

COMMISSION OF INQUIRY
INTO THE SOUTH AFRICAN COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

HELD AT PRETORIA

ON 9 MARCH 1983

CHAIRMAN:

THE HONOURABLE MR JUSTICE C F ELOFF

COMMISSIONERS:

MR S A PATTERSON
MR T L BLUNDEN
PROF P OOSTHUIZEN
MR F G BARRIE

CHIEF INVESTIGATING OFFICER:

ADV K P C O VON LIERES SC

INVESTIGATING OFFICER:

ADV ETIENNE DU TOIT

SECRETARY:

MR M L MARAIS

ON BEHALF OF COUNCIL FOR THE

S A C C:

ADV J UNTERHALTER SC
ADV A GAUTSCHI

LUBBE RECORDINGS (PRETORIA)

/Idem

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ADV F A SOLOMON

LUBBE RECORDINGS (PRETORIA)

/VMD

WITNESS: REV P J STOREY

VOLUME 42
(P 2374 - 2424)

THE COMMISSION IS RESUMED ON 9 MARCH 1983

MR UNTERHALTER: Mr Andre Gautschi appears with me, and not Mr Peter Solomon as previously. The submission of The Reverend Peter John Storey which was handed in yesterday, has been amplified by certain annexures, which I understand have been placed in the files of the members of the Commission, together with certain missing pages, and I am sure that they are now in order, and I therefore call The Reverend Peter Storey, President of the South African Council of Churches to testify. 10

PETER JOHN STOREY, duly sworn states:

MR UNTERHALTER: You have prepared a submission, Reverend Storey? -- I have.

Perhaps the best way to proceed would be to commence and read it, and if there is any addition that you would like to make by way of comment or reference to the annexures, please do so in the course of your address. --- Thank you.

"I am an ordained Minister of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa and I am at present the Superintendent Minister at Central Methodist Church, 20 Johannesburg. I am also the Vice Chairman of the South Western Transvaal District of the Methodist Church and President of the South African Council of Churches.

I was born in Brakpan, South Africa in 1938 and was the son of a Methodist Minister. My high school education was at Pretoria Boys High School and Rondebosch Boys High School, where I matriculated in 1955.

I entered the South African Navy, trained at 30

Saldanha/...

Saldanha Bay and was commissioned as an officer.

I spent some five years in the South African Navy Reserve.

I attended Theological College at Rhodes University and graduated from the Divinity School with a Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy and Theology.

After ordination, I served at Bellville and Camps Bay Methodist Churches, thereafter spending two years on the staff of the Central Methodist Mission in Sydney, Australia as Director of the First Lifeline Centre in the world. 10

Since then my ministry has focussed in inner city work, spending five years as Superintendent of the Inner City Methodist Mission in District VI in Cape Town, four years as Minister of Civic Centre Methodist Church, Braamfontein with Chaplaincy responsibility for the University of the Witwatersrand, the College of Education and the General Hospital. I am now in my sixth year as Superintendent of Central Methodist Church (Johannesburg that is) and 20 the Central Circuit in Johannesburg, with ministries which include two day-care centres for children, a residential centre for alcoholics and drug addicts, a restaurant for the aged and lonely of the city, a block of flats providing 'sheltered accommodation' for pensioners and disability pensioners, as well as pastoral responsibility for some 1200 members. On my return from Australia, I founded Lifeline in South Africa, and am the Honorary Life President of Lifeline Southern Africa. 30

During/...

During my ministry I have also served as a Naval Chaplain and Chaplain to Robben Island Prison. In 1970 my Church appointed me as founder and first editor of Dimension, the first national newspaper of the Methodist Church, and I performed that function in addition to my pastoral duties for 9 years.

CHAIRMAN: Before you leave the question of your association with the Methodist Church, I am going to interrupt you to ask you whether you could possibly give me the figure of membership of the Methodist Church, the most recent figures of membership of the Methodist Church? --- Not off-hand but ..

Can you at some stage give it? -- By all means.

"I am involved in a ministry of evangelism and apart from international journeys on behalf of Lifeline or the SACC have participated in a number of preaching missions in different countries.

My first links with the SACC began at the beginning of the 1970's when the Methodist Church appointed me as a delegate to a National Conference. I was thereafter appointed to sit on two SACC committees: Mission and Evangelism, and a committee dealing with Publications. After having attended one or two National Conferences I became a member of the Executive Committee and later was made one of the Vice-Presidents. In 1981 I was elected President for a period of three years.

By way of introduction, My Lord and members of the Eloff Commission:

"I come before you as one who has been placed first/... 30

first by his Church and then by the South African Council of Churches into the position of President of that Council, but first and foremost as a Minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Because I believe that there is no greater privilege and (no greater) responsibility than that of ministering the Word of God and shepherding His people and that whatever position a man may hold there is none more ultimately binding upon him than his vows of ordination, it is as a simple Minister of the Gospel that I shall 10 speak.

Equally because of these convictions I believe that I am first and always and last a servant of Christ. His task must be my task, His calling must be my calling, His way must be my way; any other loyalty whether to nation, family, people or party must be subservient to this and must be looked at in its light. I know that on the Day of Judgment, all that I have lived for will be tested against this measure. Neither I nor anyone else can live up to this high 20 calling, I am sure of that, but in my theology the word 'grace' has a very special place. When I fail, God in His infinite Grace offers me His forgiveness and calls me again to follow His Son. That is the wonder, the surprise and the supreme 'improbability' of the Good News. Christ is God's sign of forgiveness, of new beginnings and of new life for those who fail and the only hope for me or for any person is to live in this consciousness of being forgiven and accepted and in the power and joy and freedom which this forgiveness brings to live again for Him. 30

dupes of these forces.

But I have waited in vain to hear one word about the other makers of South African history in our time: the inventors of apartheid. It is as if the history of South Africa and that of the SACC has unfolded in a benevolent vacuum in this country. Nowhere in these analyses of our role in South Africa is there any recognition of the pivotal part played by successive South African Governments since 1948. It may be argued that it is the SACC and not the 10 South African Government which is under examination, but to examine our role without taking proper cognisance of the main context in which it has been lived out is as meaningless as, say, trying to understand the life of Abraham Lincoln without mentioning slavery or to study the theology of Dietrich Bonhoeffer without mentioning Nazism.

From evidence given thus far, a stranger to South Africa would be forgiven for assuming that the land in which the SACC's life developed was an idyllic 20 place governed by the most passive government in the world and surrounded by enemies with evil intent. I wish to paint another picture: who we are and what we have tried to do arises out of two great realities:

The first is our understanding of the Scriptures and the Gospel of which we are messengers. Bishop Tutu has made this point with great power.

The second is the context of our apartheid society.

We have been called to witness to Christ in a 30 society/...

I believe very sincerely in Our Lord's Words that when we know the truth, 'the truth will make us free and in responding to some of the hard and cruel things that have been said about us, (as a Council) I will try to use the truth as I have seen and understood it. If there is at times some anger in what I say it will be not out of a sense of personal grievance but rather because I believe that the truth has been violated, the Church misrepresented and Our Lord grieved.

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It has been a strange experience sitting here while a picture of the SACC so different from my own experience has been painted by others. I have listened with a sense of unreality as some witnesses particularly have described this body to which I belong and its history as part of a web of intrigue, serving dark intentions and designed to bring chaos to our land.

The SACC that I know is a different one. It is an attempt against the heavy odds of prejudice, the captivity of our past, and the oppression of our present to be a light on a hill and a transforming leaven in a land of division, hopelessness and fear. The greatest weakness of the case brought against us seems to me to be that history has been read with one eye closed. As I have listened to evidence given, I have heard much of the 'total onslaught' - a political slogan which has been given an almost Biblical authority. I have heard of the strategies of international communism and its surrogates. I have heard of how we, the SACC, have become allies or at least willing dupes/...

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society stained by a great corporate sin, for that is what the apartheid doctrine is.

It is a sin against God the Father who wills that all should be His sons and daughters;

It is a sin against God the Son who died to reconcile all people to God and to each other;

It is a sin against the Holy Spirit who makes all one in the unity of the spirit in the bonds of peace.

Once accept that apartheid can be right anywhere and you say that Christ's work of reconciliation on the Cross has failed everywhere. Accept that apartheid can be valid anywhere and you say that the divisions of humanity are in the end more powerful than the saving work of Him, of whom St Paul said:

'For He is Himself our peace. Gentiles and Jews he has made the two one in His own body of flesh and blood and has broken down the enmity which stood like a dividing wall between them; for He annulled the law with its rules and regulations so as to create out of the two a single new humanity in Himself, thereby making peace. This was His purpose, to reconcile the two in a single body to God through the Cross on which He killed the enmity. (Ephesians 2:14-16)'

"I want to declare to this Commission that the key to our life as a Council of Christian Churches will be found in these two realities: seeking to be bearers of the Biblical message of the Kingdom of God in a society dominated by this great denial of the Kingdom.

There is not one of us who relishes this task. Bishop Tutu has often enough spoken of his wish that he was riding ponies in the mountains of Lesotho conducting confirmations. I would love nothing more than to spend all my time preaching, serving the people of my congregation and helping them to demonstrate the caring of Christ in the centre of Johannesburg. It is out of a sense of deep obedience to the Gospel and concern for the pain of our land that we do what we do. 10

That is why it has at times been difficult to listen to what has been said about us here. It is part of the Christian's burden to be gripped by what Bishop Tutu has called the 'divine intention' and to know that you are an unprofitable servant whose obedience to that intention has often failed."

That is something we know we have to live with.

"That is a fact which we recognise and must live with, trusting in God's forgiveness. But when the intention itself is misrepresented, the motives 20 are questioned and other less worthy intentions and motives are attributed to us, we must say, no. That is a lie which cannot go unchallenged.

It has been a special privilege for me to be part of the life of the SACC. I see its achievements and its failures and above all I have lived with its dilemmas and I say without any doubt at all that those dilemmas arise supremely out of seeking to be a messenger and model of God's intention for South Africa. While others have lived in compartments 30

of language and race and therefore as prisoners of South Africa's history, the Council and its member Churches work towards God's future for South Africa and try to live that future now. In doing so we have discovered much of the pain and joy of togetherness and we know that God wants that experience for all of South Africa's people.

The pain of our togetherness is real: my wife works at the SACC. She has two sons in National Service and she works with women whose sons are somewhere 10 on the other side. She has learned to cry with them and they with her, and that is part of the pain of togetherness.

But the joy outweighs it. 'There is a special joy', says Jesus (a blessedness) 'for those who hunger and thirst to see right prevail and they shall be satisfied'. So even when we fail or others misrepresent us, even living as we do at the intersection of so much of South Africa's agony, we have learned to rejoice. 20

We cherish both this pain and this joy for all South Africans. In all that we have done, we have said and will continue to say:

the road which South Africa walks is a road which leads ever more deeply into division and destruction. It is a road away from God. Please walk down that road no longer. We call all South Africans to a new and higher road. It is a far better thing to pay the price - however high - of seeking God's intention of unity for us all. 30

It is on this road that the SACC believes it has been called to walk. If that road should lead to a Jerusalem and a Cross, so be it. It is the road that Jesus walked and beyond the Cross there is always an Easter."

I would like to speak now, M'Lord, about the Evangelical Heritage of Social Concern, as a response to the charge that our stance in the SACC is not so much theologically but ideologically based, and our aims secular rather than spiritual.

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"Mr Cain sought to establish an all pervading Marxist plot in which we were agents or at least dupes. General Coetzee drew inferences that our aims were secular pursued under a spiritual cloak.

Now, no charge can be more damning than that this - that we are not what we claim to be and that we use theology and the Bible for other less worthy ends.

In responding to these charges I will not cover ground already dealt with by Bishop Tutu. I intend however to prove out of the tradition of just one of our 20 member churches that our concern with socio-political, economic, educational and human rights issues is not inspired by any secular party or pressure group or ideology, neither are its roots to be found in the relatively recent thoughts of liberation or Black theology exponents.

I am a Methodist and an evangelical."

At this point, M'Lord I have provided for the Commission just a little booklet entitled "Our Methodist Roots", which was written by myself, but which is an official

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publication/...

publication of the Methodist Church to be used in confirmation classes, and it has already been given to you, Sir.

"I claim the 'born again' experience of salvation by faith with every bit as much fervour as did Mr Cain. I believe with him that the supreme commission of the church is that of winning men and women to be disciples of Jesus Christ. The founder of the Methodist Church was, together with some of the notable preachers of his day, the instrument whereby God brought about the greatest religious revival in the 10 history of the church. John Wesley (1703 - 1791) was the most effective evangelist and discipler of new Christians since St Paul, and none has equalled his achievements since. The Evangelical Revival of which he was the torch bearer, was rooted firmly in the Biblical doctrines of salvation."

A list of those main doctrines are in "Our Methodist Roots".

"In the 53 years between his own conversion and his death, John Wesley preached 52 000 sermons (that is two or three times each day), he rode the equivalent of nine times around the world on horseback up and down the British Isles, wrote 230 books and pamphlets, and established thousands of 'societies' or small groups of new Christians. He knew personally 10 000 'class leaders' who were committed by him to meeting with their classes once each week for prayer and instruction in the faith. Much more can be said,"

It is one of my favourite topics,

"but I simply wish to establish that in the history 30
of/...

of the church, Wesley stands second to none in his passion for 'saving souls'.

Yet the founder of the Methodist Church is also regarded as the pioneer of Christian social concern or social action as we know it today. This social concern, far from being divorced from personal religion, grew hand in hand with the religious revival. Just as Wesley rebelled against the impersonal religion of his day with his emphasis on a personal conversion experience, so he also challenged the determinism 10 of the Deist and Calvinist views of society, which pertained at the time. For Wesley there could be no personal salvation without social consequences".

I may say here, just by way of interpolation, that it was a common thing for Bishops of the Church to preach at that time that the poor had been allocated their place by God, and they would receive their reward in Heaven. John Wesley says:

'Christianity is essentially a social religion; to turn it into a solitary religion is to de- 20 stroy it. This command we have from Christ: "he who love God loves his brother also".'

"While Wesley preached men and women into the Kingdom of God, he simultaneously fought to bring English society more into conformity with that Kingdom. He promoted every crusade for justice and protested every infringement of it. He attacked slavery and proclaimed liberty to be the 'right of every human creature as soon as he breathes the vital air'. He protested the legal system and called judges 30

'tyrants' /...

'tyrants'."

M'Lord, that was 200 years ago, and then you could be hanged for more than 160 offences in the England that Wesley lived in, including sharing a gentleman's rabbit, breaking a tree on a gentleman's estate, was a hanging offence.

"He denounced war as the foulest curse he knew, 'a horrid reproach to the Christian name'.

He was the apostle of the poor and denounced the abuse of money and privilege. The liquor traffic, political corruption, religious persecution - 10
all received his attention. He was forbidden to preach in prisons for a long period because of his criticism of the conditions he found. He used the press, the pamphlet, the pulpit and the private letter", all the means of communication available to him in those days.

"He wrote to the Prime Minister and the King and his attacks on the social evils of his day were pungent and hard hitting.

Some examples:

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On Slavery:

'It is better that all these islands should remain uncultivated forever; yea it were more desirable that they were altogether sunk in the depth of the sea than that they should be cultivated at so high a price as the violation of justice, mercy and truth ..'

He was talking about the West-Indies.

"On Slave Merchants:

'Thy brother's blood crieth unto thee .. thy 30
hands/...

hands, thy furniture, thy house, thy lands are at present stained with blood ...'

On the Slave Laws:

'Are any laws so binding as the eternal laws of justice? Give liberty, cried Wesley, to whom liberty is due, that is, to every child of man, to every partaker of human nature. Let none serve you but by his own act and deed, by his own voluntary choice. Away with all whips, all chains, all compulsion.

Be gentle toward all men'. 10

"William Wilberforce was a spiritual son of John Wesley".

He was touched by the evangelical revival, converted in that revival.

"Wesley's last letter written six days before his death was addressed to Wilberforce urging him on and containing powerful comments about both slavery and racism. Among the things he said were:

'Unless the Divine Power has raised you up to be as Athanasius contra mundum, I see not how 20 you can go through your glorious enterprise in opposing that execrable villainy which is a scandal of religion, of England, and of human nature. Unless God has raised you up for this very thing you will be worn out by the opposition of men and of devils, but if God be for you who can be against you?'

And also in that letter he says:

'Reading this morning a tract wrote by a poor African I was particularly struck by that circumstance 30

that.../

that a man who has a black skin, being wronged or outraged by a white man, can have no redress, it being a law in our colonies that the oath of a black against a white goes for nothing. What villainy is this!'

So it may be said, My Lord, that in the last days before his death, the concern which was uppermost in Wesley's mind was that of slavery and the racist feelings which supported it.

"Wesley was not a pacifist but he said: 'When war breaks out, God is forgotten'. In his famous letter to Lord North the Prime Minister of England, Wesley warned him against trying to oppress the American colonies with military force:

'I cannot avoid thinking (he said) that an oppressed people asked for nothing more than their legal rights, and that in the most modest and inoffensive manner that the nature of the thing would allow. But waiving all considerations of right and wrong, I ask, is it common sense to use force towards the Americans? These men will not be frightened; and it seems that they will not be conquered as easily as first imagined - they will probably dispute every inch of ground; and if they die, die sword in hand'.

"He perceived the American War of Independence as something of a civil war:

'These countrymen, children of the same parents, are to murder each other with all possible haste to prove who is in the right. What an argument is this! What a method of proof! What an amazing/...

amazing way of deciding controversies!'.
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"He made it quite clear that even prime ministers stand under the authority of God. In his letter to William Pitt seeking some controls on the unfettered distilling of liquor .."

and in those days one out of every five of the buildings in London was a gin shop, he says:

'Suppose your influence could prevent distilling and make it a felony, you would do more service to your country than any prime minister has done in one hundred years. Your name would be precious to all true Englishmen as long as England continued a nation. And what is infinitely more, a greater monarch than King George would say to you: "Well done good and faithful servant".'

"Bearing in mind the fact that William Pitt was an alcoholic, this was a remarkably courageous letter. Wesley attacked privilege, declaring -

that he would place a tax of five pounds on every "gentleman's horse".

He could not understand why gentlemen had to have more than one horse,

and would abolish 'useless pensions especially those ridiculous ones given to some hundreds of idle men as governors of forts and castles, which forts have answered no end for above these hundred years, unless to shelter jackdaws and crows.

"On the question of obedience to the State, Wesley made it clear in his address to King George II in 1774 that the Methodist people were loyal subjects

with/... 30

with a proviso:

'We cannot indeed do either more or less than we apprehend consistent with the written Word of God; but we are ready to obey your Majesty to the utmost, in all things which we conceive to be agreeable thereto'.

So clearly, for Wesley, obedience was something he would wish to offer, so long as he could do so and remain consistent with the Scriptures.

"These and many other examples can be quoted to prove 10 that for Methodists there is no personal gospel and no social gospel, there is only the whole gospel, expressed both personally and socially. The Evangelical and prophetic ministries of the Church go hand in hand.

But further, Wesley and the early Methodists engaged themselves actively in attempting to change the system, through involvement in education, medicine, economic co-operatives, and the establishment of the first 'poor banks' (in the world) of the 20 period. John Wesley founded the first free medical dispensary in England; he began home industries for the poor; his Benevolent Loan Fund was designed to 'stimulate the expression of initiative and independence on the part of the underprivileged' and the Strangers Friend Society which had branches in every major city in the country was instituted 'wholly for the relief not of our society but of poor, sick and friendless strangers'."

You could not get relief from the Strangers Friend 30
Society/...

Society if you were a Methodist. You had to be somebody who was a stranger.

"Disgusted with the poor quality or total absence of education for the poor, Wesley established Kingswood College for the children of the tin miners of Cornwall". And there is a Methodist School by that name in this country, which is named after that first Kingswood.

"I have been particularly amazed to hear that the SACC has mischievous designs because of its desire to be involved in the emergence of the Trade Union movement in this country. That would be as inappropriate as suggested that a father should not be involved with his child. 10

The Evangelical Revival gave birth to Trade Unionism. The 'Tolpuddle Martyrs' - whose formation of an agricultural union and subsequent deportation to Australia (for many years until they were pardoned finally) is regarded as the turning point in the Trade Union history (and those Tolpuddle Martyrs) consisted of three Methodist local preachers, three (Methodist) 20 Christian workers of the Tolpuddle Methodist Chapel and one unbeliever, who was later converted in prison and became a Methodist Sunday School superintendent. This Christian influence continued so that as late as 1910 a delegation of British Trade Unionists visiting France and representing 500 000 English workmen were carrying banners with the words 'Jesus Christ Leads and Inspires Us' and 'We believe in the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man'. In 1922 Mr Lloyd George said that 'the movement which 30 improved/...

improved the conditions of the working classes, in wages, in hours of labour, and otherwise, found most of its best officers and non-commissioned officers, in men trained in the institutions which were the result of Methodism'.

"If the Commission finds the words and actions of the SACC echoing in many respects the words and actions of John Wesley and the early Methodists, then it is no accident.

Those of our member churches (our SACC member churches) who have their roots in the British Isles are all inheritors to a greater or lesser degree of this noble commitment to social concern and action. That is why our patience has been sorely tried in having to listen to talk of 'ecumenical Christianity having far more in common with Marxist concepts than Biblical Christian ones' (Mr Cain); or: 'the Council has degenerated into a political pressure group with a political gospel undergirded by a political theology' (General Coetzee). These men betray a sad ignorance of Church history, but Mr Wesley would have found a familiar ring in their words: let there be no doubt that Wesley's words and actions brought upon him continually the wrath of the authorities. They never set up a commission of inquiry into his affairs".

My Lord, here I refer to the setting up of the inquiry, and not in any way to the Commission itself.

"But the magistrates of the day did engage mobs to break up his preaching meetings, and he was pilloried and criticised by the established church which

deeply/...

deeply angered by what it saw as a threat to the status quo. The judgment of history, however, is that the Wesleyan revival gave birth to a social, economic and political revolution in England, which saved it from the violent revolution which took place 30 miles away across the English Channel in 1789. I have gone into this at some length in order to refute the absurd notion that the actions, involvements and attitudes of the SACC, because they are concerned with human rights, justice and liberation of the 10 oppressed, etc, must necessarily have their breeding ground in Marxist or for that matter any other ideology. These very same concerns were the hallmark of powerfully spiritual men who lived 200 years ago and 100 years before Marx was heard of. I resent hearing my Christian heritage being cheapened by naive inferences reminiscent of McCarthyism."

Now to the SACC and its member churches, a response to the charge that we are not representative of our member churches.

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"If the charge that we are not representative of the Church intends to convey that the SACC does not represent every single Anglican, Methodist, Lutheran etc, then of course it would be correct, but by that criterion, the South African Government is far more unrepresentative of the people of South Africa than the SACC is of its constituency.

The supreme policy-making body of the SACC is its National Conference, and if I may use my own denomination as an example, I wish to indicate that 30

it/...

it is represented there in as democratic a manner as anybody could possibly hope for. The delegates to the SACC National Conference are elected by the Annual Conference of the Methodist Church, who, in turn, consist of delegates elected from the ten district Synods, who in turn consist of delegates elected from hundreds of Circuit Quarterly Meetings in which every Methodist congregation in the Republic is represented.

It has been suggested that even with this process 10 (and similar processes for most member churches) those who attend National Conferences consist of the more radical elements in a demonimation. We respond again from the Methodist experience:

The Methodist representatives (and that is to the SACC National Conference) in 1982 included the President of the Church, the Secretary of the Church (who is its chief administrative officer) and an ex-President. Out of the 12 Methodists appointed to represent the Church on the different divisional committees 20 (of the SACC), three are past Presidents of the Church and 4 are heads of (major) departments. Such people can hardly be accused of being part of the radical fringe.

It is relevant here to refer to the procedure which is followed at our (SACC) National Conferences. The Conference always begins with an opening service at which the President delivers his address, usually on the chosen theme of that particular Conference. Each Conference lasts some 4 to 5 days and 30

each/...

each day of the Conference begins with a Bible study led by an appointed Conference Chaplain, together with the celebration of the Eucharist according to the rites of different member Churches.

One of the first items on the agenda is the General Secretary's report, which gives account of his stewardship for the past year, and raises those issues which he believes to be relevant for the Churches.

There are invited speakers at each Conference who make major plenary addresses usually related to 10 the theme of the Conference. Speakers in recent years have included a wide range of Christian scholars and leaders both local and international. Some of them have been the Lutheran Archbishop of Sweden, the Most Reverend Sundby, Mr Michael Cassidy of African Enterprise, Dr Allan Boesak, Dr Howard Yoder, the leading Mennonite Peace Scholar, Dr Wilhelm Wille of Evangelische Missionswerk (in Hamburg), Rev E Tisani, Father S Dwane of the Federal Theological Seminary, Professor A P Hunter of the Witwaters- 20 rand University, Dr F O'Brien Geldenhuys of the NGK, Pastor J du Plessis, head of the Apostolic Faith Mission, Mr Martin Conway of the British Council of Churches, Dr John Pobey of Ghana, the Rev Joe Wing of the United Congregational Church, Ds Dawid Botha of the NG Sendingkerk and Dr Hayes Rockwell of St James Episcopal Church, New York.

The Conference then divides into groups in order to hear and consider divisional reports on the work for the year, and any recommendations which may 30

have/...

have emerged from divisional committees.

Resolutions coming before the Conference arise out of the following sources:

Church representatives (who are part of the plenary session of the Conference and participate on it fully; any one of them can produce a resolution either from their church or arising out of debate); Divisional or Cluster Report Groups (when these divisional groups come back they will bring recommendations to the plenary session at the Conference); 10 Plenary discussion on the General Secretary's report (which may give rise to resolutions); (and then simply) Plenary debates (themselves).

The procedure in handling resolutions is that a screening committee is elected at the commencement of the Conference and it is their responsibility to coordinate and tidy up the wording of any resolutions put forward, and to present these resolutions to one or more plenary sessions of the Conference, usually on its last and second last day. Resolutions 20 are passed by a simple majority as is the case in most member churches. But the Conference is competent to seek the mind of the Churches on a particular issue, if it regards the issue as one on which the Churches may well be heavily divided. In any case all resolutions which relate to the Churches are then sent to their Assemblies, Synods and Conferences for consideration."

I think it would be true to add there, My Lord, that all resolutions except those which may be strictly

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domestic/...

domestic in the life of the Council, go to the Churches, not simply on issues relating to the Churches, but resolutions on public issues as well.

"The election of the officers of the Council is of course in the hands of the National Conference, and in recent years it has become the custom that the President should be elected by a clear majority rather than a simple majority, that is, by a total of at least 51% of all the votes cast.

Lest it still be argued that the decisions of the SACC National Conference and the SACC in general do not represent member Churches, we quote from the minutes of the Annual Conference of one of those member churches in 1981:"

I am going to quote two sections from the minutes of the Methodist Conference:

"First, a general resolution, with regard to the SACC and its officers, and then the specific replies of the Conference to a 'memorial' protesting SACC actions and attitudes. The memorial came from the Witbank circuit of the Methodist Church, a circuit located in the area which was until recently ministered to by the Rev Fred Shaw, the founder of the Christian League of Southern Africa".

Just to explain, My Lord, that in the Methodist system any circuit in the country may short-circuit the usual route of bringing resolutions to the Conference, if they believe it to be very important, they can send a memorial direct to the Conference. First of all then, the general resolution by the Methodist Conference in 1981, on the/...

the SACC.

'Conference recognises the disquiet occasioned in some congregations by actions or statements alleged to have been made by the South African Council of Churches or its officers;
deplores the systematic attempt of certain bodies to present the views of the SACC out of context and against a false background;
calls upon Methodists not to accept uncritically the innuendos and half-truths that are frequently purveyed by the media;
declares its support for the SACC in its opposition to apartheid and its commitment to non-violent change, while reserving the right to criticise or disagree with particular statements or actions of the Council or its officers;

reaffirms its repeated calls for the South African Government to:

- a) express its commitment to a common citizenship for all South Africans in an undivided South Africa;
- b) phase out the pass laws which restrict freedom of movement for Black people;
- c) stop forced removals and resettlement immediately; and
- d) move towards the introduction of a common education system for all South Africa;
and therefore identifies itself with Bishop Desmond Tutu in his call for these reforms.

Conference affirms its belief in the personal integrity/... 30

integrity of the former General Secretary, Mr John C Rees;

Conference commends the SACC Executive for appointing in 1979 a Deputy General Secretary with special responsibility for financial control, and instituting an independent inquiry in 1980 into the management of its financial affairs;

Conference expresses its confidence in the representatives of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa on the Praesidium and National Executive of the 10 SACC and its appreciation of the meetings which are convened from time to time between Church leaders and the Council Executive;

Conference resolves to confirm its membership of the SACC'.

"The response to the Witbank Memorial was as follows:

'Conference receives the memorial of the Witbank Circuit Quarterly Meeting and responds as follows to the issues raised:

a) Legal Aid: Conference endorses the provision of legal defence by the SACC for persons accused of certain crimes, noting that -

(i) a person is to be presumed innocent until proven guilty;

(ii) the provision of an adequate defence advances the cause of justice and does not imply approval of the alleged crimes;

(iii) over 70% of persons who have been so defended have been acquitted.

b) Conference supports the consistent stand

- of the SACC against violent action by whomsoever it is committed.
- c) Disinvestment: Conference notes that the SACC does not advocate disinvestment and recognises the right of member churches and members of those churches to advocate views both for and against this policy. Conference reaffirms its stated acknowledgment that members of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa hold widely divergent views on this issue and its belief that every 10 person has the moral and Christian right to hold and express such views and the duty to hear and seriously consider the views of those who differ. Conference notes that the statements in para 4 and 5 of the Memorial are not policy statements of the SACC.
- d) Conference notes that the SACC communicated to the heads of Frontline States its appreciation of the help afforded by them to refugees within their boundaries and urged them to continue such help and not to return such refugees to South Africa. Conference believes that humanitarian aid and pastoral care should be extended to all victims of political conflict and therefore supports the action of the SACC.
- e) Nyanga Squatters: Conference notes that the SACC provided funds to the Transkei Council of Churches for the assistance of squatters returned to that country, and that the Transkei Council of Churches paid bus fares for 30 squatters/...

squatters to return to Nyanga when the Government of Transkei refused to accept them. Conference believes that this action was motivated by humanitarian considerations and was not a "clear cut effort to challenge law and order and to encourage civil disobedience".

- f) The SACC did not organise a memorial service for the official of the Communist Party named in the memorial'.

That also comes from the 1981 minutes of Conference of 10 the Methodist Church of Southern Africa.

"I believe it is worthy of note that these decisions came from a Church within which the Christian League of Southern Africa, funded by the South African Government and dedicated to the destruction of the SACC had free reign to propagate its opinions for a number of years. The Rev Fred Shaw who founded the League was a Methodist minister and I for one defended his right to propagate his views, until it became clear that the methods he was using were repugnant and 20 unworthy of a Methodist minister.

It is significant that in spite of the Christian League exploiting every supposed weakness of the SACC and in spite of its voice being raised repeatedly at Methodist Conferences, and in spite of heavy attacks on the SACC from politicians and the SABC, no expression of support could be more unequivocal than that of the Methodist Conference of 1981.

What is true for the Methodist Church, holds true for the other multi-racial Churches, and even 30

more strongly in the Black Churches (who are members of the SACC).

Much has been made of apparent tensions between member Churches and the SACC. During one of the submissions I was quoted as giving some of the reasons for disquiet. I wish to make it clear that in referring to these reasons, I was talking about perceptions which some people within the member Churches had of the SACC and calling for us to be aware of them and to ensure that such perceptions were groundless. 10

An example of this is my reference to the role of the staff at National Conferences and my own insistence that staff be required to play a 'low profile' role at these Conferences. I need to say that that requirement has been honoured."

My concern, My Lord, was simply that at one National Conference a number of staff members seemed to speak fairly often, and I think that there were those who at that Conference, expressed the feeling that that was not altogether proper. Staff do have that freedom, when invited by 20 the President to do so, but it seemed that we had a little more staff input than we might have had, and I raised that point because I believe it to be most important that nobody should be able to say that a National Conference of the SACC is in any way directed or manipulated by the staff of the Council, because they are servants of the Churches, and servants of the National Conference. So I want to say, that requirement has been honoured, fully ever since then.

"On the question of tensions everything depends 30
on/...

on the nature of the tensions: if the tension were a destructive and divisive one, it would have been quite impossible for a church such as the Methodist Church to pass the resolution quoted above. The fact is that the tension is a creative one.

The Council stands in two relationships to its member churches. On the one hand it is required to reflect their position on certain issues, and to undertake tasks given to it by those churches to discharge them efficiently. 10

On the other hand because the National Conference is an ecumenical body, delegates from different denominations are exposed to one another's insights and new thinking emerges. In such situations the Council is often in position to speak prophetically to its member churches and call them to examine new areas of Christian responsibility or enter into new areas of concern.

A good example of this is the establishment of the Justice and Reconciliation Division. This di- 20
vision was set up after a request by the Methodist Conference of 1970. This Church (the Methodist Church) together with a number of other member churches, repudiated the granting of monies to liberation movements involved in violence (that is by the World Council of Churches' Special Programme to Combat Racism), but was nevertheless deeply challenged by the overall aims of the Programme to Combat Racism".

Later in my submission, My Lord, I will talk more about the all-important distinction of aims and methods. 30

"And/...

"... and so requested the SACC to set up a department (they did not call it Justice and Reconciliation then, but it became known by that name) to work out strategies for bringing about change within and beyond the Church in the Republic. Now, in the process of its work, the J & R Division has frequently challenged the churches and has stimulated them to address some very controversial issues. In this way the J & R Division does reflect the churches' concern (on the one hand) and prods the churches into action (on the other). This is a healthy tension, symbolic in many ways of the relationship between the SACC and its member churches.

Further, mention must be made of Church Leaders' Meetings. Constitutionally, the SACC is under no obligation to call such meetings, but such is our relationship with our member churches that often, when a matter of grave or critical importance needed to be considered, we have invited their leaders to meet with our Executive in order that we may take counsel with them. With great grace and considerable inconvenience they have come and on each occasion have assured the SACC of their solidarity and concern. Thus, in crisis, the Council never stands alone, and the obvious reason for this is the theological one given by Bishop Tutu: 'We belong to the Church of God'."

We are part of the Church. We are simply the Church acting in another way.

"Of course there are members of our (member) churches/...

churches who strongly disagree with positions taken by the SACC. By and large they are the same people who disagree with positions taken by their own churches too. Unless such people leave of their own accord, we will hold them in our fellowship. We will shepherd them, visit their sick, (not their side, although it does involve visiting their side) baptise their children and continue to love them. The church is not a political party that throws its dissenters out into the cold. But we will also continue to 10 challenge their prejudices and minister to their fears in the hope that they will become free. But such people comprise a very small percentage of the whole: 80% of our people consist of those who are downtrodden and for whom the SACC is a beacon of light in a deep, dark night."

Then, the SACC's International Partnership, a response to the charge that because we are in the main overseas funded, we are manipulated from overseas.

"In this very fallen world control of the purse 20 strings often implies power. Money is a mighty weapon with which to manipulate men and circumstances, but I would remind this Commission that we are dealing here not with the world, but with the Church. This money comes from or through the only body in the world which openly places itself under the authority of Jesus Christ, who 'though he was rich became poor for our sakes', and while the Church is not infallible, it is not only an insult but a failure in intelligence to apply the same cynical suspicion to such 30 a body as would be applied, say, to a political

pressure group.

Let us explain first why the SACC is so heavily overseas funded. The conclusion that some would have you come to is that it is because the Council does not have the Church support and I have already demonstrated that this is not the case.

The fact is that the financially independent member churches (that is those who are not themselves dependent in some measure on overseas support for their own work) are 80% Black and therefore 80% de- 10
prived and poor. In my own denomination the 20% White and more affluent constituency, together with our incredibly generous Black membership are hard put to subsidise our own mission and extension work and maintain numerous churches in outlying areas who could not support themselves. The Methodist people raise some R300 000 annually for just this purpose and there are simply no funds left over. The only churches in this land with money to spare in any quantity are the exclusively White churches 20
who are not members of the SACC.

Thus while our member churches are committed to the SACC it is difficult if not impossible for them to be financially committed to any great degree. Our overseas partners recognise this unique situation in South Africa, otherwise they would certainly not be so free with their support given the kind of demands which are made upon them from all over the world. They recognise that the member churches provide an infrastructure of costly caring at the local 30

(church)/...

(church) level across the land"

and that is where their giving and their spending takes place. And so our overseas partners' gifts -

" .. allow for a more flexible ministry by the Council across denominational boundaries and into areas of emergency and crisis.

Now, let me respond to the suggestion of manipulation: during the late 1960's and early 1970's something of a revolution took place in the philosophy of aid and development, not only among the churches 10 but (I think) in the secular world as well. In the church many 'receiving churches' (as they were called) in the Third World expressed the view that overseas aid was far too often accompanied by a patronising and manipulating approach, which robbed the recipients of their dignity and their independence."

If I may say, My Lord, that this was a very painful debate, churches overseas which for years had been supporting mission work were suddenly confronted with this kind of charge, that this is a way of still maintaining your hold over 20 us even though colonialism is finished and so on, and it was a painful debate, and therefore painfully arrived at, there came a new philosophy.

"This voice was heard in Europe and America and it became generally accepted that for such grants to have integrity they must be under the real control of the recipients. This philosophy is one which governs grants to the SACC and is observed with an almost obsessional conscience by our partners (overseas).

"It is also the philosophy which governs the grants made by the World Council of Churches to certain liberation movements, grants which have drawn vociferous criticism precisely because they have been given apparently 'without strings'.

I want to suggest that our detractors cannot have it both ways: in one breath they attack the World Council for failure to maintain controls on monies given to liberation movements, and in the other breath, accused the South African Council of being manipulated through receiving similar grants. The fact is that those of us who have very serious reservations about the grants made to liberation movements and who have expressed such reservations find that our case is weakened by the fact that we ourselves believe so strongly that grants made to us should be entirely within our own control.

It may be helpful to remind the Commission again of the process which brings these grants to our Council. The Council decides on the projects and areas of need which will require funding and these are placed before our donor partners, either separately or in gatherings especially arranged for this purpose each year. The needs are carefully motivated and explained and then it is up to our partners to indicate which areas in the budget they would wish to support. I readily concede that it could be argued that an indirect control might be exercised through the willingness to support some of the projects and the unwillingness to support others. In our experience, however/...

however, only one or two small projects have ever failed to find at least some support, so the weight of the evidence indicates that our partners trust us to know what needs to be done by the Council here in South Africa, and that trust extends even to projects which have not necessarily gone well and which may ultimately have failed.

An even greater flexibility has been introduced over the last 18 months or so, where partners have been willing to fund 'clusters' of divisions rather 10 than separate divisions so that money could be moved within those clusters from a more well supported division to a more needy one.

Under this general charge of manipulation through foreign funding, I would also wish to respond to the suggestion that the establishment and operation of the Joint Screening Committee is an attempt by the SACC, in collusion with its partners overseas, to control all foreign moneys flowing into the country for church work. Here a very helpful ad- 20 ministrative process has been misrepresented in a most cynical manner. Before the Joint Screening Committee was established, the only churches who benefitted by the generosity of overseas Christians were those who had direct relationships with their parent churches, especially in Germany."

Large churches, for instance like the Methodist Church, have no financial links with any overseas body and receive no money from overseas bodies, and it was these churches, which had these links - 30

" .. together with their parent churches who wished to see others benefitting from this assistance as well. Thus the ecumenical spirit was tested at the point where the sincerity of most enterprises is found wanting: in the matter of finance.

Also before the Joint Screening Committee was established, overseas churches found themselves besieged by a multitude of persons and projects desiring assistance. Without any co-ordination it was impossible for them to know whether they were not duplicating 10 aid already given by another agency, or whether they were neglecting very deserving projects which did not have the same persuasive advocacy overseas.

It was out of these two concerns, the one deeply ecumenical and the other administrative that the Joint Screening Committee was set up to co-ordinate requests for aid and to screen them at the only point where projects could be accurately evaluated, that is in South Africa.

Without the Joint Screening Committee most of 20 the German related churches in South Africa today would have more money than they could possibly use and any other projects would have withered on the vine.

The Commission needs also to know that although the Joint Screening Committee has performed this very useful function for a number of years now, there is still no sense in which it is the 'sole channel' of Christian aid to South Africa. Vast sums of money still pour into this country for Christian work 30

without/...

without passing through the JSC.

I do not wish to spend the time of this Commission on complaints directed at decisions of the JSC. The Commission will have a sufficient understanding of human nature to know that when an appeal for funds is turned down for however good reason, it is not easy to dissuade the unsuccessful applicant that his project was not the most important one in the world.

Thus I must put to this Commission that the sug- 10
gestion of overseas manipulation and an attempt to dominate church funding into this country is not only groundless but again is an attempt to cheapen and devalue an amazing story of Christian charity, which has brought untold benefits to the people of our land. One would expect that if there are those who resent the upliftment and new dignity and hope which this money has brought to the poor and oppressed in our land, they might at the last acknowledge the significant infusion of foreign exchange which it 20
represents, and which has come through a body accused of seeking to sabotage the South African economy.

I have had the privilege of meeting a number of partner church representatives all over Western Europe and I am hurt on their behalf for the way in which they have been misrepresented. Wherever I have gone I have found a deep and sensitive concern and the phrase which I heard most often has been 'it is a privilege for us to share at this painful time in your history in making some contribution towards peaceful 30

change/...

change in your land'."

MR PATTERSON: Excuse me, Reverend Storey, in paragraph 14 on page 26, the last line, you say:

"Vast sums of money still pour into this country for Christian work without passing through the JSC". What evidence is there to support that? --- Well, I would take for instance a body such as Africa Enterprise, which is an evangelistic body, a para-church organisation which is supported from within this land, through donors in different churches, it is an interdenominational body, 10 which also receives overseas funding support. That is the kind of example, without passing through the Joint Screening Committee.

I would suggest, would not that 'vast' overstate the position? --- It may, Sir. The quantity is something I am not aware of, large amounts, I would rather say. I am happy to make that change. My Lord, more could be said on this, but we will hopefully have before this Commission a number of people representing overseas partner churches, and I am sure they would be able to speak 20 to this. May I continue?

CHAIRMAN: Please do. --- Caring for the 'Least of His Brethren', a response to the fourth allegation that our involvement in caring is selective and therefore hypocritical and unworthy of a Christian body.

"I want to show that like so many of the other accusations against the Council, this one reveals an ignorance of the way in which the Church works, but also that it reveals in our accusers the very weakness they charge us with, that is, a secular 30

and/...

and therefore non-theological understanding of the Church.

As indicated in our original submission, it is important to note that the Church expresses its mandate through different agencies and at different levels. Some activities are more appropriate to the local congregation, others to regional groupings of churches and yet others to national church bodies or church councils.

When the SACC is accused of emphasising socio- 10
political issues to the detriment of, for instance, evangelism, this simply demonstrates an ignorance of how the Church works. As an evangelical Christian I would have nothing to do with the SACC if that were a justified criticism. The fact is that a National Council of Churches is not the appropriate instrument for evangelism. That instrument is the local congregation and as a Minister of a local congregation, that is what I am about in my pulpit and amongst my people week by week. 20

In the Book of Acts, there is no record of evangelism happening at the Council of Jerusalem in AD 47: this first Council in the history of the Church had only one item on its agenda and that was a debate about the exclusivity or universality of the Gospel. The major issue was about whether the Gospel was for Jews only or for Gentiles as well, and if Gentiles were to be admitted, then under what conditions. The Church already had its 'verkrampes' who saw their cherished Jewish exclusivism crumbling and 30
their/...

their traditional way of life threatened. They advocated a form of influx control which would both control the number of Gentiles who would come into the Church and who would ensure that those who did would first become good Jews and live by the Jewish way of life. Paul and Barnabas led the 'verligte' attack with firsthand accounts of the power of Christ amongst Gentile congregations. The 'verligtes' won the day and the first of many controversial statements made by Church Councils was published, setting the 10 Church's face firmly against exclusivism, racism and cultural imperialism.

What was appropriate for the early Church is still found to be appropriate today. By attempting to isolate the Council from the total Body of Christ, instead of recognising it as one level of the Church's ministry and life, our detractors would give the impression that we spend all our time dealing with socio-political issues rather than 'preaching the Gospel'. In my own capacity as a Christian 20 minister I have preached some 300 sermons over the last two years (I regret I cannot match the record of John Wesley in any way) and perhaps those who have so conscientiously analysed press reports of SACC officers' speeches, should do the same with our sermons."

I think it would make nonsense of their finding. I am not questioning the scientific basis of their finding, but simply that examining only what the press speaks of what people say in a certain context about certain 30

subjects/...

subjects, seems to me does not give a very accurate picture of the totality of that person's belief and what that person stands for.

"The fact is that the SACC is the appropriate church instrument to deal with National issues, particularly those which impinge upon the lives of all our member churches. When such issues are raised, they are raised very often by representatives of the member churches, either at the National Executive or the National Conference. 10

One example of mandating to an appropriate body is that of the Church Unity Commission. Four of the SACC Churches (Anglican, Congregationalist, Methodist and Presbyterian) have advanced further than the other member churches in plans for unity (for structural unity). At a certain point in this development, the SACC recognised its pioneering significance and so matters of 'faith and order' in respect of Christian unity were delegated to the Church Unity Commission. It could now be argued that the SACC does not spend 20 nearly enough time discussing united hymn books, baptismal certificates, orders of service etc, but these issues are discussed in separate meetings of the Church Unity Commission, which operates as a kind of sub-group of the SACC",

and that is a very vague term, because structurally the link is not there, what the SACC said, these member churches amongst us have reached this point; let them talk further, because what they will produce by way of plans for unity is going to help all of us. So there is a very close 30

dialogue/...

dialogue between Church Unity Commission and SACC. The Church Unity Commission regularly reports into the SACC Executive on its progress, and the SACC refers to the Church Unity Commission tasks which are not necessarily related only to those four uniting churches, for instance, the production of a common baptismal certificate for a wide range of churches, was done by the CUC on request of the SACC, and that is the way that relationship works. So we see the CUC as the appropriate instrument at this moment in history to handle the nitty-gritty problems of church unity. 10

"I want to refer more specifically to the charge of selectivity because much of the anger directed towards the SACC is linked with its concern for political prisoners and their families, politically accused persons etc.

Of course the Council is selective. Any body in the world faced by limited resources on the one hand and vast need on the other must decide how best to use its resources, and that implies choice. 20

Our Lord Himself was selective in who He healed, who He spent time with and who He could train as disciples. One of the more common complaints against Him was that His choice was misguided. 'He eats with publicans and sinners', they said. His mission was to bring life to the world, (which is a very big mission), yet He spent a disproportionate amount of His time in this way. He too was accused of hypocrisy.

But worse: He seemed quite deliberately to seek out/... 30

out the most unpopular outcasts of society: the lepers of life who were not allowed near the towns, had bells (hung) round their necks and had to cry 'unclean, unclean' if anyone approached them. These are the people Jesus touched, embraced and healed. I ask the question: who are the lepers of our land? Who are those who even ministers of religion are afraid to visit, lest some should think they too are diseased? Ask our Dependants' Conference Field Workers what it costs them in police harrassment 10 for merely visiting an ex-political prisoner or the family of a detainee. For some of them it has meant becoming detainees themselves.

In Matthew Chapter 25: Jesus made it quite clear that those who fed, clothed, visited, welcomed, the least of His brothers and sisters, were ministering to Him. John Wesley said to his followers, 'Go not only to those who need you but to those who need you most'.

I put it to this Commission that in this land of 20 many wounds and much suffering there is none so vulnerable, none so helpless, none so utterly alone and without hope as a man or woman, boy or girl in detention without trial. These are certainly among the 'least of Jesus' brothers and sisters'.

But there are other reasons as well why the Council has committed itself in a special way to those who are politically accused.

Each of our member churches has its own mechanisms for responding to the poor. In my own 30

denomination all communion collections are used for this purpose and form a discretionary fund over which I have control and which I disburse either through my social worker or at my complete discretion, to those in need in areas of food, shelter, clothing, employment etc. Given the fact that a similar provision is made in most congregations across the country, the total disbursements must be enormous. At the same time, the resources of any one congregation could never meet the kind of costs that are in- 10
volved in, for instance, legal defences.

We know that the State offers some facilities for legal defence in criminal cases, but the political accused is in many ways in a different category.

I have mentioned already that local clergy (who are usually Black) (and by that I mean that the majority of people who are being charged politically in this country are Black persons and their local ministry is therefore usually a Black person) are fearful of harrassment if they show identification with 20
'politicals' or their families. The Church has a special concern for the political accused because he is very often being charged for something which would certainly not be regarded as a crime in any democratic country. Further, the possibility of justice being done in an area which is often clouded by very strong emotional factors is less likely without the kind of defence which requires specialists in this field."

This, My Lord, is not to to cast aspersions in any 30

way/...

way on those who offer their services as Pro Deo defences, but I understand that there are very few senior counsels on that roster.

"Another factor is that the Security Police have been known to continue to harrass ex-political prisoners by, for instance, interviewing their new employers and warning them of the danger of employing such persons, thus almost always ensuring that they become unemployed once more.

When you add to this the fact that many 'politicals' 10 have been robbed of their normal rights through detention for long periods before their trials, you have a cumulative disadvantage which the Church has every right to try to rectify.

Again let it be emphasised that the beginnings of a ministry such as Dependants' Conference, arose out of the sense of concern and yet at the same time of helplessness which the churches felt in coping with the magnitude of such a problem. Once again the Council's actions here are a case of the church doing 20 its work through the appropriate instrument.

Now, we do not expect the authorities, especially the SA Police, to welcome this work. It represents and unwelcome intrusion into an area where, armed with draconian security legislation, they expect to have complete control. Rather, it is to be expected that an attempt would be made to cast suspicion on our motives. Be that as it may. We would rather be suspected by the Police for defending people who may be guilty than condemned by the conscience

of the World for detaining people who may well be innocent."

We come now, Sir, to Relationships with the World Council, a response to allegations that we are agents of the World Council of Churches.

"The word 'agent' has more than one meaning. It can be nothing more than a point of communication such as the local newsagent, or it can have the sinister connotation of being a front for some nefarious aims or designs. 10

We are a fraternal Council, affiliated with the World Council of Churches. The point has already been made that we cannot be members of the World Council because only churches can belong. The Council of Churches therefore has no vote at World Council Central Committee meetings or World Assemblies.

We are of course the agency through which the World Council of Churches will seek to direct its communications, although where member churches of the World Council have officially appointed correspondents 20 or ecumenical officers, the World Council also communicates direct with them.

I could, with Bishop Tutu, go into great length in correcting the totally false impression of the World Council of Churches communicated by the SABC and other biased media in this country. It seems superfluous to defend a body which, with the Vatican, is the most universal and prestigious Christian association in the World, but some insights from my personal experience of the World Council may be relevant. 30

At/...

At the last World Assembly of the WCC held in Nairobi seven years ago, I attended as part of the Press Corps as editor of the Methodist newspaper Dimension. Then during the totally unjustified period of restriction on the travel of our General Secretary, I have attended two Central Committee meetings of the World Council, the first being in Dresden, East Germany, and the second being in Geneva.

It may be of interest to this Commission that the whole World Assembly in Nairobi was endangered at 10 the last moment by the refusal by the Kenyan Government to grant visas to either the South Africans or the Russians, who were to attend. With a matter of days to go before the Assembly was to open, the World Council informed the Kenyan Government that it would summarily cancel the venue and move the entire Assembly to London unless those visas were granted.

It may be of further interest that the World Council, accused so widely of Marxist domination, created a major crisis for the East Germany Communist regime 20 by accepting the invitation of the Protestant Churches of East Germany to hold its 1981 Central Committee meetings there. The Communists were faced with the dilemma that if they refused permission for some 500 very high-powered Christians to come to Dresden, their claims of freedom of religion would be revealed as false. On the other hand, if they were to grant permission, they would be exposing their officially Atheist society to a very powerful Christian influence, made even more prominent by the attendance of some 30

500 journalists.

In the event, they had no choice but to approve the meetings and to make the best of them. Their Minister of State for 'Religious Affairs' (note how Communist States try to compartmentalise religion from ordinary 'secular' life) was charged with the task of pulling the wool over Christian eyes and he made a valiant effort to do this: every night the red carpet was rolled out and he entertained lavishly, but nobody I spoke to was fooled. The sharp contrast between 10 the lavish entertainment and the conditions under which the ordinary people were living, told its own story. The Police State controls on our movements were in marked contrast to the unbelievable warmth with which we were welcomed everywhere."

I wish I could tell you more about this, because of the very moving and exciting experience.

"The city of Dresden saw a religious revival with 'closet Christians' coming out into the open and identifying themselves joyfully". 20

The kind of thing that happened would be, you would be wearing your World Council badge and you would be catching a bus and an old man would get up from the front of the bus and come all the way down and say in a loud voice: 'I too am a Christian'. This is the sort of identification that was happening.

"But by far the most significant impact of the Dresden meetings was their contribution to peace. East German Christians were meeting face to face with those whom they had always been told were warmongers and 30

were/...

were discovering that the desire for peace is universal among Christians. The result was the burgeoning of a grass roots peace movement centering on Dresden and spreading across East Germany, with thousands of young Christians now refusing to do military service. Thus I believe that that particular meeting of the World Council Central Committee created as much embarrassment for a Communist regime as has its Programme to Combat Racism created an embarrassment for the South African Government."

10

THE COMMISSION IS ADJOURNED

ON RESUMPTION:

PETER JOHN STOREY, still under oath:

CHAIRMAN: Page 36, paragraph 9. Will you proceed? ---

Thank you, My Lord. Before I proceed, if I could just refer again to the question that was directed to me a little earlier by one of the Commissioners, about page 26 and paragraph 14, where there was a question on the word 'vast'. I am happy to leave it at 'large', but I chose, I think, an unfortunate illustration, and I have just myself 20 been checking up on Christian bodies that do receive money from overseas, outside of the ambit of the Joint Screening Committee, and they do include large amounts to the Roman Catholic Church, large amounts to the Luterhan Churches, which come direct; large amounts to the Church of the Province of South Africa, the Anglicans, which are used in some of their less wealthy diocese, and large amounts to the Moravian Church, as well as amounts which come through an arrangement to a body called the Christian Development Trust, in this country, upon which various churches 30

are/...

are members of that trust. I think that is simply to amplify my reply, and I think these are better examples by far than that of Africa Enterprise. My Lord, then to continue, paragraph 9:

"The impression that the World Council focuses almost exclusively on socio-political issues is also a false one. Obviously if it were to shrink from these issues it would be betraying the Gospel, thus the issue of peace was prominent at Dresden, and the Lebanon crisis at Geneva last year. (I was deeply impressed 10 by the fact that) Instead of simply pontificating on the Lebanon crisis, however, a task force was sent at great risk to themselves (by the World Council Central Committee, certain members of that Committee) to enter Beirut and to return to the Central Committee meetings to report at firsthand what was happening there under the Israeli bombardment. The task force included the Archbishop of Sweden, an Orthodox Metropolitan from the United States, a leader of the French Protestant Churches and a Middle East Community 20 Worker. But even greater prominence was given at Dresden to the debate on the place of women in the life of the Church and the report on Christian medical work around the world (which was an analysis of all missionary hospital work being undertaken by churches around the world in an attempt to assess it as to whether it was achieving what it was meant to achieve and so on. The real prominence at Dresden was to those two issues, because reports were coming in after some six or seven years of hard work on those 30

two issues, women in the life of the church and Christian medical work) and at Geneva to the Lima statement on baptism, (which as I understand it is the first statement) in which Catholics and Protestants had finally come to some agreement on their understanding on the significance of baptism in the life of the Church."

These received very high-profile treatment.

"Now, it would obviously be naive to suggest that a body as universal and prestigious as the World Council of Churches would remain totally impervious to 10 the many political pressure groups seeking to make their voices heard in the world. Such groups, lacking the official weight of governmental status, would be foolish not to try to influence the World Council of Churches as much as they seek to influence the United National Organisation. Thus one will find hanging around the fringes of such a meeting, people representing a wide variety of causes as different as the liberation of Estonia from Soviet domination, the liberation of Southern Africa or the redres- 20 sing of the Turkish slaughter of Armenians some sixty years ago. This kind of lobbying is to be expected, but it is an insult to the intelligence of some of the World's greatest Christian leaders to suggest that they are unable to recognise this process for what it is and to cope with it maturely.

Now to the direct accusation that we are influenced and agents of the World Council. Of course, we are influenced. There would be little purpose in belonging to a body if its members took no notice whatever 30

of its thinking. The currents flowing in the world of theology and the Church are very important to us and the World Council of Churches provides a point at which they can be shared and if necessary appropriated.

Right now every member church around the world is discussing the theme 'Jesus Christ, the Life of the World', (because that is the theme of the World Assembly this year in Vancouver) and the results will bring new insights into what Jesus meant by life and the quality of life He came to offer. But at the end of the day the World Council of Churches has no authority over any of its member churches, nor over any of its affiliated Councils (of which the SACC is one). Many of its concerns would not become a priority for us here and are therefore noted but not acted upon. I know of no National Conference nor of any National Executive of the SACC where a World Council of Churches document has formed the basis of any resolution taken. Documents such as 'Violence, Non-Violence and Social Change' have obviously received far greater attention from the South African Council of Churches than some others, and have therefore made their contribution to our thinking, but that is as far as direct influence has gone.

I have also never been requested to do anything on behalf of the World Council when I have attended Central Committee meetings, except to raise again with the churches the question of the suspension of their subscriptions and a possible way of meeting our

strong/...

strong disagreement with the grants to liberation movements."

A suggestion that was canvassed to me, if I can just expand on that slightly, is that churches in 1970 when the grants to liberation movements were made by the World Council, churches such as my own repudiated that action, and suspended their subscription, which is not a large amount, but suspended it to the World Council. The discussion was whether that money which had been held in suspense could be used meaningfully and usefully in this country, 10 for projects which the World Council would approve, and - or would nominate, and the discussion did not get very far, because I think there are difficulties about doing that, and that is the only occasion in my memory where the World Council has actually said to the representative of the SACC, would you discuss this with your people.

"The suggestion that Bishop Tutu went to Geneva to receive instructions before taking up his position with the SACC is ludicrous. The inclusion of this suggestion and its attempt to create something 20 sinister out of a normal courtesy is to me an indication that there are those who will grasp at any straw to try and break the SACC's back.

PROPHETIC DISTANCE FROM ALL POLITICAL MOVEMENTS

Response to allegations of collusion with the ANC

There is nothing new about this allegation. General Coetzee's submission repeats almost word for word the charges made by the then Minister of Police, Mr Le Grange in Parliament in September 1981. I responded at a press conference on 11 September 1981." 30

My Lord, my response, a transcript of my response is, I believe, in the hands of the Commission. I will be quoting fairly frequently from it in parts of my submission.

"Let me quote immediately from that response:

'The SACC has allegiances and alliances with no political party or group. Our alliances are with our member churches and with the Christian community worldwide and our allegiance is to Christ, the Lord of the Church. It is His conscience which guides us and it is His conscience which has judged 10 the apartheid policies of the South African Government. Apartheid stands condemned as an ugly stain on the conscience of the world and people everywhere who respect Christian standards of justice and decency will not rest until it is completely dismantled. That is our commitment too'.

"I stand entirely by that statement, and my reasons for doing so have nothing to do with the fact that the ANC is a banned organisation. My reasons are profoundly theological. 20

If the SACC were to enter into any such alliance with any political party or group we would surrender one of the most vital elements of our integrity which is the 'prophetic distance' necessary in order to speak the Word of God into a complex and confused situation."

I cannot emphasise that enough, My Lord.

"In my 1981 presidential address I made it clear that the SACC had no political power. Addressing myself to the Prime Minister I said 'Hear what is being said 30 at this Conference. We have no dreams of power,

we/...

we pose no political threat. In secular terms this Council is quote powerless. You can close us down tomorrow. Can you not believe then that the cry that we raise comes not from some strategy but from the heart, can you not see that powerless as we are, our priests, ministers and lay leaders are in touch with more grass roots people than your racially exclusive party can ever be. Why would we bother, if it were not for the fact that people are suffering'."

I tend, Sir, to become very angry when it is suggested 10
that it is for other reasons.

"It is my deep and unshakeable conviction that the prophetic integrity of any Christian body should lie not in its power but in its manifest powerlessness. It is the very fact that such a body neither holds nor seeks temporal power that enables people to hear what God may be saying through it without suspecting it of other motives. The only man to be completely trusted is the man who wants nothing for himself, so also in respect of organisations." 20

I believe, My Lord, that this is something precious to the Church of Jesus Christ and that whenever the Church has allowed itself to move into a position of political power, it has prostituted its task in the world, and that the Church must at all costs never find itself allied with a body which is manifestly seeking or exercising power, in such a way that the Church cannot stand back and say, that is wrong. The moment you get too close, you cannot - you surrender the right to say that, and this is fundamental to the prophetic ministry, if the prophets in the Old Testament 30

had/...

had been employed by the King, that would have been the end of their prophesy.

"I repeat then that any alliance with any group either holding or seeking power would be (quite) fatal to our prophetic integrity.

Thus another quotation from my reply to Mr Le Grange.

'He is suggesting (that is Mr Le Grange) that the activities of the SACC are synchronised with the work of the ANC. The word "synchronised" implies to me "closely working together". You can't 10 synchronise your work unless you are working in close team work. We reject that charge completely. If anyone or movement anywhere in the world happens to take a similar stance to the SACC we would suggest it is that body which is becoming wise and enlightened. We would love to see the National Party in this country to begin to synchronise its policies a little more closely with those of the Christian Gospel. We reject any suggestion that there is anything of this kind of link. We have already 20 said we have no allegiance or alliance with any political party or movement'.

I have said that the fact that the ANC is banned has very little to do with the matter. Banning, so far as we are concerned, is a totalitarian response to opposition and the first people to use it effectively were the Nazis and the Communists. This Commission must be aware that banning is an arbitrary act quite untested in the courts, and therefore the Church must be forgiven for not regarding that fact as 30

ipso facto implying unacceptability. When bodies as widely different (for instance) as the Christian Institute and the ANC (and I want to say I believe we stand in a very different relationship to the Church, to either of those bodies) suffer the same fate and when this Commission has already been requested to consider what amounts to a 'half banning' of the SACC through declaring it an 'affected organisation', it becomes manifestly clear that this weapon will continue to be used against any meaningful opposition, regardless of their philosophical base. 10

In discussing this alleged collusion between the SACC and the ANC, it is also important to make the crucial distinction between aims and methods. If the publicly declared aims of the ANC are to be taken at face value (and it must be remembered that these aims remain substantially the same as those which the ACN consistently declared in more than 50 years of profoundly peaceful advocacy), then it is not surprising if there are close parallels between many of those aims and 20 the vision of a future South Africa presented by the SACC and its member churches.

In a service of worship broadcast nationwide by the SABC on Sunday 19 June 1977 (the first anniversary after the Soweto unrest), I preached a sermon entitled 'God's Future for South Africa'. In that sermon (which I believe the Commission has a copy of) I said that I wanted to:

'Seek a clear word from God directed to the fear in people's hearts and the confusion in their 30 minds/...

minds. Let us see if we can look beyond the immediate horizon cluttered as it is with the debris of human error and argument and counter-argument to catch a vision of the great powerful principles of society embedded in the pages of the Bible. Let us see if we can dream for a moment of the kind of life together which men would have and which men could have if they listened first, not to their fears but to the Word of God. If we do this it may give to us a new starting point for our thinking and 10 our doing'.

I went on then to indicate four basic Biblical principles which God would have us honour in South Africa's future:

- 'In God's future South Africa would be a land -
- 1 where men come to love justice more than advantage;
- 2 where the vulnerable have pride of place;
- 3 where community is prized more than conflict;
- 4 where Christ is honoured above all else'.

In developing these points I obviously illustrat- 20 and supported them from Scripture. Now, I have little doubt that if the publicly declared aims of the ANC are to be believed, they would say Amen to the first three of those points and those of them who are Christian believers would say Amen to the fourth. I must assure this Commission however that I consulted not the ANC but the Bible in the preparation of that sermon.

Our accusers seem to feel that no matter how deeply you hold a certain conviction you have a duty to 30

adjust it if it coincides with the convictions of a banned organisation. Again in response to Mr Le Grange's 1981 attack I said:

'If I walked out into the road yesterday and found that it was snowing (and it may sound strange, but it was snowing the day before, in September 1981) and that if the man who walked out next to me was a Communist and said "It is snowing", I don't believe that I would have a moral obligation to say "It is not snowing" because he was a Com- 10
munist. Our policies are based not on any party manifesto, not any charter of men. Our policies and the things we are striving for will come out of the New Testament and the ethics of Jesus Christ'.

I need to say further on this question of aims that of course it is not only the ANC whose stated views may be in confluence with some of the views of the SACC. A very wide spectrum of highly respected opinion across the world would stand four square behind the SACC's position and this raises the question as 20
to whether they too are part of a vast plot organised by one South African liberation movement. The thought is absurd, and neither the SACC nor I am going to look over our shoulders before stating what we believe to be true and right in terms of our basic beliefs which are Biblical.

ANC policy as such has never been discussed in any SACC meeting I have ever attended, and I cannot speak from personal contact with any ANC member because I have had none that I know of. But I would 30

not/...

not rule out dialogue and exchange of views with anybody. I have great confidence in the Gospel. In Australia, (when I worked there as a younger minister, one of the things I had to do for my sins was to preach open air every Sunday evening for an hour and a half, not far from the place where they had their sort of Hyde Park, a place they call the public domain, and the Communists particularly after their meeting used to drift down and before they went home on a Sunday night, used to take the mickey out of the Christian preacher on the corner). I found that the Christian Gospel has nothing to fear from the bankrupt Atheism and materialism of Marxism. 10

It may be argued that the ANC is now at war and is therefore our country's enemy. Even this to me would not rule out contact between Christians. If at the height of World War II Christians in Britain and Germany were in contact, and if at the height of the Falklands War, Argentinian and British Christians were in contact, then in a war which is in fact being 20 waged between South Africans and therefore has elements of civil conflict, I would think that anyone committed to reconciliation, able to maintain some link between opposing forces, could be of crucial value in bringing about an end to hostilities."

On this whole question of contact between people who may be involved in violence, for instance, many Biblical scholars would point to the fact that one of Jesus' disciples who he chose and called to be with him, was a Zealot, and the Zealots were a group of people who lived in caves, 30

who/...

who were opposed to the Roman occupation, and whenever they could would come down from the hills and wreak violence amongst the Roman occupiers. I do not want to press that. I only want to say that here was a man part of a banned, which perhaps today would be defined in our terms as a terrorist, who nevertheless was part of Our Lord's group of disciples.

"Another important reason not to rule out dialogue or contact is that it may well be one of the ways to discover whether the stated aims of an organisation such as the ANC are indeed their real aims. I 10 am not so naive as to believe that the stated aims of any political group necessarily correspond to their real aims and fundamentally the ANC are a group seeking political power. As such their actions must be subject to the same scrutiny as any other group."

So much then for aims, but now let us turn to methods.

"If there is any confluence of SACC and ANC aims there is a radical divergence when it comes to methods. The SACC is committed to non-violence because its member churches are committed to non-violence. 20 The ANC has chosen the path of violence in order to bring about change in South Africa. I quote again from my reply to Mr Le Grange:

'The SACC is deeply concerned with all areas of life in which apartheid robs people of their rights or of expressing their God-given potential. Thus we unashamedly call for a change in the second class Bantu education system, for an end to the brutalising pass system and migratory labour, for the abolition of security laws which are consistently 30

used/...

used to harrass or silence legitimate opposition to government policies. Thus we should encourage genuine Trade Unionism where workers can organise, without fear of their leaders being banned or detained as soon as they stand up for their rights. We are not ashamed at seeking a just dispensation in these areas of human life and work. The SACC has consistently proclaimed its commitment to working non-violently towards these end. We have said that we can understand those whose frustration has led to an abandonment of peaceful methods but that we cannot walk that way. That is our position'.

(My underlining)

It is not for me to develop this theme at length. The Rev Mr Robertson will doubtless do so, but let me answer those who would have you believe that the SACC has subtly encouraged or acquiesced in violent acts nevertheless.

The issue is not a simple one."

Theologians argue about this at great depth. 20

"We know (however) that the majority of Christians do believe that violence can be resorted to in certain circumstances. Bishop Tutu, while not supporting violence, has exposed the hypocrisy of those who would suddenly demand pacifism from all who suffer in this land".

CHAIRMAN: May I have clarity about what you mean in this paragraph, when you say that the majority of Christians do believe that violence can be resorted to in certain circumstances? Are you speaking now of South African 30

Christians/...

Christians? --- I would say Christians throughout the world, including South African Christians, and I am referring particularly to the issue of war and peace, that the majority of Christian churches and the majority of member within those churches, would accept that there are circumstances in which a Christian may go to war, for instance, that the pacifist Christian has always been in the minority in the mainline churches, and the pacifist churches are small minority churches. That is all I am saying.

Leaving aside now the state of war and peace, 10
have you any views as to the attitude of the majority of Christians with regard to violence outside of the war and peace - the war situation? --- My Lord, the whole question of if and when it may be permissible for a Christian to take up arms in an unjust situation, is a related but different Christian debate. Here I would think, it is hard to assess, it tends to be something which we approve in retrospect, but find not so easy to approve in the present. In other words, most Christians would probably go along with the view that it - that the Americans were jus- 20
tified in rising up in their war of independence against the British in the 1700's.

Coming close home, what would you say would the average Christian's attitude be to, say, violence by, say the ANC? -- I do not know whether I can speak for the average Christian. I think a little further on in my submission I indicate why I can understand a person doing that, without necessarily approving it. I will come to that point. I do not know if you wish to take it up?

No, deal with it when you come to that in your 30

belong to a body advocating violence as a means of change, and I am confident that neither would any of our member churches.

Our Christian faith calls us to hope for another way and the only way that hope can be realised is to work for that other way. I am convinced that the acts of violence perpetrated by the ANC are neither necessary nor helpful in bringing about change. I am convinced that in all wars there is a spiral of escalating violence leading the participants into ever more 10 brutal acts.

Thus far the ANC attacks have been directed mainly at strategic military targets with a minimum loss of life and those bombs which have been planted in civilian areas have been timed to go off at hours when no one has been around. The horrific bomb in Bloemfontein recently was an exception and I am on record from my own pulpit and at a public meeting as denouncing that act as 'cowardly and despicable terrorism'." 20

I have also called for a study into the distinction between what might be termed guerilla war and terrorism. I think that distinction is going to be a very important one.

"The ANC has denied responsibility for that blast, but if they are proved to be lying, they have become terrorists and must be named as such. While we declare our deep understanding of those who have turned to guerilla warfare, let no one expect anything but the harshest condemnation and the judgment of God upon acts such as the Bloemfontein blast. 30

this land is not a total onslaught but the policy of apartheid and all that has flowed from it. There could be no total onslaught on a South Africa admired and respected in the Western World. There would be no fruitful soil for revolution in a South Africa at peace with itself. Those who envy South Africa's riches and strategic position would have little leverage if the young people of this land, Black and White together, experienced it as a land of the free. That is the truth'. 10

This man's decision (this young man's decision to abandon non-violence) has not taken place in a vacuum.

I quote again from my reply to Mr Le Grange:

'We refuse to allow the charge of violence to be one-sided: the world has been horrified by the violence of Nyanga where 2 000 people seeking to live with their husbands or simply seeking work were robbed of shelter and forcibly banished to separation and destitution in the name of apartheid. Mr Le Grange's claim that the SACC "encourages and supports" 20 the building of a revolutionary climate is absurd. It is the South African Government through its apartheid policies which has more than anyone else brought this climate about. It is the pain and agony and violence of apartheid which has created the present polarisation in our land and only its abandonment can bring any lessening of tensions, any hope for a peaceful solution to our problems'.

Nevertheless, despite this measure of understanding the SACC cannot walk that way. I could not 30

belong/...

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By/...

By the same token however, the SACC is bound to view with horror any evidence of atrocities by security forces in Namibia or elsewhere. Neither such actions nor what happened in Bloemfontein can be tolerated by the Christian conscience.

To summarise then: the SACC denies in the strongest terms any allegiance to or alliance with the ANC or any other political party or group; any confluence in aims can be understood as part of a world-wide rejection of apartheid and a desire for fundamental change; in the question of methods we diverge radically; we do not rule out contact or dialogue with Christians in the ANC; while we can understand those who have turned to violence to bring about change, we renounce it for ourselves, we especially condemn terrorism as distinct from military action, whoever is responsible for it."

There is just a note, that having responded to what I regard as the main broad allegations against the SACC, I now wish to deal with a number of specific areas of our life 20 which have come under question, and I list them there, the first on page 50, conscientious objection.

"This (again) will be dealt with at greater depth by Rev Robertson, but I must reject the suggestion that the SACC's position on conscientious objection is a consequence of a carefully hatched plot based in our Division of Justice and Reconciliation.

I was present at the National Conference of 1974 and have vivid recollections of a very vigorous and often frustrating debate on the subject. It is important 30

to/...

to note that the resolution (which was being debated) came not from within the SACC at all, but from a representative of a member church (at the Conference).

The matter of conscientious objection was not even on the agenda and the then General Secretary, Mr John Rees and members of the Executive could not have been more surprised at the turn of events. My own reaction is evident in an editorial I wrote for the Methodist National newspaper, Dimension, immediately afterward."

My Lord, it has been impossible to provide copies of 10
this, because it is bound, but I would be very happy to hand this up, and if Your Lordship may wish to have a look at it. It is - simply consists of a number of bound copies of back issues of Dimension, and the editorial concerned is marked there for you, Sir, if you wish to have a look at it. Now, this is what I said, written at the time:

'More hindsight will be required to assess whether the SACC Hammanskraal resolution was a milestone in Christian witness or a disaster - right now it seems that it could have been a bit of both 20
and its immediate effect has been to generate a lot more heat than light.

It is an imperfect document, bearing all the marks of hasty individual preparation in the first place and some exasperated amendments in the second. It also has a stridently self-righteous note unbecoming of the Church which has not been without hypocrisy herself in centuries of involvement in mankind's wars. Its turgid language can doubtless be faulted not only grammatically but theologically as well. 30

Issues of such consequence must in future either be prepared by or referred to a working group capable of seeing that the final draft for debate would command respect as well as attention. As it was, the resolution was suggested one day, debated the next and announced to the world before even being considered. There are lessons to be learned here and this is a particularly unhappy circumstance for a body which is held in such high regard by its member churches and which gains its weight of authority 10 from their trust.

In this respect we sympathise with Mr John Rees and others who have the task of defending something which could have been said more wisely and effectively and we believe in a less polemic spirit'.

Now, Sir, there is a measure of subjectivity because I participated in that debate and experienced some of the frustration of trying to deal with a document which has been prepared to rapidly.

"My opinion of the way the resolution was intro- 20
duced and handled has not changed but the editorial
continues:

'But let there be no mistake about the importance of the issues raised. Emotional smokescreens should not be allowed to obscure the rightness of raising them now. South Africa is drifting into a divisive war with no signs of the statesmanship needed to break the vicious circle of oppression/resentment/revolt/further oppression which lies at its root. The military situation is growing more serious 30

and/...

and of course it would be naive to suggest that the guerilla movements consist of saints, nor that there is no foreign ideological exploitation of the conflict. These things are part of the equation that we have to wrestle with in a sinful complex world. Yet there is something frightening about the belief that the way to deal with them is to silence all doubts and questioning simply because the bugles have sounded - as if any other reaction would be unpatriotic'. 10

The editorial goes on to say later:

'History is littered with ugly reminders of what unquestioning people can do in the name of patriotism and the historians are good at telling us how it happened, always after the event. The SACC's statement is at least an attempt to raise men to concern now and in this sense it has a prophetic word'.

With the hindsight of some years now I believe that the second part of the editorial also holds true and that in spite of the shortcomings of the 20 Hammanskraal resolution, God used it to arouse both church and nation to the ethical dilemma facing young men liable to national service.

I would differ very strongly from any view that the resolution was deliberately aimed at boosting the morale of the liberation movements or the image of the SACC in their eyes. It is a fact of life that the issue of conscientious objection remains more or less an academic one unless actual war or conscription eventuate. It is only then when young men 30 are/...

are faced with the actual possibility of fighting or killing that this becomes an existential ethical issue. (I remember) When the leading Methodist pacifist, Dr Alan Walker was here in 1963, he said publicly that he was amazed at the lack of interest in the issues of war and peace or in conscientious objection. (in this country). He warned that the day would come when South Africa would have to face them. Given the fact that even in World War II there was no conscription and that therefore anybody who had 10 scruples about joining the military simply refrained from volunteering, there is nothing sinister in the fact that the issue (of conscientious objection) surfaced just as conscription escalated and just as real military encounters with liberation movement forces became a distinct possibility.

It is also true and very significant that Mr John Rees had attended the All Africa Conference of Churches meeting in Lusaka earlier in the year and that his report to the National Conference indicating 20 that in the liberation movements there were many convinced Christians who 'had taken their decision to join a liberation movement in the full awareness of being Christians and of being responsible to God for their actions' (and there is no question that that) had made a deep impression".

I think if I can elaborate on this, My Lord, up until that time, for the White members of an SACC National Conference, coming as they did out of the White context, reference to people over the border who may well have designs on 30

South/...

South Africa, were references to anonymous ciphers. They were identified simply as a group of people with very destructive intentions, and suddenly, particularly, I think, the Whites in that Conference, were confronted by the fact that Mr Rees had met some of these people in Lusaka, that they were clearly deeply committed Christian people and they were justifying from a Christian point of view their decision to go and take up arms, and I think it created also a new sensitivity, a new awareness towards the dilemma of the Black members of, for instance, our National Conference, because these were their people, these were potentially their sons and daughters, their relatives, and so certainly I can recall a very sharp sense of that reality playing its part at that Hammanskraal debate, and I think: a willingness on the part of Whites to listen very, very much more carefully to what Blacks were saying, of this dilemma.

"Thus delegates were confronted by the very uncomfortable realisation that those in the liberation movements were not simply anonymous ciphers, nor necessarily Marxists with dark and evil intentions, but many of them were fellow Christians, prepared to justify their decision to fight on Christian grounds." So this became a dilemma for what it means to be the body of Christ.

"Suddenly there was an existential ethical dilemma, not only for the convinced pacifist but clearly also for young persons belonging to churches which had repeatedly condemned the system of apartheid and warned that it would ultimately lead to the

frustration/...

frustration which in turn would give birth to violence." If again I may interpolate, one of the things that is true, I think, of prophets down the centuries, is that they warn and they warn, and they say, unless you change, this and this will happen, and then when people do not listen, and it does happen, they are very often the first to be blamed for inciting it to happen.

"I submit that it was in that mood of wishing to make some meaningful practical gesture to break into this cycle of violence and counter-violence that the 10 Hammanskraal resolution saw the light of day.

In that sense and in that sense only can it be suggested that concern for the individual conscientious objector was not the main issue. Just as in the United States the question of the 'justness' or otherwise of the Vietnam war became the main issue in conscientious objection (there). It was clear to those at Hammanskraal that we faced a similar situation. Thus the Hammanskraal resolution centres around 'selective conscientious objection' rather than the clas- 20 sical pacifist position, but I do not believe that this implies any lack of concern for the pacifist objector. There is a sense in which his rights were assumed because all of the churches (to my knowledge) involved (in the SACC) recognised those rights. The concern of the churches and therefore of the SACC is definitely for both of these categories of objector. The Methodist Conference for instance says the following:

'The Conference affirms that the position 30
of/...

of the conscientious objector has a legitimate place within the Christian tradition and that the right to discuss, question or advocate this position must be regarded as an integral part of the religious liberty fundamental to the health of our society'.

It goes on to say:

'The Conference points out that conscientious objection is not always based on purely pacifist convictions, but has sometimes arisen through the peculiar circumstances of a specific conflict leading that person to refuse service because of his inability to share or accept the relative "rightness" of the cause for which he is called to fight and that the present conflict on our borders provides no exception'.

Thus the Methodist Conference is saying that the present conflict on our borders is one in which there can arise for individuals a question as to the justness or otherwise of that war, and that therefore on that basis, which may not be a totally pacifist basis, now, this is really The Reverend Robertson's field, but nevertheless, on that 20 basis he may feel obliged in conscience to refuse service.

"Thus my own denomination clearly recognises both categories of objector, and I must reject any suggestion from whatever source that this emphasis on selective conscientious objection at Hammanskraal was in any way a stratagem designed to respond to the expectations of the liberation movements, to justify their aims or to enhance the SACC's credibility in their eyes.

I obviously cannot speak for the motives of 30

everybody/...

everybody who took part in the Hammanskraal debate, but I know where I stand and I know where the SACC stands. If the debate were merely a transparent attempt to boost the liberation movements and embarrass the Government and the Defence Force, there would hardly have been any need to wrestle with it for five hours. If I for one moment felt at any time that the decisions of the SACC were being taken first and foremost on behalf of any secular body, I would resign forthwith. The proof of the pudding is in the eating. Whether 10 this resolution did anything for the morale of the liberation movements, I do not know. What I do know is that in the following years, in spite of drastic attempts by the then Minister of Defence, Mr P W Botha, to frighten the churches into silence, through the Defence Further Amendment Act, each of the member churches who have potential national servicemen in their constituencies, have either formulated statements or provided study material to help those young men struggle with the ethical implications of military 20 service.

So far as the present stand of the SACC is concerned, I tried to make this clear in my reply to Mr Le Grange's accusation that the Council was 'supporting projects created to support national service dodgers and deserters'. I said:

'So long as the rights of people who in conscience refuse to take arms are not respected by the Government of South Africa, so long will the churches fight for those rights. We do not believe that any 30

government on earth has the right to conscript a man's conscience. Within our member churches there is an honourable tradition which has always been respected by those churches ... of respecting and fighting for the right of everybody who says "In obedience to Jesus Christ I cannot take up a weapon against my fellow man". We are not ashamed of that position. It is the Government who should be ashamed for it has made it very difficult for people who hold that conscientious position. I think it is 10 a disgrace that there are people of high principle and great courage who are languishing in prison, who have simply said, "Under God I cannot kill another man". That may be the ultimate obedience to Jesus Christ'.

INVESTMENT AND ECONOMIC PRESSURE

I was not present at the 1978 National Conference when this issue was discussed at length. But what I do know is that whatever the opinions voiced at that Conference, the SACC does not advocate disin- 20 vestment.

The issue was raised quite sharply in late 1979 (and I was involved then) when our General Secretary made a statement in Denmark about South African coal contracts with that country. On his return to South Africa, Bishop Tutu had a meeting with Mr Alwyn Schlebusch, then Minister of Justice, and Dr Piet Koornhof, Minister of Co-operation and Development, who demanded that he retract his statement. After consultation with his family and the Praesidium, 30

Bishop/...

Bishop Tutu was still of the view that he could not retract his statement and because of the highly controversial nature of the investment issue it was decided that a combined meeting of the SACC Executive and Church Leadership be called. The meeting took place on 15 October 1979 and issued two statements, one to the press and the other for transmission to the Cabinet Ministers concerned."

The one to the press was very non-committal indeed, because we wanted the Cabinet Ministers to receive this with- 10
out it being in the press first. So I read the second and fuller statement, or parts of it, and it reflects three things:

- "(a) unanimity on the responsibility of people, especially Christians in a position of political or economic power to seriously consider the effect of their actions in South Africa;
- (b) a division of opinion on the merits or demerits of disinvestment, sanctions, trade boycotts etc; and 20
- (c) the obligation of Christian leaders to express their convictions as part of their prophetic calling.

Part of the statement says:

'The Church of Christ is one all Christians belong to, an international family responsible for each other. It is therefore irresponsible if Christians in positions of political or economic power do not consider seriously the effect of their actions on other people who are being denied family 30

life, employment and citizenship in the land of their birth. They must also consider their effect on those Christians who are not aware of the suffering of others in the same country.

We endorse the necessity to work with the international community in a responsible manner to avoid further recourse to arms in Southern Africa, recognising that if fundamental change is not achieved by consultation and negotiation, the alternative methods can cause a blood bath in Southern Africa. We also recognise that full and responsible discussion of alternatives to armed violence is impossible in South Africa because of the law. We do not seek confrontation with the State, but will not shirk our duty to give our Christian witness.

Having considered the report of the General Secretary of the SACC, Bishop Desmond Tutu on the contents of his meeting with the Honourable Ministers A Schlebusch and P Koornhof relating to the Bishop's statement on Danish television recently, a joint meeting of the SACC Executive and leaders of various churches of the SACC unanimously:

- (a) affirms that Bishop Tutu has been called to leadership by God through His church and is therefore under an obligation to express his convictions in the situation facing us in this land. Having heard Bishop Tutu's reasons for his statement, we share his belief that any retraction of or apology for his statement

- in this instance would constitute a denial of his prophetic calling;
- (b) recognises that in the churches represented in the SACC there is a significant constituency which support the content of what he said, but who are inhibited by law from discussing this;
- (d) confirms the indivisible nature of the Body of Christ and therefore shares wholeheartedly Bishop Tutu's belief that the worldwide Christian community is and should be involved in the struggle for justice in South Africa. "If one part of the body suffers, all the other parts suffer with it". (1 Cor 12:26);
- (e) the real issue which the Bishop is addressing is that of the need for fundamental change in South Africa. It is out of our concern to see such change take place that we believe it right to explore every strategy which can be used to achieve this end to avoid the escalation of violence'.

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From this excerpt of the statement made by the Executive and Church Leaders it will be clear that this was one instance in which the SACC recognised that within its (own) body there was a unity of aim but a strong divergence on method.

I make this clear in my 1981 response to Mr Le Grange, when I say that we as a Council are clearly aware of the fact that there is a significant constituency within our member churches who would take the disinvestment stand. It is a constituency which cannot

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be/...

be measured. It is utterly unrealistic to imagine that the Black population is wholeheartedly against disinvestment. The opposite is more likely to be true. The South African Council of Churches recognises that position as it also recognises that there are other positions held by people who are seeking change in this country. We believe in the right of our General Secretary to reflect that position because it is certainly not the position of a lone man".

I think the only honest thing, and I regard this as 10
the definitive position of the SACC, that we can say about our attitude to investment, is that we are divided, and perhaps there are times when a church body has to say that, and be honest about it, and not try and find formulas which will necessarily cover that up, but we are divided. There are those within the church who believe it would be a Christian way and a way of avoiding violence, to go for disinvestment, the other who would feel that that is merely a prelude to violence, and Christians should not in any way advocate that. And I think that is the heart of what 20
I said in my response to Mr Le Grange.

"Now, Adv Von Lieres in his presentation on 8 February this year makes brief reference to the investment issue on page 1754/5 of that presentation, referring to the so-called volte face in the SACC's attitude. I think he may have been inferring that this change was linked with a 1972 World Council of Churches decision to withdraw their own investments from bodies linked with South Africa".

In a way I suppose the SACC simply followed my leader. 30

"My/...

"My own view is that this is a completely false inference, and that the real reason why the investment issue became increasingly prominent in SACC thinking is that the 1970's saw, not only in the SACC but in its member churches, an increasing strength of Black participation in debate with a recognition by White participants that their views needed increasingly to be tested against the feeling of the Black community. I deal with this phenomenon in an article written (by myself) for the South African Outlook of 10 February 1982, (which the Commission has in its possession) which includes a section entitled 'Learning to be a Minority'. In this article I say:

'The Council is the only body in South Africa where Black and White Christians are wrestling with South African realities in a forum which is generally representative of our Black/White population ratio.'

I know that there are discussions which take place in other - on other platforms and in other forums, but I do not know of one where the populatio ratio is reflected as 20 realistically as it is in what is the National Conference of the SACC today.

'Even in the multi-racial churches, synods, conferences and assemblies still tend to carry a White representation far out of proportion to their membership. In the SACC Whites know what it is like to be a minority, and in this sense the SACC is a prototype of the future South Africa. The experience can be a traumatic one for those who have succumbed to the "White majority complex" whereby 30

we automatically assume that we will have the last and deciding word on everything in this land, but it is a vital one if we are to avoid thinking of the issues in White terms only'.

I suppose a word of personal testimony, My Lord, is simply that for me that has been a very important personal lesson, that no matter how liberated I may have thought in terms of my opinions about justice and so on in this country, I found that there was built into me an assumption that as a White, I would have the final word. That is the 10 way it is done in this country, a very unconscious assumption, one which I do not like to admit to, but it was there, and I believe the experience of being in the SACC and working with Black leadership, has done something important to that White majority complex in me at any rate.

"I indicate (in the article) that a consequence of this is 'that the SACC is able to hear and articulate an authentic Black voice which Whites desperately need to be exposed to, no matter how uncomfortable it may be'.

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Speaking as a White person, I must say that it came as a surprise to me to hear significant numbers of Blacks saying that no matter how high the price in suffering for themselves and their people, they would welcome far more harsh economic pressure on South Africa".

That is a position which still I personally do not hold, but I had to recognise that this was being said by - I think not irresponsible people.

"The position of the SACC has had to become more 30

open/...

open to this very sincerely held stance. Consequently we are being perfectly honest when we say that two sincerely held positions on disinvestment are present in our constituency".

If I may just refer for a moment back to page 17, I think that statement by the Methodist Conference, paragraph (c) there, indicates that certainly the Methodist Church regards this as the SACC position, and itself acknowledges that members of the Methodist Church hold widely divergent views, and affirms its belief that every person has the moral and Christian right to hold and express such views and the duty to hear and seriously consider the views of those who differ. 10

"I make this point to the Prime Minister in our meeting with him in August 1980".

I quote from a transcript of that meeting with him, and I do not know whether that forms part of the documentation of the Commission. If it does not, we can provide it.

'On the disinvestment issue I can only say, Sir, that we as a Church have stood and tried to be quite honest on this. That is we know that in our memberships which are 80% Black and 20% White, there is a very strong group of people who feel most sincerely, whether correctly or not is not the point, that unless economic pressure of that kind is placed upon our country we will not see change and the only alternative then would be violence, so they are saying that the only alternative to violence is this. I am not suggesting that this is my view, but I am saying that any honest representations of where many/... 30

many of our people are must state that this is what they say. There is another body within our churches which says, no, you cannot advance and disinvest at the same time, you need investment in order that that change should come about. That is an equally honest and sincere position held by our people. So we of the Council have said quite clearly that both these positions are present amongst us. It is not so easy to measure the first one because there are sanctions against people who would openly make that kind of statement. I think that when a particular individual might have said that, I think he was certainly reflecting where many of our people are even if we can't all agree with it'.

I apologise for the grammar, Sir. That was a transcript of an ex tempore part of the discussion with the Prime Minister. If we may move now to the status of study documents.

"Much has been made of apparent developments in the Justice and Reconciliation Division, being seen to have strongly influenced the SACC. Documents 20 emanating from the Justice and Reconciliation Division have been quoted in this Commission as representative of the SACC position and the question has been raised as to whether we repudiate these documents or not. We certainly do not repudiate them, but neither do we believe they may be used as representative of the SACC position. Dr Kistner for instance has been requested from time to time to provide theological reflection on certain issues, some of them very controversial indeed. That is the nature of his department. 30

Being/...

Being a Lutheran, it is not surprising that he should draw on Lutheran experience such as (for instance) the Dar-es-Salaam Conference of the Lutheran World Federation for some of his resources.

In coming to a common mind on these issues, National Conferences also draw (as I have shown) on other resources of a wider nature, together with the theological insights of its delegates.

The position of the SACC by which we stand is to be found neither in Dr Kistner's papers nor in any other resource but only in the official resolutions taken by the National Conference or the National Executive from time to time. Even then such resolutions

are not binding on member churches. An SACC policy can only said to be fully 'consolidated' if a significant number of churches confirm it in some way. An example of this (I think) is the issue of conscientious objection. At this point in time all major member churches, certainly those with White constituencies affected by national service have passed resolutions which in one way or another support the right of a person to obey his conscience in the matter of whether or not he will take up arms. Thus some of the issues which have made headlines in newspapers or which have been highlighted in evidence before this Commission have never formed any part of any SACC resolution. Much has been made, for instance, of the concept of the 'confessing church' which is a crucial development in the life of the German Church during the Nazi regime period.

While/...

While the phrase has been used often and while the call for a 'confessing church' in South Africa has been sounded more than once, none of the member churches represented at the National Conference nor any Executive meeting of the SACC has ever included that concept in a resolution, to my knowledge."

It is natural, My Lord, for Christians in this situation, where they see parallels between our situation and some of what was faced by the church in the Hitler regime in Germany, to look to the concept of the confessing church and discover what it was about and why it came about. There have on many occasions, I have heard people say, what we really need in this country is a confessing church, and I have understood them to mean by that, what we need is, our church, the institutional churches to which we belong, tend here and there to compromise, they do not seem to stand up against apartheid strongly enough, therefore what we need is in a sense a purified church of people who are committed to opposition to apartheid, and in that way we will make our confession, and in that way there is a parallel drawn between those Christians in Germany who did something similar. One hears that call, but frankly it has not been heeded. The SACC has not moved in that direction; it has not called for churches to move in that direction. It still believes very deeply and implicitly in the integrity of its member churches, in the witness they are making against apartheid. It also recognises the problems they have in making that witness, and I can only say for myself, that that concept of a confessing church is something I would resist, not because of the ideals behind it, as demonstrated/..

demonstrated in Hitler's Germany, but because I believe our task as Christians, who oppose apartheid is not to draw ourselves out into an exclusive group, but to make that witness amongst our people, many of whom do not have questions necessarily, many of whom have not even been brought face to face with the questions of what apartheid does. That is why personally for myself I have always believed I must stay in a local church, with the people who are there on the ground, and make my stand there. So thus I have to say that the concept of a confessing church does 10 not carry, I believe, the weight and significance that was suggested. Then, the next paragraph, and here I need a bit of explaining too:

"Further while the legality of the South African Government is always in question and is often in debate, the SACC has once more never declared the SA Government illegal, although it is certainly clear that it is unrepresentative".

I do not want to be misunderstood by the Commission here, My Lord. I am not suggesting necessarily that the 20 legality of the South African Government is always objectively in question. What my English was meant to suggest, was that it would be very strange and surprising if people who have no representation in Parliament, do not often in the course of debate and discussion say, I find it hard to recognise that government as my own; I did not vote for it. And it is in that sense in which it is in question amongst many of the people of this country particularly in the Black community. I am not arguing its legality or illegality, but what I am saying is that at no point 30 has/...

has the SACC declared a view that the SA Government is illegal.

"Again the phrase 'Status Confessionis' is one beloved of Calvinists and Lutherans, but (it is) not (really) in the dictionary of Methodists and Anglicans (for instance). To suggest that the idea of obligatory opposition to the present political system has its roots in a conference in Dar-Es-Salaam and the Status Confessionis discussion, simply ignores the consistent opposition to the present political system in South Africa, which can be traced back through member churches to 1948 and in some cases before that time".

May I put a comma in after the word 'opposition' - no, after 'discussion', to suggest that the conference at Dar-Es-Salaam and the Status Confessionis discussion, that that is where our opposition has its roots, ignores a long line of opposition.

"In the Missionary magazine of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of South Africa entitled 'Forward' and dated April 10, 1926, opposition is registered to the 20 Colour Bar Bill and the following is said:

'We reiterate our contention as to their ("the Natives" Bill of Rights. They have an equal claim with us in the land of their birth: (1) to live; (2) to live in contentment and peace; (3) to moral intellectual and physical freedom; (4) to individual and not merely communal land tenure; (5) to all the privileges of manhood, nationhood and progress as a people. That is: (6) to all the privileges of a Christian civilisation'.

"The editorial (of 1926) goes on to say:

'No wonder the best elements of life in South Africa are up against the Minister of Justice on this matter and he gains nothing by flouting the Christian conscience and character of the land. There is a nemesis awaiting such "scorn".'

He speaks of the 'soul of South Africa' to Stellenbosch students.

'What we understand to be the soul of South Africa will one day mock and defeat him'.

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That is fairly strong language of opposition, a long time before Dar-Es-Salaam.

"An examination of just one member church (a church quite unrelated to the Lutheran family represented at Dar-Es-Salaam) .."

It is the Methodist Church, and I have to say here, I have not read what they said at Dar-Es-Salaam.

" .. indicates a growing disquiet and strengthening opposition to apartheid and the erosion of civil rights from 1948 onwards. In 1949 the Methodist Conference 20 saw the apartheid policy as the main reason for the serious deterioration in race relations because it emphasised 'the things that divide rather than those which unite'."

We need to recall, Sir, that at this time, I think all of the three main Afrikaans churches were still holding a position of the justification of apartheid on a Scriptural basis, on the separation of races on a Scriptural basis. Paragraph 11 then:

"In 1952 the Methodist Conference declared that

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the/...

the policy of racial apartheid was not only impractical but was contrary to the best interests of all sections of the South African community and inconsistent with the highest Christian principles. By 1958 the separatist character of apartheid society was seen to be a threat to the unity of the Church itself and the Conference declared its determination to resist this trend.

'This Conference declares its conviction that it is the Will of God for the Methodist Church 10 that it should be one and undivided, trusting in the leading of God to bring this ideal to ultimate fruition. It believes that an increase, not a decrease in multi-racial co-operation is God's Will and that throughout the organisation of the Church inter-racial contact should be promoted as freely as possible'.

The strength and vigour of Church resistance at as early a stage as 1957 is indicated by the statements of the then Methodist President, who happened to 20 be my father. He said:

'In all this, where do we stand? Hounded by a monster of its own making, the Government is driven to the point of view that as long as one White man and one Non-White man are friends, apartheid will have failed. The view of the Church is that as long as one White man and one Non-White man are not friends, we shall have failed.

We have but one master - Christ. We acknowledge but one authority - the living Word of God. We 30

must/...

must, therefore, refuse to put the Church at the disposal of the State'.

This statement was made a full 20 years before the Dar-Es-Salaam meeting.

By 1958 the Methodist Church, together with others has entered upon its first act of civil disobedience when in respect of the socalled 'Church Clause' .."

which Your Lordship will recall, was a clause in the Native Laws Amendment Bill, prohibiting Black worshippers from worshipping in churches in White areas, and if a com- 10
plaint had been made of any kind. Now, in respect of that the Conference said that -

" .. no government had the right to dictate conditions of entrance into a Christian Church for prayer and worship.

'We shall continue to worship as we have in the past, undeterred by the threats contained in this legis-
lation', it stated.

In 1962 the Conference resolved to proceed with the removal of racial demarcation from all its records 20
and legislation (that is church legislation). In 1965, along with condemnation of the broad principles of apartheid, the Methodist Conference protested the steady erosion of civil rights accompanying the policy. It spoke of 'the growing tendency to totalitarianism in South Africa as shown by police raids, bannings, arrests and imprisonments without trial, increased arbitrary powers given to Ministers of State and to the police'. It went on to say that the Christian belief in God 'demanded fair and impartial justice 30

for all, respect for their rights, freedom and dignity of every individual and the right to a fair and open trial for all alleged offences'."

These things, Sir, are rooted in the Evangelical heritage in social concern which I opened with this morning. They belong to our heritage.

"Referring in 1966 to accusations that the basis for Methodist declarations was 'communistic' (and I think that was a statement made by the then Prime Minister, Mr Vorster), the Conference declared an utter rejection of communism because its ideology was so far removed from Christian concepts. It went on to oppose attempts to bring about changes by sabotage, violence or murder, but emphasised that persons seeking by constitutional means to produce such changes could not be regarded as enemies of the nation's welfare. May I now refer to references particularly in the address by Adv Von Lieres to the 'withdrawal of co-operation' or 'positive non-co-operation with the State'.

I have already indicated that as far back as the 1950's, certain member churches, including definitely the Anglican Church and my own, made it quite clear that they would disobey the so-called 'Church Clause', because it represented a clear infringement of the right of Christians to worship and associate together. In the main that decision was followed through and it would seem that over a span of more than 20 years the State deemed it wiser not to prosecute although to my knowledge the Church Clause is still on the statute/...

statute books.

A similar more recent stand has been taken by churches in regard to parochial schools.

The whole area of refusal by Christians to obey the secular authority is a very complex one, and may well be dealt with far more fully in other evidence placed before the Commission. I would simply wish to emphasise most strongly that any decision to practise non-co-operation with the State must be taken with the gravest sense of responsibility, and with the clear conviction that obedience to the secular authority would imply disobedience to God. The Church takes Romans Chapter 13 very seriously indeed: it recognises that under normal circumstances it is the duty of the Christian to be a co-operative and law-abiding citizen and that in this he ought to be an example to his fellows. It recognises the difficult task which the secular authority has to perform and would normally wish to be of assistance or at least of no hindrance to the performing of that task. But the conscientious Christian must also give equal attention to examples, especially in the New Testament, of disobedience or non-co-operation with the authorities, the most prominent being those in Acts Chapter 4 and 5."

Peter and the Apostles before the Sanhedrin. If I can then just emphasise, underlying what I have said, that the first teaching a Christian must subject himself to, is the normal responsibility which weighs upon him, to be obedient and co-operate with the State. That surely must be

his/...

his norm, but if he is convinced in conscience that such obedience will involve him in disobedience to his God, then that conscience must be respected.

"In Roman times the Sanhedrin was the highest governing body in Judea. It was the ultimate authority, not only in religious matters but in all those legal and governmental affairs which did not encroach on the authority of the Roman Procurator. Peter the Apostle refused to obey the Sanhedrin's command 'to refrain from all public speaking and teaching in the name of Jesus'. His reply to the charge that he had disobeyed the Sanhedrin's command (when he was brought up a second time) was crisp and to the point: 'We must obey God rather than men'. If we read these passages against the background of Our Lord's own saying, 'Render to Caesar that which is Caesars and to God that which is God's', there is no contradiction. Clearly it ought to be the hope and aim of every Christian to live obediently and at peace with the secular authority. If, however, Caesar should claim authority over what is not his but God's, then he is asking too much of the Christian. 10 20

One of the reasons why apartheid is an offence to God is that it represents Caesar seeking to legislate relationships and behaviour which he has no authority over. This further quotation from the 1957 Methodist President's address makes the point very clearly:

'The roots of politics are always deeper than politics itself, and apartheid, when pushed to logical conclusions - like any other philosophy of 30

life/...

life - runs into theological conclusions. Its utter incompatibility with Christian standards has been exposed where all human relationships and concepts are judged - where men meet one another in the presence of God.

In a country where race attitudes are rooted in tradition and habit, we now see the hidden conflict and fears coming to full consciousness and expressing themselves in political policy and law.

"The Native Laws Amendment Bill, with its 10 notorious clauses, giving the State power to interfere with freedom of worship and association is now law. The Methodist Church has stated, and I reiterate tonight, that we will be compelled to disobey the law if it is evoked to take away the right of any of our people to worship in any of our churches".

We further pledge ourselves to the support of any other church facing the same attack. We can only see any attempt to apply the Act as a thrust 20 wounding the whole Body of Christ and a flouting of the divine law of human brotherhood.

In this issue the time for words is gone, the test will come in action. Narrowed to its basic choice, Christ or Caesar, the issue is clear'."

THE COMMISSION IS ADJOURNED

CHAIRMAN: We move to the foot of page 71. --- Before I continue, M'lord, I wondered if I could address a question to you, Sir, and that is simply, do you regard me as having covered the question which you raised sufficiently?

Not altogether, I think I will reframe my question tomorrow. --- Right.

You are talking of the question of violence? --- Correct.

I was concerned about your statement that many Christians support violence. --- Yes.

And it is a thing with which the Commission will certainly have to deal - the general attitude in relation to violence, and since you move in many circles I would consider it to be of assistance to have your personal views on that generally. I have in mind violence, not in a war/peace situation - although many people say there is such a war/peace situation in South Africa, but I would like to have the benefit of your views concerning the attitude of Christians in this country at this point in time. Violence of the sort which involves terrorism and acts of that sort. --- And you say you would frame that tomorrow, Sir? 10 20

I will just give it a little more thought, perhaps I could be more precise in my question, but that is the general direction in which I would like to have the benefit of your views. --- Thank you. Then paragraph 21, M'lord:

"Having looked with care at the seven areas or examples of possible positive non-co-operation referred to by Advocate von Lieres, I am satisfied that each one does represent a sphere in which the law of the land has trespassed into those areas 30

of / ...

of behaviour which are rightly ordered by God and not the State. The Methodist Church to which I belong does not seek to prescribe moral behaviour, which is directly related to decisions of conscience. Because each individual stands in direct, i.e. immediate access to God according to our doctrines, he or she needs to work out for him or herself which course of action to follow. It does not promise unconditional support to those who in conscience feel bound to disobey a particular law and would wish to look at each situation on its merits but it certainly promises to minister to such people and to respect the decision which they have made if satisfied that that decision was sincerely made on the grounds of conscience.

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Thus Ref. Storey - that is C.K. Storey:

'In this we will be constantly faced with laws and situations which will require Christian answers. Shall we accept them, conform to them, defy them or seek to reform them? Confronted with any law or social institution that forbids the worship of God our way is plain and our answer should be the same - 'We must obey God'. For the rest there can be no rule'.

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"Obviously there will be debate as to which laws truly infringe the law of God and to what degree and whether that degree justifies disobedience. The very fact that this debate could be a wide one militates against any possibility of Church members en bloc becoming law breakers. What the SACC has done, therefore, in my

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view / ...

view is no more than to assure Christians that there may be cases where "positive non-co-operation" may be necessary and to stimulate an examination as to where they may exist."

The next section deals with the role of the... (Chairman intervenes)

Just before you go on to the next section can you recall instances where Christians in South Africa have in recent years been consistent with the thinking that you have just read out, have refused to obey the laws of the State? --- Yes, Sir. I know of Christians who quite consistently have refused to apply for permits to visit Christian friends for fellowship in Black areas where permits are normally required, or to worship there. That does not apply to ministers of religion who don't need permits. A couple of years ago the President of the Methodist Church publicly tore up a permit as an indication of his belief that the State had no right to decide whether or not he could or could not be present at a large Christian gathering. I also know of marriage officers, including myself, who have married people of different races. 10 20

In conflict with the Mixed Marriages Act? --- That is correct, yes. As a matter of conscience, on the grounds that we do not believe that the State has the right to decide who shall marry who, simply on the grounds of race.

Can you think of other instances? --- Those are the ones that come immediately to mind.

And do you know whether those instances occurred in consequence of the debate at South African Council of Churches level? --- The first instance no, the second instance / ... 30

instance no, the third instance I think in terms of marriage officers, I would again say no, but I would think that the issue became a sharper one and therefore perhaps one which involved more clergy, not after an SACC debate but after a Presbyterian Church Assembly debate.

Is that after the 1979 SACC Resolution? --- I was present at that Assembly, I was a visitor there, and it was after 1979, yes. May I proceed, Sir?

Yes, please do. --- Witness continues:

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"There have been many references before this Commission to the utterances and actions of the General Secretary of the SACC, and I believe it to be important for me as President of the Council to indicate how I see the role of the General Secretary. There is a sense in which the General Secretary embodies the life of the Council and its relationship with its member Churches. As the senior full-time servant of the Council and, therefore, of its Member Churches, the General Secretary is charged with ensuring that responsibilities mandated by the Churches, through the National Conference and Executive Committee are properly discharged. He is the Chief Executive Officer and as such is required to motivate all the work of the Council.

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But the General Secretary is also more than this otherwise any good administrator would be suitable for the post. He must be a man (or woman for that matter) enjoying the highest respect among the Churches, recognised for his Christian insight and

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vision / ...

vision and expected to be among those who offer a lead to the Churches in this land. It should be noted that the selection of a General Secretary is undertaken in consultation with Churches - that is the Church leaders - in a joint meeting with the SACC Executive. Each General Secretary naturally brings his own peculiar gifts to the work of the Council, as well as a different set of priorities which if approved by the Executive will be reflected in the Council's work.

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As a Christian leader the General Secretary is expected also to have a prophetic ministry speaking frequently on behalf of the Council on a wide variety of issues. In exercising his prophetic ministry, there is always the possibility that he will articulate a position or stance which lies beyond that taken officially by the National Conference or the Executive.

If the SACC were a political party with its policy caucus, such conduct would clearly be out of order, but because we are the Church and because in the tradition of prophesy new revelations from God have come time and again to stretch and challenge a generally accepted position we do not see such actions as inconsistent with the leadership role to which he is called. An example of this is that when I as President of the SACC (representing Member Churches who have widely differing attitudes on the use of alcohol) addressed the National Conference on Alcoholism in 1981, I called all Churches to an

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uncompromising total abstinence position on alcohol - something which I might say might horrify some of my brethren in other Churches. But in doing so I was certainly not representing any official position of the SACC, but I was voicing a personal conviction which I believe needed to be heard by the Churches.

Thus the Church Leaders in responding to attacks on Bishop Tutu's Denmark speech, unanimously affirmed 'that Bishop Tutu has been called to leadership by God for his Church and is therefore under an obligation to express his convictions on the situation facing us in this land. Having heard Bishop Tutu's reasons for his statement we share his belief that any retraction of or apology for his statement in this instance would constitute a denial of his prophetic calling'.

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The all important consideration in judging such 'extra-policy' statements would be whether they were genuinely grounded in deep Christian conviction.

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Thus the Church leaders declared: 'we will not allow any single member of the Body of Christ to be isolated for attack where we are sure that his primary commitment reflects, as does Bishop Tutu's, those values for which each of our Member Churches firmly stand. In this matter, therefore, the State is dealing with all the Member Churches of the SACC'.

So, M'lord, although not all the Church leaders would necessarily have gone along with what Bishop Tutu said in Denmark, what they were concerned with is to hear why he

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said / ...

said it, and having heard his reasons, to say we regard those reasons as being based in those values for which we firmly stand.

Can it also then be said that in so far as the public perception is at all important, that whatever the General Secretary says can generally be accepted by the public as being the voice of the SACC? --- Yes, I think so.

In the absence of a very clear deviation very shortly thereafter? --- I think that that would be the case, and it does present a problem, one has to weigh that up against the very firm belief we have in the right of somebody to be prophetic. 10

It is also true, well that speaks for itself, the Constitution gives the General Secretary the right to express - exercise a prophetic ministry on behalf of the South African Council of Churches and therefore gives him fairly extensive powers of pronouncing on what appear to be matters of belief? --- Yes.

"Therefore to summarise: the General Secretary is expected in his public statement to reflect the position of the Council of Churches. If any statement of his should go beyond that position in such a way as to bring that position into question, the Churches may call him to account, but because of their respect of the role of the prophet within the life of the Church and society, they will be concerned only to ensure that the basis for such a stand was a fundamentally Christian one. 20 30

The so-called 'blackening' of the SACC:

"The movement away from a white orientation in the SACC was both natural and necessary in order to more accurately reflect the realities of the South African situation and that of its Member Churches. It wasn't accomplished without a measure of pain, as has been well described in David Thomas' book: "Councils in the Ecumenical Movement" - page 63 onwards.

Although the SACC was certainly not the first Church body to move to Black leadership (the Methodists elected a Black President as early as 1963) it certainly pioneered this at all levels of its administration. 10

I think it needs just to be said here that there is a sense in which although the electing of a Black President by the Methodists in 1963 was an historic moment, nevertheless the presidency of churches governed such as the Methodists is an annual appointment, it falls away after a year and someone else comes in, it can to some degree - although he has great powers during that year - nevertheless it isn't the same as building something in at lower administrative levels. 20

"Unlike some of its member Churches, the SACC never required a Black pressure group from within its ranks to accelerate this process".

And again I think, if I may interpolate, Sir, that I think most of the multiracial churches did come into a period in their history where Black members and clergy had to exert some pressure and to say: look, practise what you preach, 30

there / ...

there must be more room given to Black leadership, and that sometimes, for instance in the Methodist Church, a group called the Black Methodist Consultation sort of met in order to pick up issues of concern to Black people within the Church and to challenge the Church with them. I am very grateful for what they have done - it wasn't comfortable. This has not happened in the SACC.

"The need was clearly seen by General Secretary, John Rees, and by the time he resigned, making opportunity for a Black General Secretary to be appointed, if desired, the majority of SACC staff and directors of divisions were Black.

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Thus the SACC was a pace setter or 'visual aid' or 'model' of the future Church, and, in our belief the future South Africa. The Council has lived with both the joys and difficulties consequent on true non-racialism and it had to work through many problems. We can therefore speak out of experience when advocating a non-racial South Africa.

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I emphasise that although the influence of Black Consciousness was a vital spur in bringing this about, nothing has shaken the Council's commitment to true non-racialism. To suggest that it could represent any kind of Black racialism is refuted by the facts. At the 1981 National Conference, newspapers headlined the fact that a delegate - Ds. Thema of the NGKA - had proposed that the SACC cease being a multiracial body and that Blacks and

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Whites / ...

Whites should go their separate ways - that there wasn't room for both in the SACC".

And I can remember because I was chairing that Conference, that newspaper reporters were very excited about this, this sounded like yet another crisis for the SACC.

"But they were in for a disappointment because the delegates at the conference could hardly work up the interest to debate that subject at all, and it just fell by the wayside with little discussion.

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And it was clear to me in chairing that Conference that Conference that it found no support whatsoever within the SACC.

"It is also of note that in 1981 the completely Black dominated National Conference in electing a new President had a choice of some eight nominations only two of whom were White. In the event the Conference did elect a White President by a clear majority on its first ballot. Now this is hardly the action of a body promoting Black domination. I would suggest rather that it is indicative of the quality of freedom which emerges in a body no longer bound by the White domination traditions of South Africa.

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The Chetty affair. If the Commission requires it I will go through the written chronology of this chapter in the Council's life. This chronology has already been submitted to the Commission, and I believe, however, that it speaks for itself".

I have not had the opportunity, speaking for myself, 30

of studying that and we could perhaps deal with that at a later stage in the course of your evidence. --- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Mokoena affair:

"In his submission to this Commission, Mr. Eugene Roelofse has suggested that in respect of problems which he raised about alleged misconduct at the St. Ansgars Property, and by Bishop Isaac Mokoena in particular, he experienced great difficulty in getting any action out of the General Secretary and officers of the SACC.

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I have provided as an annexure my own memorandum on events December 1978 to June 1st' which was a contemporaneous document which I read to a gathering of the full staff of the SACC just after Mrs. Motlana and myself had laid charges against Bishop Isaac Mokoena.

I cannot recall whether it was the same evening or the day following but it was within a matter of one or two days of having laid charges and the document was an attempt to explain as fully as possible the events which had led up to that charge for the staff.

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"I believe that this document indicates that far from being unwilling to act, Officers of the Council took the matter very seriously and gave an immense amount of time in the task of trying to find a solution to it.

It must be remembered that in the absence of the General Secretary, who went overseas during this period, responsibility in a matter such as this devolved ultimately on the Praesidium, one of whom

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lived in Alexandra, another in Soweto and only the third within easy striking distance of the Council offices. Each member of the Praesidium was an extremely busy person, deeply involved with other legitimate responsibilities and simply not geared to be able to drop everything and concentrate exclusively on this problem. As it happened the then President of the Council was able to be present on only two occasions in all of the many meetings that took place.

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Quite apart from any valid questioning which Mr. Roelofse had at the time and which I acknowledge in my memorandum, I believe that the real issue upon which it seemed very difficult indeed to achieve any understanding with him was that of the difference between a 'legalistic' and a pastoral approach to a problem such as this.

It is the practice of the Church to go to any lengths to avoid legal action against its own members and certainly against its clergy. This is, of course, 20 an attempt to respond to the scriptural injunction that believers should not take one another to Court. It is also in the spirit of so much of what Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount, and in his teaching about the attitudes which should pertain between his followers.

So the Church has thus long since developed its own Courts of discipline which handle the failures within the ranks particularly of its clergy, but I can add there also in the case of my own Church

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its laity. In the Methodist Laws and Discipline for instance, there is a complex set of regulations applying to the trying of ministers on any offence and indeed, also, laying out procedures for any charge which might be brought by a member against a minister, by one member against another, by one minister against another minister. Now these things are seldom spoken of in public because the reputation of the Church is involved and with it the reputation of the Gospel itself.

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In my own Church, should a minister be charged with, shall we say, misappropriation of funds from the Church, he would be tried by what is called in our language a 'Minor Synod', set up under strictly prescribed conditions which would then report to the Sessional Committee of our Annual Methodist Conference for final decision about how he should be dealt with. Depending on the seriousness of the allegation he might well be suspended in the interim. Provision is also made for appeal.

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But prior to all of this it is in the tradition of the Church to give such a person every possible opportunity to come himself to a realisation of what he has done, to share this with those he is accountable to in the ministry. While some of the structures of a Court of Law are reflected in the Church's disciplinary structure, the essential difference is that every attempt is made not to

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use them, if justice can be done without having to resort to them. The Church which predicates its message on the Gospel of God's free forgiveness in Jesus Christ seeks in this way to be a community of forgiveness in which people can be brought back to right behaviour without resorting to the harsher penalties of the law. Now this is what we mean by a 'pastoral approach'. We do not expect necessarily for it to find approval amongst non-Church people, because it is not designed for them. But just as for instance the military have a code of conduct enabling them to deal with many disciplinary issues without approaching any civil court, so does the Church, although of course there would be a vast difference between these two approaches.

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In the case of the SACC all of those involved, with the exception of Mr. Roelofse, came out of a context in which this pastoral approach was something with which we were familiar. I believe he found this very difficult to understand, and I can understand why he found it difficult to understand, it was not part of his background and he advocated instead a very simple philosophy that 'crooks should be behind bars'. I believe that this difference in understanding was a major cause for the difficulties and frustrations he experienced in dealing with us".

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And I think, M'lord, that perhaps something of this difficulty in understanding is reflected also in the remarks to which I took public exception of the Magistrate

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when / ...

when he was commenting on Bishop Tutu's evidence in the Mbatha trial, and when Bishop Tutu had responded to the question why he hadn't also charged the messenger who had allegedly taken some money out of a franking machine, the Bishop's reply was that as a child of God he wanted to deal with him pastorally, and the Magistrate labelled that remark as false piety, and I took strong exception to that because I believe that it was consistent with the pastoral approach.

"Further, although the SACC Officers were concerned 10
to act pastorally, unlike any of our member Churches,
we had no pastorally disciplinary structure to fall
back on. We simply had to do what we felt to be
right each step of the way. Whether what we did
was right is, of course, open to debate, but we
certainly did our best".

Black Education:

"I listened with amazement as the SACC's role in
the area of education was also brought into
question. While I have no role in the Education 20
Opportunities Council, I do know something of how
much the SACC's massive contribution through its
African Bursaries Fund and its University and
Technical Bursaries mean to the lives of many
thousands of young Black South Africans.

I believe it to be an impudence on the part of any
servant of the South African Government to question
the Church's role in education in South Africa.

Has it been forgotten that until the 1950's the
Christian Church was responsible for virtually all 30

the / ...

the education there was for Blacks in this land?
Has it been forgotten that those Blacks who
received Church education received an education
not only comparable to that of their White
counterparts but in many ways superior?

It was a Christian education, education within the context
of the Christian faith.

"Has it been forgotten that in those days many Blacks
wrote the British matriculation examinations which
in those days were probably at a higher level
than the Senior Certificate Examinations of this
country?

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Has it been forgotten that Dr. Verwoerd, the then
Minister of Native Affairs deliberately set out to
wrest education from the hands of the Churches
because 'they were educating for equality'?

Has it been forgotten that many of the proud
institutions which produced the finest Black leaders
on the continent of Africa still stand as empty
shells because of the deliberate policy of this
Government?

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I grew up on one of those institutions and I watched
it dying. I know of the day when the deeply committed
staff of that institution were lined up by their new
Bantu Affairs boss and informed that all the
'Kaffirboetie' nonsense was now over.

Has it been forgotten that thousands of night schools
run by the Churches across the land giving some
measure of literacy and education to adult Blacks
were summarily closed by the master architect of

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apartheid / ...

apartheid because they represented a threat to his theory of education?

It would seem that history is soon forgotten. During our meeting with the Prime Minister and his Cabinet I recall the then Minister of Bantu Education, Dr. Ferdie Hartzenberg, informing us proudly of the number of night schools his Government had established from nothing. We were supposed to be impressed by a number which didn't even begin to compare with those destroyed by his Government. Bantu education is not only inferior but its intent is evil because it was designed to enslave, it will take two generations at least for the Black people to recover from its disastrous effects.

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The Commission will gather from what I have said that General Coetzee's references to education and the SACC's role in it have touched a very raw spot. Of course education has a role to play in liberation. We are committed to the freedom of the Black people and good education is not only part of the road to freedom but it ensures that freedom will be exercised responsibly. Every Afrikaner who knows the history of his own people I believe will agree with this. When Bishop Tutu says: 'if the Church is serious about its involvement in the liberation of the oppressed then the education opportunities available to them should be such as to ensure that they would be able to make meaningful contributions when they are called upon to do so', I ask what in

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heavens name is wrong with that?

And the irony of this all is, of course, that by far the vast majority of those given educational assistance by the SACC have perforce had to experience that education in Bantu education controlled schools. If there was an option we would certainly have ensured that they took it but there is no option. Are we now to believe that sending a child to a Bantu Education school is part of a subversive plot?

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The Homelands policy:

General Coetzee took exception to the SACC's attitude to the Homeland policy, criticising our failure to take account of what he called 'the political realities'. I comment briefly:

In our experience, the Homeland policy is among the most deeply resented elements of apartheid because it is designed to ensure that ultimately no Black person will hold citizenship in South Africa. It results in the loss of citizenship which however circumscribed for Black South Africans is yet a precious possession.

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It is used to justify the endorsing out and forced resettlement of more than 2 million people thus far and as such it is simply the 'other side' of the Pass Laws and is used to justify them.

It is resulting in a totally unrealistic partitioning of the Republic of South Africa and we reject the right of any minority-elected Government to do this without at least a referendum requiring the consent

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of all the governed.

It has resurrected and exploited tribalism, a phenomenon, which until the arrival of the National Government in 1948, was giving way to a broad South Africanism. We believe that this is quite deliberately done in order to divide and rule rather than risk a united Black people.

None of the so-called Independent States has any hope of economic and therefore political independence in the true sense, each is condemned in the future to be a vassal state of White South Africa, having of necessity to accept the Republic's actions and therefore give the impression of approval. 10

Because popular Black leadership is aware of and shares the deep resentment against this policy and has refused to have anything to do with it, leadership in the Homelands has in most cases devolved on tribal leaders lacking genuine popular support. Such is the unpopularity of some of them that they have had to resort to police state methods even more harsh than those experienced in the Republic in order to maintain their position. 20

In my 1982 Presidential address I said:

'We watch the grand strategy of apartheid unfold like some horror movie before our eyes: The most radical dismemberment of any nation since the partitioning of India. The deliberate creation of unstable unviable tribal dynasties in which racism is exchanged for tribalism and White oppression gives way to Black despotism. Unable to dominate directly forever the 30

policy / ...

policy is now to divest the Republic of its sons and daughters by giving them away to whoever will take them'.

"That is my view of the Homeland policy and I believe it to be the view shared by the majority of those whom it affects most, the Black population of South Africa and the Homelands. In absolute opposition to the philosophy of this Government the SACC rejects and opposes the cultivation of new nationalisms in a land which had and should have every potential 10 for a united South Africanism.

It would appear that General Coetzee would have us simply abandon this opposition because independent Homelands are now in his words 'political realities'. I can only say that if the Afrikaner people had accepted that advice after 1910 South Africa would still be a monarchy within the British Commonwealth of Nations.

Rightly or wrongly the Afrikaner refused to accept the 'political realities' of the Act of Union, and 20 no matter what people thought of his struggle he continued to work for the righting of what he believed was a wrong to his people.

I am quite convinced that the future will see once again a united South Africa and that the Homelands policy will recede into history, remembered only as a confidence trick which ultimately failed. To say this is far from being an act of subversion in my view. It may in fact reflect the true political reality which is that the majority of South African 30

people / ...

people wish to remain loyal to one South Africa.

The Schreiner Commission:

The steps which led up to the appointment of the Schreiner Commission in November, 1981, are fully chronicled in the SACC's original submission to this Commission from page 34 to 40. I would only wish to deal with three matters related thereto.

The first is to point out that prior to the announcement by the Prime Minister of his appointment of a Judicial Commission of Inquiry into the SACC, 10 the decision had already been made to appoint what was to become known as the Schreiner Commission.

It was the view of the Executive, as well as that of our member Church Leaders that the appropriate body to investigate any matters related to the Council of Churches was a body made up of suitably qualified Church Leaders, guided by either a retired Judge or a Senior Counsel.

Some have understandably asked why the Schreiner Commission has not met, seeing that it was decided 20 upon in November, 1981, and that its work was seen as a matter of urgency. For the answer to this question we do not have to go further than this room. The amount of work required of our limited staff in preparing for this Commission has made it quite impossible to even conceive of running a second Commission in parallel to this one. Whatever the findings of this Commission, its appointment has successfully prevented the Council from doing much of its normal work for the past year. 30

Reference has been made to the Executive Minutes in which it is stated that the Schreiner Commission should have the 'last word'. And because that phrase is capable of dubious interpretation I want to make it clear that it implies no respect whatever for this Commission...(Chairman intervenes)

Disrespect? --- I am sorry, M'lord. (LAUGHTER) I would like to place on record that that was not a Freudian slip, M'lord.

"It implies no disrespect for this Commission but it simply underlines the fact that we as a Council believe that the final word spoken on our life must always be a word which emanates from our member Churches and not from any secular authority. We remain ultimately accountable to them and theirs must be the ultimate judgment upon us.

At this point in time, therefore, it remains the intention of the SACC that the Schreiner Commission should sit and should fulfil its mandate.

The SACC's Communication Role: 20

There has been some questioning and criticism of the SACC's communication role. We are alleged to have sought maximum publicity 'in contrast to Christian humility and piety'.

It needs to be said that the Church is in the communication business. Its evangelistic task is to 'go into all the world' and tell people what God has done in Jesus Christ. John Wesley urged his followers to do this 'to all the people we can and all the places we can in all the ways we can as often as

we can. I don't think anyone would query the rightness of that.

But equally in our prophetic ministry there is a similar imperative. The prophets of old did not hesitate to use dramatic gestures to bring attention to their message (an example of that is Jeremiah walking around the streets with a yoke around his neck).

This becomes the more necessary if the normal channels of communication are blocked to the Christian voice of opposition. I believe very firmly that the right of freedom of speech is after all in a modern technological society, linked entirely with the freedom to be heard, and this requires access to the mass media.

In South Africa the SABC (both radio and TV) is ideologically dominated and unashamedly supportive of South African Government policies. Now I do not listen every day, but I have to say that I am usually riding into town at half past seven, and I have never yet heard an SABC editorial critical of the South African Government. The SACC more than any other body with the exception of the WCC has been subject to a sustained biased and relentless attack through the SABC. This attack began with the WCC grants in 1970 and focussed more closely on the SACC ever since the 1974 Hammanskraal resolution. It is interesting to me that the SABC was not present when Bishop Tutu made his opening statement, surely an extremely important statement, before this Commission, 30

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but they were here cameras and all when the head of the Security Police came to make the SAP allegations. There has been comment in the press on the shocking and manipulative use of the cameras by focussing on Bishop Tutu 'wringing his hands' for a lengthy period during one of General Coetzee's replies under cross-examination. The only television interviewer ever to give Bishop Tutu a chance to really expound some of his beliefs was Mr. Pat Rogers who found his position at the SABC to be untenable soon thereafter. It hardly seems necessary to go on in this vein. Nobody with any kind of balanced judgment accepts the SABC's claims to objectivity.

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Now it is against this background then that the SACC must seek to make its voice heard and I believe the establishment of the ecumenical press service, later to be known as Ecunews was an absolutely necessary development. For most of its life I would want to suggest that Ecunews has performed a very valuable service in sharing with readers both in this country and overseas what is happening in the Churches, as well as the Church's perspective on what is happening in the country. There is a chapter in the life of Ecunews of which I am not proud, because in this period it was run somewhat carelessly and inefficiently and its standard dropped abysmally. That has now been dealt with and our readers are once more appreciative of the service which it provides.

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Again against this same background it has been

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important / ...

important to maintain links with the press and to attempt to present the SACC's point of view on important issues as and when they arise. In many cases the SACC has been forced to call press conferences because of virulent attacks launched on it by Cabinet Ministers and others, who because of their position in the land are assured of headlines when they make such attacks. If such press conferences are regarded as seeking maximum publicity, we would rather refer to them and our other uses of the media as the exercise of our rights. In II Corinthians IV v.13 we find these words: 'But scripture says: I believed and therefore I spoke out' and we too in the same spirit of faith believed and therefore spoke out".

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M'lord, before I read my conclusion, I hope that I have managed to convey, however inadequately, the deep sense of outrage which I feel that so much of what we believe as being deeply Christian and rooted in the Scriptures and perhaps also as being a very special part of our heritage, as coming from a particular root if you like of the great Tree which is the Church, that these beliefs somehow could have been so thoroughly misunderstood or so deeply misinterpreted, or perhaps even worse, misrepresented. One wants to retain as objective an approach as one can before a Commission of this kind, preachers tend sometimes to be a little more dramatic in their presentations, I have tried not to be. I do not want to leave this table without conveying there is a deep sense of outrage, that is what it is. Some of us have given many years to the service of

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the Christian Church because we love our Lord, and Jesus loved the Church and we love the Church. We are certainly not infallible, but we are committed to that Church and Christ as Lord, and the suggestion that we are committed anywhere else raises very passionate responses in us.

WITNESS READS CONCLUSION:

"My Lord and members of the Commission, this concludes my submission. You and your Commission have an unenviable task partly because so much of what is at issue here rests not on legal points but on theological conviction. This is why without any disrespect whatever to you and your Commission we have submitted that we are answerable to a body beyond this one for whom we are and for how we have discharged the task given us by the Churches, they in the end must decide upon us. Yet because what we have done cannot be separated from our theology it has been necessary to make those convictions plain in the presence of this Commission. 10

Something like this did happen a very long time ago, 20 in the Book of Acts, Chapter V, vs 27 to 42, is the record of the early Apostles facing the Sanhedrin, and if at the end of that trial the decision of the Sanhedrin had been a different one the work of the Church would have come to an end on that day. The reason why it didn't is to be found in two important factors:

On the one hand there was the Apostle Peter, who declared openly and without fear his allegiance to Jesus Christ and his determination to proclaim Christ 30

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and His Way as the only hope for the world. He made it clear that Christ was his highest allegiance and that in the name of that allegiance he would stand against the tide of general opinion, knowing that unless he stood for the right even if threatened he would fail his Master and himself, and he would even fail those who threatened him. On the other hand there was somebody who was open to the truth. We read that 'there stood up one in the Council a Pharisee named Gamaliel...'

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Gamaliel had no reason to like the Christians. He was a Pharisee and the things Jesus taught threatened the interests of the Pharisees more than any other group, but something in him discerned the ring of truth in their words. He said: 'Keep clear of these men I tell you, leave them alone, for if this idea of theirs is of human origin it will collapse, but if it is from God you will never be able to put them down and you risk finding yourselves at war with God'. And the result is in Scripture for all to see".

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Thank you, M'lord.

ADV. UNTERHALTER: May I ask just two questions please. His Lordship had put a question to you, Reverend Storey, in respect of incidents regarding disobedience by Christians of the law, and you gave a few examples. Would you care in addition to those to give some intimation to the Commission of what is known as the Sauer Street affair, do you think it would be relevant? --- I don't know of it.

The demonstration of the clergy. --- Oh!

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Sauer / ...

Sauer Street was where they assembled, do you remember - if you think it is relevant or if you think the Commission should be told of it? --- Yes, M'lord, this was an occasion - I hadn't known that it was known as the Sauer Street affair, this was the occasion when I think it was 50 or 52 clergy a couple of years ago walked from Braamfontein on the way to John Vorster Square by way of Sauer Street yes, in clerical robes, in order to present a petition to the Commanding Officer for the charge or release of the Reverend John Thorne, a
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Congregationalist Minister who had been arrested during the unrest amongst Coloured scholars. The chronology of this is that the Reverend Joe Wing, the General Secretary of the Congregational Church had heard of the detention of Mr. Thorne and had taken what he believed to be every possible step he could to try and get an explanation of why he had been detained, and had failed to get any satisfactory answer over I think a period of 43 hours or so. It was then that Mr. Wing asked that there be a
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meeting of ministers where a number of ministers gathered and at that meeting decided, so far as I can recall, that they should take this petition personally by way of a procession to John Vorster Square. They marched two by two and about two-thirds of the way there they were in fact arrested and detained overnight, and charged I think the next morning.

They pleaded guilty? --- There were two charges, the one was obstruction of traffic to which they pleaded guilty. The other was - and I am under correction here, it was some time ago, but I think it was the Riotous - an illegal
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gathering / ...

gathering..(Adv. Von Lieres intervenes)

ADV. VON LIERES: Unlawful gathering. --- Unlawful gathering, yes, and to that they pleaded not guilty so far as I can recall, not all of them, some pleaded guilty to both.

ADV. UNTERHALTER: They were convicted and fined and the fines were paid? --- Those who pleaded not guilty were in fact convicted and paid their fines.

Can you tell the Commission just very briefly, among the clergy who participated, who were they, in reference to membership of Churches and office that they held? 10

--- Yes, there was the Anglican Bishop of Johannesburg, there was of course Mr. Wing, who is the General Secretary of the Congregationalist Church, there was the Reverend Stanley Pitts, who was Chairman of the South Western Transvaal District of the Methodist Church, there were other senior clergy from all of those Churches, there was Bishop Desmond Tutu and myself. Offhand I cannot recollect - there was the Dean of Johannesburg, Dean Simeon Nkoane, there were Lutherans, there were Community of the Resurrection Brothers, there were a number of other Methodist ministers, Congregational ministers, there were Presbyterians, I cannot remember an officer of the Presbyterian Church offhand, - Mr. Chris Aitken. 20

And you were present in Court and you saw the procedure, and it is correct is it not that everyone went into the witness box and gave an explanation? --- Yes, it is correct, I was one of those charged so I was there. It is correct that a number of the ministers concerned gave an explanation, others were prepared simply to say that their / ... 30

their reason for doing it was in harmony with what had been said by others.

I don't know if you recollect, Reverend Storey, at this stage but the Bishop of Johannesburg went into the witness box and he gave a statement. Do you recollect it, is there any portion of it or the essence of it that you could convey to the Commission as being an explanation of his action, or if not his action if you can recollect in essence the explanation given by any of the others?

--- No, I don't recollect sufficient to be of any use to this Commission what the Bishop said, I know it impressed me deeply at the time but I don't recollect it now, but I think the heart of the reason given for taking part in that march is that here a fellow Christian minister had been prevented from doing his work as a Christian minister. That by all accounts the Reverend John Thorne, together with some other of his fellow clergy in a very tense situation, was able to remain in communication with those young people who were in a fairly explosive mood, and that the influence of people like John Thorne, far from being in any way a danger in the situation, was desperately needed because they were trusted by those young people, and if people like John Thorne said: cool it, the young people were more likely to listen than certainly if a police officer were to come along and say it. And so we saw him as exercising his duty as a Christian minister which is to be with his people, these were his people, these children were members of the congregations of Coronationville, Bosmond etcetera, and that simply for being with his people and seeking to play a role in that situation / ...

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situation, it seems, he had been detained, and that represented to us an interference with the freedom of a minister of the Gospel to do what God has called him to do, and I think that lay at the heart of why the Congregational Church called this meeting. I think then one has to say as a secondary reason that there just didn't seem to have been much concern on the part of the authorities to respond to Mr. Wing who is a senior minister of a very highly respected Church denomination in this country, to all the attempts he made to try and find out what was happening, where was Mr. Thorne and so on, and that I think was the second source of - that perhaps the only way of getting something by way of response was to show that Mr. Thorne did not stand alone, that the Church stood with him here. The ironic sequel of it, if I may say so, is that while we were all busy handing in our belts and money and things like that, Mr. Thorne was busy collecting his belt and his money and being released. 10

Just one last question on quite a different plane, evidence was given during the hearings of the Commission about an investigation undertaken into the financial records of the South African Council of Churches, by a gentleman, Mr. Tim Potter, a member of a firm of accountants. Did you personally know this gentleman at all before he embarked on his investigation? --- No, the first time I met Mr. Potter was when he came to an Executive Meeting to present his report, after he had concluded his investigation. 20

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. 30

THE COMMISSION ADJOURNS FOR TEA

THE COMMISSION RESUMES:

REVEREND P J STOREY CONTINUES HIS EVIDENCE:

ADV. VON LIERES: Reverend Storey, I propose at this stage just to ask you a few questions about certain aspects of your submission or statement about which there may be some lack of clarity on my part, and then other themes I will start developing tomorrow. I will also basically concentrate on facts there as it emanates from various documents. Could one perhaps add to your curriculum vitae and background that you are quite well known in international 10 church circles? --- National church circles?

International church circles? --- To some degree, yes.

Now, on page 2(E) of your submission, that is the addition that you handed to us this morning, you referred to the achievements and the failures of the Council, and you say that you have lived with its dilemmas, and you can say without any doubt that all those dilemmas arise supremely out of seeking to be a messenger. What sort of dilemmas are you referring to there? --- I think two kinds of dilemma were in my mind, the one is the type of 20 dilemma which consists of having to respond to a situation and trying to find out what you believe to be the Christian way of responding to it, and sometimes that can be very simple, and sometimes I think it is more complex, as for instance I indicated on the issue of investments having to come to a point and say there is no one response that can be made. But I think at another level, the dilemmas that have been faced with our administrative problems, the struggle that we have gone through there.

On page 9, paragraph 18, you refer to the perception 30

that / ...

that the SACC has mischievous designs because of its desire to be involved in the emergence of a trade union movement in this country, and you suggest that there is a Methodist tradition in the next paragraph which shows that there is nothing strange for the Church to be involved in such an activity. Now, you know, I want to read to you from Asingeni Report No.25 which is dated August 1982, and I want you to note from the nature of the language used there, then I will ask you something in connection with that. It says here: 10

"There has been unrest on the mines in the industry, especially the motor industry in the Cape. The trade union movement is the cutting edge of the liberation struggle for a more just and democratic non-racial South Africa".

Now, the type of language used here is "the trade union movement is the cutting edge for the liberation struggle". This is not the type of language that would be associated with your historical example that you have set out in paragraph 19. Would you go along with that? --- Yes, I 20 think the phrase "cutting edge" for instance is a modern phrase which you certainly wouldn't find in the currency of Wesley's day at all.

It probably relates to a sword or knife or something like that? --- It does, Sir, but it doesn't necessarily imply wielding one, because I think it is a fairly common phrase, I would say that the Lifeline movement is the cutting edge of human problems in the cities.

Now, what I wish to ask you about this is this, when this type of language is used in connection with such 30

an activity, would you find it strange if people perceive that there may be something more involved than simply the performance of a Christian duty as the Church understands it? We are talking now about secular people and not religious ministers? --- They may, and yet I am not sure what it is that you are suggesting they may read into it, but I would have little doubt for instance that if I were to transpose modern language back into the 18th Century, I would have been able to say that the Tolpuddle martyrs were at the cutting edge of a liberation struggle, although that phrase too is not one which was used then.

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No, you see you used the father/son or father/child analogy, here the involvement in the trade union movement is not used in the father/child analogy but in the context of the liberation struggle for a more just and democratic non-racial South Africa, in other words to be involved in the struggle for change? --- Yes.

Do you see the difference in your language that you use and the language that was used in this report?

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--- A difference in language perhaps, I am not sure about a difference in what is essentially meant to be conveyed. The phrase "liberation struggle" as I have heard it used, is used very very broadly, it is used by Black people particularly to describe any part of the struggle to bring a greater freedom, a greater justice, particularly again for the Black people in this land, and unless one gave it a very narrow interpretation...(Mr. von Lieres intervenes)

No, I think you can accept that I accept "liberation struggle" / ...

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struggle" in the wide term, not in a narrow violent sort of struggle. --- Then I wouldn't see an inconsistency between the role in the trade union movement in earlier days and the language that you have used there now.

Now, this is just a simple example, there are others which I won't refer to now, but if this type of language is used and the ordinary man in the street reads it, don't you think it is going to create a particular perception in his mind of the type of the type of activities that the organisation is involved in? Isn't he going to ask what exactly is it all about? --- I think if the ordinary man in the street read that phrase relating to the trade unions, I think it would convey to him without any doubt that the SACC sees part of its task as being involved in the liberation struggle, yes. 10

Now, let me just give you another example on the trade union movement, I am referring to the Minutes of the SACC Trade Union Conference held at Khotso House on the 14th August 1981, and this is a document that is to be found in Dr. Kistner's file marked A3583. During this Trade Union Conference which was chaired by your General Secretary, the following trade unions were present AZAPO, BAWU, CUSA, NGWUSA, MACWUSA, ADAWU, HOTELICA and CCAWUSU, MVASA and three or four others and SACC was represented by the General Secretary, Mr Manthata and Dr. Kistner. Now, the purpose of this meeting was explained and during this process Mrs Mashinini who was the representative of the HOTELICA asked about the involvement of the Church in the whole exercise. Dr. 20 30

Kistner was asked to reply and he said - I read this in now:

"The law relating to Trade Unions, since the law would affect basic human rights the Church had to be involved".

Is that in accordance with your doctrine? --- Yes, where there is an infringement of human rights I think the Church needs to be in some way involved.

Then on strikes it says:

"It was resolved that they happen as a result of low wages, inadequate bargaining procedures and completely unworkable official dispute procedures. Unions would stand by their members including strike pay, and the prohibition of strike support would therefore not be obeyed and the Unions would support one another in that matter". 10

Now, the law provides that there is a prohibition of strike support which must be obeyed. This decision indicates that that section of the law will be ignored. What is your comment on this sort of approach to the legal 20

regulations surrounding the Trade Unions? --- It is very difficult to comment off the cuff. I want to think deeply about an issue like that, but I would say that the concern or my starting point would be whether unionists had any genuine bargaining power with employers if they could not strike, in other words if they couldn't withhold their labour, which I think is a fairly widely accepted privilege given to Unions, and almost a right, and therefore, if their ability to strike was prevented or crippled by the lack of any - or a law against strike 30

funds, then they had a meaningless freedom in a way. Now again, whether or not the Church should advocate or assist in that situation is one I think is not easily decided as a matter of policy.

Could I just ask you in amplification of your reply, let us take essential services for example, if the law prohibits strikes or making available of strike funds for essential services for obvious reasons, let us take electricity to hospitals or water supplies or whatever the case may be, would you consider this type of approach, that the prohibitions on strike support should be ignored, will you consider this in line with the recommendation that the Church should make towards the workers to whom it sees itself standing in the relation of father to son? --- No, no, I believe that you would have to then weigh the pastoral considerations, deeply Christian considerations of the needs of people in a hospital against the right of workers to strike in that case and I know where I would land up, it would be on the side of the patients in the hospitals.

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Let me take a further example from the same document, it says here - this was now explained in answer to questions raised by delegates, it was explained that in negotiations - and I quote - "in negotiations between management and the worker the Church would stand against the legislation directed against the worker, should mobilise and educate the Black worker". Now, I wish to repeat this just so that you get the sentence correctly, it says: "In negotiations between management and the worker the Church should stand against the legislation directed

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against / ...

against the worker". Now, who decides whether legislation is directed against the worker or whether this legislation is supposed to be assisting the worker, that is I think the first question? --- In my view the Church should decide, in other words it shouldn't accept somebody else's decision, it must work that issue through for itself.

Now, how would the Church go about working through that issue, would it engage knowledgeable people, hold Commissions, or would it be a staff exercise or what? 10
In other words where do you get the expertise from to enable you to decide and to advise you? --- I would think it might do all of those or at least some of those that you have mentioned.

Do you know whether any Commissions or research projects were undertaken in connection with labour legislation? --- I don't know of any Commissions, and I certainly couldn't from memory give details of research, but I am quite sure that research has taken place, research made available by the Institute of Race Relations for 20
instance, I have heard reference to that, and I believe research in our own Justice and Reconciliation Division has taken place.

Would there be a close link between you and the Institute - your Council and the Institute for Race Relations in connection with these matters? --- I don't know of any official link at all, but obviously things like a survey on race relations and other research material produced by the Institute, form an important part of our own resources. 30

I know that Dr. Kistner has prepared a number of documents, or had a number of documents prepared on labour matters, this was done by staff members of the Division of Justice and Race Relations, and I was wondering whether you were aware if any outside expertise was called in to explain the nature of the legislation and to enable the Council to decide whether such legislation - it is rather phrased vaguely, but whether this legislation was in fact directed against the worker? --- Yes, I seem to recollect - and this I would not like to state in any way dogmatically - that some expert resources in terms of people have come to at least one National Conference in order to share about labour legislation, but I would want to confirm this, M'lord, that kind of thing I don't easily remember. So perhaps I could confirm it.

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Let me deal with another problem that I find here in this document, it says here:

"It was suggested that the SACC should play the role of uniting the registered and unregistered Unions, it was an important role in view of the delicate problem between the registered and unregistered Unions, and an umbrella body was necessary and this was the SACC's function" -

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so Mr. Wauchope suggested. Now Mr. Wauchope was the representative of ZAFU at this particular meeting. What I wish to know from you, do you consider it the Church's role to in fact create an umbrella organisation for Trade Unions? --- Not ultimately, no. I would expect that to be a secular body, a Confederation or whatever of Trade Unions

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ultimately / ...

ultimately. What I can understand, I don't know if that request was acceded to or not, but what I can understand is that in a very formative period the need for an honest broker might have been important, and I could see the SACC as being seen by a group of people with some divisions amongst themselves as a fairly trustworthy body where both sides might be able to find a meeting, but ultimately no, I do not believe that that is the ultimate role, it might be something which in a passing way may be a ministry which the SACC could provide to an emerging situation but I do not believe it is the Church's role to confederate labour. 10

One last aspect on this particular meeting in connection with the Trade Unions which I don't quite understand, if you could perhaps assist me is this, it carries on and it says:

"It was agreed that Government propaganda overseas concerning the labour situation in this country should be countered".

Now do you see it as the function of the South African Council of Churches to be involved in countering propaganda the Government makes overseas in connection with such secular activities as labour matters? --- First of all I don't know from what you have read that it was agreed that the SACC would undertake that. 20

Well, I don't know whether it was agreed that the SACC undertake that but assume it to be so, I just want to know what the position is? --- Well, understand that I am simply assuming that that was the case, the only point at which I think - or the major point, let me put it that 30

way - the major point at which this would be legitimate it seems to me, is if churches overseas were wanting from their fellow churches here, a perspective on the labour situation. That I believe would be quite legitimate.

And you would supply information to them? --- Yes.

This is the legal situation, this is the problem with the law, this is what we have set in motion to try and correct it and so forth? --- I think we would probably provide a little more than that and say: this is what we think of it from a Christian point of view. 10

Right, fair enough, but now I am talking about propaganda which has a particular meaning, is that the function of a Council hypothetically speaking? --- No, but I thought it was to counter propaganda?

Yes, it must be counter-propaganda, that is the same thing? --- Well I would regard truth as being counter-propaganda, so that if something in fact is being presented which is not true and the Church presents the truth that is countering propaganda and I don't believe it is propaganda. 20

If the Church counters propaganda with the truth it implies and requires research and study by the Church to collect the true facts and material as a necessary precondition before it can provide the truth? --- Yes, I would say that you can't counter propaganda with truth unless you know the truth, and that it would be wrong to go beyond the truth you know. Now I am not an expert in labour but I think there might be one or two things I know about our labour laws which I believe are wrong then I think / ... 30

think I am qualified to say so.

Right. Then one last question on this matter, this same meeting says "that the Church should mobilise and educate the Black worker". The word "mobilise" can you perhaps enlighten us, what is this supposed to imply - if you don't know you don't know, it is as simple as that? --- It is not language that I would use, but I would think it has something to do with - I am trying to think of it in another context at the moment - no, I don't easily understand that phrase.

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No, I am probably on a topic that you are not very familiar with and I don't want to embarrass you there, but why wouldn't you have used the word mobilise, what does the word mean to you? --- It means organise I would think.

So could I just summarise this and suggest to you that your motivation for an involvement of the Church with the Trade Unions, departs from a different basis and has a different content to this Report that I have just dealt with with you? --- No, I don't think so.

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You don't think so? --- No, I don't, I think some of the language belongs to a different age, but I don't see in principle anything different between the identification of the Church with for instance people like the Tolpuddle martyrs, and identification with a group of people struggling to discover what unionism is about today.

Now, another document that was made available by the Council which also comes from the Department of Justice and Reconciliation, is a document with a heading "Trade Union Unity" and it is dated June 1932, and it

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contains / ...

contains a copy of the Second FOSATU Congress, which apparently is an annexure, and this Congress took place on the 10th and 11th April 1982. The essence of this Second FOSATU Congress is set out in paragraph 2 subparagraph (ii) in which it says:

"We have chosen to keep it closed (that is now the Union) and to once again self-critically examine our position. I believe that this shows our determination to take the great militancy of our members and to use this to build a just and fair society controlled by workers. We have no intention of becoming self-satisfied trade unions incapable of giving political direction to the workers' struggle".

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Now this expressed intention by FOSATU "to use our members and build a just and fair society controlled by workers", would that be a factor that the Council of Churches would have to consider in its relations with trade unions. Here you have a - if I can put it that way - a declared political intention expressed by this particular trade union? --- It sounds to me like the sort of extravagant language one gets from unions all over the world in the Western World. Certainly in the little experience I have had with overseas unions, for instance in Australia, that language would not be foreign to them at all, and most people take it with a little bit of a pinch of salt.

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On page 5 of the same document, I would like to give you another extract, paragraph 4.4, it says:

"What has developed in South Africa is a very

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powerful / ...

powerful tradition of popular or populace politics. The role of a great political movement such as the ANC and the Congress Alliance has been to mobilise the masses against a repressive minority regime. In such a situation mass mobilisation is essential so as to challenge the legitimacy of the State both internally and internationally".

Now this is a declaration by FOSATU as to where they stand, does the Council consider the political attitudes of trade unions with which it has dealings before it has conferences with them and so forth, or does it accept them at face value, how does it handle these declared intentions of trade unions in terms of the role the Council sees it wishes to play with regard to trade unions? --- Yes, I don't know the answer to that question, I don't know whether such consideration has been given before any meeting with trade unions, I just don't know because I haven't participated in any of them. 10

Because this trade union wishes to challenge the legitimacy of the State both internally and internationally, that is what it says. Now you say you don't know whether the Council has got any particular policy on its approach? --- No, I don't know whether it has examined those before meeting with them or not. 20

Now, do you know what the interest of the Member Churches of the Council is with regard to involvement in trade union business? --- I can only speak on behalf of the Methodist Church here because I know that the Methodist Church has passed a Resolution, the exact wording of which 30

I can't remember but which indicates that as Christians we should be concerned about the development of the Trade Union Movement, and give what assistance we can to that development.

You see according to the Council documents a Seminar on Trade Unionism and Labour Laws was arranged for the 30th to 31st January 1971, the organiser was Mr. Tom Manthata - sorry 1979, and after these invitations went out to the Member Churches only three people turned up, they were the Reverend Moseke, Tlhagale and the Reverend Mpho, it seems as if there was no interest on the part of the Member Churches, now why would that be? --- That may of course not have been the only reason, I don't know when the invitations went out, if they were relatively late, they weren't in very very good time, it is difficult for churches to call people to things like this, I don't know who they were directed to, if they went to the actual administrative secretaries of the churches, I think those would be factors. If all of those things were met and still only three pitched up then that would indicate, yes, a lack of interest.

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Now, let me now just ask you, if people are aware of the intentions of a particular trade union in terms of its political ideology, in terms of its militancy, in terms of the fact that they wish to have workers' governments established and so forth, and people are aware of the fact that the Council of Churches is involved in contacts with such trade unions and that they are aware that the Council provides funds for strikers and so forth and so forth, would it be - would it really amaze you if

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people / ...

people have perceptions that there may be a mischievous design? --- It wouldn't amaze me that some people might have those perceptions, particularly in the White constituency. I think that people have had perceptions about mischievous designs on far less grounds than that.

Now on page 16 you quote a Methodist Conference Resolution in which you - towards the bottom part of the page - in which you express the appreciation of the meetings which are convened from time to time between Church leaders and Church executives. Now I have taken 10 the Minutes of South African Council of Churches meetings, the Executive Committee with Church leaders, three different meetings, the 15th October 1979, 4th June 1980 and the 25th June 1980. Bear in mind that you have something like 21 Member Churches, it may have varied one or two over that period. Now attending these particular Conferences between the SACC and Church leaders for 1979, there were only six or seven churches. On the 4th June 1980 nine churches attended, and on the 25th June 1980 eight churches attended out of 21, so it gives you for 20 these three attendances, it gives you an attendance figure of something like 33% roughly speaking. The 4th June 1981(sic) could perhaps serve as an example, who was present, the Reverend Wing, he also is the Honorary Life President, yourself, you were in the Chair, Mrs. Motlana was there, she is a member of the SACC, the General Secretary was there, now which were the members who were there, Makubu, Reverend Carmichael, Bishop Stevenson, Bishop Gottshalk, Reverend Dlodla, Mrs. Seroke Reverend Ulster and Reverend Massey and lastly the Reverend Jacobs. Then the 30 staff / ...

staff of the SACC was there of course. This is now in three instances, is there any reason for these poor attendances? --- Again I would say that meetings with Church leaders, and I can't speak for each one of those meetings, are very often of the nature that they have to be called at short notice. Apart from the tradition which there was of having a meeting with Church leaders at the National Conference just before the National Conference opened, there is no set meeting with them, therefore they are called when a situation requires it and normally - well when I say normally, in my experience so far as I can recall, with the exception of one or two, those meetings have been called under some pressure and at short notice. I think the possibility of getting them all there at any one time is unlikely, but the final thing I want to say is that again so far as I can recall at these meetings certainly the major churches which are part of the SACC have almost without fail been present. 10

Have you not got a bit of doubt as to whether the solidarity that is claimed that exists between the Council and its Member Churches actually exists? --- No. 20

Let me demonstrate to you for example the payment of the affiliation fees by the churches to the Council of Churches, this is for the year 1979-80-81. The Reform Church in Africa has not paid for three years, the Presbyterian Church has not paid for three years, the Paris Evangelical Church has not paid for two years, the N.G. Kerk in Africa has not paid for three years, the N.G. Sendingkerk has not paid for two years, the Moravian Church has not paid for two years, the Methodist Church has not paid / ... 30

paid for two years. Can you perhaps enlighten us seeing that you are involved in the Methodist Church why this is so? --- Well I think that proves that the solidarity is there because even the Methodists who have made such a strong statement of support have slipped up on their subs and I don't know whether it does prove anything.

For two years running? --- Yes indeed. I did mention that sin was quite possible amongst us.

FELCSA hasn't paid for three years, the Evangelical Lutheran Church hasn't paid for two years, the Christian New Salem Church has not paid for three years, the Bantu Methodist Church has not paid for three years, the African Methodist Episcopal Church has not paid for two years, the African Orthodox Church has not paid for three years. Now, isn't this indicative of two things, either a lack of interest by these people to retain their affiliation, or - and/or shall I say poor administration on the side of the SACC, or both, a combination? --- It certainly points to something of the second, because I believe that in the case of the Methodist Church, I believe that they would pay only on receiving an advice that they ought to pay, but that advice was given, in fact at the National Conference I remember I think Mr. Stevenson reminding Member Churches of where they were behind in their subs and scolding them.

And perhaps also a bit of something of the first? --- Not in respect of the Methodists, no, not in respect of the larger Churches. I believe that they have demonstrated in so many other ways where they are at with regard to the Council, as I pointed out in my submission,

but / ...

but I don't believe this kind of slip-up is indicative of a lack of solidarity by the major churches, I can't speak for some of the smaller ones.

And the major churches are about one-third of the membership of the Council, of the 21 churches? --- I don't know, I am speaking now of the Anglicans, the Presbyterians, the Congregationalists, the Lutherans, the Moravians, these are the major churches, and the NGKA.

Could I just clear up this one last aspect here, 10
on page 17, paragraph 13.3 you provide a statistic that over 70% of the persons who have been defended in terms of your Legal Aid have been acquitted. Perhaps you could just inform the Commission for what year these statistics were obtained, over how many months in that particular year, if you don't know I could perhaps stimulate your memory, it was for a three-months period towards the end of 1976? --- No, I don't know over what period that statistic would apply.

Has any subsequent statistic been extracted to see 20
whether this figure still holds good, this is now seven years old virtually, this statistic? --- Not to my knowledge. I do not know.

For how long do you think can one rely on a seven year old statistic, I mean is it a fair reflection of what has happened in the intervening period, is that statistic still true for this year, last year, the previous year? --- I do not know if it is true for this year, last year or the previous year, I think what certainly impressed me about that statistic was that it covered a period of time 30

when / ...

when a very large number of people were being helped legally by the SACC.

A very chaotic situation existed, not necessarily in the Council but in Soweto and so forth? --- Yes, many young people were being arrested and so, in so far as I was concerned, that statistic applied to a time when probably the Council gave more help in any given period than it has ever since, that is to my knowledge.

Although the Asingeni Fund has increased? --- Yes, but in terms of the number of people it has helped. 10

CHAIRMAN: Might I just ask in relation to this figure, did the SACC consider it to be a matter of importance that there should be as many acquittals as possible by the emphasis on the number of acquittals or were they concerned to ensure that the persons got fair trials? --- I think the primary concern was to see that people had a fair trial, but I think that the reason for quoting the figure is to indicate that if they had not had a defence the chances may well have been that people who in this case were acquitted, may not have been acquitted. 20

I think we should take the adjournment now but before we do so, I would like you to dwell on a question which you could answer when it suits you, you may recall that the police submission ended off with the suggestion that the Commission should recommend that the South African Council of Churches be declared an affected organisation. Now the Act concerned hits at a body or a person which practises politics, I think that is the phrase employed. Would you please when it suits you give me your comment on the question whether it can be said that the SACC 30

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has in the stated period, over the last seven years,
practised politics. --- Yes, M'lord.

THE COMMISSION IS ADJOURNED