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**CHURCHES' ALTERNATIVE NATIONAL SERVICE PROGRAMME**

C.A.N.S.P  
P.O.Box 125  
OBSERVATORY  
7935

12 December 1988

Dear Friend

**INTRODUCTION OF THE PROGRAMME**

I am writing to you on behalf of a number of individuals from various churches and Christian groupings who have been approached by the national working committee of the Churches' Alternative National Service Programme (CANSP) to introduce this programme, to you, in the Western Cape.

This initiative has been undertaken to help bring about a change in the existing legislation regarding conscientious objection and the current provisions for alternative service.

We have approached local church leaders, asking them to lend their support to the programme. Statements expressing this support have since been received from some. In addition many denominations have already passed resolutions concerning the need for the right of freedom of conscience to be respected and urging that alternatives to military service be provided.

Please find enclosed the following :

- a **pamphlet**, that outlines the programme;
- a **factsheet**, that documents resolutions passed concerning conscription; and
- a **questionnaire**, through which we would urge you to respond.

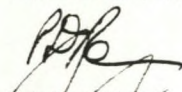
Your opinion, as the spiritual counsellor of your congregation, is vitally important in enabling us to assess the feasibility of the programme. Thus, it is of the utmost essence that we hear from you: whether you support the programme or not. The questions either require you to ring the appropriate response or write a note, and should not take up much of your time. It would assist us greatly if your reply could reach us at the above address, by Friday 14 January 1988.

Should you require any further details, please contact either :

- Natalie Edkins ~~685-1692~~ Douglas Torr 788 5143
- Jeanne Roussouw ~~53-1719~~ Douglas Banks 716 2625
- Paul Roux (0331) 42-0830(a/h)

We wish you and your family a time of rejoicing this Christmas, as we celebrate the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Your servant in Him

  
PAUL ROUX



## MESSAGES OF SUPPORT

### **Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) Cape Western**

The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) believes that there is that of God in everyone. We believe that violence by, or against, any person is wrong. We believe that wars or the training for wars is wrong. We therefore support the right of any individual who for reasons of conscience refuses military service. We support the call for a just, meaningful alternative service for all conscientious objectors which will benefit the community.

### **The Methodist Church of Southern Africa.**

The 1988 Conference of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa expressed strong support for those whose Christian Conscience leads them to abstain from military service. It also noted that the lengthier alternative service at present provided for in the Defence Act is punitive in effect.

The Methodist Church of Southern Africa objects to the imprisonment of people exercising Christian conscience which may not be exclusively expressed as universal pacifism, and rejects their treatment as criminals.

The Methodist Church of Southern Africa is calling on the Minister of defence to take seriously the Christian motivation behind refusal to do military service, and to consider reducing the period of alternative service to a period equal to the period of military service required.

The Methodist Church fully upholds and honours the

painful and sacrificial Christian witness exercised by conscientious objectors in their search to emulate the non-violent love of Christ.

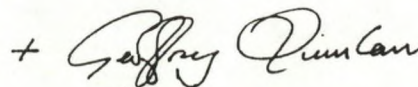
I support and commend the work of the Churches' Alternative National Service Programme.



Rev. James Gribble  
(Chairman of the Cape of Good Hope District)

### **Church of the Province of Southern Africa**

There is a growing awareness that many young men in South Africa are facing a crisis of conscience in respect of serving in the South African Defence Force. It is part of the traditional moral teaching of the Church that no person can be asked to act in disregard of his/her conscience. Such a position applies whether a person would claim some kind of religious affiliation or not. Because C.A.N.S.P. is seeking to make provision for those who, whilst not religious objectors, nevertheless, have moral grounds for objecting to serving in the S.A.D.F. it is good and right that it be supported. This I am very happy to do.



Geoffrey Quinlan  
(Bishop Suffragan, Diocese of Cape Town)



**CANSP**



## **CHURCHES' ALTERNATIVE NATIONAL SERVICE PROGRAMME:**

## **A NEW INITIATIVE.**





**C.A.N.S.P.** is a challenging initiative of the church to face the issue of compulsory military service in the South African Defence Force (S.A.D.F.). The project proposes to support young men who on conscientious grounds refuse to serve in the S.A.D.F., and who either do not qualify as religious objectors, or who refuse to submit themselves to the requirements of the Board for Religious Objection.

### Serving the Community

Practically, various church denominations will identify regions and projects where labour or skills are needed to carry out programmes in community development, other projects and church work. Each denomination will raise the necessary money to employ conscientious objectors in such programmes. The rates of pay and allowances will be equivalent to those paid by the department of manpower to acknowledged religious objectors. After placement, the church or organisation concerned will offer the conscientious objector pastoral support in various practical ways, including legal defence.

It is emphasized that participation in C.A.N.S.P. is not intended to free participants from their military duties in terms of the Defence Act, or offer any protection to the conscientious objector from the sanctions of the law. Thus the programme is not a law avoidance or evasion

scheme. Rather, young men participating in it are seeking to demonstrate their willingness to serve, at considerable cost to themselves, in a programme in the church which cannot protect them from the possible criminal and civil consequences of their conscientious stand.

### A Challenge by the Church

In C.A.N.S.P., the church has therefore decided openly to challenge the government on its legislation concerning conscription into the S.A.D.F.. Because of the dilemmas which conscription presents to young members of the church, C.A.N.S.P. presents a positive attempt by the church to take up its pastoral responsibility, and provide real alternatives for its members. After a decade and a half of church statements condemning the practice of compulsory military conscription, the church is at last taking positive action.

C.A.N.S.P. was conceived by the Southern African Catholic Bishops Conference in 1986, and has since been adopted by the Church of the Province of Southern Africa and the Society of Friends (Quakers on a regional level). It is presently being discussed by the Congregational, Methodist, Presbyterian and Lutheran churches. Working groups have been set up to perform the administrative tasks of the programme in the Witwatersrand, Durban, Port Elizabeth, and the Western Cape.

### How can you get involved?

From the outset, C.A.N.S.P. has stressed that the programme belongs to the Church. It is essential, therefore, that members of local congregations take up the programme in their churches. An interested person/group should take on responsibility for several areas:

1. publicising the programme in services,
2. informing young men of the option which this programme offers, and surveying eligible participants,
3. exploring creative job opportunities which offer real service to the community.

A placement team will take ultimate responsibility for placement of volunteers.

**Join us in exploring this exciting new initiative, and pressing for alternatives to compulsory military conscription.**

#### **Contact Telephone Numbers:**

DOUG BANKS 716 2625  
JAMES NICOLSON 827 4758

Published by: C.A.N.S.P., c/o PEACE PROJECT  
KANYA HOUSE P.O. BOX 941  
PRETORIA 0001



## CHURCHES' ALTERNATIVE NATIONAL SERVICE PROGRAMME QUESTIONNAIRE TO MINISTERS OF CONGREGATIONS

**COMPLETED BY :**

\* Name : \_\_\_\_\_  
 \* Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \* Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \* Denomination: \_\_\_\_\_

CODE:	
1.	Agree Strongly
2.	Agree
3.	Indifferent
4.	Disagree
5.	Disagree Strongly
Y.	Yes
N.	No

**QUESTIONS :**

1. Had you heard of CANSPP before receiving this letter ? 1) Y N
  2. If so, from whom ? \_\_\_\_\_
  3. Having read the pamphlet and from your understanding of the project, what is your initial response ? 3) 1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
  4. What are the most favourable aspects ? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
  5. What are the more negative aspects ? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
  6. Do you think the current conscription legislation needs revision ? 6. 1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
  7. Approximately what percentage of your congregation is conscripted ? \_\_\_\_\_ %
  8. In your view, how receptive are members of your congregation towards change in South Africa ? 8) 1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
  9. Do you think your members generally support Christians involved in seeking political change ? 9) 1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
  10. Are there social awareness groupings in your church ? 10) Y N
  11. What activities are they engaged in ? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
  12. Is conscription among the issues discussed ? 12) Y N
  13. If not, would a workshop be helpful ? 13) Y N
  14. In your personal interaction with conscripts what major problems do you encounter ? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
  15. Would you foresee members of your Congregation being enthusiastic in taking this project forward ? 15) Y N
- If so, please complete questions 16. - 19.
16. Are there members in your congregation who are unwilling to be conscripted, who might be ready to be participants in this project. 16) Y N
  17. How would members of your congregation respond to supporting such an individual ? 17) 1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
  18. If there are no members who are able to take part themselves, would some be able to support :
    - \* a participant :
      - by providing a project 18a) Y N
      - financially 18b) Y N
      - by forming a support group 18c) Y N
    - \* further involvement : assisting in organisation 18d) Y N
  19. Are there current or proposed community projects in your church or neighbourhood in which a participant could be suitably placed. If so, please specify \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
  20. Do you wish to receive further information regarding this project's progress ? 20) Y N
  21. If so, to whom should further correspondence be addressed?
    - \* Name: \_\_\_\_\_
    - \* Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
    - \* Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_



## **CHURCHES' ALTERNATIVE NATIONAL SERVICE PROGRAMME FACTSHEET: CHURCH RESOLUTIONS**

The following are extracts from recent church resolutions on conscription and alternative national service:

### **Church of the Province of Southern Africa (Anglican).**

In 1982, a resolution of the Provincial Synod of the CPSA stated that it: "...Recognises the right of all people, Christians and non-Christians alike to object conscientiously to service in national defence forces for moral, ethical or religious reasons; Calls on the Government to provide an alternative non-military form of National Service for all conscientious objectors, which is acceptable to conscientious objectors." In 1985, the Church resolved in a similar vein: "Believing that people should never be compelled against their consciences to participate in military structures.... Calls upon the government in South Africa to widen the grounds for conscientious objectors by basing these on ethical and not only religious criteria and to specifically include selective objection."

### **Methodist Church of Southern Africa.**

The 101st Methodist conference in 1983 acknowledged that the government had attempted to provide for conscientious objectors in the law with the Defence Amendment Act of 1983, but "finds the new provisions for conscientious objectors, taken as a whole, to be inadequate." (paragraph 29.9.19). In 1985, the conference confirmed the earlier statement: "Conference affirms that the position 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 our society."

### **Baptist Union of South Africa.**

In 1979 the Assembly of the Baptist Union adopted the following resolution: "This Assembly of the Baptist Union: Reaffirms that the State has the right to call on its citizens to share in the defence of the country but also recognises the right of individuals to express their genuine and sincere objection to taking up arms on the grounds of conscience or religious convictions;... Earnestly requests the Government to end the present anomaly and to amend the Conscientious Objection clause to include those who, regardless of religious denomination, have a sincere objection to carrying arms and to allow them to fulfill the service required of them in a non-combatant capacity; Asks that, in addition to the above, the Government should recognise that there are those individuals who, on religious grounds, cannot conscientiously serve in any armed forces and that provision should be made for these persons to serve the community in some civilian capacity for at least an equivalent period of time and in circumstances as similar as possible to those under which service in the armed forces is performed."

### **Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa.**

In September 1979, the Presbyterian Church Assembly stated: "The Assembly assures any member of our Church who refuses to do military service and suffers a consequent penalty of the continuing solidarity of its fellowship with him. It calls on all ministers and members of our Church to give moral and pastoral support to sincere conscientious objectors, wherever they can.... The Assembly deplores the practice of sentencing conscientious objectors to a period or recurring periods in prison or detention barracks. It appeals to the Minister of Defence to amend the law so as to provide an alternative form of national service to military service." At its General Assembly in 1984, the Presbyterian Church stated in response to the 1983 legislation: "While accepting that the Board for Religious Objectors plays a vital role in according certain people non-combatant status and providing alternative community service for universal pacifists, feels that it is inadequate in that it fails to recognise ethically based pacifism and just war objection based on either religious or moral grounds.... For these reasons, the PCSA cannot support the Defence Amendment Act of 1983.... Until such time as present legislation is amended and conscription abolished, the PCSA sees its role as being one of offering support to all its conscripted members whether they decide to serve or refuse to serve."

### **United Congregational Church of Southern Africa.**

As early as October 1977, the Congregational Church declared at its General Assembly that: "Those who object to war on the grounds of Christian or moral principle should be entitled to fulfill their obligations to society in areas of national service outside the armed forces." In the 1979 General Assembly, the following resolution was passed: "The Assembly of the UCCSA expresses its concern about the legislation on conscientious objection.... Though we do not legislate to our members on such issues as military service, we strongly support those who object to military service on religious or moral grounds."

### **Catholic Church.**

The Catholic Church has frequently criticised South Africa's conscription legislation, and the provision made for those who refuse to serve in the SADF. A 1977 statement by the Church reads as follows: "In this matter of conscientious objection we defend the right of every individual to follow their own conscience; the right to conscientious objection on the grounds of universal pacifism, and on the grounds that the person seriously believes the war to be unjust."



**Collection Number: AG1977**

**END CONSCRIPTION CAMPAIGN (ECC)**

**PUBLISHER:**

*Publisher:- Historical Papers Research Archive*

*Location:- Johannesburg*

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