

[1971]

AREAS OF CO-OPERATION

WHAT SHOULD UCM BE -

possibly (I) on the religious level it must strive to make Christianity relevant to the people - black as well as white.

This it can do in two ways :-

- (a) by placing stress on "black theology" - a deliberate redefinition of the christian faith such that it has a message for the black people in this country.
- (b) placing emphasis on a practical application of Christian principles for its white constituency through the social concerns department. In other words to lay stress on the need for a horizontal relationship between man and man as the only solid basis for the vertical relationship between man and God.

(II) on a social plane - adopt a much more vigorous attitude in schemes like literacy training with a view, if enough support is forthcoming, to make the department a separate one. In this direction UCM should make its trainers of trainers readily available to interested organizations, campuses and groups and should act as an agency for collecting the necessary funds, equipment and books.

(III) on a political plane - it must provide a platform for a meaningful interaction between various races on and off the campuses, i.e. it must be a representation of the end goals of all organizations regardless of the method adopted, i.e. a foretaste of the ideal society.

1. BLACK THEOLOGY.

It is as silly to need to justify black theology as it is to preach a western-type Christianity to a people whose problems are immediately broad and hard issues. Christianity as is presently taught has become a soporific that renders people to sleep in the middle of a revolution. Hence any Christian organization worthy the name should concern itself with the vital question - what is wrong with Christianity? UCM seems to have found the answer - Christianity as presently taught is a white man's religion. It is a religion made to suit the white man's whim. The fact that all the churches in the country are white-run, white-styled, and more closely identified with whites despite the preponderance of blacks is indicative of this. Hence the need for a new approach - one that allows the blacks to feel at home in the body of Christ - their Christ.

In an effort to bear witness to Christ in an immoral society like ours UCM must :-

- (1) Develop the idea of black theology and bring as many black ministers into contact with it as possible.
- (2) Working on the basis laid down in the paper "Towards a Black Theology" the theological concerns officers of UCM must build up an entire approach suitable for consumption by both sophisticated and simple black religious circles. The course must cover all aspects of religion and deal at length with the bible, particularly areas of dubious legitimacy in terms of present-day interpretation. The whole approach must seek to be relevant to a people whose aspirations are political and therefore material. The pre-

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occupation of Christianity with unimportant 'moral' issues like ill-defined sins of omission or commission or still worse 'mortal' and 'pardonable' sins must come to an end since it leads to paranoia and breeds religious schizophrenics. Religion must be made to deal with broad and butter issues like oppression, the need for ownership or property, prejudice arising from possessing a wrong skin, etc. Moreover, the black man must feel that God is talking to him also through the bible and he must know what message there is for him in it.

- (3) In an attempt to further this idea UCM must have a list of names of all black ministers of religion or equivalent people who stand on a pulpit on Sunday to preach what they think is the word of God. This can be obtained from basically three sources - Christian Institutes, AICA and friendly regional offices of the established churches. It is imperative that as many as possible of these ministers should be made to rub against the idea of the new approach, so as to liberate them from oppression by themselves and their various churches.
- (4) Having got this list UCM must run weekend schools under whatever name they can get (AICA ?). These shall be the places where the teaching will be imparted. These schools are to be run on a circulating regional basis.
- (5) The course on black theology should be adopted for the black seminaries, as well and UCM should try to get it incorporated in the circular of the various denominational ministries. If this proves impossible the course should then be introduced as an informal one with the co-operation of the students and UCM must provide the occasional 'lecturer' who shall make sure the basic message is grasped.
- (6) The spearhead of this approach has of necessity got to be a black man, hence the need for one to be full-time employed by UCM doing this kind of work. While we find the man UCM shall find the money.
- (7) Our main contribution in this field will be both on philosophical and administrative level. We shall contribute to a great extent by way of writings on the broad topic of black theology. The topics we propose to touch are :-
  - (a) Black religion before advent of the missionaries.
  - (b) Early missionary methods in South Africa.
  - (c) Effects of the way Christianity was imported.
  - (d) Organization and style of the early Christian black separatist i.e. the Ethiopian Movements of the 1890's and early twentieth century. This is meant to highlight the differences in emphasis between white man's Christianity and black man's own interpretation of it during these hectic days.
  - (e) Death of meaningful Christianity and seegrific effects of the white man's religion.
  - (f) Modern separatist churches.
  - (g) The need for a re-appraisal of the Christian faith and for black theology.

These topics are meant to be tied up all together with the paper on black theology by its author and, together with his own extrapolations and modifications, to be expanded into a full sort of new approach.

## 2. SOCIAL/....

## 2. SOCIAL CONCERNS.

While we believe that field work, i.e. work camps etc. are of such an infinitesimally small scale as to be of token value per se we nevertheless recognise the psychological impact that this may have if properly conducted. We do not have the necessary numbers to embark on a full scale drive throughout the year but we can nevertheless go into the hearts of the reserves during long vacations and this will provide us with the opportunity of both staying with the people and working amongst them. To this end we shall seek the help of the people set to run the homelands.

UCM's white constituency can and should continue on work camps closer to the urban areas. The experience to be gained from this sort of engagement is tremendous for the campers as well as for the people around, in that it provides, for the former, fulfilment of a purpose and a chance to learn from an approximation of the conditions, while it serves to relieve to some extent the problems experienced by the latter. To some degree one needs to maintain a non-racial character in this type of work camp also for psychological reasons. One must always seek to prevent inculcating the giver-receiver type of mentality between white and black.

## 3. LITERACY CAMPAIGNS.

As it appears, UCM will need quite a lot of members to put its programmes into effect in this field and one possible way of helping is to encourage as many black campuses as possible to make use of the opportunity of training trainers.

To this effect we shall incorporate the help of SAC's on the black campuses who will be able to galvanise far greater numbers than UCM local branches can.

## 4. PUBLICATIONS.

An exchange programme and general wide circulation of all materials produced by both of us will help to enhance people's understanding of what we are about and also to give some depth to the now superficial understanding that people tend to show towards the black-white schism question.

Both of us reject the idea of a magazine and opt for a newsletter type of communication supported by occasional circulars on interesting topics. Again the topics we intend tackling are basically those that reveal an up-to-now hidden side of the black man in this country - his role in history. We will occasionally send out circulars on :-

- (1) Early history of the black people - their type of Government and social organization.
- (2) The true account of the early black-white clashes.
- (3) The Ethiopian Movement of late 19th century.
- (4) A systematic review of black man's history up to the establishment of the Union.
- (5) Political organization amongst black people 1910-1920.
- (6) The history of the Industrial and Commercial workers Union (1910-1930)(I.C.U.).
- (7) Relations between black political organizations and white liberal bodies.
- (8) Black Trade Unions.
- (9) History of the black press.
- (10) Gandhi in South Africa.
- (11) Chronological cataloguing of important dates in black history.

## 5. FORMATION SCHOOLS.

Our type of regional formation school was carefully described and will not be dealt with here. On the other hand yours will probably concentrate to a great extent on literacy programmes. Hence we decided that

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we should part company in so far as this goes.

Where possible organizational help should be given. This we have been giving already and all we need is an intensification of the established tradition. The same applies in reverse. Most probably you may be called upon to make arrangements for sites for our formation schools especially in areas like your own region.

6. OVERSEAS CAMPAIGNING.

Agreed to use as often as possible your own people for our purposes in campaigning abroad. Also agreed that there will be constant consultation to define sources of energy properly.