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# DIE CHRISTUSFEES EN DIE WAARDIGHEID VAN DIE MENS

Die geboorte en lewe van Jesus verkondig aan ons dat die probleem van die mensdom in sy persoonlike lewe en in die samelewing so groot is dat dit nie deur enige moralisering opgelos kan word nie. Die val van die mens vanuit sy Godgegewe waardigheid is so erg dat dit nie deur 'n morele beginsel, 'n reeks wette, 'n politieke beleid of 'n godsdiens van 'n kerk reggestel kan word nie. Slegs deur na hierdie ware Mens, wat sy lewe vir ander geoffer het, te kyk, deur te besin oor sy geboorte, lyding en vreugdevolle oorwinning, ontvang 'n mens 'n glimp van die mens se glorieryke waardigheid — ecce homo! — kyk, die Mens! 'n Samelewing, 'n kerk, 'n nasie wat nie op eerbied vir die mens se waardigheid gebou is nie, het God se bedoeling met die wêreld nie begryp nie.

Waarom is dit dat die mens nie die lewe van 'n ander eerbiedig nie? Is dit nie omdat die mens sy eie waardigheid verloor het en gevolglik ook sy waardering vir 'n ander s'n nie? Met die Kersfeesgebeure het God die waardigheid van die mens herstel. Jesus het die mens met die wonderlike naam van Immanuel, God met ons, vereer. Die diepte van die mens se waardigheid lê in die diepte van die almagtige God en in die diepte van die Christusgebeure — sy geboorte, kruis, lewe, opstanding en sy Gees. Dit verkondig aan ons dat die mens méér is as sy inkomste, sy kultuur, sy seks, sy ras, sy opvattinge, sy moreel, sy kleur en sy tradisies. Die Christusgebeure toon aan ons dat die waardigheid van die mens so geweldig is dat die mens nooit geklassifiseer kan word, of tot 'n sosiologiese feit, of 'n psigologiese gebeurtenis, of 'n historiese gegewe gereduseer kan word nie. Dit lei alleenlik tot die oorvereenvoudiging van die mens en gevolglik tot sy manipulering, sy verontmensliking en sy oorverontvoudiging van die mens en gevolglik tot sy manipulasie, sy verontmensliking en sy onderdrukking. Die samelewing is om iets van die ware wese van die mens te wete te kom en om die diepte van hierdie waardigheid te probeer peil. Hierdie weg is die weg van liefde. 'n Mens moet jou oor die mens, die wonderlike skepping van God, gevul met waardigheid, verwonder en hom liefhê. Keersfees leer ons dat ons weer opnuut die mens moet ontdek, na hom moet kyk en hom as 'n gawe van God moet waardeer. Agter hierdie skepsel lê die ondeurdringbare dieptes van God self.

### **die maatstaf van die magtiges en die maatstaf van die armes**

Rondom hierdie Christusgebeure vorm God sy kerk, 'n groep gewone mense wie se waardigheid herstel is. Hulle is gevolglik 'n weerlose klein groepie in die wêreld van geweld rondom hulle. Hulle is sonder 'n diktatoriale hierargie, terwyl hulle hul gawes en eiendom deel. Hulle vorm 'n gemeenskap waar verskillende mense, ja, selfs vyande, die Jood en die Griek, die slaaf en sy heer, die

man en die vrou, mekaar vind, eerbied vir mekaar betoon en mekaar liefhet. Hulle vorm 'n alternatiewe gemeenskap teenoor die „gewelddadige” samelewing waar die verskille en teenstellinge vir egoïstiese doeleindes uitgebuit word.

Die manier waarop die waardigheid van die mens eerbiedig kan word, is om geregtigheid teenoor hom te laat geskied; geregtigheid nie slegs op 'n wetlike of morele wyse nie, maar op 'n praktiese geestelike wyse. Volgens die evangelie van Christus is geregtigheid die regte verhouding met, en die regte aksie teenoor 'n ander persoon. Christus, die Messias-Koning, verdedig die waardigheid van die arme en magtelose en vestig sy Ryk van geregtigheid tussen mense. Geregtigheid is nie 'n teoretiese beginsel nie, maar 'n praktiese regverdige daad in die regte verhouding met 'n ander. Christus het homself met die mens geïdentifiseer en gevolglik die mens in die teenwoordigheid van God gebring met die doel om in staat te wees om die waardigheid van die mens te herstel en om regverdige daade van een mens teenoor 'n ander te eis. Die mens wat in die konteks van God, voor die aangesig van God geplaas word, kan nie verag word nie.

Ná die Keersfeeservaring kan dit gevolglik nie meer die ryke en die magtige in die wêreld wees wat die maatstawwe vir „geregtigheid” en „orde” vasstel nie. Die rede daarvoor is dat hulle maatstawwe op die beginsels van eiendom en mag gebaseer is, en nie op liefde, waardigheid en meegevoel nie, aangesien die armes en dié sonder mag, se maatstaf sal neig om lyding op te hef, van enige betekenisvolle deelname uitgesluit is. In hierdie wêreld kom dit voor asof daar geen redding vir die ryke en die magtige is nie. Hy is in 'n bese kringloop vasgevang. Hy kan homself slegs deur sy rykdom en mag handhaaf. As hy dit verloor, is hy swak en dan vrees hy op sy beurt weer die bedreiging van uitbuiting. Gevolglik moet hy mag en rykdom bekom om sy posisie te handhaaf. Die heerser se hart is verhard om nie in te gee nie en om nie radikaal te verander nie. Dit is onmoontlik vir die magtige en ryk persoon om die onwaardige lyding en vernedering van die arme en die magtelose te waardeer; vir hom kan dit alleenlik 'n teoretiese probleem wees aangesien sy wesenlike bestaan nie bedreig word nie. Maar die arme staar met sy lewensbloed die finale vyand, die dood, in die gesig. Dit is deur die ervaring van, en die meditering oor pyn en lyding dat 'n mens iets van die diepte van menswees peil.

Is revolusie en teengeweld dan die weg uit die dilemma om geregtigheid en die waardigheid van die mens in die samelewing te herstel? Moet dieselfde middele, naamlik geweld en verwerping, wat die ryke en magtige op 'n geïnstusionaliseerde wyse gebruik, ook gebruik word om ware vrede te bevestig? Nee, hierdie middele is in

hulleself bese magte as dit op hierdie wyse gebruik word en hulle vernietig die siel en die waardigheid van die slu gebruiker. Nee, daar is 'n weg uit die verskriklike menslike dilemma. Die Christusgebeure is die weg van verlossing en bevryding. Indien die ryke en magtige arm en swak in Christus in sy vernedering en kruis word, en in homself en in sy selfsug sterwe, sal hy die opstandingskrag ervaar om die Koninkryk van God in die samelewing tot stand te help bring. Dan kan die ryke en magtige in Christus werklik die lyding van die arme en die magtelose deur sy eie ervaring van sy armoede en dood in Christus, waardeur.

Is dit dan per se verkeerd om ryk en magtig te wees? In die aangesig van die armoede en vernedering van Lasarus het God die ryk man, wat slegs krummels van sy tafel toegelaat het om Lasarus te voed, en honde, wat sy wonde gelek het, om hom te dien, geoordeel. Meer as twee-derdes van die wêreld-bevolking verkeer in die toestand van Lasarus.

Die weg na bevryding vir dié wat onteien is, is die weg van die exodus-God. Dit is die weg om Farao in God se naam uit te daag tot op die punt van gehoorsaamheid aan God en ongehoorsaamheid aan menslike owerhede wat van God se reg afwyk. Dit is die weg van die kruis, nie 'n passiewe, sagsinnige en onaktiewe benadering nie, maar die uitdaging van die lewe en professie van die „Lam gelei ter slagting“, wat gewillig was om sy lewe te gee, terwyl Hy die boosheid van die kerk en staat van sy tyd weerstaan het. Die Kind van Bethlehem is ook die Lam wat die sonde van die wêreld gedra het.

Die arme en magtelose wat waarlik bevry wil word, moet gewillig wees om die weg van Jesus te volg. Christus moet as Verlosser aangeneem word om vrede tussen God en mens te herstel en om geestelike verlossing te bewerkstellig, maar Hy moet gelyktydig as Heer aanvaar word om die waardigheid van die mens op aarde te herstel, en om 'n liefdevolle gemeenskap tussen mens en mens te bewerkstellig, en om krag te gee om geïnstusionaliseerde kwaad in kerk en staat te weerstaan en te onttron. Christus het arm geword en Hy was die onder die nederigstes sonder 'n plek vir sy ontvangs by sy geboorte, en sonder 'n plek om sy hoof neer te lê, sodat Hy die waardigheid van die uitgeworpenes en vernederdes kan herstel en om hulle in die ware sin van die woord te verryk.

#### **Kommunisme, Nasionalisme of geregtigheid?**

Die mens wat die „Christusgebeure“ — Kersfees, die kruis, die opstanding, Pinkster — ondervind het, kan nooit weer in die redding van *Kommunisme* glo nie, asof die „verdeling van goedere“ en die konsentrasie op 'n een-dimensionele wêreld die wortel van die kwaad in die kapitalistiese mens kan bereik; dit degradeer die mens slegs tot die vlak van 'n werksmag en tot 'n wrede Goddelose masjienwêreld. Ook kan dié mens nooit weer in die redding van *Nasionalisme* glo nie, asof die pre-okkupasie met die bloed, taal en kultuur hom 'n veilige en ordelike plek in die wêreld kan verseker; dit bevorder alleenlik die skrikwekkende vervreemding van die transnasionale God van Pinkster en die verskeuring van die eenheid van die een liggaam van Christus, die kerk, in die wêreld. Die Christusfees laat nie enige ander weg oop tot vrede en geregtigheid nie en gevolglik kom alle sisteme en strukture onder die oordeel van Immanuel.

Die Christusfees — wat 'n vreugdevolle gebeurtenis! Die kerk van die Here Jesus vier dit op sy blye pelgrimstog, sy exodusweg uit die wêreld van uitbuiting, geweld, oppervlakkighede van die gekommersialiseerde „Kers“-fees, armoede, dubbele standaarde en dreigemente, en rig tekens en gemeenskappe van vrede en geregtigheid op. Terwyl die gelowiges stip na die aangesig van die Jesuskind kyk, word hulle getransformeer en reflekteer hulle die waardigheid van die ware Mens — en nooit weer kan hulle die onwaardigheid van die mens verdra nie en hulle sal onwaardigheid tot op die punt van die kruis teenstaan, en hulle sal hul in die oorwinning van die Heer in sy opstanding verheug, terwyl hulle sy Koninkryk in individuele lewens en in die samelewing, in kerk en staat tot stand laat kom: EER AAN GOD, EN VREDE OP AARDE!



*Hierdie uitgawe is die laaste een wat deur my behartig is. Mag die Here Pro Veritate seën.*

*-Roelf Meyer*

#### **SEËNBEDE**

MAG DIE HERE, JESUS CHRISTUS, U RYKLIK SEËN GEAGTE LESERS, AS U MET DIE CHRISTUSFEESTYD TERUGDINK AAN DIE GEBOORTE VAN ONS VERLOSSER EN KONING.

MAG U SY SEËNRYKE KRAG EN LEIDING IN DIE NUWE JAAR ONDERVIND. MAG SY KONINKRYK MET KRAG KOM, OOK DEUR DIE BESKEIE BYDRA VAN PRO VERITATE.

#### **BENEDICTION**

MAY THE LORD, JESUS CHRIST, BLESS YOU RICHLY, DEAR READERS, AS YOU REMEMBER AT THIS CHRISTMAS TIME, THE BIRTH OF OUR SAVIOUR AND KING.

MAY YOU EXPERIENCE HIS BENEFICIAL GUIDANCE AND BLESSING IN THE NEW YEAR. MAY HIS KINGDOM COME WITH POWER AND MAY PRO VERITATE MAKE SOME CONTRIBUTION, HOWEVER HUMBLE, TOWARDS IT.



# CHRISTMAS AND THE DIGNITY OF MAN

The birth and life of Jesus proclaim the problem of mankind both as to personal lives and societies to be so enormous that it cannot be solved by mere moralizing. The fall of man from his own God-given dignity is so great that it cannot be restored by a moral principle, a code of law, a political policy or the religion of a church. Only by looking at the true Man, Jesus, who sacrificed his life for others, only by contemplating his birth, suffering and joyful victory, can one get a glimpse of man's glorious dignity — *ecce homo!* behold the Man! A society, a church, a nation which is not built on respect for man's dignity, has failed to understand God's purpose in the world.

Why is it that man does not honour the life of other men? Is it not because he has lost his own dignity and therefore does not respect the dignity of another? In the Christmas-event God restored man's dignity. Jesus honoured man with the glorious name of Immanuel, God with us. The dignity of man lies in the depth of the almighty God and in the depth of the Christ-event — His birth, His life, His cross, His resurrection, His Spirit tell us that man is more than his income, his culture, his sex, his race, his views, his morality, his colour or his customs. Through the Christmas-event man's greatness and dignity are revealed as so vast that he can never be classified in terms of sociology, psychology or history. An attempt at such categorization only leads to the oversimplification of man and consequently to his manipulation, dehumanization and domination. The only means of restoring the dignity of man and bringing peace and justice to society is by way of knowing and understanding the true being of man and by gauging his dignity, — in other words — the way of love. One can but marvel at this wonderful creation of God, this creation full of dignity, this creation to be loved. Christmas has taught us that man must look anew at man, find him anew and appreciate him as a gift from God. Behind this creation are the impenetrable depths of God.

Around this Christ-event God forms his church, a group of ordinary people whose dignity has been restored. In a world of violence they are a defenseless little group. They have no dictatorial hierarchy; they share their gifts and property. They form a community where different people and even enemies, the Jew and the Greek, the slave and the master, man and woman find and respect and love one another. They form an alternate community vis-a-vis the "violent" society where differences and contradictions are exploited to selfish ends.

The way to honour the dignity of man in this world is to do justice to him — justice not only in a legal or moral way, but in a practical spiritual way. According to the

gospel of Christ justice is the basis of a proper relationship with, and action towards another person. Christ, the Messiah-King, defends the dignity of the poor and powerless and establishes his reign of justice between people. Justice is not a theoretical principle; it is action both practical and just in the right relationship with others. To be able to restore the dignity of man and to be able to establish the indispensability of just acts towards him, Christ identified himself with man and thereby brought man into the presence of God. Man in the context of God, in the face of God, cannot be despised.

Consequently the rich and powerful in the world can no longer arrogate to themselves the right to establish the norms of "Justice" and "Order" for the reason that their norms are based on the principles of property and power and not on love, dignity and compassion; the powerless and the poor, whose norms and priorities would tend towards the alleviation of suffering, are excluded from meaningful participation.

In this world it would seem that there is no salvation for the rich and the powerful; they are trapped in a vicious circle. They can only vindicate themselves by their riches and power. If they lose these they are weakened, and then they in turn feel threatened by exploitation. Power and riches are the *sine qua non* of their position. The heart of the ruler is hardened never to submit or yield, and never to change radically. It is impossible for a powerful and rich person to appreciate the indignity of the suffering and humiliation of the poor and powerless; and therefore to him the problem can only be academic since he has not experienced a situation in which his very existence is threatened. But the poor man is facing the final enemy, death. It is through the experience and contemplation of pain and suffering that one can reach to some depth of humanity. The proclamation of moral law alone has never really changed people or made them more loving and humane.

Is revolution and counter-violence then the way of restoring justice and dignity to the man in society? Must the same tools, namely violence and rejection, which the rich and powerful use in an institutionalized way, be used to establish true peace? No, these tools are in themselves evil forces if used in this way and they destroy the soul and dignity of the devious craftsman using them. No, there is a way out of this terrible human dilemma. The Christ-event is the way of salvation and liberation. If the rich and powerful become poor and weak in Christ and his humiliation and cross and die unto themselves and their selfishness, then they will experience the resurrection power which will enable them to participate in the establishing of the Kingdom of God in society. Then the rich and powerful in Christ can really appreciate the suffering of the poor and powerless

through their own experience of poverty and death in Christ.

Is it then wrong in itself to be rich and powerful? In the face of the poverty and degradation of Lazarus, God judged the rich man who only allowed crumbs to be fed to him and dogs to serve him, licking his wounds. More than two-thirds of the population of the world find themselves in the same situation as Lazarus.

The way out for the dispossessed is the way of the God of the exodus. This way is the way of challenging Pharaoh in God's name to the point of final obedience to God and disobedience to civil authority which departs from God's righteousness. This, the way of the cross, is not a passive, meek and inactive approach; it is the challenge of the life and prophecy of the "slaughter-lamb", willing to give up his life in resisting the evil of the church and state of his time. The Bethlehem-child is also the "slaughter-lamb", willing to give up his life in resisting the evil of the church and state of his time. The Bethlehem-child is also the "slaughter-lamb" who takes away the sin of the world.

The poor and powerless who want to be truly liberated, must be willing to follow the way of Jesus. Christ must be accepted as Saviour to restore peace between God and man and to bring spiritual salvation, but He must also in the same instance be accepted as Lord, as Liberator to restore the dignity of man on earth, to establish a loving community between man and man, and to resist and dethrone institutionalized evil in church and state. Christ was poor and He was amongst the lowest of human beings. At his birth there was "no room for him at the inn" nor any place "where to lay his head". This was so in order that he might restore the dignity of the most degraded and outcast human being and to make him rich in the true sense of the word.

### **Communism, Nationalism or Justice?**

The human being who experienced the "Christ-event"

— Christmas, the cross, resurrection, Pentecost — can never believe in the salvation of Communism, as if the "community of property" and the pre-occupation with a one-dimensional world can reach the roots of evil in capitalistic man; such a system only degrades man to the level of a labour force and makes of the world a cruel Godless machine. Nor can this human being ever believe in the salvation of Nationalism — as if the pre-occupation with blood, language and cultural ties can secure him a safe and orderly place in the world; whereas it in fact only intensifies the awful alienation from the true transnational God of Pentecost and disruption of the unity of Christ's *one* body, the church, in the world. Christmas allows no other way of peace and justice in this world and therefore all systems and structures must be subject to the judgment of Immanuel.

Christmas — what a joyful event! The congregation of the Lord Jesus commemorates it on its joyous pilgrimage, its exodus out of the world of exploitation, violence, the superficialities of the commercialised "X"-mas, poverty, double standards and threats, and establishes signs and communities of peace and justice. While looking intently at the face of the Jesus-child, they are transformed and reflect the dignity of the true man, Jesus — and never again can they tolerate the thought of man reduced to indignity; they shall resist indignity to the point of the cross in following Christ, and they shall rejoice in the overcoming of the Lord in resurrection, establishing his Kingdom in the individual and in society, in church and state: GLORY TO GOD, AND PEACE ON EARTH!

*This issue is the last one to be prepared by me. May God bless Pro Veritate.*

*-Roelf Meyer*



# WIT EN SWART SAAM ÉÉN NUWE MENS

**sam buti**

*Alhoewel ds. Sam Buti, scriba van die algemene Sinode van die N.G. Kerk in Afrika, reeds 'n tyd gelede hierdie preek in die blanke N.G. Gemeente, Parkhurst gelewer het, bly dit steeds aktueel veral na die standpunte wat by die verskillende N.G. Sinodes oor die N.G. Kerk in Afrika se sinode-besluite ingeneem is.*

## **Skriflesing - Openbaring 21:1-8**

Teksvers: Vers. 5: „En Hy wat op die troon sit, het gesê: Kyk, Ek maak alles nuut.”

Hierdie woorde vind ons byna aan die einde van die boek Openbaring, die laaste boek van die Bybel. In hierdie boek beskryf die apostel vir ons sy gesigte. Hier word baie woorde geuiter: Deur die apostel self, maar ons lees ook van engele wat in hierdie boek praat; die Heilige Gees praat ook in hierdie boek en ons lees dat Christus self praat en ook die ouderlinge.

In baie van die visioene word daar ook van God die Vader gepraat as die Een wat op die troon sit, maar die eienaardige is dat Hy deurgaans swyg. Geen woord kom direk van Hom nie, tot hier in Openbaring 21. Dan, vir die eerste maal in hierdie hele boek, en ook vir die laaste maal in hierdie hele boek, maak Hy sy mond oop. Hy sê slegs vier woorde (in die Grieks): „Kyk, Ek maak alles nuut.”

Die feit dat dit die enigste keer in hierdie hele boek is dat God self praat, is 'n aanduiding dat ons hier te doen het met iets wat ontsettend belangrik is. As God praat, moet ons luister. En hierdie paar woorde is dan ook werklik van groot belang. „Ek maak alles nuut.” Dit is die boodskap van hierdie hele boek Openbaring. Dit is die boodskap van die hele Bybel in een sin saamgevat. „God maak alles nuut.”

Ons wil vanoggend probeer uitvind wat dit sê, veral vir ons hier in hierdie gebou. Ons doen dit onder die volgende vrae:

1. Wie maak nuut?
2. Wanneer maak Hy nuut?
3. Wat maak Hy nuut?

Ons begin met die eerste vraag:

### **1. Wie is dit wat alles nuut maak?**

Dit is God self deur sy Heilige Gees en sy Heilige Woord. Geen mens kan dit in eie krag en eie naam doen nie. Alleen God kan. Daarom kan op hierdie plek in die boek Openbaring gesê word: Geen mens of engel praat nie, dog alleen God self.

Maar in hierdie wêreld werk God altyd deur mense. Hy roep mense in sy diens. Dit is mense wat sy wil uitvoer; ja, die apostel Paulus noem ons 'n hele paar plekke „medewerkers van God”. As God dus sê „Ek maak alles nuut”, dan beteken dit ook dat Hy dit deur mense doen. Deur watter mense? Deur mense wat self eers nuut gemaak is! Slegs nuwe mense, wedergebore mense wat self nuut gemaak is, kan die dinge in hierdie wêreld nuut maak.

Die vraag aan ons vanmore is of ons sulke nuutgemaakte mense is. Is ons werklik nuut gemaak? Het die pinkstertyd vernuwing in u gebring? Of verbeel ons ons slegs? En as ons soveel ou dinge rondom ons sien, verkeerde dinge, lelike dinge, is dit nie miskien omdat die fout by ons lê nie? Dat ons nog nie werklik nuwe mense is nie?

### **2. Wanneer maak God alles nuut?**

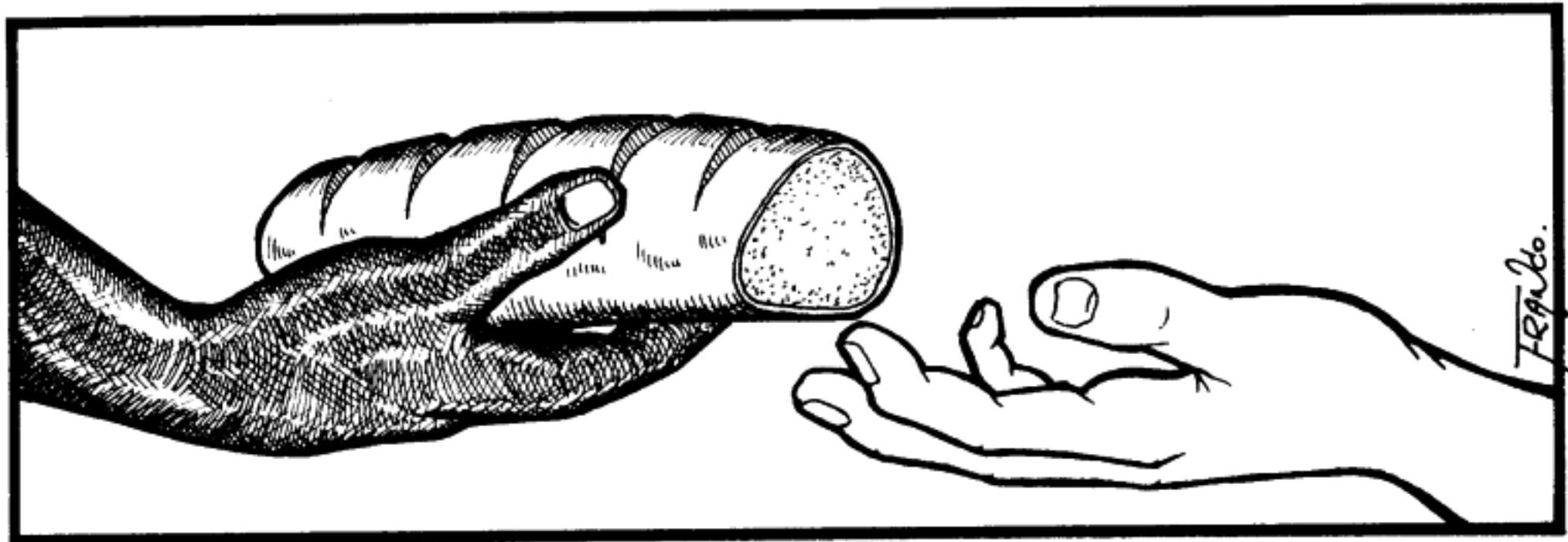
Baie mense sê: „Eers aan die einde, eers by die wederkoms van Christus. Nou, in hierdie tyd, bly al die ou dinge maar nog so en ons kan niks daaraan doen nie. Ons moet maar geduldig sit en wag. Eendag kom alles tog reg. Hier op aarde ondervind mense swaarkry, smart, armoede, pyn, hongersnood, diskriminasie, ens. Ons moet dit maar so aanvaar. Maar eendag sal alles regkom, alles sal verander! Ons moet maar moedhou, uithou. „We shall get a pie in the sky when we die.”

Daar is natuurlik 'n element van waarheid hierin. Die werklike, totale vernuwing sal eers eendag kom, wanneer God die aarde geheel-en-al nuut maak. Die mense kan maar probeer om hierdie wêreld self nuut te maak, hulle sal dit nie regkry nie. Die totale vernuwing lê nog in die toekoms.

Dit is egter maar een kant van die saak. Die Bybel praat nie van die vernuwing slegs as iets wat in die toekoms lê nie. Dit vind ook reeds hier en nou plaas—hinc et nunc. As God sê „Kyk, ek maak alles nuut”, dan is Hy nou daarmee besig. Dit kan ons ook baie duidelik sien as ons lees wat Paulus in 2 Kor. 5:17 sê: „As iemand in Christus is, is hy 'n nuwe skepsel; die ou dinge het verbygegaan; kyk, dit het alles nuut geword.”

Paulus sê hier feitlik dieselfde as wat ons in Openbaring lees. En hy sê nie „Iemand in Christus sal 'n nuwe skepsel wees”, nie; nie „ou dinge sal verbygaan, dit sal alles nuut word” nie. Nee, dit is nou reeds 'n werklikheid. 'n Geleerde in die vroeë kerk het 'n boek geskryf met die titel „Cur Deus Homo?” („Waarom het God mens geword?”) om aan te toon dat Christus nou vernuwing bewerk. Dit moet nou hier op aarde gebeur.





Daartoe het God Sy Gees oor ons uitgestort. Die Gees maak lewend, maak nuut en dit maak anders, reeds hier en nou; hier in Parkhurst, in Alexandra, in Soweto en in Johannesburg. Ons mag as Christene nooit gaan sit en wag nie; ons mag nooit sê „dié dinge is vir die toekoms,” nie, of „op hierdie ou aarde kan ons niks verander nie”. Nee, want in Christus is ons, wat vanmôre hier sit, nuwe skepsels; die ou dinge het vir ons verbygegaan. En ons moet help sodat die ou dinge al meer kan verbygaan!

### 3. Wat is dit wat nuut gemaak word?

Ons teks sê: „Alles”. Paulus sê in 2 Kor. 5:17 „die ou dinge”. Om vas te stel wat bedoel word, moet ons dus na die res van die Bybel kyk waar hierdie „alles” en „ou dinge” hier en daar konkreet verduidelik of genoem word. En as ons noukeurig lees, sal ons sien dat dit hier veral om twee dinge gaan wat nuut word; ook nog meer, maar veral hierdie twee.

Die eerste wat nuut gemaak moet word, is:

#### 3.1 Die mens se verhouding tot God

Die Nuwe Testament leer ons dat dit heeltemaal verander het. In Romeine 5 lees ons: Vroeër was ons vyande van God, maar nou sy seuns, sy kinders. Ons is met God versoen. Paulus sê verder: Vroeër was ons vêr van God, maar nou naby. In Efes. 2: Vroeër was ons dood deur misdade, nou lewend deur Christus. Vroeër was ons vreemdelinge sonder hoop en sonder God in die wêreld, maar nou het ons wat vroeër vêr was, naby gekom deur die bloed van Christus. Ons is nie meer vreemdelinge en bywoners nie, maar medeburgers van die heiliges en huisgenote van God. Ons het vroeër van God weggevlug, maar nou verlang ons na Hom.

Dit is dan die eerste totale vernuwing – ons verhouding tot God.

#### 3.2 Maar die tweede wat hiermee gelykstaan is: Die vernuwing van verhoudinge tussen mense.

Die Nuwe Testament is vol daarvan dat die koms van Christus en van die Heilige Gees verhoudinge tussen mense totaal verander en vernuut het. Waar Christus

verskyn, kan dinge nie meer bly soos hulle was nie. Die dinge wat vroeër getel het, tel nou nie meer nie. In Paulus se tyd het dit veral gegaan oor die verhoudinge tussen die Jode en die heidene (die besnedenes en die onbesnedenes). Maar luister wat sê hy daarvoor in Efes. 2: Daar was altyd ’n middelmuur van skeiding tussen Jood en heiden, maar nou is daardie hoë skeidsmuur afgebreek. En Paulus sê hieroor (Efes. 2:15): Christus het die vyandskap tot niet gemaak, en Hy het die twee wat vroeër vyande was, in Homself tot een nuwe mens geskape. In Galate 6:15 sê Paulus: In Christus het dit geen betekenis of jy Jood of heiden is nie want albei saam is nou één nuwe skepsel.

Liewe broeders en susters, dié dinge het dus radikaal verander. Ons wat vanmôre hier sit, is vernuut, maar let op wat Paulus sê: Ons is nie soveel honderde nuwe mense nie, ons almal saam is één nuwe mens. *Ons is deur Christus so na aan mekaar gebring dat ons nie maar ’n klomp los mense is nie, maar almal saam één nuwe mens.*

En in 2 Kor. 5 waar Paulus sê dat die ou dinge verbygegaan het, sê hy nog iets daarby: „Ons ken dus van nou af niemand meer na die vlees nie.” Wat beteken dit? Dit beteken die volgende sê Paulus: Vroeër het dit vir my baie saak gemaak of ’n man met wie ek te doen kry, ’n Jood of ’n Griek of ’n Romein is, maar van nou af geld hierdie dinge nie meer nie. Ek ken niemand meer na die vlees nie; dog slegs na die Gees. Met ander woorde DIE ENIGSTE WAT NOU NOG SAAK MAAK, IS DIE VRAAG OF IEMAND ’N CHRISTEN IS, OF NIE. SY RAS EN VOLK EN KLEUR MAAK NIE MEER SAAK NIE. ’n Mens kan nou redeneer dat dit simplisties gestel is, maar juis in hierdie simplistisiteit is die krag van die Evangelie.

En as hierdie dinge nog vir my saak maak en my gedrag bepaal, dan kom ek iets kort in die vernuwing, in die nuwe-skepsel-wees. Dan het alles nog nie nuut geword nie.

Hierdie vernuwing in die onderlinge verhoudinge tussen mense werk natuurlik oral deur, en ons kan maar net die Nuwe Testament lees om dit te sien. Die huwelik



word nuut, die posisie van die vrou word nuut, die familie word nuut, die verhouding tussen baas en kneg, tussen ryk en arm, tussen regeerder en onderdaan, tussen swak en sterk word alles nuut. *Dit is net eenvoudig nie meer moontlik om te sê: Ons kan tog niks aan hierdie ou wêreld doen nie; mense kan eenvoudig nie saam lewe nie, en ons moet dit maar so aanvaar.*

Nee, lieve broeders en susters, as ons so praat, breek ons 'n deel van God se werk stukkend. Dan is ons ongehoorsaam. Dan is ons tevrede met 'n toestand waarmee God nooit tevrede kan wees nie.

Natuurlik is alles nie in een dag klaar nuutgemaak nie. Dit is iets wat tyd neem, maar die vraag is: Is ons daarmee besig? En: Werk ons in die regte rigting?— In die rigting van versoening, van die „een nuwe mens” in Christus?

Op 'n dag soos vandag wil 'n mens droom, droom soos Martin Luther King gedoen het: „I have a dream” van 'n nuwe samelewing van onderlinge begrip en liefde tussen mense van verskillende agtergronde, van onderlinge aanvaarding. Maar as ons die Bybel reg lees, dan hoef

dit nie meer slegs 'n droom te wees nie. Want in Christus is ons nuwe skepsels. Die ou dinge *het* verbygegaan. Daarom moet ons eenvoudig daarvolgens lewe. Ons moet toepas wat ons glo, anders is ons geloof niks werd nie.

En as God's Woord sê: Dit maak nie meer saak of die ander man 'n Jood of 'n Griek is nie— of vir ons hier—dit maak nie meer saak of die ander man swart of wit is nie, dan moet ons daardie Bybelwoord wáár maak, juis in die Pinksterviering, anders trek ons 'n streep deur die versoening, of erger, soos Paulus dit stel, dan kruisig ons Christus weer. En as ons wat vanmore hier saam sit, hiervandaan weggaan sonder dat hierdie Bybelwoord waar word in ons lewe, dan dryf ons die spot met God en met sy werk.

„Kyk, ek maak alles nuut”, sê God. Dan gaan Hy verder en Hy sê vir ons in hierdie *land*, in hierdie kerk, op hierdie Sondag van Pinksterfees: Gaan, julle my kinders, my kerk as één nuwe skepsel; en gaan u nou ook die wêreld in en ... maak alles nuut.

AMEN

## A NAMIBIAN LETTER:

### A CHRISTIAN MESSAGE AFTER DETENTION

— zephania kameeta



*“In this country which claims to be Christian you can be a Christian ten thousand times over but if you are not white you are treated like a dog,” writes black Namibian pastor Kameeta after being released from his relatively short detention under the Terrorism Act (some have been held for over a year). This law gives South African police the power to hold and question any person who, they suspect, “is a terrorist or is withholding ... any information relating to terrorists or to offences under this Act.” An offence under the Act is defined so broadly that law professor A.S. Mathews has commented that there is hardly any person who has not at some time committed it.*

*Lutheran Pastor Zephania Kameeta, 30, is principal of the Paulinum Theological College at Otjimbingwe, Namibia. He was detained under the Terrorism Act on 24 August this year — the day after the funeral of the murdered government-appointed Chief Executive Councillor of Ovamboland, Filemon Elifas, and shortly after a public rally during which Pastor Kameeta aired his views about the South African occupation of Namibia in a strongly-worded speech. He was released and returned to his wife and two small children on 15 September. He has asked for this letter to be distributed as widely as possible.*

To all who by word and deed  
stand by us in the struggle;  
to all who by day and by night  
bring our case before the Lord!

Dear brothers and sisters,

Right at the outset I should like, on behalf of my wife and children and all Namibians, to thank you all most sincerely for your prayers and support during the past days and weeks. Once more it has become clear that the South African Government is not dealing with just “a small band of agitators and terrorists,” but with thousands of Christians around the world, and with all who, irrespective of their faith or nationality, stand for what is right and just.

Through this letter I wish to share with you some of the thoughts which I had while, like many others, I was locked up in solitary confinement. Many questions were roused in me, and I want to discuss these with you.

Have these events not perhaps estranged me from Jesus our Saviour? Many people must have put this question to themselves and come to the conclusion, “These people are only interested in politics and are far removed from Jesus and his Church,” or “These people no longer know the Lord as their personal saviour!” My purpose here is not to bring accusations against anyone or to defend myself: I myself had to face these questions, be it in a different form. But allow me to share with you what I experienced in jail.

I tried to look back on my life; and here I must honestly say that I have never lived so closely — day and night — with the Word of God as I did during the three weeks of my detention. Before I had always read the Word with an eye to other people. I always asked, "What does the Word of God say to 'them'?" But in these three weeks I began to ask, "What does the Word of God say to me in this situation?" I not only studied his Word I EXPERIENCED it! I felt very strongly that the Lord himself was speaking to me. I know no language or words in which I could describe what I experienced in those days with the Word of God. In these days Jesus became anew my Saviour.

There were days during which I experienced great doubt. Especially when I thought of his words, "Ask and you shall receive." Why does he not free us, I asked myself. I thought of my wife and children, and I thought of the scores of wives and children and girl-friends of my fellow prisoners. O Lord, how long! I asked accusingly and doubtingly. I argued aloud with the Lord in my cell: Lord, if you are a God, then you must liberate Namibia now! In those days I expected that the Lord should act according to my will.

There were also moments when anxiety took over. My hands sweated with fear. In such moments I did not want to open my Bible; and when I tried to pray my mouth felt dry and I could find no words. This fear especially descended on me before the interrogations. My unease was at times so great that I feared that there was something wrong with me. But then a great calmness came upon me. I was strongly aware of the many prayers going up to God. I took up my Bible and from it drew endless reassurance. With new strength I called on the Lord in the words of the Psalmist:

*In God I trust without a fear. What can flesh do to me? (56:4 and 12)*

The comfort and power which I got from these words is indescribable! I thought of my fellow prisoners and those outside full of worry. I brought them before the Lord. In this power I sat before my interrogator. The Word of God in Matthew's Gospel became a tangible reality to me:

*Behold I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves; so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves... When they deliver you up, do not be anxious how you are to speak or what you are to say; for what you are to say will be given to you in that hour. (Read Matthew 10:16-20).*

#### **"the government is a threat to the gospel"**

And so let me get to the next question: Can we preachers not leave this struggle to the politicians?

The struggle in our land has not only to do with the liberation of Namibia, but it goes further and deeper than that. The presence of the South African Government is not just a political question, but it is a threat to the Gospel of Jesus Christ! Thus I see it as the task of every Christian to work for a change in government. In this country which claims to be Christian you can be a Christian ten thousand times over, but if you are not white you are treated like a dog.

The South African Government and its supporters proclaim — especially by what they do — a message which is diametrically opposed to the Gospel. While God tells us that in Jesus Christ he has broken down the wall of separation between himself and us, and between us and our fellow men, the South African Government proclaims and builds the wall of separation which brings about alienation, mistrust, prejudice, fear, hatred and enmity between man and man, and therefore between man and God.



This message stands in direct opposition to the Gospel of Reconciliation, love, peace, brotherhood and justice. The different languages, races and cultures are gifts bestowed by God in his mercy, but become an abomination in the eyes of the Lord when they are used as building blocks in the wall which divides man from man; when they do not lead to brotherhood, peace and reconciliation! And worse still is when Race, Language and Culture take the place of Yahweh! In Southern Africa this has already happened, as it is just these three Gods who decide where I should live, where I should sit, eat or relax; whom I may love and whom I may marry or not marry; whose hospitality I may enjoy and whose I may not enjoy; where I must worship and even where I must be buried.

Therefore, I see the struggle in Southern Africa, and especially here in Namibia, not merely as a political struggle, in which only politicians may participate, but as a struggle in which all Christians are called to participate. And if this should happen an armed struggle can be avoided, *because the Word of the Cross is enough for us to be able to tackle this task?*

And here of course the already boring question of the Church and Politics must be raised. I want to be short and simple. If God is the creator of heaven and earth, and if he is the Father of Jesus Christ, and if Jesus Christ is the Founder and Head of the Church, why should the Church be silent and do nothing in the face of racism, exploitation and violence, when these are committed in God's world? Alternatively, should God withdraw from the history of this world, hand it over to the Devils, and restrict himself to the Temples and Church buildings?

In past months and weeks, and at present too, numbers of people have been locked up in jail under the provisions of the so-called "Terrorism Act". Why does the South African Government seek in others that which it is itself? Is this what the psychologists call projection? If anybody should be charged with terrorism then it is most surely the South African Government!

For instance let us look back at the events of 24 August. In the days preceding this date an appointed band went about in one part of the location and assaulted people. On Sunday the 24th of August the Namibia National Convention called a

public meeting with the aim of informing the public about these happenings, and to express their strongest condemnation of what was happening; furthermore the NNC wished to make known the steps which it would take. The speakers made their judgment and condemnation of these events known in clear language, and they called on the public to remain calm.

The South African Police, as always, took up their positions with dogs, batons, firearms and pick-up vans — amongst people who stood there quire empty-handed! Immediately after the third speaker had finished his address they attempted to violently disperse the crowd. The speakers and other leaders who were present at the meeting were arrested under the "Terrorism Act".

**I cannot withdraw into safety as history is in the Lord's hands**  
Is it worth continuing with the struggle? Is there still hope?  
This is a very serious question for many, myself included. If the

passage of world history were in the hands of men, I would have said that we should rather fold our hands and wait until the world either sinks or is saved. But precisely the fact that I believe that history and the existence of the world are in the strong hands of God make it impossible for me to leap back and withdraw to "safety". It was especially while I was in jail that this conviction became even stronger in me.

In answer to this question, and as a conclusion to this letter, allow me to greet you with a quotation from the prophet Isaiah:

For the Lord is our judge,  
the Lord is our Ruler,  
the Lord is our King,  
he will save us.

So be greeted in the name of our Master. \*

## book review:

### "OBEDIENCE TO AUTHORITY!"

— michael rowe

*Rev M. Rowe is the minister of St. Andrew's P.C.S.A.,  
Somerset Road, Cape Town.*

#### **Extenuating Circumstances for us ALL?**

Recently the newspapers have been filled with lurid detail of what they call 'the legal drama of the scissors-murder trial'. The appeal to the Supreme Court was concerned with extenuating circumstances. The accused had a deep emotional relationship with a man 30 years her senior who held a position of authority at what had been her first place of employment. He dominated her. The conflict situation in which she found herself had the effect of impairing her judgment. Did this lessen the degree of her moral blameworthiness?

No, insisted the prosecutor. She is intelligent and knew that what she was doing was wrong. She is not a psychopath. The conflict situation was not an extenuating circumstance unless it was shown that a normal person would have been unable to break free from it, or that the accused's ability to break free was far less than that of a normal person.

The crux of the matter then, is what the normal person would do. Would you and I allow ourselves to be so dominated by authority that we would go to almost any lengths in inflicting harm on another? The short answer is 'Yes'. Obedience to authority is so deeply ingrained and potent in our nature that it can override sympathy, morality, faith, and reason.

Before you dismiss this assertion with contempt let me tell you of an experiment conducted by the faculty of psychology at Yale university. Its aim was to investigate how far the normal, decent, responsible person will, under the influence of authority, continue to carry out a series of actions which come increasingly in conflict with conscience and which may indeed kill another. An advertisement was put in the newspaper calling for volunteers, but the purpose of the experiment was not revealed. Instead it was described as a research project in memory and learning with particular reference to the effect of

punishment on learning. As an extra inducement, payment of \$4 was offered to each participant. Hundreds responded from all walks of life, and they were all accepted.

The experiment, repeated with each volunteer, involved three persons. One was the experimenter, the professor supervising the whole thing and writing up results. Another was the 'learner'. He was led to a separate room, strapped to a chair, and an electrode fastened to his wrist. The third was the 'teacher' whose job was to read out a list of words to the learner and punish him with an electric shock each time he made a mistake. Each shock was to be greater than the one before. The shock generator was an impressive instrument with thirty switches ranging from 15 to 450 volts and three more simply marked X. The degree of shock intensity was clearly indicated not only by numbers but by phrases. Slight Shock 15 volts, Moderate, Strong, Very Strong, Intense, Extreme Intensity, Danger, severe shock 375-420 volts, and the mysterious switches simply marked X.

Only the 'teacher' did not know that the experiment had nothing to do with learning and memory and that the 'learner' was not in fact connected to the generator. The learner was an actor paid by the university and instructed to pretend that he did receive shocks.

Now if you were the innocent 'teacher' how high a voltage shock would you, in the interests of scientific research, be willing to administer? Before the experiment was started an extensive survey of hundreds of people was made. It revealed that few were willing to go beyond the label 'Strong Shock 135 volts'. None at all was willing to administer very strong shock or move further up the scale to extreme intensity or danger. They knew that it is wrong to inflict such pain on an innocent volunteer.

Yet when the experiment began it was discovered, with dismay, that virtually every 'teacher', once caught up in the procedure, overawed by the scientific paraphernalia, and in



personal relationship to an authoritative professor, blithely pressed *all* the switches one after another. It was decided to introduce a force that would heighten the conflict situation and strengthen the 'teacher's' resistance to authority. The 'learner' was briefed to express mild protest as the level of shocks increased. It made little difference. He was briefed to make strong protest and demand to be released. Still the 'teachers', for the most part, pressed all the switches without much strain. The 'learner' was briefed to yell, scream, insist that he had a heart condition, and finally faint. To the utter consternation of the experimenter almost half the 'teachers' were still prepared to go all the way with the shocks.

"Where do we go from here, professor?" asked one.

"I believe I conducted myself obediently", commented another. "I carried out instructions as I always do. So I said to my wife, 'Well, here we are. And I think I did a good job'. She said, 'Suppose the man was dead?' I replied, 'So he's dead. I did my job.'"

The chief finding of the study is *the extreme willingness of adults to go to almost any lengths on the command of any authority*. They are unable to break out of the conflict situation or to act on their principles. This produces stress and nervous tension of course, but there are ways of reducing it to a tolerable level. The human mind is amazingly versatile. The experiment revealed the following techniques.

**Avoidance.** This is the most primitive mechanism. Many of the 'teachers' turned their heads away to avoid seeing the victim suffer. We know how to take similar avoiding steps. Don't attend the meeting that threatens your prejudices. Don't

read the literature that exposes unwelcome facts.

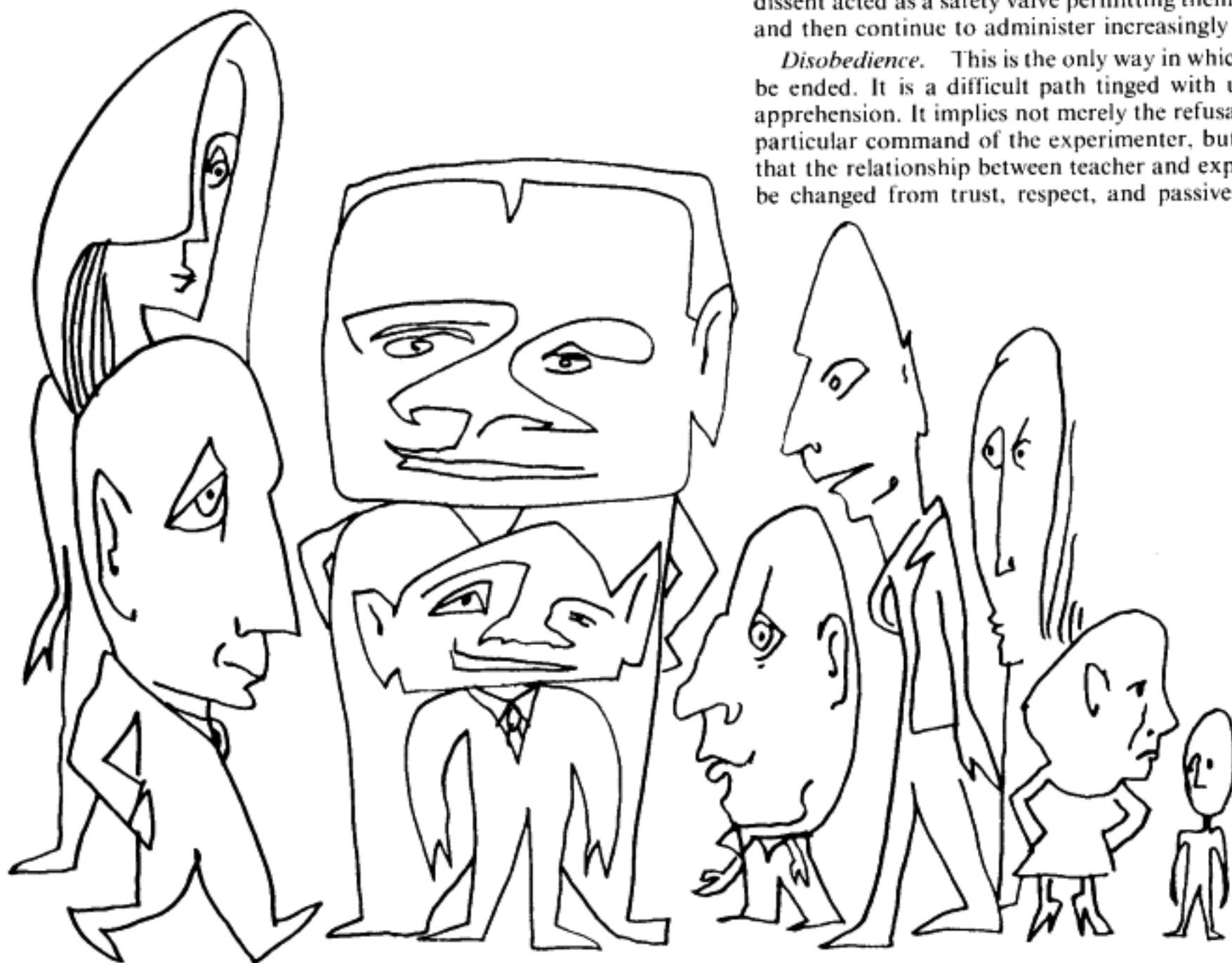
**Denial.** An intellectual shield. Some 'teachers' insisted afterwards that they did not believe the shocks were painful! The 'learner' was over-reacting. On being asked how strong a shock they were themselves willing to sample, however, very few were willing to try more than the weakest, 15 volts. We too can reject clear evidence and insist, for example, that accounts of suffering and injustice are grossly exaggerated. Refuse to accept the evidence, don't even bother to find it, and the strain is eased.

**Subterfuge.** Some teachers signalled the correct answer to the victim by stressing it vocally. They were willing to undermine the experiment but not to break with authority. They attempted to help the learner discreetly without any open breach or defiance of authority. It made little difference to the course of the experiment because the learner had been briefed to continue making mistakes, and the teacher, with his conscience eased by a trivial subterfuge, was able to continue administering shocks.

**Denigration.** Responsibility may be cast off by shifting it to the victim. He is seen as bringing on his own punishment. He is blamed for having volunteered for the experiment; he is denigrated as being stupid and obstinate. If the victim is unworthy we don't need to be too concerned about his suffering.

**Dissent.** Many teachers protested strongly against what they were being asked to do. Upon being reassured that responsibility rested with the experimenter, however, they were often persuaded to continue. They accepted authority's right to overrule their opinion, and the expression of strong dissent acted as a safety valve permitting them to let off steam and then continue to administer increasingly severe shocks.

**Disobedience.** This is the only way in which the strain can be ended. It is a difficult path tinged with uncertainty and apprehension. It implies not merely the refusal to carry out a particular command of the experimenter, but the realisation that the relationship between teacher and experimenter must be changed from trust, respect, and passive compliance to



distrust, disrespect and active disobedience.

'Yet it is not a negative conclusion' writes *Professor Milgram* in his book *Obedience to Authority!* 'It has the character of an affirmative act, a deliberate bucking of the tide. It is compliance that carries the passive connotation. The act of disobedience requires a mobilisation of inner resources, and their transformation beyond inner preoccupation, beyond merely polite verbal exchange, into a domain of action. But the psychic cost is considerable ... Those who disobey accept responsibility for destruction of the experiment, thwarting the purposes of the scientist, and proving inadequate to the task assigned to him. *But at that very moment he has provided the measure we sought and an affirmation of humanistic values. It is he, and not the obedient subject, who experiences the burden of his action.*'

## letter to the editor:

# "CHANGE THE GOVERNMENT THROUGH LOVE"

— jan knös

I believe that the general message in the editorials of "*Pro Veritate*" makes a lot of semi-Christian sounds, but does not in any way reflect the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ as we read this to be in the Gospels, and the other New Testament writings. To me there seems to be a certain anger and frustration noticeable, and possibly even a feeling of fear for the future. At this point I must make it quite clear that I believe there to be grave wrongs in South Africa: as in the Shakespearean State of Denmark, here there is also something rotten! But I do not believe that the type of writing that seems to prevail in *Pro Veritate* is able to change matters here in South Africa, because it tends to drive people further apart. The essential elements that can bring reconciliation, repentance, and love, are not present generally speaking, and certainly not in the editorial of October, dealing with Détente and Detention.

To put it in a nutshell, there is only one way in which God can use me to bring reconciliation, and that is when I repent of my sins, and am reconciled to God, receiving his forgiveness. Now I am entering a new relationship with God which enables me to be charged with His love, making me more aware of His Majesty and Power, and making me similarly more aware of my shared humanity with all mankind, being responsible for my brother's well-being. The love for God and man go hand in hand, because if I say that I love God, and not my neighbour, I am a liar. But there is virtue in loving only this neighbour, and not that one. Mother Basilea writes: "We have to make an 'about face', declare war on our anger and choose the way of Jesus. 'To this you have been called ... that you should follow in His steps ... When He was reviled, he did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten' (1 Peter 2:21-23). In our mind let us picture Jesus, who says: "I am gentle" (Math. 11:29) — Jesus the Lamb of God, filled with gentleness, patience and meekness — a picture of love that overcomes all! And to this image He has redeemed us. We should reflect this love, which wins other people, which is the opposite of anger and vehemence. It is gentleness and mildness which has great

You should get hold of this book and read it. What I have given above is only a bare outline of a fascinating and alarming account. It has wider and alarming implications for society. We are all locked into some relationship of subjection to authority, whether it be government, church, employer, or a close personal relationship. When a conflict of conscience arises we readily become the agents of terrible destructive processes unless we know where the ultimate authority lies. We call Jesus 'Lord'. Is this merely doctrine or a fact of our lives? To utter His name and accept His moral teaching is one thing

it is easy enough to say 'Lord, Lord'. To act upon our beliefs when locked into a conflict situation created by Authority quite another. 'Only those who break free', said Jesus, 'and do the will of my Father will enter the Kingdom of Heaven'. \*

power and thaws out hard hearts like a spring wind."

### "God acts only through the Church"

God acted not only in the past, and will not only act in the future. God is Lord of the present, of the time in which we live now. Jesus came to redeem the world, not then, not in the future, but now, because God acts now (2 Cor.6:2). But, God has chosen to act only through the Body of His Son Jesus Christ, the Church. And the People of God will only truly become the Church, when they repent. Then we can start to love. We are called to be perfect, and to love perfectly. Perfect love drives out fear, anger and frustration.

To detain people for 180 days or longer is wicked, and must be condemned. Not to love the people that do the detaining is just as wicked and must be even more condemned, because our Lord taught us, and those of us who confess Him to be Lord ought to know. We should not only love our neighbours, because many of the heathen do the same, but we must love our enemies and pray for them and those that persecute us.

If we could only love like that, loving those that hate us, loving those that persecute us, loving those that imprison us, we could wear out the ability to hate in others with our ability to love them! And they would start to love us, as they love God. Thank God, because that will take place. All we have to do, is to be obedient to the will of God and repent of our sins.

We confess in the Creed that we believe that God the Holy Spirit sanctifies us, and the Church. If this is so in our lives, then we must be able to see the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience kindness etc. And wherever we notice these fruits with thanksgiving, we meet people filled with the power that the Holy Spirit gives them ... these are the true Charismatic people, through whom God is changing society. People who confess to anyone who hears that Christ has overcome the powers of darkness for once and for ever, and that we can see this with our own eyes, if we can accept Him as Lord and Saviour in our lives, are giving thanks to God for the

way in which He has revealed, and is revealing Himself, -- one great prayer of thanks and praise.

### **“Kingdom not concerned with bread”**

I just cannot understand the policies of Détente and Detention either, but Détente might well increase, and Detention decrease if I, if we would start loving Mr. Vorster and his government. The Afrikaners and their exclusiveness, with the love of Christ. We might love them into the realisation that God is Lord of creation, and we can only entrust the future to Him, and not to the power of the police to ensure “peace and order”. If we can start loving with the love of Christ, being prepared to die for those who do not know the love of Christ, we might reach the point where the Afrikaner nation might be prepared to lay down its life, in order to be reborn again, as a

new Nation, together with all South Africans, truly inhabitants of God’s Kingdom.

It further seems to me that there is a certain misunderstanding about the Kingdom. The Kingdom is *not* concerned with our daily bread. Jesus did not want to lead a political party guaranteeing filled bellies. (Jn.6). God’s Kingdom cannot exist where there is hatred, and no repentance. Jesus promised that he would renew all things, and I believe this promise to be true. If we can lift up South Africa in prayer to God, he can touch it, and make our country whole, in the same way as we lift up the individual soul to God for healing and redemption. So also will God’s Kingdom come, not through physical action, not through political change, but only through the prayers of redeemed sinners.

## **“OPEN REBUKE IS BETTER THAN SECRET LOVE”**

**—roelf meyer**

Perhaps the writer of the above letter need only have been referred to the EDITORIAL ON CHRISTMAS as this deals with the same topic. But as the letter is an example of a specific “spiritual” trend among a number of people, a full reply might be better.

The letter speaks of “anger and frustration”, and “a fear for the “future” in the editorials. Is it wrong for Christians to feel anger and disappointment because of evil and suffering in society especially if their endeavours to do something effectively about it are foiled? Did not Christ and his disciples show anger in certain circumstances? Christ “looked on them with *anger*, being *grieved for* the hardness of their hearts ...” (Mark 3:5; italics added). “While Paul waited for them at Athens, he was perturbed when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry” (Acts 17:16). Is it not permissible for Christians to show some anxiety about the future if we do not change in a radical Christian way in this country? Must Christians not become anxious “if the sword come” upon the land and people do not listen to the warning (cf. Ezek. 33)?

The letter quotes texts pointing out the gentleness, meekness and patience of Jesus, but this is only half the truth, and as usual half the truth of Christ gives a totally distorted picture. This is clear in the letter which draws the conclusion that because of the meekness of Jesus He could not have had anger as this love is “the opposite of anger”. We must assuredly follow in the footsteps of Jesus, but Jesus never glossed over sin and evil as these were attacks on the honour of God and the dignity of man. Christ struggled with people and their evil to the point of the cross which showed his genuine love, — something totally different from sentimentality. To say that the only thing that is needed to change society is to repent and to love God and other people, including your enemies, is a cosy way of escape from reality where the issues must actually be faced by Christians. There is a danger which must be warned against and that is that the work of the Holy Spirit can so easily be reduced to a security-seeking surrender to authority which

causes Christians to concentrate on the inner movements of their souls instead of focussing on the transforming work of the Spirit in the world in the lives of people and their society.

### **wounds of a friend, better than kisses of an enemy**

The consequence of this standpoint of being preoccupied with the inner workings of the Spirit in the minds of people is that God is barred from any direct action in the world or society as the letter clearly says “God has chosen to act only through ... the Church”. No, God has chosen to work *through his Spirit* in the world and God promised: “I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh” (Acts 2:17). Christ was the true Light “which lighteth every man that cometh into the world” (John 1:9). These texts are being used here not in the sense of the salvation of people, but to show that God does not work only through the church. God even called a “heathen” man his “anointed” one and used him in His service (Isaiah 44,45).

Must we as Christians then not love those who cause others to suffer? Certainly, but not in a cheap all-forgiving way, which does not forgive anything and does not help or solve anything. Jesus even referred to the ruler of that part of the country as “that fox”, as Herod resisted the gospel (Luke 13:32). True love “ought to obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29), ought to “reprove, rebuke, exhort ...” (2 Tim. 4:2). One must even doubt whether there is real love if one does not point out evil in the actions of other people and resist it, also for their own sake. “Open rebuke *is* better than secret love. Faithful *are* the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy *are* deceitful” (Proverbs 27:5,6). To love a person means also to take responsibility for that person, to struggle with him, to warn him, to take him and his actions and policies seriously. Merely to call people to love others in an over-emotional way smacks of the old heresy of Docetism, which believed Christ to be “spiritual” only without a real body on earth. This bars Christ from being relevant to the problems of society of the day.



We do not deny the validity of prayer and meekness and long-suffering, and repentance in one's own life. We must however point out that thousands of deprived, exploited and suffering people have cried out to God during the past 27 years, and longer, for their liberation. Many Blacks are waiting patiently on God for radical Christian change and many with the help of Christ even love the people who cause them suffering. But God has also called his servants to challenge those in power in the name of God to set the people free, to "let my people go" (cf. Exodus 7,8). Christ came to preach the gospel to the poor, to preach deliverance to the captives, to set at liberty them that are bruised ... (Luke 4:18). It is of no use if only minor changes, are brought about but society, based on race, culture, colour and nationalism as the final norms, remains basically the same. Christ warned against false prophets, known like trees by their fruit. One cannot change one part of a tree to make it bear fruit; the whole tree must be a good tree. "Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. (Matthew 7:17). We must not only change our attitudes; our hearts and our lives; system and society must also be renewed.

### BREAD IS A CRITERION OF THE KINGDOM

Another disastrous consequence of the attitude of some of the "true Charismatic people" is spelt out by the letter itself. It says: "The Kingdom is *not* concerned with our daily bread." Did Christ not teach us to pray for *our* (our own and our neighbours') bread? The gospel stories abound with examples of Jesus caring for the hungry, the sick, the rejected, the

outcasts, etc. bread is even one of the final criteria of the kingdom. Bread is of utmost importance as Christ identified himself with the hungry: "I was hungry and you gave me food" (Matt. 25:35).

The letter concludes that the Kingdom comes, "not through physical action, not through political change, but *only* through the prayers of redeemed sinners" (italics added). If this were true, why do Christians go and preach the gospel (physical action is involved as well), and witness to society for the purpose of having laws changed? The church should rather retreat into the life of a hermit praying the whole time, and nothing more. No, Christians are "the salt of the earth", "the light of the world", and that includes the political world. Even prayer becomes political action, since life cannot be compartmentalized. Paul's exhortation to the Christians in the Roman empire to pray to God for the authorities was an act with tremendous political significance, as the people were supposed to pray to Caesar by political decree.

It is true that Christians must also examine the way in which, and the spirit in which, and the method by which they perform their duty and they must always be ready to listen and to hear criticism. However, what is even more important, is that Christ must be proclaimed Lord over our whole life, including the political sphere, and that the church must be involved in the ordering of society; otherwise it would flee its responsibility. *Luther said that one has not preached the gospel of Christ if one has not applied it to the relevant issues of the day.* Christ's death in the Roman empire had many dimensions, political, church, individual, cultural and societal. The task of Christians today is in word and deed to proclaim the same gospel through the mighty power of his Spirit. \*

## letter to the editor:

### LE GRANGE COMMISSION'S BLUNDER ON BULTMANN

Dear Sir,

Manas Buthulezi has given us an excellent concise evaluation of the views of the "le Grange-Schlebusch Commission" on Black Theology.<sup>1</sup>

A well-known theologian was heard to remark that "that report would make a cat laugh"! I was appalled by the number of glaring errors and gross misinterpretations which it contains. Here is just one of the many examples of the "doubtful theology" it expounds. The commissioners with the help of their "ghost teachers" have arrived at a theological conclusion that "Bultmann's thinking is not founded on Christianity but shows the influence of John Paul Sartre" who is said to be pro-communist.<sup>2</sup> The implied corollary is that Black Theology which the Commissioners say is based on Bultmann's ideas, must also be pro-Communist.

It is most difficult to understand how the commissioners arrived at this conclusion in view of the fact that Bultmann was born in 1884 and Sartre in 1905. Since Sartre was only a little boy when Bultmann was already studying theology and Bultmann was appointed Professor at Marburg in 1921 when Sartre was only 15, it would have been physically impossible for Bultmann to have been influenced by the philosophy of Sartre!

Apart from historical inaccuracy, whatever we might think of Bultmann's theology in the light of subsequent developments, he was not a communist and he did consider himself a Christian, believing in Jesus Christ, which makes all the difference between him and the atheistic Sartre.

It is indeed a tragedy that such an inaccurate report carries its own built-in authority as a judicial pronouncement, which has given it unlimited power over the lives of people "affected" by it, as well as unlimited power to mislead anyone who reads it in the future since its "theology" is not subject to correction and amendment as theological statements usually are — as theologians we never have the final answer but are always "students of theology!"

1. *Pro Veritate*, October 1975
2. *Op cit.*, 8.354

**(mrs.) ethne fourie**

Rhodes University

# WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES ASSEMBLY AT A GLANCE

(Report Received prior to the Assembly)

Delegates from eight member churches of the World Council of Churches met in Johannesburg last week to discuss their participation in the forthcoming Fifth Assembly of the WCC to be held in Nairobi from 23.11.75 to 10.12.75. The following are South African member churches of the WCC: The Church of the Province of South Africa; the Methodist Church; the Presbyterian Church of South Africa; the United Congregational Church; the Moravian Church; the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Transvaal and South Eastern Region, and the Bantu Presbyterian Church.

Given below are some of the basic facts about the WCC Assembly, which have been supplied by the organisation's Division of Communication:

The World Council of Churches Fifth Assembly is to be held at Kenyatta Conference Centre, Nairobi, Kenya (first WCC Assembly in Africa). Previous assemblies were in Uppsala, Sweden (1968), New Delhi (1961), Evanston, Illinois (1954), Amsterdam (1948).

**Main Theme:** "Jesus Christ Frees and Unites"

**Purpose** — The Constitution requires an assembly at seven-year intervals to determine policies for the WCC, review past performance and elect a presidium and Central Committee. An Assembly also gives opportunity to celebrate the faith and explore the gospel the churches hold in common.

**Host** — The 5 WCC member churches (Church of the Province of Kenya (Anglican), Methodist Church in Kenya, Presbyterian Church in East Africa, Salvation Army, East Africa Diocese of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria) with the co-operation of the National Christian Council of Kenya.

**Participants** — Some 2 300 people will be present in the following categories:

747 Delegates authorized to represent the 271 member churches — Protestant, Orthodox and Old Catholic. They come from more than 100 countries as follows:

116 Africans; 106 Asians; 155 West Europeans; 109 East Europeans; 153 North Americans; 24 Latin Americans; 11 Caribbean; 43 Australasia and Pacific; 30 Middle East.

These figures reflect the numerical strength of member churches on each continent; small churches have only one delegate, larger ones up to 25. At least 10 churches will seek admission at Nairobi.

Among the 747 delegates will be about

155 Women or 20% (9% of Uppsala delegates were women)  
75 Youth under 30 years or 10% (4% of Uppsala delegates were under 35 years)

300 Laity or 40% (25% of Uppsala delegates were laity).

About 80% of all Delegates are attending their first Assembly. Some 39 churches are represented at an assembly for the first time.

The largest number of delegates are from Reformed/Presbyterian Churches. Confessional families in descending numerical order are: Lutheran, Eastern Orthodox, United, Methodist, Anglican, Oriental Orthodox, Baptist, Other.

130 Fraternal Delegates (national councils of Churches, world confessional families)

90 Observers (Roman Catholics 16, other non-member churches 25, international organisations).

60 Guests (distinguished individuals from Kenya and elsewhere and representatives of other faiths including Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims, Jews, Sikhs).

120 Advisers (including 10 Roman Catholics, 10 Conservative Evangelicals, etc.).

180 Stewards (60 Africans, 80 European/North American, 40 Asians/Latin Americans).

250 Staff (including translators, interpreters and co-opted staff).

**Speakers** — Dr Robert McAfee Brown, USA Presbyterian theologians, teacher;

Topic: "Who is this Jesus Christ who frees and unites?"

Father Cyrille Argenti, French, Orthodox, and Dr John Deschner, USA Methodist theologian

Topic: "That all may be one..."

Bishop Mortimer Arias, Bolivian Methodist

Topic: "... That the world may believe"

The Hon. Michael Manley, Prime Minister of Jamaica

Topic: "Shackles of domination and oppression"

Prof. Charles Birch, Australian biologist

Topic: "Creation, Technology and Human Survival"

Others who will give formal comments on the speeches include:

Metropolitan Paulos Gregorios, Indian, Syrian Orthodox Church;

Dr Kosuke Koyama, Japanese educator teaching in New Zealand;

Mrs R.R. Andriamanjato, Malagasy Reformed, engineer and teacher;

The Rev. John Stott, British Anglican;

Archbishop Samuel Carter, Jamaican Roman Catholic

Other major plenary events include:

General Secretary's report by Philip A. Potter

Central Committee Chairman's report by M.M. Thomas  
"African Challenge" setting the theme in the context of the African churches' faith and experience

"Women in a changing world", moderator Sylvia Talbot of Guyana

Delegates will spend a major part of their time in one of six Sections:

1. Confessing Christ Today.
2. What Unity Requires.
3. Seeking Community — The Common Search of People of Various Faiths, Cultures and Ideologies.
4. Education for Liberation and Community.
5. Structures of Injustice and Struggles for Liberation.
6. Human Development — the Ambiguities of Power, Technology and Quality of Life.

They will also review past programmes in formal *Hearings* devoted to:

1. General Secretariat
2. Programme Unit on Faith and Witness
3. Programme Unit on Justice and Service
4. Programme Unit on Education and Renewal

**Committees:** In addition to the usual business committees there will be a Programme Guidelines Committee making recommendations on future emphases for the Council, and three Reference Committees on constitutional matters and applications for membership, relations with the Roman Catholic Church and the world confessional families, and



public affairs.

Work Groups: 80 - 100 Groups will examine the Main Theme through Bible Study and other means.

**Major Issues:** The following are candidates for high-visibility treatment:

1. The role of women in the Church and the WCC.
2. How faith is articulated in different cultural settings; what are the implications for action?
3. Mission and Evangelism — findings of Bangkok Conference on Salvation Today, Lausanne Congress on Evangelisation.
4. New International Economic Order; people's partici-

pation in development; eradication of absolute poverty.

5. Spirituality — individual and corporate worship, new life styles, etc.
6. The future of the ecumenical movement. Are the churches willing to pay the price of costly ecumenism?

Should the WCC give priority to theological and ecclesiological interests (e.g. Christian unity) over against social and political interests?

— *EcuNews*, 8.10.75.

## BOOKS RECEIVED

— roelf meyer

### 1. In English

**Religion and Atheism in the USSR and Eastern Europe**, edited by B.R. Borciurkiw and J.W. Strong. Publisher: The Macmillan Press Ltd, London and Basingstoke, associated company in Johannesburg. Price £10 hard cover. 412 pages.

This survey by a number of writers examines various aspects of religion and atheism in the Soviet Union and all other East European Communist States since the Second World War. The points of emphasis include philosophical confrontation between religion and Communism in these countries; Church-state relations — inter-relationship between religion, nationality and culture — and the impact of political and socio-economic changes on popular religiosity and the socio-political orientation of institutional religion. Topics dealt with in this scholarly work are e.g., Marxism, Leninism and religion, Religious dissent and the Soviet State, Church-State schism in Czechoslovakia, Religion and Social Change in Yugoslavia, and Albania — Towards an atheist society.

**Towards World Community, The Colombo Papers**, edited by S.J. Samartha. Published by the World Council of Churches, Geneva. 163 pages.

This publication brought together the thoughts of the Colombo meeting on "World Community". This conference was neither an attempt to build a super-organization nor the desperate search for a world religion. "World Community" means recognizing that people are interdependent, that religions which continue to be moats of separation should consciously become bridges of understanding, that the call is to-day for people to manifest signs of community with their neighbours in the midst of conflicts and tensions. The book contains the papers presented, the memorandum of the consultation and some critical reflections. The papers dealt with various aspects of the Hindu religion, Judaism, Islam and Christianity.

**The Dutch Plural Society, A Comparative Study in Race Relations**, by C. Bagley. Published by the Institute of Race Relations, London. Price £5 hard cover. 293 pages.

As a Sociologist the writer provides the first systematic description of that quality of Dutch society which has enabled it to absorb large numbers of immigrants from ex-colonial and colonial territories (Indonesia and the West Indies) and more

recently workers from Southern Europe and North Africa. Dr. Bagley claims that the Netherlands can claim a measure of success in its race relations as they appear to be less racially prejudiced and as they are willing to spend lavishly on special facilities for immigrants. This study includes detailed comparisons with the British situation including a socio-psychological enquiry into the extent and correlates of prejudice and discrimination in the Netherlands and Britain. He concludes his book with "The Lessons for Britain".

**Waterbuffalo Theology**, by K. Koyama. Published by SCM Press, London. Price: £2-10. 239 pages.

Dr. Koyama, a Japanese theologian, has been working in Thailand and in Singapore and this book, is an example of Asian theology. He explores how European theology and the gospel of Christ may be related to a very different culture. "On my way to the country church, I never fail to see a herd of waterbuffaloes grazing in the muddy paddy field. This sight reminds me that the people to whom I bring the gospel spend most of their time with these waterbuffaloes in the rice fields. They remind me to discard all abstract ideas and to use exclusively objects that are immediately tangible".

**A Priest's Encounter with Revolution**, by J. Vadakkan. Published by The Christian Literature Society, Bangalore. 159 pages.

This book is an abridged version of the autobiography of Father Vadakkan, a priest of the Roman Catholic Church. He is regarded as a rebel in the Church seeking its renewal in the name of his vision that Christ today should mean the solidarity of the Church with the poor in their struggle against the "Great Sin: Poverty", and that Christian ecumenism becomes real only as the Churches seek to realise "community and communion" in the Christian congregations and in the larger society. The writer is a man of action who has become part of the recent history of Kerala politics. His encounter with revolution for justice in Kerala society has sometimes brought him into opposition against Communistic ideology and politics and at other times into co-operation with them, but his position vis-a-vis Communism always expressed his genuine human concern. This book provides material for study and reflection on the relation between Christianity, Marxism and Social Revolution in India.

**The Christian Faith**, by D. Coggan. Published by SPCK.



London. Price 25p. 22 pages.

This booklet is intended as an introduction to the Christian faith. "Christianity is essentially a message of good news. It is not primarily a list of things which man must do or must not do ..." It is written for those who know practically nothing about Christianity, or those who know it from a distance, or those who are puzzled by it.

**The Young Church in Action**, by J.B. Phillips. Published by Fontana. Price 50c. 128 pages.

This is the ninth impression of the paraphrasing of the book of Acts. The aim of the explanation of the Bible in this way is to bring home the scriptural message to the man in the street. Its general aim is to make the general meaning plain even to the hasty reader.

**The Need for Teachers in South Africa**, by F.E. Auerbach. Published by the SA Students Education Trust. 22 pages.

In this report commissioned by the Students' Education Trust, the author stresses the need for secondary education for workers in an industrial society, and indicates the shortage of qualified teachers in all our secondary schools, together with the reasons for the shortage. The situation in the black schools is very bad. The *per capita* spending on black pupils is low, black classrooms are over-crowded, the "double session" system operates in many schools, too many teachers are unqualified or under-qualified, only a thin trickle of pupils pass from the primary to secondary school. The specific effort being made by the South African students' Education Trust is in the direction of providing grants and interest-free loans to needy students at Training Colleges and Universities.

**Theological Education Fund Study Guides**. General editor: D. Terry.

This series is sponsored and subsidized by the TEF in response to requests from Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and the Pacific. The books are prepared by and in consultation with theological teachers in those areas. Published by SPCK, London.

**TEF Study Guide 5: Church History I AD 29-500: The First Advance**, by J. Foster. 55p (special edition). 180 pages.

The main emphasis in this church history is on people rather than policies or polemics, with descriptions of Christians in the first five centuries persevering under persecution and carrying their faith east and south into Asia and Africa, as well as westward into Europe.

**TEF Study Guide 6: A Guide to Psalms**, by J. Hargreaves. Price: £1.10. 184 pages.

This is a study in detail of twenty of the most commonly used Psalms, with general notes on the historical and literary background of the book of Psalms as a whole and on some of the ways in which different churches are using Psalms in their worship today.

**TEF Study Guide 7: Old Testament Introduction I, History of Israel**, by D. Hinson. Price: £1-25. 222 pages.

Pointing to the evidence of archaeology and other contemporary records as well as Scripture itself, the writer sets the reader on the road to studying Israelite history in its context of shifting empires and struggles for power in the ancient world, and traces the emerging national consciousness of the Jews as

the People of God in the Old Testament.

**TEF Study Guide 8: Church History 2, AD 500-1500: Setback and Recovery**, by J. Foster. £1.50. 202 pages.

This volume traces the rise and fall of the church's fortunes through the "thousand years of uncertainty" from the time when barbarian and Arab invasions toppled the power of Rome; to Christendom's loss of Constantinople and the subsequent opening of a new age of discovery and learning.

**TEF Study Guide 9: Applied Theology I: Go ... and Make Disciples**, by A.C. Krass. £1.75. 218 pages.

This study deals with the understandings and skills needed for the minister's multiple task as communicator, counsellor, and enabler of worship, witness and community service in today's context of social change and unrest. Biblical, historical and doctrinal insights derived from other disciplines are integrated in this practical study.

**TEF Study Guide: 10: Old Testament Introduction 2: The Books of the Old Testament**, by D.F. Hinson. £1.50. 160 pages.

Pointing to the evidence of archaeology and other contemporary records the writer prompts the reader to explore the origins and contents of the books of the Old Testament in the context of Israel's history, and as both record and response to God's dealings with His chosen People.

**TEF Study Guide 11: A Guide to Romans**, by R. Bowen. £2.95. 236 pages.

In this study the author assists the reader to follow, step by step, Paul's reasoning as he explained to the young church in Rome what man's real need is, and how Jesus Christ is God's answer to that need. This volume contains topical illustrations and diagrams.

## 2. (In Dutch) In Hollands

**De Blaffende Hond, Aspecten uit het Leven van Wynfret Bonifatius**, deur A. Jelsma. Prys R3.50. 218 bladsye. Uitgewer: Boekencentrum B.V. — 'S-Gravenhage.

Hierdie boek handel oor die lewe van Bonifacius wat in die jaar 754 by Dokkum vermoor word. Tog is die boek meer as net 'n oprakeling van die verlede. Die mens uit die twintigste eeu, wat in verleentheid met homself en met die kerk verkeer, word hier met 'n figuur uit die gryse verlede gekonfronteer. Hierdie omstrede figuur kan moontlik vir die mens in die moderne tyd 'n nuwe manier van lewe aantoon. Dit is nie slegs 'n boek oor die geskiedenis nie, maar dit vra na 'n heroriëntasie in die huidige lewe.

**Apeldoornse Studies**: Hierdie publikasies word deur die Teologiese „Hogeschool" van die Christelike Gereformeerde Kerk in Holland uitgegee. Uitgewer: J.H.Kok, Kampen.

**Vroomheid in het Oude en Nieuwe Testament**, deur B.J. Oosterhoff en W. Steenbergen. Hierdie uitgawe bevat twee lesings wat in 'n studieweek by die teologiese skool gehou is. Die tema van die week was „Vroomheid". 48 bladsye. Prys: R1.50.

**De Heilige Geest en het Gebed**, deur J.P. Versteeg. Hierdie uitgawe bevat die rede uitgespreek by die oordrag van die

rektoraat aan die Teologiese skool van die Christelike Gereformeerde Kerk.

**Goddelijke Recht en Kerkelijke Orde Bij Martin Bucer, W. van't Spijker.** 40 bladsye. R1. Dié publikasie bevat die rede van dr. Spijker uitgespreek by die geleentheid van die aanvaarding van sy pos as hoogleraar by dieselfde Teologiese Skool.

**Politieke Prediking,** deur W.H. Velema. 40 Bladsye. R1. Dit is nog 'n rede wat by die geleentheid van die oordrag van die rektoraat aan die kerk uitgespreek is.

**Christus in onze Plaats,** J. van Genderen. 'n Verdere toespraak by dieselfde geleentheid van oordrag gelewer. 36 bladsye. R1. \*

## book review:

## APARTHEID

IS

## UNHEALTHY



"As long as injustice is not reduced, no amount of medicine or medical work can stem the ever-increasing tide of illness (in South Africa). For no amount of drugs or antibiotics can take the place of three square meals a day, and the means of getting three square meals a day is a just wage ...

"From this viewpoint the ultimate cause of sickness is neither germ nor bacteria but mass exploitation. But mass exploitation has its roots in a political system or atmosphere," writes Dr. L.G. Wells in 'Health, Healing and Society' (Ravan Press, Johannesburg).

This book by a young South African doctor working at a mission hospital in KwaZulu confirms a United Nations report which early this year concluded that South Africa's 'unscientific' policy of apartheid is harmful to the physical and mental health of the nation and imposes a severe burden on the black population.

Both documents agree that there is a glaring disparity between the health of different population groups. The UN World Health Organisation report says that while the ratio of one doctor to 400 white people in South Africa is among the highest in the world, the ratio of one doctor to 44,400 blacks is among the lowest.

The medical problems of South Africa, says Dr. Wells, are primarily those of the developing countries but made worse by the addition of race barriers between the rich and the poor. He sees poverty as a determining factor in the improvement of medical care in South Africa.

"Poverty determines the sort of illnesses people have, and in addition dictates the pattern of health care available to counteract them," he asserts. "Poverty means that demands for health care are always greater than the resources available to meet them."

## STATEMENT ON THE RELEASE OF H. KLEINSCHMIDT —28th November 1975

The Executive of the Board of Management of the Christian Institute, while welcoming the release from lengthy periods of detention of those who have not been charged, particularly Horst Kleinschmidt and James Polley, reiterate their unequivocal condemnation of the Terrorism Act and express their concern at, and opposition to its continued widespread use.

Nothing that has come to light in recent trials in any way justifies the violation of human rights implied in the very existence of this Act.

It is a measure of the general acceptance of the abrogation of the Rule of Law in our country that people, after having been held for periods of up to a year, can be released without being charged or even called to give evidence and there is so little by way of expressed indignation.

It is therefore essential to remind people continually that the presence of such an Act on the Statute Book, no matter how humanely it might be implemented, constitutes a violation of human rights. Even if a person is subsequently found guilty, he has the right to the protection of the courts, access to legal advice and to respect for his dignity as a human being which is denied when he is held incommunicado. \*

To him, the South African situation demands a move towards providing health care for everybody, even if this means lowering the overall standard.

Dr. Wells' opinions may be of interest to the developing countries of Africa when he notes, "Health care must be related to what poor people and a poor country can afford, and not to abstract standards of medical excellence. Illness must be treated where it is cheapest to do so, which usually means in health centres or small clinics rather than in hospitals."

Furthermore, "The wrong foreign aid may be worse than no aid at all. This occurs particularly when capital expenses for a project are donated without the recipient's ability to meet running costs."

He cites the example of one African country where a large, modern hospital stood empty, because it would take all the country's doctors and a quarter of the health budget to run it.

This example underlines the importance for every developing country to have some philosophy behind the development of a health service. For Dr. Wells, Christianity provides that philosophy, although there are other philosophies.

He emphasises the need for the Church in South Africa to continue to "heal the sick", though with a new understanding of what that means, and without separating it from the other charges given to the disciples.

Even more important, the Church must recognise explicitly the political nature of its involvement with health. Unfortunately, as Dr. Wells rightly observes, "a medical service even approximating to a Christian pattern is an impossibility in South Africa at present."

If there is any single theme that the book conveys, it is that apartheid perpetuates social injustices in health care.

"Social consequences of apartheid such as migrant labour, resettlement of people and inadequate wages are responsible for much illness. These cannot be stopped without a complete change from apartheid," asserts Dr. Wells. —Africa Acts

**If  
you  
knew  
someone  
without  
any  
fingers...  
would  
you  
give  
him  
a  
hand?**

