

Fearlessly build world of faith and freedom

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IT costs nothing to point out what is wrong, but to generate the cure there is a price to pay.

Perhaps that is why so many people spend both time and ink in highlighting all the problems and warning us about pollution of land and sea, deforestation and desertification, drug dependence, divorce, alcoholism and corruption.

Many voices are raised against communism, others blame capitalism. Expertly and interestingly we are warned on television, radio, in newspapers, magazines, even books, that unless these things are dealt with our civilisation will collapse.

It is time for those who believe there is an answer to speak up with clarity and conviction. Now, at the start of the new year we must say, firmly, that we do not believe in the inevitable degradation of our planet or its people.

Freedom

We can build a world in which men and women can live in faith and freedom.

The challenge is to look fearlessly at the basic problems and for each of us to put right (not just point out) what is wrong in our own situation.

It has become fashionable to blame the communists for much that is wrong in our country. Certainly they have not been idle, nor aimed to build up our best interests. Unknowingly to most of us they have successfully been deploying Karl Marx's strategy for victory.

It is time for the cure

He said: "The soundest strategy in war is to postpone the final military operation until the moral degeneration of the enemy renders the mortal blow both possible and easy."

If, in the West, we have by and large fallen into this trap it is not his fault, but ours. We have failed to live the faith, or uphold the standards on which our civilisation has been built.

"Marx was interested in his youth in religion," wrote Rumanian Pastor Joseph Ton some years ago, "but when his philosophy matured he realised that religion was an obstacle to revolution — that atheism was

necessary to create bitter and desperate men, with no conscience or scruples and who would use armed violence to get power".

He craftily used his religious knowledge to plan a strategy to break down the morals of his own followers, and then used the same

technique to weaken his enemies.

But after the revolution was accomplished in Russia the communist leaders realised they could not build a stable society on that basis. They began to call for "a new type of man, who would yield all his

forces freely for others, a committed altruist" (Ton). But not enough people have been ready to sacrifice for their new society.

Recently the Russian leader Mr Mikhail Gorbachev called for reform: "Instances of drunkenness have become frequent," he

said. "And loafers and pillferers again feel at their ease. The failure to bring improvements to many people's lives are very serious symptoms of defects which the party cannot ignore."

Because Russia now has problems in no way lessens

the urgency to deal with our own. But though there are social, economic and political matters which need urgent attention this alone cannot build a society protected from Marx's strategy of "moral degradation".

To outlaw communism and yet condone Marx's morality, as we do, is less than effective. The simple truth is that a nation which develops its material resources and neglects the moral and spiritual will perish.

We need to build anew. To build a home of bricks entails precise work. Each brick must be handled separately, placed in its row, joined by mortar to other bricks. Only when the walls have been strongly built can the roof be nailed and bolted in its place. If we are to build our civilisation under sound government we must have well-built foundations.

Many years ago we decided to try to become part of the cure and have found it both interesting and fulfilling. Aware of the dangers of desert, division and drink, I decided to join others on the road to reconstruction. I learned to stop blaming the Government, the weather, the circumstances or the other man and instead to care for my land on the farm, the men who worked for me, and my family in a new way.

Now we can demonstrate positive changes in the home, on the veld, in personal relations and in the marvellous transformation in a group of disadvantaged

people for whom we created employment in a labour intensive spinning and knitting project in the town (Graaff-Reinet). They are a team of positive, happy, responsible workers who have proved that employment is essential to give meaning to life.

Our efforts to bring answers within the compass of our own lives and work has taught us many lessons but has also confirmed our faith that if enough of us work together we can, yet, build a world that works, a civilisation in which freedom and respect for persons can reign.

It may be that the answer to our worldwide devastating problems can be resolved more simply than some of the experts would think possible. A Red Indian chief who visited South Africa some years ago, pointed the way.

Darkness

He said: "There are standards of darkness — absolute hatred, jealousy, bitterness, pride, they come from the father of darkness. I lived those standards for many years.

"I hated my white and brown brothers and fought with them. Then I met the standards of honesty, purity, unselfishness, and love and I came to know the God of Light. It all comes back to the importance and value of the individual if we want to cut out the root of our problems. We must recognise and deal with the real enemy. Not communism, not capitalism, not nationalism — but fear, hate, greed, selfish ambition, lust, corruption. We must again return to the time-honoured values and instead of deciding if something is Right or Left, decide if it is right or wrong. And do what is right."

Surely if our ship is in danger of sinking, it is imperative that everyone do his part to save the vessel and those on board.