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mits them. The 50 million of this young generation can only know God through Christ and they will see Him in their teachers or they may never see Him at all. The next Christian generation may be people of habit or people of faith. What part will you have in this?

#### Some salient facts

Indonesia: population (1970) estimated at 120 million — every man

must have a religion, by law. 3½ million children eligible for Primary education each year. Elementary School: 6-12 years old (will be made compulsory if present five year plan achieves its goal). Junior High School: 13-15 years old. Senior High School: 16-18 years old. All schools are available either as State or Christian foundations. This

also applies to University education which may be in Government or privately-founded institutions.

**Miss Ailish Eves is a missionary with the Overseas Missionary Fellowship in Indonesia. Further details about the opportunities can be obtained from the OMF Candidates' Secretary, 45 Newington Green, London N16 9QD**

## Reform or Revolution?

### A Correspondence

Dear Sir Frederick,

I read with mixed reactions your article in *Christian Graduate* on reform and revolution, and wonder if you will permit me certain remarks.

On the one hand, it was a pleasure to hear your convincing commendation of social sensitivity and reform-mindedness — a quality which evangelicals are happily neglecting less than they used.

On the other hand, however, there seemed to me to be a crucial flaw in your thoughts about revolution. Your analysis, historical and moral, was useful, but was not allowed to delineate its own conclusion because of your absolutist interpretation of Romans 13: 1 with which you guillotine the argument. I believe this to be a faulty exposition on two grounds (either of which seems to me sufficient alone!). First, 'submit to the authorities' seems to me an injunction which it is not possible (and not intended) to define in a simple way. Jesus, Peter, Paul and the rest quite clearly failed to submit to the authorities in all sorts of ways — not merely violent opposition, which is the most obvious but by no means the only way. It is not a precise injunction, but a general principle of conduct, or even

more importantly, a part of Paul's teaching about our general relationship to social organization and its status before God. This is not in the least to wriggle out of the command — it is rather to take it more seriously than does the attempt to use it as an 'on-off' switch. Incidentally, I take it there are injunctions which you yourself do not interpret in an absolutist fashion, such as Matthew 5: 42—do you *always* give or lend when you are asked to?

Secondly, as your own discussion of the subject makes clear, 'the powers that be' or 'the supreme authorities' cannot be unequivocally defined. If you regard them categorically as the established government of the moment you get into logical absurdities — particularly if you allow war as sometimes right, but not revolution (*i.e.* you can overturn someone else's government, but not your own!). For instance, were the French right to continue to resist Nazism after the German occupation? If not, at what point did the occupying power become the lawful government? If it did not, would it never have—for instance, if Germany had won the war and remained in control? (Indeed, the issue is more complicated, because

the text does not allow one to narrow what Paul is condemning to 'overturning' as you suggest. The Germans themselves who hid Jews to thwart the government's purpose for them were not 'submitting'.)

Indeed, I should have thought the rest of Romans 13 falsified your oversimplification of Paul's instructions. Not merely (as you quote) may government not be 'working for your good', but it is manifestly not true that it 'has no terrors for good behaviour' in some cases. So how do you interpret that? Surely it either falsifies the whole of what Paul is saying, or, as I believe, gives us light on the meaning of the whole passage.

You do not need me to remind you that we are fatally prone, in safe, just Britain, to draw conclusions based on our very exceptional circumstances. 'Gradual reform through constitutional channels', about which many evangelicals speak, is strictly meaningless where the constitution and whole governmental structure is expressly designed to prevent change in certain directions, whatever the will of the majority or the demands of justice. South Africa is an obvious example. Of course, we *try* not to fall into this trap of basing our moral stance (and our interpretation of Scripture) on our peculiar circumstances—but our most determined reasoning is often insufficient to rid us of the deeply inbuilt attitudes and concepts which are in reality not universally Christian but parochial.

Heaven knows, I am not enthusiastic about revolution or violence—no more than about war! But I do not believe that sound exposition allows us to rule out of court at all

times either violent opposition to, or overthrow of, the government of a country. On the contrary, it seems to me that the Bible, having given us all its armoury of directives and injunctions, tells us to face the political situation we find ourselves in, and have, as best and as prayerfully as we can, the mind of Christ in that situation.

The business of Southern Africa is a very important and poignant example of our responsibilities in this respect, being British and rich as we are. There are two easy ways out we may take. One is to 'break' under the moral strain, and glibly advocate violent insurrection—from which we have far less to lose than have those to whom we may commend it. The other is to rule insurrection out of court on principle (on no valid principle that I know), and to persist in the language of 'bridge-building' and 'lawful change' when all our efforts in this direction so far have failed to halt a relentless deterioration in the situation: how long should one cherish the hope that white South Africans will gradually sacrifice their privileged position in response to moral and rational pressure when they are inexorably doing the exact opposite (as *The Times* reported in two articles around May) and when to do so would mean a fundamental change in their outlook and status? Britain's persistence in this unrealism is either the hypocrisy or the sentimentality of the privileged. (What do you make of Niebuhr's *Moral Man and Immoral Society*, by the way?)

So, we have to avoid both soft options, and to bring what we have, as individuals in the name of Christ and as a nation, to contribute to the situation in thought and in action—while remembering the limitations inferred by what we do not have. What the right course of action will be in each case I do not know—but I do not believe the Bible allows us to decide except on the merits of each situation.

Yours sincerely,

(Dr) PAUL SNELL

Dear Dr Snell,

Thank you for your letter which, if I may be allowed to say so, sets out the current view of many Christians better than I have seen it expressed anywhere else.

Naturally I don't disagree with a currently prevailing view without giving the matter a good deal of thought and without having discussed it with a great many people. In one article one is, of course, limited in the amount of biblical authority one can quote, but I don't by any means think that Romans 13 is the only passage lending support to the duty of civil obedience. Even if it were, it seems to me to be quite explicit and very difficult to avoid and, as I think I pointed out in the article, no Protestant of any standing who sought to justify a resort to arms tried to avoid it. But Peter speaks in a similar strain in 1 Peter 2: 13, 14. 'Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evil doers, and for the praise of them that do well.'

I don't find anything in the acts of our Lord or St Paul or the other apostles which detracts from this position as you suggest. It is sometimes argued that the powers that be are ordained for good and we are entitled to disobey them if they are not behaving well. Those who put this view don't say who precisely is to make this judgment and in what circumstances, but although Paul was falsely imprisoned by Festus and Felix, no attempt was made to subvert the authority of those governors and Paul relied at every turn on his rights within the law.

It was once put to me by a bishop that David was a guerrilla and took arms against Saul. In fact, David made the most elaborate arrangements with Jonathan so as not to leave Saul's court until he was absolutely certain, not only that Saul had taken up arms against him, but that this was not a fit of pique but a sustained and serious attempt to kill him. His escape was self-defence. Twice he refused to kill Saul, al-

though he was the anointed king as well as Saul, and when an armour-bearer reported to David that he had killed Saul, David ordered his immediate execution.

From all this it seems to me that there can be no question about the doctrine.

It seems to me that British Christians ought, perhaps, to be more conscious of the beam in our own eye, which is Ulster, than the motes in the eyes of foreign governments. I have debated this issue with right-wing Protestants and Paisleyites in Ulster on television and they, of course, use the arguments which you use as, indeed, do the extremists among the Catholics. I am quite clear that in Ulster the only hope of avoiding a bloodbath is the firm stand taken by the major churches on both sides, that a Christian is under the duty to obey the powers that be and is absolutely prohibited from any attempt to overthrow them by violence.

None of this means that a Christian should condone oppression; far from it. But my own experience in public service is that there is no substitute for the long, tedious job of changing people's minds. And I think that it is lack of faith on the part of a Christian to believe that the church is incapable of being the salt of the earth and the light of the world or that God no longer hears the prayer He told us to say, 'Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.' I could go on but I hope that this may serve as some sort of reply.

The IVP are producing a book edited by Brian Griffiths on reform and revolution which is due out in a month or so.<sup>1</sup> Brian Griffiths, I think, took your view to begin with but, as I understand it, was gradually brought to feel that it is not one which could be sustained. I hope something of his change of view will come out in his introduction.

Yours sincerely,

F. CATHERWOOD

Footnote: <sup>1</sup>This has now been published. See the Review Article on p. 15.

Dear Sir Frederick,

Thank you for your interesting letter of 6 October. I look forward to seeing Brian Griffiths' book. Meanwhile, could you clarify one point for me: are you similarly convinced that war is always wrong or are you drawing a distinction between war and insurrection, *i.e.* overthrowing other people's and one's own government? (I don't see that such a distinction can be maintained as in the analysis of occupied France which I tried to sketch.)

My brief answer to the many instances of individuals submitting to unjust treatment or death in the Bible is that, first there is an important difference between individual and group ethics, and secondly, I am not after all for violence as a routine policy! I do believe the apostles resisted authority — perhaps we can take this further later.

Despite the 'beam in our own eye' UK citizens (like Roman citizens) do have rights within the law, which are designed to allow complaint and ensure justice. What is to be done in countries where these do not exist?

Excuse this scrappy haste. I will try to think and write again before I go abroad. I just wonder, by the way, whether the *Christian Graduate* might be interested in our exchange of letters! If you think so, and still have mine, perhaps you would let them see it, as I have not kept a copy.

Yours sincerely,

PAUL SNELL

Dear Dr Snell,

Thank you for your postcard. On your points:

1. I think that the powers that be are entitled to bear the sword against those who seek to overthrow the state internally or externally. The question for those temporarily defeated during the course of a war is whether the 'powers that be' are the occupying force or the previous legitimate government. The Dutch and I think also the Norwegian Christians decided that the 'powers that be' were the governments in exile. The Danes, Belgians and

French were in a somewhat different position since they had national successor governments which had come to terms with the Germans and the governments in exile were less credible. While a war goes on it is hard to settle—though most Frenchmen *did* settle for the successor government. But I do not see that after a peace irredentist minorities, for instance in the Italian Tyrol, can continue to refuse to recognize the internationally recognized government of their province.

2. I don't see that 'group ethics' justify actions which would not be justified in an individual. A soldier has a conscience from which ac-

tion as a group does not absolve him.

3. The question is whether those who do not have civil rights, *e.g.* the majority of those to whom Paul and Peter addressed their Epistles who were *not* Roman citizens, should gain them by appeal to conscience, by prayer and by responsible behaviour or alternatively by violence. I don't think Peter and Paul left any room for violence.

I'd be very glad to send the letters to John Marsh to see if he thinks them worth publishing.

Yours sincerely,

F. CATHERWOOD

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## Review Article

### Is Revolution Change?

Harry Sutton

Revolution is a subject to which Christians need to give the most serious attention. In one form or another it has become a living issue on many university campuses and in most of the third world. For those who find themselves in a revolutionary situation the issue is as soul-searching as war-time pacifism. This new IVP pocketbook *Is Revolution Change?* edited by Brian Griffiths (112 pp. 30p) will therefore be eagerly read by many seeking to clarify their socio-economic thinking or determine their degree of revolutionary commitment.

In the preface Brian Griffiths crystallizes the theme of the book: 'it is that a violent and total revolution is no panacea for society's problems' (p. 7). In reaching this conclusion it gives a clear outline of the different strands of the revolutionary movement, gathers together Bible teaching on the subject and presents biblical Christianity as an alternative revolutionary possibility. The value of the book lies not only in the relevance of the subject-matter, but in the

diverse experience and background of the five contributors: two from this country, one North American and two from South America. Whilst there is substantial accord between the five essayists there are some areas of difference. 'And this is how it should be. For while each is in complete agreement in affirming the relevance of the Christian faith, that same faith does not provide a unique political programme to right the world' (p. 8). Perhaps we might add a further explanation of the divergences as stemming from the different social and political contexts in which the contributors have shaped their thoughts. Brian Griffiths is lecturer in Economics at the LSE; Sir Frederick Catherwood, formerly Director General of the National Economic Development Office, is now a Director of John Laing and Son Limited; Alan Kreider is Assistant Professor of History at Goshen College, Indiana; Dr René Padilla, an Argentinian, is Associate General Secretary for Latin America of the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students;