

'SOCIAL CHANGE'

Christian Action

Sponsored by:

*Christian Institute and the S.A. Council of Churches,
P.O. Box 31134, Braamfontein, Transvaal.*

SPRO-CAS 1: Study Project on Christianity in Apartheid Society 1969-71

SPRO-CAS 2: Special Project for Christian Action in Society 1972-73

1. Basic Principles and Aims

(i) Spro-cas 2 will seek to make a positive contribution to the creation of a better social order in South Africa, one based on Christian values such as justice, freedom and equality of opportunity.

(ii) The study commissions of Spro-cas 1 (the Study Project on Christianity in Apartheid Society) have analysed our society and shown where change is both feasible and most urgently needed. In seeking change in our society, we shall

- (a) implement as far as possible those immediately practicable recommendations for change made by the six Spro-cas study commissions, and
- (b) concentrate all available resources on the most effective areas in which work can be undertaken to bring about movement towards a more Christian society.

2. Basic Approach

We recognise that the present South African society is deeply divided, and this implies that in seeking to bring about change our resources need to be used in a dual thrust into both the black and white communities. Spro-cas 2 will thus aim to develop programmes relevant to the differing needs of black and white that will facilitate the achievement of a better social order in South Africa. (See amplification under (7) Programmes).

3. Time Scale

Spro-cas 2 is initially regarded as a two-year project, starting 1 January 1972, with the position to be reviewed in mid-1973.

4. Context

(i) In 1968 the Theological Commission of the South African Council of Churches published their Message to the People of South Africa, a theological critique of apartheid. The Study Project on Christianity in Apartheid Society (Spro-cas 1) was established to study the implications of the Message for our national life. The six Spro-cas study commissions (economics, education, law, politics, society, and the Church) have made far-reaching proposals for change in the direction of a just, non-discriminatory society in South Africa. The commissions have also produced nearly 200 working papers which contain important analyses of our society and

valuable suggestions for strategies for change. Some of these have been published in the four Spro-cas Occasional Publications (Anatomy of Apartheid, South Africa's Minorities, Directions of Change in South African Politics, Some Implications of Inequality) and others are incorporated in the reports of the various commissions (see, for example, the reports of the Social Commission, Towards Social Change, the Education Commission, Education beyond Apartheid, and the Economics Commission, Power, Privilege and Poverty).

(ii) Spro-cas 2 is a follow-up to the work of the study commissions and is thus a logical further step in a major and sustained attempt to achieve change in South Africa involving the talents and energies of many people, (150 have served on six study commissions).

(iii) Spro-cas 2 can be seen as the final phase of a three-phase programme aimed at achieving social change and social justice in South Africa. The sequence can be summarised as follows:

- (a) the theological study which resulted in the Message;
- (b) the work of the Spro-cas 1 study commissions;
- (c) the action programmes of Spro-cas 2.

5. Planning

The planning for Spro-cas 2 has extended over the latter part of 1971. Informal discussions were held with a large number of individuals and organisations, culminating in a meeting of twenty five people in Johannesburg in October 1971. Among those present were representatives from the different Spro-cas study commissions and people from a variety of relevant organisations, including Asseca, Nusas, the S.A. Institute of Race Relations, the S.A. Council of Churches, the Christian Institute and labour relations organisations.

The present memorandum was then drawn up by the prospective staff of Spro-cas 2, in consultation with the S.A. Council of Churches and the Christian Institute of Southern Africa.

6. Sponsors

The joint sponsors of Spro-cas 2 are the S.A. Council of Churches and the Christian Institute of Southern Africa, who were the sponsors of Spro-cas 1.

7. The Programmes

(i) *Broad Strategic Considerations*

SPRO-CAS 2 presupposes an urgency in our situation that will not wait for anyone. We must be genuinely involved in the real issues of our society, or we face the risk of being essentially irrelevant.

SPRO-CAS 2 needs to co-operate with forces in the community working for social change and responding to the needs that these communities disclose. This movement toward involvement will require vital shifts in emphasis from the 'traditional' ways of dealing with community problems.

These shifts can be summarised as:

- From 'Charity' TO Reform
- From Symptoms TO Causes
- From Working Alone TO Working With Others
- From 'Responsible' People . . . TO . . . Responsive and Responsible People
- From Diffusion TO Power
- From Doing For The Poor . . . TO . . . Working With And Under

These shifts in emphasis can be amplified as follows:

(a) *From Charity to Reform*

In past efforts, insofar as we sought to change society, we sought to change it through the transformation of the individuals who composed it. Yet it is increasingly apparent that our concentration on individual and interpersonal relationships and efforts to reform the wayward and to relieve problems of the 'disadvantaged' has been inadequate in itself to bring about major social change. The problem we face is not simply that of individual bigotry. The racial crisis is not caused simply as a result of the sum total of everyone's individual prejudice. We are now becoming aware of the ways in which the whole white institutional life functions subtly but effectively to prevent blacks from genuine participation in the economics, education, church and political structures of the country.

Efforts to achieve change need therefore to be more than 'remedial'. We must embark on efforts to build within the black communities, the means to achieve, and opportunities for using power — political and social. In addition we must assist people in white suburban areas to use their power justly. They too are largely ignorant of the political process and the role they can play in it.

(b) *From Symptoms to Causes*

SPRO-CAS 2 must address itself, for example, to the causes of the social ills and other 'disadvantages' of the black community. To do this we need to get involved in the quest for quality education, health care,

public housing, and the myriad other points at which members of the black community are affected.

(c) *From Working Alone To Working With Others To Develop Strategy*

To change our society, we must ally ourselves with those in the community who are now the vanguard of social change, in an attempt to develop an overall strategy.

(d) *From Diffusion To Power*

No one can say with certainty what another community or person really needs, but one can come closest by knowing people in the community itself. Staff people particularly need to be in touch on many levels — with people in present programmes, colleagues in related fields, local leaders (both established and grassroots) as well as people presently unrelated to community organisations where programmes might be made available.

An agency that seeks to do everything suggested to it betrays an underlying rootlessness and lack of direction. We should seek to do that which we consider most urgent and that which we have the resources to meet. We can determine priorities on the basis of community needs and then, by reviewing present programmes, determine which programmes are relevant.

(e) *From Doing For The Poor To Working With And Under*

The greatest danger facing any agency today is the temptation to do programmes for 'poor' people and for black people without involving them centrally in the planning and execution. We must find ways of ending the paternalistic effect of this practice.

We must instead determine ways in which those whites who are interested can supply resources and technical assistance which black people need to develop programmes in their own communities.

In broad summary, then, Spro-cas 2 will aim in its strategy to be

- a) an *enabling body*, seeking out action already occurring, and stimulating new action;
- b) a *participant* as far as possible in the on-going institutional network in the country;
- c) a *decentralised* body, working through local groups and responding to local issues, as well as having a centralised function in terms of national interests and national issues.

(ii) *Implementation of the Programmes*

(a) Four major areas of action have been tentatively decided upon:

- Education
- Labour
- Church
- Social issues

It is important that the actual programmes to be undertaken in these areas should grow out of the needs of people themselves, rather than be pre-determined beforehand. The staff of Spro-cas 2 will be helped in formulation of relevant programmes by Consultative Panels in the four areas listed above. The approach must be a dynamic one, allowing for change in methods as situations and circumstances change. In other words, action will be both preceded and succeeded by reflection. The dual thrust outlined in paragraph 2 will be reflected in black programmes and white programmes, which will draw on a common pool of resources. Since the needs of the black community and the white community are not the same, it would be futile to attempt identical programmes in each community.

(b) *The Specific Goals*

Black Programmes

To help the Black Community become aware of its own identity

To help the Black Community create a sense of its own power

To enable the Black Community to organise itself, to analyse its own needs and problems, and to mobilise its resources to meet its needs

To develop black leadership capable of guiding the development of black communities

These goals may be summarised as:

Supporting black initiative, and helping whites to respond creatively to black initiative.

(c) *The Black Community Programmes*

In terms of the Black Community Programmes, our approach will be one which seeks to *communicate, co-ordinate and co-operate* in a meaningful way with other groups, organisations and institutions, both public and private, in the black communities, to enable them to make the necessary shifts in programme emphasis so that they can create a consciousness of identity as communities, develop sufficient individuals conscious of this identity and with the ability to acquire and use the resources needed to achieve the goals of unity, purpose, self-determination, collective responsibility and creativity.

The rationale for this kind of approach is that in existing organisations – welfare, education, recreation, Church etc. – there are ‘change agents’ or leaders

already working. What these agents require are skills, information and techniques to improve communication, and understanding of the goals of their organisations. Our aim should be to see to what extent we can help them to be more effective in their own setting – in a sense to train them to become better ‘change agents.’ (This is, of course, not the same as methods aimed at ‘upliftment’ or ‘conversion’ of individuals in isolation.)

In this approach stress is laid on the need to encourage communities to identify their wants and needs and to work co-operatively at satisfying them. In this approach ‘projects’ are not determined but develop as discussion in communities focusses the real concerns of the people. As needs and wants are defined and solutions sought we in Spro-cas may provide the kind of aid which assists the community in meeting these needs. But the emphasis is on communities working at their own problems. Change comes as a community sees the need for change and as it develops the will and capacity to make changes it sees as desirable.

Our aim should be to heighten this will and capacity to make changes that are desirable. Direction is then established internally rather than externally. The development of a specific project is subordinate to the development of the capacity of a people to establish the project.

The Churches in this country have indicated, by sponsoring Spro-cas and other programmes, their desire to be involved in the task of eradicating all those factors that contribute to the ‘powerlessness’ of the black communities, and it is hoped that as these programmes start, the individual churches are going to put their resources and good offices open to the implementation of most of the programmes. Close liaison will be kept with Christian Education Departments of churches as well as other key persons working on church programmes.

(d) *The White Community Programmes*

Much of the general approach described above can be seen as applying to the white community programmes as well. The objective of Spro-cas 2 is to mobilise people to take action towards the remaking of South African society in terms of certain ethical concepts. The central principle of any such mobilisation is that people must be helped to organise and to act for themselves in spheres which are immediately relevant to them. For blacks in South Africa finding such spheres poses few problems. But for whites it is more difficult since in many spheres their perceived interests are directly in contradiction to our ethical principles.

Education: White school education offers several advantages in this context. It is a matter of direct

relevance to a large proportion of the community, and the issues involved are such that people can relatively easily be led from education reform to a reflection on their own values and on the structure of their society. Thus fruitful work may be undertaken in terms of alternative syllabuses, including the compilation of a social studies textbook; theological education of both laity and clergy, with special reference to its social content; and further consideration of the theory of education, as a follow-on to the Spro-cas Education Report. Close liaison would be established with other relevant bodies. (A working paper containing detailed proposals has been compiled).

Labour: The programme in this area could operate on two levels: (a) within and through the relevant foci in the existing organisational network; (b) at and through the level of those who are not represented in or who are disqualified by the respective organisations. Work concerning foreign firms operating in South Africa might be undertaken, as might the creation of collective credit schemes. (A working paper containing proposals has been compiled).

Church: The role of the churches is of great importance in working for a more just society. Some of the major churches are in a state of ferment and are becoming more actively involved in combating racism than hitherto.

Close co-operation will be maintained with other programmes and projects that have begun to emerge. Action with regard to church schools and church investment policies might be undertaken.

Social Issues: The intention here is to have a panel of experts who can formulate programmes, or undertake research, arising from immediate issues in the society. The panel could review and deal with issues not covered by the other Spro-cas programmes.

8. Publications Programme

(i) In the first place this involves the completion of the publishing programme of Spro-cas 1, i.e. the reports of the study commissions and the co-ordinated Spro-cas Report.

(ii) Further publications will arise organically from the Spro-cas 2 programmes. A possible Social Studies textbook has already been mentioned. One of the first tasks in the Black Community Programme will be the compilation of a handbook of Black organisations. Post-literacy material is a further possibility, as is the production of a handbook for church schools. Some members of the Spro-cas 1 commissions are interested in compiling a volume of essays on the concept of participatory democracy, to carry forward the discussion in the commissions. The possibility of regular newsletters and of a quarterly journal are also being considered.

(iii) As at present, the publishing of Spro-cas literature will be undertaken in conjunction with the Christian Institute, which possess the necessary equipment.

9. Research

Allowance is made in the proposed budget for ad hoc research into relevant topics, so that where further information is needed on which to base meaningful action, it can be provided.

10. The Consultative Panels

It is necessary to have a balance between those who are essentially thinkers and those who are essentially activists. The consultative panels will be regionally based, with smaller groups meeting in Durban and Johannesburg to assist staff in planning and implementation as needed. The members of the panels will be drawn partly from the Spro-cas study commissions, with the addition of new people with relevant experience and expertise in the four fields of operation.

11. Co-ordinating Committee

A co-ordinating committee drawn from the different panels and local groups and executive staff will meet from time to time to exchange information and ideas, co-ordinate efforts and discuss future plans.

The aim for this committee will be that it should be compact, able to meet at short notice in different parts of the country if necessary, and that its members should be strongly committed to work for change.

12. Communications Committee

Composed of experts in the various media, this committee will be available for consultation by the Communications Director, and will play a vital role in the dissemination and propagation of the work of Spro-cas 2.

13. Steering Committee

Composed of representatives of the Sponsors and the executive staff of Spro-cas 2, the Steering Committee will meet from time to time to review progress and determine policy. Close liaison with the sponsoring bodies will be maintained.

14. Staff

(i) Director: To be responsible for overall policy, co-ordination and administration, in conjunction with the Steering Committee. Based in Johannesburg.

Mr. Peter Randall has been appointed director of Spro-cas 2. He is a former teacher and lecturer, was assistant director of the S.A. Institute of Race Relations from 1965 to 1969, and has directed Spro-cas 1 from its inception.

(ii) Director of Black Community Programmes: To organise and give direction to the goals of the programmes. Much of his time will be taken in travelling and speaking to groups and individuals as well as setting up such workshops, seminars and conferences as are necessary. Based in Durban.

Mr. Bennie A. Khoapa has accepted this post. Mr. Khoapa graduated as a Social Worker in 1959 and after working as a personnel welfare officer was appointed Secretary for African work of the S.A. National Council

of YMCA's in 1964. He held this position until the end of 1971. During this period he undertook a special course of training in the U.S.A.

(iii) Communications Director: To be responsible for the publishing programme and to undertake the preparation and production of material required for seminars, workshops and training courses, in conjunction with other staff. To advise on all technical matters relating to administration, and to explore the use of media such as records and films. Based in Johannesburg.

Rev. Danie van Zyl has accepted this appointment. He is a minister of the Tsonga Presbyterian Church and formerly worked for the S.A. Institute of Race Relations. He was the Christian Institute's advisor to AICA and Programme Director of the theological correspondence courses of AICA (the African Independent Churches Association) after completing a course in Educational Psychology and Technology at Birmingham University. He has worked very closely with Spro-cas 1, particularly in the publishing programme.

(iv) Organiser/Liaison Officer: with the director, to implement projects and programmes, and to have special responsibility in the area of contact and co-ordination. Based in Cape Town.

Mr. Neville Curtis has accepted this appointment. A graduate of the University of the Witwatersrand, Mr. Curtis was vice-president of that University's SRC before becoming President of NUSAS (the National Union of South African Students) in 1970-71.

(v) If sufficient funds become available, the following appointments will also be made:

(a) A Field Worker for the Black Community Programmes: to assist Mr. Khoapa, to collect data about communities and to maintain contact with points of development.

(b) A second organiser, based in Johannesburg.

(vi) A minimum of four experienced clerical and general office staff are required for the programme. In addition, a skilled varitypist is required for the publishing programme, while part-time help will be needed for such tasks as collating. The printing staff of the Christian Institute will be occupied part-time on Spro-cas at its present.

15. Finance

A budget of R130 000 is proposed for the two-year project. It is intended that this money should be sought in South Africa and Mrs. D. Courtney-Clarke has been appointed fund-raiser.

A detailed budget is available on request.

The whole Spro-cas programme represents perhaps the most sustained and important movement for change to arise from Christian concern for a better South Africa. As such it deserves the active interest and concern of individual Christians and churches throughout the country. ●

WAGE STRUCTURE

freedom as a human being. This mentality is the product of secularisation, i.e. of the loss of spiritual values, particularly of the Christian faith in which *both* personal dignity and communal obligation are deeply rooted. In this system a person is seen as a number, a part of a machine, with "basic needs". An idea of man which identifies justice with radical equality and has no comprehension whatever of the element of subordination and differentiation which are inseparable from any live social order, does not do justice to the legitimate claim of each member of the working community to personal dignity and basic independence. Therefore, this medicine would prove more dangerous than the sickness which it means to cure!

On the other hand to *treat one with prejudice because of his race*, is not a medicine but a sickness itself!

Christ said "*And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.*" (Rev. 22:12).

"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature . . . henceforth we know no man after the flesh . . ." (2 Cor. 5:16, 17). ●

TOWARDS SOCIAL CHANGE

Report of the
Spro-Cas Social Commission

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