



# PRO VERITATE

**A. M. HUGO**

Buitekerklike Bewegings

**JACK CURTIS**

Christ and South African Law and Tradition

**D. M. NORMAN**

Ministry — What Future, If Any?

**W. B. DE VILLIERS**

My Church, My Wife and I

**DANTE ANDERSON**

Faith At Work

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# PRO VERITATE

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Editorial:

## Rejectable Compromise

**The defenders of the politics of apartheid in South Africa have every right to analyse, weigh and judge criticism which is levelled at this policy. It can certainly not be denied that the policy of apartheid is also being opposed and rejected by schools of thought which are not biblically orientated. The fact remains, however, that the most irrefutable criticism against this policy comes from the Bible itself.**

It is simply a futile endeavour when adherents of the faith in apartheid continuously attempt to evade even this fundamental criticism by reducing everything which contradicts apartheid, without exception, to the denominator of liberalism or any other -ism and by either branding believers who speak from the truth of Scripture as deliberate fellow-travellers of foreign ideologies or attempting to ridicule them as stupid and infatuated instruments of such ideologies. These persons are accused of being too dull-brained to realise what they are being used for. By so doing the confessors of apartheid only prove themselves to be standing head in the sand like the proverbial ostrich against the eternal Word of God, upon which the policy which South Africa has chosen for herself must and will shatter itself sooner or later. Of this nobody need have any doubts.

The fact that the politics of apartheid in South Africa has become so rejectable is most intimately connected with the attitude adopted towards it by the most influential part of the Church in our country. It is as the result of the religious and ecclesiastical sanctioning of the policy of apartheid that Christian criticism of it has become so radical that Christians whose view of life and the world is anchored in the truth of Scripture can with deepest conviction, only reject it. When, with formal ecclesiastical authority, the Bible is brought on to the political stage to canonize apartheid, it must obviously be expected that there will be Christians who will not only greet this action on the part of the Church with a heart-felt "no", but who will for this very reason also have no other choice than to adjudge apartheid as such as an abominable heresy.

Every political policy under the sun which claims to be Christian, be

the quality of the "Christianity" it wishes to exhibit ever so pure, is essentially no more than a compromise, a compromise between that which is God's purpose with the world and the life of men, and the way in which it materialises in our sinful existence. This compromise is only tolerable and acceptable for our Christian faith if it emerges from the continuous struggle and wrestling of man to shape his earthly life and its organisation in accordance with God's purpose. A compromise in the sense of bending and distorting the divine truth in order to employ it for the justification of the sinfulness and selfishness of the flesh is, however, a condemnable error and a mockery of God. The politics of apartheid is rejectable to the Christian faith not so much because it is a compromise but because this compromise has been made so absolute by an appeal to God.

When the Church as bearer of the revelation of God in this world, directs herself to the world and proclaims God's purpose with it, she cannot do so other than in "perfectionist" terms. Nothing less dare be impressed upon the sinner than that he is God's child through the sacrifice of Christ; nothing less dare be impressed upon the world than that the kingdom of God has descended upon it; nothing less dare be impressed upon the society of men than that righteousness and love are the only and exclusive foundations upon which it is to be organised. The Church must proclaim the kingdom of God in the world and summon all towards faith in this kingdom. And the faith towards which the Church summons men does not merely consist of an emotional or intellectual acceptance of her message. Faith which is real faith always passes over into life, even though it does not thereby lose its character of faith.

The transition from faith to life, nowhere and never takes place in this sinful world other than by way of compromise. Compromise belongs to the essence of the kingdom of God as it is realised in this sinful world by the Holy Spirit during this dispensation, i.e. until Christ shall come again. The believer who is God's child for ever in Christ never appears here in a form other than that of the sinner who struggles hard to enter through the narrow gate; in the community, of which we believe righteousness and love to be the foundations, there is a constant struggle for the attainment of love and righteousness; the world in which the kingdom of God has come agonises with sighs and labour pains in expectation of the revelation of the children of God. That is why the Church is not moralistic and perfectionistic, even though that which is perfect, and nothing but this, is the content of her message. She is patient with compromise. In her essence she is herself an image of compromise. Until faith one day becomes transformed into beholding, there is no other form in which salvation is experienced in this world than the form of compromise. Therefore the Church does not despair of her message, does not become disappointed and embittered and does not judge unmercifully when she sees the world and men battling in the struggle for sanctification, even though they be ever so deeply fallen into sin.

It is a different matter, however, when the Church, instead of tolerating compromise with love and patience as she observes it in the life of men and the people, and striving to transform it into faith, proceeds to justify it analytically; and worse: when compromise becomes the content of her preaching.

As far as the political (which includes the social and economic) organisation of national life, also in South Africa, is concerned, the Church has a quite specific witness to bear: that it should take place on the basis of the belief that, in Christ, the kingdom of God has come into the world and in the expectation of

a new heaven and a new earth in which righteousness will live. Where a society is organised on the basis of this belief, the utmost will be done to do so according to the demands of righteousness, love, the brotherhood and the equality of all men before God, which are fundamental in a world which should be experienced as the kingdom of God. As far as the preaching of these things is concerned, no compromise is possible. This, and nothing else, the Church must impress also upon South Africa as God's will. It belongs to the essence of the matter, however, that the manner in which, in the reality of political practice, these things are believed in, i.e. where faith passes over into life, the result would be a paradoxical compromise, so much the more perhaps in a multi-racial and multi-national country like South Africa, because there are issues at stake here which apparently quite radically contradict the experiencing and realisation of Christian brotherhood. And although the idea of apartheid does not command an inch of room within the Christian gospel, it is quite conceivable that the Church will

have to observe her unambiguous message of love, brotherhood and righteousness coming to realisation in life on the political level in numerous shapes of compromise in which "apartheid" still maintains itself provisionally. Concerning this the Church will have to judge with love and charity and have patience with it for the time being. She may not, however, absolutise the compromise as God's will and legitimize it in her witness. Then she is no longer bearer of the gospel of the kingdom, but has become a servant of sin. The Church must encourage and strengthen the sinner in his struggle to bring his earthly life and its organisation into accordance with God's will. She may not, however, encourage the sinner in this evil of subjugating God's will to his own. Then a compromise is made which is despised by God.

It is a foolish exercise of clerical and political advocates of apartheid never to portray criticism of this policy other than as conscious or unconscious servility to political powers and world-wide trends of a leftist nature. A biblical view of life and the world which is determined

by the biblical expectation for the future stands, in final analysis, as the strongest condemnation of this "apartheid" which, with its self-appointment as a doctrine of salvation founded in Scripture, is the greatest general heresy which has ever yet found adherents in the Church and among the people in South Africa. In view of this, the rejection of apartheid must undoubtedly also be seen as an attitude of biblical arch-conservatism, whilst the canonisation of apartheid, with a direct or indirect appeal to Scripture, must be regarded as a biblical and theological liberalism of the worst kind. No Christian believer and no political leader in South Africa need doubt that, sooner or later, we will be faced with the avenging righteousness of God if we follow a political policy which derives its character of compromise not from an attempt to bring life, in the fallen part of the world where we live, into accordance with God's purpose, but from the disobedience with which we are trying to bend God's will to comply with the demands of sinful flesh. For God does not allow himself to be mocked.

#### Inleidingsartikel:

## *Verwerplike Kompromis*

**Dit is die goeie reg van die verdedigers van die apartheidspolitiek in Suid-Afrika om kritiek wat teen hierdie beleid ingebring word, noukeurig te ontleed, te weeg en te beoordeel. Dat die apartheidspolitiek ook teengestaan en verwerp word deur gedagterigtinge wat nie aan die Bybel georiënteer is nie, durf sekerlik nie ontken word nie. Feit bly egter dat die onomstootlikste kritiek teen hierdie beleid uit die Bybel self kom.**

Dit is eenvoudig 'n futiele onderneming as die aanhangers van die apartheidsgeloof voortdurend trag om selfs hierdie fundamentele kritiek te ontwyk deur sonder uitsondering alles wat apartheid weerspreek, onder die noemer van die liberalisme of enige ander -isme te bring en gelowiges wat vanuit die Skrifwaarheid spreek, òf te brandmerk as bewuste meelopers van vreemde ideologieë òf belaglik te probeer maak as stomme en verdwaasde instrumente daarvan wat te onnosel is om te besef waarvoor hulle gebruik word. Daarmee blyk die belyers van apartheid slegs soos die spreekwoordelike volstruis met

die kop in die sand te staan teenoor die ewige Woord van God waarteen die beleid wat Suid-Afrika vir hom gekies het, hom vroeër of later moet en gaan te pletter loop. Daaraan hoef niemand te twyfel nie.

Die verwerplike van die apartheidspolitiek in Suid-Afrika hang ten nouste saam met die houding wat die invloedrykste deel van die kerk in ons land daarteenoor inneem. Die Christelike kritiek teen die apartheidspolitiek het veral as gevolg van die religieuse en kerklike sanksionering daarvan dié graad van radikaliteit bereik waarmee Christene wie se lewens- en wêreldbeskouing in die Skrifwaarheid ver-

anker is, dit met die diepste oortuiging slegs nog kan verwerp. As die Bybel met die formele kerklike gesag op die politieke toneel gebring word om apartheid te kanoniseer, moet vanselfsprekend verwag word dat daar Christene sal wees wat nie slegs teenoor hierdie kerklike handelwyse 'n hartgrondige „nee" sal laat hoor nie, maar wat juis daarom dan ook geen ander keuse sal hê as om apartheid as sodanig as 'n gruwelike kettery te beoordeel nie.

Elke politieke beleid onder die son wat daarop aanspraak maak om Christelik te wees, al is die kwaliteit van „Christelikheid" wat dit wil vertoon nog so groot, is wesenlik niks meer nie as 'n kompromis, nl. tussen dit wat God met die wêreld en die menselewe bedoel en dit wat in ons sondige bestaan daarvan verwerklikbaar is. Hierdie kompromis is slegs dan duldbaar en vir

die Christelike geloof verwerkbaar as dit ontstaan uit die voortdurende stryd en worsteling van die mens om sy aardse lewe en die inrigting daarvan met Gods bedoeling in ooreenstemming te bring. 'n Kompromis in dié sin dat die goddelike waarheid gebuig en gewring word om dit aan te wend ter regverdiging van die sondigheid en selfsug van die vlees, is egter 'n verwerplike dwaling en 'n bespotting van God. Die verwerplike van die apartheids-politiek vir die Christelike geloof staan nie soseer in verband met die kompromis-karakter daarvan nie as met die sondige verabsolutering van hierdie kompromis met 'n beroep op God.

Wanneer die kerk as draer van die openbaring van God in hierdie wêreld hom tot die wêreld rig en die bedoeling van God daarmee uitspreek, kan hy nie anders as om dit in „perfeksionistiese” terme te doen nie. Aan die sondaar mag niks minder voorgehou word nie as dat hy deur die offer van Christus Gods kind is; aan die wêreld mag niks minder voorgehou word nie as dat die koninkryk van God daarin gekom het; aan die samelewing van die mense mag niks minder voorgehou word nie as dat die geregtigheid en die liefde die enigste en uitsluitlike grondslag is vir die inrigting daarvan. Die kerk moet die koninkryk van God in die wêreld uitroep en al wat leef tot geloof in hierdie koninkryk oproep. En die geloof waartoe die kerk oproep, bestaan nie slegs in 'n emosionele of verstandelike aanvaarding van sy boodskap nie. Geloof wat egte geloof is, gaan altyd oor in lewe, al verloor dit nie daarmee sy karakter van geloof nie.

Die oorgang van geloof in lewe geskied in hierdie sondige wêreld dan ook nêrens en nooit anders nie as op die wyse van die kompromis. Die kompromis behoort tot die wese van die Godsryk soos dit in hierdie bedeling, d.w.s. totdat Christus weer sal kom, deur die Heilige Gees in die sondige wêreld gerealiseer word. Die gelowige wat in Christus vir ewig Gods kind is, verskyn hier nooit anders nie as in die gestalte van die sondaar wat hard stry om in te gaan deur die nou poort; in die gemeenskap waarvan ons glo dat geregtigheid en liefde die grondslag is, moet daar om die liefde en die geregtigheid geworstel word; die wêreld waarin die Godsryk gekom het, ver-

keer in sugte en barensnood in afwagting op die openbaarmaking van die kinders van God. Daarom is die kerk nie moralisties en perfeksionisties nie, al is die volmaakte, en niks anders as dit nie, die inhoud van sy boodskap. Hy het geduld met die kompromis. Hy is self in sy wese 'n kompromis-gestalte. Totdat die geloof eenmaal oorgaan in aanskoue, is daar geen ander vorm waarin die heil in hierdie wêreld beleef word as dié van die kompromis nie. Daarom wanhoop die kerk nie aan sy boodskap, raak hy ook nie teleurgesteld en verbitterd en oordeel hy nie onbarmhartig as hy die wêreld en die mense in die stryd van die heiligmaking sien worstel, al is dit ook nog so diep in die gevallenheid in die sonde nie.

Die saak staan egter anders as die kerk die kompromis, soos hy dit in die lewe van die mense en die volk waarneem, i.p.v. met liefde en geduld te verdra en gelowig te verwerk, analities gaan regverdig; en erger: as die kompromis die inhoud van sy verkondiging word.

Wat die politieke (waarby ingesluit is die sosiale en ekonomiese) inrigting van die volkslewe, ook in Suid-Afrika, betref, het die kerk 'n heel spesifieke getuienis, nl. dat dit moet geskied op die grondslag van die geloof dat in Christus die koninkryk van God in die wêreld gekom het en in die verwagting van nuwe hemele en 'n nuwe aarde waarin geregtigheid woon. Waar 'n samelewing vanuit hierdie geloof georden word, sal daar tot die uiterste gegaan word om dit te doen volgens die eise van die geregtigheid, die liefde, die broederskap en die gelykheid van alle mense voor God wat fundamenteel is in 'n wêreld wat as koninkryk van God beleef wil word. Wat die verkondiging van hierdie dinge betref, is daar geen kompromis moontlik nie. Dit, en niks anders nie, moet die kerk as Gods wil ook aan Suid-Afrika voorhou. Dit lê egter in die wese van die saak dat die wyse waarop dit in die werklikheid van die politieke praktyk geglo word, d.w.s. waar die geloof in lewe oorgaan, 'n paradoksale kompromiskarakter sal vertoon, wat miskien juis in 'n veelrassige en veelvolkige land soos Suid-Afrika des te paradoksaler sal wees omdat hier faktore in die spel is wat die beleving en realisering van die Christelike broederskap skynbaar radikaal weerspreek. En alhoewel die apartheidsidee in die Christelike

evangelie geen duimbreed plek het nie, is dit goed denkbaar dat die kerk sal moet aanskou dat sy on-dubbelsinnige boodskap van liefde, broederskap en geregtigheid in talle kompromisgestaltes waarin „apartheid” hom voorlopig nog handhaaf, in die lewe op die politieke vlak tot verwerkliking kom. Daarvoor sal die kerk met liefde en barmhartigheid moet oordeel en daarmee sal hy voorlopig geduld moet hê. Hy mag die kompromis egter nie as Gods wil verabsoluteer en in sy getuienis legitimeer nie. Dan is hy nie meer draer van die evangelie van die koninkryk nie, maar het hy dienaar van die sonde geword. Die kerk moet die sondaar bemoedig en versterk in sy stryd om sy aardse lewe en die inrigting daarvan met Gods wil in ooreenstemming te bring. Hy mag die sondaar egter nie sterk in sy kwaad om Gods wil aan sy eie wil ondergeskik te maak nie. Dan word 'n kompromis voltrek wat deur God verag word.

Dit is 'n dwase bedryf van kerklike en politieke pleitbesorgers van apartheid om kritiek teen hierdie beleid nooit anders voor te stel as bewuste of onbewuste gediensigheid aan linkse politieke magte en wêreldstrominge nie. 'n Bybelse lewens- en wêreldbeskouing wat deur die Bybelse toekomsverwagting bepaal word, staan per slot van sake as die sterkste veroordeling teenoor dié apartheid wat met sy selfdaarstelling as 'n Skrifgefundeerde heilsleer die grootste algemene kettery is wat nog ooit in kerk en volk in Suid-Afrika aangehang is. Gedagtig daaraan moet die verwerping van apartheid sonder enige twyfel óók gesien word as 'n houding van 'n Bybelse oer-konserwatisme, terwyl die kanonisering van apartheid, met 'n regstreekse of onregstreekse beroep op die Skrif, beoordeel moet word as 'n Bybelse en teologiese liberalisme van die ergste graad. Geen Christengelowige en geen politieke leier in Suid-Afrika hoef daaraan te twyfel dat ons dit vroeër of later te doen sal kry met die wrekende geregtigheid van God as ons 'n politieke beleid volg wat sy kompromis-karakter nie ontleen aan 'n gelowige strewe om die lewe in hierdie gevalle stuk wêreld waar ons woon met Gods bedoeling in ooreenstemming te bring nie, maar aan die ongehoorsaamheid waarmee ons Gods wil probeer buig na die eise van die sondige vlees. Want God laat Hom nie bespot nie.

# BUITEKERKLIKE BEWEGINGS

— DR. ANDRÉ HUGO

In die klagstaat wat deur die jongste Algemene Sinode van die N.G. Kerk teen die Christelike Instituut opgestel is, word as eerste beswaar aangevoer dat genoemde Instituut „'n buitekerklike organisasie” is.

Merkwaardig, so 'n uitspraak! Merkwaaardig, omdat dit te kenne wil gee dat elke buitekerklike organisasie uit die aard van die saak 'n verkeerde ding moet wees, terwyl 'n oomblik se nadenke tog voldoende moet wees om elkeen te laat insien dat hierdie uitspraak op sigself geen gewig kan dra nie. Dit sou alléén gewig kan dra wanneer daar met vers en kapittel aangetoon kon word dat sodanige organisasie kragtens sy doelstellings en aktiwiteite 'n bedreiging vorm vir die kerk wat uitspraak doen. Dit is 'n **neutrale** uitspraak, wat alleen normatiewe inhoud kan kry uit 'n nadere omskrywing van die feite van die geval. En tog staan dit daar, lewensgroot voor op die wa, asof dit op sigself reeds 'n ernstige bedenking teen die Christelike Instituut sou wees!

Maar hierdie uitspraak word des te merkwaaardiger wanneer 'n mens 'n blik slaan op die kerkgeskiedenis. Elkeen wat in die kerkgeskiedenis geïnteresseerd is, sal weet dat die Kerk van Christus altyd weer nuwe lewenskrag geput het uit, en nuwe korreksie ondergaan het deur die bewegings wat buite die amptelike kerklike kanale om onder die lidmate ontstaan het. Met 'n bietjie oordrywing, maar beslis nie sonder waarheid nie, sou 'n mens kon beweer dat dit juis die „buitekerklike bewegings” was wat nog altyd die kerk gehelp het om kerk te bly! Hier voor my lê die jongste uitgawe van **Die Voorligter**, amptelike maandblad van die N.G. Kerk. Daarin vind ek twee treffende voorbeelde van bogenoemde waarheid. Laat my dit net kortliks noem, want dit kom nou uit onverdagte bron!

## DIE RÉVEIL

Ds. W. Hovy skryf 'n kort stukkie oor César Malan, daardie talentvolle Franse predikant wat in die vroeë dekades van die 19de eeu soveel gedoen het om die gees van die Protestantse Kerke van Europa wakker te skud, en wie se naam onafskeidelik verbode is aan die beweging wat ons ken as die **Réveil**.

Dan skryf hy:

„Die Réveil was geen kerklike beweging nie, maar het uitgegaan van lede van Christelike kerke wat ontevrede was met die gees van modernisme wat in die teologiese wetenskap en op die kansel die suiwer Woord van God en die versoeningsleer deur Christus verwerp het. In Nederland was een van die leiers die uit die Jodedom bekeerde Isaac de Costa en sy vriend, Capadose. Da Costa het in sy huis gereeld Bybellesinge gegee, waartoe 'n groot aantal heilbegeerige Christene toegang gehad het. Hoewel hulle teen die dwaalleringe in die Hervormde Kerk getuig het, het hulle in die Hervormde Kerk gebly.”

Toe ek hierdie woorde lees, het ek dadelik vir myself gesê: Dit kan byna onveranderd ook gesê word van die Christelike Instituut. Vervang slegs die woord „modernisme” met „rassisme” en „versoeningsleer deur Christus” met „eenheidsleer in Christus”, en dit word alles kontemporêr! Maar wonderlik genoeg: die Réveil was 'n goeie ding, terwyl die Christelike Instituut uit den bouse is!

Ek wonder regtig, ja ek wonder wat baie van ons predikante vandag sou sê as 'n bekeerde Jood — en dan bowendien ook nog 'n **slim** Jood, soos Da Costa was — hier op Stellenbosch sou begin om gereelde Bybelkringe in sy huis te hou, en as steeds meer lidmate van die gemeente na daardie Bybelkringe sou stroom! En as die bewuste Jood dan ook nog sou verkondig dat die heersende teologie in ons kerk 'n valse teologie is, wat afwyk van die suiwer Evangelie en van die Dordtse Formuliere! — Da Costa en Capadose het lank al hul veilige nissies gekry in die heldegalerie van die Nederlandse Kerkgeskiedenis. Hier voor my het ek 'n ou boekie van Capadose wat deur my grootmoeder en haar vriendinne stukkend gelees is. Die Réveil en sy leiers is vandag volledig gekanoniseer. En onwillekeurig kom die vraag by my op: Wat sal, oor honderd jaar, die oordeel van die nageslag wes oor die

tans verguisde en vervolgte leiers van die „buitekerklike” Christelike Instituut? Ek wonder dikwels of hierdie soort van vraag nie ook somtyds opkom by diegene wat vandag so fel tekere gaan teen die Christelike Instituut nie.

## DIE ONTWAKING IN DIE 18DE EEU

In dieselfde Voorligter is ook die pragtige feesrede opgeneem wat dr. Wm. Nicol op 3 Desember 1966 by geleentheid van die eeufees van die gemeente Utrecht (Natal) gelewer het, onder die titel **Seëninge van 1866**. Dit is 'n besondere toespraak, en ek sou al die lesers van hierdie blad wil aanmoedig om dit te gaan lees. In die loop van hierdie rede het dr. Nicol ook 'n kort terugblik gewerp op die geskiedenis van die Gereformeerde Protestantisme in die 17de en 18de eeue, en die doodse verstarring geskets wat in daardie tyd langsamerhand ingetree het, in Europa sowel as aan die Kaap. En dan gaan hy voort:

„**Goddank, daar het weer reaksie gekom. Die ware gelowiges begin mekaar opsoek ook buite verband met die kerk.** Daar word saam gebid en bepraat oor die ewige dinge en oor die belange van Gods koninkryk. Heeltemal onafhanklik van mekaar en soms met heelwat dwaalleer daarby ingemeng, openbaar 'n nuwe lewe hom in Duitsland, Nederland, Engeland en Skotland. Meer en meer word leraars gevind wat deur **die lewende godsdiens** beïnvloed is voor hulle koms na Suid-Afrika. Dit gebeur nogal meermale in die geskiedenis van die Kerk dat nuwe lering wat nie heeltemal suiwer is nie, die Kerk dwing om weer rekenskap van sy geloof te gee en daardeur nuwe lewe en belangstelling wek. So het dit in die Kaap gegaan. Manne soos ds. M. C. Vos, ywerig in die getuienis en in die gebed, stigter van die S.A. Sendinggenootskap, het veel gedoen om persoonlike vroomheid by die volk aan te moedig.”

In hierdie geval durf ons nie sonder meer 'n parallel met die Chr. Instituut trek nie. Dit sou uitermate voorbarig wees om byvoorbeeld te

kenne te wil gee dat die lede van die C.I. vandag in hierdie land die „ware gelowiges” is! En ons wil ook vertrou dat daar nie in ons geledere allerlei „dwaalleer” gevind word nie! Maar die sentrale punt van ooreenkoms is daar, en dit is baie belangrik: naamlik, dat die vernuwing in die kerklike lewe van die 18de eeu sy ontstaan gehad het in **private kringe**, in die veel gesmade „konventikels”, in die sendinggenootskappe wat deur „leke” op die been gebring is — kortom, in ’n magtig-aanswellende stroom van **buitekerklike** aktiwiteit. Die mense wat daarmee begin het, moes die spot van hul medemense en die verbete teenkanting van hul predikante en kerklike owerhede verduur. Hulle is uitgemaak vir dweppers en wargeeste en roervinke en wat nie al nie. Hulle het **verwarring** gestig! Hulle het die rus verstoort! Hulle wou hulle die reg aanmatig om die kerk op sy pligte te wys! Geagte leser, kom hierdie geluide u nie seldsaam bekend voor nie? Waar het u hierdie selfde aanklagte nog onlangs vernem, en teen wie was dit gerig?

### SENDINGPIONIERS OP STELLENBOSCH

Vir my as inwoner van Stellenbosch was dit ook nog altyd ’n bron van besieling (om nie te sê van vertroosting nie) om te dink aan die pioniersdae van die sending in hierdie gemeente. Die liewe goeie ds. Meent Borchers en sy kerkraad was in beginsel hoegenaamd nie teen die sending gekant nie, maar hulle het darem ook nie uit eie beweging ’n vinger verroer om dit aan te help nie. Danksy die deeglike M.A.-tesis van dr. W. B. van der Vyver, **Die Geskiedenis van die Stellenbosse Gemeente 1800—1830** (Argief-Jaarboek 1958), weet ons vandag in alle besonderhede hoe sake destyds hier gesteld was. Toe die drie Herrnhutterse sendelinge Schinn, Kühnel en Marsveldt in 1792 met hul werk op Genadendal begin, het ds. Borchers en sy kerkraad dit as ’n oortreding op hul gemeentelike terrein beskou — asof hulle sêf ooit iets vir die arme Hottentotte van die Overberg wou doen! — en het hulle werklik daartoe oorgegaan om die Kaapse owerheid te versoek dat die „secte” uit hul gemeentelike pale verban word na ’n gebied waar nog geen christelike gemeente bestaan nie.

Maar twee ouderlinge het teen hierdie besluit sterk beswaar gemaak: J. N. Desch en J. Groenewald. En gelukkig was die Politieke Raad in Kaapstad van dieselfde gevoele as hierdie twee ouderlinge, en het daar van die versoek van die Stellenbosse Kerkraad niks gekom nie. Die Herrnhutters is toegelaat om ongehinderd voort te gaan met hul prysenswaardige werk op Genadendal, en vandag staan die jaartal 1792 met groot syfers geskrywe in die geskiedenis van die sending in Suid-Afrika. Maar as dit van die Kerkraad van Stellenbosch afgehang het, dan was dit in die kiem gesmoor! So ’n gebeurtenis moet ons wêl ernstig laat nadink oor predikante en kerkrade, en oor die ernstige dwalinge waaraan hulle hul kan skuldig maak.

Maar ook die plaaslike sendingwerk op Stellenbosch self was ’n saak wat deur „gewone leke” begin is, en wat **ten spyte van** die kerkraad moes sukkel om vaste grond onder die voete te kry. Die sendingentoesiaste soos Desch, en Meeuwes Bakker, en Jacobus Hamman, was seker nie altyd baie taktvol of verstandig nie, maar **hulle** het die begin gemaak, en hulle het die gemeente sendingbewus gemaak — nie die Kerkraad nie. Slegs langsaamhand en skoorvoetend het ds. Borchers en sy kerkraad met hierdie onverskrokke pioniers begin saamwerk. Die **Stellenbosse Medewerkende Genootskap** is op 21 November 1801 gestig sonder enige medewerking van kerklike kant, en ds. Borchers het selfs nie eens kans gesien om sy naam op die ledelys te plaas nie! Sy beswaar? Dit staan opgeteken in die kerkraadsnotule van 28 Julie 1801. Daar heet dit dat hierdie genootskap „als buiten de kerk, ten minste niet met ons voorafgaand overleg, was opgerigt”, en dat die kerkraad daarom voorlopig niks met die onderneming te doen wil hê nie! Buiten de kerk! Sien u hoe die ou draad hier deurloop? Dit was ’n buitekerklike beweging! — Maar vandag staan hier op die Braak ’n sierlike sendingkerk met die jaartal 1823 op die gewel as monument vir die geloofsmoed van daardie „buitekerklike” beweging, en pluk die Nederduits Gereformeerde Sendingkerk die vrugte van die ondankbare pionierswerk wat deur daardie verguisde mense gedoen is. Dit is voorwaar ’n geskiedenis wat deur ons teologiese studente ter harte geneem mag word; want ons

beleef vandag ’n herhaling van daardie geskiedenis.

### DIE A.C.V.V. EN DIE C.S.V.

Dit tref my as iets merkwaardigs dat ons in Suid-Afrika (soos ook elders in die wêreld) tans ontwaak tot ’n nuwe waardering van die **Amp van die Gelowige** (ek hoef in hierdie verband slegs die naam van Prof. J. C. G. Kotzé te noem), en dat ons terselfdertyd sien hoe ’n groeiende getal Afrikaanse predikante hulle beywer om elke uiting van spontane geestelike lewe onder die lidmate met mag en geweld onder **kerklike beheer**, dit wil sê, onder die beheer en seggenskap van predikante te bring. „Kerk” is vir hierdie mense skynbaar sinoniem met „predikant”; waar die predikant nie die hoogste woord het nie, daar is alles dadelik „buitekerklike”! Kan daar erger misvatting bestaan? En tog sien ons dit voor ons oë gebeur, en kan ons — as ons die lus daartoe het — dit gereeld lees in die eltelange briewe oor „Kerk en Vereniging” wat die korrespondensiekolomme van Die Kerkbode laat kreun onder hul gewig.

Die Afrikaanse Christelike Vroue-Vereniging (A.C.V.V.) is gebore uit die vroomheid en uit die sosiale gewete van die N.G. Kerk. Geen vrug was ooit meer organies verbode aan die boom wat dit dra, as wat die A.C.V.V. aan die N.G. Kerk verbode is nie. Maar . . . dit is gestig deur vroue, nie deur predikante nie; dit word beheer deur vroue, nie deur predikante nie; en wat meer is, dit floreer! Nog al die jare was dit ’n saak van trots en dankbaarheid vir die ganse N.G. Kerk; maar vandat daar enkele jare gelede ontdek is dat daar so-iets as „buitekerklike verenigings” in die wêreld is, is in ons kerklike pers en in die kerklike vergaderings ’n kunstmatige antitese tussen **kerk** en **vereniging** opgebou, en staan die arme A.C.V.V. dag en nag onder swaar bombardement. Gelukkig, die dapper susters het hul goeie voorsprake in die Sinode, en tot dusver kon hulle die spervuur nog weerstaan; maar die feit dat daar so ’n spervuur is, en dat die A.C.V.V. moet veg vir haar bestaan as onafhanklike vereniging, is ’n onheilspellende uiting van kerklike outokrasie. Dit kan nie skerp genoeg veroordeel word nie.

Dieselfde geld ook vir die droewige geval van die **Christen-Studen-**

**tevereniging van Suid-Afrika.** Ek hoef nie veel daarvoor te sê nie. Vanaf 1896 het hierdie vereniging 'n onmisbare, 'n skitterende, 'n unieke werk gedoen onder die skoolgaande en studerende jeug van Suid-Afrika. Daar is talle van ons wat persoonlik kan getuig van wat dit vir ons beteken het om lid te wees van die C.S.V. Daar is seker honderde predikante van die N.G. Kerk wat dit ook kan getuig, en wat dan ook nog daaraan kan toevoeg dat hulle nie vandag in die bediening sou gestaan het, as daar nie in hul jong jare 'n C.S.V. was nie. Die hoofkantoor van die vereniging was al die jare op Stellenbosch gevestig (Posbus 25, onthou u nog?), en die hoofsekretaris was al die jare 'n hooggerespekteerde proponent van die N.G. Kerk. Die oorgrote meerderheid van die lede was van die N.G. Kerk, en op haas elke dorp van ons land is die weeklikse normaalklasse vir kringelers gelei deur die plaaslike predikant.

So was die C.S.V. dan 'n organiese deel van die kerklik-godsdiens-tige lewe van die Afrikaanse volk; en tegelykertyd — laat ons dit nie vergeet nie — was dit 'n kosbare skakel met die Engelssprekende en nie-blanke seksies van ons studerende jeug. Dit was alles soos dit moes wees, en niemand het ooit 'n vraagteken oor hierdie dinge geplaas nie, totdat — ja, totdat sekere predikante ontdek het dat daar so-iets as „buitekerklike verenigings” in die wêreld is; en — dat alle kontakte tussen Afrikaans- en Engelssprekende jongmense uit die bose is; en — dat elke kennismaking tussen blank en nie-blank, selfs rondom die geopende Bybel, 'n spyker in die kis van die Afrikanervolk is.

Ek hoef nie oor die saak uit te wei nie. My lesers ken die tragiese afloop: hoe die ideale van sewentig jaar troue diens met deursigtige redenasies verloën is, en hoe ons vandag sit met die „begeerde resultaat” van 'n reeks afsonderlike C.S.Vees vir al die verskillende bevolkingsgroepe in die land, sodat elkeen sy eiesoortige God kan dien ooreenkomstig die eiesoortige voorskrifte van sy eiesoortige Bybel, in geselskap van sy eiesoortige soortgenote. O serafynse soortelikheid!

Maar die strewe was nie alleen om die verskillende „groepe” van mekaar weg te kry nie. Dit was maar net die halfwegstasie. Die eintlike doel was om die Afrikaanse C.S.V. (wat nog altyd verreweg die

grootste deel van die C.S.V. van Suid-Afrika uitgemaak het) met man en muis in te lyf by die Kerkjeugvereniging (KJV) van die N.G. Kerk. Die K.J.V. doen 'n goeie werk onder werkende jongmense, maar hy kan nooit die unieke werk van die C.S.V. oorneem nie. En waarom sou hy dit wil doen? Het die C.S.V. sy werk dan nie goed genoeg gedoen nie? En wat word dan van die jarelange kontak met Engelssprekendes en nie-blankes? En wat doen ons in skole waar leerlinge van twee, of drie, of selfs meer Afrikaanse kerke is? Moet hulle dan ook weer almal aan hul „eie” K.J.V. behoort? So kan 'n mens voortgaan om die vrae op te stapel: redelike vrae, voor die hand liggende vrae. En al wat ons ten antwoord kry, is die dooddouner: „Die tyd het ryp geword dat die Kerk alle jeugwerk vir sy eie rekening neem, en alle jeugwerk koördineer.”

### KERK EN POLITIEK

„Die tyd het ryp geword . . .” — wat 'n niksseggende frase! En hoe dikwels word dit nie aan alle kante gehanteer nie! Mag ek, in alle onbeskeidenheid, my eie para-frase aanbied? Dan lui die bedoeling as volg: „Die Afrikanervolk staan polities vandag sterker as ooit tevore in sy geskiedenis. Maar innerlik is hy vandag pap en ruggraatloos en onbestand teen invloede van buite. Daar is nie meer die innerlike oortuiging wat hom vanself binne die laer van die voorgeskrewe apartheidsideologie sal hou nie. Daarom is daar nou net een redmiddel, naamlik dat Kerk en Staat met alle mag saamwerk om die volk, maar veral ook die jeug van ons volk, konsekwent af te sny van alle gereelde kontakte met lede van die ander volksgroepe in die land, en veral, kontakte op min of meer gelyke voet. Dit geld veral ons studerende jeug, want hulle is die ontvanklikste, en daarom die kwesbaarste, deel van die nasie. Elke ontmoeting met die „ander man” kan lei tot 'n uitwissing van die godgegewe grense en tot vervlakking van die liefde vir die volkseie. Daarom: so min moontlik dubbelmedium of parallelmediumskole; daarom, sover moontlik, geen oorsese studie-beurse vir ons knap studente nie — veral nie in die teologie nie! Daarom: aparte jeugverenigings en Christen-Studenteverenigings. Daarom: géén kontak tussen die blanke uni-

versiteite en die universiteitskolleges vir die „etniese groepe” nie. Alleen wanneer ons die uiterste maatreëls van liggaamlike en geestelike isolasie toepas, het ons enige hoop om ons ideologie vir nog 'n paar dekades (miskien) aan die lewe te hou. Ons besef dat ons langs hierdie weg diep ingryp in die normale patroon van menslike verhoudinge in die land, en ons besef dat sekere waardes prysgegee sal moet word. Maar geen offer is te groot vir die saak wat ons nastreef nie.

„Die Kerk het hierby 'n onmisbare rol te speel. Die Kerk was nog altyd die vernaamste bolwerk van die Afrikanervolk se geestelike bestaan. Die krisis waarin ons tans verkeer, vereis dat die drie Afrikaanse Kerke onverdeelde lojaliteit teenoor die Nasionale Party sal betoon, en géén prediking sal toelaat wat die lidmate sou kon laat twyfel aan die prinsipiële juistheid en regverdigheid van die Party se beleid nie. Kerk en Party moet in één juk trek. Dit kan grootliks vergemaklik word deur

(i) die nouste skakeling op die hoogste vlak tussen die Kerke en die Regering;

(ii) die nouste skakeling op die plaaslike vlak tussen Kerkrade en plaaslike Skakelkomitees;

(iii) eenwording van die vier N.G. Sinodes;

(iv) maksimale koördinasie en sentralisasie van die Kerke se inligtingsdienste, jeug-aksies, e.d.m.

„Op hierdie wyse sal die kans op afwykende uitinge en verwarrende uitsprake tot 'n minimum beperk word, en sal daar snel en doeltreffend opgetree kan word wanneer sodanige uitinge tog voorkom. Die predikant, of lidmaat, wat hom dan aan sodanige uiting skuldig maak, sal geen ondersteuning van kerklike kant kan geniet nie, en sal homself onmiddellik brandmerk as iemand wat die rug op sy eie mense gekeer het. Ons is dankbaar om te kan sê dat ons al ver gevorder het op die weg ter bereiking van hierdie ideaal.”

Om op te som. Die klag wat teen die Christelike Instituut ingebring is, as sou dit 'n „buitekerklike beweging” wees, is 'n klag wat op sigself niks beteken nie, en waaraan niemand hom ernstig hoef te steur nie. In die lig van die geskiedenis is dit bowendien 'n kortstondige beswaar, want ons eie N.G. Kerk het oneindig veel te danke aan allerlei sulke „buitekerklike” bewegings van



die verlede. Ook is dit 'n mode-uitdrukking van die allerjongste tyd, waarmee die een die ander gedagtelos napraat. Maar bowe-al is dit die uiting van 'n gees van kerklike despotisme en **sinodokrasie** wat sy wortels het, nie in enige besorgdheid oor die welsyn van die Kerk as sodanig nie, maar in die **politiek**. Dit

is maar net nog 'n simptoom van die alles-omvattende poging wat tans aangewend word om die Afrikaner-volk tot in die teerste weefsels van sy geestelike lewe diensbaar te maak aan 'n bepaalde politieke ideologie.

By my wete is die Christelike Instituut op die oomblik die enigste georganiseerde liggaam buite die

politieke sfeer wag nog konsekwent en onwrikbaar protesteer en waarsku teen hierdie funeste gang van sake. En dit is een van die redes waarom ek dankbaar is om lid te wees van die Christelike Instituut.

(Die siening van die skrywer is nie noodwendig in alle opsigte dié van die Christelike Instituut nie. — Red.)

# CHRIST AND SOUTH AFRICAN LAW AND TRADITION

— JACK CURTIS

**There is a tendency among many White South Africans to accept without question the historical significance of Jesus' life and death and to ignore, or fail to understand, its spiritual significance and the demands which its occurrence makes on the temporal lives of all those who would call themselves Christians.**

Evidence of this attitude is reflected in the widely held belief that the people of those days were more sinful and less perceptive of the teachings of God than we are today. This largely baseless belief is on occasion carried to its unrealistic conclusion in the assertion that "Had He come in our day we would not have allowed Him to be put to death."

While this might well be true, it would be as well to examine, not only our own hearts, but also the legal system and administrative practices which we either support with our votes or condone by our lack of protest, before we accept the truth of the assertion. As many people in this country know, weeping and wailing will not on its own divert the law from its course and all our regrets and remorse for the lack of past political action will not remove a single comma from the statute books. How then shall we judge what fate Jesus would have met had He come in our time and how could we have recognised Him?

Let us examine His life and conduct as recorded in the Gospels and as objectively as is possible set down the reaction as it would be today from those great arbiters of temporal destiny, the Law and "our traditional way of life".

Firstly what would be the standing of Jesus in our political and social hierarchy in South Africa?

## CITIZENSHIP

Jesus was a member of a dependent community in the Roman State. A subject but not a citizen. As such He had no right of the vote, no right of holding office, and no right of appeal. This was the position which, by his birth, He chose! It was possible for Jesus, a Jew, to be a Roman citizen, as was Paul by birth, but Jesus and most of His disciples were not.

In South Africa His position would be analagous to that of members of the non-White community, subjects but not citizens.

We may protest that in our enlightened age, knowing his noble descent and recognizing his virtue we would never commit such a blunder. But have we acknowledged with the gift of citizenship the royal descent of Albert Luthuli, or did we when he was a South African subject and in recognition of his virtue grant citizenship to Mahatma Ghandi? No indeed! Would we have granted citizenship to Christ?

What were His actions and what would be the judgement of law and tradition?

After Jesus birth, Joseph because of the cunning and ill-will of Herod was warned to flee into Egypt and "he took the young child and his mother by night and departed into Egypt."

In South Africa (as in many other

countries) leaving the country by stealth and without a certificate of departure is a criminal offence. Whilst not yet a month old Jesus would have, under the laws of South Africa, become a transgressor. As a subject and not a citizen He would have lost the right to return. His re-entry again by stealth would have confirmed this transgression.

## ILLEGAL

For many years Jesus, now an illegal entrant, lived quietly pursuing His trade but it did not last — the desire to obey God and not the law of man was too strong and so "when Jesus had heard that John was cast into prison, He departed into Galilee — and began to preach, and to say: Repent: for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand."

Jesus clearly took up the mission of a man who had been cast into prison by the lawful authority, without trial it is true (but do we not also detain people without trial in South Africa?) and continued to preach, what to His followers must have seemed to be, a radical change in the form of Government. In other words He carried on the work of a banned person or organization which would certainly have in South Africa merited a warning of possible restrictions on His freedom or worse.

His next action was to gain followers and the manner of doing it would certainly be suspect under the "General Laws Amendment Act", as an act of sabotage which is defined in part as follows: "Any

person who commits any wilful act whereby he — endangers — the supply or distribution of foodstuffs — shall be guilty of the offence of sabotage." These were His acts:

"He saith unto them (Peter and Andrew) follow me — and they straightway left their nets, and followed Him. And going on from thence, He saw two other brethren (James and John) — mending their nets; and He called them. And they immediately left the ship — and followed Him."

This action read together with His apparent intention of ushering in a change of Government is clearly indictable under Section 21(1) of the above Act.

### TRADITIONAL WAY OF LIFE

In apparent disrespect of the law and the traditions of the land, He then enunciated, by our standards, a most seditious doctrine saying: "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets."

Is this the law or "our traditional way of life" in the Republic of South Africa?

We desire that men should acknowledge our rights as citizens; we do not so to them.

We desire that men should grant us the right to work to the extent of our ability; we do not so to them.

We desire that we should be allowed to own property and reside therein; we do not so to them.

We desire that we should be allowed to move freely in our own land; we do not so to them.

To emphasise the importance of doing as against saying, of actions above words, of the foundation rather than the facade, He told the story of the house built upon sand — "and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell; and great was the fall of it."

Let us ask ourselves on what foundation of fear and selfishness, or of blindness and complacency is this Republic, soon to be torn by the winds of change, built? Do we welcome the testimony of the honest and far-sighted who warn us of the perils ahead? Nor would we welcome Christ's testimony!

Knowing this, Jesus must surely have had in mind the provision in

the General Laws Amendment Bill for the penalty of death for its contravention when He charged His disciples — "Beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils and they will scourge you — but when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another — if they have called the Master of the house Beelzebub" (a modern equivalent would be "Communist"), "how much more shall they call them of his household — fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."

### THE NEEDY

Jesus' attitude to hunger would revolt our worthy rulers of today: "At that time Jesus went on the sabbath day through the corn; and His disciples were an hungred, and began to pluck the ears of corn, and to eat."

It is worthy to note that in those days in terms of Jewish law nobody contested the right of the hungry to eat of the corn of those who had it.

What would Jesus say of our Government's administration which has prevented private assistance to the needy? When the Government's response to starvation has been to call it malnutrition and to deny that it was widespread as recently in the Northern Transvaal?

It was at about this time when Jesus affirmed that the Law was made for man not man for the Law, that the council sought means to destroy Him. In the Republic of South Africa would His affirmation of the right of all people to adequate food, if necessary at the community's expense, set the Government devising means to silence Him?

### ACTION

The means were not long in forthcoming: "And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money changers, and the seats of them that sold doves."

To Israel the temple was the repository of the Law and the seat of justice. In the Republic of South Africa the symbolic equivalent would be the Bar of the House.

Christ took violent action to indicate that the recognized representatives of the people by their blindness and corruption had blasphemed against His teachings. In the modern context it is a condemnation of our denial of human rights and our facile acceptance of self-justification.

There seems little reason to suppose that Jesus in His actions would condone blasphemy now as He did not then and would no more be afraid of giving cause for action than He was then.

Clearly the action He took comes under the heading of "injures, damages, destroys — any property, whether movable or immovable, of any other person or of the State," and would "embarrass the administration of the affairs of State" and thus He would be guilty of sabotage.

Here then is the end of the story. If Jesus had lived in South Africa today He would have been guilty of crimes, which under South African Law carry the penalty of death, and by His manner of living in contravention of "our traditional way of life" He would have estranged Himself from the sympathy of the vast majority of White South Africans.

Would He have been put to death?

The answer is to be found in an examination of the policy enunciated by the evil rulers of Christ's day — "it is expedient for us, that one man should die", said they and Christ was crucified.

What policy do we Whites, the rulers of South Africa, enunciate today?

Is it one of expediency for us, a policy which is based on our privileges and material benefits being maintained at the expense of those who have no say in the Government?

If it is then every time White South Africa says "it is expedient for us" we — you and I — crucify Christ anew in our hearts. What a man does secretly in his heart he will one day do publicly in physical action!

HAD HE COME IN OUR DAY WOULD WE HAVE ALLOWED HIM TO BE PUT TO DEATH? LET EACH MAN BE HIS OWN JUDGE WHILST THERE IS YET TIME!

# MINISTRY — What Future, If Any? — The Rev. D. M. NORMAN

"There are plenty of churchmen who, like the Bishop of Woolwich, have long held that the disappearance of the professional ministry as Western society has known it is wholly welcome." This statement by Christopher Driver, in an article in the *MANCHESTER GUARDIAN WEEKLY* (7.7.66) entitled **WHAT BENEFIT OF CLERGY?** represents an undercurrent of thinking that is threatening to rise to the surface.

Sooner or later the future of the professional ministry must be faced and frankly discussed.

"The clerical structure for both Protestants and Roman Catholics may be notably changed within the next few decades." These are words written by The Religion Editor of the *New York Times*, John Cogley, in an article — "Religion: Churches Reappraise Ministry".

The longer we delay the facing of this issue, so long will we lag behind in the training of men for a ministry to the future, and the training of men for a ministry with a future.

## SPECIALISATION

Father R. J. Bunnik, a Dutch theologian writes that "because the laymen is growing into ecclesiastical adulthood, the minister can be relieved of tasks which he had to adopt for lack of capable lay people, but which did not properly belong to his ministry: they include . . . organised charity and ecclesiastical administration. This development has already led to questions about de jure institution of part-time ministers."

Not only is the ministry called into question but also the present parish system. The Protestant "Outline for a possible plan of union" issued in the United States, speaks of "task groups" complementing the traditional parish which would serve as a specialized ministry to a group of people bound together by some unique interest or need. Specialized ministries to doctors, lawyers, scientists and so on, are getting more attention in Catholicism. The worker-priest movement has been restored in France. There are plans afoot now to adapt it to other countries, thus providing a ministry to men where they work.

Like it or not all this does represent an attempt to move with the changes in society and try to meet the complex needs and problems of the modern city and industrial life.

One of the facts of life in this new age is a shrinking area of ministry for the traditional methods of the institutional church. To such an

extent that Christopher Driver says that by projecting statistics and trends in the Church of England (in England) "it would be possible — indeed, the exercise has been tried — to demonstrate the impending extinction of organized non-Roman Christianity in England."

## LIFE-LONG MINISTRY?

The report of the British Council of Churches, **THE SHAPE OF THE MINISTRY**, recently acknowledged that the professional, full-time, life-long ministry is not essential to the existence of Christianity. "But", adds Christopher Driver, "if the Church can survive attenuation of its professional ministry, the professional ministers are naturally unable to survive the attenuation of the Church." He goes on to say that "even if the stipends continued to flow, self-respect would demand a worthwhile job to do, and more and more parsons are starting to wonder what that job is. Less and less are they able to identify it with the job they are paid to do."

More of Driver for he is pressing in on the heart of the matter. "Does this matter, except to that predominantly bourgeois minority which still likes to be comforted or chided Sunday by Sunday in church or chapel? Surely it does. The community's general indifference to the ways parsons choose to spend their time has gone much too far for its own self-interest."

## OPPORTUNITIES AND DEMANDS OF MODERN SOCIETY

Is the ministry, for all its educational opportunity and privilege; its time available for further reading, study and thinking offering leadership to the community, in any way commensurate with such opportunities? Do churches, as presently structured, encourage ministers to become involved in service to community needs — whether or not those in need are members of the church?

Churches for too long have been able to get away with oft repeated lament, "There is a shortage of ministers." The truth of the matter is

for far too long the church has wasted its manpower on irrelevant programmes and petty projects. There is not a shortage of manpower but a waste of man hours.

The sad truth is that many churches are badly run, poorly managed and ineffectively organised.

The kind of leadership in which the churches should be involved is to contribute to the continuing definition and articulation of the most cherished values of our society. In short, the churches, must offer moral leadership.

So much of a minister's energy has been devoted to tending the machinery of the church that he has neglected this element in leadership. Some wit has exclaimed that the minister either cranks the wheels, or is wheeled by the cranks. John W. Gardner, Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, in an essay, "The Anti-Leadership Vaccine", writes, "Leaders have a significant role in creating the state of mind that is the society. They can serve as symbols of the moral unity of society. They can express the values that hold society together. Most important, they can conceive and articulate goals that lift people out of petty preoccupations, carry them above the conflicts that tear society apart, and unite them in the pursuit of objectives worthy of their best efforts."

If the education and training for the ministry can produce such leaders and the churches support that kind of ministry, which is to say the least and the most, a ministry of reconciliation, a ministerial mandate which we have from the New Testament, then the prophets of gloom and doom, who prophesy the demise of the Church and its ministry would be dead wrong.

We may dispute the nature of the religious crisis of our day, but the fact that we are in the midst of a religious crisis cannot be easily denied. Out of the crisis will emerge a new concept both of the nature of the Church and the purposes of the ministry, whose shape already takes the form of a servant church.

We ought not to be dismayed by all this, since we follow and seek to serve One whose task it is to "make all things new". Even the Church! Even the Ministry! Even the Laity! Even society!

# DIE KERK BUIITE SUID-AFRIKA

BRITSE TEOLOOG VERLAAT DIE ROOMS-KATOLIEKE KERK.

PROF. B. B. KEET

Prof. Charles Davis van Heythrop, 'n Jesuitiese kollege naby Oxford, wat nog as teologiese deskundige by die Tweede Vatikaanse Konsilie gedien het, maak aan die pers bekend dat hy die Rooms-Katolieke Kerk verlaat. Hy sê o.a.: „Vir my is die Christelike belydenis onlosmaaklik verbonde met die waarheidsvraag en met mense. Ek vind dat geen van beide deur die offisiële kerk verteenwoordig word nie. Daar is belangstelling in gesag ten koste van die waarheid en ek betreur altyd die skade wat aan persone gedoen word deur 'n onpersoonlike en onvrye sisteem.”

Hy verklaar dat hy finaal tot hierdie besluit gekom het toe hy besig was om 'n referaat voor te berei vir die eerste offisiële samekoms tussen Anglikane en Rooms-Katolieke in Gus-Zada, Italië. Toe hy hom daarvoor klaargemaak het, was hy verplig om sy gedagtes oor die Pousdom en die Rooms-Katolieke Kerk te ondersoek, en het hy tot die gevolgtrekking gekom dat sy algemene opvatting van die Christelike kerke hom van die Rooms-Katolisisme uitgesluit het.

Nader word die redes, vir sy optrede soos volg saamgevat:-

## Die kerk as instituut.

Daar bestaan geen vaste Bybelse grond waarop so 'n massiewe struktuur gebou kan word as die Rooms-Katolieke eis dit stel nie. Die kerk se historiese ontwikkeling is nie die ontvouing van 'n geopenbaarde dogma nie, maar die verabsoluttering van 'n verbygaande struktuur. Die konstitusie oor die kerk word beheers deur 'n buitensporige klem op institutêre reëlinge van relatiewe waarde en bederf deur die strewe om die pouslike mag ongerep te behou. Die kerk is meer besorgd oor sy eie gesag en prestige as oor die boodskap van die evangelie.

**Twee persoonlike dogmas** in verband met die maagd Maria: haar vlekkelose ontvangenis en haar hemelvaart. Daar is nog geen bevredigende verklaring van dogmatiese ontwikkeling gevind om dit as deel van die Christelike openbaring te beskou nie.

## Die oorheersing van die sisteem oor die persoon.

Die geïnstitueerde kerk verdruk en benadeel altyd die enkele persoon. Vir hom het die kerk altyd meer 'n groot, onpersoonlike, onvrye, onmenslike sisteem geword. Die kerk van Christus is tog die sigbare getuie en voorbeeld van interpersoonlike gemeenskap, wat 'n gawe van die verlossing is. In wese

moet dit die model wees van menslike verhoudinge en gemeenskap. Waar hy die offisiële kerk sien as iets wat vernietigend werk op menslike verhoudinge kan hy dit nie langer as die beliggaming van genade aanvaar nie.

## Traagheid van Pouslike beslissing oor geboortereëling.

Die Pous moet die bevindinge van sy eie kommissie aanvaar en of 'n positiewe verklaring van die veranderde sienswyse doen, of erken dat daar eerlike twyfel bestaan omtrent die aanvaarbaarheid van die tradisionele sienswyse. Maar die Pous sê, volgens prof. Davis, dat daar geen twyfel is nie, terwyl daar klaarblyklik wel twyfel bestaan. Dit het sy geloof in die hoër gesag van die kerk laat wankel.

In antwoord op 'n vraag aangaande sy toekomstige planne het hy gesê: „Ek het geen begeerte om in hoogmoedige isolasie as denker voort te gaan nie. Ek wil in gemeenskap dink, aan 'n gemeenskaplike taak deelneem, my gedagte aan die kerk ondergeskik maak.” Hy het asnog geen plan om by 'n ander kerk aan te sluit nie, maar tog Christen te bly in 'n vorm wat hy nog nie deurgedink het nie. Geen kerk skyn die antwoord op sy probleme te besit nie. Hy sien Christene saamwerk terwyl hulle hul Christelike geloof betuig. Maar die bestaande kerke het blykbaar geen belang hierby nie; hul Christelike werklikheid bestaan wel maar word beliggaam in die kerk as instituut. Prof. Davis het ook bekend gemaak dat hy met 'n Amerikaanse vrou gaan trou, maar dit het niks te doen met sy besluit om die kerk te verlaat nie. Om te kan trou moes hy net as priester bedank het. (Ontleen aan Ecumenical Press Service).

## Rooms-Katolieke Lektuur.

In **Trouw** van 9 Januarie 1967 skryf dr. H. M. Kuitert oor die re-

sente strekking van Roomse teologiese lektuur:-

Een van die mees boeiende verskynsels in die Christenheid vandag is en bly die ontwikkeling in die Rooms-Katolieke Kerk. Gewoonlik word daarmee verwys na die tweede Vatikaanse Konsilie wat deur Pous Johannes XXIII saamgeroep is, maar net so interessant is dit om hierdie vernuwingsbeweging te volg by die teoloë van die Rooms-Katolieke.

Wat beteken hierdie beweging? Baie algemeen kan gesê word dat die Rooms-Katolieke Christendom, in Wes-Europa altans, tot die ontdekking gekom het dat hy deur die eeue heen, hoe langer hoe meer, in die sakrale vasgeroes het en daarom hoe langer hoe verder van die gewone wêreld te staan gekom het, totdat daar feitlik twee wêreldes ontstaan het, die een 'n „natuurlike” en die ander 'n „geestelike” wêreld. Vir baie Protestante sal hierdie proses ook nie vreemd wees nie.

By hulle trouens vind ons af en toe ook die neiging om die Christelike lewe in 'n aparte wêreld in te deel en so as 't ware 'n dubbele wêreld te skep, een waarin 'n mens glo en 'n ander waarin 'n mens leef. Niemand wil dit graag so hê nie, maar 'n mens kom dikwels in so 'n dubbelheid tereg. Daarom is die Rooms-Katolieke literatuur, oor hierdie probleem nie minder boeiend, leersaam en openbarend vir Protestante nie.

Dr. Kuitert maak gewag van 'n aantal boeke op sy tafel wat hulle besig hou met bogenoemde tema en vind hulle almal die moeite werd om te lees. Nie die minste omdat hulle so besonder vrymoedig oor die geloof, die kerk en die kerkregering skryf nie! Dit is nie nodig om met die skrywers op elke bladsy saam te stem nie — waarom moet dit? — Maar verder staan daar niks in die weg om as reformatoriese Christen te profiteer van die arbeid van hierdie outeurs nie.

## Naskrif

'n Anonieme skrywer het die snedige aanmerking gemaak dat met al die geskryf oor die „God is dood”-teologie, dit goed is om in gedagte te hou dat die duiwel nog springlewendig is!

## The Troubled Heart

## MY CHURCH, MY WIFE AND I

— Dr. W. BRUCKNER DE VILLIERS

My wife and I are both members of the *Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk* of South Africa. We are also active and devoted members of the controversial Christian Institute. This places us in an invidious position. For, by synodal decree, our Church has ordered us, on pain of censure, to resign and withdraw from the Institute and thereby to display our loyalty to the cause of the Church. But our consciences forbid us to relinquish the Christian ideals towards which the Christian Institute most markedly strives, whilst we have never been aware in our own hearts of any conscious intention of disloyalty towards our Church. As things now stand, however, we find that we have, overnight, virtually become heretics, in the most literal sense of the word, and it has become a source of the deepest soul-searching whether we have a right to this heresy, nay more, whether the inescapable responsibility has not been laid upon us to persevere in this newest of heresies in the history of our Church.

## LOYALTY

The crux of the matter, of course, is what exactly constitutes the "cause" of the Church to which we are bidden to be loyal to the point of spurning all other religious affiliations whatsoever. A careful perusal and analysis of the "grounds" upon which the general synod of our church based its condemnation and rejection of the Christian Institute illuminate their essential hollowness: not a single one of the "reasons" proffered in justification of the synodal decision would appear to be able to stand the test either of reason or of Scripture — as the Christian Institute itself has pointed out in great detail and has amply proven. One is compelled to ask oneself, therefore, whether there is not more than just a measure of substance to the terrible suspicion one has progressively come to entertain: that the cause of the N.G. Kerk in its controversy with the Institute has very little in common with the cause of the Kingdom of Christ, but that it appears to be the cause of the embattled White race in South Africa and of its present-day rulers that this influential church of ours has chosen to espouse and make its own. Have not events prior and subsequent to the synod's momentous decision made it abundantly clear that this is the real cause towards which our loyalty is demanded and that the actual text of the synodal decision is so much abstruse verbiage designed to conceal its real purpose and obscure the essential issue?

This is a terrible suspicion to en-

ertain about the highest authorities of the church of our fathers. But how can one avoid it when the editor of the official mouthpiece of the Church, *Die Kerkbode*, writes, as he did only a few days ago: "in practice, the demand which the Institute imposes upon the Church is a political demand of one man, one vote and it aims at an ecclesiastical pattern of multiracialism which will lead from the church to social and biological mixing. The N.G. Kerk does not allow itself to be abused for this purpose"?

## LOCAL CONGREGATION

A further aggravating circumstance that gravely worries us in this whole matter is the problem of our personal relationship with the minister of our own congregation and the members of our local church council: the men, so we believe, called by God to attend also to our spiritual needs and to offer us the necessary guidance and admonishment within the framework of the spiritual welfare of the congregation as a whole — the men now compelled to apply to us the strictures of our Church without ever having sought for themselves the dubious honour of being the effective instruments of the Church's wrath.

Our local church minister we regard as a good and sincere man, and a man hitherto professionally untroubled by the intricacies of politico-theological polemics. So, to the best of our knowledge, are the members of our local Church council. These are the men who, through some strange quirk of ecclesiastical

circumstances, are forced soon to sit in judgment upon us and to give effect to the ire of the supreme authorities of the Church at the "deviationist" activities of the Christian Institute which we unfortunately happen to represent in their particular fold.

How grossly unfair! How utterly incongruous! Our hearts are moved by simple Christian compassion: how sincerely we would have preferred to avoid a confrontation with these good and honest men — we who represent the veritably heretical in the eyes of the authorities of our church arraigned before them, our respected brethren in Christ, who have now been called upon to give effect to a quasi papal decree in the formulation and promulgation of which they themselves had no part, the background and ramifications of which they understand but slightly, the ultimate effects of which they have by no means been prepared to evaluate. Like lowly and dispensable troupes they are being sent into the fray by the generals of the church, ordered to march on a straight collision course and to do the dirty work of others without their having made the crucial decision or having had any part in it.

Why, we keep asking ourselves, must these honest and god-fearing men be dragged neck-deep into a controversy neither of their own choosing nor of their own making? Why do not the original initiators and instigators of the deplorable synodal decision (including the large number of members of the general synod who, through their personal absence from the voting-chamber, flinched from their responsibility and allowed this terrible thing to take place without strenuous objection) stand up like men and defend themselves against the arguments from Scripture and the Reformed Confessions with which the Christian Institute has repeatedly and pleadingly been prepared to face them? Why must our local minister and the good members of his council be subjected to the ignominy of trying to justify before us the righteousness of a Scripturally in-

defensible decision made by their superiors?

Seen in the light of our hitherto healthy relationship with our local Church authorities, we would rather forfeit our right to membership of the N.G. Kerk by simply resigning from it than to be brought into painful conflict with men whom we respect and who, in our view, have not deserved to become embroiled in this strange spiritual ordeal. Seen in the light of our membership of the N.G. Kerk as a whole and of the universal Church of Christ, however, we dare not flinch from even this cruel transgression upon the preserves of spiritual peace to which we regard our local shepherds of the spirit entitled.

### SACRAMENTS

There are even deeper problems troubling our hearts, however. According to the synodal decision and subsequent statements by a few of the high-priests of our Church, we are, on account of our inalcitrant stand, due for official censure by the local authorities in the foreseeable future. This entails debarment from participation in the sacraments. We have already pointed out to our local minister, however, that such a step will be of no avail whatsoever in our case. For, according to our understanding of our Church's practice, censure or debarment from the sacraments is intended not as a worldly eye-for-an-eye measure, but solely as a last means employed by God in his mercy to bring the wayward sinner to his senses — in fact, as a final act of grace, not of punishment or persecution. But in this particular context we simply do not regard ourselves as wayward sinners to whom ultimate measures must be applied to bring them to conversion. We may be erring, to be sure, but then surely it is the task of our spiritual overseers to lead us back to the road of virtue, the right road, and to do so specifically with proofs from Scripture and our Church's Confessions as to the nature of our error.

So far from this having taken place, our experience hitherto has taught us that the authorities of our Church, the hallowed church of our fathers, have come to shy away convulsively from any direct confrontation either with the Christian Institute and all it represents or with Scripture itself.

### EXCOMMUNICATION?

Consequently we remain unconvinced, uncontrite and unrepentant.

In view of this attitude of ours, the only recourse left for the authorities to whom our spiritual welfare is entrusted, therefore, is the final and irrevocable one: excommunication. And it is at this point that our hearts indeed become sorely troubled. For our Church's formulary of excommunication, which, as things now stand, will eventually and inevitably have to be pronounced concerning us, reads in part as follows:

**Despite "numerous Christian admonitions and prayers" directed at our brother/sister in order that he/she should "become converted to God and, set free from the trap of the devil, who keeps him/her in bondage to do his will, again become awakened to do the will of the Lord", we are now, therefore, compelled to "proceed to his/her excommunication according to the command and injunction given us in the Holy Word of God."**

**"Accordingly we, the servants and overseers of this Church of God, who are gathered in the Name and might of our Lord Jesus Christ, hereby declare before all of you that he/she is excluded and is hereby excluded from the congregation of the Lord and is debarred from the communion of Christ, from the holy Sacraments and from all spiritual blessings and benefactions of God which He promises and proves to his church . . . He/she must, therefore be regarded by you as an heathen and publican according to the commandment of Christ, who says that whatever His servants shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven."**

My wife, particularly, completely fails to comprehend the reason and the justification for this terrible curse which is looming over our heads. She readily concedes that any institutional Church such as our own must surely have the right and authority to ban an obdurate sinner from its fold. But then she does not regard herself as a sinner in this particular context, so far from being a hardened and obdurate one. On the contrary we are continuously striving to observe all the rules of proper piety within the framework of the congregation to which we belong and to conduct ourselves in a manner befitting good parishioners. And

not once yet have we been admonished by the overseers of our congregation or has the nature of our transgression been revealed and explained to us (unless our reading of newspaper reports concerning the synodal decision is regarded as sufficient admonishment and revelation of our sin), even though the formulary of excommunication clearly makes mention of "numerous admonitions . . . in private as well as before witnesses and in the presence of many" preceding excommunication itself.

My poor wife: she, unlike I, has had no formal theological training, but is merely a staunch and dedicated member of our church, far stauncher and more trustingly so than I myself. I hesitate to disillusion and disenchant her by revealing to her the horrors so frequently perpetrated in the name of Calvinism, or rather of hyper-Calvinism, in the past: a history of which this very formulary is but a pale relic and during which it was repeatedly employed as an instrument of cruel persecution, not of merciful chastisement. I would rather withhold from her a more intimate knowledge of the religious bigotry, sophistry and intolerance which so destructively characterised such a large part of the Protestant movement during the 16th and 17th centuries. For the sake of whatever peace of mind she has still managed to retain under our present circumstances, I would rather not provide her with the gory details of the tyrannical persecution of humane and enlightened men like Servetus and Castellio in the Name of Christ by Calvin, the founder of our Church, whose very name we have been conditioned throughout our lives to venerate; nor tell her about the despotic religious intolerance which was rife everywhere during the early years of the history of the Church of which our own is a direct derivative — a religious intolerance which (shades of the past!) seems to have struck an echo in the political intolerance (with all its amazing religious overtones and undertones) that has become characteristic of our own country in our time . . .

### HYPOCRISY

Our hearts are sorely troubled by one final circumstance contributing to our present dilemma: **the utter hypocrisy characterising the attitude**

of the authorities of our Church in their controversy with the Christian Institute and leading them to the depth of folly to which they have now stooped in dealing with it.

The general synod of the N.G. Kerk has condemned the Christian Institute for being an extra-ecclesiastical organisation, acting in competition with the Church, professing to perform the task of the Church better than the Church itself, wishing to join in one organisation all who profess to be Christians, including Roman Catholics, opposing the Church's Scripturally tested mission policy, entertaining a highly questionable Church concept and view of ecumenicity and undermining the Church's authority and promoting discord in congregations. Consequently it decided to reject the Institute as "an heretical movement which subverts the pure doctrine, undermines the good order in the Church and sows discord among members."

What noble sentiments, what sanctimonious phrases to disguise and obscure a harsh reality: that authorities of the N.G. Kerk are not prepared to have any truck with any ecumenical movement which accepts interracialism, even if only in the field of religion, as an inescapable corollary of its specific Christian endeavour.

The fact of the matter is that the Christian Institute frankly is and persists in remaining a purely ecumenical body of individual Christians from all denominations. According to its constitution it is based upon "the Word of God, belief in God the Father, in Jesus Christ the Son, Redeemer and Lord, and in the Holy Spirit, and the conviction that for all who share such a common loyalty, it is desirable and necessary that determined efforts be made to express and foster their unity in Christ" (accentuation by me.)

This is where the sting lies: in the tail of this seemingly innocuous statement. For such a statement clearly implies a firm belief in the positive practice by Christians of ecumenism also in the sense of interdenominationalism and therefore, unavoidably, interracialism at least on the devotional level. The Institute does not believe in these principles merely as ideals still to be realised in the coming Kingdom of God. For the Kingdom of Christ, finally established on Golgotha, is

already with us and we as its subjects are bidden to live according to its rules, already here and now!

It is this unambiguous belief in the principle of the unity of the Church and the attendant necessity of interdenominational contact amongst individual believers — supplementary to the official negotiations between the churches — which inevitably implies interracial contact, even if only on the religious plane which the authorities of the N.G. Kerk clearly resent and unconditionally reject. This is the real issue at stake, with its attendant issues of social justice and ordinary Christian charity in our dealings with our less privileged fellow-men. This is the gist of the whole controversy, despite the loftily worded inanities, platitudes and sophistries contained in the deplorable synodal decision.

The synod bases its rejection of the Christian Institute, to which we belong on the strength of profound conviction, on alleged doctrinal deviations. One stands aghast at such brazenness in the face of the unmistakable injunctions of Scripture and of the clear statements contained in the very Confessions upon which the N.G. Kerk itself is based.

This is what gives us, who are devoted members of this Church, such serious pause. How can the general synod of our Church and all the members comprising it, how can the hundreds of elders and especially trained ministers of our Church throughout the length and breadth of Southern Africa stand idly by at the official condemnation and rejection of the Christian Institute only because of its strong reaffirmation of its belief in an essential article of that in which the N.G. Kerk itself has always professed to believe?

### CONDEMNED

One need not even resort to aducing Scriptural proofs in justification of the Institute's standpoint in its confrontation with the N.G. Kerk. This Church stand condemned in the words of its own venerated Confessions.

Every Sunday every office-bearer and member of the N.G. Kerk who still goes to church stands with bowed head and reaffirms his belief, in the words of the Apostles' Creed, in the "one, holy, catholic Christian Church", and also, even more sig-

nificantly, in "the communion of the saints". In case there should be any doubts in any mind as to what precisely this entails, the meaning is clearly spelt out in the major Confessions upon which the N.G. Kerk, like other Reformed Churches, bases itself.

The Heidelberg Catechism states quite unambiguously in answer to the question as to what is meant by the holy, catholic Christian Church: "that the Son of God gathers, protects and preserves for Himself from the whole human race a Church (congregation) which is elected to eternal life, by his Spirit and Word, in the unity of the true faith, from the beginning of the world to its end; and that I am and will eternally remain a living member of it." (Question 54). And in answer to the question as to what must be understood by the communion of the saints it postulates equally explicitly: "firstly, that the faithful, all together and every one individually, communally participate in all His treasures and gifts as members of the Lord Christ. Secondly, that everyone should know, that he is beholden to employ his gifts willingly and joyously for the benefit and salvation of the other members" (Question 55; all accentuation my own).

This is perhaps the most incisive statement ever propounded outlining the spirit of ecumenism (derived from the Greek word *ecumene* which literally means "covering every corner of the inhabited world"). This is a principle to which every candidate for confirmation in the N.G. Kerk pays humble allegiance at the time of his confirmation, as did also my wife and I. This is the principle upon which implicitly and specifically the Christian Institute is based, and which it is also, however haltingly, trying to put into practice. And it is because it prayerfully tries to give practical effect to this key doctrinal principle of the Church of Christ, and also, ironically, of the N.G. Kerk, that it stands condemned, rejected and banned by the latter Church. This is the ludicrousness of the weird controversy in which we have become involved.

### THE CHURCH'S CONFESSION

But the matter goes even further and additional confirmation may be derived from that other pillar of the

N.G. Kerk's confessional faith: the Netherlands Confession (the *Confessio Belgica*, compiled in 1561 by Guido de Brès and a few collaborators and unanimously approved by the renowned Synod of Dordrecht in 1618-19). This Confession states quite unequivocally: "We confess our belief in a single catholic or universal Church which is a holy gathering of the true believers in Christ . . . This Church was there from the beginning of the world and will be there until its end . . . And this Church is protected and preserved by God against the wrath of the whole world; although it is sometimes, for a time, very small and has apparently ceased to exist in the eyes of men . . . Moreover the holy Church is not constituted by, bound to or limited to certain persons, but is spread and scattered across the whole world; nevertheless it is joined together and united with heart and will in one and the same Spirit through the power of faith" (Art. XXVII).

The Confession continues: "We believe that no one, of whatever standing or dignity he may be, ought to hold himself apart and to stand on his own, but that all are in duty bound to join this holy gathering and to unite themselves with it; to preserve the unity of the Church . . . as members of the same body, to be mutually of service in the edification of the brethren to the gifts granted them by God. And . . . it is the charge of all believers . . . to separate themselves from those who do not belong to the Church and to join themselves unto this gathering wherever God has established it, even though the authorities and the decrees of rulers should be against it and even though death or any corporal punishment should be entailed by it. Therefore all who separate themselves from the true Church or do not join it act in disobedience to the decree of God." (Art. XXVIII).

This is what the N.G. Kerk, our Church, professes. This is also what the Christian Institute, from sincere conviction, believes and positively strives to see fulfilled. How incomprehensible, then, that the Institute should stand condemned as an heretical movement by this, our own Church. How understandable, then, that my wife and I see ourselves impaled on the horns of a terrible dilemma and are deeply worried in spirit.

## GRIEF

Our hearts are sorely troubled by the threat of excommunication from the beloved Church of our fathers which looms over us because of our positive affirmation of an essential article of Christian faith.

Our hearts are troubled by the spiritual discomfiture we are bound shortly to cause our own local Church minister and elders, whom we would gladly have seen relieved of this onerous and irksome task of sitting in judgment upon us, humble children of their flock.

Our hearts go out in sincere sympathy to our minister's hundreds of fellow-ministers throughout the country, trained theologians all of them, who, through what can only be ignorance of or utter lack of interest in the true issues involved, are standing passively and dispassionately by, never moving a finger while this loveless decree of the synod is being enacted.

Our hearts are troubled by the measure of obviously political motivation which has crept into the decisions of the highest authorities of our Church at the expense of the single gospel of Christ and the noble Confessions based upon it.

**We grieve in our hearts for our beloved Church which temporarily is being led by men who appear to have decided to be more obedient to the dictates of men than of God and which has come so perilously close to what the Netherlands Confession itself describes as the "false church": "it ascribes to itself and its own decrees more power and authority than to the Word of God and refuses to subjugate itself to the yoke of Christ . . . It bases itself more upon men than upon Christ, persecutes those who lead a holy life according to the Word of God and who rebuke it for its failings, avarice and idolatry." (Art. XXIX).**

We, my wife and I and a few like-minded friends and fellow-members of the Christian Institute, are they of the troubled heart in these turbulent days of the tortured spirit. Like our Master before us, we, too, would pray in anguish: "if it be possible, let this cup pass from me". We are sorely troubled because we would fain take the easiest course and, for the sake of peace, quietly tender our resignation as members of our Church. This conscience will not allow us to do, however, and we can take no other stand than the

perilous one we have taken. For it is the freedom of belief and conscience that is being imperilled in these days, tragically enough by our own Church, and we can do no other than defend it against whatever odds.

If this be heresy, then so be it.

(The views of the author are not necessarily in all respects those of the Christian Institute. — Editor.)

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Ter wille van ons Afrikaanse lesers (en omdat die betrokke passasies vreemd genoeg nog meer ontstellend klink in die Afrikaanse weergawe) plaas ons hieronder die uittreksels uit die Afrikaanse Formulierboek waarna deur dr. de Villiers in die voorafgaande artikel verwys word.

Uit die *Formulier van die Ban of Afsnyding van die Gemeente*:

„Geliefdes in die Here Jesus Christus, dit is u bekend dat ons nou al op verskillende tye van trap tot trap aan u voorgehou het watter groot sonde ons medelidmaat N. gedoen het en watter groot aanstoot hy gegee het; met die doel dat hy deur u christelike vermaninge en gebede hom tot God sou bekeer en, vry geword van die strik van die duiwel, wat hom gevange hou om sy wil te doen, weer tot ontwaking sou kom om die wil van die Here te doen. Maar met groot droefheid moet ons u meedeel dat tot nog toe niemand verskyn het wat ons in die minste te verstaan gegee het dat hy as gevolg van die menigvuldige vermaninge aan hom — afsonderlik sowel as voor getuies en in teenwoordigheid van baie — tot enige berou oor sy sonde gekom het of enige teken van ware boetvaardigheid geopenbaar het nie . . .

„Daarom verklaar ons, dienaars en opsieners van hierdie gemeente van God, wat in die Naam en die mag van onse Here Jesus Christus vergader is, voor u almal dat N. weens die genoemde oorsaak, uitgesluit is en hierby uitgesluit word buite die gemeente van die Here en vervreemd is van die gemeenskap van Christus, van die heilige Sakramente en van alle geestelike seëninge en weldade van God wat Hy aan sy gemeente beoef en bewys, solank as hy hardnekkig en onboetvaardig in sy sondes bly. Hy moet daarom deur u beskou word as 'n heiden en tollenaar volgens die bevel van Christus (Matt. 18), wat sê dat in die hemele gebonde is alles wat sy dienaars op die aarde bind . . .

Uit die *Heidelbergse Kategismus*:

„54. Vr. Wat glo jy van die heilige, algemene Christelike Kerk?

Antw. Dat die Seun van God uit die ganse menslike geslag vir Hom 'n gemeente wat tot die ewige lewe uitverkies is deur sy Gees en Woord in die eenheid van die ware geloof van die begin van die wêreld af tot aan die einde toe vergader, beskerm en onderhou en dat ek daarvan 'n lewende lid is en ewig sal bly.

55. Vr. Wat verstaan jy onder die gemeenskap van die heiliges?

Antw. Ten eerste, dat die gelowiges almal saam en elkeen afsonderlik, as lede aan die Here Christus en al sy



skatte en gawes gemeenskap het. Ten tweede, dat elkeen moet weet dat hy skuldig is om sy gawes tot nut en saligheid van die ander lede gewillig en met vreugde aan te wend."

Uit die *Nederlandse Geloofsbelydenis*:  
„Ons glo en bely 'n enige katolieke of algemene Kerk wat 'n heilige vergadering is van die ware gelowiges in Christus . . . Hierdie Kerk was daar van die begin van die wêreld af en sal daar wees tot aan die einde toe . . . En hierdie heilige Kerk word deur God bewaar of in stand gehou teen die woede van die hele wêreld; alhoewel dit somtyds 'n tyd lank baie klein is en in die oë van mense skynbaar tot niet geraak het . . . Bowendien is hierdie heilige Kerk nie geleë in, gebonde aan of bepaal deur sekere per-

sone nie, maar dit is verspreid en verstrooid oor die hele wêreld; nogtans is dit saamgevoeg en verenig met hart en wil in een en dieselfde Gees, deur die krag van die geloof." (Art. XXVII).

„Ons glo . . . dat niemand, van watter stand of waardigheid hy ookal mag wees, hom apart behoort te hou en op sy eie te staan nie, maar dat hulle almal verplig is om hulle daarby aan te sluit en daarmee te verenig; om die eenheid van die Kerk te bewaar . . . en, as lede van dieselfde liggaam, onderling diensbaar te wees aan die opbouing van die broeders volgens die gawes wat God hulle verleen het. En om dit des te beter te kan onderhou, is dit die amp van alle gelowiges . . . om hulle af te skei van diegene wat nie tot die Kerk behoort nie, en hulle

te voeg by hierdie vergadering, op watter plek God dit ookal gevestig het, al sou ook die owerhede en verordeninge van vorste daarteen wees en al sou die dood of enige lyfstraf daarmee verbonde wees. Daarom handel almal wat hulle van die ware Kerk afskei of daarby nie aansluit nie, teen die verordening van God." (Art. XXVIII).

„Wat die valse Kerk betref, dit skryf aan homself en sy verordeninge meer mag en gesag toe as aan die Woord van God en wil hom aan die juk van Christus nie onderwerp nie . . . Dit grond hom meer op mense as op Christus, vervolg diegene wat heilig lewe na die Woord van God en wat hom oor sy gebreke, gierigheid en afgodery bestraf . . ." (Art. XXIX).

# BANG GOES THE TRUTH

— The Rev. PAUL DUFFETT

What an explosive potentiality there rests in those shiny steel cased shells called Hydrogen Bombs! There, innocently waiting, like eggs, lies a destructive force able to blast the world to smithereens, because clever men were able to split into two the smallest known particle of energy. I suppose that if one wanted a metaphorical description of one of those little pills pouring out its poison in a blistering cloud, one could do worse than say "There is the resurrection of the Devil".

Imagine reversing the process! Instead of the impersonal dead steel, use instead a highly intricate, wonderfully conceived, soul, a beautifully balanced, minutely designed, brain, heart and body. Instead of splitting, destroying, the smallest particle of energy, combine, synthesize, and release the most polished, perfected combination of energy in millions upon millions of its particles all harnessed gloriously into one fulfilled personality.

The result might be described as the Resurrection of man, and indeed because it WAS such a man, was it not the Explosion of the Perfect Good, the Man — and God?

There is a painting of this event

which always comes to my mind. There is the Christ figure — flowing robes in a bright morning sun, simply drawn travelling forward slightly airborne and holding a lance with a simple flag of a St. George's cross fluttering in the wind. Behind Him is the Empty Tomb, and around Him are the thunderstruck soldiers. Triumph, kind but insistent, glorious, free and cheerful, an offering of substantial Hope to all who will look, is what the painting gladly declares.

Substantial Hope. That's it! **Our** substance. Isn't it that there we see released all the potential we long for within ourselves? Isn't it that there we know it is possible — not even possible but certain? I can hear a **confident** voice of St. Paul, unbound beneath the burden of this world, the measure of which most of us are blessedly spared, raised in conviction, "I know that nothing can separate me from the love of God in Christ Jesus."

No, not suffering or death!

But perhaps those who also know the terrible power which these disintegrating forces can and do, exert on a troubled world, are those who attain the greatest depth of certainty, the highest flights of Triumph.

Is it accidental that in Japan there has been such a revival of the Christian Faith since 1945, or that Air Marshall Cheshire can say that the dropping of the "Bomb" was the most instrumental factor in his conversion? No one who has even a glimpse of the reality of Jesus Christ and the Power of His resurrection has ever avoided the terror of war, the disaster of road accidents, the despair of starvation, the loneliness of a distracted mind, or the pettiness of so much of our daily bitterness — in fact the Cross.

This is what Jesus carried to His grave — to all appearances, battered and beaten, a sorry figure of human endeavour toppled by evil. Oh, how stupid the devil is! — for it is not the appearance that counts — not the shining silent steel egg — unhatched, but the unseen explosive power. Thus with Him and thus with us. He showed once to a few stupefied friends what will be true for us, in all our amazement, as we stand shuffled off from these thin appearances, a new man bodily resurrected through the Power of Him who is able.

# FAITH AT WORK

— The Rev. DANTE ANDERSON

For about 30 years I have been a reader of a little magazine called "Faith at Work". It has a world outreach and tries to emphasise personal faith in the living of life today. The witness covers the whole range of life and it is both inter-denominational and strongly lay.

In recent years this emphasis on lay leadership has led in America to the holding of "Faith at Work" Conferences where there is a consistent challenge to deeper commitment to the Lordship of Jesus Christ and a life committed to others in open, honest fellowship.

Through the vision of an American businessman who was prepared to invest a thousand dollars to spread the emphasis of Faith at Work in South Africa I was fortunate enough to be the person who was swept into the spiritual blood stream of the United States and Canada. As I travelled around the States and Canada I discovered, at grassroot level, the family of God. Everywhere I went much the same thing happened: the love of God became glorious and powerful. Often where it had laid dormant in human hearts it stirred, became released and began to flow out for the making whole of lonely and inhibited lives.

Perhaps it might be possible with some modification to transplant an important facet of this work into our situation here in South Africa. Faith at Work evangelism is done in teams. If a church writes in to say that they would like to plan a Renewal Weekend in their church then Faith at Work office can provide the names of a number of lay folk who are prepared to share their faith in any kind of church situation. I attended three of these weekends, one in a Presbyterian, another in a Baptist and the third in a Methodist Church. The team of people coming in to the church situation for the weekend may be any size: a dozen or fifty or more. We arrived Friday evening, were introduced to the local people, met them later that evening in a number of small "Talk It Over" groups. And throughout the weekend where we were put up in the homes of church members we were given the opportunity to witness and share our faith in small groups.

Both the members who come in on the team take new steps in faith and the church people are inspired with a new zeal for their Lord. To me this would be a very worthwhile mission if we could also through the Christian Institute build up a list of folk who were prepared to be

used in this way. Preparations are in hand for a pioneer weekend and anyone who feels they would like to share in this venture can apply through the Institute.

However this was such an exciting time for me that I believe God may be speaking to us in a new way. As far as I can judge these three months overseas were spiritually more productive for me than three years in a local situation. Perhaps this may be true for others too. Can we widen our horizons and become newly mobile? Before I left America, Bruce Larson, the Director of Faith at Work, suggested that now that I knew my way about the States I ought to return but bring a team from South Africa. Are there perhaps some of you who feel God is calling you to this kind of venture?

Plans are beginning to form for such a team to visit the United States and possibly other countries. We go not for pleasure or sight-seeing but primarily to share our faith, find stimulating Christian fellowship and learn more about what it means to be a Christian in today's society. If this rings a bell for anyone please will you write to me at P.O. Box 358, Roodepoort, Transvaal.

## LETTERS

### BAPTISM AND CO-EXISTENCE

The Rev. Douglas J. Crankshaw, Stanger.

I would like to tell you how very much I enjoyed Father Jansen's "Our Living with God". These are the kinds of depths that, if we can reach down together as denominations, we are going to find a way through to a real expression of the Christian faith.

He seems to have said something like this: that our very existence is a co-existence with the world which has been made for us to live in by others and co-existence with other people. Then, thirdly, it is co-existence, especially for a Christian, with God. It depends upon the way in which our fellow-man and God and the world co-exist with us that will make us Christians or not.

Where I'm trying to get to is: Where can this idea of conversion to Christianity by baptism enter into this discussion? Am I right in saying that baptism represents a coming into existence with a certain group of people which are the Church and also coming into an exist-

ence with God that begins a Christian life and is founded on a sure foundation, but it does seem to me that everything depends upon the nature of that co-existence and very little depends upon the nature of the baptism, only in that it is the sign of something else. 'The experience of conversion at the moment of baptism' I find a most extraordinarily dogmatic statement. Is it really meant the 'beginning' of conversion or the 'sign' of conversion? Ought we not to state realistically that very often baptism does not mean coming into an existence with the Church and its fellowship and with God? It means nothing of the kind to many people. In fact it is largely a beginning of nothing.

I must say that I would have liked to have been at that Ecumenical Conference to have heard Father Jansen give this. It must have been quite an experience.

### TRADITION

Mr. J. A. Duigan, Pretoria.

I enjoyed your January issue (as I have done all *Pro Veritate* issues) but

would just like to mention one point in Dr. de Villiers' very interesting "Die Oorryp Tyd" which puzzles me, and that is his statement that, "Nêrens in die Skrif en veral in die Nuwe Testament word tradisie ooit opgehemel as iets goddeliks nie" . . . Does not John's last Gospel end by saying "There are other things which Jesus did which are not written here"? Refer also to II Thess. 2:14 ". . . hold the traditions which you have learned whether by word or Epistle". Also II Tim. 1:13 "Hold the form of sound words which you have heard of Me in faith", and II Tim. 2:2, "The things thou hast heard of Me by many witnesses, the same commend to faithful men, who shall be fit to teach others also". Paul says inter alia "Faith cometh by hearing". Rom. 11:14-18.

The traditions which are condemned are the human traditions (vide Coloss. 2:8) and I Pet. 1:18; also Matt. 15:3 which refers to "your (Pharisees) tradition".

I know Dr. de Villiers has a big job to do however, and I do not want him to spend time arguing on his views for my benefit!



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