

IV           FACTS TO BE CONSIDERED IN SEEKING  
              POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN  
              NATIONAL AND RACE PROBLEM

In assessing the possible solutions of the problem, the question arises whether the South African situation is unique and requires a different ethical approach.<sup>19</sup> South Africa certainly claims no right to gentler treatment ethically, but it does expect greater consideration for the facts which pinpoint the attitude and intentions of the Whites and neutralise some of the rash judgements of foreigners. These historical facts must be stressed.

I       *Ownership of land*

Many Christians abroad flatly condemn South Africa because they believe that the whole of South Africa originally belonged to the Bantu and that the Whites came to conquer the country and subject it to their rule. Their view would be wholly different if in equity and justice they admitted the fact that the Bantu, as the Afrikaners, were immigrants to South Africa; that both entered the country about the same time, the one from the North and the other from the South, and that the Afrikaners took possession of the *uninhabited* land, after the Bantu had already settled in what were mainly the most fertile regions of the country. In discussing the question whether the Bantu could claim a right to South Africa and establish privilege, Gedat concludes that South Africa was and is the land of the White man, not only because the White man settled in a country that was uninhabited, but also because he developed that country by dint of hard and untiring labour and earned for it the respect of the world. The almost incredible achievements of the Boers in their struggle for a homeland (*heimat*) would grace the record of the greatest epics of mankind. "It simply doesn't make sense" says Gedat, "to assert that the aboriginals of today are the real possessors of the land, when all historians agree that South Africa was practically empty, here and there only sparsely inhabited, and that the native tribes, one met, neither had a decent indigenous culture nor maintained any contact worth mentioning. What happened in the South of the continent was not a looting expedition or an attempt at subjugation but a peaceful settlement in sharp contrast to the events of colonial history experienced in Africa and other parts of the world."<sup>20</sup>

2       *No Extermination of the Aborigines*

In Europe there are many well-meaning Christians who attack

South Africans as though the latter were imbued with hatred of the Non-Whites and wished to exterminate them as Coloured creatures who could not be considered humans. To these critics apartheid means basically: away with the Black man! Yet it is an incontrovertible historical fact that the Whites of South Africa never waged a war of extermination against the Non-Whites but on the contrary continuously acted as mediators of peace between the warring Bantu factions and respected the natives as contracting parties.<sup>21</sup> Moreover the Boers impressed on the native tribes the need to transcend the barriers of family, village and tribe and to co-operate.<sup>21</sup>

### 3 *No Colonialism*

One of the most despicable ideas since the Second World War is Colonialism. In recent times Afrikaners have also been accused of Colonialism. It should, however, be borne in mind that Colonialism means the investment of material and spiritual capital by a foreign power in a territory that is undeveloped, and the exploitation of the indigenous peoples to provide profits which are returned to the homeland. Colonialism postulates the submission of a territory to interests beyond its boundaries.<sup>22</sup> But there is no trace of this amongst Afrikaners. The Afrikaner himself is indigenous to South Africa. Here his national character developed and he knows no other homeland. The fruits of his toil, produced with the assistance of his indigenous fellow-citizens, the Bantu, remain in the land for the common weal. Is this Colonialism?

### 4 *No "Herrenvolk" idea*

Nothing has been so unpopular amongst the Christians of Europe since the Second World War as the "Herrenvolk" idea. This is perfectly natural. But now many, who claim to be Christians, besmirch the name of South Africa in an ignorant and irresponsible way by connecting our race-policy with the "herrenvolk" mentality of the Afrikaner and judging us by that standard. The plain truth is that the ideological preparations for the demonic construction of the Third German Reich are wholly foreign to the White population of South Africa, who as a result of their Calvinist convictions are characterised rather by a spirit of humility. The Afrikaner people — a young and small nation — is in many respects so lacking in national consciousness and pride that it

must constantly be exhorted by means of national and cultural festivals to cherish its national heritage. These facts should dispel the iniquitous accusation which is inflicting such an injustice on the Christians of South Africa. If there were no Nazism and South Africa were not maliciously coupled with the "herrenvolk" idea, nobody would ever conclude from conditions in South Africa that the country was imbued with the "herrenvolk" idea.

#### V - TWO POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS OF SOUTH AFRICA'S RACE PROBLEMS

What solutions are there for the national and race-problems of South Africa and which is best in the light of Christian ethics? The possibilities are :

- a extermination of either the Natives or the Whites,
- b integration and assimilation, and
- c apartheid or separate development of each race according to innate tendencies.

In South Africa, fortunately, the possibility of exterminating the native tribes or dislodging them has never been entertained. Some White agitators do indeed suggest that the Natives should annihilate the smaller White population or drive it into the sea, but this is not seriously considered by the Non-White as it would destroy the essential culture and civilisation of South Africa, and in any case be ethically unjustifiable in relation to the White Afrikaners who developed their national existence and character here, and from the beginning had the same right to the land as the Bantu. No attempt to solve the problem by liquidating one race or the other is a real solution, because, to be effective a solution must secure the co-existence of the two groups.

In effect only two possibilities merit serious consideration and the Tomlinson Report presents them thus : "The White population of South Africa today faces two clear-cut alternatives. He must either, gradually or suddenly, peaceably or forcibly, permit the Bantu to penetrate his sphere of life and assimilate him ; or he must grant Bantu nationalism full facilities to develop positively alongside of, and not in opposition to, the White man's sphere of life."<sup>23</sup>

Prof. B. B. Keet denies the validity of the alternatives presented. "It is foolish" he says, "to suggest that the solution of our racial



Mr. Daan de Wet Nel, acknowledged friend of the Bantu and authority on Bantu affairs (now

question lies in a choice between apartheid (separation) and fusion (integration, amalgamation) . . . . . There are many other possibilities which exclude both alternatives."<sup>24</sup> But the learned Professor does not indicate such other possibilities. He declares: "The alternative in our human relations is not apartheid or *fusion* but apartheid or *co-operation*"<sup>25</sup> but again he fails to supply reasons why apartheid should particularly exclude co-operation. It should be noted that sympathetic connoisseurs of South Africa who strongly emphasise the necessity of co-operation because both Bantu and Whites inhabit the land and both contribute to the development of the country, nevertheless admit that the choice is between integration and apartheid. South Africa cannot belong exclusively to the Bantu because they need the Whites for the development of the country; and it cannot belong exclusively to the Whites because they need the Non-Whites. "In South Africa, as we have seen" writes Steward, "the White man and the Black man arrived at approximately the same time: the Black man somewhat earlier in the North-Eastern regions and the White man somewhat earlier in the South-Western . . . ." In much of this (industrial development) the assistance and co-operation of the Bantu people has been indispensable; but it is the White man who has provided the initiative, the guidance, the dynamic power." "Thus, withdrawal is out of the question — there are only two possible end solutions to the problem of race-relations — assimilation or separation."<sup>26</sup> The Native Education Commission of 1951 revealed the same two conflicting schools of thought: "Firstly, the view that Bantu culture is inferior and must gradually disappear; and secondly, the conviction that although the old traditional forms of Bantu-culture were no longer useful under modern conditions, they nevertheless contained the germ from which a modern Bantu culture could be developed, which could fully satisfy Bantu aspirations and meet the demands of the modern world."<sup>27</sup> Indeed we cannot escape the horns of the dilemma: either the idea of *integration* which includes assimilation, miscegenation and incorporation, i.e. the reduction of racial and cultural identity to a common unity of existence which can be described as the levelling up of all national characteristics — or the idea of *apartheid*, i.e. the development of each racial group separately so that its identity is preserved. The main question is whether South Africa with its multiracial population should be seen as one racial and national entity which must fuse, or whether it should develop as two or more racial and national entities with a healthy co-operation between the national communities. A

definite decision must be taken on these two possibilities<sup>28</sup> and time in running out. The matter is extremely urgent because the Bantu and other Non-White peoples in South Africa have developed to such an extent by contact with the Whites, that they have reached the reaction phase<sup>29</sup> and are constantly incited to reaction by contemporary political meddlers abroad. For all the national groups concerned it is essential that a decision should be reached so that future policy can be determined.

1 These alternative solutions are commonly known as *integration* or integration-assimilation, and *apartheid* or separation. There are several objections to the word *apartheid*<sup>30</sup> as a description of the traditional racial policy of South Africa —

a It continually creates misunderstanding. Foreigners interpret it to mean nothing else than meeting at a distance, and spiritual detachment from other racial groups together with callousness, apathy or antipathy, aversion, disapproval and hatred — none of which were intended by Christian Afrikaners.<sup>31</sup>

b Segregation or separation as such can never be the object of Christian people because man is ever called to live in communion.

c The separation contained in the traditional policy of apartheid is merely a *means* to that true parallel development which respects all national groups. Without the instrument of apartheid each national group would be in danger of losing its special identity by alienation. Apartheid is a means to an end. When the end has been attained, the means cannot be jettisoned for that would undermine the end once more. Apartheid will not disappear easily. As long as the peculiar identity of individual races are to be maintained because differences are admitted and respected, apartheid will be necessary to serve that purpose.

2 The term "apartheid" describes the instrument whilst the term "indigenous development" describes the object. It is preferable to use a term which indicates the real aim and purpose and stresses the development which the policy envisages. Hence instead of *apartheid* we should rather speak of the *indigenous development of races with a view to cultural independence and national service* as a possible solution of the problem.<sup>32</sup> This expression stresses the *development* that is necessary for the Non-Whites; their claim to *cultural independence*; and particularly that those who have advanced should devote themselves primarily to the

*service of their own people* (compatriots) as in the case of every other nation. By this clarifying expression attention is drawn to the special identity or national characteristics of every race or nation. If the main object is assured, namely that the potentialities of every race and nation should be developed and used primarily in the service of the same racial and national community, the term "apartheid" which is so obnoxious to many people may safely be disregarded.

### 3 *The Policy of apartheid is as old as the Afrikaner*

Most foreigners base their condemnation of South Africa on the implementing of the apartheid policy which they ascribe to the post-war period round about 1948. They cut a comic figure however in view of the fact that the policy of apartheid was applied as far back as 1657 and that it aimed at preserving the land of the Bantu from the richer hands of the Whites. If the separate possession of land by the aboriginal population were not protected in this way, they would have had no more ground by this time. Apartheid therefore is not an instrument of injustice to the aboriginals but on the contrary a means of protecting the weak.

### 4 *Apartheid does not connote spiritual isolation*

Most theologians of Europe condemn our national policy on the score that apartheid implies the severance of human relationships, which is in conflict with the theological concept of communion.<sup>33</sup> The history of our missions and educational work among the Bantu proves spiritual contact on the highest plane and true communion with the members of other peoples and races in our country. Indeed the Afrikaans concept of trusteeship which is inseparably intertwined with the concept of apartheid or segregation has always meant to the Afrikaner a personal responsibility to the younger undeveloped brother of the other race.<sup>34</sup>

### 5 *Apartheid does not imply pegging the Non-Whites to their primitive mode of life.*

Foreign theologians commonly hold that the policy of apartheid is designed to enable the Afrikaner to keep the Bantu, who is straining after Western civilisation and whose competition is feared, in a primitive condition.<sup>35</sup> It should however, be remembered that we *are compelled* not only for moral but also for

economic reasons to develop the Bantu as swiftly as possible otherwise it would be impossible to produce enough food for the country's requirements. Today vital needs demand intensive methods of development and soil conservation for the Bantu reserves if both Whites and Non-Whites are not to be threatened with extinction.

By neglecting these important facts on South Africa our fellow-Christians in Europe run the risk of becoming so blinded by prejudice and distortion that they are unable to evaluate the real problems and seek their solution. Since the onslaught on South Africa by World Opinion which has been artificially propagated, most of the Anglicans in South Africa have sided with the integrationists.<sup>36</sup> Even members of the Afrikaans-speaking population have been influenced by World-Opinion to interpret accepted facts in a strange way.<sup>37</sup>

6 Having disposed of the misconceptions of "apartheid", we now turn to the problems previously mentioned which centre round the idea of national ethos or characteristics peculiar to the nation. Several leading theologians of Europe admit that the problem of Nationhood and Race (Volkstum und Rasse) has not yet been solved and merits the serious attention of world-theologians. The national identity or "Nationhood and Race" cannot be explained by colour or colour-feeling or racial feeling.<sup>38</sup> South Africa is concerned with the problem of the co-existence of the races and not merely with colour or race. To quote the Tomlinson-report:

"The origin of this pattern and the powerful racial feeling which underlies it, are to be attributed to a large complex of factors".

And then they proceed to enumerate the most important factors: differences in religion; differences in civilisation, differences in race; differences in economic and social status; antagonisms and differences in number.<sup>39</sup>

The concept of national identity or nationhood (Volkstum) usually includes —

a *The race-element*; the inherited biological differences and variations between White and Non-White consisting of differences in colour, facial characteristics, nature and colour of hair, etc. There is a natural reserve towards people with prominent physical differences not only in South Africa but in all countries of the world. There are notable differences between the Latin, Germanic



and Slav races of Europe although they have more or less the same colour.

*b The historical element.* A common destiny is necessary in the formation of the national characteristic. The aboriginal races had no share in the destiny of the Afrikaner who immigrated from Europe and formed a new nation here. They did not combine in the long struggle against the English conqueror. When the Afrikaners fought for their very existence at Blood River, the aboriginals were the enemy. And this was also the case in other conflicts between White and Bantu. These conflicts constitute the hostilities mentioned by the Tomlinson Report to which they add: "the attitude of hostility and conflict and its intensity necessarily produced the inflexible resolve in the White man to fight for his existence. The Non-White indigenous population had no share in this; hence the divergence.

*c The linguistic-psychological element.* Language expresses the spirit of man. Language differences connote differences in the group spirit so that people with a different consciousness tend to oppose one another. Language differences point to differences in thought. Whenever such differences exist, those who speak the same language tend to associate and to separate themselves from those speaking a different language. For it is a presupposition of society that people should understand and comprehend one another and associate and discourse with one another.<sup>40</sup>

*d The cultural element.* Psychological differences between the groups express themselves in differences of culture. The one expresses Western culture, the other Eastern. To this may be added different standards of cultural development.

*e The religious element.* Religion influences the life of a nation in a very important way. The Whites of South Africa brought with them a virile and vital Calvinist religious philosophy whilst the Non-Whites had an animistic heathen religion. These differences tended to promote solidarity and group unity amongst the Whites and induced them to protect the Christian religion from the dangers of wholesale racial mixture or miscegenation.

*f The element of civilisation.* There is a vast difference in civilisation between the various national groups which is reflected in their mutual relations. In this disparity of civilisation — and this is not always realised by foreign observers — difference in *hygienic* development plays a very important role.<sup>41</sup>

A typical view put forward by the protagonists of racial inte-

gration and assimilation, is that national differences in South Africa would cease to exist as soon as the Non-Whites attained civilisation and that then there would be no reason for parallel development in order to maintain the *national characteristic*. The policy of development of the Non-Whites would necessarily result in integration with or without assimilation. But this argument discloses a fallacy. Certain elements of the national characteristic which are of a passing nature may be smoothed out by the process of civilisation, but others are not so transient and firmly resist the smoothing out process. The backlog of civilisation for instance may be made up by the Non-Whites; they may progress in hygiene to such an extent that nobody would object to having them in the same meeting. Religion too may cease to be a divisive factor by evangelisation so that they may be accepted as fellow-believers and no longer as heathens or barbarians. But this does not apply to the racial, the historical, the linguistic-psychological and the cultural elements: As long as they speak a different language, think differently and have a different culture, the national characteristic remains. History cannot be changed, nor can inherited characteristics. To assail these abiding elements<sup>42</sup> of the national character by some method of equalisation, is nothing less than the violation of the personality, character and liberty of that nation and cannot be justified ethically. We dare not violate the national characteristic of another people, which should be respected as the creation and gift of God, by an unjustifiable standardisation of our own national characteristic. The national characteristic of another race or people claims the same respect we demand for our own. From the Christian ethical standpoint it is unjust to destroy the national identity of the Non-Whites of South Africa by unlimited integration with the character of the Whites. Both Whites and Non-Whites have the right to defend their national integrity against alienation. This is the core of the problem of Nationality and Race. No people may idolise its national characteristic as if it were the only one in relation to others; but every people and race may claim respect for its national characteristic because it is God's creation and gift of grace. This problem confronts us wherever there are missions and wherever nations, who differ widely, have real and true contact. The question is constantly put: what must be changed when the nation becomes Christian and what must be retained? In South African life the problem becomes acute where several widely different nations have to live together as Christians in the same land.

The Bantu can, by preserving his national characteristics, certainly make a significant contribution to the Christianity and culture of South Africa. This contribution can enrich our spiritual heritage precisely where the Western nations lost valuable elements of original Christianity, which had been bestowed at Pentecost.

The Christian concept of communion or Koinonia which receives far better expression in Bantu than in European life, may be mentioned here. Whilst Western nations live isolated individualistic lives especially in urban areas, the Bantu have a wonderful sense of community which binds the masses in a mystical way, and produces a sense of mutual responsibility and mutual neighbourliness which is revealed in mutual care. Their generosity and unselfishness enables them to divide a small piece of food in 10—12 parts; their hospitality enables them to put up travellers, although Bantu hotels are lacking in most cities and villages. They have a better idea of *Fatherhood* than the Westerner because the tribal chief is the Father of the whole tribe, and forms the permanent link even when the members migrate to the European cities. They also understand what *brotherhood* means because they are all brothers and sisters of one great family. Their earnings are not individual possessions but belong to the big family and are at the disposal of brothers and sisters who need money to marry.

To lose everything because of Western culture would be tantamount to relapsing in egoism and selfishness. They care faithfully and devotedly for the aged, the blind and other handicapped persons; and it amounts to spiritual degradation if a Western state, for the sake of equality with the White population, were to take over this service. What a boon this principle would be if applied to the social work etc. of the Churches. The national custom of the Bantu to open both hands even when receiving a mere trifle, by which he demonstrates how much he expects from the giver and how grateful he is, gives new point to the Biblical word: "Open they mouth wide and I will fill it." The music of Bantu Church choirs is so heavenly that organs are quite superfluous. Their introduction in imitation of Western churches would be detrimental to the wonderful harmony of voices with which they praise God. There are many elements, having a unique meaning in Christianity, which could be developed to valuable spiritual possessions of Bantu culture. Hence the indigenous characteristics of the Bantu should not be submerged in Western national characteristics but their different nature, as given by God, should contribute to the glorification of God's variegated richness.