

PROF. A. VAN SELMS

'N BELYDENIS GESING

IN die Afrikaanse kerke van hierdie land word dikwels verwondering uitgespreek oor die feit dat getroue lede van die ooreenkomstige kerke in Nederland soveel moeite het om met hart en siel deel te neem aan die kerklike lewe soos dit hom in die Nederduits Gereformeerde en die Hervormde Kerk hier te lande openbaar. In die besonder word opgemerk, dat die standpunt wat hierdie kerke in sake die kleurskeidslyn inneem, en wat uitloop op die vorming van afsonderlike kerke vir die verskillende groepe van nie-blankes, so min begrip by die Nederlanders vind, en dikwels met verontwaardiging verwerp word.

Vir die argument dat 'n mens eintlik in hierdie land gebore en opgevoed moet wees, om die rassevraagstuk reg te verstaan, is die Nederlanders nie baie vatbaar nie. Hulle sal daarop antwoord dat juis die feit dat 'n mens hier gebore en opgevoed is, dikwels 'n beletsel sal wees om 'n juiste blik op die verhouding van kerk en kleurskeidslyn te verwerf. Want dit vereis 'n groot mate van selfstandigheid en stoutmoedigheid om 'n objektiewe oordeel te vorm oor wat vir ons van die begin af vanselfsprekend gelyk het.

In opdrag van die Hervormde Kerk in Nederland het ek hierdie week 'n werk verrig, wat my daartoe gedwing het om voortdurend te blaai in die gesangboek van daardie kerk. Dit is die bundel „Psalmen en Gezangen voor de eredienst der Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk, in opdracht van de Algemene Synode der Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk opnieuwe verzameld en bewerkt". Die psalms in daardie uitgawe is dieselfde as wat van 1773 tot 1936 in Afrika gesing is; die nuwe Nederlandse psalmberyming is nog nie amptelik in die Hollandse kerke ingevoer nie. Maar die gesange is nie die bundel wat as model vir die Afrikaanse gesange van 1943 gedien het nie; dit is 'n heeltemal ander bundel, waarin baie van die ou gesange weggelaat of gewysig, en meer as honderd nuwe toegevoeg is. Dit is hierdie bundel wat orals in die Hervormde gemeentes van Nederland gebruik word, en waarby sinds 1938 'n hele nuwe geslag opgegroeï het.

Boodskap van die Gesangebundel

Die hernude bestudering van hierdie bundel het vir my 'n nuwe lig laat opgaan oor die halsstarrige weie-

ring van baie Hollanders om hulle by 'n bepaling soos art. III van die Kerkwet van die Hervormde Kerk van Afrika neer te lê. In daardie artikel kom die berugte woorde „tot die Nederduits Hervormde Kerk van Afrika behoort slegs blanke persone" voor, en in daardie artikel word ook gesê dat die Hervormde Kerk „die stigting van eie volkskerke onder die verskillende volks-groepe" beoog. Oor die historiese agtergrond van hierdie bepaling praat ons nou nie; in die vraag na die organisasie van die kerk behoort historiese gegewens nie die laaste woord te hê nie, want volgens die Nederlandse Geboortsbelydenis is daarby prinsipiële, Bybelse, gronde gemoed. Dit gaan ons vandag net oor die vraag, waarom mense uit die Nederlandse kerk so 'n moeite het om daardie artikel met sy konsekwensies te aanvaar.

Dit word heeltemal begryplik as ons die Gesangebundel van die Nederlandse kerk soos vanaf 1938 in gebruik, aandagtig lees. Dan kom ons bv. by Gesang 103:1:

„Behoed uw Kerk, zet uit, o God, haar palen, zij kenn' eerlang geen grenzen meer!"

en effens verder in vers 2:

„Ontgloei heel d'aard' in broedermin!
Moog' elke muur, die nog haar duizendtallen
vaneen scheidt, vallen!"

Wie dit gesing het, kan vervolgens moeilik tog grense trek en mure gaan bou. En as die predikante en ander sielsorgers in hierdie land „die verbreking van die dogter van my volk op die maklikste manier genees" (Jer. 6:14; 8:11) deur te sê dat hierdie gesang van die onsigbare kerk spreek

en die eenheid in Christus wat die onsigbare kerk ken, geen ekwivalent in die sigbare kerke vereis nie, dan onthou ons Nederlandse immigrant dat in Gesang 105 van dieselfde bundel staan:

„Wij bidden en wij danken saam tot God met d'enen Vadernaam".

En hy vra: waar is daardie gesamentlike aanbidding, waarvan hierdie gesangvers praat? Dit is 'n sendingslied, dit spreek van wat verwag word van die evangelieprediking onder die heidene in al die lande van die wêreld. Hier word van geen stigting van rasiaal geskeie volkskerke gepraat nie; hier word gesing van 'n aanbidding wat mense van die mees verskillende herkoms in een kerk verenig.

As die immigrant nog bietjie verder blaai in sy ou gesangboek, wat hy op reis saamgeneem het en vir hom dierbaar is, kom hy by Gesang 121 met sy vlotte, geesdriftige wysie:

„... dat Hij ons over grenzen heen
laat zien het groot gezicht
van aller mensen broederschap
in 't ene, godd'lijk licht."

Skeldnaam word erenaam

„Aller mensen broederschap" — sou dit nou liberalisme of kommunisme wees? Hy laat hom nie daardeur oortuig nie, en as hy deur hierdie gesang te sing en in praktyk te bring 'n kafferboetie sou wees, dan aanvaar hy, soos sy voorouers, daardie skeldnaam as 'n erenaam, waarmee hy graag voor die troon van die ewige Regter sal verskyn.

Die gesang gaan trouens nog verder:

„God roept, en wat de mensen scheidt,
dat zij geen scheiding meer;
zijn liefde houd' ons allen saam
en samen met de Heer."

Met ander woorde: daar is natuurlik dinge wat die mense van mekaar skel, maar die kerk en sy lewende lidmate erken daardie skeiding nie en werk om dit op sy terrein te deurbreek en weg te vaag.

Wat 'n mens in sy jeug leer sing het, onthou hy sy lewe lank. Dit word 'n stuk van sy lewe, dit word die uitdrukking van sy innerlike oortuiging en die rigsgoer van sy handeling. Dit is 'n belydenis deur hom gesing.

NEW GENERAL SECRETARY

OF AACC TAKES UP

APPOINTMENT

Mr Samuel Amisshah, Principal of Wesley Teachers' Training College, Ghana, has arrived in Kitwe to take up the post of General Secretary of the All Africa Conference of Churches. Mr Amisshah was appointed by General Committee of the AACC in April 1963 but was unable to relinquish his post until January 1964. In the mean time the Secretariat was managed by Dr Donald M'Timkulu who had been Secretary of the Provisional Committee which arranged the Kampala Assembly. Dr M'Timkulu has since become Principal of the Mindolo Ecumenical Centre. He is also Chairman of the General Committee of AACC and Chairman of the Board of Governors of the Africa Literature Centre.

Die beoefening van geestelike gemeenskap. (Vervolg van bl. 2.)

tus (Lukas 8:21). Hierdie nuwe verhouding waarin verlore sondears tot mekaar te staan kom, moet sigbaar tot uitdrukking kom. Vergelyk o.a. ook die volgende verse in die hoë-priesterlike gebed van die Here Jesus: Joh. 17:11, 21, 22, 23. In Openbaring 7:9 beskryf Johannes 'n hemelse gesig van 'n groot menigte uit alle nasies en stamme en volke en tale. Indien ons dan eenmaal in die hemel geestelike gemeenskap met mekaar sal geniet, is dit tog onverklaarbaar dat hiervan niks op aarde tot uitdrukking kom nie. Die beoefening van geestelike gemeenskap mag nie maar gerevereer word vir die hemel nie, dit mag nie slegs as eskatologiese leerstuk benader word nie. Dit moet hier reeds beoefen word.

Wanneer daar weer met hierdie saak erns gemaak word, wag daar geskende ondervindinge vir beide kante. Deur ons isolasie is albei geestelik verarm. Beoefening van onderlinge geestelike gemeenskap sal geestelike verryking meebring.

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REV. S. P. FREELAND*

HOWEVER much Christians generally might disagree with some of the things said by Archbishop Whelan in his recent statement on South Africa and her race policies, that statement must be welcomed at least as another contribution to a reasoned, careful and highly-motivated examination, from the religious angle, of present national policies.

Those who have studied the whole statement will find that a good deal of what it says is difficult to refute from the point of view of Christian teaching.

Where we agree

For instance, most Christians will agree with the contention that there is no teaching of the Church in opposition to the idea of a state composed of a number of national or racial groups maintained in their separate and distinct identity by the state of which they form a part.

To the best of my knowledge no religious leaders have ever denied this. It must also be agreed that "in no

society can every man have the full exercise of those rights which belong to himself theoretically as a human person."

Therefore, as Dr Whelan rightly says, living in society must of necessity impose some restrictions on the freedom of the individual.

We agree, too, that democracy is not necessarily the only form of government compatible with Christianity; that the "one man one vote" system may not always be desirable; that the great majority of non-Europeans have not yet reached the stage of development which would justify their integration into a homogeneous society with (the great majority of) Euro-

peans; and that there will always be inequalities in society that necessarily affect human relations.

With all this many of us have no quarrel.

Neither have we any quarrel with the answer given to the question, Is apartheid not an injustice which must go? to which the Archbishop replied, It all depends on what you mean by apartheid.

Where we are in doubt

In fact this is really the crux of the whole statement. What do we mean by apartheid? It is because so many people in South Africa have never really faced up to this question, and have differing ideas as to what is meant by this term, that so often we find ourselves talking at cross purposes.

The Archbishop goes on, in endeavouring to answer the question, to point out — rightly — that we must distinguish between the idea of apartheid or separate development on the one hand, and the actual laws and regulations

which are made to implement the theory.

So far so good. But it is precisely at this point, which is the kernel of the whole discussion, that the good Archbishop fails to make the distinction which he so truly says is crucial.

He seems to suggest that the idea of apartheid is simply the idea of separate national or racial groups existing as part of one state. Nothing could be further from the truth.

There are at least three distinct characteristics of the South African policy of apartheid or separate development, as currently pursued (the words are Dr Whelan's) which go far beyond the mere theory of separate grouping.

Dressed-up dictatorship

First and foremost, it is of the essence of our present racial ideology that the white group alone decides what is the best policy for the country as a whole. In other words the concept of racial grouping is used to de-

Great Need for

DRAWING NEAR TO THE 'QUICK' OF S. AFRICA

I have over the past two years been able to view South Africa from a distance.

A country divided

I seemed to see a country divided into compartments, each having its own Churches, Schools, Universities, Clubs, Societies, and even, in the sphere of mass media of communication, its own newspapers, films, and radio programmes. In this way the people were able to nurture their stereotyped views of each other; to protect themselves from what was not 'their line'; even to preach that inter-communication may be a sin! And worse, each Christian section, accustomed to thinking of itself more as a whole than as a part, was busy justifying itself to itself and to any who would care to hear, though few did, except to criticise.

One group said they tried to some extent to express what they thought to be Christian love and concern towards those in a different coloured compartment, but a third group looked on and thought that that love was hypocritical because, for one thing, it wasn't extended to them too, and Christian love should not be only one-sided. Then being accused of self love, this third section said it was better to be sincere than false, and even Jesus had worked first amongst his own people and provided for their needs. To neglect your own would not be right.

In another compartment, people were justifying their growing apostasy from their former allegiance to Christ, by saying that they were tired of being regarded as second-class Christians, although expected to show greater love to those in the other compartments than they — the two main white groups — were prepared to show to each other.

There was yet another small cell though, feeling too recent and keen a smart, to talk and cry out as the others did. They had once half believed they were loved. So they were the more deceived when they found that they too had been judged on their indelible caste. At least Jesus had been rejected for what he stood for as a person, but there is a hopelessness about being rejected no matter what sort of person one is — as if one's person were immaterial. I can't matter only to myself. I matter to myself only in

so far as I matter to you. This is relationship and the Bible is all about relationship — of God to me and you, and of me to you, and you to me. We are all one family really, but we live in separate homes. It's bewildering'.

It is virtually impossible to view one's own land dispassionately. One can't escape the love of it, the concern for it, and the desire to work always in hope of the best for it. As Jesus is our hope if we are Christians, our work, whatever it is, will not be without reference to Him.

Spiritual reserves

I have recently arrived home and have felt most encouraged by a new realisation of depth in our South African situation — an awareness of the existence of spiritual reserves, like the reserves of a Karoo bush which suffers long periods of drought, yet which pushes its roots ever deeper in search of spring water — and finds it!

In the past we honoured leaders whose physical endurance, courage and indomitableness of spirit made them press forward fearlessly to the unknown. These men would not have got far had they chosen to stay in the laager. They ventured courageously into every part of the land, having their Bibles with them as their mainstay. We are proud of this heritage, but should this remain only a heritage?

To-day we may follow the leaders of another trek — one which is a test of mental and spiritual, more than of physical adaptation and endurance — and we ourselves will not know whether later generations will call it "great", or whether it will be as decisive in our history as the first Great Trek. We can only answer the call to trek out of our laager security into a perhaps turbulent future, following the word of God. Our forefathers had only God to trust. They learned to live moment by moment. And to live increasingly in the present is to live increasingly in the light of eternity, which is reality, honouring God's name: 'I am that I am'. He is, from the beginning, a present God.

We may remember the great Old Testament prophetic practice of recollection and expectation that gave significance to their present. But by the

time of Christ the Jews had changed from the spontaneity of prophetic living and had reduced their life to the following of a code of rules designed to keep them religiously and racially pure. Thus they lost their election for they could not recognise the truth and life in Jesus. They had learned to judge only by a code. They saw that His love was indiscriminate and that he did not honour the old ways, so they rejected Him. "It was expedient that one man should die for the people that the whole nation perish not —. Then from that day forth they took counsel together for to put Him to death".

The ground of hope

At this time of the year we remember that Jesus "set his face to go towards Jerusalem". This way to the Cross meant for Him the breaking of lesser allegiances, the disappointing of many, and then apparent personal defeat. But He said to His disciples "Remember the word that I have said unto you, the servant is not greater than his lord". I quote Dr. E. Brooke's words: "What is invincible in love is not that it gets its own way, but that it keeps on loving. This is the power of love in the face of man's freedom to do wrong; it is the victory of the Cross". Our charge is not that we should be successful but that we should be faithful. Our faith is in the Resurrection of Christ, the King, whose victory has already been won.

This then is the ground of my hope. Men in their heart of hearts know what truth is and they know what love is — even though they may know it only when they see it. These things may become obscured for a time; they may become a matter of persuasion and not of joyful recognition — but they can never be destroyed, for each time there are found men to understand a situation and fearlessly to interpret the way of God in it, so truth and love will live on, but only in the hearts of those who recognise them, and who are we to say who may or may not recognise these Christian values? Could Calaphas have guessed it would be the Romans? Could those Romans have guessed it could be the Vandals and 'Goths'? — but St. Augustine did, and the Church went out to meet those Barbarians.

* From "Power, Law, Right and Love" p.46
* Miss Evelyn Miller, belonging to the Church of the Province, is at present teaching in the Cape Peninsula.

Die kerk in Afrika. WAT HET VERKEERD GEGAAN?

So vroeg as 1808, skaars twee jaar na die oorname van die Kaap deur die Britse bewind, is die kerkgebou van die gemeente Kaapstad deur die Kerkraad op versoek van die Anglikaanse Kerk oopgestel vir dienste deur die Anglikaanse Kerk. Hierdie dienste is aanvanklik vir die Engelse amptenare en besettingsmagte gehou, en het gewoonlik Sondagnmiddag om sesuur begin. Verder is elke Dinsdag en Saterdag twee uur lank in die konsistorie klasse vir die opvoeding van Engelse kinders in die Anglikaanse kerkleer waargeneem.

Reeds gedurende April 1806, skaars drie maande na die oorname deur die Britse bewind, is ds. Fleck van Kaapstad deur Engelsprekendes van die garnisoen genader om die doop aan hul pasgebore kinders te bedien en het die kerkraad geredelik toestemming verleen. In 1813 het eerw. Robert Jones skriftelik om sekere geriewe vir die Engelse dienste aansoek gedoen; toestemming is gevra om 'n draagbare preekstoel tydens dienste in die Kerk te gebruik; die inrigting van een van die syvertrekke as 'n doopvertrek is verlang; daar is gevra dat die kerkklok gelui moes word wanneer die Engelse dienste begin; die aanbring van 'n deur na Buroolaan sou ook waardeer word.

'n Goeie onderlinge verhouding moes geheersa het, te oordeel na die warme bedankingsbrief van biskop S. James van Kalkutta, die eerste Episkopale biskop wat Suid-Afrika ooit besoek het, wat hy op 24 Oktober 1827 aan ds. A. Faure gerig het. Dit het gebeur na aanleiding van 'n diens wat biskop James in die Kaapstadse kerk waargeneem het en waartydens lidmate van sy kerk belydenis van geloof afgelê het.

„Die Voorligter“, Februarie 1964. Uittreksel uit „Engelse Eredienste in ons Kerk“ deur ds. A. J. B. Rawlin.

AANTAL LIDMATE — NIKS OM OOR TE KRAAI!

In 'n onlangse Nuusbrief van die N.G. Kerk word die volgende syfers verstrek betreffende die lidmate van die Kerke in Suid-Afrika vir 1960.

Kerkgenoot.	Blan-	Kleur-	Ban-	In-
skappe	kes	linge	skappe	skappe
	42.9	29.3		
Ned. Gerof. Kerk	6.2	0.2	5.1	0.1
Ned. Herv. Kerk	3.3	0.5		
Gerformeerde Kerk	12.6	17.8	6.9	1.0
Anglikaanse Kerke	8.7	7.8	12.0	0.4
Metodiste Kerk	3.6	0.5	1.9	0.1
Presbiteriaanse Kerk	6.2	8.0	7.0	2.2
Rooms Katolieke Kerk	0.5	9.1	1.2	
Congregational Kerk	1.1	4.9	4.9	
Lutherse Kerk	3.4	4.6	2.8	0.2
Apostoliese Kerk	5.4	8.8	4.7	3.3
Ander Christolike kerke	3.8			
Joodse Geloof		6.2		20.6
Islam				20.1
Bantoe Kerke				65.1
Hindoe	2.3	2.3	33.4	7.0
Ander en ongespesifiseer				

Uit 'n vergelyking met die syfers vir die jaar 1951 blyk die volgende: Tot die N.G. Kerk behoort die grootste aantal blankes en Kleurlinge; die persentasie vir die blankes het gestyg van 42 tot 42.9. Die aantal lidmate van die Ned. Hervormde en van die Gereformeerde Kerk het verminder, respektiewelik van 7 tot 6.2% en van 4.2 tot 3.3%. Die aantal blanke lidmate van die Katolieke Kerk het gestyg van 5.3 tot 6.2%.

Daar moet op gelet word dat hierdie getalle gebaseer is op 'n volkstelling deur die Regering onderneem en hulle stem, soos gewoonlik, nie ooreen met die Kerk se amptelike syfers nie. In die geval van die N.G. en die R.K. Kerk is die persentasies van die regeringstelling hoër.

Wat die Bantoe betref, hul sie Kerke het die grootste anhang, gevolg deur die Metodistekerk (12%). Onder die Asiate het die Hindoeke en die Islam verreweg die grootste anhang (85.7%). Uit die syfers kan ook afgelei word dat ongeveer een derde van die Bantoes nog heidens is.

„Die Brug“, Februarie 1964.

clear thinking

side whether racial grouping will be national policy! This is nothing but dictatorship dressed up — rather inadequately — to look like democracy.

If the people of South Africa were overwhelmingly in favour of partitioning the country into Whitestans, Blackstans and Colouredstans, there could be little objection to this policy, providing that minorities were protected and the whole scheme was carried out in a reasonably fair and just manner.

But there is not the slightest intention of consulting the people about it, because it is known that the majority of South Africans may not desire such partition.

The results of the voting for representatives in the Transkei Parliament recently suggests that many Africans do not want it.

'Compulsory Apartheid' isn't 'Traditional Segregation'

Secondly, the policy of apartheid, as distinct from South Africa's traditional segregation policy, requires

rigid and ruthless enforcement even upon those who have no desire to remain separate.

We have no essential quarrel with those who wish to separate themselves from their fellow-South Africans of different racial origin, as many do. Let them be free to follow their own conscience in the matter.

But to bring compulsion to bear against those who believe that it is their duty to stand together irrespective of racial differences, as many genuinely do from Christian motives, is both unjust and at complete variance with that freedom which is the right of all men in civilised society.

Racial differences not all-important

Thirdly, it is essentially wrong deliberately to blind oneself to the many other differences in development between people — of education, culture, civilised standards, religion and political awareness — and to base policy on one difference only, that of race, as if it were all-important.

It is, of course, nothing of the kind.

Complete racial exclusiveness is an essential part of the doctrine of apartheid. This is illustrated by the fact that no African, whatever his fitness for the franchise, can vote for the government of his country. No European over 18 years of age, however ill-equipped to use the vote, can lose it except under very special circumstances.

If this is just and right and Christian, then words have lost their meaning.

Dr Whelan has presented an excellent case for voluntary, self-chosen segregation, but that is not the point at issue. He has not really dealt with the Christian attitude to apartheid.

Christians of all denominations would welcome a further statement from him on this crucial issue.

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