAN CENTRE HUMANITARIAN AID FUND

"We do have our money-box, contributed to by those who wish, and who are able, once a month. The money is used, not for feasting and drinking, but to help the poor, orphaned children, the old, the shipwrecked, Christians sent to forced labour in the mines, or exiled to islands, or shut up in prison. This is why people say of us, 'See, how these Christians love one another'."

-Tertullian, about 197 AD.

In recent years Namibian Churches have, singularly and jointly, tried to meet various humanitarian needs in this country. Such aid has been given to Christians and non-Christians alike. Particular attention has been paid to those who are victims of the prevailing social and political system, including the families and dependents of political prisoners. Another concern has been the defence, in the courts of law, of persons charged because of their opposition to the

injustices of our society, and the use of the courts of law to restrain authorities or protect individuals or groups (as in the floggings case.)

Accordingly, at a General Meeting of the Christian Centre held in Windhoek on the 20th of April, 1977, the Christian Centre Humanitarian Aid Fund was established, to consolidate such efforts and bring their administration under the Christian Centre.

VIOLENCE VIOLATES — ASSAIL LOVINGLY

Professor A. Curle

The Introductory speech delivered at the recent International Consultation in search of non-violent alternatives.

Whatever the provocation, we must choose a non-violent response. Violence means to violate other human beings, their bodies, their minds, their feelings, their hopes, their rights, their dignity. The roots of the word signify the unlawful use of force. It is unlawful to hurt, kill, humiliate, terrify, exploit, manipulate, oppress, because the universe, from the grand pattern of the galaxies to our own bodies and the intricate ecological system in which we exist (and which we have also violated) is built on harmony, balance, relationship and order. A simple yet immeasurably profound word for this harmonious order is love. Love, we are told, makes the world go round and I believe this to be literally true; the same force which created and maintains the universe is also the one which brings the greatest joy to our lives. Love joins us; violence separates us, tears us apart. Love conforms to the eternal principles, is lawful.

The answer to violence can, then, never be more violence. If we are violated we cannot put things right by violating others in return, by seeking vengeance. We cannot strive for justice, which of course is the excuse for much violence, by a similar unlawful use of force — that would hardly be logical.

We must, then, act against violence with non-violence. This is a word widely used and understood, but there is a slightly negative implication which concerns me. We do not say to the people we love "I non-hate you." Mahatma Gandhi used the word satyagraha for the non-violent way of life and translated the word as "soul force." I sometimes use the phrase "loving assault." This suggests both militancy and a positive approach towards those whose violence we are confronting. It implies that we not only intend to stop them from oppressing or exploiting, but to help them realise why it is anti-human and indeed damaging to themselves to do so, to discontinue it voluntarily and, having been separated from us by

their violence, to be rejoined to us.

But it is very hard to act truly non-violently, to be a satyarahi, to assail lovingly. Most of us have been conditioned to respond to violence with violence; paradoxically some members express it differently, wounding with words rather than weapons. We are violent because of the violence which we and our society have done to our nature. The fears and the hurts, the prides and vanities, the tender egos and fragile identities make us both prickly and sensitive. If old anxieties are re-awakened, old pains re-activated, our vanity pricked, or our self-esteem jeopardised, we leap to our own defence and try to inflict reciprocal discomfort upon our imagined assailant. We have all experienced, as recipient and perpetrator, this sort of violence. We have all quarrelled, blamed, accused, criticised, made fun of, gossiped about our fellow human beings; men and women who are really the same as us, with whom we are united in the common glory and anguish of human kind, and to whom we owe nothing but love. But the selves we have fabricated, so different from the true self with which we are born and then obscure with illusion and forgetfulness, see the other as the potential enemy, a target for our violence.

Non-violence must be a total approach to life. Although there are skills to learn, it is not something to be acquired like a foreign language. It can only grow out of the person we are and if that person is confused and angry so will his behaviour be, whatever his intentions. Che Guevarra said, although he chose the violent path, that love is the heart of the revolution. We can behave completely without violence only if our love for others, all others, both allies and those we oppose, has burned away our love for our false selves leaving the true self free to act.

SOUTH AFRICA'S AFFRONT TO THE DIGNITY OF PERSONS

Theo Kotze

A short while ago "Mr Vorster challenged anybody to give an example of injury done to dignity by his Government."

(Alan Paton in Sunday Tribune May 1977)

"O Lord our Lord, how excellent is Thy name in all the earth: who hast set Thy Glory above the heavens. When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers: the moon and the stars, which Thou hast ordained; What is man, that Thou art mindful of him: and the son of man, that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels; and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands: Thou hast put all things under his feet."

The 8th Psalm describes the dignity with which God has invested human personality. We have been given dominion over the rest of creation. Humans have the ability to reason, to choose, to make

decisions, to love. They have been endowed with a conscience.

The most wonderful fact of all is that described in the Prologue to St. John's Gospel: "The Word of God became a person and took up his abode in our being full of grace and truth." (John 1.14 — William Barclay). In that Person, God revealed fully the dignity of persons.

Persons and Pigment

I know someone who is so deeply filled with the Spirit of that man Jesus that he has come through an ordeal of terror and torture, with the ability to say to those at whose hands he suffered: "I cannot hate

them — they are persons.” **The highest moment of human dignity is when one person sees another person as a person, no more and no less.**

We live in a country where the very opposite takes place, where the dignity of persons is being daily violated, not only because of the failure of individuals to recognize each other as persons, but also because of the harsh measures and cruel laws which by implacable intention impose on all the peoples of this land a system of discrimination and separation.

The many awful features of apartheid, separate, or parallel development, have over and over again been denounced by politicians, lawyers, academics, churchmen and others but to me the most dreadful thing about the system under which we are forced to live is that a person is not penalized for what he/she has *done* but is penalized for the colour of his/her skin. The penalties are profound and numerous, but the most serious of all is that our very humanity is imperilled. We are all in danger of losing the values which are deeply-rooted in our religious traditions and are part of the warp and woof of our civilization. Instead of love there is hatred; instead of dignity, degradation; instead of hope, an awful foreboding; instead of joy, gloom; instead of trust, a rising fear; instead of peace, escalating violence.

On December 10th 1948, the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted and proclaimed the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights**. In it the peoples of the UN reaffirmed their faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women. Certain countries did not sign the Declaration. South Africa was one. The others were the Soviet bloc and Saudi Arabia. It was an honest act on the part of South Africa for in this country everyone is taught that a person's racial identity is the most important thing about him/her. By unjust laws, selfish prejudices and self-interested customs countless people are denied the ordinary enjoyments and fundamental needs of a human being. Racial segregation has been enforced by legislation and the majority of this population has been deprived of constitutional rights and privileges.

Legislation

The Group Areas Act of 1950 and its subsequent amendments has for 27 years been cruelly and mercilessly applied to dispossess thousands of people (by far the majority of whom are black) of their homes, to destroy businesses and disrupt whole communities. In 1950 Alan Paton described the Act as *“an evil instrument, repugnant to all true religion and morality and contemptuous of human rights.”* Consider for a moment the impact on one's dignity of laws such as:

The reservation of **Separate Amenities Act**. The reservation of **Separate Universities Act**. The **Motor Carrier Transportation Amendment Act**. The laws that affect sport and cultural institutions. It is no good defending these by saying: “People can get permission . . .” The very need to apply for permission is an affront to human dignity.

One of the most dreadful of all laws is the **Mixed Marriages Act**, which decides whom a human being may marry . . . therefore with whom a human being may fall in love . . . therefore the limits of

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If the soul is left in darkness, sins will be committed. The guilty one is not he who commits the sin, but he who causes the darkness. (Martin Luther King).

* * * * *

I sit on a man's back choking him and making him carry me and yet assure myself and others that I am sorry for him and wish to lighten his load by all possible means — except by getting off his back. (Leo Tolstoy).

human friendship and indeed ordinary social contact . . . Indeed if you follow this to a logical conclusion, it defines the boundaries of the fellowship of the Church. I wonder if Christians realize the extent to which this and other laws have affected the life of the Church, indeed **caused the Church to sin.**

“The Gospel of Jesus Christ declares that God is love; separation is the opposite force of love. The Christian gospel declares that separation is the supreme threat and danger, but that in Christ it has overcome; it is in association with Christ and with each other that we find our true identity. But apartheid is a view of life and of man which insists that we find our identity in disassociation and distinction from each other; it rejects as undesirable the reconciliation which God is giving to us by his Son; it reinforces distinctions which the Holy Spirit is calling the people of God to overcome; it calls good evil. The policy is, therefore, a form of resistance to the Holy Spirit.”

(The Message to the People of South Africa).

There are other monstrous laws governing South Africa which attack the citadel of human dignity.

I refer particularly to the **Terrorism Act** and the **Internal Security Act** (which has taken over the widened the powers of the **Suppression of Communism Act**.) Nothing could be a greater violation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights than detention without trial and restriction (or banning) without trial. Article 5 of the Declaration asserts: “No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.” My experience with many people is that banning is a dehumanizing form of torture — so is the solitary confinement of often innocent people for long periods of time without access to family, lawyer or doctor. Whatever goes on inside John Vorster Square, Caledon Square and the like, the obvious intent is to **break people.**

The United Nations General Assembly adopted on 9th December 1975 a Declaration condemning any act of torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment as “an offence to human dignity.” It said “torture means any act by which severe pain or suffering, **whether physical or mental**, is intentionally inflicted by or at the instigation of a public official on a person for such purposes as obtaining from him or a third person information or confession, punishing him for an act he has committed or is suspected of having committed, or intimidating him or any other persons.”

The late Mr Eric Baker of the Society of Friends argued that “torture is whatever a person feels is torture.”

Hence I believe that banning and/or solitary confinement are in themselves a form of torture and a terrible assault on the dignity of any person.

We would all do well to reflect upon the thoughts of Joseph's brethren in his suffering “**And they said one to another, We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the distress of his soul when he besought us, and we would not hear.**” (Genesis 42.21. R.V.)

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**Food for myself is a material concern,
Food for my neighbour is a spiritual one. (Berdyayev).**

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**Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day;
teach him to fish and you feed him for a life-time. (Chinese proverb).**

DAVE DE BEER SPEAKS AGAIN

For five years Dave de Beer has been silenced by a Banning Order. He had worked in Namibia, and was then appointed as an assistant to Dr Beyers Naudé. He has been living in exile in Europe since that time. The Banning Order expired on May 31st. We are now able to publish extracts from a letter he wrote to the Minister of Justice in 1973, and the Minister's reply.

Minister of Justice
Pretoria

Johannesburg
December 18th, 1973

Dear Sir,

It is now some eighteen months since you signed banning orders in terms of Section 9 (1) and 10 (1)(a) of the Suppression of Communism Act, and had them served on me.

I had thought that I might myself come to realise why you had decided to ban me once I had experienced, lived through, and come to terms with the traumatic changes that occurred in my life by having to live under these severe restrictions. A year and a half have now passed, and I must confess that I am no clearer on this point. Perhaps I should explain why.

I believe very firmly that man's identity is determined by his relationship with God, as it is in God's creation that he finds himself, as it is in a world redeemed by Our Lord Jesus Christ that he lives. I therefore believe that nothing that other men may do to me on this earth can affect God's relationship to me, and in fact that the more we are called to share in Christ's sufferings the more we share in the glory of his Resurrection. St. Paul, writing from prison, puts this much more clearly in his letter to the Romans, Chapter 8, verses 31-39. Because of this, and I have come to understand this more clearly these last eighteen months, my banning orders have had no real impact on my own inner self or on my own understanding of myself.

If a man finds his identity in his relationship with God, he gives expression to this relationship in his daily life, that is to say in his life-style and his daily face-to-face encounters with his fellow men. It is in this sphere of life that I feel the greatest changes have been forced to take place during the period of my banning. For it is here that conflict arises between Our Lord's commandment to 'Go out and serve Him in all the world' and the restrictions incurred in obeying an arbitrarily imposed banning order which prevents me from using the God-given rights of freedom of movement and of association.

And yet I can understand perhaps why you felt threatened by my response to this challenge from God. Was this one of the 'reasons' for my restriction? Perhaps you are not familiar with the words of the Prophet Isaiah, Chapter 35, verses 3, 4: "*Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold your God will come with vengeance, with the recompence of God; he will come and save you*".

Perhaps you have never, week after week, gone into a labour camp of migrant contract workers emotionally shattered by the hard months of separation from their families and the harsh and inhuman treatment they receive at the hands of the white society they are forced to enter to earn their money; perhaps you have never gone in too early on a Sunday morning to find them still sleeping off Saturday night's party, or gone in too late to find them already started on Sunday's; perhaps you have never had the joy of being God's minister and servant to them, of strengthening their weak hands and confirming the feeble knees; perhaps you have never felt the helplessness of pleasure of watching them Sunday by Sunday

build their own Church, albeit out of rusted oil drums, in the dry heat of a South West African hillside; perhaps too you have never known the personal sense of loss and deprivation on learning that this community has been moved and broken up, their work as labourers no longer needed. Such are the joys and sorrows of carrying out Our Lord's commandments, and it is this that you have prevented me from doing.

But I think what I feel the loss of most in my life at the moment is the closeness and support of the encompassing and uplifting Christ-orientated community to which I had become accustomed, and which the restrictions on my social liberty have since outlawed. As mentioned before, however, this in no way affects my own Identity, and I can find my solace in St. Luke, Chapter 6, verse 22: "*Blessed are you when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake.*"

I have shared my thoughts and feelings with you in this way in the hope that you will understand why, after this passage of time, I am now writing to you in terms of Sections 9 (2) and 10 (1) bis of the Suppression of Communism Act to furnish me with the reasons for serving restriction orders in terms of Sections 9 (1) and 10 (1)(a) of the abovementioned Act on me, together with a statement of the information which induced you to issue such banning orders.

I hope that I have been able to show in this letter that I have, albeit failingly, tried to work for the extension of the Kingdom of God, so that all men might share equally in the bountiful fruits of His creation, for it is by God's grace alone that we have been set upon this earth to share in His creation, and we have no right to assume any part of it for our own.

Yours faithfully,

D. E. DE BEER

Mr D.E. De Beer,
Johannesburg

Ministry of Justice,
Union Buildings,
Pretoria.
18th April 1974

Dear Sir,

With further reference to your letter dated 18 December 1973, the Honourable the Minister of Justice has directed me to inform you that the notices were issued because he was satisfied that you were engaged in activities which were furthering or calculated to further the achievement of the objects of communism as defined in Section 1 of the Suppression of Communism Act, 1950 (Act 44 of 1950).

The information which induced the Minister to issue the notices can, in his opinion, not be disclosed without detriment to public policy. Keeping in mind the definition of communism in the said Act, you should, however, have no difficulty in identifying those aspects of your activities which gave rise to the action taken against you.

Yours faithfully,

HEAD: MINISTERIAL SERVICES

LIFTING THE IRON CURTAIN

Paul Oestreicher

A British Church authority on Eastern Europe examines the truth behind the crude distortions of the Pastor Wurmbrand type of propaganda.

It may come as a surprise: there is no such place as 'behind the iron curtain'. At any rate not in the sense in which many people use that expression, as though it were some vast concentration camp, stretching from Berlin to Vladivostok, in which the Church is savagely persecuted and all genuine Christians either in prison or part of 'the underground Church'.

That is the kind of impression conveyed by the writings and speaking of **Pastor Richard Wurmbrand** and by groups like **Underground Evangelism** and various Bible-smuggling organisations. What these groups purvey is propaganda. That is another way of saying that there *is* a good deal of truth in all this material, but when part of the truth, emotively embellished, poses as the whole truth, there is serious distortion. This crude anti-communism is the obverse side of the coin of the crude anti-religious propaganda of the Soviet Communist Party. The two are interchangeable. Only, for a Christian, the one is much worse than the other. Distortion in the name of the Gospel is doubly deplorable. How, then, is it possible to get at the truth? For those who really care to know it, in all its complexity, it is less difficult than might at first sight appear.

First of all it is easy enough to learn that the mythical continent called 'behind the iron curtain' consists of a wide variety of totally differing kinds of societies and nations. About the only thing they have in common is that they are all ruled by Communist Parties. Religious believers fare very differently from country to country and, particularly in the vast multi-national Soviet Union, even within nations.

In one edition of the *Church Times* earlier this year there was a report by an Anglican bishop just back from Russia which told of crowded churches, worshippers of all ages, deep religious devotion and church leaders of high calibre. It was a thoroughly hopeful and positive report. And in the same edition there was a news release from Keston College, the Centre for the Study of Religion and Communism, which told of arrests of Christians and a whole series of repressive acts against churches by Soviet authorities. Which report was true? Both of them were. The truth, even about the situation in one town, is many-sided. Told by one Christian in that town it will sound positive, told by another — equally sincere — it will sound frightening.

In Russia millions of loyal citizens are practising Christians. They are very much an overground Church, anything but secret and very willing to make sacrifices for their faith. Some skilled observers are sure that there are more believers, per head of population, in Russia than in England. Most of them and most of their leaders see no contradiction between being a good Soviet citizen and a sincere Christian. Yet so severely restricted is organised religion that some Christians are unwilling to be limited by the laws of the State in the way they profess their faith. And these bold Christians — a significant minority — are then likely to conflict with the law. All this is not easy to grasp without some

understanding of Russian history and the atmosphere of a society in which non-conformity is not easily tolerated. Such times do not lie all that far back in British history.

But Russia is not typical of the rest of Eastern Europe. From country to country the pattern differs. In all of them, with the exception of Albania, religion is freer than in Russia, though even that statement needs qualification. 'Communist' Poland is really still 'Catholic' Poland. More people go to church there regularly than in Catholic Eire. In the villages the local priest still has more influence than the Party Secretary. In the nation the Cardinal has a degree of social influence and power which the State dare not ignore. That is one reason why the workers in Poland can stage public protests and get away with it. The Church is behind them. Children are fought over by both Church and Party. So far the Party has not done very well in this competition, perhaps because it has lost a good deal of heart.

In Romania the Orthodox Church is to a considerable degree part of the State establishment. That is part of national tradition. It suits the Communist Party there quite well. Churches are all open, well cared for, crowded on festivals and even fairly affluent. Yet in Romania too there is persecution alongside this tolerance, persecution of those Christians who, for whatever reason, deviate from the official line of either Church or State. There is no room for dissident Christians.

In Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Bulgaria and particularly East Germany, things are quite different again. In all these countries the greatest struggle is for the minds of the young. And in all of them it can be costly to be a devoted Christian. It can cost job promotion. It may mean no place at university for the young. In fact young Christians often face the kind of discrimination young Communists face in some of the more intolerant capitalist countries of the West, which often have a Christian label. What is saddest of all is that the Communists have copied their ideological intolerance and even their persecution from past (and partly still present) intolerance and persecution by Christians.

The fierce persecution that Pastor Wurmbrand describes now belongs to the past, to the time of Stalin, on which all East Europeans look back with horror. But that is far from saying that now all is well. What can be said is that many Christians today, for all the abuses, take a positive view of their society and feel the Church can make a real contribution to it. They are critical, but constructively so. Sometimes the Communist rulers accept their contribution gladly, sometimes they insensitively reject it and demand blind conformity.

All this and much more is told interestingly and fairly in the pages of Trevor Beeson's Fontana paperback *Discretion and Valour*. It is a hopeful, though often sad, story of a living faith in a complex time of change and upheaval in the midst of old persisting traditions, both good and bad.

Let us look at the world as if we were a village — a village with a population of 100. In this village there would be 7 South Americans, 7 North Americans (6 of them representing the United States); 21 Europeans; 9 Africans; 56 Asians. There would be 30 white people, 70 black and yellow people. 30 of the hundred would be Christians. Half of the total income of the village would be in the

hands of 6 people, representing the USA. Almost all the affluent part of the village would be composed of Christians from Europe and North America. Over 70 of the 100 villagers would be unable to read. Over 50 would be suffering from malnutrition. Over 80 would live in what we call sub-standard housing. No more than 1 would have a university education. (Stephen F. Bayne, Jr.).

THE FUTURE SOCIETY AS SEEN BY BLACK PEOPLE'S CONVENTION

-Tami Zani

(This is the first of a number of articles dealing with a kind of society that BPC envisages. This particular article scans the total policy outlook: subsequent articles will deal in depth with particular aspects of that policy).

At the heart of the BPC policy outlook is the constant reminder that we are striving for the attainment of an open society.

This is an important point of departure because the implicit claim by the Black Consciousness movement is that none of the white political parties and organisations can by themselves and on their own manage to bring about the envisaged open society. So tied are they to the consideration of colour, ethnic grouping and other manifestations of irrational prejudice that they see the future either in terms of a false multi-nationalism or a pretence of geographic or ethnic federations, all of which have in common the preservation of power in the hands of those who are white and those who have money.

The best of the white formulas, emanating from the Progressive Reformists, has at its heart the creation of a dangerous coalition between the white "haves" and an upper crust of black "haves", against the interests and aspirations of a multitude of black "have-nots" who form 95% of the black majority.

This is what makes it impossible to move away from the present closed, balkinised and segmented community that constitutes the present South African plural society to a truly open society belonging to all citizens of the country.

Egalitarian

The Black Consciousness movement has often stated that it is fighting for an egalitarian society. This term is defined in the Oxford Dictionary as "asserting the equality of mankind". This is a value-laden expression which feeds one with hope for the future. It is new to us in this country used as we are to a completely amoral political system based on the exploitation of man by man on the basis of skin colour.

The term egalitarian when used to describe a political system implies:

- all sane persons shall be eligible to participate in the making of the laws under which they live, through the people's National Assembly which shall be a body constituted of elected representatives of all people.
- all people shall be equal in the eyes of the law irrespective of colour, religion, status in life, or other considerations.
- all citizens shall be protected from exploitation of one by the other, and some by the others.

Used in this context therefore the term "egalitarian society" implies a radical departure from what we are used to in this country. It means total blindness by the State and its organs to colour as a factor in deciding a man's fate and judging a man's ability. In such a society there cannot be recognition of minorities because this is symptomatic of the sickness of using skin colour to place a man in a specific social box. Neither will the State tolerate anybody who tries to turn the clock back by fighting for narrow "nationalism" in a way that defeats the pursuit of an egalitarian society.

In the new society to be created, a guarantee of **the rights of man will form an integral part of our legal system.** The Universal

Declaration of Human Rights of the United Nations will be observed and respected. Born, as we have been, out of centuries of denigration, dispossession, oppression and exploitation, we shall constantly demonstrate our abhorrence in any form of oppressive and exploitative measures, through rigorous attachment to a system that enshrines basic human rights.

Flowing from this it becomes obvious that the economic system to be followed will not countenance exploitation of any segment of the masses for the benefit of greedy and capricious individuals. We have declared ourselves in favour of the promotion of **communalism** which has at its heart a profound spirit of sharing. The practice whereby the wealth of the country is locked in the hands of a very small greedy minority, will receive attention. Unbridled capitalism has its days numbered throughout the world and there will be no exception in the future of Azania.

A proper **redistribution of the wealth** of the country also implies that those who have been living on an artificially high standard because of exclusive privileges and opportunities, must be prepared to suffer setbacks in the interests of the national good. We believe that it is much better for many to make definite progress, though at a slow pace, than for a few to advance by leaps and bounds, at the expense of all. This will be the guiding light in economic planning for the country in years to come.

We do not see our country entering into alliances with either the East or the West. We regard **non-alignment** as an essential part of our overall freedom and sovereignty. We shall carefully shy away from imperialist forces either of the old stock or new. Nonetheless, we shall join forces with the rest of the Third World in their struggle to break away from imperialist control by the big powers.

As people building a new society, we cannot but be aware of the important role played by **education** in creating proper values and a new outlook. The essence of our educational system will be the promotion of self-reliance, a high level of critical awareness, proper understanding of the community and its problems and a sense of positive identity amongst as many of our people as possible. To get ourselves out of the present quagmire, such an educational system will also need to be pruned to work for the destruction of racist, tribalist, sectionalist, imperialist and exploitationist notions. This is especially necessary because of the long standing prejudices that have been entrenched in the minds of our people in this country. The duplication of languages at all levels of general education will need to be replaced by a concentration on one international and one vernacular language selected after careful research.

For the creation of a broadly based mental development, comparative **environmental studies** covering economics, geography, history, political and constitutional structures will form the major content of instruction at an early stage. **Humanities**, including social anthropology, sociology and elementary community development, and **basic sciences** including maths and natural sciences will also form part of the early syllabuses.

An elementary education will be free and compulsory for all

citizens and will be followed by specialisation introduced at the minimum effective level. Learning facilities and teacher training will receive priority consideration in order to create the best atmosphere for the learning process. A programme of rapid elimination of illiteracy will be designed and implemented for the adult population. Education will take up the greatest percentage of the national budget, and not defence of an immoral system as is currently the case.

There will be no "national church" in our country though there will be complete religious tolerance. We cannot countenance a system whereby everybody is free to establish his own personal church hence churches will be encouraged to establish a permanent Council which shall regulate the recognition of churches and the day to day work of churches.

The State will contribute largely to the training of ministers and will work with the envisaged Council and ensure that ministers receive adequate training in social work to be able to contribute to the social welfare and community development programmes of the nation.

In the field of defence it will be expected of every sane and adult person to form part of the National Defence Force. There will be no

use of national territory by foreign forces. Our guiding defence policy will be one of peaceful collaboration with all nations of the world on the basis of the principles of mutual respect, national sovereignty, territorial integrity, non-aggression and non-interference in domestic affairs, and peaceful co-existence.

Acceptability

In all its forms therefore the future State envisaged by the BPC will seek to derive prosperity from the acceptability of its maintenance by the greatest number in the population. Coersive measures and dictatorships thrive in situations where those in power are aware of the non-acceptability of their authority and what it stands for to the majority of the people they govern. Inflated defence budgets are a measure of the lack of popularity of a government both internally and externally.

Our greatest asset will be a basic morality in our everyday operations, and flowing from that a persuasive influence on the minds of the people to support what we stand for. This we believe is the greatest insurance policy that any government may have in order to insure its continued acceptability to the people.

Pope Paul said . . .

The earth's goods must be divided fairly, and this right of every man to a just share comes first. Even the right to private property, and the right to free enterprise, must yield to justice.

Those who have money, cannot just spend as they please, or speculate regardless of the way that others are affected.

The laity must act, using their initiative, not waiting for instructions.

The laity must take the Christian spirit into the minds and hearts of men, into morality and laws, into the structures of society. The laity must breathe the spirit of the Gospel into the changes and reforms that have to come. (Pope Paul VI: This is progress).

Alan Brash said . . .

The biggest problem is to make people who haven't seen it for themselves understand what poverty means in certain countries overseas - poverty around the world cannot be understood simply as certain people who unfortunately are poor, but as the reflection of a massive state of injustice in the world because of the way the world handles its resources. The difficulty is to get people to appreciate that this is a matter of life and death, not only to the people who are on the verge of starvation, but to us all. It is part of the whole human family problem, whether we are going to live as one community in the world or not.

(Alan Brash, then Director of Christian Aid, in an interview in The Church Times, April 10th 1970).

Martin Luther King said . . .

I have a dream — that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the colour of their skin, but by the content of their character — I have a dream today. I have a dream — that one day down in Alabama little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers. I have a dream today — that freedom will reign from every hill and molehill in Mississippi — from every mountainside let freedom reign — and when it happens, when we allow freedom to reign, when we let it reign from every state and every city, we will be able to speed the day when all of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old negro spiritual, "Free at last, free at last, thank God almighty, we are free at last." (Martin Luther King.)

James Baldwin said . . .

Everyone overlooks the fact that Stokely Carmichael began his life as a Christian and for many, many years, unnoticed by the world's press was marching up and down highways in my country, in the deep south, spent many many years being beaten over the head and thrown in jail, singing, "We shall overcome," and meaning it and believing it, doing day by day and hour by hour precisely what the Christian Church is supposed to be doing, to walk from door to door, to feed the hungry, speak to those who are oppressed, to try to open the gates of prisons for all who are imprisoned. And a day came, inevitably, when this young man grew weary of petitioning a heedless population. (James Baldwin, speaking at the World Council of Churches, Uppsala, 1968).

THE STRATEGIC POSITION OF THE TEACHER IN RELATION TO CHRISTIANITY

-C. F. Beyers Naude

*An Address to the Transvaal United Teachers' Association (TAUTA) in May
1977.*

You have given me a very important but difficult assignment, especially in view of the crisis in the life of the Black community which has recently arisen in the area of education — a crisis which I believe will repeat itself in the future because the basic issues have neither been truly faced nor resolved.

1. **The wide-ranging influence of Christianity in the history of our country.** There can be no doubt in anybody's mind about the crucial role which Christianity and the Christian church has played in the history of South Africa. This missionary effort was always initiated by Whites, presenting a view of Christianity which was in almost every respect White and western. It was only after nearly 300 years of White missionary effort that this limited and one-sided view began to be replaced with another concept of the Christian faith.
2. **South Africa as a Christian country.** As a result of the belief of the Afrikaner people that they had a divine mission to proclaim the Gospel to the "heathen" nations of South Africa, the misleading conviction has grown in the minds of the majority of Whites that this country is a Christian country with a Christian government applying Christian norms of ethics to the political, social and educational life of the community. White South Africa has created a view of itself as a Christian society upholding and defending traditional norms of Christian morality, all judged according to White, western standards. This claim to be a Christian nation with a Christian government was unfortunately not perceived to be theologically false, politically dangerous and morally untenable. The confusion created in the minds of millions of Blacks in South Africa has been very real and serious, and has certainly been one of the reasons why many young Blacks are increasingly rejecting the Christian church and even the Christian faith.
3. **General assumption of teachers being Christians.** In the South African tradition of White education the community took it for granted that the teacher would be a Christian — that he must be a member of an accredited and acceptable church and therefore teach and defend the Christian faith and the dogmas of the church to which he belongs. For many years it was naturally assumed in White society that the teacher would share in the teaching of the religious syllabus of the Department of Education, uphold the traditional religious beliefs and defend the generally accepted concept of the Christian church and all that it stands for. My impression is that a similar situation has developed in Black education, creating serious moral problems for those teachers who are not convinced Christians or are not in agreement with every doctrine of a particular church. Even if such a teacher seeks to hide such convictions, many pupils intuitively sense that this is the case. And where a teacher, aware that any public criticism of a particular belief or church practise could cost him his job, remains silent, pupils sense a measure of duplicity or hypocrisy and such a teacher risks losing his credibility.
4. **Elevated position of parson and teacher in society.** In South African White society the profession of parson and teacher has

been elevated to a special position where persons practising these two professions were regarded as men of leadership, influence and status. The community took it for granted that men occupying these two positions should be leaders; they were looked up to as men expected to guide the life of the total community. A heavy responsibility was placed on their shoulders, but this also opened the door for occupying a strategic position and wielding immense influence of religious and psychological authority. They enjoyed an undisputed position of power and privilege which would either be positively used or tragically abused.

This set the pattern for a similar development in Black society and in course of time the parson and the teacher occupied positions of trust, influence, leadership — and therefore power and authority — in their own societies. In Black rural communities ministers of religion and teachers held privileged and respected positions and enjoyed for instance, certain legal rights which were not always accorded to other professions. In the eyes of many people the priest and the teacher occupied a specially privileged status because these positions enjoyed a relatively higher income and a position of authority which was linked to the acceptance of Christian faith and morality. In urban Black societies, part of the role played by the chief and the witch-doctor in rural society were taken over by the priest, the teacher and the medical doctor as men who in some undefined way, represented divine wisdom and divine power.

5. **Fundamental shift in position of parson and teacher.** During the last few years, however, a subtle but very definite shift in evaluation of the authority of the church, the Christian faith and the teaching profession has taken place in Black society. This important change can be attributed to a number of reasons, the most important being the political situation in our country and the sudden awakening of urban youth. The support for the government policy of apartheid which a powerful church like the White Dutch Reformed Church (but also other churches) gave, inevitably led the Black people to conclude that the Christian faith, being the White man's faith, was identical to racial oppression. Christianity was seen by millions of Blacks to be equated with racial discrimination, oppressive legislation, denial of human dignity, denial of political rights and relegation into a permanently subservient position because of the colour of one's skin. Because the policy of apartheid enjoyed divine sanction as far as the Whites were concerned, a strong movement of rejection of the church and even of the Christian faith has taken place amongst many, many young Blacks. The critical re-appraisal by youth of church, Christian belief and White, western Christian values eventually and inevitably led to a crisis of credibility of Christianity. The new generation started openly to challenge and reject the traditional views presented by all spokesmen of Christianity. In a short period the tables were turned: traditional Christianity as presented and propagated by Whites and Blacks was put on trial. A crisis of credibility of the Christian faith has arrived.

6. **The emergence of Black Theology.** Parallel with this development within the Black community a new phenomenon appeared: the concept of Black Theology. Initiated by Blacks in the University Christian Movement this concept was first published in a book called "Essays on Black Theology" — a publication subsequently banned. But the ideas could not be stifled because no idea which reflects truth could ever be suppressed. Eminent theologians like Bishop Manas Buthelezi, Dr. Allan Boesak, Dr. Elliot Mgojo, the Rev. Stanley Magaba, the Rev. Ernest Baartman and Fr. Lebamang Sebidi have all made meaningful contributions to the concepts of Black Theology as a liberating religious force for both Black and White, rejecting the distorted idea that the Christian faith is the faith of the White man, of apartheid, of separate development. I am convinced that when our history is evaluated, the emergence of Black Theology will be seen to have been one of the most crucial and powerful spiritual and political forces in preventing millions of people from turning from the Christian faith to seek their salvation in Marxist philosophy, materialist hedonism or other religions.

7. **Seeking of Marxist or Communist alternatives.** But it would be foolish of us to ignore the increasing interest in Communism — especially for the ideas of economic justice as proclaimed by Marxism — in the circles of educated urban youth. Discussions in which thousands of young Blacks are involved centre around the issue of an alternative political, social and economic system which could create a more just, a more human society than the one in which millions of Blacks find themselves to be. This discussion inevitably leads to a critical evaluation of the capitalist system, of the policies of the government and of the acceptance or rejection of the present economic and political system by the Christian church. Because the vast majority of White Christians support the existing systems, many young Blacks (mistakenly but understandably) conclude:

7.1 that the Christian faith is inextricably linked to capitalism and racism and supports these two oppressive -isms;

7.2 that an alternative society will therefore have to be sought outside the Christian faith, capitalism and racism.

8. **The inevitable choice: strategy of enslavement or liberation.** Everything I have said up till now forms part of a web of spiritual, political and social imprisonment which is spun around the Black teacher. The fact that the vast majority of teachers are members of a Christian church, that many hold leading positions as laymen in their own church communities, that many of them are giving religious instruction in school, or Sunday School, or catechist classes — all such involvement (direct or indirect) with the Christian church, the Christian message and the Christian faith justifiably leads the youth to ask of their teachers: **What is your judgment about the role of the church and of Christianity in liberating our community? How do you see your own position, your personal testimony, your own involvement in relation to the South African brand of Christianity as it is experienced and interpreted by the Black community?**

And if I may add a personal question, I would wish to ask: **What is your experience as teachers in home, school, church and community of the type of questions young people are asking today regarding the Bible, Christianity, social and economic justice, the liberation movements? How do they evaluate the present religious instruction in schools and churches? Do they see such instruction to be relevant and meaningful — or are many in opposition or revolt to many of the ideas presented in such religious instruction?**

I believe it to be of vital importance for every teacher to reflect very deeply on the above questions and to answer the following questions honestly and openly:

8.1 Am I as a Black teacher willing to portray my deepest

conviction regarding religion to my children at home and my pupils in school, even if such convictions may in certain respects contradict traditional views or conflict with the outlook of those in power?

8.2 If I as a Black teacher confessed to be a Christian what in fact is the nature of my belief and the issues which my pupils regard to be of vital importance for their own future? What is my judgment as a Christian of such concepts as Black Theology, human dignity, social justice, liberation, reconciliation, relationship between church and state, political rights of Blacks and Whites? Do I believe that my Christian faith does provide me with clear guidelines on these issues? Am I clear what these guidelines are and am I imparting these insights to my pupils? And if I refrain from doing so whilst holding such Christian convictions, is it because I fear the consequences for myself and those nearest and dearest to me?

8.3 Do I as a Black teacher realise that today there are especially two professions in Black society able to make a positive contribution towards true liberation more than any other: that of the parson and the teacher? Do I realise that as a teacher I find myself in a strategic position of tremendous opportunity and of serious responsibility? If I neglected to use this opportunity will this not be seen to be not only a betrayal of the Christian faith, not only a betrayal of your own community, but also a betrayal of the White community which is presently unable to liberate itself?

We are living in the midst of the most crucial period of South African history; we are either contributing to the further enslavement of our total society or its eventual liberation. As teachers we could either use and positively exploit our strategic position or, in refusing to do so, remain part of the problem instead of becoming part of the movement of true human liberation. My urgent appeal to you as a teaching profession is this: Let your voices be heard, let your actions be seen as part of the contribution which you are making towards the liberation of the Christian faith, the Christian church and the total society!

De Profundis

"Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O Lord" Ps. 130.

How deep is dark?
 Non- is the place
 Black is my face
 Which no one sees
 A hole too deep
 So let all whites sleep.
 Light — white
 Sight — bright
 Who lives in this glare
 Blind white
 Goes nowhere.
 Who feels in the dark
 Moves into God's sight
 And bears His care
 So is the cross light.

E. M. C.

C.I. QUESTIONS CHIEF BUTHELEZI AND AKZO

The Christian Institute strongly reaffirms its stand on Investment in South Africa of October 22nd 1976, maintaining that economic pressure is one of the few remaining peaceful methods of bringing about meaningful change, and therefore no further investment in South Africa should be encouraged.

According to the Press Statement issued by Grinaker Projects (Pty) Ltd on 22nd May 1977, a new chemical plant is being opened by Chief M. G. Buthelezi at Isithebe, KwaZulu.

This is an enterprise in which leading companies in the chemical field from Holland, West Germany, and South Africa have joined with the Bantu Investment Corporation to provide basic materials for the detergent and cosmetics industry.

The total investment involved is R3 150 000. The plant is fully automated and will employ 35 blacks initially, rising to 45. A "social programme" to operate the enterprise on a non-discriminatory basis, with full benefits to all employees, is in operation. The company hopes that labour intensive industries will be attracted to the area.

The Christian Institute is glad to note that the scheme appears to break new ground in offering reasonable benefits to its 35 black workers, and unknown numbers of white staff.

However, the Christian Institute expresses its grave concern because this development:

1. Appears to exploit the South African scene for the benefit of white investors mainly from Europe, who will presumably receive the major profits from the venture.
2. Gives strong support to the KwaZulu Homeland and Bantu Investment Corporation which are foundation stones of the apartheid system.
3. Mentions no provision for investment in the project by South African blacks, or the appointment of a Black Board of Directors.
4. Was originated and is designed to obtain maximum benefit for the investors, not to provide maximum opportunity to the needy people of KwaZulu.
5. Ignores the expressed desire of black leaders and organisations that foreign investment be rejected until a free society is established in South Africa.
6. Appears to question whether a scheme of this nature meets the requirements for "a radical redistribution of wealth, land, and political power" in the statement by Chief Buthelezi in March 1976, supported in his personal capacity by our director Dr. C. F. B. Naudé.
7. And therefore requests that Akzo Chemie of West Germany, Akzo Chemie of Holland, S.A. Chemical Holdings, and Anglo American Corporation, Grinaker Projects (Pty) Ltd and Chief M. G. Buthelezi declare the principles under which they are acting in this matter, and show in what ways these are calculated to support the liberation and well-being of the people of South Africa.

26th May 1977

C.I. RESPONDS TO VAN ROOYEN COMMISSION

The recommendation of the Van Rooyen Commission that the Christian Institute should be made to certify that none of its money came from overseas appears meaningless in view of such certification in any case being required and given annually to the Registrar of Affected Organisations when the audited statements of

our organisation are presented to the Registrar.

The Commission further wishes to tighten the controls over "affected organisations" by precluding a body like the C.I. from receiving purely local funds from a South African church body which also received funds for its purposes from abroad. In this regard reference is made to money which the C.I. had received from the S.A. Council of Churches. The facts of the case are that the SACC has only made one grant of R2 000 to the C.I. in June 1975 immediately after the C.I. was declared an affected organisation. This grant was made from entirely S.A. source monies and clearly stated as such. We therefore totally fail to understand the complaint of the Commission that the organisations "are often so mixed up with each other that it is difficult to separate the one from the other." If there is any confusion anywhere it is clearly not in our minds or between the organisations concerned.

The reference to grants received from the SACC for Spro-cas is irrelevant as this project terminated in 1973 — two years before the C.I. was declared an affected organisation.

If the recommendations mean that a South African church, which receives funds from abroad, may not assist a body like the Christian Institute from its local funds, then the Government is both further eroding religious freedom and regrettably hastening the Church-State confrontation.

The report also refers to funds from overseas for the defence of people involved in security trials. In this regard we wish to warn the Government that any attempt to curtail or prevent such monies from entering the country will seriously increase the already strong feelings of anger and bitterness within our Black community and lead towards further confrontation and conflict.

The overall impression of the recommendations made is that of a totalitarian regime extending its control over yet another important aspect of human life. Only an oppressive political system could seek to ensure its security by such methods.

-24th May 1977

My S.A.

7 a.m. alarm
Switch off
Switch on
Run, bus to catch
cars, bikes, birds, windows, run run!
Noise, smoke, smoke, smoke! - Lost!
at last, can't see, can't hear!
Time to think
Good morning S.A.
Howdee J.C. can you hear me?
I never know
Always too much wax in my ears
so they say
Been thinking much lately
Searching
Frantically
Not much time
Where to now S.A.?
The answer
Is
- - but where, when, who?
Must clean my ears -- no reply yet.
Peace, — yes. I've found it -- the answer!
— where the hell's the dove?
Found the olive branch
The dove?
— Dying
Stab wound to the heart.
can I save it?
Oh God, my ears are clean!
— or are they?

Diarmuid McClean

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