

## Die Kerk buite Suid-Afrika

(Vervolg van bladsy 11)

oor feite, maar alleen van feite wat voorsien kan word, maar kan en mag 'n mens daarom „in die lig van die feite wat voorsien kan word” met die etiket „kommunistevriend” omgaan? Laat ons liever bly by wat die feite vandag is en in die lig daarvan probeer 'n oordeel vorm.

### TWEE FEITE

Dr. Ridderbos noem twee dinge:

(i) die wyse waarop die President van die Verenigde State dr. King betrek het in die voorbereiding en afkondiging van die wet op burgerregte in Amerika. Die President en dr. King was telkens saam in die koerant en op die foto, oog in oog en hand in hand. Die Amerikaners hou wel van vertoning, maar dat Pres. Johnson verwyf kan word dat hy so naief is om hom in sy eie land deur mense wat die saak van die kommunisme dien op sleeptou te laat neem, lyk tog baie vreemd.

(ii) dr. King het self teen die resoluë van die Kaapse Sinode geprotesteer en sy oortuiging te kenne gegee dat die kommunistiese ideologie onverenigbaar is met die Christendom.

Hierdie protes het in 'n Suid-Afrikaanse koerant verskyn.

Kan 'n kerk iemand wat so openlik Christendom en Kommunisme onverenigbaar verklaar, op geen beter gronde as wat die Kaapse Sinode ten dienste gestaan het van kommunistiese simpatieë ens. beskuldig en nog daarop reken dat hy aan ander geloofwaardig sal voorkom? Miskien sal die Kaapse Sinode nou begryp hoe hierdie onwerklike en ligvaardige politieke diskwalifikasies van dr. King se optrede hier in Nederland geïnterpreteer word. 'n interpretasie wat hy (dr. Ridderbos) beskryf het as iets wat die indruk verwek dat elke strewende na rasse-integrasie as Kommunisties beskou moet word. Die juistheid van hierdie indruk word nou ten sterkste ontken en die Moderatuur meen selfs om voor die forum van almal wat dit wil lees, sy vertolking van hierdie indruk as „veroordeeld deur die 9de gebod van God” te brandmerk.

## GEEN HEIL IN VERVREEMDING

As hy die bedoeling van die Sinode verkeerd begryp het, dan betreur hy dit van harte. Maar hy wil tog iets hieraan toevoeg. As die Sinode ook deur sy naaste bure en vriende, nie misverstaan wil word nie met betrekking tot wat vir hom wel die Christelike standpunt is in-

sake die rassevraagstuk, sal dit goed wees as hy 'n stryd wat elders ten gunste van die man wat onder lê met 'n beroep op die Evangelie gestry word, nie te spoedig en te weinig gemotiveerd as kommunisties bestempel nie. „Dit maak die Sinode onverstaanbaar en vreemd vir ons en ons weer vreemd vir hom, wanneer ons hom daarin nie begryp nie.” En in daardie vervreemding sien hy geen heil nie, maar onheil.

## ANGLICANS AND PRESBYTERIANS MOVE TOWARDS UNION

(Part Two)

THE REV. ROBERT ORR

The first part of this article traced the course of the Conversations between Anglican and Presbyterian Churches, and concluded with the text of the Proposed Covenant between them. In this second and concluding article, we outline the reaction of the Churches to the Proposed Covenant, and comment on the significant parts of it.

### FOURTH PARTNER

Perhaps the first thing that should be noted is that, by the time the Proposed Covenant was drawn up and published, a fourth partner had agreed to enter the Conversations — the Tsonga Presbyterian Church. This Church, recently granted its autonomy, is the fruit of the labours of the Swiss Mission in South Africa, and has a membership of approximately 12,000, which includes a sprinkling of white staff, both ordained and lay. For those who may be bewildered by this profusion of Presbyterian bodies, it should be stated that the three Presbyterian Churches engaged in conversations with the Anglicans are themselves very close to organic union. When this union is consummated, (which should be within the next two or three years), the result will be a Presbyterian Church more truly reflecting the South African population, for its membership will be 72,000 African and 30,000 white, with very much smaller numbers of Coloured and Indian members.

The Proposed Covenant was presented to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa in September last year, to the Assembly of the Bantu Presbyterian Church a little later, and to the Provincial Synod of the Church of the Province in November. The Bantu Presbyterian Church's Assembly, though it did not have much

time to deal with the matter nevertheless received the Covenant. (The Synod of the Tsonga Church meets every two years, its next meeting being in July, 1966). The other two bodies gave the Proposed Covenant a most cordial reception. Experienced observers in both these courts of the Churches said emphatically that the respective debates on the Proposed Covenant were the most positive and constructive they had heard for many years. Both agreed to receive the Proposed Covenant by overwhelming majorities — in the Presbyterian Assembly, the voting was 120 votes to 8.

### COVENANT RECEIVED

The effect of these votes should be very carefully noted. The Proposed Covenant has not been adopted. Some people have, naturally enough, been given the impression that the action of these bodies means that the Churches are, in fact, entering into this Covenant now. This is not so. What they have done is to receive the Covenant, that is, to take official note of the fact that it exists, and to instruct that it be studied at all levels throughout the respective Churches — in diocesan synods, presbyteries, sessions, church councils, and congregations. The Conversations are giving serious attention to the necessity of having Presbyterian and

(Continued on page 13)

## Anglicans and Presbyterians move towards Union

(Continued from page 12)

Anglican ministers study the Covenant, and, to this end, are planning meetings all over the country, meetings to be attended by the ministers of both groups of churches, and to be addressed by teams from the *Conversations*.

It should also be noted here that at the most recent meetings of the *Conversations*, representatives of the *Congregational Union of South Africa* were present. The *Congregational Assembly*, meeting in October, had heard of the invitation of the *Archbishop of Cape Town* to other Churches to engage in the *Conversations*, and had decided (by a very large majority) to respond to the invitation. The *Congregational* representatives will, of course, have to report to their 1966 Assembly on their findings, and it is what Assembly that will have to take the decision for or against full participation.

The reasons for the cordial, indeed enthusiastic, reception given to the Proposed Covenant deserve study. First, it was recognised that the *Conversations* were wise in recommending one step forward at a time. At this stage the Churches have committed themselves to nothing beyond careful study of the Covenant. They are being given three years to do this study and to make up their minds about it, with the intention of having their governing bodies decide in 1968 whether or not they will in fact enter into the Covenant.

### WAY FORWARD

Then, it is generally recognised that the Proposed Covenant represents a hopeful and constructive way forward through the differences and difficulties that still obstruct full unity. It removes misunderstandings and causes of hurt. For example, many Presbyterians have, in the past, been offended by the refusal of the Anglican Church to permit them to participate fully in "Anglican Communion". Inevitably, they have concluded that this means that Anglicans do not really regard the Presbyterian Church as a Church in the true sense of the word, that in Anglican eyes Presbyterian Ministers are not properly ordained Ministers of Christ, that no

Christian can truly be counted a member of the Church unless he has been confirmed by a bishop. Such conclusions have been re-inforced by unguarded statements of misinformed Anglican laymen. Time and time again in the past, when Anglican-Presbyterian relationships have been discussed, this inability of Presbyterians to share in the Lord's Supper at "Anglican altars" has been revealed as the main stumbling block. The true Anglican position is, of course, far different, far less arrogant than is implied in such misunderstandings. Their position is something like this: the Sacrament is above all the Sacrament of unity, where Christians are not only united with Christ but with each other; to partake of the Sacrament together and then to go out of the church building to our separate churches and separate ways is perilously close to denying the very nature of this Sacrament of unity. However patiently this true interpretation of the Anglican position was commended, the Misunderstanding and hurt remained.

### REMOVING FEARS

If the Proposed Covenant is eventually accepted, this cause of offence will be removed, for those members who so desire will then be welcome to the Lord's Table in either the Anglican or the Presbyterian Church. This is possible because, as the Proposed Covenant makes clear, the participating churches recognise one another as indeed parts of the One, Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, and recognise that the ministries of each are effective in the ministry of the Word and Sacraments. The recognition removes related Presbyterian fears that Anglicans do not regard the Presbyterian Church as truly part of the Church, nor do they regard Presbyterian Ministers as Ministers in any effective sense.

By removing these fears, and by admitting one another's members to the Lord's Table, the representatives of the churches believe that an atmosphere of trust will be created in which we can together enter more deeply into the quest for the organic unity which we believe to be God's will for us.

### COMMON FORM OF MINISTRY

If this Covenant is eventually accepted by Presbyterians they will be committed to seek agreement

with the Anglicans on a common form of episcopal ministry. It must at once be confessed that some Presbyterians are still not easy in their minds about this provision. There are two — and only two — valid reasons for this uneasiness. There is the fear that acceptance of episcopacy means also the acceptance of a theory of apostolic succession through bishops, a theory that does not commend itself either to their theology or their reason. In reply to that it has been pointed out that the fact of episcopacy is vastly more important than any theory about it, and that among Anglicans themselves there is a wide range of theories regarding episcopacy and its relationship to the apostolic succession, none of these theories being accepted and promulgated as official by the Church of the Province. In other words, acceptance of episcopacy would in no sense imply the acceptance of any one particular theory about episcopacy. Then there is the fear that the authority placed in the hands of the bishop inevitably tends to be misused to the detriment of the growth and liberty of the Church, and to the spiritual oppression of the Church member. This fear is probably related to the unhappy experience of Presbyterians in Scotland in the seventeenth century when bishops were used by the king to enforce royal policy on an unwilling populace, a strategy that led to much bitterness and bloodshed. Two answers can be given in reply to that. The first is that, even without bishops, a church can become subservient to the State, as contemporary history has clearly shown. The second is that by far the larger majority of Christians (Roman Catholics, Lutherans, Anglicans, Orthodox and American Methodists) live, work and worship in churches governed by bishops and do not appear to suffer lasting spiritual damage as a result. Be it noted that the members of these churches are perfectly free to leave these churches and join others where they would be free of bishops, if they so desired, but that no mass exodus of this sort is discernible.

### PENITENCE

Two more significance aspects of the Proposed Covenant deserve comment. Very near the beginning, the note of penitence is struck. The

(Continued on page 14)

## Anglicans and Presbyterians move towards Union

(Continued from page 13)

participating churches "acknowledge . . . in humble penitence our several responsibility for divisions which hinder the mission of Christ's Church in the world." It is, of course, true that Anglican and Presbyterian Christians cannot, by any stretch of the imagination, be held directly responsible for the bitterness that marred relationships between these churches in the 16th and 17th centuries. It is, however, all too true that 20th century Christians have been far too complacent in our acceptance of the divided and sun-dered state of the Body of Christ, that we have been guilty of a lack of charity in our relationships, guilty of *sinful ignorance and misunderstanding* of one another, guilty of un-Christian competition with one another. For these we should and must repent.

### OBEDIENCE

Secondly, it should be carefully noted that we invite the churches to declare that in this search for unity "we are obedient to God's will . . . as clearly set forth in the Holy Scriptures". As emphatically as possible, we declare that in proposing this step to the churches the Conversations have consciously and deliberately sought the guidance of God as that guidance comes to us in his Word. Some Christians are hesitant and doubtful about the contemporary move to restore the Church's unity. (Some of these hesitations and doubts were expressed quite recently in a series of articles in the *Rand Daily Mail*). Again, let it be quite emphatically stated that in these doubts and hesitations we look in vain for a theological and Scriptural basis for this opposition to re-union. Those engaged in the Conversations have no hesitation in declaring that when Christians study their Bibles for guidance in this matter, that when they think theologically, then they can come to no other conclusion but that God wills unity for his

Church. The fact of the matter is that we are distressed that so many take it upon themselves to oppose re-union for motives that are not Scriptural nor theological. The more rigorously Scriptural and theological our thinking is, the better.

### UNITY MEANS TO AN END

Finally, in this search for unity, we are deeply convinced that unity is not an end in itself. Unity is a means to an end a means towards the renewing of the Church that it may be more effective in its mission.

## Can One be a Tramp and a Church Goer?

REV. WILLIAM J. SULLIVAN, C.S.P.

The Church of St. Séverin is located in the Latin quarter of Paris. Among its parishioners are intellectuals from the Sorbonne, Algerian refugees, foreign and French students and a social group best described as tramps. Even though the parish was a pioneer in the liturgical movement of the Roman Catholic Church, this aspect of its apostolate had little appeal to the tramps who formed a large part of its "congregation". Contacts with them were frequent but they occurred in the narrow streets of the Latin quarter and not in the church. Tramps came to the church to beg at its doors, to warm themselves or to hide from the police in the interior, but seldom to pray. The Christian community's contact with this element of society was insignificant.

A parish youth group first saw the contradiction in such a state of affairs. It was their responsibility to plan a Christmas dinner for the lonely "strangers" of the parish after the midnight Mass. In an early stage of their planning, they pointed out that none of the most isolated of the parishioners would be able to assist either at the midnight Mass or at the dinner which followed. They decided to have two dinners, one for those who could and would assist at the Mass and share the same table for the Christmas dinner. The other would be for those who could not assist at either, because, rightly or wrongly, they believed they were not wanted.

All of the food and drink for the second dinner was begged from the restaurants of the Latin quarter. The participants were invited personally on Christmas Eve by young people who visited Metro station after Metro station to find them. The two dinners began after the midnight Mass in separate halls of the parish. The first for the "strangers" who had homes of their own ended about 3 o'clock in the morning; the second continued until the Metro stations opened at 6 on Christmas day. The tramps, who are thought by some to be simply alcoholics, ate and drank, exchanged stories, sang songs and thanked over and over again the young students and working people who served at table. They were asked no questions. They were most grateful because

they had been treated as human beings.

During the next few days everyone wondered whether the next meeting with the tramps would have to be delayed until the following Christmas. What had been felt to be an apostolic problem, the exclusion of a rather large group of the community from its activities, became a human problem. We knew them and they knew us. We met them in the streets, in the Metros and of course at the doors of the church, but now instead of asking us for money they shook hands. We exchanged greetings and went on our way.

These casual contacts opened the way for the first tramps who worked in our community. They offered their services to clean one of the parish halls. They worked the entire day and transformed the building with their energy. That evening we invited them to stay and prepare their meal and then, as the hour was late, another problem arose. Since they were willing to sleep on the floor, what right did we have to put them out. It should be mentioned that this was a mixed group. They were the first tramps who worked in exchange for room and board. Because their work had been of such a high quality, we, bourgeois Christians, thought that it would be only a matter of time before we could help them to move up

(Continued on page 16)