



# PRO VERITATE

**ALBERT GEYSER**

Skuld deur Assosiasie

**G. M. A. JANSEN**

Our Living with God

**W. B. DE VILLIERS**

Die Oorryp Tyd

**DOUGLAS BAX**

Antikom Antitheses

**ENOS Z. SIKAKANE**

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# PRO VERITATE

## EDITORIAL

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## CHRISTIAN MONTHLY FOR SOUTHERN AFRICA CHRISTELIKE MAANDBLAD VIR SUIDELIKE AFRIKA

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Editorial:

## Service to Africa

The fate and future of South Africa are indissolubly and irrevocably tied to those of the great African continent. This important reality penetrates with great difficulty to the understanding of those inhabitants of Southern Africa whose ancestry and cultural inheritance are of European extraction. Because numerous cultural and economic ties still bind the overwhelming majority of whites to the old countries of origin — and will continue doing so in the foreseeable future — we experience difficulty in realising and recognising that as far as our human relationships and responsibilities are concerned, we are bound to Africa in the first place.

If the majority of Africa's inhabitants were white this change-over in thinking would have been effected far sooner and more easily. But the fact that Africa is "black" still remains a tremendous stumbling-block for many inhabitants who are of European descent, and especially because we mistakenly regard the preponderance in the number of non-whites as a danger instead of as an opportunity. The turbulent events in some African states which thus far characterised their development towards independence together with the immature and frequently irresponsible actions of some of their political leaders have given rise in the minds of many whites with a long established democratic form of government to a spirit of supercilious aloofness which has often found expression in haughty disdain towards the non-white inhabitants of these younger African countries.

Persons and communities who adopt this attitude fail to take account of three considerations:

- (1) that such a spirit of haughtiness, which also finds expression in hasty and loveless criticism, is by no means suited to someone who calls himself a Christian. Hereby we do not for a moment wish to suggest that a Christian should close his eyes to weaknesses and transgressions in the life of his fellow-man, nor that, if he be conscious of them he should rather hold his tongue for the sake of blessed peace or the security of his own existence. On the contrary: it is the Christian **par excellence** whose sense of truth and reality should be so developed that he can deliver healthy and constructive criticism which will be listened to and accepted because, in Christ Jesus, he respects and loves his fellow-man (therefore also his fellow-citizen of Africa).
- (2) that God in his eternal wisdom so decreed that white and non-white should be settled together in Southern Africa in an area which is enormously rich in mineral and other material resources, that He allowed and privileged the whites to develop economically, scientifically, techno-

logically and spiritually to a level far above that of the overwhelming number of the more than 250 million non-whites of Africa, not with the purpose that we should selfishly exploit and enjoy it, but precisely in order that we should see it as a mark of God's grace and thus place all these material and spiritual privileges in the service of our fellow-man. And to protect us from selfishness God placed the whites with their greater knowledge and development right next to millions of non-whites in underdeveloped areas, so that they can share with us in these privileges.

- (3) that there is no better manner in which to give proof of the sincerity of our intentions as whites with the non-whites than to offer our services to Africa in every sphere where we can make a contribution. So often do we hear whites in South Africa say: "Our intention with the non-whites is genuine and sincere; we do not begrudge them anything we ourselves enjoy. The only trouble is that the outside world does not understand us and begrudges us the opportunity to prove the sincerity of our intentions". Well now: here is the opportunity for the white population of South Africa to give proof of the genuineness of their motives in so many ways which do not entail any threat to our country's continued existence.

We are grateful for many forms of assistance which are already being offered and accepted. We are convinced, however, that these only constitute a humble beginning to numerous other possibilities. There is the so urgently required scientific, agricultural and technological know-how available in our country to guide the younger countries to greater independence and prosperity. There is the necessity for the education of thousands on non-whites in political and civil administration. There is the tremendous need for the training of millions of skilled and half-skilled labourers. There are the thirty odd theological seminaries and institutions of the churches in South Africa and South West Africa which can help train thousands of ministers of the gospel and spiritual workers also for other African countries. There is, furthermore, the glorious opportunity for thousands of young people in South Africa to offer their services in a multitude of forms to other African countries. Why must the initiative in this regard be taken by countries far distant from us, when we are in the privileged strategical position to offer it so much more cheaply and successfully?

And if the question should be raised what all these projects have to do with our Christian faith, then we answer: everything! Is it not pre-eminently the message and challenge of Christ's life that He

came to serve wherever men were destitute and in need? Is not this His injunction to us, his followers, to deliver this testimony of service in his Name and in his power, in our political policy, our economic planning, our educational ideals and the spiritual equipment of all the citizens of our country and (to the extent that we are able and it does not injure our own country) also of every other country around us?

In order that this service should succeed not only the actual willingness of the majority of our white population is necessary, but to just as great an extent the willingness of the non-white leaders and peoples of the young states of Africa. Persuasion on a large scale will be required on both sides: to convince the whites that it is a Christian responsibility which dare not be evaded, and to convince the non-whites of Africa not to place their repugnance and enmity towards South Africa, originated

as a result of our racial policy, as a stumbling-block in the way of sincere intentions.

There are hopeful signs that the authorities in our country are recognising the importance of such service to the countries of Africa and wish to move in this direction if the white electorate should give them the necessary support. And it is exactly at this point that an enormous responsibility rests on the churches of South Africa, to make their members conscious of the responsibility of all Christians to give their full support to all quarters who wish to make use of this opportunity. Who knows whether it may not be the beginning of a new chapter in the history of our country where the injustice towards non-whites which is at present being perpetrated and tolerated (sometimes with the honest conviction that it is a temporary necessity) is replaced by a policy of equal rights for all inhabitants of Africa — non-white as well as white.

#### Inleidingsartikel:

## *Diens aan Afrika*

Suid-Afrika se lotgevalle en toekoms is onlosmaaklik en onherroeplik verbonde aan dié van die groot vasteland Afrika. Hierdie belangrike werklikheid dring baie swaar deur tot die begrip van dié inwoners van Suider-Afrika wie se afstamming en kulturele erfenis uit Europa verkry is. Omdat talle kulturele en ekonomiese bande die oorgroter meerderheid van blankes nog aan die ou stamlande bind — en in die voorsienbare toekoms nog sal bly doen — val dit ons moeilik om te besef en erken dat wat ons menslike verhoudinge en verpligtinge betref ons eerstens aan Afrika verbonde is.

As die meerderheid van die inwoners van Afrika blank was sou dié omskakeling in denke veel gouer en gemakliker gegaan het. Maar die feit dat Afrika „swart” is bly nog ’n geweldige struikelblok vir baie inwoners wie se afkoms Europees is, veral ook omdat ons verkeerdelik die oorwig van nie-blanke getalle as ’n gevaar beskou in plaas van as ’n geleentheid. Die stormagtige gebeure in sommige Afrika-state wat hulle ontwikkeling tot onafhanklikheid tot dusver gekenmerk het, gepaard met die onvolwasse en baie keer onverantwoordelike optrede van sommige van hulle politieke leiers, het by baie blankes met ’n lang gevestigde demokratiese rgeringsvorm ’n gees van beterweterige afsydigheid gekweek wat soms in hooghartige minagting teenoor die nie-blanke inwoners van dié jonger Afrika-lande tot uiting gekom het.

Persone en gemeenskappe wat hierdie houding inneem hou met drie dinge nie rekening nie:

(1) dat so ’n gees van hooghartigheid, wat hom ook uit in haastige en liefdelose kritiek, allermens pas by iemand wat homself Christen noem. Daarmee wil ons vir geen oomblik te kenne gee

dat ’n Christen sy oë moet sluit vir swakhede en oortredinge in die lewe van sy medemens nie, of, waar hy daarvan bewus is, terwille van die liewe vrede of die veiligheid van sy bestaan maar sal swyg. Inteendeel, dis juis die Christen wie se sin vir waarheid en werklikheid so ontwikkel moet wees dat hy gesonde en opbouende kritiek kan lewer waarna geluister en wat aanvaar sal word omdat hy in Christus Jesus sy medemens (dus ook sy medeburger van Afrika) hoogag en liefhet.

- (2) dat God in sy ewige wysheid dit so beskik het dat blank en nie-blank saam in Suider-Afrika geplant is in ’n gebied wat geweldig ryk is aan minerale en ander materiële bronne, dat Hy die blankes vergun en bevoorreg het om ekonomies, wetenskaplik, tegnies en geestelik te ontwikkel tot ’n peil ver bo dié van die oorgrootste getal van die meer as 250 miljoen nie-blankes van Afrika, nie met die doel dat ons dit selfsugtig sal uitbuit en geniet nie, maar juis dat ons dit sal sien as bewys van Gods genade en so al hierdie materiële en geestesvoorregte in diens van ons medemens sal stel. En om ons van selfsug te bewaar het God die blankes met hulle meerdere kennis en ontwikkeling geplaas langs miljoene nie-blankes in onder-ontwikkelde gebiede sodat hulle saam met ons in hierdie voorregte kan deel.
- (3) dat daar geen beter manier is om die opregtheid van ons bedoelinge as blankes met die nie-blankes te bewys as om op elke gebied waar ons ’n bydrae kan maak, ons dienste aan Afrika te bied nie. Ons hoor so baie dat blankes in Suid-Afrika sê: „Ons bedoeling met die nie-

blankes is opreg en eerlik, ons gun hulle alles wat onself besit en geniet. Die moeilikheid is net dat die buite-wêreld ons nie verstaan en die geleentheid gun om die opregtheid van ons bedoelinge te bewys nie. Wel: hier is nou die geleentheid vir die blanke bevolking van Suid-Afrika om die opregtheid van hulle motiewe te bewys in so baie vorme wat geen bedreiging vir ons land se voortbestaan inhou nie.

Ons is dankbaar vir baie vorme van hulp wat reeds aangebied en aanvaar word. Ons is egter oortuig dat dit nog maar die klein begin is van talle ander moontlikhede. Daar is die so nodige wetenskaplike, landboukundige en tegniese advies waaroor ons land beskik om die jonger lande tot groter selfstandigheid en welvarendheid te lei. Daar is die noodsaaklikheid van opleiding van diusende nie-blankes in politieke en siviele administrasie. Daar is die geweldige behoefte aan opleiding van miljoene geskoolde en half-geskoolde werkers, daar is die byna dertig teologiese skole en inrigtings van die kerke in Suid-Afrika en Suidwes-Afrika wat duisende Evangeliedienaars en geestelike werkers ook vir ander Afrika-lande kan help oplei. Daar is verder die pragtige geleentheid vir duisende jongmense van Suid-Afrika om hulle diens in soveel vorme aan ander Afrika-lande te bied. Waarom moet die leiding in dié opsig van lande ver van ons uitgaan, terwyl ons in die bevoorregte strategiese posisie verkeer om dit self soveel goedkoper en geslaagder te kan bied?

En as die vraag gestel sou word wat al hierdie aksies met ons Christelike geloof te make het, dan antwoord ons: alles! Is dit dan nie by uitstek die boodskap van uitdaging van Christus se lewe dat Hy gekom het om te dien oral daar waar mense in

behoefte en nood was nie? Is dit dan nie sy opdrag aan ons, sy volgelinge, nie, om in sy Naam en in sy krag hierdie dienskneggetuie te lewer in ons politieke beleid, ons ekonomiese beplanning, ons opvoedkundige ideale en ons geestelike toerusting van al die inwoners van ons land en (in soverre as ons by magte is en dit ons land nie benadeel nie) ook van elke ander land om ons heen?

Ten einde hierdie diens te laat slaag is nie alleen die daadwerklike gewilligheid van die meerderheid van ons blanke bevolking nodig nie, maar net soveel die gewilligheid van die nie-blanke leiers en bevolkings van die jong state van Afrika. Groot skaalse oorredingswerk aan albei kante sal nodig wees: om die blankes te oortuig dat dit 'n Christelike verantwoordelikheid is wat nie ontduik mag word nie, en om die nie-blankes van Afrika te oorreed om hulle afkeer en vyandskap van Suid-Afrika, ontstaan as gevolg van ons rassebeleid, nie as struikelblok in die pad van opregte bedoelinge te plaas nie.

Daar is hoopvolle tekens dat ons landsowerheid die belangrikheid van sodanige diens aan die lande van Afrika erken en in dié rigting wil beweeg as die blanke kieserskorps hom die nodige steun sou verleen. Dis juis hier waar 'n geweldige verantwoordelikheid op die kerke van Suid-Afrika rus, om hulle lidmate bewus te maak van die verantwoordelikheid van alle Christene om hulle volle steun aan alle instansies te gee wat hierdie geleentheid wil benut. Wie weet of dit nie die begin kan wees van 'n nuwe hoofstuk in die geskiedenis van ons land waar (soms met die eerlike oortuiging dat dit 'n tydelike noodsaak is) die onreg teenoor die nie-blanke wat tans gepleeg en geduld word vervang word deur 'n beleid van gelykberegting teenoor die inwoners van Afrika — nie-blank sowel as blank.

## SKULD DEUR ASSOSIASIE

Deur ALBERT GEYSER

**Oral in die wêreld en ook in ons land maak ons ons ongerus oor 'n nuwe verskynsel. So nie openbare regspleging nie, dan wel populêre beoordeling en selfs veroordeling, deel die maatskappy op in kategorieë en assosieer hulle met een-of-ander doemwaardige rigting. Ons noem dit „skuld”-deur-assosiasie”. Wie, hoe skugter ookal, opsteek vir sosiale geregtigheid en erkenning van die waardigheid van 'n mens, en wie ookal protesteer teen die onbillikbare inkorting van die regte van 'n mens word deur hanteerders van die verfkwas dadelik uitgeteken as 'n kommunist, 'n humanis en 'n liberalis en/of 'n meeloper van een of al hierdie kategorieë.**

In werklikheid is die verskynsel nie nuut nie. Dis moontlik so oud as die berge, maar dit is definitief so oud as die Bybel.

Die Mosaïese Wet verbied hierdie soort van regspleging, die Spreuke en Prediker waarsku daarteen en die boek Daniël bevat 'n roerende beskrywing van sy gevolge. Die verskynsel kom gereeld voor waar geringe diktatoriaal en mense fanatiek word. Dis ook verklaarbaar. In

outoritêre state kwyn onderlinge vertrouwe en woeker wedersydse verdenking. Sentimentsmouse wat in normale omstandighede obskuur sou geleef het en gesterf het, daag dan op die toneel en verwerf 'n kortstondige aansien deur hul vernuf met etikette en hul tegniek van skuld-deur-assosiasie.

Daar was, so ver mens in die geskiedenis kan teruggaan, geen diktatoriale of half-diktatoriale staat

nie, of dit het gewemel van hierdie politieke dolos-gooiers en fanatiese verspreiders van suspisie. Die boek Daniël beskryf die aktiwiteite van sommige van hulle tydens die despotisme van Antiochus Epiphanes IV, en die Makkabeërboeke asook Flavius Josephus verskaf die grusame nadere besonderhede oor die martelinge en massale teregstellinge wat op grond van 'n onkritiese en populêre skuld-deur-assosiasie plaasgevind het.

Offisiële, maar meestal selfaangestelde, uitruikers oftewel **delators** het met die tegniek van skuld-deur-assosiasie Jesus, sy apostels en die Christene van die eerste eeue bitter vervolgd. Die middeleeuse inkwisi-teurs het daarop teruggeval. In ons eie tyd het in totalitêre Rusland en

Duitsland, in die mini-despotismes van Afrika „skuld-deur-assosiasie” feitlik regsstatus ontvang. Regters wat die regsgeldigheid daarvan nie wou billik nie, is óf afgesit, óf saam met die aangeklaagdes na die konsentrasiekampe en Sibirië gestuur.

Ter verduideliking, so nie ter verontskuldiging nie, moet mens dadelik toestem dat die diktator en die totalitêre staat nie sonder sy netwerk van verdagmakers en die tegniek van skuld-deur-assosiasie kan bestaan nie. Geen tirannie staan op nie, of met hom verrys openlike of ondergrondse weerstand. Dis in die diktator se belang om liever ’n paar duisend mense onskuldig te verdink, te knelter en te likwider as om een skuldige te laat ontsnap.

Dit moet verder gesê word dat in hierdie ideologiese eeu politieke onrusstokers en subversiewes ook in die ordelikste en vryste staat wroet en nie net in diktatuurstate nie.

### OWERHEID HET DUBBELE PLIG

**Elke owerheid het daarom ten alle tye die plig om te waak vir die veiligheid van die staat en die openbare orde en om die onrusstokers uit te snuffel. Die wyse regering sal egter voortdurend waak teen sy eie fanatieke aanblasers en hul tegniek om bewys van skuld te verwag met skuld-deur-assosiasie. Die wyse regeerder in ’n Christelike maatskappy sal ook toesien dat sy speurders, die offisiëles en die on-offisiëles, goed onderskei tussen Christus-gehoorsaamheid en Kommunisme voordat hul eersgenoemdes vir laasgenoemdes aansien!**

Vanaf Achab en Isebel tot by Daniël, vanaf Jesus tot vandag-toe is Godgehoorsames as subversief, staatsgevaarlik en volksvyandig uitgekryt en uitgelewer. Onder Hitler het verdagmakers gesorg vir die gevangensetting van talle soos Niemöller, die teregstelling van duisende soos Bonhoeffer en die ontorende huissoeking en die nagtelike klop op die deure van onnoemlikes.

### JESUS DIÉ TEGNIEK ONDERVIND

Vir die Christen in die moderne wêreld is dit, so nie profytelik nie, dan minstens vertroostend om die toepassing van die tegniek van skuld-deur-assosiasie teen Jesus en sommige van sy Apostels na te lees.

In Jesus se geval, so vertel Joh. 8:41, het die verdagmakers skuld-deur-assosiasie deurgetrek tot by sy geboorte. „Ons”, sê hulle en die nadruk val op die „ons”, „ons is nie uit ontug gebore nie!” Jesus se ontvangenis was voorhuweliks. Die vermeende skuld van sy moeder is sy skuld. Skuld-deur-assosiasie.

Ook die vrome Nathanael ont-kom nie heeltemal aan die tegniek nie met sy vraag of daar uit Nasaret iets goeds kan kom. Hy kan die agterlike dorpie eenvoudig nie assosieer met die Messias nie. Trouens die inwoners van die gehuggie is self so oortuigd van hul minderwaardigheid dat hulle riep glo dat Hy waarvan die ouers, broers en susters onder hulle woon, ’n profeet kan wees nie.

Jesus assosieer met tollenaars en sondaars, ’n Levi, ’n Saggeüs, ’n Samaritaanse en ’n oorspelige vrou. By magte van skuld-deur-assosiasie is Hy skuldig aan hulle sondes of minstens ’n „fellow-traveller” van hierdie soort oortreders. Hy is somer ’n vraat en ’n wynsuiper ook.

Die Evangelies sê daar nie veel oor nie, maar net genoeg om te laat sien dat Jesus onbevooroordeeld gestaan het teenoor Grieke, dit is, in die idioom van die tyd, teenoor nie-Jode. Wanneer Jesus in apokaliptiese terme sy dood voorspel en sê dat Hy weggaan waar hulle Hom nie sal vind nie, spot sy belagers: „Hy wil seker na die verstrooides onder die Grieke gaan en die Grieke leer”. Die geïmpliseerde skuld-deur-assosiasie is dat Hy tekort skiet in nasionalisme en voorkeur gee aan vreemdelinge bo sy „eie mense”.

Verdagmaking deur hierdie tegniek is so maatloos as wat dit vals is. Jesus dryf demone uit. Hy het dus te doen met demone. Deur die projektor van skuld-deur-assosiasie verbeeld dit dat Hy die demone uitdryf deur die owerste van die demone.

Alte dikwels is eiebelang die dryfveer van die beskuldiger-deur-assosiasie. Omdat die demone uit hul medemens in die varke gevaar het, kom die Gadareense varkboere na Jesus en smeek Hom om tog uit hulle gebied weg te gaan. Sy assosiasie met hulle kan hulle straks nog ’n klompie varke kos. Nie heeltemal ’n geval van skuld-deur-assosiasie nie, maar amper; skade deur assosiasie.

Swakkeling is altyd bang vir skuld of skade deur assosiasie. Pilatus se vrou — Claudia Procula was

volgens die tradisie haar naam — het op grond van ’n droom haar man laat vra om tog niks met Jesus te doen te hê nie; en inderdaad, uit ang vir skuld of skade deur assosiasie — mens sal nooit weet welke nie — kies hy die veilige weg van kompromis. Hy was sy hande in onskuld maar lewer Jesus uit om gekruisig te word.

Dit gebeur dat selfs ouers bang is vir skuld-deur-assosiasie. Jesus het hulle blinde seun genees — ongelukkig op ’n Sabbat. Dis gevaarlik om hulle te assosieer met die Sabbatskendende Geneser, en hulle sê aan die inkwisieters: Moenie vir ons vra wie hom genees het nie, „hy is self oud genoeg — vra hom.”

**Die mees skaamtelose, die mees onderduimse en die mees algemene toepassing van die skuld-deur-assosiasie-tegniek is wel dié onder die dekmantel van vrome volksliefde. Daarmee probeer Jesus se belagers Hom in ’n val lok. „Meester, ons weet dat u sonder aansiens des persoons en so reguit as ’n koeël die waarheid praat en vir g’n mens stuit nie. Sê ons bietjie, mag mens aan Caesar belasting betaal?” ’n Ja sal Hom by assosiasie skuldig maak voor die nasie; ’n nee voor die Romeinse owerheid.**

Met dieselfde voorwendsel van patriotisme besluit ’n nasie-besorgde Hoëpriester-in-Rade om Hom dood te maak, want via skuld-assosiasie sal, „as ons Hom so laat aangaan, almal in Hom glo; en die Romeine sal kom en ons land en ons nasie albei afneem.”

Jesus was self nie bang vir skuld-deur-assosiasie nie. Hy het juis gekom om sondaars te red, en jy kan ’n mens alleen red deur met hom te assosieer. Sy dissipels moes dit ook doen, maar soms het dit maar moeilik gegaan. Hulle moet dit vandag nog doen en dit gaan nog steeds broekskeur. Petrus het ’n paar keer geswig. Driekeer het ’n diensmeisie met ’n beskuldiging van assosiasie die oer-apostel gedryf om Jesus te verloën, en een keer te Antiochië het die inspekteurs van Jakobus hom uit sy assosiasie met die Griekse gelowiges verskrik.

Paulus was moediger. Hy het doelbewus met Grieke en met net wat voorkom op die pad van die Evangelie geassosieer, vir die Jode ’n Jood en vir die Grieke ’n Griek geword om Christus ontwil. Maar hy het met slae, steniging en gevangenskap betaal vir sy skuld deur assosiasie met onbesnedenes.

### DIE PRYS VAN DISSIPELSKAP

Jesus het voorsien dat sy dissipels se assosiasie met Hom hulle tot skuld gereken sal word, en Hy het hulle vooruit bemoedig: „Salig is julle wanneer die mense julle beleedig en vervolg en allerhande kwaad teen julle spreek. So het hulle ook die profete vervolg wat vóór julle was”. En Hy het hulle beraad: „Wees versigtig soos die slange en opreg soos die duiwe”, want broer sal broer aan die dood oorlewer, vaders hulle kinders en kinders hulle ouers. Maar Hy het hulle verseker dat hulle lyding weens skuld deur assosiasie met Hom „getuienis” om sy ontwil sal wees. Van die Griekse woord vir getuienis kom ons woord **martelaar**, d.i. bloedgetuie.

**Sy dissipels moet hierdie getuienis volhou. Hulle moet soos Hy, op sy bevel hul assosiasie volhou met mense wat onder die broodlyn en die paplyn lewe, met dorstiges, met dakloses en ontheemdes, met brandarmes, siekes en tronkvoëls. Volgens Mt. 25:39vv. is minstens 'n deel van**

Jesus se „Gospel” ’n „Social Gospel”. Hy sê, „Vir sover julle dit gedoen het aan een van die geringste van hierdie broers van My, het julle dit aan My gedoen.” En Hy skerp die sosiale van die Evangelie, die bereidheid tot assosiasie al ly dit ook tot skuld en skade, in deur die gelykenis van die Barmhartige Samaritaan. En Hy waarsku teen angsvallige disassosiasie van Hom in die Uitsendingsrede: „Elkeen wat My voor die mense bely, sal Ek bely voor my Vader in die hemele; elkeen wat My voor die mense verloën, sal ek loën voor my Vader in die hemele”.

Dis gevaarlik, lewensgevaarlik, ewige-lewegevaarlik om uit angs vir skuld of skade jou van Jesus te disassosieer.

Jesus het ook 'n woordjie vir die handelaar in skuld-deur-assosiasie: Uit jou woorde sal jy geregverdig word, uit jou woorde sal jy veroordeel word.

### DIE PRYS VAN DISASSOSIASIE

Die Christen in die moderne wêreld, nes die Christen van die

antieke wêreld kan nie aan die etikette en die skuld-deur-assosiasie ontkom nie. Die inhoud van die Wet en daarmee van die Evangelie, is liefde teenoor God en liefde teenoor die medemens, en daar is nie so 'n ding as liefde sonder assosiasie nie, en die gelykenis van die Barmhartige Samaritaan maak duidelik dat daar nie so 'n ding soos beperking op medemenslikheid is nie. Almal is jou naaste, en almal moet jy liefde bewys en met almal moet jy assosieer. Hoe slegter, minderwaardiger en armer, hoe meer moet jy met hulle assosieër.

Om die skyf van skuld-deur-assosiasie te word is Christenlot omdat dit Christuslot en Christus-taak was. Uit vrye wil en in gehoorsaamheid aan sy Vader het Hy hom met ons sondaars en verlore nes in die wêreld ge-assosieer en deur die assosiasie ons skuld op Hom geneem, Skuld-deur-assosiasie. „Daar loop die Lam van God” sê Johannes die Doper van Hom, en 'n ou tekstradisie voeg by, „wat die skuld van die wêreld dra.”

## OUR LIVING WITH GOD

— FR. G. M. A. JANSEN, O.P.

**WE WILL ALL BE IN AGREEMENT** with the statement that if we ever come to unity in the Church of Christ which we hope to restore together, it must be in the form of a unity of faith. However, what holds us up in this unity, more than anything else, is that we are living too much in the past.

Whenever we discuss our faith of the mysteries which God has revealed, we use a thought-pattern, which existed in the time of the Middle Ages. Listening to the conferences which were given by various ministers in our ministers' meetings at Welkom, I always got to hear: “this is what Calvin taught, this is what Luther says, or Thomas Aquinas or John Wesley”, but alas, I hardly ever heard: This is what Jesus said. Indeed as far as quotations of the Bible are concerned, most of the Churches seem to have concentrated on the Epistles of St. Paul, but you all know what St. Peter said about these epistles: “Our beloved brother Paul wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, speaking of this as he does in all his letters. There are some things in them hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to

their own destruction, as they do to other scriptures.”

**However, it is my conviction, that whatever we share in faith and in Christian living, it is because we all live with Christ, not merely because we live according to the words of Christ, but far more because by coming to live with us, He drew us completely into His own life. He let us live with Him in a personal relationship, and if then in trying to express in words what we experience in this relationship we have with Christ, we must necessarily use words, the meaning of which are given by the society in which we live!**

In the course of centuries, thought advanced; things that were hidden came into the open, and thus the words which were used in one period began to receive a deeper meaning; and new words had to be formed in order to express thoughts which

were not known at that time, and thus the very thought-pattern which underlay the faith in the 12th or the 15th century is no longer the thought-pattern of today. And therefore in order to be true to the faith with which we experience our living with Christ, let us try to express ourselves in the thought-pattern of our own present society, and we may find that we are more in agreement than we ever thought possible.

We all believe in the Bible, and profess it to be the Word of God. Yet perhaps in this way the Bible may not be adequately defined. Should we not rather say, that the Bible is the report of God's approach to man. First “God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days He has spoken to us by a Son, whom He appointed the heir of all things, through whom also He created the world.” (Hebr. 1, 1).

God approached us therefore through His Son; the Son Himself was the Word God spoke: so much did He love the world that He gave

us His only begotten Son (John 1 vs. 1: The Word who was God and was **with** God), came to live with us. He who lived in a person-to-person relationship with the Father, began to live in a person-to-person relationship with us, so that He formed a link between God and us. In Jesus God approaches us, in Jesus we respond to the invitation of the Father, to live in close relationship with Him.

Not merely in His words, but more specially in His life, in His whole way of living, He revealed to us how He lived with the Father, so that the image of His Father becomes clear in the almost unconscious relationship with His Father which we find expressed in His life. At the same time, by living with us, He established immediately a relationship that was unknown before, of God being-with-us. In other words He gave our relationship with God an entirely new dimension. He made it a person-to-person relationship, or as the modern phenomenology expresses it an intersubjective relationship.

### THE INTERSUBJECTIVE RELATIONSHIP

It is rather a mouthful, this word, but it is with this word that we begin to talk in the thought-pattern of today. The phenomenology of today has found a new approach to the knowledge of man, by getting away from the method of abstraction and logical deduction, which was used by the philosophers in the Middle-Ages and by which they came to the understanding of the **essence** of man, of that which is universal and abstract. The phenomenologist is concentrating on the **existence** of man as it takes place in history, it is his aim to make our existence as a phenomenon appear before us and to bring to light that what is hidden and latent and not immediately apparent.

However we have to point out that this approach is not a new approach, but is a thought-pattern that is very much the thought pattern of the Jews who lived as contemporaries of Christ, so that we may say that it is one which Christ Himself used, when He expressed His revelation in words.

The very first thing that we observe when we put the phenomenon of our existence before us, is that the word is aptly named: **ex-**

istence, we are always **standing out**, outgoing into the world. We cannot realise our existence unless by projecting ourselves into the world outside us, making it a world-for-us, a world fit to live in. Therefore we learn that our being is essentially being-in-the-world, you are taking up your existence and make yourself, by projecting yourself into the world. Without the world you could not be yourself. And that is why the phenomenology is preferring to call man a "subject", because "I" am not only the subject of a sentence, but also the subject of action, of every action, I am one who is free to go out in any direction, who decides what to do, and who takes the initiative in doing it, using the world outside me to make myself.

But I am not alone. I do this always together with others. The world which confronts us, is no longer the raw nature, it is a world which has been made fit for me by others, and which I in turn try to make fitter together with others. With whatever I do I am always completing what another has started. If I put on shoes to strengthen my feet, I am completing the intention of the shoemaker, which he had when he made the shoes. When I am tired and get into bed, I fulfill the purpose of the maid who made my bed in the morning, when I switch on the light, I bring into operation a complicated system of giving power and light, brought into being by hundreds of others. And if I speak only one sentence I am using words, the meaning of which I have been given by the society in which I live.

**Therefore we must say that our very existence is a co-existence; I cannot project myself into the world unless together with others; it is the very essence of our existence that we complement each other, pool forces to such an extent that together we produce a common good, making the world a world-for-us. This is what we mean, when we speak of an intersubjective relationship. We are living together, always acting together; we are constantly absorbing the social co-operation of the others in all our actions; the other is not so much the object of our actions but he is co-subject with me; not only are we supplementing each other and therefore always with-the-other, but we may well say that we are in each other, in so far that in projecting ourselves into the**

**world, we are blending together into an harmonious "we".**

However, hereby we have not yet exhausted the full penetration of our intersubjective relationships. For underneath this intersubjective relationship which appears in our social co-operation, there is another one that goes still deeper and is at the root of this one, namely the real intersubjective relationship, which is the union of love. In the real relationship of social co-operation, the "other" remains still anonymous. I do not know the shoemaker, who made my shoes, neither do I know the technicians who maintain the power station, to give me power and light. In the union of love, however, the relationship is from person to person, one in which I recognise the other as a person, and appreciate him because he is he, while the other acknowledges me in my own individuality.

**When we hate a person, we want to reduce him to a "thing", we want to annihilate him as a person. When we love a person, we allow him to be himself, because we love him for himself. We identify ourselves with him, so that all that is done to him is regarded as done to ourselves, it draws out the best that is in us, it gives us the greatest possible freedom of action.**

It is by bringing out the full extent of intersubjective relationships that we realize that our existence is truly a co-existence, that we have the gift and the necessity to live in and through our fellowman.

### ANOTHER INTERSUBJECTIVE RELATIONSHIP

Within this intersubjective relationship, the Christian experiences another relationship: he experiences God. This is a very real phenomenon. To the Christian God is real; He is a person, with whom he talks, with whom he remonstrates, sometimes even resents, whom he misses, when he suffers from aridity. The realisation of God is behind most of his actions and attitudes. There is e.g. the Christian's consciousness of God as the third party in marriage. The process of giving life is called "procreation". Man feels that his giving of life is only instrumental, to Christian parents the child is a gift of God. This brings with it a consciousness of a whole new series of experiences which are daily occurrences in a man's life: his worry



whether he gives the child a proper Christian education, his anxiety when a child goes wrong, his happiness when he receives promotion, so that he can make better provisions for his family. In all these events He draws God in, he prays to Him, feels grateful or resentful, guilty or resigned. There is another category of experiences which are centred around death. We meet death constantly, on the roads, at a deathbed of some who are dear to us, in time of war etc. Death is the one inevitability in our life. But does it not strike the Christian that whenever he meets death, he thinks of God? For us death means one of two things: either nothingness, total annihilation or God. And he cannot believe in total annihilation, which would make his whole life an absurdity. And therefore death means to him God and the resurrection after life. It is in the death of Jesus that we find the solution of the problem that is our life. We can now be convinced that there is a heaven and a hell in the life after death. We can now put our mind at rest, because if we live with God, we will remain with Him after death. O death, where is thy sting? cries St. Paul. And indeed the sting is gone; the agony of uncertainty is gone. We know our destiny and we live in the certainty that this final destiny is within our reach. Is this not one of our greatest religious experiences, so deeply rooted that it is self-evident truth to us, so that we have no fear of death? Is this faith not at the root of so many other experiences, of calmness and peace during a final death-agony, of the willingness to accept pain and suffering in preparation of death, of the courage of the priest, who stays at his mission in a rebel-infested country, of the courage of the nurse who goes on attending the sick in the midst of an epidemic, of the quiet determination of the soldier who goes into battle?

Then there is a third group of religious experiences, namely those which are centred around our intersubjective relationship with our fellowman.

We have already seen that through these intersubjective relationships man becomes himself. We only come to true co-existence when we recognize the other in his freedom, while we in turn are recognized in our own being by the other. Out of this

relationship rises a moral code. Such moral principles as "thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not steal, honour thy father and thy mother, let your "yes" be "yes" and your "no" be "no", are so many ways of recognizing the other as a subject as a person.

Finally we draw attention to a great many experiences which are directly concerned with religious cult. Among these we may mention the spiritual satisfaction which a man experiences when together with other worshippers, he takes part in the sacrifice in a full church. The experience of conversion at the moment of baptism or of a second "conversion" in a crucial moment of his life; the feeling of relief when a man has obtained pardon from his sins and feels freed from a terrible stress; the moment of mystical peace which he may experience after Holy Communion or after prayer when he entered a church in deep distress or confusion. Many of these experiences may be mixed of it there is the faith, the consciousness of God.

### GOD WITH US

When we bring these religious experiences to the surface of our consciousness and make them appear as they truly are, we begin to realize that we really live with God; we become conscious of a personal relationship with Him. **In these experiences God has a face.** He is our Father, who cares for us; He is our Creator, but a Creator who keeps us in existence here and now; He is the Master of life and death, but a Master who is very much concerned about **our** life and **our** death; living with Him gives our relationship with our fellowman a supplementary depth. Often we experience that we are in intimate dialogue with Him, that we can feel Him, taste Him, and become emotionally involved with Him.

### JESUS TAUGHT US THIS RELATIONSHIP

**It does not take long to discover that this manner in which we live with God has been taught us by Jesus Christ. The sermon of the Mount is often portrayed as the blueprint of Christian behaviour, as a new code of morals. In reality Christ speaks as much about God**

**in that sermon as about us; the sermon is really neither an exposition of God's nature, nor a series of commandments for us, but it is a blueprint for the intersubjective relationship which we have with God.**

In this relationship there are two poles. The one is God, our Father, who cares for us with a very personal, individual care, so that we do not need to fret about what we shall eat, what we shall drink or wear, because the heavenly Father knows what we need, and will provide us. He cares more for us than an earthly father cares for his son. What man is there among you, who, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? How much more will your Father who is in Heaven give good things to those who ask Him. (M. 7-9) He is the Father of the prodigal son, the good shepherd who goes after his lost sheep, He is the Father who invites all to the wedding feast of His son, who reveals Himself to little children.

And the other pole is the follower of Christ, who seeks the Father in constant dialogue, praying to him in the secret of his heart, and finding Him in the relationship to his neighbour, by loving that neighbour, by being good to those who hate him and calumniate him, by being poor of spirit, merciful, meek, pure, suffering in silence, by being an arbiter of peace. We must be all these things, because we shall see God, we shall possess the Kingdom, we shall be called the children of God.

Even though many of the Psalms are magnificent in their praise of God and in picturing the beauty of creation and providence, we may not always be in a mood to say these psalms, because we feel that the experience of God which they reflect, is no longer **our** experience. We are conscious of God as being much nearer to us; He is in our home, within our family, in our society, in our church, in the sacraments. He is deeply involved in our daily existence.

It is as Jesus expressed it: When a man keeps the commandments, my Father will love him and we will come and take our abode with him. Living together, living in each other; an intersubjective relationship similar to that of our fellowman living in us. Just as the "inliving" of our fellowman is a quality of the soul which enhances and amplifies

the faculties of man to such an extent that it enables him to perform deeds which are strictly beyond his individual capacities, so is the "inliving" of God in us a quality of the soul which enables us to perform acts which in themselves are above the powers of human nature, because they increase the union with God. What co-existence is to intersubjective relations between man and man, that "grace" is analogously to the intersubjective relationship between God and the Christian. St. Paul describes it so beautifully: By the grace of God, I am what I am; and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than all of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God which is in me. What a wonderful description of the intermingling of personalities. God has taken such a possession of my person, that what I am, I am by the grace of God; my very character, my very personality is shaped by the grace of God. Yet the absorption of grace is such that it is still I who am labour-

ing and can claim responsibility and reward; yet again it is not I who act, but the grace of God in me.

And St. Peter in his second letter (1, 4) describes this intersubjective relationship by saying that we have been made partakers of the divine nature; "consortes" says the Vulgate; we have been made of the same sort; we have been raised to His level, so that we are on equal footing, and can have a person-to-person relationship with God in the same way as we have it with our fellowman.

### FAITH

Although we experience the intersubjective relationship with God as much as we experience that with man, yet our experience is that, at the same time, they are different. The relationship with God is not as deeply rooted in us as that of man. It is not intrinsic to our nature, but it has been brought into us from outside. We have been adopted by

God. It is He who approached us first, we have received it as a **gift**. And because it is not inherent to our nature, we can lose it again, and then we acquire a new approach from God, before we can get it back. Another thing we experience is, that in order to live with God in that intersubjective relationship, we have to receive an extra light, the light of faith, and therefore faith, as a strengthening of our mental powers to observe and to be open to the living with God, is another phenomenon, which we experience daily in our life. We are conscious of it as a gift; we have been thrown into a new kind of existence, and with it we received the light, which is needed to take up that kind of existence and this new light to our **baptism**, the special sign of inward grace, because it is from baptism onwards that we began to live with God.

[This was the first of three lectures which Fr. Jansen delivered at an ecumenical conference in Bloemfontein in October 1966.]

Geesteskwellinge:

## DIE OORRYP TYD

W. B. DE VILLIERS

**In die vier-en-twintigste hoofstuk van die Handeling van die Apostels staan daar vir ons heel strak opgeteken die tragiese verhaal van die Romeinse goewerneur, Felix, miskien die treffendste voorbeeld in die Skrif van 'n man wat nie tot 'n besluit kon kom nie, wat hom verlaat het op uitstel as 'n oplossing, wat sy verantwoordelikheid ontduik het deur te skuil agter die verskoning dat die tyd nog nie ryp was nie.**

Daar lees ons immers dat „alhoewel hy noukeurig genoeg met die dinge van die Weg bekend was”, hy nogtans aangedring het op langdurige gesprekke met Paulus „oor die geloof in Christus”. Maar toe Paulus gespreek het „oor geregtigheid en selfbeheersing en die toekomstige oordeel”, so staan daar, „het Felix baie bang geword en geantwoord: Gaan vir hierdie keer heen, en as ek geleentheid vind, sal ek jou laat roep.” En dan volg ten slotte die tragiese denouement: „maar twee jaar het verbygegaan . . . en omdat Felix aan die Jode 'n guns wou bewys, het hy Paulus as gevangene agtergelaat.”

In die geskiedenis van my eie kerk en volk is dit nou al heelwat langer

as twee jaar dat ons besig is om 'n noodsaaklike beslissing te ontwyk, 'n besluit uit te stel — terwyl ons skuil agter die voorwendsel dat die tyd daarvoor nog nie ryp is nie.

Wat is dié besluit? Watter keuse is dit wat gevel moet word? En waarom beskou ons die tyd nog nie geleë nie?

### TYD NOG NIE RYP NIE

'n Aanduiding in die rigting van 'n antwoord vind ek in daardie kwellende refrein: Die tyd is nog nie ryp nie. Want die eggo's van dié refrein verneem ek telkens weer; in die afgelope tyd juis op talle plekke en uit menige mond.

Uit die mond bv. van 'n vooraan-

staande Afrikaanse sakeman en tewens ouderling van die N.G. Kerk wat, toe ek hom wys op 'n paar kenelike sosiale misstande en onregverdighede teenoor die naaste in ons land en vra wat hy en sy bo gemiddeld gegoede kollegas bereid en van plan is om daaraan te doen, ewe koel kon antwoord: „Vir eers niks. Jy en jou soort is te haastig. Die leidende Afrikaanse sakelui is besig om 'n baie belangrike deurbraak te maak tot binne-in die tradisionele „Engelse” ekonomiese magsgebied. Hulle durf hul nie nou al bekommer oor probleme van die volksmoraliteit, die godsdiens of die politiek nie. Hulle durf nog nie kleur wys nie. Dit is nog te vroeg. Die tyd is nog nie ryp nie . . .”

Voorts, uit die mond van 'n hoog-aangeskrewe en invloedryke koerantman, 'n skynbaar oortuigde en geesdriftige voorstander van die politieke eksperiment met „onafhanklike vryhede”. Toe ek hom vra of hy, na agtien jaar se eksperimen-

teerdery, nie so effens ontnugter begin raak betreffende die moontlike uiteindelijke sukses van die Bantoe-stand- en Groepsgebiede-eksperiment nie — gesien veral die sigbare en tasbare ontwinging wat dit reeds in sovele duisende individuele- en gesinsleuens veroorsaak het — was sy antwoord 'n feitlik gelykluidende: „Gee kans, kêrel! Jy en jou soort is te ongeduldig. 'n Ding soos hierdie kom nie oornag reg nie. Ek sou ook maar alte graag die apartheidsbeleid tot in sy volle konsekwensies dadelik deurgevoer wou sien. Maar jy kan nie die vrug ryp druk nie. Die tyd is nog nie ryp nie . . .”

**En dan natuurlik uit die mond van etlike deeglik bewuste en verantwoordelike predikante van die N.G. Kerk met wie ek in die afgelope tyd hul houding ten opsigte van die omstrede en tans amptelik verworpe Christelike Instituut bespreek het. Hulle reaksie was deurgaans feitlik woordeliks dieselfde: „Die Instituut het wel iets groots beet en kan seker nie mee fout gevind word op strenge Skrifgronde nie. Maar julle mense is te haastig. 'n Mens kan nie sommer daardie revolusionêre soort gedagterigting op die kerk en die volk wil afdwing nie. Mettertyd sal dit seker inslag vind, maar die tyd is duidelik nog nie daarvoor ryp nie . . .”**

Wat, dan, is hierdie revolusionêre gedagterigting wat nie oorhaastig op die volk van Christus moet afdwing word nie? Wat is hierdie gewaagde ding waarvoor die tyd nog nie ryp is nie? Vanwaar hierdie byna outomatiese beroep op uitstel as 'n oplossing?

Is dit dan nog nodig om doekies daarom te draai? Veral die antwoord van die predikante — die onlangse amptelike Sinodale reaksie, tewens, van die hele magtige N.G. Kerk — is insiggewend. Die verantwoordelike leiers van dié kerk, soos Felix, weet nl. maar al te goed waarom dit gaan: dat die Christelike Instituut hoegenaamd nie besig is om die kerk te ondermyn, met hom te kompeteer of op sy terrein te beweeg nie, maar wel op 'n terrein wat die kerk reeds sedert 1960, alle vroom praatjies ten spyt, doelbewus en angsvallig vermy — die terrein van die ekumeniese en interkerklike.

En waarom word dié deel van wat eintlik die kerk se terrein behoort te gewees het, so angsvallig vermy en so dikwels teen gewaarsku op 'n toon wat soms grens aan die histeriese?

Weereens is dit nie nodig om doekies om te draai nie. Nastrewing van die goddelik-gebode ekumeniese ideaal impliseer in ons land onvermydelik die oorbrugging van bestaande kerkgenootskaplike asook rassegrense. En hier sit die angel. Want die nivellering van die amptelik vasgelegde grense tussen die rasse, selfs op die suiwer godsdienstige vlak van gesamentlike aanbidding, verteenwoordig 'n onberekenbare waagstuk en hou 'n onmeetlike gevaar in vir die gerief en die sekuriteit van die getalsswakke blanke bevolkingsgroep.

**Dáárom dat die toonaangewende leiers van dié groep, en by name ook die groot meerderheid predikante van die drie Afrikaanse kerke, verkies om hulle oë en ore te sluit vir die duidelike opdrag van Christus in dié verband, om dinge telkens maar nog so 'n bietjie langer hul gang te laat gaan, om hul morele gewete te paai met allerlei teologiese spitsvondighede en rasionaliseringe wat bereken is om die minder ingeligtes of niksvermoedendes op 'n vals spoor te bring, om 'n duidelike beslissing deur uitstel te vermy, omdat die tyd beweerdelik daarvoor nog nie ryp is nie.**

Met hierdie verskoning in terme van tydsongeskiktheid gaan daar dan gewoonlik gepaard 'n beroep op die skynbaar sakrosankte tradisie: die geykte tradisie van die kerk in Suid-Afrika, maar veral ook, en wesenlik, die volkstradisie. ('n Beroep, terloops, wat vreemd klink komende uit die mond van nasate van die Hervormers, mense van Gereformeerde oortuiging, een van wie se vernaamste beginselbesware teen die Rooms-Katolisisme juis dié kerk se terugval op- en vergoddeliking van „geheiligde tradisie” is!)

#### ARGUMENT TEN GUNSTE VAN UITSTEL

Die aangevoerde argument ten gunste van uitstel van die onvermydelike beslissing wat uiteindelik gemaak moet word, lui dan ongeveer so:

Die tyd is nog nie ryp vir drastiese verandering nie omdat die tradisie van ons volk en ons kerk nog nie stewig genoeg gevestig is nie; ons s'n is, relatief gesproke, nog maar 'n baie jong land, onthou, en totale vervolmaking van die ideale kan werklik nie nou al van ons verwag word nie; alles is nog nie soos dit moet wees nie, dis waar, maar

ons verkeer nog in 'n oorgangsstadium; hoewel ons reeds 'n verbaasende lang skof afgelê het, is ons nog nie heeltemal die bult oor nie — net nog 'n bietjie tyd, 'n bietjie geduld, 'n laaste gesamentlike hup-stootjie, en ons is waarskynlik daar; intussen is daar nog 'n paar baie duidelike bedreigings vir ons „tradisionele Afrikaanse leefwyse”: die „gevaar” van innerlike verdeling in ons eie geleedere (deur die verraderlike „Engelse” — **perfide Albion** — met hul gemene beleid van „verdeel en heers”; deur die verdoemlike „Engelse Pers”; deur die verfoeilike verskynsel van „humanisme” en „liberalisme” wat besig is om sy lelike kop onder ons mense, en veral aan ons universiteite, uit te steek; deur die bedenklige Sestiger-groep op kultuurgebied, met hulle wilde en wêreldse idees; deur die onaantasbare „veelrassige” Christelike Instituut met sy al te gevorderde teologiese siening; ens. ens.); die „gevaar” van Oorsese inmenging in ons landsake; die „gevaar” van V.V.O.-sanksies; die „gevaar” van oorrumpeling deur die getalsterke „Swart Afrika” binne en buite ons landsgrense; die „gevaar” van insydeling van ons „volkseie” deur Rooms-Katolieke en origins onwenslike immigrante; die „gevaar” van 'n verbastering en selfs die ondergang van ons Afrikaanse taal; die „gevaar” van 'n internasionale nederlaag op enige sportveld.

**Nee, die tyd is nog nie ryp nie! Daar is nog te veel „gevaare” wat ons eers die hoof moet bied en moet uitwis — „gevaare” wat gerieflikerwys eindeloos en onvoorspelbaar lank opgetower kan word deur ons alarmskreeuende kerk- en volkleiers — voordat ons kan begin erns maak met die opdrag van Christus teenoor Sy volgelinge: om almal saam één te wees, soos Hy en die Vader één is; en om só, in alle maatskaplike geregtigheid, teenoor ons naaste te begin optree soos ons graag sou wou sien dat daar teenoor onself opgetree word!**

Die tyd is nog nie ryp vir 'n konfrontasie met ons verantwoordelike Christelike gewete nie, omdat ons nog eers, vir eers, voorlopig vir altyd, ons „tradisionele leefwyse” moet verstewig en bestendig; omdat ons kerke en kerkleiers nog eers, vir eers, voorlopig vir altyd, geroepe is om te dien as 'n „bolwerk” vir die behoud van dié „tradisionele leefwyse” — omdat ons, dooies na die gees, nog eers gedwonge voel om

ons eie dooies te begrawe en „afskied te neem van dié wat in ons huis (volk, tradisie, Afrikanerdom, bloed, bodem?) is”, ten spyte van ons Meester se vermaning: „Niemand wat sy hand aan die ploeg slaan en agtertoe kyk, is geskik vir die koninkryk van God nie”.

### DIE UITDAGING VAN DIE SKRIF

Hoe hemelsbreed verskil dit alles nie van die boodskap van die Skrifopenbaring nie!

Dáár word dit heeltemal duidelik, onomwonde en ondubbelsinnig aan ons gestel dat „dit tyd is om die Here te soek, totdat Hy kom” (Hos. 10:12); dat „die uur vir ons reeds daar is om uit die slaap wakker te word” (Rom. 13:11); dat „die tyd kort is” (I Kor. 7:29); dat „omdat die opdrag van die koning dringend is” (I Sam. 21:8), God gesê het ons „moet gou maak” (II Kron. 35:21); dat ons ons moet beywer om ook soos die Psalmdigter te durf sing: „Ek het my gehaas, en nie getalm nie, om u geboorte te onderhou”. (Ps. 119:60). En waar kan ons ’n mooier voorbeeld van hierdie besondere geesteshouding vind as juis in die geval van die vrome volksvader Abraham? Van hom lees ons in Gen. 22:1-3 dat, toe God hom die beproewende opdrag gegee het om sy enigste seun, Isak, in Moria te gaan offer, hy nie nog getalm en uitstel gevra het nie, maar „die môre vroeg klaargemaak en sy esel opgesaal” het.

Dit is ook skaars moontlik om die voorbeeld van die vroeë Christene mis te kyk. Hulle geesteskrag was nouliks geleë in die terugkyk op ’n destyds amper nog-nie-bestaande tradisie, in ’n oor-die-skouer terugblik op ’n roemryke verlede, in ’n handhawing van die status quo, maar in ’n vorentoe-kyk, ’n toekomsverwachting, ’n reikhalende vooruitstrewing na die komende Koninkryk van God, ’n ongeduldige najaag van dié dinge wat vir die ware volgelinge van Christus beloof is.

**Tradisie assulks, sy dit die tradisie van ’n volk of ’n kerk, besit ongetwyfeld ’n sekere bestendigingswaarde en dra onmiskenbaar by tot ’n gevoel van sekuriteit by beide die individu en die groep. Maar nêrens in die Skrif, en veral in die Nuwe Testament, word tradisie ooit opgehemel as iets goddeliks nie, of word toekomsverontagsamende tradisie-**

**vastheid ooit as ’n Christelike deug gekenskets nie.**

En wanneer tradisiegebondenheid en die handhawing van die status quo lei tot die fundering van ’n valse en selfsugtige persoons- of groepssekuriteit, is dit ’n duidelike euwel. Wanneer ’n laakbare „tradisionele leefwyse”, wat wesenlik gebaseer is op ’n onnatuurlike chauvinistiese selfisolasiëdrang en vreemdelingevoers, verabsoluteer word tot volksnorm, is dit ’n sonde in die oë van die Here. Wanneer ’n tradisie van selfsugtige ekonomiese misbruikmaak van die ongeskoolde arbeidskrag van ’n naasbestaande bevolkingsgroep vir eie gewin en sonder prysgawe van enige eie, gereserveerde groepsvoorregte aangeprys word as ’n „behoud van ons tradisionele leefwyse”, is dit ’n onverdedigbare onreg wat gepleeg word in die naam van ’n tradisionele „blanke, Westerse, Christelike beskawing”. Wanneer huisgesinne opgebreek word, normale maatskaplike omgang versteur word, Christelike gemeenskap verbied word in die naam van ’n reeds verafgode tradisie, is dit heiligskenis.

En wanneer daar amptelik en nie-amptelik deur Christene nie ’n vinger verroer word om „tradisionele” misstande reg te stel nie, „omdat die tyd nog nie ryp is nie”, omdat ’n „oorgangsstadium” nog eers deurleef moet word en omdat daar nog eers ’n tradisie is om te bewaar, te handhaaf en te bestendig, is dié skynvrome verskonings gewortel in ’n leuen en gegrondves op klaarblyklike huigelary.

Tradisie en tradisiebewustheid kan ’n goeie ding wees, maar ook nie altyd en onder alle omstandighede nie. Ook ons eie volkstradisie en die „tradisionele leefwyse” wat ons kerk hom geroepe voel om as „bolwerk” te dien, is nie uit die onvermengd goeie saamgestel nie, dog laat veel te wense en te verbeter oor. En dit moet vir enige gewetensgekwelde Christen en kerklidmaat ’n bron van die diepste bekommernis wees dat sy eie kerk en dié kerk se toonaangewendste leiers al hoe meer dié dinge as verskoning gebruik om onmiskenbare maatskaplike ongeregthede oogluikend toe te laat, om ’n sendingaksie onder nie-blanke dogterkerk-lidmate in stand te hou wat, in ons huidige bedeling, op ’n klaarblyklike leuen teenoor ons minder-bevoorregte mede-Christene gebaseer is — om

maar te laat begaan, om sake maar hulle „normale” gang te laat gaan, omdat die tyd nog nie ryp is vir verandering, hervorming, ’n ernsmaak met die opdrag van Christus nie . . .

**Wanneer sal die tyd vir ’n geloofsen gewetensbeslissing vir ons volk, vir ons kerk, vir ons kerkleiers en predikante ooit genoegsaam ryp word? Wanneer ons wat, soos Felix, „noukeurig genoeg met die dinge van die Weg bekend” is, tot die uiteindelijke besef kom dat dié Weg vir ons deur Christus aangedui word, nie as ’n aardigheid nie, maar omdat dit bedoel is om hier en nou bewandel te word? Wanneer die „verkrampende” vrees en ang waarmee ons bevange is, uiteindelik so intens word dat dit ons sal uitdryf tot die onderneem van ’n duidelike waagstuk met die belydenis op ons lippe: „die dag as ek vrees, sal ek op U vertrou”? (Ps. 56:4).**

Of wanneer dit reeds te laat is? Wanneer óns ook voor ’n geslote deur te staan sal kom en ons „begin buitekant te staan en aan die deur te klop en te sê: Here, Here, maak vir ons oop” — en Hy sal antwoord en vir ons sê: „Ek ken julle nie waar julle vandaan is nie . . . Gaan weg van My, al julle werkers van die ongeregthede” (Luk. 13:25-27).

In die lig van die so pas verstreke Kerstyd pas dit ons om weereens daarvoor na te dink dat ons Here Jesus Christus, die Seun van God, as Seun van die Mens na ons sondige aarde neergedaal het, deel geword het van ons gebrekkige mensewêreld en ingetree het in ons geteisterde mensegeskiedenis „in die volheid van die tyd”.

Hoe verwronge ookal die beeld van God in die mens, hoe skynbaar ongeleë ookal die tydstip, hoe onideaal ookal die uiterlike omstandighede, het God lank gelede reeds die tyd ryp genoeg geag om ’n aanvang te maak met sy wonderbaarlike verlossingswerk — en is die Christuskind gebore wat vir ons, en vir almal van ons medemense vir wie onself nog nie tyd het nie, uiteindelik aan ’n kruis sou sterwe. (Hy wat, toe die tyd vir Hom ryp geword het, ook die versoeking waaraan ons tans onderhewig is, gesmaak het, die versoeking tot die vra om uitstel, toe Hy gebid het: „My Vader, as dit moontlik is, laat hierdie beker by my verbygaan; nogtans nie soos Ek wil nie, maar soos U wil”; maar wat, toe dit vir Hom duidelik geword

het dat die beslissing nie langer uitgestel kon word nie, dit tegemoetgegaan het met Sy „Kyk, die uur is naby . . .”)

En hiermee is ook nog 'n ander gerieflike verskoning vir uitstel die selfregverdigende huiweraars en huigelaars ontnem: die verskoning n.l. dat 'n strewe na die ideale hier op aarde sinneloos is omdat dit eers tot vervulling kan kom met die totstandkoming van die toekomstige Koninkryk van God. Want hoewel dié Koninkryk klaarblyklik nog nie gekom het nie, het Christus, met Sy aardse lewe, kruisdood en opstan-

ding destyds reeds Sy Koninkryk op aarde gestig. En in dié Koninkryk van Christus waarvan ons die onderdane is, staan ons direk met Christus gekonfronteer as ons Koning en Opdraggewer, word daar 'n onmiddellike verantwoordelikheid ons opgelê deur Hom persoonlik, hier en nou, op ons aarde, in ons tyd. Die tyd sal nie nog, eendag, ryp word vir die vervulling van die mens se verantwoordelikheid teenoor sy Meester nie. Met die koms van Christus en die vestiging van Sy Koninkryk in ons mensewêreld het die tyd daarvoor reeds ryp geword,

die volheid van die tyd vir elke gelowige aangebreek.

Dit pas ons ook, aan die begin van 'n nuwe jaar, by die wenteling van die tyd, om te besef dat die tyd vir ons begin kort raak; dat die tyd vir beslissing en oorgawe aan ons Christelike roeping lankal vir ons ryp geword het; dat hierdie nuwe jaar miskien die laaste geleentheid, die laaste bietjie tyd is wat daar vir ons oorbly; dat die tyd, so verre van nog nie ryp te wees nie, vir ons almal lankal oorryp geword het.

## The Mission of the Lay Centre

THE REV. ENOS Z. SIKAKANE

as the Lord of all life.”

WHAT IN THE WORLD?

What I consider to be one of the greatest missions of this Lay Centre is further expressed by him as follows:

“The Church, finding itself locked out of the apartments, seeks imaginative ways for finding entrance, but the real entrance that is needed is for the Church to accept the call to seek the restoration of the lost wholeness of life.”

THE EDENDALE ECUMENICAL CENTRE

The Edendale Lay Ecumenical Centre which is being built at Plessislaer near Pietermaritzburg, Natal, is a fulfilment of a vision of the first African Methodist Christians commonly known in Zulu as **Ononhlevu** (the founders of **Umzondelelo**) who first preached the gospel throughout the Natal province in the nineteenth century.

Whiteside in his history of the Methodist Church of South Africa has recorded that:

“The movement commenced in 1874 after a remarkable revival at Jononoskop in which the agents were lay native preachers. At Edendale, Indaleni, Verulam and

**The Bible which is a library of books, covering the life and works of several generations, portrays man looking down first before he looks up to heaven. This means that our appeal to the most High is motivated by our human situations, our social relationships, our needs and our limitations.**

**The mountain of the Lord's House shall be established on the top of the mountains and shall be exalted above the hills and all nations shall flow into it.** Isaiah 2:2.

Christian ethics has so high a standard that every man weighed has been found wanting. Although we are created in the image of God we still fall short of the glory of God. The image of God in man is defaced but not obliterated because man hears the echoes of the divine despite contradictions within the same man. In the same man there is love and hatred and sensitivity to joy and sorrow. Sincere and very good people have often done much harm in their attempt to do the good. We need a quiet place for meditation.

Dr. Paul Tournier in his book **Guilt and Grace** gives an interesting illustration of how good people with good intentions may nevertheless kill unconsciously. He says:

“We see believers, theologians, and laymen from all churches and from all denominations, especially the most sincerely zealous in sick-visiting, crushing the sick with religious testimony. The forceful assertion of the power of God

who cures those who put their trust in Him conveying the idea that the sick person lacks faith.”

Dr. Tournier also says that the danger of such a generalization is that God cures all those who believe in Him, creating the feeling of guilt in all those who have recourse to scientific medicine, suggesting that science is not the gift of God.

This is a challenge to all of us and requires a **militant ministry** of all the **laity**. The mission of the Lay Centre is to make good provision for consultation and dialogue within the Church itself, provision for men and women to develop initiative and drive to witness for Christ as they live and work. This centre is intended to create and offer training and development in relation to everyday activities. This means the awareness of the mission of the Church to the world.

Colin Williams says:

“We are now facing the need to see that it is an essential mark of the Church not only to witness to Christ as Lord of all nations but that the calling to mission also requires us to cross the **sociological frontiers** to witness to Christ

Driefontein there sprang up simultaneously an earnest desire among native Christians to extend the word to the heathen beyond."

This movement of the laity gave birth to a remarkable evangelical movement known as **Umzondelelo** which means **fervent desire**. It is this **Umzondelelo** that has contributed towards the establishment of this ecumenical centre to bring to reality the vision of the founders of **Ononhlevu**.

Laymen from all churches and from no church will meet here for the purpose of finding the best way of offering their services in schools, in industry, in business, in farming, in the church and everywhere. The founders of the **Umzondelelo** evangelical movement were ecumenically minded. The preaching of the gospel was intended to extend to and embrace all the African people. For instance, at a meeting held at Indaleni in 1877 presided over by the Chairman of the District of Natal, Daniel Msimang, referring to the origin of this movement, said:

"We heard the cries of those who wanted to be saved, from every side came testimony as to the sad state all over the land. We felt that we ought to send people to them. The meeting raised £100 for this work and we look the money to Mr. Cameron."

The Rev. J. Cameron was the Chairman of the Natal Districts.

This was the ministry of the laity, the priesthood of all the believers, and this was the beginning of the ecumenical movement in Natal sponsored by the Africans themselves.

### THE PURPOSE OF THE EDENDALE LAY ECUMENICAL CENTRE

The **Deed of Trust** of the Edendale Lay Ecumenical Centre, dated 20th April 1965, declares that:

"Whereas the donor (**Umzondelelo**) is anxious to assist in the inauguration at Edendale in Natal of an interdenominational lay academy where laymen of all churches and from different daily occupations may study God's Word together, where they may through Bible Study learn how to make their Christian witness more effective in the place where

they work and their service more active in the church where they worship . . .

"And whereas the donor is anxious to assist in the formation of a trust to inaugurate, take charge of, manage or control such lay academy and to donate to the Trust immovable property (i.e. 10.7 acres). There is hereby constituted a trust to be known as the Edendale Lay Ecumenical Centre, hereinafter called the trust."

It is **interdenominational** in outlook and in control. Although the first Director of the Centre will be a Methodist, there is nothing in its constitution or deed of trust to prevent future directors from being chosen from other denominations. Moreover, the governing Board of Trustees includes clergy and laymen from Anglican, Congregational, Methodist and Presbyterian churches and hopes soon to add representatives of the Dutch Reformed, Lutheran and Roman Catholic churches.

The Natal Christian Council is represented by one Trustee, a layman. The IDAMASA (Interdenominational African Ministers' Association of Southern Africa) has accepted this project in principle.

Participants in the courses will be encouraged to form friendships among themselves across denominational barriers, and, most important of all, to accept the transforming friendship of Christ which transcends all sectarian differences.

Laymen form a considerable proportion of its Board of Trustees. The large majority of those attending the courses, whether as lecturers or group leaders or as learners, will be lay folk. The main purpose of the centre will be to equip laymen to play a truly Christian rôle in society.

This wider meaning will be taught in a practical way through special courses run by experts in their own fields, for example, there will be courses on social problems, including juvenile delinquency. People should be aware of such problems and should be led to feel responsible. There will be courses for industrialists, where the master-servant relationship might be discussed and methods of securing harmony and co-operation explored. Workers

should be free to offer criticisms and new ideas. They can be shown that increase in wages or salaries should be justified by improved quality of the products.

There might also be a course aimed at gaining an understanding of the functions of the police. They are potential ministers of Christ in their own field. Then why not a dialogue between them and clergymen to find and strengthen common ground?

There will be family weeks for husbands and wives, courses for nurses and other hospital workers to explore more possibilities for a Christian witness.

Various types of courses and leadership training in Christian service would be conducted for lawyers, farmers, businessmen, ministers, evangelists, and boys and girls.

Bible Study aimed at discovering the mind of Christ on the problems under discussion would be of basic importance in all these courses. Participants should be convinced of the present-day relevance of Christ's teaching.

\* *Mr. Sikakane, a Methodist minister, has been appointed as the first Director of the Edendale Lay Ecumenical Centre, a position which he will take up as from the 1st January, 1967.*

### SCOLARSHIPS FOR LEADERS OF LAY TRAINING

Six scholarships for a course for leaders of lay training lasting from October 1967 until June 1968 are being offered by the Department on the Laity, World Council of Churches, Geneva, for applicants from churches in Asia, Africa and Latin America. This course is meant for persons either assigned to or already engaged in lay training programmes. They should be people with sufficient educational background (preferably university graduates) and practical experience and they should also be persons who are committed to work in the field of lay training for at least two or three years after their period of training in Europe. Applications must be in hand not later than 15th February, 1967, and full particulars may be had from Mr. F. J. van Wyk, 408 Dunwell, 35 Jorissen Street, Braamfontein, Johannesburg.

# DIE KERK BUITE SUID-AFRIKA

SAMEWERKING TUSSEN DIE KERKE

PROF. B. B. KEET

**In Genève is deur verteenwoordigers van die Wêreldraad van Kerke en van die Vatikaanse Sekretariaat besluit tot 'n gesamentlike oproep van die Protestantse, Ortodokse en Rooms-Katolieke kerke om 'n studie- en aksie-program vir die bestryding van sosiale misstande in die wêreld op te stel.**

Onder andere word genoem: die verhoudinge tussen die rasse, die ontwikkeling op sosiale, ekonomiese en kulturele gebied, hulpverlening in noodsituasies, sorg vir vlugteling, onderneminge in verband met die vrede, deelname aan internasionale organisasies wat hulp verleen waar dit nodig is. Dit word besef dat daar tussen die kerke nog verskille van opvatting bestaan, maar dat daar ook terreine is waar gemeenskaplike optrede moontlik is. Daarom is samewerking tussen die kerke goed in die bestudering van die teologiese grondslag van Christelik-sosiale arbeid; die vaste oortuiging bestaan dat daar nie voldoende rede is om afsonderlik op hierdie terreine te werk te gaan nie. Hierdie besluit is bekend gemaak in verband met die wêreld-konferensie vir Kerk en Samelewing in Genève. Elf Rooms-Katolieke en veertien verteenwoordigers uit die kerke van die Wêreldraad het aan die beraadslaginge deelgeneem.

Hulle het ooreengestem dat die kerke die verantwoordelikheid dra om by alle volke en regeringe daarop aan te dring dat hulle hul inspan om die politieke, ekonomiese en sosiale beleid van die wêreld tot groter regverdigheid te lei. Tot nou toe het die kerke nog steeds hulle nie effektief genoeg besig gehou met die node van die mensheid nie en gee nie genoeg voorkeur aan poginge om hieraan 'n einde te maak nie.

Uit Princeton kom die merkwaardige berig dat 'n Rooms-Katolieke student hom ingeskryf het aan die Seminarie, sonder die toestemming van sy biskop.

James McHugh verklaar dat hy by 'n Protestantse seminarie aansluit het, omdat hy seker wil wees dat hy aan ekumeniese arbeid kan deelneem, nadat hy as Katolieke priester toegelaat word. Tegnies is hy nie lid van die seminarie nie omdat, soos Msgr. Floyd Brown dit uitdruk, hy op sy eie is. McHugh het sy filosofiese studies aan die seminarie, Christ the King, voltooi en sou normaalweg sy driejarige teolo-

giese kursus nou begin het. Omdat hy nog nie ofisieel aangestel is tot 'n pos nie, was hy vry om op sy eie te gaan. Self maak hy duidelik: „Ek voel dat dit nou die tyd is om dit te doen. Later kan 'n biskop my afwys as ek aansoek sou doen om ekumeniese werk te verrig. Ek glo dat die kerk van die toekoms anders sal wees as die erk van vandag en dat ek ewentueel 'n beter priester sal wees weens my ondervinding te Princeton”.

## DIE HERVORMDE KERK WENS KARL BARTH GELUK

Die moderamen van die Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk het by geleentheid van sy 80e verjaarsdag aan Prof. Barth in 'n brief van gelukwensing gestuur waarin daarop gewys word dat Barth in Nederland 'n besondere invloed gehad het op die vorming en ontwikkeling van die teologiese diskussie. „Die wyse waarop u ons telkens weer verrassende perspektiewe geopen het vir die verkondiging van Gods Woord en die getuienis van die Kerk van Christus in die wêreld het ons ook opgeroep om ons verantwoordelikheid nuwe gestalte te gee in die arbeid van die Hervormde Sinode en van die sinodale organisasie” sê die brief wat onderteken is deur dr. E. Emmen, sekretaris-generaal van die Hervormde Kerk. Daar word ook op gewys dat, hoewel daar in die Hervormde Kerk oor belangrike teologiese vrae verskille van insig met Karl Barth bestaan, dit 'n behoefte van die Hervormde Kerk is om diepe dankbaarheid tot uitdrukking te bring vir alles wat hy vir die besinning op die opdrag van die Kerk van Christus, in die besonder ook in ekumeniese opsig, bygedra het.

Oor die Bekenentis-beweging: „Geen ander evangelie nie” het Barth hom in 'n artikel in die Dortmundse Protestantse Maandblad soos volg uitgelaat: „As die beweging nie bereid is om ook politiek op te tree nie deur hom te verklaar teen die atoombewapening van die Bundeswehr, teen die oorlog in Vietnam, teen die anti-semitisme in

Wes-Duitsland en vir die vredesverdrag met behoud van die sedert 1945 bestaande grense nie, is dit nie meer as 'n farisiese beweging nie. Slegs wanneer die Bekenentisbeweging (bestaande uit 20,000 persone wat by die stigting aanwesig was) ook in politieke sake stelling neem, kan dit 'n juiste, waardevolle en vrugbare belydenis formuleer”.

## NIKS NUUTS ONDER DIE SON

In 'n Nederlandse tydskrif vertel ds. Groeneberg van 'n parallel met die wit opstootjies in Amsterdam, maar drie honderd jaar gelede was dit swart. Dit het gebeur nie in 1966 nie maar in 1628, net soos vandag: die tienerjariges wat die opstootjies veroorsaak het, die polisie wat hardhandig opgetree het en met klippe bestook is, 'n burgemeester wat aanspreeklik gestel is.

Die merkwaardige was dat die kerk en die kerkmense toe nie met hoofskuddings aangesien en vermaninge uitgedeel het nie, maar met welgevallen dit opgemerk het en van die preekstoel hulle agter die Provo's optewel agter die „Grys Geuse”, gestel het. Deur die naam „swart geuse” is die vroom kerkvolk aangedui, „grys geuse” was die straatvolk wat graag opstandjies gemaak het, met welgevallen aangesien deur die „swart geuse”. In 'n sekere huis het op tweede Paasdag 'n aantal Remonstrante saamgekom, iets wat toe onwettig was. Die owerheid het dit oogluikend toegelaat, maar die jeugdiges het hulle kans waargeneem. Dit is heerlik om 'n rede te hê om êrens ruite in te gooi, of dit nou gebeur uit naam van die leer van die uitverkiesing (dit was die geval in die geskil met die Remonstrante) of uit naam van die vrede in Vietnam of die Republiek. Hoe heerlik as jy die boel stukkend kan slaan terwyl selfs die vrome kerkvolk daar behae in vind en dominees in vurige preke jou byna daartoe opwek en sekerlik vir jou sal opkom.

Amsterdam was altyd 'n roerige stad. En so bly dit by die wisseling van kleur (swart en wit). Ons sou in die knyp raak as die wit provo's in 1966 aan ons sou sê: ons het dit geleer van die swart geuse van 1628. Die geskiedenis is leersaam. Die geskiedenis is lastig.

# ANTITHESES TO ANTIKOM

— DOUGLAS BAX

**ANTI KOM** is the monthly printed 'newsletter' stemming from the extremist rightwing group behind the National Council to Combat Communism, which held its 'international symposium' on Communism in Pretoria in September, 1966. It includes Dr. J. D. Vorster, Prof. A. D. Pont, Mr. S. E. D. Brown and Ds. D. F. B. de Beer (editor of Antikom). In its February 1966 issue this newsletter published as its main article a sharp attack on the Christian Institute. As this group has been allowed much publicity on the radio, as this issue of its newsletter was distributed to many ministers in South Africa, and as the charges made against the Institute in it are typical of those made by rightwing opponents of the Institute it would seem worthwhile to examine them.

(1) **Antikom** condemns the Institute for causing **disunity in the volk**. In the situation in which 'the three Afrikaans Churches . . . after years of theological contemplation have formulated and are maintaining another Biblical view on, for instance, the South African racial question, the Institute by its views has caused 'inner division in spiritual matters' and thus 'not only a weakening of the spiritual life in the church in question, but also a weakening of the life of the people outside, dismantling of its spiritual resistance' (p.1).

The first thing to notice about this charge is that the writer, though he professes to be a Christian and is apparently a dominee (the article is unsigned), is concerned primarily with the strength and unity of the 'life of the people' ('volkslewe'), and only secondarily with the strength and unity of the **Church**. His concern for the strength and unity of the Church is expressed only in connection with its contribution to the strength and unity of the volk. And only in third place, a long way behind both of these concerns, is his interest in the truth of the **gospel**. No legitimate room is allowed by him in principle for us radically to question and re-examine in the light of the **gospel** the traditional views of the **Church** concerning 'for instance, the South African racial question', because these traditional views of the Church do not disturb the peace and unity of the **volk** while such radical re-examination and questioning may, and does.

**But this order of priorities is impossible for a Christian. A Christian must be concerned always first of all with the truth of the gospel,**

**the Word of God. If that gospel speaks against the tradition of the Church, no matter how many 'years of theological contemplation' stand behind it, he must resolutely oppose it. He must stand for the gospel (the Word of God in the Scriptures) even if this involves his standing against the Church, because he knows that this is the only way he can ultimately stand for the Church too, calling it back to its Lord.**

He may not even ask first of all if this will cause strife in the Church or undertake to stand for the gospel only on the condition that it does not cause strife in the Church. For his primary loyalty is not to the Church but to his Lord who speaks through the gospel. And in fact **whenever** there is true witness to the gospel there is strife in the Church, as those who do not wish to follow the Christ of Scripture in radical faith and obedience seek to justify themselves against those who do, by appealing to 'theological contemplation' and 'years of' tradition against the gospel. This is a continual occurrence throughout the history of the Church, from the time of Christ's conflict with the Pharisees and scribes ('theological contemplators') with their 'tradition of men' through the great Christological controversies of the 3rd, 4th and 5th centuries, the Pelagian controversies of the 5th and 6th centuries, and so on until the great battle of the Reformation and beyond. Where would we be today if Luther and Calvin had kept quiet for fear of causing 'great tension or inner division in spiritual matters . . . in the Christian Church' (p.1)?! But they refused to consider this fear a valid or permissible concern when it was urged against them. They chose to stand rather, after the

example of their Lord, for his gospel against the Church of their day and its tradition.

Least of all may a Christian hesitate to witness to the gospel and to question any traditional views in its light because he fears that this will disturb the unity and 'spiritual resistance' of the volk or nation. Rather he knows that as the gospel always causes strife and disunity within the Church itself so much more it will always cause strife and disunity in the nation when it is truly witnessed to — as our Lord Himself promised (Matt. 10:34-39, Lk. 12:49-53). He knows that the 'life of the people' always stands in 'spiritual resistance' against the gospel! For how else is Christ 'a rock of offence' (Ro. 9:33), 'a sign that is spoken against' (Lk. 2:34)? For as 'volk' may not be identified with 'church', so least of all may the 'spirit' of the volk be identified with the 'Spirit' of the gospel. The one is sinful flesh, the other is the Holy Spirit — and 'the desires of the flesh fight against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit fight against the flesh' (Gal. 5:17). Where would we be today if Jesus had kept silent lest he disturb the peace and unity of the Jewish nation and its 'volkslewe' — as He so violently did? Where would we be if Luther and Calvin had kept silent lest they disturb the peace and unity of the German and French 'volksleuens' — as they so violently did?

No, it is not the voice of the Spirit, or the gospel, or the Church's Reformers which urges us to sacrifice the question of the truth of Scripture at the altar of national peace and solidarity. It is the voice of the nationalist, the man whose first loyalty is to his nation or volk. It was the voice of the supernationalist Hitler which berated the Confessing Church in the Third Reich for causing division in the German Church and thus also in the German **Volk** and nation when it stuck to witnessing to the gospel and its implications for the relationship of the races. For these few brave and obedient servants of Christ the evangelical truth was more impor-



tant than unity in the nation, or even in the Church; for Hitler it was not. It was the 25 Points Programme of the National Socialist Party which read: 'We demand liberty for all religious Confessions in the State, (but only) in so far as they do not endanger its stability or offend against the ethical and moral feeling of the German race.'

### UNITY MUST BE MANIFESTED

(2) Paradoxically, **Antikom** condemns the Institute also for striving for **unity in the Church**. It admits that 'Christian unity is forsooth a glorious ideal which should be striven after by all Christians', but it accuses the Institute of striving for an unscriptural unity, the unity of 'modern ecumenism' that involves 'the removal of all disunity between the various Christian church denominations and the ultimate union of the Churches.'

Against this aim it argues: 'When Christ prays: "that they may be one, as we are one" (John 17:11), the reference is in the first place to a **spiritual unity** based upon the confession of the truth in the Word; that all Christians who believe the truth of Scripture are one in heart and mind in Christ Jesus. The unity is not dependent upon a physical togetherness — that all Christians should worship together and enjoy holy communion together; or that all should belong to one Church' (p.2).

The answer to this is that the Christian Institute does believe that there must be a 'spiritual unity based on the confession of the truth in the Word'. It is precisely to help accomplish this that is one of the purposes for which the Institute exists: to encourage Christians to meet in study groups around the Word in order that they may find and work towards that unity — in understanding and confessing. But just as Christ has commanded that we must manifest the new life, the new being of existence, which He has given us outwardly to the world (Mt. 5:14-16), so also this unity as one part of that new being we have in Him must be manifested outwardly and concretely to the world (when it is found and attained). For Christ's prayer, 'that they may be one, as we are one', does not stop there; it **goes on**, 'so that the world may know that Thou hast sent me and hast loved them . . .' (17:23).

In other words this unity must also be outwardly manifested to the world, must be so obvious to the world (which sees only the outward and concrete manifestation of the Church) that it may be able to see that the gospel of Christ is the true gospel of **reconciliation** (and not **division**) and so believe in Him!

**How much Antikom has misunderstood the message of the gospel is shown by its argument that it is not necessary that all Christians should be able to meet together in prayer and eat the sacrament together. This is directly contradicted by Paul in Galatians 2, where he says that to think and act like this is to deny 'the truth of the gospel' and 'live like a heathen' (2:14) — for to the heathen the natural divisions between men are more important than their reconciliation and unity in Christ. This unity, says Paul, must be manifested concretely precisely in the eating together of the Church meals which culminated in the eating of the sacrament together.**

It is not true, however, that the Institute encourages union at the cost of fundamental scriptural truth or 'wants to establish a compromise between the evangelical doctrine of Protestantism and its arch-enemy, Roman Catholicism', as **Antikom** charges (p.2). Rather it seeks to provide groups as forums in which Christians of different persuasions may meet and by the aid of the Holy Spirit may be guided to the **one** Word of the Scriptures which will judge and correct the understanding of each. The Reformers remained in dialogue all their lives with the Roman Catholics with whom they disagreed so much. It is only a post-Reformation, late orthodox idea that there is something wrong in this! Can even the most ardent Protestant deny that it is possible for the Spirit to speak to Roman Catholics through the study of Scripture with Protestants? Or that the Protestants themselves need to be spoken to through Scripture?

### PENTECOST AND MULTI-RACIAL WORSHIP

(3) **Antikom** charges that 'multi-racial churches and gatherings as advocated and practised in the Institute are . . . not Scriptural'. Its argument for this is that the

'miracle of tongues' of Acts 2 was 'that the first congregation, although various nations were represented, heard the Gospel in their own language (v. 6, 8)' and **therefore** 'the gospel must be brought to everyone in his own language. Since the miracle of tongues is not repeated, it can only occur where Christians are separately organized on an ethnical and cultural basis' — and we must therefore have apartheid in the Churches between 'English, Afrikaners, French, Germans, Russians, Hungarians, Chinese, Japanese, Xhosas, Zulus, Basotho, etc.' (p. 2).

The **sequitur** in this argument is logically so poor that one only has to read it to recognize it for what it is, viz. a desperate attempt to justify scripturally an ideological conviction arrived at independently of Scripture and having nothing to do with Scripture. In the first place the 'miracle of tongues' of Pentecost was a sign that in Christ the curse of the Lord placed on men at the Tower of Babel has been abolished. At Babel men who were 'one people' as signified by the fact that they had 'one language' (Gen. 11:6) had joined together in sin, and therefore the Lord had 'confused their language, so that they might not understand one another's speech' and 'scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth' (11:7f). In Christ however we have been joined together again as one people, 'God's own people' (I Pet. 2:9), and Pentecost was a sign that the gospel has become the universal universal language by means of which that reuniting takes place. Or does **Antikom** believe that there is any curse or punishment of the Lord which is not overcome in Christ?

In the second place this argument of **Antikom's** completely ignores the fact that the New Testament presents us with a picture of the early Church as putting this unity which has been accomplished in Christ between the formerly divided language groups or peoples of the earth into concrete practice on the congregational level. Throughout Acts and the Letters of Paul we find congregations made up of Jewish and Gentile races **together**. And these meet to worship in Greek which was often a second language (lingua franca) to **both** groups! We have already cited one such

example: that in Gal. 2, where Paul said, against Peter, that it was essential for the Jewish and the Syrian Christians in Antioch to meet together if they were to remain true to Christ and the gospel. (It is true that sometimes different races can worship better apart because they do not have a common language they can understand or have their own cultural forms in which they find it easier to worship. But these are only occasional, practical grounds, not grounds of principle, and Paul is dealing with principle).

But, argues Antikom, there are 'no Scriptural grounds . . . for the allegation that St. Paul condemned all differentiation in the racial sphere among Christians of the first church' (p. 2). No, it is true that Paul did not condemn differentiation or strive for uniformity. On the contrary he saw in diversity a great

value. But precisely this diversity was, in his mind, the ground for unity — the kind of unity which involved actually being together in order to complement what each lacked by himself (I Cor. 12)!

#### COMPETITION: A FALSE CHARGE

(4)Antikom charges 'that the Christian Institute, although it does not advocate any new church formation, yet moves on the terrain of the church as institute and consequently enters into competition with the church' (p. 2). But this is not true. The Institute provides a forum in which Christians of different denominations and races can meet together to discuss the faith and the problems they hold in common and the differences there are between them. Where is this provided by the Churches themselves — by 'the

church as institute'? The Institute is working also to provide theological education for the ministers of the African Separatist Churches. Where is this otherwise provided by 'the church'?

Not one of these tasks to which the Institute has put its hand is one which has been undertaken or even planned for by the Churches. How then can it be moving 'in competition with the church' in what it does? On the contrary, the Institute has repeatedly declared that it understands itself completely as something only temporary, something which must be ready to dissolve the moment the organized Churches do effectively undertake these tasks. But until then it dare not abandon the tasks Christ has put in its hands. For its Lord is Christ alone — not the 'volkslewe' or any other false god.

## THE TIME OVERDUE \*

With reference to the Roman governor, Felix, who kept on postponing his decision concerning St. Paul, the author deals with the phenomenon of postponement of vital decisions among Christians because the time is allegedly not yet ripe.

This phenomenon he discovers rampant among his own people and in his own church: they are skirting around the making of an inevitable decision, a vital choice, and have been doing so for years.

What is this major decision? Its nature is revealed by the replies of several leading figures to some searching questions, all of them harping on the old refrain that the time is not yet ripe. It soon becomes evident that it concerns the divine injunction to the followers of Christ to strive towards the realization of the noble ecumenical ideal. What deters men about this ideal is not so much its loftiness as the crossing of denominational and racial barriers it necessarily implies. Here lies the sting: the levelling of the officially established barriers between the races, even if only on the plane of common religious worship, entails an incalculable gamble and an immeasurable threat for the comfort and security of the

numerically inferior white population group.

That is why the leaders of this group, and the majority of the ministers of the three Afrikaans churches, prefer to close their eyes and shut their ears to Christ's clear injunction in this regard; why they prefer to mark time, stall a little bit longer, maintain the traditional status quo and to salve their own consciences with clever theological platitudes and spurious rationalisations — all because, according to them, the time is not yet ripe . . .

This lame excuse is usually accompanied by an appeal to the hallowed tradition of the church and of the people.

The argument advanced is that this tradition is not yet sufficiently established and entrenched in a young country like ours for any drastic changes to be contemplated. There are still too many threats to our "traditional Afrikaans way of life" to be dealt with before venturing into unmapped new territory: the threat of an inner division of the people; the threat of Overseas interference, the threat of United Nations sanctions; the threat of being swamped by "Black Africa"; the threat of infiltration of the fortress of the people by Roman Catholic

and other undesirable immigrants; the threat of a bastardization or even the destruction of the Afrikaans language; the threat of international defeat on any sports field . . .

Such "threats" can be conjured forth at random and the fears of the people continually played upon by its leaders, to keep white South Africans from taking any serious notice of Christ's unambiguous injunction to be one, as He and the Father are one and to strive in all earnestness towards the practise of social justice towards all men. The time is not yet ripe for a confrontation with our responsible Christian conscience because tradition must first be adequately bolstered, because the churches must first serve as a bulwark for the "traditional way of life" — because we, dead ones, must first bury our dead and take leave of those who are in our house.

All this is, of course, in complete variance with the message of Scriptural revelation, in which a sense of the utmost urgency and he urgent need for action without any

\* This is a summary in English of Dr. W. B. de Villiers' Afrikaans article: *Die Oorryp Tyd*.

delay repeatedly becomes apparent. Literally hundreds of examples of this can be discovered in the Bible.

Neither dare one ignore the example of the early Christians who hardly ever looked back, but always forward, who never strove to maintain any status quo, but impatiently hurried onwards towards the coming Kingdom of God.

Tradition has its value, but nowhere in Scripture, is it hallowed or declared sacrosanct. And when traditionalism is made to serve as a basis for selfish personal or group security it becomes an evil; when a frequently reprehensible "traditional way of life" becomes normative for a people, it is a sin in the eyes of the Lord; when "traditional" economic misuse is made of a defenceless population group for the preservation of the privileges of a minority group, homes are broken up, normal social intercourse disrupted, Christian fellowship forbidden in

the name of an idolized tradition, we are brought face to face with blasphemy. And when Christians do not move a finger to fight social evils which have become hallowed by "traditions" because "we are still in a transitional stage" and "the time is not yet ripe", these pious excuses are based upon a lie and founded in hypocrisy.

When is the time ever going to become ripe enough for us to act, we who, like Felix, "happen to be well informed about the Christian Movement"? When we finally succeed in conquering our foolish fears? Or when it will already be too late? When we, too, are confronted by an inexorable closed door . . . ?

Christ came to earth for the sake of sinful men "in the fullness of time" — when God, however apparently adverse the circumstances, considered the time to be ripe to start His work of salvation on

earth, among despicable men. And it is of no avail for us to appeal to the fact that the Kingdom of God has not yet come and that we are therefore perfectly entitled to reconcile ourselves with our own imperfections. For the Kingdom of Christ is already with us and the "fullness of time" has already dawned for every sincere and practising Christian who stands historically confronted by his Master and clearly hears His injunctions to His followers.

We stand at the beginning of a new year and this reminder of the passing of time also reminds us that time is running out for us. This year may give us our last opportunity, our last bit of remaining time. So far from not being ripe, the time has long ago become more than ripe for us.