

# **PRO VERITATE**

**JAMES MOULDER**

Rich Man, Poor Man . . . ? (2)

**DAVID PERK**

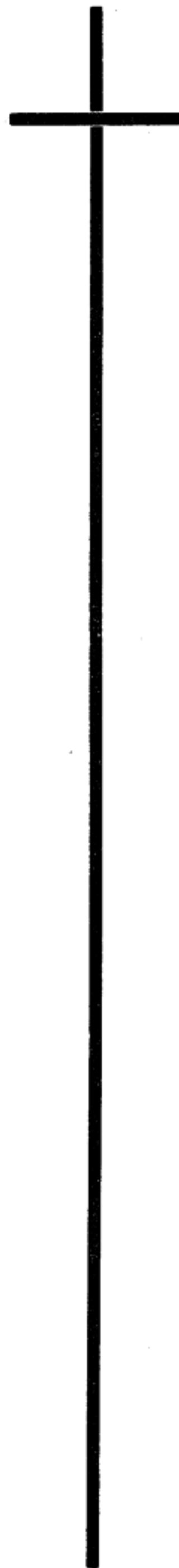
Politics and Religion

**JACK CURTIS**

Christianity at the Crossroads

**BEN ENGELBRECHT**

Vervolg van Mindolo-Gruweikroniek?



# PRO VERITATE

## EDITORIAL

*EDITOR:*  
*Dr. B. Engelbrecht.*

*EDITORIAL COMMITTEE:*  
*Bishop B. B. Burnett; Rev. J. de Gruchy; Rev. A. W. Habelgaarn; Rev. E. E. Mahabane; Rev. J. E. Moulder; Rev. C. F. B. Naudé (Chairman); Rev. R. Orr; Prof. Dr. A. van Selms.*

## ADMINISTRATION/ CORRESPONDENCE

*CIRCULATION MANAGER:*  
*Dr. W. B. de Villiers.*

*All letters to the editor and administration to: P.O. Box 487, Johannesburg.*

## SUBSCRIPTION

*Subscription payable in advance.*

*Land and sea mail: R1 (10/- or \$1.40) — Africa; R1.50 (15/- or \$2.10) — Overseas.*

*Air mail: R2 (£1 or \$2.80) — Africa; R3.50 (£1.17.6 or \$5.00) — Overseas.*

*Cheques and postal orders to be made payable to Pro Veritate (Pty.) Ltd., P.O. Box 487, Johannesburg.*

## PLEASE NOTE

*The editorial staff of Pro Veritate state herewith that they are not responsible for opinions and standpoints which appear in any article of this monthly other than those in the editorial and editorial statements.*

*PRO VERITATE appears on the 15th of every month.*

*(Price per single copy 10c).*

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

*Registered at the Post Office as a Newspaper  
By die Hoofposkantoor as Nuusblad geregistreer*

## IN THIS ISSUE . . .

- The Rev. James Moulder, in the second part of his article, "Rich Man, Poor Man . . . ?" writes about the approach to the problem of rich nations and poor nations from a theological perspective, as discussed by a conference of Christian students recently held in Germany. P. 3
- David Perk discusses the meaning and value of "the spiritual" in the relationship of politics and religion. P. 9
- Prof. B. B. Keet tells of reflections in the Anglican Church on the grounds for divorce, of a religious revival in Ghana, of an opinion expressed by Prof. A. A. van Ruler with regard to the possibility of the existence of intelligent life on other planets, and of the view of Prof. Karl Rahner with regard to the position of the laity in the Roman Catholic Church. P. 11
- In a final article in a series of three, Jack Curtis expresses the view that Christianity in the world and also in South Africa, as a result of the question of its applicability to concrete human relationships, is "at the crossroads". P. 12
- Ben Engelbrecht compares a review by "Die Kerkbode" of the World Conference on Church and Society (Geneva, July, 1966) with the facts given in the recently published Official Report. P. 13

## IN HIERDIE UITGawe

- Ds. James Moulder skryf in die tweede aflewing van sy artikel „Rich Man, Poor Man . . . ?" oor die benadering van die probleem van ryk volke en arm volke vanuit 'n theologiese oogpunt, soos dit bespreek is op 'n konferensie van Christenstuden te wat in Duitsland gehou is. Bl. 3
- David Perk bespreek die betekenis en waarde van „die geestelike" in die verhouding van politiek en godsdienst. Bl. 9
- Prof. B. B. Keet praat oor besinning in die Anglikaanse Kerk oor egskeidingsgronde, oor 'n godsdienstige herlewning in Ghana, oor 'n maning uitgespreek deur prof. A. A. van Ruler i.v.m. die moontlikheid van die bestaan van intelligente lewe op ander planete, en oor die standpunt van prof. Karl Rahner i.v.m. die posisie van leke in die Rooms-Katolieke Kerk. Bl. 11
- In die laaste van 'n reeks van drie artikels, spreek Jack Curtis die mening uit dat die Christendom in dia wêreld en ook in Suid-Afrika, vanweë die vraag van sy toepaslikheid op konkrete menslike verhoudinge, „op die kruispad" is. Bl. 12
- Ben Engelbrecht vergelyk 'n bespreking daar „Die Kerkbode" van die Wêreldkonferensie oor Kerk en Gemeenskap (Genève, Julie 1966) met die gegewens soos vervat in die amptelike verslag wat onlangs verskyn het. Bl. 13

Editorial:

# *The Church and the Future of South Africa*

The Church is the one body in the world and in the life of every people which knows, or should know, that the future is no dark mystery. Only unbelief can regard as obscure the meaning of human existence, of world events, of the historical process as such and the destiny of all things; for the Church it is revealed. Anointed with the Holy Spirit, it knows all; it knows the truth (I John 2:20-21).

This truth concerning the Church's knowledge of all things can be expressed in the words which summarise the essential content of the gospel: The kingdom of God has drawn near. The meaning of our whole earthly life, individual and social, in the Church, in society, in politics, in culture, in technology, in national existence and in international relations, is encompassed in God's establishing his kingdom on earth. Not even the harshest denials of this truth, from wars and rumours of war to the appearance of the anti-Christ, can startle the Church or confound it in its faith, for even in these and in these precisely it perceives the signs which Christ himself indicated as signs of the coming kingdom.

The Church as the bearer of God's truth has, in fact, an extremely onerous responsibility in the world and in the life of every people. For that which it knows, it does not know for its own sake, but for the sake of the kingdom of God coming into the world. It is rooted in the belief in that kingdom and it is subservient to the coming of that kingdom on earth. Its "purity of heart" consists of its remaining starkly directed upon this one issue in its whole existence as Church and in not allowing itself to be swept off its course by "all sorts of outlandish teachings."

From this it dare not be concluded, however, that the Church has a "spiritual" task in the world which stands in contrast to the material world and lies on a different plane than the task of the state, for instance; also not that it must only concern itself with "spiritual" matters like, for instance, the salvation of souls for blessedness in the hereafter; in contrast to earthly matters of a social, political, economic and cultural nature. God does not want to deliver the souls of men from their bodies, the spiritual substance of his creation from its "material casing". The Biblical gospel is a gospel for the whole man in his corporality and for the whole world in its materiality. The message of the Bible is indeed a spiritual one, but if the word "spiritual" in this context is dissociated from the all-embracing work of the Holy Spirit in order to restrict it to the innerness of man, it is completely unbiblical. There certainly is a blessedness in the hereafter also; it does not, however, direct our expectation towards a heavenly existence of souls, but towards a new heaven and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

The truth given to the Church, therefore, is a truth concerning this material world in which we live. This world, and no other, is the object of God's saving grace. He acts in the manner of salvation with this world, in the centuries of history, and ultimately in the fulness of time.

The Church derives its message for the world from this radically earthly meaning, this directedness of the gospel upon the world. Thus it is charged with an enormous responsibility for the world in which it is placed. Because it knows the truth concerning the nature and the destiny of the world, it must approach it with this liberating truth, which very frequently may mean that it will proclaim to the world light in its darkness, consolation in its sorrows and hope in its despair. But no less frequently it will mean that it will have to act with the truth aggressively. When, for instance, the political, social and economic arrangement of life is based upon a view of the world, a view of man, a concept of justice, a vision of the future which contradicts the truth that God's kingdom is coming on earth and gives evidence of the entanglement of the world in all kinds of "outlandish teachings", it immediately places the Church, whether it wants to be or not, on the attack.

The fact that it may be despised or even persecuted on account of its very claim to the truth and be relegated or forced back to its "own field", dare not cause it to falter. In such times precisely, when it becomes necessary for the Church to gainsay with the gospel some policy or other pursued in connection with the ordering of society, protests are uttered to the effect that it should be restricted to its "spiritual" field, whilst, remarkably enough, it is greeted with loud and shameless cries of welcome as collaborator and ally in the political arena, in the economic struggle, in the progress of society, if only it be prepared to hold its peace and affirm, to bless and to sanction. As soon as it says "no", however, or has to say so on the strength of the truth entrusted to it, it is put in its place as the protector of the souls of the pilgrims towards heaven.

Of course the Church can never pretend that it has all knowledge of political, economic and social problems. But the Church dare not keep silent about its knowledge of the truth concerning all things, their meaning and destiny. If a particular order of society does not measure up to the truth that God's kingdom is coming on earth, it is evident for the Church. Then it must also say so and indicate the right course.

There is nothing South Africa needs more today than such a church. Let us concede that the rulers of our country are genuinely convinced that they have found the solution to our greatest political

problem in the policy of apartheid, for instance. Two things are clear in this connection, however. Firstly, this policy, in respect of its ideological basis, is directly at variance with Scripture. If only for this reason it can offer our country no real future, despite its apparent successes and the "break-through" it has achieved. The question is not whether world-opinion is more favourable or whether there is a greater acceptance of the policy in the country itself, which has to determine for us whether we can continue with it or not, but the question whether it is a way of ordering our national life which is a confirmation of the coming of God's kingdom also in this tiny part of the world. Secondly, apartheid, even if it is renamed separate development towards self-determination, is obviously unrealisable in its practical fulfilment. We shall

not have to wait for the collapse of apartheid until one day it proves that we are clashing against God with it. We see it happening before our eyes daily.

Any church which closes its eyes to this and, on the strength of a misplaced loyalty towards a political party in which the most precious national sentiments are projected, anxiously starts proclaiming that the Church should restrict itself to its "spiritual" work and "labour amongst souls", because the Church would become degenerate if it were to direct its testimony at political, social and economic issues, is acting with the profoundest irresponsibility towards the people and in infidelity towards its divine calling. Such "love for the people" is in the deepest sense treason towards the people and such a "spiritual" awareness of calling is, in last resort, the most serious dereliction of duty.

Inleidingsartikel:

## *Die Kerk en die Toekoms van Suid-Afrika*

Die kerk is die een instansie in die wêreld en in elke volkslewe wat weet, altans behoort te weet, dat die toekoms nie 'n duistere raaisel is nie. Wat die sin van die menselewe, van die wêreldgebeure en van die historiese proses as sodanig is en wat die bestemming van alle dinge is, kan slegs deur die ongeloof as duister geag word; maar vir die kerk is dit geopenbaar. Hy het die salwing van die Heilige en weet alles; hy ken die waarheid. (I Joh. 2 : 20-21).

Hierdie waarheid aangaande alle dinge waarvan die kerk kennis het, kan in die woorde wat die kerninhoud van die evangelie saamvat, uitgedruk word: Die koninkryk van God het naby gekom. Die sin van ons ganse aardse lewe, individueel en gemeenskaplik, in die kerk, in die maatskappy, in die politiek, in die kultuur, in die tegniek, in die volksbestaan en in internasionale verhoudinge, lê daarin dat God sy koninkryk in die wêreld oprig. Selfs nie die felste negasies van hierdie waarheid, van oorloë en gérugte van oorloë af tot die verskyning van die antichris, kan die kerk verskrik of in sy geloof verwair nie, want selfs daarin en huis ook daarin ontwaar hy die tekens wat deur Christus self tot tekens gestel is van die koninkryk wat kom.

Die kerk as draer van die waarheid van God, het dan ook 'n heel besondere en uiters gewigtige verantwoordelikheid in die wêreld en in elke volkslewe. Want dit wat hy weet, weet hy nie ter wille van homself nie, maar ter wille van die koninkryk van God wat in die wêreld kom. In die geloof aan daardie koninkryk staan hy gewortel en aan die koms van daardie koninkryk in die wêreld is hy diensbaar. Sy „reinheid van hart" bestaan daarin dat hy as kerk in sy ganse bestaan op hierdie een ding strak gerig sal bly en hom nie sal laat rond-slinger deur allerhande en vreemde leringe nie.

Daaruit is egter nie af te lei dat die kerk in die wêreld 'n „geestelike" taak het wat in teenstelling

staan tot die stoflike wêreld en op 'n ander vlak lê as bv. die taak van die staat nie; ook nie dat hy hom slegs moet bemoei met „geestelike" sake soos bv. die verlossing van siele tot 'n hiernamaalse geluksaligheid, in teenstelling tot die wêreldse aan geleenthede van sosiale, politieke, ekonomiese en kulturele aard nie. God wil nie die siele van mense uit hulle liggame, die geestelike substansie van sy skepping uit die „stoflike omhulsel" daarvan, verlos nie. Die Bybelse evangelie is 'n evangelie vir die hele mens in sy liggaamlikheid en vir die hele wêreld in sy stoflikheid. Geestelik is die boodskap van die Bybel wel, maar as die woord „geestelik" in hierdie verband van die allesomvattende werk van die Heilige Gees losgemaak word om daaraan 'n beperking, nl. tot die innerlikheid van die mens, op te lê, is dit geheel en al onbybels. 'n Hiernamaalse geluksaligheid is daar ook; dit rig ons verwagting egter nie op 'n hemelse sielebestaan nie, maar op nuwe hemele en 'n nuwe aarde waarin geregtigheid woon.

Die waarheid wat aan die kerk gegee is, is dus 'n waarheid aangaande hierdie stoflike wêreld waarin ons leef. Hierdie wêreld, en geen ander nie, is die voorwerp van God se reddende genade. Met hierdie wêreld handel Hy heilig, in die eeu van die geskiedenis, en uiteindelik in die voleinding.

Aan hierdie radikale aardse betekenis, aan die wêreldgerigtheid van die evangelie ontleen die kerk sy boodskap vir die wêreld. Dit lê aan hom so 'n enorme verantwoordelikheid op vir die wêreld waarin hy gestel is. Omdat hy die waarheid aangaande die wese en die bestemming van hierdie wêreld weet, moet hy daarmee bevrydend op hom toetree, wat heel dikwels kan beteken dat hy vir die wêreld lig in sy donker, troos in sy smarte en hoop in sy wanhoop sal verkondig. Maar nie minder dikwels nie sal dit beteken dat hy met die waarheid aanvallend sal moet optree. Waar

aan die politieke, sosiale en ekonomiese inrigting van die lewe bv. 'n wêreldbekouing, 'n mensbekouing, 'n geregtigheidsopvatting, 'n toekomsvisioen ten grondslag lê wat die waarheid, dat Gods koninkryk in die wêreld kom, weerspreek en getuig van die verstrikttheid van die wêreld in allerhande en vreemde leringe, plaas dit die kerk, of hy wil of nie, meteens op die aanval.

Die feit dat hy huis dan vanweë sy waarheidspretensie verag en selfs vervolg kan word en na sy „eie“ terrein terugverwys of teruggedwing kan word, mag hom nie laat weifel nie. Huis in sulke tye, wanneer dit vir die kerk nodig word om een of ander beleid wat t.o.v. die inrigting van die samelewing gevolg word, met die waarheid van die evangelie te weerspreek, klink die proteste op wat hom op sy „geestelike“ terrein wil inperk, terwyl hy, merkwaardig genoeg, as hy bereid is om te swyg en te beaam, te seën en te sanksioneer, as medewerker en bondgenoot met luide en onbeskaamde verwelkomings in die politieke arena, in die ekonomiese stryd, in die sosiale vooruitgang, in die bewaring van die kulturele erfenis van die volk begroet word. Sodra hy egter „nee“ sé, of dit kragtens die waarheid wat aan hom toevertrou is, moet sé, word vir hom sy plek gewys as sielehoeder van die hemelpelgrims.

Natuurlik mag die kerk nooit voorgee dat hy oor alle kennis van politieke, ekonomiese en sosiale vraagstukke beskik nie. Maar dat hy die waarheid aangaande alle dinge weet, die sin en bestemming daarvan ken, mag die kerk nie verswyg nie. As 'n bepaalde inrigting van die samelewing nie die karakter dra van 'n heilige van die lewe wat geskied in die geloof en in die verwagting dat Gods koninkryk in die wêreld kom nie, is dit vir die kerk evident. Dan moet hy dit ook uitspreek en die regte koers aandui.

Suid-Afrika het tans niks nodiger as so 'n kerk nie. Laat ons toegee dat die regeerders van ons land oreg oortuig is dat hulle bv. in die apartheid beleid 'n oplossing vir ons grootste politieke vraagstuk gevind het. Twee dinge is egter in verband daarmee duidelik. Eerstens, hierdie beleid is wat sy

prinsipiële fundering betref, lynreg in stryd met die Skrif. Bloot om hierdie rede al kan dit geen toekoms vir ons land inhoud nie, die skynbare suksesse en „deurbraak“ daarvan ten spyt. Nie die vraag of die wêreldopinie gunstiger is en of daar binneland 'n groter aanvaarding van die beleid is, moet vir ons bepaal of ons daarmee kan voortgaan of nie, maar die vraag of dit 'n ordening van ons volkslewe is wat die stempel dra dat Gods koninkryk ook in hierdie stukkie van sy wêreld kom. Tweedens, apartheid, selfs in sy om-gedoopte vernoemdheid tot eiesoortige (of afsonderlike) ontwikkeling tot selfbeskikkings, is in sy praktiese uitwerking klaarblyklik onuitvoerbaar. Vir die ineenstorting van apartheid sal ons nie hoef te wag totdat dit eenmaal mag blyk dat ons daarmee teen God bots nie. Ons sien dit daagliks voor ons oë gebeur.

Enige kerk wat sy oë hiervoor toeknyp en, uit 'n misplaaste lojaliteit teenoor 'n politieke party in wie die kosbaarste volksentemente geprojekteer is, angstvallig begin verkondig dat die kerk hom tot sy „geestelike“ werk en „siele-arbeid“ moet beperk omdat die kerk in ontaarding sou verval as hy sy getuienis rig op politieke, sosiale en ekonomiese aangeleenthede, handel in die hoogste onverantwoordelikheid teenoor die volk en in ontrou aan sy goddelike roeping. Sulke „volksliefde“ is in die diepste sin verraad teen die volk en so 'n „geestelike“ roepingsbewustheid is in die grond van die saak die ernstigste vorm van pligsversaking.

## KORREKSIE

As gevolg van onvermydelike afwesigheid van die verantwoordelike persoon, is die Inleidingsartikel in ons April-uitgawe ongelukkig geplaas sonder dat die drukproef behoorlik nagesien is. Ons bied ons verskoning vir ons lezers aan. Veral twee steurende foute moet reggestel word.

Par. 2 reël 1 lees **daad** i.p.v. **dood**.

Par. 5 reël 18 lees **Christene** i.p.v. **Christus**.

# RICH MAN, POOR MAN...?

## II

### A THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

(27) C. I. Itty, Associate Secretary of the Department on the Laity of the WCC and a member of the Syrian Orthodox Church of India, helped us approach the Rich Nations/Poor Nations dilemma from a biblical and theological perspective. He gave four lectures with the following titles:

**The Church's Mission in Today's World.**

**The Christian Concern for Social and Economic Problems.**

**The Church in a Divided World of Rich and Poor Nations.**

**The Responsibility of European Christians towards Developing Countries.**

### WHAT IS THEOLOGY?

(28) Central to all Itty's arguments was his insistence that theology is not a self-sufficient discipline but a "parasitic" one — parasitic,

that is, on all that is happening in the world which is the sphere of both God's concern and his action. Such a view of theology has a number of implications:

The Rev. James E. Moulder

1) Theology is misconceived if it is regarded simply as the professional task of a minority within the church — namely, the academic theologians. Theology is the reflection of all the people of God on what is happening in the world so that they may together discern both what God is doing and what he requires to be done.

2) Theology is misconceived if it is regarded simply as being reflection on the past history of a group of God's people in the Ancient Near East. Although theological reflection cannot ignore that history — the events which are the background to

what we call the Old and New Testaments — if it is to enable the present people of God to fulfil their mission, it also cannot concern itself exclusively with those past events but must seek for the signs of God's Presence within contemporary events; for signs both of his judgement and of his grace.

3) Consequently, theology is misconceived if it is construed simply as the study of certain theological subjects — Ancient Languages, Old and New Testament, Ecclesiastical History, Dogmatic and Systematic Theology, and so on. Indeed it is still not well conceived even if subjects such as Pastoral Counselling and the Philosophy, Psychology and Sociology of Religion are included. Because theology is reflection on the world — the sphere of God's concern and his action — it is also reflection on all so-called non-theological disciplines such as Economics, History, Politics, Psychology and Sociology; in fact, on the whole of life and the whole of knowledge.

4) This view of theology has two further consequences: *Firstly*, the impossibility of any one person being proficient in all the branches of knowledge and all the spheres of life underlines the need for theological reflection to be undertaken by the whole church, rather than by a group of so-called experts in basically archaeologically orientated disciplines. *Secondly*, because our knowledge of the world and events within history are constantly changing, theological reflection is not something that can be done once for all.

## WHAT IS THE CHURCH'S MISSION?

(29) Central to such theological reflection is the attempt of the people of God to answer the question "What is the Church's Mission?" or, more correctly, "What is God doing in the world and what does he want us to do?" According to Itty, this question is central to theological reflection because the Church's Mission is to participate in God's Mission and this raises questions like "Who is God?" and "What has he done and is he doing today?" Furthermore all such questions have to be answered in two ways: *firstly*, in formal, biblical terms; and *secondly*, in practical, sociological or "existential" terms. And these two types of answers are linked because the God spoken of in the Bible both initiates social change (the

Exodus, for example; or the institution of monarchical rule, the destruction of Jerusalem, the return to Palestine, the mission of the Church) and demands growth and development to maturity (for example, as in Colossians 1: 24-29 and Ephesians 4: 1-16). Thus, in general, theological reflection is a dialogue between the Word and the World; and it is in such a dialogue that theological questions should be considered. Because of these convictions Itty attempted to answer three questions:

- 1) What changes are taking place in the World?
- 2) How ought Christians to evaluate these changes?
- 3) How ought Christians to participate in and contribute towards these changes?

As in Theobald's case, these questions are not easily answered; nor are Itty's treatment of them easy to report. With these warnings that nothing which follows is presented as the final word on the subject but merely to stimulate, as Itty tried to do, theological reflection and discussion amongst God's people, I will try to present the gist of his arguments.

## JESUS

(30) According to Itty, the formal answers to the questions which arise around the question "What is the Church's Mission?" must be sought in Jesus Christ. He focussed attention on the following aspects of what he called the "Christ event":

1) The *Incarnation* supplies us with a clue to the motive behind God's mission and, therefore, the motive which ought to inspire ours; namely, practical concern for and identification with those in need. The fact that God did not try to change our desperate situation from without, but by entering that situation and sharing its anguish, implies that our mission to our fellows can never be discharged from a distance and via a charitable stop-order on our bank-account; can never be of any use without our identifying ourselves with and sharing the situation of those who are desperate.

2) The *Ministry* strengthens this conviction because of Jesus' concern not merely for individuals but for *social groups* (the prostitutes; the tax-gathering quislings; the demon-possessed; those alienated both by the religious totalitarianism of the Pharisees and the religious utilitarian self-concern of the Sadducees; those

Zealots alienated by the oppressive legislation of Rome; and so on); for *whole towns* like Sodom, Gomorrah and Jerusalem; for his *nation* and the *world* as a whole. Both in his synagogue "manifesto" (Luke 4:16-21) and his reply to John Baptist's question "Are you the one who is to come, or are we to expect some other?" (Luke 7:18-23) Jesus referred to his concern for and action on behalf of sufferers of all sorts. Furthermore, his temptations (Luke 4:1-13) centred on the problem of the legitimate use of power in society to correct social ills — this is, to provide economic justice via feeding schemes; to obtain military and political power by compromise; to use mass persuasion to obtain a following. Thus we find Jesus not merely living in our sort of situation; he feels all its ambiguities, tensions and sufferings and seeks to be involved in its problems.

3) The *Crucifixion* supplies the clue to the mode of God's involvement in our social situation. Renouncing all power, Jesus behaves like a servant and allows himself to be used up for the sake of others.

4) The *Resurrection and Ascension* indicates God's victory and underlines that the most basic thing about us is not our sin, but our restoration (Romans 5).

5) *Pentecost* makes explicit what is implied in the ministry of Jesus and sometimes stated in his teaching — namely, that although Jesus is the clue to understanding God's mission, he himself is not the whole of that mission which continues through the Holy Spirit (John 14) and our willingness to be sent as he was sent (John 13: 1-17; 17: 13-23).

## RAPID SOCIAL CHANGE

(31) Having sketched or, more correctly, directed our attention to where the formal answers to our questions about the Church's mission are likely to be answered Itty attempted to delineate the broad outlines of the changes which are taking place throughout the world as a whole as a step towards evaluating these and suggesting how Christians ought to participate in and contribute towards their full realization. These changes can be located under five headings as follows:

1) *Secularization*, like the other four types of change Itty discussed, is a process which is accelerating but which has nevertheless not been realized in its full extent anywhere in

the world, although it has gone further in North America and Europe than elsewhere. To what sort of change does "secularization" refer? One way of answering this question is to refer to three of the attitudes towards nature and society with which it is from time to time contrasted, namely, the *religious*, the *ideological* and the *metaphysical*. These three attitudes are by no means equivalent but have at least this much in common that they are more or less non-pragmatic approaches to solving problems. Furthermore, to a greater or lesser extent they give absolute answers to political and moral questions. On the other hand, the process of secularization is one of "withdrawal of areas of thought and life" from such controls and "the attempt to understand and live in those areas in the terms which they alone offer" (Charles West, *Student World I*, 1963). As a result every *Weltanschauung* is de-absolutized and every culture and social institution is regarded as capable of change. In fact, *Weltanschauungen* and socio-political institutions are conceived of in dynamic, functional terms rather than static, ontological ones. Consequently questions of values and ethics are answered in pragmatic utilitarian and relativistic terms and man's ability to shape and change his destiny is affirmed. (For more comprehensive treatments compare, for example, M. Jarrett-Kerr "*The Secular Promise*" (SCM, 1964); Harvey Cox "*The Secular City*" (SCM; 1965); and Bernard E. Meland "*The Secularization of Modern Culture*" (OUP; 1966).

How ought Christians to evaluate this process of secularization? Is it a threat to the Gospel of Jesus or a sign of God's grace? According to Arend Th. van Leeuwen ("*Christianity in World History*" London, 1964) this process of secularization is not only a product of the Church's Mission but an inescapable consequence of the preaching of the Gospel. This view, according to Itty, is too simple because of the complex relation between the Gospel and the process of secularization. Nevertheless both the history of Israel and of Jesus indicate that the work of the prophets and of Jesus himself contains an element which can be called the "desacralizing" of men's attitudes to life. Thus both the prophets and Jesus protest against totalitarian religious institutions and customs — for example, the divorce of ritual and

morality or the making of human life subservient to the demands of the Sabbath regulations. In the end Itty therefore argued that Christians can neither totally accept nor completely oppose the processes which make for secularization because the question which matters is whether these processes dehumanize or humanize personal and social life. In particular Christians must oppose all attempts to absolutize this process; all attempts to turn "secularization" into a new religious, ideological or metaphysical slogan or principle. Furthermore, Christians ought to recognize that insofar as these processes liberate men and increase their chances to live free, responsible and creative lives they also operate to change the Church's structure and liberate Christians for new forms of worship, service, education and ethical codes.

2) *Pluralism* is a process closely linked with that of secularization. As cultures and socio-political institutions become secularized two things become clear: *firstly*, that no one "style of life" has a monopoly either on virtue or on truth; and *secondly*, that the increased specialization which is both a factor in and a product of secularization demands humility from and co-operation amongst people. Thus the existence of racial, cultural, ideological and other differences call for toleration and understanding rather than competition between their supporters in the (vain) attempt to have one dominate the other. Furthermore Christians have the task of seeking points of understanding and reconciliation where there is tension between opposing groups. And in the fulfilment of this task they must avoid being either reactionary or syncretistic.

3) *Technological advances*, as characterised by Theobald, are central to both the previous processes. Here Christians have to recognise that technology is in itself neutral; that they cannot oppose socio-economic innovations simply because they are new and sometimes startling. At the same time they cannot support these changes simply because they are new. Again the test is whether or not these changes contribute towards making it easier for people to live more humanly. Especially important is the task of seeking to understand these technological advances which is a prerequisite to any attempt to contribute anything creative to their development and implementation.

4) *Urbanization* is a conspicuous feature of the technological and secular process, as Theobald emphasised. Here the crux of the problem is that of creating new criteria for and patterns of community. Because of increased mobility the old community structures based on contiguity of persons and their fairly permanent occupation of limited social and geographical areas have been destroyed. So far new structures which offer security and personal contact between persons have not yet emerged and it is to this problem that Christians must address themselves.

5) All these processes furthermore are taking place within an era of *universal history*. The relations of the Rich and Poor Nations is only one aspect of the problem created by the fact that at an accelerating rate the world is becoming effectively one. But the problem is that a world which is becoming increasingly unified via the processes mentioned earlier, has no effective institutions via which its unity can be adequately expressed and fully realized. Here there is no doubt about what the Christian's stance ought to be: committed to a Gospel which is for all men everywhere and to a God who is the Father of all and who has created one Church for all believers, Christians ought to be at the forefront of attempts to secure world peace and effective international economic, educational and political institutions.

## ECUMENICS AND ECONOMICS

(32) In his discussion of Christian concern for socio-economic problems Itty referred to the close connections between "economics" (*oikonomia*) and "ecumenics" (*oikoumene*). The first of the two Greek words from which, in part, our English ones are derived has to do with household organization and management; the second with the whole inhabited world. Itty suggested that both these concepts have their source in the Doxology of Ephesians in which it is proclaimed both that Christians are "members of God's household" (2:17-22) and that God is "the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth takes its name" (3:14-21). And because the biblical perspective on economics is neither *systematic* (that is, it does not give exclusive sanction to one economic system; supports no one of

socialist, capitalist, laizze faire nor any other form of property ownership or distribution of wealth over against another) nor shaped by the processes outlined earlier it is this concept of God as the ruler of the *oikonomia* (economics) and the *oikoumene* (the world) that must be one source of the Christian reflection on socio-economic problems; the other source of this reflection is the biblical view of man himself; the view of man as a consumer, a worker and a steward. And, according to Itty, the essential features of biblical teaching on these dimensions of our lives are to be found in those narratives which tell of our *creation* by God, our *worship* of God and our *judgment* of God.

### CREATION AND CONSUMPTION

(33) According to the Genesis stories we are neither "souls with ears" (spirits) nor "a little lower than the computers" (bodies) but persons. And though we cannot live "by bread alone" we also cannot live without bread. Thus we dare not accept either a docetic anthropology which spiritualizes our humanity into a ghostly idealism nor a Monophysite one which materialises it into a "brutish" existence "red in tooth and claw". But, as Itty pointed out, though the Church's teaching has regularly guarded against the latter heresy it has often failed to guard against the former. We are committed to caring about men's bodily needs; about their stomachs as well as their souls. And if we attend to one at the expense of the other, whatever we are doing, we are most certainly not sharing God's concern for men, women and children.

### WORSHIP AND WORK

(34) Also inseparable is our work and our worship. This is what the Old Testament prophets were forever insisting on — namely, that God cannot distinguish, as men do, between human praises and human production-lines; between the contents of psalms and the contents of pay-packets; between the length of a sermon and the length of a shift; between the decisions of church unions and ecumenical councils, on the one hand, and trade unions and industrial councils on the other; between the worship we offer him and the work we provide for persons. Furthermore the prophets insisted

that if the sphere of our work (all our relations on the farm and in the market-place of the city) is riddled with injustices between men then our worship of God is a waste of time — he is deaf, and dead to our cries (Isaiah 58, for example).

### JUDGEMENT AND STEWARDSHIP

(35) Finally, Itty focussed attention on the emphasis many of Jesus' parables place on stewardship and the connection between it and the way we are judged by God. He mentioned three kinds of stewardship referred to in these parables. *Firstly*, our stewardship of property, of our ownership and occupancy of the land. Here it was important to notice that the earth is the Lord's — not the U.S.A.'s, nor the U.S.S.R.'s, nor the capitalist's, the socialist's or anyone else's. Thus any system of land tenure that makes it impossible for people to have sufficient food and space for a dignified life stands condemned from a biblical perspective. *Secondly*, there is the stewardship of money which is regarded as something which is to be used creatively. Thus the servant who buries his coin and refuses to use his money productively is condemned. *Thirdly*, there is the stewardship of power. In the parables a servant is condemned for his irresponsible use of power and privilege.

### DIVES AND LAZARUS

(36) Against this background of an attempt to reflect both on the changes and trends taking place in our world and on the biblical stories Itty raised the question why Christians in the Rich Nations ought to be concerned about the economic position of the Poor Nations and how they can express their concern in a practical way.

### WHY?

(37) The first of these questions he answered as follows: *firstly*, the fact that the Poor Nations are economically underdeveloped means that the majority of the world's people are suffering. This suffering is not merely physical; not merely hunger and disease. It also dehumanizes them and prevents them from realizing their creative potentialities. Such suffering is a sufficient reason for Christians in the Rich Nations to be concerned because of Jesus' repeated warnings that the way we

treat others is the way that God will treat us. The parable of the sheep and the goats teaches that Jesus is present not merely in the Eucharistic worship of his Church but in the suffering of the poor and needy (Matthew 25:31-46). *Secondly*, the gap between the Rich and the Poor Nations (and between the Rich and the Poor throughout the world) threatens world peace. As Theobald and others have observed: the sixties of this century have seen the beginnings of a drawing together of the nations of the East and West and of a gulf between these and the nations of the South (Africa, Asia, Latin America). Furthermore this gulf is not merely symbolized in the estrangement between Moscow and Peking; the countries of the South are increasingly impressed by the fact that Red China's lack of political and economic involvement with both the East and the West has enabled her to emerge as a new world power, albeit one with many internal problems still unresolved. One way in which these ideological alignments and re-alignments can possibly be prevented is via the elimination of poverty in the so-called "Third World" of the emerging nations. *Thirdly*, because God has led us to the threshold of an age of universal history he presents us now with the opportunity of sharing in his mission of reconciling all men and nations to each other and to himself. Thus he invites Christians both to realize the solidarity of mankind which they have so often professed and preached; and to exercise stewardship over the power and wealth which has come via historical processes to the Rich Nations. Here Itty underlined the fact that part of the reason some of the world's nations are Rich is the fact that they have been able to use the natural resources and labour of poor ones; this means that their wealth is not simply something they have achieved on their own and by means of their own resources.

### HOW?

(38) The suggestions Itty made concerning how Christians in the Rich Nations could help the Poor Nations amounted to two: *Firstly*, they should try to form government and public opinions both by educational and protest action. Such opinion needed forming with regard to at least the question of aid, of loans and of world economic planning. Pointing out that the Rich

Nations give less than 1% of their national product in aid and that the average per capita income of the Rich Nations is about R80 per annum as compared with about R48 in the Poor Nations, he argued that the observation of many economists to the effect that the Rich Nations should give at least 3% of their national product in aid was hardly an unreasonable one. As for loans the position is depressing; since 1961 the Poor Nations have doubled their loans (both because of insufficient aid and the embarrassment of begging) but have increased their export earning by about only 15% — a deficit which can only play havoc with future relations between these groups of nations. Finally, it was essential to canvas support for and give every possible assistance to attempts to establish institutions for world economic planning. This was a more fruitful line of development than aid and loans because of the problems faced by the Poor Nations for (i) the machinery for effective price control is in the hands of the Rich Nations; and (ii) the Rich Nations have the ability to develop synthetic commodities to replace natural products such as rubber which are vital factors in the economies of the Poor Nations. Furthermore the existence of such institutions are a *sine qua non* if enough food is to be produced for all the world's people; if fair prices for factors of production are to be maintained; and if research in and application of technological developments are to be secured.

(39) But, Itty argued, Christians in the Rich Nations can assist the Poor Nations in another way, namely, by immigrating to these nations. Especially important for these Nations' development are sufficient technologists of all kinds who are prepared to cast in their lot on a more or less permanent basis with the people of these Nations and assist them in obtaining the changes they so urgently require. And also important is the presence of missionaries who will proclaim the biblical faith which is, according to Itty, a prerequisite of a secular, technological society.

### AN EVALUATION

(40) I hesitate to comment on Theobald and Itty's arguments for two reasons: *Firstly*, it is hardly fair that my comments on their arguments

will be judged on the basis of the scanty summaries I have presented in the previous two sections. Thus I will largely refrain from any attempt to comment on the accuracy or otherwise of their descriptions of the problems to which they referred. Nevertheless I am convinced that, whatever anyone may think of their analysis of and/or remedies for these problems, they did put their fingers on issues which affect us all and which are not going to cease to be threatening ones simply because we want them to do so. *Secondly*, it is hardly possible to comment on their arguments because of the dimensions and complexities of the issues they have raised. In fact, almost every one of their arguments requires an article in itself if some sort of justice is to be done to the problem raised. This is not possible; at any rate, not here and now. Thus I am not going to attempt to "spell out" any of these issues in greater detail but am including instead a short bibliography which covers some of the topics.

(41) Having indicated what this evaluation is not, what then am I going to attempt to do? Simply this: I want to raise two sets of questions:

(i) Is a cybernated socio-economic system (cybernation, for short) Utopian? necessary? desirable? possible? These questions relate mainly to Theobald's argument.

(ii) What, if anything, *ought* Christians to contribute towards making cybernation possible? desirable? What, if anything, *can* Christians contribute towards making such a system possible? desirable? These questions relate mainly to Itty's argument.

### IS CYBERNATIONUTOPIAN?

(42) The answer to this question must be an emphatic No! As previously indicated, the computer, as almost every other invention of mankind, has ambiguous consequences. Apart from the fact that cybernation transforms or, more correctly, transmutes the possibilities for both destruction and production, even its exclusive use towards the achievement of the latter type of ends creates as well as solves problems — for example, makes possible the elimination of poverty and illiteracy while creating unemployment for the majority and a lack of living space. Thus cybernation, like the Welfare State, is no panacea for all our ills. Furthermore cybernation creates the

possibility of us having to actually deal with some of the problems which have always made some of us anyway regard Utopias with suspicion. I mention only two. The first goes back to Plato's *Republic* which required for its implementation government by one or more elite persons. In a cybernated society democracy is seriously called in question because of the technical expertise required for government. And it is obvious that, although it is possible to create avenues whereby everyone *capable* of government is allowed to participate in decision-making, not anyone, and not simply a mere numerical majority can be assumed to have the necessary information or competence to govern. Furthermore we have very little evidence that technocrats who are competent in other ways *ipso facto* also have the wisdom which is required for political decision-making in a cybernated socio-economic system. Thus cybernation offers no Utopian answers to the political problems of the future. The second aspect of Utopian systems which has always seemed to me to be questionable is their totalitarian view of freedom. From Plato to the architect of modern totalitarian and even Welfare States there has been an argument which goes something like this: men are only free when they are not enslaved either by outside oppression or misguided passions and beliefs. And because not every man is able to discriminate between those passions and beliefs which enslave him and those which do liberate him, the State or one or more persons should decide which passions and beliefs are good and which are harmful. Also legislation and sanctions must be introduced to force men to be "truly" free by allowing them simply to have those passions and beliefs which are good. And because cybernation requires the organization of huge areas of life, including education, it brings no Utopia because it makes it more difficult (as well as more necessary, in my opinion) to tolerate dissent and scepticism.

### IS CYBERNATION NECESSARY?

(43) The answers to the first question may suggest that, far from being necessary, cybernation is to be avoided at all costs. Unfortunately such an answer will not do and mainly for two reasons: *firstly*, there seems to be no acceptable alternative way of

overcoming such a basic and intractable problem as world hunger and poverty except via a cybernated socio-economic system. And not to eliminate this problem is to feed the tensions which already exist between the Rich and Poor Nations and the Rich and Poor within nations; to encourage a new polarity in world politics in which the East and the West are together arraigned against the South. Thus cybernation is a necessary but by no means sufficient condition for world peace, or something resembling it. The *second* reason cybernation is necessary is that it has already begun, most clearly in North America, but also in Eastern and Western Europe. To take only one example: since the economic depressions of the '20's and early '30's and the economic theories of Keynes there has been a growing emphasis on planned economics. One feature of such planning has been the creation of "make-shift" work which, together with advertising pressure, helps to keep the economic wheels going round. And part of the UK's present economic crisis is due to her industries employing too many unessential workers together with the threat of increased unemployment if more efficient and automated technology is introduced. Thus the choice is more between that of advancing to a cybernated socio-economic system by deliberate choice or of being pushed there or of pretending that the Poor Nations and the poor within nations are always going to be prepared to accept their hunger and poverty with docility.

### IS CYBERNATION DESIRABLE?

(44) From the answers given to the previous two questions, the answer to whether a cybernated socio-economic system is desirable, in the kind of society in which we would choose to live, depends on whether it is made so, or not. It cannot be too often stated that computers do not, by themselves, hold the key to the sort of societies we will have in the future; it all depends on how they are used. Thus cybernation demands of all of us a greater degree of maturity and sense of responsibility than was necessary in the industrial and agricultural stages of our history. Also it requires that we learn to tolerate even if we cannot learn to love each other because we can now destroy each other. And it requires that we recognise that there can be

no desirable cybernated socio-economic system in which some groups of people regard themselves as entitled to special political, social and economic privileges.

### IS CYBERNATION POSSIBLE?

(45) This is the question which is most open to different answers and the place where it is both possible and dangerous to become either too optimistic or too pessimistic, because neither of these options are realistic in the sense that they will blunt the attention which must be given to the problems in hand — in the case of the optimist, because he, mistakenly, regards the realization of cybernation as "inevitable"; in the case of the pessimist, because he will not make sufficient effort to overcome the problems which have to be faced. Also this question must be distinguished from the really important question, namely, how is it possible to transform an industrial or agricultural into a cybernated socio-economic system? Quite frankly, I don't know. Both Theobald and Itty made much of educational processes but it is obvious that these are hardly sufficient. Furthermore Theobald's arguments seem to suggest that the transition must be all of the following: (i) rapid; (ii) radical and macroscopic, but not prophylactic; and (iii) both intelligent and wise. It is hard to see how all these requirements can be met, especially the second and third. Thus while I am convinced that every educational avenue and technique should be exploited to equip people for the social changes which we will have to make in the very near future, I cannot see the transition except in terms of "birth-pangs" and a "times of trouble". Theobald would, I think, counter this by arguing that such a transition would end in the total destruction of the world in a nuclear or bacteriological apocalypse. Perhaps. But at the same time we must beware of creating a "either/or" dilemma around the question of cybernation and the possibilities of its realization because there seems to be only a short step from such a dilemma to a "failure of nerve". In concluding this all too brief evaluation of Theobald's argument, I refer to his mentioning of Moses as a paradigm for us. Called to lead his people in a time of "rapid social change" Moses was neither always optimistic about their chances, nor completely pessimistic. There was simply no alter-

native (except Pharaoh's Egypt) to the wilderness wanderings which was the way he brought the people to the "promised land" he himself did not enter.

### OUGHT CHRISTIANS?

(46) The question to whether, or not, Christians ought to contribute towards making cybernation possible and desirable, is, in my opinion, hardly an open question. The answer is YES! and for all the reasons Itty gave, plus the following: Christians are people, human beings; so are Atheists, Buddists, Communists, Hindus, Muslims and what have you. Thus we share with other people both the advantages and disadvantages of living in whatever sort of socio-economic system we happen to find ourselves. And although, in general, we are no more responsible than those who do not follow Jesus for either the ill or the benefits of a society, we also have no less responsibility than others for trying to see that our society is as human as possible and that it offers to all who live in it the opportunity of living dignified, human lives. In other words: if cybernation has tragic consequences we who follow Jesus will also be to blame; if it brings a more human way of life, we also will benefit. How then can we claim that the problems Theobald and Itty discussed are ones to whose solution we *ought not* to make a contribution? are ones which *ought not* to receive our attention and concern?

### CAN CHRISTIANS?

(47) Itty certainly argued this point in positive and affirmative terms but in the end suggested little more than attempts to form public opinion as a practical contribution Christians can make. And even this suggestion is not free from difficulties because the educational work which has to proceed and accompany the process of cybernation can only be effectively performed by those who understand something of the complex issues involved. At the present there is very little evidence that what takes place in the majority of churches relates at all to the sort of problems discussed by Theobald and Itty. Furthermore there is little evidence that either the training of clergymen, the preparation of people for church-membership or the worship and/or study groups of the churches prepares its members to be

equipped so as to make a positive and creative contribution to the cybernation process. In other words: Christians are coming to a point where they have either to conceive of Christianity in "ghetto"-like and purely personal terms or to radically change their conception of what following Jesus is all about; of what the ministry, the church, and so on, is. Now it would be naive at the end of an article to even begin to analyse the various aspects of what is involved in this suggestion or to take sides in what must by the nature of the case, be a controversial discussion. But two issues at least suggest themselves as perhaps being the ones which can lay fair claim to being regarded as priorities: *First*, if Itty's conception of theology is a correct one, and I believe it is, then immediate attention must be given to reforming what now goes under the name of "theological training" because such training is at best irrelevant to what is happening in the world and at worst contributes towards making it more difficult to bring about desired changes. And whatever a new type of theological curriculum must look like one thing seems clear; a large part of it must consist of training in the social sciences. By this I do not mean that prospective ministers must do a year or

two of, say, sociology; what I mean is that they must at least major in such subjects before doing any theological training. Or better still, that their training should consist essentially of some such tripos as sociology, biblical studies and logic studied in close inter-relationship. Only in some such way can theology loose its present "archaeological" emphasis and orientate itself towards the present world. *Secondly*, it is essential that greater clarity be achieved on the difference between a "secular theology" and a "theology of the secular". A theology of the first type would be based on secular presuppositions; would interpret both the bible and classical theology in terms of such assumptions. On the other hand, a "theology of the secular" would correspond somewhat to Itty's position as exemplified in his arguments and would consist rather of attempts to interpret secular processes in terms of biblical and classical theological presuppositions. These two theologies are poles apart and the deepest and most interesting division between Christians today is created by this difference between "secularizing theology" or "theologizing the secular". To mention only one difference related to our present discussion: "secular theologians" would argue that there is no specifically Christian con-

tribution they can make to the process of cybernation, merely a human one; "theologians of the secular" would urge that the cybernetic process needs some sort of infusion describable in terms of "transcendence" or "ultimate concern", or "a beyond at the centre of life" and so on. But once again merely pointing to a problem must suffice for the moment. Thus, for the sorts of reasons advanced here, the question of whether or not Christians *can* contribute to the cybernation process to which they *ought* to contribute is a completely open one. In our present stance the answer is largely a negative one; but there is a promise of "new wine" which can, however, only be received in "new wineskins". (Mark 2:21-22).

**Bibliography:** Preparatory Studies for the WCC's Conference on Church and Society published by SCM Press, London: 1966.

Bennett, John C. (ed.) *Christian Social Ethics in a Changing World*.

De Vries, Egbert (ed.) *Man in Community*.

Matthews, Z. K. (ed.) *Responsible Government in a Revolutionary Age*.

Mamby, D. L. (ed.) *Economic Growth in World Perspective*.

## POLITICS AND RELIGION

— DAVID PERK

When a minister of religion, in expounding the view of the Church on a controversial political issue, evokes a rebuke from a cabinet minister for what the latter considers to be a misuse of the pulpit, the age-old problem of how to combine the spiritual with the secular in daily life is brought to the forefront of the public's mind and conscience. The normal individual is never free of the problem. That some never know it is a misfortune of birth and upbringing. They are the unfortunate who have not learnt to recognise and appreciate spiritual values, and may end up not knowing how to distinguish right from wrong. They then live by the dictates of their impulses and needs and become the community's recurrent problem and concern.

### THE FLESH AGAINST THE SPIRIT

The pattern of life for most human beings is a continual shuttling from the secular to the spiritual and back again. Life's experiences and pressures, daily needs and compulsions, ambition's goals and drives

keep boosting the circular movement, which is instinctual in man.

At the beginning and end of man's span of life he is transfixed at the point of physical needs and pre-occupations. In between, when intellect first comes to him and opens his eyes to the universe surrounding him he instinctively turns

to the spirit that peers through the dawn, acknowledges and worships it. Thence on, he keeps turning to seek it, at the dictate of his nature or of the routine of his community. In finding it, he is a man inspired and exalted to a self that reflects the eternal spirit. When he turns away from it, he is moved only by the opportunity and occasion for the exploitation of his environment, the satiation of his senses and the craving for the approval and applause of his fellows. But no sooner is satisfaction felt than it yields to need, the satisfaction of which was only a moment's interruption in its duration. And even before life's energy wanes and man grows weary of his struggle to

satisfy need he has apprehended the temporariness of his struggles and satisfactions. He is then impelled to turn once again to the spirit that unites him with the larger, universal scheme and existence.

If man moves too far or for too long from the spirit he loses himself in a material world that progressively ensnares and debases him. If he recognises what is happening he has a chance of redeeming himself; if not, he joins the company of those who have never recognised and embraced the spirit.

Only a saint lives by the spirit. The rest have a perpetual struggle to extricate themselves, even if it is only for brief periods, from enmeshment in the material world, so as to be free to greet the spirit. The purpose of organized religion is not only to keep the light focussed on the spirit, so that it is never out of the sight of man, but to keep him company in his tortured wanderings, away from and back to the spirit. Man's spiritual awakening sooner or later brings him to the challenging recognition that he cannot be a saint, even if he would, and that he must find the middle path between saint and beast, if he is to fulfil himself as a human being, knowing of both the flesh and the spirit.

### THE LESSON OF HISTORY

In the political arena, man is embroiled in the same conflict and follows the same tortured, tortuous way to the spirit. The political problems that life in a community generates face man with the same choice that confronts him in his every-day life, of seeking the lead of the spirit or of yielding to the exigencies of the moment. And when he yields to the latter, he will sooner or later turn to the spirit. Until he does, no-one is better placed to judge, let alone condemn, him. History provides continual proof to support the faith in man that in the fulness of time he will turn to the spirit. When doubt in man's ways and wisdom seizes the mind it is well to remember the lesson of history, and keep faith with errant man. The Church, and I include in this all religious institutions, has a primary duty to sustain this faith.

### SPIRITUAL GUIDANCE

Theology is important for theologians, but the man in the street

looks to the Church for spiritual guidance in the problems that beset him in his every-day, personal, social and political life. If the Church should fail to translate theological concepts into the common language of man it will have betrayed the trust of believers. In fulfilling its responsibility to bring spiritual illumination into the daily life of its members, it may incur the indignation and wrath of secular authority, but such hostility can spell little else than the bankruptcy of the materialistic standpoint.

### FORCE AND FREEDOM

Man can be forced to do many things, even to go through the motions of seeking the spirit, but force effectively bars the way to the spirit. Man can reach the spirit only in the freedom of the spirit that is within him. This is as true in the political world in which man has his being as in his private life. It is, in the ultimate, as unprofitable for the welfare of the state as for the spiritual health of the individual to forbid him to express the thoughts that spring from deep spiritual recognitions. The state has a duty to curb and punish antisocial behaviour, but expression of the spirit springs from an awareness of values that reflects a universal conscience and a basic acceptance that man can only be changed by a spiritual influence that cannot be forced upon an individual or community.

That man in the mass has far from reached the stage where state supervision and force in the control of his social and personal life can be abjured does not lend warrant to its application in his spiritual life. Freedom of spiritual experience and expression is no threat to the peaceful progress of a community. On the contrary, it ensures it, for the goals of the spirit are not to be reached by hurry or violence; only by the consensus of spiritually awakened people.

Whether the Church advocates coercion in the affairs of the state (as, for example, when the Archbishop of Canterbury advocated force against Rhodesia), or the state seeks to coerce the Church in its purpose, the notion of coercion, whether emanating from the Church

or directed against it, is out of keeping with the spiritual character of the Church and its personalities. It contradicts and violates the spirit of religion.

### FREEDOM OF SPEECH

It is difficult enough for the individual and the community to build a consistent way of life out of the contradictions of their spiritual and material needs. But when this struggle is aggravated by politically motivated threats, the even tenor of their spiritual and intellectual development is interrupted and distorted, to no-one's ultimate advantage. Political leadership may wish to proceed unchallenged in its authority and control of the individual in his communal setting, but no challenge can be intended by the expression of feelings and views of responsible people. If the political lead is to reflect and incorporate the divergent views of a community they can only be expressed and become available to political leadership in an unfettered public forum. The obligation to safeguard the state from subversive movements and influences must at all times be correlated with the duty to preserve the freedom of speech, if the ill-effects, on the individual and the state, of the suppression of the open expression of opinion, are to be avoided. In a house of worship, where material values are subjected to the test of spiritual ideals, there is the built-in safeguard, to the individual and state, of values that have stood the test of time. No state or individual can afford, in the long run, not to heed them.

### COURSE FOR WRITERS AND TRANSLATORS

A training course for writers and translators conducted by Mr. Bengt Simonsson, Director of the Africa Writing Centre, will be held from 1st to 21st October, 1967, at St. Peter's Lodge, Rosettenville, Johannesburg.

For further details and enrolment forms please write to the Rev. Derrick Cuthbert, Secretary for Christian Literature, The Christian Council of South Africa, 77 Fourth Avenue, Newton Park, Port Elizabeth.

# DIE KERK BUISTE SUID-AFRIKA

— PROF. B. B. KEET

## ANGLIKAANSE KERKE EN EGSKEIDINGSGRONDE

'n Kommissie wat byna twee jaar lank onder voorsitterskap van die biskop van Exeter deur die Aartsbiskop van Canterbury ingestel, beraadslaag het oor die standpunt wat die Kerk van Engeland ten opsigte van egskeidingsreg moet inneem, het tot die volgende radikale voorstel gekom: Nie die bewys van moeilikhede binne die huwelik, soos owerspel, wreedheid of kwaadwillige verlating, mag in die toekoms in Engeland die grond vir egskeiding vorm nie maar slegs die oortuiging van die regter dat 'n huwelik grondig ontwrig is. Op die punt van die moontlikheid van egskeiding is die standpunte van kerk en staat verskillend. Die aartsbiskop het daarom die kommissie ingestel sodat die skyn nie gewek moes word dat die kerk bloot negatief teenoor hersiening van die skeidingsreg staan nie. Hierdie voorstelle wil nie egskeiding makliker maak nie, maar die saak suiwerder stel. Tot nogtoe moes die grond vir egskeidings bewys word. Daarby is nie gevra of die huwelik in wese nog bestaan nie. Die kommissie het gemeen dat die situasie andersom was — egskeiding moes moontlik wees as die huwelik definitief ontwrig is; die gronde wat tans aangevoer word, dien slegs as simptome daarvan en om die regter 'n bewys in hande te gee.

Die kommissie het hom ook teen gedwonge versoening uitgespreek. Natuurlik behoort daar poginge tot versoening gedaan te word voordat die regter kan konstateer dat 'n huwelik misluk het. Daarby kan die owerheid seker die helpende hand bied deur die instelling van sosiale instansies wat hulle met sulke gevalle bemoei en probeer om versoening tot stand te bring. Daar behoort ook nie meer gepraat te word van 'n skuldige en 'n onskuldige party nie, omdat daar nooit 'n heeltemal onskuldige of alleen maar skuldige party is nie. Hierdie terme gee groot aanleiding tot bitterheid en wedersydse verwyte. 'n Egskeidingsprocedure moet meer die karakter van 'n ondersoek as die behandeling van 'n misdryf hê.

## GHANA

Ghana Ecumenical Press Service konstateer dat daar in Ghana 'n herlewning op godsdienstige gebied is. Een jaar na die val van Pres. Kwame Nkroema, wat teen alle godsdienstige organisasies oorlog verklaar het, is daar treffende getuenis van 'n godsdienstige herlewning. Lloyd Garrison berig in die New York Times dat duisende Protestante van Ghana 'n diens in Accra Stadion bygewoon het om die eerste verjaardag van verlede jaar se staatsgreep te herdenk. 'n Jaar gelede sou 'n opeleg-diens in 'n regeringstadion ondenkbaar gewees het. Die preek is gelewer deur die Anglikaanse biskop van Accra, Rosveare, wat in 1962 deur Nkroem-

ma verban is. Hy het herinner aan Nkroema se negejarige kampanje om die kerklike leierskap te isolateer en onder sy eie beheer te bring. Hy verklaar: „Die geskiedenis leer ons telkens dat 'n mens gedwing kan word om te vrees, maar nie om lief te hê nie. Jy kan hom verplig om te konformeer, maar nie om te glo nie". Die regering het nie alleen die stadion beskikbaar gestel nie, maar het die leer-orkes verskaf om die sang te lei en die program op regeringskryfmateriaal te laat druk. Sewe uit die agt lede van die Nasionale Vryheidsraad is Christene en al sewe het die diens bygewoon. Alle godsdienstige rigtinge maak melding van merkwaardige groei in kerklike bywoning. Die biskop skryf dit alles toe aan „natuurlike reaksie teen die jarelange openbare verwaarloosung van die diens van God".

## GELOOF EN WETENSKAP

Elseviers Weekblad het aan voorstaande Nederlandse teoloë vrae gestel oor die moontlike bestaan van intelligente lewe op ander planete as die aarde. Prof. Van Ruler, bekende teoloog van die universiteit Utrecht, het op die vraag wat hy dink oor die konflik tussen geloof en wetenskap die volgende antwoord gegee: „Ons verkeer nog steeds in 'n sekere teenstrydigheid tussen die Christelike geloof en die moderne wetenskap. Die moontlikheid van kulture op ander planete het, sover ek weet, nog geen druk in die Christendom veroorsaak nie — ek het altans daar nog niks van verneem nie, hoewel

dit natuurlik nog kan kom. Die godsdienst is uiteraard konserwatief, en dit is 'n seën. Konserwatisme is iets soos die kiel van 'n skip. Ek neem dit dus aan met die narigheid wat daarmee verbonde is. As hulle sê dat dié kulture, volgens die Bybel of so, nie kan bestaan nie, dan neem ek dit graag op die koop toe. Maar tot nog toe het ek daar nijs van gehoor nie. Persoonlik meen ek dat daar maar een taak vir die Christendom is, en vir die kerk: om met die mond wyd oop te staan by die ontdekkinge van die moderne wetenskap. En dan sê ek: dit alles behoort by die „magnalia Dei", die groot werke van God wat nog baie groter is as wat ons ooit gedink het."

## BEROERING EN LEWE

Die Rooms-Katolieke teoloog, prof. Karl Rahner S.J. het in 'n radio-praatjie stelling ingeneem ten opsigte van die posisie van die leek in die Rooms-Katolieke Kerk van Duitsland. Hy het gesê dat hy graag die onrus in die kerk op die koop toe neem as dit daaroor gaan dat die leek sy plek in die kerk ontvang. Hy pleit vir 'n egte, oortuigende verteenwoordiging van leke, sowel binne as buite die kerk. En hierdie verteenwoordiging moet 'n saaklike ouoriteit en mening hê. Hy het hom dan ook teen 'n verteenwoordiging deur biskoppe uitgespreek. Dit moet van onder af opgroei, anders is daar eerder sprake van 'n verteenwoordiging van die hiérargie by die leke as van 'n verteenwoordiging van die leke by die hiérargie.

Mondige lidmate van die kerk veronderstel ook die vrye woord binne die kerk, d.w.s. aansienlike meningsverskille. En hierdie meningsverskil moet na buite openbaar word, al sou daar dan onrus in die kerk ontstaan. Dié onrus kan besonder heilsaam wees, al dink die biskoppe daar miskien anders oor. Volgens Rahner ontbreek dit in Duitsland aan 'n ope gespreksforum. Die mening heers nog dat elke dialoog so gou as moontlik tot swye gebring moet word, om die rus in die land te bewaar. „Onenigheid kan 'n teken van lewe wees, waardeur stagnasie en die rus van die kerkhof vermy word" — so besluit hy. (Katoliek Nederlands Persbureau).

# CHRISTIANITY AT THE CROSSROADS

JACK CURTIS

In South Africa today Christianity is faced in microcosm with problems which in macrocosmic form present themselves to world Christianity. Strangely, or perhaps not so strangely since we know history inclines to repetition, the form of the problem is markedly similar to the problem which confronted the adherents of the Biblical faith some 2000 years ago.

Two thousand years ago the facets of the problem were expressed tersely in questions put to Jesus and answered clearly in precept and practice by Jesus in a way which brought joy and satisfaction to some and was a cause of bitterness and rancour to others.

Two of the questions then, as now, were:

"Who is my neighbour?" and "Is it lawful for us to give tribute unto Caesar, or no?"

The first question, then, as now, was full of implications of race and creed. Did the law of God govern only our relations with our own kin, people of our own race and religious beliefs or did it extend to everyone with whom we came into contact, however remote the contact and however distant the relationship?

Jesus answered the first question in precept with the parable of the good Samaritan and by example with His relations with Samaritans, a people shunned by his fellow countrymen, and Romans and people of strange or no religious beliefs. For these practices He was accused of being "a friend of publicans and sinners." (The "fellow traveller" and the "liberal" of our day?)

In the parable illustrating duty to one's neighbour He held up to scorn the priest who "when he saw him (the needy one) passed by on the other side" and the Levite who "came and looked and passed by on the other side." How many of our priestly and Levitical Christians in South Africa having looked and seen the dire plight of our spiritually wounded, mentally distressed and on occasion physically half-dead fellow countrymen of different race have not chosen "the other side of the road?" The side of "non-intervention in the temporal affairs of the community."

To the second question, Jesus' immediate and well-known reply was "render unto Caesar the things which be Caesar's and unto God

the things which be God's."

How many of our chief priests and scribes are prepared to and do render unto Caesar the things which are God's and to God only the things which are Caesar's? They willingly give unto God their money and material resources and deny to him, by their condonation of unjust laws, their voices which should be raised in protest at the persecution of their brethren.

The two problems remain —

The denial by many, if not most "Whites" that God's commandment "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" applies to neighbours who are "non-Whites."

The willingness of Christians to pledge by their silence their allegiance to temporal governments which deny by their philosophies the fatherhood of God and deny by their laws the brotherhood of man in God.

We who have taken the name of "Christians" are inclined to believe that because of that name we can do no wrong and that whatever we do God will uphold. Jesus did not call his followers Christians, but disciples. ("Christ" is literally "Messias" or "Messiah"). Christians by derivation are Messianists or people who look for the Messiah. What is important is not what we call ourselves, but whether we show by our actions allegiance to the teachings of the Messiah who we expect to lead us into the Kingdom of God.

In the time of Jesus the scribes and Pharisees were also Messianists, worshippers of Jehovah, expecting a deliverer from God.

Jesus' warning then as now was "Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in Heaven."

Throughout all our recorded history two things have not changed, one is the identity of our Father in Heaven and the second is His will.

The traditional religious leaders of Jesus' day did not obey the will of God and their leadership was overthrown and given to others. The traditional religious leaders of today can expect no different fate if they turn away the will of God. St. Paul speaking to the Romans made this possibility quite clear in his allusion to the olive tree in which he said: "If God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest He also spare not thee" — "they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in again."

In South Africa and Africa as a whole the traditional leadership of White Christianity, once acknowledged by Africans in the religious, political and economic fields, is being lost by default.

Three students in these fields have recently testified to this loss by default:

Mia Brandel-Syrier in "Black Woman in Search of God" states her belief that the Manyanos (African Women's Prayer Circles) are the most powerful voluntary associations in existence in South Africa today but notes that they are tending to emancipate themselves from the White churches.

During a recent session of Parliament Mr. Cas Greyling, M.P., implied that the Liberal Party was essentially a Jewish movement. This is, of course, not true. It is probably true, however, that in South Africa in movements to alleviate the lot of the under privileged racial groups, whether in the political, social or economic fields, Jews play a part greater in proportion to their numbers than do Christians.

Tom Stacey writing in "Inside Africa" has pointed out that whilst the African states view with suspicion both the Communism of the East and the Economic Imperialism of the West, they accept gladly and without suspicion the ideology of Israel. They find that Israelis "have no predisposition to despise them" — but "take them unhesitatingly at face value." "Israelis are building hospitals, running clinics, reorganising health departments, training air-

line pilots, teaching and technically training all over Black Africa," — "In Africa it is the old idealism at work. Once it was the Kibbutz Communal Farming Settlement that best illustrated the essential Israel, today it is Israel in Africa."

Christianity is at the crossroads in South Africa as in the world. It may choose to enter the left-hand deviation of dictatorially imposed

egalitarian materialism or the right-hand deviation of traditional and selfish racial privilege; either will lead it with equal facility to the mouth of Hell.

If Christianity would survive it must rescue itself from on one hand an exaggerated fear of Communism and on the other hand its greed of racial privilege. It must as Israel has done combine the inspiration of

Communal activities with the enterprise of Capitalism, the love of humanity with the reverence of God, and go forward believing the promise of God, given through the prophet Malachi; "prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it."

#### DIE WOORDE VAN DIE MENSE (Matt. 12:36-37)

## VERVOLG VAN MINDOLÖ-GRUWELKRONIEK?

(Opmerkings oor 'n Beoordeling deur „Die Kerkbode“ van die Wêreldkonferensie oor Kerk en Gemeenskap, gehou te Genève in Julie 1966.)

In Julie 1966 is daar te Genève onder beskerming van die Wêreldraad van Kerke 'n wêreldkonferensie gehou oor KERK EN GEMEENSKAP. Die amptelike verslag oor hierdie konferensie het onlangs verskyn. Ek wil dit graag by my lezers aanbeveel as uiters waardevolle en leersame leesstof.

### UNIEK

Wat hierdie konferensie veral uniek maak in die geskiedenis van die ekumeniese beweging, is dat meer as die helfte van die deelnemers nie-teoloë was wat met teoloë gaan konfereer het oor die tema: *Christene in die Tegniese en Sosiale Omwenthinge van ons Tyd*. Deskundiges op verskeie vakgebiede het hulle kennis, insigte en probleme i.v.m. 'n wêreld wat op die verskillende samelewingsvlakke van die politiek, die ekonomie en die maatskaplike lewe besig is om 'n revolusionêre verandering te onderraan, met teoloë gedeel. Christene was daar byeen om te beraadslaag oor die Christelike getuienis in verband met die roeping van die mens in die moderne wêreld.

Nou is dit juis so geweldige leerbaar en verrykend vir die gees om in 'n aantal verslae wat saamgebundel is, te sien hoe Christene wat één gemeenskaplike sorg het, nl. die blywendie deurwerking van die evangelie van Christus in hierdie twintigste eeuse wêreld van ons, maar wat met hulle verskillende kerklike, konfessionele en kulturele agtergrond van selfsprekend ook uiteenlopende oortuigings daarop nahou, tog tot sekere gevolgtrekkings kan kom waарoor hulle dit almal eens is en wat hulle vir die kerk aanbied, of liever: aan hom voorlē vir verdere bestudering en aksie. Dit is te hope dat alle kerke, ook in Suid-Afrika, dit met liefde sal

ontvang en met erns sal bestudeer. Ook verdien dit oorweging dat die Christelike Instituut dit op een of ander wyse onder die aandag van al sy lede sal bring.

### VERWRONGE BEKENDSTELLING

Hierdie hoop is egter by voorbaat grootliks reeds verydel deur die wyse waarop *Die Kerkbode*, amptelike orgaan van die Ned. Geref. Kerk, die verslag van die wêreldkonferensie aan die Ned. Geref. Kerk bekend gestel het. 'n Mens kan nie anders as om daaroor diep hartseer te voel nie. Oor hierdie aanbieding, wat ek nie anders as *verwrongs* kan noem nie, wil ek een en ander sê.

My lezers moet tog asseblief nie uit die feit dat *Die Kerkbode* en sy koers telkens weer in hierdie rubriek ter sprake kom, aflei dat *Die Kerkbode* my uitverkore swartskaap is nie. Soos dit alle lede van die N.G. Kerk betaam, het ek van sy amptelike orgaan die hoogste verwagting en wil ek graag vir hom die hoogste agting hê. En dit nie slegs vanweë die feit dat ek lidmaat van die N.G. Kerk is nie, maar veral vanweë die onbetwisselbare leidende rol wat hierdie Kerk in die Suid-Afrikaanse volkslewe vervul. Maar ek kan dit nie onder stoele en banke wegsteek dat *Die Kerkbode* soms diep teleurstel nie, veral as ek die indruk kry dat hy in sy inleidingskolomme, waarvan daar so 'n

kragtige leidinggewende invloed uitgaan, soms geneig is om te daal tot 'n peil wat hom nie waardig is nie en wat die kerk en volk waarin hy dien, nie waardig is nie.

### PONTIAANS

Dat *Die Kerkbode* die Wêreldraad van Kerke nie vriendelik gesind is nie, is een saak. Dat hy daarvan blyk gee dat hy op 'n Pontiaanse wyse teen die Wêreldraad te veld wil trek, is 'n ander saak. As hy die Wêreldraad wil beveg, sal hy dit op 'n peil van die hoogste waardigheid en in 'n gees van onkreukbare waardheid moet doen. Skeldtaal, verdagmaking, suggestiewe vrae, die stel van totaal ongegronde afleidings as feite, is die manier van iemand wat wanhopig aan die verloorkant veg, van die potsierlike dwerg wat sy vuiste teen dierots wat hy nie kan beweeg nie, pap moker.

Veral die indruk wat *Die Kerkbode* as amptelike orgaan van 'n hooggerespekteerde kerk soos die N.G. Kerk met so 'n weergawe van die motiewe en handelinge van die wêreldkonferensie moontlik na buite kan maak, op Christene en kerke en instansies wat weet wat in werklikheid daar gebeur het, ontstel 'n mens. As 'n mens van iemand verskil, dan moet jy tog deugdelike gronde daarvoor hê? Dan moet jy dit tog op so 'n wyse doen dat jy hom altyd weer in die oë kan kyk? En as dit om die fundamentele dinge van ons saligheid gaan en jy werklik oor sy dwaling bekommerd is, moet jy jou tog veral nie met 'n hoplose waninterpretasie van sy bedoelinge en met hysteriese uitbarstinge, in sy oog belaglik en missien selfs veragtelik maak nie? Agter die waarheid wat

ons aan 'n ander in sy dwaling voorhou, moet God tog staan? Hy moet tog immers ook herken kan word in die wyse van ons optrede as ons voorgee om vir die waarheid te stry?

Hierdie veronderstellinge mis 'n mens in *Die Kerkbode* se inleidingsartikel van 19 April 1967. Wie die verslae van die wêreldkonferensie lees, kan nouliks glo dat dit in die artikel werklik oor dieselfde saak gaan.

## ONVERSKOONBAAR

Twee dinge het *Die Kerkbode* in sy hantering van die verslag sommer uit die staanspoor skromelik en blindweg veronagsaam. As dit nie dinge is wat in die verslag self uitdruklik staan nie, kon dit miskien nog verskoonbaar gewees het. Die eerste is dit, dat daar op die binnekant van die titelblad waar sekere bepalings i.v.m. kopiereg aangegee word, in duidelike letters staan dat aanhalings uit die verslag toelaatbaar is *mits die bron volledig aangegee word*. Sonder enige bladverwysings haal *Die Kerkbode* egter aan en aarsel selfs nie om in een sin 'n storie op te maak uit dinge wat in verskillende verband op verskillende bladsye staan nie. As bladverwysings maar aangegee is sodat lesers vir hulself kon kontroleer, sou dit ook veel makliker gewees het om vas te stel dat wat *Die Kerkbode* as standpunte van die konferensie bekend stel, in etlike gevalle (en dit moet veral in gedagte gehou word waar dit om sake van 'n uiters kontensieuse aard gaan) een van verskeie uiteenlopende standpunte oor 'n bepaalde saak is wat in 'n verslag belang word.

Die tweede hang hiermee saam en is dit, dat daar in die verslag op die eerste bladsy van die Inleiding (bl. 6) uitdruklik verklaar word dat die *gevolgtrekings en aanbevelings* wat by die verskillende verslae ingesluit is (dus nie die verslae in hul geheel nie, maar slegs daardie dele wat as sodanig aangedui is) besluite van die konferensie geword het. Let wel: dit het besluite van die *konferensie* geword en nie „slagspreuke van die Wêreldraad” waarteen *Die Kerkbode* aan die slot van sy artikel meent te waarsku, en wat bedoel sou wees as „ekumeniese voorskrifte vir die verhouding van die kerk tot die politiek” nie, maar bloot, so beskeie soos dit hoort: besluite van 'n konferensie wat na die Wêreldraad en sy ledekerke verwys is vir behoorlike bestudering. By die beoordeling van die verslag in sy geheel, kan dus slegs

daardie dele van die konferensie as besluite beskou word wat werklik besluite was, en nie alles wat in elke verslag staan nie! Dit is tog 'n elementêre veronderstelling waarvan uitgegaan moet word by die lees van enige kerkvergadering se „handelinge”.

## FANTASTIESE ONSIN

Wou *Die Kerkbode* van die wêreldkonferensie in Genève 'n tweede Mindolo-gruwelkroniek maak, behalwe net dat die saak hier „veel ernstiger” geword het omdat dit in Genève om die beplanning van 'n wêreldrevolusie gegaan het? Dit is tog ondenkbaar dat sulke fantastiese onsin ooit in die kolomme van 'n hoogaangeskrewe kerkblad gesuggereer kan word. Maar 'n mens se oë bedrieg jou tog nie as jy lees wat daar staan! En wáár kom *Die Kerkbode* tog daaraan? Vergelyk maar die opschrift van die artikel, *Kerk en Revolusie*, wat op sigself al met so 'n duidende suggestie gelaai is vir die ore van die wetsgehoorsame en ordeliewende en veelal met „antikommunisme” bestookte kerkvolk tot wie *Die Kerkbode* hom rig, met die tema van die konferensie: „Christians in the Technical and Social Revolutions of our Time”.

Inderdaad was hierdie weersinboesemende opschrift nie 'n toevalige glips nie. Uit die inhoud van die artikel blyk dit dat dit spesifiek so gekies moes gewees het om as geskikte opschrift te dien vir die wolhaarstorie wat volg.

## REVOLUSIE?

Die „sleutelwoorde” van die konferensie was „blybaar”: dinamiese handeling en sosiale revolusie. Dat „dinamiese handeling” een van die sleutelwoorde sou wees, lei *Die Kerkbode* af uit punt 2 van die „Boodskap van die Konferensie” (bl. 48-50): „During our days together, we have been reminded of the new possibilities now open before man, as well as of the new threats to human existence. We have been given a new sense of the urgency of the task before us. In the light of what is now happening in our society, we Christians cannot escape the call to serious study and dynamic action”.

*Die Kerkbode* suggereer egter dat hierdie „dinamiese handeling” op 'n „sosiale revolusie” wat deur die konferensie geïnstigeer sou wees, betrekking het. Hoe hy die kloutjie hier by

die oor kry, weet hy alleen. Of wéét hy? In elk geval kry hy dit reg om „sosiale revolusie” as tweede sleutelwoord van die konferensie naas „dinamiese handeling” en inhoudgewend daarvan, te vind in punt 1 van die Boodskap: „We, participants in the World Conference on Church and Society, are grateful to God who has brought us together from 70 nations of the world. We thankfully acknowledge that he has granted us this experience of the world community which is emerging in this age of advanced technology and social revolution. By his grace we have come to a new awareness of the reality of the Church as the people of God, united in diversity, sustained in weakness by the power of the Holy Spirit, and called to participate in the freedom and reconciliation offered us by Jesus Christ”. Dit gaan vir die konferensie dus om die dank wat hy aan God verskuldig voel dat ook die Kerk van Christus as 'n reële wêreldgemeenskap ondervind kan word in hierdie eeu van sosiale omwenteling!

Dit is klaarblyklik nie die gedagtes van die konferensie wat besoedel was met die aanstigting van 'n revolusie van watter aard ookal nie. Onteenseglik het dit vir hom gegaan om die ware belewing van die weldade van Christus en om die roeping van sy kerk in hierdie snel veranderende wêreld. Op die eerste bladsy van die Inleiding (bl. 6) staan daar al iets wat *Die Kerkbode* die hoof in skaamte moet laat hang: „The conference was charged with advising the churches and the WCC on their ministry in a world undergoing revolutionary social change”.

Maar *Die Kerkbode* het nou eenmaal sy eie tema gekies vir die gruwelverhaal wat hy wou vertel, en laat ons nou hoor hoe hy verder daarop voortborduur.

## MARXISME?

Die handeling en die revolusie waarop „die Wêreldraad se konferensie” dan sou aangedring het, so lui die storie verder, is o.m. dit, dat daar 'n oorplasing van kapitaal moet wees van die ryk lande na die armes. Nou heet dit sommer ook al „die Wêreldraad se konferensie”; en tot watter dieptes waartoe daar in sekere kringe met die moddergooiery teen die Wêreldraad gedaal word, ook *Die Kerkbode* tot 'n mens se ontsteltenis blyk te neig, besef jy weer as hy antwoord op sy selfgestelde vraag waarheen die konferensie mik:

'n Internasionale begroting en 'n internasionale belasting wat (op gesag van Alice Widener!) slegs uitgevoer kan word in 'n stelsel van wêrldsosialisme waarin die Marxistiese leer domineer! Nou is die Geneefse revolusie-komplot ontmasker en kan daar voortgegaan word om aan te toon hoe die weg wat vir sy uitvoering beplan word, al meedoënloser word, ja, tot die bloedige toe. Grieselig, voorwaar . . .

Maar laat ons eers weer die verslag self ter hand neem voordat ons fiksie en feite nie meer van mekaar kan onderskei nie en verdigsel vir waarheid aan ons laat opdis.

### „DIE HUMANE”

In die verslag van Seksie I, *Economic Development in a World Perspective* (bl. 51-93), waarin die gedagte van 'n „internasionale begroting” en 'n „internasionale belasting” inderdaad voorkom, word daar voorgestel dat „die humane” vir die kerk as kriterium moet geld in die beoordeling van ekonomiese en maatskaplike verandering. En met „die humane” word bedoel 'n Bybelse menseskouing wat deur die Christusopenbaring bepaal word. „In him” (Jesus Christ) „we see most clearly what it means to say that man is made in the image of God, that in dealing with the material world the Christian is called to express the Lordship of Christ, and to do so with a sense of his solidarity with all men”. Die Christen leef sy Christelike lewe nie slegs in die kerk nie, het die konferensie besef, maar ook in die wêreld. Sy lewe in die kerk is egter nie sonder betekenis vir sy lewe in die wêreld nie, maar normatief daarvoor. Die krag en inspirasie om in die wêreld die ware medemenslikheid te beoefen, ontleen die Christen aan die lewe wat in die kerk geleef word. Die lewe in die kerk is paradigmatis vir die lewe in die wêreld. Van die kerk word gepraat as „the Christian community, the fellowship of the Holy Spirit”. „In this community”, so word verder gesê, „the gifts of each member are meant to contribute to the common life of the whole, and not to be used merely for personal aggrandisement”. En hierin het ons die voorbeeld en die norm vir die inrigting van die wêreld. „The fellowship of the Church should witness to what man's entire political and social life should express”. (Bl. 52).

### „TEOKRATIES”

Dat daar verskil kan word oor die standpunt dat die ware menslikheid in Christus aan ons geopenbaar is, is goed begrypplik. Daar was dan ook geen gedagte by die konferensie om dit as 'n enigste standpunt te verabsouteer nie, en dit is ook duidelik gestel: „In stressing the criterion of the human we are aware that there is no full theological agreement on the meaning of our humanity in Christ, and the World Council of Churches could usefully invite a group of theologians and social scientists to pursue this question” (bl. 52 en 91). Dit is egter moeilik — vir 'n Gereformeerde Christen haas onmoontlik; alle Gereformeerdes dink in 'n meerder of mindere mate maar „teokraties” — om die gedagte dat die lewe in die kerk paradigmatis moet wees vir die inrigting van die hele politieke en sosiale lewe, te weerspreek.

### BELASTERING

Maar wat ek in verband met die Kerkbode-storie wil opmerk, lê hogenaamd nie op die vlak van 'n rede-like gedagtewisseling oor theologiese vrae nie. Dit gaan vir my slegs om sy totaal ongegronde en onredelike verdagmaking, ja, belastering van 'n konferensie van Christene, waardeur hy nie soseer die Wêreldraad van Kerke nie, maar homself as amptelike orgaan van die N.G. Kerk en daarmee die N.G. Kerk self onder 'n vraagteken van die ernstigste betwyfeling plaas. Met sulke loutere onsin soos dié wat *Die Kerkbode* van Alice Widener oorneem, as sou „die Wêreldraad se konferensie” wil afstuur op 'n stelsel van wêrldsosialisme waarin die Marxistiese leer domineer, kan geen goeie saak gedien word nie. As die N.G. Kerk stilswyend en goedkeurend toelaat dat *Die Kerkbode* sy distansiëring van die Wêreldraad begin verdedig met wapens wat uit hierdie arsenaal gehaal word, het dit tyd geword dat die N.G. Kerk homself dringend moet afvra aan watter kant hy staan in die stryd van die lig en die duisternis.

### HOOGSTE NORM

Dit is duidelik dat die wêreldkonferensie slegs na één ding gesoek het en ook nie wou verberg dat hy daar-na soek nie, nl. die hoogste Christelike norm vir die politieke, ekonomiese en sosiale inrigting van die samelewing, op nasionale sowel as op

internasionale vlak. Dit het hy, met 'n verklaarbare theologiese huiwering, in „die humane” gevind. As daar maar die geringste spoor daarvan was dat 'n bepaalde ekonomiese stelsel (volgens *Die Kerkbode* sal dit dan die Marxisme moet wees!) deur die konferensie verabsoluteer en tot norm verhef is, was 'n mate van agterdog miskien geregtig. Die teendeel is egter die geval. In die verslag self, waarin uiteraard stellinge voorkom wat meer kontroversiel van aard is as die versigtig geformuleerde besluite, word daar al pertinent gewaarsku teen die verabsolutering van enige bepaalde ekonomiese stelsel: „There is no kind of economic system within which the Christian Church is not found, and on the whole Christians tend to support the kind of society in which they live. This fact should not occasion surprise; what is surprising is that Christians have so often argued that only one economic system is Christian . . . The role of Christians is to be critical participants in the societies in which they find themselves”. (Bl. 57).

### CHRISTELIKE BARMHARTIGHEID

Nie deur die Marxisme geïnspireer nie, maar op grond van die Christelike beginsels van die geregtigheid, die liefde en die barmhartigheid het die konferensie geredeneer dat daar in 'n tyd van wêrldwye ekonomiese opbloei veral ook aan die minderbevoordele, in die sin van enkelinge en volkere, gedink moet word, ongeag die ekonomiese stelsels waaronder daar in verskillende lande geleef mag word. Dit is inderdaad ook nie die konferensie wat besluit het dat daar 'n oorplasing van kapitaal van die ryk lande na die armes moet wees, waaruit *Die Kerkbode* meen om skamper te konkludeer: „Daar moet dan 'n internasionale gevoel van verantwoordelikheid teenoor die minderontwikkelde lande wees” nie. Daar word uitgegaan van die feit dat daar 'n groeiende besef van internasionale verantwoordelikheid is vir hulpverlening aan minder-ontwikkelde volke, en dit word as 'n hoopvolle teken begroet. (Geld dit nie ook van Suid-Afrika nie? En is dit nie die duidelike koers wat deur ons huidige Eerste Minister aangedui word vir die beleid van Suid-Afrika t.o.v. minder-ontwikkelde Afrikastate nie?) Daar word in die verslag egter besorgdheid uitgespreek oor die effektiwiteit van sodanige hulpverlening, of dit werklik altyd aan die lang-

termyn ontwikkeling van volke diensbaar is of slegs 'n kort-termyn noodleniging is. 'n Elementêre reël van alle kerklike barmhartigheidsdiens word hier in ag geneem en vir die toepassing daarvan ook in die internasionale hulpverlening word gepleit. Op grond daarvan is die noodsaaklikheid van internasionale samewerking beklemtoon en met die oog daarop is die gedagte in die verslag uitgespreek dat dit eventueel mag lei tot 'n „internasionale begroting” en 'n „internasionale belasting” (bl. 75).

Hierdie gedagte het inderdaad ook in die besluite van die konferensie 'n neerslag gevind. Die konferensie het by die Wêreldraad van Kerke aanbeveel om 'n voortgaande professionele en tegniese studie te maak van probleme rakende die ekonomiese, sosiale en politieke ontwikkelinge in die wêreld, met besondere verwysing o.m. na die moontlikheid van die instelling van 'n internasionale belasting vir wêreldontwikkeling. (bl. 92).

## OFFERS

Maar hoe Marxisties-Leninisties-Stalinisties die hele aangeleentheid sou wees, merk *Die Kerkbode* „met ontsteltenis” as daar in 'n sub-seksie van die verslag, waarin gehandel word oor *World Economic Relations*, gepraat word van die offers wat nodig mag wees vir die verwerkliking van sosiale geregtigheid op wêreldskaal. Hierdie deel van die verslag gaan weer eens uit van die *feit* dat sosiale geregtigheid die grondslag is waarop die ekonomiese groei van vele lande plaasvind. Dit is egter nodig dat dit in die wêreld alom die geval sal wees. „The challenge of our times is to extend this understanding to the world community” (bl. 80). Alle volke, veral die wat ekonomies sterk is, moet verder kyk as hulle beperkte selfbelang en hulle verantwoordelikheid in wêreldperspektief sien. Daar moet, op grond van die evangelie dat God die Skepper en Versoener van die hele wêreld is, 'n regverdiger verdeling van die goed van die wêreld wees, en volke en regeringe kan aan hulle roeping slegs getrou wees as hulle saamwerk in die strewe daarna (vgl. bl. 89). Dan word daar, met 'n nugtere realisme, in die verslag iets gesê wat vir ons hier in Suid-Afrika wat 'n politieke beleid volg wat óók daarop aanspraak maak dat dit politieke en sosiale geregtigheid wil laat geskied, oorbekend is omdat

dit feitlik in daardie woorde al so dikwels van die kant van ons eie owerheid aan ons voorgehou is: „The fundamental restructuring of the world economy” (ons kan hierdie woorde goedskiks vervang met: „The implementation of the policy of separate development”!!) „necessarily implies temporary dislocation and possible suffering for a large number of people” (bl. 86).

## „VIR WATTER WÊRELD-DIKTATUUR?”

En dit is wat *Die Kerkbode* so ontstel. Dááruit weet hy dat ons hier met niks anders te doen kan hê nie as met die groot Rooi goggwa wat die Antikommers met so 'n verbysterende vernuf kan uitsnuffel in elke kerk, organisasie of persoon wat dit vir medemenslikheid opneem en vir sosiale geregtigheid pleit; en deur die bril van Alice Widener sien hy al net „koppe rol” en bloed vloei. Dat daar 'n beroep op die kerk gedoen word (*Die Kerkbode* haal nie die besluit van die konferensie aan nie, maar uit die verslag) om maatregels wat nodig mag wees om sosiale geregtigheid op internasionale skaal te beoefen, vir mense wat daardeur *tydelike* ontwrigting en ontbering mag ondervind, aannemlik en verstaanbaar te maak, plaas vir *Die Kerkbode* die „kerklike stempel” daarop dat „in die uitvoering van so 'n 'kerklike' ekonomiese plan” miljoene mense „ontwortel, geruineer, verslaaf en selfs gedood sal moet word”; en die gedagte ontpers aan hom die benoude gil: „Die kerke diensbaar aan die wêreldwye sosiale en ekonomiese revolusie!” En Rusland en China loer om die hoek . . .

In die lig van hierdie konklusie blyk 'n voorafgaande vraag dan bloot retories te wees: „En vir watter wêrelddiktatuur wat vir so 'n projek nodig sal wees moet die kerke dan handlangers wees en oortuigingswerk doen?”

## JESUS IS HERE

Kan 'n mens, wanneer jy die Kerkbode-artikel lees, glo wat jy daar voor jou oë sien? Is jou sinne nie besig om jou te bedrieg nie? Nêrens in die verslag van Seksie I van die konferensie, waarom dit in die bespreking tot hiertoe gegaan het, is iets anders af te lei nie as dat daar gespreek is vanuit die belydenis dat

Jesus die Here is en dat daar gesoek is na die Christelike maatstaf vir die konkrete gehoorsaamheid in die liefde tot God en die naaste. In die eerste reëls van die verslag word die groei in ekonomiese produktiwiteit dankbaar erken as 'n gawe van God wat in gehoorsaamheid aan Hom aangewend moet word tot voordeel van almal (bl. 52). Agter die noodsaaklikheid van internasionale samewerking in belang van 'n wêreldwye sosiale geregtigheid, sien die konferensie nie die aandrang van Moskou en China deur die rooi bril wat *Die Kerkbode* van Alice Widener geleen het nie, maar 'n sedelike imperatif (bl. 80) wat uit 'n verdere ontvouing van die gedagtegang nie blyk te kom uit 'n (ongelowige) „humanistiese” mensbeskouing en wêreldideaal nie, maar uit die Christelike humaniteit wat sy grond daarin het dat God die Skepper en Versoener van die hele wêreld is. Op grond daarvan word in die verslag die gedagte uitgespreek dat, wie in ons wêreld van vandag waarin ons één wêreldgemeenskap binne die grense van één wêreld in sig gekry het, teenoor 'n sosiale geregtigheid wat noodwendig wêreldwye afmetings moet aanneem, onverskillig staan of dit in die weg staan, onder die oordeel van God staan (vgl. bl. 89). Volkome in ooreenstemming met die Skrif is die volgende stelling: „The technical is not amoral or non-ethical. God is concerned in such technical problems as liquidity, the terms of trade, tariffs and infrastructural development. To think or act otherwise is to create a false dichotomy and to try to confine God within an ecclesiastical system divorced from the world he died to save” (bl. 89-90). Ek kan nie anders nie as om hierin klanke te hoor van die waarheid wat sal bly tot in ewigheid. Maar waar kom die onherkenbare karikatuur vandaan wat *Die Kerkbode* daarvan maak? Volgens die Geneefse konferensie, sê hy, moet snelle verandering teweeg gebring word, indien nodig, met geweld. „Maar dan het die konferensie by voorbaat één wêreldekonomie, wêreldbelasting en, by implikasie, politieke beheer aanvaar. Wie hierteen skop, is volgens hom in verset teen die Skrif en moet gedwing word om die regte van ander, volgens bogenoemde voorskrif, te eerbiedig”. Die skrikbeeld wat *Die Kerkbode* hiermee opbou, is beslis nie een van die Wêreldraad van Kerke nie . . .

## "OM DIE WAARHEID TE SÊ"

*Die Kerkbode* praat van 'n „projek”, d.w.s. 'n kant en klaar uitgewerkte plan (maar 'n hoeveel-jaar plan sê hy nie) wat aanvaar is en van 'n „kerklike” stempel voorsien is. En dit in weerwil van die uitdruklike en uitgesproke huiwering waar mee die konferensie sy gedagtes oor internasionale samewerking aansbied. „The conference recognized that these are highly complex questions on which further detailed study is needed” (bl. 80). Dit lyk waarlik nie of een enkele woord wat hy oor die konferensie te sê gehad het, agterbly as 'n mens dit oor die sif van die waarheid uitgooi nie.

Weer eens haal hy nie uit die aanvaarde besluite aan nie, maar uit die verslag, en voorsien sy mededeling nogal van 'n waarheidsverzekering as hy met die volgende kom: „Om die waarheid te sê, die konferensie bepleit kerklike deelname aan politieke opvoeding sodat 'n politieke strewe na 'n wêreldeconomie en 'n wêreldgemeenskap opgewek kan word en nasionale soewereiniteit verminder kan word”. Inderdaad word daar in die verslag ook gehandel oor die noodsaaklikheid van die opvoedingsstaak van die kerk in 'n wêrelf van snelle ekonomiese ontwikkeling. Om sy rol in die gemeenskap te kan vervul, moet die kerk die magte en instellings wat daarin werk, ten volle begryp. Naas sy pastorale taak (bl. 86-88) het hy ook 'n opvoedingsstaak. Hierin staan theologiese opvoeding voorop „to show the relationship of Christian belief and ethics to economic problems”. Dit impliseer noodwendig ook ekonomiese, politieke en sosiale opvoeding. Oor wat die bydrae van die kerk t.o.v. politieke opvoeding (d.w.s. met die oog op die beoefening van sosiale geregtigheid, waaroer die verslag handel!) behels word dan gesê: „The purpose of church participation in political education is to produce the political will for a world economic and social order compatible with Christian conscience” (bl. 88).

Ek kursiveer die laaste vier woorde. *Dit* staan daar. *Die Kerkbode* maak egter daarvan: „en (sodat) nasionale soewereiniteit verminder kan word” — 'n sin wat hy op die volgende bladsy uit 'n totaal ander verband gaan haal het en in die vertaling daarvan nie reg weergee nie (afgesien nog daarvan dat „a world economic and social order” nie sonder meer met „n wêreldeconomie en 'n wêreldgemeenskap” vertaal kan

word nie). Onder 'n ander paragraafopskrif, nadat die opvoedingsstaak van die kerk klaar bespreek is, nl. „Die Uitdaging aan die Kerke”, word in die verslag opgemerk dat internationale samewerking tot 'n regverdiging verdeling van die goedere van God (rykdom, gesondheid, onderwys, sekuriteit, behuising, geleentheid) „a diminution of national sovereignty on the basis of mutual concessions and equal rights” mag nodig maak. *Dit* weerspieël 'n totaal ander gees en is iets totaal anders as wat *Die Kerkbode* daarvan maak.

## „VEEL ERNSTIGER”

„Veel ernstiger word die saak wanneer” (*Die Kerkbode* sê dat) „aan Christene feilik 'n vrybrief gegee word vir geweld en wetsoortreding”. Hy bedoel dit is deur die konferensie gedoen. Dit haal hy uit die verslag van Seksie II oor *The Nature and Function of the State in a Revolutionary Age*. Maar uit die wyse waarop daar met die verslag van Seksie I omgegaan is, kan my lesers met reg vermoed klat hulle regtig nie „veel ernstiger” hoef te raak oor wat nou gaan volg nie. Miskien het ek ook al genoeg gevra van die uithouvermoë van my lesers en van die ruimte van *Pro Veritate*, en sal dit daarom so kort moontlik probeer bespreek.

Die stelling van *Die Kerkbode* is nie vir misverstand vatbaar nie. Dit dig aan die wêreldkonferensie iets toe wat net een betekenis kan hê. „Pleeg geweld, indien nodig” (nl. vir die ekonomiese revolusie wat moet plaasvind) is die woorde wat hy die konferensie in die mond lê. Maar hoe lyk dit as dit in die lig van die verslag self beoordeel word? Eerstens, die aanhaling uit die verslag waarop *Die Kerkbode* hom vir sy aantyging beroep, is nie 'n besluit wat deur die konferensie aanvaar is nie. Tweedens, selfs die „Conclusions”, wat alléén besluite van die konferensie is, word aangebied met die voorbehoud: „This” (nl. die hele vraagstuk van die staat) „is an area of theology which is in transition, and our conclusions call for continuing work in this area” (bl. 96). Derdens, as een van „some unresolved issues” word die vraag genoem: „Is it ever justifiable for a Christian not only to participate in but even to take an initiative part in violent political or other social overthrow against the laws of the state?” (bl. 105).

Die verste wat die besluite van die

konferensie in hierdie rigting gaan, is 'n negatieve toevoeing aan 'n positiewe uitspraak omtrent die wet as „instrument of justice”, wat lui: „When law represents arbitrary state power, men may on occasion have a right and a duty to disobey it” (bl. 118) — 'n stelling wat in die Christelike politiese etiek algemeen aanvaar word. Vir verdere bestudering is o.m. aanbeveel: „A theological understanding of: (a) revolution and especially the ethics of violent action” (bl. 119).

## VANWAAR DIE SPOOKSTORIE?

Waar kom *Die Kerkbode* dan tog aan sy spookstorie van die „vrybrief tot geweld”? Omdat dit so 'n „veel ernstiger” saak is, probeer hy maak soos dit 'n verantwoordelike kerkblad sou betaam en gee hy voor om die kwaad met vers en kapittel aan te dui. Uit die verslag, let wel: nie uit die besluite nie, haal hy as bewysvoering die volgende aan: „In many cases where legislation violates an acceptable constitution, and no speedy means of legal relief are available, the Christian may be called to civil disobedience (sit-down strikes, passive disobedience or deliberate violation of laws)” (bl. 115). Siedaar, dit kom so uit die pers se bek. *Dit* is die „vrybrief”! Want, redeneer *Die Kerkbode*, wie bepaal nou eintlik wat 'n aanvaarbare grondwet is, watter wetgewing daarteen indruis, wat 'n vinnige metode vir verligting is of wat die grens vir „opsetlike wetsoortreding” is? Hiervolgens, so lyk dit vir die heilige blad (en daar is geen ironie in as ek dit „heilig” noem nie, maar opregte erns!) sal 'n „revolutionêr” haas enige vorm van sabotasje as opsetlike wetsoortreding kan pleeg op grond van 'n kerklike mandaat.

Sy vier onbeantwoorde vrae beantwoord hy dus self met een benoude uitroep: „Geweld!” Dit is dan eintlik die ontknopping van die hele Genève-gruwelverhaal: Die wêreldkonferensie in Genève het 'n sosiale en ekonomiese revolusie beplan met die cog daarop om die hele wêrelf onder die diktatuur van die kommunisme te bring en beveel aan dat dit „indien nodig, met geweld” deurgevoer moet word. Dit staan nie presies so in *Die Kerkbode* nie (behalwe die woorde tussen aanhalingstekens in die bestaande sin wat hy self tussen aanhalingstekens plaas en maar érens in die verslag moet aantoon as hy kan), maar presies dit, en niks anders nie,

wou hy sy lesers in die kop prent. Vrae, suggesties, koppeling, tipiese woordgebruik moes dien om hulle daarvan, en van niks anders nie, te oortuig.

### ONTMASKER

Maar hoe grieseliger en fantastieker die spook is wat 'n mens maak om 'n ander mee die skrik op die lyf te ja, hoe groter die grap as hy dit „ontmasker”.

In die verslag van Seksie II, waarvan 'n sub-seksie handel oor verantwoordelike deelname van die Christen aan die politieke lewe, word o.m. „besonder moeilike sake” onder 'n aparte hoof bespreek, soos (a) die gebruik van konstitusionele en buitekonstitusionele metodes van politieke aksie; (b) die gebruikmaking van gewelddadige en nie-gewelddadige aksies; en (c) die regte van minderhede of verdrukte groepe in die lewe van 'n volk. *Die Kerkbode* het die „vrybrief tot geweld” nie in (b) gevind nie, maar in (a)! Want in (b) staan daar iets wat in sy saamgestuurde storie nie die spel sou saamspel nie — op een en dieselfde bladsy waaruit hy aanhaal: „Even in the most adverse circumstances, the Christian should distinguish himself in his persistent challenge of evil through non-violent means” (bl. 115). Bowendien, hoe hy (a) vir sy doel kon inspan sonder 'n ernstige gewetenskonflik, is vir my nie duidelik nie. Vrae wat hy as ope vrae stel — vrae egter wat „geweld” nie alleen moontlik maak nie, maar as onontwykbare implikasie die „vrybrief” gee daarvoor — word alles ten duidelikste daarin beantwoord.

### VIER VRAE

Geweld, sê *Die Kerkbode*, dit is waartoe die konferensie eintlik wou aanhef, want (1) die verslag sê nie wat 'n aanvaarbare grondwet is nie. Die saboteurs, lei *Die Kerkbode* af, kan dus daaroor oordeel soos hulle wil. En tog word daar in die verslag, in die paragraaf onmiddellik voorafgaande aan die een waaruit aangehaal word, 'n beskrywing van 'n goeie grondwet gegee wat klaarblyklik tog as norm moet dien. Dit is „a constitution which clearly guarantees human rights and dignity as understood by Christian faith and by universal consensus.” (2) Die verslag sê nie watler wetgewing teen 'n aanvaarbare grondwet indruis nie. En tog word die norm duidelik aangedui en gepraat van „cases in which . . .

legislation often does not conform to the constitution”, nl. soos in die vorige paragraaf omskrywe! (3) Die verslag sê nie wat 'n „speedy means of legal relief” is nie. En tog is dit duidelik dat hier geen ander metode bedoel word nie as dié wat 'n goeie systeem van wetgewing waarborg „in which adequate provision is made for orderly and periodic modification and improvement”. (4) Die verslag sê nie wat die grens van „opsetlike wetsoortreding” is nie. En tog word as *terminus a quo* van Christelik geoorloofde wetsoortreding aangedui gevalle waar wetgewing teen 'n aanneemlike grondwet indruis en daar geen ander „speedy means of legal relief” voor hande is nie; en as *terminus ad quem* word die moontlikheid genoem dat, waar die grondwet self verander behoort te word om menseregte beter te waarborg, en dit onmoontlik blyk te wees, „the Christian may come to the conclusion that he has no alternative but to violate the constitution in order to make possible a better one”.

### GEWELD?

Fisiese geweld is hier in elk geval heeltemal buite oorweging. Die verslag plaas die lewessie van geweld of nie-geweld in 'n totaal ander probleme-kategorie. Bowendien moet by herhaling gesê word dat ons hier nie met 'n besluit van die konferensie te doen het nie maar met 'n gedagtegang wat in 'n verslag ontvoer word. En dit moet beklemtoon word dat dit nie sommer so, op die manier van *Die Kerkbode*, in een asem genoem kan word met die gedagtes wat uitgespreek is en aanbevelings wat gemaak is in verband met die Christelike roeping tot sosiale geregtigheid op wêreldskaal nie. *Die Kerkbode* suggereer egter, sonder om te blik of te bloos, dat geweld die „kerklike mandaat” is wat die konferensie vir „die revolutionêr” gegee het om die sosiale en ekonomiese revolusie snel te laat plaasvind.

Vraag aan *Die Kerkbode*: Is dit die resep wat hy aan die N.G. Kerk voorhou oor hoe om met 'n ander se woorde om te gaan? Kan die Woord van God bv. ook maar só gehanteer word in die prediking?

### „BEWAAK JOU HART”

Die implikasie wat hy lees in die „advies” van „kerkmanne wat die ekumeniese voorskrif vir die verhouding van die kerk tot die politiek aan ons wil voorhou,” laat *Die Kerk-*

*bode* sy oë groot rek. Die Geneefse konferensie laat 'n „evangelie” van „revolusie” hoor „wat nie bloot 'n algehele hartsverandering bepleit nie”. As *Die Kerkbode* dan regtig nie op 'n waarskuwing op grond van die getuenis van profete en apostels in die Skrif wil ag slaan nie en die valse digotomie wil handhaaf wat die evangelie van Christus en die aansprake daarvan uit die wêreld wil verdryf om dit „bloot” tot die harte van mense in te perk, dan is dit stellig nie te veel gevra nie dat hy dan met die stukkie evangelie wat hy wel glo, wat ten minste darem 'n verandering van hart bewerk, sal erns maak. *Kerk en Revolutie* van 19 April 1967 lyk maar lelik as 'n mens dit aan die waarheid toets. En waar die hart van vol is, loop die mond van oor. Daar is 'n woord van die Spreukedigter wat *Die Kerkbode* dan tog in ag moet neem as hy vir baie ander leringe van die Bybel nie 'n oor het nie. „Bewaak jou hart meer as alles wat bewaar moet word, want daaruit is die oorspronge van die lewe”, (Spr. 4:23).

### BEN ENGELBRECHT.

(An English summary of this article will appear in our next issue.)

\* \* \*

Die volgende is verkrygbaar by die Christelike Instituut, Dunwell 408, Joriszenstraat, Braamfontein, Johannesburg.

World Conference on Church and Society. Official Report, Geneva 1967. Prys 80c.

J. Brooke Mosley, Christians in the Technical and Social Revolutions of our Time. Suggestions for Study and Action. Ohio, 1966. Prys 30c.

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

PRO  
VERITATE