



PRO VERITATE

DAVID PERK

The Ecumenical Ideal

C. T. WOOD

Our Oneness in Christ and our Present Witness

C. J. LABUSCHAGNE

What does it mean to be a Human Being?

„EEN DRINGEND APPEL“

(Die N.G. Kerk en die Christelike Instituut)

DALE WHITE

A Time for Speaking

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Die redaksie van Pro Veritate verklaar dat hy nie verantwoordelik is vir menings en standpunte wat in enige ander artikel van hierdie blad verskyn as die inleidingsartikel en redaksionele verklarings nie.

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(Prys per enkel-eksemplaar 10c)

Inleidingsartikel:

Die Prys is te Hoog

Die besorgdheid van kerke in en buite Suid-Afrika oor wat lyk na 'n trouverbintenis van die Ned. Geref. Kerk aan die Nasionale Party en sy apartheidsideologie het in iets soos 'n finale appèl uitdrukking gevind in die vraag wat deur die Moderatuur van die Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk gestel is, nl. of hy die Ned. Geref. Kerk nog langer as kerk kan erken. Hoe hierdie houding wat in die Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk tot openbaring gekom het, ook al beoordeel mag word, een ding staan vas, en dit is dat die Ned. Geref. Kerk hom dringend daarvan moet vergewis dat die prys wat hy sal moet betaal vir die twyfelagtige lof wat hom toegeswaai word en die eer wat hy mag geniet as die bolwerk van die ideale van die Afrikanervolk te hoog is. Geen kerk kan dit bekostig nie.

Ons maak hierby die volgende opmerkings.

1. Dit ly geen twyfel nie dat die Ned. Geref. Kerk tans in 'n worstelstryd verkeer met die grootste versoeking wat 'n kerk ooit kan bedreig, nl. om sy eerste liefde te verlaat (Openb. 2:4).

2. Hierdie stelling word nie gemaak uit minagting vir die Ned. Geref. Kerk of om hom in diskrediet te probeer bring nie. Ons spreek dit uit met diepe liefde vir hierdie kerk wat in die wye wêreld eerbied afdwing vanweë die wyse waarop hy oor 'n tydperk van meer as drie eeue heen sy roeping in die „donker“ vasteland van ons inwoning vervul het. As daar maar érens ter wêreld van die kerk in Suid-Afrika gepraat word, neem die N.G. Kerk 'n hoogs belangrike plek in.

3. Die Ned. Geref. Kerk is Kerk van Christus. Hierdie kwalifikasie word nie in mindering gebring deur die feit dat hy onder sware aanvegting te ly het nie. Ons kan en mag nie anders doen as om hom as Kerk van Christus te erken nie, ook al is hy kerk in aanvegting. Die aanvegting bestaan daarin om in plaas van kerk, liggaam van Christus, draer van die ewige evangelie en teken van Gods koninkryk, te verword tot bolwerk en kampvegter van 'n verabsoluteerde Afrikaner-nasionalisme; om in plaas van werktuig van God en sy heilsopenbaring, nuttige en bruikbare instrument ten dienste van die magskonsolidasie van 'n politieke heer te wees. Dog selfs in die aangesig van die mees evidente tekens van ontaarding wil ons ons daarvan weerhou om ons een enkele woord te laat ontval waarmee ons die Ned. Geref. Kerk as Kerk van Christus mag diskwalifiseer. Dié oordeel kom ons nie toe nie. En as dit sou kom uit die mond van die Een en Enige wat dit mag uitspreek, is dit 'n oordeel wat almal tref wat aan dié kerk behoort. Die Ned. Geref. Kerk is ook, onder meer, die organiese geheel van sy lede. Dit is egter juis vanweë ons innige verbondenheid met die Ned. Geref. Kerk dat ons ons oë nie gesluit en ons monde nie dig mag hou as hy in aanvegting verkeer nie, te meer nog as dit so ver gevorder het dat dit lyk asof die kerk

in die greep van 'n vreemde groeisel in sy lewe besig is om 'n wesensverandering te ondergaan. Maar selfs in hierdie stadium is dié kerk en die vreemde element wat in hom aanwesig is, twee. Die feit dat hierdie vreemde element in die Ned. Geref. Kerk tans oorheersend sterk is, dat dit bv. tydens die sitting van die Algemene Sinode te Bloemfontein vroeër vanjaar die oorhand gehad het (vgl. die besluit oor die Christelike Instituut) en dat dit selfs in beheer van die amptelike orgaan van die kerk is, verminder niks daaraan dat dit as 'n corpus alienum in die kerk beoordeel moet word nie. Hy laat hom stellig wel op 'n gedugte wyse geld. Deur sy oormagsposisie in wat as die amptelike kanale erken word waardeur die kerk sy stem laat hoor, bepaal hy voorlopig die koers waarin die kerk beweeg. Hy bly egter 'n vreemde groeisel in die liggaam, wat Christus nie van sy Hoof- en Heerskap van sy gemeente kan beroof nie. Hoewel hierdie element uitermate pretensieus is wat sy greep op die kerk betref, is hy uiteraard kerklik-negatief. Hy het geen, of hoogstens 'n verwronge, begrip van die kerk as draer van die openbaring van God en daarom as kritiese instansie in die volkslewe, en trag om die kerk onskadelik te maak deur die dreinering van sy geestelike krag en gesag en die kanalisering daarvan in die stroom van 'n party-politiek-verengde nasionalisme. En tog kan hy die wonder nie verhoed dat daar nog positiewe dinge is wat in die lewe van die kerk, in sy prediking, pastorale sorg, barmhartigheidsdiens, sending en evangelisasie tevoorskyn kom nie — waaruit blyk dat Christus, in weerwil van die sterkste ondermyning van sy gemeente, die Heer daarvan bly.

4. Wie 'n oog het vir die stryd waarin die Ned. Geref. Kerk verkeer en dit ook uitspreek, keer daarmee nie noodwendig sy rug op dié kerk of distansieer hom daarmee innerlik en uiterlik só van dié kerk dat hy — soos graag gesuggereer word — ook die konsekwensie daarvan moet trek en die kerk moet verlaat nie. As 'n mens met 'n vreemde groeisel in die lewe van die kerk nie vrede het nie, beteken dit nie dat jy ook met die Kerk van Christus geen vrede het nie. Jy kan die negasie van die kerk deur hierdie vreemde element verfoei en juis daarmee die kerk as liggaam van Christus met jou hele wese en om jou saligheid ontwil vasgryp. Hierdie vreemde element (ons bedoel dit nie persoonlik nie) moet uit die kerk uitgebou word (en ook uit die harte van mense wie se lewens en handeling in die greep daarvan is); en die reg wat hy hom aanmatig om sy maatstawwe neer te lê vir wie in die Ned. Geref. Kerk 'n tuiste mag vind en wie nie, moet hom om Christus ontwil ontsê word.

5. Die ontkenning dat die Ned. Geref. Kerk die bolwerk van die nasionalistiese ideale van die Afrikanervolk is, hou nie 'n ontkenning in dat hy die volk van Suid-Afrika moet dien en in hierdie

diensbaarheid selfs verteer moet word nie. Vir die heil van die volk sal hy hom selfs, soos sy Heer, vir die volk en deur die volk moet laat kruisig. Hy sal hom in selflose diens moet gee vir die heil van hierdie volk, sodat Christus in hierdie volkslewe 'n gestalte mag kry. Die heil van die volk is egter nie sinoniem met die apartheidsbeleid, met die Nasionale Party se politiek, met die selfhandhawing van die Afrikaner te midde van die „gevaar“ wat sy identiteit, sy blanke huidskleur, sy taal, sy kultuur, sy ekonomie, sy politieke oppermag „bedreig“ nie; en die selflose diens wat die Ned. Geref. Kerk aan die volk verskuldig is, is nie 'n slaafse diensbaarheid aan 'n seksionalistiese, party-politieke blanke-Afrikanerideaal nie.

Dit bring ons terug by ons hoof-stelling: Die prys wat die Ned. Geref. Kerk sal moet betaal vir die naam wat aan hom gegee word dat hy die bolwerk van die ideale van die Afrikanervolk is, is te hoog. In die teenswoordige politieke situasie in Suid-Afrika het dit net een betekenis: Hy is die bolwerk van 'n

bepaalde politieke party. Hy is dienaar van 'n vreemde heer. En 'n element wat tans in die Ned. Geref. Kerk oorheersend is, gee substansie aan hierdie aanspraak op hom.

Die Ned. Geref. Kerk is gewikkel in 'n titaniese stryd om die behoud van sy identiteit as Kerk van Christus. Sy wese is op die spel; hy is in die versoeking om sy Heer vir 'n ander heer te verruil. Sy boodskap is op die spel; hy is in die versoeking om sy evangelie vir 'n ander evangelie te vertuil. Sy waarheid is op die spel, waarby ook ingesluit is sy waarheid in optrede en spreke: die versoeking van vervalsing van sy getuienis in die wêreld omvat ook die versoeking om die goddelike verbod op valse getuienis teen die naaste te verontagsaam.

Die prys wat die Ned. Geref. Kerk sal moet betaal as hy hom totaal deur hierdie versoeking laat oormagtig, is te hoog. Die guns van mense en van politieke maghebbers wat as loon daarvoor aan hom voorgehou word, is soos die loon van dertig silwerstukke teen die prys van Jesus.

KERSFEESGROETE

PRO VERITATE wens al sy lesers 'n geseënde Kersfees toe. Ons Kersfeesbede vir al ons lesers, en namens al ons lesers vir alle Christene van alle bevolkingsgroepe in ons land, is dat die één Here oor Wie se koms in die wêreld ons ons in hierdie dae saam verheug, ons steeds meer deur sy Gees saam sal bind in één geloof, hoop en liefde.

Mag dit in die komende jaar so wees dat die liefde, blydskap, vrede, lankmoedigheid, vriendelikheid, goedheid, getrouheid, selfbeheersing wat ons by die krip van Bethlehem veremig, wat die vrug van die Gees is, oortloedig in ons lewe geopenbaar sal word. Christus wil in ons lewe, individueel en gemeenskaplik, gestalte kry. Laat ons sy Gees dan nie bedroef nie.

Editorial:

The Price is too High

The concern of churches in and outside South Africa about what seems like a spiritual alliance between the Ned. Geref. Kerk and the National Party with its ideology of apartheid has found expression in something like a final appeal phrased in the form of a question by the Moderature of the Netherlands Hervormde Kerk, viz. whether it should still continue regarding the Ned. Geref. Kerk as church. However this attitude which has revealed itself in the Netherlands Hervormde Kerk may be judged, one thing is certain and that is that the Ned. Geref. Kerk will urgently have to establish for itself that the price it will have to pay for the questionable praise it is receiving and the kudos it may enjoy as the bulwark of the ideals of the Afrikaner people is too high. No church can afford it.

In this regard we have the following remarks to make.

1. There is no doubt that the Ned. Geref. Kerk is at present engaged in a struggle with the greatest temptation that can ever assail a church, i.e. to leave its first love (Rev. 2:4).

2. This statement is not made out of contempt for the Ned. Geref. Kerk or in an attempt to discredit it. We express it with sincere love for this church which commands respect all over the world on account of the way it has fulfilled its vocation in the "dark" continent we inhabit over a period of more than three centuries. Wherever in the world the Church in South Africa is spoken of, the N.G. Kerk assumes a highly important rôle.

3. The Ned. Geref. Kerk is Church of Christ. This qualification is by no means diluted by the fact that it is labouring under severe temptation. We can and dare not do otherwise than recognise it as Church of Christ, even though it is being assailed by temptation. This temptation consists of degenerating into a bulwark and champion of an absolutised Afrikaner nationalism instead of remaining church, body of Christ, bearer of the eternal gospel and sign of God's Kingdom; of being a handy and useful tool in the service of the consolidation of power of a political master instead of an instrument of God and his revelation of salvation. Even in the face of the most evident signs of deterioration, however, we wish to refrain from uttering one single word whereby we may disqualify the Ned. Geref. Kerk as Church of Christ. This judgment is not our prerogative. And if it should issue from the lips of the One and Only who may pronounce it, it is a judgment which implicates all of us who belong to this church. The Ned. Geref. Kerk is also, *inter alia* the organic whole of its members. It is, however, on account of our very intimate connection with the Ned. Geref. Kerk that we dare not close our eyes and silence our tongues when it is troubled by temptation, and all the more if things have gone so far that it would seem as if the church, caught in the grip of a foreign growth in its own life, is in the act of suffering a change of being. But even at this stage the church and this foreign element emerging as a presence within it are still two. The fact that this foreign element in the Ned. Geref. Kerk is predominantly powerful at present, that, for example, it had the upper hand during the session of the General Synod at Bloemfontein earlier this year (*cf.* the decision concerning the Christian Institute) and that it even controls the official mouthpiece of the church, still does not minimize the fact that it must be regarded as a *corpus alienum* in the church. It asserts itself in a most formidable fashion, to be sure. Through its position of superiority in what are recognised as the official channels through which the church makes its voice known, it is for the time being determining the direction in which the church is moving. It remains a foreign growth in the Body, however, which cannot deprive Christ of his position as Head and Lord of the congregation. Although this element is exceedingly pretentious as regards its hold upon the church, it is, by its very nature, negative in its relation to the church. It has no, or at most a distorted, understanding of the church as bearer of the revelation of God and therefore as critical element in the life of the people, and attempts to render the church harmless by draining away its spiritual power and authority and channelising it into the stream of a party-politically constricted nationalism. And yet it cannot avert the wonder that there are still positive things which emerge in the life of the church, in its preaching, pastoral care, service of charity, mission and evangelisation — which gives proof that Christ, despite the most virulent subversion of his congregation, remains its Lord.

4. Whoever has an eye for the struggle in which the Ned. Geref. Kerk is implicated and says so does not thereby necessarily turn his back upon this

church or internally and externally recoil from this church to such an extent that he — as is mischievously suggested — must also draw the consequence and leave the church. If one cannot live in peace with a foreign growth in the life of the church, it does not mean that one also cannot live in peace with the Church of Christ. One can abominate the negation of the church by this foreign element and by this very act cling on to the church as Body of Christ with one's whole being and for the sake of one's salvation. This foreign element (and this is not meant personally) must be banished from the church (and also from the hearts of men whose lives and actions are in its grip); and the right which it assumes for itself to lay down standards for those who may find a home in the Ned. Geref. Kerk and who may not, must be denied it for the sake of Christ.

5. To deny that the Ned. Geref. Kerk is the bulwark of the nationalist ideals of the Afrikaner people does not mean a denial of its duty to serve the people of South Africa and even to be devoured by this servitude. For the salvation of the people it will, like its Master, even have to allow itself to be crucified for the people by the people. It will have to sacrifice itself in selfless service to this people, so that Christ may assume shape in the life of this people. The salvation of the people is not, however, synonymous with the policy of apartheid, with the politics of the National Party, with the self-maintenance of the Afrikaner amidst the "dangers" which "threaten" his identity, the white colour of his skin, his language, his culture, his economy, his political predominance; and the selfless service which the Ned. Geref. Kerk owes the people is not a slavish subservience to a sectionalist, party-political white-Afrikaner ideal.

This brings us back to our major thesis: The price the Ned. Geref. Kerk will have to pay for the name it has acquired as the bulwark of the ideals of the Afrikaner people is too high. In the present political situation in South Africa it has only one meaning: It is the bulwark of a particular political party. It is the servant of a foreign master. And an element which is at present predominant in the Ned. Geref. Kerk lends substance to this claim upon it.

The Ned. Geref. Kerk is embroiled in a titanic struggle for the retention of its identity as Church of Christ. Its essential being is at stake: it is being tempted to substitute another master for its own Lord. Its message is at stake: it is tempted to substitute another gospel for its own gospel. Its truth is at stake, which includes its truth in action and speech: the temptation to falsify its witness in the world also embraces the temptation to ignore the divine prohibition of false witness against the neighbour.

The price the Ned. Geref. Kerk will have to pay if it allows itself to be totally overpowered by this temptation is too high. The patronage of people and of political rulers which is offered it as reward is like the reward of thirty pieces of silver against the price of Jesus.

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

PRO VERITATE wishes all its readers a blessed Christmas. Our Christmas prayer for all our readers, and on behalf of all our readers for all Christians of all population groups in our country, is that the one Lord at whose coming into the world we jointly rejoice in these days may increasingly bind us together through his Spirit in one faith, hope and love.

May it happen that in the coming year the love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, meekness, temperance, which unite us at the crib of Bethlehem and which is the fruit of the Spirit, becomes abundantly revealed in our life. Christ desires to take shape in our life, individually and collectively. Let us, then, not sadden his Spirit.

THE ECUMENICAL IDEAL

DAVID PERK

The accusation of political motivation is as unjust to the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk as subversion is to the Christian Institute. What needs to be recognised is that insecure man abhors freedom and innovation. The innovator in ideas is doomed to suffer martyrdom and excommunication. This has been the story of man from his beginning. When he steps out of the ranks of his fellows and propounds new views of man, new ways of relating to God and man, he becomes a threat to the settled order of their ways and renders himself an outcast. Martyrdom is the shadow that ever follows innovation.

DESPOTISM OF SELF-PRESERVATION

Man struggles with insecurity from the moment of birth. He has continuously to adapt to a world of change and challenge, growing daily more aware that he is limited by time and intelligence from reaching the goal of adjustment, achievement and contentment. If he has not the faith and love that can give him confidence and security, he can only turn to the things that are immediately present to him, in the moment before they change form and presentation, to cling to for security. He seeks to perpetuate this security by an unremitting exertion to transfix the immediate presentations in various forms and traditions, and by appointing keepers to preserve them. Inevitably they acquire a despotic authority over him, because they serve his end, by protecting him from change. He cannot face the unmapped vistas of freedom, alone, unaided, unguided. He proclaims the fundamental and sacrosanct nature of these institutions and the authorities he has set over him,

and makes them the symbol and expression of his spiritual faith. This orientation, in truth, reflects not faith, but an abandonment of faith.

When man abandons faith he turns to rigid formulae and ritual as his imagined protection and power, and sees danger and catastrophe in any deviation from or pressure to change them. He demands, for his self-preservation, that his every companion shall conform to the same philosophy and way of life. Uniformity is the corollary of the loss of faith.

The man who will be free can expect no other but to be feared and excommunicated. The faith that bids him fearlessly to seek the truth strikes terror into those who hide behind custom and tradition, in fear of meeting the challenge of a changing inner world of experience and an expanding outer world of observation. To free man there are no horizons other than the ones that keep beckoning to him to explore further; the unfree man lives within — for him — a fixed and final horizon.

TRUTH ALWAYS SEARCHED FOR

The mind that cannot endure doubts must necessarily avoid the company of questioners and doubters. For self-protection it isolates itself from the intellectual and moral avant-garde. It senses disintegration in freedom and excommunicates the adventurous in the spiritual and intellectual realm. But in resorting to excommunication it loses its capacity for communication with the enquiring and searching soul that is instinct in man.

Truth is never final, or civilisation would have ceased to evolve at the primitive stage of man's existence. It continues to grow and expand in all directions. Existence opens out to man as he continues to explore it. The urge to explore is of the essence of man's nature and differentiates him from the rest of the animal kingdom. The beast of the field accepts what stands over above it unquestioningly, unreflectingly, unconstructively. Only man dissects it into principles, for understanding. Enquiry, research, learning and exchange of ideas reflects man in contact with existence and creation, ever reaching out for its Source. Who have ceased the search do not know the ultimate truth, as they claim, but have not the freedom and the courage to pursue it. They have become frightened by their inadequacies and encased, for pro-

tection, by *unchanging, uncomprehending* formulations.

Man cannot know the Source but he has been so constructed that search for it is part of his nature. It yields him his science, art and religion. All existence is his scope. In the movement towards Source all men show the same inspiration and motivation, the urge for truth. The unity of all existence is mirrored in man by the movement that brings all men together on the same road, towards the same goal.

VARIETY IN PERSPECTIVE FORMS UNITY

Existence is inconceivable without unity, and unity predicates that there are separate parts in the unity.

But separateness must not be interpreted as the warrant for self-centredness and self-sufficiency. All beings in the unity are separate and different, but when a human being proclaims his distinctness and separateness he does not thereby obtain the moral right to hold himself apart spiritually from other human beings. That would place him outside the unity of existence.

The herd instinct keeps a species together and therefore at a distance from another. Man, however, is able to perceive the separate species in perspective and appreciates that they are all part of nature and existence. If man had the elevation to see himself in perspective, as he sees the rest of the animal kingdom, he would recognise that what applies

to them applies to himself. He is part of the unity in existence.

The tragedy of history has been that man has adhered to his own without recognising the unity of all men and the responsibility of one for all and all for one. His self-centredness has prevented him from seeing the need for his companionship and compassion evinced by those surrounding him. His only awareness is of his own needs.

THE MIND OF THE SPIRIT

Through the centuries the separateness has inspired patriotism, sectional partisanship and group self-exaltation ("the chosen people"). The urge to separateness is aggravated by a threat a people feels to its security, identity or economic status. Such threats and the need for separateness will cease when man learns to belong to the Spirit and not to a particular people, sect or organisation. In that day the ecumenical ideal will have found fulfilment; then "they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation" (Isaiah, 2:4).

EXTRAVAGANCIES

The organization that resorts to expulsion of dissident or progressive elements, to preserve its status quo, has resigned from growth and development. It may salve its conscience by referring to them as subversive and liberal, but it cannot hide the truth from thinking people, with

whom the future rests. If there is to be discussion there must be opposition, if society and its organizations is to remain healthy and vigorous it must encourage a continuous review of its tenets and aims, so that it does not get enmeshed in an unchanging habit and tradition.

It is as regrettable that the Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk has threatened the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk with non-recognition as that the latter has ordered its officials to resign from the Christian Institute. Both actions can only put the clock of progress back and interrupt the flow of the ecumenical ideal towards its ultimate fulfilment. Man will always debate and criticise, but nothing should be done to exclude any person or organization from the unity that exists between Spirit and all being.

The Christian Institute wants to remain part of the mother church, both in South Africa and overseas, but when its founders were prompted to band together, to propagate the ecumenical standpoint, they were doomed to excommunication and martyrdom. This is the expectation according to man's recognised patterns of behaviour. Its fate is however part of the larger concern, which every reflecting South African feels, whether he is Christian or not, for the future welfare of mankind in general and South Africa in particular. The Christian Institute has become, overnight, the keeper of South Africa's conscience. The fate of the Christian Institute contains the fate of South Africa.

DIE KERK BUITE SUID-AFRIKA

PROF. B. B. KEET

DIE EVANGELIESE KERK IN DUITSLAND BERAADSLAAG OOR SY TOEKOMS

Die Sinodes van die Duitse Evangeliese Kerk in Oos- en Wes-Berlyn moes gelyktydig vergadering hou, vanweë die tweeledige verdeling van Duitsland en die begeerte van die kerk om uitdrukking te gee aan sy eenheid. In Spandau en in Potsdam het die Sinodes byeengekom en dieselfde tema behandel: „Die Evangeliese Kerk in die Spanningsveld van die Ekumenisme”.

Verskeie ekumeniese gaste was teenwoordig en het geleentheid gekry om die vergadering op albei plekke toe te spreek. Onder hulle was dr. Visser 't Hooft wat vir die laaste keer as sekretaris-generaal van die Wêreldraad van Kerke verskyn het

en dr. Schietz, president van die Lutherse Wêreldfederasie. Ook was daar offisiële verteenwoordigers van die Rooms-Katolieke episkopaat in Duitsland aanwesig.

In Spandau het die voorsitter van die Raad van die Kerk, dr. Scharf,

o.a. meegedeel dat daar binnekort 'n eerste offisiële ontmoeting sal plaasvind van Raadslede en verteenwoordigers van die Roomse biskoplike konferensie in Fulda. Hy het ook verskeie kwessies bespreek wat tussen kerk en owerheid aanhangig gemaak is, bv. die vraag in Hessen oor die skoolgebod en enkele probleme oor die kerklike belastings wat in die laaste tyd moeite gegee het. In hierdie verband het hy gesê: „Ons sal die onderhawige regtelike uit-

sprake nie bestry nie, maar na aanleiding daarvan bepaalde opvattinge onder ons oor kerklike regsforms en voorregte wat aan die kerk gegee is, nogeens krities besien. Ons sal probeer om kerklike reëlins te tref wat ons onafhankliker van die staat maak . . . Hoe minder ons moet steun op bepaalde handeling van owerheidsorgane, des te vryer is ons."

In Potsdam was dit biskop Krumacher wat namens die Raad verslag uitgebring het. Hy het die nadruk daarop gelê dat die Evangeliese Kerk bereid is om aktief mee te werk tot 'n betere verstandhouding tussen die twee dele van Duitsland as hulle nie daarin gehinder word nie. In hierdie ekumeniese tyd moet nie so eng gedink word asof die kerklike gemeenskap saam sou val met die staatkundige grense nie. Die geskrif oor die verhouding tot die Oosterbure het hy as 'n besondere diens aan die vrede en die versoening geroem. Christene in Pole het dit dan ook as die uitsteek van 'n versoenende hand beskou. (Hier word verwys na 'n kerklike geskrif wat die moontlikheid daarstel dat die hereniging van sy verowerde gebiede waarna Duitsland strewe, miskien prysgegee sal moet word).

In die verslag van die Oostelike Kanselary van die kerk word gesê dat daar in die skole van Oos-Duitsland steeds meer geprobeer word om 'n militante ateïsme te propageer. Daar word op gewys dat die sosialistiese opvoedingsstelsel die taak van die ouers in kerklike opsig uiters moeilik maak. Tog kan onder die ryper jeug gereeld deur Bybelkringe ens. voortgewerk word. Vir sy optrede na buite het die kerk slegs beperkte moontlikhede. Dit is bv. nie moontlik om via die massa-

kommunikasie-middels die publiek te bereik nie. Op die radio is daar net elke Sondag 'n môre-wyding onder verantwoordelikheid van die kerk. Tot die televisie-programme het die kerk geen toegang nie.

Die diskussie in Wes-Berlyn is ingelei deur die waarnemer by die tweede Vatikaanse Konsilie, prof. Edmund Schlink. Dit het gegaan oor die verhouding tot die Rooms-Katolieke Kerk. Die resultaat van die bespreking is vasgelê in 'n verklaring wat ook in Oos-Berlyn instemming verkry het. Daarin word gesê dat die Sinode hom verenig met die Rooms-Katolieke broeders in die belydenis wat die geloof in Jesus Christus, die een Herder, die verwagting van die bestaan van een kudde tot gevolg het. Hieruit kan 'n beter kennis en verstaan van mekaar voortvloei. Daar bly wel nog verskille oor. Al het die Bybel in die Rooms-Katolieke leer meer aandag ontvang, is daar tog geen sprake van 'n vormgewende en kritiese funksie van die Heilige Skrif teenoor tradisie en teologie nie. Die Sinode betreur dit verder dat deur die Konsilie nog geen verandering in die praktyk ten opsigte van gemengde huwelike (Rooms-Katoliek en Protestant) in ooreenstemming gekom het nie. Wat die Christelike getuïenis betref, is die kerke dit eens dat dit die eerste taak van alle kerke is. Die diens van die kerk in die grote nood van die mensheid en die getuïenis van die kerke is 'n taak wat hulle saam kan doen. Daarom sou die Sinode dit toejuig as daar 'n gereelde gedagtewisseling tussen afgevaardigdes van die Raad en van die Rooms-Katolieke episkopaat in Duitsland tot stand sou kom. Intussen word die gemeentes opgeroep om aan die reformatoriese taak getrou te wees, liefdevolle kontak met

die Roomse broeders te soek en gemeenskaplike diens aan die wêreld te verleen.

Besondere aandag is in Wes-Berlyn gewy aan die geskrif oor die situasie van die verdrewenes uit die gebiede wat by Pole gevoeg is. Uiteenlopende standpunte is hieroor ingeneem. Dit het geblyk toe die voorsiter van die organisasie van verdrewenes, Wenzel Jakosch, openlik gedreig het met massale uittredings uit die kerk, as die Sinode hom agter die geskrif sou stel. Hiermee gepaard het gegaan die brandstigting aan die deur van die Berlynse sosioloog, prof. Goldschmidt, wat medeverantwoordelik was vir die geskrif. Op hierdie punt het vriende uiteengegaan toe parlamentslid Heineman, lid van die Raad van die kerk en vriend van Jakosch, die verklaringe van laasgenoemde skerp van die hand gewys het. Die probleem is van verskillende kante toegelig en ondanks alle weerstand het die Sinode niks van die geskrif teruggeneem nie. Belangrik was veral dat die Sinode 'n einde gemaak het aan allerlei gissinge oor die geskiedenis van die ontstaan van die geskrif, verduideliking gegee het en na die toekoms verwys het. Die gedagtewisseling oor regverdigheid en versoening aan die adres van die Oosterbure kan by hierdie geskrif nie verbygaan nie, as ten minste, die benadering uit Christelike standpunt plaasvind.

Die vergadering in Oos-Berlyn het besluit om 'n verklaring te publiseer waarin dankbaarheid betuig word oor die feit dat die Evangeliese Kerk in Duitsland met nugtere openheid pastorale sorg wou gee in 'n lewensvraag vir die Duitse volk. Die geskrif neem die nood van hulle wat hul land verloor het ernstig op, maar stel alles in die Bybelse lig van versoening.

OUR ONENESS IN CHRIST AND OUR PRESENT WITNESS

THE REV. CANON C. T. WOOD

I have been asked to speak* on the theological background to the principle of our oneness in Christ within the situation in which we find ourselves.

In a sense this is an attempt at a new approach. Hitherto as a Church we have spent a great deal of time in enunciating principles on paper in protest against laws and enactments which seem to transgress such principles. They have been mainly ad hoc and almost com-

pletely unavailing. I need scarcely take you back over resolutions of diocesan, provincial and episcopal synods of the last thirty years, or even since 1948 when so many of these practices to which we object became legalized in a system of laws unique in any country of the world. I hope I need not remind you of a collection of such principles from Archbishop Clayton called **Where**

We Stand made in 1960.

But, as I say, these were primarily protests. The initiative always lay with those who were determined to impose this separation. And you cannot fail to have observed how the grounds on which we raised our objections periodically changed, leaving us as it were beating against the air — outdated, outmanoeuvred, left at the post. First, it was Segregation; then it became Apartheid (with a short but revealing interlude under Strydom who called it Baas-

* Address delivered to a conference of clergy in the Anglican Diocese of Cape Town, October, 1966.

skap); then it shifted to Separate Development; and now it is being called Separate Freedoms or Self-determination in Separate Areas.

WRONG

No Christian body in South Africa has had a longer, or more consistent, record of unavailing protests on principle. **What then has gone wrong?**

I suggest three things:

First, that many of our principles were in fact based upon objections — they were directed **against** some particular piece of legislation and thus became suspect in their integrity.

Secondly, some of our principles stemmed from a humanism which **could** be discredited, because we are in fact the heirs of a tradition very different from that of the Church which has nourished our legislators.

Thirdly, in enunciating our principles so forcibly we tended to forget a very wise warning uttered by Archbishop Fisher:

"It is no good standing out for principle if this destroys what one is working for. Sometimes the Church has confused social and political issues by proclaiming its perfectionist attitude as directly applicable to specific situations, and so has avoided the costly process of dealing with questions of relative good and evil."*

MORE CONSTRUCTIVE

Is there then a more constructive approach?

I think there is. Let me recall our aim:

We want to proclaim our oneness in Christ in the situation in which we find ourselves. I do not believe the man in the street understands at all what we mean when we have spoken about "Natural Law", or the "Rights of Man", and indeed I am a little doubtful if **all** of us have had that training in Dogmatics and in Systematic Theology to enable us so to speak.

But there is a more basic approach. I suggest that we concentrate on certain New Testament principles which can be deduced directly from Our Lord and place them firmly in the context of our present situation. It has in fact already been done, here or elsewhere, and I think

it would add conviction to this suggestion if I so draw upon contemporary witness.

I have chosen three principles to match the times in which we live.

Trust: In 1952, Bishop Cecil Alderson, who is at this moment bearing the finest witness to Christian Principles in Rhodesia of all Christian leaders, when Bishop of Bloemfontein said this:

"The most unchristian aspect of South African life is our preoccupation with the salvation of White South Africa . . . If we believe it is worth saving, will not God save it, without all this injustice and suspicion of our fellow men . . . and if we accept Christ as Lord, is it not a shocking betrayal of faith, and hope, and love, and trust, that we will not even try the way of friendship, discussion, mutual honour and trust, where Africans are concerned, because of a blasphemous assumption that God Himself made pigmentation a permanent sign of subordination, inferiority, and humiliation, among His creatures?"

If we have a solution, an alternate, to Apartheid, which I believe we have, then it lies in this mutual trust between the races within South Africa, and we should proclaim it from our pulpits incessantly, in season and out of season.

Love: I am not an exponent of the principle that we should love those who do grievous harm to **others**, leaving us untouched. That seems to me too easy. But to try and inculcate that love into those who are themselves so grievously wronged and humiliated, that is a far harder task. We have a precedent from a country more afflicted than we are, although the oppression is not legalized.

Dr. Martin Luther King, the greatest Christian Negro leader of our day, often expresses in moving terms the Christian conviction that even the most violent hatred should be met with love.

The realization of that task must come from within, it can never be imposed from without. It must spring from those who are made to suffer, not from those on the touch-line. We can only draw it out of them by our sympathy.

Fellowship: Here I come to what I hold to be the heart of the matter, and here it is that it is essential to discuss and work out its day by day implications.

One need not search far for the theological background of this principle. It is the essence of the New Testament, springing from the Upper Room to the house of Cornelius the centurion at Caesarea and continuing as a basic principle of our very existence as Christians. For our point of view here and now I cannot do better than recall the last formulation of this, specifically drawn up to meet the threat of its final negation in South Africa today:

"The Church of Jesus Christ is as much the Church when it is in conference of study, worship and conference, and to decide who may participate and how its programme is to be organized."

We owe it above all to a courageous Minister of the Dutch Reformed Church who has asked a question which every Christian must face: "What kind of Gospel is this that forbids social intercourse between brothers of the same faith?"

CHRISTIAN ATTITUDE

As long ago as the Evanston Conference in 1954 Dr. Mays asked the following questions:

What should be the attitude of Christians towards laws which they consider to be repugnant to their conscience as Christians?

Obey them?

Seek to change them?

Disobey them?

The civil power of this country now legislates against normal social intercourse between the races. Where that impinges upon Christian fellowship we cannot obey such laws. We have tried for 18 years to get them changed. Are we prepared therefore when they threaten our oneness in Christ to disobey them? What are the consequences? Shall we by falling into the trap of which Archbishop Fisher warned, of avoiding the costly process of dealing with questions of relative good and evil? Or have we reached a principle which is the one remaining bastion of the Church's witness?

Trust — Love — Fellowship: if those are to be the guiding theological principles in the society in which we live, the implications when practised at the parochial level are very different: each local congregation has its own problems, its own special need to emphasize one or other. But we are the guardians of these principles and our calling is to remain faithful to them.

* cf. ". . . too great readiness on the part of clergymen to express opposition on the basis of a moral principle without regard to the facts involved." — President Johnson on Vietnam.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A HUMAN BEING?

DR. C. J. LABUSCHAGNE

Physiologically we, human beings, stand related to the animals. The basic needs for animal life are food, drink, sleep, shelter, security. This goes for us too. We need not be reminded that human beings were created on the same day as the animals. We have an external relation to the animals. To realize this, will humble us, not only in our own eyes, but also before God who created us.

Have you discovered the beast in your own existence? Have you seen and have you been confronted with the beast within yourself uncovered? The beast within us lies in wait to rule our lives, to command our impulses, to dominate our desires, to govern our wills, to strip us of sheer humanity. Deprive man of his food, and he will act like an animal; deprive him of his safety, and he will fear like an animal. Man is a beast, and having discovered the beast within himself, he is forced to confess to God "I was a beast before thee!" (Ps. 73:22). We have to concede that there is a strong possibility that man will act like an animal, behave like a beast, for the simple reason that he can.

CREATED IN GOD'S IMAGE

There is an element of truth in modern atheistic materialism, which regards man as an animal, be it a super-animal, domesticated and cultured. But this is, thank God, not the whole truth about man! The Bible teaches us that God created man in his own image, i.e., man has an inward relation to God himself; there is an analogy between God and man: he is a shadow, a temporal copy of the eternal God and the vice-regent of God on earth. This means that there is an absolute-qualitative difference between man and animal. Man is not only a physical, rational being, but also an ethical being, able to perceive God's revelation and recognize this existence. One of man's divinely-given privileges is his prerogative to have dominion over the rest of creation, and he has been endowed with those qualities which he needs as God's vice-regent. These qualities are his ability to hear God's commandments, obey them and act accord-

ingly, his ability to have high conceptions, ideas, aims, ideals, his ability to strive for the realization of his ideas and ideals. The animal is self-satisfied when he has his food, his drink, his sleep, and his shelter, but man on his part fosters ideas, cherishes ideals and strives for their achievement and fulfilment. Holy Scripture shows contempt for the lazy, self-satisfied, complacent human beings and Amos likens them to cows.

HIGH CALLING

It is very easy for man to be an animal; to be a human being, however, is exceedingly difficult. To satisfy the beast within us, proves to be natural and easy, but to realize the image of God within us proves to be extremely difficult. Man's external relation to nature comes naturally, but his inward relation to God is hard to achieve — the realization of God's image within him is both arduous and hazardous. God created both our external relation to nature and our inward relation to Himself. Both relations are forces ruling our lives: the animal within us must be fed and sheltered, and, on the other hand, our high calling to be God's vice-regents must be realized.

Man is free to set his mind on both, or on either of these forces. He can either cling to, nurse, foster and cherish his animal existence, or he can try to attain the fulfilment of God's high purpose and intention for him. He can either set his mind on his earthly existence, or on his ethical calling. He can either let his thoughts dwell on his food and shelter, or he can aspire to the realm above and let his thoughts dwell on that higher realm.

MISUSE

But now, the tragedy of human existence is that man often uses his divinely-given qualities not to realize God's image within him, but to nurse his animal life, to improve his material position, to increase his riches and to heighten his security.

When this happens, man becomes a super-animal, high and mighty, playing the wolf to his fellowmen while making a name for himself even to the point of defying God. May I give you one of the many examples from scripture illustrating this tragedy? When the human race migrated to the east, they found a plain and settled there, making it a place bustling with human activity: "Come let us make a name for ourselves . . ." Here is man in action, man on the march, humanity running amuck. In the hustle and bustle of human activity God happened to be excluded, and those men not only alienated themselves from God, but even defied Him. We all know what happened then: God confused their defiant speech and scattered them over the face of the earth.

GOD'S COMMANDMENTS

If man is left to himself, he will always try to set his mind on his material well-being only, and to make a name for himself. But the Bible tells us that God did not want to leave man to himself; He gave man his commandments, and that wonderful, golden rule of human conduct, contained in Matth. 6:33: "Set your mind on God's kingdom and his justice before everything else, and all the rest will come to you as well". This word brings us, human beings, with everything we are, with everything we strive for, work for and long for, under the supreme authority of God. It brings us, human beings, with all our desires, our troubles and anxieties under the protection of our heavenly Father. We desperately need this word to guard us and to sway our

destiny. What does it mean to us? Let us start at the very beginning: when God created man, He created him, on the one hand, in his external relation to nature and the animal world, whereby He fully realized man's basic needs of food and shelter. He gave them food and clothed them. This shows that God does not deny man these basic needs; in fact Jesus said with regard to these things: **"Your heavenly Father knows that you need them all"**, and **"all the rest will come to you as well"**. This much is certain: God feeds and clothes human beings as part of the natural world He created and sustains. On the other hand, for man, and for man only, God has a special calling: He created him in his own image with an inward relation to Himself, intending man to be his vice-regent on earth. As opposed to his natural existence, this, however, is not something man possesses, but something he is required to **do** in obedience to God's purpose, something which he has to set his mind on, something he has to strive for in order to fulfil his destiny as a human being. And here man is free: he **can** slight his calling, he **can** play the animal, he **can** set his mind on his animal life only, and, save-for-the-grace-of-God, he usually **does** so!

FREEDOM TWISTED

Let us ask ourselves the following question in all honesty: What would I do if God came to me as He came to Solomon with the invitation **"Ask what I shall give you"**, what would I ask? What I personally know is this: the animal within me would demand its rights, the beast within me would want to be satisfied, and all the basic needs and the deepest wishes of my human heart will come to the fore . . . and I would most probably ask for myself long life, riches and security. Are not these the very things we happen to set our minds on? Are not these our aims when we toil and labour, and when we worry about our existence and fret about our security? We can see it deep down in our own hearts and we can read it in our newspapers: first, our **prosperity** at all costs, at the cost of the poor man in the street, in our back yards, locations, reserves; second, our **security**, cost what it may, even at the expense of the rule of law, at the expense of justice, human rights

and human happiness; third, the **death of our enemies**, and these enemies, real or fictitious, are all who don't seem to agree with our views. Most of us, in our homes, in our churches, in this fair land of ours, **have** chosen, chosen to satisfy the beast within us, chosen to set our minds on our earthly existence. We are utterly concerned with **our** kingdom, and have created our **own** justice, piously called "justice for all", which really means justice for ourselves at the expense of our fellowmen. God's kingdom? God's justice? Oh no, we have decided that these things are too risky, too hazardous. God's kingdom might mean the downfall of our own kingdom, and God's justice might bring about injustice to ourselves and even our judgment. God knows, we have chosen to set our minds on what Jesus calls "all these things", with complete disregard for God's kingdom and his justice. By choosing "all these things" to set our minds on, we have chosen our own downfall and destruction, for the simple reason that **"by gaining his life, a man will lose it"**. If we choose to obey our animal desires and to fulfil the wishes of the beast within us, yielding to the desires and forces of nature in our being, then we have become mere animals, and then these very desires and forces will destroy us.

GOD'S KINGDOM

We may go down on our knees and thank God for this word which can guide us, and, still sway our destiny: **Set your mind on God's kingdom and his justice before everything else!** Yes, before **everything** else. God's kingdom and God's justice should have priority in our lives, because we, human beings, created in God's image, are called to strive for the realization of God's sovereignty on earth. This is our calling, this distinguishes us from the animals, this is our human destiny, this is what it means to be human beings. To set our minds on God's kingdom, means to respond to God's calling us to be his vice-regents, to attain the fulfilment of God's purpose.

Can we, human beings, live up to what God expects of us? There are people, even theologians, who maintain that we cannot. God's kingdom, according to this view, is something over there in the skies, beyond our

horizons, in eternity, in the world to come, something invisible, and all this talk of brotherhood and visible unity of the church is sentimental drivel, silly nonsense, communist-inspired, liberalistic propaganda; here on earth we have to be realistic and use our common sense! May God forgive us this conception of his kingdom! Of course, it **is** possible for man to set his mind on God's kingdom and God's justice in the way God expects him to do. That's what Solomon did, and he was human too. He did not ask for the fulfilment of the wishes of his own heart, he simply denied himself and asked for **"an understanding mind to govern thy people, that I may discern between good and evil . . . understanding to discern what is right"**. In other words, he asked God to enable him to set his mind on God's kingdom and his justice before everything else, and so to realize God's image in him. What he asked, was for the sake of God's people, Israel, the visible guarantee on earth that God has established his sovereignty right here on earth. By the grace of God Solomon knew that the kingdom of God is not long life and riches and human security. He, a thousand years afore, understood that basic truth about human destiny which Paul formulated in the epistle to the Romans (14:17): **"The kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but justice, peace, and joy, inspired by the Holy Spirit"**. By the grace of God he knew that if he sets his mind on God's kingdom and his justice, then all other things, such as riches, long life, and security would come to him as well. And this is exactly what happened! Because he had chosen the interests of God's kingdom, God made him incomparably rich and honoured and secure.

PRACTICE OF FAITH

Therefore, let us not put the cart before the horses! What comes first, must come first. For man, to be man, God's kingdom comes before everything else, before his own true self, before his very existence, before his own safety and security. Now we can understand what Jesus meant when He said: **"Whoever cares for his own safety, is lost; but if a man will let himself be lost for my sake, he will find his true self"** (Matth. 16:25), and when He added **"What will a man gain by winning**

the whole world at the cost of his true self?". And now we can understand why Paul said: "I count everything sheer loss, because all is far outweighed by the gain of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I did in fact lose everything" (Phil. 3:8). Now we can see why the disciples left everything behind and followed in the footsteps of Jesus, and why Jesus told the rich stranger "Go, sell everything you have . . . and come, follow me", and why He told Martha "You are

fretting and fussing about so many things; but one thing is necessary". To be human beings setting our minds on God's kingdom means in practice following Christ, gathering behind the King Himself and following in his footsteps, and that a man must, as Jesus said, "leave self behind, take up his cross, and come with me".

To all of us, who are fretting and fussing about so many things, who are so preoccupied with our own

self, our lives, our riches, our safety, our security, who are coming to terms day after day with the beast within us, this word may come as a final warning. We are free to choose, free to scorn this warning, free to be like animals before God, and thereby cause our own downfall. But we are also free to heed this warning, free to be human beings, created in God's image, and strive after the fulfilment of the purpose He has in mind for us.

DIE NED. GEREFORMEERDE KERK EN DIE CHRISTELIKE INSTITUUT

'N DRINGENDE APPEL UIT NEDERLAND

In GEREFORMEERD WEEKBLAD (11 November 1966) het die volgende artikel verskyn uit die pen van prof. dr. J. van den Berg, hoogleraar aan die Vrije Universiteit te Amsterdam, onder die opskrif: EEN DRINGEND APPEL. Ons vertaal uit die Nederland.

Met verbystering is deur vele in ons land kennis geneem van die besluit van die Algemene Sinode van die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk met betrekking tot die Christelike Instituut. Aangesien ek die offisiële stukke nog nie voor my het nie, moet ek versigtig wees: dit sou immers kon wees dat die besluit van die Sinode deur die Afrikaanse pers nie korrek weergegee is nie. Aangesien egter, vir sover ek weet, die persberigte nie van kerklike kant weerspreek is nie, meen ek tog wel dat ek mag afgaan op wat die dagblaaie ons dienaangaande meedeel. As daar berigte uit Suid-Afrika mag kom wat nuwe lig op die saak werp, dan sal ek dit graag hier deurgee. Maar hoe dit ook sy, dit is tog wel duidelik dat die Sinode op 22 Oktober besluit het om die Christelike Instituut te verwerp as 'n dwaalrigting wat die suiwere leer ondermyn, die goeie orde in die kerk ondergrawe en tweedrag onder die lidmate saai.

Oor elkeen van hierdie punte tans slegs 'n enkele woord. Ondermyn die Christelike Instituut die „suiwere leer"? Die Christelike Instituut is, volgens sy eie verklaring, „'n gemeenskap van Christene, gebaseer op die Woord van God". Van die Instituut mag elkeen lid word wat

gedoop is in God die Vader, Jesus Christus, die Seun, Verlosser en Here, en in die Heilige Gees, en wat daarvan oortuig is dat dit die wil van God is om Christene saam te bring in 'n band van gehoorsaamheid en liefde. Nou kan dit wees dat daar ondanks 'n goeie, skriftuurlike basis, ondanks die begeerte om op Gods Woord en op die belydenis van die drieënige God gegrond te wees, tog 'n dwaalleer verkondig word. Maar wat is dan dié dwaalleer? In die publikasies van die Christelike Instituut het ek opvattinge teengekom op politieke en maatskaplike terrein, insigte betreffende die beleid van die kerk en die verhouding tussen die kerke waaroor daar gediskusieer kan word. Maar 'n „dwaalleer" het ek daar nooit in gekry nie. Reeds ten aansien van hierdie punt kom daar dus ernstige vrae op.

Dan word daar gesê dat die Christelike Instituut die goeie orde in die kerk ondergrawe. Ek moet aanneem dat met die „goeie orde" die Gereformeerde kerkorde bedoel word — 'n orde wat, hoe dit ook geformuleer mag wees, die N.G. Kerk gemeen het met die kerke van presbiteriaal-gereformeerde struktuur hier te lande. Maar in die uitsetting oor die aard en die werk-

wyse van die Instituut, soos dit voor my lê, kan ek niks vind wat as sodanig teen die beginsels van die Gereformeerde kerkorde indruis nie.

Die Christelike Instituut het tot stand gekom deurdat Christene van verskillende kerkgenootskappe — leraars en lidmate, blank en nie-blank, Afrikaans- en Engelssprekend — die behoefte gevoel het om saam te kom vir Bybelstudie, gebed, bespreking, deurdagte ontleding en praktiese diens. Deur die Instituut word besprekings- en gebedsgroepe georganiseer. Die lede strewende daarna om mede-Christene en landgenote op praktiese wyse te dien. Daar word konferensies belê om spesifieke probleme waarmee Christene in die huidige Suid-Afrika gekonfronteer word, te bestudeer, te ontled en te bespreek. Die Instituut wil beslissig geen kerk wees nie; dit is 'n gemeenskap van individuele Christene, wat as individue deelneem aan die werksaamhede van die Instituut. Deelname beteken nie verbreking van hulle kerklike verbintenis nie, maar geskied o.a. om die erfenis van verskillende kerke met mekaar te deel. Dit is duidelik dat dit alles nie met die orde van 'n Gereformeerde kerk in stryd is nie. Intendeel, dit kan deur die kerk as 'n goeie saak gesien word wanneer Christene wat aan hom behoort, gedryf deur die liefde vir Christus, aktiwiteite soos hierdie ontplooi. Die kerk het in die loop van sy ge-

skiedenis meer as een keer ondervind watter seën daar vir sy eie opbloeï kan lê in die werk van vrye organisasies wat in sy midde opgekóm het.

Dit kan egter ook wees dat met die „orde” nie die aangename kerkorde nie, maar „die beleid” van die kerk bedoel word. Indien dit inderdaad die geval sou wees, sou die N.G. Kerk hom op ’n gevaarlike weg begewe. Weliswaar kan die kerke ten aansien van sommige konkrete punte ’n bepaalde „beleid” uitstippel, maar so ’n „beleid” dra tog altyd ’n betreklike karakter, ’n mens is daaraan nie gebonde soos wat jy aan die belydenis gebonde is nie. Dit behoeft dan ook geen betoog nie dat die kerklike „beleid” vatbaar is vir kritiek. So ’n kritiek kan ’n pynlike saak wees; dit kan selfs op ’n gegewe moment ’n moeilike situasie skep. ’n Kerk sou egter sy reformatoriese karakter verloor as hy sy eie beleid so onaantasbaar sou maak dat daar vir kritiek op hierdie beleid geen ruimte meer sou oorbly nie. Kritiek op die „beleid” van die kerk kan aan die kerklike vergaderings voorgelê word, maar daarnaas staan dit die lede van die kerk vry om dit ook op ander maniere kenbaar te maak. En as dit so sou wees dat dit vir die besef van sommige ietwat te hard sou kom, dan sal die kerk goed doen om hom nie op formele gronde van so ’n kritiek af te maak nie, maar daar intendeel ernstig na te luister. Elke kerk ken momente in sy geskiedenis waarvan daar later gesê word: As ons toe maar geluister het na die stem van die kritiek in plaas van om ons te verskans in ons gevoel van verontwaardiging.

In die persverslag word nie melding gemaak van die houding van die Instituut teenoor die apartheidsvraagstuk nie — altans nie in regstreekse sin nie. Uiteraard mag dit vir die kerk ook geen rol speel nie. Hoe ’n mens ook dink oor die politieke beleid in Suid-Afrika, dit moet ’n vanselfsprekendheid wees dat dit lede en ampsdraers van die kerk vry staan om hulle krities teenoor hierdie beleid te stel. Dit sou ’n besonder droewige saak wees as dit alles tóg op die een of ander wyse sou meegepeel het. Uitlatings in die pers gee hierin rede tot ongerustheid, maar mag daarom nog nie op rekening van die hele kerk geskuif word nie.

Ten slotte is daar gesê dat die Instituut tweedrag saai tussen die lede van die kerk. Die vraag kom

op wat hiermee bedoel word. Die Instituut is daar allermens op uit om tweedrag te saai — intendeel, dit streef juis na die aankweek van begrip vir ander standpunte as dié van die meerderheid, en na toleransie ten aansien van hulle wat die gangbare mening nie kan deel nie. Dit kan die Instituut tog nie as skuld toegereken word as die bereidheid tot die beoefening van toleransie só min aanwesig blyk te wees dat ’n oop en eerlike gesprek oor kontroversiële sake op die grootste moeilikhede stuit nie? En dat die Instituut stáán vir wat hy as waarheid sien, dat hy ook die handhawing van ’n uiterlike eenheid nie die oorhand wil laat kry oor ’n miskien pynlike ontmoeting met die Bybelse waarhede nie, kan deur „seuns van die Reformasie” slegs positief gewaardeer word.

Daar skuil in wat hom tans binne die N.G. Kerk afspeel ’n element wat voluit tragies genoem kan word. Mense soos ds. Beyers Naudé, wat hulle gedwonge gevoel het om te spreek en te getuig omdat hulle wil leef en dink uit die radikaliteit van die geloof in Jesus Christus, vind nie alleen geen gehoor by die kerk waaraan hulle behoort en wat hulle ondanks alles lief het nie, maar hulle word selfs deur die kerk gestel voor ’n uiters pynlike gewetenskonnflik. Hulle staan voor die vraag, wat die lede van die Sinode tot hulle houding gedrywe het. Was dit angis vir ’n ontwikkeling wat hulle nie kan oorsien en nie dink om in die hand te kan hou nie? Angis is juis vir die kerk ’n slegte raadgewer! Was dit die sorg om ten koste van alles die eenheid van die kerk te bewaar? Dié eenheid is alleen dan goed bewaar as dit nie die eenheid is van ’n uniformiteit in beleid en opinie nie, maar ’n eenheid wat gewortel is in die waarheid van Hom wat ons beleid en ons opinies werp in die smeltkroes van sy louterende kritiek. Was dit verontwaardiging oor die beeld wat — soos veronderstel word — deur die mense van die Christelike Instituut ten aansien van die N.G. Kerk gegee word? Miskien sou dit beter wees om hulle af te vra watter waarheids-elemente in daardie beeld aanwesig is, ten einde so, deur die konfrontasie met hierdie beeld, te kom tot ’n heilsame selfondersoek.

Dit alles word nie geskryf in ’n gees van hooghartige veroordeling nie. Wanneer ’n mens sien dat ’n tragedie hom afspeel, behoort die oor-

deel plek te maak vir die voorbede. Laat ons as Christene in Nederland bid — vir die N.G. Kerk sowel as vir die Christelike Instituut. As ons dit nie doen nie, bly ons benede die peil van ’n egte Christelike verbondenheid. Maar juis daardie besef van verbondenheid dryf ons (en mag dit ook die kerke in Nederland in sy geheel dryf) tot ’n dringende appél op die N.G. Kerk om waarlik „moeder” te wees — ’n moeder wat nie verstoot nie, maar vashou, wat nie slaan in verontwaardiging nie, maar wat begrypend die hand uitsteek, wat die ore nie vir haar kinders toestop nie, maar wat luister, oop en liefdevol. Hierdie appél impliseer tegelykertyd ’n beroep op die Instituut om die situasie nie as hope-loos te beskou nie en hom dus nie teenoor die kerk op te stel nie, maar op die deur van die kerk te bly klop. Die onherroeplike het nog nie gebeur nie, die breuk het hom nog nie ten volle voltrek nie. Die weg van die versoening staan nog oop. As die kerk in ootmoed, in nederigheid, kortom: in die houding wat Christus aan ons voorhou, saam met die mense van die Instituut op soek gaan na die weg wat God vir Suid-Afrika wys, sal ’n nuwe perspektief miskien oopgaan vir daardie land, so ver weg en tog so na aan ons hart. En miskien hervind die kerk homself dan in sy ware gestalte in die kritiese funksie wat hy in die samelewing uitoefen, as ’n kerk wat hom deur geen menslike insettinge laat bind nie, omdat hy alleen gebonde is aan die herskeppende woord van God. Dan sal die „probleem” wat die Instituut tans aan die kerke in Suid-Afrika stel, op ’n heilsame wyse opgelos wees. En indien daar in die N.G. Kerk mense is wie se besware teen die Instituut te diep is en te ernstig om dit nou reeds te kan meevoel — laat hulle dan dink aan die magtige woord van Paulus: „Maar wat maak dit? In alle geval, op allerlei wyse, of dit onder ’n skyn of in waarheid is, word Christus verkondig; en hierin verbly ek my en sal ek my ook verbly”. In elk geval word Christus verkondig — óók deur die Instituut. Mag dit so wees dat in die gemeenskaplike sorg vir die prediking van die Evangelie in die situasie van Suid-Afrika, die uitgangspunt sal lê vir ’n nuwe verstaan van mekaar, wat sowel vir die N.G. Kerk as vir die Instituut tot seën sal wees.

J. VAN DEN BERG.

(Geskrywe op 31 Oktober)

A TIME FOR SPEAKING

THE REV. DALE WHITE

Legislation to discriminate against ministers of Religion is promised for next year.

In place of the usual three-year residential permit, it is proposed to put them on a temporary residential permit removable each year. The granting of one-year temporary permits will apply to all overseas clergymen regardless of denomination, and application for extension must be made approximately one month before the permit expires.

There has been a gradual build-up of public opinion in the Afrikaans press and Ministerial comment and action in the past year has indicated that this is no empty promise. The motivation advanced by senior cabinet ministers regarding this measure is action against ministers who stir up racial unrest.

Politically speaking, the State has the power and the right to determine conditions under which immigrants are offered domicile and citizenship. It even has the right to discriminate against certain categories of immigrants. However, when a change in the existing law is under discussion, it is necessary to decide whether such change is necessary or appropriate.

Unlike many immigrants who arrive in South Africa, the clergyman often believes he is called or sent by his Church at the direction of the God he serves. It is part of the profession and the person, which therefore requires that we look at the theological implications of such proposed legislation.

THE CHURCH — NATIONAL OR SUPRA-NATIONAL

Why does this clergyman come from abroad, does he come as a missionary?

For some years the point has been made that South Africa should produce its own religious leaders. The Dutch Reformed Churches in our country can be cited as an outstanding example of Churches which each year produce sufficient ministers to continue existing work and also to expand into further commitments. In a very real sense these churches are national Churches,

with their particular blend of theology, language and culture. When these churches extend their work to other racial groups they tend to follow the pattern of establishing separate and independent Churches for each particular group.

South Africans reared in this tradition may find it difficult to accept those other Churches which do not possess these characteristics. Indeed, they may regard such churches as unnatural, or ineffective, or become impatient with the different outlook and approach which they propagate.

The remaining larger established Churches in South Africa have a world-wide character and relationship. Seen from their standpoints, the Church in South Africa is but one representative manifestation of a world-wide Christian denomination. The minister views his ministry and Church in a world-wide perspective and can exercise it validly wherever his Church may call him or the guidance of God direct him. This factor produces a far more mobile and international form of ministry and the recruiting, training and supply of ministers cannot be confined to the national sector alone. Thus it is natural for ministers from overseas to come to South Africa, as indeed for ministers from this country to minister elsewhere in the world.

While therefore the Dutch Reformed Churches are a startling example of an indigenous and national Church growth, the supra-national aspect of other Churches remains an essential element of **their** growth and the consequences must be accepted with the same acclaim and joy in the gospel.

SERVICE AND SPIRITUAL GROWTH

At present most Christian Churches depend on the leadership of the clergyman for their spiritual growth. He is not only the founder of new congregations but is also responsible for the growing spiritual maturity of Church members. The factors of available manpower and time enter decisively into this aspect of Church life.

Although all Churches recruit ministers locally in South Africa and their training is provided here, there is a different perspective for those who discover their spiritual leadership in a national or a supra-national Church. The latter are accustomed to set their requirements before the world-wide Church and accept help from any country in time of need. Similarly, when a spiritual lead is required it is as usual, in particular circumstances, to ask for God's guidance and to choose from the total resources of the Church throughout the world.

No one can presume to claim on the basis of scripture that a Church must be nation or, if it is not, that the leaders of that Church must be from within the nation. When the demand is made that the Churches in South Africa must be of South African origin, would a world-wide Church remain faithful to its God-given nature if it were to acquiesce in this matter? God may have given South Africa a thriving national Church but the other supra-national Churches are no less God-given and they continue to thrive.

The intention of the proposed legislation will not only affect the choice of overseas clergy to be spiritual leaders in the South African Church but also places severe limitations on the effectiveness of their ministry as regards time. Many congregations regret that ministers are unable to remain with them for long periods of time. In the present form of person-to-person ministry a

long period of careful and patient building-up of deep and trustworthy relationships is required for promoting real spiritual growth. The clergyman who labours under a yearly renewable lease is hardly likely to be regarded as an effective spiritual guide. Nor can the disruption of one month's renewal notice be tolerated either as spiritually sound or as economically just. It places in the hands of a state department official the spiritual health of a number of people and would not be tolerated in any secular contract of employment or recruitment. The minimum period for effective ministry is three years and between five to ten years is merely adequate.

Would the State in all sincerity subject the spiritual welfare of its subjects to such shabby and outrageous treatment? It appears that in this instance it will not hesitate to do so, particularly if the spiritual leader is from abroad.

WITNESS AND INTIMIDATION

The prophetic witness of the Church in this country brings us to the real reason for the proposed legislation. This proposal is aimed not at overseas clergymen simply because they are from abroad, but at those who 'stir up racial unrest'. Immigration becomes for them a "welcome-under-threat" that crudely intimidates them into holding their peace — or else — should their conscience command them to speak during the three-year period.

First, let it be clearly understood that it is part of the nature of the Christian ministry to declare God's judgment upon man and society.

Secondly, it must also be clear that Christian leaders in South Africa are divided about whether separate development is contrary to the will of God or not, and whether certain aspects of legislation in this country are just or unjust.

Thirdly, that the general consensus of Christian leaders throughout the world is that, when political policy is based on racial differences, that form of society is neither grounded in scripture nor according to the will of God for mankind.

While most people in South Africa agree regarding the first two statements, some see the third as having specific relevance to interfering

spiritual leaders from overseas who have come into South Africa. They are firmly convinced that this world-wide consensus on separate development has been reached on the basis of distorted and untrue information: that if people really knew and understood the South African situation they would hold a different opinion. Personally, as a South African-born Anglican clergyman who grew up and studied in this country and has only been abroad for six months, and has no family there, let me declare my position. I believe in the prophetic ministry of the Church, I believe that separate development has no basis in scripture, and its practice is contrary to the will of God for mankind. I believe that Christianity has a revelation from God concerning the nature of man, his purpose and fulfilment, and that I am bound to live by this whatever the consequences. I believe that Christianity has a revelation from God concerning the nature of man, his purpose and fulfilment, and that I am bound to live by this whatever the consequences. I believe that 'separate development man' does not perpetuate the image of man as revealed in Jesus Christ and does damage to all men in South African society, irrespective of race. There is hardly any matter of social or individual significance in South Africa which has not been affected by the racial composition of our society. The clergyman who speaks out against the state because he bears witness to the Gospel is being obedient to his Lord.

To command any clergyman to keep silent is to intimidate him and in fact commands a servant of God to transfer his obedience to the State.

PRESENT SITUATION

In those Churches which are set in a world-wide fellowship many of the present leaders are from abroad. The proposal of temporary residential permits to discipline future overseas clergy puts them in an individual position. They find themselves responsible for the spiritual welfare of their adherents; they may have to recruit overseas clergymen. If they speak out strongly against this proposed legislation they endanger their own position and are liable to be classed as overseas clergy 'trying to stir up racial unrest'. It

is for South African nationals like myself to speak out clearly and deliberately about the implications of such shameful action.

It is also significant that clergymen from America, and more especially in South West Africa and Ovamboland, are the persons against whom action has been already taken. We realise that South West Africa is soon to become a vital world issue. We remember that in Angola it was the missionaries who drew world attention to the activities of the Portuguese authorities. Perhaps the State intends to rid itself of the embarrassment of overseas clergy in these critical areas.

In South Africa there is a steady acceptance of separate development and a steady process of conditioning can persuade men that all is well. To allow spiritual leaders who have not been locally conditioned and whose task it is to speak prophetically God's judgment on society can be upsetting. Fortunately God does not limit his gifts to overseas clergy and has raised up many prophets from among us, and while preventing overseas clergy may limit the impact of this witness, it is not going to turn away God's judgment.

AUTHORITY AND OBEDIENCE

Let it be quite clearly said that the State has the right and the power to issue temporary residential permits to clergy. The State has the authority to select and to silence and even to intimidate.

What the State cannot demand is obedience when the priority must be given to God. It remains for us to be obedient to speak and to accept the full consequences of our obedience.

In a matter such as this the Church has no authority to coerce the State. It does, however, have the responsibility to inform the State as clearly and as critically as it can what the consequences of its action may be.

The results of this small administrative detail may have severe spiritual consequences. The tensions in our society and between our Churches are real and will continue. It is our duty to bear such prophetic witness as is our obedience.

STATEMENT ON THE BRITISH COUNCIL OF CHURCHES' REPORT ("THE FUTURE OF SOUTH AFRICA") BY THE CHRISTIAN COUNCIL OF SOUTH AFRICA

Now that the controversy has died down and members of the Christian Council have had the opportunity of studying in depth the published Report, we wish to present the following critical survey of it from the point of view of those *within the situation*.

(Note: The marginal numbers refer to the sections of the Report pp. 29-88).

I. The terms of reference had two purposes: Information and Action.

All right-thinking people will agree that the more factual information we possess, the better able we are to form judgments. Christian opinion should be as fully informed as possible.

This information is set out fully in Part V of the Report, which should be read in conjunction with appendices IV-X inclusive.

From our point of view the fundamental question to be faced here is this:

V. *Is this a just and fair appraisal of the present situation in South Africa?*

Taken in conjunction with the facts set out in the appendices mentioned above, we believe that it is. There is a marked tendency to view the situation from the position of the Non-European in our midst and perhaps not enough attention paid to the impasse in which, through his own action, the White South African has now landed himself. But we can see nothing harmful in trying to get him to see himself as others see him. More attention might well have been paid in the Report to the situation of the Cape Coloured. It would have strengthened the Report since their plight under the policy of apartheid is in some ways even more tragic than that of the Africans.

We do, however, find the Select Bibliography in Appendix XXI gravely deficient.

It may be inevitable that the latest book on any situation makes the strongest impact. There is internal evidence in the Report that much weight has been given to SOUTH AFRICA — CRISIS FOR THE WEST, by C. and M. Legum, published in 1964. Although the analysis of the South African situation therein set out is a compelling one, it is overweighted by the political angle; as is naturally Dr. Carter's THE POLITICS OF INEQUALITY (1961). But a far more objective study, including a chapter on Religious Freedom — CIVIL LIBERTY IN SOUTH AFRICA, by Brookes and Macauley — is omitted.

But a more serious criticism of this list is that it does not contain outstanding contributions from the Christian viewpoint, especially by those of the Dutch Reformed Churches whose conscience has been profoundly disturbed: COLOUR — UNSOLVED PROBLEM OF THE WEST, by B. Marais, published in 1952 is still profoundly relevant; WHITHER SOUTH AFRICA? by B. B. Keet (1956); PRINCIPLE AND PRACTICE IN RACE RELATIONS, by J. C. G. Kotzé (1962), and DELAYED ACTION, a Symposium.

Nor must it be implied by silence that Church leaders in South Africa have not been long and deeply concerned on these matters. The three reports of Conference held — Pretoria 1953, Johannesburg 1954 and Cottesloe 1960 — should certainly be listed. And finally, CHURCH AND RACE IN SOUTH AFRICA, by SCM Press 1958, edited by David Paton.

We do not suggest that these books would modify the conclusions of the Report; in many cases they might well strengthen them. But it would dispel the impression that too much weight has been given to the political implications of the situation.

Since the publication of the Report we would draw the attention of the B.C.C. to THE CHURCHES AND RACE RELATIONS IN SOUTH AFRICA, an admirable pamphlet drawn up by Lesley Cawood for the Institute of Race Relations.

From information we turn to action. Here we find the Report perfectly logical and performing a function which is of the utmost value to all who are concerned with the South African situation, and we agree with their repeated statement that whatever solution is found must be a South African solution.

The policy of separate development as practised and legislated for in South Africa today, and not as a theoretical ideology, is as unacceptable to the member Churches of the Christian Council within South Africa as it is to informed Christian opinion in the rest of the world. Statements of individual Churches within our membership abundantly prove this. We have possibly within South Africa been more conditioned through repeated propaganda than those outside to accept the false antithesis of either complete and absolute separation or absorption which would entail total loss of identity, heritage and culture. This is a device used by those who have deliberately closed their minds to the consideration of Christian alternatives.

VI. These alternatives are examined dispassionately and logically. We still believe that men of goodwill could find in them a Christian solution. Only those whose minds are warped by blind fanaticism could see in them Communist tendencies.

VII. It is more difficult for us within the situation to agree with the urgency of the problem. Yet it is well to be reminded that "there has been aroused in the rest of Africa a moral indignation for which as a world force there is no exact parallel". If there is any basis for this on Christian principles, as we believe there is, we ourselves should perhaps weigh far more seriously whether it be a sufficient answer to point to our present stability, prosperity, economic leadership or material progress. Such an answer may well be satisfactory from a political viewpoint, but man does not live by bread alone.

VIII. This brings us to the most controversial chapter in the Report. If the

South African Government refuses to change its policy in any way or even to consider the smallest concessions, are there any other methods by which this change can be brought about?

This seems to us to be a perfectly legitimate question and we are quite unable to see why the careful and analytical examination of Sanctions should arouse such a furore. In any society less charged with emotional overtones we should have thought that the opponents of sanctions would have been only too grateful that the Report has so firmly rejected them. (See para. 126).

XI. We have no comment to make on the conclusions themselves, the implementation of which is the business of the B.C.C. alone. But it may be helpful if we noted our opinion on the effect they have upon those within the situation striving to effect a change. This has been done in part by a Letter addressed by the Secretary of the Christian Council of South Africa to the B.C.C. (dated 10th June, 1965).

The greatest damage that has been done by the Report is to alienate even further the Dutch Reformed Churches. For if a Christian solution is still to be found under God for this Country from within the situation, it must be with their co-operation. The phrase that has caused the greatest offence is the bald conclusion of the Working Party in para. 164 (1) "Apartheid is a blasphemy against the Holy Spirit." This of course as it stands is very open to question. Paras. 157-158 together with the footnote explain what is meant, but one cannot altogether blame critics of the Report for not undertaking this research.

Apartheid has been achieved, at whatever cost, in Ireland, India and Palestine. It was accompanied by considerable bloodshed and many tragic consequences. We have little or no evidence that the Christian Churches condemned it as the time or, in the case of the Arabs, are particularly vocal about it today.

What the Report is condemning, and with which we agree, is not Separate Development *per se*, but *discrimination, moral, economic, legal, and social, on the grounds of Colour alone, as practised in South Africa and nowhere else in the world to the same extent*.

All this may be very obvious to the B.C.C. but it is still not grasped by a large number of sincere Christians in South Africa. Our task is to persuade them. It is tedious to write twenty-seven words as underlined above when one word ought to suffice. But it is the only way to show South Africa that what they call Apartheid is just that.

Whenever we have had official dialogue with representatives of the Dutch Reformed Churches, in 1953, 1954 and 1960, great progress was achieved. We shall not cease to pray that this dialogue may be renewed.

N.B.: The following are comments which have come to us subsequent to the above report, and are appended herewith for information.

GENERAL COMMENTS

The Study Group found the report to be a penetrating and overall accurate study of conditions in South Africa. South African Christians should regard the Report as a brotherly word, spoken somewhat harshly at times, by fellow Christians deeply concerned about the Church's witness to the Saviour Jesus Christ. The group noted that British Christians cannot regard the South African situation as being of no concern to them. Many Christians in Britain benefit from and indirectly support the South African policy through investment. This enquiry was thus relevant.

PARTICULAR COMMENTS

The Comments of the 1964 society on paragraph 43 seemed relevant. Paragraph 43 stated: "This alone (Apartheid) accounts for the very high dividends that are possible . . ." The Society (1964) dismissed as fallacious the argument that high dividends could only be accounted for in terms of the cheapness of the available labour.

"BANTUSTAN POLICY"

The Study Group was in agreement with the B.C.C. Report that the Bantustan policy as far as its development was concerned is irrelevant to the problem of Apartheid. The 'Reserves need to be developed. The urban African can find no true political expression in his homeland.

ALTERNATIVES TO APARTHEID

The B.C.C. Report mentions three possible alternatives to the policy of Apartheid viz: partition, federation and the formation of a multi-racial State. The Study Group felt that any alternative to the present policy should be a realistic and practical one. On this basis none of those mentioned would be satisfactory. Partition is not practical because of the economic integration of South Africa. Federation assumes the wish for co-operation which makes it impractical and a multi-racial State does not carry the approval of the majority Whites and possibly some non-Whites. The 1964 Society said: "Humanly speaking, there thus appeared to be no solution to the present problem." The Study Group concurred. The Study Group agreed also with the words of the 1964 Society when they stated: "Hope for the future could only be held out provided a system were devised to give genuine political powers to non-Whites".

BOOK REVIEW

"...little less than God..."

Anthony Barnett *'The Human Species'* (Penguin, 1964 revised edition), 337 pp. R0.95; Eleanor Hawarden *'Prejudice in the Classroom'* (S. African Institute of Race Relations, 1966). 74 pp. R0.55.

Outside South Africa there is a growing concern amongst Christians to be "honest to God". Inside our borders any concern that there may be in this direction is largely confined to private discussion.

ECONOMIC SANCTIONS

The Study Group was aware that British Christians may, because of their historical involvement in the South African economy feel that they have to do something. Such an act could very well be the applying of economic sanctions on South Africa. The Study Group, while being appreciative of the British Christian's moral dilemma, could only foresee more hardship for all concerned in South Africa should sanctions be successfully applied. The political success of sanctions depends on a quick fall of the South African Government. The Study Group felt that a "quick fall" of the Government could not be enforced by any means.

LEGAL ACTION

The Study Group noted with interest the view that international law could be extended to cover South Africa and so lead to a change in the South African policy. The Study Group, however, also held the view that international law is still in its infant stage of development and will still produce many difficulties when attempts are made to enforce it on particular countries.

CONCLUSION

The Study Group felt that whatever path British Christians will decide to follow, it could only strongly recommend that an economic or spiritual withdrawal can in no way assist South Africa in finding a solution. The Study Group would recommend an increased contact between South Africa and Britain and that such contact should be encouraged. British Christians should attempt to create even more opportunities for such contact to take place.

The Study Group also recommends that the B.C.C. Report be studied seriously by groups in South Africa and for such groups to take note of the little real understanding of the Africans' burdens by the White man and of the White man's fears by the African. Only communications on a free and equal basis can bring the much needed understanding.

"THE FUTURE OF SOUTH AFRICA"

The Department takes note of the British Council of Churches' Report on "The Future of South Africa" and appreciates the concern evident (Report paras. 5, 6 and 7) in this thorough ex-

amination of the subject within its terms of reference. The problem is well formulated: "How do you establish justice for the non-white majority of the people while at the same time ensuring security for the White minority?" (Intro. para. 28).

We accept the gravity of the situation (Report paras. 3, 11, 12, 48, 49, 75 and 76) but like the B.C.C. Working Party (Intro. Para. 50) we "do not accept the dilemma of either supporting coercion which could lead to war or of conniving at apartheid". We too are "seeking an alternative course" which could lead to a Round Table Conference (Report para. 57) and a truly "South African solution" (Paras. 73, 74). We disagree however that "external forces hold the key" (para. 84) and we see little ground for confidence in any international guarantee (para. 70).

The desire of the British Churches that their Government should "dissociate itself from Apartheid in act as well as in word" (para. 165) is understood as a move towards a clearer national conscience within Britain, but we are of the opinion that such policies alone will not change the situation within our country.

The Christian ministry is that of reconciliation (Intro. para. 64) and as a Church in the midst of the situation we are aware of the heavy responsibility resting upon us (Report para. 181). We humbly accept the challenge to full identification within the Church: "Few White Christians have been identified with their African brothers in their suffering." "If black Africa sees the white Church is more loyal to its whiteness than to the Cross, that white Church will have betrayed not only centuries of missionary sacrifice, but Jesus Christ himself". (Report paras. 159, 162). We take to heart the call to courageous witness: "If today the ordinary white members of all the Churches joined their leaders in practical and courageous witness to the truth that God made all men of one blood, the result would be incalculable. In South Africa there are more than seven million Christians, of whom four and a half million are Africans and two and a half million are Whites. Who can say this constitutes no ground for hope?" (Intro. para. 25). With the knowledge of overseas prayer with us, supported by increased personal contact (Report paras. 178, 180), we seek to be faithful to our Lord by whose grace alone we believe South Africa will find a righteous solution to her problems. (Intro. para. 81).

Perhaps the reason is our failure to be honest to man, to our neighbour. And so the place to begin our re-assessment of what Christianity is all about is with the psalmists question "What is man?" rather than "Is God dead?"

These two paperbacks are an excellent door into the Biblical discussion about the nature of human life, both individually and communally. Eleanor Hawar-

den's book, although written mainly with history teachers in mind, is necessary reading for all who want to understand and escape a prejudiced attitude to so-called "non-white" people. The following points in her argument stand out:

(1) She emphasises the importance of understanding the nature of and attempting to deal with the evil of *prejudice*, not race. The latter is a biological con-

cept, designed to deal with physical, genetical differences between people. "Prejudice" belongs to our cultural, moral and religious discourses — as we come to understand what it means to be prejudiced we come to understand that it is a sign of our lack of education and of moral insight.

(2) Having placed the problem in this perspective Hawarden ferrets out the background of two mistaken beliefs of so-called "white" people in the English-speaking world about people in Africa and Asia. The origins of these misconceptions are various — social conditions, the writing of Europe-centred history, the reports of missionaries, the press and other mass-media — but have this much

in common: a great many of these branches of the problem have their roots in the perpetuation of 19th century mistaken and pseudo scientific ideas.

(3) The last two chapters are the most encouraging: attention is drawn to the large group of people who are still only mildly prejudiced and who are still open to reasonable arguments and the discoveries of modern historians and biologists.

Although Eleanor Hawarden herself supplies an excellent summary of the major discoveries that give the lie to the myths which are used to promote prejudice and provides a biography for further reading, I would add Anthony

Barnett's account of how recent advances in human biology has created new possibilities for dealing with age-old social problems such as race prejudice, disease, malnutrition and the population explosion. He also stresses the need for people to be informed about these advances in our knowledge so that they will be in a better position to evaluate the policies and programmes of their governments.

Also, both these books will put Christians in a better position to understand what the Bible has to say about our neighbour — that "other one" who, like ourselves, is both the evidence for and the denial of the claim that we have been made "little less than God" (Psalm 8). J.E.M.

BRIEVE — LETTERS

THE CHURCH FALLIBLE

D. BAX, Stanger.

It is with some hesitation that I answer Mr. J. A. Duigan's letter (*Pro Veritate*, 15.11.66) as it drags a red herring away from the real point I tried to make in the article he criticizes. I hope he will excuse my brevity.

(1) The claim to be 'an infallible Church with fallible members' is a piece of dialectical jugglery. Would Mr. Duigan eat a pumpkin rotten in all its parts which the shopkeeper intrepidly claimed to be nevertheless perfect as a whole?

(2) Mt. 16:18 and 28:20 were not 'overlooked'. They simply have nothing to do with attributing infallibility to the Church. On the contrary they both speak of the Church which *precisely because it is sinful, weak, tempted, in danger and constantly wandering astray into error* needs Christ to be with it all the time (28:20), to rescue it, and to bring it through to victory in the end (16:18).

(3) Luther's words, 'my teaching', in the quotation mean simply the teaching of the gospel of justification by grace (unwarranted mercy) alone through faith alone ('works' being the necessary result but not the basis of justification). Luther did not claim infallibility for all that he taught but *this* was for him the fundamental doctrine of the true Church. It was a true doctrine *not* because he taught it, but because the *Scriptures* clearly did (e.g. Eph. 2:8-10). He called it 'my teaching' only because he was instrumental in recovering this teaching from the Bible for the Church when it had so largely lost it for so long. His own words are: 'This is the reason that our doctrine is most sure and certain: because it carries us beyond ourselves, that we should *not* rely on our own strength, our own conscience, our own feeling, our own person and our own works, but on that which is outside of us, namely, on the promise and truth of God, which cannot deceive us' (WA XL, 589).

(4) Calvin claimed that God had conferred on him 'the authority to declare what is good and what is bad' only in the sense that every ordained minister may claim this — heightened no doubt by the sense that God had called him

to be a Reformer. He nowhere claimed an *infallible* authority: the necessary adjective is missing from Mr. Duigan's quotation! *On the contrary* Calvin especially *denied* that Luther, Melancthon or he himself could or should be regarded as infallible (CR VI, 250).

(5) When Protestantism claims that the Church is based on Scripture it means on the prophetic and apostolic witness to Christ, which logically preceded the Church though the apostolic witness was *committed to writing* after the Church began to exist. This witness is the foundation and basis of the Church, not vice-versa (Eph. 2:20). The Church did not create this witness: it merely gradually *recognized* its presence in certain writings and its absence in others, and drew a line between them. (I would urge Mr. Duigan to read Calvin's *Institutes* I, vii on this point. He can now, as the *Index* has been abolished).

(6) It is a common error of Roman Catholics and old-fashioned 'Liberals' that Luther opposed the authority of private judgment to the authority of the Church. This is incorrect. He set the authority of *Scripture* above that of the Church. At the same time he realized the need for corporate discussion and decision by the Church in interpreting Scripture on a point in dispute. Thus, already in 1520, he called for a General Council rather than the Pope to settle the quarrel in the Church. But the Pope, rather than weaken his authority by calling a Council, insisted on exercising *his* own private judgment and dictated a Bull excommunicating Luther and those who agreed with him. Thus was the Church split. But that the Protestant Churches have always realized that the interpretation of Scripture cannot be left to mere private judgment but must be resolved by the corporate judgment of the Church is shown by their constant resort to Confessions. It is these Confessions with their *corporately* given authority which have served as the doctrinal standards of the Protestant Churches, just like the creeds of the early Church. This practice of corporate judgment is also in line with Calvin's view (Inst. IV. ix, 13).

(7) But *even these corporate decisions or doctrinal standards* were not regarded as infallible by Protestants, but always subject to re-examination in the light of Scripture. This is clearly stated in the

official declaration of the Synod of Bern of 1532, in the introduction to the Scots Confession of 1560 (quoted in *Pro Veritate*, 15.11.66, p. 8!), in Art. V of the Gallican Confession of 1559, in Art. VII of the Netherlands Confession of 1561, in Chap. I of the Westminster Confession of 1646 etc. (See also Inst. IV. ix. 13). It is therefore quite false to say that 'every Protestant Church claims infallibility'.

(8) The Reformation did not end in a 'chaos' of interpretations. Is there after all so much more difference of interpretation between the average good Anglican, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Congregationalist, Methodist, Baptist and Pentecostalist today than there is between a man like Cardinal Ottaviani and another like Schillebeeckx or Hans Küng in the Roman Catholic Church today?

(9) But to get back to the point of my article: far from there being 'no immediate danger' that the N.G.K. will become 'Roman Catholic', as Mr. Duigan asserts, it would seem from the decision of the Algemene Sinode in Bloemfontein in October that it *has* in fact become Roman Catholic — not in name but in reality, in the sense I described in my article. I do not of course share Mr. Duigan's opinion of this as a 'happy event'. I regard it as tragic — tragic for the Church, tragic for South Africa, tragic for the spread of the gospel in Africa.

DOGMATIC PRINCIPLES IN ROMAN CATHOLIC-PROTESTANT-ENCOUNTER

THE REV. EDMUND HILL O.P.,
Stellenbosch

May a very new Roman Catholic member of the Christian Institute offer a few comments on Mr. Bax's article in your last number, *Has the N.G.K. become Roman Catholic?* As addressed to the authorities of the N.G.K., the article certainly seems to present a most devastating and unanswerable *ad hominem* argument. The last thing I would wish to do would be to undermine the force of that argument. What effect such an argument, however unanswerable,

may have at this juncture on influential circles in the N.G.K., I am of course in no position whatever to say.

But I must stress that it is an *ad hominem* argument. Its force rests on assumptions about the Roman Catholic Church in general, and its treatment of the 16th century reformers in particular, which Mr. Bax and the N.G.K. must be presumed to share. It is about these that a Roman Catholic will naturally feel certain reserves.

RESERVES

The argument says, in a sentence: 'You are treating the Christian Institute as the Roman Catholic Church treated Luther and Calvin'. And its premise is that the R.C. Church treated the reformers the way it did in virtue of certain unacceptable doctrines.

My reserves say: The Roman Catholic Church did not treat Luther and Calvin in quite the same way as the N.G.K. is treating the Christian Institute. In some ways it treated them worse, and this not in virtue of its doctrines but of its social and political involvement. In other ways its treatment of them, as for example embodied in the decrees of the Council of Trent, was more justified, and this was in virtue of an authority and of doctrines to which Roman Catholic members of the Christian Institute are just as committed as was their Church in the 16th century. This authority and these doctrines were considered by the Council of Trent, and are considered by Roman Catholics today, to be founded on Scripture, and to have the authority of Scripture. This, presumably, is still a point at issue between Catholicism and Protestantism, even the most ecumenically enlightened brands of either tradition.

AGREE, BUT . . .

While I happily agree with Mr. Bax that many Roman Catholics of the second half of the 20th century, and

indeed the Roman Catholic Church itself . . . is growing closer to the Reformed Churches on the authority of Scripture vis-a-vis Church and tradition etc., I fear he is deceiving himself, and cherishing illusory hopes, if he thinks that it is doing this in terms of the 16th century Reformers' formulations of their positions, while tacitly dropping the Tridentine formulations. The movement towards a rapprochement has been a movement on the Protestant as well as on the Catholic side, and has not meant on either side a repudiation of dogmatic principles or formulae, but a new look at them, deeper understanding, re-appraisal, reinterpretation.

I hope Mr. Bax is not hoping that Roman Catholicism will some day soon abandon some of its dogmatic definitions; because, if he is, he is doomed to disappointment, and is also failing to appreciate the essence of ecumenical dialogue.

DEMANDS OF THE GOSPEL

"CONCERNED", Grahamstown.

With the ecumenical spirit and dialogue visible amongst various churches in our country today, I believe that the basic beliefs and practices of our faith need to be examined in the light of clear Bible teaching.

After the death of the apostles of Jesus of the true resurrection Church of God, there was a rapid falling away from the Truth, which led to the Dark Ages. Then came the times of restitution during which the truth of God began to break forth out of His Holy Word. Men such as Wycliff and Tyndale, Luther, Calvin, Knox and Wesley saw and taught revealed truth. Unfortunately their followers refused to continue to grow in truth, and ruttled down into various denominations.

OF CONCERN TO ALL CHRISTIANS

Today we have arrived at an age in which we find very many varied sects, denominations and churches which have appropriated the name "Christian" and under this guise teach many varied and contradictory doctrines and beliefs. Taking these teachings in turn and turning the truth of the Bible as a whole on them, we find that many of these traditionally "Christian" teachings are repugnant or in contradiction with the clear teachings of Christ in Holy Scripture. Today, with clear concordances, lexicons and varied means of arriving at the true teaching of the Bible as a whole on ALL relevant doctrines, we are able to decide whether a teaching is biblical or not.

May I suggest that we all sit down again with the Word of God, pray for spiritual enlightenment, and first begin at home and carefully compare our denominational teachings and those ideas we have formed, with the Bible . . . and be prepared to follow the clear teaching of God on the particular topic. If we decide to reject the Truth of God, we are rejecting Him for a clear reason, and not for a vague thought. Then we can not use the vain plea that we could not know the Truth which has always been there for us to read and apply, when God calls us to task for not living and teaching the way of righteousness as clearly shown in his writings, in His Holy Scripture.

Many may be the cherished traditional ways and doctrines we will have to discard, and in their place live and teach by the True WAY of God. Nobody in the congregations must be forced to live the Way of Truth, but it is the duty of all to show in their lives the true way of conduct, thought, habits and righteousness to those around them. It is the duty of called ministers of God to be a herald of God, and to proclaim the gospel of . . . THE KINGDOM. The gospel message proclaimed by Jesus, prophets, apostles and true Christians.

Are you prepared to test your doctrines and live by the BIBLE? This question I put to you all with sincere earnestness.