

PRO

VERITATE

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DIE RADIO EN EVANGELISASIE

Voordat ons tot die praktiese aspek van die saak kan kom, is dit nodig dat ons 'n sekere begripsbepaling moet verkry. Ons moet naamlik vasstel:

1. Wat is EVANGELISASIE? en
2. Wat is die feitelike posisie in verband met die radio in Suid-Afrika (asook in Afrika) vandag en watter moontlikhede is daar vir CARA om die radio aan evangelisasie diensbaar te maak?

1. Wat is Evangelisasie?

Ons sal die begrip „evangelisasie” miskien die beste verstaan wanneer ons dit sien as „die hantering van 'n situasie wat uit 'n bepaalde tydsbedeeling voortvloei”. Die Grieke het 'n woord gehad — kairos — wat min of meer beteken het: die volheid van die tyd. So is Christus gebore en het die christelike kerk ontstaan en gegroei in die volheid van die tyd, of, soos ons vandag dit sou uitdruk: die tyd was ryp daarvoor. Deur die eeue heen was daar verskillende sake waarvoor die tyd ryp was, byvoorbeeld: 400 jaar en meer gelede was die tyd ryp vir hervorming in die christelike kerk, en het die dan ook met krag gekom. In ons tyd is daar 'n „kairos” in meer as een opsig. Op maatskaplike gebied beleef ons tans die rypheid van die tyd met betrekking tot rasseverhoudinge — die hele wêreld is gaande daarvoor en in ons land staan ons in besonder in die brandpunt van hierdie hele aangeleentheid. Op wetenskaplike gebied is daar 'n „kairos” vir tegnologiese ontwikkeling, wat selfs nuwe terreine betree, soos ruimtevlugte — die hele wêreld is gaande daarvoor.

Die „Kairos” van ons dag

Ook op geestelike gebied is daar 'n „kairos”. Daarvoor is die hele wêreld wel nie gaande nie, maar die Kerk van Christus wel, want binne die grense van die Kerk, sowel as daarbuite, is daar 'n afvalligheid en vervreemding van Jesus Christus soos nog selde of ooit tevore — en dit van mense wat lidmate van die Kerk is maar geen kennis en begrip van Jesus Christus as persoonlike Verlosser en Saligmaker het nie, of mense wat hulle verband met die Kerk reeds verbreek het, maar hulle self nog steeds goeie christenmense noem. Dit is 'n verskynsel wat sedert die tweede wêreldoorlog veral sterk op die voorgrond tree. Materialisme, sekularisering en baie ander faktore werk dit in die hand, maar ons moet dit moontlik ook eskatologies sien, want die Bybel sê: „In die laaste dae sal sommige van die geloof afvallig word...” (I Tim. 4 : 1) en: „... en omdat die ongeregtigheid vermeerder word, sal die liefde van die meeste verkoel”. (Matth. 24 : 12). Dit is wel 'n saak van spekulasie of ons reeds „in die laaste tye” leef, maar die afvalligheid van die geloof sien ons baie duidelik in die wêreld van ons dag en as sulks is dit nie alleen 'n profesie wat in vervulling gaan nie, maar ook 'n teken van die „kairos” vir die koms van die anti-chris.

Ons kan egter nie om hierdie rede

maar nou agteroor gaan sit en sê ons het met 'n verskynsel van die tyd te doen en ons kan daar niks aan doen nie, want die Kerk van Christus word op aarde geroep om die strydende Kerk te wees en te bly totdat Jesus Christus op die wolke van die hemel kom. En na mate die stryd heftiger word, moet die wapenrusting en geestelike krygsvernuf des te meer doeltreffend wees — ook met behulp van 'n moderne elektroniese massamedium soos die radio.

Die taak van die Kerk

Die taak van die Kerk is twee-ledig: „Gaan dan heen, maak dissipels van al die nasies...” en: „Leer hulle om alles te onderhou wat Ek julle beveel het” (Matth. 28 : 19). Die eerste noem ons gewoonlik die sending-aksie van die Kerk. Oor hoe die radio in diens van die sending gebruik kan word, het ons aanstonds 'n referaat. Oor die tweede taak gaan dit nou hier: hoe om die mense wat reeds dissipels gemaak is, te leer om alles te onderhou, en veral: hoe om hulle wat vergeet het wat hulle geleer het, dit weer te leer; hoe om hulle wat aan die Kerk behoort, maar van die Kerk af weggehoop het, weer na die Kerk terug te bring.

Laat ons eers daarop let dat ons twee groepe van buitelanders het — openlike buitelanders en bedekte buitelanders. Die eerste groep is mense wat openlik hulle verband met die kerk verbreek het — hulle verstaan nie meer die taal van die kerk en sy Bybel nie en stel ook nie meer belang daarin nie. Hulle gee ook nie meer om dat hulle nie meer lidmate van een of ander kerk is nie. En tog is hulle dikwels goeie mense wat volgens baie van die standaarde van die Christendom lewe — hulle is geen heidene of barbare nie. Hulle is, soos een skrywer dit uitgedruk het „christene deur osmose”. Baie van Wes-Europa en Noord-Amerika se mense lewe vandag so — en ook al heelwat hier in ons eie land. 'n Groter groep, in ons land althans, is die „bedekte buitelanders”. Hy is 'n lidmaat van die kerk; hy is in die kerk getroud en sy kinders is in die kerk gedoop — en hy word uit die kerk begrawe, maar dit is ook omtrent al verband wat hy met die kerk het. Miskien kom hy nog nou en dan in die kerk, of selfs taamlik dikwels en hy gee nog vir die kerk, maar in sy lewe van elke dag beplan hy sy toekoms en neem hy sy besluite en leef hy sy lewe sonder dat Christus daar enige seggenskap in het of die woord van die Here daar enige maatstaf voor is. Wat sy praktiese lewe en omstandighede en handelwyse en gesindhede betref, kan Christus en sy

Kerk ook maar net so goed nie bestaan het nie.

Dit is die kenmerke van die gemiddelde mens in die sogenaamde christelike lande. Dit is die kenmerke van 'n ontstellende groot groep lidmate van die kerke hier in ons eie land. Dit neem natuurlik nie die feit weg dat daar 'n kern is wat toegewyde, geesvervulde lidmate is nie; wat hul lewens inrig volgens die woord van die Here en buig voor die gesag van God; wat deur die werk van die Heilige Gees in hul harte Jesus Christus ken as hul persoonlike Saligmaker en God as hul hemelse Vader met die getuenis van die Heilige Gees saam met hul gees dat hulle kinders van God is. Hulle is in der waarheid die sout van die aarde en die

lig van die wêreld. Maar wat van die sout wat laf geword het en die lamp wat onder die maatemmer verberg is? Wat van die bedekte en openlike buitelanders?

Hoe kan die kerk weer kontak met die buitelanders maak; watter taal moet hy praat om homself verstaanbaar te maak aan die mens wat van Christus vervreemd geraak het; watter middels kan hy aanwend in die uitvoering van hierdie taak? Te midde van die baie middels en metodes wat bedink en beplan en beproef word, het ons vandag hier met een te doen: DIE RADIO:

Kan die radio 'n nuttige instrument wees in die hantering van 'n situasie Vervolg op bladsy 2

The Significance of the Toronto Congress for the Anglican Communion

Dr E. Knapp-Fischer, Bishop of Pretoria Diocese.*

In this letter I can only attempt to tell you a little about the most important thing which has come out of the Toronto gathering. This is quite a short document, but what it has to say is of the greatest significance for every single Anglican in every part of the world. It has a rather formidable title: „Mutual Responsibility and Interdependence in the Body of Christ”; but the important and fundamental things it has to say can be understood by all and every one of us. Before you hear what it says you will want to hear how this document came into existence. It was conceived at one of several preliminary meetings held before the Congress at London, Ontario, attended by the Archbishops and Primate of the eighteen Provinces of the Anglican Communion and their advisers. It was born on Saturday, August 17, when it was presented to some 2,000 Anglicans from all parts of the world at the Congress, and enthusiastically approved by them. They further undertook to do all in their power, by God's Grace, to commend and explain it to the people of their parishes and dioceses, and to win the active co-operation of every Anglican in putting its principles into practice.

A fundamental principle is summed up in its title, but this needs to be explained and expanded. It means that every part of the Anglican Communion in all six continents must realize, as never before, that they are members one of another, and that they must work together in a new partnership for the extension of Christ's Kingdom, which is the Mission of His Church. This involves several things:

1. The continuing vocation of Anglicanism. People sometimes suggest that as more and more reunion schemes are concluded, the Anglican part of the Church Universal will soon lose its own identity as it is merged into other united bodies like, for example, the Church of South India. Although this will happen one day when according to Christ's desire all churches will be truly one in Him, and all lose their separate identities in the one Church, that day is still distant.

Meanwhile the Anglican Communion must still preserve the distinctive treasures of its great tradition for the sake of that one Church which will one day come into existence, including all the distinctive contributions which the still separated churches must make to its life if it is to be truly the Body of Christ. The Anglican Communion would betray its vocation if it were to disappear prematurely. Meanwhile our immediate task and responsibility is both to work and pray for unity, and to become better Anglicans, who recognize and understand the rich inheritance which has been entrusted to us by God for the benefit and enriching of His whole Church.

2. The old distinction between „giving” and „receiving” churches must go. In the past some older churches, for example, the Church in England, have been regarded as founding churches, while other younger churches, for example, in Africa or India, have been regarded as mission churches, largely supported by the older ones. Now we must recognize that all the churches of the

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Die Radio en Evangelisasie

Vervolg van bladsy 1

wat uit 'n bepaalde tydsbedeling voortvloei? Kan die kerk die woord van die Here deur middel van die radio aan die man bring wat dit andersins nie meer hoor nie? Laat ons dit dadelik duidelik stel dat die radio geen towerstaf is waarmee allerlei soorte van wonderwerke gedoen kan word nie; of dat ons deur die radio probleme kan oplos wat op geen ander opgelos word nie. Die radio het baie beperkinge, en die radio kan nooit meer as 'n HULPMIDDEL wees nie, maar dan ook 'n baie belangrike hulpmiddel — 'n elektroniese massamedium waarmee mense in 'n korter tydperk bereik word as met enige ander medium. Die ironie is dat dit juis die radio is (en in oorsese lande de beeldradio) wat 'n belangrike rol speel in die vervreemding van die godsdiens — die mense se aandag word so volledig in beslag geneem deur sekulêre dinge wat die hele dag deur die radio en beeldradio aan hom voorgehou word, dat daar nie eintlik meer tyd oorbly vir die godsdiens nie — vir Bybelstudie en bepeinsing en gebed. Die eerste wat hy in die oggend hoor is die nuus en die laaste wat hy in die aand hoor is die nuus en tussenin 'n honderd ander dinge en allens draai sy hele lewendag om die bloot alledaagse en tydelike dinge. Kan hierdie selfde medium — die radio — wat die mens so sekulêr en materialisties maak ook gebruik word om die mens na God en sy Woord terug te bring?

Laat ons dan in die tweede afdeling vir onself afvra: „Wat is die feitelike posisie in verband met die radio in Suid-Afrika (en Afrika) vandag en watter moontlikhede is daar vir CARA om die radio aan evangelisasie diensbaar te maak?”

Maar dan moet ons daarby duidelik verstaan dat CARA nie as 'n entiteit op sy eie optree nie maar as mondstuk van die Protestantse Kerke in Suid-Afrika wil dien. Dit is dus in eintlike sin die Kerk wat die radio in diens neem.

Wat is die radio-posisie in Suid-Afrika? — Heeltemal anders as in feitlik enige ander land van die wêreld! In die lande agter die yster- en bamboesgordyn is die radio in die hande van die staat en word uitsluitlik gebruik om die heersende staatsbeleid te propageer en uit te bou. In sover die kerk nog mag bestaan, het hy geen seggenskap oor die radio of geleentheid om daarvoor uit te saai nie. In die meeste lande van Wes-Europa en veral in die V.S.A. (waar die meeste radios per bevolking gevind word) is die posisie geheel en al anders. Daar word die elektro-magnetiese golwe deur privaat maatskappye beheer. Die oorgrote meerderheid van die 5,158 uitsaaistansies in Amerika is handelsensers — iets soos ons Springbokradio; 'n tweede en veel kleiner groep behoort aan stadsrade en soortgelyke publieke liggame, en 'n derde heel klein groep behoort aan universiteite, skole en teologiese skole. Daar word — ook oor die handelsensers — baie godsdiensprogramme uitgesaai, maar die kerke moet ten duurste daarvoor betaal. Een program bv. „The Lutheran Hour” (ook genoem „Bringing Christ to the nations”) word weekliks oor meer as 'n duisend senders uitgesaai, maar dit kos die Lutherse Kerk in Amerika meer as R2,000,000 per jaar.

Posisie in Suid-Afrika

In Suid-Afrika is die posisie egter geheel en al anders. Hier het ons 'n semi-staatsbeheerde radio, waar die staat volle seggenskap oor die eteruim het maar die uitsaaierwerk gedoen word deur 'n staatsbeheerde maatskappij of korporasie — die Suid-Afrikaanse Uitsaaikorporasie — gestig in 1936 en sedertdien uitgebou tot drie afsonderlike uitsendings — die Afrikaanse sender; die Engelse sender en die handelsender, plus 'n Afrika-diens en 'n al groter wordende Bantoe-diens. Van die stigting van die S.A.U.K. in 1936 het die kerke geleentheid gekry om uit

te saai — oggend- en aanddienste op Sondag; oggend- en aandoordenkinge gedurende die week en later ook ateljeedienste, godsdiensprogramme, programme ens. Vandag word, oor die Afrikaanse sender, sowat 8% van alle uitsaaityd aan godsdiensprogramme bestee en 'n ietwat kleiner persentasie oor die Engelse sender. Oor die handelsender word geen tyd vir spesifiek godsdiensprogramme toegestaan nie. Hierby kom ons later weer.

Wat egter duidelik is, is dat ons in Suid-Afrika 'n unieke posisie het wat ons in geen ander land vind nie — die woord van die Here word dikwels uitgesaai, maar die kerke het geen koste daaraan nie. Hoeveel daar reeds vir die koninkryk van die hemele bereik is deur hierdie uitsendings, sal die ewigheid alleen kan openbaar.

Die vraag is egter of die veranderende omstandighede van ons tyd nie ook 'n veranderde godsdiensprogramme oor die radio noodsaak nie. Wie luister eintlik na die huidige godsdiensprogramme uitsendings oor die S.A.U.K.? Onderzoek het aan die lig gebring dat dit hoofsaaklik die toegewyde kerkmens is wat daarna luister. Die programme is dan ook op hierdie groep van mense ingestel — kerkdienste, godsdiensprogramme oordenkings ens. Vir die bedekte of openlike buitestander is die godsdiensprogramme nouliks enige kontakpunt.

Hoe kan die bestaande tyd vir godsdiensprogramme uitsendings — of altans 'n gedeelte daarvan — omskep word om die aandag en belangstelling van die buitestander vas te gryp; om hom te laat beseef dat hy glad nie so 'n goeie christenmens is as wat hy dink nie, maar hom juis in kontak — en tegelyk konflik — met God te bring; om hom uit sy selftevredenheid wakker te skud en hom as 't ware na sy kerk en na sy Bybel terug te dryf; om hom nie net 'n begrip te gee van die sondigheid van die mens, en dus ook van sy eie sondigheid nie, maar ook die werklikheid van Gods genade en die aanbod tot vergifnis in Christus duidelik te stel — en hom sodoende ook terug te bring tot die kerk? Hoe kan dit gedoen word? Hier lê, myns insiens, een van die grootste take van en uitdagings aan CARA. Dit sal geen gemaklike taak wees nie. Dit sal baie inspanning en studie; behendigheid en toewyding; gebed en arbeid noodsaak. Maar dit is ook 'n groot en heerlike geleentheid.

Die beleid van die S.A.U.K. is om geen tyd oor die handelsender - Springbokradio - vir godsdiensprogramme uitsendings te verkoop nie. Die rede sal duidelik wees - enige groep of rigting sou dan enigiets kon uitsaai wat baie probleme en komplikasies sal meebring.

Nou lyk dit vir my die aangewese weg, of altans, vir die huidige, 'n geskikte beginpunt vir die Christelike Aksie deur die Radio in Suid-Afrika om programme vir Radio Suid-Afrika te lewer.

Laat ek hierdie beeld gebruik: Veronderstel hier is 'n groep studente wat graag Sondag in Langa (of elders) sendingwerk wil gaan doen, maar hulle weet nie hoe om daar te kom nie en dus begin hulle nou planne maak om 'n bus te koop. Maar hier kom 'n goeie vriend en hy sê: Kyk, ek sal julle elke Sondag met my bus en op my koste daarheen neem en terugbring. Dit sou verstandig wees as die studente dan van sy aanbod gebruik sal maak.

Nou lyk dit vir my tog verstandig dat CARA op hierdie stadium gebruik sal maak van die reeds beskikbare fasiliteite en liever die beskikbare fondse sal bestee in die voorbereiding van hoogstaande programme as in die oprigting van 'n sender. Ek sê egter uitdruklik: op hierdie stadium, want CARA staan nie net vir die Christelike aksie deur die Radio in Suid-Afrika nie, maar in Afrika. Die taak en doelstelling is veel groter as die genoemde beginpunt. Gans Afrika moet vir Christus bereik word. Maar dit lê dan veel

meer op die gebied van die sending as die evangelisasie.

Ook hier is geskikte beginpunte deur gebruik te maak van Radio ELWA en Radio Voice of the Gospel. Die dag mag egter ook aanbreek dat CARA — érens — 'n sterk sender sal oprig om Afrika met die evangelie te bedien.

„Die Radio en Evangelisasie” — hier wag vir CARA 'n geleentheid en 'n voorreg; 'n taak en 'n opdrag.

Daarom wil ek graag aan die hand gee dat hierdie Konferensie van CARA lede aan die CARA Trustees 'n opdrag gee om so spoedig moontlik die masjinerie in werking te stel om geskikte godsdiensprogramme op te stel en gereed te maak vir uitsending oor Radio Suid-Afrika en, in sover dit evangelisasieprogramme raak, met die verskillende Evangelisasiekommissies van die kerke te skakel om sodoende hul nouste samewerking te verkry.

In hierdie tweede helfte van die twintigste eeu, wat in so baie opsigte die kenmerke dra van die „laaste dae” waarvan die Bybel praat, het die Here

in die hande van sy Kerk op aarde 'n middel gestel om miljoene mense op 'n gegewe tydstip mee te bereik — in die hospitaalkamer; in die siekekamer; in die sitkamer; eetkamer; kombuis — oral in die huis; in die motor; in die werkswinkel, kantoor, fabriek — oral word die stem van die radio gehoor. Laat ook daar die stem van die evangelie gehoor word — in die taal wat die mens van ons dag kan verstaan. Laat ons behou wat nog behou kan word; terugbring die wat aan die wegwaal is en inbring die wat buite staan. Die geleentheid is daar; die middels is daar; die fondse sal nog almeer gevind word. In hierdie land, waarvoor ewiglik die waspoor lê en oor die nagswart noordewand heen lê die pad van die evangelie nog oop. Laat ons die Here daarvoor dank, maar laat ons ook gebruik maak van ons geleentheid solank ons dit nog het.

* Toespraak gehou deur ds. Alheit van die Ned. Geref. Kerk by geleentheid van die Konferensie van CARA te Stellenbosch. Oorgeneem uit CARA-Nuusbulletin Aug. '63

BELANGRIKE AANKONDIGING

Die interkerklike komitee wat opfrissingskursusse vir nie-blanke leraars reël, kondig tot sy innige spyt aan dat die kursus wat vir September-Oktober gereël is, uitgestel moes word aangesien 'n onvoldoende getal aansoekers ontvang is. Die rede hiervoor is blykbaar die feit dat daar tydens daardie tydperk te veel ander kerklike vergaderings plaasvind.

Die komitee probeer nou om die kursus vanaf 4 tot 28 Februarie 1964 in Johannesburg te hou, en alle belangstellendes word gevra om onmiddellik aan die Eresekretaris, Opfrissingskursusse vir Leraars, Posbus 97, Johannesburg, te skryf.

Die komitee sal dit hoog op prys stel as persone wat hierdie berig lees, dit onder die aandag van nie-blanke leraars sal bring.

The Toronto Congress

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Anglican Communion throughout the world depend mutually upon one another. Each province must realize that it must give to other provinces, both men and money, according to their needs, as well as receive from them.

3. There must be a far greater exchange of information between the different parts of our Communion. It is very important, for instance, for different provinces to be familiar with one another's prayer books; and if conversations with Methodists or Presbyterians are going on in, say, Australia, it will be a great help to those who are engaged in similar conversations in Canada or any other country to have copies of their reports. In order that we may become much better acquainted with one another's activities and needs, the Anglican archbishops will in future meet every year, and it is suggested that the Executive Officer of the Anglican Communion shall have assistant regional officers in every continent.

4. The Anglican Communion must engage more effectively in its mission to the world. It must never be forgotten that the Church exists primarily for the benefit of those who are still outside it. The plans suggested at Toronto are not designed to make us a cosy, self-contained community of Anglican Christians, but to enable us to discharge more effectively our share in the great task of proclaiming the Gospel of Christ to all mankind.

The significance of this report — and the meaning of the Congress — is summed up in the concluding paragraph:

“We are aware that such a programme as we propose, if it is seen in its true size and accepted, will mean the death of much that is familiar about our churches now. It will mean radical change in our priorities — even leading us to share with others at least as much as we spend on ourselves. It means the death of old isolations and inherited attitudes. It means a willingness to forego many desirable things in every church.

In substance, what we are really asking in the re-birth of the Anglican Communion, which means the death of many old things but — infinitely more — the birth of entirely new relationships. We regard this as the essential task before the Churches of the Anglican Communion now”.

Many people have asked me whether the Toronto Congress was a success. To that it is impossible to give an answer yet. Whether or not it proves to be so depends upon whether we, who were privileged to be there as your representatives, can pass on the vision it gave us, so that every province, every diocese, every parish and every individual Anglican everywhere accepts the challenge of its message, and determines, by God's Grace, to accept the demands which our membership of our Communion now makes upon us all.

* In his diocesan magazine of October 1963 the Bishop of the Church of the Province in Pretoria gave the following summary about the Anglican Congress in Toronto (Aug. 1963) which we reprint with his permission.

PRO VERITATE

REDAKSIONEEL DIE CHRISTELIKE INSTITUUT

Die stigting van die Christelike Instituut het in baie kringe (kerklik sowel as nie-kerklik) wye reaksie uitgelok waarin sowel goed as afkeurende kommentaar daarvoor gelewer is. Wat ookal die uiteindelijke oordeel gaan wees wat persone of liggame oor die Instituut gaan vel, is dit duidelik dat hier iets tot stand gekom het wat onder Gods genadige bestel, 'n groot en beslissende rol in die Christelike denke en lewe van Suid-Afrika gaan speel.

In die volgende uitgawe van ons blad hoop ons om vollediger inligting oor die doelstelling en werksaamhede van die Instituut te verstrek. Intussen wil ons kennis neem van die feit dat die Instituut as sy doel aangekondig het „om die Kerk van Christus op alle moontlike maniere te dien” en dat as basis die volgende sal geld: „Die Christelike Instituut is gefundeer op die Woord van God, op die geloof in God die Vader, in Jesus Christus die Seun, Verlosser en Here, en in die Heilige Gees, en op die oortuiging dat vir almal wat hierdie gemeenskaplike trou deel, dit wendlik en noodsaaklik is dat doelbewuste pogings aangewend word om hulle eenheid in Christus te betuig en te bevorder.” Lidmaatskap „sal oop wees vir enige Christen wat die basis en doelstellinge van die Instituut onderskryf. Lidmaatskap van die Instituut sal in geen opsig afbreuk doen aan die trou van 'n lid aan sy kerk en belydenis nie.”

Die Instituut het eerstens ontstaan uit die toenemende behoefte deur baie Christene uit die verskillende Protestantse kerke gevoel om as Christene op grond van Gods Woord as enigste rigsgnoer meer erns te maak met die soeke na die lig wat die Skrif gee op die vraagstukke wat die kerk en die Christendom raak en om die antwoorde op die vrae deur individuele sowel as gemeenskaplike getuienis aan die wêreld uit te dra. Die tweede aandrang tot die stigting was die steeds groeiende behoefte dat Christene meer bewus gemaak moet word van die wese en eise om Christelike eenheid en broederskap en dat deur gesprek en studie, gebed en aksie die aard en die gestalte van sodanige eenheid bepaal sal word.

In alles word lede opgeroep om hierdie oogmerke na te strew as lidmate van hulle onderskeie kerke. Die Instituut is dus geen nuwe kerkstigting nie (soos sommige verkeerdlik wou voorgee), dis geen „Kerkraad” of Raad van Kerke soos die Christenraad of ander Interkerklike Rade waar kerke amptelik op verteenwoordig is nie. Dit dien ook nie as vervanging van enige kerk nie maar wil juis die hoogste belange van die universele kerk van Christus en die koninkryk van God bevorder deur die lidmate van die onderskeie kerke meer bewus te maak van hulle roeping en taak as belydende Christene, veral in soverre dit die doelstellinge en algemene oogmerke van die Instituut raak.

Daarom wil die Instituut juis die gewone lidmaat betrek wat bekommerd is oor die ontoereikende getuienis van 'n verdeelde Christendom in ons land en wat opreg verlang om met Christene van ander kerke saam te spreek en te bid. Die feit dat lidmaatskap veelrassig is, is (soos die Skrif dit ook sien) heeltemal bykomstig en vloei natuurlikerwys voort uit die feit dat alle kerke in Suid-Afrika blanke sowel as nie-blanke lidmate insluit.

saak van primêre belang is dat dit Christelik is, dat dit die Woord van God as enigste norm stel, dat dit erns wil maak met die toepassing van die waarheid van die Skrif op alle terreine van die menslike lewe en dat dit die ware eenheid van die kerk van Jesus Christus wil soek en belig.

EDITORIAL A CRUSADE OF PRAYER

Materially South Africa has never had it so well as at present but spiritually and morally there are many danger signs which are a cause of deep concern to every sincere Christian. The lack of faith amongst many Christians of the transforming power of Christ, the decline in church attendance, the lessening influence of the church on society, the increase of divorces and the looseness of moral standards — these and many other factors are all signs of a process of spiritual and moral disintegration. There is lack of clear understanding of the basic causes of this spiritual decline and the fact that no united clarion call is forthcoming from the church as a whole to show the way out of this impasse tends to increase the confusion and adds to the doubt amongst many Christians whether the church will be able to bring about a decisive change in the spiritual life of the country.

We have noted with deep gratitude the call to prayer issued by the Christian Council and the appeals of individual church leaders and magazines on the Afrikaans-speaking side to make this a time of supplication to God, but we doubt whether the urgent need for such prayer action has penetrated the thinking of the average Christian.

We know from history that such times of confusion and doubt have always been the seasons of God's preparation for the renewal of his church. But men must first discover and confess their total inability to change anything or anybody through their own power before God reveals his own power and saving grace. It is such a confession of human incapability to save and serve the world that is needed today — and this is brought about by prayer and by prayer alone.

Such prayer always starts with individuals but must also be taken up by groups of Christians as the increasingly discover and acknowledge their own spiritual bankruptcy and the ineffectiveness and inadequacy of their witness to the world. Has the time not arrived for Christians of all denominations to start a prayer crusade within their own ranks? And to extend this to groups of Christians of other denominations so that we all may be gathered in united supplication and confession before the face of God?

OORDENKING

NAGMAAL EN MY BROEDER

Die Nagmaal is 'n brokkie van die groot fees van God vir sy Seun. Dit is voreers God wat feesvier om dan vir ons daar 'n plek te gee. Die fees van God is die fees van die Vol-einding. In Jesus wat die Laaste is, het die laaste gebeur en het die laaste aangebreek. Dit is vir ons netmaar versluier agter die wolke van sy koms. Hieragter is alles goed en alles reg soos wat God dit goed en reg wou hê. Daarom vier God fees en gee Hy ons op ons weg na die verlossing van ons liggame 'n brokkie van die feestelike te sien.

God vier fees asof daar geen skeiding meer is tussen God en mense en tussen mense en mense nie en ons volkome bymekaar is; asof daar geen sonde en dood en kwaad meer is nie; geen oorlog, honger, siekte, ellende, stryd en spanning meer is nie... omdat dit reeds in Jesus waar is! Dit is so omdat die liefde oorwin het... wat bewys is aan die kruis en bevestig is in sy opstanding. Sy fees is 'n fees van liefde. Nagmaal is die maaltyd van dié liefde wat alles oorwin... ook alles wat ons skei van onself, van ons broeder en van God en van sy natuur.

Hulle wat deelneem aan sy liefdesfees is reeds mense uit 'n ander wêreld, uit 'n nuwe skepping, met 'n ander burgerskap en 'n gans nuwe „politiek”. Hulle nagmaalwe is om die broeders lief te hê met die liefde van God... Waar hierdie wonder gebeur dat mense van allerlei aard, herkoms en karakter mekaar onverbreeklik liefhet met die liefde wat ken maar vergeef, daar kom die WERELD WEET DAT GOD SY SEUN GESTUUR HET.

Hieraan sal die wêreld weet !!: ... as mense mekaar liefhet met die liefde wat ALLES bedek, alles wat ons van nature en vanweë ons sondes so grondig laat verskil.

Maar ons het die Nagmaalsformulier by ons laat verbydreun en so in ons harte daar 'n streep deur getrek waar dit sê dat ons die eenheid van die broeders (wat soos die eenheid van 'n brood uit baie koringkorrels en wyn uit baie druivekorrels is) met die DAAD teenoor mekaar sal BEWYS. Die daad! Die daad! Die daad! En 'n broeder is ELKEEN

wat die wil van God doen. Die wil van GOD is dat ons GLO IN HOM WAT HY GESTUUR HET.

Elkeen wat glo! Elkeen! Elkeen! Hy is my broeder.

Die nagmaalwee wat God wil hê dat ek sal lei, wat ja, die nagmaalformulier van die gereformeerde groep van kerke aan ons voorhou, is dat ek met ELKEEN wat in Jesus glo EEN sal wees in sy liefde en dat ek dit met die DAAD sal bewys dat ek een IS met hom soos die wyn en die brood.

Hier alleen is daar niks te vrees nie. Hier alleen is daar geen gevaar nie. Hier alleen is daar 'n toekoms in die Here. Hier alleen is Suid-Afrika in God se wil. As ons dit weêreld moet ons die nagmaalformulier ook weggooi, wat sommige wat so gesteld is op die lees daarvan (so janatiek en so erg gesteld) nogtans in gees reeds lankal gedoen het. Vandaar hulle gesteldheid.

Maar GOD vra ons vandag of ons nie tradisie en sentiment, gewoonte en politiek, swaarder laat weeg het as die geloof nie. Ja seker! Dit is daarom dat die wêreld nie WEET dat God sy Seun gestuur het nie.

Laat ons ophou om langer met God se Woord wegkruiper te speel. Laat ons end lry met langer in die skermkryt te gaan met God se Waarheid. Laat ons God hoor spreek: „Wie sy broeder nie liefhet nie (en let op die Bybel kwalifiseer nie wie en hoe en waar ons broeder is nie,) het God nie geken nie.” Die broeder gee my moontlik oorvloedige rede vir aanstoot, is moontlik in sy hele sin vir my tot aanstoot maar hy glo in Jesus Christus. Daarom is hy my broeder. Daarom! Wie hierdie broeder nie liefhet met die vergewende liefde van God nie, het God, die Lewende God, die Vader van alle mense in Jesus, NOOIT GEKEN NIE.

O Here, van die Heerlikheid wat opgestaan het tot ons geregtigheid, leer ons om U te ken en om ons broeder in U te ken. Maak ons vry vir U alleen en vry vir ons broers, vry om lief te hê en vry om te glo dat hierdie geloof alleen die wêreld oorwin.

Amen.

Uit „Volbring”, September 1963.

Briewe van Lesers

DR. GEERTSEMA NA „REFORMED CHURCH OF AUSTRALIA”

Geagte Redaksie,

Vergun my, in verband met die mededeling in u blad van 15 Augustus dat u medewerker, dr. P. G. Geertsema 'n beroep aangeneem het na die Hervormde kerk in Perth, Australië, die opmerking dat hy nie aangeneem het na die Hervormde kerk nie, maar wel na die „Reformed Church of Australia” d.i. dié kerk wat 12 jaar gelede gestig is deur ds. J. van der Bom onder die tarryke Nederlandse immigrante in die land. Omdat die Presbyterian Church van Australië nie meer op die grondslag staan van die Westminster Belydenis, maar leervryheid onder die predikante voorstaan, kon die Hollanders nie by die kerk aansluit nie, maar het wel toenadering gesoek tot die Vrye Presbyteriaanse kerk, wat die gereformeerde belydenis handhaaf. Daar het selfs predikante uit die Presbyteriaanse Kerk oorgegaan na die Reformed Church omdat hulle geen vrede gehad met die toestand in hul eie kerk nie.

Die Reformed Church het tans 14 predikante, waarvan

sommige uit die Christian Reformed Church in Amerika oorgekom het; dit het 'n eie teologiese skool in Geelong en het enorme vordering gemaak. Hy staan vas op sy gereformeerde belydenis, en werk hartlik saam met ander kerke, wat hulle hou aan die Woord van God.

Die verslag van die United Presbyterian Church in die Verenigde State toon dieselfde afwyking van die belydenis en 'n toename van die liberalisme soos die kerk in Australië.

Die besluit om die Bybel uit die publieke skool te verban, is 'n parallel met dieselfde besluit van die liberale regering in Nederland in 1878, wat aldaar die stoot gegee het tot die oprigting van Christelike skole.

Hierdie moderne gees openbaar hom ook in die Wêreldraad van Kerke, waarvan die leiers ook tot die United Presbyterian Church behoort en wat die oorsaak is dat, sowel die N.G. Kerk as die Hervormde Kerk van Suid-Afrika hulle uit dié liggaam onttrek het.

Die grootste gevaar, wat die Kerk van Christus teenswoordig bedreig is die gevaar van binne, wanneer dwaalle-

raars in die kerk opstaan. Die apostel Paulus, en ook Johannes waarsku daarteen in sy briewe telkens, en veral 2 Thess. 2 : 4, wanneer die Antichris die kerk indring, die teëstander wat hom verhef bo al wat God genoem word of voorwerp van aanbidding is, sodat hy in die tempel van God sal sit en voorgee, dat hy God is.

Hierteen moet ook in u blad gewaak word.

W. Hovy

NOTICE

We wish to apologise for the late publication of the September and October issues of Pro Veritate. This was due to circumstances outside our control. From November it will appear on the 15th of each month as usual. — Editor.

KENNISGEWING

Ons wil verskoning vra vir die laat verskyning van die September en Oktober uitgawes van Pro Veritate. Dit was te wyte aan omstandighede buite ons beheer. Vanaf November sal die blad weer op die 15de van elke maand verskyn soos gewoonlik. — Eindredakteur.

RECONCILIATION :

THE WORLD'S FUNDAMENTAL NEED

EXTRACTS OF THE MODERATOR'S ADDRESS GIVEN BY THE RIGHT REV. W. M. J. LUND, B.A., OF ADELAIDE TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF SOUTHERN AFRICA, SEPTEMBER, 1963.

I want to speak to you about reconciliation. Not that human thing, where our human goodwill sometimes manages to break through barriers and divisions between individuals or groups or people; but the reconciliation that God has wrought for us in Jesus Christ.

Many are the tasks we may feel that the Church has to do in the world. But this above all is its calling: to try to lift the world's eyes off itself and its obsessions, its doubts, its fears and inadequacies, to God; not to a God who is way up in the skies in a distant heaven, but who in mercy and love is with us; to God who cares, who takes the initiative because He is not impassive and unmoved, but compassionate; whose attitude to the world is motivated by a thing called love, the nature and the magnitude of which we hardly even begin to understand: God who acts, who has already acted in Jesus Christ His Son, acted to reconcile the world to Himself. That is the world's deep and fundamental need.

At the outset I want to describe the method I will use. I have not the ability to give a reasoned theological statement, illustrated and supported by quotations from the great Christian authorities. I must be myself — I must speak as I am — as the Lord made me: the things I know and believe; the things I have learned from my own walk with God, within the framework of His Holy Word and the fellowship of His Church upon earth.

You must pardon me, therefore, a certain amount of reference to myself — it is inevitable. I cannot stand apart from the things I want to say. I am involved in them, up to the hilt, gladly and gratefully so.

The reconciliation that God hath wrought for us in Jesus Christ

I still remember clearly one of my Divinity Professors at Theological College. He was a fine, gentlemanly person. He lectured to us on the work of Christ, examining the various theories of the atonement (and the word atonement in its original meaning is in fact the word reconciliation) and the different forms in which they had been stated during the long history of the Church.

The so-called modernism was in its hey-day; its vigorous mind fearlessly examining everything we believed so as to try to sort out the wheat from the chaff. Its chill breath sometimes blew away a lot of wheat with the chaff, yet it performed a real service. It made the Church look at the implications of the way it was stating some of its beliefs:

Jesus Christ, it had in fact taught, gave Himself as a sacrifice to an angry God to satisfy His honour, His justice and His wrath. How could you escape the conclusion that, no matter how you put it, Jesus Christ was gentle, self-sacrificing and wonderful; but God was demanding and grim more like a tyrant and a worldly potentate than the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Again, Christ's victory was depicted as His being thrown as bait to the devil, who was tricked, took the bait and so defeated. So the atonement was made something crude.

Again, faith tended to become the acceptance of a formula and the emphasis seemed to be on accepting the right formula rather than on a person-to-person encounter with that the Living Spirit, the Son of God.

Salvation had chiefly to do with not going to hell after death, and with having one's soul saved from the grip of the devil, and there was little reference to the desperate needs and injustices and sufferings of the men and women of the here and now.

All this had to be faced; deep heart-searching was inevitable and right.

So I listened to my professor as he accomplished the work of demolition.

But I wondered.

Perhaps I misunderstood him. He was such a fine Christian man. More than likely my own mind and spirit were very confused and one-sided. But, it seemed to me, all that was left of Christ on the Cross was a picture of Holy, suffering love, striking home to our hearts and consciences in such a way that we are persuaded to turn from sin and be reconciled to God. This of course it was. But was that all?

The old theories had been crudely stated. But were they not, in their fumbling, inadequate way, trying to say something profound, something essential? Something that is the heart of the Gospel?

I looked again at what was left after the demolition. The only sin with which the death of Christ was connected, was the sin of the Pharisees, the Chief Priests, Pilate, the Roman soldiers and the crowd who cried "Crucify Him." He did not suffer for me except to be a vision, an example, a challenge, a picture of Holy, suffering love.

God's love. Yes!

But it was distant, remote. And the focus was on what man is challenged to do; what you and I are challenged to do, not on what God has done. And life has taught me since, what I believe the Church has always said, that what man does, or attempts to do, except as a response to realising what God in His amazing love has done for us in our deep need, tends to be shaky, hollow, and in the end spiritually corrupting.

New light on Christ's Resurrection

For some years I was out of the Ministry. Shortly before I re-entered it, I came across one of James Stewart's books, in which I met for the first time the new emphasis on the resurrection of Christ. It was indeed a new and joyous light breaking. The focus was clearly and strongly on what God has done, on the victory that He had gained in raising Jesus Christ from the dead. Christ is the victor over sin and death. This was good news. This was the Gospel again. Here was the living meaning of the promise of Jesus after His resurrection: "Lo, I am with you even unto the end of the world."

Here was the reality of St. Paul's oft-reiterated words about our being "in" Christ and He "in" us. Here was a shaft of light that made Pentecost and the coming and the work of the Holy Spirit live and throb. Jesus

Christ, the Risen, Living Lord, in all His warmth and power, His Glory and Love, is with us through His Spirit in this work-a-day world, this often difficult, often confusing, often also joyous world. We are not alone. We are no longer shut in with our weak endeavours and sense of failure and impotence. By God's permission, yea by God's command, our eyes are to be on Christ, His Victorious, Risen, Living, Ever Present Son, who is mighty to help us to overcome.

And yet there was something lacking; there was something more to come. Instinctively I reached out to it. Even preached it but unsurely; with the unsureness of one who looks to other, more learned, more mature Christians for confirmation of his own fumbings, lest he be after all confused and deluded. Of course I did not look in vain.

All this burst of the new light of the resurrection seemed a bit like reading a great love story of which some vital chapters are missing. To be a resurrection, there had to be a death. What of the Crucifixion? The sufferings of our Lord? Here, all through the history of the Christian Church, apart from the somewhat grotesque formulations of theory, has been the deep and poignant centre of its faith. In its heart the Church found at the Cross, the redeeming, forgiving, merciful, something that broke hard barren hearts, that lifted great burdens of fear and sin, and set free great tides of forgiveness. It was not merely the acceptance of a formula. The Church may not always have emphasised the resurrection enough. But as the Church came to the Cross it knew that here the meaning of Christ's life, the meaning of all life came to a focus and was made plain. And in the resurrection God would put His own stamp of approval on that meaning.

He is Risen. Blessed be God for this. Christ is Risen and with us for ever and ever. But He who comes to us and is with us now, who rose from the dead in victory, He was on the cross. He suffered. He prayed. He died.

St. Paul said "He died for me". The Church has said so ever since. I believe it means something; something tremendous. The New Testament says "He died for our sins", implying that our Lord's agony was intimately connected with our sin and its forgiveness; that in answer to our faith there comes out of the event of the crucifixion and the resurrection, that blessed gift of a clean sheet before God, the gift of "righteousness"; and with it the beginning of a new way of life, a reborn life where a new heart, in which God's laws are written, exerts itself by the power of the indwelling Spirit.

And now to come to the depth of the matter: St. Paul in his letter to the Corinthians, Chapter 5, speaks about how God has reconciled us in Christ, and then suddenly, in a terrible sentence, he plunges into an awful abyss when he says of Christ: "For God hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin: that we might be the righteousness of God in Him".

Before this awful reality I for one, can do no other than fall upon my knees and say: "He did it also for me. He died for me — and for all like me — my bretheren, our bretheren — for mankind".

We do not understand the mysteries

of God's great works. But one wonders: is this saying closely linked with the terrible haunting, almost despairing cry of Jesus on the Cross: "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" Is this the abyss? The awful identification with us and our sin? — So that He who is Risen and is now ever with us, triumphant, victorious, can walk into our lives as we believe, repent and surrender, and forgive us and make us new, righteous with God's righteousness?

In the stark, hammerblow sentences of the Apostle's Creed, there are these words about the Son of God: "He descended into Hell". — Whatever may be the meaning of this great mystery, there is a hell, a private, personal hell which each of us has known; a hell whose deepest bitterness is loneliness, having lost God. Created by our own sinful independence of God, our trying to live and walk our own way, often aggravated by the sins of others; and Jesus Christ who comes to us, the Risen, Victorious Lord, has plumbed it all. He has tasted the hell of loneliness; He has dealt with it, suffered for it, redeemed it, and because of this He is able to forgive, to heal, to help us see the truth and repent; to rescue and to make of us Sons of God, reconciled with God's own reconciliation which He hath wrought for us in Christ our Lord.

Reconciliation and human relationships

But this Gospel, this reconciliation, immediately involves us in relationships with other people. For the nature of this reconciling love of God in Christ is that He loves the whole world.

So far I have spoken almost exclusively of our relationship with God. But nothing could be further from my mind and intent than to give the impression that the work of Christ for our salvation and reconciliation has to do with, as it were a soul suspended in isolation coming before God. That would be a complete travesty. My relationship with God is inextricably bound up with my relationship with other people, for this essence of God, this Love (for as the Bible tells us: God is Love) refers to every single human being, the fellow next door, the neighbour, the brother, the ones in our own home and outside it, the people among whom we live, the people of the land in which we live.

The most tragic and vicious result of our independence of God, our sin, is to be seen in broken, hurtful, twisted, barren human relationships. God made us to be warm-hearted, to care, for says the Bible, we are all made in His image, and His image is no material, physical one. It is a Spiritual one, it is Love. And sin makes us lonely, frightened, hard, self-centered and lacking in understanding. Our saddest failures are the failures in our human relationships. This is surely the deepest grief and loneliness that comes to us human beings: — our failure to mean something lovely, something fine, something dependable, something loved to other people.

Far from Jesus Christ dealing with us in isolation, it is precisely at this point that healing of relationships begins and love begins to flow like a fountain in a desert land, for we are being invaded by the very love of God.

Religion that focuses a man's eyes on his own salvation, causes him to disregard those around him and fails to stir his conscience and his heart about his human relationships has got away from Jesus Christ. Even more subtly wrong is the suggestion that he must go and set right wrong relationships so that he can get right with God. Is that not merely using other people to try to get himself right? When self ought to die before the Holy Spirit's conviction of sin, and he repent and be forgiven, and find a true love, and then go, in love and in obedience to God, the broken relationships may be healed? I must also confess that I feel suspicious of a religion that makes a man feel in any way superior to the unconverted. At its centre is self, and a religious point of view and not Jesus Christ. As I behold Jesus walking amongst people I see Him coming to the sinners, those without the pale, with a genuine love. Thus He gave them new hope and made them turn from their wandering ways and put their trust in Him, and they were saved.

The meaning of this message for South Africa

One might profitably spend much time discussing these truths, but this evening I want, especially, to proceed with them towards the question of relationships and reconciliation in this country of ours.

Is there also message of reconciliation for this land in which we live? This Southern Africa which we love, with its many peoples, its tensions, its unsolved problem of relationships, — its history of triumphs and glory — and of many hurts and wounds, wounds of the mind and the spirit even more than of the body, this place of growing anxieties, this South Africa where fear is deep-rooted and causes far-reaching damage; where prejudices, the more terrible because they have their roots in the subconscious mind, bind and blind, and cause men to commit and rationalise injustices and to dull the conscience that ought to be disturbed by such things.

Is there a message for this country, or is all this of which we have spoken work-a-day realities and pain and need of this land?

The answer is quite clear from the Word of God. The centre of our faith is not a message but a person. And that person, Jesus Christ, is right here in South Africa. A man once wrote a book entitled "Christ of the Indian Road". For us He is the Christ of the South African Road, the South African Veld, its villages, its towns and its people — this is where Christ is for you and me; in the daily relationships, both sweet and difficult, with the people whom every day we meet, in the midst of every day's toil and grind and joy; this is where Jesus Christ is. This is where we must and will find Him if with all our hearts we seek; for He, with all the amazing reconciling love of God, dwells here.

Not in holy feelings, aspirations and worship in His Father's house, alone, are we to seek and find Him, but with the whole personality rising up in faith to accept the revealed word: "Lo, I am with you even to the end of the world". Here in this South Africa of the year of our Lord 1963, Jesus Christ the Son of God is, and here, and not in some other place, He is sufficient for you and for me, for this is where He has called us to live.

Two realities to be faced

If you are to interpret Jesus Christ honestly in terms of South Africa, it seems to me there are two things that you must face.

(1) The first thing is that God loves, with this same compassionate reconciling love which in Christ was reconciling the world unto Himself, every single man, woman and child in this land of ours, whatever their race, whatever their colour, yea, even whatever their creed may be. There is not a single one excluded. If I seek God's forgiving merciful love in Christ for my-

self, then this other man that seeks is linked to me through this strongest most potent, most meaningful of all loves. He is my brother. And the whole trend of the teaching of Jesus is that, if at that point I close my heart to him, I close my heart to the love of God. And whatever religion I may think I have thereafter, is a fallacy, an unreal hypocritical fake, for it lacks the one thing which alone can redeem — the love of God in Jesus Christ.

(2) And the second thing which you must face is that Jesus Christ does not stand untouched by the needs and the sorrows and the sufferings as well as the joys of everyone in this country.

Do you remember how He once said that in the judgment, He would say to some who felt themselves unworthy of heaven that they were indeed to enter in because they had given Him water to drink when He was thirsty, food when He was hungry, clothing when He was naked, and visited Him in prison and so forth, and they said "But when did we do this?" and He said "What you have done to the least of these my brethren, you have done unto me".

He cannot stand dispassionate towards the sufferings of men. He bears it on His own heart, this Jesus Christ of the South African road, whom you and I desire and must meet. And to meet Him and to find Him and to be reconciled to God through Him is to be reconciled with our brother, to be involved in that same compassionate love. St. Paul says, with his own tremendous insight: "The Holy Spirit sheds abroad the love of God in our hearts".

Two factors bedevilling our life

There are two things that have bedevilled South Africa's history and South African life. Though they may seem opposites they are in fact deeply and closely linked. They are the very opposite of God's reconciling love in Jesus Christ.

(1) The first of these two things is hardness and sentimentality. You find them living together in the same human heart and life. A man will be sentimental about some people and hard towards others, and this happens all through the South African situation. Some people are sentimental about part of the white race and hard towards the non-white. Some are sentimental towards the non-white and hard towards others of or the whole of the white race. They both spring from self — unredeemed self-centredness in the human heart. The sentimentalist is at heart a self-indulgent person. He loves to indulge his pleasant feelings. He refuses to face the fact of sinfulness and fallenness in human nature. He closes his eyes to real people, preferring to see only his own picture of them, thus making them what they were never meant to be; thus stifling before it is born, any possibility of real love. If he looked at people as they are, he would have to face the cost of real love, for people have deep moral, spiritual mental as well as material needs. Having been helped, he would then love and really try to help. But it is easier to be sentimental and thus falsely feed his idea of himself as a philanthropist, even as a Christian.

The person who is hard (remember often the very same person) is hard because, somewhere, he is afraid of his own selfish vested interests being touched. He is hard because he is guilty of selfishness before God, guilty of lovelessness. He beholds human sinfulness and since he is himself unrepentant and un-forgiven, he knows no compassion and is afraid and rises to his own defence with this protection of hardness.

And both hardness and sentimentality try to disguise themselves under all kinds of high-sounding phraseology in our land. And they are the complete opposite of the love of God, for He sees people as they really are, in all their deep need and weakness and sin, and gives Himself in Jesus Christ His Son upon the cross to die for them that they might have freedom, new life, eternal life in Christ.

Do you remember the man who

came to Jesus, blind? And Jesus touched his eyes and He asked "What do you see?" and the man said, "I see men as trees walking". And then the second touch and Jesus asked "What do you see?" and now he was seeing men clearly. This is the mark of the real love of God in our hearts. It sees men just as they are, with all their needs, and there is no hardness and no putting on of sentimental blinkers, but a true compassion.

Our ideologies

(2) Another thing which bedevils us in South Africa is our ideologies. The danger for us is that we get so absorbed in and excited about our ideologies that we forget Jesus Christ and His compassion and we try to fit and push human beings into our plans, and the little people tend to get ground down.

Let us acknowledge that this is surely one of the most difficult countries in the world in which to govern. Let us not talk and criticise too easily. Far rather pray more than we do. Let us not be unappreciative of much being done for the needy. Thank God for it. Let us also acknowledge that there are deliberate attempts by those who don't really care, but want to destroy, to confuse issues and to spread wrong information. I remember in the early days of the last war, hearing Dr. Mac-Millan, my senior here in this Church, saying "In wartime the first casualty is truth". It is also true in the cold war and in the political conflict that goes on in our country.

Truth is often very difficult to get at.

Yet again and again the evidence persists that there is injustice in our land; that the little people, who cannot stand up for themselves are being hurt, deeply hurt. That family life is being broken up, that people of one race are being pushed around willy-nilly and often with great hardship, just for the sake of another race.

I do not want to condemn. Who of us is able to condemn? We seem to me too easily to shout accusations and condemnations at each other in this land, often ill-informed and without first of all honestly having asked ourselves the question: "What would I do if I had all those circumstances and difficulties to deal with?" No, I do not want to condemn. But the Church of Christ must warn.

Do you remember the incident when Jesus took a child and set it before men, and surely that child was the symbol of all the little people who can't stand up for themselves, and He said "Woe be unto the man who is a cause of offence to one of these little ones. It were better for him that a mill-stone were tied round his neck and he were cast into the bottom of the sea."

Jesus never condemned sinners. He welcomed them and in His love they found something that made them repent and He forgave them. But to the people who refused to be compassionate, who hardened their hearts to others, who refused to let His love enter into their hearts for needy humanity, to them He spoke grave and terrible warnings.

Jesus once said: "If you come to the altar with your gift" and for those of us who have known Christ, or call ourselves by His name, surely that altar is none other than our approach to God through Jesus Christ — "If you come to the altar with your gift, and there remember that your brother has aught against you" — in other words God's Spirit is making you aware of things you have been ignoring, God is showing you somewhere you have not forgiven him — if there you remember that your brother hath aught against you, go first and be reconciled with him and then come and give your gift". And that does not mean that you have to leave God and go first and then go back to God. If ever God truly goes with a man, if ever Christ is present with a man. He is present with that man who knows he has done his brother a harm and in repentance and sorrow goes to make right as far as

he can and to be reconciled to his brother.

True act of reconciliation needed

We have all been involved in it, one way or another. We all bear some measure of guilt for the sorrow of South Africa. Our self-righteous criticism of others is often very little more than blindness. But is the time not overdue for a true act of reconciliation? Is it not time for us in an honest humble Christian Spirit to seek out where there is injustice and avoidable hurt that we may know where our brother hath aught against us and may set it right and be reconciled to him? Surely such a courageous act, such a Christian act would do more to heal and to draw together the forces of goodwill in our land than anything that we have yet done?

This is a land with a history. A history of much that is fine, but also a history of great hurt. All sections have had a part in it and all sections have, one way and another, suffered from it. We say "forget the past". That is right. But it is not always just as easy as that. We accuse each other and nothing comes of it, for all it does is to increase the hurt and suspicion. Jesus Christ says "If you come to the altar and if there you remember, if there you realise, if the Holy Spirit brings truth to your heart, that either in attitude, or in word or in thought, or in action you have hurt or harmed or despised your brother, whatever his race or language, political outlook, then go, and the Lord goes with you, and be reconciled and then come back and know the real glory of the love of God that was in Jesus Christ reconciling the world unto Himself.

This is not idealistic nonsense. This is not the Church with its head up in the clouds. This thing has happened in our land. It has happened many many times, for this is the work of God. I venture to give you two personal illustrations, for one reason only, that they help to bring reality into our thought.

Our marriage as illustration

Sixty-five years ago my father and my wife's father were involved, on opposite sides, in that tragic conflict of our country, known as the Anglo-Boer War. Yet God, in His Holy Wisdom and love, has brought a daughter of one and the son of another into marriage. Of this marriage I dare not say anything less than what the D.R.C. Marriage Order says: "God getulig hiermee dat Hy vandag nog na elkeen as 't ware, met sy hande sy vrou lei". Freely translated this means "God hereby witnesses that even today He leads, as it were, to each man his wife". This, in God's mercy, has been a very happy marriage. It has been that, not because of human romantic love, but because by God's grace, Jesus Christ means more to each of us than we mean to each other.

I have seen marriages across this barrier suffering and going on suffering under severe strain, for there has not been this primary loyalty to, and love for, and dependence on God in Christ His Son. I have seen the one try to Afrikaansise the other, or the other trying to Anglicise the one and the resulting sadness and tension: one personality crushed; the other corrupted because love is denied and sinned against. No, by the Grace of God, the past has been faced step by step before God, and His reconciling love and mercy have had their way and out of the past God has created for Himself and for His children, something lovely and true and holy.

And the second illustration:

My first childhood memories are of the Southern Free State, and there I lived my early life. I took in, almost with my mother's milk, the deep and far-reaching prejudices of race and colour that are so strong in this land. Thus I grew up and thus I was. And then came Jesus Christ the Lord, walking into my life and with Him has

D. H. Rubinstein*

Private and Public Morality

Why is it that in private conversations one can secure assent and bold statements on contentious subjects, which assent and forthright opinions do not seem to be forthcoming when opportunity is provided to publicly take a stand? Perhaps private and small group conversations are merely a method of testing one's ideas? Perhaps it is not pure rationalization that accounts for the oft heard, "I agree with you completely, but the methods being used do not seem wise..." or, "I agree with you entirely, but it seems to me the time is not yet ripe..." To be sure, many a good cause has been damaged by a bull-in-the-china-shop approach or by lack of proper spadework to provide the necessary foundations on which a sound structure could be built. But there are those ventures which would breathe the rarified atmosphere beyond conventional (and shall we say it — "sub-Christian") morality. These by their very nature demand a boldness of approach and an intensity of commitment which must be prepared to serve as a vanguard well in advance of the eddying masses of men. "Not the right way..." and "The time is not ripe..." may sometimes be legitimate criticisms but when used in the case of such venturing, one is entitled to question whether this represents a balanced criticism or an evasive rationalization.

How can one account for the gulf between private affirmation and public witness? Let us ignore the instances where public utterance and private opinion are greatly at variance. With the exception of the field of politics, whose peculiar genius is too often characterized by just such a dichotomy, this fortunately occurs but rarely. The more common phenomenon is that of private affirmation and public silence. Why this willingness to substitute mass judgment for personal conviction? For silence is participation! If the history of the rise and fall of National Socialism and the ensuing period of shame and guilt in Germany has taught us anything, it has powerfully demonstrated that silence is participation.

By silence and apparent endorsement of prevailing mass opinion one does gain the security of "incognito" and the social acceptance which attaches to conformity. By voicing convictions which are not customary and may well, for that reason, be unpopular, one stands revealed, identified, vulnerable, risking alienation from the mass. (Let it be recognized that in some societies the degree of alienation and the severity of social sanctions which may result are very great. Ours is such a society.) Yet this is the hazard of leadership, this is the price of progress. Until an individual or small group has achieved that degree of conviction and that maturity of purpose to wean itself from such dependence upon mass approval and from the fear of severing this umbilical cord there can be but little advance amongst the indistinguishable mass of men.

Our Lord's example

It is quite natural for us to desire the approbation of our fellows, and to a degree this is necessary as a test of our relevance, but as Christians we are called upon to be transformed to something other than "natural" conformers. At the very outset of his earthly ministry Our Lord faced this temptation of the natural desire for worldly acclaim and approbation. He responded, "Thou shalt serve the Lord thy God and Him only shalt thou serve." Even the enemies of Jesus, as they sought to trap him, recognized that he refused to be shackled by his desire for acceptance and approval:

The formation of the Christian Institute has provided the basis for some interesting discussions on moral and philosophical questions. Amongst them is the perplexing problem of the discrepancy between private and public morality.

"Teacher we know that you are sincere and that you teach the way of God honestly and fearlessly; you do not court human favour" (Matth. 22 : 16 Moffatt). One of man's greatest temptations is to do that which is pleasing to his fellows; our chief concern should be to earn the "Well done thou good and faithful servant", of our Lord, not the approval of our fellows.

Attitude of individual and group towards injustice

Another aspect of this dichotomy was recently discussed in the Christian Recorder. The Recorder quoted James Sellers: "Men will uphold and sanctify injustices when they operate as groups, injustices they often will not countenance as individuals." They apparently agreed with Mr Seller's prescription for this diagnosis: "To insist upon an individualistic approach to morality when evils are wrought by groups is to fall into naïve illusion."

At the risk of being "naïve" this writer would prefer to side with Bishop Pardue, who in his book "A Right Judgment In All Things" says "Christianity is a personal adventure in making decisions and taking action," and with Dietrich Bonhoeffer in his "Cost of Discipleship" (p. 48) "Through the call of Jesus men become individuals. They are compelled to decide and that decision can only be made by themselves"... "Whenever a group, be it large or small, prevents us from standing alone before Christ, whenever such a group raises a claim of immediacy it must be hated for Christ's sake." (p. 86)

Christians dare not regard a group as anything but an aggregate of individuals. This is not to contend that masses of men in aggregate do not exhibit at times characteristics which are not the sum total of the individual components present. But Christians, of all people, must hold fast to the concept of individual accountability and responsibility and to the validity of the "leaven" working to affect the whole mass. Otherwise they must brand as irrelevant the earthly ministry of Jesus. His ministry was to individuals; true he did speak to groups, but he affected lives and produced change in individuals and through them affected the society at large. Similarly our task today, in our age of conformity and relative ethics, is to encourage that true maturity of which Paul spoke (Eph. 4 : 13) an order that we may be more concerned to be God pleasers rather than men pleasers, a term Paul uses in that same epistle.

Basically this anomalous rift between private judgment and public pronouncement can be seen as a religious dilemma. The superficial (sinful?) aspect of man's nature leading him toward conformity with the "mass", the truer aspect of his sensitivity revealing itself in the private or small group setting when the pressures of conformity and the threats of non-conformity are removed.

In her study, "Faith and Freedom", Barbara Ward states this in different terms: "Nor is it easy to conceive of any means other than religious faith for preserving a genuine division of power in society; for if

man is no more than a creature of his environment and a product of his social order, on what foundations can he base claims and loyalties which go beyond the social order? From what source can he draw the strength to resist the claims of society? To what justice can he appeal beyond the dictates of the state? The state is by nature so powerful and compelling and voracious an institution that the citizen, standing alone against it, is all but powerless. He needs counter institutions, above all the counter institution of the Church, which of all organized bodies alone can look Caesar in the face and claim a higher loyalty." (Lest this quotation be interpreted as "taking a swipe" at any political regime, let it be said that this article is interested in the terms "state" and "Caesar", the latter as a caricature of the former, only as the institutionalized expressions of mass man in any given modern situation.)

Bonhoeffer's answer to the dilemma

In "The Cost of Discipleship" Bonhoeffer puts the dilemma as he develops the Biblical injunction to be "wise as serpents and harmless as doves": "How difficult it is to draw the line with certainty between spiritual wisdom and worldly astuteness... Who is there to let us know when we are running away from suffering through cowardice, or running after it through temerity?" His answer — the Word! "Only the truth of that word (the word of Jesus) will enable him to discern what is wise. But to deviate from the truth for the sake of some prospect or hope of our own (the hope of avoiding social sanctions?) can never be wise however slight the deviation may be... It will always be true that the wisest course for the disciples is always to abide solely by the Word of God in all simplicity." (p. 190-1)

The dilemma is a religious one. Given: the nature of man and his susceptibility to environmental pressures toward conformity, and the counter pressure (unless we are to assume a "saved society") of religion to enable man to stand alone, must we assume that religion is inept or irrelevant? The initial statement of the problem as a discrepancy between private and public morality would seem to indicate that once again the Church is on the defensive. And is not this perhaps the clue to the matter, that the Church and individual Christians are reacting to situations rather than leading the way?

As our sociologist friends might state it: In any given culture there are certain independent and certain dependent variables; certain dominant assertive aspects of culture, certain adaptive aspects of culture, and invariably there is a culture lag between them.

For far too long the Church has been prepared to tag along as a dependent, adaptive aspect of modern culture rather than firmly leading with "Thus saith the Lord!" Witness the pitiable present situation in the American Church in the area of racial integration, the British Church in the field of sexual morality, and in South

Africa where business, political and humanitarian organizations have taken firm leads in stating the need for justice and a sense of human dignity. The clamant demands of our material culture, of the political and economic aspects of our life, have been vigorously asserted, and these have ruthlessly forged ahead. The Church, symbolic of our spiritual and moral culture, has too often been so occupied with its divisions and its institutionalized existence to do more than try to "tag along" rather than independently asserting its own claims on the lives of its people and on the nation. It has too often been concerned about what men would think, and perhaps not often enough concerned with what God might think.

Let us hope that the formation of the Christian Institute is but a reflection of the uneasiness that Christians of many persuasions feel about this unhappy reversal of roles in our society and that they shall be enabled, through God's guidance, to help the Church to undertake its forthright, independent role of serving God and the community.

Let us not lose sight of our problem as a distinctly individual one, one in which man may find in his faith and in his church the courage and support he needs to stand alone before God, unconcerned for the approbation of his fellows, though not unconcerned for his fellows.

This problem, this ambivalence that too often exists between private conviction and public action is symptomatic of a disease. To repress one's deep convictions in order to conform to societal norms leads to the death or maiming of conscience, or to disease. Classical psychiatry has represented the etiology of mental illness as repression — anxiety — unsatisfactory avoidance response — disease. Although it does not fit the classical conception, there is a whole new generation of practicing psychiatrists who agree with Dr. O. H. Mowrer when he says, "If as now seems increasingly likely, what most often gets repressed is man's moral rather than his biological strivings, then the undoing of repressions is pre-eminently a moral enterprise..." (p. 572 Learning Theory and Personality Dynamics) "It now seems highly probable that although Freud was right about the nature of symptoms and the necessity of repression for the occurrence of anxiety, he was wrong in his assumption concerning the direction of repression.

Many sources of present evidence indicate that most — perhaps all — neurotic human beings suffer, not because they are unduly inhibited as regards their biological drives, but because they have disavowed and repudiated their own moral striving." (ibid p. 568)

Thus if the problem stated is fairly widespread (and common experience seems to indicate it), then it would appear that the Church has some important therapeutic work to do in an area in which it alone is competent: a task it can not perform by a lame "me too" approach, but by the bold proclamation of "Thus saith the Lord!" Not that all sections of the Church will interpret scripture and its the church's role in the same way, but the "success" of the Pentecostals is to a degree an indication that people are anxious for the Church to declare itself more forthrightly. The Church can, in fact, supply the support and set the standards which will encourage its sons and daughters to declare themselves openly, to witness a good confession — at any cost!

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Mr J. C. M. Mbata*

AFRICAN NATIONALISM AND THE CHRISTIAN FAITH

This then is the point at which the West met Africa: the Africa which in 1963 boasts numerous independent states; the Africa whose sons and daughters are acquitting themselves creditably today as doctors, nurses, teachers, engineers, etc., in some of the best institutions in Europe and America; the Africa that has begun to make its impact in the assemblies of the world; a continent that may yet hold the balance between East and West.

The Bible and rapid communication as transforming factors

Two things have, more than anything else, transformed the lives, the attitudes, the aspirations and hopes of the people of this once dark continent: these are the giant strides that have been taken in the development of the means of communication, and the Bible.

Some one has said that the early missionary movement developed along with and, in some senses as part of, the expansion, political, cultural and economic, of the white races. This linking of the White man's ways with Christianity in the minds of the Africans is one of the problems that confront the Church in Africa today. In many respects, the history of colonialism in Africa has not been a happy one: it is a record of the suppression of any sense of human dignity and self-expression in the subject people. The bearers of western culture were white; they professed Christianity and yet often showed no readiness to share the good things of life with the African majority among whom they had settled. Today, the most powerful motive force behind African nationalism is the reaction against white domination. The struggle of the African people to free themselves is the focal point of unity — an essential ingredient of nationalism everywhere. The struggle is likely to get progressively more bitter, and many Christians, both White and

The nationalism which has begun to rear its head in Africa is the product of numerous influences and trends. At the end of the 19th century, the powers of Europe found themselves controlling millions of people on the continent of Africa whose progress in a material sense was centuries behind their own. The man of Africa carried his burdens on his head; he had not found it necessary to reduce his language to writing. He had no currency and no external trade, except perhaps slaves and ivory. For clothes he was content to wear bark cloth, hides and skins. His language had no words for a whole range of what were commonplace objects and concepts in the culture of the west — things like table, fork, a-quarter-to-three, a pound of meat, etc.

Black, may "get hurt" in the process — even if not necessarily in a physical sense.

African nationalism and independent churches

African nationalism made a bid to challenge the Church in this country as early as the 18th century. It derived its inspiration from the Negro in America who at that time was seized with a race consciousness that made him want to govern himself in religious matters. This movement culminated in the establishment of the first Negro Church in 1787. Following on this, African leaders in this country felt awakening in them a desire for a purely African Church. In America the movement had been greeted with great enthusiasm by the Negro people, and its success was assured from the beginning. The Africans were filled with hope, and felt that the innovation could not but succeed in this country also. They began to campaign for a national religious exodus from the European-managed churches.

A number of tribal churches, such as the Tembu Church of South Africa and the African Bakgatla Church, be-

gan to spring up; but two men, both of them ministers of the Methodist Church, came forward with a much bigger vision. The Revd. M. Mokone and the Revd. J. M. Dwane visualised a church which would be national in scope and character, "interpreting the African's religious feelings, fulfilling his aspirations towards self-government and providing opportunities for the exercise of his powers of initiative and leadership". The Revd. Mokone seceded from the Methodist Church in 1892 in protest against colour discrimination and formed the Ethiopian Church. He was joined in 1898 by the Revd. J. M. Dwane. The slogan for this new movement was "Africa for the Africans".

Their banner was inscribed with the words "Ethiopia shall stretch forth her hands to God". The two ministers sought affiliation with the Negro movement, and as a result of the visit of Negro Bishop, named Turner to this country union was effected, and what has become known as the African Methodist Episcopal Church came into being. This has remained to this day as the largest and most progressive of the Non-White churches in this country. It is significant that certain members of the original Ethiopian Church felt that affiliation with the American Negro Church was still collaboration with foreigners. They refused to join the new alliance, and have remained as the Ethiopian Church to this day.

Ethiopianism and Zionism

The movement snowballed. Thousands of people have since left the European-governed churches, and one of the features of South Africa today is the multiplicity of its separatist churches. There are those whose primary reason for secession is Ethiopianism. Their basic cry is "Africa for the Africans", and their express motive is to rid themselves of white domination in religious matters. There is yet a large section comprising numerous small groups whose distinguishing feature is Zionism. While they are not expressly nationalist in orientation, they have found that they can support many of the traditional African beliefs and practices from sections of the Old Testament. The Africanist element is therefore not altogether absent from their motives. Indeed, with the political awakening that is taking place, this element is assuming bigger proportions. These Zionists regard their leaders as prophets, and are absolutely loyal to them. Some days, some "prophet" may feel moved to assume the role of a Moses.

Even more serious is the fact that these Zionist sects look with contempt upon the orthodox Christian churches. They take the injunctions of the Old Testament seriously and literally. To them, the acid test is whether things do or do not agree with the patent meaning of the scriptures. The presuppositions and commentaries of learned theologians have no place in their sche-

me of things. They are aware that many White people passively ignore, and in some cases even repudiate, the teaching of the Bible. The inconsistencies between what is practised and what is taught by those of the West who call themselves Christians only help to destroy any respect which these people might have for the morals and culture of the West. In this they are in agreement with the more sophisticated of the break-away churches which claim that missionaries came to Africa as agents of western imperialism.

The picture we have just painted may apply to South Africa specifically; but, put in the context of developments in the rest of Africa, it takes on a more enhanced complexion. The Africa of yesterday is different from the Africa of today. History is indeed made in seconds, and it is inevitable that the reasons which prompted Revd. Mokone and Revd. Dwane to leave the White man's churches in the 19th century, while remaining basically the same, may be considerably reinforced by other factors today. The World Council of Churches recognised this fact when, in the statement it prepared in 1959, it said: "The specific task in the light of the present situation is to concentrate on a different form of nationalism in a different phase of history in the areas of rapid social change, especially in Asia and Africa."

The beginnings of most forms of nationalism in Africa are to be found in the desire of the people to discover and express themselves and to get the respect hitherto denied them. In practice, this means a common fight by the subordinate group to free itself from alien political domination and discrimination. In this phase, pride in the things that belong traditionally to the group is very evident. Where it is dormant, it is deliberately fostered by the leaders to create national sentiment. We see it in our country in the wearing of traditional dress on certain occasions, in spite of the fact that, unlike their compatriots to the North, the Africans in the South do not have a recognised form of national dress. While this phase of nationalism may be fraught with unpleasant possibilities from the Christian point of view, it is capable of direction so that dislike of domination does not degenerate into hatred of the dominant group. Fortunately for us in South Africa this form of direction is still possible — although for how long it will continue to be possible is another question.

Revival of ancient cultures and religious practices

Beyond this lies a second and more dangerous phase, the course of which is largely determined by what has gone on before and by the intensity of the spirit of nationalism. This phase can come with the attainment of independence, as in the case of Ghana, or in the course of the struggle for independence or freedom from domination, as in the rise of Mau Mau in Kenya. This phase is characterised by a revival of ancient cultures and religious practices stimulated by a desire to counteract the influence of western culture, or as much of it as can be dispensed with — and alas, Christianity is not proving indispensable, as is shown by the behaviour of the Western man himself. Bishop Newbigin says: "Western man has, on the whole, lost belief in the validity and finality of the revelation around which his culture originally grew up."

This phase can be the most destructive for Christianity, and it represents the challenge that African Nationalism poses for those who call themselves Christians. It is also in this context

RECONCILIATION

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come, step by step, through the years a transformation. In time God led me into a multi-racial Church. Here were opportunities and indeed necessities of meeting my brethren of other races in the Church of Christ. And He has given me close and valued friends amongst them, who have been to me a bridge across these chasms, these barriers with which I was born. And I thank God for all this great enrichment that He has brought to me. Here in Christ the Living One, the Lord, who died for us and rose again, is the reconciliation with God, and it is offered to us, and in it our reconciliation with each other. And it is offered for every man and for every woman in this land of ours. And let no falsehood cloud this truth. Let no man say "I belong to Christ" if he refuses to be reconciled, for he is false, he speaketh not the truth.

"The so-and-so Afrikaner", the "so-and-so Rooinek", the "so-and-so Kafir"; "the so-and-so Indian". We have all heard such words, we all know the attitudes and feelings which they represent — feelings which are the real viciousness and evil that perpetuate so much of our division, sin and confusion in this land. They thwart reconciliation: they keep people in camps of misunderstanding; they are excused with high-sounding phrases: they are even gilded to look like holy loyalties, but they are the works of hell, and they still live in many church people. They are still in many Presbyterians. They are part of the hell that

forced from the lips of the Son of God, the cry "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me". Persist in them and you persist in darkness and the works of hell. — Repent, confess, turn from them, fly from them to Christ and you will find forgiveness, and cleansing and reconciling with God and with your neighbour.

Here is the suffering of God and here is the victory.

And the Church, the Body of Christ? If ever there are words which need careful and prayerful thought by Christians, these are such words: The Church the Body of Christ. What the Body feels, Christ feels: What Christ feels, the Body feels. — But does it?

Christ's chosen, living, body of reconciliation; These divisions ought to lie like a burden of agony on our heart. Instead of which the Church, so often, through its various branches and its divisions tends to take sides — not as between the real good and the real evil — but as between one sentiment group and the other.

Not only our personal sins, but this national sin and our complicity in it: this we ought to be confessing with repenting sorrow and prayer before God, and against this we must witness.

And our destiny in this work of reconciliation: Popularity? Or scorn, mockery, crucifixion — even as the Lord, the head of the Church suffered, and with it the everlasting joy of our Lord here upon earth — and in heaven!

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BRIEWE VAN LESERS

„MY VERHOUDING MET 'N MEISIE“

Geagte Redaksie,

In „Op den Uitkijk“ van Maart 1963 verskyn die volgende (vertaal uit Nederlands):

„In Wes-Afrika het die huwelik 'n geweldige probleem geword. Voorheen was die vrou hier 'n ekonomiese faktor. Dogters het vir hul ouers „labola“ geld beteken. Toe het die Christendom gekom en dit het die monogame huwelik geleer. Maar dit het net die monogamie gebring, dit het nie weggedoen met „labola“ nie, en dit het ook nie weggedoen met alle moontlike soort van seksuele „taboes“ nie. Maar dit het wel die ekonomiese ewewig versteur: in plaas van 3 of 4 vroue nou voortaan maar een.

En na die Christendom het verstedeliking gekom. Die mense het na die stede getrek. Die jeug van vandag wil nie meer op die land werk nie. Hulle wil almal 'n loopbaan in die stad en in die stad word hulle losgemaak uit die stamlewe. In die stede is die moraal van die stamverband nie meer geldig nie. Die resultaat hiervan is dat in al die groot stede van Wes-Afrika dit 'n treurige toestand is. Losbandigheid, ongehuide moeders van 15, 16 jaar, hoë persentasies geslagslektes, prostitutie, egskeidings: die droewige resultaat van 'n samelewing wat te skielik verander het.

En die kerke, en die predikante!

Al wat hul kan doen is om 'n strenge tug toe te pas, waarby die wet 'n groter rol speel as die liefde.

Een eienaardige faktor is hier van belang: Sonde in Afrika is net die bewese sonde. Ander sake is nie van belang nie. In die kern van die saak is daar sodoende geen basis meer vir die huweliks-etiek nie.

Die monogamie is aanvaar, maar die verhouding tussen man en vrou het nie verander nie en by maar dieselfde soos vroeër, en al die gewoontes in en om die huwelik het dieselfde gebly. Want hierdie heidense moraal van vroeër in die stamlewe was wel heeltemaal verskillend van die Christelike moraal, maar was beslis nie losbandig nie, was selfs baie streng. Maar hierdie moraal bestaan nie meer nie, tenminste nie meer in die stede nie, dit is stukkend geslaan deur die trek na die stede, deur die Christendom, en is tot dusver eintlik nie vervang deur iets anders nie.

Gelukkig is daar nou tekens wat daarop wys dat die situasie besig is om te verander. In die Kameroen het dit gebeur deur 'n Duitse sendeling, Walter Trobitsch. Hy was onderwyser in Duits aan 'n Protestantse hoërskool, maar was te veel van 'n sendeling om maar net les in Duits te gee.

Hy het dus begin met 'n kursus te gee oor huweliks-vrae vir die hoogste standarde van die skool, en deur sy persoonlike houding het hy die vertroue gewen van die seuns en dogters van sy klas. Hulle het na hom gekom met hul vrae en probleme. Hy het met hulle gesels en gegewens versamel en die hele onderwerp bestudeer. Tenslotte het hy 'n boekie uitgegee met as titel: „J'ai aimé une fille.“ In Afri-

kaans sou ons dit vry kon vertaal met: „My verhouding met 'n Meisie“.

Dit 'n boekie waarin die korrespondensie weergegee word van 'n jongman wat oorspel gepleeg het, en sy predikant. In daardie boekie word die hele problematiek behandel, sowel bybels as medies. Trobitsch het 5000 eksemplare laat druk. Hulle was binne 6 weke uitverkoop, ondanks die taamlik hoë prys. 'n Tweede druk is sopas uit die pers.

Trobitsch moet deurgaans. Trobitsch moet ook boekies skryf vir die meisies, vir huweliks-katkinsasie, 'n handboek vir predikante wat die huweliks-etiek behandel, iets oor die tugmaatreëls van die Kerk. „J'ai aimé une fille“, is nou al in 5 Bantoetale vertaal asook in Engels en Walter Trobitsch het aanbiedings gekry uit 9 ander Afrikastate om by hulle te kom werk as huweliks-spesialis.

So is die toestand vandag in die Wes-Afrika lande, dat 'n predikant wat nadenk oor 'n probleem, 'n boekie van 50 bladsye skryf, meteens 'n spesialis is op die gebied van die huwelik en huweliks-etiek.“

Tot sover die artikel. Verder skryf die blad dan oor die dringende noodsaak om die lektuuraksie te steun, waaraan die Protestantse kerke in Nederland saamwerk, om lektuur te kry vir daardie Afrika-state, wat besig is om te ontwikkel, en wat byna g'n ander leesstof het as Kommunistiese nie.

Ons het die stukkie oorgeeem omdat soveel daarin ons herinner aan toestande hier.

En ook verneem ons van groot bedrae hier beskikbaar vir lektuurverspreiding. Wat ons nog kort kom is mense soos Walter Trobitsch, met die nodige kennis en liefde, om te voorsien in die geestelike padkos vir ons Bantoe volke wat op pad is na 'n hoër bestemming.

J. Griffioen.

Kerk in die Wêreld

DUITSE „KIRCHENTAG“ IN DORTMUND

In Julie het duisende Duitse Protestante in Dortmund, hart van die industrieële Ruhr-gebied, vir die tweemaandige „Kerkdag“ byeengekom. Die hooffiguur van die „kerkdag“ is Reinold von Thadden. Dit is reeds die tiende kerkdag wat Von Thadden reël. Hy is reeds 70 jaar oud, en op sy gesig lees mens duidelik die spore van lyding in die verlede. As jongman het hy die militêre akademie in Brandenburg bygewoon, en as jong offisier in die eerste wêreldoorlog gedien. Na die oorlog skakel hy in by die Christen Studente Vereniging (C.S.V.), en werk voltyds onder studente aan die Universiteit in Duitsland. Toe Hitler aan bewind gekom het, was hy 'n eensame stem wat gewaarsku het teen die beheer van die kerk deur die Nazis. Dit was ook nie lank nie of hy was 'n „gemerkte man“, en uiteindelik beland hy in die tronk in Berlyn. Hy is vrygelaat hoofsaaklik omdat hy nie opgeleide predikant was nie. Tydens die tweede wêreldoorlog het hy weer eens in 'n tronk beland, waar hy 'n gemeente georganiseer het. Hoewel hy nooit teologiese opleiding gehad het nie, het hy die „predikant“ van die tronkgemeente geword. Byna al sy gemeentelede het in die tronk gesterf, en toe hy uiteindelik vrygelaat is, het hy 'n skamele 90 pond gewee.

Hy het dadelik begin om die „Kirchentag“ te organiseer, wat geen amptelike verband met die kerke gehad het nie, maar wat gegroei het uit

individuele Christene. Hy het aanvanklik geen ondersteuning van die kerke gehad nie. . . net kritiek. Die kerk het hom verdink van politieke motiewe, en het die algehele mislukking van die „kerkdag“ voorspel. In 1950 is die eerste „kerkdag“ te Essen gehou, en 25,000 mense het toegestroom. By die afsluiting van die week van Bybelstudie en gebed, was daar 200,000 mense teenwoordig.

In 1954 te Leipzig het 'n half-miljoen mense die „kerkdag“ bygewoon. Reinold von Thadden het bereik wat geen kerk kon regkry nie — hy het die boodskap van die Bybel ten opsigte van aktuele vraagstukke uitgedra na die gewone lidmaat, die kerkvervreemde en die buitekerklike.

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that the disservice done to Christian witness by those who profess Christianity can clearly be seen; for — if one may adapt a phrase from Shakespeare — the evil that Christians do lives after them. To the African, the western way of life is essentially Christian. And when, instead of Christian kindness and friendliness, he meets with harshness, regimentation, cruelty and injustice, he begins to wonder whether he was not sold a white elephant. Where once disease attacked him because of his ignorance, he finds that he is a victim of disease because of a system that makes it difficult for him to earn enough to meet his basic needs. Where once slave traders separated families, other systems have arisen to produce precisely the same effects. The feeling of insecurity that stifles ambition and initiative is ever with him. The disillusionment that follows is perhaps the greatest threat to Christianity in Africa. The danger to Christianity is the Christian himself.

Nationalism as religion

Nationalism can also become a religion, and the people may begin to look upon the nation as a Messiah, and to regard everything that is done in the name of the nation as God-ordained. The leaders in such a case tend to demand absolute loyalty which is due only to God. Criticism becomes near-treason.

The World Council of Churches has studied the question of nationalism and one can do no better at this stage than re-iterate some of the suggestions it

makes. The World Council of Churches states:

1. „Since the Church believes in the providence and redemption of God it can recognise the upsurge of aspiration to human freedom and social justice as the movement of the spirit of man which God can use for the service of mankind. The Churches therefore should consider that emerging nationalisms are potentially able to bring hitherto suppressed peoples into the stream of world history and to provide freedom for men and women to make the choices of human destiny...“

2. „The missionary movement which led to the founding of the Christian churches in Asia and Africa became in the course of history associated to a considerable extent with the Western cultural and political expansion so that the Church and Christianity appear to many in these lands, including the younger generation of Christians, to be closely identified with Western rulers.

Very often, when rejecting Western rule, they tend to reject Christianity also and become hostile to it, so that men and women who enter nationalist politics are often lost to the Church... Along with this goes the attitude

of many elders and ministers of the churches that Christianity is a purely spiritual religion of personal salvation and has nothing to do with political questions. This non-political idea of Christianity has strengthened the feeling among Christian young people and politicians that Christianity is indifferent to the real concerns of life in society and state, and they leave the Church, considering it as best irrelevant. There is need for the Church... to renew its understanding of the

world and of the ecumenical character of the Church's being. This will help the churches not only to disentangle themselves from a false identification with Western culture and politics, but also to take a positive attitude towards the struggle for freedom and nation-building.“

3. „The Church's participation in nationalism must be positive and responsible: it should be a response to the call of God to bear witness to his purpose for the world and his concern for all men in their concrete situation. Therefore, it will also be a critical involvement and not a total one. When nationalism demands the total loyalty of the Church and its members, we have to obey God rather than man. God is not an instrument of nationalism; He is its judge and His word is transforming power. Therefore, the Church's struggle for the freedom of worship and witness to Christ as Lord of the nation, to keep its fellowship open to all men irrespective of colour or other communal affiliation, and to have relations with churches outside the nation, is at the same time its contribution to the development of a healthy nationalism.“

4. „Where imperialism or nationalism has become idolatrous or absolute, the Church may still serve the nation by suffering at its hands. Such suffering is a witness to the Lordship of Christ over the nation and has a redemptive function.“

May I conclude these remarks by quoting from a paper that I read on another occasion? I said then that „the forces of African nationalism hold for the Black man the promise of emancipation from the humiliation and degradation which he suffers because of

his colour. Will those who call themselves Christians be able to match this challenge and turn this into a force for the good? Can they convince the Black man that the Church is not the handmaiden of White domination? “

„Christianity is a dynamic, universal experience precisely because it is a personal experience. It is the duty of every Christian to seek to be personally involved in joys and sorrows, the sufferings and the humiliations of others. Every Christian is his brother's keeper...“

„Many young African men and women today feel that Christianity... is a luxury they can ill afford. They believe that they must mean what they say, or not say it at all. They see all around them many things happening which are a complete repudiation of the meaning contained in those first two words of the Lord's Prayer: „OUR FATHER...“

Christians, when they go down on their knees and repeat those words, must be prepared to proclaim the common fatherhood of God in their actions also. If they do not, then they must confess their belief in the existence of a white heaven with a white god, and a black heaven with a black god. The African demands a firm stand on principle, and no amount of „theologising“ about the situation will make him abandon this view. For the tribal gods of the Afrikaner, the Englishman and the African, he would prefer to see substituted a universal God to whom every knee, whatever its colour, shall bend.“

* Mr Mbata is a member of the Anglican Church and Field Officer of the S.A. Institute of Race Relations.