

**SOUTHERN AFRICAN CATHOLIC
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10.08.1989

TO : ALL ARCHBISHOPS / BISHOPS
JUSTICE AND PEACE COMMISSIONS

Dear Friend

In the current defiance campaign a lot of emphasis is being put on NON VIOLENCE. Church people especially are being asked to help in briefing / educating people about non-violence before they participate in action. The enclosed briefing will help you in this task.

As regards MEDIA : please collect the posters and leaflets you need from the nearest office of the Council of Churches.

Yours sincerely

Sr Margaret Kelly OP
SECRETARY : JUSTICE AND PEACE COMMISSION

NON - VIOLENT ACTION

Definition of VIOLENCE

A force that is injurious to the quality of human life in its various manifestations. It diminishes, violates, destroys human life. One can distinguish personal and structural violence, physical and psychological v., social v. (economic, political, cultural, racial etc.) international v. (area race, East-West power struggle, North-South exploitation, multinationals, National Security States etc.)

Definition of non-violence

1. A system of personal, social and international change based upon the power of Truth and Love to overcome injustice;
2. It considers the life of man the highest created value which must not be destroyed.
3. Its aim is to produce justice and the possibility for fraternal relationship and reconciliation.
4. It aims at liberating the oppressed and the oppressor through persuasion, moral pressure and manifold forms of nonviolent resistance.
5. It refuses to use counter-violence and builds upon the conviction that the willingness to accept oneself the consequences of non-violent resistance is both liberating and effective and mobilize local, national and international solidarity.

METHODS OF NONVIOLENT ACTION (NVA)

General remarks

The aim must be objectively just (The NVA must be directed against clear violation of human rights.)

The means used in the struggle for justice must correspond to the end (if we work for a society in which everyone is respected, we must show respect for people - including the adversary - during the struggle.)

We must prepare for a process of liberation, that means for a coherent, persevering commitment until the end is obtained.

NVA is creative and democratic: all can participate (women, men, children, handicapped, youth); decisions are taken with free consent of all involved and all share in elaborating strategy.

NVA is a collective effort that requires growing unity of all who stand against a given injustice:

Methods and Strategy

I. PREPARATION

- 1) Analysis of the conflict
- 2) Preparation of groups (educational process)

II. METHODS OF NVA

- 1) Dialogue (negotiation)
- 2) Direct Action
- 3) Non-cooperation

- 3) Development of strategy 4) Fasting & hunger strike
 5) Constructive programme

I. PREPARATION

1) ANALYSIS OF THE CONFLICT

The analysis tries to define as objectively as possible the injustice that exists and the factors that make its existence possible. (What are the pillars that uphold it: e.g. persons, groups, laws, religious, psychological factors, power groups etc.)

The nonviolent worker points out his own responsibility in the conflict (passivity) and asks for the reasons of the behaviour of the adversary (the truth of the adversary).

The analysis is the first instrument of NVA. Its strength and efficiency depend upon its contents of Truth (it must present the facts, the reality of the situation). It is the instrument used for consciousness raising and for negotiating. It serves as the basis for the development of a strategy of action. In the course of the struggle the analysis must be constantly deepened as new factors appear.

Truth is the driving force of NVA.

2) PREPARATION OF GROUPS - EDUCATIONAL PROCESS

NVA requires educated, trained groups. Its strength and efficiency depends largely upon the quality of the groups. Spontaneous action is important; but severe conflicts require preparation for a long and persevering commitment with a planned strategy.

The education process has three accents:

- interior (moral) preparation
- acquiring of NV attitudes and methods
- elaborating strategy

Interior preparation

Believers of most religions (Muslims, Christians, Jews, Hindus, Bhudists) consider the life of every human being as sacred; to destroy it is against the will of God who created it with Love. Therefore we find in most religions the moral imperative to overcome evil with nv means and to build peace. In the educational process each religious community must strengthen and nourish these convictions according to its own holy Scriptures. Humanists have given outstanding examples of their respect for life in situations of conflict.

In addition to these ethical principles, modern armament (atomic, biological, chemical) in the present situation has disclosed the irrational character of violence - including counter-violence - as it exposes the peoples (and even all of mankind) to total destruction. This reality has encouraged nonviolent resistance in situations of grave injustices and oppression (Poland, Bolivia, Brasil), where the people, united in a common cause, with means respectful of the life of the adversary, have been able to win local, national and international support for their cause and have been able to achieve greater justice.

Each group must deepen these convictions and win the moral strength to accept freely the consequences resulting from their commitment (to develop the willingness to pay oneself the price for obtaining peace in justice). For believers reading and meditating on the Scriptures, prayer and fasting will be a strong resource.

Acquiring of nv attitude and methods

Each human being when attacked by nature tends to react violently. But each human being also carries within himself the strength to react to an attack with calm and firmness; beyond such nv resistance each human being carries within himself the capacity to respond to lying, hatred, aggression and repression with a counter-attack through the power of Truth and nonviolence.

Our group has to learn, to train and prepare itself to control reaction, to overcome fear and discover nonviolent responses. Helpful in this learning process are :

(Socio-drama, role play: you play scenes of conflict, develop scenarios and search for nv responses. The scenario helps to analyse the situation and develop nv strategy. The role-play helps to train yourself in nv attitudes and responses. The group evaluation strengthens growth of each member.

Apply nv to every-day problems, learn from these experiences. Evaluate each small action, learn from errors. Study and learn from nv campaigns of the past that were carried on in similar or different situations (King, Gandhi, Chavez, Latin America, Poland etc.)

Elaborating strategy

Based upon the analysis the group elaborates the first NVA to be taken.

NV strategy explained through an example of Latin American peasants struggling for landrights.

1. Analysis

(Define injustice objectively= inside triangle
Discover forces of support (pillars) of the
injustice, including the group that suffers
the injustice)



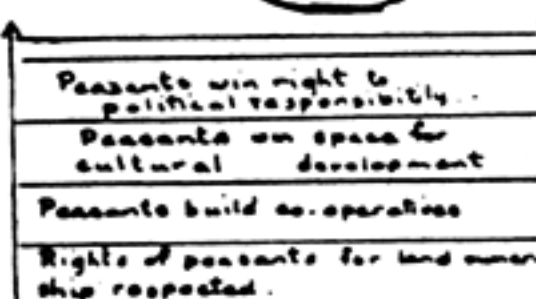
2. Solidarity

The small nv group who have decided to overcome the injustice elaborate strategy to win through NVA passive and active supporters of existing injustice over to their own side = to win them for the just cause; NVA increases their strength and diminishes the support for injustice. Step by step a new situation is created in which injustices can no longer exist = triangle with little or no support cannot stand on its tip. The unjust situation is changed.



3. Building of the alternative

The new situation in which basic human rights of all are respected is developed gradually, people are prepared to assume services and responsibilities.



II. Methods of NVA

1) DIALOGUE (NEGOTIATION)

In discussions with opponents we are used to confrontation: each side trying to impose its view upon the other; the conflict is not solved but increases.

NV dialogue aims at solving the conflict (obtaining justice) by opening the comprehension of the adversary and by admitting one's own corresponsibility.

How to prepare for nv dialogue ?

- Discover the positive values (attitudes) of the adversary and be willing to tell it to him. Such action undermines his prejudice that you are against him as a person or against a given group. He feels he is respected.

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