Three years after the 1994 elections that marked an official end to apartheid and brought Nelson Mandela and the African National Congress (ANC) to power in South Africa, euphoria has given way to worries about crime, unemployment, and other problems. South Africans, writes columnist Anthony Lewis in the *New York Times Magazine* (Mar. 23, 1997), are wondering whether Mandela, “the Great Reconciler,” is also a great president.

Crime is rampant. There were 18,893 murders in 1995—which translates into a homicide rate nine times higher than the U.S. rate. Car thefts now equal nearly half the number of automobiles sold. “When one links that to the evidence that police rings are organizing car thefts, that many of the stolen cars are exported, and that 30 percent of all goods landed at Durban’s port are disappearing,” notes John Chettle, a Washington lawyer who formerly directed the South Africa Foundation for North and South America, “it suggests very extensive corruption among police, customs, harbor authority, and other officials.” This, he adds in the *National Interest* (Spring 1997), “may be the most serious remnant of the moral corruption of apartheid, and if it is not defeated soon the consequences could be profound.” The crime and corruption, he points out, are encouraging the notion that South Africa is turning into another lawless African state with an incompetent government—and are also prompting some young professionals to leave the country.

The apartheid system did create conditions for crime: oppressive racial discrimination, deliberate denial of decent education to blacks, miserable housing and economic policies that left millions jobless,” Lewis points out. “But [Mandela] was right that the responsibility is his government’s now, and its performance so far has to be judged a failure.”

Nevertheless, Chettle maintains that “fears of the Africanization of South Africa are almost certainly ill-founded. The truth is that, despite its problems, South Africa is becoming a stable state, not yet akin to the social democratic states of Europe, but one with a high degree of agreement among its elites as to its political, economic, and social foundations.”

It was fortunate in a way, Chettle observes, that democracy in South Africa arrived only after the statist ideologies that had sus-
The Christ of Nations

“The Catholic Church and Poland’s Return to Europe” by Timothy A. Byrnes, in East European Quarterly (Jan. 1997), Box 29 Regent Hall, Univ. of Colorado, Boulder, Colo. 80309.

It is hard to imagine a more Catholic country than Poland. Not only does it owe its freedom in part to the boldness of Pope John Paul II but the church, through Primate Józef Cardinal Glemp and the other bishops, has remained actively involved in Polish politics. It now appears, however, that the church may have overplayed its hand. The ex-communist (and anticlerical) Democratic Left Alliance (SLD) now dominates the governing coalition in the Sejm (parliament), and the SLD’s Aleksander Kwasniewski overcame the church’s open opposition to defeat Lech Walesa in the 1995 presidential election. Last year, despite strong church protests, President Kwasniewski signed into law a liberalized abortion measure. Surveys show that a majority of Poles consistently dissent from the church’s stand against abortion, and 75 percent think that the church should stay out of politics.

“Young does the church continue to assert itself so aggressively in Polish politics?” asks Byrnes, a political scientist at Colgate University. The answer, he contends, is that it is looking far beyond Polish politics to “the future shape of European society.”

During Poland’s agony of the last two centuries—its history of partition, occupation, and foreign domination—the Catholic