

C H U R C H

P.O. Box 9219,
Eros.
Windhoek.
South West Africa.

P I N K P R E S S

Number Six - 1st February, 1970.

Community of St. Simon the Zealot.

At present there are eight of us - but after the weekend we shall be greatly diminished. We have two weekend visitors - Dick Blair, up from his pipe-laying job at Keetmanshoop, and Joel Gebhardt, waiting for a new school term to begin.

Charles Murcott and Richard Schaerer, both students from Johannesburg, will be going back for the new academic year this weekend. John Ngava will be going back to school in Swaziland. He has no money to pay his school fees, and last year he received a bursary which he will no longer be getting this year. If anyone knows any way of helping him, we shall be glad to hear of it.

After the weekend, the Community will have diminished to three - Heidi Burger, another student from Johannesburg, who paints pictures and writes cool poetry and doesn't like being stroked; and, as usual, Dave de Beer and Steve Hayes. A bit further on you can find an evaluation of our attempts at community living, which we hope will be helpful to any others doing similar things, and perhaps others could give us advice based on their experience.

Gobabis.

Gobabis is a small drought-stricken town about 150 miles east of Windhoek. There is a small Anglican congregation there, which is part of the Windhoek Cathedral Parish. Once a month services are held there, and in January half the Community went out with Steve. Because seven were going, the only vehicle big enough to take us was a 1½ ton Chev. bakkie belonging to the Cathedral. This vehicle has seen better days, and keeps breaking down in awkward places. On this occasion we had to go 50 miles north to Okahandja to fetch it from a garage, where it had spent a month having its timing gears replaced. Most of the month was spent waiting for the parts to come from Johannesburg. We got the bakkie back to Windhoek at about 5 on Saturday afternoon, and then loaded it up with seven people, and food and sleeping bags and cooking pots. Three of us rode in the cab, while the other four lay on mattresses in the back with the cooking pots. The first 30 miles of the road are tarred - as far as the J.G. Strijdom Airport at Ondekaremba. Then as soon as the road goes over the hill, out of sight of foreign visitors, it turns into a vicious car-breaker, with bumps scientifically calculated to harmonise with the resonant frequency of car suspensions. The Chev bakkie may once in the stone age have had shock absorbers, but none have been noticeable within living memory. So we bounced, and bounced, and bounced. A month or two ago, a construction firm began to tar the road - they say it will be ready in two years.

We stopped for the night about 30 miles before reaching Gobabis, and camped at the side of the road, cooking supper in a big three legged pot (called by the shop we bought it from a 'negro-pot' - for the use of white racist cannibals, perhaps) We slept out in the open - it gets cold, even in summer, but rarely rains. The next morning we went on into Gobabis, and went round visiting various members of the congregations there. In the afternoon we held a service in a schoolroom, which ended up as a song competition between the Hereros and Ovambos present - each would alternately sing a hymn, and everyone thoroughly enjoyed themselves, and finally all danced out while singing a chorus and clapping. There were about 60 people present, though there are probably not more than 30 Anglicans in the town, but all sorts of people come along.

We returned to Windhoek that night, and the bakkie's lights failed on mainbeam. The roads were infested with kudu - a type of car eating antelope. All along the road are signs saying "Danger Kudu Gevaar" -

By day kudus are harmless beasts, but at night they jump onto passing cars, quite often with disastrous results for the car, the driver, and themselves.

Such travelling is fairly typical of what we do here in South West Africa, and not only among the Anglicans. Peter Lamoela, for example, is the only Congregational Minister in the whole country, and so he has even more travelling to do.

Keep Left - that's Right Political Column.

The Herstigte Nasionale Party, founded by Dr Bertie Hedgehog, held a meeting recently in Windhoek, which several of us attended. It was quite unlike any other white political meeting I have ever seen - and so I will give a brief account of it. It was the opening of the campaign for the white elections here in Windhoek. There were about 20 people, ardent Vorster supporters, wearing swastikas and throwing stink bombs, and now and again they would chant Heil Vorster. But the most amazing thing was the reaction of the Nationalists in the audience. When a speaker said that they could go into a hotel and put their head on a pillow where a black head had been the night before, they all cheered wildly. Again, when he told the audience they were liberals and communists, they all cheered. At question time, a member of the audience said that the H.N.P. could not claim to be a Christian party, because they did not love their black neighbours - and the door must be opened to the black neighbours. Cheers again.

The H.N.P. is doing a great service, by confusing the issues. Soon the Nats won't know whether they are left or right. They have other virtues too - they are against BOSS, and claim to be against economic exploitation of any one, of any race. But I still find it hard to believe that our happy smiling Ossewa Brandwag General, Jolly John Vorster, is a liberal. Somehow 90 days and BOSS just don't look like that.

Political reports and comments exclusively by S.T. Hayes.
No one else is responsible for this.

International Tour No 2.

Steve has just done a lightning tour of South Africa again. One of the Anglican priests from Ovamboland moved to Grahamstown, and Steve went down there to bring back the car he had been using. On the way went round to various relief agencies like Kupugani, Inter-Church Aid, and the Congregational Food Distribution Service, bumming food for old people in Windhoek, who very often have no one to look after them, and have no pensions. He also brought back Rick Houghton, who had been to a theological colleges conferences, and was to take over the car. We brought back R 105 worth of food - mostly high-protein soup and maluti meal (a sort of fortified mealie meal). We spent only R 20 on it - all the rest was donated - R 20 from Steve's mother, R 20 from John Davies, the Wits University Chaplain, and R 50 from the Congregational Food Distribution Service.

Interkerkelike Armsorgraad

This is the name we have given to our feeding scheme. It really started many years ago - and was mainly operated personally by Colin Winter, then Dean of Windhoek. When he became Bishop, he had to do much more travelling, and was not able to continue to the same extent, and he handed it over to CHURCH, to continue. We feel that the old people are the concern of all the churches, and so are setting up an Interchurch Committee to organise. One of the difficulties is that cheap nourishing food is not available in Windhoek, and hence the need to bring it from South Africa. We have enough food for about five months, and we distribute it to 20-30 people once a week. Through health visitors and social workers we hear of more needs, and will try expand our activities into other fields.

Musroid Restoration Fund

Musrum, Steve's beloved Peugeot 403 Station Wagon, spirited male gypsy mouse, gallant companion of many journeys, has gone to bed with an unpleasant noise, and worn-out brakes. We are saving up to restore it for the next international tour.

Sudden prayers make God jump.

Ikon.

Subscriptions continue to trickle in. The Catonsville Roadrunner is selling it for us in Britain, and we are selling Roadrunners in Windhoek. We believe that Dick Usher is selling Roadrunner in Durban.

IKON 3 will be ready soon - a bit late for the Summer number, but we were delayed by the printers Christmas holidays. It has the last of the series of articles on human settlements, this time dealing with urban settlements, articles on the need for applied theology, and much more besides. Subscribe now to make sure you get your copy.

All subs should be sent to : Ikon Publications,
c/o P.O. Box 332,
Pietermaritzburg. R.S.A.

For 1 year it is R 1.00 in Southern Africa.
12/6 in Britain.
\$ 1.50 in U.S.A.

British Postal Orders are acceptable. Otherwise cheques or money orders, make payable to 'Ikon Publications'. Please add 10% commission to cheques drawn on banks outside South Africa and South West Africa.

TEN WEEKS : an evaluation

by Dave de Beer

'Behold, How good and how pleasant it is for bretheren to dwell together in unity!' (Ps. 133 vs. 1)

Our Community can really be said to have started in the last two weeks of November, 1969, and now, ten weeks later, it seems fitting that an honest assessment be made of what we have achieved and what we have not achieved.

No-one could say that we have been a settled community. In these ten weeks two periods can fairly easily be distinguished; before Christmas and after Christmas. This division covers not so much the activities of the group, but its composition.

Any attempt at evaluation must have provide standards to judge the action or non-action by. (I wouldn't think that the words success and failure apply here.) The standard which I am applying here is that the Community should be as full an agent for the work of the church, as opposed to Church, as possible. In some ways the Community should try to be the church, that place and those people who reflect the liberating power of the risen Christ. Some may criticise these 'standards' as being too ideological or unreal or too vague, but at no time have we ever tried to produce a specific goal feeling that in some ways this is a limiting factor, not so much in personal development, but rather in the overall development of the Community and the directions it follows.

The question to be answered then is how well has the community adapted itself with its rapidly changing composition to the opportunities for action which lay before it?

Ten Weeks : an evaluation (continued)

We have tried to do several things; some corporately, others done by individuals or smaller groups:

The feeding of the aged in the Windhoek area: This has had more results than merely filling the stomachs of those who have been fortunate enough to receive the food. In finding the old and needy we have come into contact with other church ministers trying to fill the same needs as we are, leading figures in the location have also come forward and volunteered their help, and as reported elsewhere in this issue we are trying to form an inter-church organisation for taking care of the poor. As in any case of trying to relieve poverty we are merely filling the gaps rather than curing the root cause. In broadening our base of support we may be able to fill in more gaps and rouse some opinion against the root cause.

Although it cannot really be said to be a community function members of the community are responsible for ministering to scattered congregations within a radius of 150 miles from Windhoek. Here the rest of the community has gone along to isolated mines and construction sites and shared in the worship and personal exchange. This, I feel, has added greatly to the effectiveness of the ministry. The response at Gobabis is an example, while Brakwater the camp 13 miles North of Windhoek has been the easiest to evaluate because of the more regular contact and the feedback that is obtained from the workers themselves. Almost every Sunday since November groups of around half a dozen have gone out to help organise the service in the tiny home-made tin church. In addition we have also gone out some Saturday afternoons merely to talk to some of the regular Church going families to exchange ideas and opinions and broaden our backgrounds. In an apartheid society where separation is all important this contact across man-made barriers gives some hope that the reconciling of Christ will prevail and helps show the Church as the living image of Christ.

We have also tried, in a series of agapes and/or common meditations to give those with whom we come into contact an experience of a non-structured form of worship. It has also allowed us to deepen and renew our relationship with people whom we do not often meet. It has been useful to be able to say, "Why don't you come round next Tuesday evening. We're having some form of worship service and you will eventually get something to eat". So easy and yet so unstructured, but through this we can keep in touch with many who otherwise would gradually slip away.

To some extent we have also been a labour pool, helping out in odd painting jobs or moving furniture. Whether this is Christian service or exploitation we haven't yet decided.

It all looks so good, and yet at heart I feel that we haven't yet really got organised. It seems so sporadic when one knows the inside story; so truly reflective of our life together which seems sometimes to drift aimlessly, sometimes introvertedly, and sometimes pulls together to produce something quite unexpected, quite rewarding. Some cohesiveness is definitely lost with people coming and going as they have been, and yet each new arrival brings a new enthusiasm, a new dynamism, a new stabilising force that is generally unexpected. Often living together seems more giving than sharing until one meets a communal spirit that carries one along engulfing one in its all-embracing power where individualism dies. This is community.

Bonhoeffer wrote that Christianity means community through Jesus Christ and in Jesus Christ, and that as a true Christian community

Ten Weeks : an evaluation (continued)

develops it is Christ that becomes the dominant power. It is here I feel weakest. At times I have felt the community becoming too introverted; too concerned with its own existence. On other occasions it has seemed fragmented; too unconcerned with its existence and the reason for its existence, and sometimes involved with hypothetical reasoning and logistics that benefits no-one, is divorced from reality, and creates artificial hang-ups which impair its ultimate efficiency in terms of service in Christ's name. What is needed to remedy this I am not sure, but I feel that a far greater concentration of joint communal worship as a stabilising factor, indeed as a centralising factor, in our communal existence is required.

PINK PRESS LITERARY COLUMN

Ecrire

Some say writing is creative,
that by putting pen to paper
you can communicate your thoughts and ideas to others;
that by writing
you can communicate yourself to others.

Some say writing is inspired,
that in writing you are removed from the world of realities
no matter how earthy your topic;
that in writing you are above the world of the flesh
and in the world of mindful communication.

Yet writing is more than communication
and inspiration
and the creation of ideas and the realisation of concepts.
Writing is the creation of your being
and the moulding of unexpressed ideas into a reality
that becomes part of you
that moulds you.

Writing is both the realisation of the past
and the probing of the future,
and so creates
a timeless present.

David de Beer

Some Random Thoughts:

Naturally not everything can be expressed in an article evaluating our community life. Some things just are not relevant. Like IKON.

With Ikon No. 3 completed from the editorial side here are some comments on what Ikon is to us. Ikon is not merely a matter of soliciting articles in a particular vein, or of doing some of the writing to express our feelings on matters important to us. Through the production of Ikon we have come into contact with people and groups throughout the world all trying to express their Christianity in modern terms, and trying to encourage others to do the same. Being part of this movement is a thrilling experience. Dealing with enquiries and replies to articles makes one constantly re-assess

Some Random Thoughts (continued)

one's viewpoint in the light of further information. Generally the result of this is to force you to develop your thinking, oftening strengthening and confirming your original resolve.

Brought home very clearly also is the power that the written word carries. A remark in parenthesis, thrown in almost as an aside, can be seized upon and extended as though it were the phrase upon which the whole logic of the argument was based. In a conversation such a remark would be largely ignored or not even noticed, but subjected to a reader's scrutiny the written word carries a power out of all proportion to the original intention.

And so Ikon has become very much a part of us, almost a silent member of the community. Short paragraphs on Ikon in letters from friends; enquiries on editorial content, news from the subscription and production department in Pietermaritzburg, new responses from outside contacts, permission to reprint occasional articles; all are part of Ikon; and Ikon serves to make our existence here meaningful.

Communal Hang-ups.

Our biggest hang-up, namely housing, has been dropped, thanks to the sufficient recovery of Dr. Nobes, the Ovamboland priest who was sick. He still has to see doctors in Windhoek, but not as frequently as was feared, and so he is able to continue his work in the theological college at Odibo.

Proper Interference Lit/Crit Dept.

FREE TO BE is the title someone thought up for the book written by John Davies, Anglican Chaplain at Wits. He wanted to call it proper interference, but the Archbishop of Cape Town, whose Lent Book it is, didn't like it. It about the Christian ministry of healing, in the broadest possible sense. Greatly recommended. 40c from S.P.C.K.

Democracy - Greek Style.

Three boos for the ex-Prime Minister of Lesotho, who, having lost an election, puts the Government in jail, and sets himself up as Dictator. Frahco and the other European savages never had it so good.

Contacts

Windhoek Peter Lamoela, Posbus 3605.

Johannesburg John Davies (Wits Chaplain) 19 Jan Smuts Ave., Parktown.

Pietermaritzburg Jenny Aitchison, P.O. Box 1329.

Durban Carohn Cornell, Inanda Seminary, Private Bag 4105.

London Dave Poolman, 10 Rabbits Road, London E 12.

Manchester Alan Cox, 46 Albert Road, Manchester, M192AB.

This issue of the Pink Press was compiled and produced by Dave de Beer & Steve Hayes in Windhoek. No one else is responsible for it or for any matter contained in it.

CHRIST IS RISEN AND HELL IS ABOLISHED !