

Totally Banned

Defiance of convention with banning

HERALD REPORTER
THE general secretary of the South African Council of Churches (SACC), Bishop Desmond Tutu, at the weekend described the banning of his name as a positive step in co-operation with immoral and unjust laws.

In an address to the synod of the Anglican Church in Grahamstown, Bishop Tutu said the church should mount a "massive campaign of support" through positive co-operation with "immoral, unchristian and unjust laws."

Bishop Tutu's speech brought him two prolonged standing ovations. He said that those who controlled the SACC "fortunately" believed there were no laws that should be obeyed when they involved a clash with the laws of God.

However, the SACC had

emphatically reiterated that it was not seeking for a confrontation with the State.

As an example of non-co-operation, the SACC, which had recently been harassed about obtaining permits for the families of political prisoners who visited them on Robben Island had decided not to ask for these permits.

"Just as you have decided at synod, so we have also decided that the church would not have a work dictated by a secular authority," he said.

Describing the SACC as "a Christian organisation with a definite bias in favour of the oppressed and the exploited of our society," Bishop Tutu said the church was committed to liberation, which was not the other side of the coin to apartheid but the obverse of damnation.

It was not the political nature of the SACC but its Christian faith that led to its involvement with the laws of political prisoners, those detained with-

out trial and the people who were a twilight existence as banned persons.

Although Christians were treated impartially, the bulk of white Christians and the bulk of black Christians were on opposite sides on very crucial matters, Bishop Tutu said. This tension put the unity of Christians to strenuous tests.

Most white Christians excoriated the World Council of Churches, while most black Christians sang its praises.

Most white Christians thought black boys on the border were terrorists, while most black Christians thought white boys on the border were freedom fighters.

Most white Christians regarded black political prisoners as justly condemned criminals whereas the vast majority of black regarded them as heroes and leaders.

The question of investment, Bishop Tutu said, most whites favoured investment in South Africa. Many blacks, on the other hand, would consider sanctions to be applied in the interests of bringing about the political changes in a reasonably peaceful manner.

By JENNIFER HYMAN
AFTER days of bitter wrangling, the Anglican Synod in Grahamstown has approved by an overwhelming majority, a motion commending the World Council of Churches' programme to Combat Racism as far as it identified with "those who are working for a more just order."

The Archbishop of Cape Town, the Rt Rev Bill Burnett, called for a short prayer before the vote was taken and a hymn of praise was sung after delegates had voted by 120 to five in favour of the resolution.

Earlier debate on a more strongly worded motion, which was reworded on the synod agenda, was being initially dismissed without a vote revealed deep divisions in the church, largely along racial lines.

Banned priest given ovation

HERALD REPORTER
THE banned Cape Town priest, the Rev David Russell, was given a rousing standing ovation at the Anglican Synod in Grahamstown at the weekend, when the general secretary of the SA Council of Churches, Bishop Desmond Tutu, described him as "the finest human being I have ever known."

Looking visibly moved, Mr Russell sat quietly while the audience rose spontaneously to their feet and applauded for more than a minute.

Mr Russell, who defied most provisions of the law in order to come to Grahamstown, left for his home with other delegates after the conclusion of the synod.

Bishop Tutu said of Mr Russell: "I am glad that David, that extraordinary young man, is here. He is a tremendous agent of God's grace and his only prayer is that he carry out God's suffering children."

He said what Christians were doing about the

arbitrary curtailment of individual freedoms that occurred through banning.

"Do we say as a letter in the Rand Daily Mail said, that there is no banning without a reason — that there can be smoke without a fire?"

Desmond Tutu said this serious question of the rule of law without so much as a whisper? Do you really think the Nationalist Government would consider Mrs Winnie Mandela to Bradford if they had evidence which would vindicate her before the world, evidence which would satisfy a court of law?"

"Do you believe Beyers Naudé to be a subversive agent of violent revolution? If there is evidence that says he is, is that his to be charged and punished for this crime?"

The churches in South Africa should tell people who were banned to ignore their banning orders, Bishop Tutu said. Then it should support them when they had to face the consequences.

Changed motion on WCC passed

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Former United Party MP joins Nats

HERALD CORRESPONDENT
DURBAN — The Prime Minister's initiatives have prompted a former United Party MP for Durban North, Mr Mike Mitchell, to join the Nationalist Party.

Mr Neil Rossouw, MEC, the Nationalist provincial secretary, said yesterday that Mr Mitchell had agreed on Friday to join the party.

Mr Rossouw said he had a brief discussion with Mr Mitchell, an architect of United Party policy before the 1977 general election.

Mr Mitchell had made no comment at that stage. An application for former party membership by former party representatives from other parties had to be approved by the executive committee of a meeting which would be held in the year.

Mr Rossouw said Mr Mitchell will have no trouble getting in.

Mr Mitchell joined the United Party in 1978 after serving for 15 years as MP for Durban North, and retired from politics altogether.

Hot spots

White speakers including bishops, warned that the church was not identifying itself with those who were working for a more just order.

The Archbishop of Cape Town, the Rt Rev Bill Burnett, called for a short prayer before the vote was taken and a hymn of praise was sung after delegates had voted by 120 to five in favour of the resolution.

More rights for prisoners urged

HERALD REPORTER
THE right of a prisoner in South Africa today was to live. The right to develop and grow as a human being was denied a prisoner by the laws of the law. It was said at the Anglican Synod in Grahamstown on Saturday.

Calling for the rights of prisoners in the national study and their families, delegates voted unanimously to back the

campaign spearheaded by the Prisoners Education Committee in Natal. The motion was presented by the Child and Family Welfare and the National Institute for Correctional and Rehabilitation (Ninri) in their efforts to establish education as a prisoner's right.

The Rt Rev Philip Russell, Bishop of Natal, said at present the rights of prisoners were being physically repressed of food and

Cleavage

The clause dealing with the use of force was amended to read that the church respected the fact that some Christians felt that it was their duty to defend the Republic of South Africa, and others to leave its borders to take up arms to defend it. It was believed to be a more just order.

Proposing that the church should be radically restructured, Bishop Burnett said some delegates felt that the church had been "driven" while others would feel that the church was still there.

Debate on the WCC motion had revealed a great cleavage in the church.

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Uproar likely on UK Bill

By IAN ROBERTS
LONDON — Government plans to tone the usual measure in a bill which could result in widespread demonstrations this winter have been published.

The bill is expected to be introduced in the House of Commons in the next few days.

Employment Secretary Mr James Pross said his aim was to "curb extreme behaviour which goes beyond all reason."

The bill is being already up-arms, calling for a fight to the death against the bill, which is claimed to "chase the Tories."

The four most important clauses in the bill, which are likely to be the heart of industrial unrest in Britain are:

- It is to prohibit individuals from being placed in a state of mind which could lead to violence.
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Queen of the Night in bloom

HERALD REPORTER
AN exotic desert plant which blooms once a year, only at night for less than 12 hours and fades at sunrise the next morning, made its brief appearance at a Port Elizabeth couple's flat last Thursday.

The owner, Mr M. P. Louber, had it for 34 years.

"The bloom always starts opening at 8.30 on December 8 and fades the next morning as soon as the sun comes up. During the first two hours it opens as quickly as you see it morning. Then it closes down and by midnight it is fully open," Mr Louber said.

Hardy plant

This "Queen of the Night" comes from the forest regions of South America and is a very hardy plant, Mr Louber says. It gives it one cup of water every 10 days but no fertilizer or manure.

When not in bloom the plant consists of a leafless stem which grows in the soil. It is a very hardy plant, Mr Louber says. It gives it one cup of water every 10 days but no fertilizer or manure.

Demo over weapons

HERALD REPORTER
Thousands of West German demonstrators yesterday in Brussels against the NATO plan to deploy new nuclear weapons.

The demonstrators, foreign delegates came by train from West Germany. One thousand West German workers joined about 2 000 West German nationalists.

The demonstration was organized by an action committee against atomic weapons. It was held in Brussels, Belgium.

Appeal to expose plight of poor

HERALD REPORTER
A spokesman for the group, Mrs Nancy Charlton, a political activist, said information from the report indicates that in the past decade more than 200 000 people have been thrown out of their homes, often suffering considerable hardship in the process and thereafter.

She noted that "this tremendous demographic shift is a major problem for the African continent."

This is part of the message of the report, which is attributed to all delegates in the Anglican provincial synod in Grahamstown yesterday by a group of delegates who took time off to study their remonstration and resettlement.

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Church of the Province of South Africa

23rd Session of
Provincial Synod
Grahamstown
November 30th - December 9th, 1979.

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Issued by the Diocese of Johannesburg, February 1979

Compiled by Revd. Paddy Glover



FROM THE BISHOP OF JOHANNESBURG

It is impossible in the printed word to convey anything but the barest facts of what happened at Provincial Synod, and a spoken report is only marginally better. For it was an experience and, like the experiences of one's dreams, cannot really live for the person hearing about it. How does one capture an atmosphere or portray the joys, the tensions, the laughter, the anger and all else which comes from the interaction of some 200 people living, worshipping and working together for more than a week?

So these reports to the Diocese from its Representatives in Grahamstown necessarily tell but part of the tale, even if their number and variety may contribute to a fuller picture than would be possible from the hand of one person. Certainly they will be more accurate than the efforts of the secular press.

Because of the nature of the media we were not given full or balanced coverage and I do not complain about that. But what does distress me is that so many people in the Diocese seem to have assumed that a complete picture and responsible reaction to the events and decisions of the Synod could be gained from radio, television and newspapers, as if they were the last word and as reliable as the Gospels themselves.

Worse still, there were those who reacted (violently sometimes) to what they read in the papers before the Synod about some of the matters on the agenda. They had not the wisdom to reserve their energies until seeing what Synod would do with those items which upset them.

For such people - and for everyone in this Diocese - this publication is an attempt to give, as far as possible, a full and true account of what went on in Provincial Synod, even though the half cannot be told.

† Timothy.

INTRODUCTION

The triennial Meeting of Provincial Synod, the highest legislative body in the Church of the Province of South Africa, was held in Grahamstown, "the City of Saints", on the Campus of Rhodes University - the same venue as the previous Synod in 1976.

This fully residential Synod, attended by 185 representatives, commenced on Friday, 30th November, at 5 pm, in the Cathedral Church of St Michael and St George, with the opening Eucharist. After the Constitution of Synod, the Presidential Charge was delivered by the Most Revd. B.B. Burnett, Archbishop of Cape Town and Metropolitan.

After supper at Kimberley Hall, the President welcomed the representatives of the Methodist Conference, the Presbyterian Church, the Roman Catholic Church, and the Congregational Union, and fraternal greetings were conveyed by Bishop Gottschalk and Revd. S. Smuts.

On Saturday, 1st December, Synod resolved itself into Conference, and was addressed by the Revd. Joseph Wing, Secretary of the Church Unity Commission on the most recent developments of the proposed Covenant between the participating Churches.

The members of Conference then broke up into small groups of approximately eight to ten people, to discuss the various items on the Synod Agenda. This proved of enormous value as it meant that, when during the course of Synod, measures and motions were debated, the representatives had already had an opportunity to discuss the questions and familiarise themselves with the issues involved. This contributed to the high standard of the debate throughout the proceedings of Synod.

On Advent Sunday, 2nd December, following the sung Eucharist in the Cathedral, at which Bishop Zulu preached on the Advent Hope, Synod began the business proper.

The daily programme throughout the week was:

7 00 am Eucharist
8 00 am Breakfast
9 00 am Session
10 30 am Tea
11 00 am Session
12 55 pm Lunch
2 00 pm Session
3 30 pm Tea
4 00 pm Session
5 45 pm Evening Prayer
6 30 pm Supper
7 30 pm Meeting of Committee

The only time this Programme was not adhered to was on the evening Tuesday, 4th December, when the Representatives to Provincial Synod were entertained at a Civic Reception in the City Hall by the Mayor and City Council.

On Friday evening, 7th December, the members of Synod were addressed by Dr Francis Wilson on the World Conference, on Faith, Science and the Future, which he attended earlier in the year.

On Saturday evening, 8th December, the General Secretary of the South African Council of Churches, Bishop Desmond Tutu, addressed an open meeting in Kimberley Hall at the invitation of the Metropolitan.

On Sunday morning, 9th December, the Archbishop preached at the final Eucharist, after which the Business of Synod was concluded and the 23rd Session of Provincial Synod dissolved.

Our Representatives were invited by Bishop Timothy to give a brief report of their impressions. These follow the Archbishop's Charge and a resumé of some of the Acts and Resolutions debated by Synod.



PRESIDENT'S CHARGE

INTRODUCTION

My brethren of the House of Bishops, members of the House of Clergy and of the House of Laity, fraternal representatives of sister Churches: I welcome you in the Name of the Lord as we begin this 23rd Session of the Provincial Synod.

Since the Synod met last in 1976 a number of its members have died. We remember them as those whom "God, who is rich in mercy, made alive together with Christ and raised up with him that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward them in Christ". We have a sure confidence then that they are now in the strong and merciful hand of God.

In the House of Clergy we record the names of:

The Very Revd W.J. Goodall
The Ven A.G. Shepperson

The Ven D. Mbopa

In the House of Laity we remember:

Dr. E. Brookes
Mr. R. Tutshana

Mr. J.A. Thomas

Since our last Synod eight bishops have resigned, namely:

Patric Harold Falkiner Barron
Desmond Mpilo Tutu
George Kenneth Giggall
Fortescue Tumelo Makhetha
John Stanley Carter
Ernest Archibald Zenani Sobukwe
Mark Nye
Richard James Wood

- Bishop of George
- Bishop of Lesotho
- Bishop of St Helena
- Suffragan Bishop of Lesotho
- Suffragan Bishop of Johannesburg
- Suffragan Bishop of St John'
- Suffragan Bishop of Pretoria
- Suffragan Bishop of Damaraland

Several new diocesan bishops and five suffragan bishops have been consecrated during the last three years, namely,

William James Manning
Philip Stanley Mokuku
Edward Alexander Capparis Cannan
James Hamupanda Kauluma
Hugh George Stevenson
Thomas Shaun Stanage
Mfaniseni Sigisbert Ndwandwe
Donald Patrick Nestor

- Bishop of George
- Bishop of Lesotho
- Bishop of St Helena
- Suffragan Bishop of Damaraland
- Suffragan Bishop of Pretoria
- Suffragan Bishop of Johannesburg
- Suffragan Bishop of Johannesburg
- Suffragan Bishop of Lesotho

The Diocese of Niassa in Mocambique has been brought into existence since Synod last met and Paulo Suizane Litumbe, Suffragan Bishop of Lebombo, was elected as the first Bishop of Niassa.

DIVES AND LAZARUS Luke 16 : 19

If Christians had heard, and responded to, what Jesus said about Dives and Lazarus there would, I suspect, have been no Marxist revolutions in modern times.

This is one of the more uncomfortable parables for the comfortable. Jesus is here telling the comfortable that God's values are quite other than theirs. The Lord describes Dives as coming into torment while Lazarus the beggar knows shalom in Abraham's bosom. You will remember that Dives then pleaded with Abraham to send someone to warn his brothers lest they come to share the torment he now knew. "But Abraham said, 'They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them'. And he said, 'No, father Abraham; but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent'. He said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be convinced if some one should rise from the dead' ". (Luke 16 : 29-31). But someone has come to us from the dead. Jesus.

We South Africans of whatever colour, who are well endowed with material things, need to hear what the Lord has to say in this parable. The failure of Christians to share their good things with those in need and poverty cannot be condoned by God. In our land there is much abject poverty in spite of a reasonably buoyant economy.

How do we look to the God of Abraham from whom this parable of Dives and Lazarus comes? We have become accustomed to accepting that some of us are ordained to wealth and others to poverty. Jesus says " look out I claim you altogether for myself. If you are a Dives I expect you not only to give some scraps to the poor but to give me yourself and all that you have. I will tell you what to do with it all. I have risen from the dead. I am the Word

from God to the brothers of Dives. By my Holy Spirit I have taught you what to do with your possessions. You know that your brothers in the Spirit said that nothing they had was their own and had all things in common. (Acts 4 : 32). You who are promised "the mind of Christ" (1 Cor. 2 : 16), you must know then what to do. You cannot call yourselves my people and still refuse to despoil yourselves so that children who now perish from Kwashiorkor may live; so that the ill-educated may have opportunities to grow, so that fathers may be comforted to see their families well cared for and afforde a future full of hope.

Christians do not need to wait for heavier taxes to scale down their standard of living to enable them to direct what could be substantial surpluses, to where financial resources are most needed. We can become involved in the parish and the Diocese in a substantial caring ministry even before legislation is changed. But what we most need is what might be described as a kind of organic response from within the fellowship of the faithful in every place. Because the redeeming power of God transforms his people he means to use them for the redemption of people and situations around them. Unless we see this happening we Christians have become salt without taste and fit for the dirt bin. But when God's people know and respond to him they look to the needs of those at their elbow in the parish. They cross parish boundaries to share in a ministry in parishes where needs may be greater and in doing these things they are equipped to act responsibly in the society in which they live. You may say that what the C.P.S.A. can do in all this will be a drop in the ocean and that may be true, but the value of the experience gained by those who step out to become deeply involved in ministering to the needs of the poor is inestimable. Small beginnings turn into larger movements. Do not despise small beginnings.

As a nation we are faced with the urgent task of finding ways to share the resources of our land without going through so destructive a process that there will be very little left to share. The Black Sash has issued a timely warning about the potentially explosive effects of a more rigid control of Africans seeking employment in urban areas. Ideological tidiness in the application of influx control is no substitute for unemployment. It may in fact be tinder to a powder keg. Unless we act speedily to create a more open society, take massive steps to provide adequate education for Black people and remove barriers, whether these are conventional or legal, in order to create job opportunities for them, the white part of our nation will retain its Dives character and have only itself to blame if it experiences the wrath of God.

THE CHURCH AT THE CROSS ROADS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

One is tempted to say that the Church is at a crucial point in her history in South Africa, as though in God's sight we live in exceptional times. The fact is that we are always at a crucial point in our life and history. The Church must still respond to its calling to stand under the cross when history seems to flow on relatively peacefully and rank injustice and the misuse of power may not be very evident. In such times it may be even more difficult to be faithful than it is in more troubled times. There seem to be such obvious and "burning" issues facing the Church in our time that one cannot be blind to them. Political pressure groups, both national and international, grasp at our minds and emotions in order to claim and to hold our allegiance. The Church is also facing a radical revision of its thinking about the ministry of women, the meaning of initiation, and the means by which we find unity with other Churches. These are potentially deeply divisive issues. Let us take care that we are not so gripped or dazed by the so-called issues of the day, whether political or ecclesiastical, that we react to these instead of responding with clarity and decision to the author of our life and of our salvation.

That would be certain to lead us into false ways and into a warfare between rival idolatries or human forms of righteousness, because we look for salvation elsewhere than in God alone. We may on the other hand fail to see that we have to be obedient to the Lord in the context of history and think we can be faithful to God only in a strictly ecclesiastical and personal way. This will lead us to a different set of idolatries because Jesus is Lord in the world, even when it does not respond to him, and not simply in the Church. We always face the question of how God means the Church and the world to be related.

Socio-political solutions for what are ultimately religious problems have often been the way the Church has responded to crisis. It does not work. We seldom take hold of the faith that God means to use his Church to do his work by the unique power of the Spirit with whom the Father anointed Jesus.

The Kingdom of God is not Capitalism or Socialism, nor a combination of both. It is not a federal solution to our countries problems or Black majority rule, but a new humanity created by Jesus and joyfully obedient to the Father in the Holy Spirit.

Thus the primary work of the Church is to produce the "new creation" man in Jesus. That man can be poor and nevertheless free even in prison, or as a man of substance, be free not only to share his good things but do without them.

The immediate and apparently relevant socio-political or even theological issues must not be allowed to deflect us from presenting such men and women to the world. Do we do it? Do we know how to do it? Do we risk ourselves by letting God do it? Is it really evident in the parish? Do we grow in holiness? Is that above all what we seek to be? Is this what we see? Is this where our energies are spent?

It is too easy to take refuge in not expecting too much of men. Yes, we are right not to do so but that misses the

point. The point is that we expect too little of God.

When our politics comes out of holiness, I speak, of course, as a fool, we will have something to say and do that the world cannot already say and do itself. Then there will be a witness to the Kingdom of God.

LIFE AND THEOLOGY IN CONTEXT

Pontius Pilate, the ruler and politician, was not wrong to have said to Jesus in the context of religious and political scheming in which Jesus was enmeshed. "What is Truth?". What used to be acceptable criteria for social and political righteousness, when the world was ruled by the Empires between the wars of this century, is no longer seen to be so. Imperialism and Colonialism are very dirty words. What is now acceptable social and political righteousness will not be seen to have been so, I do not doubt, in another 50 short years, not because God has changed but because human power structures will have done so. Or to say the same thing differently, both the American dream and the vision of the Marxist Moscow look like nightmares to many millions of people. The question of identifying Truth and Righteousness in human patterns of life remains, and will always be, an enigma. But the Truth and Righteousness of God are in Jesus Christ and in him alone.

We do nevertheless live within social structures which are a mixture of good and bad and which may be used well or ill. We all live within a particular historical context. We all know the Risen Lord within such a context. Our reading of scripture and our living of the Christian life will therefore be flavoured by the historical context in which we live. We must theologise also in that context. But there can also be a contextual theology which so focusses on the hopes and fears of men that it ends up with using God to achieve ends which they have already in fact, even if subconsciously, chosen for themselves. It reminds me of a legal adviser I had once who whenever I went to seek his advice began our discussion by saying, "Tell me, what do you want to do". By the end of the interview he had always found a legal way of doing it! Thus when you start theologising from within the context, and not beginning with God, you are almost certain to end up by doing what you want to do. The theology of the divine right of Kings which was needed to create social stability in troubled times was this kind of contextual theology. The theology of the rich man in his castle and the poor man at his gate is a contextual theology to perpetuate the wealth and power of the aristocracy.

The theology of Apartheid, which thank God no longer has any credibility, was a perfect example of a contextual theology. It evolved in the context of a white minority seeking to find divine sanction for its survival on a black continent. It may be a theology of survival but it is not the gospel of salvation. It had some positive features but became a tool for oppression. The theology of liberation and black power are in the same category forged in the context of a disenfranchised and deprived black majority seeking divine sanction for black freedom and majority rule. There are positive features in liberation theology but in the final analysis it ends up simply as an expression of one human power which replaces another. It may be called a theology of liberation but it is not a Gospel of liberation. The Gospel is for all men good news.

The theologies of Apartheid and Liberation are essentially two sides of the same coin. The common factor in a theology of Apartheid and of Liberation is essentially that they grow out of fear of oppression in the future on the one hand, and experience of oppression in the present on the other. Therefore what is "Gospel" to one is doom to another in human terms. This is so because both these theologies really come out of a struggle for political power. One or other could produce better results in the end for the majority of the people, but neither will ever be Gospel. Neither is the Gospel. There is salvation in neither. Gospel is for all who will repent and believe in Jesus Christ. It does not depend on white rule and it does not depend on black rule, but on Jesus' rule. It is the good news of the Kingdom.

It is instructive to see how the Gospel deals with men who have clearly opposed hopes and aspirations. We see the germ of it in Paul's letters. Writing to Philemon Paul tells him he is to receive his slave Onesimus back "No longer as a slave but more than a slave, as a beloved brother, especially to me but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord". (Philemon v 16). This change of both slave and master into brothers is not only "in the Lord" in an ideal sense, but has really happened in Jesus who is the first born among many brothers. My brother really is my brother. He has claims on me that a brother has, not only because in Christ the distinctions created by men have been hacked away but because we belong to the same household and are owned by the same Holy Spirit.

If the Church is not producing this brother to brother relationship and caring it fails to witness to the Kingdom of God. Unless this is happening, nothing Christian is happening. No amount of phrenetic activity will make up for that deficiency, nor does God allow us to choose our brothers, whether these are among the disenfranchised poor and black or Cabinet ministers. My beloved brethren that this has not been seen to be so, and is not so, is evident, because the suffering of black people and the injustice of our society, could not now exist if Christians had been Christian. Yes, but the Church in such a situation is more evidently under God's judgement than the State because every congregation, every house church and prayer group, every family, every individual exists to be a means by which God wants his healing love to be expressed. God has moreover given us the Holy Spirit to enable us to do these things. My brethren do we see this happening? If not, what are we doing to create that trust in God, ripeness in faith and love that produces a Christian fellowship in every place that accomplishes these things? How often I would prefer silence as the Church's spokesman in the face of man's inhumanity to man because I do not see such a Church, while I seem to say that I expect Governments to produce such a society.

“NOT SIMPLY CHANGE BUT REDEMPTION”

One of the strange features of the Ecumenical scene is that although the Ecumenical Movement of modern times grew out of the great missionary endeavours of the 19th and early 20th centuries, the movement has been able to awaken so little interest in Evangelism. When I myself was General Secretary of the S.A. Council of Churches the Department of Mission and Evangelism showed hardly a flicker of life. I do not believe the situation is other than this even now. This is a symptom of a disease that afflicts much of the Church. It may well be a reason why we do not have a Church that can respond effectively out of the Gospel to the crisis of our time, because effective Evangelism, followed by discipleship, brings men to that place where God is able to deal with their sin and hold them there. “He has delivered us from the dominion of darkness and transfer us to the Kingdom of his dear Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins”. (Colossians 1 : 13-14). Until we have a people who can speak about the living Christ whom they know, we cannot be salt in society because we will not be salt in the Church. It is much easier to think that if only we work for justice and teach Christianity in contemporary language men will respond to God. They will not.

This will not work because it almost certainly means we do not take God seriously. Let us put it another way. We need to take human sin seriously because God took it seriously, so seriously indeed that he sent the Son to live and die for us not simply to identify with us, not simply as an example, not to be the subject for teaching programmes, not to provide us with ethical principles, not simply to deal with social disorders which are the results of sin, but in order to deal with Sin itself. In other words, he sent the Son to redeem mankind from sin’s control and power. There is a struggle of cosmic dimensions between the Lord and the Prince of this world. When we change situations and structures of society for the better we do good, but it is not good enough. We will then only change the shape that sin takes, but it will remain as active and powerful as ever. Until we take sin seriously and are the agents of God’s redeeming grace among his people, we say in effect “Jesus did not need to die”. “We always had the wisdom and the will to do what was needed to improve things”. The fact is that unless the wounds of sin in men are cauterized by the power of the Gospel the wounds will continue to suppurate. We are too easily fooled into thinking that when we have dealt with the symptoms of evil in a corrupt, banal, and unjust society, we have got to the root of the matter. The real question is “Do we share in the victory of the Son of Man over the prince of this world and draw men from the dominion of darkness into the Kingdom of the Lamb of God by whom sin is dealt with and the world healed?” Do we moreover so believe in the God who raises the dead, gives life to the impotent, heals shrunken spirits and releases the guilt-laden and the fearful so that we see him doing these things now? In this warfare we are called to live by faith. It has nothing to do with the silly labels we stick on one another and upon ourselves, like activist, pietist, Catholic, Charismatic, Ecumenical, nor with nicely balanced theological statements or contextual theology. These are signposts the devil uses to confuse and divide us and send us earnestly following false trails.

I suspect, in passing, that our understanding of prophecy is superficial for this very reason. We do not in fact grasp how radical is the Gospel itself. Prophecy is a word from God about his judgement or his mercy, or both. When I weigh up the mood of the people and the potential support for social change and advocate a particular policy, that may be an intelligent and reasonable political assessment and even a courageous utterance about what should be done. But it is not Prophecy. Prophecy is a word from God. It must then be a word demanding obedience and a faithful response from Christians. You cannot say “that is a word of prophecy” and also say “but Christians will differ about that matter and properly so”. Prophecy demands a godly response from us. It is not a way of adding a divine authority to a man’s opinions. It is good moreover to remember that in Scripture words of prophecy are more often than not words of encouragement and expressions of God’s gracious love towards his people.

Jesus cleansed the Temple in Jerusalem as a sign of His Kingdom in an Israel which had failed to respond to the love and truth of God with his love and truth for Israel’s neighbours. Combined with the destruction of a fruitless fig tree this was an acted Prophecy. The temple was doomed. The Israel which did not manifest the loving and saving Righteousness of God had become a den of robbers. “It is not written”, he said quoting Isaiah 56 : 7, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations’”. He did not only mean that he wanted an integrated non-racial Church but also had in mind “the foreigners who join themselves to the Lord to minister to him, to love the Name of the Lord, and to be his servants”. (Isaiah 56 : 6). These he said “I will bring to my holy mountain and make them joyful in my house of prayer”. (Isaiah 56 : 7). If we fail to bring God’s foreigners - the alienated - unbelievers - idolators - to share in the household of faith we rob the Lord of his treasures and are unfaithful stewards. If we do not evangelise we rob God of his people. I do not believe he condones that.

UNITY AND GOD’S RIGHTEOUSNESS

It is not easy to see how we will work through the barriers of our human righteousnesses which have caused and sustained schisms in the body of Christ. One cannot but be thankful to God for those who have slogged away at Church Unity Commission meetings and struggled to find the way to give expression to the unity God has already given us in Jesus Christ. At the same time I am surprised at the patience of God. We are already formally one in baptism, but we are also formally divided by the Lambeth Quadrilateral and a variety of confessions, and, as far as our Roman Catholic brethren are concerned by, for example, the nature of authority in the Church. And yet the great Apostle lays it down the line for us when he says in writing to the Philippian Church, “But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as refuse, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own, but that which

is through faith in Christ, that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, (Phil. 3 : 7-11). The gain he was speaking about here refers to Paul's Jewish righteousness. He was zealous for what made an adequate acceptable Israelite. I do not think this kind of righteousness is in principle other than our decisions about authority, or our Confessions and even our Lambeth Quadrilateral. These are our conditions for our being the true Church of God: Truly Israel. We are convinced we cannot do without them. Paul says, on the other hand, whatever gain he had in his Israelite tradition, he has thrown away. It is trash compared to God's righteousness through faith in Jesus Christ. He hammers this point home saying, "I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Jesus Christ as Lord". The whole point of this passage is that we have no righteousness of our own. But we become acceptable - adequate, namely the righteousness from God as we are found in Christ. Nothing - no human concepts of adequacy will do. There is indeed no other way of knowing God apart from confessing we have absolutely no righteousness of our own apart from Jesus Christ the Lord. This refers not only to individual Christians but surely also to the Church. How do you separate them? And all this must be placed squarely in the context of "sharing in his sufferings and becoming like him in his death". It is only then that "we know him and the power of his resurrection". And in God's Name it is surely resurrection life we need now if we are to be any use in God's world as his means for reconciling men to himself and to one another. Church unity conversations are as often as not occasions when we fight long drawn-out battles with one another to preserve our lives as Churches and to hold to our concepts of righteousness which are so unlike the righteousness seen on Calvary. This is all very uncomfortable, and more especially when we know the Son of God told us you cannot put new wine into old wineskins without bursting them wide open. And he is the source of the new wine which will need new wineskins. It is all very uncomfortable because we find it so hard to die and trust God to give us the only righteousness worth having, which is his own. And with it the Church structures he knows we need.

Or do we suffer from a half-spoken fear which is equally debilitating, namely, that when we find ourselves in one another's company we will discover that the other is as little found in Christ as we are ourselves? Will we then after all simply be a larger tasteless pie?

CHURCH AND STATE

How do we respond then to the leadership of our own local Ecumenical Council? The South African Council of Churches has stood for necessary change with notable courage and determination. It has refused to be cowed by threatening speeches from Government spokesmen. It has striven to discern what obedience to God means here and now. It has shown a deep responsibility for detainees and their families and for the disenfranchised. We do as a Church family support the Council in the absolute necessity for radical social change. We must moreover ask for discernment to see through the smoke screens of fear and self-interest by which men seek to sustain the status quo. We do also give Bishop Desmond Tutu the warm assurance of the support of our constant prayers for him and of our love towards him.

We are at one with the S.A.C.C.'s conviction that substantial social change is urgently needed because God wants a just and peaceful society. We must face the fact, however, that it is more difficult to say which method we should espouse as most likely to reach the target we believe is God's will for us.

In 1974 the National Conference of the S.A.C.C. passed a resolution encouraging selective conscientious objection. At its most recent National Conference methods of non-co-operation with the State were advocated to achieve change. A serious study of boycotts and investments policies has been made and member Churches requested to consider advising their brethren abroad to quench the flow of capital to South Africa. The C.P.S.A. has not thus far endorsed any of these positions. In this it has, I believe, acted properly. I myself have made it clear, moreover, on more than one occasion that I believed the denial of justice and freedom to disenfranchised people in South Africa was so gross as to make the South African way of life indefensible. Indefensible means a cause you cannot defend. What all these statements have in common is that they are a political response to what seems to many an unbearable political situation. Made within a State threatened from outside, and in some respects from within, they could, I suppose be thought to endanger the safety of the State instead of being seen as urgent pleas for change before it is too late. If punitive steps had been taken by the State in response to these decisions certain Christians would presumably have been prosecuted. It would be difficult indeed to determine at what point this could then have been described as persecution of the Church. It is not in fact only Christians who hold views like these. I am expressing myself sharply in this way simply to make the point that the Church as such is not committed to particular political methods of social change other than the Gospel and the subversive effects of men who love one another, make sacrifices for each other and share what they have with one another. But on the other hand we are to give our brothers who suffer for what they believe is right loving and prayerful support even when we may not be able to identify ourselves with the means they use to produce change.

If the only way left to us in Southern Africa is to try to solve our problems by boycotts and/or military strength, whether the latter is Government force or anti-Government power, it means inescapably that Christians have failed to be Christian. We have not given that dimension of life to South Africa which can and should heal it. What the Church needs then is penitence and the dynamic of God's love. But some will say they find themselves so pressed by the apparent impossibility of securing the removal of an oppressive yoke by the way of love and truth in Christ that they believe they can only take the awesome decision to choose the way of the Zealots versus Imperial Rome.

Others may feel for the same reason that they cannot take up arms to defend the Republic. Others again will be convinced that failure to defend the Republic would have more serious consequences for us all or that further efforts must be made to reach a negotiated settlement. We must, I believe, be prepared to recognise all such Christians as brothers in Christ who before God have striven to act in obedience to him but have assessed the political possibilities in ways we do not. But by the same token if Christians make choices of this kind they must not be surprised if brother Christians differ about the kind of power which they believe should be used to secure change. Here is room for a diversity of views as men and women struggle to bear witness to the Kingdom of God. It would be a grave error to try to force upon the Church a new dogma that a particular political policy is the only form of political righteousness. For example, distinguished Black Anglican leaders differ widely in their assessment of how best to exercise political power. But even if they were to agree it would be wrong to try to hand to them, or anyone else the monolithic support of the Church. To do so would be to give the impress of an absolute quality to political policies which can never possess such finality. It would mean moreover that we have turned from the Gospel of Grace to law and a religious ideology claiming absolute obedience. We will in fact have fallen from grace.

But having said all this it must also be said that it is the inescapable responsibility of a Government to produce a society that is evidently worth defending. Every state must take steps to protect itself and its citizens, but when security measures like detention without trial, leading from time to time to deaths without trial, and banning are used to uphold manifest injustice it looks grotesquely inhuman.

If we really are seeking a just and peaceful future for South Africa we need to take seriously the pain and anger white policies have caused, and indeed continue to cause, by population removals and many hurtful restrictions and injustices. In God's Name we must stop doing what causes injury to our brothers' bodies and spirits, and then meet as equals before Him to work out a viable future together.

CONCLUSION

Do not let us be burdened by what we see around us or by how we may look to men. We are not to be conformed to this world. The fact is that if we look at the world from where we so often unconsciously derive our criteria for living, we see a grievously disordered thing.

But the world into which Jesus came was not other than the world we know. He is still with us in it and he has given us the means through his gracious Holy Spirit to heal what is broken and overcome what is in rebellion to him. But he cannot fill with his own Spirit hearts and minds that are imprisoned by Mammon, by resentment, or wholly engrossed with their own solutions to the issues we must deal with in the Church and in the world and at this Synod.

To know the perfect will of God requires the surrender of our personal and collective agenda, to allow him to reframe them or remove them. We need to put back in his hands those things we are so cock sure about and allow him to tear them up or redraft them in his wisdom. It requires an unconditional willingness to hear what is God's truth in words spoken by others at the Synod whatever our preconceived ideas may have been. This presenting of ourselves as a living sacrifice to God allows him to smooth out of our minds and spirits the too solid stereotypes we have acquired, the things we feel defensive about and those things we have been known to take a stand on and fear loss of respect and identity if we have to admit we have been mistaken. It is of course "being found in Christ, not having a righteousness of our own but that which is through faith in Christ". Then we are free to give expression to the righteousness which is the mind of Christ. I pray God he will deliver us from the idolatry of our own good causes and keep us free to respond to the mind of Christ in the Holy Spirit. The Synod is a coming together to find what is the mind of the unique and only Saviour of the World, the Lord, the Giver of Life, Jesus Christ. We rejoice in the faith that "His divine power has granted us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own Glory" (1 Peter 1 : 3). We rise up then and labour in his risen power. Maranatha, come Lord Jesus.



FROM THE ACTS AND RESOLUTIONS OF SYNOD

CHRISTIAN INITIATION

Agendum 9.

That this Synod:

- (1) receives the digest of the Report of the Archbishop of Cape Town's 1976 Commission on Christian Initiation "Baptism and Confirmation" 1978;
- (2) recognises that the Sacrament of Christian Initiation is a single sacrament: Baptism with water and the Holy Spirit in the name of the Holy Trinity, and that this Baptism is liturgically complete in itself whether the rite is enriched by chrismation and/or laying on of hands, consignation, and the giving of the Chrysom robe and the lighted candeles, or not;
- (3) recognises that persons who have been baptised and who stand by their baptismal promises should be admitted to Holy Communion.

Adults seeking baptism and those baptised earlier in life and seeking admission to Communion should undergo sufficient preparation for them to be able to make or renew the baptismal promises and share meaningfully in the worship of the Church.

Baptised children whom the parents and the Parish Priest believe to be of appropriate age and adequately prepared to share in the worship of the Church should be admitted to Holy Communion.

A certificate of Admission to Holy Communion should be issued; and the bishop informed of the name and age of the person.

- (4) resolves that the practice of episcopal Confirmation shall continue in the Church of this Province and that when baptised persons show adult responsibility and wish to be commissioned and confirmed for their task of being Christians in society they should, after due preparation, openly express their commitment to Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, with the re-affirmation of their Baptismal Vows, in the presence of the Bishop who should then confirm them;
- (5) accepts as an interim guideline the Commission's essay in the digest section 6 (f) on the relationship between the Sacrament of Baptism and the experience of the Holy Spirit and affirms that, though the Sacrament of Baptism and the experience of the Holy Spirit may not occur at the same time in a person's life, they are inextricably linked together in his initiation into life in Christ;
- (6) endorses the unbroken tradition of the Church that the sacrament of Baptism must not be repeated;
- (7) approves and adopts the following regulations:

(i) Instruction of Adult Candidates for Baptism and Confirmation

- (a) It shall be the duty of the Priest to ensure that all adult candidates for Baptism receive such form of instruction in the principles of the Christian faith as has been approved by the Bishop of the Diocese, and are challenged to commit themselves to Christ.
- (b) It shall be the duty of the Priest to notify the Bishop of their names before the baptism takes place, in places where this is possible, and in any case, not later than fourteen days after the baptism.
- (c) It shall be the duty of the Priest to require of adults who are to be baptised to seek Confirmation at the hands of the Bishop as soon as conveniently may be. They shall be prepared in terms of Canon 23, Section 3(f), according to the forms approved by the Bishop of the Diocese.

(ii) Infant Baptism for Children of Believers

The sacrament of Christian Initiation may be administered to infants of believing parents and those in the care of believing guardians.

(iii) Deferment of Infant Baptism

If there is any serious doubt that the child will be brought up as a practising Christian, the Sacrament shall be deferred until either the doubt is removed or the child is able to make his own promises.

(iv) Sponsors and Witnesses

- (a) The sponsors of the baptism of an infant are normally the parents or guardians who may, if they so desire, invite Christian friends to be co-sponsors with them.

- (b) At every baptism, other than clinical baptism, the parish community shall be assembled for worship. In cases of emergency or inaccessibility, at least one churchwarden or chapelwarden or his nominee should be present.
- (c) If a child of non-believing parents is converted to the Christian faith, and his parents give their consent for his baptism, he may be baptised provided that the Priest and the Parish Council are able to ensure that the intentions of Sections (ii) and (iii) above have been met by the appointment of sponsors acceptable both to the parents and to themselves.
- (v) Instruction of Parents and Congregations
 - (a) When infants or young children are baptised, it shall be the duty of the Priest to ensure that the parents or those who are responsible for the upbringing of the child receive such instruction in the Christian faith as will enable them to renew their own commitment to Christ and to promote the nurture and growth in the fellowship of the Church of the child or children in their care.
 - (b) The Priest must ensure that congregations as well as parents are instructed in the meaning and implications of Baptism.
- (vi) The Occasion for the Administration of the
 - (a) Sacrament and the Baptismal Formula

The proper occasion for the administration of the sacrament of Christian Initiation is the Eucharist. It may, however, be administered at another main service of the Church or when strictly necessary on some other occasion.
 - (b) In emergency it may be administered by any baptised person using water in the name of the Holy Trinity, and where possible with another Christian person present.
- (vii) Respect for Pastoral Responsibility

A priest may not baptise an infant one or both of whose parents are not his pastoral responsibility, or an adult who is not his pastoral responsibility without the knowledge and consent of the priest whose responsibility they are.
- (viii) The Keeping of Records

All baptisms and confirmations are to be recorded in the parish register. Confirmations are to be recorded in the Bishop's Confirmation Register.
- (8) commits to the educational authorities of the Church of the Province of South Africa and equivalent diocesan bodies the recommendations of the Commission with regard to a "regular programme of Christian education designed to equip all those who have been baptised to play their part as members of the Body of Christ in the mission of the Church" for further study and application;
- (9) requests Episcopal Synod to exercise control over the implementation of these resolutions and to draw up the following services based upon them:
 - (i) Baptism - for use either in the context of the Eucharist or apart from it when necessary and providing for both the baptism of infants and adults.
 - (ii) Admission to Holy Communion
 - (iii) Admission of Persons baptised in other Churches into membership of the C.P.S.A.
 - (iv) Confirmation
 - (v) Other services of Commitment.
- (10) determines that this Resolution shall not take effect until the Synod of Bishops shall have drawn up Pastoral Guidelines and provided Services listed in Section (9) above, and requests the Synod of Bishops to set in motion machinery for the preparation of a new Catechism for the Christian instruction and preparation mentioned in sections (3), (7) and (9) above.

CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTION

That this Synod:

while regretting the circumstances which make military service necessary

(1) Notes

- Agenda 11.*
- (a) that some people cannot render any form of combatant military service with a good conscience.
 - (b) that some people cannot render any form of military service with a good conscience.
 - (c) that in April 1977, the Synod of Bishops of the C.P.S.A. supported a statement of the South African Catholic Bishops' Conference which urged the State "to make provision for alternative forms of non-military service as is done in other parts of the world."
 - (d) that the Methodist Church of Southern Africa, the Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa, and the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa, have all urged the State to provide conscientious objectors with non-military forms of national service.
 - (e) That in May 1979, the Synod of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Durban requested the South African Catholic Bishops' Conference to establish a committee on Military Service.

(2) Requests

- (a) the Minister of Defence of the Republic of South Africa to create a committee (or some other appropriate procedure) that will enable the Department of Defence and the Churches to discuss specific proposals and problems which are raised
 - (i) by the request for noncombatant forms of military service that a conscientious noncombatant can render with a good conscience and
 - (ii) by the request for nonmilitary forms of national service that a conscientious nonmilitarist can render with a good conscience.
- (b) the Synod of Bishops of the C.P.S.A. to co-operate with any Committee on Military Service which may be established by the South African Catholic Bishops' Conference.

(3) Commends to the prayers and pastoral care of the Church

- (a) those men of whatsoever denomination who, for conscience sake are paying the penalty for non-compliance with the military duties imposed on them by the State, and
- (b) the families of the above men.

CHURCH OF THE PROVINCE OF SOUTHERN AFRICA

Amendment to the Constitution and Canons

The Principles

Whereas In 1870 the Diocese of Cape Town, of Grahamstown, of Maritzburg (embracing the Diocese of Natal), of St Helena and of the Orange Free State, which originally were comprehended in one Diocese of Cape Town, and were constituted an Ecclesiastical Province, of which Cape Town is the Metropolitan See:

And Whereas It was then resolved that the entire Church comprising the five aforesaid Dioceses should be called the Church of the Province of South Africa and such name was embodied in the constitution of the said Church:

And Whereas Over the past one hundred and nine years the said Church of the Province of South Africa has developed, expanded and been subdivided so that there are now seventeen Dioceses, being the Diocese of Cape Town, Grahamstown, Maritzburg, or Natal, St Helena, Bloemfontein, Zululand, St John's, Pretoria, Lebombo, George, Kimberley and Kuruman, Johannesburg, Damaraland, Lesotho, Swaziland, Port Elizabeth, and Niassa, in all extending beyond the area of jurisdiction of the Republic of South Africa, so that the name of the said Church does not correctly reflect the position:

And Whereas In Accordance with a resolution of the Special Meeting of Provincial Standing Committee in April 1978 in terms of Canon 49 Section 2, it is desirable to amend the name of the Church of the Province of South Africa by deleting the word "South" and substituting therefor the word "Southern".

Reformandum

Be it enacted that:

The name "The Church of the Province of South Africa" be and it is hereby amended by the deletion therein of the word "SOUTH" wherever it appears in the Constitution and Canons of the Church, and the substitution therefor of the word "SOUTHERN".

RIGHT TO ASSEMBLE AND PERMITS

Agendum 10.

Whereas this Synod:

- (1) believes that the free assembly of members of the Church in its worship, ministry and councils, is a right and not a concession in a Christian country and (a) affirms that the Church cannot participate in or subject itself to a system of racial discrimination which requires the permission of the secular authorities in the ordering of its life and mission:

This Synod calls upon the Bishops of the Church of the Province of South Africa

- (a) to investigate in their own diocese which aspects of the life of the Church are affected, in a way which is theologically unacceptable, by the legal requirement to obtain permits
- (b) in co-operation, if possible, with leaders of other Churches, to initiate negotiations with the Minister of Co-operation and Development, with the aim of having repealed or amended those laws which require the obtaining of permits in those areas of the Church's life and work, which are affected by the present legal requirements to obtain such permits.
- (c) should such negotiations fail of their purpose, to consider whether the right course is not to urge the administrative bodies, councils and synods of their respective dioceses to maintain the integrity of Christian witness by refraining, where practicable, to apply for such permits, and
- (d) to report back to the Provincial Standing Committee on the implementation of this resolution.

(Comment: It was the Archbishop's spontaneous comment on this Resolution which caused such consternation and ill-informed controversy in the Press and in the Pew. Below is a transcript of what the Archbishop said.)

Comment by the Archbishop

I am constantly asked by the Church - both Province and Diocese - to approach the Government for permission to do a variety of things.

It is a role I dislike.

I believe, however, that if we take seriously what we have said in Resolution 58 on refraining to ask for permits from the Government, it must cause serious disruption to the life of the Church as it is presently organised. This need not disturb us too much because we should not simply seek to preserve our institutional life as a Church, but to be the Body of Christ, witnessing to His Divine life among us by His Holy Spirit.

I am prepared to take the consequences of the risks we may have to take in this, even if it means radical alterations in the life of the institutional Church. In the light of what you have said in Synod of the situation we find ourselves in, in our land, I ask whether you are prepared for the radical changes that will follow the Church's refusal "to subject itself to a system of racial discrimination which requires the permission of the secular authorities in the ordering of its life and mission."

I hope you have realized the significance of what you have resolved. I am prepared for the institutional Church to be radically reshaped by our response to God in this situation. Are you?

THE ORDER OF ETHIOPIA

Agendum 12

JAMES MATA DWANE, Priest, 1916

James Dwane was born in 1848. His parents were not Christians. He was brought up in a home of a Wesleyan missionary. It is said that, when he first heard the story of Christ's death on the Cross, he was moved to tears and remained inconsolable for several days. He entered the Wesleyan ministry, and became the first black man to be promoted to the post of Superintendent. He was convinced that education was the key to the advancement of his people and visited England to find the money for a trade school. On his return he was disappointed when the authorities of the Church opposed his plans.

He therefore left the Wesleyans and joined the black American Methodist Episcopal Church, which made him a bishop and put him in charge of all their work in South Africa. But still he could not find peace of mind. His own studies convinced him that he was a bishop only in name, since the consecration he had received was not into the historic succession of the episcopate. He therefore submitted himself in 1900 to the Archbishop of Cape Town, resigned his previous ministry, and meekly accepted ordination as a deacon according to the Anglican rite. We can only admire the humble faith of a man who, at the age of 52, could abdicate his high position and start over again by learning his catechism as any child. He formed his previous followers into the Order of Ethiopia, of which he became the first Provincial. Despite the great honour in which he was held, he

never forgot the humble obedience of Christ and went barefoot to the day of his death, lest his high position might separate him from the least of his brethren.

A NEW CANON - CANON 51

Agendum 12

Reformandum

Be it enacted that:

A new Canon 51 be added as follows:-

CANON 51 of the ORDER OF ETHIOPIA

1 The Bishop for the Order

- (a) There shall be a bishop for the Order, who is and shall be recognised as a bishop of this Province.
- (b) He shall be elected in accordance with the provisions of Canon 3 in so far as they may be applicable, and for this purpose only, "Diocesan Synod" shall be deemed to include the Conference of the Order, a "Diocese" to include the Bishop for the Order, and a Pastoral Charge to include any mission duly established by the Order wherever it may be situated.
- (c) The confirmation, consecration, collation and resignation of a Bishop of the Order, shall be governed, mutatis mutandis, by Canons 6, 7 and 13.

2 The Bishop of the Order shall:

- (a) Possess the canonical right of veto upon all resolutions of the Conference and the Chapter of the Order, subject, mutatis mutandis, to Canon 8.
- (b) Reside in such place as he may determine, provided that a mission of the Order has been established there, subject in all other respects to Canon 10.
- (c) Obtain the Oath of Canonical Obedience to the Bishop of the Diocese and the declarations, in respect of the clergy of the Order, as provided in Canon 15 Section 2.
- (d) Be the Provincial of the Order.
- (e) Be entitled to attend, speak and vote in Episcopal Synod, Provincial Synod and Provincial Standing Committee, save that he shall not be entitled to vote on financial matters.
- (f) Be consecrated or collated by the metropolitan to exercise episcopal and pastoral oversight of the members of the Order, and shall do so in each Diocese where the Order is established in terms of the license issued to him by the Diocesan Bishop.
- (g) Have the right to be present and to speak (but not to vote) at synods of any diocese in which he has been licensed.
- (h) Be able to exercise his episcopal ministry within the Church generally upon invitation by any Diocesan Bishop.

3 The Order of Ethiopia is an integral part of the Church of the Province of South Africa. It shall be represented at Provincial Synod by the Bishop for the Order and by clerical and lay representatives elected in such a manner and according to such rules as the Conference of the Order may determine in terms of Canon 1 Section 2.

4 The Order shall be represented at Provincial Standing Committee by the Bishop for the Order, and by one clerical and one lay representative duly elected at the Conference of the Order by their respective orders.

5 The provisions of Canons 1 and 42 shall, mutatis mutandis, apply to the representatives of the Order at Provincial Synod and Provincial Standing Committee. For the purposes of these Canons only, the Conference of the Order shall be deemed to be a 'diocesan synod' and the sum of all the missions of the Order shall be deemed to be a 'diocese'.

6 Clergy of the Order licensed in a diocese shall be summoned to the Diocesan Synod. The Order shall be represented at the Synod of any diocese where missions of the Order have been established by such a number of lay representatives as that diocese shall determine.

7 Members of the Order summoned and elected to Provincial and Diocesan Synods and Provincial

- Standing Committee, shall have no vote on financial matters and shall not be entitled to reimbursement of travelling and other expenses.
- 8 The Metropolitan shall have full power and authority to visit officially any missions of the Order in terms of Canon 2 Section 1(e).
 - 9 Every diocese in which the Order has an established mission, shall be represented at the Chapter of the Order, as the Conference may determine from time to time. The Synod Bishops shall be entitled to such representation on the Chapter of the Order as the Synod deems fit. These representatives shall have no vote on financial matters.
 - 10 The Conference of the Order shall frame and from time to time amend the Constitution of the Order, so that it shall conform in all respects to the provision of these Canons. Amendments to the Constitution of the Order shall not be in force until they have been confirmed by Episcopal Synod.
 - 11 The decisions of the Chapter and the Conference shall be subject to review by Provincial Synod.
 - 12 The Provincial shall nominate to the Diocesan Bishop any clergyman whom he wishes to serve in that diocese. After the Diocesan Bishop has licensed him, the Provincial or his deputy may institute him to the cure of souls.
 - 13 The Provincial shall:
 - (a) Subject to the Constitution and Canons ordain candidates to holy orders, either personally or through letters dimissory.
 - (b) Licence lay ministers of the Order in the terms of Canon 19.
 - (c) Consult with the diocesan bishop in respect of matters of discipline over persons and matters which affect the Diocese and the Order.
 - (d) Exercise discipline over persons and matters which directly affect the life of the Order.
 - 14
 - (a) The Order shall begin new work in any area only with the consent of the Diocesan Bishop.
 - (b) All difficulties arising from close proximity of parishes within a Diocese and missions of the Order shall be determined by the Diocesan Bishop, after consultation with the Provincial of the Order.
 - 15 All members of the Order shall be eligible for election to provincial and diocesan offices.
 - 16 The Order and each individual member shall be bound by the Constitution and Canons, except so far as the Provincial Synod may determine otherwise.

The provisions of Rule 3 of the Constitution of the Order in respect of Quarterly meetings of Mission districts and monthly meetings of Missions and the appointment of Church Officers shall be held to fulfil the purposes envisaged in Canons 5, 14, 22, 26, 27, 28 and 29.
 - 17 Discipline shall be exercised in the Order as provided for in the Book of Common Prayer, in the Constitution and Canons of the Province (as provided in 16 above), the Constitution of the Order, and in the Acts and Resolutions of Provincial and Diocesan Synods, in so far as they may be applicable.
 - 18 Membership of the Order is open to all members of the Church.
 - 19 All Churches of the Order shall be open to all people without respect of person.
 - 20 Those who move from a mission of the Order to a parish within a Diocese or vice versa shall be provided with necessary letters of recommendation.
 - 21 If a member of the Order relinquishes his membership thereof, and wishes to join a parish, he shall be given letters of recommendation from the Provincial or his deputy. No member of a Diocese may be received into the Order without letters of recommendation from the Diocesan Bishop or his deputy.
 - 22 All property of the Order shall be vested in the Provincial Trustees. The Trustees of the Order who shall be appointed by the Conference according to such rules as the Conference shall determine, shall have the powers of a Diocesan Trust's Board as provided in Canon 41. The Provincial, if not a Trustee, shall have an advisory voice in the deliberations of the Trustees.
 - 23 The Provincial may invite the Archdeacon to visit Missions of the Order on his behalf.
 - 24 All matters not provided for herein shall be determined by the Synod of Bishops who shall decide the date on which this Canon shall come into effect and the compact of 1900 repealed.

(COMMENT: It remains to be seen whether the Order of Ethiopia will agree to this proposed Canon with its inhibiting restrictions limiting the Orders' Bishop.)

CHURCH UNITY COMMISSION DRAFT COVENANT

Agendum 7(g)

That this Synod:

- (1) receives the Draft of the Proposed Covenant submitted by the Church Unity Commission; and
- (2) (a) takes note of the statement made by the Synod of Bishops at its April 1979 session in answer to a question put by the C.U.C., viz:

Question: The C.U.C. want to know if the laying on of hands as a sign of mutual recognition of Ministries at the Service which would mark the acceptance of the Covenant is a way of ordaining Ministers, (e.g. Methodist Ministers), and not merely recognising them?

Therefore:

- (a) Does the C.P.S.A. insist on the mutual laying on of hands as a condition of mutual recognition of ministries and therefore that Bishops are required to be present at every service of recognition and reconciliation?
- (b) Does the C.P.S.A. see this in any way as ordination?

Answer: The Bishops wish to state their position about mutual recognition of Ministries as clearly as possible so as to avoid misunderstanding.

Any service of Recognition of Ministries will fail its purpose if it does not make clear to everyone that the Ordained Ministry of each participating Church is recognized and accepted in the fullest sense, leaving no doubt in anyone's mind.

The Ministers officiating in those Services should, therefore, be those through whom authority is normally given in each participating Church. In the C.P.S.A., that Minister is the Bishop.

The appropriate form of recognition to be used in the Services would, in the Bishops' opinion, be the Biblical and traditional laying on of hands with prayer. The prayer would include thanksgiving for past ministry and petition that God would give each of us whatever we need for the fulfilment of our ministry in the wider Church.

As well as ensuring recognition by all participating Churches, mutual laying on of hands would indicate an appropriate mutual submission to one another, the granting and accepting of a wider ministry in each other's Churches, and a renewed empowering for God's work.

No element in the Service of Recognition should be regarded as a repudiation of any existing ministry of word or Sacraments.

- (b) regrets that this theological standpoint is not reflected in the 2nd Draft Covenant.
 - (c) believes that the second Draft Covenant conflicts with the view of episcopacy held not only by the Anglican Church but also by the Roman Catholic Church with whom the C.P.S.A. is also seeking unity.
 - (d) and therefore finds itself unable to accept the 2nd Draft Covenant in its present form.
- (3) requests the C.U.C. to nominate a delegation from the participating Churches to meet with representatives of the Synod of Bishops in order to give further consideration together to the meaning of episcopacy in the Scriptures and in the tradition of the Church and to seek together to discern what God may be saying to the Church and to seek together to discern what God may be saying to the Church about it today.
 - (4) authorises the Synod of Bishops, should they be satisfied with the outcome of the meeting, to refer a revised 2nd Draft Covenant to each Diocese for urgent careful study and discussion in preparation for a decision at the next session of Provincial Synod.

INITIATIVE TO DUTCH REFORMED CHURCHES

That this Synod:

calls upon members of the Church of the Province of South Africa

- (1) to seek opportunities, both corporately and individually, for fellowship and discussion with members of the Dutch Reformed Churches;
- (2) to pray for the guidance of the Holy spirit in working with them for the advancement of God's Kingdom in this part of His vineyard.

ORDINATION OF WOMEN

That this Synod:

- (i) Takes note of the Summary of the Report of the Provincial Commission on Patterns of Ministry and the Ordination of women to the Priesthood, and of developments in this regard in the Anglican Communion, as well as the Report of the Lambeth Conference and the Comments of the Southern African Theological Commission;
- (ii) Believes that it would nevertheless not be right at this time to proceed with the ordination of women to the priesthood or the episcopate in the Church of the Province of South Africa.
- (iii) Believes that it is theologically appropriate for women as well as men to be ordained to the diaconate;
- (iv) Requests the Synod of Bishops, if and when they believe that the time is right to do so, to call a further Commission at some future time to advise Provincial Synod about the theology and practical implications of the ordination of women to the priesthood and episcopate.

COMMENT: The controversial paragraph resolving that the ordination of women to the diaconate be now permitted in the Church of the Province of South Africa was lost and deleted as it did not achieve a $\frac{2}{3}$ majority.)

CONFIRMATION OF ALTERATIONS TO APPENDIX TO ACT V

That in terms of Article X of the Constitution this synod confirms the alterations to the Appendix to Act V adopted at the 1970 Session of Provincial Synod and printed on page 47 of the Acts and Resolutions of that Synod as follows:

“That a new Section C be added to read as follows -

The following alternatives to Tables III and IV on page XV are authorised by Provincial Synod for those who do not find the existing Tables helpful.

DAYS OF SELF-DENIAL

- 1 Good Friday (the most important)
- 2 The weekdays of Lent
- 3 Other Fridays of the year (except Christmas Day, the Fridays following Christmas, Easter, and Ascension day and public holidays falling on a Friday).

On these days Christian people join in remembering the suffering and death of Our Lord.

They may be observed in one or more of these ways -

- 1 By giving more time to prayer, Bible study, or spiritual reading.
- 2 By eating less food, or simpler food
- 3 By doing without some pleasure or luxury, and using the money saved to help other people.”

RENEWAL OF MOTION - WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

(Renewed in terms of Rule 30a iv(5) and 38a)

That this Synod

- (1) Believing
 - (a) that obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ commits us to ensuring that others are treated as we would wish to be treated;

- (b) that, while the Kingdom of God can never be accomplished by better laws and structures, it nevertheless flows from our life in Christ, to work for a human community which increasingly reflects Gospel values

Therefore

- (2)
 - (a) shares with the World Council of Churches in its desire to be used by God to eradicate the sins of exploitation and racism.
 - (b) expresses appreciation for the World Council of Churches' Programme to combat racism in so far as it is an expression of identification with those who are working for a more just social order.
 - (c) asserts that, in order to achieve their aims, there is not only one form of Christian obedience and therefore cannot commit the C.P.S.A. to identify with any Liberation Movement, Political Party or Government.
- (3) respects the fact that some Christians feel themselves called to be Pacifists, other to defend the Republic of South Africa in the Armed Forces, and others to leave its borders to take up arms to achieve what they believe will be a more just ordering of society.
- (4) Calls upon all the members of the C.P.S.A. -
 - (a) to confess our own failure to do enough to let God use us to cleanse our society of the sins of racism and exploitation;
 - (b) in the power of the Holy Spirit to combat all forms of the evil of racism;
 - (c) to give aid in prayer, pastoral care and material relief to those who are suffering as a result of their or their breadwinner's conscientious action for justice and peace in Southern Africa;
- (5) Urges all parishes in the C.P.S.A. to observe October 19, or the Sunday nearest it, as a Day of Prayer for political prisoners, detainees, and their families, and for the ministry of the Dependants' Conference of the South African Council of Churches.

(COMMENT: After a lengthy debate, it was moved and carried that the original Motion, by a vote of 78 in favour and 71 against, be postponed indefinitely and Synod proceed to the next business. It was subsequently revived by Bishop Bruce Evans with the consent of Synod and carried in the amended form as above, on the last day.

An objection to consideration was moved on the Motion resolving termination of the Church of the Province's membership of the World Council of Churches, and the objection was carried; the Synod proceeding immediately to the next item on the Agenda.)

★ ★ ★

A SUFFRAGAN'S IMPRESSIONS

To have been invited to share my impressions of Provincial Synod is daunting enough, but for a bishop who had already spent two weeks at Episcopal Synod and then Provincial Standing Committee, it isn't now, however tremendously important, particularly easy to recall with a huge enthusiasm the course of yet a third assembly!

As the days for Provincial Synod approached, we were all deeply and sensitively aware from our Agenda Books that many of the motions were of a controversial nature and contained explosive material which could so easily give birth to tension and unhappiness. This is, in fact, precisely what happened, though mercifully, at that early stage we could not have foreseen the actual measure of the difficulties.

THE ONES WE LEFT BEHIND

Some of the Clergy and many of the laity who were not attending Synod had been anxious to warn us all not to allow the Church to accept women priests; to be very careful to see that the sacrament of Confirmation was not eroded; to support with vigour, or to oppose with thunder the two motions on the World Council of Churches. Few of our 'advisers' knew very much about the heat that would be generated over the call to provide the Order of Ethiopia with its own bishop.

THE TORMENT OF THE EXPERIENCED!

The venerable and conservative fathers of Provincial Synod had done their homework, as always, carefully and by the time they reached Grahamstown it was evident that there was concern at the presence of a representative of the Division of Justice and Reconciliation who seemed anxious to load the revered Canons and Rules with an emotive vocabulary. The excitement and tension of Synod was heightened by the unexpected arrival of a tall good looking priest who, defying a banning order, presented himself like the ancient Eleazar Ben Yair. All in all it looked as though the mighty Supership might crack a few of her key plates on the long and stormy voyage to December 9th.

THE ARCHBISHOP'S CHARGE

The Synod Eucharist in Grahamstown Cathedral was a tribute to Anglican genius when it comes to ceremonial. The music under the direction of Jill Westcott was a huge credit to her hard work and co-operation of her diminished choir (the holidays had already begun). The Archbishop's Charge, I can joyously report, was a Word from the Lord. It revealed a deep sensitivity and there was no attempt to dodge the burning issues of our South African world. There are some turbulent Christians who for one reason or another reside within the protection of the sovereignty of other lands around our borders who are deeply critical of the leadership of our church. I find this sad and shamefully unwarranted. The Archbishop, a modern Ezekiel, rightly warned of the dangers of the worldly exchanging of one political dispensation for another. We Christians in South Africa ought to be using our energy to assist by grace, the promotion of The Kingdom. As a former Archbishop of Canterbury would have perhaps commented: "It is the blending of a painfully sensitivity with a heavenly serenity which is the mark of a true Christian; it helps to bring strength and healing to the lives of all those around us".

THE PATTERNS

We began each morning with a Eucharist. We met together on an 'L' shaped gallery with an altar on the right-angled turn. The gathering and dispersal was noisy and the gallery, when full, was stuffy even with the louvred windows open. After a day or two I began to suffer miserably I'm afraid from the wretchedness of self-consciousness. Self-consciousness is destructive of worship and it was clearly brought about by the difficulty of having to listen to large numbers of people comment on the reading for the day. Silence, or silent pauses after the readings in the midst of so much Synodical chit-chat would have been glorious. On one morning a kindly Dean drove me to the Cathedral for the Eucharist where there was a refreshing and gentle peace! The intercessions at Mass were often heavily loaded with pleadings to God to improve the lot of the oppressed and disadvantaged. No sincere Christian would argue with this. It was interesting that hardly once did I hear a prayer for a member of the Defence Force or the police. Whether the Defence Force or the police would be considered by some to be foe rather than friend is of little consequence. There is a Dominical command from the Lord to pray for those we don't like or those whom some believe are enemies by implication.

KIMBERLEY HALL

At Kimberley Hall we were magnificently looked after by a staff of multi-racial caterers and cooks, and a not so multi-racial group of waiters and cleaners. To my utter amazement a Black representative proposed a motion that the money collected for staff gratuities should only be given to the Black staff. To this little packet of blatant racism I responded personally by giving individual gifts to all who had helped me. In obedience to Synod I made a further contribution to the 'Blacks only Box'.

GLUTTONY PERCEIVED!

At Provincial Standing Committee the previous week, it had become apparent to many of us that there was, in fact, too much to eat! I had already begun to recuse myself from at least one meal per day. Rightly though hardly

'timeously' an intercession was offered by a member of the Division of Justice and Reconciliation at the Eucharist that the Lord might have mercy upon our over-indulgence. This was a noble prayer, but it managed to translate itself into a motion at Synod that we should, amongst other things, cut down on our eating! For the kitchen staff at this late hour the request was a nightmare and because of the unpreparedness there was a disastrous imbalance of protein and vitamins in our diet. R600 was saved for charity but the consequent publicity was hardly in tune with the Gospel precept that should have governed it.

THE BUSINESS

The debates were sometimes superb and sometimes turgid. The press has been criticised for its reporting. I believe the press has little to be ashamed of. In fact I thought the reporting was pretty accurate in the face of grave discourtesy and lack of concern. If we Christians want good reporting we ought to be showing much more concern for the media which produces it. The two motions on the World Council of Churches were thrown out on a technical and somewhat parliamentary device but were resurrected quickly to save what appeared to be a very dangerous division along racial lines. A motion calling upon the Church to defy the Permit system was badly and feebly prepared and, as the Archbishop was quick to point out, if carried to its logical conclusion will mean the dismantling of the institutional church as we know it.

I find it disturbing that so much of the world's jargon has made its sinister way into Synod. There was talk of violence (during meal times) being the only way left now to the oppressed. In spite of the fact that the white man in South Africa is ridiculously pampered and privileged, it becomes tedious to have to listen again and again and again to castigations against the white man in a church which has declared itself non-racial. Like English who at one time thought of all Australians as ex-convicts, so too it is dangerous to regard every white man as the imperialist perpetrator of a holocaust to come.

BACK HOME AGAIN

I have since prayed and agonised over our ability to think of and value each other at Synod. Other assemblies seem in the power of God's great Spirit to have generated far more fellowship and love than we Anglicans were able to experience at Synod. A Christian values any other man whatever his race or culture or character or indeed for that matter opinion as a Creature of God, made in God's own image with infinite worth in God's sight. These lessons have failed to have been learned in the corridors of national government. But there is no reason why the good lady from Soweto should feel any the less a human being on her return to her home, confident that she is infinitely precious in God's sight. There is no reason why the collapse of the C.U.C. report should spell the doom of ecumenical relations in the Church. Far from it. It will make us face more honestly the real divisions that tear us apart.

Perhaps we have become too obsessed with the so-called 'credibility' of the Church? When everything has been done to polish up the image, the Church remains an earthen vessel composed of sinful, blind, stupid, human beings with many a spot and wrinkle which will certainly persist this side of Armagedon. As Mother Therese of Calcutta has shown us all so clearly, the one thing that distinguishes this particular earthly organisation, this earthen vessel from all the other organisations upon earth, past, present or to come, is the fact that there is to be found within it a priceless treasure. God be praised that there are times when that jewel shines all the more brightly for the ugly inadequate casket in which it is displayed. It is the Gospel which is a treasure more precious than all the natural or legitimate aspirations of this life or the peoples of this world.

The Rt. Revd. T.S. Stange



A journalist on a Rotary bursary was recently reported as saying that no journalist or reporter can ever be objective in his writing. How true this appears to be after reading all the English newspapers' reports of Provincial Synod. Besides a number of inaccurate statements, subjective assessments and evaluations most assuredly predominated in many of the reports. Before I mislead the reader, it is best to give my frame of reference for assessing what happened at Synod.

The Church, to be strong, must be as involved in the struggle for justice-under-law as in theological reflection and acts of mercy. Christians need to be constantly reflecting the social commandments of God's Law so that, in the framework of the State apparatus, they will be able to carry forward the unending struggle for social justice effectively. God is against unjust laws as well as against unjust men, (Ps 94 v 20-23; Isaiah 10 v 1-4, and Amos 4 v 1,2). Righteousness and justice are very often used synonymously in Scripture. We may say that spiritual righteousness must not be divorced from earthly justice.

What, may then be said of Provincial Synod 1979?

We met in Grahamstown - a body of Christians drawn from all parts of Southern Africa. The two Dioceses of Lebombo and Niassa were unrepresented owing to lack of permission from their State to attend. Synod passed a motion of Greeting and appreciation to our absent brethren, yet no motion of censure of the government which

made their attendance impossible. Provincial Synod was characterised by its selective morality; its consistency in being inconsistent; its tendency to be moved by emotion rather than reason; its fearfulness of men and society. These highly secularised overtones with which the 'Kingdom of God' motif was articulated, were reminiscent of Uppsala 1968, in so many ways. The criticism may appear harsh, but our resolutions will prove their correctness. A disturbing feature that remains to be commented upon is the fact that so many representatives to Provincial Synod found it unnecessary to stay to the end. Our own Diocesan representatives numbered 13 out of an initial 25 by the last day. When $\frac{2}{3}$ majority voting was called for because of the controversial nature of a motion, such votes were vital, but had been lost by non-participation! Such, in particular, was the vote on women as deacons. The Agenda Committee was very clever/foolish on more than one occasion in its arrangement of business.

People will be worried about CHRISTIAN INITIATION changes. An emotional subject won by a five year old's plea for the Body of Christ, rather than a deep understanding of any doctrine of Grace or dogma concerning initiation. Such changes as may result from the acceptance of the Principles, but not of the Proposals, will have to wait for the Synod of Bishops to determine when and what will come into force. The Rubrics and Canons take precedence over resolutions of Provincial Synod. The new Canon 40 on PASTORAL DISCIPLINE will be of great benefit in that it looks closely at pre-baptismal, pre-confirmation and pre-marital preparation. It is hoped that clergy and laity will acquaint themselves with the Law of the Church.

The ORDER OF ETHIOPIA is to have a Bishop of its own who is a recognised Bishop of the Province. He will be licenced to work in a Diocese (where missions of the Order exist) by the Diocesan. It must be remembered that the Order is an integral part of the Church of the Province of South Africa! CHURCH UNITY has come under scrutiny - there appears to be a lot of second thoughts. It is all over to the Bishops now to get assurances and a sense of order and discipline. W.C.C. motion is merely a reflection of the Church's present situation in South Africa. Of course, it will be disturbing to all who read it, but I believe it correctly reflects what the Church is doing at present. However, I believe the Church will have to choose sooner or later (better sooner), what the Gospel of Jesus Christ demands of her in terms of Romans 13 and 1 Peter 2 13, etc.

Bishop Tutu was ruled not to be a Bishop of the Province. Contrary to popular expectation, he did not address the 23rd Provincial Synod, although he did have the opportunity of addressing some of the delegates who attended an evening meeting held at Kimberley Hall.

Rev. O. Alby



After a bumpy air journey from Johannesburg we arrived in Port Elizabeth, and were put on board a SAR bus for Grahamstown. Half way along we overtook (and had to stop for) the earlier bus which was en route for Grahamstown. It had broken down. We loaded nearly all their passengers on to our bus, and placed our luggage in their bus. Consequently when we arrived in Grahamstown we were unable to wear our cassocks at the Opening Service in the Cathedral. We were accommodated in the Kimberley Hall of Rhodes University in great comfort. The rooms were very comfortable, the food excellent (almost too good, or too much) - but the seats in the Hall in which Synod met for its deliberations, were very hard.

I was amused to see the Dean of the Province (the Bishop of Natal) an archdeacon (not of this diocese!) and some other clergy jogging every morning before we met for prayer. We were somewhat unamused to having to wear cassocks in the heat. As it appears one has four seasons every day in Grahamstown, it was said, "If the weather does not suit you, wait five minutes!"

The multi-national (RSA, Transkei, Lesotho, Swaziland and Namibia) and the multiracial company of Synod, prayed together at Mass in the morning and at Evensong each evening. We were indeed one family in Christ. Likewise we ate together, and shared (without discrimination) the accommodation in the three Houses at Kimberley Hall. Very shortly we were a family of Anglicans, respecting one another, interested in one another, loving one another. One soon met, prayed and ate with just another Anglican. One indeed became gloriously colour-blind. Everybody was able to speak English. The laity had a gloriously high standard of knowledge of the faith, responsibility for the upholding of the faith handed down to us, and a keen response to the call of the gospel to Southern Africans. We decided about deacons voting in Synod, about the manner of the election of an Archbishop so that the Province could take a more active part; about giving the Order of Ethiopia a Bishop; about discipline in the church, about baptism, confirmation and discipline; about the business of running a Province; about social responsibilities; about initiation; about church unity; about money and many other things of importance.

Whereas the accommodation was very good, the food wonderful and the venue beyond criticism, there were some things that were not so nice:

It is very hard work: 9 a.m. to 11.30 p.m. (with breaks for food).

The chairs were very hard. And I came back exhausted.

It is wonderful to experience the church so much wider than a parish, so much wider than a diocese. And also, then to experience the Divine Presence, and to know that it is in loving one another, that we know that we belong to Christ.

Archdeacon Leo Alexander



This being the first time I have attended Provincial Synod, I was impressed at the organisation and the smoothness that followed in the running of Synod. There was also a very high degree of fellowship which was developed by us eating and living together, and I think this was a good policy to follow. However, the fellowship slipped slightly when it came to the discussion of contentious motions. This caused, at times, fairly serious splits in Synod.

In my opinion Synod was too long, and this caused a lot of motions at the end not to be fully debated, and also for a number of delegates to leave early. This could be improved by cutting Synod down to seven days and, if necessary, eliminating certain of the motions that are obviously only hobby horses being ridden by certain compulsive speakers.

A lot of the measures and motions were badly drawn, the principles being of a high standard and the proposals not bearing much resemblance to the principles, which required a tremendous amount of committee work to rectify the sloppy drafting. These should be carefully formulated before being submitted to Synod, and I think we had a high standard of debate for, unfortunately in a number of cases, a very low standard of motion. The main contentious motions were the World Council of Churches, the Order of Ethiopia, the ordination of women to the diaconate and the applying for permits. The motions that were debated at length were The Order of Ethiopia, the World Council of Churches and the application for permits. The others did not flare up as was anticipated.

There were also introduced into Synod a number of stupid motions, which in my opinion were just seeking cheap publicity, and wasted a lot more time in man hours debating them than were saved in the eventual cost of complying with these motions, and something should be done to prevent this re-occurring.

Synod to me was a tremendous experience, and the Opening Charge of the Archbishop and his closing sermon fully covered what we Christians should be trying to do to continue the work of Christ.

J.W. Bayliss, Diocesan Secretary



This report is divided into six sections, each dealing with certain aspects that seemed to the writer to stand out from the rest of what was happening at the time. This was the first time that the writer had attended Provincial Synod, and the remarks made in this report should be read in that light.

1. GENERAL

- 1.1 As a "first timer" the Synod proved to be most illuminating. Fresh insight and new knowledge was made available insofar as Church doctrine and structure was concerned. Taken as a whole the experience was for the individual of considerable educational value.
- 1.2 As a delegate one learnt to appreciate, possibly for the first time, the importance of participation in Church affairs at a grass root level and on an individual basis, even if this meant that the standard of debate was at times low and repetitious. Elsewhere in this report suggestions will be made in the hope of speeding up the process without reducing the standard of attention given to each matter; however, these suggestions must be read subject to the importance that is placed on individual participation.

2. LOCATION OF SYNOD

- 2.1 Apart from its unreliable weather, Grahamstown as a small, remote centre with an historical Cathedral, no doubt helped to concentrate the attention of delegates on the job before them and provided them with less distractions than might otherwise be the case. The programme provided that the conscientious delegate would be kept fully occupied so that this was a plus factor, outweighing the inconvenience of the remoteness (more particularly noticeable when, for example, one of the busses broke down!).
- 2.2 Another plus factor was that having the Synod on a University campus, the delegates lived together as a community throughout the Synod. This gave the opportunity for a better awareness of the problems confronting other members of the C.P.S.A., and for fellowship.

- 2.3 The standard of accommodation and board was good in relation to the amount charged to the C.P.S.A. per head.

3. BEST POINT

What stood out most clearly at the time, and has continued to retain its position of importance in the writer's recollection, was the first day spent in group meetings discussing selections of the proposals that were to be placed before Synod, with each group divided into appropriate number of laity and clergy, and usually led by a senior clergyman, such as a Bishop. As a member of laity, the writer, in some cases facing what were for him esoteric questions, found these informal discussions between a small number of people, several of whom were usually informed about the subject in hand, of inestimable value. One felt better able to contribute to the work of Synod and one's vote was more probably intelligent, which made participation at a "grass roots" level an exciting one. The writer is under the impression that at times the laity were also able to contribute their expertise. In fact on several occasions the proposers of resolutions or motions raised amendments or made points that had only presented themselves as material in these group discussions. Sadly, there had to be a choice of topics, so that very often in choosing which group one wanted to attend, one was prevented from learning more about, or contributing towards some other aspect of interest.

The writer personally would have liked the discussions to have gone on for another day, and for the list of topics to have been lengthened; however, it is clear that this could only be done if the effect was to reduce the time spent on discussion in Synod, a somewhat difficult question (vide 4.2 below).

4. WORST POINT

- 4.1 Accepting that delegates were attempting to fulfil an important role in the life of the Church, one was nevertheless adversely struck by the length of time over which Synod stretched. This was perhaps particularly the case with delegates who had left behind family and employment. One is aware of the difficulty of balancing the number of issues raised on the agenda with the need for individual participation (the importance of which has already been stressed).
- 4.2 If the group discussions covered a longer list of topics and took place over two days, it might be possible for the group leaders to get together and to prepare a list of relevant and material points made on each issue, with perhaps various of them debating between them all the points thus collated, so as to avoid repetition and to place before Synod an outline of general thinking in a succinct way. Any delegate who has something important to say (as far as he is concerned) must obviously be given the opportunity to do so, but one would hope that the chances are that some of the duplication would be cut out.
- 4.3 One noticed that a number of the resolutions or motions were considerably amended when under discussion, often by the proposers and seconders themselves in response to the debate. It is not known to the writer to what extent motions and resolutions are studied beforehand. Bearing in mind the fairly substantial period of notice that has to be given of any motion, an idea might be to have small committees of two or three qualified people to examine the proposals that come within their field of specialisation, and to discuss these with the proposers before the agenda books are prepared, with a view to anticipating much of the comment that could be made at Synod in relation to the proposal in its original form. Sometimes these initial discussions would no doubt go to the principals of the proposals themselves, which could also serve a useful function.
- 4.4 The writer was particularly struck with the cumbersome way in which Synod in committee tried to work. It was almost unbelievable that the Chairman could cope with anything between 30 to 90 people attempting to draft portions of a proposal. Because the proceedings were cumbersome, they often stretched until late in the night, when delegates were operating at well below par. One would like to preserve a certain fluidity, so that delegates could become involved in the drafting of all issues in which they were interested, but subject to that it should be possible to establish a system whereby smaller committees are appointed at an early stage in the proceedings with a view to drafting legislation within the field of speciality of each. Each sub-committee could have a chairman who would see to it that subject to the committee not being reduced below a certain number, committee members could absent themselves to attend on other committees in relation to matter in which they had a special interest. Delegates must obviously be allowed to attend these committee meetings, but it is to be hoped that they would attend meetings in relation to such matters as were of particular importance to them, so that their contributions would tend to be constructive and intelligent.

5. ADMINISTRATION

- 5.1 The writer thought that the agenda books and literature provided to delegates prior to Synod set out very clearly the issues to which they related, and went a long way towards providing delegates with some kind of perspective of what lay ahead. However, this perspective was not in relation to legislation complete before a copy of the Constitution and Canons was available to the delegate, and it might be useful to ensure that delegates have a copy of this publication before Synod in future. Perhaps those who wish to have a copy, should be sent one, even if it is to be sent to them free of charge (the additional

total cost will be small in relation to the overall cost of Synod).

5.2 The secretarial work and organisation during the Synod, when looked at in relation to the size of the task confronting the organisers, was excellent.

6. REPORT BACK

Having seen the controversy (some of it misinformed) that has occurred in various parishes in relation to some of the issues that were before Synod, it seems important that an organised form of Report Back should be made available to all the parishes of the C.P.S.A. It would not be feasible to deal with each of the issues, but it would seem necessary to identify those issues which do give rise to difficulty, misunderstanding and dissension, and to prepare a report which deals with these in a way which will give them a correct perspective, and which will properly inform members of the C.P.S.A. of the issues involved. Perhaps a small body should be appointed to prepare such a report at the end of Synod which could be sent to each parish with a view to inclusion in the parish letter or some other form of reporting back.

H.J. Bennett



PROVINCIAL SYNOD made the headline from time to time and also incurred the wrath of the SABC's Current Affairs voice. My impressions of Synod were many and varied. Certainly there was a spirit of brotherhood there which came through in spite of some sharp differences of opinion in matters of politics or policy. Perhaps that in itself is a glowing tribute to the power of Our Lord's spirit among us which enabled those present to find each other as brothers and sisters in Christ, accept that they might have differences but still go on loving and caring for each other and trying to find a way forward through the minefield which the agenda set for us in some areas.

Certainly this was the case with regard to the Agendum concerning the W.C.C. The tragedy of Mass media reporting is that there seemed no way of getting it across outside Synod that real agonising of conscience and trying to understand view points other than one's own was going on. People were conscious that whichever way they voted on some issues they would give deep offence to some brethren outside who could not have the benefit of probing and healing discussions. What it is clear that Synod did not do was identify with any political party or its policies either at home or abroad and neither did Synod attempt to bind anyone's conscience in the matter of pacifism, war or duty to the State. What it did call upon all christian people to do is to examine our consciences and motives closely, by the standards of Jesus, in all matters affecting our neighbours, regardless of race or colour.

With regard to the issue of Baptism and Confirmation we await the Bishops' regulations concerning the possible admission to Communion of young people before Confirmation. Clearly, it can be in no way obligatory upon a parish priest to enter such a practice since Synod heard it enunciated in Canonical terms that the old Prayer Book rubric still commands primary obedience. I must say that I have difficulty really in perceiving why, if we are to prepare young people carefully for the Cumunicant life before they are admitted to the Altar, and that will be necessary, such prepared young people should not also be Confirmed. After all confirmation is not something which only adults can receive and we know this since infants have regularly received it from the very earliest times. In other words it is a sacrament conveying a strengthening gift of the Holy Spirit and there is no particular age or stage of emotional or intellectual development which is irrevocably linked with its administration.

The closest link historically is with Baptism itself and of which it is actually a part. However, I think that for all the talk the changes we shall see in the immediate future will not be great or sudden.

Finally, I wonder very seriously whether in view of the great cost of such a 'talkfest' as Provincial Synod, the money might not be better spent if Synod were dispensed with and the Synod of Bishops charged with all the final legislative powers which Provincial Synod now has. Some part of the money saved could perhaps be more usefully spent by the Bishops in securing the very best advice. The bench of Bishops is quite large. It consists of men consecrated by God after election by laity as well as clergy. Diocesan Synods would still continue. Surely we should trust our Bishops not only as men of commonsense but also as the successors of the Apostles charged by God and Church alike with just such responsibility. Alas! these days of tedious participatory democracy render such an arrangement a mere pipedream.

Archdeacon Brian Boyce



It was with a sense of great expectation that I went to Grahamstown to Provincial Synod. At first they were rather dampened until the final Sunday when my faith in the Church as the body of Christ was restored.

In many respects the short free times and meals were the most exciting. Here was an opportunity to meet old friends and to make new ones and to discover something of the life of the Church in other parts of the Province. It even gave me an opportunity to get to know members of our own delegation with whom I had not had close contact before.

I thought it was an excellent idea for Synod delegates to meet in small informal groups for a whole day before the formal business of Synod began. In this way I learnt more about the Order of Ethiopia than I knew through book learning. I believe that these small groups might have been even more valuable if time had been allowed for us to meet in this way during the heat of some of the formal debates in Synod.

Most of the formal business of Synod I found most uninspiring. While I agree that we need some law and order in regulating the life of the family of the Church, I couldn't help feeling that in the minds of many of the active movers of measures was the belief that people could be or would be changed by legislation. There was little evidence of our professed belief in the power of God's grace and His Holy Spirit at work in the lives of believers.

My faith was restored during the last two days of Synod and it was a pity that so many members of our delegation - all our Bishops and Archdeacons included - missed it. These two days were a traumatic experience for me. In the serious division of opinion which split the Synod over the W.C.C.'s programme to combat Racism, we experienced something of the political and financial forces and the prejudices which exercise such tremendous pressure on our Bishops as leaders of the Church. We were being pushed into a trap from which there seemed no escape. In this situation I believe that Archbishop Bill really spoke as a Man of God when he preached a most moving sermon at the Sunday Eucharist during the adjournment of the debate. He called on all of us to search our consciences before God, rather than trying to find all the answers in our proposals or amendments. In doing so he touched the hearts and minds of the great majority of those present.

The effect was electrifying. By the time Synod reassembled, we no longer wanted to offer our human solutions. So convinced were we that God had inspired the Bishop of Port Elizabeth in amending his motion to acknowledge that the Church cannot align itself with any liberation movement, political party or Government, that we were all ready to vote without any abstentions.

By coincidence I was able to relive the whole experience a few days later as I read the final chapters of "The Final Conclave" by Malachi Martin. There he describes the Roman Catholic Church resolving the same issues in a similar way.

Revd. Jan Dijkman



For those members who had to leave before the final day this meeting of Synod must have been a sad and disappointing experience. For seven days we seemed to be deadened, divided and depressed with no sense of being gathered together in the Lord's name to seek His will. Currents of anger and alienation ran strongly below the surface. In debate we were harsh with one another using procedural motions to stop discussion and only in the debates on the recognition of customary union marriages and on the Order of Ethiopia did we approach anything like the high standards set at the 1976 session. Only at the moving moment when the Archbishop embraced Canon Hopa of the Order to welcome him and his people into the full companionship of the Church were we momentarily full of grace.

Perhaps it was God's will for us that we should travel our separate ways through the valley because on the eighth day we were suddenly overcome by a miracle of reconciliation and an in-filling of the Holy Spirit. It is difficult to know when it began - perhaps with the Archbishop's gentle and skilful handling of the debate on the ordination of women to the diaconate or his brilliant control of the discussion on the second W.C.C. motion. Perhaps we only all became aware of it and were healed during the inspired and God-centered re-introduction of this motion by the Bishop of Port Elizabeth. Certainly we were moved to joy by Bishop Desmond Tutu on the last evening as he drew us with him into the sureness of his faith: 'Before I formed you in the womb I knew you for my own; before you were born I consecrated you.' 'In Christ he chose us before the world was founded.'

Then finally at the end of the last Eucharist we were transformed into the reality of being the body of Christ as the Archbishop summoned David Russell to the altar to lay hands upon him. In that moment we were one with each other and with God, made whole and sanctified.

Sheena Duncan.



It has been said that, “if you want something to happen spontaneously, then you need to organise it properly.”

This was certainly true of Provincial Synod. The organisation was faultless and the Provincial Executive Officer and assistants are to be congratulated on the meticulous planning and the emphasis on detail so strongly evident throughout Synod. Their painstaking attention to every facet of a residential conference of this magnitude helped in no small measure with the expeditious way the business of a very full agenda was transacted. It was good when one has so often observed the opposite, to see the Church working in such a brisk and businesslike way.

The Archbishop presided with firmness and fairness, and never displayed irascibility or illhumour despite the fatigue he surely must have felt after long hours of sustained concentration, especially towards the end of this marathon session of Synod.

One of the hallmarks of a good Chairman is that he should not intrude into the debate, and it is a pity that on one of the rare occasions the Archbishop did comment on a Resolution, his words should have been seized upon and so mischievously used by the Media.

The quality of the Debate was consistently high, although it is a pity that invariably there are some people who feel obliged to speak on every issue. Two speakers who excelled themselves were the retiring Bishop of St John’s, Bishop Schuster, and the Bishop of Bloemfontein, Bishop Amooore, the latter convulsing Synod with mirth time and time again by his wit and repartee.

An excellent procedural innovation, and one that should be incorporated into the Order of our own Diocesan Synod, is that Synod resolved itself into Committee in the evenings when only those interested in drafting felt obliged to attend and consequently, this important but tedious procedure did not take up valuable time during the day and bore and frustrate the entire Assembly to distraction.

Something which kept recurring throughout Synod, which I found disturbing, was the continuous emphasis given to the primacy of the Diocesan Bishops in the life of the Anglican Church. Again and again the Diocesan Bishop was spoken of as being the “focus of Unity in the Diocese”, or in words to that effect. This was reiterated by Speaker after speaker and, for me at any rate, tended to blur that the real focus of Unity, the real Priest etc. is Jesus Christ. To stress the omnipotence of the Bishop is not only untheological, it is also impracticable.

There seems to be an increasing trend in the Anglican Church, when businessmen are seeing management less in terms of status and more as the ability to get things done through other people; to concentrate more and more of the daily decisions involved in running a Church, in the hands of the Bishop. A number of the Resolutions adopted by this Synod will undoubtedly tie the Bishops to their desks more than they already are, and this seems to me to be a retrogressive step, making the whole system of Church administration even more cumbersome than at present, causing the Bishops to be increasingly remote from the life of the Parishes.

By and large, the spirit throughout Synod was congenial and even the most controversial motions, such as the W.C.C., the Ordination of Women, and Christian Initiation were debated without rancour or bitterness. Throughout, one sensed an atmosphere of maturity and levelheadedness, and even the most heated debates generated more light than heat. At all times one felt a responsiveness to the promptings of God the Holy Spirit.

In a Church dominated by “Meetings”, I was repeatedly made conscious that God does speak to His people in a special way when they assemble and take council together.

Rev. Paddy Glover



“THE HOPES AND FEARS OF ALL THE YEARS ...”

The words of that famous hymn certainly expressed the feelings of many delegates as they travelled to Grahams-town.

Hopes ... that the church would realistically come to grips with some of the many agonizing problems of our society. Fears ... that the Church would again diplomatically evade contentious issues.

For the second time the C.P.S.A. gathered fully residential at Kimberley Hall on the Campus of Rhodes University. That has proved a great gain for this multi-racial meeting. Debate, fellowship and the development of awareness is something so precious in our divided society - a society in which so many whites (clerical and lay) seem so unaware of what is happening around them!

185 representatives from 14 Dioceses attended - three Dioceses were not represented - St Helena, and the two Dioceses in Mozambique. (There were 99 Whites and 86 Blacks.)

Some contentious issues in sight at the beginning of Synod were: “Security Police as Church Officers”; “Support

for the Goals of the W.C.C. and the P.C.R.”; “Termination of Membership of W.C.C.”; “Alternative forms of Military Service”; “The Right of Assembly and Permits”. The presence of the Revd. David Russell, who has been banned for the last two years provided a note of authenticity and urgency to some of these issues.

Fortunately many sound amendments toned down rather loosely worded and emotive motions. The amended motion on “Security Police as Church Officers” was overwhelmingly carried in the following form:

“That this Synod

Aware of the deaths of several detained people; and also aware of the profoundly distressing allegations of torture of people detained by the Security Police; and knowing that some members of our Church are employed by the Security Police either as officers or as informers in the R.S.A., asks such members especially if they hold any office in our Church to consider their witness before our Lord Jesus Christ, and asks Church vestries to exercise great care in the election of church officers.”

The W.C.C. has featured as the most sensitive item that might ever be discussed in White South Africa. After a lengthy debate both motions on the W.C.C. were thrown out. Fortunately, Bishop Evans of Port Elizabeth revived the W.C.C. motion in an amended form, which was resoundingly carried.

The Agendum on “Permits” carried decisively in its amended form urged “dioceses to maintain the integrity of Christian witness by refraining from applying for such permits”. This brought a powerful response from the Archbishop; “I believe, however, that if we take seriously what we have said on refraining to ask for permits from the Government it must cause serious disruption to the life of the Church as it is presently organised. This need not disturb us too much because we should not simply seek to preserve our institutional life as a Church but to be the Body of Christ, witnessing to this Divine life among us by His Holy Spirit ...”

Hopes and fears indeed. But for me Provincial Synod was an experience of hope. We faced honestly some very sensitive issues as brothers and sisters in Christ.

Revd. Arnold Hirst



Synod certainly provided me with the joy of meeting old friends and as time went on making new friends.

Seeing all the delegates assembled in one place, I was struck by what to me appeared like the world-wide church in germ. It made it just that little bit easier to conceive of the world-wide church. The result was that I found it easier to intercede for those parts of the church not represented there.

WORSHIP

Worship was tremendously uplifting. The colour combined with the ceremony of the Eucharistic Services in the Cathedral were very impressive indeed. In fact it made me somewhat proud to be a priest of the same tradition.

FELLOWSHIP

On the whole this to my mind was very intense and very happy. There were however some delegates who were so intensely impersonal and insensitive that they would pass you by as though you just didn't exist.

GROUP WORK

This was a commendable idea for amongst other things it enabled me to understand so much better some of the items on the Agenda and to be brought into a closer relationship with at least some of the vast crowd of delegates. It surprised me that we know so little about each other.

DEBATES

I was impressed by the clear thinking and theological competence of many fine priests of our province. Obviously without their much valued contribution people like myself would I believe, have cast their votes in an irresponsible way.

LEADERSHIP AND WISDOM

The leadership and wisdom of the Archbishop impressed upon me very deeply the need to listen and to try (even though difficult at times), and hear what people are saying.

THE HOUSE OF BISHOPS

When it came to voting in “houses” I found it very, very strange to see that even Bishops disagree on certain

matters. It made them so human. I was always under the impression that Bishops came to such meetings after having reached a common mind at Episcopal Synod, which I regard as their official "caucus"!!

THE ORDER

For me the most impressive part of Synod was when the Archbishop, after announcing the decision to accede to their request for a Bishop for the Order of Ethiopia, called the Provincial forward and greeted him with an embrace. There were tears. It was a very moving scene of reconciliation and one I will never hurriedly forget. In the main, it was a great privilege being a delegate to Provincial Synod, but I found it very exhausting. For this reason I am not quite sure I would want to be a delegate to Provincial Synod again!!

Revd. Dennis Jacobs



The honour of being a delegate of the Diocese of Johannesburg at the 23rd Provincial Synod was most challenging and often a very emotional experience for me.

The full realisation of the issues that divide our Church and our country was saddening, but the acknowledgement that the problems could only be solved by Christ, the great healer, allowed hope to shine through.

The joy on the progress of Church unity was a strong matrix that ran through the whole session and a personal challenge of real commitment to God was always at hand.

The pressure on all present at Synod to take correct decisions on all motions was great and until I could dissociate myself from the fear and vanity of what criticism or praise the Press or members of the Church would attribute to me, I found it difficult to make clear decisions as to what the real truth was. The fact that this Synod was residential and therefore that so many real men of God, both Clerical and Lay, were always around, helped me to clear my mind and to look for the will of God.

The contentious issues, highlighted by powerful speeches and often emotional outbursts, proved unnerving but on reflection, the open and unrestrained way that they were debated was of great value and I trust that individual parish councils or discussion groups will have a chance to follow the motions as proposed, the amendments and the final voting in the same spirit of enquiry and purpose as was given to us at Synod. I would like to suggest that members of the Johannesburg "team" offer to visit the parishes of Johannesburg (at the Rectors' invitation) and to advise and be ready to discuss the business of this the 23rd Synod and pass on the overall spirit of Synod to all Anglicans.

The Archbishop's charge given in the Grahamstown Cathedral on Friday, 30th November, set the tone of the entire Synod and in reviewing it the whole spirit and business of Synod was reflected.

These headings and selected typical quotations from the charge follow:-

A. Dives and Lazarus (Luke 16 : 19)

("In our land there is much abject poverty in spite of a reasonably buoyant economy.")

B. Church at the crossroads in Southern Africa

("The Church must still respond to stand under the cross when history seems to flow on relatively peacefully and rank injustice and the misuse of power may not be very evident.")

("The primary work of the Church is to produce the 'new creation' man in Jesus. That man can be poor and nevertheless free even in prison, or as a man of substance, be free not only to share his good things but to do without them.")

C. Life and Theology in context

"What is truth"?

"There can be a contextual theology which so focusses on the hopes and fears of men that it ends up with using God to achieve ends which they have already in fact, even if subconsciously, chosen for themselves."

"God does not allow us to choose our brothers, whether these are among the disenfranchised poor and black or Cabinet Ministers".

D. Not simply change but Redemption

"We must take sin seriously"

“... silly labels we stick on one another and upon ourselves, like activist, pietist, Catholic, charismatic, Ecumenical -- these are signposts the devil uses to confuse and divide us and sends us earnestly following false trails.”

Isaiah 56 : 7 quote by Christ

“My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations.”
“If we do not evangelise we rob God of his people.”

E. Unity and God’s righteousness

“Sharing in his sufferings and becoming like him in his death.” (Phil. 3 - 11)

F. Church and State

“If the only way left to us in Southern Africa is to try and solve our problems by boycotts and/or military strength, whether the latter is Government force or anti-government power, it means inescapably that Christians have failed to be Christians.”

G. Conclusion

“Do not let us be burdened by what we see around us or by how we may look to men” “To know the perfect will of God requires the surrender of our personal and collective agenda, and allow him to reframe them or remove them.”

We rise up then and labour in his risen power Maranatha, come Lord Jesus.

At times it seemed that Synod would resolve into complete disagreement but on Sunday, 9th December, after an address by the Archbishop that took us back to the word of God available to us throughout the Synod as sermons, witnesses, lectures, arguments, and prayer and Bible readings, we acted as one, voted on contentious issues and left for home with a sense of real mission.

Frank Lucas



This year, 1979, has been a year of great experience for me - to have been able to attend Synod at Provincial level, at Rhodes University, Grahamstown, which I visited for the first time.

It was an experience and learning, for me to be on a flight across the sea to Port Elizabeth. In fact, as I write, it is like a dream, particularly in view of the fact that this trip came to me unexpectedly, and was undertaken as I felt the need to answer the call of duty.

On arrival at Grahamstown, I was impressed by the cleanliness and coolness of the town. It was a great pleasure to start by attending the service at the Cathedral and listen to the Archbishop’s Charge. Again, what impressed me most was how freely we mixed with our Bishops and Priests. I wish this type of mixing could be encouraged so that we may learn to work in fellowship and work as a team of followers of Christ. The high standard of the welcoming meal at supertime made all of us feel welcome indeed.

At the beginning of the first session of Synod on Saturday, I was impressed by the method of procedure, although one felt unable to stand up and say anything before having carefully studied how one would address Your Grace, and members of Synod. But, as days went by, there was a big change and one could follow the procedure according to daily minutes and motions brought forward, which were of a very high standard. The measures to amend certain Canons were good but, to me, there was great concern as to whether, and how the people were going to accept them, particularly the one dealing with the blessing of customary marriage, baptising, and accepting children to Holy Communion at an early age. It was even very difficult when the problems of the so-called informers were dealt with, for it is not easy to find out exactly who they are.

Yes, I still feel that we have to think and pray very hard, especially for peace and understanding of one another on an equal basis of life as people. It will not help us to keep on debating and amending motions which may not be suitable for all of us. We need to be sincere in our prayers, and also to show peace amongst ourselves everywhere.

The prayer lessons were very good and impressive, more especially when we had to see ourselves commenting and saying what we thought about them.

The standard of Synod as a whole was very good, and God’s guidance was sought at all times before finalising controversial measures.

God’s Blessings for the year to come.

Mrs. Magdalene Mokgata



I am left with two distinct sets of impressions of the recent session of Provincial Synod. The first impressions were experienced during Synod itself but afterwards there were second thoughts which were more positive.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

The Synod Agenda was extremely long and exhaustive to the point of being exhausting. One wonders whether all the items were of such importance to the Province that they needed to be debated by this particular body.

One recognises that Synod cannot ignore the political circumstances of the day and it is of great importance that opportunity should be provided to debate matters which have political overtones but I wondered if it would not have been more appropriate for the day set aside in terms of the Standing Rules for Synod to meet in conference to have been used for a general debate on the Archbishop's Charge. The "controversial" motions were so wide in their scope that it was difficult for many of us to give complete approval and yet to vote against them was equally difficult. Consequently a great deal of time seemed to be taken up with amendments to resolutions which enabled Synod to express a reasonably common mind. The drafting committee could, I think have done a better job but even when a resolution has been passed can one really see it as representing the mind of the whole church? I get the impression that the important thing is that Synod members have an opportunity to express themselves freely on "political" issues and this might well be placed within the framework of the Day spent in conference. What we actually did in Conference seemed to me to be of little value.

I was also disturbed at the large number of items on the agenda which sought to amend Canons. Few people seemed to know what a canon is and there is in fact no definition in Constitution and Canons. But whatever they are, the canons are intended to have some degree of objectivity and permanence. Changes may from time to time be thought necessary but one must be very careful not to be over-influenced by specific problems and matters of immediate concern. Was Synod as objective as it ought to be in debating amendments to canons relating to the role of the Archbishop and to the election of an archbishop. Were we in fact thinking about the role of an archbishop or the role of Bill Burnett who currently holds that office? And were we influenced by the possible successors to him in establishing how an archbishop should be elected? If the impression is given that canons which may prove inconvenient in the immediate future can be changed to suit the circumstances we could be in serious trouble.

The length of the agenda to which reference has been made meant that the daily hours during which Synod met left little time for quiet reflection and "waiting upon the Lord". A residential synod is of inestimable value and the accommodation and facilities at Kimberley Hall were magnificent but we failed to get the full benefit of being "with one accord in one place" because of the length of the organised working day. To be "organised" from 7.00 a.m. until 11.00 p.m. or later with breaks for meals etc was, for me, too much.

I would like to refer to Standing Rules. Such rules are designed to make possible the orderly conduct of Synod and to provide the machinery for Synod to extricate itself from impossible situations. So Standing Rules, inter alia, permit Synod to vote to "pass on to the next business" without voting on a resolution brought to it. It is a necessary rule but it should only be used in extreme circumstances. What should NOT be possible is for a resolution brought to Synod and placed on the agenda to be passed over BEFORE the proposer has had an opportunity to speak to it.

RECOLLECTIONS

Back in Johannesburg one was able to see Synod in clearer perspective. And in spite of all I have said I was glad to have had the privilege of being there. I was very conscious of being part of a representative group of South African Anglicans being the church. One was conscious of divisions, of deep wounds giving pain to many Anglicans of failures to understand and be sensitive to each others feelings and yet over it all was an evident desire to seek unity and true brotherhood in Christ. On Saturday night we seemed to be in great trouble but by the grace of God and a genuine desire to seek to know the mind of Christ, Sunday morning saw a great triumph for the whole church. We had agonised together, argued with each other, expressed ourselves honestly and without reserve and yet stayed together which is precisely what it means to be the church.

The standard of debate was good even if one grew a little tired of hearing the same voices over and over again. I don't believe that one needs to justify one's presence at Synod by speaking. It's equally important to listen, weigh merits and vote accordingly. Not that there was in fact much repetitive speechmaking in this particular Synod. Nevertheless it was interesting to note that during the first half of Synod approximately a third of the business was completed whilst the other two thirds was adequately handled in the second half of the week. Would we not perhaps have completed the business if the deadline had been set, as originally planned, on Friday evening and if the daily timetable had been shortened?

One last comment. Those present at Synod were sent there as representatives and not delegates. For this reason great care ought to be taken to see to it that the diocesan teams are truly representative and that there is continuity of membership. We might well ask ourselves if our own clerical and lay representation was as balanced as it might have been. Was our own Diocesan Synod aware of the qualities, qualifications and general viewpoints of those whose names were submitted to them for election? Was it good that four of the ten clergy at Synod should come

from three contiguous northern suburbs parishes? Was it good that the lay representatives should include some who were not present at Diocesan Synod when the mind of the diocese was sought on certain important issues which were to come to Provincial Synod?

Provincial Synod has a tremendously responsible role to play in the life of the church. It acquitted itself well but I am not sure that it adequately represented the membership of the whole church.

Rev. Mervyn Moore



I was highly impressed by the transport arrangements. No delegate was left stranded. Catering was good although there was too much food. I was glad when a decision was taken to cut down on the amount.

The first meeting in groups to discuss different topics was most appreciated by some of us. The discussions were informative and enlightening. Our group discussed the question of the W.C.C. Many points were brought to light both for and against.

The relationship between the delegates was really good. Everyone was ready to help and advise if approached. There was real brotherhood. How I prayed that this should prevail in the whole of South Africa.

The morning and evening prayers gave me new light. The idea of all members participating in reading, explaining or interpreting the gospel in praying in one's language left a good impression on me.

The debates in the plenary session were of a high standard. The system of closing discussions on controversial topics by moving a motion to discuss the next topic was very irritating. It nearly caused a walkout by blacks. We felt it was a method to silence us. I was highly impressed by the Archbishop, the Rt Rev Bill Burnett. He directed the debates which were at times extremely difficult with dignity and caution. His charge, closing sermon on the last day left a deep impression on me. I am convinced that he is committed to change in the church and in South Africa as a whole. Hope our white brethren will follow his example. A change in our church will definitely have an influence on the people of South Africa.

Sally Motlana



Attending Provincial Synod always leaves me with mixed feelings. There is always the joy of knowing that one is going to be soaked in true Anglicanism at its best and of course the sadness that some things that I regard very trivial takes so much of the Synod's time.

Synod began at 5.00 p.m. with Celebration of the Holy Communion in the Cathedral Church of St. Michael and St. George in Grahamstown.

The Bishops of the Province Clad in their episcopal robes processed into the Cathedral with dignity and solemnity. The music at mass was very unimpressive. The attendance was also not very good.

The Archbishop's charge was illuminating and good but very long. How I wished he had limited his charge to 30 minutes (although I understand why it was so long) because he tried to cover all the things he felt the Church had done and ought to do.

It was a great joy to share in the deep spirituality that prevailed at Provincial Synod. The meditations and Celebration of Holy Communion at the beginning of every day of Synod was most welcomed. The Chapel was packed every day by both lay and clerical representatives and Bishops of course.

Business of Synod tended to fluctuate between good and sometimes very poor. The President was always at his best in conducting business of Synod. He guided the decisions ably and skilfully at all times.

The highlights of Provincial Synod as far as I am concerned were:

- (1) The insertion of the Order of Ethiopia in the Canons of the Church of the Province of South African. This meant that the compact of 1900 was repealed and the Order of Ethiopia was given the right to elect its own bishop.
- (2) The approval to amend Canon 33 moved by the Bishop of St. John's - which meant that the Church of the Province of Southern Africa now recognises customary union.

- (3) The approval to amend Canon 40 moved by Archdeacon A.D. Ainsely. With this canon amended, pastoral discipline of Church is clearly spelled out which was not the case in the Rubrics of the Book of Common Prayer.
- (4) Agendum 37 so ably piloted through Synod by Archdeacon R.E.B. Taylor. For a long time Christian Initiation in the Church of the Province of Southern Africa has caused a lot of debates to take place. Now with this report accepted by Provincial Synod, Bishops will have their tasks made easy in drawing suitable forms of Christian Initiation to be used in their Dioceses.
- (5) Agendum 49. This is the perennial question that seems to rear its head at all Synods of the Church. The Church as far as I am concerned has a clear moral responsibility to educate all its members to be aware of their Christian duty, and to implement it. I think this motion on the W.C.C. aimed at doing exactly that.
- (6) Agendum 58. This is a motion that evoked lots of discussions which the Press gave, full coverage. It dealt with the Church's right not to apply for permits from secular authorities in the ordering of its life and mission.

Towards the end of the week Synod started grappling with very sensitive issues. As the debates went on, words once said by Archbishop Hurley came to mind:

"If Christianity wants to have a say in the alteration of the South African pattern, its representatives will have to become crusaders possessed with the flame of conviction, a fire of zeal".

Archdeacon David Nkwe



Debates were of a high standard and offered an enjoyment in listening. The Synod was exciting in many ways and one could not help feeling that God was beginning to do things through prayer and scripture reading.

At the end of Synod one, though realising that there were still horizons to conquer, felt overjoyed with the spirit of interaction. Coming down to particular items, e.g. W.C.C. our Anglican brethren successfully mastered the art of fence sitting, ending the refrain by moving to "the next business". When the motion on the W.C.C. was returned to the agenda for the second time, the discussions generated more heat than light. There was lack of Christian honesty, and commitment and this led to a polarisation of feelings between blacks and whites.

The standard of debate was high and punctuated with a relevant use of the canons and constitution. I would in conclusion state that Synod as a whole had a liberating experience and a widening of one's christian horizons.

J. Sibiya



This was the first occasion of my attending Provincial Synod. It initially looked like a reunion of colleagues and old theological students. There was a lot of excitement as one met one's old theological students now representing their various dioceses under more respectable titles of Archdeacons, Canons, theological tutors as well as Rectors of parishes.

EPISCOPAL BENCH

It is very rare to find such a striking collection of men in episcopal garb, and with such a range of shades of purple, some new and others old. Even though there were only twenty-one bishops present, yet one was reminded of the conciliar nature of our get-together. The bishops were a living symbol of the existence of a number of Dioceses which constitute the Province. 'Twas interesting too during voting to see them differ freely and without embarrassment in many issues, even though quite frankly there were one or two issues which I shan't single out, where I thought it was a pity there was even a difference of opinion on the Episcopal Bench! When this happened I wasn't at all amused.

PRESIDENT'S CHARGE

It was a pointer of the direction the Holy Spirit was calling the Church to take. It covered every aspect of not only the church's life but of the life of every christian and the society in which we live. It was an answer to our questions at this time and there is a sense in which for me, Synod could have begun and ended at that point. The charge put it so succinctly: "To know the perfect will of God requires the surrender of our personal and collective agenda to allow him to reframe them or remove them. We need to put back in his hands those things we are so cock sure about and allow him to tear them up or redraft them in his wisdom."

AGENDA

It was too packed and crowded. I hope in future only matters that are really considered to be burning issues should be selected for debate and legislation. If this were to be done then we would circumvent the state of affairs and the embarrassing situation which existed towards the end of the meeting where quite a number of empty seats were a 'vociferous' report of a number of representatives who had left for home.

While it was sad to see Christians divided on vital issues particularly those issues which Blacks regard as touching directly on their lives, it is nevertheless a matter to be thankful to God about that eventually, particularly after the Archbishop's Sunday Sermon, the whole body was once again welded together so that they could reach a point which was probably not very far from consensus.

The comments which were sometimes invited on scripture readings at times degenerated into what appeared to me and others to be an unhealthy dialogue where some commentators were wanting to justify their stand on the day's proceedings. This should never have been allowed as it could easily develop into mudslinging during a Eucharistic Feast. Silence was ALWAYS a better method of listening to the will of God, and it never produced unnecessary contention.

It is heartening to see motions which tried to remind the church of its calling and particularly motions which sought to speak up for the silent majority in this country. I find it alarming that questions of injustice are taken so lightly in some circles. To me the church was beginning to grapple with relevant issues when it addressed itself to such things as permits, matters of conscience, programmes of the W.C.C. etc. All these are matters that ought never to be evaded by Christians for fear of annoying those who take such matters lightly. For me they concern themselves with salvation of man as a whole.

The committee stages of synod were very tiring at times since they were squeezed in when members were exhausted. There was an attempt to do far too much at a time. Perhaps there is no way of getting out of this impasse. One has just got to adjust. On the whole it was a profitable time spent and one could not but feel the Spirit of God was at work.

Revd. Sidwell Thelejane



Archbishop Bill Burnett, the President of Synod, proved to be a wise and loving man of God, and guided the members through ten strenuous days of very interesting, but sometimes difficult or controversial debates.

Each day began with a celebration of the Eucharist at 7 a.m., sittings of Synod were from 9 to 1 and 2 to 5.45, and were followed by Evening Prayer. The Committee of Synod, attendance at which was voluntary, lasted from 7.30 till about 11 p.m. on four evenings. Only about a third of the members took part in the very hard and tedious work of the Committee. The others were either not interested in or not capable of contributing to the details of the measures and spent these evenings in fellowship or relaxation. There were well attended talks on other evenings.

A feature of Synod was the unanimity with which many measures were passed, and others rejected. Controversial measures required and usually received much more than a two thirds majority. To achieve this usually required compromise and considerable watering down of proposals which had been thoroughly researched and strongly recommended by commissions appointed by the Archbishop to study the subjects. There were a number of conservative and timid members who always resisted any changes or innovations particularly if there was no consensus among the "major churches"!

Synod updated a dozen of the Canons, but unfortunately matters such as the Services of the Church, the functions of the Metropolitan, duties of Lay Ministers, rules for Trusts and the formation of a Development Fund will have to wait for a future Synod, as well as any positive action on Church unity or the Ordination of Deaconesses.

Bishop Lawrence Zulu's sermon on the first Sunday was prophetic when he pointed out how some people have hope in a situation where others have only fear. Throughout Synod there were men like the Bishop, who were full of hope and trust and ready to go forward, while others kept speaking about their fears and the dangers of any change. Fortunately the Archbishop is a fearless leader and whenever he spoke we heard words of faith and hope.

I am very grateful to Johannesburg Diocese for giving me the opportunity of attending another very interesting Synod and of renewing friendships made at previous Synods.

For people who like this sort of thing, here are rough statistics on the number of times people spoke:

Bishops 110, Clergy 200, Laymen 90, Laywomen 40 (by 10 of them!), Representatives from Cape Town 83, Grahamstown 54, Natal 53, Pretoria 42, St. John's 39, Johannesburg and Lesotho 31 each.

30 clergy and 30 laypersons did not speak at all.

Grierson Tuckey

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