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Kerknood

Dit is maar 'n heel klein persentasie van die lidmate van die Ned. Geref. Kerk wat getref is deur die sensuurbesluit wat die Algemene Sinode verlede jaar geneem het met betrekking tot die Christelike Instituut van Suidelike Afrika en die lidmaatskap daarvan. Hoe klein die persentasie egter ook mag wees, op getalle kom dit gewis nie aan as 'n kerk besluit om metterdaad daartoe oor te gaan om by wyse van leertug van sy lidmate uit sy gemeenskap en mitsdien uit die ryk van Christus uit te sluit nie.

'n Dood van leertug is ongetwyfeld een van die gewigstigste momente in die lewe van 'n kerk. Of dit nou een enkeling of 'n paar honderd van sy lede is wat die kerk daarmee van hom afsny, dit is 'n handeling waarmee hy te kenne wil gee dat hy in 'n bepaalde leer wat in sy midde aangehang word 'n kwaad onderken waarin die verloëning van en teenstand teen Christus self en sy evangelie skuil — 'n kwaad wat nie slegs 'n moontlik korrigeerbare siening van een bepaalde kerk weerspreek nie, maar wat teen die Kerk van Christus as sodanig ingaan, wat die waarheid van die Skrif as sodanig weerspreek en wat daarom nie slegs uit die eie kerk nie, maar uit die Kerk van Christus as sodanig geweerd moet word.

Met die besluit wat die Ned. Geref. Kerk oor die Christelike Instituut geneem het, het hy iets gedoen wat slegs by die hoogste uitsondering en in die uiterste gevalle in die Kerk van Christus voorkom. Dat die Ned. Geref. Kerk ook bedoel het om die uiterste oordeel uit te spreek, is duidelik uit die bewoording van die besluit. Hy het die Christelike Instituut verwerp as 'n dwaalrigting wat die suiwere leer ondermyn, die goeie orde in die kerk ondergrawe en tweedrag onder lidmate saai. Voorts is dit duidelik dat die Ned. Geref. Kerk niks minder bedoel het nie as om die dwaalleer uit die Kerk van Christus self te weer. Hy stel hom daarmee meteens in die wydste ekumeniese verband en spreek sy oordeel van verwerping uit in naam van die Kerk „as stigting van God deur Jesus Christus“.

Dat die kerk tot so 'n uiterste veroordeling in naam van die katolieke kerk nie kan en mag oorgaan voordat hy hom daarvan rekenskap gegee het dat hy die reg het om daarin aanspraak te maak op die instemming van die hele Kerk van Christus nie, spreek volkome vanself; en dat hy tewens op die instemming van God self moet kan reken, moet by hom geen saak van twyfel wees nie. As 'n kerk nie met hierdie oortuiging spreek wanneer hy die dwaalrigting wat die suiwere leer ondermyn so pertinent aantoon en verwerp nie, handel hy uiters onverantwoordelik. Die ware kerk sal dan ook nooit daartoe oorgaan om só te veroordeel sonder dat hy hom noukeurig en terdeë daarvan rekenskap gegee het dat hy dit inderdaad met 'n onmiskenbare dwaalleer te doen het nie. Die risiko is nêrens so groot nie as hier dat hy met oorhaastige en ongeduldige optrede of met 'n moontlike misplaaste ywer 'n oordeelsfout kan begaan waardeur hy in plaas van ware kerk, valse

kerk kan blyk te wees wat met sy veroordeling nie die weerstrewers van Christus en sy evangelie uit die gemeente weer nie, maar diegene vervolg wat heilig lewe na die Woord van God en wie se skynbare ordeverstoring in die kerk juis die gevolg sou kan wees van die feit dat hulle die kerk lief het, die sondes van die „valse kerk“ in hom bestral en die ware in hom soek. Die ontsettende keersy van die ware kerk wat die sleutels van die hemelryk nog hanteer, is die valse kerk wat homself met onwaaragtigheid en onverantwoordelikheid van optrede uit die ryk van Christus uitsluit.

In die lig van hierdie oorwegings is die wyse waarop die Ned. Geref. Kerk met die Christelike Instituut gehandel het, uitermate ontstellend. Sy redes wat hy aangevoer het vir 'n besluit wat daarop neerkom dat die Christelike Instituut met sy leer en optrede in die Kerk van Christus absoluut ontoelaatbaar is, dra skynbaar groot gewig. Daar moet egter by opgemerk word dat daar nooit 'n kerklike ondersoek plaasgevind het waarby die draers van hierdie „dwaalleer“ selfs maar die geringste geleentheid gebied is om hulle saak te stel nie. Die veroordeeldes is dan ook van mening dat daar vir geen enkele van hierdie redes enigs grond is nie. Hulle ontken dat die Christelike Instituut buitekerklik is of wil wees; dat hy op enige wyse met die kerk wil meeding; dat hy voorgee om die taak van die kerk beter te verrig as wat die kerk dit self doen; dat hy almal wat „voorgee“ om Christus te wees, in een organisasie wil saamsnoer en dat hy daarmee die Protestantse en Gereformeerde belydenis verloën; dat hy die kerk se beproefde en Skrifverantwoorde sendingbeleid weerstewe; dat hy as organisasie van individuele Christene uit verskillende denominasies enige bepaalde kerkbegrip daarop kan nahou wat „uiters bedenklik“ is en 'n opvatting oor ekumenisiteit huldig waarvolgens die eenheid van die Kerk in 'n eenheid van uiterlike organisasie gedemonstreer en bevorder moet word; en dat hy deur sy optrede en openbare uitsprake die Skrifgefundeerde kerklike gesag wil ondermyn en tweedrag in gemeentes wil bevorder. Wel is hulle die oortuiging toegedaan dat 'n ideologie van rasse-apartheid en 'n oorspanne Afrikanernasionalisme nie aan gelowiges mag dikteer wat dinge soos ware Christelikheid, die kerk, sending en ekumenisiteit is nie; dat dit ook en veral in Suid-Afrika wenslik en noodsaaklik is dat ook Christene, „gewone“ lidmate van hulle onderskeie kerke (en nie slegs die amptelike kerklike instansies nie) sal soek na 'n betuiging en bevordering van die een-wees van alle gelowiges in Christus en dat hulle ook iets, al is dit nog so gering, in hierdie verband sal doen; dat hierdie aksie van lidmate inderdaad nie buite die kerk om nie, maar in die katolieke kerk geskied; dat dit in die nouste verband geskied met die amptelike arbeid waarmee die Kerk besig is om die hervinding van sy een-wees in Christus te soek, en rondom hierdie amptelike arbeid heen; en dat die Christelike Instituut hom daarmee in die innigste

gemeenskap met die kerk wil buig onder die gesag van Christus en sy Woord alleen.

Die Christelike Instituut kan inderdaad nie bestaan buite die gemeenskap van Christus en sy Kerk nie. Die Ned. Geref. Kerk het egter met 'n beroep op sy aanspraak om Kerk van Christus te wees en in naam van die Kerk van Christus verklaar dat daar in sy gemeenskap en daarom in dié Kerk van Christus geen plek is vir die „dwaalrigting“ van die Instituut en mitsdien vir mense wat dit aanhang nie.

Die wyse waarop die Ned. Geref. Kerk hierdie saak gehanteer het, het sy lidmate wat deur sy besluit getref is, verskrik en verbaas. En hulle vra: Is dit waarlik die oordeel van die Kerk van Christus oor ons, is dit ook die oordeel van God oor ons? Met vrees en eerbied wil hulle God tot getuie roep dat hulle niks anders begeer as om in die kerk te wees nie en dat hulle die Gereformeerde belydenis innig lief het. Hulle is diep oortuig daarvan dat met wat hulle glo, daar vir hulle in 'n kerk van Gereformeerde belydenis plek behoort te wees. Hulle kan nie begryp waarom so 'n oordeel hulle moes tref nie. Die Ned. Geref. Kerk het dit nog nie aan hulle verduidelik nie. Die tyd om te kies het vir hulle aangebreek, het die amptelike orgaan van die kerk onlangs verklaar: Maar waaroor die keuse moet gaan, verstaan hulle nie; want hulle het klaar gekies — vir die Ned. Geref. Kerk, om met hulle oortuigings in sy gemeenskap 'n plek te mag hê; om met die Ned. Geref. Kerk 'n plek in die Kerk van Christus te mag hê.

Intussen het die besluit van die Ned. Geref. Kerk in diepe kerknood oor sommige van sy lidmaté gebring. Hulle het sedertdien nog nie tot die besef van hulle dwaling gekom nie, maar weet slegs dat hulle aangewys is vir uitsluiting uit die gemeenskap van die Ned. Geref. Kerk — iets wat in sommige gevalle prakties lank reeds voltrek is. Tog begeer hulle die gemeenskap van die gelowiges in die versameling van die gemeente rondom die Woord en die Nagmaal. So het sommige van hulle dit ook reeds aan kerkrade onder wie se opsig hulle staan, te kenne gegee en versoek dat hulle, indien hulle dwaal, gehelp moet word om die weg — terug na die gemeenskap van die ware Christus en sy gemeente — weer te vind. As die Ned. Geref. Kerk egter bly weier om hulle pleitstem te hoor, wat staan hulle te doen? Sonder kerk kan hulle nie wees nie en buite die Gereformeerde belydenis wil hulle nie staan nie.

Die Ned. Geref. Kerk het nog niks gedoen waarmee hy dit tot hulle klare kennis gebring het dat sy oordeel oor hulle waar is en dat hy in volle Gereformeerde en ekumeniese verband staan as hy hulle met hulle dwaalrigting uit die ryk van Christus uitsluit nie. En hoe ontwykender hy is, hoe minder glo hulle dit. Hulle nood om in die Kerk van Christus 'n plek te mag hê, en wel in Gereformeerde verband; hulle vurige begeerte om lewende lede van die liggaam van Christus te wees en te bly, het daarom, sonder dat hulle dit ooit begeer het, nou 'n uitroep om hulp geword in en tot die Algemene Christelike Kerk.

Editorial:

A Call to the Church

Only a very small percentage of the members of the Dutch Reformed Church are affected by the General Synod's decision made last year to take disciplinary steps against members of the Christian Institute. However small this percentage may be, when a church in fact decides to proceed by means of disciplinary action to exclude members from her fellowship and consequently from the Kingdom of Christ, then members are unimportant.

The taking of disciplinary steps against heresy is one of the most important moments in the Church's life. Whether one individual or a few hundred members are cut off by the Church, she indicates by her action that some among her adhere to a teaching in which she sees an evil encompassing a denial of and opposition to Christ himself and his gospel — an evil which not only contradicts a particular church's point of view and could possibly be corrected, but which opposes the Church of Christ as such, which contradicts the truth of Scripture and which must therefore be excluded not only from one particular church, but from the Church of Christ as such.

In her decision on the Christian Institute the Dutch Reformed Church did something which in the Church of Christ is only done in most exceptional and extreme cases. That the Dutch Reformed Church meant to make an extreme judgment is clear from the wording of her decision. She rejected the Christian Institute as a heretical school of thought undermining the true teaching, undercutting the good order of the Church and sowing dissension among her members. It is further clear that the Dutch Reformed Church intended nothing less than to eradicate this "false teaching" from the Church of Christ herself. The D.R.C. immediately put herself in the widest ecumenical context and exercised a judgment of rejection in the name of the Church "as institute of God through Jesus Christ".

It is self evident that no church can make such an extreme judgment in the name of the Catholic Church unless she gives account of the fact that she has the right to do so in agreement with the whole Church of Christ, and besides she should have no doubt whatsoever that her action carries God's approval. When a church speaks without this

conviction, when she so pertinently indicates and *rejects a heresy undermining the true teaching*, then she acts with great irresponsibility. The true Church will never go so far as to make a judgment without her first having carefully and thoroughly shown that she has in fact to do with an unmistakable heresy. The risk is never so great as in such an instance as this that she will, by hasty and impatient action and with possible misplaced fervour, make an error of discernment by which instead of being the true Church, she becomes the false church who by her judgment excludes not the opponents of Christ and his Gospel but persecutes those who live in holiness according to the Word of God, and whose apparent disturbance of order in the Church could be the result of the fact that they love the Church, relenting the sins of the "false Christ" in her and seeking the true one. The dreadful reverse of the true Church which correctly uses the keys of the Kingdom of heaven, is the false church which excludes herself from the Kingdom of Christ through her untruthful and irresponsible conduct.

In the light of these considerations the Dutch Reformed Church's way of action is most disconcerting. The reasons she advanced for her decision, which in fact means that the Christian Institute with her teaching and actions is completely unacceptable to the Church of Christ, apparently carries great weight. But it should be noted that no church investigation ever took place to give the bearers of this "heresy" the slightest opportunity to put their case. Those judged are of the opinion that there is no ground for any of these reasons. They deny that the Christian Institute is extraneous to the Church or that it wants to be so; that it tries in any way to compete with the Church; that it purports to do the Church's work better than the Church herself; that it wants to bind together all who "pretend" to be Christians and so repudiate the Protestant and Reformed confession; that it opposes the Church's tested and Scripture-based mission policy; that as an organisation of individual Christians of different denominations it holds a concept of the Church which is "very precarious" and an understanding of ecumenism by which the oneness of the Church must be demonstrated and promoted in the unity of an outward organisation; and that *in its actions and public utterances it wants to undermine the Scriptural authority of the Church and wants to promote dissension in the congregations*. The point of view which they do hold is that an ideology of racial apartheid and an overstrained Afrikaner nationalism may not dictate to Christians the meaning of such things as true Christianity, the Church, mission and ecumenism; that it is desirable and necessary, particularly in South Africa, that Christians, "ordinary" members of their respective churches (and not only the official church bodies) should also seek to witness to and to promote the oneness of the believers in Christ and that they too should do something, even if it is ever so small, in this field; that this action of members is not extraneous to the Church, but that it takes place within the Catholic Church; that it should take place in close association with the official work of the Church where the Church seeks to rediscover her oneness in Christ, and that it should take place

around this official work; and that in this way the *Christian Institute wants to subject herself, with the Church, to the authority of Christ and His Word alone*.

The Christian Institute can have no existence outside the fellowship of Christ and His Church. The Dutch Reformed Church, however, with an appeal to her claim to be the Church of Christ, and in the name of the Church of Christ, declared that in her fellowship, and therefore in that of the Church of Christ, there is no place for the "heresy" of the Christian Institute and consequently for those persons who belong to it.

Those members of the Dutch Reformed Church who were affected by this decision were frightened and astonished by the way in which she acted. They now ask: Is this truly the judgment of the Church of Christ on us and is it also God's judgment on us? In fear and trembling they wish to call God as witness that they wish nothing but to be in the Church and that they love the Reformed Confession. They are convinced that there should be place for them in a church with a reformed confession. They cannot understand why such a judgment should have been made on them. The Dutch Reformed Church has not yet explained this to them. The moment of decision has come, the official church mouthpiece recently declared. But they do not understand what the choice is, because they have already chosen for the Dutch Reformed Church, to find a place for themselves and their views in her fellowship; to have, within the Dutch Reformed Church, a place in the Church of Christ.

In the meantime the Dutch Reformed Church's decision has brought to some of her members a serious church crisis. They have not come to an awareness of their mistakes, but only know that they have been marked for exclusion from the fellowship of the Dutch Reformed Church — something which in some cases have in practice already taken place. Yet they desire the fellowship of the faithful in the communion of the congregation around the Word and Sacraments. Some have already made their desire known to the Church Councils under whose authority they fall, and have asked that, if they are in error, they should be helped to find the way again — the way back to the fellowship of the true Christ and his Congregation. But if the Dutch Reformed Church keeps on refusing to hear their pleading voice, what should they do? They cannot be without the Church and they do not want to stand outside the Reformed Confession.

The Dutch Reformed Church has done nothing to convince them that her judgment on them is correct and that she stands in the Reformed and ecumenical tradition when she excludes them with their "heresy" from the Kingdom of Christ. The more evading she becomes, the less they can believe it. Their need to find a place in the Church of Christ and in Reformed context; their burning desire to be and to remain living members of the Body of Christ has, therefore, without their wanting it, now become a cry for help to the Apostolic Catholic Church.

THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS

THE EARLY CHURCH'S FIRST LESSON IN ECUMENISM

DR. C. J. LABUSCHAGNE

During the early stages of its expansion the young Christian Church began to unfold itself rapidly. From Jerusalem it moved outwards and spread like an ever expanding circle to Judaea, to Samaria and to Galilee, upheld by the Holy Spirit and growing in numbers. The apostles started on their way to carry out the commission entrusted to them by the Lord Himself, to bear witness for Him "in Jerusalem and all over Judaea and Samaria and away to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1: 8), preaching in every town and telling the good news of Jesus Christ to all they met, baptizing and healing, receiving the faithful in their fellowship and bringing them into the communion of saints.

Up to the time of the events described in Acts 10, the privilege of belonging to the new people of God had been limited to Jews and Samaritans. Apart from Philip's encounter with the Ethiopian, who returned home after his pilgrimage to Jerusalem, the apostles, as far as we know, had not yet brought the Gospel to those beyond the Jewish national borders. The communion of saints was as yet a Jewish fellowship.

PETER, NOT PAUL

But the Holy Spirit was about to cross the borders and break the barriers: Saul of Tarsus was being prepared and equipped for the Gentile mission, and Peter was on a tour northwest of the holy city visiting God's people in Lydda and Joppa. Significantly Peter was the first apostle to be associated with and confronted with the Gentile mission. He, and not Paul, was the first to cross the national and racial border, to break the barriers of prejudice and to share table-fellowship with the Gentile converts. Significantly he, and not Paul, was the one called by the Holy Spirit to take the first steps in carrying out the Master's commission to bear witness for Him to the ends of the earth, and to take the first steps on the ecumenical road of the universal Church, and to receive the first lesson in ecumenism.

Why Peter? Was he really the most suitable and best equipped for this delicate, hazardous task? From a human point of view he was not, for apart from the fact that he was an uneducated fisherman, probably unable to speak foreign languages.

we know from his actions at Antioch (described by Paul in Gal. 2) that he was unable to face all the consequences of bringing the Gospel to the Gentiles. There at Antioch, Peter, on a visit to the first church with a significant ex-pagan element, shared table-fellowship with the Gentile converts, but on meeting a barrage of Jewish-Christian opposition, he was defective and withdrew, proving that he did not practise what he preached and that he was not prepared to stand firmly on the principles he was supposed to hold. Was he really the best man for the job? Well, the Lord thought so, for He chose him to cross the barriers and to receive the first Gentiles into the fellowship of the Church. Through Peter God wanted to establish and put in practice the primary principle of ecumenism in his universal Church: fellowship, table-fellowship despite the barriers of tongue and race. And in order to do so, God deliberately chose a man who still had to learn the *abc* of this principle. This God did in a most remarkable manner and in a most explicit way.

CLEAN AND UNCLEAN

While Peter was making a general tour, in the course of which he stayed on in Joppa for some time, the Holy Spirit was preparing the way for the Gospel and the Church to be brought to the Gentiles. Cornelius, a centurion in the Italian cohort at Caesarea, had a vision in which he was told to send for Peter, and while his messengers were on their way, God set out to prepare Peter for his first lesson in ecumenism, his first lesson on the principle

of a universal Church. This is how it happened: God saw that Peter went up on the roof to pray. It was about noon. He grew hungry and craved for something to eat. It was hot. He began to doze off and had a dream vision, quite understandably, about food. He saw creatures of every kind, whatever walks or crawls or flies, in a great sheet of sail-cloth being lowered to the ground, and a voice from heaven told him to kill and eat. Here was a hungry Jew confronted with a load of all the unclean animals listed in Leviticus II, hearing God's command to take and eat! Impossible! God made a mistake! No, Lord, no! Imagine Peter's revulsion, the sudden violent change of his appetite when he saw what God expected him to eat. He cried out in protest: "No, Lord, no; I have never eaten anything profane or unclean!" No, Lord, no! He'd rather starve, for how could God possibly expect him to do something that goes against his deepest feelings? How could God command him to sacrifice his traditional Jewish way of life and eat what his fathers told him was unclean and forbidden? No, Lord, no! Never!!

Shall we remind Peter of the words written in the book of Isaiah: "Woe to him who strives with his Maker, an earthen vessel with the potter! Does the clay say to him who fashions it 'What are you making?' . . . Thus says the Lord: 'Will you question me about my children, or command me concerning the work of my hands?'" (Is. 45: 9f.). Shall we remind him that on a previous occasion he also protested and said: "No, Lord, this shall never happen!" and that he was wrong, for Jesus said to him: "Away with you, Satan; you are a stumbling-block to me; you think as men think, not as God thinks" (Matt. 16: 22f.). No, we shall not, we dare not, for have WE earned to sacrifice our tastes and distastes concerning the members of his Church? Have WE learned to obey God's command rather than our

own ecclesiastical taste? Have WE learned not to protest against God's command by using the argument of our traditional way of life? God knows that WE too, like Peter, still have to learn the a b c of the primary principle of ecumenism, that WE too still have to learn to face the consequences of being members of the communion of saints! And God knows, that, if we know the theory, we still have to practise what we preach!

GOD HAS NO FAVOURITES

What is this lesson God wants to teach Peter? To close his eyes, swallow his prejudices and his pride and to relish the dish which he truly abhors and which fills him with revulsion? Is that ecumenism in practice? Is that the fundamental truth about the practical fellowship within the universal Church? Does God want to teach us that in the Church we have to swallow our social and racial prejudices and play the brother to people we otherwise despise and with whom we do not associate? No, a thousandfold no! This would be a caricature of ecumenism! Let us first listen to God's word before we draw our own conclusions. What God told Peter was not to swallow his prejudices and play the game, but it was this: "It is not for you to call profane what God counts clean" (Acts 10:15). This reproof means: Who are you to tell Me what is clean or unclean? Who are you to suppose that I will ever give you something unclean to eat? Who are you to let your prejudices play a part? Who are you to question Me about my work? It is certainly not for you to judge what is clean and what unclean! What you see here and what I command you to eat, has descended from heaven where I am, and it is clean, I count it clean because I have cleansed it myself. What you see here is my conception of what my universal Church is — these creatures here represent the communion of saints which I have chosen from every nation on earth; and by your human standards you might hold them to be a mixture in very bad taste: sinners, liars, drunkards, harlots, outcasts, aliens . . . have a good look: Jews, Samaritans, Romans, Greeks, Egyptians . . . look closer: Germans, Americans, Chinese, Englishmen, Russians, Whites, Coloureds, Blacks . . .

this is the communion of saints, which I have gathered together, which I have cleansed, purified, sanctified! What I give you, is clean! The food I offer you is clean! I do not expect you to eat what is unclean, nor do I ask you to swallow with your eyes closed and to take to you what you detest or abhor! It is clean, take it to your table, make it a part of yourself!

Peter learned his lesson. He grasped the principle concerning the communion of saints. So he went to the Italian centurion and sat at his table, sharing for the very first time in his life fellowship with Gentile and realizing that he and the Italian were brothers in Christ, bound together by one faith, one Saviour, one bond — the cleansing blood of Jesus Christ. Not only with his deeds, but also with his words he testified, endorsing what he had learned by explicitly telling those Gentiles that "God has shown me clearly that I must not call any man profane or unclean" (vs. 28). Worldly standards have ceased in theory and on principle to count in Peter's estimate of any man (cf. II Cor. 5:16). A man is no longer what Peter judges him to be, but what God counts him. If God counts a man clean, Peter has no choice but to count him clean too. Who is he to call profane what God counts clean? Peter realized how true it is that "God has no favourites, but that in every nation the man who is godfearing and does what is right is acceptable to Him" (vs. 34). Thus Peter acquired the true conception of the communion of saints, a conception he was prepared to defend before his critics when they raised the question with him, by laying the facts before them and asking them: "how could I possibly stand in God's way?" (11:17). Peter came to realize that the Church of Jesus Christ is a universal Church, ecumenical, transcending national and racial limitation, ignoring borders, breaking sinful barriers, a communion brought together and united by God himself, a fellowship of saints because God counts them clean.

THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH

What is our conception of the universal Church? What do we understand by the communion of saints? Some of us might be inclined to think in the first place of

the faithful of all ages past who are now living in heaven above in communion with Christ. You are right, the faithful of all ages past are an integral part of the universal Church — they are the heavenly communion of saints. Others among us might tend to think in the first place of the future life beyond the grave, when once all the faithful will gather before God's throne. You too are right, there is a Church beyond the grave in heaven above. Both these conceptions are true. But by thinking of the communion of saints along these lines in the first place, we deliberately seem to ignore the fact that there is also a communion of saints here and now in our own time in the very real world of today! For many of us, South Africans, living in a multi-racial country, these two conceptions of the communion of saints are most convenient, exactly because they are totally inoffensive. Nobody will ever question their truth; nobody would deny that the faithful of ages past are the communion of saints behind us in the past, united in heaven above; nor would anybody deny that once, beyond the grave in eternity, the faithful of today will unite with that communion of saints in heaven above for membership of which we all hope of quality. But, true as these conceptions may be, they give a distorted picture of what the communion of saints really is; moreover, they happen to be most welcome ways and pious means to aid us in escaping and getting clear away from our responsibilities of today. We are masters in escapism and great artists in shunning present-day issues without losing face religiously, most skilful in deceiving ourselves by means of inoffensive religious conceptions that are unlikely to awaken our consciences and open our eyes to our responsibilities regarding the present. Why do we think of the communion of saints as something behind or above or beyond, while as far as we are concerned the communion of saints is and should be the community of believers living at present, the Church of today? Let us realize that we, living here and now, by the grace of God are members of his universal Church, we are the communion of saints in the world of today. We are not concerned with the past or the future; our concern is the present. Let me

put it this way: God has taken care of what is behind, and He will take care of what lies above and beyond; as for what is here and now, God who also takes care of the present, will certainly hold us responsible, because we are the Church of today and because He has given us the task of being members of the communion of saints here and now. Neither skilful selfdeception nor pious escapism on our part will ever free us of this our grave responsibility or relieve us from our obligations and duties concerning God's Church of our own time.

BEWARE!

What is our reaction to Peter's vision? What do we think of the early Church's first lesson in ecumenism? How does that principle affect and concern us? How do we translate that principle to our present-day context? There are many among us who protest and shout 'No, Lord, no!', who recoil in disgust on seeing the consequences of being members of the communion of saints. God tells you here and now: "It is not for you to call profane what God counts

clean!" There are others among us who go even further, who regard ecumenism, fellowship, unity, togetherness and brotherhood as swearwords, who brand any ecumenical movement as communist-inspired and subversive, who deny Christians the right and freedom to obey God's commands as they see them, casting suspicion on all who take part in ecumenical activities. They curse the communion of saints for they have coined a new name, **ecumaniacs**, to denote all those who actively work for the unity of all Christians. **The time has come, and it is now, that we have to sound a clear warning to all who actively resist the work of God: Beware, you are standing in God's way! Beware, you are speaking slander against the Holy Spirit! Look out, this sin is the only one beyond forgiveness! The time has come, and it is now, that everyone of us, who still believe in the fundamental truth about the communion of saints, must practise what we preach by working harder for the unity of the Church. We have to meet this challenge and do our duty regardless of dangers and risks. Now, more than ever before,**

God calls on us to go and meet our brothers and sisters beyond the confines of our own community and church, beyond the barriers of tongue and race, to share fellowship with them, love them, knowing that it is not for us to call profane what God counts clean, that it is not for us to estimate any man any longer by worldly standards. God expects us to accept all fellow-Christians as clean and holy, because their hearts have been purified by faith. How dare we call profane what God counts clean? How dare we make a difference between them and us, when God himself "made no difference between them and us, for He purified their hearts by faith" (Acts 15:9)? How dare we build or maintain dividing walls between believers, when Jesus "in his own body of flesh and blood has broken down the enmity which stood like a dividing wall between them" (Eph. 2:14)? There are, thank God, still opportunities and channels for practical fellowship. I pray you, grasp these opportunities now! How could we possibly stand in God's way? How dare we resist, hinder or oppose the Holy Spirit?

DIE WÊRELD 'N GODSHUIS!

H. GORIS

As die wêreld vir ons soms soos 'n „malhuis" lyk, moet ons besef dat die wêreld is wat die mense self daarvan gemaak het. Dit is dan die mense eie skuld omdat hulle REGTE geëis het sonder om eers pligte te verstaan. „Alles sal regkom . . . as elkeen sy plig doen": dit is nie net 'n tipiese Suid-Afrikaanse gesegde nie, maar veral ook 'n Christelike waarheid.

Die „malhuis" het ontstaan in die Paradys, toe die eerste mense eenzydig soos God wou geword het: hulle wou heers en nie dien nie. Hulle het nie raakgesien dat selfs God bereid is om te dien nie. Nietemin is toe vir hulle belowe dat daar 'n Mens sou kom, Jesus Christus, wat sou kan heers deur te dien, wat die duiwel sou oorwin deur self, toe in die dood getrou, te dien.

Slegs as die mens in dié opsig soos God wil wees (soos God die Seun, dus navolger van Christus), sal hy iets vir die wêreld kan beteken. As ons dus wil werk aan 'n verbetering van omstandighede en verhoudinge in die wêreld, sal ons onself eers moet ondersoek of ons bereid is om te DIEN.

„Verbeter die wêreld . . . begin by jouself!"

'N GODSHUIS

Die hele wêreld is geskape om 'n Godshuis te wees: God se huis, 'n paradys, 'n lushof. En al het die mens dan ook die paradystoestand versteur en bederf, die aanspraak van God op sy eiendom en sy eis is vandag nog dieselfde.

God sê nie vir die mens nie: „Nou toe maar, as julle dan so dink, maak dit dan maar 'n malhuis". God sê ook nie so vir 'n deel van die mense (net vir die wêreld-se mense) nie. Hy stel Hom nie tevrede met die ander deel wat Hom dan wél sou wil dien nie. Nog minder bedoel God dat een en dieselfde mens Hom deelyds sou kan dien. Van alle mense word geëis dat hulle **orals en voltyds en heelhartig** God sal dien. Want: die hele wêreld en

almal wat daarin woon, behoort aan God; die hele wêreld is bedoel om 'n Godshuis te wees. Alle mense, almal wat in daardie Godshuis woon, behoort God te dien — trou te dien.

GODSDIENS

Die eerste mens is in die paradystuin gestel met 'n spesifieke taak en opdrag. Dit was nie luilekker lewe nie. Hy sou mag heers oor die redelose skepsels (die diere — en plantelewe), maar hy moes op sy beurt dien: God, die Skepper, dien. En dit sou 'n konkrete taak wees: hy moes die tuin van God bewerk en bewaak. Dit was 'n volle dag se werk; dit was 'n sesdaagse werksweek in diens van God.

God het self ook gewerk. God (die Vader en die Seun) werk tot nou toe; en die mens is God se mede-arbeider. Nie 'n slaaf of 'n huurling nie, maar 'n huisgenoot in daardie wêreld, die Godshuis.

En dan het God, na die dagtaak, in die aand gekom en in daardie tuin gewandel. Die mens kon Hom gehoor en gevoel het, want God het gekom soos 'n aandwindjie. So het God ook, na ses dae se werk, die sewende dag gerus — gerus om Hom te verlustig in die resultate van die werk wat volbring is, en om die eer van sy skepsels te ontvang.

So het die eerste mens aanvanklik sy taak volbring: bedags gewerk, in die aand gaan rus; ses dae gewerk, die sewende dag gerus. In arbeid en in rus het hy in die nouste kontak met sy Skepper verkeer.

Dit is godsdiens: harmoniese saamgaan van die daaglikse werk en van die besondere aanbidding. Bid en werk. Feitlik andersom: werk en bid. Slegs in die vorm van diens lê die onderskeid, nie in die wese nie. In wese is albei dieselfde: diens van God, met hart en met hande, met die volle lewe.

En as die mens God dan met bewustheid en van harte, met sy volle lewe dien, sal hy ook die medemens liefhê. Hy wat onder die dissipels (onder die navolgers van Christus) die meeste, die grootste wil wees, sal bereid moet wees om die dienaar van al sy broers te word.

KERK-DIENS

Tot Godsdiens is dus alle skepsels verplig. Maar nie almal wil dit gehoorsaam nie. Gemakshalwe onderskei ons: die wêreld se mense en die kerk se mense. Laasgenoemdes openbaar dan hulle bereidheid om God te dien. Altans hulle is bereid tot „kerkdiens”.

Die mense in die Godshuis is dus tweërlei: dié wat op die Vader se bevel „nee” sê en dié wat daarop „ja” sê. Maar dit is, merkwaardig genoeg, ook in hierdie verhouding nog moontlik dat hy wat „nee” gesê het, berou kan kry en tog gehoorsaam en dat hy wat „ja” gesê het, soms vergeet om te gehoorsaam. Die woord en die daad kan mekaar so verrassend weerspreek.

In ons taalgebruik is die woord „godshuis” ’n sinoniem vir „kerk”. Netso is „godsdiens” vir baie mense ’n sinoniem vir „kerkdiens”. Hulle is nie bewus van wat „kerkdiens” veronderstel nie. Die diens van God vereis meer as om net binne die eie kerk te dien. Ware diens bestaan nie net in woorde nie, maar gaan oor in daad. Daar is die dienaar van die Woord, die bediening van die ouderlingsamp, die diens van

barmhartigheid — ’n komplette kerkraad wat moet dien; God dien en die naaste. Maar ook die gemeentede buite die kerkraad staan in die „amp van gelowige”: ook hulle het die reg en die plig om toe te sien dat die Woord reg verkondig en die ampsbediening getrou uitgevoer sal word. Hulle moet op die Woord ant-waard, met gesang en gebed, maar veral ook met die daad. Hulle mag en moet die barmhartigheidsdiens van die kerk moontlik maak deur finansiële steun, maar behoort dit ook persoonlik te beoefen — somtyds met sprekender daad as die bydra van geld, deur bv. met persoonlike, Samaritaanse barmhartigheid ’n onfortuinlike mens weer op sy voete te help, figuurlik en somtyds ook letterlik sy wonde te was en te verbind. Dis diens ook buite die kerk, sommer langs die trekpad van die lewe.

Die Sondagse kerkdiens noem ons „godsdiens-oefening”. In die kerk behoort ons ge-oefen te word hoe om God te dien in die daaglikse lewe, in die „wêreld” buitekant die kerkmure.

Die kerk is die „hawe van Goeie Hoop”, die verversingstasie op die Groot Trek deur die lewe, die „kragentrale” van waaruit die lig van Gods Woord dwarsdeur die wêreld ontsteek en gevoed word, van waaruit die „motoriese krag” verkry word vir allerlei Christelike aksie.

Die kerk is nie ’n gemeenskap van mense wat net na binne gekeer is, wat net vir mekaar (indien al, maar moontlik net vir hulleself) leef, wat hoogstens vanaf die eie kerktoring ’n uitsig op, en kontak met, God wil hou nie. Daar is oomblikke van konsentrasie en besondere aanbidding, maar daarna moet die kerkdeure weer wyd oop en moet al die gelowiges, geestelik versteek, weer die wye wêreld in. Na die godsdiens-oefening die praktiese godsdiens; na die ere-diens die Here-diens. Nie „ja” sê en „nee” doen nie, maar goeie diens lewer!

DIE WARE KERK

Die Nederlandse Geloofsbelydenis het die onderskeiding gemaak van ’n ware en ’n valse kerk, onder destydse omstandighede. Van die vervalle Roomse Kerk het ’n Protestantse Kerk hom afgeskei. Met dié kwalifikasie is ongetwyfeld nie bedoel dat die „valse” kerk nooit ’n

ware kerk sou gewees het of nooit weer sou kan wees nie. Tussen die Protestantse kerke van die tyd is so ’n onderskeiding nie gemaak nie, ook al het die Calviniste met o.a. die Lutherane op verskeie punte verskil.

Die „waarheid” van ’n kerk is sy erkenning en handhawing van die Apostoliese Geloofsbelydenis.

As ons vandag objektief oordeel, sien ons baie „Roomse dwalinge” selfs onder die strengste Calviniste: vormdiens; oorskating van die heiligheid van die kerkgebou, van die „stoel” (in kerkrade en sinodes), van die ampte, die Nagmaal en van afgestorwe vaders en broeders; oordrywing van die bestuursvorm tot ’n hiërargiese magsapparaat; verkettering en vervolging van effens andersdenkende broeders. Dit neem toe onder Protestante, terwyl Rome juis besig is om hom op amper al dié punte te besin en te verander.

Die ware Christelike Kerk is slegs dié een waar Christus as Hoof erken word, ook al is daar oorblywende foute en gebreke. Dié Kerk is ’n versameling van kerke en kerkies oor die hele wêreld, denominasies volgens hulle geografiese vestigings (lande), nasionale verskille (tale), rasse-verskille (begrippe) en moontlik ingrypende verskille van historiese agtergrond. Hulle is onderskei, maar daarom nog nie geskei nie. Onderskeie lede van die een liggaam, onder een Hoof; onderskeie takke van die een wynstok, Jesus Christus. Dis die algemene Christelike Kerk: nie ’n massa-kerk nie, maar ’n saamstaan en saamwerk van baie kerke, elk met sy besondere identiteit, dog vir sover moontlik in gemeenskap met mekaar.

Daardie een liggaam kan slegs goed funksioneer as alle lede in een of ander vorm van organiese saamverbondenheid werk en saamwerk. Dit sal so wees as (en solank as) hulle werklik verbind is met die sentrale senuweestelsel vanuit die Hoof en met die sentrale bloedsomloop vanuit die Hart. Dan is hulle koördinasie en koöperasie nie ’n kunsmatige massaproduk nie, maar ’n kleurvolle en sierlike, veral ook lewendige en nuttige, geheel. As die strewe na die realisering van die eenheid in Christus openbaar en versterk word, mag die sterkste adjektief bygevoeg word: ’n heilige, algemene Christelike Kerk. Heilig allermins om die eie waardes, maar ge-heilig, omdat hulle almal, as kerke en as afsonderlike lede, agter

die een Heilige Hoof aan, een Heilige God wil dien — in gees en in **waarheid!**

So moet ons, elkeen afsonderlik en almal saam, werk aan (en in) die heilige, algemene, Christelike Kerk — aan die meerdere eenheid van kerke. As ons, elkeen in sy eie kerk, elke Sondag biddend bely dat ons glo in so 'n kerk, kan ons dan twyfel aan die moontlikheid van realisering? As ons daarby bely dat ons glo in die „gemeenskap van die heiliges” (die ge-heiligdes, gelowiges) beperk ons dit tog nie tot ons eie klein kerkie nie? Dan sou ons mos pilaar-heiliges wees!

Ons moet werk — bid en werk — nie om verskille te verdoesel nie, maar om dit uit te praat: om dwalende broers reg te help, of om self reggehelp te word. Ons moet hoof-sake van bysake onderskei. Ons moet nie werk vir die uiterlike eenheid van kerke nie, maar om die innerlike eenheid effektief te laat word — die eenheid in Christus. Soos Hy gebid het. Sodat dit veral die wêreld sal oortuig, sal laat glo dat daar 'n God is en dat ook hulle in 'n Godshuis woon!

KERK EN WÊRELD

Dikwels, maar ten onregte, is daar in die onderskeiding wat tussen kerk en wêreld gemaak word die implikasie van 'n skeidsmuur wat nooit oorkom kan word (of mag word) nie. Maar dit is inderdaad 'n ystergordyn wat ons self

optrek om onself te beskerm. Die wêreld kan egter nie daardeur teruggehou word van sy aanvalle op die kerk nie. Ook, en juis wanneer die wêreld op die kerk aanval om dit te vernietig, moet die kerk sy teenaanval loods, sy veldtog in die wêreld van stapel stuur om mense vir Christus te wen. As Christus dit aangedurf het om in die wêreld te kom om daar te soek en te vind wat verlore was, moet die kerk dan nie in sy voetstaple volg en stry nie? Selfs as daar nie 'n opdrag van Jesus self was om na die „hele wêreld” uit te gaan nie, moet ons as kerkmense verstaan dat aanval die beste verdediging is, dat 'n laer nie veilig is as die vóórterrein nie reëmatig afgesoek word nie, dat dit nie help om „binnemuurs” skoon te maak solank as daar 'n ashoop langs ons „heilige huisies” lê nie. Maar nou is die eis van kontak met die wêreld vir die kerk 'n opdrag, 'n bevel — nie allereers ter wille van ons eie veiligheid nie, maar ter wille van ander mense se saligheid. Ook in die wêreld is daar nog baie kinders van God, „verlore seuns” miskien, maar tog ons broers, ons naastes.

Só hief het God die wêreld gehad, dat Hy Sy eie Seun gegee het. God bedoel dat alle mense sal kan salig word — al sal almal nie salig word nie; Christus het vir almal gesterwe — al aanvaar almal dit nie. Maar die seleksie is nie ons taak nie.

Daar is 'n opvatting onder sommige Protestante wat, as ek dit so

mag stel, alweer 'n tipiese „Roomse dwaling” is: Onttrek jou aan die wêreld. Dis „klooster-lewe”, somtyds van 'n heeltemal Protestantse kerk. Asof die sonde van buite-af sou kom en nie alreeds in elke mens en elke kerk sy kieme het nie. Dis gesterifiseerde Christendom. Dis nie lewendig nie, dis morsdood!

Die kerk beslaan in werklikheid dieselfde terrein as die Godshuis. En die Godshuis beslaan die hele wêreld. Deur ons van die „wêreld”, of ook van ander kerke en kerkmense, af te sluit, kan ons onself uitsluit. As ons skeidsmuur optrek tussen mense en mense, tussen kerke en kerke, tussen kerk en wêreld (bedoelende om dan self so goeie Christene te kan wees), vergeet ons dat ook die Nederlandse Geloofsbelydenis erken dat daar binne die „ware” kerk „skyn-heiliges”, hypokriete, is. Dit sou kan wees dat die toegangspoort tot die ewige Godshuis juis anderkant ons skeidsmuur lê en dat ons self nie meer daar kan kom nie. Het Jesus self nie gewaarsku dat dit sou kan wees dat slegte vroue en tollenaars die kerkmense voorgaan in die koninkryk van die hemele nie? Kan ons onself of ons kerk afsluit van ander, selfs van mede-gelowiges van 'n ander kerkverband of van 'n ander ras, behalwe miskien waar dit om praktiese redes wenslik en aanvaarbaar is?

Die ewige Godshuis het weliswaar baie wonings, maar nie binne-skeidsmuur of afdelings nie.

RICH MAN, POOR MAN...?

The Rev. JAMES E. MOULDER

cussions was the “Rich Nations/Poor Nations Dilemma” and we focused on this problem both from a socio-economic and a biblical-theological perspective.

A SOCIO-ECONOMIC PERSPECTIVE

(3) Robert Theobald, whose work has focused on the implications of cybernetics for the societies of both the Rich and the Poor Nations, delivered five lectures as follows: The Nature of Man's Power in a Technological Era; The Implications of Man's Power:

I

(1) Between January 3 and 10 the Evangelisches Jugendzentrum Kloster at Höchst in the German Federal Republic was the scene of the European Student Leadership Training Conference on Politics organised by the WSCF. Cameroon, Canada, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Finland, the German Federal Republic, Holland, India, Indonesia, Italy, Sweden, Togo, the United Kingdom, the United States of America and South Africa were represented.

My family and I however thought of ourselves not so much as representing but rather as participating on behalf of you in South Africa — those of you who are called “non-white” and those of you called “white”; those of you trying to follow

Jesus and those of you who are not concerned about him or with him. And because of regarding ourselves in this way I want to report to you and share with you what we talked about during those seven days.

(2) The main theme of our dis-

- (a) in the Rich Nations;
 (b) in the Poor Nations;
 (c) for the Relations between the Rich and Poor Nations;
 Education through Dialogue — a Way of Understanding the Needed Changes.

THE NATURE OF MAN'S POWER

(1) Man, at least in the Rich Nations (North America, Eastern and Western Europe), is presently in the process of achieving the power he has sought so long — the power to remake his environment. This accelerating increase in man's power to remake his environment stems from four developing realities:

First, there is the drive toward the production of effectively unlimited energy which provides the possibility of carrying through any task which is regarded as worthwhile. For example, energy makes it possible to turn salt water into fresh; to mine increasingly low-grade ores to obtain necessary metals; to change climatic conditions; and — to destroy civilization, if not all life, by the use of nuclear, bacteriological and chemical weapons.

Second, there is man's increasing skill in manipulating the basic building blocks of nature on the micro-scale. This provides the basis for the manufacture of an increasing range of synthetic materials and the possibility of designing new materials with any desired set of characteristics — but it also makes it possible to manipulate the genetic inheritance of man.

Third, there are ever greater numbers of people who have been so educated that they can contribute to a widening of the frontiers of knowledge.

Finally, there is the development of the computer. The first commercial computer was installed in 1950; the number of computers operating in the U.S.A. grew to 5,000 by 1960 and is conservatively estimated to reach 70,000 by 1970. This development has at least two far reaching implications:

(a) Fuzzy thinking is incompatible with the use of the computer and complex machine systems; and the consequent rigour in patterns of thinking is spreading far beyond those areas where computer applications exist or are possible in any short-run future.

(b) The computer leads to "cyber-

nation" — that is, to the combination of advanced machinery with the computer in systems of production and control. This makes possible large-scale staff reductions because the computer is a far more efficient worker than the human being when the work to be done can be structured; that is, when the decision-making rules can be set out in advance.

THE IMPLICATIONS OF MAN'S POWER

(5) Although there is little room for disagreement on the nature of man's power in the Rich Nations, there is ample scope for argument when it comes to evaluating the implications of this power. And to appreciate Theobald's evaluation of these implications requires that we both consider the ambiguous ways in which this power may be used and obtain as clear a view as possible of the general answers to be recommending to what he regards as the two crucial questions which arise from what he considers to be the decisive problems facing the Rich and Poor Nations respectively.

AMBIGUITY

(6) The ambiguous ways in which the accelerating increase in man's power may be used has already been hinted at in describing the four realities on which the whole of Theobald's argument is based. In short: cybernated technological developments provide the possibility both of unlimited destructive and unlimited productive power. But the employment of the increasingly available energy towards realising productive goals is itself ambiguous because not only does it make possible the production of enough goods and services to meet our needs and eliminate want; it also demands, if this goal of abundance is to be realized, replacing the relatively inefficient human skills on which our present agricultural and industrial societies are based with the more efficient productive techniques and organization based on automated machinery and the computer. But meeting this demand not only solves the problem of want; it creates at least two problems of enormous dimensions — firstly, the problem of unemployment and the distribution of wealth; and, secondly, the problem of overpopulation. The further extent of this ambiguity will

be more fully appreciated when we come to consider the socio-economic changes which are required in both the Rich and the Poor Nations.

TWO QUESTIONS

(7) Both groups of Nations face the need to change their socio-economic systems because both stand at the end of an era, albeit in a very different one in each case. According to Theobald, the Poor Nations stand at the end of agricultural socio-economic systems in which human skills combined with animal power to provide a minimal standard of living for the vast majority of the people and a leisured existence for a small élite; whereas the Rich Nations stand at the end of industrial socio-economic systems in which human skills combine with machine power to provide great wealth for a few, a reasonable standard of living for most and abject poverty for those unable to find a place in the productive system. And the two crucial questions which arise from the stance of these two groups of nations at this stage in history are these: Are the people who live in the Rich Nations of the East and West going to change their values and their socio-economic system so that they may enter the cybernated productive system which their technology has made possible, or are they going to suffer a "failure of nerve"? And are the Poor Nations going to have to evolve — however rapidly — through an industrial to a cybernated socio-economic system?

EVOLUTION OR REVOLUTION?

(8) The ambiguous ways in which modern technological power may be exploited and the question of whether or not Theobald has correctly located the crucial problems facing the Rich and the Poor Nations already constitute sufficient grounds for discussion and possible disagreement. But if we are to do justice to his more specific evaluations of modern technology and his recommendations of the socio-economic changes which he regards as desirable, we must take note of two different approaches to the need for social change presented by our accelerating technological developments. The first concerns the speed at which changes, if any, must be made. Here there is a fundamental disagreement between those who

regard today's technological progress as greater in degree but not essentially different in kind from that of the past; and those who regard this progress as setting up totally new dynamic forces that demand major modifications in socio-economic systems throughout the world. This disagreement ran right through the conference: but Theobald at least made it quite clear that he belonged to the latter group; that is, to those who are in favour of revolutionary changes in our socio-economic systems rather than merely evolutionary ones; in favour of radical changes rather than mere reforms.

MACRO- OR MICROCHANGES?

(9) The second set of different approaches to the need for social change concerns the *extent* of such changes, if any. Here some — perhaps the majority of the people in both the Rich and the Poor Nations — would argue that it is the socio-economic systems of the Poor Nations which must change; and most who hold this view would probably add that these changes should take place rapidly. And the changes which advocates of this view have in mind are those which will take the Poor Nations out of their largely agricultural socio-economic systems into fully industrialized ones. On the other hand a minority, Theobald included, would regard this as a myopic view of the problems confronting the people of the world and would argue that *both* the Rich and the Poor Nations have to change and develop socio-economic systems based on a cybernated productive system. Thus, while admitting that the *degree* of change from an agricultural to a cybernated socio-economic system is greater than that from an industrial to a cybernated one, neither the agricultural nor the industrial ones are viable at this stage in history; and therefore, in this sense, the *extent* of the changes required are macroscopic and will affect both groups of Nations. In other words: although some Nations are less developed than others, all are drastically underdeveloped and are all facing problems at the economic, family, community, educational and political levels which seem to be intractable.

RADICAL SOCIAL CHANGE

(10) Having outlined (i) the four realities which together constitute

the nature of man's present technological power; and (ii) some of the general problems which arise when we come to evaluate the implications of this power and to speculate on the way in which it may be used; and (iii) the speed and extent of the changes required if it is to be exploited, we must now consider some of the more specific recommendations advanced by Theobald. But first a word of warning and in fairness to Theobald: especially in the summary form in which these recommendations are presented here, they appear to be dogmatic and pontifical when, in fact, they were advanced in a spirit of discussion and debate and not at all as the final word on the subject. Nevertheless as presented here these suggestions may provoke more thought and enquiry into those issues which Theobald, and not only he, regard as having to be resolved if we are to avoid a possibly tragic and finally destructive use of the increasing power available to us today. Here then are Theobald's proposals on five central aspects of our present socio-economic systems.

THE ECONOMY

(11) Theobald argued that, as presently organised, the economics of the Rich Nations, especially those of the West, depend heavily on the following three assumptions for their operation:

Firstly, that work is valuable in itself as well as being the means of acquiring social status and security.

Secondly, that it is necessary to keep effective demand or consumption growing as fast as potential supply or production. Hence the increasing tendency of producers to spend ever-larger sums on advertising ("consumer-seduction") to persuade consumers that they "need" an ever-wider variety of products.

Thirdly, that the distribution of the national income operates and should operate via the job-income link regulated by Adam Smith's "invisible hand". Thus it is assumed that the overwhelming proportion of those seeking jobs can find them and that the income received from these jobs will enable the job-holder to act as an adequate consumer.

(12) All these assumptions, in Theobald's view, are challenged by the advent of the computer:

Firstly, by making the notion of scarce factors of production obsolescent. In a cybernated productive

system, according to U Thant, "it is no longer resources that limit decisions. It is the decision that makes the resources".

Secondly, by making the job-income link an impossible vehicle for the distribution of the national income. The reason for this is simple: a cybernated productive system eliminates scarcity via greater efficiency but at the cost of unemployment for the overwhelming proportion of those seeking jobs. To quote Richard Bellman of the American Rand Corporation: if full-scale cybernation were to be introduced in the U.S.A. "two per cent of the population . . . will in the discernible future be able to produce all the food and services needed to feed, clothe and run our society with the aid of machines".

(13) But if we decide to eliminate scarcity and therefore break the link between jobs and income the whole of our socio-economic system will have to undergo a revolutionary change. To mention only three changes which will be required both to make this decision and to implement it: in the *first* place, work or production will have to be regarded not as a value in itself but as a sheer necessity for the elimination of want. *Secondly*, with scarcity eliminated and the demand-supply vicious circle broken, consumption will have to be disciplined to our needs rather than being exploited as a means for invoking production. And *thirdly*, with the impossibility of maintaining a high level of employment every individual will have to have a constitutional right to an income adequate to allow him to live with dignity — an income which no governmental agency, judicial body or other organization whatsoever should have the power to suspend.

(14) But if the people of the Rich Nations have to decide whether or not they are going to leave behind the socio-economic systems of the industrial era and enter those of a cybernated productive system, the people of the Poor Nations have the problem of whether or not they can escape entering an industrial era before entering a cybernated one. Here Theobald argued that it would be cynical to expect these Nations to develop in the same way as the Rich Nations and that they would have more or less to jump from agricultural to cybernated socio-economic systems because:

(1) industrial age machinery and

technology are no longer available;

- (2) even if it were possible, it would not be efficient;
- (3) as a simple fact of human nature — no one is satisfied with anything less than the best; and
- (4) by the time the Poor Nations have developed the organizational and value systems on which the Rich Nations have operated and now operate — especially the valuing of work as an end in itself — machines linked to computers will have made an overwhelming proposition of those seeking work unable to find it.

Thus apart from being cynical, it would be foolish to expect these Nations to wade their way through an industrial era because of the overall inefficiency and wastage which would result.

(15) Such revolutionary changes in the economic systems of the Rich and Poor Nations would present further social problems which still have to be considered. But also raised is the question of the economic relations between the two groups of nations. The central problem Theobald treated was whether or not the Rich Nations would both increase the amount of Foreign Aid to the Poor Nations and change the nature of this aid. Regarding the first he argued that the main problem is social, not economic: the financial assistance the West, for example, has given to the Poor Nations has amounted to less than 1% of its income, and this income is increasing by some 3% annually. Regarding the second: at present aid is given on the assumption that the Poor Nations have to involve into and through an industrial era. Theobald argued that aid should be based on the desire to create cybernated productive systems; that the technological equipment for such systems should be given as direct gifts to these nations; that such systems would overcome the problem of the shortage of skilled labour in these Nations as they require a relatively small proportion of the shortage of skilled labour in these Nations as they require a relatively small proportion of the population to hold jobs; and, finally, that highly intensive food production techniques, which are presently in "cold storage" because of a lack of decision to revolutionize our socio-economic systems, should be introduced and extended.

THE FAMILY

(16) Here Theobald argued that the crucial problem which would face both the Rich and the Poor Nations if they adopted cybernated productive systems is not the present one of food shortage but the more intractable one of over-population and a consequent lack of space. The plain fact is that we possess the potential to call forth enough goods and services to meet our needs but we do not have enough space to accommodate the increase in population which would result from increased longevity and decreased infant mortality. The obvious answer is, of course, birth control; but once again the solution is shot through with ambiguity. At the present level of life expectations no family ought to have more than two children if long-term overcrowding is to be avoided; if this level continues to increase each family may come to be expected to have only one child. This fact combined with the changes in sex behaviour already apparent since the development of the "pill" suggests the need for a re-examination of our sex patterns; a need for asking and attempting to answer such questions as "Who ought to have children?" and "What place is there for celibacy in the cybernated age?"

THE COMMUNITY

(17) As presently organized both the Rich and the Poor Nations are divided into urban and rural communities with the drive being towards the cities. The direction of this drive is easily explained: the urban areas are the centres of work and, therefore, offer potential wealth and power. This is also where the cultural activities of the nation are concentrated. At the same time the Rich Nations reflect an ambiguous pattern of behaviour around the cities: as status and security are acquired there is a flight from the city centre with its unpleasant over-crowding to suburbia. Thus Theobald argued not only for more imaginative urban planning but for a more radical change which can perhaps be described as, on the one hand, the *ruralization of the city* in terms of the provision of more space and the replacement as far as possible of those features in which the city resembles a "concrete jungle" with facilities which would enable people to be in more direct contact with

nature. On the other hand he argued for the *urbanization of rural communities* in the sense of a greater provision of cultural facilities via the exploitation of modern education and *communicatory techniques*.

EDUCATION

(18) Here the *initial problems* which face the two groups of Nations are somewhat different. In the Rich Nations the problem is that of the "information boom" — the accelerating increase in the quantity of knowledge available; the physical impossibility of mastering the available information, to say nothing of attempting to integrate and evaluate it. But I want to leave Theobald's suggestions in this field till we come to consider his general recommendations for dealing with the whole crisis in which we find ourselves.

(19) Turning to the problems of the Poor Nations in the educational field: here the problem is that of a gap: the one between the literate and the illiterate. Theobald argued that since it has become apparent that the UNESCO'S aim of achieving world literacy by 1980 is impossible to achieve because the rate at which teachers are being produced falls decisively short of the rate at which the population is increasing; and because education is a *sine qua non* for the happiness of people in a cybernated productive system rather than a means by which they are to be trained for doing jobs, the Rich Nations have the obligation of co-operating with the Poor so as to resolve this problem created by a shortage of teachers and of time. The kind of co-operation recommended was in two directions: *firstly*, the development of ways and means by which the almost complete dependence of education on literacy (reading and writing) could be broken; *secondly*, the substitution of radio and television for the teacher. Both these types of suggestions lean heavily on Theobald's contention that the increasingly sophisticated communications systems and techniques being developed seriously question our present reliance on books, reading and writing in education.

POLITICS

(20) Here, more than anywhere before, it is difficult to do justice either to Theobald's appraisal and

description of the present political machinery and the assumptions on which it operates or to his futuristic and radical suggestions. This is partly due to the lack of available space but more so to the difficulty of generalizing in this field. Nevertheless some attempt must be made to focus on this aspect of the problem; and so, for the moment, I confine myself to a brief account of Theobald's account of this matter and give warning that his own treatment of the subject seemed to be based, so far as the Rich Nations are concerned, on politics as practised in North America and Western Europe and, as for the Poor Nations, on Africa.

(21) His treatment of politics in North America and Western Europe was concerned largely with drawing attention to and evaluating some of the assumptions on which the political systems in these Nations are organised. First there is the acceptance of Lord Acton's dictum that "all power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely". This has had two main consequences: the evolution of political systems based on the notion of a "balance of power" because of the assumption that no individual, party or nation can be trusted; and a dependence on "crisis" situations as the stimulant for political action rather than foresight and planning. The *second* assumption is that everybody can more or less do what they like and that, because of the "balance of power" mechanisms which exist, the pursuing of one's own self-interest is regulated so as to result in the interests of the majority. This has had the consequence of making political ethics an utilitarian one and linked to the myth of the sanctity of the "survival of the fittest to survive". *Thirdly*, as presently practised with the aid of opinion polls and mass persuasion techniques, democracy has imprisoned politicians in a vicious circle which goes something like this: to be elected, a politician must gain the votes of a majority of the electors who are able to vote for him; the more electors who want what he wants, the more votes he receives; the more fully he is able to either discover what people want via the use of opinion polls or persuade them what they "need" via mass persuasion techniques the more easily is he able to offer people what they want and therefore the more votes he receives. This has the consequence of making it largely futile

to speak to politicians about what *ought* to be done. For different reasons Theobald is equally pessimistic about politics in the Poor Nations. Here the problems are, in his view, the following: *Firstly*, because of a "pre colonial" and "anti-colonial" mentality most politicians in these Nations tend to locate the blame for post-colonial failures on the past and on the colonizers rather than within the present situation of their Nations. *Secondly*, the lack of economic stability in these Nations is largely responsible for the lack of political stability and as present economic policies are based on what he regards as outmoded assumptions, Theobald expects this instability to continue.

EDUCATION THROUGH DIALOGUE

(22) From this largely pessimistic appraisal of the implications of man's power in a technological era let us now turn to Theobald's suggestions for a way of understanding the needed changes. His phrase for referring to this way is "education through dialogue" and is based on these assumptions:

(1) That, because of the vicious circle already mentioned, it is futile either to speak to politicians about what ought to be done or to seek political power within the existing political institutions.

(2) That the changes which ought to be made require changing people's point of view.

(3) That people's points of view — their values and aspirations — are changed not via the shouting of slogans but the more exacting view of changing people.

Thus, if these assumptions are valid, and Theobald argued that they were, the primary task of those who wish to contribute to social change is an educational one — but education which is based on "dialogue" and which, broadly speaking requires (i) the provision of information; and the development of (ii) critical acumen and (iii) what I am going to call "wisdom".

INFORMATION

(23) We have already noted that the acquiring of information about the world is no easy task and, in fact, becomes more difficult every day because of the accelerating rate at which our knowledge is expanding.

And this difficulty is aggravated by the way in which at educational levels below the research one, and then not always there, knowledge is compartmentalized into "disciplines" or "subjects". To overcome this set of problems will require the use of modern communication techniques. But, perhaps more important, it will require a shift in our whole approach to education: a shift away from the "mastering" of subjects or of a particular discipline to the focussing on specific problems like those mentioned earlier. Furthermore it requires the collecting of information which bears on the problem selected because in the sort of world in which we live there is no room left for myths: before we seek to pronounce on problems we must have some factually based knowledge of those problems.

ANALYSIS

(24) But collecting information is not an end in itself; to be of any use it must be evaluated and this requires the development of people's ability to analyse and critically evaluate information. This ability is crucially necessary for at least two reasons: *Firstly*, the growing dependence of politicians on technical and expert advice and the indispensability of such advice in a cybernated productive system requires an increase in the critical acumen of the world's people if we are to avoid being at the mercy of some or other form of technocracy. *Secondly*, the parallel dependence of politicians on the mass media requires the ability to separate myth from knowledge; propaganda from information.

WISDOM

(25) But even the development of critical acumen is not enough. We are, according to Theobald, entering a period when a dichotomy between morality and knowledge might well prove our undoing. Thus education is not well conceived as the imbibing of information; and not even a critical imbibing is a sufficient aim for education. What is also required is "wisdom": the ability to form decisions as to what *ought* to be done on the basis of critically established knowledge. Here Theobald argued that four moral qualities have become essential for our future well-being:

(1) *Honesty* is required if we are to know what to do; we can no longer

afford "managed news" as this makes it impossible to make the decisions which have to be made if a disaster is to be avoided. In passing Theobald made the important point that dictatorial, totalitarian and intolerant political systems sow the seeds of their own destruction via their use of propaganda and "managed news" because those who do so prevent themselves and the people they govern from obtaining and reflecting on the very information which they require if they are to remain efficient and effective leaders in difficult situations.

(2) *Responsibility* on the part of individuals is required to counteract the bureaucratic implications of a cybernated productive system. And the context in which responsibility must be exercised is not that of a merely parochial concern with one's own interests but of a concern for the whole human community.

(3) This requires *humility* — that is, the recognition that all of us without exception both contribute towards and are influenced by the sorts of problems which have been described.

In other words: the world situation is such that there can be no "outsiders"; no individual or group who have "clean hands and a pure heart".

(1) But having wisdom requires *love* and practical concern for others for without this there can be neither understanding of one's fellows nor an intelligent employment of the available resources for the good of all.

WHAT IS MAN?

(26) In concluding this socio-economic perspective of the Rich Nations/Poor Nations dilemma reference must be made to another strand in Theobald's arguments — namely, a bundle of questions which may be gathered up in the question "What is man?" Theobald made no sustained attempt to either analyse or answer this question but many of his other arguments raised this sort of problem: Is it possible for human nature to change as radically as the implementation of Theobald's proposals require in the short space of time he suggests is available for such

changes if disaster is to be avoided? If we are now in a position to have what we want, why is it that we do not know what we want? Why ought one man to obey another? We know that some men obey others out of fear or laziness or habit; because of a stick behind them or a carrot to tempt them; but is it possible for men to live together without one coercing the other? And if men do not work how will they spend their time? And if their abilities are unequal how will exploitation be prevented? Ought the principle of "the survival of the fittest to survive" be replaced by some other? and, if so, by what? And human aggression . . . ? and the "balance of power" . . . ? These are only some of the questions which were close to the surface during Theobald's lectures. But perhaps most baffling of all is this question: why are questions like these so seldom raised? and why do men spend so little time on attempting to answer them?

In our next issue:

A THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

LETTERS

BAPTISM AND CO-EXISTENCE

The Rev. G. M. A. JANSEN, O.P., Welkom, O.F.S.

I would very much like to answer The Rev. Crankshaw's query on baptism and co-existence, so that together we may find the place of baptism in our modern theology. (See *Pro Veritate*, March, '67).

The mysteries of our faith are always full of hidden depths, and the mystery of redemption is no exception. As soon as we probe into the mystery with our faith, we stir up these hidden depths and they tell us of unthought of treasures.

Christ became man and died for us on the cross in a sacrifice of expiation for our sins, by which He reconciled us with God, as St. Paul expresses it: "He was appointed by God to sacrifice His life, so as to win reconciliation through faith." (Rom. 3 : 25).

But Christ's redemption contains more than just obtaining forgiveness of our sins, and even more than just obtaining our liberation of the slavery of sin. St. Paul speaks of the redemption often as a whole re-creation of man. Christ became the new head of the human race, the great image in which God remakes His creation (2 Cor. 5 : 17). For anyone

who is in Christ, there is new creation, the old creation is gone and the new one is here.

REDEMPTION: A NEW POTENTIAL IS LAID IN HUMAN NATURE

We may therefore call the redemption, I think, a new evolutionary explosion, to use a modern expression. This new man is the man who is capable of living a divine life, a life in intersubjective relationship with God, in such a way that he lives in perfect com(m)-union with God. And therefore redemption may be seen as a new potential which is laid in human nature, a new freedom which includes a liberation from the slavery of sin, but also more positively an ability to be a person who has the power within himself to turn to God in responding to a person-to-person encounter.

This potential is given to all men. It is a re-creation of the human nature. Perhaps at the moment it will be regarded as far-fetched, but I think it will be an accepted fact of later theology that the rapid growth of culture which took place after the resurrection, can be ascribed to the new potential which Christ laid in human nature.

This new potential may be seen, I think, as our faith. Because faith is not merely the intellectual assertion of truth, it is the openness of the whole person to the approach of Christ, it is the freedom by which we are able to turn to Christ, to stand converted to Him, so that we readily respond to His approach. It would still be a gift, a grace, because it is the fruit of the redemption.

BAPTISM INITIATES EVOLUTION TOWARDS NEW MANHOOD

This potential is brought into actuality by baptism. "When we were baptised in Christ Jesus we

were baptized in his death; in other words, when we were baptized we went into the tomb with Him and joined Him in death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the Father's glory, we too might live a new life. We believe that having died with Christ we shall return to life with Him: Christ as we know, having been raised from the dead will never die again. Death has no power over him any more. When He died, He died sure for all to sin, so His life now is life with God; and in that way, you too must consider yourselves to be dead to sin but alive from God in Christ Jesus". (Rom. 6:3 ff). In the Incarnation Christ already gave the human nature a new potential by uniting it in Himself with the Divine Nature. He has defeated the power of sin assuming sinful flesh and putting it to death on the cross. It is therefore by His death and resurrection that He brings this potential into actuality. With the resurrection a new man arises; a new era has begun for the human race, the messianic, the eschatological era.

The nature of this new eschatological man comes out well when we compare it with the state of the chosen race before the coming of Christ. In the Old Testament man did not lose his inclination to evil, only: God made a covenant with the people. He gave them a law, so that by a faithful observance of this law, they escaped the domination of the sinful inclination as by external principle. But by baptism, in rising with Christ in His resurrection we receive an internal freedom, a Holy Spirit within us by which the bondage of sin can be completely removed.

St. Paul says in I Cor. 15:21: "Death came through one man and in the same way the resurrection of the dead has come through one man. Just as all men die in Adam, so all men will be brought to life in Christ, but all of them in their proper order: Christ as the first-fruits and then after the coming of Christ, those who belong to Him. After that will come the end, when He hands over the Kingdom to God the Father."

Christ then as the first fruit of His redemption, is already the new man in all perfection, and He is the image in which God recreates us. But we have to come to this new manhood by slow evolution. Living in Christ, He urges us by His spirit to realize

in ourselves the image which He represents to us in His life.

And thus the Body of Christ, His Church, is slowly built up; the Church which we can see as an outward society, but also as a milieu which is created by the Christians in which they themselves — and others as well who are attracted to join them — find it easier to live a Christian life; a milieu of Christian virtue which becomes hereditary and therefore moves steadily, although slowly, to the "new man". Thus we receive an image of Christ, throughout the centuries constantly nourishing and cherishing His Bride, sanctifying her until He might present her to Himself in splendour, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. (Eph. 5:26 ff).

SACRAMENTS ARE "PROLONGATIONS" OF CHRIST'S BODY

He does that through His sacraments, the instrumental action of His Body, the Church. These sacraments are the prolongation of His glorified Body in heaven.

We are often using instruments to exceed the capacity of our body. So we use a violin to give our body the power to express our inmost feelings in music; a hammer is a prolongation of our body which gives it power to drive a nail into a piece of wood. But all instruments we are using are really a lengthening piece of our body which gives it an extra capacity. However, in our relationships with others, when we desire to express spiritual values which exist between us, such as love, compassion, obedience, faithfulness, no instrument can be found to express these values adequately, and therefore we use material things as signs of what goes on in us.

When we send a birthday present to someone we love, the other thinks at once of the love that is behind the gift. When we hoist a flag and stand to attention, the flag is a sign of the fatherland and the loyalty which we owe it. When during a meeting we see a man wearing a golden chain, we say at once: "here is the mayor", and see the chain as the sign of his office. And when a man finds the pronouncement of his wedding vows inadequate to convey his deepest feelings for his bride, he slips a ring on her finger to represent the permanency of the relationship which they established.

These symbolic actions are signs

of realities of the world in which we really live: the world of personal relationships. They therefore really work out what they signify. E.g. a woman does not see any more the metal of the ring — whether it is a precious jewel or just a cheap, brass thing — to her the ring is her relationship with her husband; in time of deep distress she may find strength in touching or twisting the ring; when she returns the ring to her husband it is something that cannot be done without deep emotion on both sides, because to them such an act means that she regards their relationship as terminated. When a stranger is attracted to an unknown woman, the first thing he does is to glance at her finger, and when he sees a wedding ring, he knows that if he wants to meet her as a person he must respect her as a married woman.

BAPTISM ESTABLISHES NEW RELATIONSHIPS

In the same way, the sacraments are the outward signs, the prolongation of the glorified body of Christ in heaven, by which He brings into effect the work of His redemption. As soon as the water is poured out over the head of the candidate for baptism and the words of the minister are pronounced, this ritual of the mystical Body is the sign by which Christ forgives the man his sins and enters into a personal relationship with him; he is at that moment buried with Christ, to rise with Him into a new man. It is then that a new character is given to him, he is now living with Christ, being made partakers of the Divine Nature; consortes, as the Latin text says: of the same sort.

And even when a baptized person destroys this union of love which Christ established, by living a sinful life, there remains that indelible trait in his character by which he was signed by the blood of Christ, so that in homesickness he goes back to Him in contrition.

So we can see baptism as the particular ceremony by which this relationship was established, pin-pointing it so to say as a highlight in our life, that once happened, but we can also see it as the personal relationship itself, by which we live with Christ, being in constant dialogue with Him, until we more and more become like Him, and then baptism is something that goes on and on. At the same time

we find each other who are all living that same life with Christ, and together we form a body in which Christ lives not merely with each of us separately, but also in the body as a whole which together produces

a new effect, an environment in which others become attracted to live. And thus that Body of Christ becomes the leaven that steadily penetrates the whole of the worldly society, until the whole is leavened.

(Mat. 13:33), so that what began as a tiny mustardseed grows into the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches (Mat. 13:31).

DIE KERK BUIITE SUID-AFRIKA

'N VASTE PAASDATUM

Die Wêreldraad van Kerke het in 'n brief aan alle lidkerke in die wêreld gevra, dat hulle die vraag moet oorweeg of daar nie 'n moontlikheid bestaan om 'n vaste Paasdatum vir alle Christene in te stel nie.

Die geskiedenis leer dat in die jaar 325 (tydens die Konsilie van Nicea) besluit is dat die Paasfees gevier moes word op die eerste Sondag na die eerste volle maan in die lente. Die Rooms-Katolieke kerk het tydens die tweede Vatikaanse Konsilie te kenne gegee dat hy hom nie sou verset teen die vasstelling van die Paasfees op 'n vaste Sondag nie, mits ook ander Christelike kerke daarmee instem.

Die Hervormde Kerk van Nederland is van mening dat 'n vaste Paasdatum baie voordele het. Volgens sy oordeel moet Paasfees val op die Sondag tussen 10 en 16 April van elke jaar. Pinksterfees word dan gevier op die Sondag tussen 29 Mei en 4 Junie. In dié gees sal die Hervormde Sinode aan die Wêreldraad in Genève verslag doen.

'N VASTE LYDENSTYD

In hierdie verband vra ds. M. Groenenberg van Utrecht in 'n artikel, waarom die kerke nie ook die vraag van 'n gelyke lydenstyd pak nie. Dit is vreemd, sê hy, dat die Nederlandse Protestantisme van Gereformeerde formaat (hervormd, gereformeerd ens.) sewe lydens-Sondae ken en die res van die kerke in en buite Nederland net ses. Daar is geen enkele ekonomiese faktor mee gemoeid nie; niemand verdien daardeur een sent meer of minder of werk korter of langer nie. En daar is tog veel voor te sê: Dit gaan om 'n kerklike instelling: die lydenstyd. Daarvan staan geen woord in die Bybel nie. Dit is, om so te sê, 'n groeisel van die kerklike tuin. Tussen twee getalle is daar geaarsel: 70 dae en 40 dae. Die keuse het op 40 dae geval. Gedurende dié tyd is gevas. Vir die Protestante het die „vastetyd” „lydenstyd” geword en in Nederland is 'n paar dae byge-

voeg. Persoonlik vind dr. Groenenberg die hele lydenstyd te lank en hy sou dit wil inkort tot een week. Teologies en psigologies is dit 'n fout om met hierdie erfenis uit die verlede te bly sit. Wat hy daarmee bedoel? Wel, dat ons die lyde van Christus te veel „historiseer” en van die hele jaar 'n soort drama maak waarin ons alles wat Christus ondervind het nog 'n keer herhaal. In so 'n drama is dit paslik dat ons soos in 'n soort van tweede bedryf, die lyding van Christus beleef. Maar dit is nie juis nie. Ons leef uit die opstanding van Christus, wat sy lig werp op die kruis. Dit kan nie losgemaak word daarvan nie, is nie in bedrywe te verklaar nie. So iets pas wel by 'n bepaalde Middeleeuse Rooms-Katolieke gedagte of by meditasie in die kloosters. Dan kan 'n mens hom agtereenvolgens verdiep in die wond in die regterhand van Jesus en daarna in dié van sy linkerhand om verder te gaan met die voete. Maar dit is nie Bybels-reformatories nie. Dit is geen slordigheid van Paulus nie, maar opset waar hy in Filippense 3 die opstanding voorop stel.

EKUMENIESE TRETTERY

'n Britse Baptiste opvoedkundige, G. R. Beasley-Murray, prinsipaal van Spurgeons College, Londen, betreur ekumeniese „tettery” (baiting) wat soms gelyk staan aan evangeliese onverantwoordelikheid. Hy het verwys na beweringe wat deur 'n vergadering vir Christelike eenheid in Ipswich gemaak is, waarvolgens Protestante gevra word om verenig te word onder die Roomse Kerk. Die beskuldiging het gekom van die „Protestant Truth Society”. Dr. Beasley-Murray sê: „Die bewering is nie alleen onwaar nie maar belaglik. Die Baptiste

PROF. B. B. KEET

Kerk het net soveel begeerte om by die Rooms-Katolieke kerk aan te sluit as laasgenoemde lid van die Baptiste Wêreldalliansie wil word”. Evangelies gesinde liggame wat hulle met hierdie soort tettery besig hou, moet onthou dat daar geen Christelike gemeenskappe is wat nie sondes het om te bely nie, het hy gesê. Aangaande die vooruitsigte van kerklike vereniging het hy verklaar: „Of die hereniging van alle kerke van Christus voor die duisendjarige ryk sal plaasvind, kan ek nie weet nie, maar waarom word lawaai gemaak teen hulle wat bid dat die wonderwerk voor die einde van die geskiedenis sal plaasvind en soek om die weg daarvoor voor te berei?” Die artikel verskyn in *The Christian*.

PAASGELOOF EN PAASTWYFEL

Na aanleiding van 'n artikel oor Paasgeloof uit die pen van dr. Kuitert het die redaksie van Trouw enige ingesonde stukke gelees, waarvan hy verskeie sitate gee. Die skrywers kom teen twyfelaars op wat juis deur dr. Kuitert in beskerming geneem is. Die ingesonde stukke, so skryf die redaksie, laat 'n mens huiwer, weens die skewe beeld van die kerk sonder twyfelaars, stoere Gereformeerdes van die Gereformeerde en Hervormde Kerke.

„Ek vertrou dit nie heeltommal nie — dit is te selfversekerd, te stoer. Ek voel my meer tuis by die uitspraak: hy wat nog nooit getwyfel het nie, het nog nooit geglo nie. Want daardie stoerheid het met die bybelse geloof niks te maak nie, vrees ek” — so skryf die redaksie-lid. Hy gaan voort: „Is twyfel dan geen sonde nie? Natuurlik; maar dis tog heeltommal ongereformeerd dat ons die sonde in hierdie bedeling volkome aflê. Dink u werklik dat dit moontlik is om op alle punte 'n sondaar te wees, maar wat die geloof betref honderd-persent?”

Om sonbaar te wees en te bely, beteken dat ons altyd te kort skiet, ook wat ons geloof betref. Daarom is twyfel geen speletjie nie, in die besonder vir intellektueles nie, maar 'n stryd, 'n lyding, dikwels 'n diepe verdriet. Maar jy moet dit oorwin. Gelukkig dat Abraham, Moses, Jeremia, Petrus, Paulus ons geselskap hou. Meen ek dit werklik dat iemand, wat nog nooit getwyfel het nie, ook nooit eg geglo het nie? Miskien sê ek te veel en kom ek 'n egte kind van God te na, en dit sou ek nie graag wil doen nie. Maar wel kyk ek met sorg na hierdie stoere

mense. Met groter sorg as hulle na die twyfelaars. God, die Here, sê ander dinge. Hy sê: natuurlik kan jy alleen deur die Heilige Gees glo, en Hy lei in alle waarheid, naamlik in die vastheid van Gods trou. As iemand sê: ons is stoer, ons twyfel nooit, ons wankel nooit, dan vermoed ek dat Jesus sê: „Simon, Simon, kyk die Satan het vurig begeer om julle soos koring te sif. Maar Ek het vir jou gebid dat jou geloof nie ophou nie”. En sulke stoere mense is digter by die dreevoudige verloëning as hulle maar kan vermoed.”

Byskrif:

DOMINEE, POLISIE-AGENT EN PARKEERPROBLEEM

Uit die *Groene Amsterdammer* haal ons die volgende aan:

'n Anglikaanse dominee in Engeland het onlangs sy motor op 'n plek geparkeer waar dit verbode was, met hierdie briefie agter die voorruit: „Ek moet na 'n bespreking waar ek konstant al vyftien jaar lank kom. Ek is 'n bietjie laat en daar is nêrens 'n plek vir my rytuig nie. Vergeef ons ons skulde.”

By sy terugkeer het hy hierdie briefie agter sy voorruit aangetref: „Ek is lid van die polisie en ek werk hier al 20 jaar lank. My baas kom aanstons hierlangs en hy is erg stip. Lei ons nie in versoeking nie”.

“WHEREFORE BE YE WITNESSES UNTO YOURSELVES”

JACK CURTIS

Many people reading Jesus' indictment of the Scribes and Pharisees recorded in Matthew 23 have doubtless wondered at the apparent depth of depravity revealed in His condemnation; and have assumed that His remarks had application to those people and that time only. Nothing could be further from the truth!

We know II Timothy 3:16, that “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.” What profit then can be gained from reading these passages? The smug satisfaction of bumbling in blind hypocrisy. “God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men” or the evasive attempted shifting of our responsibility on to the shoulders of another betokened by the washing of his hands by Pilate. If that is all that is to be read into those scriptures, then were they better left unread.

In South Africa at this time when we Whites, the governing authority, base our claim to rule on our inheritance of Western civilization, an outgrowth of the teachings of the scriptures, it is well for us to examine how we stand in relation to this indictment.

Let us examine some of these condemnations lest we find, too late, that they were spoken to us.

In interpreting the terms “Scribes” and “Pharisees” it is probably conveying the spirit of the meaning to consider them as applying to the “legal administrators” and “representative leaders of the people,” leaders being used in the fullest sense of the word as applying to all forms of communal activity, i.e. the establishment. What then are the indictments:

● “They bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay

them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers.”

Could this be a condemnation of the Pass Laws, Influx Control and the Group Areas Act with its mass removal schemes which lay heavy burdens on the shoulders of the non-White but leave the White singularly unburdened?

● “Ye shut up the Kingdom of heaven against men; for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.”

Could this be a condemnation of Bantu Education and Job Reservation which bar non-Whites from becoming qualified for and taking up employment in positions for which there are no Whites available and thereby not only frustrate the non-White but also the development of the whole economy?

● “Ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves.”

Could these proselytes we make be the products of our tribal colleges, the Government appointed leaders of our Bantustans and other African nationalists who are already showing that they have learnt only too well the lessons of racialism?

● “Ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law — judgment, mercy and faith: these ought ye to have done and not to leave the other undone.”

Could this refer to our church-

going and Sunday observance and preening respectability and conformity while we condone laws that permit, nay command, the separation of husband and wife, parents and children for no crime; that allow persons to be imprisoned or exiled without judgment; that exclude the mercy of judges and command extreme sentences; and that are acknowledgeably based on fear and not faith?

● “Ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess — cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also.”

Could this refer to the activities of those well-meaning bodies who attempt to prove that Bantustans offer the African “the fullest possible development in his own areas” and in so doing deny virtually all the known economic laws from Adam Smith to John Maynard Keynes; who believe that in the controversy at the United Nations only we and Portugal are right and the other 119 are wrong?

Could it be that if we replaced fear by faith and abolished our irrational restrictive laws that by so doing, and without the need of a tawdry trumpet, we could win the approval of the outside world by our manifest integrity? Is it we, not the rest of the world, who need fundamental education?

Could it be that if Jesus came to South Africa it would be the “named” ones and not the “establishment” who would recognize and welcome Him?

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- Mnr. H. Goris skryf 'n vervolg op 'n vorige artikel: „Die wêreld 'n malhuis?“ hierdie keer onder die titel: „Die wêreld 'n Godshuis!“ — Bl. 6
- Ds. J. E. Moulder vertel van 'n konferensie van Christenstudeante wat in Duitsland gehou is oor die vraagstuk: Ryk volke — Arm volke. In die eerste van 'n reeks van twee artikels handel hy oor die benadering van die probleem vanuit 'n sosio-ekonomiese oogpunt. — Bl. 8
- Prof. B. B. Keet vertel in sy rubriek „Die Kerk Buite Suid-Afrika“, o.m. van godagtes wat tens uitgespreek word om 'n vaste Paastyd vir die hele Christelike Kerk in te stel. Bl. 15
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