

# PRO

# VERITATE

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# „DIE WARE JAKOB”

DR. CALVIN COOK

Men are saved when they turn from their hunt for provision to trusting the Providence of God. This change from provision to Providence is our theme today.\* We find it exemplified in the patriarch Jacob and in his anonymous descendant, the woman at the well of Sychar. Man's attempts to provide for himself are not only the basis of his politics; because he has not been able always to do this to his own satisfaction, they have from earliest times also been the source of his religion. When God teaches man to know and to trust his providence, that is to know God's provision as gracious, so he changes also not only the basis of his religion, but of his politics as well. The crucial question for man therefore is whether he comes to know and knowing, to trust the Providence of God. But this is not only the crucial question: the answer of the cross is that he can and must.

## SINCERITY OR OPPORTUNISM?

Take Jacob first. Behind him burn the fires of a cheated brother's resentment. Ahead, a future in which all is darkly uncertain. Nor is the present safe: he finds himself terrified by a vision of the presence of God: a God whom he has not yet come to trust as his own. God of his fathers, but not yet his. Thus hedged about, he proposes a covenant with God in these terms:

„If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and clothing to wear, so that I come again to my father's house in peace, then the Lord shall be my God, and this stone, which I have set up for a pillar, shall be God's house; and of all that thou givest me I will give the tenth to thee . . .” (Gen. 28:20-22).

We marvel at his brass: provision, safekeeping, profit and a safe return, all for 10%! Was he sincere, opportunist or a mixture of both? Simplicity in human affairs is only found in saints and psychopaths. Jacob was neither. The trekker vow we commemorate today echoes the same spirit:

(Continued on page 2)

# ’N BELYDENIS VIR ONS EIE TYD

DS. DANIE VAN ZYL

In 1925 het die „United Presbyterian Church of North America” ’n voorstel aangeneem waarin die kerk weer sy verhouding tot die Westminster Konfessie bevestig het. In dieselfde voorstel het die volgende verskyn:

„Hiermee bevestig die kerk ook die reg en plig van ’n lewende kerk om sy geloof van tyd tot tyd te herkonstateer, om sodoende enige verdere vooruitgang wat hy onder die leiding van die Heilige Gees gemaak het, te vertoon.”

In hierdie verklaring is die saad van ’n nuwe belydenis gesaai.

In 1957 het ’n komitee van die „Presbyterian Church in the United States” verslag gelewer en aanbeveel

„dat die verenigde kerk (van die genoemde twee Presbiteriaanse kerke) nadat die same-smelting in 1958 voltooi is, ’n kort hedendaagse geloofsverklaring moet voorberei, wat dan deel van die konstitusie sal word.”

Hierdie kort verklaring het nou tot ’n volle belydenis ontwikkel

en staan in Amerika bekend as die „Confession of 1967”.

Die beplanning van ’n hedendaagse belydenis is nie beperk tot die Presbiteriaanse kerk in Amerika nie. Dieselfde taak is besig om ook in lande soos Engeland, Australië en Holland oorweeg of aangepak te word. In werklikheid het die hele gereformeerde familie van kerke nie alleen die behoefte gevoel om hulle verhoudings tot die ouere belydenisskrifte te hernu nie, maar om ook ’n belydenis op te stel wat die probleme en behoeftes van ons eie tyd in ag sal neem.

Deur die „United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.” word ’n boek van belydenisskrifte oorweeg wat die volgende belydenisse sal insluit:

(Vervolg op bladsy 3)

## "Die ware Jakob"

(Continued from page 1)

a church and an annual Sabbath observance in exchange for victory over Dingaan. It is easy for us to be shocked at the willingness of others to exploit God. But we do not face Dingaan; and when we are in trouble, our covenants with God are no less mercenary than Jacob's.

### GOD'S TERMS

Yet clearly, the main point of Jacob's story is not his shrewd opportunism. What matters most is the providential grace of God. Jacob looks merely for provision; he finds Providence. He is unable to conceive terms as advantageous as those which God has for him. When the time came that God commanded him to return, Jacob was squeezed between the rising jealousy of Laban and his family and the dark prospect of returning to land occupied by an unreconciled brother. In Haran, the flocks and herds had ebbed and flowed. But the final direction was as unmistakable as that of the Zulu cattle: more and more found their way into Jacob's laagers. And as Jacob, the Afrikaner today finds himself caught in the squeeze between the rising resentment of those at whose expense he seems to prosper and the command by God to set out on a course which means a meeting with if not also a collision with his angry brother.

We do not know yet how this will turn out for our land. But we do know how it turned out for Jacob. By the grace of God he not only prospered exceedingly; he was also reconciled to his brother. What Jacob had been powerless to procure, God provided. His own elaborate attempts to placate his brother, precautions that have their parallels in the feverish plans for the Transkei, did not suffice to give him peace of mind. What from the point of the politics of provision would have been shrewd in the politics of providence became blatant and silly. For where grace works, bribery is unnecessary. Once again, Jacob had to find that "God was in this place and I knew it not." The limp the wrestler left him remain-

ed a life-long reminder that God not only honours his word by providing graciously; he reconciles brothers. If our aim is provision for ourselves, then by every means possible, fences, titles, border strips, brands, we do well to keep neighbours and brothers at a distance. But when we are overtaken by Providence, God makes possible life together without fences.

### LIVING WATER

The second illustration of the replacement of human provision by divine providence is in the meeting between the anonymous woman at the well of Sychar and Jesus. At first, the woman does not recognize the one in whose presence she finds herself. At Bethel, the weary patriarch found merely an empty place to rest. She, tired herself, sees only a tired and thirsty Jew. But his request for a drink, and his remark about living water raises acutely two questions about the framework of her life and the life of her people. She assumes that Jesus will assert in traditional terms the claim to religious and racial supremacy. This she seeks to forestall by going back to a common ancestor. She and her people, racially and religiously, are as good as he and his. "Are you greater than our father Jacob who gave us this well and drank from it himself?"

A knockout question: but the answer is stunningly unexpected. Since he can give "living water" he is greater. Yet his claim was as vulnerable then as we feel it to be now. He has nothing with which to draw; the well is deep. Thus on the level of provision, he appears hopelessly deficient. At this stage, the verdict between the realism of provision and the realism of providence seems inconclusive. She has this well and the pot: whence this living water? But he also shows the insufficiency of this well to sustain life. None knows better than she that those who drink from this well thirst again, and that even the life which it sustains is highly unsatisfactory.

But what of the alternative? Common physical ancestry is not enough: salvation, he asserts, is of the Jews. The providence and the grace of God always seem

exclusive and arbitrary at times, particularly when these are exercised on behalf of others, and most of all when shown to our enemies. What Jacob may or may not have done, his gifts and his habits do not matter most. What our ancestors may have achieved themselves or passed to us does not finally determine our place before God or men. As Retief found in 1838 and as non-europeans are finding now, possessing a land means more than treaties and Deeds Offices. God's providence is the whole history of his dealings with a people, and not simply the parts we want. This means learning to value parts of that history which we find unpleasant or unflattering, and to devalue some of the parts upon which we put most stress. The assertion that salvation was of the Jews destroyed what the Samaritans thought important. Samaria was in fact a spiritual non-entity. We cannot always see what will be of lasting importance in our time, but we can be sure that God's providence in the gospel will be more important than our human attempts at provision.

But Jesus pursues this beyond the complacent judgment of the racist. He makes no attempt to hide the fact that salvation is of the Jews, but points to the fact also of that which would outmode these historic rivalries and differences once and for all. God was now to be worshipped in Spirit and truth. This demand and possibility made the question of Jerusalem or "this mountain" no longer of urgent importance. As with the question of who owned or gave the well, so that of where men were to worship was no longer of primary importance. The presence of the Messiah had changed the ancient and ancestral priorities. In the era of living water, the new era of the Spirit, physical considerations became secondary to spiritual. Flesh is a function of spirit.

### REVALUATION OF HISTORY

This is where the conversation touches us. 1838, and all the rest is part of the salvation history of our country. But the time has come when we have to revalue our history in terms not of provision, but of providence. Some moments and places have an impor-

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tance in the politics of provision which they do not have in the politics of providence. Blood River is important in the politics of provision; it is quite possible that this spot, in the politics of providence may turn out to be more important to the history of our land. While it is a function of ancestors to provide for their descendants, we cannot make such provision into a religion without making it idolatrous. Our ability to provide for our children rests finally upon God's providence. That providence is established on his terms, not ours. The pattern of providence always differs from that of ancestral cults. Where the ancestors hedge to protect, God destroys the frontier. What is shaped initially by the greed, the lawlessness and the violence of men is finally to be subdued by the grace of God. He offers living water to all in this land, regardless of to whom its wells belong. In so doing he challenges our politics of provision. As long as we cannot make up our minds whether to trust him or our own methods, we shall show not simply indecision, but the hypocrisy of the doubleminded.

Like a man accepting the gift of a woman's love in marriage, the acceptance of the gift of living water requires an immense revolution in our thinking and living. In Palestine, as here, possession of the wells was the key to provision. Those who held the water held the land. There are many reasons for being nice to Basutoland; not only is there the flow of labour, but also the Orange and the Caledon rise in the Malutis. This stranger challenges every section of the country with the adequacy of the sources of its life. None of them can satisfy even the section concerned. We see the common drought; we are offered a common draught. Both with race and religion, we can see each other's thirsts. We can see their inadequacies and short comings. The West is regarded for its technology, the means it has of bigger and better water supplies, and not for its civilization, how its community lives and moves. Presbyterians regard bishops not as the crown of ecclesiastical

creation, but at best as an unavoidable necessity of union. An ancestral well will not suffice for a descendant's thirst, let alone another's who may wish to drink.

### THE GOSPEL OF THE POOR

Second, God's providence as living water comes not to the owner of the well or the headman of the village, but to a poor wretch who had to join mad-dogs and Englishmen out in the mid-day sun in order to escape the tongues of her neighbours. We see her as a spiritual porcupine, with every quill of resentment a-bristle. She has few rights and privileges, and fewer amenities even than the over-worked African house-wife who trails to the township stand-pipe. These often find something to sing about as they go, but this is a silent, most uneager beaver.

The gospel is not offered to a rich and prosperous patriarch whose problem is to find sufficient grazing and water for his vast flocks and herds, that is, to one whose problem is abundance, but to this creature who clings to distant ancestry as her only ennobling feature; not to a wool baron, but to some inhabitant of district six distinguished by being called Jannie van Riebeeck or Charlie Somerset. Living water is for the rightless, the landless, the disaffected, the disgruntled, the divorced, the sin-swamped and those with outsize inferiority complexes. (Remember the climax of the message to John the Baptist? "The poor have the gospel preached to them. Blessed is he who is not offended in me.") In this woman, Jacob's limp has turned into a chip on the shoulder. Yet she becomes the one to whom the Saviour of the world is revealed, and the one privileged to lead others to where he is to be found. To this racist, and essentially irreligious person, is given that which heals racialism and religious division. Like her ancestor, she finds in a covenant based on the supremacy of grace, unbelievable riches. For her, as for him, the hunt for provision has suddenly become the revelation of Providence.

*\*The above is the first part of an address delivered at the Wilgespruit service on the Day of the Covenant, 1965. To be continued.*

## 'n Belydenis vir ons eie Tyd

(Vervolg van bladsy 1)

- (i) Die Geloofsbelydenis van Nicea
- (ii) Die Apostoliese Geloofsbelydenis
- (iii) Die Skotse Konfessie
- (iv) Die Heidelbergse Kategismus
- (v) Die Tweede Helvetiese Konfessie
- (vi) Die Westminster Konfessie en Korter Kategismus
- (vii) Die Teologiese Verklaring van Barmen
- (viii) Die "Confession of 1967".

### IS 'N HEDENDAAGSE BELYDENIS GEREGVERDIG?

Van die vroegste tyd af het die Christelike Kerk die behoefte gevoel om een of ander fokus of samevatting van die Bybelse getuigenis aangaande Christus te hê. Kort dele van sulke belydenisse is alreeds in die Nuwe Testament teenwoordig. Die Kerk het vroeg al besef dat die doopsbelydenisse en kanon van die Skrif nie eenheid in die Kerk kon waarborg nie. Valse leringe aangaande die betekenis van Christus, die belang van redding en die verhouding van die Christelike evangelie tot Judaïsme en die Grieks-Romeinse godsdienste, het die Kerk geforseer om sekere besluite te neem en duidelike onderskeidings te maak. Hierdie besluite en onderskeidings is deur 'n reeks konsilies en sinodes gemaak. So word in die geloofsbelydenis van Nicea bv. probeer om met meer duidelikheid en noukeurigheid die betekenis van Christus vir die Kerk uiteen te sit en die Skrifwaarheid aangaande Christus teen valse leringe van die tyd te verskans.

Ten spyte van die omvang van hierdie besprekings in die Kerk en die insig waarvan dit getuig, is min of geen aandag aan die volgende vraagstukke gegee nie: hoe die Skrif verklaar moet word; die Christelike leer omtrent die mens; die leer van die genade; die leer van die kerk, sy bediening en aanbidding; en die verhouding tussen kerk en kultuur.

(Vervolg op bladsy 4)

## 'n Belydenis vir ons eie Tyd

(Vervolg van bladsy 3)

Geen gemeenskaplike besluite is oor hierdie sake geneem nie.

Dit was op hierdie gebiede waar die Protestantse Hervormers hulle sterkste aanslae kon maak, juis omdat daar geen vasomlynde uitsprake was nie. Al die Protestantse belydenisskrifte het beoog om nuwe belydenisse te wees wat die nuwe situasie in ag sou neem. Die vroeëre belydenisse, soos die Apostoliese geloofsbelydenis en die Geloofsbelydenis van Nicea is nie verwerp of vervang nie. Die nuwe belydenisse het eerder die insig van die vroeëre belydenisse erken, maar dan daarby met teenswoordige probleme rekening gehou.

Johannes Calvyn het gesê dat die andersoortige en verskillende probleme van die sestiende eeu nie met die antwoorde van die vierde eeuse kerk beantwoord kan word nie. Probleme van die sestiende eeu moet met die antwoorde van die sestiende eeu beantwoord word. Dieselfde kan van ons twintigste eeu gesê word.

Die Hervormers het daar geen beswaar teen gehad om gedurende die Reformasie in elke land 'n eie belydenis op te stel en om selfs nuwe belydenisse op te stel om hulle vroeëre geskrifte te vervang nie. Hulle was maar net besig om hulle eie getuienis uit te leef. Die Hervormers het geglo dat die kerk altyd, wat sy eie lewe betref, deur die Woord van God en onder leiding van die Heilige Gees in die HEDE hervorm moet word.

Wanneer kerke in 'n nuwe omgewing die belydenisse oorneem wat in 'n vroeëre tyd en in 'n ander historiese situasie ontstaan het, word die probleem geskep van hoe die belydenis nou afgelê moet word. So 'n probleem het in Amerika tussen die Baptiste, Kongregasionaliste en Presbiteriane voorgekom. Al drie kerke het die Westminster Konfessie onderskryf. Tog het hierdie gemeenskappe uiteindelik teen mekaar, en later ook onderling, verdeeld geraak. Die ergste skeuring tussen hulle was egter die gevolg van strydvrage wat nie in

die Westminster Konfessie behandel is nie. Hierdie kerke se grootste probleme was slawerny, politieke kwessies, filosofiese veranderinge, ekonomiese beleid en groepsmededinging. Dit het nie vir hierdie kerke moontlik gelyk om onder leiding van die Heilige Gees die Skrif te herondersoek en so weer die Christelike geloof in hulle teenswoordige situasie te bely nie. Tog was dit juis wat die Hervormers in hulle situasie gedoen het.

Die Amerikaanse kerke moes dus die ongeëwenaarde godsdienstige en sosiale veranderinge van die twintigste eeu tegemoet gaan met 'n stel belydenisskrifte wat drie eeue vantevore opgestel is. Dit was een rede waarom daar in Amerika sulke anti-presbiteriaanse en anti-gereformeerde elemente soos ultra-nasionalisme en rasse-diskriminasie die kerk kon binnekom. Die driehonderdjaar-oue belydenis kon geen weerstand bied teen sulke valse insluipels nie.

In Duitsland het Nazisme die kerk oorval en binnegeval. In die stryd is die Teologiese Verklaring van Barmen gebore om die Christelike geloof weereens in verhouding te bring met die plaaslike situasie. Barmen is 'n blywende voorbeeld van hoe die totstandkoming van 'n ware belydende kerk ook tot 'n kerk van belyers en martelare gelei het.

Daar is vandag 'n diep besef in die kerk dat sy verantwoordelikheid om die Christelike geloof, soos die Hervormers, in die onmiddellike, feitlike situasie te bely, ernstige aandag moet geniet.

Die kenmerke van 'n belydende kerk is dat sy lewe nie deur enkele persone of gemeentes gerig word nie, maar deur die norme van 'n belydenis. 'n Belydenis as maatstaf is ondergeskik aan die Bybel, maar verhewe bo leraar en gemeente. 'n Belydenis kan nie in 'n vakuum opgestel word nie, maar alleen wanneer daar 'n wisselwerking is tussen die Heilige Skrif en die plaaslike situasie.

Die oogmerk van die outeurs van die Westminster Konfessie was dat hulle belydenis 'n opsomming van die Bybelse leringe moes wees en dat dit as gids moes dien tot 'n beter begrip van die Skrifwaarhede. Die werk was egter sowel 'n opsomming as 'n verklaring van die Skrif. Party

Bybelse temas is geweldig uitgebou terwyl ander geheel en al weggelaat is. Dat hierdie belydenis, en uiteraard enige belydenis, ook 'n verklaring van die Heilige Skrif is, is heeltemal korrek. Die Bybel-waarheid moet in die hedendaagse taal uitgedruk word om deur die hedendaagse mens verstaan te word. Die Christelike boodskap moet altyd in die idioom van 'n sekere tydperk en plek verkondig word.

Geen enkele belydenis kan vir alle tye voldoende wees nie, en nog minder kan 'n besondere belydenis as onfeilbaar beskou word. Die hede en toekoms mag belydenisvorme nodig hê waarvan nog nie eens gedink is nie. Die toets van 'n ware belydenis is nie hoe dit met 'n sekere tipe ooreenkom nie, of hoe dit in styl uitmunt nie, maar hoe dit die kerk help om die evangelie in die teenswoordige lewe in woord en daad uit te dra.

Die „United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.“ se taak, gesien as eties, ekumenies, verstandelik en evangelisties, kon nie voldoende gerig word deur 'n geskrif van die sewentiende eeu nie. Maar dit beteken nie dat alle vorige belydenisse nou geheel en al onbruikbaar geword het nie. Elke kerk het 'n tradisie wat waardevol is. As 'n kerk sy tradisie verloën, bedrieg hy homself en word hy verarm. Die weg na die toekoms loop uit die verlede vandaan. Die Amerikaanse Presbiteriaanse kerk het sy tradisie bevestig, maar tog die Bybelse waarhede opnuut van toepassing gemaak deur die „Confession of 1967“ as die laaste belydenis in 'n boek van belydenisskrifte op te neem. Die kerk se lewe word nou deur al die belydenisse gesamentlik gerig.

### DIE INHOUD VAN DIE „CONFESSION OF 1967“

Die „Confession of 1967“ is in drie dele verdeel wat onderskeidelik handel oor God se Versoeningswerk, die Bediening van Versoening, en die Verwesenliking van Versoening. Die belydenis lê nie nadruk op die tradisionele leerstellinge nie, maar probeer om 'n hedendaagse verklaring te maak oor wat die kerk vandag omtrent Jesus van Nasaret glo. „In Jesus van Nasaret is die ware

(Vervolg op bladsy 11)

## Editorial:

## *Must the Institute Disappear from the Scene?*

Prof. P. A. Verhoef, Dean of the Theological Faculty of the University of Stellenbosch, recently expressed the hope that "the great and demisive rôle" which the Christian Institute of Southern Africa will still play, will be by disappearing from the scene quickly and quietly."

(Die Christelike Instituut van Suidelike Afrika, N.Z.A.W. — Kroniek, December 15, 1965, p. 3).

Although this comment was meant to be unfriendly, there is such an important element of truth in it that no-one connected with the Institute, taking part in its activities and supporting its aims, could be indignant about it. Nor could anyone become melancholy over this statement of a theological professor whose words carry authority and are appreciated amongst a wide circle, as if it is a prophecy of doom. If the Christian Institute fulfils its objectives — which the professor doubts, but about which he could be better informed — then sooner or later, at least in so far as its present function is concerned, it must become redundant and disappear. This is perfectly obvious and should be awaited calmly and confidently, and should even be zealously hastened. The Institute has limited aims and a limited task. It is no church, and is no competitor against the Church, but acts in the sphere of the Church and keeps itself busy with a part of the Church's task of witnessing, while it must still respect the Church as greater. As far as the Church is concerned, the Institute, by way of analogy, will have to find its slogan in the words of John the Baptist in connection with his relationship to Christ: "He must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3:30). The Church is the body which God wants to use in this world and in our country to be the carrier of His truth and revelation. Therefore the Christian Institute may not have any pretensions to the truth which stand over against that of the Church or which receive pre-eminence above that of the Church. The truth of which it witnesses is not its own, but that of which the Church is the ultimate and decisively chosen bearer. Love and respect for the Church will, therefore, have to characterise all actions and activities of the Institute.

This love and respect, however, only come into their true form, into genuineness and purity, when they are greater than and different from a facile submission and narrow denominational tie. In the same way in which the child's love and respect for his parent come to their highest and most beautiful revelation in love for and obedience to the Father, while this may mean that the earthly parent is contradicted on certain points precisely because of this, so the love and respect for the church also finds its highest and most beautiful manifestation in the

(Continued on page 6)

## Inleidingsartikel:

## *Moet die Christelike Instituut van die Toneel Verdwyn?*

Prof. dr. P.A. Verhoef, dekaan van die teologiese fakulteit van die Universiteit van Stellenbosch, het onlangs die hoop uitgespreek „dat die ‚groot en beslissende rol‘ wat die Christelike Instituut van Suidelike Afrika nog sal speel daarin sal bestaan dat hy spoedig en sag van die toneel sal verdwyn”

(Die Christelike Instituut van Suidelike Afrika, N.Z.A.W.-Kroniek, 15 Des. 1965, bl. 3).

Hoewel hierdie opmerking onvriendelik bedoel was, is daar tog so 'n belangrike element van waarheid in dat niemand wat aan die Instituut verbonde is, aan sy werksaamhede deelneem en sy doelstellings onderskryf daarvoor verontwaardig kan wees of daarvoor melancholies kan raak soos oor 'n onheilsprofesie uit die mond van 'n teologiese hoogleraar wie se woorde in wye kringe waardering geniet en gesag dra nie.

As die Christelike Instituut aan sy doel beantwoord — wat die professor egter betwyfel, maar waarvoor hy stellig beter ingelig kan word — dan moet hy vroeër of later, altans wat sy huidige funksie betref, oorbodig word en verdwyn. Dit is volkome vanselfsprekend en dit moet rustig en vertrouensvol afgewag word en selfs ywerig verhaas word. Die Instituut het beperkte doelstellinge en 'n beperkte taak. Hy is geen kerk nie en ook geen mededinger van die Kerk nie, maar tree op op die terrein van die Kerk en hou hom besig met 'n deel van die getuienistaak van die Kerk, terwyl hy steeds eerbiediglik sal moet besef dat die Kerk meer is as hy. Ten opsigte van die Kerk sal die Instituut, by wyse van analogie, sy leuse moet vind in die woorde van Johannes die Doper i.v.m. sy verhouding tot Jesus: „Hy moet meer word, maar ek minder” (Joh. 3:30). Die Kerk is immers die instansie wat deur God in hierdie wêreld en ook in ons land gebruik wil word om die draer te wees van sy waarheid en sy openbaring. Daarom mag die Christelike Instituut geen waarheidspretensie hê wat teenoor dié van die Kerk staan of bo dié van die Kerk uitgaan nie. Die waarheid waarvan hy getuig, is nie sy eie nie, maar dié waarvan die Kerk die eintlike en deur God uitverkore draer is. Liefde en eerbied vir die Kerk sal daarom alle aksies en aktiwiteite van die Instituut moet kenmerk.

Hierdie liefde en eerbied kom egter eers tot sy ware wese, tot egtheid en louterheid as dit iets meer en iets anders is as 'n willose onderworpenheid in 'n eng-denominasionele binding. Soos die liefde en eerbied van die kind tot sy ouer tot sy skoonste en hoogste openbaring kom in die liefde tot en die gehoorsaamheid aan die Vader, terwyl dit mag meebring dat die aardse ouer juis daarmee op sekere punte weerspreek word (vgl. Luk. 2:48-49), so vind ook die liefde en eerbied vir die Kerk sy

(Vervolg op bladsy 6)

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obedience to the Head and Lord of the Church, provided this is not accompanied by proud and obstinate pretensions, but takes place within the boundary of truth which was given to the Church and learnt from the Church.

The Christian Institute may not contradict the fact that the Church is the Institute of Christ, but it continually acts in the greatest love and respect for the Church when it contradicts certain sinful tendencies in appealing to the truth committed to the Church. Its right to exist as an organisation as well as its duration depends on the question of how deep rooted these sinful tendencies in the Church are and how widely disseminated. But its concern can be the Church only, so that the Church can truly be Church. Therefore, the Christian Institute, in the execution of all its energy, in its service to Christ and His Church, should be consumed, and in its zeal for the Church it should couple the words of John the Baptist with Calvin's slogan: **Terar dum prosim**. The Institute will, however, sin against the Church if it does not fulfil its limited task and calling within a hoped for limited duration of time.

For someone like Prof. Verhoef, who recognises the "Biblical basis and elevated aims" of the Institute as well as its right to exist, and who openly expressed his appreciation of "the zeal and enthusiasm for ecumenism which is shown in these groups, and also their struggling with our problem of race relations" (quoted art. page 2), it should not be too difficult to temper his judgment of the Institute to something more friendly — especially because Prof. Verhoef, and many responsible churchmen with him, know how important and how difficult and challenging it is to contradict the deep-rooted sinful tendencies

in the Church for the sake of Christ, on precisely these points of ecumenism and race relations mentioned. Instead of from a distance wishing the Institute a quick and quiet disappearance from the scene, people like Prof. Verhoef could make a powerful and valuable positive contribution in allowing the Institute to play its "great and decisive rôle" in our Church life, so that it could then, but then only, disappear from the scene.

## Moet die Christelike Instituut van die Toneel Verdwyn?

(Vervolg van bladsy 5)

hoogste en skoonste manifestasie in die gehoorsaamheid aan die Hoof en Heer van die Kerk, mits dit nie met 'n hooghartige en eiesinnige pretensie gepaard gaan nie, maar geskied binne die omlyning van die waarheid wat aan die Kerk gegee en van die Kerk geleer is.

Die Christelike Instituut mag die feit dat die Kerk Instituut van Christus is, nie weerspreek nie, maar hy handel steeds in die grootste liefde en eerbied vir die Kerk as hy met 'n beroep op die waarheid wat aan die Kerk toevertrou is, sekere sondige tendense in die Kerk gewortel geraak het en hoe wyd verbreid dit is. Maar dit mag vir hom enkel gaan om die Kerk, sodat die Kerk waarlik Kerk sal wees. Daarom moet die Instituut met inspanning van alle kragte in sy diensbaarheid aan Christus en sy Kerk verteer word, en in sy ywer vir die Kerk met die woorde van Johannes die Doper die leuse van Calvin paar: **Terar dum prosim**. Die Instituut sal egter teen die Kerk sondig as hy nie sy beperkte taak en roeping in 'n hopelik beperkte tydskuur vervul nie.

Vir iemand soos prof. Verhoef, wat die „Bybelse grondslag en verhewe doelstelling“ van die

Instituut sowel as die bestaansreg daarvan erken en sy waardering openlik uitspreek „vir die ywer en entoesiasme wat uit dié kringe ten opsigte van die ekumene aan die dag gelê word, en ook vir hulle worsteling met die probleem van ons rasseverhoudinge“ (a. art. bl. 2) behoort dit nie moeilik te wees om sy oordeel oor die Instituut in die lig hiervan tot ietwat meer vriendelikheid te matig nie — veral ook omdat prof. Verhoef, en talle verantwoordelike kerkmanne saam met hom, weet hoe noodsaaklik en hoe moeilik en uitdagend dit is om juis op die genoemde punte van die ekumene en rasseverhoudinge, diepgewortelde sondige tendense in die Kerk om Christus ontwil te weerspreek. In plaas van op 'n afstand die Instituut 'n spoedige en sagte verdwyning van die toneel toe te wens, sou mense soos prof. Verhoef 'n kragtige en waardevolle positiewe bydrae kon lewer om die Instituut sy „groot en beslissende rol“ in ons kerklike lewe te laat speel, sodat hy dan, maar dan eers, van die toneel kan verdwyn.

The Editor of PRO VERITATE received a number of letters for publication but could not publish them in this edition. These letters will however appear in the February edition of PRO VERITATE.

Die Redakteur van PRO VERITATE het 'n aantal briewe vir publikasie ontvang wat ongelukkig weens gebrek aan ruimte nie hierdie maand gepubliseer kon word nie. Hierdie briewe sal egter in die Februarie-uitgawe van PRO VERITATE verskyn.

# DIE BARMENVERKLARING VAN 1934

Die Barmenverklaring van 1934 het so 'n belangrike en beslissende rol gespeel in die Duitse Kerkstryd van 1934-1945 en omdat telkens daarna verwys is in die artikelreeks oor 'n „Belydende Kerk” in Suid-Afrika, publiseer ons dit hier met die oog op die uitdaging wat dit aan alle Kerke en Christene, ook in Suid-Afrika, stel om in dergelike situasies, met Gods Woord as onfeilbare rigsnoer 'n vrymoedige en onmiskenbare getuie te gee. Dis die eerste maal dat dié belydenisstuk in Afrikaans gepubliseer word en PRO VERITATE ag homself bevoorreg om hierdie diens aan alle Afrikaanse lesers te lewer.

\* \* \*

Die Duitse Evangeliese Kerk is volgens die inleidingswoorde van sy konstitusie van 11 Julie 1933 'n bond van gelykberegtigde, naas mekaar staande belydeniskerke wat uit die Reformasie voortgekom het. Die teologiese voorwaarde vir die vereniging van hierdie kerke word aangedui in art. 1 en art. 2, 1 van die konstitusie van die Duitse Evangeliese Kerk wat op 14 Julie 1933 deur die Ryksregering erken is.

Art. 1: Die onaantasbare grondslag van die Duitse Evangeliese Kerk is die Evangelie van Jesus Christus soos dit in die Heilige Skrif betuig word en soos dit in die belydenisse van die Reformasie opnuut aan die lig gekom het. Hierdeur word die volmagte wat die kerk vir sy sending nodig het, bepaal en begrens.

Art. 2, 1: Die Duitse Evangeliese Kerk bestaan uit kerke (territoriale kerke).

Ons wat in 'n belydenis-sinode van die Duitse Evangeliese Kerk verenig is uit verteenwoordigers van Lutherse, Gereformeerde en Verenigde Kerke, vrye sinodes, KIRCHENTAGE en plaaslike kerkgroepe, verklaar dat ons gemeenskaplik staan op die bodem van die Duitse Evangeliese Kerk as 'n bond van Duitse belydeniskerke. Ons is saamgevoeg deur die belydenis van die een Here van die een, heilige, algemene en apostoliese Kerk.

Ons verklaar openlik voor alle evangeliese kerke in Duitsland, dat die gemeenskaplikheid van hierdie belydenis en daarmee ook die eenheid van die Duitse Evangeliese Kerk in die grootste gevaar verkeer. Dit word bedreig deur die leer- en handelwyse van die Duitse Christene en die kerkregering wat deur hulle beoefen word, wat in die eerste jaar van die bestaan van die Duitse Evangeliese Kerk meer en meer sigbaar geword het. Die bedreiging bestaan daarin dat die teologiese voorwaarde waarin die Duitse Evangeliese Kerke verenig is, sowel deur die leiers en

woordvoerders van die Duitse Christene is deur die Kerkregering, voortdurend en grondig deur vreemde voorwaardes deurkruis word en kragteloos gemaak word. As dit geldig moet wees, hou die kerk op, volgens al die belydenisse wat vir ons gesaghebbend is, om Kerk te wees. As dit moet geld, sal ook die bestaan van die Duitse Evangeliese Kerk as 'n bond van belydeniskerke onmoontlik wees.

Gemeenskaplik mag en moet ons as lede van Lutherse, Gereformeerde en Verenigde Kerke tans oor hierdie saak praat. Juis omdat ons aan ons verskillende belydenisse getrou is en getrou wil bly, mag ons nie swyg nie, omdat ons glo dat ons in 'n tyd van gemeenskaplike nood en aanvegting 'n gemeenskaplike woord in die mond gelê is. Wat dit vir die verhouding van die belydeniskerke onderling mag beteken, vertrou ons aan God toe.

Met die dwalinge van die Duitse Christene en die teenswoordige Ryks-Kerkregering voor oë, wat vir die kerk en daarmee ook vir die eenheid van die Duitse Evangeliese Kerk verwoestend is, bely ons die volgende Evangeliese waarhede:

1. „**Ek is die weg en die waarheid en die lewe; niemand kom na die Vader behalwe deur My nie.**” (Joh. 14:6).

„**Voorwaar, voorwaar Ek sê vir julle wie nie by die deur in die skaapstal ingaan nie, maar van 'n ander kant af inklim, hy is 'n dief en 'n rower. Ek is die deur, as iemand deur My ingaan, sal gered word.**” (Joh. 10:1, 9).

JESUS CHRISTUS, SOOS HY AAN ONS IN DIE HEILIGE SKKRIF BETUIG WORD, IS DIE EEN WOORD VAN GOD WAT ONS MOET HOOR, WAT ONS IN LEWE EN STERWE MOET VERTROU EN WAT ONS MOET GEHOORSAAM.

Ons verwerp die valse leer as sou die Kerk as bron van sy verkondiging buiten en naas hierdie een

Woord van God ook nog ander gebeurtenisse en magte, gestaltes en waarhede as Gods openbaring kan en moet erken.

2. „**Christus Jesus, wat vir ons geword het wysheid uit God en geregtigheid en heiligmaking en verlossing**” (1 Kor. 1:30).

SOOS JESUS CHRISTUS GODS TOESEGGING VAN AL ONS SONDES IS, SO EN MET DIESELFDE ERNS IS HY OOK GOD SE KRAGTIGE AANSPRAAK OP ONS GANSE LEWE; DEUR HOM WEDERVAAR ONS VREUGDEVOLLE BEVRYDING UIT DIE GODDELOSE GEBONDENHEDE VAN HIERDIE WÊRELD TOT VRYE, DANKBARE DIENS AAN SY SKEPSELS.

Ons verwerp die valse leer as sou daar gebiede van ons lewe wees waar ons nie die eiendom van Jesus Christus nie, maar dié van ander here is, gebiede waar ons nie die regverdiging en die heiliging deur Hom nodig het nie.

3. „**Maar, terwyl ons in liefde die waarheid betrag, in alles sou opgroei in Hom wat die Hoof is, naamlik Christus, uit wie die hele liggaam goed saamgevoeg is**” (Ef. 4: 15-16).

DIE CHRISTELIKE KERK IS DIE GEMEENTE VAN BROEDERS, ONDER WIE JESUS CHRISTUS IN WOORD EN SAKRAMENT DEUR DIE HEILIGE GEES AS DIE TEENWOORDIGE HEER HANDEL. HY (DIE KERK) MOET MET SY GELOOF SOWEL AS MET SY GEHOORSAAMHEID, MET SY BOODSKAP SOWEL AS MET SY ORDENING, TE MIDDE VAN DIE WÊRELD VAN DIE SONDE AS KERK VAN BEGENADIGDE SONDAARS BETUIG DAT HULLE ALLEEN SY EIENDOM IS, ALLEEN VAN SY TROOS EN SY VERMANING IN DIE VERWAGTING VAN SY VERSKYNING LEEF EN WIL LEWE.

Ons verwerp die valse leer as sou die Kerk die vorm van sy boodskap en van sy ordening mag oorlaat aan sy eie willekeur of aan die wisseling van die van tyd tot tyd heersende wêreldbeskoulike en politieke oortuigings.

4. „**Julle weet dat die owerstes van die nasies oor hulle heers en die groot manne oor hulle gesag uitoefen; maar so moet dit onder julle**

(Vervolg op bladsy 10)

# DIE KERK BUIITE SUID-AFRIKA

## VATIKAANSE KONSILIE

PROF. B. B. KEET

As waarnemer by die tweede Vatikaanse Konsilie deel Dr. Robert McAfee Brown van die Presbiteriaanse Kerk in Amerika, in *Presbyterian Life*, sy bevindinge mee onder die hoof: **REVIEWS AND PROSPECT**. Om die belangrikheid daarvan, deel ons die hoofinhoud mee.

Hy begin met 'n terugblik op die ontstaan van die Konsilie. In Januarie 1959 het Pous Johannes XXIII sluit om 'n Konsilie van die Rooms-Katolieke kerk, bestaande uit al die biskoppe en hoofde van religieuse ordes, byeen te roep ten einde, soos dit uitgedruk word, die Rooms-Katolieke Kerk tot op datum te bring (*aggiornamento*). Sedert 1870 was daar geen Konsilie van dergelyke aard nie, en vóór dié tyd het die Konsilie van Trente as teenvoeter van die Protestantse Reformasie in die 16de eeu vergader. In Desember 1965 het die tweede Vatikaanse Konsilie van Pous Johannes sy werk deur Pous Paulus VI voltooi. Die meer as 2,200 biskoppe wat elke weksdag gedurende drie agtereenvolgende najaarsittinge vergader het, het hul laaste toespraak aangehoor, hul laaste stem uitgebring en hul laaste dokument as lede van Vatikaanse Konsilie II, uitgevaardig. Die vraag is: hoeveel is deur die Konsilie tot stand gebring?

Op hierdie vraag kan nog geen besliste antwoord gegee word nie, want selfs ná die laaste sitting sal dit nog jare duur voordat die trefkrag daarvan vasgestel kan word. Tog is dit moontlik om voorlopig, nog voor die vierde en finale sessie, enkele dinge te konstateer. Die Konsilie het reeds tasbare en ontasbare winste opgelewer. Die tyd alleen sal aantoon watter die vernaamste sal wees, maar albei is van betekenis.

Tot sover is daar drie tasbare prestasies. Die eerste het te doen met die Liturgie, wat natuurlik vir die Roomse alleen van belang is, maar tog uitgebreide implikasies vir alle Christene meebring.

Die dokument oor hierdie aangeleentheid vertoon 'n verbasende aanpassing van iets wat sentraal is in die Rooms-Katolieke lewe — die heilige Mis. Groot gedeeltes van die Mis word nou in die taal van die gemeente voorgedra en nie in Latyn nie, wat vyftien-honderd jaar lank die heersende taal van die Kerk was. Dat Rooms-Katolieke nou aanbid in

die taal wat hulle verstaan, is vanself geen klein heroorsiening nie. Dit bring hul liturgie in nouer verband met die lewe en dit maak deelname van ander Christene sinvoller.

Nog belangriker as die gebruik van die moedertaal is, dat groter vryheid van deelname aan die Mis vir die gewone volk geskep word. Dit is nou duidelik dat die Mis nie iets is wat die priester ten behoeve van die leek verrig nie, maar iets wat die gelowiges saam doen. Die rol wat die gemeente speel, is nie die van toeskouers nie, maar van deelnemers. Vrug van hierdie hervorming sal 'n radikaal nuwe begrip van die Kerk as volk van God wees en nie as bestaande uit priesters alleen nie. Die tweede belangrike vrug is die verklaring oor die Kerk. In ooreenstemming met die nuwe opvatting van die liturgie, verklaar die dokument dat die Kerk basies die volk van God is, die hele volk van God onder wie die hierargie sy plek inneem, in teenstelling met die ou opvatting dat die Kerk basies deur die hierargie verteenwoordig word. Dit beklemtoon die priesterskap van alle gelowiges en verduidelik dat die doop self 'n soort ordening tot die priesterskap is. Hierdie standpunt open die weg tot nuwe rigtings in die Rooms-Katolieke leer van die Kerk.

Nog belangriker is die kerklike ontwikkeling van wat genoem word die „kollegialiteit van die biskoppe”. Dit beteken dat die Pous se biskop van Rome saam met al die ander biskoppe as 'n kollegium oor die kerke regeer. Die Pous is hoof van die kollegium en sonder hom kan hulle nie optree nie, maar hy word beskou as iemand wat in sy optree nie op eie houtjie handel nie, maar as hoof van die kollegium, saam met die ander biskoppe in wie se naam hy praat. Hierdie toegewing word met versigtigheid gemaak met 'n verklarende nota dat niks van die pouslike gesag weggeneem word nie; tog kan dit op die duur 'n radikale verandering in die samestelling van die Roomse Kerk teweegbring.

Die derde tasbare prestasie is die

besluit oor ekumenisme. In sy ondersoek oor die verhouding van die Rooms-Katolieke Kerk tot ander Kerke en kerklike gemeenskappe, word drie dinge genoem. Ten eerste word aan ander kerklike liggame die status van „Kerke en kerklike gemeenskappe” toegeken. In vroeër tye is Protestantse groepe nooit as Kerke aangedui nie. Dit kon nog toegegee word dat individuele nie-Katolieke ook ware Christene kon wees; nou word erken dat hulle status as Christene hulle toekom vanweë en nie ten spyte van hul lidmaatskap van Christelike Kerke nie. Almal wat gedoop is, word daardeur in die liggaam van Christus opgeneem en is in sekere sin reeds lede van die Kerk van Christus. Daarom word nie-Katolieke beskrywe as geskeide broeders liewer as skeurmakers en kettters. Tweedens word openlik erken dat die Rooms-Katolieke Kerk mede-verantwoordelik is vir die verdeeldheid onder Christene en dring by sy lede aan om die vergifnis van God en van hul broeders te soek vir hul sonde teen die eenheid. Vroeër was die houding van die Kerk dat al die skuld van skeiding aan die Protestantse kant geleë was en dat hereniging alleen kon geskied deurdat Protestante hul dwaling bely en na Rome terugkeer. Nou word dit ingesien dat albei kante in verootmoediging mekaar moet soek. Derdens word aanbevelinge vir ekumeniese aktiwiteit gedoen, soos gemeenskaplike samespraak, 'n mate van gemeenskaplike aanbidding, gesamentlike aksie op maatskaplike gebied en ander stappe wat Protestante en Katolieke saam kan onderneem.

By hierdie tasbare resultate moet nog die ontasbare gereken word, die belangrikste waarvan is, dat die deure van die Kerk, volgens die begeerte van Pous Johannes opgemaak is om 'n frisse lug deur die heiligdom te laat waai. Op hulle wat verwag het dat die Konsilie niks anders as 'n rubberstempel van die Pous sou wees nie, het die opreg eerlike debat en die kragtige uiting van uiteenlopende gesigspunte binne die Konsilie, 'n diepe indruk gemaak. Die idee van die Roomse Kerk as 'n reusag-

(Vervolg op bladsy 10)



# CHRISTELIKE VRYMANSKAP — LIBERALISME?

DR. W. BRUCKNER DE VILLIERS

## „IN CHRISTUS”

Deesdae word beskuldigings van „humanisme”, „liberalisme” en mees verdoemend nog, „kommunisme” kwistiglik rondgeslinger deur die meer demagogiese verteenwoordigers van die sg. „behoudende” element in ons Afrikaans-Hollandse kerke teen wie ook al met die beste wil in die wêreld nie kans sien om in alles met hul saam te stem en blindelings te „konformeer” nie.

Vanwaar die skielike populariteit van veral die massa-opsweepende mode - vloekwoord „liberalisme” waarmee almal onder die knuppel gebring word wat nie onvoorwaardelik goedkeuring heg aan die sg. „algemeen aanvaarde tradisies” van volk en kerk nie? Vanwaar die botte veroordeling van alles wat blyke gee van selfs ’n sweem van „liberalisme”? Waaruit bestaan dié liberalisme wat skielik allerweë as die grootste van alle volksgevaare totnogtoe bestempel word?

Die woord „liberalisme” word natuurlik afgelei van die Latynse wortel „liber”, d.w.s. „vry”, en dié se verdere derivaat „liberus” oftewel „vryman”. Dit kan nie ontken word nie dat soos die liberalisme soms in die geskiedenis van die politiek en die teologie tot openbaring gekom het, daar ook sterk afwykings was van die Christelike geloof soos dit in die Christelike lewe gestalte wil kry. Die grondbetekenis van die woord is egter niks meer nie as ’n aanduiding van ’n gedagterigting wat die nastrewe van vryheid voorstaan. En is vryheid dan nie die toestand waarin en waartoe God die mens geskep het toe Hy hom „na Sy beeld” geskape het nie? Vanweë ’n sekere ongunstige historiese belastheid van die woord is dit nie altyd gerade om hierdie Godgegewe vryheid van die mens as „liberalisme” aan te dui nie. Waar dit in hierdie artikel tog wel argeloos geskied, is dit enkel toe te skryf aan die argelose wyse waarop die woord rondgeslinger word om as anathema ook mense te tref wat slegs die Godgegewe vryheid glo en verkondig.

## VERSIGTIG

Die diepste sin van die menslikheid is juis geleë in die menslike **vryheid**, wat op sy beurt weer die wesenlike voorveronderstelling is vir die menslike **verantwoordelikheid**. **Dit is egter nodig om daarop te wys dat ons, vanuit die Christelike ge-**

**loof gesien, uiters versigtig moet omgaan met uitdrukkings soos „die ingebore vryheidsin”, „die natuurlike vryheidsdrang”, „die onkeerbare vryheidstrewe” van die mens.** Want deur die sondeval het die mens al sy oorspronklike Godgegewe vryheid verbeur en verstrik geraak in die bande van die bose. Hy het ’n slaaf van die satan geword en deur die sonde is sy eertydse vryheid vervorm tot ’n karikatuuragtige skynvryheid wat eintlik niks anders is as die grootste gebondenheid nie. Deur die mense se vrye keuse — kragtens sy oorspronklike vryheid, deur God aan hom toebedeel — van die sonde as lewenspatroon het sy natuurlike vryheidstrewe, sy „liberalisme”, ontvaard tot die grofste libertinisme: tot die botviering van alles wat selfsugtig en boos is in die mens, onder die vaandel van ’n gewaande „vryheid” wat slegs ’n simptoem van sy daadwerklike gebondenheid aan die sonde was.

Met die menslike vryheid sou dit, deur die sonde, gaan soos met die goddelik-verordende verhouding tussen man en vrou: juis op hierdie vlakke waarop die mens nie alleen geroepe is nie, maar ook daartoe in staat gestel is om op te styg tot ’n staat „weinig laer as dié van die engele”, sou hy ook, as gevolg van die sondeval, telkens weer daal tot die peil van die subdierlike en in die moeras van sy eie menslikheidsverwording versink.

**Die bestormers en veroordelaars van die sg. „liberalisme” het dus ongetwyfeld iets beet; want daar moet gedurigdeur gewaak word teen ’n sondige misbruik van die vryheid as ’n slagspreuk en as a tipies sataniese camouflaasje vir die bevordering van selfsugtige eiebelang en seksionele magstrewe.** In die naam van die sg. „vryheid” en onder die vaandel van die sg. „liberalisme” het die satan reeds baie van sy bose doelwitte onder mense bereik.

Maar dan mag daar daren ook nie vergeet word nie dat dit slegs die helfte van die hele storie is. Alle vryheidstrewe is nie uit die bose nie. Die oorspronklike vryheid wat deur God aan die mens gegee is, het uiteindelik (genadiglik) geblyk tog nie onherroeplik verbeur te wees nie. In Christus het daar ’n algehele herskepping van die gelowige mens plaasgevind en deur Sy verdienste het daar ’n nuwe, onvernietigbare menslike vryheid tot stand gekom, die vryheid in Christus, wat niks meer in die gemeen het met die skynvryheid van die sonde nie, maar wat aan die verlose Christene gegee is om daagliks tot eer van God te gebruik en ten alle koste te handhaaf.

En om hierdie egte vryheidsdrang, hierdie verskyningsvorm van die ware godsdienstige liberalisme blindweg te veroordeel, as sou dit ’n volksgevaarlike vorm van sondige libertinisme wees, is sekerlik net so verdoemlik as die bevordering van die belange van die Bose in naam van ’n menslike vryheid wat slegs die skynvryheid van die sonde is. **En om dan nog verder te gaan en mede-Christene — erfgename van die vryheid in Christus — deur ’n slinkse en wesenlik onlogiese omkeringsproses te veroordeel vanweë hul „liberalisme”, as sou dit ’n soort geestesmelaatsheid wees, is nog meer verdoemlik, nie alleen omdat dit klaarblyklik berus op ’n moedswillige poging om die teologies ongeskoolde massa doelbewus te mislei nie, maar ook omdat ’n sodanige optrede in direkte teenstryd staan met die goddelike openbaring omtrent die vryheid in Christus en die vryheid wat daar in Hom gevind kan word — dié vorm van Christelike „liberalisme” waartoe die mens inderdaad en onontwykbaar geroepe is.**

Is dit nie dalk vir die anti-liberalistiese alarmkreeuers — soos inderdaad vir almal van ons — nodig om weer ’n slag ernstig te begin nadenk oor die verkondiging van Paulus nie: in Christus het ek en elkeen van my medegelowiges ’n „vryman” geword, ’n **liberus**, ’n geroepe verteenwoordiger van die egte Christelike „liberalisme”. Maar die wese  
(Vervolg op bladsy 10)

## Die Barmen- verklaring van 1934

(*Vervolg van bladsy 7*)

nie wees nie; maar elkeen wat onder julle groot wil word, moet julle die-naar wees" (Mat. 20: 25-26).

DIE VERSKILLENDE AMPTE IN DIE KERK IS NIE DAAR SODAT DIE EEN OOR DIE ANDER SAL HEERS NIE, MAAR SODAT DIE DIENS WAT AAN DIE HELE GEMEENTE TOEVERTROU EN OPGEDRA IS, UITGEOEFEN SAL WORD.

Ons verwerp die valse leer as sou die kerk vir hom, apart van hierdie diens, leiers kan en mag beskik of laat beskik wat met magsbevoegd-hede bekleed is.

5. „Julle moet God vrees, die koning eer." (1 Petr. 2:17).

DIE SKRIF SÊ AAN ONS DAT DIE STAAT VOLGENS GODDE-LIKE REËLING DIE TAAK HET OM IN DIE NOG NIE VERLOSTE WÊRELD, WAARIN OOK DIE KERK STAAN, NA DIE MATE VAN MENSLIKE INSIG EN MENSLIKE VERMOË, MET BEDREIGING EN MET UITOEFENING VAN GEWELD, VIR REG EN VREDE TE SORG. DIE KERK ERKEN, DANKBAAR EN EER-BIEDIG TEENoor GOD, DIE WELDAAD VAN HIERDIE REËLING VAN HOM. DIT HERINNER AAN GODS RYK, AAN GODS GEBOD EN GEREG-TIGHEID, EN DAARMEE AAN DIE VERANTWOORDELIKHEID VAN REGEERDERS EN GERE-GEERDES. DIT VERTROU EN GEHOORSAAM DIE KRAG VAN DIE WOORD WAARDEUR GOD ALLE DINGE DRA.

Ons verwerp die valse leer as sou die Staat bo sy besondere opdrag uit die enigste en totale ordening van die menslike lewe moet en kan word en so ook dit wat vir die Kerk bepaal is, vervul. Ons verwerp die valse leer as sou die Kerk, bo sy besondere opdrag uit, vir hom die karakter van die staat, die pligte van die staat en die waardigheid van die Staat moet en kan toeëien, en daarmee self 'n orgaan van die staat word.

6. „Kyk, Ek is met julle al die dae tot aan die voleinding van die wê-reld" (Mat. 28:20).

„Die Woord van God is nie ge-bonde nie." (2 Tim. 2:9).

DIE OPDRAG VAN DIE KERK, WAARIN SY VRYHEID GEGROND IS, BESTAAN DAAR-IN DAT HY, IN DIE PLEK VAN CHRISTUS EN DUS IN DIE DIENS VAN SY EIE WOORD EN WERK, DEUR PREDIKING EN SAKRAMENT DIE BOODSKAP VAN DIE VRYE GENADE VAN GOD RIG AAN DIE HELE VOLK.

Ons verwerp die valse leer as sou die Kerk in menslike soewereiniteit die Woord en werk van die Here in diens kon stel van watter eimagtig gekose wense, doeleindes en planne ook al. Die belydenis-sinode van die Duitse Evangeliese Kerk verklaar dat hy in die erkenning van hierdie waarhede en in die verwerping van hierdie dwalinge sien die onontwyk-bare grondslae van die Duitse Evangeliese Kerk as 'n bond van belydeniskerke. Hy roep almal op wat hulle by sy verklaring kan aansluit om in hulle kerkpolitiese beslissinge hierdie teologiese uitsprake in gedagte te hou. Hy versoek almal vir wie dit mag aangaan om tot die eenheid van die geloof en van die liefde en van ons hoop terug te keer.

**Verbum Dei manet in aeternum.**

## Die Kerk buite Suid-Afrika

(*Vervolg van bladsy 8*)

tige beeld uit een stuk gekap, waarin alle mense eenders dink, is doeltreffend vernietig. Ook het dit duidelik geblyk dat die Kerk, sowel wat sy verlede as sy hede betref, aan self-kritiek onderworpe is. Alle kontroversiële vraagstukke wat, na verwagting, ligtelik aangeraak sou word, het openlik aanleiding gegee tot lewendige debatte — die Indeks, die sonde van geestelikes, skandale van die heilige amp, die Inkwisisie, gemengde huwelike, geboortebeperring en dergelike, is op die lappe gebring. Die derde sitting het selfs die skouspel opgelewer, dat die Pous 'n dokument aan die Konsilie-lede vir hulle goedkeuring voorgelê het en dat hulle dit verwerp het. So-iets sou vyf jaar gelede ondenkbaar gewees het. Na eeue van ernstige agterdog teen nuwe gedagtes het die Rooms-Katolieke plotseling tot die ontdekking gekom dat eerlike debat en meningsverskil tot nuwe begrip van die waarheid kan lei. Dié wins is onberekkenbaar groot.

McAfee Brown sluit sy artikel met die volgende woorde: „Die Rooms-Katolieke Kerk staan voor 'n kritieke moment in sy geskiedenis. Dit kan voortgaan na 'n periode van ongekende skeppingskrag of dit kan slegs gedeeltelik bevry word van die bekende, uitgetrapte en verbeeldinglose weë van die 19e eeu. Pous Paulus VI, meer as iemand anders op aarde, sal die rigting aanwys wat sy Kerk sal inslaan. Selde het enige persoon die behoefte aan die voorbidding van alle Christene so nodig gehad as hy."

## Christelike Vrymanskap — Liberalisme?

(*Vervolg van bladsy 9*)

van my vrymanskap bestaan juis — en dit is die diepe geheimenis, die wonderbaarlike verdieping wat die geloof in Christus aan die ware menslike vryheid verleen — in my slawerny t.o.v. Christus en my diensbaarheid teenoor my naaste; terwyl dit, omgekeerd, juis in dié diensbaarheid is dat ek uiteindelik die volmaakte „vryheid in Christus" vind, nl. bevryding van die selfsugsbande van die sonde en die Godbedoelde vervulling van my geskiedenis as mens, die ware **imago dei**.

### NORM EN SKEIDSLYN

My skyn dit of dit in hierdie Skrif-waarheid is dat die norm gesoek moet word; dat dit die skeidslyn aandui tussen die ware en die valse vryheid, tussen die egte, Christus-geïnspireerde liberalisme en die aanvegbare libertinisme, veral op geestelike vlak.

En as dié skeidslyn, dié streng skriftuurlike norm toegepas word, skyn dit my verder of diegene wat in ons tyd so smalend en veroordelend as „liberaliste" uitgekryt word, tog darem iets van die werklike vryheid in Christus beet het vir sover hulle, volgens die lig wat hulle ontvang het, streef na 'n selfdiensbaarmaking veral teenoor die eenvoudigstes, die minderbevoorregtes en dikwels die veragtes onder hul medemense; terwyl juis diegene wat as selfaangestelde „wagters op Sions mure" so luidrugtig besig is om die uitkrytwerk te doen, so verslaaf geraak het deur die mag van hul eiegeregtigheid dat hulle die vryheid van diensbaarheid teenoor Christus en sy „geringes", die onaansienlikes onder hul medemense, in 'n groot mate uit die oog skyn te verloor het.

## 'n Belydenis vir ons eie Tyd

(Vervolg van bladsy 4)

mensheid vir eens en altyd verwerklik". Verder, „Hy het die liefde van God in woord en daad uitgebeeld en het vir alle soorte sondige mense soos 'n broer geword. Maar sy volkome gehoorsaamheid het hom in botsing gebring met sy mense." Die belydenis gaan verder: „Hulle wat in die geloof aan Hom verbind is, is in 'n regte verband met God gestel en kry opdrag om as sy versoende gemeenskap te dien."

In die eerste deel van die belydenis word daar ook oor die sonde van die mens gehandel. „In sonde eis die mens meestersreg oor sy eie lewe, en word hy 'n uitbouter en plunderaar van die wêreld. Hy verloor sy mensheid in 'n ydele wedywering en word in rebellie, wanhoop en afsondering gelaat."

In die tweede onderafdeling van die eerste deel word oor die liefde van God gehandel. „Hy het die mens met bevoegdheid toegerus om die wêreld aan sy behoeftes diensbaar te maak en die goeie daarvan te geniet. Die lewe is 'n gawe wat met dankbaarheid ontvang moet word en 'n taak wat met moed vervul moet word."

In die derde onderafdeling word die Gemeenskap van die Heilige Gees behandel. „Die lede van die kerk is afgesante van vrede en streef na die welsyn van alle mense in samewerking met magte en owerhede in die politiek, kultuur en ekonomie. Maar hulle moet stry teen pretensies en onreg wanneer dié owerhede die welvaart van mense in gevaar stel." In hierdie selfde afdeling formuleer die belydenis opnuut die betekenis en plek van die Bybel in die Christelike gemeenskap. „Die een genoegsame openbaring van God is Jesus Christus, die vleesgeworde Woord van God, van wie die Heilige Gees op baie maniere getuig. Die kerk het die Ou en Nuwe Testamente ontvang as die normatiewe getuienis van hierdie openbaring, en het dit as Heilige Skrif erken". „Gods Woord word vandag tot sy kerk gespreek waar die Skrif getrou verkondig en met aandag gelees word in afhanklikheid van

die leiding van die Heilige Gees en met bereidheid om die Skrif se waarheid en leiding te ontvang."

Die tweede hoofdeel van die belydenisskrif is van die opskrif „Die Bediening van die Versoening" voorsien, en handel oor die roeping van die kerk en die kerk se toerusting. „Die kerk gaan uit om God te dien waar sy lidmate ookal is, in arbeid en spel, in die private of in die gemeenskaplike lewe. Elke lidmaat is 'n afgevaardigde van die kerk, toegerus deur die Heilige Gees met een of ander gawe van bediening en is verantwoordelik vir die egtheid van sy getuienis in sy eie besondere situasie."

Die belydenis vervolg: „In elke tyd en op elke plek is daar besondere probleme en krisisse wat die kerk tot aksie oproep." Dan word die belangrikste en dringendste vraagstukke van die teenswoordige Amerikaanse samelewing genoem. Die eerste wat genoem word, is diskriminasie. „Die kerk as die gemeenskap van die versoening word opgeroep om alle mense daartoe te bring om mekaar aan te neem as persone wat die lewe op elke vlak met mekaar deel in arbeid en spel, hofmakery, huwelik en familie, kerk en staat. Gemeentes, individue en groepe Christene wat hulle medemenslike uitsluit, oorheers of neerbuigend behandel, hoe subtiel ook al, weerstaan die Gees van God en verwerp die geloof wat hulle bely." Tweedens word die stryd tussen die volkere genoem. „Die kerk is geroepe om die vergewing van vyande in sy eie lewe te beoefen, en om as praktiese politiek vir die volk aan te beveel dat daar na samewerking en vrede gestreef sal word."

„Wanneer die kerk toelaat dat een besondere nasionale owerheid of 'n enkele lewensbeskouing met die saak van God vereenselwig word, dan verloën hy Christus die Here en verrai sy roeping". Derdens noem die belydenis armoede. „Die kerk kan armoede nie goedkeur nie, of dit nou aan 'n onregverdige maatskaplike struktuur toegeskryf moet word, aan uitbuiting van weerlose mense, aan gebrek aan nasionale middele, aan die afwesigheid van tegnologiese kennis, of aan 'n snelle bevolkingsaanwas." „'n Kerk wat onverskillig staan teenoor armoede, of wat sy verantwoordelikheid in ekonomiese

aangeleenthede ontken, of wat alleen oopstaan vir een sosiale groep, of wat dankbaarheid vir sy barmhartigheid verwag, maak 'n bespotting van die versoening en sy diens is nie vir God aanneemlik nie."

Die derde hoofafdeling van die belydenis dra die opskrif „Die Verwesening van Versoening." „God se versoeningwerk in Jesus Christus omvat die hele lewe van die mens, maatskaplik en kultureel, ekonomies en politiek, persoonlik en individueel."

### DIE BETEKENIS VAN DIE AMERIKAANSE BELYDENIS

Dit is dadelik by die lees van die belydenis duidelik dat die tradisionele leerstellings wat reeds in vroeëre belydenisse behandel is, veronderstel word. Dus maak die belydenis geen melding van die Drie-eenheidsleer of maagdelike geboorte nie. Die belydenis konstateer in 'n moderne woordeskat wat versoening in die daaglikse lewe van die twintigste eeu beteken. Die leser word gekonfronteer met hedendaagse probleme — die rasseprobleem, armoede, internasionale stryde, ekonomiese vraagstukke — en word daarop gewys dat hierdie dinge op die gebied van Christelike diens en getuienis lê.

Die belydenis word ook gekenmerk deur die afwesigheid van Bybelse aanhalings. Die belydenis skep eerder die indruk dat dit die hele Bybel as grondslag neem, nie net 'n paar proeftekste nie. Die Bybel word nie as 'n versameling tekste beskou nie, maar as 'n geheel, en as so 'n geheel die getuie van die Woord van God.

Voordat die „Confession of 1967" deur die „Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A." aangeneem kan word, moet dit eers gestuur word na die 193 „Presbyteries" of sinodes vir hulle goedkeuring. Die volgende twee algemene vergaderings van die kerk moet elk ook met minstens 'n twee-derde meerderheid van stemme goedkeuring verleen aan die belydenis. Of aan die belydenis veel verander sal word, kan ons nie sê nie. Een ding is egter duidelik: die Amerikaanse Presbiteriaanse kerk se getuienis sal sterker wees, en dit sal betrekking hê op die samelewing waarin die kerk hom nou bevind.

(Vervolg op bladsy 12)

## 'n Belydenis vir ons eie Tyd

(Vervolg van bladsy 11)

### 'N SUID-AFRIKAANSE BELYDENIS?

Suid-Afrika en Amerika bevind hulle in 'n baie soortgelyke posisie. Albei is betreklik nuwe lande. Die vestiging van die Westerse beskawing en die kerk het in albei na die Reformasie plaasgevind. Albei lande onderskryf belydenisse wat deur ander kerke, in ander lande en in ander tydperke opgestel is.

Die Presbiteriaanse kerk in Suid-Afrika, byvoorbeeld, onderskryf die Westminster Konfessie. Hierdie belydenis het tevoorskyn gekom in 'n tydperk van skolastiese teologie, van besorgdheid oor outoriteit en politieke absolutisme. Maar die tydperk van klassieke en Christelike kultuur waarin die outeurs tuis was, is nou vinnig besig om verby te gaan, ook in Suid-Afrika. Die Afrikaanssprekende kerke kan ook as voorbeeld dien. Hulle bely die Nederlandse Geloofsbelijdenis, die Heidelbergse Kategismus en die Dordtse Leerreëls. Hierdie stukke is onderskeidelik in 1561, 1563 en 1619 opgestel. Terwyl al drie stukke doeltreffend was, en nog steeds waardevol is, kan hulle nie meer doeltreffend tot ons moderne probleme spreek nie. Ander kerke in Suid-Afrika bevind hulle in soortgelyke posisies.

Terwyl van Suid-Afrika se probleme met dié van Amerika vergelyk kan word, is daar ander wat eie aan Suid-Afrika is. Gelowiges in Suid-Afrika weet nie altyd hoe hulle Christelike geloof in die alledaagse lewe toegepas moet word nie. As die kerke in Suid-Afrika 'n belydenis opstel, met ons eie probleme in die oog, en weer opnuut die Bybelse waarhede in ons eie idioom uitdruk, sal dit baie daartoe bydra om ons maatskaplike en nasionale lewe weer op 'n ware Christelike vlak te plaas. Suid-Afrikaanse kerke, onderhewig aan die norme van 'n belydenis opgestel in die Suid-Afrikaanse situasie, sal ware belydende kerke kan wees, kerke wat God se geregtig-

heid en waarheid in alle lewensverhoudinge en op alle lewens-terreine sal bely.

Suid-Afrika het 'n groot behoefte daaraan om die waarheid van Gods Woord te hoor soos dit bely wil word met betrekking tot ons rasseprobleem, ons ekonomiese stelsel, ons salarisse en toelae,

ons werksure, ons eerlikheid in besigheid, ons kultuur, ens. Ons moet weereens hoor wat Christelike vergifnis, nederigheid, samewerking, broederliefde en die samelewing van mense in ons eie gemeenskap beteken. 'n Eie Suid-Afrikaanse belydenis kan baie daartoe help.

# LETTERS / BRIEWE

## WIL GESPREK VOORTSIT

Ds. N. van Loggerenberg, Posbus 346,  
Benoni.

Ek het met waardering kennis geneem van die feit dat die redaksie nou die oënskynlik inperking van die ope gesprek in 'n voetnoot, na aanleiding van mnr. Van Staden se skrywe in die November-uitgawe, weer reggestel het en ek bied graag die volgende aan:

Ek was en is steeds werklik begerig om die Christelike gesprek met mnr. Naudé voort te sit, mits die redaksie my dit toelaat en 'n billike geleentheid bied, maar dan moet dit 'n tweespraak bly. Dit sou billik wees teenoor Pro Veritate en myself, want dit is onmoontlik om aan drie gespreksfronte, mnr. Naudé, die redaksie en ds. Kuiper, gelyktydig te spreek. Ek is bereid om dit skriftelik of per openbare optrede te doen, mits die voorwaardes billik en in belang van die WAARHEID is. Dit kan ek egter nie van mnr. Naudé se twee artikels, die „voorlopige” redaksionele opmerkings en ds. Kuiper se skrywe sê nie. Ek vra dus 'n geleentheid om op die omstrede opmerkinge van die redaksie en die willekeurige en uiters onoortuigende twee artikels van mnr. Naudé of per openbare debat of deur middel van Pro Veritate te mag antwoord.

Ek wil ds. Kuiper egter verseker dat ek sy beoordeling van my artikel hoegenaamd nie vrees nie. My weergawe van mnr. Naudé se oorspronklike artikel kan maar op waarheidsgrondslag deur enige deskundige getoets word. Ek ontken dat ek liefdeloos, sonder enige „Christelike barmhartigheid” die persoon van mnr. Naudé aangeval of hom enige dinge in die mond gelê het. My gesprek met en versoek aan 'n lid van die redaksie loënstaf hierdie „Christelike barmhartigheid” van ds. Kuiper en ek verwerp sy wetenskaplike onbeholpenheid om my suiwer en beknopte weergawe van mnr. Naudé se oorspronklike artikel as 'n „karikatuur” te bestempel. Selfs die skrywer van die oorspronklike artikel het nie eers so geoordeel nie. Voorts verwerp ek ook sy inlêkunde om te beweer dat ek „absolute gehoorsaamheid aan kerklike vergaderinge” sou bepleit. Ek versoek hom vriendelik om hierdie stelling gemotiveerd op te helder en ek verseker hom dat my kennis van die

Skrifgenormeerde kerkreg sy oppervlakige inlêkunde nie vrees nie.

(Enigsins verkort. Enige bydrae van ds. Van Loggerenberg wat geskik is vir publikasie, sal ons graag in PRO VERITATE opneem. — Redaksie).

## LET WEL

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

## PRO VERITATE

Verskyn elke 15de van die maand.  
**Korrespondensie en Administrasie:**

Alle briewe vir die redaksie en die administrasie aan:  
Posbus 487, Johannesburg.

### Redaksionele Bestuur:

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Mnr. J. Oglethorpe,  
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### Assistent-redakteur:

Dr. B. Engelbrecht,

### Redakteur:

Ds. C. F. B. Naudé.

### Intekengeld:

Republiek van Suid-Afrika, S.W.A., die Rhodesië en Protektorate:  
R1 per jaar vooruitbetaalbaar.  
Oorsee: R1.50 per jaar vooruitbetaalbaar.

Tjeks en posorders moet uitgemaak word aan „Pro Veritate” (Edms.) Bpk., Posbus 487, Johannesburg.  
Gedruk deur Prompt Drukkers Maatskappy (Edms.) Bpk., Harrisstraat 11, Westgate, Johannesburg.

# DR. J. D. VORSTER AND THE CHRISTIAN INSTITUTE

In our previous edition we published a request to Dr. Vorster to answer for his statement that the Church has unmasked the Christian Institute as a front organisation for the enemies of "our policy". This request was also published in *Die Burger* in the form of a letter. This was followed by a correspondence (with Dr. Vorster) in the columns of *Die Burger*. We wish to mention in deep appreciation the fact that *Die Burger* allowed so much space for this correspondence. The letter which dealt with this matter and which appeared in *Die Burger*, is published here in English.

On the 10th December, 1965 Dr. Vorster replied to our request, as follows:

"Mr. Naudé presented me with the challenge of replying or forever holding my peace, so I am compelled to react to his letter. I do this reluctantly, because a person does not attack a man already floored, but I cannot be so impolite as to refuse to comply with his request.

Allow me to say right at the start that if Mr. Naudé, in his comment that "front organisation" reminds him of Communism, thinks he can land me in a trap, he should think again. Let us get our point of argument clear. I spoke about the Institute as a "front organisation of the enemies of our policy". If I meant anything else I would have said it. I only made this clear statement. I did not even mean that it is a front organisation of any importance. Indeed, we know that the front failed so completely that even some of his friends said that they had never before received such a set-back as precisely through his conduct. And this is one truth from the circle of PRO VERITATE. A person can also understand this when you analyse the questions to which I have to reply.

## UNMASKED

When and where did the DRC unmask the Institute as a front organisation of a political, extra-church, or non-church movement or ideology, is asked. Naturally I never made such a statement, nor did the Church unmask the Institute as a front organisation of a political party, and this because of the plain fact that no political party of status would be so foolish and bankrupt to expect anything from such allies. The Church did, however, unmask the Institute etc. as a "front organisation of the enemies of our policy." This I contended and this was done so thoroughly by the "Breë Moderatuur", the Synodical Commission of the Synod of Southern Transvaal, a number of "Ringe" and Church Circuits, that not only could Mr. Naudé muster no support in the Synod of which he was Moderator, but his few followers one after the other, also left him. Never before have the views of a person who held such high status, been so completely rejected as was the case with him. Or can Mr. Naudé name one church body or any church leader who supports him or who still

stands with him? He is so alone, a person feels sorry for him.

The Church did all this, to give but a few reasons, on the grounds that

- (a) the founding of the Institute and its actions "must lead to an opposition to the racial and ecumenical views of the church", and
- (b) the Institute could "not fruitfully assist the Church, but only cause confusion and hinder the Church in the carrying out of its task."

Mr. Naudé now insinuates in the fourth question that the Church has never investigated the Christian Institute and Pro Veritate.

Let me help Mr. Naudé out of his dream.

## ALL

1. The Church never makes a pronouncement without study and thorough reflection.
2. The Church studied everything which the Institute could make available, and also that which it would have liked to hide.
3. The Church took note of Mr. Naudé's actions against his former companions, and considered them in the light of Christian moral standards.
4. The Church took note of all that he and his henchmen wrote in Pro Veritate and what he said in closed meetings.
5. The Church knows exactly which enemies of our policy he contacted and how they publicised the Institute in the beginning, but later left it aside because they saw that you could not win a derby on a donkey.
6. The Church knows that Mr. Naudé even offered to distribute the infamous report of the British Council of Churches, who wants to incite the world against us.
7. The Church knows how his little circle supports the World Council of Churches and its scholarships to force the Church away from its policy.
8. The Church with complete knowledge rejected the Institute, but treated Mr. Beyers Naudé with fitting compassion, because it knew how strong and cunning the forces are which led him on this disastrous road, and felt sorry that one of her talented sons had become the victim of the enemies of our policy.

Luckily the Church unmasked the front organisation so completely that the attempt to divide and break the Church failed as completely. The study circles because of this were not viable, the closed meetings fruitless, and Pro Veritate found no entrance. They could not divide or tear apart the DRC and could capture no stronghold or following.

May I in closing put a challenge to Mr. Naudé?

1. Can he tell me what bodies in South Africa, except the Institute of Race Relations, NUSAS, the Progressive Party

and Communist groups are in sympathy with his viewpoints? Your friends do reveal a lot!

2. Will Mr. Naudé, for the sake of truth, publish in Pro Veritate a complete balance sheet, specifying the sources of income, mentioning the names of donors?"

On the 20th December, 1965, the Rev. Robert Orr, Chairman of the Board of Management of the Christian Institute of Southern Africa, Mr. J. Griffioen, member of the Board of Directors, Pro Veritate and Dr. B. Engelbrecht, Assistant Editor of Pro Veritate, replied to Dr. Vorster's letter. Their letter appeared in *Die Burger* of that date, as follows:

## QUESTIONS TO DR. VORSTER ABOUT A REPORT

On behalf of the Christian Institute of Southern Africa and the Christian journal Pro Veritate, we wish to express our deep displeasure concerning the way in which Dr. J. D. Vorster replied to certain questions put to him by the management and editorial of Pro Veritate and the Executive Committee of the Christian Institute, particularly about his assertion that the Institute and Pro Veritate have been unmasked by the Church as a "front organisation for the enemies of our policy". Dr. Vorster was not asked to vent his personal grievances against the Director of the Christian Institute and to express his personal prejudices against the Institute and Pro Veritate, but as a responsible official of the DRC to give matter-of-fact answers backed by factual information to clear questions, and in so doing to answer publicly for his assertion that the Church unmasked the Institute and Pro Veritate as something other than what they pretend to be.

## NOT PERSONAL

Although the questions were published in the form of a letter in *Die Burger*, which was signed by Ds. C. F. B. Naudé as Director of the Institute and Editor of Pro Veritate, Ds. Naudé did not write the letter to Dr. Vorster in his personal capacity, but on behalf of the Institute, the Editorial Board and the Management of Pro Veritate. We are surprised that Dr. Vorster did not keep this in reckoning, and we regret that he side-stepped the questions, which were put to him for the sake of the honour and integrity of many Christians in South Africa. We regret on the other hand the unreasonable personalization of the Christian Institute in its Director and of Pro Veritate in its Editor, in both cases Ds. Naudé, against whom a number of unworthy, insulting and disparaging remarks were made, and on the other hand the placing of Dr. Vorster's personal, uncontrolled and irresponsible prejudgement in connection with the Institute and Pro Veritate on the DRC's account, by which the

(Continued on page 14)

# Dr. J. D. Vorster and the Christian Institute

(Continued from page 13)

DRC can only be dishonoured. We wish, however, to make it quite plain that our respect for the Church prohibits us from seeing any link between the DRC and Dr. Vorster's reply. To drive the fact home to Dr. Vorster that he (an anointed of Christ) has not in this case to do with one person (a fellow anointed of Christ) against whom he can arbitrarily pour out all kinds of utterances and personal grudges and then think and pretend that he answered the Institute and Pro Veritate decisively, this letter is co-signed on behalf of the Christian Institute and all its members and on behalf of Pro Veritate and all its supporters, by the Chairman of the Board of Management of the Institute and a member of the Editorial Board of Pro Veritate.

## MEANING

Concerning the contents of Dr. Vorster's letter, we wish to make the following comments:

We were somewhat surprised at Dr. Vorster's dismay because an insinuation was deduced from his expression "front organisation" which he applied to the Institute and Pro Veritate, which, if the insinuation had to be uncovered and given form as a spoken thesis, would necessarily have led to a ban (if it should have been true) on the Institute by the state or to an unconditional apology from Dr. Vorster (seeing that it is untrue). Must we accept that Dr. Vorster was not conscious of what meaning is attached to the phrase "front organisation" everywhere, and that he had no such meaning in mind at all? May we then on grounds of what we, and unquestionably most readers of Die Burger know, give the friendly advice that in future he chooses his words with greater care. The phrase "front organisation" has quite a demarcated and specific meaning in our time. Or does Dr. Vorster perhaps know this as well? Is it really true that he uses such a dangerous phrase as innocently as he pretends? What must we deduce from his first question to Ds. Naudé, after his attempted reply to the Institute and Pro Veritate, where he mentions in one series the Institute of Race Relations, NUSAS, the Progressive Party and Communist groups, and associates the Christian Institute with them? We wish urgently to request Dr. Vorster in his position as servant of the divine Word, that if he wishes to engage the Institute and Pro Veritate in a battle, to do it in an honourable way. From our side we would like to give him the assurance that no one of us has ever had the aim or intention of catching him "in a trap". When Dr. Vorster was requested to answer for his assertion, there was no other intention than that of safeguarding the good name of many Christians in our country against damaging gossip, encouraged and inspired by irresponsible talks and insinuations by even some of the "church leaders", which places these Christians in a category where in all truth they do not belong.

## TRY TO STOP

The only reasonable finding in Dr. Vorster's whole letter is contained in point 1 of his reply: "The Church never makes a pronouncement without study and thorough reflection." Dr. Vorster then takes this as his premise, and in seven incoherent and nonsensical arguments which follow, he pretends that his thesis proves that "the Church" „has however” „soundly”, „completely” „unmasked” the Christian Institute as a "front organisation of the enemies of our policy", „attempting to divide and break the Church."

Before we test this finding of Dr. Vorster — that the Church did not come to this discovery "without study and thorough reflection" — according to the true facts, we must hasten to put a stop to any wrong which Dr. Vorster's irresponsible statement may cause. Neither Dr. Vorster nor we can undo the wrong he caused the Institute and Pro Veritate, who wish to be instruments in the hands of Christ. Only Christ can do this. Let this, however, be said by way of reassuring all members of the Christian Institute and supporters of Pro Veritate and all who are sympathetic to the Institute and the journal, and approve of their evangelical aspirations, but who may, because of the shameless campaign of lies which is being conducted against them, have reservations about or may even be suspicious of both organisations: it is a gross untruth to say that the Christian Institute and Pro Veritate are "fronts" behind which something else shelters. Whoever has seen the "front" of the Institute and Pro Veritate and heard its witness, has seen and heard everything. We have nothing which we need hide — not even our sources of income, as Dr. Vorster insinuates. Dr. Vorster said: "the Church has studied all that the Christian Institute can make available and also that which it would like to hide". Why then Dr. Vorster's enquiry after our sources of income? (On this point there was obviously such a slip in Dr. Vorster's argument that not much remains to be "unmasked" on his side).

Dr. Vorster's thesis that the Church never makes a pronouncement without study and thorough reflection, is the same as that which the Institute and Pro Veritate held when it requested Dr. Vorster to answer for his statement that the Church "unmasked" the Institute and the journal. Dr. Vorster surely knows, as we do, that before the Church even dares to make a responsible pronouncement, reports are submitted to Church governing bodies in which the "study" and "reflection" finds expression. Dr. Vorster's evidence to prove that this enquiry, which somewhere led to a pronouncement, did in fact take place, reminds a person of the Dutch proverb about the extraordinary leaps of a cat in a tight spot. The sevenfold argument which Dr. Vorster puts forward, leads us to put certain questions based on his premise in this point concerning "study and thorough reflection" which also forms our basic premise.

## WHERE?

- (a) Where is a study report presented to any governing church body? On grounds of Dr. Vorster's assurance of study and thorough reflection it should be somewhere?

- (b) Point 3 in Dr. Vorster's letter is obscure and says nothing. It insinuates again. It points to an act of discipline by the Church which would be applied to the person of our honoured Director. Can Dr. Vorster explain and at the same time say how he intends proving the Church's unmasking of the Institute by this?
- (c) To whom does Dr. Vorster refer when he says that the Church has taken note of all that "he and his henchmen" have written in Pro Veritate? How does the formulation of the Church taking cognisance of their writings read, and how did this contribute to the unmasking? We would like to know, because according to our knowledge, no-one who is not a confessing bona fide Christian, has ever written in Pro Veritate.
- (d) In the "unmasking" whom did the Church find to be the "enemies" and what does Dr. Vorster mean when he says "our policy"? Who is the "our" in this case? (There are still further questions on this point. Dr. Vorster commences his statement with "The Church knows . . ." and ends with "because they" (the enemies who in the beginning gave publicity to the Institute) "know you can't win a Derby with a donkey." Does the Church (DRC) know this? In which report is it contained and what is the wording? To us it does not sound like a remark which would come from the lips of a Christian, let alone the possibility of it existing somewhere as a formulation of which "the Church knows".
- (e) In points 6 and 7 we read again: "The Church knows . . ." Dr. Vorster refers to the report of the British Council of Churches, the World Council of Churches and study burseries "to try and force the Church away from its policy". It is becoming more interesting but also more mysterious, and Dr. Vorster could possibly create an obsession with us to know something more about the study and thorough reflection which preceded the unmasking — how does the report read, how do these things fit into the unmasking and where can we obtain information? Can Dr. Vorster help?
- (f) In point 8 "The Church with complete knowledge rejected the Institute, but treated Mr. Beyers Naudé with fitting compassion", a single remark. This is no argument in favour of the unmasking as asserted by Dr. Vorster, and, therefore, not relevant. Also a single question, not to Dr. Vorster, but to the Church whose mouthpiece he pretends to be in his letter: when will the D.R. Church awake to being concerned about the glaring injustice and sorrow done in its midst to one of its most devoted members and earnest servants of Christ — to which Dr. Vorster's letter is the latest contribution?

## IRRESPONSIBLE

In closing, we wish to say that as far as we know, (and surely no-one should know better than we do), no just and thorough enquiry has been made into the Christian Institute and Pro Veritate.

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# Dr. J. D. Vorster and the Christian Institute

(Continued from page 14)

The Synodical Commission of Northern Transvaal has made such a request to the General Synod. A finding of the "Breë Moderatuur" in 1965, referred to by Dr. Vorster, was no pronouncement of the DRC, but a provisional judgment of a Commission of the General Synod (which in this instance acted as an Ecumenical Commission) made shortly after the founding of the Institute and without there having been any preceding "study and thorough reflection".

It is clear that Dr. Vorster could not reply to the questions put to him. As long as he cannot reply or replies in the way he did in *Die Burger* of the 10th December, his assertions that the "Church unmasked the Christian Institute and Pro Veritate as a front organisation of the enemy of our policy" must be written off as the greatest irresponsibility and/or an insolvent presumption of one of the officials of the DRC who in making public his own twisted prejudices, attempts to pose as the mouthpiece of the Church.

To the readers of *Die Burger* who may believe that the study circles of the Institute have not proved to be viable, and that Pro Veritate found no entrance, we wish to make known the truth that the membership of the Institute is increasing and the study circles are thriving — as we hope and pray — to a blessing of the whole Church and Christendom in South Africa, and that Pro Veritate's circulation and number of readers are ever increasing.

Concerning Dr. Vorster's enquiry about our sources of income (but does he not know all about the Institute?), we are not accountable to him. If the Church, however, should decide to investigate the Institute — and for the sake of truth we hope it will happen soon — all reasonable requests for relevant information will be granted, including financial sources.

Dr. Vorster reacted to this letter in *Die Burger* (31.12.65) as follows:

## JUDGEMENT ON INSTITUTE NOT WITHOUT STUDY:

### FACTS WERE WELL KNOWN

The reply of the Institute cum suis is truly comic and tragic. Such a revelation of powerless anger is ludicrous, but it is definitely tragic that a Christian Institute reveals itself in an abusive document. It is an anthology which reaches its climax in the judgment in (d) that I cannot be a Christian. To this I do not reply. The people in the Institute surely know Scripture's condemnation of such a judgment and I will be surprised if in rereading their letter, they do not feel deeply ashamed.

The esteemed writers are angry because I addressed Mr. Naudé and they contend that he did not write in his personal capacity. Did Mr. Naudé not associate himself with this letter? Or are the

writers attempting to withdraw a target from the battle front? This is an old trick of the Institute, Pro Veritate and their leaders to shift the responsibility on to some other partner. This is discernable once more. Thus, I will leave Mr. Naudé alone, and direct my reply to the official bodies of the front organisation.

### KNOWLEDGE

1. They think I was dismayed about their remark concerning front organisations. I was not dismayed at all, on the contrary, it was too ridiculous for words to find that they really thought they could trap me. If there was any doubt concerning their plan, they themselves have now cleared that away. In fact, they have put it plainly that they would have forced an apology from me had I said what they wanted me to say. Was I not then justified in saying they will not trap me? I am sorry that I could not play this game. I said what I wanted to say, and this was apparently so effective that they are now attacking me on what they wanted me to say. Their analysis of front organisations is a naive attempt to excuse themselves after the trap they set had failed. Or should I deduce from the words of comfort addressed to Institute members that their attack like the wooden cannon of the Griquas hit themselves? Oh no, I never did the Institute any harm, the poor organisation has been stewing in its own juice all the time.

2. Of course no church body makes a pronouncement without study. Or do the writers wish to contend that the "Breë Moderatuur", the Synodical Commission, etc. take decisions without any knowledge and that their statements were founded on gossip, encouraged and inspired by irresponsible talks? Because a leading figure in our Church was concerned in this matter, the documents and statements and actions of the leaders of this front organisation were particularly thoroughly inspected. The previously mentioned pronouncement was based on this knowledge without the necessity having been felt to collect the well-known facts in a Study Report. The Church only does that when the facts are not commonly known. The correctness of this action and judgment is shown by the fact that they found no support in the D.R.C.

3. If point 3 in my letter is not clear to the esteemed writers, they ought really to ask Mr. Naudé to tell them the story. Or possibly he could write this up in a "study report" and place it before his former companions for their comments.

4. Who do I refer to when saying — "he and his henchmen"? This is surely clear. Or do the gentlemen suddenly not know their own brothers-in-arms? I naturally refer to Mr. Naudé and all those who, in Pro Veritate and Sunday papers, attack our policy and by that our Church. The writers now say that only bona fide Christians write in Pro Veritate. I make no judgment on their inner lives. To do this would be unscriptural. This does not detract from the fact that they are enemies of our policy. In fact, the Institute was founded as an attempt to force the Church from its policy. And when this attempt failed so miserably, Mr. Naudé himself made a call for a cell-formation within the Church. But this front organisation was so completely unmasked that this

weapon from the armoury of the sects only harmed their own following.

5. In (e) the writers make all kinds of jackal runs to try and rid themselves of the facts I placed before them in points 6 and 7. They do not succeed in this either. Let them deny that Mr. Naudé offered to distribute the infamous report of the British Council of Churches, or that they possess effective weapons against our policy in the scholarships of the World Council of Churches. They dare not deny this.

6. Neither I, nor the Church have done Mr. Naudé a glaring injustice. On the contrary my contention in point 8 is but all too true. The Institute will not succeed in making Mr. Naudé a martyr.

7. We are told, as truth, that the Institute's study circles flourish and its membership is increasing. This can be so, but it is definitely not true in so far as members of the three Afrikaans Churches are concerned. They cannot deny that the small number of members — here in Steynsburg where I am on holiday I have not got the exact number before me — from the three Churches, has decreased with the years. The fact that they could hardly recruit a handful of members from our Church, is sufficient proof that my challenged statement is true and answered for.

8. I expected that the Institute would not specify its donors or sources of income. I asked for it sometime back but to no avail. Now it is said that my question was a slip in my argument. This is childish unless the sources of income are the most important factors concerning the Institute. The Institute was rejected because of its direction and points of view, not because of its financial sources.

And why does the Institute not reply to my questions? A reply would have been self-incriminating.

(One phrase deleted — Ed. *Die Burger*).

Dr. J. H. P. van Rooyen, minister of the D.R.C. in Parkhurst, Johannesburg, also replied to Dr. Vorster in *Die Burger* of the 22nd December, 1965. He wrote as follows:

## 'KNOWLEDGE' FOUNDED MOSTLY ON HEARSAY

I would have liked to have analysed Dr. Vorster's reply to the questions put by Pro Veritate and the Christian Institute, point by point, but as I am aware that limited space in your paper will not allow me to do so, I confine myself to the following comments only:

### NO ANSWER

1. It immediately strikes one that Dr. Vorster offers no answer to any of the four questions which were put to him. I am sorry about this because a concrete answer would on the one hand have supplied members of the D.R.C. with information for which many who refuse just to talk, have waited for a long time, even with an amount of impatience. On the other hand, a concrete answer would have restrained Dr. Vorster from making such a pitiable personal attack on someone who, together with him, wants to be nothing but a servant of Jesus Christ. I would like to express the hope that Dr. Vorster will reflect again and supply us with a concrete answer.

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# Dr. J. D. Vorster and the Christian Institute

(Continued from page 15)

## "OUR POLICY"

2. Dr. Vorster calls the Christian Institute a "front organisation for the enemies of our policy". I would like to know what your correspondent means by "our policy". Would he mean the policy of a political party? If this is so, then he should ask himself whether he, as a minister of the Gospel, has the right to attack a fellow minister of the Gospel in such sharp, humiliating and insinuating language, and this because last-mentioned differs from him politically. Should Dr. Vorster, however, mean the Church's policy — yes, then he would have the right and even the duty to attack a fellow minister of the Gospel, but then Dr. Vorster will first have to show where Ds. Naudé or the Christian Institute differs from "our policy". Personally I do not believe Dr. Vorster can point to such a difference. In fact, personally I have again and again (so that I would have no part in a purely smear campaign and in so doing could ultimately appear before the throne of God to hear that I as a minister of the Gospel, opposed the work of God) asked ministers where the Christian Institute differs from the Church's policy, and from no side have I ever (not even from the "Breë Moderateur" or the Synodical Commission of the Southern Transvaal or from so-called Church leaders) received an answer. Because of this, I myself reviewed all the documents of the Christian Institute (although I am not a member, I also obtained full information on their financial sources), but nowhere could I find any indication of a deviation from the policy of the D.R.C. as formulated in various Synodical decisions. With this in mind, I looked forward to Dr. Vorster's reply to the questions put to him, but had to note that there was no reply, only a casting of suspicion.

## CONTRARY

3. Dr. Vorster maintains that the Church "unmasked" the Institute. Here we find a "simplicitas" in Dr. Vorster's argument which is everything but "sancta". In fact in 8 points he emphasises that the Church never makes a pronouncement without study and reflection; that the church knows and has complete knowledge, but then at the end he comes with a challenge which proves the opposite — that the Church definitely does not know all nor possesses complete knowledge. How is it possible for the Church "with full knowledge to reject the Institute", but still not know where the money comes from. To judge the Institute, inspection of its books would be one of the first requirements. Dr. Vorster follows up his boasting about complete knowledge with a sign of little knowledge. Can Dr. Vorster assist me in understanding this logic?

But further: where did the Church unmask the Institute? I really do not know where and when this happened, and Dr. Vorster will have to inform me together with many other people. I do not know

of a study made. I have read about numerous decisions on this matter, but am still waiting for a study on this matter. And apparently, I am not the only one waiting for a glance at the Church's study, because obviously the Synodical Commission of the Northern Transvaal is also waiting for this. As long as no thorough study and reflection on the Institute has taken place, I refuse in accordance with our Church's confession of the Ninth Commandment, viz. that no-one may be judged without a hearing, to have a part in the sharp denouncement of the Institute. My experience is that the people's "knowledge" about the Institute, is grounded mostly on rumours and hearsay, and I notice something of this with Dr. Vorster when he says: "The Church has taken cognisance of everything . . . which he (Ds. Naudé) said at closed meetings". Can this knowledge be grounded on anything but hearsay?

## BROEDERBOND

4. Dr. Vorster further has something to say about the Church having taken note of Ds. Naudé's conduct against his former companions and "considered them in the light of Christian moral standards". Is Dr. Vorster referring to the Broederbond incident? Ostensibly, yes! But then the following comments:

(a) Knowing that Dr. Vorster with good reasons on his side, feels very strongly about this matter, I nevertheless want to place the following before him for reflection. Is it not possibly because Ds. Naudé considered that conduct, so common amongst members of the Broederbond (Transvaal is rotten with it), namely nepotism, i.e. the blind favouring of your "companions" and the accompanying injustice to fellow Afrikaners and Christians (even amongst ministers), in the light of Christian moral standards, and that he as a Christian, could no longer endure with them?

(b) Should we accept that the way in which Ds. Naudé resigned from the Broederbond was wrong, (those who know what happened do not accept this because they know better), then I still put the question: are there any grounds in Scripture on which Christians and ministers of the Gospel could humiliate, arouse suspicions against and smear a "fallen man" as has been done with Ds. Naudé during the past two years? Christendom and the Church breathe a spirit different from that which I notice fills many Christians against Ds. Naudé.

## HATE

5. Further Dr. Vorster states: "The Church has treated Mr. Naudé with fitting compassion." I wish I could echo these words! How much more peaceful and happier I would have been had that statement been true! But when did this happen and in what was this compassion revealed. All I noticed was the hate of many church people and even so-called church leaders — a demonstration and a spectacle of the most abominable denial of the Christian message and spirit! Scorn, disdain, evil-speaking and the spreading of untruths were all the order of the day in this matter. In such circumstances I really wish to pray: "God, save me from the 'fitting compassion' of the Church!" Involuntarily I pray in the words of David: "let us now fall into the hands of the Lord; for his mercies

are great: and let me not fall into the hands of man" (2 Sam. 24:14).

## FINAL COMMENT

6. In closing just this comment (I should possibly have placed this first): Dr. Vorster's letter has given me no cause other than for sorrow. In fact, for the umpteenth time I notice that a new *modus operandi* has come into use in the Church and amongst ministers of the Gospel and Christians, viz. not to answer the person who differs from you, or if he goes astray not to call him back with the Word of God, but to label him and cast suspicion on him. Personally, I have always held this method to be typically wordly, and that it can therefore have no place in the Church and in Christendom. Is our conduct worthy of the Gospel of Jesus Christ? Are we still in such actions the light of the world and the salt of the earth? Is such behaviour not the sign that in us the light has become darkness? These questions form themselves into my mind when I read and re-read Dr. Vorster's letter, and I cannot escape the impression that questions put by the Christian Institute and Pro Veritate have not been answered, but a personal attack has been made on Ds. Naudé to expose him to public contempt.

To conclude this correspondence the following letter was sent to DIE BURGER on the 4th December, 1965: (published on Thursday, 6th January):

Dear Sir,

We would like to thank your paper for the space allowed for the correspondence in connection with Dr. J. D. Vorster's attack on the Christian Institute of South Africa.

It appears from Dr. Vorster's reply in the edition of the 31st December, 1965, that in our opinion further correspondence on this matter would be futile. We would, therefore, like to end the correspondence from our side with the statement — and we wish to do this explicitly — that we leave the matter at that. Should Dr. Vorster wish to interpret this as his having spoken the final word, he is welcome to it. We would, however, leave it to the judgment of your readers to draw their own conclusions from the correspondence as to whether Dr. Vorster reasonably answered even one question put by the Christian Institute. As far as we are concerned, we are satisfied that it is clear from Dr. Vorster's reply that the Church never unmasked the Christian Institute or Pro Veritate as "front organisations" of any category. We are thankful that the truth, which is greater than the Institute or any of its vulnerable co-workers, emerged from the battle without any harm. A deep sorrow, however, remains with us — which Dr. Vorster erroneously understood as a powerless anger and called tragic and comic — concerning this attitude of a responsible office bearer of the D.R.C. This alas, testifies to a complete unwillingness to converse with fellow Christians in the presence of the wide circle of readers of DIE BURGER, which could have proved that it was still possible to do it on a higher level than that in which many at present, also in our country and church circles, see a "worn-out" Christendom sinking away.