

**A CRITICAL EVALUATION OF  
THE UNIVERSITY CHRISTIAN MOVEMENT  
AS AN ECUMENICAL MISSION TO STUDENTS, 1967 - 1972**

by

**WILLIAM JOHN HOUSTON**

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**SUPERVISOR: PROFESSOR W SAAYMAN**

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## SUMMARY

This dissertation has examined the University Christian Movement (UCM) over its turbulent five year history from 1967 to 1972 in terms of the original hopes of the sponsoring ecumenical denominations. Contextual factors within the socio-political arena of South Africa as well as broader youth cultural influences are shown to have had a decisive influence. These factors help to explain the negative reaction from the founding churches.

While this is not a thesis on Black Consciousness, nevertheless the contribution of the UCM to the rise of Black Consciousness and Black Theology is evaluated.

UCM is shown to be a movement well ahead of its time as a forerunner in South Africa of Black Theology, contextual theology, feminism, modern liturgical styles, and intercommunion. As such it was held in suspicion. It suffered repressive action from the government and alienation from the churches.

Constant cross referencing to other organisations such as the World Student Christian Federation, the National Union of South African Students, the South African Council of Churches, the Christian Institute, and the Students Christian Association, helps to locate the UCM within the flow of contemporary history.

The concluding evaluation differs markedly from the report of the Schlebusch Commission by making both critical and positive judgement from the perspective of the UCM as an ecumenical mission to students.

## KEY TERMS

Ecumenism, Ecumenical, Campus ministry, Student ministry, Black theology, Black consciousness, South African churches, Liturgy, Intercommunion, Schlebusch Commission, Christian Institute, Feminism, Student Christian Association, World Council of Churches, NUSAS.

To JOAN  
who has supported me through  
fourteen years of part-time study.

## **PREFACE**

My own interest in the subject of this dissertation stems from the fact that I worked with students through the Student's Christian Association for fourteen years. The five year life of the UCM coincides exactly with the five years when I was teaching and not involved in campus ministry. It has therefore been a fascinating journey of discovery as I have had to rework some of my perceptions.

It was a surprise to discover that nothing has been published on the UCM except in regard to its role in the struggle against apartheid. The focus of research therefore fell on primary sources. This was made difficult by the fact that the UCM was raided by the security police and boxes of documents were taken and never returned. Furthermore when the UCM was banned it became illegal to keep publications and documents of theirs and most people got rid of their records. I am grateful to the University of the Witwatersrand library which holds such UCM records that remain for their help.

It was fortunate that I was able to interview many of the people who were involved in the movement either by telephone or personally. This put flesh on the bare bones of the written material. I was greatly helped and stimulated by the perspectives given by the following people: Mr M Andrew, Dr A Boraine, Prof C Cook, Dr D Cragg, Rev S Hayes, Prof P Hinchliff, Archbishop D Hurley, Mr L Lawson, Rev J Massey, Mr C Mokoditso, Mr J Moloto, Dr J Moulder, Rev D Murray, Dr B Pityana, Prof N Richardson, Dr C Simkins. Once again the record is incomplete because some of the key players could not be traced, or were overseas or had died in the struggle against apartheid.

**ABBREVIATIONS**

|         |  |
|---------|--|
| ACSV.   | Afrikaanse Christen Studente Vereniging.           |
| AMW.    | Afrikaans Medium Work.                             |
| ASF     | Anglican Students Federation                       |
| BC      | Black Consciousness                                |
| CCSA    | Christian Council of South Africa                  |
| CI      | Christian Institute                                |
| CSV     | Christen Studente Vereniging                       |
| CUC     | Church Unity Commission                            |
| DRC     | Dutch Reformed Church                              |
| EMW     | English Medium Work                                |
| IFES    | International Fellowship of Evangelical Students   |
| NCFS    | National Catholic Federation of Students           |
| NUSAS   | National Union of South African Students           |
| PCR     | Program to Combat Racism                           |
| SACC    | South African Council of Churches                  |
| SASO    | South African Students Organisation                |
| SCA     | Students' Christian Association                    |
| SCM     | Students' Christian Movement                       |
| SKJA    | Studente Kerk Jeug Aksie                           |
| SPROCAS | Study Project on Christianity in Apartheid Society |
| UCM     | University Christian Movement                      |
| WCC     | World Council of Churches                          |
| WSCF    | World Student Christian Federation                 |

## CONTENTS

|  |    |
|--|----|
| CHAPTER 1  |    |
| Antecedent Events  | 1  |
| CHAPTER 2  |    |
| The Ecumenical Churches Prepare  | 8  |
| CHAPTER 3  |    |
| The Inauguration of the University Christian Movement  | 18 |
| CHAPTER 4  |    |
| Controversies  | 23 |
| CHAPTER 5  |    |
| Dissolution  | 48 |
| CHAPTER 6  |    |
| Evaluation and Conclusions   | 50 |
| APPENDIXES   |    |
| A. SCA Press Release 13 January 1965   | 57 |
| B. Report on the Consultation about the possibility of creating<br>a new ecumenical body in the Universities and Training Colleges,<br>held at Bishopscourt, 29-30 November 1996 | 58 |
| C. Motion of Dissolution of the U.C.M.   | 62 |
| <br>   |    |
| <i>ENDNOTES</i>  | 65 |
| <i>SOURCES CONSULTED</i>   | 68 |

## CHAPTER 1

### ANTECEDENT EVENTS

The University Christian Movement had a turbulent five year history from 1967 to 1972. It flashed across the South African sky like a meteorite generating both heat and light only to burn up in the hostile atmosphere of apartheid.

The UCM came into being as a result of fundamental changes that had occurred in the long established Students Christian Association (SCA). Founded in 1896 at the time of the great stirring among students in the United States when the Student Volunteer Movement and the Intercollegiate YMCA were founded, the SCA grew rapidly on English and Afrikaans speaking campuses. By the mid 1930's a fledgeling African work had come into being. This was followed by a growing work among Coloured young people. The SCA conducted work in both secondary schools and at tertiary level, in teacher training colleges and universities.

The largest section by far was the Afrikaans Medium Work. It is therefore not surprising that the social issues of the day, especially race relations, should surface in the SCA. Thus in 1952 the SCA changed its constitution from a unitary structure to a federal one of four sections based on cultural/racial differentiation. The four sections, African, Afrikaans, Coloured and English,<sup>1</sup> each had a governing committee which ran the affairs of the section. The supreme General Committee had representatives from each section in proportion to the membership of each one.

From the very beginning the SCA had to face the challenge of being a multiracial organisation. The problem was however not just one of racism but also of cultural domination. Dr D Cragg (1965:56) writes:

The SCA had always been predominantly Afrikaans and after the Second World War, the English Medium Work asked for greater autonomy to conduct its own affairs. This led to a constitution which was adopted in 1952 and divided the work into Afrikaans, English, African and Coloured sections...

This interpretation is supported by Rev Danie Van Zyl (1965:3) '...the English medium work asked for a sectional division. They hoped that such a move would save them from being swamped by the Afrikaner majority in the SCA.'

This amicable arrangement helped the administration of the Association, especially the large schools work. Nevertheless:

This arrangement conformed to the policy of apartheid and for this reason it came under immediate and increasing fire, especially from the English and African sections. The annual intervarsity conferences were interracial and stressed the unity of the SCA. Here there was much heart searching and frank discussion. The sharpest conflicts occurred where contact was closest and most sustained; in intervarsity conferences. The clashes occasioned by these conferences could not be ignored, least of all by those who did not attend and therefore who feared the implications of such contacts. For in these conferences, inevitably questions involving the nature of the gospel, the means used in its proclamation, social involvement, ecumenical relationships were raised and discussed with a frankness sufficient to cause trouble within denominations and between them.  
(Cook:1967:9)

The implementation of the 1952 decision did not solve the problems. Mounting external pressures were being felt within the Association as a whole, especially in the two white sections. The international Christian community was becoming increasingly alarmed at the unfolding apartheid policy and regarded it as racism which was an affront to the community of nations, oppressive of the majority of South Africans and a deviation from the teaching of Scripture.

In December 1960 the World Council of Churches (WCC) convened a meeting together with the Christian Council of Churches in the Johannesburg suburb of Cottesloe to tackle the issue of race relations. The meeting was occasioned by the Sharpeville massacre<sup>2</sup> of innocent protestors by the police. Delegates came from the ecumenical member churches and, significantly, also included leaders from the Dutch Reformed Church synods of the Transvaal and Cape and the Hervormde Church. The concluding statement represented a consensus about reforms.



Reactions were swift and electric. The prime minister, Dr Verwoerd, repudiated outright the Cottesloe Report. Soon two DRC synods fell into line. The effect of Cottesloe was very significant indeed.

Cottesloe marked a major turning point in church relations in South Africa. What could have been a breakthrough in beginning the process of moving away from apartheid on the part of the Afrikaans Reformed Churches resulted in those Churches separating themselves from the wider ecumenical community in South African and becoming more confirmed than ever in their support for apartheid. (de Gruchy & Villa-Vicencio 1983:144).

The government's segregated national education policy at tertiary level was expressed in 1959 in the Extension of the University Act.<sup>3</sup> The separation was completed with the passing of this act which separated the universities, ended the enrolment of 'non-whites' at the universities of the Witwatersrand, Natal, Rhodes and Cape Town and made provision for ethnic universities to be established. The SCA, it should be remembered, also had a very large work in high schools. Here too the policy of mother tongue education (as opposed to dual medium education), led to the separation of the white school-going population.

This exclusiveness of the school in the course of time served to generate stereotype attitudes not only in regard to English-Afrikaans relationships, but also on ideological issues involving black-white relationships as reflected by the party in power. (E G Malherbe in I Wilkins & H Strydom 1978:264)

It is reasonable to expect that the same separatist forces were present within the Afrikaans section of the SCA where people like Dr A Treurnicht were senior officer bearers. Such facts as are known about the secret Broederbond indicate the likely controlling role it might have had.

...the Broederbond is an elitist organisation, representing the vast majority of Nationalist Cabinet Ministers and Parliamentarians as well as leaders in the church, education, cultural movements... It links these leaders from Parliament to church councils and local village committees in the smallest centres. (Serfontein 1982:87)

The separatist forces within the Afrikaans section of SCA must have been irresistible.

In 1964 the SCA was attacked at the rabidly anti-Communist 'Peoples Congress on Communism' for its communistic and liberalistic sympathies thus putting more pressure on the Afrikaans section to prove its loyalty to the Dutch Reformed Church, the volk and the National Party. There was a growing crisis when the Dutch Reformed Church started 'Kerklike Jeug Verenigings' and Afrikaans CSV branches began to disaffiliate from the SCA.

That the Afrikaans section had great problems of its own was quite evident. In the minds of many leaders there must have been a long conflict of loyalties; a loyalty to the movement as a whole and a loyalty to the many followers who were becoming critical of the functions of the SCA as an ecumenical and non-church movement. (Van Zyl 1965:4)

The Afrikaans section with its close ties to the DRC was under threat from influential sections of the church who considered the CSV/SCA to be a parachurch organisation. They favoured the dissolution of the CSV in favour of the Studente Kerk Jeug Aksie which would be under the direct control of a local DRC. This obviously caused a crisis of loyalties for many in the CSV. The motivation for SKJAs was partly theological, namely that all mission, in this case mission to students, should be an expression of the mission of the local church and partly the isolationist policy of the mother church which wanted to maintain ideological control over their youth.

Within the English speaking section there were tensions as well but of a different nature. Prof C Cook, (1967:9) the last chairman of the EMW before the split wrote:

On the other hand within the SCA, a group felt that the theological position of the SCA was too indistinct, and that 'for the sake of clarity' it should adopt a basis of faith. The church constituency of the SCA was not consulted in this regard, nor indeed could it have been assumed to be favourable, since most of the advisory council of the SCA remained both members of and in sympathy with the World Council of Churches. Hence within the SCA two distinct opinions emerged, one believing that under the present circumstance, the maintenance of the multi-racial and open character of the church was the primary article of faith, and the other

believing that this was less important than a declaration that the SCA stood in the tradition of the evangelical party.

The strength of the evangelical party lay in the Western Province where the SCA branch at the University of Cape Town had years before adopted an evangelical doctrinal statement which sought to safeguard such doctrines as the inspiration and final authority of Scripture, the atoning death of Christ, and the necessity of personal salvation. These two positions proved to be irreconcilable.

Pressure was also brought to bear on the SCA from outside the country by the World Student Christian Federation (WSCF), to which it was affiliated, to repudiate apartheid. In 1960 the General Committee of the WSCF met in Thessalonika and issued its *Thessalonika Statement on Race*. This document contained a biblical and theological exposition on race. The WSCF was attempting to deal with the issue of race and racism which was seen to be a world wide problem, not just in the student world, but in society at large. The policy read as follows: (Crane 1965:11)

1(a) We confirm the unity of the Body of Christ as the ground of the community of our Federation life, and therefore reject all forms of segregation and discrimination, and those patterns of separation that are based on race, colour, or ethnic origin.

(b) We ask our member movements to examine their own fellowship and the structures basic to their association in order to become aware of all forms of separation and segregation and to work for the removal of these. Reports of progress should be submitted to the next General Committee.

2. We intend to stay together in Christ and, therefore, refuse to judge one another for sins that are committed by all.

3. We affirm our rejection of all forms of racial injustice in society, and recommend co-operation with agencies and organisations working for the same principles.

The next step was taken in August 1964 at the General Committee meeting of the WSCF in the

Argentine. 'First, it requested the SCA to receive a visit from the General Secretary to discuss racial discrimination and threatened disaffiliation if no progress was made.' (Cragg 1965:57). Second, it sent a letter to all member movements calling on them to 'bring pressure to bear on South Africa to discontinue its policy of apartheid.' (Andrew 1967:105). These pressures, it was suggested, could include a call for economic sanctions. For the WSCF, which considered racism a threat to world peace, to have remained silent would have been to accept an inhuman situation. As can be imagined such a call created an intolerable situation in the SCA and brought tensions to a head. The SCA Executive met in September 1964 and decided to disaffiliate, 'accusing the WSCF of trying to force the will of the majority upon a minority and of leading its member movements to become political pressure groups'. (Cragg 1965:58) This precipitous step was taken initially without the consent of the General Committee. That consent was, however, not long in coming.

From the above it is evident that the theological and ideological centrifugal forces were far too great to overcome. A split in the SCA was inevitable. At a special general meeting convened in Bloemfontein in January 1965, the SCA resolved to dissolve and to reconstitute as four autonomous, separate movements. The official press release was amazingly bland and carefully avoided giving any reasons or motivation for the split. (See appendix A).

The four separate sections had each to reconstitute under a new name. The English section became the SCA of Southern Africa, the Coloured section became the Association of Christian Students. The African section called itself the Student Christian Movement (though not related to the worldwide SCM). Only the Afrikaans section defined itself in racial terms by becoming the Afrikaanse Christen Studente Vereniging. The other three groups were technically open to students of any race but were *de facto* confined to one group by virtue of segregated schools and tertiary institutions. Apartheid separation in tertiary education had progressed in the 1960s with the establishment of 'bush colleges' for different black groups following the 1959 Extension of the University Education Act.

Within a year the theological tussle in the English section came to a head. At a council meeting

in Cape Town in July 1966, a two-thirds majority voted in favour of adopting an evangelical doctrinal basis thus narrowing the basis of the movement to put it out of step with the erstwhile supporting ecumenical churches and to align it with the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students. (IFES)<sup>4</sup>

The ecumenical churches were aware of the unfolding developments and foresaw the inevitable demise of the SCA. Preparations began back in 1963 when the EMW contacted the Christian Council about the possibility of affiliation through the youth department in order to achieve a closer link with the ecumenical churches. In his annual chairman's report of the EMW 1963/64, Dr C. Cook laments:

If the work of the SCA within the university is ever to be more than the work of a few interested individuals, the church as a whole will have to give more attention to its responsibilities towards the university. The EMW executive is convinced that the efforts of individuals can no longer represent the main way in which most of the churches discharge their responsibilities to the universities.

The perceived monoracial character of the new SCA after 1965 and its theological narrowness was unacceptable to the ecumenical churches. They, in collaboration with the CCSA, began to consider the option of creating a new body that would express their values and aspirations.

## CHAPTER 2

**THE ECUMENICAL CHURCHES PREPARE**

In 1964 an informal meeting was held at the Mindolo Ecumenical Centre in Zambia 'to discuss recent developments in the Students Christian Association in South Africa and to consider a possible line of action in response to the fast deteriorating situation of the English-medium, African and Coloured student work in South Africa.' (Aide-memoire:1964). It was called by the WSCF to seek advice and clarification of the situation in preparation for the upcoming WSCF General Committee meeting in July which the SCA declined to attend. Even though this meeting had no official status at all it was influential because of the seniority of those who attended.

Present were: W Crane, chairman and secretary for Africa WSCF; Dr Visser t'Hooft (WCC); Rev Beyers Naude (Christian Institute); Rev B Brown (CCSA); Rev S Mokitimi; Prof A Geysler; Mr F Van Wyk; Prof GC Oosthuizen; Rev Burgess Carr (Vice Chairman of WSCF); Rev A Booth; Rev B Bilheimer; Rev P Abrecht; Mr H Makulu; Rev T Okuma; Mr Q White and the Bishop of Bloemfontein.

The high level meeting reviewed the recent relationships between the SCA and the WSCF since the 1960 General Committee at Thessalonika. Rev. B. Brown outlined the concerns of the English speaking churches 'over the fact that SCA was not truly ministering to the needs of their students in schools, colleges and universities. It is this concern which has given rise to growth of denominational chaplaincies and student movements.' (Aide Memoire:1964)

After considerable discussion the following proposal was put forward as a possible solution the 'Formation of a new Student Christian Movement, bringing together English speaking and non-white students and student groups, together with small groups of liberal Afrikaners who are disillusioned with the present SCA leadership and stand on racial matters.' (Aide Memoire: 1964) The CCSA was to play the role of midwife to bring about the birth of this movement, but it was not to exercise too much control after the initial steps had been taken to bring about its formation.

Even at that late stage the WSCF had not given up all hope for negotiation with the SCA in order to change its racial policy. SCA was therefore asked for a clear statement of its position with regard to the *Thessalonika Statement on Race*, which the SCA declined to give.

Central to the concerns of the WSCF, as recorded in the Aide -memoire, seems to have been race relations. The *Thessalonika Statement on Race* was taken as the standard against which to measure compliance. There is no record of other aspects of Christian life and witness having been discussed.

The Mindolo Consultation set in motion a flurry of correspondence between the SCA's EMW and the CCSA and between the CCSA and member churches. One of the key thinkers at this time was Rev J D Davies, the Anglican chaplain to the University of the Witwatersrand. In November 1964 he wrote a two page private memo for the Anglican Bishops Episcopal Synod entitled *Ecumenical Student Witness in South Africa*. The same memo was also sent to the Division of Christian Education of the CCSA. In the memo he notes that the Anglican church has increasingly taken an interest in student chaplaincies which has given rise to the emergence of the Anglican Student Federation. However, in student institutions Christian divisions were an obvious hindrance. The impending dissolution of SCA was taken as inevitable. Furthermore the theological narrowness of the EMW did not 'represent the variety of theological attitude that is to be found in the churches of the CCSA'. A vacuum would be created that needed to be filled. His view was that:

Many people feel that the times demand a truly ecumenical student body, that shall be truly related to the churches (interdenominational rather than undenominational), that shall be sensitive to the demands of Christian witness and fellowship in a multiracial country, that shall be truly concerned to penetrate and claim the student world, rather than just perform religious exercises on the fringe. (Davies 1964:1)

He envisaged that this new organisation would express student initiative and not be something handed down ready made by higher authority. It would be truly geared to student needs so as to be relevant, and it would be interracial. With prescience he foresaw such a 'student society is

going to be very vulnerable politically, it may even draw fire from within our own churches. If it is to survive, it must be possible for the churches to say with some degree of credibility this is not just an informal student body, it is the church, it is our agency in the university'.

Rev J Davies was particularly concerned that the CCSA should act swiftly, together with its member churches, to establish an ecumenical student movement in order to win over elements of the soon to be disbanded SCA and so claim to be the true inheritors of the SCA.

The challenge he put to the SACC and its member churches was to decide whether they wanted to take this opportunity 'or let the bulk of student Christian witness fall into the hands of segregationists of various kinds'. He concluded his Memorandum with these words 'To do nothing at all would avoid many tensions and points of disagreement; it would also commit us to a policy of ensuring that the witness of ecumenical Christianity remains absent from one of the most strategic sectors of our society'.

At about the same time the Division of Christian Education of the CCSA met on November 16 1964. Amongst a lot of other business, there was a discussion of Rev Davies' memorandum and another by Rev Goldie. Rev Davies was again prominent in the discussion. He outlined the proposals for a national student conference in July 1965 and reported that the Anglican Synod of Bishops had empowered the Bishop of Bloemfontein to act as he saw fit in the matter.

The following resolution was adopted by the meeting;

That the Division expresses itself in favour of a student movement that is

- (1) non-racial;
- (2) doctrinally 'open';
- (3) more closely related to the churches.

The motion was referred to the General Purposes Committee which had power to act. They in turn could establish a strategy committee to act on this resolution and the other proposals contained in Rev. Davies' memorandum. The need for a new movement was never questioned, only the timing in relation to the coming dissolution meeting of the SCA.



The resolution was swiftly implemented. On December 7 1964 Rev B Brown, secretary of the CCSA, wrote a *Memorandum on Student Work* to member churches. In it he laments the negation of ecumenical thinking and experience in the universities on account of both the exclusive evangelical emphasis of the main stream of SCA, and also the rise of denominational societies which express the fragmentation of the church. He continues:

This has led many of the member churches, and the Christian Council itself, to ask whether there ought not to be a new ecumenical approach to this whole matter and whether the churches should not take active steps in more direct involvement together in this field. We believe that it is of prime importance that any student Christian body should be inclusive enough to provide for a wide variety of traditions and emphases, that it should be fully inter-denominational (rather than undenominational) and fully interracial. We also believe that it must be so structured as to make students of varying traditions feel at home with one another in the things of the spirit and to involve them in dialogue and fellowship of a real ecumenical experience. (Brown 1964:1)

The Strategy Committee of the CCSA met on 17 February 1965 knowing that the SCA had broken up in January 1965. Rev B Brown, as acting chairman, outlined developments that had led to the meeting, while Mr M Andrew, the ecumenically minded travelling secretary of SCA, described the history of SCA that led to the dissolution. Dr C Cook, the chairman of the EMW of SCA, answered questions from the meeting by way of clarification. Then Rev J Davies spoke of the plans for a student conference in July 1965 under the title of 'What Does It Mean To Be A Christian In The University World?' There were at this stage no plans for a permanent organisation. The SACC approved the conference plans, offered financial assistance, and appointed a smaller strategy committee to continue to study the question of student ministry taking into account the voluminous materials written on the subject in WSCF circles. We should note the presence of Rev W H Crane in the meeting and his offer of help if needed because it indicates the hoped for links with the world ecumenical movement.

For ecumenical churches, the collapse of SCA would have occasioned blame, rebuke or, given the high hopes for a new movement, triumphalism. However, Rev J Davies (1965:1) wrote an

article expressing repentance:

It is easy to confess someone else's faults. But the ecumenical movement is nothing if not primarily a movement of repentance. The illness of SCA is showing us how we are all ill. If there is something in another group which we consider unsatisfactory or lacking in truth, our own group shares the blame, because we have contributed to each other's isolation. So I thank God for the tensions which have led to the Bloemfontein SCA meeting last month; it has been a crisis, a moment of truth for all of us;...

This cautionary note and generous spirit was both remarkable and wise, given the difficulties yet to come. This article, written only a month after the break up of SCA, expounds his vision for any new ecumenical body. He rightly stated that the ethos of the movement will best be communicated through national conferences. Because the new body would be interdenominational 'the ecumenical experience must start with people who have got some sense of commitment to the church as it is, in its fragmentations'. He recognised that there was no perfect recipe for the relationship between senior guidance and student initiative, but urged that initiatives come from the student level. Then it must be inclusive. 'Ecumenical encounter does not demand in the first place surrender of one's own beliefs ... rather we say, "truly there are real matters of difference between us, and we must get together to learn from each other"'. Finally he articulated his belief that 'ecumenical action had always sprung most powerfully out of concern for the world, for the mission of the Gospel to the world, and for the expressing the compassion of Christ for the world'. He believed that such activity would most effectively draw people together especially '...if we have in the foreground of our thought the society into which we are sent, the society of our country, the society of our culture, the society of our campus.' He expected this to produce problems for he wrote; 'something will be wrong if this does not stimulate disagreement; but the most instructive discourse takes place not according to the established denominational fences but across them.'

What Rev. Davies could not foresee was the awaiting division not over doctrine, but over social perception, social analysis and one's relation to the means of production. No amount of ecumenical goodwill, it proved, was able to transcend those divisions.

The following July an ecumenical gathering of students did take place at the Wilgespruit Fellowship Centre from July 14-18, 1965. Some 35 people attended from the National Catholic Federation of Students (NCFS), the Anglican Students Federation (ASF), the SCM (the old African section of SCA), and from the SCM of Basotholand (now Lesotho). The purpose of the conference was to get people to meet each other. There were bible studies and lectures on the theme of unity. In the true spirit of ecumenism speakers were drawn from a wide range of denominations, namely; Dr Allen (Church of England), Dr Johanson (Baptist), Ds Venter (DRC), Mr Duggan (Catholic) and Fr Stubbs (Anglican). The matter of the celebration of the Eucharist was solved in an unsatisfactory way. 'On the Saturday evening the Anglicans had their Mass in the presence of the whole conference, and on the following morning the Catholics did the same, on the same altar with the same ornaments.' (Davies 1965:175). This seems to be viewed as an achievement especially when we reflect on the fact that the Churches were at this stage still a long way from agreeing to intercommunion.

Lengthy discussions were held on the subject of student ecumenism. It was not at all clear then whether a new body should be formed to promote ecumenical relationships. Many wished to see such a body established, but this was not a conference of official delegates and so they had no power to act. Furthermore, Dr Cook's address had contained a plea to SCA to recover its vision as an ecumenical body, which if they did, to set up a new group would appear to rival SCA in this responsibility. This plea was to prove fruitless, but at this early stage it created uncertainty as to the way forward.

There was little difficulty, however, in deciding to promote the formation of local councils for the co-ordination of existing Christian societies on campus, to conduct dialogue, to have common worship, prayer and bible study and finally to organise social projects. The conference decided to hold another conference in July 1966 with every effort being made to make it more widely representative. The Continuation Committee was mandated to do this.

It is evident that the direction and drive was coming from the CCSA at this stage with the students being less certain as to the way ahead.

The next significant event was the conference of ecumenical churches at Bishopscourt, Cape Town, from 29-30 November 1966, with the Archbishop of Cape Town in the chair. This was a high level consultation of official delegates whom, it could be noted in passing, were all white males. The participants were;

|                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| Convenor and Chairperson | The Archbishop of Cape Town  |
| Methodist Church         | The Rev A L Borraine<br>The Rev Dr D Cragg   |
| Presbyterian Church      | Rev Dr C Cook  |
| Congregational Union     | Rev J De Gruchy  |
| Roman Catholic Church    | Rev Fr N MacManus  |
| Anglican Church          | Rev Canon J Goldie<br>Rev J Davies   |
| Consultants:             | Rev B Brown (Secretary Christian Council)<br>Rev B Moore<br>Rev W Bell<br>Mr M Andrew. |

The presence of the Roman Catholic representative is important given that this Church was not a member of the CCSA. Perhaps something of the new spirit of Vatican II was in operation already.

The report of this consultation is instructive (see Appendix B for the full Report) because it records the intentions and theological underpinnings of the ecumenical churches. First, the four aims of the SCA were noted; then it was recognised that there were two main methods of fulfilling these aims.

The first seeks to fulfil these purposes by means of individuals uniting on a common basis of faith. The second believes it to be necessary for churches to work together corporately in the academic community. By the choice of a basis of faith, the SCA has opted for the first of these methods. Thus a new movement is needed that would implement the second method and expresses the fullness of the church.

We see here a clear ecumenical commitment by five denominations to conduct a ministry among students.

Third, the theological link between evangelism and unity is clearly articulated.

The Church cannot separate evangelism from unity.... With growing awareness of the scriptural requirement of unity, the Churches have now been brought to cooperate with one another in the mission of the Church. We acknowledge that the failure of our Churches to realize their interdependence, and their disobedience to their Lord has been largely responsible for the weakness and ineffectiveness of much of their work among students.

The theological commitment is both valid and laudable but the implied cause of ineffectiveness is far too simplistic. Failure in ministry is more likely to be multi-causal. If all it required was for Churches to work together, then the UCM would have been a glorious success.

Fourth, it was accepted that a new movement would have to:

... involve the whole church in its responsibility to bring the whole Gospel to the whole academic community. Unity and mission will thus be kept together as they must be.

Quite how the whole Church was to be involved was not spelled out, but it does express the desire to have proper, official Church support. The report confesses 'that the failure of our Churches to realise the interdependence and disobedience to the Lord, have been largely responsible for the weakness and ineffectiveness of much of their work among students'.

The Bible was taken to be the basis which informed ecumenical and evangelical action. These concerns of the Church were to be expressed in the following ways;

Worship and prayer.

Study of the Christian Faith and secular disciplines.

Witness to the academic community.

Service in the academic world.

There are some important differences between the concerns as listed above and the four original aims of SCA. In the first place the focus of the ministry has been widened from just students to embrace the whole academic community which could include faculty members and support staff.

The report recognises the importance of denominational groups working together in unity but is silent on the other vexed issue of multiracial groups working together for the sake of the credibility of the gospel. This is perhaps because the white liberal paradigm was non-racial and individualistic which downplayed race and ethnicity.

The subjects deemed worthy of study were the Christian Faith (although Bible study is not specifically mentioned as it is in the SCA's aim) and secular disciplines. This is a decisive break with the pietistic dualism of the old SCA by bringing secular disciplines under the Lordship of Christ.

Witness to the academic community is affirmed in terms of dialogue - a diffuse term that was coming into use in WCC circles - but there is no specific reference to evangelism. In contrast, the first aims of the SCA was 'To lead students to accept the Christian faith...' It is this exact point that sharply reflects the difference between evangelicals and ecumenicals.

Another noteworthy omission is that of any reference to world mission as was contained in the old SCA's four aims. While the ecumenical concerns defined the nature of student work more widely than did the old SCA, at the same time it narrowed its geographic scope at the expense of the world missions mandate and was thereby more unfocussed.

The purpose of the conference was to review the situation in the student world and to discuss the advisability of starting a new student movement. Tragic as the dissolution of SCA was, it created the opportunity for a new ecumenical venture. The SCA had in the meanwhile in July 1966 adopted an evangelical doctrinal statement and had declared its intention to seek affiliation with the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students. This action finally cleared the way for a new body to be formed. 'Once the SCA had taken the decision to adopt a basis of faith, many in

the churches that had hitherto supported the SCA felt impelled to seek another movement that would be a vehicle for joint ecumenical and evangelical action.' (Cook 1967:10).

The last of the preparatory conferences followed soon after the end of the Bishops court conference. From 5 - 8 December 1966 representatives of various denominational societies, denominational chaplains, open SCA branches, academics, representatives from Churches and the CCSA, and Rev W H Crane of the WSCF, all met at Rosettenville in Johannesburg. Rev J Davies who was in the chair reported: 'The conference gave thorough consideration to the present situation and the need for Christian work in the academic world. Special study was made of the proposed constitution,....and the report from the Consultation of Church representatives, held at Cape Town on the 29th and 30th November.' (Minutes).

This conference resolved: 'That an interdenominational, and interracial and international Christian movement be formed to fulfil the Christian mission in the academic world.' The name of the new movement was to be *The University Christian Movement of Southern Africa*. The name carefully embodied the idea of mission to the whole university rather than to just students, as well as the wider geographical scope of the sub-continent. We must assume that teacher training colleges were included under the title of university, although one suspects that in fact they were the poor relatives.

A steering committee was appointed, a budget was set, and the machinery of administration was established. It was decided to hold an inaugural conference and council meeting over the period 8 to 14 July 1967 at the Federal Seminary in Alice. Participating churches were to be asked for their assistance with finances and to advertise among their scholars.

The conference recorded a special vote of thanks to Rev. W.H. Crane for his presence, sympathetic advice and '...for the vision he had given the participants of their place in the mission of the Church in the academic communities of Africa.' (Minutes).

The Churches had worked for three years together with the SACC and the WSCF to prepare the way for the formation of a new body that would encapsulate their ideals. The stage was now set.

## CHAPTER 3

**THE INAUGURATION OF THE UNIVERSITY CHRISTIAN MOVEMENT**

The University Christian Movement finally came into being at the Inaugural Conference held in Grahamstown from 9-14 July 1967. Papers were read by leading academics, the constitution was debated and adopted, and the conference was brought to a fitting conclusion with an Inaugural Service on Friday, July 14, 1967.

Because the values and intentions of an organisation are generally contained in its constitution, we shall turn to it in some detail.

The name of the organization was settled as The University Christian Movement of Southern Africa. It is significant that an earlier suggestion of Student Christian Movement was not accepted because the accepted title reflected a step forward to encompass more than just students. In fact, a note in the constitution under **Article 1 - Name** reads, 'By the word "University" shall be meant the total academic community in any institution of higher learning'. The target of ministry was to include students and staff both teaching and support staff. The name also widens the geographic scope of operations to include all of Southern Africa. What was in mind was contact with the University of Lesotho, Botswana and Swaziland (UBLS) as well as universities in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) and Zambia.

**Article 2** states the purpose to be;

The purpose of the UCM shall be:

To call all members of the academic community to love, trust and hope in God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit; to acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour according to the Scriptures; and to be servants and messengers of God's Kingdom in all the world.

This general statement of purpose is Trinitarian in its formulation, its source of authority is Scripture, and its scope goes beyond any local campus to the world. The style was to be



characterised as that of a servant- no triumphalism here. The message is wider than a pietistic one for it is the message of God's Kingdom which simultaneously combines both the horizontal and the vertical dimensions of Jesus' teaching.

Article 2 goes on to list a number of ways in which the general purpose might be lived out obediently. First, through worship and prayer. Second:

... by bringing together, not only individual Christians of different Communion and cultures, but also different Christian denominations and groups, as an essential visible expression of their unity in Christ; and by being used for the renewal of the Church, through responsible membership of particular denominations...

Whereas the SCA allowed for individual membership, the UCM provided for group membership. Of particular importance is the theology of unity which maintains that unity has to be visible and demonstrable in order to be credible. Furthermore this unity in Christ is a given which only needs to be expressed. This contrasted markedly with the recently adopted doctrinal basis of the SCA which speaks of the 'spiritual unity of all believers'. In the UCM constitution we have a clear commitment to ecumenism seen in the light of the general missiological purpose of being servants and messengers of God's Kingdom in all the world. Unity of races is not mentioned, instead contact between cultures is. This avoidance of the explicit issue of race is surprising. The reason is perhaps, and this is only supposition, that English liberals of the day preferred the notion of non-racialism and individual rights over against any theories of group identity.

Tucked away in this paragraph is a little surprise. It is the reference to UCM being used for the renewal of the Church. This idea is not found in any of the records of the earlier conferences. It may contain seeds of student discontent with their experience of the institutional church. It is highly unlikely that the Church hierarchies and ordinary laity were ready to see themselves as being the objects of mission. One may discern right here the potential for later conflict. The evidence suggests that the Churches viewed the UCM as a vehicle through which to discharge their responsibilities to the academic world and not *vice versa*.

Another way in which the general purpose was to be lived out was 'by working for justice, reconciliation, and peace in our land and throughout the world'. This clause puts justice issues firmly on the agenda. Mr Mick Andrew recollects that in the UCM the ecumenical churches at last had a body that would be their social conscience among students.

The final article to note is 'by witnessing to Jesus Christ as the Lord of all life through active participation in the whole life of our society and especially in the academic community.' By this holistic statement, the old pietistic dualism of the SCA was carefully avoided. All of life in all of its concerns was the legitimate arena of Christian scrutiny and action.

These carefully worded statements set the direction and the agenda for UCM in the following five years. What is noteworthy by its absence is any reference to an explicit evangelistic mandate. Such an omission caused concern among the evangelical wing of the church.

Under **Article 3** on Membership, provision is made for five types of members. First there are local branches, that is, groups on campuses. Then, Constituent Bodies such as local denominational and inter-denominational societies as well as national denominational Christian societies (such as the Anglican Student Federation for example) may obtain membership. This clause allowed existing groups to retain their own identities while casting the UCM in the role of an umbrella organisation on a local campus. Being committed to the ecumenical ideal, this clause wisely facilitated co-operation rather than competition. Individual Membership was the third category. Any person at a university where there was no UCM branch, could apply for membership. Such flexibility would later help to circumvent the problems caused when UCM was banned from some campuses. Writing in the *Wits Student* of 28 July 1967, Charles Simkins states 'The most important thing about the structure of the UCM is the freedom of branches to take the form best suited to the local situation. At Wits for instance, the UCM will probably take on some form of federation between the Christian societies.' The last two categories allowed for honorary membership and for post university membership. These broad categories of membership seemed to allow the UCM to draw on a wide range of human resources; staff and student, graduate and undergraduate; while at the same time reflecting the ecumenical ideal of inclusivity and co-operation with others.

The composition of the Council was designed to give effect to the ideal of a close link with the supporting Churches. In the previous chapter we demonstrated the key role played by the ecumenical churches and the SACC in the formation of the UCM. It was therefore entirely reasonable to expect them to be officially represented on the council. A balance is struck in which the Churches had a voice but did not command a controlling interest in the council. This arrangement gave a much more effective link between Church and campus than had been the case in the SCA. The participating Churches as listed in the first constitution were:

Church of the Province of South Africa  
 Congregational Union of South Africa  
 Methodist Church of South Africa  
 Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa  
 Roman Catholic Church.

Conspicuous by their absence were the evangelical denominations such as the Baptist Union of South Africa, the Church of England in South Africa, and the Pentecostal churches.

Apart from the expected representation of local branches and regions, we should note the provision for representation from national denominational student organisations. This effectively turned the UCM into a national co-ordinating forum and put it in a very powerful position to command the high ground on campus.

Before the end of the year the sponsoring churches had written letters of commendation to their various congregations. Typical of these letters is the following (undated) one:

The Annual Conference of the Methodist Church of South Africa which recently met in Pietermaritzburg gave official recognition to the University Christian Movement.

I heartily commend this new venture to Methodist students believing that it holds great potential in promoting fellowship and discussion, in moulding character and in developing qualities of leadership.

With prayerful good wishes,  
Lloyd G S.Griffiths,  
President of the Conference.

The birth of the UCM did not go unnoticed in the national press. Favourable articles were to be found in, for example, the *Cape Times* on 15 August 1967 and even in the Progressive Party's magazine, *Progress*, of June 1967.

Rev John Davies wrote at this time (Davies 1967:107) a series of rhetorical questions one of which was :

In what sense can the Christian Societies exercise the Churches' role of articulating a conscience concerning academic freedom and social segregation?

At this stage there was no answer to that question but it turned out to be a key one. He went on to state that the UCM was unique because

We understand, in fact, that our new movement is the first of its kind in the world; there is no other movement, not even the new University Christian Movement of the USA, where both Roman Catholic and non-Roman Catholic Churches have come together at this level...(Davies 1967:108)

With the founding of UCM we have a unique movement, full of potential, ready to sail out into the unknown. It did not take long before the storm of controversy raged about it.

## CHAPTER 4

**CONTROVERSIES**

## 4.1 THE STUDENT WORLD IN THE 1960's

In order to appreciate something of the context on campus in which the UCM operated, we need to recall that there were massive social changes underway in the 1960's.

The decade of the sixties began with high hopes. President Kennedy announced in 1961 that the United States of America would place a man on the moon by 1970. This was achieved on 20 July 1969. President Kennedy also inaugurated the Decade of Development in which poverty was to be tackled. In this same spirit the Peace Corps was founded in 1961 to provide an opportunity for young people to assist developing countries especially in the fields of education and agriculture.

As the decade proceeded the dreams went sour. America became deeply embroiled in the war in Vietnam. It was a war that could not be won. The very moral basis of the war was disputed as was the political wisdom of the costly interference. As opposition grew it was expressed in protest marches and draft dodging, especially among young people who were becoming alienated from mainstream society. Science and technology were increasingly seen as contributing to weapons of destruction and as such were rejected. The memorable film *The Graduate* (1968) has a scene of a graduation party at which the graduate is advised to 'Go into plastics' as a career. That epitomised all that was artificial and so the graduate drops out instead.

Student protest movements spawned protest songs by singers such as Joan Baez and Bob Dylan who accurately expressed and shaped the sentiments of the youth sub-culture. There was a search for freedom- that was the watchword- authentic experience and new forms of community. The openness to new ways invited some to experiment with altered states of consciousness induced by drugs. The phenomenon of radicalised students was not limited to the United States. Radical student groups in France and Germany in 1968 even threatened the stability of those

governments.

Earlier, black Americans had engaged in what was then called the Negro civil rights struggle for equality before the law, the right to vote, desegregated facilities etc. A march on Washington in 1963 attracted a huge crowd. While the strategy was that of non-violence, there were some groups which were more militant under the leadership of Malcolm X and Stokely Carmichael. This mass mobilisation of black Americans won changes in Federal and State laws.

The 1960s have also been called the swinging sixties. Conventional morality and values were rejected. New freedoms were claimed in sexual morality, experimentation with drugs and Eastern religions. Alternative lifestyles were modelled by rock groups such as the Rolling Stones and expressed in their music.

Self-theorists in psychology such as A Maslow, E Fromm, C Rogers, and Rollo May, turned a generation of people away from the conventional values of self control, independence and reason to the new value system of free expression, self actualisation and hedonism. The popularised writings of Carl Rogers (*Encounter Groups*) and Eric Berne's (*Games People Play*) sold millions of copies. Rogers is quoted in Vitz (1977:29) to estimate that 'the number of encounter group participants in one year, 1970, was probably three quarters of a million.'

In short, this is a period in which young people felt alienated from all adult structures in society such as the Church, government, commerce and the academy.

There were new currents in the world of theology as well. The Secular Theology of P von Buren and others postulated that God is Dead. Harvey Cox's *Secular City* was a popular book with students at Rhodes. J Fletcher's views in his book on *Situational Ethics* fuelled fears that core values had been relativised. The writings on political theology opened up the political arena as never before to Christian social action.

These rapid but fundamental changes left many older people bewildered, if not threatened. The impact was felt in every institution, including the Church. At the World Conference on Church

and Society in Geneva in 1966 consideration was given to the Church being effectively present in a world being transformed:

Andre Dumas provided a profound philosophic-theological meditation on the meaning of the future-oriented culture and concern with innovation. The felt need to interrogate the future and to grow in step with the new was a categorical imperative different from that which had dominated earlier societies. (Nash 1975:40)

Nash goes on to sum up part of Dumas' address thus:

Speaking in the year of worldwide student unrest he analysed the tyranny of efficient organization which sacrificed the needs of men to the needs of things and therefore could not create a community of all with all. The young, rejecting the cycle of production and consumption, were exposing the frustration of human need 'to express oneself, to know, to participate, to refuse, to decide; a need to speak and act and not only to digest and execute'. The conformism of society often left no way open but that of protest and dispute to those who felt they were losing their human dignity. (Nash 1975:44)

The Fourth assembly of the World Council of Churches met in Uppsala in July 1968 and:

Whether consciously or not, each member of the Assembly knew in his depths that radical change, creative and destructive, was the mark of the times forcing all to examine the foundations, to dream new dreams, to build new structures in order to be relevant to the ultimate fears and hopes of man. (Fey 1970:413)

South African society, on the other hand, was in a phase of repression and conformity to the will of the government. Talk was about preserving our traditional way of life rather than about a new society. This period falls within the premiership of B J Vorster when increasingly oppressive security legislation was passed and greater abuse of state authority in the form of bannings, detentions without trial and torture became common. The seed of UCM fell onto stoney ground!

## 4.2 EXPERIMENTAL WORSHIP.

Within a year of its founding the UCM was embroiled in controversy over the experimental worship services that were held at Rhodes University under its auspices. During May 1968 the columns of the local newspaper *Grocotts* were filled with criticisms of the services and with letters of defence. In June it reached the national press when the *Sunday Times* carried an article (9 June, 1968.) 'A fierce controversy is raging in Grahamstown over a "service of modern worship" held under the auspices of the University Christian Movement (UCM) at Rhodes.'

This was followed on 23 August, 1968 by an article in the *Star* newspaper. It will be quoted at length because it conveys well the outsiders view.

Psychedelic lighting, 'pop' posters, live jazz music, and an old silent comedy film have figured in what must rank as the most unconventional religious service yet held in South Africa.

The only orthodox part of the service was the theology on which it was based. Its theme was "Christ, the Light of the World."

According to the organisers, the emphasis was not so much on content as on creating "the appropriate mood for worship." The organisers, headed by a final year student of theology, Mr Bill Meaker, felt that most forms of worship in Christian churches is irrelevant and emotionally unsatisfying.

..... There was no seating in the hall, in order to facilitate movement of the audience, who are free to respond whenever they feel the need.

The walls in the hall were covered in posters, advertisements and clippings of newspaper headlines to create the mood "that worship is in the world, not apart from it."

The first act of worship, praise, consisted of light hearted folk songs, a 10 minute showing of an old silent comedy film and a performance by an African jazz band. "This is aimed at creating the mood of excitement and joy," the organisers say. Acts of Thanksgiving interspersed the service, and were conducted under psychedelic lighting. In contrast, the "act of confession" was in a quiet, sober mood, induced by the playing of a solo flute, in a darkened hall.



The following week the *Sunday Times* carried a half page article under the headline 'Dancing and films are part of UCM prayers. Moulder replies to "orgy" allegations.' (25 August 1968) The accompanying picture of a scene inside the hall gives the impression of a large group of students all doing their own thing, including some standing, others sitting, some reclining and some dancing in a snake line. In the preceding week members of the 'Jazz Prophets', the African jazz group that had played at the 'mood worship service, were raided by the Special Branch and asked about their connections with UCM. We shall return later to the matter of state harassment.

From the above it is understandable why the public at large and churchgoers in particular would have been alarmed, some to the point of calling the services blasphemous.

The objections seem to fall into a number of categories which are not necessarily separate compartments.

- 1) The most simple complaint was that the major worship events were held on Sunday at 7:30 pm and clashed with the regular church services and thus drew students away from their own church. The charge is in essence that the UCM group acted in opposition to the local churches.
- 2) The politically charged content in the songs, poems and prayers called into question the political motives which lay behind the UCM.
- 3) The Bread and Wine meals caused grave concern in some churches as they were assumed to be the Eucharist meal. As such, only ordained priests should be the celebrants. Some of the more experimental elements used verged on being sacrilegious. Roman Catholic students at Rhodes were advised by their priest, Fr T O' Dea, not to participate in the Eucharistic part of the modern worship. A letter to *Grocotts* of 18 June 1968 by a Miss M Venables outlines the official Catholic position. She states that Bishop Green wrote a letter on 20 May calling for a prudent minimum of Catholic student participation in UCM worship services. She goes on to cite the official policy in the Directory Concerning Catholic Participation as signed in Rome on 14 May 1967.

Part One, Chapter 1V, (C) (2) Paragraph 59 on "Sharing in liturgical worship with other separated brethren" allows for occasional attendance at liturgical services of other brethren. Paragraph 38 sets clearer limits. "Yet sharing in liturgical worship is not to be considered as a means to be used indiscriminately for the

restoration of unity among Christians”.

Those with reservations about UCM were able to call on, or at least interpret, an official document to support the case for withdrawal.

In South Africa, the Church Unity Commission (CUC) was only formed in 1968. At that time the view held by the Anglicans and Roman Catholics was that the Eucharist was a seal of union, not a means toward it, with the result that the talk of Eucharists being held at UCM meetings was disturbing. UCM assured the churches that they were in fact holding *agape* meals and not formal Eucharists. Where this did occur the celebrants were ordained clergy such as Rev Basil Moore, a Methodist and Father Colin Collins, a Roman Catholic priest. The niceties of these theological points must have carried little weight with students who were impatient of bureaucracies and who simply wished to express their common experience of unity in a common Eucharist. The UCM leaders nevertheless wrote to all their member Churches to begin discussions on this sensitive matter. The problem was not resolved because of the protracted nature of the CUC deliberations which, in fact, was only finalised in 1974 after the demise of UCM.

The Dutch Reformed Church Council in Grahamstown also objected publicly (*Grocotts* 18 June 1968) in an open memorandum to the chairman of UCM. Besides time clashes, because of ‘certain stressed social, political and racial references’, the Church Council maintains ‘it is clear that the general trend of the Litany and the meetings have a strong sceptical nature, and that a parody is made of Church practices, e.g. the Holy Communion as in the case of ‘Bread and Wine Happenings.’

These in outline were the objections. What was UCM's defence?

Rev Basil Moore, the president of UCM, was an ordained Methodist minister and temporary lecturer at Rhodes. He wrote in the *Methodist Churchman* of 1 September 1968, an article to explain to Methodists what was going on:

Some of the students show no interest in the Church because they find greater relevance outside of it. Some have dropped out of church-going because they are bored, or the style of worship and instruction just does not touch their problems...

It has been clearly seen that if these students are to be reached or retained by the Church then a new style of Christian life and worship has to be found.” The use of new media is no idolatry of the new nor is it mindless gimmickry. “A great deal of thought and planning has gone into each experiment in worship”.

His concluding paragraph reveals something of the real problem:

Here we are involved in a student revolt. These new forms of worship are revolting against the imposed, out-dated worship and artistic forms.

While this was true, many clergy must have felt under threat by this ‘revolt.’

The mood worship services were undoubtedly successful in attracting students. The Presbyterian minister and chaplain, Rev M Lund, wrote a six page letter to fellow ministers explaining and defending the experimental worship services. He notes how much difficulty he and other chaplains had to find the wave-length of students. Then UCM was founded. At the first experimental service 450 students came out of a student body of 1500. This was true for the second service as well. Rev Lund quotes Prof P Hinchliff as saying ‘All in all I thought it a deeply moving and truly religious experience. I have met many people since who have told me that their lives have been deeply affected by that service.’

By far the most comprehensive defence of these services was given by the Rev B. Moore in two articles. In the first article in *Pro Veritate* on 15 September 1968, he states that the happenings have all the elements of a normal service, their ‘shape’ is the same. They have elements of praise and thanksgiving, confession, intercession, the ministry of the word, even a collection, and a shared meal. What was very different of course was the content and style of each component. The shape was conservative while the medium was contemporary.

The theory behind these happenings was firstly a concern to reach out to the those unchurched people and to those who had dropped out because church was irrelevant and boring and represented an alien sub-culture of Victorian verse set to pre-Victorian tunes. UCM took these students seriously. Against this background of frustration with the traditional patterns of Christian worship and thought, something new had to be found. In this regard therefore, the

intentions were missiological.

Secondly UCM took the model of house churches from the early church in the epistles. Therefore, apart from major worship gatherings there were the very important small discussion groups in which issues were discussed, personal concerns were shared and community life was shared. While house churches were a novel idea then it is widely used in churches today and no one would be very suspicious of their use.

Thirdly Moore argues '...for an understanding of the Atonement as community creating'. A Messiah must have a Messianic community of spiritual, ethical, and social righteousness. The essentials of the new community are 'full recognition of each person as a person. This means taking him, his views his beliefs, his doubts, his hopes, his ambitions and his fears seriously.' The next essential is mutual self respect and the recognition of our interdependence. 'Both of these essentials demand opportunities where there can be the meeting and interaction of self-expression.' It should be noted that the mid 60's saw the full flowering of the group dynamics movement such as 'T Groups' and similar approaches used at the Wilgespruit Fellowship Centre and in the Christian Education Leadership Training courses. Many people were suspicious of group dynamics fearing its manipulative misuse and the abuse of non-Christian psychology.

The fourth and final point of explanation is that of the involvement principle. 'Modern educationalists and experts in the field of communication are virtually unanimous in their verdict that the least effective method of communication is that which is completely verbal, e.g. the delivering of a monologue on a chosen topic to a captive and silent audience.' Emerging writings on adult education showed that the most effective method of learning is by personal involvement in the learning process, especially if the subject is relevant to the learner. This participant-learning style was the opposite of the top down monologue of sermons. For this reason events in UCM provided freedom for people to raise their own agenda, express themselves as they wished, respond to the 'happenings' as they felt appropriate. Rampant individualism was meant to be moderated by the sense of and responsibility to the rest of the group. In fact Moore continues:

It is rather a very serious experiment in church renewal having far reaching

implications for the whole church. We want to show, in a very ecumenical setting, that church renewal can be a practical reality and not simply an idealists pipe dream.

In a later edition of *Pro Veritate* (15 February 1969) Moore covers some of the same ground again (learning through involvement and in community), but this time he develops the subject of ideas and feelings. He quotes a visiting Professor from Chicago who said 'Man does not live by ideas alone, but by a whole range of feelings or emotions which become attached to our experiences.' Reason, feelings and actions all interrelate and they all need to be given their proper place in the learning process. This is what UCM was trying to do in the mood worships and in the small groups.

Most of the defenders of these experimental services admit that mistakes had been made. It is in the nature of an experiment that one learns from the exercise. Nevertheless the UCM at Rhodes was misunderstood and was attacked. Almost thirty years later many of the educational and theological principles underlying these experiments are accepted as standard practice. The UCM was, as I see it, being consistent with its statement of purpose. There was a concern for the unchurched, and there was a concern for the renewal of the Church. 'It may be that some folk have suspected this wider vision and have been terrified by it ...' (Moore 1968 :18).

James Moulder<sup>5</sup> upon reflection today questions whether these were really worship services or celebrations of protest which keyed into a superficial secular theology. As such he would call them a Christian substitute.

Having said all that, we should be aware that for most black students worship and their relationship to their churches was not a burning issue. Rev Barney Pityana was of the opinion <sup>6</sup> that most black students were more orthodox in belief and unquestioning of their churches' authority. For them the issues were political rights and justice in the body politic, not the renewal of their churches. While political issues were also the concern of white UCM members, we see here one of the factors which was relevant to the split in UCM in 1970.

### 4.3 ALLEGED IMMORALITY.

Allegations of immorality, particularly at the national conferences, were thrown at UCM. Based on many interviews<sup>7</sup> it seems reasonable to assert that there was immoral conduct in the form of casual premarital sex and the abuse of alcohol. The interviewees all maintained however that the rumours greatly exaggerated the incidence of such misconduct.

There are some confusing factors which complicate ones judgement of these matters. They are the different cultural and denominational attitudes to these moral issues. Anglicans and Roman Catholics have a much more relaxed attitude to the use of alcohol than would some Methodists whose church background would be teetotal. Evangelicals as a whole, both black and white would strongly disapprove of the use of alcohol at religious functions. This stems from the 'holiness movement' which is one of the streams feeding into modern day evangelicalism. On this issue then there were irreconcilable attitudes complicated by cultural and denominational differences as well the fact that the conferences attracted many people who were not professed Christians and who therefore were not bound by a Christian moral framework. These challenges were of course to be expected in a broad, multiracial, ecumenical organisation like the UCM. In any case it should be recalled that the law then criminalised blacks and whites drinking together to make such activities not only immoral but illegal as well.

It was not official policy to encourage libertine behaviour. In fact one couple was expelled from the 1968 conference at Stutterheim. Yet the stories circulated. The Methodist Church sent the Rev Jack Cook, an evangelical, to observe a conference. His report was condemnatory. The following year Rev Simon Nqubule was sent because he was both an African and more sympathetic. However mild his report was he could not escape the evidence and had to conclude that there were instances of misbehaviour.

Some of the publications did UCM no favours. The very first experimental edition (vol 0 No 0.) of the magazine '*One For The Road*' brought down a howl of protest for its provocative article on student revolutionary power.<sup>8</sup> The mistake was that there was no disclaimer clause stating

that the views expressed were not necessarily those of the editor nor of the UCM. This gave UCM no room to manoeuvre when they were attacked. Needless to say the disclaimer appeared in the next edition.

When these rumours, albeit exaggerated ones, are seen in the context of the 'swinging sixties', it is small wonder that church leaders would have been gravely concerned that their students in UCM were being immersed in a very unhelpful atmosphere.

#### 4. 4 SOCIAL RADICALISM.

When the Ecumenical churches founded the UCM, they had wanted a student movement that would express their social concerns of a liberal and anti-apartheid nature. But the UCM was born into a period of rapid change away from the gentility of liberal statements about individual human rights to the rough politics of resistance.

This did not happen in a vacuum of course. The brutality of police action in March 1960 in Sharpeville sent shockwaves throughout South Africa and attracted the increasingly critical attention of the world community and world church. Racism was firmly on the agenda of world bodies. The civil rights struggle in the United States and the assassination of Dr Martin Luther King helped to conscientise many Americans. In Southern Africa wars were being successfully waged against European colonial powers in Angola and Mozambique while the guerilla incursions in Rhodesia and South West Africa ( Namibia) had brought blacks into armed conflict with white settlers for the first time since 1906. Because of Sharpeville, blacks were forced to adopt revolutionary strategies. The ANC and the PAC were banned in April 1960 leaving the black masses voiceless.

As a direct result of the Sharpeville massacre, the WCC convened a consultation of its South African member churches at Cottesloe in Johannesburg in 1960. The details of the conference have been fully covered in numerous publications and need not be repeated here. In many ways the consultation was a failure.

It seems fair to conclude therefore that Cottesloe eventually did not succeed in

bringing the major South African churches any closer together, not so much because of theological differences,...but because of socio-political differences.

(Saayman 1991:77)

The government totally rejected the Cottesloe report as eventually did the family of Dutch Reformed churches.

The WCC however continued to wrestle with the problem of racism and shifted progressively towards active identification with the victims of racism. While the South African churches resorted to 'protest without resistance'<sup>9</sup> in contrast.

It was, however, essentially on the international scene that the stage was being set which would strike at the moderate heart of the English-speaking churches and cause them to turn their backs on those of their number who resorted to armed struggle. (Villa-Vicencio 1988:109)

At the WCC General Assembly meeting in New Delhi in 1961 the influence of J C Hoekendijk became evident. He had already been warmly acclaimed by students at the 1960 WSCF conference for his radical views of the Church-for-others. Saayman writes:

For them (along the lines of the theology of the apostolate), the church should not be central but the world (and therefore its history). Where the Church was still spoken of, it had to be the Church-for- others. On the basis of this point of view, the concept of *Missio Dei* was also filled with new content: *Missio Dei* concerned God's offer of shalom to the whole creation, and was by no means to be domesticated in the Church. (Saayman 1984:23)

The sharp dividing lines between the Church and the world became indistinct. In this model the Church had to express its faith in socio-political action. Over the decade this new, essentially missiological, understanding of the role of the Church in the world, became more radical in its response to racism.

The Central Committee of the WCC meeting in Rochester in 1963, coincided with the march on Washington by civil rights activists which made delegates painfully aware of the black peoples struggle against racism. A large part of the Rochester statement that was issued dealt with South



Africa. 'Three points emerge in this statement which hint at the beginnings of a change of course in World Council thinking on racial problems'. (Richardson 1977:28) The first was a warning to governments against economic involvement in oppressive situations for selfish national interests. The way was paved for later calls for disinvestment. The second point was to see the secular sphere as its rightful arena of action and the third was the growing '....pessimism with regard to constitutional and legal methods of effecting change....' (Richardson 1977:29)

Of great importance was the Church and Society Conference convened by the WCC in Geneva in 1966. 'This conference highlighted the extent of repression throughout the world and called on the churches to become more directly involved in the struggle for liberation and justice.' (de Gruchy 1991:25) The Geneva conference created a new mood on racial matters but could not itself frame policies. That was the business of the Fourth Assembly of the WCC held in Uppsala in 1968. Here racism in all forms, but especially white racism because of its historical importance, was condemned as a blatant denial of the Christian Faith.

The WCC urgently followed up Uppsala with a Consultation on Racism in Notting Hill, London in May 1969. 'More than any meeting it is the Notting Hill consultation that marks the beginning of the new activist stance of the World Council' (Richardson 1977:55) A key concept was that of power, especially economic power. This power resides in institutions of which the Church is one example. In the *Notting Hill Report*, a direct challenge is laid before the Church;

...the Church must be willing to be not only an institution of love, but also an institution of action, making inputs into societies to effect a new balance of power that renders racism impotent. (Richardson 1977:57)

The final outcome of this process of social analysis and theologising in the WCC was the Ecumenical Programme to Combat Racism [PCR] adopted at Canterbury in August 1969. This was to be an ecumenical act of solidarity and a move beyond charity to relevant and sacrificial action.

The link between the churches and organisations employing violent means to effect change was to become the most widely publicised and most highly

controversial aspect of World Council social policy. (Richardson 1977:59)

We have dealt at some length with the trends in the social thinking of the WCC in order to locate the radicalism of UCM within this wider world context. We need now to revisit the Church in South Africa following the disappointing Cottesloe conference. One hopeful development arising from the aftermath of Cottesloe was the formation of the Christian Institute (CI) in 1963. The story of Beyers Naude and the Christian Institute has been told elsewhere.<sup>10</sup> One of the original intentions of the CI was to influence white thinking, especially Afrikaners, against apartheid through discussions and bible studies. By the end of the decade this aspect of the Institute's work had become moribund due to hardening white attitudes.

The Christian Council of South Africa was the official ecumenical body in the country. It was a white' dominated body of liberal churchmen which made little impact on society. de Gruchy (1979:115) writes:

By the time of Cottesloe, the council was a relatively ineffectual body, unprepared for the tasks that were about to come its way. It was not taken seriously by its member churches or those in authority. It was virtually unknown to the public.... Partly for this reason the CI took on many of the responsibilities that the council should have shouldered in the early sixties.

Things began to change in the mid-sixties. Under the leadership of Bishop Bill Burnett the council changed its name in 1968 to the South African Council of Churches to emphasise the fact that it was indeed an inter- church body. Then the Council was restricted in its social analysis by the absence of blacks who, after all, made up the majority of the church members in white led denominations.<sup>11</sup> Daryl Balia (1989:143) writes forcefully using class as his analytical key:

Nearly all the resolutions and statements, and all the theological documents written before the advent of Black Consciousness in South Africa are the products of the theology of the dominant group.

By moving the office from Cape Town to Johannesburg in 1967, a closer relationship was forged

with the CI which then became a member organisation of the CCSA in 1967. In fact Beyers Naude was co-opted to the executive of the SACC. Here a network of relationships developed and the interactions shaped each others thinking.

So Thomas (1984:205) is able to write:

...its physical proximity to the CI meant that the SACC was continually exposed to the inputs and action of the CI, which despite its weak numerical base, was undoubtedly the most important ecumenical organisation in South Africa in the 1960's.

It was only in 1971 that there was a majority of black people at the SACC national conference. This was the year which saw the '...end of the neo-liberal era in the SACC...' (Thomas 1984:215) A black president, Rev A. Habelgaarn was elected who, together with a black majority, the SACC began to reflect black concerns and perspectives and therefore became more radical in its commitments.

The UCM fitted into this matrix of progressive Christians at home and abroad through cross-memberships in some cases and through personal contacts. So, for instance, Basil Moore attended the USA UCM conference in 1967 in Ohio and James Moulder attended the WCC conference in 1968 on Church and Society. The UCM was a member of the SACC, while the CI and the SACC each had representatives on the council of UCM. This was true too of NUSAS and UCM. Cross-pollination of ideas and mutual support was evident. Colleen Ryan (1990:141) a biographer of Naude's asserts:

A key influence on Beyers was the University Christian Movement (UCM) and its founder and general secretary, white Methodist minister Dr Basil Moore.<sup>12</sup>

All three of these organisations contributed to the radicalisation of Christian opposition to apartheid. Among the delegates to the WCC Geneva conference were Bishop Burnett of the CCSA, Beyers Naude of the CI and James Moulder from UCM. The eventual upshot of Geneva for the South African church was the issuing of *The Message to the People of South Africa*

...which, when published in 1968, would launch the SACC into national headlines and usher in a new phase in the saga of growing conflict with the state.(de Gruchy 1979:118).<sup>13</sup>

The Message aroused intense feelings, vigorous debate in the SACC member churches and the wrath of the government. The Prime Minister, Mr John Vorster, warned clerics who were ... planning to do the same kind of thing here in South Africa that Martin Luther King did in America, I want to say to them cut it out, cut it out immediately for the cloak you carry will not protect you if you try to do this in South Africa.<sup>14</sup>

The next stage after issuing *The Message* was to determine practical alternatives to apartheid. This was done through the 'Study Project on Christianity in Apartheid Society' (SPROCAS). It worked for four years through four commissions, namely economics, education, legal affairs, politics, the churches and social relations. It ultimately drew in 150, mostly white, individuals. As an exercise by liberals it was rejected by both the government and by blacks. However: 'In spite of this, the Black Consciousness movement had a profound effect on Sprocas and the CI.' (Ryan1990:132) Naude came to see that in order to gain acceptance in the black community he and the CI would have to move towards a more radical stand. In this regard Saayman writes (1992:83):

As the programme developed, it reflected more and more the concerns of Black Christians. In this respect it had a strong influence in turning the CI towards a stronger political praxis, and was also influential in the growth of Black Consciousness, in the churches and in society at large.

This same trend is evident in the UCM. The UCM became a thorn in the side of its sponsoring Churches by articulating the black perspective on political-ethical issues in order to provoke the churches to change. So for example the UCM's response to the PCR was to issue a two page statement, part of which was published in the *Rand Daily Mail* on 12 September 1970. The nub of their response is in the following paragraph:

The UCM wishes to make no comment on the WCC action. We do wish to comment on the rash of public statements by our church leaders. If the issue really is an objection to the use of violence or, as one leader put it, "the use of violence to overthrow law and order", then their silence on the use of violence by the white regimes in southern Africa places a huge question mark over their motives.

Because the UCM would not condemn the use of violence in the liberation struggle, they were accused of advocating violence which was not the case. What the UCM statement did do was to ask the uncomfortable questions of the Church regarding the use of repressive violence by the state.

#### 4.5 BLACK THEOLOGY AND BLACK CONSCIOUSNESS.

If ever the UCM rates a mention in literature on the Church and apartheid, it is in connection with the rise of Black Consciousness and Black Theology. It is too much to claim that UCM was the midwife of BC, (this assertion is rejected on the grounds that it carries the idea of intentionality) because it was an 'idea whose time had come' and would have arisen in any case. But it is true to say that the BC movement first formed in the context of UCM conferences. Black students were drawn to UCM for a number of reasons;

1. Political activity was banned on black campuses in the mid 1960s as was NUSAS. When UCM was formed it was initially allowed to operate on black campuses because it was a religious ecumenical organisation. This made it the only national student movement where black students could meet and therefore provided the critical mass needed to cause the chain reaction which led to BC.
2. The SCM was also judged by some black students to be too pietistic to be relevant to their struggles.
3. In the words of Steve Biko (1987:10)

The establishment of the University Christian Movement in 1967 opened new avenues for contact. UCM had a special appeal to student in the University Colleges. The fact that within a year and a half of its existence the UCM had already a black majority in its sessions is indicative of this. Hence with the getting together of students from the University Colleges dialogue began again among black students.

4. Black students had become disillusioned with NUSAS. Steve Biko had attended the 1963 and

1964 NUSAS Congresses and was not impressed. The 1967 NUSAS conference was held in Grahamstown when blacks were housed in the nearby location while the white students lived in university residences. Steve Biko (1987:11) wrote of that event:

This is perhaps the turning point in the history of black support for NUSAS. So appalling were the conditions that it showed the blacks just how valued they were in the organisation.

5. Some of the early leaders in UCM had credibility in the eyes of black students which attracted them to the new body. Rev J Davies, the national chaplain to the Anglican Students Federation (ASF) and Fr Colin Collins of the National Catholic Federation of Students (NCFS) were two such men who were known and respected by blacks in those two multiracial organisations.

Later on, despite this, and despite all the good intentions of being a genuinely multiracial movement, black and white students were fundamentally divided by their respective positions in 'the system', that is, beneficiaries and oppressed.

At the second UCM conference in Stutterheim in July 1968<sup>15</sup> a group of 40 black students formed a black caucus for the first time to debate the possibility of forming a black students organisation.<sup>16</sup> This decision was taken at a follow up meeting in December 1968 at the Marionhill Conference. Thus the South African Students Organisation (SASO) was formed and held its inaugural conference at Turfloop in July 1969. Here UCM members such as Barney Pityana and Steve Biko were prominent.

During 1970 SASO broke off all contact with NUSAS which was dismissed as a white dominated organisation following a white political agenda. Biko (1987:23) wrote a stinging attack on white liberals in an article entitled *Black Souls in White Skins?*

White liberals must leave blacks to take care of their own business while they concern themselves with the real evil in our society- white racism.

In effect, the heart of the BC movement was 'Black man you are on your own'.<sup>17</sup> The rise of BC was of great importance in the black people's struggle for justice because it gave participants

self-worth and self confidence, a platform to mobilise and conscientise the masses through the founding of other BC groups such as The Black People's Convention, The Black Worker's Alliance and The Black Women's Movement. de Gruchy (1979:152) summarises the importance of BC thus:

Within a remarkably short time, the black consciousness movement injected a potent dynamism into South African social and political life. It provided a bridge across ethnic divisions within the black community, binding in one all African, Coloured, and Indian students who rejected separate development, and who were striving for alternative ways of combatting apartheid. And while it started off mainly as a youth movement, it soon gained adherents across the generation gap.

And what of UCM? Well, it was never the intention to spawn a black activist movement! Far from it. The original intention of the Churches had been to establish a multiracial group. That dream was under severe threat. SASO however did not break off relationships with the UCM which is noteworthy given its rejection of liberalism. Biko's letter to SRC presidents in February 1970 reveals something of SASO's perception of UCM:

The University Christian Movement is a religious group concerning itself with ecumenical topics and modernisation of the archaic Christian practice. It also concerns itself with a practical application of Christian principles in an immoral society like the South African one.

1. We believe to a great extent that UCM has overcome the problems of adjusting to a two-tier society like ours. However we still feel that the fact that the blacks are in the majority in the organisation has not been sufficiently evidenced in the direction of thought and in the leadership of the organisation.
2. We nevertheless feel that UCM's progress is commendable especially in the direction of provoking meaningful thinking amongst clergymen; and its members.

(Biko 1987:14)

Despite this commendation, the formation of SASO with its accompanying Black Consciousness caused confusion, hot debate and a lot of rethinking. The liberal ideal of nonracialism had shattered. The social intentions of the churches when they founded the UCM were frustrated by

the polarising effect of BC. At that early stage BC was misunderstood in some quarters and was accused of merely fostering apartheid in reverse. The UCM, it must be noted did not lose all its black members, far from it. Many Christian black activists belonged to both organisations. What the movement did in response was to restructure itself around a number of projects. The report on the 'Freedom 71' conference is an interesting social commentary:

We began this conference as a multiracial body, afraid of seeing the UCM collapse under the pressure of the new black mood on black campuses. ... While this black/white tension took some time to surface a tension not before experienced within the UCM took over- the tension between men and women.

The diversified interest/project structure at the conference became the pattern for local branches, that is, groups concerned with women's liberation, black theology, white liberation, ideology, literacy, development and preventative medicine. The strength of this arrangement was that it allowed people to focus on the area of their concern. All of the projects could fall into the broad category of liberation or humanisation. These interest groups drew in people who were not necessarily Christian but who had a shared concern. We might note in passing this early incipient interfaith position being practised. The great weakness of the new structure is that it predisposed the movement to disintegration. The intention all along was to spread the influence of these groups both on campus and in the wider society.

The Black Theology unit is the most significant one in terms of what was produced. There is no debate regarding the role of UCM in the genesis of Black Theology. Mokgethi Motlhabi, who took over as director of the Black Theology Project when Sabelo Ntwasa was banned, writes:

The pioneering effort in the bringing of Black Theology to South Africa, as an intellectual discipline, was made by the University Christian Movement in 1971.

(Mosala & Tihagale 1986:44)

A series of seminars on Black Theology were held around the country. The papers were later published in book form<sup>18</sup>. Black Theology was readily taken up in the black theological seminaries at Hammanskraal (Roman Catholic), Mapumulo (Lutheran) and the Federal Theological Seminary (ecumenical). In this way many black churches became actively involved



in BC and led to the formation of black caucuses within white dominated denominations and 'gave shape to the ministry of many black clergy'<sup>19</sup> Black Theologians drew on a number of sources. There was the Black Theology that emanated from the United States, there was Liberation Theology from Latin America, there was the older African Theology from independent Africa and there was the creative reflection by black South Africans all of which fed into the South African version in varying proportions. Black Consciousness and Black Theology, while distinct, are nevertheless interdependent because they arose from the experience of the black people. It was a contextual theology from below.

The importance of Black Theology is suggested by Kretzschmar (1986:62):

Conversely it is also true that Black Theology provided the Black Consciousness movement with an immensely powerful spiritual foundation and motivation. Blacks were able, on theological grounds, to reject a negation of their humanity as 'inferior' and to affirm the value of their blackness.

When the UCM disbanded, the Black Theology project moved to the Black Community Project and continued to influence a spread of BC organisations.

The Feminist project voted to become independent of UCM within three months of being founded but nevertheless retained personal links with it. The White Consciousness group was mandated to conscientise their own white constituency. To this end a paper was written and circulated and campus discussion groups were formed to consider such topics as our patriarchal society and militarism. Their most notable activity was to distribute 11000 copies of a pamphlet which aimed to tell pupils about the nature of their oppression. The literacy group involved many black students because of the need for mother tongue instruction. It was at this point that there was a functional relationship with SASO on account of overlapping memberships.

#### 4.6 NEGATIVE REACTIONS

In contrast to the above mentioned commendation by SASO, UCM's sponsoring churches and the state reacted negatively to the trends in the movement. The government accused the UCM of promoting polarisation in society, of supporting violence and of fomenting unrest.

The state never banned the movement outright because, we suppose, it would have brought it into open conflict with the SACC and its member churches. Instead an indirect approach was used to cripple the UCM. The office of UCM was raided by the security police in February 1971 when files, documents and publications were removed. It was always assumed that there were informers at UCM functions which heightened tensions and sowed suspicion. UCM publications were banned in an effort to contain the spread of ideas. Particularly noteworthy was the banning of the national magazine called *One For The Road*. Overseas visitors were refused entry visas to attend UCM conferences. Some leaders had their passports withdrawn to prevent them from travelling abroad. Some leaders were issued with banning orders in terms of the Suppression of Communism Act which effectively removed them from leadership. These leaders included, amongst others, Justice Moloto (banned in September 1971), Basil Moore (banned in February 1972), Stanley Ntwasa former director of Black theology and editor of *Essays On Black Theology*, Chris Mokoditso and of course ex- UCM members who were active in SASO such as Barney Pityana and Steve Biko. The threat of impending banning encouraged leaders like Charles Simkins to go overseas to further their education. The UCM was also banned from operating on black campuses as early as May 1969.

This array of repressive measures was too great for the movement to bear. White student membership declined, funding became a major problem, and its leaders were gagged. When the government announced the establishment of a commission of inquiry into certain 'affected organisations', the writing was on the wall.<sup>20</sup> It was just a matter of time before the movement collapsed under the weight of repression.

Had the founding ecumenical churches continued to support the UCM, the movement may have been able to ride out the storm. As it was, the denominations withdrew their support one by one. Church representatives from the five ecumenical denominations had met with the UCM executive during the Encounter 70 Conference. The records of the conference state that 'There were four main areas of criticism against the UCM. These four areas were ecumenism, politics, religious beliefs, and morality.' This frank discussion did not clear the air because there is a record of a meeting with the Methodist Church in February 1971 when similar issues were once

again tabled.

With the withdrawal of support came the loss of an annual grant from Anglo American whose grant was conditional upon the support of the Church. Denominational grants were suspended and even a potential overseas donor was discouraged from making a grant. A letter from Chris Mokoditso on 8th March 1972 is printed in full because it conveys something of the anger, frustration and disillusionment that was felt in UCM towards the ecumenical churches.

8 March 1972.

Dear Archbishop Hurley,

I regret that you could not accept the position of legal holder for our literacy project, as per your letter dated 23rd February.

It came as a shock to me that you, of all Catholic bishops should see fit to write such a damaging letter, apparently with a view to discouraging Misereor from granting the financial assistance. If only you based your argument on first hand information and not on hearsay.

It is true that the UCM has "fallen from grace" with the white dominated churches in South Africa, especially the Methodist Church which completely severed its links with us.

But it is unbelievable to think that you want to give the impression that church hierarchical opinion coincides with that of the black oppressed majority in this country.

I am becoming more convinced that apart from periodic wonderful messages to the people, the hierarchy is dedicated towards maintaining the status quo. Of course, what can one expect from white dominated churches- are they sincerely prepared to see change apart from seeing apartheid more humanely applied?

The UCM is sick and tired of being told it is not Christian when the very churches are doing nothing Christian.

Perhaps I should point out that the UCM is greatly appreciative of the support it gets from the blacks who happen to be in the majority and are benefitting tremendously from its projects.

I believe you are aware that Dr. Basil Moore is banned, of course you should also

be aware of the fact that his church the Methodists were the first to 'ban' him, it is interesting to note that his banning by the church coincided with their withdrawal from the UCM.

I also believe that you know Justice Moloto, the former General Secretary of the UCM, personally and very well, and that he is a Catholic. You are also aware of the fact that he has been banned and restricted to the Mafeking Magisterial district. Ironically to date, he has not heard from a single Catholic priest or member of the hierarchy of the church, not even a letter to console him. Is this the church from whose grace the UCM can regret having fallen?...

There are such divergent understandings of the cause of the ruptured relationship between the ecumenical churches and the movement they founded that it is impossible to arrive at a settled conclusion. One view is that the root issue was the political timidity of the church hierarchies who conveniently hid behind secondary issues in order to distance themselves from the UCM. On the other hand it is entirely reasonable for churches to expect a Christian organisation to uphold certain moral standards from an organisation that acts in its name. Archbishop Hurley recalls the reason,<sup>21</sup> from the Roman Catholic viewpoint, as being the unusual behaviour at conferences which lacked Christian decorum while acknowledging that Colin Collins was 'far ahead of any of us in his identification with black students.'

The Methodist church was the first denomination to withdraw support of the UCM. Tensions had already been expressed at the 1969 and 1970 Methodist Annual Conferences. One of the issues raised among many, was the that of an article written by Mr Moore which 'did in fact urge the reader to adopt kind sort of atheistic theology.' Basil Moore was a protagonist of secular theology and held the influential Theological Concerns portfolio nationally. Because the Death of God debate was a theological one, it is unlikely to have had a widespread effect outside of the Rhodes theological circle but it was here that many of the brightest theological students dropped out of ministerial training- a costly haemorrhage the church could ill afford. It was in any case very much a white student issue. The difficulties that the Methodist Church had with their own minister may well have coloured their view of the UCM as a whole.<sup>22</sup> Rev Moore later resigned from the Methodist ministry after having been moved from Rhodes and posted to the little town

of Aberdeen without any consultation. This was interpreted as an attempt to gag him.

We are left with the impression of wounded people, suspicion, accusation and counter accusation, in short- a mess which did neither party much good.

## CHAPTER 5.

## DISSOLUTION

The UCM had, at the 1971 conference, become a federation of projects with the executive being a co-ordinating committee. The movement had changed fundamentally from the one originally established. The Executive Committee was faced with some harsh realities when they met in December 1971. Churches had withdrawn support, the Women's Group had broken away, the Black Theology and Literacy Project were set to move over to SASO, and the Government had promised to investigate them in what became known as the Schlebusch Commission. The anticipated outcome of this sham commission was the banning of UCM. The future of UCM while it seems to have been discussed, was left to the 1972 Conference to decide. This conference was in fact two conferences in parallel, Black 72 and Alternatives 72, but in close proximity to one another. Due notice of dissolution was sent out in April 1972 (see Appendix C). The reasons given were:

\*Withdrawal of support from the churches (except for the United Congregational Church) which 'has seriously affected our ability to speak in the university world from within and with the Churches.'

\*Pressure from government which placed impossible strains on the movement.

\*The existence of UCM as an organisation was 'probably standing in the way of the success of its own projects, particularly the Black Theology, the Literacy, and the White Consciousness projects.'

\* The inevitable strategic need for polarisation meant '...that we no longer believe that multi-racialism is a viable strategy to bring about change.'

The report of the Schlebusch Commission (1974:121) believed that there were other factors as well such as the appointment of the Select Committee in February 1972 'to investigate the UCM may have contributed to this decision' and:

Undoubtedly, also, the restriction placed on Basil Moore in March 1972 and his subsequent decision to leave the country removed from the scene a person who had played an important part in the UCM from its inauguration until shortly before its dissolution.'

There is a measure of truth in this last statement because of the dominant role this strong personality played in what was originally meant to be a movement of students. The UCM had been decapitated and was also being dismembered. There was very little left to justify its existence. Thus it was decided to disband after the July 1972 Conference. Many of the assets, such as a car, went to SASO to help the Literacy Project.

The death of UCM certainly pleased the government, it would have been a relief to the churches, and it suited SASO because it, in the words of Chris Mokoditso<sup>23</sup> 'left the field clear for SASO'.

## CHAPTER 6

## EVALUATION AND CONCLUSIONS

Any fair evaluation of this remarkable and turbulent organisation must take into account a number of confusing factors. The movement changed over its five years and so the big picture must constantly be kept in mind. Then, the high profile national conferences and the national publications present one picture whereas life in the diverse local branches might have been somewhat different. There is a dearth of information from local branches which leads to caution when trying to formulate an opinion. The Rhodes University branch tends to dominate the available written records and therefore might skew the picture. This is particularly true with respect to the experimental worship services and the radical secular theology controversies because Rhodes had the official ecumenical theological faculty in which senior theological students doing post-graduate degrees played leading roles.

## 6.1 AHEAD OF ITS TIME

Having said that, it is clear that the UCM was at the very forefront of some world trends which placed it ahead of its time in the South African context. The experimental worship services with the creative use of modern music, multi-media, poetry readings, and dance, while controversial then, is not a very divisive issue in most churches today. This next point needs further research, but it is possible that UCM may have contributed to the need for liturgical reform through the sharp criticism of outdated hymns and tunes. It is possible that the charismatic movement which swept through churches in the 1970s and which was given respectability when Bishop Burnett became involved, may have swept UCM aside.<sup>24</sup> The charismatic renewal also offered exciting, lively worship, freedom to participate through the exercise of various gifts, a somewhat anti-institutional tone, while presenting a God who was very much alive and who could be experienced as well. The pendulum swung from secular theology to the super-spiritual. This trend was clearly evident in North America as well and was documented in Time magazine articles on 26 December 1969 (*Is God Coming Back to Life?*) and on 21 June 1971 (*The Jesus Revolution*).



The official ecumenical Church Unity Commission's finding on a shared Eucharist was only finally accepted by all the participating churches in November 1974 whereas this had been the accepted practice in UCM from its beginning. The two Churches most critical of UCM then in this regard were the Anglicans and the Roman Catholics whereas the Congregational Church never had a major problem. The problem with UCM was that it was born seven years too soon.

The term contextualization<sup>25</sup> only came into common usage in 1972 when it was used by Shoki Coe of the WCC's Theological Education Fund. Without using the term, people in UCM were already working with the concept in their various theologies from below such as Black Theology, Feminist Theology, White Theology (in the white conscientising programs) because leaders were sensitive to the needs of ordinary Christians who were struggling to make sense of their contexts. Being anti-authoritarian, the style was to be suspicious of imposed top down beliefs. This gave freedom to ask new questions and to break new theological ground. It was done at the risk of being perceived as having jettisoned the historical theological formulations.

The Feminist Project of UCM did not exist long enough to have made a significant impact, but it is evident that they were wrestling with gender issues of justice in church, home and society, much as the BC movement was doing in relation to black concerns, long before they became more widely studied. This group came up against the, largely male, perception that the real struggle was against apartheid. The women's group rightly saw that women were doubly disadvantaged as blacks and as women, and in any case, liberation was indivisible. It is a pity that a companion volume to that on Black Theology was not produced because there were a number of papers in circulation. Some, but by no means all, influence came from the early feminist thinking in the USA. Original work seems to have been done in the papers '*Towards a Theology of Sexual Politics*' and '*Women's Liberation in South Africa*'.<sup>26</sup> While the feminist critique of unjust male dominated structures was then new and appeared strident, today the case is much more developed and understood; though I dare say not much more accepted in some circles.

We have already examined the role UCM played in the genesis of Black Consciousness and its ally, Black Theology which has turned out to be UCM's most significant and lasting contribution.

Together with other progressive groups such as the Christian Institute and the SACC (from 1971), they formed a common axis of like-minded and mutually supportive people who were way out ahead of their white dominated church constituencies. They helped to radicalise the church. They had intuitively felt their way towards what was later called 'a preferential option for the poor'. This approach found full expression much later in the *Kairos Document* of 1986. Only in The *Rustenberg Declaration* of 1992 did churches in South Africa apologise for their timid opposition to apartheid. Groups such as the CI and the UCM were proved right at last.

The leaders of UCM understood the extent to which young people were alienated from the church and from society in a way that church leaders never did. It therefore attracted questioning non-conformists and rebellious young folk with a critical social conscience.

No evaluation of UCM would be complete without some reference to the findings of the Schlebusch Commission of Inquiry. The Schlebusch Commission of Inquiry into UCM uses the conspiracy theory as its hermeneutical key. The line of reasoning runs like this. Innocent students are believed to be manipulated by older men like Basil Moore and Colin Collins who have links to the WSCF and WCC and the American UCM, which in turn are manipulated by communists who are bent on the revolutionary overthrow of the government.<sup>27</sup> This simplistic analysis of a politically biased commission is altogether too shallow to do justice to the complex social-theological realities that made up UCM and as such must be dismissed. There is for example a noteworthy absence of Marxist rhetoric in the minutes and records of conferences. Neither black nor white students had much predilection for Marxism or communism, though models of African socialism were discussed. It is true that what UCM stood for was a threat to the Government because they attacked the theology undergirding apartheid. But then the evidence of history has proved them right as did the World Alliance of Reformed Churches in 1982 when they declared the theological and moral justification of apartheid to be a heresy.

Another example of how the UCM was ahead of the rest of the country is to be found in its Literacy Projects where the conscientising method of adult education established by Paulo Freire were used as early as 1970. This is two years before Freire's book *A Pedagogy of the Oppressed* even appeared in English. Once again it is an approach from below which is consistent with

UCM's general commitments.

In passing we should not lose sight of the fact that the Roman Catholic Church was an official participant in the formation of UCM which made this a unique ecumenical venture for its day.

One last example to cite is the attempt to obtain hymns, poems, and liturgies from other African countries in what was an early attempt to indigenise the worship, this time not to Western youth culture, but to African culture. These efforts speak of a keen missiological sensitivity to overcome cultural barriers in order to be heard.

## 6.2 A CREATURE OF ITS TIME

While the UCM was at the head of social trends in this country, it was also very much a product of its time. It reflected the radical student trends in Europe and the United States in its ethos and style.

It mirrored the theological thinking of the WCC from Uppsala to Bangkok when the radicalised understanding of the *Missio Dei* and the church-for-others was ascendent. 'Uppsala marked a milestone in ecumenical missionary thinking, and climaxed the development of *missio dei* based on the world as the locus of God's mission' (Scherer 1987:119). Uppsala marked the end of Barthian theological influence with its major emphasis on the revelatory in-breaking activity of God in Christ. A new pattern of mission evolved from church-to-world to church-in-the-world where the church becomes participants with God in history to support movements that led to more just and humane societies. During this period when salvation was defined in this-worldly terms, it produced strident reactions from evangelicals. Donald McGavran accused the WCC of betraying the lost two billion people who had never heard the gospel. Peter Beyerhaus attacked the theology for substituting redemption for mere humanisation. There was a struggle between a narrow definition of mission as personal spiritual salvation and a broad one of mission as justice and humanization.

The trouble was that both positions were dualistic, with each party emphasising only half the truth.<sup>28</sup> Neither side was able effectively to reconcile the vertical and the horizontal dimensions

of the gospel. It was the period of greatest polarisation between evangelicals and ecumenicals. The UCM certainly represented the WCC's horizontal view of mission. As such it was a product of that phase of conciliar thinking.

In his closing address at Uppsala, Visser 't Hooft (in Thomas 1995:139) he pleaded that we must get out of the rather primitive oscillating movement of going from one extreme to the other, which is not worthy of a movement which by its nature seeks to embrace the truth of the Gospel in its fulness. A Christianity which has lost its vertical dimension has lost its salt and is not only insipid in itself, but useless for the world. But a Christianity which would use the vertical preoccupation as a means to escape from its responsibility for and in the common life of (humanity) is a denial of the incarnation.

More recently there have been signs of convergence between evangelicals and ecumenicals.<sup>29</sup> The UCM however fell right in that period of maximum polarisation in mission theology. Small wonder then that conflict raged around it. With hindsight, the Death of God type of secular theology was a sidetrack. It might well have been Basil Moore's own concern which he promoted because it was a non issue for blacks who were not grappling with issues of secularism but with issues of justice. Black Theology accepted that God was alive but relocated God to the site of struggle.

The basis of unity that operated in UCM was not credal because the movement was committed to being open to all. Nor was the basis ecclesiastical because non church goers were active in it. The common bond was experiential, a shared commitment to explore issues, to work on a given project, to change society.

### 6.3 FAILURES

In some important ways the UCM was a failure. From the perspective of the founding denominations, the new student organisation they had brought into being had let them down to the extent that they withdrew support of it. The UCM failed ultimately to be the vehicle through which the ecumenical churches could fulfil their missionary concern for students in South Africa.

The UCM became, in effect, just another parachurch organisation. It had become marginalised by the dominant traditions in these churches and was located on the margins of the ecclesial structures. It had rejected the civil religion of the DRC, dismissed the pietism of the evangelicals and scorned the liberal approach of the ecumenical churches. As such it was unable to shape or renew the institutional churches. More than that it failed to fulfill its role as an umbrella body to co-ordinate the activities of the other Christian societies such as the ASF and the NCFCS. Instead, by adopting its own agenda, it became a rival.

From the perspective of the UCM, it failed in its goal to reform or renew the Church. Student anger, disillusionment led to intolerance of the Church. What began as a reform movement ended in revolt and therefore this unintended strategy was bound to cause a hostile reaction in the Church. Furthermore young Christian activists in UCM had constantly to cope with a vortex of emotions like anger and disillusionment. It appears that there was an insufficiently robust enough spirituality in the struggle to prevent some students from giving up their faith altogether. Was Jesus being proclaimed or a social ideal? By way of contrast, Beyers Naude too was at the forefront of the struggle but his Reformed theology and piety carried him through the dark days.

As time went on the UCM spent more of its energies on humanisation programs than on 'calling members of the academic community....to acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour according to the Scriptures.' It had moved away from the statements of purpose in the founding Constitution. Clearly the departure of Rev J Davies in 1970 was a great loss to UCM<sup>30</sup> for he was good theologian with a sensitive social conscience who might have been able to counter balance Basil Moore's more radical theology and kept UCM within the ambit of the church.

When the UCM died, there died with it an ecumenical ideal.<sup>31</sup> The ecumenical churches have since busied themselves with their own denominational chaplaincies. There has been no further attempt to establish a credible united witness on the campuses of South Africa. When reading the report of the original Bishopscourt Consultation we read phrases like, 'The Church cannot separate evangelism from unity.' and 'Unity and mission will thus be kept together as they must be.' These were the theological imperatives which led to the formation of UCM. After the battering the churches received, they now play the tune of unity *sotto voce*, if at all. In fact a

plethora of parachurch groups and new Pentecostal groups now operate on campuses together with, or in competition with, the ecumenical denominational societies.<sup>32</sup>

The UCM was unique. It prefigured the post-Kairos era of the new South Africa. It came and went in five tumultuous years and bequeathed us Black Theology and Black Consciousness .

## APPENDIXES

## APPENDIX A

**SCA PRESS RELEASE 13 January 1965.**

A general meeting of the Students' Christian Association of South Africa was held in Bloemfontein on January 12 1965, and was attended by 106 delegates from all over the Republic, and thirteen staff members. The delegates represented the four sections of the association, namely African, Afrikaans, English, and Coloured. The meeting decided to dissolve the present association which has a history of 67 years in the service of the Kingdom of God amongst the students and scholars of South Africa.

Its place has been taken by four autonomous bodies corresponding initially to the four sections of the old association. The four sections agreed unanimously to keep in contact with one another and to foster Christian fellowship by means of a federal liaison committee.

Some of the delegates expressed themselves in favour of even closer cooperation, and are investigating the possibility.

A special vote of thanks was expressed to the Rev Fred Liebenberg who is retiring at the end of the year after 37 years of service as general secretary, financial adviser and in other capacities.

## APPENDIX B

**REPORT ON THE CONSULTATION ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF CREATING  
A NEW ECUMENICAL BODY  
IN THE UNIVERSITIES AND TRAINING COLLEGES  
HELD AT BISHOPSCOURT  
29-30 NOVEMBER, 1966**

## I. INTRODUCTION

A. During the past 70 years, the Students' Christian Association has sought to serve the cause of Christ and His Church in schools, colleges and universities of South Africa. The purposes of the association have been set out in its constitution as follows:

1. To lead students to accept the Christian faith in God- Father, Son and Holy Spirit- according to the scriptures, and to live as true disciples of Jesus Christ.

2. To deepen the spiritual life of students and to promote among them the earnest study of the Bible as the inspired Word of God.

3. To urge students to devote themselves to the extension of the Kingdom of God in their own country and throughout the world.

4. To foster among students loyalty to the Church of Christ as a whole and to their own Church in particular.

B. The realization of these aims has from time to time involved changes in the working and character of the Association. Always the question behind such changes was how to realise these aims more fully. However, in the last two years, two changes of fundamental importance have occurred. First, it was decided in 1965 to divide the organisation into four independent movements along racial lines. One of these was the Students' Christian Association of Southern Africa. This Association works mainly among English- speaking white schools, colleges and universities but also serves the Indian community. Second, in July 1966 the Council of this Association decided in the interests of its work to adopt a 'Basis of Faith' in accordance with that of the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students. Both these changes are unacceptable because they do not include the full range of membership within our Churches. These changes have also focussed a difference of opinion as to how the



purposes of the original SCA may best be achieved. The first seeks to fulfil these purposes by means of individuals uniting on a common basis of faith. The second believes it to be necessary for Churches to work together corporately in the academic community. By the choice of a basis of faith, the SCA has opted for the first of methods. Thus a new movement is needed that would implement the second method and express the fullness of the Church.

C. The Church cannot separate evangelism from unity. In the past, because of the relations of Churches with one another, it was possible to discharge evangelical responsibilities only on the basis of co-operation amongst like-minded individuals. With growing awareness of the scriptural requirement of unity, the Churches have now been brought to co-operate with one another in the mission of the Church. We acknowledge that the failure of our Churches to realize their interdependence, and their disobedience to their Lord has been largely responsible for the weakness and ineffectiveness of much of their work among students.

D. A new movement must therefore involve the whole Church in its responsibility to bring the whole Gospel to the whole academic community. Unity and mission will thus be kept together as they must be. John R Mott declared the object of the World Student Federation to be 'the evangelisation of the world in this generation', and the original aims of the SCA were the means by which it was hoped to achieve this purpose. We do not depart from either the object or the means, but we believe that we must re-state both in terms of what the Church has been taught since then of the Master's purpose.

E. Such a movement must therefore be biblically based. And because it is biblically based, it will also be evangelical, ecumenical and ready to obey whatever may be asked of it in the circumstances of our time.

F. The movement will also have to express these concerns of the Church:

1. Worship and prayer as an expression of the Christian presence in the academic community.
2. Study of the Christian Faith and secular disciplines in obedience to the Lordship of Christ.
3. Witness to the academic community. This will involve continuous dialogue among its members and with those who differ from us.
4. Unity, not simply among individual Christians but also among Christian Churches and groups working together.

G. To achieve this purpose will require mutual trust and responsibility between Christians within the academic community and those outside of it. The Churches as organizations will have to give whole-hearted support without demanding control of the movement; Christians within the academic community must accept their common membership with the rest of the Body of Christ.

## 11. RECOMMENDATIONS

1 Taking these considerations into account, this Consultation unanimously approves the establishment of a new society or organization to serve the Academic Community.

2. A draft constitution has already been drawn up, and after further consideration it will be submitted for approval.

3. The launching and maintenance of such a project will inevitably entail the acceptance of some financial responsibility and outlay by the Churches. An Organising Travelling Secretary will almost certainly be needed to establish and develop the work in co-operation with local committees, and to co-ordinate, interpret and encourage work in the various centres. A finance committee will need to be appointed to consider a budget.

4. We would stress the fundamental importance of student responsibility and leadership in this work; and autonomy and initiative in local universities and colleges should be encouraged. The dynamic thrust required must come, in the main, from within each university community, and cannot come from the leadership of the institutional Churches.

5. We have studied the proposed structure and powers of the suggested new body, and accept in general terms those clauses which refer to the relationship between it and the participating Churches.

6. At the same time we would stress the vital role of the denominational Chaplains, whole-time and part-time, working whenever possible as a joint chaplaincy orientated to the needs of the university as a whole.

7. We would also emphasise the important role that should be fulfilled by the Christian Council's Commission on the Mission of the Church in the Academic Community.

8. We take note of the statement by the SCA of Southern Africa that its schools work is not affected by the decision to adopt a Basis of Faith except in that Travelling Secretaries

will be required to subscribe to the basis; we are aware that in various places representatives of our Churches play an important part in SCA work in the schools...

9. The Consultation notes that the special circumstances of Bantu Education will necessitate the continued separate existence of the schools work undertaken by the Student Christian Movement of South Africa. It recommends that this organisation should be recognised and supported by the Churches along with any other ecumenical body that may be established as a result of present discussions.

### III. LIST OF PARTICIPANTS:

#### Officially Appointed Delegates:

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Convenor and Chairman ....                      | The Archbishop of Cape Town            |
| Methodist Church ....                           | Rev A L Boraine<br>Rev Dr D Cragg      |
| Presbyterian Church of<br>Southern Africa. .... | Rev DR C Cook                          |
| Congregational Union ....                       | Rev J de Gruchy                        |
| Roman Catholic Church ....                      | Rev Fr N MacManus<br>Miss C Cornell    |
| Anglican Church ....                            | Rev Canon P B Goldie<br>Rev J D Davies |

#### Consultants:

Rev Basil Brown ( Secretary, Christian Council)  
Rev Basil Moore  
Rev W R Bell  
Mr M Andrew.

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## APPENDIX C

**MOTION OF DISSOLUTION OF THE U.C.M.**

In accordance with article XII of the Constitution of the University Christian Movement of Southern Africa, which require 90 days notice of a proposal to dissolve, the following Motion is being sent to all members of the Council for decision at the BLACK 72 and ALTERNATIVES 72 Conference to be held from the 10th to 16th at St. Ansgar's and Wilgespruit respectively.

THAT:

NOTING.

1. That the Methodist and Presbyterian Churches have finally withdrawn their support from the UCM without giving their reasons fully and clearly to the UCM in spite of the avenues that have existed for this; that the Catholic has never, as a whole, really supported the UCM, and that the Anglican (sic) have recently begun to question the wisdom of their support, leaving only the United Congregational Church of the original five founding churches of the UCM. This isolation of the UCM has seriously affected our ability to speak in the University world from within and with the Churches. It has also made it far more difficult to speak meaningfully to the churches concerning the total University life.

While we acknowledge with pride that the UCM has been a home for many students who have found it increasingly more difficult to be at home in our institutionalized Churches, we believe that we ought not to continue in isolation from the broad stream of Christianity. If the denominational churches refuse to identify themselves with the students who have given expression to their Christianity in and through the UCM and its activities then we believe that the onus rests on these churches to create alternative organizations with which they can and will identify themselves. The onus also rests on these churches to give less nominal support to such student organisations than they have given to the UCM.

II. That the UCM has had to operate against increasing pressure from government and power structures in the Universities. On Black campuses, particularly, it has been made virtually impossible to function as an open Christian organisation and expulsion as a result of their

association with the UCM. In addition, the continuous harassment of members and leaders in the movement Special Branch interrogation, the confiscation of their passports, the raids on UCM offices and the recent banning of three members of the Executive- Mr Justice Moloto (past President and General Secretary), Dr Basil Moore (first President and former Acting General Secretary) and Sabelo Ntwasa (Director of Black Theology). All of this has placed impossible strains on the Movement.

In view of the fact that no open accusation has been made against the UCM, it is pointless speculating on why these action have been taken. It is sufficient to note that the existence of the organization is probably standing in the way of the success of its own projects, particularly the Black Theology, the Literacy and the White Consciousness projects.

III. That the UCM itself has over the past few years advocated the need for black/white polarization. We have held that the situation of whites in this country is very different from that of the blacks, and that both groups need to sit down to analyse their situations in depth, and to work out strategies within their own communities to bring about change in South Africa. While we have pleaded for communication and sharing between the different groups, and repeatedly asserted that freedom cannot be sectional, freedom in South Africa entails a society free from racism, our own projects show that we no longer believe that multi-racialism is a viable strategy to bring about change.

#### AND BELIEVING:

- I. That it was right for the UCM to constitute itself as it did at the time it did.
- II. That it was right to allow the Movement to change and adapt to the changing conditions and circumstances as it did during its five years of existence.
- III. That its voice was and remains an authentic Christian voice in South Africa.
- IV. That the practical outworking of its own convictions in its specific projects were right and remain urgently needed in South Africa.
- V. That some of South Africa's finest people have been formed by the UCM and have dedicated themselves to the achievement of its aims to the extent of having lost their liberty without just cause.

VI. That many South Africans give thanks to God for the work and witness of the UCM and that one day this country will claim with pride the heritage of UCM.

RESOLVES;

- I. That the University Christian Movement of Southern Africa be dissolved, and that its assets be allocated in accordance with Article XII, section (2) of the constitution.
- II. That a committee of 5 persons be appointed to dispose of the assets. This disposal to be done in the light of any other relevant decisions taken by the 1972 Council.

Dated 1 / 4 / 1972

## ENDNOTES

1. While racial appellations are odious, there is no way of avoiding them when describing this period of history.
2. On 21 March 1960 police fired into a crowd of unarmed protesters, killing 69 people.
3. See Horrell, M. 1968. *Bantu Education to 1968* SAIRR, Johannesburg, for an outline of apartheid education laws.
4. For the story of the IFES see Lowman, P. 1983. *The Day of His Power*. Leicester: IVP
5. Personal interview on 11 August 1995.
6. Personal interview in August 1995.
7. The list of people who were interviewed is to be found in the Sources Consulted.
8. The article began with the statement 'The only revolutionary class left in the Western world today is the community of students.' This rashly optimistic statement doubtless reflected the impact that students were making in France, Germany and the United States.
9. This phrase is used by Villa-Vicencio to aptly describe the limp manner in which the English speaking churches opposed apartheid. Other studies by D Balia and J Cochrane come to the same conclusion.
10. See for instance; Ryan, C. 1990. *Beyers Naude: Pilgrimage of Faith*. Cape Town: David Philip. \* Randall, P.1982. *Not Without Honour: Tribute to Beyers Naude*. Johannesburg, Ravan. \* Walshe, P.1983. *Church Verses State in South Africa. The case of the Christian Institute*. Maryknoll: Orbis.
11. In 1968 only 5 of the 16 SACC executive members were black.
12. This is an example of the untrue assertion found in some books that Basil Moore was the founder of the UCM. He was of course a very influential figure from the very beginning, but the founders of UCM were the ecumenical churches.
13. Ten thousand copies were distributed to local congregations for study which widened the impact of The Message.
14. The Prime Ministers speech was given in Brakpan on 27 September 1968.
15. The annual national conferences were of major importance because of their impact on delegates. They were; the founding conference in 1967; Event 68 in Stutterheim; Happening 69 in Stanger; Encounter 70 at Wilgespruit; Freedom 71 at Eston; and the Dissolution conference south of Durban in July 1992.

16. A SASO pamphlet gives the figure of 40 whereas an article by Colin Collins puts the number at 60.
17. This phrase was used by the then president of SASO, Barney Pityana, when he and Steve Biko addressed a workshop at the University of Cape Town . Quoted in *Comment* student newspaper March 2, 1971.
18. The original editor of the book entitled *Essays in Black Theology*, Sabelo Ntwasa, was banned. His name was replaced with that of Basil Moore when the title was changed to *The Challenge of Black Theology in South Africa* for the American edition..
19. B Moore here quotes Takatso Mofokeng ( Moore, B. 1994. *Black Theology Revisited. Bulletin for Contextual Theology*. Vol 1. Pietermaritzburg.)
20. A Parliamentary Select Committee under the chairmanship of Mr A L Schlebusch was established to investigate the UCM, NUSAS, the CI, the SAIRR. It was not a judicial enquiry by people trained to impartially sift the evidence, nor did it have any theologians on it. It was a politically loaded blunt instrument with which to beat those organisations. Evidence was taken in camera without the affected parties being able to answer in self defence. For a summary of the parliamentary debate at the time when the Select Commission was announced, see *Race Relations Survey, 1972* by The SA Institute for Race Relations.
21. Interview on 21 August 1995.
22. There is for example strongly worded correspondence between Basil Moore and Rev R Harrison dated 25 October 1971 and 10 November 1971.
23. In a telephone conversation on 22 August 1995 he revealed that he had been put in UCM by SASO with the task to 'fold up UCM to leave the field clear for SASO'
24. This thought was tentatively posited separately by Prof C Cook and the Rev D Murray
25. Contextualization refers to that theological reflection that takes into account political, economic, legal and social realities and not just cultural factors.
26. *Pro Veritate* Vol 10 no 5 September 1971.
27. See for example paragraph 2.5.21 of the Schlebusch Commission Report
28. The two different emphases are well depicted by D Bosch in *Missionalia* Vol 9 No 1 April 1981 in an article entitled 'In Search of Mission: Reflections on "Melbourne" and "Pattaya" .
29. So for instance J Scherer writes: 'As there is now very nearly complete consensus on the basic proposition that evangelism and sociopolitical responsibility are inseparable in mission, the issue should no longer be regarded as divisive,...'1987:238 in *Gospel, Church and Kingdom: Comparative Studies in World Mission Theology*. Minneapolis: Augsburg.
30. This opinion was independently expressed by Dr A Borraine, Rev B Pityana and Dr C Simkins.



31. A similar ecumenical ideal of shared theological training has similarly died with the breakup of the Federal Theological Seminary.

32. One of the ironies is that since the demise of UCM, 'the SCA has increasingly encouraged multiracial programs and become more committed to social witness.' (De Gruchy 1979:155)

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