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CHRISTIAN CITIZENS OF THE FUTURE

(Rev. G. M. Setiloane)

I propose to deal with this subject in the following manner: —

1. What Christian Citizenship is not;
2. Factors affecting our basic purpose and outlook in Christian Citizenship; and
3. The role of Christian Youth in bringing it about.

WHAT CHRISTIAN CITIZENSHIP IS NOT

Three erroneous concepts must be explored if we want to understand what world Christian leaders mean by Christian Citizenship these days.

(a) It is not a denial of the world that makes Christianity a heady, otherworldly religion. Very often, here in our country, the fact that Christianity deals with people's souls has led to our ignoring if its pragmatic, matter-of-fact, everyday nature. We have quoted St. Paul's dictum: "Our citizenship is in heaven; We have no abiding city" and given it a negative view to our present physical and material life. It is this kind of view of our duties as Christians in the hurly-burly of life, this denial of our everyday life needs, that has led the Communists to taunt at Christianity with sayings like: "A pie in the sky when you die", "a bourgeois ideology."

(b) It is not the liberalistic, last-generation-American Social Gospel which reduces the Church to a Social Welfare Society. We can be good citizens, but do not necessarily become Christian citizens by running a Milk Fund because of our concern for the prevalence of kwashiorkor or running the Christmas Fund or a Child Welfare Society. Philanthropy, missionary zeal and Christian service are good Christian qualities, but sometimes they can be distorted and be just not Christian. This is the old question of Faith and Works. Far be it from me, a Protestant Methodist Minister, to belittle the place of works, but I do want to say that many good works of Christian people do not arise from the best, deep, Christian Faith, and that also some of these works do become an impediment to the doer's arrival at a true concept of Christian Faith.

(c) Christian Citizenship is not a conferring upon the Church and its individuals pontifical powers. Many sincere Christian people believe that we become good Christians Citizens by keeping a look-out and howling loudly when the people at the helm of social, political and economic

affairs make a mistake. We begin to view ourselves and the Church as mere judges, and we think we become prophetic when we condemn the Bantu Education, the Immorality Act, the Sabotage Act etc. We become arm-chair philosophers, uninspired and uninspiring. This is the point that I think was spelled out very clearly by Dr. Webb in his Presidential Addresses at last year's Conference, and I agree with him that it is not necessarily the duty of the Church (the Christian people) to oppose this or that Law or Regulations, but theirs is so to live the Christian life that the dead lump of degenerate society can be leavened, and the earthly low, and parochial intentions of humanity can be salted.

Our truly Christian concept of Citizenship is that which is embedded in a correct Christian teaching. "Correct Christian" by me agrees that while "we have here no abiding City" and "our citizenship is in heaven", yet it is here in this life, this sinful earth, that we are called upon "to run the race that is set before us".

Goods works are essential, but they are not to be judged on face value. Christian Citizenship requires their source to be examined. It is here that I think our founder John Wesley had a real contribution to make in the whole controversy between the Lutherans and Rome. True Christian life must have tangible fruits, but these fruits must consciously arise from a living faith.

Christian Citizenship therefore as I see it is based on the acceptance of Christianity as a way of life". The first Christian were called oi odwv = The people of the way". It implies the acceptance of certain principles of conduct of daily living, principles which are basic to the Christian Faith. I now proceed to enumerate these principles: —

(a) TRANSCENDENCE OF GOD:

This means that Christians must live and decide in a world which they know to be God's world. They must understand that God transcends every culture, every social

group, every ideal and even every church.

"Behold the nations are like a drop in the nations and are accounted as dust in the scales" (Isaiah, 40 : 15). Always before us should be the warning against idolatry: "Thou shalt have no other gods before me", is the place where our understanding of Christian Citizenship must begin. It is in our preference and our sticking up for our own culture, our own nation, our own social system as against others that idolatry of the more subtle kind often appears. So much talk in our country about the guardianship of white Christian Civilisation can be, in the light of this, nothing but subtle idolatry.

Let us not forget that this idolatry could also creep into our concept of Christianity and our Christian Witness. New Delhi is very conscious

of this when in the Witness Section it declares: — "God" this transcendent "God" is his own Witness. He has been and is at work authenticating his message to men "as for us, we are not the world's saviours. We are called to witness To Him who is the Saviour and Lord of all". St. Paul puts it in a manner that I think is very striking: "Remember you are not your own, you are bought with a price. The price which it the blood of the Lamb".

(b) GOD'S JUDGEMENT:

God's transcendence means also that He is Judge of all, including the Christians: "We cannot bear His name without coming under the searching light of his judgement. Therefore our first step towards the discovery of a Christian orientation to public life is to lay ourselves open to God's judge-

(c) LOVE:

It should never be forgotten by those who aim at Christian Citizenship that God loves all men. It is for all men that Christ died... the good and the evil, the difficult and

• Cont. on page 5

Die Christen se houding teenoor verandering

(Prof. Ben Marais)

Ons lewe in 'n wêreld waarin verandering in die hoogste versnelling plaasvind. Dit geld nie alleen ons kennis en kontak met die buitenste ruimtes nie maar veral die sosiale, politieke en ekonomiese patrone van die mensewêreld van ons dag. Baie van hierdie veranderinge vind teen so 'n tempo en op so 'n breë front plaas dat dit by baie primêr vrees en verskrikking inboesem.

ONS REAKSIE TEENoor VERANDERING

Dit is noodsaaklik dat ons as Christene vir onself reenskap gee van wat ons reaksie teenoor verandering is en behoort te wees.

In die algemeen is dit waar dat die gewone mens wat lid is van 'n bevoorregte mensegroep so na aan die status quo as moontlik probeer bly. Dit pas hom goed soos dit is. Daarteenoor is die reaksie van die gewone mens uit 'n minder-bevoorregte groep presies teenoorgesteld: hy verwelkom in die reël verandering in die hoop dat sy lot daardeur verbeter sal word. Hy het min belang by die behoud van die status quo. Toe aan 'n jong Amerikaanse neger uit die diep Suide gevra is wat beteken die uitdrukking status quo was sy antwoord: "I guess it means the mess we're in!" Vir miljoene minder-bevoorregtes kleef presies daardie gevoelswaarde aan die bestaande orde of toestand.

VERSKILLENDE HOUDINGS

Indien ons die reaksies van

die mens in die algemeen in oënskou neem kan ons die volgende duidelike houdings onderskeel.

Die eerste is vrees. By miljoene mense en helaas ook Christene is die eerste en oorheersende reaksie teenoor verandering die van vrees. Hul vrees dat die bestaande en veral hul bestaande voorregte bo ander mensegroepe aangesig mag word of verlore mag gaan.

Op sy beste behels hierdie reaksie die vrees dat soveel wat in 'n besondere groep of individu dierbaar is die slagoffer van verandering kan word.

Hiermee hang ten nouste daardie konserwatisme saam waardeur gestreef word om teen elke prys die ou en geliefde gemeenskapsvorm te bewaar en in stand te hou.

DIE CHRISTEN SE ANTWOORD

Hoewel die Christen hierdie houdings begryp en soms in sy eie hart daarteen die stryd moet aanknoop, is en mag hy

tog nie bevrees wees vir verandering nie omdat hy besef hoe swaar die laste is en hoe geweldig die ontberinge waar- onder die meerderheid van die mensheid gebuk gaan.

Hoe mag 'n Christen bloot- stry vir die behoud van die status quo so lank ons in 'n wêreld leef waarin meer as die helfte van die mensheid bv. nog nie kan lees of skryf nie, kronies ondervoed is en nooit die geleentheid vir mediese dienste het nie? Hoe kan ons bloot- stry vir die status quo so lank dit waar bly dat in die V.S.A. die gemiddelde in- komste per capita van die be- volking 1400 rand per jaar is, in Japan 250 rand, in Indonesië 52 rand! Met watter soort Christelike gewete kan jy bloot of eerstens 'n verdediger van die status quo in so 'n soort wêreld wees?

PASSIEWE AANVAARDING

'n Ander baie algemene reaksie t.o.v. verandering is wat ons kan beskryf as 'n passiewe aanvaarding. Daar is vandag miljoene sulke mense onder wie ook baie Christene. Hul betreur die sosiale en poli- tieke veranderinge wat rond- om hulle plaasvind maar aan- vaar dit bloot passief as onaf- wendbaar. Ek het veral in die V.S.A. en by name die suide- like state baie mense teenge- kom wat t.o.v. één besondere verandering tw. dié van dese-

• Vervolg op bladsy 3

IS DIT NOG ONS ERNS? [Slot]

Drie Noodsaaklike Vrae

D. C. S. Oosthuizen

Soos ons gesien het is daar veral twee aspekte aan 'n heilige verbond: die verordeninge van God wat ons in 'n gelofte beloof om te onderhou, en dié nuwe toestand van vrede en onderlinge liefde wat God aan ons beloof deur die Genade van Christus. Dit is hierdie dinge wat ook ons moet nastrewe, in die vaste geloof dat Jesus Christus dit reeds vir ons bereik het, as ons deel wil hê aan die gelofte van Charl Celliers. Laat ons dus 3 vrae aan onself stel, in selfondersoek en verootmoediging om te toets of hierdie gelofte nog ons erns is:

- (1) Wat is dié verordening wat God aan ons vadere gestel het, en waarop hulle van hulle kant ongeveinsd moes antwoord?
- (2) Wat beteken dit dat God aan ons voorouers 'n oorwinning geskenk het, en hoe kan ons aan daardie oorwinning 'n deel hê?
- (3) Wie is diegene wat aan die verbond van ons voorouers deel het?

(1) Oor die verordening wat God van ons eis in die nuwe verbond kan daar weinig twyfel bestaan. Ons Here self het hierdie verordeninge opgesom in 'n eerste en tweede gebod wat aan mekaar gelykstaan: „Jy moet die Here jou God liefhê met jou hele siel en met jou hele verstand” en „Jy moet jou naaste liefhê soos jouself.” (Matt. 22) Daarom kan Paulus dit ook uitdagend stel: „die hele wet word vervul in één woord, naamlik: Jy moet jou naaste liefhê soos jouself” (Gal. 5 : 14). „Die liefde is die vervulling van die Wet”. (Rom. 13 : 8). Daar is geen Liefde tot God sonder Liefde tot die naaste nie. Immers, „reine en onbesmette godsdiens voor God en die Vader is dit: om wese en weduwees in verdrukking te besoek, en homself vlekkeloos te bewaar van die wêreld” (Jak. 1 : 27).

Oor hierdie verordeninge van God, wat ook die grondslag van die nuwe verbond is, kan nooit genoeg gesê word nie; daar is 'n onuitspreklike rykdom in hierdie woorde vervat. Maar ons moet ook daaraan dink dat dit in die gelofte van ons voorouers nie gaan om 'n Kennis van hierdie verordeninge nie, maar om 'n vaste voorneme om daarvolgens te leef. En dit is 'n taak wat nie alleen geen einde ken nie, maar wat ook vir ons, soos vir alle sondears, eindelose gevare inhou. Die moeilikheid is naamlik dat daar niemand is wat nie ons naaste is nie, en dat 'n mens nooit genoeg vir iemand anders kan doen nie. As Paulus die Xtene in Rome vermaan om aan niemand iets skuldig te wees nie, „behalwe die liefde, want hy wat 'n ander lief het, het die wet vervul.” (Rom. 13 : 8) maak hy nie alleen geen uitsondering nie; hy stel dit ook pertinent dat die vervulling van die wet nie geleë is in die afbetaling van 'n liefdeskuld nie, maar geleë is in die genade om in daardie skuld te kan bly.

ONTDUIKING VAN GODS VERORDENING

Soos Israel van ouds die verordeninge van God nie wou aanvaar nie, omdat dit vir hulle as „stamsenote na die vlees” gevaarlik was, is daar ook steeds die gevaar dat ons aan hierdie hoë eise van God sal probeer ontsnap. Die gevaar is nie alleen dat ons nie aan ons naaste wil betaal wat ons wel kan en moet betaal nie — belasting aan dié wat belasting toekom, vrees aan die wat

wat die Skrif hier vir ons gebiedend stel is die kloof tussen gelowiges en ongelowiges. „Laat ons dan, terwyl ons geleentheid het, aan almal goed doen, maar die meeste aan die huisgenote van die geloof” (Gal. 6 : 10) sê Paulus — want die „huisgenote van die geloof” moet nader wees aan ons as ons huisgenote na die vlees (Vgl. Matt. 12 : 46 e.v.). Trouens, ons moet nie in dieselfde juk trek saam met ongelowiges nie (Gal. 6 : 16) en volgens ons geloofsbelydenis moet ons saam met alle gelowiges oor die hele wêreld in dieselfde juk trek. (Art. 27, 28)

Oral geld dus die onverbidlike verordening van die nuwe verbond dat ons ons naaste, vriend of vyand, moet liefhê soos onself; dat ons in elke mens Jesus Christus moet sien, wie en wat die mens ook al mag wees; en veral dat ons daarom elke mens moet behandel soos Jesus self ons toespreek deur sy teenwoordigheid.

Dit is die verordening wat ook vir ons bindend is as ons wil staan in die gelofte van ons vadere d.w.s. wat ook ons sal moet bevestig as daardie gelofte nog ons erns is.

TWEDE VRAAG: WAT BETEKEN DIE OORWINNING?

(2) Wat beteken dit — dan dat God aan ons voorouers die oorwinning by Bloedrivier geskenk het, en hoe kan ons aan daardie oorwinning deel hê? Charl Celliers self het dit só gestel „dat die eer van God daardeur verheerlik sal word, dat aan Hom die roem en die eer van die oorwinning gegee moet word.” (Preller, d.w. 251). Celliers sê nie alleen dat die roem en die eer van die oorwinning aan God gegee sou word nie, maar dat die eer van God daardeur verheerlik moet word dat aan Hom die roem en die eer van die oorwinning gegee word. Volgens die woorde van ons gelofte moet ons nie alleen aan God die eer van die oorwinning gee nie, ons moet dit ook op die regte manier aan die Here gee.

Om die roem van die oorwinning aan die Here te gee is, menslik gesproke, moeilik genoeg. Die neiging is steeds daar om te sê dat die Here 'n mens „gehelp” het, dat Hy iets toegevoeg het tot 'n mens se vernuf, sy planne help verweselik het; of selfs om te sê dat die „hulp van die Here” die verdienste van 'n mens of van sy planne bewys. Maar om die roem van 'n oorwinning aan die Here te gee beteken om vir 'n mens geen verdienste, niks, vir so 'n oorwinning op te eis nie. Om hier te roem in die dapperheid, godvrugtigheid, vreesvernuf, beginselvastheid, volksetrouheid e.d.m. van ons voorvaders is om „al roemende dwaas” te word. (II Kor. 12).

As 'n mens hier wil roem moet dit in ons swakhede wees, in die onverdienstelike en verwerplike van ons en ons vadere. In II Kor. 12 lees ons hoe ook Paulus die Here smeek om hom te verlos van 'n „doring in die vlees”. „Hieroor”, sê hy, „het ek die Here driemaal gebid, dat (die duiwel) van my moet wyk. En (die

Here) het vir my gesê: My genade is vir jou genoeg, want My krag word in swakheid volbring. Baie liever sal ek dus in my swakhede roem sodat die krag van Christus in my kan woon... want as ek swak is, dan is ek sterk”. (II Kor. 12:7-10).

As dit moeilik is om aan die Here die roem van die oorwinning te gee, dan is dit nog veel moeiliker om aan Hom die roem op só 'n manier te gee dat Sy eer daardeur verheerlik word. Immers, hierdie Genade van God word in ure van benoudheid van Hom afgebied, en die geroep „uit dieptes van elende” is alleen dan geoorloof en sinvol as 'n mens ook op die regte manier bid. (Vgl. Matt. 6 : 7, 8) Eers moet 'n mens 'n oorwinning oor jouself in 'n gebedstryd behaal; anders is dit goddelastelik om te sê dat die eer van God daardeur verheerlik sou word dat toevallig een mens of volk die oorwinning oor 'n ander in 'n wêreldse stryd behaal. God het 'n behae, nie in brandoffers nie, maar in 'n rein hart, en daarom „wat sal dit 'n mens baat as hy die hele wêreld oorwin, en skade lei aan sy siel?” (Mark. 8 : 37). As 'n mens dus deel wil hê aan die oorwinning van ons voorouers by Bloedrivier, moet hy eers deel hê aan die oorwinning van die getewiges oor hulself in die stryd wat voor God in die gebed gevoer word.

Wat so 'n oorwinning oor 'n mens self in die gebed beteken, vertel Jesus vir ons. „Wie agter my aan wil kom, moet homself verloën en sy kruis opneem en My volg. Want elkeen wat sy siel wil red, sal dit verloor; maar elkeen wat sy siel om My ontwil en om die ewangelle ontwil verloor, hy sal dit red.” (Mark. 8 : 34, 35). Jesus sê hier dat 'n oorwinning in die gebedstryd voor God alleen daarin kan lê dat 'n mens hierdie stryd voor God verloor. Dit is nie maklik nie. Om saam met Paulus te aanvaar en God daarvoor te dank dat Sy Genade vir ons genoeg is, beteken tog om aan onself te sterwe. Dit is moeilik genoeg wanneer ons God om 'n guns smeek en Hy in Sy Alwyse Raad dit van ons weerhou. Miskien is dit nog 'n bietjie moeiliker wanneer ons gebed verhoor word en ons dan nog in stilte daaraan moet vashou, dat God se Genade vir ons genoeg is. Oneindig moeiliker is dit egter wanneer God van ons eis dat ons ons siele moet verloor sodat dit tog uiteindelik gered kan word. Ek weet nie hoe om hierdie woorde anders te verstaan nie as dat God van ons eis dat ons ook ons ideale, daardie dinge wat vir ons mooi en edel is en wat koers en rigting aan ons bestaan gee, op die altaar moet lê terwille van die Evangelie nie. Ook hier lei God ons waar ons nie wil wees nie. Petrus moes dit eenmaal ondervind toe God hom in 'n droom beveel het om die „beste” tradisies van sy volk te verontsaam om saam met onbesnede mense aan tafel te gaan sit, terwille van die Evangelie. (Handel. l.e.v.). Om so daardie karakter van 'n mens prys te gee wat deur jou volk geprys word mag dwaas wees

voor mense. Dit KAN dwaas voor God wees om daaraan vas te hou en daarin te roem asof dit iets besonder is, wat God self nie eers van ons sou kon eis nie.

ONVOORWAARDELIKE OORGAWA AAN GOD

Om deel te neem aan die Gelofte van ons voorouers en „hulle” oorwinning te gedenk beteken dus dat ons ons volkome moet oorgee aan die Here, en dat ons selfs nie ons eie persoonlike ideale, selfs nie ons voortbestaan of die voortbestaan van ons volk van die altaar mag weerhou nie. Teenoor daardie mense wat waarsku dat ons die woord van God hier nie al te ernstig moet neem nie, omdat die Christendom sal verdwyn as Christene hulle bestaan op die spel stel, moet ons vashou aan die woord dat God self sy kerk in stand sal hou.

Ook vir ons as mense moet die lewe Christus wees, en die sterwe wins. (Fil. 1 : 21) En dit alles terwille van die Evangelie, want die Here sluit sy vermaning dat ons ons kruis moet opneem en Hom volg só af: „Want elkeen wat Hom skaam vir My en My woede in hierdie oorspelige en sondige geslag, vir Hom sal die Seun van die mens Hom ook skaam wanneer hy kom in die heerlijkheid van sy Vader...” (Mark. 8 : 38). Ons moet lewende getuies van God in hierdie land wees; ook dit is ingesluit in die verbond van Charl Celliers, al beskaam dié woord ook ons volk op die weë wat ons wil inslaan. Alleen as ons ook dit wil doen, sal die Gelofte van Charl Celliers ons erns wees.

DERDE VRAAG: WIE HET DEEL AAN DIE GELOFTE?

(3) Miskien moet ons nog 'n vraag aan ons self stel voor God om vas te stel of hierdie gelofte nog ons erns is. Wie is diegene wat aan die verbond van ons voorouers deel het? Celliers self het gesê dat die 400 manne wat voor die slag van Bloedrivier saam was aan „hulle kinders sou sê om deel te hê aan die gelofte tot 'n gedagtenis ook vir ons opkomende geslagte.” (Preller, l.a.p.). Sou dit beteken dat alleen die kinders en kindskinders van daardie 400 manne deel sou hê aan die gelofte en die verbond met die Here? Dat ons vandag hier bemekeer is dui daarop dat ons dit nie só verstaan nie; min van ons mense hier in die Oos-Kaap is direkte afstammelinge van die 400.

En só moet dit ook wees. Ons het gesien hoe in die Ou Testament 'n verbond met die Here ook steeds ingesluit het dat families en stamme en volke voor God beloof het om broeders en bloedverwante te word. God self skep vir hulle 'n nuwe toestand van „vrede” op grond van Sy verordeninge om dit moontlik te maak. Maar ons het ook gesien hoe Israel hierdie verbond steeds interpreteer het as iets wat hulle as „stamsenote na die vlees” bo andere volke en nasies gestel het: en ons het gesien hoedat die Here in die nuwe verbond hierdie

Vervolg op Bls. 7

PRO VERITATE

Redaksioneel

„DIE TYD IS NIE RYP NIE”

Die spreke van die Christen moet steeds 'n verantwoorde en 'n verantwoordelike wees. Ook die vraag hoe, wanneer en of daar hoegenaamd gesprek moet word, veral oor omstrede sake en in tye van emosionele hoogspanning, verdien die ernstige en biddende oorweging van elke Christen. Salomo herinner ons in sy betoog oor die bepaalde uur daaraan dat daar „'n tyd is om te swyg en 'n tyd om te spreek”. En onse Here Jesus self ag dit nodig om sekere dinge van sy dissipels te weerhou omdat hulle op daardie tydstip dit nie kon dra nie (Joh. 16 : 12) en Hy gee verder 'n duidelike voorbeeld van swye op die regte tyd as Hy voor Pilatus weier om te antwoord op die valse beskuldigings teen Hom ingebring (Matth. 27 : 14). Daardeur het Hy ons geleer dat die motief vir ons stilswye sowel as ons spreke altyd moet wees die bevordering van Gods eer en koninkryk en die bevestiging van die waarheid van Gods Woord. Nooit het Christus gesprek of geswyg ter wille van eie eer of voordeel nie. As die Christen se stilswye dus veroorsaak word deur vrees vir aantasting van sy populariteit of prestige of die benadeling van eie posisie en voorregte, beteken dit dat sodanige Christen besig is om sy profetiese getuïenis te verloor of te verloën, en vertraag hy sodoende die deurwerking van die waarheid na die wêreld. Dan word die verweer dat die tyd nie ryp is nie, 'n ontduiking van ons hoogste verantwoordelikheid om te getuig in ooreenstemming met Gods wil.

Die beslissing om te spreek of te swyg mag dus nie afhanklik gestel word van die vraag of sodanige getuïenis „suksesvol” sal wees of nie, of dit aanvaar word of nie. Selfs al sou ons as Christene ander nie meer kan oortuig nie, word ons steeds geroepe om te getuig. As aanvaarding deur die menigte die maatstaf moet wees vir ons getuïenis, dan moes die profete van ouds nooit gesprek het nie, dan wat die tyd totaal onryp vir Paulus om teen bedrieging en vervolging in te getuig van stad tot stad. Die toets vir die Christen in beide spreke en swye is dus altyd of dit 'n opdrag van God is, of dit gaan om die eer van God en die uitbreiding van sy koninkryk, en of die spreke die waarheid van Gods Woord vertolk en bevestig. Waar dit die geval is en die opdrag van God deur Sy Gees kom om te spreek en te getuig, daar mag sy kind nie swyg nie, selfs op gevaar af dat sy woord en getuïenis misverstaan, verdraai of verwater word.

Watter geweldige verantwoordelikheid rus daar op elke Christen, en by name op elke Evangeliedienaar, om in hierdie jaar steeds eerlik en ootmoedig maar onverskrokke die volle waarheid van Gods verlossende Woord te laat spreek — ongeag die gevolge — en toe te pas op alle lewensterreine!

Editorial

ECUMENICAL MEETINGS IN AFRICA

The important role which the Church of Christ, under God's guidance, is going to play in the future of Christianity in Africa, is illustrated by the increasing number of ecumenical gatherings now taking place on our continent. When this issue of our paper appears the All-Africa Christian Youth Assembly in Nairobi (Dec. 28th—Jan. 7th) as well as the Conference on Christian Education in a changing Africa (Dec. 29th—Jan. 10th) in Salisbury, S.R., will have been held. A third gathering of vital importance will be the All-African Church Conference to be held in Kampala, Uganda from the 20th—30th April 1963. All these conferences, as well as subsequent ones, are the irrefutable proof that the leadership is deeply conscious of the fact that such united consultation, study, planning, prayer and action is the only way of making an effective impact on Anti-Christian forces in Africa.

It is with deep regret that we note that not all churches — especially those from the Afrikaans side in South Africa — are actively participating in this forward movement of the church in Africa. May we express the sincere hope that it will still be possible to draw into these discussions all the churches of Reformed tradition, even if this only means their representation through a number of observers. For it is becoming increasingly clear that no church which keeps aloof or refuses to participate in such encounters can hope to increase its evangelizing influence and its missionary impact. In a world which moves to a universal destiny every Christian must realise that the strength of a church does not lie in spiritual isolation but in Christian participation.

At the same time the churches and organizations involved should realise that there is no reason for selfcomplacency in reckoning that the presence of a few church leaders will fulfill the needs of the day. Much more is required: to drive home

THE GRACE OF JESUS CHRIST

THE GRACE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST
BE WITH YOU ALL

REVELATION 22 : 21.

Familiar words. Words with a homely ring for Christians. Words used more often than any others by the Christian minister. Words with the Bible closes.

Familiar — but their very familiarity may help to hide their true meaning. We can only grasp the full and rich significance of the grace of Christ when we think of the varied meanings of the word "grace". Its primary meaning — often forgotten, but very important — comes both from Athens and Jerusalem, from both Greek and Hebrew thought. It means beauty, beauty in its basic essence, that is, harmony. In Jesus Christ two elements are blended in harmony, such harmony as is not to be found elsewhere, the elements of tenderness and fiery anger, deep compassion for human misery and burning indignation in the presence of hypocrisy and injustice.

The beauty of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all: the tear and the flame. The tear of infinite sympathy for those who need you, whoever they may be. The flame of indignation wherever you find injustice and oppression, either in church or community. May the tear never be dried and the flame never be extinguished.

The second meaning of the word "grace" is the more familiar one: the unmerited favour of God, that free gift of God's love which he gave us through Jesus Christ, his incredible, miraculous mercy to us all. Therefore the grace, the unmerited favour, the divine mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Never, never forget that through all the passing minutes you live only because God is merciful, only because God pours out his holy forgiveness on you, on me, sinful, all too imperfect beings

to every Christian in every congregation and parish the real meaning and importance of these encounters. Where churches fail to achieve this, the message of Christ for His church will be lost. In this sense the most important and lasting value of such meetings lies in the manner in which their meaning is carried over to the local church.

May God use these conferences to enrich His church with a wider vision, a deeper sense of mission and a greater willingness to serve the needs of all the peoples of Africa!

Die Christen se verhouding

• Vervolg van bladsy 1

gregasie so reageer. Hul aanvaar bloot passief die onvermydelike. Maar dis 'n soort reaksie wat ons oral op aarde t.o.v. baie verskillende spesifieke veranderinge teenkom onder baie groepe of individue. Naas hierdie houding kry ons 'n ander een wat ons kan aandui as 'n positiewe aanvaarding. Die term klink mooier as die houding wat dit aandui. Dit is die houding van hulle wat verandering verwelkom as 'n geleentheid om eie belang te bevorder. Daar is miljoene sulke mense in Afrika en in elke deel van die wêreld. Verandering word hier verwelkom vir wat jy as individu daaruit vir jouself kan kry sy dit dan op sosiale, ekonomiese of politieke gebied. Dit is hoofsaaklik 'n selfsugtige reaksie.

Daarteenoor staan die houding teenoor verandering wat ons ook as positiewe aanvaarding kan aandui maar waar-

deur verandering verwelkom word as 'n geleentheid vir die verwesenliking van 'n voller en meer bevredigende lewe vir die mensheid.

DIE ROEPING VAN DIE GELOWIGE

Dit is byna onnodig om te sê dat hierdie laaste reaksie die voor die hand liggende vir die Christen is. Hy is gewillig om veranderinge te insleer en hervormings te ondersteun wat die bande van honger en armoede verbreek en geregtigheid en vryheid bevorder.

Hy is bewus daarvan dat die gawes van God vir die diens van die kwaad aangevend kan word maar hy is ook steeds bewus daarvan dat hierdie wêreld Gods wêreld is. Die gelowige het 'n lewende roeping t.o.v. die lewe van die gemeenskap in al sy fasette. Hy mag hierdie taak en roeping nie ontduik nie. Die houding van die Christen moet steeds die wees van 'n posi-

MEDITATION

God gives us his grace, his mercy. Therefore may that grace and mercy mark all our dealings to others. The governor of a large prison has hanging in his study these words engraved on a beautiful piece of polished woods "Every man is fighting a hard battle, therefore be merciful!" You who live by the mercy of God, be merciful to others. Err on the side of magnanimity. Let your mind cherish no dark suspicions. Hold every man innocent until he is proved guilty. And when he is proved guilty, have mercy. May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ come to others through you.

And also "grace" has the meaning of strength. We who live by Christ's grace are by it made strong to travel as pilgrims together, as crusading and loyal brothers in the Church of God. May his strength be with you all in moments of deep sorrow when you stumble through the valley of thick gloom, strength to put steel into your hope that there will be a dawning, a brightness beyond the darkness, a joy that comes with morning. When the last measure of strength — your strength — is drained away and exhausted, may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all to help you keep on keeping on.

But you will need this gracious strength most of all in your times of prosperity and joy, that you become not forgetful, you will need it above all in times of triumph and success to keep you from pride and conceit, to keep you humble. You will need it too to help you do little things as though they were great, so that, as Pascal said, you may come to do great things as though they were little, through the abundant grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In 1963, for myself and for all comrades on life's pilgrimage in the great companionship of the Church militant I offer this prayer "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with us all."

DR. DAI KITAGAWA AND
MR. FRED VAN WYK
VISIT CEYLON

The gathering of the Third Assembly at New Delhi brought many important visitors to Ceylon, who stayed for short or long periods, and all of whom brought welcome contacts and shared thoughts. Most important was the visit of Dr. Daisuke Kitagawa who, at the request of the National Christian Council, spent six weeks in Ceylon studying our communal problems. His visit terminated with a consultation with the N.C.C. on November 3rd and an important seminar, under the Chairmanship of the Hon. Mr. T. S. Fernando, on November 11th when Dr. Kitagawa and Mr. Fred van Wyk of the South African Institute of Race Relations led our thinking on the nature, cause and cure of

tiewe maar onderskeidende deelname gebaseer op meegemoet vir sy medemens en 'n onwrikbare vertroue in die liefdevolle wysheid van God. Ook t.o.v. die Staat het die Kerk hier 'n duidelike roeping en plig wat hy nie mag ontduik of wat hom nie ontsê mag word nie.

UNITY, EQUALITY AND STRENGTH

CHURCH UNION THROUGH EVANGELISM

It is at this point that I would call the members of this Assembly to examine our motives in promoting union with other churches and societies. We have heard much of the scandal of our divisions; but if our purpose in joining with other churches is only to give us greater strength, then we are guilty of a most vulgar form of spiritual body-building.

On the other hand, if we are prepared to use our God-given powers of creation and organisation in the service of the establishment of the kingdom, of God, let us be united with other Christians in this great task.

If we feel and believe that union with other churches is right in the eyes of God, let us pray that God will help us to use our powers of judgment aright. If we feel that the love of God in us goes unrequited because of the limited sphere within which we serve, let us not hold our hands in dismay, but let that love of God become a driving power, sending us out to serve and sacrifice ourselves for the beloved children of God. Let our witness be the unified message of the Word of God to people sitting in darkness and sin.

At this Assembly much will be heard of Adams United Theological College at Lovedale. The college is being built on the slopes of Sandile's Kop. Rising above the crest of the hill is a blue stone memorial to Dr. James Stewart, companion to Dr. David Livingstone during his Zambesi journeys. Dr. Stewart's grave is below the memorial, and the wording on the grave reminds the reader that in 1877 he took him four men to establish a mission in Nyassaland in memory of Dr. Livingstone. One of the men was William Koyi, husband of the daughter of the Rev. Timothy van Rooyen, one of our Coloured ministers of Phillip-ton. I have often wondered about the price she paid so that her husband could preach the gospel of Jesus Christ in Central Africa. The amazing discovery of that mission into the interior was that the four evangelists found that certain tribes in Nyassaland could understand the Xhosa language of the Eastern Cape. The discovery gave them a point of unity which became an instrument in the preaching of the gospel.

Freedom can create a glorious atmosphere in which men and women can decide to follow Christ. But it must be controlled by unity, which in turn is motivated by the love of God.

2. Equality in Stewardship

(a) Escape from Equality

I have dwelt rather longer than I should have on the point of the inter-relation of freedom and unity in Christian thinking and action. But the pattern has been set for our thoughts on equality or parity, as certain people prefer to term it.

Ever since certain citizens of the Cape reacted violently to the idea of equality over a century ago, and packed their worldly goods on ox-wagons and headed northwards, equality has been an unmentionable subject. The cry of "geen gelykheid" still resounds among the "koppies" of the interior. What makes it hard for a

Christian to come to a sound judgment in this matter is the level of the platform from which one politician cries for parity on one side, and the height of the "koppie" from which another politician declaims "no equality" on the other side.

What I cannot understand is why so many of us think that we are the only people in the world who have to face this problem of equality. The newspapers have recently indicated that the problem is able to take quite violent form in the southern states of North America. But long before Little Rock became an easy news item, there was a caste struggle in India, one group would not let their girls marry into another social group in China, and certain Australians were fussy about the criminal records of the ancestors of their future in-laws.

(b) An ancient, yet modern, problem

The subject of equality is by no means a new debating point, nor can it claim to be exclusively local. The ancient Greeks spent many hours arguing about the distinction between "arithmetic" equality and "geometric" equality. I regret that I cannot give you the answer! The whole argument was academic, because the Greek state depended on the slaves or helots for their existence.

For the Jews equality was a religious problem. For them superiority lay in the fact that they had been chosen by God for a special task in life. If they were superior, others were inferior and there could be no equality.

For many centuries the Christianity of Europe was quite happy in continuing to live within the traditions handed on from Greek culture and from Jewish beliefs. It was the Prime Minister of England, Mr. Ewart Gladstone, who said that the love of equality had made practically no impact on the political system of his country. England loved her aristocrats. Since his day Europe has survived two tragic wars as a result of which many deeply-rooted ideas have been eradicated from popular thinking. Thus when the British Labour party was looking for a title for its policy statement in 1936, it chose the words "Towards Equality". The party had been in power for five years. All the socialist theories had been moulded by the responsibilities of office and their political ideas had been put to the test. But they were not satisfied with laying the foundations of the welfare state that Britain has become. They saw their future task as the achievement of equality. So the problem of equality or inequality is both ancient and modern.

(c) Inequalities fixed by prejudice

It is when people thought-

lessly associate certain inequalities with particular groupings of citizens that our way of life has to be looked at again.

I heard recently of an interesting comment made in the country of Liberia. This independency was established on the coast of West Africa so that American Negroes could return to Africa to a Zion of their own. It was to be the solution to all the embarrassing race-problems of the southern states of North America. For many years the American diplomat in Liberia was always a Negro American. Then it was decided, for no particular reason, to send a white-skinned American to be diplomat in Liberia "Ah," said certain Liberians, "at last America is treating us with equality. She is sending us one of her own men, not one of the men she regards as inferior". There is something rather sad in that comment, because behind it lies an unnecessary sense of inferiority.

This is the latter part of an address delivered at the 1962 Assembly of the Congregational Union of South Africa by the Chairman, Rev. G. Owen Lloyd.

(d) God is the Judge of Equality

It is at this point where prejudice turns inward, that it becomes necessary to pass on the reminder that all proponents of equality still have to ask the question: "In whose sight are we going to be equal?" Logically, the equal cannot judge one another. There must be someone superior, someone stronger, someone more competent, someone with greater good, who can declare the achievement of equality. This is where religion enters into the picture and we Christians say that we believe in God, the Eternal Judge, whose will is declared in the Bible and who revealed Himself and his ways, to mankind in Jesus Christ of Nazareth.

There are some who will say that the question of choosing between equality and inequality is evaded by bringing God into the picture. But what are the alternatives? Either you believe that life is a matter of chance in which the lucky person gains power and forces his will on his fellow men, or you ignore the patent facts of life that men are not equal, and you force them by education and law into a predetermined mould.

The Christian view of life recognises differences in social position, in power and in capacity. It accepts these differences as a condition which has been established by the inscrutable will of God. But it does not stop there. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit of the same God, it sets about the task of changing these conditions by re-building personalities into a fuller life and by developing a mutual sense of obligation between neighbours.

The very first story of the Bible, the story of Adam and

Eve deals with the problem of equality of knowledge. One of the purposes of the story was to show that man had no right to the omniscience of God. Adam and Eve were expressly told not to eat of the tree of knowledge. They disobeyed and man's thirst for knowledge has never been quenched. Man tried to make himself equal to God in knowledge and learned very early that he had to accept the fact that there would always be a person who would know more, or know better, and that in the end knowledge is a revelation from God. Man learned to accept one of the first inequalities of life. That sense of inequality has created magnificent universities, has brought into being vast educational systems and has spawned millions of books. Man has accepted his birth as an ignorant babe, but has not been satisfied with his ignorant state, particularly in those countries where Christianity has been given a chance to teach a better way of life.

The problem of the inequality of knowledge is but one instance of the fact that we have to accept certain forms of inequality as the normal condition of life, but that we can do something about it as Christians.

(e) Equality of Stewardship

There is however, one equality that the Christian calls for and that is the equality of stewardship — the equal right of all to have the opportunity to serve God under a personal covenant of service.

The modern materialist seeks his equality in the freedom to live as he chooses. But this very freedom contains the explosive elements of conflict that will level down the heights of achievement and leadership. There is a tragic inappropriateness in the shallow insistence on equality, when what is required is devoted leadership. One cannot help feeling that there is something inconsistent in the strident demand that everyone must count for one, and nobody for more than one. Catch-penny phrases like "One man, one vote" become meaningless when they are considered in the light of the realities of inequality. A newspaper sub-editor recently worked out a political equation which reads: "One man plus one vote equals one party". What starts as equality ends with inequality. Surely it would be more sensible to accept inequality and work under the guidance of God towards the equality that He will grant in His good time.

That is the message of the parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard. The story contains a pertinent admixture of equalities and inequalities that annoy some and please others. As such it is a very true picture of life. The promise of equal wages, was misinterpreted as inequality. The equality of time served brought forth an equal wage because of the factor of generosity and kindness.

The important thing to remember about the parable is that it is not only a picture of life. It is also a picture of God. If we are interested in God, the parable makes sense. If we are only interested in wages and matters of equality and inequality, we shall never

be satisfied. But if we accept God as Master, these things have a way of working themselves out.

The genius of Christianity lies in the direction of creating equalities in an atmosphere where the inequalities of life are accepted as necessary for the moment, but changeable under the guidance of God. It is co-operation with the guidance of God that is the key to the whole position.

3. The Excellence of Christian Love

We have seen so far how freedom becomes unreal unless it is controlled by unity. It has also been argued that equality is meaningless if there is no recognised standard of judgment. That leaves us with the question of what standard of judgment we have to apply to our lives.

(a) Deplorable modern standards

One of the features of modern life is mass-communication in which the radio, films and the press play prominent parts. Many of the controllers of these instruments of popular thinking say openly that it is their task to find out what the public wants and then to sell it to them. As a result our Sunday papers publish trivialities, the most popular films are banal in the extreme and the radio serves to provide background music in many a household. The ultimate result of this attitude is that the politician becomes a party stooge, the artist an overdraft-conscious showman, the journalist a nose-parker and the popular preacher a salesman of second-hand thoughts.

On the one hand, the advertising agencies can be blamed for reducing our standards of excellence to the lowest common denominator of effortless acceptance. Only rarely does one hear of a publisher refusing an advertisement because of some fault in the commodity to be advertised. It was most refreshing to read this year of a popular magazine that is refusing to accept any more advertisements for tobacco because of the association of tobacco smoking with lung cancer.

But one cannot blame the media of communication only for the lack of excellence in our standards of judgment. There is a fundamental human laziness that prefers pictures to words, that reads comic-strips rather than editorials, that chooses the film before the novel, that covers up inadequate shortcuts with the word "efficiency" and in the end has no time for God, the Creator of the universe.

(b) The more excellent way

Christianity presents to all these "the more excellent way" described by Paul. For him the more excellent way was the way of self-sacrificial love. In a world that accepted slavery he preached freedom to serve Christ within the kingdom of God. In a society of inequalities, he proclaimed equality within the church of Christ.

If he, the greatest of all missionaries, were to travel round the world in a jet airliner today, he would still recognise the Hebrew insight in-

getref dat laasgenoemdes in die verste verte nie so 'n verdoemende gees het as die blanke studente en die Amerikaanse negers nie. Vir hierdie mense gaan dit net om één ding, soos hulle dit noem, die uitsluiting van „opportunities” bloot op grond van kleur. En wat van alles wat ons vir die nie-blanke, insluitende skole en universiteite vir hulself, doen? Vir dié groep is dit 'n tevergeefse vraag; solank ander universiteite, werkgeleenthede en die stemmas vir mense op grond van kleur geweier word. Die Suid-Afrikaanse benadering van differensiasie en paralele ontwikkeling is vir hulle net nog die bestendiging van kleur-diskriminasie en gevolglik verdoemlik.

Dit is uit hierdie groep wat 'n nigerstudent my gedurende vraetyd, ek kan amper sê, toegesnou het: „Julle is niks anders as 'n klomp Nazis nie!” Om die kennelike spanning te breek het ek tot vermaak van die gehoor geantwoord: „Nee, my vriend, want dan sal daar nie mense oorgeby het met wie ons 'n rasseprobleem kon gehad het nie.”

DIE VRIENDE.

Maar Suid-Afrika het ook sy groot vriendekring. Onder hierdie groep tel veral hulle wat sowel van Afrika as van die wesenlike probleem kennis dra. Ek was gelukkig om 'n groot aantal van hierdie persone te ontmoet. Hulle besef dat Suid-Afrika geen kolonie is nie en dat sy eintlike probleem soos etlike van hulle dit uitgedruk het, in „wit probleem” is. Hier is vir hulle 'n paar miljoen „wit Afrikane”, wat geen ander tuiste het nie. Hierdie kerkers ag die huidige kreet van „een man een stem” dan ook belaglik en in stryd met alle realiteit.

Maar ook onder hulle, van wie etlike reeds herhaalde male Afrika en Suid-Afrika besoek het, kon ons niemand vind, om die minste te sê, wat aanvaar dat ons inderdaad besig is om die kleurkwessie op te los. Want selfs al sou ons redeneer, veral die persone uit Amerika, van die Bantustans enigszins 'n sukses maak, het ons daarmee in die lig van die Kuba-krisis ons grense nie beveilig nie, en die eintlike kleur-probleem in Suid-Afrika nog nie besleg nie. Hoewel dié mense so van ons verskil, erken hulle die uiters moeilike karakter van ons probleem, en bly simpatiek hoop dat 'n oplossing vir beide groepe in Suid-Afrika gevind sal word.

DIE LES VIR DIE KERK.

Genoeg om te toon, enersyds hoe totaal alleen Suid-Afrika met sy benadering van die rasseprobleem staan, andersyds hoe die wêreld daarbuite intens besig is met hom. Die totale indruk, waarmee mens terugkeer, is dat die twintigste eeu 'n kleurstryd ken soos die 18de en 19de eeue 'n klassestryd gehad het.

En as daar iets hieruit te leer is, dan moet die kerk van Christus hieruit leer dat hy in daardie dag goed probeer doen het, sonder om die regte ding te doen. Eers het die kerk afsydig gestaan, ondanks die smarte van die verdrukke klasse. Toe het dit begin filantropiese pogings aanwend, sonder om tot die wortel van die kwaad deur te steek. Dit het berus in toestande, sonder om profeties reg en geregtigheid te preek. Dit is juis hier, wat 'n Karl Marx die hef uit die hand kon neem het, en vir die verdruktes gedoen het, wat die kerk versuim het. Dit is 'n

les van die geskiedenis, wat ons nie durf verontagsaam nie.

ONS GROOT BEHOEFTE.

Dat ons hier met 'n probleem te doen het, wat byna naas die atoombom die kenmerkende probleem van die twintigste eeu geword het, is beswaarlik te ontken. Die ganse wêreld is daarmee besig. Dit word nog meer intens gemaak deur die verskrikontwaakte Afrika. Hier vind mens 'n brandende nasionalisme, wat wel op menige punt gekorrigeer moet word, maar wat niemand hulle durf verwyt of ontsê nie. En die opslag en mag wat hierdie wilde en onvolwasse nasionalisme deur blote getalle in die Verenigde Volke verkry het, maak dit van wêreldbelang en wêreldgevaar. Dit twintigste eeu stel geen groter eise nie dan dat hierdie nasionalisme sal aanvaar, verstaan, opgevoed en geleer word. Maar watter ontsaglike probleme is daarmee nie gemeen nie. En vir geen volk rask dit so intens as juis vir Suid-Afrika nie. Dit juis bring my by die vraag, waarom ek die las op my hart voel as seun van my geliefde land om oor dit alles te skryf? Dit is gebore uit die oortuiging dat 'n overheid alleen nooit so 'n probleem kan oplos nie. Trouens die overheid is Regeerder, maar ook Verteenwoordiger van die volk, wat hom daar plaas. My oortuiging is dat ons hier almal saam moet werk. Hier moet veel gebid, gedink en geleer word.

GEMEENSAPLIKE BESINNING VAN ANDERSDENKENDES.

Wat dan? Ek is bevrees dat ons politiek-gevirteerde toestand beswaarlik geleentheid bied vir gemeenskaplike besinning. Ons bly gedurig in kampe

opgesluit, en verstaan so bitter min daarvan dat mense met verskillende oortuiginge tog as vriende en medewerkers om 'n ronde tafel van gesprek gesamentlik arbei. Meestal praat mense in ons land met dieselfde oortuiginge saam, en neem die gesprekke meer die vorm aan van 'n voorafuitgemaakte standpunt wat bevestig of verdedig moet word. Wie daarmee verskil word ergens geklassifiseer en klaar! Niks kan meer noodlottig wees nie. Daarom pleit ek hier vir gespreks-groepe van mense wat met mekaar verskil. Maar om dit te doen is nodig dat ons mekaar aanvaar, na mekaar luister en weet dat die ander man se oortuiging vir hom net so 'n heilige saak is as wat myne vir my is. Ons voer niks uit met mekaar te beveg nie. Ons het mekaar te nodig. In so 'n stryd kan dit alte gemaklik gebeur dat ons handel soos swak voetbalspelers; hulle speel nie die bal nie maar mekaar. Ek pleit vir ware gespreks-groepe van mense wat met mekaar verskil. So alleen kan ons hierdie gemeenskaplike nood en taak dien.

Waar mens eerlik is met feite, opreg in jou beskouing en lojtaal aan jou volk, het ek in die afgelope maande gesien, gaan die mees onverwagte deure oop. Ek het gevind dat dit werk om jou teenstanders te ontmoet met die volgende inleiding: „I refuse to be flooded, because I fight nobody; I refuse to be despised, because I am loyal to my country; I refuse to be denied, because, as I see it, I am faithful to truth.”

Ook in Suid-Afrika kan hierdie gesindheid deure oopgooi en botsende groepe saambring.

Daarvoor pleit ek hier!

THE CHURCH IN AFRICA

LITURGIESE ORDE VAN EREDIENS IN NED. GEREK. KERK DEUR ALGEMENE SINODE VASGESTEL.

Sedert die Raad van die Kerke enige jare gelede sekere aanbevelings t.o.v. die liturgiese orde van ons erediens voor die sinodes gelê het, is uiteenlopende besluite geneem en het daar verwarring in baie gemeentes ontstaan. Dit het daarop neergekom dat baie gemeentes en predikante eenvoudig elkeen hulle eie liturgiese orde gevolg het.

Nou het die Algemene Sinode die liturgiese orde vir die hele kerk vasgestel en ons vertrou dat dit deur al die kerkrade en predikante gevolg sal word. Ons gee hieronder die orde vir die Oggenddiens soos deur die Sinode bepaal:

1. Votum.
2. Seëngroet.
3. Lofsang.
4. Lesing van die Wet. (Sang: Ges. 59 vs. 11). Gepaste tekse soos bv. 1 Joh. 1 : 9; Eseeg. 36 : 26 en 27; Rom. 8 : 1.
5. Geloofbelydenis (mag deur die gemeente hardop gesê word).
6. Sang: Ges. 52 vs. 11.
7. Skriflesing.
8. Gebed.
9. Sang.
10. Preek.
11. Gebed (met of sonder die Onse Vader).
12. Kollekte (koor).
13. Slotsang.
14. Seën.

Die orde van die aanddiens is dieselfde behalwe dat die Wet en belydenis na eie keuse gelees of gelaat kan word.

Dit is tog noodsaaklik dat lidmate wat dienste in verskil-

lende gemeentes moet bywoon nie deur willekeurige afwyking van die liturgiese orde verwar of selfs ontstig sal word nie.

„Die Voorligter”,
Des. 1962.

IS CANADA BECOMING A CATHOLIC COUNTRY UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA

The United Church of Canada's General Council, highest court of the denomination, held its 20th biennial meeting during nine mid-September days in London, Ont. Nearly 300 commissioners — about equally divided between ministers and laymen—attended.

After the opening communion service Hugh A. McLeod, the retiring moderator, gave an address which was a masterly record of his stewardship and a shrewd appraisal of the state of both church and nation. On the latter subject he rocked his listeners and earned a wide series of press, radio and TV accounts. The retiring moderator pointed out that the 1961 decennial census showed that the Roman Catholic Church increased its membership 37 per cent in Canada in the past ten years, while the Canadian population increased only 30 per cent, the United Church 27 per cent and the Anglican Church 17 per cent. McLeod declared that the report foreshadows the day when Canada will be a Catholic-dominated country, and that such a development, master-minded by a monolithic church, would be a threat to liberty.

CONFERENCE ON CHRISTIAN EDUCATION IN A CHANGING AFRICA

From the 29th December, 1962 to the 10th January, 1963 the all Africa Churches Conference has called a Conference on Christian Education in A Changing Africa, at the University College, Salisbury, southern Rhodesia.

In the history of education in Africa the Phelps-Stokes Commissions of 1920-25 marked the end of the pioneering epoch of the Missions and the beginning of planned cooperation between Church and State. The Cambridge Conference of 1952 on Education in what was still British Colonial Africa was the first stage in a new appraisal. The Churches were not so prominent as in 1925, but there was an underlying assumption that the basis of the education being planned was religious and that the Churches, as Voluntary Agencies, still had a major part to play in cooperation with Governments.

In 1961, a Conference on education in Africa was called by Unesco in Addis Ababa. The resulting Addis Ababa plan has begun to revolutionise the pattern of education in Africa. The fundamental tenets of the Addis Ababa Conference suggest that the purpose of education as training for a full life is to enjoy an adequate share in the material benefits of a competent technological state structure, with emphasis on “material” rather than “spiritual”.

Therefore the Churches in Africa are now facing new and far-reaching questions. What Christian insights are available in planning this educational system for a Welfare State? What is the specific contribution the Churches should now make?

These questions will be fully discussed at this Conference on Christian Education. About one hundred and twenty persons, including members of the Christian Churches engaged in education in Africa, members of Mission Boards and Foundations, and educational experts, will meet. In order to prepare for the Conference, a Planning Committee has been set up under the chairmanship of Dr. Donald M'Timkulu, the Secretary of the Provisional Committee of the All Africa Churches Conference.

The Conference will discuss both the policy of Christian Education and the practical steps to be taken by the Churches, over the next ten to twenty years, in their contribution to the educational development of the newly independent countries of Africa.

(Prayer Leaflet, All Africa C. Conference).

Reformed Meeting in Nigeria

The World Alliance of Reformed Churches' executive committee held its first meeting on African soil Aug. 26-30. The meeting, at Ibadan in Nigeria, followed a consultation on the mission of the church in west Africa attended by representatives of Presbyterian and Reformed churches from all over the continent.

The Christian Century
Oct. 17 1962.

DIE KERK IN AFRIKA MEV. J. DE BRUIJN RAPPORTEER:

Ons is dankbaar dat ons die geleentheid gehad het om die inwyding mee te maak van 'n nuwe kerk. As ons sien hoe baie kerke daar elke maand in ons land in gebruik geneem word, is dit niks besonder nie. Dis waar, maar tog is daar by hierdie kerk 'n paar aspekte wat die inwyding wel tot 'n besondere geleentheid gemaak het. In die eerste plek gaan dit om 'n kerk wat 'n unieke plek inneem in die Nederduits

Hervormde Kerk van Afrika. Die Nederlands-sprekende gemeente van hierdie kerk het nou hulle eie kerkgebou in gebruik geneem. Hulle het lank gesukkel met hulle vergaderplekke, maar nou is hulle in die besit van 'n eie, besonder mooie kerkgebou. Dit tweede besonderheid van hierdie kerkgebou is, dat dit gebou is deur die vakmanne onder die lidmate met hulp van die nie-vakmanne, wat opgetree het as houthakkers en waterdraers. Niks as lof vir die pragtige stuk vakmanskap wat hulle gelewer het. Dis beslis die moeite werd om 'n besoek te bring aan die gebou en op Sondagmôre om 10 uur 'n diens mee te maak. Die gebou lê aan Etonweg 4 in Parktown - Johannesburg. en leraar is ds. J. I. G. Knottnerus.

Daar is vroe oor die bestaansreg van so'n kerk. Hoekom sluit die lidmate nie aan by 'n Afrikaans-sprekende kerk nie. In die eerste plek is daar baie Hollanders wat maar tydelik in Suid-Afrika bly, wat hulle nie permanent kom vestig nie. Dit is daar mense wat maar swak kerkgangers is en hulle gloed nie tuis voel in die kerk nie. Tog het hulle soms die behoefte om 'n diens mee te maak, maar kom nie sover dat hulle na 'n Afrikaanse kerk gaan nie. Parte van hulle sou moonlik aansluit by die Engelse kerke, waar hulle miskien ook nie sou tuisvoel nie. Die Nederlands-sprekende gemeente sal dus die meeste van die Hollanders wat van die kerk vervreem is, aantrek. Hulle is dan in die gemeenskap opgeneem, terwyl hulle anders miskien in die grootstad sou verloor geraak het.

Ons sal nie baie sê oor die inwydingsdiens self. Dit was 'n besonder indrukwekkende liturgiese diens, wat deur afgevaardigdes van verskillende Engelse en Afrikaanse kerke bygewoon is. Spesiale vermelding verdien die uitstekende prestasie van die kerkkoor wat aan die diens meegewerk het.

Christian Citizens

• Cont. from page 1

the amenable, those we feel passionately in love with and those we feel neutral to. The injunctions to us in the Johanne writings to love are so very basic to this that we must mention one or two: —

"This is my commandment that you love one another, even as I have loved you"; "He that says he loves God and hates his brother is a liar; for he that loves not his brother whom he has seen cannot love God Whom he has not seen."

It is not for me to expand the N.T. concept of "Love" (agape) as used in these quotations and other parts. But I do want to stress that Christian Love clearly involves caring for the welfare and dignity of all who are affected by what we do or leave undone. This for us in South Africa applies with greater relevance to the groups in our population who have the ability to do things, those who have the voice the vote and privileges. On the other hand, and this applies to my people more, the light of Christian Love being shed upon questions of Christian Citizenship or any group relationships shows that as Christians we cannot write off, not even think of writing off, another person, (mark you I say person irrespective of whether he is Christian or not). His politics and whole world-view may be wrong, unacceptable, or even dangerous but he is still man, and defaced though it may be beyond recognition, still bears the IMAGO DEI.

• Cont. from page 4

to the nature and purpose of God. He would see the Greek sense of reverent curiosity about the universe at work in the beaver-like research of our best scientists. He would appreciate the French capacity for clear logical thought, the German enthusiasm for sustained industry, the British experience of political wisdom, the Russian sense of community and the American achievement in nationhood. What he would say today of India and China would probably not differ much from what he would have said in the first century. Paul would recognise that each nation has made, and is making, some contribution to life on this earth and that in a shrinking world we are all becoming members one of another.

(c) Faith, hope and love

But what would he say of Africa? I believe that he would call on the 52 million Christians in Africa to realise that the time has arrived for them to put into more effective practice the way of Jesus Christ, the more excellent way of love. He would remind them, as he reminded the Christians of Corinth in his great hymn of love, that the day of self-display and self-importance is over; that eloquence, God's gift to the African, should be inspired and disciplined by the spirit of Christian love; that mutual kindness, which is such a happy feature of both African community life and European homestead hospitality, must be motivated by unselfish love rather than by tribal loyalties.

He would speak of faith, hope and love, and remind us all that the greatest excellence of life is still to be found in the love of God as revealed in Jesus Christ. ★

This love perspective, therefore, knows not vengeance, it "blesses those who curse" it. It does not condone evil, and wrong and injustice; it fights against them and seeks to destroy them, but it forgives their perpetrators and sees in them brothers. This, friends, is what we should try to live true to; to hate evil and wrong and injustice done against us and those like us, but not to hate those who do it, instead to love them and forgive them. "Love your enemies; be good to them that harm you." It is not easy!

MOTIVES AND INTENTIONS

It is right, I feel, that after speaking about love and forgiveness we should come to motives and intentions in public and private lives. R. Niebuhr, the American theologian, has very successfully pointed out the subtlety of sin and the devils' ways. He has shown how self-interest, creeping in unconsciously, very often mars many a so-called good work of our Christian heroes and great men. In all our endeavours in backing up certain movements, yea, even movements of reform to the better, it is proper for Christian people to examine their motives and intentions, and find out if they are always controlled by commitment to God's purpose of love for all men. This affects, if you do not see it, how you vote, for whom, what party you back up and why?

"In public life there are available more elaborate rationalizations of pride and self interest and hostility." An examination of our motives and intentions will be backed by our own understanding of the universality and persistence of sin in human life, bringing home to us the truth that no wholly good social or political cause exists. For that reason we shall never go into any socio-political cause with the fanaticism of an idolator.

CHRISTIAN HOPE

When we have done everything in our power and failed, when darkness encompasses

and we are frustrated, let us not forget that God still is and His promises stand from generation to generation: "Heaven and Earth shall pass away but my words shall never pass away" or again "Behold I am with you always even unto the end of the world". He is the good shepherd even when we pass through the valley of the shadow of death.

In the Book of Jeremiah we find what is to me the most telling teaching on Hope in spite of odds and adversity. It is the parable of the Field. (Jeremiah 32 : 1—15).

Yes, whatever happens since God is God, fields "Houses and vineyards shall still be bought in Israel".

For right is right since
God is God
And right the day must
win

To doubt would be
disloyalty
To falter would be sin.

But please note that Christian Hope does not encourage sloth and empty complacency. The Change we hope God will bring about, He can only bring about with us working as His servants' soldiers.

Now I wish I had the time to draw out the relevance of all the foregoing to the South African situation but I cannot. Also I wish I could go together with you through the applications of these factors in the statements on matters of Church and Society of the WCC from Amsterdam to date. Again time does not permit.

But, I will not have done justice to my paper if I shall not give you a few telling quotations from the latest of these Statements. This is the statement of the WCC Assembly at New Delhi (1961). The relevant section is "On Service" the subject in Responsible Society dealing with Freedom Order and Power: Here are the quotations: —

1. "Recognition of the limitations under which Christians must live and work in many nations does not mean that one form of government is as good as another, that Christians can be indifferent to the nature of political in-

stitutions. It is possible for a Christian to live (or die) with integrity under any political system; it is possible for the Church to obey its Lord in all kinds of external circumstances."

2. "Love for the neighbour must move Christians to use whatever opportunities may exist, to work for political institutions which encourage participation by all citizens, and which protect both the person's freedom of conscience and his freedom to express his convictions. No present difficulties justify Christians or Churches in acquiescing in either old or new forms of tyranny."

3. "Christians can never give the State their ultimate loyalty. The Church must always see both nation and state under the judgement as well as the mercy of God as known in Christ. Churches must be prepared for conflicts with the state in any nation and under any political system. They should hope and pray and work for a political system which, within its own structure, expresses its recognition that man is not the creature of the state, that the state is not the Lord of the conscience."

4. "The Church cannot identify itself with any particular economic, social or political system. However, both because of the opportunities afforded by political action for the improvement of conditions and because of many forms of evil and suffering which results from the misuse of political power the Church should encourage the individual Christian to be active in the public life of his country. This is a form of loving service to the neighbour in solidarity with the life of the nations."

I leave it to you to apply these to the South African situation to which you and I belong.

In conclusion I must say something about how this Christian Citizenship we dream of can come... because our title says "of the Future".

Drie Noodsaaklike Vrae

• Vervolg van bladsy 2

verbinding van mens en mens in 'n „hulsgenootskap van die geloof" nie beperk tot één stam of één volk nie. Ook ons is dus nie verbonde aan ons vadere, deelgenote in die gelofte, omdat ons hulle „kinders of stamgenote na die vlees" is nie.

Die nuwe Israel is 'n Israel na die Gees, en ons bloeds- en bodem-gemeenskap met Charl Celliers en sy manne is nie deurslaggewend vir ons deelhê aan hulle gelofte nie. Soos ons gesien het was ons vadere daar bymekaar, nie as Afrikaners nie, nie as volkgenote nie, maar as sondears wat uit „dieptes van ellende" God om Genade gesmeek het, 'n Genade wat vir hulle genoeg moes wees. Dat ons Afrikaners is is iets onbelangriks en nie ter sake nie as dit gaan om deelname aan daardie gelofte: Ons het daar deel aan, nie as hulle kinders nie, maar as „kinders van die belofte" (Rom. 9 : 8), as lidmate van 'n algemene en Heilige Kerk, die gemeenskap van die heiliges, wat oor alle nasies en tale strek. „Soos die Here ook in Hosea sê: Ek sal die wat nie my volk is nie, my volk noem en in die plek waar aan hulle gesê is: Julle is nie

my volk nie! — daar sal hulle genoem word kinders van die lewende God." (Rom. 9 : 25, 26). Die Christen sprekende óf Xosa óf Zulu mag hierdie gelofte en verbond nie uitgesluit word omdat hulle nie ons „stamgenote na die vlees" is nie.

„My broeders", sê Jakobus, „julle geloof in onse Here Jesus Christus... moet nie wees met aanname van persoon nie... het God nie die armes van hierdie wêreld uitverkies as rykes in die geloof en erfename van die Koninkryk wat Hy beloof het aan die wat Hom lief het nie?" (Jak. 2 : 1 e.v.). As ons hierdie mense uitsluit het ons van die „Heilige God van Hemel en Aarde" 'n volksgod gemaak, en dan is die gelofte en die verbond van Charl Celliers vir ons tot 'n oordeel omdat ons „die waarheid van God verruil het vir die leuen en die skepsel vereer en gedien het bo die Skepper" (Rom. 1 : 25). Maar dan het ons die verbond ook grondig verwerp en het ons geen deel daaraan nie omdat ons voorgegee het dat ons wys is terwyl ons dwaas was om die „heerlikheid van die onverganklike God" te „verander in die gelyk-

vormigheid van die beeld van 'n verganklike mens" (Rom. 1 : 22, 23).

Alleen die gelowiges uit alle tale en volke dus het deel aan hierdie verbond. „Want daar is geen aanname van die persoon by God nie... omdat nie die hoorders van die wet by God regverdig is nie, maar die daders" (Rom. 2 : 11, 13). Ook ons moet daarom oppas, soos Jesus sê, dat die hoere en die tollensars ons hier nie voorgaan in die koninkryk van God nie. (Matt. 12 : 50)

By elke Gelofte dag kom ons byeen om 'n gelofte wat ons voorouers aan God afgelê het te gedenk; en die vraag wat ons aan ons self moet stel is: Is hierdie gelofte nog ons erus? Is ons hier bymekaar in die vreugde van 'n „groot oorwinning oor donker Afrika", waarin ons 'n voorbeeld sien van „die oorwinning van ons volk op die pad van Suid-Afrika"? Of is ons hier bymekaar in die vreugde van ons Meester, en Sy oorwinning oor die dood op die weg deur Gethsemané na Golgotha? Soek ons vandag daarna om deel te hê aan die sterk, „natuurlike bande van bloed en bodem", wat „geslag aan geslag verbind" in 'n „stryd wat gevoer sal word tot ons sterf of oorwinning het"? Of

THE ROLE OF THE CHRISTIAN YOUTH

The responsibility of bringing about a change sufficient enough to bridge the gulf between what I have said in this paper and what exists in South Africa and the world to-day is laid up the attitudes of Christian Youth. It is time Christian Youth started to take a living interest in these things. When I say "living" I do not mean academic interest where you have us coming to expand to you what the Bible, sociologists or theologians say about these things, but I do mean an interest that is participation in those ways and means that are being tried to bridge the gulf between what we believe and what we do.

What disturbs me about our Church Youth is that they are so full of "good Christian" people. They are so placid and peaceful that the young fellow to whom questions of social and political nature are living has no place in them. The result is that young persons with independent thought or opinion on these things... those fellows we call "angry young men or rebels" — have to leave and find homes in atheistic or agnostic groups. This is how Communists are made. Besides "woe unto us" if the change we seek in our Land and the World is going to be brought about by Non-Christian people. The danger to our country is not the Communists, or the Nationalist Agitator be he black or white. The danger is the slothful, complacent Christian young person, black and white, who leaves to the Communist and Nationalist Agitator the Christian privilege of expressing dissent.

Further, there is something wrong somewhere with the Church if, as is happening among the non-whites to-day, the more vociferously radical and violently objecting find no place in its organisations. There is much greater danger to the Church if voices of dissent in regard to matters of citizenship are heard outside and not inside it.

soek ons daarna om deel te hê aan die Mistieke Liggaam van Jesus. Sy onsterflike kerk, in 'n stryd waarin ons alleen dan oorwin as ons aan ons self gestarf het? Word ons vandag aan 'n „glorieryke verlede" verbind daarin dat ons die „grootseid en die heldhaftigheid" van ons voorouers in herinnering roep? Of is ons daarin aan ons voorouers verbind dat ons voor God erken en bely en betreur dat ons en ons vadere saam voor God gesondig het? Waar lê vir ons die „heilige grond"? Daar waar die „bleek gebeentes" van ons voorouers ons „roep uit grafte" waaroor ons hulle nie wil laat groei nie? Of by die Kruis waar alles wat ons het, óns sondes sowel as óns ideale voor God afgelê moet word?

„Ons is hier om 'n gelofte stand te doen wat voor die Heilige God van Hemel en Aarde afgelê is, en ons sal op hierdie vrese voor God moet antwoord as hierdie dag vir ons nou ons erus is en ons woorde nie vdel en godslesterlik nie. Laat ons dan nie roem nie, maar saam met die stervende Willem die Swyer voor God ineensink en om genade bid: „O God, ontferm u oor ons arme volk! O God, wees hierdie arme land barmhartig!"

Dat hierdie vereenselwiging misverstaan en gekritiseer sal word, moet ons ver wag. Dit het reeds met die Meester en sy volgelinge gebeur (Luk. 5 : 30; 15 : 1-2; Gal. 2 : 11-12). Maar die waarheid van die Skrif mag nooit deur die vooroordeel van die sonde vernietig word nie.

BETEKENIS VAN VEREENSELWIGING

Die gelowige moet dan alereers met innige meegevoel die verlorenheid van mense gadeslaan. Dié gesindheid het die verhouding van die Meester teenoor die wêreld van sy tyd gekenmerk (Matth. 9 : 36). Soos liefde vir die wêreld Hom na die aarde gebring het, (Joh. 3 : 16), moet sy liefde in die kerk uitgestort, ons dring om na die wêreld te gaan. Hierdie liefde is geen hooghartige simpatie nie, maar 'n innige meegevoel, 'n eenwording in ons menswees met die magtelooheid van die wêreld, met die „skape wat geen herder het nie“ (Matth. 9 : 36).

Dit is geen maklike taak om die kruis van die wêreld se sonde wat die gelowiges moet dra, elke dag op te neem nie. Die gelowiges moet dit dra nie omdat hulle daarvoor verantwoordelik is nie, of die straf daarvoor moet ondergaan nie, maar omdat hulle moet neerbuig na 'n verlore wêreld en in hul solidariteit met die wêreld die antwoord op die verlorenheid moet gee.

Soos die barmhartige Samaritaan wat by die gewonde neergekniel het om hom te help, kniel die kerk in grenslose meedoë by die wêreld om die antwoord wat God aan hom

KERK en Wêreld

II. VEREENSELWIGING IN DIE PRAKTYK

In die vorige artikel het ons daarop gewys dat die probleem van gebroke kommunikasie tussen die kerk en die nie-Christelike (en soms anti-Christelike) wêreld grotendeels ontstaan het omdat die kerk nie die skriftuurlike eis gehoorsaam het om hom met die wêreld in sy frustrasie te vereenselwig nie. Hierdie solidariteit beteken nie dat die kerk hom met die sonde van die wêreld vereenselwig nie, want hy moet homself rein bewaar in die wêreld en in die sondige wêreld moet gelowiges as heiliges optree (Filip. 4 : 22); dit beteken ook nie dat gelowigs 'n sosiale of antropologiese eenwording met die wêreld soek nie. Dit is 'n gawe van die self in die liefde van Christus aan 'n verlore gaande wêreld.

toevertrou het, aan die gewonde en sterwende wêreld te gee. Want die doel van hierdie vereenselwiging is altyd om die redding in Christus mee te deel — die redding wat die antwoord op die gelowige se probleem geword het, en wat hy aan die ongelowige in die besondere omstandighede waaronder hy verkeer, wil meedeel.

Daarom moet ons meer as oorwinnaars wees, want ons moet die genade van God in ons eie lewe ontvang, en dan nog ook genoeg om aan ons medemens uit te deel — 'n dubbele deel vir 'n gemeenskaplike probleem.

SELFGENIETING OF SELF-OPOFFERING?

Die aanname van Christus in die geloof mag nie as 'n weg tot selfsugtige en gemaksgtige genietinge van die heilsweltdade beskou word nie, maar as 'n weg tot selfopoffering. Die koringkorrel moet in die aarde val en sterf voordat dit vrugte kan voortbring. Die offer wat die Christendom vra, is 'n offer van die hele wese. As

iemand die antwoord van God in sy eie lewe gevind het, moet hy die antwoord, nie van buite nie, maar van binne hul eie situasie aan mense gee. Dit beteken gewilligheid om verneder te word, om selfverloëning te ondergaan, sodat die geleentheid geskep word om die seënninge van die hemel aan ander te bring.

DIE UITDAGING TOT GROTER IDENTIFIKASIE

Ons sal baie nader aan die wêreld moet beweeg. Toe Paulus gesê het: „Vir die swakkes het ek soos 'n swakke geword; vir almal het ek alles geword om in alle geval sommige te red“ — het hy nie daardeur bedoel dat hy saam met hulle sondig het, of sy Christelike beginsels prysgegee het, of hulle swakhede goedgepraat het nie, maar dat hy hom met hulle in hul nood en onmag vereenselwig het, langs en by hulle gaan staan het, sodat hy hulle kon help om Christus te vind.

Hierdie identifikasie veronderstel konsultasie met die wê-

Dr. A. J. VAN WYK

GRENSE WAT MURE WORD

Grense sal en moet daar altyd in die wêreld wees; maar die grense mag nooit verhinder dat gelowiges in die intiemste samespreking en vereenselwiging met mense aan die ander kant van die grense in aanraking kom nie. Vir die sending- en evangelisasietak van die kerk is dit lewensbelangrik dat daar 'n ontmoeting met die wêreld moet wees, want geestelike isolasie is net so gevaarlik en sondig soos geografiese afsluiting van die wêreld.

Sonder konsultasie in die intiemste sin is daar geen kennis en geen vereenselwiging nie, en sonder vereenselwiging is daar geen sendingaksie en dus geen gehoorsaamheid aan die opdrag van Christus nie. Die kerk sal moet streef om die deure wat hy self gesluit het, weer wyd oop te maak.

Dié konsultasie moet deur die kerk as instituut en as organisme gevoer word; die vereenselwiging kan alleen deur die kerk as organisme geskied, want die kerk as instituut kan dit nie doen nie. Dit is elke gelowige wat dit moet doen, in die situasie waarin hy staan en met die deel van die wêreld waarmee hy in aanraking kom. Dit is die dienswerk van die heiliges waarvoor hulle toegevoerd moet word (Ef. 4 : 12).

Dit is die finale opdrag van Christus aan al sy volgelinge. Want dit is wanneer die kerk van Christus na die mens gaan, met hom een word, en die boodskap van verlossing bring, dat die kerk die Koninkryk van God sal laat kom.

Daar is een allerbelangrikste vereiste vir hierdie taak, en daarvoor skryf ons in 'n volgende artikel.

• Word vervolg

Sienswyse van Lesers

Geagte Redaksie,

Met belangstelling het ek die artikels van ds. R. Orr gelees: „The Dutch Reformed Churches, as they appear to a friend“, waarin ek spesiaal my wil bepaal by sy kritiek op die houding tussen die Afrikaanse en Engelse kerke in ons land, en dat daar geen samewerking bestaan op algemeen Christelike gebied, waar die gemeenskaplike belange op die spel staan nie. Dit is seker betreuenswaardig, maar laat ons nagaan wat die oorsaak is van die gebrek aan samewerking.

Wyle ds. Louis Brandt van die Hervormde Kerk in Johannesburg het altyd vir samewerking geywer, maar waardeur het die verwydering gekom?

Een van die oorsake is wel die Anglo-Boere-oorlog en die strewe van Lord Milner om die Afrikaanse volk op skool- en kerkgebied te verengels.

Die houding van die Engelse kerke teenoor die Afrikaanse was 'n gevoel van meerderwaardigheid: ons wil wel saamwerk, maar dan moet julle na ons pype dans. 'n Bekende Presbiteriaanse predikant in Pretoria het 30 jaar gelede tot sy gemeentelike gesê: „Julle moet nooit vergeet, dat die Afrikaners in Transvaal die oudste regte het en dat die Engelse eers na die anneksasie 'n rol van betekenis kon vervul nie.“

Dit is ook opmerklik dat die Engelse kerke, veral die Anglikaanse, in plaas van die lewende Woord van God as siekvoedsel toe te dien, op die

kansel allerlei politieke kwesies bespreek, en dat hul mening gewoonlik in stryd is met die politiek van die regering en van die meeste lede van die Afrikaanse kerke.

So word deur Rev. Orr ook enige besware teen samewerking genoem, wat al drie op politieke terrein tuis behoort, soos werkreservering, rasseklassifikasie en die verplasing van die Bantoes uit die Westelike Provinsie.

Voorts kritiseer hy die samewerking van volk en kerk. Hy vergeet hierby dat in die stryd, wat die Afrikaners gevoer het tot handhawing van hul bestaan kerk en volk hartelik saamgewerk het teen aanvalle van Britse en liberale kant.

Aangaande die kritiek van Rev. Orr omtrent die neiging van sommige Afrikaanse predikante om baas te speel en die vrees van die lidmate om hulle predikant teen te spreek: hierdie kwaad kom in alle kerke voor, en wat die Engelse kerke betref, veral in die Anglikaanse kerk, dus sal ds. Orr liever sy hand in eie boesem moet steek. Dr. A. Kuyper in Nederland het reeds die vorige eeu teen hierdie ewel te velde getrek en wat hy noem dominokrasie bestry.

Maar daar is 'n terrein, waar samewerking tussen Afrikaanse en Engelse kerke nie alleen wenslik nie, maar noodsaaklik is, en dit is op die terrein van evangelisasie, waarby politiek uitgesluit is.

In Woord en Daad van 19

Oktober verskyn 'n artikel van dr. A. C. Barnard, Johannesburg, oor dié onderwerp. Die evangelisasiekommissie het oor 600 besoeke afgelê in Hillbrow en ander voorstede van Johannesburg, om afgedwaalde lidmate van die Afrikaanse kerke op te spoor en afgedwaalde en buitkerklike lidmate weer na die kerk te probeer terugbring. Aan die slot van sy artikel skryf dr. Barnard: „'n Groot aantal Engelse wat (sogenaamd) lede is van kerke of ook wat sonder kerkverband is, het die begeerte uitgespreek, dat hulle graag met 'n predikant van ons kerk wil praat. Dit gebeur dan ook baie dikwels dat die hele gesprek in Engels gehou moet word, omdat daar familieledes of vriende is, wat geen Afrikaans verstaan nie. Hier het ons 'n ernstige probleem. Ons sal daaraan moet dink om of dalk dienste in Engels te hou of 'n Engelse afdeling van ons kerk in die lewe te roep“.

Dr. Barnard behoort klaar blyklik aan die Ned. Geref. Kerk. Intussen het die Gereformeerde Kerk, Johannesburg-Sentraal, wat sedert die totstandkoming 10 jaar gelede, steeds evangelisasiewerk as 'n belangrike deel van sy arbeid beskou het, besluit om 'n predikant te beroep, uitsluitend ter bearbeiding van die talryke Engelse bevolking in die middestad, en ons bid en vertrou, dat die Here hier die regte persoon sal aanwys, wat in staat is om die vertroue van die Engelse te wen. Hierdeur sal ook die band en samewerking met die Engelse kerke versterk word.

Winburg.

W. Hovy.

THE CHURCH IN AFRICA

Pro Ecclesia IMPORTANT CONFERENCE OF CHURCHES IN AFRICA.

Preliminary plans for an Assembly of churches in Africa to be held in Kampala, Uganda, April 20, 30, 1963 were made by an enlarged Provisional Committee of the All Africa Church Conference meeting at Mindolo Ecumenical Centre, Kitwe, Northern Rhodesia, August 29 — Sept. 6.

The theme agreed upon for the Kampala Assembly was „Freedom and Unity in Christ: Towards a Renewed Church in a New Africa“. The 1963 Assembly will be the second All Africa gathering, the first having been held in Ibadan, Nigeria in 1958.

The Committee made plans to issue invitations to churches and National Christian Councils in every part of Africa and Madagascar to send representatives to the Kampala Assembly next year. It is expected that about 350 persons will attend.

Among the topics under the theme selected for discussions at the Kampala gathering will be „Christian Concern for the Family“, „The Christian in the Community“, „Economic Development in Africa and Christian Responsibility“, „The Selfhood of the Church“ and „Politics — Toward a Theology of Nationalism“.

The Committee also made a proposal for organising the All Africa Church Conference on a permanent basis, and to

augment this proposal, suggested the establishment of the Assembly of Commissions on Studies, Mission and Evangelism, Work of Men and Women in Church and Society, Youth, and Education.

The progress of plans for the All Africa Christian Youth Assembly to be held in Nairobi, Kenya Dec. 27, 1962 to Jan. 7 1963 was commended and continued cooperation pledged. The Committee received reports on some of the projects and other actions in which churches and Councils of the All Africa Church Conference have participated with in recent date: Rapid Social Change Studies, Urban Africa project, African Writing Centre, Sunday School Curriculum, Theological Education Fund projects in Africa, Broadcasting and Audio-Visual Committee, and Women's World Day of Prayer All Africa Fellowship.

In view of assistance and grants to the work of the All Africa Church Conference from churches and church bodies in other parts of the world, the Committee voted expressions of thanks and appreciation to all who had so shared.

Sixty leaders and representatives from churches in 23 countries in Africa and Madagascar were in attendance for the enlarged Provisional Committee meeting.

(From Release by the Planning Committee, Kitwe, 6th Sept.)

MULTI-RACIAL CONGREGATION IN EAST LONDON

Rev. Robert J. D. Robertson

Some months ago the Presbyterian Church of South Africa opened in East London a congregation designed from the start to be multi-racial. This effort has now achieved a reasonably steady existence and I would like to report thereon.

The idea was born about four years ago out of the frustration of ministering to congregations which were unwilling to consider any kind of permanent fellowship with people of other races. The Presbyterian Church is multi-racial but at congregational level there is a general resistance to any kind of mixing. The inter-racial fellowship of Presbytery and General Assembly is closed to all but ministers and a few elders. This means that the minority in our congregations who wish to meet and share in congregational life with Christians of other races are quite unable to do so, because of what the Cape Synod of the Dutch Reformed Church in a memorable decision once described as "the weakness of some" (now the weakness of many!).

It seemed to me that the only way to meet the desire of these persons was to form a new congregation which would be understood to be multi-racial from the start. This would permit the races to meet in Christian worship and to share in the responsibilities of membership in one congregation, but would force it on no one. When put to the General Assembly last year the proposal was adopted with only

two dissentient votes.

The success of such a scheme naturally depends a great deal on the place in which it is attempted. We chose East London not only because I was already living there and had made valuable contacts and advance preparations but for three other reasons also. East London is not too big a city and an experiment like this, which must begin in a small way, will not get lost in it. In East London there is an area of very mixed population where one can find five different races in five consecutive homes in a street, and this North End, as it is called, affords a place where every race can come without feeling a stranger. Unlike the Reef, East London has an almost homogeneous African population speaking only Xhosa and this simplifies the language problem.

As preparation I spent some time living in a rented room in North End in order to judge the lie of the land. I also instituted a monthly afternoon joint service between the various racial sections of the Presbyterian Church in East London which ran for about a year prior to the opening of the multi-racial congregation. The response to these joint services was erra-

tic and frequently disheartening, but they did prepare a group of people who were later ready to consider a more frequent service and a more permanent form of association.

The regular weekly services of the North End Church, which are held in a section of our home altered to provide seating for 85 persons, have in contrast been steadily supported since they commenced on the 18th March. Africans, Coloureds and Europeans appear at these services in roughly equal proportions, though the Africans have been more cautious about coming. The average attendance is 40 per service. These services, including Communion, and an occasional after-service cup of tea, hymn-practise or talk, have had a really hopeful atmosphere surprisingly devoid of tension. Once a month I have arranged for an African or Coloured minister to conduct the entire service preaching in English but leading prayer in his own tongue.

A tri-lingual hymnbook has been prepared, culled from the various translations that exist of hymns originally written in English. Each verse is given in English, Afrikaans and Xhosa though usually at any one time we sing in only one of these languages. So that the Afrikaans and Xhosa speaking members do not have to put up with "second-hand" hymns all the time we have commenced the translation of Xhosa and Afrikaans originals into

English. As far as I can determine this is the first time this has been done with Xhosa hymns. It demonstrates that through this congregation the spiritual heritage of the Xhosa Church is at last being shared with other races.

The congregation is governed by a Session of two African, one Coloured and three European elders, each at present seconded from another Session for this purpose. A somewhat prophetic atmosphere prevails in its meetings. So far we have simply encouraged people to attend services, but now the question of membership has been opened and a date set for a "Foundation Members' Service". This will be the real test of how far people are ready to go. Members will come under the care of an elder not necessarily of their own race. Baptism and confirmation, weddings and funerals will then take place in a multi-racial context. Members will co-operate in the various activities of a congregation.

The next minister to be called, should that stage be reached, will not necessarily be a European.

What results do we hope for from the formation of this congregation? We hope to give practical evidence to the Church that this kind of thing is possible. Many did us the kindness before we started of assuring us that it was impossible! We are discovering experimentally the richer life that Christians can find when

they lower the artificial barriers erected against their fellow-Christians. We hope to pioneer a way for the eventual de-segregation of the whole Church. That does not mean forced integration. It simply means the creating of a spirit of welcome acceptance of any man or woman in each congregation.

One might say that the way we have chosen is artificial, not spontaneous. But if a car is stuck in the mud and cannot get out spontaneously, we do not criticise the artificiality of employing a span of oxen to move it. Over the past 100 years the Church in this country has been slowly sinking into the mud of segregated worship. This developed sometimes from quite laudable motives such as advancing missionary work but often merely in obedience to secular pressures alien to the Church's nature. Now we are so firmly stuck that many are prepared to avow that God made us for the mud. A span of oxen is a rather cumbersome traction force but is better than nothing; and an ounce of rough and ready interracial worship is worth a ton of perfect "hot air" on the theory of race relations. When the car is on solid ground again the oxen can be dispensed with; and when the Church has ceased to call its congregations "European", "Coloured", "African", "Indian", then the words "Multi-Racial" will gladly be dropped from the title of North End Presbyterian Church.

BOEKBESKOUING

DE KATHOLICITEIT DER KERK

Dr. H. Berkhof, G. F. Callenach, Nijkerk 1962.

Feitlik iedere jaar verskyn daar van die hand van die bekende hoogleraar, Berkhof, 'n volstandige boek naas sy talre artikels oor aspekte van die Kerk en die kerklike lewe in ons eeu. Prof. Berkhof is historikus; maar sy oorwegende interesse, om uit sy publikasies te oordeel, lê in die tydgenotiese geskiedenis van die Kerk, dit wil sê in die Kerk onderweg in hierdie eeu.

Dit verwonder daarom nie dat sy jongste boek een van die aspekte van die twintigste eeuse problematiek van die Kerk, die katholiciteit, behandel nie. Wie oor die ekumenisiteit van die Kerk praat, kan nie anders as van die katholiciteit, van die Kerk praat nie. Ons kan nie oor die een besin sonder die ander nie. In die bogenoemde boek gee die skrywer 'n oorsig oor die besinning van andere oor hierdie onderwerp en voer hy sy eie besinning tot 'n Skriftuurlike fundering van die begrip.

Ons vertaal die griekse woord, katholicos, waarmee die Apostoliese Geloofsbelijdenis die heilige Christelike Kerk kwalifiseer, met „algemeen”. Uit sy gebruik deur die kerkvaders, die belydenisse en tot by die reformatore bepaal die skrywer die betekenis. Hierer nog die skakeling van betekenis van die „katholiciteit van die Kerk” soos dit vandag bestaan in die Roomse, Anglikaanse, Lutherse en Calvinistiese opvatting. Telkens

wys hy ook op die gebreke in die opvatting van die begrip by elkeen van die genoemde groepe.

Hierdie betekenisbepaling is nie maar soreramer 'n ydele onderneming nie. Dis brandend noodsaaklik, want in die afgelope eeu het in elke deel van die Christelike Kerk besinning gekom oor die ekumenisiteit en die eenheid van die Kerk in gehoorsaamheid aan die opdrag van die Here van die Kerk. Hierdie beweging van die gees eis ook besinning oor die onafkeibare anderkant, die katholiciteit. Roomse geleerdes soos de Poulpique en Congar, Luthers-Evangeliese geleerdes soos Söderblom, Heiler en Stählin, Anglikaanse geleerdes soos Ramsay, Dix, Elliot, Hebert en Thornton, Gereformeerde geleerdes soos Thils en Bavink, verdiep hul al lank en ernstig in hierdie studieveld. Nou gee by herhaling ook Berkhof sy visie daaroor. In laaste instansie kies hy vir aansluiting by en voortbouing op die benadering van Congar omdat Congar die katholiciteit van die Kerk Skriftuurlik funder en dit, soos alles wat met die Kerk te doen het, aflei uit die persoon van Christus.

In sy briewe aan die Efesiërs en aan die Kolossense praat Paulus ook oor die „katholiciteit van die Kerk” — wel nie in presies hierdie woorde nie, want hy verkies om te praat van die „volheid” en die „volmaak” van die Kerk deur Christus. Daardie „volheid” blyk „eenheid-in-veelheid” te wees uit 'n noukeurige ekse-

gese van die woorde pleroma en pleroun in die briewe aan die Efesiërs en die Kolossense. Die eksegese moet ten aansien van die betrokke verse antwoord op die vrae, wát vul Christus en hoé vul Hy dit wat gevul moet word. Pleroma beteken die dominium, die ge-

binne daardie heerskappy waarin profeties, voorbeeldend van die volle verwerkliking van die dominium en imperium van Christus, sy volmag nou reeds geld. Dis die Kerk. Christus se volmag oor die heelal, nou nog verborge maar wesenlik teenwoordig, is in die Kerk.

BOODSKAP VAN DIE DIREKSIE

Van die sekretaris van die Direksie van Pro Veritate het ons die volgende boodskap vir publikasie ontvang:

By die oorgang van die een jaar na die ander is dit 'n goeie geleentheid om 'n terugblik te werp op die jaar wat agter lê. As ons dit doen vir sover dit ons blad betref word ons harte met dankbaarheid vervul; dankbaarheid vir die groot mate van steun en simpatie wat ons uit alle dele van die land en ver daarbuite ondervind het; dankbaarheid ook vir die skrywers van artikels en vir hulle wat daarop gereageer het; dankbaarheid vir al ons medewerkers wat sonder vergoeding hulle tyd en kragte beskikbaar gestel het om die reëlmatige verskyning met alles wat daarmee saamhang, moontlik te maak.

Pro Veritate word nie alleen in die Republiek van Suid-Afrika versprei nie, maar ook in Noord- en Suid-Rhodesië, S.W.A., Nigerië, Nederland, Switserland, Engeland, Swede, Duitsland, Japan, die Verenigde State van Amerika en Brasilië. Orals geniet dit warm belangstelling.

Ons is ook dankbaar vir die kritiek wat ons ontvang het, geregverdig sowel as ongeregtig, nie alleen omdat daardeur ons blad kostelose publisiteit geniet het nie, maar ook omdat dit ons gedurig aanspoor om ons doelstelling suiwer te hou nl. die bevordering van die ope en eerlike gesprek tussen lede van die kerk van Christus sowel as die bevordering van die eenheid in ooreenstemming met Gods Woord van die lede van die kerk van Christus.

bied, van Christus. En dit is die gesameerde heelal. Die woord beteken verder die imperium van Christus, sy volmagtige heerskappy oor die heelal Ef. 1:23 stel egter 'n gebied binne daardie gebied en 'n imperium

Die Kerk se funksie in die lig van die volheid en die katholiciteit is daarom om te wees „kosmiesekatologies” en „profeties-eksemplaries”. Die Kerk staan tussen die „alreeds” van die huidige en die „nog nie”

van die eindtyd. Katholiciteit is enersyds die Kerk se uitgangspunt en andersyds haar eindpunt.

Uiteraard het die verdere vraag, hoé vul Christus die heelal, ewe-eens betrekking op die Kerk. Die Kerk, lewend te alle tye en in alle dele, moet uitbrei onder alle nasies. Hier val apostolaat en katholiciteit saam, maar hier val ook ekumenisiteit en katholiciteit saam. Ekumenisiteit is nie self katholiciteit nie; dis die anderkant en die konsekwensie van die katholiciteit, die kosmiese heerskappy van Christus.

Na hierdie skriftuurlik-prinsipiële bepaling van die aard en inhoud van die „katholiciteit van die Kerk”, keer die skrywer na die skema aan die begin van sy boek terug. Onder die opskrif, „Belemmeringen der katholiciteit” meet hy op die ry af die onderskeie kerklike groeperinge in hul belydenis en hul belewenis aan hierdie skriftuurlike eis. In een of meer opsigte skiet almal te kort.

Die boek sluit met 'n uiters-belangrike heenwysing: Die katholiciteit van die Kerk sluit haar eenheid, sibbare eenheid in. Dis egter nie al nie en dis nie genoeg nie: Katholiciteit beteken en is die vulling, die groei tot die volheid van Christus in die gelowige en in die gemeenskap van die heiliges. Eenheid en volheid en die groei tot beide is onlosmaaklik aan mekaar verbonde.

Hoe aktueel en hoe tydlig hierdie vlotgeskrewe en maklik verstaanbare werk verskyn het, hoef nie nader aangewys te word nie.

Albert Geyser

CHRISTIANITY

These are large and vague terms and the conjunction of the two makes them even larger and more vague. There are many kinds of Christians, some of whom do not acknowledge others. The title "democracy" is used to cover widely different societies with varying ideologies, some totally opposed to others. We use these two words loosely, thinking we know what we mean and mean what we say. Quite often we do not.

It is assumed that there is a necessary connection between the two. Christianity, it is said, must mean democracy, generally of the kind, one man, one vote. But this is by no means proved and needs careful consideration.

CHRISTIANITY AND TOTALITARIAN CLAIMS

It is quite true that Christianity confers upon the individual everlasting worth and significance and it is no accident that the decline of Christianity should have coincided with a monstrous invasion of the rights of man. The totalitarian regimes could not have imposed their total claims on men save in the twilight of Christianity in the lands where they flourish. Nor is there any justification, ultimately, for the repudiation of the tyranny they represent other than the Christian valuation of man as an end in himself. Democracy in the modern world cannot resist totalitarian claims by a vague and tepid belief in human decency. It can stand only if it can strengthen that belief with the conviction religion can supply.

CHRISTIANITY'S EVALUATION OF MAN

Our religion puts an infinite value on the individual but we commonly forget that this is not because of what he is now but of what, by the grace of God, he may become. Christian democracy is something

different in kind from the democracies of this world. It is a democracy of sin and grace and in it men are in a kingdom, bound together by their common relation to the King. It is not sufficient that a man be just a man. He has no rights in himself. Indeed, because of the evil in his nature, having its roots far back with which he is powerless to deal, he cannot enter the kingdom. Until by repentance and faith he has come into a right relation with the King he has no part in the kingdom.

The love of God yearns after him while he is outside, but even that love can confer no rights upon him until he is inside. Too often we have conferred rights upon all and sundry irrespective of their spiritual allegiance and have made it an axiom that every man, because of Christianity, has a right to a place and a share in the government of any true democratic order. This is a non sequitur of the most obvious kind.

Rights have to be taken as well as given. To be rightly taken they must be understood. Taking and understanding mean the acceptance of responsibility. In our age, as in the Garden of Eden, there is much emphasis on rights and very much less on responsibilities.

THE MEANING OF DEMOCRACY

Democracy is a word which

AND DEMOCRACY

must be redeemed by reconsideration. The word means literally government by the people, and that is thought to be an axiom, a self-evident truth. Theodore Parker, nineteenth century American preacher and campaigner against slavery, exalted democracy as "a government of all the people by all the people, for all the people; of course a government after the principles of eternal justice, the unchanging law of God". This is the kind of loose oratory we too often get in sermons. There is no "of course" about it. Democracy can mean something very different from either eternal justice of the law of God. Democracy, as Oscar Wilde said, can mean "simply the bludgeoning of the people, by the people, for the people". A perfect democracy, said Burke, is the most shameful thing in the world because "their own approbation of their own acts has to them the appearance of a public judgment in their favour".

EUROPE'S TRADITIONS OF LIBERTY

In European history there are two traditions of liberty, vitally different. One began in England; the other in France. One was and still is empirical and unsystematic, the other speculative and rationalistic. In the one the keynote is development with the least possible interference of public power. In the other organisation with

considerable interference of that power. One stands for slow, half-conscious growth, the other for doctrinaire deliberateness; one for trial and error procedure, the other for an enforced pattern which alone is valid.

These two traditions are of interest to the theologian because of their different views of human nature. The rationalistic design theories were based on the assumption of man's individual propensity for rational action and his natural intelligence and goodness. The evolutionary theory made allowance both for the fact of sin and the guidance of God. To omit these is a fatal error. It is easy to see that a planned democracy, relying mainly on blueprints, must, owing to human sin and cussedness, become a dictatorship to maintain its plan, and, even then, the dictatorship usually outlives the plan.

RELATION BETWEEN CALVINISM AND DEMOCRACY

In the Presbyterian churches we are the heirs of Calvin and it is instructive to note the relation between Calvinism and democracy. In Calvinism the importance of the individual is the resultant of several things working together. The first is the sovereign grace of God directed towards the believer. This is, so to say, the spotlight of the universe, and in its blinding ray he stands

marked and clear. Second, his acceptance of that grace makes him one of the elect, a status far above all titles and prizes of this world. Third, that election demands of him work and stewardship which together add up to high responsibility. The whole make the dignity of the Calvinistic man, than which there is no greater.

In America this Calvinistic man was created before the coming of democracy for everyone, and thus the cart of democracy did not come before the horse of character. The man deemed worthy of power is one who has been educated in the love of order, habituated to self-government. "Such government as ours", said Woodrow Wilson, "is a form of conduct, and its only stable foundation is character. It is the heritage of races purged alike of hasty passions and patient servility and schooled in temperate common counsel".

CHRISTIANITY AND UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE

It is often thought that the immediate conferment of universal suffrage is in accord with both Christian and British tradition. In fact, it is neither. Universal suffrage was not attained in Britain until 1884 and for women not until 1928. The supreme importance of the individual to Christianity is his importance as a soul in the sight of God. What has actually happened in Africa is very much more in accord with the French tradition than the British, and the most curious and calamitous thing is that the Westminster model of parliamentary government has been presented as a primary and necessary blue-print instead of the culmination of long processes of training in character and method.

BOEKBESKOUING

De Brief aan de Hebreërs, deur dr. H. van Oyen, in die reeks De Prediking van het Nieuwe Testament, Derde Druk 1962, G. F. Callenbach N. V., Nijkerk.

In hierdie welbekende reeks uit die geleedere van die Hervormde Kerk in Nederland het die derde druk van die Kommentaar van dr. Van Oyen oor die Hebreërsbrief verskyn. Ons mening is dat hierdie kommentaar 'n goeie toevoeging is tot die literatuur oor hierdie pragtige Bybelboek, waarvan die taal en styl van die skoonste is in die Nuwe Testament.

Wanneer 'n mens 'n kommentaar lees, is daar sekere eise wat 'n mens stel of begeertes wat bevredig moet word om dit m.i. te laat slaag. In die eerste plek wil 'n mens graag dit aanvoel dat die skrywer sy stof goed beheer en met gebalanseerde ekonomie sy weg vind deur al die dinge wat reeds oor dieselfde stof gesê is. Dit moet vlot lees, nie 'n gespartel in kleinlike skermutseling wees met mense van wie verskil word nie, maar 'n waardige ontleding van wat daar staan in die Skrif, met die nodige kennisname van ander skrywers wat miskien in hierdie verband iets opmerkenswaardig gesê het. Hierdie kommentaar onder bespreking voldoen m.i. volkome aan hierdie vereiste. Dit lees vlot, is waar-

diglik opgestel, verval nie in kleinliedheid nie, maar hou die groot lyn. Dit is ook mooi gedruk met 'n mooi letter, wat dit werklik aantreklik maak om te lees.

So 'n kommentaar moet verder nie terugdeins om tog tot die essensie te probeer deurdring nie. Die teoloog sal daarna verlang, om, sonder om op al die taalkundige kwessies in te gaan, tog te weet wat die skrywer dink van sekere pertinente sake waaroor die teks uitlutsel moontlik kan gee. Hierdie kommentaar weifel nie om by tye die oorspronklike Grieks aan die orde te stel nie, maar op so 'n manier dat dit nie die werk onnodig verswaar nie. Mooi dinge word aksentueer, dinge waar die Griekse teks ons kan help om skakeling van betekenis beter te verstaan. As van die duivel se mag ten opsigte van die dood gepraat word, 2 : 14, word daarop gewys dat die Grieks praat van kratos, geweld, terwyl Christus se mag 'n allesoorheersende is, eksousia, voor wie alles en almal moet buig. 'n Mens kan van skrywer verskil oor sekere interpretasies, bv. of die woord, apagelo, vir verkondig, 2 : 12; 'n verwysing is na Jesus as die ware engel of boodskapdraer Gods juis in teenstelling met die engele wat in die voorafgaande gedeelte minderwaardig aan Hom gestel is? In elk

geval is dit 'n werk wat die teoloog bevredig, omdat dit op 'n mal-lieke manier tog indelf in die verskillende eksegetiese probleme.

'n Kommentaar moet verder die Woord só verklaar dat die gewone leser ook die kristallisasie van die gedagtes van die skrywer kan verstaan en waardeer. Dit moet die boodskap van die Skrif op 'n bevattlike manier laat spreek. Hierin slaag skrywer m.i. uitnemend. Mooi is sy uiteensetting in verband met die verheerliking van die Seun van God, 1 : 5-14. Treffend is sy tekening van die solidariteit van skrywer met sy gemeente in 2 : 3, wanneer hy saam met hulle homself ook waarsku teen die verontagsaming van die saligheid. In 2 : 4 vind hy 'n pragtige tekening van die wese en grondslag van die kerk: Christus die Heer as die Grondslag, die Heilige Gees wat deur tekens en wonders en inwooning in die harte die ruimte skep waarin Christus Sy Woord kan laat klink en wáar maak, en hulle wat hoor en as getuies dit nie mag verontagsaam nie, maar moet uitdra.

Ons sou miskien iets meer en miskien duideliker sy standpunt wou verneem het i.v.m. die moeilike Hebr. 6 : 4-6 O. l., as ons hom reg verstaan, kom die volharding van die heiliges in 'n mate in gedrang deur sy interpretasie. Hierdie is seker een van die moeilikste tekste in die Bybel, wat selfs vir Luther probleme geskep het.

Dit is egter 'n kommentaar wat ons baie graag wil aanbeveel. Dit tref ons dat Calvyn met groot waardering van tyd tot tyd aangehaal word. Dit alles maak van hierdie werk iets besonder en dit is nie vreemd

dat 'n derde druk daarvan in 1962 moet verskyn nie. Die eerste druk het in 1939 verskyn onder die titel: „Christus, de hogepriester“.

J. L. de V.

DIE KERK IN AFRIKA

SYPEL KOMMUNISME IN AMERIKAANSE KERKE IN?

Watter waarheid steek daar in die aantygings van 'n kommunistiese suurdeeg in die kerk? 'n Afdoende antwoord word verskaf deur William C. Sullivan, hoofinspekteur van die Federal Bureau of Intelligence en een van hierdie liggaam se beste kenners van kommunistiese bedrywighede in Amerika. „Dit is 'n onomstootlike feit,“ het hy verklaar, „dat enige bewering as sou daar 'n aansienlike inspyeling van Kommunisme in die geleedere van ons Amerikaanse predikante wees van alle waarheid ontbloot is. Die trou van die oorgrote meerderheid van Amerika se predikante is bo alle twyfel verheue. Hulle is van ons mees konsekwente en vasberade teenstanders van Kommunisme. Die feit dat hulle al die geld en tyd wat Kommunisme aan propaganda bestee het om hulle te beïnvloed, suksesvol weerstand gebied het strek hul tot groot eer.“

Dit bevestig seker genoegsaam die berekening van Ralph L. Roy: "Communism and the Churches" dat daar sowat 25 predikante uit die

halfmiljoen evangeliedienaars in Amerika is met kommunistiese neigings, en nie een van die 25 is nog in die evangeliebediening nie.

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