

PRO

VERITATE

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CHRISTELIKE MAANDBLAD VIR SUIDELIKE AFRIKA—CHRISTIAN MONTHLY FOR SOUTHERN AFRICA

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THE LAND IS GOD'S

The desire for land lies close to the heart of South Africa's racial problems. It has been the cause of conflict between racial groups from the first Dutch settlement at the Cape until the present day. Whatever other issues may divide South Africans, until this land conflict is resolved the country will have no peace.

THE CLAIM TO LAND

The white man has had an almost insatiable hunger for land in South Africa. This hunger drove colonists eastward from the Cape, to carve out huge farms and to kill or enslave any native inhabitants who stood in their way. It set Boers upon the Great Trek to escape British restrictions upon the land. It led them to resist any Boer republican Government's attempts to limit property rights, for they held that government existed to protect the farmer's claim to the land.

This white passion for land con-

tinues today. Thousands of urban whites long for a farm of their own. The whites will only support a Government which protects their stake in the soil of South Africa. For nearly thirty years the rulers of this country have tried to purchase "white" farm land for inclusion within African reserves; but no Government dare expropriate such land. For to take land from a white man and to give it to a black runs counter to the whole course of South African history. "The land is ours!" cries the white man — we fought for it, we have a right to it, and we will not give it to the black man.

— P. ALLEN MYRICK

A similar passion for land exists in the African community. More than at any other point, perhaps, African resentment at white rule focuses upon the land question. "The land was ours, and the white man robbed us of it." The division of the country into "black" and "white" areas, with Africans forbidden to own land in the latter but confined to the crowded reserves, arouses great hostility. Many is the African who has asked me bitterly: "Why should a white man own a vast farm of thousands of acres, while I am confined to a tiny plot in the reserve?"

The Africans' desire for land is particularly centred upon the question of freehold rights. To own land in freehold is to gain a special status in the community. Groups which are especially restricted in their opportunities to own property, such as most African independent churches, feel a particular resentment against the authorities and those groups which possess land. Like any other folk, Africans hate being moved from one area to another for the sake of "Group Areas" — but never is the hatred so strong as when such removal means the loss of freehold property. If an African owns a piece of land, however small, he will often resist selling it, no matter how much sale may be to his financial ad-

DIE TYD VIR 'N „BELYDENDE KERK" IS DAAR

— BEYERS NAUDÉ

Ek skryf hierdie artikel 'n paar dae nadat ek koerantuitknipsels ontvang het van die eerste berigte wat in die Suid-Afrikaanse koerante verskyn het oor die deursoeking van die kantore van die Christelike Instituut en van ons huis om dokumente i.v.m. Kommunisme en die A.N.C. te probeer vind, asook van die besluite van die Sinodale Kommissie van die N.G. Kerk van Suid-Transvaal insake lidmaatskap van lede van die N.G. Kerk van die Christelike Instituut, ondersteuning van Pro Veritate en my ouderlingskap van Parkhurst.

Ek is besonder dankbaar vir die bekwame wyse waarop prof. A. S. Geyser, voorsitter van die Raad van Beheer, die saak in sy persverklaring gestel het insake die verdagmakende indruk wat

sekere instansies teen die Christelike Instituut wil skep en ek wil alles beaam wat deur hom gesê is. Ek merk ook uit die berigte dat daar vrae oor die saak in die

(Vervolg op bladsy 4)

(Please turn page over)

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vantage. For that bit of land is a symbol of what his people once had, a sign that he has a bit of security for the future. "The land was ours!" — and if I can hold on to a part of it, I have not quite been defeated.

LAND IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

The desire for land is not confined to South Africa. It has been the source of conflicts in many parts of the world. In the little country of Palestine, centuries ago, the hunger for land was very keen, and it led to much conflict. The experience of ancient Israel in dealing with this problem can teach South Africa a good deal today.

The Israelites, like white South Africans, owned a land which was coveted by others. Their continued control of the land was challenged by other peoples, within and without their borders. Good land was scarce in that dry and barren area; and those who held it never lacked enemies who were eager to lay their hands upon it.

In this situation of land-hunger and land-conflict, Israel held a fundamental belief: **the land is God's**. It does not belong to a nation or a Government or a tribe or an individual — it belongs to God. He has given the land to his people for their use. But their property rights are limited by the will of God and the needs of others. And if they abuse the land or their neighbours, or deny the will of God, God will throw them off his land, and give it to someone else.

The Bible repeatedly asserts that the land is God's. "... the land is mine: for you are strangers and sojourners with me," says God to Israel (Lev. 25:23). The tribes are told to "Pass over the Lord's land" (Josh. 22:19). God emphasises his ownership of the country when he declares through his prophet that he will punish Israel "... because they have polluted **my land** . . . and have filled **my inheritance** with their abominations." (Jer. 16:18).

This God, owner and ruler of the soil, graciously permits his

people to use the land. The soil is one of the gifts which the Lord gives to those who serve him. This conviction is expressed frequently in the Old Testament, in the words of prophets, psalmists and historians. But nowhere is it more eloquently set forth than in the Book of Deuteronomy:

"For the Lord your God is bringing you into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and springs, flowing forth in valleys and hills, a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive trees and honey, a land in which you will eat bread without scarcity, in which you will lack nothing, a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills you can dig copper. And you shall eat and be full, and you shall bless the Lord your God for **the good land he has given you.**"

(Deut. 8:7-10)

Because God is the Lord of the land, the right of land ownership within the community is a limited one. A man does not so much own land, as hold it in trust from God. And this trust is often exercised with careful regard for family tradition. From the time of the conquest of Palestine each family was entrusted by God with a certain portion of land. And this land must stay in the family if at all possible. Thus if a man wishes to sell his land, he must first approach his relatives, to see if they want to purchase it so that it may stay in the family (see Jer. 32:7-8). And no one, not even the Government, can break these traditions by expropriating land without the family's approval (see 1 Kings 21:3). For God himself has given this land into the keeping of this family. This belief stands in stark contrast to the way in which many whites wrested South African soil from Africans without regard for tribal and family traditions.

Furthermore, the man or family to whom the land is entrusted is responsible to God for the way in which he uses it. He cannot do what he likes with it, but must take account of the will of God and the needs of the community. Here the needs of the poor and the unprivileged were a special concern. The poor have a right to the gleanings, after the harvest

(Deut. 24:19-21). The traveller may ease his hunger by eating from the fields (Deut. 23:24-25). The harvest is taxed heavily (10%) every three years, for the sake of "the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow . . ." (Deut. 14:28-29). In short, the soil is not to be used only for the profit or convenience of the land-owners. The whole community, landless as well as landed, has a stake in the soil and must be cared for. And in all that the land-owner does he is accountable to the Lord who is the real owner.

What if the people misuse the land, or break God's will? The Old Testament gives a clear answer: **They will lose the land**. The land is the gift of God to his covenant people. But if they are unfaithful, the gift is withdrawn — they are thrown off the land. Deuteronomy states repeatedly that those who disobey God will lose the land:

"Take heed lest your heart be deceived . . . and the anger of the Lord be kindled against you, and he shut up the heavens, so that there be no rain, and the land yield no fruit, and **you perish quickly from off the good land** which the Lord gives you." (Deut. 11:16-17).

The destruction of Israel and the deportation of its people to Assyria are not an accident; Israel is not the innocent victim of power politics. Israel loses her land to Assyria "... because the people of Israel had sinned against the Lord their God . . ." (2 Kings 17:7 — see the whole of 17:1-23). And Jeremiah declares that the land of Judah is ruined and desolate, without inhabitants, "Because they have forsaken My law which I set before them, and have not obeyed my voice . . ." (Jer. 9:13ff) In short, God has not promised the people permanent possession of the soil — they have no "natural right" to the land. It is theirs only so long as they serve God. And He will not hesitate to tear the land away from those who defy His will.

NABOTH'S VINEYARD — and SOUTH AFRICA

This Biblical understanding of land is clearly expressed in the story of Naboth's vineyard (1 Kings 21:1-24). King Ahab of Israel wants Naboth's field for his

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own use. And he offers him compensation, either a better field or cash. But Naboth refuses. It should be noted that the will of the Government is not absolute; the king cannot simply take the land, to suit his own desires or policies. He must follow God's way of dealing with the community; and in this case that means he must respect the traditions whereby God has entrusted this field to the family of Naboth. Arbitrary expropriation suits the king's convenience and policy; but it does not suit God's will, and so Ahab cannot take the field.

It is Jezebel, the pagan queen who respects neither the will of God nor the rule of law, but insists that the Government's rights are absolute, who seizes Naboth's field. For Jezebel, to give in to Naboth's traditional rights is a sign of weakness: „Do you now govern Israel?" she mocks at Ahab. So Naboth is trampled under foot to serve the pleasures of the Government.

It is impossible to read this story without thinking of South Africa today. Queen Jezebel would permit nothing to stand in the way of Government power; and this is precisely the position of our Government. To modify one's policy or to compromise for the sake of Christian tradition or human dignity is a sign of weakness: "Is not Parliament sovereign?" the Government echoes Jezebel. And so in the name of the godless policy of white supremacy, thousands of Non-Whites have lost their land. Government policy demands that people be moved. At least King Ahab had the decency to offer Naboth fair compensation for his land. In South Africa, Africans have been moved from property to which they held freehold title, without being given freehold rights elsewhere; and the mass removals demanded by the Group Areas regulations have meant the rapid decline in property values, so that people have had to sell their property at a heavy loss.

King Ahab was weak, but at least he began by trying to be just to Naboth. White South Africa rather chooses to imitate the

pagan Jezebel, who cynically destroyed Naboth for his opposition to the Government. One is reminded of the ruthless destruction of Sophiatown a decade ago, and of the cynicism (or the pettiness) of a Government which proclaimed its victory over that ruined community by re-naming the white suburb which was built on its ashes, "Triomf".

The Naboth story ends on a note which South Africa must heed well. After Ahab takes possession of Naboth's vineyard, "The word of the Lord came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, "Arise, go down to meet Ahab king of Israel, who is . . . in the vineyard of Naboth, where he has gone to take possession." And Elijah says to Ahab " . . . You have sold yourself to do what is evil in the sight of the Lord. Behold, I will bring evil upon you; I will utterly sweep you away, and will cut off from Ahab every male, bond or free, in Israel . . ." (1 Ki. 21:17-21) A Government which wantonly disregards the rights of the poor and deprives them of their land without compensation, falls under the wrath of God.

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In their conflicts over land, South Africans white and black, must listen to the Old Testament when it asserts that God is the owner and ruler of the soil, and man is accountable to God for the way he deals with the land.

This means that white South Africa has a terrible guilt, for which it must atone. Because of the white man's ruthless plunder of millions of acres of land from the Africans who owned it, he stands condemned before God. In addition, white South Africa continually mocks God by its Group Areas policy, by which it deprives folk of their land without giving them either a voice in that decision or adequate compensation for their property. And the "Bantu Homeland" policy defies the Biblical concern for justice in land distribution and for the protection of the poor, by confining the vast majority of the people of this country to a tiny minority of the land.

Furthermore, the white farmer bears an especially heavy bur-

den of guilt. He has scorned the freedom of his Non-White workers, through his use of the pass laws and farm goals to confine them to his farms. He has denied their humanity by the fearfully low wages and poor housing which he provides. (There are some notable exceptions to this rule, but they remain exceptions.) The fact that the platteland farmer is noted for his devotion to the Church does not lessen his guilt, but makes it all the worse.

In relation to its land policy, the prophet Isaiah speaks directly to white South Africa:

Woe to those who join house to house,
who add field to field,
until there is no more room . . .
The Lord of hosts has sworn in my hearing:
"Surely many houses shall be desolate, large and beautiful houses, without inhabitant."
(Isa. 5:8-9)

The Non-European also, in his hunger for property, should remember the Biblical teaching concerning land. The African farmer however small his plot in the reserve, is accountable to God for his use of the soil; and to rob it of its fertility through owning too much stock or failing to check erosion is as much an offence against God as is the white man's greed and exploitation. Perhaps one can hardly blame the African farmer for his slowness to modernise his farming, since he has so very little land to work with and he is encouraged to reform by a Government which oppresses him. Yet the Biblical imperative remains the same for all: the land is God's and must not be abused.

Thus man has no "natural right" to the land. He is God's steward, privileged to tend the soil in God's name. His stewardship must be exercised with careful regard to the fertility of the soil and the needs of the community. He who exhausts the soil carelessly or for his own profit, or who uses the land to exploit others, or who renders them landless for his own wealth or power, abuses one of God's great gifts. The judgment of God will fall upon him. And he will lose the land.

DIE TYD VIR 'N „BELYDENDE KERK” IS DAAR

(Vervolg van bladsy 1)

Volksraad aan die Minister van Justisie gestel sal word en ek sien met groot belangstelling uit na die inhoud van die antwoord wat gegee sal word. Want dit moet vir elkeen wat nog 'n sin vir geregtigheid het, volkome duidelik wees dat in hierdie saak van die optrede van die kant van die Staat daar êrens iets ernstig skeef-geloop het.

Na ernstige oorweging van al die gebeure en ontwikkelinge ag ek dit nodig om die volgende te konstateer:

ALGEHELE VERWERPING VAN KOMMUNISME

Weereens wil ek bevestig dat nóg die Christelike Instituut nóg ek persoonlik enige kontak met enige Kommunistiese organisasie of groep het of ooit gehad het en dat sowel die Christelike Instituut as ekself in persoon ons algehele verwerping van die Kommunisme beide as ideologie en in sy metodes uitgespreek het. Onomwonde en duidelik wil ek dit hier stel dat geen poging deur wie of watter kant ook al aangewend, enige bevestiging sal bring van die argwaan wat doelbewus geskep word dat die Christelike Instituut of Pro Veritate Kommunistiese leerstellings of oogmerke nastreef, duld of bevorder nie. Die grondslag, doelstellinge en getuienis van sowel die Instituut as die blad was nog nooit anders en wil niks anders wees nie as dié van 'n suiwer Christelike waar die Woord van God en die boodskap van die Skrif in alles op alle gebiede tot alle mense spreek. Op hierdie ingeslane weg sal ons voortgaan en niemand sal ons van hierdie weg laat afwyk nie — nie na regs of na links nie.

VALSE AANKLAGTE EN GOEDKOOP SPREUKE

Verder wil ek daarop wys dat die Christelike Instituut reeds meer as 'n jaar gelede in 'n openbare verklaring gewaarsku het

teen die gevaarlike tendense in Suid-Afrika wat duidelik in sekere Afrikaanse kerklike en kulturele kringe te bespeur word van 'n toenemende gees van McCarthyisme, gegrond op en gevoed deur 'n verwronge insig in die Kommunisme en sy effektiewe bestryding. Sommige persone en instansies hoop blykbaar om 'n twyfelagtige voordeel ter wille van eie posisie of ideologiese oogmerke te behaal deur op 'n handige maar roekelose manier die vrees van baie blankes vir die Kommunisme uit te buit. Weereens wil ons waarsku dat 'n gebrekkige of eensydige begrip van die Kommunisme, sowel in sy historiese as in sy huidige vorm, onbewus kan lei tot totaal verkeerde beskrywingsmetodes wat op die lang duur alleen die Kommunisme kan aanhelp en die saak van die Christendom en die Evangelie ernstig gaan benadeel. Deel van hierdie gevaarlike en skewe metodes is om met goedkoop slagspreuke soos „liberalisme”, „necrofilisme” en „Kommunisme” ook dié Christene en Christelike organisasies en tydskrifte of publikasies te be-etiket wat soek om op 'n suiwer Bybelse en Christelike grondslag gelykberegtiging vir alle mense in Suid-Afrika op 'n verantwoordelike en ordelike wyse te bevorder. Sulke metodes kan tydelik slaag maar uiteindelik vernietig hulle die persone en organisasies wat hulle aanwend en dien hulle alleen die saak van die Kommunisme. As daarby nog kom aksies soos dié wat tans teen die Christelike Instituut en teen Pro Veritate gevoer word, kan dit alleen gesien word as 'n gees van paniekbevangingheid van persone en instansies wat daarmee erken dat hul stryd in werklikheid nie teen die Kommunisme is nie maar teen die Kruis van Christus — en dat hulle daardie stryd reeds klaar verloor het.

WAARHEEN IS ONS OP PAD?

Ons is almal bewus van die feit hoedat deur effektiewe manipulerings van propagandategnieke sommige politieke leiers en sekere Afrikaanse koerante, asook die S.A.U.K., daarin geslaag het om 'n groot deel van die blanke bevolking huiwerig en afwysend te laat staan teenoor kritiek van die buiteland op gebeure in

Suid-Afrika. Ek wil ook dadelik onderstreep dat eensydige en selfs onware berigte vanuit Suid-Afrika daartoe bygedra het om hierdie houding by baie blankes te veroorsaak en te verskerp. Maar die reaksies wat ek beleef het in Europa in kerklike kringe by die lees van al die berigte (sowel in die Afrikaanse as Engelse nuusblaaie uit Suid-Afrika) moet dié van ons in Suid-Afrika wat nog waarde heg aan die opregte belangstelling en diepe besorgheid van Kerk- en Christenleiers in Europa wat goed vertrou is met ons omstandighede, ernstig laat nadink oor die vraag: **Waarheen is ons op pad?** Die reaksies van die kerkleiers was tweeledig: een groep was diep geskok oor die feit dat so iets in Christelike Suid-Afrika kan gebeur — sowel wat die deursoeking van die Christelike Instituut, ons huis en my persoon, betref as ook die besluite van die Sinodale Kommissie van die N.G. Kerk insake die Instituut, Pro Veritate en my ouderlingenskap. Ons in Suid-Afrika moenie vergeet nie dat kerkleiers in Europa gereeld kennis neem van die inhoud van al die stukke van die Christelike Instituut, uitaaies van Pro Veritate, en kerklike blaaië en kerklike berigte in ons Afrikaanse pers, en dat hulle oordeel dus nie gegrond is op eensydige of verdraaide beriggewing nie.

Die ander groep was glad nie geskok nie; hulle reaksie was ongeveer soos volg: „Ons het al lankal beweer dat Suid-Afrika in wese 'n diktatuurstaat geword het waar die vryheid van individu sowel as van kerk al meer aangetas en ingeperk word. Hierdie gebeure het dit vir ons weer eens ten duidelikste bewys en die besluite van amptelike kerklike kommissies dit bevestig dat hulle nie wil insien hoe die kerk al meer sy roeping verloën en sy reg prysgee om sy profetiese getuienis te laat hoor nie.” Wat albei groepe nie verstaan nie, is hoe dit kan gebeur dat verantwoordelike kerklike liaggeme dit moontlik vind om besluite soos dié van die Sinodale Kommissie te neem sonder dat daar 'n woord oor oortreding teen Skrif en belydenis gesê word. Maar wat albei groepe baie goed verstaan, is dat ten

(Vervolg op bladsy 6)

Editorial:

The Extended Hand

During January 1965 a number of ministers from African Independent (or Separatist) Churches met in Daveyton African Township, Benoni, to discuss their need for improved theological training. At this conference several resolutions were adopted, all of which were important for the future life of the Church in South Africa, but one was of special significance:

"We sincerely appeal to the bigger Churches i.e. integrated Churches which we left as early as 1888 that we are their work and we are still looking to their help by all means and kind".

Anyone who knows something of the origin of these Churches amongst our African people arising initially as an unconscious protest against the spirit of racial superiority and paternalism of Western Christianity will appreciate the magnanimous attitude and sincere expression of Christian forgiveness which is displayed in the words of this resolution. For the first time in the history of our country representatives of some of these churches and splinter denominational movements voluntarily expressed their wish to co-operate with Christian leaders and bodies having White leadership.

Many Christians of the older established churches thought this expressed desire too good to be true and waited to see whether this would go the way of many good intentions. All such doubts were dispelled by the outcome of the second conference in Queenstown, held last month, where an African Independent Churches' Association (AICA) was formally established and a number of resolutions passed concerning Bible correspondence courses, theological refresher courses and theological training to be offered to ministers and members of these churches. These decisions do not only reflect an acknowledgement of need: they also prove the sincerity of the desire to co-operate on a basis of equality with all Christian individuals and bodies who are willing to help them.

Neither the churches concerned nor the bodies assisting them have any illusions about the dangers and difficulties involved. On the side of the Independent Churches who have already joined the Association there is the ever-present danger that the background history of division and schism may seriously retard all efforts for closer Christian unity and co-operation, while deep-rooted (and sometimes very legitimate) suspicions will tend to keep away many who have not yet joined. It is also true that the very nature of some of the Messianic movements amongst the Africans is such that their leaders will find their own views to be incompatible with the basis and aims of the Association.

On the side of the historic churches of the West many factors have tended to enlarge the gulf between them and these more than 2,400 African churches and splinter movements — not the least of which were indifference, lack of understanding, criticism of lack of theological depth and the refusal

(Continued on page 6)

Inleidingsartikel:

'n Lofwaardige Voorbeeld

Onlangs is van Regeringsweë aangekondig dat 'n ruim skenking van voedselware aan Basoetoland gedoen is om te help om die ernstige nood wat as gevolg van die droogte ontstaan het, die hoof te bied. Van die kant van sommige Regeringsondersteuners het daar kritiek op die besluit gekom, terwyl sommige Regeringsteëstanders die altruïsme van die daad betwyfel het.

Met instemming en dankbaarheid het ons van hierdie daad van die owerheid kennis geneem, nie omdat dit aan nie-blankes bewys is of aan 'n bepaalde land (in hierdie geval nie Suid-Afrika) nie, maar omdat dit die bewys lewer van die wese van Christelike barmhartigheid waar ons Meester ons geleer het dat vir die Christen as enigste maatstaf dié twee vrae moet geld: Is daar nood? En, indien wel: Is ek in staat om in dié nood te voorsien?

En as daar vanuit sommige oorde twyfel uitgespreek word oor die motiewe agter dié daad, dan antwoord ons dat 'n Christen geroepe is om die opregtheid van die optrede te aanvaar totdat die teendeel bewys kan word. Hier het ons te doen met 'n gebaar van welwillendheid wat geweldig baie kan doen om die ernstig-versteurde verhoudinge tussen ons en die oorgrote meerderheid van Afrika-state te begin herstel en die bewys te lewer dat ons dit opreg meen met hulle vooruitgang. Ons is diep bewus daarvan dat so 'n daad van barmhartigheid by verre nie genoegsaam is om die basiese beswaar teen ons rasse-beleid, nl. dat dit die geestelike waardigheid van die mens krenk, uit die weg te ruim nie, maar in elk geval is dit 'n duidelike rigtingwyser van 'n pad waarop baie vinniger gevorder moet word.

Die tragedie van die saak is (en die reaksie aan albei kante het dit weer eens bewys) dat nie die Christelike maar 'n politieke norm aangewend word om sulke aksies te beoordeel. Dit openbaar ook hoe baie Christene die Nuwe Testamentiese begrip van die diens van barmhartigheid nog nooit gesnap het nie. Die gelykenis van die Barmhartige Samaritaan sê vir sulkes niks of byna niks nie, anders sou hulle dadelik geweet het dat Christus van die mens verwag om te alle tye en plekke waar nood en behoefte is, almal te help wat dit nodig het ongeag die vraag of dit vriend of vyand is, blank of nie-blank, Christen of nie-Christen. Wie so handel vervul so die wet van liefde en verrig 'n weldaad waarvan die seënryke gevolge sal deurwerk tot in verre geslagte. „Vir sover julle dit gedoen het aan een van die geringste van hierdie broeders van My, het julle dit aan My gedoen.“

DIE TYD VIR 'N „BELYDENDE KERK” IS DAAR

(Vervolg van bladsy 4)

diepste die stryd hier gaan om die lewe en getuienis van die Kerk van Jesus Christus — en vandaar nie net hul lewende belangstelling nie, maar ook hul ernstige besorgdheid oor die rigting waarin 'n deel van die Kerk hom in Suid-Afrika beweeg. Daarom ook hulle intense en eerlike begeerte om tot beter begrip en 'n verantwoordelike gesprek met hulle medebroers in die Afrikaanse kerke in Suid-Afrika te kom.

'N „BELYDENDE KERK” NOU NODIG

As ek die gang van sake in ons land, sowel op kerklike as op staatkundige gebied oorweeg, dan moet dit vir elkeen wat die ontwikkeling van die kerklike situasie in die Derde Duitse Ryk meegemaak of bestudeer het, duidelik word dat daar meer en meer parallelle ontstaan tussen die situasie van die destydse Nazi-Duitsland en die huidige in Suid-Afrika.

Hierdie parellel word net nie gevind in metodes in Suid-Afrika aangewend nie, nie alleen gesien in die daarstelling en uitbuiting van slagspreuke in pers en radio nie, maar ook in die algemene vrees-reaksie van 'n toenemende aantal Christene, beide onder Evangeliedienaars en lidmate, sowel aan Afrikaans- as aan Engelsprekende kant. Hierdie vrees lei tot onhoudbare kompromisse of onduldbare stilswye, en versterk die mag van 'n politieke beheer wat nie anders kan, kragtens die hele rassefilosofie wat sy beleid ten grondslag lê, as om steeds skerp en strenger maaatreëls aan te wend teen enigeen — dus ook teen dié Kerke en Christene wat uit suiwer Bybelse en Christelike oortuiginge onchristelike elemente in die rasse-beleid veroordeel.

As ek aan al hierdie en ander tekens dink dan is dit vir my duidelik dat die tyd vir 'n **Bekennen-**

de Kirche ('n „belydende Kerk” soos in Duitsland binne die kring van die verskillende Kerke ontstaan het) vir Suid-Afrika aangebreek het. Om alle misverstand te voorkom en terwille van hulle wat uit onkunde of met opset hierdie benaming „belydende Kerk” kan misbruik, wil ek dit duidelik en omonwonde stel dat sodanige „belydende Kerk” niks te make het met die stigting van 'n nuwe Kerkformasie nie en dat dit ook nie die trou van enige lidmaat aan eie kerk en belydenis wil verbreek of verwater nie — intendeel dat dit juis inhou dat Christene vanuit alle Kerke as groep van gelowiges met groter liefde, erns en verantwoordelikheid die Kerke waartoe hulle behoort sal oproep om 'n ondubbelsinnige standpunt in te neem en 'n onbevreesde getuienis te laat hoor op grond van Gods Woord.

Maar dis ook duidelik dat weens gebrek aan Bybelse vorming en teologiese begrip onder lidmate van al ons kerke dit moeiliker sal gaan om so 'n belydende groep in ons kerke te vorm as in die destydse Duitsland. My vraag — en hierdie vraag word in besorgdheid oor die sondige stilswye van so baie van my medebroers veral in ons Afrikaanse kerke my uit die hart gewring — is: Sal God dan nie gee dat uit al hierdie gebeure daar meer gesante van God na vore sal tree wat alle huiwering en vrees van hulle sal afwerp en in die naam van die Here sal opstaan om tot Kerk en Staat, owerheid en onderdaan, individu en gemeenskap, te spreek met dié vrymoedige getuienis: „Ons is en wil niks anders wees nie as Christene, manne van God, geroepe om die getuienis van Jesus Christus en sy heerskappy in die wêreld te gee — 'n getuienis om mens en gemeenskap van hulle angs en haat en vrees te bevry, 'n getuienis van die eenheid van alle Christene in liefde, gemeenskap en diens oor die grense van taal en ras en volk en nasie heen, 'n getuienis van die erkenning van die beeld van God in elke mens ongeag sy stand en kleur, en van die beoefening van naasteliefde, medemenslikheid en geregtigheid in alle menslike en maatskaplike verhoudinge.” Sal daar nie sulke gesante van God wees wat sal

uitbreek uit die angsvallige stilswye om uit die onrus van hul gewetens ter wille van God en sy ryk van geregtigheid en waarheid en liefde te staan en te stry nie? Ons wag op daardie dag — en intussen gaan dié van ons wat in hierdie oortuiging leef en werk, voort om ons getuienis te gee ook wanneer ons daardeur veroordeel, verag en gesmaak word. Want ons doen dit in die wete dat 'n dag sal kom wanneer erken sal word dat wat ons gesoek het om 'te doen, alleen was ter wille van God en sy ryk onder alle volkere, tale en rasse van ons land, Suid-Afrika.

(N.S. Die menings in die artikel uitgespreek is die persoonlike oortuiginge van die skrywer en moet nie as amptelike standpunt van enige organisasie waaraan die skrywer verbonde is, gesien word nie.)

THE EXTENDED HAND

(Continued from page 5)

of some clergy to submit themselves to church discipline. This is not the moment to evaluate and pronounce judgement upon these attitudes and objections. What we would like to stress is the joyous fact of a new approach and a new willingness discernable on both sides to come to a better understanding of one another. Some African Independent Churches have taken the initiative to extend their hand in Christian fellowship to other Christians, and we should grasp that hand and assist in their need not because they are African, not because they are Independent, but because they are and truly want to be Church — part of the body of Christ in Africa, which truth makes us all strongly dependent upon one another and wholly dependent upon Christ, the Head of His Church.

DIE KERK BUITE SUID-AFRIKA

— PROF. B. B. KEET.

BILLY GRAHAM IN AMERIKA

“Christianity Today” publiseer ’n verslag oor die eerste besoek van Billy Graham aan Alabama en waaraan ons die volgende ontleen: Die ope wonde van Alabama se voortgaande sosiale stryd het die genesende balsem van die Evangelie gedurende sy besoek in Meimaand ontvang, en daar is getuig dat in die gemeenskappe wat hy in sy vierdaagse toer ontmoet het baie goeie resultate gevolg het. Leiers van albei bevolkingsgroepe het verklaar: „Ons glo dat sy besoek die begin van ’n nuwe dag in ons samelewing sal inlei.”

Heel aan die begin van sy veldtog het Graham verseker dat hy gekom het nie om oor rasse-probleme te preek nie, maar om die Evangelie te verkondig wat hy oor die hele wêreld gepreek het. Daarby het hy egter gevoeg dat hy buite die openbare byeenkomste met die leiers van albei rasse in aanraking wou kom om te praat oor die probleme wat onlangs die Staat onder die aandag van die wêreld gebring het. Aan ’n verslaggewer het hy gesê: dit is nie reg dat mense in ander dele van die land ’n eiegeregtigde vinger van beskudiging op Alabama rig nie. Om een Staat uit te sonder as die skuldige is dikwels net ’n manier om die aandag af te trek van ander streke waar die probleem net so skerp is.

Hy is egter deur sommige beskuldig dat hy as President Johnston se persoonlike afgevaardigde gekom het om die gevoelens wat deur Martin Luther King opgewek is, te kalmeer; nogtans het die groot meerderheid hom verwelkom. Die dag toe hy in Dothan, ’n stad van ongeveer 38,000 inwoners, aangekom het, is hy deur die plaaslike koerant in ’n inleidingsartikel gewaarsku dat hy met iets minder as eensgesindheid aangaande die tyd van sy besoek ontvang word, en ’n advertensie onderteken deur die President van die Raad van Blanke Burgers het dit betreur dat dr. Graham juis op hierdie tydstip na Dothan uitgenooi word, ’n uitnodiging wat uitgegaan het van ’n vergadering van blanke en negerpredikante in eenstemmige samewerking.

Die eerste vergadering het 15,000 bymekaar gebring; ’n koor van 400 stemme, die helfte negers, het die diens in sang gelei en talle het hulle hereid verklaar om die Here te volg. By die slotbyeenkoms op Sondag namiddag is die opelugvergadering deur ’n stortreën onmoontlik ge-

maak en moes die byeenkoms in ’n beperkte lokaal gehou word. Ondanks hierdie teenslae word getuig dat die Evangelie wondere in daardie omgewing verrig het. Onder die aanmerkinge wat gemaak is, was een van Eerw. Clayton Bell, Presbiteriaanse kerk wat hom soos volg uitgedruk het: „Dit is die eerste keer dat ’n volstrek ope vergadering van hierdie aard in hierdie stad gehou is waar Negers en Blankes vrylik kon kom en sit waar hulle wou. Daar was nie slegs geen stryd nie, maar ’n werklike gees van liefde en gemeenskap het die harte van die aanwesiges verower.”

Die berigte van die Dothan-vergaderings in die openbare pers het alle twyfel laat verdwyn waarom Billy Graham in Alabama was. Sonder ophef het die Evangelie sy genesende uitwerking gehad. Op die Maandag-oggend het Graham ’n tweerassige komitee van 30 lede ontmoet, om planne te maak vir sy tweede besoek in Junie. Ook is daar ’n vergadering gehou aan die Universiteit op uitnodiging van die president, Frank Rose, en die Studenteraad. Dié vergadering is ook deur reën onderbreek, maar die aanwesigheid van 15,000 toehoorders het getuie-nis gelewer teenoor die inwoners van Tuscalooso waar die Ku-Klux-Klan sy hoofkwartiere het. Die volgende dag het 16,000 in gunstiger weer Graham aangehoor. Winkels is gesluit, lesings aan die Universiteit gestaak en skoliere vrygestel tussen 10-12 nm. By ’n maaltyd met besigheids-, burgerlike en godsdienstige voorgangers het Graham gesê dat die beeld van Alabama buite die staat nie juis is nie. Dit is nie so goed soos sommige meen nie, maar dit is stellig ook nie so sleg as ander dit voorstel nie. Hy het verseker dat hy bemoedig is deur wat hy gesien en gehoor het en wat Negerleiers hom aangaande rasseverhou-

dinge vertel het.

Die volgende besoek was aan Tuskegee Neger-kollege, 40 myl van Montgomery. Die gehoor was hier oorwegend Neger. Op die verhoog het ’n aantal leiers van die blanke gemeenskap hul plek ingeneem en ’n koorgroep uit die blankes het saamgesing. Samevattend kan gesê word: Die toer van Billy Graham in Alabama, eerste fase, is verby. Hy het die hart van die inwoners verower, en as sy gretigheid om in Junie terug te gaan vir die kruistog in Montgomery ’n aanduiding is, het die mense van Alabama ook die hart van Billy Graham verower.

OPVOLGER VAN VISSER 'T HOOFT

Persbureau van die Ned. Herv. Kerk in Nederland deel iets mee omtrent die opvolging van dr. Visser 't Hooft, sekretaris-generaal van die Wêreldraad van Kerke. ’n Groot fout is begaan toe die aanbeveling van Rev. Patrick Rodger as kandidaat deur die Uitvoerende Komitee gepubliseer is, terwyl die Sentrale Komitee later sy kandidatum nie aanvaar het nie. Daaruit word terreg afgelei dat in hoër kringe daar verskil van mening oor hierdie aan-geleentheid staan. Origens word die vraag gestel of ’n eenhoofdige sekretariaat voortgeset moet word, of ’n driemanskap ingestel moet word. So sou aan herhaalde beweringe in kringe van die Wêreldraad te gemoet gekom word, dat samewerking die beste moontlikhede bied. Intussen het die hoofkwartiere in Geneve aan Rev. P. Rodger ’n onaangename ervaring berei, of hulle daarvan bewus was of nie. Dit gaan in die eerste plek nie oor die vraag waarom so gehandel is nie, maar om die metode. Dit is nl. nie ’n politieke stryd waar getrag word om mekaar te beïnvloed nie. Lede van die staf mag natuurlik adviseer, maar daar moet sekere beperking wees wat die metodes betref. Uiteindelik tog moet die beslissing by die kerke lê wanneer dit gaan om benoeming en bevoegdhede van die sekretaris-generaal en staflede. Oor die algemeen is die gees onder die staflede goed, maar die gevaar bly staan solank so ’n gebrek aan eensgesindheid nie tot ’n definitiewe oplossing gebring is nie.

Intussen kan Visser 't Hooft self veel doen om die saak tot ’n bevre-

(Vervolg op bladsy 11)

WHERE DO WE STAND?

— ROBERT ORR

I feel strongly that it is wrong to mix political opinions with personal Christianity. Am I wrong in thinking that Jesus never took a political stand? The Church's job is to preach the Gospel and to encourage people to lead Christian lives.

An increasing number of people are saying things like that. In saying them, they raise again the old, old question of the relationship of politics and religion. What can we say in reply?

The first thing we must say is that, in fact, practically every Christian believes that his faith has something to do with politics. Except, perhaps the Jehovah's Witnesses, who are at least consistent in that a true Jehovah's Witness will not even vote in any kind of election. Apart from them, however, nearly all Christians believe that their faith relates to politics somehow. Some will say that if you are a Christian, you are duty bound to combat Communism by every means in your power, including political means. Others will maintain that the Christian is bound to use what political power he has to discourage pornographic literature. Still others will feel themselves bound in conscience to use all the political pressure open to them to advance the cause of temperance.

CHURCH HISTORY

The second thing that needs saying is that it is strange to hear such statements these days. Recently, a play called **The Deputy**, by Rolf Hochhuth, has raised in a quite startling way the moral failure of churches in Germany (during Hitler's time) that neglected political issues and concentrated on spiritual and ecclesiastical questions. Generally speaking, the churches in Germany delayed long in offering effective opposition to the iniquities of the Hitler regime, including harsh measures against Jews. What do we think of them? These are the days, also, when many of us have heard the story how the leaders of the Revolution in Russia were discussing their plans, while, in a building further down the same street, the leaders of the Orthodox Church in Russia were also holding a meeting — to discuss the number of pearls that should be sewn into the vestments of the priests. What do we

think of them? These are the days when we can think back to the churches in America before the Civil War who were accused of "interfering" in politics because they opposed slavery. Today we wonder how **any** churches were able to avoid the issue.

What will Christians in 2065 A.D. think of us?

The first thing that becomes clear, then, is that none of us — or at the least, very few of us — believe in an absolute divorce between politics and religion. (Again, let it be said that if we did, we would, like the Jehovah's Witnesses, forbid Christians to vote). All — or practically all of us — believe that our faith has political consequences.

SCRIPTURAL GROUNDS

The third thing that needs saying is that we have good grounds for our belief that the Christian faith has political consequences. Scriptural grounds. Perhaps we should notice, in passing, that very few Christians get into political controversy for the fun of it. They engage in the political debate because they are called on to proclaim to the world the whole Word of God as that Word comes to us in the Scripture. As for the Old Testament, the prophets again and again insist that God is worshipped, not only in sacrifice and ritual in the Temple, but in honesty, justice and mercy in the life of the community, in fair treatment of the poor and defenceless. Again and again the prophets denounce national policy, rebuke national leaders, expose the folly of foreign entanglements. The prophets have no doubt whatsoever that their first faith in God has political consequences. Nor have they any hesitation in flaying the "false prophets" who promise an ungodly nation that all will go well with them, who hold up the nation's booming economy as proof of the favour of God, who shout "Peace! Peace!" when there is no peace.

The New Testament puts very much less emphasis on political

judgments. This is partly because New Testament Christians believed that the end of the world, the end of time, was imminent. Partly it is because Jesus and his disciples were not even citizens of the political empire in which they lived. They had no voice and no vote in the affairs of state. That is why Paul advises his readers "Every person must submit to the supreme authorities." That is why Peter says that the Christian owes "reverence to God, honour to the sovereign".

Yet there is another side to the New Testament's teaching. Careful study of the Gospels reveals that in many ways Jesus took his stand against one political group — the Zealots, who advocated the overthrow of the Roman conqueror by force. Jesus did not hesitate to call King Herod "that fox". When the persecutions began, the Book of Revelation shows that Christians were called on, not to obey the authorities — for that would have meant disloyalty to Christ — but to disobey and humbly to bear the consequences of their disobedience.

THE LORD OF ALL LIFE

The fourth thing that needs saying is this: if you truly believe that religion and politics don't mix, you cannot, logically, stop there.

You must go on to say that religion and business don't mix, that religion and daily work don't mix, that religion and family life don't mix. What this boils down to, of course, is that religion has nothing to do with anything except what goes on inside the church building for an hour or two on Sundays.

Over against that conclusion we must quite firmly set the claim that God is Lord of all life.

How do these considerations affect our present situation? It would be foolish to close our eyes to the fact that support for the present government of our country seems to be increasing steadily. In one sense that is understandable enough. No one can deny that the govern-

(Continued on page 11)

Hier van en Daar van

„Als een Afrikaner, die met veel waardering en dankbaarheid mag terugdenken aan zijn eigen studietijd in het gastvrije Nederland, is het mij een genoegen om de akademiese opleiding aldaar aan mijn landgenoten hartelijk aan te bevehlen.” — Dr. D. F. Malan, 1910.

BEURSE VIR BEÏNVLOEDING?

Die meerderheid van ons Afrikaanssprekende lesers sal teen hierdie tyd reeds op die hoogte wees van 'n diskussie wat in **Die Kerkbode** gaande is omtrent die nagraadse studie van Afrikaanse studente in die teologie aan oorsese inrigtings, en die beurse wat vir die doel beskikbaar gestel word deur die Wêreldraad van Kerke. Onder die opskef **Beurse vir Beïnvloeding** het die redakteur van genoemde blad in sy uitgawe van 24 Maart j.l. betoog dat hier gevare skuil: dat daar „sekere instansies” in die buiteland is wat met 'n „dieperliggende motief” beurse aan ons studente beskikbaar stel, naamlik, om hulle met „nuwe en soms revolusionêre denkbeelde” in Suid-Afrika „terug te plant”, en sodoende, deur middel van hierdie studente, hul „integrasie-rassebeskouing” op die volk van S.A. „oor te plant”. Instansies wat met name genoem word, is die Wêreldraad van Kerke, die Christelike Instituut van S.A., en die S.A. Instituut van Rasseverhoudinge. In die slotparagraaf word dan ook nog gesê dat „ons suiwer geloofs- en volkslewe ondergrawe word” deur hierdie subtiële aksie, en dat dit daarom onverantwoordelik sou wees indien niks gedoen word nie.

Dit is in die allereerste plek nodig om vas te stel wat die feitelike toedrag van sake is. En dan blyk al baie gou dat die redakteur van **Die Kerkbode** geen kennis gedra het van die feite nie; of anders . . . Maar laat ons liever sien wat die feite is. Ek noem net 'n paar van die belangrikste punte.

1. Nog die Christelike Instituut, nog die S.A. Instituut van Rasseverhoudinge het iets met die beurse te doen.

2. Die beurse wat deur die Wêreldraad van Kerke toegeken word, word toegeken aan studente van **alle lande**. Daar is dus geen sprake

van 'n bewuste poging om **juis Suid-Afrika** op die manier by te kom nie. Om die waarheid te sê, die **ad hoc**-komitee van leraars en teologiese dosente van al die Protestantse kerke in Suid-Afrika wat die aansoeke ontvang en beoordeel, moes nà die uittrede van die N.G. Kerk uit die Wêreldraad baie mooi praat om nog beurse vir studente van die Afrikaanse kerke toegeken te kry! Dit is toegestaan, maar daar is gewaarsku dat daar in totaal nie meer as 25 beurse per jaar aan studente uit S.A. toegeken sou kon word nie. Dit is voorwaar die teendeel van wat **Kie Kerkbode** wou suggereer! Die Wêreldraad dwing geen beurse aan ons op nie; ons moet intendeel bly wees dat hulle nog so vriendelik is om enige beurse aan ons af te staan!

3. Vanweë die **tekort** aan beurse wat op hierdie wyse ontstaan het, het die sekretaris van genoemde **ad hoc**-komitee, mnr. F. J. van Wyk, aan verskillende bekende universiteite en seminaries in die V.S.A. geskrywe om te vra of hulle dan nie miskien **self** beurse vir ons studente beskikbaar wou stel nie. Die resultaat was 'n stuk of vyf beurse, bestem vir studente van enige Protestantse kerk in S.A. Hierdie toekennings geskied vanselfsprekend heeltemal buite die Wêreldraad om. Dit is 'n saak van daardie universiteite alleen.

4. Geen enkele beurs van die Wêreldraad is gekoppel aan 'n bepaalde studie-inrigting nie. (Dit is dus nie soos 'n Rhodes-beurs, waarmee 'n student alléén na Oxford kan gaan nie.) Elke student sê in sy aansoek self waarheen hy graag sou wil gaan, en die komitee doen hul bes om hom daartoe in staat te stel. So is daar vanjaar drie beurse toegeken aan studente van die Teologiese Kweekskool te Stellenbosch: een vir Göttingen, een vir Amsterdam, en een vir die V.S.A. In totaal gaan in 1964-65 agt Afrikaanse studente na Holland, ses na Amerika, en drie na Duitsland. Hoe kan daar nog enige sprake wees van bewuste poging tot beïnvloeding? Dit sou waarlik 'n super-organisasie kos om te sorg dat elke erkende studiesentrum ter wêreld „klaar staan” om die aankomende seunties uit Suid-Afrika te indoktrineer! Die

veronderstelling is te belaglik om vir een oomblik ernstig opgevat te word.

Dit is dan, in kort, die feite van die geval. Dit is eenvoudig verbyssterend dat **Die Kerkbode** in die aangesig van hierdie feite kon skrywe soos dit geskrywe het. En dit moet by die leser die vraag laat ontstaan: Waarom het die redakteur van **Die Kerkbode** so geskrywe?

Ek dink ds. Beyers Naudé het dit baie netjies opgesom toe hy in 'n artikel oor hierdie aangeleentheid in **Inspan** (April 1965) gesê het: „Is die onaangename waarheid nie, dat nêrens in die hele wêreld waar 'n Bybelse teologie beoefen word (of dit nou in Holland of Duitsland of Amerika is) ons apartheidbeleid en ekumeniese siening op Skriftuurlike gronde goedgekeur of geregverdig kan word nie? Is dit nie die groot vrees (ook by **Die Kerkbode**) dat ons teologiese studente by dieper en deegliker Bybelse ondersoek tot die gevolgtrekking sal kom dat hulle in die opsig hul vantevore gehuldigde mening sal moet wysig nie — nie om ‚liberaal’ te word nie, maar juis om daardeur meer Skrifgetrou te wees? Is dit nie die paniekbevange houding van mense wat weet dat **enige** nagraadse teologiese studie in die buiteland gerugsteun deur **watter** beurs ook al, noodwendig 'n veranderde maar nie noodwendig verdraaide uitkyk by enige intelligente en eerlike student moet bring nie?”

Dit is reguit vroe hierdie, en ek sou graag sien hoe **Die Kerkbode** daar verby gaan kom. **Paniekbevange**: dit is inderdaad die enigste juiste woord waarmee die reaksies van sulke mense gekenskets kan word. En dit word alles in sulke mooi woorde ingeklee, dat baie lesers van **Die Kerkbode** nooit eens agterkom waarheen dit alles dryf nie. Dit is eers wanneer 'n mens uitsprake van groot Afrikaners uit vroeëre jare weer gaan lees, dat jy skielik besef hoe ver ons al agtergebly het teen die steilte af! Op my rak het ek 'n brosjure uit die jaar 1910, uitgegee deur die Nederlands Zuid-Afr. Vereniging, Amsterdam, en getiteld: **Het Studeren van Zuid-Afrikaners in Nederland**. Verzameling van Onderwijsgidsen voor Zuid-

(Vervolg op bladsy 15)

DIE PROBLEEM — SUID-SOEDAN

— DR. J. P. FEDDEMA

Soedan was onlangs weer voorbladnuus. Die Arabiere, die mees ontwikkelde bevolkingsgroep in Soedan, neem oor die algemeen 'n meerwaardige houding teenoor hulle landgenote met 'n donkerder huidskleur en boonop het hulle 'n politiek van geweld gekies om hulle posisie te kan handhaaf. Voorwaar g'n goeie metode om die verskillende bevolkingsgroepe in 'n land bymekaar te bring nie!

Gedurende my besoek aan Soedan 'n paar maande gelede is ek getref deur die groot teenstelling tussen die Arabiese en die Bantoe-bevolking daar — 'n teenstelling wat by die dag groter word. Daar is egter nog min bekend oor die agtergrond hiervan. Bepaalde streke van Soedan is origens heeltemal afgesluit van die buitewêreld deur die streng pers- en briëfsensuur.

Op grond van die geskiedenis van hierdie land is ons egter glad nie verbaas dat daar geen goeie verhouding tussen Noord- en Suid-Soedan bestaan nie. Die Noorde het in 1820 vir meer as sestig jaar 'n deel van die Turks-Egiptiese Ryk geword, daarna het die bestuur van die Mahdi gevolg. Gedurende hierdie tydperk was die enigste kontak met die Suide die strooptogte van die Arabiese slawehandelaars. In 1898 het die Suide meer in kontak met die Noorde gekom deur die Engels-Egiptiese besetting. Vier jaar later is egter besluit om Noord- en Suid-Soedan as twee afsonderlike dele te bestuur. Engels het die offisiële taal van die Suide en Arabies dié van die Noorde geword. In Suid-Soedan waar sending en missie 'n monopolieposisie gewerf het, het Sondag die offisiële rusdag geword en in die Noorde Vrydag. Die Noorde was meer op Egipte ingestel terwyl die Suide, akademies altans, hom meer op Oeganda gerig het. Baie studente van die Suide het hulle opleiding aan die Makarere Universiteit te Kampala geniet, waar nou slegs Soedanese vlugteling as studente aangetref word.

In 1946 het Engeland besluit om die skeiding tussen die twee dele wat die Nyl as enigste verbinding gehad het maar verder geografies, etnies, kultureel en godsdienstig niks met mekaar gemeen gehad het, op te hef. Op 12 Februarie 1953 het die sg. Engels-Egiptiese ooreenkoms tot stand gekom, op grond waarvan Soedan op 12 Januarie 1957 onafhanklik sou word na 'n oor-

gangperiode van drie jaar selfbestuur wat op 12 Januarie 1954 'n aanvang sou neem.

'n Jaar voordat hierdie tydperk van selfbestuur beëindig sou word, het die regering Ashari egter met 'n eensydige verklaring van onafhanklikheid gekom wat op 1 Januarie 1956 bekragtig is deur die voorlopige parlement sonder dat die belange van die Bantoe-bevolking van Suid-Soedan, wat uit vrees vir 'n Arabiese oorheersing, 'n federasie met Noord-Soedan nagestreef het, genoegsaam gewaarborg is.

Egipte het die nuwe Staat baie gou daarna erken, asook Engeland wat beswaarlik iets anders kon doen. Premier Ismail el Ashari het vantevore in 'n verkiesingsmanifes van 1953 aan die bevolking van Suid-Soedan interne selfbestuur belowe, maar die partye van die Noorde het toe nie meer daaraan gedink om hierdie belofte na te kom nie.

'n Nasionale komitee het die voorstelle van die Suide vir 'n federale regeringsvorm verwerp en het ten slotte, nadat die lede van die Suide hulle teruggetrek het, 'n eenheidsgrondwet ontwerp waardeur Islam as Staatsgodsdienst en Arabies as offisiële taal verklaar is. Toe die ontwerp voor die grondwetgewende vergadering gediën het, het die afgevaardigdes van die Suide op 16 Junie 1958 hulle pleidooi vir 'n federasie herhaal. Enkele maande daarna het verskillende stamme van die Noorde wat ge-islamiseerd maar nog nie gearabiseerd was nie, gevra dat o.a. Beja ook meer seggenskap in interne aangeleenthede moes kry. Die voorstelle van die Suide het kennelik weerklank gevind by ander groepe en die Arabiere is daardeur met skrik vervul. Op 17 November 1958 het die bloedlose staatsgreep van die leër wat geheel in Arabiese hande was, gevolg.

Waarskynlik het die regering of een van die ministers nl. Abdallah Khalik uit eie beweging die mag aan die leër oorhandig ten einde

die Arabiese invloed in Soedan te verseker noudat dit langs die weg van die demokrasie gevaar geloop het.

Die beleid om die Suide te islamiseer onder die bewind van Abboud soos o.a. geblyk het uit die onderwysbeleid, die bou van "kalwa's" d.w.s. islamitiese kategismusskole in bykans elke klein dorpie op staatskoste en die verbanning van al die missie- en sendingpersoneel het dus definitief 'n politieke agtergrond. Die leidende groepe besef dat vermenging en arabisering hand aan hand gaan met islamisering en dat op dié wyse die oorheersende posisie van die Arabiere wat volgens getalle nog in die minderheid is, op die lange duur minder verset sou uitlok. Ons vind dus 'n doelbewuste politiek van vermenging. Die aantal Arabiere in Suid-Soedan vermeerder geleidelik, veral regeringsampnare en besigheidsmense van wie lg. nog nie kan afleer om die Bantoe „swartes" of „Aabeed" d.w.s. „slawe" te noem nie. Omgekeerd word in die Noorde, veral in Khartoem, baie uit die Suide as werkkragte toegelaat. Die onlangse betogings in Khartoem bewys dat dit vir die Arabiere uiteindelik noodlottig kan word veral as die beleid van diskriminasie in die Suide voortduur.

Die beleid van islamisering in die Suide het tot dusver min sukses behaal! Daar is geen sprake van toename van die Islam, terwyl 'n beweging tot opstand homself steeds verder uitbrei. Die verset van die Suide — nêrens in Afrika het ek aangetref dat die blanke so populêr is nie, is te verstaan aangesien Noord en Suid te lank as afsonderlike gebiede bestuur is. Die periode van 1946 toe Engeland haar politiek van skeiding gewysig het, tot 1956 — die jaar van onafhanklik wording — was te kort om 'n gevoel van eenheid te help ontwikkel in hierdie land, volgens oppervlakte die grootste in Afrika.

Die oorsaak van die moeilikhede in die Soedan is nie dat twee rasse nie in een land kan saamwoon nie want in baie Afrikaanse lande woon daar verskillende rasse — neem by. baie Indiërs in Oos-Afrika. Die agtergrond is dat Noord- en Suid-Soedan geskiedkundig twee verskil-

(Vervolg op bladsy 11)

DIE PROBLEEM — SUID-SOEDAN

lende lewenssfere ontwikkel het waarvan die etniese verskil slegs een aspek is en dat die afgelope jare bewuste pogings aangewend is om die een lewenssfeer deur die ander te laat oorheers m.a.w. 'n **geforceerde kultuurimperialisme**. (As die Arabiere geduld sou beoefen het en sake hul natuurlike loop laat gaan het, sou die Arabiese kultuur geleidelik tog in die Suide deurgedring het, dit is nl. 'n vermydelike proses in 'n land: **dwang wek egter altyd verzet op**.)

Amper vyftig jaar lank (1902 — 1946) is Noord- en Suid-Soedan afsonderlik bestuur. Gedurende dié tyd het die Arabiese kultuur geen toegang tot die Suide gehad nie. Skielik het Engeland haar beleid van skeiding gewysig, waarskynlik omdat Suid-Soedan ekonomies nie lewensvatbaar geblyk het nie. 'n Vereniging met Uganda het Engeland waarskynlik nie aangedurf omdat dit die Arabiere en Egiptenare sou verbitter.

Na die onafhanklikheid — **op die onafhanklikheidsdag het Suid-Soedan nie fees gevier omdat hulle bang was vir Arabiese oorheersing** — het die Arabiere drastiese hervorminge in die Suide ingestel. Selfs nou nog word groepe **onderwysers** — ek het van hulle op die Nylboot ontmoet — tydelik van die onderwys onttrek en na die Noorde gestuur om 'n Arabiese **heropvoeding** te ondergaan.

Daarby kom nog die beleid van islamisering waardeur die voortgang van byna 50 jaar se sendingwerk belemmer word en Sondag selfs as die offisiële rusdag na Vrydag verander is.

WHERE DO WE STAND?

(Continued from page 8)

ment has shown itself to be strong and capable in preserving order, in allowing the daily life of its citizens to carry on under more or less normal and peaceful circumstances. That is a great boon in times that have seen the chaos, bloodshed and anarchy that flare up under unstable or incompetent governments.

Yet such appreciation cannot muffle our insistence that the duty of any government is not only to maintain order but also to dispense even-handed justice for all its citizens. Where we truly believe that some citizens (whether Afrikaans or

Baie Bantoes in die Suide het gehuil toe uiteindelik al die blanke missie- en sendingpersoneel verban is omdat van hulle toe ook nog die morele steun in die dae van nood weggeneem is.

Dat hierdie skielike wysigings as **neokolonialisme** of as Arabiese oorheersing aangesien is, is begryplik, veral toe die beloftes tot interne selfbestuur nie nagekom is nie.

Die Bantoe van Suid-Soedan het 'n **sterk gevoelsband met die blanke aan wie hy sy ontwikkeling te danke het en nêrens** het ek as blanke soveel hartlikheid aangetref nie.

Die kerk staan pal — watter moeilikhede daar ook al mag wees. Islam het min sukses; die godsdienst van die oorheersers is meestal nie populêr nie, ook is die besnydenis wat Islam toepas 'n belemmering vir die meeste stamme wat geen besnydenis ken nie. Vir Suid-Soedan is daar baie, baie mense, werkers, sendelinge, ens. nodig. Sal die nuwe regering hulle weer toelaat? Mag God veranderinge gee! Want die velde is wit om te oes. Nog nooit het die Evangelie soveel geleenthede gehad nie.

Dis denkwaardig dat die sektewese dikwels 'n uiting van nasionale stryd skaars in Soedan bestaan. (Was daar so min bitterheid teenoor die Engelse uit vrees vir die Arabiere?) Daar bestaan egter nou groot gevaar dat die sektewese sal oplewe en toeneem deur die groot gebrek aan teologies-gekoelde dosente, noudat alle blankes verban is. Selfs teologiese dosente uit Uganda word nie toegelaat nie, hoewel die regering dit wel belooft het.

English, white or black, is irrelevant) are being deprived of justice, it is our godly duty to say so. If we believe, for example, that our laws and customs are preventing some citizens from leading a normal and full family life, we are bound in conscience to point to the command of our Lord, "What God has joined together, man must not separate."

A SERVICE TO THE GOVERNMENT

By such vigilance and constructive criticism we shall also be ren-
(Continued on page 16)

DIE KERK BUIE SUID-AFRIKA

(Vervolg van bladsy 7)

digende oplossing te bring. Dat hy 'n baie vername rol in die ontstaan en voortgang van die Wêreldraad gespeel het, ly geen twyfel nie. En dat hy die vaste grond van die Heilige Skrif in sy hele benadering beklemtoon, blyk uit 'n toespraak wat hy voor die Britse en Buitelandse Bybelgenootskap in Londen gehou het, toe hy gewaarsku het teen die vermenging van godsdienste waartoe daar in ons tyd gevaar bestaan. In die Weste, sê hy, weet ons veel meer van die ander godsdienste. Daar word steeds meer gesoek na 'n gemeenskaplike grond vir internasionale betrekkinge. Dit word beweer dat 'n groot deel van die sendingarbeid uit 'n sekere aanmatiging ontstaan. En hierdie beskouing lei maklik tot die mening dat die beste weg is om uit elke godsdienst die nuttige en doelmatige te neem en dan alles saam te voeg tot 'n nuwe geheel.

Die Bybelse standpunt hierteenoor is glashelder. 'n Partheon, 'n tempel vir alle godsdienste is ondenkbaar. Bestanddele van heeltemal verskillende herkoms kan nie saamgevoeg word nie. Alleen 'n terugkeer na die Bybel kan 'n groot geestelike verwarring vermy.

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The Local Church and Problems of Identity in a Multi-Racial Country

PART IV

— J. W. DE GRUCHY

THE LOCAL CHURCH AS THE PRIESTLY COMMUNITY

In the first part of our study we considered the way in which the Church should relate itself to the men and women of the world in any given situation. In seeking an answer to this question we turned to the Incarnation in order to see how God relates Himself to mankind in Jesus Christ, and in doing so we arrived at what we have called man's basic identity. However, it is not easy for Christians to relate themselves to all men in terms of this identity because we live in a world where many powerful factors seek to undermine our theological convictions. In the second and third parts of our study we considered two of these destructive factors in our own situation, namely race prejudice and race anxiety, in order to understand more fully those influences which would prevent us from becoming true to our own identity. In this final section, we turn to consider the nature of our own identity as members of the Church, and this brings us directly to the local church to which each Christian belongs, for the identity of the Christian man is directly related to the identity of the Christian community in whose life and witness he participates.

The underlying thesis of this section is that the relevance of the witness of the local church to the basic identity all men have in the sight of God depends upon the realization of its true nature as the priestly community set within the world. The use of the word "priestly" in this connection is not intended to suggest anything other than what is implied in the Biblical teaching that the People of God is a "kingdom of priests", that all who are baptised into Christ participate in His priesthood, together with the understanding that all men were created to become priests¹ in this sense. However, it is our contention that while all members of the Church are already priests in an objective sense, this identity must continually be realized existentially in a priestly style of life. This does not mean a stereotyped form of existence or piety to which all must conform, but it does mean being involved in the life of the world in such a way that our calling to be priests is fulfilled. In this connection, to be a priestly man means to be involved in a two-fold action in daily life: **first**, it means participating in the life of the world and being identified with men and women in their hopes and needs; **secondly**, it means offering this daily life to God and seeking to live this daily life in obedience to His Word.

Now, in stressing priestly identity we do not intend to minimize the complementary prophetic identity of the Church and the Christian man, but to show that they are complementary and that the prophetic ministry of the Church must continually become incarnate in the priestly life of the Church. It is not sufficient for Church Synods and Assemblies to declare the Word of God with prophetic vision and power, such pronouncements must become visible in the concrete life of the churches. In our country many major denominations have spoken out against racial discrimination, but we are faced with the startling fact that very few local churches heed the prophetic words that are uttered. We are confronted with the problem of the empirical church, the church as it is in reality, the church caught in a net of social norms and political enterprises which the prophets condemn. Would that all God's people were prophets! But they are not! And yet, somehow the prophetic word must grasp hold of the life of the churches and be put into effect in the world in a priestly way. Ordinary people are called to live by faith in Christ and in contradiction to accepted patterns and norms, the churches to which we belong are called to be transformed by the mind of Christ and no longer to conform to the standards of this world, and this is to take place

within the world amidst its problems and in spite of its fundamental antagonism.

If we think about the two-fold action that characterises priestly identity we discover that such an identity by definition contradicts race prejudice and race anxiety.

First, the truly priestly community or person is identified with all other men in terms of their basic identity — other men are accepted as God accepts them in Jesus Christ. This is a priestly function in the deepest sense, for it is the pronouncement of God's Word of reconciliation in Christ and involves vicarious action on behalf of other men. Here there is no room for any form of prejudice.

Second, the truly priestly community or person cannot fall victim to the neurotic demands of race anxiety. Whereas the demand of race anxiety is to put the preservation of racial identity above any other consideration when it is threatened, the priestly community or person lives by faith in God and seeks first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. The priestly man is aware that he is *homo viator* — here there is no abiding city.

RE-EDUCATION

In all this there is one major problem, it is **the** problem of the hour. How can the local church realize its true identity, how can the kingdom of priests recapture the style of life that belongs to its very nature, how can ordinary people begin to live the priestly life amidst the ambiguities of daily existence? One of the essential needs which our situation reveals, is **the need for re-educating Christian people** in terms of their true identity, but re-educating them in the best and deepest sense of that word. At this point it might help us in our enquiry if we consider what is involved in such a task, and to do this we take these words

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of Kurt Lewin to guide our thinking:

"(re-education is) a process in which changes of knowledge and beliefs, changes of values and standards, changes of emotional attachments and needs, and changes of everyday conduct occur not piecemeal and independently of each other, but within the framework of the individual's total life in the group."²

This definition of re-education points out some of the most important directions in which change is required in the process of re-educating people, and in re-awakening Christian people to their true identity in the world it seems as if changes in the same directions are required.

First, there is the need for a change in understanding and perception, that is, a change "of knowledge and beliefs, changes of values and standards."

George Herbert Mead said that the essence of the self is cognitive, that is, at the heart of the self is the process of knowing. Martin Buber and other existentialists have pointed to the truth that to know and perceive the other person as a 'thou' is decisive for being a person. And in our study of race prejudice we saw that it is upon the basis of person perception that interaction takes place between people. From all this, it would appear that our first task in re-educating Christian people is to help them understand their true identity, and to help them perceive other men in terms of their identity. The local church must begin to see itself as the priestly community if it is to become a priestly community, the local church must begin to perceive the mass of humanity which encircles it in terms of man's basic identity if it is going to relate to it as it should.

Second, there is the need for a change in feeling.

There is the need not simply for a change in understanding, but also a change on the emotional level, the level of passionate concern. Some words of Bonhoeffer's from his

"Communion of Saints" may help us here:

"It is a Christian recognition that the person, as a conscious person is created in the moment when a man is moved, when he is faced with responsibility, when he is passionately involved in a moral struggle, and confronted by a claim which overwhelms him."³

Transformation of identity cannot occur in the life of one who looks on as a disinterested spectator, even though he may have a fairly accurate understanding of the situation, transformation and change only come through participation in the situation. There are many Christians in our country who understand what they are called to be, and how they ought to perceive others, but this ought does not imply that they can or do live the priestly style of life. It seems that what we so often lack is passionate involvement in the life of the world as "priests". Indeed, we have before us the example of our great high priest who is "touched with the feeling of infirmities"⁴ that is, one who is able to understand our human predicament because He was and is involved in it.

Further, this involvement is one of everyday conduct. In other words, the priestly style of life must be applied to the whole of life at every "now", there is no waiting for the appropriate moment or event or situation. There is no growth in the person who only seeks to be true to his identity when it is convenient or most likely to be acknowledged by others. Likewise, the local church is called to witness to its true identity in all its life, and as this becomes true it is able to witness in particular situations with a moral and spiritual power beyond its own meagre resources.

Third, re-education requires the life of a group.

As Lewin says, re-education is a process which occurs "within the framework of the individual's total life in the group." Priestly identity cannot be separated from the priestly community, and the dynamic for the growth of priestly identity is to be found only through participation in the community of the Holy Spirit. Personal identity is always meshed with group identity, and there is no better witness to this truth than the Bible itself. The Biblical message is not primarily about

the emancipation of the individual from sin, but about God's action in history to create a community in which the responsible individual finds his true identity.⁵ At this point there is the clear need of understanding that the identity of the Christian man is largely determined by the identity of the local church to which he belongs and in whose life he participates, so that the re-education of Christian people involves the need for "group-life" which is sympathetic to the task. At the same time, the local church will not develop its own identity as the priestly community, unless its life is orientated in that direction. And so we come to the question of paramount importance "how can the local church become a priestly community?" We obviously cannot answer this question in a short space, and further, we cannot speak about any local church than some hypothetical one, but there are certain factors which are important for all churches if they are to realise their priestly identity in their life and witness.

The priestly community is called to be a **disciplined community.**

The local church is called to live under the authority of the Word of God, it is not permitted to live unto itself, it is committed to obedience to the will of Christ. Too often we find churches which are a law unto themselves, churches which regard the church as their own possession rather than the possession of Christ and the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit. The individual who is seeking to be true to his priestly identity needs the supportive discipline of others who are involved in the same concern. Sometimes it is necessary, though perhaps unfortunate, that those who take their calling seriously are forced to find this disciplined community not within the church itself but within small groups. There are real dangers inherent in any "ecclesiola in ecclesia", such as exclusivism, false piety, separatism and so forth, but sometimes situations arise where they become necessary. Especially is this true when the local church seeks to stifle the very identity which the Christian man knows is his by right. When this happens, there is discipline but of the wrong kind — true discipline enables growth, encourages growth, sustains and directs growth, and it

(Continued on page 16)

The nature of the Christian faith

The twin poles of such relationship cannot arise out of mere adjustment to a well-ascertained fact. Thus the rhythm of any such relationship must be that of invitation and response, and such outgoing commitment of the self cannot be separated from risk. Unless we are willing to chance ourselves on the un compelling overtures of other people, a truly personal relationship with them is impossible.

Compelled response is destructive of the finest kind of human relationship. If the invitation which one person makes to another is too blatant and open, the overwhelming probability will be that the response will be one of adjustment rather than commitment. The restraint which we observe in human relations is one of the prime analogies which we must apply in considering what Christians claim to be the Biblical revelation. He must come to us in the way of gesture which can be refused or accepted. If He did not, He would deprive Himself of the possibility of such relationship with men who so largely fear such self-giving in order to accept another. If God revealed himself openly and directly, is it not probable that the vast majority of the race would be intellectual Pharisees — holding God at a distance by their very knowledge of Him?

Thus the Christian revelation from the very nature of what it claims to be must be a veiled one. There are the gestures which cause us to pause and consider but do not compel. Why for example is the Old Testament faith, held by a mere handful of tribes, so very different in fundamental content from the general run of Near Eastern religion at that time? That is a problem which the most objective historian of ideas must consider. What was the origin of the Christian Church, unless Jesus Christ did rise from the dead? — again there is an issue which any openminded historian of the period must face. Such gestures, however, do not compel belief, they can be evaded, and many who do that show the embarrassment which we all know when we seek to sidestep the approach of other people, with whom for some reason or the other we do not want to enter into relationship. On the other hand these same gestures may

be so illuminating of our existence that we take them for what they are — invitations to commitment.

That is the peculiar logic of the Christian revelation, a logic basically similar to that of inter-human personal relationships. For that reason Christian belief can never be easy and undemanding. At times it may appear so, especially during these periods of history when whole societies adhered to the Church, so that for most people Christianity appeared the most reasonable thing in the world. In such periods the real nature of Christian faith can be obscured — its quality as insight and committal is dimmed, and social acquiescence would appear the broad road to saving belief. Then the nature of faith is obscured because of the numbers who make it their profession.

To-day, it is becoming more and more obvious that it is not easy to be a Christian — people will only come to belief if at the same time they are aware of what belief is and entails. In this age, we can only rejoice that issues are increasingly becoming more and more clear-cut in this respect. The widespread unbelief of the present time must not be thought of as defeat for God, for He is not an ad-man, a purveyor of mass-suggestion, who measures his success by the sales turn-over.

To-day, faith can be clearly seen to be commitment — a commitment to the insight that the world is meaningful, yet whose reason is found in a love so deep and holy that it takes the way of the Cross. Because faith is commitment, reason can do no more than present the alternatives, to create space in which grace can act.

This in fact is the task of natural theology. It elucidates the issues presented by ultimate questions and shows what patterns of behaviour and attitude are likely to follow from them. In so doing, in the writer's opinion, it has the value of making clear that an atheistic Christianity is an impossibility — that the faith, hope and love demanded by the Christian revelation requires a theistic understanding of the universe. Natural theology is there to clarify, it cannot tell us how we must choose.

1. R. Tennant in review in Prism (May 1964) of R. Robinson 'An Atheist's values'.

HIERVAN EN DAARVAN

(Vervolg van bladsy 9)

Afrikaners. Drie Afrikaners van naam het elk 'n inleidende woord daartoe bygedra: **Prof. Melius de Villiers, prof. Leo Fouché en dr. D. F. Malan.** Veral die voorwoord van dr. Malan munt uit deur helderheid en oortuigingskrag; maar wat hy bowe-al daarin tref, is die **van-selispreekende sekerheid** waarmee hy sekere waardes aanprys wat vandag deur sommige onder ons onder 'n vraagteken geplaas word. Hy sê nie: Jongelui, julle kan na Holland gaan, maar pas tog op om nie Hollanders te word nie! Hy sê: „De aanraking met een volk, bij uitstek met vaderlandsliefde en vrijheidszin beziel, geeft verder een gezonden impetus aan zijn nationaal gevoel, ten gevolge waarvan de jonge Afrikaner niet zelden in Holland zichzelf vindt.” Daarom het hy ook die **vertroue** wat hom in staat stel om die studie in Holland by sy landgenote „hartelijk aan te bevelen”.

Maar belangriker nog: Dr. Malan skryf oor dinge soos „het geestesleven van Europa”, „de toeïgening van de intellectuele rijkdommen van Europa”, „de groote cultuurlanden, die op intellectueel gebied de mensheid leiden”, „den totalen schat van Europeesche beschaving en kennis zicht toe te eïgenen, te ziften en te verwerken”. Waarom hoor ons nooit meer van daardie dinge nie? Het Europa ons nou skielik niks meer te leer nie? Of . . . is ons miskien **bang** om daar te gaan leer? Besonder veelseggend in verband met die diskussie oor die buitelandse studiebeurse is die volgende woorde van dr. Malan: „Hierbij komt nog het feit dat de Hollandse Universiteit aan den ernstigen student, **die eigen standpunt niet ontvangen maar zellstandig veroveren wil** (ek kursiveer), eene verscheidenheid biedt van geestesstromingen, zoals die wellicht nergens anders aangetroffen wordt. Holland kan met recht genoemd worden het intellectuele pan-opticum der beschaafde wereld.”

Hierdie woorde moet genoeg wees om meer as een hedendaagse teoloog in ons land koue rillings te laat kry. 'n Verscheidenheid van geestesstrominge! Anathema! 'n Eie standpunt selfstandig verower? Liberalisme! — En toe, daar staan dit en in 1910 is dit deur almal aanvaar en goedgekeur. Waar staan ons vandag?

— Erasmus

The Nature of the Christian Faith

(PART 2)

— DR. S. H. RUSSELL

The four main ways of argument for God's existence do not succeed in what they set out to prove — nevertheless in different ways they are extremely illuminating concerning the human situation, for they show us what it means to believe or not believe in God.

The ontological argument testifies to man's conviction that his standards of perfection require a certain objective beyond that of mental conception, while the teleological shows his desire to understand the wonders and intricacies of the natural world in personal terms. Going deeper, the cosmological argument raises the question whether there is any significance in existence as a whole, while the moral argument bears witness that man in his most personal activity feels responsible to an order beyond himself. The question of God's existence and that of our personal significance are inextricably related. Do we live in a responsible world? are our moral standards more than our private predilections? The answers which we give to these questions are of the utmost importance for what we make of our personal existence. These questions cannot be dismissed, and therefore we must pass on to consider the various answers to them.

HEROIC ATHEISM

There is the answer of heroic atheism, perhaps best represented in these days by J-P. Sartre. He states quite baldly that we live in a godless world which is lacking in any meaning beyond that which we provide for ourselves. We must create our own significance for our lives and there are no norms beyond ourselves to which we must conform. In fact, the greatest threat to truly personal existence is to become conformist in regard to the demands of society. One must affirm oneself in one's own way — that is Sartre's gospel.

It must be admitted that such an attitude produces courage (Satre himself was a resistance fighter during the Nazi occupation of France), yet the courage seems to be of a particularly pointless kind. Why should man be so concerned to af-

firm his personal existence in a world so apathetic to it, especially if such affirmation results in discomfort? Moreover, man finds in such attitude no release from self-engrossment which theistic belief offers. An heroic atheist may be unselfish (some are), but he is unselfish for the sake of his own self-affirmation. Furthermore, such an attitude does not make for social cohesion — if there are no norms to which the individual is obliged to conform and if social pressures are a threat to true individuality, there is no reason why one's self-affirmation should not take the form of deliberate perversion. The heroic atheist can become so easily a rebel without a cause.

UNHEROIC ATHEISM

There is the answer of the unheroic atheist — *l'homme moyen sensuel*. It is not for him to challenge the wickednesses and stupidities of society, but rather to find a niche in which he can make himself as comfortable as possible. The unheroic atheist is not anti-social, though he will not be willing to sacrifice himself for the society to which he belongs. For him the heights of human devotion, courage and honesty are but glorious fancies, while tolerance and reasonableness are the greatest virtues. As a not illiberal reviewer has recently written in his critique of one of the best presentations of the finer kind of this atheism: "The passion of faith or the lust of power, adventure, risk, and a glorious death for a lost cause — by which even death may be defeated — are not to the author's taste, and because they are not to his taste his reason can find excellent reasons against them".¹ The unheroic atheist cannot grasp Dostoevsky's dictum: "If men are deprived of the infinitely great they will not go on living but die of despair." Is it going too far to sug-

gest that a great deal of modern boredom is due to the unconscious acceptance of such a position?

THE THEIST

Finally, there is a theistic position which affirms that our humanity is bound up essentially with a transcendent personal order. The theist accepts the world as possessing a meaning of its own, the organization of nature he treats with respect even though on occasion with genuine bewilderment, while he further believes that his values have a validity beyond that which he confers upon them. Lastly he regards his ethical activity as being grounded in a deeper and final personal order.

So far we have not decided which of these positions is the superior. All of them are so ultimate that they can produce a coherent scheme of existence and its attendant way of life. There is no more ultimate position from which these three attitudes can be judged and evaluated. If we criticize one of them it is from the point of view of another position. In the last resort our option for either one of them is a question of insight and loyalty, not of unbiased assessment.

BIBLICAL FAITH

Where, however, does Christianity come in on this matter of ultimate loyalties? Now, it is significant that in the Biblical narrative nowhere is any attempt made to prove the existence of God. This, of course, could be attributed to naivete, but is more likely due to the apprehension that such a proof is irrelevant to the Biblical faith. If the significance of our existence lies in personal relationship to God, the great cornerstone of the Christian faith, the only validation for the faith must lie in the realm of personal commitment, for in matters of such relationship there can be no certainty apart from commitment. A worthwhile personal relationship neither resides in measured reaction to other individuals nor in the more or less conscious manipulation of them, nor yet again in the observance of certain rules to keep on the right side of someone else, but in trust and uncalculating response.

THE LOCAL CHURCH AND PROBLEMS OF IDENTITY IN A MULTI-RACIAL COUNTRY

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is this kind of discipline that the priestly community must exercise. A discipline which enables a man to live the priestly life in the world.

The priestly community is called to be a **community of dialogue**.

There can be no priestly community and no growth of priestly identity within the community without dialogue amongst the members and with the world itself.⁶ By this we do not mean simply discussion, we mean that form of communication which is deeper in silence than in chatter and more profound in common worship than mere conversation. For the growth of priestly identity amongst the members of the church, the church must be a com-

munity in which members are able to wrestle together with the Word of God, where there can be frank and earnest discussion, where men can be heard without fear of rejection lest in rejecting them the Word of God for that moment be lost. But at the same time, the priestly community is in dialogue with the world, for it does not live only in dependence upon God, it also lives fully immersed in the predicaments of human existence. The priestly community and those priestly men who represent it day by day can only speak and act in a relevant manner when they have heard the world as well as the Word of God. We have to learn again in all humility that the children of darkness are often

wiser than the children of light!

The priestly community is an **eschatological community**.

The priestly community is called to take God's activity in history with utter seriousness. It is called to participate in the present as if we have some real hope, some cause for expectancy, some awareness of God's judgment and activity in history which is leading towards ultimate reconciliation and consummation. The priestly man must live both in the fear of God and in hope, believing that God is the God of history and His purposes will not be thwarted. But the priestly community cannot take the future seriously unless it takes the present moment seriously. Living eschatologically, the priestly community asks the question, "in what way is Christ taking form in the world here and now?"⁷ Here is Bonhoeffer's stress upon the responsibility of the Christian at the concrete place, the place of decision and task, the place where Christ is already at work and where He bids us participate with Him. In the situation which confronts us in a multi-racial country such as ours, the priestly community is called to bear witness to the presence of Christ in the situation as Lord but also as represented by those who are hungry, in prison, poor and oppressed.⁸ Whatever is involved in bearing witness to God's acceptance of every man in terms of his basic identity is the present task of the priestly community. The priestly community asks the question: "What are we going to make of this moment of history in Christ's name?" And this is the question that comes to the Christian Church in our world and in our land today — we are faced with a difficult situation, we are faced with powerful factors which seek to thwart our witness, but we are also faced with the Word of hope and the Word of this hour.

REFERENCES:

1. See Cyril Eastwood "The Royal Priesthood of the Faithful" and "Laity" July 1960-9.
2. "Resolving Social Conflicts" p 58.
3. p 31 (American edition).
4. Hebrews 4:15.
5. G. E. Wright "The Biblical doctrine of Man in Society" p 97.
6. cf H. Kraemer "A Theology of the Laity" pp 172ff.
7. "Ethics" p 23f.
8. Matthew 25:31ff.

WHERE DO WE STAND?

(Continued from page 11)

dering a service to the government. A government — an especially a government that enjoys increasing popular support — is made up of sinful and fallible men who face awesome temptation to misuse their power for their own ends. By our criticism, we shall provide them with a salutary reminder that no man is infallible or sinless, provide them with a bulwark against temptation. (I understand that in one province, the recent elections have resulted in a provincial council made up entirely of members of one party. One cannot help speculating that this particular council will have a dreadfully dull time with no opposition to encounter).

ON GUARD

The final thing that needs saying is this: there are dangers in political action against which every Christian must be on his guard. It is possible for example, for a Christian to become so tied to a particular political faction, that he forgets the Church's calling to minister to all men, of whatever political persuasion. It is one of the supreme tragedies of life in South Africa that, generally speaking, the Churches are divided on lines that broadly coincide with differences in political

conviction. If our congregations were made up of approximately equal numbers of people of all political persuasions, what constructive debates, what healthy tensions, would result! Again, history shows quite clearly that Christians have made foolish judgments because they lacked skill in economics and politics. This is reason for caution, not for silence. The fact of fallibility does not reduce men to silence in theology, ethics, or politics. It does, however, demand that Christians who engage in politics should be ready to learn from the statesmen, the lawyers, the economists and sociologists. Finally, Churches, as corporate bodies should be very much more cautious than individual Christians or groups of Christians in taking political stands.

It is the Christian individual's task to engage in political debate, controversy and action, in this, as in every other sphere, speaking the truth (as he sees it) in love. It is the Church's task to stimulate the Christian individual to this engagement, and to provide as many resources as it can to assist him in arriving at a theologically and ethically sound conviction.
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