

APPENDIX BAPPROVED TEXT OF STATEMENT ON CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTION ISSUED BY THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCE, RELEASED ON FEBRUARY 9, 1977

In the armed struggle that is developing on our borders and could easily spread internally a grievous situation arises for all who are concerned about the use of violence. On the one side the conviction grows in a significant sector of the oppressed majority that only violence will bring liberation. On the other, the minority in power sees itself threatened by indiscriminate violence supported by international Communism.

In these agonising circumstances we can only promise with God's help to give leadership in an on-going Christian examination of this tragic situation. We intend to publish reflections from time to time as incentives to Christian prayer, thought and commitment and we hope to be able to do this with the representatives of other Christian churches and organisations. In the meantime we have resolved to say something about conscientious objection.

According to the teaching of the second Vatican Council, "it seems just that laws should make humane provision for the case of conscientious objectors who refuse to carry arms, provided they accept some other form of community service" (Constitution of the Church in the Modern World, No. 79).

In order to understand the issue of conscientious objection, a careful distinction should be made between universal conscientious objection (the pacifist) and selective conscientious objection (e.g. on the grounds that a particular war is unjust); between combatant military service (carrying arms) and non-combatant military service (e.g. in the medical corps) and between military service (combatant or non-combatant) and national service (which could include services to the community, like social welfare, education, housing).

In South Africa the Defence Force Act (section 67 (3))

- a) makes no provision for any conscientious objector (universal or selective) to do non-military national service;
- /b) provides for universal .....

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- b) provides for universal conscientious objectors (those who belong to pacifist denominations) to do non-combatant military service;
- c) makes no provision for selective conscientious objectors even to do non-combatant military service.

Such provisions are made in some way or another by almost every other non-communist country in the world which has conscription.

It should also be noted that objectors are sometimes accommodated, despite the lack of legal provision for it, by being given non-combatant tasks but never by being given non-military national service.

Consequently, in South Africa the selective objector and the universal objector refusing to do non-combatant military service are liable to a fine and/or imprisonment (Section 126, 127 (c)).

In this matter of conscientious objection we defend the right of every individual to follow his own conscience, the right therefore to conscientious objection both on the grounds of universal pacifism and on the grounds that he seriously believes the war to be unjust. In this, as in every other matter, the individual is obliged to make a moral judgement in terms of the facts at his disposal after trying to ascertain these facts to the best of his ability. While we recognise that the conscientious objector will have to suffer the consequences of his own decision and the penalties imposed by the State, we uphold his right to do this and we urge the State to make provision for alternative forms of non-military national service as is done in other countries in the world.

#### APPENDIX C

#### STATEMENT ON CURRENT SITUATION ISSUED ON FEBRUARY 10, 1977, BY THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN BISHOPS' CONFERENCE

Having dedicated most of the time at this plenary session to the consideration of our own roles as leaders in the social mission of the Church in South Africa, we feel obliged, also, to give some consideration to the events that have occurred since June 1976 and the resulting situation.

We recall that the disturbances began in Soweto with a demonstration on the part of the youth against a system of education which the students regarded as narrowing and limiting rather than developing their education.

The disturbances represent a wider frustration of Black youth unwilling to grow into a society in which they can have no say as to the manner in which they are governed, cannot even have ordinary worker organisations to defend their right to a living wage, cannot be sure of having the right to a house and home near where they must work when they marry, are declared by the system in the Republic unfit for citizenship on grounds of colour only without question of ability or qualification, and if they protest are suppressed with the unnecessary and horrifying violence we have recently witnessed.

/Realising that South Africa .....



Realising that South Africa has entered a critical phase in the rejection by the majority of its people of a social and political system of oppression, we add our corporate voice as leaders of the Catholic Church in this country to the cry for a radical revision of the system.

People starved of freedom, deprived of their just rights and humiliated in their personal and corporate dignity will not rest until a proper balance of justice is achieved.

We affirm that in this we are on the side of the oppressed and, as we have committed ourselves to working within our Church for a clearer expression of solidarity with the poor and deprived, so we commit ourselves equally to working for peace through justice in fraternal collaboration with all other churches, agencies and persons dedicated to this cause.

We again profess our conviction, so often repeated, that the only solution of our racial tensions consist in conceding full citizen and human rights to all persons in the Republic, not by choice on the false grounds of colour, but on the grounds of the common humanity of all men, taught by our Lord Jesus Christ.

In the struggle that has reached new intensity since June 1976 we are especially perturbed by what appear to be reliable reports of police brutality. We realise that a situation of violence breeds atrocities on both sides, but we are speaking of seemingly systematic beatings and unjustifiable shootings during disturbances.

With these reports coming in as the accompaniment of confirmed accounts of the death of many persons in detention, we cannot but harbour the gravest misgivings about police action and behaviour.

We call for an investigation and resolve to collaborate with others intent on bringing the truth to light and we protest in the strongest possible terms against the intention of the Government to provide legal indemnity for the police and other security personnel who may have been guilty of unprovoked and disproportionate violence.

It is clear that the Black people of the Republic have passed the point of no return, and no temporary suppression by violence, only a just sharing of citizenship, can give hope of any safety for the children, Black and White, now growing up in the Republic, and prevent the horrors of evil war in the future. This is only to say that the Christian commandment of love must be fulfilled, and if it is fulfilled we can trust in God to give the grace of friendship and peace in social life.

#### APPENDIX D

#### STATEMENT BY SOUTHERN AFRICAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCE ON THE QUESTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS, ISSUED ON FEBRUARY 3, 1977

The Plenary Session of the South African Catholic Bishops' Conference, meeting in Pretoria, has been urged "that the awakening of social conscience, knowledge of injustices and problems, should be a central part of the ordinary apostolic work of the Church".

/In a paper on .....



In a paper on "Citizenship and Human Rights" presented to the Conference it was pointed out that as early as 1960 the Bishops' Conference had stated the need of giving equal citizenship opportunities in South Africa to all races in terms of political participation, economic opportunity and unhindered free association and social intercourse.

"The very serious happenings in the last half of 1976 have only increased our conviction in this matter. "It is clear that the Black majority in the Republic will not be satisfied with minor improvements, nor should they be. The sense of being human persons in the image of God obliges them to demand citizen rights. There can be no answer to our present tensions other than granting the citizen rights which are due to all".

It was clear that since the large majority of those living in the Republic, and making it what it is by their labours, were Black, the people of South Africa could never again be separated nor the Black majority offered a true citizenship elsewhere.

"This statement has political implications although it is not as such a political one but only one that the Church has repeatedly made about the human rights built into man by God for situations all over the world".

The paper stressed that in the attitude of Black and White there is still an immense fund of potential friendship. If friendship is fully offered Whites need have no fear for their future. But if in fear or despair they continue to impose injustices on the others, then there is indeed reason to fear for all, Black and White alike, in the near future.

#### APPENDIX E

PRESS RELEASE BY THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCE ON FEBRUARY 4, 1977, ON "CHRISTIANITY AND WEALTH, ECONOMIC RIGHTS AND DUTIES"

"Every readable social and historical sign in South Africa points to our immediate future as an increasingly harsh right-wing dictatorship by the white minority over the black majority, to be followed after a number of years by a take-over of the black majority, driven by their frustration to the extreme left-wing, something like nazidom followed by something like Mozambique. These are the highest probabilities, and prudence or moral judgement must act on such". This statement was made in a paper delivered for consideration by the Catholic Bishops of South Africa meeting in plenary session in Pretoria.

"The resolutions offered here suggest crisis measures", states the report on "Christianity and wealth, economic rights and duties". But if we are in crisis times we may need crisis measures. We may be unable to influence the blind forces of mass psychology at political level; but we can at least so act that we demonstrate love by sharing".

Urgent change is called for in several resolutions dealing with aspects of social justice and reconciliation. In an accompanying report on "Implications of social justice in our structures and customs", it is pointed out that people expect to see in the Church a demonstration of how a human community - and in South Africa one of different races - can live together in harmony and justice.

/It is thus recommended that .....



It is thus recommended that the bishops direct special attention to the growing number of unemployed people; industrial workers, especially those who are migrant workers; worker organisations; the thousands of squatters living on the periphery of the large cities; political prisoners; detainees, banned people and their dependants.

"This plenary session should take resolute steps to change the focus of the Church's ministry so that we can give special attention to these people" states the report.

Another resolution urges that Black people be promoted to high clerical office in any part of the country, "allowing them and the Black lay people to take responsibility for the Church in their own way and with customs agreeable to them".

A third resolution calls for sharing to be made visible in Church finances and the application of the principle of communalising Church funds, not only within dioceses but on a national level, between rich and poor dioceses.

In a report on the use of money in the Church, it is urged that the bishops accept the establishment of equal pay for equal work as the aim of deliberate progressive budgeting, insisting on a review of all wages and conditions of work in their dioceses.

Another resolution urges that Church authorities should not retain control of training or development schemes, or institutions or large landholdings, longer than is necessary to initiate local community groups to take them over with the funds donated for them.

The report concludes: "No one believes the extraordinary is upon him until it has come, and often not even then. Not even now. Yet it is extraordinary to have 1500-2000 people under one or other form of permanent political penalisation, to have school children shot in large numbers, to have been unable to get several outstanding Catholic leaders as advisers here because they are detained or banned, to have Church offices raided, school children sent to adult penal settlements for five years. Five school children were given five years on Robben Island recently. It is extraordinary to have persecution. We have no persecution of faith, but one of charity, since Christians can be penalised for giving each other ordinary hospitality".

#### APPENDIX F

PRESS RELEASE BY THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCE ON FEBRUARY 5, 1977, ON "COMMUNITY BUILDING"

A belief that, given the chance, Christian communities could be established along non-racial lines in South Africa was expressed in a report on "Family and community building" presented today by Father Smengaliso Mkhafshwa to the Catholic Bishops holding a plenary session in Pretoria. These Christian communities would be characterised by the communal sharing of wealth, brotherhood and political power, irrespective of race, colour or religious affiliation.

In his opinion, community building could best be realised by Development. White Church authorities and workers were asked to consider relinquishing sole control over development projects as soon as Black leaders were ready to assume responsibility for them.

/Without discrediting the .....

"Without discrediting the excellent work already accomplished by our self-sacrificing white brethren, Black people feel the need to control their lives at all levels of the church's life. It is humiliating for educated Black adults to feel they are treated as minors. People may be excused for asking: Is it going to be a question of White or Black control or is it to be a partnership founded on common commitment?"

It was pointed out that the poor, especially in Africa, Asia and Latin America, are becoming aware that their full development will be achieved only with a struggle to change the overall domination by the affluent and exploiting classes. Genuine liberation must attack the root causes of the problem.

"If we accept the point of view that development ought to be the liberation of the whole man, it is imperative that we should reject the evils that seek to enslave man and reduce him to a sub-human existence".

Various methods were suggested through which practical co-operation could be attempted. The co-operative system assumed that people would decide to practise co-operation more than competition or compulsion in their relationship.

"Co-operatives have flourished in most democratic countries, although not without fierce opposition from persons or groups with special class interests".

The broad aim of this family and community building programme was summed up in the first part of the report by Mrs F R Mlotshwa, who said: "The Church has the right and the duty to bring back community consciousness and awareness.... The Church must restore the spirit of sharing at every level: materially, morally and spiritually".

