

47.1-8



CHURCHES' ALTERNATIVE NATIONAL SERVICE PROGRAMME

C.A.N.S.P.
P.O. BOX 9293
JOHANNESBURG
2000

10 May 1989

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 Johannesburg.

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 you 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 30 June 1989.

Should you require any further details, please contact either:

- Doug Banks** 716-2625
- James Nicolson** 827-4758
- Douglas Torr** 788-5143

We would be glad to assist you in any queries you may have regarding this programme.

Yours sincerely

DOUG BANKS

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 or 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 to challenge the government openly 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 (Anglicans). The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) have accepted the programme 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 could take on responsibility for one or more of the following:

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.

DOUG BANKS	716-2625
JAMES NICOLSON	827-4758
DOUGLAS TORR	788-5143

**PUBLISHED BY: C.A.N.S.P. P.O. Box 9293
Johannesburg 2000.**

MESSAGES OF SUPPORT

Methodist Church

The individual conscience is one of the most precious assets in any society and the violation of conscience by duress is always wrong.

Conscription into military service presents many young men with such a violation and the churches have a duty to help them remain true to their convictions. The Churches Alternative Service Project is an attempt to do this by opening doors to other forms of service consistent with their conscience. It is a positive initiative demanding costly commitment by both the individuals who take this route and the churches that provide it.

The programme merits careful consideration by every person facing conscription.



REV DR PETER STOREY

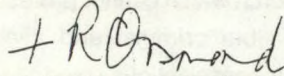
Bishop, South Western Transvaal District
Methodist Church of Southern Africa

Catholic Church

The issue of national service in the SADF faces practically every young white man in South Africa. The number of men not responding to their call-up has increased dramatically. Whatever you or I may feel, young people in our country are having a crisis of conscience about serving in the SADF. Instead of simply condemning the system of compulsory military service, the Church now offers a constructive alternative: to help her young members to serve the community in some way, and to support such people financially and pastorally. The Catholic Church in South Africa has its catholic volunteer service organisation - CATHOLICS FOR SERVICE.

Several other churches have responded positively to this initiative of the SACBC.

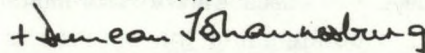
It is my hope that the heartrending anguish of young white South Africans will be sympathetically considered by the authorities and that this constructive outreach of the Church will give hope and courage to many in their crisis of conscience.



REGINALD J. ORSMOND
BISHOP OF JOHANNESBURG

Anglican Church

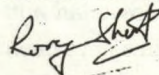
I am happy to support the work of CANSP. It seems to me that any country needs to have a place in its life for those who find armed service, or even uniformed involvement in the Military, to be an unacceptable expression of their conscience. So the need to find alternative forms of service which are acceptable to the authorities as well as to the individuals concerned is critical and lifegiving. I pray that this organisation will prosper in its work and in the process be part of the solution for our tense and unhappy land.



THE RIGHT REVEREND DUNCAN BUCHANAN
BISHOP OF JOHANNESBURG

The Religious Society of Friends

We the Religious Society of Friends believe that war is fundamentally wrong, because we believe that there is something of God in every person. If national service exists it is necessary that every individual has the opportunity to do alternative service which will benefit the community. CANSP is showing initiative in attempting to provide such service. We therefore support the programme.



RORY SHORT

Clerk
Transvaal Monthly Meeting
RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS (QUAKERS)



CANSP



CHURCHES' ALTERNATIVE NATIONAL SERVICE PROGRAMME:

A NEW INITIATIVE.



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

COMPLETED BY:

Name:
 * Address:

 * Telephone:
 * Denomination:

CODE
 1. AGREE
 2. INDIFFERENT
 3. DISAGREE
 Y. YES
 N. NO

QUESTIONS:

- | | | |
|---|---|-----------|
| 1. | Had you heard of CANSP before receiving this letter? | 1. Y N |
| 2. | Do you agree with the objectives of CANSP? | 2. 1 2 3 |
| 3. | What are the most favourable aspects? | |
| | | |
| 4. | What are the more negative aspects? | |
| | | |
| 5. | Do you think the current conscription legislation needs revision? | 5. Y N |
| 6. | Do you think the members of your congregation generally support Christians involved in seeking political change? | 6. Y N |
| 7. | Are there social awareness groupings in your church? | 7. Y N |
| 7.1. | Is conscription among the issues discussed by the group. | 7.1. Y N |
| 7.2. | If not, would a workshop be helpful? | 7.2. Y N |
| 8. | Would you foresee members of your Congregation being interested in taking this project forward? | 8. Y N |
| If so, please complete questions 9 - 14 | | |
| 9. | Are there members in your congregation who are unwilling to be conscripted, who might be ready to be participants in this project? | 9. Y N |
| 10. | How would members of your congregation respond to supporting such an individual? | 10. 1 2 3 |
| 11. | If there are no members who are able to take part themselves, would some be able to support: * a participant: | |
| | by providing a project | 11a. Y N |
| | financially | 11b. Y N |
| | by forming a support group | 11c. Y N |
| | support: * further involvement | |
| | assisting in organisation | 11d. Y N |
| 12. | Are there current or proposed community projects in you church or neighbourhood in which a participant could be suitably placed. If so, please specify: | |
| | | |
| | | |
| 13. | Do you wish to receive further information regarding this project's progress? | 13. Y N |
| 14. | If so, to whom should further correspondence be addressed? | |
| | * Name: | |
| | * Address: | |
| | | |
| | * Telephone: | |

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PUBLISHER:

Publisher:- Historical Papers Research Archive

Location:- Johannesburg

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