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The Church and the Race Problem

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FATHER TOM COMBER
IN AN
INTERVIEW WITH BENJAMIN POGRUND

Father Tom Comber was born in England 53 years ago. After completing an engineering degree at Cambridge he entered the ministry and came to South Africa in 1937. He has served as a parish priest in Germiston, Jeppe, Ferreirstown and Ermelo, and was Anglican Chaplain at the University of the Witwatersrand for five years. He has been Rector of St. Andrew's, Kensington, Johannesburg, since February this year. He is married and has two children.

When a Christian must oppose State

Is there any racial segregation or discrimination within the Anglican Church in South Africa?

FATHER COMBER: In theory I don't think there is any unless you regard differential pay for White and Black clergy as discrimination. I think the fact that so few Africans are among the highly placed clergy — bishops, deans and archdeacons — is because Africans do not as yet measure up to the demands of the public organisation of the Church as we know those demands today. To be in a position of authority you require an experience which few Africans have as yet. Also the State authorities in a White-dominated multi-racial society would be likely to make things difficult for him.

In other words, there is in fact discrimination in practice?

FATHER COMBER: The trouble is not so much a deliberate discrimination as an inability or unwillingness to grow out of the racial conditions we have all been subjected to. When Black and White meet, a conditioned reflex response obscures their common humanity. One

has to make a conscious effort to remember, this is a man not this is a Black or a White man.

What form does discrimination take in the Church?

FATHER COMBER: There are not many White congregations where Black people would be genuinely welcomed. Black Anglicans can worship in any church, but it would take time for them to be fully accepted. This is due not so much to lack of goodwill as to social ineptitude. We don't know how to get on together as people. We don't know what to say to each other. This is a human failing not by any means confined to members of the Church.

Isn't this the basic failing in South Africa which causes much of the inter-racial difficulties which we have?

FATHER COMBER: Certainly. Lack of genuine contact is the denial of community, but this weakness is by no

means confined to interracial relationships. It is a common condition of Western man who lives in an impersonal society and it infects our whole life. It is perhaps more marked in race relationships. But this is not characteristic of Africans. The Bantu are far warmer personalities and less inhibited.

In this respect they could help the European to emancipate himself from his inhibitions. Whites are so terribly respectable. Europeans in Africa have an opportunity of recovering a sense of humanity not open to the peoples of industrialised Europe.

Would you say that this warm contact between peoples is a fundamental of Christianity?

FATHER COMBER: I would say it is Christianity, although the 'Christians' have no monopoly of it. I think of Christianity as the context in which man fulfils his humanity. Where contacts become stereotyped, organised and inhibited there is loss of humanity. Its place is taken by segregation whose final terms is the atomisation of society.

In this country we are bedevilled by adjectives in connection with human relations. We don't think in terms of people. We stop short at Black or White people, Jewish or Gentile and so on. And of course it is the avowed intention of our rulers to prevent us from becoming truly human.

Does the lack of contact between members detract from Christianity of the Anglican Church?

FATHER COMBER: It most certainly impoverishes the Christian content of the Church. So much that we stand to gain from our existence in Africa we are afraid to take hold of. The virtually White Christianity which ministers like myself are confronted with has less and less meaning. In a wholly bad sense it is out of this world. South Africa is an illusion — it is Africa that we live in. That is the truth about the whitest suburb you can think of. It is part of Africa.

"South Africa" is an illusion which history is rapidly destroying. Policies based on illusion will be irrational and vicious.

Is the Anglican Church conscious of the lack of contact between its members?

FATHER COMBER: No, on the whole it is not. The Church is more interested in maintaining its traditional patterns. And it is very often complacent and unaware of the changes taking place around it, unaware of changes in Africa, and of new ways in which people think of themselves. The Church's job is to serve the world, but it is geared to maintaining itself rather than giving itself to the service of the world. That might sound rather cruel but by and large it is the case.

The clergy are the most inclined to be conditioned by what they are used to. They have made their rather small world, they know how to make it work and they want to keep it that way.

But to extend it to a broader context requires a faith sufficiently profound to stand up to the hazards of experiment. The Church is too dominated by the middle-aged and suffers from the same disease as parents suffer from — a wish that their children should be reproductions of themselves. Between the young and the old there is a real lack of understanding, but we are digressing. It is the same lack of accord that is found between races. We are used to White and Black congregations and to maintain itself socially the Church is too like the society we are supposed to be redeeming.

The ordinary person is conditioned much more by the society he lives in than by the faith he professes. He has little fear of God and a very great fear of what the neighbours will think.

Is the Anglican Church doing anything to meet the situation?

FATHER COMBER: I don't think it is a matter of deliberate action. I don't think people can be planned out of their over socially-conscious condition and into one of greater God-consciousness. It is a matter of the Church living by its Liturgy and Faith, of the Church being the Church. When that happens, it is contributing in a small way, by example.

and the witness of Christians in the world, to a healthier human climate.

The trouble with modern Christians is their conviction — and it is well-nigh unshakeable — that the Church exists to provide them with uplift and religious feeling. Consequently, they are totally unaware of themselves as called to be the people of God, whose concern is not with emotion but with obedience and conformity to the Biblical revelation.

The relevance of prayer, retreats, and the life of Holy Communion in achieving the spiritual conversion that is so badly needed would not, I think, interest your readers. But the last thing we want is that people should be worked into more intense fervours of religion. I can see nothing good or healthy coming out of what is called "religious revival". Hysterics and ecstasy only remove a man further from his real problems.

You spoke earlier of the identification of the Church and its members in Africa. Do you think there is a case for making the Church more African?

FATHER COMBER: I wouldn't put it that way. The Church will become indigenous only in the proportion that it becomes a genuinely multiracial fellowship. The Church has always to become two things that are impossible to reconcile in thought and statement. It breaks with Christ if it is not catholic, the universal Church locally manifested. But it must also put down roots and bring forth fruit of local flavour.

Forms of worship, ways of apprehending the truth revealed in Christian faith, customs and culture must be that of the country where the Church is. But on the other hand Christianity can never be English, Afrikaner, or African. It must be of and over against what those words stand for.

Are non-Whites being driven away from the Church and from Christianity?

FATHER COMBER: Driven away is rather a strong phrase here. But if by non-White you mean African, I think the Church is to some extent failing

to give them what they want and need. Like us, they need the integration of their lives, a wholeness of living at a higher level than that of the tribe. They have known wholeness of life in the tribe but it has been repressive and they are seeking to find a larger humanity for themselves. This is what the Church must seek to provide. Communism, because it is a corruption of humanism, is not what he needs. It is a fundamentally religious need, to be most safely met by the Church.

But it is anyone's guess as to how much the Church is in fact doing. If the Church is only offering a devitalised Western religiosity—with only the froth and not the content of religion — the African is not interested.

Has Christianity any responsibility for offering a solution to South Africa's race problems?

FATHER COMBER: The Church has no business to offer a solution, but by being itself, it is a solution, a solvent in which the human being grows into his own truth. The Church aims to engender a sense of human values which will irrigate the soil out of which a genuinely human political order will grow. Whether that order will be democratic or authoritarian, will not depend upon the Christian fertilisation but on historical circumstances. That is why I don't think there is, for example, such a thing as a Christian political franchise.

I find it very difficult to say Christianity is this, or that something else is the Christian answer. Christianity is something that happens. Whether what happens is Christian will only be known in the future. We walk by faith, not by sight.

Is there perhaps a place in South Africa for Christian democratic parties such as exist in some European countries?

FATHER COMBER: They could emerge in theory. In practice they would create more problems than they would solve. In countries where such parties have developed, Christianity has been more coherent, as for example in

largely Roman Catholic Italy. But in South Africa our Christianity is more divided and lacking in theological coherence and that would inhibit the emergence of a Christian party

Do you think there is any lack of Christian thought and action in South Africa?

FATHER COMBER: There is such a lack in every country in the world. Here we are not as vigorous as we should be because we are quite naturally frightened by political authorities, and the whole trend of legislation is opposed to Christian fellowship in Africa. No one wants the Special Branch knocking at his door at 4 a.m. We are frightened and timid as a result.

Christians practise their religion in terms of their private and domestic lives — paying their bills, being kind to their wives and so on. In public life they dismiss their faith as idealistic and impractical and scare themselves with the bogey of politics. Yet every Christian must take some part in political life. If he doesn't he is an absentee from history and by doing nothing he supports the *status quo* which at best can only claim his critical support.

What is your view of the increasing trend towards political violence among the country's non-Whites?

FATHER COMBER: If it is increasing the reasons for its doing so are quite obvious. No other channels for political action are open to them. We will leave aside the Bantustan mirage. I cannot imagine how any full-blooded African could support the present Government unless he was very cynical and convinced that it had but a brief future. I think therefore that while things remain as they are political violence is bound to increase. If every White man is given a sten gun and he uses it, the economy of the country is bound to collapse.

Should a Christian resort to violence?

FATHER COMBER: Christians seldom enjoy the luxury of choosing between right and wrong. Social and political choices have to be made between lesser and greater evils. This applies in general to man in society, and not merely to South Africa. Violence is obviously undesirable but it is a personal choice which I should be hesitant to pass judgment upon.

Would you say that the Anglican Church's moral and social outlook is in conflict with the policies of the Government?

FATHER COMBER: I should certainly hope so and I think in fact it is. In any situation the Church is in conflict with society and its legal enactments. Men as Churchmen or citizens are far from perfect, but whereas the Church struggles with its sinfulness, society is more likely to compromise or even endorse it. Any notion of human dignity, justice, a proper personal responsibility compels one to be in conflict with the policies of the Government. To pretend that discrimination on the basis of race could be Christian is sheer humbug.

What action does the Church take if it finds itself in conflict with society. Does it remain quiet?

FATHER COMBER: The answer to the second question is "all too often." We are over socially conscious as I have said before. As to the action the Church sometimes does take, it varies between a quiet defiance of the norms of behaviour and an open defiance of the law. If there is a clear distinction between its duty to God and its duty to the State, then it must obey God rather than man. For example, we have been told by our bishops that if ever the law goes so far as to prohibit people of different races from worshipping together that is a law that we must be prepared to break. But we do recognise that we have a duty to the State however much we dislike its policies. But where these policies are clearly contrary to the law of God, Christians should be prepared to suffer the consequences of disobedience.



FATHER MOLEFE
IN AN
INTERVIEW WITH BENJAMIN POGRUND

This is the second in the series of interviews with Churchmen on the role of the Church today. Interviewed is the Rev. Christian Molefe, 55, Rector of St. Andrew's Anglican Mission, Pimville, and St. Hilda's Anglican Church, Senoane, Johannesburg, for seven years.

Born in Potchefstroom, he qualified as a teacher and taught for 10 years. He entered the ministry and studied at the Theological College of the Resurrection, Rosettenville. He served as a priest in Orlando East, Vereeniging and Brakpan and was also, for a year, assistant director of Religious Instruction in the diocese of Johannesburg.

He is married and has one son who is a clerk in a legal firm

Anglicans harbour worst racialists

Do you regard South Africa as a Christian country?

FATHER MOLEFE: In word only, but not in action. It is deficient in the way in which we treat one another. When one looks at South Africa and sees what the Black man has to endure, one continually is forced to ask the question: "Is this really Christianity?" The answer is that it is not.

What effect is this lack of Christian practice having on Africans?

FATHER MOLEFE: It is a fact that there is frustration and disbelief in the Christian religion and the Churches, to the extent of people saying: "What is the good of keeping on and trying to practise Christianity when it is not observed on the other side of the colour line?"

There is a strong current now against White-controlled Churches, even among the African intellectuals of my church. They ask: "Isn't it high time we left the Europeans alone and practised

Christianity as we can, in the way in which we see it in the Bible?"

Is it seen as a defect of Christianity as such, or of the men who apply it?

FATHER MOLEFE: As a defect of the men, not of Christianity as such. This at least is the reaction of the intellectuals. Among the simpler people there is a turning away from the Christian religion. They are going back to primitive, heathen practices and are also going to the African religious sects.

All our African ministers are terribly worried about this. At the same time we find it difficult to answer satisfactorily the questions put to us. Very often we are just bowled out when people point out to us the defects in the Church. We just do not know what to say.

Another cause for the backsliding of African Christians is the economic situation. People are so poor, yet they have to pay for, and maintain, their priests. Because of their grinding poverty they can't afford to pay, so they just sit back and let their religion slide.

Do you think then that Christianity has a future among Africans in this country?

FATHER MOLEFE: That's a very good question. I don't want to be pessimistic but I think the future is very doubtful because for as long as the Church goes on as it does, there will be no end to the quarrels among its members. The upcoming generation is not as tolerant as my own generation. They will increasingly query the situation, and if they are not satisfied, they will take action—either by leaving the Church or by going somewhere where they feel they can be treated as equals.

In view of what you say, do you think that Christianity has an answer to South Africa's race problems?

FATHER MOLEFE: I say yes, if it is properly and sincerely applied in practice. It is the practical application of Christianity, according to its founder, Jesus Christ, which could make the world realise that here is our salvation. In the first place, though, the Churches—as the main machinery for bringing men together as brothers—would have to practise Christianity truly within themselves.

What is this Christian answer?

FATHER MOLEFE: True love towards one another, irrespective of race, colour or creed. Simply, the brotherhood of man.

From what you say, you feel that this answer is not being applied?

FATHER MOLEFE: Definitely. There is a lot of racial discrimination in the Churches, not only in my own Anglican Church, but in all Churches.

The relationship between Black and White in the Church today calls for much thinking and reflection. The Anglican

Church in the Diocese of Johannesburg, for example, would like the world to know that there is no colour bar within its ranks. But in point of fact there is in this Church not only a colour bar, but colour prejudice of the worst kind.

I have worked in this diocese as a full-time catechist and priest for 26 years. During all these years it has always been most painful to attend Synods and to observe the outward multiracialism of the Church when in reality it was not so.

The Anglican Church in Johannesburg is definitely divided into two sections: Black and White. The magazine of the diocese, "The Watchman," is definitely European. All the news in it is about Europeans and there is hardly anything African to talk about.

It is when we come to finance that we clearly see how the Church is divided into two groups. Every time we are given a financial report there is Black money and White money. There are two bags in the Church, one for the Europeans and one for the Blacks. For the past three years or so, some people, I think from the African side, have questioned the disparity in the stipends received by African and European priests. The question has arisen: "If we are priests regardless of whether we are White or Black, why the difference in stipends?"

This has caused most Europeans, if not all priests, delegates and officials of the Diocesan Office, to come out in their true colour.

"We cannot pay African clergy with White money," they say. "Their own people should contribute in such a way as to enable us to pay their priests a living wage."

These White members of the Church fail to realise the financial difficulties of the African members. The Africans are forced to live up to 20 miles out of town. They get very low wages. The European members of our Synod pay their African employees out of their pocket money. Yet they want these Africans to contribute as they do to Church offerings.

We are supposed to belong to the one, Catholic and Apostolic Church, and yet there are still some people who are being referred to as members of another group. I think the worst sin the Church can be guilty of is hypocrisy; yet I think there is a lot of hypocrisy in the Church.

It is no use showing the public in Hoek Street, outside the Cathedral, that a European priest walks with a Black priest—and yet we do not sit together at meals.

as brothers. At every Synod there are meals for European priests and delegates, and separate meals for African priests and delegates.

There is no Christian fellowship or charity. We are only pretending. The White priests do not really accept us in their hearts. In fairness to some, however, especially the younger White ministers, I must say that colour does not mean anything to them. They are sincere men.

After much thought and prayer I have come to the conclusion that it is high time that the Anglican Church became true to itself and admitted to itself and the public that it is not a multiracial Church. It harbours the worst racials.

They must leave the Africans to themselves to look after their own affairs. Let

them admit to the world that the Church is in two. We as Africans are tired of this present bluff. The Government, in its intentions for separate development, is at least more sincere than the Church.

How should these defects be remedied?

FATHER MOLEFE: Broadly speaking, those at the head of the Church should find out the truth about people and how they live. Their leaders do not know their people and the situation of their people. And why can't we all be natural? If we are Anglican Christians together, why can't we all worship together without fear?

Full of appeals
to compromise
because of "practical
considerations".



BISHOP BURNETT
IN AN
INTERVIEW WITH BENJAMIN POGRUND

This is the third in the series of interviews with churchmen on the role of the Church today. Interviewed is The Right Rev. Bendyshe Burnett 46. He was consecrated Anglican Bishop of Bloemfontein six years ago. Born in Koffiefontein, he was educated at Bishops and Michaelhouse and completed a Master of Arts degree in History at Rhodes University. During the Second World War he served with the South African 7th Reconnaissance Battalion and was captured at Tobruk. He escaped and spent nine months behind the German lines. He was Chaplain to Michaelhouse from 1950 for four years, and then Vicar of Ladysmith, Natal. He is married and has three children.

We're refusing to make sacrifices

Have Christians any responsibility for providing leadership in South Africa's troubled racial situation?

BISHOP BURNETT: I would say Christians do have such a responsibility though it is not their first responsibility which is to God and the perfection of His Kingdom. And if you take your responsibility as a Christian citizen seriously, you must always remember that the political sphere is secondary and conditional. What one must guard against is regarding the social order as an end in itself, as an absolute.

This does not mean that politically we should be inactive. We should seek to produce the best possible social order — but always remembering that, because of the clash of legitimate rival claims, the social order can never be perfect.

The first obligation of a Christian is to accept the ethics of the Cross, which are of course, the ethics of love, humility and self-abnegation. I do not think, however, that you can transpose this ethic directly into a political key. This is so because the function of the State is not the same as that of the Kingdom of God.

The function of the State is to erect barriers against the indiscipline and rapacity of men, to protect the honest and the weak and to provide an ordered life in which goodness can flourish. The Kingdom of God is that way of life in which men are being reconciled to God and to one another by forgiveness and mutual trust. These two kingdoms must not be confused although they are obviously related.

In my judgment pacifism represents this sort of confusion. The pacifist tries to transpose the ethics of the Cross directly into political terms. But the refusal to resist a tyrant on idealistic grounds may very easily lead in the social sphere not to justice but to greater injustice for the whole community. The pacifist ethic of love then becomes a socially irresponsible act and ceases, strangely enough, to be an expression of real love.

But doesn't South Africa most need at the moment the everyday fulfilment of this obligation by Christians?

BISHOP BURNETT: One has to be practical and realistic and acknowledge

that although as citizens of the Kingdom of God this is what we believe we ought to be applying in fact we belong also to a world in which sin is a reality which makes it impossible to apply simply and directly the Christian ethic in the government of a nation.

What one should try to do is to project Christian love into a situation and then weigh up how this can best be applied so that the greatest number of people can benefit. This means of course that you abandon the conception of absolute justice. In fact there is no such thing. In this sense love is greater than justice. I could even go so far as to say that strict justice is sometimes opposed to love. Strict justice one might say is to give the man the vote because the majority's right is to have the right to govern their country.

In fact I think if you are to project love into our South African situation will require the balancing of the claims of various groups in our society with their respective priorities. This would be a more adequate expression of love in terms of our social needs than the man the vote.

Has Christianity then an answer for South Africa's racial problems?

BISHOP BURNETT: Yes it has an answer but it is not an answer that is acceptable to those with the authority to govern. I don't think most Nationalists in South Africa I doubt it. Whether the sort of solution which we believe Christianity demands should be acceptable to politically conscious Africans either.

You see if the answer is the application of the greatest possible Christian love in the situation then there must be a Christian answer and whether it is acceptable or another matter. It might not ever be an acceptable answer to Christians. That is the irony of the situation that Christians are unable to move towards the kind of social order in South Africa which their faith demands.

Of course racism has no absolute solution. Group prejudices will be with us until the end of time. What we must seek to do is to legislate against the effects of racialism. That is, we must build up bulwarks to prevent it corrupting society more than it need. I want to get away from the concept that if apartheid were abolished everything

would be all right. It won't be, because group rivalries and prejudices will coalesce around new centres and new power blocs will emerge which will use power selfishly.

To what extent would you say that Christians are living as Christians in this country?

BISHOP BURNETT: I don't think they are any better or worse than Christians in other countries, but the challenges here are often greater. The challenges are more immediate. There appears to be a challenge to our very existence here. I think we are refusing to accept the sacrifices that are necessary if we are to create that form of social order which the Christian faith demands in our situation. This is a failure in an obedience to God. South Africans are not, however, more wicked than other people in this respect.

Christians throughout the world fail in their obedience to God. This does not mean we are not culpable of course and the consequences of our failure may be more terrible than elsewhere.

One of the ways in which Christians fail is by allowing themselves to be conditioned by the prejudices of our society so that they shrink from normal social relationships with educated Africans. This also spills over into Church life and causes a serious breakdown in Christian fellowship. I think there are many Christians who are not prepared to accept non-Whites into their fellowship even when the non-Whites are mature and well-educated people. This is discrimination on the grounds of colour alone.

This as a Church, we have always refused to accept because by Baptism we are incorporated into the Christian fellowship with all others who believe and are baptised. This unity in Christ must find visible expression. Christians are so irrevocably linked to one another that discrimination on the grounds of colour or different national traditions alone is a denial of the very nature of the Church.

What does the Church do about this situation?

BISHOP BURNETT: Our unity is not being denied everywhere. There are congregations where non-White people are welcome although there are not as many as there should be. It is never legitimate for any Africans or Coloureds

Burnett dances around pragmatic applications of Christian principle, which can't be "ideal" or "out-of-line" with social norms. He is against the "strict justice" of 1-m-1-v, bec. of the "social needs" of whites to protect themselves.

to be excluded from any of our churches. Indeed those who try to exclude them might find themselves under discipline of some kind. On the other hand, the fact is that African and Coloured people can be made to feel not very welcome without positively excluding them.

There is also the question of opportunities of worshipping together. This does not mean that we think all congregations should be totally integrated. There is no reason really why congregations should not represent a particular language or culture group, as long as there is complete freedom to choose which congregation you wish to belong to and there is ready access to every church by every Church member.

What is being done to remedy the deficiencies among the Church's members in regard to these matters?

BISHOP BURNETT: In this Bloemfontein diocese, for example, at our last synod we passed a resolution which urged every parish to take positive steps to arrange meetings between members of Church councils of different racial groups and also on any notable parish "occasion" to invite members of other congregations to share in their activities.

Should more be done?

BISHOP BURNETT: There must be continual teaching about the nature of the Church as being by definition, a unity of all who belong to Christ. We arrange inter-racial conferences of laymen from time to time. Unity can be fostered on a student level by holding Christian conferences which are inter-racial. We should experiment with laymen's inter-racial study groups. These are very difficult to run, however, because of different educational backgrounds between Whites and Blacks. This does not mean, though, that one should not continue to make the attempt.

Is there a great deal which the Church should be doing but which it is not doing?

BISHOP BURNETT: We should seek more effective social contacts between the

racess because there is no future for South Africa worth contemplating which is not based on mutual respect and trust. Christian citizens ought to be politically active and seek, in consultation with others who have the same sort of approach to social ethics, to evolve and apply more Christian policies.

If the Church finds itself completely at odds with happenings in the society around it, should it not then become a public pressure group?

BISHOP BURNETT: No, because then it would cease to be the Church. The State is the servant of God, even if it is unjust or atheistic. If the State becomes demonic then the Christian can do one of two things - either simply suffer and endure, or he can take political action on his own initiative. The Christian need not always submit. He can reach the stage where it is his duty to subvert the State. The Christian citizen has a right to take up arms and to overthrow the State, but the Church hasn't. The Church loses its nature if it preaches a holy crusade.

What is your view of the increasing trend towards political violence among the country's non-Whites?

BISHOP BURNETT: I do not believe that it is immoral for a Christian to use force if that is the best possible solution. But you would have to be very confident that the result of your use of force would be better for the greatest possible number of citizens than what you have at the moment.

I do not myself believe that the methods at the disposal of the African people within the Republic would allow of such an expectation. I do not believe that the Christian conscience could countenance mob violence and acts of terrorism against women and children. It would be a pity, however, if every rebellion or coup d'état had to be left to the initiative of non-believers! I have an admiration for the General De Wets of history.

In regard to integration within the Anglican Church which you discussed earlier, are the clergy inhibited in calling for this by the attitude of the laity?

BISHOP BURNETT: Yes, on the whole I think they are. There is a fear that they might lose some members of their congregations. In pressing the claims of Christian love for more effective integration, the priest has to bear in mind his pastoral responsibility even to those who are most prejudiced and who oppose him as well as the legitimate claims of those who suffer discrimination.

Christian love demands that we have a pastoral concern for both these groups and that we do not choose one and reject the other. We must do all in our power to hold them both as close together as possible in the faith that the Spirit of Jesus Christ will teach them mutual love and trust. This is the most positive and

comprehensive expression of Christian love under the circumstances in which we live.

What about the vexed question of different stipends for White and Black clergy? Would you comment on it?

BISHOP BURNETT: Equality of stipends means either that Europeans would be reduced to a condition of life far below that of the average European family or it would mean raising the standard of living of the African priest above that of his compatriots. In either case this would be unfortunate for the priest's relationship with his parishioners. Nevertheless I do believe that African stipends ought steadily to be brought closer to the European standards as their own communities approximate more to European standards.



Mr. FREELAND
IN AN
INTERVIEW WITH BENJAMIN POGRUND

This is the fourth in the series of interviews with Churchmen on the role in the Church today. Interviewed is the Rev. S. I. Freeland, 54, who was born in England and came to South Africa 32 years ago. He was already a journeyman shipwright when he arrived as a candidate minister and entered the Methodist Theological College, Cape Town.

He was ordained in 1938 and has served at Butterworth, Johannesburg, Pretoria and in the Ciskei and Zululand. He served as a chaplain in the Second World War. At present he is Superintendent Minister, Pretoria East Circuit. He is married and has two children.

Racialists are out of tune with God

Has Christianity an answer for South Africa's race problems?

THE REVEREND MR. FREELAND: Yes, undoubtedly. I believe that not only individual but community troubles spring largely from the fact that man is out of tune with God, and as a result, is out of tune with his neighbour. Christianity shows how man may live in harmony with God and his neighbour and can therefore provide an answer to all problems arising out of human relationships.

What is the Christian answer?

MR. FREELAND: The Christian answer lies in the acceptance of every other person irrespective of differences of race, standard of civilisation, education, colour, wealth, culture or sex, as a person created by God and made in His image.

This involves an acceptance of the brotherhood of man. There is a sense in which all men are brothers, for Christ clearly speaks of God as being the Father

of all men. There is, however, a special and deeper sense in which those who have entered into the Christian family by an acceptance of Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour are brothers. Whichever of these two views of brotherhood we accept, in neither of them are the accidental differences of race and colour of essential importance. We recognise that there are differences but they are differences within the family. Just as differences within any family — of age, sex, gifts, temperament, etc. — do not affect the unity of the family, so differences between men should not in any way affect their essential brotherhood.

Am I not right in saying that there are many Christians in South Africa who would dispute this view of what the Christian answer means?

MR. FREELAND: Yes, some would certainly dispute the view that all men

are brothers because they believe the true brotherhood is to be found only "in Christ." But they would not, I believe, dispute that all who are "in Christ" belong to one family under God. They may, however, draw different conclusions from this basic assumption from those which I draw.

Let me look at some of the conclusions which they draw. They say, for instance, that the African people as a whole, although our brothers, have not reached the stage where they can be treated in the same way as the White people. They point out that parents do not treat a six-month-old infant in the same way as they treat a 12-year-old child. There must be differential treatment adapted to the particular needs and stages of development. This, they say, is exactly what the policy of separate development does in the life of our nation.

I would agree entirely that all people cannot be treated in the same way. But the fallacy lies in judging a man not by the stage of development he has actually reached, but by the racial-cultural group to which he belongs. For example, here is an African, a cultured Christian gentleman, well educated, politically mature, able to hold his own in any group of cultured people whatever their race. But because he is an African, and for no other reason, he is treated differently to other similarly cultured and educated people.

Conversely you have White people in this country who are poorly educated, not very intelligent, uncultured and even, in some ways, uncivilised. Yet they have all the rights and privileges of a democratic state for no other reason than they belong to the White ruling race.

In other words, it is the exclusive nature of separate development which runs completely counter to the Christian view of brotherhood. We recognise that the majority of Africans in this country have not reached the same standards of civilisation, culture and education that the majority of Europeans have reached — that is obvious. But the doctrine of separate development, with its preoccupations with race above all other differences, makes it clear that even those that have achieved a high degree of civilisation, education and culture are still to be treated as primitive and uncultured.

Referring to the Christian answer which you have described— is it being applied in South Africa today?

MR. FREELAND: It is being applied in some instances. But it is not being applied by nearly enough people nor in full enough measure. For instance, many people who profess to be Christians and who know the Christian answer in the sphere of human relationships — that is, the answer which springs from the Commandment to love one's neighbour as oneself — find that their personal and race prejudices, as well as their fear of being non-conformists in their own particular group, are stronger motives than their Christian belief.

People must not only believe that the Christian way is the right way but they must be so completely convinced of this that they are willing to lay aside all other considerations in their determination to do what is right in the sight of God. Not many of us do this in every sphere and on every occasion.

To ensure that Christianity is fully applied, what concrete action should the churches take?

MR. FREELAND: The first action the Church must take is to ensure that it sets forth in its own life and fellowship the things it believes. The Church would make a far greater impact upon society if it was seen that the high principles for which it stands are worked out in concrete action within the Church itself.

We must face the fact squarely that there are more than traces of racial discrimination within the churches. These must be removed as soon as possible. Secondly, the Church must refuse to be intimidated by those who say that separate development is the policy of our country and therefore must not on any account be criticised or condemned.

In other words, the Church must make its judgments not on the basis of the prevailing political ideology, but on the basis of fundamental Christian principles.

Thirdly, the Church must always seek to assist those who are in any way

oppressed or treated unjustly. It must stand with those in need. This does not mean that the Church must take sides in any group or race conflict. The same love which is shown towards oppressed people must be shown towards the oppressor. That is why the Church continues to pray for and to show goodwill towards all in authority. It may be forced to condemn Government policy. It must never condemn the people who make up the Government for they, too, are our brothers made in the image of God.

These are the attitudes of the Church. What of everyday actions in the specific South African situation?

MR. FREELAND: I think the Church must beware of acting as a political pressure group or of being too closely associated with political movements. I would say with the greatest emphasis that I can that any action taken must spring only and directly from the Christian basis. We are not promoters of democracy, integration or apartheid.

We are promoters of the Christian way of life, and whatever action is taken must be firmly based upon Christian principles only. For this reason I would not suggest that any particular action must be taken beyond putting our own house in order as soon as possible, clearly declaring and applying Christian principles and seeking to win men and women of all races to an allegiance to Jesus Christ.

This may mean different types of action in differing circumstances, for example, direct pressure being put upon the Government to turn away from un-Christian legislation in particular instances, joining with others in the community in protesting against unjust laws and regulations - providing that the Church's protest is based upon its Christian convictions; and if necessary a clear stand by the Church on matters affecting Christian principle, even though such a stand might be looked upon by some as treasonable.

The apostles and many Christian leaders since apostolic days have sometimes been forced to say: "We must obey God rather than men." Many Christian churchmen

in Nazi Germany had to say this and were imprisoned and even executed as a result. We sincerely hope of course, that things will not come to this pass in South Africa. We are fortunate in having a Government made up of many who are convinced Christians, even though in my view they are drawing the wrong conclusions from their Christian beliefs.

But if it should ever come to pass that attempts are made to force Christian people in South Africa to act in a way contrary to their beliefs about Christian conduct - and incidentally, contrary to what the great majority of Christians in the world believe - then I can only hope and pray that such people will not fail their Lord and that they will be willing, if necessary, to suffer for what they believe to be right and true.

You don't believe we have reached that stage yet?

MR. FREELAND: We may be in the process of reaching it now. I don't believe we have reached it on a large scale. There are a few individuals who have had to suffer trial and imprisonment because they refused to act contrary to their beliefs and it is possible that this number will grow in the future.

What worries me is that many people have already succumbed to the temptation to be silent about what Christianity teaches, in the face not of the threat of legal action or punishment so much as of popular opinion, possible social ostracism within their group, and the loss of business support. Undoubtedly we are already living in an atmosphere of fear. Many people are afraid to speak up or to act in a way they believe to be right because they might land themselves in trouble of some kind.

Has Christianity a standpoint on the increasing trend to political violence among non-Whites in South Africa?

MR. FREELAND: Oh yes, undoubtedly I would say that Christianity must always oppose violence. Christ said that "they

"No take the sword shall perish by the sword." Violence can never be an outcome of brotherhood. Resistance there may have to be, but it should take non-violent forms. Those who participate in resistance must be ready to suffer rather than to cause suffering — in other words, to turn the other cheek. It is for this reason that the more extreme types of African nationalism have little time for Christianity or the Church.

But in South Africa hasn't it become extremely difficult for non-Whites to indulge even in non-violent political opposition? What hope can Christianity offer them for the future—because a number of non-Whites see violence as their only means of salvation?

MR. FREELAND: I think it would be much truer to say that there is little hope at this stage and indeed at any stage in the foreseeable future for success by violence. There is, however, great hope for the achievement of certain ends by non-violent resistance. If a people feel deeply enough about wrongs they are suffering they will be prepared, as many Negroes in the southern states of America are prepared today, to suffer through forms of passive resistance and to bring about social changes without the awful necessity of having to hate those who hitherto have denied them their full rights. In this way lies hope, for violence will only be met by violence, hatred by hatred, refusal to understand by refusal to understand.

But a genuine attempt to understand the point of view of the other man or group and to continue to show positive attitudes towards that man or group while actively protesting against what one believes to be wrong has often borne great fruit in past history. This method of "resistance in love" is achieving much in the United States today.

You referred earlier to the need for the Church to put its own house in order first. What is the position within the Methodist Church?

MR. FREELAND: In many of our circuits — groups of churches — racial nomenclature is used—European, African, Coloured or Indian. This is not a good thing. It will be necessary for many years — because of differences of language and partly of education, as well as the fact that the different races live apart in our country — to have separate churches for the general use of the different racial groups. These, however, must not be exclusive, and in theory they are not. In many of them multiracial worship can and does occasionally take place. And it is hoped that this will increase.

There is already an increase in the interchange of pulpits across the colour line, although at a slow tempo. A resolution has been passed this year by one synod requesting that local churches of all racial groups be linked together into single circuits so that at least the ministerial and lay leaders of those churches will meet together as members of the same multiracial circuits.

Another matter that worries us is the question of stipends for our ministers. These are not fixed, but there is a minimum which is different for each racial group. In principle this seems quite wrong. But the practical issues resulting from a sudden change might do more harm than good and perhaps the best way to approach this matter is to work towards the ideal.

My chief concern at the moment is that there is so little contact between the two racial groups on the level of the ordinary Church member. Our people are not getting to know one another across racial barriers, and without personal contact there cannot be full understanding. I feel that the Church must go very much further than it has already gone in encouraging and making possible inter-racial fellowship.

It is clear from what you say that the Methodist Church is moving towards breaking down its internal racial segregation. Has this the support of your lay members?

MR. FREELAND: Of all of them, no. It is difficult to know what proportion of our lay members accept the official attitudes of the Methodist Church in regard to race. However, our Church courts are entirely democratic and any member is at liberty to put forward any other view through Leaders' Meetings, Circuit Quarterly Meetings, Synods and the Annual Conference. This is seldom done. That does not necessarily mean that there are not a number of people who are opposed to the Church's standpoint. It may simply mean that those who are opposed to it realise that they would be unable to build a good case for their attitude on the Christian doctrines accepted by the Methodist Church.

There are few, if any, African congregations which would object to having White

people either in their pulpit or their pews. There are probably quite a number of European congregations with many members who would object to having an African in their pulpits or in their pews. In this sense the Africans are generally ahead of the Whites.

Do you envisage the possibility of large numbers of Whites leaving the Methodist Church because of the movement towards non-racialism?

MR. FREELAND: It is almost certain that some White people will leave the Methodist Church if we press on with our present programme towards non-racialism. How many will be involved is anybody's guess. But I believe personally that a smaller Church, without those who cannot accept what we believe to be our essentially Christian race policy, would be a more effective and therefore a stronger Church. Here, numbers are not so important as the things for which we stand

THIS article in the series, "The Church and the Race Problem" takes a different form. It was spontaneously submitted some weeks ago by an African minister of the Methodist Church of South Africa.

At the time he agreed that his name should be published, but he has since asked that it should be withheld. It is a commentary on our situation that he should have felt obliged to make this request.

Here is his moving description of what an African minister can encounter in the service of Christianity in South Africa.

To be a Christian is hard for a Black

"**I**T is hard for a Black man to be a Christian!" I have heard the township people say that so often that it no longer makes me angry. It is a saying that township people use to excuse their failure. Even the people in my Church talk like that. And they laugh when I tell them that it is also hard for a White man to be a Christian.

But let me begin at the beginning, and when I am finished perhaps you will understand why my people laugh at me and excuse their failure to follow Jesus Christ.

When I was sent to the Methodist Church in the township, I found that the young men and women in my congregation were turning away from the Church. They talked about "freedom" and "liberation" and they dreamed of how they would live when the White "herrenvolk" had been driven into the sea.

And they poked fun at the Church. "When the White man arrived he had the Bible, and we had the land. Now we have the Bible, and the White man has the land."

They laughed at what would happen to "umfundisi" (me) when "uhuru" came! What good was a Bible to people who were hungry at night?

TOOK BIBLE

Talk like this disturbed me. Did my people not know that Jesus Christ offered true freedom? Had no one told them that they belonged to a nonracial Church?

And so I went in search of them at their meetings, held late in the night. I took my Bible and the pamphlets on race relations

issued by my Church. And I told them of the conference of 1968 when someone had proposed that the Methodist Church should develop on separate Black and White lines. And how the conference had decided that "it is the will of God for the Methodist Church that it should be one and undivided, trusting to the leading of God to bring this ideal to ultimate fruition."

And God was good to us. He made them see that the way of Jesus Christ and His Church was the true road to freedom. And so they agreed to come back to the Church they had despised. My heart was glad that the foolish talk had stopped. My people had seen that not all White men are evil.

STRUCK DUMB

But four weeks later they called me to a meeting. They were angry. They mocked me, and jeered at the Bible and the minutes of the conference.

"Where are the White Christians? Where is the White minister? How can you talk of a one and undivided church when we always do everything separately?"

That night God struck me dumb. My mind was full of fine phrases I had heard from the White fathers of my Church — "gradual evolution," "ultimate fruition," "cultural differences," "spiritual unity," "patience." They had been so convincing when I heard them — but now they were like the sounds of clanging cymbals.

I was silent that night and ever since. I am trying to answer a question that is too big

for me: "Where are the White Methodists?"

And then I went to the synod of our Church. All the fine phrases again filled the air. But my heart was heavy. No White minister came to share the fellowship of the meals our people had prepared. They were given tickets to the White hotel across the road, while we went to the church in the township.

INSULTED US

And the night we had our social I again heard the question I cannot answer. This time it was from a young schoolmaster, who had promised his choir that they would sing to an audience of Black and White ministers. But only the chairman and secretary of the synod were there. "Where are the White ministers? Where were they? Where? Where? WHERE!" The children cried with disappointment.

But that was not all. The township superintendent also came to the social. He made a speech. It was to welcome my people — "the Natives." And not only did he insult my people, he insulted my Church, and laughed at those who needed her help. And the White ministers sat and listened.

I still do not have the answer to my question. When I spoke to one of the White fathers of my Church he spoke of a "time of transition" and reminded me of the "difficulties" of the White minister who would lose members of his congregation if he preached that racial prejudice was a sin! Now I was even more

confused. I had been taught that the Church must preach against what was sinful — but in the Methodist Church there seemed to be a different doctrine of sin. We must not upse White sinners, even if their sin of racialism drove my people away from the Church, and made them despise Jesus Christ! This was a strange doctrine.

GOD ASKED

Yes, it is hard for a Black man to be a Christian. It will always be so until I have found an answer to my question. Where are the White ministers?

And this question is not only a difficult one. It is one that makes me afraid. Sometimes I cannot sleep at night because of the haunting horror of the question that hounds me. "Where are the White Methodists? Where? Where? Where?"

And then I remember the time God asked a similar question.

"Cain said to Abel his brother, 'Let us go out into the field.' And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel, and killed him. Then the Lord said to Cain, 'Where is Abel your brother?' He said, 'I do not know; am I my brother's keeper?'"

Have mercy upon my people, O God. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.



Mr. DUGMORE
IN AN
INTERVIEW WITH BENJAMIN POGRUND

The Rev. Deryck P. Dugmore was born in Grahamstown 51 years ago, a descendant of 1820 British Settlers. His one-year term of office as president of the Conference of the Methodist Church of South Africa expired recently.

He holds a Bachelor of Arts degree of the University of the Witwatersrand and a Master of Arts degree of the University of Pretoria.

After teaching at Kilnerton Institution for four years he was ordained a minister in 1939 and since then has served in various Church educational institutions and in various Transvaal circuits.

He has been at Kilnerton for the past 10 years.

Some laws hamper work of Church

Has Christianity any answer to South Africa's racial problems?

MR. DUGMORE: Yes, I think it has. I don't think that Christianity in the first place provides a political science. But it has a great deal to say about personal relationships and I think these are basic in race relations. The fundamental doctrine of Christianity is the brotherhood of man.

You say that there is a Christian answer for South Africa. What exactly is it?

MR. DUGMORE: I have not been able to accept the teaching that the only Christian form of government is a democracy where every person has the vote. I believe in democracy. I think it is the finest form of government which has ever been evolved. But I think it would be a mistake to say that the pattern of democracy was created in heaven.

I would say that the Christian answer is far more than a political answer. Christianity is a religion which has applications in the political field, but Christianity basically speaks to the human race and it teaches us to respect every other human being and to treat him as a brother. I think the word "respect" is very important in Christian doctrine. Christianity has taught us the tremendous worth of every human soul. We Christians regard every person as the one for whom Christ died, and so any attitude which despises one's brother is diametrically opposed to Christian teaching.

What are the practical, everyday applications of this Christian answer in the South African situation?

MR. DUGMORE: Part of the answer is that Whites have to speak and address non-Whites with greater respect than they have been in the habit of doing in the past as well as making themselves

acquainted with the reactions of the people they are addressing. So many people unthinkingly refer to a Black man as a "boy," and every Black woman as a "girl," little realizing that the translation of the word "boy" into a Bantu language is a term which any man who has gone through the ceremonies of initiation from boyhood into manhood takes as a grave insult. I have heard of a shop assistant speaking to one of our senior African ministers and saying: "What can I do for you, boy?"

Incidents like that show a complete lack of understanding and do a great deal of harm.

Then in our church councils we have to learn to give greater weight to the opinions and feelings of African members, making sure that we give them adequate opportunity to make themselves understood and also to understand what is being said by others. Knowledge of African languages is very necessary in this respect.

A striking change takes place in an African gathering when their own language is used, and there is a different atmosphere when they discuss any matter in their own language. It is very much easier to get at their true views and reactions when proceedings are in the mother tongue.

I think it's very important to maintain links between the racial groups and for that reason most of our deliberations take place in English, but it is also very important to give a proper place to African languages. For this reason it is very profitable to allow the African members of the Church to speak freely in their own gatherings. This inevitably leads to a certain degree of separation in church activities which is not to be feared or deprecated but to be encouraged.

Another line in which this respect for African opinion can be demonstrated is by opening the higher offices of the Church to Africans. Every possible measure must be taken to demonstrate that Christianity is not the White man's religion but is every man's religion.

This is an interesting point which you have made about encouraging a certain degree of separation within the Church. Are you thinking of separation in the leadership?

MR. DUGMORE: I believe it is essential to maintain the unity of the Church by including representatives of all races in the highest courts of the Church. It would be fatal to practise any kind of separation which would keep-us ignorant of one another and without co-ordinated leadership.

What then of racial separation in the lower reaches of the Church, among the members?

MR. DUGMORE: A certain amount of separation in the lower reaches of the Church is inevitable at this stage. But in order to build up the family spirit of the Christian religion it is essential that provision be made for a type of practical education which will have the effect of introducing to one another the different members of the Church. We cannot really respect one another if we do not know one another.

Is the Christian answer which you described earlier actually being applied in South Africa today?

MR. DUGMORE: Yes and no. I think it is well known that the Dutch Reformed separate development whereas the Roman Church, for example, is in favour of Catholic and Anglican churches are not. But my own personal opinion is that tensions exist in all these churches in that there are certain members of the Church who oppose the process of integration and others who support it. Speaking for the Methodist Church, I can say without hesitation that the two trends are easily discernible.

I don't wish to imply that Christian brotherhood leads inevitably to integration and that separate development is unbrotherly, because I believe that there are many ardent supporters of separate development who have a strong brotherly feeling for members of other races.

I agree that the Christian principles of brotherhood and respect are not being applied generally in South Africa. This is easily understood when we consider the history of this country where we have a group of people on a higher cultural level coming into contact with a group of people on a lower cultural level.

and where there has been a history of conflict between these two groups. In these circumstances, a programme of education in race relations is essential.

What concrete means of action should be taken to meet the situation?

MR. DUGMORE: In general terms I have spoken of a programme of education in race relations. This means encouraging contact between the racial groups in study circles, in worship and in church government. I can see nothing wrong in partaking of meals together and of drinking tea together when we meet for a common purpose as at a church function.

But doesn't Government policy frown on this sort of thing?

MR. DUGMORE: Yes.

So what do you do?

MR. DUGMORE: Well, we proceed along our own lines because we believe that we are practising our Christian faith. I do not think that we are called upon to break the law. We merely go as far as we can within the law.

Are there any laws in South Africa which prevent you from carrying out your functions as a Christian minister?

MR. DUGMORE: No, but there are laws which make it difficult. While I am personally not in favour of "mixed" marriages, at the same time I do feel that there are cases of real hardship when "mixed" marriage have to be broken up because of the law, and where marriages between Coloureds and Whites, who are very close to one another, are prohibited by law. Race classification has resulted in some heartbreaking separations which I believe to be contrary to the law of God.

The restrictions on the entry of Whites into urban locations are often irksome but I have always encountered sympathetic treatment from officials when applying for Whites to attend religious functions in the townships.

Up to this point I have been speaking as a White minister. But I am bound to say that our African ministers and evangelists do encounter restrictions which hinder them in the carrying out of their duties. Those who have not been specifically exempted from curfew regulations may not legally enter a White area to pray for a dying person at night. Difficulties have also been encountered in obtaining permission for wives to accompany husbands to situations in an area where influx control operates.

In these situations, what is the duty of the minister? Must he defy the law?

MR. DUGMORE: He could take a chance. I would say he should. If called to a dying person he should go, and if he is arrested he should face the court and make his explanation. A minister whose wife is not permitted to live with him pegs away until he gets permission. So far, we haven't had a blank refusal for a wife to live with her husband, when he is a minister of the Church.

What is your view, as a Christian minister, of the increasing trend towards political violence among South Africa's non-Whites?

MR. DUGMORE: I deprecate any tendency towards the use of violence for the purpose of attaining political ends, as this appears to me to be diametrically opposed to the teachings of Jesus Christ.

What alternative can you offer non-Whites for achieving their aspirations?

MR. DUGMORE: The only logical alternative seems to be the one recommended by Mahatma Gandhi — passive resistance. But this should go hand in hand with a positive approach creating a sense of confidence in the political maturity and responsibility of the non-Whites.

Surely this has become difficult for non-Whites today? Even passive resistance, for example, is frowned on by the law.

MR. DUGMORE: You are right. I overlooked that. But there is something very powerful in the philosophy of passive resistance — something which cannot be crushed by legislation. Moreover, the positive approach will continue. The Christian way holds out the best hope of success.

Every Christian African will demonstrate in every possible way his essential dignity and sense of responsibility; he will develop his natural talents by every means available to him. New avenues of service are opening up in the African homelands as well as in the European areas. He will look to his brother Christians who have political and economic power to aid him in his struggles, and he will be aware that the Holy Spirit is still active in the world today. God did not retire after the abolition of slavery.

In regard to the Church, is there any racial discrimination or segregation within the Methodist Church?

MR. DUGMORE: While we are officially opposed to racial discrimination within the Methodist Church, it cannot be denied that it exists.

It cannot be denied that we have churches where non-Whites would not be welcomed and that there are members who oppose the present trends towards the "one and undivided Church."

There are different standards of living among our people and different rates of pay for ministers and evangelists.

The unwillingness to allow people of another race to worship with one's own people in church is unchristian. Under the circumstances I would not say that the differences in stipends are unchristian. It's an interim condition with its origin in history. History will correct it.

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political affairs of their day. They had such a wonderful spiritual unity among themselves that these other divisions did not amount to much as far as they were concerned.

The master was still master and his slave was still his slave, but their mutual relationship was governed by an entirely new spirit. When they went to worship they had a unity in Christ which transcended the social stratification or system within which they lived in their ordinary lives. In their ordinary dealings with each other, as master and servant, they acted on the basis of a newfound mutual respect.

This is aptly illustrated by Paul's letter to Philemon, whose slave, Onesimus, had run away to Rome and there been converted to Christianity. In the letter Paul says he is returning the slave to Philemon because he can now be received as a brother in Christ.

But there is no question of Onesimus ceasing to be a slave: he had to conform to the social and legal standards of his day and as a Christian he had to make restitution for the wrong he had done his master by running away.

Does this mean the Church should not concern itself at all with social, or secular, matters?

DR. GELDENHUYS: Yes, not directly. But if the Church succeeds in helping people to become true Christians they will generate this new spirit in their personal lives and make an impact on all areas of social and secular living. This new way of life will also help them to adjust themselves in whatever social relationships they may find themselves and influence it for the better.

Does this mean the Church should at no time protest against laws which may be in conflict with Christian principles?

DR. GELDENHUYS: No, I didn't say that. There is a distinction between the Church as an organisation and the Church as an organism. It is never the duty of the Church as an organisation to dictate to the State the kind of legislation that

should be adopted. But, on the other hand, it is always the duty of individual Christians — the Church as an organism — to influence the State, and witness to any wrongs they may find in it.

This brings me back to my theme. According to the New Testament, it is not in the first instance a question of having to remove all barriers, but of arriving at a new acceptance of one another within the different social situations in which we live.

Is the Church doing an adequate job in spreading the spirit of Christian brotherhood?

DR. GELDENHUYS: Yes and no. Yes insofar as the only real effort to create a spirit of true Christian brotherhood is to be found within Church life and among Christian communities. No, insofar as these efforts are often hampered to a certain extent by some differences among the churches on these matters. There is a lack of consensus as to the exact form and nature this brotherhood should take and how it should be practised in ordinary everyday relationships.

Is there any race discrimination or segregation in your Church?

DR. GELDENHUYS: Within the framework of the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk we have mother churches, consisting of European members, with separate congregations and church organisations for the different non-European groups such as Coloured and Bantu — with the latter subdivided, as far as possible, into ethnic groups such as Zulu, Sotho, and so on.

You spoke earlier of the slave and the master worshipping together. Is the division in your Church not in conflict with the spirit of Christian brotherhood?

DR. GELDENHUYS: No. It is merely an arrangement dictated by the practical needs of the situation.

What kind of situation?

DR. GELDENHUYS: The situation that people of different backgrounds, cultural levels and languages can more efficiently be served with the Gospel if they receive it through the medium of their particular languages, and within the sphere of their particular cultural backgrounds.

But in principle there can be no objection to services attended by members of the various races, if and when this can be arranged in such a way that it is edifying to all parties concerned.

Does this in fact take place?

DR. GELDENHUYS: It is regular practice, when a missionary is installed for European members to attend the service in the mission church. On other occasions there may be a joint service for a special purpose.

Do non-White members ever attend White services?

DR. GELDENHUYS: Yes. At funerals for example, the trusted servants of the deceased often attend the service in the European church. There are other occasions as well.

Should the Church have anything to say about legislation which has the effect of separating non-White families?

DR. GELDENHUYS: We have made a thorough study of the whole problem of migrant labour, and our synod decided at its last session to keep the spotlight continually on the system with a view to eliminating it altogether, or restricting it to an absolute minimum wherever possible.

Where migratory labour is inevitable because of the economic system, the period during which a worker is separated from his family should be as short as possible. And wherever possible families should be united.

But we also realise that these problems have ramifications into which the Church can have no final insight. Nor does it have all the acts at its disposal, so it cannot just make general pronouncements. However, as a system, we feel it can do

irreparable harm to family life and public morality if left entirely unchallenged.

Does the Church take enough action on matters like this?

DR. GELDENHUYS: That is a matter of opinion. The public usually does not know that we are in frequent contact with the various Government authorities on practical aspects of the application of State policy.

We do not believe in publicising our efforts because, in the South African situation, sincere attempts to rectify things which may be wrong according to Christian principles are often abused for unchristian purposes by elements interested only in achieving political gain.

Do Whites in South Africa have a sufficient feeling of Christian brotherhood towards non-Whites?

DR. GELDENHUYS: That is a difficult assessment to make. I can speak only of the relationship between Christians of our own community, and here I find no antipathy between Christians of our Church and those of our mission Churches.

There is much more general goodwill towards non-Europeans in our Church than is publicly realised. The fact that we do not always agree with the political views other people may have on these matters does not imply that we have any antipathy towards the non-European. Our extensive missionary work is proof of this.

What do you feel about the growing tendency among non-Whites to seek political change through violence?

DR. GELDENHUYS: As a Christian I can never condone violence as a method of redress. It can only do irreparable damage to existing good relations between the different sections of our population. And as far as I have been able to find out, responsible Christian leaders among the non-Europeans share this view entirely.

How should a non-White Christian who desires political change seek to achieve it?

DR. GELDENBUYS: By constitutional means — by organisation, by consultation and discussion, and by the orderly presentation of his case. Everybody agrees that all sections of our nation must get adequate political rights: differences of opinion arise only as to how this should be done. And these points are open to discussion. But it is not the Church's responsibility to make out a blueprint of how it should be done.

If he cannot organise, and if he cannot achieve change through constitutional means, is he still not justified, in terms of Christian ethics, in turning to violence?

DR. GELDENBUYS: At no time can violence be justified. Even Christians in Communist Russia have got to accept the system under which they live but, at the

same time, keep praying and working along constitutional lines for change in their country.

In our country, people who feel the system should be different from what it is still have every legal means open to them to persuade others to their point of view. If they cannot persuade others to accept their views then it remains their Christian duty to live as responsible members of the society, even under a system of which they disapprove. They must also be willing to give due consideration to the other side of the question.

Do you regard revolution generally as unchristian?

DR. GELDENBUYS: Yes definitely. But that does not mean that Christians should not be prepared to suffer, or use methods of passive resistance, if they honestly feel their basic Christian principles are being violated.



PROFESSOR KEET
IN AN
INTERVIEW WITH BENJAMIN POGRUND.

Professor Barena Bartholomeus Keet was born 78 years ago in Alice. He retired at the end of 1959 from the Chair of Reformed Dogmatics and Christian Ethics at Stellenbosch University after nearly 40 years' service.

Professor Keet matriculated at SACS, and after completing his Bachelor and Master of Arts degrees at the old University of the Cape of Good Hope, studied at the theological seminary of Stellenbosch, and then at Princetown University and in Amsterdam where he took a Doctorate in Theology.

After serving as a minister in Paarl and Graaff-Reinet, he was appointed Professor of Systematic Theology at Stellenbosch in 1920 when he was 34.

He was one of the champions of the use of Afrikaans in the South African Dutch Reformed Church and is the only survivor of the five scholars who first translated the Bible into Afrikaans.

Scriptures do not justify apartheid

Has Christianity any answer to South Africa's racial problems?

PROFESSOR KEET: I think it has the only answer there is — if it is only applied in practice. I regard South Africa as a multiracial country. We can't separate the different racial groups from each other. For each of them, it is their own homeland or adopted country. Christianity must show us the way to live together as human beings even if we are all not of the same race. I see Christianity as the fulfilment of Judaism and in the Scriptures both of the Jews and the Christians you have the basic commandment of love to God and to your neighbour, and the one not without the other. No mention is made of colour at all.

This is the sum total of the Ten Commandments which we share with the Jewish religion. I cannot see, though, how it can be fulfilled when you stand for total separation between the races. I know, of course, that people are prone to come up for their own and for their nation's interest. But we must learn to mix and to help each other and we can't do that if we are separated from each other.

People will say that one is talking unrealistically because people have got feelings — but it is just these selfish feelings which must be fought, which must be testified against and resisted. People cannot live together if they stand only for their own self-interest.

It is also claimed that not only are we different from each other, but there are also differences in colour and culture and civilisation. Colour plays a too-important part in our thinking. If you have even a touch of colour in you, you are ostracised. My standpoint is that colour has absolutely nothing to do with your humanity.

It is often said that South Africa is a Christian country. Would you agree?

PROFESSOR KEET: I would say that nominally our people do try to live up to that standard, but it is mixed up with so many other things, especially with the idea that the traditional policy in our country is that we should not intermingle. Under certain circumstances I can understand that. When you think of the Coloured and African races — that they

have been on a low level of civilisation—you have to be careful how you interpret mingling with them or having social relations with them

We must, however, try to adjust ourselves to the changed circumstances. There must be a change of heart. We must do some thinking again. People fear mixing socially with non-Whites — they fear that they will lose everything they have gained in the past 200 years. I don't think one can regulate social relationships by legislation. It's been tried in this country and it doesn't work. We went forward for so many years without legislation — now we try to regulate everything by legislation. That is the position sometimes taken up by the Dutch Reformed Churches. They say the Government must regulate social relationships.

But the Church must proclaim that social relationships are quite voluntary and must not be forced on people.

In which way is Christianity not being applied in South Africa?

PROFESSOR KEET: People will agree with you about Christianity in theory but will not put it into practice. This is something we are all prone to do. If we have high principles in life we are always running up against difficulties. Here in South Africa we have quite a lot of that. We pride ourselves on the fact that we want to do our best for the people who are with us. But then we also say that the Coloured man must be kept in his place and we make it very difficult for him to improve that place.

We are always talking about how much we do for the Natives, for their housing and so on. But when we come to the real basic question of personal relationships then we say that the only way to preserve our own culture and civilisation is to separate ourselves from the other races. Is there, for example, anything more unrealistic than the Family Life Conference held in Bloemfontein recently by the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk at which some very fine papers were presented on the importance of family life. Yet in the name of apartheid, thousands of families are broken up and we don't say a word against it.

Do you think that Church leaders are aware of the gap between the theory and practice of Christianity?

PROFESSOR KEET: In general, I would say certainly. But it is not very

difficult under certain circumstances to change your theory according to your practice instead of the other way round. And that, I'm afraid, is what many of our people are trying to do. Instead of standing by the principle, they are trying to justify the practice by the theory. Hence this never-ending search for seeking Scriptural justification for apartheid or seeking new descriptive terms such as separate development, differentiation or autogenous self-development. And it is not possible to find Scriptural justifications. They are nominally Scriptural, but the wrong interpretations are given. I have not seen any argument yet that convinces me that here is such a ground in Scripture.

Some people have even said that self-preservation is the first law of life. But a Christian ought never to say that because he has been taught to sacrifice himself and to give his life for others.

So the Church leaders do not really recognise that there is a deficiency in the practice of Christianity — until they reach a different viewpoint.

You refer to Church leaders reaching a different viewpoint. From reports, doesn't this seem to be happening on an increasing scale especially within the Dutch Reformed Churches?

PROFESSOR KEET: Yes, I think you can say that. You see it by letters in the Press, by the publication of the independent Church monthly magazine "Eru Verlig" and by the developments inside the Dutch Reformed Churches. People are coming out for understanding of what Scripture says. If we stand by what Scripture says then we must be willing to come out in the open for it. Many factors, however, work against this happening because the power which tradition has is very great and a person cannot easily change.

We of the Dutch Reformed Churches are standing quite alone in our interpretation of the Scriptures on the question of apartheid. We are not only standing against the convictions of other churches in South Africa, but we differ from the Reformed Churches of the world. All the Dutch Reformed Churches in this country stand for apartheid in the churches and in politics.

They support the Government in its policy and particularly in regard to total

apartheid if it can be done in a humane way. But I don't think they take into consideration what must lead to that — and even then excuse these methods and practices which increase tension between the races by saying they are only temporary. I don't think a good purpose can be served by bad means.

And I do not think it is true to say there is only one choice — between apartheid and integration. These are not the only possibilities — there are many other ways in which you can do it. In the first place, people say that Blacks will always vote against Whites and vice versa. But if we treat them on an equal basis this does not follow. Conditions in our country are vastly different from those in the rest of Africa. But then we must treat them in a fair way as people, as persons.

I think the Dutch Reformed Church leaders are very honest in their standpoint. But you can be very honest and yet be very wrong in your thinking.

Who would you say is leading whom in the Dutch Reformed Churches? The ministers or the members?

PROFESSOR KEET: The minister is the leader of the congregation. But some of them do not like to express their feelings on these matters. They just avoid them. In the political difficulties that we have in South Africa especially in times of stress — for example, during the Second World War — the same problem arose for ministers — how far to talk out on these issues.

Now that the colour question has become a political issue it has made it more difficult for the ministers. If a man should stand up and proclaim he is against apartheid he is called a Sap or whatever it may be and he is told he is not a true Nationalist.

I would say that many of our ministers feel as I do on the race issue. But they will not come out on it because they would make their positions very difficult. At the same time an increasing number of our ministers are in fact coming out into the open in spite of the support of most of their members for current Government policy.

Do you think there is any chance of the ministers significantly influencing their members?

PROFESSOR KEET: Oh yes, I do. Especially our younger ministers.

How would you describe Christianity's view of the increasing trend to political violence among the country's non-Whites?

PROFESSOR KEET: Christianity is against violence. Protests, yes, as strong as you can make them without using violence. Passive resistance is what I'm thinking of.

But even this sort of activity is difficult these days. What hope then can non-Whites be offered for achieving their aspirations?

PROFESSOR KEET: I would say the best chance for non-Whites is to work for change in the attitudes of the Whites. I think they will find more sympathy along these lines too.

Is there any race discrimination or segregation within the Dutch Reformed Churches?

PROFESSOR KEET: Theoretically no except in the Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk where non-Whites are specifically excluded from membership in terms of Article Three. But whatever the theory in practice there is segregation every day. Non-Whites are generally not allowed to attend the services of White people. This is not true of all our Churches but it is especially true in the north.

Just as you have social classes and distinctions you cannot just change this sort of thing. But it should not be a hard and fast rule. We should not exclude people. It should be on a voluntary basis.

How do you view the relations between the Dutch Reformed and the other Churches?

PROFESSOR KEET: There was a time when we met and discussed things but the occasions are getting less. I am hoping that we will resume our conversations with the other Churches because there is a great need for us to consult with one another.

The new interdenominational Christian Institute of Southern Africa is a good idea because it provides the opportunities for meeting. If the Churches do not meet on an official level then the representatives of the Churches must come together to talk things over.



ARCHBISHOP HURLEY
IN AN
INTERVIEW WITH BENJAMIN POGRUND

The Most Rev. Denis E. Hurley O.M.I. Roman Catholic Archbishop of Durban, was born in Cape Town 48 years ago, the son of a lighthouse keeper. He matriculated at a school in Maritzburg and then went to the Gregorian University in Rome for seven years' study in Philosophy and Theology.

He was ordained in Rome in 1939 and returned to Durban as a curate. Shortly after, he was appointed Superior of the Oblate Scholasticate for theological students in Maritzburg.

He was appointed Vicar Apostolic of Natal in 1946 and was consecrated Bishop of Durban in 1947. In 1951 he became the first Archbishop of Durban.

He was a member of the Preparatory Commission for the Ecumenical Council convened by Pope John, and is at present attending the second session of the Council in Rome.

Lip-service only to Christianity

Has Christianity any answer for South Africa's tangled racial problems?

ARCHBISHOP HURLEY: Christianity like any living faith, is supposed to provide a way of life — not merely a set of theoretical responses to theoretical questions but practical directives indicating how life should be lived. Also, a way of life should have sufficient power and inspiration to induce people to follow its norms even though these norms imply self-renunciation and sacrifice.

I firmly believe that Christianity has all these elements and can supply an answer to South Africa's race problem — provided that Christians and particularly Christian leaders, make a concrete and tangible application of their way of life to the South African situation.

This is not easy. It is not easy because any faith which lives for any time in history and accumulates conventions and cultural relationships is inclined to identify itself too much with these conventions and relationships. Its followers lose the overall deep and penetrating vision which should enable them to see

beyond and outside the conventions and compromises to which they have accommodated themselves.

Do you mean then that the purity of the Christian faith has been lost in South Africa?

ARCHBISHOP HURLEY: In a sense yes. It has been suffocated by identification with certain narrow cultural, national experiences. For example, the White man generally identifies Christianity with Western civilisation. When he finds another man not reflecting the values of Western civilisation he does not consider that his Christian practices should automatically be extended to that man. Personally, I have a theory for this. It's a limitation of the inborn natural love of the human race which is in all of us — it's a distortion of our human community instinct.

Christianity's basic directive is that stated by Jesus Christ: "Love God above all these things, love your neighbour as yourself."

But like all men in all ages, South Africans are inclined to restrict the category of neighbour to those who share their own characteristics — in the case

of White South Africans, the same culture and the same colour. The basic problem is to understand what neighbour means. In the light of Christianity, neighbour is every man.

But one often reads and hears that this is a Christian country. Don't you agree with this?

ARCHBISHOP HURLEY: It is Christian to the extent that we accept academically the basic Christian directive. But in practice we pay only lip-service to it. Many authorities today criticise the application of the adjective "Christian" to any culture, country or nation on the grounds that any of these is a combination of local qualities and defects with a Christian vision. Since this vision is always restricted by local blind-spots, these critics say that we are not justified in calling any human group as such a "Christian group".

As a way of life, Christianity is supposed to emphasise positive love for one's neighbour as the most striking manifestation of its influence. This is summed up in the Scriptural quotation: "By this shall all men know that you are my disciples if you have love one for another".

The obvious meaning of this is that Christianity should manifest itself not merely by a negative attitude of not wishing to harm other people, but by a positive attitude of going out of one's way to be neighbourly and kind. If we judge the vitality of Christianity in South Africa in the light of this statement, then Christianity obviously has a long way to go before it becomes a living force in this country because so few White Christians have any awareness that they should be going out of their way to manifest goodwill to their Black neighbours.

You are saying that there is a lack of Christianity in South Africa. What about unchristian actions? Are these also evident?

ARCHBISHOP HURLEY: Yes, we have positively anti-Christian attitudes and acts that flow from them. For example, the attitude that the White race must dedicate itself to its self-preservation even at the cost of offending against all norms of charity and justice. This is totally anti-Christian because the supreme moral value in Christianity is love for

mankind based on love for God. Therefore to place the self-preservation of a race, nationality or culture above neighbourly love is an inversion of Christian values.

The Afrikaans-speaking people particularly stress this matter of self-preservation. I might be wrong, but I recall statements that it is even part of the Christian duty of a group. But in view of what you say, do you regard it as anti-Christian?

ARCHBISHOP HURLEY: I sympathise very deeply with the self-preservation aspirations of the Afrikaans-speaking people. I have experienced it with Roman Catholic societies in Spain, Portugal, Ireland and Canada. But sympathy with an aspiration of this nature must not blind oneself to the fact that placing the preservation of a race or culture above the universal precept of love is unchristian and seems to fall under the judgment of this statement of Christ — "He that will save his life shall lose it, and he that shall lose his life for My sake shall find it".

What means of action should Christianity take to restore the purity of its faith in South Africa?

ARCHBISHOP HURLEY: The most effective remedy within a religious group when that religious group is failing to live up to its ideals is to give rise to a prophet or two who will face martyrdom to refresh and resharpen the presentation of the religious ideal. Unfortunately prophets are not at our beck and call. Failing prophets it is for the leaders of each religious community to evolve the best human means of bringing their ideals to life again within their community.

This involves a good deal of heart and head searching for the leaders themselves. This is a painful process because the leaders are very much the product of the community and reflect its conventions, its limited understanding of ideals and its fear of change. Along with a newer and deeper and clearer vision of ideals it is necessary to work out practical methods of communicating these ideals to the rank and file of the religious group. Theoretical communication by teaching and preaching is not enough. The community must be given practical experience.

of what it means to live its ideals in the situation in which these ideals have become clouded over. To sum up, there must be a good deal of learning by doing

What are these forms of action in everyday terms?

ARCHBISHOP HURLEY: One must admit that giving practical examples of what this means is difficult, particularly as learning by doing in the South African racial context means arranging opportunities for people of different races to acquire understanding of one another and to practise neighbourly attitudes towards each other

This is extremely difficult under present circumstances because of the degree of residential separation that has been effected and because of the dislike most people experience for breaking the law or what they imagine to be the law. However, if religious leaders worked up sufficient conviction about their own ideals — sufficient determination to make the living realities in their own communities — ways and means would be found for circumventing the difficulties and bringing together people of different races to share religious and human experiences.

Basically then, you say that, if to be Christian it is necessary to break the law, it must be done?

ARCHBISHOP HURLEY: Yes, that is so

Is there any sign of this spirit in South Africa?

ARCHBISHOP HURLEY: No, I see no sign of it yet

If there is no sign of it, doesn't it follow from what you have said that Christianity will be barren and purposeless?

ARCHBISHOP HURLEY: Yes, I would agree with that. This, of course, is no reflection on Christianity but on Christians

vival can mean anything from 1 to 99

This is a bleak picture of Christianity you have painted. What lies ahead?

ARCHBISHOP HURLEY: There is still the possibility that a number of

Christian leaders will realise how critical the situation is and throw caution to the winds in order to sound the alert and to rally what there is of Christian conviction and goodwill in the country in a sort of heroic effort to make Christianity relevant to the South African situation. I would like to expand my remarks and include other religious groups as well as Christians

I don't see anything like an effective movement to make Christianity relevant to the South African situation yet, but I do welcome the signs of profound concern being experienced in several religious denominations. The fact that this profound concern is becoming evident in many quarters of the Dutch Reformed Churches is one of the most exciting and promising developments in our country today. I do find that in regard to people of the Dutch Reformed Church faith, they reflect a certain admirable integrity in the cohesion of their faith with their social behaviour. This means that when they acquire a broader and deeper grasp of the implications of Christianity, they are inclined to go the whole distance and make applications in real life that must be termed heroic when considered in the light of their former convictions and the present situation of their people

Your description of Christianity's situation in South Africa is so gloomy that I wonder whether you see any hope of it surviving among our non-White peoples?

ARCHBISHOP HURLEY: Yes, I think it has hope of survival — although perhaps 10 per cent of our population. And, of course, my hope is based not perhaps on empirical reasons but on religious reasons. I do believe in the Divine content and the Divine power of the Christian faith and its ability to transcend the trickiest human situations. But I am also impressed by the direct and very moving faith of a great number of African Christians who do not allow bitterness and frustration to overwhelm their belief. You might say that African political leaders will have difficulty in reconciling what they experience with a Christian faith. But very often in history the faith has been preserved in the hearts of the common people in a sort of humbly instinctive way, and when their leaders have led them into a new political kingdom they in turn have been able to give back religious faith to their leaders.

Is there any racial discrimination within the Roman Catholic Church?

ARCHBISHOP HURLEY: There again you must distinguish between theory and practice. In theory there is not supposed to be. In practice, there is a great deal. In regard to worship, there is first of all the fact that White and Black congregations nearly always live in different areas and use different church buildings. When they use the same building there is the problem of language. And when they do share the same language, as for example Whites, Coloureds and Indians, and kneel in the same benches, their association does not survive their exit from the church. There is hardly any social mixing outside of the church. However, there is a certain degree of mixing and collaboration in Church work -- in Christian charitable action and in societies run by the Church.

The Church has many State-aided or private schools but they follow the pattern of racial separation. Legally, of course, today it is almost impossible to mix pupils of different races in the same school. Even if it were legally possible it would not be easy to achieve integration in schools because of the attitude of parents. The Church has never attempted any systematic breakdown of these racial attitudes in regard to schools or other Church institutions like hospitals or hostels.

Do you think this racial discrimination is consistent with Christianity?

ARCHBISHOP HURLEY: No, no, but I must confess to an evolution of thought in regard to the practices that prevail. Some years back I was much more impressed by the practical problem of getting people of different races to meet. Today my chief preoccupation is with the failure of the ideal. Some years back, had somebody inquired about the practices that prevailed in the Roman Catholic Church and its institutions, my tendency would have been to explain the difficulties in the way of integration. Today my tendency is to apologise humbly for our failure to give greater reality to

the Christian ideal in everything that concerns the Church.

Is the Church doing anything about the discrimination situation?

ARCHBISHOP HURLEY: The Church's biggest effort so far in re-educating its members has amounted to the publication of statements on the racial question by the bishops. These statements are rather theoretical but very much in keeping with what has been the trend up till recently in the Catholic Church when it is faced with a problem.

It has been inclined to issue a theoretical statement on the assumption that the members of the Church would spontaneously make the necessary practical applications. There is an obvious weakness in the system and the trend today is to insist far more on the practical education of Church members in the attitudes necessary to solve the problem. The more psychological and practical methods are found in church groups which aim at giving their members the practical ability of applying Christianity to the circumstances in which they live.

Should the Church do more than it is doing?

ARCHBISHOP HURLEY: I would say that we Catholic bishops as leaders of our community must give tremendous impetus to translating our theoretical statements into a living doctrine that will tangibly and concretely affect the daily lives of our people.

What is your view, or Christianity's view, of the increasing trend towards political violence among non-Whites?

ARCHBISHOP HURLEY: I can only deplore it. Although Christians in the past were responsible for a fair amount of violence, Christianity itself is opposed to violence. But if Christians fail to offer a positive solution to our racial problems, a solution inspired by deep religious principles, they will have little reason to complain if violence is turned against them.

The Church in South Africa

DURING this past fortnight, leading members of some of our largest Christian bodies have been taking a long, cool look at the performance of the Church in the context of the South African race crisis. In a series of articles published in the "Rand Daily Mail," they have discussed with remarkable frankness and perception the Church's contribution to this essentially moral question. By and large, they have found it falling sadly short of what it should be.

What is wrong with the Church? Why is it failing to provide the moral leadership that our people so desperately need in their bewilderment and apprehension? The Ministers we interviewed provided many of the answers. The Christian Church in South Africa is too much the product and not enough the moulder of its environment.

Down the years it has absorbed the social conventions and race attitudes of its surroundings. It is inward-looking rather than outward-looking. It is too complacent and unaware of the need for change in an age of change. It is more interested in maintaining its traditional patterns than in giving itself over to the service of a radically new world, rightly preoccupied with ending race discrimination.

No united force

Furthermore, the Church is divided within itself. Not only do the Dutch Reformed Churches stand apart from the rest in their interpretation of the Scriptures, but in all Churches tensions exist in that some adherents oppose the process of integration in South Africa while others support it. In other words the conflict that divides and weakens the people of South Africa is repeated in the Church, weakening that too.

It would be wrong to lay all the blame for this on the clergy. The laity must take its share. The leaders of the Church must have the effective support of their members if they are to exert a proper influence in the community. All too often

this support has not been forthcoming. Some of the Church's most courageous leaders have been left standing quite alone.

So many adherents seem to think that the Church exists solely for the purpose of providing them with comfortable religious feelings on Sundays. Their faith is a separate activity practised in isolation and for its own sake. At best, they practise religion in their private life but stop short of carrying it over into public life. Thus a gap opens up between private and public morality in South Africa. It is a Christian country tolerating un-Christian things.

Inwardly disturbed about this, many people seek biblical justification for the social attitudes that produce these things and some of the Churches assist them in the search. In the process the preservation of a national group and its culture is elevated above the Christian precept of universal love.

Inner weakness

The result of these inner weaknesses is that the Church becomes too much like a community it is supposed to be redeeming. It forms part of the establishment instead of leading the advance towards the kind of social order which the Christian faith demands. Too often, in the memorable words of Martin Luther King, it has remained "silent behind the anaesthetising security of stained glass windows."

This is the darker side. Fortunately there is a lighter side too. All the Ministers we interviewed spoke with great insight and compassion; indeed, their observations produced many very moving and inspiring passages. They all believed with fervour, that the Christian Church had a part to play in the unfolding drama of South Africa and they agreed that this was not in the espousing of particular political solutions but in the vigorous statement of those Christian principles which govern standards of human behaviour.

They understood the limitations of their work and the difficulties that must be overcome. And they indicated that the first task facing the Church was to set its own house in order.

Secondly there are encouraging trends of thought in the Dutch Reformed Churches, as one of the articles in our series brought to light most vividly. Few people outside these Churches realise the extent and depth of this movement but it is there and it is under way.

Remarkable event

Thirdly, even while the series was in progress, a remarkable event took place with the choosing by the Methodist Church of an African to be its President-elect — a most significant step by one of our major Churches in adapting itself

to present-day realities.

Summing up, it seems that what the Church needs to do is to stop hugging its faith to itself and to project it firmly and confidently into the community. It must gather up sufficient conviction to make Christian beliefs a living reality in South African affairs. It must re-establish Christian principles as a basis for our national conduct. It must make Christianity relevant to the South African situation.

These are tasks not only for the clergy but also for the lay members who make up the main body of the Church.

If it can bring itself to do these things, the Church will become the powerful force for good that is lacking in troubled South Africa today.

—THE EDITOR

