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VOL. 1

NO 3

A FORUM FOR CHRISTIAN ACTION AND IDEAS

*You are the salt of the earth.
But if salt becomes tasteless,
what can make it salty again?
It is good for nothing, and can
only be thrown out to be
trampled underfoot by men.*
Matthew 5 : 13



MISSION
ACCOMPLISHED

SADF
against the
wall

- Interview
- Theology
- Bible Study

A PINCH OF SALT

"Honestly, I really would help you, but my dog's just had 30 puppies and I've got to get them to the vet and I can't use my mom's car 'cause she's gone to help my granny's godchild's sister's best friend who broke her nail in the fridge door, so I'll have to walk to the vet which means I really can't stop for you now, but don't worry, I REALLY WILL PRAY FOR YOU!"

Great help for the poor chap whose skull has just been cracked by a Mohawk's throwing axe!

Surely you must have heard the expression "I'll pray for you", often enough. Perhaps it is worth asking if that is all we can do in a particular situation, or in fact if that is all that is required of us as Christians.

In this edition SALT looks at the question of Christian responsibility in the South African situation.

During August, students from many different Christian societies had come together to assist with Destiny '84. Reflecting on Destiny '84, we can thank God for the message that brought to campus and how it achieved unity among different Christian societies.

Mission is over but the message it presented need continual furthering. SALT wants to be a forum in which the message to campus is continued and Christians work together.

The mission of Jesus was wider than just words. Having a relationship with God gives us a responsibility to restructure our lives. This restructuring needs to be enforced by what God tells us.

Christ tells us to take action. In this issue SALT considers some of the meanings this has for our lives as Christians.



Michael Cassidy:
The mission of Jesus
is wider than words

If we look at the implications of the Good Samaritan we see that the idea of a "passive" faith is rejected. This is explicit in James 2:26 which reads "as the body without the spirit is dead so faith without deed is dead". When we look at the injustices in our society, it is not good enough merely to pray for their removal but as Christians we have a responsibility to act in a way God wants us to.

This is very important. For merely to act for the removal of injustices in our society might lead us very far from God's will. We must be sure that we are acting in God's interests and not merely our own.

As University students God has given us the ability to bring about change and not use these talents to bring about God's will, would be to negate the principles Christ lived out.

Looking further than campus, August was the month of the elections for the tricameral parliament. Perhaps we need to ask ourselves why so few Christians were involved in actually questioning the legitimacy of this system.

The issues, militarization and conscription have become closely linked with the elections and "Coloured and "Indian" will soon face the same dilemma as "whites". For Christians this issue is particularly pertinent

The Christian mission continues. Our active participation in society extends beyond the month of August. SALT continues to encourage real unity between diverse Christian groups, a unity that will develop both our faith and our actions.

MISSION

• AE SOWING
THE SEEDS



After a hectic week of over 200 meetings with students, lecturers and admin, security maintenance and cleaning staff, some exhausted but excited members of the AE team spoke to Salt about their feelings on the success of the mission and their impressions of Wits students.

He said the aim of the mission was to encourage the activities of students in 3 important areas. The most significant of these was the sowing of new seeds in the minds of many individuals after exposure in new ways to the claims of Christ. He stressed, as did all members of

The team, that there is more significance in what has been begun in Mission week than in what has been completed.

The second important area was to provide stimulation and nourishment to Christians on campus and perhaps in some ways to draw them closer together.

One member of the team said that a major obstacle to this was the total lack of support felt by black Christians as most societies just don't cater for their needs.

Michael felt that the credibility of Christians had been raised in ways which would mean that people would feel less timid in witnessing to their Christianity.

The variety of methods used by members of the team - mime, drama, dance and proclamation - would provide inspiration for Christians to seek new ways to express their beliefs in informal situations. They then would begin to practise Christianity in their daily lives.

"Imposing fanatics. If Jewish and Muslim organisations on campus did the same - there would be WAR. There should be a counter-seminar 'How to cope with the Mystery of Existence'."
"The dramatic and dance production were fascinating, inspiring Christians as well as providing good entertainment for non-Christians. 'Life under New Management' challenged me." Sue Larner-Burke

The third area of encouragement was amongst those who took a commitment and began to discover Christ. They will be followed up by members of different societies and hopefully be brought into the community of Christians at Wits.

Generally, Michael Cassidy expressed the hope that Mission would provide a climate for fresh discussion and debate amongst Christian groups. He wished to encourage Christians to take the initiatives towards those students who have been opened to the message of the gospels.

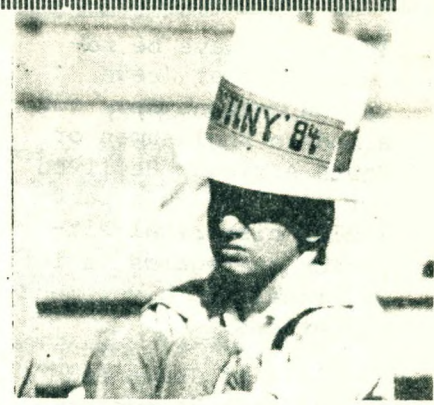
talk highlights

The Christian message embraces individuals as well as whole nations. For this reason the emphasis of the talks was on our personal lives and on the consequences of a personal relationship with God within a wider South African context.

When the individual has radically changed towards new measures of justice and love, it is a necessary consequence that he then works towards the same change within the structures of society.

In a joint presentation, "Must the

Beloved Country Cry?", Frank Chikane and Michael Cassidy attempted to point out the reality of Christ in the South African situation. Frank talked about the necessity of change towards a more just society. He rejected the notion of conservative state reform



"Can I also have a hat?"

being acceptable as the Christian faith claims that a radical transformation and renewal of man is necessary (cf. 2 Cor. 5).

'The Christian Critique of Marxism', given by Dr P. Le Feuvre, was a great challenge to our conventional thinking. Here are some thoughts he presented:

- Christian condemnation of Marxism is generally unsound as their criteria for social evaluation correspond to the biblical critique of society
- Christians should be prepared to be involved in a "critical co-operation" with Marxist fronts, because their notion of active discipleship corresponds closely to Christ's own way of living.

- "Critical co-operation" means remaining critical of Marxist attitudes towards atheism, human perfectibility, Party authority and moral/ethical relativism.

Tapes of all the meetings are available from the Christian societies.

It must always be remembered that Jesus was an ancient Jew, not a modern Englishman or South African. He lived out his life in a particular historical situation as regards social, political and governmental matters.

The life of Jesus indicates that He conformed to the laws of people on every level. He made no distinction between good laws and bad ones, and yet he was not silent regarding ineffective or unjust administration of the law.

Probably one of the most important passages indicating Jesus' attitude to the State is reflected in Mt.22.

Here he had been approached with a question regarding the legality of paying a poll tax to Caesar.

The reply of Jesus is common knowledge: "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's" (Mt.22:21)

In "rendering to God the things that are God's", the Christian sees the example and practice of establishing justice as a priority. In fact, when an order infringes on duties which are God-centred, the principle of the Christian becomes: "We must obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29).



CHRISTIAN CONCERN DEMANDS THAT WE GROW IN OPENNESS UNDERSTANDING AND COURAGE

Authority's task: to make us free

Salt approached a former Anglican priest, presently doing a law degree at Wits, as to his views concerning the question of Christian principles and responsibility to society:

The Christian faith also draws its principles from Paul, a man whose historical and social circumstances brought him into contact with civil authorities on a number of occasions. No passage of scripture creates as much controversy as Romans 13:1-7.

Three clear presumptions are made in this passage. Firstly, the authority of government comes from God, not from human judgements about governments. Secondly, the office of government is to order society morally and thirdly, this passage does not preclude the legitimacy of civil disobedience which can be justified when a government violates its office.

It is important in understanding Rom.13 to note that Paul's central concern here is not so much civic obligation and political power as it is faith and providence. It can be seen as Paul's theological assessment of his experience of Roman citizenship: namely that the God who raised Jesus is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, continuing to rule history, not only above and in spite of government, but also through them. Romans 13 then does not justify anyone in making an unconditional commitment to any earthly government.

Another important point is that in a democracy the power of leaders is derived from the people, which is then the primary focus of God-given authority. For white South Africans there are limited possibilities in the democratic process with its scope of review, debate, re-examination, election and defeat. Within such a framework Christians are obligated to criticise, debate and analyse the political situation.

An analysis of the Christian's attitude to government certainly requires far more than an understanding of the two concepts that have been discussed here. But it suffices to submit that the Christian has a responsibility to ensure that the State's role is constantly evaluated within the context of Christian allegiance to God.



This means then that the Christian will find himself or herself accepting new responsibilities that before were totally ignored.

Michael Cassidy has expressed it well: "Having fixated on man's depravity we have ignored man's dignity. Our doctrine of sin has held primacy over the doctrine of creation ... We have forgotten that nothing human is alien to our concerns as Christians. The result is that we have let our Christianity become compartmentalised and have turned the political and social dimension of life into the spiritually untouchable."

Undoubting Thomas

LIFE SKETCH

- 1118: 21 December - Thomas Becket is born into a poor family in London.
- 1142: Thomas, who entered the clergy to support himself, is taken into the household of the Archbishop of Canterbury.
- 1154: King Henry II ascends the throne.
- 1155: Advised by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Henry II appoints Thomas as Chancellor of England.
- 1155-62: A close friendship develops between Thomas and Henry II; Thomas becomes indispensable to the King.
- 1162: Theobald, Archbishop of Canterbury, dies and Henry II appoints Thomas to the position of Archbishop, hoping to gain political influence in the church. Thomas refuses at first, then accepts the position reluctantly.
- 1162-64: Thomas turns against Henry II as tension between clergy and state increases. Henry II wants to abolish the right of the church to hold trials in special church courts.
- 1164: Thomas begins six years of exile on the continent, in France.
- 1170: At the request of Henry II Thomas Becket returns to England. He sides with the poor and excommunicates four leading priests who sided with the king.
- 29 December - Thomas of Canterbury is murdered in the Canterbury Cathedral by four knights in the service of the King.

In 1172, two years after his death, St. Thomas of Canterbury was already declared a saint - not because of his contentious character nor his severe self-discipline, but because of his firm stand in God's cause on the side of the poor.

Once in the service of the church he rejected external luxury and power. He walked barefoot and in simple robes to lead the Christmas services in the royal cathedral of Canterbury.

His solidarity with the suffering and poor was expressed even more deeply in his struggle against a state-controlled clergy. He made the church courts a place of refuge for the oppressed and he redistributed the wealth of the church to serve the needs of all its members. He also took a firm stand against the execution of 'witches'.



Will no one rid me of this turbulent priest?

Becket's courage and defiance in the face of armed knights, and his commitment to 'the liberty of the church', which he felt he had been called upon to defend in the face of a weak pope and a rapacious king, were remarkable.

This late-twelfth-century illumination is probably the earliest surviving illustration of the murder of Thomas Becket at Canterbury.

St. Thomas's sudden and complete separation from his former influential position as Chancellor remains puzzling. His non-violent and firm stand against increasing political oppression gained the support of the poor masses and this made him a controversial figure.



In an attempt to justify his firm political resistance he is said to have answered: "If anyone wants to walk after me, he must deny himself, take up his cross and follow me; for whoever wants to save his life shall lose it, but whoever loses his life for me shall find it." (Mt.16: 24 &25).

Bible Study

Did You Feed ME?

When the Son of Man comes in his glory, escorted by all the angels . . . he will say to those on his right hand, 'Come, you whom my Father has blessed, take for your heritage the kingdom prepared for you since the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food; I was thirsty and you gave me drink; I was a stranger and you made me welcome; naked and you clothed me, sick and you visited me, in prison and you came to see me.' Then the virtuous will say to him in reply, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you; or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger and make you welcome; naked and clothe you; sick or in prison and go to see you?' And the King will answer, 'I tell you solemnly, in so far as you did this to one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it to me.'

Matthew 25 : 31-40

The Gospel as Praxis

To say that the gospel must be understood as praxis is to say that its truth must not only be analysed and reflected upon, but fulfilled and actualised in concrete situations. It is to affirm that the gospel is a message about a living person who penetrates with power all of life's situations to help men and women in their deepest thoughts." 1

The Son of Man in Matt. 25: 31-46 is just this person who is involved, without relinquishing any of his glory (majesty and splendour), in all the diversity, divisions and sinful structural prejudices of our world. He is the Son of Man who is also the Son of God; the weak, suffering human who is also the victorious, saving Creator.

And those with whom he is involved - Christ's brothers and sisters - encompass all humanity; particularly those who are marginalised. The reality of Christ's Kingdom is situated among them; here, especially, we act under the rule of God and are judged under it.

WHATEVER YOU DO
FOR THE LEAST
BROTHERS OF MY
FOR ME YOU DO



The nations of the world (i.e. all people) are judged, not by the purity of their motivation, not on the clarity of their understanding of God and the world, but by the concern they showed for the weak around them. Jesus does not even make fellowship with himself the dividing line between sheep and goats.

It is fellowship with the least noticed, the most needy in our society which decides our destiny; and not only whether we have fellowship or not, but what kind of fellowship we have.

What then is "praxis" in our situation? How do we live the gospel in South Africa, in Johannesburg? Which people are sick, what do they suffer from?

It is our individual responsibility to discover who they are; our corporate responsibility as the church to care for them.

This is what Christian responsibility is all about: the Gospel as praxis, accepting the guidelines Christ has given us for our whole lives, and translating them into the here and now. Christ does not want us to wait passively for his return. If we are to be just, we must be active. We must respond to the needs of the people around us: Christ is in them!

1. Orlando Costas, p.71.

P.S. People are divided into two groups - the righteous and the unrighteous - and the righteous do the dividing!



Christians acting against the apartheid heresy



July 1979. The eyes and ears of South Africa are turned towards the Pretoria Showgrounds. The whole machinery of the South African media is geared towards the spectacle - history in the making. But what is this new focus? "Why all the excitement?" you ask.

SACLA is what is happening. (Christian Leadership Assembly)

For the first time, in a land where division and separation are enforced by law, people reach out to each other across the barriers. Christians and people of goodwill from all walks of life, who have been separated by race, class, political persuasion, are getting together to get to know each other, to begin to undo the damage caused by three centuries of division, mistrust, fear and hatred.

Five years later, the fires of excitement and enthusiasm have waned and the bush has been consumed by the

flames. An ever-escalating spiral of violence is indicative of the heap of ashes that is all that remains of the bush.

Yet, when one kicks the heap of ashes, one finds some glowing embers there - protected by the very ash! A sign of hope, light at the end of the dark tunnel! One of those embers carries the name of SUCA

Students as SACLA felt strongly that SACLA should not be a once-in-a-lifetime, once-in-history occurrence in the life of South Africa.

Students from almost every South African University campus got together and in June 1980 SUCA was formally constituted and baptized

SUCA

The shared vision is one of bringing Christians together so that they can begin to be reconciled

A living proof that people of different races, economic backgrounds and different cultures CAN in fact live together in peace and harmony, and that the contrary claim of Apartheid and Nationalist ideology is a lie.

The National theme for 1984 is Christians Acting against the Apartheid Heresy, and August was declared a Month of Action to coincide with the SACC's Month of Compassion.

A SIGN OF HOPE
a desire to begin to implement the values of the Kingdom of God in our daily lives

Members have undertaken to choose various aspects of the apartheid society as targets and some form of action to express their opposition.

Like the larger Church of which it is a part, SUCA is experiencing its own internal conflicts. But then, which family does not have its squabbles? And we ARE ONE FAMILY, with the Living God our Father.

Charles Sampson.

IS THERE ANY OBJECTION TO LOVE ?

salt spoke to neil mitchell,
who conscientiously ob-
jected in 1982

What was your own
experience as a
Conscientious
Objector?

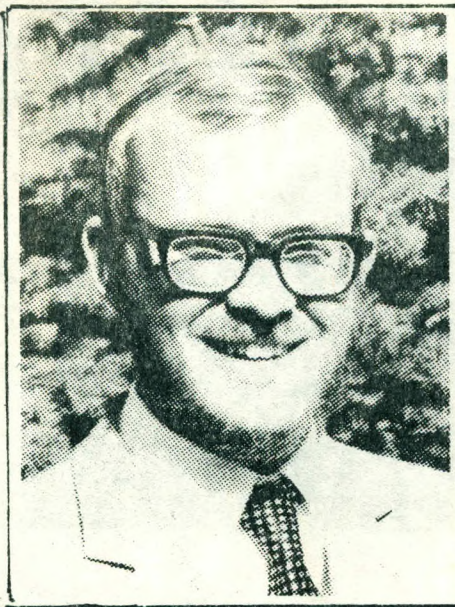
NEIL: COSG helped me to
become aware that it was
possible to object, poss-
ible to refuse and remain
in the country.

I felt that in the Church's
mission to try and establish
God's Kingdom in this world
the sort of values we live
by in this mission are
motivated by love and car-
ing and a desire to make
people and situations
whole.

I didn't see how the army
and the training I would
be subjected to would
assist me in trying to
do this- especially when
I saw the SA army as
existing to uphold this
unjust apartheid system
which just didn't square
with the values of the
Kingdom.

I was told at the court-
martial that they believed
I was sincere in my beliefs
but that they were irrel-
evant. I wasn't on trial
for my beliefs but because
I disobeyed the law which
required me to undergo mil-
itary training. Why I had
done it was irrelevant!

* Conscientious
Objectors' Support
Group



Neil
Mitchell:
"Why I
have
refused"

The sentence was one year in
military detention barracks.
I was put with the military
offenders but I was allowed to
wear a blue overall. I just
simply didn't undergo any of
the military training the
army inmates were undergoing.
I just didn't follow any of
the military commands.

I always felt it was such an
ironic situation because the
very set-up I refused to be
part of was going on around
me all the time and I was
forced into it when the very
reason I was there was because
I didn't want to be part of
it!

It had some advantages - I was
able to observe at very close
quarters the way the army
operated. For example,
my understanding of the
concept of leadership as
taking it from the example of
Jesus is that it means service
of other people. The
greatest leader is the least
among people.

Yet I saw the way leadership
functioned in the army - an
effective leader was one
who could strike terror into
the hearts of the troops.

Just observing this sort of
thing, I could affirm that
was being true to my con-
victions in rejecting
this.

Three times they command-
ed me to put on the army
uniform and each time I
refused I got a sentence
of solitary confinement.
It actually was a great
relief to get away from
the screaming and shout-
ing and dehumanisation.

I had a further court-
martial and was charged
with refusing to obey a
lawful command. Of course,
I was found guilty and
was sentenced to 6 months
civilian imprisonment and
given an ignominious dis-
charge from the army.

SO COSG was
central to your
stand?

NEIL: Yes, from the point
of view of support- know-
ing that this kind of
stand was possible and
that other people had done
it.

My experience of COSG was that it was very Christian-based and it also had a very strong non-violent aspect. COSG developed from being a Christian group rallying around individual people to support them to one of putting the whole question of CO into the broader framework of militarisation in SA, while not lessening its primary function of support.

It was no longer a case of seeing CO as a matter of personal integrity for an individual but rather seeing it as a means of resistance to militarisation and as a Christian witness of justice and peace against this militarisation.

While the churches and COSG had been demanding alternative service, they had always said the root of the problem was conscription. With the new law which effectively co-opted religious pacifists and alienated political objectors, it became ever more apparent that the real problem is conscription.

COSG has been a prime mover in initiating the End Conscription Campaign (ECC). They decided to demand the end to conscription and to broaden the campaign from just COSG to include all sorts of groups such as the Black Sash, NUSAS, JoDAC, the Institute of Race Relations, and various women's movements.

In what way is militarisation increasing in SA?

The army is extending conscription to the point of calling up the older men, the so-called Dads' Army, in obviously strategic areas such as

the Northern and Eastern Transvaal. Older men are being compelled to go on camps.

We hear of landing strips being built to accommodate aeroplanes. SA is obviously gearing itself for an anticipated increasing conflict and for border-war situations developing.

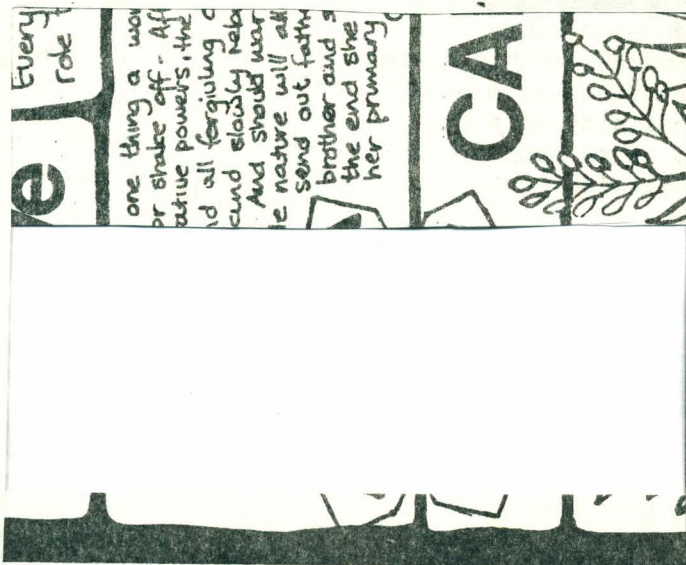
At the same time there is a growing number of white conscripted people who feel what they're being called to defend is an illegitimate white regime where they're going to be called upon to fight against fellow countrymen, where neighbour is going to be called upon to fight neighbour - not some foreign aggressor, but people who are refusing just to accept the humiliation and degradation and deprivation of rights. They are standing up and resorting to armed conflict, if necessary, to win their freedom.

And so they're beginning to ask whose side we're on. Are we on the side of this white minority regime or do we want to secure a better future for this country?

Comment on the present situation between Namibia and South Africa.

The army is portrayed very much in the role of protecting Namibia, and ultimately SA, from Communist onslaught. The troops in the SA army are led to believe they're performing some kind of sacred duty by holding back "these Satanic forces that threaten to destroy our Christian civilisation", but when one looks at what the churches - the Catholic bishops, the SACC, the British Council of Churches - have said, a different picture emerges.

The SABC and other government media always portray SWAPO as ruthless killers of the Namibian people - looters, destroyers, plunderers, committing atrocities, murdering, raping and burning down villages - but again the Bishops' statement has shown that the SA army is equally guilty of atrocities.



S.A.D.F.

"...the conflict stems from the determination to maintain by force a structure of society in which the majority of the people of this land suffer gross oppression and exploitation; as a result a vital function of the SADF has become the protection of those unjust structures." (ANGLICAN SYNOD)

"Conscience is not, nor was it ever, the highest authority" (NATIONALIST PARTY M.P.)

"chaplains play a tremendously important role in sustaining the morale of men in the Defence Force, more than people on the outside realize." (CAPT. W. STEENKAMP)

for his country if he can't vote. Among the terms of the new dispensation is the guarantee that Coloureds and Indians will get full voting rights. It follows that their responsibility will increase accordingly which means they will hold obligations to defend these rights" (F.W. DE BLERK)

Cape Corps

STAY OUT OF DRAFTS

"With Blacks in SA Army uniform you can say "Heck this proves that this is not a white man's struggle anymore" (CAPT SWANERD)



"There is a conflicting requirement between that of total strategy and the democratic system of government" (GEN MAGNUS MALAN)

Indian Corps



Defence Budget
April 1983 -
March 1984
R3 092 000 000

UNITA, MNR WHERE DO YOU GET GUNS? YOU

ARMSCOR



"I want to unite the business leaders of South Africa behind the SADF. I want to unite the private sector behind the SADF. I think I have succeeded in doing so" (P.W. BOTHA)

CIVIL DEFENCE OF OFFENCE

"If nuclear weapons are a last resort to defend oneself it would be very stupid not to use them" (DEPUTY DEFENCE MINISTER)



"The responsibility for combatting internal and especially urban unrest rests primarily on the S.A. police. Nevertheless the SADF must at all times be ready on a country wide basis to quickly mobilize trained forces to render assistance to the SAP (DEFENCE WHITE PAPER 1977)

Citizen force

"The SADF cannot claim simply to be defending our borders against foreign aggressors. It is playing an active role in a civil war situation" (ECC SPOKESPERSON)

"South Africa is today involved in total war, the war is not only an area for the soldier. Everyone is involved and has a role to play" (GEN. MAGNUS MALAN)

one thing a woman can never or shake off - After war the active powers, the patience and all forgiving compassion of and slowly rebuild peaceful and should war come again, the nature will allow her to send out father, husband, brother and son and at the end she will take up her primary task again. (PARATUS)

VELDSCHOC

"Our educational systems must train people for war" (P.W. BOTHA)

viceman to teach the black man whilst his rifle is standing in the corner of the classroom." (MAJ. GEN LLOYD)

CADETS



RELIGIOUS / POLITICAL OBJECTION — BOARDERLINE CASE

On Tuesday 25 September four Roman Catholics appeared before the Board for Religious Objectors in Bloemfontein. Three of them, David Schmidt (24), Antonio de Sousa-Martin (19) and Victor MacGregor applied for recognition under Section 72 (a)(iii) of the Defence Act, i.e. as persons with whose religious convictions it is in conflict to render military service or participate in any armed force. The fourth, Dino Bertoni, asked for non-combatant status. Since the introduction of a very limited category of religious conscientious objection in 1982, the Board has heard 134 cases (rejecting only 3), mainly from the "peace" churches. Of mainline churches there have been 3 Anglicans, 2 Baptists, 2 Methodists, and now 4 Roman Catholics. David Schmidt, a former president of the National Catholic Federation of Students, was asked why he had appeared before the Board when his church had refused to recognise the validity of the Board or to send a Catholic theologian to serve on it.

He replied that he fully supported his church's refusal to acknowledge the legislation's narrow definition of conscientious objection (i.e. religious pacifism), when

the refusal of an individual to participate in an unjust war was also an integral part of Christian, indeed all human, history.

He added that he had appeared before the Board under duress, with the threat of six years' imprisonment or permanent exile as the 'alternatives'. As a member of the End Conscription Campaign, he said that he fully supported the call to end conscription and to establish a just peace in South Africa as being more permanent ways to end conflict than fighting for the SADF in a civil war. The Board, headed by Justice Steyn, former administrator-General of Namibia (and associated with some of its most notorious security legislation), and com-

prising also of an NGK dominee, a Hervormde Kerk dominee, an Anglican priest and a Methodist minister, subjected both David Schmidt and Victor

Macgregor to hard and close questioning on their political beliefs in relation to military service. Both applicants stated firmly that they saw a major cause of the conflict in South Africa to be apartheid, and that the SADF was one pillar upholding an unjust system.

Victor said "participation in the SADF would alienate me from the poor and the powerless, whose lifestyle I am called on to share."

Justice Steyn was only satisfied as to their 'religious objector' status when Victor said he was a universal pacifist and David said that there is no armed force he would consider serving in. The Board's insistence on religious pacifism denies the Just War doctrine. The 1979 statement issued by leaders of the mainline churches rejects the position of the Board:

"We plead with the government to understand that in the present circumstances in our country, CO can be based on genuine religious and moral convictions...surely others have the right to claim that their perception of the injustice around them gives them the right to conscientiously object". The Board's artificial division of conscientious objectors has been widely condemned as an attempt of the state to co-opt certain sections of the CO movement by giving acknowledgement only to universal pacifists. At the July conference of the Conscientious Objectors Support Groups, the delegates unanimously supported a motion to reject the Board for Religious Objectors as 'inadequate' and 'divisive', and attempting to dilute resistance to the military.

Women's day is every day

"The people who bear the brunt of the bantustan system are the women", said Cheryl Carolus, secretary of the United Democratic Front (UDF) Western Cape region, at a National Women's Day Meeting earlier this year. Now that the elections for the Coloured and Indian Houses of Parliament have been staged and the stillborn Constitution looks set to stay until it rots, many are beginning to feel its effects - and it is women who have been hardest hit.

It was wrong to think that the New Deal ignored black South Africans. The basis of the New Constitution is a more sophisticated system of pass law control (as provided for in the Urbanization Bill, which is to replace the Orderly Movement and Settlement of Black Persons Bill).

Women are regarded as the least economically productive of the work-force. Therefore, they are the first to be endorsed out of the cities and deported to the homelands. It is the women who struggle to feed and cloth the next generation in these poverty-stricken human dumping grounds.

Virtually the only accessible avenues of

wage employment are the decentralised border industries - where wages are the



lowest. This forces many women into "illegal" squatter settlements in "White" South Africa. 73% of the people at Crossroads are women. It is they who face the police, the teargas, the dogs, the sjamboks. It is they who regularly have to rebuild their shacks after they have been torn down by Government Officials.

The time has come for women to unite and to raise their voices with those who are demanding food and housing for all; adequate social services; health, childcare and educational facilities lower rents, prices and taxes; better wages, and an end to forced removals, detentions, influx control and the Group Areas Act.

The ill wind of the New Deal has blown some good - it has revived a spirit of unity amongst the

people not seen since the 1950's. The Federation of South African women (Fedsaw) is continuing the march which began with the Women's Charter in 1954 and which led to 20 000 women converging on the Union Buildings in Pretoria on 9 August 1956.

There they proclaimed: "We have gathered here to save African women from the degradation of passes, raids, arrests, loss of pay, long hours at pass officials and weeks in cells awaiting trials for pass offences".



This statement is as appropriate today as it was 28 years ago - proof that change in South Africa has only been superficial. Today we must make a stand for what we believe is right. We must commit ourselves to building a new society in which God's commandment - "Love thy neighbour as thyself" - extends to all and where race, class and sex are no longer acceptable criteria for evaluating our fellow human beings.

NCFS CONFERENCE

NATIONAL CATHOLIC
FEDERATION OF STUDENTS
NATIONAL CONFERENCE

This year's National Catholic conference has to be rated as one of the most stimulating ever.

People came together during the July vacation to share and reflect on their faith. They travelled from Cape Town, Rhodes Stellenbosch, PE, Durban, Maritzburg to gather at a Magaliesberg conference centre.

The theme, "Formation Towards a Church of the Poor", was anticipated with much speculation.



However, the Maritzburg chaplain, Fr, Theo Kneiffel, and other speakers soon cleared all this up. They left some dismayed and some enlightened, but all were certainly encouraged.

SEMINARS

The workshops, an integral part of the conference, looked at theology, conscription, church traditions and sacraments, sex roles and relation-

ships, and projects. Each workshop drew up resolutions which were voted on by everyone.

It was resolved: that educational projects be taken up; that NCFS endorse the End Conscription Campaign declaration; that we as NCFS sensitise ourselves to use of language that excludes people.

One could not have hoped for a more varied and exciting conference. The 'overseas' contingent, Laurier Caron, came from Paris to represent the International Movement of Catholic Students (IMCS); there were also observers from the (black) Catholic Students' Association and from the Anglican students' movement present.

But the true excitement was provided by the baptism of one of the Wits Cathsoc members. We will all remember this joyous and unforgettable occasion.

At the end of the conference, people were left on the crest of a wave, even more committed to the Kingdom of God.



SCA REPORTS

SCA NATIONAL CONFERENCE

"Jesus - who then is this?"

270 students discovered the variety of experiences this question leads into.



JESUS - WHO'S THAT?

Jesus is lectured on, discussed and debated. He is also present in community. And He lives in South Africa.

The main speaker was Dr Dick France, a lecturer at London Bible College. In the plenary sessions, he expounded both the person and mission of Jesus. Jesus' temptation, His response to the law, the basis of His ministry and the context and manner of His death were explained to illustrate this.

A variety of workshops and seminars were offered in addition to the main plenary sessions.

COMMUNITY

Community, however, was at the core of the conference. Community was expressed in personal devotions and group bible studies. Meeting other Christians from other campuses further built the fellowship which bound the conference together.

Perhaps the greatest contribution the conference has made is to encourage and challenge us to be true disciples of Christ in a particular social context.

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