



PRO VERITATE

BEYERS NAUDÉ

Die Kerkbode, die Christelike Instituut en die N.G. Kerk

ROBERT ORR

On the Way to Church Unity

BRUCKNER DE VILLIERS

Protes

DERRICK M. NORMAN

The Socialization of Grace

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PRO VERITATE

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IN HIERDIE UITGAWE

- Ds. Beyers Naudé spreek 'n duidelike woord oor die verhouding van die N.G. Kerk tot die Christelike Instituut, en toon die rol aan wat „Die Kerkbode“ gespeel het om die saak te vertroebel. Bl. 4
- Eerw. Robert Orr laat ons lesers hoor hoe hy by geleentheid met sy gemeente gepraat het oor die noodsaaklikheid van kerkeenheid. Sy bydrae vandeemaand is eintlik 'n weergawe van 'n preek, gelewer op 7 Mei in die Presbiteriaanse Kerk, St. Andrew's, Pretoria. Bl. 6
- Dr. Bruckner de Villiers protesteer teen die proteste teen protes. Bl. 9
- Eerw. Derrick M. Norman bring enkele aspekte van die sogenaamde apostolaatsteologie na vore in 'n artikel waarin hy praat van „die sosialisering van die genade“. Bl. 11
- Anne Attwell, studente in Kaapstad, is van mening dat die kerk hom nie te veel met politieke en sosiale vraagstukke moet inmeng nie. In 'n interessante brief kritiseer sy 'n artikel van ds. J. Moulder wat in ons Junie-uitgawe verskyn het. Ds. Moulder antwoord daarop, asook op besware wat mnr. J. A. Duigan van Rooms-Katolieke kant teen hierdie artikel ingebring het. Dr. Elfie Strassberger van die Christelike Instituut vereer ons blad ook met 'n bemoedigende brief. Bl. 13
- Professor B. B. Keet kon vanweë siekte hierdie maand nie sy rubriek versorg nie. In die plak daarvan vind ons lesers enkele interessante beriggies, oor verskillende bladsye versprei, oor gebeurtenisse van ekumeniese belang in Nederland.

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- The Rev. Beyers Naudé clearly speaks out about relations between the Dutch Reformed Church and the Christian Institute, and points out the rôle which „Die Kerkbode“ has played in confusing the issue. P. 4
- The Rev. Robert Orr on occasion addressed his congregation about the necessity of Church unity. His contribution this month is in fact a reproduction of a sermon delivered on the 7th May, in the St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Pretoria. P. 6
- Dr. Bruckner de Villiers protests against protests against protest. P. 9
- The Rev. Derrick M. Norman (Methodist Church, Camps Bay) brings to the fore some aspects of the so-called theology of the apostolate, in an article in which he speaks of 'the socialization of grace'. P. 11
- Anne Attwell, a Cape Town student, holds the view that the Church should not interfere too much in political and social matters. In her interesting letter "a plea for sanctify" is heard in which she criticizes an article by the Rev. J. Moulder in our June issue. Mr. Moulder replies to her criticisms, as well as to objections to this article from a Roman Catholic side by Mr. J. A. Duigan. Dr. Elfie Strassberger of the Christian Institute also honours our paper with an inspiring letter. P. 13
- Owing to illness, Professor B. B. Keet was not able this month to attend to his regular column. As a substitute, however, our readers will find, spread throughout this issue, short, interesting reports dealing with events of ecumenical importance in Holland.

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LET WEL

Die redaksie van Pro Veritate verklaar dat hy nie verantwoordelik is vir menings en standpunte wat in enige ander artikel van hierdie blad verskyn as die inleidingsartikel en redaksionele verklarings nie.

PRO VERITATE verskyn elke 15de van die maand.

(Prys per enkel-eksemplaar 10c)

Inleidingsartikel:

Verstandiger as die Kinders van die Lig

Die verblydendste ding wat gedurende die afgelope weke op die Suid-Afrikaanse samelewings-toneel maar kon gebeur, is dat die betreurenswaardige praktyk van die beswadding van andersdenkendes tot 'n openlike konflik in politieke kringe gelei het.

Hoewel dit op die politieke toneel in enger sin plaasgevind het, tussen prominente van 'n bepaalde politieke party, t.w. die Nasionale Party, is dit vir die Suid-Afrikaanse samelewing in sy geheel en vir elke vlak daarvan, van die grootste betekenis. In die binneste kringe van 'n magtige politieke party, waarvan voorbode uit sy gelede en sommige van sy mondstukke vir jare lank al die voortou geneem het in 'n langasem ketterjag teen die sogenaamde liberaliste, met 'n onbeskaamdheid wat God nog mens ontsien het, word daar nou hande omhoog gehou met 'n besliste haltroep: Tot hiertoe en nie verder nie!

Dit is dieselfde magte wat in hierdie einste party huis wat oor jare heen nie geaarsel het om selfs getuienisse van die suiwerste evangeliese inhoud as komende uit 'n bron wat „kommunisties“ van aard is, so te sê aan die duiwel toe te skryf nie. Dit is dieselfde magte wat daarin geslaag het om die Kerk van Christus hier te lande met 'n diaboliese werking binne te dring en Christen van Christen met bitterheid te vervreem; wat kerklike ampsdraers voor die publieke oog by die naam as die „gelystes“ van 'n „verderflike koers“ ten toon gestel het om hulle sodoende òf in incognito terug te dryf òf 'n bres te probeer slaan tussen hulle en hul werk- en lewenskringe waaraan hulle met hart en siel verbonde is.

Dit blyk nou dat hierdie magte, wat 'n gees van byt en opset onder mense van dieselfde huis indra sodat hulle mekaar wil verteer, hulle aanwesigheid pynlik laat voel juis daar waar hulle so lank beskerm en vertroetel is.

Gesien in die lig van die dringende erns wat die Suid-Afrikaanse politieke situasie van alle verantwoordelike leidliede vereis — ons wil herhaal wat ons verlede maand gesê het — sou dit fataal wees as tyd en kragte in beslag geneem moet word deur die onsinnighede waartoe die ketterjag op die „liberaliste“ so hartstogtelik aandring. Tereg het die redakteur van 'n politieke dagblad wat die haltroep die duidelikste laat hoor het, onlangs daarop gewys dat talle dinge in die huidige politieke koers van Suid-Afrika wat deur sommige as „liberalisme“ beoordeel sou kan word, met die liberalisme as sodanig hoegenaamd geen verband wil hou nie, maar bloot as „gesonde verstand“ in politieke optrede soos bepaalde situasies dit vereis, beoordeel wil word.

Laat daar geen twyfel oor wees nie: Vanuit 'n politieke oogpunt gesien, moet bv. die beleid van die ontwikkeling van onafhanklike, selfbeskikkende tuislande vir die verskillende bevolkingsgroepe van

Suid-Afrika — 'n beleid wat daarop aanspraak maak dat die gedagte wat daaraan ten grondslag lê, dit is dat die blanke aan ander rasse moet gun wat hy vir homself toeëien — as liberaal beskou word. In weerwil van hierdie sprekende analogie sal die ontwerpers en voorstanders van hierdie beleid egter met rede die grondigste beswaar kan maak teen enige verwyf as sou hulle hul aan die ideale van „die liberalisme“ verbind het. Elke regdenkende mens sal dit dan ook aan hulle gun om self te sê watter motiewe hulle dan wêl tot hul siening gelei het; en tensy daar grondige redes voor is, behoort hulle geloofwaardigheid hierin tog nie in twyfel getrek te word nie. Veral sou dit uiters onbillik, ja onsinnig wees om hulle, op grond van iets wat hulle sê wat 'n volbloed liberaal toevallig óók sê, as „liberaliste“ te gaan uitskel (met die populêre konnotasie wat die volksemosie daaraan gegee het).

Hoe dit ook sy, wat uit hierdie roeringe op die politieke erf blyk, en dit tot beskaming van sekere kerke in ons land (m.n. die Afrikaanssprekende kerke), is dat politieke figure in hulle kring bereid is om te sê wat in die Kerk al lankal met gesag gesê moes word, en dat hulle bereid is om in eie kring te doen wat die Kerk op sy terrein nagelaat het.

In onderskeiding van, en soms ook in skerp teenstelling met die politieke party, spreek die Kerk (of ook: die Heilige Skrif) sy eie taal. Waar die politieke ideologie egter as norm teenoor die Skrif aangewend word, is dit 'n uitgemaakte saak dat hierdie eie taal in meerdere of mindere mate òf by die ideologie aangepas òf daardeur verwerp sal word.

So lank as wat daar wêreld is, sal die Bybel en elke politieke ideologie altyd op gespanne voet met mekaar verkeer, of hierdie ideologieë nou ook al so ver uitmekaar wil lê soos die Kommunisme aan die een kant en apartheid aan die ander kant. Dit maak per slot van rekening nie soveel verskil of die ganse Skrifgetuienis as „opium vir die volk“ verwerp word en of die basiese elemente van die evangelie van versoening as liberalistiese gif vir die volkslewe bestempel word nie.

Die Kerk kan egter alleen dan bly wat hy is as hy, hoe ergerniswekkend sy getuienis ook al mag wees, aan die Woord wat aan hom toevertrou is, getrou bly. Teenoor elke politieke ideologie staan hy in vryheid — die volkome vryheid waarmee Christus hom vrygemaak het. Sy stryd om te bly wat hy is, bestaan daarin dat hy in hierdie vryheid sal vasstaan. As hy bv. teenoor die materialistiese heilsleer van die Kommunisme getuig van die Bybelse toekomsverwagting, mag hy hom nie laat afskrik deur die verwyf dat hy daarmee 'n instrument geword het van die kapitalisme en imperialisme „van die Weste“ nie, maar moet hy sy vryheid om Gods Woord te spreek, beoefen in getrouheid aan sy roeping; en met die vraag of hy wel daaraan getrou is, is sy wese op die spel.

Dieselfde geld van die Kerk se getuienis teenoor apartheid. Waar apartheid tot grondslag van 'n mens-, lewens- en wêreldbeskouing gemaak word en tot norm verhef word vir wat as konserwatief behoort te geld, is alles wat hierdie ideologie in sy prinsipiële fundering en in sy praktiese intensies weerspreek, vanselfsprekend „liberalisties”. Die kerk wat getrou is aan die getuienis wat aan hom toevertrou is en sy vryheid in Christus nie uit sy hande wil gee nie, het egter geen ander keuse as om apartheid te weerspreek nie. Hy verkondig die broederskap van alle mense; maar daarmee het hy nie 'n werktuig van die liberalisme geword nie. Hy staan daarop dat die Godsvolk 'n gemeenskap en saamverbondenheid in die innigste eenwees van mense is oor die grense heen van volk en ras en taal en kultuur; maar daarmee het hy nie aan 'n gees van grensuitwissing en internasionalisme ten prooi geval nie. As hy die bedoeling van God met sy wêreld bekend maak uit die kennis wat aan hom geopenbaar is, kan hy dit nie ontwyk om tot sosiale geregtigheid op te roep nie; en daarmee berei hy die weg van die komende Here — nie van die „godlose Kommunisme” nie.

Van die kerke in Suid-Afrika het dit egter sienderoë toegelaat en tot die verbystering van vele selfs daartoe aangespoor en die voortou daarin geneem dat teen hierdie getuienis en die draers daarvan 'n

smeerveldtog, ongeëwenaard in ons geskiedenis, gevoer word wat deur die apostels van apartheid vanaf politieke verhoë en in die kolomme van politieke koerante op tou gesit is. En nou dat die kinders in die politieke huis mokaar wil begin verteer, word dáár besef dat dit niks minder nie as 'n demonie is wat betyds nog, as dit kan, besweer moet word. Die skade wat dit kan aanrig, so word dáár besef, is onberekenbaar.

Maar die Kerk het hierin agter gebly.

Tog is die waarheid wat aan hom toevertrou is om uit te spreek, nog veel suiwerder, 'n veel sekerder grondslag vir die blywende ordelike lewe in ons land as dié wat die wysste verkondigers van apartheid meen te besit. Hoe toegeeflik die Kerk ook al mag staan teenoor politieke toonaangewers wat in alle erns trag om die botsing tussen die politieke ideologie en die Christelike geloof te vermy, hy spreek nog sy eie taal met 'n woordeskat waarin „apartheid” ontbreek. Sal hy nie in politieke kringe veel groter eerbied afdwing, en daar ook 'n groter diens bewys, as hy ook eenmaal met gesag wil verklaar dat die vertekening van sy evangelie tot „verderflike” liberalisme 'n gruwelike lastering is nie? As hy weier om onder druk van politieke verdagmaking sy eie taal te verknoei en so sy vryheid in te boet?

Editorial:

Wiser than the Children of Light

The most gladdening occurrence of the past few weeks on the stage of South African society has been that the reprehensible practice of besmirching those of a different opinion has led to an open conflict in political circles.

Although this took place on the political stage in a narrower sense, between prominencies of a particular political party, to wit the National Party, it is of the greatest importance for South African society as a whole and for everyone of its departments. With a decisive Halt! — so far and no further! — hands are now being uplifted in the innermost circles of a mighty political party in which bell-wethers from its ranks and some of its mouth-pieces have for years already taken the lead in a long-winded heresy-hunt directed against so-called liberals.

It was these same powers, nesting in this very party, who for years did not hesitate to depict even witnesses of the purest evangelical content as deriving from a source which was „communistic” in nature, i.e. virtually ascribable to the devil himself. It was these same powers who succeeded in penetrating the Church of Christ in our country

with diabolical effect and in estranging Christian from Christian in bitterness; who publicly accused office-bearers of the Church by name as „listed followers” of a „pernicious course” in order thereby either to force them back into an incognito status or to try and create a breach between them and their circles of work and of life to which they were bound in heart and soul.

It now proves that these powers, who introduced a spirit of backbiting and devouring among members of the same household so that they want to consume each other, are making their presence painfully felt exactly there where they have so long been protected and coddled.

Viewed in the light of the urgent seriousness which the South African political situation demands from all responsible leaders — we wish to repeat what we said last month — it would be fatal if time and energy had to be expended on the absurdities so passionately insisted upon by the „liberalist” heresy hunters. Quite rightly the editor of a political daily which most clearly shouted Halt! recently pointed out that many things in the present political course of South Africa which could be regarded by some

as "liberalism" do not have any connection whatsoever with liberalism as such, but are merely to be regarded as "common sense" in political action depending upon specific situations.

Let there be no doubt: Regarded from a political viewpoint, for example, the policy of the development of independent, self-determining homelands for the various population groups of South Africa — a policy which claims as its basic principle that the White man must grant other races that which he claims for himself — must be regarded as liberal. In spite of this striking analogy the planners and protagonists of the policy could, however, most justifiably object to any accusation of having bound themselves to the ideals of "liberalism". Every right-thinking person would also grant them the right themselves to state what motives did indeed lead them to their view; and unless there be very sound reasons, their credibility in this instance should surely not be held in doubt. It would be particularly unfair, yes absurd, to upbraid them for being "liberalists" (with the popular connotation assigned to the name by mass emotion) on the strength of something said by them which the dyed-in-wool liberal by chance **also** says.

In any case, what emerges from these commotions in the field of politics, putting certain churches in our country (viz. the Afrikaans-speaking churches) to shame, is that political leaders are prepared to state in their own circle what the Church should long ago have stated with authority, and that they are prepared to do in their own circle what the Church has neglected on its terrain.

In contradistinction, and often also in sharp contradiction to the political party, the Church (or also: Holy Scripture) speaks its own language. Wherever political ideology is used as a norm vis-a-vis Scripture, however, it is a foregone conclusion that this peculiar language will to a greater or lesser extent either be adapted to the ideology or be rejected by it.

As long as the world exists there will always exist a state of tension between the Bible and every political ideology, even though these ideologies be so far apart as Communism, on the one hand, and apartheid on the other. In final analysis, it does not matter so much whether the whole witness of Scripture is rejected as "opium for the people" or whether the basic elements of the gospel of atonement are described as liberalistic poison for the life of the people.

The Church can only then remain what it is, however, if it remains true to the Word which is entrusted to it, however annoying its witness may be. In confrontation with every political ideology it stands in freedom — the perfect freedom with which Christ set it free. Its struggle to remain what it is consists of standing firm in this freedom. If, for instance, it gives witness concerning the Biblical expectation of the future as against the materialistic

doctrine of salvation of Communism, it dare not allow itself to be deterred by the accusation that thereby it has become an instrument of capitalism and the imperialism "of the West", but it must make use of its freedom to proclaim God's Word in faithfulness to its calling; and its whole substance is placed at stake with the question whether it is indeed faithful towards it.

The same applies to the Church's witness with regard to apartheid. Where apartheid is regarded as the basis of a view of man, life and the world and is postulated as the norm for what should be regarded as conservative everything which contradicts this ideology in its basic principle and in its practical intentions is obviously liberalistic. The Church which remains true to the witness entrusted to it and refuses to relinquish its freedom in Christ has no other choice, however, than to contradict apartheid. It proclaims the brotherhood of all men; but in so doing it has not become an instrument of liberalism. It insists that the people of God is a community and fellowship in the most intimate oneness of men across all barriers of nation and race and language and culture; but in so doing it has not fallen prey to a spirit of abolition of differences and of internationalism. If, from the knowledge revealed to it, it makes known the purpose of God with his world, it cannot avoid calling for social justice; and in so doing it prepares the way for the coming Lord — not for "godless Communism".

Some of the churches in South Africa have, however, wittingly permitted it and have, to the dismay of many, even encouraged it and taken the lead in allowing this witness and its bearers to be subjected to a smear campaign, unparalleled in our history, which was set in train by the apostles of apartheid from political platforms and in the columns of political newspapers. And now that the children in the house of politics want to start devouring each other it is being realised **there** that it is nothing less than something demoniacal which should be exorcised in good time, if at all possible. The damage it can do, it is being realised **there**, is incalculable.

But in this matter the Church has straggled behind.

Yet the truth which it is entrusted to proclaim is still far more pure, a far more secure basis for enduring orderly life in our country than that which the wisest advocates of apartheid deem themselves to possess. However permissive the Church's attitude may be to the political trend-setters who are in all earnestness attempting to avoid the clash between political ideology and Christian faith, it still speaks its own language with a vocabulary in which "apartheid" does not occur. Would it not command far greater respect in political circles, and also perform a greater service there, if it were also once to state that the caricaturisation of its gospel as "pernicious" liberalism is a horrible blasphemy? If it refuses to mangle its own language under the pressure of political suspicion-rousing and thus to sacrifice its freedom?

DIE KERKBODE, DIE CHRISTELIKE INSTITUUT EN DIE NEDERDUITSE GEREFORMEERDE KERK

BEYERS NAUDÉ

In „Die Kerkbode” van Woensdag, 28 Junie 1967 verskyn daar ’n inleidingsartikel van die hand van die redakteur van die blad wat nog baie verreikende gevolge, nie alleen vir die skrywer daarvan, maar ook vir die hele Ned. Geref. Kerk kan hê. Dit dra die opskrif: RING EN SINODE en inhoudelik handel dit oor die implikasies van die besluit van die Ring van Johannesburg insake die uitvoering van die besluit van die Algemene Sinode rakende die Christelike Instituut, maar wesenlik handel dit oor die beslissende vraag oor wat die swaarste weeg: gehoorsaamheid aan die gesag van die Skrif of die gesag van ’n Sinodale liggaam. En die antwoord wat die redakteur gee laat geen twyfel oor waar vir hom die klem val of die keuse lê nie.

Omdat daar vir die Ned. Geref. Kerk sowel as vir die hele Kerk van Christus in Suid-Afrika soveel op die spel is in dié saak soos gesentreer rondom die bestaan, doelstellinge en aktiwiteite van die Christelike Instituut, ag ons dit dringend noodsaaklik om die soeklig op die sieninge van die redakteur te laat val en dit te toets aan Skrif en belydenis.

KERKREGTELIKE ASPEKTE

Wie die betrokke artikel lees en die standpunte van die redakteur vergelyk met sy eie uitspraak in ’n inleidingsartikel van 30 Maart onder die opskrif: ORDE! asook met die antwoord van die Actuaris van die Algemene Sinode onder die opskrif: **Wat sê die Kerkwet?** (Kerkbode, 21 Junie 1967) en dit op sy beurt vergelyk met die „harteroep” van prof. P. A. Verhoef gerig tot die Breë Moderatuur en tot Kerkrade (Kerkbode, 7 Junie 1967), en met die brief van dr. W. D. Jonker (Kerkbode, 26 Julie 1967), kan net tot een gevolgtrekking kom nl. dat hier ’n byna Babelse verwarring by verantwoordelike Sinodale ampsdraers en kerkleiers weerspieël word oor die vraag: Tug of nie tug nie? En die redakteur help blykbaar nie mee om dié verwarring op te klaar of te verminder nie. Hy sou dit kon doen as hy d.m.v. **Die Kerkbode** die kerk op o.a. die volgende kon wys:

(a) Die advies dat „die ordelike weg om die Sinode se besluit te wysig, is deur ’n beswaarskrif of beskrywingspunt by die Sinode in te dien” is net nie uitvoerbaar sover dit sodanige indiening deur ’n lidmaat, Kerkraad of Ring by die Algemene Sinode betref nie, aange-

sien die Kerkorde van die Ned. Geref. Kerk geen reg daartoe verleen nie. Dit geld ook vir dr. J. D. Vorster se verwysing na die indiening van ’n gravamen. Die Gereformeerde Kerk in Nederland asook dié in Suid-Afrika maak duidelik voorsiening vir sodanige moontlikheid (en beoefen dit inderdaad) maar in die Ned. Geref. Kerk se kerkorde is daar geen verwysing na so iets as ’n gravamen nie hoewel die ou Wette en Bepalinge van die Ned. Geref. Kerk die reg aan ’n individuele lidmaat verleen het om ’n beswaarskrif direk by ’n Sinode in te dien. Die verwysing na Artikel 23 van die kerkorde gaan nie op nie omdat dit kennelik na die reg van appèl verwys van ’n mindere vergadering op ’n meerdere, terwyl dit hier om die beswaar van individuele lede gaan.

(b) Die besluit van die Kerkraad van Parkhurst en die versoek van die Ring van Johannesburg is geen blyke van ongehoorsaamheid teenoor die gesag van die Sinode nie, maar juis die bewys dat albei liggame erns wil maak met die Sinodale besluit en in hulle poging tot uitvoering van dié besluit voor oorkomelike struikelblokke te staan kom. Dis nie dié liggame wat die probleem skep of daarvoor verantwoordelik is nie, en ook nie die Christelike Instituut nie, maar twee besluite, een van die Breë Moderatuur (geneem op November 1963) en dié van die Algemene Sinode soos geneem op Oktober 1966.

DIE TWEE BESLUITE

Eerstens is daar die besluit van die Breë Moderatuur oor die Chris-

telike Instituut geneem in November 1963, ’n paar dae nadat die direkteur sy arbeid by die Instituut begin het en nog voordat die Instituut met enige eie werksaamhede ’n aanvang geneem het. Die redakteur haal in sy artikel dié besluit volledig aan as bewys van die leiding wat dié liggaam aan kerkrade en ringe gegee het. Nou is dit hoogs interessant om daarop te let dat die Breë Moderatuur ’n besluit neem waarin verreikende gevolgtrekkings gemaak en ernstige aanklagte teen die Christelike Instituut ingebring word op ’n tydstip toe die Christelike Instituut nog nie eers begin funksioneer het nie! En dit sonder dat die Breë Moderatuur enige amptenaar of bestuurslid van die Christelike Instituut om inligting nader, te woord staan of die geleentheid deur ’n gesprek of ondervraging gee om die onbewese en onbewysbare aanklagte teen die Christelike Instituut te weerlê. Die eerste woord wat die Instituut destyds van die besluit verneem het, was toe ’n berig daarvoor in die pers (ek meen dit was in ’n Afrikaanse Sondagblad) verskyn het. Met reg mag ons die volgende vrae i.v.m. hierdie besluit stel:

(1) Was dit billik van die Breë Moderatuur om so ’n besluit te neem sonder om vooraf homself van die ware toedrag van sake te vergewis en indien nodig die Christelike Instituut die geleentheid te gee om valse sieninge te weerlê?

(2) Op grond waarvan kon die Breë Moderatuur beweer dat „dit duidelik is dat die stigting en optrede van die Instituut noodwendig moet lei tot die bestryding van die rasse- en ekumeniese standpunt van die Kerk”?

(3) Op grond waarvan kon die Breë Moderatuur beweer dat „die Instituut hom begeef op die terrein van die Kerk deur vir hom sekere funksies, wat tot die roeping en terrein van die Kerk behoort, toe te eien” (aksentuering van ons) en dat hierdeur die stigting van die Instituut die Kerk in die uitvoering van sy taak hinder? Hoekom is daar geen

ander kerk in Suid-Afrika (behalwe die Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk van Afrika) wat so 'n standpunt huldig en die Instituut as so 'n bedreiging sien nie?

(4) Met watter goeie reg kon die Moderatuur voorgee (in die derde rede aangevoer vir die nie-goedkeuring van die Christelike Instituut) dat die N.G. Kerk „vir die behartiging van ekumeniese belange . . . die nodige liggame en kanale vir konsultasie en samewerking geskep het”? Is dit nie juis een van die kardinale probleme dat vanaf Cottesloe hierdie kanale meer en meer toegestop en die geleenthede vir geestelike verkeer oor kerk- en rassegrense heen meer en meer van die hand gewys, veroordeel en verdag gemaak is nie?

Wat die besluit van die Algemene Sinode betref wil ons nie nou op die konklusies ingaan wat deur die Sinode as gronde vir verwerping aangedien is nie. Waarop ons egter wel moet wys is dat nóg die Breë Moderatuur (wat in 1963 baie gou was om aan kerkrade en ringe leiding oor die Christelike Instituut te gee) nóg enige ander kerklike liggaam tot dusver by magte of gewillig was om antwoord te gee op die een kernvraag wat die Christelike Instituut vanaf 1963 — maar veral na die Sinode-besluit van 1966 — voortdurend en in diepe erns stel: wat is die Skrif- en belydenisgronde op grond waarvan die Christelike Instituut deur die Sinode van die N.G. Kerk veroordeel word? Dr. J. D. Vorster het in **Die Burger** van Junie en Julie 1967 in antwoord op die pertinente versoek van dr. A. M. Hugo om die gronde te voorsien, gespartel om 'n bevredigende antwoord te probeer voorsien sonder om enigsins daarin te slaag. En die antwoord wat die redakteur van **Die Kerkbode** in sy inleidingsartikel probeer gee het (ons kom netnou weer daarop terug) deur na 'n sinsnede van 'n uitspraak van die direkteur van die Christelike Instituut te verwys wat deur hom in 'n televisieprogram van die NBC van die V.S.A. op 25 September 1966 gedoen is, is so 'n kennelike ontduiking van die vraag van die Christelike Instituut dat alleen die domste onder die dommes nie sal bemerk dat die redakteur homself hier sonder sukses probeer uitwikkel uit 'n ystergreep waarin hy vasgevat is nie. Laat ons dit nou maar prontuit sê: daar is baie min predikante en lidmate van die N.G. Kerk wat na beskikbaarstelling van al die feite met goeie

grond sal kan bly beweer dat die Instituut 'n dwaalrigting is wat verwerp moet word. En hoe langer die Breë Moderatuur weier, versuim of huiwer om die Skrifgronde vir die Sinodale besluit te voorsien, hoe minder en minder gaan lidmate glo dat daar wel sulke gronde bestaan.

Dis verder nodig (en ons sê dit in diepe liefde tot en uit ernstige besorgdheid oor die Ned. Geref. Kerk) om daarop te wys dat hierdie besluit die kerk op 'n pad geplaas het waarvan die eindbestemming nie voorsien kan word nie. Dit gaan hier nie in die eerste plek om die Christelike Instituut as sodanig nie, maar om 'n kardinale beginsel wat beslis of die kerk bo al kerk wil wees en bly, nl. die vraag watter maatstaf deur die kerk as hoogste en finale erken word wanneer oor omstrede vraagstukke beslis moet word — die Woord van God of die woord van 'n Sinode? Daar word gedurig gepraat van lojaliteit — en lojaliteit moet daar wees. Die kardinale vraag is net: aan wie is die Christen meerdere lojaliteit verskuldig as daar 'n botsing van lojaliteite binne 'n kerk ontstaan — aan die Woord van God of die woord van 'n Sinode wat die toets van Gods Woord nie kan deurstaan nie?

DIE ROL VAN „DIE KERKBODE”

Met reg mag die kerk van die redakteur van sy amptelike blad verwag om leiding in sulke sake te gee. Met reg mag die lidmate verwag dat die kerk dieselfde teenoor hulle sal doen. Maar dan altyd onder die één voorwaarde: dat elkeen (redakteur, Sinode, lidmaat) hom gedurig en sonder vrees sal onderwerp aan die gesag van Gods Woord. En waar daar verskil is oor wat die Woord van God bedoel of gebied, dat die kerk se leiers en bestuursliggame alle moontlike geleenthede vir 'n oop gesprek skep op grond van en rondom Gods Woord met uitnodiging aan alle Evangeliedienaars en lidmate wat besware oor sekere Sinodale besluite of kerklike beleide mag hê, om dit openhartig te bespreek en uit te debatteer. Dit tog is die weg wat Christus vir sy Kerk aandui.

En nou is dit opvallend dat i.v.m. die stryd rondom die Christelike Instituut in al die talle kere dat die redakteur die saak in sy inleidingsartikels te berde gebring het hierdie Bybelse weg nooit deur hom aangedui is as die weg wat die Kerk moet

bewandel nie. Wat nog meer opvallend is, is dat van die eerste oomblik dat hy oor die Instituut begin skryf het, dit in 'n gees van liefdelose kritiek en volgehoue veroordeling was wat die redakteur van 'n kerkblad onwaardig is. Maar wat nog die meeste opgeval het, is die feit dat die redakteur met sy vaardige pen en vernuftige formuleringe 'n verdediging van die Breë Moderatuur en die Sinode se besluite opgewerp het wat vir die onkritiese leser die skyn van goeie Skrifgefundeerdheid gegee het, maar wat by nadere ontleding geblyk het 'n behendige uitdrukking van 'n bepaalde politieke siening te wees wat onder die dekmantel van Skriftuurlikheid die wêreld ingestuur word. 'n Pragtige voorbeeld hiervan is die afkeurenswaardige taktiek wat die redakteur volg in sy artikel van 28 Junie om die woorde van die direkteur van die Christelike Instituut soos gebesig in die reeds genoemde televisieuitzending verdag te maak by sy leserspubliek. Kan ons nou van die redakteur van **Die Kerkbode** vriendelik maar dringend die volgende vra:

(1) is hy bereid om die hele teks van die televisieprogram te publiseer sodat my woorde in hulle regte verband gesien kan word?

(2) is hy bereid om saam met my en ander mede-Christene die uitspraak te toets aan die Heilige Skrif om vas te stel of die taak van die afbreek van sondige skeidsure („barriers”) nie een van die hoofoogmerke van Christus se komis na hierdie wêreld was nie?

En indien nie, hoe verstaan en verklaar hy dan die Woord van God wat lui: „Want Hy is ons vrede, Hy wat albei een gemaak en die middelmuur van skeiding afgebreek het” (Ef. 2:14)?

So kan ons voortgaan om die een bewys na die ander op te stapel dat waar dit die Christelike Instituut geraak het, die redakteur deurgaans 'n bepaalde partypolitieke siening met 'n vernis van Skriftuurlikheid daarvoor, gepropageer en 'n kerkblad daarvoor gebruik het. Dit wek dan ook geen verbasing dat aan hom die redakteurskap van 'n partypolitieke blad aangebied is nie — en dit is ook sy goeie reg om dit te aanvaar as hy oortuig is (soos ons glo dat hy is) dat hy deur God daartoe geroep word. Maar ons ernstige beswaar is dat **Die Kerkbode** as kerkblad as aanloopbaan gebruik is om hierdie vlug van Kerk na politiek te loods. En in hierdie ywerige oefeningsproses is dr. Treurnicht ge-

reeld en getrou bygestaan deur dr. J. D. Vorster. Dit was hierdie twee kerkleiers wat steeds op die voorpunt gestaan en gebly het in hulle volgehoue aanvalle teen die Christelike Instituut. Dit was hierdie twee manne wat met soveel vuur en hartshitte die Sinode voorgegaan het in hulle pleidooie om felle en finale veroordeling van die Instituut. Dit is hierdie twee broeders (wapenbroers in die ideologiese stryd deur hulle gevoer) wat in hulle oulike spanwerk in die kerk so nou aansluit by die sienswyses van 'n heersende politieke ekstremisme wat al verder en verder in ons kerklike lewe ingedra word en ons kerk al dieper en dieper in die ellende gaan

dompel. Die tyd het aangebreek dat die Kerk se oë moet oopgaan vir wat besig is om te gebeur voordat dit te laat word. Hoe opreg dit ook al bedoel word, neem dit niks weg van die feit dat die optrede van hierdie broeders besig is om die beeld van ons kerk as kerk van die Skrif onnoemlike skade te berokken, ons lidmate te verwar en die samewerking met ander kerke en ekumeniese liggame steeds moeiliker te maak.

Die tragedie is egter dat daar Evangeliedienaars en lidmate in ons N.G. Kerk is wat dieselfde oortuigings huldig as ons, dieselfde bekommernis deel maar wat om verskillende redes die swye bewaar — 'n swye wat uiters skadelik inwerk

op die hoogste belange van die Kerk maar wat verstaanbaar (en deels verskoonbaar) is in ons situasie. In 'n volgende artikel hoop ons om hierdie groot swye te behandel en o.a. daarop te wys dat die optrede van die Ned. Herv. Kerk een van die sterkste faktore is waardeur die Ned. Geref. Kerk in 'n hoek ingedwing word waarin sy verantwoordelike leierskap hom nie graag wil sien nie, maar waarin hy steeds dieper en dieper ingedwing word deur sy huiwering om in omstrede rasse- en ekumeniese aangeleenthede die lig van die Skrif onbevrees op sodanige vraagstukke te laat val en die profetiese woord te spreek wat so nodig is vir hierdie uur.

ON THE WAY TO CHURCH UNITY

THE REV. ROBERT ORR

The first Sunday in May a letter from church leaders was read in most pulpits of the Anglican, Congregational, Methodist and Presbyterian Churches. What does this letter mean? It means that this whole concern with church unity is growing into a bigger, more serious affair than any of us could have predicted four or five years ago. No longer is this just a cosy consultation between Anglicans and Presbyterians. We now have a Church Commission which embraces far and away the vast majority of English-speaking Protestants in this country. It means that churches whose total membership is over the one and a half million mark, possibly near the two million mark are seriously committed to seeking together the unity which they believe to be the will of God for his Church. It does not mean that the Anglican, Congregational, Methodist and Presbyterian churches in South Africa will be one church by this time next year. It does mean that we have publicly and seriously made a commitment to one another to search for this unity and to search for it together.

WHY?

Why is it that in this country and in many other countries, it is not just a few screwball Christians who are fanatical about union, but churches themselves, through their official representatives, who are committing themselves in this way? The letter we read gives the answer: "... the lack of unity of Christ's church is contrary to God's will, and tragically hinders the Christian witness".

How do we know that the lack of unity is contrary to God's will? We know it from the New Testament. God speaks to us in the New Testament. Through Christ himself he speaks: "Love one another; as I have loved you, so you are to love one another. If there is this love among you, then all will know that

you are my disciples". There you have it. The world is not interested in our pretty words about God. It is interested in our deeds, our deeds of love for one another. There is nothing more attractive than love. When the world looks at the church today, how much love does it see? How much do we love other Christians, other disciples of Christ? How much do we love Anglicans, Congregationalists, Methodists? Isn't it true that rather than loving them, we are in — more or less — polite competition with them? Or, if you think that is a bit strong, don't we simply ignore them?

Again, God speaks to us in the New Testament through the apostle Paul. Paul, writing to the congregation at Corinth, which had split up into several quarreling parties, wrote, "Can you not see that while

there is jealousy and strife among you, you are living on the purely human level of your lower nature? When one says, 'I am Paul's man', and another 'I am for Apollos', are you not all too human?" What he means is that their divisions prove that they are dragging their old pagan, un-Christian ways into the life of the Church. Their divisions prove that they still have a great deal to learn about what it means to love and serve Christ.

How do we know that our lack of unity is contrary to God's will? We know it, in the second place, because God speaks to us as we reflect on the New Testament, as we think what it means to have God love us in Jesus Christ. We know it, in other words, through our theology.

When we think theologically, we have to take seriously those Christians who insist that the Church already enjoys a spiritual unity given to it by Christ, that this spiritual unity is enough, that we do not need to express this unity in visible, concrete form through our church structures. We are all related to Christ through our faith and through our baptism. We are all, as the New Testament says, "in Christ". And if we are all related to Christ in this way, then we are obviously all related to each other in a unity of the Spirit, a spiritual

unity. This is true. But we cannot stop there. We have to reckon with the concrete, earthy nature of Christianity. What I mean is that when God wanted to give us his love, he did not give it to us in some "spiritual" form. He gave it to us through a concrete, historical person, Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ was not just a "spiritual experience" in the hearts and minds of the disciples. He was the Son of God incarnate. As John puts it at the beginning of his letter to all Christians: "We have heard him; we have seen him with our own eyes; we looked upon him and felt him with our hands". The Church that is rooted and grounded in Jesus Christ cannot be content with a "spiritual unity" any more than it can be content with a Christ who was only "spiritual" and did not have a physical body.

How do we know that our lack of unity is contrary to God's will? We know it, in the third place, because God speaks to us through the needs of men. Just as Christ came to serve, so he commands and commissions his Church to serve. The Church is not here for its own benefit, nor even for the benefit of its members. It is here for the benefit of the world. The Church exists for the sake of those outside, to help them to see their deepest needs and then to serve those needs. And what, would you say, is the pressing need of men in this generation? Would you not agree with me that the most urgent need of men is healing, solidarity with one another, unity, peace, the overcoming of those barriers which keep us separated from one another? Wholeness, unity — this is the crying need of the world we know.

Where will they find it? Where will they find this peace, this wholeness, this unity? Here we come face to face with a paradox. On the one hand, the Christian Church proclaims a message of reconciliation, peace and unity. We have the secret of wholeness, the secret which helps men to realise that underneath all their outward differences they can be united, at one with one another. To put it simply, we have what all men need and what most men want. On the other hand, the life of the churches, the present **divided** life of the churches, is a glaring contradiction of this very message of peace and reconciliation and unity. Our divisions into denominations, sects and class churches are a blatant

denial of the quality of life which God has offered his people through Jesus Christ. If I were a non-Christian and I heard a Christian speaking to me about the secret of unity, I would have to say, in all honesty, "Yes, that is what you say. But it is not what you believe. If you did believe it, you would find the name of Jesus sufficient to overcome all your differences. In fact, you add all sorts of other names — Presbyterian, Anglican, Methodist and what have you. Clearly you have not yet made use of the secret which you now offer to me".

NO CHOICE

Let me make this very clear. We who believe passionately in this church unity business are not in it for the sake of our health or happiness. I confess very frankly that there are times when I wish I could get shot of the whole business. There are so many problems, so many people who suspect one's motives, so many heartbreaks, that I wish I could leave it to others and just get on quietly with the business of being a parish minister with no fuss and bother. But I cannot. For I believe, deep down inside me, that this is God's will for his Church in this generation. Again, let me make it very clear that what we are after is not just a big church. We are not fascinated by the size of the united church we could have if Presbyterians and Anglicans and Methodists and Congregationalists get together. Size does not matter to God. What we are fascinated by is the spectacle of a church that will be, because of its unity, that much closer to obeying God. Again, let me make it very clear that we are not trying to gang up on anybody. We are not trying to gang up, for example on the world. The Church is not against the world. The Church is for the world, and wants to serve the world, and believes that through its unity it can serve the world that much better. Again, let me make it very clear that the English-speaking Protestant churches of this country are not trying to gang up on the Dutch Reformed Churches. We have already been accused of that, and with all the emphasis I can command I say it is a lie. If the Dutch Reformed Churches wish at any time to share in our search for unity, we shall welcome them with gladness and joy. No, the only reason why we work and pray and

think and sweat in the cause of unity is that we believe it to be God's will. Because of that, too, we believe that nothing can stop it.

FEAR

Nothing can stop it. There are many things that can **hinder** it. And the chief thing that hinders it is **fear**. Mention unity and often the first reaction is fear. What are you afraid of? I know that four hundred years ago, our Reformation fathers, with deep grief in their hearts, believed it necessary to divide the church **in order to protect and preserve an essential truth of the Gospel**. But now? Is it true, today, that for us to unite with the Anglicans, the Methodists, the Congregationalists would also be for us to betray the Gospel? No, of course not. **Another thing we fear is uniformity**. Particularly in our ways of worship. We fear that a united church will present to all its members a dreadful, dreary sameness in all its ways of worship, that we shall all be squeezed, no matter what our temperaments or our characters may be, into the identical mould of set prayers and creeds and bowing and scraping and incense and all the rest of it. If this is your fear, then be re-assured. Those who work and pray for unity are at the same time those who unanimously regard uniformity as an evil to be avoided at all costs. Unity does not mean uniformity. The Church Unity Conversations are already emphatically on record to this effect. **Some of us fear absorption**. We fear, as Presbyterians for example, that all our distinctive ways — our emphasis on the importance of preaching, our emphasis on the tremendous value of the eldership — that these will be swallowed up and lost in a united church. Again, be reassured. From my own personal knowledge, I can tell you that other churches covet precisely these things. Not that we are talking unity officially with the Roman Catholic Church, but it was to a Roman Catholic friend of mine that I put the question, "What would you hope to gain, to learn from the Protestants and particularly the Presbyterians?" Without hesitation the answer came back, "Your insistence on the value of preaching, and the way your laymen feel an integral part of the Church." We are not after absorption, where the special gifts of each church are

destroyed or just quietly dropped over the side. We are after unity where the gifts that each church has learned will enrich the whole.

Some of us fear change. We do not like anyone to rock the boat. This makes us uncomfortable and unhappy. We would far rather that the life of the Church went on in its old accustomed grooves. Here I cannot re-assure you. I can only point you to the fact that in these changing times God is moving on ahead of the Church, calling to us

in the needs of men, calling us to serve those needs with new methods, new structures, new forms of obedience to him, a new and deeper love. And after all, this is what matters isn't it — our obedience to God in this generation. Compared to that our accustomed ways of doing things, our venerable traditions do not matter a click of the fingers.

A new and deeper love. "If there is this love among you, then all will know that you are my disciples".

This is the crux of the matter. And if we concentrate overmuch on our fears, then the word of God comes again in all its judgment and encouragement: "There is no room for fear in love; perfect love banishes fear". As we move out in love towards our Christian brethren, seeking with them a new and deeper love, a new and deeper obedience to God, let us be re-assured that we are moving, at the same time, towards a deeper relationship with God.

OMVATTENDE „NUWE” RAAD VAN KERKE IN NEDERLAND

In Nederland word tans voorbereidings getref met die oog op die totstandbrenging van 'n „nuwe” raad van kerke wat dermate 'n reorganisasie van die huidige ekumeniese raad van kerke aldaar is dat dit, volgens 'n berig in „Hervormd Nederland” (24 Junie 1967), sodanig sal wees dat kerke wat op die oomblik nie lid van die raad is nie, soos die Gereformeerde Kerke, die Roomse Kerk en die Unie van Baptiste-gemeentes, sonder beswaar daarby sal kan aansluit.

Op 16 Junie j.l. is te Utrecht 'n vergadering van verteenwoordigers van 'n aantal kerke gehou om daarvoor te beraadslaag. 'n Vooraf benoemde werkkommissie het aan hierdie vergadering 'n verslag met 'n aantal voorstelle voorgelê wat deur die verteenwoordigers voor hulle onderskeie kerke gebring sal word. Die verslag bestaan uit drie dele: Uitgangspunte, vormgewing en die ontwerp van 'n nuwe statuut. Vyf uitgangspunte word daarin genoem.

1. In 'n beraad oor die vormgewing van die gemeenskap van kerke in Nederland is die belangrikste gesigspunt dié van die *eenheid in getuienis en diens*. Die werkkommissie het daarby uitgegaan van die veronderstelling dat, as die kerke ten aansien van getuienis en diens tot oorleg en samewerking kom, dit op die duur moet en ook kan lei tot stappe in die rigting van *organiese verbondenheid* en selfs tot *organisatoriese eenheid*. Die skrywer van die berig in *Hervormd Nederland* merk daarby op: „As dit die kerke *werklik* erns is met hulle eenheid in getuienis en diens, as hulle *werklik* tesaam die geloof in Jesus Christus as Hoof van die Kerk en Heer van die wêreld gaan bely

in die één geloofsverkondiging, in die één aanbidding, in die één gebed vir die nood van die wêreld, in die één Doop en in die één maaltyd van danksegging, in hul arbeid vir die vrede tussen die volkere, in hul diens aan die nabye en verre naaste, dan sal hulle in elk geval op weë gelei word en op weë wil gaan na 'n groter organiese eenheid. En verwag die geloof te veel as dit daarop reken dat daar óók iets gerealiseer sal kan word van die eenheid wat sigbaar word in die *eenheid van ampte en vergaderinge*; in die eenheid van kerkorganisasie?”

2. Die tweede uitgangspunt is dat alle kerke by die raad moet kan aansluit as volwaardige lid, afgesien van die vraag of hulle lid is van die Wêreldraad van Kerke of nie. Wel sal die nuwe raad bereid moet wees om ten volle oop te staan vir die inspirasie van die ekumeniese bewegings soos dit gestalte gekry het in die Wêreldraad, in die Europese konferensie van kerke, in die Hervormde Wêreldbond, die Lutherse Wêreldbond, die Kongregasionalistiese Wêreldorganisasie, die tweede Vatikaanse konsilie, ens.

3. Die derde uitgangspunt is dat allerlei vorme van kerklike arbeid wat buite die huidige ekumeniese raad om tot ontwikkeling gekom het, in die nuwe raad saamgebring moet word.

4. Die vierde uitgangspunt is die deelneming van die Rooms-Katolieke Kerk. Die skrywer van die berig sê daarvoor die volgende: „Toe 'n paar jaar gelede suggesties in die rigting gemaak is deur die Evangelies-Lutherse Kerk, het ek persoonlik nog baie aarselend, indien nie afwysend, daarteenoor gestaan. Nou dink ek radikaal anders daarvoor. Ons het as Reformatoriese Christene 'n besonder groot verantwoordelikheid teenoor die Rooms-Katolieke Kerk in sy Nederlandse Kerkprovinsie. Wat hier

gebeur aan heroriëntering en vernuwing, in 'n nuwe soeke van inspirasie uit die oergetuienis van profete en apostels, is uniek in die hele R.-K. Kerk en kan vir die hele R.-K. Kerk, ja vir die één heilige katolieke en apostoliese kerk waarvan ook ons as evangeliese Christene deel uitmaak, van onskatbare betekenis wees”. Van die kant van die Nederlandse episkopaat was daar dan ook blyke van bereidheid tot samewerking. 'n Verteenwoordiger van die episkopaat het in die werkkommissie sitting gehad.

5. Wat betref die vyfde uitgangspunt, die van die vryheid en die gebondenheid van die kerkgemeenskappe, het die werkkommissie uitgegaan van die beginsel dat goeie samewerking alleen op die basis van vrywilligheid kan plaasvind. Die kerke moet mekaar geen juk oplê nie. Die Raad mag nooit *teenoor* die kerke staan nie. Die kerke doen *saam* daarin iets. As 'n kerk bv. vir een of ander verklaring van die raad nie medeverantwoordelikheid wil dra nie, moet hy die vryheid daartoe hê. Die samewerking as beginsel hoef daardeur nie verbreek te word nie en die kerke moet mekaar nie daarom minder ag nie.

Lidmaatskap van die raad — so word voorgestel — moet oop staan vir „geestelike gemeenskappe” soos die Heilsleër en die Genootskap van Quakers wat in hulle arbeid met die kerk verwant is, en die moontlikheid van die samewerking van verenigings en stigtings moet eweëns oopgelaat word.

'n „Inleiding” wat as 'n soort „basisformule” dien, gaan aan die konsepstatuut vooraf. Dit lui: „Die kerke, aangesluit by die Raad van Kerke in Nederland, wil in getuienis en diens gestalte gee aan die gemeenskap van kerke, in die geloof in die een Heer Jesus Christus, die Hoof van die Kerk en die Heer van die wêreld”.

GEESTESKWELLINGE

PROTES

 DR. W. BRUCKNER DE VILLIERS

In die afgelope tyd is daar in ons land weer deur 'n paar enkelinge en instansies protes aangeteken teen die optrede van kerklike en politieke owerhede, het daar van andere vermaninge tot omsigtigheid uitgegaan as sou die tyd vir protes reeds verby wees en het nog 'n derde groep dit openlik betreur dat die hele gees van protes hier te lande skynbaar allengs aan 't uitsterwe is.

Vir die individuele Christen, veral een van Protestants-Gereformeerde belydenis soos ekself, skep die hele aangeleentheid 'n mate van verwarring. En wanneer daar van veralgemenings oorgegaan word tot besonderhede, wanneer die verantwoordelikheid tot Christelike protes gesien begin word as 'n persoonlike, skep dit 'n yslike probleem.

SLEGS 'N TRADISIE?

Is ek, uit getrouheid teenoor my Protestantse erfenis, nog hoege-naamd geroepe om, spesifiek dan ook as enkeling, protes aan te teken teen misstande aan my bekend, of moet ek die verantwoordelikheid daartoe as „iets van die verlede”, d.w.s. slegs nog as 'n huldenswaardige tradisie, uitgediende merkteken van 'n vervloë geskiedenis, beskou? En as ek dan wel nog geroepe is om te protesteer, teen wie of wat? Wanneer? Onder watter omstandighede? Op grond waarvan? Hoe? Met watter doel? En waarom juis ék?

In ons land is daar oor die afgelope jare heen 'n hele boel protesaksies geloods, sommige relatief suksesvol, die groot meerderheid egter sonder enige noemenswaardige gevolg. Baie het selfs 'n suiwer negatiewe reaksie uitgelok en in sekere kringe word al hoe meer die gevoel uitgespreek: „Ons is nou hartlik moeg en deeglik sat daarvan!” En ongetwyfeld is dit dan ook so dat baie van die mees sensasionele en wyds gepubliseerde protesteringe gegaan het om wesenlike nietighede, van stapel gestuur is deur klaarblyklik getikte aanhitters van onmin en gelei het tot allerlei uitspattighede, onsmaaklikhede en belaglikhede.

„WOLF, WOLF!”

Geen wonder dat menige sensitiewe en gesofistikeerde landsburger of kerklidmaat met weersin vervul is nie en dat hulle daartoe gekom het om, soos hedendaagse Pilatusse, die hande in die skottel van totale apatie en afsydigheid te was.

Want sekerlik is dit waar dat protes bloot ter wille van protes die futiele tydverdrijf van kinderagtigheid of kindsheid is en dat 'n blote massabetoging nog geen waarborg is vir die verdienstelikheid van die saak waarvoor daar betoog word nie. Met 'n onverpoosde „wolf, wolf!”-geskreeu loop 'n mens die daadwerklike gevaar om die lankmoedige luisteraars pynlik te verveel en met jou voortdurende gekrys slegs by te dra tot die totale afstomping van die volksgewete.

Dit is dan seker ook die hoofbewegrede waarom die oorgrote meerderheid van ons volksgenote en mede-kerklidmate hulle geleidelik aan al die gedoe onttrek het en met skouerophalende minagting of meewarigheid toesien hoedat die raserige minderheid na hulle mening gekke van hulleself maak.

Tog vrywaar dit 'n mens nie teen verantwoordelikheid en durf ons uiteindelik nie dié verskoning aandien vir 'n ontwyking van ons roeping tot Christelike protes nie. Dat daar diegene is wat in hul verset teen wat hulle as misstande beskou, hulle alte gereeld te buite gaan as gevolg van 'n skynbaar ongeneeslike voorliefde vir vertoon en sirkushouery, beteken nog lank nie dat daar nie in werklikheid ernstige misstande in ons volkslewe en kerklike gemeenskap bestaan nie. En solank as wat sulke misstande bestaan is sinvolle protes nog altyd iets aangewese, en is verwysing na die on-

sinnige smakeloosheid van andere nog geen verskoning vir persoonlike afsydigheid en belangeloosheid nie.

WEGPRAAT OF WEGSWYG

Ek, as doodgewone en persoonlik gebrekkige Christen, as toegewyde lidmaat van 'n magtige kerk van Protestants-Gereformeerde belydenis, as lid van 'n volksgroep wat deur dié kerk in al sy goed en kwaad stilswyend en soms selfs met uitgesprokenheid onderskraag word, as bevoorregte landsburger van 'n land waarin miljoene van my medeburgers amptelik tot 'n staat van minderbevoorregting ingeperk is, vind myself nog steeds gekonfronteer deur 'n paar wesenlike en verwante probleme wat ek nie maar eenvoudig net kan wegpraat of wegswyg nie.

Wat staan iemand soos ek (en daar is meer van my soort as wat dit aldag wyd en syd bekend maak sou wou sien) nou eintlik te doen ten aansien van 'n landsowerheid wat, by alle sporadiese blyke van verdraagsaamheid en „uitwaartsheid”, telkens weer met 'n byna venynige hardheid en ongevoeligheid optree teen enkelinge of groepe van enkelinge in 'n angswalige verskansing van die verabsoluteerde reëls van 'n verafgode apartheidsideologie? Wat is vir my die aangewese weg wanneer my eie kerk, optredende in die naam van Christus, die Heer van die één Kerk op aarde, telkens weer bewys lewer dat hy bereid is om klaarblyklik God-uittartende en gemeenskapsverbrokkelende handeling van die landsowerheid goed te praat en hom openlik te ondersteun in sy gepoogde uitvoering van 'n beleid wat in laaste instansie op naakte groepsselfsugtigheid gefundeer is; wanneer hy skaamteloos in gebreke bly om enigszins 'n bestraffende vinger op te hef ten aanskoue van die skeidsmure wat toenemend opgebou word en die klowe wat daar met die volle sanksie van die landswet geslaan word tussen belydende Christene van verskillende bevolkingsgroepe?

TYD NOG NIE VERBY

By alle vertwyfeling en geesteskwelling wat sulke probleme, en die lastige noodsaaklikheid van protes wat daaruit voortvloei, by 'n mens veroorsaak, is daar tog enkele punte waarvoor daar volkome duidelikheid bestaan.

In die eerste plek moet dit heel onomwonde gestel word dat die tyd vir protes nog lank nie verby is nie: solank as wat God wat oor sy skepping heers, nog die God van geregtigheid is en solank as wat daar, ook hier te lande, nog skreiende en onverbloemde onreg gepleeg en stilswygend geduld word, is sy kinders en die ware volgelingen van die Here Jesus Christus hier op aarde geroepe om daarteen te stry en te protesteer. Die protes waarom dit hier gaan, is naamlik geen protes bloot ter wille van protes nie, maar protes in die Naam en in opdrag van God self.

Tweedens is dit duidelik dat werklik besonne Christelike protes van hierdie aard nie maar smalend afgeskryf kan word as 'n blote „agitasieveldtog”, van stapel gestuur deur een of meer getiktes nie. As positiewe getrouheid aan die opdragte en eise van die Woord van God as domme agiteerdery bestempel kan word, dan is die Bybel self seker die mees opruiende geskrif wat ooit die wêreld ingestuur is en dan is elke werklik belydende Christen voorwaar en uiteraard 'n opperste agent provocateur.

HERVORMINGSPROTES

Voorts moet dit dan ook bo alle twyfel verhewe wees dat Christelike protes nooit tot stilswye mag uitsterf bloot op grond daarvan dat vorige proteste skynbaar onsuksesvol was of dat daar ten alle tye slegs 'n paar waagsame geeste bestaan het wat nog bereid was om protes aan te teken nie. Veral vir Christene van Protestants-Gereformeerde belydenis moet dit duidelik wees dat, soos 'n mens se persoonlike lewe alleen 'n voortdurende proses van heiligmaking kan wees, die lewe-in-die-gemeenskap met mede-Christene én die heidendom steeds weer onderhewig moet wees aan hervorming; en dat hervorming in en van die gemeenskap in die geskiedenis telkens weer voortvloei uit die openbaarmaking van die protes van enkelinge oor klaarblyklike misstande in die gemeenskapslewe, sy dit dié van volk of kerk. Die protes waarom dit gaan, weereens, is nie

protes bloot ter wille van protes nie, maar protes gerig op hervorming volgens die eise van Gods Woord.

En dat dit altyd slegs die enkeles is wat bereid is om die voortou te neem in enige protes- of hervormingsaksie, is 'n historiese feit. Van 'n Moses en 'n Jesaja tot 'n Luther en 'n Calvyn was dit nog hoofsaaklik slegs die enkelinge se geestes- en gewetenskwelling wat, protesgewys, gelei het tot kerk- en volkshervorming. Dat ek dikwels skynbaar alleen staan in my oortuiging, durf my nie afskrik nie. Dit moet vir my intendeel 'n aansporing wees om my te haas met my protes-gerig-op-hervorming. Want dit kan slegs 'n aanduiding wees van die ontstellende feit dat die gewetens van die massa rondom my — ook, helaas, van die leiers van my kerk en die massa van my belydende mede-Christene — reeds tot so 'n mate afgestomp geraak het dat 'n heldere oproep tot bekering dringend noodsaaklik geword het.

DIE KORREKTE WEG

Daar is nog een laaste omstandigheid wat 'n mens tref in hierdie hele verband. So dikwels in die afgelope tyd is die meer rebelse geeste in ons midde deur meer gesofistikeerde kennersgeeste gemaan tot omsigtigheid en „bewandeling van die korrekte weg”. En dit wil tog voorkom of hulle reg het. Want, Bybels gesproke, is die „korrekte weg” klaarblyklik 'n heel stelselmatige, een wat lei van die klein na die grote.

Die byna vanselfsprekende aanvang van die hele proses is nl. geleë in die protes van die inhomself-verdeelde mens teen homself, van die Godsewebeeltenis in hom teen die sondaar in hom. Eers na die gevolglike persoons-hervorming lei die weg dan verder tot die protes van die belydende Christen teen misstande binne die „gemeenskap van die heiliges”, d.w.s. die Kerk van Christus self. En as laaste, dog onvermydelike, stap volg dan die profetiese protes van die kerk ten opsigte van ongeregtighede en onregverdighede binne die sekulêre gemeenskap van die volk soos hy onder die opsig van die staat verkeer. Daar is niks onberekend lukraak of astant voortvarend omtrent hierdie patroon nie, en miskien kan dit dien as wegwysing vir elke geestesgekwelde en gewetensbeswaarde geroepene tot protes ook in ons tyd en in ons land.

Ten alle koste moet daar in opdrag van ons Meester in elk geval geprotesteer word, of dit nou ook al deur die kind is teenoor sy vader, deur die vrou teenoor haar man, deur die gewone gemeentelid teenoor sy ouderling, deur die ouderling teenoor sy predikant, deur die kerkraad teenoor die ring, deur die ring teenoor die sinode, en deur die sinode of kerk as geheel, amptelik, teenoor watter owerheid ook al.

VERANTWOORDELIKHEIDS-ONTDUIKING

Die metode van protesaantekening — die hoe, waar en wanneer — bly 'n saak van kwelling en vertwyfeling. Die noodsaaklikheid van protes ten aansien van al die kennelike onreg wat ook in ons land nog vermetel hoogty vier, staan bo alle twyfel verhewe. Die karigheid en die flouheid van die bietjie protes wat daar eens in 'n wyl nog wel gehoor word, kan alleen maar stem tot die diepste ontsteltenis.

Want één ding is seker: vir die oortuigde en eerlik belydende Christen om op die lang duur sy verantwoordelikheid en goddelike roeping tot protes te probeer ontduik is net so futiel as wat dit vir die eerste mensepaar was om die uiteindelijke konfrontasie met hul skepper na die sondeval te probeer vryspring. En vir hulle wat weldeeglik nog kennis dra van sowel die goed as die kwaad in die lewe van ons kerk en ons volk, maar wat stelselmatig besig is om hulle protes-verantwoordelikheid te ontduik, moet hierdie saak allengs alhoemmer 'n saak word nie van geesteskwelling alleen nie, maar ook van die mees hartgrondige gewetenswroeging.

OOREENKOMS OOR DOOP

Die Rooms-Katolieke en die Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk in Nederland het, na langdurige samesprekings, ooreengekom om mekaar se doopsereemonies as geldig te aanvaar.

In die toekoms sal die twee kerke oor en weer doopsertifikate uitreik in gevalle waar seker gemaak moet word of 'n persoon wettiglik gedoop is.

Die St. Willibrord Vereniging (R.-K. liggaam amptelik belas met ekumeniese betrekkings) het ook aangekondig dat gedagewisseling oor die onderwerp van gemengde huwelike voortgaan en dat samesprekings gevoer word oor die kwessie van interkommunie. (E.P.S.)

A VISION OF THE NEW EVANGELISM AS THE SOCIALISATION OF GRACE

I

THE REV. DERRICK M. NORMAN

When a Roman Catholic theologian gives as the title of his book **THE WIDE WORLD MY PARISH** and quotes John Wesley's claim: "I look upon the world as my parish", then we are forced to concede that the insights of the Evangelical Revival are becoming explicit in the second half of the 20th century.

Denied the use of the pulpits of the Anglican Church, John Wesley took to the fields and the market places and preached the Gospel. Refused admittance to the Holy Communion, the converts of the Evangelical Revival were shepherded into classes and societies for spiritual edification. The action of the Anglican Church — referring to the established church and not the evangelical element within the church — in refusing to participate in the evangelistic endeavour of Mr. Wesley and his followers proved two things. The first, denied the use of church buildings, John Wesley came into the realisation that the world was his parish. Thus did a true theology of the Church emerge, to wit the building does not make the church. Secondly, the rigid attitude of non-participation, non-help and hindrance betrayed the false theology of the times, concerning the church: the church exists for the church.

Out of the criticism, heart searching and self-examination that has been going for some time now, is emerging a clearer understanding of what Mr. Wesley arrived at experimentally and experientially, that "the church is not called on to decide for herself whether she will carry on the mission (of God) or not. She can only decide for herself whether she wants to be church."¹

The IMC Conference at Willingen put it even more bluntly: "There is no participation in Christ without participation in His mission to the world."²

John Wesley's statement: "The world my parish", is a confession of participation in Christ's mission to the world. The problem for the Anglican Church of Wesley's day, is the same problem for the churches today — the **problem of the congregation in the task of**

evangelism. Prof. Hoekendijk states the fundamental problem for the Christian Church — "We need a new vision of evangelism, a disentanglement of all secular complexes and secret ideologies — a recovery, in short of the Biblical sense of evangelism."³

Evangelism is an overused and much abused term. It has been used to cover a multitude of activities ranging from a Billy Graham Crusade to a church coffee house discussion. No wonder that the word 'mission' is being used for the new ideas of what it means to be evangelical today. The Rev. Dr. Billy Graham, the evangelist, in his recent book, "The World Aflame", says: "When most major Protestant denominations have their annual councils, assemblies or conventions, they make pronouncements on . . . disarmament, federal aid to education, birth control, the United Nations . . . Very rarely are any resolutions passed that have to do with the redemptive witness of the Gospel . . ."

Why should a pronouncement on disarmament have nothing to do with the redemptive witness of the Gospel?

Yet let it be said that to merely make such pronouncements, does not necessarily mean that the church is participating in Christ's mission to the world. **To participate in Christ's mission to the world requires three things: Firstly an awareness of the world to which the Gospel is directed; secondly, a knowledge of the God and Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who was sent to be the Saviour of the world, by God; thirdly, sharing in the life of the world and the life of God.** And the one word which holds this all together, retaining a Biblical depth, is the word 'SHALOM' — the peace of God, God's mission — the goal

of which is peace on earth, as the promise of God.

True evangelism needs to keep the social dimensions of man's life and his individual needs in mind. The end of the evangelism, its goal, is not to get the individual into the church, but the church into the world. "Shalom", says Prof. Hoekendijk, "is a social happening, an event in inter-human relations, a venture of co-humanity: men may show their proper face (not their masks: persona: 'God is not a respecter of persons') and things can have their proper weight. Therefore shalom can never be reduced to a simple formula, to be applied in all occurring instances: it must be found and worked out in actual situations, relevant shalom (and irrelevant shalom is not shalom) can only be discovered, tested and achieved in actual co-operation (co-operation with those for whom shalom is destined.)"⁴

One Mission Board executive has put it this way, "no matter how confused our motives and blurred our images, we learned long ago that missionary obedience does not mean that we always know exactly where we are going". The real operational definitions will not come "simply out of discussion: they will come out of concrete experiments".

The new kind of church that is emerging (or has in some places emerged) is the experimental church. The church that is more eager to attempt mission than talk mission. Even though this may mean less success and more failure. But, nevertheless knows that this is the only way to learn to be the church, by doing the mission, God's mission.

BASIC THEOLOGICAL CONCEPTS OF WHAT THE NATURE OF THE CHURCH IS or A NEW INSIGHT INTO THE CHURCH

Yves Congar asked if it was possible to "define the Church", and asked the question in such a way as to preclude the possibility of

definition. De Ecclesia rightly begins with the notion of the Church as "mystery."⁵ And Dr. Outler comments that such a beginning at once lifts the discussion above the level of institutional organization and management, "and to establish as the first premise of sound ecclesiology the reality of the Church's divine origin, maintenance and destiny. The Church in history is 'human, all too human', but her true dynamic — what accounts for her continuity through history and her effective witness in the world — lies beyond manipulation or merit".

Dr. Outler reminds us all that to speak of the Church as mystery is to be reminded that "we belong to the Church — the Church does not belong to us".

When we define the Church it must be a working definition that is offered. We do not define the Church in order to defend its pristine purity, or even to get back to the 'ideal' of the early Church. Our need for a definition is in order to know what it is that the Church has to do, in order to be the Church.

De Ecclesia, in Chapter II "recalls the biblical theme of the People of God", who constitute the body of Christ. Thus making the Church a communion, or fellowship, of men who call Jesus Lord and are committed to proclaim Christ's Saviourhood and Lordship; to live by what they proclaim, and to serve the world as that means by which Christ's salvation becomes effectual in the life of the world.

Catholic commentators draw attention to the encyclical of Pope Paul's — *ECCLESIAM SUAM* — which raised the issues and questions of which De Ecclesia is a working answer. Pope Paul raised three pertinent issues:

1. We are living in an hour when the Church should deepen its consciousness of itself — of the origin of the Church, its nature, mission and destiny. Something "never sufficiently investigated or understood".

2. Correct defects in its members and effect renovations in its structures.

3. Examine its relationship with the world of temporal values. Current criticism of the Church, much of it self-criticism, which is good and a necessary element in the 'renewal of the Church' (and it is hoped the advancement of the Kingdom of God), will not allow a

deepening consciousness of itself to become inverted and ingrown.

Yet the Church must be aware of its nature if it is to avoid every temptation to become relevant to the age, and go in for modernization rather than reform and renewal. Lest men value criticism for criticism's sake it is necessary to stress that **part of the Church which is unchangeable**. And that which is unchangeable is that which the Church is — the means appointed by Christ to bring men to eternal salvation. Structures of the Church may not always serve this purpose and when this does not happen the structures need to be changed. But the church as means to salvation is the immutable part of the Church. Any change must serve this purpose — salvation, and change must be made only to facilitate this divine commission.

This is the new insight into the Church: **that it does not exist for itself**. It does not act in the world as an ark to which people repair, only in order to be secure from the cruel world. Its primary duty is not to call men out of the world, but to call them to submit to the Lordship and Saviourhood of Christ, and having so submitted themselves to Christ, to live under His reign in the world.

SHALOM AS BOTH THE MESSAGE AND MISSION OF THE CHURCH

or

A RENEWED INTEREST IN THE SOCIAL ORDER AS THE LOCUS OF SALVATION

Nowhere is this renewed interest in the social order, on the part of the Church, more apparent and deservedly receiving of the Church's attention than in the cities, particularly the inner city — with its poverty, crime, juvenile delinquency, tension and friction. The very conditions which cry out for some good news of deliverance and hope.

The inner city has all the signs of inward chaos which reveal a lack of ordered society, for which the message of God's Shalom is news of deliverance and hope.

What is Shalom? Hendrik Kraemer says that it is "... wholeness, integrity, 'Heil', the state of complete integration of a community, its restoration into its original God-willed design".⁶ Even thus defined it is already applicable to

the needs of the inner city, as bringing that which is lacking — true community.

However Prof. Hoekendijk expands on what shalom is, and corrects an error that would spell disaster for the inner city and incapacitate the Church in its duty to proclaim its message and perform its mission to the inner city, or whatever social order stands in need of salvation, or does not know God's shalom. Prof. Hoekendijk distinguishes shalom from salvation, misunderstood as the salvation of the individual, and uncovers the broad social context of this 'Shalom' conception. **Salvation of the individual merely delivers him from a social (racial or ethnic) ghetto into an ecclesiastical (spiritual or class) ghetto**. Whereas God's shalom "in the new Testament . . . is the most elementary expression of what life in the new aeon actually is",⁷ it is not confined to the Church as an ecclesiastical institution. It is the way in which deliverance and hope is brought to the chaotic conditions that is all that life is for too many of God's children.

According to Prof. Hoekendijk evangelism then means: "Witness of Shalom, Shalom for all life; destruction of all solitude, obliteration of all injustice." Evangelism means to "give men a future, and a hope."⁸

The era of missionary expansion found its impetus, charter and commission in Matthew 28:19: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age". Now the Church must find its sense of mission in the words which Christ used from the Book of the prophet Isaiah, to open his public ministry; "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor, He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord". Luke 4:18, 19.

This is not to deprecate the missionary expansion of the past century and a half, as misguided and lacking in valid results. But to acknowledge that largely, missionary activity has resulted more in the

establishment of churches and not enough in the transformation of human communities. The type of evangelism which calls for the conversion of individuals, as a step toward the transformation of societies, needs to ask seriously why conversions do not result in any recognisable change in community life. If faced honestly this situation will lead to a renewed interest in the social order as the locus of salvation in order that men may share in God's shalom. What does it mean to share in God's shalom?

According to Prof. Hoekendijk to —

1. Proclaim shalom. That is one aspect of evangelism. In the kerygma shalom is represented in the literal sense, it is made present.

2. Shalom is lived. That is another aspect of evangelism. It is lived in koinonia. We must not speak too quickly of community. Only in so far as men are partakers

of shalom, represented in the kerygma, do they live in mutual communion and fellowship.

3. There is a third aspect of evangelism. The shalom is demonstrated in humble service, diakonia. To partake of the shalom in koinonia means practically and realistically to act as a humble servant.⁹

Biblical evangelism consists of these three biblical conceptions — kerygma, koinonia, and diakonia. And reflects "the three ways of the gospel's mode of operation" — in the world. This is the consciousness of itself that the Church needs — as, the Church for the world.

As partakers of shalom men live (in the world!) in mutual communion, fellowship and witness. Or, as Jeremiah Newman says in his book, 'CHANGE AND THE CATHOLIC CHURCH', the Church is a "communion of men in a supernatural society of truth and love."¹⁰ It is this concept of the Church, its

nature, mission, and destiny which makes it "a living organism of truth and love, or more accurately, truth and love as an organism."¹¹ It is the Church existing in the world as truth and love that makes it a source of deliverance and hope.

"You will know the truth, and the truth will give you your freedom", John 8:31. "Beloved let us love one another; for love is of God, and he who loves is born of God and knows God". 1 John 4:7.

(To be Continued)

1. The Mission of God — George F. Vicedom p.6.
2. Quoted in the Mission of God—p.6.
3. The Church Inside Out — J. C. Hoekendijk p.20.
4. Lecture Notes — J. C. Hoekendijk.
5. See the Document of Vatican II Gen. Ed. Walter M. Abbott.
6. Hope in Action — Hans J. Margull.
7. Quoted in Hope in Action p.52.
8. Ibid.
9. Lectures — Prof. J. C. Hoekendijk.
10. Change and the Catholic Church by Jeremiah Newman.
11. Ibid.

LETTERS

PLEA FOR SANCTITY

ANNE ATTWELL, Simonstown,

Cape:

In the overwhelming array of philosophies, causes and institutions, all clamouring for the allegiance of a generation vaguely labelled "Youth", religion occupies a position along with Communism, Socialism, Existentialism and scores of other "isms" covering almost every area of our existence. The most pressing problem that my generation faces is that of evaluation and consequent identification.

Distinguishing between the "isms" is not easy. The propagators of each "ism" often overlap in the presentation of their functions. Our task is to reach an understanding of the essence of what each "ism" offers, and to weigh this against what we want out of life. A tremendous responsibility rests on the shoulders of those pressing the claims of various ideologies to be confident and clear-headed in what they say. From Communism we expect an economic social system based on the submission of self to state. The consequences of commitment to this way of life are clear. Similarly the aims and results of other social ideologies are clear. But what of religion?

CHRISTIANITY A SOCIO-POLITICAL PRESSURE GROUP?

From a recent article in *Pro Veritate* (June 15th, 1967) entitled "Beggar my Neighbour", it appears that Christianity is trying to be a socio-political pressure group. It is, in this article, making allegations and claims already covered by the socialists. It wants to use its relatively small income for the furtherance of the specific aims of larger organizations with incomes geared to their functions of economic development and social relief, such as WHO, FAO, UNESCO, etc. The institutional activity of the Church in these fields is redundant, but I see no harm in the Pope trying to motivate capable individuals into associating themselves with capable organizations. Furthermore, touching our South African situation, in decrying the "idiotic denials and schizophrenic illusions of the apartheid propaganda machine" to the social problems of our country, the Church is adding its voice to an already existing collection of voices raised in opposition to the government, and this voice of the Church is in no way unique. The article to which I have referred is not unique either: it is representative of a large, steadily growing mass of Christian literature

of a type which has a distinctly secular ring.

What is the Church's unique function? Without a background knowledge of early Christianity one cannot expect a young person to evaluate its function today from the conflicting, and often superfluous, thunderings of contemporary "religious" socialists. To a large extent the Church has been stripped of its social, philanthropic and economic functions. The social conscience of man has been awakened. In many cases the Church is left only with its empty barrels who won't climb off the platform and leave it to the trained sociologist and economist to apply their superior knowledge and resources.

Man, however, especially keenly alert youth, is not satisfied. The solutions of the socialist or communist or large scale philanthropist would be all-sufficient if he possessed a mass mind. The fact that we are also individuals and our lives are indisputably egocentric and cannot be anything else rules out a mass-produced solution. The final responsibility, tempered no doubt by environmental factors, for the quality of one's living comes back to the individual. The individual is the basic unit of society and ultimate deciding factor in the tone of any community. The art of decision and evaluation by individuals is what counts in the final

analysis. This art can be neglected by the conscious mind but is implicit in every human action. Every evaluation and decision emanates from the quality of a man's mind and way of life, and depends on the orientation of his personality. From the simple reading of the New Testament this is the unique area of influence Christ meant His Church to enjoy. In fact, St. Paul listed the qualities resulting from an orientation of the personality towards the precepts of Christ's teaching in Galatians 5 — love, joy, peace, etc. These qualities can all be summarised in one word: *sanctity*.

THE CHURCH'S UNIQUE FUNCTION

Sanctity is the unique characteristic of the Church. Whatever else it exudes is additional to it. The unique heritage of the Church as such is not social protest or legislative reform, although it may motivate its members to these actions, but the cherishing of the spirit of sanctity which is the best source of human dignity yet discovered. This work is necessarily done painstakingly, individual by individual. It is far more difficult than political attack. The chief bearers of the Church's unique heritage should be its ministers, and unless they are fulfilling this task they indeed do not have the right, in the Rev. Moulder's words, to waste money on their stipends and buildings.

It must be recognized, however, that while man cannot live on bread alone, bread is necessary both to the hungry and to the material existence of the Church. Man's humanity is at least half material and cannot be separated from his spiritual faculties by which the spirit of sanctity, with the correct orientation, is developed. Sanctuaries are essential. Church buildings should contribute towards the sanctification of the individual. The secularization of Church buildings detracts from this important function. Because an area is poor, is the very last reason to deprive it of its sanctuaries. To do so would be to deny the economically indigent an aspect of the dignity to which they have an inalienable right as human beings. It would be to claim that the important aid of the sanctuary toward the raising of the human spirit is the privilege of the wealthy, who could probably afford such aids in their homes in any case. Even the secular enlightenment of the twentieth century has not erased

the validity of the human beings cry for true dignity, in fact, sanctity.

In a word, the Church's unique function is motivation. This cannot be done by ministers who are unsure of their vocation, which is the unfortunate impression that the "angry young men" of various priesthoods convey to a watchful and sceptical generation of youth. Where we see the quality of sanctity we will be prepared to accede to the validity of the Church's existence. This may well be the first step to commitment.

Reply

Anne Attwell and I hold such different convictions that it is impossible to reply briefly and adequately to her letter. But these differences need to be discussed; so I will risk appearing unfair to her and to be over-simplifying the issues involved while stating four theses I am prepared to defend in a debate with her.

Thesis 1. I wouldn't dare to speak for my generation, but the problem and task facing me is not that of reaching "an understanding of the essence of what each 'ism' offers", but of understanding how to be more human in the midst of rapid social, technological and intellectual changes. Furthermore no ism and/or religion provides an adequate understanding of how to deal with the problems created by these changes; largely because every ism and/or religion contains so much that is irrelevant and incomprehensible in their light.

Thesis 2. It is by no means obvious to me that the "social conscience of man has been awakened"; indeed, I'm not even sure what Anne Attwell is driving at via this claim. And her plea that "the trained sociologist and economist" be left to "apply their superior knowledge and resources" to the work of attempting to create more relevant and less unjust socio-economic and political structures is both too simple and highly irresponsible:

irresponsible, because, by suggesting that socio-economic and political decisions which make my neighbour's and my own life either more or less worth living can safely be left to others and need not concern me, it underwrites an attitude which makes for totalitarian forms of government; and

too simple, because it does not distinguish between (1) the information required for making and implementing socio-economic and political decisions and (2) the question of

which goals politicians must attempt to realise in the light of this (often conflicting) information. While I am convinced that this information must be gathered via the research of social scientists rather than from the mythologies of isms and/or religions, the evaluation of the ends to which this information is used concerns everyone; and it is here that I find much of the teaching and example of Jesus relevant.

Also too simple is the claim that the individual is "the ultimate deciding factor in the tone of any community. The art of decision and evaluation by individuals is what counts in the final analysis". In fact almost the reverse is true; that is, it would be far nearer the truth to claim that it is society (its structures and institutions) which determine the values and decisions of individuals.

Thesis 3. I agree that Jesus' followers have no unique contribution to make to any socio-economic and political problem. What disturbs me is our general unwillingness to make an ordinary, human one. And especially disturbing is our irresponsible and selfish use of the funds which we have and raise.

Thesis 4. The question of "the Church's unique function" is one of those irrelevant and largely incomprehensible subjects to which I have already referred. What's worse: although there is little evidence that the churches do make a unique contribution to what Anne Attwell calls "sanctity" and "motivation", or that many theologians would agree that "the chief bearers of the Church's unique heritage should be its ministers", it is probably true that the majority of Jesus' followers believe that "sanctuaries are essential". But this brings me back to somewhere near where I began; the difference between those who would defend my first Thesis and those who would not.

J. E. Moulder.

THE POPE AND POVERTY

MR. J. A. DUIGAN, Pretoria:

It is to be regretted that the Rev. J. Moulder in the June issue of *Pro Veritate* should have publicly revealed his ignorance of and bias against the Pope, when he wrote in his article "Beggar my Neighbour", "that the Pope made the situation" (in regard to world hunger and illiteracy) "even more ludicrous"; and "has further undermined the last scraps of integrity which Christians

have" by calling for governments to establish a fund for the elimination of hunger, "without indicating what contribution, *if any*, the Vatican would make"! Mr. Moulder goes further and refers to "babblings about being the servants of the Servant" (a reference to a Papal title).

I challenge Mr. Moulder to withdraw his sneer at the Papacy and suggest that he finds out the truth about the charitable activities of the Vatican in general, and individual Popes in particular. Does he not know that the "treasures of the Vatican" are not the property of any Pope, but they are a world treasury of art which is preserved for the benefit of all nations? An actuary once estimated that the sale of these irreplaceable items would barely suffice for one simple meal for the world's poor, and then these treasures would be lost to the world's students.

The present Pope Paul is living, as his predecessors did, a very simple, abstemious life; and above all has given personally and through agencies, millions of Rands for the hungry (as in India) and the illiterate, whether Catholic, Protestant or heathens.

Reply

I am sorry J. A. Duigan thinks a section of *Beggar My Neighbour* contains a "sneer at the Papacy" and reveals my "ignorance of and bias against the Pope". I indeed plead guilty to not knowing enough about him but "not guilty" to the other two charges. And I rest my case on two arguments:

1. Whatever use the Pope may make of the phrase "servants of the Servant", the fact remains that he is merely one of these servants. And like the rest of us who are trying to follow Jesus he sometimes confuses talking about with actually being a servant of others. Thus, while my remark about our "babblings about being servants" may not *ex officio* exclude the Pope it by no means applies only, always or *ex officio* to him. I submit therefore that I was not sneering at anybody but warning us all not to trade too much on our own descriptions of ourselves.

2. The fact that I (like some Roman Catholics) am not always over-impressed by the Pope's performances does not entail that I am

biased against him. After all, he is no more confused than the majority of us when it comes to such large-scale issues as how to be the church in the midst of world hunger and illiteracy. And in my article I simply confined myself to two examples of what I regard as idiotic ways of being the church. I illustrated the one form of idiocy by referring to my own denomination, Methodism; the other form by reference to another denomination, Roman Catholicism. And I am prepared to claim that similar failings are manifested by unmentioned denominations.

As for the rest of Duigan's argument: the Pope and anyone else's abstemious life is largely beside the point and so are the amounts which the Vatican, the WCC, various denominations and Christian individuals give to aid the hungry and illiterate. When all this has been noted and duly acknowledged the fact remains that we who are trying to follow Jesus spend more on our own religious titillation than on projects for aiding the hungry and the illiterate. And it is this which makes our claim to be servants of a Servant incredible. Now the only way I can see us regaining our integrity and making our profession of service credible is for us (1) to stop wasting the money we raise every year on clergy and other religious paraphernalia; (2) to liquidate any land and buildings which only serve us and not a wider community; and (3) to begin to discover ways in which our resources (however limited) can be put to the best possible use for eliminating such scandals as hunger and illiteracy.

And while on (3): I am *not* asking for ecclesiastical soup-kitchens run by redeployed culinary clerics — there are more imaginative and relevant schemes than this! Nor am I urging a philistine approach to the art treasures of the Vatican or any other shrine. It goes without saying that the church's collection of genuine art treasures must not "be lost to the world's students" and others. What I want to suggest is (1) that in the process of liquidation we discriminate between the church's art treasures and her "holy rubbish"; and (2) that the Vatican be preserved as an art gallery where the art treasures would be displayed and to which could be added any items of genuine artistic worth other denominations may have.

J. E. Moulder.

DEUR STUDIE MET NUWE INSIGTE VERRYK

DR. ELFIE STRASSBERGER,
Johannesburg:

As een van die lede van die personeel van die Christelike Instituut van Suidelike Afrika, het ek die geleentheid gehad om gedurende Mei en Junie vanjaar die doktorsale eksamen in die teologie aan die Kweekskool te Stellenbosch af te lê — 'n geleentheid waarvoor ek my innige dank verskuldig is aan die Raad van Beheer van die Instituut, sowel as aan die professore van die Kweekskool vir hulle geduld en verdraagsaamheid, en vir nuwe insigte wat *sels* in die angste ure van mondelinge eksamens verkry kon word!

Al studerende en worstelende breek daar by tye momente van sulke heldere verligting deur dat 'n mens nie anders kan as om dit met jou medemens te wil deel nie. Daarom hierdie kort skrywe.

Dis ook hierdie tyd van gekonsentreerde studie wat my besiel het om nou aan 'n proefskrif te werk oor *Die ekumeniese strewe in Suid-Afrika 1900-1960*, en in hierdie tyd, dalk jare van navorsing wat voorlê, wil ek graag elke oomblik beleef in solidariteit met elke gelowige en elke kerk wat saam bid en saam werk in gelowige gehoorsaamheid aan die gebed van ons Meester, Jesus Christus, nl. „dat almal een mag wees net soos U, Vader, in My en Ek in U; dat hulle ook in Ons een mag wees, sodat die wêreld kan glo dat U My gestuur het" (Joh. 17:21).

IN GODS HAND

Een van die dinge wat ek gedurende die tyd van my studie beleef het, is dat ek intenser as ooit bewus geword het van die drieënige God wat ons as Christene aanbid. In almag, in genade en liefde, het God hierdie wêreld, ja, die heelal in die holte van sy hand. Die geweldigste gebeure is nie buite Hom nie; die kleinste, skynbaar onbenulligste voorval is nie buite Hom nie; die geringste enkeling is vir Hom van belang; en oor die mees hooggeplaaste, belangrikste persoon beskik Hy soos die pottelbakker oor die klei in sy hande. So het Hy Hom in Jesus Christus geopenbaar, en in die kerk- en wêreldgeskiedenis word sy openbaring voortdurend só bevestig; en in die lig van hierdie openbaring staan ek met die aakligheid van my sonde.

Ek, gelowige mens, kind van God, wat soms in wanhoop en kleingeloof kan versink; ek wat myself verhef deur teen 'n medemens te diskrimineer; ek wat in selfsug en eiegeregtigheid my eie volk, taal, kerk, ideologie of lewensfilosofie verhef tot 'n god; wat die sinnelike laat seëvier en wat onwillig is om ten alle koste medewerker van God te wees — ek staan naak voor hierdie ewige, drie-enige God. Maar dis dan juis hierdie nuwe besef van myself in my sondigheid, stryd en gebrokenheid wat die visie van die ontfermende genade van hierdie God so heerlik maak.

En dan kom die onvermydelike vraag: Waarheen is ons as Kerk van Jesus Christus in Suid-Afrika op pad? Kan ons nog met vertroue opkyk in die oë van God as ons geslote en weierend staan teenoor ons medesondaars, ons medebegenedigdes? Sal ons nie aan die bedoeling van ons Heer met ons beantwoord as ons weer eens in dankbaarheid met albei hande sy genade aangryp en in dié genade opstaan uit ons agterdog en liefdeloosheid, ons kragteloosheid en ons wanhoop nie?

GEMEENSKAP

Dis hier waar 'n tweede besef opnuut tot my deurgebreek het: Op die menslike vlak is ons nood 'n nood aan ware ontmoeting en aanvaarding van mekaar, 'n wedersydse verlatting van die skanse waaragter ons skuil en die self-gemaakte ideologieë wat ons besiel, en 'n riskante uitkomst in die oop arena waar daar saam met die medemens hardop gedink kan word en saam met hom geworstel kan word om die „hele” waarheid waarin die Gees ons wil lei. Binne die Christelike Kerk in ons land is daar 'n dringende behoefte aan ware gesprek, gesprek wat oor alle grense heen die mens as mens sy medemens laat vind. Daarsonder versink ons as mense in 'n eensame worstelstryd waarin ons skanse opbou en valse ideologieë verabsoluteer tot 'n god. Jesus Christus as die ware mens kom met vrymaking na ons — vrymaking waarin ons ons eie skuld, sonde en swakheid kan erken en bely en sodoende waar kan word teenoor God en teenoor mekaar, en waarin ons die „ware andere” ook kan aanvaar. En so kom die gesprek, en in die gesprek met God en met die medemens vind ons die ware lewe.

Dit was 'n grootse belewenis om God opnuut te kon ontdek en om die moontlikheid tot ware menswees in hierdie bedeling opnuut te kon ont-

dek. 'n Nuwe belewenis van ons menswees as 'n verbondenheid in Christus met God en met mekaar, is vir almal in Suid-Afrika dringend nodig. As dit nie was vir hierdie nuwe visie op God nie, sou ek in wanhoop kon versink het.

DIE KERK

Egte, ware gemeenskap waarin en vanwaar uit die lewe sinvol en leefbaar word, is daar vir ons in die Kerk, in die Liggaam van Christus. Maar vind ons dit nog daar? So dikwels nie meer nie, en daaraan is ons, een en almal, skuldig. Om ons lewe ontwil is dit vir ons nodig om Christus en sy Kerk weer te vind.

Ek, as een van die lede van sy Liggaam, staan skuldig. Is u, leser, tevrede agter u skans van denominasie, kultuur, taal, of wat u ook al tussen u en u medemens opgewerp het? Slegs wanneer ons uitkom agter ons skanse in 'n ywerige soeke na Christelike gemeenskap, Christelike eenheid en Christelike waarheid, kan ons diensbaar wees aan Gods koninkryk in hierdie wêreld.

Gedagtig hieraan wil ek my graag in my werk en in my innerlike gebedsstrewe opnuut vereenselwig met die arbeid en strewe van die Christelike Instituut, van die Christenraad van Suid-Afrika en al sy lidkerke, van elke predikant, gemeente en lidmaat vir wie dit erns is. Want die één Kerk van Christus, hierdie nuwe gemeenskap, hierdie nuwe volk van God is die herout en die onderpand van Sy koninkryk wat in die wêreld kom, en dra die getuigenis van Jesus Christus wat gekom het om versoening te bewerkstellig sodat in hierdie versoening die wêreld (en ook ons land) gered mag word en die Vader verheerlik mag word.



Dr. Strassberger was voorheen lektreiser aan die Hugenote Kollege te Wellington. Daarna was sy werksaam as reisende sekretaresse van die C.S.V., vir universiteite en kolleges. In 1953 het sy die doktorsgraad in geskiedenis verwerf aan die Universiteit van Hamburg. Tans is sy besig om te werk vir die doktorsgraad in godgeleerdheid aan die Universiteit van Stellenbosch. Onlangs het sy die doktorsale eksamen met welslae afgelê — 'n prestasie waarmee ons haar hartlik wil gelukwens. Dr. Strassberger is verbonde aan die studie-afdeling van die Christelike Instituut van S.A.—Red.

LIBERAL INVITATION

P. M. HARKER, Kings Lynn, Boyes Drive, Muizenberg:

What an odd ending to Mr. David Perk's exceptionally valuable article on "Apartheid or Ecumenism" in your July issue — "No-one in touch with present-day South Africa can seriously advocate an immediate universal enfranchisement of its population"!!

As in the previous paragraph he seemed to agree that his views may be far ahead, in time, presumably he *did* mean ADVOCATE, and not EXPECT TO BE IMPLEMENTED. (No-one expects the Sermon on the Mount to be implemented in full even by Christians. Are we so out of touch with to-day's world in seriously advocating it?).

Which being so, isn't Mr. Perk being rather presumptuous, as well as wandering from his theme? He wasn't after all, discussing the various political alternatives to apartheid. Your publication is hardly the place for that.

Neither do I propose answering Mr. Perk's sweeping assertion that I, and a good many fellow South African (of all colours) Christians, are 'not in touch'. I appreciated his article. In return I offer him the assistance for his further enlightenment of his nearest Liberal Party office where he will be able to judge the practicality of both personnel and policy. Dialogue with those apparently not-like-minded can only help.

Alternatively he can write to me. I have spent the 21 post-war-years in the very practical sphere of industry, working in both rural and urban areas with thousands of all race groups at every level of education.

LUTHERANS INCREASE

The number of Lutheran Christians throughout the world have increased by about one and a half million during the past three years. Lutheran Christians numbering about 74½ million, is the world's third largest church group, exceeded in number only by Roman Catholics and Eastern Orthodox Christians. In South Africa Lutherans rank in fifth place in numerical strength among the non-European churches — in succession to Methodists, Anglicans, Roman Catholics and Dutch Reformed. (Lutheran Information).

GELD TERUG!

Private belastingbetalers in Nederland is deur 'n verlaging van inkomstebelasting gesamentlik bevoordeel met 550 miljoen gulde per jaar (R110 miljoen).

Die ekumeniese werkgroep „Sjaloorn” het op 1 Julie by wyse van 'n openbare demonstrasie voor die Vredespaleis in Den Haag, waaraan sowat 300 mense deelgeneem het,

daarteen geprotesteer met die slag-spreuk: „Niet goed! Geld terug!”

So lank elders in die wêreld nog alles ontbreek, sê „Sjaloorn”, mag ons nie méér gaan verteer nie. In 'n optog van die Vredespaleis na die ministerie van finansies, is goedgekeurde plakkate met opskrifte soos: „ $\frac{2}{3}$ van die wêreld ly gebrek”, meegedra.

Nadat die drie leiers van die aksie deur die staatssekretaris van finansies

te woord gestaan is, het die deelnemers elk 'n koevert met 10 gulde (R2.00) geplaas in 'n groot kis wat op die stoep van die ministeriële gebou gestaan het.

By die ontbinding van die optog, het een van die leiers gepleit dat met die aksie deurgegaan sal word, en dat wie sy geld wil terugstuur, giro no. 1 van die ryks-skatkis kan gebruik! — (*Hervormd Nederland*).

What is the Christian Council of South Africa?

THE RT. REV. B. B. BURNETT

The nature of the C.C.S.A. is frequently misunderstood. Many churchmen regard the Christian Council as the playground of fairly harmless ecumenical enthusiasts. The truth is that it is a Council of Churches and other ecclesiastical bodies in South Africa.

It is affiliated to the World Council, which is also a Council of Churches but it cannot be a member of it because it is not a Church, nor is it a link between the World Council and its member churches in this country.

In a vast country like ours it is essential to have a localised ecumenical expression focussed on the more populated parts of the country. This is the function of Regional Councils. Some of these tend to become, not links between the local churches, but rather places where ecumenical enthusiasts meet, with the result that they do not effectively impinge on the life of the Church in that place.

NO TIME FOR ECUMENISM

Sometimes one hears that there is not time to discuss ecumenical activities in Parish Councils and Sessions, in Presbyteries or Synods. The question must be asked however: "Can we afford not to?" If it is true that the Church's witness and integrity are at stake in the way in which she expresses the unity which is God's gift to her, and if it is true that this is a matter either of obedience or of failure to be loyal to her Lord, then the Church cannot afford not to be deeply committed to the work of the Christian Council.

TO WHOM DOES THE CHURCH BELONG?

The Churches take themselves and their structures seriously. Do they take the call to be obedient to Our Lord Jesus Christ as seriously? Is it possible that we are so engrossed in keeping our Church organisation going that we have no time to consider whether as Churches, simply preserving our old structures and habits of life and worship, we are really seeking to be obedient to God's will for men?

In other words we must ask the question: Do our Church structures, and does our present organised Church life, stand between us and our mission and therefore our obedience to God?

The ecumenical movement is not in the first place concerned about unity. It is concerned that all men should acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of the Father. The ecumenical movement represents an attempt by the Church to live and act in a way that is consistent with her vocation.

THE GOSPEL FOR TODAY

It may be claimed that Christianity was relevant to human life in the happy far-off days of a European rural and semi-urban economy. But how do we find ways for Jesus Christ, the Lord, to impinge on our industrial, urban and increasingly

technological civilization? The Churches all face the problem of relating the One Lord to a single human species in one world. It is a world in which the tempo of change is tremendous and ever-increasing. Half the scientists who have ever lived are alive now! The Churches with their inherited concept of a timeless structure and theology are left gasping and flat-footed while the world rolls on without them. How can we move from our quiet backwaters and confront a changing world with the Christ who is its contemporary without drawing on all our resources of intellect, imagination, skill and experience?

The world, moreover, is not much interested in Anglican, Methodist, Presbyterian or Roman versions of what is God's purpose for his creation. It is concerned with one creation, and, more and more in a shrinking world, with a single humanity, in spite of divisions and differences caused by our "fallen" nature. The world is not much interested in Roman Catholic or Anglican or Methodist Man. It is interested in MAN. It is more catholic in this than the Churches. Thus any attempt by the Church to serve in industry, in the universities and indeed in most places where the future direction of humanity is being shaped will have to be on an ecumenical basis.

The C.C.S.A. could become the means by which theologians and lay experts in various fields are brought together so that we see more clearly what it means to witness to Christ in this present world and not in an age long passed.

**Christelike Instituut van
Suidelike Afrika**

**JAARVERGADERING VAN
LEDE**

Die 1967-jaarvergadering van lede van die Instituut sal D.V. op DINSDAG, 12 SEPTEMBER, om 8 nm. in die Darragh-saal, Hoekstraat, Johannesburg, gehou word. Ons vertrou van harte dat lede vanuit alle dele van ons land die vergadering sal kan bywoon. Kennisgewings word eersdaags aan alle lede uitgepos.

Die Instituut se Raad van Beheer sal om 9.30 vm. dieselfde dag vergader in die biblioteek van die Instituut, Dunwell 216, Jorissenstraat 35, Braamfontein, Johannesburg.

C. F. B. NAUDÉ,
Direkteur.

**Christian Institute of
Southern Africa**

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
OF MEMBERS**

The 1967 Annual General Meeting of members of the Institute will be held on TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 12th, at 8.00 p.m. in the Darragh Hall, Hoek Street, Johannesburg. It is hoped that members from all parts of our country will be able to attend the meeting. Notices will be posted to all members in the near future.

The Institute's Board of Management will meet on the same day at 9.30 a.m., in the Institute's library, Room 216 Dunwell, 35 Jorissen Street, Braamfontein, Johannesburg.

C. F. B. NAUDÉ,
Director.

NOW AVAILABLE

1. Judgment in the case between Professor A. S. Geysers and the Rev. C. F. B. Naudé (Plaintiffs) and Professor A. D. Pont (Defendant). A 30-page mimeographed summary in English. Price 50 cents.
2. The full judgment in Afrikaans 85-page booklet. Price R1.00.
3. The Cottesloe Consultation Report — often referred to in the Court Case: 100-page booklet. Reduced price 50 cents.

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„EKONOMIESE EKUMENE”

In Hoogvliet, Nederland, het die gemeente van die Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk en die Rooms-Katolieke parogie onlangs daartoe oorgegaan om 'n kerkgebou in gesamentlike besit en gebruik te hê.

Die kerksentrum „De Bron” is sowat drie jaar gelede opgerig vir gebruik deur die Hervormde wykgemeente.

Op die Rooms-Katolieke pastoor, C. N. M. Hammann, het die verantwoordelikheid gerus om vir die parogie 'n kerkgebou te laat oprig. Nadat hy egter berig ontvang het dat geen biskoplike vergunning vir kerkbou toegestaan word nie, is daar tot 'n ooreenkoms geraak (wat begin het na 'n vriendelik-skertsende opmerking van die plaaslike Hervormde predi-

kant, ds. K. Verbeek, dat die Rooms-Katolieke dan maar by hulle moet tuis gaan) waarvolgens gemeente en parogie in een kerkgebou gehuisves sal kan word.

Die kerkgebou het die gesamentlike eiendom van die gemeente en die parogie geword, en daar is ooreengekom dat die parogie die helfte van die lopende koste plus 50% van die boukoste (na aftrek van die ryks-subsidie en die koste van die Hervormde pastorie) sal betaal.

Tydens 'n samekoms wat aan die ooreenkoms 'n offisiële karakter gegee het, het prof. H. Berkhof, kerklike hoogleraar te Leiden, opgemerk dat dit nie so vreemd is dat die woorde „ekumenies” en „ekonomies” nogal soms met mekaar verwar word nie. „Hulle hoort wel deeglik by mekaar. Hier is die Heilige Gees besig om ons te vang met die lis van die beursie”.

Prof. Berkhof het die hoop uitgespreek dat dit met die onderneming van hierdie „ekumeniese pioniers” nie sal gaan soos met soveel halwe maatreëls waardeur ekumeniese werk so dikwels in diskrediet kom nie: Veel ophef oor die begin, maar later hoor 'n mens niks meer daarvan nie.

Prof. H. A. M. Fiolet, hoofbestuurslid van die ekumeniese vereniging St. Willibrord, het by die geleentheid gesê dat die saamwoon in een kerkgebou 'n uitdaging is aan die parogie en die wykgemeente om op alle terreine saam te doen wat maar moontlik saam gedoen kan word tot diens aan die samelewing. „Dit gaan vir God nie om die Kerk nie, maar om die wêreld wat Hy so lief gehad het dat Hy sy eniggebore Seun daarvoor gegee het”, het prof. Fiolet gesê. (*Persbureau der Ned. Herv. Kerk en Hervormd Nederland.*)

