

# PRO

# VERITATE

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# GEÏGNOREER EN VERWERP

„Maar Ek bid nie vir hulle alleen nie, maar ook vir die wat deur hulle woord in My sal glo — dat almal een mag wees net soos U, Vader, in My en Ek in U; dat hulle ook in Ons een mag wees, sodat die wêreld kan glo dat U My gestuur het. En Ek het hulle die heerlijkheid gegee wat U My gegee het, sodat hulle een kan wees, net soos Ons een is. Ek in hulle en U in My, sodat hulle volkome een kan wees; en dat die wêreld kan weet dat U My gestuur het, en hulle lief gehad het soos U My lief gehad het.” — Johannes 17 : 20 - 23.

Hierdie woorde eis ons noukeurige aandag indien ons ons geloof in Jesus Christus gestel het, want ons is die „hulle” vir wie Christus bid tot sy Vader. Ook kan ons hierdie gebed van Christus nie ignoreer nie omdat die gebed nog nie beantwoord is nie. Ons verdeelde kerke — die wêreld se onwilligheid om te glo dat die Vader sy Seun gestuur het en dat Hy hulle net so lief het as wat Hy sy seun lief gehad het — dit is die skandelige bewys dat ons Christus se gebed geïgnoreer het en dat ons nie is wat Hy begeeër dat ons sal wees nie.

Maar hierdie woorde doen nog meer as om die skandelige wyse waarop ons die wil van Christus vir ons geïgnoreer het en daardeur 'n skandalon vir die wêreld geskep het, bloot te lê. Die woorde sê vir ons dat Christus vir ons gebid het. Daarom is hulle ook woorde van hoop, want ons weet dat as ons iets vra volgens Sy wil Hy ons verhoor en dat ons die bedes verkry wat ons van Hom gevra het (1 Johannes 5:14-15); hoeveel te meer sal God die gebed van sy Seun verhoor en aan sy versoek voldoen! Laat ons dan noukeurig luister na die gebed van Christus sodat ons beoordeel en tegelykertyd deur Hom vernuut kan word: **„dat hulle almal een mag wees”**

Hier word **hen** gebruik in teenstelling met die onderdele waaruit die geheel saamgestel word. In die N.T. word **hen** gebruik om die liggaam van Christus te beskryf, die Kerk, die mense van die nuwe Verbond in sy bloed. Daar is slegs een nuwe Verbondsvolk (1 Kor. 10:17; 12:12; Ef. 4:4; Kol. 3:15); omdat daar net een God en

een Middelaar is (1 Tim. 2:5; Ef. 2:14-16); een Gees wat ons vrygemaak het van die wet van die sonde en die dood en getuig dat ons kinders van God is (Ef. 4:4; 1 Kor. 12:13; Rom. 8:2, 9, 14, 16); een doop waardeur ons toetree tot die Verbondsvolk (1 Kor. 12:12; Ef. 4:5); een brood wat 'n simbool

(Blaai om asseblief)

JAMES E. MOULDER.

## The nature of the Christian faith

— DR. S. H. RUSSELL.

Does one have to be a theist in order to be a Christian? Till the beginning of the 19th century this question would have appeared ridiculous, and it was only with the arrival of Schleiermacher on the theological scene that a negative answer could be hinted at as a possibility. Though his theology is perhaps ambiguous on this point, certainly one interpretation of it suggests that the object of Christian theology is the same universe of cause and effect presented by science, viewed more passively in the light of religious sentiment. While this interpretation of the nature of the Christian faith has never had more than the slightest of followings in the Church, the suggestion of a non-theistic Christianity had been made.

In the last year or so, it has again been made in different forms — with considerable ambiguity in the Bishop of Woolwich's 'Honest to God' and with far more scholarly acumen in Paul van Buren's 'The Secular Meaning of the Gospel'. In these discussions, it has been assumed

that the classical arguments for God's existence are invalid and largely irrelevant to the question in hand.

It is the purpose of this article to argue that these arguments do not prove the existence of God, yet they are of great significance  
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## GEÏGNOREER EN VERWERP

(Vervolg van bladsy 1)

is van die eenheid in die Verbondsvolk (1 Kor. 10:17). Die lede van die Verbondsvolk is een in denke en gees met dieselfde liefde vir mekaar, dieselfde denkwyse, en staan in een gees vas, een van siel en een van sin (Fil. 1:27; 2:2); hulle beywer hulle soos een man vir die evangelie van Christus (Fil. 1:27; 1 Kor. 3:8-9); eendragtiglik uit een mond wil hulle die God en Vader van ons Here Jesus Christus verheerlik (Rom. 15:6); hulle bedien mekaar as lede van een liggaam in Christus (Rom. 12:5) en deel mekaar se verdrukking (Kol. 1:24). Die nuwe eensgesindheid wat hulle deur geloof in Jesus Christus deelagtig geword het, oorbrug die afbakings wat deur die wêreld daargestel word om mense te klassifiseer — die verskille van rasse, sosiale stand en natuurlike onderskeidende kenmerke het onbeduidende maatstawwe geword wat binne die Verbondsvolk toegepas word (Rom. 10:11; Gal. 3:29) waar daar geen onderskeid is nie want almal het gesondig en dit ontbreek hulle aan die verdienste gereqverdig deur die verlossing wat in Christus Jesus is — die Here van almal wat ryk is oor almal wat Hom aanroep (Rom. 3:23-24; 10:11-12).

Dit is wat Christus vir ons begeer, en dit is dié gebed wat ons geïgnoreer het én Sy wil wat ons geminag het deur ons verdelde kerke, ons onbeduidende bepalings van ras en sosiale status, ons eksklusiewe aansit aan Sy tafel.

### „Soos U, Vader, in My en Ek in U, dat hulle ook in Ons een mag wees”

Paulus en Johannes gebruik albei **en** om 'n intieme persoonlike verhouding aan te dui. Let duidelik op die volgende:

- (i) Christus wil hê dat die gemeenskap tussen sy volgelinge van dieselfde aard sal wees (**kathos**) — net soos sy verhouding tot sy Vader;
- (ii) Christus wil hê dat ons moet deel in die gemeenskap wat Hy met sy Vader het.

In die N.T., en veral in Johannes, word die verhouding tussen Christus en sy Vader beskryf in terme van sy gehoorsaamheid aan sy Vader. „Want Ek het uit die hemel neergedaal, nie om My wil te doen nie, maar die wil van Hom wat My gestuur het. My voedsel is om die wil te doen van Hom wat My gestuur het en om sy werk te volbring.” (Joh. 6:38; 4:34; vgl. 5:30; 6:39, 40). Hy was gehoorsaam tot die dood toe, ja die dood van die kruis. „Daarom het God Hom ook uitermate verhoog en Hom 'n naam gegee wat bo elke naam is sodat in die naam van Jesus sou buig elke knie van die wat in die hemel en die wat op die aarde en die wat onder die aarde is, en elke tong sou bely dat Jesus Christus die Here is tot heerlijkheid van God die Vader” (Fil. 2:6-11). Dit was hierdie gehoorsaamheid — gehoorsaamheid tot die dood toe, wat die verbintenis van eenheid gevorm het tussen Christus en sy Vader. Hierdie verbintenis is so sterk dat Hy in sy Vader is en sy Vader in Hom. En dis hierdie verbintenis van eenheid wat Hy wil dat ons met Hom en sy Vader en ook met mekaar sal deel.

Maar ons kan hierdie eenheidsverbintenis slegs deelagtig word as ons gehoorsaam is. „Julle is My vriende as julle alles doen wat Ek julle beveel”. (Joh. 15:14; 1 Joh. 2:3-5; 1 Joh. 3:21-24). En dis sy gebod: „Soos Ek julle lief gehad het, moet julle ook mekaar lief hê. Hieraan sal almal weet dat julle My dissipels is, as julle liefde ondermekaar het” (Joh. 13:34, 35; Joh. 5:12; 1 Joh. 4:21; 1 Joh. 5:1-3). Die liefde waarmee Hy ons beveel om mekaar lief te hê moet soos sy liefde vir ons wees, want „hieraan het ons die liefde leer ken, dat Hy sy lewe vir ons afgelê het; en ons behoort ons lewe vir die broeders af te lê. Maar wie die goed van die wêreld het en sy broeder sien gebrek ly en sy hart vir hom toesluit, hoe bly die liefde van God in hom? My kinders, laat ons nie liefhê met woorde of met die tong nie, maar met die daad en in waarheid” (1 Joh. 3:16-18; Jakobus 2:14-17.)

### „sodat die wêreld kan glo dat U My gestuur het”.

Dit is die doel van Christus se gebed vir ons. Dis waar ons ver-

oordeel staan weens die onenigheid onder onself wat openlik aan die wêreld ten toongestel word in kerke wat verbrokkel is in denominasies, in rassegroepe en in sosiale klasse. Omdat ons nie bereid is om deel te wees van die verbondsverbintenis wat baseer is op gehoorsaamheid soos dié van Christus nie — gehoorsaamheid om mekaar lief te hê, nie met woorde of met die tong nie, maar met die daad en in waarheid, en te deel in mekaar se lyding selfs tot die dood toe — het ons 'n **skandalon** vir die wêreld geword wat die enigste **skandalon** versteek wat die N.T. ken — die kruis van Christus (1 Kor. 1:22-24).

Let noukeurig daarop dat Christus nie sê dat die wêreld oortuig sal word deur ons liefde vir hulle nie, maar deur ons liefde „onder mekaar” (Joh. 13:35). Dit beteken dat die Republiek van Suid-Afrika nie sal glo nie omdat ons kerke duidelik en sonder enige sweem van twyfel aantoon — deur ons skeidings in denominasionele, rasse- en sosiale kerke — dat ons mekaar nie lief het soos Christus ons lief gehad het nie — deur te deel in ons lyding selfs tot die dood toe — ja, die dood van die kruis. Totdat ons duidelik en sonder sweem van twyfel die eenheid van die Verbondsvolk bely soos ons dit beskrywe vind in die N.T., kan die wêreld ons nie ernstig opneem en glo dat Christus deur sy Vader gestuur is nie. Waarom sou hulle dit dan glo?

### „die heerlijkheid wat U My gegee het”.

In die N.T. word **doxa** gebruik hoofsaaklik om die Hebreeuse '**kabod**' te vertaal en dit word slegs op sekondêre wyse in die gewone Griekse sin van „opinie”, „reputasie”, „eer”, „aansien” gebruik. **Kabod** beteken “the manifestation of God's being, nature and presence, in a manner accessible to human experience; and the manifestation was conceived in the form of radiance, splendour or dazzling light” (C. H. Dodd in *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*; C.U.P., 1953). In die LXX vertaling van Jesaja 60:1-3 en 58:8 word **doxa** en **phôs** parallel gebruik en verwys na openbaarmaking van die krag van God vir die verlossing van sy volk.



## GEÏGNOREER EN VERWERP

In die vierde evangelie word **doxa** in die Griekse sin gebruik, maar ook in die O.T. sin van **kabhad** (Joh. 1:10-14; 2:1-11; 11:38-40; 12:23-43; 17:1-5, 20-24). Joh. 1:10-14 is 'n algemene verklaring wat betrekking het op die betekenis van Jesus Christus se verskyning met die wederkoms; Joh. 2:1-11 en 11:38-41 beskryf hoe die krag van God openbaar word in die wonderwerk te Kana en die opwekking van Lazarus. Joh. 12:23-43 beskryf (a) hoe die uur aangebreek het vir Christus om verheerlik te word, d.i. vir die krag van God om openbaar te word in die verlossing van sy kinders (12:23-36); (b) waarom die tydgenote van Jesus nie sy heerlijkheid kon begryp nie. Joh. 17:1-5, 20-24 verklaar weer dat die tyd gekom het vir Christus om verheerlik te word (17:1-5) en wys op die oorhandiging deur Christus van sy heerlijkheid aan sy volgelinge (17:20-24).

Die koms van Jesus Christus on sy lewe op ons nietige klein planeet word aldus beskryf as 'n manifestasie van die krag van God vir die verlossing van sy kinders. Hierdie krag word duidelikste geopenbaar in die dood van Christus aan die kruis (vgl. Joh. 12:30-36; 17:1-5; 1 Kor. 1:18-30, veral 1:22-25, Rom. 3:20-26; Fil. 2:1-11; Rom. 1:16-17). So is die kruis van Christus sy heerlijkheid. Hier sien ons die krag van God openbaar gemaak. Dis die heerlijkheid wat God aan Christus gegee het — lyding, vernedering, verwerping, bespottingsdood.

**„Ek het hulle die heerlijkheid gegee.”**

Christus gee aan sy volgelinge die heerlijkheid wat sy Vader aan Hom gegee het — die heerlijkheid van lyding, vernedering, verwerping, bespotting en dood, waarin die krag van God openbaar gemaak word vir die verlossing van sy kinders.

Dis die heil waaroor Paulus roem en waarin hy hom verbly wanneer hy aan sy mede-verdruktes en medewerkers in God skryf. „Ons is . . . erfgename van God

en mede-erfgename van Christus, as ons naamlik saam met Hom ly, sodat ons ook saam met Hom verheerlik kan word.” „Gedurig dra ons die doding van die Here Jesus in die liggaam om, sodat ook die lewe van Christus in ons liggaam openbaar kan word. Want altyd word ons wat lewe, oorgelwer in die dood om Jesus wil, sodat ook die lewe van Jesus in ons sterflike vlees openbaar kon word.” (Rom. 8:17; 2 Kor. 4:10-11; vgl. Rom. 8:35-39; 2 Kor. 2:15; 4:1-6, 11).

Maar hierdie lyding moet nie vertolk word as 'n passiewe onderwerping met moed vir die ontberinge van Christen-discipelskap nie, ook nie as die lyding van 'n sondige wêreld nie. Net soos Christus se lyding en dood doelgerig en verlossingsgewend was, so aanvaar Paulus met blymoedigheid die kruis wat Christus hom bied, want op hierdie wyse kan hy in sy swakke menslike vlees aanvul die „oerblyfsels van die verdrukkinge van Christus vir sy liggaam, wat die gemeente is” (Kol. 1:24).

**„sodat hulle een kan wees net soos Ons een is. Ek in hulle en U in My, sodat hulle volkome een kan wees; en dat die wêreld kan weet dat U my gestuur het en hulle lief gehad het soos U My lief gehad het.”**

Christus gee aan ons sy heerlijkheid — sy kruis — vir dieselfde rede as dit waaroor Hy vir ons bid — dat ons een mag wees soos Hy en sy Vader een is, en dat die wêreld kan weet dat die Vader Hom gestuur het en hulle liefgehad het net soos Hy Christus liefgehad het.

Weereens staan ons veroordeel. Ons het nie slegs sy gebed waarin sy wil vir ons uitgedruk word, geminag nie, maar ons het ook sy gawe verwerp wat ons sal verenig soos Hy en die Vader een is. Ons onenigheid en die wêreld se weiering om ons ernstig op te neem, veroordeel ons as diegene wat sy gawe verwerp het.

Hier moet elkeen van ons sy eie hart ondersoek „want as ons hart ons veroordeel, God is meer as ons hart, en Hy weet alles” — want „ons het 'n Voorspraak by die Vader, Jesus Christus die Reg-

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in providing the background against which the affirmation of the Christian tradition can be understood. Natural theology cannot be allowed to become the final arbiter of the interpretation of Christian doctrines — on the other hand without some kind of natural theology Christian affirmations do not possess even an existential, let alone an ontological basis. To discountenance natural theology entirely is to disprove the statements of the Christian revelation of any clue as to their interpretation, and thus we have today the possibility of theologians interpreting Christian language in both a theistic and an atheistic manner.<sup>1</sup> If there is no natural theology, where shall we find a key to their elucidation?

Firstly we will consider briefly the four main types of argument which have been put forward in the past to argue to the existence of God. Two of these, the ontological and the teleological will only receive a summary treatment, because in the writer's opinion, they do not go very far in making probable the existence of the God of the Christian faith. They are fallacious and we cannot easily maintain that these fallacies are of a suggestive kind. The other two arguments, the cosmological and the moral will receive a more extended treatment, not that they prove God's existence, but rather because they are significant pointers to those factors which make the question of God's existence the most important one for human life.

### THE ONTOLOGICAL ARGUMENT

In very general outline, the ontological argument amounts to this — that to conceive of an all perfect being, we must think at the same time, of such a being existing. A being which has all the attributes of perfection (in itself a very difficult concept) and is non-existing would be inferior to a being which possessed such attributes and which did exist.

(Please turn page over)

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Therefore, the exponent of the ontological argument would maintain that the very notion of an all perfect being implies that we think of Him as existing.

Most unphilosophical people, once this argument is put to them, feel that there is a catch in it somewhere, even if they find it hard to put their finger on it. The fallacy lies basically in treating 'existence' as a predicate. To say a concept 'exists' does not give it an extra attribute, and it is only the similarity in form of 'exists' to really attributive verbs which has led to this confusion. If we are to say anything positively in regard to the ontological argument it is that it bears witness to the fact that men find it hard to accept that their standards of value are merely mental constructions. It tells us something about human nature, but nothing about the possibility of a divine being.

### THE TELEOLOGICAL ARGUMENT

The teleological argument is the one generally resorted to by the man in the street when he is asked why he believes that there is a God. 'Look at all the wonderful contrivance in the natural world,' he replies, 'all the order in the universe; you don't mean to tell me that all that came into being without an intelligent Creator'. Unfortunately, this argument encounters overwhelming difficulties.

In the first place, it is possible to conceive how the vast intricacies of the natural world have come about without reference to any notion of conscious creation — it seems reasonably certain that random mutations and natural selection over a long period of time will account for the marvellous adaptations we meet in the world of living organisms.

In the second place, do the adaptations we meet, bear witness to a Creator of infinite wisdom? Could it not equally, as Hume suggested, testify to a god who was losing his grip, or an

immature deity who as yet had not fully learned his trade?

Thirdly, what sort of moral qualities does the organization of creatures in the natural world suggest that we might find in their Creator? Do we not discover wonderful adaptation in the **anopheles** mosquito which makes it an extremely proficient disseminator of malaria, or in the liver-fluke, which enables it to become an efficient and destructive parasite on organisms which by any generally accepted standards we would regard as higher? Could not the adaptations we find in the natural world be the products of two deities, an evil and a good one who were inexorably opposed to each other, or even of many gods not living altogether in harmony?

If this argument does indicate something it is certainly not about the nature or existence of a Creator, but rather that men feel the wonder of the natural order asks for an explanation in personal terms. Once again, the value of the argument lies in its illumination of a certain aspect of the psychology of human belief, not in what it purports expressly to do.

We now pass on to two more important arguments: the cosmological and the moral, which in my opinion possess far more significance than those which we have already considered.

### THE COSMOLOGICAL ARGUMENT

The cosmological argument is often presented in a very inadequate form which runs somewhat as follows: everything which we encounter in the world is caused by something else, and that something has also its own particular cause. Such a process cannot go on for ever — therefore, there must be some Great First Cause, which is but another name for God.

Presented like that the argument is far from convincing — why should the causal chain stop? could it not go on for ever especially as we have no overwhelming reason to prevent us from regarding the universe as infinite? At the best, the type of deity such an argument presents to us is but of a crude deistic variety.

The argument, however, can be made in far more profound form. All entities which we know are contingent; there is no reason why they should be; they are all dependent upon other entities for their existence and these entities in their turn bear the same contingent character. Whatever we may say about them, we must declare about all of them that they do not bear the reason for their own existence. The reason for their existence, if there is one, must be received from outside.

Now an exponent of the cosmological argument would then go on to say that contingent beings must receive the reason for their existence from necessary being — that being whose existence explains and justifies itself, and such a being can be no other than God.

This argument, though it does not demonstrate the existence of God, does show us something of the utmost importance — all entities with which we are spatially related do not provide the reason for their own existence. Looking at them as a whole, they could equally have not existed — there are reasons for every individual entity, but no reason as to why there is anything at all — unless there is necessary being. Here we meet the very mystery of being, which has perhaps been as well expressed in modern times, not by a Thomist but by Ludwig Wittgenstein: 'not **how** the world is, is the mystical, but **that** it is.'<sup>2</sup>

Now it can be argued that this sense of the contingency of being is not felt by the majority of people, that most of the time we are only concerned with the immediate reasons for the existence of the entities which surround us, and that we are not overwhelmed with the question 'why is there anything at all?'

Some would dismiss this latter question as illegitimate — but on what grounds? That it is incapable of solution? possibly, but are the grounds for such rejection logical or empirical? If the question is not a contradiction in terms (which would be hard to demonstrate), there is always the possibility that some kind of evidence would lead to its solution. It is therefore an open one and we

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## Inleidingsartikel:

## „Wie nie teen ons is nie, is vir ons”

Elkeen wat aan die Christelike Instituut van Suidelike Afrika en die blad **Pro Veritate** liberalistiese en kommunisties-geïnspireerde motiewe en oogmerke toedig, doen mee aan wat seker die mees diaboliese leuen genoem kan word wat daar tans in ons Christelike volksgemeenskap versprei word.

Konstitusioneel stel die Instituut hom dit ten doel om die kerk van Christus op alle moontlike maniere te dien, en in die praktyk het hy nog niks anders as dit probeer doen nie.

'n Beter diens kan daar stellig ook nie in die teenswoordige situasie aan die kerk van Christus in Suid-Afrika bewys word — hoe aanmatigend so 'n stelling ook mag klink — as om Christene na die Skrif alléén te probeer (terug-)lei sodat hulle (weer) kan leer om na die Skrif alléén te luister as die hoogste en enigste bron van kennis aangaande die wil van God met ons lewe nie. Daarby leef in die Christelike Instituut die oortuiging dat die wil van die Here nie alleen geken moet word nie, maar ook gedoen moet word.

'n Afwerende teenworsing dat hierdie diens 'n self-opgelegde, ongevraagde en daarom onwelkome diens sou wees, mag 'n vraagteken oor die bestaansreg van die Instituut (en **Pro Veritate**) plaas, wat egter op sy beurt dadelik bevestig word deur die feit dat die bestaan van sowel die Instituut as die blad reeds op 'n meer as menslike wyse geregverdig is. Die bewyse is daar dat dit in 'n dringende behoefte voorsien. Aan die positiewe kant staan daar, om enkele voorbeelde te noem, die groeiende getal gelowiges wat aan die Bybelstudie-kring deelneem, die toenemende steun wat aan die Instituut sowel as die blad verleent word in weerwil van alle verdagmaking, die „geopende deur” na die separatistiese-groepe om 'n diens te lewer i.v.m. beter teologiese skoling vir hul predikante. Aan die negatiewe kant is daar die groeiende, onredelike verset wat, juis omdat dit die beskuldiging teen die Instituut en **Pro Veritate** met geen enkele argument wat aan die Skrif of die belydenis ontleen is, kan staaf nie, maar intendeel van klaarblyklik valse argumente gebruik maak, nie anders beoordeel kan word as 'n bewys daarvan dat die vinger op die seerplek gelê is nie. Die onheilspellende tekens dat die Christelike denke in ons volkslewe reeds ver heen besig is om in die gevaarlike woeker van Bybelvreemde idees vasgerank te word, word in skreeuende tone bevestig.

Hierdie laaste gevolgtrekking is nie hooghartig bedoel nie. Dit stem ons tot droefheid, tot skuldbesef en tot ootmoed. Nie 'n enkele lid van die Instituut mag of wil hom in selfregverdiging daarvan distansieer nie. Die gedagte om „uit die kerk” te gaan, is ook strydig met alles wat die Instituut beoog. In sy konstitusie veronderstel hy 'n besliste trou van sy lede aan hul kerkverband en belydenis.

(Vervolg op bladsy 14)

## Editorial:

## For the record

Because the controversy surrounding the Security Police's search of the offices of the Christian Institute and the home of its Director has received so much publicity and has not yet come to an end, it is necessary to get some of the facts straight "for the record."

● On the 2nd June the Head of the Security Police granted the Chairman of the Board of Management and the Administrative Director of the Christian Institute an interview in the course of which he stated categorically that the search was **in no way** connected with the work of the Christian Institute, but was occasioned by the fact that an article in the February issue of **Pro Veritate** had mentioned the title of a banned publication.

● The Head of the Security Police is also aware of the following:

- (i) that immediately after he had pointed out to the Editor of **Pro Veritate** that the abovementioned article contravened the Publications and Entertainment Act, No. 26 of 1963, instructions to withdraw this issue of the paper were given by the latter;
- (ii) that the offending title was cut out of all the remaining copies of the February issue of **Pro Veritate**;
- (iii) that the offending title was also cut out of **Die Kerkbode's** editorial which had been reprinted in the February issue of **Pro Veritate**;
- (iv) that the Security Police had searched the offices of **Pro Veritate** when they became aware of the abovementioned contravention, and had been assured that the publication in question had not been received by any member of the staff or Editorial Board; and
- (v) that **Pro Veritate** issued a statement in the March issue explaining how this **bona-fide** contravention of the law had occurred and both giving the assurance that it was its intention to continue to operate within the law and re-affirming its conviction that violence is totally incompatible with the life and teaching of Christ.

● In spite of all these steps the offices of the Christian Institute and the home of its Director were searched by the Security Police on the 7th May.

● The Editor and Editorial Board of **Pro Veritate** wish to state categorically that they regard it as the duty of the Security Police to investigate any contravention of the law, but cannot understand what motivated the search of the 7th May.

# DIE KERK BUITE SUID-AFRIKA

— PROF. B. B. KEET.

**Twee van die wêreld se leidende kerkmanne het onlangs samesprekinge gehou in die stad Pennsylvania, V.S.A. Hulle is die bekende dr. Martin Niemöller van Wiesbaden, Duitsland, oud-duikbootkommandant van die Eerste Wêreldoorlog, en dr. Eugene Blake, algemene Skriba van die United Presbyterian Church, V.S.A. Die bespreking het gegaan oor al die belangrike vraagstukke wat die kerk van vandag besig hou: eenheid, rasseverhoudinge, armoede, en die kerk se roeping in verband met politiek, ekonomie en evangelisasie.**

Uit *Presbyterian Life* neem ons enkele gedagtes oor wat ten aanhore van byna 3.000 hoorders uitgespreek is.

Hulle het saamgestem dat die wêreld vandag verwag dat elke Christen en sy kerk die inisiatief sal neem in 'n verskeurde wêreld om 'n wêreldwye gemeenskap te bou waarin daar algemene sorg vir die naaste betoon sal word, of hy nou swart of wit of tussen-in is, om die hoek woon of kontinente ver verwyder is. Die roeping van die kerk mag nie verloën word deur sy lede hulle te laat vasklem aan die gesellige haard van hulle huisgode nie, of hulle rug te laat draai en hulle besig te hou met denominasionale spel op 'n oomblik in die geskiedenis wanneer die omsingelde strydende kerk roep om die verenigde bevelvoering van Jesus Christus ten einde die magte van ateïsme, skeptisisme, haat en verwarring in alle dele van die wêreld, op alle terreine van die menslike lewe die hoof te bied. In ons tyd, het dr. Niemöller gesê, het ons opnuut tot die besef gekom dat die Christelike kerk hom nie tot die mens se godsdienstige behoeftes moet beperk nie; die kerk het hom in hierdie rigting laat verlei en by name waar dit 'n staats- of min of meer nasionale kerk geword het, homself beskou as alleen verantwoordelik vir sy lede se verhouding tot God en sy bo-sinnelike wêreld en lewe.

**Oor die wêreldwye sending:** Christus kan nie uit 'n oorvloedige vrygewigheid as 'n pakket uitgevoer word nie. Vandag word Hy deur die wêreld ontvang slegs namate dit duidelik blyk dat ons, sowel as hulle, Hom nodig het. **Oor Christelike eenheid:** die ekumeniese beweging gee ons die geleentheid om moedig voort te gaan, nie slegs oor die politieke en geografiese skeidings van 'n verdeelde wêreld nie, maar ook oor die verdeling van die kerk in alle plaaslike omgewings waar Christene

woon en werk en getuig. **Oor rasseverhoudinge:** kerkmanne word aangemoedig om ruil-besoeke tussen blanke en Negerkerke te reël, om die tafels in ons eie huise te desegreger en aktief deel te neem aan die beweging om burgerregte te verkry. Die besluit word nie aan onself oorgelaat nie; ons moet handel as lede van dieselfde familie, ongeag wat ons klem is.

**Politiek en ekonomie:** die kerk mag nie slegs die godsdienstige deel van die bevolking dien nie. Christene moet alle terreine van die lewe dien, sodat die grondtoon van diens aan ander mense deur heel ons beskawing gehoor sal word. So weinige in ons samelewing is gewillig om Jesus Christus te erken as Here, ook van ons ekonomie en politiek.

Samevattend was die konklusie waartoe hulle gekom het: „Die Kerk van Philadelphia, en van enige ander stad in die wye wêreld, mag hom nie langer isoleer nie. Ons mag nie bly staan waar ons is nie, waar ons in vrede gevestig het en veilig voel nie. Die kerk moet die versoeking oorwin om hom van die bron van sy lewe te verwyder en sy eie weg te gaan wat vir 'n tyd slaag, maar enkel in verydeling, eensaamheid en dood kan eindig.”

## VISSER'T HOOFT OOR DIE EKUMENE

In 'n toespraak voor die vergadering van die Westelike Streeksinode van die Evangeliese Kerk in Duitsland, gehou in die Pauluskerk, Frankfurt, het Dr. Visser 't Hooft die stand van die ekumeniese beweging tot op datum soos volg geteken: Vir die huidige situasie sê hy dat dit hom herinner aan die woorde van Jesus in Matt. 11:17: „Ons het vir julle op die fluit gesneel, en julle het nie gedans nie.” Hy waarsku vir 'n siarmante ekumenisme en vir 'n te ruim en oppervlakkige gebruik van die woord eenheid, 'n

woord wat veral begryp moet word in die Nu-Testamentiese sin van gemeenskap. Daar moet meer Bybels en minder moralisties oor hierdie begrip gedink word. „Gemeenskap behoort tot die wese van die volk van God — in die twintigste sowel as in die eerste eeu.”

Die optimiste sowel as die pessimiste het, volgens hom, 'n eensydige oordeel oor die ekumeniese beweging. „Ons tekortkominge sou nie so ernstig wees as die behoefte nie daar was nie. Die resultaat wat ons beoog is die rede waarom ons geen genoeë kan neem met die huidige situasie nie.” Daar is wel resultate wat genoem kan word, maar dit is nog nie oral sigbaar dat die tyd van eenheid gekom het nie. Hy het op sy hoorders 'n beroep gedoen om die vrees te oorwin dat volle gemeenskap uniformiteit, magskonsentrasie en onderdrukking van mindere beteken. 'n Gemeenskap mag ook nie gehinder word deur allerlei bindinge van politieke of rasse-aard nie.

**Slotgedagte:** Ons moet liever nie spreek oor 'my' of 'ons' kerk nie, maar alleen oor 'Gods Kerk'.

## VERENIGDE STATE:

**Persbureau der Ned. Herv. Kerk** gee die volgende verslag van die demonstrasie vir burgerregte in Amerika: Die protesaksies onder leiding van dr. Martin Luther King in die stad Selma, Alabama, het groot aandag getrek. Die eerste opmars is deur die polisie met geweld tot stilstand gebring waarby 'n twintigtal persone gewond is. 'n Oproep deur dr. King tot kerklike leiers in die hele land om te kom help het groot weerklank gevind. Onmiddellik het meer as 500 geestelikes en leke hulle aangemeld vir deelname aan die tweede opmars om aandag te vestig op die verkryging van stemreg vir die Negers. Hierdie reaksie teken die diepe simpatie aan van alle godsdienstige rigtinge met die stryd om menseregte. Die tweede opmars het ook nie sy doel bereik nie. Die 500 kerklike leiers, blank en swart, afkomstig uit Protestantse, Rooms-Katolieke en Ortodokse Kerke en uit die Joodse gemeenskap saam met 1.000 Negers uit Selma, is deur die polisie sonder verdere geweldpleging teëgehou. Die demonstreerders het hulle rustig versorei nadat hulle op die publieke weg gebid het. Die vreedsame ont-

(Vervolg op bladsy 13)



# UNITY AND EVANGELISM IN "SEPARATE DEVELOPMENT" SOCIETY

— THE RT. REV. B. B. BURNETT, Bishop of Bloemfontein.

**Our unity in Jesus Christ is not something we can choose to be enthusiastic about or not, as the case may be. Unity in Christ is not something that is optional at all. It is not something which would be rather nice to have, nor is it something we must create. Those who believe in Jesus Christ and who are baptised in His Name, believe that unity is a given factor and that it is of the essence of the Church and of Christian life.**

## GOD'S GRACE

This means that the Church is a unity created by God. The Church is a unity (fellowship) of believers who are reconciled to God. Our Unity comes from the nature of God who is Trinity in unity. His love comes to meet us in Jesus Christ, and through Him we all are forgiven, renewed, accepted, reconciled to God. But because Christians have the mind of Christ they are instruments of His reconciling love; instruments to create unity among men. Their mission is to reconcile men to God and to one another in Jesus Christ. Their mission is to be ministers of unity.

Unity is effected among us by Faith and Baptism. By this means we are placed within the priestly body and identified with Jesus Christ and all others who are in Christ. Thus we have the mark of our unity indelibly scored upon us by Baptism. It is this unity which Christians are being summoned to express anew in the life of the Church and of Society.

## RECONCILIATION

By our unity we preach Christ. Because our unity finds its source in Christ's redeeming work, we preach by it of man's need to be redeemed and reconciled to God, and we demonstrate, by our fellowship in Christ, that Jesus Christ is indeed the One in whom men are created anew. Our unity in Christ points to human impotence to express reconciliation in his fallen nature, precisely because it is in Christ alone that reconciliation is possible. It must also point to the power of our Lord through the Holy Spirit to effect what He took flesh to do.

We need to take more seriously the prayer of our Lord Jesus Christ that all his disciples should be united **"that the world may believe"**. Christian unity is the witness to the reality of what has happened in the world through Jesus Christ. The fact that the Holy Spirit of God is able to create a brotherhood that comprehends social, cultural, ethnic and linguistic differences, is a witness to the Grace and Power of God. The more diverse are the elements which God the Holy Spirit holds together in Communion with one another in the Son of Man, the more is God glorified.

Our mission is to draw all men together in Jesus Christ in order that there should be offered to the Heavenly Father a "being-made-perfect" — a "being-reconciled" — humanity in Jesus Christ. The New Testament conception of perfection is surely not of a holiness in splendid isolation. For Christians, perfection is perfection, or holiness, in community. The perfection of the flock is impaired by one sheep lost. The whole necklace is impaired if one coin is lost. Where love is the driving power, holiness can only be expressed in community and particularly in relation to those who are of the household of faith, whoever these may be.

## OUR SOULS' WELFARE

Without it we cannot be consistent Christians, for we should not deny in practice the unity which God has bestowed upon us by Faith and Baptism.

In point of fact our given unity has a far wider reference even than Baptism. Baptism restores a prior given unity which is overlaid and defaced by Sin. There is a prior unity: the unity that we have as "Adams" created by the One Lord.

We have a unity by creation. This unity of which we are speaking is all embracing. It is a unity not only established in the creation — for we are one species of Adam — but it is also a unity re-established by the new act of creation by the Second Adam, Jesus Christ. All rule and authority are given to Him — the Proper Man. Despite present disobedience this is the domain of the one Lord. The Universe has one Master and one consistent purpose. It has one source of meaning and one source of redeeming power. The Kingdom of God is one Kingdom. This unity is focussed in the one New Man, who is the first fruit and the means of the new creation, namely Jesus Christ.

## THE WORLD

The world does not understand that the Church is God's instrument to create reconciliation and unity.

This is not surprising because although this is God's world, it is also a corrupted, spoiled world. It is Babel. But the Church must bear a heavy load of responsibility for this misunderstanding. The Church is under judgment for her failure to preach Christ by her unity in faith and love. We are not responsible for the schisms that have destroyed the unity of the church, but we, and our fathers, are under judgment for our comparative indifference to the disunity of the Church. Even now in this ecumenical age I suspect the majority of those who are called to minister to Christian flocks have no sense of urgency about the Church's need to respond to our Lord's Prayer for unity among His disciples. It is not at all surprising therefore that the world — that the State — should suppose that unity is a matter of indifference to the Church.

The desperate need for the renewal of the Church through unity in Christ, means not only stretching out hands of understanding and love to Africans and Coloured people

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and sharing in worship and fellowship with them at the table of the Lord. It means also stretching out hands of love and seeking unity in worship with Christians of other Communion than our own. These are one issue. It is simply that the Gospel of Jesus Christ demands and creates unity.

The witness of the Church to fellowship in Christ of both Black and White will continue to be the flabby half-hearted thing it is, until the Church has a conviction that its nature and purpose demands that all Christians must be in communion with one another. Worshiping and studying with black Christians is not really an issue apart from the need for Methodists and Anglicans to be able to meet at the Altar of God.

The judgment on us for our indifference to God's will for the unity of His Church is perhaps expressed by the way in which the world has taken our "witness" seriously. Our witness is that it does not matter for Christians to be separated in worship or fellowship. This is what our Church life proclaims. We say, by our continued separation, Christ is divided and I don't much mind. It really is not to be wondered at that the world should now be surprised that we make a fuss when the state seeks to separate Christians from one another by law. We have asked for it, and we still ask for it by our damnable indifference to the prayer of the Saviour for our unity.

## CHURCH AND STATE

How do we relate the Gospel of reconciliation in the One New Man, Jesus Christ, to life in "Separate Development" Society?

What must we say and do about the unity which is Man's by creation — a basic unity which is not destroyed by divisions caused either by sinfulness or differences in culture and heredity — in "Separate Development" Society?

To suggest answers to these questions requires a quick glance at the

responsibility that the Church and the State bear towards one another.

It sometimes looks as though there are conflicting views about the relationship of the Church with the civil authorities in the New Testament. This is not really the case if one bears in mind that Church and State function in two separate but related spheres in society. The concern of the State is the "temporal common good". It is not directly concerned with securing the eternal welfare of the members of Society. It must use its legislative and coercive power, however, to protect that which is for the welfare of civil society. The function of the State is to secure a framework within which the Good Life can be lived. It does not itself seek to plan for every facet of life in Society but provides the security and the structure of law that will make possible the liberty and peace and justice needed for the full life of citizens and associations of people within the State. Among other things it will provide a framework within which citizens may associate freely for religious purposes.

Although the Roman Empire to which Saint Paul enjoined obedience was an Imperial Dictatorship, it nevertheless provided security and a reasonable degree of justice. It served the temporal good of humanity. Christians are rightly expected to pray for and to obey the civil authority which exists to be a bulwark against avarice and lawlessness. It protects the weak from the strong, and provides an opportunity for an ordered and civilised life. Christians should pray for and obey the civil authority even when it does not in every respect use its power for the common good, for the advantages of order are not lightly to be tossed aside.

It is significant, however, that the author of the Book of Revelations takes a quite different line about the State. The State has become the Enemy. The Empire is now Satanic. The reason for the change is to be seen in the persecution of the Church by the State. The civil authority in the person of Domitian not only persecuted the Church but had moreover claimed divine honours. The civil power had gone beyond its function of securing the temporal good of Society and claimed for itself an ultimate significance and entered the domain of religion.

The legal and coercive power of the State has limits then. It does not exist for itself but to protect and preserve the interests of its citizens individually or in association with others. Society and the State are realities willed by God, and the citizen may not act in contempt of the common welfare. But the power of the state is neither unlimited nor arbitrary. This is so because Everyman (Adam) has a dignity conferred on him by creation. He is made to enjoy a relationship with God. The dignity which is his by creation is confirmed and reasserted by his redemption and his relationship in Jesus Christ with the Heavenly Father. He is a son of man, formed after the pattern of the Son of Man and he is being restored to conform with the life of the Proper Man Jesus Christ. He has loyalties and responsibilities, therefore, and potentialities, which go far beyond temporal responsibilities of the State. These do not fall within the competence of the civil power. The State ought to recognise such supra-temporal obligations and protect men in the exercise of them. Among these are personal relationships, such as the choice of friends, the choice of a life partner, the bringing up of children, cultural interests, and, of course, the relationships created by the exercise of religion.

The Church meanwhile is not merely a disembodied spiritual phenomenon but, according to the Gospel, is bound to have a social expression. Our redemption is not in isolation. It is not for individual separate Adams but for all humanity and even, according to Saint Paul, for the whole creation. The Gospel creates a brotherhood of believers with a vocation to claim all the world for Christ. It is therefore a community which cannot withdraw from Society into a 'ghetto'. It is expected to be a leaven mixed with Society for its good and for the redemption of all men.

Thus the Christian and the Church cannot be isolated and set apart from the ordinary life of the human community. The human community cannot consider religion as something foreign to its life. There is an inevitable inter-relation. But although the Church claims the liberty to proclaim the Gospel for the salvation of all men and the renewal of human Society, she cannot herself employ the methods and coercive



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power of the State to achieve her ends.

The Church thankfully receives the blessings of peace and an ordered life at the hands of the State, and seeks by her charity and obedience to God to encourage Society to conform as much as possible to the will of God. She does this by the witness of her own life and by her witness to the need for Social justice, and of course, by the participation of her sons in the political life of the State.

In rendering to Caesar what is quite properly Caesar's, and because she has a responsibility to Society, she must adapt herself to the conditions of the Society in which she finds herself as long as this does not mean being deflected from accomplishing her vocation. But because she has a primary loyalty to God, and a supra-temporal reference in addition to her concern for the welfare of men in Society, the Church can never be permitted to become the handmaid of the State or of pressure groups within the State. She must retain her freedom to be first the servant of God. She must be free to speak to men both of Grace and of Judgment.

Christians cannot lightly shrug off their responsibilities to the State. Ordered Government, even if this is the product of a one party state or a Dictatorship is to some degree a blessing. Chaos and the preying of the strong upon the weak would be far worse than the security of a relatively unjust Society. For this reason, Christians will withdraw their obedience to particular laws only with the greatest reluctance and only in the conviction that no other way is left open to them.

On the other hand, the State should not only provide the framework in which the Church can freely make her witness to God's Eternal Kingdom, but it must be careful not to usurp the functions of the Church; nor should it use the Church as a political pressure group, or espouse ideological idols that become in some degree a substitute for the Church.

## EVANGELISM

The Church has a vocation to present to the Heavenly Father a humanity redeemed and reconciled in Jesus Christ. How can she carry out this vocation in "Separate Development" Society?

**How will she do her duty in supporting the State to achieve the greatest possible temporal good?**

(1) She will bear witness to the fact that Christian citizens insist that love must find its social expression in justice. The love of Christ constrains her to be concerned about the temporal welfare of all men.

(2) She must bear in mind, however, that it is impossible for the State to govern with love. The authority of the State rightly expresses itself in the use of power and even force for the protection of Society. All that the Church can ask for is the greatest degree of justice consistent with the stability and safety of the State. Justice may mean equality before the law and equality of opportunity (but it does not necessarily mean, for example, equal voting rights, for in some circumstances this might endanger the stability of the state).

(3) She will thank God for the security and a measure of justice provided by the State and will encourage her members to be loyal to the State.

(4) She will acknowledge that in Temporal Society there can be no absolute justice and that the pressures and opportunities of particular historic circumstances must be taken into account in formulating the most just solution to political problems. Moreover, because she knows what is in man — a fallen nature — she will not make the error of thinking that ideal solutions are possible to governments, or indeed that any "final solutions" can be achieved in this world.

(5) If however, she is well informed about the condition of Society and is convinced that a greater degree of justice would be consistent with the stability of the State:

(a) the Church may ask for legislation to secure a more just society. This is as far as the **Church** may go.

(b) Christian **citizens** — but **not** the Church as the Communion of the faithful — may take direct

political action by forming pressure groups and by organising protests and demonstrations.

**How will the Church be true in her witness to the Kingdom of God?**

(1) Her own life must be consistent with her vocation. She must be God's instrument for the reconciliation of all men to Him and to one another. This will require common endeavour in study and service and worship.

(2) She cannot allow the State to make demands on her that would require her to deny her vocation. If the State uses its authority to pass legislation that will, among other things, prevent Christians from meeting for the Ministry of God's Word, for study and worship, religious liberty has been infringed. If the law prevents the meeting together of Christians to consider the application of the Christian Faith to life in Society, the State will have stepped outside its proper sphere.

If Christians, by meeting, cause traffic jams or scream their heads off, or combine to rand a bank, the State may deal with them and prevent their meeting. But it may not do so simply because brown skins are meeting with white skins. It may not enter the sphere of the deeply personal and spiritual relationship between men.

This is already a crucial issue for the Church. She may have conformed far to much to the ways of the world already. We have for many years accepted the fact that some persons must live in African Townships and that permits are needed for white persons to visit them and worship with them. Perhaps this was accepted in the interest of security. But the door was not shut, because no permits were required for Africans to share in Christian fellowship in white areas. The Church's acquiescence in the matter of location permits still left a way open for unity.

This is not the whole picture, of course, for the "Church Clause" is still on the Statue Book. It has not, as far as I know, been invoked. To do so would be to make a frontal attack on the Church.

(1) Nevertheless, pressure is applied from time to time to prevent Africans from worshipping in white areas, without invoking the "Church

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Clause". Any denial of the right of non-white people to worship in white areas would be a serious infringement of religious liberty.

(2) Conference centres in white urban areas are required to secure permits for Africans attending residential conferences. The Church cannot concede that the State has the right to decide who may meet for worship, fellowship and study, except where persons have been convicted of an offence and are serving a sentence.

**Exemption from this provision has been refused to the Wilgespruit Fellowship Centre, and indeed its future existence is threatened.**

At the same time the Church must, in obedience to God, seek more and more to meet across the colour line and indeed across denominational barriers. If we are to be obedient, this process must continue and even increase. Because it is becoming more difficult for persons of different race to meet at depth, this is a vital issue. It turns on two points:

(1) The Nature of the Church and the nature of her unity.

(2) The limitation of the State to the Temporal Good of Society.

**In the threat to the existence of Wilgespruit, the State goes beyond the care of the temporal good of Society in the interests of a particular ideology. In so doing it threatens the Church at the centre of her life.**

This becomes clear if we consider again the vocation of the Church.

The Church is created by God to be the means by which men are reconciled to Himself and to one another as fellow men in Jesus Christ and the acceptance of all men as equally loved by God.

The unity of the Church and her sanctification requires the acceptance of one another in Christ as a means by which God desires to bestow spiritual blessings upon us.

The unity of the Church and her perfection require the acceptance of

one another in Christ as each has an essential part to play in the realization of the **Pleroma**.

The unity of the Church requires freedom to meet in order to be witnesses and instruments of God's love towards one another.

The unity of the Church does not mean the studied integration of congregations, but freedom to share in fellowship and worship. It does mean that we do not confer a favour on non-white Christians by "allowing" them to meet with us but rather **we need one another** for our mutual enrichment and fulfilment in Christ. (Phil. 2:1-4; 1:8; Rom. 15:14; Gal 6:2; Col. 3:16.)

Thus the Church is a Community of Faithful People united to one another in bonds of mutual love, all within the embrace of God's love.

The Church hears constantly the prayer of her Lord: "That they may be one . . . that the world may believe that Thou didst send Me" and is responsive to it.

The Church seeks ardently to express her unity for which her Saviour lived and died, or she is a faithless Church.

Alas, the Church is often faithless and sinful. She fails often to adequately express her God-given unity. She is aware that she is under judgment for her failure but this makes it all the more necessary for her to seek, with new passion, the unity which is her Lord's gift to her.

The Church in South Africa has a particular vocation to witness to the unity of men in Christ, because Africa is a Continent threatened by the divisiveness of tribalism. She has a particular need to express her unity because South Africa has accepted a philosophy of separation and her government seeks to make this permanent in every sphere of life.

She must more especially seek to express brotherhood in Jesus Christ because the State seeks in white areas to keep all relationships with African and Coloured people on a formal basis of master and servant.

Because even worship can be a formal act it is essential to foster unity at depth. This is needed not only by Christians of different colours but also of different denominations, classes and backgrounds.

**Wilgespruit is a loving and obedient attempt by the Church to be**

**obedient and faithful in seeking the unity of all men in Christ.**

The State however legislates on the assumption that divisions and differences between races must at all costs be retained. There must be the greatest possible separation that is consistent with economic advantage.

**It is consistent with the policy of the State that the fellowship centre at Wilgespruit should not exist, and the State is taking action to make it impossible for it to exist as an Ecumenical Centre.**

It is consistent with this policy that the worship of Africans in White areas should be discouraged and even prevented if possible, for the State desires to destroy unity among persons of different racial groups.

In acting in this way, the State will infringe the religious liberty of her citizens, instead of protecting it.

In denying to the Church opportunity to express her unity and brotherhood at depth, the State interferes with both her progress in sanctification and with her witness.

The State, in fact, is acting in a way which will prevent the realization of Christ's prayer "that they may all be one . . . that the world may believe . . ."

Here, the State positively opposes the purposes of God as they are revealed and made effective in Jesus Christ. At this point therefore the Church is bound to say respectfully and humbly but quite firmly "No". She will moreover plead with those Christians who seek ends contrary to the prayer of the Lord Jesus Christ that they should consider the Judgment of God.

A last question must be asked. Does the Unity of the Church endanger the Security of the State? No, it cannot. It can only redeem the Society in which the Church lives, for the Church is God's means of redemption.

**If the unity of the Church is thought to endanger the State this is the most devastating judgement on Society and a clear indication that the social order is not consistent with the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. When the Church which is seeking to be faithful is felt to be a danger to Society, the State must seriously ask itself whether it still seeks a Society pleasing to God.**



# The Local Church and Problems of Identity in a Multi-Racial Country

— J. W. DE GRUCHY

## 3. ANXIETY AND IDENTITY

In the first article we considered the meaning of man's basic identity in terms of Jesus Christ; in the second article we considered the problem of race prejudice and its distortion of man's basic identity. Now we give our attention to another problem that faces the Church in its calling to witness to Jesus Christ in a multi-racial country, namely, the problem of race anxiety. It is not just race prejudice that prevents us from accepting other men in terms of their basic identity, race anxiety provides sufficient dynamic to do the same, and where both prejudice and anxiety are present their combined effect upon interpersonal and intergroup relations can be disastrous.

The awareness and intensity of any form of anxiety is integrally related to an historical and social situation. Paul Tillich has attempted to show that different historical epochs have given rise to different forms of anxiety, and that certain moments in history are more anxiety-producing than others<sup>1</sup>. Man is and always has been confronted by the ultimate threat of death, and his feeling of anxiety in the face of death has always overshadowed all other anxieties and given them their ultimate seriousness. But at certain historical moments men and nations have been more aware of their mortality than at other moments because of the context of events within which they live. In our day, the threat of nuclear annihilation is a constant backdrop to our lives and as a result there is what may be described as a cosmic anxiety which clouds our horizon. But within the shadow of such disastrous possibilities, we find other more immediate occasions for anxiety which may or may not be related to the cosmic dimension. One of these is race anxiety, a form which has erupted into prominence today and which may be defined as that manifestation of anxiety which is aroused in situations where race relations are such that individuals and groups involved feel that their racial identity is threatened and that this ultimately constitutes a threat both to their basic identity and to their existence as a whole.

### RACE ANXIETY IN HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Race anxiety has arisen within an historical context and can only be properly understood in terms of

that history. This does not mean that anxiety itself is simply an historical phenomenon which can be explained solely in terms of history, but that each manifestation of anxiety is to a great extent an historical and cultural product. Rollo May rightly said that "an individual's anxiety is conditioned by the fact that he lives in a given culture at a particular point in the historical development of that culture."<sup>2</sup>

An historical survey of the relations between the white and non-white races in South Africa reveals a continuous struggle between these two groups epitomized in a number of paradigmatic events. Thinking solely in terms of the struggle for white survival, and let us never forget that this immediately implies a struggle for black survival, we may for the sake of brevity and convenience see the struggle in three different but complimentary forms.

First, there has been the struggle for self-preservation itself, the struggle for life against death; second, the struggle for a particular identity through the preservation of religious, moral and cultural values, the struggle to preserve a "way of life"; third, the struggle for land and supremacy, the struggle to entrench and to enlarge the white man's claim to a new homeland. Involved in each of these is the underlying assumption that the black racial group constitutes a serious and certain threat to all that is implied in the struggle. We cannot possibly deal thoroughly with all that is involved here, but a brief examination of these three facets of the struggle for identity may reveal the roots of race anxiety.

### SELF-PRESERVATION

The struggle for self-preservation is a natural and necessary struggle, and this cannot be denied any group. As we have previously seen, racial identity is not to be despised, and therefore a racial group has the right to care for its own existence. But this natural right implies the right of other groups to preserve their identity in the same way and to the same extent. "To abandon standards of justice in the name of self-preservation, for selfish group ends and with the consequent disregard of the rule of law, is dangerous in all societies but incalculably so in a multi-racial society."<sup>3</sup> To struggle to preserve one's own identity in a way that denies another the opportunity to do the same undermines Christian ethics, and produces a sense of guilt within a sensitive society. This guilt is an essential component of race anxiety.

### PRESERVATION OF A WAY OF LIFE

The struggle to preserve a way of life which embodies significant values for humanity is right and must not be denied any group. However, any means used to preserve these values which are contrary to or the negation of the values, implies that the values are no longer regarded as important to the way of life which embodied them. The way of life must be maintained at all costs! Tillich describes pre-World War II Europe in these words:

"The younger generation was tired of making decisions about everything, including their own existence. They could not bear any longer the burden of autonomous thinking and acting. They could not stand any more a life in which nothing was certain. Consequently they were longing for a certainty to be gained at any price . . ."<sup>4</sup>

(Please turn page over)

## The Local Church and Problems of Identity in a Multi-Racial Country

(Continued from page 11)

Under pressure, the vitality which comes through the risk of living for truth rather than self-security is severely constricted, and the average man cannot deal with his free floating anxiety, he must cling to something certain even at the cost of losing his soul. But this is a surrender of truth and ultimate meaning and with its loss anxiety is given birth — life becomes meaningless because its meaning is sought in self-centred ends.

### THE STRUGGLE FOR LAND AND SUPREMACY

The struggle for land and domination can be understood, though today we find difficulty in seeking to justify Colonialism. But every man and group needs "space" in which to develop identity, and in our land the question of this "space" is of great importance and no amount of historical back-biting will solve the problems involved. Two quotations from Tillich may help to pin-point the relation of this to anxiety:

"Every being strives to provide and to preserve space for itself. This means above all a physical location — the body, a piece of soil, a home, a city, a country, the world. It also means a social 'space' — a vocation, a sphere of influence, a group, a historical period, a place of remembrance and anticipation, a place within a structure of values and meanings. Not to have space is not to be."<sup>5</sup>

Such desire becomes dominant

"in special periods and in special social and psychological situations. Men create systems of security in order to protect this space. But they can only repress their anxiety; they cannot banish it, for this anxiety anticipates the final 'spacelessness' which is implied in finitude."<sup>6</sup>

Today we find that these struggles are not at an end but entering a new phase, and we are continually reminded that the days to be will probably be more decisive than any that have past. There is a sense in

which we, like the Romans of old, have become aware of the "Goths" and "Visi-Goths" to the North, and see in them a threat to our way of life — imagination may well go further in considering this parallel. But it is precisely at this point that a further and futuristic element enters into our race anxiety, a phenomenon expressed by the late Richard Niebuhr when he said: "in the destructive interactions of castes or racial groups in the United States and in South Africa and elsewhere in the world we must take into account that beyond all loyalty to law and beyond all idealism there is operative in the minds of the defensive group a deep fear of coming destruction."<sup>7</sup>

### THE NATURE OF RACE ANXIETY

As will be seen, we are heavily indebted to Paul Tillich in our understanding of anxiety, and we base this section substantially on his creative thought.<sup>8</sup> For Tillich, anxiety is an ontological quality which becomes manifest in the experience of men when a man becomes aware of his finitude or creatureliness. Anxiety arises through the awareness of non-being. This means that anxiety is always present but not always experienced. We may then see race anxiety as one manifestation of anxiety which is aroused in the given historical and cultural situation of our land. That is, South Africans at this moment of history, experience anxiety because the situation within which we live has the power to arouse awareness of the threat not merely to our way of life but to our existence.

The awareness of the threat of non-being can be thought of in the classical sense of "angst" as in Freud or Kierkegaard, where it refers to the feeling of being choked or passing through constricting narrows. It is not just the feeling of the threat of physical death, but the feeling of the threat to meaningful life. It may be the awareness of dying slowly while given every appearance at life and vitality. As we saw in our glance at the problem of prejudice, we are faced with the problem of group depersonalization which is really an integral part of this constriction which awakens anxiety.

Various studies of the phenomenon of anxiety have pointed to the close relationship that exists between

anxiety and fear. For example, both are manifest as reactions to some threat, and both have similar affects upon man. However, there are important differences. Fear always has an object, it is the awareness of a specific danger to the self; anxiety never has a concrete object, it is the awareness of danger that cannot be described. Anxiety as distinct from fear brings with it the painful experience of helplessness in the face of the danger because the source of the danger cannot be described and made manageable, it lies beyond the control of man himself. In South Africa there is much fear, and while this fear is difficult to overcome it can be dealt with as long as the source is discernable and manageable — e.g. the fear of miscegenation can be dealt with by law. But race anxiety is something more profound, it is the product of fears that are without rational foundation, without substance in truth, and yet which awaken within us a sense of foreboding and constriction while at the same time they reveal our impotence to manage them.

We must distinguish between normal and neurotic anxiety. Anxiety is normal, it is part of human creatureliness and finitude, but when a man is unable to accept his finitude and live through his anxiety he escapes despair by "escaping into neurosis."<sup>9</sup> In thus reacting negatively to anxiety a man settles down to a fixed, though limited and unrealistic self-affirmation, and he begins to find it difficult to relate to others, especially those whom he irrationally regards as dangerous to his own identity. We are not a nation of neurotics! No. But when it comes to race relations the signs of pathology are evident. Again, Tillich illumines our thought:

"There is a moment in which the self-affirmation of the average man becomes neurotic; when changes of the reality to which he is adjusted threaten the fragmentary courage with which he has mastered the accustomed object of fear. If this happens — and it often happens in critical periods of history — the self-affirmation becomes pathological. The dangers connected with the change, the unknown character of things to come, the darkness of the future make the average man a fanatical defender of the established order. He defends it as com-



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pulsively as the neurotic defends the castle of his imaginary world. He loses his comparative openness to reality, he experiences an unknown depth of anxiety. But if he is not able to take this anxiety into his self-affirmation his anxiety turns to neurosis."<sup>10</sup>

We all experience anxiety at some stage or another, and in South Africa we are all subject to race anxiety, the danger comes, however, when our anxiety succumbs to the irrational, turns pathological, and results in the fanatical defense of racial identity in such a way that the very values that give identity meaning are forgotten and even denied.

### SOME RESULTS OF RACE ANXIETY

Race anxiety leads to the isolation of one racial group from another, while at the same time it is itself heightened through increased isolation. "When in a multi-racial country the various groups are no longer capable of full communication with one another, when by reason of isolation and other factors, normal human contact has been severed, that society becomes abnormal."<sup>11</sup> The white man perceives the black man as the source of his anxiety, thus he moves away from him and withdraws into his own secure group, in doing this he breaks communication and therefore is unable to see whether or not his anxiety is justified or not. The black man becomes the unknown, the mysterious, and is swiftly classified in terms of some stereotype which poses as a threat to identity and existence.

As a result of this isolation and the element of guilt alluded to earlier, there is the deeper factor of alienation. Under these conditions of group and personal estrangement anxiety becomes moulded by hatred and guilt in varying proportions. The hatred is projected, the guilt is suppressed, and fanaticism emerges.

There is, however, the possibility of a constructive aspect of anxiety. Anxiety in itself is never simply negative, for part of its function is

to awaken man to an awareness of his predicament and the threat to his existence under which he continually stands because of his finitude. Thus, race anxiety may awaken us to the real threats to our identity, chief among which is our growing inability to meet the future on any other terms than those of selfish interest. Race anxiety may awaken us to the peril we are in through the neglect on the part of Christians to see all men in terms of their basic identity and not in terms of some ideology with which we bolster our "way of life" as ultimate in itself. This awareness may bring us to true repentance and faith, indeed, without these there is no salvation.

(To be continued)

#### References:

1. Tillich "The Courage to Be" pp 57f.
2. R. May "The Meaning of Anxiety" p 154.
3. L. Marquard "The Peoples and Policies of South Africa" p 145.
4. Tillich "The Protestant Era" p 245.
5. Tillich "Systematic Theology" Vol. I p 216.
6. *ibid* p 217.
7. R. H. Niebuhr "The Responsible Self" p 60.
8. cf. Tillich's "Courage to Be", "Systematic Theology" etc.
9. Tillich "The Courage to Be" p 66.
10. *ibid* p 70.
11. May 'op.cit' p 183.

## GEÏGNOREER EN VERWERP

(Vervolg van bladsy 3)

verdige en Hy is 'n versoening vir ons sondes, en nie alleen vir ons s'n nie, maar ook vir dié van die hele wêreld". (1 Joh. 3:20; 2:1-2.)

Al het ons hierdie gebed geïgnoreer, bid Christus nog vir ons en sy gebed moet verhoor word. Al het ons sy kruis verwerp, bied Hy dit nog vir ons aan as 'n krag van God tot redding vir elkeen wat glo (Rom. 1:16). Die mense van die Republiek van Suid-Afrika mag glo — maar nie terwyl ons terugdeins van die kruis wat Christus ons oplê nie — die kruis van te deel in die lyding, vernedering, verwerping, bespottig en dood van ons broers — die kruis van te sterwe wat betref ons denominasionale, rasse en sosiale onenigheid wat 'n skandalon vir die wêreld is. „Voorwaar, voorwaar Ek sê vir julle, as die korinkorrel nie in die grond val en sterf nie, bly dit alleen; maar as dit sterf, dra dit veel vrug" (Joh. 12:24).

## DIE KERK BUIE SUID-AFRIKA

(Vervolg van bladsy 6)

moeting met die polisie is vantevore deur die leiers van die demonstrasie afgespreek. Tog was daar op dié dag nog ook geweld: die dood van eerw. James Reed wat deur die koerante gemeld is, is veroorsaak deur 'n aanval van enkele blankes na afloop van die demonstrasie. Hierdie gebeurtenisse het oral in die land die aandrag tot steun van die aksies in Selma versterk.

### VERENIGDE KONINKRYK

Verteenwoordigers van die Engelse Kongregasionaliste-kerke en die Presbiteriaanse Kerk van Engeland het 'n voorstel tot vereniging bekend gemaak wat albei kerke in een nuwe kerk verenig, volgens Presbiteriaanse model, omdat dit administratief gemakliker is. Die planne voorsien 'n indeling van 2500 Kongregasionistiese en die 300 Presbiteriaanse gemeentes in 'presbyteries' of 'distrikte' van 25 tot 30 gemeentes. Provinsiale sinodes sou gebiede met hoogstens 250 gemeentes insluit. 'n Algemene Vergadering sou leiding neem in die kerk. Hierdie planne sal in die byeenkomste van albei kerke in Mei bespreek word en dan na die plaaslike gemeentes vir oorweging deurgestuur word.

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# AFRICA CONSULTATION

From January 4th to 9th sixty African Church leaders, both clerical and lay, men and women, representing twenty different countries, gathered at Enugu for an African Consultation. This was organised by the All African Conference of Churches in co-operation with the Department on Church and Society, the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs and the Division of Inter-Church Aid, Refugee and World Service of the World Council of Churches.

The consultation had as its theme "The Christian Response to the African Revolution." Among the subjects dealt with in the various papers were "A Christian Interpretation of the African Revolution," "The Contribution of the Church to the Development of the New Africa", "The Heritage of Christian Service and the Challenge of the New Societies in Africa", "Present Positions and Problems of the Churches in Africa", "The Ecumenical Programme for Emergency Action in

Africa", "Current Developments in Modern Africa", and "The Rôle of Africa in World Affairs." The consultation was divided into four Commissions, which studied:

1. The Christian basis for Participation in the African Revolution.
2. The Project System in Africa.
3. The Refugee Situation in Africa.
4. Africa and International Affairs.

His Excellency, Sir Frances Ibiam, Governor of Eastern Nigeria and a President of the World Council of Churches, presided over the Consultation and Dr. Donald M'Timkulu, the Chairman of the All African Conference of Churches and the Rev. Jean Kotto, President of the Eglise évangélique of the Cameroun were the Vice-Presidents.

The consultation was characterized by the fact that it truly consisted of Africans. There were representatives of the churches of the West and of Asia present but these only contributed to the discussion when invited to answer questions or to deliver addresses. The papers and the discussions revealed a deep insight and concern among church leaders about the rôle of the churches in the contemporary African scene. This reflected a political sensitiveness and indeed a hope and confidence which at times bordered on naiveté about the effectiveness of political solutions for Africa's problems. The representatives from English- and French-speaking Africa reflected different approaches to the problem, obviously influenced by their cultural backgrounds. To the French-speaking Africans especially the consultation was indebted for the sounding of the evangelical note, while those from English-speaking Africa continually focused the attention of the consultation on the political, economic and social realities of the situation.

It is inevitable that the papers and discussions should emphasize the great problems which the churches and countries of Africa are facing — problems of youth (50% of the population of African countries is under 20 years of age), of economic backwardness, of the non-emancipated peoples, but they also revealed a clear determination on the part of church leaders to help their nations deal with these great issues. The consultation was also characterized by a general awareness that if this is a time of crisis in Africa, it is a time of great opportunity for the Christian Church.

Many leaders of African nations are committed Christians or have been trained in Christian institutions, so that it is especially urgent

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Inleidingsartikel:

## „Wie nie teen ons is nie, is vir ons”

(Vervolg van bladsy 5)

Intussen het dit egter duidelik geword dat die vraag of die vermalediede sogenaamde „liberaliste” nog langer in die kerk geduld sal word, hier en daar akuut geword het. Nog bedroewender as die besluite van sommige kerkrade van die Ned. Geref. Kerk van Suid-Transvaal, waarna in ons vorige uitgawe verwys is, is 'n besluit van die kerkrad van die Ned. Geref. Gemeente Lindenpark, waarin die Direkteur van die Christelike Instituut „beleefdlik” (!) die deur van die kerk gewys word. As hy daarvan oortuig is dat hy met „sy instituut” op die regte pad is — so lui die besluit — „word hy beleefdlik aangeraai om liever vir hom 'n geestelike tuiste te soek in 'n kerkverband waar sy sieninge en aspirasies beter sal inpas” (**Die Kerkbode**, 19 Mei 1965, bl. 633). Maar dit is tog nie hierdie één man se Instituut nie? Talle lidmate en ampsdraers van die Ned. Geref. Kerk is óf formeel daarby ingeskakel óf deel die „sieninge en aspirasies” waarna daar blykbaar in die besluit verwys word, altans hulle onderskryf die basis en doelstellinge van die Christelike Instituut. Wat van hulle?

Die vrae kom ons met smarte van die hart: Veronderstel dat die besluit van die kerkrad van Lindenpark die heersende gevoel in die Ned. Geref. Kerk vertolk, wat is daar besig om met 'n kerk te gebeur wat die deur wys vir van sy lidmate wat in leer en lewe onberispelik is? Watter sieninge en aspirasies pas nie in by die Ned. Geref. Kerk nie, en waarom nie? Dié wat deur hierdie oordeel getref word, het tog seker die reg om te vra dat die Skrif en die belydenis ook in hulle geval as die maatstaf sal geld. As hulle hierdie toets kan deurstaan, behoort daar tog seker vir hulle 'n plekkie oor te wees in die kerk van Christus? En as 'n kerk vir hulle om ander redes as dat hulle die weg van die Woord, die suiwer leer en die Christelike sedes verlaat het, geen plek meer het nie, wat is die bestaansgronde van hierdie kerk? As hierdie deur-wysery deurgevoer sou gaan word, wat tog sekerlik iets ongehoords sal wees, waarheen sal die verstotenes hulle dan moet wend? Kan dié wat so haastig is om die deur te wys, miskien die weg ook wys? As die kerk sy kinders begin wegjaag. „Heer, waar dan heen? Tot U alleen, U sal ons nie begewe!”



# Persverklaring deur die Uitvoerende Komitee van die Christelike Instituut — 29 MEI 1965

Omdat daar miskien twyfel, en selfs agterdog, by sommige mag ontstaan as gevolg van die besoek van lede van die Veiligheidspolisie aan die kantore van die Christelike Instituut en aan die huis van sy direkteur, ds. C. F. B. Naudé, op 7 Mei 1965, wil die Uitvoerende Komitee met alle beslistheid verklaar:

(1) dat daar hoegenaamd geen regverdiging vir die besoek was nie, soos ook blyk uit die feit dat die Veiligheidspolisie ná 'n baie deeglike ondersoek niks verwyder het nie behalwe twee eksemplare van die Februarie-uitgawe van **Pro Veritate** uit die kantore en twee eksemplare van die verslag van die Britse Raad van Kerke, „The Future of South Africa” uit die huis van ds. Naudé. (Hierdie verslag is deur die Minister van Justisie verklaar as 'n boek wat in Suid-Afrika versprei mag word. Wat die twee eksemplare van **Pro Veritate** betref, het hulle, soos trouens alle uitgawes van **Pro Veritate**, niks bevat wat strydig is met ons landswette nie);

(2) dat die Christelike Instituut niks meer en niks minder beoog nie as om Christus en sy Kerk te dien, veral deur geleentheid te skep vir Christene om saam te kom vir Bybelstudie, gebed, bespreking, deurdagte ontleding en praktiese onderlinge Christelike diens;

(3) dat die Christelike Instituut se doelstellings en sy werksaamhede gebaseer is op en gemotiveer word deur die Heilige Skrif, met inagneming van die Belydenisskrifte van die kerke waaraan sy lede behoort. Die Christelike Instituut en sy lede trag om die Wil van God uit sy Woord te verneem en om daardie Wil in ons huidige verwarde situasie rigtinggewend te gehoorsaam.

Die Uitvoerende Komitee wil ook aandag vestig op die Christelike Instituut se vroeëre onomwonde verwerping en veroordeling van:

1. **Die Kommunisme** waarvan die Instituut „geen werktuig is of sal wees nie” (Verklaring van 9 November 1963) en wat „'n gevaar is wat met alle mag bestry moet word” (Verklaring van 21 Februarie 1964).

2. **Geweld en ondermyning**, aangesien dit „immorele, reedetlose en sinnelose” metodes van protes is wat die Christelike Instituut „onvoorwaardelik en ondubbelsinnig” verdoem (Verklaring van 24 Junie 1964 — die dag van die bomontploffing by die Johannesburgse stasie).

3. **Liberalisme**, „as dit sou inhou heulery met enige organisasie of ideologie wat die Kerk van Christus vir sy magspolitek wil misbruik” (Verklaring van 9 November 1963). Die Uitvoerende Komitee wil daarop wys dat die woord **liberalisme**, in weerwil van sy fundamentele gunstige betekenis, in Suid-Afrika in die jongste tyd as 'n vae en ongeformuleerde slagkreet gebruik word waarvan niemand die presiese inhoud omskryf het nie.

Die Uitvoerende Komitee herbevestig:

1. sy onvoorwaardelike verwerping en veroordeling van die Kommunisme en wys daarop dat hy stappe gedoen het om die Kommunistiese infiltrasie in die Instituut te verhoed;

2. sy verwerping en veroordeling van geweld en ondermyning as geheel-en-al in stryd met die Evangelie van Christus;

3. sy vasberadenheid, nou en in die toekoms, om nie 'n instrument te wees van die Kommunisme of van enige organisasie of individu wat geweld en ekonomiese ondermyning bepleit as „metodes vir die oplossing van Suid-Afrika se vraagstukke” nie;

4. sy oortuiging dat die Heilige Skrif die rigskoer vir sy lede en vir homself moet wees, en dat die instituut as organisasie en sy lede as enkelinge, te alle tye sal trag om gehoorsaam aan God te wees; dat daar geen twyfel bestaan nie dat reg en geregtigheid, liefde, vrede en versoening, deel van God se Wil is vir sy kinders;

5. dat, soos in sy konstitusie verklaar, die Christelike Instituut die kerke en ander liggame wat dieselfde doelstellings as die Instituut het, wil help om die getuienis van die Kerk van Christus in die wêreld te bevorder, en dat die Instituut nie 'n nuwe kerkformasie of ondermyning van die bestaande kerke beoog nie.

## CHRISTIAN PRESENCE IN THE ACADEMIC WORLD

“‘Evangelization’, ‘witness’, and ‘mission’ have long been among the words used by the WSCF to describe its witness to Jesus Christ in the academic world. However, these words have now become problematic for many students. The dissatisfaction springs from the historical burden which they carry and which suggests a Christian behaviour of speaking before listening, of calling people away from their communities into a Christian grouping, and of preoccupation with the soul at the expense of the whole of life. Even when the words ‘witness’ and ‘mission’ are properly understood, many students feel that they are too big and too definite. They suggest a certainty of faith and purpose, and an ability to conceptualize faith, in terms which create difficulty for many people, often most of all for those most committed to Christ and his gospel.

“When we try to formulate what the task of the Christian community in the academic world is in our living language of today, we seek to express the same realities our forefathers did, i.e., how to give witness to our belief that in Christ Jesus God has reconciled the world to himself. We use the word **‘presence’** for that reality. We use it to express both the centre of Christian faith and our response to it. As an expression of our faith it points to the incarnation: God became man like us and lived among us. The man Jesus uncovers life for us . . . His presence has shown God to us . . .

“The word **‘presence’** does not mean that we are simply there; it tries to describe the adventure of being there in the name of Christ, often anonymously, listening before we speak, hoping that men will recognize Jesus for what he is and stay where they are, involved in the fierce fight against all that dehumanizes, ready to act against demonic powers, to identify with the outcast, merciless in ridiculing modern idols and new myths. When we say presence, we say that we have to get into the midst of things even when they frighten us . . . Presence spells death to the **status quo** both in society and in the Christian community: we will not tire of pleading and working for the restoration of the normal manhood as we see it in Jesus.” (WSCF Gen. Com., 1964).

## The nature of the Christian faith

(Continued from page 4)

cannot dismiss it out of hand because it makes no appeal to our minds.

We may not notice the fact of the contingency of the world any more than when I happen mentally to remark that a car is passing, I do not notice that it is the latest Vauxhall model. Another person, however, notices this fact about that same car and is impressed by it; in the same way it happens that some people do observe the same world which is open to all and are overwhelmed by its contingency.<sup>3</sup> The question of overall significance is one which they cannot escape.

Furthermore, for those who ask this question, it gains major significance. Is the whole of existence with which I am related meaningful or not? Is the significance of my life to be found in my attempts to embody that meaning in my own existence, or must I just attempt to create arbitrarily a little corner of significance in which to dwell? Is the highest pattern of meaning open to me just that which my own ego deliberately fashions? Once this question is asked, the problem of 'necessary being' or the 'existence of God' takes the utmost personal significance. The cosmological argument does not prove the existence of God, but it shows that the question of his being is a truly meaningful one — one which we cannot evade, unless we arbitrarily pre-judge the issue by refusing to ask the question.

### THE MORAL ARGUMENT

The fourth argument which I wish us to consider is the moral one. It was expressed in its most classical form by Kant who had already rejected the other arguments for God's existence on the ground that they were drawn from the realm of appearance and therefore could not apply to God who by everybody's admission did not belong to the sensible world at all. All we knew, Kant argued, of the external world was

of appearance, but in moral activity we become conscious of the real world. Such a world we could only know from within, and when we decide on any moral activity, Kant went on, pre-supposed that we were free beings and also that we lived in a world which upheld such activity. That this was so is not immediately obvious, and therefore God is introduced as the upholder of the moral law, who saw to it that virtue (often so ignominiously treated in this world) would eventually be rewarded with immortality.

Put as baldly as that the argument is hardly inspiring. Many an atheist has done what he considered to be 'right' action, though he does not believe that there is a God to back up his efforts. Moreover, from the religious point, the use of God made here seems to be irreverent in the extreme, bringing him in as a kind of cosmic convenience to guarantee our moral efforts.

Defective though this argument may be in regard to what it ostensibly sets out to prove, nevertheless, like the others, it testifies to a significant element in our human consciousness. When we perform an action which we regard and call 'right', we mean more than that we are doing something concerning which we feel strongly. Few people would wish to reduce an ethical decision to the same level as a whim, even a fancy about which we have strong feelings. When we perform an action which we regard as good, we feel that we are acting in reference to some standard beyond ourselves. In that way as Von Hügel put it 'oughtness' depends upon 'isness'.

True, we may define a good action as that which is socially useful, but man has arrived at that level of personal self-consciousness as to ask himself why he 'ought' to perform a socially useful action. In our ethical decisions we become aware of ourselves as persons (and in this Kant is certainly right in insisting that for us this is the most real of worlds), yet in such situations we find it difficult to think of the dictates of our consciences as no more than highly impulsive whimsicalities. What is the status of our ethical decisions — are they

nothing more than our private ideal creations, or do we through them come into contact with objective moral order?

This question is put to us by the moral argument for God's existence, just as much as the problem as to whether there is a final reason for things as they are, is put to us by the cosmological argument.

(To be Continued)

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1. It is significant in this respect that van Buren was a pupil of Karl Barth, whose antipathy to natural theology is well known.

2. *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* 6.44. Also 'The contemplation as a limited-whole. The feeling of the world as a limited whole is the mystical feeling' (T.L.P. 6.45).

3. For a fuller treatment of this point see F. C. Copleston 'On seeing and noticing' (reprinted in 'Contemporary Philosophy', London, 1956).

## AFRICA CONSULTATION

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that the churches should reveal the relevance of their message and mission to the contemporary situation and sustain those who are seeking to bring a Christian influence to bear on the political, social and economic issues of the day.

One sign of the determination of Christian leaders to help the churches to become involved in dealing with the needs of the people was the action taken at the close of the consultation by the General Committee of the All Africa Conference of Churches to undertake the responsibility with the help of churches around the world for developing and carrying through the Ecumenical Programme for Emergency Action in Africa.

**Extract from the "World Council Diary" of the ECUMENICAL REVIEW, April, 1965.**

(Copies of the **Consultation Digest of the Enugu Conference** may be obtained from the British Council of Churches, 10 Eaton Gate, London, S.W.1. 35 cents).