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Ethiopians and others . . . they all want dialogue



Dr W. F. Nkomo, a vice president of the South Institute of Race Relations, writer of this article.

remarked after one seminar on Africa, "I never dreamt that I could sit down with people from all parts of Africa, especially South Africa and Rhodesia, and find a common mind on the basic tasks that confront us."

It is interesting to see one's country in the global setting of world affairs and to realise

how far we have progressed in some directions and how far we have still to go in others. South Africa's economic potential is recognised everywhere. What is not so obvious is her potential for moral leadership. From country after country we heard reports of the crisis of character that threatens the nations. Softness and corruption are creeping in, making them an easy prey for divisive ideologies. Everywhere men see the need for a moral basis of nationhood.

Corruption

It is important that South Africa offers her technical and industrial knowhow to less developed countries but unless we can also offer an answer to corruption and division, our aid will be worthless. Our potential to do this was dramatically demonstrated time and again by the delegation of Black and White South Africans. In Ireland the Catho-

lic Archbishop said to them, "Your very presence here gives me hope." The fact that a group of men with so many natural differences could find a basic unity of purpose spoke louder than words.

The question everyone wants to know is "what is the basis of this unity?" I would say it is a common commitment to fight for the absolute standards of honesty, purity, unselfishness and love to become dominant in our personal lives and the life of our communities.

For those whose work lies in industry or public life, this will naturally have many practical implications. It answers the needs of nations in all parts of the world. It could be a critical race issue in Assam which some observers said could have become another Vietnam; a land problem in Papua-New Guinea affecting one of the largest copper mines in the world; communal problems in the

South Tyrol that had defied every previous attempt at solution; discrimination against foreign workers in Switzerland; a new concept of student power when a group of radical Indian students decided to tackle a long-standing industrial dispute and helped to settle it; race issues in America or problems affecting European industry.

World force

It was my particular pleasure to meet a dozen young South Africans at the heart of this world force. They are giving matchless service in the situations where they are placed and especially in Britain where they are able to meet and work with Africans from all parts of our continent.

Conrad Hunte, the West Indian cricketer, whose work for racial reconciliation in Britain has won the gratitude of top government officials,

asked me to send him more South Africans, Black and White, to help him in his programme. I also want to see a new commando force move through the African continent to fight for our leaders' to become incorruptible, hate the things that divide men and live out the faith which is vital for the future. Here at Caux we met from all parts of the continent, including South Africa and Rhodesia, parts normally excluded. As men of moral purpose we decided to exclude nobody in the task of making our continent great.

I long to see South Africa take on a job worthy of her potential. When we begin to care for the world's needs as well as our own, we shall learn to welcome change rather than resist it. We shall experience the adventure of pioneering an answer valid for all mankind as we aim to give every man of every race a home, a job and a future to look forward to.

I HAVE just returned from a conference in Switzerland which could have very real significance for the African continent. It was the 25th anniversary of the Caux assemblies for Moral Re-Armament held near Montreux, overlooking Lake Geneva.

More than 3 000 people came from 77 countries from July to September and included 95 people from 18 African countries. A provincial councillor from Ethiopia said to me, "Our governments may not yet be prepared to talk, but there is no reason why the ordinary people of Africa should not get together."

Delegate after delegate from West, East and Central Africa said how much they wanted to visit South Africa and see for themselves what was going on there. The Bishop of Lagos, the Right Rev I. S. Kale,