



PRO VERITATE

DAVID PERK

Apartheid and Ecumenism

H. GORIS

Die Godshuis 'n Handelshuis

C. GREGOROWSKI

"Meanwhile, Back on the Ranch..."

**THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES AND
COMMUNISM**

Questions and Answers

PRO VERITATE

EDITORIAL

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IN HIERDIE UITGAWE

Ernstige besinning oor probleme van die geloof en die Christelike lewe is nie slegs 'n saak vir predikante en teoloë nie. PRO VERITATE verheug hom daaroor dat hy hierdie maand drie artikels kan plaas van persone wat in die „gewone lewe” staan.

- David Perk spreek prikkende gedagtes uit oor sy oortuiging dat nie apartheid nie, maar 'n beleving deur gelowiges van hulle eenheid in die Gees, die antwoord is op die rasseprobleem in Suid-Afrika. . . . Bl. 3
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- Dr. Francois Möller van die Pêrel vertel hoe hy tot die ontdekking gekom het dat die ware godsdiens nie 'n eis is nie, maar 'n gawe van God waardeur die sondaar vrygemaak word om God en die naaste lief te hê. . . . Bl. 10
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Editorial:

Spiritual Precaution

The church and the state in South Africa and, orbiting around these two central institutions of authority which are responsible for the arrangement of our society, all bodies and organisations which are connected in some way or other with the shaping of life in our country and contribute to it are faced with the onerous task of taking precautionary steps, through swift, calculated action, for the spiritual equipment and preparation of our whole population for life in the future South Africa.

The statement that we are living in a rapidly changing world simply does not allow itself to be employed as a hackneyed academic platitude of the late twentieth century on account of its usefulness as a subject for learned dissertations and interesting conferences. The dynamism of the actual truth which finds expression in this statement is too tremendous for this. The melting-pot in which the rapid change takes place is the seething world itself. And the "new" which makes itself felt at a given time is hardly stated and often barely fathomed when it already belongs to the "old" and already forms part of the historical background against which the new has to be explained and evaluated.

In South Africa, too, we should not dwell and ponder too long on the fact that the world, including the country of our own habitation, is a place of rapid change. It is simply a fact, whether we like it or not. We are simply involved in it, whether we wish to accept it or not. We are simply compelled to attain a certain attitude towards life in the midst of change.

In South Africa this concretely means that every inhabitant of the country will have to find his place in a pattern of society which is subject to a process of profound and irresistible change on every level — politically, ecclesiastically, socially, economically, culturally. No legislation, no emotional protests, no single political, ecclesiastical or cultural stronghold which is erected to conserve the unassailable "old" in sectional interest can check the speed with which we are rushing towards a new South Africa. In many respects the actual situation in which we now live is already something totally different from the idealised by-gones to which many desperately wish to cling.

Our country, too, has undergone a far-reaching change of countenance in the technological and social revolution. We have remained anything but unaffected by what has happened in the wide world. Yet certain prominent features in the appearance of our society have not changed. Despite urbanisation on a large scale, for example, and an intensification of the already existent integration of various elements of the population on the level of labour as a result of industrialisation, and despite the inevitable measure of acculturation which went with it, it has essentially never come to another basis of relationship between the various population groups

of our country than that of master and servant between White and non-White, on the one hand (or more gently put, that of the Whites *qua talis* as the class of employers and of the non-Whites *qua talis* as the class of employees); and on the other, between the Whites themselves, that of the Afrikaner as the inheritor of the country and the non-Afrikaner as dominator (real or potential), as threat, intruder, foreigner. However much the population of our country in large measure constituted a socially and economically integrated whole, South Africa has always thusfar wanted to maintain, by parliamentary legislation since fairly recently, that it is inhabited by a variety of peoples sharply separated from each other, each one of whom has a claim to the country in a different way and to a different degree: Europeans, Bantu, Asiatics and Coloureds.

Now it is certainly no crystal-gazing, no sophistic soothsaying with an eye to the main chance when one alleges that this pattern of society will soon irrevocably belong to the historical background of the new day which is dawning. Neither is it the case that someone who says it necessarily also wants it that way. A situation which we desire and one in which we are simply placed are two things. From undeniable facts it is already becoming evident that we are standing on the threshold of a South Africa in which everyone who inhabits and loves the country will have to inhabit this **one** country together with others who **also** have no other home and **also** know no other love of the fatherland. The situation for which every inhabitant of the country must prepare himself is one in which not the colour of someone's skin, his language, his degree of development, his culture are going to determine whether, and in what measure, he has a right to full citizenship, but in which those who inhabit and shape the country will also possess and govern it. That we live in a rapidly changing world, a world in which change simply occurs irresistibly and unavoidably, also still has this pronounced implication for South Africa in particular.

It is rather senseless to mull over this fact as such. It should be spiritually digested. Especially the church will have to take the lead in this and expound how Christians must evaluate the phenomenon of change in this (rapidly changing!) world. It will have to realise in advance that it renders service to no one by preaching an attitude of reticence towards change. It will have to see the continuously occurring change, the "new" ever and again appearing in the world, in its broad context of eschatologically determined faith, the coming of new heavens and a new earth. It will have to indicate the connection between what is traditional and what is new: What is tradition to-day was new yesterday and what is new to-day, will belong to tradition to-morrow. It will have to point out clearly

what the difference is between respect for tradition and a convulsive clinging to the old. It will have to identify the traditional elements which are essential for a believing experience of reality in its new forms of appearance as a reality which is also encompassed in the historical acts of God, and call for its preservation and continuous actualisation.

The big question facing all authorities and elected ones to whom spiritual guidance in our country is entrusted is whether the people of our country are spiritually prepared and equipped for life in the South Africa of tomorrow. The hubbub in ecclesiastical and cultural circles which has again stirred up so many gusts and eddies during recent months is a foolish fuss and a waste of time. Trifling issues are devouring the powers of men faced by an enormous and challenging task. What is requisite for the welfare of our country more than all else is

that all spiritual leaders should busy themselves more intensely and with greater dedication than ever before with the gospel of Jesus Christ — and do so not with an anachronistic attitude towards life and an anachronistic approach towards the Word but in order to carry it also at this juncture as the dependable lamp to our feet and the only light on the "path of South Africa".

It is necessary to make the discovery that the Christian gospel will competently cope with all the demands which are going to be put to the individual and the community, the state and the church in the coming time. This discovery is made by them who stand in the present with the greatest realism and acceptance of reality and bow before the authority of Scripture in the belief that the God of the past is also the God of the present, but even more comfortingly, also the God of the future.

Inleidingsartikel:

Geestelike Voorsorg

Die kerk en die staat in Suid-Afrika en, rondom hierdie twee sentrale gesagsinstansies wat verantwoordelik is vir die inrigting van ons samelewing, alle liggame en organisasies wat op een of ander wyse ingeskakel is by en meedoen aan die vormgewing van die lewe in ons land, staan voor die gewigtige taak om met haastige, berekende optrede voorsorg te tref met die oog op die geestelike toerusting en voorbereiding van ons hele landsbevolking vir die lewe in die toekomstige Suid-Afrika.

Die stelling dat ons in 'n snel-veranderende wêreld leef, laat hom eenvoudig nie as 'n akademiese gemeenplaas van die laat twintigste eeu tot afslytens toe hanteer vanweë sy bruikbaarheid as tema vir geleerde verhandelings en interessante konferensies nie. Daarvoor is die dinamiek van die waarheid self waaraan die stelling uitdrukking gee, te geweldig. Die kookpot waarin die snelle verandering hom voltrek, is die bruisende wêreld self. En die „nuwe" wat hom op 'n gegewe tydstip laat voel en laat geld, is nouliks nog gekonstateer en veelal skaars deurgrond, of dit behoort alweer tot die „oue" en vorm reeds deel van die historiese agtergrond waarteen die nuwe verklaar en beoordeel moet word.

Ook in Suid-Afrika sal ons nie te lank daarby kan stilstaan om te peins oor die feit dat die wêreld, met insluiting van die land van ons inwoning, 'n plek van snelle verandering is nie. Dit is eenmaal so, of ons daarvan hou of nie. Ons is eenmaal daarby betrokke, of ons dit wil aanvaar of nie. Dit word eenmaal op ons afgedwing om te midde van die verandering tot 'n bepaalde lewenshouding te kom.

In Suid-Afrika beteken dit konkreet dat elke inwoner van die land sy plek sal moet vind in 'n samelewingspatroon wat op elke vlak — politiek, kerklik, sosiaal, ekonomies, kultureel — in die proses van 'n grondige en onkeerbare verandering verkeer. Geen wetgewing, geen emosionele proteste, geen enkele politieke, kerklike of kulturele vesting wat opgerig word om die „oue" in seksionalistiese belang te konserveer en sakraliseer, kan die vaart

keer waarmee ons 'n nuwe Suid-Afrika tegemoet gaan nie. In vele opsigte is die feitlike situasie waarin ons tans leef, reeds iets totaal anders die geïdealiseerde vervloënhed waaraan baie krampagtig wil vashou.

Ook ons land het in die tegnologiese en sosiale revolusie van die afgelope halfeeu 'n ingrypende gelaatsverandering ondergaan. Ons het alles behalwe onaangeroerd gebly deur wat in die wye wêreld gebeur het. Tog het sekere prominente trekke van ons samelewingsvoorkoms nie verander nie. In weerwil van 'n grootskaalse verstedeliking, bv., en, as gevolg van industrialisasie, 'n intensivering van die voorheen reeds bestaande integrasie van verskillende bevolkingselemente op die vlak van die arbeid, 'en in weerwil van die onvermydelike mate van akkulturasie wat daarmee gepaard gegaan het, het dit wesenlik nie gekom tot 'n ander verhoudingsbasis tussen die verskillende bevolkingsgroepe van ons land nie as, enersyds, tussen blank en nie-blank dié van baas en kneg (of sagter uitgedruk, dié van die blankes *qua talis* as die werkgewersklas en van die nie-blankes *qua talis* as werknemersklas); en andersyds, tussen die blankes onderling, dié van die Afrikaner as erfgenaam van die land en die nie-Afrikaner as oorheersers (reëel of potensieel), as bedreiger, indringer, vreemdeling. Hoe ons landsbevolking ook al sosiaal 'en ekonomies tot op groot hoogte 'n geïntegreerde geheel gevorm het, Suid-Afrika wou dit tot hiertoe nog altyd handhaaf, en van betreklik onlangs af deur parlementêre wetgewing, dat hy bewoon word deur 'n skerp van mekaar afgegrensde verskeidenheid van volke wat elk op 'n ander wyse en in 'n ander graad van reg aanspraak het op die land: Blankes, Bantoes, Asiate en Kleurlinge.

Nou is dit voorwaar geen kristalkykery, geen sofistiese waarsêery op 'n kans van òf die een òf die ander as 'n mens die bewering maak dat hierdie samelewingspatroon straks onherroepelik tot die historiese agtergrond sal behoort van die nuwe wat aan die aanbreek is nie. Dit is ook nie die geval

dat iemand wat dit sê, dit noodwendig ook graag so wil hê nie. 'n Situasië wat ons begeer en een waarin ons eenvoudig gestel word, is twee dinge. Uit onloënbare feite blyk dit nou reeds dat ons op die drumpel staan van 'n Suid-Afrika waarin elkeen wat die land bewoon en lief het, hierdie één land sal moet bewoon saam met die ander wat óók geen ander vaderlandsliefde ken nie. Die situasië waarvoor elke inwoner van die land hom moet voorberei, is een waarin nie die kleur van iemand se vel, sy taal, sy graad van ontwikkeling, sy kultuur gaan bepaal of, en in watter mate, hy 'n reg op volledige burgerskap het nie, maar waarin diegene wat die land bewoon en bewerk, dit ook sal besit en regeer. Dat ons in 'n snel-veranderende wêreld leef, 'n wêreld waarin die verandering hom eenvoudig onkeerbaar en onafwendbaar voltrek, het vir Suid-Afrika in besonder ook nog hierdie geprononseerde implikasië.

Dit is taamlik sinloos om oor hierdie feit as sodanig te tob. Dit moet geestelik verwerk word. Die kerk veral sal hierin die leiding moet neem en moet uitspreek hoe Christene die verskynsel van verandering in hierdie (snel-veranderende!) wêreld moet beoordeel. Hy sal by voorbaat moet weet dat hy aan niemand enige diens bewys deur 'n houding van geslotenheid teenoor die verandering te predik nie. Hy sal die voortdurend optredende verandering, die telkens verskynende „nuwe“ in die wêreld, in die groot verband van sy eskatologies-bepaalde geloof, die koms van nuwe hemele en 'n nuwe aarde, moet sien. Hy sal die verband moet aantoon tussen wat tradisioneel en wat nuut is: Wat vandag tradisie is, was gister nuut en wat vandag nuut is, sal more tot die tradisionele behoort. Hy sal duidelik moet aantoon waar die verskil lê tussen eerbied

vir die tradisie en 'n krampagtige vasklemming aan die oue. Die tradisionele elemente wat essensieel is vir die gelowige beleving van die werklikheid in sy nuwe verskyningsvorme as 'n werklikheid wat ook opgeneem is in die historiese handele van God, sal hy moet uitwys en tot die bewaring en voortdurende aktualisering daarvan sal hy moet oproep.

Die groot vraag waarvoor alle instansies en geroepenes aan wie die geestelike leiding in ons land toevertrou is, hulle gestel vind, is of die mense van ons land geestelik voorberei en toegerus is vir die lewe in die Suid-Afrika van môre. Die geskarrel in kerklike en kultuur-kringe wat die afgelope maande weer soveel stofdwarrels veroorsaak het, is 'n ydele gedoe en 'n verkwisting van tyd. Onbenullige kwessies verteer die kragte van mense voor wie daar 'n enorme taak uitdagend staan. Wat vir die heil van ons land tans nodiger is as alle ander dinge, is dat alle geestelike leidsliede hulle intensiewer en met toegewyde erns as ooit tevore met die evangelie van Jesus Christus sal besig hou — en dit nie met 'n anachronistiese lewenshouding en 'n anachronistiese benadering van die Woord nie, maar om dit ook in hierdie tydsgewrig te dra as die betroubare lamp vir ons voet en die enigste lig op die „pad van Suid-Afrika“.

'n Ontdekking is nodig dat die Christelike evangelie opgewasse is vir alle eise wat in die komende tyd aan individu en gemeenskap, staat en kerk gestel gaan word. Hierdie ontdekking word gedoen deur hulle wat met die grootste realisme en aanvaarding van die werklikheid in die hede staan en voor die Skrifgesag buig in die geloof dat die God van die verlede ook die God van die hede, maar in nog troosvoller sin, ook die God van die toekoms is.

APARTHEID AND ECUMENISM

DAVID PERK

The religious hermit who detached himself from the world and made a hole in the desert his home, where he could meditate and worship without distraction, no doubt made a contribution to mankind's spiritual appreciations and conceptions. There are no terms, other than spiritual ones, by which to judge the value and merit of his contribution. The ordinary man and woman in the community may experience a sense of wonderment and perhaps admiration at this man's self-denial and spiritual life but he is likely to judge more approvingly and appreciatively the personality and life of a spiritual human being like St. Francis of Assisi, for example, who went among the people ministering to their needs and comforting them in their suffering.

The religious-minded in our midst may prefer to follow their religious lives unconcerned with the life around them and its problems, or preferring not to confront them, but this means that they are not applying their religion to their daily life. It becomes then a spiritual exercise which has value for them, but which makes no real contribution to the development of a prac-

tical way of life of the community. Amongst the most pressing of the problems confronting our community is the co-existence of the diverse racial entities composing our population. Our national philosophy vis-a-vis these racial groups is to promote their individual development in geographically separate areas. Economic inter-dependence opposes its fulfilment however, and

keeps alive what to most white South Africans is the spectre of black domination.

Most white South Africans harry themselves with visions of violence, destruction and chaos, which, they believe, would follow the take-over of power by the non-white population from the white, should it ever arise. This naturally fortifies them in their support of separate development in autonomous homelands. But as these homelands, in their present state of development, can only contain portions of the racial groups linked patrimonially to them, the communities outside these homelands, embracing both the white and non-white sections, must evolve a way of relating to each other that promotes a mutual regard and respect. This is not only

a moral imperative. If we could evoke the allegiance of all groups and sections to a united South Africa we should gain for a future South Africa a security from internal strife and outside threats that it does not now possess.

OUR RESPONSIBILITY

The ultimate result of self-development may well be the elimination of cultural differences between the various racial groups, despite that the reverse is the present intention and design of the policy of self-development. But if the good neighbourliness that it is intended to achieve with this policy is to materialize we have to find a way of converting the white man's fear-ridden and rejecting attitude to the non-whites into an accepting and co-operative one.

The least we can do in discharging our responsibility to our children and to the generations ahead is not to bequeath to them a heritage of ideologies and structures that will undoubtedly bring them a harvest of difficulties and troubles. Admittedly, our vision of the future is restricted by the horizon of our common intelligence and the comprehensions of our period. Nor are we entitled to deny a future generation the inspiration of the moment, the freedom to adapt, the initiative to evolve and the impulse to experiment. But whether we wish it or not we shape the future, for even if we cannot rationally extend our responsibility beyond the bounds of our vision, we must recognise that, wittingly or unwittingly, we impose our will on future generations by the structures and traditions we pass on to them. The acorn we plant now gives verdure and shade to generations ahead, or none if we do not plant it. We dare not do less than attempt to visualise the ultimate effects of our present-day decisions, to the extent that our experience and wisdom permits.

Not to peer ahead and prepare for a future that is beyond us is a betrayal of trust. Each generation receives a heritage from its forebears, and adding its own contribution, passes on a growing heritage to its successors. Responsible men, in their personal lives, plan, as far as is possible, to provide their offspring with the means and facilities to achieve security and advancement in life. As members of a community, man, generally speaking,

are less motivated to planning for its future. For one thing, the community feels to be less close and comprehensible than the family, and for another, the individual, sharing responsibility for it and its future with a multitude of other individuals and diverse national, parochial and sectional organizations, cannot clearly discern and feel the contribution he is expected to make.

It thus comes about that we tend to leave the planning for the future of our community to political institutions and the people who govern them. This is universal practice, and is a function of democracy. But if these institutions and our leaders are to reflect our views in their decisions we owe it to them and our future generations to keep declaring them. This is the least degree of responsibility that devolves on the individual in the community.

"COLOUR" FEAR

History has bequeathed South Africa a heritage of colour consciousness and sensitiveness that today dominates its thinking in all spheres of endeavour. The preoccupation with colour diverts and shackles energies and talents that could be used more constructively, and the legislation it inspires narrows the living and creative horizons of all groups.

South Africa's obsessive fear of colour has robbed it of perspective, and neither ethical nor practical considerations are given the thought and priority they should receive. If South Africa could redirect the money and energy it is deploying to ensure apartheid to the spiritual, cultural and educational elevation of its total population the fear of domination of one by the other groups would ultimately disappear, with the elimination of the present educational and cultural differences. The establishment of a culturally and spiritually homogeneous community would be the surest proof and clearest demonstration of the unity of South Africa's total population.

It would be contrary to human nature to expect that white South Africans will voluntarily give up the superiority they enjoy because of their colour, with the social, political and economic advantages it entails. The age-old fear of racial dilution and of competing on equal terms with the non-white population will not easily be allayed. The

notion of giving the non-whites a voice, not to mention an authoritative one, in the regulation of affairs affecting the whites, is so unacceptable to the mass of white South Africans, in their present mind, that they have put a government in power that is committed to preventing this.

The fear of black domination both reflects the picture of white domination and draws strength from the racial clashes of the past and the unhappy chapters written by the non-white nations on the African continent who have gained independence in the last twenty years. If South Africa is however to reach a stage when all its sections can live in unity and harmony, this fear will have to be eradicated. Nothing would contribute more to this end than the spiritual and cultural uplift of all sections of South Africa's population, animating a mutual regard and respect.

THE CHURCH'S TASK

The process of substituting respect for an attitude of superiority can only be undertaken by the inspired teaching of spiritual leaders. Political leaders are too enmeshed in the fears of their constituents and in the short-term problems of the day to be charged with such a task. If respect could replace the rejection implicit in the policy of self-development in separate group areas, many of the present problems bedevilling the relationship of the white and non-white groups would in time disappear, and with it the hostility of a world that has outlawed racial discrimination.

No institution is better able to evoke the mutual regard and respect of the non-white and white sections of the population than the Church. An authentic spiritual lead should, in the ripeness of time, bring the grace and inspiration of humility to all those coming under its influence and win the joyous acceptance of the equality of all before the Spirit. Additionally, our Western civilisation and culture, to which the Church has given inspiration and impulse through two thousand years of its history, is embodied in the message of the Church. An active missionary Church would not only help to bring men into the presence of the Spirit but would also convey to the less advanced sections of our population the mode

of life and thought contained in Western civilization.

That the European has evolved to his present stage of moral and cultural development, through a phase of religious experience and exaltation, conveys a lesson that should be kept in mind by those who plan for the future of the less advanced peoples in our community.

If it is true, as I believe it is, that in the lives both of individuals and of a people, a period of religious awareness and spiritual motivation precedes and promotes their psychological development and maturation, religious institutions, Christian and non-Christian, have a duty to lead the less advanced sections of the community towards the spiritual phase of individual and communal evolution. This responsibility rests particularly with the Christian Church, whose adherents constitute the largest element in the white community.

MISSION AND UNITY

The main body of the Christian Church in South Africa appears to be lacking a sense of mission in respect of the non-white community, essentially through the operation of inhibitions which derive from and are reinforced by the outlook of the white community it serves. Whether or not these inhibitions have political overtones, the religious communities that feel unable to extinguish external distinctions between men in the presence of the Spirit cannot be expected wholeheartedly to engage in missionary work. It is no doubt not so much the lack of funds as the lack of spirituality which hampers Christian missionary work in South Africa.

The Christian Institute has taken a stand in regard to the unity of all peoples in the presence of the Spirit that should at once bring the spiritual guidance and illumination that the sprouting Christian sects amongst the Africans are seeking and the unifying message of the Spirit to all peoples. Its ecumenism could provide the future bridgehead to enable the segregated groups of South Africa to reach out to one another in understanding and harmony.

God has no step-children. Those who seek God are united by the same purpose and enjoy the same open road to Him. However different individual man is from his fellows in his life-time, in the end

all differences vanish when he retreats into the embrace of the Spirit that unites all peoples, ages and existence. When man uses the temporary, life-time differences between men to divide them into grades and camps and to provoke envies and enmities amongst them he betrays and offends the Spirit. Sooner or later, however, the Spirit, which is at the heart and source of the unity of existence, in all its manifestations, and through all time and space, reasserts its reign, dissolves the man-made divisions and unmasks man's pretensions. If religion is to reflect and hallow the truth of existence and its Spirit it cannot but follow the ecumenical road.

It may be argued that at this stage of man's socio-economic development, when he is under the continuous pressure of a rapidly changing and evolving environment, dominated by technological and politico-economic influences, he has neither the disposition nor the time to pay more than passing heed to spiritual values. Whilst this is undoubtedly true, it must not be overlooked that throughout man's history progressive phases in his spiritual development have preceded stages in his socio-economic development, and that over a period he is the product of both the spiritual and material influences which have successively made an impact on him. Modern man in the mass may feel too harrassed and hurried to stop and take his spiritual bearings, but the ecumenical movement is rapidly moving into the churches and homes of the whole world and no man will long remain unaffected and uninfluenced by it.

The essential barrier to ecumenism is that man sees in his fellow-man a competitor for material advantages and not a companion in dedication to the Spirit. To bring home to all men without distinction that they all begin and end in the Source, that the unity of the Source creates and underlies the unity of all beings, that their distinguishing features are a manifestation of the many-sidedness of existence and that the exploitation of these features for the construction of hierarchies is man-made and not God-inspired, is religion's task and responsibility. A large section of the Church, deeply rooted in the agony of the community it serves, has been unable to free itself from

its views and immediate interests and suffers with it. Though it is hampered for the moment in bringing the message of the Spirit to all, it must sooner or later find its true soul. The Church's struggle with its conscience has left it little inclination to give spiritual guidance to the mass of Africans, who have responded to the primitive urge to seek the Spirit and Truth in existence by establishing churches of their own, grafting on to the teachings of the Church their own primitive interpretations and rituals.

If discrimination in the body of the Church were to cease, white and non-white would meet there to acknowledge and worship the Spirit which unites and informs them both and all existence. In this manifestation of unity across the barriers of colour lies South Africa's ultimate hope for spontaneous harmony and peace. The religious mood that permits the confrontation of diverse colours and cultures on common ground can however only come after prior spiritual renewal. There will be much soul-searching before this gets under way.

When the white and non-white man will have acquired the same spiritual goals and will have come together as spiritual equals in the body of the church, their differences of colour will have lost the divisive effect it has today, and the fear of domination of one by the other will have diminished or vanished. Group identity, which is rooted in man, like differences between individuals, will continue to make the communal scene a varied one, but it will not abbreviate the sense of an all-embracing national and international unity in the ecumenical fold.

IDEALISM?

This view may appear very idealistic to the present outlook of white South Africans, and be far, in time, from the possibility of its translation into current living conditions. The peoples of the world are being directed, however, by various social, economic and technical developments in our civilization into a closer unity that keeps overtaking the diversity. South Africa cannot remain an exception for ever.

Idealism is the only realism that offers a solution to the difficulties that cannot but mount progressively as time goes on. There are few fields of human endeavour in which

problems rooted in colour are not painfully manifest today. It is simply not realistic to believe that more fool-proof segregation will contain the difficulties that inhere

in segregation. No-one in touch with present-day South Africa can seriously advocate an immediate, universal enfranchisement of its population, but more segregation

and denial is also not an appropriate answer. The only realistic answer is a dedication to the prior spiritual elevation of the entire community constituting South Africa.

DIE GODSHUIS 'N HANDELSHUIS

H. GORIS

Daar is baie mense, veral nie-sakemense, wat reken dat handel en besigheid feitlik maar iets minderwaardigs en selfs iets onchristeliks is. Hulle beskou wins min of meer as diefstal.

Tog is daar prinsipieel niks verkeerd met handel nie. Handel is: lewering van goeie ware of diens teen 'n regmatige vergoeding of beloning. Onder dieselfde definisie val **alle** werk, handewerk en harsingwerk. Of jy nou 'n kabinetmaker is of 'n minister, of jy nou 'n handelsagent is of 'n predikant, 'n broodbesorger of 'n pleitbesorger — elkeen moet goeie diens lewer om geregtig te wees op 'n billike vergoeding.

Handel was oorspronklik slegs ruilhandel en in beginsel is dit vandag nog so. Die een indiwidu lewer uit wat hy as 'n surplus het aan die ander en ontvang daarvoor terug wat hy self kortkom. Eers later het die praktyk posgevat dat handelswins gemaak kan word deur goedere te verkoop teen 'n hoër prys as waarvoor dit ingekoop is. Jy kan vandag ook 'n ander man se goed vir hom verkoop en in die wins deel. Dan word slegs jou diens beloon.

Handel, in die ruimste sin, word eers dan oneerlik as jy nie (of nie genoeg) werk of goed lewer nie en ten volle betaling aksepteer; of as jy goed verkoop wat nie jou eiendom is nie en die opbrengs daarvan nie afdra aan die regmatige eienaar nie; of as jy goed wat wel jou eiendom is verkoop teen 'n prys wat buite verhouding groter is as die reële waarde daarvan. Daar moet egter bedink word dat dit nie net handelaars is wat so kan maak nie. Somtyds word dit ook met geestelike goed gedoen: Promosie wat gemaak word danksy die goeie werk van 'n ondergeskikte; plagiaat wat in geskryfte (selfs in preke) gepleeg word; 'n ander mens se eer en goeie naam wat belaster word uit eiebelang. Dit is alles diefstal.

HANDEL IN GODSDIENS

Die diens van God word ook beloon. Die Bybel sê nie verniet dat God 'n beloner is van die wat Hom soek nie (Hebr. 11:6). Dit word beloon, in hierdie lewe en/of in die toekomstige lewe. Jy gee hoogstens jou tydelike en armsalige lewe vir Hom, maar jy ontvang terug die ewige en salige lewe. Dit is selfs só dat jy die ewige saligheid kan ontvang omdat jy, by wyse van gelykenis, om Christus ontwil 'n beker koue water gegee het vir 'n dorstige medemens — naasteliefde om Godswil betoon het. Die beloning wat God toesê is so oneweredig groot dat jy **in** en selfs **met** jou lewe nooit daarvoor sal kan kompenseer met dade nie. Dit word ons slegs toegereken, op ons rekening tegoed geskryf, om die volkome verdienste van Christus.

Die essensie van godsdienstige werk is ook dat 'n mens daarvan bewus bly dat God die eienaar is van wat jy lewer. Dan sal jy ook nooit spog met jou goeie werke en sal jy die beloning daarvan ook nooit beskou as jou verdienste nie, maar slegs as God se genade.

Maar 'n mens kan nie stoepsit en wag nie. Jy moet werk.

Die hele wêreld is God se huis, sy eiendom. Maar Hy gee die rykdom van die wêreld in gebruik aan mense, om daarmee te handel, in sy diens, tot sy eer. Selfs die Paradys moes deur die mens bewerk en bewaak word.

Daar is niemand wat kan sê dat hy geen werk het nie, of dat hy niks het om mee te handel nie. Sommige het die kapitaal van hulle stoflike besit of van hulle kennis gekry; ander hulle ondervinding of

liggaamskrag of . . . liefde. Die een het vyf, die ander twee talente, nog 'n ander slegs een. Almal egter het talente — alles talente wat ons van God gekry het: rykdom, of 'n helder kop, of ons sterk hande, of ons warm harte. God verskaf self die handelskapitaal.

Nou vra God slegs dat ons dit sal gebruik, tot hoogste profyt, in sy diens. Dat ons daarmee sal handel, sal woeker, wins daarmee sal maak vir sy koninkryk en tot sy eer.

Adam, vóór sy val, moes al gewerk het. Adam (en ook ons) ná die sondeval, moet werk, ook al kos dit nou sweet, al is dit dikwels swaarkry. Swaarkry is gering vir hulle wat 'n groot doel voor oë het. Daar is meer mense wat doodgaan van stoepsit as wat daar sterf van té harde werk.

HANDEL IN DIE GODSHUIS

Ons stel dit graag só: Ons is 'n Christelike nasie; ons voorgeslag het dan die Christendom aan die suidelike punt van 'n heidense wêrelddeel geplant en ons moet daardie erfenis bewaar.

Ja, die aksent lê dikwels besonder skerp op die „bewing”.

Maar 'n mens kan iets lewends slegs op twee maniere bewaar. Dit kan gekonserveer, gesteriliseer, gemummifiseer word, waardeur slegs die uiterlike aansien en vorm daarvan behou word, of dit moet versorg en gevoed, geaktiveer word, sodat dit werklik lewend bly, die kleur en krag daarvan behou en in krag toeneem.

Ons praat van 'n Christelike volksplanting in Suider Afrika. In die plantelewe moet 'n mens somtyds verplant, dooie takke afkap, wilde lote afsny en nuwe lote in-ent op die ou stam, anders tree daar degenerasie in en is daar 'n verswaking van die gehalte. By die diere-

lewe moet 'n mens uitgesoekte nuwe elemente inbring en wegdoen met onsuivere elemente om 'n hoë graad te bewaar of daarop te verbeter. As daar nie gewerk en krities geoordeel word nie, as daar net staatgemaak word op die goeie gehalte van die verlede, sal degenerasie en inteelt gou die gehalte verlaag. So is dit ook in die godsdienstige lewe; ook daar moet gewerk word, gekultiveer word om die wesenlike en lewende waardes daarin te behou. Die Bybel het sy ewigheidswaarde omdat daaruit altyd weer nuwe skatte gedelf kan word wat toepaslik is op die konkrete omstandighede. Die praktiese godsdienste, die evangelieverkondiging en Christelike naasteliefde, mag en moet gebruik maak van moderne middele en wetenskaplike metodes om tot die hoogste rendement te kom. Om dit so te stel: ook die Kerk moet 'n departement van onderwys, kuns en wetenskap organiseer, tot meerdere glorie van God. Die Kerk is nie net 'n museum van oudhede waar uiterlike vorme bewaar bly nie.

As daar nie voortdurend hervorm, gere-formeer word nie, word selfs godsdienste 'n dooie vorm. As godsdienste net konserwatisme is, word die Kerk en kerkmense mummies, goedbewaarde lyke, museumstukke. Sodra die godsdienstigheid sy persoonlike karakter verloor, verstyf en versterf dit in sy kerklike of sinodale of nasionale vorms. Dis die individuele predikante en gemeentelede wat met hul persoonlike geloof die Kerk dra; hulle is as persone die voortsetting en die vrugte van die ou planting. Dit hang alles af van die onderlinge en wedersydse aktiwiteit en goeie sorg of die vrugte gaaf en goed ontwikkel. As daardie werk gedoen word in gehoorsaamheid aan God en uit liefde tot Hom en die naaste, sal die Kerk bloei. Dit is sekerlik alleen God wat die wasdom skenk, maar mense moet plant en natgooi. As dit in die Paradys al vir Adam beveel is, hoeveel te meer is dit dan nou, nadat die „dorings en distels” bygekom het en die Satan probeer verwoes wat God geskape het, die geval.

Institusionele liggame soos kerkraad en sinode is wel essensieel en onmisbaar maar nie superieur aan die gemeenskap van gelowiges waaruit hulle opkom nie. Dwarsdeur die geskiedenis van die Kerk, vanaf die Joodse Sanhedrin tot vandag, was kerkvergaderings in hul strewe om die Kerk te bewaar dik-

wels juis die oorsaak van die verskeuring van die Kerk — omdat hulle magsapparate op hul eie wou wees en nie meer dienaars van die Koning van die Kerk nie. Die Satan werk nie net in die wêreld buite die Kerk nie, maar juis ook daarbinne. Die direkte en persoonlike trou van elke afsonderlike lidmaat aan Christus, die gehoorsaamheid van die lede van die liggaam aan die Hoof, van die vlees aan die Gees, probeer hy vernietig.

Die geskiedenis bewys dit. Die ou Joodse Kerk het in sy geheel 'n museum van ou vorms en tradisionele, wettiese gebruike geword, omdat die kerkregeerders die profete doodgemaak het. In die jaar NUL was daar slegs 'n enkeling wat nog die koms van die messias reël verwag het.

Die Roomse Kerk in sy diepste verval het gesteun op die mag van die clerus, in 'n uiters hiërargiese vorm. Individuele persone het „protesterend” die vernuwning van die Kerk bewerkstellig.

Vandag nog (ook onder Protestante) sien ons dat, as kerklike bestuursorgane hulleself magte toe-eien om oor die gees van lidmate te heers en die plek van die Koning wil inneem, daar verwarring kom en die kerke leegloop of doodloop in vormdiens. Aktiwiteit van die individuele lede is onontbeerlik. Organisasie en koördinasie daarvan is verkieslik. Tug en orde is noodsaaklik, maar dan tog slegs op Bybelse gronde en met die eerlike doel om die lidmaat vir die Kerk te behou — om sy aktiwiteit te lei en te rig tot diens aan die Koning.

Waar kerklike bestuursorgane magsapparate word, verstar die Kerk. Daarbinne is daar dan geen egte lewe, geen egte aktiwiteit nie. Pragtige tempelgeboue en witgepleisterde grafte van profete staan alles daar as koue steen en harde klip.

SKYN-HEILIGHEID

In die voorhof van die tempel in Jerusalem kom die gelowiges met hulle offergawes: diere of geld. Hulle kom somtyds oor lang afstande, so ver as van Galiléa vandaan. En dan is dit moeilik om van só ver af diere saam te neem. Dit is beter om dit naby Jerusalem te koop. In die veld van Éfrata wei daar baie skape wat as offerdiere aangehou word. Geleidelik het dit 'n gewoonte geword dat Joodse handelaars die offerdiere tot in die

voorhof bring en daar verkoop. Hulle het daar ook bank-takkantore gestig waar die onheilige Romeinse munte gewissel kon word teen die heilige tempelmunt, natuurlik net vir die godsdienstige behoeftes. In feite was dit dus 'n diens, 'n gerief vir die gelowiges — eintlik dus nog 'n hulpdienste by die diens van die Here. Die kerklike owerheid het dit toegelaat: die buitekant word skoon gehou maar die binnekant word nie gereinig nie.

Maar dan kom Jesus in die tempel. Hy sien daardie handelsgedoente. En Hy vererg hom baie. Hy jaag die handelaars uit; Hy sweep hulle uit; Hy kasty hulle en maak hulle handelsware deurmekaar. Hy roep uit dat hulle die huis van sy Vader, die Godshuis, tot 'n handelshuis maak, tot 'n rowerspelonk, terwyl dit 'n huis van gebed behoort te wees.

Dit is die kriterium wat Jesus altyd stel. Aktiwiteit moet daar wees, maar dan tot eer van God en tot heil van die medemens. Hy onttrek Hom nooit aan selfs die grootste sondaars nie. Hy praat met kinders, met vroue (selfs met slegte vroue), met Samaritane, met rasegte heidene . . . ook met die Fari-seër Nikodemus . . . vriendelik en liefdevol, vermanend maar vergewensgesind. Slegs as Hy met skynheiliges te doen kry is Hy regtig kwaad.

Die duiwel in die woestyn wat Hom skynheilig met Bybeltekste wil verlei om van sy roeping afvallig te word; die skynheilige skrifgeleerdes wat Hom net so met Bybelwoorde probeer vasvang; skynheilige handelaars wat net wil voordeel trek uit die godsdienste — Jesus haat hulle met 'n volkome haat. Dis alles duiwelse aktiwiteite. Skynheilig is erger as on-heilig.

Jesus is baie krities ten aansien van die godsdienste. As 'n mens die huis van gebed betree, kerk toe gaan, moet jy gaan om ook werklik te aanbid; en as jy dan maak soos 'n gelowige, openbaar dan jou geloof in jou werke en versaaak eiebelang. Kom om te dien — nie om te verdien nie. Gee aan God die eer wat Hom toekom, in die Godshuis en daarbuite, in die wye wêreld.

Want dis nie die tempel wat die mens heilig nie. Die geboue van die tempel beteken weinig vir Hom. Ook die erediens in die tempel is nie alles nie. By voorkeur hou Jesus sy predikasies nie daar nie, maar teen die hange van berge of op die

strande van die see. Die tempel is 'n huis van gebed, maar nie die enigste plek van aanbidding nie. Vir persoonlike gebed verkies Jesus die eensaamheid van 'n bergtop of die donker tuin van Getsémané. Enige plek, elke stukkie grond, orals waar jy God opreg wil ontmoet, is heilige grond. In die ware godsdiens kan die persoonlike element nie uitgeskakel word nie. Ook as dit gesamentlik beoefen word behoort dit vir die persoonlike ruimte te laat en dit te bevorder. En nie net die kerkgebou is die plek nie. Die anneks van die heiligdom is die voorhof. Jesus sluit dit in by die huis van sy Vader as die huis van gebed. Daar is ook nie net te bid nie, daar is ook te werk. Die opregte gebed sluit in die vraag: „Wat wil U hê-moet ek DOEN?” Die ware werk en handel sluit in die erkenning dat ons die krag en die middele van God verkry het. God eis die erediens, met harte én met hande, van alle mense. Christus het ons voorgedaan om van die wêreldse voorhof weer 'n skoon werkplek te maak. Hy het die stryd aangebind met onheiligheid en veral met die skyn-heilige diens van God.

Dit was Jode, kerkmense, wat die voorhof misbruik het. Hulle behoort tot die volk van God maar het hulle nie as sodanig gedra in hulle handel nie. Skyn-heilig. Teen hulle allereers rig Hy sy optrede. Ook teen die Fariseërs wat op die stoel van Moses gaan sit het; wat vir die gelowiges wette voorskryf wat hulle self nie hou nie; wat die koninkryk van die hemele toesluit voor die eenvoudige mense; wat oor

see en land trek om een bekeerling te maak en, as hy dit geword het, hom 'n kind van die hel maak; wat die huise van weduwees opeet en vir die skyn lang gebede doen — Fariseërs, wat ook buite die kerk, op hoeke van die strate, bid om deur die mense gesien te word, maar nie om te evangeliseer nie. Hulle misbruik die Kerk vir eie belang. Hulle misbruik eie aansien en posisie om maatskaplike en politieke wins te behaal. Hulle maak van God se huis 'n rowerspelonk. So het hulle ook 'n afsonderlike voorhof vir heidene, vir gelowiges uit ander volke, aangebou omdat Jode tog nie gemeenskaplik met gelowiges uit die heidene hulle godsdiens kan beoefen nie.

EN NOU . . . ?

Doen ons vandag nie dieselfde as ons van die eie kerk 'n vesting maak teenoor ander kerke nie? As ons ander kerke en selfs broers uit die eie kerklike gemeenskap verdag maak en belaster, pleks van om, uit liefde tot God en die naaste, moontlike verskille te bespreek op die basis van die Woord van God? As ons sendelinge die land laat afreis om bekeerlinge te maak, maar dan die bekeerdes angsvallig buitekant ons „blanke” kerke hou? As ons die toesig van sinodes dryf na diktaatur oor plaaslike kerke en oor afsonderlike lidmate?

Eendag is Jesus gewaarsku dat daar êrens mense is wat in sy naam preek en wonders doen, mense wat dan nie tot die direkte dissipelkring behoort nie. Hy het toe rustig gesê:

„Wie nie teen ons is nie, is vir ons”. By 'n ander geleentheid het Hy gesê: „Hulle wat nie met My is nie, is teen My”, d.w.s. die wat maak of hulle Christene is maar Hom nie as Koning erken en predik nie, hulle is teen Hom.

As Paulus leraars ontmoet wat nie die volle evangelie ken en uitdra nie, veroordeel hy hulle nie, maar roep hulle saam om hulle beter te onderrig.

Is dit nie tiperend dat Jesus by die finale proses teen Hom daarvan beskuldig word dat Hy die tempel wat met **hande** gemaak is, wou afbreek en 'n nuwe een wou opbou wat **nie** met hande gemaak is nie? Inderdaad, hulle het Hom mooi verstaan. Die Kerk is nie die klipgebou en die organisasie van mense, die bouwerk van mensehande nie. As Jesus dan stil bly op daardie beskuldiging, vra die hoëpriester baie tereg: „Is U die Christus, die Seun van die geseënde God?” Die boumeester en die Hoof van die ware Kerk kan mos slegs God se Seun wees! Eers hierop antwoord Jesus bevestigend: „Ek is”. En Hy sê selfs nog meer: „U almal sal die Seun van die mens aan die regterhand van die krag van God sien sit”. Jesus, die bouer van die tempel wat nie met hande gemaak is nie, is die Hoof van die Kerk. Hy is dit wat sy gemeente wil regeer terwyl Hy sit aan die regterhand van die krag van God. Wat Hy van die Kerk gemaak het en wil maak, dit is die ware Kerk waarin ons moet leef en handel ooreenkomstig sy bedoeling.

“MEANWHILE, BACK ON THE RANCH . . .”

CHRISTOPHER GREGOROWSKI

A useful scene-changer, this phrase, which brings a delighted chill to the spine of the young cinemagoer. For it invariably means that the scene is changing from the TALK in the sheriff's office to the ACTION back on the ranch. Both the talk and the action must take place, but surely simultaneously. And one grows impatient when the camera dawdles too long at the talk.

USEFUL TALK

Each member of the Christian Church is immersed in a life-situation in which he has to make his decisions for himself, as in the life-and-death struggle back on the ranch. Meanwhile the talk in the

sheriff's office — negotiation, consultation, delegation, deputation — continues. Memoranda from Mindolo, Pastorals from the Pope, gen from Geneva. We thank God, back on the ranch, for these. Without them the struggle would degenerate into pure brawn perhaps, without

the new vitality, the new direction which the battle for the kingdom needs as constantly as the world-situation changes. Far from despising these reports, many of us read them with half a mind on a voyage one day on a delegateship.

CONFORMITY OR CREATIVITY?

But the fact remains, meanwhile, that our problems are never solved for us, that each of us is immersed in a life-situation in which he has

to make his own decisions and so is subject to the terrible tension between conformity and creativity. One can see this writ large in the Church or writ small in each individual member. The greatest temptation which confronts the Church is the one of conforming with the standards of the world around it. Of course where these standards are good there is cause for rejoicing and our only sadness can be that the Church does not conform enough. But where these standards are bad and the Church endorses them by the life she lives, this causes in us a frustration which has its roots, of course, in the fact that we are guilty of the same sin and are powerless to overcome it. For to be creatively in conflict with the established standards of society is a well-nigh impossible task for the individual. It means ceasing to be the human being one automatically became from the infant who received its parents' applause to the youth who clung to the gang to the adult who is expected to respect his local society and finds tremendous security in so doing. No man is an island, and for any clod to allow itself to be washed away into the sea is as unlikely as it is for an apple to defy the Law of Gravity. Only once has it happened. Jesus Christ went **alone** to his Cross. The basic fact about the Church is that nobody else will ever have to do the same.

COMPANY IN CREATIVITY

The Christian who takes up his cross will always do so in the knowledge that the Father loves him, that the Son has walked this path and is waiting for him on it, and that the Holy Spirit is as close as the marrow in his bones. And yet it is basic to God's method that this love, this encouragement and this presence come to us from God largely through other people. This is a statement not so much of accepted doctrine as of experience. It is that act of love, that letter of encouragement, that person's availability, which brings home to us the love of God. Alone we are so alone, so ineffective. Our creativity just trickles away into conformity. The good that we would do we do not do. No, a man on his own is no man. He must have the support, the acceptance of others, a sense of belonging, before he is strong

enough to be creatively himself. The Christian expects this from the Church as the foot expects its life-blood from the heart. It is the calling of the Church to be creative in society. Each member has an individual, specific talent to exercise; but only when he is intimately supported by others, the whole, can he do so.

CONFORMING CONGREGATIONS

The problem for so many individuals is, however, that they cannot look to their local congregations as a whole for this support because the local congregation is in almost every case busy conforming with the doubtful standards of the world. An Anglican who hates the sin of apartheid, for example, has to go a long way before he finds a congregation which does not endorse this sin by its separate services and ministries and buildings. Episcopal statements and resolutions of synod are slender fare for one who has to chew the daily bread of separation. It is probably true that in every denomination the individual member rarely receives the support of his local congregation in fighting the sin of apartheid. One would be encouraged to hear of specific cases where this is not so; where the balance is on the side of creativity.

* * *

And so? Alone we can seldom be the creative selves which Christ calls us to be. We look to the Church for support and find not creativity but conformity. What are we to do?

CROWDS AND GROUPS

Some members of the Church believe that they are discovering an answer, and have been for some time. This answer is seen in embryo in that group which was Jesus of Nazareth and his twelve disciples; more clearly perhaps in Jesus, Peter, James and John; supremely in the twelve apostles and the Spirit of their Risen Lord. It was from this last group that the apostles received the necessary strength to go out and form the other groups in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, creative groups which gave their members the support they needed to live their lives and die their deaths creatively. We cannot expect to

receive this kind of support from large congregations unless they are broken down into smaller units for the simple reason that the larger the group the less chance has each individual member to express himself in it. A hundred people make a crowd, and the demand which the crowd makes on the individual is that of conformity. Three or eight people make a group, and the demand which the group makes on the individual is for a contribution, a creative act. The group which is truly centred around the Holy Spirit will make on each member the demands of no one other than the Holy Spirit. Another way of saying this is that the individual receives from the group the support he needs to do God's will, to take up his cross.

GROUPS

Of course the word "group" has long been a swearword to many and it is difficult to see whether this is becoming more or less so. Also, all of us have been members of groups so badly run, so purposeless or so dominated by one person that we shy away from involvement in new occasions for frustration. Despite all this, it has been a small group of people which has for some of us provided our most meaningful experiences of the loving activity of God. A group can be a comfortable escape; it can also be the springboard of creative love.

ELEMENTS IN A GROUP

Some Christians in South Africa are now discovering this, discovering at last some meaning, some way of beginning to do the things they had been blaming themselves for not doing. There are groups of Christians, perhaps all over the country, who realise that this is one of the ways which God is using (and has always used) to change the life of the Church from more conformity to less conformity, from less creativity to more creativity, and so to change society. Such creativity seldom springs from a group of like-minded people — it is then that the group becomes a cosy escape. It is surely when groups contain members from different walks of life, Christians of different denominations, people of different races, that their life is dangerously enriched, and creative love begins. When two

elements in society need to be reconciled, that reconciliation can begin within a group only when both elements are represented in the group. Groups of Methodists will never achieve Church Unity. Groups of whites — however well-intentioned — will never solve the problems of South Africa.

THE HEALING OF SOCIETY

The healing of mankind began in a little group comprising a Sinless Man and twelve sinners. The healing of South Africa's racial separations began there too and continue wherever there are groups in which separated elements have been brought together. Such groups may

never have thought of themselves as groups (a family, a group of friends), may have existed for one of many reasons (to sing, to play, to work), may or may not have been consciously striving for the establishment of Christ's kingdom here and now. Yet, any true group composed of different elements will realise that God has called it into existence for the healing of the society which contains these elements. If it does not, the relationship between the members must exist solely on the surface. Even a scratch will reveal the separation and the need for healing. The revelation accepted, the healing has begun.

AN APPEAL TO ALL GROUPS

Such groups — groups which have discovered their vocation to the sacred ministry of reconciliation — can help one another by sharing their experiences and insights, more important just by letting one another know that they are there. The writer of this article belongs to a group which would be glad to hear of such groups (c/o *Pro Veritate*) so that information may be pooled (possibly presented in another article) and made available to other groups — or to individuals who find themselves haplessly collapsing into conformity meanwhile, back on the ranch.

Enkele Gedagtes oor my Godsdien

DR. H. FRANCOIS MÖLLER

In die bekende dorpie Pêrel, waar ek gebore is en opgegroeï het, het ek die evangelie die eerste keer „dogmaties” gehoor toe ek vyf jaar oud was. Dit was in 'n skoolgeboutjie regoor die K.W.V. Die geboutjie is afgebreek en die skooltjie bestaan nie meer nie, maar ek onthou die klas-kamertjie nog goed. Daar was 'n groot prent teen die een muur van 'n baba-bottel met 'n groot vlieg op die tiet wat polio of sindelikeid moes voorstel. Die vlieg het 'n diep genoeg indruk op my gemaak dat ek vandag 'n medikus is.

'n Bybelwaarheid wat ek daar geleer het, nl. dat wie in Gods hand is Hy nooit sal prysgee nie, is vir my in my eie lewensverhaal bevestig. Ek sou nog baie ander Bybelwaarhede wat in daardie skooltjie aan my tuisgebring is, hier kan aanhaal — soos bv. dat elkeen 'n ander talent ontvang het; of dat jy jou naaste moet liefhê soos jouself; of: gaan heen en verkondig die evangelie aan alle kreature. Al hierdie gedagtes vergesel my nou al meer as dertig jaar.

Dan onthou ek die Witte Huis in Oegstgeest in Suid-Holland waar een van ons ouderlinge my kom opsoek en oorreed het om vir die Sending Mkar toe te gaan om melaatsheid te gaan help bestry in die Naam van Jesus. Ek onthou daardie selfde Oegstgeest waar ek vier jaar lank in die Zendingshuis te Leidsche straatweg 11 gewoon het, worstelende met God en sonde en Bybeltekste en die evangelie. Daar het hulle my Maleis geleer, die taal van ons slawe wat saam met die Hugenote die Pêrel bekend gemaak het.

In daardie dae het ek baie aan my voorouers gedink wat saam met die Hugenote in 1682 na Kaapstad en na die Pêrel gekom het.

(Maleis is net so 'n eenvoudige taal as Afrikaans. Interessante halwe gee ek 'n paar voorbeelde. *Saja makan nasi* word in Afrikaans vertaal met: Ek eet rys. *Saja tidur di tempat tidur*, met: Ek slaap in die slaapplek. Maleis het ook sy onuitwisbare stempel op Afrikaans afgedruk. *Baba doedoe* kom uit Maleis vandaan. By ons beteken dit min of meer: Die kind slaap. In Maleis beteken *doedoe* (of *doek-doek*; die *k* word nie uitgespreek nie) egter om te sit, en *baboe* is die kindermeid. Die kindermeid met die slapende kind op haar skoot is dus die Maleise oorsprong van ons *baba doedoe*. So kan daar op meer Afrikaanse woorde gewys word wat 'n Maleise oorsprong het, bv. *piering*, die Maleise woord vir bord; *nonja*, die Maleise woord vir meesteres (nooi, nonna); *banjak*, wat by ons „baie” geword het; en ons „tiekie” is afgelei van die eienaam *Tiki*, die beskermgod van die

pêrelduikers wat sy amulet om hul nekke gehang het as hulle 40 voet diep na pêrels gaan soek het).

Die Maleise beïnvloeding is, soos ek dit sien, egter nie tot die taal van die Afrikaners beperk nie. Weliswaar het Maleis ons taal verryk, al is dit 'n erfenis van eertydse slawe. Maar ook hul godsdienstige opvattinge het blykbaar diep spore op ons nagelaat. In die slampamperliedjies en natuurgedigte van dr. C. Louis Leipoldt, om 'n voorbeeld te noem, meen ek is daar elemente te bespeur van die ou sinkretistiese en animistiese Maleier-godsdien. Die spore van 'n slawe-erfenis in ons godsdien is egter nog duideliker aan te toon.

DIE GEBOD AS EIS

„Jy moet jou naaste liefhê soos jouself” het my, sedert my Sondag-skooldae, as gebod, as onverbidlike eis van God bygebly. Hoe ek dit kon doen sodat ek Hom tevrede kon stel, was tot hiertoe my lewensstryd. Dertig jaar lank het ek gesoek en getas en gebid. Baie dae het ek in geweldige versoekings gekom en in sonde beland, soos Koning Dawid. Tog het ek bly glo dat ook ek, soos Dawid, Gods kind is en dat Hy die wat in sy hand is, nooit sal loslaat nie. Maar hoe kan ek, sondaar, doen wat Hy my beveel? Waarom kon ek dit eintlik nog nooit doen nie?

Die gebod van naasteliefde as on-

verbiddelike eis van God, is nie iets wat slegs aan die Christelike geloof eie is nie. Die vraag is of dit in die geheel in die Christelike geloof 'n plek het. In werklikheid, so kom dit my voor, is dit 'n godsdienstige oorwring van die slawe. Soos wat die slawe-taal sy stempel op Afrikaans afgedruk het, so het 'n slawe-gesindheid, wat aan die heidense religie eie is, ons Godsverhouding binnegedring. In hoeverre dit regstreeks aan die invloed van die ou slawe toegeskryf moet word, sou ek nie kan sê nie. Maar 'n duidelike analogie is daar wel. Ook die ou Maleiers in Kaapstad en in die Pêrel het die gebod van naasteliefde in hulle sinkretistiese godsdiens geken. Of die godsdiens nou Mohammedaans, Confuciaans, Boeddhisties of animisties is, hierdie gebod is die groot MOET daarin. Confucius het immers ook geleer dat jy nie aan 'n ander moet doen wat jy nie aan jouself gedoen wil hê nie; en die Chinese glo al eeue lank dat jy jou naaste nie moet haat nie. Al die klem val daarin op die MOET.

'n Slaaf is iemand wat MOET.

Ons het nie slegs 'n aantal woorde in ons taal nie, maar ook die MOET in ons Christelike godsdiens van slawe oorgeërf.

Onderwerping aan die gebod van naasteliefde is op sigself nie die oorgang van heidendom na Christendom nie. As die ou Kaapse slawe slegs hierdie gebod uit die Christelike evangelie aangeneem het, het hulle maar net daaruit oorgeneem wat hulle reeds geken en reeds gehad het. Dan het hulle in die Christelike geloof niks nuuts ontvang nie. Het ons dit van hulle oorgehou dat daar in die evangelie van Christus niks nuuts is nie, geen ware vrymaking nie, maar slegs die troostelose, vreugdelose voortgang onder die dwingende eis: Jy MOET jou naaste liefhê soos jouself? Of het die Christene aan hulle niks meer en niks anders as dit gegee nie?

In elk geval, hierdie „moet” is en aan die ware vryheid en aan die ware Christendom vreemd. Psigologies pas dit by die slawe-mentaliteit en teologies is dit algemeen religieus. My kennismaking met die Maleise taal en die invloed daarvan op Afrikaans, en met die godsdienstige agtergrond van die ou Maleiers, het die vraag by my laat ontstaan of ons ook godsdienstig deur hulle beïnvloed sou kan wees — want die „moet”-mentaliteit in die verhouding tot God kan niks anders as 'n slawerfenis wees nie! Naasteliefde kan alleen 'n dwingende, vreugdelose moet, 'n slawejuk wees waar die evangelie van Jesus nog nie ondervind is as die bevrydende krag wat mense soos kinders teenoor die Vader stel en soos broeders aan mekaar verbind nie.

Die gebod sonder meer, ook al is dit die gebod van God, maak van die mens 'n slaaf. Wie in die slawe-verhouding tot God staan en sy gebod wil uitvoer bloot omdat hy moet, omdat hy meen dat hy so alleen die straf van God kan vryspring, ontdek al gou dat die gebod vir hom die dood inhou. Wie deur middel van die wet trag om daarin te slaag om sy naaste lief te hê, is vervloek onder hierdie wet. As die sondaar hierdie wet in sy eie hande neem om hom daarmee te regverdig, word hy daardeur as sondaar aan die kaak gestel wat sy mede-sondaar nie lief het nie.

DIE GEBOD AS GAWE

God het Sy gebod vir ons op twee tafels gegee. Die inhoud van die eerste tafel is dat ons Hom moet liefhê. Die inhoud van die tweede tafel, dat ons ons naaste moet liefhê soos onself, kan nie daarvan losgemaak word nie. Alleen vir hulle wat God waarlik liefhet, is dit moontlik om die naaste lief te hê, om vader en moeder te eer, om nie dood te slaan, egbreuk te pleeg, te steel, valse ge-

tuenis te spreek, met begeerte en hebsug teenoor die goed van die naaste te staan nie.

Maar omdat ons God nie liefhet soos kinders hulle vader nie, omdat ons Hom soos slawe wantrou en vrees, faal ons in die liefde tot die naaste.

Christus het gekom om ons van die vloek van die wet vry te maak sodat ons in ons Godsverhouding en daarom ook in ons naasteverhouding vry kan wees, vry om waarlik lief te hê. In die herstelde verhouding tot God wat Christus teweeg gebring het deur die straf van die slawe van wet en sonde in hulle plek te dra, is ons weer die kinders, en God is weer die Vader, en die mense is mekaar se broers.

Alleen wie God as Vader ken en die naaste as broer, kan liefhê.

In die vryheid waarin Christus ons gestel het, is God en die naaste nie meer vir ons 'n bedreiging nie. Die moet het uit die gebod van die liefde verdwyn — die moet wat ons telkens weer laat faal sodat ons bv. ons broers in 'n aparte kerk stop omdat hulle 'n ander kleur as ons het en hulle nie wil toelaat om in ons kerk te kom nie — terwyl ons onself wysmaak dat ons, juis so, pragtig in die liefde slaag.

En as die moet verdwyn het, het dit 'n genadige mag geword. Die naasteliefde is die gawe van God aan sy kinders waarin hulle mag lewe. Ons is vry om die naaste lief te hê — ook die wat anderkant die rasse-grens staan; ons is vry om saam met al die kinders van God ook in een kerk te aanbid.

Onlangs het 'n dominee aan my gesê dat daar oor 50 jaar in ons land nie meer iets soos „ras” sal wees nie. Hierdie dominee is 'n beskeie man en 'n vader wat graag sy skip met kinders veilig in die hawe wil bring. Maar as hy so praat, laat hy nuwe hoop vir ons kerk in my oplewe. Inderdaad, 'n mens sien uit na daardie dag.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES AND COMMUNISM

RELEASED : 20.2.1967

BISHOP B. B. BURNETT, General Secretary of the Christian Council of South Africa, writes the following: "Questions and Answers about the World Council of Churches and Communism deals with what is at present a 'hot'

topic. The Ecumenical Movement is constantly under fire as a Communist Front Movement. It is important that those who desire to know the truth about the Council should be given the information provided in this statement".

1. Does the membership of the WCC include churches in countries under a communist régime?

Yes. From the very beginning in 1948 the WCC has had member churches in countries under com-

munist regimes in Eastern Europe. These churches had been active in the ecumenical movement in the period before the Assembly of 1948. Other churches in communist countries, especially the Russian churches, joined later on.

The WCC believes that these churches which live in an aggressively secular environment and which have maintained the faith through many years of external pressure need and deserve the spiritual support which the world-wide fellowship of churches can give them, just as their participation in the ecumenical movement immensely enriches it.

In any case, all churches when they join the membership of the WCC do so on the basis of its constitution which defines it as "a fellowship of churches which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the Scriptures and therefore seek to fulfil together their common calling to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit".

2. Are these churches represented in the governing bodies of the WCC?

Certainly. Of the 22 members of the Executive Committee, 2 members represent churches in communist countries. Of the 99 members of the Central Committee, 8 members represent such churches.

3. Does this mean that there are communists on the governing bodies of the WCC?

Certainly not. From the point of view of the churches as well as from the point of view of the communist party it is impossible to combine faith in God and in Christ as Saviour with the tenets of dialectical materialism. The church leaders in communist countries are men who seek to defend and maintain the Church of Christ in the very difficult situation created by the pressure of the official communist ideology and by anti-religious propaganda. In no way can one speak of them as trying to compromise theologically with the Marxist ideology.

4. Has the WCC expressed its mind about communism?

The WCC has consistently defended the idea of "the Responsible society" which includes in the words of the Amsterdam Assembly that the people have freedom to control, to criticize and to change their govern-

ments, that power be made responsible by law and tradition and be distributed as widely as possible through the whole community. In the light of this criterion the Amsterdam Assembly stated that the churches should reject the ideologies of both communism and unqualified laissez-faire capitalism. The points of conflict between Christianity and atheistic Marxian communism were spelled out in five points such as "the materialistic and deterministic teachings that are incompatible with the belief in God and with the Christian view of man as a person made in God's image and responsible to Him".

These statements on communism were reaffirmed by the Evanston Assembly in 1954.

The WCC's attitude should never be judged on the basis of utterances of individuals, but only on the basis of its approved and representative statements. The constituency of the WCC is so varied that with regard to communism as with regard to many other questions it is possible to hear in WCC meetings a great variety of opinions. In this respect the situation has not changed since the well-known debate between Mr. John Foster Dulles and Professor Hromadka at the first Assembly in 1948.

5. Has the WCC expressed its mind about actions of communist governments in the field of international affairs?

The WCC has made statements concerning a number of critical situations in the realm of international affairs. Sometimes these statements have been in the nature of welcoming international action as when the treaty on nuclear testing was adopted by the USA, Great Britain and the USSR. Sometimes these statements have been addressed to any government which by its actions seemed to endanger world peace, quite irrespective of the political group to which it belonged. Thus in 1950 the WCC supported the United Nations action in Korea. In 1956 it spoke clearly against Russian intervention in Hungary at the same moment as it was also speaking clearly against the French and British military action in Suez. In 1961 the Assembly committee dealing with international affairs endorsed a statement "regretting the nuclear tests by France and the resumption of nuclear tests by the Soviet Union". On the other hand the WCC also

spoke firmly about the unilateral military action of the USA in Cuba in 1962, and more recently about the war in Vietnam.

6. Has the WCC defended the cause of religious liberty in communist countries?

Ever since its beginning the WCC has stood for religious liberty. Its Commission of the Churches on International Affairs has been very active in this field at the level of the United Nations as well as at the level of national governments. It was at a meeting in Russia (Odessa) that the Executive Committee gave general approval to a statement of the Director of the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs which included the following words: "Freedom of religion or belief applies to all men in society, whether atheistic or adherents of a religion . . . All men have the right not only to maintain or to change their religion or faith but also to manifest it in society". As they have done with regard to other countries, representatives of the WCC have on a number of occasions called the attention of officials of the USSR government to the basic principles of religious liberty and to specific situations in which these principles were not observed.

7. Has the WCC taken positions which are similar to those of communist governments?

Whether it speaks through its Assemblies, its Central and Executive Committees or its officers, the WCC endeavours to remain independent of any political influences and take its position on the basis of Christian insights which have been developed in the life of the ecumenical fellowship. In other words the WCC does not take a position because it wants to back up any particular government. On the other hand it does not consider that it should be silent about its convictions in case these happen to agree with those of one government or group of governments. Those who study the WCC documents thoroughly will however discover that in external situations in which each party may claim to have good reasons for its position the WCC seeks to contribute to a solution of the problem by pointing towards the possibility of a reconciliation between seemingly irreconcilable standpoints.

8. What attitude have communists taken to the WCC?

In communist publications the WCC has often been severely criticized. Thus after the 1961 Assembly of the WCC at New Delhi, the People's Daily in Peking wrote (Feb. 2, 1962): "The political line of the World Council of Churches under the control of a clique of imperialists does not even need to take off its thin religious cloak to reveal its true colour as an American State Department political line, in essence."

9. Why is the WCC interested in political, social and economic questions? Should it not restrict its activities to "spiritual" matters?

Since its very beginning, the WCC has emphasized in a great many conferences and statements that the Christian faith has implications in all realms of life and demands obedience to Jesus Christ as Lord of history, which includes a concern for the political, social, economic and international spheres. Christians are not free either to remain indifferent to these forms of collective life or to withdraw from them, nor can they simply conform themselves to current ideologies and secular programmes. In all these spheres Christians have a specific witness to render to the lordship of Jesus Christ in words and action. An attempt at defining the kind of witness required today was precisely the object of the World Conference on Church and Society

held in Geneva in July, 1966, which has submitted its report to the WCC.

The overriding purpose of this witness will always be to manifest to men the love of God. This certainly includes preaching and calling to personal conversion but inseparably demonstrating in everyday life the same love as that with which Jesus healed the sick and fed the hungry; in our time this calls for service to the victims of political, social, economic and international upheavals and disorders and action to prevent such upheavals. Last but not least it calls for activities which foster a broader understanding of the enormous problems of development faced in Latin America, the Middle East, Asia and Africa by the highly industrialized nations.

DIE KERK BUIITE SUID-AFRIKA

PROF. B. B. KEET

IS DAAR ENIGE VORDERING?

„Persbureau der Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk” haal 'n treffende voorbeeld aan van wat vyftig jaar gelede as rede gegeld het vir die afsetting van 'n predikant in die Gereformeerde Kerke van Nederland. Ons neem die artikel in sy geheel oor.

Op 10 Junie 1967 sal dit vyftig jaar gelede wees dat ds. J. B. Netelembos, gereformeerde predikant te Middelburg 'n preekbeurt (vir dr. J. A. Cramer) in die hervormde gemeente 's-Gravenhage waargeneem het. Hierdie feit het gelei tot 'n kerklike prosedure teen hom, wat uitgeloop het in sy afsetting deur die Generale Sinode van die Gereformeerde Kerke te Leeuwarden in 1920. In hierdie prosedure wat drie jaar geduur het, het o.m. sy Skrifbeskouing en die uitdrukking **Christus-ervaring**, wat hy in 'n lesing voor die Algemene Predikantevergadering te Utrecht gebruik het, ook 'n rol gespeel. Dat woorde wat vyftig jaar gelede uitgespreek is, vandag nog aktueel kan wees, bewys wat ds. Netelembos op 28 Februarie 1917 in Middelburg gesê het. Op 'n samekoms wat ter bevordering van die samevoeging van die drie bestaande plaaslike kerke gehou is, het hy in 'n preek oor die Bybelwoorde: „so dat hulle almal een kan wees” o.a. gesê: Ek sou vanaand graag die wens wil uitspreek dat ons, Gereformeerdes, wat nou uit drie groepe een geword het, sê oor 10 jaar met

die Hervormdes, oor 20 jaar met die Lutherse en oor 30 met die Roomse kan saamsmelt. Dit sou ek graag wil hê, maar ek vrees dat dit op mislukking sou uitloop, as ons daartoe vergaderings hou en kommissies vorm soos ons nou gedoen het tot die vereniging van ons drie groepe. Dié byeenkomste sou immers daar uitsien soos 'n timmermanswinkel waar kiste en banke en lessenaars in mekaar geslaan word. Nee, ek weet van 'n beter wens: dat ons eenmaal besef dat ons eintlik, innerlik en geestelik, een is, want ons is almal gebou op die fondament, waarbuite niemand 'n ander kan lê nie, nl. Jesus Christus.

Ek sal nou maar die groep noem wat die verste van ons staan: die Roomse Kerk. In die middelpunt van sy dogmas en erediens staan tog nog altyd die kruis van Golgota. Maar dan is die Roomse ook ons mede-Christene; noem hulle dwalende, dolende mede-Christene, hulle staan op die Fondament — dit moet ons besef. Dan sal eenheid nie met draadspykers in mekaar getimmer word nie, maar ons sal lewe uit een gemeenskaplike geloof, ons

sal nader tot mekaar kom. Ons sal begin insien dat wat ons dikwels van mekaar afstoot, sekondêr is. Die slagvelde van Europa, veral aan die Westelike front, het reeds sulke treffende staaltjies opgelewer van geestelike eenheid in smart en sterwensnood. Lyding verbind mense, veral as hulle saam die oog op die Groot Lier vestig.

Ds. Netelembos was van 1905-1910 Gereformeerde predikant te Oostkapellen, van 1910-1912 in Heereveen, van 1912-1920 in Middelburg. Ná die beëindiging van die prosedure wat tot sy afsetting gelei het, het hy na die Ned. Hervormde Kerk oorgegaan waar hy van 1921-1928 die gemeente Heinkenland bedien het. Van 1928 tot 1931 was hy predikant van Roermond, waar hy die ere naam „de menselijke dominee” verwerf het. Van 1931 tot sy dood in 1934 het hy in Groenlo gestaan.

In 1917 het hy die wens uitgespreek dat die eenheid met die ander kerke binne n beperkte aantal jare werklikheid sou word en gehoop dat die vereniging van Hervormdes en Gereformeerdes oor tien jaar bereik sou word. Ons is nou 'n half eeu verder!

DR. OTTO DIBELIUS

Verlede maand is in hierdie rubriek gewag gemaak van die heengaan van dr. Dibelius, van 1945 tot 1966 biskop van die

Evangeliese Kerk in Berlyn en Brandenburg, en van 1946 tot 1961 voorsitter van die Evangeliese Kerk in Duitsland. Hy was ook een van die voorsitters van die Wêreldraad van Kerke.

Hervormd Persbureau gee 'n waardering van sy persoon en werk, soos volg: Die Duitse Christenheid verloor in Dibelius 'n leier van formaat, 'n markante persoonlikheid en 'n pionier van die ekumeniese beweging. Hy was 'n onafhanklike man, uit een stuk, wat baie kernagtige uitsprake gedoen het. Voor die oorlog was hy nouliks bekend, al het hy in sy studentetyd getoon dat hy nie vir tradisionele meninge geswig het nie. Sy leuse was: geen wet of tradisie is so perfek en onveranderlik dat troue volgelinge van Christus nie gedwing word om dit so nou en dan te oortree nie. Hy het hom fel teenoor die Hitlerbewind gekeer, is geskors en ge-

arresteer, maar sy werk het hy voortgesit. Sy beginsel: „Staatsgrense is nie kerklike grense nie”, het sy stryd teen alle diktatuur bepaal; die kerk het 'n eie roeping teenoor die staat.

Dibelius, so word besluit, sal die kerkgeskiedenis ingaan soos 'n strydbare man wat die sentrale figuur was van die verzet teen die kommunistiese maghebbers in die Oosstreek.

ROOMS-KATOLIEKE KINDERS BESOEK 'N PROTESTANTSE KERK

Kinders van die Rooms-Katolieke skole uit Vleuten en De Haar het gedurende die gebedsweek om eenheid 'n besoek gebring aan die Hervormde Kerk in Vleuten. Ds. B. Koole het hulle ontvang en hulle vertel oor die Protestantse erediens. Meestal word hierdie dienste baie sober ingerig, ten minste in die oë

van Rooms-Katolieke. Maar die predikant het sy gaste gewys op die karakteristieke kenmerke van die kerk: die Bybel op die kansel, die doopvont in die middel, die Nagmaalstafel, die banke vir die kerkraad ens. Ds. Koole skryf o.m. dat die inisiatief tot hierdie besoek uitgegaan het van die kapelaan met instemming van die pastoor en die skoolbestuur. „Daar is tog blykbaar veel verandering aan die gang”, skryf hy. „Sommige sê egter dat dit nog veel te langzaam gaan, ander vind dat ons na die afgrond hol. Ek doen geen uitspraak oor die vraag wie gelyk het nie. Maar dit is onteenseglik 'n feit dat daar dinge gebeur het waarvan ons tien jaar gelede nog nie kon droom nie. En ook is dit waar dat dit vir die kerk louterend werk as ons ons vasgeroeste meninge oor die ander mede-Christene telkens in die weegskaal moet lê.”

THE CONFESSION OF 1967

(Approved by the General Assembly of the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.)

PREFACE

The Church confesses its faith when it bears a present witness to God's grace in Jesus Christ.

In every age the church has expressed its witness in words and deeds as the need of the time required. The earliest examples of confession are found within the Scriptures. Confessional statements have taken such varied forms as hymns, liturgical formulas, doctrinal definitions, catechisms, theological systems in summary, and declarations of purpose against threatening evil.

Confessions and declarations are subordinate standards in the church, subject to the authority of Jesus Christ, the Word of God, as the Scriptures bear witness to him. No one type of confession is exclusively valid, no one statement is irreformable. Obedience to Jesus Christ alone identifies the one universal church and supplies the continuity of its tradition. This obedience is the ground of the church's duty and freedom to reform itself in life and doctrine as new occasions, in God's providence, may demand.

The United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America acknowledges itself aided in understanding the gospel by the testimony of the church from earlier ages and from many lands. More especially it is guided by the Nicene and Apostles' Creeds from the time of the early church; the Scots Confession, the

Heidelberg Catechism, and the Second Helvetic Confession from the era of the Reformation, the Westminster Confession and Shorter Catechism from the seventeenth century; and the Theological Declaration of Barmen from the twentieth century.

The purpose of the Confession of 1967 is to call the church to that unity in confession and mission which is required of disciples today. This Confession is not a "system of doctrine", nor does it include all the traditional topics of theology. For example, the Trinity and the Person of Christ are not redefined but are recognized and reaffirmed as forming the basis and determining the structure of the Christian faith.

God's reconciling work in Jesus Christ and the mission of reconciliation to which he has called his church are the heart of the gospel in any

age. Our generation stands in peculiar need of reconciliation in Christ. Accordingly this Confession of 1967 is built upon that theme.

THE CONFESSION

In Jesus Christ God was reconciling the world to himself. Jesus Christ is God with man. He is the eternal Son of the Father, who became man and lived among us to fulfil the work of reconciliation. He is present in the Church by the power of the Holy Spirit to continue and complete his mission. This work of God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, is the foundation of all confessional statements about God, man, and the world. Therefore the church calls men to be reconciled to God and to one another.

PART I

GOD'S WORK OF RECONCILIATION

Section A. The Grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

1. Jesus Christ

In Jesus of Nazareth true humanity was realized once for all. Jesus, a Palestinian Jew, lived among his own

people and shared their needs, temptations, joys, and sorrows. He expressed the love of God in word and deed and became a brother to all kinds of sinful men. But his complete obedience led him into conflict with his people. His life and teaching judged their goodness, religious aspirations, and national hopes. Many rejected him and demanded his death. In giving himself freely for them he took upon himself the judgement under which all men stand convicted. God raised him from the dead, vindicating him as Messiah and Lord. The victim of sin became victor, and won the victory over sin and death for all men.

God's reconciling act in Jesus Christ is a mystery which the Scriptures describe in various ways. It is called the sacrifice of a lamb, a shepherd's life given for his sheep, atonement by a priest; again it is ransom of a slave, payment of debt, vicarious satisfaction of a legal penalty, and victory over the powers of evil. These are expressions of a truth which remains beyond the reach of all theory in the depths of God's love for man. They reveal the gravity, cost, and sure achievement of God's reconciling work.

The risen Christ is the saviour for all men. Those joined to him by faith are set right with God and commissioned to serve as his reconciling community. Christ is head of this community, the church, which began with the apostles and continues through all generations.

The same Jesus Christ is the judge of all men. His judgement discloses the ultimate seriousness of life and gives promise of God's final victory over the power of sin and death. To receive life from the risen Lord is to have life eternal; to refuse life from him is to choose the death which is separation from God. All who put their trust in Christ face divine judgment without fear, for the judge is their redeemer.

2. The Sin of Man

The reconciling act of God in Jesus Christ exposes the evil in men as sin in the sight of God. In sin men claim mastery of their own lives, turn against God and their fellow men, and become exploiters and despoilers of the world. They lose their humanity in futile striving and are left in rebellion, despair, and isolation.

Wise and virtuous men through the ages have sought the highest good in devotion to freedom, justice, peace,

truth, and beauty. Yet all human virtue, when seen in the light of God's love in Jesus Christ, is found to be infected by self-interest and hostility. All men, good and bad alike, are in the wrong before God and helpless without his forgiveness. Thus all men fall under God's judgement. No one is more subject to that judgement than the man who assumes that he is guiltless before God or morally superior to others.

God's love never changes. Against all who oppose him, God expresses his love in wrath. In the same love God took on himself judgement and shameful death in Jesus Christ, to bring men to repentance and new life.

Section B. The Love of God.

God's sovereign love is a mystery beyond the reach of man's mind. Human thought ascribes to God superlatives of power, wisdom, and goodness. But God reveals his love in Jesus Christ by showing power in the form of a servant, wisdom in the folly of the cross, and goodness in receiving sinful men. The power of God's love in Christ to transform the world discloses that the Redeemer is the Lord and Creator who made all things to serve the purpose of his love.

God has created the world of space and time to be the sphere of his dealings with men. In its beauty and vastness, sublimity and awfulness, order and disorder, the world reflects to the eye of faith the majesty and mystery of its Creator.

God has created man in a personal relation with himself that man may respond to the love of the Creator. He has created male and female and given them a life which proceeds from birth to death in a succession of generations and in a wide complex of social relations. He has endowed man with capacities to make the world serve his needs and to enjoy its good things. Life is a gift to be received with gratitude and a task to be pursued with courage. Man is free to seek his life within the purpose of God, to develop and protect the resources of nature for the common welfare, to work for justice and peace in society, and in other ways to use his creative powers for the fulfilment of human life.

God expressed his life for all mankind through Israel, whom he chose to be his covenant people to serve him in love and faithfulness. When Israel was unfaithful, he disciplined the

nation with his judgements and maintained his cause through prophets, priests, teachers, and true believers. These witnesses called all Israelites to a destiny in which they would serve God faithfully and become a light to the nations. The same witnesses proclaimed the coming of a new age, and a true servant of God in whom God's purpose for Israel and for mankind would be realized.

Out of Israel God in due time raised up Jesus. His faith and obedience were the response of the perfect child of God. He was the fulfilment of God's promise to Israel, the beginning of the new creation, and the pioneer of the new humanity. He gave history its meaning and direction and called the church to be his servant for the reconciliation of the world.

Section C. The Communion of the Holy Spirit.

God the Holy Spirit fulfils the work of reconciliation in man. The Holy Spirit creates and renews the church as the community in which men are reconciled to God and to one another. He enables them to receive forgiveness as they forgive one another and to enjoy the peace of God as they make peace among themselves. In spite of their sin, he gives them power to become representatives of Jesus Christ and his gospel of reconciliation to all men.

1. The New Life

The reconciling work of Jesus was the supreme crisis in the life of mankind. His cross and resurrection became personal crisis and present hope for men when the gospel is proclaimed and believed. In this experience the Spirit brings God's forgiveness to men, moves them to respond in faith, repentance, and obedience, and initiates the new life in Christ.

The new life takes shape in a community in which men know that God loves and accepts them in spite of what they are. They therefore accept themselves and love others, knowing that no man has any ground on which to stand except God's grace.

The new life does not release a man from conflict with unbelief, pride, lust, fear. He still has to struggle with disheartening difficulties and problems. Nevertheless, as he matures in love and faithfulness in his life with Christ, he lives in freedom and good cheer, bearing wit-

ness on good days and evil days, confident that the new life is pleasing to God and helpful to others.

The new life finds its direction in the life of Jesus, his deeds and words, his struggles against temptation, his compassion, his anger, and his willingness to suffer death. The teaching of apostles and prophets guides men in living this life, and the Christian community nurtures and equips them for their ministries.

The members of the church are emissaries of peace and seek the good of man in co-operation with powers and authorities in politics, culture, and economics. But they have to fight against pretensions and injustices when these same powers endanger human welfare. Their strength is in their confidence that God's purpose rather than man's schemes will finally prevail.

Life in Christ is life eternal. The resurrection of Jesus is God's sign that he will consummate his work of creation and reconciliation beyond death and bring to fulfilment the new life begun in Christ.

2. The Bible

The one sufficient revelation of God is Jesus Christ, the Word of God incarnate, to whom the Holy Spirit bears unique and authoritative witness through the Holy Scriptures, which are received and obeyed as the word of God written. The Scriptures are not a witness among others, but the witness without parallel. The church has received the books of the Old and New Testament as prophetic and apostolic testimony in which it hears the word of God and by which its faith and obedience are nourished and regulated.

The New Testament is the recorded testimony of apostles to the coming of the Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth, and the sending of the Holy Spirit to the Church. The Old Testament bears witness to God's faithfulness in his covenant with Israel and points the way to the fulfilment of his purpose in Christ. The Old Testament is indispensable to understanding the New, and is not itself fully understood without the New.

The Bible is to be interpreted in the light of its witness to God's work of reconciliation in Christ. The Scriptures, given under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, are nevertheless the words of men, conditioned by the language, thought forms, and literary fashions of the places and times at which they were written. They reflect

views of life, history, and the cosmos which were then current. The church, therefore, has an obligation to approach the Scriptures with literary and historical understanding. As God has spoken his word in diverse cultural situations, the church is confident that he will continue to speak through the Scriptures in a changing world and in every form of human culture.

God's word is spoken to his church today where the Scriptures are faithfully preached and attentively read in dependence on the illumination of the Holy Spirit and with readiness to receive their truth and direction.

PART II

THE MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION

Section A. The Mission of the Church.

1. Direction

To be reconciled to God is to be sent into the world as his reconciling community. This community, the church universal, is entrusted with God's message of reconciliation and shares his labour of healing the enmities which separate men from God and from each other. Christ has called the church to this mission and given it the gift of the Holy Spirit. The church maintains continuity with the apostles and with Israel by faithful obedience to his call.

The life, death, resurrection, and promised coming of Jesus Christ has set the pattern for the church's mission. His life as man involves the church in the common life of men. His service to men commits the church to work for every form of human well-being. His suffering makes the church sensitive to all the sufferings of mankind so that it sees the face of Christ in the faces of men in every kind of need. His crucifixion discloses to the church God's judgement on man's inhumanity to man and the awful consequences of its own complicity in injustice. In the power of the risen Christ and the hope of his coming the church sees the promise of God's renewal of man's life in society and of God's victory over all wrong.

The church follows this pattern in the form of its life and in the method of its action. So to live and serve is to confess Christ as Lord.

2. Forms and Order

The institutions of the people of God change and vary as their mission requires in different times and places. The unity of the church is compatible with a wide variety of forms, but it is hidden and distorted when variant forms are allowed to harden into sectarian divisions, exclusive denominations, and rival factions.

Wherever the church exists, its members are both gathered in corporate life and dispersed in society for the sake of mission in the world.

The church gathers to praise God, to hear his word for mankind, to baptise and to join in the Lord's Supper, to pray for and present the world to him in worship, to enjoy fellowship, to receive instruction, strength, and comfort, to order and organise its own corporate life, to be tested, renewed, and reformed, and to speak and act in the world's affairs as may be appropriate to the needs of the time.

The church disperses to serve God wherever its members are, at work or play, in private or in the life of society. Their prayer and Bible study are part of the church's worship and theological reflection. Their witness is the church's evangelism. Their daily action in the world is the church in mission to the world. The quality of their relation with other persons is the measure of the church's fidelity.

Each member is the church in the world, endowed by the Spirit with some gift of ministry and is responsible for the integrity of his witness in his own particular situation. He is entitled to the guidance and support of the Christian community and is subject to its advice and correction. He in turn, in his own competence, helps to guide the church.

In recognition of special gifts of the Spirit and for the ordering of its life as a community, the church calls, trains, and authorizes certain members for leadership and oversight. The persons qualified for these duties in accordance with the policy of the church are set apart by ordination or other appropriate act and thus made responsible for their special ministries.

The church thus orders its life as an institution with a constitution, government, officers, finances, and administrative rules. These are instruments of mission, not ends in

themselves. Different orders have served the gospel, and none can claim exclusive validity. A presbyterian polity recognizes the responsibility of all members for ministry and maintains the organic relation of all congregations in the church. It seeks to protect the church from exploitation by ecclesiastical or secular power and ambition. Every church order must be open to such reformation as may be required to make it a more effective instrument of the mission of reconciliation.

3. Revelation and Religion

The church in its mission encounters the religions of men and in that encounter becomes conscious of its own human character as a religion. God's revelation to Israel, expressed within Semitic culture, gave rise to the religion of the Hebrew people. God's revelation in Jesus Christ called forth the response of Jews and Greeks and came to expression within Judaism and Hellenism as the Christian religion. The Christian religion as distinct from God's revelation of himself, has been shaped throughout its history by the cultural forms of its environment.

The Christian finds parallels between other religions and his own and must approach all religions with openness and respect. Repeatedly God has used the insight of non-Christians to challenge the church to renewal. But the reconciling word of the gospel is God's judgement upon all forms of religion, including the Christian. The gift of God in Christ is for all men. The church, therefore, is commissioned to carry the gospel to all men whatever their religion may be and even when they profess none.

4. Reconciliation in Society

In each time and place there are particular problems and crises through which God calls the church to act. The church, guided by the Spirit, humbled by its own complicity and instructed by all attainable knowledge, seeks to discern the will of God and learn how to obey in these concrete situations. The following are particularly urgent at the present time.

(a) God has created the people of the earth to be one universal family. In his reconciling love he overcomes the barriers between brothers and breaks every form of discrimination based on racial or ethnic difference, real or imaginary. The church is

called to bring all men to receive and uphold one another as persons in all relationships of life: in employment, housing, education, leisure, marriage, family, church, and the exercise of political rights. Therefore the church labours for the abolition of all racial discrimination and ministers to those injured by it. Congregations, individuals, or groups of Christians who exclude, dominate, or patronise their fellowmen, however subtly, resist the Spirit of God and bring contempt on the faith which they profess.

(b) God's reconciliation in Jesus Christ is the ground of the peace, justice, and freedom among nations which all powers of government are called to serve and defend. The church, in its own life, is called to practice the forgiveness of enemies and to commend to the nations as practical politics the search for co-operation and peace. This requires the pursuit of fresh and responsible relations across every line of conflict, even at risk to national security, to reduce areas of strife and to broaden international understanding. Reconciliation among nations becomes peculiarly urgent as countries develop nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons, diverting their manpower and resources from constructive uses and risking the annihilation of mankind. Although nations may serve God's purposes in history, the church which identifies the sovereignty of any one nation or any one way of life with the cause of God denies the Lordship of Christ and betrays its calling.

(c) The reconciliation of man through Jesus Christ makes it plain that enslaving poverty in a world of abundance is an intolerable violation of God's good creation. Because Jesus identified himself with the needy and exploited, the cause of the world's poor is the cause of his disciples. The church cannot condone poverty, whether it is the product of unjust social structures, exploitation of the defenseless, lack of national resources, absence of technological understanding, or rapid expansion of populations. The church calls every man to use his abilities, his possessions, and the fruits of technology as gifts entrusted to him by God for the maintenance of his family and the advancement of the common welfare. It encourages those forces in human society that raise men's hopes for better conditions and provide them with opportunity for a decent living. A church that is in-

different to poverty, or evades responsibility in economic affairs, or is open to one social class only, or expects gratitude for its beneficence makes a mockery of reconciliation and offers no acceptable worship to God.

(d) The relationship between man and woman exemplifies in a basic way God's ordering of the interpersonal life for which he created mankind. Anarchy in sexual relationship is a symptom of man's alienation from God, his neighbour, and himself. Man's perennial confusion about the meaning of sex has been aggravated in our day by the availability of new means for birth control and the treatment of infection, by the pressures of urbanization, by the exploitation of sexual symbols in mass communication, and by world overpopulation. The church, as the household of God, is called to lead men out of this alienation into the responsible freedom of the new life in Christ. Reconciled to God, each person has joy in and respect for his own humanity and that of other persons, a man and woman are enabled to marry, to commit themselves to a mutually shared life, and to respond to each other in sensitive and lifelong concern; parents receive the grace to care for children in love and to nurture their individuality. The church comes under the judgement of God and invites rejection by man when it fails to lead men and women into the full meaning of life together, or withholds the compassion of Christ from those caught in the moral confusion of our time.

Section B. The Equipment of the Church.

Jesus Christ has given the church preaching and teaching, praise and prayer, and Baptism and the Lord's Supper as means of fulfilling its service of God among men. These gifts remain, but the church is obliged to change the forms of its service in ways appropriate to different generations and cultures.

1. Preaching and Teaching

God instructs his church and equips it for mission through preaching and teaching. By these, when they are carried on in fidelity to the Scriptures and dependence upon the Holy Spirit, the people hear the word of God and accept and follow Christ. The message is addressed to men in particular situations. Therefore effective preaching, teaching, and personal

witness require disciplined study of both the Bible and the contemporary world. All acts of public worship should be conducive to men's hearing of the gospel in a particular time and place and responding with fitting obedience.

2. Praise and Prayer

The church responds to the message of reconciliation in praise and prayer. In that response it commits itself afresh to its mission, experiences a deepening of faith and obedience, and bears open testimony to the gospel. Adoration of God is acknowledgement of the Creator by the creation. Confession of sin is admission of all men's guilt before God and of their need for his forgiveness. Thanksgiving is rejoicing in God's goodness to all men and in giving for the needs of others. Petitions and intercessions are addressed to God for the continuation of his goodness, the healing of men's ills, and their deliverance from every form of oppression. The arts, especially music and architecture, contribute to the praise and prayer of a Christian congregation when they help men to look beyond themselves to God and to the world which is the object of his love.

3. Baptism

By humble submission to John's baptism Christ joined himself to men in their need and entered upon his ministry of reconciliation in the power of the Spirit. Christian baptism marks the receiving of the same Spirit by all his people. Baptism with water represents not only cleansing

from sin by a dying with Christ and a joyful rising with him to new life. It commits all Christians to die each day to sin and to live for righteousness. In baptism the church celebrates the renewal of the covenant with which God has bound his people to himself. By baptism individuals are publicly received into the church to share in its life and ministry, and the church becomes responsible for their training and support in Christian discipleship. When those baptised are infants the congregation, as well as the parents, has a special obligation to nurture them in the Christian life, leading them to make, by a public profession, a personal response to the love of God shown forth in their baptism.

4. The Lord's Supper

The Lord's Supper is a celebration of the reconciliation of men with God and with one another, in which they joyfully eat and drink together at the table of their Saviour. Jesus Christ gave his church this remembrance of his dying for sinful men so that by participation in it they have communion with him and with all who shall be gathered to him. Partaking in him as they eat the bread and drink the wine in accordance with Christ's appointment, they receive from the risen and living Lord the benefits of his death and resurrection. They rejoice in the foretaste of the kingdom which he will bring to consummation at his promised coming, and go out from the Lord's Table with courage and hope for the service to which he has called them.

PART III

THE FULFILMENT OF RECONCILIATION

God's redeeming work in Jesus Christ embraces the whole of man's life: social and cultural, economic and political, scientific and technological, individual and corporate. It includes man's natural environment as exploited and despoiled by sin. It is the will of God that his purpose for human life shall be fulfilled under the rule of Christ and all evil be banished from his creation.

Biblical visions and images of the rule of Christ such as a heavenly city, a father's house, a new heaven and earth, a marriage feast, and an unending day culminate in the image of the kingdom. The kingdom represents the triumph of God over all that resists his will and disrupts his creation. Already God's reign is present as a ferment in the world, stirring hope in men and preparing the world to receive its ultimate judgement and redemption.

With an urgency born of this hope the church applies itself to present tasks and strives for a better world. It does not identify limited progress with the kingdom of God on earth, nor does it despair in the face of disappointment and defeat. In steadfast hope the church looks beyond all partial achievement to the final triumph of God.

"Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to do far more abundantly than all we ask or think, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen".

DIE PONT-SAAK

As gevolg van die feit dat prof. A. D. Pont appèl aangeteken het teen die uitspraak van die Hooggeregshof in die lasteraksie teen hom deur prof. A. S. Geysler en ds. C. F. B. Naudé, sal ds. Naudé sy kommentaar daarop weerhou tot na die beslissing van die Appèlhof.

THE PONT CASE

Owing to the fact that Professor A. D. Pont has appealed against the verdict of the Supreme Court in the libel case against him by Professor A. S. Geysler and the Rev. C. F. B. Naudé, Mr. Naudé will withhold his comments on the case until the Appeal Court has delivered judgement.