

PRO

VERITATE

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CHRISTELIKE MAANDBLAD VIR SUIDELIKE AFRIKA

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PROFESSOR MONICA WILSON

» . . . mag geen mens skei nie”

Vir honderd jaar en langer gebeur dit nou al dat nie-blankes hulle tuistes verlaat om vir die blankes te gaan werk — eers op plase, later op diamantvelde en in goudmyne, en in toenemende mate in die industrieë en winkels en huise van Suid-Afrikaanse dorpe. Eers het 'n beperkte getal jong mans vir kort tydperke kom werk; daarna het meer en meer gekom, met baie getroude, ouer mans onder hulle, en die periodes wat hulle in die dorpe en stede deurbring, het langer geword.

Die ondermyning van 'n fondament

Tans is meer as die helfte van die mans van werkende ouderdom op enige tydstip weg van hulle tuistes in die reservate — amptelike syfers stel dit op 54%, en dit was so hoog as 72% in sommige distrikte. Mynverslae toon dat die gemiddelde tydperk wat tussen kontrakte tuis deurgebring word, konstant korter word, en mans wat in die sekondêre industrieë werksaam is, bring selfs nog 'n korter tyd tuis op die platteland deur as mynwerkers, deels ongetwyfeld omdat werk in die industrie skaars is en as iemand eers so 'n werk het, hy geneig is om daar-aan vas te hou en slegs huis toe te gaan in die kort tussenposes van sy verlof. Die Tomlinson-kommissie het vasgestel dat mynwerkers 28% van hulle werkleef tyd tuis deurgebring en industriële werkers 6,2%. 'n Detailstudie wat gemaak is in die Keiskammahoek-distrik in die Oostelike Kaap tussen 1948 en 1950, het gelei tot die bevinding dat 41% van die manlike trekarbeiders langer as 5 jaar weg was sonder om terug te keer.

Baie van hierdie mans wat so min tyd op die platteland by hulle families deurgebring, is getroud, maar nie in staat om hul vrouens saam met hulle na die stad te neem nie. In Keiskammahoek was meer as die helfte van die mans (53%) wat weg daarvandaan in die stede gewerk het, bekend as getroude en slegs 21% van hulle het hul vrouens by hulle gehad. 'n Meer resente studie in Kaapstad het aangetoon dat 85% van die mans in die industrieë oor wie die ondersoek gegaan het, getroud was, maar meer as die helfte van hulle het nie hul vrouens by hulle gehad nie.

Ons weet dus dat 'n groot getal van die trekarbeiders wat in die stede werk, getroude mans is wat nie in staat is om hul vrouens saam met hulle te neem nie, en dat die besoeke aan hulle tuistes minder en korter word, sodat hulle op die langste slegs 'n kwart van hulle werk-leef tyd by hul vrouens deurgebring. Vir die wat in die sekondêre industrieë werksaam is, is die gemiddelde tyd wat tuis in die reservate deurgebring word, net iets meer as drie weke per jaar.

Mans verlaat hul gesinne in die reservate en gaan werk in die stede ter wille van voedselvoorsiening. Die reser-

DIE liefde tot die naaste impliseer belangstelling in sy welsyn en lewenswyse. 'n Christen is daarom verplig om belang te hê by die probleme van sy medemense, en in besonder om 'n besorgdheid te openbaar oor daardie faktore wat vir ander struikelblokke vorm op die weg om 'n Christelike lewe te leef. Die stelsel van trekarbeid is een van hierdie dinge.

vate van die Ciskei en Transkei, en ten minste ook sommige in die Noordelike Kaap en in Natal, is ver van selfonderhoudend, selfs wat mielies betref. Die geld wat die mans in die stede verdien, word vir die grootste deel aan voedsel bestee, insluitend mielies wat op die Vrystaatse plase gekweek word. Byna elke gesin in die Ciskei en Transkei — behalwe enkeles waarvan die vader, broer of dogter in regeringsdiens staan as onderwyser, klerk of verpleegster — is afhanklik van 'n broodwinner wat in die stad werk. In 1949 was die gemiddelde inkomste van

'n gesin van 6 in die Keiskammahoek-distrik R100 per jaar, en daarvan was meer as 'n derde geld wat in die stede verdien is.

Die eienaardigheid van die Suid-Afrikaanse situasie

Die verskuiwing van mense van die platteland na die stad om daar te gaan werk, is natuurlik iets wat al vir eeue lank oor die hele wêreld plaasvind. Dit is 'n begeleidingsverskynsel van industriële groei. En in die beginstadia van

industrialisasie gebeur dit dikwels dat mans tussen die stad en die platteland beweeg, vir 'n paar maande (en soms langer) in die industrie werk en dan terugkeer na die plattelandse tuiste. So het die Pole in Duitsland gaan werk en later in Amerika, en tans werk Italianers en Spanjaarde in Switserland.

Die eienaardigheid van die Suid-Afrikaanse situasie is egter dat die sirkulasie van arbeid tussen stad en platteland en weer terug aangehou het vir honderd jaar. Gewoonlik gebeur dit veel gouer dat die trekkendes hulle as stedelinge gaan vestig. Die verskynsel van so 'n voortdurende beweging is nie toe te skryf aan ras of aan die eienaardighede van 'n kulturele agtergrond nie. In die Koperstreek gebeur dit dat Bantoe-mynwerkers wat van die gehugte af kom, en wat baie meer ongekunsteld is as die van die Transkei,

VERVOLG OP BLADSY 2

REV. TOM BAIRD

Live prophets -- or a dead loss?

WE in the Christian Church in Southern Rhodesia are only half awake on social and political issues. We are often tempted to avoid the challenge of Christ that comes amid the tensions of reality. We are too much like a group of people in a long-distance coach, travelling somnolently. As the coach careers round a dangerous bend, one of the passengers notices a precipice and yells a warning. The other passengers turn on him for waking them up. After all, they say, the coach was guaranteed to be comfortable.

Dangerous dozing

One of the demonic factors in the situation is that this blindness or inertia in social concern is found among people of sincerity and unquestioned moral worth. In an earlier century it would be both less dangerous (in its immediate consequences) and perhaps more pardonable. But in modern Africa, and in an age when the Church of God is faced with one of the greatest challenges to its courage and humility, such social and political somnolence is a peril to the world as well as to the Church's soul.

There are of course many Christians in Southern Rhodesia who would not subscribe to the analysis I have just given. To them I shall return in a moment. But consider first those who share the view I have outlined. We are in a grave dilemma. We are torn between a proper duty of loyalty to the Church (to which we owe an unpayable debt of gratitude over the years), and our other duty: to yell a warning before it is too late.

When we do speak out, we are

sometimes told to keep quiet; either by fellow-Christians with different views, or by the public at large. At times we have been joined, and indeed led, by the official leaders of some of the Churches. But there is still a lot of dangerous dozing.

What is the Church's function in society?

The time has come for the church to face the question openly and plainly. The Revd. E. R. Wickham has answered this question clearly and well. In his book *Church and People in an Industrial City* (1957) he says that the Church is 'neither a monolithic rock unmoved by the currents of history, nor . . . an ark for the saved, nor . . . flotsam and jetsam floating on the surface but . . . a deep current itself running in the seas'. That is well said. Or is it?

Many Christians here would disagree vehemently with Wickham's definition of the job of the Church. To them the Church is an ark and a rock. They would not admit that their ark

The Church in Southern Rhodesia

is a haven of a purely individualistic salvation; or if they did, they would claim that religion is basically about the individual soul and not about person — body, mind and spirit — living in society. Similarly they conceive the Church as an unchanging Rock in an ever-changing world rather than as a mobile current finding its strength in continuity with the Living Christ. They stress the solid permanence of the Christian message, and in a situation like ours this can easily slip into contentment with the status quo and the perpetuating of existing privilege and outworn modes of thought.

It seems as though we must face the fact that there are two almost completely different views of the function of the Church in society. If we hold the one, then social and political action are at most an application of the Gospel. If we hold the other then social and political action are an expression of the Gospel just as surely as is a preaching service. It is to this second view that I subscribe.

This radical appraisal of the Church's work in society does not be-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

„...mag geen mens skei nie”

(VERVOLG VAN BLADSY 1)

hulle spoedig vestig. Hierdie verskynsel is regstreeks toe te skryf aan die beleid van opeenvolgende Suid-Afrikaanse regerings.

Die ekonomiese is dit daarvoor eens dat die beweging van 'n groot deel van die Bantoebevolking na die industrie noodsaaklik is vir die verhoging van die lewensstandaard oor die algemeen in Suid-Afrika — die Maatskaplike en Ekonomiese Adviesraad het dit in 1946 ondubbelsinnig uitgespreek. Landboukundiges is eweneens eenstemmig daarvoor dat grondbewaring en 'n toenemende produktiwiteit in die reservate slegs bereik kan word deur minder gesinne die grond in die reservate te laat bewoon. Doeltreffende boerdery vereis dat werkers voltyds hulle grond sal bewoon — hulle moet geen trekkers wees wat van tyd tot tyd van die stad terugkeer nie — en volgens landboukundiges kan minder as die helfte van die gesinne wat tans in die Transkei woonagtig is, voorsien word van „ekonomiese eenhede” van grond om daar te boer.

Meer en meer Bantoes is daarom verplig om in die stad te werk. Op die grond in die reservate kan hulle nie 'n bestaan vind nie. Waar moet hulle gesinne woon?

Gesinne gedwing om uitmekaar te leef

Teenswoordig in die Kaap word gesinne wat hulle by die vader en broodwinner aangesluit het, stelselmatig „uit-geëndosseer”, d.i. toestemming word geweier om in die stad te bly, en gelas om terug te keer na die distrik waar hulle gebore is. Sommige het tuistes in die gehugte van die Transkei of Ciskei; ander het nie, en hulle het inderdaad ook geen wettige reg om elders te woon nie. 'n Poging is aangewend om „plattelandse dorpe” vir die

ontheemdes daar te stel; d.i. gebiede waar diegene wat geen tuiste het nie, kleinhoues kan koop waar hulle huise kan bou.

Maar hierdie „dorpe” is verwyderd van werksentra; en gesinne wat daar gevestig is, het geen lande of weldingsregte nie. Hulle moet uitsluitlik leef van die lone van die broodwinners in die stede en van wat hulle kan kweek in groentetuine rondom die huise wat hulle vir hulle gebou het. Vrouens kan slegs eis om by hulle mans in die stad te bly as die man vir 'n ononderbroke tydperk van 15 jaar in daardie stad gebly het of by dieselfde werkgewer langer as 10 jaar gewerk het en dit bewys kan word dat die vrou „gewoonlik by haar man woon”. As 'n wet wat reeds voor die Parlement was, in werking tree, sal selfs daardie kwalifikasies vrouens nie in staat stel om by hul mans te woon nie. Mev. Maphpee, wie se man 'n tekstielwerker in die Paarl is wat by dieselfde firma langer as tien jaar gewerk het, is 'n tipiese voorbeeld van die vrouens wat graag by hulle mans wil bly, maar gelas is om weg te gaan. Die Maphpees is Christene en in die Kerk getroud, maar dit maak daar geen verskil aan nie. En daar is duisende „mevroue Maphpees”.

Byna negeduisend Bantoevroue is tussen 1959 en Maart 1962 uit die Westelike Kaap „uit-geëndosseer”, en in elke dorp in die reservate is daar talle meer wat begeer om by hulle wettige eggenotes te kan woon en 'n gesin op te bou saam met 'n vader wat by hulle bly en wat nie net maar elke vyf jaar kom kuier of gedurende die Kerstyd vir drie weke terugkom nie.

Hoe leef die mans wat in die stad as trekarbeiders werk? As 'n jong man vir die eerste keer in die stad kom, sal hy hom waarskynlik voeg by die nou-aaneengeslote groepie vriende wat van dieselfde dorp af kom. In Kaapstad sal

dit in die „barakke” in Langa wees — die „stalle” soos dit genoem word, met 25 man per kamer. Die lewe word draaglik gemaak deur hierdie vriendskap met „home-boys”. 'n Dosyn of meer eet saam, en saans as hulle almal van die werk af tuis kom, word die kookwerk gedoen deur die mees junior lid van die groep. Hul leier is die mees senior man van die tuisdorp en hy hou die nuwelinge dop, waarsku hulle vir die gevare van die stad en maan hulle om elke maand 'n deel van hul geld huis toe te stuur.

Baie van die mans in die barakke, gedagtig aan die nood tuis, lei 'n lewe van ontbering om te kan spaar al wat hulle kan, en omdat hulle aan voedsel besnoei, loop hulle gevaar om aan skeurbuik te ly. Sommige van hulle bly gedurende hul hele werkleeftyd in die barakke in die „home boy”-groepe, maar vir baie word dit ondraaglik en hulle verhuis of na 'n kamer in die getroude kwartiere in Langa of na waar hulle ook maar 'n woonplek kan vind in groter Kaapstad.

Onsekerheid en rasse-antagonisme

As hulle nie hul eggenotes na die stad kan bring nie, gebeur dit soms dat hulle met ander vrouens deurmekaar raak in 'n ongeoorloofde verhouding wat min of meer permanent van aard is. In Langa het die persentasie alleenlopende mans gedurende die afgelope agt jaar snel toegeneem, terwyl druk uitgeoefen is op mans wat op die Skiereiland verstrooid gewoon het, om na die nuwe enkelkwartiere in Langa te verhuis; en dit is geen toeval dat met die toename van enkellopende mans, die gevoel van onsekerheid en die rasse-antagonisme ook geweldig toegeneem het. Inwoners van Langa het hulle reeds in 1954 al uitgespreek oor die toenemende onsekerheid wat ontstaan het as gevolg van die talle-toename van enkellopende mans in die gebiede, en die kontras tussen 1954 en 1962 wat betref die gees wat daar geheers het, is pynlik opvallend. Gedurende hierdie tydperk het die verhouding van mans tot vrouens gestyg van 477 mans tot 100 vrouens, tot 866 mans teenoor 100 vrouens.

'n Nuusblad in die volkstaal wat kommentaar gelewer het oor POQO, het die bewering gemaak „dat POQO nérens aangetref word waar getroude Bantoes by hulle gesinne woon en elke dag gaan werk nie”, en het aan die hand gedoen „dat enkelkwartiere in museums omskep sal word”.

Antropoloë en sosioloë is bewus daarvan dat 'n gesin van een of ander aard die fondament vorm van die maatskaplike lewe, dat dit 'n voorwaarde daarvan is. Selfs die Sowjet-unie was verplig om, pas nadat die rewolusie op die punt was om die gesin as 'n verouderde instelling te beskou, die belangrikheid van gesinsverbande te beklemtoon.

As gesinne opgebreek word, wreek dit hom op die gemeenskap wat die wanorde daarvan maai. In Suid-Afrika gebeur dit reeds.

Dit is waar dat huwelike wat deur Bantoes op die platteland aangegaan word, merkwaardig stabiel bly, maar die buite-egtelike geboortesyfer is baie hoog — 25% van alle geboortes in die Kelskammahoek-distrik, en so hoog as 60% in sommige stedelike gebiede — en dit onder mense by wie die buite-egtelike geboortesyfer tradisioneel besonder laag was. As 'n mens egter dink aan wat tydens die jongste oorlog in die Europese stede, wat met soldatekampe omsom was, gebeur het, dan hoef jy daarvoor nouliks verwonderd te wees. Die dorpe van die Rand en Durban en Kaapstad, is soos stede wat met soldatekampe omsom is.

Hierdie feite behoort verontrustend te wees vir elke burger, maar vir Christene in besonder. Hoe kan ons 'n maatskaplike stelsel duld waarin gesinne gedwing word om uitmekaar te leef? In hierdie stelsel staan die man voor die keuse of om sy vrou en kinders te sien vergaan van honger, of om geskei van hulle te leef totdat hy oud is.

(Word vervolgt)

(Hierdie artikel is 'n vertaling van „... Let no man put asunder”. Professor Monica Wilson is 'n toegewyde Christen en professor aan die Universiteit van Kaapstad, Departement van Bantoelestudies. Die artikel is in Engels verkrygbaar van mnr. B. Mackenzie, Globeweg 4, Rondebosch.)

Live prophets - or a dead loss?

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

little the importance of the less spectacular duties of the Church in pastoral counselling and Biblical instruction: but it does challenge the widespread assumption that the Church should have as little to do with politics as possible! Both in theory and in practice we find that the Biblical basis of our faith drives us to serve God and our neighbour in concrete political terms.

While this does not mean that we expect every Church member to toe a liberal line (by a kind of inverted fascism!), it does involve the challenging of Church people of all races to do their political thinking and action in response to a living God of justice and love: and this is quite a frightening proposal in Southern Rhodesia.

If we consider briefly three simple questions, it will be readily seen how important and delicate is our task. Each of these questions is rooted in the understanding of the Church's work outlined above. If, therefore, they seem to be 'loaded' questions that surprise or offend any reader, our presuppositions must be borne in mind.

1. Is the Church in my country unpopular for the right reasons?

In the early days some missionaries earned considerable unpopularity from fellow-Europeans by championing African rights. But gradually during the last half-century the European

Christians and even their leaders have accommodated themselves to a lower standard of idealism. Maybe this was almost inevitable, but the political events of the last twenty years, both inside the country and beyond it, have raised a new challenge to Christian prophetic leadership. An example may illustrate the point. It is still common for European Christians (in whose hands much of the Church leadership still — for the time being — lies) to regard their African brethren as second-class citizens and even second-class Christians. Although they may be kind to their African servants or employees, they are rarely friends. They are seldom, if ever, seen in Church together. The barriers of language and culture have been allowed to stand even in God's house, instead of being pulled down by the hard-working, deep-hearted sympathy called love.

If the Christian European exerts himself adventurously in this field, he calls down the horrified disapproval of his fellow-Europeans. There was a time, a few years ago, when even the average European was on the edge of a genuine willingness to work and live comradeship with Africans, but since then the social and political attitudes have hardened. Even to-day there is still genuine goodwill in the hearts of many Europeans and Africans towards one another, but it is slowly being drained away by fear and misunderstanding.

Whenever the Church begins to give a lead either at the level of improving personal relationships of equality or widening the franchise, it is at once

resisted from within its ranks as well as beyond: and all too often it draws back. A recent sociological survey in Southern Rhodesia by two independent experts has made it crystal clear that European Christians tend to be reactionary as a group. They have not the political and social courage to be unpopular with their own kinsmen.

2. Should the Church approve the aspirations of African nationalists for majority rule?

I believe that the Christian answer is 'Yes'. The emotional reaction of many European Christians to those who make the answer is often anger or distress. They complain that this is a betrayal. Why they ask, single out African nationalism for favour, thereby condemning European dominance? They often go on to talk of the lowering of standards of behaviour and culture that would at once result from majority rule. But the force of their prediction is weakened by the degrading results of their own policy. Racial exclusiveness and repressive legislation are poor evidence of a concern with standards.

Once it is recognised that European nationalism in my country is a rear-guard minority action carrying less moral conviction every year, our eyes can be opened to recognise that African nationalism, despite its human faults, is a historic trend in a Continent's fulfillment. This judgment is based on a belief in God's continuing work in history, and on a passionate concern for the value and dignity of the average man; it is strengthened by the conviction that democracy is a political concept of abiding value.

We are confirmed in these beliefs by the fact that they are widely held

by Christian leaders and people in many lands, but the judgment itself is made within the realities of our own situation.

3. Should the Church speak out against repressive legislation?

In Southern Rhodesia during the last few years many laws have been passed which have buttressed the power of the government at the expense of the liberty of the courts and of the citizen. Both lawyers and Church leaders have been strong in protest. But the protests have been largely ignored. Further, many European Church members have themselves resented the protests that have been made in their name.

The time is coming when the Church may have to choose between identifying itself more openly with African nationalism, and the legal rights of the citizen and the courts, or keeping both silence and its European membership unbroken.

We can thank God that that decision has not yet finally presented itself. For it is full of judgment. But meanwhile it is time to wake up to the opportunities and perils of the situation.

Great work has been done by the Church among people of all races. Nothing is gained by sneers. There is need for gracious as well as bold witness to fundamental truths in a tense and critical situation. But tact is no substitute for the Church in Southern Rhodesia. We are praying for you also. May God grant us insight and courage and love.

(The Revd. Mr. Tom Baird is a Methodist minister in Southern Rhodesia, and is grateful to the 'Central African Examiner', of Salisbury, for permission to use material published in May, 1963.)

PRO VERITATE

Inleidingsartikel

... JOU NAASTE SOOS JOUSELF

ELDERS in hierdie uitgawe verskyn 'n artikel uit die pen van Monica Wilson onder die titel, „... mag geen mens skei nie”. Suid-Afrika maak daarop aanspraak dat hy 'n Christelike land is en gee daardeur te kenne dat hy homself aan die Evangelie van Christus onderwerp. Monica Wilson, 'n toegewyde Christen, doen dus in haar artikel wat elke Suid-Afrikaanse Christen telkens behoort te doen, naamlik om die beleidsrigtings wat ons volg, aan die toets van die Evangelie te onderwerp. Dit bring haar onder andere by die vraag: „Wat is die prys van apartheid — gemeet nie in rand en sent nie, maar in die lyding van mense en van God”.

Monica Wilson stel hierdie vraag aan ons verstand en aan ons gewete. Sy skryf nie in die eerste plek as sosioloog nie, maar as iemand wie se oë geopen is vir die menslike lyding en smart wat daagliks meegebring word deur die toepassing van sekere aspekte van ons landsbeleid. Hierdie smart en lyding word nie voorgedou as 'n probleem vir bespreking of as 'n intellektuele oefening nie, maar as 'n aanklag teen ons gruwelike onverskilligheid teenoor die menslike nood wat deur ons optrede veroorsaak word.

Professor Wilson is ook nie in die eerste plek besorgd oor die „rasvraagstuk” nie maar oor die skynbare afwesigheid van erbarming in ons houding teenoor individuele menslike wesens wat, presies net soos blanke Suid-Afrikaners, 'n diepe behoefte het aan liefde en sekuriteit. Kan dit wees dat baie blankes nie weet van hierdie behoeftes en nood nie en dat hulle tog diep geroer sal wees as hulle wel weet?

Ofskoon politieke oorwegings nie deur haar of haar lesers verontagsaam kan word nie, skryf Monica Wilson nie oor 'n „politieke vraagstuk” nie, maar teken sy die gevolge van ongehoorsaamheid aan die geboorte van Christus: „Jy moet jou naaste liefhê soos jouself”, „Alles wat julle dan wil hê dat die mense aan julle moet doen, net so moet julle aan hulle ook doen; want dit is die wet en die profete”.

„Die wet en die profete” — laat ons dit gerus lees nadat ons Monica Wilson se artikel gelees het — Amos, Hosea, Miga, Jesaja, Jeremia, Esegieël, Mattheüs 25:31-36, die bergpredikasie. As ons nie diep geraak word deur wat God in hierdie Skrifgedeeltes vir ons sê oor wat ons besig is om te doen aan die mense van ons land nie, dan het ons voorwaar die genade van God baie nodig.

„Bewaar ons daarvan, o God, dat ons iets sal doen of sal toelaat waarvoor ons berou sal hê wanneer ons voor U moet verskyn.

„Bewaar ons daarvan, o God, dat ons so dwaas sal wees om te glo dat ons u geboorte kan verontagsaam en terselfdertyd die gevolge van ons ongehoorsaamheid kan vryspring.”

Editorial

LOVE AND UNITY

IT is probably true to say that today more Christians are talking, thinking, working and praying about Church unity than ever before in the “Christian era”. This tide of concern has even reached our own shores, and where before we said and did little about it, now it is on the tongues and in the hearts of many.

“Church unity” is an elusive phrase: it can mean several things. It can mean the deep and undeniable spiritual unity which we already have in Christ; it can mean the friendly sharing of views and convictions in inter-church groups of ministers and laymen; it can mean co-operative work in agencies such as Bible societies; it can mean “federal union” between churches or it can mean full-bloom “organic union” between churches. Whatever it means, most Christians today would probably admit that it involves Christians displaying to the world rather more unity than so far we have succeeded in doing.

Behind this desire for unity it is imperative that we should discern the true motive. The true motive is not to form an organisation of impressive size, wealth and prestige. The true motive must be love — love for God, love for fellow-Christians. Love for God will compel us to draw closer to one another — for such is his will, Love for one another will help us to overcome those “natural” and “instinctive” aversions and dislikes that we feel towards one another. Love for one another will help us to overcome the barriers of race and language which so tragically divide us from one another, Love for one another will prevent us from prejudging issues that divide us, from prejudging each other. The realisation that God loves us will stimulate us to persist in the quest for the unity He wills for us in spite of setbacks and disappointments. For love never fails.

R.O.

Pinkster 1964

'n Boodskap van die president van die Wêreldraad van Kerke

„... en op Hom sal die Gees van die Here rus, die Gees van wysheid en verstand, die Gees van raad en sterkte, die Gees van kennis en van die vrees van die Here. En Hy het 'n welgevallen aan die vrees van die Here” (Jes. 11:2-3).

So skryf die profeet Jesaja en Christene het nog altyd sy profesie duidelik geïnterpreteer. Dit was op Jesus Christus wat die sewevoudige gawes van die Gees gerus het, en dit was van die verrese Christus wat hierdie selfde gawes gekom het na sy volk op die eerste Hemelvaart.

Geen geskenk word dieper benodig nie deur hierdie wêreld van ons, met sy verwarring en geweldpleging, sy gebrek aan orde en sy blinde self-vertroue. En die wêreld behoort na die Kerk van Jesus Christus te kan opsien vir hierdie gawes — selfs daar waar die Kerk materieel arm en onbeduidend mag wees. „Silwer en goud het ek nie, maar wat ek het, dit gee ek vir jou: In die Naam van Jesus Christus die Nasarener, staan op en loop!” Te dikwels, egter, is daar ander eienskappe wat ons blyk te onderskei van die wêreld: 'n gees van gekant te wees teen ondersoek en hervorming, van besluiteloosheid, 'n gees van vrees, nie van die Here nie, maar van mense.

Ons kan 'n voortdurende middel tot verbetering vir hierdie foute vind in die Woord soos dit tot ons spreek deur die Bybel. Want die Bybel spreek tot ons van sover ons algebele afhanklikheid van God, asook van die grenslose moontlikhede van

die menslike natuur soos dit geneem en berstel is deur God se eie Seun. Dit is nie per toeval dat menige Christen vandag sy eenheid met ander Christene herontdek deur diepere studie van die Woord nie, of dit nou individueel of gesamentlik gedoen word. Ons dring aan by al ons ledekerke om te volhard in die verspreiding, die uitleg en gebruik van die Bybel, sodat die rykdom daarvan nooit vanselfsprekend aangeneem mag word nie, maar nuwe waarde sal hê in die eeu waarin ons lewe.

Met elke Hemelvaart word die volk van God in sy geheel geroep tot self-ondersoek.

Vanjaar behoort elke gemeente haarself af te vra of sy die woorde ter harte geneem het van die „Faith and Order”-konferensie in Montreal, aangaande die behoefte aan plaaslike eenheid sodat ons waarlik mag deel in die gawes van God, asook wat op die Sending-Konferensie te Mexico gesê is i.v.m. die roeping van elke plaaslike kerk, om die liefde van God in Christus duidelik uit te lewe, in belydenis en diens aan die wêreld wat haar omring.

As ons verlang dat die geestelike gawes ook op ons moet rus, moet ons teruggaan na hulle oorsprong en bid, nederig maar verwagkend: „Kom, Skepper Gees, en wek in ons midde die volheid van daardie gawes wat ons reeds ontvang het”. Net op so 'n manier kan ons aan ons vriende en bure, ons gemeenskap en nasie iets meedeel van die wysheid en insig, die raad en die mag, die kennis en toegewytheid en ontsag, wat die vrug is van gemeenskap met God.

DIE ONVOLTOOIDE TAAK

ds. A. M. Scheffler

Daar is die gevaar — geen denkbeeldige nie — om net te konsentreer op die gemeente, dié te bearbei en op te bou. M.a.w. mense te lei tot 'n dieper lewe. Dit is baie noodsaaklik, maar nie ten koste van doelgerigte evangelisasie nie. Dink maar aan ons stads- en dorpsgemeentes. Wat gaan daar aan? Die leraar en sendeling en evangeliste bearbei die lidmate, doen wat hulle kan om hulle op te help en aan te vuur. En dan meen hulle dat hulle baie hard werk. Dit is dan ook meestal die geval. Maar nog hoege-naamd nie in die gees en die sin van Matth. 28:19 nie. Want daar word 'n direkte bevel tot ons gerig om uit te gaan en dissipels te maak. En so lank ons deur tienduiseende omring bly, moet dit ons hoofsaak wees en bly. Waarom is daar so min vrug op ons stedelike arbeid? Het ons al genoeg ernstige studie daaraan gewy? Ja, ons weet van die probleme van ontstamming, ontworteling, sekularisasie, veral in ons groot dorps- en stedelike lokasies. Maar skeld dit ons vry? Kan ons nie meer doen nie?

„Die Kerkbode”, 11 Maart 1964.

“DO AND LEARN”

A Pioneer missionary camp arranged by the Anglican Students' Federation was held in January at St. Matthew's Mission in the Diocese of Grahamstown.

The “Doing” consisted of levelling and clearing the ground and planting grass in front of the Mission Hospital. Working hard in the sun when the temperature was 103 degrees in the shade, the students stuck to their task, enjoying every minute.

The “learning” took place during the official discussions and Bible Studies led by the Rhodes University Chaplain, the Reverend John Barnett. However, in a happy multi-racial society it was inevitable that learning went on throughout the day. Being at the Mission was an experience not to be missed. In matron and sisters, nurses and laundry workers there was found a spirit of joy which had to be seen to be appreciated.

It is hoped that these camps will bring about an enthusiasm for missionary activity and that this enthusiasm will lead to people dedicating themselves to this life of love for the Glory of God.

“Seek”, April 1964.

DIE KERK IN AFRIKA

THE CHURCH IN AFRICA

PROFESSOR A. VAN SELMS

Joernalistieke iatsoen

MY artikel „Onsterflike woorde?” in *Pro Veritate* van 15 Maart 1964, waarin ek die slagspreuk „Glo in jou God, glo in jouself, glo in jou volk” aan die Bybel getoets het, het die ronde gedoen in die pers van hierdie land, al was dit dan ook slegs in verkorte vorm. So het bv. 'n baie goeie uittreksel daarvan verskyn in *Die Vaderland* van 23 Maart. Dit het my net verwonder dat die redaksie van daardie dagblad dit voorsien het met 'n hoof in groot en vet letters: „Prof. Van Selms bespot Malan-slagspreuk”. Elkeen wat daardie artikel van my in *Pro Veritate* gelees het, sal saamstem dat ek daarin niks geskryf het wat grond kan gee aan die bewering dat ek daardie slagspreuk bespot het nie. Ek het dit getoets aan die Heilige Skrif, maar dit is 'n uiters ernstige besigheid, waarby geen spotterny op sy plek is nie. Sowel die eerbied vir die Skrif as die piëteit jeens 'n oorledene sluit by elke regdenkende mens die lus tot spotterny uit.

Die lesers sal dit dus kan verstaan dat ek die dag daarna die volgende stuk aan *Die Vaderland* ter plasing aangebied het:

Die Redakteur,
Die Vaderland.

Geagte Heer, Graag wil ek u hartlik bedank vir u uitstekende weergawe, in u uitgawe van 23 Maart 1964, vir my artikel „Onsterflike woorde?” in *Pro Veritate*, 15 Maart 1964. Dit verheug my baie dat u deur u weergawe die kern van die gedagtes, wat ek vir die lesers van *Pro Veritate* in daardie artikel uiteengesit het, onder die aandag van die breëre publiek wat deur die *Vaderland* bereik word, wou bring. Ek hoop dat dit in die toekoms meer sal gebeur en altyd weer op so 'n noukeurige en deskundige manier.

Ek het my net verbaas dat u aan u weergawe die titel gegee het: „Prof. Van Selms bespot Malan-slagspreuk”. Ek glo nie dat ek in my artikel daardie slagspreuk bespot of belaglik gemaak het nie. Ek het dit aan die Bybel getoets, en dit is 'n ernstige besigheid, reg en plig van elke Christen. Niemand wat u weergawe, laat staan die oorspronklike artikel, lees, kan daaruit die indruk kry dat ek gespot het nie.

Dog afgesien van hierdie ongelukkige opskef, my volle waardering vir u beriggewing en weergawe,

Die uwe,
A. van Selms.

Saam met hierdie stuk, wat per geregistreerde pos op daardie dag aan die redaksie van *Die Vaderland* gestuur is, het die volgende begeleidende brief gegaan:

„Aan die Hoofredakteur,
Die Vaderland.

Geagte Heer,

U sal sekerlik wel so vriendelik wil wees om bygaande brief in u eersvolgende nommer op dieselfde plek en in dieselfde lettertipes as die stuk, waarop dit 'n reaksie is, te plaas. Dit sal u sekerlik duidelik wees dat dit 'n enigszins bevreemdende daad is om 'n hoogleraar met die predikantstatus daarvan te beskuldig dat hy 'n uitspraak van 'n oorledene bespot het, en dit te meer omdat in die stuk, waarop u stuk 'n reaksie is, geen woord van spot oor die oorledene of sy uitspraak gevind word nie, en ook u weergawe van wat deur my geskryf is hoegenaamd nie duidelik maak, in watter opsig ek my aan daardie bespotting skuldig gemaak sou het nie. U sal ook opmerk dat ek die brief wat ek ter plaatsing hierby

insluit, so gestel het dat dit vir u gemaklik sal wees om die woord „bespot” met apologie terug te trek.

Hoogagend die uwe,
A. van Selms.”

Tot vandag, 15 April, het daardie stuk van my nie in *Die Vaderland* verskyn nie; ek het ook tot vandag toe geen berig dienaangaande van die redaksie van *Die Vaderland* ontvang nie.

'n Ander beeld

Op die voorblad van *Die Burger*, die Kaapse Afrikaanse koerant, het op 24 Maart ook 'n uitvoerige weergawe van dieselfde artikel in *Pro Veritate* verskyn. Die opskef lui in daardie geval „Onsterflikheid van dr. Malan se woorde betwis”. Teen daardie opskef of teen die weergawe van my artikel sal ek geen beswaar maak nie.

In *Die Burger* van 31 Maart skrywe proponent Nik Lee 'n brief, waarin hy op Bybelse gronde probeer om die slagspreuk van dr. Malan te verdedig. Prop. Nik Lee was so vriendelik om dit in die vorm van 'n uitknipsel aan my te stuur. Ek het sy poging om 'n Bybelse grondslag vir daardie slagspreuk te vind, gewaardeer, al kon ek dit nie

anders as 'n mislukte poging beskou nie, en het op 4 April 'n antwoord op die betoog van prop. Lee aan *Die Burger* gestuur. Ek gaan nou nie verder in op die inhoud van prop. Lee se betoog en my weerlegging daarvan nie; ons lesers kan, as hulle daaromtrent meer wil weet, dit in die nommers van *Die Burger* van 4 en 8 April nalees. Vandag vestig ek net die aandag daarop dat *Die Burger* my antwoord onmiddellik na ontvangs geplaas het: 4 April het ek geskryf na Kaapstad en 8 April verskyn dit, onverkort en met die korrekte opskef, „Prof. A. van Selms ontleed sy besware” in dieselfde lettertipe as die opskef bo die brief van prop. Lee. En dit terwyl dit feitlik die derde stuk in die polemie was, terwyl my brief aan *Die Vaderland* 'n direkte antwoord op 'n griewende misduiding deur die redaksie van *Die Vaderland* wou wees. Ook het die redaksie van *Die Burger* my op 10 April verwittig van die plasing van my brief en dit as 'n koerantuitknipsel aan my toegestuurd.

Die optrede van die twee Afrikaanse koerante kan dus gemaklik as 'n vergelyking tussen die sedelike norme, waardeur die onderskeie redaksies

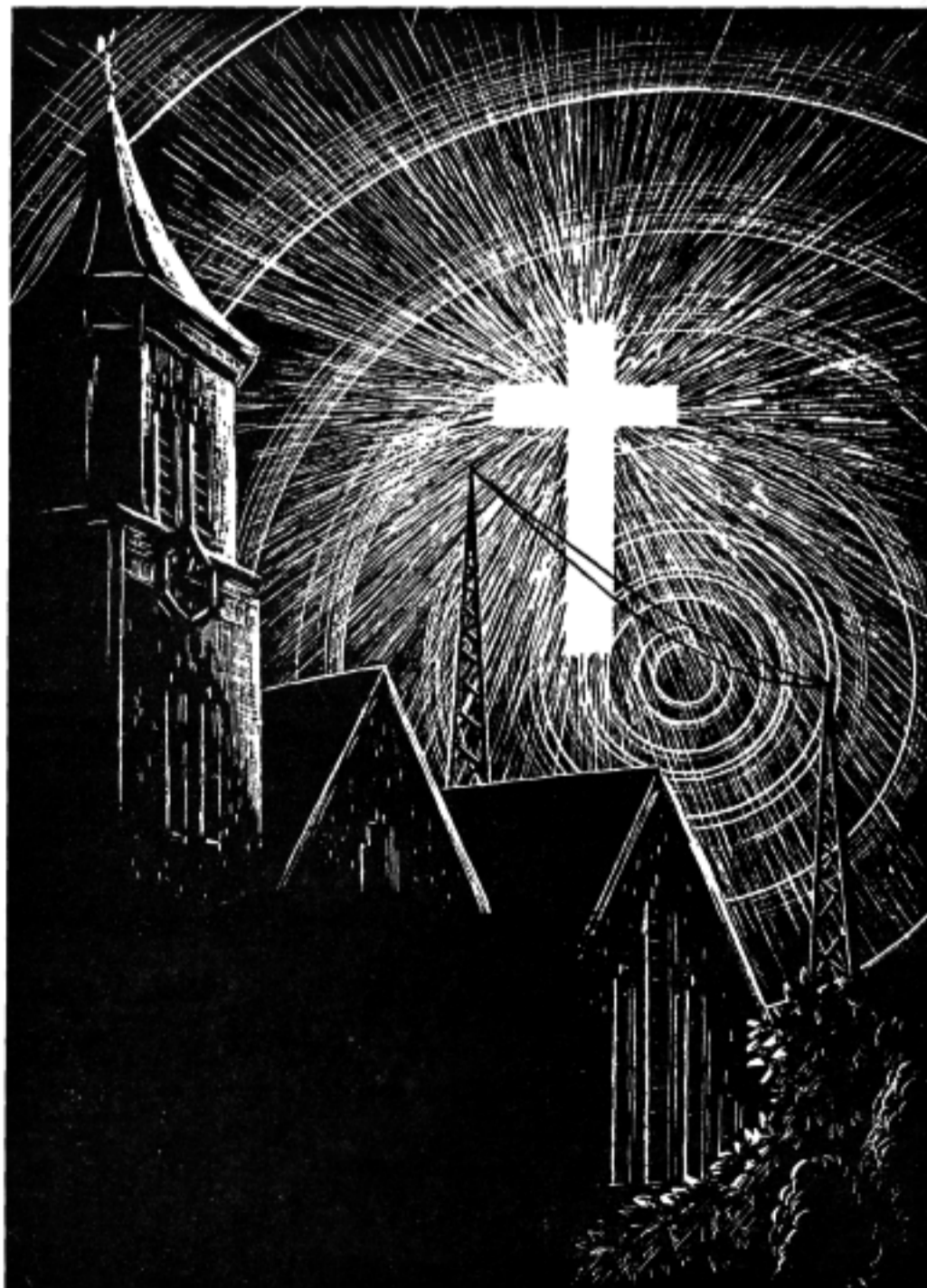
hulle laat lei, gebruik word. Aan die kant van *Die Burger* merk ons 'n volkome korrekte leiding van die gedagte-wisseling op, en 'n gedragslyn wat in ooreenstemming is met wat geld tussen mense wat mekaar, ook by eventuele verskil van insig, hoogag. By *Die Vaderland* sien ons eers 'n misleidende opskef, en vervolgens die onwil om aan iemand, wat homself as verongelyk beskou, reg te laat geskied.

Dit is algemeen bekend dat *Die Burger*, hoewel die mondstuk van 'n bevolkingsgroep wat instem met die strewe van die Nasionale Party, nogtans aanmerklik in toon en inhoud van 'n koerant soos *Die Vaderland* verskil. Dit is, soos elkeen weet, heel wat gematigder as *Die Vaderland*. So kan ons uit hierdie geskiedenis weer leer dat die groot gevaar van ekstremisme dit is, dat die reëls van wellevendheid as uitdrukking van 'n beskaafde gemoedstoestand verwaarloos word.

En tog sê ons almal dat ons wil waak vir die handhawing van die westerse en christelike beskawing . . .

N.S. — 'n Week nadat hierdie artikel aan die redaksiesekretaris van *Pro Veritate* gestuur was, het my brief soos hierbo afgedruk, in *Die Vaderland* verskyn, en wel op 23 April, 'n maand nadat ek dit aan daardie dagblad gestuur het. En dit sonder apologie of terugtrekking van die griewende opskef, en op een van die agterste bladsye. Vermaaklik is die opskef, wat die redakteur daaraan gegee het: „Prof. Van Selms sê dankie”. Sou die redakteur net die suiker geproe het?

Weni Creator Spiritus



Verbef, o Christen, lof-
gesange,
laat klink u danklied na
omhoog!
Gods Gees, verwag met
groot verlange,
het neergedald voor
menseoog
in vuur-tong, wind en
vreemde tale
voor 'n verbaasde men-
seskaar,
dieselfde Gees wil telke-
male
Hom aan ons harte
openbaar.

Die volke van die verste
lande
getuig: hier spreek Gods
majesteit,
want dank'bre skares
bef die bande,
aanbid die Heer van
beerlikheid.
Triomf, so leef, so beers
die Koning,
besing sy segepraal
alom!
Die Gees getuig van
Jesus' kroning
en maak ons hart sy
heiligheid.

GESANG 151.

Bonhoeffer and young Christians in Germany

Part 2

THE first half of my article ended with a summary of Bonhoeffer's address at Fanö in which he discusses the so-called 'justification' of war, and the stand-points of the secular pacifist and the Christian. This summary was given to indicate to you what questions are exciting Christian youth in both parts of present day Germany. What Bonhoeffer saw at Gland and Fanö of the murderous and dreadful nature of modern war, a slaughter and horror which cannot be justified by an objective or ideal, is even more true in the atomic-bomb age in which we live.

But we cannot consider these questions without taking into account Bonhoeffer's fate, for it reveals implications of this problem which he had not seen in 1934 at Fanö. Bonhoeffer was deeply involved in the struggle of the German Confessional Church against those Churches which were compromising the Gospel by co-operating with the Nazis. For several years he was responsible for the organisation of an illegal Seminary for the training of young pastors of the Confessional Church.

The opportunity to escape

Then came the spring of 1939. Hitler was preparing for war and Bonhoeffer's generation was called upon to bear arms. Because of his convictions about the evil and senselessness of war Bonhoeffer did not intend to obey this call and his friends feared that he would be sent to a concentration camp. With the help of Reinhold Niebuhr and other American friends they arranged for Bonhoeffer to be invited to the United States to lecture at Universities and seminaries and do pastoral work in a German parish in New York.

Bonhoeffer went to America in June 1939. But during his stay there he became convinced that he ought to be involved in and identified with the work of his brethren in the Confessional Church of Germany — together with them to find and to preach repentance and Christian life for the German people. The most urgent task was to preach the gospel of Christ to his own blind people who, seduced and overpowered by Hitler and his 'gang', were tumbling headlong into the dreadful crime of war. But he could only preach to them if he suffered with them, and so he returned to Germany in August 1939 just before the beginning of the War.

Bonhoeffer never had to join the army. Until his biography is written we will not know exactly why, but a young friend of his who was also a confessional pastor, and who had also intended refusing to serve in the army, enlisted now. This decision of his seems to have been inspired by Bonhoeffer's new insight: "one must suffer with one's own people. Only then can you preach the Gospel to them".

Later, when Bonhoeffer was in prison, he wrote to this pastor that he never regretted his decision not to remain in America but to return to Germany in the summer of 1939. And it is this decision which is the second great influence in the life and thought of the present-day German Christian youth. This influence was especially apparent when it was still possible to leave East Germany by way of West Berlin. Pastors and laymen did not think it was morally right for a Christian to forsake his ministry here. This point must always be borne in mind when you discuss and attempt to assess the thoughts and feelings of our people here in Eastern Germany.

Return and involvement

From September 1939 to April 1943 (the time of his arrest) Bonhoeffer was once again engaged in the work of teaching young confessional pastors as far as this was possible. In 1940 the Gestapo absolutely prohibited him from teaching and speaking in public. By this time (in fact since 1939) he was also in touch with representatives of the resistance against Hitler. They had gathered round General Beck, one of the most influential of the leaders in the well-known events of the 20th July, 1944. His brother, Klaus, and his brother-in-law Hans von Dohnanyi had introduced him to this circle. Because of this involvement Bonhoeffer also used his journeys as a representative of the Confessional Church to establish political contacts with the Allies. This was done through members of the Ecumenical Movement in neutral countries and thus he came to meet Visser 'tHooft, Karl Barth and Searge Bell, then Bishop of Chichester. At this famous meeting Bonhoeffer informed the Bishop, and through him the British Foreign Office, of the existence of several groups of the Resistance. He also tried to ascertain the possibilities of an eventual armistice with the Allies should a new anti-Nazi government be installed.

Arrest and imprisonment

A year after this important meeting Bonhoeffer was arrested by the Gestapo. "Letters and papers from prison" and certain parts of his "Ethics" contain his letters, poetry, and fragments of thought which were smuggled out of prison. To read these papers is to be made aware of the extent of Bonhoeffer's concern with the ethical problem of living as a Christian in a world of Nazi-terror and ideology. The minister of God and preacher of the Gospel who had declared at Fanö (1934) and elsewhere that it was not morally right for a Christian to take part in any kind of war on whatever side it may be — he was now a member of the Resistance which could only fulfill its function by planning murder and violent attacks against the Nazi enemy in an attempt to destroy their power!

To understand this aspect of Bonhoeffer's life and thought we must understand the parable he used to express his convictions on this point — the parable of the mad driver of a motorcycle who brings death to the passers by in the street by his ruthless and irresponsible handling of his machine. Bonhoeffer was convinced that it is the duty of a man standing on the edge of the pavement to stop this driver and to stop him by means of a blow on the head if no other means were possible.

Obedience — not rationalization

But how can we reconcile this parable with the address given at Fanö and Bonhoeffer's emphasis on the commandment of God which absolutely forbids us to kill our fellowmen? Bonhoeffer did not attempt to reconcile or explain away his earlier convictions. Instead he acknowledged the absolute nature of God's other commandments and recognised the truth of our Lord's words in Gethsemane as God's judgment in his life and fate — "He who takes the sword shall perish by the sword" (Matt. 26:52). These words of Christ were applied by him to himself and accepted as our Lord's verdict of his own activity. Because of this he never complained, nor did he rationalise his decisions and behaviour, but suffered prison willingly.

Bonhoeffer did not know of faith

without perpetual repentance. In his meeting with Bishop Bell he had declared that repentance would be the source of the action of the anti-Nazi government-to-come, and in his personal life he also accepted repentance as the source of Christian action and suffering. By repentance he did not mean a perpetual grinding of remorse or similar feelings, but the abandonment of the whole of one's life in a perpetual surrender to God. It was this repentance which made him astonish both his fellow-prisoners and warders by his peacefulness, friendliness and gaiety.

The challenge of Bonhoeffer's life

I ask those of you who read this article to reflect for yourselves on the meaning and importance of Bonhoeffer's life and thought for us who live in Germany. I think enough has been said to show you why we are so concerned with the insights and with the events in which he was involved because he lived by the convictions God had given him. But please do not make the mistake of thinking that Bon-

hoeffer only belongs to Germany. He was a member of the Church of Christ and belongs to all of us. I will not argue for this point but conclude with some words Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote from prison:

"When you have abandoned the attempt to make somebody out of yourself — be it a saint, or a converted sinner, or a man of the church (the so-called "priestly" type!), a righteous man or an unrighteous man, a sick or a healthy one . . . then you throw yourself wholly into the arms of God, then you do not regard your own suffering as the most important thing in the world, but the suffering of God himself in this world; then you remain awake with Christ in Gethsemane; and I think this is faith, this is metanoia, and this is the way to become a man, a Christian (cf. Jer. 45). How can you be arrogant in success and helplessly depressed by failure, when you take part in the sufferings of God by living in this world?"

From: A Leading Christian in East Germany.

Rev. J. M. LETLABIKA*

Practical Theology

The second Ministers' Refresher Course was concerned with the problem of relating the Bible and our theology to the practical problems facing the Church. The emphasis was on dealing with the problem of the empty pew and the lethargy of the Christian community. We noticed how much attention we devoted to the 'insiders' in contrast to the first Christians who were concerned with bringing the Gospel to the 'outsiders'.

Are we reliable vessels?

The evening seminars where we had the opportunity of discussing some of the urgent problems of our time was a most valuable part of our three weeks stay together.

The discussion on the desirability of an "authentically African Church" was of especial relevance to us. The emergence of the newly independent African states was something thrilling and yet disturbing.

The question that remained in our minds was a challenging one: 'Are we African Christians a reliable vessel of the Gospel of Jesus Christ?'

Unity not chaos

The course was also a rich experience of the unity we believers have in Christ. No less than eleven denominations were represented at the course. I expected some kind of 'fireworks' because of this bringing together so many different theological traditions. Instead of chaos we experienced unity and came to a new awareness of how man-made our divisions are and how God's Spirit was seeking to guide us to a renewed and united Church. The result of all this was that each of us went away thinking of the practical application of all that we had learned in our own congregation.

And we had a new understanding of the fact that Christianity was larger than our own denominations, and that we would shrivel-up and die if we clung to the smallness of our denominational understanding of the Gospel and refused to be led by God's Spirit into a new unity.

The refresher Course cost the Theological Education Fund no less than R100 per participant. We are deeply grateful to our Christian friends in America for their generous gifts but we must be aware of the fact that this fund is not inexhaustible.

We in the Republic must begin to make plans to see that courses such as these become a permanent part of the life of the Church in this country.

Our Churches may, for instance, subsidise the cost of maintaining those ministers who attend the course. Also those who attend the courses must contribute something towards the cost involved — it is well worth it, believe me!

* Rev. J. M. Letlabika is a Methodist Minister of Mamelodi, Pretoria.

SASOLBURG EXPERIMENT

"A Board of Directors consisting of the clergy and two lay representatives of the Catholic, Anglican, Presbyterian and Methodist Churches, are planning the building of an interdenominational church to serve these four religious groups. Supporting them is a joint fund-raising committee whose target is to raise R4,000 in two years.

This project will become a reality in Taabos-Highveld Power Stations and Coalbrook Collieries, where the ecumenical spirit is fully evidenced by the friendly spirit of co-operation in planning what is fondly known to all as "our community Chapel".

Methodist, Gereformeerde, N.G., Apostolic and Catholic clergy meet to discuss a wide variety of religious problems. Their friendly understanding has projected itself to the people, so that in this fast-developing area — the triangle which is Sasolburg, Viljoensdrift and Vereeniging — the barriers of religious intolerance are being not only lowered but obliterated, and in their place is springing up an atmosphere of friendship, harmony and mutual understanding."

"Southern Cross", January 22nd, 1964.

PROPHETS AND POLITICS

By the Rev. P. Allen Myrick

Lecturer in Old Testament, Adams United College,
Federal Theological Seminary, Alice, Cape Province.

As Christians weigh these questions, it is well to remember that the prophets of the Old Testament faced a very similar problem. They too lived in times of political crisis and they had to decide what their role in that crisis should be. The answer which they found may be of considerable assistance to us as we wrestle with the problem of "religion and politics" today.

What was a prophet in Israel? Many answers have been suggested: The prophet was an ecstatic figure or a cultic official, or a champion of individualism, or a social reformer. None of these views seems to me to be adequate.

I should like to suggest that the prophet in Israel was primarily a political figure — an official of God's heavenly Government sent to his people Israel, and especially to Israel's government, to declare God's will for the nation and his judgment upon its disobedience.¹

The covenant and God's rule

In order to interpret prophecy (as well as much of the rest of the Old Testament), we must begin with the Israelite view of the covenant.²

In covenant theology the primary emphasis is upon the Lordship of Yahweh. He is the sovereign who has chosen Israel for his own, redeemed her from bondage in Egypt, and brought her into special relationship with himself. He is the suzerain who states the terms of that relationship, declaring that if Israel, the vassal, lives in grateful obedience to Him she will be blessed, and if she disobeys she will be cursed (cf. Ex. 19:4-7; Deut. 27 and 28; Josh. 24:1-28). The covenant is cast in political categories, he it noted. Yahweh is suzerain; Israel is vassal. Yahweh governs the people whom He has chosen, and they are called to obey as they would obey an earthly ruler.

The sovereignty of Yahweh over his people was taken with great seriousness during the period of the Conquest of Palestine and the Twelve-Tribe League. This belief was, in fact, the basis of Israel's existence and the point at which she most radically rejected the political and religious structures of the Canaanites. The Canaanite city-states, along with most of the Ancient Near East, placed both political and religious institutions under the authority of the king, whose rule was understood to have divine sanction. The preservation of the status quo thus took on a religious aspect. In reaction to this view of government, Israel insisted that "... the usual functions, authority, and prestige of the king and his court are the exclusive prerogative of deity. So, land tenure, military leadership, 'glory', the right to command, power, are all denied to human beings and attributed to God alone."³ Human leadership was accepted only when the leader showed unmistakable signs of the divine spirit, and if that spirit departed, the leader was repudiated (cf. Saul). This amphictyonic view of Yahweh's rule is perhaps most clearly expressed in Gideon's refusal to establish a dynasty: "I will not rule over you, and my son will not rule over you; Yahweh will rule over you" (Judges 8:23).

The monarchy and God's rule

With the expansion of Philistine power and the fall of Shiloh, the old amphictyonic structure was endangered. Although it may have made sense theologically, a purely charismatic leadership was not very practical, for

WHAT IS THE role of the Church in the political and racial crisis of South Africa today? Should the Church be concerned only with "spiritual" things, with the life of worship and private devotion to Christ? Should it actively engage in the political struggle on the outcome of which so much of South Africa's future depends? To a large extent the future of the Church and of this country depends upon the way in which we answer these questions.

in the face of the Philistine danger no "man of God" came forward to lead the armies of Israel. To many in Israel it seemed that Yahweh's rule must be mediated through a permanent leader; otherwise the nation would perish. Yet to establish a monarchy was to threaten the central Israel belief that Yahweh alone is king; it was to open the door to the despised Canaanite pattern whereby the ruler dominated all of life, including the cult, and claimed divine support for his policies. Thus the fall of Shiloh and the breakup of the League constituted both a theological and a political crisis. A monarchy was required for political reasons, yet it would jeopardize the distinctive covenant faith of Israel.

In the face of this dilemma, two things happened. Firstly Israel accepted Saul as ruler. It should be remembered, however, that this was no full-blown monarchy, after the manner of Solomon; it was but a tentative first step. Saul was as much a charismatic "judge" as he was a king, for he possessed the gifts of the spirit. In several passages he (and David as well) is referred to as 'nagid' (military commander), not 'melek' (king), and it is probable that "the office held by Saul and David was intended by Samuel to be military leadership over the tribal confederation, stabilized by formal election and religious sanction."⁴

The second development in this critical period was the rise of the prophetic movement. It is clear from the Biblical evidence that, while there were occasional individuals in the earlier period who possessed some prophetic gifts, prophecy as a movement began with Samuel.⁵

That is to say, precisely at this time of theological and political crisis, when Israel was in danger of compromising the covenant faith by establishing a monarchy, prophecy was born. The concrete military and political situation in which the League needed a new type of leader prompted Yahweh to raise up a prophet to make certain that the new commander did not fall into Canaanite patterns of kingship.

And when Saul did begin to adopt such patterns, such as subordinating the cult to his own policies by offering sacrifices himself (1 Sam. 13:9), and denying God's sovereignty by breaking the sacred ban upon the Amalekite spoil (1 Sam. 15:2-3, 9), Samuel condemned him and declared his government to be invalid. Thus Saul's primarily political moves to consolidate his position and to establish his dynasty along traditional Near Eastern lines were blocked by the prophet Samuel as contrary to the divine government of Israel.

One may perhaps best summarize the position in this formative period by quoting the words of G. Ernest Wright:

During the period of the Tribal League, God had ruled directly, making use of charismatic leaders as the need arose. With Saul political and military leadership resided permanently in one

man, but the ideology of the Tribal League was preserved under the assumption that he would exercise his authority only at God's direction, given by a charismatic spokesman — that is, by Samuel in the role of God's prophet (herald or messenger of the divine throne).⁶

As we have seen, Samuel did no hesitate to give this direction.

Politics and God's rule

Thus the prophets were intimately involved in political problems from the very first. There is in prophecy no separation of political and "spiritual" no recognition of the state as an autonomous order for which religion has no concern. To tell religious leaders to "keep out of politics" make no sense whatever in the Old Testament. Yahweh himself is the Governor of Israel, and he sends his prophets to communicate his will to kings and leaders and to pronounce his doom upon them if their structures or policies deny his sovereignty. Repeatedly the prophets addressed themselves to concrete political and social concerns and declared that in these areas Israel had denied the lordship of Yahweh, and thus broken the covenant — and she would be destroyed.

At the same time, the monarchy quite naturally resisted the old amphictyonic tradition of the lordship of Yahweh, championed by the prophets. Every state — and certainly every state in the Ancient Near East — tends to work for its own preservation. The naturalistic religions of that time were primarily concerned with ensuring order and stability, and this concern was also dominant in the political structures. To establish itself firmly and to guarantee its own continuance, to resist all interference with its own self-defined prerogatives, to bring every aspect of life under its sovereignty — these were cardinal points of national policy during the Israelite monarchy. Thus David and Solomon, for example, sought to weaken the old tribal units which preserved the League traditions, and to build up their own bureaucracy and private army which would give complete loyalty to the dynasty. Furthermore, true to the old Canaanite patterns of monarchy, Israel's kings sought to legitimize their dynasty by religious sanctions: the Ark of the Covenant was brought to the "City of David"; the Temple of Solomon was in reality the royal chapel (note that the Temple took seven years to build, the palace complex thirteen, and that the king's house was four times the size of the Temple); the priestly establishment and the theology prevalent in Jerusalem came to reflect the ambitions and ideals of the Davidic dynasty. The king became Yahweh's "son" (Ps. 2:7); the royal capital was God's dwelling place (Ps. 132:14); and no matter what might happen, God had unconditionally promised:

"Once for all I have sworn by my holiness;

I will not lie to David.
His line shall endure for ever,

His throne as long as the sun before me." (Ps. 89:35-36.)

In modern jargon, here is a "Christian National State" — God is on our side, and we cannot lose.

The lines were thus drawn for a full-scale battle between those prophets who stood for the amphictyonic covenant tradition, with its demand for the state's unconditional obedience to the covenant Lord, on the one hand, and the defenders of the "royal theology" of the Jerusalem court, on the other. In such a situation, for a prophet to "stay out of politics" amounted to the admission that the state was free to determine its own policies. This would be a betrayal of the covenant faith that Yahweh is king, and the national king and his state only a vassal under God's sovereignty.

The prophets and God's rule

The prophets were guilty of no such betrayal. The history of the prophetic movement can in some ways be written in terms of the prophets' struggle with political authorities which refused to obey God. There is hardly a prophet in Israel who, in his concern for the sovereignty of God over human affairs, did not become intimately involved in political affairs.

Samuel, Nathan, Ahijah, Elijah, Elisha, Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Zephaniah . . . the list is a long one. Here we must be content to call attention to two such prophets, by way of illustration.

Early in the period of the monarchy, during the reign of Solomon, we meet Ahijah (1 Kings 11). Ahijah was from Shiloh, the old amphictyonic centre where the traditions of the League lived on. His attitude to the monarchy was consistent with the League ideal that Yahweh is the true King of Israel, and that a government which did not acknowledge that kingship was doomed. Ahijah declared that because of Solomon's disobedience to God, the united kingdom would break up and the ten Northern tribes go their own way (1 Kings 11:30-33). Furthermore, the continuance of a dynasty in North Israel, under Jeroboam I, would depend upon obedience to Yahweh (v. 38). Here a prophet of Yahweh is preaching revolution. In the name of God he is justifying the violent overthrow of a state which fails to obey its heavenly sovereign. And, of course, that revolution followed swiftly and successfully.

Three centuries later, as the monarchy drew to a close, Jeremiah preached in Jerusalem. His deep involvement in politics is well known. Suffice it here to underline one point. The record of his call to the office of prophecy contains, as was often the case, a summary of the work he was to do. Here we read:

"See, I have set you this day over nations and over kingdoms, to pluck up and to break down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant" (Jer. 1:10 — RSV).

The word "set" inadequately translates the Hebrew "pqd", which often means "to appoint an officer" (originally in a military sense). Jeremiah is officially appointed by God as officer "over" (cal) nations and kingdoms. Not only must he be concerned about national affairs: he is authorised by God to take direct action, sometimes destructive action ("to destroy and to overthrow") in politics. If the government failed to do God's will, Jeremiah felt compelled in the name of God not

only to pronounce judgment upon it (cf. 22:13-19; 36:29-31; etc.), but even actively to work for its downfall (cf. 38:1-6, where he is accused of treason). For he was an officer of the heavenly King, commissioned to proclaim and to work for the overthrow of the disobedient vassal.

Political chaos and God's rule

Ahijah, Jeremiah, and many others "preached politics"—nay more, the declared that a state in rebellion against Yahweh was doomed, and thus worked for the overthrow of the state. (Note also Elijah's commission to anoint new, and therefore rebellious rulers over Israel and Damascus, 1 Kings 19:15-17.) Was not this prophetic message dangerously irresponsible, in that it invited chaos of the worst sort? One of the state's chief functions is to keep order and restrain lawlessness: but revolution opens the door to the blind forces of confusion, to a raw chaos which may bring worse suffering than does an unjust government.

The prophets seemed not to be particularly worried about such chaos, for at least two reasons. Firstly, order and security and the preservation of the status quo were the central concern of the established governments of the day. This was especially true in Egypt, but it was also prevalent in the Israelite monarchy, as is evidenced, for instance, in some of the Royal Psalms which declare that the Lord who established the Davidic dynasty is king over the forces of chaos (Ps. 18:7-19; 89:9-11, 19-37). In the face of this bureaucratic passion for preserving order, the prophets declared that justice and obedience were more important even than national security. A government which breaks the covenant, exploits the poor and the weak, and claims divine sanction even in its disobedience is worse than chaos. Jeremiah was willing to contemplate even the undoing of creation itself, rather than defend the continuance of a faithless kingdom (4:23-26).

In the second place, the prophets could proclaim the downfall of a government in the name of God because they knew that the forces of chaos would not be loosed completely. For they spoke in the name of the Lord who was ruler of all history. He who willed the destruction of a faithless vassal was himself in control of the forces of destruction, and even in the midst of confusion he was at work "to build and to plant". A new covenant would be established, a faithful remnant would emerge. The people of God would have a new opportunity to live in obedience and righteousness.

What has all this to do with us today in South Africa?

Obviously there is no simple, one-to-one relationship between the task of ancient prophets and of modern Christians. We cannot simply take over the message of the prophets en bloc and apply it directly to our time, without regard for differences of circumstances or for the work which God is doing in our particular time. The construction of a Christian ethic is far more complex than this. At the same time, no Christian ethic can be worked out in relation to government without taking the prophetic message with the utmost seriousness.

Some have objected that the prophetic message is not relevant to modern political problems, for Israel was a theocracy, while our modern states are not. A theocracy, which is believed to be ruled directly by God through his servants, has a special responsibility, and therefore comes under special judgment for its sins. But a modern heterogeneous technological society is in a different category altogether. Furthermore, Israel was a state, whereas the Church today is not. So the argument proceeds.

Clearly the modern forms of state are different from those of Israel and her neighbours. Many of our specific institutions and problems are peculiar to our time. But this does not absolve us from taking the Scriptural message seriously. Differences in institutions cannot be used to dismiss inconvenient passages in the Bible because "our situation is different".

To this, two observations may be added. First of all, even if our political and ecclesiastical forms are different, the fundamental Biblical insights remain relevant. The Bible proclaims that all states are responsible to God, under His lordship and His judgment. The prophets proclaimed their revolutionary message not simply to Israel and Judah, but also to all the other nations of the Ancient Near East. Yahweh is Lord of all peoples, and oracles against foreign nations are a regular part of the prophet's ministries. Furthermore, while Israel was unique, a combination of state and church, the fact remains that God's way of dealing with a faithless state in the Old Testament is normative for Christians. He called upon His faithful servants to labour for a fundamental change in, and if necessary the overthrow of, an evil government. As long as Christians accept the authority of Scripture, this called to Christian political action cannot be silenced.

Secondly, the prophetic message has a peculiar relevance in a land which claims to have a "Christian state". A government which claims to be "Christian" must accept the responsibilities as well as the privileges of that claim. And the primary prophetic word to a state which claims the sanction of God is this: the policies and practices of such a government must withstand the scrutiny of God Himself; and if they depart from His will, then those policies and that government are under God's judgment. Either the ways of that state must change, or else it will be destroyed. And the destruction will be the judgment of God, however ruthless and blood-stained may be the human instruments of that destruction. Furthermore, in such a state God has appointed some to be His prophets, to speak the word of judgment and destruction. And if the Church is not willing to accept that appointment, can it be called "The New Israel" at all?

1. In this interpretation of prophecy, I am much indebted to Professor G. Ernest Wright, who, in his lectures at Harvard Divinity School, defends this view. See also his article "The Lawsuit of God", in *Israel's Prophetic Heritage*, ed. by B. W. Anderson and W. Harrelson (New York: Harper and Bros., 1962), p. 42.
2. See specially G. E. Mendenhall, *Law and Covenant in Israel and the Ancient Near East* (Pittsburgh: The Biblical Colloquium, 1955).
3. G. E. Mendenhall, "The Hebrew Conquest of Palestine", *The Biblical Archaeologist*, Vol. XXV, No. 3 (September, 1962) p. 76.
4. W. F. Albright, *Samuel and the Beginnings of the Prophetic Movement* (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1961) p. 16.
5. Some scholars would date the beginning of prophecy in the Ninth or even the Eight Century. W. F. Albright has, however, clearly demonstrated that the movement began with Samuel. See especially his *Samuel and the Beginnings of the Prophetic Movement*. See also Albright, *From the Stone Age to Christianity*, (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1957) pp. 303 ff.; G. E. Wright, "The Lawsuit of God", *Israel's Prophetic Heritage*, p. 63; J. Mullenberg, "The History of the Religion of Israel", *Interpreter's Bible*, vol. I (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1952), p. 311; M. Newman, "The Prophetic Call of Samuel", *Israel Prophetic Heritage*, pp. 91 ff.
6. G. E. Wright "The Lawsuit of God", *Israel's Prophetic Heritage*, p. 63. Wright argues further that Samuel and other prophets held formal office in the Israelite government. The evidence for this view, however, does not seem to me to be conclusive.

PROFESSOR DR. SURJIT SINGH

NASIE (volk)

en

RAS

DEEL I

AS ons probeer om te ontdek wat die Bybel te sê het oor die hedendaagse probleme van volk en ras, dan moet ons eerste opmerking wees dat hierdie probleme hulleself vandag heeltemal anders openbaar as enigiets wat die Bybel oor dergelike probleme sê. Dit sal nie veel help om te probeer om Bybelse passate direk op ons huidige situasie toe te pas nie. Ons eerste taak is om die verskil tussen die twee (of meer) konsepte so duidelik as moontlik te stel.

Nadat ons dit kortliks en tentatief gedoen het, moet ons die Bybelse konsep in meer besonderhede definieer. Dit veronderstel nie slegs 'n ondersoek na 'n paar uitstaande passate in hul regte verband nie, maar ook — en dit is in werklikheid die belangrikste oogmerk van hierdie studie — om die vraagstuk in die lig van die hele Bybel te sien, die middelpunt waarvan is die boodskap van God se handelinge in Jesus Christus, onse Here. 'n Mens kan heel maklik 'n breedvoerige dokument opstel oor die rassevraagstuk op die verskillende vlakke van die literatuur van die Ou Testament; vir ons doel sal die resultaat maar bra skraal wees, aangesien dit nie betrekking sal hê op ons situasie as Christene in die wêreld van vandag nie. Ons word dus genoodsaak om die Bybel uit die staanspoor as 'n eenheid te neem, wat dit dan ook in werklikheid vir ons as Christene is. Die skrywer van hierdie artikel gaan dan ook in dié opsig volkome akkoord met die verklaring van die Wadham Kollege-konferensie, Oxford, 1949: „dat die eenheid van die Ou en Nuwe Testamente nie gesoek moet word in enige naturalistiese ontwikkeling nie, ook nie in enige statiese identiteit nie, maar in die voortgaande verlossende handeling van God in die geskiedenis van 'n volk, 'n behandeling wat sy vervulling in Christus bereik. Daarom is dit van deurslaggewende belang in die uitlegkundige metode om die Ou Testament in die lig van die totale openbaring in die persoon van Jesus Christus te vertolk. Die vleesgeworde Woord van God waaruit die volle Triniteire geloof van die Kerk ontstaan.” (*Guiding Principles for the Interpretation of the Bible*, Wadham College, Oxford, 1949. Sien p. 240 en wat daarop volg.)

As ons daarin kan slaag om te ontdek hoe die probleme van volk en ras in die hele Bybel beskou word, dan mag ons terselfdertyd ontdek wat die oplossings is wat in die samehang van Bybelse denke en terminologie aangebied word. En dit is slegs wanneer ons daardie stadium van vertolking of uitleg bereik het, dat ons 'n poging sal kan aanwend om 'n paar voorstelle te formuleer wat betref die toepaslikheid van sodanige oplossings vir ons hedendaagse vraagstukke op die gebied.

1. Verskillende aspekte van ons probleme

Wanneer ons vandag praat van die probleem van volk en ras, dan verwys ons na die feit dat baie volke en nasies in ons moderne wêreld bewus geword het van hulle besondere karakter in teenstelling met die van ander volke.

Wanneer ons mense van ander lande of kontinente ontmoet — iets wat baie vergemaklik is deur moderne wêreld-kommunikasies — dan neem ons onmiddellik die verskille van taal, ras en kleur waar. Dis merkwaardig dat dié dié dinge is wat ons eerste tref. Ons begin nie deur op te let dat ander mense wat ons ontmoet 'n ander GOD het nie. Dit is egter presies dié punt wat sentraal is wanneer hierdie probleme in de Bybel opduik. Hierdie verskil in benadering het baie konsekwensies, soos ons sal sien.

In hedendaagse terminologie is volk (nasie) en ras twee entiteite wat nou aan mekaar verwant is. By die eerste oogopslag mag dit voorkom dat die Bybel goed bekend was met dié probleem. Was dit nie religieuse en rasse-nasionalisme wat in Palestina ingevoer is na die Ballingskap deur Nehemia en Esra nie? Jode het met vroue getrou uit die omliggende volke en Nehemia verbied sulke huwelike (Nehemia 12: 23, 27). Blykbaar nie tevrede met die maatreël nie, het Esra nog sterker opgetree deur aan te dring op die weg-stuur van die vreemde vroue en die verwerping van kinders uit sulke huwelike gebore. Hy het ook die gemeenskap beveel om hulle af te skei van vreemdelinge (Esra 10). Maar waarom is hierdie maatreëls geneem? Albei staatsmanne het dit gedoen omdat hulle geglo het dat dit die enigste manier was om die suiwerheid van die Joodse godsdiens te verseker.

Die hoofklem is gelê op die godsdienslike aspek, terwyl die hedendaagse voorstanders van rassediskriminasie hoofsaaklik in biologiese terme dink. Baie hedendaagse mense glo dat 'n „suiwer ras” biologies sterker is en dat ondertrouery om dié rede verbied moet word. Die boek Rut daarenteen stel dit duidelik dat die egverbintenis tussen die Moabitiese vrou en die Israeliet Boas nie as gevaarlik beskou is nie, aangesien sy vroeër gesê het: „U volk is my volk, en u God is my God”.

Twee gevolgtrekkings kan uit hierdie opmerkinge gemaak word:

- (a) die rasseprobleem, soos die probleem van nasionalisme, is vir die Bybel in hoofsaak 'n godsdiens-tige kwessie, en
- (b) ofskoon ons in ons hedendaagse terminologie moet onderskei tussen volk (nasie) en ras, is dit nie nodig wat die Bybelse terminologie betref nie, aangesien die biologiese aspek, wat vandag 'n sodanige onderskeid maak, geen noemenswaardige rol in die Bybel speel nie.

Maar een aspek van ons tema het nog nie voldoende aandag geniet nie: ons staan vandag nie net voor die pro-

bleem van die verskil tussen nasies of volke nie, maar veral voor die probleem van nasionalisme. Dit beteken meer as die blote erkenning van verskille tussen volke of nasies. Dit behels 'n sekere bewondering, indien nie 'n verering nie, van die hoedanighede van 'n mens se eie volk. Ofskoon liefde vir en bewondering van 'n mens se eie volk heel natuurlik is en op politieke gebied in 'n mate geregverdig word, so lank as wat 'n onderdrukte volk moet veg vir sy vryheid — die oorsprong van moderne nasionalisme in alle dele van die wêreld — mag die uitbuiting van een volk deur ander nooit geregverdig word op grond van die sogenaamde meerderwaardigheid van een volk oor 'n ander nie. Daarby kan 'n nasionalistiese gees tussen onafhanklike nasies internasionale samewerking bedreig en mag dit selfs na oorlog tussen hulle lei.

Maar dit is nie al nie. Vir baie van ons medemenses het nasionalisme 'n plaasvervanger van godsdiens geword. Sodra sulke neigings begin intree, kom die Christen voor ernstige vraagstukke te staan. Hulle is godsdiensvraagstukke, soortgelyk aan die Bybel, maar tog is die verwantskap verskillend, en so ook die gevolgtrekkings wat gemaak moet word. Dit is hier waar ons ons Bybelse ondersoek eintlik moet begin.

2. Volk (Nasie) en Ras as 'n godsdiensvraagstuk in die Bybel

In die Nunc cimitis is ons saam met Simeon dankbaar dat Christus gekom het as „'n lig tot verligting van die nasies — hierdie heidense nasies — en tot heerlikheid van u volk Israel” (Lukas 2:32), „'n sinsnede waarvan ons die oorsprong in die Ou Testament vind (Jesaja 42:6, 49:6). Hierdie passaat bevat, as dit in die samehang van die hele Bybel gelees word, die belangrikste antwoord op ons vraagstuk. Dit wys op drie feite:

- daar is blykbaar 'n verskil tussen die „nasies” (d.w.s. die heidense nasies) en die volk Israel;
- laasgenoemde word, in 'n heel besondere sin, genoem „U (d.w.s. God se) Volk”, en
- Christus het gekom nie slegs as 'n lig tot verligting en tot heerlikheid van Gods uitverkore volk nie, maar ook as 'n lig tot verligting van die nasies, d.w.s. die heidense nasies. In 'n sin word in Hom die verskil tussen die heidense volke en die volk Israel opgehef of oorkom.

Die verskil tussen Israel en die heidense volke word deurgaans in die Bybel herken deur verskillende terme of benamings vir elk te gebruik: Daar is min uitsonderings op die reël dat die Griekse woord *Laos* verwys na die volk Israel en dat dit dus normaalweg in die enkelvoud gebruik word, terwyl die „nasies” ta *ethné* is, normaalweg in die meervoud. Dit dui daarop dat vir die skrywers van die Bybel hierdie onderskeid 'n aansienlike betekenis moes gehad het; hulle het hierdie onderskeid as van groter belang beskou as die onderskeid tussen die ander nasies, ofskoon hulle ook dié onderskeid nie oor die hoof gesien het nie.

Wat die Nuwe Testament van die nasies dink, word duidelik in 'n passaat soos Handeling 14:16 aangedui: God „het in die tye wat verby is, toegelaat dat al die nasies in hulle eie weë sou wandel”. God kon iets besonders met hulle gedoen het — maar Hy het nie, al is Hy die Skepper van hemel en aarde. Maar Hy het een van die nasies uitverkies; hierdie een het Hy nie toegelaat om sy eie weg te gaan nie. Soos in Deut. 4:19 en wat daarop volg gestel word: God het al die volke onder die hele hemel toegelaat om die son, die maan en die sterre, die hele leër van die hemel te aanbid. Maar aan die volk Israel is dit gesê: „Die Here het julle geneem en julle uit die yster-smeltoond, uit Egipte, uitgelei om sy erfvolk te wees”.

Dit is die kern van die saak vir die Bybel; daar was hierdie één volk die volk Israel, wat die Almagtige uitverkies het om sy eie volk te wees. Hy het hulle uit Egipte verlos. As gevolg van die ervaring van Exodus het Israel 'n volk of nasie geword. Hulle is nie uitverkies omdat hulle enige besondere eienskappe gehad het wat hulle dierbaar vir Hom gemaak het nie, maar „omdat Hy die eed gehou het wat Hy gesweer het” vir hulle vaders. (Deut. 7:8); met ander woorde, God het hulle uit sy eie wil verkies. Dit is daarom dat die saak van nasionalisme en ras vir die volk Israel in elke opsig 'n godsdiensvraagstuk is. Aangesien hulle verheffing tot 'n nasie gebaseer is op 'n fundamentele godsdiensvraagstuk, sou enige onenigheid in of bylegging van hul godsdiens 'n ernstige uitwerking op hul identiteit as 'n volk gehad het. Dit blyk duidelik uit hul latere geskiedenis.

Hierdie gevaar het reeds geblyk in hul verowering van en vestiging in Kanaän. Daar was veel wat die Israëliete van die inwoners van die land kon leer. Hulle was nog nie bekend met die landboumetodes, of met die handwerk en kunste van die stadsbewoners nie. Maar die belangrikste saak, vir hulle, was 'n godsdiensvraagstuk: die Baäls van Kanaän was die skenkers van die natuurlike gifte, insluitende die vrugbaarheid van die aarde (Hos. 2:8; Deut. 12:2; 1 Kor. 14:23). Hierdie geheim wou die Israëliete graag aanleer. Daar was twee maniere waarop hulle dit kon doen. Hulle kon óf Baäl-aanbidding as 'n supplementêre kultus by die Jahweh-aanbidding voeg, óf hulle kon sekere van die ritusse van die Baäl-aanbidding by die aanbidding van Jahweh voeg. In die gewone omgang skyn dit asof wat wel gebeur het is dat die Israëliete hulde aan Baäl betoon het en tog gedink het dat hulle dit aan Jahweh betoon het. En geleidelik het 'n godsdiens wat grootliks Kanaänitiese stempel gedra het begin posvat onder die gemengde bevolking waaruit Israel tydens die tydperk van die konings bestaan het. Dit was teen hierdie verduistering van die grense tussen Jahweh-aanbidding en Baäl-aanbidding dat die profete van die agtste en sewende eeu geprotesteer het.

(Hierdie artikel is 'n vertaling van die artikel, *Nation and Race* uit *Biblical Authority for Today*, (S.C.M. Press Limited, London, 1961). Dr. Singh is Professor in die Teologie, Teologiese Kollege Saharanpur, Indië.)

Die Ballingskap was 'n ander mylpaal in die lewe van Israel, en daarmee het die politieke onafhanklikheid van die Israëliete verdwyn. Die tempel was in duie en die politieke staat het nie meer bestaan nie. Maar wat het met hul godsdiens gebeur? Die mense van die Noordelike Koninkryk het geen tekens van enige godsdiensvraagstuk getoon nie, maar die Babiloniese bannelinge het geweier om opgeneem te word in die leefwyse van hul bure met hul verskillende godsdiensvraagstukke en sosiale gebruike. Die keuse was 'n beslissende een: óf om opgeneem te word, óf om hulleself apart te hou. Hulle het ten gunste van laasgenoemde besluit en sodoende die bewaarders van die godsdiens van Jahweh. Dit was in Babilon, onder die bannelinge, dat godsdiensvraagstukke nasionalisme weer gebore is. Dit was die eksklusiwiteit en partikularisme van hierdie bannelinge wat Jahweh-aanbidding van ondergang gered het, en 'n nuwe begin daarvoor in Palestina verseker het. Dit was deur hierdie inspirasie dat die godsdiensvraagstukke en morele rehabilitasie van die „volk van die land” plaasgevind het.

Ons het reeds verwys na die terugkeer uit die ballingskap as die volgende mylpaal in die bewoë lewe van Israel, en veral die „rassewette” van Nehemia en Esra. En ons het beweer dat die belangrikste aspek ook hier nie rasse-nydigheid was nie maar veel eerder die verlange om die godsdiensvraagstukke van Israel te bewaar. As Christene wat eintlik die erfgename van

hierdie erfenis is, behoort ons in staat te wees om selfs hierdie maatreëls in die regte gees te verstaan: in die samehang van God se besondere beloftes aan hierdie volk — beloftes wat in Christus vervul is — is hulle geregverdig. Maar dit geregverdig nie dergelyke maatreëls by ander volke of hedendaagse regerings nie.

Jesus was die Messias van Israel. Hy was ongetwyfeld 'n lid van die uitverkore volk. Maar Hy het gekom, nie net tot heerlikheid van hierdie volk nie, maar ook om te wees „'n lig tot verligting van die nasies”, d.w.s. die heidense volke. Die Nuwe Testament stel baie duidelik albei aspekte van sy lewe en sy betekenis vir die mensdom. Jesus het die feit dat Hy 'n Jood was erken en dat Hy 'n afstammeling van die huis van Dawid was, maar, soos Hy baie skerp aangetoon het, die beslissende ding was nie hierdie aardse afkoms nie, maar die feit dat Hy die Seun van God was en dat Hy as sodanig gebonde was deur die wil van sy Vader tydens sy verblyf in hierdie wêreld. Toe die mense Hom kom vertel het dat sy familie-lede Hom kom besoek het, het Hy onmiddellik geantwoord dat diegene sy familie-lede is wat die wil doen van God (Mattheüs 12:46). Dit beteken geensins dat Jesus sy aardse verbintnisse verag het nie, maar vir Hom was die aardse familie-verbintnisse nie die belangrikste saak nie.

In een van die hoofstukke wat hierdie verhaal voorafgaan, staan dit opgeteken dat „Hy sy twaalf dissipels na Hom geroep het . . .”: dit word algemeen verstaan as die verkiesing van die twaalf verteenwoordigers van die Nuwe Israel, die volk wat Hom sou erken as hul Messias (Matt. 10:1). Die beslissende vraag wat op 'n antwoord gewag het was nou: Sou hierdie Nuwe Israel beperk wees tot lede van die ou uitverkore volk? Johannes die Doper het hulle gewaarsku: „Moenie by julleself begin sê: „Ons het Abraham as vader nie: want ek sê vir julle dat God mag het om uit hierdie klippe kinders vir Abraham op te wek” (Lukas 3:8). In weerwil hiervan, lees ons in die sogenaamde „sendingopdrag” dat Jesus sy twaalf dissipels uitgestuur het met die uitdruklike bevel dat: „Moenie gaan op pad na die heidene nie, en moenie ingaan in 'n stad van die Samaritane nie”. Hulle moes liever gaan „na die verlore skape van die huis van Israel” (Matt. 10:5-6). Hierdie opdrag skyn 'n skerp kontras te wees tot ander verslae in die Evangelie wat dui op die universele karakter van die Christelike boodskap.¹) Sommige Skrifverklaarders verduidelik hierdie skynbare teenstrydigheid deur te verwys na die frase in Jesaja 49:6 hierbo aangedui as een van die Ou Testamentiese bronne van Lukas 2:32. In daardie frase was dit veronderstel dat die eerste taak van die Messias sou wees „om op te rig die stamme van Jakob”. Dit mag wel wees dat Jesus gedink het dat Israel eers bekeer moes word voordat Hy sy werk onder die heidene kon begin.

Die voorbeeld van die Siro-Feniciëse vrou dien egter as 'n skakel en 'n oorgangspunt van die enge na die universele toepassing van die Evangelie (Markus 7:25-29; sien ook Lukas 4:23). Hierdie genesing van 'n heiden in die midde van 'n besondere bediening onder Israel is die uitsondering wat die reël bewys: dat die bediening universeel is. Hierdie gebeure verskaf die positiewe basis vir die universele toepassing van die boodskap van verlossing. Die basis is geloof, wat nie die prerogatief van enige etniese gemeenskap is nie.

Die verhaal van die kaptein van Kapernaüm (Matt. 8:3-13) en die gelykenis van die maaltyd (Matt. 22:4-14; Lukas 14:6-27) is albei aanduidings van 'n ander vertolking van Jesaja 49:6. Aangesien dit gesê is dat „Dit is te gering” vir die Knecht van Jahweh „om op te rig die stamme van Jakob” en dat daarom moet Hy wees „'n lig van die nasies” (d.w.s. die heidense nasies), mag die veronderstelling wat die vroeë Kerk hieruit gemaak het dat

die Messias nie daarin sou slaag om die huis van Israel te bekeer nie en dat die deur gevolglik oop was om lede van ander nasies na die tafel van die Here te noel. Die beskrywing wat in Handeling gegee word oor die prediking van die vroeë sendelinge, veral Paulus, toon duidelik dat hulle dieselfde beleid gevolg het: hulle het altyd eers in die sinagoge gepreek en slegs daarna vir die „heidene”.

In die algemeen gesproke kan daar geen twyfel bestaan nie dat Jesus en sy dissipels baie gou die vele passate van die Ou Testament op hulle situasie toegepas het, die passate waarin dit gesê word dat die nasies (d.w.s. die heidense nasies) na die Messias sal vra (Jesaja 11:10) om Hom gehoorsaam te wees (Gen. 49:10; sien ook Jesaja 62:12) en dat die nasies in Jerusalem sal saamkom (Jer. 3:17; sien ook Jesaja 2:2-4; Miga 4:1-3; Jesaja 25:6, 51:4 en ander passate). Die Nuwe Testament toon egter dat die apostels aanvanklik nie eenstemmig was oor wat die vervulling van hierdie beloftes in werklikheid sou behels nie.

Ons hoef nie hier die verhaal van die stryd tussen Petrus en Paulus oor die implikasies hiervan te herhaal nie (Gal. 2 en Hand. 15). Ons let net daarop dat ook hier die saak altyd 'n godsdiensvraagstuk was (sien Hand. 10:14) en nie 'n kwessie van rasse-diskriminasie in die hedendaagse sin van die woord nie. Nadat de stryd-vraag geskik is, kon Paulus met gesag sê dat die Christene uit die heidene wat vroeër „vervreemd van die burgerskap van Israel” was, nou „naby gekom (het) deur die bloed van Christus. Want Hy is ons vrede, Hy wat albei een gemaak het en die middelmuur van skeiding afgebreek het, „en nou is hulle nie „meer vreemdelinge en bywoners nie, maar medeburgers van die heiliges” (Ef. 2:11-19). En dieselfde Christene word genoem „'n uitverkore geslag, 'n koninklike priesterdom, 'n heilige volk, 'n volk as eiendom verkry” (1 Petrus 2:9) — ~~almal aanbelings~~ uit die Ou Testament toegepas op hulle wat in Christus glo, afgesien van hul rasse- of etniese oorsprong. Hier is die „rasse”-spanning beslis oorwin. Maar nou bly die vraag: Wat is die betekenis hiervan vir die bestaande verskille tussen die nasies en rasse van ons hedendaagse wêreld?

(Einde van Deel 1.)

1. Dit is hierdie opmerking wat sommige Skrifverklaarders tot die gevolgtrekking laat kom het dat onse Here nie hierdie woorde kan gebruis het nie. Ander egter het daarop gewys dat indien dit so is, dit nog veel moeiliker sal wees om te verduidelik wie hulle in die Evangelie ingevoeg het, aangesien die vroeë Christene baie gou in Samaria (Handeling) en ander lande begin preek het. Die moelikhede wat hierdie woorde vir die eksegeet skep is juis 'n aanduiding dat hulle na alle waarskynlikheid outentiek is.

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