# The American Catholic Church and the South Africa Issue

*by*
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Like the rest of American society, the U.S. Catholic Church is currently confronting the challenge of formulating a morally correct and politically sound policy toward South Africa. This article will discuss the U.S. Catholic Church's position on the South Africa issue, and will provide an evaluation of this position. In brief, the article argues that, out of a quite understandable revulsion against *apartheid*, the Church has supported policies toward South Africa that could produce either civil war or a harshly repressive government rather than a multi-racial democratic society in South Africa. It should be emphasized that the article deals only with the period prior to de Klerk's assumption of power in the summer of 1989.

## The Position of the American Catholic Church on South Africa

In recent decades, the U.S. Catholic Church has taken stands on many political issues. The Church's bishops have issued pastoral letters on Vietnam (1968), on war and peace (1983), and on the economy (1986).[1] This tendency to get more involved in political issues is characteristic of the Catholic Church in other countries as well and also of such Christian bodies as the World Council of Churches.[2] One issue in which the American Catholic Church has become increasingly involved is South Africa. The concern of the U.S. Church about South Africa flows from a belief that *apartheid* is immoral for the following reasons–

*Apartheid* is based on racism, and racism is unChristian. A 1985 United States Catholic Conference "Statement on South Africa" quoted Pope John Paul II on racism and *apartheid*:

> For Christians and for all who believe in a covenant, that is, an unbreakable bond between God and man and between all human beings, no form of discrimination–in law or in fact–on the basis of race, origins, color, culture, sex or religion can ever be acceptable. Hence no system of *apartheid* or separate development will ever be acceptable as a model for the relations between people or races. (The Hague, May 1985).[3]

The Church also condemns *apartheid* because it fosters economic inequalities between white and black South Africa. In a 1985 background paper on South Africa, the United States Catholic Conference had this to say about economic conditions in South Africa:

> As a result of the implementation of the laws designed to further the system of *apartheid*, South Africa can be said to be both a 'First World country' and a 'Third World country'.

> White South Africa's standard and mode of living is comparable to that of western European countries, Canada, and the United States. Black South Africa's standard and mode of living is comparable to that of some of the poorer countries of Africa, Asia, and Latin America. And it is the black South African community that makes possible the high standard of living of the white South African community.[4]

The American Catholic Church further notes that, under *apartheid*, there is a lack of protection of individual rights. Church officials point to the Suppression of Communism Act and to the Terrorism Act; both of which give the government the right to hold anyone in detention for three months without charging them with a crime. During this detention period, detainees cannot contact family members or a lawyer; and there is no legal recourse against such detention.[5]

American Church officials also are critical of the banning practice, whereby an individual is ordered to reside in a place designated by the government. Banned persons cannot be published or quoted, and their movements are restricted. The banning penalty may last as long as five years and may be renewed. Again, there is no legal recourse against the banning order.[6]

Finally, the Church sees South Africa as an undemocratic country. It notes that the blacks in South Africa lack voting rights, and the Asians and the Coloureds (individuals with a mixed race background) have voting rights only for their own special parliamentary chambers. Only white South Africans have the full franchise.[7]

In contrast, the Church's recommendations about what type of political system should replace the current South African system are rather vague. This vagueness flows from a belief that the new South African political system must be worked out by the South African people.[8] The Church believes that the new South Africa should be racially neutral; that there should no longer be any racial restrictions on where people can live and work; and, that the new South Africa should be one where there is rule of law. Finally, it insists that the new South Africa should have the full social, political and economic participation of all of its people and an end to discrimination based on race or ethnic origin.[9]

If *apartheid* is immoral and there is a need for a major restructuring of South Africa's political, social and economic institutions, the question arises as to how this restructuring is to be accomplished. Some Christian churches believe that such restructuring can only be accomplished through violent revolution, and consequently have endorsed such revolutionary movements as the African National Congress (ANC). For example, at an international conference in Lusaka, Zambia in May 1987, sponsored by the World Council of Churches Program to Combat Racism, a resolution was passed which stated: "South Africa's war against its own inhabitants and neighbors compels the movements to the use of force, along with other means to end

oppression."[10] (A number of members of the ANC, including its president, Oliver Tambo, were present at this conference.)[11]

The U.S. Catholic Church, however, does not endorse armed struggle to end *apartheid.* Instead, its preferred strategy is economic pressure. Thus, it has advocated several forms of economic pressure against South Africa: first, a prohibition on the importation of South African krugeerrands or other gold coins from South Africa; second, a prohibition on loans to the South African government (except for loans for any educational, housing, or health facility which is available to all persons on a nondiscriminatory basis); third, a program of divestment of Church funds from business enterprises doing business in South Africa; and finally, if Church officials deem divestment unwise, the correct policy is to file shareholder resolutions with portfolio corporations doing business in South Africa, requiring them to implement a disinvestment program.[12]

The stand of the American Catholic Church in favor of sanctions has generated considerable controversy and debate. Many people have argued that economic sanctions against South Africa will result in victimization of the country's black community and setbacks in the peaceful reform process.[13] In response to these arguments, the Church has made the following case in favor of sanctions–

First, it argues that while it is true that blacks will be hurt by sanctions, blacks are willing to pay this price to end *apartheid.* According to Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu:

> The argument that Blacks would be the first to suffer may be true, yet there are at least two rejoinders: a cynical one is, when did the Whites become so altruistic? After all, they have benefitted from black misery engendered by low wages, migratory labour, etc., for so long. The less cynical is the Blacks would probably be ready to accept suffering that has a goal and a purpose and would therefore end, rather than continue to suffer endlessly.[14]

The U.S. Catholic Church further argues that economic prosperity will not, in and of itself, end *apartheid.* In a U.S. Church document there was the following quotation from Archbishop Tutu:

> Many who are concerned to see fundamental change happen in our country peacefully believe that economic prosperity will of itself erode *apartheid* . . . . I wish this were true. Unfortunately, contemporary South African history proves the opposite. We have experienced several boom periods during the 30 years of Nationalist *apartheid* rule. There has been no real liberalization of *apartheid.* Some of the most vicious legislation has come at times not of a recession but of a boom.[15]

Finally, the U.S. Church acknowledges that sanctions would hurt the economies of the black states bordering on South Africa, but argues (as in the

case of damage to black workers in South Africa itself) that this is the price of ending *apartheid.*[16]

Before concluding this section it should be noted that there is one major restraining factor on the Church's support for economic pressure against South Africa. Specifically, it feels that in formulating policy on South Africa it should take into account the views of the South African Catholic Church. The South African Catholic Church has long been opposed to *apartheid.* In 1957, South Africa's Catholic bishops characterized *apartheid* as "something intrinsically evil."[17] At the same time, however, the bishops have mixed feelings about economic sanctions. On the one hand, they acknowledge that without some form of pressure there will be no reforms in the *apartheid* system. As Bishop Wilfred Napier, president of the Southern African Catholic Bishop's Conference, stated in May 1987:

> For all the criticisms of the SACBC stand on economic pressures, we wonder if anything would have been done to move away from the odious system of *apartheid* if it had not been for such pressures. Sadly people only seem to respond to pressure and this has had the positive result of creating a greater awareness of the position in South Africa by those who might otherwise have been content to allow matters to continue. A climate for response has developed, which was not present before.[18]

So the South African Catholic Church clearly feels that economic pressure is one way to cause reforms in the *apartheid* system. At the same time, however, the South African Church is concerned that economic pressure, carried too far, could result in an economic "wasteland" in South Africa that would benefit no one. As the South African bishops stated in May 1986:

> We, ourselves, believe that economic pressure has been justifiably imposed to end *apartheid.* Moreover, we believe that such pressure should continue and, if necessary, be intensified should the developments just referred to show little hope of fundamental change. However, we do not need to point out that, in our view, intensified pressure can only be justified if applied in such a way as not to destroy the country's economy and to reduce, as far as possible, any additional suffering to the oppressed through job loss. At the moment, we can see no justification for the sort of pressure that would leave a liberated South Africa in an economically nonviable situation.[19]

In addition to their concerns that sanctions might wreck the South African economy, the bishops are skeptical that sanctions alone will move South Africa away from *apartheid.* As a report commissioned by the South African Bishop's Conference put it:

> As anticipated, the whole issue of economic pressures has clearly had a totally counterproductive effect on government thinking. The whole sanctions issue has consolidated

> Government in its retreat from meaningful, and indeed any, reform.[20]

Inasmuch as the South African Catholic Church and the American Catholic Church are branches of the universal Roman Catholic Church, the leaders of these two national Churches have had considerable personal contact with each other through Church councils, such as Vatican II, and through the bishops' synods that convene in Rome every few years. Historically, the American Catholics have been reluctant to urge policies with respect to a foreign country unless these policies have the approval of the local Church. Consequently, in South Africa's case, the U.S. Church has been less radical in its policy recommendations than have been such largely Protestant bodies as the National Council of Churches and the World Council of Churches.

## An Evaluation of the Policy of the American Catholic Church Toward South Africa

Given the terrible moral costs that the *apartheid* system imposes on oppressor and oppressed in South Africa, it is not surprising that the U.S. Catholic Church has been so concerned about the need to restructure South Africa's political, economic and social institutions with the ultimate goal of a multiracial democratic society. A Church claiming allegiance to Christian ideas could hardly do otherwise.

The problem with the position of the American Church is not that its moral concern is misplaced, but rather that it fails to understand some fundamental aspects of politics in democratic societies. Specifically, the Church overlooks the following three issues: first, for a democratic political system to survive there must be some degree of economic prosperity; second, for democratic reform to work it is necessary that there be adequate time and that political order be maintained; and third, democracy in multi-racial, multi-religious and/or multi-ethnic societies operates on different principles from democracy in homogeneous societies.

Looking at the first issue, there are numerous examples of how economic collapse can lead to a breakdown of democratic institutions. In the case of the Weimar Republic (1918-1933) two key reasons for its demise were the massive inflation of 1922-1923 (where in the course of less than a year the value of a German Mark went from four to a dollar to several trillion to a dollar) and the Great Depression of 1929-1933 (where by 1932 unemployment in Germany was 42%).[21] The Allende government in Chile (1970-1973) fell to a considerable degree because it badly mismanaged the Chilean economy (at the time of the 1973 coup inflation in Chile was running at 400% a year and there were shortages of all sorts of essential items).[22] The Uruguayan coup of 1973 was brought on in large part because of the failure of the civilian leadership to revive an economy that had been stagnant since the mid-1950s.[23] And one of the key reasons for the downfall of the Nigerian Second Republic (1979-1983) was the perception on the part of the Nigerian population that the government was incapable of managing the economy. (In the four years of civilian rule foreign currency reserves declined from $8 billion to less than $1

billion; external debt climbed from roughly $4 billion to $15 billion; and both unemployment and inflation registered sharp increases under civilian rule.)[24]

It is of course true that economic disasters do not automatically bring down democratic governments. The United States survived the Great Depression, and Great Britain endured the quite difficult economic conditions present immediately after World War II. So by itself economic hardship will not invariably destroy democratic institutions. But there can be *no* doubt that economic calamities put a strain on democratic systems. When combined with other problems (such as the collapse of political order, poor leadership, a lost war), economic crisises can bring down democratic governments.

Given that some degree of economic prosperity is important for establishing and maintaining democratic governments, one can see the dubiousness of the idea that by trying to damage the South African economy one will promote the development of a multi-racial democracy. As the South African bishops realize, destroying the South African economy is most unlikely to promote the goal of a democratic South Africa. What the U.S. Catholic Church must realize is that the history of the development of democratic regimes shows conclusively that democracies thrive under conditions of economic prosperity, and that consequently it is very doubtful that a genuinely democratic South Africa would emerge from a severely economically depressed South Africa.

The second requirement that democratic societies need to survive is the ability to maintain political order. The Twentieth Century offers many examples of democratic societies that collapsed and were replaced by dictatorships because they could not maintain law and order. In the case of the Weimar Republic, the government lost popular support not only because of economic disasters, but also because of a collapse of public order; by 1932-1933 the German population saw daily street battles between the different private armies of the various political factions.[25] The final year of the Allende government in Chile witnessed considerable violence between right-wing and left-wing extremists.[26] In Uruguay a key factor in discrediting civilian rule was the government's inability to defeat the Tupamaro urban guerrillas; consequently in the spring of 1972 the Uruguayan government gave the military a "blank cheque" to crush the Tupamaros (which the military did in a brutal campaign of a few months).[27] And, in addition to the economic causes of its collapse, another factor that helped bring down the Nigerian Second Republic was its inability to control political violence. The 1983 elections in Nigeria were marked by clashes between parties and party factions in which hundreds were killed and thousands were injured. This high level of violence was one of the main reasons for disaffection with civilian rule.[28]

Critics of the argument that order and democracy are linked could identify examples where revolutionary violence has led to democracy. One can point to the English Civil War, the American Revolution, the French Revolution and the American Civil War as cases that arguably resulted in victories for democracy. So, following from these examples, a case could be made that a

revolution in South Africa would not necessarily have an anti-democratic outcome.

However, a closer look at these examples, plus a consideration of other cases, casts considerable doubt on the idea that revolutionary upheaval would lead to democracy in South Africa. First, in the cases cited it must be remembered that the immediate outcome of three of these four cases was a military dictatorship: Cromwell in England, Napoleon in France, and the U.S. Army in the South. Second, these cases were *all* pre-Twentieth Century. In this century violent revolutions have seldom if ever had democratic outcomes: the Russian, Chinese, Cuban, Vietnamese and Cambodian revolutions produced totalitarian regimes; the Iranian revolution led to a theocracy; and the Mexican revolution produced a one-party authoritarian system. Third, Twentieth Century cases such as the Irish rebellion of 1916-1922 and the Israeli struggle for their homeland in 1945-1948 were *not* social revolutions; they were "wars of national liberation," in which one portion of a political system (the Irish Republic, Israel) seceded from the rest of the political system (the British Empire).

For any democratic society the question of dealing with political violence poses major ethical dilemmas. These societies pride themselves, quite rightly, on their legal systems, which respect minority opinions and provide for elaborate protections for individuals accused of crimes. Yet it is this very system of respect for diversity and for the rule of law that can make democracies vulnerable to attack by terrorists and political extremists. In many cases in recent years terrorists and political extremists have taken advantage of the legal safeguards of democratic states to wage war against these societies. For example, the Tupamaro urban guerrillas were able to operate effectively in Uruguay in large part because Uruguay was a democratic society with a long-standing respect for civil liberties and rule of law.[29] And the high incidence of both right-wing and left-wing violence in Italy in recent decades has been in large part due to the fact that Italy is a democratic nation that respects human rights.[30]

Consequently, all democratic societies have emergency legislation that can be invoked to deal with a crisis. The U.S. Constitution provides that the writ of *habeas corpus* shall not be suspended except in times of "Rebellion or Invasion."[31] During the Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln used this clause of the Constitution to arrest and imprison many people. In 1871, the U.S. Congress passed the Ku Klux Klan Act, which gave the President sweeping powers to use the U.S. military to control domestic terrorism. Canada used the War Measures Act, which Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau invoked in 1970, to deal with terrorism in Quebec generated by the Front for the Liberation of Quebec (FLQ).

In South Africa's case, the question of political order and democracy raises some acute moral dilemmas. The U.S. Catholic Church has opposed draconian security legislation of the South African state that provides for such measures as imprisonment without trial, banning and the death penalty. Since the outbreak of unrest in 1984, the American Church and its South African

counterpart have been concerned about police and security force violence. A document of the United States Catholic Conference on the South African situation included the following quotation from South Africa's bishops:

> And we say now, as long as the system of *apartheid* prevails, the resentment and unrest will never die down. In our report on police conduct during township protest, in December 1984, and in our statement of March 22 on the Langa tragedy, we deplored the unnecessary force and violence used the police.[32]

So there is ample cause on Christian grounds for the American Catholic Church to be concerned about the way South Africa deals with political violence. However, there is in the South African case a failure by the Church to recognize the implications of political violence for the development of democratic institutions. Specifically, it fails to understand that its goal of a democratic multi-racial South Africa can be achieved *only* if there is some minimum degree of political order in South Africa. If violence is corrosive to democratic institutions, then continued political violence in South Africa will not offer an environment in which democracy can emerge. What it could produce is the triumph of the hard right Conservative Party in the next election; an accelerated political radicalization of the black community; and/or a military coup.

In sum, the American Catholic Church must realize that in South Africa's case, as in all countries, order and democracy are inextricably linked. The existence of such a linkage does *not* require the Church to stop protesting against the draconian emergency legislation of the South African state. What it requires is that the Church recognize the need for order in South Africa as a prerequisite for the emergence of a genuinely democratic system in that country.

Before concluding discussion on this issue, it may be instructive to recall another time when the American Catholic Church was forced to deal with the question of order and democracy. During the 1960s in American society there was considerable urban violence due to black discontent and to student radicalism. Many people in the Church were reluctant to condemn this violence because they felt that those causing the turmoil had just grievances (racism and the war in Vietnam).[33] What these Church figures failed to realize was that this violence was having a corrosive effect on America's democratic institutions. The U.S. Catholic Church can learn something from the turbulent 1960s as it seeks to formulate a South Africa policy; no matter how just the demands of an aggrieved group may appear, tolerating violence by the group in question will only endanger the survival or the emergence of democratic institutions.

The second major failure of understanding is that the U.S. Church does not comprehend what is needed to institute democratic reforms. Specifically, it does not appreciate that in moving toward democratic institutions there is a need for both time and order, as mentioned above.

On the matter of time, it is worth recalling that democratic institutions have nowhere emerged overnight. As was noted above, political revolutions seldom result in democratic governments; almost invariably the outcome of revolutions is dictatorial government. How much time is required varies from case to case. For example, in Brazil in 1964, a military coup overthrew the democratic government. The process of returning Brazil to democracy began in the early 1970s, when the military relaxed some of the controls it had established over society. But it was not until 1985 that Brazil inaugurated a civilian president.[34] In Nigeria, the military overthrew the First Republic in 1966. This coup set in motion the events that led to Biafra's 1967 secession; the civil war brought about by this secession lasted until 1971. Shortly thereafter, the military indicated its plans to eventually return to civilian rule; but it was not until 1979 that a civilian government took over power from the military.[35]

The U.S. Catholic Church has called for an immediate end to *apartheid* and the establishment of a new South Africa.[36] Out of an understandable revulsion against the *apartheid* system, it has not understood that the only way a new South Africa can be built is through a process of reform that will take at least several years. Hastening the process may actually prevent a democratic outcome.

As noted earlier, another prerequisite for democratic reform is some minimal degree of political order. Political writers since Tocqueville have commented on how, when a political regime begins to change, often the result is a desire on the part of the population for an immediate end to all of the regime's injustices. Such utopianism can lead to a complete breakdown of order in society. A society that lacks a minimal degree of political order cannot undertake democratic reforms. For example, Brazil's return to democracy was possible because the Brazilian military by the early 1970s had totally crushed the rural and urban guerrilla groups. With these guerrilla movements destroyed order was ensured, which made possible the cautious process of redemocratization of 1974-1985.

In South Africa's case, even before de Klerk's recent initiatives, the Botha government's reforms had raised expectations and hopes of an immediate end to *apartheid* among South Africa's non-white communities. If these raised expectations result in the breakdown of order the upshot will be the end of the democratic reform process and a civil war, or the imposition of an authoritarian government interested only in the restoration of order.

In trying to formulate a South African policy (as well as a policy on other countries undergoing political disorder), the American Catholic Church should keep in mind the aphorism of the Protestant theologian Reinhold Neibuhr: "A situation without order means chaos and is therefore bad. An order without justice means that it will become intolerable in the long run."[37] Order and justice are inextricably linked; in a society in turmoil such as South Africa the only hope for justice is that a minimal degree of order can be maintained.

The third failure of the U.S. Catholic Church is its inability to grasp that in societies with deep racial, religious and/or ethnic cleavages democracy must, of necessity, function quite differently from the way it does in relatively homogeneous societies like the United States, Great Britain, and Western Europe. Specifically, there are two major dangers that ethnically, religiously and/or racially divided societies face in their efforts to achieve stable democratic government: civil war and majority tyranny.

In contemporary Africa, there are many examples of countries that are either currently going through a civil war or have suffered one in the recent past. Such conflicts invariably complicate the task of establishing and preserving democratic institutions. In the Sudan a bloody North-South conflict has hampered the reintroduction of democracy. In Uganda, the effort to reestablish democracy after Idi Amin's downfall in 1979 was unsuccessful because of large-scale violence between the various tribal groups and political factions.

All democratic countries run the risk of civil war; after all, even a well-established and institutionalized democratic system like the United States had a terrible civil war between 1861 and 1865. But for ethnically, racially and/or religiously divided societies the dangers of civil war are particularly acute because of the deep social cleavages that are present in these societies.

In segmented societies there is also a risk of majority tyranny. Specifically, in these societies there is always the threat of the majority ethnic, racial and/or religious group setting itself up as the "permanent majority" by encouraging all members of the group to vote for it. This, in essence, is what has happened in Zimbabwe since that country became independent in 1980. Robert Mugabe's ZANU (Zimbabwe African National Union) is based on the Shona tribe, which constitutes about two-thirds of the country's population. Almost all Shonas vote for ZANU, giving it a permanent majority in parliament. The minority Ndebele tribe, which supports Joshua Nkomo's ZAPU (Zimbabwe African People's Union), is thus a "permanent minority." The Ndebeles have accused Mugabe's government of considerable persecution and discrimination in the years since independence.

Majority tyranny is a problem for any democratic society. The founding fathers of the American Republic were well aware of the hazards of majority tyranny, which is why they established a Senate not elected by popular vote and set up a complicated system of checks and balances whereby different branches of government would prevent each other from becoming too powerful. But in ethnically, racially and/or religiously divided societies majority tyranny is a particularly acute danger because voters quite often tend to automatically support their own members for office rather than (as in more homogeneous societies) shift their votes among parties and individuals based on the issues and personalties of the campaign. It should be noted in passing that the U.S. Catholic Church has always been keenly aware of the threat of majority tyranny, specifically, the risk that the Protestant majority in the United States would act tyrannically toward the Catholic minority.

Consequently, in its history American Catholics have always been strongly in favor of minority rights.[38]

Because of these dangers, democracy, if it is to work at all in ethnically, racially and/or religiously divided societies, must function according to the principles of what Arend Lijphart calls "consociational democracy."[39] Since Lijphart's book on Dutch politics *(The Politics of Accommodation)* was published in 1968, there has been a great deal written about consociational democracy and how it differs from more conventional interpretations of democracy. In brief, the basic principles of consociational democracy are: executive power-sharing among the representatives of all significant groups, a high degree of internal autonomy for groups that wish to have it, proportional representation and proportional allocation of civil service positions and public funds, and a minority veto on the most vital issues.[40]

Even this brief sketch of how consociational democracy functions shows that it is quite different from the republican or Westminster style of democracy. Because divided societies are more fragile than homogenous states, they tend to have the sort of democratic system that puts a great deal of emphasis on consensus and tries very hard to avoid conflict.

Looking at South Africa in this light, it is clear that South Africa's *only* chance for a democratic system is some sort of consociational system. South Africa is a diverse country in terms of race, ethnicity and religion. The white community is split linguistically between Afrikaans and English speakers. Religiously, the people of South Africa are divided among a number of Christian Churches (Dutch Reformed, Anglican, Evangelical, mainstream Protestant), a sizeable Jewish community, Muslims and Hindus. Racially it is divided among whites, blacks, Asians and Coloureds. The black community is separated ethnically among a number of tribes, and religiously among several churches.[41] It has been correctly noted that the architects of the *apartheid* system sought to reinforce tribal loyalties to keep the black population segmented. However, the corollary that is sometimes drawn from this charge, namely that the tribal loyalties in South Africa are artificial, is most clearly not true. The whole history of post-independence Africa has shown the enduring significance of tribal loyalties. Based on the experience of other divided countries imposing a Westminster or republican system in South Africa probably would result in either civil war or majority tyranny.[42]

The U.S. Catholic Church has, unfortunately, not understood this. Instead, it has tended to urge the creation of democratic systems based on "western" models. Such majoritarian systems are unacceptable to *both* the white and the non-white populations of South Africa. They are unacceptable to the whites because under a majoritarian system the white minority would be totally frozen out of power. Equally important, majoritarian democracy goes against African traditions of resolving issues by debate among the elders until consensus is reached. As Chief Buthelezi has said: "The competitive Westminster system (is) incompatible with African traditions."[43] So what the U.S. Church needs to do is "broaden its horizons" and start looking at some

other possible models (such as the Netherlands and Switzerland) for democratic reform in South Africa.

## Conclusion

This article recognizes that in dealing with South Africa the American Catholic Church is motivated by a quite sincere revulsion at the injustices of the *apartheid* system. But, as is so often the case in politics, good intentions and sincere motivation are not enough to produce a constructive outcome. Specifically, on the South Africa issue the Church has failed to recognize that in an explosive situation like South Africa the claims of justice must be balanced against the claims of order. If these two sets of claims are not balanced against each other the result will be a terrible civil war in which all of the people of South Africa will be the losers.

It has also failed to appreciate the complexity of democratic systems. These systems require certain preconditions if they are to be created and to survive; can best undertake reform by evolution; and often have to be greatly modified in order to fit the social, economic and political conditions of the society in which they emerge. The American Catholic Church has not comprehended the complex and diverse nature of democratic systems, and consequently has called for unrealistic and utopian measures to introduce democracy into South Africa.

In sum, in formulating policy toward troubled countries like South Africa, the U.S. Catholic Church would do well to remember another one of Neibuhr's maxim's: "Goodness, armed with power, is corrupted; and pure love without power is destroyed."[44] Put differently, in the context of South Africa, being concerned about the moral issues is not enough. The U.S. Church must be prepared to "arm goodness with power" (even if it means abandoning some of its moral purity) by taking a sober, realistic look at *both* the political and moral dilemmas that countries like South Africa face.

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**Endnotes**

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32 *Divestment, Disinvestment and South Africa*, p. 20.
33 For a discussion of the U.S. Catholic Church during the Vietnam era see George Weigel, *Tranquillitas Ordinis: The Present Failure and Future Promise of American Catholic Thought on War and Peace* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), pp. 216-236.
34 For a discussion of the political liberalization in Brazil and of the Church in this liberalization see Scott Mainwaring, *The Catholic Church and Politics in Brazil, 1916-1985* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1986), pp. 145-253.

35 The Nigerian military has announced its intention to return to civilian rule in 1992. As a first step in the reestablishment of democracy Nigeria held local elections in 1987.

36 *Divestment, Disinvestment and South Africa*, pp. 1-2.

37 Harry R. Davis and Robert C. Good, eds., *Reinhold Neibuhr on Politics* (New York: Scribner's, 1960), p. 177.

38 For an overview of American Catholic history, including foreign policy history, see Msgr. John Tracey Ellis, *American Catholicism*, 2nd edition, revised (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969).

39 Arend Lijphart's ideas on consociational democracy were first outlined in his book *The Politics of Accommodation* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1968). Lijphart's book was a study of politics in the Netherlands.

40 Arend Lijphart, *Power-Sharing in South Africa* (Berkeley, CA: University of California, Berkeley, Institute of International Studies, Policy Papers in International Affairs, Number 24), p. 6.

41 For a breakdown of the religious affiliations of the people of South Africa see Sincere, *The Politics of Sentiment*, pp. 113-114.

42 The difficulties of establishing and preserving democratic institutions in Africa are illustrated by the cases of the two African countries that have preserved democratic institutions since becoming independent; namely the Gambia and Botswana. In both countries there is a dominant party (in Botswana the ruling Democratic Party has never gotten less than 68% of the vote in the four elections since 1966; in the Gambia, the ruling Progressive Party won 27 out of 35 parliamentary seats in the 1982 elections, the government has never changed hands, and the opposition presents no threat since it is disorganized and has few political resources at its disposal). It is problematical whether these two countries would have remained democratic if they had oppositions that presented real threats to those currently holding power. For a good discussion of democracy in Africa see Robert M. Jackson and Carl G. Rosberg, "Democracy in Tropical Africa," *Journal of International Affairs* 38, no. 2 (Winter 1985), pp. 293-305.

43 Lijphart, *Power-Sharing in South Africa*, p. 126.

44 Reinhold Neibuhr, *Beyond Tragedy* (New York: Scribner's, 1973).