



PRO VERITATE

BEYERS NAUDÉ

Die Christelike Instituut en die Kerk

ELFIE STRASSBERGER

A New Fellowship Becomes Relevant

DAVID PERK

Identity, Ecumenism and Loyalty

JAMES MOULDER

Who's Afraid of Aggiornamento?

Volume VI, No. 8 | Jaargang VI, No. 8

December 15 Desember

PRO VERITATE

REDAKSIE

REDAKTEUR:

Dr. B. Engelbrecht.

REDAKSIONELE KOMITEE:

Biskop B. B. Burnett; Eerw. J. de Gruchy; Eerw. A. W. Habelgaarn; Eerw. E. E. Mahabane; Eerw. J. E. Moulder; Ds. C. F. B. Naudé; (Voorsitter); Eerw. R. Orr; Prof. dr. A. van Selms.

ADMINISTRASIE/ KORRESPONDENSIE

SIRKULASIEBESTUURDER:

Dr. W. B. de Villiers.

Alle briewe vir die redaksie en administrasie aan: Posbus 31135, Braamfontein, Johannesburg.

INTEKENGELD

Intekengeld is vooruit-betaalbaar.

Land- en seepos: R1 (10/- of \$1.40) — Afrika; R1.50 (15/- of \$2.10) — Oorsee; 17/6 — Engeland.

Lugpos: R2.00 (£1 of \$2.80) — Afrika; R3.50 (£1.17.6 of \$5.00) — Oorsee; £2 — Engeland.

Tjeks en posorders moet uitgemaak word aan Pro Veritate (Edms.) Bpk., Posbus 31135, Braamfontein, Johannesburg.

LET WEL

Die redaksie van Pro Veritate verklaar dat hy nie verantwoordelik is vir menings en standpunte wat in enige ander artikel van hierdie blad verskyn as die inleidingsartikel en redaksionele verklarings nie.

PRO VERITATE verskyn elke 15de van die maand.

(Prys per enkel-eksemplaar 10c)

CHRISTELIKE MAANDBLAD VIR SUIDELIKE AFRIKA CHRISTIAN MONTHLY FOR SOUTHERN AFRICA

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

IN HIERDIE UITGAWE

- Ds. Beyers Naudé bespreek die noodsaaklikheid van die bestaan van die Christelike Instituut en sy verhouding tot die kerke in Suid-Afrika. Bl. 4
- Dr. Elfie Strassberger stel ons lesers bekend met verskillende metodes van Bybelstudie. Bl. 8
- David Perk beskou die ekumeniese beweging as 'n uitdaging aan mense en groepe om uit te kom uit die grense en bindinge van hulle identiteit om, sonder prysgawe van hulle identiteit, te kom tot aanvaarding van dit wat buite hulle lê. Bl. 12
- Prof. B. B. Keet beveel die ekumeniese nuuspublikasie „Inter Nos“ (ds. W. A. Landman) sterk aan, en bespreek enkele aspekte van die sendingwerk van die Christian Reformed Church van Amerika in Afrika. Bl. 13
- Ds. James Moulder doen verslag van sy indrukke van die Derde Wêreldkongres van die Lekaapostolaat wat vroeër vanjaar in Rome plaasgevind het. Bl. 14

IN THIS ISSUE . . .

- The Rev. Beyers Naudé deals with the necessity of the existence of the Christian Institute and its relation to the Churches in South Africa. P. 4
- Dr. Elfie Strassberger introduces our readers to various methods of Bible study. P. 8
- David Perk sees the ecumenical movement as a challenge to individuals and groups to step out beyond the bounds and bonds of their identity and, without relinquishing their identity, to embrace that which lies beyond it. P. 12
- Professor B. B. Keet strongly recommends the ecumenical news sheet "Inter Nos" (the Rev. W. A. Landman) and dwells upon some aspects of the missionary work of the Christian Reformed Church of America in Africa. P. 13
- The Rev. James Moulder renders an account of his impressions of the Third Congress of the Lay Apostolate which took place in Rome earlier this year. P. 14

Inleidingsartikel:

Die Vrede van die Ekumene

In die jaarlikse wêreldwye viering van Kersfees is 'n verdeelde kerk en 'n verdeelde Christendom telkens weer verenig. Eintlik is die hele ekumene tot ver oor die grense van die kerk heen daarin verenig. En hoe oningewyd en ongedissiplineerd, hoe raar en koddig die meedoen aan die blye Christussees in vele gevalle ook mag wees, tog is die wêreld dan 'n feesterein rondom die middelpunt van sy heil. Kersfees is by uitstek 'n Christelike wêreldfees wat spot met 'n verdeelde kerk en 'n verdeelde Christendom; wat dit negeer, wat dit veroordeel.

Dit sou natuurlik ook gesê kon word van elke ander Christelike feesdag waarop die heilsfeite herdenk word. Goeie Vrydag, Paasfees en Pinkster is ewe min as Kersfees in te pas in die patroon van 'n verdeelde kerk en 'n verskeurde Christendom. Wie by die kruis, die leë graf of onder die menigte in Jerusalem tydens die uitstorting van die Heilige Gees staan sonder om die getuienis in sy hart te voel dat hy daar staan met al die heiliges, verenig in die gemeenskap van een Here, een geloof, een doop, staan daar tot 'n oordeel oor homself — „sonder bruilofskleed“.

Maar by die geleentheid van die viering van Kersfees voel ons dit tog nog veel sterker aan. Miskien is dit die evangelie self wat daartoe aanleiding gee. In die ander heilsgebeurtenisse is daar immers 'n sterk konnotasie van die gewelddadigheid waarmee God in Christus gehandel het om sy heil as gawe van sy genade te laat uitstroom om die aarde te vul „met die kennis van die Here soos die waters die seebodem oordek“ (Jes. 11:9 en Hab. 2:14). Op Golgota is in die kruisdood van Jesus die offer van die versoening gebring waarkragtens die volke van die aarde, dié wat ver en dié wat naby is, as medeburgers van die heiliges en huisgenote van God toegang verkry tot die vrede van sy gemeenskap; deur die krag van sy opstanding word die wêreld die geregtigheid deelagtig wat Hy deur sy dood verwerf het; met sy hemelvaart is hy „uitermate verhoog“, bokant al die hemele as Here van die wêreld voor wie elke knie sal buig en aangaande wie elke tong sy Heerskap sal bely; en in die uitstorting van die Heilige Gees sien ons, weliswaar nog binne die kring van die Joodse religie, hoe dit na alle kante begin uitbreek.

Kruis, opstanding, hemelvaart en pinkster spreek van die onstuitbare krag waarmee God in Christus sy geregtigheid opgerig het tot heil van al die nasies.

Maar by hierdie heilsgebeurtenisse wat die fundamente van ons hoop en die hoekstene van ons geloof is, kry ons weinig te sien. Hier is dit eerder die element van verbergings wat die toon aangee — 'n kruis, dan 'n graf, dan 'n leë graf, en die hemel. Die vrede waarin alle dinge wat in die hemele sowel as op die aarde is onder een hoof in Christus verenig word, het in hierdie dinge sy ewige grondslag, die waarborg van sy realisering. Maar die

aard daarvan vir die duur van die tyd en van die eeue, is ook hierdeur bepaal. Die geloof staan op die hemel gerig vanwaar ons die Verlosser verwag, en die gang van die geloofsweg is 'n opneem van die kruis elke dag. Ons dra die hoop in die verbryseling van ons hart en ons het die vrede nie anders nie as daarin dat ons dit najaag tot op die jongste dag. Uit die waarheid daarvan leef ons, in 'n stryd en in 'n worsteling wat duur totdat die geloof eenmaal oorgaan in aanskouing. Die Christelike eeue en die geskiedenis van die kerstening van die nasies staan in die teken van hierdie stryd en worsteling in geloof en hoop.

En tog, iets van die vrede van die aanskouing, iets van die aanskouing van die vrede wat Jesus deur sy dood vir die ekumene verwerf het, kom reeds oor ons as ons die geboorteberig in die Evangelie van Mattheüs lees. Die teenwoordigheid van die „wyse manne uit die Ooste“ wat oor Jerusalem in Betlehem aankom om die Kindjie te aanbid en met goud en wierook en mirre te vereer — klaarblyklik uit die kategorie van die „wat vroeër ver was“ en „vreemdelinge ten aansien van die verbonde van die belofte“ (Ef. 2:12, 13) — is soos 'n handgeld van die ewige vrede in die ryk van heerlijkheid. Dit is soos 'n verruklike tafereel uit die apokaliptiese toneel van Jesaja 60. Dit is 'n teken, 'n seël en 'n onderpand van die vrederyk waarin alle „vyandskap“ vernietig sal wees en God alles in almal sal wees.

En tog is dit niks anders nie as die beeld en die omtrekke van die Christelike Kerk wat hier reeds sigbaar word. In 'n verskeurde wêreld waar vyandskap heers en middelmure van skeiding soos ondeurdringbare versperringe in die weg staan van die ware ontmoeting en gemeenskap met God en die naaste waarin ons die vrede vind, staan die kerk as belofte en waarborg dat Christus in sy vlees die vyandskap tot niet gemaak het, die middelmure van skeiding afgebreek het, Jood en heiden saam in Homself tot een nuwe mens geskep het en vir albei deur een Gees die weg tot die Vader gebaan het.

Die vrede van die ekumene is inderdaad apokalipties van aard. As 'n realiteit in die verbergings, nl. in die kruis en in die hemelvaart van die Heiland, is dit wesenlik 'n vrede wat op sy openbaring en op sy onthulling wag. Dog soos die wyse manne uit die Ooste in Betlehem verskyn het om, terwyl alles nog in diepe duisternis gehul was — die duisternis waarin die Woord vlees geword het en die Vredevoers sy lydensweg van miskenning tot die dood in 'n vyandige wêreld betree het — saam met alle verlostes te kniel voor sy aangesig en te jubel in sy ewige lig, so verskyn daar tog wel meer sulke tekens van die komende heerlijkheid in hierdie wêreld.

Rondom die persoon van Jesus word dit sigbaar — onmiskenbaar as aankondigings van die

dagende lig, maar dit deel met Hom die miskening, die smaad wat Hy „buitekant die l er“ moet dra. So verskyn ook die kerk in hierdie w reld as 'n teken van die ewige vrederyk. Dit is die heerlikheid van die kerk, dat die vrede van die ekumene in hom sigbaar word. In hom is die middelmuur van skeiding reeds afgebreek. Die wat ver was en die wat naby was is hier reeds in Jesus tot een nuwe mens geskep.

In die kerk, di  vreemde „apokaliptiese“ verskyning uit die komende nuwe w reld van God, is daar geen Griek en Jood, besnedene en onbesnedene, barbaar, Scith, slaaf en vryman nie, maar is almal verenig in die aanbidding van die  en Naam, word almal saamgevoeg tot 'n heilige tempel in die Here, saam opgebou tot 'n woning van God in die Gees.

Dat dit die wese van die kerk uitmaak soos hy in hierdie w reld verskyn, is, in die lig van sy teken- en beloftekarakter, 'n heerlike vanselfsprekendheid. Dat sy plek in die w reld een van miskening en sy weg deur die w reld een van stryd is — hy

staan immers rondom Jesus geskaar — verminder daar niks aan nie en versteur nie sy vrede nie.

Maar die smart van die eeue is dat die kerk in 'n stryd met homself gewikkel geraak het. Des te dieper besef ons dit as ons daaraan dink hoe dit, soos dit reeds uit die geboorteberig van die Heiland blyk, rondom Jesus wat sy Kerk vergader eenvoudig gebeur dat daar „van ooste en weste“ aangekom word soos wat duiwe na hulle vensters aangevlieg kom (Jes. 60:8) om saam met Abraham en Isak en Jakob aan te sit in die koninkryk van die hemele.

„Hy is ons vrede“ — dit is die wese van die kerk en die evangelie vir die ekumene. Die kerk is teken en belofte van die ewige vrederyk. Maar waarvan kan hy in sy verdeeldheid en verskeurdheid, in onderlinge vervreemding en vyandskap die teken wees? Soos telkens deur so baie eeue van sy ontarding heen, so stel die viering van die Kersgebeure en 'n wereld wat met hunkering en honger daaraan meedoen, die Kerk van Christus weer vanjaar voor hierdie diep-beskamende, sielsverootmoedigende vraag.

*Die redaksie en direksie van Pro Veritate wens al ons lesers 'n
geseende Kersfees toe. Mag genade en vrede vir u almal
vermeerder word deur die kennis van God, en Jesus, onse Here!*

Editorial:

The Peace of the Ecumene

A divided Church and a divided Christianity is repeatedly united in the annual world-wide celebration of Christmas. In fact, the whole ecumene stretching far beyond the boundaries of the Church is united in it. And however uninitiated and undisciplined, however strange and odd the participation in the joyous festival of Christ may be in many cases, the world is then a festival-site surrounding the centre of its salvation. Christmas is a Christian world-festival par excellence which mocks a divided Church and a divided Christianity; which denies it, which condemns it.

This could also be said, of course, of every other Christian festival-day on which the great facts of salvation are commemorated. Good Friday, Easter and Pentecost are just as little to be fitted into the pattern of a divided Church and a disrupted Christendom as Christmas. Whoever stands at the cross, the empty grave or among the crowds in Jerusalem during the outpouring of the Holy Spirit without

experiencing in his heart the witness that he stands there in the company of all God's people, joined in the community of one Lord, one faith, one baptism, stands there as a judgment upon himself — "not having a wedding garment".

When we celebrate Christmas, however, we feel this far more strongly. Perhaps it is the gospel itself which gives rise to this. For in the other events of salvation there is present a strong element of the forcibleness with which God acted in Christ in order to let his salvation stream forth as a gift of his grace to fill the earth with "the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Is. 11:9 and Hab. 2:14). In the death on the cross of Jesus on Golgotha the sacrifice of reconciliation was made on the strength of which the peoples of the earth, those who were far off and those who were near by, gained access to the peace of God's communion as fellow-citizens with God's people and members of his household; through the power of his resurrection the world

becomes a participant in the righteousness which He earned through his death; at his ascension He was "raised to the heights", above all the heavens as Lord of the World before whom every knee should bow and concerning whom every tongue should confess his Sovereignty; and in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit we see, though still within the circle of Jewish religion, how it starts breaking out in all directions.

The cross, the resurrection, the ascension and Pentecost — they all speak of the irresistible power with which God established his righteousness in Christ for the salvation of all the nations.

But in the case of these blessed events which are the foundations of our hope and the cornerstones of our faith, there is little for us to behold. Here it is rather the element of concealment which strikes the keynote — a cross, then a grave, then an empty grave, and heaven. The peace in which all things which are in heaven as well as upon earth are united under one head in Christ finds its eternal basis, the guarantee of its realisation, in these things. But its nature for the duration of time and of the ages is also determined by them. Faith is directed at the heavens whence we expect the Saviour, and the course of the way of faith is one of taking up the cross every day. Hope lies concealed behind the shattering of our heart and we have no peace other than in reaching towards it until the end of time. We live by virtue of its truth, in a process of turmoil and in a struggle which lasts until one day faith gives place to sight. The Christian centuries and the history of the Christianisation of the nations stand under the sign of this struggle and turmoil in faith and hope.

And yet, something of the peace that will come with the immediacy of sight and something of the experience of the peace which which Jesus gained for the ecumene through his death, already descends upon us when we read the birth report in the Gospel of St. Matthew. The presence of the "wise men from the East" who arrived in Bethlehem via Jerusalem to worship the Child and to bring homage to Him with gold and incense and myrrh — obviously gentiles from the category of those "who once were far off" and "strangers to the community of Israel, outside God's covenant and the promise that goes with them" (Eph. 2:12, 13) — is like a first instalment of the eternal peace in the kingdom of glory. It is like an enchanting scene from the apocalyptic picture painted in Isaiah 60. It is a sign, a seal and a pledge of the kingdom of

peace in which all "enmity" shall be destroyed and God shall be all in all.

And yet it is nothing else than the image and the outlines of the Christian Church which are here already becoming visible. In a world torn asunder, where enmity rules and dividing walls stand like impenetrable obstacles in the way of the true encounter and communion with God and the neighbour in which we find peace, the Church stands as promise and guarantee that Christ destroyed this enmity in his flesh, broke down the dividing wall, created out of Jew and gentile a single new humanity in Himself and provided access to the Father for both alike in the one Spirit.

The peace of the ecumene is indeed apocalyptic by nature. As a reality in concealment, to wit, in the cross and in the ascension of the Saviour, it is essentially a peace which awaits its own revelation and unveiling. Yet, just as the wise men from the East appeared in Bethlehem to kneel with all those saved before Him and to rejoice in his eternal light, while everything was still veiled in the deepest darkness — the darkness in which the Word became flesh and the Prince of Peace entered upon his suffering of misjudgment unto death in an inimical world — so more such signs of the coming of the glory into this world do indeed appear.

They become visible around the person of Jesus — unmistakable as heralds of the dawning of the light, but they share with Him the misjudgment, the scorn which He must bear "outside the camp". Thus also the Church in this world appears as a sign of the eternal kingdom of peace, his is the glory of the Church, that the peace of the ecumene becomes visible in it. In it the dividing wall is already broken down. Those who were far off and those who were near by are already created into a single new humanity in Jesus.

In the Church, this strange "apocalyptic" phenomenon from the coming new world of God, there is no Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and freeman, but all are united in the adoration of the one Name, all are bounded together into a holy temple in the Lord, built with all the rest into a spiritual dwelling for God in the Spirit.

It is gloriously obvious that this constitutes the essence of the Church as it appears in this world, in view of its nature as sign and promise. That its place in the world is one of misjudgment and its way through the world one of struggle — for it stands gathered around Jesus, to be sure — do not

The editorial staff and directors of Pro Veritate wish all our readers a blessed Christmas. Grace and peace be multiplied unto all of you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord.

detract from this fact at all and do not disturb its peace.

But the agony of the ages is that the Church became embroiled in a struggle with itself. This we realise so much more intensely when we think how, as already becomes evident from the birth report of the Saviour, it simply happens that people flock around Jesus who gathers his Church, "from the east and west" as the doves to their windows (Is. 60:8) to sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.

"He is our peace" — this is the essence of the Church and the gospel for the ecumene. The Church is a sign and a promise of the eternal kingdom of peace. But of what can it be the sign in its dividedness and disruption, in its internal estrangement and enmity? As has happened so often throughout the centuries of its degeneration, the celebration of the Christmas event and a world which participates in it with yearning and hunger once again this year confronts the Church of Christ with this deeply embarrassing, spiritually humiliating question.

DIE CHRISTELIKE INSTITUUT EN DIE KERK

(Toespraak Stellenbosch, 21 September 1967)

BEYERS NAUDÉ

INLEIDING: DIE EKUMENIESE BEWEGING

„Alles het sy bepaalde uur, en vir elke saak onder die hemel is daar 'n tyd". Met hierdie woorde het die wyse Salomo die waarheid vertolk wat die geskiedenis bevestig het dat die lewe van Kerk en gemeenskap gekenmerk word deur besondere vraagstukke wat in besondere tydvakke na vore tree en om 'n antwoord roep. Een van daardie vrae wat die afgelope halfeeue die voortdurende aandag van die Kerk opgeëis het, was die vraagstuk van die ekumene: die eenheid en die verskeidenheid van die Kerk.

Sommige kerke en Christene sien hierdie Bybelse eis om eenheid bloot as 'n onsigbare gesteldheid van geestelike verbondenheid aan Jesus Christus wat nie noodwendig uitdrukking in sigbare vorm vereis nie. Ander weer sien dit as 'n eenheid wat beide sigbaar en onsigbaar kan wees en waarin kerklike geskeidenheid nie as sondige verskynsel gesien hoef te word nie. Ander weer vertolk die Skrif so dat die Kerk van Christus nie net 'n onsigbare, maar ook duidelik sigbare eenheid moet vertoon — 'n eenheid waarbinne die ryke verskeidenheid van tale, kulture en nasionaliteite tot harmoniese openbaring kan kom deur die alles oorheersende gemeenskaplike geloof in en liefde tot Christus, die Here en Hoof van sy Kerk. Die oorgrote deel van die Kerk van Christus in die wêreld aanvaar vandag dat laasgenoemde siening die suiwerste vertolking bied van die Bybelse eis van eenheid soos eerstens tot uitdrukking gebring in Christus se gebed („dat almal een mag wees net soos U, Vader in My en Ek in U; dat hulle ook in Ons een mag wees, sodat die wêreld kan glo dat U My gestuur het") en soos verder beliggam in die samestelling, lidmaatskap en lewe van die Nuwe Testamentiese Kerk.

Uit hierdie worsteling met die uitsprake van die Skrif het daar die

afgelope dekades in alle Kerke van alle wêrelddele beweginge ontstaan wat die herstel van die eenheid van Christene en die eenwees van die Kerk van Christus gesoek het. Daaruit het gevloei die organisatoriese eenwording van baie Kerke met ooreenstemmende belydenisse en die voortgaande onderhandelinge van baie ander Kerke om te sien of eenwording op grond van hulle onderskeie belydenisse moontlik is. Daaruit het gevloei die totstandkoming van talle ekumeniese rade en liggame in baie wêrelddele wat soek om, in gehoorsaamheid aan die Skrif, uitvoering te gee aan Christus se gebed en gebod.

In gehoorsaamheid aan die wil van God vir sy Kerk is daar dus oor die hele wêreld 'n beweging van Kerke en Christene wat soek om die verbokkeling van Christus se liggaam soos o.a. so duidelik kenbaar geword het in eeuelange kerklike verdeeldheid en Christelike afsydigheid, te prober heel. Sommige van hierdie bewegings het al groot vrug en seën afgewerp; ander was minder geslaag omdat hulle vorme van eenheid wou soek ten koste van Bybelse waarheid. Maar in sy geheel gesien is daar die dankbare erkenning in die Kerk van Christus oor die wêreld dat ons hier aanskou en bevoorreg is om deel te hê aan 'n beweging van die Heilige Gees wat

besig is met vernuwing van die Kerk van Christus. En daar is geen enkele kerk in watter wêrelddeel ook al wat nie deur hierdie beweging van Gods Gees geraak word nie — ook nie in Suid-Afrika nie.

DIE EKUMENE EN SUID-AFRIKA

Wat Suid-Afrika betref is die patroon van kerklike geskeidenheid basies dieselfde as in meeste ander lande van die wêreld behalwe dat in drie opsigte ons posisie anders en miskien meer gekompliseerd is:

1. In 'n groot sektor van ons Bantoe-gemeenskap het hierdie geskeidenheid vir die gesonde voortgang van die Christendom uiters nadelige afmetinge aangeneem in die voortgaande versplintering onder die Bantoe Onafhanklike (Separatiste)-Kerke. Waar daar in 1913 ongeveer 30 van hierdie Kerke was en in 1918 sowat 76 het hulle in 1932 gestyg tot 320, in 1948 tot ongeveer 800, in 1955 tot 1,286 terwyl die skatting is dat daar vandag meer as 2,200 sulke Kerke en groepe bestaan. Lidmaatskap het gegroei vanaf 9.6% van die totale Bantoebevolking in 1946 (761,000) tot 20.1% (of 2,188,303) van die totale Bantoebevolking in 1960. Ons kan dus sonder vrees vir teëspraak sê dat daar geen ander land is waar so 'n versplintering in aparte Kerke bestaan as in Suid-Afrika nie.

2. Die ekumeniese beweging as sodanig (veral soos verteenwoordig deur die Wêreldraad van Kerke) is in ons land, hoofsaaklik om politieke redes, deur volgehoue propaganda oor die radio en in geskifte (veral van Afrikaans-kerklike kant) só

verdag gemaak dat die Bybelse eenheidsopdragte waaraan deelnemende Kerke en kerkleiers soek om gehoorsaam te wees grootliks verberg word agter die stofwolke van suspisie wat so behendig deur die vyande van die ekumeniese beweging opgewerp word. Dit gebeur óók in sommige ander lande — met egter dié verskil dat waar Kerke en hulle leiers daar bewus word van sodanige valshede en verdraaiinge wat binne-in die Kerk in die naam van waarheid aangebied word, dáár onmiddellik die geleentheid gesoek en gebied word om deur gesprek, debat en geskrif hierdie dinge reg te stel terwyl in ons land, veral aan Afrikaanskerklike kant, die vreesbevangenheid om dalk met die Wêreldraad en alles wat eg ekumenies is geassosieer te wees 'n diep betreurde stilswye oor die Bybelse eis en getuienis by die meerderheid van teoloë en predikante in ons Afrikaanse Kerke teweegbring wat hulle medeaandadig maak in die bestendiging van sodanige sondige geskeidenheid waardeur die saak van Christus ernstige skade berokken word.

3. Dat, waar in meeste ander lande Kerke en hulle leiers soek om die geskeidenheid en gevolglike vervreemding wat deur die feit van aparte kerke, tale, kulture, en rasse geskep en bevorder word, te deurbreek, daar het ons in Suid-Afrika te doen met die bedroewende verskynsel dat hierdie apartheid meer en meer as pseudo-evangelie, as geloofsoortuiging gepropageer en geïmplementeer word op alle terreine van die lewe met die gevolg dat die só noodsaaklike ekumeniese kontak, gesprek en gemeenskap steeds minder verwelkom, gesoek en beoefen word. En weer (en ek sê dit met groot droefheid) is dit ons drie Afrikaanse Kerke, wat in die opsig die grootste onwilligheid openbaar. Hierdie houding is histories verklaarbaar en op menslike vlak miskien verdedigbaar — maar dit laat ons as Christene vir geen oomblik vrykom van die duidelike eis en opdrag van Christus vir sy Kerk nie. En dis hierdie eis en opdrag wat ons van Afrikaanskerklike kant in so baie opsigte so angsvallig ontwyk.

Oor die lidmaatskap van die N.G. Kerk van die Wêreldbond van Gereformeerde Kerke sowel as die Gereformeerde Ekumeniese Sinode is ek innig dankbaar en vir die mate van kontak wat dit met kerke van ooreenstemmende belydenis in die buiteland bied, hoewel dit nie as

ware ekumeniese arbeid beskryf kan word nie omdat dit net binne die raamwerk van 'n enersluidende belydenis beoefen word. Afgesien egter van die feit dat hierdie kontakte baie sporadies is en net 'n paar kerklike verteenwoordigers betrek, bly dit die sentrale uitdaging ontwyk van die noodsaaklikheid dat Kerke wat Christene van verskillende konfessies, kulture en kleure verteenwoordig, in hierdie land hulle gesamentlike bestaan en roeping moet uitwerk in gehoorsaamheid aan Gods Woord. In hierdie mooi land van ons het God ons saam geplaas, ons lotgevalle saam verbind, ons 'n roeping gegee om saam te vervul — en hoe kan ons hierdie godgegewe roeping vervul as 52% van die blanke bevolking behoort aan kerke wat volhard in hulle weiering of afsydigheid om in direkte Christelike gemeenskap te staan met kerke wie se lidmaattal 41% van die blanke, 62% van die Bantoe- en 61% van die Kleurling-bevolking uitmaak? Kan dit die wil van God vir sy Kerk en sy volk wees?

DIE BELEWING VAN DIE EENHEID IN ONS KERKLIKE SITUASIE

Die beweging van die Kerke na eenheid moet as 'n noodsaaklike deel van die opdrag van die Here aan sy Kerk gesien word. Daar behoort nie in enige kring van teologies-verantwoorde leierskap van enige kerkgenootskap in Suid-Afrika enige onduidelikheid te wees oor die noodsaak van die opdrag nie. Dat daar verskil van mening kan wees oor die finale vorme wat hierdie eenheid behoort aan te neem, is baie goed verstaanbaar. Ook oor wat presies die inhoud en omvang van die gemeenskap van Christene van verskillende kerke en konfessies moet wees, kan daar nog baie gedebatteer word. Maar by al hierdie verskillende benaderinge en gesigspunte — ja juis omrede van die wye uiteenlopendheid daarvan — is die minste wat God van sy Kerk en sy kinders verwag dat hulle die Bybelse waarheid vreugdevol sal bely en beleef dat ons alles saam sal doen behalwe wat ons in gehoorsaamheid aan Gods Woord geroepe is om apart te doen. En dan is die allerminste wat met reg verwag kan word dat kerke alle moontlike geleenthede vir gesprek en gemeenskap sal skop en bevorder. Een van hierdie kanale wat vanselfsprekend in enige land behoort te be-

staan en aktief behoort te funksioneer, is 'n nasionale raad van kerke waarby soveel moontlik van alle kerke geaffilieer behoort te wees. Ook in Suid-Afrika is dit 'n saak van dringende noodsaak. Hierdie ideaal vir die kerke in Suid-Afrika is tydens die Cottesloe-beraad in die vooruitsig gestel maar is deur die reaksie van Afrikaanskerklike kant verongeluk.

Intussen het die Christenraad van Kerke waartoe 28 Protestantse Kerke en sendinggenootskappe in Suid-Afrika behoort (en wat 'n lidmaatskap van ongeveer 4 miljoen lidmate verteenwoordig) sy ekumeniese taak met hernude ywer aangepak. Ook die Christelike Instituut is geaffilieer met die Christenraad en gee sy steun waar enigsins moontlik aan alle onderneminge wat die saak van die ekumene kan bevorder. Die Christelike Instituut geniet dan ook die morele steun van die oorgrote meerderheid van die bestaande Suid-Afrikaanse kerke en hulle leiers met uitsondering van die drie Afrikaanse kerke — soos die uitsprake van kerklike liggame en kerkleiers in een van die Christelike Instituut se pamflette getiteld: „Die Christelike Instituut: 'n Kort Beskrywing” duidelik aantoon.

DIE BESTAANSREG VAN DIE CHRISTELIKE INSTITUUT

Van tyd tot tyd is die vraag gestel, hoofsaaklik vanuit ons Afrikaanse kerke, of die Christelike Instituut Skriftuurlik en kerkregtelik 'n bestaansreg het, en uiteenlopende antwoorde is daarop gegee. Die Christelike Instituut het 'n duidelike en ondubbelsinnige antwoord hierop gegee soos ook op die aanklagte en beskuldigings vervat in die besluit van die Sinode van die N.G. Kerk (Oktober 1966). Laasgenoemde antwoord is aan die Breë Moderatuur gestuur waarin punt vir punt die aanklagte weêrlê is en duidelik daarop gewys is dat die Christelike Instituut geen buitkerklike organisasie is nie, maar dat dit in die kerk gebore is en daar wil werk; dat dit nie mededingend met die Kerk wil optree nie, maar juis ondersteunend; dat dit nie voorgee om die taak van die Kerk beter te verrig as wat die Kerk dit self doen nie, maar juis die Kerk daarin wil bystaan; dat dit nie die belydenisskrifte verloën nie maar juis bevestig; dat dit nie die Kerk se skrifverantwoorde sendingbeleid weerstrewe nie of die Skrifgefundeerde kerklike gesag wil ondermyn

nie en ook geen valse ekumenisiteit bevorder nie.

Wat die bestaansreg van die Christelike Instituut betref, was ons standpunt nog altyd dat in 'n situasie van onverdedigbare, sondige kerklike en Christelike geskeidenheid die Christelike Instituut se bestaan volkome geregtig en dringend noodsaaklik is en dat dit ook onder normale omstandighede (al is dit dan in gewysigde vorm) die ekumeniese arbeid van die Kerk kan dien. Daarom bv. sal daar noodsaaklike aanpassings gemaak moet word sodra 'n kerk soos die Ned. Geref. Kerk amptelik meedoën aan 'n omvattende Ekumeniese Raad van Kerke in Suid-Afrika. Die oomblik dat dit gebeur sal die Christelike Instituut in alle waarskynlikheid 'n volwaardige Ekumeniese Instituut vir teologiese studie, navorsing en organisering van kursusse en konferensies word onder beskerming van sodanige Raad van Kerke, terwyl sy besprekingsgroepe dan as plaaslike studiegroepe of van die Ekumeniese Instituut of van die Studie-afdeling van so 'n Raad kan funksioneer om die ekumeniese bewuswording op die vlak van die lidmate te bevorder, terwyl volle geleentheid tot vrye deelname gegee moet word aan alle lidmate van dié kerke wat nog nie amptelik by so 'n Raad geaffilieer het nie.

ONHOUBARE POSISIE VAN DIE AFRIKAANSE KERKE

Die volgehoute aksie van veroordeling van en verdagmaking teen die Christelike Instituut en teen sy leierskap wat aan die Afrikaanse kerke behoort onder aanvoering van politiek-ekstremistiese elemente in die Ned. Geref. en die Ned. Herv. Kerke wat die Kerk as handige instrument vir hulle eie oogmerke gebruik, het daartoe gelei dat 'n aantal besluite deur die Sinodes van dié twee kerke aangeneem is wat nóg op Skriftuurlike nóg op konfessionele gronde verdedig kan word. Ten spyte van alle versoeke van die kant van die Christelike Instituut en van sy lede wat lidmate van die N.G. Kerk is om bekendmaking van die gronde vir die Sinodale besluit van die N.G. Kerk van Oktober 1966 het dit nog nie geskied nie — en sal hulle as Bybels-verantwoorde gronde nie voorsien kan word nie om die eenvoudige rede dat sodanige gronde nie bestaan nie. Almal van ons weet dat die besluit die vrug is van die

onderskrywing van 'n verkrampde teologie wat die skyn van Skriftuurlikheid bied en soos veral voorgedra en aan die Kerk opgedring deur manne soos dr. J. D. Vorster, dr. A. P. Treurnicht en prof. A. B. du Preez.

Deur hierdie besluit het dié twee kerke tydelik daarin geslaag om aktiewe lidmaatskap van die Christelike Instituut uit die kringe van predikante en lidmate van dié kerke te hou met 'n gevolglike verlies ook vir die Christelike Instituut. Maar die liggame wat eintlik — en veral op die lang duur — die ernstigste skade gaan ly is die Afrikaanse Kerke self — soos ek nou sal aandui.

Wat die Ned. Herv. Kerk betref het hy homself in sy politieke verblindings met sy besluite oor die Christelike Instituut en „Pro Veritate” so gekompromitteer dat ek net nie kan sien hoe hy hom weer kan loswoel uit die doodse wurggreep van wêreldse loyaliteit waaraan hy hom so gewilliglik oorgegee het nie. Daarom die gewetenskrisis van manne soos prof. dr. A. van Selms, dr. C. J. Labuschagne en ds. J. A. Swanepoel wat tot hulle uittrede uit die Ned. Herv. Kerk gelei het. Wat die Ned. Geref. Kerk betref het hy homself deur sy besluit in die hoogs onbenydenswaardige en aanvegbare posisie geplaas waarin hy alles wat die Christelike Instituut as in ooreenstemming met Gods Woord aandui of moet veroordeel of moet neger. Veroordeel hy Bybels-verantwoorde studiestukke, standpunte, uitsprake en optredes van die Christelike Instituut, dan verloën hy daarmee sy Hoof, Christus Jesus, asook sy ware wese as Kerk van Christus op aarde met al die ontsettende gevolge wat dit inhou vir sy lewe en arbeid. Negeer kan hy die Instituut moeilik want die Christelike Instituut wil en moet in gehoorsaamheid aan God voortgaan om 'n Bybels-verantwoorde getuïenis te gee oor vraagstukke wat die individu en die gemeenskap op elke terrein van die lewe in Suid-Afrika raak — en keer op keer sal die N.G. Kerk geroepe word om hierdie getuïenis te beoordeel. En selfs al sou die N.G. Kerk die Christelike Instituut om rede van sy numeriek klein ledetal uit N.G. geleedere ignoreer — is sodanige houding Christelik-verantwoord? En as stadigaan — en hoe stadig ookal is dit onvermydelik dat dit moet kom — predikante en lidmate van die N.G. Kerk deur Gods Woord en Gees gedwing word

om openlik te erken dat die Christelike Instituut se doelstellinge en arbeid nie strydig is met Gods Woord nie en alleen bedoel is om die Kerk te bevoordeel, wat gaan die N.G. Kerk met sulke predikante en lidmate doen: almal uitban? Indien dit gebeur, wie kan dan die gevolge van sodanige Bybels-onverantwoorde en onbesonne optrede voorsien?

Maar die dilemma van die Kerk is nog ernstiger; deur sy standpuntname en optrede teen die Christelike Instituut is die Ned. Herv. en Ned. Geref. Kerke besig om die beoefening van alle ter sake teologiese studie, debat en denke te benadeel, te ontmoedig en bewustelik of onbewustelik te onderdruk. Want alle teologie wat dié naam waardig is, moet hom besighou met vraagstukke nie net van die hiernamaals nie, maar ook van die hier en nou. Alle teologie wat betekenis het is ter sake teologie — en in Suid-Afrika beteken dit teologie wat bereid is om ook die terreine van die omstrede en die so gevoelige kerklike, kulturele, rasse- en menslike verhoudinge te betree en die lig van Gods Woord onbevrees daarop te laat val. En nou weet almal van ons baie goed wat gebeur het en nog altyd gebeur wanneer teoloë en predikante uit Afrikaanse-kerklike kringe dit waag om sodanige teologie te beoefen — hoedat onmiddellik die etikette en brandmerke van kommunisme, liberalisme, negrofilisme e.d.m. behendig aangeplak word, gevolg deur verdere tugaksies van optrede en aanklag as die aanplakbiljette nie die verlangde uitwerking gehad het nie. Is dit 'n wonder dat baie dan maar om den vrede — of om den brode-wille, swyg? Nie dat ek sodanige swye goedkeur nie — ek is inteendeel oortuig daarvan dat hoe meer die getuïenis vir die waarheid gehoor word, hoe gouer sal meer lidmate bereid word om daarna te luister en in erns te oorweeg. Maar hoe groter die stilswye, hoe groter die verwarving en verarming in Christelike denke en daad binne die geleedere van ons N.G. Kerk! In gesprekke wat ek met Ned. Geref.-predikante gehad het, is die gedagte geopper dat die Christelike Instituut met die oog op die stryd tussen die verligtes en verkrampes hom tydelik op die agtergrond moet plaas omdat dit moontlik is dat politieke ontwikkelinge die Kerk kan help om 'n nuwe vrymoedigheid van spreke te vind. Afgesien van die vraag of so iets sal gebeur, is daar die beginselvraag wat

gestel moet word: het die Kerk (ook die N.G. Kerk) as Kerk van Christus dan nie die roeping om in gehoorsaamheid aan God 'n profetiese getuïenis te laat hoor wat nie afhanklik gestel mag word van politieke of kulturele strominge nie?

VERLANGE C.I. TOT HERSTEL VAN VERSTEURDE VERHOUDINGE

Niemand wat die Kerk as liggaam van Christus liefhet (en dus ook die bepaalde kerk waartoe hy behoort) kan ooit gelukkig voel oor so 'n toestand van sake nie. Trouens dis die plig van elke lidmaat om sy kerk met alle vermoëns te help om uit so 'n onhoudbare situasie te kom — en dis presies wat die Christelike Instituut probeer doen het en nog doen. As die verwyd aan die adres van die Christelike Instituut gemaak word dat hy deur sy optrede die taak van die N.G. Kerk bemoeilik, dan moet die Christelike Instituut die beskuldiging ernstig opneem, homself afvra of daar waarheid in so 'n aanklag steek en die geleentheid soek om deur openhartige gesprek alle moontlike misverstand tussen hom en enige kerk uit die weg te ruim. Hiertoë was die Christelike Instituut nog altyd bereid ten spyte van die feit dat die N.G. Kerk hom nog nooit daartoe geleentheid gegun het nie maar hom onverhoord veroordeel het.

Baie duidelik wil ek dit vanaand dus weer hier in die openbaar stel dat die Christelike Instituut uit sy pad sal gaan om of by wyse van informele of formele samesprekinge (vertroulik of in die openbaar) enige van ons Afrikaanse kerke, hulle leiers of lidmate te ontmoet om misverstand uit die weg te ruim en die versteurde verhouding tussen die Christelike Instituut en die Afrikaanse Kerke te help herstel. En as dit sou blyk dat die Christelike Instituut in gesindheid of getuïenis fouteer het, sal ons alles in ons vermoë doen om sodanige foute te herstel. Want die Christelike Instituut wil die Afrikaanse Kerke net so opreg ten diens wees as enige ander kerk in Suid-Afrika.

Daarom is ek van oordeel dat baie meer lidmate uit die geledere van ons Afrikaanse Kerke by die Christelike Instituut behoort aan te sluit en die Christelike Instituut moreel en finansiëel te ondersteun (ook waar hulle nie as lede aansluit nie). Sodanige aansluiting mag nie as ver-

set teen of ongehoorsaamheid aan die betrokke kerke gesien word nie — nie as dit geskied in gehoorsaamheid aan God en aan sy Woord nie. En sodanige gehoorsaamheid is juis wat die Christelike Instituut verlang.

Ek wil vir geen oomblik te kenne gee deur wat hierbo gesê is dat daar nie ook ernstige versuim en leentes in die ekumeniese lewe en getuïenis bestaan van die kerke wat by die Christenraad geaffilieer is nie. Ek wil ook geensins te kenne gee dat daar algemene instemming by die blanke lidmaatkorps van die Engels-talige kerke bestaan vir die strewe en arbeid van die Christelike Instituut nie. Maar in ten minste twee opsigte is daar 'n radikale en belangrike verskil: die meerderheid van dié kerke se leierskap het hulle volle morele steun aan die Christelike Instituut toegesê en die geleentheid tot 'n oop gesprek tussen alle Christene word deur dié kerke verwelkom en aangemoedig. En ek bid dat die dag gou sal aanbreek dat ten minste die Ned. Geref. Kerk tot hierdie Christelike gesprek sal toetree.

DIE CHRISTELIKE INSTITUUT SE DIENS AAN DIE BANTOEKERKE

Ek mag hierdie toespraak nie afsluit nie sonder om ook spesifiek te verwys na die verhouding van die Christelike Instituut met en sy diens aan die kerke met oorheersend of algehele nie-blanke lidmaatskap. Wat betref die nie-blanke lidmate behorende tot die erkende historiese kerke en sendinggenootskappe uit die Weste, is dit 'n algemeen bekende en aanvaarde feit dat die toestandkoming van die Christelike Instituut by groot getalle nie-blankes die hoop gewek het dat vanuit die Kerk daar op 'n suiwer Christelike basis, op vreedsame en geordende wyse, 'n aksie sou ontstaan wat die eis van geregtigheid, waarheid en naasteliefde sou laat hoor het ook t.o.v. die algemene posisie van die nie-blanke in ons land. Vrees en intimidasie weerhou baie nie-blankes van aansluiting en deelname. Hoe verstaanbaar dit ook al is, is hierdie houding in die lig van Christus se opdrag vir sy volgelinge net so onaanvaarbaar as die angsvallige stilswye en onthouding van deelname deur Christene uit die Afrikaanse Kerke. Maar hulle weet (en ons weet) dat die feit van die Christelike Instituut se bestaan vir hulle 'n lig-

baken is, 'n teken van hoop in 'n situasie wat vir duisende van hulle al minder hoop inhou sover as dit die Kerk se getuïenis en optrede betref. En daarvoor is ons dankbaar.

Maar saam met hulle is daar die Bantoe-Christene uit die meer as 2,000 Onafhanklike (Separatiste-) Kerke met 'n ledetal van meer as 2 miljoen wat die Christelike Instituut kom versoek het om hulle voorgangers behulpsaam te wees met beter teologiese opleiding en Bybelse skoling. Uit 'n klein en nietige begin van 'n versoek afkomstig van 'n handjievol Bantoeleeraars het daar tot stand gekom 'n Raad van onafhanklike Bantoekekerke genaamd die A.I.C.A. (African Independent Churches' Association) waarby tot op datum meer as 200 kerke reeds amptelik aangesluit het (met nog 'n 200 besig om aansluiting te oorweeg) en onder wie se beskerming die planne vir 'n vaste teologiese opleiding reeds baie ver gevorder het. Ses teologiese funderingskursusse is ook reeds in verskillende dele van die land gehou en bygewoon deur altesaam 260 leraars. Niemand is meer bewus van die ernstige teologiese en praktiese probleme verbonde aan dié dienswerk as die personeel en bestuursliggame van die Christelike Instituut nie. Maar hulle is ook terdeë bewus van die groot en geopende deur wat dit die Suid-Afrikaanse kerke met blanke leier- en lidmaatskap bied om die Evangelie van versoening aan miljoene Bantoe-christene uit te dra. Ek beskou hierdie genadige beskikking van God as een van die mees betekenisvolle deurbrake na die hart van Afrika — en al sou die Christelike Instituut net dáarvoor tot stand moes kom, was dit dubbel en dwars sy stigting werd.

Hoe graag sou die Christelike Instituut nie wou sien dat alle kerke, insluitende die N.G. Kerk, hulle kragte wil inwerp om hierdie reuse-taak gesamentlik te volvoer nie! En hier weer, soos in byna alle vorms van ekumeniese arbeid in ons land, staan ons Afrikaanse kerke daarbuite — nie omdat die Christelike Instituut, die Christenraad of enige ander liggaam dit begeer nie, maar omdat die betrokke kerke self die isolasie begeer en bestendig. Hoe groot en betekenisvol is die bydrae nie wat die N.G. Kerk ook op hierdie gebied van ekumeniese arbeid kan lewer nie! Maar hoe groot is die verlies nie vir die N.G. Kerk sowel as vir elke ander kerk wat die

gemeenskap met en die bydrae van die N.G. Kerk moet ontbeer nie!

Intussen moet die werk gedoen word --- want dis Gods werk waartoe Hy ons roep. En solank die Christelike Instituut daartoe in staat is en die historiese kerke nog nie hulle weg oopsien om 'n gesamentlike hulpdiens te lewer met vrywillige aanvaarding daarvan deur die betrokke Bantoekekerke nie --- solank moet die Christelike Instituut hierdie taak bly verrig. Alleen dan wanneer die bevoorregte kerke gesamentlik hierdie diens oorneem met voorafgaande goedkeuring deur die deelnemende Bantoekekerke kan die Christelike Instituut hierdie arbeid prysgee. Maar as dit die dag so ver is (en mag dié dag gou aanbreek!) dan MOET die Christelike Instituut terugtree want dan het hy sy taak in hierdie opsig vervul.

SLOT

So sal daar een na die ander behoefte ontstaan waar die nood van Christen én nie-Christen sal roep om dringende aksie wat die kerk, as gevolg van die sondige verskeurdheid en geskeidenheid van sy bestaan, nie as nood onderken of in staat of gewillig is om op te neem nie. En as God dan deur sy Gees individuele Christene of groepe van Christene opwek om dit te doen, nie in ongehoorsaamheid aan of opposisie teen enige kerk nie, maar juis omdat hulle ten diepste gehoorsaam wii wees, dan moet die georganiseerde, ge-institueerde kerk dit nie teëstaan of veroordeel nie maar in dankbaarheid daarvan kennis neem en sy deure en vensters wyd oopmaak om al wat daarin as die verfrissende

winde van Gods Gees onderken kan word, in te asem en in sy bloedstroom op te neem. Elke kerk wat dit doen, sal daardeur verryking ondervind vir sy bestaan en arbeid. Maar elke kerk wat dit afwys, sal uiteindelik ontdek dat daar in sy liggaam 'n verskraling en verarming plaasvind wat sy getuiskrag uiters nadelig moet beïnvloed.

Daarom kom die Christelike Instituut na elke kerk en na elke Christen in Suid-Afrika in diepe nederigheid en besorgdheid en sonder enige pretensie dat die Christelike Instituut iets meer wil wees of iets beter kan doen as die Kerk self en roep hy om die seën en die beskerming van die hele Kerk omdat hy niks meer wil wees nie as dienskneg van Christus en daarom ook dienskneg van sy Kerk!

A NEW FELLOWSHIP BECOMES RELEVANT

DR. ELFIE STRASSBERGER

A New Fellowship

The fact of our being members of the Christian Institute or of other interdenominational groups signifies an interest in the life of the Christian Church and not only an interest in our own particular denominations. As disciples of Jesus Christ we belong to His Body on earth. We recognise and want to proclaim His Lordship over the whole of life in the whole world for time and for eternity. This immediately implies obedience. It is completely illogical to acknowledge Christ's Lordship if we do not wish to obey Him as Lord. His will is made clear in His Word. This is the miracle of our Christian life. We may know God because He has revealed Himself and if we seek to know Him we will find Him revealed in His Word!

As we come together as Christians belonging to different Churches we form a new type of fellowship in which the only binding factor is our faith in Jesus Christ as Lord. Jesus Christ became man, remained God, lived a human life dedicated to God in complete obedience and in service to his fellowmen, died a purposeful death, was raised from death by the life-giving power of God, ascended into heaven as victorious God-man, and is even now present in this world, working in a life-giving manner through His Body, the believing community.

So we form a new fellowship, a new people, in which all the human factors are still actively present — factors like language, race, customs, colour, physique, health, talents, intelligence, etc., etc., but their importance is superseded by the fact of our

belonging to a new fellowship in which Christ is Lord.

He is the Kingdom, and the more He is present within us the more His Kingdom comes in this world.

And then we come together as the new fellowship, to be together, to pray together, to get to know God's will together. Thus we study God's Word together, not in order to be pietistic or square or orthodox or irrelevant or to form a "pie in the sky" club, but in order to listen anew to the ever-new will of God. And this is the only relevant thing in the whole world: God's will. His will is life abundant for the whole world.

And as we think and listen and obey together, and alone, we are being re-made. Our ideas, our attitudes, our plans are re-made, re-enforced. Ideals and enthusiasms are uncovered as the rubble of our

"selves" is removed and as Christ takes on human stature.

Together and alone we can read and study this Bible in various ways.

AROUND THE WORD

E. H. Robertson wrote a book "Take and Read" which is intended "to help those who wish to undertake effective Bible study" as individuals or as groups. And whether we like it or not, prayerful, effective, relevant Bible study and prayer *is the way* to true and deep renewal within the Christian Church.

Effective Bible study Robertson describes as "that study of the Bible which enables a man to go out and live fully in his world". He sees both the Pietist and the Liberal way of Bible study as ineffective. The *Pietist way* is to study the Bible as belonging to another world. Bible study becomes an escape, and in times of crisis this approach is completely ineffective (cf. Pietist groups in Germany during the Nazi period, who escaped into their Bible study and took no responsible action against the evils of their society). The *Liberals*, too, have a task to do, but on the whole they again neglect the authoritative message of the Bible, following

an objective method of dissecting and often missing the message. *In stormy days there is a need for Bible study which is more intensely personal. What we need is a joining of the streams.* And this need was felt very strongly in Germany during the Nazi time — and is felt in South Africa in 1967.

A NEW METHOD

Robertson described a *New Method* practised by a group of German parsons during this period. "First they deputed one of their members to read all the commentaries, especially the old ones. At the meeting of pastors he would summarise what the commentaries had said. For several hours the pastors would debate the alternative interpretations. Their simple question was: "What did the writer mean when he wrote this passage?" When they had thoroughly explored the background of the passage and understood its meaning, they put the Bible to one side and discussed the world in which they lived. The discussion would include the latest Nazi decrees, the impact of these upon their own people, perhaps the removal of a teacher from their school, the appointment of a new teacher, the disappearance of a neighbour. This period of discussion was earnest and real. They used their minds and their native moral sense to decide what was right and what was wrong, expecting to be better able to do this because they had just come from a detailed study of the Word of God. When they had done these two jobs thoroughly they set to work to bring them together".

This was a way in which they prepared a background study for their sermons. But this can also be a way in which a group of Christians can prepare themselves for "daily living". This was a method of combining the "scrupulous work of the liberal scholar with the intense piety of the Gemeinschaft (Fellowship) Movement. The Liberal discovered that the Bible did speak to a contemporary situation; the Pietist discovered that he had to go out into the world to practise there what the Bible was saying to him.

RESULTS OF A NEW METHOD

A Post-War result in Germany was the forming of the Evangelical Academies — centres where laymen go to discuss the ethics of their daily life. *A further development* was the

Kirchentag, a lay Movement which draws large crowds of people every year or so to study the Bible together and to hear what God says through it as regards their condition. This terrific effort, with all the thorough prayerful preparation entailed, has restored in the churches a confidence in the Bible.

A third result is the Bible Weeks held in most churches in Germany once a year. Each provincial area chooses a book or chapters of the Bible; top scholars spend a few days together to work out the meaning of the section chosen. This basic study is used and interpreted for various groups, e.g. a specialist on youth work must spell it out in such a way that it will be helpful to youth groups. Various things are done, but the heart of the Bible Week is a daily meeting, every evening from Sunday to Saturday, in which the pastor expounds the relevant passage to his people.

HOLLAND

In *Holland* also, after World War II, a tremendous movement was started towards the renewal of the church. "The church as a whole, including the laity, had to be re-awakened, but this required leaders trained to help the laymen perform their task." A New Academy, "Kerk en Wereld", was to work towards a new type of ministry, also training men to do social work, group work, evangelism; to reach industrial workers and also a rural population. These trained men have established *small Bible study groups* wherever they have gone. In Holland there are many examples of how reading the Bible together has led groups to take action in their local communities. "In Utrecht for example, when the small Baptist Church was burnt down, it was one of the groups made up of people from all denominations who began to re-build the Baptist Church". A characteristic of Dutch Bible study throughout this period has been its practical emphasis.

NORWAY

In *Norway*, resulting from a revival led by Hans Nielsen Hauge and later by a Professor in Dogmatics, the Pietistic Prayer House Movement developed, which has played a major part in stimulating the Church to new life. Concurrently small Bible study groups developed in which a particular method was used. Lay

leadership played a major part. Every member of the group prepares the particular passage of Scripture beforehand. He reads it through and puts a *question mark* next to each verse that puzzles him; an *exclamation mark* if a verse strikes him and a *star* if it inspires him. When the group meets, each member explains why he has put a particular sign next to a particular verse, and this forms the basis for discussion, supplemented, if necessary, by a simple commentary. But the real basis for Bible study is the shared experience. These groups meet in homes and the first part of the evening is taken up with coffee and social fellowship with an informal discussion of the problems of the neighbourhood. In Norway these groups are neighbourhood groups. As groups developed a need for more intensive discussion and a deeper study of the relevant passage developed.

SCOTLAND

In Scotland the Iona Community developed an association of ministers and laity who continued their daily work and in it sought to discover together the meaning of the "Christian Community" for today. The Iona Community and the Radio Mission led to the development of the Tell Scotland Movement. At St. Ninian's in Crieff, Perthshire, a training centre for individuals and groups in Bible study was started in 1959. Prepared studies can be obtained from the Warden. Here are two of the methods put forward by St. Ninian's:

1. Research Method

This is especially effective in studying Bible characters. In the New Testament, there are for instance 5 references to Philip. The group is divided up into five smaller groups — two members are sufficient to form such a small group — and each small group investigates and discusses one reference. Then all share their points and together construct a sketch of Philip's character. Or some theme, as for instance peace, money, marriage etc., is chosen and studied in the same manner.

2. Head, Heart and Hand Method

Head: The facts in the particular portion of Scripture are discovered — the meaning of words; the way the portion is constructed; who wrote

it, etc. On occasion the leader could give an exposition by discussing the portion verse by verse, indicating its deeper meaning.

Heart: Now the main group could be divided into smaller sub-groups. Each person re-reads the section quietly and tries to discover what is the central thought, the heart, of that particular section of Scripture. This is then shared with the sub-group and discussed.

Hand: The sub-groups briefly report to the main group what they found to be the heart of the section and the leader indicates a few outstanding thoughts. Together the group decides what it finds to be most important and then a discussion follows of what can and should be DONE in order to show obedience to the most important thoughts.

TWO OTHER METHODS

1. In the News

After preliminary discussion of a Bible passage the company is divided into small groups each having been given a newspaper of recent date and asked to discover in it any news item upon which the passage throws light. The groups then report their findings in a plenary session.

2. "Encounter and Enter Into"

To "encounter" means "to meet another person in such a way as to discover where both stand in relation to a 'truth'." To use this particular method of study, the following five steps are recommended:

1. Give a brief introduction to the passage chosen for study. A Bible commentary is a good source for in-

formation on the context of a passage.

2. Form small groups of two to six persons and provide each member with pencil and paper. Start with a silent reading of the passage, asking each person to write down in *his own words* his understanding of the passage. Suggest that quoted words or phrases be avoided. Teenage "slanguage" does not violate the intent of a passage if it helps young readers grasp the author's idea.

3. Still within the small group, ask the young people to compare their interpretations with the author's actual words. It sometimes helps to suggest an imaginary conversation with the author, as if asking him, "Do you mean . . . ?" This often will help get at what the author was trying to explain, impart, or bring to light, and will reveal a great deal about the tone and feeling of his words.

4. Return to the whole group for discussion of the ideas in the passage. No attempt should be made to refute or change the author's view. The purpose is rather to take the author's view, relate it to and consider its effect on everyday situations. "What are the implications for us today if we take the author seriously?"

5. Select, if possible, short passages — one verse, or a few verses that can be kept easily in mind. If Bibles are not available, use the Book of Common Prayer. Verses from the Epistles, Gospels, or Psalms, the Opening Sentences from the Daily Offices, the Offertory Sentences, or the Comfortable Words offer a wide choice.

In other countries, too, experiments are being made in new and more effective ways of studying the Bible in our day. Below a few books on

such efforts are listed. We can start by trying some new way if we are not happy about our own group.

E. H. Robertson mentions the following principles as basic to Bible Study:

1. Bible Study should be at considerable depth.
2. It must be related to the situation in which the people find themselves.
3. Bible study is at its best when it is group thinking.

YOU can be the originator, convenor, leader, inspiration, interested, participating member of a Bible study group. This can be part of the answer to a real need for true fellowship in our churches. Also with respect to Bible Study groups and to the renewal within the church, let us remember individually and together that, "more things are wrought by prayer, than this world dreams of".

BOOKS ON BIBLE STUDY AND GROUP WORK

1. *The Bible in Our Time*, E. H. Robertson, S.C.M. Press.
2. *Take and Read*, E. H. Robertson, S.C.M. Press.
3. *Bible Study*, R. A. Torrey.
4. *Groups that Work*, By the editors of Faith and Work, New York, 1964.
5. *A Life Full of Meaning*, Pergamon Press, London. New York, 1965.
6. *Saam om die Woord*, Saamgestel deur Elfie Strassberger. Extracts from various books on Methods of Bible Study.
7. *Pastoral Psychology (Periodical)*, June, 1964. Vol. 15, No. 145. Pastoral Psychology, 400 Community Drive, Manhasset, New York, N.Y., U.S.A.
8. *Preface to Bible Study*, Alan Richardson, London, S.C.M. Press.
9. *Reading the Bible Together*, Harold Wilson. From: Church House, Dean's Yard, Westminster, London, S.W.1.; or from: Anglican Church Bookshops.

Christian Institute and other Publications

The following publications can be obtained from the Christian Institute, P.O. Box 31135, Braamfontein, Transvaal:

(a) *English Summary: Judgement in case Geyser and Naudé vs. Pont.* (The appeal in this case has been set down for February 15 to 26, 1968, in Bloemfontein) — 50 cents, including postage.

(b) *Full Court Judgment in Afrikaans* — R1, including postage.

(c) *The Church's Industrial Mission.* Report on a Course held in June, 1967 at the Wilgespruit Fellowship Centre — R1.10, including postage.

(d) *Some Reflections on the Prohibition of Improper Interference Bill, 1966.* This is of topical

importance as the report of the Government's Commission will in all probability be tabled early during the next session of Parliament — 10 cents, including postage.

(e) *Christians in the Technical and Social Revolutions of our Time.* A report on the 1966 Geneva Conference on the Church and Society — 30 cents, including postage.

The people of Springs challenge the Ministers' Fraternal

During the month of October enthusiasm has been running high among the members of all the churches in Springs. Vital matters concerning the life of the Christian Church have been discussed on the street corners, in the cafes and businesses of the town.

What happened?!

On the first four Monday evenings in October, the Ministers' Fraternal organised an open conference for all people in the town to listen to well-known speakers and then to see what we as Christians could do together in a practical way in Springs. Between 200 and 250 people attended every meeting.

The first speaker was Prof. A. S. Geyser, who spoke on "What is tying the hands of the Church". He said that the Church has forgotten to whom she belonged — viz. Jesus Christ the Lord. Instead men had attempted to make the Church their own and so we have an English, Dutch, German and Boere Church, which compete with one another instead of serving the Lord.

In the discussions afterwards it was felt that the concept of Christian Nationalism was not tenable because in practice it means adding to or subtracting from Jesus Christ. The Church must rid itself of internal disputes so that it can offer moral leadership based on the love of God (worship) and love of all men (neighbour). Modern language and symbolism must also be used to keep up with the modern generation.

Ds. Beyers Naudé talked about

"Christ and Caesar". The relationship here is very delicately balanced. Certainly when the State demands total allegiance or an allegiance which conflicts with Christian principles, the Christian must obey God rather than the State. The difficulty lies in assessing whether the demands of the State are in conflict with Christian principles.

In considering the question of citizenship the conference came to the following conclusion. A good Christian citizen should give full support to the State which tries to be what God intended it to be, and simultaneously watches and warns when the State oversteps the mark. Christians should get rid of the idea that politics is a dirty business and participate in local and national affairs.

The Rev. I. Thomson addressed the gathering on "Christ and the Workbench" and stressed how important it was to apply our Christianity to our work situation.

After considering how the Church could relate its ministry more helpfully to the needs of the people in Industry, the conference felt that ministers should be given experience in Industry and Commerce. Parish groups should be formed to study work situations and all the forces which operate within Industry. Then the Church should try to help those in Industry to work for better relations between people working there.

At the final meeting, the conference challenged the Ministers' Fraternal to put into practice a large number of suggestions. We

can only list some of the more important ones here.

Under the heading of Inter-Church Activities the conference called for joint action on "Putting Christ back into Christmas"; Hospital Visiting; caring for the sick, lonely, aged, needy Alcoholics; African Creches; Sunday Schools; Bible Study; Prayer Groups and Young People. It was suggested that the churches should co-operate to establish a non-denominational Youth Centre. There should be a monthly interchange of ministers and a public library bringing together all religious views of the churches should be established.

In the sphere of State and Church an inter-denominational group should attend Council meetings as observers, so that the churches may be informed on what is happening in the town. Christians with the ability should try to get onto Council or into Parliament.

In its ministry to Industry the Church must help the laity to bring Christ into Industry. The Church must foster the ideas of good work for good pay; the dignity of work; the dignity of all men. The Church should try to bring Personnel, Management and Trade Union leaders together to discuss these ideas and other problems in Industry.

The challenge has been issued. Many ideas and suggestions have been put forward. We hope and pray that through the Ministers' Fraternal the leaders of the churches will now act together to implement the practical suggestions made.

J. H. L. DIJKMAN.

IDENTITY, ECUMENISM AND LOYALTY

DAVID PERK

Among man's first intellectual achievements is the translation of his instinctual attachment to his mother into a recognition of his identity. Beginning with an instinctual recognition of bodily needs and the response of that which stands over against them to minister to them, to be identified later as mother, there follows, as the mind burgeons into consciousness, an awareness of the body, progressively more comprehensive, that which stands over against it in the environment and finally of an ever-widening environment and the searching horizons of the mind.

The awareness is initially of source. The sources of need and satisfaction flow into each other, so that they are not perceived as separate entities. Then, as the mind and consciousness grow the objects separate out and are discernible as distinct entities with distinctive features. An awareness of self and outside self emerges. The child's need and feeling for his mother promotes an expanding awareness of her, her person and the impersonal environment that surrounds and is associated with her, and from this starting point he reaches out in increasingly wider expeditions to the world beyond her, in himself and outside self.

The impressions that mount progressively in the mind polarise by degrees into an awareness and knowledge of a self and that which is outside self. The two are closely linked. When the individual is a fully self-aware being he is more or less conscious of his love and hate, loyalties and enmities, acceptances and rejections. But at no time has he the clear identifiable image of himself that reflects and embodies all these particular, positive and negative, identifications. Nevertheless their sum gives a reference to the man at a particular moment and an explanation of the way he lives and reacts. It contains within it moreover the key to the experiences, conscious and unconscious, that have gone into his construction. The profile of appearance, motivation and history is conveyed in the term identity. The individual is and can never be aware of his total identity. It has a coverage and a depth that defies instant comprehension. The most he is capable of is an appreciation of certain specific identifications, but they do not of course add up to his total identity.

Man's identity is as large as life. With the advance in years his ego absorbs more and more of the environment and grows proportionately in stature and meaning. Man's identity is a measure of his identification with that which surrounds him, quantitatively and qualitatively.

Except in pathological states, when a person's sense of reality is disturbed or is temporarily overwhelmed, no person is without a sense of identity, even if it attaches to no more than his name and personal belongings.

COMPLEX

Identity is as complex as a person's make-up. It is a summary of the nature and extent of his ego. It is a concept of man's relationship to himself and his environment. He is not conscious of it as such, but to the extent that he senses and knows his feeling for and identification with people, objects and ideas, in a positive or negative sense, it reflects and expresses man's relatedness to himself, his ideas and his interests outside himself. He turns to it, piece meal, in self-affirmation. It is his pathfinder to his attitudes and relationships. Though man does not know his total identity it is implicit both in his being and in his actions. It is recognised by the existence and functioning of man in relation to himself and his environment.

It grows with man as he matures and contracts with the failure of his faculties. It is the sum of the increasing identifications. Each identification is the base for the construction of the next one. Man sets out to explore from the established base of his current identity. His maturation is reflected in the comprehension of an ever-extending internal and external world. The new insights and the intellectual and

emotional challenges that keep confronting him are the kernels of fresh identifications. From the first comprehension and identification with physical objects, which he instinctually invests with a primitive power and recognises as sources of emotive response, he evolves to the apprehension of abstract and spiritual realities, which are the nidus of more mature identifications.

PREJUDICE

If man did not inherit the prejudices that contaminate objects of identification, whether they are people, ideas or organizations, through association with people, he would be free to unite unreservedly with the world surrounding him. But from the very beginning he is taught by example and training how and what to comprehend in this world, so that as much as is available for identification there is even more that is rejected out-of-hand, without any prior knowledge or understanding of it. And if this were not enough to abbreviate the world available for identification there is a built-in resistance to new identifications in the established ones. Though the latter serve as foundations for the construction of fresh ones they also limit the superstructures that can be erected on them.

Man grows by his identifications but he creates thereby barriers between himself and other beings and ideas. He becomes bonded to and delimited by his identity, so that what the identifying, assimilative process has not reached out to and absorbed takes on the appearance of something foreign, if not alien, something unassimilable, if not also inferior and unworthy. Having learnt to distinguish self from non-self man continues the classifying programme and divides the non-self into separate divisions, containing, in one, the persons, ideas and institutions with which, through the impact of personal, educational and historical influences, he becomes identified, and in the other, that which remains outside the range of his identifying process. And so

alongside the identifying and growing process is one that keeps separating him from other beings and ideas, and limits and isolates him.

CHALLENGE

The ecumenical motivation and movement challenges man to step out beyond the bounds and bonds of his identity and embrace that which lies outside it. This is a challenge that he cannot however easily meet. True, every identification follows a challenge by that which stands over against him, and to which, in time, he reaches out. If ecumenism were to be interpreted as an invitation or challenge to man to break down the boundaries and disloyalty that is levelled at him by barriers of his identity and to merge into worlds outside it, it would be doomed to failure. It is beyond the capacity of the generality of human beings to enter into unending identifications. Ecumenism must operate within the current limits of man. If it can succeed in encouraging him to reach out to men and ideas for which his education and culture had not prepared him and to identify

himself with them without asking him to yield up any meaningful part of his identity it will have amply fulfilled its primary mission to help man forward on the path to mutual understanding and peace. If it can promote a desire for comprehension and dialogue and collaboration for the common cause of the brotherhood of man it will have served the utmost purpose that can be demanded of it, compatible with the nature of man.

RESISTANCE

Man has to contend with and overcome the resistances that inhere in his already established identity before he can extend himself into fresh identifications. The resistance inhering in the individual is caught up and reflected in the combined resistance of a group, sect or community. Courage and strength of character are necessary to enable a person to face up to the charge of those with whom he is associated in institutions and ideas when, individually, he reaches out to fresh ones beyond them. It is a sad aspect of social life that the individual is held captive by the loyalties he shares

with a group and that a group, generally speaking, does not take kindly to the propagation of new ideas and adventures in self-extension by daring individuals in it. A group is roused to wariness, if not suspicion and hostility, at the spectacle of a member reaching out to other groups. If ecumenism can support man in the exercise of his native right to dialogue and intellectual and spiritual exploration it will have helped not only the individual to find the courage to step outside his confined self and extend his identity but our society to adjust to an exploding population in a shrinking world that will have no place for distance between man and man and group and group, either territorially or morally. Ecumenism may seem to oppose man's obdurate nature to guard the boundaries of his identity, but it nevertheless conveys the profound yet elementary message to all men, which, for the sake of our children and children's children, we cannot afford not to heed. It is that the future is with us no less than with them and that we must face up to it responsibly, as if it were here now.

DIE KERK BUITE SUID-AFRIKA

PROF. B. B. KEET

SENDINGWERK VAN DIE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH VAN AMERIKA IN AFRIKA

„Inter Nos”, die publikasie van die Ned. Geref. Kerk, onder leiding van ds. W. A. Landman, is ’n onderneming wat van groot betekenis is vir die ekumeniese taak van die Algemene Sinode, wat nog altyd sy roeping in hierdie opsig bely.

Jammer dat hierdie publikasie geen wyer kring van lesers kry nie. Sover ons bekend word „Inter Nos” alleen aan predikante gestuur en ’n mens kan dit net betreur dat nie groter getalle bereik word nie want die produksie is dit allesins werd. Ek kan my nie ’n ander uitgawe van gelyke aard voorstel, waar so ’n algemene en objektiewe verslag van die kerk in die wêreld as geheel geteken word nie. Veral die staat van die sending vind ’n vername plek in „Inter Nos” en word met groot kennis behandel. Ek het dus volkome vrymoedigheid om die volgende berigte oor ’n deel van die sendingarbeid, waarmee ons kerk in vroeër

jare innig verbonde was, langs die weg van „The Banner” uit die Christian Reformed Church van Amerika oor te neem. Dit gaan oor die kerk van Christus in Tiv-land, waarin ds. Lester van Essen, sendeling in Nigerië as volg skryf: Die Here seën die werk van die Christian Reformed Church in hierdie streke nog steeds. Die kerk van die Tiv is volgens ds. Van Essen die kerk wat die sterkste groei toon in die hele wêreld. (Ons kerk soos bekend is, het nog tot onlangs die Tiv-kerk in die Soedan gedien, totdat die arbeid deur die Christian Reformed Church oorgeneem is. Die getal volwassenes wat elke Sondag gedoop word, is om

en by dertig. In die sendinggebied van die Christian Reformed Church in Tiv-land word die evangelie elke Sondag op meer as seshonderd plekke verkondig. Die Christian Reformed Church werk ook onder die Benue-stamme waar daar teenswoordig ’n East Benue Church is. Dáár is die groei veel langamer wat te wyte is aan die feit dat Moslem-invloede daar veel sterker is as in Tiv-land. Die twee sendinghospitale dien die bevolking goed. ’n Derde is in aanbou in Mkar.

Wat Christelike opvoeding betref word twee sake genoem. Die eerste is die drie inrigtings vir hoër onderwys, waar 800 leerlinge opgelei word om die gemeenskap te voorsien van opgevoede mense en vroue wat heilhartig in die diens van Christus en sy saak staan. Die ander belangrike onderwyswerk word verrig deur die Theological College of Northern Nigeria waar, soos die naam te

kenne gee, predikante opgelei word. Op die oomblik is daar 48 studente, maar die Sendingraad beoog 'n aansienlike uitbreiding, sodat minstens 120 studente daar gehuisves en onderrig sal word. Hier, soos in die kolleges, word die behoefte aan inheemse leerkragte al hoe dringender. 'n Verdere uitbouing in die Christelike onderwys word beoog veral met die oog op behoeftes van die platteland waar basiese onderrig in landboumetodes veel sal kan doen om die lewenspeil te verbeter. In die Tiv-kerke word veel klem gelê op pastorale werk onder die honderde jongmense wat gedurig na die stede verhuis.

Die artikel eindig met uiteensettings van die politieke moeilikhede in Nigerië en hoe dit die sending tref.

In „The Banner” van 25 Augustus vertel ds. E. H. Smith eers oor die politieke worsteling tussen Federale magte en dié van Biafra waarvan ons die volgende oorneem: 'n Groot deel van die gevegsfront wat aan die oostelike deel grens (t.w. Biafra) is Tiv-land. Terwyl die stryd 'n suiwer militêre konflik bly en die Federale troepe suidwaarts beur, bly die Tiv-land betreklik onaangeraak. Maar dit kan anders word. Ons sending (d.w.s. dié van die Christian Reformed Church en van sy voorganger

die Ned. Gereformeerde sending) het 'n goeie naam by die Regering sowel as by die volk. Dit word oral erken, en dit het die sending dan ook grootliks bemoedig om vas te trap en voort te gaan met sy bediening van die Woord. Dat ons sending dae van spanning en onrus deurmaak, spreek vanself. Maar juis in so 'n tyd word die sendelinge fyn dopgehou. Mag hulle kalm en vol vertroue bly. Die Here het sy dienaars wonderlik gesterk maar hulle, saam met die Kerk van Tiv-land, reken op die gebede van die kerk aan die tuisfront om in die duisternis van die broederstryd in Nigerië soos lig in die wêreld te skyn.

Who's Afraid of Aggiornamento?

JAMES E. MOULDER

I address this question, not so much to Roman Catholics, as to Orthodox and Protestants. And I do so having been privileged to participate in some of the agony and ecstasy of about three thousand delegates to the Third, World Congress of the Lay Apostolate in Rome, who, between October 11 and 18, contributed to the renewal presently taking place in the Roman Catholic Church.

In the absence of the final and official report of the Congress and because of being limited to participation in only two of the sixteen workshops into which we were divided, this report must necessarily be a subjective one. I therefore want to make it quite clear that I am doing no more than referring to what impressed and exhilarated me. Similarly, the questions which I had when leaving were those which had arisen in the course of my necessarily limited listening, reflecting and discussion.

But first a few general remarks about the Congress. The general theme was "God's People on Man's Journey" and had two parts. First we considered "the joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the men of this age" — their spiritual attitudes; the family in the present evolution of society; co-operation between men and women in various fields of social life; tensions between generations; the cultural revolution brought about by new social communications' systems; development and social responsibilities in a planetary society; migration; our search for peace and a world community. Apart from a lecture and a panel discussion, these

eight topics were explored in small workshops.

The second part of the Congress was concerned with the rôle of the laity in the renewal of the Church. We were forcefully reminded that we are also men of today and we sought to respond to the insights of Vatican II. I say "we", because the Orthodox and Protestant observer-consultants were not only invited to participate fully and freely in the Congress but were asked to lead workshops and prayers and were always forgetting that this was a Roman Catholic Congress! Thus having reflected on what it means to be alive in the final third of the 20th century we went on to wrestle with ways of presenting the Christian Message to modern man; Christian education; new methods of equipping Christians for their tasks in various environments; the need for dialogue within the Church; the tasks of the laity in the renewal of church communities and the Church's missionary activity; the "aggiornamento" of lay organizations; and ways of advancing ecumenical dialogue and collaboration.

So much by way of sketching the general outline of our deliberations. I now want to pin-point more

exactly six areas of concern and then raise four questions.

WORLDLY CONCERNS

The most hopeful and refreshing characteristic of the Congress was that so much time was devoted to what some still regard as "worldly concerns". In general the conviction was strengthened in some and born in others of us that Christians needed to be converted to the world; needed to be present, not first of all in church, but in the world. Furthermore we were not to attempt to force the world into religious straight-jackets of our own peculiar design but were to participate as servants in man's journey because men and women and all creation had a God-given, non-religious autonomy.

More specifically the Congress was concerned with the economic and cultural problems facing the developing nations and in the spirit of Gandhi who recognised that God can only appear to hungry men and women in the form of bread. Following in the steps of **Populorum Progressio**, the Congress called for the freeing of foreign aid from political conditions; the transference of 1% of the gross national product of developed countries in genuine capital assistance to the developing nations between now and 1970; and on developing nations to develop as much as possible their natural re-

sources and plan necessary legal, administrative and social reforms.

Another major concern of the Congress was the position of oppressed people and the use of violence to bring about socio-political changes. Perhaps the most impressive contribution in this field came from a Latin American who pointed out how quick the Church was to condemn violent revolutions while being equally slow to condemn the use of violence to maintain an oppressive *status quo*. At the end of the day there were probably more questions unresolved than answered, but at least the Congress recognised "the Christian's duty to side with those who are oppressed, regardless of their race, religion, ideology and social class" and requested us to participate actively in movements which seek to end oppression.

On the subject of racism the Congress recognised the alarming extent of both explicit and implicit racial discrimination. No country was specifically named or condemned because we were very aware that no one of the countries represented at the Congress was blameless. Instead we requested "the magisterium of the Church to continue to make clear without equivocation that racism is totally unacceptable, contrary to all human values and to the Christian faith" and urged "Christians all over the world to put into practice this teaching of the Church".

Finally, these concerns with development, the plight of politically oppressed peoples and those who are discriminated against on the grounds of their colour, were intimately linked with more general questions concerning peace and our present strivings for a world community. Barbara Ward (Lady Jackson) summed up "the joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties" of many of us when she referred to the gap between our scientific, technological equipment which is taking us headlong towards a planetary society and our lack of the moral equipment required for realizing our common humanity and solidarity.

AUTHENTICITY

A second clear impression of the Congress was the demand of the delegates for an authentic style of Christian discipleship. In a meeting for the observer-consultants Fr.

Thomas Stransky of the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity referred to "the complicated process of arriving at christian simplicity (not, naïveté) in a complex world". This point was made throughout the Congress in many different ways. There was an insistence that the Church must first of all learn to face reality and actually **listen** to those whose experience is different -- Marxists, non-believers, scientists, members of other religions and other denominations, the only half-articulated insights of the agricultural and industrial proletariat.

And when we had listened and reflected on what we had heard we had to learn to speak clearly and directly in the language of men and women of today. Although much was made of the need to adapt the Church's teaching and liturgy to non-western cultures, few recognised how alien these are to men and women of the present "west" — that is, to men and women who are secular, industrialized technocrats.

But it was not only the Church's language that came under fire. Its hierarchical, non-democratic structures were also questioned by many as they insisted on their right to experiment with new ways of worship and community life. Especially interesting were the questions raised about the continued usefulness of long-established lay organizations which no longer related to contemporary realities and experiences and the hope that via more flexible, temporary and *ad hoc* groups Christians would be able to participate more significantly in the environments in which they found themselves.

POVERTY

But the demand for authenticity was most clearly expressed in the repeated conviction that the Church must be seen to be poor and identified, not with the centres of political and economic power, but with the ordinary people of the world the majority of whom lack food, adequate homes, clothes and education. And there were those in the workshops who looked to one or both of two ways of bringing this about.

Firstly, the Church must learn both from its own tradition and from more recent, and sometimes secular, experiments the value of symbolic signs and acts. The behaviour of the prophets, of Jesus, St. Francis, of pacifists who hand

out flowers at displays of military might need to be imitated so as to demonstrate the Church's temporal weakness and its solidarity with the weak.

Secondly, more of the Church's income ought to be spent on aiding the developing nations and the poor within the developed nations.

Having heard the sincerity with which these convictions were expressed I can only hope that not only the Roman Catholic, but all our churches will soon be characterised by the mark of poverty.

RESPONSIBLE FREEDOM

Another dimension of the Congress was revealed in the insistence of the delegates that the Roman Catholic laity be allowed to exercise an adult and responsible freedom on questions of conscience. In particular the Congress demanded that there ought to be freedom of expression; that no topic be banned from discussion and that theological probing be permitted. Furthermore, while recognising the communal task of evolving an ethic of responsible parenthood the Congress decided that "the choice of scientific and technical means for achieving responsible parenthood" ought to be left "to parents acting in accordance with their Christian faith and on the basis of medical and scientific consultation".

The same emphasis was made in connection with mixed (Roman/non-Roman Catholic) marriages. Although no resolution was passed on the subject the workshop which reported on this problem asked that every marriage contracted in any Christian church be recognised as valid and that the education of children be left to parents after consultation with their priest and/or minister.

ECUMENISM

Apart from these insights on the topic of marriage, the Congress was clearly in favour of closer co-operation between members of the different denominations. Such contact and co-operation was urged to begin immediately in the field of what the WCC calls "Life and Work" — that is, in social action, inter-church aid, youth work and so on. Also urged was the finding of a way in which Christians who had united in the fellowship of life and work projects

would not be divided at the Eucharist.

EDUCATION

While making all these demands the delegates also recognised the need for educating and re-educating themselves and future members of the Church — both clergy and laity! Of special interest was the recognition of the need for a new understanding of the history of salvation and a new catechism which, amongst other things, would emphasize social responsibility and the sort of moral qualities required by having to live in an increasingly planetary society.

But perhaps more significant was the view of what appeared to be a minority — that ways must be found in which competent laymen could participate in and contribute towards the formulation of the Church's teaching. Amongst these there was also a recognition that the insights of Vatican II must be developed further and any attempt to regard the work of renewal as completed must be resisted.

QUESTIONS

Before raising the four questions I want to make two comments. The first is simply to acknowledge that Dr. Hans-Ruedi Weber, Associate Director of the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey, triggered off some of these questions while summing-up the Congress at the final plenary session. He must not of course be blamed for the way I have formulated them. Dr. Weber's presence on the rostrum expressed more clearly than all our discussions the desire of Roman Catholics to join other Christians in realizing the prayer "may they all be one" (John 17: 20-23) — ten years ago at the Second World Congress of the Lay Apostolate he had been the only Protestant present, and then only disguised as a news reporter!

The second point ought to be obvious, namely, that these questions could be addressed to any denomination.

A MATURE LAITY?

Amongst other things, industrialized societies breed specialists. In itself this is no bad thing and one reason for the accelerating development of technology and accumulation of information about "how the

world is". Unfortunately very little has been done by way of integrating the advances and insights gained via specialization. Thus most specialists are also characterised by vast gaps in their knowledge and experience of life. And this is no less true of theologians than of other specialists. But the very nature of the theological enterprise, concerned as it is with the whole range of life, is probably more threatened than any other discipline by the restrictions which accompany specialization. Theologians and priests/ministers do, of course, do what they can to bridge these gaps and extend their knowledge and experience. But at its best any substitute for a lengthy and committed involvement in some sphere or other is very much a second best. All of which suggests that laymen and women are indispensable to the fulfilment of the Church's theological tasks. In other words: while the specialist in theological disciplines cannot be excluded from or given a sub-ordinate place in this function of the Church, neither can the secular specialist or, for that matter, the "ordinary" man or woman.

Formulating and defending this ideal state of affairs is however very different from translating it into action — even from offering suggestions as to what steps ought to be taken in this direction. Obviously, Pope Paul was correct in regarding as absurd the supposition that every Tom, Dick and Harry are, willy-nilly, "their own interpreters of God's Word". But equally absurd is the supposition that **some** Tom, Dick and Harry deeply committed both to the Gospel of Jesus and some dimension of life is not able to have insights into God's Word that are inaccessible to professional and/or priestly theologians. Furthermore it is a pity that the Pope's sermon failed to point out that the comparison of anyone who attempts to cut himself off from the Hierarchy to a "branch which atrophies because it is no longer connected with the stem which provides its sap" applies **mutatis mutandis** to a Hierarchy which insulates itself from the insights of its laity.

Thus I ask: how are we (Roman, Orthodox and Protestant) going to develop a mature theology? Or, if the above argument has any force, how are we going to develop a mature laity which can participate in the development of a significant

theology, liturgy, social ethic and so on?

LAY CLERICS?

To the first question Dr. Weber replied by advancing the claims for the importance of corporate Bible Study, something which was not done in the Congress. But this is, of course, only part of the answer. What's more, the question not only points to a need but creates a danger, and one which Protestants have not altogether escaped from — namely, the danger of breeding "clericalized" laymen and women. In other words: it would be tragic if the laity should become so involved in the Church that they cease to be primarily involved in the concerns of various secular spheres. In the sermon already referred to, Pope Paul quoted St. Augustine: "there is in the field, that is, in the world, till the end of time, the growing wheat of Christ". These words have, of course, a wider reference than to Christian laity; but the Congress echoed this insight in its insistence that Christians be "there"; that is, be present with men and women of today and sharing in their joys and hopes, their griefs and anxieties.

I therefore ask: will we merely renew our various denominations in this century? or will we be renewed by engaging in the work of bringing about a planetary society in which hunger and illiteracy have been eliminated and in which racism, political oppression and wars are, if not ended, more clearly recognised for the evils they are?

SECULARIZATION?

At the end of the first part of the Congress during a meeting of the observer-consultants, a member of one of the Orthodox Churches expressed some alarm over what he regarded as the "implicit humanism" of many of the contributions made in the workshops. His observation was accurate; his alarm, I would say, misplaced. In another workshop concerned with ways of presenting the Christian Message to modern man something similar emerged: participants were uncertain about **what** they wanted to present to modern man. More specifically, when mention was made of the Incarnation, Resurrection, Ascension and Return of Christ these delegates

were obviously perplexed and concerned by the fact that to the majority of industrialized people such a message is incomprehensible. Nevertheless in the very act of being confused by the fact that for most teenagers in Europe and North America (and a growing number elsewhere) "Easter means eggs", they understood and had to some extent experienced the same loss of significance.

I must however point out that these remarks apply mainly to delegates from secular societies. I was struck by the fact that most delegates from Asia, and more especially from Africa, expressed very different opinions. Most of them were still optimistic about the future of a religious view of the world and in more or less sophisticated ways made the same point as came from Cameroon: "There are no unbelievers in our country".

A serious dialogue between representatives of these two sorts of background and experience has hardly begun. Nor is it going to be easy for either side to accept each other's *bona fides* and believe that each wants to serve the Church.

I therefore ask: what are we going to do about this tension between secular and sacral understandings of Christianity? Is it possible to recover a religious view of life once this has been lost? Are those who live in societies which still have sacral attitudes, customs and ethics going to be able to maintain these in the face of increasing industrialization and urbanization? These are only the more obvious questions which come to mind and which, though often near the surface, were hardly faced by the Congress.

Perhaps the most important question is this: did this Congress fail before it began? This may sound a churlish question in the light of the tremendous significance and sense of exhilaration experienced by the majority of us. Nevertheless this experience was unreal in the sense that it was linked to the move for renewal in the Roman Catholic Church, when most of the problems raised and the suggestions made for overcoming them were not very peculiar to that Church. This suggests that whatever reasons ecclesiastical bureaucrats of Orthodox, Protestant or Roman persuasion may have for postponing the reunification of the Church, there are no reason for the laity of these traditions to be

separated from each other in their search for an authentic style of discipleship and service to the world. If this is indeed so then there are also no reasons for a Fourth World Congress of the Lay Apostolate as distinct from a congress for Christian laymen and women.

WHO?

I conclude by making the point Hans-Ruedi Weber made at the close of his address. It is probably true to claim that the Ecumenical

Movement has contributed something positive towards the desire for renewal amongst Roman Catholics. In the light of Vatican II and this Congress the question Orthodox and Protestant must ask themselves is this: are we going to proceed radically and rapidly enough with the task of renewing our denominations so as not to be a stumbling-block to our Roman Catholic brethren in their search for ways of being God's people on man's journey?

Letters

"DIE KERK VAN DIE ANTICHRIS"

Mnr. P. G. Overduin, sr., Northside 435, Lynnwood, Pretoria.

Pro Veritate van 15 Oktober 1967 herdenk in 'n inleidingsartikel die Kerkhervorming wat 450 jaar gelede plaasgevind het. Dit geskied op 'n baie bedenklike manier. Luther word daarin tot 'n sataniese figuur wat deur sy leringe, in besonder deur sy daad van 31 Oktober 1517, 'n skeuring in die Christelike Kerk veroorsaak het.

Die redaksie weet blykbaar niks daarvan dat die Reformasie van die sestende eeu steeds weer verklaar het dat dit geen skeurkerk is nie maar die regmatige voortsetting van die Christelike Kerk — 'n verklaring wat deur die eeue heen tot vandag toe herhaal word.

Deur die uittrede van die gelowiges in die sestende eeu het Rome opgehou om 'n Christelike Kerk te wees en het dit die kerk van die Antichris geword wat volkome deur die Heilige Gees verlaat is. Ter wille van sy selfhandhawing het Rome wêreldse magsmiddele gebruik, Rome het vervolg en gemartel en vermoor. Die Protestante in Spanje kan getuig hoe swaar die lewe vir hulle is, selfs nog in ons tyd. Van die Serwe in die staat Kroasië kan verneem word hoe daar in die Hitler-tyd 600,000 nie-Roomse Serwe uitgemoor is onder leiding van die Vatikaan-kliëk.

Die Kerk van die Reformasie is vol blydschap omdat God die held Luther verwek het. Deur hom is die gelowiges bevry van die dwalinge en tirannie van Rome. Vir hulle is dit 'n daaglikse vreugde om te kan bely: Die Skrif alleen en nie daarbo die tradisie nie; die geloof alleen en nie daarbo die werke van die wet nie; Christus alleen en nie bo Hom 'n

Briewe

groot aantal heiliges en in besonder die hemelkoningin Maria as medeverlosseres nie.

Oor al dié dierbare geloofswaardede het Rome op die konsilie van Trente sy veelvuldige vervloekinge uitgespreek.

★

(Ons korrespondent moet tog maar asseblief die betrokke inleidingsartikel weer lees en hom afvra of sy gevolgtrekking dat ons Luther so sou voorgestel het soos wat hy beweer, billik is. Ons het in elk geval hoegenaamd nie bedoel wat hy daarin wil sien nie. Verder wil ons hom vriendelik daaraan herinner dat ons ons nie meer bevind in die tyd van die konsilie van Trente (en van die Heidelbergse Kategismus nie!), en aan die hand doen dat dit vir alle Protestante gerade is om enigsins te probeer tred hou met nuwere ontwikkelinge in die Roomse Kerk sowel as van ontwikkelinge op die gebied van toenadering tussen die kerke van Rome en die Reformasie. — Red.)

"RE-DISCOVERED" OR "INTRODUCED"?

Mr. J. A. Duigan, Pretoria.

Your otherwise excellent editorial of November 1967 contains the statement in the opening paragraph that, "the gospel of 'justification through faith alone' was the greatest Biblical treasure re-discovered by the Reformation". In my opinion the word "introduced" should be substituted for "rediscovered", as "justification by faith alone" is not Biblical.

Why did Luther reject the Epistle of James? Simply because it stated, "Faith without works is dead", 2:17 and, "By works a man is justified and not by faith alone", 2:24; and "For even as the body without the spirit is

dead, so also faith without works is dead", v. 26. Turning to Matthew we read, "The Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father, and then will He render to every man according to his works", 16:27; and, "Unless your justice abound more than that of the scribes and the Pharisees you shall not enter the Kingdom of heaven", v. 20. Also Paul: "If I have all faith so that I could move mountains, but have not charity I am nothing", 1 Cor. 13:2, and, "He that thinketh himself to stand let him take heed lest he fall", 1 Cor. 10:12; also "... while we have time let us work good to all men", Gal. 6:7. In Titus 2:11-15 we read "... our Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from all iniquity and might cleanse to Himself a people acceptable, a pursuer of good works".

Martin Luther was mistaken in his interpretation of Rom. 3:28 and 5:1, when he added the word "alone" after "faith". Luther overlooked Peter's warning that "No prophecy of Scripture is of private interpretation".

CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

*Mr. Thomas A. T. C. Moremoholo,
Welkom, O.F.S.*

As Christians we form the mystical Body of Christ and are co-heirs with Him in the Kingdom of Heaven. If therefore we are, as we confess, children of God and brothers in Christ we should be intimately concerned that we celebrate the nativity of Christ in humility and be spiritually prepared. In preparing ourselves we can ask what this festival recalls and what Christmas means? Christmas commemorates the Birth of Christ, who simultaneously is the Redeemer and the first-born of every creature. He comes into creation as a creature, out of eternity he comes into time, out of infinity into space, to redeem, through his sacrifice, a rebellious and perverse people.

When we join in gratitude to praise God for his unspeakable gift to mankind then we have part in this event which transcends time.

It is therefore right for all Christians to join their joyful cries with that of the hymn writer when he says:

*"Glory be to God in the highest
and on earth peace to men of
goodwill".*

'N RARE SPRONG

Die veroordeling van die Christelike Instituut as 'n dwaalrigting is een van die ongelukkigste dinge wat seker nog ooit in die geskiedenis van die Ned. Geref. Kerk geboekstaaf is. Hierdie Kerk het hom daardeur in 'n verleentheid laat bring waaruit dié wat hom daarin gelei het, hom klaarblyklik nie kan uithelp nie en waardeur hy, by gebrek aan die nodige verantwoording, onder sware verdenking sal bly staan.

Wanneer 'n kerk hom immers van die dwaalleer distansieer, verklaar hy daarmee tegelyk uitdruklik en ondubbelsinnig wat dan die ware leer van die saligheid is wat hy bely. Dit kan alleen in die grootste erns geskied. En as die erns ontbreek, as die woord „dwaalleer” oorhaastig en onbesonne uitgespreek word, moet dit as ydel en ligsinnig betreur en veroordeel word. So iets is die Kerk onwaardig.

En tog kan 'n kerk hom blykbaar daartoe laat verlei. Die eerbied en die liefde vir die Liggaam van Christus vereis egter dat 'n mens selfs dan nog nie die kerk as sodanig moet afskryf nie, maar dat daar gebid en gestry moet word om sy bevryding uit die mag van verleiding. Per slot van sake bly die Kerk die eiendom van Christus, ook al verval hy soms blykbaar geheel en al in die hande van onheiliges.

Daar is by baie 'n diepe smart oor die verleentheid waarin die N.G. Kerk hom bevind oor sy besluit aangaande die Christelike Instituut. Hy is daardeur goedkoop gemaak, verneder. En die weg tot herstel is gewoonlik so pynlik. Hoe kan die Kerk weer daar uitkom?

Daarom stem dit 'n mens tot so 'n intense droefheid dat daar mense is wat, juis met die gesag wat hulle posisies in die kerk aan hulle verleen, met hom nog verder en verder die moeras ingaan.

In 'n vorige uitgawe het ek een en ander gesê oor die bewering in 'n *Kerkbode*-artikel van 'n vooraanstaande professor dat die Christelike Instituut 'n sekte sou wees.

In 'n latere uitgawe van *Die Kerkbode* (25 Okt.) word in 'n redaksionele artikel weer eens gepoog om die besluit van die Sinode vir die lidmate van die Kerk te regverdig. Die artikel dra die opskrif *Waarom die Besluit van die*

Algemene Sinode nodig was en vind die bewys dat die Christelike Instituut 'n dwaalrigting is in uitsprake van die direkteur van die Instituut in 'n toespraak wat hy onlangs in Kaapstad gehou het, soos dit in 'n koerant gerapporteer is. Wat hy volgens die berig gesê het (en ons neem aan dat dit min of meer korrek gerapporteer is) kom daarop neer dat daar deur die blankes in Suid-Afrika aan die Kleurlinge onreg gedoen word uit naam van die Christelike godsdiens; dat die N.G. Kerk daar skuld aan het; dat Christus, as Hy vandag in Suid-Afrika was, waarskynlik as 'n Kleurling geklassifiseer sou word (waaruit ek verstaan: Hy sou Hom met die „misdeldes” vereenselwig het tot in die aanname van die huidskleur wat hulle as sodanig merk).

Dit, beweer *Die Kerkbode*, bewys hoe reg die Sinode geoordeel het deur die Christelike Instituut as 'n dwaalrigting te verwerp.

'n Mens is geneig om daarvoor 'n grap te wil maak, daarvoor te wil lag, dit in 'n spitskriffie te wil hekel. 'n *Rare sprong*, het ek as opskrif hierbo geskrywe — met die gedagte aan wat die kat doen as hy in die knyp sit. Maar die spot en die lag sit net aan die oppervlakte. Daaronder skuil daar 'n skrynende pyn.

Leef daar in die N.G. Kerk nog enige besef van wat dwaalleer is? En dus: Van wat die ware leer van die saligheid is? Daar moet tog nog „seweduise” oor wees vir wie die eer van Christus swaar genoeg weeg dat hulle nie sal toelaat dat (ook in hulle naam!) so 'n vreeslike bankrotskap in die redaksionele kolomme van die amp telike orgaan van die Kerk so openlik geadverteer word nie?

B.E.



PRO
VERITATE