



Left: Walter Sisulu (front left), Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Mrs. Albertina Sisulu, at a celebration of her birthday.

Bottom left: Hugh Masekela.

Bottom right: Hannah Stanton and Fr. Timothy Stanton.



the CR need not be thought of as *white* persons! Trevor seemed to me to laugh like an African: to laugh with his body not simply with his teeth! His freedom to hug and touch people communicated something to us. He revealed the magnetism of love to me — not only in South Africa; but when I saw him in Stepney, when he was bishop there.”

“I think it is difficult for people in England to understand what it is like when you have been subject to the ultimate blasphemy of apartheid and have come to doubt whether you are a child of God. You hate yourself: your being: the way you are. Trevor restored self-assurance and self-confidence. He took away the need to *clobber* whites. He made people like me deeply saddened that what so many whites think is working for their good is actually undermining them.”

“When I got to College at Rosettenville, the Vice-Principal cleaned out the toilets. Up to then I had only seen black people do that *for* whites.”

“What Trevor and the other Fathers taught me is the absolute centrality of the spiritual: not as a form of escape but as that which constrains you to get involved. I believe they taught us an authentic spirituality.”

“+Trevor touched my life at so many points. I could never now see myself as a ‘self-made’ person. Many of us might have collapsed in the days when the system was at its most vicious, but Trevor and the other members of the CR taught us to put first things first and gave us a profound Hope.”

“You will have heard how Trevor came to visit me each week when I was in hospital. Did you know that the doctors had told him that I did not have a long time to live? I said to God ‘Well if it is your will that I die — so be it; and if it is your will that I live — so be it. That day I experienced an incredible serenity unlike anything I have experienced at any other time. And here I am!! — a black archbishop!!!”

Archbishop Desmond had begun our interview with a simple prayer and at the end he gave me the Blessing, in his own tongue. I did not, of course, understand the words, but I understood his hand outstretched and his African handshake.

Fr. Timothy had kindly driven me to the Archbishop’s House, in Soweto — his official residence is in Cape Town. On returning to the Priory, I had to set out with Andrew for “The Yard of Ale”, opposite the Market Theatre, in the centre of Johannesburg, to meet Hugh Masekela. Hugh hardly drew breath as he told his story.

“I was born in 1939 in Witbank. My father was a health inspector; my mother, a social worker. She worked under Helen Navid in Alexandra township. We had a family gramophone and a collection of 78’s that included Duke Ellington, Count Basie and others.”

“By the time I went to St. Peter’s, Rosettenville, Fr. Huddleston was a legendary figure. We were always reading and hearing about him. He was well known, for instance, at the hospitals. He would come up to you at the school, ruffle your hair, and say ‘Hey, little creature!’ By that time I was a server. I had played the piano since I was six.”

“In 1953 I was in a group that was always getting into trouble. Ernest Manana, my classmate ‘Stompie’ — we played soccer together and would go into the girls’ hostel and got very unpopular with the nuns, teachers and prefects. One day we went to play our rivals at soccer, Kilnerton. I scored a couple of goals and celebrated on sorgum beer and Gilbey’s. In those days you were expelled if you had the smell of liquor. I was tipsy in the ‘bus. There was a teacher, Alfred Kumalo, who we called ‘Too Cool’. When we returned, he said ‘Masekela: what have you been drinking?’ I was sick all over him!”

“Norman Montjane had us cancelled from serving lists and gaited.”

“At that time we were mad about jazz records of, for instance, Louis Armstrong in America and films like “Young Man with the Horn” with Kirk Douglas: the story of Bix

Beiderbecke. We thought of Fr. Trevor as a ‘Hoodlum Priest’ and nicknamed him: ‘DiGerry’.”

“Fr. Trevor asked me one day: ‘What is it you really want to do? — you’re getting into so much trouble.’ I said I wanted to learn the trumpet, and that if I had a trumpet I’d never bother anyone again.”

“It was when I was unwell, not long after, that Fr. Huddleston got me a trumpet — for £15 — from Polliack’s. He persuaded a member of the Johannesburg Municipal Brass Band to give lessons on a Saturday morning in the carpentry shop. Fr. Trevor got us a second trumpet and a clarinet. We built up our record collection and became avid jazz fans. We changed our Boy Scout drum into a bass drum; and so began the Huddleston Jazz Band.”

“Spyros Skouros, head of MGM and Twentieth Century Fox, came to Johannesburg, and Fr. Huddleston persuaded him to kit out the whole band — in cowboy outfits! Yehudi Menuhin also helped us. We hit the newspapers!”

“In 1955, when St. Peter’s had to close, and Fr. Huddleston was recalled to England — one of the saddest events I can ever remember — we gave two big farewell concerts. There was Jonas Gwangwa on the trombone, Zakes Mokae on the saxophone, George Makhene on the drums, Monte Mahobe playing the bass, and Ernest Manana, ‘Stompie’, on the trumpet: one of the best there ever was.”

“It was Fr. Huddleston who was the first to ensure that black musicians received royalties — from Gallo Records, EMI and so on.”

“He got the Head of Music at “Wits”, and a member of the Johannesburg Symphony Orchestra, to help us. He told Louis Armstrong — when he stopped in New York — about the band, and Louis, who had been in a reformatory, sent us a trumpet. When I finally met Louis Armstrong in New York, I was able to tell him how much it had meant to us. In 1959, through Yehudi Menuhin and Johnny Dankworth, Fr. Trevor got me to the Guildhall School of Music. Two months after Sharpeville I took a ‘plane to England, but I did not stay long in England then: I got a scholarship to New York. I lived in the USA for thirty two years, and I started the Botswana International School of Music. Now I wish that Fr. Huddleston was back here with me — and only forty years old!!!”

At tea time, “Chinkie”, Frederick Modiga, came to collect Andrew and me, to drive us round Soweto. It was as depressing a drive as I’ve ever done. Soweto is not even a name; it’s an acronym for South Western Township. It came about through the evil policy of destroying stable black communities like Sophiatown. It just grew, higgledy-piggledy. It’s now over two million people — nobody quite knows. There are various areas which tend to house different tribes — e.g. a Zulu area — and get different reputations and names e.g. “The Wild West”. There are the notorious hostels for migrant workers. Many houses have two or three families and also have a shack — or two or three — in such grounds as they possess — because there’s nowhere for people to move to. This shack living — there are a quarter of a million squatters — which reduces people to no significance, encourages them to treat the place as of no significance, so that rubbish is everywhere, and wrecks of cars. Hardly any of the amenities, that are taken for granted in the more affluent white suburbs, exist. At the entrance to Soweto stand the cooling towers of a huge power station, but much of Soweto itself lacks electricity. There are middle class houses — like the Archbishop of Cape Town’s and Chinkie’s — which are beautifully kept. (Chinkie’s wife has worked for sixteen years with the African Children’s Feeding Scheme which +Trevor began.) The police drive round in huge Casspir armoured vehicles (which you never see in the white highlands) and there’s no denying the fact that life in Soweto is violent. We left as dusk fell, and there are areas where it would have been dangerous to be after dark. My experience at Pimville

last Sunday — within Soweto — had revealed how the races and tribes do get together in at least some of the churches, and undoubtedly many people live relatively happily in Soweto — whites would be more hostile to them elsewhere: but I cannot believe Soweto is life as it is meant to be lived. Most whites in Johannesburg have never been there. Until recently they'd have to get a pass to enter. But they are still too scared to go.

Friday August 28th 1992

Let me record my heartfelt thanks for the World Service of the BBC — for objective, reliable news, of course, day after day; but, last night, I awoke after three hours sleep, and the huge suppurating sore of Soweto — and its utter chaos and unsolvableness — seemed, for a time, the only reality; then, suddenly, some Elgar, and Simon Rattle, conducting the finale of the Mahler Seventh — via the World Service, proclaimed most marvellously other aspects of reality. *Laus Deo!*

We celebrated in Chapel, at the early morning Mass, the Feast of Augustine of Africa (i.e. of Hippo, not of Canterbury). Most of my thoughts were with John Austin — that ancient abbreviation of Augustine — at whose consecration as a bishop of the Church I shall be preaching in far away Birmingham (D.V.) next Thursday! I added a paragraph to the m.s. of my sermon to make clear that he will be a bishop of the *world* church: Austin of Africa as well as of Aston!

I write "D.V. — Deo Volente" — because, alas, we met with a minor accident in the car this morning in the centre of Johannesburg. I suffered nothing more serious than a bump on the head from where the safety-belt is attached to the car and Andrew was untouched, thank God, and both cars involved were able to proceed on their way. But when it happened it was unpleasant, though it provided insight into how the public and the police in Johannesburg behave on such an occasion — which was better than we had imagined — even at that evil police HQ in John Vorster Square, where we had to register the accident. (It was there that prisoners have been known to jump — or were they pushed? — from tenth floor windows.)

We had been going to have a meal again in the evening with Geoff and Christine Lowick. Instead, alas, I had to visit him in hospital after he had had what seems to have been a heart attack.

Instead, in the evening we took the Prior, Fr. Crispin, out to dinner — our last chance to do that — and then to a magnificent new play by Athol Fugard: *Playland* at the Market Theatre. There are just two actors: John Kani, who is black, and Sean Taylor, who is white; and the whole ninety minutes — without interval — is a sustained confrontation between the two about truth and forgiveness. Although the situation is "concrete" it also articulates the need of white people in general — especially here — and at this time — to speak to black people. At the end of the play you expect and desire a happy ending. But not a bit of it: they take their bows separately. There is no reconciliation — yet. It is one of those plays from which you emerge in profound silence. It could not have been a more appropriate play for Andrew and me to see at the end of our stay in South Africa. The audience was mainly white but it is a sign of the times that it was black *and* white.

Saturday August 29th 1992

It was time for my last interview of a black priest: David Nkwe, now Bishop of Klerksdorp, a hundred miles south-west of Johannesburg. It was again a fascinating drive through the Transvaal. David, who lives in a fairly large house suitable for meetings — there was a diocesan meeting going on when we arrived — in a white suburb of Klerksdorp, first of all explained to us the extraordinary difficulties and opposition he had encountered as a black bishop wanting to live in what until recently had been a "white" area. This led straight to our subject

of the influence of +Trevor. "He taught me not to acquiesce in the evil of apartheid" said David "to stand up and be myself. Once I knew that I was a human being I could withstand all sorts of attacks. You know: we need to confess our sin of acquiescence. We have allowed them to turn us into door mats. Trevor Huddleston was a role model to some of us. I owe it to him that I am a bishop at all — I do not mean that I got the job! I mean that I gained the confidence. Something of him rubbed off on to some of us: we began to emulate him. We were encouraged that there was a person like him."

David told us he was born on 3 March 1936 — not far from Klerksdorp, at Potschefstroom. He remembered +Trevor from when he was a small child. David was schooled at Orlando High School. The Church of Christ the King, Sophiatown, was a magnet to him. He was a very keen server. He remembered Trevor's aura — in his white cassock and scapula. "It wasn't only +Trevor. The Fathers — like Trelawney-Ross — would take you round visiting the sick. They taught you that you can only get the most out of life by serving the community. Others made you want to meditate like them — Fr. Aelred Stubbs, for instance."

"At first, I wanted to be a lawyer, but gradually I knew I must be a priest. I was one of the last group of students at St. Peter's, Rosettenville, before it moved to Alice. I was ordained deacon in 1962 by Bishop Leslie Stradling to St. Paul's Jabavu. It was the same year I married Maggie. My vicar resigned in my first year and eventually I was made rector. I encouraged house churches so that everyone could play a part. We built a new church to hold a large congregation. I stayed there 28 years! In 1971 I went to Erasmus University in Holland. In 1972, Dale White, a white priest in Johannesburg, came to be my assistant priest: the first white priest to serve under a black priest! Then the Government took away my passport and made all sorts of false accusations against me. On numerous occasions I was taken to be interrogated. Helen Suzman tried to get me back my passport."

"After the uprising in 1976, I went to +Trevor and said 'Our only libraries in Soweto are inadequately equipped. I want a library to equip the young for the future.' He said he had a friend who would help. It is there now in St. Paul's: the Trevor Huddleston Library. It is an oasis."

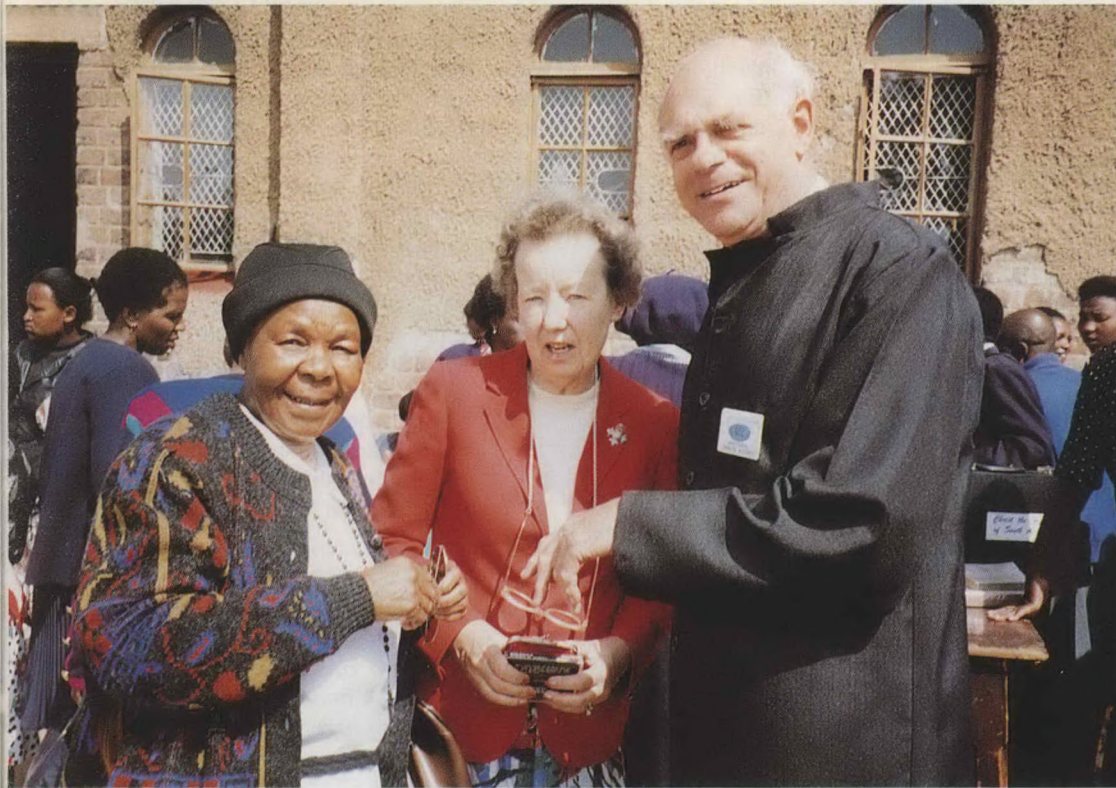
"If we hadn't had churches, I believe the whole '76 rising would have collapsed. The young leaders of the rising often found food and a bed in the churches. But the opposition did their best to destroy St. Paul's. Mercifully, the detonators did not go off. When Nelson Mandela made his first speech out of prison in Soweto it was in our Conference Centre at St. Paul's." I asked Bishop David whether he thought Synod's present policy of not allowing priests to be members of political parties was right — after all, +Trevor is a card-carrying member of the ANC. "Yes", he said "in the present circumstances, when polarisation has set in, I believe it is very wise. Everyone knows where I stand, but if I said I was ANC in some areas of my diocese . . . ! And if you said you belonged to another party in another area, the same thing would happen. You wouldn't be seen alive again. Remember: two or three priests have been shot because of their party allegiance. It is important to *unify* people at the moment. That is what +Trevor did when he returned. He was given a thunderous ovation by *everybody*. He brought warring people together."

"My regret is that everything, in +Trevor's day, happened around *him*. Why were others so extra-careful? Why did not they too run with the torch?"

Maggie, David's wife, who was a hospital sister, has, for many years, run a Community Home for Children in Soweto. They are a remarkable pair.

Sunday August 30th 1992

Andrew flew off to a lay training centre in Zambia this



Top left: Bishop David Nkwe, Bishop of Klerksdorp.

Top right: Two old-age pensioners gossiping in Alexandra.

Centre: Dot and Deane Yates with a parishioner outside St. Michael's Alexandra.

Bottom: A "hostel" in Alexandra for migrant workers.



morning. I said goodbye to him with a profound sense of gratitude for all he has done for me this month. I know that it has been for him a valuable month of preparation for Ghana; for me, his friendship, his efficiency, his calm common sense and his driving skill have been invaluable.

An hour after Andrew had departed, Deane Yates came to collect me. I last saw Deane in 1958, when he came to Cambridge in search of teachers for the prestigious St. John's School, Johannesburg, of which he was then Headmaster. Since his time at St. John's — 1954-70 — he has more and more lived the life of an educational pioneer. He built in Botswana the non-racial school Andrew and I visited a couple of weekends ago, Maru-a-pula, but after ten years there he left to set up NEST — New Era Trust Schools. Phuting, for instance, founded in 1989, situated north of Johannesburg, is fast becoming not only an educational laboratory, the majority of whose students are black and either full-time or weekly boarders, but a kind of locus of reconciliation in a polarised South African society.

But I was not meeting primarily with Deane the educationalist. He was going to take me to St. Michael's, Alexandra, and introduce me to some of the problems of the township.

First of all, Deane took me back to his home, which is in Kew, five minutes from Alexandra, and introduced me to his marvellous wife, Dot, who has partnered him in all his experimenting. Deane helps at St. Michael's, which was as refreshing an experience of worship as was St. Andrew's, Pimville, Soweto, last Sunday. And just as Stephen Montjane had an extraordinary story to tell, so had the young priest Samson Makhalemele — of being beaten up at the hands of Inkatha.

I sat with Dot in the congregation, and greatly enjoyed the worship, and gave a brief talk from the lectern on +Trevor Huddleston and his message for us all.

Then began an hour with Deane, going round the township, which exceeded my worst imaginings. Alexandra has a population of 350,000 people, about a sixth of the size of Soweto, but many of its problems are even more serious. It is largely a shanty town, but the fighting between Inkatha and the ANC has left part of the township like a battlefield or an area that has just been blitzed; Inkatha has taken over what was ANC ground and the people have had to take refuge wherever they could find it. There were twenty-six families in one hall I visited: they have been there since last March. Outside the hall, the children gathered round me much as they did for +Trevor in Sophiatown. What will *become* of them? I thought. The mothers were cooking inside the divided hall, amid all their belongings: beds and wardrobes, like a second-hand furniture store. There were more vast hostels like barracks. Deane and Dot work tirelessly in Alexandra. Having begun as a public school headmaster, Deane has ended up as a kind of voluntary social worker: a community reconciler. He introduced me to the Inkatha leader, who has many killings to his account. "Divide *in order* to rule" is the aim of the Government. Deane spends much time dragging people together to talk to one another.

Eventually, having spent four hours in Alexandra, Deane and Dot took me to their home to talk about +Trevor.

Deane had one particularly valuable memory. Raymond Raynes, Superior of the Community of the Resurrection, came out to Johannesburg in November 1955 — he had taught at St. John's, and came to Deane and Dot's flat (Deane was Headmaster). He remembers Raymond pacing up and down like a caged lion — smoking endlessly — going over and over the reasons for and against +Trevor being recalled to England. His diabetes was a major concern of the Superior. South African prisons were unlikely to pay much attention to that. Would the South African Government risk having a martyr on their hands? Would they be likely to deport +Trevor?

Apartheid policies were coming to a crescendo. Later they did not hesitate to deport +Ambrose Reeves. Perhaps the hour had come for a witness overseas to the evil of apartheid. Dot said that +Trevor had hardly been able to speak to anyone for some days when he first heard the news of his recall.

I was surprised to hear from Deane that until +Trevor's recent visits, hardly anyone in South Africa knew he was a card-carrying member of the ANC. But the phrase "card-carrying" is somewhat misleading. +Trevor (and Chief Albert Luthuli and Yusuf Dadoo) were the first recipients of the Isithwalandwe. *That's* how he belongs to the ANC.

Dot — +Trevor was her confessor — said "He always gave you the whole of his attention. He always had a hundred and one things to do, but he gave you the gift of time. He made you feel you were the only person in the world. He was a person who saw a need and did something about it" she said.

Deane had been at Oriel College, Oxford when John Collins was Dean. We also talked of Hugh Lewin — Deane had been his Headmaster at St. John's College, Johannesburg.

Monday August 31st 1992

I have only a few last letters to write and 'phone calls to make, otherwise I have reserved my last day in South Africa for reflection. I don't have to leave the Priory until about six this evening.

I came out here intent on getting a lot of research done for the biography of +Trevor. That goal has largely been achieved. But I've got much more than I bargained for — as will be apparent, I hope, from this Journal: not least, an insight into the *present* situation. Apartheid is no longer the official policy of the Government, but its effects are going to last for a very long time. And what people do about the *continuing* situation will *continue* to be important. Change will come only when people want it to.

The political situation has not changed much publicly because politicians are playing literally a cynical political *game*, like a game of chess, waiting for the other party to move — and make a false move. Meanwhile people suffer and suffer greatly. But the ANC enjoys the major support of black South Africans and the country at large knows its only hope is in negotiation - with the ANC. I don't think I could conclude this journal better than by writing out a prayer which Fr. Timothy wrote:

*O Lord, thank you for South Africa:
for its beauty, its resources, and for its variety of
people of all races:
for their courage, their love, and their joy.
Thank you for all who want to live and work together for
the coming of your kingdom here.*

*But there is much that is wrong:
avarice, injustice, exploitation, cruelty,
above all, racism.*

*So we pray for all the people of this country:
for Whites:*

*those who have the power to change things but
don't use it, for fear of losing their power and
privileged position — or just through laziness.*

for Blacks:

*for those who have worked with the system, and
are now well off, and don't want to change things;
for those who are trying to change things, both
from inside and outside the country;
and for those who have lost hope of changing
things except by violence.*

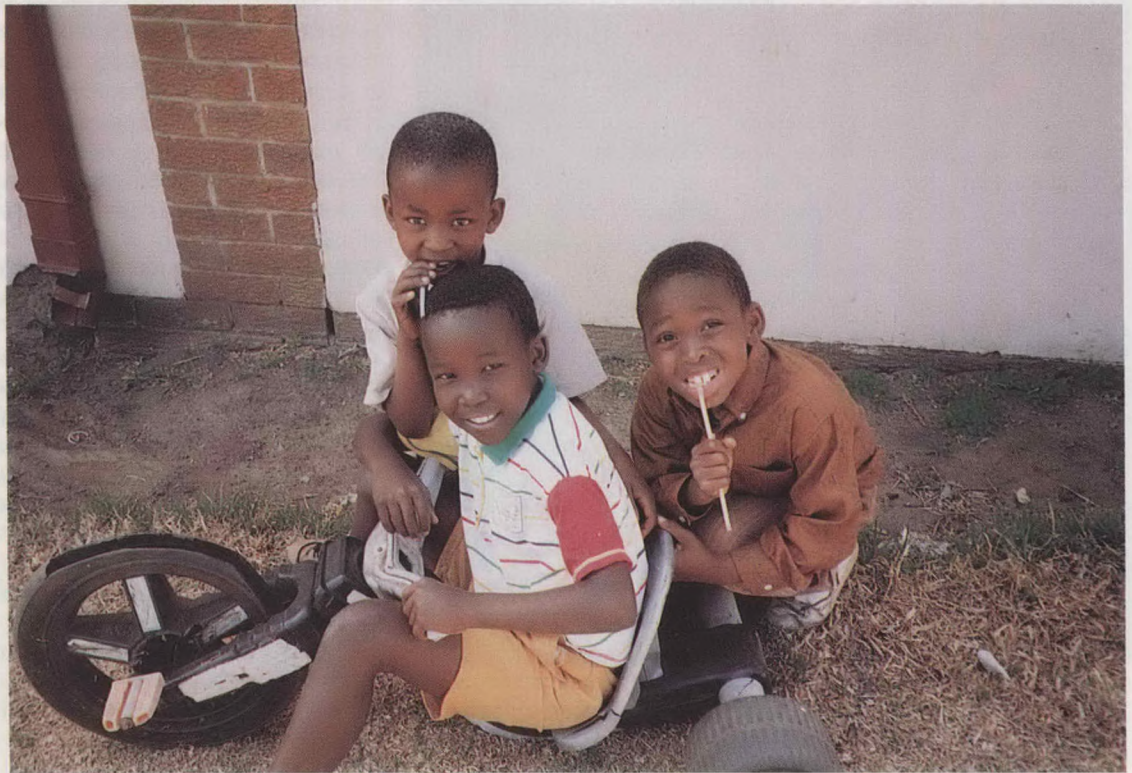
*for Coloureds and Indians and other races, torn
between their desire to share white power and
privilege, and their duty to share with Blacks in
the Liberation Struggle.*

*O Lord, save us and help us all.
Things won't come right without repentance.
Help us to recognise our sins and grant us true
repentance.*

*Grant us your Holy Spirit:
that we may see how to bring about change in the
best way,
and with as little violence as possible.
May we each do what we can in the situation we are in,
and with the gifts we have, to create peace and
harmony;
that all the people of this country may live fully
human lives, in right relationship with you, with
each other, and with all your creation;
And so may your Kingdom come in all its fulness,
Amen.*

For those who prefer something shorter there is Trevor Huddleston's prayer:

*God bless Africa,
Guard her children,
Guide her leaders,
Give her peace.*



An article for Analysis: Christian Concern for Southern Africa

I was in South Africa, for the first time for twenty years, for the whole of the month of August.

I went with a specific task: to do research for the biography of Bishop Trevor Huddleston, which he has invited me to write — on condition that it will not be published in his lifetime. He will be eighty next June. He was in South Africa from 1943 to 1955; so I was expecting to meet people who would recall events of thirty-five to fifty years ago.

Although my brief was to that extent historical, there was no way, in the present situation, in which it could be confined to the historical. August 3rd was the beginning of a general strike and a week of “mass action”. Several of the people I was interviewing had been in prison for what they believed, and were as deeply involved in the present as they had been in the past. Many of the situations I was visiting, like Soweto, are what they are now because of what has been done to them in the last fifty years.

A month to take the temperature of a complex country like South Africa is no time at all. But what impressions — for what they are worth — have I gained?

1. Things in South Africa can never be the same again.

I think the majority of people in South Africa know that there is only one way forward: the way of negotiation and of the abandonment of apartheid. Economic prosperity can come no other way — and — Marx must be laughing! — in the end the economic rather than the moral argument has probably been the most powerful.

2. Although much of the legal system of apartheid has been demolished — and it is astonishingly different to be able to sit next to black people in restaurants, buses and theatres — what has not changed, not least because it is the economic not the moral argument which has won, are many of the social attitudes. White people are still as afraid of black people as they ever were (and will warn you to watch out!) and are still as patronising and paternalistic. Laws can be changed overnight: social attitudes take longer: maybe a generation or more.

3. Not even all the legal system of apartheid has yet been abandoned. Even Archbishop Desmond Tutu has no vote! And there is little sign that South African voters are eager to vote the finance for the transformation of black schools, hospitals, etc., so that South Africa becomes a society of equal opportunity. The cost of a more equal society is still being counted; it has hardly begun to be paid. It is as though it has been grudgingly admitted that apartheid must go — so long as it goes at no great cost.

4. There is the major question of what I will call Confession, Absolution and Forgiveness — in secular terms. People seem to want to say: “O.K. Apartheid was probably a mistake. Let’s admit it, and get on with the new South Africa.” But there is a huge toll of lives lost as a result of apartheid. There has been a massive wastage of gifts — and untold suffering. The police record is particularly appalling. People are waking up to what has happened — rather as Germany woke up to the reality of the concentration camps. There is a silent, unspoken question

— more an unspoken statement: “But you don’t really expect us to say we’re sorry to *blacks* . . .”

5. In England, we are learning that it is not easy to reform a police force and a judiciary. But our problem in England is simple compared with South Africa’s. It has suddenly to produce a multi-racial police force, having at present had a police force in which it is taken for granted that white police should treat blacks as less than human. But it is not only the police force which has to be changed. A very significant minority of people love to have the police force as it is. It is not simply the police force but the society whose police force it is which has to be transformed.
6. In England there is some awareness of the class problem. The “problem” of the inner city is fairly high on the political agenda. South Africa’s urban problem — of migration to the towns from rural areas — is huge, and what has to be seen to be believed is the extreme contrast of riches and poverty in close juxtaposition but separate existence. The shanties of Alexandra are five minutes from the affluence of the north Johannesburg suburbs. In the Transvaal, a dozen miles from the riches of Rustenburg, is the mining village of Imfdikwe with *one tap to two thousand people*. Life in Imfdikwe largely passes by Rustenburg — *and its churches*.
7. As I interviewed thirty or forty individuals who had known Trevor Huddleston in Sophiatown I found myself thankful for this Christian tradition of personal social concern. Many testify to what they owe to it. There are other agencies of social concern at work in Soweto and Alexandra. But the need there is huge: not only of cash, but of, for instance, teachers committed to the townships — there are probably two million people in Soweto alone. You need a whole “priesthood” of caring professions.
8. The divisions within the black community in South Africa have to be seen to be believed, and taken very seriously. In Alexandra, I visited about thirty families who have all been living in one hall since March. They were ANC families who had been burnt out of their homes by members of Inkatha. No doubt there are similar ANC atrocities. The Government does all it can to foster such divisions, so that, having divided, they can go on ruling, and does it not least through an armed police force glad to implement its strategy.
9. Which brings me to a crucial question: power sharing. The *theory* of power sharing has to become as some point *power surrender*, by those in present possession of power. That is, of course, a huge step. It is not surprising that there is all sorts of delaying going on along the way. South African politics at the moment are like a game of chess, with great delays between each move; but it is not really a game, a clean game. It’s a cynical game in which you hang on to power as long as you can, *pretending* to be devoted to power sharing. The divisions between blacks are a gift in this situation: “How can we possibly hand over power to *them* until they agree together?”

10. In Trevor Huddleston's "day" it was probably right for him to identify himself with the ANC and become a card-carrying member. It was one of the chief ways he earned the right to be thought of as "one of us" by black people. Now the Church has to see if it can bring unity — not only to black and white but to black and black: to the ANC and Inkatha.
11. In the last decade in England I have often used the phrase "a voice for the voiceless". In the last month I have found myself thankful for all those who have been that voice in South Africa; but that voice is only valid when every effort is made to keep *alongside* the voiceless, so that — if at all possible — the voice arises from the midst of the voiceless. The witness of Trevor Huddleston is still valid because it was a voice — for over a dozen years — from the midst.
12. As I have suggested, there have been and are "voices from the midst" — even white Anglican clergy. But as typical is the white priest — one of my hosts in South Africa and a friend — who, as we stood looking out to sea at Cape Town, to Robben Island, and I asked him "Did you ever think, when you you drove along here, of the prisoners on the island?" replied "Candidly, no" and then added "No one did. If we did, I suppose we thought of them as law-breakers."
13. As, in the last month, I have looked back to the Church's witness in South Africa in 1943-55, I have often found myself looking a little further back to the previous decade — in Germany. Paul Schneider, for instance, died in Buchenwald in 1939. His death was martyrdom, pure and simple. He did not know the meaning of compromise. That was his way of witness. Bonhoeffer's death was different. Bethge says: "In 1939 he entered the difficult world of assessing what was expedient, of success and failure, of tactics and camouflage. The certainty of his calling in 1932 now changed into the acceptance of the uncertain, the incomplete and the provisional. The new call demanded quite a different sacrifice, the sacrifice even of a Christian reputation." It is always tempting to think there is only one way of Christian witness. Bonhoeffer's life — and death — is a warning that it takes all sorts to make a Church: all sorts of witness, all sorts of sacrifice, all sorts of characters, all sorts of personalities.
14. Having been in the company of people like Helen Joseph, Hannah Stanton, Timothy Stanton, Walter Sisulu, Oliver Tambo — all of whom have suffered in prison in South Africa for what they believed — and have spoken of those who, alas, are no longer with us, such as Steve Biko — I must give thanks and testify to the spiritual strengthening and cleansing such company can be.
15. When I interviewed Walter Sisulu, he said to me: "I am glad to be paying this tribute to Trevor Huddleston at this important hour: when I am confident we are on the edge of great things." For a man who was imprisoned on Robben Island from 1964 to 1989, and who has — at eighty years of age — seen many false dawns, those words seem to me significant. He was full of hope — so different from empty optimism. Walter Sisulu is Deputy President of the ANC. I do not feel I can be less hopeful than he.

Eric James
September 1992



Frederick "Chinkie" Modiga.

BBC THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

Monday 28 September 1992

Canon Eric James

I was privileged to see, recently — in Johannesburg — the production of a new play by the great South African playwright Athol Fugard.

It's called *Playland*, and it's set in a travelling amusement park encamped on the outskirts of a South African town. The play's a powerful parable. The time is as important as the place. It's New Year's Eve, 1989.

Two men, a young white ex-serviceman from the war against SWAPO, on the South African border, and a black night-watchman, who looks after the amusement park, meet accidentally, and, as the eighties become the nineties, confront and work through their differences, and through the nightmare of guilt which they find they both share. They both have, for different reasons, blood on their hands. The ex-serviceman's guilt has brought him to the point of breakdown; but both characters, in their distress, shout out truths which in calmer moments they would keep to themselves.

"You've got to speak up in this bloody world" says Gideon, the white man. "It's the only way to put an end to all the nonsense that's going on."

Gideon is aware not only of his guilt but of his mortality. Like a good many soldiers, he says he's aware of having swapped jokes with his buddies one moment only to be praying for them in the next.

It had been his job to throw the bodies of some of his men into a hole, like rotten cabbages — but, suddenly, he found himself realizing that one of those cabbages was some mother's son.

So far, the story may sound fairly depressing. But it's more than that: it's a secular story about repentance, forgiveness and reconciliation, at a time when, of course, South Africa has desperate need of such things; but, like all great plays, it's not only about one country at one time, or about only those two people. It's a play about hope — not naive optimism, but hope that is born of facing up to the realities of existence.

Fugard gave an address to some university students in South Africa in 1991 when he said "I was on the brink of being a pessimist, but the Fugard that is talking to you now has a hell of a lot more hope and optimism. Not naively so. I am aware of how precarious our movement towards a new reality, a new dispensation in our society is — but I would be dishonest with you if I did not say that I am one of those people who believe that we are going to win through — in the end."

This week-end has seen the start of the Jewish New Year. As a Christian, I have hope; but hope isn't the monopoly of Christians: you find it in the Psalms and in many a Jewish story — Yes; and in plays like this play of agnostic Athol Fugard: because Hope is an inexhaustible gift of God, our Creator — which I believe is available to us all.

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Yizwa imithandazo yethu

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O feditse dintwa
Le matswenyeho
MORENA boloka
Sechaba sa heso
O feditse dintwa
Le matswenyeho.

O se boloke - O se boloke
O se boloke MORENA sechaba sa heso sechaba sa heso

Lord bless Africa
Let her horn be raised
Listen to our prayers

Lord bless
We, her children

Come Spirit
come holy
spirit
Lord bless
we, her
children

God bless
our Nation
Do away with
wars + trouble
God bless our
Nation

Do away with wars
+ trouble. Bless it
Bless it, Lord OUR NATION, OUR
NATION



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