



PRO VERITATE

LEONARD VERDUIN

For He is Our Peace

J. R. KRIEL

Ek voel, daarom is ek

MYRTLE A. RADLEY

The Norwegian Church Struggle 1940-1945

EDMUND HILL

Bible Weeks

ERASMIUS

Gesprek met Rome

PRO VERITATE

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IN HIERDIE UITGAWE

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HET PASTOOR NIEMÖLLER GELYK?

Die bekende Duitse kerkman, dr. Martin Niemöller, wat veral vanweë sy leidende aandeel in die Duitse kerkstryd tydens die Nazi-bewind altyd as een van die beproefde getuies van Christus in die geskiedenis van die kerk onthou sal word, het na sy besoek aan Suid-Afrika verlede jaar sy indrukke oor ons land saamgevat in 'n artikel wat onlangs in 'n Duitse kerkblad verskyn het.

Wat hy oor die politieke toestande in Suid-Afrika, die land van apartheid, sê, is min of meer wat alle skerpsinnige buitelanders wat hulle die moeite getroos om hulle persoonlik daarvan op hoogte te kom stel, daaroor opmerk. Die goeie dinge verswyg hy nie, maar gee Suid-Afrika die volle krediet daarvoor. Hy praat bv. met groot lof van die goeie woontoe-stande van die nie-blankes in Soweto, van wat daar alles gedoen word vir die opvoeding en onderwys van die nie-blankes, van die vryheid van die pers en die vryheid om die apartheidsbeleid van die regering te kritiseer.

Tog het Niemöller ook die skadukante opgemerk. En as hy daartoe oorgaan om die apartheidsbeleid te beoordeel, kom hy met 'n vlymskerpe kritiek wat, vanuit sy Europese oogpunt besien, stellig ook nugter en verantwoord is. Hy beskou dit as prakties onuitvoerbaar, as geen oplossing vir die rasseprobleem soos dit hier bestaan nie. Die feit dat die blankes enersyds in apartheid glo en dit ook wil deurvoer en dat hulle andersyds in hulle ekonomie, op die gebied van die landbou en die industrie, tog nie sonder die nie-blanke arbeid kan of wil klaarkom nie, maak, volgens Niemöller, van die rasse-teenstelling eintlik 'n klasseteenstelling. Hulle ekonomiese afhanklikheid van die nie-blankes aan die een kant en hulle vrees vir politieke oorheersing aan die ander kant, maak dat die blankes op die mees verrassende wyse so ver as moontlik aan die begeertes van die nie-blankes voldoen, solank dit maar nie in stryd is met die apartheidsbeginsel nie. Die feit bly egter dat die nie-blankes in die politieke struktuur van apartheid geen mede-seggenskap het in die regering van die land nie. Hulle is geen burgers van die land nie maar in 'n groot mate slegs bywoners en trekwerkers, met betreklik goeie lone en bestaansmoontlikhede, maar nogtans mense van 'n tweede of 'n derde klas wat as noodsaaklike en goedkoop arbeidsmiddele gewaardeer en as sodanig in stand gehou word. Dit het Niemöller wel opgeval dat die nie-blankes oor die algemeen met hierdie toedrag van sake skynbaar tevrede is, terwyl die blankes dit as normaal en in orde beskou. Die tevredenheid van die nie-blankes sien hy egter as geduld — 'n geduld wat vir die Europeër verrassend en verbasend is; maar die nie-blanke het tyd en hy weet dat die tyd aan sy kant is. Hy dink nie daaraan om 'n verandering van sy lewensomstandighede met geweld te probeer bewerkstellig nie. Sy getalsvermeerdering in verhouding tot dié van

die blanke sal hom dit vanself, soos 'n rypgeworde vrug, in die skoot laat val.

Hier wil ons graag opmerk dat die siening van Niemöller nogal ooreenkoms vertoon met dié van sommige apartheidsprofete in ons land. Dat die antwoord op die vraag of die politieke mag in Suid-Afrika in die hande van die blankes sal bly op 'n beslissende wyse ook afhang van hulle getalsterkte in verhouding tot dié van die nie-blankes, is een van die mees geliefde temas in die moraalprediking van die apartheidsideologie.

Die lewenshouding van die blankes in Suid-Afrika beoordeel die Duitse pastoor egter as een van 'n salige waan dat hulle in hulle isolering van die res van die wêreld, waarin die tyd van die blanke opperheerskappy vir goed verby is, in hulle eie Suid-Afrikaanse wêreldjie hulle lot self kan bepaal, onafhanklik van wat elders in die wêreld gebeur. Die natuurlike gemoedelikheid van die swartman stel hulle gerus en laat hulle die erns van die situasie nie begryp nie. Dit is selfbedrog, meen Niemöller, vir die 3½ miljoen blankes in Suid-Afrika om te meen dat hulle onbeïnvloed deur die lot van die orige meer as 1,200 miljoen blankes in die wêreld, op eie krag kan voortleef en voortreger.

Niemöller is egter in die eerste instansie 'n Christen en 'n kerkman. Dit is dan ook in ooreenstemming met alles waarvoor hy staan en waarvoor hy hom steeds beywer het dat hy die dinge wat hy op ons politieke toneel waargeneem het, geestelik sou beoordeel en tydens sy verblyf in ons land hom veral sou wou vergewis van hoe die kerk en Christene in Suid-Afrika die toestande alhier geestelik beoordeel. Dit is juis die uitsprake wat hy in hierdie verband doen wat 'n mens tot die diepste droefheid stem. Nie dat ons hom dit kwalik neem of sy waarskuwings as ongegrond kan verwerp nie. Dit moet ons intendeel met grondige selfondersoek laat vra of dit waar is. Ons bepaal ons slegs by wat hy oor die Afrikaanssprekende kerke sê. 'n Saak wat in ons eie kerklike kringe, in vrugtelose pogings om oor dinge waaroor talle Christene in ons land diep besorg is tot 'n openhartige gesprek te kom, al dikwels genoem is, nl. dat ons in apartheid met 'n pseudo-evangelie te doen het wat ons Godsverhouding ten diepste kom versteur het en met die Christelike geloof in konkurrensie is, word deur 'n man wat weet hoe dit lyk as die geloofstryd op hierdie vlak gevoer word, in onomwonde taal uitgespreek. Hy praat van die wyse waarop die Bybel en die teologie misbruik word om die apartheidsideologie aanvaarbaar te maak — iets wat 'n noue ooreenstemming vertoon met wat tydens die Hitler-tyd in Duitsland gebeur het. Vir baie Suid-Afrikaanse Christene is 'n blanke Suid-Afrika belangriker as Christus, soos wat destyds vir die „Duitse Christene“ Duitsland belangriker was as Christus. Soos wat in die georganiseerde kerk in

Duitsland gedurende dié tyd slegs nog die religieuse slaaf van 'n nasionalistiese ideologie herken kon word, so is hierdie kerke nouliks nog iets anders die religieuse instrumente vir 'n rassistiese ideologie. Dié kerke het 'n hulporgaan ten dienste van die meerderheidswil van die blankes geword wat van die kerk verlang en verwag om hulle voorregte te bevestig. 'n Predikant wat probeer om vir die outoriteit van Jesus Christus op te kom en dit teen die meerderheidswil in openlik verkondig, beland in 'n moeilike posisie en word tot swye veroordeel — nie van bo af, deur die owerheid nie, maar van onder af, deur die kerkvolk. Die staat blyk in hierdie opsig veel verdraagsamer te wees as die offisiële kerk. Dit moet betwyfel word, sê Niemöller, of aan so 'n sosiologiese grootheid nog die naam „kerk” gegee kan word. Wat die „Duits-Christelik” georganiseerde kerk tydens die Derde Ryk betref, het die „Bekennende Kirche” in Duitsland dit nadruklik ontken.

Op die vraag of daar in Suid-Afrika ook 'n „belydende kerk” bestaan, antwoord Niemöller bevestigend. Terwyl egter, soos destyds in Duitsland, die offisiële kerk hierin gefaal het, het hy in Suid-Afrika die belydende kerk gevind in klein kringe, oor die hele land verstrooi en dikwels ook nie eers van mekaar bewus nie — die „twee of drie” wat in Jesus se Naam vergader, dié kerk vir wie die belofte geld dat die poorte van die hel dit nie sal oorweldig nie. Op hierdie „belydende kerk” binne die Afrikaanssprekende kerke rus die gewigtige taak om dié kerke op te roep om waarlik kerk te wees en te word, d.w.s. om die heerskappy van Jesus te verkondig in plaas

van om toe te gee aan 'n menslike meerderheidswil wat in teenspraak is met die wil en die Gees van die Here. So alleen sal dié kerke aan Suid-Afrika daardie noodsaaklike diens lewer waarsonder 'n verandering in die vooruitsiglose situasie nie moontlik skyn te wees nie. Aan so 'n Christelike bydrae in die egte sin van die woord bestaan daar in Suid-Afrika 'n dringende behoefte; dit is nodig om die voorwaardes te bepaal vir vreedsame voortgang.

Klaarblyklik het pastoor Niemöller hom nie skuldig gemaak aan 'n kwaadwillige beswadding van Suid-Afrika nie. Daarom het religieuse en politieke mondstukke van die Nasionale Party sy lofuitinge in verband met toestande in ons land ook reeds met waardering aangekondig. Dit sou egter dwaas wees om hierdie man se vermelding van die goeie woon-toestande in Soweto, die persvryheid in ons land, die gemoedelikheid en skynbare tevredenheid van die nie-blankes, die feit dat Luthuli nie verbitter is oor sy ingeperkte vryheid nie, ens., te beoordeel as 'n pluim op die hoed vir apartheid. Omdat sy kritiek op 'n wesenlik immorele en onrealistiese politieke beleid klaarblyklik sonder vooringenome kwade gedagtes op die wese van die saak afstuur, daarom is dit soveel skerper en indringender as kritiek in die vorm van valse aantygings en onverantwoordelike wolhaarstories. Daarom moet ons, veral in kerklike kringe, besef dat Suid-Afrika 'n vriend in pastoor Niemöller het wat spreek uit 'n diepe liefde vir Christus en vir sy Kerk ook in ons land. Daarom moet ons bereid wees om na hom te luister.

Editorial:

IS PASTOR NIEMÖLLER RIGHT?

The well-known German churchman, Dr. Martin Niemöller who, mainly because of his leading rôle in the Church struggle during the Nazi regime, will always be remembered in the history of the Church as one of the tested witnesses of Christ, has in an article which recently appeared in a German church paper, summarised his impressions of our country after his visit to South Africa last year.

What he has to say about the political conditions in South Africa, the land of apartheid, is more or less in accord with what all astute foreigners who take the trouble to inform themselves in this matter have to say. He does not conceal the good things but gives South Africa full credit for them. Thus he talks with great praise of the good housing conditions of the non-whites in Soweto, of all that is being done in the field of the education of the non-whites, of the freedom of the press and the freedom to criticise the government's apartheid policy.

Yet Niemöller also spotted the darker side. And when he passes judgment on the policy of apartheid, he expresses scathing criticism which, seen from his

European viewpoint, is certainly also sober and accountable. He regards the policy as impracticable and as no solution of the race problem as it exists here. The fact that the whites on the one hand believe in apartheid and wish to implement it and yet on the other hand cannot or do not wish to do without non-white labour in their economy in the field of agriculture and industry, according to Niemöller, really turns the race conflict into a class conflict. The whites' economic dependence on the non-whites on the one side and their fear of political domination on the other cause the whites in a most surprising way to accede to the wishes of the non-whites as long as this does not clash with the principle of apartheid. The fact remains, however, that in the political structure of apartheid the non-whites have no say in the government of the country. They are not citizens of the country but to a large extent mainly bywoners and migrant labourers, in receipt of fairly good wages and opportunities of existence, but nevertheless second or third class people who are appreciated as essential and cheap instruments

of labour and are cared for as such. It struck Niemöller that in general the non-whites would appear to be satisfied with this state of affairs while the whites regard it as normal and in order. However, he sees the satisfaction of the non-whites as patience — patience which for Europeans is surprising and astonishing; but time is on the non-white's side and he is aware of this. He is not considering violence as a possible means to change his circumstances. His greater numerical increase in relation to that of the white is his assurance that circumstances will eventually change in his favour.

At this juncture we wish to remark that Niemöller's view shows a remarkable similarity to that of some of our prophets of apartheid. That the answer to the question whether political power in South Africa will remain in the hands of the whites will depend in a decisive way also on their numerical strength in relation to that of the non-whites is one of the most beloved theories in the moral preaching of the ideology of apartheid.

The attitude of the whites in South Africa is, however, judged by the German pastor, one of blissful delusion that they will, in their isolation from the rest of a world in which the time for white supremacy is passed, be able to determine their own fate in their own little South African world, irrespective of what happens elsewhere in the world. The natural bonhomie of the blackman sets minds at rest and prevents them from realising the seriousness of the situation. It is self-deceit, according to Niemöller, for the 3½ million whites in South Africa to believe that they will be able to continue their life and rule on their own strength in the face of the fate of the rest of the world's more than 1,200 million non-whites.

But Niemöller is in the first instance a Christian and churchman. It is therefore in accordance with everything for which he stands and for which he has consistently worked that he should judge spiritually everything which he has observed on the political scene, and that he should, during his sojourn in our country, have informed himself on how the Church and Christians in South Africa judge the conditions here from a spiritual point of view. It is in fact his judgments in this regard which are the cause of the greatest sadness in us. Not that we blame him or that we have the right to reject his warnings as invalid. On the contrary, his judgments should spur us on, in a spirit of sincere self-examination, to ask whether they are true. We wish to confine ourselves only to what he had to say about the Afrikaans churches. A matter which has often been mentioned in our own church circles, in fruitless efforts to arrange a frank dialogue on the things about which many Christians in our country are deeply concerned, namely that with apartheid we are dealing with a pseudo-gospel which has deeply upset our relationship with God and which is in competition with our Christian faith, is described in unequivocal terms by a man who knows what it looks like if the battle of faith is fought on this level. He talks about the way in which the Bible and theology are misused to make the ideology of apartheid acceptable — something which bears a marked resemblance to what happened in Germany in Hitler's time: for many South Africans and Christians a white South Africa is more important than Christ,

precisely in the way in which in Hitler's time Germany was more important than Christ to many German Christians. As in the organized church in Germany of that time only the religious slave of nationalistic ideology could be recognised, so these churches are hardly anything else than the religious instrument for a racist ideology. These churches have become an auxiliary in the service of the will of the majority of the whites, who desire and expect the Church to confirm their privileges. A minister who endeavours to stand up for the authority of Jesus Christ and to pronounce it openly in the face of the will of the majority finds himself in a difficult situation and is forced into silence — not from the top, by the country's rulers, but from the bottom, by the people of the Church. In this respect the State appears to be more tolerant than the official Church. It is to be doubted, says Niemöller, whether the name "Church" can still be given to such a sociological quantity. During the Third Reich the "Confessing Church" certainly denied that the term could be applied to the "German Christian" organised church.

To the question whether a "confessing church" exists in South Africa Niemöller replies in the affirmative. While, as in the Germany of that time, the official church had failed in this regard, in South Africa he found the confessing church in small circles, spread all over the country and often not even aware of each other — the "two and three" meeting in the name of Jesus, **the** Church for which the promise holds that the gates of hell will not overpower it. On this "confessing church" within the Afrikaans churches the grave responsibility rests to call these churches to be church and to become church, that is to proclaim the sovereignty of Christ instead of giving in to the majority will of people, something which might be in direct conflict with the will and Spirit of the Lord. Only in this way will these churches render to South Africa that essential service without which a change in the grim situation does not seem to be possible. For such a Christian contribution in the real sense of the word there is an urgent need in South Africa; it is necessary in order that the conditions for a peaceful advance may be determined.

Pastor Niemöller clearly did not make himself guilty of a malicious besmirching of South Africa. For this reason the religious and political mouthpieces of the National Party have given appreciative publicity to his praise of conditions in our country. It would be very foolish, however, to regard this man's mention of the good housing conditions in Soweto, the freedom of our press, the fact that Luthuli has not become embittered by the limitations on his liberty, etc. as a feather in the cap of apartheid. Because his criticism of an essentially immoral and unrealistic political policy, obviously given without any harmful intent, is directed at the very essence of the matter, it is so much sharper and penetrates so much deeper than criticism in the form of false accusations and irresponsible stories. Therefore we, especially in Church circles, should realise that South Africa has a friend in Pastor Niemöller who speaks out of deep love for Christ and for His Church in our country also. Therefore we should be prepared to listen to him.

FOR HE IS OUR PEACE

(Ephesians 2: 14)

— THE REV. LEONARD VERDUIN*

The Apostle Paul, as he seeks to instruct and edify the Christians at Ephesus, (see 2: 11-18) feels the need in the course of his argument to throw out the explanatory statement that **He, Christ, is our PEACE. No doubt his intention is to say that Jesus is the occasion for our peace, the one who makes our peace possible. Just as a peasant might say that his little plot of ground IS his livelihood, so St. Paul asserts that Jesus IS our peace, the one through whom, in whom, by whom it is possible for our peace to be.**

TOGETHERNESS

In the languages of the Bible the word **peace** does not have exactly the same flavour that our English usage gives to it. With us peace is the absence of hostility, the opposite of war; in the Bible peace is that condition which results when all that which in the nature of things belongs together is together. In the Hebrew and Greek usage **peace** is togetherness, the opposite of clevenness.

That this is the essential thrust of the Biblical word **peace** is apparent when one recalls that the children of Israel were instructed to pick up stones from the now dry riverbed of Jordan, carry them to that river's western bank, and there build an altar with them. In our translations these stones are referred to as "unhewn" stones — but in the original they are called "peaceful" stones, not, surely, because they were not at war with each other, did not fight, but because they were "together" stones, stones which spoke eloquently of a togetherness, unsplit stones, stones in which that which in the nature of things belongs together is actually together.

That we are on the right track in this study of the word **peace** is altogether apparent from the context, both foregoing and sequential. In that which goes before Paul has been speaking of a coming-together, of those who were at one time **far off** and those who had all along been **near**. Then, in an effort to throw the necessary light upon this coming-together, this creation of togetherness, he utters the words of our text: **For He is our peace. And in that which follows he speaks of Him "who has made us both one, and has broken down the dividing wall of hostility". Both times Christ is said to be our peace because He it is that has effected togetherness.**

JEW AND GENTILE

Who were these parties that had previously been in unpeace, with a wall of hostility holding them apart? And what was the bone of contention that kept them thus divided? Paul locates the dividing agent. It is "the law of commandments and ordinances". These Christ has abolished in his flesh, so making peace. And then, as if to clinch the amalgamation he created in himself of one new man instead of the erstwhile two, so making peace, he came to **preach** peace, this peace, to those who were afar off and to those who were nigh.

The law of commandments and ordinances had indeed been the great keeper-apart. It had been the fact that they, the Jews, had the Law of God that had kept Jew and Gentile apart. So apart that when the Jew travelled he would ford the Jordan when he entered non-Jew territory (actually it was only half non-Jew; for the Samaritans were partly Jewish), walk on the safe side, not to cross again until he knew it was safe to do so. To this situation Jesus had put an end, He being our peace. He did this by scrapping the notion that Law-having was enough to put a man in good standing with God. He put some other formula in its place — so making peace. That formula had to do with "the blood of Christ" says Paul. Into that blood both parties, hitherto keeping each to his own side of the Jordan, had to be plunged. And in this common experience the erstwhile difference disappeared — so making peace.

MADE ALIVE

The great event, the great feat of the peace-maker, Paul hastens to describe from still another point of view. Actually it has to do with the

thing Paul had broached in the first place, when, at the very beginning of the chapter, he had thrown out the powerful assertion "and you, you too, he has made alive". In this "making alive" the cause of peace had been served in a stupendous way. All who have been thus "made alive" have been made over, in the similitude of Christ himself; regardless of the side of the Jordan they had lived on, they had been made over after one and the same set of blueprints; now they were so much alike that peace, togetherness, resulted as a matter of course. And then He came to preach this togetherness, this peace, to all alike, to "you who were far off" and "to you who were near".

For He is our peace. He it is who has, by a stroke of unbelievable genius and sacrifice, fashioned the formula for peace, for togetherness.

MAN-TO-MAN RELATIONSHIP

The primary reference, it will be observed, is to togetherness between man and man. After all, the Christian Gospel **does** have to do with the man-to-man relationship; which is to say that the Gospel is not exhausted by any means when we have listened to what it has to say about God-man and man-God relationships. An imbalance here, a one-sided concentration on the vertical relationship, at the expense, if not the actual cancelling out, of the horizontal, has, especially in my homeland, given rise to the so-called "social Gospel". It is a reactionary one-sided emphasis on the horizontal. We do well to guard against being led astray by it. But we must also see to it that by our imbalance in the matter we do not set the stage for another surge of "social gospel" theology.

In this connection it is indeed remarkable that the Apostle himself seems to have thrown his weight on the other foot for a moment, to avoid an imbalance that threatened. As he is speaking of Him who is our peace, who has removed the wall that had kept men apart from men, he throws in the information

that after He has so made peace on this plane He took steps to "reconcile us both to God". He was also interested in reconciling the now mutually reconciled ones to God.

It serves no good purpose, so it seems to us, to agonize over the question as to which comes first, the vertical peace-making or the horizontal. In all likelihood there is no first and second. The one is contained in the other. A man cannot "get right" with God without simultaneously "getting right" with his fellow man. The sin in Eden brought unpeace between God and man, and, between man and man; the Law sought to spell out, in a first and second table, what acceptable conduct in both directions is like; the Gospel addresses itself to the vertical and the horizontal version of the dispeace caused by man's sin. "What God hath joined together let not man put asunder" is applicable here.

PRACTICE OF PEACE

He is our peace. Among men, in all parts of the world — it is a universal language — peace is celebrated in two well-known and down-to-earth ways. Men who wish to give evidence of togetherness, that is, of peace — talk to each other and eat a bit together. Has it ever occurred to you that He who is our peace is like unto us in this convention also? He talks with us, in His Word; and He eats a bit with us, at His table. We have a "means of grace" for each of the conventional ways of giving expression to togetherness.

It follows that to say "I am not on speaking terms" is to say a very sad thing as it is sad to omit the eating together. The "communion table" is not called by that name for nothing. How sad a commentary that this very table often speaks most loudly, not of togetherness but of apartness!

How sad that men continue to believe that a black man who has been made over after the image of Christ and a white man refashioned after the same blueprint are still so dissimilar that peace, that is togetherness, is not practicable! As if the Oracle of God had not told us that "in Christ", that is among such as have been created anew in Him, the old distinctions of Jew and Gentile, Barbarian or Scythian, etc. pale into insignificance! Is not an

Auca Indian who has been raised with Christ, more like a blond believer than his fellow whiteman who is still in his sin? If I find it distasteful to talk or eat with the believer from the other side of the world, it could be because he and I are so dissimilar; he has been made over, and I am still in the raw. That explains the absence of peace between us. Someone should take me to see the great Peace-maker, Jesus Christ. For He is our peace.

* * *

We have seen that peace is togetherness, togetherness of all that in the nature of things belongs together. And we have seen that St. Paul teaches very plainly that a Semite who believes and a descendant of Japheth who believes, have, by their renewal in Christ, become so much alike that they belong together; the "dividing wall" between them has been broken down.

CHRIST THE GREAT DIVIDER

But, it may be asked, does then **everything** belong together? Are there not some differences left, differences that must be respected and observed? Walls that we must allow to stand?

The answer is yes. And no one has taught this more plainly than has this Jesus himself; no one has spoken more plainly of a residual twoness than did the Master himself. And he has built this teaching also around the concept of **peace**.

"Think not that I have come to bring peace on earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother; a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and a man's foes shall be those of his own household." (Matthew 10:34ff). Manifestly, Christ is the Great Divider as well as our Peace, the Bringer-together and the Putter-apart. How can this be?

What Jesus is saying here is that in all situations of life, in every segment of human society, those who have been made over in Him will find themselves living next door to persons who have resisted the hand that would renovate them too. Wherever Christ has been there human society has become a compound. That is what Jesus is saying here.

And to make this teaching vivid He takes us right to that societal

situation where we do not usually look for diversity, where we expect to find consensus — the family circle. Right here, says He, be prepared for the situation of father vs. son, mother vs. daughter, etc. A man's "foes" can be those of his own household.

Let us hope that He meant this to be hyperbole, an excessively strong statement, made so in order to make it impossible for us to miss the point. Happily fathers and sons, mothers and daughters, even mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law can, and do, very commonly even, see eye to eye in the things that are of Christ. Thank God for that!

CHRISTIANITY AND SOCIETY

But let us not miss the point Jesus is making here. It is that we must learn to think in terms of the composite society, of a twoness that reaches into all societal groupings, the very family circles not by definition excluded. Wherever Christ goes the world becomes a place where "two women will be grinding at the mill, the one will be taken and the other left". It was to get His people to think in terms of a for-and-against that runs through all societal groupings that He said the solemn words: "Think not that I am come to send peace on the earth; I come not to send peace but the sword."

Was it not then a sad day when people began to talk of a "Christian nation"? A "Christian civilization"? A "Christian culture"? When Christ has said in words of one syllable that even a "Christian home" does not speak for itself? Does His Word permit us to expect more than a "nation", a "civilization", a "culture" influenced more or less (depending on numbers and degree of faithfulness) by the believers that walk in its parade? For are not all "nations", "civilizations", "cultures" also always and necessarily in part **demonic**?

Is not the King of His Church teaching us this truth anew in our times? Times in which we have seen demonic forces, parading under the name of "Christian" nation, "Christian" civilization, "Christian" culture? As millions of human beings were herded into gas chambers and their remains trucked into tankage vats, as men said, with hellish mockery: "The Party bases itself

upon positive Christianity"? Can we actually, after Barmen, ever be misled again or fall into the chant of "a Christian nation", "a Christian civilization", "a Christian culture"? Or shall we let the Teacher have His way, as He tells us that His coming will make all human societal situations **composite**, right down the line, to the very hearth?

It is most significant that the Saviour tied both of these mighty teachings to the word "peace". This is because He wanted us to hold them in conjunction with each other. That is why He also spoke of "children of the kingdom cast into outer darkness" in the same breath with "many from east and west coming to sit down... together in the Kingdom". The Great Bringer-together combines the supposedly uncombinable; He causes to go their several ways the supposedly

inseparable. He creates a new family of men that were lying apart; and He divides into two camps those who were lying together.

The one insight is contingent on the other. It was not until St. Paul was ready to grant that Jews could be lost that he was prepared to say that non-Jews could be saved. It was not until he had been taught that people, his people, Abraham's people, were going in two receptacles that he was ready for the idea that those who had been all along in two receptacles could be put in one. It is still that way. He who thinks that the societal groupings of which he is a part, the nation whose language he speaks, is non-composite, will, to that extent, deny his final and ultimate oneness with men of other societal groupings. Only he who has learned to see how fictitious is the idea of a "Christian"

tribe to which he belongs will be able to take a genuinely and uninhibited stance over against believers of another tribe.

Only so can the Church be the Church, the Church of the New Testament, the Church of Christ. It brings together men of every kindred, clime, tongue, colour; at the same time it creates in every human situation men who witness and men who are witnessed to.

And the purpose of the witnessing is to make more and more men to know Him and in the knowing become a part of the New Humanity.

For He is our peace.

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EK VOEL, DAAROM IS EK

— J. R. KRIEL

*„Waarom is ons nie toegeseël
teen pyn, teen al die bitter lig?
die oop, grys senuwees gesluit?
en al die hart se luike dig?"*

(N. P. van Wyk Louw)

Sedert Descartes sy gedagtes gepresipiteer het in die stelling: *cogito ergo sum*, het feitlik elke postcartesiaan op een of ander tyd in die gang van sy denke hierdie stelling probeer parodieer. Die formele uiterlike is behou, maar die inhoud is geknak en getrek, gedraai, verbuig en selfs gebollemakeer tot die *sum ergo cogito* van die eksistensialiste.

Miskien is juis dít die grootste kompliment wat die wêreld se kumulatiewe dink aan die voete van Descartes kan lê. 'n Duisend-en-een inhoude is in hierdie vorm gegiet; 'n duisend-en-een inhoude wat dalk almal reg, of miskien selfs almal verkeerd mag wees. Meer waarskynlik is dit egter dat elkeen op sy manier en binne die staalwerk van sy eie vooronderstellings, van sy mis- en vooroordele tog iets waars verklank van die oneindige perspektiewe wat ons menswees vir ons op onself open. Op hierdie vlak is almal waarskynlik reg — en terselfdertyd almal verkeerd.

Net so is die stelling wat die opskrif van hierdie essay vorm vanuit 'n sekere perspektief heeltemal on-sinnig. My voelery het met my syn

in 'n ontiese sin, met my isgeid (soms is dit meer isserigheid!) niks te make nie. Die voelery is tog sekondêr, afhanklik van hierdie warwerk senuwees wat onuitputlik-rusteloos impulse heen en weer rangeer. Tog seker: ek is, daarom voel ek.

Vanuit 'n ander oogpunt beskou, sou 'n mens egter kon sê dat hoewel gevoel niks met die grond van jou bestaan te doen het nie, jy waaragtig nie lank op die grond sou bestaan sonder gevoel nie. Op die mees elementêre, animale vlak is die verskillende modaliteite van gevoel wesentlik betrokke by die voortbestaan van die organisme in 'n ongenadige omgewing. Om te voel is om te kan lewe. Dit definieer die omvang, die kompleksiteit en die moontlikhede van die ruimte waar-

in die mens bestaan. Om te voel is die weg van die liggaam tot die wêreld en tot homself.

Ek wil heel arbitrêr vir die doel van hierdie opstel die oë uitskakel. Om te sien vereis distansie, verwydering — jy kan per slot van sake nie die binnekant van jou eie ooglede sien nie. Om te sien is om te distansieer. Dit vind sy liggaamlike korrelaat in die weg-beweeg van die liggaam as hy iets wil sien. Hoewel die oë 'n belangrike weg tot ervaring van en aanpassing in die wêreld is, gee dit geen direkte ervaring van of die wêreld of die liggaam in die wêreld nie.

Wanneer jy sien, sien jy vanuit jou liggaam wat die onsienbare uitkykpunt vorm. Selfs wanneer die bruingebrande Tarzan so terloops afkyk na sy salfgesmeerde spiere, dan kyk hy nog vanuit sy deurleefde liggaam as perspektiewe middelpunt van sy uit-sig na 'n in-bewondering-geobjektiveerde deel van sy anatomie.

BELEWING VAN DIE WERKLIKHEID

Maar wanneer jy voel, dan is daar 'n direkte, onmiddellike beleving van beide die wêreld waarin jy leef en van jousef as liggaam. Jy voel die wêreld aan jou bas; die wêreld gaan jou te lyf. En vir een ekstatiëse moment is jy en die wêreld ineengestremel, weet jy van jousef en die wêreld as een — 'n eenheid van stof tot stof. Hierdie beleving van jou radikale wêreldsheid, hou ook in 'n radikale beleving van die kontingensie van die menslike bestaan — nee meer, van die toevalligheid en vervangbaarheid van my bestaan. Nie ek is belangrik nie — ek is maar deel van 'n omvattende, skone, ongenadige wêreld waar dinge kom, vir 'n oomblik 'n bestaan voer wat of skoon of wreed of neutraal is, en vir ewig verdwyn.

In hierdie ervaring loop die hemele leeg — want binne hierdie dimensie is daar geen metafisiese godemag wat na my omsien of 'n noodlot wat my bepaal nie. Wat hier gebeur is geheel te verklaar in terme van binnewêreldse kategorieë, of is gladnie te verklaar nie. Maar daar is geen verklaring van die skoonheid en die lyding, die grootsheid en die walglikheid, die liefde en die haat van hierdie wêreld in terme van metafisiese (filosofies en teologies) denkbeelde en projeksies nie. Hier ontdek ek dat ek niks is nie, dat ek één met die wêreld en tog 'n vreemdeling is in die wêreld wat na my nie omsien nie. Hier word ek gestroop en ontdek ek dat ek radikaal mens is. Hier ervaar ek die radikaliteit van die dood en die eenmalige urgensie van die wêreld in sy skoonheid en lyding. Hier is geen ewige lewe nie — net die nou met sy verlede en sy toekoms, en sy vreugde en sy smart. Hier kan ek God ontmoet, 'n God wat in Jesus Christus homself radikaal mens verklaar het: kontingent, swak, vervangbaar, maar met die moontlikheid om lief te hê.

ISOLASIE

Miskien is dit waarom ons hele sameleving en lewensgewoontes daarop ingestel is om ons te beskerm teen ons voel. Ons streef na onversteurbare gevoelloosheid, en werp ons net in in die stampende, stotende wêreldkolk om die middele te verdien om ons meer effektief te isoleer. Maar deur ons van die wêreld te isoleer, isoleer ons onself van ons naaste en van God.

Ons-wil nie koud kry nie; swem

nie as die water onder 74° is nie; wil nie in die wind loop nie want ons hare waai deurmekaar; wil nie natreent nie; wil nie warm kry nie; wil nie moeg word nie — wil in werklikheid nie lewe nie. Ons ry rustig Sondagmiddag langs die see, want dis tog so mooi en dis mos sonde om op die Sabbatdag te swem. Maar om die see te sien en jou klere nie te stroop en hom nie aan jou lyf te voel woel en sweet nie, is om niks van hom af te weet nie.

En wanneer ons dit tog waag om ons liggame bloot te stel aan die wêreld, dan is dit met bybedoelings. Wie lê in die son om sy taai brand te voel, om sy sweethitte te ervaar? Ten spyte van ons politiek, lê ons net om bruin te word. En asof om ons skaamte te bedek, of ons te beskerm teen die ekstatiëse uitdaging om saam met hom te dans oor die wêreld en te sterf, smeer ons olie tussen ons en die son. Watter witgetêkkiede figuur hardloop ter wille van die fluitpyn in sy bors en die lamheid in sy bene? Wie hardloop omdat dit 'n manier is om homself te ervaar? Wie hardloop omdat hy weet dat om te hardloop is om te lewe, en om te lewe is om uitgestort te word in die dood?

Om te kan voel is om oop te wees tot die wêreld en tot ander. Om te kan voel is om kwesbaar te wees; om te kan voel is om te kan ly.

SOLIDARITEIT IN LYDING

Die mens van vandag het egter vir hom 'n fantastiese bolwerk van predikante, dokters, psigiaters, ekonome en dies meer opgewerp tussen hom en die elementêre ervaring van lyding, want hy dink dat om te ly 'n tydelike toestand is wat nie eintlik tot ons menswees behoort nie. Geluk is nie vir hom 'n positiewe, beslissingsafhanklike daad nie, maar is bloot die afwesigheid van lyding.

Maar om mens te wees is om te ly. En solank as wat daar lyding op hierdie wêreld is, (en dit is solank as wat die mens hierdie wêreld betree) het niemand aanspraak op die reg om gelukkig te wees nie. Of liever, om te ly met die wat ly, is die enigste geregverdigde vorm van geluk, want om saam te ly is om mens te wees. Hierdie solidariteit van lyding is die enigste ware grond vir vreugde in hierdie wêreld.

Want God het in Jesus Christus homself verklaar nie as 'n God van of vir lydendes nie, maar as 'n lydende God. Hy beloof ons nie 'n lydinglose bestaan nou of in die toekoms om so ons lyding te versag nie,

maar Hy roep ons op om nou en tot aan die einde van die tyd te ly soos Hy gely het, nog ly en tot aan die einde van die tyd sal ly. Maar Sy lyding is sy solidariteit met die lyding van die mens en dit is tot deelname in hierdie lyding dat hy ons roep en nie tot 'n pseudo-lyding van wêreld-ontsegging nie. In hierdie daad van eenwordende lyding ontstaan die liefde — die liefde tot die wêreld, tot die naaste en tot God. Want só het God die wêreld lief gehad.

Die lyding van die mens is 'n omvattende gegewe wat op baie verskillende vlakke te voorskyn kom. Die mees ooglopende is waarskynlik die liggaamlike, psigiese en ekonomiese lyding. Die lyding in die politieke dimensie is meer as net dié van onderdrukte minderheidsgroepe of rebelle in tronke — dit is 'n wesenlik menslike lyding van onvermoë om homself polities só te organiseer dat hy waarlik mens kan wees binne sy politieke ruimte. Op feitlik elke vlak waarop die mens hom begewe of bevind — die geslags- en huwelikslewe, die arbeid, die opvoeding, die ouderdom, die stad, die wetenskap, die liefde, die eensaamheid; in elke dimensie van sy bestaan, staan die mens midde in die lyding en die nood wat eie is aan sy bestaan.

Omdat die lyding van die mens die hele spektrum van sy bestaan omvat, sal die daad van solidariteit waartoe hy opgeroep word beide deur die feit van die lyding self en deur God, verskillende fasette toon afhanklik van elke persoon se eie situasie en moontlikhede. Die daad van God in Jesus Christus was een, volkome daad. Ons moet hierdie daad partikulariseer, want oor ons hang die uitdaging: „Gaan, verkoop alles wat jy het en volg My”.

DIE DOOD

As uitdrukkings van die openheid van die menslike situasie, is beide gevoel en lyding ook aanduidings van die onselfgenoegsaamheid, van die fundamentele gebrokenheid van die mens waarvan die dood die beslissende uitdrukking is. Dit is die uiteindelijke menslike tragiek, dat hy weet dat hy gaan sterwe. „Die buffel ken geen metafisika . . . Alleen die mens tref in sy swerwe tussen hede, toekoms en verlede die spleet tot grotte van die rede: hy maak 'n mes, 'n vuur, skep gode, dink aan sterf . . .” (D. J. Opperman: Vuurbees.) In 'n wêreld wat sterf is alleen hy bewus . . . of his own short

life span, of the fact that without his will he is born and against his will he dies, that he will die before those whom he loves, or they before him, of his helplessness before the forces of nature and of society . . .' (Erich Fromm). Om te voel is om te weet dat jy gaan sterwe. En in die dood is geen gevoel meer nie.

Maar sonder die gerigtheid van die liggaam op die dood word die ekstase van my liggaamlike bestaan in, en ervaring van die wêreld ver-vlak tot 'n reeks oppervlakkige ge-nietinge wat my nie in verantwoor-delikheid en liefde kan bind aan die wêreld, sy genot en sy lyding, en so aan God nie. Ek is my liggaam. My liggaam gaan sterf. Deur die radikaliteit van die dood te probeer versag deur terug te val op 'n on-sterflike siel, is om verraad te pleeg teenoor die wêreld, die liggaam en God wat tot die dood toe liggaam

geword het, en so die radikaliteit van die bestaan as liggaam, en van die dood, bevestig het.

Met elke ervaring, met elke voel van hierdie wêreld in al sy aspekte deur my liggaam, krummel die dood reeds mee onder my voete. Selfs in die oomblik van suiwerste skoonheidservaring of pynigende ekstase klap die klank van kluite mee.

Dit gee aan elke oomblik 'n ver-bysterende eenmaligheid, 'n angs-wekkende urgensie. Hierdie onherhaalbaarheid gee aan die liggaams-ervaring van die wêreld sy sin en betekenis. Die lewe is nie 'n reeks wegkringende sirkels waarin niks werklik gebeur omdat niks ooit fi-naal is nie, want die lewe staan midde in die dood en die dood in die lewe. In sy onherhaalbaarheid dra elke oomblik in homself die moontlikheid van vreugde en verantwoor-delikheid in en vir die wêreld en die

naaste. In hierdie onherhaalbare oomblik is ons in liefde en verantwoordelikheid op mekaar aange-wese.

Die liefde van God het tot die dood toe liggaam geword om ook in hierdie aspek van ons lyding soli-dêr met ons te wees. Maar daarom roep Hy ons op tot 'n solidariteit tot die dood toe met die lyding van hierdie wêreld wat Hy lief het. Want geen groter liefde is daar as dit nie, dat iemand sy lewe vir sy vriende gee. In elke daad van liefde is daar iets van 'n sterwe.

Ek voel, daarom is ek, want om waarlik te voel is om waarlik te lewe, te ly, lief te hê en te weet dat ek gaan sterwe. Dit is die dimensie waarin God ons wil ontmoet. Daarom het Hy liggaam geword vir en met ons; het Hy saam met ons kom voel. En daarom het Hy opgestaan — as liggaam.

THE NORWEGIAN CHURCH STRUGGLE 1940 — 1945

MYRTLE A. RADLEY*

Among the countries occupied by Germany during the Second World War the position of Norway was unique. Surprised on April 9th, 1940 and the country over-run in a short military campaign of two months, the King and Government escaped to England and there maintained the Free Norway. But at home, after months of tension between Hitler and the military authorities, the Norwegian Nazi, Vidkun Quisling, was installed in the position previously promised to him by Hitler himself. He was to be the head of a one-party National Socialist government and turn Norway into a Nazi controlled State. There was to be a political, not merely a military, conquest. The significant struggle, therefore, for the remaining 4½ years of Occupation was not mainly military but was against the attack on the political front, on the whole social and religious life of the Norwegian people.

CHURCH UNDER STATE CONTROL

The Norwegian Church was in a particularly vulnerable position because of its relationship to the State. Its control was, and now again is, vested in the State and its temporal affairs managed by the Department of Church and Education (Kirke og Undervisningsdepartementet). The disposition of the clergy is regulated by the Department. Finance comes from a Church tax, included in general income tax, and the salaries of the clergy are paid from this, making the individual as regards organisational matters virtually a Civil Servant. The ecclesiastical leadership

resides with the bishops, there being no archbishop, but during the years we are discussing the Bishop of Oslo, the senior bishopric, was Eivind Berggrav. In the resulting struggle much was due to his personality, but the ultimate course of events was determined by the attitude of the general Norwegian public. The national Church claims some 97% of the population as baptised members — the active membership is only a small proportion of this, but during the Occupation many focussed their moral opposition to the regime through the Church.

Such a combination of state control and spiritual leadership had

jogged along under a democratic government, administering the affairs of a Church whose members had elected it. The supreme test of the spiritual independence of Christians came when the organ of the State came under the control — through the power of a foreign occupying force — of a Party whose principles were in direct conflict with the Christian conscience. Few who saw the military attack on Norwegian soil would have expected that here Hitler and his political ideology would receive so complete a defeat and the Church rise to be one of the main causes of this effective resistance.

SPONTANEOUS RESISTANCE

Already within a few weeks of Quisling assuming control the threat to the freedom of the Church was felt. A great gathering of some 3-4,000 people assembled one evening during a conference of the Bishops in Oslo in that occupied and blacked-out city. A provisional joint Christian Council of the Norwegian Church was formed to

mobilise and lead the entire Christian population.

The first skirmish came over an order from the Quisling "government" to omit from the services the usual prayer for the King and government and substitute one for Quisling and his men. This was the first and last time that the Church made any compromise. The usual prayer was to be omitted but nothing put to replace it. Many clergymen paused at this point in the service and congregations spontaneously repeated the loyal words; in any case the prohibition turned what might have been a routine repetition into a sincere act of prayer, rallying thought around the person of the absent King and his significance.

PASTORAL LETTER

From now on the initiative was often taken by the Church. Attacks on general personal freedom had been increasing; some of those who made public protest were arrested and Quisling's political "police" (hirdmenn) were making a habit of physical assaults on individuals wearing patriotic badges, and had forced their way into a technical college and mishandled students. The police issued an order annulling the oath of silence of clergy, doctors and lawyers. The Church prepared a Pastoral Letter to the Minister of Church Affairs and, though on February 11th, 1941 he forbade it to be publicised, it was read from almost every pulpit in the land on Sunday the 16th. 50,000 copies were printed and distributed before the police could seize them and became a prized possession of those who could secure a copy!

NAZI CLERGY

In June of the same year Hitler declared war on Russia. The Germans expected and asked for Norwegian support for their much publicised "Crusade against Bolshevism". Bishop Berggrav denounced the appeal and only 27 clergy gave it any support. That any did so was due to the efforts of the Quisling "government" to fill any vacancies in parishes by Nazi clergy; the appointments being in the hands of the Church Department this could be done. But qualified clergy with Nazi sympathies were scarce and some curious incumbents — octogenarians or gentlemen of shady charac-

ter — were pressed into service. Later, in 1942, a specific law was passed allowing unordained persons to hold office of parish priest. Congregations, grown in size in this time of stress, without exception vanished from the church services with the arrival of the new appointee who found himself preaching to a handful of individuals or even an empty church. The congregation found some other place of meeting and maintained their corporate life. This happened particularly when the priest in charge was dismissed for political reasons — as recounted later.

"A SURE STRONGHOLD . . ."

The continued interference of the State reached a climax in February 1942. Dean Fjellbu of Trondheim Cathedral was ordered at a few days' notice to vacate his pulpit for the Sunday morning service on February 1st to make way for a special service to be conducted by a Nazi, Rev. Blessing-Dahl. The Dean let it be known that he would conduct a postponed service at 2 o'clock. Long before this time a large number of worshippers entered the cathedral. The police arrived and blocked the doors but people continued to arrive and a large crowd of some thousands, which included most of the Trondheim clergy, gathered outside. On that freezing February afternoon there was no talking but suddenly a voice broke into singing "A sure stronghold our God is still" and the whole company joined in this and other hymns. Meanwhile Dean Fjellbu inside preached on the text "Lo, we have left all and followed Thee", followed by a communion service. When all was finished the crowd went quietly home.

OBEY GOD RATHER THAN MAN

But the storm soon broke. The Trondheim clergy and their bishop protested at the interference and were supported by clergy, university staff and religious bodies all over the country. Within a few days the Department of Church Affairs had sent a curt note to Dean Fjellbu dismissing him. On February 24th the Bishops met in Oslo and drew up a long statement which each, in identical words, sent to the "Minister" of Church Affairs. It ends thus:-

"I therefore hereby declare that I lay down the conduct of my office . . . In other words, what the State has entrusted to me I lay aside. The spiritual vocation given me by ordination at the Lord's altar is mine through God and by right . . . As it came to Luther, so to us has come the moment when we must be loyal to our beliefs and assert the justice of the Church against the injustice of the State. Forms of government may change, but the Church knows — as did the fathers of the Church — that against that which Luther calls tyranny stands God himself in His Word and with the power of His spirit. Woe to us if we do not obey God rather than man!"

That this act of the bishops embarrassed the authorities was certain; they tried to conceal the resignations and announced them piecemeal at intervals.

Inevitably this led to the dissociation of the lesser clergy from the authority of the State. In the great majority of churches the minister read a declaration that they too would no longer carry out their civil functions since "as long as present conditions exist, the Church and its servants will be obliged to live and act according to their obligation to God's word and their confession and take all the consequences which may follow."

CONSEQUENCES

For the remainder of the Occupation the clergy continued their pastoral work, held services, but withheld their functions on behalf of the State such as the legalisation of marriages. The "consequences" were, however, very personal for each individual. There was not, as had been half expected, a general eviction from their parsonages, but none of them accepted their stipends. The general public supplied their material needs and, as giving financial support to the clergy became an offence, this had to be done in secret. The writer has pushed anonymous envelopes through letter-boxes of clergy who must avoid knowing from whence this help came. Of 861 clergy, 797 thus laid down their office, and in addition were supported by some 300 ordained men who were not at the moment holding posts under the State.

CLERGY UNDER ARREST

On April 9th Bishop Berggrav and four other bishops were arrested, but after nine months in concentration camp Berggrav was released but put under house arrest in his country cottage in the forest near Oslo. Here he remained, latterly quite alone, for 2½ years to the last days of the war, guarded by more than a dozen police. The quality of his personality was such that the guards had to be frequently changed as he won their sympathy and many were the tales of how he was able to meet his friends when, under escort he made a necessary visit to the city, as to a dentist. He was supplied with books from the outside world, and at one period he received press cuttings, reports, even the News Sheet of the World Council of Churches from Geneva, smuggled into Norway and thence into his milk-can one day in the week! I know, for I handled some of them in transit.

The Quisling "government" was left with the problem of replacing the bishops without anyone competent to ordain those newly appointed. A service was arranged at the Church of Our Saviour in Oslo with the intention of consecrating a man named Froeland as Bishop of Oslo. First the keys of this, the most important church in the city, were not forthcoming. Police had to go to the homes of Church-wardens and search until they found them. Then the choir and organist objected to attend and the choir of the Nasjonal Samling (Quisling's political Party) was hurriedly pressed into service.

Though the bishops were thus harrassed, other leading clergy put under restraint and the Provisional Church Council declared illegal, this latter refused to dissolve and later the "government" even tried to negotiate with it to achieve some cessation of the resistance. The leadership continued partly in the hands of two theological professors belonging to the more conservative religious wing. It was said of Professor Hallesby that he had studied the ways of the devil so closely all his life that he was well equipped to deal with the Nazis! Even his later imprisonment seemed rather to encourage his defiant spirit.

The clergy were a constant trouble to the "government". Some were ordered to leave their parishes

but, since they made no effort to comply and they had the whole-hearted sympathy of their parishioners, the Quisling police found their physical eviction a humiliating exercise. In February, 1943 the Director of Labour issued a list of 75 priests and 200 theologians and students who were to be conscripted for labour service — to remove them out of the way. Most were those who had refused co-operation or taken some open part in opposition. The Church protest, led by Professors Hallesby and Hügen, gave the authorities an excuse to arrest these two — Professor Hügen was later released on account of his advanced age but Hallesby remained a prisoner to the end. The conscripted clergy, however, went into hiding and efforts to arrest them proved fruitless. In fact, so embarrassing became the running conflict that the "government", in a circular to local Nazi leaders in March 43 stated that it was important to give the mass of the people "time to calm down" and advised that Church affairs "be handled with the greatest care and tolerance".

THE JEWS

This struggle must be seen as only one part of a resistance to nazification which was carried out on many fronts, particularly in schools and by the teachers, by parents, in the professions and wherever the attack was directed on freedom. One of the most terrible results of Nazi action resulted from their racial theories which, in Norway, caused the death of some 600 persons, mostly in the gas-chambers of Auschwitz — a third of all those in the country at the beginning of the Occupation who were of Jewish blood. Most of them were Norwegian for generations but some were refugees from central Europe who had sought asylum in Scandinavia. Following compulsory registration of Jews, on one night in October, 1942 all male Jews were arrested, and a month later all the women and children, who could be found. The Church protested in a statement at this violation of personal liberty as well as the confiscation of the property of Jews, while both clergy and laity helped with the dangerous work of hiding, feeding and assisting the escape to Sweden of those who could be saved. Earlier that year one in ten of all men teachers had

been arrested and deported to the extreme north of Norway, within the Arctic circle. The numbers in prison and concentration camp increased so that by the end of the war some 40,000 Norwegians had been imprisoned for a period.

CHURCH GREW STRONGER

The coast of Norway with its fjords and fringe of islands provided plenty of scope for banishment and most of the original leaders of the Church struggle were by 1943 either imprisoned or geographically out of reach. To conserve man-power the leadership was forced to "go underground", to work in secret and anonymously — only the fact that directives were received and passed from one to the other was known (and the same took place in the educational sphere of the struggle). By April, 1945 the banished clergy numbered 127 and 40 were in prison. But the opposition never flagged; in and from remote places they exerted influence. As the inevitable defeat of Germany became obvious even their captors lost interest. Over 50 were assembled, nominally under guard, on an island in the large lake of Mjøsa in south Norway; this included most of the bishops. But it is said that on Easter Day, 1945 not one was on the island, they were all conducting services elsewhere. Bishop Berggrav slipped out from his house arrest and came into the open a few days before Liberation on May 8th.

Pastor H. C. Christie has written a history of these years and the part of the Church in the struggle. His manuscript was prepared during his own banishment, concealed as he moved from one place to another and finally buried under currant bushes. He ends his story thus. "The attempt to create a Nazi Church in Norway, uniting the 'Führer' principle and worship of the State with Christianity, ended as it had to end in complete breakdown".

But the Church, stronger both numerically and spiritually, was ready to emerge to take its part in the return of legal government and freedom to all the people of Norway.

* Mrs. Myrtle A. Radley is a well known English member of the Society of Friends who, together with her husband, Philip, worked many years in South Africa.

Bible Weeks

— THE REV. EDMUND HILL, O.P.*

This is only a description of the one Bible Week with which I have been associated, which was held at Cannock in Staffordshire, England, in Passion Week, 1966. Nearly all the credit for its success as an ecumenical exploration of the scriptures is due to the Anglican vicar of Cannock, the Rev. Mr. Townsend, and to one of his curates, the Rev. Mr. Carr. The secretary of the Bible Societies Association, the Rev. Mr. Garrard, was also very helpful with his advice and experience.

Mr. Townsend approached me as early as June 1965 to ask me to give the four lectures which were to constitute the grand finale, so to speak, of the exercise. The long preparation which this indicates was essential to its success, and indeed the week itself was only the conclusion to something much bigger and more important. In this case 'Bible Week' was something of a misnomer; it would have been more accurately described as a 'Bible Lent'.

The theme chosen — I think by the local ministers' fraternal — was **Conflict**. I was asked to choose four passages from Scripture bearing on this theme. In fact I offered a list of about ten passages, and asked the fraternal to pick out four of these. The passages eventually chosen were Gen. 37 (Joseph sold by his brothers), Isai. 53 (the suffering servant), Jn. 15:11 — 16:11 (conflict between disciples and 'the world'), and Rom. 7:7-25 (man's inner conflict with himself, law versus grace).

PRELIMINARY GROUP MEETINGS

The plan was to have these passages discussed in small house-groups, each of mixed denominational membership, during the first four weeks of Lent. Then in the Bible Week proper, at four general meetings, would come the four lectures on these passages, followed by group discussion; the meetings, of course, being opened and closed by prayer. But in order to help the house-groups with their discussions, the ministers of the area held some preliminary meetings to draw up a booklet containing brief reflections on the passages chosen, and points for discussion on them, in terms of contemporary experience and situations of conflict. My chief criticism of the lines of discussion suggested by this leaflet was that they were

too moralistic. Is this perhaps characteristic of the way clergymen of all denominations tend to approach the Bible? Does it not give us away a little, and indicate that our main concern in religion is morality? Morals is of course the most obvious field in which religion, and hence the Bible, can be readily seen to be relevant to life; but I suspect that to make of Christianity chiefly a concern for morals is the quickest way to render it 'irrelevant' to ordinary people, by identifying it with outdated standards of behaviour; and I am quite certain that it is to miss the point of the gospel as Good News, as the complete revelation of God's grace, and the fulfilment of his promises. But we will take this point up again shortly.

ECUMENICAL VALUE

When Lent came, thanks to some long and well organized campaigning in the district, there must have been something like 70 house-groups ready to meet once a week and discuss each of the chosen passages in turn. The clergy were in principle excluded from these meetings, and I think quite rightly. But in order to decide what line to take in the talks I was to give during the Bible Week itself, I wanted to have some idea of the sort of comments people were making, and the sort of problems they were airing. So I planted spies (quite openly) in two of the groups, in the shape of four of my Dominican students from Hawkesyard Priory, two to a group. As spies, in this rather naive sense, they were not particularly effective or informative. But of course the main point was their taking part in the Bible Week for its own sake, and they were all absolutely convinced of the ecumenical value, indeed the sheer Christian value of these small domestic meetings of Christians of differing traditions to read and dis-

cuss the scriptures together. One of them said that he discovered, with the other members of his group, a wholly new meaning to the Church — he learned by experience, I suppose, the full force of the saying 'Where two or three are gathered together in my name . . .' At the very least, they all appreciated the meetings as occasions for making new friends, and precisely new friends in Christ, without any sentimental religiosity about the friendships.

ATTENDANCE

Between 600 and 700 people took part in the house group discussions. An average of about 250 attended the four general meetings of the Bible Week proper, to hear my lectures. Mere figures are not always a good guide, but these I think do just about fairly indicate the relative value of the two parts of the exercise. I myself, of course am prevented by pride, or modesty, or both, from commenting on the success or failure of the lectures. I tried to make them provocative; the main target for my attack was the moralistic approach to scripture which I have already mentioned. I tried to stress that scripture contains the revelation to us of God's mercy and grace, and not the revelation of rules of conduct, which mankind ought to be capable of working out for itself by using its mother wit. The Bible does not tell us very much about what we ought to do, except incidentally, but a great deal about what God has done for us; and this involves telling us plenty of home truths about what we are; and in both these ways the story of Joseph, for example is highly instructive — but as a story with a moral, if people will read it that way, it is a washout.

This line did provoke a fairly strong reaction from an officer of the Salvation Army who was asked to lead the prayers at the close of the first meeting. This was all to the good, of course. I think the other three passages I had to lecture on were well suited to help me establish my point, especially Romans 7.

“POST MORTEM”

A month or so after the Bible Week, the Dominican students who had taken part in it and myself invited the members of their two groups, and some of the ministers who had been involved, to supper at the Priory guest house, and we held a general **post mortem** on the Bible Week. It was generally agreed it had been a great success, but suggestions were for improving the arrangements, roughly as follows:

1. The value of four general meetings crammed into one week was questioned; most people in any case find it difficult to spare four evenings in one week. It would be better, perhaps to distribute the general meetings more widely, interspersing them with the house group discussions, so that you have house group discussions followed by a general meeting and lecture on each of the four passages of scripture in turn.

2. The guidance given by the pamphlet for the house group discussions, and the instructions for the leaders of the groups were perhaps rather too rigid. The choice of leaders for these groups is clearly very important, and rather chancy; but if they are chosen well, rigid instructions on how to run the meetings, and on what points to discuss

are not really necessary, and if they are chosen badly, no instructions will be of much help.

3. In this **post mortem** we argued about the purpose of these Bible Weeks, and the matter of their apostolic or evangelising value was raised. We eventually agreed that they are hardly designed to have a direct apostolic effect; their immediate purpose is to help already committed Christians to deepen their understanding of their faith. But if they achieve this purpose, then of course their indirect apostolic value will be enormous, because they will help to make those who take part in them all the more effective witnesses to the faith of Christ in their other activities and relationships.

* * *

By way of **postscript**, I would like to add that in March of this year I am going to take part in another Bible Week in Stellenbosch, South Africa. Here the ecumenical situation is very different from that in England. What with politics and one thing and another, inter-Church contacts are much more tenuous, and the general atmosphere much less cordial. This Bible Week is being held under the auspices of an ecumenical organisation called the Christian Institute, which is in open conflict with the

most powerful of the Churches in this country, the Dutch Reformed Church, and does not enjoy very wide support. It is thus only a ginger group, which cannot hope to elicit a town wide response to the Bible Week, such as I saw achieved at Cannock in England. It will not have the same support or leadership from the clergy as a whole — at least I doubt it. But I look forward to the result with great interest and hope, nonetheless. Members of the Institute in the district already meet monthly in two house groups to discuss passages from scripture. The subject chosen for the Bible Week is the epistle to the Galatians — i.e. law and grace, which is very apposite to the South African scene.

* * *

The above article which we published here with acknowledgement to the ecumenical quarterly *One in Christ*, is a report on a Bible Week held in England last year. The writer came to South Africa last August. Before that he was engaged in teaching theological students of his own order, the Dominicans, at Hawkesyard Priory, Staffordshire, in the English Midlands, not far from the mining town of Cannock, where the Bible Week he reports on was held. He is now engaged in similar work at St. Nicholas' Priory Stellenbosch. — Editor.

DIE KERK BUITE SUID-AFRIKA

DIE ORTODOKSIE IN DIE OOSTE

PROF. B. B. KEET

„Ecumenical News Service” gee periodieke oorsigte oor verskillende wêrelddele en wy in een van sy jongste uitgawes ’n uiters belangrike en insiggewende oorsig aan die Ortodokse Kerk in die Ooste. Die grootste deel word aan Rusland gegee, en ek wens dat ek selfs ’n verkorte verslag van al die gedagtes en beskouinge dienaangaande kon weergee, maar dit is so lywig en wydstrekkend dat die lesers van „Pro Veritate” nie alles sou kan verkeer nie.

Daar is bv. beskouinge oor die groot Russiese literatore soos Dostojewski, om hulle verhouding tot die Christendom te bepaal volgens die opvatting van ateïstiese sowel as Russies-Ortodokse skrywers; want dit moet onthou word dat die ateïsme in Rusland ’n uitgebreide skriftelike stryd teen die Christendom voer. Hoe seer ons dus ons lesers sal wil inlig met betrekking tot hierdie stryd, word dit onmoontlik om in ’n kort bestek aan albei kante reg te laat wedervaar. Tog wil ek enkele grepe doen wat hopelik iets sal bydra tot ’n juiste begrip van die plek wat die Russies-Ortodokse Kerk in

die ekumeniese strewes inneem. Die eerste is ’n artikel wat in „Journal Moskovkoi Patriarkii” voorkom, geskryf deur L. Voronov, professor aan die Teologiese Akademie in Leningrad, onder die titel: „Die Ortodokse Kerk en Christelike Broederskap”.

Prof. Voronov begin deur te konstateer dat die besware wat nog altyd in die weg staan van ’n gemeenskaplike basis waarop alle Christene mekaar kan vind en hulle eenheid kan uitlewe, in die **Vierde Wêreldkonferensie vir Geloof en Kerke in Montreal (1963)** duidelik geword het. Een van die vrae wat daar ge-

stel is, was: „Is u gewillig om u selfbegrip en selfwaardering, saam met u begrip van ander kerke, aan die oordeel van onse Here, Jesus Christus, te onderwerp?”

Wat die Ortodokse Kerk betref, is die volgende hul opvatting: „Ons noem dié kerke ortodokse kerke wat in ongebroke lyn die gemeenskap voortgesit het wat deur Jesus Christus self gestig en altyd deur die Heilige Gees gedra is”. Die Ortodoksie het nog nooit enige selfgenoegsaamheid vertoon nie. Intendeel, die verskillende nasionale ortodokse kerke het hulle nog altyd self beskou as deel van die een, heilige apostoliese Kerk. Daarom, ten spyte van hul groot gesag, maak hulle geen aanspraak op onfeilbaarheid nie. Onfeilbaarheid kan alleen aan die algemene kerk geskenk word. Vir die Ortodokse Kerk word die bevel van die apostel: „Onderzoek julleself of julle in die geloof

is", as 'n oproep tot self-ondersoek aanvaar, en dienvolgens is die Ortodokse Kerk altyd gereed om „hulleself, hul teologiese denke en hul handelinge aan die oordeel van die onfeilbare ekumenies - ortodokse kerk te onderwerp, d.w.s. aan die oordeel van die Here, Jesus Christus self. Die Ortodokse Kerk sal altyd gewillig geregverdigde kritiek van die Christene van ander konfessies aanneem, as hulle ooit van hul beginsels afdwaal. Die Ortodokse Kerk moet tot 'n dieper besef van ander kerke kom, as hulle die waarde en betekenis daarvan wil verstaan. In belang van die grootste objektiwiteit moet die Ortodokse Kerk die historiese en praktiese lewe van die ander kerke bestudeer, met liefde en vry van vooroordeel bejeën en met die hulp en broederlike samewerking van hierdie kerke te werk gaan."

Toe hy gevra is of die Ortodokse Kerk gewillig is om dieselfde belang in die geskiedenis van die ander kerke te stel as in sy eie geskiedenis, het hy onomwonde ja! gesê. „Ons wil eerlik langs die historiese weë gaan wat deur ons broeders in Christus betree is. Sover moontlik wil ons, saam met hulle, die belang-

rikste gebeurtenisse herlewe wat hulle deurgemaak het, hulle moed en toewyding verstaan en onself verryk deur hul beste geestelike belewinge, en liefde betoon waar hulle gefouteer het. Ons kerk ag die tyd nog nie ryp om 'n offisiële standpunt in te neem ten opsigte van die verhouding van die geskeie kerke tot die universele kerk nie. En dit is begryplik as in aanmerking geneem word dat die verskeie kerke dinamies van aard is en nie staties nie, en dat hierdie aard van die kerk varieer met die afstand van die basiese beginsels van die ongedeelde Ou Kerk. Teologiese studie sal uitgevoer moet word met die grootste versigtigheid, om moeilikhede te voorkom wat uit 'n oppervlakkige oordeel kan ontstaan.

Hy besluit met die hoop uit te spreek dat daar in die ontwikkeling van verhoudinge tussen die kerke, by name onder die ortodokse kerke, 'n groeiende mate van realiteit sal wees in die herstel van eenheid, 'n eenheid gebaseer op die beginsels van die Ou, onverdeelde Ekumeniese Kerk van die eerste sewe konsilies, volgens die motto: in necessariis Unitas, in dubiis Libertas, in omnibus Caritas. (In noodsaaklike

dinge eenheid, in twyfelagtige dinge vryheid, in alles liefde).

'n Ander berig prys die Roemeense ortodoksie vir sy openheid met betrekking tot die ekumeniese beweging. Die Patriarg van die Roemeense Ortodokse Kerk het Genève besoek as gas van die Wêreldraad van Kerke. Gedurende sy tweedaagse besoek het hy verskillende offisiële verteenwoordigers van die Raad ontmoet en was eregas by verskeie funksies, een waarvan deur regeringsbekleders van die Geneefse owerheid aangebied is. In 'n preek het die patriarg dit betreur dat die Christendom verdeeld is en 'n beroep gedoen op vernuwing van eenheid in die kerk. Dr. Visser 't Hooft het in antwoord die Roemeense-Ortodokse Kerk geprys as 'n kerk wat „ten volle bewus is van sy ekumeniese roeping en een van die grootste en mees aktiewe van die Ortodokse kerke, wat altyd sy vensters open om in aanraking te bly met die lewe van die hele Christendom”.

Die Ortodokse Kerk van Roemenië, wat 14 miljoen lede tel uit 'n bevolking van agttien miljoen, is vandag die tweede grootste Ortodokse Kerk.

DIE WOORDE VAN DIE MENSE

'N KWESSIE VAN AKSENTE (' ' ') EN VRAAGTEKENS (? ? ?)

In *Die Kerkbode* van 18 Januarie 1967 word, na aanleiding van sekere uitlatings van pres. Kaunda tydens 'n toespraak voor 'n Zambiese kerkvergadering, 'n aantal stellinge gemaak wat nadere aandag verdien. Juis omdat dit in *Die Kerkbode* staan. *Die Kerkbode* is immers die amptelike orgaan van een van die invloedrykse kerke in ons land en spreek met gesag tot die lede van dié kerk.

Hoe hierdie stelling beoordeel moet word, of liever: hoe *Die Kerkbode* wil hê dat dit beoordeel moet word, kon vir my nie heeltemaal duidelik word uit die betrokke inleidingsartikel nie. Ek kon nie presies uitmaak of *Die Kerkbode* die lig sien en deurgee, en of hy die lig verduister nie. Eintlik wil *Die Kerkbode* niks anders doen nie as om die aksente reg te lê op 'n paar dinge wat pres. Kaunda gesê het. Maar dat hy juis daarmee enkele ernstige vraagtekens agter sy eie bedoeling gelaat het, daarvan getuig die artikel self.

Ek wil dit nou maar op my neem om 'n paar van die stellinge te nummereer, die waarheid van elkeen te

onderstreep, vraagtekens wat daar nog bly staan het nadat die aksente reg gelê is, te probeer aantoon en die rigting te probeer aandui waarin Christene, na my mening, die antwoord op dié vrae behoort te soek; en in die lig daarvan wil ek dan aan *Die Kerkbode* 'n dringende versoek rig.

1. „*Die verkondiging van die evangelie en die opbou van 'n inheemse kerk is nie sonder implikasies vir die maatskaplike, ekonomiese en politieke welsyn van die mense van die land nie. Dit kan met alle reg beweer word dat waar ons eie kerk sendingwerk gedoen het, 'n verbetering in die lewensstandaard, bestryding van*

„Maar Ek sê vir julle dat elke ydele woord wat die mense praat, daarvan moet hulle rekenskap gee in die oordeelsdag. Want uit jou woorde sal jy geregverdig word en uit jou woorde sal jy veroordeel word.” —
(Mat. 12:36-37).

siekte deur mediese dienste, asook skoolopvoeding 'n onafskeidelike deel en vrug daarvan was.”

„SOCIAL GOSPEL”?

„Social gospel”? Dit is my eerste vraagteken. Nee, ek verskil nie van *Die Kerkbode* nie, ek vra maar net. En eerlik gesê, ek verheug my daarvoor dat niemand minder as *Die Kerkbode* dit sê. Wanneer die kerk hom beywer vir die maatskaplike, ekonomiese en politieke belange van die „mense van die land”, dus vir die sosiale geregtigheid, is dit nie iets wat hy terloops óók doen nie; dit is 'n onafskeidelike deel van die taak van die kerk, sê *Die Kerkbode* tereg. Laat ons mekaar op hierdie punt goed verstaan. Wanneer iemand 'n swaar aksent op hierdie wesenlike deel van die taak van die kerk lê, beteken dit nog geensins dat hy daarmee wil beweer dat die Koninkryk

van God in 'n proses van sosiale vooruitgang moet ontwikkel in die rigting van die voleinding nie. Maar vanuit die waarheid van die voleinding, d.i. van die koms van Gods Koninkryk in heerlijkheid, moet hierdie aardse lewe voor Gods aangesig geheilig word en moet die samelewing van die mense ingerig word op die grondslae van die geregtigheid en die liefde. Omdat die kerk die koms van hierdie koninkryk verwag, daarom stry hy daarvoor dat die heiligmaking in die vrees van God volbring sal word; daarom is sy beywering vir die sosiale geregtigheid 'n onafskeidelike deel van sy taak. *Die Kerkbode* verstaan dit seker ook so.

Hoekom dan — dit is my tweede vraag — meng *Die Kerkbode* sy stem so graag in die onheilige koor wat op dergelike getuienisse uit ander oorde vandaan so boosaardig aan die skel kan gaan, dit as „social gospel”, liberalisme en 'n bereiding van die teelaarde vir die kommunisme verketter?

DIE KERK EN DIE MENSE VAN DIE LAND

Laat ons 'n bietjie van Zambië af, oor wie *Die Kerkbode* sy gedagtes uitspin en op wie sy pad hy die lig wil laat val, vir 'n oomblik tuis kom. 'n Prinsipiële uitspraak soos hierbo aangehaal, het ook betrekking op Suid-Afrika. As *Die Kerkbode* verwys na die sendingwerk van „ons eie” (d.w.s. die Ned. Geref.) Kerk, blyk dit dat hy dit nie slegs besef nie, maar dat hy eintlik ook besig is met 'n apologie vir „ons eie kerk” se Skrifverantwoorde en beproefde sendingbeleid, soos dit genoem word. Die kern van hierdie beleid word in dieselfde *Kerkbode*-artikel saamgevat met die woorde: „Dit (is) dringend nodig dat die Christelike kerk, met behoud van sy ware karakter as kerk, inderdaad inheems word”. Nouja, teen hierdie beleid as sodanig kan daar geen beswaar wees nie. Dit staan stewig gegrond in die belydenis van die kerk van Christus. Die kerk is nie slegs algemeen in dié ekstensiewe sin dat hy uitgaan tot alle volke van die aarde nie, maar hy is ook algemeen in dié intensiewe sin dat hy ingaan in die lewe van „die mense van die land” en hom so nou daarmee verbind dat hy, om so te sreek, die kleur daarvan aanneem. Soos wat die kerk ingaan in Zambië om waarlik en ten volle kerk vir die mense van die land te wees, so moet hy ook in Suid-Afrika ingaan. Daar-

om sal die één kerk, dieselfde kerk, in Zambië anders lyk as wat hy in Suid-Afrika lyk; en, afhangende van die aard en die „kleur” van die omgewing waarin hy hom bevind, sal hy ook op verskillende plekke in Suid-Afrika verskillend lyk. Nou is die feitlike werklikheid dit, dat daar dele van Suid-Afrika is waar die omgewing van die kerk oorwegend, selfs uitsluitlik, 'n nie-blanke kultuur- en arbeidsgemeenskap is. Daar is ook dele waar die omgewing van die kerk „bont” is. Laasgenoemde is die geval in alle sogenaamde „blanke” gebiede. Wat blanke gebiede genoem word volgens die maatstawwe van die apartheidspolitiek, is in werklikheid gebiede waar blank en nie-blank, ten minste op die ekonomiese vlak, in die arbeid, 'n geïntegreerde, bont samelewing is. Hier volg nou my vrae: Wat beteken dit dat die kerk inheems moet wees, dat hy kerk vir die mense van die land moet wees in dié dele van Suid-Afrika waar blank en nie-blank dag vir dag saamleef en saamwerk en waar hulle stofflike en geestelike belange as gevolg van arbeidsintegrasië en akkulturasie steeds minder bepaal word deur hulle afsonderlikheid en steeds meer deur die gemeenskaplikheid waarin hulle dieselfde landsbodem bewoon, bewerk en lief het? As die kerk in bont Suid-Afrika dit as 'n onafskeidelike deel van sy taak moet beskou dat hy hom ook sal beywer vir die maatskaplike, ekonomiese en politieke welsyn van die mense van die land, hoe moet hy dit nou, in die feitlike situasie doen? Moet hy die norme vir sy getuienis en optrede ontleen aan die dikwels absurde praktyke van 'n onrealistiese en klaarblyklik onuitvoerbare politieke ideologie, die rasse-apartheidsdroom? Samevattend: Wat beteken dit dat hy kerk vir die mense van die land moet wees in 'n samelewing waarin die feitlike situasie enersyds bepaal word deur die feit dat blank en nie-blank 'n geïntegreerde arbeids- en lewensgemeenskap vorm en andersyds deur 'n politieke ideologie waarvan rassediskriminasie skering en inslag vorm? Dit beteken op sy minste (en op grond van sy prinsipiële stelling behoort *Die Kerkbode* hiermee saam te stem) dat die kerk daarvoor moet ywer dat die geregtigheid en die liefde soos die Skrif dit aan ons leer, die grondslae sal wees waarop die politieke, maatskaplike en ekonomiese inrigting van hierdie permanent gevestigde bont samelewing sal geskied. Die kerk sal veral nie agter die idee van die „inheemse” kerk moet gaan

skuil en 'n daadlose, getuienislose of selfs 'n goedkeurende toeskouersrol mag vervul as volgens die norme van die apartheidsideologie die geregtigheid vir mense wat in hierdie bont samelewing aan verskillende rasse behoort, met verskillende mate uitgemeet word nie.

In elk geval is een ding duidelik: *Die Kerkbode* is 'n dienskneg wat die wil van sy Heer ken (vgl. Luk. 12: 47). Hy weet dat dit 'n onafskeidelike deel van die taak van die kerk is om hom te beywer vir die maatskaplike, ekonomiese en politieke welsyn van „die mense van die land”.

2. „(Ons) wil nie ontken dat die sendingwerk van sommige instansies die weg berei het vir sekere politieke idees en oogmerke nie”, sê *Die Kerkbode*. „Daar is dan ook ideologieë wat in 'n sekere tipe prediking oorgepra word wat weinig grond in die evangelie self vind en waarsonder die jong vrywordende state kan klaarkom. Maar die moontlikheid is nie uitgesluit nie dat daar vir 'n land 'n soort vryheid gekoester word wat strydig is met die beginsels van Gods Woord”.

Apartheid? Dit is my eerste vraagteken by hierdie stelling waarteen ek geen enkele ander beswaar het as dat die ideologieë waarteen dit waarsku, nie by die naam genoem word nie. 'n Jong Afrikastaat soos Zambië — ek wonder of *Die Kerkbode* dit weet het — sal ongetwyfeld by hierdie pragtige stelling apartheid as uitroepeteke skryf.

Maar dit daar gelaat. Aangesien hierdie hele *Kerkbode*-artikel so 'n duidelike apologetiese toon verraai, vervang ek maar gou die woorde „jong vrywordende state” in hierdie prinsipiële stelling met „Suid-Afrika” en naas „ideologieë” vul ek die woorde in tussen hakies: „Soos apartheid”, en siedaar! die puntjies is op die i's gesit.

INHEEMSE KERK EN APARTHEID

Daarmee is ons dan weer uit Zambië vandaan terug op vaderlandsbodem en ek plaas my tweede vraagteken naas die stelling dat die sendingwerk van sommige instansies die weg berei het vir sekere politieke idees en oogmerke. Die Ned. Geref. Kerk? Wat my betref, bly dit egter 'n vraagteken. Het die Ned. Geref. Kerk met sy sendingbeleid van selfstandige, inheemse dogterkerke die weg vir die apartheidsideologie berei? Mag God oordeel dat dit „nee”

is! Maar *Die Kerkbode* het seker ook al gehoor hoe kritiek op die Nasionale Party se apartheidsbeleid en uitinge van droefheid omdat die kerk versuim om daarteen te getuig, gepaard met die waarskuwing dat m.n. die Ned. Geref. Kerk daarteen moet waak om hom met 'n politieke party se beleid so te vereenselwig dat hy in 'n geestelike bolwerk van die party ontaard, afgeweer word met die bewering dat apartheid aan die wese van die kerk eie is, dat dit eintlik in die kerk self sy ontstaan gehad het, dat die beleid van afsonderlike ontwikkeling deur die kerk toegepas is lank voordat dit 'n politieke program geword het. Dat die gedagte van die „inheemswording” van die kerk die korrelaat is op die geestelike erf van die apartheidspolitiek soos dit in Suid-Afrika toegepas word, moet elkeen wat Christus en sy Kerk lief het, weier om te aanvaar. Stem *Die Kerkbode* saam dat, as die begrip „inheemse kerk” misbruik word om die apartheidsideologie mee te verdedig, dit per implikasie, nee, sommeer ronduit, 'n gruwelike beskuldiging is aan die adres van die Ned. Geref. Kerk dat hy die wegbereider is van apartheid? Dit is wel waar, en ten diepste te betreur dat hierdie ideologie waarvoor daar weinige, indien enige, grond in die evangelie gevind kan word, selfs in 'n sekere tipe prediking oorgedra word. Daar kom nog by dat dit hoe langer hoe duideliker word dat dit 'n ideologie is waarsonder ons liewer moes klaargekom het. Weliswaar sal almal erken dat Suid-Afrika 'n beleid moes (of liewer: moet) vind waarvolgens 'n vreedsame naasbestaan van die mense in ons veelrasige land verseker kan word. Maar ons het ons voet op 'n dwaalweg gesit toe ons van apartheid ons geloofs-belydenis gemaak het, toe dit ons lewens- en wêreldbeskouing geword het. Toe het die rekbaarheid en plooibaarheid wat aan 'n goeie, praktiese beleid eie moet wees, verdwyn en het apartheid 'n starre ideologie geword wat as sodanig sy eie regverdigingsbeginsel is vir onreg, onsinnige leed, diskriminasie en al die verfoeilikhede van „klein apartheid”. Toe dit ons evangelie geword het, het dit in stryd gekom met die evangelie van Jesus en het dit 'n slegte boom geblyk te wees wat slegte vrugte dra. Dit verkondig ook wel „aparte vryhede”, maar waar bly die beginsels van Gods Woord as ons ons eerlik afvra wat apartheid presies beteken in ons permanent gevestigde „bont” gemeenskappe?

As dit *Die Kerkbode* waarlik erns is om die aksente reg te lê, dan moet hy dit ook doen; en dit is *nou* die tyd om dit te doen.

3. „Dis moontlik dat die evangelie self as 'n „Westerse” of „witmansgoddiens” beskou kan word en daarom as 'n vreemde ideologie verwerp kan word. Om hierdie rede is dit dringend nodig dat die Christelike kerk, met behoud van sy ware karakter as kerk, inderdaad inheems word”.

WARE KERK EN APARTHEIDSKERK

Geen enkele vraagteken nie, maar ek onderstreep die woorde: „met behoud van sy ware karakter as kerk . . .” 'n Paar toepaslike opmerkings wat ons situasie in Suid-Afrika betref, is dan dringend nodig. Want veral in Suid-Afrika blyk dit 'n duiwelse versoeking te wees om vanuit die gedagte van die inheemswording van die kerk wat in die belydenis van sy katolesiteit gegrond is, te kom tot die idde van die apartheidskerk. Wat eintlik daarmee beoog word, is om aan die apartheidspolitiek as sodanig 'n kerklike fundering te gee. 'n Waarheid wat in verband staan met die belydenis van die katolesiteit van die kerk, word ingeroep ter regverdiging van die apartheidsideologie. En dit is 'n flagrante goddeloosheid. Die katolesiteit van die kerk maak van hom nie apartheidskerk nie. As die kerk, soos hy in Suid-Afrika inheems is, hom konstitueer in 'n aantal apartheidskerke volgens die patroon en die norme van die apartheidspolitiek, dan geskied sy sogenaamde inheemswording ten koste van sy ware karakter as kerk. Dan is sy eenheid en sy katolesiteit met mekaar in botsing.

Daar is dan ook niks wat in Suid-Afrika sterker daartoe kan bydra om die Christelike goddiens as 'n vreemde ideologie, 'n „witmansgoddiens” verwerplik te maak nie as dit, dat die witman die skoonste elemente daarvan misbruik om daarmee sy politiek wat in die grond van die saak uit sy augs om selfbehoud gebore is en in die praktiese uitwerking daarvan blykbaar noodwendig met die norme van die Christelike geloof in stryd kom, te regverdig.

Die „inheemse” kerk in Suid-Afrika moet uiteindelik die één kerk van Christus wees vir alle mense wat hulle in hierdie land as inheems beskou. Hierdie één kerk is in so 'n ware sin ook katoeliek dat hy, sonder

om 'n prooi van die apartheidsideologie en daarom apartheidskerk te word, vir almal, ook vir elke bevolkingsgroep van ons land, alles kan word. Maar omdat hy die één katoelieke kerk is, sal hy sy ware karakter as kerk ook daarin laat blyk dat hy, waar die samelewing op die lewens- en arbeidsvlak van Maandag tot Saterdag „bont” is, op Sondag rondom die geopende Woord en die Tafel van die Here ook „bont” kan wees.

4. „Teenoor die eis dat ook sendelinge moet help met die samesnoering van die nasie, sal daar voorbehoude wees. Weliswaar, die evangelie is geen vyand van die verenigde nasionale bestaan as sodanig nie. Die feit dat nasies hul besondere plek in die plan van God het — ook onder die nuwe bedeling — is duidelik uit die Nuwe Testament. En as God vir die nasies 'n taak het en die evangelie ook aan die nasies as spesifieke groeperinge van mense verkondig moet word, kan die kerk nie sê dat hy met die nasionale bestaan absoluut niks te doen het nie. Maar selfs dan is die kerk nie 'n politieke instrument nie”.

Weer eens 'n aantal prinsipiële stellinge waarvan 'n mens onwillekeurig die indruk kry dat dit eerder apologeties uitgespreek is met betrekking tot die rol wat die Ned. Geref. Kerk in die Suid-Afrikaanse politiek speel, of liewer: volgens sommige behoort te speel, as wat dit bedoel is om die lig uit die Woord op Zambië se pad te laat val. Dit sal dan ook ongetwyfeld nog presies in ooreenstemming met die bedoeling van *Die Kerkbode* wees as 'n mens in die plek van die woord „sendelinge” in die eerste sin hierbo „die kerk met sy ampte” skrywe en in die plek van „nasie”, „die volk van Suid-Afrika”. Ook as dit só staan, kan 'n mens daar geen beswaar teen hê nie, behalwe dat dit so orakelagtig vaag is. Daarom wil ek 'n duidelike, skerp vraagteken naas hierdie stelling plaas, en wel met betrekking tot wat so 'n prinsipiële uitspraak in die algemeen en vir Suid-Afrika in besonder moet beteken.

DIE KRUIS

Wat is die voorbehoude waarmee die kerk moet diensbaar wees aan die samesnoering van 'n volk? En wie is in Suid-Afrika die „nasie” wat saamgesnoer moet word? Die kerk het wat hierdie vrae betref, 'n eie getuienis van ingrypende politieke betekenis. Ek dink in die eerste plek aan die voorbehoude waarvan daar in

hierdie stelling sprake is. Wannec 'n volk saamgesnoer word, beteken dit dat daar 'n middelpunt is waaromheen dit geskied. Die voorbehoud waarmee die kerk aan die same-snoering van 'n volk sal diensbaar wees, hang saam met die vraag wat hierdie middelpunt is. Daarop het die kerk slegs een antwoord. Hy weer-spreek alles wat die nasie in sy heidendom as die sakrale middelpunt van sy nasionale bestaan vereer: die ras, die bloed, die bodem, die taal, die volkseienomlikheid. Die kruis van Golgota is die middelpunt waaromheen die „nasionale” lewe ingerig en geleef moet word. As dit waar is — en as die kerk dit ooit sou ontken, wat het daar dan van sy boodskap, van sy waarheid oorgebly? — dan is die tweede sin in die *Kerkbode*-stelling nie slegs nie te bevraagteken nie, maar moet dit selfs veel skerper en positiewer gestel word: Die evangelie wil die nasionale bestaan rondom sy één. ware middelpunt verenig. En daaraan moet die kerk diensbaar wees.

DIE NASIE

Hier kom dan, in die tweede plek, die vraag ter sprake: Wie is die nasie wat in Suid-Afrika rondom hierdie middelpunt saamgesnoer moet word? Antwoord: Dit is die nasies van Psalm 2, vir wie die sakrale middelpunt van hulle die bloed en gees, wat hulle as nasies in hulle heidendom onder hulle eie bloed- en rasgode

verdeel, vervang moet word met die Bloed en Gees van Christus. „Natie — dat is geboorte buiten de *incarnatie*, de geboorte van Christus, om” (Noordmans). Die Kerk mag vir veelrassige Suid-Afrika net hierdie een boodskap hê: Dat die nasies rondom die kruis van Golgota tot Godsvolk verenig mag word.

Oor die vraag wat die plan en weg van God met die „natie” is, laat die Ou en die Nuwe Testament geen twyfel nie. Daarom is dit ook so waar wat *Die Kerkbode* sê, dat die kerk nie kan sê dat hy met die nasionale bestaan niks te doen het nie. As hy dit sou sê, sou hy nie meer die kerk wees nie. Die nasies moet gedoop word, het Jesus beveel. Dit beteken: Hulle moet ingelyf word in die dood en in die wederopstanding van Christus. Maar die kerk sou eweëns ophou om kerk te wees, hy sou 'n goedkoop instrument van die politiek word, nee, erger nog: hy word 'n werktuig van die antichris as hy hom laat misbruik in die diens van enige nasionalisme waarin die gode van die natuur — ras, bloed, bodem — 'n plek in die middelpunt van die volkslewe opeis naas die lewende God met die offer van sy Seun, of waar hierdie gode die Lam wat vir ons geslag is (Openb. 5: 6. 9) uit sy plek wil verdring (vgl. 1 Joh. 4: 3).

GELEENTHEID

Of *Die Kerkbode* ook min of meer bedoel het wat ek hierbo probeer uit-

druk het, weet ek nie. Alles in hierdie uiters belangrike artikel is so vaag, so orakelagtig-dubbelsinnig. Dis veral jammer as 'n mens dink aan die kostelike geleentheid wat *Die Kerkbode* het om 'n duidelike woord te spreek in die gevaar wat kerk en volk in Suid-Afrika bedreig — nie 'n klomp versonne gevare, soos die liberalisme, immigrante, die Rooms-Katolieke en wie weet wat nog alles nie, maar die gevaar om die lewende God, die „fontein van die lewende water” te verlaat om vir ons „reënbakke uit te kap, gebarste reënbakke wat geen water hou nie” (Jer. 2: 13).

Wáár lê *Die Kerkbode* die aksente? Vraagteke.

Tog kan 'n mens vanuit die belydenis dat Jesus die Here is, nie teen die stelling as sodanig veel beswaar maak nie. Dit kan wees dat *Die Kerkbode* juis bedoel om in hierdie artikel hierdie belydenis af te lê en daartoe op te roep; en „niemand kan sê dat Jesus die Here is nie, behalwe deur die Heilige Gees”. *Die Kerkbode* ken die weg, dit is duidelik. Hy weet dat Jesus die Here is, dit is ook duidelik.

Hier volg dan my dringende versoek, of miskien moet ek liever sê: my gebed: Dat dit nooit van *Die Kerkbode* gesê mag word dat hy die wil van sy Heer geken het en nie klaargemaak of volgens sy wil gedoen het nie; en dat hy aangaande Jesus bely het: „Here, Here!” en nie gedoen het wat die Here sê nie.

BEN ENGELBRECHT

HIERVAN EN DAARVAN

GESPREK MET ROME

My geëerde vriend die Dominikaanse Prior stop sy pyp met daardie duur, welriekende Drie Nonnetjies-tabak wat in ronde blikke uit Engeland geïmporteer word. My eie twak is van 'n minder kerkelike allure, en bowendien weet ek nie of dit my as Protestant sou betaam om so 'n celibatêre stopsel te brand nie. In elk geval, soos die spreekwoord sê, De gustibus . . . Dus ons gesels verder.

Erasmus: Wat dink U van die gesprek wat nou aangeknoop is tussen die Kerk van Engeland en die Kerk van Rome? Dink U dat dit enige kans het om iets op te lewer?

Prior: O ja seker. In praktiese aangeleenthede soos gemengde huwelike kan daar 'n verslapping van die ysterharde reëls kom, en kan dinge aan albei kante 'n bietjie makliker gemaak word.

Erasmus: Ja goed, dit sou seker algemeen verwelkom word; maar wat van die dieperliggende dinge? Daar is 'n „High Church”-groep wat die Kerk van Engeland weer wil teruglei na die Pousdom, en dit is ongetwyfeld ook hulle wat die voortou geneem het in hierdie gesprekke. Maar U weet tog dat daar ook 'n sterk „evangeliese” sektor in die Kerk van Engeland is wat nooit sal

toelaat dat die wesenlik-protestantse kenmerke en leerstukke van hul Kerk op enige wyse afgewater of selfs afgeskryf word nie!

Prior: Heeltemal reg. Alle partye is hulle hiervan bewus. En daarom glo ek ook nie dat daar enige kon-sessies van konfessionele aard gedoen sal word nie. Die Kerk van Engeland sal haar leerstukke behou en die Kerk van Rome hare. Al die wedy-sydse aanstootlike leerstukke sal, na ek glo, onveranderd in die formulier-boeke bly staan; maar, my vriend, die gees waarin dit verstaan word, en die styl waarin dit vertolk word, dit sal ingrypend verander! Dit hét

al verander! Dit verander altyd, soos die geslagte en die eeue mekaar opvolg! Dink maar aan 'n Roomse teoloog soos Küng, wat vandag durf beweer dat die leerstuk van die Versoening, soos deur die Konsilie van Trent geformuleer, in wesenlike ooreenstemming was met die leer van Maarten Luther! Verbeel jou net!

Erasmus: Ja, daar is iets in wat jy sê. As ek nou maar dink aan my eie kerk: die N.G. Kerk van 1967 is nie meer die N.G. Kerk van 1917 nie, en nog minder die van 1867! Ons bely nog altyd dieselfde leersukke, maar ons voel dit anders, en beleef dit anders, en aksentueer dit anders as ons vaders en grootvaders. Die verandering was nie in alle opsigte 'n verbetering nie, maar daar het 'n verandering ingetree, dit is seker. Maar dit alles raak myns insiens nog nie die hart van die saak nie. Al sal ons mekaar ook hoe suiwer verstaan, en al sal ons ook hoe vriendelik en hoe verdraagsaam teenoor mekaar staan, daar bly tog altyd nog 'n rotsvaste sediment van dogmatiese besinsel wat met geen ekumeniese emulsies versag of opgelos kan word nie. Neem nou maar byvoorbeeld die leer aangaande die Vagevuur. U sal tog seker nog altyd daaraan vashou?

Prior: O ja, sekerlik. Ons praat nie meer oor die Vagevuur soos in die ou dae daarvoor gepraat is nie, maar ek glo baie beslis nog dat daar so iets bestaan, en dat daar vir die dode gebid moet word.

Erasmus: Presies. En ek kan nie sien hoe ons ooit by so 'n punt gaan verbykom nie. Ons kan interpreteer en plooi en vertolk soveel as ons wil, maar telkens kom daar die oomblik wanneer daar op 'n bepaalde punt 'n

onomwonde Ja of Nee uitgespreek moet word.

Prior: Kom ons gesels dan maar liever oor Augustinus.

Erasmus: Ja, kom ons gesels oor Augustinus! Hy was 'n ras-egte Protestant, en Calvyn . . .

Prior: Dit is nie waar nie! Julle sê dit altyd, maar . . .

Op hierdie kritieke oomblik in die Gesprek met Rome het Mevrouw Erastria met toe en beskuit opgedaag. „Wat sit julle alweer in mekaar se hare?” — Ag, sy weet nie hoe lekker ons gesels het nie!

* * *

„My Friend, the Enemy”

Wyle ds. P. C. J. Meiring was jarelank predikant van die gemeente Rondebosch en tegelykertyd redakteur van *Die Kerkbode*. Van een van sy dogters, Mevrouw Lettie Cruse van Stellenbosch, verneem ek onlangs die volgende staaltjie. Haar vader, vertel sy, was meermale in langdurige polemieke gewikkel met Monseigneur dr. F. C. Kolbe, die bekende Rooms-Katolieke denker en skrywer van Kaapstad, seun van 'n N.G. Kerk-sending, Eerw. Kolbe van die Paarl. Die polemieke het maar altyd weer gegaan oor punte van verskil tussen die Protestantisme en die Rooms-Katolisisme. Dr. Kolbe het sy skote afgevuur in die *Southern Cross*, en dan het ds. Meiring daarop gereageer in *Die Kerkbode*. Maar dr. Kolbe kon skerp wees, uitermate skerp selfs; en dan het dit soms gebeur dat die redakteur van die *Southern Cross* aan hom moes sê: „I can't print this. It's libellous!” Maar daarmee was dr. Kolbe nie uit die veld geslaan nie. Hy

bring die manuskrip persoonlik na ds. Meiring. Hulle was goeie vriende, ten spyte van hul geskille. Ds. Meiring lees die stuk, en antwoord met 'n glimlag: „Yes, it is libellous. But you may print it in your paper. I shall not answer it.” Met hierdie *imprimatur* van ds. Meiring het „my friend, the enemy” (soos ds. Meiring hom dikwels spottend genoem het) dan vrolik teruggedaan na die kantoor van die *Southern Cross*, en het hy sy stuk geplaas gekry!

Eendag stap ds. Meiring met sy gesin langs die strand by Bloubergstrand. In die verte sien hulle 'n eensame wandelaar nader. „Ag, kyk wie kom hier aan!” roep ds. Meiring uit. „Wie is dit, vader?” vra die kinders nuuskierig.

„Wil julle vir my sê julle weet nie wie dit is nie? Dit is mos „my friend, the enemy!”” antwoord ds. Meiring. En toe hulle by dr. Kolbe kom, word hy dadelik uitgenooi om saam met hulle na die strandhuis te stap en saam met hulle die middagtee te geniet. Die uitnodiging is met dank aanvaar, en hulle het 'n genoeglike agtermiddag met mekaar deurgebring.

Vandat ek hierdie verhaaltjie gehoor het, moet ek telkens weer daaraan dink. Dit hou aan ons 'n beskaamende voorbeeld voor van hoe 'n Christenmens sy opponent kan en moet bejeën, en hoedat 'n teologiese polemieke op die hoogste vlak gevoer kan word wanneer daar goeie trou tussen die partye bestaan.

„My friend, the enemy”. As ons dit maar vandag ook kon sê.

ERASMUS

Gedruk deur Prompt Drukkers Maatskappy (Edms.) Bpk., Harrisstraat 11, Westgate, Johannesburg

WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

7th TO 14th MAY, 1967

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity will be observed in South Africa during the week preceding Pentecost, May 7th to 14th. The Roman Catholic Church has agreed to cooperate in the observance of this Week, and we believe that its observance is becoming increasingly meaningful to a

large number of individual congregations and parishes throughout the country. Leaflets for use during this Week are available from the offices of the Christian Council of South Africa, P.O. Box 2846, Cape Town, at a cost of R1.50 per 100 including postage.

† B. B. BENNETT.