

PRO VERITATE

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PROF. DR. TH. C. VRIEZEN*

DIE PROFETE EN HULLE BOODSKAP

Niks is vir my aangenamer as om via Pro Veritate met hulle wat ek verlede jaar in Suid-Afrika ontmoet het, en met hul vriende, in aanraking te bly nie. As ek, na my verblyf aldaar, terugdink aan u land en volk, dan klop my hart vinniger, byna net soos toe ek as jong seun die boeke van Penning gelees het. Die romantiek van destyds het wel 'n bietjie afgeneem, en dit mag wel gebeur waar iemand sy pensioengeregtigde leeftyd nader, maar die blydschap oor die persoonlike kennismaking met u land, het die belangstelling en toegeneentheid verdiep en versterk.

Ek het byna hierdie eerste hydrae in sy geheel gewy aan die goeie herinneringe en baie indrukke van verlede jaar, maar het dit andersyds tog nie aangedurf nie, omdat dit waarskynlik te eensydig, te persoonlik en daardeur te weinig 'tipies' is. Lof en blaam word so dikwels oordryf of ook as onjuis aan gevoel. Daarom moet dit bly by hierdie enkele persoonlike woorde, — veral omdat ek graag die suggestie van die redakteur wil opvolg om iets te skrywe oor die boodskap van die profete vir die Kerk in Europa of in Afrika.

Die profete se boodskap universeel

In wese kom dit nie daarop aan of 'n mens vir die Kerk in Europa, Asië, Suid-Afrika of Amerika skryf nie; vir die Kerke in die hele wêreld het die profete 'n aktuele boodskap, of liever is hul boodskap op verskillende wyse aktueel. Die profete het in hulle eie dae voor die mees verskillende situasies gestaan en hul boodskap is daarom vir baie fasette van die lewe waardevol.

Ek is baie bly oor die wenk van die Eind-redakteur, want dit gee my 'n geleentheid om 'n bietjie op my eie terrein te bly. Ek dink eerlik nie dat ek by hierdie groot manne soos 'n kind aan huis is nie, maar ek het my by meer geleenthede op die terrein van die profete-ondersoek beweeg en hul geskrifte, hul tyd, hul woorde en handdelinge in allerlei opsigte bestudeer en oorweeg, en — ek moet sê — altyd die besef gehad van deur die aanraking met hulle steeds weer geleer te word en verryk te word.

Oor een van die dinge waardeur die profete my altyd weer geboei en geïnspireer het, wil ek hierdie keer iets skrywe, en wel oor 'n spesifieke saak wat ek altyd soseer in hulle bewonder, nl. die persoonlike van hul optrede.

Die persoonlike van hulle optrede

Die profetiese geskrifte is en bly vir my een van die hoogtepunte van die Ou Testament, indien nie dié glanspunt daarvan nie, omdat dit ons in aanraking bring met manne wat één was met die woord wat hulle gespreek het, wat met hulle hele persoon gestaan het agter wat hulle te sê gehad het.

Op die oomblik stempel so 'n uitspraak hier in Europa iemand in feite

pelprofete was), hetsy as boetepredikers, wat slegs op heel bepaalde momente in die geskiedenis iets te sê gehad het; terwyl dit wat hulle te sê gehad het, nie veel meer sou gewees het as 'n onderstreping of herhaling van wat die oorlewering al reeds eeuelank deurgegee het nie.

Ek is dit nog steeds nie eens met hierdie beskouing nie en wag maar geduldig die tyd af wanneer meer mense, in besonder onder die jongeres, die enorme belang van die profete vir die ontstaan van nuwe geestelike insigte en daardeur hulle besondere betekenis vir die Christelike geloof, weer sal ontdek.

Hier en daar hoor ek (behalwe pro-teste van ouere geleerdes) verheugde

klanke ook van die kant van die jongeres. Juls namate die skaal van die waardering van die profete baie ongunstig na die een kant afgedruk is, kan 'n mens aan die ander kant verwag dat twyfel sal opkom of die nuwe opvatting die Godsmanne wel voldoende reg laat wedervaar. 'n Mens hoor dan ook al nou en dan stemme weerklink wat waarsku vir 'n onderwaardering van die persoonlike in die profetiese optrede.

So verheug my, nog meer as 'n artikel van die bekende Baselse professor Eichrodt oor Eségiël 33 (in die Feesbundel vir prof. A. Weiser, wat onder die titel Tradition und Situation in November 1963 verskyn het), die

• Na bladsy 2

GERDENER PLEA:

FIGHT PREJUDICE

“SCHOOLS SHOULD SHOW WAY”

— RACE RELATIONS PROGRAMME OUTLINED

A call to the people of South Africa to consider a comprehensive, well-organised, and nation-wide onslaught on race prejudice was made yesterday by the Administrator of Natal, Mr. T. J. A. Gerdener.

He doubted whether enough was being done to curb existing racial prejudice, which would inevitably affect the future course of events.

He was outlining to the Pinetown Rotary Club an educational plan for improving race relations.

To counteract the effects of racialism, he suggested a series of programmed lessons in all high schools.

These should deal with race relations, forms of government, civic duties, and individual responsibility towards fellow South Africans.

If all educational institutions followed such a programme, he had no doubt that race relations would be immeasurably improved.

Emotional problem

Racialism was basically an emotional problem. As people's emotional patterns were formed in childhood, it stood to reason that the devastating effects of racialism should be counteracted at an early age, preferably at school.

He believed that a fight against racialism was a practical proposition. And he outlined three aspects of the problem:

- The origin and nature of racial prejudice;
- Its manifestations; and
- The combating of prejudice through education.

No reason

“I am afraid we have to admit that our people are still frighteningly prone to prejudices against those who belong to other language and colour groups. When we look to the future, there is no reason for complacency.”

“It is a matter of conjecture whether legislation, or its implementation, would have a significant bearing on racial attitudes. This goes for legislation on apartheid, and it will also go for legislation on integration.”

“Racial prejudice was caused by man's emotions. It was rarely the product of rational thinking.”

Need of a boost

“The man or woman who is in constant need of a boost, and who has to feel superior to the members of another language or racial group, can only satisfy this emotional hunger by attaching derogatory and uncomplimentary tags to other people”.

The Afrikaans- or English-speaking person who liked to think that his language group was more cultured and intelligent than that of the other, was often in dire need of an ego boost.

Deep in his subconscious mind there was probably a feeling of uncertainty, and this could only be overcome by reassuring himself that those on the other side of the language or colour barrier were an inferior and unpleasant people.

Prejudice in the sphere of racialism could therefore be defined as attitudes and beliefs which put the individuals or groups at whom they were directed at some social, economic or political disadvantage.

The individual who held such beliefs put his own group at some unjustified advantage.

It was inevitable that gross distortions would result, and that such distortions would be perpetuated until the emotional needs or motivations of the individual concerned were satisfied.

“Many Afrikaans-speaking people are Nationalists and many English-speaking people are supporters of the United or Progressive parties. But to say that all Afrikaners are Nationalists and that all English-speaking people are Saps, is tantamount to dividing the Afrikaans- and English-speaking forever into two artificially separated units.”

Once it was generally realised that adherence to a political party was something totally different from racialism, the tragic fight among the people of South Africa would immediately lose much of its devastating and dividing power.

“The English-speaking person who rejects co-operation with Afrikaans-speaking persons out of fear that he will be overwhelmed, suffers from nothing but racialism.

“So does the Afrikaans-speaking person whose ignorance of the language and culture of the English-speaking person makes him despise it. In fact both suffer from racialism.”

(Report in “The Natal Mercury”, 14th Febr. 1964.)

PROF. A. VAN SELMS

ONSTERFLIKE WOORDE?

Nuwejaarsgroot

Ds. De Beer het hom in die dagbladpers tot die volk gewend met 'n nuwejaarsgroot, waarin baie dinge gesê word wat 'n mens maar gerus kan oordink. Dit is behartenswaardig en verdien langduriger aandag as wat die meeste vertoë in die dagbladpers gewoonlik ontvang.

Maar . . . , soos die Romeine waarskynlik met die oog op die skerpioen gesê het, die vergif lê in die stert, in hierdie geval in die stert van daardie artikel. Of, soos die boere op Beveland gewoon was om te sê: Wat het jy aan 'n beste koei as sy die melkemmer omtrap? Dit is wat gebeur as Ds. De Beer aan die einde van sy nuwejaarsboodskap, sonder dat daar eintlik veel innerlike samehang met die voorafgaande ontdek kan word, die „onsterflike woorde van wyle Dr. Malan" aanhaal: „Glo in jou God, glo in jou self, glo in jou volk."

Die mens se woord onsterflik?

In die eerste plek: mag ons van 'n mens se woorde sê dat hulle onsterflik

is? Ek lees heel iets anders in I Petrus 1 : 24 en 25: „Want alle vlees is soos gras en al die heerlijkheid van die mens soos 'n blom van die gras. Die gras verdor en sy blom val af, maar die woord van die Here bly tot in ewigheid". Onsterflikheid is iets wat volgens I Tim. 6 : 16 net die besit van die Here God is en wat ons as gelowiges as 'n gawe van die onsterflike God eers op die dag van die groot opstanding by die klank van die laaste basuin, sal ontvang I Kor. 15 : 51 — 54). Nêrens in die Skrif staan dat die woorde van 'n mens onsterflik kan wees nie.

Mense kan voortreflike woorde spreek, maar hulle behoort tot daardie heerlijkheid van die mens, waarvan Petrus in die aangehaalde teks in navolging van Jes. 40 : 6 — 8 sê dat dit verdor en afval. Dit is net die

Woord van die Here wat onsterflik is, wat bly tot in ewigheid.

Selvs geen blywende woord?

Is daar dan glad geen kans vir 'n mens om iets waarliks blywends te sê nie? Tog wel: as sy woord nie sy eie woord is nie, maar 'n suiwere weergawe van die woord van God. Dan het daardie woord, hoewel dit deur 'n menslike mond gespreek, of deur 'n menslike hand geskryf is, deel aan die ewigheid en onsterflikheid van die woord van God, wat in daardie geval die werklike inhoud van die menslike woord uitmaak.

Daarom moet ons in die tweede plek vra: Is hierdie beweerde onsterflike woorde 'n weergawe van wat ons in die Heilige Skrif vind?

„Glo in God"

„Glo in God" — dit is inderdaad die boodskap van die Bybel op sy kortste formule gebring. Ek sou nie aarsel om te sê dat hierdie woord deel het aan die ewigheid van die woord van God nie. „Julle moet geloof in God hê", sê die Heiland volgens Mark. 11 : 22. Van die begin tot die einde is die Bybel een groot getuigenis van die redende krag van die geloof in God.

„Glo in jouself"

„Glo in jouself" — waar staan dit in die Bybel? Ek lees in Gen. 6 : 5: „Toe die HERE sien dat die boosheid van die mens op die aarde groot was, en al die versinsels wat hy bedink in sy hart altyddeur sleg was . . ." Na die beskrywing van die sondvloed word dit herhaal: „ . . . want die versinsels van die mens se hart is sleg van sy jeug af" (Gen. 8 : 21). Midde in die Bybel vind ek die psalmwoord. „Hulle het almal afgewyk, tesame het hulle ontaard; daar is niemand wat goed doen, ook nie een nie" (Ps. 14 : 3, vgl.

• Vervolg op bladsy 6

DIE PROFETE EN HULLE BOODSKAP

• Van bladsy 1

feit dat een van die jongste Duitse Ou Testamentici, die kleinseun van die bekende geleerde R. Smend, die handskoen opneem wat professor van Reventlow die ouere eksegete toegewerp het. Van Reventlow wil die hele optrede van die groot profete, tot selfs dié van Jeremia, verklaar uit hulle afhanklikheid van die tradisie en in besonder van die kultus; daarteenoor eis Smend, in die „Evangelische Theologie" van verlede jaar, die aandag op vir die persoonlike beslissinge in die optrede van die groot profete. Ons hoop dat hierdie stemme nie verlore sal gaan nie, maar kragtiger sal word, nie sodat ons, soos in 'n kringloop, weer na die ou uitgangspunt sal terugkeer nie, maar sodat ons, geleer ook deur die nuwe studies, die profete beter kan verstaan. Omdat ons oë hierdeur geopen is vir die tradisionele agtergrond in die lewe van hierdie Godsmanne, kan ons des te beter die onverganklike waarde van die persoonlike in die optrede en die prediking van hierdie manne leer waardeer.

Dat die nuwe ondersoek die amptelike en tradisionele elemente van die optrede van die profete meer na vore gebring het, is immers nie verkeerd nie, intendeel, dit is in allerlei opsigte 'n winspunt, maar dat dit hom daardeur laat bring tot 'n miskennening van hulle persoonlikheid, is 'n fout. 'n Mens kan immers ten volle dié reg van die een element aanvaar sonder om die ander te verwaarloos of te elimineer.

Boodskapper een met sy boodskap

M.i. bly die feit dat Israel se profete met hul hele wese persoonlik in beslag geneem is deur hul boodskap, of nog liever deur hul Opdraggewer, een van die opmerklikste en belangrikste kenmerke van die bybelse profetisme. Hulle was nie alleen maar oorbrengrers van 'n woord nie, maar ook predikers daarvan; en hulle was dit op so 'n wyse dat hulle hul geheel en al in diens van die verkondiging van die Godswoord gestel het; so het hulle die Godsmanne geword wat hulle gewees het; hulle het hulle met hul hele wese beskikbaar gestel om die woord ingang te laat vind in die lewe van die volk.

Dit kom my voor dat een van die nuwe trekke wat die bybelse profete vertoon in vergelyking met en in teenstelling tot hul ampsbroeders in die buite-bybelse godsdienste, juis dit is

dat hulle hul met hul hele persoon in beslag laat neem het deur die woord van hul Sender. Hulle was geen posbodes wat klaar was toe hulle die boodskap afgelewer het en toe hul pantoffels kon aantrek nie, maar hulle is met hul lewe daarvoor verantwoordelik gestel om die Woord te laat deurklink.

So het Eségiël (in hoofstuk 33 en 3) sy taak begryp, en so was dit ook met die ander profete gewees. Aan Eségiël word sy verantwoordelikheid so nadruklik voorgelê dat hy opgeroep word om aan die mense persoonlik die woord deur te gee op straf van self medeskuldig te word aan die ondergang van die ongelowiges en die oordeel wat oor hulle sou kom, saam met hulle te moet ondergaan. Hy word dus persoonlik verantwoordelik gestel vir die geestelike lewe van die ballinge; hulle sou hulle nie moes kon verskuil agter hul onkunde nie. Daarom moet die profeet preek. Hy voel dit aan op dieselfde wyse as Paulus, wat skryf: **Wee my as ek die Evangelie nie verkondig nie.** Die profeet werk op dieselfde wyse as die apostel later, wat gewet het dat hy geroepe was nie alleen om die woord van Jesus te spreek nie, maar ook om die lewe van sy Heer in sy liggaam te openbaar (II Kor. 4 : 10). Paulus weet dat 'n apostel moet ly, omdat hy die boodskap van die lye, sterwe en opstanding van Jesus te bring het (II Kor. 3 : 7 en volgende). Die profete ervaar op hulle beurt dat hulle meedra aan die oordeel wat hulle van Godswêe oor hul volk uitspreek. Die werk van God, wat gedoen word in die prediking van die Woord, word in die lewe en lye van die boodskappers van hierdie Woord ten duidelikste openbaar. Daarom moes hulle op allerlei wyse simboliese handeling verrig, maar ook op 'n baie harde wyse self in die oordeel staan.

Hulle eensaamheid

Ek wil op slegs enkele dinge nader ingaan: hulle eensaamheid. Die profete het op allerlei maniere eenlinge, sonderlinge, verworpenes geword. Van Jeremia is hierdie eensaamheid die mees bekende — hy voel hom bedreig deur sy familieleden en dorpsgenote (Jer. 11 : 18 — 12 : 6); vanweë sy roeping het hy geweet dat hy nie moes trou nie (Jer. 16 : 1 v.). Maar Jesaja was nie minder eensaam nie; hy het enkele leerlinge, maar het in sy geloof

tog wel op 'n baie klein kring teruggeworpe gevoel; hy sê (in 8 : 18): „Hier is ek en die kinders wat die Here my gegee het — tot tekens en sinnebeelde is ons in Israel, vanweë die Here van die leëskare wat op die berg Sion woon." En wat van Eségiël, aan wie reeds dadelik by sy opdrag geopenbaar word dat hy groot vyandskap sal ondervind (Eseg. 2 : 3 — 3 : 11), of van die profeet van die hallingskap, wat geslaan, mishandel en bespuug is (Jes. 50 : 5 — 7). Dit lyk asof dit nie anders kan wees nie — het dit nie met die Christus self ook so gegaan nie?

Hulle stryd

Naas die eensaamheid: die stryd. Ek kan my nie voorstel dat die profete die stryd gesoek het nie; sekerlik nie 'n Jeremia wat voortdurend in klagte uitbreek oor wat hy deur te maak het en wat tog met allerlei mense met sy mede-profete en priesters (Jer. 26), in die hewigste stryd gewikkel is l.e. Die eerste groot Skrifprofeet, Amos, is al deur die priester van Bet-el verban (Amos 7); Miga weet dat hy tot stryd geroep is (hoofstuk 3), maar ook dat hy deur Gods krag begenadig is om Gods werk onder die volk te volbring . . . Van die meeste van die „klein profete" het ons geen nadere berigte oor hul lewe nie; maar dit is te verwag dat hulle dieselfde ervaring gehad het. Al is hulle woorde ook in die Ou Testament verewig, tydens hul lewe was die profete geen geliefde leraars van die Kerk nie, intendeel, hulle was manne van stryd en twis, het dit teen hulle sin, teen hulle hele gemoed ingegaan. Lees daarvoor maar 'n keer die klag van Jeremia in 15 : 10:

„Wee my, my moeder, dat u my gebaar het — 'n man van twis en 'n man van stryd vir die hele land! Ek het nie uitgeleen nie, en hulle het nie aan my geleen nie; almal vloek my!"

En aan die einde, asof dit nie genoeg was nie, is hy van verraad, volksverraad, landsverraad verdink, of daarvoor selfs veroordeel. 'n Jeremia, die sagmoedigste onder die groot profete, het selfs die gevangenis nie vrygespring nie (Jer. 38) en dit alleen omdat hy 'n ander, 'n geestelike weg aangewys het wat die leidslide van sy volk, die koning en sy raadgewers, priesters, profete en militêre nie kon aanvaar nie; 'n weg wat die profete

egter as Gods weg leer verstaan het. So moes die profete met hul eer, hul populariteit en hul vryheid, vir hulle trou en gehoorsaamheid aan hul roeping boet.

Massamens — of persoonlik gehoorsaam?

Ek dink tog dat, om hierdie persoonlike element in die optrede van die profete te sien, 'n boodskap inhou wat die kerke in alle wêrelddele, ook nou, baie nodig het. Onlangs het ek kritiek gelees oor 'n verbysterende boek van 'n Amerikaanse Jodin oor 'n verbysterende mens, die Jode-massamoordenaar Eichman, wat vir sy misdade met die veroordeling tot die strop moes betaal. Die resensent het aan die einde die vraag gestel, of dit nie die ergste was wat hierdie geskiedenis geleer het nie, dat 'n origens doodgewone mens, 'n fatsoenlike vader in sy gesin, 'n goeie burger, uit gebrek aan persoonlike verantwoordelikeheidsgevoel, hom kon laat gebruik in die masjinerie van 'n totalitêre sisteem en hom volkome gewetenloos deur die magte wat oor hom gestel was, met 'n beroep op die uitspraak: „Bevel is bevel", tot massa-beul laat verlaag het. Die Hitlerbeampete, 'n willose, siellose massamens, is een van die mees onteerde, vreeslikste vorme van die mens-wees. Waarom? Omdat die mens geroepe is om 'n selfstandige wese te wees of te word, wat bewus persoonlik antwoord op Gods oproep om Hom te gehoorsaam.

Die profete, hul boodskap, hul lewensgeskiedenis, roep tot 'n persoonlike beslissing, 'n persoonlike handele, 'n persoonlike gehoorsaamheid aan die stem van God, tot 'n selfstandige keuse om Gods wil.

'n Dodelike gevaar vir die geestelike lewe van 'n volk, is dat die mens hom laat „massifiseer", hom willoos aan die oorheersende stroom oorgee. Dit was 'n groot gevaar in die jongste wêreldoorlog vir almal wat onder 'n diktatuur gelewe het. Dit is na die oorlog 'n steeds groter gevaar vir almal wat as die enigste ideaal het: die welvaart. — Daar is geen groter goed as dit nie: Die persoonlike roeping van Godswêe wat alleen die mens self kan vervul.

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PRO VERITATE

Redaksioneel

SO WORD KOMMUNISME BEVORDER

Die gebeure in Florida Park waar 'n predikant van die Congregationalkerk, as gevolg van die proteste van blanke inwoners, genoodsaak was om 'n erediensreëling spesiaal vir nie-blanke aanbidders op 'n Sondagmiddag ingestel, te kanselleer, roep om ernstige en kritiese besinning. Die feite is kortliks soos volg:

Die leraar van die gemeente, ds. D. P. Anderson, en sy kerkraad het in samewerking met die Bantoeleeraar van sy kerk wat die nie-blankes in die gebied bearbei, besluit om 'n Sondagmiddagdiens in te stel vir die nie-blankes van die omgewing wat dit onmoontlik gevind het om weens hulle laat werkure en die afwesigheid van vervoer na Durban Deep (die naaste Congregationalkerk vir nie-blankes) dienste daar by te woon. As gevolg van die protes van 'n inwoner woonagtig in die nabye omgewing van die kerk, ondersteun deur besware van die Belastingbetalersvereniging, moes die polisie optree en die diens aflas. Dis belangrik om daarop te let dat die beswaar nie ingedien is op grond van steurnis wat verwek is nie, maar op grond van die vrees dat die waarde van die eiendomme sou daal. Afgesien van die feit dat baie bewyse aangevoer kan word dat sodanige waardevermindering nog nooit plaasgevind het in stadsgebiede waar sulke erediensreëls gereeld gehou word nie, blyk hier duidelik dat selfsugtige oorweginge van tydelike voordeel as oordeelsmaatstaf die plek geneem het van die geestelike verantwoordelikheid wat een Christen aan 'n ander verskuldig is. Dis verder belangrik om daarop te let dat beide Afrikaans- en Engelsprekendes hierdie besware geopper en die protes ondersteun het — 'n duidelike bewys van hoe eners dié gevoelens onder albei blanke seksies van ons bevolking lê.

Die beslissing dat die diens afgelas moes word het as 'n groot skok vir die nie-blanke Christene van die omgewing en van die hele Rand gekom. 'n Bantoeleeraar het na afloop van die gebeure gesê: „Die vyande van die Christendom juig. Baie van ons sendingwerk, met moeite en sorg oor 'n lang tydperk opgebou, word deur een so 'n gebeurtenis in een dag tot op die grond afgebreek. Kan ons blanke Christene dan nie insien watter groot skade hulle deur so 'n optrede aan die saak van Gods koninkryk berokken nie?”

Van ons kant wil ons toevoeg — met erns en klem: So word die Kommunisme bevorder en die hand van die agitators versterk. Elke gebeurtenis van dié aard word gretig aangegryp om die huigelagtigheid van ons Christelike strewe bloot te lê en die geweldige gaping tussen teoretiese belydenis en praktiese beleving te bevestig. Hier is dit nie die kerk wat op die terrein van die politiek tree nie — eerder is dit politieke sieninge wat die roeping en reg van die kerk om die Evangelie te verkondig in sy hart raak. Die gedurige sluiting en verskuiwing van die sogenaamde „garage“-dienste as gevolg van besware en proteste moes tog seker al die gewetes van Christene laat ontwaak het tot die besef van die onberekenbare skade wat sulke optredes berokken aan die Godsryk. Moet die deure na die hart van die nie-Christene eers totaal toegaan — en dit deur ons eie toedoen — voordat ons oë sal oopgaan (miskien te laat) vir wat ons besig was om te doen?

Editorial

A CALL TO THE PEOPLE OF SOUTH AFRICA

Racial prejudice, like Mt. Everest, is a brute fact. Whether we are starry-eyed idealists, head-in-the-sand escapists, or practical down-to-earth realists we are all a part of it. Thus we all need to come to grips with this disease, both within ourselves and in the life of our land. To pretend that it does not exist, to say that it is not our responsibility to provide an answer, to concern ourselves exclusively with improving the social and economic position of people, is to provide this monster in our midst with further ammunition for the destruction of all things which we value.

One of the most significant attempts to come to grips with the problem of removing racial prejudice, was outlined last month by the Administrator of Natal, Mr T. J. A. Gerdener (see page 1). This is a perceptive and incisive assessment of the problem, and demands careful consideration by all the people of South Africa, irrespective of their language, colour, or political affiliations.

A careful examination of his plan will reveal that, unlike similar schemes already existing in the Transvaal schools, the emphasis is not on race studies, but on understanding racial prejudice in its origin, nature, and manifestations, with a view

Oordenking

„Hy is 'n versoening vir die hele wêreld”

1 Joh. 2 : 2.

Hy is die boetende slagoffer, die versoenende offer wat aan die Regter geoffer is vir al ons oortredinge teen sy majesteit, wet en regering. „Hy kan volkome red die wat deur Hom tot God gaan, omdat Hy altyd leef om vir hulle in te tree.” (Hebr. 7 : 25).

1. Die wêreld het versoening nodig.

„Hulle het almal afgewyk, saam het hulle ontaard. Daar is niemand wat goed doen nie, daar is selfs nie een nie.” (Rom. 3 : 12.) Ons Heidelbergse Kategismus leer dan ook: „Ek is van natuur geneig om God en my naaste te haat, en die gebooe van God met gedagtes, woorde en werke te oortree.” Die mens het God verlaat en daar is geen regverdige op aarde nie. Paulus sê uitdruklik: „Wat die vlees bedink is vyandskap teen God; want dit onderwerp hom nie aan die Wet van God nie.” (Rom. 8 : 7.) So 'n wêreld het versoening nodig.

2. God alleen kan hierin genoegsaam voorsiening maak.

Ons onthou dat Petrus vir Jesus gesê het: „Here, na wie toe sal ons gaan? U het die woorde van die ewige lewe!” (Joh. 6 : 68.) God self het voorsiening gemaak vir ons versoening met Hom. Gewoonlik moet die een wat oortree het 'n uitweg vind om vrede te maak en hier sien ons dat Hy teen wie ons in opstand gekom het, self die versoening moontlik maak.

In Art. 17 van die Nederlandse Geloofsbelijdenis lees ons: „Ons glo dat onse goeie God — nadat Hy gesien het dat die mens homself in die liggaamlike en geestelike dood gewerp en geheel-en-al ellendig gemaak het, deur sy wonderlike wysheid en goedheid die mens, toe Hy al bewende van Hom af weggevlug het, weer opgesoek en getroos het met die belofte om hom sy Seun te gee wat uit 'n vrou gebore sou word om die kop van die slang te vermorsel en hom gelukkig te maak.” Die Insteller van die genadeverbond is dus God self. Hy het die eerste stap gedoen om die diepe kloof tussen Hom en die gevalle mens weer te oorbrug. Hy het die mens opgesoek.

„En toe die volheid van die tyd gekom het, het God sy Seun uitgestuur”, (Gal. 4 : 4) „en Hy het deur die kruis oor die magte en owerhede van die hel getriomfeer.” (Kol. 2 : 15.) Nie alleen het Hy self die versoening bewerk nie, maar ook genoegsaam voorsiening gemaak. Die hei-

liges en die engele kan nie ons middelaars wees nie maar Hy alleen. „Die verlossing is in niemand anders nie; want daar is ook geen ander Naam onder die hemel wat onder die mense gegee is, waardeur ons gered moet word nie.” (Hand. 4 : 12.)

3. Die Versoening deur Christus is bedoel „vir die hele wêreld.”

„Gaan die hele wêreld in en verkondig die Evangelie aan die ganse mensdom.” (Mark. 16 : 15.) Dit is nie beperk tot een nasie nie, „maar ook vir dié van die hele wêreld.” Hy is 'n versoening vir sondes van vervloë dae, vir die hede en vir die toekoms. Die omvang en oogmerk van die Middelaar se dood strek na alle stamme, volkere en lande.

4. Ons is ingesluit.

Geniet ons die vergewing, losmaking, reiniging? Het daardie kosbare bloed ons al bedek en gewas? Jesaja skrywe: „al was julle sondes soos skarlaken, dit sal wit word soos sneeu; al was dit rooi soos purper, dit sal word soos wol.” (Jes. 1 : 18.)

5. Ons wat dit geniet, is onder 'n verpligting om die heidene hiermee bekend te maak.

„Want elkeen wat die Naam van die Here aanroep, sal gered word. Hoe kan hulle Hom dan aanroep, in wie hulle nie geglo het nie? En hoe kan hulle in Hom glo van wie hulle nie gehoor het nie? En hoe kan hulle hoor sonder een wat preek?” (Rom. 10 : 13, 14.) Die Jode was baie kwaad vir Paulus omdat hy die Evangelie aan die nie-Jode of heidene verkondig het. Nou wys hy hulle daarop hoe belangrik dit is om die heidene in aanraking met die Evangelie te bring. Die eer van God is daarmee gemoeid; want hoe kan hulle Hom aanbid as hulle nog nie van Hom gehoor het nie? En waar sal hulle van Hom hoor as iemand Hom nie aan hulle bekendstel nie?

Ons bid dan: „Laat U Naam geheilig word en laat U koninkryk kom.” As dit werklik dié begeerte van ons hart is, sal ons uit liefde vir ons Verlosser graag sien dat ons bede waar word en ons deel daartoe hydra om dit te verwesenlik. Die kruis is die fondament van die sending: Wie self nog nie by die kruis was nie kan nie daarop bou nie; maar hy wat daardie fondament ken, sal daarop bou tot eer van God.

P.C.J.L.

to combating it. In other words — the heart of the problem is not my ignorance of factual knowledge of the people against who I am prejudiced, but my ignorance of myself, my motives, my pre-conceived ideas, my shallow judgments.

Important as it is that this plan be discussed by the educational authorities, it is of even more importance that Christians should heed these words. Racism and racial prejudice are something totally different from adherence to a political party. America is the tragic confirmation of the truth that legislation and political

programmes, be they pro-apartheid or pro-integration, do not have a significant solution to the problem of racialism. There is an urgent need for all Christians white and non-white — to engage in a study of the problem along the lines suggested by Mr Gerdener. If the future members of Christ's Church, of all languages and colours, who are also the future citizens of our land, are to be freed from the curse of racialism, someone will have to accept the responsibility of slaying the monster. There are some things God will not do for us, but only with us, because without Him we can do nothing. Combating racial prejudice is one of them.

MRS. MIA BRANDEL-SYRIAR

Some aspects of the meaning of Christianity for the African woman

You probably noticed that the first part of this paper used the past tense to answer the question, "what did Christianity mean for the African?" This was done deliberately because many of the meanings previously delineated are no longer given to Christianity, and an increasing number of urban Africans to-day do not think these meanings any longer so important. No longer is Christianity seen as the be-all and end-all of civilization, and an integral part of the African's general progress towards enlightenment. Many Africans have realized that they can become civilized and educated and wealthy without ever going to Church and becoming Christianized. They can do without Christianity and the missionaries.

In the 10 years which passed since I first began my first research, developments have been fast. From the African side, the Africans are beginning to gain self-confidence as Africans, and the very foreignness of Christianity which once was the hall mark of its excellence, now becomes its death warrant. The very fact that Christianity had been, in the people's mind, so closely associated with Western civilization, and dominance, is now beginning to work against it.

From the mission churches' point of view, they have lost considerable power and influence. Any number of new and secular agencies are taking over the functions earlier exercised by the Churches and the missionaries. Countless clubs and societies are springing up offering new group belonging, new personal ties, new fun and fellowship, and new opportunities to count as a person of standing and authority. No longer do the missionaries control the schools and the educational opportunities. Authorities of a different order now have to be pleased to get bursaries, jobs and business loans. Church going is no longer required to get on in life.

Now, with all the earlier outward trimmings and benefits gradually becoming more and more removed, Christianity is becoming revealed as what it always was, but what so often had been forgotten, — a religion. I.e. a spiritual force which can remake men not by giving him hospitals and schools, tasks which any modern Government does better, — and not by entering the political arena, as seems at the moment to be the purpose of much Church activity, but by nourishing the soul and freeing the spirit of man.

The meaning of Christianity as a religion

What does then Christianity as a religion mean to the African people? It is wellnigh impossible to find amongst the numerous definitions of religion given throughout the ages one which can be used for analytical purposes. I myself found most workable a definition by means of three functions which a religion in the Western sense must fulfil in order to satisfy a three-fold need in man. These three functions represent three aspects of religion and correspond to three human faculties. According to this definition, a religion must contain a doctrine satisfying man's cognitive faculties, a cult satisfying his emotive faculties and a code of behaviour which satisfies his volitional faculties. Christianity, it is said, must occupy the whole of man.

All the great Western religions, those of Judaism, Christianity and Islam, contain these three elements.

There is always a doctrine concerning God and matters divine, there is a cult concerning forms of worship laid down as the most desirable ways of approaching God, and there is a code which determines the criteria to distinguish actions which are good and those which are evil. Although between the different religions as well as between the different sects and denominations there is a pronounced difference of emphasis on one or another aspect, and although there is probably a modern tendency to stress the code and cult aspect of Christianity and to underplay doctrinal differences which have caused so much strife and bloodshed in history.

Doctrine means least of all

Now, from my investigation I gained the impression that of these three necessary components of Christianity, doctrine means least of all to the African Christian. The doctrinal differences between the various denominations in Christianity to which Europeans attach so much importance mean little or nothing to the African. Loyalty to one's Church is personally and socially conditioned, but rarely influenced by a particular doctrine. Hence one sees Africans frequently change their religious adherence and for reasons never connected with doctrinal preferences; hence Africans can attend the services of each other's churches with pleasure and without hesitation. Hence I have encountered women, e.g. who with equanimity combine an active communism with an active church membership. In the IOTT many members of different churches with entirely opposite doctrines are wont to worship together regularly in complete union and without any denominational friction.

Morals and manners

With regard to a particular code of behaviour, everyone who knows life in the townships is aware of the fact that Christianity has so far had little influence on behaviour patterns. Whatever there is of control and regulation of conduct is felt to be rather a constituent of civilization than of Christianity.

"The ideal personality aimed at," writes Selby Bangani Ngeobo, "is that of a civilized man or woman. And the extent to which Christian ethics and ideals move even those Bantu who are regular churchgoers may be doubted."

In fact, most aspects of everyday life are considered to be outside the domain of religion, and what is right and wrong is not determined by any Christian principles. This is most flagrantly demonstrated in the attitudes towards sex and money. What European Christians consider a sin, African Christians are likely to see in terms of a social transgression, a mistake in good manners. From the definition given to the words Christianity and Civilization, it appeared very clearly that the notion of "morals" and "manners" are not always distinguished.

Communal worship

While therefore the religion of Christianity rarely means a particular creed in which the fundamental beliefs are exactly formulated, while it generally (all exceptions granted) does not seem to be understood that Christianity must influence a person's actions and general conduct in life, because it lays down what is right and

what is wrong, in all the different activities of life, it is only the cult element which has been fully accepted by the African people. Worship is the first and foremost of the religious meaning of Christianity; worship expressed in the desire for ritual and the need for prayer. It is in communal prayer and more particularly in communal song and dance that the African experiences the direct presence of God in his life, and that, for a short but glorious moment, he finds the hunger of his soul assuaged. But for this he has to adjust European ritual to his own needs, and to find those forms which for him expresses his close relationship with the Christian God as conceived by him. And only then does he find that totality of experience and that acceptance of something whole and complete, of which he has remained so singularly starved by European Christianity as brought by the European missionaries.

Christianity too European

Thus, we see in a few brief, all too brief sentences, how Christianity has not been able to give the whole of itself and to reach the whole of man in Africa. Why has this happened? What has gone wrong? Why has Christianity, or rather not Christianity but the European-formulated and developed Christianity as brought by European missionaries, failed?

That it has is, I believe, an undeniable fact. Witnessed by a great many tokens. In the African states we see how with the withdrawal of the Europeans, older beliefs and forms of worship are re-emerging. In South Africa we witness the defections from the European mission churches and the creation of ever more independent African Churches, most of which can hardly be called Christian although they use biblical material and an old testament vocabulary.

That and why the Christian Church has failed in its task was the subject of two articles in the Rand Daily Mail by S. P. Freeland these last few days. The question was asked whether the Church was too "worldly" or too "other-worldly", whether it was too modern or too old-fashioned, whether it was too difficult or too easy. In my opinion, it is nothing of all this. It is only that most European Churches are too European. And because of this, Christianity as brought by the Europeans cannot possibly give what the African needs, and in it he cannot express that which he is thirsting to find expression for. This is what I have learned from my experience with the African Churchwomen and their Manyanos. For here in the Manyanos Christianity is again de-Europeanized, as it is happening all around us and on a far larger scale in the great African-founded religions of present-day South Africa. Here, also in the Manyanos, new forms are created in which something of the old and familiar is blending with something of the new and the strange and the result is wholly appropriate, and satisfactory, and the beginning of what might be termed a truly African Christianity.

The need for a creative response

You remember that the purpose of this women's research was to find out their true needs, for the sponsors felt that these needs might be somewhat different than what the Europeans thought was needed. The definition of the terms "Needs" given me was "What the women require in the pre-

This article is the second part of an address given by Mrs. Mia Brandel-Syriar at the Theological Staff Institute Course held at Rosettenville, Johannesburg, during January, 1964.

sent transition stage of adjustment to a predominantly Western environment". The more I saw of the African women the more I realized that this was entirely inadequate. What the African women and all Africans need is to find their own creative response to the challenge of the West. This means that the European must help the African towards a creative adaptation of the Western institutions handed to him, so that he can re-interpret them in his own terms. With regard to Christianity, this implies that European missionaries should begin with some thorough soul-searching and try and distinguish the pure and simple, and probably universal Christian messages from all kinds of external trimmings. Not only from all the amenities and facilities with which Christianity in South Africa has clothed itself in order to win the African souls more easily, but also from all kinds of incompatible cultural trimmings which range from Teutonic myths to Greek philosophical formulations and which belong to the cultural tradition of the European missionaries, but are not essential components of Christianity. Only then can the African people begin to express this universal message in African terms.

Everywhere in the world the realization is dawning that Christianity must be integrated in the cultural traditions of the different peoples of the world. The R.C. Archbishop of Japan, Henti van Straelen writes: "We need Oriental leaders in whom the Faith has taken deep root to give fresh expression to supernatural realities in terms of their own traditions of philosophy, spirituality and asceticism, art and literature." And J. Spencer Trimmingham, Anglican priest and Islamic Scholar, writes: "We need a new African priesthood, whose training has not made them lose contact with the spiritual needs of their people, a priesthood fully integrated in African life and able to express Christian truths in African ways."

Similar demands are coming from African themselves. J. N. Nketia of Nigeria writes: "Can the African worship the true God only if he is Westernised, only if he sings in the Western idiom, and worships in ways known to the West?" "The mission of Christianity in the face of growing nationalism in Africa does not lie in progressive Westernisation but in the provision of the heaven . . . for the re-creating of African culture."

It has often been said that Africans incline towards the Old Testament material. Here there is an environmental and psychological affinity with their own state, a closer familiarity with their own linguistic conceptual forms of thought. No wonder, that so many African Churches have a decidedly "Judaic" tone. Doesn't anyone realise that these people need a framework in which their own bewildering experiences of the moment have a place, in which all their frustrations and confusions fall into a pattern, through which they will discover their lost identity and find a new interpretation of themselves.

Christianity and Africa

Do not the European Christian realise that the Africans have to begin again where it all began? I believe that the task of the Christian churches in South Africa as in Africa is to stimulate their African members into taking an active and leading part in the shaping of their religion, because only the Africans themselves can do this.

J. van Dyk*

Die Kerk en geheime genootskappe

Dit is bekend dat baie lidmate van die Afrikaanse kerke lede is van die Afrikaanse Broederbond. Dit sal my nie verbaas as 'n hele aantal lidmate van die Engelse kerke lid is van die geheime genootskap van die Vrymeselaars of van die Sons of England nie. Miskien is daar selfs Bantoechristene wat lede was van die geheime versetbeweging, „Poqo” wie se werksaamhede deur die ingrype van die regering aan bande gelê is of van ander geheime organisasies wat op die patroon van bekende blanke organisasies gevorm is. Omdat bogenoemde besluit Skriftuurlike beginsels neerlê wat betref organisasies waaraan geheimhouding verbonde is, is hierdie besluit ook van belang vir die ander Christelike kerke in Suid-Afrika, wat hulle baseer op die Woord van God, sowel as vir elke Christen wat soek om gehoorsaam te wees aan Gods Woord.

Die besluit het sy oorsprong in die beswaarskrif wat by die Sinode ingedien is deur 'n aantal lidmate van die Gereformeerde Kerk. Dit sal nuttig wees om die belangrikste punte uit hierdie beswaarskrif aan te haal en die besluit van die Sinode wat hierop betrekking het te vermeld.

Beswaarskrif: Hoofpunte:

Die vernaamste punte van die beswaarskrif is:

- Dat alle geheime genootskappe in stryd is met die wese van die kerk.
- Dat hulle ook in stryd is met die Skrif.
- Dat daar onsekerheid in die kerk heers of die besluite op kerklike vergaderinge nie beïnvloed word deurdat 'n groot deel van die ampsdraers lede is van die Broederbond.

Hieronder volg die motivering met die betreffende besluite van die Sinode oor hierdie drie punte:

- Die Afrikaner Broederbond is in stryd met die wese van die kerk:*
Art. 27 van die Nederlandse Geloofsbelijdenis bely 'n enige, algemene kerk wat 'n heilige vergadering is van almal wat in Christus glo, wat hulle hele saligheid in Jesus Christus verwag, en verenig is met hart en wil in een en dieselfde Gees.

Prof. H. Bavinck vat sy beskouings oor die wese van die kerk soos volg saam: „De leden van Jezus' gemeente zijn broeders en zusters onder elkan- der, Matth. 12 : 48, 18 : 15, 23 : 8, 25 : 40, 28 : 10, Joh. 15 : 14, 15, 20 : 17, Rom. 8 : 20, Heb. 2 : 11 ens. Zij zijn kinderen van een gezin; God is hun vader, Ef. 4 : 6; Christus hun eerstgeborene broeder, Rom. 8 : 29, Jeruzalem, dat boven is, hunne moeder, Gal. 4 : 26. En zoo hebben zij elkander met al hun geestelike en natuurlike gaven te dienen. Die kerk is eene gemeenskap der heiligen”.

Volgens Skrif en Belydenis ken die gelowiges net één broederskap, nl. die in Jesus Christus, waarin hulle met hart en wil, d.w.s. met die hele persoon, verenig is, lede van één gesin. Hierdie broederskap, hierdie gesinslidmaatskap, sluit elke ander broederskap uit. Matth. 12 : 48.

Hierdie broederskap is verder openbaar (Hand. 1936, Art. 84). Almal wat waarlik in Christus glo, behoort daartoe (N.G.B. Art. 37).

Die Afrikaner Broederbond is geslote omdat slegs seer spesiale persone daartoe uitgenooi word. (Verslag ds. D. P. M. Beukes, N.G. Sin. Suid-Transvaal, 1963).

Die broederskap van Christus werk in die openbaar. Só openbaar is deur Petrus met Pinkster gespreek, dat 3000 siele toegebring is; die apostels het meermale op die tempelplein gespreek, o.a. op bevel van die engel (Hand. 5 : 20, 21 en 22), om enkele voorbeelde te noem. Die gemeentes kom in die openbaar bye.

Deur die Sinode van die Gereformeerde Kerk is onlangs 'n besluit oor geheime genootskappe geneem wat m.i. van groot belang is vir al die Christelike kerke in Suid-Afrika, blank sowel as nie-blank.

Die Afrikaner Broederbond werk in die geheim, agter geslote deure (Art. 73, Grondwet). Die broederskap in Christus het geen geheime, in besonder geen geheime leer nie. Paulus sê: „Want ek het nie nagelaat om aan julle die hele raad van God te verkondig nie”. (Hand. 20 : 7. En Christus self sê: (Joh. 18 : 20) „Ek het ronduit met die wêreld gespreek... en in die geheim het ek niks gespreek nie”. Dit kan geen Christen wat aktief lid van die Afrikaner Broederbond is, sy Heiland nasê nie.

Die Afrikaner Broederbond se grondwet, doelstellings en verrigtinge is geheim en besprekings word agter toe deure gehou. Slegs word nou en dan, onder druk van buite, net datgene bekend gestel aan nie-broederbondlede waarvan gedink word dat dit die Broederbond nie sal skaad nie.

Die lidmaatskap van die kerk, die broederskap in Christus, behoort aan almal bekend te wees en mag nooit weggesteek word nie (Mark. 8 : 38); die lidmaatskap van die Afrikaner Broederbond daarenteen is geheim; met geheime tekens ken die broeders mekaar uit; slegs in enkele gevalle mag iemand sê dat hy 'n lid is, maar in die algemeen moet dit weggesteek word.

Die lidmaatskap van die broederskap in Christus sluit die lidmaatskap van die ander broederskap uit. „Niemand kan twee here dien nie” (Luk. 16 : 3). Die kerklike toesig kan nie uitgeoefen word oor iemand wat beloftes van geheimhouding afgelê het nie. 'n Christen wat hom onder die toesig van die kerkraad stel, onttrek 'n deel van sy lewe aan die toesig daarvan deurdat hy deur die Afrikaner Broederbond deur 'n belofte van geheimhouding gebind is. Ook kan hy nie sondes in die leer of lewe wat hy sien by 'n mede-Broederbondlid binne die organisasie ter kennis van die betreffende kerkraad bring nie.

Bevinding van die kommissie en Sinode:

Die betreffende bevinding van die kommissie, wat besluit geword het van die Sinode, is soos volg:

Ten opsigte van punt 1, 2. beweer die beswaardes dat alle geheime genootskappe in stryd is met die wese van die kerk, nl.:

a. „Die lidmaatskap van die broederskap in Christus sluit die lidmaatskap van elke ander broederskap uit”, met verwysing veral na Matth. 12 : 48. Hierteenoor stel u kommissie:

(a) Moet ons dan aanneem dat familiebande in die kerk wegval en moet ons ons „broers na die vlees”, soos Paulus sy volksgenote noem (Rom. 9 : 2), vergeet? Die „broederskap” van die Afrikaner Broederbond wil blykbaar so verstaan wees soos ons ook in ons geskiedenis van broederstryd spreek.

(b) Calvyn sê by Matth. 12 : 48: Hy (Jesus) toon alleen aan dat die vleeslike verwantskap niks of weinig beteken vergeleke met die geestelike, d.w.s. Jesus spreek hier nie eksklusief nie maar vergelykenderwys.

(c) Die uitspraak bevat slegs 'n waarskuwing dat natuurlike broederskap (ook in die sin van volksverbondenheid) nooit ten koste van ons broederskap in Christus beklemtoon moet word nie.

b. „Die kerklike toesig kan nie uitgeoefen word oor iemand wat beloftes van geheimhouding afgelê het nie”, en „ook kan hy nie sondes in die leer en lewe wat hy sien by 'n mede-Broederbondlid binne die organisasie ter kennis van die betreffende kerkraad bring nie”.

Hierteenoor stel u kommissie:

(a) Dit is wel gewigtige besware, maar:

(1) Hoeveel van ons lewens en bewegings is verborge vir mekaar — selfs van ouers en kinders.

(2) Ons verantwoordelikheid vir mekaar gaan sover as wat ons sien en weet. Daar is altyd 'n deel van ons lewe waarin ons in persoonlike verantwoordelikheid voor God staan.

(3) Aan die vrugte moet ons die boom ken (Matth. 7 : 16—20).

(4) Dit bring ons by 'n belangrike riglyn t.o.v. lidmaatskap van organisasies waaraan geheimhouding verbonde is: nl. dat die geheimhouding nooit van so 'n aard sal wees dat dit ons in die weg staan om rekenskap te kan gee van ons optrede nie (1 Petr. 3 : 15—17).

(b) As geheimhouding van so 'n aard is dat dit so iemand verhinder om die sondes van 'n medelid onder die aandag van die kerkraad te bring dan sou sodanige lidmaatskap onver- enigbaar wees met lidmaatskap van die kerk.

(b) *Die lidmaatskap van die Afrikaner Broederbond is ook in stryd met die Skrif:*

Die Sinode van 1897 noem twee Skrifbewyse nl.:

i) 2 Kor. 6 : 14—18, waarin gewaarsku word om nie in dieselfde juk saam te trek met ongelowiges nie.

Hoewel 'n geheime genootskap wel sekere Christelike ideale mag voorstaan, is daar geen waarborg dat ongelowiges nie 'n lid kan wees nie. 'n Christen kan volgens hierdie teks hom nie in 'n broederskapsverhouding met ongelowiges begewe nie, want: „Watter aandeel het die gelowige met die ongelowige”.

ii) Joh. 3 : 19—21, waarvan ons, wat die Afrikaner Broederbond betref, die een-en-twintigste vers wil onderstreep: „Maar hy wat die waarheid doen kom na die lig, sodat sy werke openbaar kan word, dat hulle in God gedoen is”.

'n Afrikaner Broederbondlid gaan met sy aktiwiteite binne die Broederbond nie tot die lig nie. Hierdie word met 'n muur van geïmmuniteit omring sodat nie in die openbaar kan blyk dat daardie werke „in God gedoen is nie”. As die Afrikaner Broederbond se doelstellings uitsluitelik op die kulturele terrein lê hoekom moet dan geheimhouding gewaarborg word? Andersyds behoort ook iemand se aktiwiteite kontroleerbaar te wees deur mede-Christene en deur die besondere amp. 'n Mens kan baie doen op die sg. kulturele gebied wat die toets van die Skrif nie kan deurstaan nie.

Die bevinding van die Sinode oor hierdie punt is soos volg:

„Dat sodanige organisasies in stryd is met die Skrif”, met verwysing na 2 Kor. 6 : 14—18 en Joh. 3 : 19—21. (Vgl. sinodebesluit 1863).

(1) 2 Kor. 6 : 14—18: Hiervan sê die beswaardes: „Hoewel 'n geheime genootskap wel sekere Christelike ideale mag voorstaan, is daar geen waarborg dat ongelowiges nie 'n lid kan wees nie”.

Hierteenoor stel u kommissie:

(a) Dit hang van die konstitusie van so 'n organisasie af.

(b) Die verwysing na hierdie teks in sinodebesluit 1863 bevestig die verklaring dat dit in hierdie besluite bepaald gaan om on-(anti-)Christelike geheime-genootskappe.

Die beswaardes beweer:

(2) „'n Afrikaner Broederbondlid gaan met sy aktiwiteite binne die Broederbond nie tot die lig nie”, en ag dit in stryd met Joh. 3 : 19—21.

Hierteenoor stel u kommissie:

(a) „Tot die lig” gaan, word hier deur die beswaardes blykbaar verstaan as „in die openbaar”. Dit beteken egter om oral en altyd voor die aangesig van God te lewe (vgl. Grosheide, Joh. 1, bl. 242). Die teëstelling in hierdie teks is nie „openbaar” teenoor geheim nie, maar in Christus teenoor buite Christus.

(b) Dit is duidelik dat hierdie uitspraak nie sonder meer op organisasies, waar geheimhouding betrag word, oorgebring kan word nie.

(c) *Daar is ongerustheid en onsekerheid in ons kerk of die besluite wat op mindere of meerdere vergaderings geneem word, nog uitsluitlik en alleenlik gegrond word op Gods Woord deur die leiding van die Heilige Gees.*

Die formulier vir die bevestiging van ouderlinge en diakens stel dit dat alle tirannie en heerskappy uit die gemeente van God geweerd moet word. Dit is bekend dat 'n klein minderheid, wat goed voorberei is, op 'n vergadering baie maklik 'n bepaalde voorstel aangeneem kan kry sonder dat die ander aanwesiges weet dat hulle reeds met mekaar 'n bepaalde besluit geneem het. Dit het in die pers bekend geword dat die „broeders” aanwysings ontvang het hoe die Afrikaner Broederbond wou hê dat op die Sinode van die N.G. Kerk Suid-Transvaal besluit moes word. En al sou hierdie bekendstelling nie as bewysend aanvaar kan word nie, dan tog is die moontlikheid daar, nl. waar hier sprake is van 'n geheime organisasie waarvan ds. Beukes van bogenoemde Sinode gesê is dat bemocienisse op die terrein van die kerk ook tot hulle doelstellings behoort.

So kom daar tirannie en heerskappy in die kerk. Dit is moontlik dat lede van die Afrikaner Broederbond reeds van tevore gebind is om 'n bepaalde standpunt in te neem en daarvolgens te handel, voordat hulle na Sinode, Klassis of Kerkraadvergadering gaan. Nie alleen is onderlinge oorleg dan sinloos nie, maar die vergadering begin met die gebed of die Here die gedagtes en besprekings wil lei; hierdie gebed word tot 'n profanie as reeds deur bepaalde broeders deur onderlinge oorleg 'n standpunt bepaal is.

Verder moet vir bepaalde beslissings baie deeglike Skrifstudie gemaak word, bv. van die Kleurbeleid, of van die verenigbaarheid van die lidmaatskap van die Afrikaner Broederbond met die lidmaatskap van die kerk. Watter sin het hierdie Skrifstudie as reeds vantevore die resultaat daarvan vasstaan? Dis dan nie die leiding van die Heilige Gees wat, d.m.v. die Skrif verweg word nie. So kan nie meer op die leiding van die Gees staatgemaak word nie. So word die Gees bedroef en uitgeblus.

Hieroor het die Sinode soos volg besluit:

„Daar is ongerustheid en onsekerheid in ons kerk of die besluite wat op mindere of meerdere vergaderings geneem word, nog uitsluitlik en alleenlik gegrond word op Gods Woord deur die leiding van die Heilige Gees”.

Ten opsigte van hierdie bewering wys u kommissie daarop:

(a) Dat dit hieroor 'n moontlikheid en nie 'n noodwendigheid gaan nie. Dit geld die misbruik wat van so 'n organisasie gemaak kan word en nie die bestaan van sodanige organisasie op sigself nie.

(b) Hier moet herinner word aan ons Lasbriewe en die Openlike Verklaring waardeur deputate na mindere en meerdere vergaderings in hulle gewetens voor God gebind is om in alles te handel in ooreenstemming met Gods Woord en die Drie Formuliere van Eenheid, waaraan die Gereformeerde lidmaat altyd en oral in sy optrede gebonde is. Die enigste wyse om die ongerustheid en onsekerheid te laat verdwyn, is *vertroue*; 'n ander waarborg is daar nie.

• *vervolg op bladsy 6*

● *vervolg van bladsy 5*

Bevinding van Sinode:

Van besondere belang is die bevinding of slotkonklusie waartoe die Sinode gekom het en wat as volg lui:

III. Bevinding:

U kommissie beveel aan dat die beswaarskrif van die hand gewys word op grond van die voorgaande beredenering omdat die argumente teen organisasies waaraan geheimhouding verbonde is, nie oortuigend is nie. Origenes gaan dit nie teen sulke organisasies as sodanig nie maar teen misbruike wat daarvan gemaak kan word. Die moontlike misbruike wat daarvan gemaak kan word, lei tot die volgende beginsels wat in ag geneem moet word t.o.v. lidmaatskap van Gereformeerde lidmate by organisasies waaraan geheimhouding verbonde is:

1. Dit mag in generlei wyse die uitoefening van die kerklike tug strem nie, nóg wat lidmate onderling betref, nóg wat die amptelike optrede van die kerkraad betref.
2. Onder geen omstandighede mag so 'n organisasie hom laat geld op kerklike vergaderings en op kerklike erf nie.
3. 'n Afrikaner broederskap en die bevordering van volksbelange, hoe loflik op sigself ook al, mag nooit beklemtoon word ten koste van die Broederskap in Christus of dit enigsin oorskadu nie.

Hoewel die besluit van die Sinode na my mening nie volledig is nie moet ons tog dankbaar wees dat die besluit sekere Skrifuurlike riglyne gee wat deur alle Christelike kerke, wat die Heilige Skrif as die onfeilbare Woord van God aanneem, aanvaar behoort te word.

Dit sal egter duidelik wees dat die besluit geen waarde het nie as dit nie ook konsekwent toegepas word nie.

Toepassing van beginsels

Uit die pers het nou inligting beskikbaar gekom oor die werksaamhede van die Afrikaner Broederbond. Hierdie inligting is na my wete nooit weerspreek of ontken nie en solank dit die geval is moet die Christelike kerke aanneem dat die inligting betroubaar is. Ek het insae gehad in dié persdokumente wat blykbaar kopieë is van oorspronklike Broederbond-omsendbriewe en studiestukke. Ek het geen rede om hieraan te twyfel nie en onder hierdie proviso is die enige konsekwensie van die beginsels wat in die Sinodebesluit neergelê is dat lidmaatskap van die Afrikaner Broederbond onvernegbaar is met die lidmaatskap van 'n Christelike kerk, omdat na my mening:

- 1) Die belofte van geheimhouding wat deur lede onderteken moet word, die kerklike tug en die amptelike optrede van die kerkraad in die weg staan.
- 2) Die Broederbond hom laat geld op kerklike vergaderings en op kerklike erf terwyl dit wil voorkom, deur die fanatisme waarmee die organisasie deur hulle verdedig word, of baie Christene hierdie Broederskap bo die broederskap in Christus stel.

Die belofte van geheimhouding

Wat die eerste punt betref lui, volgens die kopieë, die belofte van geheimhouding as volg:

„Ek, die ondergetekende, verklaar en onderneem plegtig:

Eerstens, dat ek aan geen geheime of half-geheime internasionale organisasie deur lidmaatskap of medewerking verbonde is nie en onderneem om nie sonder verlof van die Uitvoerende Raad lid daarvan te word nie.

Tweedens, om alles wat by my instelling aan my meegedeel word en alles wat ek in die toekoms van die ambtelike stukke, besprekinge, besluite en werksaamhede te wete kom, tot die dood toe en selfs as ek van my lidmaatskap onthef word, aan geen buitestaander, ingesluit my eggenote en die lede van my gesin, te openbaar nie, tensy ek vooraf verlof daartoe van die U.R. verkry het.

Derdens om my eie lidmaatskap slegs in werklik dwingende omstandighede te openbaar nie; die van my

mededele nooit sonder hul toestemming nie.

Vierdens om my aan onmiddellike skruppeling as lid te onderwerp, ingeval ek hierdie plegtige belofte in enige opsig skend.”

As hierdie belofte werklik afgelê moet word dan beteken dit absolute geheimhouding teenoor enigiets of enigiemand. Daar word selfs 'n wig ingedryf in die verhouding van man en vrou, iets wat vir 'n Christen ontoelaatbaar is, omdat die huwelik 'n afskaduwing is van die band tussen Christus en sy gemeente (Ef. 5) waarby geen geheime meer is nie (Joh. 15).

Verder is m.i. die belofte immoreel omdat geheimhouding belof word vir onbekende dinge wat in die toekoms nog mag plaasvind. Welke Christen mag so 'n belofte aflê?

Dit is duidelik dat so 'n belofte 'n Christen ook verhinder om 'n medelid van die Broederbond en medelidmaat van sy kerk amptelik te vermaan.

Inmenging in kerklike aangeleenthede

Ten aansien van die tweede punt haal ek aan uit die omsendbriewe en studiestukke wat aan my gewys is en waaruit na my mening genoegsaam bewys word dat die Broederbond hom inmeng in kerklike aangeleenthede.

Baie sterk kom dit tot uitdrukking in omsendbrief No. 5/62/63 van 1.12. '62, wat o.a. in punt 4 handel oor „Ons Organisasie en die Vrymesselary”. Ek laat die punt in sy geheel hier volg:

„Op versoek van verskillende afdelings word die juiste bewoording van die Alg. Sinode van die N.G. Kerk i.v.m. die vrymesselary hier weergegee. (Dan volg die 4 punte van die besluit). As gevolg van bogenoemde besluite word vanselfsprekend ook weer meer vrae oor ons organisasie gestel. Baie oningeligtes stel bv. die vraag, waarom die kerk net die vrymesselary veroordeel, terwyl ons organisasie tog net so geheim is. Dit is ook moontlik, dat lede of voorstanders van die vrymesselary 'n poging sal aanwend om 'n bespreking van ons organisasie in kerkraadsvergaderings uit te lok, of selfs 'n ondersoek daarna sal eis. Teneinde die minste opspraak of suspisie te verwerk, word vriende aangeraai om sulke besprekinge of eise nie te probeer voorkom nie, maar dit sy natuurlike gang te laat neem en dan aan die hand te doen, dat die aangeleentheid na die onderskeie Sinodes verwys word. Ter algemene inligting kan meegedeel word, dat verskillende Sinodes en die Raad van die N.G. Kerke reeds in die verlede ondersoek na ons organisasie ingestel het en dat rapporte daarvoor vrygestel is. Daar word in die vooruitsig gestel, dat 'n kort samevatting van die rapporte wat oor die vrymesselary uitgebring is, tot die beskikking van lidmate van die N.G. Kerk gestel word.”

Verder word in 'n buitengewone omsendbrief van 14.8.'62, wat handel oor studiefondse, o.a. as volg aanbeveel: „Die Uitvoerende Raad het die vrymoedigheid om alle vriende en afdelings in Transvaal te versoek om die propagering en die uitbouing van die ——— van hulle provinsie aktief te steun en as 'n besondere taak te aanvaar. In die verband word die volgende wenke aan die hand gedoen: a) Vriende, wat in openbare liggeme soos sakekamers, kerkrade, stadsrade ens. dien, kan hulle invloed gebruik om die organisasies te beweeg om 'n goeie bydrae te maak. b) ———”

Dan word in omsendbrief 3/62/63 van 1.10.'62 onder punt 2 „Ons Weerbaarheid” meegedeel, dat aangeheg word 'n stuk oor „'n Positiewe verstandhouding tussen die drie Afrikaanse kerke om doeltreffend gesamentlik op te tree” t.o.v. die uitbouing van ons Republiek en die vyandige aanslae wat die hoof gebied moet word. Hierdie stuk bestaan uit ruim 4 getikte bladsye en is te land om in sy geheel hier op te neem. Die volgende sinsnede moet egter in die verband waarin dit gelees word, m.i. aangemerkt word as riglyne vir die vooraanstaande kerklike figure, wat lid is van die Afrikaner Broederbond: „Is daar nie genoeg bande wat ons bind om te kan praat van 'n Afrikaanse kerk in die Republiek van S.A. nie, al is daar drie op die vlak

van kerkorganisasie. Die een vernietig nie die bestaan en bestaansreg van die drie nie. Ons aanvaar hiermee die taak om na te gaan en te verwyder wat ons verhinder om doeltreffend op te tree”. In dieselfde stuk lees ons: „In 'n volgende studiestuk, wat deur die taakgroep oor ons Godsdienstige Weerbaarheid opgestel word, word ons werk in die verlede in S.A. behandel. Hier is dit egter van belang dat die huidige stand geskets en vir die toekoms beplan word. Waar ontmoet ons mekaar om saam te beplan”. Dan volg verder 10 punte, waar die kerke mekaar kan ontmoet, wat na ons mening voorskrifte aan die kerke is hoe en waar om gesamentlik op te tree. Die 10 punte is:

- 1) Die tussenkerklike kommissie.
- 2) Bybelvertalings en Hersieningskommissie.
- 3) Die gemeenskaplike kerkboek.
- 4) Geloftefees.
- 5) Handhawing van ons Protestantse erfenis.
- 6) Anti-Kommunistiese aksie.
- 7) Onderwys.
- 8) Volkskongresse.
- 9) Immigrasie.
- 10) Openbare sedelikeheid.

Die stuk vervolg dan, dat daar nog meer kontakpunte is.

Egter: „Hierdie kontakpunte word nie genoem om daarmee te suggereer, dat alle grense nou maar afgebreek kan word en dat redes vir drie Afrikaanse kerke i.p.v. een in organisasie nie bestaan nie. Ons hou rekening met verskille wat daar bestaan, verskille wat elke kerk tipeer. Maar geen verskil is so groot, dat dit nodig is om daaroor te twis en van mekaar gedryf te word nie”.

Soos die kerke na my mening ingeskakel word vir die doeleindes van die Afrikaner Broederbond, so word ook die sending van die kerke m.i. gebruik. Ons lees in 'n studiestuk oor „Sekere aspekte van die Kleurling- en Indiërbeleid” van 1.12.'62: „Die Afrikaanse kerke met hul sendingwerk onder die Kleurlinge, saam met ('n

bepaalde organisasie), sal die kragbron kan vorm tot die Kleurling se verafrikaansing”.

'n Streng vertroulike buitengewone omsendbrief van 1.8.62 sluit as volg op bl. 5 af: „Ten slotte word daar op gewys, dat ons standpunt op taktvolle maar beslisse wyse onomwonde in vergaderings, kerkblaaie en die openbare pers gestel moet word”.

Bogenoemde uitreksels is uit omsendbriewe wat gedurende 'n bepaalde periode in 1962 uitgestuur is. Mens vra hom af of in vorige en volgende omsendbriewe nog nie baie meer voorbeelde gevind kan word van die werksaamhede van die geheime organisasie op kerklike gebied nie. Kan iemand my kwalik neem as ek begin twyfel of die Bond byvoorbeeld die Volkskongres oor Kommunisme wat binnekort gehou gaan word nie ook gaan gebruik om die Afrikaanse kerke op dieselfde manier te betrek om ander oogmerke te bereik as wat Christus van sy kerk eis nie?

Die Christelike kerke kan en mag nie lydsaam bly nie, maar is in gehoorsaamheid van haar enigste Koning en Heiland geroepe om te ondersoek of hulle vir nog ander doeleindes gebruik word as die uitbreiding en verkondiging van die koninkryk van God. In besonder ons Afrikaanse kerke, dit wil sê ons Afrikaanse Christene wat in 'n Afrikaanse kerkverband verenig is, het hier 'n swaar verantwoordelikeheid.

Op elke lid van die Afrikaner Broederbond, wat ook 'n lid is van 'n Christelike kerk rus die verpligting teenoor sy Verlosser en teenoor sy kerk om sy gewete te ondersoek of hy hom deur sy belofte van geheimhouding gebonde moet ag, of dat hy meer gehoorsaamheid verskuldig is aan God; of hy die broederskap in Christus belangriker ag as die broederskap van 'n wêreldse geheime organisasie.

* *Mr. Van Dyk is lidmaat van die Gereformeerde Kerk.*

ONSTERFLIKE WOORDE?

● *vervolg van bladsy 2*

53 : 4). In die Nuwe Testament tref my die woord van die Heiland vir die ryk jongman: „Niemand is goed nie, behalwe Een, naamlik God” (Matth. 19 : 17). En ek het geleer om met die apostel Paulus uit te roep (Rom. 7 : 24): „Ek, ellendige mens!” Moet ek nou glo in myself, 'n ellendige mens, die versinsels van wie se hart sleg is van sy jeug af, een wat afgewyk en ontaard het?

„Glo in jou volk”

„Glo in jou volk” — waar staan dit in die Bybel? Het ooit iemand sy volk meer liefgehad as die profeet Jeremia? Maar het hy ooit gesê dat sy tydenote of ons in die volk moet glo? Wat is die volk? 'n Versameling mense, en van elkeen van daardie mense geld, soos ons gesien het, dat hulle verlore sondaars is. Moet ons in 'n sondige kollektiwiteit glo?

En mag ons dieselfde verhouding wat die gelowige tot sy God het, ook bevorder tussen die gelowige en sy eie ek, en tussen die gelowige en sy volk? Die geloof, so sê Luther in sy Kleine Kategismus, is dit wat God of afgod maak. Wat maak die geloof in jouself van jouself? Wat maak die geloof in jou volk van jou volk? Kan ons die eie ek en die volk somaar langs God plaas?

„God, Nederland en Oranje!”

Dit alles laat my met beskaming terugdink aan die verfoeilike frase wat ek veertig jaar gelede dikwels uit die mond van predikante op nasionale feesdae in Nederland gehoor het: „God, Nederland en Oranje!” Teenswoordig beskou ons dit as godslasterlik om op so 'n manier 'n land en 'n vorstehuis langs God te plaas. Daardie frase word

in die Nederlandse kerke ook nie meer gehoor nie.

Is dit omdat ons Nederland nie lief het nie? Elkeen wat iets van die Hollanders weet, sal dit ontken. Is dit omdat ons liefde vir die Koningin en haar huis minder geword het? Dit is groter as ooit in die geskiedenis. Maar ons het geleer dat die Here sy eer met geen skepsel deel nie; maar ons het geleer om te sidder vir die majesteit van God; maar ons het geleer dat ons hoop en vertrouwe net op God gerig mag wees. Daarom het daardie frase „God, Nederland en Oranje” gesterf; dit is dood en begrawe.

Sou die woorde „Glo in God; glo in jouself; glo in jou volk” dan wel onsterflik wees? Ook van hulle geld wat God in Ps. 82 : 7 sê: „Nogtans sal julle sterwe soos mense, en soos een van die vorste sal julle val.”

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EXTRACTS FROM THE THIRD NEWS LETTER

The Christian Institute starts its Action Programme

REGIONAL MEETINGS: PRETORIA, JOHANNESBURG AND ELSEWHERE

We hope to launch our regional meetings in the near future. At these meetings members from the various areas will be divided into study and discussion groups. As far as possible we hope to place Christians of different denominations who reside in the same area, in the same group. Groups should not be composed of more than 20 persons, and, if at all possible we would prefer it if the members are able to have their meetings in each other's homes, but if this is not possible, the best arrangement would be to use a church-hall or committee-room for the meetings. Please give careful consideration to your choice of a meeting place. It is essential to meet in an atmosphere which is pleasant and informal, and which will help to create a spirit of Christian comradeship and fellowship. Each group is also asked to appoint a chairman and secretary from amongst its members. The name and addresses of these two persons should be forwarded to the Institute, and the secretary will also be required to inform us of any members who may decide to leave the group.

The information regarding the first two regional meetings is as follows:

Pretoria and District: Wednesday the 18th March at 8.00 p.m. in St. Andrew's Hall, 294 Schoeman Street, (next to the Presbyterian Church).

Johannesburg City and Suburbs: Thursday, the 19th March, at 7.30 p.m. in the Lower Wesley Hall, (entrance in Kruis Street), next to the Methodist Central Hall (cor. Pritchard and Kruis Streets).

The Regional meetings for the East- and West Rand, Durban and Pietermaritzburg, Port Elizabeth and the Eastern Province generally, Cape Town and Stellenbosch, and any other areas where it is possible to establish discussion groups, will be announced at a later date. In any case, personal invitations have been posted to members of the Institute, and they are asked, both to invite any persons who may be interested, and also themselves to attend the regional meeting and the discussion groups in their area.

PROGRAMME FOR THE DISCUSSION GROUP

The Board of Management decided to accept the following guiding principles by which to direct the work of the discussion groups:

1. *Monthly meetings:* It was decided that the groups should meet once a month, excluding the months of *January, July and December*, and that every group should decide for themselves which evening of the month would be most convenient as a regular meeting time.
2. *Bible-Study:* Nine Bible-studies will be prepared each year (one for each meeting of the group). These Biblestudies will all aim at focussing our attention on the connection between the Biblical passage chosen for study, and the concrete, real-life situation in which we find ourselves. Each member of the group will receive a copy of the Bible-studies for his or her own personal use in, and preparation for the monthly discussion-groups. Someone may be appointed to introduce each particular passage for study at the monthly meeting, but the chairman is asked to please guard against the danger of the meeting becoming a *lecture* given by one person. The purpose of the meeting is to share in a *discussion* with one another, and each member of the group must be encouraged to participate.
3. *Prayer:* The Board of Management wishes to emphasise that the Institute must be a "praying commu-

nity" and that both personal and communal times of prayer are a vital important part of the work we have to do. Thus we suggest that each period of Bible-study ends with a time of prayer together, either silently or expressed, in which we make a special point of interceding for the whole of Christ's Church, in the whole of our country, and in the whole world.

4. *Discussion of a chosen Subject or Theme:* The Board of Management was of the opinion that Bible-study and prayer would occupy the major portion of the time devoted to each meeting, and that it was, therefore, not necessary to consider the possibility of including anything else on the programme at this stage.

On the other hand, various groups of interested persons with whom this question has been discussed, are all of the opinion that the discussion-groups should feel free, if they so wish, to embark on the study of any subject or theme related to the life and witness of the church, e.g. *Christianity and Nationalism, Christianity and Communism, Christian Family Life, The witness and expansion of the Church in Africa, The Unity and Diversity of the Church, The future of Christianity in Africa, etc.*

The Institute will be glad to provide any group who would like to tackle a study along the lines suggested above, with a list of books, publications and where possible, any background information, to aid them in their study and discussion. It needs to be emphasised that any study of this nature, to be really fruitful, must be intimately related to the Biblical message and insights, and that all the obtainable factual information must be collected and examined as a whole, and in an objective and critical attitude. Groups must feel free to tackle these subjects for as long a period as they think necessary to enable them to reach an informed and Christian assessment of the problem. The office of the Institute, will, however, be glad to help and advise you in whatever way possible.

THE INSTITUTE LIBRARY

We have already made a good start with the establishment of a theological library, which, because of its ecumenical orientation and its inclusion of a broad selection of available publications, should develop into an excellent mine of knowledge from which discussion-groups will be able to draw the information they require for their studies. It will be appreciated by everyone, that the creation of a really adequate library along these lines, is not possible without considerable financial means. Thus we will be grateful if you will help us in the following two ways: (1) Will you help us in praying and working for the funds we need for this purpose? (2) If you have any books which will be of value in our library, (theology, church history, sociology, philosophy, anthropology, and related books or lectures, etc.,) and which you do not require any longer, will you please consider either donating or loaning them to our library?

PLANS FOR ADDITIONAL STAFF

At present, the staff of the Institute consists of the Director plus a secretary, and the employment of part-time workers as, and when necessary. As soon as the necessary funds are available we hope to appoint a full-time assistant-Director, to help with the work of addressing meetings, compiling study-material, and canvassing for new members. We

envisage as the next step after this, the appointment of a field-worker who will be able to concentrate on the canvassing of non-white Christians with a view to them becoming members of the Institute. Will you join us in praying for the realisation of these proposed developments, and especially for the obtaining of the money required?

FUNDRAISING

The Board of Management have given the Board of Trustees authority to name an ecumenically representative Financial Advisory Committee, to be responsible for planning a fundraising campaign for the work of the Institute. We are also grateful for the suggestion of one of our members in this connection, namely, that members be asked to arrange for a monthly stoporder payable to the Institute.

DIE INSTITUUT NEEM NOG EENS STANDPUNT IN TEEN DIE KOMMUNISME

VERKLARING OOR KERK EN KOMMUNISME

Die volgende verklaring van die Instituut is op 21 Februarie aan die pers oorhandig:

Die Raad van Beheer van die Christelike Instituut het op sy vergadering van 7 Februarie met besorgdheid kennis geneem van verwikkelinge in sommige dele van Afrika waar kommunistiese beïnvloeding nuwe gevare skep wat ook die taak en getuïenis van die kerk ernstig kan benadeel. Die Instituut wil weereens beklemtoon dat die kommunisme 'n gevaar is wat met alle mag bestry moet word en dat Christene die saak in dié lig moet sien en hulle getuïenis dienooreenkomstig moet gee.

Terselfdertyd ag die Christelike Instituut dit noodsaaklik dat in die bestryding van hierdie godlose ideologie alleen metodes aangewend word wat die toets van die waarheid van die Woord van God en die feitlikheid van die geskiedenis kan deurstaan. Ons dink in dié verband veral aan die stryd wat in die V.S.A. ontbrand het in die tydperk 1952—1953 waarin aantygings gemaak en oordele oor persone en kerklike liggeme uitgespreek is wat deur hulle ongegrondheid die saak van die kommunisme eerder be-

vorder as bestry het. Omdat ons alles in ons vermoë wil doen om mee te werk om aan kerk en gemeenskap 'n juiste benadering en beoordeling van die aangeleentheid te gee sluit ons vir u kennisname en publikasie 'n viertal dokumente as inligtingstukke in. Twee van die stukke is verklaringe afkomstig van die Presbiteriaanse en die Episkopaalse kerke in die V.S.A. terwyl die ander twee dokumente is waarin die algemeen-kerklike aspekte behandel en toegelig word. Die stukke word teen 'n klein fooi van 30 sent aangebied om reproduksie- en verspreidingskoste te dek. Die boek van Edgar C. Bundy: *Collectivism in the Churches* sowel as die verweer van Ralph L. Roy: *Communism and the Churches* is albei ter insae beskikbaar in ons biblioteek.

Waar die Christelike Instituut hom heelhartig vereenselwig met elke opregbedeelde poging om die kommunisme te beveg daar wil ons die hoop uitspreek dat dit in ons land altyd sal geskied in 'n gees en op 'n wyse wat die toets van christelikheid en objektiwiteit te alle tye kan deurstaan.

DIREKTEUR NA V.S.A.

Reeds in 1960 het die Direkteur 'n aanbod van die Amerikaanse regering ontvang om met 'n Leiersbeurs vir 2 maande na die V.S.A. te gaan. Gemeentelike omstandighede van kerkbou het dit onmoontlik gemaak om in 1961 te gaan en in 1962 het die Sinode van die N.G. Kerk die besoek verhinder. Toe die Amerikaanse Ambassade aan die einde van verlede jaar berig het dat die aanbod alleen tot 30 Junie 1964 kon bly geld het die Raad van Beheer op 7 Februarie eenparig besluit en by die Direkteur aanbeveel om die besoek nou te laat plaasvind. Hoewel die Direkteur huiwerig was om in hierdie belangrike tyd van opbou weg te wees het die Raad geoordeel dat met die nodige voorafgaande reëlings die werk sonder skade kan voortgaan.

Die Direkteur vertrek dus op 2 April vir twee maande na die V.S.A. waar hy hom veral sal toelê op 'n ondersoek na die rol wat kerke en Christelike organisasies speel in die skepping van beter rasseverhoudinge en die mate van sukses deur hulle behaal. Sover dit enigsins moontlik is sal reëlings getref word om die werksaamhede van die Instituut normaalweg te laat voortgaan.

Christianity for the African women

● from page 4

And they are doing it all around us in South Africa, and the women are the moving force in this process of creation: the women in the Manyans and the women in the great new African-founded religions. Go and study it and learn from it, what it is that Africans want from a religion for it to become something dynamic and powerful, — a Faith which will move mountains, and remake men.

For if you, in your European Churches do not allow the development of a truly African Christianity to happen within the cadre of your Churches and under your sensitive and respectful guidance, it will happen outside your vision and removed from your influence.

Already one can see an African Christianity in its first dim outlines. And it is possible to sketch certain possible more permanent characteristics tentatively and with due caution.

The African Christian will, no doubt, rid Christianity of the centuries of rationalisation which Europeans introduced in it: he will be inclined to ex-

perience and express his relationship with God in emotional rather than in rational terms, — as a direct perception, a contact of immediacy rather than as a reasoned intercourse.

As in Islam and Judaism, the two great Semitic Religions in which the Law occupies a central place, African Christianity will always have a strong legal emphasis. Similar to Indian Christianity will probably continue to contain an acceptance of what Europeans call "psychic" phenomena.

For many years to come, the African religious need will be for communal worship and collective ceremonial in which song and dance will carry the common mood. While religious life will rather be conceived in social terms, worship will remain as it is now, sought and performed for its own sake. Liturgy as an aim in itself, and the relative separation of religious life and morality, have always been and are up to this date characteristic of the Eastern Christian Churches in Syria and may well remain distinctive traits of African Christianity.

DR. CALVIN W. COOK

THE WORLD:

CONTEXT OF MISSION

(PART 2)

We might note in this connection that the sign of the closed wall in Rome is the decree of papal infallibility. Where this is broken, and not where it is maintained is precisely the place where grace is to be most obviously found. Infallibility is in fact subjectivity writ large. On the protestant side, critical scholarship has found itself all too often the prisoner of its own assumptions. What is probable is not necessarily true; what is improbable may in fact be true. The gospel reduced to probabilities is in fact not a gospel at all. We may accept its truth and its liberating improbabilities with joy because these are the signs of grace. Tertullian's "I believe because it is impossible" is a characteristic exaggeration of the truth.

Our mission is therefore faced by this double movement. He sends us out; on the way, he meets us. We go to meet a returning pioneer. Wherever we get to in the course of this mission, we find that he has already been and is. Thus we go out to meet an always returning bridegroom. When in the end he comes, we shall know how precisely he has already always been here. Hence the inseparability of eschatology and mission.

The mission of the second Adam

This mission of the second Adam contains given characteristics. We confess them in the creed. But what we need to note is the way in which these conditions can only be understood in the light of the wisdom of the cross. They are given; but they do not appear except in the light of faith, in much the same way as certain things only become visible through X-rays or ultra-violet light.

1. ONE.

We need to notice that the oneness of the world is a complex process. Energy in the world works both by fission and fusion, and both of these have a bearing on the mission of the church. There is a right kind of fission: there must be a division between apostles and deacons; a dividing of the mission between Peter and Paul. This is not a division of sovereignty, for sovereignty does not reside in the parts, but in the head. There is also of course a false division which often crops up. But our fear of this must not prevent us from recognizing the real place of division of work and diversity of opinion. Nor must we forget that grace is an explosive energy that moves outwards away from the centre: from God to man. Yet of course, there is a place for fusion. What the grace of God brought together was also remarkable. All kinds of divisions were swept away and the fellowship found itself being completely reconstituted so that there was neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free, male nor female. There are of course imitations of this kind of unity to be avoided like the plague: we may notice for instance the unlikely coalition of Sadducees, Herodians and Pharisees brought together to crucify Christ. Any wisdom that does not take both these factors into account in its thinking about oneness in fact will be specious and subjective: it will not be the wisdom of the cross. The cross unites; the cross divides: we must follow both its divisions and its unities.

2. HOLY.

Holiness obviously can no longer be thought of in terms of external taboos and symbols. The agent of sanc-

There are three examples of contemporary demonism that we may note. First and obviously, there is the neurotic or psychotic understanding of the world in which the facts have been made subject to the person's imagination. The more complete the domination of facts by imagination, the more perilous the state of the patient. The second type is the ideologue. Again, there is the same subjugation of the facts to a theory or system and the making of this theory absolute and infallible. A third type can be seen in the priest who puts his trust in a sacramental formula or in a minister who puts his trust in a form of words. Both are prisoners, not of grace, but of lack of grace. Of the three, the last is the most to be pitied.

tification is the Holy Spirit. Those in whom he dwells are holy. Thus we need to learn to recognize and acknowledge the work of the Holy Spirit in ourselves and in others, and to see that this work is the work of sanctification by which we and they are being built into the temple of God. There is no other criterion of holiness than the work of the Spirit. The wisdom of the first Adam yearns for an unspiritual external standard; but this is precisely the sign that is not given. For all the appearance of objectivity, this in fact makes holiness subjective as well. Discrimination and discernment as to when to separate and when to unite comes from the Spirit alone. To pray "Hallowed be thy name" is to admit that we are praying for the impossible: a supernatural discernment that enables us to distinguish what is of the Spirit and what is not. True holiness is thus the recognition of the same Spirit at work in differing ways in others for the upbuilding of the whole temple of God.

3. CATHOLIC.

The catholicity of the church is an aspect of its holiness. Catholicity is not simply a geographical expression: it is a quality of comprehension, applicable both to the small units and to the universe alike. This means moreover that the church is not conditioned by our local circumstances or understanding. This has effects both for me and for those from whom I differ. In a congregation, for instance, it means that I am not related to my people in terms of master and disciple. We are both disciples related to the one master. Catholicism has become tragically identified with a hierarchy, when in fact true catholicism is the reverse of hierarchy. We must learn to work with the same Spirit, and in subordination to the same Spirit at work in others throughout the world. If there is a hierarchy at all, it is a hierarchy of service, not of rule.

Of particular importance for us is the question of indigenization. This is a protest that often obscures the problem. There is perhaps no greater threat to true catholicity than indigenization, just as there is perhaps no greater drive to indigenization than an imperialist "catholicism". Thus for instance, to shell out permission to play flutes and to use native languages in the liturgy can become little more than a political expedient to keep the disgruntled colonial subjects happy. On the other hand, protestant catholicity meaning that every nation can do as it likes is not what we mean by "broadmindedness". Catholicity is of the Spirit, as the other characteristics are of the Spirit. Catholicity is the recognition of this supernatural force at work in our world, and the exchange of our concept of comprehensiveness for the character that the Spirit gives.

4. APOSTOLIC.

We are sent into the world from a quite definite base: the witness of the Scripture and of the Holy Spirit to the character of Christ. Our mission is shaped by the word of the Lord of all; it is constituted by the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. We may describe one facet of this work as reconciliation.

But any estimate of this work, which is His, must take full account of the seriousness of the division to be overcome. The measure of this seriousness is the need for His death; of the power of His grace, the fact that these divisions have been overcome. Realistic bridge building requires both the measurement of the gap and the calculation of the traffic to be carried. Here again, the wisdom of the cross alone can give us the true understanding of both of these things. Otherwise we are like people trying to build without taking any measurements at all. The apostolic ekklesia is thus made up of those who have been called out of their understanding of the world, and live now according to the word of Christ about it. This world in which we live is further constituted by and rest on that same word. We therefore are to live in this world apprehending it and being apprehended by it. Our means of doing this are faith, hope and love; the results, the fruits of the Spirit. Not only do we witness, we are part of the evidence ourselves.

The myths of Adam and the wisdom of the Cross

These then are the marks by which the church understands its missions, and moves towards greater understanding of it. These are given; at the same time these are what the church becomes. This process of self-understanding at the same time brings about a judgement on the other means by which men comprehend their world. In this process the wisdom of the first Adam and the wisdom of the Cross come into open conflict. We may note the way in which this happens by examining some of the other attempts at comprehension. We must select here, because there are almost as many attempts at comprehension as there are men. We may notice, however, that these attempts at comprehension, these myths, are also the ways in which man deceives himself. This is the essential judgement of the wisdom of the Cross on the wisdom of the wise. The myths appear to give us control of the world, and therefore affluence and salvation; in fact, they are the means by which we shall be damned. We may also note that characteristically, worldly wisdom is to be seen in opposite and opposing contrasts, each of which may have part of the truth; but these pairs of conflicting parts do not have in themselves what

they pretend to have: the whole truth. We may therefore contrast these myths of comprehension with the event with which true apprehension begins.

1. THE MYTH OF UNITY AND THE MYTH OF APARTNESS.

Both ignore the work of Christ. There is no unity for the world apart from Christ. What appears to be unity is in fact wickedness or deception or both. Pan-whitism and Pan-Africanism are both in the end wicked. The important part of each is the "pan" part. We might remember the wonderful use Dorothy Sayers makes of the legend that when Christ died, Pan died. There can in fact only be true unity in the light of this true judgement.

The same goes for apartness. Man must not put asunder what God has united. Behind race theory there lies the truth of the three generation God. The myth becomes a way in which man who can truly say of himself "I am", equates his "I am" with God's "I am". He then compounds his sin by adding the name of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. But this he is not. He lives in a single generation; after that he comes under the judgement of his successors who are not bound by what he has done. Racial theory projects the domination of one generation into future generations.

We ought not to fear race suicide. This is a myth. Whatever intermarriage may be, it cannot by definition be race suicide. The seed only too obviously continues. We of Scots ancestry, for instance, can be profoundly thankful that we are no longer Picts.

2. MYTHS OF EXCELLENCE AND MYTHS OF EQUALITY.

Both can become forms of pride. Christ calls whom he wills. There is no higher destiny possible than this call. He calls all without respect of persons — that call is the basis of equality. There is no other base than this call. And because it is Christ's call, it is both gracious and holds within itself the seed of true excellence. On the other hand, the pursuit of excellence without Christ is liable to lead to Christine Keeler; the pursuit of equality for its own sake leads to Stalin.

3. SCIENTIFIC AND POLITICAL MYTHS.

There is a real sense in which these are antagonistic and conflicting. Marx claimed to have made politics scientific. What in fact seems to have happened is that science has become political. The progress of science depends increasingly on public funds. The scientist finds himself dependent on others for research facilities and a living. Thus he is much in the position of a Chinese cormorant who has to fish for others. He must catch for his own living. But he cannot determine the use to which what he catches is put.

The scientific catch is largely controlled by the politician. But neither has the politician a free hand. He is challenged by what other politicians' cormorants are catching. He cannot afford to be left behind in this technological race because technology profoundly influences power. Yet each new technological breakthrough means the scrapping of old solutions and balances, and, therefore, new problems. The politician is caught between the twin nightmares of nuclear war in which his side has inferior weapons, and the scrapping of programmes like

"Blue Streak" and "Skybolt" after millions have been spent to develop them, and before either reaches the troops, because the hardware itself has become obsolescent. Thus the South African defence force can probably meet and master the troops from any other African nation. For this we may wear our chests out. But what is our answer to non-African powers in Africa? For instance to a Polaris submarine in the Indian Ocean and an ultimatum that unless there is an immediate granting of one-man one-vote, that the white cities will be destroyed by nuclear warheads? In this dilemma the myth of invincibility is as silly as the myth of a gotterdammerung.

4. THE MYTHS OF FREE ENTER-PRICE AND NATIONALISED ECONOMIES.

In the field of economics, there is the world wide conflict which has its repercussions in our own land, between free enterprise and nationalized economies. But what wisdom save that of the Cross can teach a nation when to be in want and when to abound?

5. ECCLESIASTICAL MYTHS.

Despite the perennial reminder of its folly, the myth about there being "no salvation outside the church" still lives on. Recently it appears to have been challenged by another myth, that everywhere except in the church there is salvation — a way in which even bishops appear to have misread Bonhoeffer and others. We have to reckon with grace both within and outside of what we are pleased to think are "normal channels", and to stop thinking about these as regrettable admissions we have to make about God's unpredictable workings. Rather we should glory in the grace of God wherever we find it at work. It is important that we realize the truth that where sin abounds, grace did much more abound. If we have found a lot of sin in others, it is time that we also acknowledge the grace which has been sent to cover this sin.

Re-thinking our divisions

If we think of the tensions which the mission of the church into the world has set up within the church, we can only be grieved at the way in which they have not been accepted or resolved. We can see and admit the wisdom of the decision of the council at Jerusalem in resolving the differences between Jew and Gentile. But what of the council of Whitby; or the issues between conventuals and Spirituals in the Middle ages; or those between reformers and Rome in the sixteenth century; or the question of accommodation raised by Jesuits in the seventeenth; or the issues between Wesley and the bishops in the eighteenth; or those between younger and older churches in the present. Or in our own land, those between Mission churches, Ethiopian and Zionist; or the "middle of the road" against both Rome and Pentecostalism? Do not all these require to be re-thought according to the wisdom of the Cross, assuming the unconditional character of the grace of God given as we put our faith in His Word and are led by His Spirit, and producing the reformation of the human institutions and traditions instead of a demonic defence of them?

What guarantees are there for such an enterprise? There are none save the promise of Christ that he is with us to the end of the age. If it takes faith to act on this promise, so through faith we shall discover that no other guarantee is needed. Thus by faith and by faith alone can we enter this which is the context of our mission; in accepting it, accept as ours a mission to discover the grace of God at work in us and in those to whom we go. This world remains irreducibly the object not only of our witness but of God's care, and because this world is under His sovereignty alone, it will not admit the sovereignty of anything

else. All other attempts to subject this world to an alien Lord are in fact usurpations arising from the pride or the anxiety of men. They arise from defective theologies; that is defective understanding of the work of God in and through Christ and the Holy Spirit.

His mission and ours

Thus there are two ways in which we may attempt this commission of being sent into the world. In the face of the intractability of the world to our wishes and designs we may take the way of the first Adam and of the Old Israel and try to subdue the world to ourselves. Men are always trying this way because of the almost irresistible attraction and temptation that they shall be "like Gods". Yet this is the way the second Adam rejected, and therefore which if we are identified with him, we must also reject. He did not want the Kingdoms of the world

as the devil comprehended these lyingly. He rejected every order save that which was the order of his father; that order which alone could make of the worlds of our comprehension a single universe.

So he chose the second way. He broke through the demonic barriers with their illusions of comprehension, their semblance of wisdom and their usurped powers. He also broke through the barriers that man in his pride, greed and anxiety had erected. Though it cost him the death of the slave, he was ready always to take the form of the servant. Precisely because of this absolute obedience, he has been given the name that is above every name, and the unique authority after which the first Adam lusted but never attained. He will not only have the dominion over creation signified by giving to each his name; he will have the allegiance of all: to him every knee will bow and every tongue confess — to the glory of God the

Father. Further, it is God's intention that in being thus exalted, he should be the first-born among many brethren. Because he shared our humiliation — which is our position in the world, we may share his exaltation — which is his position in the world, This is our true destiny and his.

But in doing this, he has put before us an unavoidable choice. Will we remain in the camp, imprisoned within our own sin and lack of comprehension, or will we go out to where he is, and find that in the end, the City of God is centred round the same Lamb in its midst.

Again, we wait with joy and expectation where we are; but we listen intently for the shout that heralds the Bridegroom, and when we hear it, we take our lamps with joy and go to meet Him. Suddenly the world — the context of our mission — sleeping and dark, becomes ablaze with light and song because He who is coming is here.

REV. S. S. M. THELEJANE*

IMPRESSIONS OF THE SECOND THEOLOGICAL STAFF INSTITUTE

This Theological Institute was held at St. Peter's, Rosettenville from the 4th to the 25th January 1964. It was the second of its kind in Southern Africa.

About thirty-six lecturers, from various denominations and Seminaries, met here to attend lectures given by Professors from as far afield as the Netherlands, United States of America, and Northern Nigeria. Apart from these three professors two ladies of outstanding scholastic abilities also delivered lectures. These were Dr Hellmann and Mrs Mia Brandell-Syriar. They each presented very thought provoking papers on the urban African.

There is no doubt that everyone who attended went away deeply impressed by the manner in which the whole machinery worked harmoniously together. All those who were responsible for the smooth running of things (here I want to quote the names of the Director, Professor Oosthuizen, the Chairman of the Co-ordinating Committee, Revd. C. F. B. Naudé, Honorary Secretary of S. A. Advisory Committee on Theological Institutes, Mr F. van Wyk, and the Chairman of the S.A. Advisory Committee on Theological Institutes, Fr. Stubbs and the Chaplain, the Revd. Becken) deserve our praise for this wonderful work. While nearly everything at the Institute appeared interesting, there are perhaps certain things which made a rather pronounced impression on me. These are:—

1) Communication through the Holy Spirit.

The free manner in which both camps, Black and White, communicated and shared ideas, should never be underestimated. It is inevitable that when we first come across each other there are some obvious reservations on either side of the colour line. But it will only be a matter of some two or three days and the whole lump gets permeated and leavened by God's Holy Spirit, and we begin to understand each other better and long to exchange ideas freely and warmly. There didn't seem to be a superiority or inferiority complex on the part of either party. It seemed as if everybody was behaving in a perfectly natural way towards each other. And I cannot help remarking that it is quite clear that relations are improving every year we meet for this important object of hearing lectures delivered, and of sharing ideas

and experiences in our theological work.

2) The thirst for unity.

Emanating out of the foregoing impression is the obviously insatiable thirst for unity on the part of members representing certain denominations. It is of course understandable that some members felt this need more than did others. I do pray that the Holy Spirit may move more and more members to the realisation of the necessity for taking such a step. There is nevertheless no doubt that there is a world-wide awakening of conscience as far as the question of re-union of christendom is concerned. There is a general feeling that a divided church is bound to fail in its endeavour to bring the message of reconciliation to men since it is not itself reconciled to itself. First the Church has to practise what it preaches and only then can it hope to win over estranged souls, and unite them with Christ in His Church.

3) Peace.

I was also very greatly impressed by the atmosphere of peacefulness we enjoyed at Rosettenville. Maybe it was after a similar experience of peaceful-

ness that the Sisters at St Benedict's House decided to inscribe on the Bell Tower and at the gates that wonderful three-lettered word "PAX"!

4) Academic Standards.

I also noticed that there was a great desire to improve the standard of theological training, and the raising of the academic standard in our Seminaries. This is accepted as a necessary step. But I dare say the heads of churches are the people to take this initiative and dance in concert to the music thus played. Yet this must not mean that God can only "call" men of higher qualifications to the exclusion of the devout, but less intelligent, men who happen to possess a Junior Certificate only.

In conclusion I must say that while we appreciate very much what our lecturers from abroad gave us, yet all must agree with me that more and more lecturers from either South Africa or the rest of Africa must be invited, and be able to relate what they teach to the African contemporary scene.

* Rev. Thelejane is a lecturer at St. Bed's College, Umata.

— Rev. S. J. Magagula*

What the Staff Institute Course meant to me

This being my first contact with such a group, some impressions have been made in my life. I will just touch on two and then I shall endeavour to give some constructive criticism.

First and foremost; at this Institute my dream of meeting and hearing views from Christians from the other side of the colour-line was fulfilled. This is not only limited to making friends which in itself is essential but it also showed that Christians are dropping the colour-barrier and are seeing the need for exchanging views at the highest level.

Secondly, it was of most importance to note that Christians see the need for a united front in the effort of "reaching the regions beyond" which must be claimed for Christ. "If there was a time for working together in the Christian circles, it is now!"

With these two impressions in mind I would like to add that I am very much disturbed by the fact that the

participants are still not agreed on what THE GOSPEL is, that is to be preached to the regions beyond. This in my frank opinion is the crux of our disunity, and I feel the sooner this question is thoroughly thrashed out the better. This question can only be answered by "the Grand Old Book" which is the complete revelation from God. It is pathetic to hear people speak of joining a certain church or denomination to be saved. According to the Bible salvation is through Christ (John 10 : 9). The world is on fire and we must be agreed whether to use water or powder in putting this fire out.

The lectures were appreciated and some thought-provoking questions were raised and we were shaken by some facts which hitherto we had ignored or were unaware of.

*Rev. Magagula is connected to the Johannesburg Bible Institute, Florida.

WORSHIPPING TOGETHER

(Letters of a Minister to a member of his Flock)

II

Dear Mrs Smith,

I have been thinking a great deal about you since our conversation yesterday. Do believe me when I say that I think I understand your deep feelings, and the turmoil they must be causing in your mind. Please be assured of my prayers for you, and for all, that God may lead us to see what is right, and may give us the strength and power to do what is right. I sincerely pray that God will use what I have to say in this letter — and in any other letters and conversations that may follow — to give us his light and to help us follow his light.

Africans worshipping in same church building

It seems to me that the main reason for your unhappiness is that you find yourself unable to accept the fact of Africans worshipping in the same service and in the same church building as yourself. I remember the other reasons that you mentioned, but it appears that this is the main one. (I am quite prepared to accept your word if you tell me that this is not so.) Behind this, as you yourself admitted, is the strong feeling handed to you by your own parents, your family and friends, all of whom take what you have called the „Afrikaans viewpoint” on this matter.

I do not think you were altogether right on this last small point. If I may begin with a confession, I believe that many many English-speaking South Africans feel very much as you do, and I confess that in some respects I share this attitude. I and my fellow English-speaking South Africans dare not stand aside and blame “the Afrikaner” for these strong feelings. We all have them.

I do believe, however, that when we expose these strong feelings to God and to his Word, we shall find that they are both wrong and sinful.

First of all, with regard to Africans worshipping with us in Church. May I repeat that we must assume that Africans who do this are African Christians, and that they have no other motive than to share with us in the worship of God — their God and ours. If indeed they are Christians, then the bond, the link between us, goes deeper than any other human bond. Christ has given himself to them, as he has given himself to us, and, if we have Christ in common, we have the very greatest thing possible in common. When Christ comes to us, when we open our hearts to him and call him our Lord and Saviour, then he immediately joins us, in love, to everybody else who faithfully bears the name of Christian. It does not really matter whether the other Christian is Japanese, Red Indian, Eskimo, Russian or African — Jesus Christ himself has made that man my brother.

The viewpoint of the majority of African Christians

You did point out — and quite rightly — that church buildings and services are provided for African people near where they live, and in their own language and style, and that they should therefore attend these services. That is, of course, what the great majority of African Christians do. They find our “European services” too formal and cold for their exuberant nature. But if an African Christian feels that just now and again he would like to have fellowship with his white brother-Christians, or if he feels that God comes to him more readily or more

easily by worshipping with us, and sharing in our style of service, we cannot refuse him.

I believe that it comes down to this question: what do we believe is the most important thing about a person? Do we ask ourselves: is he a man with love in his heart, is he a man who thinks deeply about his faith, is that man a Christian? Or do we ask ourselves: is that man black?

Africans who are not Christians

So far, I have been talking about Africans who are also Christians. But we must face the fact that many Africans are not Christians. (For that matter, many white men are not Christians either). What should our relationship with them be? I believe we must try to see it, if I may put it this way, from God's point of view. We believe that God made us, made every man. We believe also that God loves every man — even the sinner, even the man who does not return God's love or respond to it. Now let us try to put it very simply. God loves me (even though I am a sinner). God loves that man over there. But that man is a black man. Therefore I will not love him. In other words, I am refusing to love a person whom God loves.

Let us not be too “spiritual” about this love. When God wanted to give us his love, he did something very practical and concrete and material — he sent us his Son, Jesus Christ. He did not just say “I love every man”, and leave it at that. He added the deed to the word. So also, it is not enough for us to say “I love that man, even if he is a black man” and then do nothing more about it. We must act in love towards that man. If he suffers, we must suffer. If he feels hurt and upset and unhappy, we must also feel the same. If he is separated from his family, and can only see them at long intervals, must feel the hurt of that situation in our own hearts. If he is a

clever and talented man, but cannot exercise the talents that God has given him, we must share that frustration.

The forces against Christianity

May I close this letter (it is probably already too long) with this word: I believe the future of Christianity in our beloved country depends on how we white and non-white Christians act towards one another. There are strong forces working against Christianity in this land. One of the strongest is the force of Islam — Mohammedanism. Islam knows no colour bar: white

Moslems and black Moslems are brothers in the faith, and they act as if they really were brothers. If white Christians say to black Christians “You are our brothers” but do nothing to prove what they say, it is quite possible that Islam will conquer Christianity in South Africa. It has happened before — when Islam wiped out Christianity in North Africa 1200 years ago.

May I repeat here my warm invitation for you to come to the study when you feel you would like to talk these matters over? I shall be very happy to see you.

Yours very sincerely,
R. Orr.

Readers' views:

Questions on “The Church and Politics”

Dear Sir,

As a member of one of the Dutch Reformed Churches, I have read Rev. Orr's article “The Church and Politics” in the January issue of Pro Veritate with an open mind.

Whilst reading it certain questions arose in my mind which I now shall translate into words, in the hope that an answer will be forthcoming.

These people, the fine philosopher, who according to you, is prevented from using his talents, the businessmen who are deprived from their livelihood, all those whose progress are impeded by the colour laws of the Republic, are there any definite proofs that they will obey the will of God

concerning the white race, should the reins of government come into their hands?

What assurance has the white race that in every sphere of life: economics, industry, education, agriculture, the home, sport — and politics, a non-white government will prove that the Lord is God, and that His will must be done? Was it the will of God that missionaries must be murdered recently in the Kwila province of the Congo?

I am awaiting your reply with expectation.

I am etc.
“MNR. SMIT”.

Rev. Orr replies as follows:

I warmly welcome Mr Smit's assurance that he read my article with an open mind. I welcome also the opportunity he has given me to discuss the issues raised by that article.

A needless assumption

The article pointed out that some of our laws break God's commandments, and pleaded with the Christian not only to realise this but to work to rectify the situation. From his letter, it would seem that Mr Smit assumes that the only way to rectify the situation is to hand the reins of government over to the non-whites. I do not think that assumption is justified on the basis of my article. I truly believe the white man could be just without abdicating all power.

God's judgement

Let us, however, assume, with Mr Smit, that power has passed into the hands of the non-white. He then asks, in effect: Could we be sure that a non-white government would obey the will of God? Could we be sure that they would act with justice towards the whites?

History seems to give a negative

answer. The Pilgrim Fathers left England to escape religious intolerance, and promptly set up a religiously intolerant government in the New World. The French Revolution and the Bolshevik Revolution seem to show that when the underdog becomes top-dog, he takes revenge on those who lorded it over him for so long. Recent events in Africa seem to point the same way. (Like Mr Smit, I am appalled at the murder of missionaries in the Congo. But when I read how the Church in France and in Russia, before their respective revolutions, was identified with the oppressions of the upper classes, I wonder whether the fate of the Church is not part of God's judgement.)

Revenge not inevitable

Assuming, then, that non-whites achieve power in South Africa, is it inevitable that there will be a similar process of violent revenge? While naturally I cannot prove this, I do not think it is inevitable. A great deal depends on the method by which the non-white achieves power. If the white man stubbornly holds on to his power, to the bitter end, then the prospects are gloomy. If he, of his own will, shares progressively more and more power with the non-white, I believe violence and bloodshed will be much

less likely. The violence of the French and Bolshevik revolutions, and of certain unhappy events in our own country, seem to indicate that it is when the top dog refuses to listen to reasonable requests that the underdog becomes bitter, frustrated and violent.

To my mind, there are two more factors that would work to prevent violence. One is the incredible amount of goodwill that still exists in the heart of the non-white. The other is the fact that Christian people of all colours are praying God for a peaceful solution to our problems. I find it hard to think that God will not hear those prayers.

Our responsibility

Finally, I refer more specifically to the question: Is there any definite proof that a non-white government will obey the will of God? In all honesty, I must assure Mr Smit that such proof is impossible, no matter what government is involved in this land or any other. However, it is far more likely that a government — any government — will be concerned to obey God's will, if the Christian citizens of the country concerned work to make it so.

R. Orr.