

# People

By Kwame Dawes

The prospect of another article about apartheid demands answers to some fundamental questions: Why? Why suffer students living thousands of miles away from South Africa to read about a system that seems unrelated to the "freedoms" of their society? Why talk about the evils of others that "we" can't do anything to change? Why further depress the already teetering spirits of people with world issues that maybe they couldn't or shouldn't care less about? Why add to an already saturated market of information that has become "stale news"?

The age of media as show biz has created a way of regarding current world affairs that is characterized by sensational high profile or high number deaths and scandals and further by a process of oversimplification which presents an issue in a series of episodes which expires after a fitting climax. In a way, we have come to treat human events as "fiction" with accepted and manageable beginnings, middles and ends. A story that is dragged on for too long has come to grate on our patience, we feel saturated because the climax is so effectively executed that more information becomes a bother. The combination of simplification, and the need for sensationalism has reduced many issues to half-explained ideas with themes that are easily recognized. Substance, however, is lacking. Thus, many issues end long before they have "ended" in reality. Silence about old good stories is often treated as an indication of stability and peace. Few people, for instance, would believe that people are still starving and looking as emaciated and broken as they were dramatically shown to be on t.v. a year ago. This necessary myth of the media has been accepted by us for our own sanity's sake but it has frustrated many people all over the world who rely heavily on international support for the freedom and assistance that they need.

Thus two dangers are manifest. The first is a limitation of information which sometimes becomes misinformation. This is tied to a selectivity about the information that is conveyed which is sometimes based upon a genuine belief in the lack of intelligence in the society. However, it is often a part of a larger diabolic plan to sway political decisions through incomplete information. The second is the misrepresentation that emerges when stories have "lived their life" and are pulled from the media because they are no longer "news worthy."

So back to the first question. If the source of knowledge about apartheid has been primarily the news casts of major television networks and headline stories in newspapers and magazines, we may be working within a framework of ignorance and very selective knowledge. Part of this select knowledge may include the assumption that the practised life-styles of people living in Fredericton have nothing to do with the system of apartheid. Another manifestation rests on the further assumption that Canadians can do nothing to change the system of apartheid and that those who have tired to suggest otherwise are stretching the issue. The third

consequence of this kind of dilemma rests on the assumption that the apartheid system's survival does not implicate Canadians, nor does it have any implications for the human rights situation in this country.

Addressing these assumptions has become the task of many who are convinced of the horror and injustice of the system of apartheid. Some have chosen to question these notions through a careful examination of the larger oppressions that are seen in societies normally regarded as being free and thus showing the kinship links between these oppressive systems and apartheid. Some have chosen to challenge the politicians in other countries whose policies towards South Africa are seen to betray a disregard for the interest of the oppressed while others have sought to challenge societies based on the shared systems of belief that are manifest even in South Africa. Such advocates are, for



instance, challenging the Christian Church and are postulating an examination of the Judeo-Christian worldview and its response to the system of apartheid.

The outspoken and widely published Cetic Mayson falls into the last category. He has embarked on a crusade that has entailed the challenging of the Christian Church's response to the system of apartheid both in South Africa and in the rest of the world. His statements reflect a complete conviction that the teachings of Christ fully oppose the system of apartheid, however, he identifies a distinction between the teachings of Christ and the "Churchianity" that has come to dominate today's society. Mayson's statements on the complex issue of sanctions and economic politics are poignant and compelling in their common-sense and their grounding in fact. Mayson's view that apartheid is "unreformable" makes his crusade speak against the media pattern of closing a story long before an effective end has come to an injustice.

His credentials as a victim of apartheid make him worth listening to and questioning. Perhaps attending his talk on the question of liberation will give us a chance to unearth all our questions on apartheid and to demand adequate answers from one who has a vested interest in answering with honesty and wisdom.

The following are some of Mayson's provocative statements culled from a number of his articles. This week's feature justifies itself on the basis that it attempts to generate dialogue, to open an issue and keep it open for as long as is necessary.

*A South African Methodist minister and former editor of the now banned Pro Veritate, Mr. Mayson will be meeting in SUB Room 103 on Friday, February 3, at 2:00 pm - 3:30 pm. All are welcome!*



Layout by Kwame Dawes. Thanks to John Valk for information.

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