

**Canadian Bishop  
taken to task  
by  
Zimbabwe Rhodesian  
clergy**



## INTRODUCTION

*One of Canada's leading churchmen, the Rt. Rev. Lewis Garnsworthy, Anglican Bishop of Toronto, said in an interview published in the Toronto Star of July 21, 1979, that the grants by the World Council of Churches (WCC) to liberation groups in Africa "are the only proper, Christian response to a tragic situation". The article, entitled "Patriotic Front Deserves Help, Bishop Finds," resulted from a month's tour by the Bishop of several African countries, including Zimbabwe Rhodesia, South Africa, Uganda, Malawi and Botswana.*

*The interview is reproduced in full in this pamphlet as is also an open letter by the Dean of Salisbury, the Very Rev. John da Costa, to Bishop Garnsworthy via the Toronto Star. The Dean had escorted the Bishop throughout most of his brief stay in Zimbabwe Rhodesia and he has accordingly "put the record right".*

*The Archdeacon of the Midlands within the Diocese of Matabeleland, the Rev. Warwick A. Willows, also wrote a letter to the Toronto Star and extracts are printed in this pamphlet.*

### Interview in a Toronto newspaper

In an interview Bishop Garnsworthy told the *Toronto Star*:—

"I support the World Council grants, made through the special Programme to Combat Racism, because to do otherwise would be totally unrealistic. There are hundreds of thousands of refugees under the care of the Patriotic Front of Joshua Nkomo and Robert Mugabe — and a great many of them are kids. The grants are for humanitarian purposes and the WCC is doing the only right thing it can do. I would stand or fall on that."

"The Anglican Church of Canada has been deeply troubled in recent months by divisions caused by the WCC's actions and attitudes in southern Africa, with a number of influential businessmen threatening to quit or stop their donations over the issue."

"Most Rev. Edward Scott, Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada, and moderator of the central committee of the WCC, has been the principal target of criticism because of his high profile as a world leader and his adamant refusal to back down on the grants."

"I've always supported Ted Scott on this," said the bishop. "The only difference is that I have now gone and seen for myself."

"Garnsworthy, relaxed and tanned after his trip, pointed out that if the churches had failed to show their hand in humanitarian aid to the liberation movements they would eventually meet the same fate in Zimbabwe Rhodesia as they have in Mocambique 'where they are now paying the price of their silence.'"



"In 1978, the Anglican Church of Canada gave \$15 000 from special funds to the WCC's Programme to Combat Racism; the United Church gave \$24 000; and the Presbyterian Church gave \$5 500. Of the programme's total budget of \$500 000, \$85 000 went to the Patriotic Front, causing the Salvation Army to suspend its membership in the WCC pending discussion of the recipients' accountability.

"Those who say the churches should give the money through the Red Cross instead of directly to the freedom groups are wrong, the bishop argues.

"The churches must be seen to be doing what they're doing. Double-talk will be no answer when the day of judgement comes for Africa."

"Striking out at critics of the grants, Garnsworthy queried: "What about the many thousands of dollars the WCC has given for aid to the blacks inside Zimbabwe Rhodesia itself — much more than they ever have given to the guerrillas? You never hear much about that part of the action, do you?"

"He went on to say that in view of what he has seen in Zimbabwe Rhodesia he does not believe economic sanctions should be lifted.

"I spent a week there and talked to hundreds of black clergy and other leaders. They all say that the so-called black majority rule of Bishop Abel Muzorewa represents merely cosmetic change. They point out that there can never be any real lasting peace until the Patriotic Front is included in the settlement."

"Critics of the new, black majority rule — including Lord Harlech, Britain's special emissary to Africa — point out that the recent elections in Zimbabwe Rhodesia preserve much of the former white power by giving the whites (4 per cent of the population) 28 per cent of the seats in parliament, 28 per cent of cabinet posts, plus control of the army, the police and the economy.

"Garnsworthy said that having seen the style in which many wealthy Rhodesians live, it is not hard to imagine why they would like to go back to the good old days of white supremacy."

"He said: 'Why wouldn't you hope for it, when it meant you lived at the top of the heap? You could get a servant for about \$15 a month and house him in a hut at the edge of your estate and so forth.'

"Because of his church affiliations and the fact that he was visiting Africa as part of a consultation on missions, the bishop was able to move freely in totally black areas wherever he went. The overwhelming impression he got was that of 'the immense spirit of liberation which is sweeping the entire continent.

"You could feel it everywhere — the sense of independence and that all are behind their fellow blacks wherever they are fighting against oppression."

"He noted that today in Zimbabwe Rhodesia the guerrilla forces of the Patriotic Front can move 'almost anywhere at will, except for the urban centres.'

"While the whites spoke of them as 'terrorists', the blacks spoke of them as 'freedom fighters', he explained.

"Asked about whether it is Christian to support violence, Garnsworthy replied:

"The issue is much more complicated than the question makes it appear to be. If the church is silent, it gives support to a system of violence and so is supporting violence. How do you escape that?"

"Whenever you look at a violent response, you have to look at the violence

which initiated it. People who condemn the violence of others should be aware of just how much violence is committed against people right here in Canada — native peoples, for example. When you realise that violence takes on many forms and comes from many sources, you are not quite so quick to sit in judgment on those of another culture."

"The bishop said he found it 'incredible' to be in Salisbury, the capital of Zimbabwe Rhodesia, because the whole city of 2 million people comes to a total halt at 6 p.m. each day. 'After that, nothing moves outdoors.'

"He said he found the whites understandably paranoiac and unable to talk about anything except the war against the Patriotic Front. Each of the various political parties, including Premier Muzorewa's, has its own army, called 'a security force', he discovered.

"So, the whole thing could very well end up in total chaos."

## In other areas of Africa

"Turning to South Africa, Garnsworthy said the impression he got was that 'the oppression there is tighter than ever. You could feel it in the air even as you got off the plane and entered the country.'

"His most vivid memory is of Soweto, the steaming slum of 1 million blacks, about 25 miles from Johannesburg, in which 176 were killed during rioting in June, 1976.

"I'll never forget Soweto, the bishop says. 'A million people with no electric lights, no running water. I saw 12 people living in a shack with only two rooms. There were endless barracks on the outskirts for male labourers. They looked like concentration camps and the men only get home to see their families about once a year.'

"Garnsworthy said he couldn't see evidence of anyone doing anything for the people except the various churches.

"In Uganda, the bishop said, Tanzanian troops who ousted Idi Amin are still very much in evidence everywhere. In fact, the impression he got was that if the Tanzanians pulled out tomorrow, there wouldn't be any effective control of government at all.

"In Kampala, the capital, the bishop said there was automatic rifle fire from all over once darkness fell.

"Nobody really seems to know what is going on, but the overall impression is that the various tribes are now trying to exact their own revenge," he said.

"Garnsworthy was pessimistic about Uganda's immediate chances of recovery following the Amin debacle — 'there could well be a civil war. One has to wonder how effective the church there can be in calling for a new Uganda when it is so riddled through with tribalism itself.'

"At the same time he noted that the shell-pocked, Anglican seminar just outside Kampala was crammed to the doors with 150 student ministers and that the Anglican Church of Uganda now has 3 500 000 members and is continuing to grow.

"He was distressed, however, to find just how 'English' the Anglican Church in Africa remained.

"I found bishops in black republics still called 'My Lord,' morning prayer was frequently in English though the whole congregation was black; the hymns were the worst of the Victorian era, also in English. I wish it were all more African. If the church there can't produce what is essential to its own culture, it won't say much in the end."



## Dean of Salisbury sets the record straight

When the Very Reverend John da Costa, Dean of Salisbury, was asked for his comments, it was learned that the Dean had escorted Bishop Garnsworthy throughout most of his brief stay in Zimbabwe Rhodesia. Dean da Costa has, accordingly, set the record straight by means of an open letter to the Bishop, via the *Toronto Star*:

"Dear Bishop,

I am wondering how many Christmas cards you will be sending to Zimbabwe Rhodesia this year? How many hundred will you be sending to all the black clergy you say you met in the four days you were with us? For, as far as I know, there aren't even one hundred black Anglican clergy in the whole country. But then, you might have met clergy from other denominations, without our knowing about it!

"I am worried about your memory, Bishop. Perhaps it is due to the number of countries that you visited in such a short space of time. You may have confused them with Zimbabwe Rhodesia. For I am surprised that you have learned more in four days, than I have in four years here.

"May I remind you of who I am? I am the white Dean of Salisbury who met you on Friday at Que Que, half way between Bulawayo and Salisbury. You came there with my black brother-Dean of Bulawayo and you preferred to travel to Salisbury with our black bishop Suffragan, if my memory is correct.

"You were taken immediately to our Conference Centre outside Salisbury, and then, at the end of the 'briefing' on the Diocese — which couldn't have been that good (or else you were over-tired, for some facts you have mentioned seem wide off the truth!) you then went to the Bishop's House — which is riddled with white ants, and the floor is collapsing (remember?) for a drink, and bed. The Bishop's servants, by the way, live in decent brick-built cottages, with a lot of land around where they happily grow their own vegetables. They don't live in 'huts at the end of the plot,' nor are they paid only \$15 per month. I wonder where you found such servants? Zambia, perhaps or Malawi, was it? You did so many countries, in such a hectic two weeks!

"Next morning, you were driven 60 miles to the sanctuary where our hero martyr Bernard Mizeki was killed for the Christian faith. He was the first of many in this land. When I first went to the annual service four years ago, 4 000 people were there — camping there overnight and coming to Holy Communion early in the morning. Now, due to the activities of your friends, (for you seem to think that the Patriotic Front are the ones to be backed, and not the present elected Government) nobody can stay overnight with safety, and, as you saw, there were only 400 people present. Many of these are likely to be in danger of their lives upon returning home, for having been to a service at all! How many black clergy did you talk to whilst the service was on, Bishop?

"Next, if I remember, you met the Headmasters and Chairman of Governing bodies of the Diocese's nine African secondary schools. These men are dedicated to the goal of educating all people, black and white, to their maximum. Perhaps you heard of the recent murder of one of these men? This wasn't the work of the forces of the elected government, but by people that you call 'freedom fighters'! The freedom that they have brought

about is the freedom of 250 000 children to stay away from schools which they have closed, often destroying the premises into the bargain! Is that the freedom that you think is needed?

"On that same Saturday evening, you met people involved in trying to keep this Diocese financially viable. Many years ago it was so. Now, with 85% of the work closed by terrorists, there is income only from the six predominantly white parishes. They are giving to the limits of their resources, and 25% of our total income is spent on clergy who aren't able to minister to anybody, owing to the war situation. But there, I am forgetting. You talked to hundreds of black clergy, and I don't need to remind you of these facts.

"You may have come to the Cathedral — but you certainly didn't come to a service here. If you had, it might have been to a formal English-language service, with superb music and a gorgeous setting. But it wouldn't have been a 'Victorian Morning Prayer, with Hymns Ancient and Modern'. We don't have that! Instead, we have a splendid series of settings, sung by a choir. (The head boy is black, by the way!) Half the lads are from neighbouring boarding schools — where the majority of boys are black. We don't have any African adults in the choir yet; for none has asked to join us. But had you been here, you would have found the congregation consists of all sexes, all colours, all sizes, and we all meet together as a family in the Cathedral garden for an uproarious hour afterwards. But you may not have wanted to have seen such proof of how people can live together, and love each other.

"On the other hand, you might have come to the service which is in Shona, and is for people who are unable to come at other times. Many of these are domestic servants, but none, as far as I know, work for our Anglican white parishioners.

"So then, instead of being with us on Sunday, you went off to our oldest Mission, St. Mary's, Hunyani, a few miles south of Salisbury. There, you will remember, there is to be a new city — which will house 300 000 people, eventually. Our Church is trying to make a start at preaching the Gospel to these people, many of whom are going to be refugees from the war. Our townships are crowded with refugees now, but this is as nothing to what will be at Seki. Perhaps, Bishop, you think that we ought not to be trying to evangelise such needy people, and this is why you are advising the Church in Canada to back terrorists. It would be strange for a Minister of the Gospel of Jesus to be saying this, but you wouldn't be the first bishop to be on the side of the Marxists! Nor the first Canadian, either.

"On Monday, Bishop, you were on your way to Malawi, to the conference which was the original reason for you coming to visit us. So we are wondering if you made a few mistakes in what you reported to the people of Toronto?

"You mention 'the kids in the care of Robert Mugabe, and Joshua Nkomo.' I suppose you talked to a lot of them and found out which schools they had been abducted from? Of course they are kids — kids who should still be at school if their parents' wishes were being carried out! And you may stand by the idea that WCC grants will be for humanitarian purposes. Supplies from the Save the Children Fund and UNICEF, are regularly found on the bodies of, and at the bases used by, terrorists. I guess you might be happy about this? You can't limit the uses to which a gift is later put?

"The Church is paying the price, you say, for its silence. Just think, Bishop. A lot of missionaries were deported by the previous government. A lot have been massacred by the gentlemen whom you hope will be the future



government. Our own bishop was one of the most hated men in the country for his stand on matters of justice. I too have had my run-ins with the authorities, for bringing to their notice matters reported to me. Come on, check your facts. Facts like the payments made to 'servants' — each gets a very much greater amount of pay than you stated, unless of course the exchange rates have changed considerably! — and blacks speaking of 'freedom fighters'. They don't use these terms: they call them 'the boys' — which is a way of saying anything, or nothing!

"You may wonder why I have taken so long to reply to your report on this. I thought that it might have been possible that there were mistakes in the report that we had — *Toronto Star* July 21, pp. 1 & 2. Since you don't seem to have denied this, we take it to be true.

"Dear Bishop, I am likely to be in the United States in May next year. May I come to Canada for a week? May I be taken to Vancouver, Ottawa, the Arctic, The Yukon, and Newfoundland, and see Medicine Hat? If I can do all this in a week, I am sure that I would be able to tell all the people in this country all about the tensions that exist in Canada. I should be conversant with the linguaphone troubles of Quebec Province (both Notre Dame, and Laurentides Park); with the opinions of the clergy at Moose Jaw and Gander and trustworthy on my assessment of the church in New Westminster. Think of it! All in one breath-taking week! Might I suffer from mental indigestion, and need to check facts with the people living in these places, before allowing myself the luxury of an article in the Press?

"Do come to us again, and next time, please stay long enough to find out *all* the facts, and get them right.

"With our prayers, (and we mean it!)

"Yours sincerely,

John R. da Costa,  
Dean of Salisbury."

## Did the Bishop come to see what he wanted to see?

The Rev. Warwick A. Willows, Archdeacon of the Midlands area of Zimbabwe Rhodesia, says:

"Bishop Garnsworthy's comments on his trip to my country is full of exaggerations, distortions and half-truths! So much so that it is difficult for those living here to believe that it is a description of conditions in Zimbabwe Rhodesia. I was born here and have lived here for the past 37 years."

Mr. Willows says the Bishop spent a total of two hours in my Archdeaconry, most of it travelling on main highways. He met and spoke to four Clergymen for no longer than half an hour. Most of the Clergy in my Archdeaconry minister to the suffering people in the country areas. The Bishop did not leave the main highway and urban areas for we feared his friends in the Patriotic Front might not recognise him. Where did he meet 'hundreds of black Clergymen'?

"One can only come to the conclusion that as a result of his whirlwind trip to several African countries, the Bishop became confused and cannot recall what he saw and heard from one country to another. Thus resorted to putting them all together and applying them to Zimbabwe Rhodesia. In a less charitable frame of mind, one could come to the conclusion that the Bishop came to see what he wanted to see, ignoring everything else in order to support his previous stand and be able to claim first-hand knowledge. This would appear to be supported by his statement 'I have always supported Ted Scott (Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada) on this (i.e. WCC grants to the Patriotic Front of Nkoma and Mugabe). The only difference is that I have now gone and seen for myself.'"

Mr. Willows writes that Bishop Garnsworthy's exaggerations and distortions, intentional or otherwise, are bad enough coming from a Christian bishop, but what is more serious is that he is determined to lead the Church into the support of the Patriotic Front.

"We in Zimbabwe Rhodesia live in the midst of the agony of a power struggle that is shot through with racial, tribal and ideological conflict. There are Christians on both sides; there is suffering on both sides; there is agony and death on both sides; there are refugees on both sides. The Church in Zimbabwe Rhodesia is living on a knife's edge, concerned about the agony on both sides of the conflict.

"There are refugees from the country areas flooding into the urban centres causing the most appalling living conditions. There is little doubt that there are many refugees in the camps of the Patriotic Front living under equally, if not worse, conditions. Some of the Patriotic Front refugees are there by their own free will, others have been forced to go.

"It is all very well to strike out at critics of the WCC's grants to the Patriotic Front by saying: 'What about the thousands of dollars the WCC has given in aid to the blacks inside Zimbabwe Rhodesia itself — much more than has ever been given to the guerillas? You never hear much about that part of the action, do you?' The Church in Zimbabwe Rhodesia is deeply grateful and indebted to the WCC for its grants to alleviate the suffering within the country but the grants given have been given to the Church and other organisations engaged in relief of suffering. Not one cent of WCC money has ever been given to the Zimbabwe Rhodesian Government. WCC grants



to churches and organisations working to alleviate the suffering of refugees is one thing, grants given to a political and military organisation is quite another, even under the guise of refugee aid. There would be little objection to WCC grants to organisations engaged in the relief of the suffering within the camps of the Patriotic Front.

"Bishop Garnsworthy has led and is leading the Church into supporting one side against the other in a bloody, racial, tribal and ideological conflict in which there are Christians on both sides. It is deeply distressing to note that Bishop Garnsworthy ignores the fact that the one side is headed by a Christian Bishop who is openly in support of Christianity and democracy, while the other side is headed by leaders who have openly declared their support for a marxist form of government and have threatened reprisals against any who oppose their wishes. Bishop Garnsworthy advocates Christian support for the Patriotic Front despite statements by them such as 'The WCC has recognised the legitimacy of the arms struggle — Patriotic Front spokesman in Lusaka, 11th August, 1978'.

"One wonders whether Bishop Garnsworthy is a bishop of the Christian Church of our Lord Jesus Christ!"

## Rhodesians Worldwide



# Rhodesians Worldwide