

The Rural People: Victims of Social Change in Nigeria¹

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I. INTRODUCTION

The children of Israel were slaves in Egypt for 400 years. Then they were freed, liberated, and they rejoiced. However, things did not go smoothly for them and they soon challenged Moses, "Why did you take us away from the flesh-pots of Egypt? Things were better there; now we only suffer."

Nigeria was a colony for less than a century and then we were set free, liberated. Our hearts beat with great expectations. Now we would determine our own destiny. However, today there is crying in the land and weeping. Some are wondering aloud,

Why did the British go away? It was much cheaper to live in those days. Now we only get cheated. There is certainly more money around, but it buys much less than in the past. Where are the promises of a better land, of a land flowing with milk and honey – or, rather, with oil? We have been promised many things. We were promised liberty, dignity and a destiny in our own hands. Liberty was proclaimed to the captives.

Today there is bitter weeping in the land. A small group of clever people especially in the big towns are reaping the benefits of all the changes, while rural people do not know how to cope with them. Instead of liberty and dignity, the changes introduced have been making it increasingly hard for the poor to make ends meet.

A Consultation of church workers, mainly from the Northern States, took place from July 10-12, 1978, at the Theological College of Northern Nigeria (TCNN), Bukuru, Plateau State. The theme of the Consultation was *The Christian Mission in Rural Development*.

¹ Report on a Conference on rural development, Jos, Nigeria, organized by the Institute of Church & Society, Northern Area Office, 1978. "Church & Society Papers" CS/3. Ibadan and Jos: ICS, 1978 (23 pp.). There are two versions of this report, one on stencil, the other, printed. This one is a combination of the two. *Every Square Inch*, vol. 2, p. 184.

The participants evaluated their various projects in the light of the Christian Gospel, in relation to definitions of the Christian Mission and in relevance to the felt needs of the people in rural areas.

Below is a summary of the discussions, with the criteria which emerged from the evaluation. A few resolutions were made on action to be taken in the future and on the help needed to make service to rural areas more meaningful.

This manual is recommended for use in Bible Schools and in the training of agents and evangelists generally.

II. VICTIMS OF SOCIAL CHANGE

Many changes have taken place in Nigeria since independence. Change can be beneficial to human existence. Change is a part of life. There is constant change in nature. The changes in Nigeria since independence have affected politics, education, economics, religion and our social lives. Much of this change has been part of our common struggle to move forward in the life of our country. Some of the changes were planned, but much of it was not *carefully* planned. In fact, most of it was not planned at all. Many people have not been able to adjust to the many rapid changes of the past eighteen years. The major changes have been: independence, big government contracts, military government, creation of states and of new state capitals, cocoa slump, expansion of education institutions, take-over of schools, industrialization, road building, and local government.

When primary, trade, and secondary schools were taken over, universal primary education was introduced. At first, this was to be free education for each student. It has not altogether turned out that way. Many students have to purchase their books and uniforms, carry their seats or mats to school and pay “development fees” if they are to be allowed to stay in school. Since the take-over of schools from the religious organizations, children can continue to receive religious training only when the parents and church leaders take it upon themselves to press that practical provisions be made for it for their own children. Many children are as a result not yet receiving religious training in the schools.

To crown the rapid social changes since independence is the introduction of the “Land-Use-Decree.” This will definitely affect everyone in the nation, but some people will be hurt in the process by those unscrupulous few who think they can find happiness in stealing from others.

Inflation is now affecting everyone in Nigeria. The inflation of the price of food, of building materials and other goods, has caused much hardship for the poor people who far outnumber the rich. The people who are taken care of by the government in this time of inflation are the salaried workers because they have organized and they make the most noise. They have caused the government continually to review their salary scales. The salary scale of the civil servants and professionals is climbing daily. The rich business man is becoming richer while the farmer is having his profit cut away till there is no profit at all. The farmer has no salary. He has to depend on his hard working hands to grow his income.

Life for the farmer in the village is laborious. The basic human necessities are often not present. A villager tills a small piece of land, plants whatever crop he can lay his hands on and then has to wait patiently until the crops grow into the harvest. There is no adequate system later for the farmer to sell his harvest to the city people at a price that will give him a reserve for the time the weather does not allow his crop to grow. He does not earn enough to take care of himself with his wife and children through the dry season. The villagers may have to travel miles to find clean water in the dry season. There is no electricity for lighting nor to run motors for crop processing. Many villages have no roads and no vehicles to carry their crops to a market.

The development of a nation is not just the development of things. All the same, people need things to help them in their own development. People need a good road system; an educational system that educates the young people to live in and improve their own home village; an economic system that distributes the nation’s wealth so that no one lives in poverty; a power system that takes some of the burden of labour from the backs of rural people; a banking system that works for the people instead of for the shareholders of the bank; a postal system that aids the communication between people; a telephone system that helps people communicate quickly without waste of national resources in travelling in person to carry a message; a medical system that trains

doctors to go among all the people, not just among the elite 20% in the city. Roads, schools, trade, banks, electricity, hospitals, postal and telephone services are to foster and facilitate good human relationships.

The Nigeria before independence is not the Nigeria of today. Though the general appearance of the cities and villages has changed, social attitudes and value systems have deteriorated. As a result, the gap between the rich and the poor continues to widen. This worsening disparity between the rich few and poor millions must be brought under control so that the full dignity of persons growing as whole human beings can be bestowed upon all Nigerians. The purpose of self-government is to bring “life more abundant” to all the citizens.

III. VICTIMS OF INJUSTICE

Various causes of the suffering of our villagers can be identified. We will describe three of them briefly with supporting examples. We realize that some of the examples adduced under one cause could also be placed under either of the other headings. The three causes we emphasize are these of: (a) inertia resulting from *fatalism*, (b) the exploitation of the rural folk by the educated elite, and (c) the fact that a number of our institutions appear designed purposely to exploit the illiterate poor. We will treat them in this order. However, it must be noted that inertia/fatalism is the main problem. The other two causes are supporting circumstances.

A. Inertia Caused by Fatalism

Villagers know they are being cheated, but they find it difficult to tell the stories of their experiences, especially on paper. There is a reluctance to speak out because of a sense of fatalism that prevents them taking their destiny in their own hands. There is a strong sense of helplessness and powerlessness in the rural area. Many think, “God wills it” or, “Life is like that and there is nothing to be done about it.” *Even Christians have forgotten that Jesus came to preach liberty to the captives and to break the chains of the oppressed* (Luke 4:18-19).

Below follow a few examples of the experiences of poor people where the poor could have acted to change the situation but did not.

1. A farmer had tried to get fertilizer from the agricultural office, but in vain. He then appealed to his pastor who, through the help of his educated friends, was able to get the fertilizer without much difficulty. The man remarked, "When will we be freed from the colonialism forced on us by our own people?" Though this is the experience of most farmers, *no one has so far thought about doing anything about it.*

2. There are many cases of clever traders who get fertilizer from the government in illegal ways, usually through bribes. They then sell it to farmers either at inflated prices or on condition that they can buy the farmers' crops at very low prices. Since the farmers are usually in desperate need of fertilizer, they often agree to such arrangements. This is, as we shall see, only one of the many examples of people manipulating government services for their own ends at the expense of the poor. *Is this right? Must the farmer continue to take this lying down?*

3. A pastor had cause to go to the local hospital at midnight. Outside, at the main door, he saw an old woman lying on the cement floor, clearly unattended. She had no one to help her get the attention of the nurses, she explained. The pastor succeeded in calling out a nurse, who then apologized, "If I had known this woman had connections with you, I would have taken care of her." *Since when is a helpless woman not worth caring for?*

4. In a certain community that had its own primary school, the teachers, most of whom were from other towns, used most of their initiative and imagination to find ways to reduce their teaching time to a minimum. The result was that few children passed examinations to other schools. The parents muttered to themselves and grumbled amongst each other, but none took steps to correct the situation. One

important father was advised to get the parents together and discuss what to do. They could call in the headmaster or even all the teachers. They could send a delegation to the education office or all go together. However, the matter was dropped when the father answered that the government had not given them authority to do such a thing! The argument that God had given parents the responsibility for the education of the children and that the government was paying these teachers for this task could not break through the inertia.

5. A certain town was provided with pipe-borne water that was pumped from a river some 20 miles away. The pumping station was a village which was given one tap for the whole community. The supply of water was irregular so that when there was water, villagers would crowd around the tap, all scrambling to get a pail of water before the water would be turned off again. Whereas they used to draw plenty of water from the river, the bank was now wired off. The result was a village full of squabbling and fighting people. The social atmosphere was thoroughly soured. Requests to authorities for additional taps were not heeded. The village was in disarray. *Was that really necessary or just?*

6. A certain village was making plans for building a dispensary to serve the whole community without cost to the local government, since they intended to join a medical health program run by the church. The chief whose cooperation and permission was needed lived in a village a few miles away. By refusing to give his cooperation, he effectively prevented the medical help so badly needed by these people. It was a case of community rivalry. Had the people in the village where the chief lived initiated the programme, he probably would have agreed. *What should these villagers have done?*

7. A chief ordered a certain village to move closer to the new road. When the village decided to stay where they were, the chief sent his henchmen and burnt the village down. *No one did anything about it!*

8. When Operation Feed the Nation (OFN) started, each district was to form its own committee. There was a certain district for years left undeveloped because it had not produced enough educated sons and daughters who would fight for them. Some 25 farmers were chosen for the committee. On the day of the meeting, they met on time at the district office, but the chief let them wait for about an hour and a half. He finally appeared in the company of a “big man” from the state capital, a member of a powerful and dominant tribe, who in his walk and dress made it obvious that he expected obeisance from these farmers. The chief told one of those waiting that his “big man” had come unexpectedly and that he was in a hurry to return to the comfortable city. The chief would help the “big man” finish his business and then the meeting with the farmers would start. It was pointed out to the chief that while the “big man’s” salary would continue even if he were kept waiting, the farmers’ income and productivity were standing still *for the sake of OFN!* The chief, himself under pressure from the “big man,” went away with him. Most of those waiting did not heed the suggestion of one that all go home in protest. In typically fatalistic obedience they waited for the “big man” to leave for the city. It was a situation of *utter contempt for the farmers, but the farmers did nothing about it!*

A. **Exploitation by the Educated and the Clever**

By virtue of their education, many men and women are placed in positions of trust by the government. Unfortunately many use these positions of trust to further their own ends. We have come to a position where fellow citizens exploit each other as much or more than colonialists ever did. The thought will not be suppressed that the cry of the educated against western imperialism, true though the charges may be, have turned out to be actually a smokescreen behind which many of the elite make their individual and collective plans to channel the profits they derive from the changes into their own local or foreign bank accounts. A few examples follow.

1.The one agency that does more than anything else in Nigeria to continue oppression and exploitation is that of education, especially at higher levels. It is widely assumed that the purpose of education is primarily to enrich oneself, even though occasionally lip service is paid to the ideals of responsibility and service. These reminders are often voiced by people who themselves live ostentatiously and who drive the most expensive cars – unless they prefer the cover of the “low profile.” Everyone knows that education is a motto of a *Christian* secondary school. People graduating from our schools of higher learning have been provided with all the tools required to take advantage of illiterate people, and society expects them to do so without qualms. The few who refuse to participate are given a hard time. Christians are hardly different in this expectation.

2.The refusal of the educated to practice their professions in rural areas is proverbial. Three-fourths of Nigeria’s doctors are said to be living in two cities close to each other, Lagos and Ibadan. Cases of engineers and doctors in government service who maneuver to avoid rural assignments are numerous. This amounts to a refusal to serve the very people who paid for their education! It is a hopeful sign that the National Youth Service Corps has started to correct this.

3.Visits to government offices, whether at federal, state or local level, often end with the suggestion to return tomorrow until one is worn out. Then one either gives the expected bribe or he/she simply gives up.

4.Demands for even higher incomes are backed up by displays of power on the part of groups already among the privileged.

5.Expensive residences are constructed for high officials in secluded areas with long tarmac roads leading to nowhere except to such homes, just as it happened in colonial days!

6. The elite engage in ostentatious living which siphons off funds that could be more profitably used for rural development. Christians who participate in this are challenged to justify their style on the basis of the Gospel!

Exploitative Institutions

The government frequently makes plans that are intended to benefit the general population. However, inventive bureaucrats and clever business men and women soon learn to derive undue profits from such schemes. Some projects indeed look as if they are purposely designed to cheat the poor.

1. Every farmer is familiar with the difficulty of getting fertilizers from the very agencies set up for that purpose, not to speak of the hiring of a government tractor to plough the farm, or to have the veterinarian vaccinate one's chickens.

2. The various government loan schemes for rural development are inaccessible to the average farmer for two reasons. First, they are written not only in English – and that is already difficult enough – but in very intricate English. Furthermore, the conditions for such loans are impossible for the poor to meet, the very people who need them.

3. The general lack of medicine in government hospitals and dispensaries is experienced by all the poor. Even more so are the bribes necessary to get medical attention in many such institutions.

4. What happens to the profits of marketing boards? Economists often assert that such profits are either squandered or used for the cities. Is this fair to the farmers?

In addition, inflated contracts use up millions of naira which could have been used for more development.

5. Early signs indicate that the introduction of Local Government simply passes arrogant power down to small cliques of elites interested in their own vanity. Arrangements are yet to be made to make Local Government councilors understand methods of a truly popular participation on the local level.

Yet there is no reason for resignation on the part of the poor. The Gospel is a *power* that Christians must tap to preach this good news to the poor and to set the oppressed at liberty. Instead what we find in our society is one group of Christians who participate in the oppression and another group that accepts it in fatalistic resignation. Both must change their mentality and together realize their Christian task. The poor can take heart, for one virgin prophesied that God in Christ

has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts, he has put down the mighty from their thrones, and exalted those of low degree; he has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent empty away. (Luke 1:51-53)

And the rich? The verse speaks for itself:

God does not will suffering! Let us be done with fatalism! Let farmers and their like take the initiative in the faith that god is on their side. The day of redemption is at hand! Farmers must select a government of people who will work for justice. Farmers should protest when they see evil done. They must organize cooperatives which can gain true benefits for all.

IV. HELPERS OF THE VICTIMS

The foregoing section gives the impression that nothing is being done for the victims. In fact, impressive efforts exist to raise their standard of life, efforts by both government and church agencies. Since the Consultation was concerned primarily with church

efforts, we give a brief indication of the types of projects in which her agents are involved.

A. **Medical Development**

1. Most churches in the country have established agencies for development in both medical and health matters. The medical work often consists of a chain of dispensaries and clinics scattered throughout the countryside. These are usually built by the local people themselves who are mobilized for such specific projects, while they may receive token grants from government or church for the purpose.

2. There are mobile medical programs making regular rounds to administer preventive medicine, give prenatal advice and care, and teach preventive health.

3. Chains of first-aid helpers are sent out to give elementary medical help where there are no dispensaries. These are often trained either in dispensaries or in special courses of a few months duration.

4. Christian hospitals often cap this whole system. It is here that more serious cases are treated. That these have now been taken over in most states is no secret.

5. These medical care systems are often supplied from a central depot which, because it specializes in bulk buying, is often able to obtain medicine at relatively low prices.

6. Most churches have joined in the Christian Central Pharmacy in Jos, which receives orders from all these depots for a 6-month period or even for a year. This pharmacy has international contacts from which it procures its bulk supplies.

7. Some of these Christian hospitals have for years also had nurses' training and laboratory technicians' training units. SIMATS in Jos, Vom and Mkar hospitals are notable examples.

8. One must not ignore the leprosy work being done, which often includes the teaching of various skills for patients who have lost their fingers or even hands. Benue Leprosy Settlement is an example.

Most of these agencies have been primarily organized by the Christian church and with Christian resources. We draw attention to one medical project that is unique in that, though organized and run by the church and with some funds from the government, its basic finances have been supplied by the Muslim community. We refer to the dispensary and maternity units established by the Christian Reformed Church of Nigeria in Ibi, Gongola State. Ibi is a predominantly Muslim town on the banks of the Benue River. Though there has been a struggling Christian community there for years – it was the first established headquarters of the Sudan United Mission – it was always an oppressed group with little vitality until they received their first Nigerian pastor, Rev. Ezekiel Nyajo. He utilized the services of a rural health nurse, Miss Ruth Vander Meulen, who would come to Ibi once a month for preventive medicine. Rev. Nyajo would subsequently visit the families whose children had received treatment and soon became a respectable member of the community. His new standing enabled him to mobilize local funds to build first a dispensary and then a maternity unit with six beds. He gets medicine from the Christian Reformed medical depot, which, in turn, gets their supplies from Christian Central Pharmacy. Some grants continue to trickle in from Gongola State, while a missionary nurse, again Miss Vander Meulen, has now been appointed midwife.

The result of such medical activities is beyond measurement. The amount of suffering relieved can probably be somewhat documented if all these organizations would pool their statistics. But even then, figures could not measure the *joy* of healing, the sense of *liberty* experienced by discharged patients.

However, there have always been members of these medical teams who were uneasy about the institutionalization of such efforts. The early prophets whose voices were not heeded as much as it was worth were Dr. and Mrs. Herman Gray, who worked in what is now Benue and Gongola States² under the Mkar and Takum Christian Hospitals. They emphasized the need for more preventive teaching. This resulted in the medical mobile outreach that later was sent out from these hospitals. A current advocate of reduced

² Today (2015), Gongola State no longer exists and the area is part of Taraba State.

institutionalization of medical work is Dr. Hilton under the auspices of the Ekklesiyar 'Yanuwa of Nigeria (EYN) in Gongola and Borno States.³ The emphasis of this programme is on preventive health teaching, non-institutionalization, community participation, traditional pedagogic methods including stories, music and dance.⁴

B. Agricultural Development

Most denominations have agricultural agencies that aim to improve the methods and the lot of farmers. There are many such agencies, including Faith and Farm, Christian Rural Outreach, the Agricultural Development Program, Christian Rural Development (two go by that name), Christian Farmers' Association, *Kyautata Zaman Kauye*, etc. In addition to such exclusively agricultural organizations, most Bible schools include a heavy dose of agricultural methods that evangelists take to their villages. The most notable here is probably Kulp Bible School.

These agricultural agencies have different patterns, but most of them include activities such as supplying agro-chemicals, teaching and demonstration of new methods, supplying improved seeds and chicks, giving loans, developing local cooperatives in close association with churches, etc.

The results of these activities have been considerable in that new methods and crops have been adopted by many farmers with subsequent improved yields. Chickens are in great demand and some are beginning to realize the advantage of cooping them in to prevent disease. Chemicals and better storage procedures are also making their contributions. The importance of these efforts is difficult to overestimate in a situation where supplies are hardly available. In many instances the programmes have awakened sufficient interest in certain items, e.g. chicken wire and chemicals, that it has become profitable for traders to stock them. Thus, farmers do not solely rely on these agencies for the supplies anymore. Some farmers have caught on to grafting orange trees and are selling small plants to others. This is another example of independence. It is impossible

³ Today (2015) this part of Gongola is part of Adamawa State. The area has been reduced to rubble by the Boko Haram debacle. Most of it is part of the BH xxxx

⁴ For complete information we urge interested parties to contact Dr. Hilton via C.B.M., P.O. Box 626, Jos.

to estimate the change of mentality and increased confidence that such projects have helped create. A new openness to methods in general is in itself a major victory that is hard to put in statistics.

The Need For Further Mobilization

The Bukuru Consultation opened with a meditation and subsequent discussion of the parable of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10. The Samaritan, of course, was identified as being the true neighbour because he *did* a neighbourly deed. However, the discussion brought to light also a major failure, namely that though this Samaritan provided the necessary aid for this particular victim of robbery, nothing was done about the basic situation that allowed this robbery and others to occur. We realize that Jesus did not need to go further to make his point. However, there can be no doubt that more people were similarly robbed and beaten. The Samaritan would have provided more far-reaching help if he had been able to canvass for public action, such as eliminating the hiding places along the road, providing more adequate security along the lonely stretches etc., that would help reduce future incidents of such violence. That would have gone beyond helping one victim to the prevention of further victimization.

Dan Agbese, the author of the weekly column "In Lighter Mood" wrote an article entitled "The Common Man," (*The Nigerian Standard*, 14/7/78) in which he indicates that many people are making a career out of helping the "common man" –whoever he is --, but his lot is never improving. We quote from the article:

The common man is patient. He is long-suffering. He is utterly forgiving. He never protests. He never fights for his own interests and welfare so long as there are those who will do all the fighting for him. He is used; he is misused

It is the fatalistic attitude described in Section II above. Without belittling the very vital contributions of the medical and agricultural activities summarized here, it is imperative that this vicious cycle of patient long-suffering and continued oppression be broken. Sometimes Christian rural development agencies work towards that. One example related in the Consultation was the organization of a group of farmers to refuse to sell their crops at the lowest price. Together they decided to hold on till the price went up.

The clever traders who had been accustomed to exploit these farmers came begging to the organizers. Then conditions were laid down to which the *traders* were forced to agree. For once, the farmers had the upper hand.

However, it appears to have been a one-season project. It was not carried over to the following years and it did not spread to other areas. In this incident, there is a key to the type of development that has been neglected. Churches have taught obedience and rural development agencies have supplied the materials, but neither group has sought to mobilize the farmers to demand their rights, to stand up together when they are cheated. Churches and their development agencies, in preaching and teaching, must undermine this fatalism and introduce the more dynamic aspects of the Christian faith that will help farmers overcome their lethargy and fear. The Gospel is **power**, but that is only dimly realized. Christ came to bring **liberty** and to **break the power of the mighty**, but this has been spiritualized. Pentecost was to introduce new **dreams of a new society** and the Christian hope is exactly for a **new heaven and new earth in which righteousness dwells** and in which **every man** is to eat the products of his hands. We realize that utopia will not come by man and that Christ will return to introduce this new order, but that **hope** must already **now** guide and **activate** us **today**. Every age needs its own emphasis. The Consultation has made it clear that these long-neglected dimensions of the Gospel are to be activated for our present situation. Participants were thrilled to discover these dimensions and they left with a new sense of hope and destiny.

(a) Bargaining Power

The question is *how* can this new sense be instilled in the hearts of farmers? How can they achieve *bargaining power*? How can they effectively *demand* proper medical treatment? How can they *insist* on getting fertilizer channeled through government and other agencies with fairness? We have seen two effective examples above. It would appear that such action could be multiplied in every community, whether it concerns medical care, educational problems, or agricultural or any other rural interests. The Christian cooperative could become the focus for discussion of specific problems leading to specific action. The proper authorities should become aware that the villagers are now determined to take *action*, not merely to cry or throw up their hands in despair.

They will call in authorities to their meeting *demanding* to know why this or that service is denied them. Peaceful demonstrations should not be ruled out. Delegations should become part of the program. These should all be organized *by* the local villager, not *for* them. This *can* be done by concentrated action towards this end by the church and her rural development agencies.

(b) Political Education

During the Consultation as well as in Agbese's article quoted above, mention is made of politicians using farmers for their own dubious ends. The Consultation agreed that churches need to provide political training for their members. Churches ought to help the villagers understand the claims and promises of political candidates. They should minister to the candidates, call them in, give them advice, demonstrate concern in prayer. In short, encourage the villagers to determine who their best candidates are and make these best candidates realize that they have behind them a loving, concerned and praying church that does not regard the candidate as a renegade, but as one who is prepared to champion the cause of justice as the villagers see it, without himself losing the broader state or national perspective.

© The Need for Information Exchange

There are over-arching organizations uniting development agencies and workers. There are CRAC (Christian Rural Advisory Council) in the northern area, CRF (Christian Rural Fellowship) uniting the individual workers throughout the nation, CHAN (Christian Health Association of Nigeria) and Fellowship of Christian Doctors. All of these are providing vital services. However, the Consultation has brought to light the fact that very little information is shared between the various agencies. Some participants did not even know of the existence of some other programmes. The need was felt for sharing of information useful for rural development. Attempts have been made, e.g. by CRAC, but it has been difficult to find a coordinator for this work. And even where this has been done, it has not generally helped in instilling the new sense of destiny and right that

needs to become part of the village community if they are to rise above their present situation.

The following are examples of steps to be taken to supply this need. Farmers need to be helped to:

- Organize co-operative which can gain true benefits for all.
- Elect a government of people who will work for justice.
- Protest when they see evil done.
- Work actively to overcome their adversity.
- Those who help them need to be organized themselves.

V. TRAINING FOR THE HELPERS

There are two basic assumptions which emerge out of the discussion above and of which a programme for the training of church workers must take account. The first is the insight that the Christian faith has more to do with society and social issues than we have hitherto assumed. The other is that the people to which the Church ministers have not only a never-dying soul to save but also bodily needs which must be served too by the ministry of the Church. In other words, the Gospel of Jesus Christ has been interpreted too much in terms of individual persons and too much also concerning only the souls of the people. What of the bodily needs of the people and what of their social relationship? Failure to attend to these partly account for the rise of the Pentecostal churches of Africa. But their approach is not necessarily the only one possible. We in the more established churches have to explore new ways of ministering in order to make persons whole and to keep modern societies wholesome.

Evangelists and pastors in Africa have traditionally been trained with the unspoken assumption that the people we serve are persons in whom the soul can be kept separate from the body. The emphasis in worship and sermons gives the impression that on Sundays people left their work at home and took their souls to church. Today, we have seen that the people in our congregations and villages cannot be separated

into body and soul. If we do not minister to the body of our people as well as to their souls, then we are not ministering to them fully. Human beings are a whole. We cannot take them apart. People do not live by religion alone; they must have bread, vice versa. And they must have the bread made properly, wholesomely and in sufficient quantity for the parents, the children and others.

The bread sold on our streets has very little food value in it. But we do not know, nor do we care to ask for better. We thank God that some Christian ministers know and care enough to minister to the community with better bread. Canon Chadrach Opoti of Kenya and the Adventist Seminary of West Africa are examples of redemptive exceptions to the rule. How do we train more Opotis and how do we have more seminaries which see human life as a whole?

Charles Elliot, an Anglican priest and university professor in economics and development studies writes:

When it comes to demanding housing for the homeless or jobs for the unemployed, waffle, even theological waffle, is useless. We need to be able to proclaim the situation as it is, the situation as it will be, and God's judgement of that situation This again requires foresight and a certain competence in the fields of sociology and economics in order that the championship of the poor may be authoritative.

Surely, this does not mean that the study of theology must be abandoned for the disciplines of sociology and economics. The point is that our sermons need to be intelligently related to the felt needs of the congregations, our ministry relevant to the social problems the people face. The training of evangelists and pastors has to take account of this need.

It is important that pastors be able to use the Bible as a source of insight and edification. It is equally important that pastors know something about food and farming. Certainly, we need pastors who can take the Word of God to our people. But the people also need food and water, freedom from disease and from exploitation. Would it not be possible to combine a theological pastors' course and, say, a rural development course to produce a pastor of the whole person for village congregations? A pastor might be

educated to learn something about fly control in the village so that germs and disease are not so easily spread among his people. He might learn something about the politics of his state and rural area so that he can advise his people. He could be made aware of the possibilities of an educational system in the village that would teach children to respect the customs and traditions of their elders, an educational system which might teach children how to enhance life in the village rather than to prepare young people only for the streets of the crowded cities. A pastor could be the bringer of the latest farm knowledge to his people. He could help his people to learn which are the most productive ways to grow their food. He could be able to show them how to combine the foods on the table properly to form the most nutritious diet. The pastor could be able to help his village organize to dig a well or in some other ways to find a source of clean water. A pastor must be able to organize farmers into cooperative groups where they can share their knowledge, wisdom and resources. Pastors might learn to encourage local music and colour and culture to uplift the spirit of life in the village.

Probably the most important social training that a pastor should have is that of being able to organize his village community so that they can feel their own power. We know that there are many ways that villagers are taken advantage of by business people and by politicians and government agents. If the villagers can become organized to recognize their own rights they will be able to protect one another from this old enemy of the rural people. Each village group needs to be effectively organized and then made aware of other village groups so that larger groups of villages may also come together to pool their power. To this end, the prospective pastor must be educated in the political realities of his nation, state, and village area. He must be able to see where the power lies.

In a word, the pastor in modern Africa needs to be more than the one who baptizes, marries and buries those who join church congregations. Neither should his administrative competence be devoted to serving the whims of an ecclesiastical structure which is more concerned about its own prestige than about serving the people. The pastor must be educated to become a spiritual guide for the church and the total parish community in the village or in the town.

Exactly the same alternatives presented themselves to our Lord. We need a more careful study of how He resolved the issues not only in the wilderness where He was tempted, but also in the temple and among the people. The manifesto for His ministry is clearly stated:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed ... (Luke 4:18).

The Christian church is the Body of that Christ. Therefore, all Christians are called upon to make this call of Jesus come true

For this reason, the reform of education has to go beyond our Bible schools and theological colleges. We need to evangelize all our educational institutions with the whole Word of God. The current educational system does not prepare people to dig wells or make bore-holes, to store food for the dry season, to grow more food, or to defend the masses from the legal crooks who would rob them of their human dignity. The teachers' colleges and universities, and the Ministries of Education on the federal and state levels need to hear that 80% of the people live in the village and that the educated few must be prepared to teach villagers how to enhance their own lives in the village. The whole of our educational system must be evangelized with the message that human beings have a divine right to personal dignity. Thus will the captives be truly free, the victims made whole.

v. RESOLUTIONS

Resolutions taken at the Bukuru Consultation

(The numbering refers to sections of the Report)

1. That a report of this Consultation be written out and made available to the participants, their projects, their institutions and other interested groups.

2. We propose that a committee be appointed to study the loan schemes for rural development provided by State and Federal Government. The assignment is to include at least the following:

- (a) to describe in plain language each plan as it is legally stated in government documents.
- (b) to describe the obstacles preventing farmers from benefiting from such schemes.
- (c) to suggest ways in which such obstacles can be overcome.

The ICS is requested to make this report available to participants, the churches, rural development agencies and other relevant parties by the end of October 1978 at the latest. The following people were appointed members of the search committee: Rev. Joseph Jibi, Rev. John Boer, Mrs. E. Yamsat, an officer of an Agricultural Bank Loan (to be consulted).

3. Be it resolved, that one of the most important goals to work toward is to help the rural people to organize themselves so they can exert potential power. Local people can be exploited easily if they remain separate from one another. We must therefore, firstly, help people to see their own power, to learn to join together to frustrate those who would exploit them. We can encourage village meetings where issues can be discussed and awareness raised toward the time when groups can get together with their best spokesmen to defend themselves and to work together for more control of their lives. Secondly, we must encourage the people to shed the fatalistic notions that they cannot control their own destiny. Local proverbs and adages which reinforce the positive attitude and powerlessness of the people must be critically examined or purged.

4. To assist us and other development workers in the task of enabling the people to create their own destiny, this Consultation calls on TCNN and other theological and Bible schools to encourage their students to investigate and write short research papers on the belief held by their people on such notions as Fate, Predestination, Predetermination, the Will of God, etc. The ICS is urged to follow

up this recommendation and make the results of the study available to church development workers and others.

5. This Consultation asks Mr. E.O. Olaoye, ICS/R.R.D Coordinator and a participant in the next Conference of the C.R.F. at Nsukka in August 1978, to encourage C.R.F. to open channels of communication between rural development workers by means of a newsletter or through the *Nigerian Christian*.

6. That a consultation be organized by the ICS to consist of members of staff of theological colleges, their students, representative pastors and Christian laymen in Northern Nigeria to begin with, to investigate new methods of teaching and learning in theological education towards a more appropriate preparation of ministers for the proclamation of the Christian Gospel to the whole man in contemporary Nigeria.

The ICS Northern Area Office is asked to consult with TCNN and others, so that this recommendation can be implemented by Easter 1979 at the latest.