

The United Party is on the verge of agreeing or of not agreeing to take part in this totalitarian farce. It is torn between two fears, the fear of still further alienating its more liberal supporters and the fear of still further alienating its more reactionary supporters. A party whose policy is dictated by fears of this kind has no future. It certainly has no part in making the future. The Nationalists sneer at the United Party for having no policy, and this to a large extent is true. The United Party is an all-white party that knows there is no all-white future, but has not the guts to act on its knowledge.

The United Party has one grave and apparently incurable weakness. It is in opposition, and it is its duty to examine critically the actions of the government and the arrangements of society. But let the Prime Minister blow the security whistle, and the Party comes to heel like an obedient dog. There may be no danger in sight, there may be no danger at all, but the whistle has gone and the Party must come to heel. The Prime Minister and the Nationalists know this well, and they know exactly when to blow.

So the smell of consensus is in the air and a nasty smell it is too. The whistle blows and the UP-ites come running into the laager, some of them hoping, you may be sure, for a job on a waggon, the greasing of an axle, the wielding of a whip, the chancellorship of a voorloper

university. Let the others howl outside, the students, the supporters of the world churches, the pro-veritates, the innocent instituters that at first didn't know a schlebusch when they smelt one. Let them all be eaten up by the ever-vigilant reds that prowl eternally outside. Inside here we are safe and sound, and so jolly to be together again.

And what about you, Catherine Taylor, and Japie Basson, and Harry Schwarz? Will you be happy inside there? Will you go inside there to convert the UP-ites and bring them out again? Wouldn't you be happier outside with Helen Suzman and her sproccassian friends? Wouldn't that be better for us all?

It's hard to believe that Rabbie Burns knew the U.P. but he must have, because he couldn't possibly have written these lines if he hadn't.

O whistle, and I'll come to you, my lad:  
O whistle, and I'll come to you, my lad:  
Tho' father and mither and a' should gae mad,  
O whistle, and I'll come to you, my lad.

And up there on the ossewa sits my lad himself, looking as satisfied as can be. And why shouldn't he be, after having eaten the U.P. for breakfast? □

# BLACK CHRISTIANS MUST LIBERATE WHITES

An address entitled "Christianity in South Africa: A Serious Look by a concerned Black Believer", delivered to The Christian Institute of Southern Africa. (Natal Regional Conference, May 19th 1973, Edendale Lay Ecumenical Centre).

by Manas Buthelezi.

I am a Christian and hope to remain one because in the Christian Gospel I have discovered an assurance of the fulfillment of possibilities for the realization of my true humanity. However betrayed by fellow Christians I very often feel, I have never experienced betrayal by the Gospel itself. Had it not been for the Gospel, I would already have had every reason to believe that whoever created me is the enemy of my humanity. In the Gospel I have discovered hope for my liberation towards true humanity.

It is against the background of this expressed faith in the Gospel that you should try to understand what I am going to say. For my part, it is out of this Gospel hope that I have mustered courage to say what I am going to say about the pathology of christianity in South Africa. Listen to me as to a fellow believer speaking out of the depths of his overflowing and believing heart. If in taking South African Christianity as a spiritual pathological case, my diagnosis and prescription here and there smack of

missionary and evangelistic arrogance, kindly bear with me; I am simply moved by the black man's love for his fellow South Africans.

I shall call the first part of my address, "A Spiritual Diagnosis", and the second, "An Evangelistic Prescription".

*A Spiritual Diagnosis:*

The Christian Gospel has been in this land for over 300 years. This is a long time if one considers the spate of drastic changes which have taken place since then. Here I am not only referring to changes in the political map of South Africa, but also to changes in the very history of the spiritual destinies of the peoples of South Africa.

The modern history of Christianity in South Africa is a sad tale of the gradual erosion of the expression of the spirit of christianity itself. The institutional symbols of christianity like the church and the ministry are there all right but they are increasingly less of the visible incarnation of that which accounts for the uniqueness of christianity, vis - a - vis, the religion of our forefathers. Over the past decades, the church for one has been turned into a living monument of a race and colour-oriented society. Is it not true that many church buildings are no longer houses of the worship of God the father of Jesus Christ, but have become heathen shrines of a race and colour god? That is why even in this day and age some church synods still find it necessary to pre-occupy themselves with making resolutions about keeping their churches lily-white on Sunday. You see, a racially mixed worship assails the majesty of the god of racism and colour.

This is a negative appraisal of South African Christianity, you may say. Is it not true that there are more people who believe in Christ today than there were in 1652? Is South Africa not as a matter of fact the most christian country in Africa percentage-wise? The conclusions drawn from answers to these questions cannot but be disquieting unless one fails to see beyond the mere quantitative theory of progress.

To my mind the ultimate criterion for the spread of Christianity is not just how many people go to church on Sunday, but how many people allow that which is unique in the christian Gospel to shape their lives as well as the spirit of their social, economic and political environment.

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What is it that is unique in the christian Gospel? It is the love of God in Jesus Christ that transforms strange neighbours into loving brothers. It is very often said that points of race contact are points of friction. What is unique about the Gospel is that it changes points of contact into points of fellowship. Fellowship is by definition a situation of contact. It follows that there can never be christian fellowship without human contact. Any deliberate elimination of points of human contact is a calculated sabotage of the essence of christian fellowship.

About this uniqueness of the Christian Gospel Christ said: "I give you a new commandment: love one another; as I have loved you, so you are to love one another. If there is this love among you, then all will know that you are my disciples (John 13: 34-35, NEB)."

As if in commentary to this, Paul in Galatians asserts: "There is no such thing as Jew and Greek, slave and free man, male and female; for you are all one person in Christ Jesus (Gal. 3:28 NEB)".

In Jesus Christ the divisions of mankind into warring nations as dramatized in the story of Babel, is resolved. In Christ mankind becomes a family, a brotherhood. This is the uniqueness of christianity, otherwise white Europeans would have no business to leave Europe and come here to make christians out of black Africans. This is the uniqueness which, according to my diagnosis, the South African way of life has done its share to undermine and almost destroy. We are all the poorer for it; ours is a christianity in caricature. **The white man as the main architect of the South African way of life has, it seems, done his best to destroy the heart of the faith he brought.**

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When white missionaries came to Natal during the time of Shaka, they were hospitably received by the black people who did not know anything about Christ and who had every reason to reject the humanity of white people because they had never seen any white human beings before. They so accepted them as human beings that they were prepared to allow their black girls to marry them. The classical case in point is the British hunter John Dunn who raised generations of coloureds in Zululand from the black wives he was allowed by King Cetshwayo to marry. Of course, Cetshwayo did not know anything about the Immorality Act because white christianity had not invented it. The black Zulus could see a dignified human being behind the facade of a white skin.

You all know Henry Francis Fynn who was among the first white men ever to visit King Shaka. In his diary, Fynn has a very touching portion where he describes the grand reception which he as well as his entourage received from the king. James Stuart who edited Fynn's diary made the following comments on Fynn's diary account:

"The first meeting of Shaka with Farewell, Fynn, and the rest of the party was manifestly a unique and memorable occasion. Instead of the formal, stiff and constrained ceremonial customary at such a moment, Shaka, whose heart had been mysteriously touched by the advent of British settlers to his shores, converted the occasion into a grand and dramatically planned festival."

This is not just an allusion to dead past history, but is a commentary on the black man's open and loving attitude towards the white man as I have grown to know it. When I grew up, white people, especially missionaries, used to

visit our home since my father was an evangelist. I cannot remember a single occasion when a white person did not receive the best courtesy and the best catering our limited resources could allow. Many a black man can testify to the same. The lack of reciprocity in treatment when we visit white people's homes has not deterred us from giving them our best. In South African Society there are many things which remind the black man of the fact that he is a rejected member. Indeed white South Africa has rejected the black man as someone with whom a self-respecting patriotic white can relate with any degree of intimacy in daily life situations. Whites who have not observed this convention, have ordinarily not escaped some degree of social and political censure bordering on the forfeiture of personal security. Even as lepers in society, black people have on the whole not withdrawn the hand of friendship and love stretched towards the white men. Nothing less is expected of those who follow the way of Christ.

There is a pattern of a racist outlook in the thinking and behaviour of the average white mainly Anglo-Saxon Protestant Northern European, whether he happens to be in America, Asia or South Africa.

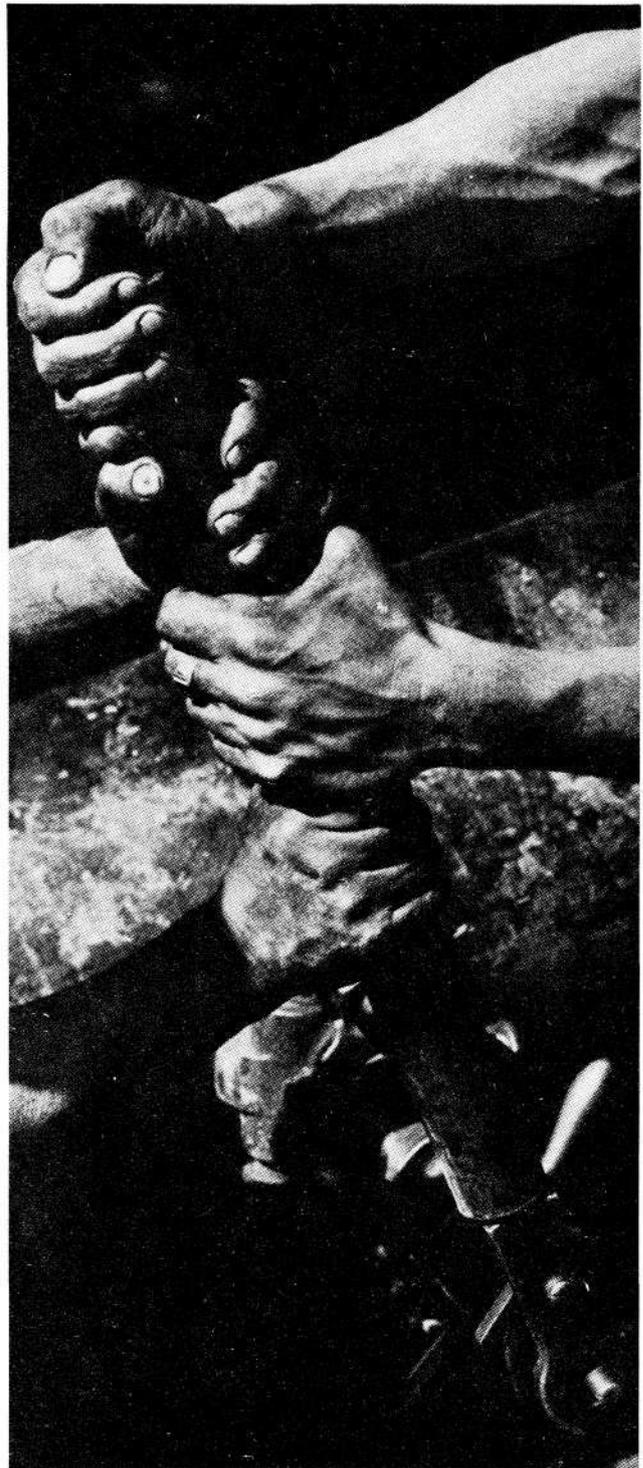
As the respective histories of the United States and South Africa, in particular, demonstrate, the Northern European seems to be overly obsessed with his race and the fact that he is white. He translates this into his politics, economics and social theory. This tendency is not so pronounced in the Catholic Mediterranean Southern European. The history of the colonies which belonged to the latter also bear this contrast.

Be it as it may, white people, whether they like it or not, are our brothers. We owe them not just passive love, but creative and creating love. It is not enough for us to bemoan the pathological condition of South African Christianity; we must do something about it. To a medical doctor, diagnosis is never the end; it is a means towards a healing prescription.

#### *Evangelistic Prescription:*

Black Christians as a group have not made any significant contribution in the evangelization of South Africa as a country beyond the people of their own race. This is out of proportion to their numerical strength as Christians. Among the main denominations, the Dutch Reformed Church is the only exception with a white majority. Black people can therefore never be taken as merely an appendage to South African Christianity. They are a factor to be reckoned with. The trouble is that hitherto they have not taken themselves seriously. This is nowhere else better illustrated than in the negligible role they have played in the evangelization of South Africa.

In other words black people have not preached the Gospel to *all* nations yet. They seem to have been conditioned into thinking of themselves as third grade kaffir ambassadors of Christ, whose spiritual credentials do not in any way qualify them to carry the message of God to white people, for instance. They have underestimated both their integrity as ambassadors of



God in South Africa and the universality of the scope of their mission.

This stands in sharp contrast to the evangelistic consciousness of white Christians who have always correctly understood themselves as being sent everywhere

and to everybody. Here I am not by any means overlooking the influence of the colonial motif in European history; I am simply stating the basic essentials of the case of evangelism in South Africa.

As a black Christian, I feel obliged to thank white European Christians for having realized that God did not send them to white people only, but also to me, black as I am. In saying this, I hope that white people will also be generous enough to reciprocate this sentiment of mine as I feel moved at this hour that God has also sent me as a black person to tell them the Good News that God has died in Christ to liberate the white man from the urge to oppress the black man. This means to say that the Gospel as preached by the white man needs to be complemented by the Gospel through the black man.

I have already hinted that the Gospel preached by white Christians was of such a kind as to harbour the reality of the white man's rejection of the black man. It was and still is a Gospel with a truncated expression of Christian fellowship. By Christian fellowship here I do not mean just worshipping together on Sunday, but also sharing together all the daily blessings of God which he continually showers over his children.

It is well-known that in this land the white man has grabbed for his own use the greater portion of the wealth God has meant for us all. God is angry about this and will definitely judge the white people. White people need to be liberated from the coming wrath of God. They need to be told that God also loves them; He wants to give them power to love the black man so that they do not find it nauseating to share a meal with him in a public restaurant.

I say this being fully aware of the existence of fringe groups in the white Christian establishment which have tried to stir the white Christian conscience into the realization of the full-implications of Christian fellowship. The Christian Institute is one of those fringe groups. However, as fringe groups, they have existed as voices crying in the ecclesiastical wilderness. It has very often been said that the leadership of the English speaking churches has displayed a liberal and progressive stance which is very often out of touch with the grass-root membership of those churches. This is a euphemistic way of stating that the average white Christian still does not see any contradiction between professing Christian discipleship and rejecting the black man in his daily life. He has not been liberated into accepting the black man as his daily life brother.

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Just to illustrate how patently true this observation is, a leading white statesman of this country has recently found it necessary to exhort white people to remember that black men also have souls. I would be shocked if any one here could stand up and say that this statesman — who

will remain nameless — did not know what he was talking about. This poses a challenge to the black man: the white man needs to know that the black man was created in the image of God too. The black man must testify to the white man that he really has that image, otherwise any third person statement of that fact will not free some people from doubts. The image of God in the black man must urge him to evangelize the white man into accepting him as a brother.

**If white people are lost, does it ever occur to the black man that he may be held responsible? Does it ever occur to black people that they have an evangelistic duty of getting the white man out of the spiritual darkness which has prevented him from seeing that the black man is his daily life brother? God will ask: "Black man, where were you when the white man abandoned my Gospel and went to destruction?" When the black man answers, "I was only a kaffir, how could I dare to preach to my baas?", God will say: "Was Christ's resurrection not sufficient to liberate you, black man, from that kind of spiritual and psychological death? Go to eternal condemnation, black man, for you did not muster courage to save your white brother."**

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This leads me to the following practical conclusions:

- (i) There is an urgent need for the establishment of a black Christian Mission to the whites in South Africa. This mission manned by blacks will have as a general aim:
  - a. to enable the white man to share the love of God as it has been uniquely revealed to the black man in circumstances in which the white man does not have experience.
  - b. to preach love to the white man so that he may have courage to see with consequence that his security is not necessarily tied to his rejection of the black man.
  - c. to give glory to God for what he has done for the black man in spite of everything.
  - d. to work for the salvation of the white man who sorely needs it.
- (ii) It will be appreciated if some existing white church buildings will be made available to serve as mission stations. This gesture on the part of white churches will serve as a realization of a meaningful partnership in mission.
- (iii) The feasibility of this endeavour is assumed from the fact that there is freedom of preaching in this country. Whites do preach among blacks; therefore there is no reason why blacks cannot preach among whites.

This is not a neat outline of a programme, but merely an expression of an idea. Who knows? It may come as a significant contribution towards the solution of some of our basic problems.□