

WORLD DOMINION

The World Dominion Movement advocates Informed Continuous Co-ordinated Evangelism to reach everyone at home and abroad. Its basis is belief in the Deity and Atoning Death of the Lord Jesus Christ, the World's Only Saviour, and in the Final Authority of Holy Scripture.

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A New Stage in South Africa

WILLIAM EVELEIGH

ON the morning of 25th June last, a company of some sixty persons rose from their seats in a church hall at Bloemfontein, in the Orange Free State, and sang the Doxology. They had just united in the solemn act of constituting the first Christian Council of South Africa, and their hearts were glad. From all parts of the Union they had come, representing twenty-six churches and missionary societies, and speaking a dozen different languages. Of varied national stocks—Scottish, English, Dutch, American, Irish, Welsh, French, German, Swedish, Norwegian, Danish, Swiss, and Bantu—they had sought in faith and prayer a common meeting-ground for united thinking, united planning and united action. And they had found it. It was a great moment for those who had long prayed and laboured for such a coming together; and it certainly marked a notable stage in the development of the new mind of the Christian Church in South Africa. Another of Dr. John R. Mott's visions had been realized.

But what is the background of the Council? What forces has it to contend against? What are the tasks which await it? What part is it likely to play in the life of South Africa? An attempt to answer these and similar questions by a European who has been engaged in Christian work in South Africa for thirty years may not be without interest at this time. Let it be recognized at once that the Council will have to face a number and variety of problems unsurpassed in any other mission field. 'I have heard that word "problem" more times in the six weeks that I have been in South Africa than I have before in all my life,' said a distinguished English minister when on a visit to the country.

The problems are due to various circumstances. There is, first of all, the root problem of the racial divisions. The Union of South Africa has, according to the preliminary returns for the census taken on 5th May last, a total

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population of 9,479,985 persons. They are divided up as 1,979,390 Europeans, 6,529,784 Natives, 755,282 Coloured and 215,529 Asiatics. The Europeans are mostly British and Dutch, with about 72,000 Jews, and a sprinkling of Germans, French, Italians, Greeks, Norwegians, Swedes, and Poles. The Asiatics are mostly the South African-born descendants of Indians brought to the country to work on the sugar and tea plantations of Natal. The Coloured people are a mixed race, the descendants of European settlers and sailors, Malays and Hottentots, who are classified, politically and economically, with the White people. The Native people, or the Bantu, are the dark-skinned African peoples, who are living in all stages of development, from the raw heathenism of the kraal to the civilization of urban communities.

It will be apparent to those who know something of the racial situation in the United States of America that the problem created by racial contacts in South Africa must be much more acute than it is in America, since there, in a country of over 125,000,000 people, only about 12,000,000 are Coloured, whereas in South Africa the White people are outnumbered by the non-European people by nearly four to one. And the non-European people, especially the Natives, are increasing more rapidly than the Whites. The problem to be solved in South Africa is how European people, with European habits, traditions and ideals, can develop alongside another race of a different colour—virile and prolific and much stronger in numbers, who are a subject people struggling upwards from heathenism—without being unjust to them in striving to safeguard their own civilized position.

General Hertzog, the Union's Prime Minister, has persistently maintained that the whole racial problem is to provide the Natives of the Union with a place in the legislation of the country and in society 'in such a way as not to threaten with ruin the continued domination of the White man and his civilization.' He has declared his willingness to assist the Natives in their development, 'provided it happens in a way compatible with that great

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interest of the White man, that he shall remain the ruler in South Africa.' 'We have duties,' he says, 'but whatever our duty is towards the Natives, the first duty of the European is toward himself.'

And he has written his convictions into the law of the land. Recent legislation, which included the Representation of Natives Act, and the Native Trust and Land Act, has closed the door to the Black man's advance along the avenue of a common citizenship with the White man, since the franchise which the Native enjoyed in the Cape Province on equal terms with the European has disappeared, and its place has been taken by a weakened form of franchise which only permits the qualified Native voters to elect three members to Parliament, and even these must be Europeans. The debates in Parliament and the discussions outside revealed very plainly that European opinion in the main was with the Prime Minister in refusing equality of citizenship to the Black man, though a strong liberal minority opinion was active, and influenced legislation in some measure. Even the lower form of franchise, let it be noted, is limited to the Cape Province. Provision has been made, however, for the Natives of the other Provinces to elect four Europeans to the Senate; and a Native Council is to represent the Natives of the whole Union. The Council will report on all matters relating to Native interests to the Minister of Native Affairs and it may make representations to Parliament.

Then in the Native Trust and Land Act provision is made for the release of large areas of land for Native occupation and for the development of the land in the interests of the Natives. The Government is pledged to make the necessary financial provision for the purchase of the land and Parliament has voted a first grant of £10,000,000.

The Prime Minister has declared with assurance that the new legislation will 'clear up the relations between Black and White and wipe the slate clean.' But there are too many glaring injustices in the treatment meted out to the Black man by the ruling race, and too many manifest

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disabilities in colour bars and repressive laws, to permit many of us to believe that. But, all the same, wisdom will be found in making the fullest possible use of the machinery provided by the new Acts of Parliament, while at the same time the methods of prayer, education, moral suasion and co-operation are used to create a spirit in which wiser and more liberal policies may become possible.

Certainly there is prospect now of rest in the land from embittering controversies and some hope of the birth of earnest co-operative effort to make the best of the opportunities presented by the new legislation. At the close of the debate on the Representation of Natives Bill in the Joint Session of Parliament, the Minister in charge of the Bill made, on behalf of the Government, a direct appeal to the Churches to co-operate in giving it a fair trial, as he was sure that 'from such co-operation very real benefits would accrue to South Africa.' 'Co-operation,' he added, 'would be cordially welcomed by the Government.'

But there are other and deeper forces moving in the Church itself under the pressure of the Spirit of God which belong to the rising tide of Christian co-operation manifest the world over. Each section of the Church in South Africa, with but one exception, is affected, and this cannot but have a helpful influence upon the work of the Christian Council. It would seem that the Council has come into being just when many and varied forces are favourable to united Christian action.

Here it may help to a clearer view of the general situation if we set out the numerical strength of the principal Christian bodies at work among the non-European peoples, the majority of which are now linked in the Council. The latest available figures belong to the returns of 1926; the figures for the census taken this year are not likely to be available until next year. But while the new census may reveal increases, the proportions will probably be about the same.

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EUROPEANS

Dutch	921,961
Anglican	311,281
Methodist	105,217
Presbyterian	79,516
Roman Catholic	71,227
Lutheran	23,371
Baptist	17,316
Congregationalist	9,965
Apostolic Faith Mission	15,544
Salvation Army	3,647

NATIVE

Methodist	661,548
Anglican	289,573
Lutheran	195,313
Dutch Reformed	109,888
Presbyterian	108,819
Congregational	84,998
Roman Catholic	63,179
Baptist	22,100
Zionist	15,001
French Protestant	4,940
Salvation Army	1,978
Various Christian Sects	41,376

COLOURED

Dutch	166,598
Anglican	130,486
Methodist	68,666
Congregational	60,725
Lutheran	46,494
Roman Catholic	18,829
Presbyterian	7,078
Other Christian Sects.. .. .	6,136
Baptist	1,844

Included in the ' various Christian sects ' would be a large number of separatist bodies varying in size from a few hundred to a few thousand members.

What about the relative positions of these churches ? What contributions can they bring to the National Council ? Are there differences of outlook on the racial question ? The Dutch Church is strong and influential as it has about half the European population of the country within its fold.

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Conservative in outlook, it is much more cautious in dealing publicly with racial issues than the English-speaking churches, and much less inclined to witness to what is supra-racial and supra-national in Christianity. There are reasons, historical, social, and religious, to account for that, and they need to be known in order to appreciate the Dutch point of view. But the Dutch Church is a missionary Church. It supports mission work in Nyasaland, Northern Nigeria, Northern and Southern Rhodesia, and Bechuanaland, as well as within the Union of South Africa. Through the Women's Missionary Union, the Laymen's Missionary Movement, the Children's Missionary Circle, and other missionary agencies, it raises some £170,000 annually for missions, and trains European, Native and Coloured missionaries and teachers and women workers. It was the Dutch Reformed Church which, in 1923, initiated a series of national Bantu-European Conferences. And friends of the Native people will never forget that the leader in the fight in Parliament for a liberal Native policy, when the Prime Minister's Bills were under discussion, whose courage and idealism won for him the esteem of the whole House, was an elder of the Dutch Church; and the only Cabinet Minister to take the same high line was also a member of the Dutch Church. It is not true, as is often foolishly asserted, that colour prejudice is the peculiar vice of the Dutchman. There are British-born persons in South Africa who have far more racial prejudice than many of the Dutch people.

A statement of the principles which should form the basis of any proposed solution of the Native question was adopted some time ago at a special meeting of the Federal Council of the Dutch Reformed Churches and this may be regarded as expressing the best mind of the Dutch Church. The statement read:—

'The Native, like ourselves, has been created after God's image and as a human being, and much more as a Christian, he has certain rights which may not be denied him.

'No solution of this problem has any prospect of success if it

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be not undertaken in a Christian spirit, and carried through according to Christian principles.

'The Christian principles which should especially be borne in mind are justice, generosity, mutual respect, and sympathy, patience, and tact.

'The problem is so many-sided and so intricate that we cannot expect to reach any solution in the near future or with any degree of finality; the solution can only come by stages, one part supplementing the other.

'Hence, while we are evolving a solution, it should be our continuous aim to create an atmosphere and a sympathetic feeling between Black and White, and so pave the way for the desired solution.'

Most of the English-speaking churches, of course, have had an overseas origin, and are in the main missionary in sympathy, with a liberal outlook so far as the Natives are concerned. The Anglicans, Congregationalists and Methodists hold all their communicants within the one church organization, with the same rights in the ecclesiastical courts for European, Native or Coloured. Largely owing to the linguistic difficulties and social custom, however, there are separate church buildings as a rule for the Native and Coloured people. The Native and Coloured people belonging to the Dutch Reformed Church are organized into mission Churches with their own ecclesiastical courts.

Recent years have witnessed a steady movement towards self-supporting churches. The Methodists are now, as the Methodist Church of South Africa, an independent and autonomous body, and they raised last year for various church purposes, including missions, over £312,000, exclusive of grants made by the Government for educational work on the mission field. The Church of Scotland, by the formation of a Bantu Presbyterian Church—an autonomous African body—and by its policy of not replacing its missionaries when they reach the retiring age, is obviously moving in the same direction. The Baptist Church is independent and self-supporting and carries on active missionary work. The Presbyterian Church of South Africa and the Congregational Church get very small subsidies now from overseas

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for evangelization work. The Church of the Province (Anglican) is assisted by liberal grants from England. Most of the Continental missionary societies at work in the country, such as the Paris Evangelical Mission, the Rhenish Mission, the Moravian Mission, the Swiss Mission, maintain their connection with the mother bodies, but some of their work is now self-supporting. The Christian Council will have the weighty support of these various bodies, representing at least a dozen nationalities, with a rich variety of tradition, experience, and outlook.

The figures of the church affiliations of the Native people already given show how many are nominally associated with Christian communions. Altogether there are 1,605,927 professing Christians. But the churches and missionary agencies have covered the country with a network of places of worship, day and Sunday schools, secondary schools, teacher training and industrial institutions, medical missions, and welfare organizations, all of which are profoundly affecting the life of the people, purifying age-long customs, sweetening social habits, undermining evil traditions, and raising the whole standard of life.

However, one ugly fact stands boldly out and dominates the missionary horizon of South Africa ; there are more than 3,000,000 heathen in the Union. After considerably more than a century of missionary service there are more heathen people in the country than when the early missionaries began their work. Ought not this fact to bite into the consciousness of every missionary Church ? Obviously a major task of the missionary forces is that of evangelism. A new study of the methods of evangelistic work among the Native people is necessary. Why is it that the million-and-a-half Christians are not a greater force for evangelization ? Is the Native Church in danger of becoming an institution with its main interest turned in upon itself ? Are the many duties associated with the supervision of schools and institutions and the exercise of discipline over congregations absorbing an undue proportion of the missionary's time ? Are Native pastors ceasing to be evangelists ?

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Do we not need a larger evangelism? Where are the evidences in the governing councils of the missionary bodies of long-range policies in regard to the evangelization of the heathen? These are among the questions that are being asked to-day. The European agents will never be sufficient to make the direct contacts with the heathen people necessary for evangelization. Their aim should be to train and equip Native witnesses, fire them with a passion for souls and send them out into the strongholds of heathenism. The establishment of a Bible School at Lovedale on an interdenominational basis for the training of evangelists is a good beginning, but a beginning only on one line of attack.

Then there are new problems arising in connection with Native education now that the Union Government and the Provincial authorities are making a fresh approach to the whole question of the relationship of the Government to Native education and to missionary bodies. The co-ordination of labours in connection with the production of vernacular missionary literature demands attention. Then there is the grave matter of overlapping of effort which cries aloud for unselfish and courageous co-operative action.

It is very plain then, that the Christian Council will have abundant scope for its energies. A first task will probably be a thorough survey of the field. Action must be based on knowledge. All the facts about the present situation need to be gathered up, tabulated, illumined, and then assimilated. The first meeting of the Council was fortunate in having the presence of Mr. Kenneth G. Grubb, of the World Dominion Press, who was co-opted as a member of the Council with Miss Margaret Wrong, Secretary of the International Committee on Christian Literature for Africa, another welcome visitor. Mr. Grubb, by request, addressed the Council on the need and value of a survey and on the publication of a Mission Directory and gave some welcome information about proposals for a survey. At a later time he met the Executive and made helpful suggestions. Such a survey as Mr. Grubb has in view will be most valuable in preparing the way for advance on the

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right lines. A beginning was made in the general work of the Council by setting up committees for the following : evangelism, literature, medical work, education, women's work, youth movements, and Native welfare.

But ' there are many adversaries.' Not always do even the people of the churches follow in good numbers when a lead is given by the Church Assemblies. Prejudice against missionary work is found in high places in the land. There is a widespread fear of the competition of the Black man, should he be encouraged along the path of progress. It is much easier to exploit him when he is ignorant. But the Council will take the high road of equity and hold up to the South African people the ideals of justice and right. It may have to hasten slowly for a time, but in maintaining a united Christian witness and delivering a united testimony it can initiate processes which, followed up, may have profound and far-reaching effect upon national life. The Council, of course, will be affiliated with the International Missionary Council. It will thus form another link in that mighty chain of National Councils which girdles the earth, linking the whole Christian world in a fellowship of intercession and service.

An Important Tool

Thorndike-Century Junior Dictionary. By E. L. Thorndike. (Scott, Foresman. \$1.32).

The *Africa Journal* says that this is one of the most important tools which has come to the attention of educationists in many lands during the past years. It will be welcomed by educationists teaching English to non-English-speaking people, as well as by students who are trying to acquire a new and difficult language. It will help English-speaking teachers in non-English-speaking areas to formulate easily understood definitions which may readily be translated into the vernacular. Professor Thorndike has been an outstanding authority on word lists and other educational problems for many years. From some 10,000,000 words which he read over a period of seventeen years, he has culled out the 25,000 most common.

A missionary writes : ' This Dictionary would be valuable in India, China and Japan, where Christians know English, and, to a less extent, in Africa.'