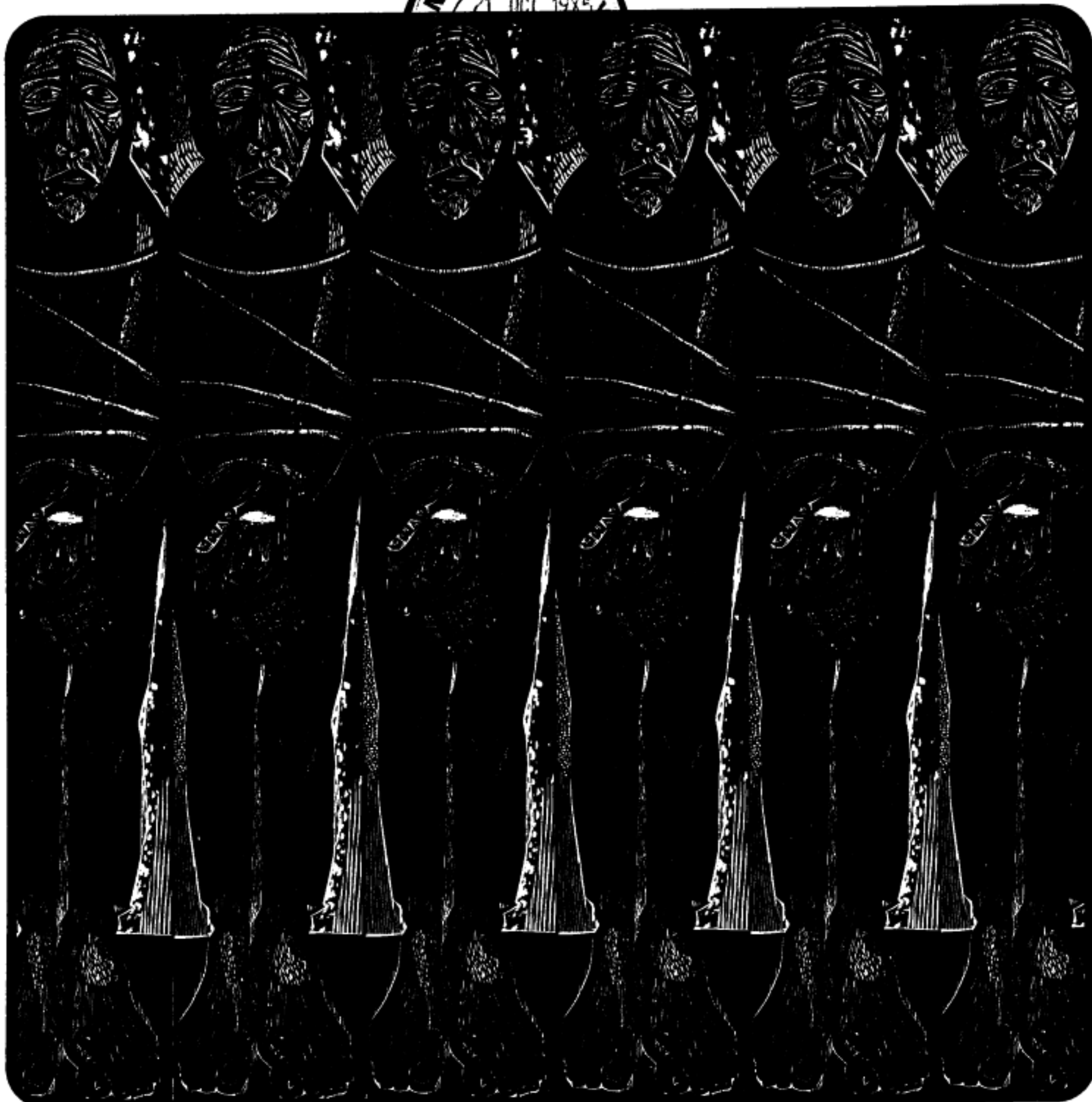


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# WAAROM IS DÉTENTE ÈN AANHOUDING IN SUID-AFRIKA MOONTLIK?

As 'n mens na die agtergronde van die huidige situasie, waar die beleid van ontspannings-politiek tesame met die beleid van onbepaalde aanhouding (Wet op Terrorisme, art. 6) gevolg word, vra, is dit met verbasing omdat beide moontlik is. Die vraag moet dan gestel word waarom Suid-Afrika, en by name die blankes wat in die magsposisie verkeer, toelaat dat die regering vryelik, feitlik sonder tekens van teenkating en protes, kan voortgaan om weerlose mense vir onbepaalde tye sonder verhoor (en dit wat daarmee saamgaan) aan te hou.

Die publikasie deur 'n Transvaalse dagblad van die antwoorde van blankes op die vrae of die kerk in die politiek betrokke moet wees, of nie, en of daar gemeen word dat Christus aktief in politiek betrokke was, of nie, was baie insiggewend. Volgens dié opname is die oorweldigende oortuiging van die blankes negatief, nl. dat die kerk nie met politiek betrokke moet wees nie en dat Christus nie „politiek” betrokke was nie. Moontlik moet 'n mens die vraag stel of die onduidelike gebruik van die woord „politiek” deur die koerant nie misverstand veroorsaak het nie, asof dit sou slaan op party-politiek en nie politiek in die algemeen as die ordering van die samelewing nie. Hoe dit ook al sy, die feit bly staan dat verreweg die meeste daarvan oortuig is dat die kerk van Christus hom buite die terrein van die staat en regering moet hou. Die onvermydelike veronderstelling is dat die kerk en ook Christus 'n afgebakende terrein in die samelewing, of moontlike buite dié lewe het. Slaan Christus se boodskap dan slegs op die hiernamaals, of op die innerlike lewe van die individu, of op die sake wat op die omtrek van die samelewing lê, soos bv. etiese kwessies i.v.m. sensuur op films, fotos en publikasies, perdewedrenne, horoskope en skoonheidskompetisies wat nie direk ingrypend die lewe en dood van mense bepaal nie?

As dit die houding van die blankes in die kerk is, kan 'n mens iets begryp van die agtergrond in Suid-Afrika waar dit vir die regering moontlik is om feitlik enigiets uit te voer. Veralgemeen beteken dit dat die staatsterrein aan die regering behoort, daar is hy „god”, daar is hy die „oppergesag” om sy willekeurige „wette” te maak en dit, weereens willekeurig, toe te pas soos dit hom pas.

Gewoonlik word die argument gebruik dat ons die regering maar moet vertrou vir dit wat hy (in die geheim) doen omdat dit 'n „Christelike” regering is. Die argument is teologies absoluut onhoudbaar omdat die gelowige se vertroue altyd alleenlik in God moet wees. Die veronderstelling met dié vals argument is dat omdat die regering Christelik sou wees hy in homself as gesagsinstansie onder God die maatstaf word en self (in die geheim) die finale gesag het om te weet wat reg en verkeerd is en dat dit nie meer nodig is om in die openbaar voor God en die wêreld aan God se norme getoets te word nie.

Gewoonlik word nog bygevoeg dat die politiek „die

kuns van die moontlike” is sodat die politikus homself vir dit wat verkeerd mag gaan, kan verontskuldig. As die argument ernstig bedoel word, nl. dat die „kuns van die moontlike” die hoogste norm word, is die verband met die Christelike evangelie reeds in die politiek verbreek. Dit gaan vir die Christen in kerk en staat om die kuns (wysheid) van die regte, reg en geregtigheid voor God en nie om dit wat in sy mensgemaakte beleid moontlik of ontmoontlik is nie.

### charismatiese gawes?

Die houding van die blankes (volgens die vrae-opnames) ten opsigte van die gebrek aan betrokkenheid van die kerk, en die grenslose aanvaarding van die optrede van die regering is 'n ernstige aanklag teen die kerk in Suid-Afrika. Daar is uitsonderinge waar sommige tog daadwerklik profeties getuig, maar die vraag kom onvermydelik op hoe diepgaande en ingrypend die getuigenis is — of staan ons onder die oordeel van die Hebreërbrief: „Julle het nog nie ten bloede toe weerstand gebied in julle stryd teen die sonde nie”? Moet ons nie maar met skaamte voor God bely dat ons, terwyl ons voorgee om toegewyd te wees, onself totaal oorgee aan die gesag van die regering as gevolg van 'n sekuriteits — en veiligheidsdrang nie?

In die lig van die opkomende charismatiese beweging in Suid-Afrika, moet ons vra of die Christene hulle al meer op die innerlike beweging van hulle siele gaan toelê in plaas van op die koms van die koninkryk van God op aarde. Moet daar nie 'n woord van waarskuwing gehoor word dat Gods Woord tot die wêreld nie verruil moet word vir vrome woorde wat mense vir hulleself en by hulleself spreek nie? Word so'n beweging nie 'n ontvlugting van die werklikheid, waar Christene die breekpuntspanning in die situasie ervaar en intuïtief aanvoel dat iets gedoen moet word en dat hulle 'n verantwoordelikheid het, maar dan liever die weg van die minste weerstand volg deur op die „belangrikste” ewige sake te konsentreer, waar die charismatiese gawes tog selfregverdiging „bewys” nie?

Indien die *politieke lewe nie begrens word met beperkte gesag* deur die evangelie wat erns met hierdie lewe maak, nie, is die geneigdheid tot totalitarisme altyd daar. Ons moet onself ook ernstig afvra of Suid-Afrika nie ook (onherroeplik?) in die greep van totalitarisme onder apartheid of afsonderlike ontwikkeling is nie. Totalitarisme kan hier slegs deur 'n paar verkorte stellings weergegee word:

- Die idee van 'n bepaalde *utopiese* staat word voorgedra, waaraan almal hulleself (teen wil en dank) moet onderwerp — vgl. die propaganda van die regering i.v.m. die tuisland-beleid, die fantastiese beloftes van ekonomiese groei en samewerking van almal in Suider-Afrika.



- Die handhawing van bepaalde selfgeskape *dogmas* as finale maatstaf waaraan almal (teen wil en dank) onderworpe is. Die belangrike hier is nie of die dogma korrek en logies is nie en of dit prakties uitvoerbaar is nie, maar dat almal dit moet aanvaar of hulle daaraan moet onderwerp. Die dogma self is minder belangriker as die absolute *oortuiging* waarmee dit gehandhaaf word en die gevolglike vaderlands-verraad wat dit tot gevolg het as dit ongehoorsaam sou word — vgl. die absolute handhawing van die mite in die woorde „*apart*” (apartheid) en „*eiesoortig*” (eiesoortige ontwikkeling). Dit gaan nie om die uitvoerbaarheid, Christelikheid, regverdigheid al dan nie, maar om die eis van onderdanigheid daaraan en samewerking daarmee.

- Die *fanatiese wil* om die beleid en elke besluit „tot die dood toe” deur te voer. Selfs al sou ’n rigting onprakties en onmoontlik blyk te wees, is daar slegs aanpassings, minderbelangrike wysigings en verdere ontwikkeling van fases nodig. Die ideologie van die wil van selfhandhawing word ’n roekelose vasbeslotenheid om alle beperkings, teenstand en teenstanders wat die „saak” bedreig eenvoudig uit die pad te vee — vgl. apartheid op sy rotsvaste koers (tot die dood?) met noodsaaklike, maar geringe aanpassings (opheffing van sg. klein apartheid) en wysiging van metodes (*détente*), en ook die fanatiese optrede teen gevaarlike of vermeende gevaarlike teenstanders.

- Die skepping van ’n *rassemite* en die skepping van ’n *bogey* (’n spookvyand) wat die land bedreig. Dit werk as eenheidshandhawing teen die „gevaar”. Die anti-

groep word as stereotiep voorgestel sodat kollektiewe haat opgewek word. Individue, hulle gesigte en persoonlikhede verdwyn agter die beweerde sameswering. Gee die gewapende „bully-boys” net hulle slagoffers en ’n rede en dit is genoeg. Niemand kan dus protesteer as daar onmenslik teen hulle opgetree word nie. Hulle is absolute vyande en daarom regverdig die doel die middel — vgl. die rasse-ideologie wat die grondslag van die ganse lewe in Suid-Afrika vorm en die spook van „wêreldkommunisme” wat agter elke teenstander van ’n onchristelike beleid gesien word. Die metodes, hoe erg ookal, word toegelaat, want die „gevaar” teen die vaderland „regverdig” dit.

Hierdie totalitaristiese houding in die politiek is ’n groot gevaar vir Suid-Afrika. Al die tekens is daar.

Dit roep die kerk van Christus (soos ook destyds Barmen in Hitler-Duitsland) op tot ondubbelsinnige getuie-nis van die Koningskap van Christus en vir die koms van sy Koninkryk op elke gebied van die lewe. Vir die kerk moet dit ook gaan om die daaglikse brood, om die wêreldpolitiek van God, om Christus, wat deur die destydse kerk en staat gekruisig is, maar wat „die Hoof is van alle owerheid en mag” en in wie alle dinge standhou (Kol. 1). Dit vereis altyd ’n keuse, ook in die politiek: Die evangeliese weg, wyse en houding, of ’n eie weg, wyse of metode. *Détente* en aanhouding? Nee, *détente* (vrede met God en *détente* (vrede met die naaste). Mag God se Ryk kom in die „rasseryk” in Suid-Afrika!

- Roelf Meyer

## EDITORIAL

### HOW DOES IT COME ABOUT THAT DÉTENTE AND DETENTION CAN EXIST SIDE BY SIDE IN SOUTH AFRICA?

If one looks at the background of the present situation, in which the policy of *détente* is observed together with the policy of domination (e.g. indefinite detention under art. 6 of the Terrorism Act), one finds somewhat surprisingly that both can exist together. The question must then be put why South Africa — and especially the whites who are in a position of power — allows the government freely — virtually without any sign of opposition or protest — to continue its abhorrent practice of detaining defenceless people for indefinite periods without trial with all that goes with it.

A Transvaal daily paper published the answers of some of the white population to the question whether the church should be involved in politics and whether it could be supposed that Jesus Christ was actively concerned in politics or not; the answers were illuminating. According to this survey the conviction of the overwhelming majority of the whites was negative, namely that the Church ought not to be concerned in politics and that Jesus Christ was not involved in this manner. Possibly it should be asked whether the obscure use by

newspapers of the word “politics” had caused misunderstanding, the word being used as if it referred to party politics and not to politics in general as ordering of society. However that may be, the fact remains that the great majority of whites is convinced that the Church of Christ must hold itself aloof from the realm of the state and the government. The inevitable assumption is that the Church and Christ are set apart in an area outside of society — possibly it may seem even outside of this life altogether. Is Christ’s message then valid only for the hereafter, or for the interior life of the individual, or for matters lying on the periphery of society as e.g. questions of ethics relating to the censorship of films, photographs and publications, horse-racing, horoscopes and beauty competitions which have no real, direct or far-reaching effect on the life and death of people.

If this is the attitude of people in the church, one can begin to understand a little of the South African background where it is possible for the government to do what it will. To generalise, this means that the sphere of the state belongs to the government; there it is “god”:

there it has supreme authority to make its arbitrary "laws, and to apply these laws arbitrarily.

The argument is generally used that we must simply trust the government in regard to what it does (in secret) because it is a "Christian" government. Theologically speaking, this argument is totally untenable since the believer must always place his trust in God alone. The assumption underlying this fallacious argument is that, because the Government is professedly Christian, having all authority under God, it must constitute itself its own measuring-rod, it even has (in secret) the final authority to know what is right and what is wrong; and it is no longer necessary to put this to the test in the open before God and the world in terms of the divine norms.

Further, it is usually argued that politics is the "art of the possible" and therefore the politician can exonerate himself from blame should things go wrong. If this argument, namely that the "art of the possible" must be regarded as the highest norm, is intended seriously, the connection with the Christian gospel in the realm of politics is already broken. For the Christian politics is associated in church *and* state with the art (wisdom) of those things which are right and just before God; it is not associated merely with that which is possible or impossible within the terms of man-made policy.

#### **charismatic gifts**

The attitude of the whites (according to the survey) regarding the Church's non-involvement and the uncritical acceptance of the action of the government is a serious indictment of the church in South Africa. There are exceptions and some few do really witness prophetically even today, but the question inevitably arises how deep-rooted and far-reaching such witness is in word and deed — or are we liable to be judged in terms of the Letter to the Hebrews: "In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood." Must we not to our shame admit before God that while we profess to be 'dedicated' we slavishly submit to government authority because we are motivated by a compulsive urge towards safety and security.

In the light of the emergent charismatic movement in South Africa, we must ask ourselves whether it is required of Christians now more than ever to give themselves over to the inner life of the soul instead of to the coming of the Kingdom of God on earth? Must not a word of warning be sounded that God's Word to the world must not be exchanged for mere pious words of people for themselves and by themselves. Is not such a movement a flight from reality in that Christians having experienced the breaking-point of the present tense situation, feel intuitively that something is wrong and that they have a responsibility to do something about it. Instead of which they follow the line of least resistance; they prefer to concentrate on "eternal" matters which are the most important for them and where the charismatic gifts supply self-justification.

If authority in the political life is not limited in terms of the gospel, the tendency to totalitarianism always exists. We must ask ourselves earnestly whether South Africa is not also (irrevocably?) in the grip of totalitarianism in the guise of apartheid or separate development and whether this is not irrevocably so. Totalitarianism can be illustrated here by only a few short examples:

- The idea of a limited *utopian* state to which everyone must subordinate himself whether he will or no — Cf. Government propaganda in connection with the homelands policy, extravagant promises of economic growth and the willing co-operation of everyone in South Africa.

- The maintaining of specific limited self-created political *dogmas* as the ultimate measuring-rod to which everyone is subordinated (whether he will be or no). The significant thing here is not whether the dogma is correct and logical and capable of being carried out in practice but that everyone must accept it or be subjected to it. The dogma itself is of less importance than the absolute *conviction* with which it is supported and maintained, refusal to obey being construed as "betrayal of the fatherland" — Cf. the absolute support of the myth in the word "apart" (apartheid). What matters is the demand for obedience to the dogma and co-operation with it, whether it is Christian and just or not.

- The *fanatical will* to carry out this policy and every decision in terms of it to the bitter end, even if such action appears to be impracticable, not to say impossible, necessitates adjustments, minor amendments and further development of the various phases. The ideology of the will to self-preservation becomes a reckless determination simply to sweep aside all resistance, opposition and opponents which threaten the "cause" — Cf. Apartheid in its adamant course (to the death?) with the necessary, albeit limited adjustments, the lifting of so-called petty apartheid and amendments of method (*détente*) and also the fanatical action against "dangerous" or allegedly dangerous opponents.

- The creation of a *race-myth* and the creation of a "bogy" which threatens the country. It is effective in bringing about solidarity in the face of a common "danger"; the anti-group is presented as a stereotype; collective hatred is aroused, and individuals, their faces and their personalities, disappear when confronted by the alleged conspiracy. Only give the armed "bully boys" their victims and a reason, even if fictitious, and that is enough. No one can then protest if inhuman action is taken against them. They are the enemy, and the end justifies the means — Cf. The race ideology which forms the foundation of the entire way of life in South Africa and the bogey of "world communism" which is seen behind every opponent of an unchristian policy. The methods, however evil, are sanctioned, because they are "justified" by the "threat" to the fatherland.

This totalitarian attitude in politics is a great danger for South Africa. All the signs are there. It calls the Church of Christ (as did Barmen in Hitler's Germany) to an unambiguous witness to the Kingship of Christ and the coming of the Kingdom in every area of life. For the Church the Kingdom is concerned with daily bread, with God's involvement in the political world, with Christ crucified by the church and the Roman state, but nevertheless being the power and authority in the universe; in Him all things abide (Col. 1). This always and everywhere requires of us the making of a choice — even in politics: The following of the gospel in its ways and methods and attitudes, or one's own way of life and one's own methods? *Détente and detention*? No — *détente* (peace with God) *and détente* (peace with one's neighbour). May God's Kingdom come in the racial state of South Africa.

– Roelf Meyer



# BLACK THEOLOGY AND THE LE GRANGE-SCHLEBUSCH COMMISSION

manas buthelezi

What is significant about Black Theology is not only that it has been a source of inspiration to a wide spectrum of black preachers and thinkers, but also that lately it has even aroused the interest of white politicians. You would not be far wrong if you judged the quality of a study course by the number and calibre of students who enrol in it. The most recent group of Black Theology students consisted of such high ranking figures as the Le Grange-Schlebusch commissioners.

The report paper they wrote at the end of the course is, however, very disappointing. If I were in a position to do so, I would certainly give them a failing mark "F". I do not know whether I should lay the blame on the student Commissioners or on their ghost teachers. After one has finished reading the impression that either the Commissioners failed to understand the "experts" who gave secret evidence before it, or that the anonymous experts irresponsibly misled and misinformed the Commissioners. I say this because the Report is an assemblage of faulty premises and hasty conclusions about the character of persons, things and organisations.

There is, however, something positive about the Report, and it is this: it is a revelation concerning to what extent the white man can fail to grasp the depth of the black man's soul. It raises the problem: how can members of one racial group claim to understand fully the subtleties of the yearning of the soul of another people across the artificially created chasm of Separate Development? How much room for mutual understanding does the philosophy of Separate Development leave? Do the practitioners of Separate Development still have any capacity for empathy and gauging the nature of the soul of a people from whose existential situation they are cut by an Apartheid wall?

Before continuing further, and in order that I may refresh your memory about the Report, I will begin by summarising the findings of the Commission on Black Theology.

## I. THE FINDINGS OF THE COMMISSION

After the Commission had become aware of the phenomenon of Black Theology in the course of its inquiry into the activities of "organisations that want to show their Christianity by their names," such as the Christian Institute and the University Christian Movement it doubted the scriptural validity of Black Theology. As a result of this doubt, it called for and heard "expert" evidence from "theologians representing various denominations." (p. 146ff.)

The evidence presented in the Report to the Commission can be summarised as follows:

It first refers to the confusion that was aroused in many concerning the content and aims of Black Theology. Among those confused was the Afrikaans periodical *Die Kerkbode* of 14th April 1971 which spoke highly of Black Theology thus: "It sums up our traditional missionary policy most effectively," (p.147). The Report then goes extensively into what it believes are the factors that influenced Black Theology in the Republic. Among these are the following:

### 1.1 Certain Developments in the United States

In the opinion of the Commission movements like the Black

Panthers, the Student Non-Violent Co-ordinating Committee and the Students for a Democratic Society gave rise to the idea of Black Theology. The Commission takes pains to show how these movements were influenced by Communism. It concluded by saying that "according to all the theologians who gave evidence before the Commission, it goes without saying that the scriptural validity of "black" or "white" or "brown" theology must be seriously questioned, since the Gospel of the Bible is first and foremost concerned with the redemption of sinners through Jesus Christ and not with racist ideology," (p.148).

### 1.2 Rudolf Bultmann

Basil Moore's essay "Towards a Black Theology" is seen by the Commission to demonstrate the influence of Bultmann. According to the evidence submitted to the Commissioners Bultmann's thinking is not founded on Christianity but shows the influence of Jean Paul Sartre who is said to be pro-Communist. The line of reasoning based on this premise continues as follows: "If, therefore protagonists for a Black Theology were to build on Bultmann's ideas, they could justify themselves for "nationalising and socialising the teachings of Jesus so as to make them serve as a basis for a "theology of liberation." (p.150)

The Commissioners then conclude that "these observations suffice to show clearly that a question mark must be placed over this scriptural exegesis by the protagonists for Black Theology under the influence of Bultmann and Sartre," (p.150). The inference from this statement of the Commission is that the basis of Black Theology is not the Bible but Communism or, at least, pro-Communist sources.

### 1.3 The Social Gospel

The Commission Report opens with the statement that it is clear that "in the propaganda for a Black Theology, the American Social Gospel is carried through to its logical conclusions. So the Gospel is put to the service of both socialist and Communist doctrine to equate the ethical implications of the New Testament with the ideological basis of Communism," (151)

After quoting Claude Williams' statement on his conception of Christianity, the Commission concludes: "It is clear, therefore, that this theology, under the influence of Communist ideology, will emphasise only the 'horizontal aspect' (the relationship between man and his fellow men), doing so at the expense of the 'vertical aspect' (the relationship between man and God). Throughout, this method and approach form the basis for Black Theology as a theology of "liberation", in its socio-political sense.

### 1.4 The World Council of Churches

It is asserted in the Report that "for a better understanding of the deeper significance of Black Theology as propagated in the Republic, it is necessary to touch briefly on the 'shift in power' that has taken place in the World Council of Churches," (p.152). Here I wish to add that this statement as well as the ones that follow in the Report are reminiscent of what Pike says in his book, *Religion Red and Rotten*. As you will remember, Pike in that book attacks not only the World Council of Churches but also the South African Council of Churches.

Be that as it may, the Report continues and states that since the late fifties the World Council of Churches has been seeking rapprochement with the Russian Orthodox Church. "The admission of the Russian Orthodox Church and the International Missionary Council led to a shift in power, with the result that the churches of the Western World no longer took the lead in the World Council of Churches, but that Communists and neo-Marxists called the tune in the new thinking in the World Council of Churches," (p.152)

After making reference to the support the WCC has given to the guerillas, the Report tries to relate Black Theology to the World Council of Churches as follows: "The way in which some Black Theology propaganda, such as Dr. Basil Moore's 'Towards a Black Theology,' refers to oppressors (Whites) and the oppressed (Non-Whites) and uses the Bible to justify putting an end to this so-called oppression, lends support to the view that it is not far-fetched to seek the theological roots of Black Theology in the World Council of Churches propaganda as well," (p.153)

On the basis of the evidence given before it, the Commission becomes satisfied that the father of Black Theology in South Africa was Dr. Basil Moore" who brought it from the United States and that the launching of Black Theology in South Africa "did not come from one or more organisations only, but that this theology is supported by much greater ideological forces," (p.153)

For the sake of convenience, I will sum up the findings of the Commission concerning Black Theology as follows:

1. Black Theology has started in South Africa as a result of foreign influential factors which are hostile to South Africa. Among such influences are such accredited enemies of South Africa as Communism and the World Council of Churches.
2. The corollary of the above point is that Black Theology is neither traceable to the dynamics of the South African situation nor is it the spontaneous and constructive contribution of South African black preachers and theologians. At most it is white South Africans like Dr. Basil Moore and Beyers Naudé who have mediated its spread in South Africa. Hence there is no need for any reference to what black people in South Africa have said about it.

This then leads me to my own evaluation of the Le Grange-Schlebusch Commissions's understanding of Black Theology.

## II. EVALUATION OF THE COMMISSION REPORT

In my introductory remarks I have anticipated what I am going to say here. As is obvious to everybody, the Commission's report, like previous ones, is a political harangue against the enemies of Apartheid. In the Report there is no acknowledgement of the fact that Apartheid is *the* problem or, at least, that it poses problems and burdens to the lives and consciences of the majority of the people of South Africa. As a result, the bona fides of the critics of Apartheid is not recognised. Always the critics of Apartheid are either acting maliciously or play the role of unwitting tools of outside hostile forces. In this respect the Commission displays a high degree of insensitivity to the dynamics of the South African situation. The Commission ignores a number of important facts:

### 2.1 Good Inspirations very often come from outside

The premise that Black Theology is a foreign import, in the sense of its emergence being unrelated to legitimate factors in South Africa, is fallacious. It is true that, as a deliberate and

technical model of theologising, Black Theology started in the United States. But this does not by any means detract from its integrity. The fact that Christianity was brought to this country by white European foreigners is no legitimate ground for black people to reject it. Within the frame of the Commission's reasoning it could, of course, be argued that it is much more unreasonable for black South Africans to allow themselves to be influenced by foreign white Europeans than by foreign black Americans. This is even in harmony with the Apartheid policy based on the colour of one's face. But I reject this argument just as I reject the Commission's which underlies it. If black Americans inspired us to do our own good thing in South Africa, what is wrong with that? Has South Africa not recently confessed that it has discovered that it has something in common with far-away Paraguay? What is wrong if Dr. Basil Moore played a role in "fathering" Black Theology? That was, at least, something better and more acceptable to black people than what other white people have "fathered," namely, Apartheid. (In saying this, I do not necessarily share the Commission's view on the question of the paternity of Black Theology.)

### 2.2 Apartheid explains the Quest for a Black Theology in South Africa

Had there been no perennial preoccupation with colour in South Africa we would never hear of a Black Theology. South Africa has elevated the factor of colour to the level of the ultimate. It is the colour of your skin which determines your physical and even spiritual destiny. Some have even raised the question whether whites and blacks will go to the same heaven if they do not go to the same churches, restaurants and toilets here. You can therefore see how Apartheid can destroy the spiritual vision of people. Black Theology is an attempt on the part of black theologians to define the Gospel in a way that helps to repair the damage inflicted by Apartheid. The Gospel so defined then says to black people: "You too, black as you are, and even though poor and feeling powerless, were created in the image of God for a higher destiny than what you experience. Do not despair; take courage in the liberating Gospel of Christ. Take your own good initiatives. Do not hate the white man simply because you believe he has rejected you. Come on, be creative. Have your own black love that can exist and survive irrespective of the existence or non-demonstration of white love. Do not only take spiritual initiatives from white people; accept the responsibility of taking initiatives yourself even to the point of proclaiming the Gospel to your white rulers." Did not even a single expert tell this to the Commissioners? Where did they get this junk about the communistic inspiration of Black Theology? Is there anything more biblical than infusing people with the hope that black as they are, they were created in the image of God just like white people and that they should not be ashamed of themselves because their black bodies are also the temple of the holy spirit? We have seen black people trying to make themselves look white in order to mitigate at least on a psychological level, the daily humiliations and deprivations occasioned by the factor of their blackness, but even so we would not hold it against a black preacher if he told his parishioners that it is a sin for them to be ashamed of their blackness even if blackness sometimes means no job, no house to sleep in, and no vote.

Far from suggesting that black people should emulate the Afrikaners in all respects, it is in place to mention that the Afrikaners are what they are today because they were able to integrate their religion with their social, economic and political consciousness. In principle, to integrate religion with all of life is a good thing. The Afrikaners should therefore be the last people to tell us that Black Theology is evil. Any way, any one



who has studied South African history will not believe them, (The Commissioners).

I was therefore surprised to read what the Commissioners wrote concerning the relationship between the Gospel and racist ideology. The suggestion was that the Gospel has nothing to say about a racist ideology. The relevant passage, which I have already quoted reads as follows: "The Gospel of the Bible is first and foremost concerned with the redemption of sinners through Jesus Christ and not with racist ideology," (p. 148)

Is racism not a sin from which sinners need to be saved? Salvation in Christ is incompatible with a racist ideology. This is an instance where their ghost teachers misled the Commissioners. To bring in the issue of the Social Gospel is merely to blur the issue of the need to preach the Gospel to the whole of life, since there is no area of life which is out of the reach of the demands of the will of God.

### **2.3 The Commissioners were ill-equipped to evaluate black religious experience**

The fact that there was no black member in a Commission composed of people with well defined political interests is enough to discredit the credibility of the report. Even according to the theory of Separate Development which the Commissioners seemed to have presupposed in their pontifications, one would have expected them to acknowledge that there has developed a separate development in the manner of looking at things.

Separate Development has caused black people to parti-

cipate in experiences which are different from those of white people. Not knowing what it means and how it feels to be black in the face of the laws the Commissioners had played a role in making, they should have recused themselves. None of the Commissioners has been humiliated by Apartheid, let alone the fact that none of them is a theologian. Yet the basic question they set out to investigate is of a theological nature, namely, whether black theology has a biblical basis. As a result of all this the Commission Report is irrelevant to the issue at stake. *It is a political attempt to justify Apartheid by casting aspersions on its critics.* The unfortunate thing is that this bad and irrelevant Report can mislead the innocent. This is, of course, an understatement. The report has had a much more serious consequence on people as well as on certain organisations.

Had the Commission Report been a discussion paper instead of being a judicial pronouncement, it could qualify as a basis of continuing dialogue.

Unfortunately the Report is not an instance of a search for enlightenment and understanding. Misunderstandings are excusable when they are a phase in the process of understanding. I wish the Commission Report were that. Instead it confuses misunderstanding with truth, and good race relations suffer as a result. The moral of this story is that it is dangerous for any racial group to claim to be an expert in the inner workings of the soul of the people of another racial group. This is especially the case in South Africa where races have been separated from each other in the course of the implementation of the policy of Apartheid. \*

## **STATEMENTS ON DETENTIONS**

### **JAMES POLLEY**

Our friend and colleague, the Rev. James Polley, a member of this National Board of Management of the Christian Institute, has been detained under the Terrorism Act.

This barbaric law makes it possible for the police to hold a citizen without trial for an indefinite length of time, without access to loved ones or legal advice.

We are appalled by the action that has been taken against James and against all others who are being held under these so-called security laws which provide for indefinite detention without trial. We stand by James Polley particularly, whom we know as a friend and a Christian minister.

State action of this kind affects every citizen. Where Christians are acted against in this way for standing up for Christian principles it is the church which is being attacked.

If a major purpose of this kind of action is to put fear into the hearts of citizens, as we believe is the case, these actions under the Terrorism Act itself amount to nothing less than acts of terrorism and provoke counter-violence.

We call for the repeal of the Terrorism Act, and for the immediate release of James Polley and all prisoners who are being detained without trial in this country, or for them to be brought to trial under laws which do not contravene principles of justice.

We call, too, for a public assurance from the Minister of Justice that nobody held under any law in any gaol or police station will be physically or mentally maltreated in any way.

— Board of Management  
of the Christian Institute, 5.9.75.

### **HORST KLEINSCHMIDT**

This marks a further disgraceful episode in South Africa's sorry recent history. It is obvious the Government will tolerate no opposition in its march towards totalitarianism. To those of us who know Horst well, there seems to be no other reason for his detention but that he has been of tremendous practical assistance to the families of detainees. His compassion is an example to us all.

The work will go on. Neither the Affected Organizations Act nor actions against staff members will prevent the Christian Institute carrying on its prophetic and reconciling work.

— Theo Kotze, 16th September, 1975  
\*

The Christian Institute today pledged its total support and solidarity for Mr Horst Kleinschmidt, who was detained under the Terrorism Act today.

Mr Horst Kleinschmidt is a former youth organiser of the Progressive Party.

A statement issued today by the CI director, Dr Naudé, and the Rev. Roelf Meyer, editor of Pro Veritate, the CI's journal, attacked the detention of Mr Kleinschmidt and condemned the Terrorism Act.

Dr Naudé said: "Through our concern to assist families of detained people, we have come to know something about the agony caused by this system of detention without trial.

"But now that one of the Christian Institute members has been taken in, we realise more than ever the tremendous repressive powers which this Act imparts to the Security Police."



The CI was also aware of the point made by Mr Cosmas Desmond, the former Catholic priest whose banning order was lifted recently, that détente and detention went hand in hand, he said.

"Our strongest form of protest will be to continue with that work as best we can."

The South African Council of Churches has called for the

Terrorism Act to be repealed.

In a statement issued today, Mr John Rees, general secretary of the SACC, said the call came after "having been associated with the difficulties and hurts brought about by detention particularly among the Black people of South Africa."

— *The Star*, 15.9.75

## WELL-BEING HAS BECOME WELL-HAVING

### toine eggenhuizen

The policy of Separate Development was designed to preserve the values of the West. There have been generous motives and ideals to provide a richer share in the goods and welfare of modern society for all.

But as the threatening implications of this policy begin to emerge, the wagon grinds down to a halt. It reveals its true purpose: to protect the style of life that affluence has made possible for a few only.

The fact is, reports the World Bank, that a quarter century of world attention to economic development has benefited a relatively few people. Out of 135 United Nations members, 97 are considered to be what is politely called the 'developing' category, although 42 of them in a comparably serious condition, are scarcely achieving any development. And economic indicators in a number of them are actually going backward. In short, people are getting poorer, hungrier, sicker.

This applies as much to the world at large, as to the microcosmos of South Africa. Newspaper reports about living conditions of blacks, of whatever shade, are revealing.

In a consumer economy of planned obsolescence "time is money", — the rich get richer, the poor get poorer. — production and profits must increase in order to ensure growth.

"A society in which consumption has to be artificially stimulated in order to keep production going is a society founded on trash and waste, and such a society is a house built upon sand", says Dorothy L. Sayers.

Well-being has become well-having. And to be well-having means to have more and more.

Those in control of a society based on "well-having" declare it obligatory for all. "That they may have more" put in its proper perspective becomes actually "That I may not have less".

The economic growth means rising levels of frustration and expectation for the majority of marginal people. The enormous wage increases, percentage wise, of the last few years for the black workers are a case in point. The rising inflation disarms the raises. The actual wage gap is growing.

Therefore, the "gun" of police, army, repressive laws, is important to protect the "well-having" of the whites and blacks, who have made the grade.

Numbing the damage done by the "gun" or by inflation as a result of cunningly worded consumer seduction in the task of the welfare idealists. These idealists will carry the brunt of ingratitude. In the words of the priest-philosopher Ivan Illich, they are the Charlie Browns: "How can you go wrong or lose, when you are so sincere".

Events in Angola recall the Congo of the early sixties, when many Charlie Browns suffered "ingratitude" (not to mention all others who suffered).

An Iron Curtain has been drawn up to protect the affluent whose aim of life has become having (using) instead of being.

The affluent fear revenge by the non-affluent, who have nothing to lose and nothing to be thankful for — revenge against the "gun" of oppression.

There is fear of losing what they have — this threatens life. For being has become having.

Affluent society is characterised by rising levels of consumerism. There is, however, an underlying subconscious fear that there will never be enough for all in this process of never-ending economic growth and expansion.

Society has been schooled to accept, to conform to what is known by teacher, curriculum, priest or minister, boss, authorities and tradition. School alienates people. It has prevented "being", it prevents exploring the unknown.

Hence immature people have always an in-built fear of the unknown, of the other — male or female, old or young, jew or gentile, white or blue collar worker, black or white, Xhosa or Sotho, English or Afrikaans. "They are so different", is the usual comment.

The combination of all these fears forces the affluent to accept the protection of the "gun" or law.

Once this protection has been created, it becomes an entity in itself. It grows as a naked instrument of power abused by the State. — growing from 90-days to 180-days to the Terrorism Act.

This protection will stifle even the attempts of the affluent to develop their personality, to question the system, to "think free", "because it riles them to believe that you perceive the web they weave".

When a society has become pregnant with fear it gives birth to fearsome laws. People become scared to say or do things, because of the frightening power of the security police. Affluent society has created a Frankenstein monster it cannot control or moderate.

The anti-Terrorism Act is the logical consequence of the white "South African way of life". \*

# WHAT DO WE MEAN BY MINISTRY?

james moulder

## Introduction

According to Wittgenstein, a philosopher is someone who assembles reminders for a particular purpose.<sup>1</sup> Although this may not be the last word on what philosophers do, it is all that I hope to accomplish in this exploration of what we mean by ministry. And I have decided to confine myself to some reminders because the church's ministry has such a long history, and has been and still is such very different things at different times and in different places, that, if one has to be brief, it is impossible to be accurate.

In addition I want to concentrate on the church's ministry to white South Africans. And I want to limit myself in this way for three reasons. *Firstly*, I am myself a white South African; consequently, I do not command either a total or a neutral position from which I can perceive and evaluate the church's ministry. *Secondly*, black South Africans have discovered that they have little or nothing to gain when old-fashioned liberals like myself speak about their problems. I welcome their discovery; and I want to respect their request to refrain from speaking about their problems; especially the problem of what they mean by ministry. *Thirdly*, a growing number of black theologians are saying what they mean by ministry. For example, Simon Gqubule's 'What is Black Theology?' and Gabriel Setiloane's 'Those Church Union Talks in South Africa' are far more adequate accounts of the kind of ministry to which black South Africans are called than anything I could ever write.<sup>2</sup>

In all that follows, therefore, the South Africans I have in mind are the white ones. At the same time, however, I am not convinced that white South Africans are the only, or even the best, people who can minister to their own needs. And by the same token, I am not convinced that black South Africans are the only, or even the best, people who can minister to their own needs. And by the same token, I am not convinced that black South Africans should allow themselves to dodge the question of how they can minister to white South Africans; and conversely. On this occasion, however, I will not discuss these questions which are raised by the restrictions I have placed on my comments because I have other fish to fry. More specifically, I simply want to explore three questions: What is a minister? How does one minister to people who are affluent and privileged? And, does a theological education prepare someone to minister to white South Africans?

## What is a minister?

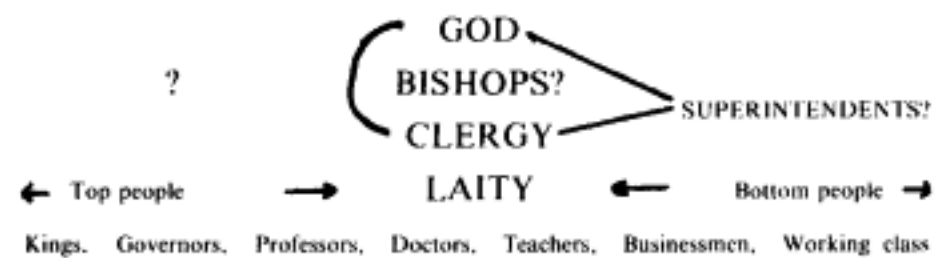
This question is not as innocent as it may appear to be. The *Oxford English Dictionary*, for example, first tells us that a minister is a servant and someone who acts as the agent or representative of a superior, and then warns us that this way of using the word is now rare! In addition, this dictionary identifies ministers and clergymen and illustrates its claim that there was a time when the words *minister* and *servant* were synonymous by quoting 2 Kings 6.15: when the servant (margin, minister) of the man of God was risen early ... !

The other entries under *minister* and its cognates are also worth studying and suggest that the *Oxford English Dictionary* is a splendid record of how English speakers have misunderstood the Biblical concept of ministry. It also suggests that any attempt to say what we mean by ministry rests on

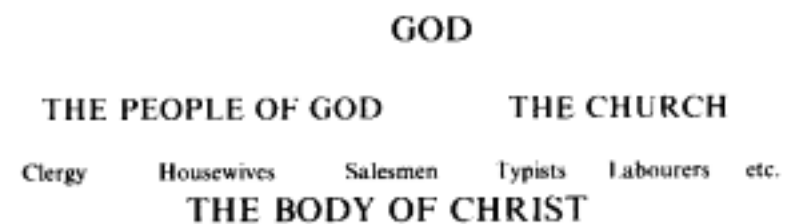
our convictions about the nature of the church; and, ultimately, on our convictions about the nature of man and of God. Consequently, something has to be said about these convictions. But because I must be brief and I want to raise questions rather than answer them, I will simply present two models of the nature of the church and a number of propositions for discussion.

Mark Gibbs and Ralph Morton use the following diagrams to contrast what they believe are the contemporary and the New Testament models of the church and, therefore, of the ministry.<sup>3</sup>

### A. The contemporary model of the church



### B. The New Testament model of the church



Although the Gibbs-Morton diagrams emphasise the fact that both the clergy and the laity are ministers, they fail to capture the fact that the church's ministry derives its essential nature from the person and work of Jesus Christ. But this aspect of what the New Testament means by ministry — and a great deal more — is captured by the five propositions which Markus Barth uses to state what *Ephesians* has to say about the church's work in the world:<sup>4</sup>

1. God is his own evangelist, and it is a pleasure for the Church to be used in his services.
2. The Church has no other destination and purpose than to live publicly to God's praise.
3. The members of the Church cannot give anything to the world, unless they receive it, together with the world, always and only from God.
4. The witness to God is borne in lowliness by the whole person of each saint, in every realm of life.
5. Only the true, full Gospel is good enough to be witnessed to the world by the Church.

These five propositions do not define a minister; nor do they say what the New Testament means by ministry. But they and the Gibbs-Morton diagrams remind us of some of the essential ingredients we have to include in any adequate account of what it means to be a minister or of what we mean by ministry. In addition, Barth's propositions can be converted into five ques-



tions which may be used to test the quality of the church's ministry in South Africa:

1. What is God doing to make himself known in South Africa and how does the church enjoy being used in his service?
2. What kind of advertisement for the power of the Gospel is the public life and ministry of the South African church?

I have, of course, failed to say what a minister is and what we mean by ministry. But I hope I have said enough about the nature of the church to indicate what has guided my reflections on how one ministers to people who are affluent and privileged.

#### **How does one minister to people who are affluent and privileged?**

I have two reasons for asking this question. Firstly, the church's ministry derives its essential nature from the person and work of Jesus Christ. And when all is said and done about his person and work, the most important fact is that 'Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners' (1 Timothy 1.15). Consequently, if his ministry is the model for ours, then the aim of our ministry must be to enable people to discover for themselves that the statement that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners is completely reliable and should be universally accepted. But if we are to succeed in this aim we need to discover what the Bible means by sin and salvation. More specifically, we need to discover that to sin is something much more serious than 'to offend against some principle or standard' (*Oxford English Dictionary*). As a careful reading of Genesis 2 and 3 suggests: to sin is to destroy our relationship to ourselves; to other people; to the natural world; and to God.<sup>5</sup> In fact, I want to suggest that perhaps we are uncertain what ministry means because we are uncertain what sin and, therefore, salvation is.

Another reason for asking how one ministers to people who are affluent and privileged is that this is what most white South Africans are. But Jesus had some pretty straightforward things to say about the affluent and privileged.

For example:

How happy are you who own nothing, for the kingdom of God is yours!

How happy are you who are hungry now, for you will be satisfied!

How happy are you who weep now, for you are going to laugh!  
How happy are you when men hate you and turn you out of their company; when they slander you and detest all that you stand for because you are loyal to the Son of Man. Be glad when that happens and jump for joy — your reward in Heaven is magnificent. For that is exactly how their fathers treated the prophets.

But how miserable for you who are rich, for you have had all your comforts!

How miserable for you who have all you want, for you are going to be hungry!

How miserable for you who are laughing now, for you will know sorrow and tears!

How miserable for you when everybody says nice things about you, for that is exactly how their fathers treated the false prophets.

(*Luke 6.20-26; J.B. Phillips' translation*)

Words like these give content to what sin, salvation and ministry mean when one has white South Africans in mind.

And unless the church enables those of us to whom this and similar warnings apply to discover that the statement that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners is completely reliable, her ministry will be inadequate and incomplete.

What then does ministry mean in this context? Quite frankly, I don't know; but I want to make two suggestions from which an answer may begin to emerge.

1. **If we want to minister adequately to white South Africans, we must first draw the practical consequences of some of Bonhoeffer's words and then act upon them:**

The Church is her true self only when she exists for humanity. As a fresh start she should give away all her endowments to the poor and needy. The clergy should live solely on the free-will offerings of their congregations, or possibly engage in some secular calling. She must take her part in the social life of the world, not lording it over men, but helping and serving them. She must tell men, whatever their calling, what it means to live in Christ, to exist for others. And in particular, our own Church will have to take a strong line with the blasphemies of *hybris*, power-worship, envy and humbug, for these are the roots of evil. She will have to speak of moderation, purity, confidence, loyalty, steadfastness, patience, discipline, content and modesty. She must not underestimate the importance of human example, which has its origin in the humanity of Jesus, and which is so important in the teaching of St. Paul. It is not abstract argument, but concrete example which gives her word emphasis and power.<sup>6</sup>

2. **If we want to minister adequately to white South Africans, we must discover and proclaim how Jesus Christ liberates us from the crippling effects of our wealth, our fear and our guilt.**

Each of the three aspects of this claim deserves an extensive comment, but here the following remarks and quotations must suffice:

#### (a) **Wealth**

*Apartheid and the Church* makes the following recommendations:<sup>7</sup>

**Church buildings:** The churches spend a disproportionate amount of money on buildings. We recommend that building projects be ecumenical and multi-functional in design. They should be of service to the community; for example, as crèches, nursery schools and community centres. This would make more money available for community development.

**General education:** What is spent by the state on African education is far less per capita than that devoted to the education of white children. If more adequate provision is made for the former our income tax must be increased. We propose that church members now tax themselves to provide bursaries and funds for additional teachers and classrooms in community schools. Such monies may be channelled through the churches or various reliable bursary funds (for example, the SAIRR or the SACC).

**Simplicity of life:** In view of the poverty of a large part of the population of our country, simplicity of life should be a hallmark of a Christian. Church leaders should ensure that symbols of their office and their style of leadership do not emphasise status and power, but are consistent with the life and authority of the Son of Man.

#### (b) **Fear**

*Apartheid and the Church* reminds us that many of our atti-

tudes and motives seriously inhibit the possibility of our being able to minister adequately to white South Africans. One of the most serious of these is fear:<sup>8</sup>

**our racial fear:** we fear that we may be dominated by other racial groups; we fear inter-racial mixture; the loss of our racial identity; the loss of our affluence and privilege.

**our fear of failure:** we value visible success very highly and it seems intolerable that we should risk worldly failure.

**our fear of controversy:** we prefer to avoid the controversy which is often involved in new experiences of teaching and learning; and, therefore, we strengthen our sectional groupings and identities.

**our fear of ostracism and isolation:** we often fear to say what has to be said because of the possibility that our friends, students or congregations will reject us.

**our fear of the loss of our identity:** we fear that we may lose the security of our cultural group.

**our fear of those in authority:** we fear, often without good reason, that we will be detained, banned, deported, or deprived of a passport.

### (c) Guilt

On the one hand, influential members of our society warn us not to feel guilty about our affluence and privilege. For example, Mr M.C. Botha, the Minister of Bantu Administration and Development, has issued a warning of this kind:

I wish to state unequivocally that the whites in South Africa, generally speaking, have a proud record and have no reason whatever to have a feeling of guilt about how they have behaved in helping the non-white peoples in South Africa on their way to self-realisation and self-development and their progress to their own destiny. There are other continents in the world where there is undoubtedly such a guilt complex on the part of certain groups, but we must guard against this blowing over to us as a spirit of the times.<sup>9</sup>

On the other hand, we are uncertain as to how we can experience God's forgiveness and how we can ask black South Africans to forgive us. And we are uncertain because we know that forgiveness by God and by the people we have wronged requires us to repent and to make restitution for what we have done.

Our wealth and privilege; our fear; our sense of guilt and our inability to face the consequences of being forgiven by God and by our fellowmen — these are the areas in which we have to discover what ministry means and how Jesus Christ liberates us. And we also need to discover how, if at all, a theological education prepares someone to minister to white South Africans in these areas.

### Does a theological education prepare someone to minister to white South Africans?

Theological education has become the whipping-boy for all the ills of the church; sometimes with justification but more often than not without either justification or any real awareness of the complex issues involved. In any case, I have not raised this question because I am looking for a scape-goat. It is simply a useful peg on which to hang some additional questions and two quotations with which I want to conclude. Here are the quotations and the questions:

Hans-Ruedi Weber maintains that  
the clergy, with other professional Church workers,

have a particular responsibility — to nourish, equip, help, and sustain the laity for their ministry.

Mark Gibbs and Ralph Morton argue that experimentation in new ways of theological training will only be tinkering with the problem unless two things are recognised:

One, the lesser, is that the fundamental training on which the future of the Church depends is the training of the laity and that the training of the clergy has to be seen as fitting into and serving this.

The second and by far the more important thing is the realisation that in a day when the laity is educated and when the intellectual questions are set by the laymen — the scientist, the economist and the politician — it is essential that theology be seen as the one subject to which all have to contribute, when the contribution of the secular specialist and the experience of the laity in their life and work in the world are of supreme importance.<sup>10</sup>

Here are some of the questions which these two quotations raise for our conception of the ministry and of theological education:

1. Are the curricula and other activities of any South African theological institution based on the ideas contained in these two quotations? If so, how is this done?
2. If no theological institution has based its curricula and other activities on the ideas contained in these two quotations, why is this so? For example:
  - 2.1 is it because these quotations embody an inadequate idea of what we mean by ministry?
  - 2.2 is it because these ideas cannot be implemented?
  - 2.3 is it because this is not how the clergy want to be trained?
  - 2.4 is it because this is not the kind of minister the various denominations either want or need?
  - 2.5 or is there some other reason why no theological institution has based its curricula and other activities on these ideas?
3. Does any theological institution invite lay people to contribute to the teaching and training of its students?
4. Do the various denominations want their theological training to produce people who can minister adequately to the needs of affluent and privileged South Africans? who can enable affluent and privileged South Africans to be liberated from the crippling effects of their wealth, their fear and their guilt? If so, what kind of theological education do the various denominations want their clergy to receive?

### Conclusion

It is obvious that I have not said what we mean by ministry, but I have tried to raise some of the questions which are at stake and, without answering them, to indicate the conceptions — or misconceptions! — which I would employ if I did have to tackle them myself.

### REFERENCES:

1. *Philosophical Investigations* (Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1958) p.50.
2. *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 8 (September, 1974) pp. 16-23; *South African Outlook* 104 (1974) pp.159-161 and 170.



3. *God's Frozen People* (Fontana Books, London, 1964) pp.11 and 14.
4. *The Brown Wall* (Collins, London, 1959) p.161.
5. I have commented on this concept of sin and some of its consequences in 'A Sketch for a Model of the Atonement' *Agape* (September, 1973) pp.9-14.
6. *Letters and Papers from Prison* (Fontana Books, London, 1959) p.166.
7. Report of the Spro-cas Church Commission, Johannesburg,

1972, pp.74-75. Compare Anthony Delius, 'Crisis of Confidence for SA's Whites', *Sunday Times Magazine*, September 29, 1974, p.5.

8. Report of the Spro-cas Church Commission, pp.18-21.
9. *Eastern Province Herald*, November 3, 1973. During the Second Reading of the Defence Further Amendment Bill the same warning was issued; *Hansard*, Fifth Parliament, columns 798-827 and 1450-1486.
10. *God's Frozen People*, pp.15 and 179-180. \*

## THE COMMUNITY OF SUPPORT

*(Fellowship through correspondence)*

This community has been formed to provide fellowship and contact for those who feel themselves called in faith to work for the liberation of men and the establishment of the kingdom of God. It is a loose community in structure, and sees its function as solely to serve the work and the personal growth of the brothers and sisters.

The fellowship of the community is extended to all who are prepared to undertake the following commitments:

- (i) to pray once each day the prayer of the community, and to make a short meditation on it;
- (ii) to notify the community's co-ordinator once each calendar month, of their continued interest and continued receipt of the community newsletter;
- (iii) to share both insights and problems with the other brothers and sisters, either through person-to-person correspondence, or through the newsletter;
- (iv) to respond in writing to the concerns of the brothers and sisters expressed in the newsletter or in personal correspondence, whenever they feel they have something relevant or valuable to contribute;
- (v) to notify the community co-ordinator of person-to-person correspondence, so that the community may be aware, and become more aware, of its duty to stand with its brothers and sisters, and with the wider human community. Notification of this type will dispense with the commitment required by (ii) to express continued interest, since it is in itself an indication of precisely that commitment;
- (vi) to continually assess the implications and challenge to their own lives, of the new values Jesus taught as the values of the kingdom of God.

The community extends its fellowship to all. It is not a question of what one can contribute, in terms of talents, time, energy or material support. Simply by their fellowship, brothers and sisters will be sharing with the community that which the community desires most of all. There are no givers and no takers, only brothers and sisters sharing and growing together.

The community gathers itself around the risen Jesus, hoping and striving in faith and in action for the coming of his kingdom. It sees the liberation of all men as an integral part of the kingdom, and the brothers and sisters examine liberation in the light of Jesus' teaching. In view of that teaching, they interpret certain new values, in an attempt to learn an existential compassion for the whole human community. These values are sharing as opposed to possession, service as

opposed to domination, equality as opposed to status and privilege, and solidarity as opposed to prejudice.

Faith in this good news is an essential element of making it come to be in our own time. The brothers and sisters pray for that faith, and attempt to strengthen it in each other, by their mutual concern, and above all by embracing the challenges of their own lives and environments.

The brethren adopt this form of community life not out of exclusivity of purpose or belief, but as an existential recognition of their personal frailty and ambivalence. They hope both to acknowledge their weakness and overcome it, in the single action of a continuing fellowship around the risen Lord.

To join the community, send name and address to:  
Tim Dunne, 4 Welcam Flats, 361 Commercial Road,  
Pietermaritzburg, 3201, Natal. \*

### letter to editor:

## "IDENTITY" HAS LITTLE USE

Dear Sir,

A corner-stone in the political system of Apartheid is formed by the concept "identity". Even your latest editorial (September) gives some value to this concept of identity.

I would like to submit to you what Robert Stoll wrote in 1968, "My colleague Nathan Leites, Ph.D., has concluded after a review of the literature that the term 'identity' has little use other than as a fancy dress in which to disguise vagueness, ambiguity, tautologies, lack of clinical data and poverty of explanation."

The birth of the Afrikaner people would never have taken place if the original Dutch, German and French settlers had conserved their so-called groups identities.

"Identity" is nothing more than a fancy dress for naked racialism and baasskap to prevent the birth of a truly South African nation which can give a fair distribution of the country's wealth to all.

— Toine Eggenhuizen

*You attack something which I have not written in the editorial. The editorial did not give "some value to this concept of identity" with regard to the "System of Apartheid".*

— Roelf Meyer

## A SOUTH AFRICAN CHRISTIAN ON TRIAL

*"The Trial of Beyers Naudé: Christian witness and the rule of law" (Search Press, London, in conjunction with Ravan Press, Johannesburg, 1975).*

*A new book shows clearly the daunting decisions which the South African situation forces Christians like Dr Beyers Naudé to take.*

"When I think of the men who have shown me what it means to be a Christian," says Lord Ramsey, the former Archbishop of Canterbury, in his preface to "The Trial of Beyers Naudé", "my thoughts will always go quickly to Beyers Naudé."

This is a remarkable testimony for the former leader of the Anglican Communion to make about a man on the other side of the world who has been deprived of his ministry in the Dutch Reformed Church of South Africa. But it is not the only remarkable thing about this book.

It has been edited by the International Commission of Jurists in Geneva. It has been produced in a matter of weeks — the last reference in it is to the declaration of May 30, 1975, by the South African Government that the Christian Institute which Dr Naudé heads is an "affected organisation." And it gives the spiritual biography and the mature Christian convictions of a man uniquely caught at the front-line between a Government which sees itself as Christian and Christians who believe that their faith puts them in opposition to their own Government.

The trial of Beyers Naudé was for refusing to give evidence to the Schlebusch Commission set up by the South African Parliament to inquire into 'certain organisations', among which was the Christian Institute.

A former minister in the biggest Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa — the N.G. Kerk — and the son of a minister, an Afrikaner and for years a member of the Afrikaners' secret Broederbond organisation, Beyers Naudé came slowly but surely to see that the churches in South Africa, including his own, were ignoring the clear teaching of the Bible and of their faith on the race issue. After the Cottesloe Consultation of South African Churches in December 1960, he was asked to lead the Christian Institute — set up by Christians who hoped to move their churches to do what the Gospel demanded of them, in the South African situation. Despite his rejection by his own Church, Beyers Naudé accepted.

The Christian Institute was an open organisation which rejected violence and sought justice and reconciliation between all South Africans, but from the outset it was feared by the National Party Government of South Africa and also by the Dutch Reformed Church. The 'conversion' of Beyers Naudé, as an Afrikaner of the Afrikaners, undoubtedly had something to do with these attitudes.

As the South African Government became increasingly fearful of organisations which were spreading "liberalistic" solutions to South Africa's grave human problems, the Schlebusch Commission was named to inquire into four of them, including the Christian Institute. It was a commission entirely composed of Parliamentarians from the two main parties, its hearings were in secret, it could compel evidence from anyone

it wished without any of the normal safeguards of a court of law, and it could make recommendations to the Government which could bring down on those 'investigated' some of the harshest punishments known to the notorious South African Statute Book.

Beyers Naudé refused to take the oath or give evidence when called to do so. His reasons were many: The South African Prime Minister and members of the parties from which the Commission was named had all, he said, made prejudicial statements about the organisations to be investigated. The Commission's composition was political and in no way judicial.

There was nothing about the Christian Institute which the Government did not already know. Banning orders placed on leaders of the National Union of South African Students immediately following a previous Schlebusch inquiry showed that the investigation could lead to people being persecuted in an un-Christian and unfair manner, without legal process, and a Christian should not — said Dr Naudé — co-operate with such a procedure.

There was no information given to those who testified about the accusations they faced, no right to defence and no possibility of cross-examining the accusers.

### A major South African debate

His trial could have been a short and obscure affair, held in a small magistrate's court in Pretoria. It became instead the centre of a major South African debate about Christian witness and the powers of modern governments to make laws which punish outside the courts those who disagree with them politically.

The heart of Beyers Naudé's defence was not about political alternatives but about Christian conviction. He told the court that his own personal realisation about the need to proclaim openly the implications of the Gospel in South Africa came to him from St. Matthew's Gospel, where Christ says:

"So do not be afraid of them. There is nothing covered up which will not be uncovered, nothing hidden that will not be revealed in broad daylight; what you hear whispered you must shout from the rooftops."

It was in the spirit, he testified, that the work of the Christian Institute had been conducted. And his Christian conscience would not now allow him to give evidence to a secret commission which denied all the rights given to any accused person by the law.

During his evidence — which is given in detail in "The Trial of Beyers Naudé" — he read the sermon which he had given to his congregation at the time he was excluded from his Church. In it he talks about his Church's "deliberate and fear-inspired process of isolation, with its tragic withdrawal from the Holy Catholic Church in South Africa, in Africa ..."

When the magistrate asked him why, as an "individual in a democratic system" he had taken a stand against an action of the State which had been discussed in Parliament, Beyers Naudé made it clear that it was the secrecy dictated by fear which appeared to lie behind the Schlebusch Commission's



work to which he objected as a Christian.

"Why," he asked, "is there any basic hesitation from the side of the Government to follow the ordinary procedures of our judiciary if there is an alleged charge, or an inquiry which could lead to a charge ...? On this question no one has given me a satisfactory answer."

The magistrate found him guilty and sentenced him to a fine of 50 Rand or one month's imprisonment, with a further three months suspended for three years. An appeal court overturned the magistrate's conviction, but its decision was reversed in turn by a higher appeal court. A fresh appeal followed on grounds which the first appeal court did not consider.

Meanwhile the Schibusch Commission made its report, strongly condemning the Christian Institute, which was promptly declared an 'affected organisation' and prevented from receiving money from outside South Africa. The Commission's report and the Government's action have been opposed by South African Christians with greater unanimity than any other action of recent years has aroused.

As Robert Birley comments at the beginning of "The Trial of Beyers Naudé", as we read the account of the trial, "slowly the tables are turned; it is the South African Government and, to Dr Naudé's obvious deep sorrow, his own Church, who have to answer the charges."

—Africa Acts Feature

## N.G.K. MOET NIE AS BAAS OPTREE

BLOEMFONTEIN. — Die N.G. Kerk moenie teenoor die jong kerke optree soos 'n baas wat gunste uitdeel nie, maar moet taktvol, geduldig en vergeeflik wees, het ds. P.M. Khunong, Skriba van die Vrystaatse Sinode van die N.G. Kerk in Afrika, gister hier op die Vrystaatse Sinode van die N.G. Kerk gesê.

Ds. Khunong het die N.G. Kerk in Afrika se groete aan die Vrystaatse N.G.K. oorgedra en gesê: „Ons weet baie blankes bedoel nie om só op te tree nie, maar daar is baie wie se gesindheid verkeerd is.”

Hy het gesê daar is wedersydse dankbaarheid en liefde tussen die Moederkerk en die jonger kerke. „Ons moet lig loop om in dié tyd van gespanne verhoudinge nie toe te laat dat die duivel dié goeie betrekkinge versleg nie.

„Ons as jong kerk wil saamwerk, nie as ondergeskikte kinders nie, maar as broers van een algemene kerk. Ons vra nie net geld en verder niks nie, maar wil ook nie net omdat ons geld van u ontvang, as kinders beskou word nie.

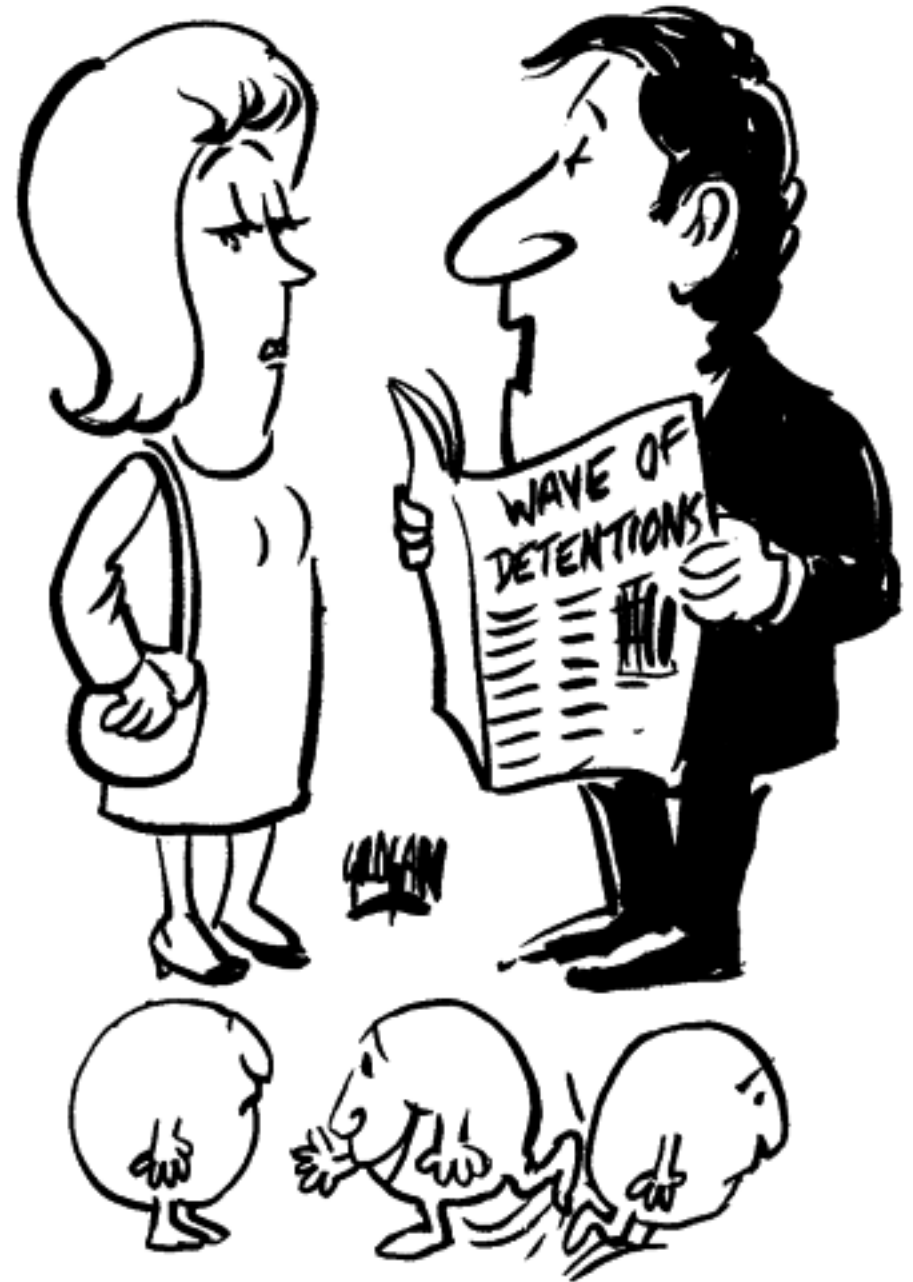
„U is meer bevoorreg as ons, U is meer ervare en het meer rykdom. U moet taktvol optree, anders maak u ons as dogter baie seer. Daar is baie gebruike wat ons seermaak.

„Die aanspreekvorm, die manier waarop u ons by u huise ontvang, die manier waarmee met ons gepraat word. Niemand hou daarvan om aangespreek te word met 'n skelwoord nie. Ons hou nie daarvan as daar met ons gepraat word soos met kinders wat niks weet nie.

„As blankes met ons in gebroke Afrikaans praat asof ons geen beter taalgebruik kan verstaan nie, word ons diep gekwets,” het ds. Khunong gesê.

In sy antwoord op die groeteboodskap het prof. Bernard Odendaal gesê die verhouding tussen moeder- en dogterkerk kan nooit verander nie.

—Die Burger, 20.9.75



**"It looks as if the Government is showing the hand of friendship abroad and the foot of suppression at home."**

— Cape Times, 17.9.75

