challenge



A HOLY CHRISTMAS

AND

A PEACEFUL NEW YEAR

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LETTER Colin Gardner

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Ut omnes unum sint

not value terms from Christian moral theology used in positive or negative value judgments only; but rather that they refer to actual gestalten in the being of man, structural features of Being with concrete manifestations in the structure of personal and communal life. 'The Demonic' refers to those real alternative structures manifested in human existence which are opposed to 'The New Being' manifest in Christ Jesus our Lord.

FORMS OF HUMAN SOCIETY

Finally, Tillich uses the terms 'heteronomy', 'autonomy' and 'theonomy' as categories for the classification of forms of human society or culture. Heteronomous cultures are those which show an 'attempt by religion to dominate autonomous cultural creativity from the outside'.19 'Self-complacent autonomy cuts the ties of a civilization with its ultimate ground and aim, whereby, in the measure in which it succeeds, a civilizaton becomes exhausted and spritually empty.'20 Finally, 'Theonomy has been defined as a culture in which the ultimate meaning of existence shines through all finite forms of thought and action; the culture is transparent, and its creations are vessels of a spiritual content'.

Part of the admiration Tillich has for Catholicism stems from his identification of the early and high

Patrick R. B. Lewis

A sketch of life in Soweto

WHAT IS IT LIKE to live in Soweto? The canvas is so large, and there is so little scientific information available, that one can only sketch some facets and then only give a glimpse of the way of life of the hundreds of thousands of people who have moved to the cities from the rural areas.

It is a story of a social upheaval on a vast scale, where traditional patterns of behaviour developed over a long period of time, have been suddenly undermined before a new social code has been evolved to substitute suitable norms of conduct in place of those which have been destroyed.

First let me tell you how Soweto got its name. Early in 1930 the Johannesburg City Council purchased 1,300 morgen to the South-West of Johannesburg, adjacent to the Potchefstroom Road, and in 1932 Middle Ages as an outstanding example of one such theonomous period in history. However his commitment to the Protestant principle, the principle that all historical events and institutions and cultural creations are brought under the Divine Judgment (including the Church) makes it impossible for him to accept the dogma of papal infallibility-at least in the sense in which this seems to him to imply an absolute authority, not subordinate to the Word of God but arbitrating its judgments, claiming a certain proprietorship of the truth. Hence his comment that Catholicism in modern times has lost its theonomous character and has become 'the most potent system of religious heteronomy'.²¹

- The Interpretation of History-p. 54.
 Theology of Culture-p. 169.
 By R. H. Daubney for example, in the introduction to the The (2) Theology of Cunure—p. 107.
 (3) By R. H. Daubney for example, in the introduction to the The Protestant Era.
 (4) 'Training in Christianity' S.K.
 (5) Erich Fromm: The Art of Loving and The Fear of Freedom.
 (6) and (7) See 'Existence—a new dimension in Psychology and Psychiatry' edited by Rollo May.
 (8) Systematic Theology Vol. 1 p. 6.
 (9) Systematic Theology Vol. 1 p. 8.
 (10) Systematic Theology Vol. 1 p. 72.
 (11) For a summary see 'Catholic criticism of Tillich' by J. Heywood Thomas—Scottish Journal of Theology Vol 16 No. 1.
 (12) Quoted by A. L. Conradie in 'The Neo-Calvinistic concept of Philosophy p. 1.
 (13) Das religiõas Loge der Gegenwart and The Protestant Era.
 (14) Systematic Theology Vol. 1 Chapter 3.
 (15) The Protestant Era p. 25f.
 (16) Ibi p. 26.

- (15) The Protestant Era p. 251.
 (16) Ibid p. 26.
 (17) Ibid p. 26.
 (18) See K. Barth: Epistle to the Romans.
 (19) Author's preface to The Protestant Era
 (20) Ibid p. XXXI.
 (21) The Protestant Era p. 24.

started building houses in a township which was called Orlando, named after one of the then Councillors, Mr. Orlando Leake. One of the primary purposes was to rehouse Africans living in appalling slums at a place called Prospect Township, which was situated on part of the ground now occupied by the new Kazerne Goods yard. By the outbreak of World War II in 1939 5,800 houses had been built by the City Council in Orlando. During the war no additional houses were built even though rapid industrialization called for many more workers, and it was at this time that a veritable flood of people moved into the areas adjacent to Orlando, and the notorious squatter camps of Shantytown and Moroka were established. Those were days of degradation, crime and appalling misery. Then, after a hesitant start, the seemingly impossible was achieved.

Today we have some 65,000 houses accommodating 306,000 men, women and children, and three hostels accommodating 14,000 men. So, to Orlando was added townships such as Dube, Naledi, Moroka, Chiawelo, Jabavu, Jabulani, Emdeni, Mapetla, Mofolo, Zolo, Zondi, Phiri, Senaoane, Maletsane. For years this large area of 7,900 morgen or 25 square miles was referred to as the South-Western Bantu Bantu Townships It was a city without a name, with no corporate entity. A competition was then held to choose a name. Many of the suggestions had to be turned down because the Zulu would not accept a Sotho name and vice versa. Eventually, a compromise was reached, and Soweto is derived from the first letters of South-Western Townships. So Soweto is the name of this unique town.

CITY WITHOUT INDUSTRIES

Why unique? Because within a period of less than 35 years what had been veld has now become the home of nearly $\frac{1}{2}$ million African people. It is a city without industries, and the working population has to commute to work in the white areas of Johannesburg, some 12 to 20 miles away depending on the station at which the train is boarded. It is unique in that there is only one landlord-the City Council. Unique too, in that the landlord has been prepared, year in and year out, to subsidise many of his tenants by providing houses at sub-economic rentals, by providing medical care, recreational facilities, social welfare services, swimming baths, recreation halls, vocational training-incurring losses which for the last 12 years amounted to R6,500,000. The employers of the tenants have contributed R21,000,000 by means of such funds as the Bantu Transport Levy to subsidise transport, and the Bantu Services Levy towards the capital costs of providing services, thus enabling the rentals to be lowered.

But who are the people who live at Soweto and where did they come from? Why did they come? What manner of persons are they?

Who are the people? Where did they come from? The Xhosa came from the Transkei, the Basuto from Basutoland, the Shangaan from Portuguese East Africa, the Zulu from Zululand, the Bapedi from Pietersburg in the Northern Transvaal, the Tswana from the Western Transvaal, the Nyasa from Malawi, the Bechuana from Bechuanaland, the Mashona and Mandabele from Rhodesia. There are also Swazi, Fingo, Pondo, Makwena, Barolong, Bakgatla, Venda and Griqua. Johannesburg is the magnet for people from all over Southern Africa.

WHY DID THEY COME

They came to the cities to work, for in their homes in

the rural areas the land available was limited, and the agricultural methods primitive. They had no means to support their families when crops failed. They needed cash to pay taxes. Their wants increased and the bright lights of the cities lured them to come to E-Goli—the City of Gold—to seek the cash they needed. With the industrial expansion in the cities their labour was required to enable the factories and industries to function. The services provided in the towns, the educational and medical facilities available, and the general better living conditions drew the people to the cities from the rural areas.

At one time, it was just the men who came. In 1900, of the 60,000 Africans the ratio of males to females was 12—1; by 1927, with a population of 136,000 the ratio was 6—1; at the outbreak of war the ratio was 3—1 and now it is equal.

At first the men worked for short spells, returning home to join their families and returning to the cities again when their funds gave out. What a different pattern it is today! Now that the women folk have moved to town the vast majority are permanent urban dwellers.

NEW SURROUNDINGS

How different they found the city from their rural areas! How strange they felt in their new surroundings! How ill equipped their tribal beliefs and training had made them for their new life. Instead of the sun being their time-piece, they now had to work to the inelastic and unsympathetic clock of the white man. Instead of working in the circle of their clan, where everyone was known to them and to each other, they were now among strangers, strangers to them and strangers to one another. They heard unfamiliar tongues they could not understand. Because they could not understand they were thought to be stupid—some called them momparas and worse. Whereas at home they had a sense of kinship, and could consult their kinsmen, they were now on their own and had to make decisions for themselves. Their food was different, as were their mealtimes, and the white man's medicine was different. Instead of a barter economy, ready cash was necessary. Instead of leisurely walks along country paths, 170,000 persons each day rise early to throng the crowded trains carrying them to work, only to repeat the same tortured travel in the late afternoon. No longer were cattle the symbol of wealth. In the City the material goods of the West and a flashy car were one's aim. Whereas in the clan initiative was not encouraged and could lead to jealousy, now they were judged on their own merits and were encouraged to develop individuality. At home there was respect for one's elders. The daily battle to

secure a place on the crowded trains destroyed any attitude other than looking after oneself. In the City one was on one's own, and free from restraints of the tribe, but at the same time one had lost the security of the assured help of kinsmen. The ancestral spirits seemed far away; some people in the towns even cast doubt on their very existence. It is difficult enough for a rural dweller of any race to adjust himself to the hustle and bustle of the City. For the African it also meant adjustment to a totally different way of life.

What an upheaval-what an adaptation to make. The migratory worker away from his kith and kin, away from his women folk, could not be expected to observe the tribal sanctions and restraints -- for a man is a man and needed his desires fulfilled and so began the process which has caused a most heart-rending upheaval in the structure of African society, particularly in family life. Sadly enough both marriage and family life arc very unstable and one fears that it will be a long process to rebuild secure and stable families again. But other societies, notably England during the Industrial Revolution, have experienced the same maladjustments inevitable in such a drastic transition, and have readjusted themselves. While large numbers are living normal family lives there are still 85,000 men and 55,000 women living under single conditions in hostels. compounds, flats or on their employer's private property. There is no means of estimating how many of these men and women are in fact single and how many are involuntarily parted from their spouses.

FORMER CUSTOMS

In the early days of contact between White and Black many well-meaning people, looking through the eyes of one civilization and, not knowing the customs and traditions of the other, condemned polygamy and other marriage customs, and the lobolo system, interpreting that system as the purchase of the wife by the bridegroom—how wrong they were.

In days gone by, while customs varied from tribe to tribe pre-marital pregnancies would have had serious consequences for both parties. In the towns no such sanctions existed and illegitimate children became accepted without any eyebrows being so much as raised. The transfer of cattle by the kinsmen of the bridegroom to the kinsmen of the bride was a symbol of the alliance of the clans, and many consequences flowed from these transactions. For one, if the husband died his clan would care for his wife and children. There were no uncared for widows or orphans.

How different in the towns. One was away from the close-knit community where everyone knew one's

actions. One was among strangers who did not care thus causing a breakdown in tribal sanctions.

In the cities the lobolo system lost its old meaning for there were no cattle. Yet it persists today in the form of money in circumstances which destroy its original purpose. It is often the earning capacity of the bride which determines the lobolo demanded. In days gone by it was the parents and the clan who assisted with the payment of lobolo now it is the groom who has to find it. If the amount demanded is too high the man and maid often live together until lobolo can be found.

In Bantu society in rural areas polygamy was the accepted norm. The women tilled the fields and were responsible for providing the meals. In the cities there were no fields to till and the only means of providing the food was to go out and work for cash. Then who looked after the children while one was at work in the city? No wonder many of the youngsters have grown up without discipline or the desire to have regular employment, seeking rather to live by their wits. The role of the women in the tribe was well defined and very different from that of women in the Western societies. What profound change has resulted from coming to the city. Today in Soweto the women play an increasingly important role in their own society and are potent agents of stability. Read books such as "A Black Women in Search of God" to appreciate the stabilising force of the Manyano women. It is often the women who provide the stimulus in educating the children. In many households the women scrimp and scrape to find the funds to enable the children to acquire the knowledge they themselves never had. And what problems this often creates where the children may scorn the parents because of of their illiteracy.

POVERTY

One of the ever-present problems is that of making ends meet. Poverty in the rural areas was one thing because in the rural areas one shared what there was to share. In the city where cash is required to meet the month's rental—for with only one landlord one can find oneself on the street with nowhere else to go if the rent is in arrears—where food and clothing has to be bought at ever-increasing prices—poverty is a nightmare, especially for the aged, the out-of-works, the ill, the deserted wives with a crop of children to care for. These days of full employment and more adequate wages have helped enormously in relieving the hardships of a large portion of the Soweto population, but it is a constant struggle, especially if the men spend their wages on clothes, or gambling, or at the Municipal beerhalls or on their girl friends without measuring up to their responsibilities for the family they helped to create.

I have endeavoured to put to you this melting pot into which people of varying tribal backgrounds, various levels of education, varying stages of civilization have been thrown. What has been the outcome of this melting pot process?

If one visits Soweto one is impressed with the manner in which the houses are kept, by the gardens that have been made and how neat the homes are inside.

I can only marvel at the resilience, at the good humour, the philosophical attitude, and the good sense of the people in adapting themselves to what has happened.

Who could have visualized some 30 years ago-20 yers ago-- even 10 years ago the skills that would be acquired by these country folk, who could have envisaged that there would be African matrons at Baragwanath Hospital, and a hospital staffed with African nurses, who could have believed that Municipal treasury officials would be Africans, that the builders of houses, the bricklayers, the carpenters, the electrical wiremen, the plumbers and drainlayers would be Black, and that there would be building contractors, that they would be driving bulldozers, that they would acquire the skills for industry, that there would be elegant owner-built homes in a middle-class suburb, that there would be choirs who could sing the Messiah to us in the City Hall, that there would be artists trained in the city's art centre in Polly Street capable of exhibiting works of art in London, Paris and New York. Who would have believed, not 10 years ago, but 3 years ago that making European liquor available to the Africans would not result in an orgy of drunkenness and terror. The release of European liquor to the Africans has improved the relationship with the Police, who no longer have at all times to carry out the hated liquor raids. Unacceptable and unenforceable laws breed disrespect for the law. The complicated pass laws and influx control regulations impinge on the desired freedom of movement of most families in one way or another. In the minds of the Africans the Police are identified with the laws and the niceties of the difference between the makers of the law and those who have to carry them out are not recognised.

RELIGIOUS VALUES

That all is not well we know. You cannot have a social upheaval such as we have had without somebody being hurt, and it will take time and patience and understanding to heal the wounds caused by the destruction of one social order before another takes its place.

The beliefs of the African, the concepts of kinship, the belief in signs, in omens good and bad, the belief that one can be bewitched, that one can bewitch one's enemy, the belief in the witchdoctor's occult powers, in his medicines—these and many others are deeprooted and will be a part of African thinking for a long time to come.

What have we tried to put in their place? Often the Africans' first contacts with White civilization were the missionaries. What dedicated men and women they were. To what extent have those sacrifices and dedication influenced African life and morality today? A large proportion of the educated Africans received their schooling at Missions and Church affiliated institutions such as Lovedale, Fort Hare, Kilnerton, Adams College and Roma. While the churches have many hundreds of thousands of members and adherents, Christianity is by many regarded as the white man's religion and is therefore suspect. Was the behaviour of the white man towards them, and were the laws of the white man such as to create a desire to repose belief in the white man's God?

Countless separatist churches (some put the number at over 2,000) have sprung up throughout South Africa. These vary from those having beliefs and a faith bearing a close resemblance to Christianity to those which are almost completely pagan. It is regrettable to have to say that the Christian church is finding it hard to penetrate to the core of the masses and amongst the more sophisticated church affiliation is often for purposes of social status rather than for inherent belief backed by a standard of conduct.

MIDDLE CLASS

A hopeful sign in a society where the class structure is emerging is that not only in South Africa, but in Africa as a whole, status is allied with the extent to which western civilization has been attained. We recently suggested that we have an exhibition in Soweto at which tribal huts and impedimenta be displayed and tribal costumes worn. The Advisory Boards would have none of it—they did not want to be reminded of their past.

In Soweto today various strata of society are emerging. These strata are based on the extent of education, and the absorption of western civilization. Possession of material goods is a symbol of success and status. The better educated—professional persons, the teachers, shopkeepers, nurses, senior officials in Administration, entertainers—tend to form the uppercrust of society. One's income and skills are important factors. In addition there are the labourers and the newcomers to town. There are church associations, choral societies, football clubs, school associations, chambers of commerce, advisory boards and many other organisations cutting right across ethnic grouping and these activities determine one's associates and place in the new society. Unfortunately, there are also the city slickers and spics, the people who want to make money the easy way not caring whom they rape or rob or how they maim. I often feel that today the greatest need in Soweto is to

Robert Orr

Reformation Sunday

With deep roots and firm foundations, may you be strong to grasp, with ail God's people, what is the breadth and length and height and depth of the love of Christ.

EPHESIANS 3:18

(A sermon preached by the Rev. R. Orr in St. Andrew's Church, Pretoria, on Sunday, 31st October, 1965, and broadcast by the S.A.B.C.)

TODAY IS BEING OBSERVED in many Protestant churches as Reformation Sunday. Why is this? It is because, on October 31st, 1517, a certain Augustinian monk, one Martin Luther, nailed to the door of the castle church in the town of Wittenberg a document containing ninety-five theses or propositions whose truth or falsity he was willing to debate with anyone. It was not a particularly dramatic occasion, although some Protestants would like to surround it with glamour. It was the normal and accepted way of initiating an intellectual discussion. As it happened, no one turned up to debate these propositions. But as near as we can make it, this was the beginning of what we call the Reformation. Looking back on it now, we can say that October 31st, 1517, marked the watershed. After this, things could never be quite the same as they had been.

Today, then, is Reformation Sunday. Obviously one cannot talk about the Reformation or about Protestantism, without saying something about the Roman find some way of providing the law-abiding citizen with protection from the molestation of his fellows.

The urban dweller of today has travelled a long way on the path of material progress. His standard of living, his abilities, his outlook and that of his Citybred children are vastly different from those of yesteryear. What of tomorrow? I see a further advance in that progress, but care must be taken that these abilities are given adequate outlets so that a mood of frustration is no allowed to develop. If that can be done then I have confidence in the future.

Catholic Church. What, then, are we to say about Roman Catholics? What are we to say to them? What are we to say to Protestants on Reformation Sunday? It would be easy, I suppose, to stir up the usual wild emotions. It would be easy to stir up the dust of

old, unhappy, far-off things,

and battles long ago.

It would be quite easy to re-open old wounds, to stoke up the fire of animosities, to repeat the old, hurtful, insulting epithets. Shall we do this on Reformation Sunday, 1965? That would be a barren occupation. Let us say something quite different. Let us say something quite different. Let us say something that may surprise both Roman Catholics and Protestants. Let us say it because it is true: Roman Catholics and Protestants need each other. We need each other if we are to serve our common Lord Jesus Christ as faithfully and fully as we should.

MUTUAL NEED

Protestants need Roman Catholics. Perhaps it surprises you that a Protestant minister should say this. Perhaps you are asking, 'Why?' What is there that Protestants need and that Catholics can give? For one thing, there is a valuable stability about the Roman Church that benefits all churches. Protestants do have a tendency to blow this way and that, following the theological winds of change in every generation. The Roman Church does not do that. It looks very carefully at theological fashions. It sifts the wheat from the

A Sketch of Life in Soweto

Ea. 31 1977

BY CR. PATRICK R. B. LEWIS JOHANNESBURG

E IGHT short years ago the approach to Johannesburg from the Cape by rail was a hideous experience: miles and acres of shantied slums capable of shocking even someone familiar with the East End of London. And now? In place of the shanties, Soweto thousands of acres of orderly dwellings in their gardens, mile upon mile of tarred roads, hospitals, churches, schools, menities of all kinds and administrative buildings. The full story has been told with pictures in "Municipal Affairs" and in brochures issued

The full story has been told with pictures in "Municipal Affairs" and in brochures issued by the Non-European affairs department of Johannesburg City Council. It was A. J. Archibald, the creator of Kwa Thema when he was Town Engineer of Springs, who, as Johannesburg City Council's Director of Housing, taught the Bantu to build his own homes, and was the moving spirit behind the launching of the Bantu city south west of Johannesburg.

But the work has still gone on since his departure to rebuild Mauritius. All these years Mr. W. J. P. Carr has been the h u m a n e a n d enlightened manager of the city council's on-European affairs department, and Mr. Patrick Lewis has been the councillor in charge of Non-European Affairs. It is as an altruist that Cr. Lewis has interested himself in this field: it has not been for him a means to any other end. He is thus particularly well qualified to speak with sympathy and understanding of the inhabitants of Soweto who enjoy there a standard of life unknown to the inhabitants of any of the African communities outside S o u t h Africa and Rhodesia.

Soweto is one of the sights of the Southern Hemisphere. No visitor, whencesoever he may come to it as a stranger, can fail to leave it without acquiring a changed attitude to South Africa.

But urban life carries with it problems for the Bantu. It is of these, too, that Cr. Lewis writes in this article based on an address which he delivered recently to the Insurance Institute of the Transvaal. The problems to which he refers have no political undertones: they are the human problems consequent upon the urbanisation of a rural community. Soweto is not the only fine Bantu town created by local government in South Africa, with the aid and encouragement of the Central Government. In all those Bantu towns the problems arise which Cr. Lewis describes. Non-European affairs departments everywhere will be interested in what he says.

WHAT is it like to live in Soweto? The canvas is so large, and there is so little scientific information available, that one can only etch some facets, and then only give a glimpse of the way of life of the hundreds of thousands of people who have moved to the cities from the rural areas.

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It is a story of social upheaval on a vast scale in which traditional patterns of behaviour, developed over a long period, have been suddenly undermined while a new social code has still to be evolved to substitute suitable norms of conduct in place of those which have been destroyed.

"Soweto"

Soweto acquired its name in these circumstances. Early in 1930 Johannesburg City Council purchased 1,300 morgen to the south-west of the city adjacent to the main road to Potchefstroom. In 1932 it started building houses in a township called Orlando named after Mr. Orlando Leake, then a city councillor. One of the primary purposes was to rehouse Natives living in appalling slums at a place in the city called Prospect Township, which was situated on part of the ground now occupied by the new Kazerne Goods Yards. By the outbreak of World War II, in 1939, 5,800 houses had been built by the city council at Orlando. During the war no additional houses were built even though rapid industrialization called for many more workers, and it was then that a veritable flood of people moved into the areas adjacent to Orlando, and the notorious

squatter camps of Shantytown and Moroka were established. Those were days of degradation, crime and appalling misery. Then, after a hesitant start, the seemingly impossible was achieved. Today we have some 65,000 houses accommodating 306,000 men, women and children, and three hostels accommodating 14.000 men. So to Orlando were added townships such as Dube, Naledi, Moroka, Chiawelo, Jabavu, Jabulani, Emdeni, Mapetla, Mofolo, Zolo, Zondi, Phiri, Senaoane and Maletsane. For years this large area of 7,900 morgen or 25 square miles was referred to as the South-Western Bantu Townships. It was a city without a name and with no corporate entity. A competition was then held to choose a name. Many of the suggestions had to be turned down because the Zulu would not accept a Sotho name and vice versa. Eventually, a compromise was reached: and the name of this unique town is derived from the first letters of "South-Western Townships".

1965

A Unique Town

Why unique? Because within a period of less than 35 years what had been veld has now become the home of nearly half a million Bantu. It is a city without industries, and the working population has to commute to work in the White areas of Johannesburg some 12 to 20 miles away according to the station at which the train is boarded. It is unique in that there is only one landlord-the city council. Unique, too, in that that landlord has been prepared, year in and year out, to subsidise many of his tenants by providing houses at sub-economic rents, by providing medical care, recreational facilities, social welfare services, swimming baths, recreation halls and vocational training-thereby incurring losses which for the last 12 years have amounted to R61m. The employers of the tenants have contributed R21m. by means of the Bantu Transport Levy for subsidising transport and the Bantu Services Levy contributing towards the capital costs of providing services, thus enabling the rents to be lowered.

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The People

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The Men First

At one time it was only the men who came. In 1900, of the 60,000 Bantu the ratio of males to females was 12:1; by 1927, with a population of 136,000, the ratio was 6:1; at the outbreak of war the ratio was 3:1; and now it is equal.

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Strange Surroundings

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Development of Individuality

Whereas in the clan initiative was not encouraged and could lead to jealousy, now they were judged on their own merits and were encouraged to develop individuality. At home there was respect for one's elders. The daily battle to secure a place on the crowded trains destroyed any attitude other than looking after oneself. In the city they were on their own and free from the restraints of the tribe, but at the same time they had lost the security of the assured help of kinsmen. The ancestral spirits seemed far away; some people in the towns even cast doubt on their very existence. It is difficult enough for a rural dweller of any race to adjust himself to the hustle and bustle of the city: for the Bantu it also meant adjustment to a totally different way of life.

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Inevitable Maladjustments

But other societies, notably England during the Industrial Revolution, have experienced the same maladjustments inevitable in such a drastic transition, and have readjusted themselves. While large numbers are living normal family lives, there are still 85,000 men and 55,000 women living under single conditions in hostels, compounds or flats or on their employer's private property. There is no means of estimating how many of these men and women are in fact single and how many are involuntarily parted from their spouses.

Marriage Customs

In the early days of contact between White and Black many wellmeaning people, looking through the eyes of one civilization and not knowing the customs and traditions of the other, condemned polygamy and other marriage customs such as the lobolo system, interpreting that system as the purchase of the wife by .the bridegroom. How wrong they were.

In days gone by, while customs varied from tribe to tribe, pre-marital pregnancies would have had serious consequences for both parties. In the towns no such sanctions existed and illegitimate children became accepted without eyebrows being so much as raised. The transfer of cattle by the kinsmen of the bridegroom to the kinsmen of the bride was a symbol of the alliance of the clans, and many consequences flowed from those transactions. One important one was that if the husband died his clan would care for his wife and children. There were no uncared for widows or orphans.

How different in the towns. A man was away from the close-knit community where everyone knew his actions. He was among strangers who did not care what he did, and that caused a breakdown in tribal sanctions.

In the cities the lobolo system lost its old meaning for there were no cattle. Yet it persists today in the form of money in circumstances which destroy its original purpose. It is often the earning capacity of the bride which determines the lobolo demanded. In days gone by it was the parents and the clan who assisted with the payment of lobolo. Now it is the groom who has to find it. If the amount demanded is too high the man and maid often live together until lobolo can be found.

Women's Role

In Bantu society in rural areas polygamy was the accepted form. The women tilled the fields and were responsible for providing the meals. In the cities there were no fields to till and the only means of providing the food was to get out and work for cash. Then who looked after the children while the parents were at work in the city? No wonder many of the youngsters have grown up without discipline or the desire to have regular employment, seeking rather to live by their wits.

The role of the women in the tribe was well defined, and very different from that of women in the Western societies. What a profound change

has resulted from their coming to the city. Today in Soweto the women play an increasingly important role in their own society and are potent agents of stability. Books such as "A Black Woman in Search of God" illustrate the stabilising force of the Manyano women. It is often the women who provide the stimulus in educating the children. In many households the women scrimp and scrape to find the funds to enable the children to acquire the knowledge they themselves never had. And what problems that often creates where the children may scorn the parents because of their illiteracy.

Making Ends Meet

On of the ever-present problems is that of making ends meet. Poverty in the rural areas was one thing because in the rural areas one shared what there was to share. In the city where ash is required to meet the month's nt-for with only one landlord one can find oneself on the street with nowhere else to go if the rent is in arrears-where food and clothing have to be bought at ever-increasing prices, poverty is a nightmare, especially for the aged, the unemployed, the sick, the deserted wives with a crop of children to care for. These days of full employment and more adequate wages have helped enormously in relieving the hardships of a large part of the Soweto population, but it is a constant struggle, especially if the men spend their wages on clothes or gambling or at the municipal beerhalls or on their girl friends, without measuring up to their responsibility for the family they helped to create.

I have endeavoured to put to you this melting pot into which people of rying tribal backgrounds, various evels of education, varying stages of civilization, have been thrown. What has been the outcome of this meltingpot process? The visitor to Soweto is impressed by the manner in which the houses are kept, by the gardens that have been made and by how neat the homes are inside. I can only marvel at the resilience, the good humour, the philosophical attitude and the good sense of the people in adapting themselves to what has happened.

Skills Acquired

Who could have visualized some 30, 20, even 10 years ago the skills that would be acquired by these country folk? Who could have envisaged that there would be Bantu matrons at Baragwanath Hospital and a Hospital staffed with Bantu nurses? Who could have believed that municipal treasury officials would be Bantu; that the builders of houses, the bricklayers, the carpenters, the electrical wiremen, the plumbers and the drainlayers would be Black; that there would be Black building contractors; that they would be driving bulldozers; that they would acquire the skills for industry; that there would be elegant owner-built homes in a middle-class suburb; that there would be choirs who could sing Handel's Messiah in the City Hall; that there would be artists trained in the city's art centre in Polly Street capable of exhibiting works of art in London, Paris and New York?

Who would have believed, not 10 years ago, but three years ago, that the Central Government's action in making European liquor available to the Bantu would not result in an orgy of drunkenness and terror? The release of European liquor to the Bantu has improved the relationship with the police, who no longer have at all times to carry out the hated liquor raids.

Unacceptable and unenforceable laws breed disrespect for the law. The complicated pass laws and influxcontrol regulations impinge on the desired freedom of movement of most families in one way or another. In the minds of the Bantu the police are identified with the laws; and the niceties of difference between the makers of the law and those who have to carry them out are not recognised.

That all is not well we know. You cannot have a social upheaval such as we have had without somebody's being hurt; and it will take time and patience and understanding to heal the wounds caused by the destruction of one social order before another takes its place.

Bantu Beliefs

The beliefs of the Bantu: the concept of kinship; the belief in ancestral spirits; the belief in signs—in omens good and bad; the belief that one can be bewitched and that one can bewitch one's enemy; the belief in the witch doctor's occult powers and in his medicines—these and many other beliefs are deeprooted and will be a part of Bantu thinking for a long time to come.

What have we tried to put in their place? Often the Natives' first contacts with White civilization were the missionaries. What dedicated men and women they were. To what extent have their sacrifices and selfdedication influenced Bantu life and morality today? A large proportion of the educated Bantu received their schooling at missions and churchaffiliated institutions such as Lovedale, Fort Hare, Kiligerton, Adams College and Roma. While the churches have many hundreds of thousands of members and adherents, Christianity is by many regarded as the White man's religion and is therefore suspect. Was the behaviour of the White man towards them and were the laws of the White such as to

create a desire to repose belief in the White man's God?

The Churches

Countless separatist churchessome put the number at over 2,000have sprung up throughout South Africa. These vary from those having beliefs and a faith bearing a close resemblance to Christianity to those which are almost completely pagan. It is regrettable to have to say that the Christian church is finding it hard to penetrate to the core of the masses; and, among the more sophisticated, church affiliation is often for purposes of social status rather than for inherent belief backed by a standard of conduct.

A hopeful sign in a society where the class structure is emerging is that not only in South Africa, but in Africa as a whole, status is allied with the extent to which Western civilization has been attained. It was recently suggested that there should be an exhibition in Soweto at which tribal huts and impedimenta would be displayed and tribal costumes worn. The Bantu Advisory Boards would have none of it: they did not want the people to be reminded of their past.

In Soweto today various strata of society are emerging. These strata are based on the extent of education and the absorption of Western civilization. Possession of material goods is a symbol of success and status. The better educated-the professional persons, the teachers, the shopkeepers, the nurses, the senior officials in administration, the entertainers-all these tend to form the uppercrust of society. Income and skills are important factors. In addition there are the labourers and the newcomers to town. There are church associations, choral societies, football clubs, school associations, chambers of commerce, advisory boards and many other organizations cutting right across ethnic grouping, and those activities determine a man's associates and place in the new society. Unfortunately, there are also the city slickers and spivs, the people who want to make money the easy way, not caring whom they rape or rob or how they maim. I often feel that today the greatest need in Soweto is to find some way of providing the law-abiding citizen with protection from the molestation of his fellows.

The urban dweller of today has travelled a long way on the path of material progress. His standard of living, his abilities, his outlook and that of his city-bred children are vastly different from those of yesteryear. What of tomorrow? I see a further advance in that progress; but care must be taken that these abilities are given adequate outlets so that a mood of frustration is not allowed to develop. If that can be done then I have confidence in the future.

"A SKETCH OF LIFE IN SOWETO" BY COUNCILLOR PATRICK R.B. LEWIS, TO BE DELIVERED TO THE INSURANCE INSTITUTE OF THE TRANSVAAL : 10TH AUGUST 1965.

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I would like to thank you for asking me to speak to you on a subject on which I have pondered for some time - what is it like to live in Sowetc? The canvas is so large, and there is so little scientific information available, that one can only etch some facets and then only give a glimpse of the way of life of the hundreds of thousands of people who have moved to the cities from the rural areas.

It is a story of a social upheaval on a vast scale, where traditional patterns of behaviour developed over a long period of time, have been suddenly undermined before a new social code has been evolved to substitute suitable norms of conduct in place of those which have been destroyed.

First let me tell you how Soweto got its name. Early in 1930 the Johannesburg City Council purchased 1,300 morgen to the South-West of Johannesburg, adjacent to the Potchefstroom Road, and in 1932 started building houses in a township which was called Orlando, named after one of the then Councillors, Mr. Orlando Leake. One of the primary purposes was to rehouse Africans living in appalling slums at a place called Prospect Township, which was situated on part of the ground now occupied by the new Kazerne Goods yard. By the outbreak of World War 2 in 1939 5,800 houses had been built by the City Council in Orlando. During the war no additional houses were built even though rapid industrialization called for many more workers, and it was at this time that a veritable flood of people moved into the areas adjacent to Orlando, and the notorious squatter camps of Shantytown and Moroka were established. Those were days of degradation, crime and appalling misery. Then, after a hesitant start, the seemingly impossible was achieved. Today we have some 65,000 houses accommodating 306,000 men, women and children, and three hostels accommodating 14,000 men. So, to Orlando was added townships such as Dube,

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Naladi, Moroka, Chiawelo, Jabavu, Jabulani, Emdeni, Mapetla, Mofolo, Zolo, Zondi, Phiri, Senaoane, Maletsane. For years this large area of 7,900 morgen or 25 square miles was referred to as the South-Western Bantu Townships. It was a city without a name, with no corporate entity. A competition was then held to choose a name. Many of the suggestions had to be turned down because the Zulu would not accept a Sotho name and vice versa. Eventually, a compromise was reached, and Soweto is derived from the first letters of South-Western Townships. So Soweto is the name of this unique town.

Why unique? Because within a period of less than 35 years what had been weld has now become the home of nearly $\frac{1}{2}$ million African people. It is a city without industries, and the working population has to commute to work in the white areas of Johannesburg, some 12 to 20 miles away depending on the station at which the train is boarded. It is unique in that there is only one landlord - the City Council. Unique too, in that the landlord has been prepared, year in and year out, to subsidise many of his tenants by providing houses at sub-economic rentals, by providing medical care, recreational facilities, social welfare services, swimming baths, recreation halls, vocational training - incurring losses which for the last 12 years amounted to R6,500,000. The employers of the tenants have contributed B21,000,000 by means of such funds as the Bantu Transport Levy to subsidise transport, and the Bantu Services Levy towards the capital costs of providing services, thus enabling the rentals to be lowered.

But who are the people who live at Soweto and where did they come from? Why did they come? What manner of persons are they?

Who are the people? Where did they come from? The Xhosa came from the Transkei, the Basuto from Basutoland, the Shangaan from Portuguese East Africa, the Zulu from Zululand, the Bapedi from Pietersburg in the

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Northern Transwaal, the Tswana from the Western Transwaal, the Nyasa from Malawi, the Bechuana from Bechuanaland, the Mashona and Mandabele from Rhodesia. There are also Swazi, Fingo, Pondo, Makwena, Barolong, Dakgatla, Venda and Griqua. Johannesburg is the magnet for people from all over Southern Africa.

They came to the cities to work, for in their homes in the rural areas the land available was limited, and the agricultural methods primitive. They had no means to support their families when crops failed. They needed cash to pay taxes. Their wants increased and the bright lights of the cities lured them to come to E-Goli - the City of Gold - to seek the cash they needed. With the industrial expansion in the cities their labour was required to enable the factories and industries to function. The services provided in the towns, the educational and medical facilities available, and the general better living conditions drew the people to the cities from the rural areas.

At one time, it was just the men who came. In 1900, of the 60,000 Africans the ratio of males to females was 12 - 1; by 1927, with a population of 136,000 the ratio was 6 - 1; at the outbreak of war the ratio was 3 - 1 and now it is equal.

At first the men worked for short spells, returning home to join their families and returning to the cities again when their funds gave out. What a different pattern it is today! Now that the women folk have moved to town the vast majority are permanent urban dwellers.

How different they found the city from their rural areas! How strange they felt in their new surroundings! How ill equipped their tribal beliefs and training had made them for their new life. Instead of the sun being their time-piece, they now had to work to the inelastic and unsympathetic clock of the white man. Instead of working in the circle of their clan, where everyone was known to them and to each other, they were now among strangers, strangers to them and strangers to one another. They heard unfamiliar tongues they could not understand. Because they

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could not understand they were thought to be stupid - some called them momparas and worse. Whereas at home they had a sense of kinship, and could consult their kinsmen, they were now on their own and had to make decisions for themselves. Their food was different, as were their mealtimes, and the white man's medicine was different. Instead of a barter economy, ready cash was necessary. Instead of leisurely walks along country paths, 170,000 persons each day rise early to throng the crowded trains carrying them to work, only to repeat the same tortured travel in the late afternoon. No longer were cattle the symbol of wealth, In the City the material goods of the West and a flashy car were one's aim. Whereas in the clan initiative was not encouraged and could lead to jealousy, now they were judged on their own merits and were encouraged to develop individuality. At home there was respect for one's elders. The daily battle to secure a place on the crowded trains destroyed any attitude other than looking after oneself. In the City one was on one's own, and free from restraints of the tribe, but at the same time one had lost the security of the assured help of kinsmen. The ancestral spirits seemed far away; some people in the towns even cast doubt on their very existence. It is difficult enough for a rural dweller of any race to adjust himself to the hustle and bustle of the City. For the African it also meant adjustment to a totally different way of life.

What an upheaval - what an adaptation to make. The migratory worker away from his kith and kin, away from his women folk, could not be expected to observe the tribal sanctions and restraints - for a man is a man and needed his desires fulfilled and so began the process which has caused a most heart-rending upheaval in the structure of African society, particularly in family life. Sadly enough both marriage and family life are very unstable and one fears that it will be a long process to rebuild secure and stable families again. But other societies, notably England during the Industrial Revolution, have experienced the same maladjustments inevitable in such a drastic transition, and have readjusted themselves. While large numbers are living normal family lives there are still 85,000 men and 55,000 women living under single conditions in hostels, compounds,

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flats or on their employer's private property. There is no means of estimating how many of these men and women are in fact single and how many are involuntarily parted from their spouses.

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What have we tried to put in their place? Often the Africans first contacts with White civilization were the missionaries. What dedicated men and women they were. To what extent have those sacrifices and dedication influenced African life and morality today? A large proportion of the educated Africans received their schooling at Missions and Church affiliated institutions such as Lovedale, Fort Hare, Kilnerton, Adams College and Roma. While the churches have many hundred of thousands of members and adherents, Christianity is by many regarded as the white man's religion and is therefore suspect. Was the behaviour of the white man towards them, and were the laws of the white man such as to create a desire to repose belief in the white man's God?

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