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THE LONG VIEW

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The new Archbishop of Cape Town doesn't like apartheid. I didn't think he would. But he puts us all in his debt by making up his mind so quickly about it. According to the rules he should have waited a couple of hundred years.

I certainly don't want to drag the Archbishop into political controversy. I have no wish to "use" him to further the end of CONTACT or any political party. But I want him to know that there are hundreds of thousands of South Africans who are thankful that he saw so quickly that apartheid is an evil thing. There are also many Christians who share this thankfulness; they would like to be proud of their religion, not ashamed of it.

The Liberal Party is not a Christian organisation, nor could it be. It is a political organisation with a strong moral motive. At the moment this seems to many white South Africans to be very odd; that is only because they are used to immoral politics. I don't mean they cheat and lie; I mean they are used to a brand of politics which aims to ~~serve~~^{secure} privilege and power at the expense of other people.

Now although the Liberal Party is not a Christian organisation, its policies have a great deal in common with Christian ethics, and its philosophy has been influenced by Christian theology. I shall not therefore apologise for writing something about these things.

If one is a Christian, one believes that there is a spiritual order as well as a temporal, but one believes that the values of the spiritual order, justice, love, mercy, truth, should be the supreme values of the temporal society, and that the good state will uphold and cherish them. Further one believes that the Church, while without temporal power, has the duty of championing these values in the temporal world.

One believes also that when the state substitutes for justice, love, mercy, truth, any other value, the temporal society will decay. This is exactly what has been happening in South Africa, and especially since 1948. The Government has made apartheid the supreme value. They have done it by saying that you can only have justice, love, mercy, truth, in the framework of apartheid. Is that true, or is it not?

It is not true, and every Christian should know it is not. A policy that can push out the Indian traders of Johannesburg to the bare veld twenty miles away, that can separate African husband from wife and children at Windermere, that can allow petty officials without public reprimand to subject coloured persons to gross indignities in order to determine their racial classification, that can forbid friends of different races to associate in restaurant or cinema, has long since severed its connection with justice, love, mercy, and truth.

Why do so many of us white people not see this any more? Are we punch-drunk? And tired of resisting? That is too easy a supposition. We too have elevated apartheid until it has become the supreme value even though we should hate to admit it. That is really why we have given in.

Or shall I say we have consented to the elevation of apartheid? Half-heartedly, I agree. But what more does a tyrant want? A man like Luthuli must look at us in desperation sometimes, behind the closed doors of our shut-off world, and wonder why we cannot see that it is we and not our stars that make evolutionary change impossible. How will these doors be opened, if we do not help to open them ourselves?

While one is tinkering, and allowing other people to tinker, with these supreme values, lots of things begin to happen. The Christian religion for example begins to allow quite a lot of important but subordinate values to enter as absolutes, such as being nice, "moderation" in speech and action, and upholding the temporal authority. A nice Christian woman said to me, "I have come to believe that we must have apartheid, but with as little brutality as possible." As we motor along the roads, some people are pickupable, and others are not. A Colour-bar organisation is able to declare unctuously that its aim is to bring together people "from all the corners of the earth." And some foolish fellow writing to the paper declares that the "vast majority" of South Africans supports Mr. Louw in condemning the Declaration of Conscience.

In this number of "The Long View" I have dealt only with the moral ideas that Christianity and Liberalism have in common. That is why, while not wishing to drag the Archbishop into politics, we must record our thanks for his stand. It is for us a moral reinforcement, and the more we have of it, the better for South Africa. Up till

now - with exceptions naturally and of course - the defence of Christian morality has been left too much to bodies that are not Christian at all.

We welcome the Archbishop to South Africa, and hope that nothing will happen to cut short his stay amongst us. We believe that he has already shown himself to be as true a South African as any of us, because it is clear that he understands what alone can be the foundations on which a true South Africa must be built.