

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES

THE CONFRONTATION BETWEEN THE ARCHBISHOP  
OF CAPE TOWN, JOOST DE BLANK, AND THE  
SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT ON RACIAL POLICIES  
(1957-1963)

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## P R E F A C E

This study arises partly out of a pre-occupation with a period covering six impressionable years of my life - the final year at school, university days and the commencement of a teaching career; and partly from a reading of Alan Paton's Apartheid and the Archbishop which in covering the political aspects of Geoffrey Clayton's archbishopric inspired me to attempt the same for the term of Joost de Blank.

The racial legislation passed since 1948 is discussed at the outset as it is the backdrop against which the whole Confrontation must be viewed. The reader might stagger under the sheer weight of detail but this is my intention since it facilitates an identification with de Blank who was overwhelmed by a plethora of legislative acts. The Anglican background to the period under discussion is of moment in that it reveals how de Blank became embroiled in a Church-State relationship which had gradually, yet perceptibly, deteriorated. Much of the material here is based on my own study of Synodal Resolutions and the Charges of Geoffrey Clayton. The biographical chapters provide the reader with the necessary factual background and, at the same time, make an independent judgement possible. de Blank's theological insights detected in the works written before his Enthronement furnish the categories into which the Confrontation naturally falls. This must be stressed because it is my conviction that de Blank's attack on apartheid represents not a departure from, but an extension of his earlier views. In conclusion, the Assessment examines the achievement of the Archbishop largely, but not exclusively, in the light of his own theological criteria.

It will be noted that certain key passages have been quoted on more than one occasion. However, this repetition has only been resorted to when I have felt that the verbal omission would have lessened the impact of the argument being developed.

Much remains to be said about the whole de Blank period. The Archbishop's confrontation with the Dutch Reformed Church, for example, deserves a study in itself, and it is my intention to pursue this line of research with special emphasis on the two distinct theological traditions which made different approaches to the same issues inevitable. There is also considerable scope for an examination of the Church of the Province of South Africa from Union in 1910 to the present; and, in fact, research

is being done in this field by students in the Department of Religious Studies of the University of Cape Town.

My debt to others is so considerable that it is hard to know where to begin. My thanks go to Canon C.T. Wood for his informed advice and for making the summary of the de Blank Papers at York University; to Messrs Christopher Hill and Tom Lodge of the Department of Southern African Studies, York University, for their prompt replies to my requests for source material; to Mr G. Ferry, a former Mayor of Cape Town, who put me in touch with important personalities involved in de Blank's dealings with the Cape Town City Council over the Windermere evictions; to Mr S.A. Rogers for his account of the whole 'Windermere' episode; to Mrs Moira Henderson, Dr Oscar Wollheim and Rev. H.H.E. Peacock for their personal memories of de Blank; to Ds W.A. Landman of the D.R.C. for his shrewd observations on the whole period; to the staffs of the South African Public Library and the Jagger Library, U.C.T. (more particularly those in the Special Collections Department) for their invaluable assistance at all times; to the Archbishop of Cape Town, the Most Rev. B.B. Burnett, for allowing me the use of the Bishopscourt library; to the staff at Church House, Queen Victoria Street, Cape Town, for putting their records of Provincial and Diocesan Synods at my disposal; to my long-suffering mother who typed the original draft and to Mrs S. Ellinghouse for the care she took over the preparation of the final script; to my sister, Mrs Joan O'Brien, for her constructive criticism and encouragement not only in the preparation of this work, but in all my study; last, but by no means least, to my supervisor, Dr J.W. de Gruchy, who has exercised monumental patience in dealing with my many delays and for his unobtrusive yet firm guidance throughout the period of my research.

CHAPTER 1Racial Legislation in South Africa 1948-1963

1948 is without doubt a signal date in South African history. Yet it is a fallacy to think that the Nationalist Government which came to power in that year was making a complete break from accepted tradition and turning the country in a radically new direction. Thus in order to view the legislation of the period under discussion in true perspective, it will be necessary to examine it against the background of racial legislation enacted since Union in 1910.

(i) Racial Legislation: 1910-1948

The non-White franchise was a key issue confronting the makers of Union. Two political principles were involved here: the Cape Liberal principle that the non-Whites should have equal political rights to those of the Whites provided they satisfied certain requirements of property and income; and the Northern principle prevalent in the Transvaal, Free State and Natal, that the non-White was inferior to the White man and so could never share political power with him.

L.M. Thompson shows that the division of opinion was not based on racial lines but on geographical factors.<sup>1</sup> Even in the Cape the approach to the problem was not uniform in that those who lived in the eastern districts in close proximity to large numbers of Africans were not as sympathetic to the granting of political rights to these people as were the Whites in the Western Cape where the Africans did not pose a numerical threat.

The general White attitude to the problem can be gauged from the views expressed by the representatives to the South African Native Affairs Commission which met between 1903 and 1905. Thompson comments thus:

"To read the evidence taken by the Native Affairs Commission is to gain the impression that nearly every White South African, in the Cape Colony as well as in the northern ones, treated all non-Europeans as social inferiors, relied on non-Europeans to provide domestic and industrial labour at low wages, and believed that non-Europeans should never be allowed to control the political machinery."<sup>2</sup>

A compromise solution was eventually arrived at which in effect was the maintenance of the existing position in the four colonies. Non-Whites in the Transvaal and the Orange Free State were excluded from any political rights, while in Natal no further Africans or Asians could register as voters. The non-Whites in the Cape were allowed to retain their voting rights which could only be altered by a two-thirds majority of both Houses of Parliament sitting together. However, non-Whites were not permitted to sit in Parliament and the number of constituencies in the Cape was pegged by the number of White voters.

In 1926 General Hertzog, Prime Minister of the Pact Government, introduced a Bill to deprive the Africans of their franchise rights, granting them instead seven White representatives in the House of Assembly and four in the Senate, to be elected by Africans throughout the country through their chiefs, headman and councils. However, the two-thirds majority required by the constitution was not forthcoming.

It was the coalition between the Nationalists and the South African Party which provided Hertzog with the opportunity for making another attempt. At the second reading of the Representation of Natives Bill, which now reduced the proposed number of representatives in the Assembly from seven to three, he outlined the reason for his policy:<sup>3</sup> the Africans' right to vote on the same basis as Whites could ultimately lead to the latter's being dominated by the former; there was also a need for a uniform policy as regards the Africans instead of the existing system which favoured those in the Cape; under the new system the Africans would be able to elect representatives whose sole responsibility was to consult their interests; in addition, the Native Representative Council created by the Bill would keep in touch with the White legislative bodies in that its reports were to be laid before both Houses of Parliament by the Minister of Native Affairs. At the third reading Hertzog gained the necessary two-thirds majority, only a small group led by J.H. Hofmeyr voting against the Bill.

In respect of the Indians, General Smuts, as a result of pressure from Whites in Natal, was forced to introduce an Asiatic Land Tenure and Indian Representation Act in 1946. As a quid pro quo for the restrictions placed on acquiring fixed property in Natal and the Transvaal, the Indians in those provinces were granted the franchise on a communal basis. They would elect three White representatives to the House of Assembly, and in the case of Natal Indians, two members (either White or Asian) to the Natal Provincial Council.

It is interesting to note that General Smuts, in rejecting the idea that the Indians should be on the Common Roll with the Whites, used the same argument as Hertzog when speaking on the Representation of Natives Act in 1936: the fear of the Whites that they would be eventually dominated by the numerically superior non-Whites.<sup>4</sup>

The Indians scornfully rejected the rights offered, referring to them as "a spurious offer of a sham franchise",<sup>5</sup> while at the United Nations, from which he had expected better things, Smuts was roundly condemned.

The first attempt after Union to bring about territorial separation between Whites and Africans was the Natives Land Act of 1913. Speaking in Parliament, the Minister of Native Affairs, Mr J.W. Sauer, said that in this Bill he was proposing that the bulk of the two races, the Whites and the Africans, should live in the main in separate areas.<sup>6</sup> Ten and a half million morgen of land were scheduled as Natives Reserves, Whites being prohibited from acquiring land in these areas, while restrictions were placed on Africans' purchasing further land outside the Reserves.

Mr Sauer frankly admitted that he did not think the area set aside was sufficient, but at least it was a step towards doing the Africans justice.<sup>7</sup> Julius Lewin puts a different construction on the matter: he sees collusion between the Government and the mine owners on the Rand to ensure that by limiting the land available to the Africans, the latter would continue to flock to the mines through sheer economic necessity.<sup>8</sup> The Courts subsequently declared this Act ultra vires in the Cape since it interfered with the potentiality of African males' acquiring franchise rights.

In recognition of the fact that the land scheduled for exclusive African occupation in 1913 was clearly inadequate, the Native Trust and Land Act (1936), which with the Representation of Natives Act was Hertzog's attempt to settle the African problem, set aside a further seven and a quarter million morgen to be added to the Reserves. The Act also sought to get rid of African squatters on White farms and to limit the number of tenant-labourers.

As regards urban areas, legislation was passed in 1923 requiring local authorities to provide segregated areas for African residence in order to put an end to "undesirable mixing" between Black and White. The

same Act,<sup>9</sup> effected greater uniformity in the various provincial pass laws, the origin of which goes back long before Union. The intention of the pass laws was to regulate the entry of Africans into White urban areas. In practice they had unfortunate consequences as the 1942 Smit Committee pointed out:

".....the harassing and constant interference with the freedom of movement of Natives gives rise to a burning sense of grievance and injustice which has an unsettling effect on the Native population as a whole. The application of these laws also has the undesirable feature of introducing large numbers of Natives to the machinery of criminal law and makes many become familiar at an early stage with prison. These laws create technical offences which involve little or no moral opprobrium. The Committee has reached the conclusion that rather than perpetuate the state of affairs described above, it would be better to face the abolition of the Pass Laws."<sup>10</sup>

The above extract exemplifies the Government's recognition of the need for reform in its African urban policy. Other significant examples can be found in The Oxford History of South Africa, vol.II p.189.

The Asiatic Land Tenure and Indian Representation Act which has already been discussed in respect of franchise rights was an attempt to segregate Indians from Whites. This measure, called the "Ghetto Act" by those affected by it,<sup>11</sup> limited the purchase of land in Natal by Indians to certain exempted areas. Smuts in justification said that his party was not breaking new ground but was following a well-known South African principle:

"We are following practices and principles which have been approved here in Parliament, practically unanimously, and which we regard as essential to the structure of our complex society in South Africa. Fundamentally the principle of separate land tenure and residence and of separate political representation for Indians are the same here in this Bill as in the case of the Natives, and the Native legislation which is already in force in this country...."<sup>12</sup>

In the industrial sector, severe limitations were placed upon Africans by the Native Labour Regulation Act of 1911 which made a breach of contract on the part of an African labourer a criminal offence. This was in line with earlier Masters and Servants Acts which had been passed in the four territories since 1856 and which remained operative after 1910.

An economic colour bar to protect Whites was erected by the Mines and Works Act of 1911 which excluded Africans from a number of jobs. In

terms of the Act the Governor-General was empowered to issue certificates of competency for skilled occupations. These were not to be granted to "Coloured persons" in the Transvaal or Orange Free State. In 1923, however, the regulations framed under the above Act were declared ultra vires, and this following in the wake of the 1922 strike and its attendant bloodshed, paved the way for the Pact victory in 1924. The alliance between Hertzog's Nationalists and Creswell's Labour Party was forged on the basis of common economic interests, the most important concern of which was the future security of the White worker. It is not surprising, therefore, that in 1926 the new Government passed the Mines and Works Amendment Act which limited the granting of certificates of competency for skilled occupations to "Europeans, Cape Coloured and Mauritius Creoles, or St Helena persons."

The Africans suffered under further disabilities. As a result of the exclusion of African men from the definition of "employee" in the Industrial Conciliation Act (1937), Africans could not become members of registered trade unions, and their own unions were not granted official recognition. Any strike on the part of Africans would be a criminal offence in accordance with the Masters and Servants Acts or the Native Labour Regulations Act.

The attitude of the majority of White South Africans towards African labour was articulated in the Prime Minister's Circular of 1924. Civilized labour was defined as the work done by those whose normal standard of living conformed "to the standard generally recognised as tolerable from the usual European standpoint". Uncivilized labour was that rendered by those "whose aim is restricted to the bare requirements of the necessities of life as understood among barbarian and undeveloped peoples."<sup>13</sup>

It was the declared intention of the Pact Government that White civilized labour should replace non-White uncivilized labour wherever possible. Practical expression was given to this on the railways where 30 000 unskilled Whites were taken on at the expense of Africans who were forced to look for alternative employment.

From the legislation relating to Africans it is evident that most White South Africans looked upon these people as inferiors and found social contact with them degrading. Hertzog, for example, expresses this attitude when he calls it a "rock of offence" to the Whites that they were on the same roll as the Africans and had to vote cheek by jowl with them. This

"was a thing which offended the feelings, because this free association caused by the joint voting allowed the position of the White man in his opposition to miscegenation in South Africa to be weakened. Inevitably the easy intercourse, etc. was bound to lead to a considerable amount of social intercourse."<sup>14</sup>

The 1936 Native legislation was an attempt to eliminate this threat to racial purity by removing the African from the common roll and extending the territory for his exclusive occupation. Here it must be pointed out that already in 1927 sexual contact between Whites and Africans, which was obviously Hertzog's ultimate fear, had been forbidden by the Immorality Act.

On the other hand, the Coloured people in the Cape continued to enjoy voting rights on the same roll as the Whites. However, in 1937 a Commission appointed to investigate the position of the Coloured people recommended that these rights be extended to the other provinces; but as the Nationalists were pressing for the political and social segregation of the Coloured population and many of Hertzog's own party sympathised with the opposition viewpoint, nothing came of this.

In 1939 Hertzog, in order to allay Coloured fears as to their position, said that they would not be deprived of their existing political rights, nor would they "by reason of race and colour be debarred from engaging in any form of industrial occupation or employment."<sup>15</sup> Yet he did state that as both Whites and Coloureds accepted social separation as a settled policy of South Africa, social and economic conditions would be brought into line with this policy.

From the above it can be seen that the Coloured people, although linked politically in the Cape with the Whites, were considered to be a group apart. The Prime Minister looked forward to a time when they would be living in their own areas, running their own affairs and services "as far as practicable."

From the brief summary of the relevant legislation enacted before 1948 it is evident that successive South African Governments discriminated on the basis of colour, the reason simply being that they were putting into operation what the majority of White South Africans desired.

We cannot, therefore, accuse the Nationalists of introducing a new racial ideology. Julius Lewin, for example, shows that in respect of Africans there has been a uniform policy in the fifty years since Union;<sup>16</sup> C.M. Tatz similarly makes this the basic thesis of his work Shadow and Substance in South Africa; while L.M. Thompson, writing in 1960, says that "most White South Africans have been actuated by racial sentiment rather than by the liberal traditions of their countries of origin."<sup>17</sup>

(ii) Racial Legislation 1948-1963

In spite of the conclusions reached in the last section, 1948 marks a new era in South African political thinking. Previous Governments had been acutely aware of the racial problems facing the country and had introduced discriminatory laws when they felt that the predominantly White electorate was demanding them. Even then prime ministers and their cabinets trod warily since they knew they were on delicate ground. Often the Government of the day contained members with widely divergent views on race and colour, a factor which made compromise a necessity on vital issues. It follows that there could be no such thing as a well-defined policy. Custom and tradition rather than law determined the relationship between White and non-White, with legislation being of an ad hoc nature.

The victorious Nationalists were to change all this. Unlike the United Party, which tended to be all things to all men, they were a relatively more homogeneous group intent on making South Africa safe for the White man. They were systematic and thorough in their approach, driving the concept of segregation, now termed apartheid, to its logical conclusion in a seemingly never-ending series of laws which entrenched their policy in every aspect of the country's life.

With the general election in May 1948 in view, the Head Office of the National Party issued a pamphlet outlining its racial policy.<sup>18</sup> In the introduction it mentioned the two guiding principles determining non-White policy: the choice was between integration, inevitably leading to national suicide, and apartheid which was referred to as a concept historically derived from the experience of the established White population of the country and in harmony with South African principles such as justice and equity. Its aim was the preservation of the racial identity of both the White population and the indigenous peoples of South Africa. In pursuance of this objective, no mixed marriages would be permitted.

The various non-White groups would be given the opportunity "to develop into self-governing national units" where they could establish their own institutions and social services. To put it in a nutshell: "The policy of our country should envisage total apartheid as the ultimate goal of a natural process of separate development."

In the evangelisation of the non-Whites, mission churches would have the support of the National Party but here there was an ominous qualification: "Churches and missions, however, which frustrate the policy of apartheid or which propagate foreign doctrines, will not be tolerated."

In the case of the Coloured people, occupying "a position midway between White and non-White", the policy would be total apartheid. Inter-marriages between them and Whites would be prohibited while in their own areas they would be protected "against unfair competition by the Bantu". In respect of political rights, they would be removed from the common roll and given instead a system which allowed them three representatives in Parliament. A State Department of Coloured Affairs was envisaged and in the Cape Province a Coloured Representative Council would be elected by those who possessed the existing franchise qualifications.

The guiding principle of African policy was the segregation of "the most important ethnic groups and sub-groups in their own areas where every group will be enabled to develop into a self-sufficient unit." The Reserves were viewed as the national home of the African and it is here that the educational and social services would be provided rather than in the urban townships. Opportunities for industrial enterprise would also be created.

The National Party, aware of the problems caused by the influx of Africans into urban areas, pledged itself to "safeguard the European character" of these by providing separate residential areas for the African and by exercising a strict control of migration to and from the Reserves. The African in urban areas would be considered "migratory citizens not entitled to political or social rights equal to those of the Whites". In this attempt to arrest the process of "detribalisation" redundant Africans in the urban areas would be returned to the Reserves and even those admitted to European towns should be considered as temporary employees who would return to their homes on expiry of their contracts. A "convenient identification and control system" would have to be devised for this purpose.

African education, which would be under State control, was to be Christian national in character with adaptations to the needs and level of development of the people themselves. "It should have a strong moral

purpose and should inculcate national consciousness."

The existing system of African representation in Parliament and the Provincial Council would be abolished, and the Native Affairs Commission replaced by a body consisting of members with special knowledge of African affairs. A system of local government was favoured which would "uphold the authority of tribal chiefs and enlist the services of educated Africans." The local councils to be established in all the Reserves could develop into central councils for the different ethnic groups. There would be initial White supervision with a progressive measure of legislative and administrative self-government.

The Indians were frankly described as "a foreign element which cannot be assimilated in the South African set-up". The intention was to repatriate as many as possible and no further Indian immigration to the country would be allowed. The Asiatic Land Tenure and Indian Franchise Act would immediately be amended so that there would be no provision for Indian representation in Parliament. Separate residential areas would be allotted to the Indians who would be prohibited from living or owning property in White areas. Where feasible, apartheid would be enforced between Indians and the indigenous races, and trading facilities outside their own areas would be drastically curtailed.

The first legislative attempt of the Government to ensure social apartheid was the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act of 1949 which made marriages between Whites and non-Whites illegal. If any person living in South Africa entered into a mixed marriage while out of the country, the marriage would not be valid in South Africa. Hand in hand with this, went the Immorality Amendment Act of 1950. The provisions of the 1927 Act, which had prohibited carnal intercourse between Whites and Africans, were now extended to non-Whites in general. A further amendment, Act 23 of 1957, increased the maximum penalty for a breach of this law from five to seven years.

The administration of the above Acts could entail certain difficulties as there was no rigid race classification, definitions of racial groups having been incorporated into certain laws for the purpose of these laws only. There was nothing to prevent a person from passing into another group if his physical features rendered this possible. To eliminate any element of doubt,<sup>19</sup> the Population Registration Act of 1950 was passed. It was basic to the whole apartheid legislative programme in

that there was now a cut and dried racial classification, the criteria being appearance and general acceptance. The Act also provided for the compilation of a national register and the issuing of identity cards specifying the racial origin of the holders. The Population Registration Amendment Act of 1962 made it even more difficult for border-line cases to pass into the category "Whites" since, whereas acceptability by the community had been the main criterion used under the 1950 Act, now acceptance and appearance had to be considered together.

The practical application of social apartheid revealed serious discrepancies. In the course of 1952, against the backdrop of the Defiance Campaign,<sup>20</sup> a number of Africans had successfully appealed against their convictions for using facilities set aside for Whites on the grounds that where separate facilities were provided for the different racial groups these should be substantially equal. The Government's answer to this was the Reservation of Separate Amenities Act of 1953 which laid down the principle that separate facilities for different groups did not mean that these need be substantially equal.

The attempt to enforce social apartheid in the religious sphere caused a great stir which is dealt with elsewhere. The offending piece of legislation, the Native Laws Amendment Act of 1957 with its clause 29(c), gave the minister the right, with the concurrence of the local authority, to put an end to the attendance of Africans at a church service in a White area if he considered that they were causing a nuisance or that their presence was undesirable in the numbers in which they customarily attended.

In 1949 a circular emanating from the Prime Minister's Department re-affirmed the "civilized labour" policy of 1924. This policy found expression in the Industrial Conciliation Act of 1956 which embodied the contentious principle of "job reservation". The Minister of Labour was empowered to instruct an industrial tribunal to look into the desirability of reserving certain types of work for a particular racial group "in order to safeguard the economic welfare of employees of any race in any undertaking, industry, trade or occupation." What the Nationalists were aiming for here was simply the protection of the White worker against competition from the competent non-White. The political advantages to the Government of such a policy are obvious. For examples of the operation of this Act see Tatz, p.141.

The basis of residential separation is the Group Areas Act of 1950. Its importance in the National Party's apartheid policy can be clearly seen from Dr Malan's words:

"What we have in this Bill before us is apartheid. It is the essence of the apartheid policy which is embodied in this Bill."<sup>21</sup>

Dr A.J.R. van Rhijn explained that while White and Black lived in unsegregated areas it was impossible to have laws against Mixed Marriages and illicit intercourse across the racial barrier.<sup>22</sup> Dr Dönges, Minister of the Interior, who introduced the Bill, said that since Union it had been hoped that the problems attending racial intermingling would be eliminated by voluntary segregation. Since this had not materialised, the Government was obliged to supply a new answer. Three basic reasons for the Act were put forward:  
a) the cultural and political disparity existing between the various racial groups made identical treatment impossible; b) the maintenance of western civilisation, which was in the best interests of both Whites and Blacks, could be ensured by a separation of the races; and c) as close contact between different racial groups led to tension, it was best to keep them apart.<sup>23</sup>

The purpose of the Act was to segregate the various racial groups into separate areas reserved for each. Similar legislation affecting Africans and Indians had already been passed but this Act was far more comprehensive, bringing the Coloured people within its orbit. In essence, the Act limited the acquisition, ownership and occupation of land in an area to a particular racial group. People of another group, such as domestic servants, might occupy premises in areas proclaimed for a group other than their own if the necessary permit were granted.

In certain "defined" areas buildings could be used for specially designated purposes only. Thus a trader could use his building for business purposes but would have to move his home to an area reserved for his own racial group. As a general principle, however, trading activities were to be conducted in the area of the traders concerned.

A great source of grievance to the African population has been the Native (Urban Areas) Consolidation Act of 1945 as amended in 1952, 1955 and 1957. Section 10 (the cause of de Blank's first confrontation with the authorities) lays down that no African may remain in an urban area for more than 72 hours unless he or she a) has lived there continuously from birth; b) has worked there continuously for one employer for ten years or lived there continuously for fifteen years and has not been imprisoned while in the area for more than six months or fined an amount exceeding R100;

c) is the wife, unmarried daughter or son under the age of eighteen years of an African falling under one of the above categories and normally lives with him; d) has been given special permission to be in the area.

If the Africans were to develop along their own lines, and thus separate from the White man, then their education would have to prepare them for the course mapped out for them. In 1951 the Eiselen Commission on Bantu Education recommended that there should be a separate system of education for the Africans controlled by the central Government. Instruction should be through the medium of the mother-tongue but in order that the African child might "be able to find his way in European communities; to follow oral or written communications; and to carry on a simple conversation with Europeans about his work and other subjects of common interest,"<sup>24</sup> both official languages would be taught. The Minister of Native Affairs, Dr Verwoerd, who accepted most of the Commission's recommendations, stated that African education should not clash with Government policy and should not create the wrong expectations on the part of the African himself, something which would inevitably occur if it were administered by those who believed in a policy of equality.<sup>25</sup> Here Dr Verwoerd was without doubt referring to the English-speaking mission schools which played the major role in African education at the time. Those who ran these institutions were creating in the minds of the Africans expectations which clashed with the possibilities open to them, for within the White community there was no place for the African above the level of certain forms of labour. Yet in their own areas every opportunity was available. Accordingly, African education should stand with both feet in the Reserves and have its roots in the spirit and being of African society.

The Government's policy as outlined above was embodied in the Bantu Education Act of 1953 which transferred control of African education to the Native Affairs Department. All schools had to be registered and wider powers were placed in the hands of the Minister. There would be a progressive reduction in State subsidies to mission schools. The Churches concerned could sell or lease their schools to the Department. They could, if they chose, continue to run their establishments at their own expense if official permission was forthcoming. The Anglican reaction to this will be discussed in the next chapter.

Professor Welsh, in discussing the reasoning behind the Bantu Education Act, writes:

"Mistrust of the English churches, the lineal descendants of the hated missionaries, includes a mistrust of their educational role among the Blacks, especially Africans. Their English orientated education was an anglicizing, 'de-nationalizing' force that induced Blacks, but especially Africans to look to political assimilation as the logical complement to cultural assimilation. Because of this education Africans would naturally incline to the English side, while the total cultural environment would become much more English in character to the detriment of Afrikaans culture."<sup>26</sup>

Universities were not to remain outside the framework of apartheid. The so-called open universities, the University of Cape Town and the University of the Witwatersrand, admitted students regardless of colour. In order to put an end to this practice a Separate University Education Bill was introduced in 1957. After the second reading it was referred to a Select Committee, the majority report of which outlined the principles on which future policy would be based:

"It is the considered opinion of the Commission that the existing "open" or mixed universities will never be able to meet the real requirements of the non-Europeans. At best they will only be able to provide university education for a limited number of non-Europeans, as has been the case up to now. Moreover they will give the students a background which does not fit in with their national character and will give them an alien and contemptuous attitude towards their own culture...."<sup>27</sup>

Following this report the Extension of University Education Act of 1959 was passed, providing for the establishment of separate university colleges for Africans, Coloureds and Asians. Two years later further admittance of non-Whites to a White university was prohibited without the consent of the responsible minister.

An example of the strict Government control over education can be seen in the case of the University College of Fort Hare. In 1959 control of the College was transferred from the multi-racial Governing Council to the Minister of Bantu Education who exercised the considerable powers put in his hands to dismiss the principal and a number of senior staff members.

The new Government was not slow to enforce apartheid in the political sphere. As promised in their pre-election campaign, the Nationalists repealed the section of the 1946 Asiatic Land Tenure and Indian Representation Act which had provided for three White parliamentary representatives for the male Indian votes in the Transvaal and Natal. Indian men in the Cape, like their Coloured counterparts, could still qualify for the common roll.

The attempt, successful after a protracted struggle, to remove the Coloured people in the Cape from the common voters' roll is perhaps the most illuminating illustration of the Nationalists' determination to let nothing stand in the way of the fulfilment of their ultimate goal of apartheid.

Dr Dönges, the Minister of the Interior, speaking on the Second Reading of the Separate Representation of Voters Bill, outlined the reasons for the desirability of removing the Coloureds from the common roll.<sup>28</sup> He alluded to the 1936 legislation in respect of the Africans to show that now similar dangers were felt as regards the Coloured people who could eventually become a threat to the maintenance of White civilisation. He further maintained that these people had been used as a "political football" - at election times their votes had been won by means of promises which were conveniently forgotten afterwards. The existing system was also retarding the progress of the Coloured community in that the White man was afraid to initiate anything which would promote their welfare since he feared that he would be simply "making a noose for his own neck."

However, the real reason behind the abolition of the Coloured common roll vote was that with a parliamentary majority of only five, the Nationalists were apprehensive that they could be unseated by the registration of new Coloured voters who were hardly likely to side with the Government.

What was given to the Cape Coloured voters instead was the right to elect, on a separate roll, four White representatives to the House of Assembly and two to the Provincial Council. The Coloureds now had, it was argued, people representing their own interests and not that of another party. An attempt was made to show that this method did not constitute an injustice to the Coloureds and so could not be regarded as a diminution of their rights.

The obstacle that stood in the way of the passing of this Bill was the entrenched clause in the Constitution which required that any alteration to the political rights of non-Whites in the Cape required a two-thirds majority of both Houses in a joint sitting. The Government, having sought legal advice, felt that as a result of the changed status of Union brought about by the Statute of Westminster, Parliament was not bound by the entrenched clause and so the Bill could be passed by means of the normal procedure.

The Separate Representation of Voters Act was duly passed by a simple majority, only to be declared invalid by the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court. The expedient adopted to overcome this judicial obstacle was the High Court of Parliament Act which gave Parliament, sitting as a court, the power to review any judgement of the Appellate Division. This Act, in its turn,

was declared invalid by the Appellate Division.

After further attempts to put this piece of legislation on to the statute book had failed, the necessary two-thirds majority was obtained by "packing" the Senate, an action which was so devious and foreign to the spirit of the Constitution that even Nationalists themselves were uneasy about the measure.<sup>29</sup>

Dr Verwoerd, recently elevated to the position of Prime Minister, startled even his own supporters by announcing in the opening session of 1959 that legislation would be laid before Parliament to give "the Bantu territorial authorities direct access to the Union Government for the promotion of Bantu interests which will replace the present system of representation by Europeans."<sup>30</sup>

The Government's intentions were clarified in a White Paper<sup>31</sup> which explained the "Background and Objects of the Promotion of Bantu Self-government Bill." This, measure was said to be in line with the Land Acts of 1913 and 1936, interpreted as attempts to identify the various African groups with the land to which they were historically linked. Here they would have the opportunity to exercise their own political rights and as these national units attained the necessary level of self-sufficiency they would "eventually form a South African Commonwealth together with White South Africa which will serve as its core and as guardian of the emerging Bantu States." The greatest impediment to the envisaged political autonomy was the representation of the Africans in the White Parliament. This was the source of White fears of being swamped politically by the Africans and at the same time it retarded the development of African institutions by the Africans in that it held out expectations of greater involvement in White institutions and promoted the desertion of trained human material from service within its own community.

The Act itself abolished African representation in Parliament, made provision for the appointment of commissioners-general to act as a liaison between the national units and the Minister of Bantu Administration and Development, and laid down that representatives of the territorial authorities were to be appointed in urban areas to maintain the link between the migrant worker and his homeland.

Whatever the official explanation, Professor Welsh sees two basic reasons behind the abolition of African representation : first, Dr Verwoerd's mania for "konsekwent-heid" (consistency); and secondly, such a form of representation was a symbolic affront to his grand scheme to

deflect African political aspirations to the homelands.<sup>32</sup>

In the light of the important part played by the African Reserves in the Government's thinking as outlined in the White Paper mentioned above, Dr Verwoerd's reaction to the report of the Tomlinson Commission (released to Parliament in 1956) is of considerable interest. The Commission had been called upon "to conduct an exhaustive inquiry into and to report on a comprehensive scheme for the rehabilitation of the Native Areas with a view to developing within them a sound structure in keeping with the culture of the Native and based on effective socio-economic planning."<sup>33</sup> The Commission reported that the way to separate development (a policy which it endorsed) was to be found "in the sustained development of the Bantu areas on a large scale."<sup>34</sup> This would require an amount in the region of R208 000 000 over the following ten years. Funds would be channelled through an Industrial Development Corporation which could initiate enterprises of its own. A majority was in favour of the establishment of White-sponsored industries in the Reserves as a means of realising the Commission's objectives. It was hoped that the application of the programme outlined would check the drift of Africans to 'White' areas.

Most of the basic recommendations of the Commission did not meet with the approval of Dr Verwoerd, then Minister of Native Affairs. White enterprise in the Reserves, he contended, was a step towards White domination of the Reserves, and extensive public assistance would deprive the African of the spirit of self-help. Since it was necessary, from a psychological point of view, for the African to begin on a small scale and with his own resources, there was no need for the large financial allocations suggested or the Industrial Development Corporation.<sup>35</sup>

Anyone coming to South Africa in the wake of this remorseless tide of racial legislation would have found the following situation: the Africans who represented an indispensable labour force undergirding the country's economy could not rise above a certain level of employment. They were subject to severe restrictions on their movements which not only by their nature but also in their application were great sources of grievance. Driven by ineluctable economic forces to 'White' areas, they were only permitted to enjoy political rights in the Reserves which could not adequately support even those living there and which many had never

seen. An educational system had been devised for the African to train him to accept a way of life not of his own choice but one mapped out by his political masters.

The Coloured people in the Cape had been shorn of their long-held political rights, and with the Indians, were segregated residentially and educationally. In addition, the application of the principle of 'job-reservation' prevented them from competing on equal terms with the Whites in the industrial and economic sphere.

Such a situation caused misgivings among many White South Africans but long-standing attitudes and prejudices made an adjustment to it relatively easy. However, for someone like Joost de Blank, reared in the British liberal tradition, such a system was unacceptable and intolerable.

References to Chapter 1:

1. L.M. Thompson: The Unification of South Africa 1902-1910, (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1960) p 113
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3. D.W. Krüger: South African Parties and Policies 1910-1960, A Select Source Book. (Human & Rousseau, Cape Town, 1960) pp385-393
4. Ibid. p276
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6. Krüger: South African Parties and Policies 1910-1960, p364
7. Ibid. p373
8. Julius Lewin: Politics and Law in South Africa, (Merlin Press, London, 1963) p99
9. Natives (Urban Areas) Act
10. Quoted in The Oxford History of South Africa, vol.II South Africa 1870-1966 (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1971) p201. (In Chapter IV: The Growth of Towns by David Welsh)
11. cf. Change in Contemporary South Africa, Edited by Leonard Thompson and Jeffrey Butler, (University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, California, 1975) p262. (In Chapter 10: South African Indians: The Wavering Minority by Kogila A. Moodley)
12. Krüger: South African Parties and Policies 1910-1960, p269
13. C.M. Tatz: Shadow and Substance in South Africa, (University of Natal Press, Pietermaritzburg) p139  
<sup>1961</sup>
14. Krüger: South African Parties and Policies 1910-1960, pp388,389
15. Quoted in Margaret Ballinger: From Union To Apartheid A trek to Isolation (Juta, Cape Town, 1969) p80
16. Lewin: op. cit. Chapter 7
17. L.M. Thompson: The Unification of South Africa 1902-1910, Preface v
18. Krüger: South African Parties and Policies 1910-1960, pp402-407
19. The passing of the Population Registration Amendment Act of 1962 shows that doubt had not been eliminated.
20. cf. T.R.H. Davendorp: South Africa A Modern History, (Macmillan, London, 1977) pp265,266
21. Quoted in Tatz, op. cit. p142
22. Idem.
23. Tatz: op. cit. pp142,143
24. Quoted in The Oxford History of South Africa, Vol.II, p225
25. Ballinger: op. cit. pp348,349
26. Thompson and Butler :op.cit. p63 (In Chapter 3: The Politics of White Supremacy by David Welsh)
27. Quoted in Tatz: op. cit. p147
28. Krüger: South African Parties and Policies 1910-1960, pp321-336  
The real reason is given in the next paragraph cf. Thompson and Butler, op. cit. pp61,62
29. Ballinger: op. cit. p306

30. Ibid. p359
31. Tatz: op. cit. pp158-164
32. Professor Welsh to me.
33. Davenport: op. cit. pp270,271
34. Ballinger: op. cit. p325
35. Ibid. pp328,329

CHAPTER 2Anglican Church and State1910-1957I. 1910-1948(i) Introduction

Hinchliff shows that at the time of Union a new concept of the role of the Church was coming into being as a result of the work of the Anglo-Catholic clergy in the slums of England. The priest was now seen as one who was fighting to improve the political and social position of the under-privileged.<sup>1</sup> Not only was the Anglican Church in South Africa deeply affected by these ideas, but just a year before Union William Carter became Archbishop of Cape Town, a man profoundly influenced by the Christian Socialism of F.D. Maurice<sup>2</sup> and one who at the time of the National Convention had united with others to resist the entrenchment of the colour-bar in the Constitution.<sup>3</sup> The scene was set for the inevitable conflict between the State, largely controlled by the Transvaal with its well-known ideas on discrimination, and the Church which was increasingly taken up with the concept of social justice.

(ii) General Nature of Church-State Relationship in the Early Years

It must not be presumed that the battle was immediately joined. On the contrary, in the resolutions of the Provincial Synods held in 1915 and 1919 Louis Botha, the Transvaal Prime Minister of the Union, is favourably, and even affectionately, referred to. In 1915 he is assured of the Synod's confidence in him during the War and regret is expressed that his responsibilities have been increased by the rebellion;<sup>4</sup> and in 1919 Synod recorded the sense of loss sustained by his death and was thankful "for his untiring efforts to weld into one the European races of this land."<sup>5</sup> This last phrase is significant because the emphasis on his contribution to European unity with the absence of any reference to the handling of the African population shows that the Church had not yet warmed to the struggle.

It must also be remembered that the differences which divided the two White groups before Union were so great that the success of the National Convention can be viewed as a minor miracle.<sup>6</sup> If the Union were to flourish, everything possible had to be done to ensure the maintenance of White unity even if it meant soft-pedalling on vital matters such as the rights of the non-Whites who formed the majority of the population. It seems that the Church itself, whether consciously or not, was thinking

along these lines, hence the above tribute to the late Prime Minister.

That the Church during this period was not aiming at anything that could be called revolutionary emerges from a resolution on "Racialism in Religion" where the 1924 Synod emphasises its belief in "the Brotherhood of all in Christ" and "the equality of all before God" but qualifies all this with an introductory phrase "without aiming at any interference with social customs."<sup>7</sup> From this it seems that at the time the Church could not see any incongruity between the doctrine of the equality of all before God and the traditional South African way of life.

(iii) Synodal Resolutions

In 1915 the Provincial Synod, in the interests of the Africans and the security of the country, called for a "more uniform and sympathetic Native policy, together with a closer personal relation between the governed and the governing."<sup>8</sup> In pursuance of this, it suggested that the Native question be raised above the vicissitudes of party politics and that Native Councils should be established in every Province to give the African the opportunity of expressing his views on matters affecting him and to train him to participate in the administration of his affairs.

Although the Native Land Act of 1913 was not referred to in the Provincial Synod of 1915, it did become the subject of a resolution at the following Synod. It was felt that the restrictions of the Act had "resulted in much injustice and hardship to Natives" and these therefore "should be immediately removed and the Act repealed until such time as more generous and comprehensive legislation is forthcoming."<sup>9</sup> And any such legislation should not be passed until the opinion of the African had been ascertained.

In the light of this resolution, it is surprising that the Synod<sup>10</sup> following the passing of the Native Trust and Land Act (1936) failed to comment officially on the subject. What is even stranger is the absence of any official statement on the Representation of Natives Act of the same year which deprived the Africans of the franchise rights granted to them at Union. It seems that at this stage the Church was more interested in social justice for the African than in his political rights.<sup>11</sup> Further, we must bear in mind that it was only after the Second World War when independence was granted to former colonial territories elsewhere on the continent that the African's political aspirations increasingly forced themselves on the attention of White South Africans and the Church leaders amongst them.

Throughout this period resolutions were passed at Provincial

Synods calling for increased grants towards African education.<sup>12</sup> In 1929 Synod stated that while it appreciated the necessity of taking the circumstances of the Africans into consideration when formulating the mode of African education, there was an urgent need to put African education on the same footing as that of the European and Coloured.<sup>13</sup>

In 1939 Synod endorsed the Report of the Inter-Departmental Committee on Native Education of 1935-36 which recommended that African Education should be administered by the Union rather than the Provincial authority; it further suggested that this authority should be the Union Department of Education and not the Native Affairs Department.<sup>14</sup> The reason for this latter suggestion was probably that the Church wanted educational rather than political considerations to be the determining factor in African education. The same resolution called for more generous provision for African education, since it was unfair to limit the amount set aside to what was derived from African taxation.

In 1924 the Cape Education Department was asked to appoint a Departmental commission on the educational needs of the Cape Coloured people. A proposal of the Diocese of Cape Town, asking for a conference of delegates of religious bodies concerned in Coloured Education with a view to formulating a policy, was supported.<sup>15</sup>

On the legal front the Church also raised its voice. Resolution 33 of the Provincial Synod of 1919 pointed out the injustice of the law "in certain parts of this ecclesiastical province" which made cohabitation between an African man and a White woman a punishable offence, whereas cohabitation between a White man and an African woman was not considered a crime. The relevant authorities were called upon "to rectify this injustice."<sup>16</sup>

On a more general level, the Provincial Synod of 1924 expressed its agreement with the Report on Equality of Justice for Europeans and Natives passed by the Provincial Missionary Conference of 1923.<sup>17</sup>

#### (iv) Statements on Colour Prejudice

Reference has already been made to a Provincial Resolution on Racialism in Religion which witnessed "to our earnest desire for the inclusion of all races in the one Church of Christ."<sup>18</sup> The Bishops of the Church of the Province went much further in a statement issued in 1930.<sup>19</sup> Their intention was to call attention to "certain Christian principles which we believe to be vital in any just handling of racial problems."

The first of these two principles was: freedom and justice for all, the basis for this being Scripture rather than expediency. "God is the Father of all: man was made in the image and 'after the likeness' of God: Christ came to redeem all men..... Therefore every man - of whatever race or colour - is of infinite worth in the sight of God." If the truth of this is conceded, "no follower of Christ can - without the gravest presumption - thwart or check the progress of even the least of God's children, nor deny to them opportunity for the fullest development of which they are capable."

The second principle was the belief that full citizenship was not dependent on race or colour, but on the fitness to discharge the responsibilities of citizenship. It was acknowledged that those who were uncivilised should not have a determining voice in the Government but as through education a subject race progressed, an increasing share in the government of the country should be granted to it.

That not much progress along these lines was made in the next fourteen years is clear from a resolution of the Cape Town Diocesan Synod in 1944. It stated its conviction that Christianity demands equal opportunity and fair treatment for all, regardless of colour. These principles should be applied to both Africans and Coloureds not only to meet their needs of the moment but also to "open a door of hope for the future." Finally, there was an expression of penitence for the extent to which these evils existed among Church members and a determination to set a better example.<sup>20</sup>

This frank statement perhaps reflects the increasing influence of the National Party which was stridently proclaiming its policy of what was later to be officially termed apartheid.

(v) Michael Scott

In the pre-1948 era Michael Scott anticipated the role to be assumed by Ambrose Reeves and Trevor Huddleston in the Fifties. In England during the Depression, he, like de Blank, had been deeply moved by the human suffering resulting from widespread unemployment. He became aware that there were two kinds of Christianity:

"There was the religion which was the divine sanction of the status quo, and there was the religion which was the divine instrument of change."<sup>21</sup>

He opted for the latter, even being prepared to work with Communists "whenever I conscientiously could."<sup>22</sup>

In 1943 he came to South Africa as assistant priest in the Pretoria Native Mission and shortly afterwards moved to Johannesburg where he worked in Sophiatown, an African township. The plight of the people amongst whom he worked led him to write:

"The pattern of civilization that has grown up in Southern Africa is that of an increasing mass of Africans uprooted from the reserves, migrating to the towns or the White man's farms, and back again to the reserves, in a constant state of flux and instability. Erected on the basis of this landless, voiceless mass of disease-ridden black people, whose own culture and social life is being destroyed with only a pathetic travesty of the White man's city culture to take its place, is the superstructure of the White man's political system. In this, farmers, mine owners and White labour combine to legislate against Black." <sup>23</sup>

In 1944 he founded the Campaign for Right and Justice which had as its aims the elimination of profiteering, the achievement of the full development of the human resources of the country and the provision of social services for all races. But he was unable to hold together the various groups, including the Communists, within the movement. He was eventually outvoted in committee and the movement fell into the hands of the Communists before ultimately collapsing.

In 1946 he was sentenced to three months' imprisonment for joining those who were taking part in a passive resistance campaign against the Asiatic Land Tenure and Indian Representation Act. A year later he was fined for living, contrary to the law, in a Native Urban Area. Shortly afterwards the police, ironically, had to rescue him from possible man-handling on the part of farmers who resented his investigation into the conditions of African farm labourers in the Bethal district of the Transvaal.

It was his espousal of the cause of the Herero tribesmen of South West Africa that led to his departure from the South African scene. After presenting their case to the Fourth Committee of the United Nations he was declared a prohibited immigrant by the Nationalist Government. <sup>24</sup>

## II. 1948-1957

### (i) Geoffrey Clayton

The victory of the Nationalists in 1948 coincided with the election of Geoffrey Clayton as Archbishop of Cape Town. At first this man of strong personality, with extraordinary mental gifts to go with it,

was prepared to examine the new regime with a "completely open mind,"<sup>25</sup> although he already doubted whether apartheid could make good its claims, at least as far as the Coloured population was concerned.<sup>26</sup> He concluded his first charge to the Diocese by stating that the policy of freedom of worship would not be abandoned in the Diocese of Cape Town.<sup>27</sup>

In 1950, while still giving the Government the benefit of the doubt, he made it clear that the Church had the right to criticise the authorities since it was not the handmaiden of any political party; and this right he exercised fully, yet with restraint during his remaining years in office.<sup>28</sup>

In 1954 he described the Bantu Education Act as "so fantastic that it cannot succeed."<sup>29</sup> He nevertheless felt that Church buildings should be leased to the Department since "even a rotten system of education is better than that which young children pick up in the streets...."<sup>30</sup> Here he could not see eye to eye with Ambrose Reeves, the Bishop of Johannesburg, who closed the schools in his diocese rather than let them be used "to indoctrinate children with a racial ideology which I am persuaded is clean contrary to the Gospel."<sup>31</sup>

A year later he declared that the policy of compulsory apartheid was appearing in all its stark reality in spite of the idealism which motivated many of its supporters.<sup>32</sup> This reality became even clearer when the Coloured people were removed from the common roll. He called this "a breach of faith with the Coloured people, and therefore immoral."<sup>33</sup>

While acknowledging that a good deal of voluntary apartheid existed, he was opposed to forced segregation on a racial basis as in the Group Areas Act.<sup>34</sup> He was especially concerned about the position of the Coloured people for "whatever may be true of Natives, for them the ideal is integration and not segregation."<sup>35</sup> Yet he was still optimistic since "the difficulties of implementing the Group Areas Act in the Peninsula may prove so great that if only some face-saving formula can be found our worst fears may never be realised."<sup>36</sup>

Clayton was worried that through the implementation of apartheid the Coloured people would become bitter as they became victims of residential and educational segregation. But he had a word for them which, in its balance and lack of bitterness, illustrates the essential character of the man:

"Don't let yourselves get converted to apartheid.  
And try to get a Christian sense of proportion.  
I know it isn't easy. But it is true that what  
really matters about you is not what you possess,  
nor what others think about you; but what you are

"yourself in the sight of God. Who steals my purse steals trash. Who steals my vote steals something that is not much better. But if a man impairs your integrity he has done you real harm. If you grow bitter, if hatred or desire for revenge comes into your heart, then you have let him do you real harm. Don't let that happen." <sup>37</sup>

It is important to note that, however much Clayton objected to official policy, he was not prepared, except in the last resort, to take any action which was not, to use his own word, constitutional. Thus, as Bishop of Johannesburg, he did not support the activities of Michael Scott, even going as far as implicitly condemning Scott's actions in Durban at the Johannesburg Diocesan Synod of 1946, where he declared passive resistance to be incompatible with Christianity.<sup>38</sup> Scott was certainly hurt that he did not have his bishop behind him for in his autobiography he wrote that after the failure of his Campaign for Right and Justice he felt betrayed by his own Church. Though not specifically mentioned, Clayton was certainly in his mind.<sup>39</sup>

Later as Archbishop of Cape Town, Clayton, as we have seen, could not agree with the Action of Reeves in closing Anglican Mission Schools in protest at the Bantu Education Act.<sup>40</sup> Clayton's policy of leasing the schools to the Government was viewed as a capitulation by Trevor Huddleston who took his stand firmly behind Reeves.<sup>41</sup> Nevertheless, reluctant as he was to come out openly in defiance of the authorities whom he believed to be ordained of God, Clayton at last reached a point where he was prepared to make the ultimate protest.<sup>42</sup>

#### (ii) Other Anglican Reactions to Apartheid

##### A. Synodal Resolutions

The Provincial Synod of 1950 passed a resolution on race discrimination couched in far stronger language than that used by Clayton in delivering his charge to that assembly when he touched on the policy of the new Government. After rejecting discrimination on the basis of Colour alone as inconsistent with the principles of Christianity, Synod felt "that the effect of much recent legislation is likely to be the rigid division of the population into social classes with unequal rights, privileges and opportunities, and the relegation of the non-Europeans to a position of permanent inferiority, and for this reason (condemned) this legislation as inconsistent with the respect of human personality that should be characteristic of a Christian society."<sup>43</sup>

The following Provincial Synod (1955) opposed the extension of migratory labour by the provisions of the Urban Areas Act "on the grounds that it will involve the breakdown of family life with its attendant evils."<sup>44</sup>

The absolute prohibition of mixed marriages was condemned as "an unwarrantable interference by the State with a Divine means of grace". Synod could not "believe it to be consistent with the will of God that a couple who are living in a state of sin should be denied the opportunity of expiation by the conversion of an unhallowed union into a union sanctified by the Divine blessing."<sup>45</sup>

The Diocesan Synod (Cape Town) spoke out strongly against the proposed removal of the Coloured people from the common roll since this was "in direct conflict with the fundamental principle of the Constitution and the honourable pledges given at the time of Union."<sup>46</sup> The proposed withdrawal of the Native Representatives from Parliament was viewed in an equally serious light.<sup>47</sup>

There was a vehement protest "against the application of the Group Areas legislation in the Cape on the grounds that a law is a bad one when it cannot be carried out without widespread suffering, which in this case involves enormous sacrifice to non-Europeans, the least protected group, and means for them the loss of material possessions, the partition of families, cruel uprooting from long established homes, and mental agonies arising from utter frustration and a haunting sense of insecurity."<sup>48</sup>

It was further pointed out that apartheid represented a threat to the national security in that it was a policy "calculated to destroy the self-respect and dignity of the non-White groups while entrenching the privileged position of the White group."<sup>49</sup>

#### B. Ambrose Reeves

While Clayton was prepared to co-operate with the Department in respect of Bantu Education, Ambrose Reeves, Bishop of Johannesburg, closed the schools in his diocese rather than lease the buildings to the Department of Native Affairs. The grounds for his action were that:

"the Church has no alternative but to refuse to co-operate in any way in furthering an education policy which violates the principles from which all true education ought to spring, for it proposes to train the great majority of African children for a status in life which has been assigned to them."<sup>50</sup>

Clayton respected this reasoning but considered Reeves' action unwise.<sup>51</sup>

Though Reeves did not make much headway with Clayton, he was able to exert a powerful influence on his successor, Joost de Blank. When the latter, as Bishop of Stepney, was attending the Anglican Congress at Minneapolis, he heard Reeves speak on "Race Relations in the Union of South Africa" and was so impressed that he made a pointed reference to the address in his report of the Congress. He was also able to learn of Reeves' assessment of the situation in South Africa at first hand when he met him after the Congress.<sup>52</sup>

It is not surprising then that when Reeves was deported in 1960, de Blank, now Archbishop of Cape Town, expressed his "scandalised astonishment" in the strongest terms.<sup>53</sup>

#### C. Father Trevor Huddleston

Father Trevor Huddleston of the Community of the Resurrection was deeply disturbed by the Bantu Education Bill and the Resettlement Bill, which had as its aim the removal of Africans from Sophiatown, Martindale, Newclare and Pageview to the new town of Meadowlands. Huddleston found it difficult to accept that his work in Sophiatown would come to an end. His sense of frustration is revealed in an article written for the Observer entitled "The Church Sleeps On":

"In God's name, cannot the Church bestir itself all over the world and act? Cannot Christians everywhere show their distress in practical ways by so isolating South Africa from contact with all civilized communities that she realises her position and feels some pain in it."<sup>54</sup>

Clayton was by no means happy with this statement and wrote to Huddleston, telling him that while he valued the prayers of the Anglican Communion, the Church in South Africa would have to solve its own problems. He could also not agree with the idea of a cultural boycott of South Africa for which Huddleston was calling.<sup>55</sup> Huddleston, for his part was surprised that Clayton did not support him and felt that those in authority in the Anglican Church, both in South Africa and England, were not militant enough in their opposition to apartheid.<sup>56</sup>

His book, Naught For Your Comfort, raises a number of issues which were to be taken and elaborated on by de Blank who must certainly have read his work and been influenced by it.<sup>57</sup> The following passage could have helped him to clarify in his mind the role he was being called upon to play as a Church leader in South Africa:

"It is but rarely in history that the hierarchy takes a prophetic view or a prophetic initiative against evil. Perhaps that is because its chief function is to guard the truth rather than to proclaim it. A Thomas à Beckett, a Faulhaber, a William Temple, are conspicuous because they occur so infrequently. They are in no way typical. Yet when evil shows itself in an attack upon personal freedom, surely then, if ever, the Christian conscience should awake, and should see to it that the Church not only speaks but acts!"<sup>58</sup>

#### D. Canon John Collins

Another prominent Anglican who was not prepared to temper his anger or language in the face of what he considered to be flagrant violations of Christian teaching was Canon John Collins who paid a visit to South Africa in 1954. His description of the country as a 'police State' and a 'mad-house' did not endear him to the authorities.<sup>59</sup>

#### E. "Church Clause"

It was clause 29(c) of the Native Laws Amendment Act which precipitated the greatest crisis in the relations between Church and State. The "Church Clause" as it has come to be called, provoked widespread reaction from many bodies, both sacred and secular, throughout the country. The Anglican reaction was embodied in a letter to the Prime Minister sent by Archbishop Clayton on behalf of the Bishops of the Province. Dr Verwoerd was told that the Church could not "recognise the right of an official of a secular government to determine whether or where a member of the Church of any race ..... shall discharge his religious duty of participation in public worship or to give instructions to the minister of any congregation as to whom he shall admit to membership of that congregation." He recognised the seriousness of disobedience to the law of the land, believing that obedience to the secular authority, even where there was a difference of opinion, was a command of God. Nevertheless they had to render to Caesar the things that were Caesar's and to God the things that were God's; and the issues dealt with under Clause 29(c) fell, in their opinion, in the latter category. The closing paragraph, simply yet movingly expresses the dilemma of the Church:

"We therefore appeal to you, Sir, not to put us in a position in which we have to choose between obeying our conscience and obeying the law of the land."<sup>60</sup>

The day after the final draft of this letter had been completed Clayton died of a heart attack. Joose de Blank would continue the struggle.

(iii) Official Attitude of the Church of England

It is pertinent to ask what the official attitude of the Anglican Church in England was during this period. We can say for certain that the Archbishop of Canterbury agreed with the statesmanlike approach of Geoffrey Clayton while taking exception to the actions of Huddleston whom he told in no uncertain terms:

"You are entirely wrong in the methods you are using to fight this situation ..... The Christian must never use force ..... must never use the same weapons as his opponent."<sup>61</sup>

His silence on the South African situation must be attributed to a communication he received from Clayton himself. He wrote:

"In the time of Archbishop Clayton, I wrote to him feeling the need of advice from the Church in South Africa and I asked him what he wanted the Church of England to do in order to give him our help in the best way. He knew that we were wholeheartedly with him in the struggle against apartheid. His reply was that we should make it abundantly clear that we abominated apartheid and supported the Archbishop entirely. Having made that clear, we should say no more since any more we said would make things more difficult for him."<sup>62</sup>

As Archbishop-elect de Blank was to hear that the Church in South Africa had abandoned the attitude outlined above and was now looking for more positive support from overseas.<sup>63</sup>

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28. Ibid. pp14,15
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58. Naught For Your Comfort, pp156,157
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61. Naught For Your Comfort, p231
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63. cf. p62

CHAPTER 3Biography of Joost de BlankI. 1908-1957 1(i) Childhood

For one whose chief opponents were to come from the descendants of seventeenth century Dutch settlers, the antecedents of Joost de Blank are not without a touch of irony. He was born in Rotterdam on 14th November, 1908. Both his father and mother were Dutch and had "Afrikaner relations" in South Africa who visited them from time to time. His father was an able financier and economist who rose to the position of head of the finance department of the great combine of Unilever. His son inherited a great deal of his administrative ability, being labelled the 'tycoon bishop' by a prominent newspaper.<sup>2</sup> When he was nine months old his father moved from Rotterdam to London where Joost, the youngest of six children, was baptised in the Dutch Church at Austin Friars.

At the age of five he entered a kindergarten for girls at Acton after which he went to the Hillsborough Preparatory School for Boys at Ealing Common. In 1919 he left to continue his education at Merchant Taylors' School where his brother was already a pupil.

He informs us that "he suffered all the spoiling which resulted from being the youngest of a large family."<sup>3</sup> His sister refers to him as a sensitive child with a strong moral sense. "He was generally sweet-tempered and outshone us all in the personal charm he had inherited from both his parents". This was not the whole picture for he was also "a self-willed child with a quick temper who would scream if he did not get his own way".<sup>4</sup>

His father did not subscribe to orthodox Christian views but as his mother had been brought up in the Dutch Reformed Church, the children were sent to the Presbyterian Church because of its similar Calvinistic basis. However, at the impressionable age of twelve, de Blank "really 'got' religion. I was invited to a schoolboys' mission in the Christmas holidays. I joined a boys' Bible class that met first on Friday evenings and later on Sunday afternoons. The teaching was forthright and definite. You were either saved or unsaved - the choice was yours. And so I was converted - not just once, but every time I was submitted to a 'Gospel appeal' lest I had not done it properly the time before."<sup>5</sup>

In unpublished autobiographical notes written during his last illness, he remembers the great stress laid on the Second Coming of Christ:

".....I was quite certain that I would be taken and the others of my family left. This caused a good deal of sorrow and made me hate, for example, the thunderstorm when I believed Christ was coming, and to my surprise and horror I myself was left behind while the saints were gathered to Him in the sky."<sup>6</sup>

He later described this religion as "incredibly bigoted, partial and puritanical." At the same time he admitted that he had never lost the reality of Christ which impressed itself on him at that time.<sup>7</sup>

His school career was unexceptional. He followed the modern and scientific side of the school curriculum, specializing in higher mathematics in his final year. He later regretted that he had neglected the classics but at this stage he entertained no thoughts of entering the ministry.

#### (ii) University Days

After leaving school in 1926 de Blank still had a year to wait before commencing his university career at Cambridge. During this period he completed a course in journalism at King's College, London. This interest in the written and printed word was to remain with him unabated and manifested itself in the writing of books and the production of church magazines which were praised for their originality and attractive appearance.

By the time he started his studies at Queen's College, Cambridge, he had already made up his mind to enter the Church, though law, which formed the second part of his tripos, held a strong attraction for him. At the end of his second year he obtained a second class tripos in English.

The bulk of his time at Cambridge was taken up with religious activities, all of which centred round the Cambridge Inter-Collegiate Christian Union (CICCU). This body was composed of students who had an evangelical and fundamentalist outlook similar to his own, and so he felt at home as he attended the regular prayer-meetings, Bible readings and evangelical services. On one occasion he responded to an appeal for missionary service which was made at the annual Keswick Convention.

De Blank, in referring to this period, tells us that he took with him to university the attitude to religion he had derived from his Bible Class experience. He "found enough kindred souls coming from identical

Bible Classes and identical in their outlook. The company of 'the saved' was what mattered. Church-going was an optional extra, and it was better to go to no church at all than to one that was 'unsound'. This meant inevitably that it did not matter in the least which 'denomination' one patronized; we went wherever the pure word of God was preached - and we made ourselves the judges ..... The word of God was exalted at the expense of the Sacraments which were always under suspicion as they led via sacerdotalism to Rome!".<sup>8</sup>

In 1930 he joined the evangelical Cambridge Missionary Fellowship, becoming the secretary of this body, a post which he held for a number of years. In this company he did not meet many who were of opposing views. On the other hand, his father did not see eye to eye with him on his religious outlook and "was sometimes near despair that his beloved youngest son and an intelligent person, could hold such narrow beliefs. Many fruitless discussions took place between them but father's more humane and tolerant views, coupled with his deep concern for mankind, contributed to the gradual widening of Joost's horizons."<sup>9</sup>

It seems, though, that de Blank did not follow slavishly the doctrines of the Union for he, together with a number of friends, formed an "Off the Rails Club" with its own tie. The expression, "off the rails", was used to describe those who deviated from the accepted theology of the group, and therefore de Blank's part in the formation of the Club indicates that he was aware that he had moved some distance from his earlier convictions.

Of this period de Blank wrote the following:

"I could say that the strong evangelical convictions of my youth wrecked my chances of using fully my time at Cambridge.....but on the whole I have to give thanks to the stability these convictions brought to my life; they gave me more than I ever deserved to receive."<sup>10</sup>

He later felt that what the Union lacked was an emphasis on Christian obedience which embraced the whole of life: "The incarnational challenge that a man is expected to glorify God in his daily work, whatever that work may be, was never clearly proclaimed. And herein lies the weakness of this partial Christianity."<sup>11</sup>

In order to anticipate later criticism of de Blank's love of colour and display, which the uncharitable might have referred to as ostentation, a comment of his sister relating to this period is particularly apposite:

"By nature he was extravagant, loved colour and flamboyance in his clothes and in his belongings .....he was fortunate in that while he was at Cambridge his father's financial prosperity enabled him to indulge an expensive taste in clothes, in cars and other luxuries of life. He wore the baggiest of plus fours and the widest Oxford trousers; he liked brightly coloured pyjamas and neckwear, modern paintings and unusual ornaments."<sup>12</sup>

(iii) Preparation for the Ministry

De Blank felt called to the ministry but had not decided on the Church he should enter. It is worthwhile quoting in full the reasons for his ultimate choice:

".....it seemed to me that the Church of England had advantages that outweighed all its Romanizing tendencies and ritualistic dangers. These advantages were pastoral. No other Christian body in England had the right to work the parochial system - and the parochial system meant that the Minister was not limited to shepherding the members of his particular denomination, but he had a right to confront everyone in his parish with the claims of the Gospel. He had a right to go to those who went to no church ..... but still thought of themselves as 'C of E'. It was thus a desire that my ministry should be an Evangelistic one that first led me to the Church of England. I was prepared for Confirmation during my second year."<sup>13</sup>

Upon completion of his tripos in English and Law he commenced his theological training at Ridley Hall, Cambridge. De Blank did not find his studies here enjoyable. His sister gives two reasons for this: first, the college was divided into two factions, the one consisting of fundamentalists to whom de Blank felt naturally drawn and the other of those more liberal in outlook; secondly, the training did not come up to his expectations, especially as the principal treated them like children.

At this time he was moved by the writings of Henry Drummond, an author he was to quote in his own books and sermons.<sup>14</sup>

(iv) Curate at Bath

A friend, Francis Lampen, who had decided to go to the parish of Walcot in Bath, told de Blank that there was an opening for a second curate. He decided to accept an offer to serve there, being made deacon in December 1931 and a priest a year later. His sister describes the parish of Walcot as a "very low evangelical church"<sup>15</sup> without conforming to the fundamentalism of de Blank's student background. He took control of St Thomas's, a small church located in a working class area.

Writing as Vicar of Banbury, Ian Beacham, in whose home de Blank stayed during his curacy at Bath, said that it was felt that the rector had made a mistake in sending Francis Lampen to the "fashionable, large and well-attended St Andrew's" while de Blank was put in charge of a mission church. However, he soon made his presence felt, and such was his eloquence that "it became an important endeavour each week to find out where he was to preach the following Sunday." It was soon realized that he was being wasted where he was, and so he was heard more often at the Parish Church and St Andrew's :

"He was also, even in those days, a master of the apt story or illustration and never hesitated to kindle emotion in what he said and the way he said it."<sup>16</sup>

It was as a result of his ministry in the Anglican Church that de Blank became broader in his outlook. Years later, when already Archbishop of Cape Town, he could look back and comment:

"being an Anglican ..... enlarged my charity. It broke down my narrow exclusiveness. This did not happen in a single moment, but gradually I discovered that the Church of England included among its members a wide variety of Christian belief, and that people holding very different views from myself were just as devoted in their service of Christ as I tried to be. I could no longer 'unchurch' them; I could no longer pretend that I was saved and they were not."<sup>17</sup>

This early period of his ministry coincided with the Great Depression, and his sister mentions that he was especially disturbed by the unemployment. In a letter he wrote that "one of the saddest things about visiting round here is the amount of unemployment - the utter helplessness of men is pathetic and materially one can give them very little comfort."<sup>18</sup> Bartha de Blank sees in those troubled years the awakening of his desire for social justice.<sup>19</sup>

At this time too, de Blank felt drawn to the Oxford Movement which was attracting adherents all over Britain. He was so greatly influenced by their teaching on guidance that in 1933 he wrote a booklet, Will God Speak?, in which he presented the biblical backing for the Movement's teaching on this subject, together with the personal experience of well-known spiritual leaders.

Beacham mentions that one result of his interest in the Movement was that his field of service became much more extensive than the area to which he was licensed. He did not remember any tensions arising from this combination of parish work and Group activity, but he does state

categorically that de Blank never managed to interest the other clergy in the Movement. On the other hand, he had great success in introducing the ideas of the Group to numerous people with the result that "what had been a formal and traditional church attendance became a personal living faith. At the time in Walcot parish he had at least a dozen groups meeting in each other's homes every day at 7 o'clock in the morning for the Quiet Time."<sup>20</sup>

(v) Working for the Oxford Movement

De Blank soon became so totally committed to the Oxford Movement that in August 1934 he became a full-time worker at Bredon in Worcestershire. His duties, which he undertook without payment, involved the furtherance of the evangelistic work of the Movement while acting as a liaison for the various teams operating in the West Midlands. His parents were unhappy about the financial aspect of this new job and so de Blank received a regular allowance from his father while at Bredon.

From entries in a private journal<sup>21</sup> it is clear that 1936 was a troubled year for de Blank. He was worried about the swift passing of time, the implications of stewardship and of Christianity as a whole. In order to illustrate his disturbed state of mind and his frustration at the failure of others to grasp his vision, it will be necessary to make extensive use of this record. On the 22nd April he wrote:

"Back to the simple life - the bare necessities - the more to have to propagate the Gospel. Not the luxury in which we live. Simplicity and Stewardship. Everything watched, my breakfast, my earnings, to see if it really contributes to the spread of the Gospel. It will mean settlements of Christian Communism I believe, where each for all and all for each will be demonstrated."

The influence of the Oxford Movement is apparent in this extract:

"I suppose finally the challenge of guidance is the only answer, but I believe we need to be woken up to real stewardship as we live in comfort while the poor starve. I believe there is a deliberate blindness to that."

He was satisfied with the correctness of the Movement's principles but had his doubts about its methods:

"We cannot as Christians coerce a man ..... by the power of emotional propaganda. The challenge of Christianity is always to the mind to think and the will to take action. Emotionalism (jelly-bellied flag-flapping) - unintelligent propaganda are not worthy instruments to bring in the Kingdom of God because they are transitory and not permanent."

We notice here, too, an appeal to the intellect, a factor which he seems to have neglected up to this point for he wrote later that "becoming an Anglican meant for me the one word, liberation. I was liberated from a narrow sectarianism; I was liberated from a bigoted anti-intellectualism; and I was liberated too from an unreasoned and unreasonable puritanism."<sup>22</sup>

He was against any attempt to play down the implications of Christianity in order to make it more palatable for the masses:

"I think my fear is that we water down the challenge say on stewardship or war or a new system because we don't want to put people off, i.e. - we want to get as many people changed as possible. My belief is that ten people changed with the grasp of the implications of the Kingdom are worth any number changed to a different level."

A month later he was moved to write: "I must record for my own sake that .... seven Bishops have lately come down against pacifism. So often I feel like resigning my orders!" He began to look for "a definite job ahead ..... somewhere I need that drive within me to creative work .... whatever that creative work may be."

Ashamed of his own selfishness, he now wanted "to live for others - to burn out for God. Of T.E. Lawrence it was said that 'he refined his life to a flame'. May my life be a flame for God. May I always, always, always, be relaxing in the hands of God so that He through me may work the good purpose of His will."

On the 21st June he recorded that he was "still desperately keen on world-changing, enlightened internationalism, the freedom of the individual, the outlawry of war, the banishment of hate and fear and poverty. Is the Group doing that?, and even if it is, is it doing it the quickest way?"

If neither the Oxford Movement nor the Church was the right vehicle for getting these ideas across, then was it not preferable to find a parliamentary platform for the propagation of his plans to change the world?

In another entry in his journal he refers to his "unintelligent acceptance of a Group dictatorship" for which he blames "my chameleon-like character and my desperate inferiority." But now he felt he could face the challenge of the world.

Beacham reflects thus on de Blank's association with the Oxford Movement:

"In later years he always gave me the impression that he was reluctant to talk about his association with the Movement in Bath and subsequently at Bredon, almost as if it was naive. In retrospect much of it probably was but there is no doubt that at the time he was deeply committed to it, and that through it he influenced very many people, including myself, to take their Christian faith seriously."<sup>23</sup>

After further doubts about himself and his ability to solve the complex problems of mankind, he felt led to the parish of Emmanuel, Forest Gate in East London.

(vi) Vicar at Emmanuel, Forest Gate

He commenced his new ministry at the end of January 1937. At this stage he still maintained an active interest in the Oxford Movement but by the outbreak of the war he had terminated his association with the group. At Forest Gate de Blank began by questioning, by implication, the purpose of the various church organisations:

"No church or organization justifies its existence unless it is actively assisting in bringing the neighbourhood under God's control. Organizations which exist solely for pleasant fellowship have no place in the church .... Only as our efforts are directed outwardly to a world in need will we find (fellowship). No valid church organization can remain static. It will either increase or it will decrease..... It is our determination that at Emmanuel every organization shall have as its objective the winning of the world for God."<sup>24</sup>

In pursuance of this objective all the branches of the church were re-organised and revitalised. Sub-committees were formed to facilitate the work and to get as many people as possible involved. The church magazine, called the "unpaid curate" by de Blank because of his belief in its effectiveness, was redesigned to make it an attractive and modern publication. A special epilogue on Sunday evenings was introduced in the summer months. These services which people were invited to attend in their holiday attire proved extremely popular. Of a more specialised nature, de Blank set up a spiritual clinic for those with personal problems, and through an arrangement with the psychotherapeutic wing of one of London's hospitals he could pass on to it those in need of special psychiatric help.

His increasing awareness of social problems and the role of the Church in dealing with them are apparent in this extract from the Forest

Gate Review:

"No Christian can accept the appalling conditions in which so many of our fellow-creatures have to live. He has been called to help in the establishment of Christ's Kingdom. Very well - that demands constructive action in dealing with the social evils of our time ..... Poverty in the midst of plenty, might conquering right, unemployment, exploitation - these poisons must be eradicated from society's system and the Church gives itself to that task."<sup>25</sup>

Everyone in his parish was called upon to engage in this work.

The need for Church unity also occupied his mind at this time. Instead of bemoaning the fact of division, he was determined to do something about it, and so he wrote that at Forest Gate "divisions on secondary issues shall not be allowed to hinder our closest co-operation in all primary matters of our common faith."<sup>26</sup> These words received practical expression in a number of combined services.

The deteriorating international situation evoked an appeal which was addressed to a far wider audience than the Forest Gate parish.

"When will the leaders of Christendom realize the imperative and urgent need for Christian unity? It is the need of the day, and I long that the Archbishop of Canterbury will seize his umbrella and fly to the Vatican, there in the name of Christ to demand common Christian action and Christian policy. We want more than a courteous exchange of politeness and opinions both with the Roman church and the Free churches - we want united action."<sup>27</sup>

So intense were his feelings that he initiated a new movement called "The Christian Front", the aim of which was to unite people of all denominations so that a concerted effort could be made to influence national policy and avert the impending international disaster. However, the war started before the organisation could make its presence felt.

Anyone who saw de Blank as Archbishop of Cape Town, resplendent in his purple cassock and prominently displaying his ring of office, will be surprised to learn that at this time he seldom wore a clerical collar because "it sets up a false mark of difference between the clergy and the laity. You would be surprised to discover how few people can be natural with a clergyman. They seem to think that ordination has turned a very ordinary sinner in a moment of time into a very extraordinary saint, and that the clerical collar is actually a halo which has slipped out of position a bit."<sup>28</sup>

We can gauge the importance of de Blank's ministry at Forest Gate from what he himself wrote in his introduction to The Parish in Action:

"I should not like this book to be published without also referring to the parish of my first incumbency, Emmanuel, Forest Gate ..... I went there at the age of twenty-eight, and how kind all its people were to me as I tried out my wings and made my foolish mistakes. Many of the experiments recorded in these pages were first tested, often in an undeveloped form, in Forest Gate, and nobody seemed to mind."<sup>29</sup>

#### (vii) The War Years

The war brought an end to his ministry at Forest Gate. In July 1940 he left to begin a three-week training course for Army Chaplains. After six months with the Anti-Aircraft Brigade in Cheshire, de Blank was transferred to the Seventy-third Medium Regiment, R.A. which was destined for service in the Middle East. On their way to Egypt, they stopped at Durban where de Blank had his first personal experience of South African conditions: "What a wonderful week that was. We were entertained lavishly and royally and I have the happiest memories of the kindness and generous hospitality of a large number of people."<sup>30</sup>

During his stay here which was "absolutely the biggest compensation the war has given me", he visited Zululand where "we saw native kraals and blacks in all kinds of costumes and dress."<sup>31</sup> He had a conversation with Mr Shepstone, the Native Welfare Officer, who told him :

"that in all his years of experience he reckoned that he had met only six natives who were so truly converted that their lives were Christian. He bemoaned the higher education the missionaries were giving the natives because the body politic was not ready to receive them into jobs worthy of their education. Hence brooding dissatisfaction."<sup>32</sup>

This is an interesting reminiscence because although de Blank was not in a position to make any comment on Shepstone's words, he was to have much to say on the Government's attitude to mission schools when he assumed office in South Africa sixteen years later.<sup>33</sup>

His sister, without citing any authorities, mentions that de Blank led a convoy of over thirty trucks from Tobruk only a few hours before it fell in June 1942, although all the exits from the city had been mined. She adds that friends "who knew of this felt he would have received a decoration for outstanding leadership and initiative if there had not been so much chaos."<sup>34</sup>

In August 1942 he was transferred to the headquarters of the Ninth Army near Beirut to take up his position as staff chaplain. Here chaplains of different denominations discussed, under his leadership, post-war problems facing the Church and the difficulties involved in reunion. Writing in 1952, Rev. K.C. Oliver, C.F. (Warden, Royal Army Chaplain's Training Centre and Dept., Bagshot) had this to say:

"It was apparent that he had a most unusual combination of talents, possessing intelligence, charm and boundless energy. During the lulls between battles, the chaplains met together on several occasions and discussed the role of the Church in the days of peace that we hoped lay ahead. Here again Joost took the initiative. His outlook was fresh and original and under his guidance, we formed a movement known as the Forward Group, full of plans for the future, a movement that received the keen encouragement of Archbishop William Temple."<sup>35</sup>

After being transferred to the Royal Dragoons for a short period he returned to England in the Spring of 1944 and was promoted to the rank of senior chaplain in April. In the autumn of the same year he was posted to Northern Europe where an injury from a rocket attack necessitated his return to England. After four months of convalescence he became Warden of the Chaplains' Training Centre at Tidworth.

His war service gave rise to serious doubts about his vocation. He was perhaps influenced partly by the apathy he saw in many of the chaplains and partly by the horror of the war itself. In the early part of 1942 he had decided to become a barrister after the war so that he could follow a parliamentary career which he saw as his best means of propagating Christianity, for, as he wrote to a friend, "the church was possibly not the right place for his militant ideas".<sup>36</sup> He seems to have been serious about this resolution because he noted in his diary that he was "reading Criminal Law with interest".<sup>37</sup> The following year, however, he felt that there was a revival in his spiritual life.

De Blank might have contemplated leaving the Church but he also entertained thoughts that tended in the opposite direction. In Syria he told a fellow-chaplain that he was increasingly attracted to the "Franciscan ideal, but NOT doctrinally bound, not even within the confines of Christianity and not avowedly celibate either, but Lady Poverty, yes, emphatically, yes. I find I am tired of the average clergy, half in the world and half out."<sup>38</sup> His sister expresses the opinion that he would possibly have joined a religious order in later years if there had been no family ties.<sup>39</sup>

(viii) On the Staff of the Student Christian Movement

After the war de Blank joined the staff of the Student Christian Movement, starting his duties as Assistant General Secretary in February 1946. This period in his life does not seem to have been particularly eventful, his most noteworthy achievement being the part he played in the organisation of the Quadrennial Conference held at Westminster in January 1948.

He was due to take over the magazine of the S.C.M., The Student Movement, but at the time the organisation was feeling the financial pinch and so cutting down staff. De Blank felt it was time to go and left to begin a new sphere of service at St John the Baptist, Greenhill, Harrow, in the diocese of London.

It is interesting to hear his views on the S.C.M. written a decade later:

"It was perhaps too caught up with its own intelligence and academic qualities ..... Somehow I have the uncomfortable conviction that the S.C.M. of those days gave people a lot of stimulating ideas; I am not sure that it brought them face to face with the One who is recognizably Son of Man, and Son of God and who by virtue of His being had the right to make a limitless demand upon their service and their loyalties as He called them to follow Him only and to love Him more than anything or anyone on earth." <sup>40</sup>

(ix) St John the Baptist, Greenhill

In his book, The Parish in Action, de Blank has left us a full account of his ministry at Greenhill which he began in February 1948. His experiments at Forest Gate were now continued and extended. His primary aim was to bridge the gulf between the regular church-goer and those outside. De Blank was obviously not content with the complacent attitude of the Church which had survived the war, was faithfully served by its priests and had a variety of activities for its members:

"It was possible not only to come to church services, but also to spend most evenings in the Church hall, entering with fellow church members into a wide variety of social life and entertainment. But all this activity added to the danger of a growing division between the church-goers and the non-church-goers. Because the church-goers found their social life in the church and the non-church-goers outside it, between the two there was a great gulf fixed, which, while it remained, would effectually prevent any possibility of those outside being brought inside." <sup>41</sup>

In order to remedy this situation the parish was divided into twelve areas each under its own leader who, in turn, kept in touch with street representatives. Area leaders met regularly with the incumbent and his staff to exchange news and information such as forthcoming marriages or baptisms, and to make known particular needs of people in the various areas so that pastoral visitation could be more purposefully directed. In their own areas the church members acted as baby-sitters, performed nursing duties in times of illness, and were generally able to provide expert help for those with particular problems.

To attract those unfamiliar with Prayer Book worship, special epilogues were arranged on Sunday evenings. At these services to which, as previously at Forest Gate, people were invited to come just as they were, the form of service was explained. Attempts were also made to reach the rank outsider by means of lunch hour, open air and area services.

His desire for Church unity was also in evidence in his arrangement of combined acts of witness although the Harrow Council of Churches was already in existence when he came to Greenhill. The minister of the Cottage-road Baptist Church said that in his time de Blank had done more than any single local individual to bring the work of the churches together.<sup>42</sup>

It was a strong conviction of de Blank that the Church should be involved in the running of the community. He himself set the example by being a member of the local Education Committee and encouraged his parishioners to become similarly involved.<sup>43</sup> The Harrow Observer paid the following tribute to him on his election to Stepney:

"Mr de Blank has proved a vicar of most energetic and progressive qualities. Not only has he attracted large congregations to the church and increased its electoral roll, but he has sought - and succeeded, I believe - to extend the influence of the Church by original and enterprising methods. He has also taken a prominent part in the religious and secular life of Harrow beyond his own parish."<sup>44</sup>

The Dean of Westminster told de Blank's sister that on meeting Joost during this period he gained the overwhelming impression of an enterprising pastor and parish priest: ".....at that time I don't think I ever visited an ordinary parish and got such a strong impression of this tremendous pastoral leadership, enthusiasm, imagination, spiritual confidence."<sup>45</sup>

Bishop Wand also spoke in glowing terms of de Blank's ministry at Greenhill:

"We shall remember his great and distinguished pastorate in Greenhill which he made into a parish of friendship and loving souls united in one great endeavour to forward the coming of the Kingdom of God. It was here more than anywhere else he acquired his contact with lay people and learned to understand the position and opportunity of the clergy. It was out of that experience that most of his writing came..... He was a pioneer in the great movement of parochial reform that is going on at the present time ..... it is on the principles that he enunciated that our work will proceed in years to come."<sup>46</sup>

(x) Bishop of Stepney

Shortly after his father's death in January 1952 de Blank received an invitation from the Bishop of London to become Suffragan Bishop of Stepney. On 25th July he was consecrated by Geoffrey Fisher in St Paul's Cathedral. De Blank was not daunted by the prospect of taking control of an episcopal district set in the heart of the East End of London. He refused to believe "that the vision and the hardship of the work in this neighbourhood can no longer draw men to lives of heroic self-denial and service. This is the most exciting place to be in the whole of the Church of England, and I promise to do all I can to inspire young and active men of God with the privilege and adventure of working in these parts."<sup>47</sup>

Church work had been disrupted as a result of war-time bombing and the clergy themselves were discouraged and dispirited. De Blank's great contribution here, according to Canon C.E. Young, was "that he put new heart into the clergy. He made us realise that we had got a task to fulfil, and that this was something we could do if we really realised that we could do it."<sup>48</sup>

In order to "break down any loneliness or sense of isolation"<sup>49</sup> among the clergy, de Blank made every Tuesday an 'open-house'. He also organised an elaborate Christmas party to which leading personalities, including the actress Margaret Leighton, were invited to pay tribute to East London clergy, who, in de Blank's words, "work in comparative isolation and often live in drab surroundings with little opportunity for social relaxation."<sup>50</sup> It was this practical way of showing his concern which encouraged the clergy and made them feel that here was someone who really had their interests at heart."<sup>51</sup>

His cordial relationship with his clergy was the subject of a

tribute paid to him by Bishop Ward at de Blank's memorial service:

"He was a wonderful Bishop of Stepney; his clergy adored him. He was a born leader, they rallied to him and after all the devastating effects of war they were able to build up the life of the church in that part of the diocese in a most marvellous and God-refreshed way."<sup>52</sup>

There were some, though, who had reservations about him. Canon Young mentions "a lot of old diehards who had been there for years and years, and they did not like the idea of a young Bishop whose churchmanship was perhaps different from the Catholic tradition of East London .... But as he got to know the clergy I think it would be fair to say that perhaps 90% of them fell for him completely as I did."<sup>53</sup>

He also wasted little time in getting to know the people under his charge. In a tight schedule he even managed to fit in three days in the Kent hopfields in order to become acquainted with the pickers, most of whom came from the East End of London.

His Lent Progress<sup>54</sup> of 1953 further illustrated his desire to identify himself more fully with his people. This Progress displayed such energy and initiative that the Church Times felt called upon to write:

"Realizing the danger of a Bishop becoming known to his people only as an administrative officer of the Church, he set aside every available minute in Lent to share in the life of the parishioners in his jurisdiction..... A progress such as this establishes such mutual confidence and affection, that Bishop, clergy and people move firmly forward together under God to build His Church and extend His Kingdom in London east of Aldgate Pump."<sup>55</sup>

In 1954 an East London Church Congress was held. De Blank once again showed his great gift for organisation in his detailed preparation for an event, the purpose of which was "quite simply to capture the imagination of the East Londoner, for practical action follows awakened imagination."<sup>56</sup> This Congress, which Canon Young termed an 'inspiring occasion',<sup>57</sup> also illustrates de Blank's desire to take the church to the people rather than to be satisfied with the position as he found it. According to a young London vicar, the Congress had the effect of bringing together in fellowship and resolve the clergy and congregation of the whole area. It made them "conscious that they were members of a family together, embarked on a common enterprise .... against terrific odds."<sup>58</sup>

De Blank did not confine himself to ecclesiastical affairs.

Believing as he did that the Church had a right to speak out on matters affecting society as a whole, he expressed himself strongly on controversial issues of the day. When the Lord Chief Justice called for flogging as a punishment for crimes of violence, the Bishop addressing two-hundred school-girls, had this to say:

"The Lord Chief Justice, whose main function one would have thought would be to maintain the dignity and impartiality of the law has been canvassing for the power to order flogging as enthusiastically as any usher at a Victorian Charity School."

Commenting on the Lord Chief Justice's statement that the public conscience would not be satisfied if savage and sometimes bestial crimes were not punished in a way that would satisfy it, he said that this was uncomfortably close to vox populi vox dei: "It is not far removed from identifying justice with mob law, an attitude of mind no Christian or humanistic conscience can accept."<sup>59</sup>

In 1955 he visited Ruth Ellis in the condemned cell at Holloway Prison and was "horrified and aghast beyond words"<sup>60</sup> to find that the prisoners could hear the hammering going on as the scaffold was being built. On the death penalty itself he was outspoken:

"The sanctity of human life is an essential element of religious faith, as it is of any civilized community. And though wars may still have to be fought, men are then killed because the rule of law has been denied, not because it has been observed. Let the man convicted of a capital crime be prepared for final judgement even if years of remedial imprisonment be involved. If we dispatch him into eternity unprepared, our crime is at least as grave as his."<sup>61</sup>

In accordance with his insistence that Christianity involved the whole of life, he served on various boards and committees. This extract from his quarterly Cockaigne (Spring 1955) illustrates his attitude:

"We must put the Gospel back squarely where it belongs, in the market place, on the floor of the House, in the factory and in the counting house. It means putting the Gospel back into the centre of our lives, our work and our homes."<sup>62</sup>

He also did a fair amount of writing during this period. He had several books published and contributed a weekly article on religion to The Star, the London evening paper, during 1955 and 1956. These articles were so popular that they continued to appear even when de Blank

was on a visit to North America.

As at Forest Gate and Greenhill, much thought went into the production of a magazine. Cockaigne was attractive in appearance and, in the words of Dean Abbott, gave "the impression of a high degree of originality."<sup>63</sup> This, together with his elaborate preparation for the East London Congress and the Christmas Party for the clergy, is an example of what Abbott called "a certain style and a flair for the occasion .... he was quite unafraid to put on a good performance."<sup>64</sup> Later, in South Africa his style and flair were not always so well received.

De Blank's sphere of activity was not limited to his episcopal district. During 1954 he visited the United States for the first time to attend the Anglican Congress at Minneapolis and the Conference of the World Council of Churches at Evanston. The effect that the former had on him can be gauged from his report on the Congress entitled "Mighty River"<sup>65</sup> which the Daily Telegraph referred to as "a spiritual and moving account".<sup>66</sup> At the outset he became deeply aware that he was not merely an individual Christian but a member of the Universal Church. Of the opening service he writes:

"For a moment the Church Militant was expressing the unity and victory of the Church Triumphant as the delegates passed the last seats in the auditorium, making a total congregation of 10,000 people ....."<sup>67</sup>

And in similar vein:

"In Minneapolis we were united with the saints, the martyrs, the doctors and confessors - one with those who in Christ's Church in every age have worshipped the God of their salvation."<sup>68</sup>

The feeling of elation and excitement is well captured in this passage:

"But now the 'Anglican Mississippi' was in full flood. In a picture more appropriate to the Egyptian Nile, it was overflowing its banks to bring the water of life to parched and arid areas, both here in America and throughout the world. It was as if the button that released this tremendous hydro-electric power was pressed on this opening evening. To one observer it brought an echo of the Day of Pentecost, when, overcoming the differences of language and custom, men heard - and experienced - in their own tongues the wonderful works of God."<sup>69</sup>

De Blank frankly conceded that the Congress had said nothing significantly new on basic issues but it was "good to state publicly that the Church, by its obedience bound, can recognize no barrier of colour or of race and that the Gospel of the Incarnation demands an involvement, at

least responsibly and perhaps directly in the civic and political hurly-burly of modern life."<sup>70</sup> This reference to the Incarnation with its implications for practical living must be noted as it forms the basis of de Blank's attack on Apartheid.<sup>71</sup>

Those at the Congress were reminded "that the proclamation of the Gospel is falsified if the Church fails to stress the need for social justice in all walks of life and for fair dealing between peoples."<sup>72</sup> de Blank was to use this very point in warning the South African Premier, Dr Verwoerd, that the continued existence of Christianity on the Continent of Africa was being jeopardised by the policies of his Government.<sup>73</sup>

In the light of de Blank's aggressive attitude as Archbishop of Cape Town the following is significant:

"Although this was not the kind of gathering which forwarded resolutions to governments, nevertheless everyone present came to recognise the Church's right and obligation to enunciate those Christian principles on which alone a stable and developing society can be built ..... In the strength of their global fellowship men and women went back determined that their church should move from defence to attack in the triumphant assurance that the Salvation wrought by Christ would honour their obedience here and bring men to find victory in the life to come."<sup>74</sup>

The issue of race relations was also raised. de Blank wrote that this was not a great problem in England at the time "though every day it looms more largely - but is of greatest moment in South Africa and other parts of the world."<sup>75</sup> The Congress called upon all members of the Anglican Church "to witness strongly and wisely against all forms of discrimination, to work in each land for justice in racial relations, and to teach the full implications of our faith with regard to race."<sup>76</sup>

The relationship between Church and State, especially when the latter is felt to have acted contrary to the law of God - a matter of fundamental importance to this study - was strongly outlined at Minneapolis:

"When the State denies or rejects the Sovereignty of God, its power becomes a menace to God's order and it then becomes the duty of the Church to affirm the rule of God. We deny that the individual exists for the State, but assert that one of the principal ends of the State is the development of personality, which requires man's freedom under God ..... The Church at all times and in all places should be a fearless witness against political, social and economic injustice."<sup>77</sup>

At the Congress de Blank heard Ambrose Reeves, the Bishop of Johannesburg, speak on "Race Relations in the Union of South Africa". He emphasised that the Government was sincere in much of what it was doing although "enlightened opinion" would view this sincerity as mistaken and misdirected. His closing words, quoted by de Blank, were:

".....just because South Africa is a great country and I have received so much kindness from people in every racial group since I came here, I have always striven and shall continue to strive, to find some better way out of our present dilemma than either that which is now being offered to us or some terrible and violent catastrophe which might well bring all down in ruin. It is quite possible that such efforts will fail, but the world should know that there are people, if only relatively few in numbers, in every ethnic group in South Africa who refused to acquiesce in a policy which they believe to be contrary to humanity and justice, yet who sought to keep the way open to a peaceful solution to a problem which today tortures the minds and hearts of men."<sup>78</sup>

De Blank commented that although Reeves had spoken on South Africa, "there were few who, listening to him, could not translate his words into their own circumstances."<sup>79</sup> He records in his diary that after the Congress he was able to meet the Bishop of Johannesburg personally and discuss "his difficulties in South Africa - a country with the racial policies of which America is now very impatient, even though segregation is only just coming to an end here."<sup>80</sup>

Looking ahead to his ministry in South Africa, we should see the importance of Minneapolis for de Blank in the strengthening of his views on key issues such as the Church-State relationship, the involvement of the Christian in the problems of society in general and race relations in particular. As at Lambeth four years later, he could feel that what he believed was not merely endorsed by those in his own diocese or even country, but by Anglicans throughout the world. After Minneapolis, Evanston came as an anti-climax:

".....the more I see of the World Council the more I liked Minneapolis. The ecumenical movement survives better if you don't see too much of the separated brethren - i.e. in the abstract rather than in the concrete. They are so remote and heavy and often lack understanding."<sup>81</sup>

This cynicism is not typical of de Blank, and is, in fact, at variance with what seems a genuine desire to bring all Christians together, more in the concrete than in the abstract. His comment should rather be interpreted in the light of the frustration he felt in having, as part of

a minority group, to come to an accommodation with people whose views differed so much from his own after the elation and euphoria of Minneapolis where all the delegates spoke substantially with the same voice.

What was also frustrating for de Blank was that the deliberations at Evanston seemed so removed from life. Extracts from his diary indicate his feelings:

16th August: "Here we seem to have so many professional theologians from Germany and elsewhere who love talking stuff so involved and so removed from daily life."

23rd August: "We are a little impatient with the remote and abstract theology of some of the Continental Protestants and the Anglican and Orthodox Church delegates are not altogether happy about things."

26th August: ".....the general sense of frustration is growing. I think most feel that there has been much too much on the periphery and too many public assemblies in a kind of ecumenical circus....."

The above sheds further light on why de Blank compared Evanston unfavourably with Minneapolis; at the Anglican Congress the accent fell on the practical implications of Christianity whereas at Evanston he thought undue and unnecessary attention was given to sterile theological debate.

In 1956 de Blank visited the United States again in the course of a trip which also took in Canada and the West Indies. Of special relevance to this study are his comments on the problems of de-segregation in the Southern States. He told his readers in The Star that the cause of de-segregation was making slow progress but "it would be a sad misjudgement to condemn the South out of hand for its obscurantism and resistance." He pointed out that only fifty years previously the gentry in England went to Church in the morning and their servants in the evening. His superficial impression was "that most decent people in the South know that integration must come. Their reluctance is due to the fact that hitherto the Negro has been educated for a lower status in the social scale." It was the Negro's lack of upbringing and learning that accounted for the unwillingness to accept him as an equal at the moment. It was, in fact, a matter more of caste than of colour.

The critic naturally accused the Southerner of educating the Negro for servitude, and it was conceded that he had not been given an adequate chance in the past. Yet de Blank felt "that decent people ..... have now reached the point where they know segregation to be wrong and they want integration just as soon as Coloureds and Whites can live by

the same social standards and rules."

Integration had to come because Christianity, human values and common sense demanded it but "let us not be too quick to cast the first stone at the Southerner of Augusta for his slow progress - not unless we have done something to ease the lot of the coloured people in our midst in London, or, for that matter, unless we have done something for the Pole or the Hungarian exiled from his motherland."<sup>82</sup>

It is interesting to note the sympathetic attitude which de Blank displays towards the problem of de-segregation and the pains he takes to show that the majority of Whites would approve of integration provided the Negro adopted the social standards of the Whites - a provision he does not condemn.

The racial situation in South Africa also provoked comment. Giving examples of human sin in modern days, de Blank mentioned in the same breath the "hatreds and rivalries of the Middle East. The Martyrdom of Hungary. The Union of South Africa (did you see the Punch cartoon last week? - a little church with the words upon it: 'Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden' with a Government notice affixed to it 'For Whites Only' - Strijdom)."<sup>83</sup>

As Bishop of Stepney, Joost de Blank had established himself as "one of the most dynamic personalities in the Church of England."<sup>84</sup> It seems that he was not chosen to succeed Wand as Bishop of London because he had been at Stepney such a short time.<sup>85</sup> When the appointment of Henry Montgomery-Campbell was made known several newspapers, noting his age, said that this was a caretaker regime until Stepney took over. de Blank commented in his diary: "Thy will be done".<sup>86</sup>

Looking ahead to his frustrations in South Africa, we find food for thought in these words of his sister:

"There is no doubt that Joost would have enjoyed above all being Bishop of London: he loved London and knew its people and its problems and possibilities better than most."<sup>87</sup>

He was popular among both the clergy and the laity, and his words reached a far wider area than the East End of London through his articles in The Star and Press reports of his activities and pronouncements. He became accustomed to success which made all his considerable efforts worthwhile.

Then completely unexpectedly, on 25th April 1957, he received the cables informing him that he had been elected Archbishop of Cape Town by an overwhelming majority and urging him to accept the position.

References to Chapter 3:

1. Unless otherwise acknowledged, biographical detail in this chapter is derived from MBJ.
2. Caption in The Observer, 12th May 1957
3. Quoted in MBJ, p2
4. Ibid. p6
5. They Became Anglicans, ed. Dewi Morgan, (Mowbray, London, 1959) p27
6. Quoted in MBJ, p13
7. They Became Anglicans, p27
8. Ibid. p28
9. MBJ, p31
10. Ibid. p28
11. They Became Anglicans, p29
12. MBJ, p33
13. They Became Anglicans, p29
14. e.g. Out Of Africa, p72
15. MBJ, p44
16. From reminiscences written for Bartha de Blank dated 2nd November 1971.  
YPP, Reel 4, pp1,2
17. They Became Anglicans, p30
18. Quoted in MBJ, p47
19. Idem.
20. Beacham to Bartha de Blank, p2
21. Following extracts quoted from MBJ, pp55-63
22. They Became Anglicans, pp30,31
23. Beacham to Bartha de Blank, p2
24. Quoted in MBJ, p73
25. Quoted from Forest Gate Review (de Blank's Church magazine) April 1939  
in MBJ, p77
26. Quoted from Forest Gate Review, September 1937 in MBJ, p79
27. Quoted from Forest Gate Review, February 1939 in MBJ, p81
28. Quoted from Sermon delivered 26th June 1938 and published in Forest Gate Review, July, in MBJ, p84
29. Joost de Blank: The Parish In Action, (Mowbray, London, 1954) p10
30. Joost de Blank: Six Years Hard. An unfinished and unpublished  
autobiography. YPP, Reels 3 and 4, p14
31. Personal Diary, entry 8th September 1941, YPP, Reel 1
32. Ibid. Entry 9th September 1941, YPP, Reel 1. The surname Shepstone  
is, of course, famous in South African history. However, I have not  
been able to identify this 'Mr Shepstone' more accurately.
33. cf. pp174-181
34. MBJ, p96
35. The London Churchman, August 1952, quoted in Hackney Gazette,  
15th August 1952

36. MBJ, p108
37. Entry 13th January 1942, YPP, Reel 1
38. Quoted in MBJ, p108
39. Idem.
40. MBJ, p115 (quoted from a review of Christian Obedience in the University, Professor D. McCaughey in The Student Movement, November 1958)
41. The Parish in Action, p87
42. Report of a farewell reception for de Blank in The Harrow Observer, 21st July 1952
43. Idem. for a tribute to de Blank for service on Education Committee
44. 12th June 1952
45. Reminiscences of Very Rev. Eric Abbott written for Bartha de Blank, dated 3rd May 1969. YPP, Reel 4, p1
46. Memorial Service, 26th January 1968. YPP, Reel 5, pp1,2
47. East End News, 19th September 1952
48. Reminiscences written for Bartha de Blank, dated 4th May 1970. YPP, Reel 4, p1
49. East London Advertiser, 19th September 1952
50. Undated and unidentified Press cutting. YPP, Reel 1
51. Reminiscences of Canon Edward Carpenter to Bartha de Blank, dated 11th September 1969. YPP, Reel 5, p2
52. cf. reference 46
53. C.E. Young to Bartha de Blank, p1
54. i.e. a systematic visitation of his people in Stepney
55. 10th April 1953
56. Reminiscences of the Bishop of Hereford written for Bartha de Blank, dated 28th May 1970. YPP, Reel 4, p4
57. C.E. Young to Bartha de Blank, p2
58. Rev. J.H. Hornby in Johannesburg Sunday Times, 5th August 1957
59. Paddington Mercury, 6th March 1953
60. Undated cutting from Daily Express. YPP, Reel 1
61. London Illustrated, 3rd December 1955
62. p3
63. Abbott to Bartha de Blank, p1
64. Idem.
65. Joost de Blank: Mighty River, being an informal account of the Anglican Congress held in MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA, United States of America from August 4-13, 1954. Church Information Board, London, 1954
66. 12th October 1954
67. Mighty River, p9
68. Ibid. p11
69. Ibid. p10
70. Ibid. p15

71. cf. pp156-158
72. Ibid. p16
73. Good Hope, August 1959
74. Mighty River, pp16,17
75. Ibid. p23
76. Idem.
77. Ibid. pp23,24
78. Ibid. p20
79. Idem.
80. Entry for 4th September 1954. YPP, Reel 3
81. Entry for 18th August 1954. YPP, Reel 3
82. The Star, 30th June 1956
83. Sermon delivered on Good Friday 1957 (Place Unknown), YPP, Reel 4
84. Glasgow Evening Citizen, 8th October 1955
85. Reminiscences of Canon Rennie Simpson, Preceptor of Westminster Abbey, 1963-1974, written for Bartha de Blank, dated 16th June 1969. YPP, Reel 5, p2
86. MBJ, p169
87. MBJ, pp169,170

CHAPTER 4Biography of Joost de BlankII. 1957-1963(i) Introduction

de Blank was on a preaching tour in the United States of America when he received the cables informing him of his election.<sup>1</sup> He immediately cabled the Dean of Cape Town, the Very Rev. T. Savage, saying that he was overcome by the honour, yet regretted that he could not make a decision until he returned home early in May but "apart from other considerations must warn that acceptance dependent on responsibilities undertaken and not yet discharged."<sup>2</sup> These "responsibilities" were his mother, now eighty-seven years old, and to a lesser extent, his sister, Bartha, to whom he was greatly attached. These two must have been aware of what was in de Blank's mind for he received a cable from them the following day telling him not to let consideration of them affect his decision.<sup>3</sup>

On the 27th April the Dean of Cape Town wrote to de Blank confirming the information contained in the cables dispatched two days earlier. He mentioned that Anglicans in South Africa were very conscious of their need for wise and courageous leadership at that time. The Anglican Church was in the forefront of the news, "and in the conflict between the Church and the Government, it is regarded as the most recalcitrant of the Christian bodies. The Bishops have just issued a further statement asserting that they will be compelled to advise both clergy and people to ignore and, if necessary, to disobey the clause in the Native Laws Amendment Bill which seeks to control Africans and Europeans worshipping together. This stand is supported by all denominations except the Dutch Reformed Church."

There followed a clear warning:

"I am sure that it is right to point out to you that if you accept the Archbischopric you are likely to render yourself liable to fines and imprisonment, but I do not think that this consideration will deter you."<sup>4</sup>

On his return to London de Blank consulted Dr Wand, retired Bishop of London, Dr Henry Montgomery-Campbell, the Bishop of London and "a trusted friend and counsellor", and the Archbishop of Canterbury.<sup>5</sup> He informed the latter of the "quite serious domestic complications" which stood in the way but "apart from this and other personal matters I shall be glad if your Grace will be kind enough to tell me whether you think it is right for me to accept this call. I have no desire to leave my work

in England, but I must be prepared to go wherever the Holy Spirit leads." <sup>6</sup>

The Archbishop sent this prompt reply:

"Obviously you must take into account the particular responsibility you have for your mother, but as a general rule even such personal ties as this should not be the deciding factor. I know something of the steps by which the authorities in Cape Town have reached this conclusion. I know with what anxious care and waiting upon the Holy Spirit they have guided their steps. In my own judgement there is no way of escape for you unless there is some personal reason completely unknown to me. I think that you will feel that it is your bounden duty to accept the task since the call has come to it, and I pray that whatever labours and alarms may await you in the future you will never have any reason to doubt that your decision at this moment is laid upon you by God." <sup>7</sup>

This advice, together with the readiness of his mother and sister to accompany him, led de Blank to accept the position that had been offered to him.<sup>8</sup> On hearing this, the Archbishop of Canterbury wrote to him once again:

"I am glad that you were able to make your decision rapidly and securely. Now may I pray for you all those powers of wise judgement and quiet courage which the Church in South Africa so needs in these testing days. The situation there will not alarm you - the Christian need never be alarmed by anything in this sinful world. And indeed the conflict stimulates. The burden we bear is first to know what we ought to do after the mind of our Lord and then to find the right way of doing it when there are any hundred inviting ways of doing it calling to us. Again - 'burden' is not the right word. It is an absorbing occupation of all our faculties. And certainly you will find happiness and strength in that ..." <sup>9</sup>

His decision, not unnaturally, featured prominently in the newspapers. The Daily Mail referred to his opposition to the death penalty, and although mentioning that he was not prepared to be drawn into criticising the South African Government's racial policy, quoted him as saying : "The Church has stated its position according to fundamental principles - principles which I support."<sup>10</sup>

The East End News thought that his Dutch family connections would give him a notable advantage in dealing with a Government whose traditions and ways of thought stemmed from an ultimate origin in Holland. <sup>11</sup> The London Evening News, however, was under no such illusions: "He will be hated if he criticises apartheid in or out of

the churches: he will be hated more because, despite his Dutch name, he speaks in English and propagates an Anglican tradition of worship." <sup>12</sup>

The Observer listed his undoubted talents: "He has many characteristics of a business tycoon - tremendously efficient, thinks months ahead, never forgets details, always punctual, answers all letters the same day." <sup>13</sup>

In South Africa the Natal Daily News felt that in going overseas to find a successor to Geoffrey Clayton the elective assembly of the Church of the Province of South Africa had opened itself to criticism. Reference was made to his comparative youth which meant that he would be "able to give the Anglican Church long years of unbroken and, it seems certain, brilliant service." <sup>14</sup>

de Blank received letters from a number of Southern African bishops. The Bishop of George wrote that while the new Archbishop was under no illusions about the heavy burden of responsibility that fell on him, he nevertheless believed that he would "find in the warm-hearted friendliness of the clergy and people of the diocese and in the wonderful natural beauty of your surroundings in the Cape and in that graciousness of life still to be found there, some compensation for the cares of office and the atmosphere of political bitterness in which we have to do our work." <sup>15</sup>

The Bishop of Zululand described de Blank's new position as "an office from which any man might shrink in these critical days." <sup>16</sup> But the Bishop of Matabeleland was more sanguine: "You can approach all the problems with some detachment, and so far as the troublesome Government is concerned, without any initial prejudice on their part. Your name too will make some appeal to them and prevent them from saying that here is 'just another Englishman'." <sup>17</sup>

At the end of May the Overseas Secretary of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, the Rev. A.E.A. Sulston, wrote an unofficial letter to the Bishop of Grahamstown, the Rt Rev. H.A. Cullen, assuring the C.P.S.A. of the continued support of the S.P.G. which was deeply distressed "over the intensification of the apartheid struggle." :

"I should, however, like to know whether there is anything more we can do at this juncture. Archbishop Clayton nearly always advised us, in connection with apartheid problems, that we should simply go on with our job of supporting you all, quietly and without too much noise,

"leaving the Province to fight its own battles on its own ground." <sup>18</sup>

Sulston sent de Blank a copy of this letter, asking him for any comments he might wish to make as these would be of great interest to the African Sub-committee of the S.P.G.<sup>19</sup> de Blank replied that he thought it better at that stage to make no comment on apartheid problems. He added that he did not become Archbishop-elect of Cape Town officially until the 4th June, and in any event, he would prefer to wait until he had had the opportunity of knowing something of the problems at first hand.<sup>20</sup>

On the 17th June Sulston wrote to de Blank again, giving him the text of the reply he had received from the Bishop of Grahamstown. One paragraph is of particular importance because it reveals the desire of the C.P.S.A. for more open support from Anglicans in England and could provide de Blank with justification for making regular trips to the United Kingdom during his archbishopric to inform the Churches there of conditions in South Africa and to enlist their aid in the struggle with the Government over racial policy:

"Hitherto it has been our view that pronouncements in England or elsewhere did not help us much in our efforts. But the Bishops think that the time for that has now passed. The Church is seen to be in opposition to the State. Therefore we are glad of any support which we might be given by prayers of the faithful and in any other ways which commend themselves to you. The Archbishop of Canterbury has been written to in a similar sense by the desire of the Bishops generally."<sup>21</sup>

Writing from England in July 1957 edition of Good Hope, de Blank as Archbishop-elect mentioned that he had been non-committal to the press because he did not wish to speak out of ignorance or embarrass the Church of the Province. Even after a preliminary visit to Cape Town between the 23rd June and 1st July de Blank observed a strict silence. Similarly, in his first letter to the diocese he wrote that it would not be proper for him to make any declaration of policy before his Enthronement which was shortly to take place.<sup>22</sup>

de Blank's reticence must not be taken to indicate that he was not forming very definite impressions of the situation. He has left us fairly full accounts of his June visit in his diary from which it will be instructive to quote fully. He quite clearly took exception to the living conditions of the non-Whites. At Flackfontein, an African location just outside Pretoria, he saw "row upon row of identical little houses - no running water, no lavatory, and here 40,000 Africans live. It looks

like an open prison." However, he is prepared to concede that the Government could say that these houses were far better than the ones the people had before.<sup>23</sup> Of his visit to African and Coloured locations in Cape Town he wrote:

"The worst by far was Nyanga where an enormous area of veldt has been cleared. Here the Natives are sent ..... without any provision at all except a water tap every 200 yards and lavatories (earth with no cesspit) every 100 yards or so ....."<sup>24</sup>

Of special importance, in the light of his first public condemnation of apartheid seven months later, is this comment:

"The Group Areas Act is working great hardship both for Coloured and Africans - and today we saw a coloured shanty town (called Windermere) which beggars description. Just bits of tin and corrugated iron in a water-logged area ..... Unbelievable."<sup>25</sup>

On the 25th June he wrote about the 'Church Clause', shortly to come into effect, and mentions the amendment, attributed to the influence of the Dutch Reformed Church, that the penalty fell on the offender and not on the Church:

"The Bishops are certain that they must act as lightning conductors and draw the fire on themselves. Therefore a Sunday or two after the thing becomes law, a pastoral letter will be read in all churches saying that the Church's ministrations must on no account be refused to any bona fide worshipper of any race or colour. In other words this is definite rebellion - telling the Church not to obey the law. And a dear old man like Grahamstown<sup>26</sup> is quite ready for the consequences."

He added that there was nothing to prevent the Government from imprisoning all the Bishops, and that in the event of this happening, the Bishop of Basutoland had been told that he should be ready to take over the Province. However, it was felt that the Government would play the issue down, especially as it had already delayed the segregation of Cape Town and Witwatersrand universities. This was seen as partly the result of public pressure but also as an attempt on the Government's side to make certain of victory in the 1958 General Election.

A meeting with Justice Centlivres corroborated the message which had been conveyed in the letter from the Bishop of Grahamstown to the Rev. A.E.A. Sulston:<sup>27</sup> "He (Centlivres) believes that public pressure overseas may have delayed action about apartheid in the universities which shows a line of action for the Church."<sup>28</sup>

Following this line of action a year later, de Blank was to meet with concerted opposition not only from Government supporters but even from within the ranks of his own Church.

de Blank, as he was constantly to stress later, felt that however one might complain of apartheid, things had to be put right at home first. He referred to an Anglican rector who had the greatest difficulty in arranging a Communion service for the Coloured people in the parish church at Groot Drakenstein. He was happy, though, that this attitude was beginning to die:

"However, it seems to me that my initial charge at the Enthronement might stress the Epistles of Trinity I and II which were the Sundays of my preliminary visit to S.A. They couldn't be more appropriate about man's love for God being seen only in his love for his neighbour."<sup>29</sup>

On his return to England he alluded to his visit to South Africa in two addresses, both of which emphasised how people are conditioned by their environment. de Blank's preoccupation with this thought can be traced to a conversation with Mrs Savage, the wife of the Dean of Cape Town, shortly before he left South Africa. He records that she pointed out the ease with which people begin to accept the situation in South Africa as a result of their being conditioned by life in that country.<sup>30</sup> Preaching in Westminster Abbey, he said:

"This is not the time or place to give you my detailed reactions to what I saw - except for one persistent warning: the ease with which men can be conditioned by their own situation if they do not get outside it often enough to view it from the standpoint of eternity. And when this happens prejudice can overcome principle and expediency can put morality to rout."<sup>31</sup>

In speaking at a Grammar School, he was far more explicit. In South Africa he had found much to encourage him but also much which disturbed him. He admitted that the problems of a multi-racial society were enormous:

"But when those who accept apartheid complain of criticism and say come and live here before you judge I grow more disturbed. So many of them have been conditioned by their circumstances. They have lost sight of principles in the customs and conventions of their society. This applies even to what we might call regular church-goers. They accept things as they are because they do not want to question. They have been absorbed by their environment. Of course we have no right to say how their intricate problems are to be solved

" - but the tragedy is that they have lost sight of the principle which applies everywhere - that God loves all men and that we are to love our neighbour (whatever his colour) as ourselves." <sup>32</sup>

In both sermons, however, he pointed out to his audiences that they themselves were subject to the same conditioning processes. He referred to the toleration of slavery, child labour and poverty as historical examples of conditioning in English society.

On the 20th September a farewell service was held for de Blank in St Paul's, the address being delivered by the Very Rev. Michael Gibbs. His words carry some weight because he himself had been Dean of Cape Town before Tom Savage; in addition, they were being spoken by a man who was patently free of bitterness and maliciousness.<sup>33</sup> We do not know what impression they made on de Blank but they must have helped him in some way to come to an assessment of the role he was to play. To many African Christians, said the Dean, the new Archbishop would "symbolize in his own person the protective character of the Church: the Church which, in age-long Christian tradition, has espoused the cause of the poor and hungry: the Church which has put down the mighty from their seat, by attacking their privileges and exposing their selfishness, and has exalted those of low degree, by giving them a place in the Kingdom of God."

But there were those among the White population who needed his spiritual leadership:

".....he will be looked to as a father-in-God by many Europeans too, in their sense of bewilderment: by many who have an uneasy conscience about the way things are going in their country. There is a considerable section of European people in Africa which will look to him to make articulate for them that sense of justice in human relations which they have never entirely lost, but which waits for the right lead at the right time to call it into being and give it definition."<sup>34</sup>

(ii) Enthronement Address<sup>35</sup> - St George's Cathedral, Cape Town,  
25th October, 1957

In the address delivered on the occasion of his Enthronement, he made no direct attack on the racial policies of the South African Government. Condemnation, however, was implicit in what he said. After significantly establishing his own apostolic authority as successor to Geoffrey Clayton, he began to elaborate on his text:

"Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God." (1 John 1V:7)

This verse was not chosen at random but especially selected as a result of observations he had made during his preliminary visit to the country.<sup>36</sup> Looking back a decade later, de Blank said that to him these words of Scripture "appeared remarkably appropriate to the South African situation (and) have been the mainspring of all my actions ever since."<sup>37</sup>

He admitted that he had no single solution for the complex problems that beset South Africa and, in any case, his short period in the country prevented him from arriving at any detailed answer. Yet he had one criterion for all communities and that was the touchstone of love. This love embraced the whole world and so no arbitrary limit could be placed on it. God's love in Christ extended to all without exception, thus making every individual a brother for whom Christ died.

Policies are transient (it is reasonable to assume that included here are the apartheid policies of the Nationalist Government) but love endured. A possible conflict between Government policy and Christian love is thus hinted at. There was also a suggestion that the powers that be were in opposition to the divine will, for the one who sinned against love was sinning against God. de Blank, then, although speaking in general terms, warns of an impending conflict, for those who put love into action will meet with opposition from "the world's greedy selfishness". He now became more specific: "Love asserts equality". This love was not to be confused with patronage which connotes superiority. We are equally sinners and therefore equally look to God for His mercy and forgiveness. He ends this section of his address with a plea to his hearers to extend this love even to their enemies. His carefully chosen words, "to those who to us are misguided in their treatment of those weaker than themselves", make it reasonably clear that the enemies referred to could be found in the South African political context.

In his peroration he alluded to White South Africa's appeal to blood and birth:

"Remember that the only blood we dare to plead is the precious Blood of Christ, the only birth in which we place our trust is that rebirth by water and Spirit into the Kingdom of Heaven."

Finally, he again warns of the possibility of persecution but draws confidence from one of his favourite themes - ultimate triumph through the love of Christ.

This address is couched in moderate terms. In fact, his predecessor, Geoffrey Clayton, and Bishop Lavis, who had acted as Vicar-General during the interregnum, had used far more explicit language in referring to the South African situation. Nevertheless, de Blank had implicitly revealed his assessment of the political and social scene and had warned of a confrontation between those who were guided by love and those who were motivated by selfishness.

(iii) de Blank Breaks His Silence

Before 1957 came to an end de Blank had made contact with a number of influential people holding widely differing points of view. At Senator L. Rubin's home he met Prof. Z.K. Matthews and Chief Albert Luthuli, both defendants in the Treason Trial.<sup>38</sup> He was moved to comment:

"The question seems to be at what point opposition becomes treason. It is important to notice that the Government works on fear ..... There are so many regulations now and people are so fearful of breaking the law that interchange between races is being progressively and rapidly reduced."<sup>39</sup>

At the other end of the political spectrum he had informed meetings with the Editor of Die Burger,<sup>40</sup> Ds Brink of the Dutch Reformed Church and Prof. N. Olivier of the South African Bureau of Racial Affairs (SABRA). Of his discussions with Prof. Olivier and other SABRA leaders de Blank made these remarks:

"I was amazed to discover how much they felt about the Afrikaans language. The discussion never got beyond the relationship between Afrikaners and Britishers in South Africa and their resentment that the Britisher didn't know Afrikaans was really pathological. I ventured to say this at the end and to suggest that if only they had spent as much time in getting their ideas across as in getting their language, things might be much further advanced. I tried to put it to them that the British were bad linguists and that Afrikaans was not singled out in any way - but they wouldn't really believe me."<sup>41</sup>

In his unfinished autobiography de Blank refers to these discussions as "part of the softening up process"; i.e. an attempt to persuade him of the reasonableness of their point of view:

"They could not have been more charming, and although I expected our conversation to concern itself with inter-race relationships I found in fact that the whole evening was spent in talking of the misunderstandings existing between the two sections of the White population ..... and a perhaps legitimate anger that the British would not even want to learn

"Afrikaans - a language which to one with some knowledge of the Dutch language must be quite the most hideous in all the world." <sup>42</sup>

de Blank comments that he kept in mind what they had said, and though a bad example himself, he always stressed the necessity for the clergy to be proficient in Afrikaans. <sup>43</sup>

He summed up his initial month in office thus:

".....I was sought out by all manner of people who tried to convince me of the basically Christian nature of apartheid and urging me to study it at first hand before coming down on one side or the other. I did my humble best to do this though apartheid sounded to me as definitely a sin as adultery but I forebore to pass judgement until Christmas Eve at Windermere of all places." <sup>44</sup>

It was this visit to Windermere (which took place on the 22nd December, not Christmas Eve) <sup>45</sup> that moved de Blank to break his silence. However, before his impressions are recorded it will be necessary to sketch the background to the situation in some detail because, though de Blank had visited the area six months earlier, this was the first time he had become directly involved in a complex state of affairs that arose partly as a result of the passing of recent Bantu legislation.

Windermere had sprung up as a shanty town during the Second World War through the influx of Africans into the Cape Peninsula in search of employment. In many cases wives and children, for whom there was no adequate accommodation, followed later. Soon conditions were such that the area was described as "a festering sore on the body of Cape Town". <sup>46</sup>

On the 25th November, 1957 the Chief Reporter of the Cape Times wrote that during the past year more than 12,000 African bachelors had been moved to Langa and that intensive screening of the numerous remaining inhabitants, mostly African families, was taking place to determine who would be eligible for a house when African families were moved to Nyanga in accordance with Government policy. At the Shawco Students' Clinic Africans told him "of cases where shacks had been pulled down over the heads of old men, women and children. All were apprehensive and fearful that their own shacks would be demolished." However, he was given the assurance by the Chief Inspector of Native Administration that no shacks occupied by African families would be demolished till alternative housing could be provided.

Only four days before de Blank's visit an official of the Cape Town City Council's Native Administration clarified the position further: in January work would be started on a Coloured Township in a certain area of Windermere. African families who had been living there were entitled to houses in Nyanga only if the husband concerned had been in the municipal area for fifteen years or engaged by the same employer for ten years. Other families would have to return home until the breadwinners satisfied the necessary qualifications. He concluded by saying that the removals were being carried out in such a way as to cause the minimum of hardship to the people concerned.<sup>47</sup>

de Blank gives us this description of his visit:

"There was no means of stopping that damned bulldozer, but the heroic people of Windermere are like people in distress all over the world; they stick together. And although every home in the area was already overcrowded, the owners managed to take in between them all those who had been rendered homeless by this inhuman destruction."<sup>48</sup>

The following day de Blank and the Dean of Cape Town, who had suggested the visit to Windermere, met with representatives from the Congregational, Presbyterian, Methodist and Baptist Churches. They then proceeded to the City Hall where they had an interview with P. Santilhano, the Cape Town City Council's Chairman of Native Affairs Committee, C. Bakker, Chairman of Housing, and the Mayor, Col J. Billingham.<sup>49</sup> The latter put through a telephone call to S.A. Rogers, Manager of Native Affairs, summoning him to the City Hall immediately. He refused as he was showing a group of American visitors around Langa, but gave the assurance that only bachelors had been removed from Windermere and that all these were now rehoused in Langa. He suggested that the Church representatives should meet him at Windermere on the following Friday, 27th December.<sup>50</sup>

Here "Rogers was able to assure us that no officially recognised families had been broken up as a result of Windermere evictions. Some people attacked the Government legislation quite rightly - but this was neither the time nor the occasion - and we came away feeling that the City Council did everything possible in an impossible situation."<sup>51</sup>

Rogers himself says that the day after he had received the telephone call from the Mayor, he went to Windermere where he satisfied himself that the Council officials were not going beyond the limits of their instructions. He adds that bachelors involved in the removal were able to state personally to de Blank and his fellow churchmen that they

had made no complaint. In fact, they had signed papers which said that they were moving to Langa and had authorised the Council to demolish their shacks.

At the end of the meeting de Blank, according to Rogers, shook his hand, saying that he had one of the most difficult jobs in the country. He complimented him in words which are consonant with what de Blank had written in his diary: "You are carrying out inhuman laws in a most humaneway."<sup>52</sup> Rogers saw this as a complete vindication of the City Council's operations at Windermere.<sup>53</sup>

The time and occasion for attack was the February 1958 edition of Good Hope. Though he said that it was not the time for him to explain why South Africa's apartheid legislation was becoming increasingly abhorrent to him, he nevertheless gave a full explanation based on "my recent experience at Windermere." He contrasted the idealistic language of the apartheid theorists such as the South African Bureau of Racial Affairs and the Dutch Reformed Church with the realities of the situation as he saw it - the demolition of the shanty houses and the separation of man and wife, all in the interests of White domination and privilege.

He conceded that the City Council was acting as humanely as it could, though inhumanity was inherent in the application of an inhuman law. He then elaborated on the baneful effects of migrant labour with its dislocation of family life which was the inevitable result of Section 10 of the Native Urban Areas Act. What particularly rankled with him was the fact that the onus was on the Bantu to prove that he was legally resident in a particular area.

He was prepared to admit the unlikely possibility of an apartheid policy which involved a just division of territory by mutual consent but baaskap he would never tolerate. "This is the point where the issue forces itself on the individual Christian conscience and on the life of the Church as a whole. European domination we utterly reject as inhuman and unchristian."

de Blank was aware that those who criticised the Church of the Province on the grounds that it did not always practise what it preached had some justification for their accusations. Accordingly he admonished his people in a deliberate scriptural misquotation: "Let apartheid not be once named amongst you as becometh saints." From the reference to Ephesians 5:3 it is clear that apartheid is considered as immoral as fornication.

He found it hard to believe the reports of the operation of apartheid in certain of his churches, but if this were proved, "I should do everything in my power to eradicate it; and in the intervening period while it still existed I should have to refuse any episcopal ministrations on behalf of the congregation concerned."

He concluded his letter by reminding his readers that what they did to the least of mankind, they were doing to Christ, and that as the redeemed were made partakers of the divine nature, it was blasphemy to deny by any action or disrespect this potential divinity to any man.

In his unpublished autobiography de Blank is even more unrestrained in his expression. "It nearly broke one's heart to see apartheid in action.....";<sup>54</sup> and later: "There is no doubt despite all the soft words of the theorists that in practice it was filthy, sinful, and satanic. The only thing to do with sin is to resist it and if possible, destroy it."<sup>55</sup>

From a close study of the entries in his diary (22nd and 27th December, 1957) it would appear that de Blank was less moved at the time by what he saw at Windermere than he was ten years later. This is seen when the diary record and the relevant section of his autobiography, written more than a decade after the event, are compared. When then, we may ask, did he speak out so strongly in his diocesan magazine? Only five days before he wrote the controversial letter he mentions that he was interested to read the London Times leader about South Africa the previous week:

"It had no doubts about my racial attitudes but was waiting to see where the battle would be joined.  
So am I. I am sure the maintenance of the Buddha's 'noble silence' is a good idea as long as possible."<sup>56</sup>

This last sentence shows that de Blank had no intention of joining battle right away, and the "so am I", written after Windermere, indicates that what had happened in that shanty town was not yet contemplated as a casus belli. Yet on the 5th January he writes:

"Managed to write my Good Hope article. Strangely enough I have raised the apartheid issue. In a sense I didn't mean to but the Prime Minister's New Year broadcast in which he talked of improved race relations was too much for me. But having written one article, I changed my mind and thought I wouldn't make much of the issue after all. Nevertheless on rewriting it I found I had come back to it again tho' perhaps on a more domestic front saying that I would resist any attempt at apartheid in any of the churches in my jurisdiction. In a sense I realise I have bitten off more than I can chew - as I know of churches where apartheid doesn't exist - but where, say, the choir is all

"white! But if it brings things to a head so much the better."

"All this is largely the result of the leader in The Times a week ago which was about South Africa and which expressed doubt what action the Archbishop was going to take on the racial issue."

de Blank obviously found it difficult to hold his peace when he saw a discrepancy between the Prime Minister's words and what he had seen with his own eyes. It seems, too, that the article in The Times had been much in his thoughts. He perhaps interpreted their eagerness to hear his reaction to apartheid as an implicit criticism of the silence he had hitherto observed.

The February Good Hope letter unleashed a storm of criticism from the Nationalists. Mr Blaar Coetze (North Rand), quoting at length from the article, said that it was one of the most controversial statements ever made by any spiritual leader in South Africa. Aware that many United Party supporters belonged to the Anglican Church, he pointed out that the Archbishop was condemning "not only the Nationalist policy of apartheid, but the United Party's policy of 'White supremacy' as well as inhuman and un-Christian."<sup>57</sup>

The Minister of Justice, Mr C.R. Swart, was also aware that de Blank's fire was being directed at White South Africa as a whole; therefore "the sooner we, not only as political parties, but as leaders of the White community, repudiate him, the better. We repudiate him entirely. We say he has no right to describe our centuries-old way of life here as un-Christian."<sup>58</sup>

Another Cabinet Minister, Mr P.O. Sauer, taking advantage of the now delicate position of the Leader of the Opposition, told Sir De Villiers Graaff that he could not keep silence in order to gain votes but was obliged to tell the electorate where he stood in relation to de Blank.<sup>59</sup>

Mr Eric Louw, Minister of External Affairs, warned the United Party that, now that de Blank had entered the political field, they would have to be careful since he had threatened to withhold his ministrations from churches which applied a policy of separation. He also challenged the Archbishop to prove his sincerity by admitting non-White pupils to Anglican Church Schools.<sup>60</sup> de Blank re-acted immediately by saying that if the restrictive legislation were removed, he would do all in his power to see that children of all races were allowed entry.<sup>61</sup>

The Argus leader writer referred to the unfortunate timing of de Blank's utterance since the Nationalists could now warn the electorate that if the United Party were returned to power there would be mixed schools and perhaps even mixed marriages.<sup>62</sup>

Sir de Villiers Graaff embroiled, against his will, in the cross-fire between de Blank and the Nationalists, temporised for two weeks. He then issued an official statement in which he said that nothing could be more detrimental to the interests of all races in South Africa than "a protracted public argument between the political leaders of the Government and the head of the Anglican Church." This not only took the form of a political battle but "threatened to revive the age-old battle between the Church and the State." He implicitly advised the Archbishop to remain within his sphere of interest: "It is necessary for the Church to guard over the moral and spiritual life of the people just as the State should safeguard the national, political and social welfare." Then to allay any suspicions among wavering supporters, he made it clear that the United Party followed the traditional pattern of South African life and development. This was "a policy of social and residential separation .... empirically devised in order to avoid unnecessary conflict, bitterness and exacerbations of hatred." The Leader of the Opposition ended with a long-awaited pronouncement of his party's stand on mixed schools:

".....it has long been a mutually accepted custom in South Africa for European and non-European children to be educated in separate schools, a system which need bring about no injustice. The United Party considers this practice should be continued and is against the establishment of mixed schools. Any attempt to ignore this practice must ignore the realities of the South African situation."<sup>63</sup>

The Minister of Justice had called upon leaders of the White community to repudiate de Blank.<sup>64</sup> While de Villiers Graaff's words cannot be called a direct repudiation, they can nevertheless be viewed as a restrained way of telling the Archbishop that he was in danger of trespassing beyond his own well-defined area and that the United Party could not side with him in his attempt to alter the traditional pattern of South African life.

de Blank wrote later that, having expressed his thoughts on the 'inhumanity' of what was going on at Windermere, he "was left in no doubt that the honeymoon period was over."<sup>65</sup> Soon afterwards he gave his first Garden Party at Bishopscourt but "Not a single member of the government accepted my invitation, nor, for the sake of the record, did a single

member of the United Party. Most did not even bother to acknowledge it. And this attitude continued throughout my time in South Africa."<sup>66</sup>

In his diary he mentions that he had been widely attacked since the publication of his criticism. Yet he drew comfort from "so many letters of support from Europeans as well as others and an excellent press overseas - but it's no fun having the Govt. ganging up against one and some friends have been slow in support ...."<sup>67</sup>

An immediate result of de Blank's pronouncements was the withdrawal of an invitation to speak at the Anglican Dockyard Mission in Simonstown. Rear-Admiral Bierman said that the invitation had merely been postponed out of courtesy because he could not be present to receive the Archbishop in person.<sup>68</sup> de Blank's reaction to this was that the invitation had not been "postponed because of the inability of the Admiral to be present on social grounds. It may have been postponed because of his inability to be present on political grounds."<sup>69</sup>

Die Burger's political correspondent went even more directly to the heart of the matter:

"It must be accepted that the desirability of Dr de Blank's ministering in the church concerned, which is a church under the control of the State, should be seen in the light of the Archbishop's utterance. That is probably the reason why the invitation to preach there yesterday could not be fulfilled."<sup>70</sup>

Having been accused of dragging religion into politics, de Blank answered his critics in his following letter<sup>71</sup> (March 1958, published 19th February) entitled "The Church's Place in the Political Field." At the outset he expresses amazement that there are still those who feel that the Church has nothing to do with politics, but since politics has to do with the organising of relationships between people, it often involves a matter of Christian principle. The Incarnation has shown that no part of life is exempt from the claims of God, and this makes it imperative that the Christian should put God's will into practice in every activity. The prophets of the Old Testament had a passion for social justice while Christ Himself was crucified for meddling in politics. Although the Church, to be faithful to God, will be active in the political arena, she cannot ever fully identify herself with any particular party, for parties change while the Church remains faithful to the "Eternal Gospel."

He then accuses the Dutch Reformed Church of equally engaging in political activity in that failure to criticise Government policy

indicates acquiescence "for absence of criticism implies approval and silence means consent." By way of example, he refers to a work by Prof. P.V. Pistorius to show how the D.R.C. is adopting a political stance even when it does not speak out.<sup>72</sup>

de Blank now differentiates between law-giving and law-making: God has laid down certain laws which politicians must work out in practice. But where the politician deviates from these laws by implementing a policy which runs counter to them, he becomes a law-giver instead of a law-maker. He quotes two laws which are particularly relevant to the South African situation, the love of one's neighbour as oneself and the indissoluble unity of the marriage bond. When these principles are flouted by any government, the churchman cannot keep silence because this is not a political but a religious conflict.

The Church Times in London noted the medieval character of these thoughts and foresaw modern objections to the view that Parliament's role was only derivative and subordinate. Nevertheless it endorsed the Archbishop's sentiment that the Church had the right to criticise all political parties while belonging to none.<sup>73</sup>

#### (iv) Dönges versus de Blank

At the end of February de Blank caused a stir by using the annual speech day of St Cyprian's School in Cape Town as a means of replying to accusations levelled against him by Dr T.E. Dönges, Minister of the Interior, at a Nationalist Party rally. Dr Dönges had said that de Blank, when asked why Coloured and Indian children were not allowed to attend Anglican Church schools, had replied that this was not permitted by the laws of the land. Yet before leaving for South Africa he had stated that he would not hesitate to break the laws of the land if they clashed with his conscience. Nevertheless, when driven into a corner he was the first to shelter behind the law. He continued:

"It shocks me to see that he wants to apply sanctions in his church against those who differ from him. Such a man makes one think he is suffering from spiritual superiority and self-righteousness. These are not the qualities one expects from a church leader, whose first quality is humility."

He felt that it was naive of the Archbishop to ask a sovereign government which had passed laws in accordance with its conscience to amend these to suit de Blank's conscience. It was not necessary, though, to change the law. It was for the Archbishop to prevail upon the committees of Bishop's,

St Cyprian's and St George's to apply for exemption so that Coloured and Indian pupils might be permitted to attend these schools. The matter would then be given due consideration, and interested people and bodies such as Parents and Old Boys unions could give evidence at a public hearing. He thought, however, that the vast majority of de Blank's Church were not prepared to follow the dictates of a foreigner who had only been in South Africa for five months.<sup>74</sup>

What is significant about the Archbishop's reply is the strong language used in referring to a minister of State. He said that it was hardly surprising that the crime wave was assuming gigantic proportions when a Cabinet Minister jeered at those who respected the warnings of an informed conscience and who believed in the necessity of obeying God's law:

"It is a well-known fact that distortion and misrepresentation are the stock-in-trade of cheap-jack politicians the world over, but it is seldom in civilized communities that a Cabinet Minister descends to deliberate distortion and malicious misrepresentation."

To say that he had used the phrase 'without hesitation' in connection with disobeying the law was "a calumny that no decent man would either fabricate or utter. A Cabinet Minister has a staff and a good deal of the tax-payers' money at his disposal. He therefore has means of verifying his references and quotations that are denied to ordinary citizens like myself. It is therefore a disgrace to one of Cabinet rank if he relies on tendentious reports, phrases torn from their context, and incomplete and inaccurate quotations. Such conduct is a shameful attempt to mislead the people, and it is hard to see how anyone guilty of such practices can be entrusted with any responsible portfolio in national or public life."

His speech was not without a touch of humour. He foresaw the possibility of Dr Dönges and himself being in gaol together for he had no doubt that the public prosecutor had noticed Dr Dönges' remarks inciting him to break the law; and if ever he did so, the Minister was bound to be arrested as an accessory before the fact.<sup>75</sup>

The Archbishop here laid himself open to two charges: first, that he had used immoderate language and secondly, that a girls' prize-giving was not an opportune moment to make an attack on a member of the Government and to raise the issue of civil disobedience.<sup>76</sup> Dr Dönges in his reply said that he would not compete with de Blank in the use of insulting language which his long experience in law and politics had taught him to

be the last resort of a man who had been driven into a corner. After explaining his use of the Afrikaans word 'skroom' which he claimed to have been incorrectly translated as 'without hesitation', he added:

"On one thing Dr de Blank and I agree: a man must act according to his enlightened conscience and obey God. But I am not prepared to accept that my enlightened conscience must also serve for others. I accept that other people also have their consciences and that they must work out their own salvation."

de Blank's arrogance in spiritual matters reminded him of the parable of the Publican and the Pharisee; and with this observation he left de Blank "to the schoolgirls and members of his congregation."<sup>77</sup>

(v) Sermon in New York

At the end of May de Blank left for a visit to the United States on his way to attend the Lambeth Conference. Before leaving Jan Smuts airport he promised that there would be "no fireworks", but added ominously: "All I attack is inhumanity wherever I find it."<sup>78</sup>

On his arrival in New York he told reporters that there was a re-assessment of apartheid in South Africa with the result that the idea of White domination was giving way to the concept of segregation on the principle of "equal but different."<sup>79</sup>

But it was his sermon delivered on June 1st in New York that caused an outcry in South Africa. The offending passage was:

"It is a sad commentary on the work of the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa that it spends a good deal of money on missionary work, but believes in keeping its African and White congregations separate. It has a warped and inaccurate Calvinistic outlook."<sup>80</sup>

Speaking on behalf of the Moderator of the Dutch Reformed Church in the Transvaal, the Rev. A.M. Meiring said that in the light of the remarks made in New York by the Archbishop it would be sheer hypocrisy to take part in inter-church discussions, and so his Church was withdrawing from the proposed conference to be held in December.<sup>81</sup>

On the Anglican front, the Dean of Cape Town, the Very Rev. E.L. King, felt that there was something to be said for not playing down the opinion which one felt to be correct,<sup>82</sup> but other denominations rallied to the support of the D.R.C. Dr R.H.R. Liddell, Moderator of the

Presbyterian Church of South Africa, condemned the Archbishop's attack, not only in the light of the practical policy of the D.R.C., but also because the Presbyterian Church and the D.R.C. shared the same Calvinistic background. He felt that de Blank's statement was obstructing all efforts to obtain co-operation between the Churches.<sup>83</sup> The Ven. S.C. Bradley announced that the Church of England in South Africa would not attend the inter-church conference unless the Archbishop withdrew his statements on the D.R.C. made while he was in America.<sup>84</sup>

An Argus leader, entitled "Warped, inaccurate criticism", took de Blank to task in no uncertain terms: The mutual hostility of theologians was proverbial, but probably few of them realised how painful it was to laymen when a religious leader failed to set an example of Christian charity towards those whose views differed from his own. It was regrettable that "the millions of heathen in South Africa should be offered the spectacle, bewildering to them, of one great missionary church attacking another."<sup>85</sup>

The Cape Times felt that de Blank's criticism of the D.R.C. had not advanced the cause of Christian unity or of human rights. If there were differences between himself and that Church which he felt should be brought into the open, the place for such a confrontation was here in South Africa where a discussion could be conducted face to face, "rather than in a distant country and before a congregation that knows little and probably cares less about the exact shades of South African truth."<sup>86</sup>

The Rhodesian Herald was more subtle in its comment: the D.R.C. was putting pressure on the Government behind the scenes to alter the emphasis in the application of apartheid, and so "If Dr de Blank is to be criticised, it should be on the basis that he is not sensing this change of climate and that he is retarding it - and not that he is vilifying the Union from a foreign pulpit."<sup>87</sup>

Leading politicians also entered the fray. Dr T.E. Dönges saw de Blank's utterances abroad as having brought the various Churches and groups in the country together in that it had caused them to reveal their patriotism.<sup>88</sup> Mr Harry Lawrence, a leader of considerable standing in the United Party and also an Anglican, said that it would be in the interests of the country if the Archbishop spoke a little less abroad.<sup>89</sup>

Referring to the Archbishop as a "bigoted cleric", Mr Eric Louw said in Parliament that de Blank had got the "wind up" when he had realised what he had done. His excuse that thirty words of a speech of

three thousand words had been taken out of their context was seen as an attempt to extricate himself from a difficult position: "Mr Chairman, you can attack another Church in far fewer than 30 words; you can do it in 20, or even in 10."<sup>90</sup>

Replying from Maryland to criticism levelled by Dr Liddell, de Blank said that in his controversial sermon he had stressed that all Churches in South Africa, including his own, had failed in their task. However, while the other Churches had opposed apartheid, the D.R.C. had given it "tacit approval". The D.R.C. was worthy of all honour for it contributed more money to missions and African education than all the other Churches in South Africa put together:

"But they have got their Calvinistic outlook wrong. Calvinistic churches in Europe and elsewhere do not see eye to eye with them on apartheid. They have not resisted apartheid legislation. This is not a matter of opinion. It is a fact. I do not and never have impugned their sincerity, but I think the members of the D.R.C. are misguided in their approach."<sup>91</sup>

de Blank's diary for this period makes interesting reading. He noted that it seemed there were objections to his statement that the D.R.C. supported apartheid. His question was: "But doesn't it?" He admitted that he had referred to their brand of Calvinism as "warped and inaccurate". Again there followed the rhetorical "But isn't it?" Every other Calvinistic Church rejected their theology on racial matters. His sermon "only mentioned the D.R.C. en passant as believing in apartheid. Its main burden was an appeal for sacramental (and therefore social) religion and was a plea to the Anglicans to be true to their Catholic Faith. I made a point of saying that the D.R.C. gave more to Missions and Education than all the other churches."<sup>92</sup>

A day later he returned to the subject: the D.R.C. had accused him of attacking them for the first time when he was outside the country. But their English handout had already accused him months ago. There follows a thought which he was to express publicly on his return to South Africa: "I cannot see what it's all about except that I think they are gunning for me while I am out of the country".

For those who have read his diocesan letters for February and March, 1958 his next sentence - "Perhaps I've been on the defensive too much" - carries more than a touch of irony. He concluded: "They do let down the Christian Church and perhaps that ought to be said quite categorically. I'm all against polite dishonesty so that we may keep on

speaking terms."<sup>93</sup>

There are two further entries on the subject, both of which convey the message that de Blank had been the victim of "a deliberate and well-planned attack".<sup>94</sup> The excitement in South Africa is seen to have been created "by a few dirty dogs at the South African Office of Information who by tearing one sentence out of its context could make out that I had violently attacked the Dutch Reformed Churches. They understand that perfectly well here because they did exactly the same with Bishop Reeves last year."<sup>95</sup>

(vi) Lambeth Conference

After completing a hectic programme of addresses and sermons, de Blank flew to London to take part in the Lambeth Conference as Chairman of the Committee on the Reconciling of Conflicts between and within Nations. This emphasis on reconciliation so fired his imagination that it became the recurring theme in many of his subsequent writings and sermons. It is self-evident that de Blank's leading position on this committee made a discussion of South Africa's apartheid policy inevitable. The Archbishop derived strength and encouragement from the fact that "our views on Christian obedience in the present racial situation were identical".<sup>96</sup>

His influence is also apparent in the following statement of the committee:

"With the Church of the Province of South Africa the Committee condemns the injustices perpetrated against non-white men and women in South Africa under the policy of 'apartheid'. It holds that every citizen of South Africa of whatever race should have equal rights before the law, and that the non-white should be given a fair and just share in the government of the nation of his birth and citizenship. It believes that if the present pattern of multi-racial community is to continue any form of 'apartheid' is less just and righteous than a gradual and mutually enriching growth into responsible interdependence of all the races which now share this fertile and beautiful land."<sup>97</sup>

de Blank clearly saw this unequivocal attack on apartheid as the green light for continuing his own assault.

That he was a commanding figure at Lambeth is evident from a report in the Manchester Guardian, under the heading, "Lambeth's Incoming Tenant?", which said that people who had met de Blank at the Conference felt they were looking at the future Archbishop of Canterbury:

"Although he is physically small he has a presence which makes him stand out not only in a roomful of assorted people but even on a lawn filled with bishops at a garden party. His stature is, of course, the same but his presence has noticeably increased since he left Stepney last year and was translated to Cape Town. He is a man entirely in command of himself, relaxed yet sombrely intense, courteous yet withdrawn."<sup>98</sup>

The significance of de Blank's first trip abroad as Archbishop of Cape Town needs to be underlined: even before leaving South Africa his public pronouncements on apartheid had received a wide coverage overseas. The extensive publicity given to his New York sermon served to bring him all the more prominently into the public eye and made it certain that he would be a leading personality at Lambeth. Always a man to rise to the occasion, he conducted himself in such a way that he established himself as a leading ecclesiastical figure marked out for the highest honour. In the strength of this acclaim and morally equipped with the Lambeth resolutions condemning apartheid and its manifestations in South Africa, he could return to the theatre of conflict. On the other hand, the applause accorded to him was not echoed in South Africa. As he afterwards realised, his trip overseas after a relatively short period in office was a "sad necessity"<sup>99</sup> - sad because it gave his opponents unhindered scope to attack him. He had thus succeeded in winning many friends overseas but alienating a great number of people in the country where he would have to continue his work.

(vii) Comment on Return

de Blank was aware of the hostile comment he had provoked through his utterances abroad. This emerges from his first letter to the diocese after his return in which he writes that while he was away the "enemies of Christ's Church at once set to work. By downright lies, by venomous insinuations, by deliberate omissions and subtle half-truths, the devil went about his dirty work.....". Yet he drew comfort from the warmth of his reception at the airport where people of all races paid "honour to the man who had been made-through no virtue of his own but by the action of Christ in His Church - its spiritual leader and father in God."<sup>100</sup>

Although the Nationalists were firmly in control, the Church would fearlessly give practical expression to God's revelation that all are one in Christ Jesus. The Nazi Youth had boasted that the future was theirs but the Church knew that the future belonged to God and would therefore move forward in obedience to Him.

In the light of the above sentiments it is interesting to compare his statement to the Press two days after his arrival from overseas. de Blank said he was a gentle and peace-loving man who was not happy to be at odds with "responsible leaders" such as Eric Louw whom he was keen to meet over a cup of tea.<sup>101</sup>

(viii) Charge to Forty-First Diocesan Synod - December, 1958<sup>102</sup>

In his Charge to the Diocesan Synod the Archbishop said that the burden of leading the diocese lay heavily upon him. This was due to the fact that he had taken over from a leader of such standing as Geoffrey Clayton who at the time of his death had signed a letter renouncing the "infamous Church Clause with its blasphemous claim that the State had a right to stand between a people and its God".

As he had referred to the reports of recent Synods, it was interesting to note that each President's Charge contained an attack on some aspect of national policy which did not square with Christian doctrine. He was saying this to "set in perspective the calumny and contumely to which I have been subjected since coming to this country". He had intended to keep silent but his visit to Windermere forced him to speak out against "the ruthless application of the Native Laws Amendment Act as man and wife, and parent and children were pitilessly separated". Because he had resisted this "inhumanity" he had been vilified and abused on all hands.

His course was clear: "the slightest smell of compulsory apartheid" had to be removed from all Anglican churches. There were Church people (presumably Anglicans from the context) who objected on the grounds that he had exceeded the mark but previous statements of Dr Clayton had proved an encouragement to him in his determination to get rid of this "social poison".

He was aware that the Anglican Church was not blameless as far as racial discrimination was concerned, something which certain politicians had not hesitated to point out. Yet the failures of the Church did not prevent it from carrying out its divine task of proclaiming Christian principles, "for the word we speak, we speak to ourselves as well as to the nation".

He was surprised that a "vociferous minority" still believed that a concern for social justice was politics and not Christianity. He could only think that something was seriously wrong with the teaching given at Church schools, Confirmation classes and in the home if children could

reach maturity and still cling to "such gravely heretical opinions" which denied the truth of the Incarnation, that because the word was made flesh, a distinction could not be drawn between the sacred and the secular.

(ix) de Blank and Die Burger, January 1959

In the January 1959 edition of Good Hope the Archbishop accused Die Burger of suppressio veri and suggestio falsi in its coverage of the deliberations of the recent Diocesan Synod. This provoked a personal reply from the Editor of Die Burger who said that the Archbishop's allegations were serious, and invited him to prove the charges. de Blank responded that it was pointless to substantiate his accusations in a single article after which Die Burger would continue its attacks, having satisfied its readers that the Archbishop had been given a fair hearing. He would only consider the offer if he were given a weekly column over the next twelve months. He suggested as an alternative a recorded conversation on the issue raised in Good Hope to be published in Die Burger without comment. He then gave a number of examples of what he considered suppressio veri and suggestio falsi.

The Editor rejected both proposals, insisting that de Blank had been given a chance "to enlighten us about something we know nothing about". He held that although the Archbishop's letter was 'personal', the readers of Die Burger could not be kept in the dark about his reply to the invitation. de Blank expressed surprise that the readers of Die Burger had known of the Editor's offer which had nevertheless been headed 'personal'. The Editor could satisfy his readers in some other way.

Finally, the Editor of Die Burger informed de Blank that he proposed to publish the correspondence, with the Archbishop's approval, on 2nd February. de Blank agreed, but only if the correspondence appeared in toto. He suggested a simultaneous release to the Press at 4 p.m. on the suggested day. The Editor could not agree to this as it would mean that a section of the English Press could publish it before Die Burger. He reaffirmed his intention of publishing the correspondence on 2nd February. This drew a sharply-worded rebuke from de Blank who said that in all his long experience with newspapers he had never encountered such unprincipled behaviour.<sup>103</sup>

Die Burger in a leader criticised de Blank over the whole issue and asked:

"Is this the church father, the church leader, the chief shepherd of a great Christian church in South Africa? Are these sly, suspicious, these smooth evasions, these nice little schemes with tape recorders the signs of a prince of religion?" The Archbishop had proved himself to be a man "eager to wound but frightened to strike".<sup>104</sup>

(x) South Africa's Awakening Conscience

In his next diocesan letter (February 1959) de Blank wrote of a "stirring of conscience" in South Africa. His grounds for saying this were the "ever more elaborate and fantastic justifications for current racial policy." Apartheid did not now stand for White domination but separate development on the principle of "separate but equal". It had been recognised that apartheid was not based on principle but had become a matter of practical expediency. SABRA had called for inter-racial discussions and the protagonists of apartheid were prepared to admit that they had given the rest of the world the wrong impression of their policy.

In Cape Town there were clear signs of this stirring: a "phenomenal meeting" addressed by Prof. Pistorius,<sup>106</sup> the multi-racial service to commemorate the Day of the Covenant,<sup>107</sup> the resolutions of the Diocesan Synod rejecting White superiority,<sup>108</sup> the Potchefstroom Declaration,<sup>109</sup> protests against job reservation and the proposal to put Coloured municipal voters on a separate roll.<sup>110</sup>

The increasing violence of the attacks on those who did not follow the official line was a further indication of the awakening conscience. It was easy to label the critics of the regime Communists. Hitler had used this technique but by his inhuman policies he had given rise to the very Communism he deplored.

The last paragraph of the letter illustrates the confidence of ultimate triumph which de Blank entertained at this stage in his ministry:

"All over the country the tide of moral conviction is rising. In time it will wash away the cruel rock of arrogance and pride, and will soften the hardness of men's hearts. The Day of the Lord is not yet. But now is our salvation nearer than when we believed."

The May letter of Good Hope may be viewed as a sequel to that of February: Africa was entering a new era and it was impossible for those in South Africa to isolate themselves from the rest of the continent. A policy of exclusion had to be rejected not solely on Christian principle but out of self-interest since disaster was the inevitable result of that

policy. White extremism had generated a Black extremism. It had "brought an angry proletariat to birth which is all too rapidly losing patience with those who claim to be their masters".

Was it too late to ask those who called themselves Christians to give practical expression to their faith by showing their greatness not by exercising physical domination but by the quality of their service? Such a realisation of the Christian's calling would mean the end of extremism whether Black or White, and as a result the tarnished image of partnership could still be redeemed.

The June letter was of a similar nature. People were "rapidly awakening from the drugged sleep of an untenable ideology and are re-discovering the fundamental decencies of life and of human relationships". It was accordingly time to unite all the moral forces, in and outside Parliament, to bring to birth a new policy of justice and co-operation. If this opportunity were missed, it might never recur.

(xi) Meeting with D.R.C. Leaders

On 19th May 1959 a meeting took place in Bloemfontein between representatives of the Church of the Province of South Africa and the leaders of the Dutch Reformed Church. It will be remembered that de Blank had brought the relationship between the two Churches to a very low ebb by his comments on the D.R.C. made in America almost a year previously.<sup>111</sup> The statement released after the meeting is thus of particular importance: the D.R.C. were given the assurance that the Archbishop in his sermon in New York had not gone beyond "a mere statement of conditions as he understood them;" and, in turn, the Church of the Province was assured that the D.R.C. "did not start any campaign to vilify Archbishop de Blank."<sup>112</sup>

Points four and five are given in full because of the significance they assumed in the troubled conditions of the following year:

- "4. The churches undertake to inform each other on the reasons governing their policy and activity and to do everything in their power to avoid deductions which are ill-founded and detrimental to the interests of either church.
- "5. Both churches will seek to devise new ways and means of consultation at all levels and will encourage office-bearers of both churches to foster a spirit of goodwill."<sup>113</sup>

The Archbishop issued a statement in which he said that the talks had been conducted "in an atmosphere of frankness and goodwill." The two

Churches had neither compromised their respective principles nor ignored the difficulties that separated them, but he believed that the meetings opened "a new era of mutual consultation and respect which I pray may lead through clearer understanding to corporate action in matters of common concern."<sup>114</sup>

(xii) Visit to Accra and its Sequel

At the end of May 1959 the Archbishop left Cape Town to participate in the centenary celebrations on St Helena, returning via West Africa. He tells us that at a State banquet in honour of President Tubman of Liberia the Governor of Sierra Leone spoke of de Blank as one "who is known to thousands among us as a doughty champion of African interests and whose courageous stand we follow with our admiration and our prayers."<sup>115</sup> The Archbishop says that he was greatly moved by the applause which followed - "such a contrast to the treatment meted out in South Africa!"<sup>116</sup>

He also noted the words of President Tubman who "talked of how the whole continent of Africa was moving towards freedom and independence - except for one country but where, thank God 'we too have our friends'."<sup>117</sup>

On 21st June he spoke in Accra Cathedral on why the Church had to disagree with Government policy in South Africa. Contrary to his normal practice, he read his sermon from a manuscript as he believed that extracts would be quoted against him.<sup>118</sup> This is precisely what happened, for immediately after reports of the address had appeared in the South African Press, the Prime Minister, Dr Verwoerd, took him to task for using a foreign land as a platform from which to libel South Africa.<sup>119</sup> de Blank replied in his next diocesan letter,<sup>120</sup> which will be dealt with fully later.

In the second section of the letter he made a dramatic offer to the Prime Minister who had said that the Archbishop did not belong to South Africa:

"For the sake of South Africa therefore I am prepared to withdraw from the country as Archbishop and Metropolitan if Dr Verwoerd will withdraw as Prime Minister and return to his native land. His native land, it may be recalled, is the same as mine. It breaks my heart to make this offer, but I am willing for such a sacrifice because I know if it were accepted it would hasten the country's return to decency and sanity."

On his way to Sierra Leone from St Helena he received the news that Maoris were to be excluded from the 1960 New Zealand rugby side to

tour South Africa. He noted in his diary that as a result of this he had composed a cable informing the Archbishop of New Zealand that he was withdrawing his acceptance of the invitation to visit that country the following year on his own behalf and that of the Church of the Province of South Africa.<sup>121</sup> Later, when suggesting that there should be a boycott of South Africa in the field of international sport, he wrote:

"New Zealand is making herself the laughing stock of the civilized world by tolerating its Rugby Union's exclusion of Maoris from the All-Blacks team to tour South Africa this year. And this from a country which has always proudly claimed that the Maoris are fully integrated into the life of New Zealand and that no segregation exists. I was myself to have gone to New Zealand this year, but had to withdraw my acceptance of the invitation when the Rugby Union's disgraceful action was made public."<sup>122</sup>

#### (xiii) The Archbishop's Conference - August 1959

It seems that some time during 1959 the Black Sash<sup>123</sup> asked the Archbishop to call together a meeting of representatives of all races in South Africa so that something constructive could be done to put an end to apartheid.<sup>124</sup> This was not the first time he had been contacted by the organisation. As early as 3rd December 1957 he had received a copy of the Declaration of Conscience and been given details about a Protest meeting to mark Human Rights' Day.<sup>125</sup> He replied that he was not trying to "wriggle out" of his responsibilities but felt that this was not the right moment vocally and officially to attack Government policy. He concluded:

"But I have no doubt that the right moment will arrive, probably sooner than we think, and when it does I pray that I may not be backward in publicly allying myself with all who hold to such a creed as proclaimed in the Declaration of Conscience. I shall therefore be more than grateful if you will keep me informed of all the developments and see to it that I do not miss my cue through ignorance or inadvertance."<sup>126</sup>

Now, more than a year later, having already attacked Government policy both at home and abroad, he was not likely to miss any cue. He accordingly sent out a letter<sup>127</sup> to "progressive organizations and individuals" inviting them to a conference to be held on 1st August 1959. In the letter the Archbishop stated that South Africa had come to a parting of the ways. On the one side there were those who supported apartheid; on the other stood those who believed that it was disastrous and wrong, economically, socially, and religiously. The results of this policy were there for all to see: deterioration in race relations, increased poverty, injustice to many individuals, and a lowering of the country's inter-

national prestige.

There was, however, much to encourage the true patriot: men were "rapidly awakening from the drugged sleep of an untenable ideology and ..... rediscovering the fundamental decencies of life and of human relationships". The past weeks had witnessed "the appearance of a series of large and encouraging cracks in the facade put up so long by the upholders of White domination and total segregation". It was the time to strike:

"Strenuous and united opposition to current policies is therefore urgently called for, outside as well as within Parliament, from all who believe in human dignity and fair dealing. Now is the time for the moral forces of the country to combine to bring a new policy of justice and co-operation to birth. If we do not seize the opportunity now it may never recur."

de Blank pointed out that as similar efforts at bringing interested people together were being made elsewhere in South Africa, it was possible that those coming to the Conference were helping to lay the foundations of a popular movement of constructive reform that would take on national dimensions.

The Press was not informed but Die Burger managed to get a copy of the letter which was given prominence on its front page.<sup>128</sup> The Black Sash thus felt it necessary to make a public statement stressing that the Archbishop had no intention of forming a new political party.<sup>129</sup>

On the 1st August the Conference was duly held. Among the organisations represented were the African National Congress and the South African Coloured People's Organisation.<sup>130</sup> After opening remarks from the convenor, Dr de Blank, Dr O. Wollheim gave an address in which he outlined the extent, causes and effects of poverty in South Africa.<sup>131</sup> Ex-Chief Justice Centlivres showed, with reference to laws passed since Union, how civil liberty had been constantly infringed.<sup>132</sup> Finally, Mr D. Molteno, Q.C. revealed the shortcomings of the South African Constitution which had been drawn up by a National Convention, composed exclusively of White delegates and largely dominated by representatives from the Transvaal.<sup>133</sup>

At the conclusion of the meeting a motion was passed in which the Conference recorded its considered view "that the history of the first 50 years of Union does not warrant the observance of the 31st May 1960, as an occasion for celebration, but rather for solemn dedication to the task of improving on the Union's achievements and rectifying its mistakes, so as to render the next 50 years better and happier than the first."<sup>134</sup> Accordingly, all organisations and individuals who shared the convictions

expressed above were called upon to observe 31st May 1960 as a day of dedication to the task of achieving objectives which reflected the conclusions arrived at in the three addresses given earlier in the afternoon:

- "(a) the ridding of our land of the scourge of poverty and the achievement for all South Africans of a minimum living wage, social security, and equality of economic opportunity;
- "(b) the enjoyment by all South Africans of those civil liberties that, throughout the civilised world, are regarded as undeniable human rights;
- "(c) a reform of the South African Constitution, as agreed by a new National Convention, truly representative of all races of our people, which will guarantee to individuals the above-mentioned liberties and rights, will grant political representation to men and women irrespective of race and will protect each racial community from domination."<sup>135</sup>

A Continuation Committee was appointed to make recommendations on how 50 years of Union should be observed and to organise a campaign for the achievement of the above-mentioned objectives.<sup>136</sup> de Blank had been loud in his vocal criticism of apartheid. Now he was showing that he was prepared to back up his words with positive action.

The report of the Continuation Committee to the Conference in November 1959 shows that much had been done since the inaugural meeting.<sup>137</sup> It had been decided that on Union Day 1960 there would be a procession commencing at the Foreshore (Cape Town) to be followed by a ceremony of re-dedication. The Sub-Committee on Poverty had already arranged a meeting with Trade Union representatives, and representatives of employers would also be contacted. Farm gaols and farm labour would be the subjects of investigation.

As regards civil liberties, the general feeling was that influx control should be done away with. A resolution was also drawn up that "no person be deprived of any portion of his liberties without order of open court to that effect."

The Sub-Committee on the Constitution felt that it was involved in a long-term project. In order to educate the public to accept that there was a need for a new Constitution, it would work in conjunction with the Constitutional Reform Association and the Liberal Party.<sup>138</sup>

#### (xiv) Overseas Again

At the end of August 1959 de Blank left to conduct a Clergy

Retreat in Bulawayo from where he proceeded to Britain and America to speak of the work of the Church in South Africa.<sup>139</sup> One of his addresses, in particular, was widely reported. At a meeting of the South African Church Institute in Central Hall, Westminster, he quoted Livingstone's famous words in connection with the slave trade:<sup>140</sup>

"All I can add in my loneliness is, may Heaven's rich blessing come down on everyone - American, English, or Turk - who will help to heal the open sore of the world."

de Blank suggested that if Livingstone were alive today he would use virtually the same language, but with reference to the particular problem of the day:

"The open sore of Africa in 1959 is a society based on Colour privilege. While there remains discrimination on the basis of colour alone Africa's peaceful future is seriously threatened. This is the open sore of Africa in the twentieth century as slavery was in the nineteenth. And to its eradication we are by our Christian obedience pledged."<sup>141</sup>

He was able to tell his audience that at the moment all the Churches in South Africa were at one in condemning apartheid as being anti-Christian. When he had first come to South Africa he was disturbed because it seemed that the Dutch Reformed Church stood behind Government policy. However, he knew better now. Not only had valuable discussions taken place between the C.P.S.A. and the D.R.C. but the Reformed Ecumenical Synod had signed a statement in which it said that no race may consider itself entitled to a privileged position or regard itself as superior to other races.<sup>142</sup>

There was also another reason for optimism:

"And now we have at long last begun to see the stirrings of conscience in the Official Opposition Party. It seemed to me, and to many, for a long time as if the United Party either had lost its soul or had no soul to lose. But now the freeze is over and the political thaw has begun."<sup>143</sup>

No one would dare to predict how long the "present unworkable policies" would be maintained:

"But there are cracks, ever-widening cracks in the structure, and we who love South Africa believe and pray that it may act before it is too late. Time is against us. The situation is urgent, desperately urgent, but the Churches are making a valiant witness....."<sup>144</sup>

(xv) Charge to the Forty-Second Diocesan Synod<sup>145</sup>  
(December 1959)

The Archbishop told Synod that as a result of the Group Areas Act and "the consequences of a racist policy run wild" it was important to train leaders from the same people they were destined to serve. The time could come when the non-Whites, because of "the evils of apartheid", would have nothing more to do with the White man but would only acknowledge leaders from their own races.

In the second section of his charge de Blank spoke of the "threat" of Christian National Education. This subject will be discussed extensively later.<sup>146</sup>

Attention was next focused on the Mixed Marriages Act, "a monstrous piece of legislation which must be wholly repugnant to the Christian conscience". To prevent a union of two people on the basis of a difference of colour was "near blasphemy". Should priests continue to serve as marriage officers recognised by the Government when, in the course of their duties they were giving "formal and practical recognition to this non-Christian intrusion"? He was happy that the Bishops in Synod had initiated an inquiry into this matter. It was perhaps better, he suggested, that the religious ceremony be separated from the civil one.

Section Four attempted to show why the rest of the world needed to be informed about apartheid. This policy threatened not only South Africa but Western civilization as a whole. He himself had gone abroad in September and October because of "urgent invitations" from Britain and the United States. It was important that Church leaders should accept such invitations for so often official representatives of the Union spoke only for the Whites. He had stressed overseas that as a result of the Potchefstroom Resolution and the conference between the C.P.S.A. and the D.R.C. all Churches in South Africa were united in opposition to policies maintaining White domination.

His visit overseas had convinced him that the hostile attitude to the Union would change immediately if the Government a) signed the Declaration on Human Rights; b) rescinded the Church Clause; c) granted members of all races freedom to travel abroad; d) abandoned the attempt to make African women carry passes.

(xvi) Wind of Change - February 1960

1960 began with a warning of coming difficulties:

"the demands of Christian charity and obedience are so opposed to current legislation and its outworking in terms of human lives and families that a life of loyalty to Christ and His Church is bound to evoke hostility and misrepresentation."<sup>147</sup>

The following month (February) de Blank referred to the stirring of the consciences of many Europeans who were beginning to question the presumptions of apartheid. He saw the Church as having played a major role in this respect with its insistence on the equality of all men before God. If the Church remained faithful, he was confident that the following decade would witness significant changes.<sup>148</sup>

While de Blank was talking of those within South Africa who were questioning the assumptions of apartheid, there was someone from without who felt he had to do the same. Early in January the British Prime Minister, Harold Macmillan, began a tour of Africa.<sup>149</sup> His reason? -

"The rising tide of nationalism in Africa was then not so evident as it was soon to become. Yet I was conscious of dangers and storms ahead. I hoped by a personal visit not only to inform myself on some of the difficulties in the next stages of constitutional advance, but perhaps by focusing public opinion at home on this problem, lift it to a plane above that of narrow party politics."<sup>150</sup>

In South Africa Macmillan was able to speak to a number of people opposed to Government policy, including de Blank,<sup>151</sup> who told him that he should never have accepted an invitation from Dr Verwoerd to come to the Union without getting an undertaking in advance that he would be allowed to talk with non-White leaders. The Archbishop told reporters that the British Premier had seen his point, and added, "I think he's going to make an interesting speech tomorrow."<sup>152</sup>

Interesting it certainly was. Speaking to both Houses of Parliament, he said that the wind of change was blowing in Africa.<sup>153</sup> African national consciousness had to be accepted as a fact if the precarious balance between East and West on which the peace of the world depended were not to be imperilled.<sup>154</sup> Britain's response to the rise of nationalism in Asia and Africa had been to aim for the creation of a society "in which men are given the opportunity to grow to their full stature - and that must in our view include the opportunity to have an increasing share in political power and responsibility - a society in which individual merit and individual merit alone is the criterion for a man's advancement, whether political or

economic."<sup>155</sup>

Turning to British policy towards countries inhabited by more than one race, he quoted his Foreign Secretary, Selwyn Lloyd: "We reject the idea of any inherent superiority of one race over another. Our policy therefore is non-racial."<sup>156</sup>

de Blank was grateful for this speech which embodied much of what he had already said:

"Without any tub-thumping, without any flights of eloquence or tricks of oratory, the British Prime Minister reiterated quietly but forcibly those fundamental truths that are axiomatic in Biblical theology, namely that all men are of equal value to Almighty God and that the rewards of this life must be based on individual merit and on nothing else. As South Africa claims to be a Christian country, this should be the touchstone of all legislation - and until it is, Church and State will be out of step."<sup>157</sup>

#### (xvii) Sharpeville and Union Celebrations

Only six weeks after Macmillan's warning of the danger of ignoring the growth of national consciousness in Africa, a crowd of Africans converged on the police station at Sharpeville near Vereeniging in protest against the pass laws.<sup>158</sup> They had been told by Robert Sobukwe, President of the Pan-Africanist Congress, to leave their reference books at home and to go to the police station to invite arrest for this disobedience to the law. The situation got out of control with the result that the police opened fire. On the same day there were similar scenes of unrest at Langa, an African location near Cape Town. It was reported that altogether seventy-two Africans had been killed and one-hundred-and-eighty wounded. Amidst growing tension the Government declared a State of Emergency.

In view of the situation, de Blank cancelled his scheduled visit to America, France and Britain. In 1961 he explained to his American audience why he had been unable to address them the previous year:

"A Bishop's first duty is to his people. The violence and bloodshed that ushered in a state of emergency ... convinced me that I had, at that time, no right to leave my diocese or province - I had to keep myself available for my children in Christ."<sup>159</sup>

Sharpeville had come as a complete vindication of everything he had said or written since he first uttered his condemnation of apartheid in February 1958.<sup>160</sup> It was now, more than ever, essential that all Christians should join ranks:

"The over-riding factor is the future of the Christian Faith so far as the millions of Africans in this country are concerned. This is far more important than inter-Church politeness or formal relations. Everyone in close contact with the African knows that we have reached a parting of the ways: if he cannot now be convinced of the reality of Christianity he will turn against the Faith for good. Unfortunately he is at present quite certain that the Church stands for White domination and White superiority and if there is to be any hope of regaining his confidence at all every Church must state categorically its repudiation of such an ideology. In the light of events that took place on March 21st and subsequently, the disastrous effects of the logical out-working of an apartheid policy are now plain for all to see. Whereas in the past there might still have been some excuse for Christian bodies to cherish the hope that this was a workable proposition which could find expression in accord with Christian principles, the terrible happenings of the disturbances and the means of repressing them can leave no room for doubt in any Christian breast. To every Christian now compulsory apartheid should be clearly recognizable for the sin it is. It is as blatant, perhaps a more blatant, denial of the New Testament commandment to love one's neighbour as oneself as the sin of adultery."<sup>161</sup>

But the Dutch Reformed Church would not be drawn into any criticism of the Government. de Blank reacted by saying that if the D.R.C. did not join the other Churches in repudiating apartheid, it was essential that other Churches should no longer be associated with it in any council or federation. He added that he had appealed to the World Council of Churches to send out a fact-finding team to South Africa to investigate the racial situation at first hand.<sup>162</sup>

The Moderator of the Synod of the D.R.C. in the Cape replied that de Blank's latest attack was a breach of the agreement reached between the C.P.S.A. and the D.R.C. in May 1959 and made future co-operation with him impossible.<sup>163</sup> de Blank rejoined that he was prepared to co-operate with all Churches as long as the Christian belief in the equality of all before God was recognised. If effective agreement was reached on this basis and his presence still retarded co-operation, he was prepared to retire from the scene. What mattered was the Christian faith - not himself.<sup>164</sup>

The seriousness with which de Blank viewed the situation in the country can also be gained from an address in which he spoke of Christ's weeping over Jerusalem and the destruction of the city forty years later because it did not know the things that belonged to its peace. He referred to the things which belonged to South Africa's peace, such as justice and fair-dealing, leaving his hearers to draw whatever conclusions they wanted to.<sup>165</sup>

In his Easter sermon the Archbishop said that the events of the previous months were an example of the wrath of God falling upon the children of disobedience. In what he described as a "day of judgement" he called upon all Churches to love their neighbours as themselves and to reject any system that bred hatred among the different sections of the population.<sup>166</sup>

de Blank could see little reason for festivities to commemorate fifty years of the Union of South Africa. In his sermon entitled "Year of Jubilee"<sup>167</sup> he referred to the biblical method of keeping such a festival: liberty was to be proclaimed throughout the land and everyone should return to his own possession and his family.<sup>168</sup> In South Africa the Year of Jubilee was a mockery - instead of liberty there was a state of emergency; and instead of the return of every man to his family, regulations had been deliberately framed to keep familites apart. This was not the occasion for celebration but for shame and penitence:

"We ought not to be rollicking at this time in Bloemfontein but beating our breasts in Sharpeville. We ought not to be roystering in Pretoria but lamenting in Langa. And I dare say in the name of the Lord that to indulge in officially-sponsored jollification at such a time as this is both immoral and indecent."<sup>169</sup>

Die Kerkbode took de Blank to task for labelling participation, and thus their participation, in the Union celebrations as "immoral and indecent."<sup>170</sup> The Archbishop said that he had not replied to this attack because Die Kerkbode had not assailed him but Moses. In passing, he mentioned that Mr Eric Louw and the Die Kerkbode had created such a demand for his sermon that it had to be printed.<sup>171</sup>

On Union Day (31st May) the march arranged by the Archbishop's Conference took place.<sup>172</sup> de Blank felt "desperately sorry for those in Cape Town who for reasons of personal safety or expediency decided not to join in this highest act of patriotism when people of all races and all creeds dedicated themselves to the building of a better future."<sup>173</sup>

#### (xviii) First Steps Towards Cottesloe

Reference has already been made to the Archbishop's appeal to the W.C.C.<sup>174</sup> The D.R.C. in the Transvaal and the Cape were of the opinion that de Blank had asked for the expulsion of the D.R.C. from the W.C.C.<sup>175</sup> In spite of later denials that an official request of this nature had been made,<sup>176</sup> they were absolutely right. In his letter to Visser't Hooft, the Archbishop stated that the attitude of the C.P.S.A. was most clearly expressed in a communication to his fellow bishops on behalf of the

Episcopal Consultative Committee, a copy of which was included in the letter.<sup>177</sup> de Blank wrote to the bishops as follows: "Now that Cecil Wood is safely in England I can write to tell you that his going was determined by the Episcopal Consultative Committee which met on Monday, April 4th.

"The Committee was convinced that, while all Churches have sinned, the continuing support for apartheid by the Dutch Reformed Churches makes African hostility to the Christian Faith inevitable. In spite of the Evanston Declaration on racial discrimination and in spite of the twelve points on race relations issued by the Potchefstroom Ecumenical Synod in 1958, to date the Dutch Reformed Churches have done nothing to repudiate the official violent action taken during the riots, and particularly on March 21st and April 4th. The Committee was agreed that it is quite impossible to maintain fellowship with Churches that have not repudiated the policy of apartheid now that its brutal working out in practice has been so clearly manifested. So far, the only statement issued by the Dutch Reformed Churches, signed by their Public Relations Officer and their Moderators, while regretting the violence, expressed complete confidence in the government and the nation's leaders.

"The future of Christianity in this country demands our complete dissociation from the Dutch Reformed Church attitude. Cecil Wood is therefore authorised to tell the World Council of Churches that unless the Dutch Reformed Churches are prepared to forsake their support for apartheid and to condemn the government for its ruthless action, we can no longer remain as fellow members of the World Council of Churches with them. Either they must be expelled or we shall be compelled to withdraw.

"I realise this is a very grave decision to take and I have therefore empowered Cecil Wood to ask for a strong fact-finding commission from the World Council of Churches to come and investigate the situation in South Africa at first hand. I have, therefore, also expressed some concern that, as far as I am aware, the World Council of Churches as such has not yet issued any statement condemning the tragic events that have been forced upon South Africa."

Visser't Hooft clearly viewed de Blank's ultimatum - "Either they must be expelled or we shall be compelled to withdraw" - in a serious light. He accordingly wrote to the members of the Executive Committee of the W.C.C. asking them for their reactions to de Blank's communication.<sup>178</sup> Lakdasa de Mel, Anglican Bishop of Kurunagala, Ceylon, replied that it "would be disastrous to exclude from our fellowship the church which has

the biggest responsibility for proclaiming what we in the W.C.C. believe in this matter, as their members are the most backward.

"The Archbishop of Cape Town and the Bishop of Johannesburg have won the admiration of Christendom by the stand they have taken, but we must gently reason with them that expulsion of the D.R.C. would be in effect a kind of ecclesiastical apartheid adding one more scandal to an already scandalous situation. We must keep our links with these people and in this way encourage the more enlightened amongst them to convert their own brethren..."<sup>179</sup>

The Archbishop of Canterbury, in his reply to Visser't Hooft, was more forthright on de Blank's demand for the dismissal of the D.R.C. from the World Council:

"It is a stupid remark: The Archbishop of York said to me you do not cure one form of apartheid by inventing another form. You can be assured, therefore, that the attitude of the Archbishop of Cape Town (and of Bishop Reeves if he said the same which rather surprises me) is not the attitude of the Church of England or of the Anglican community as a whole: quite the contrary. If necessary I shall have to say this at Nottingham,<sup>180</sup> but I hope to avoid saying it in public."<sup>181</sup>

He went on to inform the General Secretary that he had cabled de Blank, asking him whether his statement on the D.R.C. represented his own opinion or the official policy of the bishops in South Africa. de Blank's reply was:

"Agreed by emergency meeting Episcopal Standing Committee but first call for World Council fact finding commission public repudiation of compulsory apartheid in Church and State essential for continued co-operation."<sup>182</sup>

Fisher commented that it was not easy to interpret this answer. His personal opinion, however, was that de Blank's first priority was the request for the sending of a fact-finding commission. Any idea about the expulsion of the D.R.C. was subordinate to this. To him de Blank's reply meant that the Archbishop of Cape Town had "prepared the way for a climb down later on, hoping that it (would) not have to be made in so many words."<sup>183</sup>

The chairman of the W.C.C. Commission for International Affairs, Sir Kenneth Grubb, told Visser't Hooft that Cecil Wood had attended the meeting of the British Council of Churches in Nottingham to clarify de Blank's point of view. Grubb felt that he had not been very convincing and that the general feeling at Nottingham was that the Archbishop "had been rather foolish in raising the question of the membership of the World Council."<sup>184</sup>

That de Blank had called for the expulsion of the D.R.C. from the World Council has been clearly shown both from his own letter and the

reaction of W.C.C. leaders to it. There is still the problem as to whether the W.C.C. sent Dr Bilheimer to South Africa as a result of the pressure brought to bear on them by de Blank. The Archbishop himself and Cecil Wood seemed to be under the impression that the former's appeal had given rise to subsequent W.C.C. action.<sup>185</sup> On the surface it would seem as if they were correct. On 13th April Cecil Wood conferred with leaders of the W.C.C. and on the very next day the D.R.C. received Visser't Hooft's cable asking them to receive Dr Bilheimer.<sup>186</sup> Further, a press statement made immediately after the discussions between Wood and the W.C.C. leaders announced that the W.C.C. was sending one of its officials to South Africa to consult with leaders of all the member Churches. The Rand Daily Mail using the news service, SAPA-Reuter, reported that the announcement had been made after the meeting between Archdeacon Wood and W.C.C. leaders, and that the former had expressed his satisfaction saying, "I am sure that a member of the Secretariat will be most welcome in South Africa." But the Rand Daily Mail, consciously or unconsciously, had omitted an important piece of information which Die Transvaler, using the same news service, included in its report - the fact that the decision to send an official to the Union had been taken before the discussions of the previous day. The Transvaal D.R.C. representatives at Cottesloe stressed this point in their report,<sup>187</sup> and the veracity of the information is proved beyond any shadow of doubt from an entry in Bilheimer's diary: "the decision for my visit had been taken before we knew of the de Blank idea."<sup>188</sup>

Dr Bilheimer duly arrived in South Africa on 19th April. Discussions with D.R.C. leaders in the Transvaal the following day revealed that there was the likelihood that the D.R.C. would withdraw from the W.C.C. the following year. This probably made Bilheimer, already armed with the moral support of the Archbishop of Canterbury, all the more determined to convince de Blank that he was playing with fire. Bilheimer has left us the following record of his meeting with the Archbishop:

"It was a rough conversation. de Blank started by saying that we have come to a parting of the ways. The future of Christianity in Africa is at stake. We must no longer associate with those who believe in apartheid. The conversation moved so fast that I could not keep notes. I took the initiative and should probably say that I became aggressive. Indeed, I don't remember ever having talked as hard to any human being in my life. Main points: to ask for the expulsion of the Dutch Reformed Church starts something which breaks up the ecumenical movement. de Blank was shaken when I asked him point blank what we should do with the Chinese Churches. Expulsion means the power and judgement of the super-church, which is a surprising suggestion to arise from such high quarters in the Anglican Church."<sup>189</sup>

Having obtained de Blank's co-operation, Bilheimer now found during talks with D.R.C. leaders in the Cape, that the D.R.C. were intent on making de Blank pay for his actions by a public withdrawal of his call for the dismissal of the D.R.C. from the W.C.C. This was too much for Bilheimer:

"I felt that by getting the Archbishop to co-operate with the W.C.C. consultation I had done enough, and that to get him to climb down publicly was a bit steep. The toughest moment was when they said that they wanted to make their acceptance of the consultation conditional upon the Archbishop publicly withdrawing his 'withdraw or expel' proposal."<sup>190</sup>

Bilheimer extricated the World Council from a difficult situation by adopting an ingenious expedient. He managed to convince the D.R.C. leaders that the two topics, the consultation and D.R.C.-C.P.S.A. disagreement, should be separated from one another. To him the consultation was of prime importance. If the D.R.C. were prepared to fall in with plans for an inter-church conference, thought could then be given to ways of solving the lesser problem of the difference of opinion between the two Churches. Bilheimer put the final outcome of his talks thus:

"It was out of this discussion that we hatched up the idea of an Anglican-D.R.C. meeting before the W.C.C. consultation, in which they could discuss their problems themselves, rather than in the bigger group."<sup>191</sup>

In his second meeting with the Moderator of the Transvaal D.R.C., Bilheimer found that the D.R.C. in the Transvaal and the Cape had been in communication with one another over the issues at stake. The Transvaal D.R.C. were prepared to meet with C.P.S.A. leaders before an inter-church consultation but were adamant that de Blank should publicly withdraw his demand for the expulsion of the D.R.C. from the World Council. Bilheimer, using all his ingenuity, put it to them that de Blank's acceptance of both consultations would constitute a withdrawal of his demand. But this "was a little too easy for them - a little too easy on the Archbishop."<sup>192</sup>

However, after a long discussion it was decided that the Cape and Transvaal D.R.C. would accept the proposal from the W.C.C. for the holding of a consultation conditional upon the decision of the Anglican Church. The World Council would also invite the D.R.C. and C.P.S.A. to an earlier meeting at which they could discuss their mutual differences. As de Blank was unaware of any proposal for a meeting between the two Churches, Bilheimer phoned him two days later "with some trepidation." The Archbishop immediately replied that he could not speak for his Church but that he was willing to accept the invitation. Bilheimer felt that de Blank

had, in fact, committed the Anglican Church. In any case, "once the invitation to both meetings has gone to all churches and been published, no one can refuse!"<sup>193</sup>

On his return to Geneva, Bilheimer wrote a confidential report on his visit to South Africa. One paragraph in particular, shows where his sympathies lay in the conflict between the D.R.C. and the C.P.S.A. :

"The Anglican Church, to put it very bluntly, needs a big reform of attitude at the above point (apartheid issue), and in regard to their attitude to the D.R.C. They speak and act as The Church, not only on theological grounds, but on historical-cultural grounds. They do not try to consult with the D.R.C. and are too greatly isolated from them."<sup>194</sup>

As a result of Bilheimer's report, the W.C.C. sent a letter to member Churches in South Africa inviting them to take part in an ecumenical dialogue with one another and the W.C.C. At the same time a letter was also sent to the D.R.C. in the Transvaal and the Cape, the Hervormde Kerk and the C.P.S.A., inviting these Churches to a meeting to take place before the inter-church consultation.

But there were more problems to come. Die Kerkbode's reply to de Blank's criticism of their participation in the Union Celebrations provoked more than the public response already mentioned.<sup>195</sup> Behind the scenes the Archbishop took prompt action. A cable was sent to Visser't Hooft in Geneva to this effect:

"Die Kerkbode of NGK (D.R.C.) this week attacks Archbishop. No possibility of any consultation whatsoever with D.R.C. until this attack is officially repudiated and apology published."<sup>196</sup>

However, on the same day Cecil Wood, who was in London at the time, requested the W.C.C. not to react to de Blank's cable but to wait for the outcome of the Episcopal meeting due to be held in Cape Town on 20th June 1960. He proposed that the whole issue be left to Bishop Stephen Bayne, Executive Officer of the Anglican Communion in London and delegate to the Episcopal meeting in Cape Town. Visser't Hooft and Bilheimer decided to fall in with Wood's plan.<sup>197</sup>

Meanwhile Bilheimer had had consultations with Anglican leaders in London concerning the proposed inter-church conference. Bilheimer's notes on proceedings reveal how deep were the emotions aroused among the Anglican hierarchy by de Blank's confrontation with the D.R.C. Bilheimer, having been called into a meeting between Fisher, Reeves, Wood and Baynes which had already been in progress for three hours, wrote that the "temper of the

meeting was bad. The Anglican leaders were exasperated among themselves, and embarrassed. Canterbury's nerves were clearly frayed .....

"All were preoccupied with the problem of Anglican-D.R.C. relations. The line was that nothing fruitful could happen until this is straightened out. There was, even when I pressed, scarcely any recognition of other member churches as being a factor in the situation. Canterbury ..... constantly played down the all-member church consultation as something that could wait until church relations (Anglican-D.R.C.) were clear. I got little chance to present a case or make any statement. When I was asked to and started, I was interrupted by men in a bad mood." <sup>198</sup>

Fisher proposed that de Blank should arrange a meeting between the D.R.C. and the C.P.S.A. as quickly as possible. It was further decided, much to the disappointment of Bilheimer, that the inter-church consultation should take place in April 1961. Bilheimer was afraid that if Fisher's proposal were accepted there would be serious consequences, especially for the Anglican Church - "we do not want to give the D.R.C. a weapon against them that we could not handle." <sup>199</sup> As he told Fry, "Our view is that a 1961 date would lose momentum, especially with the D.R.C. and weaken the effect of the consultation." <sup>200</sup>

The W.C.C. were pinning all their hopes on Bayne's persuading the South African bishops to vote in favour of the inter-church consultation. Visser't Hooft wrote to Bayne:

"All of the evidence available indicates that this is the most important thing that we can do now, and that it is urgent that plans for the meeting proceed with the least possible delay. In our judgement, it is of the highest importance that a decision be taken at the meeting of the Bishops of the Church of the Cape to participate in this meeting." <sup>201</sup>

Visser't Hooft also wrote to C.B. Brink, a D.R.C. leader and member of the Central Committee of the W.C.C., informing him of Bayne's visit to South Africa and the importance of the meeting of bishops on 20th June. From what he had written to Bayne and Brink, it is certain that the general secretary was hoping for a meeting between the D.R.C. and C.P.S.A., perhaps even without mediation of the W.C.C. <sup>202</sup>

In sending W.A. Landman, Director of Information of the D.R.C. in the Cape, a copy of Visser't Hooft's letter, Brink stressed the need for keeping the contents confidential since he was afraid that "if Dr de Blank finds out that we are being informed by the World Council concerning the affairs of the Anglicans, he will possibly want to make more trouble." <sup>203</sup> (My translation).

It seems that de Blank would not allow himself to be dictated to by the Archbishop of Canterbury or the W.C.C., for on the 27th June 1960 Brink received a cable from Visser't Hooft and Bilheimer:

"Anglicans accept all member churches consultation, but do not reply officially to second invitation. Would D.R. Churches agree to holding larger consultation with Planning Committee in July and agree to treating Anglican-D.R.C. meeting as a separate issue in view of time factor?"<sup>204</sup>

Brink, after consulting D.R.C. leaders in the Transvaal and Cape, told the W.C.C. that the D.R.C. were prepared to attend the meeting of the Planning Committee but as regards the inter-church consultation, they were adamant that this should be preceded by a D.R.C.-C.P.S.A. meeting.

On 8th August Landman wrote to Fry, Chairman of the Central Committee of the W.C.C., that the D.R.C. had received no official information concerning the reaction of the C.P.S.A. to the W.C.C. proposal of a meeting between the two Churches, "and we now assume that this consultation will not take place." Fry was also told that de Blank's ultimatum to the W.C.C. had been given such great publicity in South Africa that the general public and especially members of the D.R.C. were under the impression that the inter-church consultation was being held to discuss the expulsion of the D.R.C. It was thus of the greatest importance that members of this Church be given further information since they "will not understand how we can participate in discussions with a church that does not want to be associated with us within the World Council of Churches and is entertaining the idea of taking steps to have the D.R. Churches expelled." Fry was accordingly asked to answer these two questions:

- "1. Did the Church of the Province approach the World Council of Churches asking for the expulsion of the D.R. Churches?
- "2. In case the Church of the Province should at some future date ask the World Council of Churches to expel the D.R. Churches, what would the position then be?"<sup>205</sup>

Fry replied that no request for the expulsion of D.R.C. from the W.C.C. had been received by the Central Committee and that the constitution and regulations of the W.C.C. made no provision for such an act of expulsion.<sup>206</sup> It must be stressed here that Fry's answer does not give the true picture. The W.C.C. had been asked by de Blank for the expulsion of the D.R.C. but Visser't Hooft had not put the Archbishop's request before the Central Committee.<sup>207</sup>

The Moderator of the Cape D.R.C. was later to report to its Synod that the most important reason for a meeting between the two Churches which, in fact, never took place, fell away with this reply from Fry.<sup>208</sup>

(xix) The Deportation of Ambrose Reeves<sup>209</sup>

After the Sharpeville riots Ambrose Reeves, the Bishop of Johannesburg, visited the wounded in the Baragwanath Hospital and offered legal assistance to any who desired it. He summoned a Consultative Committee drawn from fourteen organisations through which an appeal went out for food, clothing and money to supply the needs of the dependants of those killed and wounded. Through the press he levelled serious charges against the authorities, including the accusation that the police had used dum-dum bullets at Sharpeville.

On the 1st April certain African friends informed him that his name was on a list of those shortly to be arrested. After a meeting with three leading clerics in his diocese, it was decided that he should leave for Swaziland immediately. Once there, he was forced to issue a statement as rumours were rife as to his whereabouts. He had left Johannesburg, said the Bishop, to await clarification of his rights in the Union. It was his first wish to return - provided that he could obtain a reasonable assurance that he could continue his work unmolested. This assurance was not forthcoming although the Government was prepared to allow him to give evidence at an enquiry into events at Sharpeville and then return to Swaziland.

He decided to leave for England where he availed himself of the long leave which had already been granted him before the unrest started. On 10th September he returned to South Africa only to be served with a deportation order two days later on the grounds that it would not be in the public interest for him to remain in the country.

de Blank was on a visit to the Diocese of Natal when he received the news. He immediately cabled Geneva to tell the World Council of Churches that if Reeves could not be present at the W.C.C. Conference due to take place in December, then the meeting should be held outside South Africa.<sup>210</sup>

On the following evening (13th September) in what was clearly an emotionally-charged atmosphere, he preached in the City Hall, Durban, to a congregation of over 4000 people. Contrary to his custom, he read his address because of "the gravity of the situation and the possible dangers attendant on my words."<sup>211</sup> What had happened was scarcely credible: "Who

would have thought that this country would entertain the thought of religious persecution - this country which claims to be a Christian country?"<sup>212</sup> He went on to liken the shock felt by Christians at this time to the amazement of the Christians in Germany when they realised that Hitler had come to power.<sup>213</sup> The date, too, was particularly appropriate since it was the feast of St Cyprian who was martyred for his witness in Africa.<sup>214</sup>

After reminding his hearers of the need to forgive those who were spitefully using them and of the importance of practical living in their daily pursuits, he assured them that as Christ was for them, they could lift up their hearts for their redemption was drawing nigh. As they offered them selves to Christ they could pray with all confidence: "Let God arise, and let His enemies be scattered."<sup>215</sup>

In his diocesan letter he again referred to the deportation and warned that, since the Church had been directly assailed, provision should be made for any eventuality - "Religious persecution has struck once: it would be foolish to disregard the possibility of other and more extended attacks."<sup>216</sup>

Bilheimer on behalf of the W.C.C. was determined not to let the Reeves affair destroy the planned inter-church consultation. From London he heard that Grubb and Bayne had discussed the deportation of Reeves. Bilheimer was told that the "discussion was highly unsatisfactory, always admitting that Bayne is paid to maintain the prestige of the Anglican communion..... Could the consultation be held without the Church of the Province? Bayne said that if that were done de Blank (to whom he had telephoned) would withdraw his church from membership of the W.C.C. He added that all the other churches of the Anglican communion would also withdraw in sympathy. This is a wholly absurd statement. The Church of England certainly would not, and I have since learned that the Episcopal Church of the U.S.A. would not.....the only point on which we were firmly agreed was that everything possible should be done to secure leave for Ambrose Reeves."<sup>217</sup>

Bilheimer even decided to fly to New York to talk matters over with Fry. Both agreed that the "previous Anglican-D.R.C. discussion, and now in a greater way the Reeves situation, overshadows the intent of the consultation and the W.C.C. in South Africa. We must correct this. We should make every attempt to get Reeves to the Consultation.....hoping to so conduct matters that if the Anglican Church does not co-operate the onus will be on it.....

"To what extent is this a fight between the Archbishop and the Union Government in which the Archbishop is using the difficulties as a stick to beat the Government? .... To what extent is the Archbishop using the Conference to gain concessions for his view-points?"<sup>222</sup>

Amid growing disenchantment towards the Consultation on the part of the D.R.C., Bilheimer made his third visit to South Africa. He, to the understandable surprise of all, told D.R.C. leaders "that the W.C.C. was prepared ultimately to proceed without the Anglicans. All were visibly surprised, for as Van Wyk told me, no one even remotely dreamed that the W.C.C. would forsake the Anglicans."<sup>223</sup>

A critical meeting took place between the Executive Committee and a delegation from the C.P.S.A. on 24th October. de Blank after having intransigently refused to countenance any consultations without the presence of Reeves, now adopted the argument that the impact of the Conference would be all the greater if it were held within South Africa. Bilheimer's impressions make interesting reading:

"I cannot refrain from noting that this was without doubt the most uncanny and farcical - if these two things can go together - meetings I have ever attended. We were being put through the paces of a play written, staged, produced and obediently acted, with one great object of saving face.

We had agreed to everything, and then de Blank said, 'Of course, it is absolutely impossible for us to meet in Johannesburg, since the host Bishop is in exile.' The stinger of course, is that there isn't any other place to meet where we can be inter-racial.<sup>224</sup> Fortunately, when this came forward, I was drafting the press release, and I continued to be very busy with it, while Webb and Van Wyk squirmed.

It was four o'clock, and tea came, and provided an interruption. Tinkling his tea cup, de Blank then said, 'Perhaps over tea, the Anglicans can mellow a bit over this' - and then proceeded to propose, and dictate (to Wood) a cable to Reeves asking him to invite the Anglicans to the Consultation in Johannesburg, and requesting a cabled reply by tomorrow!

Naudé then began to say, 'What if Reeves refuses'. That did make me nervous, because by this time it was clear to me that all this was laid on, pre-fabricated, cooked-up, and that Reeves was probably hanging by his phone in London ready to receive and to reply. de Blank brushed Naudé off and we departed with Archepiscopal blessings."<sup>225</sup>

Lückhoff adduces three reasons for de Blank's volte face: increased pressure from Canterbury; a letter from Fry which showed de Blank that the W.C.C. was kindly disposed towards him; and the meeting of the Planning

Committee which gave him a platform from which he could convincingly play his face-saving role.<sup>226</sup> But the matter was by no means settled. Only two days after his meeting with the Executive Committee, de Blank announced that the Anglicans could not attend a conference in Johannesburg without the permission of Reeves. Bilheimer found himself in an awkward position:

"To the D.R.C. it looked like we were waiting upon the permission of Reeves. To the other member Churches it looked like another de Blank condition - and they had made it plain the day before that they were fed-up."<sup>227</sup>

It seems that de Blank was angry over an incomplete press report which had given the impression that the Archbishop had completely capitulated on the Reeves issue.<sup>228</sup> On the same day (26th October) de Blank received Reeves' reply to his cable:

"Agree to invite upon condition all member churches publicly denounce banishment."<sup>229</sup>

Bilheimer was once again forced to use all his ingenuity. In order not to antagonise the D.R.C. he persuaded Brink and Naudé to suppress the reply of Reeves till after their meeting with the Synodal Commission of the Transvaal D.R.C. At the same time he contacted the Bishop of Natal, Rt Rev. V. Inman, and Fr A.G. Sidebotham, Anglican member of the Executive Committee, requesting them to ask de Blank not to make known Reeves' cable. Bilheimer was successful with both the D.R.C. and the Anglicans. The Synodal Commission, without a vital piece of information, gave the Moderator the authority to proceed with arrangements for the Consultation, while on the Anglican side, a phone call from Wood, asking Bilheimer to come to Cape Town, indicated that Inman and Sidebotham had succeeded.<sup>230</sup>

Bilheimer duly met de Blank on 28th October at Bishopscourt. They agreed to make an immediate press announcement to the effect that: the consultation would take place; the Executive Committee was busy seeking for a suitable venue; and the reaction of Reeves to the announcement was being awaited. To Bilheimer's amazement, only a few minutes after his interview with de Blank the Cape Argus midday edition appeared carrying the news that "the Bishop of Johannesburg had agreed by cable to invite the delegates to his See."<sup>231</sup> Bilheimer was rightly, so it seems, sceptical of the veracity of this report:

"Did de Blank get another cable in the five minutes between the time I left and the time I know he saw the press? Is he so confident that he jumped the gun? I was met in Johannesburg by a jubilant Fred van Wyk. The de Blank interview was all over the front pages of the Johannesburg press."<sup>232</sup>

(xx) Charge to the Provincial Synod<sup>233</sup>  
 (November 1960)

The Archbishop's Charge to the Provincial Synod is especially significant for the amount of space given to a discussion of the Apostolic Ministry. The reason for this soon becomes clear. de Blank says that in coming to South Africa he had expected "that one was bound to suffer from the lies, invective, half-truths, distortions and misrepresentations of half crazy racialists." But he had expected a stronger unity within the Church and a greater loyalty to the Episcopate. While not referring to himself personally, it is obvious that he was aware of opposition among his own people to the uncompromising stand he had taken against apartheid. He concluded this section of his Charge, to be discussed fully later,<sup>234</sup> with a hint of sarcasm: "It would be wonderful if those who pray regularly for the Bishops could sometimes expect their prayers to be answered."

(xxi) The Cottesloe Consultation

Notwithstanding the friction between the D.R.C. and de Blank, the Cottesloe Consultation duly took place in December 1960.<sup>235</sup> At the close of the discussions which had been conducted in a most cordial fashion,<sup>236</sup> the Conference issued its findings. With the exception of the Hervormde Kerk contingent,<sup>237</sup> all the delegates, including those from the Dutch Reformed Churches of the Cape and the Transvaal, endorsed the resolutions contained in the official statement. The following, drawn from Section II of the report, are of particular importance to our subject:

- "6. No-one who believes in Jesus Christ may be excluded from any church on the grounds of his colour or race.....
- "10. There are no Scriptural grounds for the prohibition of mixed marriages.....
- "11. We call attention to the disintegrating effects of migrant labour on African life. No stable society is possible unless the cardinal importance of family life is recognised, and, from the Christian standpoint, it is imperative that the integrity of the family be safeguarded.
- "13. The present system of job reservation must give way to a more equitable system of labour which safeguards the interests of all concerned.
- "15. It is our conviction that the right to own land wherever he is domiciled, and to participate in the government of his country, is part of the dignity of the adult man, and for this reason a policy which permanently denies to non-white people the right of collaboration in the government of the country of which they are citizens cannot be justified.

"16. It is our conviction that there can be no objection in principle to the direct representation of Coloured people in Parliament and the application of this principle in the foreseeable future." 238

de Blank was so moved by the spirit in which the Conference was conducted and by the positive results achieved that at the conclusion of the deliberations he rose to make "an informal and personal statement." He thanked the W.C.C. and the English-speaking Churches -

"But in particular we are appreciative of the participation of the Dutch Reformed Churches and especially for the courtesy, understanding and patience of the delegates of the Dutch Reformed Churches of the Transvaal and the Cape

We want to emphasize this point with all the earnestness at our command because we are aware that there have been times when we have felt it right to speak strongly on the urgency of the situation in this country. In such statements we have called upon Christian people to be true to the Faith that is in them, both in witness and conduct.

In our conviction that acquiescence in a policy of discriminatory segregation gravely jeopardizes the future of the Christian Faith in South Africa, we believed - and still believe - that it was right to speak urgently and clearly and uncompromisingly. But in the light of what we have learnt here and the information now put at our disposal, we confess with regret that in the heat of the moment we have at times spoken heatedly and, through ignorance (for which ignorance we cannot be altogether held responsible), have cast doubt on the sincerity of those who did not accept the wisdom of such public action.

Nevertheless the delegates of the NGK have met with us in the fullest fellowship and we have been deeply moved by this spirit of brotherly goodwill. Where, in the past, we have at any time unnecessarily wounded our brethren, we now ask their forgiveness in Christ." 239

de Blank was soon to be disillusioned. The following year the Synods of the Dutch Reformed Church in the Cape and Transvaal both rejected the findings of Cottesloe and withdrew from the World Council of Churches. 240

#### (xxii) South Africa's Position in the Commonwealth

In January 1960 Dr Verwoerd announced his intention of holding a referendum to determine whether South Africa should become a Republic. 241 After the referendum, held on 5th October, 242 had, by a narrow majority, gone in favour of a republic, the great talking-point was whether South Africa would be allowed to remain a member of the Commonwealth.

de Blank had very definite views on the subject which he embodied in a letter to The Times, London (1st March 1961). He began by re-asserting his "implacable hostility to the practice and policy of apartheid" which he believed to be "morally corroding, economically suicidal, politically senile and theologically indefensible." Yet because he thought that one day there would be a move towards a multi-racial society, he pleaded for South Africa's retention within the Commonwealth.

Emotional reactions to South Africa's policies must not dictate the decision, for the non-Whites who made up four-fifths of the population wished to remain in the body since they felt that within "the family" they would not be completely forgotten. In addition, if South Africa remained a member, moral pressure could still be exerted, while exclusion would mean that the task of those Whites fighting the system would be so much harder.

He concluded with an appeal to all who believed in social and racial justice to act with restraint, especially during the period of the Prime Minister's Conference:

"More will be accomplished by sound argument and example than by a senseless parade of passion. Let us fight for our principles. Let us not flaunt our prejudices."

The controversial topic was duly debated when Commonwealth leaders met in London in March 1961.<sup>243</sup> The issue aroused such strong passions among the African and Asian Premiers that Macmillan felt that he had to take steps to avoid a possible dissolution of the Commonwealth. He thus "devised a plan by which Dr Verwoerd should be induced to withdraw his application if it became clear that the result of forcing the question to a vote would be an overwhelming vote against."<sup>244</sup>

After the British Prime Minister had discussed this line of action with Dr Verwoerd, the latter informed the other Prime Ministers "that in the light of the views expressed on behalf of other member Governments and the indications of their future intentions regarding the racial policy of the Union Government, he had decided to withdraw his application for South Africa's continuing membership of the Commonwealth as a Republic."<sup>245</sup>

On hearing this, de Blank, in a cable to the Church Times (London) expressed his deep regret but said that he saw South Africa's departure as "a challenge to the Church of the Province to increase indigenous ministry and self-help."<sup>246</sup>

(xxiii) To England and America (1961)

At the end of April 1961 de Blank left to fulfil engagements in England and America. Addressing the South African Church Institute in London, he appealed for further financial help through channels such as the Treason Trial Defence Fund,<sup>247</sup> while in a sermon delivered in Westminster Abbey he suggested that the first step towards a solution of South Africa's racial problem was a conference of representatives of all the different races.<sup>248</sup>

In Philadelphia he delivered a series of three sermons on the "Gospel of Reconciliation",<sup>249</sup> a subject which had fired his imagination at the Lambeth Conference in 1958 where, as we have seen, he was Chairman of the committee on the Reconciling of Conflicts between and within Nations.<sup>250</sup>

On his return to the Republic in June the Archbishop said that many Americans were shocked that South Africa was still emphasising segregation through legislation when American law and public opinion were heading in the opposite direction. In England there was sympathy for the country in her present predicament and "a deep sense of sorrow at her withdrawal from the Commonwealth to which she had made such a contribution."<sup>251</sup>

During September de Blank spent a holiday in Britain before attending the general convention of the Episcopal Church in Detroit. Here he delivered an address entitled "Now is the Accepted Time", in the course of which he stressed that as far as apartheid was concerned, the time for gradualism was over:

"There are churches and congregations as resolutely opposed to Apartheid as I am, who believe that they are accomplishing more by carrying their community with them in every forward step they take, pacing the steps carefully - one by one - than if they demanded the total and immediate reversal of any practice accepting any form of colour differentiation. Let us who are Christians stand in our hair-shirts here. Had the Church never compromised on slavery, had the Church never compromised on racial discrimination, our people would never have been conditioned to accept and adopt the pattern of a discriminatory society. It is because our trumpet gave forth an uncertain sound - hesitantly and over long and weary years - that today we have to reinterpret the simple truths of the Gospel in terms that the uninstructed Christian can comprehend and to which he can respond."<sup>252</sup>

(xxiv) Charge to the Forty-Third Diocesan Synod<sup>253</sup>  
(December 1961)

de Blank, perhaps anticipating the expectations of his listeners, said that he had no intention of wearying them with an analysis of current legislation. The Church's attitude had been unambiguously stated many times. All Christendom, in fact, the whole world condemned the country's racial policy. The Christian's task in the situation should be one of "repentance, reconciliation and redemption." The Church would continue to speak out when the laws of God were flouted but its main task was the "spread of the Gospel in the hearts of men.....so that God's Name may be glorified and a new spirit of understanding and goodwill replace the present animosity and mistrust".

This Charge indicates a turning point in de Blank's career. In 1958 he had been vehement in his attack on apartheid and although he had made numerous enemies, he certainly succeeded in getting many people, including his opponents, to examine anew a policy which they had taken for granted. Early in 1959 he could write of the "stirrings of conscience throughout South Africa which gave him hope for the future - 'that day of the Lord is not yet. But now is our salvation nearer than when we believed'."<sup>254</sup> A few months later he told his diocese that as a result of conversations with people in all walks of life, "I am confident that given strength of nerve we may very shortly see significant changes in both the political and social realm."<sup>255</sup>

Then came Sharpeville and its aftermath. de Blank saw in these tragic events the judgement of God and called for all Christians to unite in their rejection of apartheid.<sup>256</sup> The Cottesloe Consultation with its almost unanimous rejection of racial discrimination seemed to indicate that at last his prophetic mission had been successful. But the Archbishop was soon to see his hopes dashed as the Dutch Reformed Church in the Cape and the Transvaal rejected the resolutions of Cottesloe.

It is against this background that we must view his synodal Charge. It is as if he had exhausted every means of condemning the system while he personally felt that his own people did not relish their being the recipients of another outburst. There also appears to be an air of resignation in his statement that their main task was the "spread of the Gospel in the hearts of men", which for de Blank is almost a relapse into the "partial" Christianity of his youth.<sup>257</sup>

(xxv) de Blank - 1962

In the course of his visit to the country districts during Lent the Archbishop began "to see the implementation of the Group Areas Act in all its ruthlessness". He was especially moved by the plight of those who were forced to leave homes they had occupied for years. Many were required to leave businesses which they had built up through their own efforts. In the midst of such unhappiness "one is ashamed to be numbered among the White population of this land." Typical cases were being referred to the South African Foundation which had as the object of its existence the defence of South Africa's good name before the world but "if that good name is to be defended, injustice and inhumanity must find no place in any official dealings with the under-privileged or disenfranchised people of our land."<sup>258</sup>

de Blank visited America and England in May and June. In San Francisco he said at a Press Conference that the greatest hope for South Africa's racial problem was the "cleavage that was occurring in the Dutch Reformed Church".<sup>259</sup> In a sermon delivered in New York he stated that in their approach to racial affairs the Americans were more progressive than the South Africans: "There are always hoodlums on the lunatic fringe. In South Africa we have some sane people, with the lunatic fringe in government."<sup>260</sup>

On his way back from England de Blank was granted a private audience with the Pope. The Archbishop found him "immensely interested in and disturbed by the racial problems of South Africa and was eager to learn of the Church's witness both Non-Roman and Roman."<sup>261</sup>

While he was away de Blank was informed that he had been elected President of the Christian Council of South Africa. He esteemed this a great honour but it was a "great grief that the Dutch Reformed Church still kept themselves apart. Nevertheless he prayed for the day they would become members."<sup>262</sup>

In August de Blank suffered a cerebral thrombosis<sup>263</sup> and was told by his doctors to take a two months' rest from his diocese. The Suffragan Bishop, acting as Vicar General, mentioned how the Archbishop had "worked and travelled unceasingly and untiringly. How he has maintained the pressure of his labours I shall never understand."<sup>264</sup> He left for England where he was due to consult a specialist.

During his convalescence the Vicar General, the Rt Rev. Roy Cowdry, wrote to de Blank telling him on behalf of all Anglicans that they wanted

him back in South Africa once he had fully recovered.<sup>265</sup> Letters to the newspaper revealed that not all Anglicans were of the same mind on the issue.<sup>266</sup> From the Government angle, the Cabinet Minister, Mr B. Schoeman, stated tersely: "de Blank is overseas and I hope he stays there."<sup>267</sup>

de Blank's illness had come at a most unfortunate moment, for the Diocese of Cape Town was due to hold a Church Congress in November. It will be remembered that as Bishop of Stepney de Blank had arranged an immensely successful East London Church Congress<sup>268</sup> and he now looked forward to organising a repeat performance. The purpose of the Congress, as he wrote in December 1961,<sup>269</sup> was "to recall the Church to its true pastoral and evangelistic obligations. It is realised that these are never forgotten, but in the racial tensions of our land there is a danger that they may be given only second place in our struggle for social justice." The last sentence is a further example of the change, already noted,<sup>270</sup> that had come over de Blank's ministry. In his pre-occupation with the racial situation in South Africa the pastoral and evangelistic obligations of the Church had been forced into the background. But now that he had said and done all he conceivably could to bring about change in the country, he was reminding his people, as well as himself, that there were other essential obligations to be fulfilled.

de Blank clearly wanted to do all in his power to attend the Congress. Consequently Roy Cowdry wrote to him that he should not do anything precipitate:

"The Holy Spirit did not guide your election for nothing. Your work is not nearly done here, and I do not believe that you should prejudice its continuance by jeopardising your health."<sup>271</sup>

de Blank became reconciled to the fact of his absence although it was a bitter blow:

"I thought that this was going to be the crown of my five years' work, but it is not to be."<sup>272</sup>

The Congress was held in de Blank's enforced absence, "but", to quote Canon C.T. Wood, "the blue print was his and the whole diocese was enriched by the experience."<sup>273</sup>

On the 22nd November, de Blank returned to the Republic.

(xxvi) The Final Year

Early in 1963 we find the Archbishop's outspoken opposition to apartheid as strong as ever. Anyone who denied the essential unity of the human race embracing all colours and nations was the "spirit of anti-Christ" but "we rejoice that there is an ever growing number who look beyond mere human means to God Himself to put an end to injustice".<sup>274</sup>

In the May edition of Good Hope he commented on the encyclical of the Pope which laid down that racial discrimination was contrary not only to the Gospel but also to natural law. He was heartened by this strong declaration of the absolute nature of the moral law which held sway over the relative laws of states. The stand taken by the Roman Catholic Church was in keeping with that of the Church of the Province and the Christian Council of South Africa.

In the following edition de Blank quoted extensively from an article in the American Church Quarterly, which will be discussed elsewhere.<sup>275</sup> The gist of the argument was that Communism was not the only menace - there was an equal threat from the "radical Right" which wanted to use Christianity for its own unholy purposes. It is clear that de Blank is here speaking apropos of anti-communist legislation in South Africa which took for granted that unrest in the Republic was the work of left wing agitators, and is criticising those who used scriptural arguments to support the policy of apartheid.

In June the Archbishop once again left the country for engagements in England, the United States and Canada. In England he told the annual meeting of the South African Church Institute of the difficulties facing missionaries as a result of regulations governing the entrance into Bantu areas.<sup>276</sup> Then during the course of a television interview he expressed the opinion that isolating South Africa in sport and cultural affairs could be more effective than a trade boycott. When asked whether he feared deportation, he replied that the present interview could possibly lead to his imprisonment.<sup>277</sup>

In New York he compared the situation in the United States with that in the Republic in the following way: "In South Africa we have a reactionary Government prodded by a progressive minority. In the United States you have a progressive government being held back by reactionaries."<sup>278</sup>

In his September diocesan letter,<sup>279</sup> dated 27th July, he elaborated on this statement. In the same letter, written from America, he accused

the Die Kerkbode, which had denied that refusal of permits had hindered missionary work in the Diocese of Damaraland, of doing a "great disservice to the cause of the Christian Church throughout the world when it endorses this anti-Christian conduct."

In Toronto he delivered the closing address at the World Anglican Congress. He did not refer to the racial policy of South Africa but stressed the role of the Church in contemporary society:

"The Church has to be actively engaged in those places and among those people where power is exercised and where today sovereignty and authority are to be found. At the heart of the modern world must be the Church, offering Christ to all men, revealing Himself in terms that have meaning for them, suffering with them, giving Himself to them and for them."<sup>280</sup>

de Blank realised that his ministry in South Africa was coming to an end. Two entries in a note book indicate his state of mind:

a) 2nd August

"It is time Africa got somebody better - who loves everybody as I do not love everybody - who prays hard as I do not pray - who inspires loyalty as I do not inspire loyalty - who serves as I do not serve - who forgets himself as I do not forget myself."<sup>281</sup>

b) 22nd August

"Lord make me patient about the future. I have, I'm sure, made a mess of things but I honestly want to do only Thy will and so I pray that Thou wilt overrule everything to Thy will and Thy glory."<sup>282</sup>

It is not surprising then that at the beginning of October de Blank announced his resignation. Ill-health had made it "wicked for me to carry on as Archbishop unless I were one hundred percent fit,"<sup>283</sup> especially as the future promised to be no easier than before. At the same time he warned of the disaster which would befall South Africa if present policies were persisted with.

A leading article in the Cape Argus commented that the Archbishop had been a controversial figure but added that since he had assumed office race relations had become a concern of the Church which had a duty to speak out on them. There was a possibility, though, that he had gone too far for conservative South Africa.<sup>284</sup> Die Burger, on the other hand, regretted the reported reasons for his resignation but did not mourn his departure. His "biased condemnation.....brought about a state of estrangement which eventually made any ideological alliance between him

and the Dutch-Afrikaans Churches unacceptable."<sup>285</sup>

In his final sermon, delivered in St George's Cathedral on 29th December, de Blank reminded his congregation that they were living in an irreligious age when even intelligent men "relegate Christianity to an obscure corner of life where you speak the language of Canaan, sing the Songs of Zion and worry about irrelevant details of Sabbath observance." At the same time the divine command to love one's neighbour as oneself was ignored. The promised land of the future belonged to all people in South Africa. He realised that difficulties lay ahead with their enemies using every weapon at their disposal. He thus called upon them "to be strong and of a good courage."<sup>286</sup>

On 31st December 1963 Joost de Blank sailed from Cape Town to take up the less demanding position of Canon of Westminster.

(xxvii) Postscript - 1964-1968

Once back in England de Blank had little opportunity or inclination to enjoy the tranquility his new position afforded. His views on South Africa were much sought after and soon he was busy fulfilling engagements all over the country.<sup>287</sup>

As at Forest Gate and Greenhill, he was full of ideas for making the Abbey services more relevant to the needs of modern society but found it frustrating when his suggestions were not capable of being implemented.<sup>288</sup>

In June 1964 de Blank flew to New York where he presented to U Thant, the Secretary General of the United Nations, a petition for the release of all political prisoners in South Africa.<sup>289</sup> This led the Minister of Justice, Mr B.J. Vorster, to challenge de Blank to say why he had left South Africa since his active life since leaving the Republic convinced him that the reason was not solely his health.<sup>290</sup> de Blank, never slow to reply, said: "I greatly appreciate Mr Vorster's concern for my health and I am happy to say that since I came to England my health has been making steady progress."<sup>291</sup> He confirmed, though, that it was his state of health that had caused him to leave South Africa.

In January 1966 de Blank was elected Bishop of Hong Kong and Macao. As his diocese would be small and the amount of travelling to be done consequently limited, it seemed the ideal job for him.<sup>292</sup> The position was no sinecure, though, since the large numbers of refugees from Red China were causing overcrowding with its resultant social problems.<sup>293</sup>

de Blank made it clear that commitments at the Abbey would prevent him from taking up his new appointment until the beginning of October. However, during the intervening months his health began to deteriorate again with the result that his doctors advised him to withdraw his acceptance.<sup>294</sup>

In September 1966 he was appointed an honorary assistant Bishop in the diocese of Southwark but he was unable to give this job the attention he wished to as his activities as Chairman of the Greater London Conciliation Committee which dealt with complaints submitted to the Race Relations Board, took up much of his time.<sup>295</sup>

During the course of 1967 de Blank was asked by the Archbishop of Canterbury to write the Lent book for 1968. He completed this devotional study, The Return of the Sacred, which was well received.<sup>296</sup>

In August 1967 de Blank had another stroke.<sup>297</sup> After an illness lasting five months he died on New Year's Day 1968. His funeral took place in Westminster Abbey, and after his cremation his ashes were interred at the entrance to St George's Chapel. The inscription on his memorial stone, chosen by the Dean and Chapter, fittingly describes one who was an

INDOMITABLE FIGHTER  
FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

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5. Six Years Hard, p6
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7. 4th May 1957. Ibid.
8. Cable sent on 7th May 1957. Ibid.
9. 9th May 1957. Ibid.
10. 11th May 1957
11. 17th May 1957
12. 15th May 1957
13. 12th May 1957
14. 8th May 1957
15. 12th May 1957. YPP, Reel 1
16. 27th May 1957. Ibid.
17. 8th May 1957. Ibid.
18. YPP, Reel 3
19. Idem.
20. 3rd June 1957. YPP, Reel 3
21. YPP, Reel 3
22. Good Hope, November 1957 (Published 23rd October)
23. Entry for 23rd June 1957. YPP, Reel 2
24. Entry for 27th June 1957. Ibid.
25. Entry for 24th June 1957. Ibid.
26. The Rt Rev. H.A. Cullen
27. cf. reference 21
28. Entry for 27th June 1957. YPP, Reel 2
29. Entry for 28th June 1957. Ibid. cf. p66
30. Entry for 1st July 1957. Idem.
31. Undated sermon on 1 Cor.3:11. YPP, Reel 4, p3. In this sermon, as in the one on John 8:12, he mentions his visit to South Africa.
32. Undated sermon on John 8:12. Ibid. p3
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35. In Address and Charges
36. cf. P64
37. Six Years Hard, p26
38. For details cf. Davenport, op. cit. pp280, 281
39. Diary Entry 4th November 1957. YPP, Reel 2

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41. Entry for 27th December 1957. Ibid.
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43. Ibid. p34
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45. This is clear from his Diary Entry for 22nd December 1957. YPP, Reel 2
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47. Cape Times, 18th December 1957
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49. Diary Entry for 23rd December 1957
50. Told to me by S.A. Rogers
51. Diary Entry 27th December 1957
52. cf. previous reference
53. Rogers to me
54. Six Years Hard, p41
55. Ibid. p43
56. Entry for 31st December 1957. YPP, Reel 2
57. House of Assembly Debates, Vol.96, p252
58. Ibid. p881
59. Ibid. pp578,579
60. Ibid. p229
61. Cape Times, 5th February 1958
62. 6th February 1958
63. Cape Argus, 7th February 1958
64. cf. p72
65. Six Years Hard, p67
66. Ibid. p71
67. Undated entry under heading: January 29-March 15. YPP, Reel 2
68. Cape Argus, 3rd February 1958
69. Idem.
70. Die Burger, 3rd February 1958
71. Good Hope
72. No Further Trek, (Central News Agency S.A., 1957) pp57-59
73. Quoted in Cape Times, 26th February 1958
74. Cape Argus, 22nd February 1958
75. Cape Times, 1st March 1958
76. cf. de Blank's attack on the Lord Chief Justice, p49
77. Cape Times, 3rd March 1958
78. Rhodesian Herald, 28th May 1958
79. Cape Argus, 29th May 1958
80. Cape Argus, 2nd June 1958. I have not been able to obtain the full text of the sermon. However, de Blank says that in his sermon he

pointed out that all Churches in South Africa had failed in four ways:  
 1. Personal religion had become divorced from political responsibility;  
 2. Spiritual behaviour had become divorced from cosmic redemption;  
 3. Conventional attitudes had become divorced from creative obedience  
 to God; 4. Domestic developments had become divorced from global  
 commitments. (Cape Argus, 9th June 1958)

81. Cape Argus, 7th June 1958
82. Ibid. 11th June 1958
83. Cape Times, 9th June 1958
84. Cape Argus, 9th June 1958
85. 4th June 1958
86. 10th June 1958
87. 16th June 1958
88. Cape Argus, 26th June 1958
89. Cape Times, 11th June 1958
90. House of Assembly Debates, Vol.97, col.2514
91. Cape Argus, 9th June 1958
92. Entry for 7th June 1958. YPP, Reel 2
93. Entry for 8th June 1958. Ibid.
94. Entry for 10th June 1958. Ibid.
95. Entry for 18th June 1958. Ibid.
96. Quoted in My Brother Joost, p233
97. Idem.
98. 19th July 1958
99. Six Years Hard, p125
100. Good Hope, November 1958
101. Cape Times, 24th September 1958
102. In Address and Charges 1957-1960
103. Cape Times, 2nd February 1959 for full account
104. 2nd February 1959
105. Good Hope
106. Public meeting in the City Hall, Cape Town, organised by the Civil Rights League, 9th December 1958. 1500 people attended. Inter alia Professor Pistorius said that the state of affairs in South Africa could lead to two alternatives: the beckoning of a new world or the rocks of shipwreck. Cape Times, 10th December 1958
107. This was a practical attempt of de Blank's to bring the races together cf. Six Years Hard, p69
108. This was, in fact, a single resolution which called for the elimination of discrimination on grounds of colour alone in the various parishes, and pledged support to governing bodies of Church Schools in the diocese (Cape Town) in whatever steps they were able to take in giving effect to the Archbishop's plea for the elimination of racial discrimination. cf. Resolution 1 in Diocesan Acts 1937-1974

109. Of the Reformed Ecumenical Synod which met in Potchefstroom in August 1958. This gathering, attended by Reformed Churches from all over the world, said in its twelve-point statement that: "No single race may deem itself entitled to a privileged position and consider itself superior to other races." cf. Good Hope, November 1958
110. For job reservation cf. A Survey of Race Relations in South Africa 1958-1959 compiled by Muriel Horrell, (South African Institute of Race Relations, Johannesburg, 1960) pp225-235; for municipal voting rights cf. same volume, pp149-151
111. cf. pp77-80
112. Good Hope, July 1959
113. Idem.
114. Cape Times, 21st May 1959
115. Diary Entry for 16th June 1959. YPP, Reel 2
116. Idem.
117. Idem.
118. Diary Entry for 21st June 1959. YPP, Reel 2
119. Cape Times, 26th June 1959
120. Good Hope, August 1959
121. Entry for June 13th 1959. YPP, Reel 2
122. Kaleidoscope: a personal letter from the Archbishop of Cape Town, February 1960. YPP, Reel 1, p2
123. A women's political organisation which originally aimed at the defeat of the Senate Bill with its threat to the Cape Coloured voter (cf. p15) It strives to "uphold the principles of parliamentary democracy and the moral pledges and constitutional safeguards of the compact of Union." Its views are propagated by means of pamphlets, lectures and symposiums. Its protest 'stands', for which it has become famous, are still held. cf. Standard Encyclopaedia of Southern Africa, Volume 2 Bad-Cal. (Nasou, Cape Town, 1970)
124. Information given to me by Mrs M. Henderson of the Black Sash
125. Letter in Black Sash file, (Archbishop's Conference) 2nd December 1957
126. Letter in Black Sash File, 3rd December 1957
127. Undated letter. Copy in Black Sash file
128. Quoted in Cape Argus, 3rd June 1959
129. Idem.
130. cf. Minutes of Archbishop's Conference, Black Sash file
131. cf. The Living Wage, Black Sash file
132. cf. Civil Liberties, Black Sash file
133. cf. Précis of Address on the South African Constitution, Black Sash file
134. Minutes of Archbishop's Conference
135. Idem.
136. Idem.
137. Report in Black Sash file
138. With the illness and departure of de Blank the Archbishop's Conference came to an end

139. Good Hope, September 1959
140. Sermon delivered on 25th September 1959. YPP, Reel 2, p2
141. Idem.
142. Ibid. p9
143. Idem.
144. Idem.
145. In Address and Charges 1957-1960
146. cf. pp181,182
147. Good Hope, January 1960
148. Good Hope, February 1960
149. Harold Macmillan: Pointing The Way 1959-1961, (Macmillan, London, 1972), p119
150. Idem.
151. Pointing The Way, p151
152. News Chronicle, 2nd February 1960
153. Pointing The Way, p475
154. Ibid. p476
155. Ibid. p477
156. Ibid. p478
157. Good Hope, March 1960. cf. Kaleidoscope, February 1961: Macmillan "acquitted himself brilliantly in a crucially difficult situation." YPP, Reel 1, p4
158. Details in Peter Calvocoressi: South Africa and World Opinion, Institute of Race Relations. (Oxford University Press, London, 1961), p1
159. In MS. of lecture entitled The Church's World Mission, YPP, Reel 4, p1  
Published lecture in Out of Africa, pp57-102 does not include this.
160. cf. pp70-71
161. Out of Africa, p122
162. Cape Argus, 11th April, 1960
163. Cape Argus, 14th April, 1960. cf. p85
164. Cape Argus, 18th April 1960
165. Cape Argus, 12th April 1960
166. Good Hope, April 1960
167. Out of Africa, pp134-141
168. Lev.25:10
169. Out of Africa, p136
170. Quoted in Cape Argus, 4th June 1960. One paragraph is particularly hard-hitting: "It would seem that as far as he is concerned, sobriety has been supplemented by arrogance. So blind is he in his racial and colour prejudices - the sins of which he accuses the Afrikaner and the DRC - that the DRC can now do nothing that is not susceptible to his criticism."
171. Good Hope, July 1960

172. 10 000 - 12 000 people, led by such notable personalities as de Blank, ex-Chief Justice Centlivres, Donald Molteno and Alan Paton, marched through Cape Town. This was followed by a meeting in the Old Drill Hall.
173. Good Hope, July 1960
174. cf. p94
175. A.H. Lückhoff: Die Cottesloe-Kerkeberaad. Ph.D. Thesis, Witwatersrand University, 1975. pp19,20
176. Ibid. p20
177. Ibid. pp20,21
178. Ibid. p38
179. Ibid. pp38,39
180. cf. Grubb to Visser't Hooft on same page
181. Lückhoff, p40
182. Idem.
183. Idem.
184. Lückhoff, p41
185. Notes given to me by C.T. Wood
186. Lückhoff, p38
187. All the above information from Lückhoff, pp37,38
188. Lückhoff, p38
189. Ibid. p24
190. Ibid. p55
191. Ibid. p56
192. Ibid. p57
193. Ibid. p58
194. Ibid. p61
195. cf. p95
196. Lückhoff, p79.
197. Idem.
198. Lückhoff, p80
199. Ibid. p81
200. Ibid. p82
201. Idem.
202. Lückhoff, p83
203. Ibid. p84
204. Ibid. pp84,85
205. Ibid. pp85,86
206. Ibid. p87
207. Ibid. p23
208. Ibid. p87
209. Factual information from John S. Peart-Binns: Ambrose Reeves, (Victor Gallandcz, London, 1973), chaps.14-16

210. Diary Entry for 12th September 1960. YPP, Reel 3
211. Out of Africa, p142
212. Idem.
213. Idem.
214. Out of Africa, p143
215. Ibid. pp145,147
216. Good Hope, November 1960
217. Lückhoff, p95
218. Ibid. pp95,96
219. Ibid. pp89,90
220. Ibid. pp97,98
221. Elfriede Strassberger: Ecumenism in South Africa 1936-1960, (South African Council of Churches, Johannesburg, 1974), pp220,221
222. Lückhoff, pp101,102
223. Lückhoff, p104
224. It is not certain on what facts he based this opinion
225. Lückhoff, pp106,107
226. Lückhoff, p107. Lückhoff does not give any details of the facts on which he bases his first two reasons.
227. Lückhoff, p113
228. Idem.
229. Idem.
230. Lückhoff, pp114,115
231. Ibid. p116
232. Ibid. p117
233. In Address and Charges 1957-1960
234. cf. pp152-156
235. W.A.Visser 't Hooft: Memoirs, (SCM Press, London and The Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1973), p283
236. cf. Ibid. pp285,286
237. Strassberger, op.cit. p231
238. Ibid. pp230,231
239. South African Outlook, 1st March 1961, p43
240. Strassberger, op.cit. p234. Visser 't Hooft, op.cit. p287
241. Macmillan, op.cit. p153
242. Ibid. pp289,290
243. Macmillan, op.cit. chap.10
244. Ibid. p299
245. Ibid. p300
246. Reported in Cape Argus, 24th March 1961
247. Cape Argus, 11th May 1961
248. Cape Argus, 15th May 1961

249. Out of Africa, pp13-53  
250. cf. p80  
251. Cape Times, 17th June 1961  
252. Out of Africa, pp125-134. Quote from pp130-131  
253. Acts and Resolutions of the forty-third Session of the Diocese of Cape Town 1961, (Church House, Cape Town, 1962)  
254. Good Hope, February 1959  
255. Good Hope, June 1959  
256. cf. p94  
257. cf. p36  
258. Good Hope, May 1962  
259. Cape Argus, 9th May 1962  
260. Cape Argus, 21st May 1962  
261. MBJ, p267  
262. Good Hope, August 1962  
263. MBJ, p270  
264. Good Hope, October 1962  
265. Idem.  
266. Cape Argus, 15th and 18th October 1962  
267. Cape Argus, 23rd October 1962  
268. cf. p48  
269. Good Hope  
270. cf. p112  
271. 27th September 1962. YPP, Reel 2  
272. 22nd November 1962. YPP, Reel 2  
273. Good Hope, February 1964  
274. Good Hope, February 1963  
275. Good Hope, June 1963. cf. pp170,171  
276. Cape Argus, 28th June 1963  
277. Cape Argus, 8th July 1963  
278. Cape Argus, 9th July 1963  
279. Good Hope  
280. October 1963  
281. MBJ, p271  
282. Idem.  
283. Good Hope, November 1963  
284. 1st October 1963  
285. 2nd October 1963  
286. Cape Argus, 30th December 1963  
287. MBJ, p339  
288. Ibid. pp344,345

- 289. Cape Argus, 16th June 1964
- 290. Cape Argus, 19th June 1964
- 291. Cape Argus, 20th June 1964
- 292. MBJ, p360
- 293. Cape Argus, 8th January 1966
- 294. MBJ, p361
- 295. Ibid. pp362, 363
- 296. cf. Press reports in YPP, Reel 4
- 297. MBJ, p368
- 298. Ibid. p379

CHAPTER 5Theological Foundations of de Blank's Ministry

Before coming to South Africa de Blank wrote seven books all of which are of a pastoral nature and indicate his theological position.<sup>1</sup> The recurring themes found in these books are to be discerned in his later writings and sermons, only re-interpreted and re-applied in the light of the South African political and social situation. There is much that is repetitive but this itself helps to illustrate the relatively narrow limits within which his thoughts moved and explains his single-minded determination to realise his objectives.

(i) The Incarnation

Central to an understanding of de Blank's ideas is his interpretation of the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation. As he is writing to those who already have a more than superficial acquaintance with Christianity, de Blank takes a knowledge of this doctrine for granted, placing the emphasis on its implications for the Christian Church.

Through the Incarnation "the other world has invaded this present world, and the story of Christianity is the increasing penetration of this world of flux and change by the world of Christ's eternal kingdom."<sup>2</sup> God can thus not be divorced from the world of man for "our Lord's Incarnation has for ever identified Him with all the sons of men."<sup>3</sup>

Further, "because God became man in Jesus Christ, all life is the sphere of our obedience."<sup>4</sup> In the light of this, Christianity cannot be confined to one day of the week or certain seasons of the year.<sup>5</sup> Any distinction between Christianity and life is artificial since it is a denial of Christ's Incarnation.<sup>6</sup> This separation of the sacred from the secular he sees as the reason for the failure of what is termed "much evangelistic zeal,"<sup>7</sup> an apparent allusion to his early spiritual experience at Cambridge. Of this he writes:

"As one would expect from a theology so strong on the Atonement at the expense of the Incarnation, the wholeness of Christian obedience in all that makes up life was never made clear to us."<sup>8</sup>

If the teaching of the Incarnation is all-embracing, then no part of a Christian's life is exempt from the claims of Christ. A man's place of work becomes the place of discipleship,<sup>9</sup> for "the Lord of glory is also the Carpenter of Nazareth."<sup>10</sup>

To de Blank the doctrine of the Incarnation is also a corrective to the idea that the bodily welfare and social condition of our fellow men can be disregarded on the grounds that it is the soul that is all-important.

In This is Conversion his point of view is stated cogently:

"There is something wrong with a so-called Conversion that is concerned only with people's souls and takes no interest in their bodily welfare. The fact that the Word whom we worship is the Word-made-Flesh forever sets a divine seal on the business of ordinary living."<sup>11</sup>

Consequently the physical part of man is of special concern to God.<sup>12</sup> Any form of Christianity which places the emphasis on a spiritual experience to the detriment of the material and the physical is labelled as "debased and partial"<sup>13</sup> because the Incarnation shows that the material itself can be redeemed<sup>14</sup> and become a means by which a Christian can live triumphantly.<sup>15</sup>

The sacramental life of the Church is also brought forward as proof that the material is inextricably linked with Christianity in that the material symbols of bread, wine and water emphasise the meaning of the Incarnation: the Word-made-Flesh.<sup>16</sup> In Call of Duty he writes:

"Our Lord took bread and wine, the simplest and most obvious symbols of our daily work, to convey the reality of His presence and concern for all men and for everything that makes up their workaday lives .....The Holy Communion embodies in itself the truth that life is all of one piece."<sup>17</sup>

### (ii) Practical Christianity

If the Incarnation has brought all human activity within the sphere of Christianity, it then follows that the Christian must live up to his name in every aspect of his daily existence. de Blank relentlessly pursues this practical theme in all his writings.

Conversion itself is intensely practical, transforming the individual from a spectator into an actor.<sup>18</sup> It is not only an act but a process during the course of which the important question to ask "is not whether I was converted five, ten, fifteen or twenty years ago but whether I have been converted today - whether today I am seeking to do God's will through His Spirit in the fellowship of His Church."<sup>19</sup>

From the above it is clear that a mere verbal utterance of our belief is not enough. Christ commanded the Gospel by His character and deeds before commanding it in words.<sup>20</sup> Similarly the Christian, in following the example of his Master, will observe the same order: "First the work and then the word"<sup>21</sup> This takes on a greater significance as many today are seriously considering the Christian remedy for the world's

ills, but the final assessment will be based on the quality of the lives of those who profess to be Christians.<sup>22</sup>

(iii) Reconciliation

After the 1958 Lambeth Conference the Christian doctrine of Reconciliation was to dominate the thinking and preaching of de Blank.<sup>23</sup> However, he makes significant references to it in his pre-archiepiscopal writings.

In Members of Christ he quotes the scriptural basis for this doctrine:

"God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself."  
(2 Cor.5:19). But as in the case of the Incarnation, de Blank is not satisfied with a limited interpretation, for he adds that it is the Church through which Christ continues His reconciling work.<sup>24</sup> The individual church member, who has himself already experienced the benefits accruing from Christ's reconciling work, is therefore bound to bring about a reconciliation between himself and anyone else who rightly or wrongly has a grievance against him.<sup>25</sup> Here de Blank links the doctrines of reconciliation and forgiveness on the basis of Christ's words in the Sermon on the Mount:

"If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift."<sup>26</sup> (Matt.5:23,24)

The forgiveness called for is more than a mere change in one's mental attitude. It must "reach out to embrace the offender; we must convince him that the separating barrier has been broken down. Like the prodigal ..... who knew that his father's heart of love beat unceasingly for him, so must those who have wronged us know that we are not patronizingly demanding justice or satisfaction, not even apportioning blame, but that we are ready and eager to create an even richer communion than we experienced before."<sup>27</sup>

The matter, however, extends beyond the individual for Christians as a body "will always be active in society as reconciling agents, breaking down walls of partition that separate man from man as in the Church's early days it broke down the barrier between Jew and Gentile - bringing them together to constitute one new man in Christ."<sup>28</sup>

(iv) Church-State Relationship

In the light of his reaction to the policies of the South African Government, de Blank's earlier views on the Church-State relationship are of great importance. In Chapter Four of Uncomfortable Words de Blank outlines his position unambiguously. The very title of the chapter - Social Obloquy - indicates that there is going to be friction. He characteristically moves into the attack:

"In its willingness to render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's the Church has sometimes been dangerously near to rendering to Caesar the things that are God's." <sup>29</sup>

Goebbels is cited as one who would not tolerate any interference by the Church in the social life of the nation <sup>30</sup> but it is the Incarnation again which is the counter to such an attitude for it exempts no part of life from man's obedience to God. <sup>31</sup>

de Blank makes it clear that a clash between Church and State is inevitable since in spite of every attempt to be loyal to its twin allegiances, the Church eventually reaches a position where it says: "We have to obey God rather than man." <sup>32</sup> An example of such a situation is drawn from the British industrial disputes of the 1920's when the Prime Minister, Lord Baldwin, was indignant at William Temple's efforts to bring peace. <sup>33</sup>

Because the Christian finds it impossible to separate religion from politics, he is likely to incur the anger of his own Christian friends who prefer to keep the peace. Even persecution could come from this unexpected quarter in accordance with Christ's warning to His disciples that those who killed them would think that they were performing God a service. <sup>34</sup>

Conversion must not be limited to the individual but must extend to society as a whole. In his attempt to usher in the kingdom of God, the Christian "will be working for a society where every man is free to live with all the powers of his personality fully released and developed in the service of God and his fellows." <sup>35</sup> In so doing it will become necessary to resist any legislation which encourages the exploitation of man's weakness and greed. To put it positively, "he has to work to prepare the world for the coming of its King." <sup>36</sup>

While working toward the creation of a social order which approximates to the ideals laid down in the Sermon on the Mount, the Christian must of necessity make decisions of a political nature. <sup>37</sup> This might even lead him to seek election as a member of parliament or local

council for "as local politics and national politics are the official means by which social legislation is effected, no Christian has the right to ignore his responsibility in these fields. He must be awake both to his civic and his political duties, which, while he lives in the world, he must faithfully discharge."<sup>38</sup> However, his judgements in these fields will be made in the light of his Christian beliefs,<sup>39</sup> and he will be aware of the dictum that "nothing that is morally wrong can be politically right."<sup>40</sup>

de Blank goes on to show how such political involvement on the part of the Christian Church has led to the abolition of slavery and child labour. In such cases the Church does not follow public opinion but gives it the lead since it has inherited the passion for social justice which inspired the Old Testament prophets.<sup>41</sup> de Blank sums up his position in a typically hard-hitting sentence:

"a vigorous churchman in the prime of life, who is not politically, civically, or socially alert and therefore almost certainly involved, is a religious monstrosity."<sup>42</sup>

In spite of what has been mentioned above, the Church is not able to identify itself with a particular political party since every political creed falls short of perfection. Thus the Church, while not cutting itself off from the world of politics, stands above it. At the same time, by its prayers and spiritual advice, it gives support and encouragement to its members who are involved in the political arena.<sup>43</sup>

#### (v) Church Unity

de Blank's starting point on the subject of Church unity is that the body of Christ is one and indivisible. "The New Testament with its emphasis on the Church's unity convinces us that those who are in Christ are still joined with their brothers in Christ."<sup>44</sup> As far as St Paul was concerned, a divided Christ was unthinkable.<sup>45</sup> Nevertheless we are called to face the reality of the situation - "we live in the torn world of a divided Christendom".<sup>46</sup> Those who have gone into schism are guilty of mutilating the Church but at the same time the reasons of conscience which impelled Christians to leave the Catholic fold cannot be disregarded.<sup>47</sup>

To de Blank Church unity assumes its importance from the fact that it is a key issue in converting the world to the Christian Faith. His scriptural warrant for this is the petition of Christ: "I pray that they may all be one ..... that the world may believe." That the world does not believe is seen to be the direct result of the disunity among Christians.<sup>48</sup> de Blank feels that this is especially true in respect of the Church's

missionary endeavour. While in the West we have taken the divisions of Christianity for granted, "the Church overseas has had to face a wholly different situation. The gospel failed to make its expected impact because of the divisions among the Church. The world could not believe while Christians remained in separate compartments."<sup>49</sup> But even in the West the general apathy towards Christianity could possibly be attributed to "our unhappy divisions."<sup>50</sup>

Since the situation is serious every Christian, not just the interested few, should take an active interest in any effort that has reunion as its objective. This does not mean that principles should be forsaken though prejudices may well have to go by the board.<sup>51</sup>

de Blank concedes that the divisions within Christianity are deep-seated. It is for this very reason that there is a need for "prayer and study together with a sustained effort for mutual understanding. Not a glossing over of differences but honest examination is the way back to the unity we have lost. And in such an examination there will be self-criticism as well as criticism of others ..... The way to reunion with any 'church' is barred if that 'church' dares to claim its own inerrancy while being quick to condemn the errors of others."<sup>52</sup>

It is not surprising then that de Blank calls upon Anglicans to benefit from Christian traditions other than their own and to keep in touch with "our Nonconformist friends". Whenever possible there should be attempts to make a united impact. If there is to be reunion, isolationism and separatism which are not only unwise but also signs of conceit must give way to mutual respect and understanding.<sup>53</sup>

#### (vi) The Missionary Aim of the Church

It is a source of concern to de Blank that the average church gives the impression of a club, catering for people who share the same religious views. "Those who enjoy its typical activities join it, and its life goes on happily but privately, all too often out of touch with the neighbourhood in which it stands."<sup>54</sup> He therefore emphasises that the main responsibility of the Church is to the many who are outside of the Christian Faith. There can be no compromise: "Either we plan the life of the church on a missionary, outward-looking basis, or on a self-regarding, inward-looking one."<sup>55</sup> The reason for this is simple: the old pattern of church activities designed to meet the needs of those inside consumes so much time and energy that it leaves no opportunity for the essential missionary work.<sup>56</sup>

On the personal level, de Blank is equally forthright - "no man can be a member of Christ's body without sharing in the evangelistic mission of its Head."<sup>57</sup> What is more, the individual Christian represents the Church to those he meets in the course of his daily activities.<sup>58</sup>

There is a serious word of warning for those who disregard this message. Ancient Israel is cited as an example of a nation which misinterpreted its divine vocation. Chosen by God, not for her own benefit, but to reveal His righteousness and justice to the surrounding nations, she concentrated on the benefits accruing from her privileged position, and in so doing brought calamity on herself.<sup>59</sup>

(vii) Suffering and Triumph

de Blank's views on suffering are based firmly on Scripture which constantly reminds us of Christ's life and death. The purpose of this is not only that we should rejoice in His atoning work but also that He should be taken as our example. I Peter 2:21 is given as biblical warrant: ".....Christ also suffered for us leaving us an example that ye should follow in His steps". The Christ who "humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross" (Phil.2:8) is the one who calls the believer to share His cross and follow Him.<sup>60</sup>

If this is the case, it is no use misleading people by bribing them to church "by a variety of entertainments and social recreations ..... it is high time we told them quite frankly what Christian discipleship entails ..... They should realise beyond all doubt that there is no Christianity apart from a Cross."<sup>61</sup> As we have already noted elsewhere, persecution could even be at the hands of professing Christians.<sup>62</sup>

But there is no need for depression, for the words of Christ bring promise of ultimate triumph: "In the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."<sup>63</sup> In fact, suffering and triumph cannot be separated. During His earthly ministry Christ's glory was manifest in His suffering and now in His heavenly glory He still carries the marks of His suffering. The suffering of Calvary and the triumph of the Resurrection combine to form His glorified body. Similarly our "present service and sacrifice are all part of the final harvest. In this world the Church's triumph is seen in its humility and humiliation. 'Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die it abideth alone, but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.' There is an essential oneness about the fruit ripened on the tree and the seed buried in the soil. Both are part of the divine purpose. Both reveal the truth that God reigns."<sup>64</sup>

References to Chapter 5:

1. The earliest of his works is entitled: Is it nothing to You? (1953), a meditation on Christ's sayings on the Cross. The thoughts are spoken from his cell in the monastery of Caesarea by Longinus, the centurion who was on duty at the Cross.

The Parish in Action, published in 1954, is an attempt to look at the Church's pastoral responsibilities and opportunities. The second part of the work gives a detailed account of how the theoretical aspects mentioned in the first section were put into practical operation in the Parish of Greenhill.

Saints at Sixty Miles an Hour (1955) was written to enable people to maintain fellowship with God at a time when there is little opportunity for quiet reflection.

Call of Duty: Church Membership Considered (1956) is a commentary based on "A Short Guide to the Duties of Church Membership" which the Archbishops of Canterbury and York had recently issued.

Members of Christ, published in 1956, is a series of addresses delivered in October 1955 during a Teaching Week organised by the diocese of Glasgow. The writer attempts to relate the faith of the Church to the proclamation of the Gospel.

This is Conversion (1957) looks at Christian conversion, beginning with the individual and culminating in the transformation of society.

Uncomfortable Words (1958) looks at various aspects of day-to-day Christianity with the object of helping the individual to "keep a good Lent".

2. Uncomfortable Words, (Longmans Green, London, 1958) pp31,32
3. The Parish in Action, p83
4. Uncomfortable Words, p119
5. The Parish in Action, p36 - See also Is it Nothing to You? (Mowbray, London, 1953) p16
6. Call of Duty - Church Membership Considered, (Geoffrey Cumberlege, London, 1956) p97
7. The Parish in Action, p36
8. MBJ, p28
9. The Parish in Action, p44
10. Ibid. p84
11. This is Conversion, (Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1957) p72
12. The Parish in Action, p55 - See also Saints at Sixty Miles an Hour, (Faith Press, London, 1955) pp2,3
13. Ibid. p56
14. Members of Christ, (Mowbray, London, 1956) p59
15. Uncomfortable Words, p114
16. Members of Christ, pp57-59
17. Call of Duty, p61
18. This is Conversion, p16
19. Ibid. p54
20. Uncomfortable Words, p103

21. Call of Duty, p36
22. Ibid. p4
23. cf. p80
24. Members of Christ, p20
25. Uncomfortable Words, p82
26. Ibid. p74
27. Ibid. pp79,80
28. This is Conversion, p71
29. Uncomfortable Words, p30
30. Ibid. p31
31. Ibid. p119
32. Ibid. p32
33. Ibid. pp34,35
34. Idem. pp35-37
35. This is Conversion, pp71,72
36. Ibid. p73
37. Uncomfortable Words, p118
38. The Parish in Action, pp58,59
39. Call of Duty, p71
40. Ibid. p46
41. The Parish in Action, pp60,61
42. Ibid. p62
43. Idem.
44. Members of Christ, p22
45. Idem.
46. Idem.
47. Idem.
48. Uncomfortable Words, pp62-64
49. Ibid. p65
50. Ibid. p66
51. Ibid. p67
52. Ibid. p68
53. The Parish in Action, pp69,70
54. Ibid. p15
55. Ibid. p29
56. Idem.
57. Members of Christ, Introduction, p4
58. Ibid. p29
59. Ibid. p17
60. Uncomfortable Words, p9
61. Ibid. p10

62. cf. p131
63. Members of Christ, p88
64. Idem.

CHAPTER 6The Confrontation

This chapter has been organised in the following manner: beginning with the origin of apartheid as seen by de Blank, we devote a section to the paradox of an un-Christian doctrine being propagated by Christian men. This adds greater relevance to the Confrontation which is going to be waged on explicitly Christian grounds. There follows the Confrontation on the basis of de Blank's theological insights which have already been outlined in Chapter Five. Here we have added a further category - the equality of all before God - which arises directly out of the South African situation. de Blank's theological objections to two aspects of the apartheid policy are then given as examples of his method of attack in the practical sphere. The chapter closes with two sections in which de Blank reveals his hatred of the whole system, first by means of a comparison and then in an uncompromising final judgement.

(i) The Origin of Apartheid - Fear

de Blank sees the origin of the apartheid policy in the Afrikaner's fear of being absorbed by the numerically superior Blacks.<sup>1</sup> Having no other homeland and fearful of the future, he was persuaded that only by keeping absolute power in his hands could his position in the country be maintained:

"All racial groups other than White must be made to see that they are of inferior stock, and though their place in the country is recognised they must accept a subservient rôle."<sup>2</sup>

It is the same fear, continues de Blank, which prompts the present Government to pursue the policy of apartheid and which, since "fear when it overwhelms a man becomes irrational",<sup>3</sup> has led to the legislation that has shocked the outside world but has been unquestioningly accepted by the bulk of the White population.

This fear is elsewhere described, in terms of nineteenth-century South African history, as a "laager mentality" which gives rise to "impassioned pleas to the White people to stick together not only in face of the dangers coming from the non-Whites within the country or over the border, but also in face of dangerous egalitarian ideas that are now accepted by nine-tenths of the globe."<sup>4</sup>

It was this dread of "dangerous egalitarian ideas" that prevented South Africa from allaying its fear of absorption by the Blacks:

"If a more enlightened immigration policy had been followed over the past 100 years or so, there might now have been 10 or so million Whites, and no problem of absorption would have arisen today. But the settlers of South Africa were afraid of the liberal winds that were blowing through Europe, the winds of revolution and change, and they preferred to maintain their patriarchal, almost Old Testament society as it was, rather than admit other Whites in large numbers."<sup>5</sup>

Yet even now de Blank felt that through extensive immigration, resulting in a larger White population, the White man's fear of being submerged in a Black Africa would be dissipated: but White immigration, de Blank told the South African Church Institute, was not encouraged because the settlers might be too liberal in their convictions.<sup>6</sup> The News Chronicle in a leading article called the suggestion constructive but of little practical value since immigration would have to run into millions to reduce the disparity between White and Black numbers.<sup>7</sup>

The fear of the Whites is strongly contrasted with the "patience and gaiety" of the Africans "before whom the rooineks (English-speaking South Africans) and bullnecks (Afrikaans-speaking South Africans) are seen to be fear-ridden neurotics to their great disadvantage." The only hope for the latter was to lay this "bogey" which "has assumed pathological proportions" and to initiate a policy of co-operation and partnership between the races.<sup>8</sup>

Although de Blank could be scornful about the fears of White South Africans, he could also be sympathetic. The following extract carries none of the unpleasant overtones inherent in the passage in which he refers to the "laager mentality".<sup>9</sup>

"The moment you come to think about the racial problems of South Africa, you realise that you must be very understanding and sympathetic towards this perilously small White minority, who feel in danger of being submerged by this far stronger African group, which grows at a far more rapid pace than they do themselves, and much of the apartheid legislation, and the difficulties of South Africa, are caused by this fear on the part of the White man, that he will lose his identity in the southern tip of the continent."<sup>10</sup>

From the above we are left with the impression that, whatever the White man could or should have done in the past, his fear is justified for the White minority is conceded to be "perilously small", and the phrase,

"tip of Africa", reinforces the picture of isolation. This does not square with de Blank's use of the adjective "irrational", quoted earlier, to describe White South African fears. A possible explanation of the discrepancy is that in the former example he was speaking in 1961,<sup>11</sup> just a year after Sharpeville and the declaration of the State of Emergency, and so was not likely to be looking for mitigating factors in the development of a policy which he saw to be certain of bringing disaster not only to South Africa but the continent of Africa as a whole. On the other hand, the last-quoted extract was from a lecture delivered in 1965, almost two years after his leaving South Africa. Away from the storm centre, as it were, he could look at the situation more dispassionately. In addition, racial problems in Britain made him less inclined to pass judgement on South Africa:

"You know very well that there are racial difficulties in this country, so much so, that we have had Immigration legislation brought in recently, to try to deal with this very acute problem. It used to be quite easy to adopt the 'holier than thou' attitude to a country like South Africa, and tell it exactly how it ought to behave, but now.....in this country (though) there are very few non-Whites numerically speaking, we find that a great social and political problem is revealed which demands the careful attention and continuing watchfulness of our legislators."<sup>12</sup>

(ii) The Paradox : South African Government Christian

If the policy of the South African Government was not only sub-Christian, but anti-Christian and satanic,<sup>13</sup> then it would be reasonable to suppose that those who tenaciously clung to this "diabolical doctrine"<sup>14</sup> were themselves unbelievers. But here de Blank was perplexed by a strange paradox:

"The tragedy of this country is that those who oppose us speak not as those who have rejected the Christian Faith - which would be reasonable enough - but as fellow Christians ...."<sup>15</sup>

In South Africa, unlike Hitler's Germany where no one was likely to mistake "the Nazi wolf for a believing sheep",<sup>16</sup> the Government "which initiated apartheid.....consist for the most part of God-fearing men, and their policy is officially endorsed and approved by the Dutch Reformed Church to which they belong."<sup>17</sup>

Moreover, Dr Verwoerd, says de Blank, made it quite clear in his broadcast after being elected Prime Minister that he had been placed in the position by Almighty God and that he was carrying out God's plan in

racial matters.<sup>18</sup> In fact, the Afrikaners from whom the official apartheid policy originated "have always regarded their coming to South Africa as part of the divine plan for the dark continent. They have considered themselves as the appointed custodians of the Christian Faith and the Christian way of life."<sup>19</sup> Like the Israelites of old, their ancestors, the Voortrekkers, saw themselves as God's chosen people.<sup>20</sup>

It was the claim of the South African people as a whole to be a religious and God-fearing nation that made de Blank refrain from prejudging the racial situation in the country since, if the claim were justified, apartheid could not be as bad as the evidence seemed to suggest.<sup>21</sup>

However, something was tragically wrong with the South African brand of Christianity. Nowhere in the world was there such an enthusiastic church-going population, yet nowhere in the world was the Church's witness so often called in question.<sup>22</sup> That this refers to White South Africans is clear from his closing comment ("And not without justification as we shall see") which leads on to the next chapter (in his autobiography) "Christians and Apartheid", dealing largely with the Dutch Reformed Church and also containing an admission of the failure of the other Christian Churches in respect of apartheid.

This form of Christianity, for all its apparent devoutness, was not producing the fruit de Blank expected. In recording his First Impressions of South Africa, he said that he envisaged a great future for the country if it could "learn to express its devout Christian spirit in a vigorous freedom-producing Christianity".<sup>23</sup> It goes without saying that he was aware of a discrepancy between faith and works.<sup>24</sup> Elsewhere he expresses it thus: when the Church at the close of the Roman Empire was faced with the menace of the barbarians, it had to contend "as with us today" with an even greater peril - "the peril of men who paid lip-service to the Christian Faith but whose practices and policies all too often belied their word."<sup>25</sup>

In Good Hope (May 1959) he put it even more directly:

"The peculiar tragedy of South Africa is that many who believe in the exercise of power and racial supremacy claim also to be Christians and apparently see nothing incongruous in denying their Lord's teachings by their actions."

de Blank sees this problem in South Africa in relation to Western Christianity as a whole. The latter is a "superficial affair"<sup>26</sup> which sees very little connection between worship on Sunday and conduct during the rest of the week - "The tragedy is that we fail to identify the bread

on the Altar with the bread man earns by the sweat of his brow." <sup>27</sup>

In order to illustrate more forcibly this superficial understanding of the demands of Christianity, de Blank compares Christian South Africa unfavourably with Communist Russia when speaking of his visit to Windermere:

"Even the Russians in Christmas 1963 opened their hated wall so that German families might be together for the great Feast, but in South Africa, which claims to be Christian in deed as well as in word, in 1957 the very reverse was taking place. Houses were being broken up ....." <sup>28</sup>

What was especially irksome to do Blank was the Government's use of the name of God for its own un-Christian purposes. Speaking at the time of the deportation of Ambrose Reeves, he makes mention of those "who, in their public utterances, use the name of God as a convenient rallying call to awaken the emotions, to outlaw and to suspend judgement." <sup>29</sup> He does not mention anyone by name but the context in which these words are spoken taken together with his comment on Dr Verwoerd's sense of a divine calling, <sup>30</sup> make it reasonably clear that he has the South African Government in mind.

His quotation from the American Church Quarterly is also particularly revealing of his own attitude:

".....the right wing (the South African Government and its supporters, as a careful reading of whole Diocesan letters will show) want to embezzle it (Christianity) and convert its wholesome and sanctifying energies to its own unholy uses: It is for this reason that we must be on our guard against any tendency towards the secular patronage of religion. Christianity is nobody's tool. There can be no contriving to get God on our side - no prostitution of Christianity to buttress the reactionary views of the extreme right." <sup>31</sup>

We might reasonably ask whether the Archbishop really thought the South African Government and its supporters to be Christian. This question was in the mind of an interviewer who asked de Blank whether he thought it was possible to be a sincere Christian and yet support enforced apartheid. He replied that it was possible to be a sincere Christian and support the Inquisition. <sup>32</sup> We must also bear in mind that he links the shortcomings of White South African Christians with those of Western Christianity as a whole. <sup>33</sup> Then too there are times when he openly concedes that the South African authorities are God-fearing men. <sup>34</sup> On the other hand, the context in which the concession is made raises an element of doubt. Also the use of qualifying words such as "claim to be" <sup>35</sup> and "call themselves" <sup>36</sup> before the term "Christian" makes the reader wonder whether a charge of hypocrisy is not perhaps being laid. What is certain is that he was sceptical of the

authentic Christian character of the Afrikaners and their culture. In a chapter of his autobiography dealing with the Afrikaners he writes:

"The Voortrekker Monument in Pretoria, which has much more a pagan than a Christian feel about it, is now far and away the greatest centre of pilgrimage - a harsh, square and solid erection where the altar is replaced by an ox-cart, and the sanctuary lamp by a hurricane lantern."<sup>37</sup>

We should, however, bear in mind the fact that de Blank was inclined to make liberal use of hyperbole when the issue under discussion was an important one to him. It is perhaps best to interpret this particular line of attack as an attempt to awaken the conscience of racially-minded White South Africans and to shame them into living out the principles of the Christianity they professed.

(iii) Confrontation on the basis of de Blank's theological insights.

(a) The Importance of Theology

Theology, as we might have expected in the case of an Archbishop, was of fundamental importance to de Blank. As far as the Church was concerned, the position was self-evident. As the Body of Christ, the Church was a theological fact and as such could not be organised untheologically - "the expedients we adopt must square with the theology we profess."<sup>38</sup> But the individual Christian as well could not make decisions on anything but theological grounds: "practical expediency alone can never be a valid criterion."<sup>39</sup>

This, in fact, was in accordance with the official view of the Bishops of the Church of the Province of South Africa stated in 1930, a pronouncement of which de Blank made use to show that people like Reeves and himself were not voices crying in the wilderness: "We take our stand on the principles of our Religion, as revealed in the Holy Scriptures, rather than on grounds of expediency."<sup>40</sup>

The importance of theology for de Blank lay in the fact that what a person believed had a direct bearing on his actions:

"Your convictions about the Church, the Atonement, the Sacraments will determine your conduct in the practical ordering of society. Right action can only follow right doctrine. If we differ with fellow-Christians on racial policies it is because we differ on Christian doctrines."<sup>41</sup>

In an address delivered after he had left South Africa de Blank put the same thought thus: "The nature of a man's encounter with his fellows depends upon the nature of the God he worships and the ethical demands his God makes upon him."<sup>42</sup>

If de Blank considered apartheid to be inhuman and contrary to scriptural teaching, it is not surprising that he should refer to the warped Calvinism of those who attempted to justify the system on biblical grounds.<sup>43</sup> de Blank wished to make it quite clear where the conflict in the South African situation lay: "What the Christian world needs to know (is) that the disagreement between the Church and State is a theological and not a political one."<sup>44</sup> And in a reply to the accusation that the Church was being political in its attitude to the State, he said that he had yet to find an instance when this attitude was not based firmly on theological principles and not on a political point of view.<sup>45</sup>

When writing about the Archbishop's residence at Bishopscourt, de Blank says: ".....here he can entertain those in positions of authority and try to convey to them, often informally, the theological attitude to South Africa's problems."<sup>46</sup> This explains why de Blank regretted that Government officials never accepted his invitations to his home: he was losing the opportunity of gently questioning the theological grounds on which God-fearing men based their belief in apartheid.

(b) Church and State <sup>47</sup>

1. Development of the concept in de Blank's experience before 1957

On de Blank's own admission his early religious experience, both as a child and a university student, did not lead him to an understanding of the wider implications of Christianity.<sup>48</sup> It was only after he entered the ministry of the Church of England that he became aware of the relationship between faith and life in general. The first signs of this awakening was his concern over the effects of widespread unemployment during the Depression: and it was not long before he was calling on the Church to deal with the social evils of the time.<sup>49</sup>

As Europe drifted towards war, de Blank saw the Church as being capable of exerting a profound influence on the formation of national and international policy, and so he wrote strongly of his desire that the Archbishop of Canterbury should "seize his umbrella and fly to the Vatican, there in the name of Christ to demand common Christian action and Christian

policy."<sup>50</sup> The same sentiments led to his forming The Christian Front which was rendered abortive by the outbreak of war.<sup>51</sup> These examples show that de Blank was becoming increasingly conscious of the relationship between Church and State, though no direct mention of a conflict was as yet made.

During the War he came to feel that by becoming a barrister and entering parliament he would be able to propagate Christianity in a more telling manner.<sup>52</sup> It is possible that in these moments of crisis he was doubting whether the Church as an organisation was able to hold its own against the secular interests of the State.

After the War, however, we find him still in the ministry, encouraging his parishioners to involve themselves in the running of the community,<sup>53</sup> and later, as Bishop of Stepney, he calls the Church to put the Gospel where it belonged, among other places, "on the floor of the House."<sup>54</sup>

## 2. Inter-relationship

de Blank's belief in the inter-relationship between Church and State stems directly from his deeply-rooted belief in the Incarnation. In accordance with this doctrine, the "idea that there is a small compartment of life which is the religious compartment and that the rest of life has nothing to do with religion is a dangerous heresy and has no place in Christian orthodoxy."<sup>55</sup>

This was how de Blank met the challenge of those who had accused him of meddling in politics. To him Church and State were not mutually exclusive spheres, and those who disagreed with him on this matter were subscribing to a "dangerous heresy". The use of the word "heresy" not only indicates how de Blank viewed the position of his critics, but also shows that he was in no doubt whatsoever as to the correctness of his own beliefs on the subject.

This "heresy" is later linked with what de Blank refers to as a "thorough-going Erastianism which accepts the State's authority in its own sphere and reserves to the Church only a concern for people's souls. This means that the Church may never challenge or question any action by the State for that is to trespass on preserves forbidden to it." However, he feels that it is hardly necessary for him to point out that in any country claiming to be a democracy such a differentiation is "wholly unreal - for we who claim to be Christians are those who elect our governments and therefore as Christians we have a responsibility for the actions of our

government. We cannot slough off our responsibility as if the State were something imposed on us from outside. We have put the government there ourselves."<sup>56</sup>

At the end of his first year in office the Archbishop told the Diocesan Synod that he was surprised at the "vociferous minority who believe that a concern for social justice is politics and not Christianity". Then follows a serious indictment:

"Something must be seriously wrong with the teaching of Church schools, the instruction for Confirmation, the communication of the Faith in the home, the sermons in our churches if people can grow to mature years if not to maturity, and hold in all sincerity such gravely heretical opinions."<sup>57</sup>

His shock at the attitude of certain members of his own Church is underlined by the word "heretical" which reminds us of his earlier attack on those who had criticised his sentiments expressed in the February edition of Good Hope.<sup>58</sup> Here, though, his feeling of outrage is all the greater because he is dealing not with criticism in general but from a quarter which should know better.

The two-fold hope of the Church is also brought forward as an illustration of the impossibility of divorcing Christianity from man's corporate life: Christians look not only for a new heaven but also a new earth. The prayer, "Thy Kingdom come", keeps this hope alive. Thus the Church, regarded throughout the New Testament as the herald of God's Kingdom, must through individual Christians realise its calling in the affairs of human life on earth.<sup>59</sup>

The "instructed Christian" then is astounded when he is accused of interfering in political affairs:

"Politics is the art or science of government, and is therefore concerned with the relationship of people with people and states with states. And the way these relationships are organised or administered ....is frequently a matter of Christian faith and religious principle."<sup>60</sup>

The coupling of the command to love God with the command to love one's neighbour as oneself further accentuates the fact that religion cannot be considered a private affair, and so "criticisms and judgements which may be deemed political are bound to have their place in a Christian's obedience."<sup>61</sup>

Those who are still in doubt are pointed to the Old Testament prophets whose "obedience was expressed in a passion for social justice,"

and to Christ who "was crucified because he was accused of interfering in politics."<sup>62</sup>

### 3. The Superiority of the Church

Having established the inter-relationship between Church and State, de Blank now outlines the functions of each.<sup>63</sup> "It is the politician's calling to make human society conform as nearly as possible to the laws of God." Therefore, as a law-maker, it is his function to make legislation approximate to the tenets of the Christian religion. "But in a Christian society it is not part of his duty to be a law-giver. Principles governing man's relationship with his fellow-men have been laid down in God's self-revelation. The politician's vocation is to work out these principles in practice. But the moment he begins to question these principles, the moment he seeks to implement a policy which cannot be squared with these principles, he assails the Divine prerogative by acting as a law-giver instead of a law-maker. Though not deliberately, he is committing blasphemy." The Christian at this point feels it incumbent upon himself to speak out since the conflict is now a religious, not a political one.

The Church Times had a relevant comment to make on this:

"There is more than a touch both of mediaeval thought and the teachings of William Temple in his emphasis that the Church must be concerned with politics and that where ultimate principles are involved, the last word must be not with the State but with the Church of God."<sup>64</sup>

It pointed out too that there could be objections to the Archbishop's describing the role of a modern Parliament in law-making as subordinate and derivative only. The final thought, that the great point at issue was to determine what God's will on race relationships really was, highlights the problem. How can the Church say the last word when there is no unanimity among Churchmen?

de Blank is placing the Church in a superior position since it has the authority to pass judgement on the State whereas the State is not accorded any rights not conceded to it by the Church. In fact, any conflict that comes about is the result of the politicians' stepping out of "their own well-defined limits into the theological arena."<sup>65</sup> The use of the expression "well-defined" is open to question since the lack of unanimity on this very issue among South African Churches indicates that not everyone accepted the definition as given by de Blank who was, in fact, following an Anglican tradition as exemplified in the writings and activities of William

Temple. Moreover, judging from the unfavourable reactions to his criticism of the South African Government from a section both of the clergy and the laity, he could not even speak for the Church of the Province as a whole.<sup>66</sup>

The right of the Church to criticise the State had also been asserted by Clayton. It is instructive to catch the tone of his words:

"For my part I cannot agree that we have no right to express our opinion about these matters and if we think that something is wrong to say so."<sup>67</sup>

Clayton, who is speaking under the heading of "Right to Criticise", is far from claiming the right to pass judgement, for in the words "opinion" and "think" there is the admission of possible error on the part of representatives of the Church. Contrast this with the uncompromising words of de Blank, all the more remarkable since he has just been speaking of the failures of the Church:

"None of these things invalidate the word of judgement that in the Name of God the Church is called to utter as Christian obedience demands."<sup>68</sup>

de Blank was naturally encouraged by the encyclical of the Pope which declared that racial discrimination was not only contrary to the Gospel but also to natural law. The issue of racial discrimination will be dealt with later but the important point in the Church-State issue is that the Church was asserting its right to pass judgement on the State:

"How heartening to read so strong a declaration that the moral law is absolute and stands supreme over the relative laws of states.....Wherever and whenever the Churchman sees God's moral law being flouted, even by those who claim a religious sanction for what they are doing, he has no alternative but to make his protest....."<sup>69</sup>

#### 4. Inevitability of Conflict

In Uncomfortable Words de Blank wrote: "In its willingness to render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's the Church has sometimes been dangerously near to rendering to Caesar the things that are God's."<sup>70</sup> These words have been re-quoted because they reveal an important characteristic of de Blank's thinking on the Church-State issue.<sup>71</sup> Vincent Taylor in commenting on the reply of Jesus - "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's" (Mark 12:17) - says that these words have deeply influenced all subsequent discussions of the complex relationships of Church and State; and, while it does not solve that problem ..... it enunciates the decisive principle relative to that discussion.<sup>72</sup> Both Taylor<sup>73</sup> and Filson<sup>74</sup> point out that Christ is not here

dividing life into two separate spheres, one the political and the other the religious. The authority of God is all-embracing. However, the Jews are being told that no matter how unpalatable it may be, they have an obligation to the government over them. H. Benedict Green sums up the position: "obedience to Caesar in matters of civil government and administration (of which the law says nothing) is itself obedience to God; but where he has made his will known (primarily in the Torah) and particularly in any case of conflict between this and the demands of Caesar, God alone is to be obeyed."<sup>75</sup> de Blank would have agreed with Green's statement. But because in the South African situation he saw Caesar as having already taken up a stance against God, the Archbishop is led at times to disregard the claims of the State not only on his obedience but also his respect.

de Blank even goes as far as to raise the possibility of disobedience to the State at a school prize-giving:

"Christians must in the last resort obey God rather than man. If this means that at a certain point he has to decide on disobedience to the law of the land, it is a decision he comes to after a thorough and agonizing appraisal of the situation. If ever the moment dawns when, with the Apostles, we have to choose between obedience to God or to man, I pray that we may all be given the courage to make the right choice...."<sup>76</sup>

Although he qualified this statement by saying that the choice would never be an easy one, it seems that he was being unnecessarily provocative on an occasion unsuited to such a serious consideration. de Blank, however, might have felt that the Church had failed to educate its members, and so a formal address to schoolgirls belonging to his Church could redress some of the omissions in their education.

de Blank did not deny that the State had a claim on the Christian's allegiance but he foresees a time when his greater loyalty to God would have to be asserted. Here again he leaves us with the impression that a struggle between Church and State must ultimately take place. While he was in England this conflict remained largely hypothetical. However, when he entered the South African scene where a clash had already occurred de Blank, consistent with the position he had already taken up, was not slow to carry the battle to the enemy.

As Archbishop-elect he was asked by Malcolm Muggeridge who was speaking in connection with the "Church Clause", about the possibility of his breaking the law. His reply was: "A certain moment has to be reached when you have to accept that as part of the penalty and privilege of being

a Christian". He then said that he would be prepared to break the law for the fundamental dignity of the individual.<sup>77</sup>

Another pointer to his eagerness to confront the State is the short time it took him to make his position clear. It was his stated intention to hold his peace for the time being so that he did not speak out of ignorance or embarrass the Church of the Province.<sup>78</sup> Yet in his Enthronement Address he refers to "our enemies" in such a way that we could identify them with the South African authorities: ".....if we are to live in love we must abide by the command to love our enemies and not only their victims. Without this active love towards those who are opposed to us, even to those who are to us misguided in their treatment of those weaker than themselves, we are failing in our basic obedience to God."<sup>79</sup>

Then in his Good Hope letter of February 1958 he put veiled references aside and spoke out clearly. Using his own line of reasoning, we may take it that he now felt that he had fully grasped the realities of the situation and was therefore not talking out of ignorance. His intention was certainly to launch an attack, or at least to prepare his people for one, since his words were grouped under the provocative heading:

"Defeat your Enemy in Detail".

The February letter contains a strange contradiction. This was "not the occasion to say why Apartheid legislation grows increasingly abhorrent to me." Still he goes on to make a biting attack on certain aspects of the system. de Blank probably was aware of what he had said earlier about keeping his peace and must have known that he would be charged with talking from insufficient knowledge if he spoke out too early in his ministry; nevertheless, apart from considerations dealt with elsewhere,<sup>80</sup> his compulsion to start what others referred to as a "holy war"<sup>81</sup> was too strong, and so the Church had to be made ready to defeat the enemy - the State.

##### 5. de Blank's view of his position as representative of the Church

de Blank as Archbishop of Cape Town was acutely aware of his position of authority in the Church. Before coming to South Africa his statements on the authority of a bishop were of a general nature and not designed to boost his own status.<sup>82</sup> In South Africa, though, he speaks self-consciously and deliberately of the power vested in him as a Bishop of the Church.

In the first section of his Enthronement Address<sup>83</sup> he says that it is difficult to succeed a man of the stature of Geoffrey Clayton yet "if we believe - as we must believe if we have faith in the Holy Spirit at all - that Elijah's mantle has been cast upon my shoulders....." The word "must" allows his listeners no choice. Through the agency of no less authority than the Holy Spirit the Apostolic Ministry continues in his person. The references to Elijah and Elisha must not be seen merely as a scriptural embellishment but as a telling metaphor, illustrating the prophetic nature of his calling. The mention of Elijah in this context shows de Blank's exceptionally high opinion of Clayton, but we cannot help feeling that we are being told that a double portion of his spirit has fallen upon his successor who, as a result, speaks with his power and authority.

It was not long before he made it clear that he was prepared to translate this authority into decisive action. In his controversial Diocesan letter (February 1958) he spoke of having heard of the operation of apartheid in certain Anglican Congregations. He could not believe it, "but if it were ever proved to me that apartheid does in fact operate in any Church in this diocese, let me state with all the emphasis at my command that I should do everything in my power to eradicate it, and in the intervening period while it still existed I should have to refuse any episcopal ministrations on behalf of the congregation concerned."<sup>84</sup> Here we feel that we are listening to a medieval pope threatening a recalcitrant secular ruler with excommunication. In fairness to de Blank it should be noted that the tone of "I should have to" shows a certain reluctance to wield what is nevertheless to him a real power.

Before leaving for the Lambeth Conference of 1958 de Blank wrote that the findings of this gathering should be treated with respect, not because of the individual attributes of the bishops but "because of their gathering together as Bishops, as the successors of the Apostles in the Church of God."<sup>85</sup> Though he is here speaking of the bishops as a group, the reader is aware that it is one of these men who is addressing him.

While he was in America before proceeding to Lambeth, the Archbishop stirred up a hornets' nest with his statements about the South African Government and the Dutch Reformed Church.<sup>86</sup> Even members of his own Church were embarrassed by these pronouncements. On his return, however, he silenced any possible questioning of his conduct by re-affirming his divine appointment: his reception by people of all colours "was the visible expression of the Church of God, living its life of supernatural fellowship and paying honour to the man who had been made - through no virtue of his own - but by the action of Christ in His Church -

its spiritual leader and father in God."<sup>87</sup>

de Blank, although qualifying his words with the self-effacing "through no virtue of his own", nevertheless receives the "honour" without qualms. Orthodox Anglicans in the country would have agreed with his theological premises but many must surely have been taken aback by the uncompromising statement of his position by a man whose actions were nothing if not controversial.

As time passed and de Blank became increasingly involved in controversy, he sensed that he did not have all his people behind him. He thus spent a disproportionate part of his Charge to the 1960 Provincial Synod on establishing his own position in the ecclesiastical hierarchy.<sup>88</sup>

After looking back nostalgically at his London ministry, he spoke of his disillusionment, not with "half crazy racialists" but with his own Church. ".....I confess that I had anticipated a greater unity within the Church, a more faithful acceptance and application of those resolutions passed by Provincial and Diocesan Synods, which had stirred the Church of God throughout the world, and a stronger loyalty to the Episcopate in this country than I have in fact experienced."

He reminded his audience that they professed to believe that their pastors were divinely called to their position but in practice they often acted as though they neither believed their choices to be inspired nor their prayers to be answered. Just as at his Enthronement he had spoken of the Holy Spirit in underlining the authenticity of his appointment as successor to Clayton, so now he stresses the divine calling and inspiration which lies behind the appointment of a bishop. This statement is framed in more general terms - he speaks of bishops in the plural - but the whole tenor of his address leads us unmistakably to the conclusion that he is bringing his own position as Archbishop into focus. In any case, he has only just begun.

The Anglican Church, he continued, had a high opinion of the Ministry. They were taught "in Holy Scripture to pray for those who are set over us in the Lord and to esteem them very highly for their works' sake." This appeal to the authority of the Bible shows that de Blank is attempting to bring spiritual pressure to bear on those who were taking too light a view of his role. He saw a danger in the prevailing theological climate in South Africa which "does not stress the Grace of Orders as we do, and we may be contaminated if we are not on our guard." "Contaminated" is a strong word and implies that those who held opposing views on the

subject are diseased in their thinking.

At this stage it is fitting to ask who these people are who do not think "as we do". They are certainly not Anglicans as the use of the word "we" shows. If he has in mind the Calvinistic Dutch Reformed Church then he is underestimating the high status of D.R.C. ministers both theologically and socially. From a theological point of view, it would be interesting to know what de Blank thought of Calvin's estimate of "The Teachers and Ministers of the Church." In his Institutes of the Christian Religion he writes:

"In this passage (Eph. IV:4-16) (Paul) shows that the ministry of men, which God employs in his government of the church, is the principal bond which holds the faithful together in one body. He also indicates that the church cannot be preserved in perfect safety, unless it is supported by these means which God has been pleased to appoint for its preservation. Christ, he says 'ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things'. And this is the way in which he does it. By means of his ministers, to whom he has bestowed grace to discharge it, he dispenses and distributes his gifts to the church, and even affords some manifestation of his own presence, by exerting the power of his Spirit in this his institution, that it may not be vain or ineffectual .... Whoever, therefore, aims to abolish or undervalue this order, of which we are treating, and this species of government, attempts to disorganize the church, or rather to subvert and destroy it altogether. For light and heat are not so essential to the sun, nor any meat and drink so necessary to the nourishment and sustenance of the present life, as the apostolical and pastoral office is to the preservation of the church in the world.

Therefore I have already remarked, that God hath frequently commended its dignity to us by every possible encomium, in order that we might hold it in the highest estimation and value, as more excellent than everything else." (IV. III. 2 & 3)<sup>89</sup>

Dakin's comment is that we have here "as high a doctrine of the Christian ministry as can be found in Christendom."<sup>90</sup>

To continue with his Charge to Synod, the Archbishop now comes face to face with a difficulty, the fact that "Our Church is an hierachial society that in Synod uses some of the methods of democracy for the ordering of its corporate life." In case this should give rise to any false notions he adds:

"But the means of democracy are in no way meant to challenge the hierachial pattern. If we profess to believe in the threefold Order of Bishop, Priest and Deacon, let our life and activity witness to our Faith."

This last sentence puts his hearers in a difficult position. The authority of a bishop has been restated in strong terms. It is an article of belief

which is in danger of being disregarded in South Africa. He accordingly calls his people to give practical expression to this belief in their lives. In other words, he is asking Anglicans to identify themselves fully with the stand taken by the Archbishop in the South African situation.

de Blank's predecessor, Geoffrey Clayton, brought no such pressure to bear on the members of his Church. In delivering his Charge to the Diocesan Synod of 1949 he frankly admitted that there was a difference of opinion in the Church as to how the racial situation should be approached. It is important to notice not only the content but the tone of his words:

"It may well be that some of you do not agree with all that I have said. There is no obligation laid upon us that we should all think alike.....we must try to apply Christian principles to our contemporary situation. As to how that can be done men may differ and differ honestly. There is no disloyalty in differing from your Bishop, provided that you believe that your view represents the mind of Christ. But you must not differ from that....."<sup>91</sup>

Here Clayton has the humility to concede that he is not necessarily in the right. He is prepared to admit that those who hold opposing views are not ipso facto disloyal or dishonest; and of prime importance is his reference to the "mind of Christ" which is not viewed as a monopoly of his.

de Blank now proceeds to quote Fr Herbert: "The Church is not a democracy; the authority which governs its members' lives is that of the ascended Christ, and so those who rule in the Church must be seen as representing Him, and not deriving their authority from men. If, then, in a local Christian community there is not someone entitled to claim obedience in Christ's name, such a body may be quite a good religious club, or an association for propagating religious sentiments; it cannot be the Church of God."

He is here justifying his claim on the obedience of his people. But where were they falling short of giving him this obedience? We can safely assume that behind this appeal "in Christ's name" is the equivocal attitude of many Anglicans towards their Archbishop's declared war on apartheid. From the above quotation it is also clear that de Blank felt that in representing Christ in His Church he also spoke with the mind of Christ. If this were not his conviction, he could hardly have dared to make such an elaborate appeal for their allegiance. This raises the further problem of whether he was not opening himself to the charge of claiming infallibility for his opinions on apartheid. When, then, we may ask, was the Archbishop speaking with the authority of Christ, and when was he expressing his personal

and possibly misguided opinion?

Having spoken in such a way that no one could have failed to note the drift of his message, de Blank surprisingly does not let the matter rest. His case is further bolstered by another long quotation, this time from a work of Archbishop Garbett entitled "The Claims of the Church of England". One sentence in this passage, although it refers to bishops as a group, is especially relevant to de Blank as an individual. "If they make a joint utterance they will be told from many sides that it is injudicious, mischievous and ill-advised." de Blank had been accused of being "injudicious, mischievous and ill-advised"<sup>92</sup> in his pronouncements but he here shows by implication that the criticism levelled at him is something to be expected and part of the price of being an overseer of the flock.

The Archbishop did not view criticism of bishops as being all that harmful in the sphere of the Church in England where most people were at least nominally Anglicans; but "in South Africa our Church is fighting for its life and for its liberty, for its Faith and for its freedom, and we must stand shoulder to shoulder in the face of the peril that threatens us." Loyalty to the Church leadership is thus of prime importance because of the "peril" facing the Church. At this critical moment (he quotes Garbett again): "the Church, and particularly the ministry in the Church, has the duty of guarding the apostolic Gospel lest it become perverted into something different, and of condemning as error or as heresy teachings which are subversive of it." This, says de Blank, is the inescapable duty of a bishop who "shares in our Lord's prophetic, priestly and kingly work" by virtue of his Consecration. With his detractors clearly in mind, he condemns those who look upon a bishop as a mere super-priest but "who would reject his prophetic office and rebel against his sovereignty."

From what has gone before, it is logical to assume that de Blank's estimate of his own position is linked with his estimate of the situation in South Africa. The Church is in grave danger, and therefore, as leader of that Church which pays at least lip-service to its hierachial pattern, he must command the loyalty and obedience of all so that a united front can oppose the forces of error and heresy ranged against it.

The culmination of his argument is a scriptural reference to the appointment of a successor to Judas. After prayer and the casting of votes Matthias was elected, "honoured as an apostle chosen first by our Lord and then confirmed by the choice of the Church. Like every bishop, he derived his authority not from the people but from Christ in His Church - and that authority every bishop holds today."

There can be no further doubt. de Blank stands before his people elected in the traditional apostolic manner. To challenge his authority would be tantamount to challenging the authority of Christ.

#### 6. Note on reaction to Pope's Encyclical

Writing to his diocese<sup>93</sup> about the Pope's Encyclical of April 1963, de Blank had this to say:

"The Pope has made it clear that Roman Catholics all over the world must reject all forms of racial discrimination wherever and whenever they occur."

We can detect in this a message to his own people. The Pope had demanded (implied in "must reject") obedience from his Church. Should not the Anglicans be following their spiritual leader whose call for similar obedience on the same issue had received corroboration from such an influential quarter? de Blank must certainly have regretted that he was not able to command the same allegiance as the Pope.

#### (c) The Incarnation

From our study of de Blank's books written before he became Archbishop of Cape Town it is evident that the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation loomed large in his thinking.<sup>94</sup> It has already been seen that he justified the Christian's involvement in politics and social life on the grounds that God had become man in Christ Jesus, and so all life, including its political aspect, was the sphere of Christian obedience.

He always remained acutely aware that in his younger days an imperfect understanding of this truth had led to a partial Christianity which laid the stress on non-essentials: "Unfortunately, the deprived areas, want in the midst of plenty, slum housing, international discord - such were matters that could be ignored although their disregard was a denial of the Incarnation."<sup>95</sup>

He was determined then that no one in his Church, in fact, no one in South Africa would remain unacquainted with the "central truth" of the Incarnation and its implications for daily living. In his struggle against apartheid this doctrine became a powerful weapon. He was astonished that his opponents should criticise his attack on the system on the grounds that he, as a Christian, was interfering in politics. He accordingly found it necessary to restate his belief, already familiar to those acquainted with his earlier writings:

"Christianity is the truth of the Word-Made-Flesh, of God become Man, of the Captain of our Salvation who is also the Carpenter of Nazareth. Through the Incarnation God has set this seal upon our world. And it is in the moil and toil of daily working life, of life in the flesh, that our discipleship is proved."<sup>96</sup>

While only a "vocal minority"<sup>97</sup> in his Church needed a reminder of the implications of the Incarnation, de Blank said that all Dutch Reformed Churches "believe in saving people's souls, with insufficient reference to their bodies, to their material circumstances."<sup>98</sup> Elsewhere this belief is called a "Christian heresy" which has to be guarded against:

"In point of fact, a phrase beloved by many an evangelical about saving souls is alien to the New Testament. There is scarcely any reference to saving souls - a great deal about saving people."<sup>99</sup>

South Africans had to be made aware of this for the danger facing the country was that of a spiritual salvation divorced from social redemption.<sup>100</sup>

This stress on a spiritual salvation to the detriment of a concern for the whole man (alternatively expressed as an emphasis on the Atonement at the expense of the Incarnation)<sup>101</sup> meant that it was possible to "postulate a spiritual unity in Christ which has little to do with the way you treat a man of different race in the ordinary exchange of daily life." This was a serious weakening of the fact of the Incarnation.<sup>102</sup>

Probably with his own early experience in mind, de Blank felt that only a strongly sacramental Church could keep this truth in the forefront of an individual's faith and practice. It was only as an Anglican that de Blank had recognised, through the emphasis on the sacraments, the need to express his faith in the physical realities of working life.<sup>103</sup> We have already dealt with his insights into the connection between the sacraments and the doctrine of the Incarnation,<sup>104</sup> but here, in speaking of the Dutch Reformed Church, he states it again:

"It is as one receives that Christ has taken such basic things of daily life as water, oil, bread and wine to convey the reality of His redemptive power that the Gospel is seen to deal with human beings in the totality of their personalities and environment. It is hard to be a weekly communicant and retain any idea of racial superiority."<sup>105</sup>

This final sentence does not ring entirely true when we remember that there were members of his own sacramental Church (including men in the ministry) who had to be rebuked for falling into the same error as that for which he is criticising another Church. It is also a remarkable statement when the work of the Salvation Army - a Church which does not

have a sacramental basis - is taken into account. What de Blank, in fact, is doing is to generalise on the basis of his own experience. His becoming an Anglican had widened the scope of his Christianity because of the emphasis that was laid on the sacraments. He now assumes that the sacraments will have the same efficacy in respect of others. He does, however, concede that it is possible to take Communion mechanically and "to eat and drink to our own judgement and condemnation."<sup>106</sup>

Then, too, those who imperfectly understood the doctrine of the Incarnation were guilty of entertaining "the incredible conception of the invisible Church" which could find no support in the New Testament but which in South Africa was constantly used to justify separate congregations for different racial groups. The real Church, as de Blank interpreted this notion, is the Church which incorporates all believers who are known only to God. People of all races and colours have their place in this body and are one in Christ, "but any suggestion that the visible Church should embody that unity in its tangible life here on earth is a matter of no importance at all. Though I know that sincere men genuinely hold such a belief, I find it very near to blasphemy and a denial of everything I understand by the Body of Christ."<sup>107</sup>

This doctrine of the invisible Church is thus diametrically opposed to true biblical teaching and uncompromisingly called "heresy".<sup>108</sup> The Church to de Blank was the place where everyone irrespective of race or any other distinction was given his divinely ordered status. The Incarnational basis of the Christian faith dictates that there "can be no escape by means of pious protestations of fellowship in the invisible Church while denying such fellowship in the life of man in society.....we are a 'colony of heaven' (de Blank here uses a favourite quotation of his from Moffat's translation of Philippians 3:21) and the kind of love and service and fellowship that unites all heaven in the praise and worship of Almighty God is to be expressed in our church life here below."<sup>109</sup>

#### (d) Practical Christianity

de Blank's stress on the doctrine of the Incarnation with its implications for the whole of life led to an insistence on practical Christianity. He was disturbed by the fact that, as in late Victorian Britain, there was among the Whites in South Africa "a great deal of conventional church going, with little recognition of the connection between church attendance and daily conduct; and a certain resentment when the intimacy of this connection is pointed out to them, in spite of our Lord's

uncompromising words: 'By their fruits ye shall know them'.<sup>110</sup> In fact, there were many in South Africa who did not take their Christianity beyond the Church porch.<sup>111</sup> He thus told the Anglican laity that their life in the Church should be matched by the quality of their life outside it.<sup>112</sup> Although de Blank is here speaking to his own people since he believed that judgement must begin at home, he is nevertheless addressing all White South Africans who had divorced personal religion from public responsibility.

He felt so strongly on the subject that he wrote to those in his diocese that it was far better for the Anglican Church to "be small numerically and true to its Lord than that it should be strong numerically but in its strength dependent on the nominal faith of many who have no serious intention of ever putting their faith into practice."<sup>113</sup>

What made the theme of practical Christianity assume such proportions in de Blank's mind was that for him it held the key to the future of Africa. The situation on the Continent was critical because the Whites had brought an angry Black proletariat into being through "the assertion and maintenance of their privileged status". The Africa of tomorrow depended "upon the Christlikeness of the Church and life of the humblest Christian. This is a time for greatness. Can we rise to it? Can the Church become Christian in life as well as in word? Can the ordinary churchman begin to live up to the Faith he professes? Can we make our conduct from Monday to Saturday square with the character of our worship on Sunday?"<sup>114</sup>

de Blank's message for a South Africa which had neglected the practical reality of the Christianity it professed and, in so doing had jeopardised the future of the Christian Faith in Africa, is epitomised in this sentence from the closing section of his Enthronement address:

"Only the love of God shed abroad in our hearts and expressing itself in our daily lives is sufficient to conquer the misunderstanding and mistrust of our time."<sup>115</sup>

#### (e) Reconciliation

de Blank, in spite of his declared intention to bide his time before making his views on the South African situation public,<sup>116</sup> nevertheless spoke out forcibly early in 1958.<sup>117</sup> His utterances provoked a stormy reaction. Whatever misgivings he might have had were dispelled when he attended the Lambeth Conference held in July-August 1958. This gathering, with its emphasis on reconciliation, provided him with additional justification for what he had said and gave him a concept with which to

continue the struggle.<sup>118</sup>

This naturally is not meant to imply that he was previously unaware of the doctrine of reconciliation. Reference has already been made to his views on this subject in his pastoral writings;<sup>119</sup> and at his Enthronement he spoke of God in Christ reconciling the world to Himself.<sup>120</sup> But at Lambeth it took on a new significance "as the most living and pertinent expression of the Gospel for our day."<sup>121</sup>

de Blank calls reconciliation the word used to describe the changed relations between God and man arising from the death and resurrection of Christ.<sup>122</sup> He adds:

"Through the decisive redemptive act of God in Jesus Christ man is reconciled to God - man who was estranged from God and in a state of enmity with Him is won over to love and willing service."<sup>123</sup>

Man's estrangement from God is given as the cause of his insecurity. Even the staggering achievements of science and technology are merely aggravating his predicament because they have been taking place at a time when mankind has no philosophy of history to inspire it with confidence in its destiny. The hope that many, even in Christian countries, have based on secular progress, has been shattered, and there has been nothing to fill the vacuum. But man's extremity is God's opportunity. Through the life, death and resurrection of Christ the world has been brought back to Himself. Man's alienation from God is terminated by the peace which has been made through the blood of His Cross. Ephesians 2:13-16 is quoted as the clearest exposition of this truth:

"But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For He is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us.....for to make in Himself of twain one new man.....and that He might reconcile both unto God in one body by the Cross."

We find the world divided into two armed camps and torn apart into different racial groups. The old and young are moving further apart, and capital and labour are separated by hostile political ideologies. It is because of these divisions that reconciliation epitomises the Gospel for our age<sup>124</sup> - "that Christ breaks down the wall of partition between man and man is as much part of the Gospel as that He breaks down the wall of partition between man and God."<sup>125</sup>

However, the theological concept of reconciliation has to be translated into practical operation. If the Church wants to take this

message to the world, it must begin with itself and the shame of disunity,<sup>126</sup> Individual Christians within the Church must be reconciled with each other before they can become reconciling agents in the world at large.<sup>127</sup> What has taken place between the individual church member and God, and between the individual church member and his fellow-believer is only a preparation for a wider application of this truth. de Blank quotes from the Lambeth finding:

"A dedication to Christian vocation is the chief way in which Christ's Church can today carry its influence into every sphere of human activity. Every layman is called to be the Church in each situation where he finds himself, making himself an instrument of Christ's reconciling love."<sup>128</sup>

It is for this reason that a Christian should not come apart from the world and its activities but rather involve himself fully with society so that he can become a reconciling agent by giving what he believes to be the Christian answer to the problems facing the community.<sup>129</sup>

de Blank now makes an important qualification: reconciliation does not mean peace at all costs. The Church rejects the criticism that Christian missionaries "upset the natives" with their Christian education and doctrine:

"Our Lord Himself stated plainly enough that He brought not peace - not that kind of peace - but a sword, and the Church must at all times be prepared to take the responsibility for creating conflict.....to remedy injustice, to halt oppression and to forward human dignity."<sup>130</sup>

The Archbishop is here clarifying his own position. In working for the bringing together of the various races in South Africa he was, paradoxically, going to alienate many people, not least members of the Government, but on matters of principle an uncompromising stand had to be taken. Speaking of apartheid, he declares that "the only thing to do with sin is to resist it and if possible, destroy it."<sup>131</sup> Reconciliation could not be effected at the cost of Christian principle.

As far as South Africa was concerned, the message of reconciliation was clear: Apartheid is so "contrary to the Gospel - to the breaking down of dividing walls as one of the direct results of Christ's atonement, at-one-ment - that one cannot understand how sane, sensible, intelligent Christian men can subscribe to it."<sup>132</sup>

Since apartheid by its very nature was an erecting of barriers, it was bound to be condemned by any assembly which had caught the vision of a society where barriers could be thrown down. Therefore, although apartheid

as such is not mentioned, two resolutions, quoted by de Blank in his lectures,<sup>133</sup> were passed at Lambeth condemning discrimination on the grounds of race and colour alone, and migratory systems of labour which broke up family life by the enforced separation of man and wife, or of parents and children.<sup>134</sup>

In de Blank's actions, as well as his statements, there was the attempt to put the doctrine of reconciliation into effect. People of all shades of colour and belief were invited to parties at Bishopscourt. Here he entertained ministers of the Dutch Reformed Church so that the contacts made at Cottesloe might be maintained.<sup>135</sup> He would also have liked to meet members of the Government this way but it was a great sorrow to him that not a single one accepted his invitations.<sup>136</sup>

Since de Blank believed that the Church should set its own house in order before it could be effective in carrying out its ministry of reconciliation in South African society, he was determined that all racial barriers in the Church should be removed. Accordingly when he was informed that apartheid operated among certain congregations, he warned that if it were proved to him, though he could not believe it, that apartheid did exist in any church of the diocese, he would do all in his power to eradicate it, at the same time refusing any episcopal ministrations on behalf of the offending congregation.<sup>137</sup>

He was convinced that the way the Day of the Covenant was commemorated in South Africa served only to perpetuate hostility between Black and White. He decided therefore, that on this day a special eucharist would be celebrated on behalf of racial unity in the country. Three ministers from three different racial groups would officiate at the altar in order to lend greater significance to the occasion.<sup>138</sup>

It was not only within the Anglican Church that de Blank attempted to break down barriers. As a great champion of Church Unity, "he took new ecumenical initiatives in a church that had become almost frigid in its ecclesiastical separation."<sup>139</sup> Behind these initiatives was the desire that the Church should speak with one voice on racial matters. He saw the urgent need for this after Sharpeville and the resultant State of Emergency. At the close of the Cottesloe Conference,<sup>140</sup> which arose out of the critical situation in South Africa, he made what he termed "a personal and informal statement" (quoted earlier)<sup>141</sup> which reveals his conciliatory attitude to the Dutch Reformed Church with which he had been at variance.

de Blank was also ready to pay tribute to others who attempted to bring people together. He was generous in his praise of the White traders in the Transkei who were "working out a new relationship with the Africans that it would be criminal to destroy". The intention of the authorities to remove them brought to his mind once again the dangers of a policy of separation:

"Any non-Christian doctrine of separation threatens us with our own Congo in a few year's time. Only reconciliation leading to partnership - that is to say, only the Gospel faithfully accepted and willingly applied - offers the Continent of Africa any hope for the future."<sup>142</sup>

#### (f) Church Unity

We have already noted that before coming to South Africa de Blank, both in word and action, laid stress on the need for Church unity.<sup>143</sup> At Lambeth, eight months after his Enthronement his interest in the subject was further aroused by the sobering thought that "we have to confess our share in the sin and scandal of the disunity of the visible historic Church. Our sorry inability to find the reconciling truth that shall restore visible unity to Christ's Church weakens our witness to the love of one God and the one Lord."<sup>144</sup>

The need for Church unity was especially important within the South African situation: if the un-Christian doctrine of apartheid were to be effectively combated, all the Churches would have to speak with one voice. But the difficulty of achieving the necessary unanimity was the attitude of the Dutch Reformed Churches which was "different from any other recognised Christian body either inside the country or outside."<sup>145</sup> However, there were encouraging signs. The resolution of the Reformed Ecumenical Synod<sup>146</sup> that no single race may deem itself entitled to a privileged position and consider itself superior to other races, together with the conference between the Dutch Reformed Church and the Church of the Province of South Africa in May 1959,<sup>147</sup> "has brought the Churches closer together in their resistance to any discriminatory legislation. Now all the Churches in South Africa and united Christian opinion in the country are at one in their opposition to policies maintaining White domination."<sup>148</sup>

But de Blank's optimism was to be short-lived for only for months later the riots at Sharpeville led to widespread unrest throughout the country and resulted in the declaration of a State of Emergency. At this critical juncture de Blank found the silence of the Dutch Reformed Church

inexplicable. The Church was at the crossroads. "Unless it openly and publicly repudiates the doctrine and practice of compulsory segregation, it is condemning itself to extermination - and the whole of Southern Africa will be wide open to secularism and other non-Christian creeds.....after Sharpeville almost every church issued a statement clearly condemning policies that could lead to such a shocking state of affairs....." Unless the Dutch Reformed Churches identified themselves with the above repudiations of apartheid, the Christian faith was in urgent danger of complete rejection by the African people. If the Dutch Reformed Churches failed to take such action, it was essential that other Churches should no longer be associated with them in any council or federation.<sup>149</sup>

In spite of these unpromising developments, the Cottesloe Conference provided another opportunity for the Churches to reach the consensus on racial discrimination desired by de Blank. That the delegates of the Dutch Reformed Churches of the Transvaal and the Cape were able to give their assent to the official statements of the Conference on controversial issues such as freedom of worship, mixed marriages and migratory labour, came as an unexpected surprise to the Archbishop who now believed that a new era of consultation and possible co-operation in many fields was being opened up.<sup>150</sup>

Once again his hopes proved unfounded. The D.R.C. delegates who had supported the official statement of the Conference were repudiated by their Churches and the findings of the Conference were rejected. What is more, the three Afrikaner Churches (the D.R.C. in the Cape and the Transvaal, and the NHK) which had attended Cottesloe withdrew their membership from the World Council of Churches (at New Delhi, 1961).<sup>151</sup>

de Blank was understandably bitter as he looked back on the Cottesloe Conference shortly before his death. He tells us that for the sake of ecumenical understanding, it was clear that the C.P.S.A. and the other Churches would comply with any proposals of the World Council of Churches which was prepared to "fall over backwards to win the confidence of the D.R.C." The findings of Conference "did not go nearly far enough to satisfy us or the other English-speaking Churches, but as they might represent a drawing together of the Churches we added our signatures to them." The reward for these concessions was the rejection of Cottesloe by every D.R.C. Synod in the country.<sup>152</sup>

Disillusioned as he was by the attitude of the D.R.C., de Blank was still prepared to hold out the olive branch for the sake of a united Christian front. In the August 1962 edition of Good Hope he mentioned that

while overseas he had received word that he had been elected President of the Christian Council of South Africa. It was "a great grief" that the Dutch Reformed Churches still stood outside the organisation, as they had done for twenty-five years. He prayed for the day when they would join it.

As de Blank's period of office drew to a close, he must have become increasingly sceptical of any chances of Church unanimity on racial issues in South Africa. Nevertheless, the Pope's encyclical on racial discrimination provided him with a final opportunity to call for a closing of the ranks:

"With such an unequivocal statement as the Pope's to strengthen their hands, surely all Christian people everywhere in this country, as throughout the world, will now work.....for the coming Prince of Peace into the hearts of all peoples of all colours everywhere."<sup>153</sup>

Two prominent churchmen in the C.P.S.A. have paid tribute to de Blank's efforts in the field of Church unity. The present Archbishop of Cape Town, the Most Rev. B.B. Burnett, has already been quoted in connection with the "new ecumenical initiatives" taken by de Blank.<sup>154</sup> Canon C.T. Wood views de Blank's strivings against the wider background of the total South African situation. In February 1964 he wrote that after Sharpeville and Langa de Blank was "the first to press for consultations with recognised Church leaders among the Africans. He saw clearly the weakness within South Africa of a divided Christian opinion and appealed to the World Council of Churches at Geneva for some way out of this tragic dilemma."

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#### (g) The Missionary Aim of the Church

##### 1. Apartheid and the Future of Christianity in Africa

de Blank stressed that apartheid was not an ideology that exercised an influence only on South Africa. It had a bearing upon the whole continent of Africa and the future of Christianity in Africa. During the nineteenth century the European Colonial powers vied with each other for the territory of Africa. This era was coming to an end as the former colonies became self-governing nations. The struggle, though, was by no means at an end for now an attempt was being made to capture the soul of Africa. Christianity here was by no means holding the field for it was being called in question throughout the continent - and the policy of apartheid was largely to blame:

"I must tell him (Dr Verwoerd) that the repressive apartheid legislation enacted by his government... has put the future of Christianity throughout Africa in the gravest jeopardy. Christianity would be in a far stronger position in Africa if apartheid had never been practised and never preached."<sup>156</sup>

Because of apartheid many of the millions in emerging Africa were equating what was happening in South Africa with the belief and practice of Christianity. At the Lambeth Conference in 1958 "we discovered to our horror that even the African bishops had not learnt to distinguish between the policies of the South African Government and the attitude of the South African Church. It took quite a long time to make the difference clear..."<sup>157</sup>

Since the equating of conditions in South Africa with Christianity was "the lie that has to be nailed at every opportunity", de Blank had told the people of Ghana that the Church had no part in the ideology of apartheid. For this he had been condemned by the Prime Minister, but as the future of Christianity was at stake, he was obliged to tell Dr Verwoerd "that if I am forced to choose between the future of the Christian Faith in Africa and the future of the Union of South Africa, the Christian cause must come first."<sup>158</sup>

The peaceful future of Africa, and especially of the White man in Africa, depended on the continued existence of Christianity on the continent since it was only as he embraced the Christian Faith that the African could learn to forgive and forget:

"If there is not that internal personal revolution that lies at the heart of Christianity within each or all of us, we may be certain that there will be revolutions of another kind. We have seen what happens in the Congo. The African has a long memory - and he has not forgotten the days of Leopold with all its bestial brutality. The answer must inevitably be violence unless he can learn to forgive, and forgiveness is a Christian quality."<sup>159</sup>

What de Blank is implying is that White South Africans, like White settlers elsewhere in Africa, had treated non-Whites in such a way as to rouse their thirst for revenge. Self-interest then, if nothing else, decreed that the White man should not by his actions turn the African from Christianity which stressed the necessity of a forgiving spirit. The onus rested on all who professed the Christian Faith:

"Are we doing what we can to create a situation where the Gospel can take root, before the machine-gun bullet takes charge?"<sup>160</sup>

There is thus a call for a practical expression of Christianity for the "future of Africa hangs on the obedience, the grace, the prayers, the witness of the humblest Christian. If all who name the name of Christ were Christian in word and deed and not in name alone, we should have nothing to fear."<sup>161</sup>

To those South Africans who remained unmoved by the Archbishop's appeal, which implicitly called for a rejection of apartheid, there was a serious warning: if Christianity were doomed in Africa, then South Africa

was similarly doomed; and further, if Christianity in Africa was doomed, the South African Government's policy of White supremacy and racial discrimination would be justly blamed as a primary cause of its destruction. But de Blank was assured of the indestructibility of Christianity and could therefore affirm with confidence that "the growth and increase of the Christian faith guarantees the doom of this diabolical apartheid and all its works."<sup>162</sup>

## 2. Islam

It was de Blank's view that South Africa was standing "at the cross-roads of missionary endeavour"<sup>163</sup> for here Christianity was coming into conflict with rival faiths it could not ignore. One such rival was Islam, the growth of which in North Africa at the expense of Christianity is stressed as a warning that something similar could be repeated in the South if the policy of apartheid were allowed to run its course.<sup>164</sup>

de Blank sees the birth of Islam, the one world religion to emerge after Christianity, "as a perfectly understandable judgement on its errors and weaknesses."<sup>165</sup> Writing in 1962 about the great number of Moslems in Africa (eighty-six million) as compared to the Christians (thirty-five million), he points out that this is a continent where Christianity has had a start of over six centuries. The "northern seaboard was once one of the fairest fields of Christendom but ..... since its extermination by the soldiers of the Prophet has never come to life again." He attributes the decline of Christianity in this field to the Church's becoming too respectable and to its pride and self-interest that led one section of the Church to appeal to the Moslems for help against another section - "and Mohammed was the only victor."<sup>166</sup>

For centuries, proceeds de Blank, Islam south of the Sahara lay dormant, leaving the field to the White Christian. During this period Christians, considered as such by the Africans, exploited the Africans who were regarded as inferior. Special stress is laid on the inhumanity of the slave trade although de Blank concedes that the Arabs were far from guiltless in this respect. No sooner was slavery abolished than the scramble for Africa began with the White man treating the Black man as if he were the lowest level of creation. Nor was the White settlers' attitude any better at the present. The result was that the African "feels in general terms that the White man stands for Christianity, and by his discrimination and superiority does not commend it."<sup>167</sup>

Islam is able to take advantage of this situation because it has never been the faith of the White man and so has never been associated with a policy of racial discrimination. The Moslem missionary being a Black or Coloured man himself can point to the fact that Christianity is the religion of the White man, and therefore if the African or Coloured wishes to remain loyal to his own people, he should embrace Islam.<sup>168</sup> By so doing they are strengthening the non-White forces of the world and working for true racial equality.<sup>169</sup>

de Blank feels that the Christian Church has no answer to this argument unless in practice it gives expression to the professed truth that all, both Black and White, are one in Christ Jesus.<sup>170</sup> This answer to Islam is not to be viewed so much in the light of "disagreement and disapproval as in fulfilment and completion".<sup>171</sup> This is in accordance with his view that if Islam had come before Christianity historically, the latter would have been built upon it.<sup>172</sup>

The South African Church Institute in London was given a practical example of the inroads Islam was making into Christian territory: in parts of Africa Friday was replacing Sunday as the traditional day of rest. From a Moslem point of view this was reasonable but "from the point of view of an unlettered Christian, such a change means to him that Islam is conquering and that Christianity is on the retreat".<sup>173</sup>

What de Blank was saying refers to the whole of Africa, south of the Sahara, though he obviously had South Africa and its policies uppermost in mind. When addressing the 1958 Diocesan Synod he is more specific.<sup>174</sup> After mentioning the resurgence of Islam throughout the Continent he bemoans the fact that "our own Mission to Moslems has all too often to report the loss of a Christian to the Moslem Faith usually for reasons of marriage. But the truth of the matter is that Islam not only preaches brotherhood but lives it". Having no colour bar, it can at times justly accuse the Christian world of preaching brotherhood but denying it in practice. "Nothing is more inimical to the spread of the Christian Faith than this inconsistency on our part, and the remedy is in our own hands".

### 3. Communism

de Blank saw Communism, together with Islam, as one of the greatest threats facing the Church. Just as Islam "without its colour prejudice is a judgement upon the Church which has failed to be true to the universality of the Gospel, so in effect is Communism a judgement upon the Church for

its acquiescence in social injustice and the exploitation of the weak."<sup>175</sup>

He is not blind to the ruthlessness of Communism or the fact that the promise of social justice which it holds out is a myth. Nevertheless for many it stood for human rights and dignity. It would never have arisen "If the Church had been true to the Gospel of the Incarnation, if it had proclaimed Christ's lordship over the whole of lie and not just a spiritual and disembodied part of it".<sup>176</sup> Once again the fundamental importance of the practical implications of the doctrine of the Incarnation is underlined.

Communism is then man's attempt to obtain by secular means what the Church failed to give him by its denial of the importance of the material world. It is not only a form of Soviet expansion but also an ideology, and as such it makes its claim for the soul of Africa.<sup>177</sup>

It was for the reason that he considered apartheid as being a denial of social justice, that he saw the policies of the South African Government as a sure way of promoting Communism. He told his first Diocesan Synod that "those who are most eloquent about this threat are strangely enough often those who by policies of oppression and injustice are themselves the most effective agents for the Communism they profess to reject."<sup>178</sup> South Africa is not specifically mentioned here but the message is clear when we bear in mind the anti-Communist legislation in South Africa and the fact that de Blank is talking to a South African audience.

In his Zambriskie Lecture<sup>179</sup> he said that a policy of White domination was the best means for ensuring that Black Africa would turn to Communism for its salvation since Communism, although of White origin, had never accepted or proclaimed a policy of discrimination based solely on colour.<sup>180</sup> He went much further in his penultimate diocesan letter:

"Those who ought to be imprisoned under the Suppression of Communism Act are not those who are striving for human dignity but those who make Communism attractive to thousands of our brethren by equating it in their minds with human decency and honour. This is the great betrayal of our times, and such hybris must bring its inevitable nemesis".<sup>181</sup>

Here de Blank enables us to contemplate the ironic situation of the South African Government's being found a transgressor of its own anti-Communist legislation. The above also contains the serious accusation that the Government has been criminal in its activities.

The South African Government's description of everything "which does not square with its racist segregationalist policies as communistic"

is called "incredible obtuseness"<sup>182</sup> and compared to the tactics of Hitler who used the same methods to attack those who opposed his "bestial policies". He pointed to the fact that Communist control of much of Central and Eastern Europe was the direct result of Hitler's policies.<sup>183</sup> South Africa was here being warned that as a result of her own racial policies much of Africa could likewise come under Communist domination. In his unpublished autobiography he states this more explicitly when drawing the same parallel:

"Any form of totalitarianism breeds Communism as a result. Adolf Hitler is the direct progenitor of East German Communism. And if Communism ever captures Southern Africa the Government (South African) will be the directly responsible and culpable agent."<sup>184</sup>

de Blank was also not happy with the South African Government's definition of Communism, since to him it was a convenient way of stigmatising opponents and diverting attention from the reality of the situation:

"Of course, your task is made easier if you can equate African aspirations with Communism - for Communism is a world-body and your true motives can be thus partially disguised or concealed. If you dub every African who asks for the full dignity of a human being as Communist, and if you do it often enough, a large number of people will in the end believe you, ...."<sup>185</sup>

He was thus grateful that at the Cottesloe Conference Dr Visser 't Hooft and Dr Bilheimer "condemned the official definitions of Communism as far as the South African Government was concerned. They were at great pains to point out that it was inevitable under any definition that simple people would come to admire those who were labelled Communist..... The stupidity of such a policy was underlined again and again."<sup>186</sup>

de Blank now takes his argument one step further: apartheid is not only a means of furthering the cause of Communism - it is a danger of equal proportions to Communism. Both pose a threat to the Christian Faith for the outworking of Christian doctrines are challenged by, among others, "totalitarian parties that believe either in the dictatorship of the proletariat or the dictatorship of race."<sup>187</sup>

In this comparison between apartheid and Communism, the former eventually emerges as the ideology worthy of the greater condemnation. He quotes with approval from the American Church Quarterly which shows that Communism is not the only menace. There is also the threat of "neo-fascist dangers from the radical right." (The context of the letter, together with

the heading 'Suppression of Communism', carrying an obvious allusion to South African legislation, indicates that South Africa is being placed in this category). However, "in mitigation of the Communist's guilt it can be said that although it has the bad taste to hate Christianity, it at least pays it the compliment of taking it seriously".<sup>188</sup> There is here the implied charge that the South African Government, for all its professions of being Christian, does not take its religion seriously.

Finally, while de Blank believes that the totalitarianism of the right as much as that of the left detracts from man's essential dignity, he feels that the right is more culpable because of its "greater cynicism".<sup>189</sup>

#### (h) Suffering and Triumph

Before coming to South Africa de Blank had written about the inevitable suffering that awaited the Christian who took his faith seriously.<sup>190</sup> From a knowledge of his own life before 1957 we can view any statements of his on persecution as largely hypothetical since in the British situation he does not seem to have met with any real opposition in the carrying out of his ministerial duties.

But in South Africa things would be different. The Dean of Cape Town, Tom Savage, had warned him that if he accepted the position, fines and imprisonment could await him.<sup>191</sup> No less a person than the Archbishop of Canterbury spoke of the task awaiting him as one "full of terrible difficulties".<sup>192</sup> In addition, he had paid a preliminary visit to South Africa, and this, together with the reports on conditions in the country appearing in the various media in Britain, gave him some impression of the struggle that lay ahead.

What provided de Blank with confidence, and this is what he tried to pass on to his fellow-Christians, was that there was a theological basis for Christian suffering. In his Enthronement Address he says:

"Again St John, in writing about love, warns us with these words: 'Marvel not if the world hate you' - because this love is something alien to the self-seeking spirit of unregenerate man. If you live in love you will certainly run foul of the world's greedy selfishness".<sup>193</sup>

de Blank pointed out that when Christ commissioned His disciples, he showed them His hands and His side. This visible reminder of His suffering was an indication that they could not depend on popular support and that their path would be hard and agonising.<sup>194</sup> This fellowship in

Christ's sufferings was meant to be productive:

"The privilege of God's minister is to have some share in Christ's sufferings so that Christ's saving love may break through the hardness of men's hearts so that through our sacrifice others may be saved."<sup>195</sup>

Perhaps de Blank here is expressing his confident expectation that through the "martyrdom"<sup>196</sup> of Geoffrey Clayton, the deportation of Ambrose Reeves and even the "calumny and contumely"<sup>197</sup> to which he had been subjected, South Africa would ultimately be saved from the policy of apartheid.

This view of suffering is elsewhere linked with the thought that through it man attains his full stature:

"We know that the way to glory must pass through the valley of suffering.....not because God likes to see His children suffer - but because He knows that man reaches his highest point of development when he voluntarily embraces suffering on behalf of another and to ease his burden."<sup>198</sup>

de Blank then saw that suffering lay ahead for himself if he were to break through the hardness of the authorities' hearts and ease the burden of those suffering under the yoke of apartheid. He and his fellow-clergy could identify themselves with Paul who wrote: "I think God has set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death, for we are made a spectacle to the world" (I Cor.4:9)<sup>199</sup>

The struggle against apartheid was nothing short of a holy battle which had to be fought to the end - even to the point of martyrdom. Dedicating the St George's Cathedral nave just a month before finally leaving the country, de Blank said that the Cathedral stood at the legislative heart of South Africa. In other words, it was in the centre of the struggle against un-Christian apartheid legislation. It, he continued, witnessed "to the fact that God had a cause to which all Christians must pledge themselves and that battle will never be disengaged till His will be done, whatever the cost in suffering, in hardship, in obloquy, ostracism or vituperation. Once you know God's will, you have no alternative, and should you die in battle, a martyr's crown awaits you."<sup>200</sup>

Nevertheless, when persecution finally came in the deportation of Ambrose Reeves, Bishop of Johannesburg, the Archbishop, in spite of his belief in the inevitability of Christian suffering, even on occasions at the hands of one's fellow-Christians, could not fail to be shocked that an avowed Christian country should entertain the thought of religious persecution. It was possible that the tribulation, distress, persecution,

peril and sword listed in the eighth chapter of Paul's letter to the Romans could follow, for "as it is written, for Thy sake we are killed all the day long".<sup>201</sup>

But at this lowest point de Blank moves towards an unexpected climax with a scriptural note of hope drawn from the same chapter: "'Nay in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us' because the city of which we are citizens first is an eternal city, whose builder and maker is God, and over whom the powers of this world have no authority or control. Beloved, I am persuaded that nothing, nothing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord".<sup>202</sup>

This Christian confidence in the future, no matter how dark the present, is the subject of his Easter messages which are sometimes heavily charged with overtones of conditions in South Africa. In April 1958, for example, only two months after his detailed attack on apartheid as revealed in the squalor and breaking up of families in Windermere, he wrote:

"However black the night, however apparently lifeless and hopeless the situation, the triumphant cry 'Christ is Risen' reverberates around the world, and everywhere from enslaved, despairing and tortured humanity comes the even louder echoing cry: 'Yea, verily He is risen'."<sup>203</sup>

Of greater significance is the Easter letter of 1960 during the State of Emergency which so deeply moved the Archbishop that he cancelled his proposed visit to the United States and Britain. That Christ rose "when wicked men had conspired to kill and get rid of Him for good, gives us the unwavering assurance that evil will not have the last word.....and so we take courage in spite of all the hardship we have to suffer and the hostility we have to encounter."<sup>204</sup>

Was de Blank hinting that the "wicked men" of Christ's time had their counterpart in the South Africa of 1960? and could the "evil" referred to be the policy which he had so often condemned in the strongest language?

The analogy between the suffering and the triumph of the Christian and the suffering and triumph of Christ is brought out in de Blank's Diocesan Letter of January 1960.<sup>205</sup> He has been speaking of the hostility the Christian is bound to incur in his opposition to current legislation, yet "the joy set before us is stronger to draw us than the Cross with all its pain to frighten us". The allusion to the Letter to the Hebrews 12:2 - "Looking unto Jesus.....who for the joy that was set before Him endured the Cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne

of God" - shows that de Blank felt that just as Christ was prepared to endure the pain of the Cross in order to experience the joy of redeeming man and of exaltation to God's right hand, so the Christian in South Africa was prepared to face whatever persecution came his way, knowing that ultimately he would triumph and enter into the joy of his Lord.

de Blank stresses that the Christian's hope is not a blind one but based on knowledge. The Israelites could have confidence in God because they looked back to a deliverance from Egypt. In like manner, the Christian is assured that the future is God's because Easter confirmed the victory of Calvary.<sup>206</sup>

The Eucharist, the significance of which formed such an essential part of his theological thinking, was a "foretaste and guarantee of final victory" for the Lord's death was proclaimed at this service "till He come".<sup>207</sup>

With his faith firmly rooted in scriptural teaching de Blank was confident that the enemy would not prevail. Even though the existence of the Christian Church in Africa seemed threatened by the policy of discrimination, his belief in the indestructibility of the Christian faith guaranteed "the doom of this diabolical apartheid and all its works".<sup>208</sup> He could therefore encourage his people, in spite of the deportation of a bishop of the Church,<sup>209</sup> to lift up their heads, for their redemption was drawing nigh. As the churches offered their service to God they could "assert without fear: 'If God be for us, who can be against us?' And then we can pray in all confidence and vigour: 'Let God arise, and let His enemies be scattered'."<sup>210</sup>

#### (i) The Equality of All Before God

The scriptural basis for de Blank's belief in the equality of all men is Genesis 1:26 : "And God said, Let us make man in our image". Not only does this give man a unique status as a child of God but it also establishes his relationship with his fellow-man. "His relationship to God is equivalent to mine. What I am in the sight of God, so is he. I am not born with, nor on any grounds can I claim, a given superiority or domination."<sup>211</sup>

The death of Christ conveys the identical message:

"Every person is invested with a divine dignity, for every man is a brother for whom Christ died, and every person (such is his worth before God) can say as Saint Paul said: 'the Son of God loved me and gave Himself for me'."<sup>212</sup>

Our attention is also drawn to the collect for the Second Sunday after Christmas where reference is made to our being "made partakers of the divine nature" (an allusion to 2 Peter 1:4). From this the conclusion is drawn that since all the redeemed are partakers of the divine nature, "we live blasphemously if by any action or disrespect we deny this potential divinity to any child of man".<sup>213</sup> Thus man's equality with man is not based solely on the creation of man in the image of God but also on his recreation in that same image in Christ.

What de Blank was affirming had already been set down by the Bishops of the Church of the Province in 1930:

"God is the Father of all: man was made in the image and 'after the likeness' of God: Christ came to redeem all men, and to make them the sons of God and heirs of eternal life: He was ever the friend of the poor, the outcast and the oppressed. Therefore everyman - of whatever race or colour - is of infinite worth in the sight of God".<sup>214</sup>

The Bishops referred to a denial of this truth as a rejection of the Gospel and the gravest presumption:<sup>215</sup> de Blank pronounced it simply - blasphemy.<sup>216</sup>

This scriptural teaching that man is made in the image of God and is potentially a partaker of the divine nature is not merely a matter for theological discussion since "those who have the Christian hope will ever strive for the practical and social acceptance of the theological truth that man is made by God, destined for God - and will flower into perfection through fellowship with God."<sup>217</sup>

The practical application of this same truth is also emphasised elsewhere. After using the biblical verse: "He has made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on the face of the earth" (Act 17:26), de Blank adds: "It is in such a belief that all our conduct must be determined and performed".<sup>218</sup>

The operation of this doctrine in the Anglican Church is given as the reason why the non-Whites of South Africa are more enthusiastic in their church-going than the Whites. Of the Africans he writes:

"The Church stands at the centre of their lives. Often oppressed and underpaid at work, they come alive in the atmosphere of the Church. Here at least they are recognized as individuals, as unique children of God, and here their lives, their fears and wishes have meaning and are considered".<sup>219</sup>

The notion of racial purity with its connotation of superiority stands at the heart of apartheid. This concept de Blank could not tolerate. Again he alluded to Acts 17:26 - God had made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on the face of the earth. It was only in South Africa, he was to say to an American audience, that he had heard this text used as an argument for differentiation rather than unity.<sup>220</sup>

At his Enthronement he reminded his South African congregation that blood and birth should not be thought of in human terms. This ruled out all conceit and arrogance for "the only blood we dare to plead is the precious Blood of Christ, the only birth in which we place our trust is that rebirth by water and Spirit into the Kingdom of God".<sup>221</sup>

In similar vein he told the Episcopal Society for Cultural and Racial Unity that man's relationship to God was more a matter of rebirth than an accident of birth: "He is counted worthy not because of his racial blood but because of the redeeming blood of Christ".<sup>222</sup>

#### (j) Note on Apartheid and Moral Law

de Blank had made it quite clear that he opposed apartheid on theological grounds. But the moral law also had to be taken into account; it "is written into the Universe as surely as scientific laws such as.... gravity or electricity and which men as surely break at their peril".<sup>223</sup>

Under this moral law apartheid stood condemned:

"We have to say.....with Mr Gladstone that nothing which is morally wrong can be politically right. And any policy which is based on racial discrimination in which free voting rights are limited to the Whites is morally wrong and politically suicidal".<sup>224</sup>

de Blank drew encouragement from the Pope's encyclical which said that racial discrimination was not only contrary to the Gospel but also to natural law: "How heartening to read so strong a declaration that the moral law is absolute and stands supreme over the relative laws of states."<sup>225</sup>

de Blank's appeal to moral law should be viewed as an attempt to enlist the support of all men in his struggle against apartheid. Theological principles could affectively be brought to the attention of Christians and Jews, but those not committed to one of these Faiths had to be drawn into the ranks of the opposition as well.

(iv) Theological Objections to Two Practical Applications to Apartheid(a) Migratory Labour

It was the effects, in human terms, of the system of migratory labour which led to the initial confrontation between de Blank and the South African Government.<sup>226</sup> It is not surprising then that the Archbishop should refer so often and so bitterly to his visit to Windermere. It was not only the "ghastly squalor" of the living conditions but the fact that "the family unit linked by love and service, was being taken from them in a ruthless application of the Native Laws Amendment Acts as man and wife, and parent and children were pitilessly separated."<sup>227</sup> He was aware that the men had illegally brought their wives and children to live with them. This infringement of the law he condoned for "any decent and sensible husband would have done the same."<sup>228</sup>

de Blank defended his right to speak out on this matter not "on political theory but on theological principle".<sup>229</sup> When talking on the subject of migrant labour (de Blank is speaking in general terms but the language used and the situation he is describing indicate quite clearly that he has the Windermere incident uppermost in his mind) he prefaced his remarks with an appeal to the Gospel of the Incarnation which made a man's physical and material conditions as much a Christian concern as his spiritual condition.<sup>230</sup>

Having established the theological basis for his involvement in this matter, he becomes more specific. Not only were families being separated but even if a man chose to return to the Reserves in order to remain with his wife and family, he would soon have to leave in search of employment elsewhere since there was little likelihood of his finding a job in the Reserves; therefore whatever course a man chose, the result was the same - separation from his family.<sup>231</sup> Here an important theological principle was at stake:

"The Church believes that marriage is an estate constituted by God Himself. It has a place not only in Christian law but in natural law".<sup>232</sup>

A family was therefore not to be broken up for reasons that could not be justified, and quite obviously the reasons given by the authorities, armed with the necessary legislation, were not, in de Blank's view, justifiable, for how could a Christian "subscribe to a migratory system of labour which is guaranteed to wreck home life and which by its nature encourages promiscuity".<sup>233</sup> He contrasts this with conditions on the Copper Belt in Northern Rhodesia and the tea plantations of Ceylon where migratory labourers were encouraged to bring their families with them.<sup>234</sup>

Because the issue was clear-cut from a theological point of view, battle had to be joined:

"Christian people everywhere are bound by virtue of their faith to fight the evils of a migrant labour force. We can no longer tolerate a state of affairs where family units are deliberately broken up by Government decree. The family is the true Christian unit - and not only Christian for it is the natural biological unit - and anybody that of set purpose wrecks the family is fighting against God." <sup>235</sup>

de Blank now goes even further. He has already called on Christians to resist the "evils of a migrant labour force". But this is not sufficient: Because "the sanctity of the family is as fundamental to Christian obedience as resistance to the infamous Church clause", Christians and all men of goodwill had "to resist the enemies of God's law by every legitimate means". <sup>236</sup>

Here we have an example of de Blank's pursuing an issue to its logical conclusion, no matter what the result: if the migrant labour system in South Africa is contrary to God's law, then those who seek to perpetuate the system are fighting against God. In doing so they are His enemies, and must be opposed by all Christian men. de Blank, though, does soften the impact of his final thrust with the qualification, "by every legitimate means".

One feels that de Blank could have made his point as forcefully by pointing out the theological objections to the migrant labour system without going as far as to label the South African Government the "enemies of God's law". This type of phraseology tended to divert attention from the main issue which he was desperately trying to highlight, and to focus attention on personalities who were only too ready to rejoin with equally hard-hitting language. It also made any reconciliation, if such reconciliation were possible, between the opposing groups out of the question.

Because the system of migrant labour was not only un-Christian but also inhuman and contrary to the moral law - "To demand a man's labour without allowing him to have his family with him is immoral and indecent" <sup>237</sup> - de Blank felt justified in making an appeal to all men, both Christian and otherwise:

"Such a policy is damnable. Christians must resist it by reason of their Christian faith.....furthermore I believe that there are hundreds of people who are not Christians who have been brought up in the humanities who will stand shoulder to shoulder with us in our determination to slay the ungainly Goliath of migratory labour that has encumbered our fair land for so long." <sup>238</sup>

The theological argument against this system as practised in South Africa was used to great effect in de Blank's sermon, "Year of Jubilee", in commemoration of fifty years of the Union of South Africa. He started by pointing to the regulations governing the Year of Jubilee laid down in Leviticus, chapter 25: "And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout the land to all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubilee unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man to his family". His comment was:

"Instead of every man returning to his family, we still continue a system of residential rules and regulations that deliberately breaks up families, that keeps man from wife and parents from children."<sup>239</sup>

de Blank, after condemning the migrant labour system in South Africa, found theological support for the stand he had taken when he attended the Lambeth Conference six months after his initial attack on the Government. From the committee dealing with "The Family in Contemporary Society" came a resolution which was "enthusiastically endorsed" :

"The Conference, recognising the family as the God-given unit of human life and society, condemns those systems of migratory labour that break up family life by enforcing the unjustified residential separation of man and wife, or of parents and children".<sup>240</sup>

At Cottesloe, eighteen months later, de Blank received yet further encouragement from the findings of the Conference:

"We call attention once again to the disintegrating effects of migrant labour on African life. No stable society is possible unless the cardinal importance of family life is recognised, and from the Christian standpoint, it is imperative that the integrity of the family be safeguarded".<sup>241</sup>

de Blank could now feel that he was not a lone voice crying in the South African wilderness, but that a large body of Christian opinion stood behind him as he continued the fight against this manifestation of the apartheid policy.

#### (b) Education

As regards education, crucial theological principles were involved: all men are of equal worth in the eyes of God; he has made of one blood all nations to dwell on the face of the earth, and man is not redeemed by his social upbringing but by the blood of Christ.<sup>242</sup> This put the onus on the authorities to give everyone the opportunity of developing as far as his potential and capacity permitted. But the Government, having taken Bantu

education out of the hands of the Missions and having recently closed White universities to the Africans, were providing education for the Africans in their own schools and colleges - "but all this education.....will be held at a lower level of academic attainment - so that White supremacy will not be threatened".<sup>243</sup>

de Blank, who saw the Bantu Education Act as "one of the heaviest blows directed against the Church",<sup>244</sup> told a British audience in 1965 that the State's taking over of education from the Missions would not be "so shocking, were it not for the fact that this means that a curriculum has been introduced which was designed to educate Africans up to a position where they would recognise their place in the structure of South Africa, they would never regard themselves as equal to the Whites, but always regard themselves on a lower level".<sup>245</sup>

In the same address he said that the new Tribal Colleges in no way resembled universities since free discussion was not permitted, training was not on the level of the White universities and by their very constitution the whole conception of what a university stood for was being denied.<sup>246</sup>

de Blank frankly conceded that the Bantu Education Act had brought more schooling to Africans than the Missions or other voluntary agencies could ever provide. For this they were worthy of credit but "on the debit side is the damnable theory that the Black child must not be given the same kind of education as the White child as this would give him ideas above his station. He is preternaturally destined to be the inferior of his White brother and therefore the education he receives must suit and provide for his inferior status".<sup>247</sup> The Black universities into which the African was being forced not only lacked academic freedom but did not have the international recognition of the ones now reserved exclusively for Whites.

However, theological principle was not the only consideration in this vital subject of education. It was true that the rich talents of mind and spirit which God had implanted in man should be fulfilled by all. To deny one's fellow-man the opportunity of achieving this purpose was murder. Yet in case we are unmoved by the enormity of thwarting a divine purpose, de Blank makes an appeal to blatant self-interest. The denial of full educational opportunities to one's fellow-man is suicide:

"If civilization is to survive, then education at its best must be available to all who can use it. Without the humanities inherent in civilization, the jungle all too quickly wins back what it had so hardly lost."<sup>248</sup>

The appeal to self-interest coupled with an appeal to theological principle is in line with what he had written in May 1959: <sup>249</sup> "He (the true African patriot) will reject any policy of exclusion, knowing not only on the basis of his Christian faith but on the basis of naked self-interest that such a policy will undoubtedly bring disaster".

The African had been forced into an educational straight-jacket, but what about the White population? They were also faced with a threat - that of Christian National Education. <sup>250</sup> de Blank felt that, in the light of this, it was necessary to point out "that any proposals dealing with the basic principles of education ought always to be scrutinised in the light of the Christian view of man". <sup>251</sup> The basis of this view was that all men had been created in the image of God. But man, given the power of free choice, "has become self-centred and only too easily plans his life to further his own selfish purposes and that of his own family, nation or race, without regard to the wider needs of the world in which he lives". <sup>252</sup> It was from this ego-centricity that God had rescued man.

Educational policies should flow from this basic teaching about man, the aim being to strengthen the character and develop the intelligence and personality of children so that they may live freely and responsibly as God's children individually and socially:

"any educational policy that seeks to educate children only for the benefit of the state puts the city above the citizen, just as the education that is concerned only with the development of the individual falls into the error of assuming that human beings are self-sufficient". <sup>253</sup>

It followed that the only education which the Anglican Church could support was one which gave full value to the significance of human beings and the necessity for them to live in community.

Anglican parents were called upon "to resist any attempt to make education subserve any ulterior purpose. We want freedom for our children not slavery". <sup>254</sup> These children had to become acquainted with the best in thought and literature through familiarity with the treasures and heritage of all nations. On behalf of the Church he re-affirmed the Lambeth resolution of 1948 "that education should be more than a training for livelihood or even for citizenship. It should be based upon the fact that every child is a child of God created by God for citizenship in heaven as well as on earth". <sup>255</sup>

Although de Blank was outlining his theological argument against the Government's policy of Christian National Education which, in his view,

put the State above the citizen, he was not slow in realising that his own house had to be put in order. In the following passage there is the implication that Anglican Church Schools have not always been true to the principles he has clearly spelt out above:

"And as there will be neither Jew nor Gentile in heaven, neither Black nor White, it would be wise if we took our heavenly citizenship more seriously here and now. Schools which call themselves Church Schools are in fact no Church Schools at all but merely private schools unless they consistently uphold the principles of worship, fellowship and service".<sup>256</sup>

As parents would lose the right of sending their children to a school that was obedient to the Church's teaching once the State controlled all schools and reduced education to a single pattern, they should strive to prevent the closure of the remaining Church schools and generously support all efforts being made to extend a Church school education to all sections of the community.

It was on this issue - the opening of the Anglican Church Schools to non-Whites - that the purely theological was called upon to meet the challenge of the practical. Eric Louw, the Minister of External Affairs, reacting strongly in the House of Assembly to de Blank's Diocesan Letter (February 1958), said that since separation offended the conscience of the Archbishop, he hoped that White and non-White paying pupils would be admitted to schools such as St George's and Bishop's (Anglican Church Schools in the Cape Peninsula). This would be a test of the sincerity of the statement made by the Archbishop.<sup>257</sup>

In similar vein, Mr B. Coetze (National Party) taking up de Blank's threat to withhold episcopal ministrations from congregations practising apartheid, challenged him to say whether he would refuse to administer the sacrament to the school behind his church (St George's Grammar School).<sup>258</sup> de Blank's immediate reply to Mr Louw was that he doubted whether the Bantu Education Act would allow non-European pupils to enter White schools. He nevertheless looked forward to the time when public opinion and the laws of the country made entry to "our great schools dependent on ability and not colour".<sup>259</sup>

In the midst of the general uproar caused by this pronouncement, following so swiftly on his outspoken condemnation of apartheid in Good Hope, the Argus leader writer noted the theological basis of his statements. He felt that the Archbishop's plea for the removal of legislation barring the admission of non-Whites to Anglican schools and his denunciation of

apartheid as un-Christian could not have been more unfortunately timed (the General Election was to be held later in 1958) but "from a Christian and theological standpoint it is easy to see that he could do no other".<sup>260</sup>

At the Diocesan Synod held in December 1958 there were two resolutions dealing with this subject, one urging Anglican Church Schools to make provision for children of other than White parents, and the other recommending the establishment of a new multi-racial school. Legal opinion, however, made it quite clear that the relevant sections of the Group Areas Act, the Bantu Education Act and the Urban Areas Act rendered it highly unlikely that non-White children would be permitted to attend a White school.<sup>261</sup>

In spite of this almost impenetrable difficulty de Blank did not leave the matter without a further statement of his theological viewpoint:

"The Church looks forward to the day when a change of heart or a change of Government will make it possible for us to implement our fundamental Christian beliefs in any educational establishments associated with the Church".<sup>262</sup>

(v) Confrontation by Analogy : Apartheid and Nazi Germany

In order to accentuate his abhorrence of apartheid de Blank drew parallels between the contemporary South African situation and Nazi Germany. He was here wielding a powerful psychological weapon: he knew that Hitler and his followers stood condemned in the judgement of all civilised men, and so the coupling of the South African Government with the Nazi regime was an effective means of discrediting it.

Baasskap, which to de Blank was a more accurate description of Government policy than apartheid, is explained as follows:

"this was almost exactly Hitler's conception of the so-called Aryan people being the natural herrenvolk in Germany, and the idea was that the Whites of South Africa were the master race and God's chosen people at the southern end of the Continent, whose natural superiority to those of other races must be preserved at all costs".<sup>263</sup>

In an article written for Look de Blank wrote in a similar vein. Speaking of Mr Hans Strydom whom he calls the architect of Baasskap, he has this to say:

"He maintained that all legislation must bear the 'boss-ship' of the White Man. He was in a class by himself. What the Aryan was to Hitler's Germany,

"that the White man was to Strydom's South Africa. In both the anti-Christian idea of a 'herrenvolk' was proclaimed".<sup>264</sup>

de Blank maintained that the most vocal supporters of this concept of racial purity and White supremacy were those whose own background was suspect, just as in Germany "none.....were so anxious to prove their pure Aryan blood, none were so anti-Semitic in thought, word and deed, than those who felt that a Jewish skeleton hung in a not too distant ancestral cupboard".<sup>265</sup>

Having shown Strydom's indebtedness to the ideas of Hitler in the formulation of his 'baasskap' principle, de Blank turns to his successor, Dr Verwoerd. Although he says that it is hard to trace the source of his theories, he leaves us in no doubt as to what his own conclusion is:

"In the war, as is well-known, his sympathies lay openly with Hitler, and he has allowed the irrational racial theories of the Nazis with a similar ghetto mentality to sway his thinking and his practice."<sup>266</sup>

de Blank, however, draws a distinction between the South African and the German situation, and it is a distinction which makes the South African one appear the more sinister: in Hitler's day opponents of the regime knew they had the whole Christian world on their side; further, there was no doubt as to whom the enemy was since "no one mistook the Nazi wolf for a believing sheep".<sup>267</sup> Yet in South Africa the Government whose apartheid policy was, in de Blank's view, almost inseparable from Hitler's racial theories, consisted for the most part of God-fearing men, and their policy was officially endorsed and approved by the Dutch Reformed Churches to which they belonged.<sup>268</sup>

de Blank is here showing that while Hitler and his henchmen could never be mistaken for Christians, those who revealed similar characteristics in South Africa were posing as such, and thus the un-Christian nature of their policies was being concealed. That this is a correct reading of his thoughts emerges from a quotation he made from the American Church Quarterly about the neo-fascist dangers threatening Christianity from the radical right:

"The tendency of the radical right.....is neither to deny nor even publicly to doubt Christianity, but rather to use it as something instrumental to its own secular and anti-intellectual purposes. If the left wing wants to destroy the faith, the right wing wants to embezzle it and convert its wholesome and sanctifying energies to its own unholy uses".<sup>269</sup>

In his first letter (November 1958)<sup>270</sup> after returning from his controversial visit to the United States and Britain, de Blank referred to the apparently secure position of the Nationalist Government after their recent election victory. This was likely to "make many faint hearts who formerly professed liberal opinions turn tail and flee for shelter into silence, servility or even docility". Yet he was convinced that the Church would remain firm, and added a final word of encouragement: "The Hitler Youth of Nazi Germany used to love to sing and yell: the future is ours. They know better now. The future belongs to God".

de Blank is here indicating that, as in the case of the Hitler Youth, the confidence, or rather arrogance ("sing and yell") of the present regime is destined to be proved groundless. The antithesis in the last two sentences leaves the reader to draw the conclusion: youthful Nazi hopes were frustrated because God who controls the future took action against Germany. Those who are firmly in control in South Africa can expect a similar divine judgement. de Blank was always confident that the stand taken by the Anglican Church in the country would ultimately be vindicated in the course of South African history.

The Archbishop also detected, as we have seen,<sup>271</sup> a similarity between the South African Government and Hitler in their attitude towards Communism. With reference to the opponents of official policy, he writes:

"It is easy (and outworn) to dismiss all such critics as Communists or communist inspired. This was the technique used by Hitler in his day to designate all those who withheld his bestial policies; ..... We know now that the surrender of much of Central and Eastern Europe to Communism was the direct result of Hitler's policies. He fathered the Communism he professed to deplore".<sup>272</sup>

This carries a warning for the South African authorities that, like Hitler, they by their constant attacks on Communists, were making heroes of those thus designated, and, in so doing, were promoting the very evil they wanted to wipe out. There is also the implication that these tactics are employed to divert attention from some evil in official policy. In this manner Hitler's 'bestial policies' and apartheid are equated in the minds of the reader.

de Blank, in accusing those who attacked their opponents by using labels which carried unpleasant connotations, comes very close to employing the same tactics, for, although he does not actually call the members of the Nationalist Government Nazis, his linking of the two is perhaps an even more subtle form of stigmatisation.

When speaking of the complexity of the South African situation in comparison with the clear-cut issues at stake in Hitler's Germany, de Blank added parenthetically that there "none, thank God, have yet been called to suffer as some of those Christian heroes of Nazi Germany".<sup>273</sup> But with the deportation of Ambrose Reeves he saw the dawn of a similar situation. We quote his words once again:<sup>274</sup>

"Who could have thought that this country would entertain the thought of religious persecution - this country which claims to be God-fearing, which claims to be a Christian country? It is unbelievable that we should wake up one morning and rub our eyes to find that it is true, as the Christians of Germany one day discovered that Hitler was in power".<sup>275</sup>

de Blank's visit to Windermere on Christmas Eve 1957 can be viewed as a traumatic experience which lingered with him even after he had left the country. When recollecting this incident as a Canon of Westminster Abbey, he dwells upon the "horror"<sup>276</sup> of it, drawing upon a Nazi German parallel to emphasise what to him was inhumanity on the part of the Government. African men were being separated from their families "rather as Jews had been snatched from their families in the evil days of the Hitler regime".<sup>277</sup> The ignorance of White South Africans of this and other official acts causing suffering to non-White is compared to the ignorance of the Germans of the cruelties being perpetrated in the concentration camps.<sup>278</sup>

This method of highlighting conditions at Windermere, calling to mind the persecution of the Jews with its attendant atrocities, illustrates not only de Blank's hatred for apartheid but also a certain lack of judgement in his choice of similes. It seems unreasonable to compare the application of apartheid, whatever suffering it occasioned for those affected by it, with the ruthless persecution and attempted extermination of a race.

de Blank also turns to the example of Hitler when replying to those who wish to stress the good work being done by the Government for the non-Whites. His answer is simply:

"We do not dispute these things - we do not question the industrial development of Soviet Russia; we know that Mussolini built wonderful roads in Italy, and Hitler did magnificent construction work in Germany".<sup>279</sup>

And while conceding that it is right that Cape Town should want to see the end of the squalor and the shanty homes of Windermere, he feels that the end cannot justify the inhuman means being employed. He points, by way of example, to the transformation of the East End of London as a

result of the Nazi 'blitz' and asks:

"Does that mean that we thank God for Hitler because he was instrumental in getting rid of London's slums?"<sup>280</sup>

(vi) Final Judgement : Apartheid-Satanic and a Source of Corruption

de Blank used every verbal means possible to bring home to people the hatred he felt for the doctrine of apartheid. It was heresy, sub-Christian, anti-Christian, on a par with adultery, ungodly and a damnable policy. He did not stop there: if all this were true, then the real author of apartheid was none other than Satan himself. Sometimes he leaves his audience to draw the conclusion for themselves. For example, he speaks of "Apartheid and all its works",<sup>281</sup> knowing that most of his readers were familiar with the expression, "the devil and all his works"<sup>282</sup> and therefore would not fail to detect an identification of apartheid with the devil. In a less subtle manner, he speaks of apartheid and the unfruitful works of darkness in the same breath.<sup>283</sup>

At times he is more specific. In his diocesan letter<sup>284</sup> of August 1959 apartheid is called "diabolical" while in his unpublished autobiography he terms it "filthy, sinful and satanic".<sup>285</sup> The system of migratory labour which he saw in all its "horror" at Windermere is "a devilish policy which breaks up homes",<sup>286</sup> Finally, when the Pope had published his encyclical condemning racial discrimination as being contrary to natural law, de Blank called upon all Christians to work together to "exorcise the demons of racialism (which, alas! are legion in name and number)....."<sup>287</sup>

Since de Blank viewed apartheid as satanic, it is not surprising that those who criticised his attack on this policy should be seen as being energised by Satan. His visit to America in 1958 met with widespread censure not only in Nationalist circles but also among his own Church members. de Blank attributes this hostile reaction to the machinations of the devil who "by downright lies, by venomous insinuations, by deliberate omissions and by subtle half-truths.....went about his dirty work - sometimes using willing servants, sometimes corrupting those who meant no harm, often disguised (in conformity with innumerable precedents) as an angel of light..... The devil and his minions are no fools....." They were able to achieve their purpose even with some men of goodwill. "But that again is according to precedent: even the very elect may sometimes be deceived".<sup>288</sup>

The last three sentences contain an explanation (based on scripture) which no doubt many were calling for, as to why non-Anglican Church leaders

and Anglican laymen of the stature of Harry Lawrence,<sup>289</sup> a member of parliament and former cabinet minister in the Smuts Government, had taken the Archbishop to task for his statements overseas; if scripture clearly stated that the devil could deceive the very elect, then it was not surprising that men of répute should become unwilling tools in his hands.

de Blank is seldom content with half-measures. People might remain unmoved by his description of apartheid as sinful and satanic, but in order that we might feel uncomfortable in its presence, he associates it with corruption and defilement.

The application of apartheid legislation at Windermere provoked him to say:

"Even the slightest smell of compulsory apartheid must be removed from our churches. Man cannot touch pitch without being defiled..... We dare not let ourselves be contaminated by such a social poison".<sup>290</sup>

The corruption of the Whites by their apartheid policies was one of the saddest yet most obvious features of South African life - "It can be seen in their faces as well as heard in their official utterances".<sup>291</sup>

de Blank realised that even members of his own Church "had been corrupted by the prevailing spirit of the land". This had led them "to think of their Church in 'White' terms instead of in terms of the universal Church of Christ....."<sup>292</sup>

References to Chapter 6:

1. Out of Africa, p109
2. Idem.
3. Idem.
4. Six Years Hard, p32
5. Sermon on Racial Problems of South Africa delivered in All Saints, Margaret Street, London, 4th October 1965. YPP, Reel 4, p5
6. 25th September 1959. YPP, Reel 2, p7
7. 26th September 1959
8. Article written for the magazine Look but which was apparently not published. YPP, Reel 4, p9
9. Reference 4.
10. Racial Problems of South Africa, p4
11. He was addressing an American audience in New York
12. Racial Problems of South Africa, p2
13. cf. p187
14. Good Hope, August 1959
15. Charge to Provincial Synod 1960, p10
16. Out of Africa, p105
17. Ibid. p106
18. Look, p7
19. Out of Africa, p57
20. Ibid. pp57,58
21. Six Years Hard, p27
22. Ibid. p95
23. Undated MS. YPP, Reel 4, p4
24. cf. James 2:14-26
25. Undated Sermon on Matt.21:9. YPP, Reel 4, pp1,2
26. Out of Africa, p66
27. Idem.
28. Six Years Hard, p42
29. Out of Africa, p145
30. cf. pp140-141
31. Quoted in Good Hope, June 1963
32. Cape Argus, 9th November 1963
33. Out of Africa, p66
34. Ibid. p106
35. Ibid. p135
36. Undated Sermon on John 12:21, p10
37. Six Years Hard, p31
38. Charge to Diocesan Synod 1958, p12

39. Six Years Hard, p100
40. Out of Africa, p113
41. Good Hope, January 1962
42. Robert Waley Cohen Memorial Lecture 1964  
INTER-RACE RELATIONSHIPS  
Council of Christians and Jews, London, (no year of publication given) p9
43. cf. p77
44. Undated Sermon on Matt.6:33. YPP, Reel 4, p4
45. Good Hope, May 1963
46. Six Years Hard, p81
47. This section has been placed first - it was section (iv) in Chapter 5 - because of its importance to an understanding of the Confrontation
48. Chapter 3, p36
49. Ibid. pp41,42
50. Ibid. p42
51. Ibid. p42
52. Ibid. p44
53. Ibid. p46
54. Ibid. p49
55. Out of Africa, p25
56. Ibid. pp47,48
57. Charge to Diocesan Synod, 1958, p5
58. Good Hope, March 1958
59. Out of Africa, p24
60. Idem.
61. Idem.
62. Out of Africa, p25
63. The following quotations are taken from Out of Africa, pp26,27
64. Quoted in The Cape Times, 26th February 1958
65. Out of Africa, p26. cf. p73 for this criticism in reverse
66. cf. pp78 and 205
67. Where We Stand, p14
68. Charge to Diocesan Synod, 1958, p5
69. Good Hope, May 1963. Encyclical: pacem in terris
70. op. cit. p30
71. I am aware that this is by no means a comprehensive treatment of a subject - the respective demands of Caesar and Christ - upon which so much has been written
72. The Gospel According to St Mark, (Macmillan, Trowbridge and London, 1966), p478
73. Ibid. p480

74. F.V. Filson: A Commentary on the Gospel According to St Matthew, (Adam and Charles Black, London, 1960), p235
75. The Gospel According to St Matthew, (Oxford University Press, London, 1975), pp182,183
76. Cape Times, 1st March 1958
77. The Argus, 25th May 1957
78. cf. p62
79. In Address and Charges, Section IV
80. cf. pp71,72
81. House of Assembly Debates, vol.96, pp578,579; Cape Argus, 27th January 1958
82. e.g. Members of Christ, pp24-27
83. In Address and Charges
84. This passage has been deliberately repeated because of its importance to the subject
85. Good Hope, June 1958
86. cf. pp77-79
87. Good Hope, November 1958
88. In Address and Charges
89. Translated by John Allen (Griffin, London, 1844)
90. A. Dakin: Calvinism, (Duckworth, London, 1940), pp130,131
91. Where We Stand, pp8,9
92. cf. reaction to his trip abroad in 1958, pp77-79
93. In Good Hope
94. cf. pp128,129
95. Notes On Early Years. YPP, Reel 4
96. Good Hope, March 1958
97. Charge to Diocesan Synod 1958, p5
98. Six Years Hard, p97
99. Out of Africa, p46
100. Undated Sermon based on four years' experience in South Africa. YPP, Reel 4, p4
101. Robert Waley Cohen Memorial Lecture, p15
102. Six Years Hard, p97
103. Notes On Early Years. YPP, Reel 4, p5
104. cf. p129
105. Six Years Hard, pp97,98
106. Undated Sermon on John 11:56. YPP, Reel 4, p5
107. Out of Africa, p47
108. Good Hope, September 1963
109. Charge to Diocesan Synod 1958, p12
110. Six Years Hard, p82
111. Good Hope, August 1960

- 112. Charge to Diocesan Synod 1961, Section VI
- 113. Good Hope, February 1960
- 114. Good Hope, May 1959
- 115. In Address and Charges 1957-1960, Section V
- 116. cf. p62
- 117. Good Hope, February 1958
- 118. cf. p80
- 119. cf. p130
- 120. In Address and Charges 1957-1950, Section III
- 121. Out of Africa, p15
- 122. Idem.
- 123. Idem.
- 124. Idem.
- 125. Ibid. p128
- 126. Ibid. p18
- 127. Ibid. pp20,21
- 128. Ibid. p22
- 129. Ibid. p29
- 130. Ibid. p30
- 131. MBJ, p222
- 132. Out of Africa, p45
- 133. Bohlen Lectures delivered in Philadelphia, U.S.A. in May 1961
- 134. Out of Africa, p37
- 135. MBJ, pp264,265
- 136. Six Years Hard, p71
- 137. Good Hope, February 1958
- 138. Six Years Hard, pp68,69
- 139. B.B. Burnett, now Archbishop of Cape Town, quoted in MBJ, p286
- 140. cf. pp108,109
- 141. Good Hope, February 1961
- 142. Good Hope, September 1960
- 143. cf. pp42,132,133, etc.
- 144. Out of Africa, p18
- 145. Ibid. p117
- 146. cf. Chapter 4 reference 109
- 147. cf. pp85,86
- 148. Charge to Diocesan Synod 1959, p10
- 149. Cape Times, 12th April 1960
- 150. cf. p109
- 151. Out of Africa, p121
- 152. Six Years Hard, pp103,104

153. Good Hope, May 1963
154. cf. p162
155. Good Hope
156. Good Hope, August 1959
157. Six Years Hard, p161
158. Good Hope, August 1959
159. Sermon on Acts 4:12. YPP, Reel 4, p5
160. Racial Problems of South Africa, p12
161. Undated Sermon on Rom.8:19. YPP, Reel 4, p7
162. Good Hope, August 1959
163. Out of Africa, p58
164. Idem.
165. Sermon on John 12:21, p2
166. Undated Sermon on Acts 2:11. YPP, Reel 4, p2
167. Out of Africa, pp59,60
168. Idem.
169. Undated Sermon on John 12:21, p3
170. Out of Africa, p59
171. Undated Sermon on John 12:21, p2
172. Ibid. p3
173. Cape Argus, 11th May 1961
174. In Address and Charges 1957-1960, p7
175. Out of Africa, p61
176. Idem.
177. Out of Africa, pp61,62
178. Charge to Diocesan Synod 1958, p11
179. Delivered at Alexandria, Virginia, U.S.A., October 1961
180. Out of Africa, p62
181. Good Hope, November 1963
182. Sermon on John 12:21, p1
183. Good Hope, February 1959
184. Six Years Hard, p123
185. Out of Africa, p109
186. Good Hope, February 1961
187. Good Hope, June 1958
188. Good Hope, June 1963
189. Undated Sermon on Matt.21:9. YPP, Reel 4, p7
190. cf. pp131,134
191. cf. p59
192. Letter to de Blank : 4th May 1957. YPP, Reel 3
193. In Address and Charges 1957-1960, Section IV

194. Out of Africa, p48
195. Undated Sermon on Matt.28:20. YPP, Reel 4, p2
196. cf. Out of Africa, p117
197. Charge to Diocesan Synod 1958, p3
198. Undated Sermon, Third Address in a series of Retreat Sermons. YPP, Reel 4, p3
199. Idem.
200. 24th November 1963. YPP, Reel 4, p4
201. Out of Africa, pp142,146
202. Idem.
203. Good Hope
204. Good Hope, April 1960
205. Good Hope
206. Undated Sermon on Matt.21:9, p4
207. Undated Sermon, Seventh Address in a series of Retreat Sermons. YPP, Reel 4, p6
208. Good Hope, August 1959
209. Ambrose Reeves
210. Out of Africa, p147
211. Robert Waley Cohen Memorial Lecture, p6
212. Charge to Diocesan Synod 1958, p12
213. Good Hope, February 1958
214. Out of Africa, p113
215. cf. p23
216. cf. first paragraph p175
217. Undated Sermon on Matt.21:9, p7
218. Waley Cohen Memorial Lecture, p7
219. Six Years Hard, p83
220. Out of Africa, p45
221. In Address and Charges 1957-1960, Section V
222. Out of Africa, p128
223. Undated Sermon on Matt.6:33, p2
224. Undated Sermon on John 12:21, p9
225. Good Hope, May 1963
226. cf. pp67-71
227. Charge to Diocesan Synod 1958, p3
228. Six Years Hard, p41
229. cf. Undated Sermon on Romans 8:19, p2
230. Idem.
231. The Fight Is On, MS of article written for Africa South, March 1958. YPP, Reel 4, p5
232. Undated Sermon on Matt.6:33, p5

233. Undated Sermon on John 12:21, p9
234. Look, p8
235. The Fight Is On, p4
236. Idem.
237. Idem.
238. The Fight Is On, p6
239. Out of Africa, p135
240. Ibid. p37
241. Ibid. p120
242. Undated Sermon on Matt.6:33, p5
243. Undated Sermon on Romans 8:19, p5
244. Out of Africa, p159
245. Racial Problems of South Africa, p10
246. Ibid. pp10,11
247. Look, p9
248. Out of Africa, pp128,129
249. Good Hope
250. This attack on the educational system for Whites is a part of the Confrontation because it is viewed as a means of perpetuating apartheid by indoctrination.
251. Charge to Diocesan Synod 1959, p5
252. Idem.
253. Idem.
254. Idem.
255. Charge to Diocesan Synod 1959, p6
256. Idem.
257. cf. p72
258. Cape Argus, 25th January 1958
259. Idem.
260. 6th February 1958
261. Charge to Diocesan Synod 1959, pp6,7
262. Ibid. p7
263. Six Years Hard, pp48,49
264. MS, p4
265. Ibid. pp4,5
266. Ibid. p6
267. Out of Africa, p105
268. Ibid. p106
269. Quoted in Good Hope, June 1963
270. Good Hope
271. cf. pp169,170
272. Good Hope, February 1959

- 273. Out of Africa, p105
- 274. cf. Preface i for reason for repetition
- 275. Out of Africa, p142
- 276. Six Years Hard, p36
- 277. Ibid. p42
- 278. Ibid. p45
- 279. Undated Sermon on Rom.8:19, p6
- 280. MS of Look, pp1,2
- 281. Charge to Diocesan Synod 1961, Section III;  
Out of Africa, p30
- 282. A Book of Common Prayer (S.A.), p419
- 283. Allusion to Eph.5:11 in Charge to Diocesan Synod, 1958, p4
- 284. Good Hope
- 285. Six Years Hard, p43
- 286. MS of The Fight Is On, p6
- 287. Good Hope, May 1963
- 288. Good Hope, November 1958
- 289. cf. p78
- 290. Charge to Diocesan Synod 1958, p4
- 291. Six Years Hard, p50
- 292. Charge to Diocesan Synod 1961, Section V

CHAPTER 7Assessment(i) Background against which assessment should be made

Any assessment of de Blank must take into account the situation into which he was called. In challenging the tenets of the apartheid policy he was not initiating, but continuing a war which had already commenced. Moreover, the man into whose shoes he was stepping had been a victim of the struggle. He was not slow to point out that in his criticism of racial legislation he was following the path taken by his predecessor. C.T. Wood confirms this when he says that a reading of Clayton's Charges reveals clearly that he stood on the ground already covered by Clayton.<sup>1</sup> But there is no doubt that with the advent of de Blank the conflict was intensified. This was to be anticipated if one bears in mind that the circumstances of Clayton's death, following upon the dispatch of the fateful letter signed on behalf of the bishops of the C.P.S.A.,<sup>2</sup> together with the even stronger measures taken by the authorities to silence dissenters, were bound to lead to an escalation rather than a cooling off of hostilities.

Those who criticise de Blank's belligerence in comparison with the statesmanlike caution of Clayton might be surprised to learn that the day before he died Clayton felt the need for a different approach to the one he had been following. For years, he told Mrs Moira Henderson of the Black Sash, he had believed in doing things in a constitutional manner, with due regard for the correct procedure, but the time had perhaps come for him to pursue another, more positive line of action.<sup>3</sup> Whether Clayton would have translated these thoughts into something more practical if he had lived is a matter of speculation. What is certain is that in de Blank there was one who would attempt to put this new line of action into operation.

(ii) Personal factors favouring an effective confrontation

de Blank was by no means lacking in confidence. His self-assured attitude stemmed from the consciousness that before coming to South Africa all his efforts had been crowned with success. In particular, as Bishop of Stepney he had won golden opinions for his considerable achievements under difficult circumstances.<sup>4</sup> In South Africa, by contrast, he did not see the same tangible results. In his frustration he compared White South African Anglicans unfavourably with the London Cockneys.<sup>5</sup> Another source of

confidence was de Blank's belief that he had been divinely appointed to exercise a prophetic ministry in the Union. Like Amos he exposed the injustices of the society in which he moved, and when he found that his admonitions were not being heeded he warned of impending doom. He went as far as to proclaim that the racial unrest culminating in Sharpeville was the judgement of God falling on the country.<sup>6</sup> As we listen to his words, uttered at this critical time, it is not difficult to make out authentic prophetic accents.

de Blank had further cause for confidence. In his view on apartheid he found that he had the backing of the whole world. Before coming to South Africa he had heard apartheid condemned at Minneapolis,<sup>7</sup> and within a year of his Enthronement the Lambeth Fathers took an identical stand.<sup>8</sup> He also seemed assured of support from the Church in South Africa. Clayton's letter to the Prime Minister had been sent on behalf of the bishops of the C.P.S.A. and so it would not be unreasonable for de Blank to feel that these men, together with their lay brothers, were ready to advance with him.

de Blank's effectiveness as an opponent had much to do with his single-minded devotion to the cause he had espoused. We might ask how much this was due to the fact that he was a single man. It is true that he had the care of his aged mother for much of his term at Bishopscourt, but his sister Bartha was also with him and so could take a great deal of the responsibility off his shoulders. In fact, de Blank's life in many respects was a monastic one. We have seen that it is his sister's opinion that he might have taken Holy Orders if he had been free of family ties.<sup>9</sup> We know, too, from his own lips that he felt that the witness of those "living under Rule" was a unique one.<sup>10</sup> It is not surprising then to find that his own life was rigidly ordered:

"The discipline of his life and the order of his household (were) meticulous..... No one entered his offices informally when he was engaged during office hours.... In the evening, after Compline at 9.30, he would retire promptly to his room, to read, and to be fresh for the duties of the following day..... Morning Prayer and the Eucharist, with Communion, were kept as daily procedures. So also was Evening Prayer at 6. Every morning before daybreak and the corporate service of Morning Prayer, he was in meditation within his Chapel, ever deepening his life in Christ....."<sup>11</sup>

This leaves us with the impression of one who was able to harness the energies of body and mind: and in South Africa all those considerable powers were devoted largely to an attack on the political system. It might be argued that the great deal of lavish entertainment which de Blank did hardly made Bishopscourt resemble a monastery. Yet here we have a

paradoxical situation:

"He.....seems to have had a strong ascetic streak.....I (Leslie Stradling) have a vivid picture of him sitting at the head of a table of fifty guests, sipping a glass of sherry and nibbling at some fragment on his plate."<sup>12</sup>

This description indicates that his elaborate way of life was not a personal indulgence.<sup>13</sup>

de Blank was also articulate. This gift of tongues was a natural one, developed by his formal education and wide reading. There are in the foregoing chapters sufficient extracts from his sermons, Charges and Diocesan letters to show his control of the weapons of language. He used a wide range of rhetorical devices: gentle innuendo in his Enthronement Address,<sup>14</sup> eminently suited to an occasion which was not ripe for a direct assault but which called for some hint of the line he was going to follow; clear-cut analysis in outlining the dangers facing Christianity in Africa;<sup>15</sup> irony in his reference to God-fearing men who clung tenaciously to a diabolical doctrine;<sup>16</sup> undisguised scorn when he saw a country celebrating in the grip of a State of Emergency;<sup>17</sup> prophetic fire as he warned of the wrath to come.<sup>18</sup>

He was devastating in his emotive use of language. The last two sections of Chapter 6 are illustrative of this. Especially telling was his employment of words implying indecency and immorality in his criticism of racial legislation.<sup>19</sup> He was here using an ad hominem argument, for his opponents in respect of the ill-named Immorality Act had equated sexual immorality with inter-racial contact.

His apt use of a scriptural verse or allusion added force to his pronouncements which were made for the benefit of people who acknowledged the authority of the Bible. We may cite here his sermon on the Year of Jubilee<sup>20</sup> as a signal example of his ability both to choose and develop the appropriate biblical theme; and his address, Nothing to Fear,<sup>21</sup> which moves to a triumphant climax on the strength of a sequence of scriptural texts.

In his Confrontation with the authorities de Blank was consistent. He made it quite clear that issue had been joined solely on the basis of theological principle.<sup>22</sup> Every verbal assault, whether in a sermon or press release, was couched in theological language with a felicitously-chosen biblical verse as a divine warrant. It is a tribute to his method that his opponents, when faced with this theological barrage, fell back, sometimes on arguments based on practical expediency, sometimes on charges of ignorance of the situation on the part of the Archbishop, sometimes on

sheer invective, but seldom on the theological issues raised by de Blank.

It could be said that a cleric like de Blank was dealing with theoretical concepts whereas the politician was faced with the intricacies of the practical situation which could not always be tailored according to the theoretical pattern. Yet de Blank was still consistent in this respect: there were divine principles which had been revealed to man. These were incontestable and unalterable. The politician's role, as we have seen,<sup>23</sup> was to enshrine these principles in the laws of the State. de Blank was doing his duty, as he understood it, in proclaiming these principles. He now looked to the politician to carry out his function in the light of the divine pattern.

But de Blank did not remain in the rarefied atmosphere of Sinai. Only eighteen months after his first assault on the system he came down to assume the leading role in an attempt to do something practical to remedy the situation. The Archbishop's Conference<sup>24</sup> is a tribute to his determined efforts in which, to use the phraseology of Alan Paton,<sup>25</sup> he achieved a synthesis of the pragmatic and moral solution. It is significant that as a result of his illness and subsequent departure from the scene the movement petered out.

However much de Blank might expose the sins of others, he was always aware of the failings of himself and his Church. Time after time he bemoaned the fact that White Anglicans had been conditioned to accept the pattern of life that had developed in South Africa.<sup>26</sup> Nor did he spare himself. In 1960 he wrote: I accuse myself for the little I have done for Africa in the space of nearly three years. It has all been too easy and comfortable. So little has been accomplished - so much remains to be done."<sup>27</sup> His public apology to the D.R.C. at Cottesloe<sup>28</sup> and the private views expressed in his diary in 1963<sup>29</sup> are further examples of a critical faculty turned inwards.

Finally, de Blank had the courage of his convictions. Like Clayton before him, he knew that the stand he had taken could have serious consequences for himself personally. He had been so warned when receiving the news of his election,<sup>30</sup> and during the State of Emergency he had seen one of his own bishops deported.<sup>31</sup> Around this time it seems that he seriously felt that there was a possibility of his being detained, and so he drew up a statement entitled J' Accuse to be released in the event of his arrest.<sup>32</sup>

(iii) Criticisms of de Blank Examined

de Blank has been accused of having been too outspoken.<sup>33</sup> Clayton's words always carried weight, not only because they were carefully chosen but because they were uttered sparingly. de Blank, on the other hand, spoke out at all times as the files on him in the daily newspapers can confirm. The result was that familiarity began to breed a certain contempt.

In writing of de Blank's approach, Leslie Stradling points out that there are two ways of dealing with evil: "the head-on attack" and "peaceful penetration".<sup>34</sup> In conceding that the latter method (which he favours) achieves little as far as measurable success is concerned, he implicitly supplies us with a reason for de Blank's forthrightness. The Archbishop's character, which demanded immediate results, and his view of the critical situation in the country, called for a course of action which went right to the heart of the problem.

The Archbishop's readiness to become involved must be seen in relation to the view of his role. C.T. Wood says that de Blank's "conception of the Episcopate was nearer to that of an XVIII century English Bishop and member of the House of Lords, expected to make Pronouncements on events of National concern - all quite foreign to the average South African layman."<sup>35</sup> That the "average South African layman" found this foreign would have been irrelevant in his view - his very statements would be a means of re-educating the laity in the country to accept the participation of the Church in all aspects of life.

Dr Oscar Wollheim makes this observation:

"The very first thing one noticed about Joost de Blank was that he was blunt and forthright. He would never be able to call a spade an agricultural implement for turning the soil. It was this quality which surprised one in an Archbishop of an extremely large and important see such as that of Cape Town, from whom one would expect a high degree of diplomatic skill and tact. de Blank did not have these qualities and it was this which so often brought him into situations of confrontation with State authorities in South Africa - and which, I am sure, caused him as many headaches and worry as it did others."<sup>36</sup>

The Cape Times detected a danger in de Blank's much speaking. It acknowledged that in the interests of keeping the tax-paying public informed on affairs of State, politicians should speak their minds freely. On the other hand:

"The situation of the clergyman is rather different. If his statements on temporal affairs become so frequent that they are predictable in timing, temper and substance, he becomes part of the political environment and his moral

"authority correspondingly declines. For when men - particularly those of other confessions - look upon him they do not see him primarily as a man of God but as a political opponent."

This did not mean that churchmen should remain silent. But it did make it necessary for them "to use the utmost economy in public statements on political matters or in potentially wounding references to the opinions of other communions."<sup>37</sup> There is a measure of truth in the above statement. de Blank's opponents in the Government tended to reply to his frequent barbs as if they were responding to a political attack. Yet would they have answered otherwise if he had spoken more sparingly? It could also be argued that if he had been more reserved, conditioned South Africans would have been less likely to have heard him. Insistent hammering could be viewed as at least having some chance of effecting a break-through.

Speaking of de Blank's critics within his own Church, Bishop Stradling says that many thought "he was too outspoken and aggressive. They felt it created an atmosphere of hostility, in which it was impossible to have any dialogue with either the Government or the Dutch Reformed Church, in which the word reconciliation had been discarded".<sup>38</sup> Dean King speaks in similar vein: "his eagerness to do battle wherever and whenever he was attacked, to some extent alienated sympathy from the cause he had dearest to his heart, not least among members of his own Church, and indeed among his own fellow clergy....."<sup>39</sup> That the C.P.S.A. chose the more reticent and reserved Selby Taylor to succeed de Blank indicates that many Anglicans felt that a change was needed from the tactics employed over the previous six years.

de Blank can also be accused of acting impulsively. Whenever some issue, and this was generally a racial one, especially moved him, he was inclined to react immediately without completely thinking through the implications of what he was saying. The Dean of Cape Town put it this way:

"His white-hot zeal for righteousness did perhaps lead him to judgements liable to the accusations of being premature. Tactically, I believe, he made errors of judgement. He could have won more loyalty for his undoubtedly courageous judgements and utterances if he had spent more time early in his ministry here taking 'soundings', listening quietly, meditating on the complexities of life in South Africa. But it was typical of the man that he was in a hurry. In a hurry to speak out, to proclaim God's word to a generation dull of hearing in matters of justice."<sup>40</sup>

de Blank's erratic behaviour during the critical months before the Cottesloe Consultation moved Billheimer to record in his diary:

"de Blank, I think, is a man who acts first and thinks later - this is the clue to his issuing absolute conditions publicly and then backing down as he has with us on 'expulsion', on 'outside the Union' and on 'Johannesburg'. My conclusion is that we must never kow-tow to that (de Blank's) ambition, but always meet it with power based on a strong moral position; and, that we must constantly minister to the loneliness which I am sure lies behind his more difficult moves."<sup>41</sup>

Many have queried de Blank's wisdom in speaking out so soon after his arrival.<sup>42</sup> Not only his opponents, but even his supporters within his own Church thought that it would have been better for him to have held his peace until he had familiarised himself fully with the complex conditions in South Africa. Yet here again de Blank was following his own logic: if a particular policy was flouting God's laws, then there was no call for temporising. Condemnation should follow promptly. One, in fact, did not even have to live in South Africa to come to a conclusion about apartheid. It could "be condemned with equal justice by an Esquimau in Canada, a Christian ex-headhunter in Borneo or by a damned Britisher or a renegade Hollander."<sup>43</sup> To have waited, to use another favourite argument of de Blank, would only to have risked becoming conditioned to inhumanity. As C.T. Wood said at the time of de Blank's first onslaught:

"What those who wish that the Archbishop would be silent seem to be implying is that if only he waits a little, perhaps his right judgement will be warped and the hideous spirit of complacency which is the lot of so many of us in South Africa will triumph."<sup>44</sup>

de Blank's habit of criticising South Africa overseas led to much hostile comment. Many felt that the debate should be confined to the country where his opponents could then present their point of view.<sup>45</sup> But here, too, de Blank was acting consistently. We have seen that he believed apartheid to be a world, and not just a local problem.<sup>46</sup> It threatened the future of Christianity on the Continent of Africa, and what happened in Africa affected the entire globe. Apartheid then was the concern of all Christian men who had to be rallied together so that they might bring the full weight of their spiritual and moral pressure to bear on the South African authorities. Consequently he made regular trips overseas and encouraged his own Church leaders not to lose any opportunity of going abroad to make the Church's position known, especially as official White representatives of the country only spoke for one section of the population.<sup>47</sup>

de Blank was censured for regarding the Anglican Church as the Church. While he never openly asserted the primacy of the Catholic Church over other Churches, he nevertheless tended, when dealing with a

controversial issue, to use the expression "the Church" without qualification in a context which made it clear that he was quoting the views of his own denomination.<sup>48</sup> Dr R. Billheimer, although not mentioning de Blank but with him clearly in mind, accused the C.P.S.A. of speaking as "The Church", and in so doing aggravating inter-Church relations in South Africa.<sup>49</sup> Others, especially Dutch Reformed Church leaders, were led to take de Blank to task for thinking that he had a monopoly of the truth.<sup>50</sup>

Anglicans in South Africa have taken issue with de Blank on the grounds that in his opposition to apartheid he did not represent the whole of the C.P.S.A. To this charge Alan Paton replies that it is not the duty of an Archbishop to be representative of the clergy or the laity but to preach the Gospel.<sup>51</sup> We might put it otherwise: the Archbishop's task was to show the way, not to follow a path marked out for him by his subordinates. Nevertheless it must be acknowledged that he could not carry the bulk of White Anglicans with him. E.Knapp-Fisher (writing as Bishop of Pretoria) says that his "tragedy was that he gave to the privileged the impression that he did not sufficiently sympathise with their circumstances, and so failed to win them to share the convictions which he powerfully held and for which he fearlessly contended."<sup>52</sup> de Blank, too, was aware that in his forward surge he had left many of his people behind. In his final sermon he referred to this:

"Some people have hinted that I have tried to go too fast too quickly. But how far and how fast are you supposed to go when you are running away from sin and seeking to do God's will?"<sup>53</sup>

#### (iv) de Blank's Achievement

If we are to judge de Blank's work in absolute terms of success and failure, we must come to the conclusion that he failed since when he left South Africa broken in health, apartheid remained dominant. But this is too facile a conclusion. His achievements were, in fact, considerable. First, whatever his weaknesses or errors of judgement, he took a stand, and in so doing became a focal point of opposition to apartheid and its adherents. In this way he gave encouragement to the relatively few Whites who were striving for a society free of discriminatory laws; but above all, he was the champion of the non-White people, many of whom according to Leslie Stradling, were kept from leaving the Church because of his words and actions.<sup>54</sup>

Alphaeus Zulu, Bishop of Zululand, wrote:

"almost all Black persons saw a prophet of the Old Testament in Joost. He inspired in them the hope of a life of fellowship and friendly relations between Black and White.

"When his health broke down many Black South Africans called him a martyr. Those who admired him will never hate White men as a group because Joost was White."<sup>55</sup>

de Blank can be said to have lived up to what Michael Gibbs,<sup>56</sup> Dean of Chester, regarded as the expectations of some Whites and the vast majority of Blacks: to the latter he symbolised in his own person the protective character of the Church; for the former he articulated that sense of justice in human relations which they had never entirely lost.

de Blank was more than a focal point of opposition. His opponents might ridicule him but they could not dismiss him. If his words had not hit home, there would have been no need for such detailed counter-blasts. He set himself to "persuade Church people.....constantly to examine their consciences and face as fellow Christians the moral problems in a multi-racial society."<sup>57</sup> He had the effect of making White South Africans reveal exactly where they stood. This was no great achievement as far as the Nationalists were concerned: everyone knew their position. But the official opposition, the United Party, which had many Anglicans among its members, were forced early in de Blank's ministry into a reluctant expression of criticism of the Archbishop over the controversial issue of integration in education - this at a time when a general election was on the horizon.<sup>58</sup> When the Dutch Reformed Church was criticised in New York for its "warped" Calvinism, White Church leaders rallied to its defence, revealing White solidarity in the face of an attack on the racial policy of a sister Church.<sup>59</sup> Within his own Church he brought about a polarisation: there were those who stood four-square with him; others who were on the verge of open mutiny. There is incontrovertible proof<sup>60</sup> that fourteen Anglican priests formed a group called Joost Must Go. They were ready to resign in protest against the way de Blank was handling the apartheid issue. They decided "to give him another chance", but the resignation of the Archbishop intervened and the movement consequently came to an end.

The Dutch Reformed Church almost over-reacted to de Blank's criticism of its support of apartheid policy. D.R.C. leaders were quick to justify the line they had taken, laying stress on their long-established mission policy.<sup>61</sup> In fact, of all groups provoked to a response by the Archbishop, the D.R.C. was the most moved to do real heart-searching. In the process a wedge was driven between members of the Church which eventually through its Synods repudiated some of its own number.

Finally, de Blank forced White South Africans to accept that racial policy came within the purview of the Church. On hearing of his resignation, the Cape Argus, often severely critical of the Archbishop, wrote:

".....since his assumption of office in South Africa six years ago, it has become accepted that race relations are the business of the Church, and that it is the Church's business to speak out on them. To that change Dr de Blank has made a considerable contribution. In his effort to drive that home he may have made tactical mistakes - only history will prove if they were mistaken - but he has helped to affirm the message and have it accepted that the Church's duty is to concern itself with race relations, and in that process it may have to decide its attitude to political authority. In his period of service in South Africa he has seen a ferment of questioning in all the Christian Churches. He has seen the growth of the belief that 'no man' - and no Church - 'is an island'; the Church cannot retire into itself if its Christian belief compels it to act in what is normally regarded as a lay, or political, field."<sup>62</sup>

This acceptance, no matter how reluctant, of a great truth inherent in the doctrine of the Incarnation should be viewed as de Blank's most significant triumph.

In the final analysis, we must allow history to make its own judgement on Joost. We are still too close in time to see his period in true perspective. What we can say, in conclusion, is that we are here dealing with one whose revolt against his early evangelical upbringing, with its emphasis on a personal, and therefore a partial Christianity, made him determined not to leave any aspect of life out of his consideration. At the same time his reverence for the Bible, also a legacy of his youth, made it certain that any battle would be fought with scriptural weapons. In South Africa he came face to face with a political doctrine which he could not ignore because he considered it to be un-Christian and a danger of global proportions. Like Thomas à Becket he resolutely and fearlessly faced the secular authorities, carrying out his prophetic office regardless of the cost - for there was a cost. Many of his own Church turned against him, and as he bore "in himself the injustices which he saw around him",<sup>63</sup> his health declined to the point where he felt it necessary to resign. Four years later this "tycoon bishop"<sup>64</sup> and "human dynamo"<sup>65</sup> was dead. How much South Africa, now re-examining its apartheid policy in the face of mounting world pressure, owes to him has still to be computed.

References to Chapter 7:

1. C.T. Wood's notes to me
2. cf. p29
3. Moira Henderson to me
4. cf. pp47,48
5. Charge to Provincial Synod 1960, p4
6. cf. p95
7. cf. p51,52
8. cf. p80
9. cf. p44
10. Charge to Cape Town Diocesan Synod 1958, p7
11. Assistant Bishop of Matabeleland, The Rt Rev. Robert Mize to Bartha de Blank 30th December 1969. YPP, Reel 4, p5
12. Bishop of Johannesburg to Bartha de Blank, 12th January 1970. YPP, Reel 4, p3
13. Idem.
14. cf. pp65-67
15. cf. Good Hope, August 1959
16. cf. pp140-143
17. cf. p95
18. cf. Good Hope, November 1963
19. cf. e.g. Good Hope, June 1960; Out of Africa, p122
20. Out of Africa, pp134-141
21. Out of Africa, pp141-147
22. cf. p 144
23. cf. p147
24. cf. pp87-89
25. Paton to Bartha de Blank, 4th July 1970. YPP, Reel 4, p2
26. e.g. Out of Africa, pp43,44
27. MBJ, p382
28. cf. p 109
29. cf. p116
30. cf. p59
31. cf. p103
32. MBJ, pp382-389
33. cf. pp77,78
34. Stradling to Bartha de Blank, 12th January 1970, p2
35. Wood to me
36. Wollheim to me
37. 10th June 1958
38. Stradling to Bartha de Blank 12th January 1970. p1
39. King to Bartha de Blank 29th January 1970. pp2,3

40. Ibid. p2
41. Lückhoff, p117
42. February 1958
43. Six Years Hard, p9
44. Cape Times, 6th February 1958
45. cf. p78 and Cape Argus 10th June 1958
46. cf. pp165-167
47. Charge to Cape Town Diocesan Synod 1959, p10
48. cf. Out of Africa, p111
49. cf. p100
50. W.A. Landman to me
51. Paton to Bartha de Blank 4th July 1970. p2
52. To Bartha de Blank 25th November 1969. pp2,3
53. Quoted in notes from C.T. Wood to me
54. Stradling to Bartha de Blank 12th January 1970. pp2,3
55. To Bartha de Blank 12th June 1970. pl
56. cf. p65
57. Lord Redcliffe Maud (appointed British High Commissioner to the Union in 1959) to Bartha de Blank (undated), p4
58. cf. p73
59. cf. pp77,78
60. I am unable to disclose my source
61. Die Kerkbode, 5th February 1958
62. 1st October 1963
63. King to Bartha de Blank 29th January 1970. p4
64. cf. p34
65. cf. Cape Argus, 7th May 1957

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Summary made by the Reverend Canon C.T. Wood in June 1976 of the contents of the de Blank Papers deposited in the University of York (Centre for Southern African Studies) by Bartha de Blank :

Box 1 (Forest Gate)	<u>Mss diary:</u> 31 July 1941-March 1942	Reel 1
Box 3 (Stepney)	<u>Press Cuttings:</u> June 1962 to January 1957 appointment to Stepney, book reviews, etc. <u>Idem</u> <u>Scrap Books:</u> Saturday Talks in The Star, 1955-56	<u>Idem</u>
	Letters received on appointment to Cape Town 1957	<u>Idem</u>
	<u>The Cockaigne.</u> Bishop of Stepney's Quarterly: nos 1-6, 1954-1955 duplicates of nos 2,4,6	<u>Idem</u>
Box 4 (Cape Town)	<u>Papers and cuttings</u> on appointment to Cape Town: 1957 <u>Kaleidoscope:</u> 1961, printed circular to English friends	<u>Idem</u>
	<u>Good Hope:</u> Cape Town Diocesan Magazine: loose numbers, unchecked	<u>Idem</u>
	<u>Personal papers:</u> loose, unchecked, including Certificate of British Nationality 1963 and S.A. Identity Card 1957	<u>Idem</u>
Box 5 (Cape Town)	<u>Scrap Books:</u> Newspaper cuttings May 1957-February 1960	<u>Idem</u>
Box 6 (Cape Town)	<u>Church Congress:</u> Cape Town November 4-11, 1962 Cuttings, programmes, photos, bound in leather	Reel 2
Box 7 (Cape Town)	<u>Mss Visit to Transkei:</u> July-August 1959 <u>Visit to Rhodesia, England and America</u> <u>Meeting in Central Hall, Westminster</u> 25 September, 1959	<u>Idem</u>
Box 8 (Travel)	<u>Mss Diary.</u> Visit to USA, July 21-September 16, 1954. Loose sheets	Reels 2 & 3
	Letters and pcs to Mama:	<u>Idem</u>
	<u>Mss Diary.</u> Visit to Canada and USA May 1955-July 1956	Reel 2
	<u>Mss Diary.</u> Visit to Cape Town June 21-July 3, 1957	<u>Idem</u>
	<u>Mss Diary.</u> Round the World July 23-August 9, 1957	<u>Idem</u>
	<u>Mss Diary.</u> Arrival in Cape Town and visit to Basutoland September 1957-March 1958	<u>Idem</u>
	<u>Mss Diary.</u> Tour of America May 27-June 18, 1958. Loose sheets	<u>Idem</u>
	<u>Mss Diary.</u> Visit to St Helena, Freetown and Accra. May 3-June 24, 1959	<u>Idem</u>

Box 9 (Travel)	<u>Mss Diary. Visit to Natal and Lebombo</u> September 6-20, 1960	Reel 3
	<u>Mss Diary. Visit to Malta and King's Lynn</u> June 3-9, 1963	Idem
	<u>Notes on Churches visited in the Diocese</u> of Cape Town. 1963	Idem
	<u>Diary of Engagements. 1964-1967</u>	Idem
	<u>Hong Kong. Correspondence re election to</u> <u>Bishopric. Unsorted, 1966</u>	Idem
Box 10 (Cape Town)	<u>Index: Letters received on retirement as</u> <u>Archbishop, October 1963</u>	Idem
	<u>Folders: Press cuttings, photographs and</u> <u>memoranda. Unsorted.</u>	Idem
Box 11 (Miscellaneous)	<u>"Six Years Hard"</u> <u>Typescript of autobiography, 1957-1963</u> unpublished	Reels 3 & 4
	<u>The Return of the Sacred: typescript and</u> <u>letters to publisher, 1967</u>	Reel 4
	(published by The Faith Press, 1968)	
	<u>Review of the above, 1968</u>	Idem
	<u>Inter-Church Relationships</u>	
	<u>Mss and printed copy. 1964</u>	Idem
	<u>Mss of Lectures, 1961</u>	
	Mainly delivered in the USA	Idem
Box 12 (Sermons)	<u>Mss of Sermons, undated</u>	Idem
	<u>Mss of Retreat Addresses, delivered in</u> SA undated	Idem
	<u>Typescript of Sermons, delivered in</u> All Saints, Margaret Street in 1965	
	and various	Idem
	<u>Mss various. Sermons, sermon notes and</u> quotations, undated	Idem
Box 13 (Bartha de Blank)	One box of unsorted material collected by Bartha for her life of her brother "My brother Joost", including personal reminiscences from sundry correspondents and photographs, unsorted	Reels 4 & 5
	<u>Pamphlets</u> "A life worth living" by the Bishop of Stepney "Mighty River" by the Bishop of Stepney - a report on the Minneapolis Congress:1954	Reel 4

\* (Items under seal and certain material not able to be  
microfilmed have been omitted)

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