

Notes on conversation between Cardinal Conway  
and the South African party, Armagh, July 7th.

The Cardinal asked: "Many people urge me to make a statement condemning apartheid. I have a built in resistance to joining band-wagons. But I want to know your view. Would such a statement be of help to you?"

Dr. Nkomo replied by telling of his own experience, having been committed to the road of bloodshed in Africa, and learning to listen to God and "to live out the principles of Moral Re-Armament. I learned to break down the middle wall of partition between God and man, between those we hated and ourselves. The right thing is to sit together and listen to God's voice." He told of the new relationship he found between himself and his wife. "If two people can find such a relationship, on the basis of 'what is right and not who is right', then it is possible in relations with other men. Different conditions or different skin-colours do not stop us listening to God's guidance."

He called for the Church to give to Africa men who will do this, and will train leaders in this way. And he spoke of the way African leaders have found at Caux a better road than Moscow's; to build a "hate-free, fear-free, greed-free Africa, peopled by free men and women."

The Cardinal: "One is aware of the situation in Africa, but is there anything a person in my position can do to help?"

Nkomo: "It would help if men who come to South Africa could come to Caux to learn the strategy of unity, and then go to do missionary work. The help we need is not so much material, as through men with the right ideas."

Patrick Miyen asked the Cardinal to pray for his country.

The Cardinal said he would of course do this, but repeated his query, "Ought I to say something publicly? Something in disapproval of the legal situation - which of course I think is awful, from what I know of it. Would this be useful?"

Nkomo in reply told of his experience. "I have given my life to end injustice; and I am still giving it to that end. I will fight to see that my grandchildren have a better country to grow up in than I had." Then he went on: "Of course we cannot tell you what you should do. You must be free to say what you feel God wants you to say. Peter Howard made clear his views on this subject. The Catholic hierarchy in South Africa has made plain where it stands."

But the crux of the matter, he continued, is to find the most effective way to deal with those responsible for the policy. "I think I can say they are touchy." "Agreed," said Bremer Hofmeyr, whose family has held six Cabinet posts in South African governments.

David Kingwill, Chairman of the Sneeuwberg Agricultural Association, then spoke as a representative of the coming generation of white South Africans. What he and his friends found in MRA, he said, was "a new hope of what our country could do for the world when we answer our own divisions." In addition to offering them this great goal, MRA had given them the answer to fear.

"Ah, fear!" said the Cardinal. "That is the root of our problems here too." "There is also greed," said Kingwill. "That was the problem on our farm." "Many of us have lived selfishly in South Africa. I am now out to change the injustice and put right what is wrong."

Nkomo said, "Of course, it is not so good to point fingers - especially when the other fellow may be able to point three back at you!"

Eric Turpin interjected, "With respect, sir, - it is as though the South African government were to issue a statement condemning the Orange Order!"

Dr. Nkomo said how welcome the Cardinal would be if he went to South Africa. "It may be that God will want you one day to do something great there. It would be a pity if any statement you had made were to make such a visit impossible." The point was made that as much should be done as possible to draw South Africa into the family of nations, rather than to isolate her.

Robert Kinyale said, "It is lack of contact that is the problem." He told of the Students Representative Council President from Stellenbosch who has met MRA and is now organizing a multi-racial group of students to the U.S. in September, to study how multi-racial universities can run.

David Kingwill quoted a statement by Mr. Vorster, the South African Prime Minister, reported recently in the press: "If we fail in human relationships we fail completely. A policy based on the belief that you are better than the next man simply because your skin is white can never succeed." He suggested that the Cardinal might publicly support and encourage the Prime Minister in his new approach.

The Cardinal asked about Harry Oppenheimer, (the South African Financier and Gold magnate) whom he had seen on TV, and whether industrialists like him were helping the situation. Nkomo told of meeting Oppenheimer before leaving for this journey, and of his interest in it. "A man like him could turn the tide. He has great influence. We are grateful for his outlook, and his vision to keep South Africa in the world family of nations, so that in spite of the forces fighting to isolate us we shall remain there. He is a very simple, humble man."

"South Africa", Nkomo went on, "has extremes of people, like the world. There is hope for South Africa, as there is for the world. The help we want is of bridge-builders with the white South Africans. Let men and women come, and see for themselves; not come and get drunk and do all the low things, but give a vision to the people to lift them. It will help us to be the men we are meant to be. We South Africans need men

who will love us as we are and help us to be what we are meant to be, to be God's men."

"There are forces trying to use South Africa to break down Ireland, as they try to use Ireland to break down South Africa."

Michael Horn spoke of the true choice, to lift people on to a higher level of living; and of loyalty to God, which gives true loyalty to Church and section. Speaking as a minister of the Dutch Reformed Church and a Calvinist, he told of his daughter's marriage to a Catholic. "This was a shock to my wife and myself. It took us time to accept it. But when we listened to God, we saw that we should rejoice because they both are loyal to Him." "They are now a joy to us."

George Daneel, thanking the Cardinal, told how he too, as a Dutch Reformed minister, had been brought up 'to believe in our superiority as white people and to fear the Roman danger'. Apologizing for this, he spoke of Frank Buchman's work in South Africa. "He saw the wrongs in our country, and just set out to change people. Thousands were lifted on to a new level, where God is real. As we listen to Him and obey, we not only become friends, but find we have a greater view of our nation as we become committed to God's purpose. That is the hope of the world; and we are realizing that we are not alone."

"We find a unity - closer even than to our families - with everyone who is committed as we are to the remaking of the world."