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CHRISTELIKE MAANDBLAD VIR SUIDELIKE AFRIKA

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DIE UITDAGING VAN ISLAM IN AFRIKA

— C. FOURIE

Onlangs (1960) het 'n Mohammedaan in Kenia vir Billy Graham uitgedaag om in die openbaar die krag van die christelike geloof met dié van Islam te meet deur middel van wondergenesings. Tereg het dr. Graham nie die uitdaging aanvaar nie, soos Christus ook 'n soortgelyke uitdaging beantwoord het met die woorde: „Daar is óók geskrywe: Jy mag dié Here jou God nie versoek nie.” God openbaar sy krag aan wie Hy wil en wanneer Hy wil.

Tog vul die uitdaging ons met 'n mate van weemoed asof ons Heiland aan hierdie Moslem kon vra: „My dissipels is so lankal by julle, en ken jy My nie?” Want ons sien in hierdie uitdaging ook die dertien eeue van Islam se uitdaging aan die Christendom; van Islam se aanspraak dat, as die jongste van die twee gelowe, dit die finale openbaring van God is en dit nie voor die Christendom kan of sal swig nie.

In Islam vind die Christendom sy grootste uitdaging in Afrika. Bijlefeld reken dat die totale aantal bekeerlinge uit Islam na die Christendom op slegs 200,000 uit 375,000,000 gestel kan word (skaars meer as .05%). Montgomery Watt vind dat die meerderheid van die lode van nuwe protestantse sendingkerke in die Arabiese state „bekeerlinge” vanuit ander Christelike kerke is. Twee jaar gelede het Major Louis Kraft beweer dat uit elke tien heidene in Afrika wat deur die groot wêreldgelowe gewen word, sewe hulle tot Islam voeg en slegs drie tot die Christendom; en nou berig 'n skrywer in die Intelligence Digest dat in die afgeope vier jaar 15 miljoen inboorlinge in Afrika die Moslemgeloof aangeneem het.

Wat is die rede vir die „onbekeerbaarheid” van Islam en die skynbare terugval van die Christendom voor Islam? Is Islam werklik onbekeerbaar omdat dit as 'n na-Christus-geloof noodwendig Christus verwerp het en dus as die produk van die Antichris gesien moet word — onversoekenbaar en onredbaar? Lê die fout dalk by 'n onaktiewe Christelike kerk, sons Addison beweer wanneer hy praat van: „the almost uniform reluctance of the Christian Church to engage in the enterprise of winning Islam” en sê: „no missionary opportunity of comparable importance has been so widely and continuously neglected”, of is die oorsaak te vind by die swak uitlewing van die christelike geloof deur 'n Christendom, sonder Christus, wat dit vir die Mohammedaan onaantreklik maak? Is ons voorstelling van die koninkryk van Jesus vir Islam identies met die heerskappy van die Weste: met kolonialisme en imperialisme?

In hierdie artikel wil ons die probleem bestudeer om te sien wat ons kan leer uit die geskiedenis van Islam in Afrika, sy houding teenoor Christus en die Christene, en veral sy jongste vertoon van lewe en krag, om sodoende te kan bepaal wat ons te doen staan t.o.v. Islam.

DIE VERSPREIDING VAN ISLAM IN AFRIKA

'n Misverstand by baie blankes in Suid-Afrika is dat die verspreiding van Islam in Afrika die infiltrasie van Asië in Afrika beteken. In werklikheid egter vorm etnies-suiwer Asië

slegs 'n klein persentasie van die Moslembevolking van Afrika.

Die 80,000,000 Moslems van Afrika is grotendeels inheems: Egiptenare, Berber en Tuareg, Neger, Hamietse en Bantoe; en by sommige van hierdie groepe is hulle verby in Afrika langer as dié van die Grieke en Romeine in Europa. Selfs die Moslemgeloof is al meer as 1,200 jaar in Afrika.

Noord- en Oos-Afrika vorm deel van wat Fernau die groot inter-kontinent van Islam noem. Hierdie aaneenlopende gebied dek 'n oppervlakte van nagenoeg 12,000,000 vierkante myl — 'n gebied groter as die hele vasteland van Afrika! Dit strek tot ver binne die

grense van die Soviet-Unie (waarin daar meer as 22,000,000 Moslems is) en tot in Kommuniste Sjina (Oos-Turkistan het 4½ miljoen Mohammedane). In die hele interkontinent woon daar 280,000,000 Moslems, waarvan 80,000,000 in Afrika woon. (Dié getalle sluit nie die Moslems van Suid-Oos-Asië en Indonesië in nie.) 25,000,000 Moslems woon in die Nylvallei, (Egipte en die Soedan), ongeveer 20,000,000 in die Magrib (Noord-Wes-Afrika) en meer as 35,000,000 in Neger- en Bantoe-Afrika.

DIE INVLOED VAN ISLAM OP SY VOLGELINGE

Om sendingwerk onder Moslems effektief te doen is dit nodig om te weet watter rol en invloed die Mohammedaanse geloof in die lewe van die in-

diwidu speel. Dit vereis ook 'n studie van die basiese struktuur van die Moslemsamelewing. Dit is egter nie moontlik om selfs 'n kort oorsig van die kernaspekte van die saak in 'n artikel soos hierdie te gee nie.

Dit is egter belangrik om te weet dat die rol van godsdiens in die moderne Moslem se lewe 'n krisispunt bereik het. Op die massas het dit nog 'n geweldige houvas maar nie op die middelklas en die leiersklas nie. Die moderne Egiptenaar en Indiër soek leiding wat sy godsdiens nie kan gee nie omdat dit nie vir alle eeue geldig is soos die Evangelie nie. Jong mans streef na tegniese bekwaamheid en intellektuele ontwikkeling; vrouens soek emansipasie; almal soek ekonomiese ontwikkeling en sekuriteit; en sosiale en politieke vooruitgang. Hier het ons (Vervolg op bladsy 2)

THE CHALLENGE OF ISLAM

— A. L. GRAHAM

One of the most interesting and significant phenomena of this century is a revitalised and militant Islam. By virtue of the enthusiasm, fervour and proselytising zeal of its adherents, Islam is today a force to be reckoned with and the challenge of this religion is particularly real in Africa.

This continent is at present experiencing its third important phase in modern times. On the Age of Discovery followed the era of Partition and Exploitation and today we have the Awakening of and the Struggle for the Soul of Africa. Three major forces are engaged in this struggle: Communism, Christianity and Islam.

There are many observers who are convinced that Islam is going to be victorious; for Moslems are making converts in Black Africa at a rate more than five times as great as are Christian missionaries and it is considered that this tempo will quicken. Recently a Christian mission organisation set up seventy-five years ago virtually admitted defeat in one of its main objectives: to stem the Southward spread of Islam in Africa.

Out of a population of over 200 million, only 13 per cent are Christians, about 37 per cent are uncommitted and nearly 50 per cent are Moslems. It is therefore considered highly probable that Islam is going to become the religion of Africa.

FAITH HAS REPLACED RACE

There are various reasons for this success and rapid progress, but probably the most important reason is the fact that two great principles, viz:

- (1) the dignity of every human being, regardless of race or nationality, and
- (2) the brotherhood of the faithful, are recognised not only in theory but also in practice.

Race and nationality do not debar

anyone in Moslem countries.

According to the Koran: “The faithful are all brothers.”

The words of the Prophet are again repeated: “The Arab is in no way better than the non-Arab unless he is more religious.”

According to Amadou Hampate Ba, the outstanding Moslem theologian in Africa: “There are only two types of people in the world, those who accept and love God, and those who don't.”

There is thus a real sense of fellowship in the Moslem world, for faith has replaced blood, race or nationality as unifying force.

The reason for the success of Islam is explained by Vivekananda:

“It came as a message for the masses. The first message was equality. There is one religion — love. No more question of race, colour, or anything else. That practical quality carried the day.”

Already in 1928 at the Mission Conference held in India the following challenging statement was made:

“The admirers of Islam maintain that Islam is the only practical and real brotherhood for this divided world, the only unifying factor in the midst of all the prejudices. Islam brings real unity in the midst of conflicts of colour, race, nationality and class. Islamic brotherhood as a unifying factor is something real.” And Toynbee writes:

“The extinction of race consciousness as between Muslims is one of the outstanding moral achievements of Islam, and in the contemporary world there is, as it happens, a cry-

ing need for the propagation of this Islamic virtue.”

For in a world in which distance has been destroyed by the achievement of modern man, man will either learn to live in peace and harmony with his fellow-man or destroy himself.

But these two great truths which are proclaimed and practised by Moslems and which are making such an impact on the African mind, viz. the dignity of man and the brotherhood of man, are the two fundamental principles in Christian teaching.

The parables of the lost son, the lost coin and the lost sheep, each emphasise the great truth that every human being, irrespective of race, colour or nationality, is of infinite worth in the eyes of God; for he was made in the image of God; he has an immortal soul and Christ died for him.

Furthermore, we are taught that “we are all children of God” and therefore brothers. For the Fatherhood of God implies the brotherhood of man. In the words of our Lord:

“For whoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother and my sister and my mother.”

There is thus a bond far more valid than the bond of blood, race or nationality. A spiritual family exists, a fellowship in Christ in which “there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.”

Differences of race, nationalities, social status, culture or sex are not destroyed, but these dividing lines are transcended. We still have racial or national diversity for “the people of God” are drawn from “every tribe and language and people and nation”, but the great divisions of men are transcended, differences are composed and

(Continued on page 2)

THE CHALLENGE OF THE ISLAM

(Continued from page 1)

we have a spiritual unity, a Divine Commonwealth in which all other bonds are subordinated.

There is, however, large scale disloyalty to these two fundamental Christian principles.

Not only in totalitarian states, but also in all so-called Christian countries, we find a process of devaluation of man. The individual is subordinated and sacrificed to the community and man is judged and measured by the use of artificial norms; consequently we have not respect, but contempt, arrogance, intolerance, exploitation and injustice.

Furthermore, instead of unity and fellowship we have disunity, and consequently discord instead of concord, amongst those who profess to form the Ecclesia, the Community of Christ, the people of God.

And because of this unfaithfulness, Christianity is rejected by Africa in favour of Islam!

This unfaithfulness is, I believe, due to the fact that God is no longer a reality.

ALMIGHTY MAN OR ALMIGHTY GOD

There are ultimately only two views of life:

1. The Theocentric or God-centred or
2. The Egocentric or Man-centred.

In Africa we have today these two diametrically opposed views of life. These two are not only lined up against each other but are trying desperately to gain control over the minds of millions who are living in a spiritual vacuum, and to mould this African world in which so much has become fluid.

On the one hand Communism with its materialistic and atheistic view of life.

On the other hand two religions: Islam and Christianity.

Islam with, in the view of Christians, a limited conception of God but with wholehearted surrender to the will of Allah.

And Christendom with, so it is believed, the full revelation of God, but guilty of half-hearted submission to the will of God and therefore unfaithful to the fundamental Christian principles.

Rhadikrishnan calls this "the disparity between outward allegiance and inward betrayal."

Here, I believe, is the crux of the problem, the reason for the ineffectiveness of Christianity.

God is not openly rejected, but life is no longer God-centred. A process of secularisation and dechristianisation has for a considerable time been going on in the Christian world. Spiritual truths have been watered down. Christian principles might still be accepted as intellectual truths, but are no longer the driving forces of action. Religion has been divorced from week-day life and we have in consequence a religion without moral force. E. M. Forster in "A Passage to India" describes one of his characters as approving of religion as long as it endorses the National Anthem but he objected when it attempted to influence his life. This is typical of millions who still make use of the outward framework of religion but who are the victims of hypocrisy and whose values are blurred.

This process of secularisation has dire consequences:

1. When man becomes the law-giver there is no longer a supreme law valid for everyone. Values are not absolute but pragmatic; morality becomes relative; what is good and right depends on circumstances — it is all a matter of expediency. Love is not rejected but we have self-love, love for those who belong to my group, but not the love of Christ which is universal and knows no boundaries or barriers. There is still respect, but never respect for all men irrespective of social standing, culture, language, political or Church affiliations, colour of skin or racial origin. And

in consequence we have arrogance, prejudice, injustice and exploitation.

2. When faith is no longer the unifying force, its place is taken by group loyalty, race or nationality and so there is no true fellowship. Instead we have militant entities; differences are not composed but emphasised and glorified; there is class or race consciousness, an acute, and sickly awareness of difference. Because the fatherhood of God is not real, the brotherhood of man does not exist.

Toynbee accounts, in his own addition to the Parable of the Sower, in a novel way for this phenomenon of a religion that is powerless and ineffectual in the economic, political and social sphere:

"Some seeds fell on a conveyor-belt and were carried into the factory where they were processed, refrigerated and sterilised."

And so we have spiritual truths without redeeming power, religion without moral force, Christianity without Christ.

The history of Islam warns us that when a Church is not true to the light it has received and to its divine calling, it not only loses its freedom and strength but also destroys itself.

When the centre of gravity of the Moslem world shifted to Baghdad, the Khalif came strongly under the influence of Oriental despotism. Soon the theocratic democracy disappeared and a bureaucratic despotism took its place. Khalif means "Successor to the Prophet." But he now calls himself the Shadow of God on Earth. He identified his will with the will of God and soon the next step followed: he identified the will of God with his will. In theory he was still subject to the will of God, but in practice he decided what was right.

Religion was put in the service of this autocracy; it had to justify the claims of authority as well as the policy of authoritarianism. The ruler had decided what the truth was — and religion had to add the hall-mark of validity. The Church was no longer the conscience of the State but was expected to collaborate, to give divine sanction to State policy. It no longer provided a divine norm to which policy had to conform but was expected to confirm and justify policy.

In the temple of Leviathan its chief function was to help to maintain the status quo. But when the Church willingly became one of the pillars of the existing order, the vindicator of policy and therefore the tool and prayer front of the State, it lost its freedom. A Church that refuses to speak by testifying, warning or condemning, soon discovers that it cannot speak; a Church that no longer serves God becomes subservient to man!

But not only did it lose its freedom, it had started on the down-hill course of self-destruction. For when justification of policy became the task of religion, when theology was no longer concerned with divine truth but with interpreting the Koran in a way that was acceptable to the State which had already decided what truth was, we find that emphasis fell on dogma and instead of a living faith we have the growth of religious legalism and arid formalism. Religion which served not God but man, lost its spiritual strength and redeeming power — it had become divorced from life, sterile and ineffectual!

THE NEED FOR CHRISTIAN VOCATION AND RESPONSIBILITY

But the Church not only lost its strength, it also destroyed itself. For when religion became characterised by dogmatism and authoritarianism, orthodoxy became of the utmost importance. Belief hardened into a rigid code, into a cut and dried set of doctrines which had to be accepted in their entirety without any questioning. No deviation was allowed, everyone had to conform. Anyone who opposed or

criticised the status quo or the official policy on the grounds of conclusions or an interpretation which deviated from the official view, anyone who found that dictates of the conscience made it impossible to accept the dictates of authority, was branded a heretic. And it is therefore not surprising that disintegration set in and that Islam started splintering into numerous non-conforming sects.

Islam is regarded by many as a danger. It should rather be regarded as a warning and a challenge — a warning that religion and civilisation can be destroyed not only by attacks from without, but also by dry-rot within. And a challenge to all for whom Christianity and culture have become synonymous and religion a sort of social decency, the done thing without any true significance, without moral vitality, to do some honest soul-searching: a challenge to get once again a clear idea, not only of the fundamental principles of Christianity, but also of the Christian vocation and responsibility. Yes, a challenge to the Church to become again a creative force. We are reminded by John Macmurray that "the pre-eminence of Christianity as a creative force in history lies in the fact that it realised the function of religion, as the creation of a universal community, a brotherhood of all mankind; and realised it not as an idea to be believed or as a sentiment to be

cherished, but as a task to be achieved."

The needs of both Africa and the world make this a matter of great urgency. For science has destroyed distance and given us a physically integrated world; unfaithfulness to Christian principles is on the other hand, responsible for a divided and spiritually disintegrated world. And so we have "proximity without communion." Isolation is no longer possible. "The unifying forces that create proximity cannot be stopped, but the disruptive forces that prevent community must be curbed otherwise we are heading towards ruin and ultimate night." (Murdo Macdonald in "The Need to Believe.")

And therefore Islam brings the challenge to Christians not only to proclaim, but also to practise the Christian principles of the dignity and brotherhood of man. For a Church that does not insist on the infinite worth of every human being, irrespective of race, colour or creed, a Church that is not the "fellowship of reconciliation and communion of love", is no Church of Christ, has no message for an awakening Africa and is powerless to meet the challenge of either Communism or Islam.

(An abridged address given to a Rotary Lunch in Port Elizabeth on 17th May, 1962.)
Mr. Graham, a teacher, is a member of the Ned. Geref. Kerk in Grahamstown.

Die Uitdaging van Islam in Afrika

(Vervolg van bladsy 1)

'n situasie waarin die moderne Christelike kerk leiding behoort te kan gee. Maar sê Montgomery Watt: „practically no Muslim has shown interest in modern Christian thinking“. Waar lê die fout? Waar het die paai van Islam en die Christendom geskei?

ISLAM EN CHRISTUS

Islam het altyd Christus aanvaar maar nie as die Seun van God nie. Die Koran aanvaar die bonatuurlike geboorte van Jesus deur die werking van die Heilige Gees in die maagd Maria (Sura III, 40-45); dat hy gestuur was deur God en gesteun was deur die Heilige Gees (Sura II, 80-84, 250-254); dat hy mense gesond en lewendig gemaak het met spesiale krag van God, en dat sy plek naby God is (Sura III, 40-45); dat God aan hom gesê het: „O Jesus! Ek sal maak dat u sterwe en u weer opneem na my en ek sal u bevry van die ongelowiges; ek sal dié wat u volg hoër stel as dié wat ongelowig is . . . en wat betref dié wat nie glo nie, ek sal hulle straf met 'n groot straf in hierdie wêreld en in die toekomstige, en hulle sal niemand hê om hulle te help nie". (Sura III, 40-49). Ook in Sura XIX, 30-34 word gepraat van Jesus se opstanding en dié woorde word in sy mond gesit: „en (God se) vrede bly by my, op die dag wat ek gebore is, en die dag dat ek sterwe en die dag dat ek lewendig opgerig sal word." Daar word selfs gepraat van sy wederkoms as 'n dag wat sommige skielik sal oorval (Sura XLIII, 55-69).

Tog is die Koran dan weer verwarrend want in Sura III, 75-80 word Jesus as gewone profeet saam met die artsvaders (insluitende Ismael) en Moses genoem, met die woorde: „ons sal geen onderskeid maak tussen hulle nie." En in Sura IV, 165-169 word Christene gewaarsku: „Die Messias, Jesus die seun van Maria, is slegs 'n apostel van God en sy Woord . . . Glo dan in God en sy apostels en moenie sê „Drie" nie . . . God is 'n enige God en te verhewe in sy eer om 'n seun te wek." Wat sy dood, opstanding en wederkoms betref glo Mohammedane, volgens wat die Koran in 'n later Sura (IV, 156) sê dat Jesus nie aan die kruis gesterwe het nie, maar dat God 'n plaasvervanger gegee het en Jesus na die hemel opgeneem het vanwaar hy later weer sal kom om soos 'n mens te sterwe. In Mohammed se graf is daar 'n ekstra kelder gebou wat nog altyd wag vir die liggaam van Jesus.

As jongste godsdiens glo Islam dat

die dié finale openbaring van God is, ook wat betref Jesus se wese en amp.

ISLAM EN DIE CHRISTENE

Die tradisionele verdraagsaamheid van Islam teenoor Christene kan teruggevoer word na die Koran, waarin daar wel aan die een kant kritiek teen Christene gevind word omdat hulle in Christus meer wil sien as net 'n besondere groot profeet en apostel, maar aan die ander kant hulle beskou word as dié geseende volgetinge van die groot profeet (sien die aanhaling hierbo uit Sura III, 40-49). So byvoorbeeld vind ons in Sura V, 85, dat die Koran die Jode aanval maar sê: „en julle sal vind dat die wat naaste is aan die gelowiges" (d.w.s. Islam) „is hulle wat sê: Ons is Christene; dit is omdat daar priesters en monnike onder hulle is, en hulle nie hoogmoedig is nie." Mohammedane gaan selfs vandag nog op pelgrimstogte na Antiochië, na die graf-tempel van Habib en Najjār, wat volgens hulle oorlewering bekeerlinge en volgetinge van Jesus was en saam met Jesus vervolg was!

'n Mens is dus nie verbaas dat van die vroegste tye af Christelike kerke toegelaat word om te bestaan te midde van Mohammedaanse gemeenskappe nie, en vandag kry ons verskeie Teologiese kweekskole in Mohammedaanse lande (soos bv. die Henry Martynskool vir Mohammedaanse Studies in Aligar, Indië). Ook vind ons daar Christelike uitgewers en drukkerie soos bv. die Nile Mission Press in Kairo en die American Mission Press in Beirut, Lebanon (Sirië). Christen-professore doen dikwels diens aan hulle universiteite (met uitsondering van die Mohammedaanse Kweekskool van El Azhar) en Christene-predikante is al selfs uitgenooi om van Mohammedaanse „Kansels" te preek. In Desember 1953 het die Egiptiese koerant „El Akhbar El — Jadidah" en die „Egyptian Gazette" Moslems aangespoor om Kersfees te eerbiedig deur groete en presente aan Christene te stuur, en voorgestel dat Christene dieselfde doen op die Mohammedaanse feestdae. Die Egiptiese onderpremier het in 'n spesiale boodskap gesê: „Dit is vir my 'n plesier om aan al my Christen-broers my beste wense oor te dra vir geluk, voorspoed en sekuriteit." Die Egiptiese Departement van Binnelandse Sake het ook terselfdertyd permitte uitgereik vir die bou van Christelike kerke. Verder het die Egiptiese Departement van Onderwys aangekondig, dat Christen kinders in staatskole, met toestem-

(Vervolg op bladsy 7)

PRO VERITATE

Inleidingsartikel

RAMPOKKERLAND?

Byna elke dag bring koerante ons berigte van georganiseerde rooftogte, aanrandings, inbrake en diefstal. Hoewel dit hoofsaaklik in ons groot stede voorkom ondervind groter plattelandse dorpe in toenemende mate ook sulke ervarings. Alarmstelsels, diefwering, loeroë, kettings aan deure, gewapende bankampfenare en nagwagte — al hierdie verskynsels word meer en meer deel van die daaglikse patroon van ons stadslewe. Sommige inbrake en rooftogte word deur blankes beplan of onderneem; in die meerderheid van gevalle, egter, is nie-blankes betrokke in die werklike gevalle van wetsverkragting en dien al hierdie gebeurtenisse om die ongelukkige gevoel van agterdog teen die nie-blanke nog verder te verskerp terwyl baie blankes nie genoeg daaraan dink dat duisende wetsgehoorsame nie-blankes net so ontsteld en veronrus voel oor hierdie toenemende wetteloosheid as enige verantwoordelike blanke.

Dringende, spoedige en kragdadige stappe sal geneem moet word om 'n verandering in die toestand van sake te bring. 'n Noodsaaklike vereiste vir 'n goeie oplossing is om 'n deurtastende ondersoek te laat doen na die grondoorsake van hierdie gewelddadigheid. Ernstige aandag sal gegee moet word aan onder meer die volgende vrae: watter rol die verbrokkeling van sedelike waardes onder die blanke, die ondermyning van die familielewe van die nie-blanke, die verontagsaming van owerheidsgesag, die invloed van die rampokkergeskrifte en -films speel in die skepping en toename van sulke gebeure. Die samewerking van verantwoordelike leiers aan albei kante van die kleurlyn sal verkry moet word as ons die toenemende stroom van wetteloosheid en geweldpleging wil keer. Hier is 'n kostelike geleentheid vir Kerke en Christenleiers om mekaar te vind en saam te werk in 'n saak waarvoor almal basies ewe ernstig voel.

Editorial:

Church Hypocrisy: The Only Valid Reply

The "Christian Recorder" of the 18th September contains a report of the reply which the Prime Minister, Dr. H. F. Verwoerd, gave to the Methodist Church when he received a resolution passed by the Cape Synod asking for a re-consideration of the 90-days legislation. In his reply the Prime Minister accused them of hypocrisy in certain aspects of their church life and practice. We are not in a position to judge whether this is a valid accusation or not, and even if we were able so to judge, we believe that the Methodist Church must be free either to accept or to refute this indictment.

This accusation, however, needs to be taken seriously and to be viewed in a broader perspective by every church and every Christian in this country. Is it not true that at the deepest level every church and Christian is guilty in larger or smaller measure of the sin of hypocrisy? If we sincerely and honestly compare the verbal confession of our faith with everyday practice in church life what else can we say to God and man than: We are guilty? Is there a single denomination in South Africa (or the world) where church decisions on unity, justice, mercy, and brotherhood have been fully implemented in the life of the congregation or the structure of the church? Is this not one of the fundamental and major weaknesses of the church: the great gap existing between principle and practice? Would it not be much better if all Christians and denominations in South Africa would realize and admit that true renewal of the Church is impossible without a sincere confession of sin and repentance before God? And then to start implementing the eternal truths of Christian brotherhood, unity, justice and compassion in faith and without fear regardless of the consequences? And if such implementation clashes with government policies, then we must answer by saying: We do this just because we want to wipe out all hypocrisy and want to be obedient to God above all else.

A Prayer for Social Justice

Almighty and most merciful God, we pray for all those who work earnestly for their livelihood, that thou mayest guide and protect them. For all who labour on land, sea or air;

We beseech thee, O Lord

For all who toil and yet have to starve because their wages are low;

We beseech thee, O Lord

For those who have to borrow for their daily needs and are not able to clear their debts because of inadequate income;

We beseech thee, O Lord

For those who spend their earnings on liquor and ruin their families and themselves;

We beseech thee, O Lord

For all those who have resorted to shameful means to earn their living;

We beseech thee, O Lord

For those who cannot provide proper food or education to their children because of poverty;

We beseech thee, O Lord

For the poor who labour so hard that they have no time for prayer and meditation, and for the rich who in their pursuit of gain and riches fail to find time for prayer;

We beseech thee, O Lord

For avaricious employers who do not give proper wages to their employees and for unscrupulous business men;

We beseech thee, O Lord

For officials who take bribes and for all who resort to dishonest means to make a profit;

We beseech thee, O Lord

For doctors who charge exorbitantly for their services and for people who are reluctant to pay fairly for the services they enjoy;

We beseech thee, O Lord

For those who receive high wages and yet are not faithful in their work;

We beseech thee, O Lord

O Lord, our God, we pray thee, that thou wouldst cleanse all men from unrighteousness and selfishness, and hasten the day when thy will shall be done on earth as it is in heaven. And grant us the will that we may dedicate ourselves for the establishment of thy kingdom on earth.

O Lord, have mercy on us and hear us through Jesus Christ our Saviour

O Christ Jesus, who seeing the multitude said unto thy disciples "Give ye them to eat", give to us and to thy Church, the consciousness and the sense of duty towards the poor and the needy.

"Let us Pray" — A Work Campher's Book of Worship.

Christian Peace Assembly Czechoslovakia, 1964

—MARGARET A. NASH

By train and bus, motor-car, "duimry"; on flights from Moscow, Paris, London, over 1000 people converged on Prague in the heat of late June. The occasion? The Second All-Christian Peace Assembly, June 28 - July 3.

Travel, said the veterans of the First Assembly (1961), was easier; at the beginning of this year Czechoslovakia threw open her borders and offered a favourable rate of exchange to foreign tourists — who came in their thousands.

Was that the purpose of the Peace Assembly? Hardly, for it has its origins in the Christian Peace Conference of Prague that struggled into life during the harsh realities of the Cold War. For years the C.P.C. served as a bridge, first for Christians in east European countries to meet together, increasingly for Christians of east and west (so-called) to discover that in Christ the curtain of separation has been irreparably torn.

To come back to 1964: this Assembly had as its theme — "My Covenant is life and peace". (Malachi 2:5) and in daily bible studies the groups of delegates struggled (in three languages) to hear and understand the Covenants of God with his people throughout history.

Against this background speakers of astonishing diversity focussed our thoughts on world issues. The keynote address was, of course, by Professor Josef Hromadka, doyen of the Assembly. A youth in the reign of the European Franz Joseph, Hromadka at the age of seventy-five still thinks and acts positively towards secular powers. "Christians", he said, "share in the responsibility for the past. The speed of historical developments is frightening. Sometimes I fear that we will not be able to cope spiritually with our task, and accept the new events, new changes and world upheavals. But the Gospel in the victory of Jesus Christ and in his merciful rule over the world, turns us to the future."

Hromadka reminded us that throughout the world, in the east and in the west, man — his essence and destiny — has become the main subject of philosophical, literary and political discussions. In this situation Christians, in declaring that God became man, become involved in the struggle of secular man with his problems of life and death.

The main speeches, then, were largely secular. Emilio Castro of Latin America spoke militantly about Hunger and Economic Independence. "Our Lord Jesus Christ definitely made the fate of mankind his own . . . this is to know that underdevelopment is something that must be conquered. To know that God has not given up his property in the earth is to be free from all that holds us back in our search for the solutions to the problems of today."

Liberty and Unity was the subject of Richard Andriamanjato, Mayor of Tananarive and minister of the Reformed Evangelical Church of Madagascar. He defined these in positive terms, liberty for action, and spoke of the struggle of the African people: to discover the real dimensions of man in a situation that is more and more restrictive for all of humanity; to forge a unity of culture that would triumph over accidental differences (racial, tribal, technical), to attempt to propose a new conception of international relations and of a world where it would be possible to harmonise and recognise the rights of all men.

He challenged the Church as an institution in history. Is it the bulwark of conservatism or can it be as radical as its Lord? In the recent UN Trade Conference in Geneva "the 75" stood together, refused to align with either east or west, witnessing to their vision of justice in economic relationships. Is the Church committed or uncommitted

in the struggle of men to liberate themselves for fuller life together?

It was hard to switch over mentally (and to ignore the jargon) in the address by Professor Harvey Cox of the U.S.A. The very title was forbidding: "Christian Responsibility in a Technicised World". BUT — and it is a big but — here was a man wrestling with the future to which Hromadka asserted the Gospel takes us. A future of scientific technology. A world of automation? even that is not "with it". A world of cybernation, where mathematics and the computers look like taking over.

Most of us were in deep waters: many delegates made the jargon an excuse for indifference. For me, this was one of the most difficult and thought-provoking sessions. One of these days I'm going to get Harvey Cox to write it in basic English! In the meantime, I'll go on struggling with what he had to say about:

I. The biblical basis of modern technology. Under this, he discussed the "disenchantment" of the natural world, the worth of human work, and the possibility of changing things.

II. Religious distortions of technology. The three most significant are romanticism (nature the source of healing), utopianism and conservatism (which does not cast in its lot with the Coming One).

III. Problems and Possibilities of Technical Civilization. In this section he listed four areas of choice — "life or death".

modern weaponry
modern methods of food production
cybernation (can we develop a Christian ethic of leisure?)
mass media.

IV. Problems of the Technological Mentality. The two most important are the impersonality of power ("in bureauocracy no one feels personally responsible for what is happening") and the utilitarian logic which measures not only things but people in terms of productive processes.

In summing up Harvey Cox said "History is not reversible. The living God does not allow us to remain adolescent, tampering and playing with human life. He creates for us a civilization in which the only alternatives are maturity or death, responsibility or destruction."

(It may seem that, in terms of South African readers I have dwelt too long on this topic. On the contrary, however, it is because South Africa is one of the most technologically developed countries on the continent of Africa that some of us at least ought to be thinking about the kind of "civilization" towards which the whole world is tending.)

"BEFORE GOD TOGETHER"

Equally thought-provoking was the scholarly address of Archpresbyter Borovoi, Russian Orthodox representative at the World Council of Churches. Speaking on "The Problem of Coexistence," he quoted Charles Peguy "We must come before the face of God together", and quoted extensively from Bonhoeffer, Congar, Schutz, Pope John XXIII, Pope Paul VI, in defence of his thesis that the Church of Jesus Christ lives for and serves ALL MEN.

While admitting freely the accusation that in the Christian Peace Conference there was a tendency to "leap" from "theological foundations to concrete political decisions, Father Boro-

voi claimed that this "leap" is "a common phenomenon among all men who try to deduce from their outlook concrete directions for all occasions." This should not lead away from political commitment: "One may have a great interest in the problems of eschatology, a most lofty and purely spiritual concept of the peace of Christ, one may work to establish the kingdom of God in one's heart, but without effective ministry to the reconciliation of mankind all this will be as sounding brass and tinkling symbol."

WORKING GROUPS

There were other speeches, but already I have dwelt too long on this aspect of the Assembly. After two days we separated into commissions or working groups, on a wide range of subjects (disarmament, the German Question, Ecumenical Relations, Peaceful Service of Youth, etc.). I was in the one on "Peace and New States", and in this we came to grips with some of the major issues of the Development Decade — the economic gap between developed and developing countries, the tendency towards neo-colonialism (control through economic pressure), racialism. The group included people from Indonesia, Cuba, Argentina, many African countries, India, U.S.A., and most European countries.

The exchanges in discussion answer the question I have so far not raised, i.e. was there freedom of speech in this communist context? Our discussions, and others I experienced in the Assembly, were characterised by straight speaking and honest criticism, and in the search for understanding of the problems of New States or developing countries there certainly was not a neat division into western and eastern approaches. Rather there was a general awareness of the need to strengthen the UN as an impartial and objective agency in all major international programmes of development.

In a session on Southern Africa, there was no mistaking the impatience with words shown by African delegates. They urged action against racialism, in all countries and situations where there was discrimination. In its report the Commission called on the churches to work with their respective governments for "much stronger support for all organizations which promote the economic, social and cultural advancement of the newly developing countries."

There is so much I still have not said about this Assembly: the conversations over meals or in the evenings, the explorations of the old city of Prague (marvellous Hansel and Gretel towers, lovely Gothic churches full of national history and aspiration), the services of worship, the meeting of old friends and the making of new ones from all corners of the earth. Through such an experience one loses many prejudices — and gains new ground for criticism! As westerners, some of us were forced to engage in an unwonted degree of "corporate self-examination": as students we were stimulated to read and think more widely and deeply, and to reject those attempts at conditioning which make us insensitive to the truth which may be revealed outside the accustomed "externally ecclesiastical sacramental forms."

CONCLUSION

The proceedings of the Second Assembly will be printed in book form, and will be a basis for study and action in the next three or four years. I hope that at least some copies of the book will be available in South Africa, and be used to share in the ongoing search for God's way in our world. All I can do by way of conclusion is to quote from the final Message to Churches and Christians:

"God's Covenant does not take us out of the world, but sends us into it. That frees us to love all mankind and to be responsible with regard to everything that happens in the world. The Covenant of the Lord obliges us to take upon ourselves the risk of concrete decisions. Only thus can we who have heard God's call remain on the way of obedience."

(Margaret Nash, a South African, is General Secretary of the SCM in Canada.)

DIE CHRISTEN SE ANTWOORD OP DIE KOMMUNISME

(Uit referaat van prof. S. P. van der Walt)

Ons moet ons toespits op one eie werf en die oog rig op diegene binne ons volksmuur. Ons moet 'n gelukkige blanke en Bantoevolk hê. Ons moet die Kleurlinge aanvaar as ons naaste wat saam met ons beweeg op ons nasionale pad tot ons eie Suid-Afrikaanse bestemming. Ons moet geregtigheid doen teenoor die Indiër en hom gelukkig laat voel.

Dan het ons 'n bolwerk, 'n sterk vesting wat nie sal en kan brokkel nie. Ons hoef nie bevrees te wees vir die leuenpropaganda nie.

Die Christen wat op die wagtoring staan moet ook nousienend wees dat geregtigheid betrag word en billikheid moet die wagwoord wees. Hiermee gaan natuurlik gepaard dat waarheid beoefen moet word. Is daar 'n gebied wat nader aan huis is, as hierdie geestelike terrein wat deur die Christen nie net gepreek word nie, maar ook beleef? God is die hoogste waarheid en God is 'n God van geregtigheid. Geen mag, geen vereniging of Bond, ook geen regering mag die Christen van hierdie mooi pad af laat gaan nie. Dit is beginsels hierdie wat sodanig die eiendom is van die Christenmens, dat dit sy lewensasem genoem kan word. Gee die waarheid prys, en jy beland in dieselfde impasse as die Kommunisme, wat deur niemand meer vertrou kan word nie. Waarom is dit dat volkere nie tot oplossing van hulle vraagstukke kan kom nie? Die antwoord is eenvoudig. Hulle mag saamstem, maar ook die samestemming het nie veel betekenis nie, omdat kommuniste God nie vrees nie, en daarom geen groot agting het vir waarheid, geregtigheid en billikheid nie. Al wat ons hier eis is dat die Christen getrou moet wees aan sy wese.

(Oorgeneem van „Antikom", Mei 1964.)

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EDUCATION FOR REALITY

— WINSOME MUNROE

The term "Christian education" can legitimately be used in a number of senses, depending on the context. In relation to state education it is often used of Christian Religious Instruction, as a subject alongside other subjects of the curriculum. More widely it can refer to the activity in the general sphere of education of those who are Christians, or to education undertaken on a Christian basis, or in institutions with a denominational attachment. The sense in which it is used here, however, is in relation to the message and purpose of the Church, a sense which is more clearly conveyed by the term "the teaching mission of the Church". This is to be preferred because it avoids the narrower connotations of "Christian education", which all too often brings to mind something which it is hoped takes place among the young, in the day school or in the Sunday school, something, in other words which happens at a different time from the "main" coming together and worship of the Church proper, usually in another place and with only an indirect relation to the Church itself. Against this background special attention to "Christian education" can easily be understood merely as the advocating of better techniques and teaching aids, with reference to the capacities and needs of children. In contrast "the teaching mission of the Church" is obviously a matter which concerns the Church as a whole and is integral to its entire existence.

THE NATURE OF THE CHURCH'S TEACHING MISSION

The calling of the Church is to be — the community of those reconciled to God through Jesus Christ, the new humanity, the new creation, as well as the agent of redemption through which God is bringing about the reconciliation and recreation of the world so that the kingdoms of this world become "the kingdom of our God and of his Christ." All of this assumes that the Church itself is aware of what it is called to be and that the world in which it is set is made aware of its aims and claims. This must involve a process of communication both within the Church and out from the Church into society at large. Both these aspects are implied in the charge to "go . . . and made disciples (i.e. learners) of all nations, baptising them . . . (and) . . . teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you . . ." (Mt. 28: 19). (An oversharpest distinction has been drawn between "preaching" in the sense of the proclamation of the basic Christian truths, and "teaching" in the sense of the drawing out of the mainly moral implications of these truths (cf C. H. Dodd in "The Apostolic Preaching and its Development".) It is in fact impossible to separate these two functions. Both are to be regarded as facets of the entire teaching mission.)

The object of the teaching or nurture of those within the Church, or under its immediate influence, should be to relate and promote the growth of the whole person in every aspect — physical, mental, moral, emotional and social — in relation to God. The "spiritual" life, i.e. the whole life in its relation to God, must not only have a beginning but should be a matter of continual growth far beyond childhood and adolescence into adulthood and even beyond in the life to come, "to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children . . ." (Eph. 4: 13f). This means growth in response to God as he has revealed and continues to reveal himself, in fulfilment of the first and greatest commandment: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind." (Mt. 22: 37). "Heart", "soul" and "mind" refer to the whole person as a living, thinking, willing, acting being and not to any special parts of the human makeup to which the Church is to minister. This response should ideally be to the whole revelation of God, so that, in the words of Ephesians, "you may be strong to grasp, with all God's people, what is the breadth and length and height and depth of the love of Christ, and to know it, though it is beyond knowledge. So may you attain to fullness of being, the fullness of God himself." While there is room for the particular message or emphasis of a particular person or group, this should be in the setting of all that has been revealed to the whole Church. Fullness of understanding is only possible "with all God's people". The sect is a sect because it has become separated from the main body of

Christendom in its life and message. In the divided state of the Church every church is to some extent a sect, out of touch with the totality of God's revelation. For this reason the ecumenical movement is of the greatest importance to the Church's teaching mission. In South Africa the Church and its teaching suffers from fragmentation amounting to chaos due to the proliferation of separatist sects.

FOR THE SAKE OF THE WORLD

If this explanation of the Church's teaching mission were to stop here the impression might be given that it is something concerned purely with the building up of the Church and the edification of its members, in other words, that the teaching mission is for the sake of the Church, with the world serving only as a source of supply for fresh members. It cannot be too strongly emphasised that **the Church exists not for its own sake but for the sake of the world in which it is set.**

To refer again to Mt. 28: 19, the charter of the Church's teaching mission, one finds the Church charged to "go . . . and make disciples of all nations" and in a related passage " . . . you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth." (Acts 1: 8). This mission to all the world has ceased to have geographical meaning, since there is today no country where the gospel is not announced and where there are no witnesses to Jesus Christ. According to the World Christian Handbook (1962) there are 854,031,945 professed Christian witnesses (a third of the human race) in the world today, yet it is obvious that in terms of the actual life of the world the task has only just begun. Only recently has the Church begun to think seriously about its witness in every aspect of what constitutes the world, about being in truth the salt, light and leaven that change the quality of the whole. What this amounts to for the teaching mission is the effectual proclamation and application of the total Lordship of Christ, an affirmation of which prefixes the teaching charge (Mt. 28: 18) and brings the entire life of the world in its every aspect within the scope of the Church's mission.

In recent years there has been much talking and writing about the gulf between the Church and its message on the one hand and the life of the world on the other. The fact remains, however, that the Church IS in the world in the person of every one of its members in every walk and sphere of life. What is called the "laity" find themselves in the places where the real issues of life and of history are being fought out, and in it all the witness of the Church occurs through them or not at all. These ordained to the ministry undergo years of intensive training in order to equip them for their tasks. But what of the bulk of Church members who share this ministry? Is it not as important that they should be trained and equipped and made aware that they too are ordained to the ministry of the Church through their baptism and confirmation?

DISCOVERING THE RELEVANCE OF CHRISTIANITY

The question needs to be asked whether the Church does in fact fit its members to bear witness to the reality of God in the midst of the realities of our modern society. It is unfortunate but true that to some extent at least the Church positively unfits its members for this rôle. First there is the centuries old tendency typified in Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress to "write off" the world as something heading for destruction, from which as many as possible must be rescued and separated before it is too late. Much has been read into the saying "My kingdom is not of this world" to justify non-involvement in the affairs of society, in particular political affairs. This is of course to misunderstand the words, which refer not to the other-worldly character but the other-worldly origin of the kingdom and the allegiance it demands. To be "in but not of the world" means to bear witness to what Bonhoeffer has called "the beyond in the midst of our life."

Then more recently the Church has tended to place itself on the defensive in relation to the world and the spectacular progress of science, industry and social reform, and the relatively new concepts of the responsibility of the state for education, the care of the sick and the relief of poverty, which used to be regarded as the special spheres of the Church. The Church has appeared to wonder anxiously whether all this leaves any room for God and also for itself. Instead of supporting and welcoming every evidence of man's advance and seeing in it the continuing creative work of God it has often been grudging in its acceptance of progress and given an unfortunate impression of being on the side of those who cling to the past and oppose change. In Africa as elsewhere the Church is being driven to the position where it must either contract out of the rapidly developing life of man or throw itself into that life and regard its members not merely as those who fill pews which would otherwise be empty, but as those who man the front ranks of the Church, those who are in the thick of the real work of the Church in the world. The latter is obviously the only way open to the Church, but this requires considerable reorientation in the way the Church thinks about itself and about the world and human society.

It is not enough to decide that the church member needs to be acquainted with a certain body of doctrine and teaching in order to qualify for church membership, or what candidates for the ministry need to know in order to perform certain functions in the Church in order that the Church may be perpetuated. At every level the "what?" of the teaching mission needs to be rethought in the light of the question "what for?" This means not trying to "make Christianity relevant", as if it were not relevant and needed to be changed to become so, but discovering its relevance in the real issues which face young people in the varying stages of their growth and which face adults in their work and family life

and in relation to the individual and corporate decisions which are forced upon them.

The Church in the discharge of its teaching mission needs to take account of the findings of the scientist, the social scientist, the psychologist and psychiatrist in order that it may understand better the people and the society to which it ministers. It needs to be far more *au fait* than it is with what is afoot in society, with the intellectual climate, with the movements of one kind and another that stir the intelligentsia as well as the masses.

In South Africa it is alarmingly out of touch with the up-and-coming people who are bound to shape the society of the future. It apparently has nothing whatever to say to those who are most concerned to bring about a just social order. It is doubtful whether it would really welcome them as part and parcel of its life. What happens in South Africa in the future will pass the Church by as a cumbersome irrelevance unless it exerts itself to become geared to the realities of the situation. There is only the dimmest awareness of the thinking of the Church in other parts of the world on these very matters.

(To be concluded)

Winsome Munroe, B.A., B.D., is secretary of the Christian Education Movement.

HOW CHRISTIANITY AIDED COMMUNISM IN CHINA

The following extract from an address given by Peter Howard to the Rotary Club of Minneapolis, Minnesota, August 21st, 1964, is the report of a conversation he had last October in New Delhi with a Red Chinese diplomat. After discussing some of the problems of living in an atomic age, the diplomat suddenly said, "We do not want Christianity back in China."

He raised the point, I did not. I asked him why. He said, "I was brought up in a missionary school. So were many leaders of my country. The missionaries came from the West. Most of them were sincere people. But they were only interested in personal salvation and in filling churches. We were interested in China. The missionaries had no chance."

He then explained the Communists were interested in the food empty stomachs would get to eat — the work empty hands would have to do — the unity and destiny in Asia and the world, of a nation of history and grandeur.

I said to him with some passion, "Supposing you had had men of faith come from the West to your country who were as interested as any Communist in the food men had to eat — as interested as any Communist in the work men had to do — as interested as any Communist in the destiny of China, but also cared greatly and intelligently for the character and faith of every individual they met?" That Chinese Communist diplomat looked at me for several seconds, then replied, "In that case the West would never have lost China."

MRA Information Service, Vol. 12, No. 328, 26th September, 1964.

Die Werk van die Wêreldraad van Kerke

The Work of the World Council of Churches

WAT WORD BEDOEL MET INTERKERKLIKE HULPVERLENING, VLUGTELINGE- EN WÊRELDDIENS?

Die *Ecumenical Review* van Januarie 1964 publiseer 'n toespraak van dr. Leslie Cook oor bogenoemde werkafdeling van die Wêreldraad van Kerke.

Die spreker poneer en verduidelik twee stelling:

1. "Die Afdeling Interkerklike Hulpverlening, Vluchteling- en Wêrelddiens van die Wêreldraad van Kerke is 'n uitdrukking van ekumenisiteit en dra die verantwoordelikheid om op sy besondere terrein die volle roeping van die Wêreldraad van Kerke tot uiting te bring. Ons bepaalde verantwoordelikheid is om ons besig te hou met die behoeftes van die kerke en van manne en vroue, maar hierby kom nog die verantwoordelikheid om te sorg dat wanneer kerke daartoe oorgaan om in hierdie behoeftes te voorsien, hulle dit op so 'n wyse doen dat hul eenheid in Christus gehandhaaf en sigbaar word."

2. Die tweede stelling is: "Die Afdeling Interkerklike Hulpverlening, Vluchteling- en Wêrelddiens moet as deel van die Wêreldraad van Kerke daarna streef om die roeping ten opsigte van die evangelie te vervul. Die roeping bestaan daarin om die eenheid (wholeness) van die evangelie te verkondig en met die daad te demonstreer."

Die spreker sê dat in hierdie verband reeds veel studie gewy is aan die Nieu-Testamentiese begrippe *diakonia* en *leitourgia*, o.m. om aan te toon dat hulle nie van die versoeningsdiens van Christus geïsoleer mag word nie. Hy self vra aandag vir die omvattende betekenis van die woord barmhartigheid of ontferming in die Nuwe Testament. Hy wys daarop dat barmhartigheid 'n wesenlike deel van die evangelie is en dat dit doeltreffend en planmatig moet wees.

"Hierdie barmhartigheid, wat Gods liefde in Christus is, kom tot uitdrukking in ons getuienis in ekumeniese verband in die algemeen en in die Wêreldraad van Kerke in die besonder. Dit is 'n getuienis aangaande die eenheid van die evangelie wat ons tot die eendragtige betoning van barmhartigheid verplig."

Die tweede deel van die rede bestaan uit leidrade vir die besluite en handelwyse van die Afdeling Interkerklike Hulpverlening, Vluchteling- en Wêrelddiens.

i. Hierdie Afdeling moet sy deel doen om in betrekking tot kerke te tree en 'n broederlike verhouding tussen kerke tot stand te bring. Die Afdeling het bepaald met die diens van barmhartigheid te doen, en deur behoeftige kerke sowel as vermoënde kerke in hierdie hulpaksie te laat deel, word die ware ekumeniese gees ontwikkel.

ii. Die Afdeling moet sy deel doen in die diens wat die Wêreldraad aan die kerke poog te verrig.

Deur hierdie diens van barmhartigheid ontstaan 'n wederkerigheid tussen die kerke wat materiële dinge gee en ontvang en wat geestelike onderrig gee en ontvang. Dikwels ontvang die kerk wat gee kostelike insigte van die kerk wat hulp ontvang. Aldus oorskry die kerke die grense deur afkoms en tradisie oopgerig en begin hulle hul eenheid in Christus gewaarword. Hulle besef dat hulle nie maar net Amerikaanse of Engelse of Duitse of Franse of Afrikaanse Kerke is nie, maar Kerk van Jesus Christus in Amerika, Engeland, Duitsland, Frankryk en Afrika.

iii. Die Afdeling moet sy deel doen om die doel van die Wêreldraad van Kerke na te kom wat bestaan in die bevordering van ekumeniese studie van sake wat die gemeenskap belange van die kerke raak.

In die laaste jare het die Afdeling die studie van bepaalde onderwerpe

ondernem. Daar is bv. die verskynsel van trekarbeid, Christelike maatskaplike inrigtings in die moderne welsynstaat, chroniese armoede in sommige lande en die vorm wat hulpverlening moet aanneem. Interkerklike Hulpverlening vereis 'n suiwere verhouding tussen die praktiese en die teoretiese, tussen ekstroversie en introversie. As die klem te veel op die praktyk val, loop die afdeling gevaar om 'n groep onnadenkende „do gooders" te wees; val dit te sterk op die teorie, dan word dit 'n groep planmakers wat nooit tot die daad oorgaan nie.

iv. Die Afdeling moet sy deel doen om die doel van die Wêreldraad te verwesenlik ten opsigte van gemeenskaplike aksie deur die kerke.

Dit bestaan daarin dat die belangstelling en middele van soveel kerke as kan, ten bate van kerke of landstreek waar hulp dringend nodig is, aangewend word. Dit sluit ook in die aanstelling en aktivering van beproefde beplanningsskategoriees wat met die plaaslike lewensomstandighede en met die ware behoeftes van dié wat gehelp moet word, bekend is en dus in staat is om middele wat geskenk is, op die voordeligste wyse te bestee.

v. Die Afdeling moet in naam van die Wêreldraad en tot verwesenliking van sy doelstellings gewigtige beslissings neem en handelend ootree. Dit is die Afdeling daarom te doen om in een bepaalde sektor van nood, bv. tydens natuurrampe, by verhongerde bevolkingsgroepe, by vluchteling wat êrens gevestig moet word, in 'n arbeidskamp van jong mense, deur sy optrede die besef te wek dat die kerk van Jesus Christus, versprei oor die hele wêreld, hier in aksie is. Die ware solidariteit van Christenmense om, waar die nood skreiend is verstandig te beraadslaag, vlugtig op te tree en noodlenigend in te gryp, moet aan die lig tree.

Op dié manier beantwoord die Afdeling aan sy doel.

„Inter Nos", Augustus 1964.

THE CHURCH'S HEALING MINISTRY

(Tübingen, Germany) — Deep and continuing study of the Christian concept of the healing ministry of the Church was called for by a consultation convened here by the World Council of Churches and the Lutheran World Federation.

A statement unanimously adopted by the six-day meeting asked the two bodies to take a "new look" at the meaning of healing and particularly at the role of church-sponsored medical institutions.

The participants, the majority of whom were doctors, nurses, and other medical personnel attached to church-sponsored institutions around the world, specifically stressed the need to re-examine the concepts within the church which view Christian medical work as either primarily for the meeting of physical needs or as a tool for evangelism.

"The valid criticism by younger churches that such institutions are a 'burden' to them and the lack of intimate congregational involvement in medical institutions in the West points up the absence of a sufficient distinction between much Christian medical work and the services of secular agencies," the statement declared.

But, "the Church cannot surrender its responsibility in the field of healing to other agencies," the statement affirmed. "The Christian Church has a specific task in the field of healing." It has "insights concerning the nature of health which are available only within the context of the Christian faith."

Consultation discussions were concerned with what constitutes the health and healing of the whole man — the psychological, spiritual, and mental

realms — as well as the physical.

It affirmed that "all healing is of God" and that "the specific character of the Christian understanding of health and of healing arises from its place in the whole Christian belief about God's plan of salvation for mankind." It added:

"The Christian understanding of healing begins from its place in the ministry of Jesus. There it was a sign of the breaking into human life of the powers of the Kingdom of God and of the de-throning of the powers of evil. The health, which was its fruit, was not something static, a restored equilibrium: it was an involvement with Jesus in the victorious encounter of the Kingdom of God with the powers of evil.

"A concept of health which is merely that of a restored balance, a static 'wholeness', has no answer to the problem of human guilt or death, nor to the anxiety and the threat of meaninglessness which are the projection upon human life of the shadow of death.

"Health, in the Christian understanding, is a continuous and victorious encounter with the powers that deny the existence and goodness of God."

With this understanding of health, the consultation statement declared, it must be seen that the congregation has "a central and responsible role" in healing and that all its members — not just the doctors, nurses, and pastors — are involved.

The congregation, it said, "by its prayer, by the love with which it surrounds each person, by the practical acts which express its concern for every man, and by the opportunities which it offers for participation in Christ's mission . . . is the primary agent of healing."

The consultation expressed concern that contemporary theological training deals so little with the relationship between healing and salvation, noting that the importance of the spiritual component in health is not generally recognised.

It recommended that pilot projects be set up within selected hospitals in which teams comprising a physician, nurse, psychiatrist, and pastoral counsellor would seek "to treat the patient in the totality of his sickness."

It also favoured the cooperation of church-sponsored agencies with government and secular bodies "provided this in no way compromises the expression of Christian witness."

It further called for cooperation by the churches in survey, study and planning, personnel placement, and "in some areas" the sponsorship of joint medical programmes.

The report also suggested that a small consultation of theologians be held "at an early date" to discuss "health and salvation."

Participants in the consultation, which did not speak for either of the two convenor bodies, came from Europe, Asia, Africa, and North America and represented a wide range of church membership.

(The report of the consultation will be available later from the World Council of Churches and the Lutheran World Federation. The study papers of the consultation are scheduled for eventual publication.)

"Ecumenical Press Service", Geneva, 4th June, 1964.

'N BOODSKAP AAN ALLE CHRISTENE

'n Berig van die Wêreldraad van Kerke van 23 Des., 1963 meld dat die Kommissie vir Wêreldsending en evangelisasie 'n boodskap aan alle Christene in die Wêreld uitgestuur het. Hier volg 'n opsomming daarvan:

1. Ons wêreld verander sneller as ooit. Nuwe lewenspatrone kom tevoorskyn. In hierdie veranderinge speel

wetenskap en tegnologie 'n beslissende rol. Dit het sy groot voordele maar stel ons ook voor die ernstige vraag of tegnologie ons dienaar of ons baas gaan wees.

2. Ons wat die God van die Bybel ken weet dat die toenemende heerskappy wat die mens oor die natuur uitoefen 'n gawe van God is, maar ook dat ons aan Hom rekenenskap daarvoor verskuldig is. Onderdanigheid aan Hom is die één waarborg van ons menslike vryheid.

3. Met dit in gedagte betuig ons: (a) dat hierdie wêreld Gods wêreld is. Juis die handelose onrus van ons tyd is ons antwoord; enersyds in onderwerping aan en andersyds in opstandigheid teenoor Gods Woord. Die wêreld mag dit nie weet nie of dit verontagsaam nie, maar die feit bly staan dat God die Here is nie slegs van die skepping nie, maar ook van die geskiedenis. Wat gebeur, is in Sy hand, selfs wanneer Hy nie as God erken word nie. Ons word opgeroep om met volharding ons daaron toe te lê om hierdie wêreld te verstaan en Gods wil daarvoor te ontdek en dit beteken om te wete te kom wat in ooreenstemming met Sy bedoeling is en wat onder Sy oordeel val. Terwyl ons dus alle waardering het vir die nuwe lewensmoontlikhede wat ons huidige samelewing bied, wil ons beklemtoon dat die mens slegs in diens van die lewende God tot vryheid kom, anders verval hy onder die heerskappy van ander magte tot sy eie ondergang.

(b) Ons betuig dat God, aan wie hierdie wêreld behoort, Hom in Jesus Christus geopenbaar het. Hy, Jesus die Here van almal, Sy Naam is ho alle name. Sy liefde gaan uit na alle mense. Hy het gesterf en opgestaan vir almal. Daarom kan ons in vertroue en nederigheid tot mense van ander gelowe of sonder geloof gaan. Want die evangelie wat ons bring is die verkondiging van wat God vir alle mense gedoen het en nog doen. Alle mense het reg daarop om hierdie goeie tyding te verneem en op ons wat dit ken rus die verpligting om dit bekend te maak. Niemand, die Christen allermins, durf volhou dat dit nie daarop aankom wat mense glo nie as hulle maar iets glo. Hoofsaak in die lewe van 'n mens is juis om te weet wie God is en dit weet ons slegs in en deur Jesus Christus. Ons verkondig Jesus Christus nie uit 'n gevoel van meerderwaardigheid nie, maar enkel en alleen omdat Hy aan ons die sendingtaak toevertrou het.

(c) Ons betuig dat alle Christene geroep is om eendragtig hierdie opdrag te vervul. Ons voel oortuig dat die tyd daar is dat ons moet kom tot onderlinge oorlepleeg en optrede. Die feit dat Christus onverdeel is moet oortuigend blyk uit die samestelling van ons sendingwerk. Ons verdeeldheid op kerklik en sendinggebied weer-sprek hierdie feit ongelukkig.

(d) Ons betuig dus dat hierdie sendingtaak één is en eenheid verg. Dit is één omdat in alle lande die taak van die kerke wesenlik één en dieselfde is. Dit is één omdat elke Christen gemeente waar ook al in die wêreld geroepe is om die liefde van God in Christus in woord en daad aan die omringende wêreld bekend te maak. Ons geskiedenis verswak ons boodskap.

(e) Ons betuig dat by gevolg ons genoop word om grense oor te steek. Die sendingeling doen dit wanneer hy eie nasie en kultuur verlaat om die evangelie aan ander volke met 'n ander kultuur te bring. Daarby kom die talle Christene wat terwille van 'n beroep in handel, onderwys of regeringsdiens hul na ander lande begewe. Laasgenoemde het ons gebede nodig.

Maar daar is ook ander grense wat ons moet oorsteek: ons Christene moet besef dat God ons met 'n doel na die werkwinkel, kantoor, klaskamer of waar ook al in die sekulêre wêreld stuur en dat die stryd vir repte sosiale en rasse-verhoudings ook hul taak is.

(Vervolg op bladsy 7)

Die Uitdaging van Islam in Afrika

(Vervolg van bladsy 2)

ming van hulle ouers, onderrig kon ontvang in die Christelike geloof (voorheen is net die Koran in hierdie skole geleer). Die leerplan word opgestel deur die owerhede maar in oorleg met Koptiese en Evangeliese kerke.

Verdraagsaamheid en geloofsvryheid in Islam beteken egter slegs die reg van elkeen om sy eie geloof te behou en uit te leef. Dit beteken nie dat 'n volgeling van Islam vry is om sy geloof te laat vaar en 'n ander geloof aan te neem nie. As hy dit sou doen sal geweldige wettlike, sosiale, en ekonomiese sanksies op hom toegepas word—selfs moord is nie uitgesluit nie. G'n wonder dat in sulke omstandighede waarin slegs een rigting bekerings (d.w.s. tot Islam) toegelaat word, die ortodokse Christenkerke 'n passiewe en defensiewe houding ingeneem het nie. Die gevestigde Christenkerk in Arabiese lande bly getrou aan hulle geloof ten spyte van ontberinge, en dit strek hulle tot eer, maar hulle skyn vandag totaal onbewus te wees van die feit dat hulle 'n evangelie het om uit te dra.

EL AZHAR

Die grootste struikelblok vir sendingwerk onder Islam en die bron van krag in die uitbreiding van die ryk van Islam in Afrika is die Jamia' El-Azhar Universiteit in Kaïro — die oudste Universiteit in die wêreld — wat gestig is in dieselfde jaar as Kaïro self — 969 A.D. — en dus oor nege jaar sy duisendjarige bestaan vier.

Hierdie Universiteit is die belangrikste teologiese opleidingsinrigting van die hele wêreld van Islam. Dit het nagenoeg 11,000 studente en 350 professore. Sy studente kom van oor die hele wêreld, selfs uit Kommuniste-Rusland, Sibirië en Sjina. Die minimum toelatingskwalifikasies was altyd laag: minimum ouderdom 10, moet kan lees en skrywe; moet die helfte van die Koran uit die hoof ken. Die hoofdoel van El-Azhar se leerplan is 'n grondige kennis van die Koran en die leerstellinge en wette van Islam. In die laaste kwarteeu is daar egter groot pogings aangewend om die leerplan meer wetenskaplik te maak en die standaard te verhoog. Maar suiwer akademiese opleiding is die taak van Alexandrië en Kaïro se ander drie groot Universiteite (60,000 studente) terwyl El-Azhar wat nou sendingbewys is, hom toespits om sy 11,000 studente die wêreld in te stuur as praktiese sendelinge vir Islam in hulle alledaagse gemeenskapskringe.

Dit word gesê dat 2,000 sendelinge elke jaar El-Azhar verlaat om veral Afrika te wen vir Islam (teenoor 100 nuwe sendelinge per jaar wat al die Christelike Kerke saam in Afrika uitstuur).

El-Azhar neem glad nie genoë met die liberale houding van die Egiptiese regering teenoor ander gelowe nie en sy maandblad, die „Majallat El-Azhar“ kritiseer gereeld die regering omdat op regeringskole te veel aandag gegee word aan sekulêre vakke en te min aandag aan godsdienstige opleiding.

SENDINGMETODES VAN ISLAM

Tot dusver was die sendingveldtog van Islam in Afrika geen sensasionele „heilige oorlog“ teen die Christendom nie, maar 'n geleidelike uitbreiding van sy invloedssfeer.

Sy „sendingtegniek“ word goed beskrywe deur J. Spencer Trimmingham in sy boek oor Islam in Ethiopië. Hy skrywe onder meer: Islam het in Ethiopië geen georganiseerde sendingspropaganda gebruik nie en sy uitbreiding was grotendeels deur vreedsame indringing van Arabiese handelaars. Die eerste stap in die „beking“ van die beiden is gewoonlik niks meer as die dra van Moslemklere en versiersels en die gebruik van sekere kossoorte nie. Dit word Moslem-persoonsname oorgeneem en Moslemfeeste soos dié van Ramadan word saam met Moslems gevier (hoewel die vas nie onderhou word nie). Moslemamulette en -geluk-

bringertjies word van reisende smouse gekoop en gedra. Hierdie uiterlike tekens is egter genoeg om diegene wat hulle gebruik se aandag te trek na die geloof van Islam, en geleidelik aanvaar hulle Moslemgebruike en -gewoontes.

Die Sharia of kanonieke Wette van Islam pas nie heeltemal in by die stamgewoontes van Afrika nie maar, sê Spencer Trimmingham: „What Islam requires primarily is reverence for the law even though it is not observed“ Dit werk dan sielkundig sodat hoewel die naturel aanvanklik voortgaan met sy eie stamgewoontes, hy Islam se wette en rites eerbiedig en geleidelik skuldig voel as hy hulle nie uitvoer nie, totdat die wette ook vir hom 'n rig-snoer word vir sy lewe. Sodra die naturel hierdie stadium bereik het, wil hy ook in om sy kinders na Koranskole te stuur en in sommige groot dorpe soos die Somalstad Zaila word Moslemstudente aangehelp om na die El-Azhar-universiteit in Kaïro te gaan, waar daar koshuise vir 5,000 buitelandse studente is.

'n Belangrike faktor is die intieme vermenging van ontwikkelde Moslems met haar naturelle-Moslems op die gebied van godsdienste.

Die feit dat Islam nie aanvanklik inbooringgebruike en -rites aanval nie; dat Islam simpatiek staan teenoor die naturel en 'n „nie-blanke“ godsdienste is; dat Islam veral in die stede aan die stamlose naturel 'n godsdienste aanbied wat hom dadelik bind aan 'n massa ander Moslems is belangrike faktore in Islam se sendingaksie en vooruitgang. Hulle is veral belangrik as gevolg van 'n besluit van die „All African People's Conference“ in Akkra (van 5 tot 13 Desember 1958) om 'n einde te maak aan die baie godsdienste wat stamme van stamme skei. Islam bied hom aan as 'n godsdienste wat 'n eenheidsband kan bevorder en die plek van die menigvuldige heidense gelowe kan neem.

HERLEWING ONDER ISLAM?

Nou word daar baie gepraat van 'n groot herlewing onder Islam, as sou Islam nou met vuur en vlam die wêreld wil bekeer en die Christene beveg. My beskeie mening is egter dat dit meer 'n geval van neo-Islamitiese nasionalisme is as 'n godsdienstige herlewing.

Dit is waar dat Pakistan homself verklaar het as 'n Moslemstaat en die hoogste poste word vir Mohammedane gereserveer; in Iran moet die koning, eerste minister en alle kabinet-ministers Moslems wees; so ook vind ons in Indonesië en in die Soedan pogings om Islam te bevorder en Christelike aktiwiteite te beperk (bv. die mediese werk in die Suid-Soedan word deur die regering oorgeneem); maar van 'n ware godsdienstige herlewing is daar nie sprake nie. Dit is meer 'n poging om 'n minderwaardigheidsgevoel teenoor die Weste (van wie die Midde-Ooste en Noord-Afrika so afhanklik is vir geld en tegniese hulp in hulle huidige ontwikkelingsplanne) teë te werk deur eie kultuur en godsdienste te verdedig en op te hemel. Die motiewe is sielkundig en spruit nie uit godsdienstige oortuiging nie.

Die leiers van die Moslemstate dink nie diep oor hulle godsdienste nie (hoewel hulle altyd as Moslems dink), maar hulle moet die gevoelens van die massas, wat in rites en in gewoontes sterk deur hulle godsdienste gebind is, eerbiedig. In werklikheid egter het die leiers geweldige probleme as gevolg van die stremende invloede van ortodokse Islam, wat 'n pre-wetenskap, pre-industriële, pre-nasionalistiese godsdienste is, en hom moeilik leen tot die uitwerk van ekonomiese en politieke formules vir moderne toestande.

Tot dusver was die staatkundige uitbreiding van Islam geleidelik. Maar in die afgelope dekade word uitbreiding deur politieke gebeure in die Midde-Ooste en in Afrika verbaas. Aanspoerende faktore is bv. (a) die verset teen die indringing van Israel in die wêreld van Islam; (b) die gesamentlike protes van die Arabiese Bond teen die aanval

van Brittanje en Frankryk op Suez; (c) die gemeenskaplike verset teen Franse optrede in die Magrib en (d) verset teen die voortbestaan van koloniale beheer in Afrika.

Nog is die optrede van Islam gematig soos bewys is deur die drastiese onderdrukking deur die Egiptiese regering van die fanatieke Moslem-Broederbond (met ledetal tussen een of twee miljoene) by geleenthede waar hulle eise en optrede buitensporig geword het. Maar ekstremiste se stemme word meer en meer gehoor. So vind ons dat dr. Mustafa Khaladie en dr. 'Umoar Farroekh in 1953 'n boek uitgee met die titel: „Sendelinge en Imperialisme“ waarin hulle verklaar dat sendelinge imperialisme uitdra en o.m.: „Die feit bly dat die verkondiging van godsdienste 'n bysaak is in sendingaktiwiteite“ (bls. 28) en „sendelinge word gekenmerk deur sterk vyandskap teenoor Arabiere en Mohammedane en 'n openlike haat vir ander Christengroepe wat van hulle verskil“ (bls. 30). Sulke ekstremistiese uitlatings word natuurlik bedoel om die wêreld van Islam teen die imperialiste te verenig, en hulle vind 'n simpatieke gehoor onder die naturelle-nasionaliste verder suid.

In dié verband skrywe die Intelligence Digest in Januarie 1960:

„This process of wooing Africans into joining Islam has until recently been proceeding quietly and efforts were made not to attract too much attention. Now, suddenly, all caution is being abandoned and the drive for more converts, directed from Egypt, is accompanied by outright attacks on Christianity and on Christianity's interference with African traditions and culture . . . Mohammedanism is being offered as the great unifying force for all Africans.“

Majoor Louis Kraft meen dat in die laaste 30 jaar Islam 1,000 myl vooruitgang gemaak het in Afrika en dat die tempo versnel word. Voor my lê 'n brief van die Sekretaris van die Sudan Interior Mission waarin hy skrywe: „Our own missionaries, entering areas that were always known as pagan, have found time and again that Moslem missionaries have got there first and the result has been that once-pagan areas have become solid Moslem blocks.“

Daar is geen twyfel dat Islam vinnig uitbrei nie. Wat staan ons as Christene te doen voor hierdie opmars van Islam?

Oorgeneem van „Polumnia“, 1960. Die tweede deel van die artikel verskyn volgende maand en is 'n poging om rigting te gee in wat gedoen kan word in antwoord aan Islam.

WERKE WAARNA VERWYS IS

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(Vervolg van bladsy 6)

Op hierdie terreine moet hul onder leiding van die Heilige Gees deur woord en daad getuig van die geloof wat in hulle is.

4. Ons betuig daarom dat die sendingwerk beslag op alle Christene in al die ses vastelande is. Sending moet die gemeenskaplike getuigenis van die hele kerk wees wat die hele evangelie na die hele wêreld uitdra. Ons hoort nog nie goed watter omwentelinge hierdie benadering van ons eis nie. Maar in geloof beurt ons vorentoe in roedevrie afwaagting van die leiding van die Heilige Gees.

„Inter Nos“, Februarie 1964.

THIRD MINISTERS' REFRESHER COURSE

The third of the series of refresher courses which are being held under the auspices of the Theological Education Fund will be held in February 1965, probably in Johannesburg or vicinity. Interested ministers are asked to write immediately for details to **The Secretary, Ministers' Refresher Courses, c/o P.O. Box 97, Johannesburg**. It is hoped that vacancies will be available for a small number of White ministers also. Ministers who have attended past courses may apply again.

The theme for the course will probably be „The Task of the Church in Urban Industrial Areas“ and we hope to have at least two well-known overseas theologians among our lecturers.

Participants must hold at least the Junior Certificate plus the Minister's certificate of their own churches. They must be able to understand and speak English.

All travelling and accommodation expenses will be paid by the Committee, but a fee of R10.00 will be levied on each participant to assist with the administrative costs. The course will be of three weeks' duration.

Please write immediately to the Secretary for details.

DIE FRANSE PRIESTER-ARBEIDERS IN DIE INDUSTRIESENDING

Bulletin 14 van die **Persbureau der N. Herv. Kerk** verklaar soos volg:

„Nadat tydens die laaste oorlog in Frankryk 'n studiestuk oor die taak van die Rooms Katolieke Kerk in Frankryk ten opsigte van die ontkerkende arbeiders-wêreld verskyn het, het die gedagte al meer na vore gekom dat daar 'n taak vir sommige priesters om as **arbeiders** tussen die arbeiders te gaan staan om so hul getuigenis te lewer. Hierdie oortuiging is versterk nadat 'n aantal priesters as gewone arbeiders saam met die Franse arbeiders na Duitsland gegaan het.“

Die Franse kardinaal Suhaid het hierdie beweging verdedig maar die aanvalle daarteen van die uiters regtervleuel onder die Franse Katolieke en ook van die Curie in Rome het al hoe sterker geword.

Na die dood van kardinaal Suhaid in 1949 was daar geen prelaat meer in Frankryk wat hom voluit agter die beweging gestel het nie en het die teenstand van uit Rome geseëvier en is die priesters verbied om hulle in die arbeiderstand te laat inskakel. Hierdie verbod sou in 1954 van krag word.

Tien jaar het sedertdien verloop. Ongeveer 50 of tweederde van die aantal priesterarbeiders het hulle nie aan die verbod gesteur nie en het as arbeiders aanhou werk. Sommige het verkies om liewer die Roomse Kerk te verlaat as die roeping wat vir hulle heilig was.

Deur hul handelwyse vóór en na die verbod het die priesterarbeiders in elk geval hierdie positiewe resultaat bereik dat die kerk, en nie slegs die Roomse Kerk nie, bewus geword het van die noodsaaklikheid van evangelisasiewerk onder die arbeiders. Enkele lede van die Franse episkopaat het, stellig onder invloed van die Kosilie in Rome, besluit om weer priesterarbeiders na fabriek in hul diocese te stuur. In die gees van die desentralisasiering wat by die Konsilie geopenbaar is, is daar meer vryheid om op eie verantwoordelikeheid te besluit en kon die eksperiment hervat word ondanks die destydse verbod uit Rome wat nooit herroep is nie.

Die priesterarbeiders, wat met die werk begin het, moes die moeilikhede van hierdie pioniersonderneming verduur en het die kerk waarskynlik 'n groot diens bewys.

„Inter Nos“, Junie 1964.

Lay Training in my Congregation

PART 2

by GEORGE D. WILKIE

Last month Rev. G. D. Wilkie sketched the history and establishment of lay leadership training in his congregation. This month he deals with some of the specific problems encountered in this work.

TRAINING OF THE ELDERS

The monthly meeting of the Kirk Session which normally deals only with business became the "briefing meeting" for the elders preparing them for their leadership in the house churches. Of course the training was principally needed in the leading of the Bible study but there was also discussion about how to conduct a meeting, how to deal with awkward cases, and a sharing of ideas about how the house church could operate more effectively.

There was also from time to time a request for courses in the basic doctrines of the faith. These elders could not get by now with a superficial knowledge of the faith. They were being asked too deep questions and they accepted a responsibility for finding out the answers for their people.

We soon discovered that the biblical plan of going out two by two applied in this work and most of these house churches are now run by two elders cooperating with each other. This makes it easier for them and also strengthens the bond between them as they work together and support each other. Altogether there is a new sense of learning together and of teaching each other, or rather learning from each other in a quite informal way, which is perhaps the best way for older people to learn.

We also found that this job gives the elder a new status. The office of the elder is one greatly respected during Scotland's history, but it is today only a very faint reflection of what it once was. Most elders have the feeling that it should mean more than just dealing with the routine organisation of a congregation. The house church gives the elder a new status both in the congregation and in the people of his district. He becomes the person to whom the people will go with a problem or difficulty. Elders themselves say they know this is what they ought to have been doing all along.

TRAINING OF THE CONGREGATION

Of course this applies only to those who attend regularly and that applies to not more than 25% of the congregation. One of the exciting things, however, has been to see the growth of people of quite outstanding ability and perception in the house churches. Men who reveal a depth of understanding in the Bible study and are of course all the time training their fellow-members; women who show remarkable ingenuity in getting round obstacles and caring for people; people on the fringe of the Church who come into their own and bring a refreshing breath of unconventionality to a Christian gathering. Altogether I believe that a person grows more in Christian character in six months in such a group where there is no formal preaching than in six years regular attendance at church services.

The basis on which we work is not essentially different from that on which we started: service and Bible study.

SERVICE

Neighbourly service is still one of the greatest factors in the mission of the Church. It is the one essential thing by which the world recognises whether you are Christians or not.

Some years ago a Glasgow minister was approached by a group of Quakers who wanted to do some work in his "down-town" parish. He directed them to a block of slum tenements and suggested that they go in and clean them up and get essential repairs done. They set to work at weekends with pails and brushes and paint and nails, enlisting the help of the occupants. Three weeks later the minister was walking through his parish one Saturday afternoon when a man (a local man) asked him: "Where are the Christians working this weekend?"

Said the minister: "The church has existed in this parish for over 300 years but they have never called us Christians. Now a bunch of men come in with pails and brushes and immediately they are dubbed 'the Christians.'" Unfortunately I cannot say that the people of the parish now see the members of the house churches who undertake this sort of work as Christians. They see it as arising out of the kindness of individuals because they do not think of it as part of the work of a church.

I would like to emphasize the importance of service however in such groups. Otherwise they can very easily become pious and inward looking.

BIBLE STUDY

One of the great discoveries of course for the laymen was that Bible study could be so interesting and rewarding. They always took it for granted that it was dull. One of the great discoveries for the minister was the realization that in the Protestant Church (of all places!) the laymen had no opportunity of getting down to the problems that face him in the Bible.

The other conviction that we now have is that Bible study of itself creates fellowship. The Bible forces men to be honest, to confess their doubts and to expose their problems. And immediately someone has done that in a group they are putting their trust in the other members. It is like sharing a deep secret with someone. You trust them not to expose you or give you away. So in helping men to share their most secret thoughts, the Bible creates a new trust and sympathy and bond between me, which is the basis of true fellowship.

We expected fellowship to arise out of service. We found it also in Bible study, where you have a committed group. No longer was there a problem of how to inject fellowship into a congregation. For those who attended the house churches it was inevitable and in many cases became a very real and costly thing.

There also grew up a new understanding of the Church. No longer was it down there in that building. "Now we feel the Church is up here in the street", said a member of a house church to a BBC reporter recently.

It would seem to me that this is the Church and not a temporary expedient or missionary tactic. John Robinson, the controversial bishop of Woolich, as early as 1950 wrote: "I believe that the theological recovery of this notion of the Church in the house . . . is one of the most important tasks of this generation. Whereas the organisation is now an optional extra . . . I believe that the cellular structure of the Church will be rediscovered as a necessity of

(Continued in next column)

PUBLIKASIES ONTVANG -

- BOOKS RECEIVED

"Race. Reflections of a theologian" deur P. Bon. Hinwood, O.F.M. Herder, Rome. 168 bl.

Dit gebeur nie dikwels dat in ons blad 'n boek bespreek word, waarin die skrywer ook „Die Brug” se artikels aanhaal nie. (Bl. 86). Dit gaan hier oor „Race. Reflections of a Theologian”, deur dr. P. B. Hinwood, O.F.M.

Hierdie boek is 'n proefskrif ter behaling van die doktersgraad. Dit is nie 'n boek wat mens maklik lees, soos byvoorbeeld 'n slaphandboekie voor jy na bed gaan, nie.

Nadat hy vasgestel het dat rasse altyd 'n rol gespeel het in die geskiedenis en verduidelik het wat die positiewe wetenskappe met rasse bedoel, set die skrywer uiteen hoe die Kerk deur haar leiers teenoor rasse en die gevolge van rasseverskille in die samelewing staan. Hoewel die Kerk die fundamentele gelikheid van alle mense benadruk, neem sy die verskille wat daar bestaan tussen lande, groepe, kulture en rasse in ag. Almal moet bydra tot die vorming en verryking van God se Volk.

Die vierde hoofstuk — 'n kommentaar op die „Instruksie oor dwalings insake Rasseverhoudings” van Pous Pius XI (1937) — is goed. Interessant is dit ook om te verneem dat die Kerk dit regverdig dat die Staat vir ongedooptes die huwelik tussen mense van verskillende rasse kan verbied, mits dit in die openbare belang blyk te wees. (Bl. 89-93).

Tog twyfel ons of hierdie abstrakte behandeling veel hulp sal bied aan talle

mense wat oor rasseverhoudings besorg is. Rasse, soos kulture, is nie 'n filosofiese onderwerp nie, maar 'n realiteit, 'n veranderende werklikheid, wat 'n mens nie alleen uit die oogpunt van wat kerkleiers en sosiologiese deskundiges daaroor in die algemeen sê, kan beskou nie, maar veral met inagneming van die plaaslike omstandighede, sowel geskiedkundig as eietyds. Daarom is die oordeel van Biskoppe wat hulle noodwendig met die rasseverhoudings moet besig hou, soos in Suid-Afrika en die Verenigde State, belangriker as ander uitsprake. Al staan hulle in die bibliografie, word hulle maar min aangehaal. Maar hulle is besorg oor die toepassing van regte en pligte en dit is nie die oogmerk van hierdie proefskrif nie.

In die Kerk het daar 'n groot ontwikkeling plaasgevind ten opsigte van rasseverhoudings. Van die weiering om Indiane tot die Kommunie toe te laat (bl. 3) — op grond dat hulle moontlik nie mense sou wees nie — tot Biskoppe uit alle rasse, wat deur blanke en ander priesters bygestaan word, is 'n groot stap. Hierdie ontwikkeling is nog nuut, slegs vyftig jaar van duur (bl. 103). Dit is darem jammer dat die skrywer sy werk grotendeels op ouer geskifte baseer.

Hier in Suid-Afrika wag ons nog op die toepassing van die beginsels, uitgedruk in Hoofstuk Vier, op die werklikheid van ons rasseverhoudings.

(Oorgeneem van „Die Brug”, Augustus 1964.)

Menings van Lesers

21 September 1964.

Geagte Redaksie,

Graag wens ek hiermee aan die lesers van Pro-Veritate mee te deel dat die Artikel „God, Kerk en Sending”

(Continued from previous column)

its life.” And I would suggest that in such cells lay training is as natural as it could be. It is basically informal but it is constantly raising a demand for the deepest formal instruction. And always it is being tested and tried against the actual needs of the situation.

The house church of today is not of course the whole Church. The New Testament word “oikos” included a man's place of work as well as what we know of as his home and presumably the “oikos” church is to be found in man's work also. I think we see the so-called house church in its true perspective if we see it as one of the attempts to relocate the Church in this generation, as an American writer described it. I believe that this problem of relocating the Church is one which is central to our whole missionary effort.

If I might return to a point made at the beginning, my conviction that in these groups was to be found the true Church, arises not so much because in them I have seen the Word truly preached, though I have seen that, nor because I have seen the Sacrament truly administered, but rather because I have seen the Spirit giving gifts to men and in a group faced with a difficult task choosing someone — sometimes a most unlikely person — for the job which needs to be done. This I am sure gives encouragement to those who have responsibility for lay training and should serve to comfort us and convince us that we do not work alone.

(The Revd. George D. Wilkie is a minister at the Church of Scotland. These excerpts from an address given at the World Consultation for Leaders of Lay Training, Bossey, May, 1963, is reprinted from “Laité”, No. 17, June, 1964.)

in u uitgawe van 15 September 1964 sonder my goedkeuring of medewete gepubliseer is, soos u dan ook tereg in u voetnota te kenne gee.

Met agting,
die uwe.

(Ds.) C. W. H. BOSHOFF.

Die Sendingkantoor
De Kortestraat 117,
Braamfontein,
Johannesburg.

Geagte Redaksie,

Op bladsy drie van die uitgawe van u blad van September 15, lees ek dat die Eerste Minister gesê het: „Attempts are being made to create the impression that we are wrong if we do not allow multi-racial churches . . . We do not wish to change our church from the way in which we have inherited it and experienced it for centuries.”

Dit is tog in stryd met die geskiedenis. Toe ek in 1916 by my gemeente gekom het was daar 'n tal van nie-blankes (Kleurlinge) in die kerk en aan die nagmaalstafel en het die predikant gereeld huisbesoek gedoen saam met die blanke lidmate. Daar is toe 'n plaselike sendingkerk gestig en na enige jare het die mense hulle by die sendingkerk vrywillig aangesluit.

En as ons sou terug gaan in die geskiedenis „vir eeue” van af die aankoms van Jan van Riebeeck sal ons vind dat ons Kerk wel 'n veelrassige kerk was. Ek herinner my toe ek 'n jongman was dat daar talle kleurlinge saam met die blankes aanbid het op Wellington, Paarl, e.a.

Sal u nie hierop die aandag vestig nie?

EMERITUS.