



PRO VERITATE

ROBERT ORR

A Presbyterian on an Anglican Pulpit

C. J. LABUSCHAGNE

Die Triomflied van Verworpenes

JAMES MOULDER

Beggar My Neighbour

J. A. SWANEPOEL

Confession and Witness

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CHRISTELIKE MAANDBLAD VIR SUIDELIKE AFRIKA CHRISTIAN MONTHLY FOR SOUTHERN AFRICA

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IN HIERDIE UITGAWE

IN THIS ISSUE . . .

- By geleentheid van die begin van die week van gebed vir Christelike eenheid, het ds. Robert Orr (Presbiteriaanse Kerk, St. Andrew's, Pretoria) gepreek in die Anglikaanse Kerk (St. Alban's, Pretoria). Lees veral wat hy gesê het oor Presbiteriaanse beskouinge i.v.m. die biskop. Bl. 3
- Dr. C. J. Labuschagne mediteer oor Hand. 16:9-40: Die triomflied van „verworpenes”. Bl. 6
- Ds. James Moulder sê Christens moet in die praktyk van stofflike hulpverlening aan arm (veral nie-blanke) volke laat blyk dat hulle waarlik „knegte van 'n Kneg” is. Bl. 9
- Is dit slegs „liberaliste” wat hulle oor die verdeeldheid van die Kerk van Christus bekommer? Prof. Keet vertel o.m. in sy rubriek wat dr. Howard G. Hageman van die V.S.A. hieroor sê. Bl. 11
- Mnr. Fred van Wyk bring onder die aandag dat Gesinsdag vanjaar in S.A. as 'n gebedsdag waargeneem moet word, en verduidelik waarom. Bl. 14
- 'n Vertaling in Engels van ds. J. A. Swanepoel se „Belydenis en Getuianis” by geleentheid van sy bedanking as predikant van die Ned. Herv. Kerk word vir ons lesers aangebied. Bl. 15
- On the occasion of the beginning of the week of prayer for Christian unity, the Rev. Robert Orr (Presbyterian Church, St. Andrew's, Pretoria) preached in St. Alban's Cathedral (Anglican), Pretoria. Read in particular what he has said about the Presbyterian view of the Episcopacy. P. 3
- Dr. C. J. Labuschagne meditates on Acts 16:9-40: The song of triumph of the rejected ones. P. 6
- The Rev. James Moulder says that Christians, in the practice of material aid to underdeveloped (especially non-white) nations, must prove that they are really “servants of a Servant”. P. 9
- Is the dividedness of the Church of Christ only the concern of “liberals”? Prof. Keet tells, inter alia, in his column what Dr. Howard G. Hageman of the U.S.A. says about this. P. 11
- Mr. Fred van Wyk focusses our attention on the necessity that, and for what reasons, Family Day in South Africa this year should be observed as a day of prayer. P. 14
- An English translation of the Rev. J. A. Swanepoel's “Confession and Witness” on the occasion of his resignation as a minister of the Ned. Herv. Kerk, is offered to our readers. P. 15

Inleidingsartikel:

Oor 'n Krisis en 'n Kleinigheid

Afgesien van watter politieke beleid in Suid-Afrika gevolg mag word ten opsigte van die allesoorheersende rassevraagstuk, is daar iets wat elke Christen positief kan bydra tot die voortbestaan en saambestaan van alle mense in ons land.

Dit is skynbaar 'n kleinigheid, omdat dit so elementêr is. Maar dit is ook van fundamentele belang — so fundamenteel dat dit selfs van deurslaggewende betekenis kan wees.

Hierdie bydrae lê op die vlak van menslike verhoudinge. Christene sal hulle daarin moet oefen om in lede van ander rasse volwaardige medemense te herken en te respekteer. Met woord en daad en houding sal hulle moet laat blyk dat die beoefening van naasteliefde oor die rassegrens heen, vir hulle opregte en vreugdevolle erns is. Tegelyk moet hulle daardeur in ons veelrassige samelewing die voorbeeld stel van die enigste lewenshouding wat sowel betaamlik as heilsaam vir almal is.

Ons noem dit 'n kleinigheid, maar bedoel eintlik dat dit vir Christene so elementêr is dat dit vanselfsprekend is. Om daarvoor te wil redeneer, is futiel. Tog is dit van die uiterste belang in die optrede van elke landsburger in die feitlike situasie van ons veelrassige samelewing.

Christene moet ook realiste wees (en in 'n bepaalde samehang van gedagtes kan dit ook beteken dat hulle eerlik moet wees) wat hulle optrede in die konkrete situasie van die hede nie laat bepaal deur enige ander toekomsvisioen as dié van die komende koninkryk van God nie. Realisme en eerlikheid in Suid-Afrika vandag beteken dat ons dit as 'n voldonge feit moet aanvaar dat ons 'n gemengde bevolking in permanent gevestigde sin is. Die grootste reële vraagstuk in ons land op die oomblik, en na alle waarskynlikheid tot in die verre toekoms, is nie hoe blank en nie-blank apart kan bestaan en apart gehou kan word nie, maar hoe hulle in harmonie kan saamlewe. En daarvoor bied 'n samelewingsordening op die grondslag van Christelike naasteliefde en geregtigheid, en uitsluitlik dit, die enigste en tegelyk die skoonste oplossing.

Ons hoef inderdaad nie ver en diep na die oplossing te gaan soek nie. Wat vir enige owerheid wat aan bewind mag wees en met die vraagstuk te worstel het, die lojaalste steun is wat hy maar kan begeer, is 'n lewenswyse volgens die basiese, elementêre beginsels van naasteliefde soos die Bybel dit aan ons leer. Ten spyte van al die onheilige verdagmaking van hierdie soliede stuk Christelike getuienis as „liberalisme“ en „linksheid“, en selfs as „'n verderflike koers“ en „kettery“, sal dit, ook wat die betekenis daarvan vir rasseverhoudinge in Suid-Afrika betref, vroeër of later onteenseglik blyk dat die beste Christen die beste burger is.

Onder Christene behoort daar geen botsing van menings te wees oor wat ons houding teenoor enige

mense in die samelewing moet wees nie. Daarvoor is die boodskap van die Skrif eenmaal té duidelik. Dat die waarheidstoets of ons waarlik dissipels van Jesus is, nie lê in indrukwekkende demonstrasies van deugde wat lê op die vlak van godsdienstige uiterlikheid en selfverheerlikende offervaardigheid nie (van die spreek van die tale van mense en engele af tot by die uitdeel van al ons goed en die oorgawe van ons liggame om verbrand te word), maar daarin of ons liefde onder mekaar het, is 'n elementêre, basiese Christelike waarheid. So ook dat, terwyl die aanspraak om God lief te hê selfmisleidend is as die broeder gehaat word, daar tewens geen waarheid is in die pretensie van naasteliefde as die gebod kondisioneel verwing, selektief toegepas en in die radikaliteit wat Jesus daaraan gegee het, ontken word nie.

Juis omdat dit tot die kleinighede, of liever: tot die elementêre, die basiese, die vanselfsprekende van die Christelike geloof behoort, is dit so verbysterevend dat daar in sekere kerklike kringe en selfs deur amptelike kerklike instansies in ons land so fel, ja, so fanaties gereageer word teen 'n beklemtoning van hierdie waarhede. Die optrede van owerheidsfigure, met name ook van ons Eerste Minister, moet hierdie kerkmanne en kerklike instansies gewis beskaam.

In die afgelope paar weke het iets van hierdie reaksie hom weer skerp laat voel sowel in die Ned. Geref. Kerk as in die Ned. Herv. Kerk. Dit is sekerlik nie 'n oorvereenvoudiging van die saak nie, maar 'n aanduiding van die kern waar alles om gaan as ons beweer dat in al die lawaai rondom die Christelike Instituut sedert sy stigting en in al die beroeringe in die Ned. Herv. Kerk sedert die onregmatige skorsing van prof. A. S. Geysers in 1961 tot by die bedanking en summiere skorsing van ds. J. A. Swanepoel enkele weke gelede, dit hierdie fanatiese reaksie is wat hom laat geld teen die beklemtoning van die elementêre Bybelse beginsel van naasteliefde. Vroeër of later sal dit moet uitkom — dit is vir baie trouens reeds duidelik — dat al die geraas oor kettery en dwaalleer in kerklike kringe gedurende die afgelope ses, sewe jaar niks anders as die loutere onsin en slae in die lug is nie. In die grond van die saak het dit in al die kerklike beroeringe, waarin harde slae toegedien en bitter leed veroorsaak is, waarin mense geestelike en liggaamlike knoue toegedien is, en as gevolg waarvan hier en daar kosbare kragte vir die geestelike opbou van ons volkslewe verlore gegaan het, gegaan om 'n paniese skrik vir die implikasies van die goddelike evangelie vir ons lewe vandag in Suid-Afrika.

As dit 'n Christen nie pas om met bitterheid te spreek en verwyte te slinger nie, sal dit seker in ooreenstemming met die liefde wees om met sekerheid te sê dat die getuienis aangaande hierdie basiese Christelike waarhede waarteen daar tans nog in sekere kerklike en politieke kringe gevloek word, vroeër of later as die enigste koers aanvaar

sal word waarin die heil van Suid-Afrika gesoek en gevind kan word.

Intussen is dit pure selfregverdiging as iemand wat hom steeds as een van die kerklike voorbokke laat ken in die veroorsaking van die pandemonium oor basiese Christelike waarhede, vroom probeer beweer dat daar nie van 'n krisis in die kerk gepraat kan word nie. As elementêre evangeliese beginsels deur 'n sinode tot dwaalleer verklaar word; as daar officieel-kerklik met klaarblyklike onreg gehandel word om wat reg is teen te staan; as naakte en onverbloemde onwaarhede officieel-kerklik geduld en beskerm word; as kritieklose konformering aan kerklik-ekstremistiese politieke beskouinge 'n regverdigingskrag in die kerk verkry wat meer as die bloed van Jesus die sonde bedek, is dit nie 'n ernstige krisistoestand nie, ongeag hoe

wyd die kring mag wees waarin dit as 'n krisis ervaar word?

Tog glo ons dat die goeie uiteindelik daaruit sal voortkom. Baie oë het al oopgegaan, en geleidelik begin die besef posvat dat dit miskien nog die grootste van alle dwalinge is om wat sleg is, goed te noem en wat goed is, sleg (Jes. 5:20).

Dit is 'n onbetwisbare „kleinigheid" in die Christelike getuienis dat die houding teenoor die medemens deur die Bybelse eise van naasteliefde bepaal moet word; dit is elementêr. Dááror — oor niks anders nie — was die kerklike toneel in Suid-Afrika die afgelope aantal jare een van onrus en beroering. Maar die belang van hierdie kleinigheid kan moeilik oorskat word. Dit kan beslissend blyk te wees vir die heil van gans Suid-Afrika.

Editorial:

On a Crisis and a Triviality

Apart from whatever political policy may be followed in South Africa with regard to the preponderant racial question, there is something which every Christian can positively contribute towards the continued existence and the co-existence of all men in our country.

On the face of it, it is something trifling, because it is so elementary. But it is also of fundamental importance — so fundamental that it may prove to be decisive.

This contribution lies on the level of human relations. Christians will have to become trained in the recognition and respect of members of other races as fellow-men in their own right. In word and action and attitude they will have to give proof that the practice of neighbourly love across the racial barrier is for them a matter of utmost and joyous sincerity. Simultaneously they thereby have to set the example in our multiracial society of the only attitude to life which is both proper and beneficial for all.

We call it something trifling, but really mean that it is so elementary for Christians that it is self-evident. Any argument about it is futile. And yet it is of the utmost importance in the conduct of every citizen in the factual situation of our multi-racial society.

Christians must also be realists (and this, in a certain context, may also mean that they must be honest) who do not allow their conduct in the present concrete situation to be determined by any other vision of the future than that of the coming kingdom of God. In South Africa to-day, realism and honesty implies that we should accept it as an accomplished fact that we are a mixed population in a permanently established sense. The most real problem in our country at the moment, and probably right into the distant future, is not how white and non-white can exist separately and be kept separate, but how they can live together in harmony. And to this problem an arrangement of society on the basis of Christian charity and justice, and this exclusively, offers the only and at the same time the finest solution.

We do not, in fact, have very far to seek for this solution. The most loyal support any government which may be in power and has to struggle with this problem, can desire is a way of life in accordance with the basic, elementary principles of neighbourly love as taught us by the Bible. In spite of all the unholy casting of suspicion upon this substantial part of Christian witness as though it represented "liberalism" and "leftism", and even as "a pernicious course" and "heresy", it will most unquestionably prove sooner or later, also in its relevance to race relations in South Africa, that the best Christian is the best citizen.

Among Christians there should be no clash of opinions with regard to what our attitude towards any man in society should be. The message of Scripture is far too explicit for this. It is an elementary, basic Christian truth that the true test of our real discipleship of Jesus does not reside in impressive demonstrations of witness which are on the level of superficial religiosity and a self-glorifying willingness to make sacrifices (all the way from the speaking of the tongues of men and angels to the distribution of all our possessions and the submission of our bodies for burning), but in our having love for each other. By the same token, apart from the claim of loving God being self-misleading if the brother be hated, there is, furthermore, no truth in the pretension of neighbourly love if this commandment be conditionally distorted, selectively applied and essentially denied in the radicality with which Jesus imbued it.

For the very reason that they belong to the trifling things, or rather to the elementary, the basic, the self-evident elements of Christian faith, it is so perplexing that there should occur such a harsh, indeed, such a fanatical reaction to an emphasis upon these truths in certain church circles and even on the part of official ecclesiastical authorities in our country. The recent conduct of the governing authorities, specifically of our Prime Minister, must surely put these churchmen and ecclesiastical authorities to shame.

During the past few weeks, something of this

reaction again made itself sharply felt in both the Ned. Geref. Kerk and in the Ned. Herv. Kerk. It is certainly no over-simplification but an indication of the gist of the whole matter, if we contend that, in all the brouhaha around the Christian Institute since its establishment, and in all the commotions in the Ned. Herv. Kerk ever since the unjust suspension of Professor A. S. Geysers in 1961, right up to the resignation and summary suspension of the Rev. J. A. Swanepoel a few weeks ago, it was this fanatic reaction against the emphasis upon the elementary Biblical principle of neighbourly love which asserted itself. Sooner or later it must become evident — for many it is already all too clear in fact — that all the blustering about heresy and doctrinal error in church circles during the past, six, seven years, was nothing but rank nonsense and a jousting with windmills. Basically what it was all about in all these ecclesiastical commotions, in which harsh blows were dealt and bitter sorrow caused, in which some sustained severe knocks in body and in spirit and as a result of which precious talents for the spiritual strengthening of our national life occasionally got lost, was a panicky fear of the implications of the divine gospel for our life in South Africa to-day.

If it does not befit a Christian to speak with bitterness and to cast reproach, it will surely be in accordance with love to state with certainty that the witness concerning these basic Christian truths against which certain ecclesiastical and political circles are still fulminating, will sooner or later be accepted as the only course along which the welfare

of South Africa can be sought and found.

In the meantime, it is pure self-justification when a man who is publicly in the forefront in causing this pandemonium on account of basic Christian truths, piously tries to assert that there can be no talk of a crisis in the Church. When elementary evangelical principles are declared heretical by a Synod; when official church action is resorted to with patent injustice to resist what is right; when rank and unvarnished untruths are officially tolerated and defended by churches; when unquestioning conformity to ecclesiastically extremist political views is acquiring a justificatory power within the Church which cloaks sin more than the blood of Jesus, is this not a serious state of crisis, irrespective of how large the circle may be in which it is experienced as a crisis?

Nevertheless we believe that good will ultimately be born from it. Many eyes have already been opened, and gradually the realisation is beginning to dawn that it is perhaps the greatest of all heresies to call what is evil good, and what is good evil (Is. 5:20).

It is undoubtedly "something trifling" in Christian witness that one's attitude towards one's fellow-man should be determined by the Biblical demands of neighbourly love; it is elementary. It was on this score — and no no other — that the church scene in South Africa during recent years has been one of unrest and turmoil. But the importance of this triviality can hardly be overrated. It may prove to be decisive for the welfare of the whole of South Africa.

A PRESBYTERIAN ON AN ANGLICAN PULPIT

THE REV. ROBERT ORR

(Sermon delivered in St. Alban's Cathedral, Pretoria, Evensong, Sunday, 7th May, 1967, on the occasion of the beginning of the week of prayer for Christian Unity. Heading provided by the editor.)

When my very good friend, the Dean, invited me to preach he suggested that I should take one particular aspect of the discussions going on between our churches and expand on that, rather than speaking generally about the need for unity. This I am very willing to do and this I plan to do. But I cannot help saying something, however brief, at the beginning on the need for unity. When it comes to this matter of the need for unity, I confess I am a man with a one-track mind, like Jeremiah, who, when he tried to button up his mouth so that the Word of the Lord would not be spoken, had to confess that "there is in my heart as it were a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I am weary with holding it in and I cannot."

UNITY GOD'S DEMAND

I am utterly convinced, you see, that God wants unity for his Church on earth. I am persuaded by Christ's prayer on the night before his death. I am persuaded by Paul's blistering words condemning the divisive cliques in the congregation at Corinth. I am persuaded by Paul's vision of the gifts given to every member of the Church being used for the benefit of the whole Church. I am persuaded that a Church commissioned to preach re-

conciliation to the world must first know reconciliation in its own life. I am persuaded by such mundane matters as the waste of the money which you — faithful members of the Church — put into the offering plate week by week, only to see it going to put up two church buildings and pay the stipends of two ministers where one building and one minister would be quite enough. Do you wonder that I have an itch for unity when I see and think about these things?

When I think of it this way, I am sorely tempted to describe our divisions as absurd and ridiculous. Certainly to our spiritual ancestors our situation would have been quite, quite incredible. Look at it: members of different denominations in the same community, virtually ignoring one another as Christians. We do business together. Our children attend the same schools. We meet one another at rugby tests and political meetings. Our sons and daughters intermarry. But even though we care very little for the differences between our churches, we do not break bread together at the Lord's Table — indeed the rule of our churches may forbid us to do so. We do not together bring the Christian faith to bear on the life of our community and country because, while we may know one another as decent citizens and may be informed about one another's church membership, we have no church living together. If we pray together, it is quite likely to be on

Church Square on the anniversary of the Republic. This is the situation we take for granted! To Paul it would have seemed intolerable, utterly at variance with our Christian profession. No wonder he splutters with indignation and amazement when there is even a hint of division at Corinth. Do you remember how agitated he became at any suggestion that Jewish Christians should not worship with and eat with Gentile Christians? This was the issue on which Paul stood up to Peter, on which, as he says, "I opposed him to his face . . . before the whole congregation". What a spectacle that must have been — these two giants of the early Church speaking strong truth in love to one another in full view of the Christian community!

I have, as I confess, a fiery itch for unity. But this does not mean that I can remove the obstacles in the way of unity by waving a magic wand. These are obstacles that must be worked at with patience, understanding and, above all, love.

PRESBYTERIAN VIEW OF THE BISHOP

One of the obstacles — and here, of course, I come very much closer to doing what the Dean has asked me to do — is our understanding of the ministry within the Church. Let me make it clear that I am quite convinced by the Anglican, Lutheran, Roman, Presbyterian and other theologians who insist that the whole Church shares in the ministry of Christ to the world, that every Christian is a minister to other men, a servant of other men for Christ's sake. This, so I believe with all my heart, is true. It is also true that it is in our understanding of the special ministries within the Church, in our understanding of the servants of God's people, the clergy, that most of the thorny problems arise when it comes to uniting churches.

Let me focus it down to one matter only — the matter of bishops, and how we understand their place and function within the Church. To some Presbyterians, I'm afraid the word "bishop" is as a red flag to a bull, almost a dirty word — for reasons I will pass on to you in a moment. To a few Presbyterians unity is so precious that they are prepared to accept bishops, archbishops, cardinals and popes if only the cause of unity may be served thereby. Most Presbyterians fall somewhere in between. Those

who have been doing some thinking about this have, by and large, come to the very practical conclusion that since unity is something that involves the whole Church, and since the vast majority of Christians in the world today — Romans, Anglicans, Orthodox, Lutherans and Methodists — not only have bishops but seem to be very content with them, then bishops we must have. Nor is this said with any hint of reluctance or bad grace. For we have seen other things about bishops that we had not seen before. We have seen, above all, the value of a bishop as a minister to ministers, as a pastor of pastors, as a father-in-God to whom ministers can turn for counsel, advice, spiritual guidance and plain practical help. My early days in the ministry are not all that far behind me, and I remember very clearly how many problems a young minister has to tackle, how inadequate he feels to deal with them, and how he longs for the listening ear and open heart into which he can pour his troubles and misgivings and — yes — his mistakes and follies. Speaking personally, I would rate the bishop's pastoral function as the number one priority. While we see this and value it, there is one rather important practical problem that remains. The bishop is the pastor of pastors, their counsellor and adviser in times of trouble. But, unless the bishop is superhuman, he surely has problems and troubles of his own. Who, then, is the bishop's pastor? It may well be that you Anglicans have solved this problem. I, for one, would be greatly interested to know the answer to it.

We have also begun to glimpse the value of the bishop in another direction. He is, we can see, the centre and focus of the unity of the Church, the visible expression of the unity of the Church. By his action in confirmation, he makes it plain as a pikestaff that these young people are members, not just of a local congregation, but of the wider Church. Through him, ministers and people of the diocese are, it seems to me, bound together in a living, personal relationship. Through him the needs and concerns and problems of one part of the diocese become the needs and concerns and problems of the whole diocese. Not only so. Through him, and through his personal relationships with bishops in other

parts of the country and indeed in other parts of the world, the diocese is made aware of its links with the Church universal. It works the other way round too: through the bishop, the Church universal is made aware of that part of the Church to which he ministers.

We have also seen the value of the bishop when it comes to the mundane matter of making decisions and bearing responsibility for them. Here, some Presbyterians are greatly worried about the set-up in the Presbyterian Church. Someone has said that the Presbyterian Church has more committees to the square inch and more meetings per minute than any other Christian body. Many of us are concerned that this business of governing the Church through committees is — not exactly **wasting** time, for the jobs have to be done, but certainly **devouring** time and diverting it from tasks like reading and prayer. It seems to us that many committee decisions could be committed to the bishop instead, so that the other clergy can get on with the job. Further, when a committee makes a decision and it turns out to be wrong, even disastrously wrong, there is not terribly much one can do. The chairman of the committee can always shrug off the responsibility by passing the buck to his committee — and you cannot really discipline a committee. We need, it seems to me, someone who, while he will take advice from others, will nevertheless be responsible for the decisions and their consequences.

UNFORTUNATE

Some Presbyterians, I say, are beginning to glimpse the value of the bishop's rôle. Beginning to glimpse, because obviously one cannot really appreciate a bishop unless one has worked with and under him.

But all the same, I must ask you to bear with us Presbyterians while we work this whole thing out, even if we take a rather long time doing it. I did say earlier on that to some Presbyterians the word "bishop" is as a red flag to a bull. There is good historical reason for this attitude. The Church of Scotland, is, as you know, the mother of many Presbyterian Churches including our own in Southern Africa. (Perhaps I should add that practically all the daughters have now grown up and are sometimes quite critical of mother!) The Church of Scot-

land's experience of bishops was, to say the least of it, unfortunate. The century following the Reformation in Scotland saw the Stuart kings making a determined attempt to impose the royal will on the Scottish Church through the bishops, and an even more determined resistance to this imposition on the part of the Scottish people. This led to bitter and violent struggles which stained Scotland's soil with blood, and the memory of these killing times has seared its way into the minds of many Scots, and hence of their spiritual cousins. If you think I am raking over the dust of battles long since fought, that all this does not concern us, I am afraid you are wrong. When, just over ten years ago, Anglicans and Presbyterians in Britain published their hopes and plans for church union, including a structure of the ministry that would have bishops in it, it was possible for the sensational press in Scotland to raise the furious cry that the Church and the people of Scotland were in deadly danger. Bishops were once again — so they said — threatening the spiritual freedom of the Church. Naturally a lot of what was just sheer nonsense, all guff and hot air, but the fact remains that these particular plans for union in Britain suffered a severe setback at that time. There is, in the minds of many Presbyterians, a vague fear of bishops which will take some time to remove.

One thing that will increase that fear is the view of some Christians who stoutly maintain that if you do not have bishops, then you do not really have a proper ministry and therefore do not really have a Church. You may have a kind of vague association of Christians met together for religious exercises, but you cannot really call this a Church since it has not a proper ministry nor proper sacraments. If anything is calculated to make other Christians bristle, this is it. Even in the Roman Catholic Church, where one would expect to find this view most strongly championed, there are those who believe that the non-Roman denominations cannot simply be dismissed as "communities", that there is something of the Church about them which must be recognised. It is also significant that the view "no bishops, no church" is not official Anglican teaching, since there are many

Anglicans who do not hold to it. The famous declaration of the 1920 Lambeth Conference of Anglican bishops uses the word "Communion" to refer both to episcopal and non-episcopal bodies.

In view of all this, it is something to be grateful for that the Conversations on Church Unity when they issued their statement on the ministry included a sentence or two to the effect that since the episcopal order originally came into existence without reference to any one theory of its nature or authority, we cannot impose any one such theory to the exclusion of others.

IGNORANCE

Questions of doctrine and our different interpretations of doctrine are not the only obstacles on the way to unity. Perhaps the greatest obstacle is our shameful ignorance of one another, our lack of accurate knowledge about one another, and, consequently, our suspicion of one another, for we fear that which we do not know. I realise that there are many Presbyterians who are very vague about Anglicans, but I have also come across many Anglicans who have some dangerously woolly ideas about Presbyterians. During these last few minutes, let me try to dispel some of these bogies, some of these wrong ideas that you have about us.

One false idea is that Presbyterian ministers always preach long sermons! If I am not careful, this sermon tonight will be giving you precisely this idea, so let me say here only that Presbyterian church members are just as uncomfortable as yourselves with a sermon that wanders over the twenty minute mark.

Wrong idea number two is that the Presbyterian Church is a Scottish Church. It is quite true that the Presbyterians in this country began as a largely Scottish Church, but this Scottish flavour is fast disappearing. With very few exceptions, all the men entering our ministry in the last twenty years have been trained in South Africa and were, for the most part, born in South Africa. Today the ranks of our ministry have a fair sprinkling of names immediately recognisable as South African.

Wrong idea number three is that the Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa is an "apartheid church". This is not true. We

have a sizeable non-European membership and ministry, and non-white ministers and elders have an equal voice and vote in Church courts like presbytery and general assembly. We are very close now to organic union with two other Presbyterian churches — the Tsonga Presbyterian Church and the Bantu Presbyterian Church — and the united Church will have something like 72,000 Africans and 32,000 Europeans, with a significant majority of Africans in the General Assembly. It is true that there is a wide gap between white and non-white clergy stipends, but we are not at all comfortable about this gap and we are doing our best to make it smaller.

Wrong idea number four is that the Presbyterian Church is a Calvinistic church, committed to the Westminster Confession, including predestination. It is quite true that we honour Calvin, but this by no means implies that we refuse to accept theological development since then. There is in the ranks of our ministry a wide variety of theological conviction all the way from a catholic high churchmanship to evangelical fundamentalism. Among our ministers you will find disciples of Barth and Bonhoeffer, Tillich and Niebuhr. As far as the Westminster Confession is concerned, I believe that one Anglican at least holds the view that we Presbyterians are bound hand and foot to the Westminster Confession. This is simply not true. The Presbyterian Church of S.A. has its own Confession of faith, and we are, in any case, not bound hand and foot to our subordinate standards. We are bound hand and foot only to Jesus Christ. As far as predestination is concerned, I have been a Presbyterian for more than a quarter of a century and the only place I have heard predestination even discussed was at Rhodes University where I trained for the ministry.

This sermon is already too long. Let me end with four sentences. There was perhaps a time when it may have been necessary to divide the Church in order to emphasise some vital aspect of the Gospel which was being neglected. As far as Anglicans and Presbyterians are concerned, that time is past. We could not be betraying the Gospel by uniting. Indeed I believe it is the very Gospel we are charged to proclaim that impels us to unity.

DIE TRIOMFLIED VAN VERWORPENES

'n Besinning oor Handeling 16 : 9 - 40.

DR. C. J. LABUSCHAGNE

Wie die Bybel nie ken nie en sy boodskap nie verstaan nie, sal aanstoot neem aan die opskrif hierbo. Dit bevat 'n teenstrydigheid. Wie kan 'n oorwinningslied sing as hy deur die gemeenskap verwerp en veroordeel is? Wie kan aanspraak maak op triomf as hy die slegste daarvan afgekome het? Is dit nie waansin en verwaandheid nie? 'n Triomflied veronderstel immers oorwinning en blydskap, en dit pas alleen in die mond van die wennende party. Hoe kan die verworpene wat as 'persona non grata' deur die gemeenskap veroordeel, vervolgt en uitgebani is, 'n oorwinningslied sing? Hoe kan iemand wat hom om middernag in die gevangenis bevind met skrypende wonde en strieme aan sy liggaam, met sy voete in die blok en wetende dat hy as 'n oproermaker en misdadiger veroordeel is, 'n loflied sing? Wie die Bybel ken en sy boodskap verstaan, sal weet dat dit kan, dat die Here Jesus self as veroordeelde, verworpene en uitgestotene, as een wat so sleg daarvan afgekome het dat Hy as oproermaker en misdadiger aan die kruis opgehang is en gesterf het, juis getriomfeer het, dat Stéfanus buitekant die stad uitgewerp en gestenig is en as oorwinnaar gesterf het met 'n gebed op sy lippe om vergifnis vir sy moordenaars.

BYBELSE WAARHEID

Ons opskrif bevat 'n groot Bybelse waarheid, daardie waarheid dat dit salig is om ter wille van die Here vervolgt te word, dat die gelowige wat saam met Hom ly saam met Hom verheerlik word, dat wie deelgenoot is aan verdrukking, vervolging en gevaar ook deelgenoot is aan die oorwinning, dat almal wat godvrugtig wil lewe in Christus Jesus vervolgt sal word maar dat die Here hulle uit alle vervolginge sal verlos. Maar ons opskrif het ook sy beperkings en voorbehoude: dit is alleen van toepassing op diegene wat op grond van hul geloof in Christus en deur hul verbondenheid aan die Evangelie en as gevolg van hul gehoorsaamheid aan die Woord van God deur die mense verwerp en vervolgt word. Alleen diegene wat in geloofsgheoorsaamheid onder alle omstandighede vashou aan die een waarheid van die een Evangelie en deur die genade van God trou hul dissipelskap beoefen, kan onder die druk van vervolging en in die eensaamheid van verwerping deur die mense 'n triomflied sing. So was dit met Paulus en Silas die geval toe hulle as verworpelinge, veroordeeld en beledig en geslaan, omstreeks middernag in die gevangenis te Filippi gebid en lofliedere tot eer van God gesing het: die triomflied van verworpenes.

„WYSE RAAD”

Hoe het dit gebeur dat hierdie twee mense, wat met die beste bedoelinge, nl. om die Evangelie te verkondig, na Filippi gegaan het, deur die bewoners van dié stad beskuldig, veroordeel, mishandel en verwerp is? Het hulle hul misdra of gesondig teen die gemeenskap? Het hulle as vreemdelinge op Macedoniese bodem deur hul optrede die indruk geskep dat hulle die maatskaplike orde van die stad willens en wetens wil kom versteur en omverwerp, dat hulle oproer wil kom kraai en 'n rewolusie beplan? As ons sou dink dat hulle hierdie indruk geskep het en hierdie dinge beoog het, dan sou ons hulle goeie raad kon gegee het toe hulle in Filippi aangekom het. As ons van oordeel sou wees dat hulle anders kon opgetree het en dat hulle nie versigtig in hul optrede was nie, dan sou ons, as ons daar teenwoordig was, hulle tot versigtigheid gemaak het. Ons advies in daardie geval sou wees: Dink daaraan, julle is nou nie meer in Asië nie, maar op Europese bodem; wees tog versigtig want hier in Macedonië het die mense, hoewel hulle net soos julle Romeinse burgers is, tog hul eie lewenswyse, sedes en gewoontes wat julle moet respekteer en in ag neem; pas tog op, moenie gaan inmeng in hulle tradisionele lewenswyse nie, want hulle woon hier al

ceue en hulle weet teen hierdie tyd wat hulle wil en hoe hulle wil lewe; moet tog nie kritiek uitspreek nie, want die mense hier hou daar niks van nie, veral as dit deur vreemdelinge gedoen word; verkondig gerus die Evangelie, want daarvoor het julle gekom, maar pas tog op om tog niks te sê wat moontlik kan aanstoot gee nie — die mense hier is baie gevoelig omtrent bepaalde dinge — julle sou deur taktlose optrede die mense teen julle kry en alleen bereik dat julle die stad uitgesit word en dat julle planne om die Evangelie te verkondig verongeluk word; wees tog nou verstandig en doen tog niks meer as net die Evangelie verkondig nie! Dit sou ons wyse raad aan Paulus en Silas gewees het, want dit is dieselfde raad wat ons aan mense in ons eie land gee. En dit is dieselfde advies wat ekself meer as tien jaar gelede van 'n welmenende kollega gekry het kort voor my bevestiging as predikant, toe hy my gemaak het om tog nooit oor sending te praat nie omdat die mense daar vierkantig teen gekant is en om tog nooit die mense in hul politieke lewe te kritiseer nie omdat dit vir hulle iets heiligs is.

ONVERMYDELIKE KRISIS

Gelukkig was ons nie teenwoordig te Filippi om Paulus en Silas ons welgemeende advies aan te bied nie, en dié advies word, goddank, ook nie gevra nie. Bowendien het Paulus en Silas dié soort advies nie nodig gehad nie, omdat hulle tog niks anders in Filippi wou kom doen as net die Evangelie bring nie. As gaste het hulle hul voorbeeldig gedra, taktvol, geduldig en liefdevol met die mense omgegaan en niks meer en niks minder gedoen as die Evangelie van Jesus Christus verkondig nie. Maar daardie Evangelie, omdat dit die ware Evangelie en die volle Evangelie was, het konsekwensies gehad en dit het, soos elke lewende Evangelieverkondiging oral ter wêreld, reperkussies gehad vir hoorders sowel as vir ver-

kondigers. Waar die Evangelie van Jesus Christus in sy volle breedte en diepte in die menslike samelewing ingedra word, ontstaan 'n krisis: die waarheid van God kom te staan teen menslike valsheid, leuenagtigheid en bedrog, die Logos (Woord) van God kom te staan teen die ideologie van die mens, die Gees van God kom te staan teen die geeste wat mense se lewens beheers, die Evangelie kom te staan teen magte en geeste wat die gang van die Evangelie bleemmer. In hierdie krisis wat 'n konfrontasie van magte en geeste is, is dit onvermydelik dat mense diep geraak word, seerkry, aanstoot neem, fel reageer en ook seermaak. Die eerste tekens van hierdie krisis is verontrusting en beroering, wat onder bepaalde omstandighede kan lei tot oproer en geweld.

Dit is wat in Filippi gebeur het. Die tragiese en bedroewende van die geval was dat die Evangelieverkondigers, die apostels van vrede, verantwoordelik gehou is vir die oproer wat ontstaan het. Die aanklag teen hulle was dat hulle die stad in opskudding bring omdat hulle Jode is en sedes verkondig wat vir die Romeinse burgers van Filippi onaanvaarbaar is. Die aanklag het 'n politieke kleur en politieke sentimente word uitgebuit om momentum aan die agitatie te gee. Dat hierdie beskuldiging totaal vals is, maak natuurlik nie saak nie so lank dit maar sy doel dien. Die gebruik van valse beskuldigings is 'n ou gevestigde en beproefde taktiek van agitators, wat met groot welslae toegepas is by die veroordeling van Jesus, Stéfanus en baie ander in die loop van die eeue en wat vandag nog met skynbare welslae aangewend word.

Ons het hierdie dinge die afgelope agt jaar in ons eie land ondervind: toe die Evangeliese getuïenis in verband met rasseverhoudinge hier te lande onomwonde en duidelik gestel is op kerklike vergaderings, in die boekie 'Vertraagde Aksie' en op die Cottesloe konferensie, het 'n krisis ontstaan wat beroering en verontrusting en helaas ook agitatie veroorsaak het. Die beskuldigings wat sedertdien na die hoofde van die uitgesproke getuïes geslinger is, het 'n onmiskenbare politieke kleur gekry en namate die agitatie toegeneem het, het welvoeglikheid en redelikheid begin wyk voor 'n sistematiese veldtog van verdagma-

king en beswadding. Afrikaners is deur mede-Afrikaners beskuldig dat hulle nie egte Afrikaners is nie maar verraaiers van hul volk; teoloë is deur mede-teoloë beskuldig dat hulle politieke motiewe het en as liberaliste die weg baan vir die antigoddelike ideologie van die Kommunisme.

Hierdie beskuldigings is net so vals as dié wat teen Paulus en Silas ingebring is, nl. dat hulle as Jode die stad in opskudding bring en on-Romeinse sedes verkondig, terwyl hulle net soos die kloeke inwoners van die Balkanskiereiland ewegoed Romeinse burgers was! Agter hierdie flagrante leuens en valshede kan ons egter maklik die ware redes ontdek waarom die apostels vervolgd en uitgewerp is.

DIE WAARSÊENDE GEES

Lukas beskryf dit in drie verse: Toe Paulus en Silas, nadat hulle met veel vrug en in die beste harmonie met die inwoners gepraat en die Evangelie verkondig het, op 'n goeie dag weer na die gebedsplek op weg was, kom 'n slavin met 'n waarsêende gees hulle teë en loop hul agterna terwyl sy aanhou skreeu „Hierdie manne is dienaars van God die Allerhoogste, en hulle verkondig aan julle die weg van verlossing”. Nadat sy dit dae lank gedoen het, het Paulus, baie ontevrede oor die oorlas, die waarsêende gees gelas in die naam van Jesus Christus om uit haar uit te gaan. Dit het dan ook terstond gebeur; die gees is besweer en die swye opgelê. Paulus het niks anders gedoen nie as om hom te verset teen 'n gees wat hom gehinder het by die uitvoering van sy werk. Hierdie waarsêersgees, 'n gees wat wêét, het hom die rol van herout vir die apostels aangemeet, en, hoewel dit die waarheid gespreek het, het dit die gang van die Evangelie belemmer. Hoe geraffineerd is die metode wat die bose gebruik om die werk van die Evangelieverkondiging te probeer fnuik! Paulus was genoodsaak om ter wille van die Evangelie in te gryp en 'n gees, wat die gang van die Evangelie ernstig belemmer het, die swye op te lê. Heeltemal onopsetlik en sonder om ooit te dink of te bedoel om iemand te na te kom of te benadeel, het Paulus alleen maar sy plig gedoen deur 'n gees, wat die Evangelieverkondiging wou dwarsboom, te besweer en uit die weg te ruim. Die Evangelie het te

staan gekom teen 'n gees wat hom die reg van wete en spreke aangemeet het. Wat kon Paulus anders doen as om dié gees teen te staan en dit te besweer?

Soos altyd en oral die geval is, het die beswering van 'n gees in die Naam van Jesus Christus verreikende reperkussies gehad. Wie 'n gees besweer, kry onmiddellik te make met die mense wat hulle agter dié gees skaar, dit opwek, vertroetel en daarvan profiteer vir eie gewin en vir eie belang. Met die beswering van dié gees was die resultaat vir Paulus dat 'n aantal agitators hom en Silas by die mense van die stad verdag gemaak, beswadder en valslik beskuldig het, sodat 'n vyandige menigte met opgesweepte politieke emosies teen hulle tekeer gegaan en hul arrestasie bewerkstellig het. By hooglopende politieke emosies bestaan die gevaar altyd dat daar tot geweld oorgegaan word: hul klere word van die lyf geskeur, stokke word gegryp, daar word geslaan en hulle word bloedend in die gevangenis gegooi.

VERSET

Die gemene beswadding en die gewelddadige aanranding van die persone van die apostels, was in werklikheid 'n verset teen die Evangelie en sy konsekwensies. Dit was in feite teen die Evangelie en teen die noodsaaklike gevolge wat die Evangelieverkondiging op sosiale vlak in Filippi meegebring het, dat daar 'n heftige versetveldtog geloods is. Teen 'n Evangelie wat netjies in sy kompartementjie gehou word sodat dit net „op sy eie terrein” beweeg en veral nie mag ingryp op maatskaplike vlak nie, teen so 'n Evangelie het niemand nog ooit beswaar gehad nie. Maar, 'n Evangelie wat in die ware sin van die woord Evangelie is en wat sy getuïes in die naam van Jesus Christus die Evangelie-belemmerende geeste van hierdie wêreld laat besweer en die swye oplê, so 'n Evangelie is 'n steen des aanstoots, en die verkondigers en getuïes van hierdie Evangelie word uitgekryt vir oproermakers, sentimentele liberaliste, handlangers van die Kommunisme en die Here weet vir wat nog meer — hulle moet weg, uitgeskop word, dood, of die land uit.

Dit was die lot van Paulus en Silas. Hul werk, hul getuïenis en hul optrede in belang van die Evangelie het konsekwensies gehad vir die inwoners van Filippi, o.a.

ook ekonomiese konsekwensies; en daarom moes hulle beswadding en slae verduur, daarom moes hulle weg, die kerker in en uiteindelik die land uit.

TRIOMF

Hul misdaad? Hulle het een van die geeste van hierdie wêreld besweer, die gees wat waarsê, die gees wat dit wêét, die gees wat luidkeels sê so is dit en nie anders nie. Hulle het hierdie uiters gevaarlike gees die swye opgelê. Paulus en Silas het daar nie spyt van gehad nie, want die Evangelie het sukses gehad, hulle het in die naam van Jesus Christus getriomfeer. Daarom kon hulle omstreeks middernag lofliedere tot eer van God sing, die triomflied van Christus se oorwinning oor een van die gevaarlikste geeste wat ooit die lewe van mense beheers het: die gees wat voorgee om alles te weet, die waarheid en wysheid in pag te hê, en daarop aanspraak maak om ver in die toekoms te sien en te weet wat die ontwikkelingspatroon en verloop van die mense se lotgevalle sal wees.

Hierdie gees is een van die geeste wat Paulus bedoel het toe hy aan die Efesiërs geskryf het dat ons worstelstryd nie teen vlees en bloed is nie, maar teen die owerhede, teen die magte, teen die wêreldheersers van die duisternis van hierdie eeu, teen die bese geeste in die lug. Dit is een van hierdie geeste wat hulle in Filippi deur die Evangelie oorwin het, daarom kon hulle dié nag in die gevangenis lofliedere sing ten spyte van hul bloeiende strieme en ten spyte van die groot gevaar waarin hulle verkeer het.

'N LIED IN DIE NAG

Wat sou hulle gesing het? Ons weet nie, maar ons sou met hulle wil meesing in die gees van daardie aangrypende gesang uit die gesangbundel van die Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk:

*„De Heer regeert! Zijn koninkrijk staat vast,
zijn heerschappij omvat den loop der tijden;
een sterke hand, die nooit heeft misgetast,
blijft met het heilig zwaard des Geestes strijden;
en d'adem zijner lippen overmunt den tegenstand!”*

Sou ons só kon sing . . . as verworpenes, in die gevangenis, met

bloeiende wonde aan ons liggame, om middernag, met ons voete in die blok, sonder lig, sonder om te weet of ons daar ooit lewend sal uitkom? Die gedagte alleen aan daardie haglike toestand is genoeg om ons die lied in die keel te smoor. Wat is die geheim van Paulus en Silas se blymoedige martelaarskap? En wat is die geheim van hul lied in die nag?

'n Deel van dié geheim het ons al ontdek: Hulle het Gods lof besing wat hulle laat triomfeer het oor een van die geeste wat in die pad van die Evangelie gestaan het. Maar hulle het nog 'n ander rede gehad waarom hulle gebid en gesing het: hulle het uitvoering gegee aan die opdrag wat Paulus aan die Thessalonicense gegee het, „Wees altyddeur bly; bid sonder ophou”. Die geheim van onder sulke haglike omstandighede te kan sing, is ook die geheim van die lied van 'n voël wat hoog bo die grond op 'n dun takkie van 'n boom sit en sing. Het ons al daarna opgelet? Die takkie buig gevaarlik af onder sy gewig, maar hy sit vrolik en kwinkeler; hy kwel hom nie oor die afgrond onder hom nie; hy weet dat hy vlerke het en hy weet dat as die tak sou breek, hy nie in die afgrond sal stort nie, maar veilig sal wegsweef in Gods ruimte. Dit is ook die geheim van die lied van die apostels; die takkie waarop hulle hul bevind het, was baie dun en het gevaarlik begin kraak — onder hulle het 'n afgrond vol onsekerhede en gevare gegaap. Hulle kon egter sing, want hulle het geweet, soos Jesaja van ouds al gesê het, dat „die wat op die Here wag, kry nuwe krag; hulle vaar op met vleuels soos die arende . . .” Paulus en Silas het geweet dat hulle deur die genade van God vleuels van die geloof gehad het en dat hulle nie in die afgrond sou stort nie. Wie waarlik glo en sy vertrou alleen op Jesus Christus stel, hét hierdie sekerheid en voel hom veilig onder alle omstandighede, want hy aanvaar die waarheid wat so meesterlik onder woorde gebring is in 'n ou Duitse kerklied: „**Gott verlässt uns nicht wenn alles bricht**” (God verlaat ons nie, ook wanneer alles breek).

BEVRYDING

Net soos die Evangelie, wat die apostels te Filippi gebring het, konsekwensies gehad het vir die inwoners van dié stad, so het ook die triomflied wat hulle langs die mure

van die gevangenis laat ruis het, ingrypende gevolge gehad vir hul medegevangenes. Die gevangenes het na hulle geluister! Daardie ongelukkige mense het in die lofliedere van die apostels midde in hul nood en in daardie diepe donker nag 'n onmiskenbare teken van hoop ontwaar, 'n teken van redding, van verlossing, van 'n vrye blye lewe, waar hulle almal na gesmag het. Die triomflied van die medeverworpenes, wat vir hulle 'n sekere simbool van vryheid en verlossing was, het plotseling 'n werklikheid geword: die fundamente van die gevangenis het geskud, die deure het oopgegaan en die boeie van almal het losgeraak . . . Kyk, so het God aan hulle en aan ons almal getoon dat waar die oorwinningslied uit die mond van gelowiges opklink, daar word die weg gebaan na vryheid, na verlossing, na lewe. Waar die Kerk onbevrees sing van sy geloof en sy hoop, daar word gevangenes in vryheid gestel, daar val die boeie af wat mense kluister, daar word die desperate mens, wat in wanhoop op die punt staan om selfmoord te pleeg, deur die Evangelie gegryp, gered, verlos, behou, bewaar in Gods koninkryk.

EVANGELIE VIR DIE WÊRELD

Begryp ons nou dat die gevangenes, ons medegevangenes in hierdie wêreld, met reikhalsende verlange soek om die triomflied van die Kerk te hoor? Besef ons nou dat diegene wat ingekerker is en hopeloos vas sit in die greep van hul skuld, in die greep van hul verlede, in die greep van die owerhede en magte en wêreldbeheersers van die duisternis, in die greep van die bese geeste in die lug, smag na die lied van die Kerk? Dring dit nou tot ons deur dat God hierdie gevangenes wil vrymaak juis deur die lied van die evangeliese getuie van die Kerk, en dat daar géén ander weg tot behoudenis en redding is nie as deur die Evangelie waarvan die Kerk getuig en sing? Hoe sing die Kerk in ons wêreld, in ons tyd en in ons land hierdie lied? Moet God sy Kerk eers agter tralies sit en moet Hy eers van ons uitgeworpenes maak voordat ons die lied aan ons toevertrou gaan sing? Ons kan met reg in droefheid en skaamte vra: Gaan daar ooit 'n lied uit van die Kerk waarin ons groot geword het en wat ons ken? Staan die Evangelie, die Evangelie wat

alles te sê het oor alle terreine en alle aspekte van die lewe, inderdaad in die middelpunt van die werk, optrede en getuienis van die Kerk?

Die gevangenes luister . . . Wat hoor hulle van die kant van die Kerk? Hulle hoor die strydrumoer van die vegpartye binne die Kerk teen die eie vlees en bloed, teen die medebroeders, en deur die geskreeu van strydkrete, slagspreuke en luide beleidsverklarings word die lied van die Kerk se evangeliese getuienis oordonder. Die gevangenes hoor die vloeke, die belasteringe, die beswadering en die verdagmaking van medebroeders in die geloof, en dit nogal in die naam van Jesus Christus! Wat is die boodskap van die Kerk aan die gevangenes? Gaan daar iets uit van die prediking, of is dit 'n gepraat in die ruimte waarby sogenaamde kontensieuse sake sorgvuldig vermy of waarby die Heilige Skrif verdraai word om by menslike dwaasdenkbeelde aan te pas? Wat het daar in die Kerk wat ons ken en probeer dien het, verkeerd gegaan? Wat is óns skuld? Wat het óns verkeerd gedoen of nagelaat om te doen?

ONS IS SKULDIG

Sou ons durf antwoord gee op hierdie ontstellende vrae? Laat ons dit nou maar voor God erken! Wat ons verkeerd gedoen het, is dit: Ons het, anders as Paulus en Silas te Filippi, nie betyds daarin geslaag om daardie geeste, wat in die pad

van die Evangelie staan, te identifiseer nie. Ons het daardie geeste óf aanvaar as onskuldig en goedaardig, óf ons het 'n **modus vivendi** gevind om met hulle oor die weg te kom, óf ons het hulle verdoesels en geïgnoreer. In ons ywer om veral geen aanstoot te gee nie, en in ons vrees om nie vir eg aangesien te word nie, en uit vrees vir onpopulêrheid, het ons te lank teenoor hierdie geeste geswyg en hulle hul gang laat gaan, hulle toegelaat om die lewens van mense te beheers en te verwoes. Die gees wat waarsê, daardie gees wat meen om die wysheid en kennis in pag te hê, wat daarop aanspraak maak dat hy altyd en alwetend is en die toekoms van mense vir hulle kan bepaal en presies uitstippel, daardie gees wat hom by tyd en wyle as 'n leuengees openbaar en dwars in die weg van die waarheid van Gods Woord stelling inneem, aan dié gees het ons ons toekoms toevertrou en ons vertrouwe geskenk. 'n Ander gees, die gees wat verdeel en skei wat God saamgevoeg het, wat uitmekaarskeur diegene wat bymekaar hoort, dié gees wat hom lynreg stel teen die werk van die Heilige Gees, dié gees het ons binne die Kerk vertroetel en dit die grondslag van ons sogenaamde kerklike beleid gemaak. **Hier lê óns skuld: ons het nagelaat om hierdie anti-evangeliese geeste betyds in die naam van Jesus Christus te besweer. Daarom het daar 'n einde gekom aan die blye**

lied in die lewe van baie Christene, daarom het daar 'n bitterheid en 'n venynige giftigheid hul intrek in die harte van vele geneem.

TYD VAN AFSONDERING

Wie weet, miskien kom daar 'n tyd, en daardie tyd lyk nie meer te ver nie, dat God sy getuies as verworpenes wil afsonder uit die rumoer om hulle so die geleentheid te gee om die lied van die evangeliese geloof te sing sodat die gevangenes na hulle kan luister? Die tyd is besig om aan te breek dat diegene wat hierdie anti-evangeliese geeste identifiseer en gaan besweer hulle in afsondering as uitgeworpenes sal bevind.

Mag God gee dat diegene wat daarvoor geroep is en sal word, so sal sing dat die medegevangenes iets het om na te luister, dat dit 'n triomflied sal wees, dat dit 'n lied van geloof en van hoop en van liefde sal wees, waardeur alle deure sal oopgaan, alle boeie sal losraak en waardeur alle ingekerkerdes, verkrampde gevangenes en eensame geboeides vryheid sal ontvang en alle desperate bewaarders behoudenis sal ontvang. Dan sal die triomflied van die verworpenes sin en betekenis hê, want dit sal 'n loflied wees op die oorwinning van Jesus Christus oor die magte en geeste van hierdie wêreld, 'n lied ter ere van Hom aan wie alle mag in die hemel en op die aarde gegee is.

BEGGAR MY NEIGHBOUR

THE REV. JAMES E. MOULDER

About fifteen thousand people died of hunger today. About ten thousand of them were children. More or less the same number died yesterday and tomorrow it will be the same because everyday this number of people die of starvation.

What makes this scandalous state of affairs not merely more scandalous still but one of the most explosive features of the present international scene is that very few, if any, of these emaciated corpses have palefaces. Very few, if any, Australasians, East or West Europeans, North Americans or so-called "white" South Africans die of starvation. The vast bulk of the malnourished and/or starving men, women and children are what we palefaces call "non-white". What's worse, almost all the world's illiterates and those who do not have

pensions and sick benefits are "non-whites".

But "non-whites" are not non-humans. Like palefaced people, they die if they do not eat; are open to exploitation if they are ignorant and suffer indignities if they have no real part in determining the political policies which regiment their lives. Moreover they become angry and resentful when food, knowledge and political rights are withheld from them — which is further proof that they are as human as anyone else.

These facts formed part of the

framework of the 1967 Methodist Laymen's Missionary Movement Conference at Swanwick. The other part was the Gospel of Jesus. And our aim was to understand what consequences follow from the decision to take both these facts and Jesus' Gospel seriously. What did we learn? I can only answer for myself and do so via reporting and reflecting on two of the lectures.

SELF-SUFFICIENCY IS INSUFFICIENCY

The President of the Methodist Conference, the Revd. Douglas W. Thompson, opened our explorations by contrasting the present state of food production in the U.K. with the state of affairs which obtained

there before World War II and which presently exists in the Third World (roughly the non-capitalist, non-communist worlds of Africa, Asia and South America). Before that war all but a few of Britain's people had insufficient food for at least part of each year, usually the winter months. This happened, in the main, because of large inequalities in wealth and the fact that most of what was consumed was imported. Both these unsatisfactory positions are now being overcome via a revolution in food production techniques operating within the framework of "Welfare State" legislation.

The revolution in food production has come about through the marriage of **industry** (the tractor and other mechanical devices) and **chemistry** (fertilisers and synthetic food-stuffs) to agriculture. The success of this union is reflected in the fact that during 1964 the U.K. produced 52% of the food its people consumed — the highest food production increase anywhere since the War. And these developments have gone hand-in-hand with an increasing acceptance of taxation as a mechanism for adjusting inequalities of wealth and ensuring less unequal nutritional, educational and other facilities for the British people.

These developments and reforms are however only partly responsible for the elimination of hunger and other socio-economic injustice. The other and harder lesson that is being learned is that all attempts to be self-sufficiently independent of other nations are, both in economic and more personal terms, insufficient and inefficient. In other words: the U.K. is discovering the non-mythical or secular socio-economic and political truth imbedded in the Christ-myth of the dying seed and body which lives again (John 12:20-26).

Turning to the problems of the hungry Third World, Thompson underlined that there is no significance whatever in the fact that pale-faced British people have overcome some of the technological, socio-economic and political-ideological barriers which create hunger and injustice. Other countries (both capitalist and communist) have made similar progress because the techniques employed depend for their success on the way the world is structured; the way it has been created by God. Or, as I would

prefer to put it, it is because God is the structure or ground of the universe that the same techniques have universal application. Thus the industrial, chemical and agricultural technologies as well as the socio-economic and political conditions which create a more equitable and human standard of life are the same for all men everywhere; for pale-faces and darkfaces, in South Africa as much as elsewhere — despite the idiotic denials and schizophrenic illusions of the **apartheid** propaganda machine to the contrary!

But this being the case, the facts with which I began are not only scandalous but sinister. Not only the ignorance, complacency and self-interest of the Third World but also that of the capitalist and communist blocs constitute a largely unintentional but no less evil and effective barrier to world peace. And it is here that we who are trying to take Jesus seriously have to work hard to discover what he was on about. In other, blunter and stronger words than Thompson used: Jesus **didn't** sweat blood because he had a bee in his bonnet about petting, adultery, non-marital intercourse, drinking, gambling, dancing and swearing but because he exposed his contemporaries' ignorance, disturbed their complacency and challenged their limited self-interest on the question of Jewish-Roman political relations.

MINI-SACRIFICES

The other lecture was given by Mr. T. George Thomas, M.P., Minister of State, Commonwealth Office and Ex Vice-President of the Methodist Conference. He discussed Britain's responsibility for contributing to the elimination of world hunger and illiteracy and some of the problems this created. Unfortunately his argument does not make for good reporting consisting as it did of a large amount of statistics. But the gist of what he was getting at can be drawn together in some figures and an unresolved problem. The figures reflect something of the U.K. Government's aid programme, mainly to African and Asian Commonwealth countries:

(1) Aid given in the form of grants, technical assistance and long-term (up to 25 years) interest free loans:
 1965-66 R410 million (£205 mil.)
 1966-67 R450 million (£225 mil.)
 1967-68 R410 million (£205 mil.)

(2) 550 Commonwealth Teachers' Scholarships per annum.

(3) Aid given via the Overseas Development Mission which places skilled personnel (mainly teachers) in the developing countries for contracted periods during which nationals are training to occupy these posts. In Africa alone there are about 18,400 such persons who, amongst other things, are maintaining the Nigerian and Kenyan educational services while nationals are being trained to do so.

But more instructive than the Minister's statistics was his attitude to them. He was dissatisfied because the figures indicate that these efforts are not adequate and do not meet the need which exists. Furthermore they are handicapped by Britain's limited resources and her balance of payments problems — presently exemplified in the reduction of aid by R40 million (£20 million) because of the "freeze" and the decision to increase foreign students' fees.

Here it is also important to emphasise a fact on which we pale-faced South Africans ought to reflect — namely, that this aid is paid for by taxing U.K. citizens. And this while there are still many British workers who are regarded as not sufficiently well paid; many old people who require further national assistance; insufficient houses for lower income groups; and, while the Government has about 2 thousand teachers in Nigeria alone, the U.K. Teachers' Association is pressing hard for increased salaries and smaller classes.

But enough of what Britain is doing and finding she cannot do because of her limited resources. Also, let's skip some of the more basic dimensions of the problem of chronic hunger and illiteracy (but compare **Rich Man, Poor Man . . . ?** in **Pro Veritate** for April/May, 1967). What significance has all this for South Africans, especially pale-faced ones? Three answers suggest themselves:

(1) What sticks out like a sore thumb is that there will be no end to hunger and illiteracy until International structures and funds have been developed for this purpose. One way in which South African and other Christians can contribute towards such structures and funds is to take seriously a suggestion made at the 1966 World Conference on Church and Society — namely, that we put pressure on our

respective governments to tax us and everyone else whose income is above the poverty datum line for our part of the world for a percentage based amount which will be used to eliminate hunger, illiteracy and disease.

(2) A more immediate contribution we can make to these problems is to begin at our doorstep and improve the social services, wages and educational facilities of our fellow "non-whites". The money for this will, of course, have to come via a taxation policy which aims at equalizing the socio-economic position of "non-whites" and "whites" and will require the latter to be less selfish. And although there is no intelligent reason why this adjustment must be made within the apartheid framework, I hasten to add (for the sake of those who are still afflicted by this form of lunacy) that **there is also no reason why such a policy should not be followed within that framework.** In fact, if "equal" means what the dictionary says it does, then I would have thought that a policy of "separate but equal development" demands some such scheme for equalizing the social services, wages and educational facilities of "white" and "non-white" South Africans. And if "separate but equal development" does not entail at least some such

scheme then apartheid is not only an idiotic policy but an immoral and uncivilised one.

(3) But the world does not end at the Limpopo. Fortunately, even some members of the Government are beginning to discover this and it is to be hoped that soon South Africa will contribute tangibly to at least the development of Central and East Africa. Surely politicians who insist (on I know not what evidence) that our nation operates on "Western, Christian and Civilized" principles are at least committed to some sort of full-scale **Peace Corps or Voluntary Service Overseas** programme as well as other forms of aid?

THE CHURCHES' MITE?

Listening to the President of the Conference and to the Minister of State I could not help reflecting that Methodists in the U.K. are basically as willing to make tangible and sacrificial contributions towards resolving world hunger and illiteracy as are Methodists and other Christians in South Africa. One of our duties is, without doubt, that of moulding public opinion and trying to bring the few shreds of influence which we still have left to bear on our respective governments. But it never seems to occur to us that the various denominations throughout the world have

large material resources which could be used for the elimination of hunger and illiteracy.

To say nothing of its various investments and assets, during the 1966 financial year the Methodist Church of South Africa alone collected R1,432,360 (£716,180). The bulk of this was **wasted** on buildings and ministerial stipends; and so were the amounts raised by other denominations both inside and outside South Africa. And to make this sort of situation even more ludicrous and to further undermine the last scraps of integrity which Christians have, the Pope recently called on governments to establish an international fund for the elimination of hunger without indicating what contribution, if any, the Vatican would make!

Until we Christians cease this kind of religious titillation of ourselves and release our material resources for the world's welfare we have no right to expect anyone to take our babblings about being "servants of a Servant" seriously. In fact, in the light of our determination to waste money on ourselves we must regard the cold shoulder men give us as a sign of the continuing influence of Jesus and moral insight on their part — only the blind are so handicapped that they end up following the blind!

DIE KERK BUIITE SUID-AFRIKA

— PROF. B. B. KEET

KERKVERENIGING NIE UITSLUITEND „LIBERAAL" NIE

Dr. Howard G. Hageman, pastor van die Reformed Church, Newark, V.S.A., wat by ons geen onbekende is nie (hy het enige jare gelede ons land besoek en treffende boodskappe gelever) skryf in die „Church Herald", orgaan van die Reformed Church in Amerika, dat, ondanks die populêre opvatting dat die beweging tot kerkvereniging alleen van „liberale" kerke uitgaan, dit nie hul eksklusiewe terrein is nie.

Die indruk word dikwels, soms onbewus, gewek dat die hereniging van kerke die besigheid is van mense met 'n benewelde teologiese uitkyk wat êrens links van die Christelike geloof lewe. Beweer word dat konserwatiewe Christene besorg is oor geestelike eenheid wat van baie meer belang is as „organiese eenheid". 'n Sodanige populêre karakterisering is egter nie waar nie. In Amerika het daar in die laaste jare verskeie samesmel-

tinge van konserwatiewe kerke plaasgevind, waarvan weinig notisie gencem is, omdat hulle kleiner groepe was en nie tot die groot gemeenskappe behoort het, wat al die publisiteit kry nie. Hy noem die hereniging van die Evangelies Presbiteriaanse Kerk en 'n deel van die Hervormde Presbiteriaanse Kerk; die latere vereniging van die Wesleyaanse Metodiste en die Pilgrim Holiness Kerke; en die vroeëre vereniging van die Wesleyaanse

Metodiste-kerk met die Hervormde Baptiste-kerk. Hierdeur wil hy nie te kenne gee dat, omdat hulle dit gedoen het, alle organiese unies reg is nie. Wat hy wil sê, is dat ons nie selfvoldaan kan beweer nie: „Ons het geestelike eenheid", en dan terugstaan en sê: „Ons het alle geregtigheid vervul". Eenheid van gees is pragtig, maar as ons daarmee klaar is, moet ons nog die vraag na een liggaam beantwoord. Dr. Howard Hageman deel dan mee dat die Reformed Church in Amerika vereniging met die Presbyterian Church in the U.S. (Southern) op die oomblik beplan. Die twee denominasies sal hul jaarlikse algemene vergaderinge gelyktydig hou in dieselfde stad om so die vereniging te bespoedig.

DIE EVANGELIESE KERKE IN DUITSLAND (Oos en Wes) gaan voort om sy eenheid te bely ten spyte van alle poginge om dit in twee te verdeel. Ondanks hierdie fundamentele standpunt word dit, volgens 'n verslag wat aan die Raad van die Evangeliese Kerk voorgelê word, almeer onmoontlik vir lede van die Sinode in Oos- en Wes-Duitsland om op een plek te vergader. Ter elfder ure het die lede van die Oostelike deel noodgedwonge die plek van byeenkoms verander van Berlin-Weissensee in Oos-Duitsland, waar hulle oorspronklik sou vergader, na Fürstenwalde in Wes-Berlyn, omdat die D.D.R. (Duitse Demokratiese Republiek) eersgenoemde belet het. 'n Leidende woordvoerder van die Oos-Duitse Demokratiese Party het onlangs verklaar dat die Evangeliese Kerk in Duitsland aandrang op eenheid in die kerke net om teen die Republiek 'n koue oorlog te voer. Die verskerpte houding teenoor die regering het ook geblyk uit die afwysende antwoord wat hy gegee het op 'n voorstel van Biskop Kurt Scharf, leier van die E.K.D. (Evangeliese Kerk in Duitsland). Hy het nl. die gewilligheid van die Kerk te kenne gegee om kontakte met die regering te hernu, en officieel ooreenkomste aan te gaan in verband

met vraagstukke wat albei partye raak. Vrae soos die van godsdienstvryheid, die interpretasie van betrokke artikels in die Konstitusie en wat hulle gedrag onder die omstandighede moet wees, het hy bedoel. Hulle wou met die staat onderhandel omdat dit die **de facto** outoriteit is. Die koue antwoord wat ontvang is, het gelui dat die regering nie geïnteresseerd was in 'n erkenning van sy gesag deur die kerk nie. Intussen lyk dit of Scharf se houding deur die kerk as te toegeeflik beskou word, en dat hy in 'n volgende verkiesing plek sal moet maak vir iemand anders.

PROTESTANTSE KERK IN DACHAU WORD INGEWY

Op Sondag 30 April is die Protestantse Kerk ingewy wat in die voormalige Duitse konsentrasiekamp gebou is, tot die boukoste waarvan in Nederland kerke 12,000 gulde bygedra het. Die kerk in Dachau dra die naam van „Versoeningskerk” en die inwyding het geskied onder leiding van die Evangeliese Kerk, wat die grootste deel van die koste gedra het. Dachau is gekies omdat dit die oudste konsentrasiekamp uit die Nasionaal-sosialistiese periode is. Nederland het nog 'n geskenk aangebied, 'n groot bronsbeeld van die Amster-

damse beeldhouer, C. Kneulman, wat die Bybelverhaal van Daniël en die drie jongelinge in die vuuroond voorstel. In verband met die inwyding is 'n tog na Dachau georganiseer van oudgevangenes en nabestaandes van slagoffers, terwyl die verrigtinge ook op televisie uitgesaai is.

BISKOP DIBELIUS OORLEDE

Biskop Otto Dibelius van Berlin-Brandenburg, wat 'n lang tyd biskop van die Evangeliese Kerk was en die grootste deel van sy lewe gegee het aan die verdediging van sy kerk, insonderheid teen die aanslae van Hitler wat die kerk vir sy eie ideologie wou inspan, is onlangs oorlede. Van 1932-1945 het hy teen Hitler geveg, en van 1945 tot sy dood verlede maand teen die kommuniste in dele van Duitsland en Berlyn. Toe hy vir die Oos-Duitsers 'n vorm van verzet aanbeveel het, en in Berlyn gepreek het ondanks 'n verbod, het sommige van sy vriende gemeen dat hy te ver gaan. Nogtans het hy nie enigszins hatelik opgetree nie. Hy het eenmaal 'n vergadering in Wes-Berlyn vermaan om selfs die Vopos (kommunistiese polisie) as broeders te bejeën en met 'n glimlag te begroet. Van 1954-1961 was hy een van die presidente van die Wêreldraad van Kerke.

THE WORLD CONFERENCE ON CHURCH AND SOCIETY (GENEVA 1966) UNDER THE SPOTLIGHT

(Summary of the Afrikaans article "Vervolg van Mindolo-Gruwelkroniek" by B. Engelbrecht, *Pro Veritate*, May, 1967.)

The official mouthpiece of the Dutch Reformed Church (N.G. Kerk) *Die Kerkbode* obviously displays either an incomprehensible ignorance or an intentional maliciousness towards the World Conference on Church and Society which was held in Geneva in July, 1966.

The official report of this conference is discussed in an Editorial dated 19th April, 1967. The Editorial carries the heading "Church and Revolution". The fact that this particular heading was chosen is not without meaning when considered in the light of the smear campaign conducted by certain circles within the Afrikaans Churches against the World Council of Churches.

It is very noticeable that *Die Kerkbode* comes with this Editorial at a time when the attention of the general public

and particularly of the churches is sharply focussed on the libel case against Dr. A. D. Pont, the Hervormde Kerk's professor of Church History, for slanderous statements which he made in *Die Hervormer* against Professor A. S. Geyser and the Rev. C. F. B. Naudé, *inter alia* because they attended a conference held at Mindolo under the aegis of the World Council of Churches. According to Prof. Pont, this conference was inspired by Communism and Professor Geyser and the Rev. Naudé attended it with the purpose of conspiring with Pan-Africanists to conquer South Africa by force for the black man.

"Church and Revolution" in *Die Kerkbode* was written in almost the same spirit as Professor Pont's articles. The Editorial alleges that dynamic action and social revolution were the key words of the conference, and suggests that a call went out from the conference for dynamic action to bring about a world-wide social and economic revolution. The alleged aim of the Conference was to make the churches in the world serve this revolution. The conference allegedly insisted upon the transference of capital from the rich countries to the poor and that an international budget and international tax should be introduced to fulfil the ideal of one world economy and one world

community. In pursuance of Alice Widener's ideas, *Die Kerkbode* then argues, that this can only be effected in a system of world socialism in which Marxist doctrine dominates and reaches the conclusion, by way of question and suggestion, that the World Conference aimed at making the churches the handmaidens of a Communist world dictatorship who had to undertake the work of persuasion in this cause.

With a claim to speaking the truth *Die Kerkbode* then states: "In fact, this Conference advocates 'church participation in political education' so that a political aim towards a world economy and a world community can be engendered and national sovereignty can be diminished". This is not the whole story, however. This Conference, according to *Die Kerkbode*, "virtually gave Christians licence" "towards violence and breach of the law". The revolutionary is given an "ecclesiastical mandate" to commit any form of sabotage as intentional breach of the law.

* * *

The discussion of this Editorial of *Die Kerkbode* in our previous issue was a modest attempt to correct monstrous misrepresentations ascribable either to ignorance or malice or both. If the official report is compared with *Die*

Kerkbode's commentary on it, we come to the following conclusions.

1. *Die Kerkbode* quotes from the report without giving page references and even links together phrases from sentences appearing on different pages and in different contexts in order to bring about a totally new meaning which does not appear in the report at all and which thus distorts the intention of the conference. In the report we read (p. 88). "The purpose of church participation in political education is to produce the political will for a world economic and social order compatible with Christian conscience". *Die Kerkbode* makes of the last four words (my italics): "and so that national sovereignty can be diminished". The words "A diminution of national sovereignty" appear on the following page in a completely different context.

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2. *Die Kerkbode* makes no distinction between the lines of thought which unfold in the different reports and decisions of the conference and treats everything which appears in the official report as decisions of the conference.

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3. The Editorial of *Die Kerkbode* apparently wishes to give the impression that the World Conference in Geneva set itself the goal of urging Christians to work for a world-wide social and economic revolution and thus to serve the Communist ideology. This is false of course. Even more surprising is the fact that *Die Kerkbode* can ascribe such a motive to the conference (and to what is really meant: the World Council of Churches) knowing that the word "Communist" encompasses for the South African reader the association and expression of the most gruesome of all conceivable evils. The truth concerning the aim and object of the conference can be found in the report, however: "The conference was charged with advising the Churches and the WCC on their ministry in a world undergoing revolutionary social change" (p. 6). But this did not deter *Die Kerkbode* from charging the conference with the worst evil its readers could imagine.

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4. Although the conference gave serious thought to a more equitable division of the riches belonging to God (not only wealth but also of health, education, security, housing and opportunity) amongst all people (in the sense of individuals and nations) in the whole world, the concept "that there should be a transfer of capital from the rich countries to the poor" did not originate at the conference. The conference based its discussions on the fact that this was already taking place. "One hopeful sign of our times is the growing sense of international responsibility for assisting in the development of the economically less advanced nations" (p. 75). In one of the reports a plea was made for international co-operation in this field so that assistance with a view to long term advantages for the less developed countries may take place. The possibility that eventually this may lead to an 'international budget' and 'international taxation' was mentioned. And the conference made no further decision than

to ask the WCC "to undertake an on-going professional and technical study on this issue" (p. 92).

* * *

5. The suggestion that the conference intended to mislead the churches by in fact making them serve a Communist world dictatorship is completely false. It blasphemes against the truth that this conference, in the confession of the Lordship of Jesus and the truth that God is the Creator and Redeemer of the whole world, sought the highest standard for concrete obedience in the love of God and the neighbour. This did not direct the conference's thoughts towards any particular economic system (which according to *Die Kerkbode* was Marxism) but in the direction of the Biblical teaching of "the human". "The Christian understanding of the human derives from the belief that Jesus Christ is the disclosure to us of both true God and true man. In him we see most clearly what it means to say that man is made in the image of God, that in his dealing with the material world the Christian is called to express the Lordship of Christ, and to do so with a sense of his solidarity with all men" (p. 52). The conference asked the WCC to ascertain by continued study whether this supposition is theologically correct (p. 90). Concerning economic systems, the report states exactly the opposite to what *Die Kerkbode* tries to suggest: "There is no kind of economic system within which the Christian Church is not found, and on the whole Christians tend to support the kind of society in which they live. This fact should not occasion surprise: what is surprising is that Christians have so often argued that only one economic system is Christian . . . The role of Christians is to be critical participants in the societies in which they find themselves" (p. 57).

* * *

6. From the following words which appear in the report (p. 86) *Die Kerkbode* deduces that the aims of the conference could be reached only through violence and bloodshed and that it did not shrink from saying so in so many words: "The fundamental restructuring of the world economy necessarily implies temporary dislocation and possible suffering for a large number of people. The first task of the churches in this situation is to speak to the government or power structure responsible and to insist that prior measures be taken to prevent or at least minimize and alleviate the difficulties which individuals and groups may have to face. Only after every preventive measure has been taken should the Church prepare people to accept and overcome these problems and impart the vision of a wider world order for which restructuring is a necessary preliminary. This requires that the Church present an ethic of altruism and justice which will make these measures intelligible". Of this *Die Kerkbode* says: "A person may well ask how many millions of people will have to be uprooted, ruined, enslaved and even killed in the execution of such an 'ecclesiastical' economic scheme in order to redistribute the riches of the countries . . . It seems as if this plan may contain the possibility of the greatest disruption, suffering

and loss of life for men. And then it will bear the stamp of the churches who 'must help society to understand and to accept the price of the world wide economic development'."

A comparison between what appears in the report and what *Die Kerkbode* says about it reveals the abominable misrepresentation which the latter tries to give of the conference and makes any further comment superfluous. (Compare for instance, "an ethic of altruism and justice" with the thought that the churches should assist in preparing people to understand and accept the "price" of an "ecclesiastical economic scheme" by which "millions of people will have to be uprooted, ruined, enslaved and even killed"). It may be of interest to point out here that something similar is also often stated by responsible authorities of the South African policy of separate development of the races, of which *Die Kerkbode* is a champion and even an ecclesiastical mouthpiece, that its implementation "necessarily implies temporary dislocation and possible suffering for a large number of people". The truth of this has been proved again and again.

* * *

7. *Die Kerkbode* in its Editorial sinks to its lowest level when it asserts that the World Conference practically gave Christians a charter for violence and the breach of law. In vindication of this *Die Kerkbode* refers to the following words appearing in the report: "In many cases where legislation violates an acceptable constitution, and no speedy means of legal relief are available, the Christian may be called to civil disobedience (sit down strikes, passive disobedience or deliberate violation of laws)" (p. 115).

In a most brutal fashion *Die Kerkbode* simply negates the following:

(i) This statement (like most of those which it attacks) was not a decision of the conference. The only statement that appears among the decisions concerning the possibility of a permissible breach of the law by Christians is: "When the law represents arbitrary state power, men may on occasion have a right and duty to disobey it" (p. 118).

(ii) This statement does not appear at all in that section of the report which deals with the ethical problem of violence, but in a section which deals with "constitutional and extra constitutional methods of political action" and as one of "especially difficult issues" (p. 114).

(iii) In the section which deals with "violence and non-violence" strong statements against any form of violence appear. For instance: "Even in the most adverse circumstances the Christian should distinguish himself in his persistent challenge of evil through non-violent means" (p. 115). While *Die Kerkbode* presents everything in the reports as decisions of the Conference it seems somewhat strange that this statement is overlooked.

(iv) The Conference decided to recommend for further study the following issues, *inter alia*

97.c) The Theology of law; the foundations of law and the state, and criteria for just law and political organisation (p. 118).

100.f) A theological understanding of:

(a) revolution and especially the ethics of violent action; (b) non-violence and the new experiences of non-violent revolution; (c) the rights of conscientious objectors to military service (p. 119).

* * *

In this distorted introduction of the report of the World Conference for the benefit of its South African readers, *Die Kerkbode* did a great disservice to the cause of Christendom. One of the objections to the Conference it raises, viz. that it advocates a gospel which does

not merely require a complete change of heart, reveals that it bases its argument on the supposition that the gospel has nothing to say to us concerning our life in the political, social and economic spheres. The "false dichotomy" against which the report warns, is probably not, from *Die Kerkbode's* point of view, a basic denial of the Lordship of Jesus in the world. While *Die Kerkbode* still at least accepts a change of heart as moral implication of the gospel, one wishes to express the hope that *this* very change will happen to it before it again

fills its editorial columns with anything that has any connection with the WCC. A heart changed by the gospel of Jesus should not produce such a false judgment as constituted by the Editorial "Church and Revolution".

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The Official Report of the World Conference is heartily recommended to readers for their attention. It can be obtained from the office of the Christian Institute (408 Dunwell, 35 Jorissen Street, Braamfontein, Johannesburg), at 80 cents per copy.

FAMILY DAY, MONDAY, JULY 10th

F. J. van Wyk

This year Monday, July 10th, will be observed as Family Day in South Africa. All churches have been requested to pray for families on the preceding Sunday, July 9th, and many ministers will, no doubt, refer to aspects of family life in their sermons.

The preservation of family life is a matter of common concern to all the churches and Christians in our land and it is hoped, therefore, that there will be general support for the various proposals, plans and suggestions made to focus attention on family life on the two days.

ALL-DAY VIGILS OF SILENT PRAYER

On the Witwatersrand the newly created Section of Home and Family Life of the Witwatersrand Christian Council will collaborate with the Witwatersrand Regional Committee of the Christian Institute of Southern Africa in arranging Ecumenical All-Day Vigils of Silent Prayer on Monday, July 10th. Several local parishes and congregations have offered their churches for this purpose and it is hoped that similar vigils will be held in many churches throughout South Africa. The Section of Home and Family Life invites churches which are not members of the Christian Council of South Africa, e.g. the Roman Catholic Church, the Dutch Reformed Churches and others, to cooperate in this undertaking.

SPECIAL PRAYERS

Special suggested prayers for families have been printed — a slightly amended version of the prayers prepared by Christians in

Cape Town and approved by the Christian Council of South Africa, but also including part of St. Francis' well-known prayer, "Lord, make me an instrument of thy peace . . ." Small quantities of these are available from the Christian Institute's Head Office (408 Dunwell, 35 Jorissen Street, Braamfontein, Johannesburg).

DATA ON FAMILY LIFE IN SOUTH AFRICA

In addition, a brief information sheet giving some interesting statistics on family life in South Africa has also been prepared. The sheet contains data on some of the causes of the break-up of family life, e.g. divorce, and the migratory labour system, including influx control.

DIVORCE

It is disturbing to note that in 1960 there was one divorce for every 6.6 marriages in South Africa and that in some urban areas the rate is now given as one divorce for every three marriages among the white population. In 1960 no less than 5,712 children were involved in homes broken up by divorces. It is also interesting to note that in 1960 80.12% of the divorces occurred in cities, 15.91% in towns and 2.43% in rural areas. Marriages in church appear to be more stable than those contracted in our civil courts, as in 1960 the percentage of divorces in the case of marriages contracted in the civil courts was 62.3% while the percentage was 37.7% in the case of marriages in church.

MIGRATORY LABOUR

It will be recalled that the Cape Synod of the Dutch Reformed Church (N.G. Kerk) in October, 1965 condemned this system and drew attention to the disruption it was causing in numerous South African homes. The Report prepared by the Cape Synod and the conclusions arrived at in the Report were accepted by the General Synod of the D.R.C. in 1966.

It is disturbing to note that an inevitable consequence of the policy of separate development will be the steady increase of the number of migrant labourers. According to estimates made in 1960 by Dr. H. J. van Eck and Mr. G. S. J. Kuschke, Directors of the Industrial Development Corporation, the numbers will increase from 533,000 in 1965, to 610,000 in 1970 and 1,013,000 by 1990. Of the latter, 723,000 will be men and 290,000 women.

African migrant labourers are mostly male, many of them married, and they leave their families in the homelands while they go to work in the "white" areas, often for periods of nine months and longer. The greatest disadvantage of this system is, therefore, the break-up of home and family life and this should be a prime concern of all Christians.

INFLUX CONTROL

This is the control exercised over the influx of Africans into the urban areas mainly in terms of the Urban Areas Act. Personal identity documents constitute an important part of the machinery of implementing this control. It is most disturb-

ing to note that during the first half of 1966 no less than 20,835 men and 588 women were arrested on the Witwatersrand for non-possession of these documents, leading to no less than 17,589 convictions, while during the same period 15,995 men and 973 women were arrested for being in the prescribed area of the Witwatersrand for more than 72

hours without permission. During 1965 39,974 men and 11,527 women were endorsed out of the Witwatersrand while no less than 85,211 men and 6,444 women were **admitted** to the Witwatersrand! It is certainly not difficult to visualise the disruption and pain caused by this state of affairs in the homes of every one of these persons. All

Christians are asked to ponder with compassion on this truth. (The figures quoted are taken from Hansard, 12th August, 1966, Col. 628).

This is some of the information given in the sheet which has been prepared for Family Day, and readers will agree that there is much to pray for and to confess at the Prayer Vigils on that day!

CONFESSION AND WITNESS

Submitted to the Most Venerable General Commission of the Ned. Herv. Kerk van Afrika to account for my decision to resign from the ministry in the Church.

(1) I believe and confess one, single veritable God to whom all honour, glory, praise and trust and obedience are due, and from whom one can and may expect only everything that is good.

That He is our God and ordered us in his first commandment that man should have no other gods before his countenance means that He is the One and Only in whom we may have faith and confidence. Anyone else, however powerful and exalted, and anything else, however noble and good and beautiful in which one places one's trust, becomes an idol when a man sets higher store by its authority or value than by the authority or value of God.

"It is trust and faith of the heart alone which make both God and idol.

"If faith and trust are right, then our God is the True One too, just as the true God does not exist for us if our trust is insincere and untrue" (Luther).

That for which man lays bare his heart and to which he entrusts himself is his real god.

In numerous sermons, ecclesiastical pronouncements, writings and decisions the officers of the Commission of the General Assembly of the Ned. Herv. Kerk van Afrika have given proof that they believe that the continued existence of this Church depends upon and is tied to the present social order in South Africa, and that any other social order would entail the downfall of the Church.

In as much as the officers and the Commission of the General Assembly make the existence and the continuation of the Church dependent upon the present form of society, they are making an idol of it and the disappointment at, but also the punishment of idolatry must ineluctably follow. Therefore I call upon the official leadership of the Church to convert themselves to the true God and to renounce their faith and confidence in any political or social policy or specific form of civilization, or a particular racial viewpoint, and thus to assure the salvation and continuation of the Church.

* * *

(2) I believe and confess one Lord Jesus Christ, the King of kings and the Lord of lords.

To Him alone absolute obedience is due. His authority and dominion demand the highest loyalty from the Church.

There are numerous indications in the Ned. Herv. Kerk that many are allowing their heavenly citizenship and eternal riches to be supplanted by their earthly citizenship and the supposed riches it encompasses. Thereby the authority and dominion of Jesus Christ are denied.

A week after the General Synod of the NEDERDUITSCH HERVORMDE KERK VAN AFRIKA, on Friday, 12th May, 1967, the Rev. J. A. Swanepoel, at a special church meeting of the Witpoortjie congregation, handed in his resignation as a minister. On the 15th May, 1967, he appeared before the Moderamen of the Commission of his Church's Synod in connection with the reasons for his resignation. He was then given time until the 19th May, 1967, to reconsider his resignation. The article which follows is a translation of the one which Mr. Swanepoel presented to the Commission and in which he maintained his stand.

Although Mr. Swanepoel is not a member of the Christian Institute, the Institute is willing to accept orders for the printed copy of the article in Afrikaans and for off-prints of the English translation. Copies will be supplied free of charge but as Mr. Swanepoel is himself paying for the printing and distribution costs, he would be grateful for any contribution towards the expenses. Copies could be ordered through the Institute, 408 Dunwell, 35 Jorissen Street, Braamfontein, Johannesburg. Cheques or postal orders should be made payable to Mr. J. A. Swanepoel.

Too often does the Church acclaim ministers of the Word serving up the current political policy in their preaching and their consequent compromising of the Church, rather than that they should explain Holy Scripture properly and issue a call for true faith in God

(Vide Art. 29 of the Netherlands Confession on the true and the false church). The danger of a denial of Jesus Christ has thereby become a real one.

Together with the fathers I confess that the true Church is recognisable by its recognition of Jesus Christ as its only Head.

I declare to many in the Church and all the inhabitants and authorities in the Republic of South Africa and before the world that all of us must recognise and respect the absolute dominion of Jesus Christ and must prayerfully and humbly subject ourselves to Him.

Where this does not happen, the Church is no longer Church but merely an association which can lay no claim to being the bearer of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

* * *

(3) I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Lifegiver who issues from the Father and the Son, who leads us in all truth and works true faith in our hearts through his recreative power, and who convinces us of sin, justice and judgment, whereby we are brought to a deep realisation of our sin and guilt and which effect in us the rebirth and the true and continuing conversion.

The persistently negative attitude and approach, especially as evidenced by its preaching concerning admission of guilt and realisation of guilt and conversion, have contributed largely to the decadence which currently threatens the Ned. Herv. Kerk. It is my sincere conviction on the strength of Holy Scripture that no one needs conversion more urgently than the Church itself.

* * *

(4) Together with the Church everywhere and at all times I confess and give witness that Holy Scripture as the Word of God is the highest authority for the faithful and the only trustworthy norm for faith, and the source from which man can learn to know and love God.

The Ned. Herv. Kerk has, in a disquieting fashion and in an increasing measure in recent years, started straying from this principle and guideline of the Reformation. This explains its error in its obstinate vindication of Art. 3 of the Church Law. Persons who give the lead in the Church have in this regard yielded to "the weakness of some", the

rule of custom and the current social order, and have elevated it to an "inviolable" law. The Commission of the General Assembly have even forbidden officers and members of the Church to express their dissent from Art. 3, and that despite this Article's provable variance from Scripture.

The permission for the article to be criticised in church meetings and publications alone, is valueless, for thereby the majority enjoin silence upon those burdened by conscience under the pretext that they might disturb the order, peace and rest in the Church by their dissent.

It furthermore became apparent from various General Assemblies that precedence is given in their decisions to the customs and usages of the Church above the witness of Holy Scripture.

As long as the Church persists in pursuing this direction, it is threatened by calamitous degeneration.

* * *

(5) I declare that Councils and Synods are fallible. No General Assembly can claim that all its decisions are infallibly in accord with the will of God and are therefore absolutely valid. The Ned. Herv. Kerk, to be sure, has not alleged this, but the church leadership has given undeniable proof that it does not tolerate any opposition to the decisions and laws of the Church. This is evident from Art. 14, on censure, which reads: "*Of the vexatious sins which must be censured according to the directions of Art. 12, without any necessity for them to be dealt with in accordance with the regulations for supervision, the most important are . . . opposition to officers and assemblies of the Church.*"

This decision and article constitute an arbitrary denial of the injunctions of Matth. 18:15-17 and make a mockery of Matth. 18:18.

Thereby the church leadership reveals that it takes no account whatsoever of the fact that a Synod may err in its judgment or may even err in those things which are necessary for salvation (Calvin: Institution IV:IX).

I agree with Calvin that a council (synod) which has been convened in the name of Jesus Christ is governed by the Holy Spirit and is led in truth through his grace.

But also that a Synod in which Christ holds no dominion is governed by its own spirit and can therefore only err and lead to error.

Thus some Synods have strayed and can stray from the truth. The General Assembly, moreover, has given proof that it assumes for itself the power to enforce upon its members and officers a compulsion of faith and of conscience. Thereby the Church has forsaken the principles of the reformed Church and has spurned the precious heritage which the fathers gained through struggle, blood and tears.

This is evidenced further by the Church's allowing itself, at the instigation of a few individuals, to be guided in its regulations concerning censure *inter alia* by "the continuous usage of the Church" and "precedents which already exist in the Church and are of the essence".

Hereby the door is opened for human arbitrariness and it constitutes the sanctioning of a heresy hunt of which the

end is unforeseeable and it threatens to transport the Church back to the Rome of the Middle Ages.

* * *

(6) The Church may not lay claim to the right to act as a judge of men's faith. The action against church officers who wish to maintain Scriptural principles in connection with the meaning of the gospel of the crucified Christ for the sanctification of our earthly life is tantamount to an imposition of silence. In an increasing measure, in various fashions, the call to obedience to the commandment of Christ is being eliminated from ecclesiastical discussion. There is enough evidence that a systematic process of fettering the conscience is taking place in the Church. The too often stressed phrase: "We must only preach the crucified Christ" has become a pillow for the flesh (cf. The Doctrinal Rules of Dordrecht, Fifth Section, 12 and "Error" 6) and is an evasion of the full truth of Scripture (cf. Rom. 6:1). Such a treatment of the divine gospel is human arbitrariness, and when it is enforced, the believing conscience is fettered to human inventions. Calvin contends that St. Paul declares that it is not permissible for consciences to be bound to any human laws. (The Articles, Art. 24, Remedy XXIV).

An extremist way of thought concerning political matters which does not originate from the gospel and in the Church of Christ, but which has intruded into it from outside, is being forced on to the congregation of Christ by certain leaders in the Church.

I appeal to the Ned. Herv. Kerk to bethink itself and to set itself free from this earthly tyranny, and itself to relinquish the transference of this coercion to its members.

The decision taken by the General Assembly concerning the magazine "Pro Veritate" is at variance with the reformed principle regarding the majority of Christian man, according to which believers themselves can also read and understand Scripture and themselves adjudge truth. This is a serious and impermissible impairment of Christian freedom.

(NOTE: In my statement to the church council and to the press I erroneously mentioned that also the reading of "Pro Veritate" was prohibited by the General Assembly, since I was under the impression that this formed part of the decision. Herewith I wish to express my regret for the embarrassment thus caused the Church, but must state at the same time that this by no means detracts from the essential objection I have to the decision about "Pro Veritate").

Especially during the last decade it has become apparent that there is a concentration of power in the hands of a small group, viz. the Commission of the General Assembly, the Council of Finance and its Administrator. Such a degeneration into tyranny, against which the formulary for the induction of elders, warns, has become a threat for the Church. The reformed, presbyterial principle of church government is thereby affected in its essence.

* * *

(7) I affirm that the Church has a God-given instruction always to give voice

to the prophetic witness towards the people and the authorities. The prophetic witness of the Ned. Herv. Kerk van Afrika threatens to peter out in silence through an uncritical sanctioning by the Church of present practices. Any neglect of this God-given duty places the Church in a position of profound guilt before God and constitutes a great injustice towards the people and the authorities. As watcher over the people and the authorities, the Church is called to give witness regarding God's demands of righteousness, charity and neighbourly love, and to warn against the sin of abusing power, corruption and denial of men's rights. This witness is rooted in and grows from the belief in and the obedience towards God and the love for Him above all else. This witness is an essential and inseparable part of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is no other gospel than the one given by God to his Church and to the world in Holy Scripture.

As already stated in other writings, I reject the historical "Social Gospel" theology and movement. Similarly I reject the present church leaders' misrepresentation that witness for instance to social justice and the demand for the display of neighbourly love constitute "Social Gospel", advance Communism and are based upon humanistic considerations. In the General Assembly's declaration of policy concerning the "Social Gospel" statements are made which are highly disputable on Scriptural grounds. See, for example, 3 (a) where the (correct) statement that the kingdom of God is an eschatological entity does not take the complete preaching of the New Testament into account, to wit that the coming Kingdom of God has also come in this world. Furthermore, the statement in 2 (c), viz. that the commandment of neighbourly love should not be regarded as "boundless", is not in accordance with Scripture, but directly at variance with it (cf. for example, Lk. 10:25-37; Mt. 7:12; Lw. 6:31; Phil. 2:5). Leading figures in the Church contend that this view clashes with the gospel. It can only be held where men close their ears to the whole truth of the gospel. A church which does not take the full testimony of the prophets and apostles into account has become a sect.

The attitude of the official Church leadership towards this issue flows from the fact that the Church has become enamoured of group selfishness and has become the champion of sinful egoism and the avarice of those in a position of privilege. That is why, when the Church has to give expression to the full prophetic witness, it becomes embarrassed by the earthly riches and man-made security to which it has bound itself in order to ensure its continued existence as church.

The allegation which is often made with so much authority and which is so firmly adhered to in the Ned. Herv. Kerk, viz. that it is not the primary task of the Church to fight for human rights, is misleading. The preaching and observance of the evangelical demand of justice and neighbourly love inescapably includes compassion with the oppressed and repressed fellow-man. Do leaders of the Church make this allegation in obedience to God, or with

ulterior motives? This is the question to which they must answer before God. In this connection I would like to remind them of the finding of Professor Dr. H. P. Wolmarans in his "Kommunisme en die Suid-Afrikaanse Vakunies" ("Communism and the South African Trade Unions"), Voortrekker Press, undated, p. 17: "Another cause of this terrible behaviour of Communism after the revolution of 1917 was the Christian Church itself. Through the conduct of the Czars and the nobility, the Church also more and more fell into the hands of the state, so that not only the state and the nobility were guilty of the oppression of the masses, but also the Church". That preachers abuse Holy Scripture in order to present as "gospel" the unevangelical view which lies at the root of the allegation referred to above, is clear from an analysis of numerous sermons, including the inaugural addresses at various General Assemblies.

Therefore I issue an urgent appeal to the General Assembly seriously to consider and prayerfully to examine the true Gospel in this connection.

* * *

(8) It happens repeatedly these days that church officers who do not pay lip-service to Jerusalem are deliberately and systematically, and under all kinds of pretences, pushed out of the service of the Church. I urgently appeal to the authorities of the Church to arrest this process. I must point out that the occasional legislation in the Church during the past decade stands in close connection with this phenomenon. It does not occur on account of concern for Scripture, Confession and Christian conduct of life, but is designed to hamper an essential part of the evangelical witness. As proof of this, specific reference can be made to the Church's decisions concerning the Christian Institute, the magazine "Pro Veritate" and the whole course of events in connection with the heresy charge laid against Professor A. S. Geysler. In the latter instance the General Commission had to admit, after a court case, that they had found him guilty of heresy on the strength of a "bona fide" misunderstanding and had expelled him from his office. This misunderstanding cost the Church more than R100.000. apart from great consequent perturbation in the congregations — money which could have been valuably employed for the essential task of the Church in a world which experiences a crying need. (Think of the hampering of constructive work in congregations and of the work of Christianisation as a result of a lack of funds).

A further example of this nature is the case of Professor A. van Selms, a world-renowned theologian, who was deposed from office by the Church leadership. In contrast there stands the inconsistent granting of ministerial status to retired ministers who pursue secular careers. It inspires grave disquiet that a church leader could upon occasion remark with regard to erstwhile ministers who, although they became lecturers in theology, had nonetheless been deprived of ministerial status, that the loss this had entailed for the Church was "a blessing in disguise". One is distressed that the Church leadership apparently allows individuals to start making themselves guilty of a subtle, modernised

persecution of faith with the refined technique of suspicion-casting. It is general knowledge that persons who, on the basis of Scripture, express themselves critically with regard to what they judge to be social evils in our country, are branded as traitors to the people, fellow-travellers of Communism, parroters of world opinion, forerunners of the antichrist. In this relentless attack many have shown that they have no respect for the truth.

* * *

(9) I accept and bow before the authority of the Word of Jesus Christ to his disciples and the true believers: "If there is this love among you, then all will know that you are my disciples". (Jn. 13:35).

It has become high time for believers to settle the question whether the lack of mutual love does not constitute a denial of their faith in Jesus, the Christ. There is clear evidence that neighbourly love is being held up to mockery and presented as godless Communism.

Holy Scripture teaches us that everyone who says that he loves God and hates his brother is a liar (I Jn. 4:20).

* * *

(10) Finally I want to testify that I have made all the above statements not with the underlying thought that the Church of Christ can be sinless and perfect. I have not done so in arrogance or the presumption of expecting from the Most Reverend General Commission something to which none of us can attain, but in order to humble myself together with the Church before God. I confess my guilt before God and my complicity with the Church. I furthermore confess with sorrow that I, too, ever so often maintained silence about the witness to which I was called to give expression. My resignation as minister of the Word in the Ned. Herv. Kerk is not an act of dissociating myself from the guilt. I can and dare not, however, identify myself with the clear course of departure from the way of true faith along which the Ned. Herv. Kerk is allowing itself to be led, and which is especially unmistakable in the attitude and decisions of the most recent General Assembly. Thereby the General Assembly has robbed me of the opportunity to confess my own guilt as one called by Christ in solidarity with the Ned. Herv. Kerk, to call others to a confession of guilt and to proclaim the way of forgiveness and life which is revealed in Christ alone. This is what compelled me to come to this grave decision. I do so in the trust and faith that I, miserable man, belong to my faithful Saviour, Jesus Christ, with body and soul, in life and in death, and in the deep conviction of faith that it be done in obedience to Him.

LORD. HAVE MERCY UPON US
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J. A. SWANEPOEL, V.D.M.

Nederduitsch Hervormde Congregation,
Witpoortjie,
Transvaal.
19th May. 1967.

BRIEWE

BESLUIT VAN N.G. SINODE OOR CHRISTELIKE INSTITUUT

MNR. A. J. J. BURGER,

Maric, Pk. Witvlei.

Hoe verder ek u Inleidingsartikel in *Pro Veritate* (15 April) gelees het, hoe meer het my simpatie gegroei met lidmate van die Ned. Geref. Kerk wat aan die Christelike Instituut behoort. Veral aan die einde skets u die probleem van hierdie lidmate raak en eg. Dit gryp diep in 'n mens se hart en Christelike gevoel wanneer jy tot die besef gedwing word dat jy nou moet glo dat iets wat jy as liefhebber van jou kerk nie verwag het en nie wou glo nie, werklikheid geword het.

Die besluit van die Algemene Sinode om die Christelike Instituut as 'n dwaalrigting te veroordeel, was veral skokkend omdat geen bewysgronde daarvoor aangevoer is nie. Daar sou teweens alleen gepraat kon word van 'n nugtere en weloorwoë besluit as hierdie lidmate die geleentheid toegestaan was om hulle saak voor hierdie hoogerwaarde vergadering te stel en te verdedig.

Die indruk is sterk by my gewek dat baie lede van die vergadering op hoorsê gestem het, en ander sonder dat hulle omgegee het wat hulle doen. Ons wat al meerdere kerkvergaderings bygewoon het, weet hoe argeloos besluite soms geneem word. Daarom word daar dikwels nie uitvoering aan gegee nie, of word dit later soms verander of by revisie gekanselleer. Uit ondervinding kan ek praat van hoe bitter groot die onkunde maar alte dikwels is.

As 'n mens sulke krasse aantygings soos hierdie maak, doen jy dit met huiwering. Want 'n mens wil jou kerk wat jy lief het, liever verdedig as beskuldig.

Maar hoe anders moet 'n mens oordeel as so 'n groot en verantwoordelike vergadering mense veroordeel sonder dat hy hulle behoorlik aangehoor en ondersoek het en sonder dat aan elke afgevaardigde die geleentheid gegee is om homself te oortuig dat hy sy stem uitbring teen 'n bewese dwaling wat so-wel vir ons Kerk as vir die Kerk van die Here in die algemeen skadelik is?

Wat 'n mens met nog groter leed moet aanskou, is dat daar manne in die N.G. Kerk is wat blykbaar hierin die leiding neem en haastig is om met lede van die Christelike Instituut wat aan die N.G. Kerk behoort, klaar te speel. Hierin kan ek nie die gesindheid van ons Meester sien nie, wat aan sy dissipels gesê het: „Moet hom nie belet nie, want daar is niemand wat 'n krag in My Naam sal doen en gou van My sal kan kwaadsprek nie; want wie nie teen ons is nie, is vir ons.”

Laat ons bid dat die Here reg sal laat geskied deur die kerklike liggeme wat hierdie manne nou sal moet ondersoek. Ek het nog niks in die geskrifte van die lidmate van die N.G. Kerk wat aan die Christelike Instituut behoort, gevind wat 'n verkondiging is van die dinge waarvan hulle deur die Sinode beskuldig word nie.

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

JOURNAL REVIEW

NEW WINE

New Directions. Subscription: R1 per annum. Mr. David Kershaw, 85 Granville Avenue, Northborough, Peterborough, Northants, United Kingdom.

In this age of rapid social change an increasing number of Christians in all parts of the world are becoming aware that Jesus Christ is insisting that the new wine which he has cannot be given to the world in the old wineskins, of denominations which are not merely divided amongst themselves but often imprisoned within their own bureaucratic organizations and outdated traditions. The focal point of this awareness is the World Council of Churches and, more recently, the Vatican Council. But in North American and Western Europe this same awareness also finds expression in renewal movements within the various denominations. In Britain, for example, the *Newman Association* (Roman Catholic), *Parish and People* (Church of England), the *Church Order Group* (Congregational) and the *Renewal Group* (Methodist) exist alongside and in co-operation with groups such as the *Friends of Reunion* and the *Ecumenical Fellowship*. And all seek to be instrumental in bringing a "new reformation" in Britain via the renewal of the denominations as an integral part of their seeking the unity which Christ wills for his Church.

These movements are also character-

ised by publications which are designed to stimulate discussion of issues in the Church and the world. Typical amongst these is *New Directions* which came into existence with the Methodist Renewal Group, itself formed in 1961 when a small group of Methodist ministers and laymen found they shared "a common concern about: the deadness of much Church life and its irrelevance to the world; the lack of radical thought and action to deal with this; the failure to learn from the great movements of the world Church today". Instead of allowing this concern to turn sour by introspective and introverted "gripping" this small group decided to accept responsibility in the ecclesiastical-political life of Methodism and to "work together for the Renewal of the Mission, Worship and Structure of the Church". Seven areas for action were designated and it is these which, broadly speaking, provide the subject matter for the articles in *New Directions*. They have been stated in the Group's committal:

1. To undertake theological study of the nature of the Church of Christ.
2. To deepen our ministry by common discipline and prayer; by meeting together for training and study; and by seeking new types of ministry suited to our age.
3. To discover by study and experiment the pattern and content of worship which will be both corporate and also meet the real needs

of worshippers; and to work out the expression of this in Church architecture.

4. To develop a policy of training in Churchmanship, discipleship, vocational obligation, and relevant witness.
5. To find ways of Christian action in social, economic and political life.
6. To review our theory and practice new methods of evangelism.
7. To work wherever possible with members of other Communion, and towards ultimate Christian unity.

Obviously, the *Renewal Group* is rooted and grounded in the conditions of British Methodism and *New Directions* aims at ministering to these. Thus it is no vicarious substitute for the deadness of much South African Methodism and our irrelevance in the midst of different socio-political and ecclesiastical conditions. Even less can reading it replace the thinking we have to do or expiate our failure to learn from the great movements of the world Church today. But reading *New Directions* is an excellent stimulus.

If therefore your concern is to have new wineskins in which to receive the wine Christ wishes to substitute for the "skokiaan" which is fast destroying our senses, one thing you can do is start reading *New Directions* regularly.

JAMES E. MOULDER,

DIE PONT-SAAK

Na 40 dae van getuienis, verhoor en kruisverhoor het die Pont-saak binne 5 minute ten einde geloop toe regter Trollip sy uitspraak gegee het ten gunste van prof. A. S. Geyser en ds. C. F. B. Naudé — 'n uitspraak wat nog verreikende gevolge vir die Kerk van Christus in Suid-Afrika kan hê.

In ons volgende uitgawe sal ds. Naudé probeer om die betekenis van die saak en die uitspraak te behandel veral in soverre dit die ekumeniese gedagte, die Christelike Instituut en Pro Veritate asook die hele Antikom-groep se getuienis raak. In die stuk sal ook die posisie van die Ned. Herv. Kerk (en in samehang daarmee ook dié van die Ned. Geref. Kerk) behandel word om aan te dui watter toets die uitspraak aan veral dié twee kerke en hulle leidende figure stel.

Intussen wil ons net meld dat 'n volledige opsomming van die 181-bladsye getikte uitspraak van regter Trollip deur die Christelike Instituut gedoen word wat in

Afrikaans sowel as in Engels beskikbaar gestel sal word sodra dit voltooi is.

THE PONT CASE

After forty days of testimony, questioning and cross-questioning, the Pont case drew to a close within five minutes when Mr. Justice Trollip gave his verdict in favour of Professor A. S. Geyser and the Rev. C. F. B. Naudé — a verdict which may still have far-reaching effects for the Church of Christ in South Africa.

In our next issue the Rev. Naudé will attempt to deal with the significance of the case and its outcome especially in so far as they affect the ecumenical idea, the Christian Institute and Pro Veritate as well as the witness of the whole Anticom group.

In this article also the position of the Ned. Herv. Kerk (and, in the same context, that of the Ned. Geref. Kerk) will be considered in order to indicate what test has been posed these two churches

in particular and their leaders by the verdict.

In the meantime we only wish to mention that a complete summary of Mr. Justice Trollip's typed verdict of 181 pages is being prepared by the Christian Institute, which will be made available to those interested in English as well as Afrikaans as soon as it is completed.

