

MASTER

THE CHURCHES AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Niall MacDermot

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Human Rights and The Churches

It was with real pleasure that I accepted this invitation to speak on Human Rights and the Churches. It is nearly six years since I began working in the international field on behalf of human rights. During that time I have become increasingly aware that it is often the Churches which play the greatest part in their defence and promotion, particularly in countries where human rights are consistently and systematically violated. Sometimes they are almost alone in doing so.

I am speaking primarily of the Christian Churches. Two years ago I attended a Conference in Louvain of the World Conference of Religion for Peace, a non-governmental organisation which brings together members of all the leading religions of the world in the cause of peace and related subjects, including human rights. One of the things which struck me was how much better equipped organisationally the Christian Churches are than other religions to take action in this field. This is not to decry the contribution made by other religious leaders, but when there is a need for co-ordinated, speedy and effective action at the national and international levels, it is particularly the Christian Churches who have the means available and the will to use it.

What I have been saying can be illustrated from Rhodesia, where it is the Christian Churches who, almost alone among the small white minority, have maintained a campaign in favour of human rights. There are opposition

political parties within the white minority who could have championed this cause if they had chosen to do so. But even those who favour a more liberal policy towards the Africans have not been prepared to challenge the government about the brutalities and excesses of the security forces towards the Africans. Perhaps they have been afraid of incurring electoral unpopularity if exposed to the kind of abuse which the Minister of Law and Order, Mr. Lardner Burke, saw fit to direct at the Churches. In an obvious reference to the Catholic Justice and Peace Commission he said: "There is a fifth column at work which on the face of it appears to stand for justice and peace and so forth but which in reality has much more sinister objectives." On another occasion, in rejecting a demand for a commission of enquiry into alleged atrocities, he said: "It is the usual ploy of those who are indoctrinated by the Communist Code."

Whatever the reason for the silence of the opposition parties, it was left to the Christian Churches to collect and publish, with your assistance, information about the torture and ill-treatment of suspects and the demoralizing and dehumanizing effects of the way in which Africans have been crowded into the so-called protected villages. The Catholic Justice and Peace Commission has been in the lead in this, but it has been very much an ecumenical activity with close co-operation between Catholics, Anglicans, Methodists and other Churches.

It is right to say that African leaders have also denounced these violations but naturally this does not make the same impact within the white community as statements by their own Church leaders. Also the Africans do not have the same links with the outside world, so as to be able to mobilize external pressures upon the government. Indeed, in this particular case, it was to me somewhat surprising and depressing to find how sceptical the African leaders were about the value of trying to do this. They had known for years what had been going on, but they did not see any point in trying to document and transmit abroad this information. There would, no doubt, have been risks for

them in doing so. But it is not, I believe, primarily the risks involved which have deterred them. This reason is a sadder one. Disillusioned by the ineffectiveness of the United Nations action against the illegal regime, they do not see how activities of this kind can help at all towards their liberation. In this, I am sure, they are profoundly mistaken, but it is a sad reflection that this should be their attitude.

It is perhaps an extreme case. Other African liberation movements in Southern Africa have had much closer contacts with international human rights organisations. Nevertheless, they are seldom equipped to collect and disseminate the kind of accurate and continuous information which is required to enable an effective pressure of public opinion abroad to be built up.

The Churches have one great advantage in Rhodesia. They have, in the missionaries and mission schools, representatives throughout the African areas who are closely in touch with the people and know what is happening to them and what they are thinking. We had a vivid illustration of this same point in quite another region of the world when our mission went to Chile in 1974. We were received by Cardinal Raul Silva just after the remarkable public statement by the Catholic Bishops' Conference denouncing the use of physical and psychological tortures during interrogations. He told us that two days earlier General Pinochet had tried to dissuade him from publishing this, adding "Anyway, it isn't true." The Cardinal's reply to this was: "General, there are two organisations in this country who know what is going on, the Carabineros and the Church, and the reason is the same. In each case we have our man in every street and in every village and nothing can happen without our knowing about it. If the Church tells you that these practices are occurring, you have got to believe it." Evidently, General Pinochet did believe it, since, on a later occasion, he defended the practice to Bishop Helmut Frenz, saying "How else can we make them sing." Cardinal Raul Silva also told us on this occasion that whereas there had been a minority of the Bishops who doubted the wisdom of their Conference making

a public statement of this kind, there was not one who disagreed with the facts of the arbitrary arrests and torture and ill-treatment of suspects. On that there was unanimity.

The Churches: Co-operation and Contribution

These two examples indicate some of the reasons why the Churches are able to and do make a unique and vital contribution to the promotion of human rights. They have access to reliable factual information about what is happening; their word is generally credible in these matters in a way that that of interested political organisations is not; they usually enjoy a certain immunity from repression at least in professedly Christian countries (there are, of course, limits to this; it is not unusual to find priests imprisoned in some of these countries); and finally they have channels of communication to interested persons and organisations outside their countries who are ready to help them.

These points could be illustrated from almost every region of the world. To an important extent it is the Churches who have drawn attention to and supplied information about torture practices, arbitrary arrests and detentions, harrassments, threats, physical attacks and assassinations carried out by security forces, or, in some cases, their para-military or para-police associates, in places as far apart as Korea, the Philippines, South Africa, Chile, and Brazil, to name but a few.

Usually, one of the Churches is in the lead, generally the Church with the largest following among the oppressed, but it is striking in how many cases this activity is the occasion for close ecumenical inter-church co-operation. Among examples which spring to mind are the Committee for Co-operation for Peace in Chile and the Christian Institute in South Africa. The Committee for Co-operation for Peace came into existence at the initiative of the leaders of the Catholic and Lutheran Churches and of the Jewish community. It provided a legal aid and advice service which helped thousands of political prisoners, as well as workers who had been dismissed from their jobs owing to their

political beliefs. It organised relief and assistance to their families. It collected and collated accurate and reliable information about the repression in Chile and supplied it to many visiting missions from abroad. The Christian Institute in South Africa, with support from all the leading Christian Churches apart from the Dutch Reformed Church, seeks to promote inter-racial understanding and to find solutions compatible with Christian principles to South Africa's social problems. It has also produced accurately documented information about the repression in South Africa as well as a remarkable series of reports and studies with positive proposals for advancing the status of Africans. It is led by one of the great Christian leaders of our times, Dr. Beyers Naudé, a former pastor of the Dutch Reformed Church, which disowned him when he accepted the directorship of the Institute.

In each case, the repressive governments concerned have rightly seen these bodies as a serious challenge to their position, and have done all that they can, or all that they think expedient, to discredit them and restrict their activities. In neither case could the authorities prosecute them for any offence, as they had kept strictly within the law. In Chile the Committee has been closed down, not by any lawful procedure but simply by beginning to arrest and detain its staff under the state of siege (the head of the legal department has been expelled from the country) and by General Pinochet writing a letter to Cardinal Silva telling him that the Committee must cease its activities.

In South Africa the action taken has been more subtle and more sinister. The Christian Institute was subjected to an examination by the notorious secret inquisition known as the Schibusch Commission. This was a Parliamentary Commission (in which to their discredit the opposition United Party participated), which was set up to investigate allegedly subversive organisations. It sat in secret and it was an offence to publish anything that was said before the Commission. Members of the suspected organisations could be summoned to be interrogated by the Commission under oath, without

knowing what charges had been made or what evidence had been led against them. They were not entitled to the assistance of a lawyer and it was a criminal offence to refuse to answer questions. In these circumstances Dr. Beyers Naudé and other leaders of the Christian Institute refused to testify, making clear that they would be willing to do so in open proceedings subject to the normal safeguards and principles of the Rule of Law. They were all duly prosecuted and convicted and the protracted appeal proceedings are not yet completed.

This Commission eventually produced a report which sought to smear the Institute with the suggestion that it supports violent change and therefore constitutes a danger to the state. The report was described in a leading article in the *Cape Times* in these words: "It is about the worst document of its sort we have ever set eyes on, when judged by the criteria of unsubstantiated assertion, guilt by association, unveiled innuendo and jumping to conclusions."

The government, however, were so pleased with this instrument of calumny that they have now introduced a Bill to establish a permanent commission of this kind and to give themselves power to impose indefinite detention without trial on security suspects.

As well as co-operating between themselves, the Churches in these countries often work closely with lawyers who share their concern to assist the victims of oppression and to see a restoration of human rights under the law.

The Role of the Legal Profession

The role of the legal profession varies greatly from country to country. In all countries there will be at least a small minority of lawyers who know what is going on and who are involved in defending victims. These tend to be a group of younger lawyers who practise largely in criminal work. They are not among the most influential or powerful members of the profession. In some cases they are politically sympathetic to the victims, if only because in places where there are acute political divisions and tensions it is rare to find lawyers willing to act for suspects on the other side of

the political fence. This becomes something of a vicious circle. The lawyers get identified with their clients and consequently subject to the same kind of harrassment and persecution. In Argentina, for example, it is not unusual for defence lawyers to have bombs thrown into their offices, to be threatened with assassination if they do not leave the country, and even at times to be assassinated without being offered this option. Where these defence lawyers are left to themselves without support from the leaders of the profession, the establishment lawyers, they are at great risk. The leaders of the profession either do not know what is going on or do not want to know. It is not an unusual experience for me when meeting the heads of the profession in such countries to find that I know more about what is going on in their countries than they do. I remember clearly a strenuous discussion I had in 1972 with a member of one of the leading firms of commercial lawyers in Uruguay who simply would not believe the things I told him. Two years later, when things had got a good deal worse, and even his respectable clients were getting tortured for suspected currency offences, he admitted that I had been right and he had been wrong.

When the leaders of the legal profession strip off their blinkers and find out what is really going on and are prepared to stand up and support those of their colleagues who are involved in the day-to-day struggle, they can play a really important role in defence of human rights. I think, for example, of the Council of the Federation of Colleges of Advocates in Brazil, a most influential body which has consistently and publicly protested against the violations of human rights occurring in Brazil, and have taken energetic action in support of colleagues who have been persecuted. Another example is Pakistan, where the most distinguished members of the profession have led the struggle for liberty. Under the military dictatorship of Ayub Khan they literally went out into the streets, carrying banners and demonstrating against unjust laws and practices.

The same applies, I think, to the Churches. When those in positions of greatest responsibility are prepared to deploy

all the force of their authority in support of the minority of their members, for it is usually a minority, who are actively engaged on behalf of human rights, it not only adds greatly to the effectiveness of their action but gives some protection to those who by their activities may be risking harrassment and vilification, if not actual persecution.

So far I have been talking about the work of the Churches in the countries where there is systematic violation of human rights. Before coming nearer home perhaps I should make clearer to what human rights I am referring.

When lawyers speak of human rights they tend to think in particular of the traditional civil and political rights, freedom of speech and expression, freedom of association and assembly, a free press, freedom from arbitrary arrest, the right to a fair trial, freedom of communication, freedom of movement, and so forth. Western trained lawyers believe that these rights achieve their highest attainment when safeguarded by a pluralist parliamentary democracy, by an independent judiciary and by well-known legal remedies, such as *habeas corpus*.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as I am sure you know, includes not only these traditional civil and political rights but also the basic economic and social rights inherent in the concept of social justice, such as the right to work with fair remuneration and equal opportunity, without discrimination, trade union rights, the right to social security, family rights, the right to an adequate standard of living and health, the right to education, the right to participate in the cultural life of the community. These two sets of rights have been spelt out in greater detail in the two International Covenants of Human Rights, the Civil and Political and the Economic, Social and Cultural, which have both, after many years, just received the 35 ratifications needed to bring them into force. Many of us feel very relieved that the United Kingdom has become one of the ratifying states.

I believe that Churchmen will readily understand this interaction of economic, social and cultural rights, and the civil and political rights. They see them as one whole because they see each single individual as a whole, and all mankind as a whole, whose unity in peace and love they pray and work for. The growing sense of responsibility of the Churches for action in the field of human rights is striking. Let me give a few quotations to illustrate the point.

On March 15 of this year Cardinal Stephen Kim of Korea preached a sermon during a Mass in the Cathedral in Seoul for priests and other Christians detained by the Korean police after a prayer meeting held on March 1 in the same Cathedral. In his sermon he said of those arrested:

I believe that their fundamental interest was in social justice and the protection of human rights before any interest in political systems. As a matter of fact this is the teaching of the Church. The 1971 Synod of Bishops' Statement on Justice in the World taught that the Church must do her best to realise social justice and made it clear that 'work for the realization of justice is a constitutive part of the mission of the Church.'

The Synod of Bishops states in its message on the Protection of Human Rights issued in 1974 that 'the protection of human rights is today one of the Church's greatest missions.' In addition, the social teachings of successive generations of Popes and the teachings of the Councils emphasize that the Church must understand salvation, not in the old, narrow sense of 'saving souls,' but in the broader sense of developing the whole man. It is [in] this sense that the Church must devote herself to making every country, in fact the whole world, more human in Christ. Therefore, the Church must do her best to plant the Gospel spirit, justice and love deep in every sphere of society—political, economic and cultural.

On December 7, 1973, on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a Joint Statement was issued by Dr. Philip Potter for the

World Council of Churches and Cardinal Roy for the Pontifical Commission Justice and Peace. Two of its main points were:

We appeal to local churches, and particularly to Christian leaders and educators, to initiate or intensify programmes of instruction and sensitization on human rights and corresponding duties so that every person, regardless of race, religion, class or nationality, may be aware of the qualities of human life to which he is entitled.

and:

Together we must promote and defend human rights in each of our own respective societies. And in solidarity with all those who struggle for freedom and justice we must identify our efforts to remove the root causes of human suffering wherever it occurs.

Plainly, action can be taken at different levels. At one level it can be a matter of charitable work to bring succour and relief to victims of oppression as well as to victims of poverty, disease and ignorance. The work of missionaries in the field of education and the work of the great relief organisation is all an important activity in support of human rights. Others will be drawn to remedial action aimed at persuading or inducing authorities who are violating human rights to moderate their actions and make their rule more humane. For others again, their concern about justice will lead them to search for the political means to tackle the underlying causes of injustice.

In the International Commission of Jurists we describe ourselves as a non-political organisation, meaning that we are not identified with any particular party or ideology and seek to look objectively at the situation concerning human rights under all political and social systems. But we are well aware that everything we say and do has political implications. It is impossible to make any meaningful contribution to the protection of human rights in any country without some understanding of the political background and the

political forces involved. And it is equally impossible to take any effective action in support of human rights without one's actions having political repercussions. We cannot, as lawyers, shirk the fact that the struggle for human rights is inevitably a political activity.

There are, of course, many lawyers who refrain from acting because they consider the matter "too political." But this decision to do nothing where there is a possibility of action is itself a political act in favour of the *status quo*. The same dilemma must face churchmen as it faces lawyers. Equally, to have a too strictly juridical approach to human rights tends to make them defensive instruments to protect that which exists, giving human rights an essentially static character.

The field of possible action is enormous, and obviously there must be selection. Each individual and group must decide about its priorities and what action is likely to be most fruitful or effective. Those present at the St. Pölten Consultation of the World Council of Churches, held near Vienna in October 1974, formulated their current priorities in the field of human rights under six headings, which you may find of interest. They are:

The right to basic guarantees for life, including the right to work, to adequate food, to guaranteed health care, to decent housing, and to education for the full development of the human potential;

The rights to self-determination and to cultural identity and the rights of minorities;

The right to participate in decision-making within the community, calling for structures of governments at all levels to 'become more responsive to the will of all the persons belonging to the various communities,' especially women and the young;

The right to dissent which 'preserves a community or system from authoritarian rigidity.' It is essential to the vitality of every society that the voices of dissenters be heard and that their right to hold opinions without

interference, to freedom of expression and the right to peaceful assembly be guaranteed;

The right to personal dignity, for example [freedom from] physical or psychological attacks on the human person;

The right to religious freedom which should, nevertheless, not be used to claim privileges. For the church this right is essential so that it can fulfil its responsibilities which arise out of the Christian faith. Central to these responsibilities is the obligation to serve the whole community.

Conclusions: Supporting Human Rights

Let me turn now to the final part of this address in which I shall try to suggest some possible fields for action and ways of increasing the effectiveness of the Churches in support of human rights. If this sounds presumptuous and even impertinent, I can only plead that I was specifically asked to do so.

I shall speak mainly of the way in which Churches in western countries can aid those who are struggling against oppression and injustice in other countries, for this is the field in which I am particularly involved. This does not, of course, mean that I am suggesting that there are no human rights problems within our own countries which require the attention of the Churches. Far from it. One need only mention the agonizing conflict in Northern Ireland, or the deep problems of racial discrimination, to see how much there is to do at home. Much of what I have to say about helping our brothers and sisters abroad can be adapted without much difficulty to human rights issues at home.

The essential strategy in the field of human rights is based on three propositions derived from the experience of organisations operating in this field. These are that there is no government in the world which is not susceptible to pressures of public opinion, that these pressures are most effective when they can operate through other governments,

particularly those on which the offending government depends for aid, trade and arms; and that, at the least, outside pressure always gives encouragement and hope to those who are struggling within the country concerned against the system of oppression. Even if dictatorial governments are able to stifle opinion internally, they cannot stifle what is said abroad, and with modern means of communication a great deal of that will penetrate the sound barrier of censorship and control.

The Use of Information

The starting point of all action is gathering and disseminating reliable, accurate and objective information. As I have indicated already, the Churches have exceptional, and in some cases, unique opportunities to perform this function. Information is needed not only about the violations of human rights which are occurring, but the context in which they occur and the basic causes of them. Violations such as arbitrary arrest and imprisonment, torture, rape, deportation, enforced incarceration in mental hospitals, or kidnapping and assassination of political opponents do not occur in a vacuum. To quote from a report of last year's Nairobi Conference of the World Council of Churches, "The basic causes for these violations are to be found in an unjust social order, the abuse of power, the lack of economic development and unequal development. This leads to violations of unjust laws and rebellion by the dispossessed, to which political and military forces of 'law and order' respond with cruel repression." So information is required not only on the violations themselves but on the laws and structures which support them and the basic causes of the unrest which they are designed to repress.

To collect this information requires organisation. It will usually mean visits to the countries concerned or inviting visits from them urging and encouraging, and perhaps giving financial assistance to the local Churches to gather the needed information in a continuing and systematic way, with precise data. They in turn need to establish links with lawyers,

economists, social scientists and others who can help them to collect and collate this information. It will also mean establishing contacts and regular channels of communication. On the basis of this information, well-prepared studies and reports can, with the assistance of the mass media, help to enlighten informed opinion upon particular situations, as well as serving as the basis for other actions.

The second field of action is promoting human rights by teaching their spiritual significance, educating people at all levels on the religious and moral basis of human rights, economic, social and cultural, as well as civil and political, and stressing the need for adequate legal procedures for their protection. These include, of course, religious freedom and freedom of conscience, not as a special privilege for the Churches but as an inseparable part of fundamental human rights.

Information: The Role of the Churches

Thirdly, the Churches can seek ways to intervene in particular situations so as to make felt their concern and the weight of their moral judgement and spiritual authority. This action can take place at all levels and there is great scope here for imaginative and novel modes of action. The action should be aimed in three directions, to influencing the directly offending government, to influencing public opinion in one's own country and abroad, and to influencing the parliaments and governments of one's own or friendly governments who may bring pressure privately or openly upon the government concerned. Let me give an example which illustrates the point. About a year before the fall of the military dictatorship we learned that seven lawyers in Greece who had been acting for and advising students had been arrested and were being severely tortured in the notorious ESA military interrogation centre in Athens. Our organisation sent to Greece a mission of three very distinguished lawyers from across the Atlantic, a former U.S. representative to the UN Commission on Human Rights, a Canadian Professor who was former Director of the UN

Human Rights Division, and a leading member of the Bar of the City of New York. They were not received by government ministers, but they did see many colleagues and friends and families of the arrested lawyers. Before they left they held a press conference in Athens denouncing these arbitrary detentions and tortures, and they held another on their return to New York. The mission attracted considerable attention, especially in the American press. Shortly afterwards the lawyers were released. Some time later we learned that the U.S. government had, following this mission, made the strongest diplomatic representations they had ever made on a human rights issue to the Greek government. They were able to do this by saying to the Greek government, "We have no wish to interfere in your internal affairs, but when your actions provoke a reaction of this kind among the most prestigious lawyers in our country, this becomes an internal matter for us and affects our relationship with you." I am sure it was this intervention by the State Department which had the desired result. Among the lessons to be learned from this episode is that it is usually only by arousing public opinion that one is able to overcome the reluctance of governments to intervene in what they choose to regard as each other's internal affairs.

I take this example from our own experience, but there have been many cases where fact-finding or other missions have been sent by Churches, in which distinguished Church leaders have been able to make a considerable impact upon a particular situation and draw public attention to it.

It is impossible to lay down fixed rules about the type of action which will be most effective. Each situation must be judged upon its merits. Sometimes it is better to act publicly, by an open and fearless denunciation of outrageous actions; on other occasions a more temperate expression of concern, or even a private intervention without publicity will have more effect. Again, it is sometimes better to act alone, sometimes to act jointly with members of other Churches or human rights organisations. In any event, it is always well to maintain close contact with other organisations, so that even

if each acts in its own name, there is the cumulative effect of an orchestrated campaign. On occasions it may be better to work through other organisations. We have not infrequently been approached by Churches to send an Observer to an important political trial which is of concern to them or to send a mission to study a particular situation, and I know that there is also close co-operation between Churches in many parts of the world and Amnesty International and the International Committee of the Red Cross on behalf of prisoners of conscience.

All the traditional methods of lobbying can be employed. My experience as a member of the House of Commons for ten years and then working for nearly six years in the ICJ has shown me that we still have a lot to learn from the United States in this art. Of course, their Constitution and parliamentary procedures, in particular the work of the Congressional Committees, help a great deal. But I believe that much more effective political pressure on human rights issues could be built up in the British Parliament, either by an all-party group or perhaps more effectively within each party. I am sure that pressures by the Churches upon M.P.s could help to bring this about.

A more direct way in which the Churches can assist victims of oppression is by helping to organise legal aid for them and relief for their families, either in relation to particular cases, or by raising the funds to finance a local body such as the former Committee for Co-operation for Peace in Chile. Fund-raising is not only a most practical form of help but is also a valuable means of educating people on human rights and developing their sense of responsibility about them.

A fourth field in which the Churches could help is the development of what is called, perhaps rather optimistically, the international implementation of human rights. This is a subject for a lecture in itself, or a series of lectures. Briefly, the object is to break down the rigid barrier of the doctrine of national sovereignty. This finds expressions in Article 2, paragraph 7 of the UN Charter, which says that nothing in

the Charter shall authorise the UN to intervene in matters which are *essentially* within the domestic jurisdiction of any state, or require members to submit such matters to settlement under the Charter. The word 'essentially' is usually omitted when governments quote this paragraph. It is, of course, accepted that the UN can act in human rights situations which constitute a threat to peace, and it is under this provision that sanctions were imposed against Rhodesia. It is also now accepted that a situation in which there is "a consistent pattern of gross violations of human rights" is a matter of international concern not falling within the exclusive domestic jurisdiction of the particular state. And, very remarkably, there is a procedure in the UN Human Rights Commission, known as the Resolution 1503 procedure, under which either individual victims, or concerned non-governmental organisations, can bring complaints before the Commission through one of its subordinate bodies. It is not as yet a very effective procedure, but it is another way of bringing pressure upon governments and it is worth developing.

Information: UN and Regional Bodies

There are also other UN procedures which can be used. Under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights a new Human Rights Committee is about to be set up which will be able to receive and consider complaints of violations of the Covenant brought by individual victims against governments which have ratified the Optional Protocol to the Covenant, or complaints made between governments who have made an Article 41 declaration agreeing to submit to this procedure. Although the United Kingdom has ratified the Covenant, it has not ratified the Optional Protocol or made an Article 41 declaration, and I suggest that members of Parliament should be asked to press the government to do so.

There is much else going on in the Human Rights Commission on which governments could be pressed to take positive action. For example, there is the Draft Declaration

on Religious Tolerance, which has got bogged down in interminable delays, and the Draft Statement of Principles on the Protection of Persons in all Forms of Detention, which seems to have more steam behind it, and which could be a useful follow-up to the Declaration on Torture made last year by the UN General Assembly.

In addition to the United Nations there are also regional bodies concerned with human rights, the European and the Inter-American Human Rights Commissions, and it is to be hoped that similar bodies will in time be formed in other regions. The Inter-American Commission has a particularly flexible procedure and is ready to receive complaints about violations from any source. For example, its enquiry into violations of human rights in Chile following the 1973 coup, one of the most remarkable human rights documents compiled by an intergovernmental organisation, was initiated by complaints made to it by our organisation and by Amnesty International very shortly after the coup. There is no reason why a religious organisation in this country should not file a complaint with the Commission based on information received from Churches within that continent, when those Churches would not have the freedom of action to file the complaint themselves.

I hope I have said enough to indicate the vast scope there is for action by concerned individuals and organisations in the field of human rights. For reasons which I have tried to indicate I believe that the Churches and organisations such as yours inspired by religious beliefs and values can play a role which is second to none. Our own organisation has been very gratified and encouraged by working with you in recent months and I hope that many other opportunities for co-operation will arise. There can never be too many operating in this field, but to operate successfully requires qualities of concern, courage, commitment and candour, qualities which the Churches are eminently qualified to bring to bear.

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