

THE CRISIS OF VIOLENCE FOR CHRISTIANS

WHERE DOES THE CHURCH STAND ON THE QUESTION OF VIOLENCE?

A consultation organised by the Zululand Council of Churches in Durban in August unwittingly highlighted hostilities within the Christian "brotherhood" in SA and the extent to which political "sides" have already been taken. Non-church organisations were invited to participate including representatives of Inkatha and the KwaZulu Government. The Vicar-General of the Catholic Archdiocese of Durban, Monsignor Paul Nadal, walked out of the consultation because of the "non-church" bodies present. He said he was told it would be a meeting of church leaders and he was not prepared to remain and participate in the presence of the invited guests.

and the Minister of Welfare and Pensions, Mr S Sithebe. They presented a document to the consultation prepared by the Chief Minister of KwaZulu and President of Inkatha, Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi. Chief Buthelezi said there was a situation in South Africa in which, in the pursuit of justice, earnest and prayerful Christian endeavour clashed with earnest and prayerful Christian endeavour. There was a great deal of Christian sincerity on both sides on the many issues which deeply divided one South African from another. Christians in South Africa were "crying out" for reconciliation of one Christian to another and the role of Church leaders needed to be examined

ciently aware of the fact that "we have a crisis of leadership amongst Anglicans . . ." The questions he could ask about Anglicans were questions with a very much wider relevance. "The higher one's office is, the more one has to forfeit the right of individual expression of opinion and the more entitled other people are to regard one's utterances as official statements," he said. "When therefore I refer to Bishop Desmond Tutu in the context of a crisis of Anglican leadership, please bear this in mind." Bishop (now Archbishop) Tutu went beyond the main body of Anglican opinion both at the laity level and at the clergy level in many of his utterances.

WHY DOESN'T THE CHURCH CONDEMN THE ANC BECAUSE IT KILLS PEOPLE AND URGES SOUTH AFRICANS TO CREATE A SITUATION OF CIVIL WAR?

The consultation was delayed by a discussion regarding the invited guests and it was finally decided that those who had been invited would be allowed to attend. Monsignor Nadal subsequently "disassociated" himself from proceedings. Others represented (following the departure of Monsignor Nadal) included the Anglican, Methodist, and United Congregational churches. A brief statement following the consultation said it had been "a very useful consultation and complex issues were dealt with." Inkatha and KwaZulu were represented by the Minister of Health, Dr F T Mdlalose, the National Organiser of Inkatha,

frequently and earnestly. "Where Church leaders become part of the problems of division, there is a need to sit down together and to ask some very fundamental questions," Chief Buthelezi said. There was a leadership crisis in the Church which had not been properly recognised. "It is more than a crisis in which it can be said that the Church has not yet found the answers and there are bound to be divergent opinions about what the Church should be doing . . ." Because he was an Anglican, Chief Buthelezi said he believed it was only right for him to question whether Anglican Church leaders were suffi-

"Bishop Tutu has now finally called for punitive mandatory sanctions against South Africa. He has been hinting at what his position actually is for a long time . . . The Anglican Bishop of Natal, the Rt. Rev Michael Nuttall, says that the Anglican Church has not called for economic sanctions against South Africa and that Bishop Tutu has called for sanctions in his personal capacity . . . "I do not presume to put words in Bishop Nuttall's mouth, but I think I would be correct in making the assumption that Bishop Tutu is also expressing personal opinions when he talks about the question of violence. "But whether or not Bishop

HAS THE CHURCH BEEN INTIMIDATED BY VIOLENCE?



"... We will make a mockery of Christian fellowship if we do not have the courage to table the realities around us, put a name to them and talk about them. The crisis of leadership in South African Christian Churches gives licence and latitude to individual radicalism in the name of the Church. Such individuals gather in organisations like the South African Council of Churches and present their thinking to the world as consensus South African Christian thinking . . ."

"Are we really moving towards that kind of quagmire of blood in which there are only accusations and counter-accusations about who are the villains and who are the saints?"

Chief Minister M G Buthelezi

Nuttall and other Anglican Bishops agree that Bishop Tutu is going far ahead of the Anglican Church when he talks on the question of violence, and whether or not they individually would agree with him, there must be agreement that Bishop Tutu adopts positions in this regard which the Anglican Church itself has not adopted.

"Given the circumstances which actually prevail in South Africa, Bishop Tutu's pronouncements on violence lend respectability to revolutionary violence."

It was not only in his pronouncements that Bishop Tutu separates himself from positions which the Anglican Church had in fact adopted. He also separated himself from the Anglican Church by some of his actions.

In his address during his enthronement ceremony when he became Bishop of Johannesburg he said: "We will not have peace until we have justice and how can we have that without the participation of

the premier black liberation group, the ANC."

Chief Buthelezi said that in action Bishop Tutu again and again identified with the ANC Mission in Exile and in South Africa he became a party politician when he accepted nomination as a patron of the United Democratic Front. The Anglican Church, as a Church, recognised that there was gross injustice in South Africa. It recognised the right of black individuals to struggle for their liberation from this injustice. The Anglican Church recognised the hideousness of apartheid. The Anglican Church had not blessed the ANC as the premier liberation organisation and it had not expressed the view that the United Democratic Front represented the Church's best interests here on the ground in the country's struggle for liberation.

"Bishop Tutu, however, talks and behaves as though this was the case, not only in South Africa but throughout the world.

"We do have a crisis of leadership in the Anglican Church, no matter how frequently Bishops claim that Bishop Tutu speaks in his personal capacity."

The Anglican Church had not called for bringing about the downfall of the Government by revolutionary means. It had not pronounced that all non-violent means of bringing about really radical change could not work. "We are not yet fighting a just war in this country," Chief Buthelezi continued. "The Anglican Church does not support the Kairos document's rationale that this is now the case. The Harare Declaration does not sum up the position of the Anglican Church in South Africa.

"When Bishop Tutu declares himself personally against violence but adds that the time has come in South Africa for everybody to oppose apartheid, whether or not they have opted for violence, he ranks violence as important as non-violence in the pursuit of justice . . ."



THE CRISIS OF VIOLENCE

It was time for concerned Christians to table the realities around them and to put a name to them and to talk about them. The crisis of leadership in South African Christian Churches gave licence and latitude to individual radicalism in the name of the Church. Such individuals gathered in organisations like the South

African Council of Churches and presented their thinking to the world as consensus South African Christian thinking. "The SACC has quite definitely adopted a Party political attitude to me and to Inkatha and it most definitely has adopted an attitude of support of the United Democratic Front and the ANC Mission in Exile.

ARE OUR BISHOPS MORE CONCERNED ABOUT BEING SEEN TO BE ALIENATED BY SOME BLACK FACTIONS THAN THEY ARE ABOUT THE DICTATES OF THEIR HOLY CALLING?

This is simple fact. "Diakonia is hostile to Inkatha and it is hostile to me, and it is simple fact that the hostility of the SACC and Diakonia to what I am doing is Party political motivated." Chief Buthelezi said he knew of no SACC document which set out the reasons for why its leading office bearers adopted a pro-ANC, pro-UDF stance and an anti-Inkatha stance. "It is a simple fact that the SACC supports its office bearers and personnel in virulent anti-Inkatha propaganda. It is fact that Diakonia houses individuals who do the same. Neither Anglicans nor Catholics in their capacities as Church men and Church women have come to consensus that the attacks on Inkatha and my leadership are justifiable and that Church leaders in the SACC and Diakonia are correct in their support for the



The ANC Mission in Exile, in numerous broadcasts over the air by Radio Freedom, urges South Africans to create a situation of civil war.

The ANC has placed bombs in shopping malls, in dustbins at bus stops, at hotels, on country roads and in cars in busy streets outside city buildings. If we are fighting a "just war", as Bishop Tutu hints to be the case, it is not time our Bishops and Archbishops sought consensus on their Churches that this is the case?

Can a "just war" be declared by holy default?

Is it not tragically inadequate for some Bishops and clergy to lament all violence when confronted with the ANC Mission in Exile's

organised attempts to spread violence?

Why is the ANC not attacked as the ANC because it is doing so many of the things which in terms of the Bishops' own statements are indefensible? Has the Church now been intimidated by violence?

Are our Bishops now more concerned about being seen to be alienated from some black factions than they are by the dictates of their holy calling? Will we be able to establish a just government in this country by violence?

Is it not time that the Church went beyond its statements of understanding why we have got violence in South Africa and sought consensus about why it should condemn that which it understands?

WHAT IS IT IN INKATHA'S AIMS AND OBJECTIVES THAT THE CHURCH SHOULD CONDEMN?

ANC and the UDF."

Chief Buthelezi then discussed the appalling spiral of black-on-black violence in South Africa.

"AZAPO members have killed UDF members and UDF members have killed AZAPO members. AZAPO and UDF members have killed Inkatha members and UDF members have died at the hands of Inkatha members. These are the facts of life.

"I deplore this internecine black conflict and I state very simply that Inkatha is in fact

committed to non-violent tactics and strategies. We are committed to black unity but amidst violence which has spread throughout South Africa, no leader can ensure that every member of his or her organisation never resorts to violence.

"There really is in Inkatha a deep dismay amongst its members that some of them have been hacked to pieces and burnt alive because of their commitment to Inkatha's aims and objectives and tactics and strategies.

"There is among some members of Inkatha an appalling realisation that everything they stand for will be annihilated by acts of brutal violence on the part of other blacks if they do not defend their rights to believe what they believe.

"Are we really moving towards that kind of quagmire of blood in which there are only accusations and counter-accusations about who are the villains and who are the saints?

"Is there no way in which Church leaders can now address the hideousness of political slayings in this country. Prominent Churchmen sadly fan the flames of black-on-black confrontation and actually indirectly encourage black to kill black."

Chief Buthelezi asked: "Where does the Church stand on the question of violence?"

WHY IS IT THAT ARCHBISHOP HURLEY, BISHOP TUTU, AND THE SOUTH AFRICAN COUNCIL OF CHURCHES SHOULD PARTICIPATE IN ANTI-INKATHA ACTION!