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# WHY DÉTENTE CANNOT SUCCEED LIBERATION VERSUS DEVELOPMENT

Within South Africa the major problems of society will not be solved as long as people do not hearken to one another; let us say rather, unless they become *willing* to hear one another. The White man, the ruler, the rich person wants to solve these problems by providing the means of development for the Blacks, the ruled, the underprivileged. The Black man seeks liberation within his situation to set him free to live a human life.

Outside South Africa the attitude towards this country will not change ultimately unless we become willing to listen to the real objection which other states have against us, namely our internal policies, our way of life and how we try to solve the problems of our society.

At far as the enlightened White man is concerned, exciting changes have taken place in the spirit of détente, but for the Black man nothing has really happened other than mild marginal changes. They still have no prospect of enjoying a normal family life; of owning their own home or piece of ground near their place of work; of having free and compulsory education for their children which is up to standard; of enjoying equal opportunity to earn a living wage irrespective of race; of receiving a decent living wage; of being recognised as human beings with dignity; of being relieved of the harassment of apartheid laws geared as they are to racism and petty restrictions; or of having a say in the determination of their lives and future.

It is clear that two different views of life clash in the two attitudes described above and it is important that we assess this problem theologically. The gospel presents salvation as a total gift in Christ, as a unity of all the various dimensions of life. This necessarily includes liberation and development in every situation. Theology, thus understood, linked with history fulfils a prophetic function insofar as it interprets historical events with the intention of revealing and proclaiming their profound meaning. A theologian is necessarily someone personally and vitally engaged in historical realities. Theology

however, does not stop with reflecting on the situation, but tries rather to be part of the process through which the world is transformed. Thus, our task is to penetrate the present reality.

Why is it then that the Black person would have liberation and the whole idea which it conveys, whereas the White person in South Africa sees development as a solution to the problems? We use these two words, "development" and "liberation", to indicate two approaches, two views, two starting points, two categories to reflect a way out of the dilemma.

### **the myth of 'development'**

"*Development*" critically analysed in our situation connotes a negative attitude towards those "underdeveloped" ones. It stands in opposition to "underdevelopment" according to the morals and standards which the so-called "developed" apply. This attitude divides people into two groups with one-sided sectional standards, and causes polarity leading to confrontation.

The result is that the Black person views "development" of the underdeveloped as a euphemism intended to camouflage the anguish of the poor, those who are discriminated against and oppressed. The two terms "developed" and "underdeveloped" are regarded as applying to the rich, powerful and privileged on the one hand over-against the poor, powerless and oppressed on the other. What makes it even worse is that the rich, developed and educated consider themselves to be central to the history of South Africa, whereas in the Gospel of Christ the poor, the underdeveloped, the rejected constitute the central focus of attention.

But why is development viewed with so much suspicion? Development can be viewed as a total social process whereas the economy forms the backbone of the whole system. Thus development includes social, political and cultural aspects and

stresses the interdependence of groups of people. This however has the effect of leading to greater wealth for fewer people and greater poverty for the majority in South Africa. The reason for this is that discrimination is built into the very basis of the system so that if the lower-income groups, the Blacks, "develop", the higher-income groups, the Whites, "develop" even further above them in a spiral movement. As a result the privileged groups always stay ahead as to power, riches and privilege.

The whole development myth coupled with basic race classification and discrimination has the effect of producing the same differentiation in every situation so that Black "developed" businessmen exploit their own Black "underdeveloped" workers in the same way. Even more alarming is the fact that the homelands are in many aspects a replica of South Africa with the same basic concept of the "developed" and "underdeveloped", those in power and those powerless, as an example of which we may mention the powers, equivalent to those of the Republic, which were granted to some homelands to ban people without trial.

*Liberation* on the other hand, is the approach which attempts to place the notion of development in a much wider and more comprehensive context: an historical vision in which people would assume control of their own destiny, bringing to an end a system of utter subjection to and fundamental dependence on others for the very basics of human life. In the modern idiom "dependence" (economic and labour dependence) become synonymous with "slavery".

Christ the Saviour liberates us from sin which is the ultimate root of all disruption of brotherhood and friendship, and of injustice and oppression. The primary means through which sin is expressed and the means it uses is the economic system; as the Bible so aptly puts it: "For the love of money is the root of all evil". The Lord makes man truly free and enables him to live in communion with Him and this is the basis also for human brotherhood and service in the economic field.

The Black person wants to be liberated from all that limits or keeps him from self-fulfilment, from all impediments which keep him from the exercise of his freedom to create, to be a human being, to travel, to belong to the community, to own a house, to decide about his life and future.

The White man views this liberation with suspicion. He sees it as posing a threat to his very existence and the continuation of his development and civilization. He is willing to allow self-determination only under the strictest and most well-defined conditions in terms of which the Black people are totally dependent and are thrust into a situation of polarization in different "states" where for the fore-

seeable future—and this is all-important—they will be *absolutely dependent* on South Africa for their economy. But even if the homelands policy achieves its aim, the same problem will remain inside "White" South Africa where, (having regard to the increase in population and the limited land of the 'homelands'), the ratio will remain 4 Blacks (Indians and Brown people included) to 1 White person. In "White" South Africa the Black people will only enjoy rights, privileges and power insofar as they are not a threat to the White man's existence, wealth, power and privileges.

### **the challenge of "development" by "liberation"**

In this situation the White power and wealth structure which is willing to grant 'development', is challenged by the Black aspirations towards liberation. If one compares these two key words the picture of this challenge becomes clearer.

Liberation gives expression to the inescapable moment of radical change, a *metanoia*, a turning around in the opposite direction; of such change "development" knows nothing. The Gospel focusses on the salvation and liberation of the lost, the poor, the rejected, the starved, the powerless. Everything possible must be done in the name of Christ to reverse the present situation, the structures of society, the policies which determine the lives of these people.

Development attacks the fruits of evil, liberation attacks the root of evil; development works for the betterment of people, liberation for their well-being; development strives for improvements in conditions, liberation for the reversal of evil conditions; development strives for a higher position in the hierarchy for those who suffer, liberation strives for the abolition of the hierarchy which causes people to suffer. Development uses charity, almsgiving, permits, allowances, opening up of new opportunities at the right time, whereas liberation stands for basic God-given rights, structural changes to benefit all people, decision-making power to share in one's own destiny.

In South Africa, the concept of liberation challenges our priorities. To give one example, —we could mention protests against poverty, exploitation, discrimination and apartheid—such protests are seen to be *subversive*. This view is totally wrong. The Gospel sees luxury and wealth in the face of starvation, disruption of fellowship (separate development), denial of human rights, as subversive of its principles.

Furthermore, freedom in our society is only possible if one is submissive to the system, arbitrary laws and decrees and the will of the government and those who support it. The more readily one obeys them, the more one is "free"—"freedom will only prevail if the slaves of the system have the

souls of slaves with the end result that the more one is a slave of the system, the more one is "free". This can, e.g., be clearly seen in the "homelands" and the Coloured Council and also in the Black Dutch Reformed Churches which are dependent on the White Dutch Reformed Church for money and training.

The perpetual temptation to me as a White man in South Africa is *not* to escape from the prison of arbitrary laws, a superficial separated society, but to become a voluntary prisoner of the system with its privileges and opportunities geared to the whiteness of my skin and the Afrikaans utterances of my tongue. To me as a proclaimer of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, my dilemma in the situation is that it is not by proclaiming rebellion against evil in our society that I propagate "freedom", but by preaching total submission to an evil system.

One cannot escape from the feeling that the government and its supporters are playing 'god' by granting and withholding human rights, freedom, opportunity, ownership, etc. according to a policy of separate development. Consider for one moment the detention of more than forty young Black people for six months without trial—this can only be described as an action of idolatrous power.

#### **change in South Africa?**

Change within South Africa has taken place, but such are not the marginal changes which people usually mention in the hope of bringing about détente.

One of the major changes that is taking place on an ever-increasing scale, is the fact that the African States were previously defined *by* South Africa in terms of South Africa (cf. technical assistance, loans, workers for South Africa, etc.) but they are now being re-defined from within South Africa in terms of Africa. Détente aspirations have suddenly made us aware of the community, the links, the contacts, in Africa. The myth of seeing ourselves in South Africa as *the whole*, the very essence, has been destroyed, and we are now beginning to see ourselves as a small part of Africa.

Another change is that after the events in Mozambique and Angola, the majority of people in South Africa are beginning to express a deeply rooted sentiment, namely the aspiration towards liberation which will change their situation completely, and since the actual achievement of independence in Mozambique and Angola this awareness must necessarily grow. This awareness will cause them to dream about, to strive towards and work for that goal.

This kind of change in the minds of the majority of people cannot but bring about major structural change. At the moment those in power are allowing marginal changes which do in some small way alle-

viate the needs in the labour field for example, but one gets the impression that changes are only made when there is pressure on the structures, increases in salaries after strikes, for example. If the government is really serious in using the slogan "away with discrimination", the whole concept of separate development will have to go. If it is not serious, the whole operation is futile. The lesson of Mozambique and Rhodesia must be learned and taken to heart in South Africa—the abolition of petty apartheid which was effected in both those countries, did not change the situation and the populations still longed for freedom in a non-racial society.

The longing and the striving for liberation will continue just so long as the powerful, rich and privileged White man keeps the Black man in economic and political *dependence* and takes the major decisions for him—this is the root cause of the problem. Unless this changes the longing and striving for liberation will not be stopped. Marginal changes within the system will not help. Our only hope is to start at rock bottom and leave it to the Black man to re-define himself in terms of his God-given humanity without imposing racial concepts or capitalistic categories ('labour force') on him. The White man must also be re-defined, not in terms of his power and development, but in terms of his contribution and creativity as a human being in the service of other human beings.

To be a Christian means to be a sign that the Kingdom of God has come in one's life, and is coming in justice, peace, fellowship and compassion, and also to erect signs in society which portray this glorious kingdom. What signs have we erected?—the signs indicating that God loves the White people and rejects the Blacks, that God favours the rich and allots misery and starvation to the poor, that God rules with an iron hand of military power to force 'law and order' in terms of segregation on everyone?

Détente will be on the right path only if Christ and His way of love, justice and fellowship are followed in both our individual lives and in society, and if the White people abandon their attempt to build up their security, wealth and privilege at the expense of the Black people.

# WAAROM DÉTENTE NIE KAN SLAAG NIE BEVRYDING VERSUS ONTWIKKELING

Die groot probleme in Suid-Afrika sal nie opgelos word solank as wat mense mekaar nie hoor nie, of liewer *gewillig* word om mekaar te hoor nie. Die witman, die heerser, die ryk persoon wil die probleme oplos deur „ontwikkeling” vir die swartman, die oorheersde, die minderbevoorregte te voorsien. Die swartman probeer bevryding in die situasie vind om hom te bevry om 'n menslike lewe te kan lei.

Buite Suid-Afrika sal die houding uiteindelik nie teenoor dié land verander nie behalwe as ons gewillig word om na die werklike beswaar van die ander state teen ons te luister, naamlik ons binne-landse beleid, ons wyse van lewe en die wyse waarop ons probeer om die probleme van ons samelewing op te los.

Vir die verligte wit persoon het opwindende veranderinge in die gees van détente plaasgevind, maar vir die swart persoon het niks wesenliks plaasgevind nie, behalwe maar bykomstige veranderinge. Hulle het steeds nog geen uitsig op 'n normale familie-lewe nie, of om hulle eie huise en erwe te kan besit waar hulle werk nie, of om vrye en verpligte onderrig vir hulle kinders wat op standaard is, te ontvang nie, of om gelyke geleenthede vir 'n lewenswaardige inkomste te geniet sonder dat hulle ras in ag geneem word nie, of om as mense met waardigheid beskou te word sonder apartheidswetgewing wat aan rassisme en klein apartheid gekoppel is, te verduur nie, of om 'n sê te hê in die beskikking van hul lewens en-toekoms nie.

Dit is duidelik dat twee lewensuitkyke in die twee sieninge wat hier bo beskryf is, bots en dit is belangrik dat die probleem teologies gewaardeer moet word. Die evangelie bied verlossing as 'n totale gawe in Christus aan, wat 'n eenheid vorm van al die verskillende dimensies van die lewe. Dit sluit noodwendig bevryding en ontwikkeling in elke situasie in. Teologie wat so gesien word en wat met die geskiedenis verbind word, vervul 'n profetiese funksie sover as wat dit historiese gebeure interpreteer met die begeerte om hulle besondere betekenis te openbaar en bekend te maak. 'n Teoloog sal dan iemand wees wat persoonlik en wesenlik in die historiese realiteite betrokke is.

Teologie hou egter nie op met die oorweging van die situasie in die lig van die evangelie nie, maar probeer eerder om deel van die proses, waardeur die wêreld getransformeer word, te wees. Gevolglik is ons taak om die huidige werklikheid te deurvors.

Waarom is dit dan so dat die swart persoon voorkeur aan die begrip bevryding, en dit wat dit alles inhou, gee, terwyl die wit persoon ontwikkeling as 'n oplossing vir die probleme in die land sien? Ons gebruik hierdie twee woorde „ontwikkeling” en „bevryding” om twee benaderings, twee sieninge, twee uitgangspunte, twee kategorieë aan te dui om 'n weg uit die dilemma te oorweeg.

### die mite van ontwikkeling

As *ontwikkeling* krities ontleed word, gee dit 'n negatiewe houding tot diegene wat „onderontwikkeld” is, weer. Dit kom in kompetisie met onderontwikkeling volgens die moreel, standarde en maatstawwe wat die sogenaamde ontwikkeldes aanlê. Dit verdeel mense in twee groepe met eensydige maatstawwe en veroorsaak polariteit wat tot konfrontasie lei.

Die gevolg is dat die swart persoon die „ontwikkeling” van die „onderontwikkelde” sien as 'n eufemisme om die foltering van die verarmde, dié teenoor wie gediskrimineer word en die onderdrukte te kamoefleer. Die twee terme die ontwikkeldes en die onderontwikkeldes word gesien as die rykes, diegene met mag en die bevoorregtes teenoor die armes, dié sonder mag en die verdruktes. Wat dit nog vererger, is dat die rykes die ontwikkeldes en die geleerdes hulleself as in die sentrum van die geskiedenis in Suid-Afrika beskou, terwyl die armes, die onderontwikkeldes en die verwerptes egter in die evangelie van Jesus Christus die middelpunt van die aandag geniet.

Maar waarom word ontwikkeling met soveel wantroue beoordeel? Ontwikkeling kan as 'n totale sosiale proses beskou word, maar die ekonomie vorm die ruggraat van die hele sisteem. Ontwikkeling sluit dus sosiale politieke en kulturele aspekte in en dit beklemtoon die interafhanklikheid van

groepe mense. Dit het egter die gevolg dat dit groter rykdom vir minder mense en groter armoede vir die meerderheid in Suid-Afrika tot gevolge het. Die rede daarvoor is dat diskriminasie in die fundamentele basis van die sisteem ingebou is, sodat as die laer inkomste groepe, die swart mense, „ontwikkel”, die hoër inkomste groepe, die witmense nog selfs verder bo hulle in 'n spiraal ontwikkel met die gevolg dat die bevoorregte groepe altyd in mag en rykdom voor bly.

Die hele ontwikkelingsmite wat met basiese rassediskriminasie en differensiasie gekoppel is, het die effek om dieselfde onderskeiding in elke situasie te bewerkstellig, met die gevolg dat die swart besigheidsmen sy eie swart „ontwikkelde” werkers sonder mag op dieselfde manier uitbuit. Selfs meer verontrustend is die feit dat die tuislande op so baie aspekte 'n replika van Suid-Afrika is met die konsepte van „ontwikkelde” en „ontwikkelde”, diegene met mag en diegene sonder mag. Om maar een voorbeeld hier te noem, kan verwys word na die magte wat aan sommige tuislande verleen is om mense sonder verhoor in te perk, net soos in die Republiek.

*Bevryding* aan die ander kant is die benadering wat probeer om die begrip ontwikkeling in 'n baie wyer en omvattender verband te plaas: Dit stel 'n historiese visie voor waarin mense die beheer van hulle eie bestemming oorneem. Dit beteken die beëindiging van die uiteindelijke toelating deur, en afhanklikheid van ander vir 'n basiese menswaardige bestaan. Die moderne woord vir „slawerny” is hier *afhanklikheid* — ekonomiese en arbeidsafhanklikheid.

Christus die Verlosser verlos ons van sonde, wat die diepste oorsaak van die onderbreking van broederskap en vriendskap en van ongeregtheid en onderdrukking is. Die belangrikste middel waardeur sonde uitgedruk word en die middel wat dit gebruik, is die ekonomiese sisteem soos die Bybel dit so raakvat: „Geldgierigheid is die wortel van alle ewels.” Die Here bevry die mens wesenlik en stel hom in staat om in gemeenskap met hom te leef, en dit is die basis vir broederskap en diens ook in die ekonomiese veld op die ekonomiese terrein.

Die swartman wil graag bevry wees van al die beperkinge wat hom van selfvervulling weerhou, van al die struikelblokke wat hom van die uitoefening van sy vryheid om te skep, weerhou, wat hom verhoor om 'n mens te wees, om tot die gemeenskap te behoort, om 'n huis te besit, om oor sy lewe en toekoms te besluit.

Die witman beskou hierdie bevryding met wantroue omdat hy dit as 'n bedreiging vir sy werklike bestaan en die voortgang van sy ontwikkeling en beskawing sien. Hy is gewillig om selfbeskikking slegs onder die strengste en duidelik-gedefinieerde voorwaardes toe te laat waar die swartmense heeltemal verdeeld is en in 'n situasie van

polarisasie in verskillende „state” geplaas is, en wat baie belangrik is, is die feit dat hulle in 'n posisie geplaas word waar hulle in die afsienbare toekoms in 'n posisie van absolute ekonomiese afhanklikheid van die Suid-Afrika geplaas word. Maar selfs al werk die tuislandbeleid uit, sal dieselfde probleem nog in „wit” Suid-Afrika oorbly waar die verhouding (met die vermeerdering van die bevolking en die beperkte grond vir die „tuislande”) vier swartes (Indiërs en Bruinmense ingesluit) tot een blanke sal bly. In blank Suid-Afrika sal die swartmense alleenlik regte, vooregte en mag geniet in soverre as wat hulle nie 'n bedreiging van die witman se bestaan, rykdom, mag en voorreg is nie.

### **die uitdaging van „ontwikkeling” deur „bevryding”**

Die blanke struktuur van mag en rykdom, wat gewillig is om „ontwikkeling” toe te laat, word in die situasie deur die swart aspirasies vir bevryding uitgedaag. As 'n mens die twee sleutelwoorde vergelyk, word die prentjie van hierdie uitdaging duideliker.

*Bevryding* druk die onontwykbare moment van radikale verandering, 'n radikale *metanoia*, 'n omkeer in die teenoorgestelde rigting uit; daarvan weet ontwikkeling niks nie. Die evangelie se fokus is op die verlossing en bevryding van die verlore, die armes, die verworpenes, die hongerlydendes, die magteloses, en alles moontlik moet in sy Naam gedoen word om die situasie, die strukture van die samelewing, die beleid wat die lewe van hierdie mense bepaal, in 'n teenoorgestelde rigting te stuur.

Ontwikkeling val die vrug van die kwaad aan, bevryding die wortel van die kwaad; ontwikkeling arbei vir die verbetering van mense, bevryding vir hulle welwese en heil; ontwikkeling strewe vir die verbetering in toestande, bevryding vir die verandering van toestande; ontwikkeling strewe vir 'n hoër posisie vir die lydendes in die hierargie, bevryding vir die opheffing van die hierargie wat veroorsaak dat mense ly. Ontwikkeling gebruik liefdadigheid, aalmoese, permitte, toegewings, nuwe geleenthede op die regte tyd, terwyl bevryding staan vir die basiese Godgegewe regte, strukturele veranderinge wat alle mense ten goede kom, besluite-mag vir elkeen om in sy eie bestemming deel te hê.

Die bevrydingskonsep daag die prioriteite van almal in Suid-Afrika uit. Ons noem 'n voorbeeld. Protes teen armoede, uitbuiting, diskriminasie en apartheid word as *subversief* gesien. Dit is heeltemal verkeerd. Die evangelie sien luuksheid en rykdom in die aanskoue van hongersnood, 'n verbreking van gemeenskap (afsonderlike ontwikkeling) en 'n verloëning van menseregte as *subversief* vir sy beginsels.

'n Mens kan 'n ander voorbeeld gebruik met die begrip „vryheid”. Vryheid in ons samelewing is alleenlik moontlik as 'n mens gedwee aan die sisteem, arbitrêre wette en dekrete en die wil van die regering en dié wat hom ondersteun, onderworpe is. Hoe meer 'n mens hulle gehoorsaam, hoe meer is jy „vry”—„vryheid” sal alleenlik in swang wees as die „slawe” van die sisteem die gees van slawe het. Die eindresultaat sal soos volg wees: Hoe meer jy 'n slaaf van die sisteem is, hoe meer is jy „vry”. Dit kan bv. duidelik in die „tuislande” en die Kleurlingraad en ook in die swart Ned. Geref. Kerke, wat van die wit Ned. Kerk Ned. Geref. Kerk vir geld en opleiding afhanklik is, gesien word.

Die gedurige versoeking vir my as 'n witman in Suid-Afrika is *nie* om van die gevangenis van arbitrêre wette, van 'n oppervlakkige apartheidsamelewing te ontlug nie, maar om 'n vrywillige gevangene van die sisteem met sy voorregte en geleenthede wat aan die blankheid van my vel en die Afrikaanse spraak van my tong gekoppel is, te word. Vir my as 'n verkondiger van die evangelie van Jesus Christus is die dilemma dat dit nie deur die verkondiging van teenstand teen die kwaad in ons samelewing is dat ek vryheid verkondig nie, maar egter deur totale onderworpenheid aan 'n bose sisteem.

'n Mens kan nie van die gevoel wegkom nie dat die regering en sy ondersteuners „god” speel deur die skenking en weerhouding van menseregte, vryheid, geleentheid, die reg tot eiendom, ens., volgens die apartheidsideologie. Dink vir 'n oomblik aan die aanhouding van meer as veertig jong swartmense vir ses maande sonder verhoor, wat op afgodiese kragaksie neerkom.

### **verandering binne Suid-Afrika?**

Daar is verandering in Suid-Afrika maar dit is nie die gewone bykomstige verandering wat mense gewoonlik noem in die hoop om *détente* tot stand te bring nie.

Een van die belangrike veranderinge wat plaasvind en wat steeds toeneem, is die feit dat Suid-Afrika, wat voorheen die Afrika state in terme van Suid-Afrika gedefinieer het (vgl. tegniese hulp, lenings, werkers vir Suid-Afrika, ens.) word nou geherdefinieer vanuit Suid-Afrika *in terme van Afrika*. *Détente*-aspirasies het ons skielik bewus gemaak van die gemeenskap, die verbindings, die eenheid, die rykdom van kontak in Afrika. Die mite om onself in Suid-Afrika as dié geheel, die belangrike essensie te sien, is vernietig en ons begin onself nou as 'n klein deeltjie van Afrika te sien.

Nog 'n verandering is daarin geleë dat na die gebeure in Mosambiek en Angola, die meerderheid mense in Suid-Afrika begin om 'n diepgevoelde sentiment, naamlik die aspirasie vir bevryding, wat hulle situasie heeltemal sal verander, uit te druk en

vanaf die werklike onafhanklikheid van Mosambiek en Angola sal hierdie bewuswording slegs groei. Hierdie bewuswording sal hulle aanspoor om oor bevryding te droom, daarvoor te streef en te werk.

Hierdie soort verandering in die gemoedere van die meerderheid mense kan nie anders as om belangrike strukturele veranderinge tot gevolg te hê nie. Op die oomblik laat diegene wat die mag besit, bykomstige veranderinge, wat die nood op 'n klein skaal verlig, toe, soos bv. op die arbeidsterrein, maar 'n mens kry die indruk dat veranderinge alleenlik aangebring word as daar pressie op die strukture toegepas word, soos bv. die verhogings van salarisse na stakings. As die regering werklik ernstig met die slagspreuk „weg met diskriminasie” is, sal die hele begrip van „afsonderlike ontwikkeling” moet verdwyn. As dit nie ernstig bedoel is nie, is die hele aksie futiel. Die les van Mosambiek en Rhodesië moet in Suid-Afrika geleer en ter harte geneem word—die opheffing van klein apartheid, wat in beide lande gebeur het, het nie die situasie verander nie en die bevolkings het steeds na bevryding in 'n non-rassistiese samelewing verlang.

Die kern van die probleem is dat die magtige, ryk en bevoorregte blanke die swartman in ekonomiese en politieke *afhanklikheid* hou en die belangrike besluite van sy lewe vir hom neem. Tensy dat dit verander, sal die begeerte na en die strewe vir bevryding nie beëindig word nie. Onbelangrike veranderings binne die sisteem sal nie help nie. Ons moet eerder by die begin van sake begin en aan die swartmense die vergunning toelaat om hulleself in terme van hulle Godgegewe menslikheid te definieer sonder om rassistiese begrippe of kapitalistiese begrippe („arbeidsmag”) op hulle af te dwing. Die blanke moet ook geherdefinieer word, nie in terme van sy mag en ontwikkeling nie, maar in terme van sy bydrae en skeppingsvermoë as 'n mens in diens van ander.

Nie alleenlik is die toekoms van Suid-Afrika op die spel nie, maar ook die betekenis van die Christendom. Om 'n Christen te wees, beteken om 'n teken te wees dat die Koninkryk van God in 'n mens se lewe gekom het en nog steeds kom in geregtigheid, vrede, gemeenskap en liefde, en ook om tekens in die samelewing op te rig wat hierdie glorieryke Koninkryk weerspieel. Wat het ons in Suid-Afrika opgerig? Is dit nie tekens wat die feit weergee dat God die blanke liefhet en die swartmense verwerp nie; dat God die ryke bevoordeel en ellende en hongersnood vir die armes toelaat nie; dat God met 'n ysterhand van militêre mag regeer om „wet en orde” in terme van apartheid op elkeen af te dwing nie? *Détente* sal op die regte pad wees as Christus en sy weg van liefde, geregtigheid en gemeenskap nagevolg word, ook in ons samelewing, en as die opbou van die sekuriteit, rykdom en voorreg van die blanke *ten koste van* die swartmense gestaak word.



# ALTERNATIVES TO CAPITALISM

**peter randall**

*The Justice and Reconciliation Committee of the South African Council of Churches has been looking in depth at some of the problems of our society, one of them being the whole question of Capitalism and its consequences. Mr Peter Randall, Director of Ravan Press, was asked to give a talk at that meeting, and we publish it here.*

I don't believe that one can simply deal with the question of alternatives to capitalism in a few minutes and then move on to the next item on the agenda. One either takes the subject really seriously and does something meaningful about it or else perhaps one should ignore it entirely. But given that reservation, let me say a few words of my understanding of some of the alternatives available that the churches should be looking at rather than the present tacit acceptance of the status quo as regards the economic system under which we live.

Most of the debate in South Africa is about various racial formulae—about how to accommodate the various racial groups into some kind of political structure or system that will reduce the degree of conflict between those race groups, and all the White parties, certainly as far as I know, tacitly accept the free enterprise, capitalistic economic system, and fail really to look at the relationship between economics and politics; this I think is where socialism makes its most important contribution—that it puts economics at the centre of the political debate and sees issues other than race as being the most profound and most important issues to be faced. I certainly think this is the global dimension to this whole subject, that in the rest of the world where race has become reduced as a factor in conflict, the problem is much more an economic one of how do you re-distribute the world's resources, how do you allocate the world's wealth to overcome the imbalance between the haves and have-nots in the rich western countries and the poor Asian, African and Latin American countries.

Now that is a terribly simple analysis because it so happens that in the world at large and in South Africa in particular the economic cleavages tend to follow racial lines and therefore the discussion cannot ignore race; it is a very crucial factor still, particularly in South Africa. I would like to refer—not knowing quite why—to a book called the "Eye of the Needle" which Spro-Cas published in 1973—I say I don't know why because it cannot be legally quoted from or distributed in this country any more—it is a book by Rick Turner in which

he has made, I think, the first serious attempt in South Africa to explore the relationships between Christian teaching and the two opposing economic systems of capitalism and socialism. I believe that this is a profoundly important book and one of my disappointments was that it was not taken sufficiently seriously by the Church—it was certainly read by many individual church people and I think it has had considerable influence in the thinking of many individuals, but I think that to be really effective this needs to be looked at by the organised church. As I said the book is banned because the author is banned which again is a commentary on South Africa. I want to refer to this, I suppose, to indicate that it is not that there has been no thinking in South Africa about the subject. I think Rick Turner's book was one of the pioneering works and one of the seminal works in this field. I think there is a lot of thinking going on in some of our university departments, not necessarily related to the Christian Church or to the Christian teaching, but it is going on, and I think very often the church itself is simply unaware of the dimensions of the debate that is occurring.

In approaching a topic as broad as alternatives to a capitalist society, I really think I can do no more than try to suggest the outlines of a conceptual framework of thought from which to look at this subject, making it quite clear that I do not set myself up as anything of an expert in this field. I have a few very hazy ideas which may or may not be relevant. If they have some relevance I hope they will stimulate some thinking and that is as much as I can hope.

If you look at the political spectrum in the world it is possible, if you want to, to draw a simple dichotomy between socialism on the one hand and capitalism on the other. I think this is in many ways a false dichotomy in terms of the reality of the world, as it is very rare to find a pure capitalist system or a pure socialist system, and increasingly it seems the countries of the world are moving towards some kind of mixed economy with socialist features and capitalist features.

This complicates one's discussion because for convenience sake it is useful simply to divorce the two concepts and talk about capitalism and socialism as two completely distinct things. And then there are a number of aberrations as well that one has to consider, even if only to have in the back of one's mind, for example Communism in practice. Communist theory is obviously closely allied to pure socialist theory but in practice Communism, in Soviet Russia in particular as the prime



example, has resulted in precisely the kind of totalitarian system which socialism seeks to avoid. So I myself do not include the Communist states per se, particularly as symbolised by Soviet Russia, as a socialist society. Then you have the kind of rather freaky situation which we have in South Africa, where we seem to be moving very strongly towards state capitalism which has been an outgrowth, I think, of the racial ideology of the ruling party in this country, its attempt to dominate the situation and retain Afrikaner Nationalism as the dominant partner in this society. So that also for the moment I would like to leave aside and just look very simply and superficially at some of the elements, as I see it, that makes up classical capitalism and classical socialism.

#### **Laissez faire or planned economy**

Now capitalism obviously espouses the idea of free enterprise: that individuals should be free to make profits; that there is nothing immoral in this. If a man has the initiative and of course the necessary skill to create a factory, say, to employ people to work for him, so as to improve his own profits, this is a purely acceptable thing. Classical capitalism usually has a strong element of laissez faire in it, the idea that there are certain, not laws of nature, but certainly strong market forces and economic forces, which if left to themselves will sort things out. That there is, for example, a law of supply and demand for labour, that there are economic forces which politicians must not tamper with. Socialism on the other hand is much more concerned with a planned economy and is much less favourably disposed towards the profit motive per se. In looking at socialism I think one can distinguish between at least two fairly basic approaches here. One would be the revolutionary socialist approach which I will come back to and the other which is the one which I myself am interested in, and that is the idea of social democracy where elements of

socialist thinking and socialist theory are incorporated in the political structure without necessarily going the whole hog as it were of pure and simple social teaching.

Now as to the two basic economic systems: capitalism and socialism, I would like to try to extend into their fairly typical political manifestations and again I must stress that I am generalising and over-simplifying. I would see these as falling roughly into the two groups called Liberal Democracy on the one hand and Social Democracy on the other. Liberal democracy with its implicit faith in free enterprise and the free play of market forces which you have in the Western world has, amongst other results, the effect of a concentration of wealth in a few hands. When people look at Britain and draw the conclusion that the trade unions are crippling Britain and are disloyal to Britain, I think this is an over-simplified reaction, because it appears that in Britain something like 5% of the population still controls nearly 90% of the wealth, so there is a gross imbalance in the distribution of wealth, and it is possible to see the present struggle in Britain as being a class struggle, in which the working classes as organised through their trade union movement, particularly, and to a lesser extent through the Labour Party, are seeking to bring about a more equitable distribution of wealth. Certainly one sees the same kind of imbalance in the United States of America and one certainly sees it in South Africa, where again the situation is complicated by the racial factor.

Social democracy aims at distributive justice, a fair distribution of the rewards, goods and services of the society basically through a faith in planned economy rather than the laissez faire approach of the liberal democracy, and one of the outcomes of this has been the welfare state as practised in Britain, although Britain is not by any means a socialist society, and certainly a better example would be the Scandinavian countries where the principle is recognised that the state has a

responsibility to every member of the society and the rich and powerful are not simply allowed to exploit the others in order to make profits.

### **A slogan for socialism**

Now let me try to focus from this broad kind of approach down more specifically to socialism per se: what are the ideas behind socialism, and I myself would see those ideas as being compatible with Christian teachings. Let us take some of the slogans and platitudes used by socialists. The one which seems to me to be most apt here is: "unto each according to his needs and from each according to his means". I think this is a profound statement about objectives for a society, that each person will receive from a society according to his needs and each person will give to society according to his means. In other words the rich and powerful will pay more proportionately in order to satisfy the other element of this platitude that the needy should be supported and cared for. Now like all basic truths and platitudes, this remains an ideal which most societies have not begun to achieve but certainly I think it is a helpful ideal in suggesting the kind of goals towards which a Christian should be seeking to steer his society. And from that platitude you get two divergent approaches: on the one hand revolutionary socialism and on the other, what one could call the reformist socialism, the social democratic approach.

Revolutionary socialism is dogmatic as the name implies, it is not satisfied with gradualism, it wishes to see a total overthrow of the non-socialist society and the imposition by force if necessary, of a socialist system, one of the assumptions being that capitalists are wily people and unless put out by force they are going to devise stratagems and they are going to devise mechanisms to thwart the bringing-about of the socialist system. Reformist socialism would seek rather to look at the present ills in the society and to reform them from within with the aim of leading gradually towards a more equitable distribution of power and wealth and the imposition of some of the principles and programmes which socialists see as desirable, e.g. national health, national housing schemes, national pension schemes, curbs on excessive profiteering, worker participation in factories, and so on. I think it is important, even though I am implicitly rejecting it as my own choice, to understand something of the theory behind revolutionary socialism and the thinking that persuades some people that socialism must ultimately be a revolutionary movement and a revolutionary force and cannot be content with gradualism.

The first obvious factor is that socialism understands that capitalism allows for control and ownership of the means of production to be in private hands; this is the basic tenet of capitalism of course. Socialism rejects this and says that the ills of capitalism flow from this very fact that the means of production are owned by certain individuals who seek to exploit those means of production in order to maximise their own profits. And that of

course is a phrase much used by businessmen in this very town, that the aim of their business is to maximise their profits and this makes business sense from their perspective. From the perspective of a desire to create a responsible society maybe it doesn't make sense, maybe the profit motive is something that needs to be very critically looked at by the churches. Socialist theory goes on then to see a conflict of interests between those who own the means of production, whether these are factories or agricultural land, whether they are wealth or capital, and those whom they seek to exploit in order to maximise their profits. Of course, given the kind of industrial society that we are, you have to employ people in order to utilise your means of production and so the socialists will say many people are exploited for the needs of a few. Socialism attempts to counter that by public ownership of the means of production which would allow the many to benefit and not just the few to increase their particular income, their particular power and so on.

So socialism sees a class conflict inherent in a capitalist system. Those who own the means of production wish to maximise their profit making and they can only do this by exploiting the workers. And one element of this is to keep down as far as possible the money they have to spend on their workers, i.e. wages. Therefore inevitably, there is a class conflict and there must be a clash, and revolutionary socialism goes on to say that the change comes after the full development of an industrial society. Industrial development is in fact a precondition for socialist revolution; that through industrial development the working classes who are being exploited by the owners achieve a consciousness of their position, a consciousness that there is in fact an inherent conflict between themselves and the owners of the means of production which they can only overcome by working class solidarity, a unity and a common striving to oppose the bosses. Once this kind of consciousness and working class solidarity has been achieved the basis for the socialist revolution is there. This obviously does not necessarily mean violent revolution. The aim then is public ownership of the means of production and not ownership by private individuals.

Now this is the barest bones of and terribly oversimplified socialist theory and obviously it is open to question at a number of points. One is the fact that it is very difficult to find a pure capitalist system, as I mentioned earlier, but generally there are some elements of both socialism and capitalism in most societies today. Certainly South Africa comes pretty close to a classical capitalist society with the aberration I mentioned earlier to state capitalism as a further complicating factor, as well as the fact that the class unity of all workers in South Africa is not possible given present racial divisions. The White working class tends to identify with White bosses rather than with the Black working class so that the possibility of the working class per se achieving the kind of broadly based solidarity and common front in order to take over means of production is lacking in this country. It is also possible to look at capitalist

societies such as the United States and ask critical questions of traditional socialist theory. Is it possible for example that as all the needs of capitalists are met (I mean if a man has \$10 000 000 and 6 Cadillacs and four swimming pools, what in fact more does he need?): so one of the arguments coming from the States is that sheer affluence breeds the dissolution of the capitalist system and that increasingly it becomes in the interests of employers themselves to be socially responsible, to stop destroying the atmosphere and the earth, to put back some of their profits into the community from which they have derived those profits and so on. That now is one response and again that too I think needs a very critical look. Certainly it seems to me that the Western world is in a mess, and as to its monetary system, we are all at the mercy of the weird fluctuations of stock markets and things about which none of us know much.

This again is one of the elements of socialist theory: that the bosses deliberately mystify the matter by creating mystiques about such things as the international monetary system, currency, devaluation, inflation, and all these other things and socialist theory goes beyond this to look at other systems in the society like the legal system, and talk about the deliberate mystification of the law so that the lawyers can get together as a solid interest group and exploit the rest of us because we are too ignorant or stupid to understand the law and need the lawyers to take us through the tangles, whereas essentially justice should be simple. The same thing can be applied to the medical profession for example. I am just mentioning these things as the different responses that can be made both pro and contra the traditional socialist attitude.

### **Measures of reform**

If I were to look at the reformist stance as opposed to the revolutionary stance, I would myself see direction to be more important than goals. I don't myself believe that unless human beings change fairly miraculously, it's really realistic to talk about solutions to our human problems, our political problems, our economic problems—and it is more realistic to talk about directions in which we should be seeking to move and I myself would be prepared to say that I, as a non-revolutionary socialist, (or theoretical socialist in a society like this) would go for any meaningful moves towards a socialisation of the resources of the country and of democratisation. In other words I am nailing my colours firmly to a social democratic mast, knowing that this inevitably draws the wrath of other socialists, the pure and simple socialists. And I think in the light of these two approaches: of direction being important and meaningful moves towards the two goals of socialisation and democratisation, then in my understanding we need to look at the immediate society in which we are and not worry too much about the theory, but to look rather at the immediate needs in the society; these for me come down to very specific and practical things, a national health

scheme e.g., this not only because the medical profession holds the rest of us to ransom, Then why? Because ultimately it wants to line its own pockets. This of course is a gross over-simplification and doctors are capable of most sophisticated arguments to demolish it, but that is how I understand it. And this I believe applies not only to Blacks in the society but also to Whites, that there are Whites who are alienated and suffering, poverty-stricken and at the mercy of the interest groups who have organised themselves into powerful cartels whether they are industrialists or wholesalers, or whether they are landlords, or whether they are doctors or lawyers, because of our stake in free enterprise and the right of the individual to make his profits. So it seems to me that one of the basics for social health is a national health scheme, similarly a national housing scheme. Why should we be paying exorbitant sums of money and a disproportionate amount of the national wealth to middle-men—parasites whose only role is to bring you in touch with people who have houses to sell.

Certainly I would see the need for curbs on profiteering. If I were in power, I would undoubtedly place extremely high taxes on profits made by companies above a certain minimum level and I would be prepared to face the argument that by doing this you are reducing the initiative of people to make profits and therefore the economy is going to suffer. I believe that it is a facile argument and I believe that there are very adequate responses to it. I would certainly work to counter the growth of the vast corporations, the vast conglomerates, that increasingly are beginning to affect the lives of every single person in the society, so that if you have a nightmare vision of South Africa I think it is not too absurd to say that we are going in the direction where ultimately all of us are either going to be in the employment of the State or in the employment of Anglo-American (using Anglo-American simply as a symbol of the growth of vast corporations) where secret decisions are taken at board meetings, where the public have no participation, decisions which ultimately affect every man, woman and child in this country. That for me indicates immediately the need for public participation in decisions of that nature. Certainly trade union rights would be something which goes without saying given a socialist approach, and beyond that there should be worker participation in decisions in companies and in factories. There are some very good models here, in Western Germany for example, where I think there is virtual parity in representation between the bosses and workers in board meetings which take decisions on policy. In other words my understanding of worker participation goes far beyond simply consulting workers as to what colour paint they want on their lavatory walls and whether they want curry and rice or biltong at the canteen meals and so on. And then certainly, while I myself would not abolish small businessmen, because I think this is very important and I think the experience of Russia in trying to collectivise all farms and all small businesses has been quite indicative that this has had

tragic consequences, I would certainly, given the continuance of some degree of private initiative, say that it is totally unacceptable that there should be arbitrary discrimination against some people in terms of their economic opportunities—and of course we have many examples of that in South Africa at present. Similarly arbitrary discrimination in educational opportunities would have to be abolished.

And talking of education one comes to the crux of the matter: that what one needs to be doing is looking very critically at the values underlying our society, I have already, I hope, suggested that there are profound criticisms to be levelled at the implicit faith in free enterprise, the laissez faire approach that the market forces will sort everything out and it will all be o.k. in the end if you leave it to the businessmen and so on. But we must look at other values as well, our present western concentration on the individual and individualistic values to be countered with communal values, communal responsibility. I remember a very vivid description by an African friend of mine who went to New York for the first time and stayed in a hotel across a park at the other end of which was a vast steel and glass building and in the morning out of this building came out row after row of old tottering people. He asked what kind of place that was, and they told him that it was an institution where they kept their aged people; he felt physically revolted that society could do this to its old people, get rid of them, put them out of sight in a big concrete block and he compared this with traditional African values of communal responsibility and care of the aged. Our whole concept of the family nucleus perhaps needs to be re-considered. Perhaps with population growth and the growth of the megalopolis and all this kind of thing, it is becoming urgently necessary to think more in terms of communal living than in terms of the nuclear family and certainly there should be more vigorous discussion about the alternatives open to us and not simply a tacit assumption that this is the only and best way in which a man and a woman can live together and bring up their children.

Certainly the materialistic values of our society need to be considered very carefully, and then a whole area is opened up by the debate on conservation versus public waste, the damage to our ecology, our environment, that comes about partly at least as a result of irresponsible exploitation by capitalists; one needs to contrast the social needs of people with the profit motive of certain individuals. And here I think is where the role of education in the schools and in the churches is very important. So in an attempt to try to wrap up what I am saying—it seems to me that there must be a clear analysis of the society, an analysis not only in our traditional terms of the different racial groups but also in terms of the different interest groups which increasingly cut across the racial lines. As Blacks are brought into companies at the level say, of personnel officers, and so on, they begin to acquire identical values and interests to those of the bosses, they become part of the bosses and their interest

group is different from that of the Black workers. So I think we need not always look at society merely in terms of racial groups but also in terms of interest groups, occupation groups, and ultimately class groups.

One needs to see the issues underlying race in South Africa and the issues there are ultimately power and the distribution and exercise of power. If one is going to attempt to move meaningfully in any direction away from the kind of society we are now, one certainly needs clear articulation of goals and here I think the churches have failed us; the churches have inevitably resorted to platitude after platitude without ever clearly articulating in some specific degree the goals of the society that they envisage. And then one needs to look at where one can intervene at accessible points in the present system in order to bring about movement towards socialisation and democratisation ... that is of course if one thinks as I do and agrees that those are desirable goals. One needs to look at strategies here which I would superficially dichotomise as radical versus liberal strategies, and I think White English-language churches in this country are still hung up on liberal strategies of change and have not taken a hard-headed look at the radical options open to them, again does not necessarily mean throwing bombs.

One certainly needs to have some knowledge of other models available to us and not always confine ourselves to the usual Western examples. I think obvious examples here are Tanzania with its experiments such as ujamaa and African socialism, and certainly countries like Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia where the attempt to impose a rigid socialist regime has had to be modified through the passage of time and the experiences of human beings in such a situation; and certainly one needs to look deliberately at one's life style and the life style of organisations in which one is involved and this would certainly come down to some of the specific items—questions like the African Bank, church investment and this kind of thing. \*

## DIALOGUE ON CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTION

We regret that due to unforeseen circumstances it is not possible for us to publish the second part of the dialogue on conscientious objection and the Hamanskraal resolution between Rev. Douglas Bax and a friend, this month as promised. We do hope to publish it in our next issue.



## VOORTREKKERS IN TIME

james cochrane

The Voortrekker is one of the most potent symbols of our white South African heritage. This we know. The Voortrekkers of our past, whatever their failings, were a people of great courage, adventure, and risk. They conquered space, the land we know today. That powerful heritage has since been perverted, for it remains only as a memory of the past and not a call into the future. Let me explain.

The Voortrekkers of the past were Calvinists, and today we call ourselves a Christian nation. But we have left too much out. It is overwhelmingly clear from most modern Biblical scholars that the message and proclamation of Jesus, the gospel, was first and foremost "eschatological". This means it is concerned with the future, not just any future, but the future coming Kingdom of God. Jesus saw himself, the Son of Man, as ushering in this future, heralding its beginning, and proclaiming that it already breaks in on the present time. A new creation and a new birth (the second birth) is the demand of the kingdom of God upon us. That kingdom promises the transformation of the whole world in peace, love, righteousness and justice. But it is not complete. So it still stands in contradiction to the present, to all that is. In this way the gospel, the good news of the kingdom of God, places *all* in the present under judgment. It is primarily a critique of the status quo and the promise (which is our Hope) that we gain our life by losing it. In other words, only as we are a people whose gaze is upon the future rather than on the past are we responding to the gospel. We must allow the new thing that God will do; more, we must participate in it.

Well, what does this mean now?

It means we all stand under judgment. Any person, party, government, movement, or organisation, that prevents or is neutral to the "new creation" of God's (of peace, love, righteousness and justice) which is breaking into our present, stands under the judgment. No one of us, no individual or group, can consider himself righteous or above and beyond the call of Jesus.

The call comes clearly to us. It is implicit in the events which daily occur in South Africa, such events as the breakdown of the C.R.C., the increasing unrest evidenced by black workers (over 75 000 strikers in recent months), the growing restlessness of the homeland leaders, the daily rate of "Pass Law" arrests that fuel an unknown depth of anger, and so on. Those who have eyes to see and ears to hear; is there not some clear and deeply important "statement" lying behind all this?

The same call is being made explicitly by some Black leaders and students, by the Roman Catholic Bishops, by the N.G. Kerk in Afrika, by the Christian Institute, and the South African Council of Churches.

If we believe in the Christian hope and promise, can we not for a moment set aside our fear and emotioned instinctive reactions? Can we not recognise the fundamental instability of the South African status quo ("that which now is"), and respond to it with urgency, with courage, with vision, with risk? The "exodus in space" of the first Voortrekkers had such characteristics. Is it not possible, in fact urgent, that a similar "exodus in time" should now be undertaken?

It was precisely when Israel contented itself with its traditionally established institutions, merely extending and extrapolating its political and social formulations—it was precisely under this static ideological understanding of itself as a nation, that the prophetic voices of Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and others, thundered out.

White South Africa no longer has only a good, it also has an evil history. We must expect prophets, as Israel should have done. We must learn how to live *with* our past, but not out of it. The old frontier of space, the land in which the first Voortrekkers sought freedom, must become the new frontier, the time horizon within which we stand. The new Voortrekker will be a Voortrekker in time. He or she will not belong to any one group. Rather than the open land, it is the open future which challenges and invites us. The Hope of the gospel can enable us to confront it with courage, adventure, and risk, as we seek love, justice, peace and righteousness. Our future will be our heaven or our hell. For which will we set out on a "new Great Trek"?

\* \* \* \* \*

"What is past is at best a prologue to the future."

There is a difference between the exodus and the arrival. It is in this difference that we experience history, for, finally, we cannot ever actually "arrive" in this world if we are to remain faithful to the eschatological message of the New Testament. The kingdom of God still remains for us future, already inaugurated but not fulfilled.

The Whites of South Africa today, thinking they have arrived, are no longer in history, making real history, at

least in the New Testament sense of the word. There is no longer any "exodus" taking place. Now there is a tenacious attempt in the face of many warnings to consolidate and strengthen the position at which we, white South Africa, have arrived.

This can no longer be. *That* is the divine imperative. We must, literally "for Christ's sake", allow the eschatological gospel, the radical breaking in of a new future and a new creation, to penetrate our society, confronting head-on the illusion that to hold on to the past as a society is the Christian way of perpetuating value. If we fail to allow this impact, we create the conditions for our own judgment to be brought down upon us.

That the kingdom of God is also inaugurated, we must take seriously. *This* is the divine indicative. There is a mood and the opening up of a new future taking place among many blacks and a few whites. It will not go away.

Thus there is not just a call to our nation and ourselves to allow the new future of God's kingdom to make its impact on our actions and thoughts, although this call is urgent (thus particularly directed at white South Africa). It is also the statement that such impact is occurring, will occur, cannot be avoided, and must be recognised for what it is. Only then are we faithful to God in Christ, and only then do we have the power to set aside the racking fears that leave us clinging to "old South Africa", much like drowning rats will cling to a raft breaking up. \*

## THE RIGHT TO PRIVACY IN CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE

richard cote

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Nothing is more sacred than the private life of man, and nothing is more offensive to man's dignity as a person than that his right to respect for privacy should be twisted and manoeuvred as though it were a less-than-sacred thing. Before outlining the Christian justification of privacy, let us first consider what men generally understand by this right, its juridical basis and content.

Throughout history, man has always felt the need to secure—for himself and his family—a reasonable measure of privacy. He has sought to surround many of his intimate or "core" activities with the protective shield of privacy and he has done so for a variety of reasons:

1. to avoid being manipulated or dominated wholly by others;
2. to satisfy various types of emotional release;
3. to know himself more inwardly and thus, with better self-knowledge, to plan his life and future accordingly; and
4. to be able to share confidence and intimacies with those he trusts—spouse, "the family", personal friends and close associates at work.

To be sure, needs for individual and group privacy and resulting social norms exist in virtually every society.

Although it is true that privacy is by no means a distinctly modern notion, only in recent years has it come to be acknowledged and 'declared' as a human

right, the right, that is, to determine for ourselves when, how, and to what extent information about us is communicated to others. To be conscious of a felt need—such as the desire for privacy—is one thing; to declare respect for that need in terms of a human right, is quite another thing. The latter invariably marks a significant advancement over the former—indeed signifies a break-through and a ‘qualitative leap’ forward in the affairs of man as well as a more developed consciousness in man.

The successively more explicit affirmations of man’s rights can be seen in the progression of various *Declarations* from the 17th century to our present day. One has only to compare the tenor of the 1948 U.N. Declaration with that of the later international Agreements, to detect this move toward an ever increasing degree of moral and juridical consciousness. There is ample evidence of this gradual ascent and growth of man’s consciousness throughout history, and it should therefore come as no surprise that modern man speaks of ‘new liberties’. Among these newly declared liberties is the right to respect for privacy.

At first glance, the right to privacy may seem less important than, say, the right to work or the right to vote. But this is only an illusion. Properly understood, human freedom forms an organic whole, a body or *corpus* of truth that does not admit arbitrary fragmentation. No human right is ever unimportant, secondary or negligible. All are important because together they form part of that basic fabric which we call *human freedom*. Using the analogy of the five fingers of the human hand, is it not true that we suffer the same excruciating pain and something of the same loss when any one of our fingers is severed from the hand—even though, in some respects, the index finger may be more useful to us than the thumb? So it is with the personal rights of man: they are all part of a whole and each represents some vital dimension in depth for man, notwithstanding the fact that man may, on occasion, affirm this or that human right more forcefully than others.

### **Privacy and the human person**

The right to respect for privacy is based essentially upon the recognition of the individual’s interest that he should be protected against any intrusion into his intimate life and into any part of his existence which he might legitimately desire to keep to himself. This right belongs to every person, whether white or black, healthy or unhealthy, of whatever religion, political sympathies or cultural level: it is his right *as a person*. Hence the real value of privacy is derived from the dignity and worth of the human person. Any other criterion invariably runs foul of man’s authentic freedom and thus violates the sanctuary of his sacred individuality. Without privacy there can be no real freedom, and without freedom there can be no genuine privacy. The two are indissolubly linked. Like freedom itself, privacy is inwardness, spontaneity, the capacity of a man to find within himself the reasons and the motives of his own right decisions and

action, without external interference or unwarranted intrusion. Privacy, or what the ancients called ‘internal forum’, is a fundamental dimension of the human being and one of the essential values that constitute personhood. In the final analysis, respect for privacy is respect for the human person.

### **What Privacy Involves**

The complexity of the human being is such that one’s right to privacy can only be spelt out in a number of more specific rights. These constitute the ‘content’, as it were, of the individual’s rightful, if somewhat general, claim to privacy. Among other things, they include the following:

*Freedom of conscience*—religious or otherwise—of every individual.

*Respect for what is confidential and private* in an individual’s life.

*Inviolability of personal correspondence*, whether letters, notes, diaries, or any other material expression of an individual’s interior life.

*Inviolability of the home* in which the personal relations between spouses and those between parents and children are safeguarded.

*Respect for the free and mutual interchange* of advice, opinions, and sentiments, between individuals even outside the home.

A number of these rights have been so declared and enshrined in various Declarations. For example, Article 12 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states: “No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home, or correspondence ...” Yet it is curious and doubtless revealing that today respect for privacy seems to be at a premium. Among the present day intrusions on privacy, one would have to mention the insidious encroachment of commercial propaganda upon man’s private life (through radio, T.V., advertisements, etc.); certain methods of police interrogation and surveillance; house searches at any time of the day or night, often without a warrant or even the occasion of an imminent crime; the tapping of private telephone conversations or the opening of correspondence of certain ‘marked’ individuals; certain constraints on one’s freedom of conscience, etc.

Whenever such intrusions are made into the private life of individuals, the practice is usually ‘justified’ on the grounds of national security or for the good of public order. Yet nothing lends itself to greater abuse of power than this particular line of thinking (as the Watergate affair in the United States amply testifies). The right to privacy, like other human and civil freedoms, is exercised within society and may therefore be subjected to limitation. In a free society, however, this limitation should be minimal. The overriding principle is that there should be as much respect for privacy as possible, and only as much interference as necessary. Moreover, it must be remembered that no individual—be he the most



obstinate delinquent or the most hardened criminal—ever ceases to be a person with consequent loss of the essential core of his fundamental rights.

If respect for individual and group privacy can be justified on purely rational grounds, however, it gains unprecedented value and importance when viewed in the light of Jesus Christ. In the remainder of this article, therefore, we will focus our attention on the Christian perspective of privacy.

### Theological justification of privacy

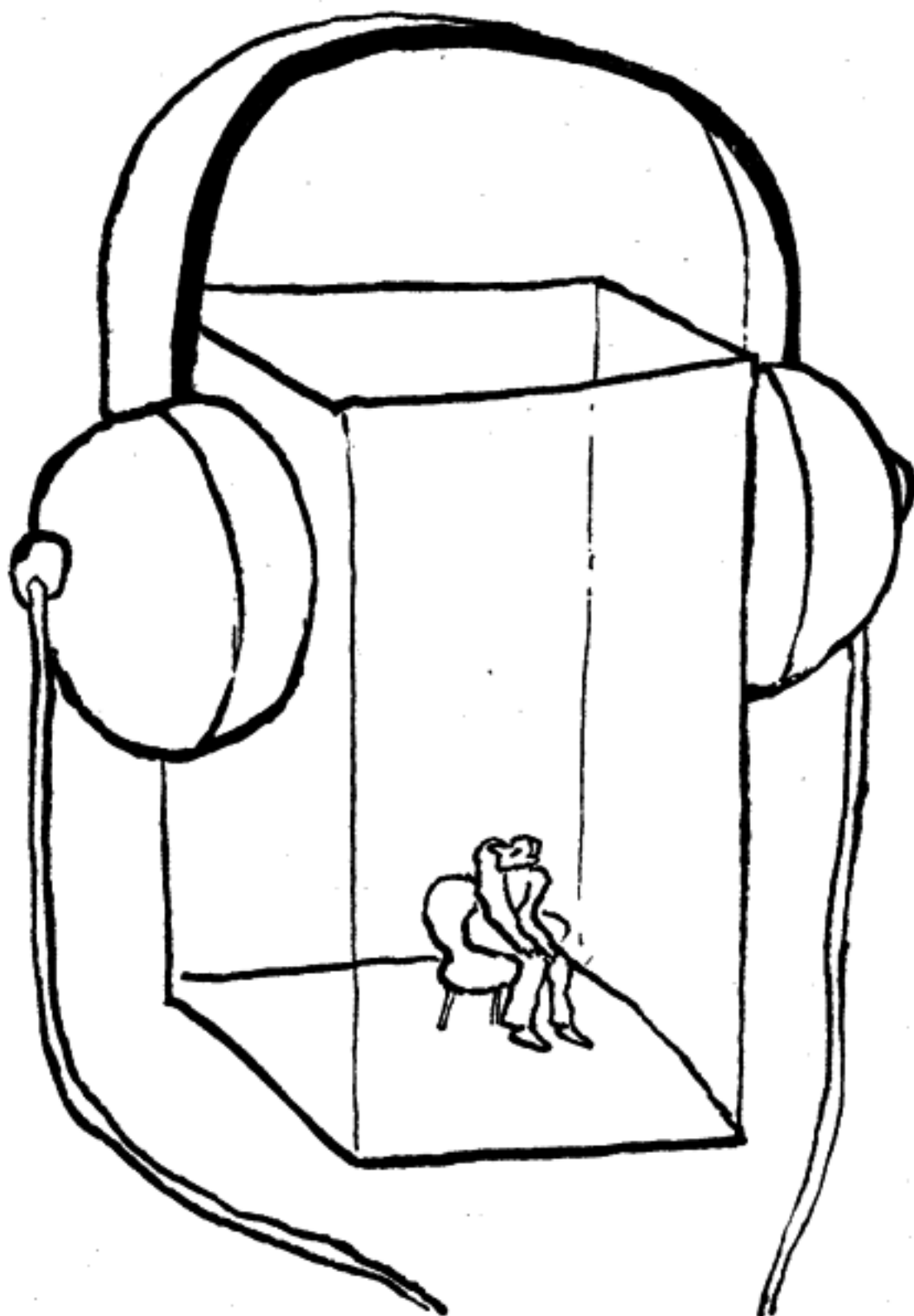
A *Theology of Privacy* has yet to be elaborated and, even now, is long overdue. Without attempting to construct such a theology here, nevertheless it is possible to indicate the theological basis of privacy. To do so means, of course, that we will focus on Jesus' own attitude towards, and respect for, privacy—his own and that of others.

#### A. Jesus cherished His own privacy

The first thing that compels our attention in the gospel narratives is the information-gap between the childhood accounts and Jesus' emergence in the public ministry. Jesus' personal history is cloaked in an impenetrable silence. It is indeed remarkable that we know so little of his private life and that somebody whose impact was so great should also be so 'hidden' in many biographical respects. While it is true that the gospels were not written as biographies in the modern sense, this fact alone does not completely explain the information-gap and silence that surrounds Jesus' past. Part of the answer lies in Jesus' own sense of privacy. Even to his contemporaries, he did not readily volunteer information about his "private life".

The great silence that enveloped Jesus' private life was no less evident in his public career. In fact, one of the things about Jesus that deeply impressed the people around him was the obscurity of his life. He did not allow the public to draw too close to him and when the approaches became too pressing, he would withdraw. The most important decisions of his life were always reached "apart in silence". We are told that time and again he would "withdraw" from the crowd in order to enjoy a bit of privacy, peace and prayer. On these occasions, it is astonishing to what extent he was prepared to rebuff people in order to safeguard these privileged moments of privacy. For him, silence was as great a privilege as speech and indeed he maintained it whenever he pleased.

Jesus' deep sense of privacy can perhaps best be seen in his relations with that small inner circle of friends, called "the Twelve". He was especially close to his disciples and confided things to them which were not meant for public consumption. On occasion, he tells them expressly that all is made clear to them, whereas the multitude will have to be content with parables (Mt.13:11ff). He gives them private instructions which he keeps from the general public.



His many injunctions to observe secrecy are also noteworthy. The whole idea of the 'Messianic Secret' which figures so prominently in Mark's gospel cannot be dismissed as a mere literary device to account for the silence of the earliest tradition, an invention of the Evangelists for apologetic reasons. Many reputable scholars argue that there is some historical basis to the fact that Jesus imposed silence. Whatever motive he may have had, Jesus did evince a remarkable sense of privacy. This can also be seen in the way he himself respected the privacy of others.

#### B. Jesus respected the privacy of others

Many isolated instances could be put forward to illustrate Jesus' respect for the privacy of others, but it is above all the general pattern of his whole attitude and behaviour towards others that best illustrates our point. The fact that Jesus' presence and behaviour was so *unobtrusive*, rather than over-powering, is important in this connection. Everything he said or did had an unob-

trusive quality about it—indeed unobtrusiveness seems to have been of the very essence of the “happening” we call Jesus.

His encounters were always those of a man who prizes an individual as a person regardless of his or her particular behaviour at the moment. He accepted people as they were, respected them deeply, and never tried to coerce or possess them. He allowed them to think, feel, and decide for themselves—to be free. This positive and unconditional regard for people provided numerous avenues of access to Jesus without violating any individual's freedom of response. They could either love him or revile him, but their response would always be free. To respect the freedom of others in this way meant that Jesus accepted the laws of human dialogue, which invariably include the real possibility of rejection. This was one risk that Jesus never ran away from. It also meant that he had no desire or need to impose himself on others, much less to intrude or pry into their private lives and affairs. In short, he respected their right to privacy. This great respect stemmed from his honest acceptance of individuals *as* persons, and hence as free agents.

One salient example of Jesus' respect for the privacy of others is the reserve and self-restraint with which he surrounded Judas' secret intention to betray him. At the Last Supper, Jesus knew that Judas had made up his mind. And although he did foretell the betrayal of one of his own, he did not say specifically who the betrayer would be—at least not in a clear, unequivocal manner.

The information in Mt 26:5 that Jesus answered affirmatively when Judas asked, “Is it I?”, is quite certainly secondary; in any case Matthew does not indicate that the other disciples overheard. This is confirmed by the fact that the disciples were seemingly unaware of Judas' purpose when he approached Jesus in the garden. The only point we wish to make here, however, is that Jesus did not pry into Judas' well-guarded secret and he did not encroach upon his freedom. Nor did he allow his foreknowledge of Judas' evil intent to influence or in any way alter his own plans. It was as though Jesus preferred to let Judas' secret crime run its course rather than to disregard or violate this man's right to privacy.

### Epilogue

As Christians, we should not content ourselves with a theoretical or abstract discussion on human rights. In this crucial area, particularly, we must compromise and commit ourselves to a more just society, one in which the sacred individuality of every person is respected and safeguarded. Justice, like charity, begins at home. This means that we must begin by examining our own conscience to see whether or not we respect the rights of others—including their right to privacy. The extent to which we ourselves intrude into the private lives and affairs of others may well be the measure of our own unhappiness and lack of freedom. \*

## CHRISTIANITY IS A POLITICAL BUSINESS

cedric mayson

Jesus was executed as a political offender although he had turned down the crown. The message he put round Galilee was the original unadulterated unexpurgated first edition of the gospel, but it threw such havoc into the vested interests of the priests and statesmen that they destroyed him. At its purest, Christianity was a political bombshell.

He believed that God was working in human society to bring salvation to his people on his planet Earth which is why they called him Saviour of the World and meant it. He was not church-oriented, nor heaven-oriented, but people-oriented and couched his teaching of God's love in terms of human relationships.

Caricaturists of Christianity who insist with sincere vigour and no veracity that Christ is more concerned to save souls than society, with heaven than earth, and with dying than living, are blasting a fanfare of old religious raspberries into our ears but they cannot obliterate the original message from those who will hear.

Christianity is not a religious movement to encourage

individuals to support a church, but a social movement to make disciples of all the nations to follow Christ on Earth in kitchens and bedrooms, workshops and boardrooms and the open air. That is what causes political upheaval.

Jesus' teaching demands vast social reforms. He claimed that God designed the world that all men might have the fullest possible life (John 10.10). It meant providing food and drink, housing and clothing, health and friendship (Matt. 25.31ff); freedom from poverty, oppression, and ignorance (Luke 4.18ff). He preached justice, generosity, service (John 13.1ff), joy (John 15), peace and unity (Matt. 16.13ff). He believed every man should have the opportunity to work and live (Matt. 20.1ff) to his best ability (Matt. 25.15) and his neighbour's good (Luke 10.25ff). He knew his followers would be persecuted (Matt. 16.24; John 16.1, 2, 33) but was convinced that the truth and joy of his way of love meant liberation for the world (John 8.31). He was willing to die for it,

and this spiritual guts was the power behind his whole life.

God's priorities form a clear directive for those seeking social structures in which living can flourish, but they are anathema to those whose political motives are for personal or party purposes. If your desire is a seat in the Cabinet, a bigger house than the Jones's, a firmer control over the NKomos, or a grander church than the van der Merwes, Jesus is an embarrassment.

People scream to keep religion out of politics when they see Christ as a threat to their political position. It is far easier to turn him into a religious figure and ignore him, than accept him as a real figure and follow him.

But Christianity crunches deeper into politics yet. We have sought to apply it to our policies to make a better South Africa, maintaining the highest standards and improving conditions for everyone.

But Jesus bursts out of our political objectives altogether because nationalism, racialism and denominationalism are simply not Christian concepts. Those who fight for such nice little kingdoms of men are talking of a nonsense that prevents human society from receiving God's kingdom, though their knees be bruised from long praying and their hearts broken with pious pleading. Jesus' debunks our political categories.

The ideal of building white western Christian civilization here is blasphemous poppycock. Maintaining a power structure to concentrate wealth in the hands of a few; perpetuating oppression, violence, lawlessness and division; deliberately adopting non-Christian priorities: the whole apartheid dream is damned and doomed by

the teachings of Jesus about God's motives for men.

It is not the mistakes of the system, but the highest objectives of separate development which are unacceptable in terms of the New Testament, and those who believe that the God of Jesus is alive and well and living in South Africa must also believe that such policies will be brought smashing down.

Now that's tough. Many people do not want a Jesus who is an Earth-God; they reject political repentance and political faith; they won't risk facing the Special Branch, or B.O.S.S., or secret arrest, or whatever form of crucifixion is handed out these days. (Such things only happen in non-Christian countries, don't they, not here?). They would rather have a non-Jesus make-believe faith offered to them by politicians and churchmen who are afraid to challenge the status quo than a God who tells you the truth about how to organise living.

The Christian Institute, struggling out of the bog of conventional thinking, is convinced that only a radical change in the political life of our country can avert the judgment of God, and grasp His promise.

It believes that God is God in Africa and that politics will only work His way. Apartheid is theologically untenable; and therefore it is politically false; and therefore it is leading us all to future ruin as surely as it condemns most of us to a sub-Christian existence right now.

God, after all, is God. \*

## book review

gerald sack

# THE RISE OF BLACK NATIONALISM

WALSHE, P. 1973. "BLACK NATIONALISM IN SOUTH AFRICA: A SHORT HISTORY"

Mr Gerald Sack is a lecturer in Anthropology at Rhodes University.

This book, essentially a summary of *The Rise of African Nationalism in South Africa*, can only sadden the serious reader, as it records how the sincere and dignified attempts of Blacks who sought "equality before the law as an alternative to the official policies of successive governments" (p.40), were frustrated. Secondly, since most of the key-figures from the post-1950 period are banned in South Africa, Dr Walshe has had the difficult task of painting a credible picture of modern Black nationalism without being able to quote its leaders. He

has, nevertheless, an interesting and concise monograph that avoids the stylistic infelicities that have characterized so many earlier Spro-cas publications. In clearly-written prose, Dr Walshe presents a dismal picture of Blacks being continually 'slapped down'; yet he avoids being partisan: for example, in the above passage, he could so easily have said "... successive repressive governments ...", having given in his text an ample factual justification for such an epithet.

The book has three sections: the rise and development of African nationalism before 1912, when what later became the African National Congress was founded; the period from 1912 until the outbreak of the Second World War; and finally, from 1939 until 1972. Carefully researched, this book sets out to "help clarify some of the root causes of tension in South African society";

something which it does admirably.

One is surprised to read, in his opening lines, that there were over 12 000 enfranchised Africans in the Cape in the 1880's, and that they made up almost half of the electorate in five Eastern Cape constituencies. It is thus understandable that the Cape, by no means discrimination-free, came to be held up as the ideal, on which Africans built their vision of a just, common society, since in Natal and the Boer republics, racial discrimination and territorial segregation were firmly entrenched. This vision was bolstered by Christianity's stress on the brotherhood of man. Further, African leaders recognized far earlier than their White counterparts, it would seem, that Black and White were economically interdependent in South Africa. It is but a short step from this to the elaboration of a political philosophy of a free and open society, such as these Black leaders had developed by the late 19th Century. The final important influence on the rise of African nationalism was that of Black America, especially Negro clergymen, who came to South Africa as missionaries. Many Africans, too, had been educated overseas, mainly in America and Britain, and this, again, reinforced the impact of Negro missionaries, whose tales of the Negroes' struggle provided a paradigm for the Africans' drive for political and economic rights. Dr Walshe adds further colour to this picture of rising political expectations by stressing the continuities between the traditional African political systems, and a Westminster-type of parliamentary system: it was common practice in Black Africa, to integrate conquered peoples into the victors' polities, and African political systems operated essentially through debates and councils. Blacks thus felt equipped for a place in the White political system.

The body that was later to become the ANC was founded in 1912, largely as a response to the Treaty of Vereeniging, which gave Blacks under Boer hegemony no political rights whatsoever, and the National Convention of 1909, whose draft constitution specifically excluded Africans from the proposed Parliament. Protests against this had been ineffectual, so the ANC was founded as "a political pressure group for Africans, ... to extend their ... areas of civil liberty." (p.9). Essentially, then, it was to be a self-help association, and was not anti-White.

The ANC's history can be summed up, according to Dr Walshe, as an on-going series of reactions against a White Parliament that progressively whittled away African rights: for example, the Native Land Act of 1913, and the Representation of Natives in Parliament Act, that removed Africans from the common voters roll. During this period Africans also began flexing their economic muscles in the form of the Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union. During its brief existence it was powerful enough to negotiate a few wage settlements, and, further, strove for political equality for Blacks as well. During these years, 1912-1939, too, passive resistance against pass-laws was organized, in pursuit of "equality before the law and ... non-racial jus-

tice ... in spite of very considerable disillusionment with the motives and nature of White authority." (p.17). Dr Walshe takes care to point out that "it would be very easy to exaggerate the role of Communism in the rise of African nationalism in South Africa". (p.23), and shows that Black members of that party were expelled from the ICU and were most unwelcome in the ANC. Africans, he stresses, were not interested in revolution.

By the time war broke out in 1939, the African nationalistic movement had grown so large as to require extensive re-organization at the local level, and from 1940, Dr A.B. Xuma, one of the lesser-known, but very important ANC leaders, began to convert the ANC into a tightly-organized, and well-disciplined movement through which Blacks, especially after the war, began to assert their political claims more forcefully. A highly-qualified, overseas-trained medical man, Dr Xuma was solidly against any form of confrontation with Whites, although during his period as leader, several policy statements articulated, with increasing intensity, Black hopes for a better deal, including a call for 'one man, one vote'.

As Minister of Finance and Education, Hofmeyr had improved the grants for African welfare and education, but his advances were abruptly negated, says Dr Walshe, when the National Party came to power in 1948. By 1951 the Group Areas Act had initiated the long road towards apartheid, and the Suppression of Communism Act had provided a potent weapon against potential dissidents. These measures, and the retrograde steps taken with regard to African education had led to Xuma's ousting in 1949, as a younger cadre of Congress members began pressing for a more aggressive line to be adopted in the face of such measures. Confrontation with the Whites, they argued, was the most effective means of building up Congress membership. This new course led to the 1952 Defiance Campaign, which, by the time it ended, saw over 8 500 African, Coloured and Indian passive resisters in prison; ANC membership had, however, risen from 7 000 to 100 000. While this younger group of leaders occasionally used Marxist terms like 'the class struggle', the author stresses again that they were not Communists, even though they used confrontation to articulate their increasing dissatisfactions.

In 1956, 156 key ANC men were jailed, and the Treason Trial began. When it ended in 1961, all had been acquitted. This was the start of increased Governmental pressure, that led to internal dissension, and the Pan-Africanist Congress, composed largely of younger men, split-off. Events then moved rapidly: in 1960 an anti-pass campaign led to Sharpeville, the banning of the ANC and PAC, and the establishment of detention without trial. Dr Walshe notes that the machinery now existed to remove any future Black leaders from positions of influence, and the whole African nationalistic movement was in dis-array.

In short, 50 years of campaigning for basic political rights had come to naught, and the author advances six

major reasons to account for this, most of which can be subsumed under the heading "organizational difficulties". In the first place, the ANC had been reluctant for far too long, to drive for mass support, lest they alienate Whites. Secondly, their idea that if they could but educate Whites sufficiently to make political reforms, was Utopian to say the least; and, further, they had failed to utilize such Black labour movements as had existed, to add punch to their campaigns.

The ANC had, in addition, no independent Press to assist it, and the sheer size of South Africa, along with tribal divisions, made an effective organization almost impossible. Organization was further impeded by the repressive measures promulgated after 1920, especially the 1960 State of Emergency.

The book ends with a brief analysis of modern events, most notably the way in which Homeland leaders are filling the void left by the banning of the ANC: these men are striving for Black unity, and, Chief Gatsha Buthelezi is named as the most articulate leveller of "scathing criticism at ... the blatant hypocrisy of apartheid".(p.38). In addition there has been ferment on Black university campuses, labour unrest, and an attempt to establish a legal Black Peoples' Convention, aimed at reviving Black dignity, and striving towards a just society.

As Dr Walshe so rightly points out, the BPC gives one "a sense of *deja vu*"(p.39), in that we have seen it all before: the reaction against White oppression by creating a noble vision, while having petty organizational problems such as what attitude the BPC should adopt towards the Homelands and their leaders; and whether the BPC should include the other oppressed non-White groups. It also has the major problem of mere survival "among the phalanx of legislation that is ready on the statute books to repress it".(p.39). Nonetheless, Dr Walshe is quite optimistic about the future: "The ultimate tragedy will be if the idealism of the long search (for a fair deal) should finally be eroded by persistent and ruthless White privilege."(p.40).

Dr Walshe has pin-pointed the crux of the matter in a most telling fashion, but his analysis would have been considerably enhanced had his book, although intended for popular consumption, been fuller. After reading his full-length treatment of this important topic, one can only feel rather let down by the brevity of this one; and, more especially, by its lack of a bibliography. Surely the editorial board should have insisted on at least a list of suggested readings, when Dr Walshe has written so elegantly as to stimulate one to delve further into such a relevant field.

Again, it is possibly the shortness of this book that leads one to feel a trifle uneasy about Dr Walshe's insistence that Blacks merely reacted against White oppression, but never countered White racism with their own brand of racism, lest they "lost any sense of moral superiority ... To put it in a slightly different way; the negative example of an exclusive and introspective Afrikaner nationalism kept African nationalism out-

ward-looking."(p.11). It is not easy to accept that a mere desire to be 'better' than some rather bloody-minded Whites, prevented the emergence of a more radical brand of Black nationalism. Was it not, rather, internal dissensions based on personality-clashes that kept down the scale of the movement? This is but hinted at when, for example, we are told that liaison with the Natal branch was poor; and that Champion's "willingness to co-operate with the centre was always problematical at best".(p.37) This is too tantalizing to be left as it stands; why was he reluctant to co-operate? Was it because he had leadership aspirations bred in his ICU days? Or was there a tribal antagonism at work?

This little book nevertheless deserves a place on the bookshelf of anyone concerned not only with the important question of Black aspirations, but with race relations in general in South Africa. It may also, hopefully, stimulate local historians to initiate research into the Black man's views on modern events, a subject which has been far too carefully neglected up until now. Expanded, and with a bibliography, this book would be even more valuable than it is since it has the rare merit of being written in plain, easily readable prose. This highlights Dr Walshe's hope "that it will ... possibly assist South Africans to establish that justice which alone can provide for lasting peace and goodwill between men". With such an impulse behind it, it is not surprising that a remarkably good piece of work has resulted. \*

## THEIRS IS NOT SKINDEEP

Theirs is not skindeep! It isn't. No  
 theirs is down  
 to earth. Theirs isn't facial beauty.  
 Theirs is human  
 beauty: the eight brave basadi  
 determined like mad to cure the inhuman  
 Pretoria  
 of political malaria  
 as,  
 We are remedies and not publicity  
 seekers. Favours nor any foolish foodstuffs  
 we seek not. All we are after  
 is human treatment en  
 niks meer!  
 Look!  
 our hopes  
 our beacons  
 our morning and evening stars  
 have unjustly  
 been smothered! A  
 pula e ne! E ne!!!!

—Mothobi Mutloatse

# BOTSWANA — AN ISLAND OF TOLERANCE IN A SEA OF RACIAL OPPRESSION

j. feddema

A simple ferry takes us over the Zambezi, a strategical river in southern Africa, out of Zambia and into Botswana. One feels immediately drawn to Botswana: a land without an army and about the size of France. Affable customs officers warn us against the roads in the north of the country which, due to the summer rains, are impassable, and pressing us to detour via Bulawayo in Rhodesia. We prefer, however, to avoid the rebel, Smith's country completely and concentrate entirely on Botswana, an oasis of peace in an area of intolerance and violence.

The Kalahari country, where approximately 20 000 Bushmen still lead their traditionally nomadic lives, is especially attractive to tourists because of the enormous amount of wildlife there. More than 10 000 elephants, for example, roam in the tropical northern part of the country with its exciting Okavanga Delta. The European or American, hounded by a life where urbanism and industrialism play such a large role, cannot wish for a more delightful holiday resort, as long as he doesn't mind putting up with the scantily developed infra-structure — only three hundred kilometers of the road network are made up. Botswana's real interest lies in its policy with regard to the racial problem and conflict in southern Africa.

## **A British Protectorate**

First of all something about the history of Botswana. Seven Tswana groupings and a number of minority groups, among them the Kalanga of Shona-origin and the Bushmen inhabited the territory in the last century, when the Boers who came in the Great Trek from the Cape occupied the Transvaal and overthrew the Tswana. Dry Bechuanaland (Botswana) did not at first attract the attention of the Boers. Thus the country became a haven of refuge for the Tswana from the Transvaal, who, in about 1850, could no longer bear the harsh treatment they received from the Boers. Later when the Boers attempted to extend their rule over all the Tswana, Khama III, the great Christian tribal chief of the Bamangwato, grandfather of the present president of Botswana, Seretse Khama, called in England's help. Thus, in 1885, with the approval of Khama and the chiefs of other somewhat smaller tribes, Bechuanaland became a British Protectorate.

For its economy and culture, however, it was almost entirely dependent upon South Africa. Even the-then capital of Bechuanaland and administrative centre,

Mafeking, was situated not in the country itself but in South Africa. It is only owing to the nationalists in South Africa or rather their "apartheid" policy after 1948 that this did not continue. An attempt on the part of Verwoerd to unite Botswana and the other protectorates in a federation with South Africa was also rejected. "We don't hate the whites, indeed we would like to become a part of South Africa if the apartheid policy did not exist there." This we can learn today from the Tswana's own lips more than seven years after their country's independence.

## **Marriage to a white woman**

On the 30th of September 1966, Botswana became an independent republic with Seretse Khama as its president. While studying in England, he met his English wife, Ruth Williams. However his marriage to her in 1948 roused great opposition, not only from several conservative tribal chiefs but above all from the South African government who at precisely that time had resolved to pass a law forbidding marriages in their own country between black and white. Seretse Khama managed nonetheless to break the opposition among his own people. At a national assembly of his tribe he delivered a fervid speech pleading for harmony among all races, after which his tribesmen voted showing their approval of his marriage, with 6 000 votes for and only 40 against. The English government had however asked him to abdicate as tribal chief in exchange for a tax-free retirement allowance. This Seretse refused and was thereupon sent into exile. In 1956, back after his years of exile, Seretse voluntarily renounced his position as tribal chief in order to fully devote his time to politics and thus gain independence for his country by democratic means rather than through bloodshed. His Botswana Democratic Party now has twenty-four members in parliament out of the thirty-one chosen members of parliament. One of the opposition parties, the Botswana National Front, is against what it calls an overhasty move for democracy and is conducting a campaign for preservation of the tribal chieftains' powers. This policy does not however have much success, even though one of the formidable representatives of this conservative trend is the former tribal chief Bathoen S. Gaseitsiwe, who beat vice-president Masire in 1969 in his electoral district.

### **No "one-party" system**

The system of having only one ruling party, such as exists for example in Zambia and Tanzania, does not appeal to the people of Botswana. During a meeting for discussion at the end of last year, convened by a number of university students in the capital Gaborone, members of parliament both from the government and opposition parties proved fervent advocates of the multi-party system. Seretse Khama himself does not see anything in the one-party system. To his mind, unity of the people can be achieved sooner by "promoting consultation and consensus and by institutions of participatory democracy, notably village development committees, co-operatives, and a wide range of voluntary organisations, including women's organisations and parent-teacher associations, through which our people can exert direct influence on decisions concerning the quality of their lives". In his opinion democracy fits in with the Tswana tradition. "It is too often stated that democracy has no place in Africa. Democracy is also stated to be incompatible with development, and the jettisoning of democratic institutions is justified by the demands of development. I do not share that view ... but regard democracy as a condition of development", this was stated by Seretse Khama in one of his recent speeches. An eventual abuse of democracy on the part of the opposition can only be checked by instructing and convincing each other and not by oppression.

### **"Third way-strategy"**

Consensus, or trying to get all parties concerned to agree by lengthy speech-making, is an important aspect in the making of decisions according to the traditional tribal culture of the Tswana. It is the most ideal form of democracy, also practised by peaceful sects such as the Quakers. No wonder people in Botswana are shy of violence, which is the antipole of reaching agreement or "consensus" by peaceful negotiation. It was also through negotiation that Botswana gained her independence, and she hopes that the people of the countries surrounding Botswana will have the same pleasant experience.

Opinion in Botswana advocates a third strategy which means that priority should be given to opposing the Right, but that at the same time they should dissociate themselves from extreme Leftist views, which apply the same method as Right. Only thus can they attain their goal: equality in society. In an impressive speech at a meeting of his party in 1972, Seretse Khama rejected the class warfare both of Right and Left. He appealed to the time-honoured Tswana ideal "Kagisano" (which means unity, peace, harmony and sense of community). In the contrapositions between races, between tribes, between classes as well as between rich and poor and between town and country, maintenance of the dominant position of the one group over the other (whether it is quoted as so-called "apartheid" between the groups or not) is, in Seretse's opinion, completely contrary to the national ideal of "Kagisano" in Botswana. Just as the racists

think that different tribes and races cannot live in harmony with each other and are always doomed to disagree, Seretse Khama maintains that there are also leftist movements which believe that "irreconcilable conflict of interest" is inevitable, and "to be resolved only by the triumph of one dominant group. The most extreme of such beliefs argue that such differences can be resolved only by bloodshed, violence and civil strife. Such dangers," he continues, "do exist in societies where rapid change is taking place, but we believe that these dangerous conflicts are not inevitable and can be avoided if we assert and apply in practice our belief in "Kagisano"."

### **Co-operative movement**

It is obvious that this sense of community and this spirit of peace via justice is threatened (a) by the introduction of an uncurbed capitalism and (b) by the tension, which is evoked by the racism and colonialism in the countries surrounding Botswana. Botswana's government is proud to have attracted twelve new industrial concerns in 1973. A beginning can now also be made to win copper and nickel in East Botswana, where the mining town of Selibwe Pikwe is growing up on what was fallow savanna ground. Orapa, a new village in the Kalahari raises equally exciting prospects. In 1967 the largest-but-one diamond pipe in the world was discovered here and put into production in 1971. This new development coming hand-in-hand with the recent discovery of coal has suddenly given a new outlook to the future of poverty-stricken Botswana — a fifth of whose labour force is employed in migrant work in South Africa. The government however, is a good deal concerned about the social and cultural results of rapid industrialisation and urbanisation in a country where the age-old tribal village was until a short time ago the central point round which the people's lives revolved. The mining boards have therefore had strict instructions from the government about the building of houses round the mines — for example there are to be none of the bachelors quarters such as exist in South Africa. Also noteworthy is the fact that the government is quite decided as regards the co-operative movement in Botswana. Patrick van Rensburg, an exile from South Africa and former South African consul in the former Congo has played a large part in this. The government has also established a centre for the development of co-operatives. Seretse Khama hails the co-operative movement as an important factor in the advancement of democracy, self-reliance, and the development of social responsibility. He also sees the co-operative movement as an important aid in cutting out the speculator in the necessary transition from subsistence to a cash economy.

### **Peaceful coexistence**

As regards the second point, the oppression in the countries surrounding her, Botswana has adopted an attitude of peaceful coexistence, without ever having to re-

nounce her principles of non-racism. Economically Botswana is still completely dependent upon South Africa. Imports and exports to and from Europe and America all go via that country. Thus the oil-boycott against South Africa and Rhodesia also affects Botswana. Only a huge fleet of aircraft could bring relief here, and, to a lesser degree the road which should open up the north of Botswana so that the narrow connection for import and export with Zambia can also be made use of. For the time being the people south of the Zambezi are economically completely thrown onto their own resources. Following negotiations, a customs union dating from 1910 between Lesotho, Swaziland, Botswana and South Africa was modified in 1970 in such a way that Botswana now receives extra revenue as a transit-land. Private South African capital, especially from the Oppenheimer-concern which has declared itself an opponent of "Apartheid", is allowed in Botswana. An official offer of help made by the government of South Africa was declined.

Naturally, Botswana and South Africa keep up the necessary diplomatic contact with each other as neighbouring countries, but there is no mutual official representation. Seretse Khama's explanation of this is as follows: "We decline to consider the exchange of diplomatic representatives with South Africa until we are confident that South Africa can fully guarantee that Botswana's representatives will in all respects, at all times and in all places, be treated in the same way as diplomats from other countries. Botswana knows very well that she is regarded as a beacon of hope in an area of vexation and trouble. She therefore tries above everything else to be an example of racial tolerance, and social justice for all. In word and deed, Botswana wants to testify to the fact that the "philosophy" of dividing people on ethnic grounds is "destructive and inhuman". Botswana's anti-racism campaign is even given expression in the national predominantly blue flag which has in its middle a wide black strip (a black majority group) and two small white strips (the white minority group).

### **Working for a peaceful change in southern Africa**

Botswana's government realises, that people, through despair, grab at violent methods, but it can never be assumed from her policy that the problems of "apartheid" can only be solved by violence. A representative of Lesotho has voiced these feelings in a speech at the meeting of the United Nations in October 1973. When therefore in January of this year, a violent rebellion broke out against the government of Premier Jonathan, the Afrikaans-speaking press wrote scornfully: "Lesotho preaches violence: now she's got it."

At the United Nations, Botswana votes for all resolutions whereby apartheid is condemned, and also support the Arab oil-boycott against South Africa and Rhodesia. She does not however admit that guerilla warfare uses Botswana territory as a springboard for South Africa. Minister Nwako said at a conference in Lusaka that Botswana gives "preference to negotiations rather than fighting ... and cannot, for obvious reasons, allow its territory to be used in the violent struggle for human equality and self-determination that is now going on in southern Africa."

Botswana is working for peaceful change in southern Africa, that is the gist of a continually repeated statement by Seretse Khama. He can sympathise with the fact that southern Africa, in the face of oppression grips at violence. In spite of this however he is convinced that, taking the balance of power into consideration, an escalation of violence in the territory concerned is not in the best interest of the oppressed people themselves and their confederates in independent Africa. Botswana, a haven of refuge for political fugitives from Rhodesia and South Africa, an "experimental garden" where all races can live together in harmony in the middle of an apartheid area, deserves as much support as it can get from all those who are for a radical and peaceful change.

\*

## **PROGRESS OF DIAKONIA**

**p. kearney**

At the 1974 Synod of the Archdiocese of Durban, Archbishop Hurley presented a proposal that an ecumenical agency be established in Durban to promote Church involvement in social problems of welfare, development and liberation. This proposal was unanimously accepted, and the Archbishop was asked to take all necessary steps to establish such an agency, under the name DIAKONIA or any other suitable name.

Further enthusiastic support came for the idea when Archbishop Hurley addressed the Annual General Meeting of the Natal Council of Churches in May 1974.

In July, a special preliminary consultation was held at which ideas were canvassed from over twenty people well versed in the problems of welfare, development and liberation. Gradually, in the intervening months, the aims and methods of Diakonia have been further refined and clarified, and altered on the basis of suggestions made.

Essentially the purpose of Diakonia is to activate, on an ecumenical basis, the moral influence of the Churches and focus this influence on important social problems. Diakonia will endeavour to do this through infor-



mation, communication, and that degree of action and involvement that is judged necessary for the accomplishment of its object.

Broadly speaking, Diakonia will have two chief concerns, both of which it will endeavour to pursue through the Churches:

- (i) that of helping to create opportunities for self-help and development among Blacks;
- (ii) that of making Whites aware of the conditions among Blacks in a country run by Whites mainly for their own benefit.

In order that practical steps may now be taken towards the establishment of Diakonia, a consultation of Church representatives was held in the Assumption Parish Hall, Nicholson Road, Durban on the 19th March 1975 from 5.30 p.m. to 10.00 p.m.

The main topics on the agenda were:

Constitution

Finance

Full-time personnel

Five delegates were invited from each of the following Churches:

Anglican, Methodist, Presbyterian, Congregational, Lutheran and Catholic. In addition, representatives were invited from the Interdenominational Association of Ministers of Southern Africa (IDAMASA), the Natal Council of Churches and Inter-Church Aid.

Your prayers are asked for the success of this venture—that the foundations of Diakonia may be well laid!

— P. Kearney

*Acting Secretary of Diakonia*

## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME OF THE CONNEXIONAL TRAINING CENTRE (UMTATA)

**t.b.m. mbabane**

### **Preamble:**

Our new Programme of the Connexional Lay Training Centre is geared towards Community Development. It augurs in a new and an exciting phase in the history of the Lay Centre.

Hitherto, the Connexional Lay Training Centre has been used for training Evangelists, but as from 1975, the training of Evangelists will form part of our broad programme. Could there be any better way through which the Methodist Church of South Africa could serve the people of this land?

Our aim is not that of imparting information to ignorant people, but to learn together in order to develop together.

The history of Community Development has proved that it is futile to transplant foreign ideas and technique or advanced social structures and material. Success has always been assured when people are allowed to develop their already existing technical skills. Given a chance, members of our community will develop and even devise means of reaching their own goals. A living example of what happens when development has been imposed before the people have been prepared, is that of the *Methodist African Social Centre* at Ncambedlana, Umtata. This centre is destroyed by the same community for which it was built. Could there be any reason why such luxurious establishments often become white elephants.

The irony is that no responsible community will either neglect or destroy what it has put up from its own

labours and resources. "Zikhulise" in Alice is a living example of how people can develop from their own resources. When we started looking for a site, the work was already going on. We did not wait until we put up a modern building. Chief Mabandla offered two rondavels with falling doors and windows. We were exceedingly grateful for this offer. We had to make use of what was available. It is through such a small beginning that people develop confidence and are eventually able to attain self reliance. "Zikhulise" is now self-supporting. The people at Krwakrwa in Alice, regard "Zikhulise" as their project. The Lay Training Centre is now ready to assist projects of a similar nature.

Those who are interested in Agriculture but do not know where to find help, will be glad to realise that we are blessed with the services of an experienced agriculturist, Mr B. Mashiga. He has come to join us with this rich experience gained while working for the government of Botswana, at Fort Hare, and in the Ciskei Department of Agriculture. This young man is now at your disposal. He is ready, not only to tell you how to do things, but also to handle the spade with you. Tell us your line of interest in Agriculture and he will come personally.

If you have ideas, we shall be happy to discuss them with you. We are easy to find. Our centre is not only centrally situated in the Transkei, but also at Umtata, where all roads from different parts of the Transkei meet. Should you want to know more, please do not hesitate to write to us, but better still, invite us.

## PROGRAMME

### 1. Agriculture

- (a) Different kinds of farming, e.g. Fish Farming, etc.
- (b) Special types of farming, e.g. Cash-crop Farming, etc.
- (c) Experimental Farming:
  - (i) At the Lay Centre
  - (ii) In the Glebes (Mission Lands)
  - (iii) In the surrounding land of the community.

### 2. Commerce

- (a) Home Industries
- (b) Courses on business management
- (c) Courses on Farming Economics and Marketing

### 3. Domestic Science

- (a) Dress-making
- (b) Cookery
- (c) Home Economics

### 4. Educational

- (a) Seminars on chosen themes
- (b) Short Courses
- (c) Refresher Courses
- (d) Literacy Training

### 5. Social

- (a) Film Shows in the African Social Centre
- (b) Concerts
- (c) Drama
- (d) Dancing Parties
- (e) Social Entertainments

### 6. Technical Skills

- (a) Type-writing and Book-keeping
- (b) Craft Work
- (c) Carpentry
- (d) Weaving and Knitting

### 7. Theological

- (a) Courses on Pastoral Care
- (b) Courses on Pastoral Lay Leadership
- (c) Courses on Religious Education

— Rev. T.B.M. Mbabane  
DIRECTOR

## MORE MISSIONARIES FOR AFRICA OR FEWER

### africa acts

*Some African Catholics may welcome the fact that, in the near future, fewer missionaries are likely to come to Africa from overseas.*

Uganda's Roman Catholic priests are calling for the localisation of their Church. A recent memorandum issued by the Uganda Priests Association says that the duty of Africanising—Ugandanising—Localising the Church belongs first and foremost to Africans; and the "signs of the times" require that the process be carried out quickly.

One "sign of the times" in Uganda has undoubtedly been President Amin's insistence that the Africanisation of Uganda's Churches needs to be speeded up. He said at the end of last year that he did not intend to rush the issue, but the Catholic priests are obviously taking account of last year's Uganda Government census of missionaries, which reported 1,293 foreign missionaries working with the Catholic Church. (The Anglican Church in Uganda had 95, and other faiths 67 foreign

workers.)

One reason often given for the large number of foreign missionaries still working in Africa has been a lack of African vocations to the priesthood. It is interesting to note that in one area of Africa which was suddenly deprived of missionaries—the East Central State of Nigeria—a huge increase in vocations has followed.

Three hundred missionaries of the Holy Ghost Fathers alone were refused permission to continue working in the Ibo area after the Nigerian civil war, as well as dozens of missionaries from other societies. Yet the Catholic Church, with three Ibo bishops, 150 Ibo priests and 163 Ibo sisters, now has some 450 senior seminarians in the four dioceses of Onitsha, Owerri, Enugu and Umuahia, and 1,600 aspirants to the religious life.

In this admittedly strongly Catholic area of Nigeria, the Diocese of Enugu alone has 160 senior and 450

junior seminarians, 600 entered for the sisterhood, 25 Cistercian monks and ten postulant nuns for an enclosed Benedictine convent. Yet other parts of Nigeria, it is reported, "will be dependent on foreign missionaries for a long time to come".

If the withdrawal of Iboland's missionaries has stimulated vocations, it is hard to draw conclusions from the other areas of Africa which report full seminaries. One is Zaire, where there appears to be a growing conflict between Church and State. Another is Tanzania, where the Church may have been criticised but it is not oppressed, and President Julius Nyerere is a practising Catholic.

#### **"missionaries would always be welcome ..."**

In no country in black Africa is more than 35 per cent of the Catholic clergy local-born. Countries with more than 30 per cent are Burundi, Cameroun, Dahomey, Equatorial Guinea, Rwanda, Tanzania, Togo and Uganda.

One influence on the situation which must vary from country to country and which is most difficult to estimate is the attitude of each national Church and Diocese towards missionaries. Does Africa want more missionaries or fewer?

More, says Cardinal Maurice Otunga, Archbishop of Nairobi and one of Africa's newest Cardinals. Speaking recently to the Generalate of the Holy Ghost Fathers in Rome he made a fervent appeal to missionaries not to desert Africa but to come in still greater numbers.

Acknowledging that African hierarchies were becoming Africanised and that local priests and sisters were becoming more numerous, Cardinal Otunga said that nevertheless missionaries would always be welcome and could work harmoniously with the local clergy in spite of their different backgrounds.

A recent report on missionary personnel at work in Africa shows that the number of missionary priests in the continent doubled between 1949 and 1969, rising from 7,500 to 15,100. The number of brothers rose from 2,941 to 5,177 and the number of sisters from 14,078 to 27,555.

In the same period the number of African priests rose from 1,080 to 3,623.

The report found the increase in the number of foreign missionaries "impressive, but still far from sufficient to keep pace with the growing needs of the missions". African Bishops' Conferences, it was reported, found the presence of foreign missionaries "useful if not absolutely necessary", especially in the work of evangelising non-Christians. African bishops spoke of the work of the missionary institutes as indispensable to the growth of their Churches.

The institutes themselves, on the other hand, expected to send fewer missionaries to Africa in the future, largely because the crisis in vocations to the priesthood in the sending countries is far more severe than it is in Africa.

The report suggests that Western countries would send still more missionaries to Africa if they only could. But some African Catholics are coming to believe that maybe fewer would be better.

Launching the new Nigerian Catholic Directory recently, Bishop Anthony Sanusi of Ijebu Ode spoke of the continuing need for missionaries but took pride also in the Nigerianisation of the Church which had taken place since the last Directory was published. The 1973 Directory shows 554 expatriate and 304 Nigerian priests, against 904 expatriates and 108 Nigerians in 1967. Expatriate sisters have lessened from 493 to 349, while Nigerian sisters have grown from 188 to 252.

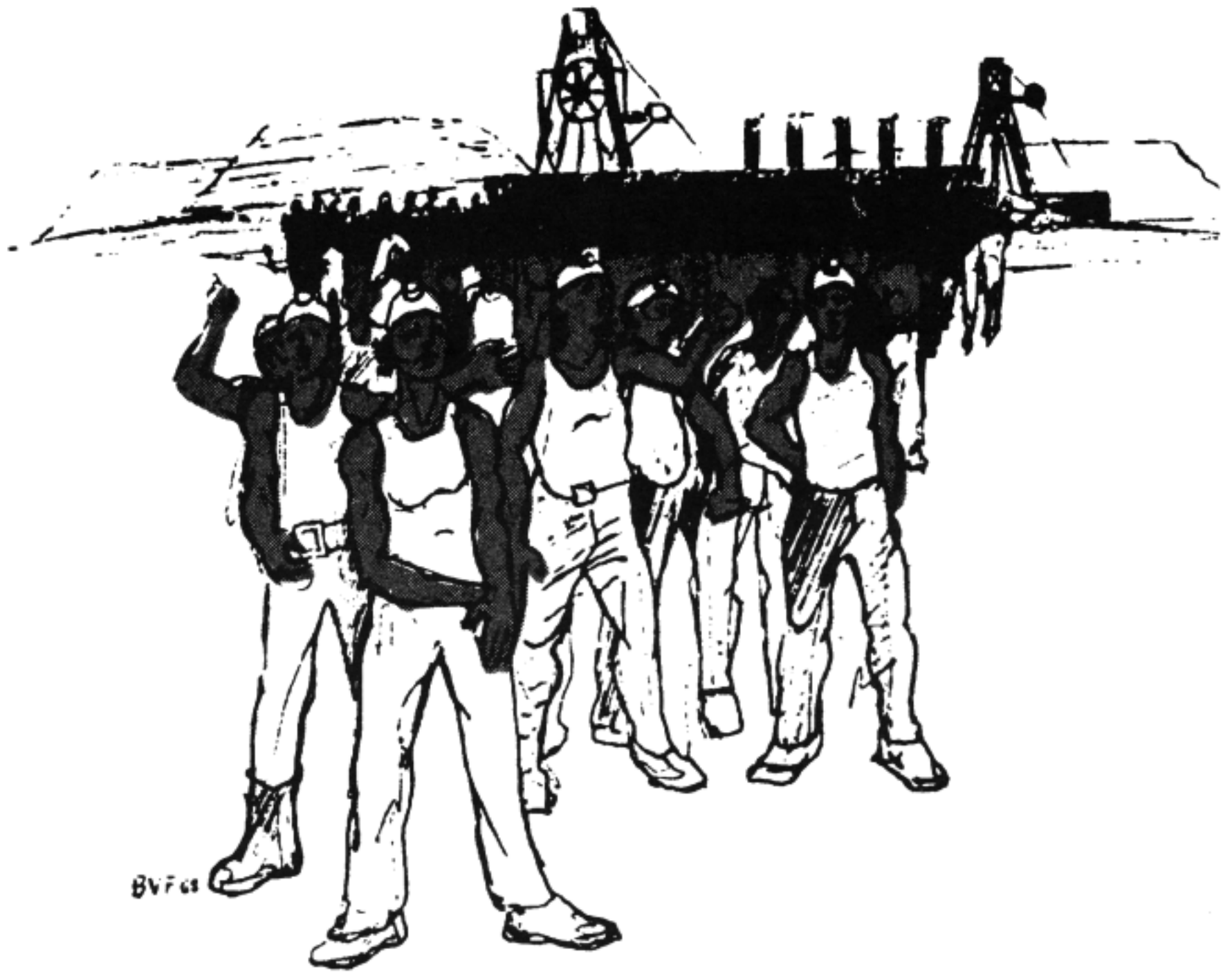
It is not statistics, however, but the results of localising the Church which are crucial. The Uganda Priests Association, saying firmly that their memorandum is not directed in any way against non-Ugandans, brings out the fact that African converts need to retain their own cultural inheritance, while missionaries have often brought the Christian message to Africa "clothed with Western-Latin cultural observances and laws."

They give as an example Uganda's parish structures, which they see as being built on a monastic model from Europe's Middle Ages. "The priests who live there scarcely know the lives of their people; they are not acquainted with their daily joys and sorrows."

The Uganda priests look for a future priesthood which will contain married men and which will include, alongside the present type of priests, catechists, ex-seminarians, teachers and many others. The present structure, they believe, needs to give way to smaller communities, where people may be better ministered to.

They do not ask, as an African Protestant leader recently asked, for a period without missionaries during which the African Church may "find itself". But they suggest that the African Church must be ready to change any belief it may hold that missionaries are indispensable to its growth.

—Africa Acts



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# LIBERATION OR DEVELOPMENT?