

# PRO

# VERITATE

## INHOUD/CONTENTS

Die Gereformeerde Kerk van Suid-Afrika en die Sending	1
The Rule of God and White Supremacy	1
Inleidingsartikel/Editorial	5
Meditation	6
Die Kerk Buite Suid-Afrika	7
The Church in Communist Countries	8
The Local Church and Problems of Identity in a Multi-Racial Country	9
Readers Views	16

CHRISTELIKE MAANDBLAD VIR SUIDELIKE AFRIKA—CHRISTIAN MONTHLY FOR SOUTHERN AFRICA

Apr. 15 Apr. 1965

Jaargang III, Nr. 12

By die Hoofposkantoor as Nuusblad geregistreer.

5c

Intekengeld R1 Subscription

Volume III, No. 12

Registered at the Post Office as a Newspaper.

## DIE GEREFORMEERDE KERK VAN SUID-AFRIKA EN DIE SENDING

— PROF. J. H. BAVINCK †

Noudat ek aan die einde gekom het van my mooi en interessante reis deur die Republiek van Suid-Afrika, het ek behoefte om in 'n kort oorsig rekenskap te gee van my indrukke, veral ook met betrekking tot die Sending. Enersyds sien ek daarteen op om my gedagtes saam te vat en aan andere voor te lê.

Ek is nou eenmaal 'n buitelanders en het slegs drie maande geleentheid gehad om omstandighede in Suid-Afrika te ondersoek. Drie maande is natuurlik veels te kort om tot 'n suiwer oordeel te kom. Eintlik sou ek veel langer moet rondreis en ook aan die werk self moet deelneem, voordat ek werklik 'n goeie en blywende indruk daarvoor kan vorm. Daar was al soveel buitelanders gewees wat slegs 'n kort tyd deur Suid-Afrika gereis het en wat by hulle tuiskoms hulle oordeel en veral ook hulle kritiek in die koerante gepubliseer het. Ek kan my dit goed voorstel dat die Afrikaner groot afkeer in sulke kritiek het en dat hulle met reg kla oor die laster wat in die wêreldpers oor hulle land — en hulle probleme rondgestrooi word. As ek daaraan dink en rekenskap probeer gee van die kortheid van my reis en die oppervlakkigheid van my indrukke, sou ek liefs wil swyg. En tog durf ek nie swyg nie. Ek het in die enkele maande van my reis soveel hartlikheid ondervind, ek is van alle kante met soveel welwillendheid ontmoet, dat ek nou ook verplig voel om iets te sê. Ek is innig dankbaar vir die openhartigheid waarmee mense

my oral tegemoet gekom het, die erns waarmee hulle my ingelig en aangehoor het, en ek het ver trek met 'n gevoel van simpatie met die Afrikaanse volk en opregte meegevoel met hul vrese en kwellinge. En juis hierdie simpatie en meegevoel dwing my om met groot versigtigheid my indrukke weer te gee. Ek is daarvan bewus dat ek groot gevaar loop om hier en daar dalk eensydig voor te kom en selfs onjuis-

te dinge te sê. Van harte hoop ek dat mense my dit sal vergewe en my woorde sal bejeën as dié van iemand wat van harte bid dat God die Gereformeerde Kerk van Suid-Afrika sal gebruik as 'n middel in Sy genadevolle hand tot verheerliking van Sy naam en tot die koms van Sy Koninkryk.

### ALGEMENE INDRUKKE

Wanneer 'n mens, soos ek gedoen het, die Republiek deurkruis in alle rigtings word jy onwillekeurig getref deur die feit dat die bevolking van Suid-Afrika (ek bedoel hier daardie gedeelte van die bevolking wat die Gerefor-

*(Vervolg op bladsy 2)*

## THE RULE OF GOD AND WHITE SUPREMACY

— P. ALLEN MYRICK

"Rarely has there been such a magnificent gesture of true South Africanism". So said the Prime Minister, congratulating Rotary Club members on their defence of our national life against overseas criticism. At times we hear more, that our way of life is a Christian one, and that South Africa is a bulwark of Christian civilisation on a pagan continent. Is the white South African way of life so Christian, and can Christians defend it? Not only is the relationship between Christian faith and a nation's culture a source of vigorous debate among theologians. It is also one of the most pressing issues in the life of the Church in South Africa.

Before we attempt to answer this question with respect to South Africa, let us see what the Old Testament, and particularly the prophet Hosea, can tell us.

### THE CANAANITE WAY OF LIFE

The problem of the relationship between religious faith and an  
*(Continued on page 12)*

## Die Gereformeerde Kerk van Suid-Afrika en die Sending

veral ook vir hom wanneer hy 'n goeie, getroue werker is, netjies en noukeurig. Maar die donker ondertoon van vrees is nog luider as dié van simpatie. Vrees vir die opkoms van die Bantoe wat nie langer kind wil wees nie maar 'n selfstandige posisie wil beklee. Vrees vir die opgesweepte, oproerige Bantoe, wat ongereeldhede en afskuwelike misdade pleeg. Vrees vir die aangroeiende miljoenemassa, wat, as hulle eers eenmaal ontwaak, 'n ontsettende gevaar sal inhou. En hierdie vrees neem hier en daar die vorm aan van redelose haat en van diepe afkeer. Toe ek weer op die punt staan om na Nederland terug te keer, sê iemand vir my: „Hoe gelukkig is u nie om na 'n land te mag gaan waar daar geen swartes is nie.”

Hierin lê soveel opgesluit wat volkome begryplik is en natuurlik ook onredelik is. As blanke is ons geneig om dieselfde van die Bantoe te verwag as van onself. As hy aan daardie maatstaf nie beantwoord nie, vind ons hom lui, dom, gevaarlik en onsedelik. Ons vergeet dat hy in sy stamverband nooit geleer het om rustig en ordelik en volgens tyd te werk nie. Die Weste se vernaaamste uitvinding was die horlosie gewees. Die horlosie wat ons lewe, ons elke dag in afgemete tydvaakkies indeel. Die Bantoe het nog altyd sonder 'n horlosie en heeltemal ongebonde in sy stamverband geleef, sonder enige persoonlike verantwoordelikhede. Sy stam reël alles, sy stam het vaste, streng wette wat hom in toom hou; maar 'n eie, persoonlike gewete, dit het hy nie. Hy het net soos ons Bataviëse voorvaders, bier gedrink en sy vrouens laat werk, oorlog gevoer en geroof. Dit het ons voorouers ook gedoen. God het 20 eeue gebruik om ons te bring waar ons nou is en ons het alle rede om ons te skaam as ons daaraan dink wat ons is. Vir meer as 'n duisend jaar al skyn die lig van die evangelie vir ons

en tog is dit skrikwekkend as ons sien hoe weinig ons daarvolgens leef! Die Bantoe word sonder meer losgeruk uit sy stamverband, en oorgeplaas in ons moderne wêreld. Dit sou presies dieselfde wees as ons een van die heel ou Bataviërs plotseling sou oorplaas na een van die besigste verkeerspunte in New York. Is dit dan 'n wonder dat hulle nie weet wat om te doen nie en dat hulle nog onbeskryflik baie het om te leer?

Ons het alle rede om ons diep te skaam omdat ons hom nie in 'n betere Westerse wêreld kan inlei nie, dat daar in ons blanke beskawing die gedors na goud, drank, gevloek en materialisme die hoogty vier. Ons sal 'n beter begrip van die Bantoe en sy krisis moet aanleer; ons sal ons meer in sy stryd moet probeer oorplaas. Ons sal ons dieper moet skaam vir die beskawing waarmee hy in aanraking kom. Ons sal eers inniger moet roem oor Gods genade, ons die Westerse volke, wat geen haar beter is as die Bantoe, wat ons vir soveel eeue vasgehou en gelei het. Ons sal 'n bietjie meer opregte simpatie en ware meegevoel teenoor die swartes moet koester. Miskien sal ons dan nog verbas staan oor die snelle tempo waarin ons hulle ons eie gemaak het, waar dit voorheen so geweldig moeilik gelyk het. Miskien sal ons ons daarin kan verheug dat daar al reeds van hulle is wat 'n sekere mate van verantwoordelikeheid kan dra, en selfs meer as dit wat ons aan hom toevertrou. Ek is daar deeglik van bewus dat ek as buitestaander, wat nog nooit in die praktyk iets met die mense te doen gehad het nie, hierdie dinge makliker kan sê as u, wat elkedag met hulle in aanraking kom. Maar dit is tog nie daarom minder waar nie. En dit is belangrik dat die Afrikaanse volk in sy hantering van die Bantoe, hierdie sy van die saak behoort te oorweeg.

### TE MIN OPREGTE LIEFDE

Ek mag nie 'n vergelyking tref tussen die Suid-Afrikaanse Bantoe-probleem en die probleme wat ons met die bevolking van die vroeëre Nederlands-Indië deurmaak het nie. Ek weet goed dat  
(*Vervolg op bladsy 16*)

## The Rule of God and White Supremacy

(Continued from page 1)

established way of life is clearly seen in ancient Israel's tendency to worship the Canaanite god Baal. This problem began as soon as Israel settled in the land of Palestine in about 1250 B.C., and continued until the final collapse of the nation in 587.

When the nomadic Hebrews first entered Palestine, they found already established there a sophisticated culture. The Canaanite way of life was superior to the Israelite in a number of respects: the developed material civilisation, flourishing cities, and complex political structures all made Hebrew ways seem primitive indeed. In no respect was the contrast greater than in that of agriculture: to the humble Hebrew nomad, wandering on the edges of the cultivated land with his sheep and goats and donkeys, the green fields and flourishing orchards of Canaan seemed nothing short of a miracle. Here indeed was a "land flowing with milk and honey." The wonder of this fertility bursts forth again and again from the poets' lips:

"Thou dost cause the grass to grow for the cattle,  
and plants for man to cultivate,  
that he may bring forth food from the earth,  
and wine to gladden the heart of man,  
oil to make his face shine,  
and bread to strengthen man's heart." (Ps. 104:14-15).

Inevitably, many Israelites began to imitate this advanced Canaanite culture, and especially Canaanite ways of agriculture.

As the Hebrews settled in Palestine and began to be farmers, they naturally asked their Canaanite neighbours, "How do you get a good crop?" What are the best farming methods? And the Canaanite reply was simple in the extreme: "We worship Baal, the god of fertility." You must build altars to Baal on the hill-tops, offer him sacrifices, and make love to the charming "priestesses" of Baal who live in his

## The Rule of God and White Supremacy

shrines. Then Baal will give you abundant rain and fertile soil and increasing herds. This was the "traditional way of life" of a successful farming community. It had been tested over the years, and had been found satisfactory. Moreover, it was a pleasant set of customs, which appealed to men's appetites. As a result, most Israelites accepted this way of life. If anyone challenged them about it, they could justifiably reply that this was a proven method of ensuring rainfall and fertility, and therefore national survival. He who refused to worship Baal was inviting economic ruin and national collapse.

### YAHWEH AND BAAL

It is important to remember that Israel saw no particular conflict between the service of Baal and the worship of Almighty God (whom they called Yahweh). Yahweh was their Lord, of course. He had led them through the desert for forty years, he had come to their aid in military crisis and raised up able leaders for them. But after all, one also had to live his daily life, and ensure his future and that of his children. And the only way for a farmer to do this was to honour Baal. So we see Gideon's father Joash, a good Yahwist, also maintaining an altar of Baal, with the enthusiastic support of local opinion. (Judges 6:25-30). Thus the cultural patterns of Baalism had taken as strong a grip upon the people as had the religious traditions of Yahwism, and the two flourished side-by-side in Israel.

Some, of course, understood that there could be no compromise between Yahweh and Baal. This traditional way of Canaan was a betrayal of the First Commandment, "I am Yahweh your God . . . You shall have no other gods besides me" (Exodus 20:2-3); it was a denial of the covenant made with God at Shechem, during the early stages of the settlement in Palestine (Joshua 24,

especially verses 14-24). The arguments in favour of Baal might be most convincing, his service might be pleasant, and his gifts abundant; to abandon him might fly in the face of tradition and the apparent national interest. But Baal must be rejected, or the moral and spiritual foundations of the people would be undermined, and they would perish.

This clash between a firmly entrenched way of life and an uncompromising religious faith was particularly bitter in three periods of Israel's history. In the time of the Judges, shortly after the settlement in Palestine, some of the leaders of the Twelve-Tribe League, notably Gideon, realised that unless Israel was faithful to Yahweh she was doomed. During the reign of Ahab and Jezebel (869-850), Elijah battled to convince his people that their survival depended upon the rejection of Baalism (see especially 1 Kings 17 and 18). And in the last days of the northern kingdom (about 745), the prophet Hosea saw that the continued service of Baal was about to bear fruit in the complete collapse of the nation. It is to this great prophet of the North that we must now turn, for he, more than any other Old Testament figure, understood the tragedy of a people who compromised their faith for the sake of their "traditional way of life".

### NATIONAL CORRUPTION

By the time of Hosea, Baalism had become so ingrained in the national character that it had permeated the religion of Yahweh altoaether. The people of the North saw no conflict at all between their faith and their culture, for they had completely married the traditional way of life (Baalism) with their religious faith (Yehwism). They worshipped Yahweh in the form of a bull, which was a symbol for Baal (Hosea 8:5-6.) They offered sacrifice to Yahweh with entirely corrupt rites, at the Baalistic "high places", surrounded by fertility symbols, idols, and cultic prostitutes (Hos. 4:12-14; 8:11-13). In fact, Yahweh himself, the God of Israel, was "Baalized", and made to appear as the protector of the traditional way of life, the source

of fertility, who was to be worshipped as Baal was (Hos. 2:16). The people had completely forgotten the true character of the pure and holy Yahweh, the ruler of history, who had given his people the gifts of the land through his unmerited grace (Hos. 2:8). Here religion was wholly captive to culture.

The triumph of the cultural norm had a number of tragic consequences for Israel. Not only did Yahwistic faith degenerate into idolatry, so that God was made a servant of the desires and aspirations of the people: the whole national life was corrupted. The people fell victim to a complacency which declared that the current prosperity and abundance were proof that they were following the correct policy and worshipping in the proper way:

"Ephraim has said, 'Ah, but I am rich, I have gained wealth for myself.' — (Hos. 12:8; see also Hos. 2:5, 12).

And this self-satisfaction blinded them to the terrible moral decay of the nation. For Hosea witnessed the collapse of the integrity of a community which had sold its soul to a corrupt culture. Economic exploitation (Hos. 12:7), sexual immorality (4:2, 14), the break-down of law and order (4:2; 7:1), political instability and irresponsibility (7:7; 10:3-4) — all these testified to the destruction of the very way of life which the nation had cherished, and which it thought it was safe-guarding through its respect for Baal.

### HOSEA'S VIEW OF THE NATION

Hosea declared that all this corruption was the result of the nation's denial of Yahweh. The people had substituted Baal for Yahweh, a pleasant, traditional way of life for the stern righteousness of God. They had depended upon a set of cherished customs and not upon Yahweh. Hosea summarises his indictment by saying, "They know not Yahweh" (5:4). "Knowledge", for Hosea, is far more than mere information; it is faithfulness, it speaks of the relationship between two persons who have pledged themselves to one another in covenant. The be-

## The Rule of God and White Supremacy

trayal of their basic relationship with God is the cause of their downfall:

"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge." (4:6).

Like so many of his fellow-prophets, Hosea preached God's judgment upon this faithless people. Their surrender to the prevailing culture would bring national ruin. The judgment would begin with the collapse of justice and morality: the sin of Baalism would bring its own reward in increasing sensualism (4:14, 18) and lawlessness (7:1-2). This inner decay would, moreover, leave Israel at the mercy of her enemies, and she would be destroyed by Assyria (9:10-17; 13:9-16). Hosea had much to say about the love of God for Israel. But he never allowed that love to be debased into the sentimental feeling that God would protect his people under every circumstance. Indeed, immediately after speaking of God's tender love for his child Israel, Hosea speaks some of his most dreadful words of judgment:

"The sword shall rage against their cities, consume the bars of their gates, and devour them in their fortresses.

My people are bent on turning away from me; so they are appointed to the yoke, and none shall remove it."

(Hos. 11:6-7).

The tender compassion of Yahweh could not penetrate their hearts until they had learned what it meant to obey and to serve and not to betray.

### SOUTH AFRICA'S WAY OF LIFE

The clash between an established cultural pattern and religious faith is as real in modern South Africa as it was in ancient Israel. And like Israel, South Africa's national integrity and religious heritage depend upon the way in which she resolves this conflict. Let us explore the parallels between Israel's situation and our own.

We hear a good deal today

about white South Africa's "traditional way of life." The distinctive element in this way of life, which sets it apart from other "European" cultures, is the belief in and practice of white supremacy and segregation. This is the aspect of our way of life which is most often criticized from overseas, and which we are therefore exhorted to defend at all costs. The patterns of white supremacy are old, well established, and highly sophisticated. The ideal of white supremacy developed early in the life of the white South African community, generation after generation of Afrikaner farmers was nurtured in it, new settlers adopted it, the hardships of trek and war were endured for the sake of preserving it. Indeed, so woven into the fabric of South Africa is white supremacy that many people cannot imagine this nation without it.

We are told that to give up these patterns would be to commit cultural and national suicide, it would bring economic, social and political ruin. Thus all the institutions of white South African culture are enlisted to defend this way of life: the home, where parents are exhorted to raise their children as "true South Africans"; the school, with "Christian National Education"; political parties, some of which exist to propagate this doctrine; voluntary associations, labour unions, and even Churches proclaim that every people has a right to its own way of life, which must be defended against all enemies. White supremacy is inseparable from our national life, it is an integral part of our heritage.

### THE EVIL OF WHITE SUPREMACY

The belief in white supremacy which permeates South African life is as untrue and evil as Baalism. The theory that one race should permanently rule another is no more supported by scientific evidence than were the myths of the god Baal and his sexual orgies. Furthermore, the theories and practices of white supremacy are a clear denial of the evil of God. The Biblical teaching that God created man in his own image requires us to treat all men

with equal respect, according them equal opportunity and justice. The commandment to love one's neighbour obliges us to labour unceasingly for that which is best and truest for every man, and his skin colour is quite irrelevant. The teaching of Christ and the witness of the early Christian Church call us to live with our fellow Christians in a community which knows no distinctions and no barriers, "for you are all one in Christ Jesus." The patterns of white supremacy and segregation violate the will of God as clearly as did the sensuous Baalism of old.

Furthermore, the consequences of white supremacy for the body politic are equally evil. For this ideal can only be maintained by unjust means. Thus economic, social and political equality are systematically denied to those of a different colour. Africans are shut up in a world where their place of residence, their family life, their education, their employment, and their political institutions are shaped to serve the ideal of segregation. Those who support "separate development" to justify these actions forget that that very idea was conceived, executed and enforced by the white man; that the only Africans who were seriously consulted on the matter were chiefs who are in the employ of the Government; and that no action of the "Bantustans" has any legal force until it has been approved by the white rulers who have been elected to preserve "our South African way of life". Thus even in the programme which is supposed to give the African his "rights", his liberty is in fact denied him.

The evil practices of white supremacy have spawned two especially ugly children: **militarism** and **complacency**. In order to defend this way of life, South Africa is engaged in a national and a personal arms race: national, as the Government buys or makes arms and strengthens its military forces; personal, as individuals acquire their own weapons and learn how to use them. For our way of life must be defended at all costs. Complacency is a form of moral degeneration which has come rather recently upon the scene. For the current prosperity

## The Rule of God and White Supremacy

of this country has dulled the consciences of many whites. Industry is booming and the standard of living rising. We are comfortable, and for many this appears to vindicate our present policies. We conveniently forget that in the midst of this very prosperity, African unemployment is widespread, urban Africans have no security whatever for they live under the threat of being "endorsed out", the skilled trades are still closed to Africans, and the gap between skilled and unskilled wages is as wide today as it was during the Great Depression. The words of Hosea speak directly to white South Africa:

"Ephraim has said, 'Ah, but I am rich,

I have gained wealth for myself'; but all his riches can never offset the guilt he has incurred." (Hos. 12:8)

Baalism appealed strongly to the physical side of man, and this is true of white supremacy as well. As the worshippers of Baal enjoyed the physical pleasure of sexual license at the "high places", and thus guaranteed for themselves a high standard of living, so those who practise white supremacy also are physically rewarded for their devotion to this way of life. They are tended day and night by non-white servants. They are free to indulge extensively in sports and social diversions because so much of the dully drudgery is done by those who serve them. Many are able to enjoy a higher standard of living than would be possible in an unsegregated society, because the black majority of the country is prohibited from competing economically with them. And to these physical pleasures is added a great "spiritual" reward: the sense of pride which comes from believing that we, the whites, are wiser, stronger, and better than the blacks. These pleasures mean, of course, the degradation and exploitation of those who are the victims of this supremacy — just as the pitiful prostitutes of

Baal were ruthlessly exploited by their masters. But it is a price readily paid by the whites for the sake of comfort and survival.

Many white South Africans see no particular conflict between their way of life and Christian faith; and here, too, we are not unlike our Israeli forbears. White supremacy and Christian religion flourish side by side; nay more, the ways of white supremacy have persecuted Christianity altogether. Just as Hosea saw Yahweh being worshipped and described in Baalistic ways, so too, much of Christian thought and practice are captive to the patterns of white supremacy and segregation. Public worship is thoroughly segregated, and we shamelessly defend this as conforming to our way of life, without stopping to enquire whether perhaps our way of life should not rather be conformed to our religious principles. Fellowship across racial lines is as rare in the Church as it is in other portions of our culture. We hear constantly of our "Christian National State" and our "Christian National way of life". Christianity and the ideals of white society are virtually identified. Therefore the Prime Minister could say that he believed that God had spared him from the assassin's bullet in order to enable him to carry out his programme of the total segregation of the races. For God is the protector of the white man's way of life, as we are invariably reminded on the Day of the Covenant. **It is small wonder that many Africans think of Christ as the white man's God, and therefore reject him. They are quite right in so doing, for they are rejecting not the living God, but an idol made after the image of white South Africa.**

### HOSEA'S WORD TO SOUTH AFRICA

The situation in South Africa today, then, is strikingly similar to that of Israel in the time of Hosea. White South Africa has a way of life which is familiar, beloved, and has proved useful in the past. Yet it is a way which defies God and degrades men. So thoroughly has this pattern of life established itself that it has become almost inseparable from

Christianity itself in South Africa. Thus not only is the future of the nation rendered uncertain by this corrupt heritage; Christianity is also at stake, for when white supremacy crashes into ruins, the religion which it has captured may be ruined as well. **Often in the history of civilisation, a religion has become so integrated into a particular culture, that when that culture passed from the scene, the religion perished with it.**

In these circumstances, South Africa desperately needs the message of the prophet Hosea. He defies the nationalist claim that every people has a right to its own way of life, and must defend that way; for righteousness is more important than tradition, and the claim of the Lord greater than that of one's race. He declares that a people must choose whom it would serve, and the words of his prophetic forbear Elijah might be his as well:

"How long will you hop to and fro between two different opinions? If Yahweh is God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him." — (1 Kings 18:21).

He proclaims that a faith which becomes captive to a corrupt culture is no faith at all, and that those who worship God while following evil social patterns are in fact worshipping idols: "... you are not my people and I am not your God." (Hos. 1:9). He draws the frightful picture of moral depravity and national destruction which follow upon unfaithfulness to God. And Hosea appeals with all his might to a people who would compromise their faith for the sake of their "traditional way of life":

"Return, O Israel, to the Lord your God,

for you have stumbled because of your iniquity.

Take with you words  
and return to the Lord;  
say to him,

"Take away all iniquity;  
accept that which is good  
and we will render  
the fruit of our lips.

Assyria shall not serve us,  
we will not ride upon horses;  
and we will say no more, 'Our God',  
to the work of our hands'."

(Hos. 14:1-3).