

St FRANCIS TODAY

3. THE NEW CITIZEN PEACE-MAKERS.

"Blessed are the peace-makers."

Most people who long for 'peace', view that condition as being merely an absence of conflict while others think of it as a kind of 'nirvana' in which people avoid conflict, which only reduces human inter-action and merely builds up prejudices and pent up rage.

The great task of the Peace-Makers of the nation is to make an unequivocal stand that will send a mission message to the rest of the world that South Africa is a God-fearing nation. Just as it was the prayers of the faithful were responsible for the birth of the New South Africa without violence so the next stage of re-birth - or a true ethical renaissance of our society for resolving conflict

- rests ultimately upon the individual
- not on governments, Acts of Parliament, the police, commissions of enquiry or conferences.
- rather look to the scriptures and the example of St. Francis.

The Old Testament is noted for its Ten Commandments that are God's warnings on what displeases Him. In the New Testament however, Christ provided us with Ten Commitments that constitute evidence of our acceptance of The Kingdom of God and proof that we live in it.

"Where there is hatred – let me sow love "

THE PEACE-MAKERS TEN COMMITMENTS TO :

1. LOVE - - God - *and* my enemies
2. HONOUR God.
3. OBEY the Commands of the Kingdom
4. TRUST God in all things
5. PRAY in the Spirit
6. REPENT of all wrong doing
7. FORGIVE others
8. WITNESS to the Good News
9. PRAISE God
10. SERVE God, His Kingdom and the world.

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT VIOLENCE.

There is much discussion
on whether violence is ever justified.
The Bible however is very clear on the matter.
Quite apart from the Commandment
'Thou shalt not kill.'
and leaving aside the normal response to self defence, the following are some direct Biblical
injunctions.

" If you become angry, do not let your anger lead you into sin, and do not stay angry all day. Do not give the Devil a chance. The man who used to rob must stop robbing and start working in order to earn an honest living for himself and to be able to help the poor.

Do not use harmful words, but only helpful words, the kind that build up and provide what is needed, so that what you say will do good to those who hear you. And do not make God's Holy Spirit sad; for the Spirit is God's mark of ownership upon you, a guarantee that the Day will come when God will set you free.

"Do not let anyone deceive you with foolish words; for it is because of these very things that God's anger will come upon those who do not obey him. So have nothing to do with such people. You yourselves used to be in darkness, but since you have become the Lord's people, you are in the light. So you must live like people who belong to the light, for it is the light that brings a rich harvest of every kind of goodness, righteousness and truth. [Ephesians 5: 6-14]

The Anger Industry

Anger, once considered a deadly sin,
has developed into a fully fledged industry
in which finding something to be angry about
as become a kind of mission in many people's lives.
anyone who is not angry about something
or somebody has come to be regarded as
a self-centred, unthinking or uncaring person
who does not want to face the realities of the day.

It takes very little imagination or intellect
to be a critic or to point out life's injustices.
Moralizing can indeed be a very self-satisfying
experience as it places oneself above a situation
rather than in it, and can often be a substitute
for having to act justly oneself.
Injustice cannot be resolved with the kind of intolerance that prefers the snarl to the smile,
and indignation to reason
which use repetitive slogans as weapons of judgment.