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BY DIE POSKANTOOR AS NUUSBLAD INGESKRYF

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REDAKSIONEEL

STEVE BIKO

Steve Biko het die bevrydende mensheid wat hy vir ander gesoek het, uitgeleef. Deur middel van die louter sterkte van sy persoonlikheid het hy 'n leier van mense, wat ver en wyd erken is, geword. Moedig en meedoënd, onverbiddelik en kalm het hy 'n indringende insig gehad en onbepaalde bronne van vertroue, hoop en blydschap.

Sy martelaarskap sny deur die mistigheid van verwarde denke en vertroebelde motiewe, en verlig die ware omstandighede van ons lewe deur die helderheid van die dood.

Dit ontbloot regeringsbeleid wat gedurende Steve se hele lewe lank gesoek het om wit oorheersing deur mag en geweld op Suid-Afrika te laste te lê. Om hierdie doel te bereik, is die land op 'n oorlogsbasis geplaas en 'n militêre teenwoordigheid regeer die swart woonbuurtes, terroriseer die bevolking en belas die ekonomie. Die jongmense word opgelei om te haat en te dood, of aangeval deur koeëls, gas en honde.

Die Minister van Justisie wat verantwoordelikheid vir sulke gruweldade ontken, slaag nie daarin om te verduidelik waarom sy metodes mense nie kan verhoed om deur vensters te spring, hulleself op te hang of hulleself dood te verhonger nie. Regeringsbeleid en praktyk word as afgrysig gesien deur hulle wat oor die Koninkryk van God besorgd is.

Dit ontbloot die posisie van hulle wat die status quo-ondersteun, deur hulle stem, hulle instemming, hulle investeringe, hulle verskonings of die walglike Fassisties-tipe entoesiasme van hulle politieke saamtrekke; hulle ondersteun hierdie onderdrukkende regeringstelsel en is mede-verantwoordelik vir die sterfgevalle wat dit veroorsaak. Daar is geen ander weg vorentoe nie behalwe deur belydenis.

Dit ontbloot die powere dwaasheid van hulle wat dink in terme om die regering te hervorm. 'n Vals evangelie, 'n bose verblindende ideologie kan nie hervorm word nie, dit moet

verwerp word. Die enigste aanvaarbare hervorming is totale en fundamentele verandering.

Dit openbaar dat Swartbewussyn, in direkte verwerping van beskuldigings van rassisme en kommunisme, aanvaar word deur baie uit alle rasse, as 'n geldige en belangrike deel van die mens se strewe vir daardie volheid van menslikheid en bevryding wat Christus verkondig het.

Een van die oomblikke van waarheid in die lewe van Jesus word weergegee in Lukas 19:41-44 toe Jesus gesien het dat sy samelewing 'n pad bewandel het wat onvermydelik tot sy vernietiging sou lei. *„As jy tog maar geweet het, ja, ook in hierdie dag van jou, die dinge wat tot jou vrede dien! Maar nou is dit vir jou oë bedek. Want daar sal dae oor jou kom dat jou vyande 'n skans rondom jou sal opwerp en jou omsingel en jou van alle kante insluit. En hulle sal jou en jou kinders in jou teen die grond verpletter; en hulle sal in jou nie een klip op die ander laat bly nie, omdat jy die gunstige tyd toe God jou besoek het, nie opgemerk het nie.*” Tog het Hy sy dissipels in die brandpunt van hierdie moeilike periode uitgestuur om die evangelie van die Koninkryk oor die hele aarde uit te dra (te verkondig).

'n Soortgelyke bewustheid het tot baie met die dood van Steve Biko gekom. Dit is 'n onheilspellende gebeurtenis. Vanaf die ghettos van Ginsberg tot die kanselarye van die Weste lei sy dood tot 'n duidelike bewustheid dat hierdie ongoddelike en weersinsewakkende samelewing vernietig sal word. Oordeel en die vernietiging van euwel is onontkombare fasette van die geskiedenis en die Heilige Skrif.

In hierdie onrus van 'n ineenstortende gemeenskap roep Christus mense met visie, oortuiging en moed om uit te reik na die werklike mag van broederskap van die hele gemeenskap. Liggame sal sterf, harte sal breek maar niks sal ons geesdrif gevange hou of God se doel weerhou nie.

EDITORIAL

STEVE BIKO

Steve Biko lived the liberated humanity which he sought for others. Through the sheer strength of his personality, he became a leader of men recognised far and wide. Courageous and compassionate, tough and quiet, he had a piercing insight and vast resources of confidence, hope and laughter.

His martyrdom cuts through the fog of confused thinking and muddled motives and illumines the true circumstances of our life with the clarity of death.

It reveals Government policy which for all of Steve's life has sought to impose white domination on South Africa, with power and violence. To this end the country has been put on a war footing, and a military presence rules the townships, terrorises the population, and burdens the economy. Youths

are trained to hate and kill, or assaulted by bullets, gas and dogs. The Minister of Justice, disclaiming responsibility for such atrocities, fails to explain why his methods cannot prevent people jumping from windows, hanging themselves, or starving themselves to death. Government policy and practice is seen to be abhorrent to those concerned for the Kingdom of God.

It reveals the position of those who support the status quo. By their votes, their acquiescence, their investments, their excuses, or the nauseating fascist-type enthusiasm of their political rallies, they support this oppressive regime, and share responsibility for the deaths it causes. There is no way forward except through repentance.

It reveals the blindness of the authorities: Far from intimidating the population, repression has stiffened people's resolve, immeasurably. Under the anguish of Steve Biko's death is a total commitment to remove the heretical horror of apartheid, once and for all.

It reveals the weak folly of those who think in terms of trying to reform the Government. A false Gospel, an evil blinding ideology, cannot be reformed; it must be rejected. The only acceptable reform is total and fundamental change.

It reveals that Black Consciousness, in direct rejection of charges of racism and communism, is accepted by many of all races as a valid and vital part of man's quest for that fullness of humanity and liberation which Christ proclaimed.

One of the moments of truth in the life of Jesus is recounted in Luke 19:41-44, when Jesus saw that his society was bent on a course that led inevitably to its destruction. *'If you only knew today what is needed for peace! But now you cannot see it! The days will come when your enemies will surround you with barricades, blockade you, and close in on*

you from every side. They will completely destroy you and the people within your walls; not a single stone will they leave in its place, because you did not recognise the time when God came to save you.'

Yet into the heart of this troublesome period he sent his disciples to spread the Gospel of the Kingdom throughout the Earth.

A similar awareness has come to many with the death of Steve Biko. It is a portentous event. From the ghettos of Ginsberg to the chancelleries of the West his death leads to a clear awareness that this ungodly and revolting society will be destroyed. Judgement and the destruction of evil are inescapable facets of history and scripture.

In this turmoil of a collapsing society Christ calls for people with vision, conviction and courage to reach out together for the real power of brotherhood and a whole community. Bodies will die, hearts will break, but nothing will detain our spirits or deter God's purpose.

STIFLING GOOD WORKS

Peter Storey, Editor of the Methodist newspaper DIMENSION, comments on proposed new legislation which threatens the work of the churches

Stifling Good Works . . .

Every minister, W.A. President and lay church worker concerned with the wider caring task of the Church should study the Draft Bills for the Social Workers and Associated Professions Act, Fund-raising Act and National Welfare Act — all planned for 1978, and then put pen to paper before September 30, in protest.

While the aims of these Bills are laudable — ensuring that people don't go around posing as Social Workers when they're not, eliminating the racketeers in the fund-raising game and seeking to provide adequate welfare facilities on a decentralised basis — their overall effect on a wide range of activities in which the Church is rightly involved and a category of persons rendering valuable lay-service may well be disastrous.

The Social Workers and Associated Professions Act: No person may practice social work, defined as: 'any professional act, activity or method directed at diagnosing, eliminating, preventing or treating social malfunctioning in man,' or at 'promoting social stability in man', including 'the rendering of any material assistance with a view thereto,' unless registered under the Act.

• Many churches today are gaining invaluable service from lay people (pastoral assistants, youth workers, community workers) engaged for just this purpose. Is this new emphasis in full-time lay ministry (e.g. the Order of Christian Service) going to be quashed, and is the New Testament task of caring for the *whole* man (not just his soul) to be monopolised by one professional class?

The Fund-Raising Act: Any fund-raising not 'exclusively for the purpose of promoting the *religious* work' . . . of a religious body will fall under this Act and will require written authority on every occasion from a 'Director of Donation Funds'. He will decide whether there is a need for the fund-raising and the Act decrees that every person collecting in any way will have to hold a written power of attorney to do so. The Act states that even the accepting of an *unsolicited* gift of any kind is 'collecting' and to do so without this authority will be an offence. There is an overriding clause enabling the Minister of Social Welfare and Pensions to prohibit collections for *any* purpose at all (even 'religious' it seems) by notice in the

Government Gazette and there is no appeal against this prohibition.

• The Church, with a Biblical understanding of 'religion' sees such projects as Youth Ministering to Youth, Centres of Concern, Methodist Relief Fund, Community Centres, Literacy work, Old Age Pensioners Funds etc. as 'religious work' — will the Director of Donation Funds do so? Past experience is that Government officials have a far narrower definition of what is 'religious'.

If your cake-sale is for any project falling outside of this narrow definition (e.g. for the Methodist Relief Fund) then even to accept a cake from your next-door neighbour without a power of attorney etc. will be an offence. (The Director of Donations Funds may search your premises *without warrant* at any time to ensure you are not hiding it too!)

The National Welfare Act: If a project has by some miracle fallen through these nets, then this Act will take care of it. No one may offer 'social welfare services' (including any measure or programme 'directed at the relief of social distress . . . or the improvement or promotion of the social functions of persons, families or groups of persons') without Welfare Registration. All W.O. numbers will be withdrawn, a mammoth re-registration will take place, and of course even the possession of a W.O. number will *not* entitle you to raise a cent without on each occasion going through the Fund-raising Act rigmarole.

• Numerous Church programmes (some with W.O. numbers, most without) could fall under this wide-ranging definition and it will be up to one of a large number of regional boards to decide whether to register them. If they refuse . . . *it will be an offence to offer that programme.*

We concede the need for control but in the delicate field of voluntary good work (in which the Church is more experienced than any) this is the kind of control which could stifle the spirit of service. Do we have to rewrite the New Testament? Did Jesus really say 'Go, sell all your goods and give them to the poor, *but first ensure that thou art a registered Social Worker, that thou hast a power of attorney from the Director of Donations Funds, and that thy good intentions are approved by the Regional Welfare Board.*

Lord preserve us!

THE PROPHETIC TASK IN SOUTH AFRICA TODAY

The Christian Institute's response in relation to the Christian's essential prophetic task on the one hand and the pre-conceptions of the Commission of Enquiry into certain Organizations on the other.

In view of continued misunderstandings of the theological situation, we publish the Christian Institute's response to the Schlebusch/Le Grange Commissions Report.

The Christian Institute, which was 'investigated' by the Commission of Enquiry into Certain Organizations' is a Christian Movement which in South African society witnesses in word and deed to the realization of justice, freedom and peace in the Name of Jesus Christ. To understand why the Commission rejected the Institute it is necessary for us to look at some of the Commission's pre-conceived ideas.

1. Danger to State

According to the Report of the Commission the C.I. is a 'danger to the state' (v. 4.1.4; 6.3.25; 6.4.1; 6.5.26). The C.I., it says, advocates violence as a means of change; perpetrates a theology of revolution and even supports the ideological way of thought of terrorism. **No grounds were advanced for these allegations and the C.I. categorically denies them.** Nevertheless the question must be asked why the Commission regards the C.I. as a danger to the state. If the values, the outlook on life and the criteria which have validity for the Commission, as these are revealed in the report, are examined, it becomes clear why in the absence of any tangible evidence, the C.I. has been judged in so negative a fashion.

From the Commission's point of view the highest authority is vested in the state and the actions of the C.I. pose a threat to this authority and the security of the state (v. 1.3.; 9.1.2). As is abundantly clear from the C.I.'s manifesto, its constitution and public statements, and the editorials published in *Pro Veritate*, the C.I. upholds Christ and the Gospel as the highest authority in the state, including the legal sphere. According to the C.I., justice, freedom and order as expounded in the Gospel, must form the basis of the state's ideas on and the laws relating to justice, freedom and order.

The witness of the C.I. and its criticism of the government and of government policy and the application of that policy, constitute a rejection on the C.I.'s part of the state as the final authority in all spheres of life because **this authority belongs to God alone.** The state, the government and its policy and its norms must, according to the C.I., always remain relative and must be submitted to and tested against the highest of measuring rods — the Gospel of Christ.

It can thus be understood why the C.I. is regarded by the Commission as a danger to the state. The C.I. is a threat to the authority of the state which itself, in the eyes of the Commission, is vested with the highest authority: in other words with the authority of God.

Whether the C.I. is in fact a danger to the state in that it regards the state and its policy and norms as relative to the Gospel and criticizes them in the light of the Gospel is another matter, and it would seem that at most the C.I. can be alleged to endanger what is un-Christian, oppressive and unjust in the state.

2. Political Body

Another allegation made by the Commission is that the C.I. 'in the main, if not entirely, is active on the political front, and on economic and social levels'. Seen against this background the organization is not capable of passing independent and impartial judgment on political matters on Christian grounds. According to the Commission, the C.I. has in being and in function become a

political body with a political destiny. (v. 9.1, 2, 3.; cf. 2.5 on p. 158; 6.2,23; 6.1,5). The Commission's assumption is that both the Church and the C.I. as a Christian organization, must hold aloof from political matters if they are to be competent to pass independent judgment.

In the view of the C.I. however, the state is not an independent entity, nor is it the fount of right, justice, freedom and order. The source or basis of all right, justice, freedom and order is the Gospel. The state is their custodian — not their creator, their servant — not their master. The witness of Christians or groups of Christians as in a movement such as the C.I., is necessary for the proper understanding of the basic principles (as e.g. justice) on which the state is founded. The task of Christians is not merely the exposition of Christian principles or the proclaiming of doctrines, but also and in particular, it involves the putting into practice of a Christian way of life. It is concerned with the furthering of the coming of the Kingdom of God bringing men to hunger and thirst in their quest for justice, love, freedom and peace.

The Commission limits the sphere of the Gospel to the theoretical, to the 'spiritual' and inner life of men. This is a denial of the all-embracing meaning of the Kingdom of God for the total life including the political life of men. Political life in particular must conform to the Gospel because politics has such a decisive influence on men and their way of life, their standards and life-style. If their political life is divorced from the direct and crucial influence of the Gospel, then it becomes an exclusive sphere with its own independent and final norms and a policy which then sets itself up as opposed to God and the divine standards.

The Commission's contention that the state and the church have their own differentiated and separate spheres is un-Christian. The state indeed has a separate task to perform, but that task takes place within the human sphere, within human society, the whole of which and for all time falls under the sovereignty of Christ — King, Saviour and Liberator.

3. Not a church

The Commission alleges further that the C.I. sees itself in the role of the Church, called to bring about change in the (existing) un-Christian socio-political and economic conditions. (1.; 1.2.8.). This function the Commission sees to be in conflict with the interests of the state.

But what is important here in the C.I.'s view is the fact that the state must not by implementing an independent policy, govern or determine the lives of men in all respects. In South Africa the state controls and governs all aspects of human life by means of legislation and the power of authority as, e.g. where they may live, who may and who may not possess ownership rights, political rights, marriage rights, freedom of movement, etc.

In any case **the C.I. regards itself as a part of the Church of Christ because in its view the Church comprises the body of believers in Christ.** On the other hand the Commission postulates that the C.I. is not a part of a Christian 'church' with specifically defined church structures and a dogmatically defined religion, and that it therefore is not competent to play a prophetic role in society.

The Commission, which sees the C.I. as a threat to the state in

contrast to the recognised churches, holds this point of view because the government wants to rule the action and life of the recognised churches in such a way that it will afford security in the interests of the state. As long as the churches do not clash with the basic policy of the government, which prescribes and enforces the norms and way of life of the people of South Africa, and makes no demands, for just so long is that church 'safe' in the eyes of the state.

The C.I., however, witnesses directly in word and deed on the basis of the Gospel to a Christian way of life as opposed to the principle of apartheid and the policy of separate development and the application of this policy. This is the God-given right and responsibility of every Christian or group of Christians — to oppose injustice in society and to work for more just and Christian social structures — and this because Christians are the light of the world and the salt of the earth.

4. Vertical and Horizontal

The Commission postulates further that a basic distinction between the horizontal and vertical aspects of the Gospel should be made and that Verticalism should enjoy precedence over Horizontalism (v. 6.2.19 — pp. 155-163). According to the Commission the C.I. subordinates the Vertical or direct relation between men and God to the Horizontal relationship of men to their fellow-men.

This belief that man can have a direct 'spiritual' vertical relationship with God is a Gnostic and Docetist heresy. The Gnostic heresy in the early church taught the co-existence of a supernatural independent spiritual world standing in a dualist relationship and which is held to be the real world in contradistinction to this world. The spirit (soul) of man is subject to this Spiritual world to which he must stand in a vertical relationship. The influence which this 'spiritual' world exerts on the soul of man must secondarily and indirectly be applied to the life of man on earth and human society.

This postulate, however, is in conflict with true Christianity and is a profound denial of the incarnation of Jesus Christ who in Himself and in His life on earth has reconciled God and man. He established the Kingdom of God and his direct involvement in all spheres in the world. **The Christian has no knowledge of God or a 'spiritual' world without Jesus Christ who in reality is part of the horizontal world because He revealed God therein.** God's revelation to and relationship with men is here on earth and in history, and thus it is, as it were, bound to the horizontal. According to the Gospel there is not a vertical world as opposed to a horizontal world. God, however, is simply God over against the world in its horizontal dimension.

In actual fact in the Bible the relationship of man to his neighbour sometimes takes precedence over man's service to God through sacrifice. (v. Matt. 5:23-24), — not that man's relationship with his neighbour is more important than his relationship with God but because man's relationship with his neighbour determines and is intrinsic within his relationship with God. In no event can man maintain a relationship with God other than in an historical earthly framework, nor can He be known in the spirit. God can only be known or denied in the context of man's earthly life, his society, his personality, his politics or his social life.

The Bible goes further and says that he who does not love his neighbour, does not know God (for God is love). (1 John 4:7-8). According to the Gospel there is an ineradicable bond between man's relationship with God and his relationship with his neighbour, between the Kingdom of God and politics, between the revelation of God and history, between redemption and forgiveness of sins and the incarnation of Jesus, the Christ.

The 'spiritual life' cannot be separated from the political, community, cultural, individual, economic and social life. Life forms a unity and cannot be differentiated into *spiritual* and *earthly* spheres because the earth and its inhabitants are essentially the creation and work of God, and because the 'spiritual' is an aspect of the created earthly humanity. It is thus clear that humanity does not stand in a vertical relationship with God and in a horizontal relationship with his fellowmen or with politics.

Continuing to use this terminology, it may be said that man stands in a vertical *and* horizontal relationship to both God and his fellowmen. According to the Gospel man's religion has political, social and individual meaning *and* man's political, social and individual life has religious meaning. God has created but one world and the entire creation falls within His sovereignty.

If the Commission rejects the C.I. because it (the C.I.) applies the Gospel in unseparated vertical and horizontal dimensions, this means in effect that the true Gospel is opposed by the Commission.

5. Violence

As already indicated the Commission alleges that the C.I. also advocates change by means of *violence* (v. also pp. 104, 122, 42). If this were true it would have dire consequences for South African society and the C.I. and its representatives would almost certainly have been indicted before the courts. The C.I. has denied this accusation in the strongest terms and according to its writings, its action and its public statements it stands for fundamental, peaceful Christian change. Then why does the Commission re-iterate time and again that the C.I. advocates violence as a means of change?

Here again, the 'findings' of the Commission are implicit in its initial assumptions. If the state is the highest authority in the legal and political spheres, then it implies that the state also has the final authority to exercise *its power* over the whole spectrum of life. Its power and authority according to this view are regarded as sovereign and not even to be criticized let alone ultimately rejected.

The C.I. does not accept this view of authority and power and for this very reason the C.I. is held to be guilty of being a 'danger to the state', aiming to bring about change by 'violence'. This is the Commission's interpretation because authority and power (violence) which are held to be absolute can only be rejected by authority and power (violence). This absolutist maintenance of power and authority of the government which controls the total life of the people of South Africa on the basis of the apartheid policy is rejected by the C.I. on Christian grounds and the C.I. witnesses against it.

It is this prophetic witness in word and deed in the belief that it is God rather than people who should be obeyed which is accordingly regarded by the Commission as support of violence with the aim of overthrowing the absolutist power of the state. Because the Commission holds an ideological view in regard to the power of the state, namely that the ideology of separate development must be preserved through power (violence), power as such is extolled and maintained through this unlimited power; it is never subjected to any other norms such as justice and love. People with such a view of power believe that the power of the state (violence) can only be overthrown by a stronger power (violence) and therefore they look upon criticism as a support of violence with a view to bringing about change.

The C.I., however, subscribes to the view that government power is not absolute, but must be subordinated to right and justice according to the Gospel. **The state must be basically a state founded on justice — not power.** Power and authority ought not to be used to enforce upon the people an ideology or a policy which is elevated to the status of a final norm (such as 'separate development'); because in such circumstances power degenerates into violence, violating the human quality and dignity of men. The power of the state may only be used to safeguard and protect justice and the God-given rights of the people. **He who encroaches upon the rights of his fellowmen must be curbed by the state. When the government itself encroaches upon the rights of the people, then it is understandable that it should fear violence against itself.**

The C.I. does not advocate the use of violence as a means of change, but rather the exercise of power according to the norms of right and justice as ultimately subject to the Gospel.

6. Defiance

A final point made by the Commission in its criticism of the C.I. is

based on the belief that the 'existing order' is sacrosanct, a norm to which all else must be subjected. The Commission alleges that the 'defiance' of the C.I. is not simply a protest against the church or the policy of separate development, but that in the final analysis it has developed into opposition to the existing order (1.2, 11).

The report of the Commission deals with the existing order which at all costs must be preserved inviolate. Basing its assumptions on this point of view the Commission comes to the conclusion that the Christian witness and work of the C.I. is a danger to the state. Why? Because the *existing order* established upon the basis of 'separate development' is elevated to the highest inviolable authority, so that anyone who has the temerity to question it would be guilty of 'religious' treason, apostasy, Marxism or neo-Marxism, or even terrorism.

This view of an unassailable existing order converts the state and its policy into an ideology. The interpretation of the South African situation in terms of the norm of 'separate development' is raised to the level of an authoritarian ideology demanding total authority and unconditional obedience. Anyone who deviates essentially from this authority is brought under control by legislation providing for censorship, banning, detention without trial etc. **A policy, a status quo, a political order is in this way elevated to the status of the Gospel. And it is for this reason that witness emanating from a higher authority is held to be a threat to the existing order which must be suppressed.**

The national state based on racial differentiation and discrimination, and built upon these foundations, constitutes the keystone, the central and highest principle. The C.I. which rejects this norm and viewpoint in the light of the Gospel, is consequently regarded as a danger to the state. The question is repeated — why does the Commission see the C.I. as a danger to the state in that it questions the 'existing order'? Because the C.I.'s criticism rejects the basis of the existing order, the ideology or the principle of conscience on which it rests, viz. 'separate development'. If one touches upon the ideology (the 'conscience') of the state, one attacks its essence and the state becomes very much alarmed. This ideologically bound nationalist's 'God', his being, his life, his existence, his all, is

threatened. He suffers and existential shock and all and everything must be set in motion to avert the danger. The existing order is indispensable and any person or action which ventures to oppose it is branded as subversive and undermining. An absolutist state cannot tolerate any deviation from its norm.

In Afrikaner nationalism state and religion are linked together so that change or rejection relating to either one constitutes religious apostasy and is branded with such labels as communism, Marxism, Horizontalism, and so forth. The existing order must be maintained at all costs. This is the *sine qua non* to which all people are compelled to adapt and conform.

The ideology of the existing order is more important than mere people and their needs, necessities and rights. The ideological machinery of the existing order has the final answer which people must be coerced into observing even if such measures cause intense suffering. The people and their needs and rights are submerged, overshadowed, so that the ideology of the existing order may be made manifest and maintained.

The C.I. maintains that men and their political policy as existing in the status quo are relative, whilst the Kingdom of God which exists in justice, freedom and neighbourly love is absolute. The Kingdom must be realized continuously and therefore the existing order must continually be tested against the divine norms and, if necessary, must be radically changed or even substituted by a more Christian order of things.

Christ and His Gospel remain the criterion. He said: **'Unto me is given all authority in heaven and on earth . . .'** And henceforward both church and state, the C.I. and this Commission, subject and ruler must be subject to Him.

He who rejects the Kingship of Christ and His Kingdom which must be continually realized even in the political sphere and in the social sphere, may be able to build up his own ideological kingdom, but this will bear within itself the seeds of its own inherent decay, fore-doomed from its inception. **'Woe to those who silence their prophets . . . Shall the trumpet be blown in the city, and the people not be afraid . . . The Lord God has spoken, who can but prophesy? (Amos 2:11; 3:8).**

A WEEK OF PRAYER FOR WORLD PEACE

Prepared for the week of prayer from October 23-30th 1977

Peace

There is a kind of peace, such as is regarded as prevailing in areas of the world today, which is a mere absence of war. Yet this is by no means true peace. There have been since 1945 a hundred armed conflicts, from bitter outbreaks of civil strife within close-knit communities to devastating large-scale wars employing an even greater weight of destructive weaponry than in the so-called world wars. Dozens of conflicts still rage, not least in the developing countries, where the most urgent need is for peace to enable economies to be organised for the well-being of communities still suffering from deprivation, poverty and often stark hunger. Commercial arms sales by the rich nations have increased by 6,000% in twenty years. Social peace is not merely the absence of conflict but is the presence of justice. Yet in some countries a third of the work force is unemployed, and in some areas two thirds die of or grow up stunted by malnutrition. World population grows by a million every week. Inter-state conflict is being superseded as the poor respond violently to the structural violence which impoverishes them. The arms race is continuing and growing more dangerous. The spiral of violence is escalating. Some of us are able to pray 'in peace', while most of the people in the world pray urgently from the agony of deprivation and desperation.

Power

The world tends to conceive of power in material terms: economic power, political power, military power. Always the ultimate coercive element is the power to destroy. Destructive power has now been developed to such an intolerable degree, and the world has grown so acutely vulnerable to its effects through the elaborate and delicate inter-relationship and complex mutual dependency resulting from modern means of communication, that the whole concept of power needs to be re-examined. To put material power into true perspective there needs to be a new understanding of spiritual and moral power. People of all faiths join during this week to pray for peace and justice because they believe in the power of prayer. The power reveals itself in many ways. God's response to our particular prayers is in whole answers. Individuals in their own personal need pray for food; others in their compassion pray for the hungry — and we see the birth of the idea of a domestic economy for the whole human household with plans developing within the family of the United Nations for the 'New International Economic Order' which can change the structure and rules of the global economy in the interests of common welfare. Individuals seek their freedom and we see a growing concern for all political prisoners, not least through the work of Amnesty International, and

mounting action against racial discrimination and the oppression of minorities. In military or political terms these great movements of our time appear to be weak. Does this mean that we are witnessing the development of a power which bypasses the gun and complements lawful authority?

People

Obvious though it may seem, we need always to remind ourselves that the purpose of any economic system or political ideology is to be of benefit to people, not just some people but all people. No true economic system and no valid political ideology can become an end in itself without harming people. Those who believe people to have been created in order to fulfil the divine will must always see the

economic or political system in terms of its effectiveness in serving people and never the other way round. Surely this is the answer to our prayer for peace, namely the assurance that 'we the people of the United Nations' can act effectively for peace. What is most needed to secure disarmament is 'an alert informed public opinion made bold and operative', states the Oslo Peace Research Institute. 'The U.N. is ultimately powerless . . . we cannot change your laws, your education, your economic plans . . . you have to do that', explained Helvi Sipola, secretary of the U.N. Women's Conference. When Pope Paul declared 'If you want peace, defend life', he was addressing us all, not only those with direct political power. In this week of prayer, study and action we, the One People of the One World, unite our power for peace.

BEYERS NAUDÉ REPORTS

The National Director, Dr C. F. B. Naudé, reported to the Annual General Meeting of the Christian Institute in Johannesburg, on Saturday, September 10, 1977.

Dramatic events in our country during the past year which have serious implications for the Christian Institute require that my report should be longer than usual. I wish to deal with these events and issues as follows:

1. The Continuing Crisis

Shortly after the mid-year student demonstrations of 1976 I indicated that South Africa would never be the same again after Soweto, June 16, interpreting the development as the emergence of a social youth revolution. Subsequent events have substantiated this prediction and we now find ourselves in a situation where the political goals of Black and White are so contradictory and so widely divergent that there is very little hope of any meaningful reconciliation of these goals as long as the government refuses to recognise and admit the real reason for the existing unrest. In addition, a series of government decisions and police actions have led to increasing estrangement and growing polarisation between Black and White. Basically the situation has now developed into a struggle for power with the majority of Whites supporting the military, police and economic power of the government in the belief that this will guarantee their future security, and practically all Blacks convinced that the power of truth, the power of youth, the power of sustained Black political aspirations, the power of numbers and of world pressure, will eventually enforce fundamental change and achieve liberation. The implications which this struggle has for the church are staggering and the challenge which this presents to the Christian faith is, I believe, only vaguely realised within our country.

2. The C.I.: Goals and Policy

As a Christian organisation seeking to remain relevant to the needs of the community which it wishes to serve, the Christian Institute has during the past year, without deviating from its previously stated basis and goals, sought to lay special emphasis on goals and strategies which we believe to be of crucial importance at this moment in time to bring about fundamental change through non-violent means. Our policy statements on foreign investment, our resolutions on the state of the nation and the Transkei independence, plus our publications on detentions and alleged torture — all these have to be evaluated against the background of our growing concern that the country is rapidly approaching a point (if it has not already reached it) where the institutionalised brutality of our system has engendered so much bitterness and hatred that many Black leaders believe counter violence to be a tragic inevitability. In the light of the above the staff and Council of the Christian Institute have increasingly given their support to Black initiatives for self-realisation and self-development whilst at

the same time interpreting to the White community the real nature of the vast social and political change currently taking place in our country. Admittedly — especially with White attitudes moving more and more to the right — such a witness and work antagonises many Whites and becomes increasingly unacceptable to the vast majority of the White community, whilst for many Blacks our non-violent stand and Christian call for reconciliation on the basis of justice become irrelevant. At the same time we are grateful to experience increased support from the ranks of the Black community because of our stand of solidarity with the oppressed and we can only hope and pray that somewhere in the future, because of the trust we have thus been able to gain, we will be allowed to make a worthwhile contribution to true reconciliation between the opposing groups and forces in our country.

3. Financial Support

The government action in declaring the C.I. an affected organisation in May 1975 necessitated a substantial reduction in staff and programmes and a considerable change in the nature of our funding. Despite these obstacles we were able to raise R97 000,00 during the financial year of June 1976 to May 1977 for the total budget needs of the C.I. (National and Regional) and we wish to express our sincere gratitude to all donors for every form of support — both large and small. We realise that in the present political climate a concerted effort will have to be made to ensure the continuation of our work on the same level and for this purpose we ask for all possible support from members and sympathisers in regard to fund raising activities.

4. Regional Activities

With each Region sending out its own newsletter as part of our policy of decentralisation there is a greater awareness within regions of their own activities but a lesser knowledge of what transpires elsewhere. My annual report therefore seeks to present in a summarised form the main activities and developments in each Region:

4.1 Cape and Namibia:

Special mention should be made about the 'Facing the Future with Hope' courses conducted by Dr Theo Kotze throughout the country (Transvaal, Eastern and Western Cape, Natal and Namibia) during the past year. Furthermore there has been good co-operation between the Christian Centre, Windhoek and the Diocese of Damaraland, with the C.I. in the Cape. Staff and Regional Committee members were resource people in assisting with a number of their courses. The Cape Office has also been a centre of wholehearted and positive response to

the refugee situation as a result of the riots which occurred between Christmas and New Year 1976/77. The same holds true of the squatter situation in the Cape Peninsula. Two Regional Committee members, Dr Margaret Nash and the Rev. Wesley Mabuza, were arrested on the strength of their identification with those oppressed. The Cape staff is playing a prominent part in supportive action to organisations like the Cape Flats Committee for Interim Accommodation.

4.2 Natal:

The resignation of Mr Cosmos Desmond as Regional Director left a vacuum which was only filled when Mr Reinier Holst was appointed as Regional Organiser mainly for the greater Durban area. The Regional Board, after careful deliberation, decided to move the Regional office to Durban in order to facilitate the organising of the work of the C.I. We wish to use this opportunity to express our heartfelt thanks to Mrs Joan Kerchhoff for her devoted service to the C.I. in the Pietermaritzburg office and wish to welcome Ms. Cindy-Lou Schmidt who has taken her place.

There has been very good co-operation between the C.I. and Diakonia in Durban and we sincerely hope this will continue. This became more apparent during the recent tragic uprooting of 600 to 800 squatters in the Clairmont area.

4.3 Transvaal:

The detention and banning of Mrs Oshadi Phakathi, our Transvaal Regional Director, with the subsequent departure from South Africa in March of this year of Mrs Phakathi, adversely affected our Regional work in the Transvaal. More so as we previously lost the services of the Rev. Lucas Mabusela, who accepted a call to the Mamelodi congregation of the N.G. Kerk in Afrika in August last year. I wish to place on record our deep gratitude for the significant contribution made by Oshadi Phakathi to the cause of the C.I., both on the National and the Regional level, and to state how glad we are that the overseas C.I. Information Office has obtained her services. During the year two staff members of the Transvaal region, Mr Cedric Mayson and Rev. Mashwabada Mayatula, have been detained, as were two members of the regional committee.

Despite these serious disruptions a number of important courses and conferences have been held in the Transvaal — amongst them two courses on 'Facing the Future with Hope', a course on the relevance of the Christian faith and a course sponsored by Iziko la ma Krestu on Indigenous African Religion and the Christian faith.

The vacant post of Regional Director has not yet been filled but we hope this will be done in the near future. The situation of ongoing unrest in Soweto has continued to occupy our minds and we are grateful for the meaningful contribution which Rev. Mashwabada Mayatula as member of the Committee of Ten has been making. We also wish to thank the Transvaal Regional Committee for their assistance to and support of the work in Transvaal during this difficult period.

5. The C.I. and the D.R. Churches

Since 1963, when the C.I. was established, it was hoped that in course of time the White D.R.C. (NGK) would be influenced to exert strong enough pressures on the government to affect meaningful change in the racial policies of our country. The total rejection of the C.I. by the NGK, the negative response of the official leadership of the NGK to the earnest endeavours of the SACC to involve the NGK in meaningful dialogue, linked with the increasing opposition from the three Black Dutch Reformed Churches to the White NGK's continued support for government policy, have forced one to conclude that no meaningful pressures for basic political change will be applied by the NGK. As in the political field, such initiatives for change will emanate from the

Black community — in this case the Black DRC. The C.I. has always seen as part of its witness its expression of support for such actions, as we believe these to be a more realistic and effective way of bringing about change than to wait for the day in the distant future when eventually and belatedly the White DRC may be willing to stand up and be counted publicly in total rejection of the racial policies of the government. We are convinced that growing Black impatience with racial injustice will not be willing to wait for that day.

6. The C.I. and the Multi-Racial Churches

With sincere gratitude we acknowledge the moral support we have received as an organisation from ministers and members of the major multi-racial churches in South Africa — especially the Roman Catholic, Anglican, Congregational, Lutheran, Methodist and Presbyterian Churches.

We are aware, however, that within each church the conservative grouping of the White membership has become increasingly critical of the stance of the C.I. in supporting Black initiatives for change. We have been accused of taking an anti-White and a pro-Black stand in our expression of Christian solidarity with the oppressed. It is of vital importance that we restate our stand as being neither pro-Black nor anti-White but pro-Christ. If our identification with the teaching and example of Christ is seen to be too radical, too closely identifying ourselves with the oppressed, with too little sympathy displayed for White fears and prejudices, then we can only deplore such misinterpretation and regret such distortions but we dare not deviate from our duty in giving what we believe to be a sincere and balanced Christian witness. The C.I. is part of the church and wishes to share the guilt as well as the glory of the Church as the Body of Christ. But we equally believe that in the tragically racially divided Christendom of South Africa, an ecumenical body of concerned Christians such as the C.I. has a vital role to play in pioneering unpopular concepts based on the Gospel, challenging outdated traditions and practices in the church, facing existing prejudices and fears, exposing social injustices and unacceptable attitudes, and in planning for a new society which is more in accordance with the demands of the Kingdom of God than the present one. If our witness, pronouncements and actions are authentically Christian, then we deserve the full and enthusiastic support of all churches. If not, we need the fearless and loving criticism of the church — and not a fearful withdrawal of moral or financial support because we are seen to be too 'radical', 'outspoken' or too little 'diplomatic'.

7. The C.I. and the African Independent Churches

Since 1973, when — at their request — we handed over all financial assets and administrative services of AICA to its Board of Management, we viewed with deep sadness and concern the maladministration of the organisation by certain members of the Board of Management. The handing over of AICA assets was done with the full awareness of the risk involved and the possible misuse of power thus gained, but we knew that refusal at that stage of the upsurge of Black Consciousness would have created a much greater problem of misunderstanding and estrangement.

The action of the C.I. in handing over the administrative and financial responsibilities to AICA did not imply, however, that we had withdrawn our interest and support for the needs of the African Independent Churches. In fact, just the opposite was the case. We knew that the African Independent Churches in general and AICA in particular had to first work through the problematic and agonising experience of discovering and responding to their own strengths as well as their weaknesses as organisation and church community. Only so could they face independently their inner divisions, their struggle for recognition and power with all the pitfalls attendant thereto, their lack of leadership and training, but also the important contribution which they — through God's grace — could make to the Christian faith in Southern Africa.

We are convinced that at the most recent Annual General

Conference of AICA, which was held in Soweto in July 1977, a new leadership has emerged which augurs well for the future of this body. The estrangement between AICA and WAAIC has also been graciously healed, good relationships restored, and we sincerely hope that AICA will be able to make a meaningful contribution to the need for a deeper Christian unity amidst the rich diversity of the African Independent Church scene.

8. The C.I. and its Witness Abroad

The C.I. has for a long time felt the need for a Centre outside South Africa which could become a resource centre for relevant and reliable information to church and other agencies outside South Africa. The decision of Mr Horst Kleinschmidt to leave the country brought this need to fruition resulting in such a C.I. Information Centre being established as an independent unit in Holland, with the support of overseas churches and related agencies. Under the able and untiring guidance of Horst this Centre has become a very important focal point for providing information and guidance to church and other bodies concerned to assist in the search for bringing about peaceful change in South Africa.

When Oshadi Phakathi left the county it was already clear that the workload of Horst was such that it was impossible for him to cope with the growing demands being made upon his services. The committee responsible for administering the Centre and providing the necessary finances therefore decided to appoint Oshadi as successor Horst. Whereas Horst had originally planned to proceed with academic study, he eventually decided to continue as staff member of this Centre and to concentrate more on information and guidance in the social, educational and political spheres.

Although legally and financially all responsibility regarding this Centre rests with the Overseas Committee and two staff members, the C.I. in South Africa is convinced of the vital importance of this work and wishes to give it our full blessing. We also wish to place on record our sincere gratitude to the Dutch authorities for having granted permission to both Horst and Oshadi to be allowed to enter Holland and operate from there.

9. The C.I. and the Authorities

The witness for justice, human dignity and liberation which the Christian Institute continues to give is clearly unacceptable to the powers-that-be. Conclusive proof of this is to be found not only in the banning and detention orders which have been served on staff, the confiscation of passports, the attacks on us by ministers of state and members of parliament, but also the banning of a number of important C.I. publications since April last year — including the banning of five issues of Pro Veritate. In addition a charge has been laid against Zenith Printers (of which company I am a director) for having printed an undesirable publication — referring to the Bulletin of the UBJ (Union of Black Journalists) which was printed on August 10, 1976 and declared an undesirable publication on August 26. Under the Publications Act as amended in 1976 it could now become an offence to print and/or publish any document which, however legal and acceptable at the time of printing and publication, is subsequently declared an undesirable publication. The case will be heard on October 11, 1977.

The above are but the outward signs of an increasing trend of more determined suppression of all legitimate opposition to government policies — thereby inevitably preparing the way for some form of political dictatorship. As pressures against the White regime mount both from within and without, the government is applying more ruthless methods to suppress any opposition which it fears could become effective — thus proving the ideological nature of its philosophy and policy of separate development. It therefore seems inevitable that more repressive measures are going to be applied which create increased Black opposition and resistance — and which in turn will strengthen White unity and White determination to oppose Black demands for sharing of political and economic powers. Thus the vicious spiral would increase until the estrangement between Black and White is

complete and the polarisation irrevocable — all because of the worship of an ideology by the dominant section of the White community, which in the long run will not only create untold harm to the country as a whole, but which could even destroy its authors and protagonists.

10. The C.I. and the Future

The majority of the White community views the future with trepidation and uncertainty or with a stubborn determination to fight to the last man to maintain its present power and privilege. The majority of Blacks, again, look at the future with hope and live in the expectation of a liberation which is certain to come some time in the foreseeable future. Where does the C.I. stand under these circumstances?

As a Christian organisation we share the hope of the oppressed and dispossessed of a better day which is dawning — a day of rejoicing in the liberation which Christ has promised to all those who are suffering under the yoke. Equally we sympathise with the millions of Whites who live in growing uncertainty and fear. We believe that Christ has a vital and significant message for both: He wants to lead the Blacks into a life of greater freedom and fulfilment — and equally He wishes to free the Whites from their fears and their false self-interest which in the long run cannot but destroy them. That is the reason why we can face the future with hope and can call upon all the people of South Africa to join with us in this outlook; that is why we have embarked on a study project dealing with capitalism, socialism and the Christian evaluation of these and related economic systems in our search to obtain greater clarity on the nature of the new society which will emerge and the role which Christians could play in the establishment and development thereof.

As South Africa moves into an increasingly uncertain future, Christ is calling His followers to step into this unknown tomorrow with faith and hope and joy — because this is His world and His people and His Kingdom. Aware as we are that our country is moving into a period of great suffering, anguish and conflict, we move forward in hope and joy in the certain knowledge that where Christ leads He brings us the assurance of the fulfilment of our striving for justice, liberation and recognition of human dignity.

C. F. B. Naudé
Director.

Johannesburg
September 1977.

JESUS THE LIBERATOR

-Drake Tshenkeng

Notes for a discussion.

We cannot talk about the liberatory acts of Christ, before analysing God's saving works as seen in the history of Israel. Our point of departure is Yahweh and His relationship to Israel; taking it from there we see God in the light of a deliverer.

Marcion, a theologian later declared a heretic, once tried to prove that the God of the Old Testament and Christ were not the same, contending that the God of the Old Testament was shown to be cruel, warring, and full of wrath. He brought misery and punished his children many a time, and brought them tears and death.

Marcion goes further by saying that, in Jesus we see a different God. Christ is loving, merciful, kind, and peaceful. Thus Marcion concludes 'How can these two be the same?' It is our task today to show that the God of the Old Testament and the God of the New Testament are but the same God, and one cannot draw a distinction between their liberatory acts.

THE OLD TESTAMENT GOD AND THE OPPRESSED

Exodus Chapter 9:1 says, 'God said to Moses, "Go to Pharaoh and tell him to let my people go". This perhaps is the most important command of God concerning the liberation of a dispossessed nation. Israel was liberated from oppression and her enemies, by the strong hand of the Lord. We see this in the song of Moses and the children of Israel, Exodus 15:1-19, "I will sing unto the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously; the rider and his horse has he thrown into the sea."'

An Old Testament theologian, Anderson, puts it rightly and clearly when he says 'The history of Israel is the Arena of God's activity' and goes on to say that 'Israel knew God for what He did in their history'. This is the central message of the relationship of Israel to her God, that is 'A God who acts'.

God said to Israel 'You shall be my people and I will be your God.' This is how God saw his people, not as individuals but as an entity, a community. For the transgression of one man, the whole family or nation was punished. This is illustrated by the Saul/Jonathan story; Saul commanded that no one should eat before the battle was won. Jonathan his son, who could not resist the temptation of hunger, plucked corn from the fields and ate. Jonathan's weakness cost Israel the battle. Israel lived as a corporate nation: united.

JESUS AND THE PEOPLE

In Christ we see God incarnate and continuing His liberatory acts. In the Noah story God promised never to judge the world with death again. When God judged the world the second time, it was by being born in the person of Jesus Christ: a judgement of love, forgiveness and humility.

John Chapter 1:1 'In the beginning was the word,' reveals that Christ is the Creator we find in Genesis. We see Christ identifying himself with the poor and oppressed from the time of his birth. The location of His birth is not luxurious, but a stable, a ghetto; not a five star hotel, or a Houghton mansion.

The basis of Jesus' work and acts emerges clearly in Luke 4:18; 'The spirit of the Lord is upon me.' Here Christ tells the people that He came to liberate the world from evil, oppression and exploitation.

This message echoes throughout the gospel, a new religion of respect for one another, a new life.

The *Beatitudes* emphasise this message. Addressing himself to

the poor, 'Blessed are you poor when men persecute you for my sake,' Christ does not say it is blessed to be poor. He is not saying that poverty is a virtue, and that it is the will of God. Christ recognises the poverty in the world is caused by men discriminating against other men because of selfishness, greed, and cruelty.

CHRIST AND SHARING (COMMUNALISM)

Luke 3:10 gives us a glimpse of the gospel of sharing, which was propagated by Christ. John the Baptist here says that: 'If a man has two coats, give one to him who does not have.' He is talking to people who rejoice in accumulating riches for themselves only and not caring about others, the rich becoming richer and the poor becoming poorer.

We can learn an important lesson in the familiar story of the feeding of the five thousand, when Jesus fed five thousand with five loaves of bread and two fishes. We tend to look at this only as a miracle and ignore its message. To be able to understand this episode we need to look into the background of Israel.

Prophets were not a new thing to Israel. They had had them for a long time, and it was common practice in Israel that a person who followed a prophet to listen to him, should take food to eat when hungry. Knowing that there would be no time to go home to eat, people took something. I believe that the crowd that listened to Christ followed this practice.

People had food with them, and it was not accidental for the lad to have bread and fishes: he was following the custom. Christ's message here is that of sharing what you have with others. People were clinging to their food, not wanting to give to those who had none. Christ's distribution of this food was encouraging men to conquer their selfishness and greed. Jesus shows a God who believes in sharing, unlike the world today, especially in our country, where the rich are accumulating the wealth for themselves.

THEOLOGY OF LIBERATION

Today white theologians are saying that theology cannot be said to be black or white. If they are saying that God is working with both the oppressor and, on the other hand, God is with the oppressed, they have missed the mark. Christ was shown to be on the side of the underdog.

People have started compartmentalising the gospel into spiritual and social. When one studies the gospels as presented by the evangelists, they do not say: 'This is the social gospel' or 'This is the spiritual gospel'. The evangelists point is clear and blunt: 'This is the gospel of Jesus Christ.'

Black Consciousness is defined as 'An attitude of the mind, a way of life; whose basis is that the black man must reject all value systems which make him a foreigner in his country, and denies him his human dignity'. Black Theology is interpreting or theologising on these experience of the black man. It is said 'theology to be true, must be able to interpret the existential experience of a people.'

God is with the oppressed in their struggle to rid themselves of the Apartheid heresy. Christ's death on the cross and his resurrection, brought this liberation to us, with the help of God, to continue the struggle against oppression. Black Theology is saying to the black man, it is important for you to be a cohesive group determined to rise from the death bed of oppression and exploitation.

In conclusion, theology is saying, Black man God is with you always, identifying Himself with the struggle for liberation. Yours will be a double victory, for you shall also liberate the white man from his greed and fear.

THE CHALLENGE FOR CHRISTIANS IN SOUTH AFRICA TODAY

An address to the Annual General Meeting of the Christian Institute in Johannesburg, September 10, 1977.

-Dr Allan Boesak

I believe that we as Christians must continually look at our situation and must continually assess the challenges that arise for us out of our situation. We must constantly ask ourselves, not merely what our situation is, but also, where we stand with regard to the issues that are matters of life and death to so many of those who live with us in this country. We must not merely look at those things that we deem important for ourselves but we must especially look at those things that are important for those who are really in need; for those who are in the most difficult position in our society. As Christians we must forever ask ourselves whether our witness is being heard, whether our witness is relevant, and whether we, through our life and work, seek to follow in the footsteps of Him in whom we say we believe. As Christians we must analyse our historical situation as coolly and as clearly as we possibly can, for without this historical analysis the remedies we may prescribe for our situation may be completely irrelevant.

Let us therefore look briefly to the South Africa in which we still live today and then move on to look at the challenges that arise for us as Christians who confess Jesus Christ as our Lord.

1. THE SITUATION

What is the situation in South Africa in 1977? The most obvious thing that we can say about this country is that South Africa is still the land of apartheid, in spite of all those wild promises and in spite of all those persuasions on international platforms. In spite of the slogans that 'we are moving away from discrimination', apartheid still rules this country. It is of course not true that changing of the terms, giving other names to the South African reality has in the least changed the reality itself. We may have been moving away from using old terms (which really were far more clear and precise and therefore far more honest) but we are certainly not moving away from discrimination. It is impossible to move away from discrimination and at the same time maintain a system of white superiority. It is impossible to move away from discrimination while maintaining separate development or whatever it may be called. So the blunt fact is that 1977 finds us in the situation where apartheid still calls the tune.

We live now in the aftermath of the so-called riots of 1976 which have left most people in the black community with even more frustrations and even more bitterness than ever before.

We have now seen the depth of black anger at the system through which they are still being subjugated to the white power structure. But we have also seen the extremes to which the white rulers of this country are prepared to go to maintain the status quo. Moreover, many of us are totally convinced that in spite of what we have seen, we have not yet experienced the worst.

In other words, White South Africa will, if necessary, go to still greater lengths in protecting its interest and its way of life. So, understandably, apart from the anger and the frustration there is also a great fear growing in the hearts of many black people. A fear that comes from the fact that we know that there is still so much more that White South Africa can do and will do to protect its way of life, and we also know that they will get away with it. And yet, we cannot change the determination to be free, to gain recognition of our human dignity that is now in our hearts.

Apart from all this, there is also a certain confusion that the government still succeeds in creating in the black community. Because it has the power and because it controls people in this country and because it controls the media, etc., the White Government is able to make some people believe that they may have 'good intentions' with blacks in this country. They have the

power to devise all sorts of political schemes and force them onto the black community. And because some black people are confused they tend to accept the schemes of the government, they tend to believe the empty promises. In turn these blacks not only add to the confusion that already exists but they also threaten any unity and solidarity which in our situation are always extremely fragile.

On top of all of this, we know that the government has not yet reached that level where the true causes of black unrest and bitterness and white fear have been recognised and tackled. Even at this late stage the government is still not prepared to put its own policies under the critical searchlight of reality. Rather it points a selfrighteous accusing finger at everybody and anything else in our society.

The fear of black people has its counter-part in the white community. Where as many blacks fear the brutal force of white power, white people fear black retaliation. They are afraid because they are not sure of themselves anymore. Nor do they find any real security in the policies of their government or in the future. They fear for their survival. They fear the future, for they know not what will happen, while black people fear the present white power structure.

Whites in general have a great fear of what may come tomorrow and it is sad but true that so many government officials capitalize shamelessly on this fear in the white community, that we still find the tendency to create a total war psychosis in the country, that the cleverness of the propaganda is both astounding and pathetic, and that not only are people bludgeoned in official political speeches, but the government knows how to make use of the 'subtle persuasions'. On the radio and on television, (not so much in documentary programmes, but in stories, and so-called entertainment) people are being steadily brainwashed and an atmosphere is being created in which it will soon be totally impossible for people to face up to the realities in our South African situation. This includes the realities vis-a-vis our position in Southern Africa as a whole. In the midst of all of this, Christians, I find, are rather confused. They are not sure exactly where they are historically and they are certainly not sure precisely what to do.

2. THE CHALLENGE

This confusion in Christian circles is not only the result of the events of the last few years. It is also the result of an almost historical uncertainty as to where Christians ought to stand with regard to all these issues. Of course the church is now being confronted more than ever before and in times of crisis like 1976, churches have reacted. The point is that Christians know that it is not enough to be able to react in the midst of a crisis but that the situation is such that Christians should always be on the alert so that they are not caught on the wrong foot by historical events.

The challenge for us is to be truly and authentically part of the struggle for liberation and justice in this country. The challenge for the church is to be meaningfully involved.

The challenge is to be true to its calling and to its Christ. The challenge is not to be afraid to do what God has done through history for the salvation of His children. He is the God of the Exodus who through all of history never hesitated to take sides, the side of those who were exploited and oppressed and whose humanity has been threatened.

The challenge for the church is not to be neutral, for neutrality is the worst kind of partisanship there is. This kind of neutrality means taking the side of the oppressor without accepting responsibility for it. It is not only bad politics, it is also the worst

kind of Christianity there is. For the Church, to be truly the church means to become part of the suffering community. I am afraid that there is nothing that one can do about that: The integrity of the church and of Christians lies in the willingness to suffer for that which is right. Let us look at this challenge more closely.

2.1. THE CHALLENGE TO BE RELEVANT

There has always been the danger for Christians to live for themselves alone. Christians have always had this marvellous capability to isolate themselves completely from reality and they have been ingenious in finding ways to make that kind of escapism look as if it was precisely the right thing to do. The challenge for Christians is to be relevant. That means to speak and to live in such a way that Jesus Christ becomes a reality for people in the world.

To be relevant means to know that one has to live with one's faith in Jesus Christ as Lord *in the world*. It means to recognize that one is part of the society, part of the world in which one lives and that one has a responsibility to make this world a place to live in. The challenge for Christians is to make human life truly human in the world. To be relevant means to be sensitive to the needs of others.

It also means to be sensitive to the will of God for our lives. I firmly believe that faith in Jesus Christ does not make a Christian an emigrant out of history, but places him squarely in the midst of history where he tries to find, and follow, the footsteps of his Lord.

2.2 THE CHALLENGE TO BE FAITHFUL TO THE TRUTH

Another challenge that I want to discern is the challenge to be faithful to the truth. It is the task of Christians to unmask the lies, the halftruths and the myths that are employed to destroy humanity. We must always remember that no system of oppression can exist without myths, lies, halftruths and deception. In order to oppress a person one must first come to believe that there is reason that one is better than the other. One must first eliminate the other's humanity, his dignity. One must first destroy the image of God in the other and in order to do that the oppressive systems create and disseminate the lies and the myths and the halftruths, until they are accepted as truth, thus we have seen right through history **the myths that have been disseminated about the inferiority of black people**, based either on so-called scientific data, or even on arguments taken from the Bible. Nowadays, this process has become much more subtle although one can still find evidence of this first fact that I have given.

Let us take an example. In February 1973 hundreds of black children were separated from their parents in the Johannesburg area and sent to homelands because the parents by having their children with them were contravening some or other apartheid law. The reporter of the Rand Daily Mail who covered this story asked the official of BAAB who was in charge of this sordid operation, a Mr Koen Kotze, why they were doing it. Mr Kotze replied that the reporter did not understand. 'You see', he said, 'these people are not like us. These women do not mind at all that their children are taken away. In fact, they prefer it.' (See Pro Veritate, February 1973).

Not so long ago, we heard an argument along the same lines when Mr Frikkie Botha, another official of BAAB, said that the government was not breaking up families in demolishing squatter homes at Modderdam, because the African does not value family life in the same way as White, Western Christians. This merely serves to illustrate the point.

On the whole, however, as I have said, the argumentation is now much more subtle. So, instead of the myth of the inferiority of blacks, we find **the myth of change**. People are trying to tell us that things are changing in South Africa; that really we are now on our way to a completely new dispensation. A very recent and important example of this is this new constitutional plan of the government. Much has been said about this and much more will still be said. The reasons why this plan has been rejected by so-called coloured leaders are also well-known.

I support those who reject this plan. There is no reason whatsoever for black people to accept a plan devised by a white

government without their having been consulted and without there being one single thread of evidence that we could trust this government. The exclusion of urban African people is very high on my list and it is not because I fear retaliation by African people, as some white political commentators seem to suggest, but because it makes plain political nonsense to exclude eight or nine million people who have their permanent political home in the Republic of South Africa.

Furthermore, I will reiterate what I have said before. Inasmuch, as so-called coloured people consider themselves a part of the black community of South Africa, they must refuse to accept rights and privileges that are not inclusive of all black people in this country. I must make myself clear on this point.

A year ago, seventeen so-called 'coloured' ministers of the Dutch Reformed Church made a statement in which they said the following:

'... In all earnestness we call upon them to accept that the Black community is one inseparable entity, that as one community they are deprived of all fundamental rights.

As one community they are called to struggle for the recognition of their God-given humanity.

We refuse to accept privileges that are not given to the rest of the Black community and we refuse to use any longer by the divide and rule politics of the White government.'

I still firmly believe this. I firmly believe that real change in South Africa will only become a reality when the human dignity and therefore the right to participate in decision-making on *all* levels of *all* people is recognized.

There is another myth that I want to talk about. That is **the myth of 'agitators'**. We are heartily sick and tired of people who keep telling us that there is 'a white person or a group of whites behind the blacks'. We do not need any white person to tell us what it means to be black in South Africa. Also, people keep telling us that the real power behind black people's anger and their determination to be free is communism. Not for one single moment do I believe communism to be our saviour in this situation, and it is nonsense to label as communistic the rightful demand for human dignity and freedom. Christians can do a lot to correct these false impressions that are continually disseminated by government propaganda. Christians should be wide awake to counter these false notions that still linger around.

Another dangerous myth that I want to mention is **the myth of time**. There are many people who say to the blacks and their allies in the white community; 'Don't be so hasty, you can see for yourselves that things are changing. South Africa is on the move. We are going to give black people their rightful place - in time. Just give us time and things will work themselves out.' There must be an answer to the myth of time and the answer lies in the fact that black people know better than any one the depth of anger and despair within themselves. They know that in fact there is not much time left.

They also know that the oppressor — always — has time. He can afford to stall. But there is another reason why we should not accept the myth of time and many years ago this was pointed out, brilliantly by Martin Luther King. 'Time', he told us, 'is neutral. It can be used either constructively or destructively.' As it was then, so it is now: The forces of evil geared to negative ends, are using time much more constructively than the forces of goodwill, and I repeat what Martin Luther King said and paraphrase it for our situation. I am absolutely convinced that we will repent in this generation, not merely for the vitriolic words and the violent actions of the bad people who will kill children to preserve their privileged positions in their grossly unjust society, but we shall repent also for the appalling silence and indifference of the good people who sit around saying: 'Wait on time'.

The challenge for Christians is to work ceaselessly for those changes that are so necessary in our society. The challenge is also to prepare people for those changes that must inevitably come. Without the dedication and the hard work of men and women who are convinced about God's truth for our society, time itself will

become an ally of the primitive forces of social stagnation.

Another myth that whites enjoy throwing around, is the myth that black people are confused: They don't really know what want. Don't be deceived. Black people *know* what they want. The government may be able to confuse the issue with their propaganda and with those blacks who allow themselves to be bought and used, but essentially blacks know what they want. They want freedom, they want human dignity, they want power, they want a share in the highest decision-making processes of this land. In short, they want the vote; *all* of them want the vote and white people, including the government and the opposition, should be clear about this.

WHAT CAN WE DO?

If these are the challenges, is there something Christians can do? I believe there is.

1. The church, Christians must see to it that the truth of our situation is known to all of us in South Africa and to the world.
2. Christians should proclaim day in and day out the Lordship of Jesus Christ for our lives and for our society.
3. They should remind the official church of its responsibility with regard to change in our society, with regard to the issues of liberation, justice and reconciliation. They should remind the

church of its pastoral responsibility to work so that people be prepared not only for the changes that must come, but prepare them also to participate in the processes of change.

4. Christians must take sides and in this struggle they must unequivocally side with the oppressed. The Church and Christians really cannot be a 'middle-group'. The integrity and the authenticity of Christians lie in their ability, in this hour, to side fearlessly with those who have no helper, with those who have no voice — and in their willingness to suffer with those who suffer. Christian solidarity means also, among other things, a redistribution of the pain.
5. Christians must begin with themselves and live a life of commitment, challenge their own life style and that of their churches; create and participate in alternatives for our present way of life.
6. And lastly, Christians should never stop believing that in doing this they are doing what is right and they must keep on until a better society is realized.

In all of this it is a good and humbling thing to know that not only do people depend on us, but that the Lord — as we are His only instruments on earth — is depending upon us.

SOCIALISM AND SIN

Socialists believe that there is a fundamental moral distinction to be drawn between a system that encourages people to be greedy and one that instead encourages them to acquire only what they truly need.

—Bruce Douglass

Dr Douglass is assistant professor of government at Georgetown University, Washington, D.C.

Much of the political comment coming from theologians these days has a socialist flavor. I was surprised, therefore, to find a theologian arguing the case for capitalism in the editorial pages of the *Washington Post* ('A Closet Capitalist Confesses,' March 14, 1976). Especially was it surprising to find Michael Novak in this role, for in a previous incarnation he was one of the early proponents of a theology for radical politics. Not only does Novak admit to being a 'closet capitalist' (acknowledging the truth of Michael Harrington's charge about liberals in the United States), but he also sets forth elements of a theological argument for the superiority of capitalism over socialism.

Making the World Free for Sinners

Actually Novak makes two cases — one political, the other theological. The former calls into service two time-tested claims of capitalism's defenders: (1) that the free market yields greater efficiency and productivity than socialist economies, and (2) that it results in greater freedom. Novak raises the specter of a whole economy run with the well-known efficiency of the U.S. Postal Service, and then attributes to capitalism most of the world's productivity:

Millions are alive, and living longer, because of medicine developed under capitalism. Without our enormous psychic energy, productivity and inventions, oil would still be lying under Saudi Arabia, undiscovered, unpumped and useless. Coffee, bananas, tin, sugar and other items of trade would have no markets. Capitalism has made the world rich, inventing riches other populations didn't know they had. And yielding sinful pleasures for the millions.

The only way socialism can possibly work at all, we are told, is by being authoritarian. Lacking the incentive of greed, people have to be coerced into producing. At the same time great power is

concentrated in the hands of politicians, bureaucrats and experts. They make the momentous decisions that determine the fate of millions. The result is a command society — a result which, Novak suggests, no self-respecting liberal would want. Democratic socialists are hard put to cite an example, he notes, of a model socialist society. Everywhere we look — China, Cuba, Tanzania, eastern Europe — socialism means the same thing: the domination of society by huge, ponderous government bureaucracies.

Why is this the case? The theological part of Novak's analysis provides the answer: capitalism is more congruent with human nature — i.e., with humanity's sinful nature. It accepts selfishness as a fact of life; it doesn't require any illusions about the innate goodness of people. 'God's heart may have been socialist; his design was capitalist as hell.' Given the freedom to sin, human beings have of course taken abundant advantage of the opportunity, and the only way to create a productive and free society is to cater to selfishness. Socialism, presuming goodness, 'never works,' whereas capitalism, building upon greed, 'is nearly always a smashing success.'

Sin thus accounts for the greater productivity of capitalism; it also accounts for the greater freedom it allows. Capitalism 'makes the world free for sinners'; it tolerates people's doing what they will. Socialism, dedicated to the cultivation of benevolence, can't leave people alone. Human beings have to be made over; sin has to be eliminated. All the while, of course, socialists place great faith in the goodness and wisdom of the politicians and social planners.

In short, capitalism is realistic while socialism is naïve. For this reason, the future belongs to capitalism. A social system built on illusion simply cannot succeed — not in the long run.

But such arguments make little headway with socialists, says Novak, because, contrary to appearances, socialism is not really a practical political proposal at all. It is a faith, a secular religion,

'the residue of Judaeo-Christian faith' minus the theistic component and minus the idea of sin. It is a belief that paradise can be brought to earth here and now by human action. In the face of such a belief, practical considerations are 'beside the point.'

A Fixation with Profits

When I first read this 'confession,' I suspected that Novak was putting us on — that it was all tongue-in-cheek. The mid-1970s are not, after all, the most auspicious time for a spirited defense of capitalism. Devaluations, unemployment, inflation, problems with OPEC — the catalogue of serious economic problems suffered by capitalist societies in the past few years does not inspire confidence. The more I thought about it, however, the more I concluded that he was serious and the more I felt that his argument called for a reply.

At the risk of being dismissed as a naïve visionary who can't face up to reality, I want to suggest that the choice between capitalism and socialism is considerably more complex than Novak would have *Washington Post* readers believe. I have come to take his argument seriously, both because there is some truth in what he says and because he articulates sentiments widely held in this country. The problem is that his view expresses only half the truth. He conveniently overlooks certain other considerations favorable to socialism; when these considerations are given their due, even some practical people unafflicted by the need for a secular religion will find the alleged superiority of capitalism something less than obvious.

The socialist case against capitalism has never, to my knowledge, challenged the productivity of the free market. That has not been the issue. There is no better hymn of praise, after all, to the achievements of capitalism than the Communist Manifesto. The socialist critique has been based on other grounds — specifically, the use of the productive resources which capitalism generates. Because of the fixation with profits, capitalist use of this productivity necessarily is far less rational and humane than it could be.

Examples abound, but to my mind the most graphic case in point is the American automobile industry. Year after year, decade after decade, we witness the spectacle of Detroit's efforts to sell ever-increasing numbers of cars designed for quick obsolescence, though it has been clear for some time now that considerations of both space and air quality dictate that we move toward some alternative transportation system. Both transportation and ecology experts tell us that we cannot go on indefinitely multiplying the number of cars on our streets and highways without serious costs to our physical and psychological well-being. Yet this is precisely what the health of the economy is said to require.

Food production offers other illustrations. Chemical additives in our food, possibly harmful, are justified as a convenience to the producer and seller. Short of unequivocal prohibition by the government (which the industry strongly resists), these additives continue to be used because they enhance the appeal and durability of food products. The meat looks pinker; the baked goods last longer on the shelves — even if they actually may be less healthful! Then there is the irony of underproduction. For many years now the federal government has been paying farmers *not* to produce foodstuffs, while millions, in this country and abroad, go hungry. The rationale, once again, is economic necessity: prices and profits must be maintained at a level sufficient to stimulate production.

The energy crisis is another case in point. Now that there are no lines at the gas pumps and the scare has faded, consumers are once again being encouraged to use energy in all kinds of ways, many of them patently frivolous. The crisis is hardly over, of course, but the imperatives of the market require that we stop worrying about energy conservation.

Underlying the whole system is, of course, a consumption ethic, which John Kenneth Galbraith and others have analyzed. Vast sums of money and resources are invested in the creation, mainly through the mass media, of 'needs' which otherwise would not exist. To make the system go, to keep sales and profits moving, people

must be encouraged not to acquire only what they sensibly need but, in the words of the beer commercial, to 'grab for all they can get.' Whether these acquisitions will really benefit them and whether this style of consumption represents the best use of available resources are questions not seriously considered.

'Public Penury'

The other side of the story is what David Broder aptly characterizes as 'public penury.' Vital public services, which do not easily lend themselves to profit-making, are underfunded and inadequately developed: public transportation, health care, education, criminal justice. Alongside Novak's picture of the abundance which capitalism produces there needs to be placed another equally significant image — that of decaying, broken-down bus and railway systems; underpaid teachers, policemen, firemen and social workers; overcrowded and understaffed public hospitals; jails and rehabilitation facilities extended far beyond their reasonable capacities. In America at least, capitalism has resulted in a situation in which, as Broder has written (in *The Party's Over*), 'every single essential service we depend on some public agency to provide is seriously underfinanced.'

The case for socialism derives from the irrationality of this state of affairs. Would it not be a more intelligent use of resources, asks the socialist, to focus our productive capabilities on those things that are conducive to human well-being? Would it not be more rational (and humane) to invest more of our resources in such things as health care and education and less in providing 17 brands of breakfast cereal or dream cars with Moroccan leather upholstery? Would it not be more intelligent to seek to liberate ourselves from the tyranny of profits? Would it not be preferable to develop and utilize our productive capacities on the basis of a rational plan rather than the whims of investors? Would it not be more intelligent, in short, to try to transcend the *anarchy* of capitalism?

To speak of planning, of course, raises the other issue on which Novak makes his case for capitalism. For many people, any mention of social planning suggests dictatorship, and socialism becomes therefore almost by definition a recipe for tyranny. I have no intention of making light of this problem. It is the central problem of socialism today. But the notion that socialism need be tyrannical can be dismissed as an exaggeration. Democratic socialism as it has been practised in western Europe and elsewhere demonstrates clearly that this is not the case. Democratic socialist regimes have tended, however, either to be coalition governments or to be short-lived, and they have had considerable difficulty with the problem of reconciling parliamentary, bureaucratic and managerial authority. Democratic socialism still remains, therefore, much more a vision than a demonstrated possibility.

The Problem of Freedom

But to admit that freedom is a problem for socialists is one thing, and to say that capitalism solves the problem of freedom is quite another. It all depends, of course, on how you define the term. Novak defines it in negative terms — freedom means being left alone, being uncoerced by other people. That is an important part of freedom, no doubt; in this respect it must be admitted that the liberties of bourgeois capitalist society are no small achievement, and that they are not to be casually forsaken.

There remains, however, another side to the story, which people who take Novak's line characteristically neglect. Freedom has a positive aspect as well. The free person is not only free of external coercion but also has the ability to control the direction of his or her life and to develop his or her potential. In this respect I would argue that the difference which capitalism makes has been greatly exaggerated by its proponents. Perhaps in the 18th or early 19th century the simplicities of the free market made it possible for anybody with gumption to become a 'rugged individualist' and shape his or her own destiny. But we are far removed from that era today. We are now confronted with a form of capitalism which concentrates economic power in vast, impersonal institutions, with

the result that decisions vitally affecting the livelihood of average citizens are made in places far removed from their capacity to have any influence at all. What kinds of jobs will be available, where they will be available, how much salary they will provide, what products will be sold, how much they will sell for — these matters are settled for most of us by people who remain faceless.

It is therefore a misleading half-truth to say, as Novak does, that capitalism 'allows human beings to do pretty much what they will.' It all depends on what you choose. If you opt for selling insurance or making automobiles or fixing plumbing, the system will probably find a place for you. It will also tolerate your whim if you choose to 'drop out' in a commune somewhere. But if you choose to do something which does not lead to profits and which requires substantial financial support, your chances of being frustrated are fairly high. If you choose, for example, to be an educator or a social worker or an artist, realism demands that you prepare for the possibility that a shrunken job market or the impossibility of making a decent living will force you to abandon your career aspirations in favor of something more 'practical.'

Restricted Choices

The same holds true for consumption. Strictly speaking, we are not forced to buy anything. And if we happen to like what is offered in the marketplace, then indeed capitalism does allow us to do what we wish. But what if we do not like what is being offered? What if, for example, an individual does not want to pay the price being asked for automobiles? What if he thinks the price unnecessarily high and the product undesirable in important respects? He needs transportation, and public transportation in his particular area is either inadequate or nonexistent. Such a person, I would submit, has his freedom of choice restricted *precisely because of the way the free market operates*. He will probably end up buying one of Detroit's latest models not because he really wants to but rather because it represents the only available practical answer to his needs.

The same argument applies to the life and medical insurance premiums people pay because there is no cheaper, more efficient public program for dealing with the costs of medical care and old-age security. It also applies to our food, much of which comes to us in the supermarkets overpriced and laced with chemicals of dubious value. Theoretically it is possible to grow one's own crops and bake one's own bread, but as a *practical* matter that is not a serious possibility for most people. So they end up 'choosing' products about which they have serious reservations. Short of transforming their whole way of life, they are stuck with what A&P and Safeway make available — and at the prices A&P and Safeway charge.

I do not mean to imply that things will be radically different under socialism. Only anarchism makes sense as a formula for the full restoration of positive freedom, and anarchism is incompatible with industrial society. If we are going to live in an industrialized world, with its economic complexity and population density, a substantial diminution of the freedom of the individual (as compared with simpler times) is probably inevitable. Concentrated economic and political power is going to be a fact of life, regardless of the economic arrangements under which we live.

Socialists have argued that it makes a considerable difference where this concentration occurs. They contend that freedom is enhanced when economic power is vested in public rather than private hands because the people who wield that power are made publicly accountable. As R. H. Tawney, a British socialist of an earlier generation, wrote: 'It is the condition of economic freedom that men should not be ruled by an authority which they cannot control' (*The Acquisitive Society*). The virtue of socialism, it is argued, is that it does away with such irresponsible authority, and forces those who make economic policy to appeal to the electorate and to justify their decisions in terms of the public good. Through political action, in turn, there is something average citizens can do about their fate. No longer need they be the victims of faceless, powerful people over whom they have no control.

Subscribe to this argument, but it can be confidently asserted

only insofar as socialism is democratic. And by 'democratic' I mean liberal democracy — i.e., a multiparty system, regular competitive elections, and civil liberties. Without these, there is no reliable check on the policies laid down by government officials, and there is a strong likelihood that the ruling elite will become just as exploitative as any capitalist (perhaps even more so).

Sinfulness and Justice

The other element in the case for socialism is, of course, justice. Down through the socialist tradition, the argument repeatedly has been made that capitalism results in gross inequities, and that socialism can do away with such foolishness. Under socialism no one goes hungry; everyone who is able works; those who work receive benefits commensurate with their social contribution; and there are not the radical disparities in wealth and opportunities characteristic of capitalism.

Curiously, Novak makes no mention of the issue of justice. But it is of critical importance to the choice between capitalism and socialism, and it is directly relevant to what he has to say about sin.

I have no quarrel with an emphasis on sin per se. The inevitability of selfishness in political and economic affairs is something which I have taken for granted ever since reading Reinhold Niebuhr. Niebuhr's arguments are thoroughly persuasive that sin is simply a fact of the human condition which no amount of education, preaching or social engineering will eliminate. I take this to be one of the principal contributions which Christian thought has to offer in the realm of social and political theory.

For Niebuhr, however, an emphasis on sin was not the whole story of human nature. It was equally important to recognize humanity's capacity for justice. If I read Niebuhr correctly, the two are roughly equal in their strength and influence in human affairs. It is for this reason that Niebuhr could be moderately optimistic about the course of history and make comparatively high demands on social institutions (unlike, e.g., St. Augustine).

The neglect of the issue of justice is what makes Novak's case as plausible as it is. There is no question that capitalism builds upon and in fact encourages selfishness; a capitalist environment naturally inclines us to believe that people *must* be addicted to a greedy, competitive individualism. But the socialist argument is that a different environment will elicit a significantly different kind of behavior.

Socialism's Moral Appeal

'Different,' I emphasize, but not sinless. There are socialists, of course, who harbor fantasies about completely rooting out selfishness. But they hardly represent the whole of the socialist tradition, and there is no reason to believe that the socialist idea requires such a belief. Many socialists have been and continue to be more modest and pragmatic. They identify socialism not with heaven on earth but simply with a better, morally superior way of life. They have no intention of remaking the soul of humanity — only of harnessing human egoism and cultivating a better human nature. They know that selfishness is a given, but they also know that its force and consequences vary enormously with the context. They believe that there is a fundamental moral distinction to be drawn between a system that encourages people to be greedy and one that instead encourages them to acquire only what they truly need.

For much the same reasons, it is simply fallacious, I think, to say that socialism *must* take the form of a secular religion. Socialism no more than capitalism need be a substitute for theistic religion, and it is worth noting that capitalist ideology, for all its alleged 'realism,' just as easily succumbs to this danger. (For every socialist who believes that socialism is The Answer to the problems of the human condition, there are at least as many capitalist 'true believers,' the preponderance located in the business world.) Admittedly, socialism does make a strong moral appeal, and in the past this appeal has often been associated with a heavy dose of secularism. But to suggest that this is a necessary connection

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