

PRO

VERITATE

INHOUD/CONTENTS

"The Gospel of Love Requires..."	1
Is Ek 'n Christen?	1
Inleidingsartikel/Editorial	5
"Die Ware Jakob"	6
Ope Brief aan Pro Veritate en die Christelike Instituut	8
An Edumenical Notebook	11
Die Kerk Buite Suid-Afrika	12
Boekbespreking	14
Letters/Briewe	14

CHRISTELIKE MAANDBLAD VIR SUIDELIKE AFRIKA—CHRISTIAN MONTHLY FOR SOUTHERN AFRICA

February 15 Februarie 1966

5c

Intekengeld R1 Subscription

Jaargang IV, Nr. 10.

Volume IV, No. 10.

By die Hoofposkantoor as Nuusblad geregistreer.

Registered at the Post Office as a Newspaper.

"THE GOSPEL OF LOVE REQUIRES..."

(PROVINCIAL SYNOD, CHURCH OF THE PROVINCE OF SOUTH AFRICA, 1965)

The Very Rev. A. H. Cross, Dean of Bloemfontein

If religion is relationship — relationship with God and with our fellow men — then much of the business of Provincial Synod could rightly have been termed "religious". Newspaper coverage naturally gave prominence to items of general interest, and to some have conveyed the impression that the Anglican Church was at it again — "interfering in politics". Nothing could have been further from the truth. Synod was concerned — profoundly concerned — with these two questions of man's relationship to man. As such it was, and always will be, bound to consider the things which help or hinder these relationships.

Being a body which, until now, has met only every five years, there was of necessity much that was merely business — but again, such "business" as was thought likely to render the Church a more effective instrument in promoting these vital relationships. There was, for instance, a searching reappraisal of the Church's "structures", resulting in a certain amount of stream-lining in the interests of efficiency: Provincial Synod will in future be a slightly smaller body, and will meet more often. There were resolutions to admit women to the Synods of the Church, and to lower the age-limit of Church officers, making it possible for young people to play a more active and effective part in the work of the Church. Committees were set up to investigate the present methods of appointing Bishops in the Church of the Province and to ascertain whether a change of method was desirable; another to advise on religious broadcasting, including that of Radio Bantu, and the possibilities which this medium affords.

UNITY

But the real "meat" of this Session of Synod lay in this matter of

relationships. The Archbishop (the Most Reverend Robert Selby Taylor) had sounded the theme in the course of his charge to Synod — a theme on which subsequent resolutions wrote their variation. "The unity of the Church is at its deepest level a unity of love. We are separated from one another because our

love for one another is so imperfect. Schism is the failure of love. The sin of uncharity is not far away from every schism. It is a failure of charity on both sides. We may try to justify the necessity of the divisions in which our forefathers were involved; we may argue that they were moral-
(Continued on page 2)

GEESTESKWELLINGE

IS EK 'N CHRISTEN?

DR. W. BRUCKNER DE VILLIERS

Dis 'n vraag wat 'n mens jou wel deesdae kan begin afvra.

Ons raak tot so 'n mate omgeef van selfaangeprese „Christene“, wat hul tegelykertyd ook die klaarblyklik mees onchristelike uitinge en handeling veroorloof, en van allerlei sg. „Christelike“ liggame, organisasies en aksiegroepe, wat in hul optrede eerder die saak van Satan skyn te bevorder as dié van Christus, dat dit werklik tot ernstige nadenke stem of die begrip „Christen“ nog enigsins sin inhou.

Kan dit hoegenaamd nog beskouw word as die eretitel wat dit eertyds was en as die verantwoordelikeheidsaanduiding wat dit by implikasie wesenlik inhou? Of het die erenaam „Christen“ net so niksseggend en bespotlik geword as die hedendaagse begrip van 'n „Christelik“ Westerse Beskawing?

BESIN

Eén ding is seker: die groot meerderheid mense wat hulleself vandag nog so onnadenkend-hoofaardig en asof vanselfsprekend „Christene“ noem, het nie die vaagste benul van wat dié naam werklik beteken en wat die aanmatigende opeising daarvan vir
(Vervolg op bladsy 3)

"The Gospel of Love Requires..."

(Continued from page 1)

ly or theologically right in the dispute which caused the division, yet surely we must admit that if there had been perfect charity on both sides the dispute would never have ended so tragically. And, even if we are not prepared to admit any responsibility for the original cause of the split which divides us, we cannot deny that we have done much to aggravate the situation by our lack of charity to those from whom we are separated, by our unwillingness to see whether the original causes still hold good or whether the fault is not now on our side. The weakness which comes from our divisions does not only involve our faith: it affects every sphere of the Church's proper life. Today we are weak in ways which it would be wearisome to enumerate. Our Churches are race churches, national churches, class churches. As a result of our weakness we are barely beginning to grapple with the task of the evangelisation of man in modern mass society. But our very weaknesses are the grounds for new hope. For there is a growing sense of need and expectancy for the spirit of renewal. We are beginning to see that it is only through such a renewal that we shall be fit for the task which challenges us in the world today."

Following hard upon the sounding of this theme came the resolution concerning Anglican/Presbyterian relationships. A debate of an extremely high standard followed the introduction of this subject by the Bishop of Bloemfontein (the Rt. Reverend B. B. Burnett), and led to one of the most significant decisions taken at this Synod. Voting separately in the three Houses of Synod — Laity, Clergy, and Bishops — it was agreed by an overwhelming majority in each House to receive the Report of the Anglican/Presbyterian Conversations, to commend the Proposed Solemn Covenant and Statement of Agreed Belief to Parish Vestries and Diocesan Synods for study and discussion, and to urge that mem-

bers of the Church of the Province should meet with members of the Presbyterian Church for prayer, study, and fellowship. Thus was another step taken towards that organic unity which is the ultimate hope of both Churches.

Another resolution which, originally, asked for the re-opening of conversations with the Methodist Church was, during the course of debate, amended to include other Churches wherever such conversations might be possible.

RESPONSIBILITY

It was also the Bishop of Bloemfontein who introduced a resolution, of no less importance and concern to Synod, concerning relationships with other racial groups. This was no "racial" resolution; no charter of human rights. Rather was it a statement of Christian responsibility, unexceptionable in its statement of the principles of justice, comprehensive yet concise in its survey of the total situation, direct and practical in its application. As such it deserves to be quoted in full:

"This Synod affirms that all men, of whatever race, who permanently inhabit the Republic of South Africa, may rightly claim it as a homeland afforded to them by the goodness of God. Justice therefore requires that South Africans of every racial group be given an equal opportunity to make their contribution to the development of their country and that they be given a just share in the ensuing rewards and responsibilities. Injustice established and enforced by legislation or the arbitrary exercise of power, and condoned by the privileged, shows lack of charity towards those who are penalised, and is a sin against God. Moreover because justice requires the balancing of the needs of individuals and groups against the overall welfare and security of the society in which they exist, Christian citizens are bound to seek for a social order in South Africa in which the needs of no racial group, whether White, or Indian, African or Coloured, are placed above the legitimate needs of other groups.

This principle must find expression in the way Christian citizens—

(i) seek to provide legislation to

protect men from the results of race prejudice instead of giving permanent expression to racialism in legislation;

- (ii) seek to remove job reservation;
- (iii) seek to assert the right of every man to own land and live with his family wherever he is domiciled;
- (iv) seek to secure, as far as may be, equal educational opportunities for all;
- (v) seek to provide an opportunity for individuals and representatives of all racial groups to participate effectively in the government of our country;
- (vi) seek to ensure that equal opportunities for recreation are available for all races.

In this speech the Bishop stressed that this resolutions was addressed to all Christians, concerned as they should be with relationships between people and communities. Inevitably, therefore, the Church must be involved in society; this was as much the Church's business as it was that of the State. Synod gave its resounding approval to the Resolution.

FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION

Another resolution on relationships, of great importance to the working of the Church, was introduced by the Bishop of Zululand and Swaziland (the Rt. Reverend T. J. Savage) who moved:

"That Synod affirms that the Church is a unity created by the grace of God through the redeeming work of Jesus Christ . . . This unity of the Church finds expression in common prayer and communion and in a fellowship which is being sanctified by the Holy Spirit and used by God for the blessing and enrichment of all who share in it.

We affirm that the nature of this fellowship requires freedom of association in study and in conference with all members of Christ's Body irrespective of colour or race."

The resolution went on to endorse the statement enunciated by the Christian Council of South Africa at Bloemfontein in May, 1965, that:

(a) The Church of Jesus Christ is every bit as much the Church

"The Gospel of Love Requires..."

when it is in conference and study as when it is at worship;

(b) The Church and the Church alone has the right to regulate its own programme of study, worship, and conference and to decide who may participate and how its programme is to be organised.

and it concluded with the words: "It is often both necessary and important that Christians of different races should be able to live under one roof and share a common board."

The Bishop of Bloemfontein in seconding the resolutions read to Synod the concluding paragraphs of a letter received from the Prime Minister's Private Secretary (Mr. J. F. Barnard) in reply to a request from the Christian Council that the Prime Minister should intervene in the matter of members of different races being allowed to meet at a certain ecumenical centre:

"The Government may not be expected to change its political convictions to suit the different political outlook of its opponents even if these are defended in terms of religion."

Bishop Burnett rightly described this as "scandalous". Again, Synod unanimously adopted this resolution urging the clergy and people "to take the initiative in providing opportunities for people of different races and cultures to meet in conference for prayer and for the study of God's word."

COMMON CHRISTIAN CONCERN

Rightly concerning itself with the conditions under which members of Christ's Church are compelled to live, Synod spoke with a single voice on the question of Migratory Labour. In one of the best speeches heard at Synod, the Rector of Stellenbosch (the Venerable F. Findley) laid bare the evils of this system which he described as "the greatest cause of the break-up of family life, the greatest impediment to normal married life, the greatest cause of sexual immorality and vice of all kinds amongst Africans."

And he warned: "This system is not decreasing, it is increasing; it is intended that it should go on increasing." The picture which he went on to paint of the resulting immorality, poverty, malnutrition, and appalling death rate — all substantiated by facts and figures — this gruesome picture was somewhat relieved by the heartening news that the Cape Synod of the N.G. Kerk had received and approved the report of a Commission which condemned this system of migratory labour as "a cancer ravaging the social and moral life of Africans and will not leave the country as a whole unscathed."

"Often enough," the Archdeacon said, "the Dutch Reformed Churches and ourselves have not seen eye to eye on the great issues which are at stake in our country. Often enough we have criticised each other and often enough with little understanding and less charity. Cannot we now say we are with you and behind you utterly and entirely in this matter?" To which Synod said an unanimous "Yes".

TRUTH

The last word on Synod 1965 might well be that of the Archbishop, who, in his charge, had said:

"There are times when the Gospel of love requires us to remain silent, as Christ was silent before His accusers. But much more frequently the same Gospel demands that we should speak out courageously, whatever the personal consequences may be. The Scribes and Pharisees tried to silence Christ, because they knew that His teaching would destroy many contemporary traditions. The truth was of greater importance than tradition. We must continue to proclaim the truth. As we do so, our primary concern is to act as leaven within the community. The effect of the leaven may not always be apparent, or it may even have disastrous consequences for the individual. This is not the question. We have to be witnesses to the faith that is in us. Self-preservation is not our first concern. For "we must work not for perishable food, but for the food that lasts, the food of eternal life."

Is Ek 'n Christen?

(Vervolg van bladsy 1)

hulself inderdaad van hulle persoonlik sou verg nie. En ook nog 'n ander feit begin alhoemeer soos 'n oogversteurende paal bo water uit te staan: dit het werklik tyd geword vir alle belydende Christene wat enigsins nog erns maak met hul eie Christenskap — en selfs vir alle „Christelike“ kerke wat nog die pretensie tot Christelikheid daarop wil nahou — om in alle erns te begin besin oor die opdrag, die eis, die verantwoordelikheid en die uitdaging wat vervat is in enige ernstigbedeelde volgelingsberoep op die naam van Christus.

Selfs onder verwysing na 'n massa Skriftuurplase behoort dit vir enige denkende mens, of hy nou in die Christelike Openbaring glo of nie, in elk geval heeltemal duidelik te wees wat 'n Christen **nie** is of behoort te wees nie. En na selfs die mees ooglopende norms gemeet word dit dan onmiddellik duidelik dat die meeste van juis die luidrugtigste hedendaagse aanspraakmakers op Christenskap geensins die toets van dié Openbaring kan deurstaan nie: dat dit inderdaad die grofste vermetelheid van hulle kant is om te waag om die heilige naam van Christus op hulle lippe te neem en die ere naam Christen vir hulleself toe te eien.

Afgesien van die maklik definieerbare en uitkenbare sondes van die vlees wat vandag so algemeen bedrywe word ook deur selfbetitelde Christene ten spyte van die verbintenis om hul „af te lê“, word ons tyd en tydgenootskap by uitstek gekenmerk deur die skaamtelose verval in die meer subtiele, en daarom gevaarliker, sondes van die gees, skromeloos gepleeg veral deur „Christene“ en — veel erger nog — in naam en op grond van hul vermetel toegeënde en gewaande Christenskap.

(Vreemd, of miskien verstaanbaar genoeg, is dit onder die gelede van die sondaars na die vlees — dikwels die uitgeworpenes en ge-ostraseerdes van die samelewing — dat die werklike Christene nog gevind kan word:

Is Ek 'n Christen?

(Vervolg van bladsy 3)

bloot omdat daar, in hulle geval, werklik nog sprake kan wees van „hartgrondige berou“. Daarteenoor is dit juis in die geledere van die beoefenaars van die veel gevaarliker sondes na die gees dat daar so dikwels geen sweem van berou te bespeur is nie. Miskien is dit egter gladnie so vreemd of eenmalig nie: Christus self kon dit in Sy hart vind om Matthéüs, die tollenaar, en Maria Magdalena, die straatvrou, te vergewe, terwyl Sy veroordeling van die Fariseërs en Skrifgeleerdes van Sy tyd 'n ongenaakbare was en Hy nie gehuiwer het om die onheiligers van Gods tempel met 'n sweep uit die heiligdom te verjaag nie!

Vandag staan die opperste liefdeloosheid, beterwetende eiegeregtigheid, trotse hovaardy, genadelose onvergewensgesindheid en selfs openlike viktimisasie van die naaste (so dikwels, helaas, selfs van die sg. mede-„Christen“) bekroond as die suiwerste uitinge van „Christelike“ ywer. Vormgodsdien (gereelde, pligmatige erediensbywoning, gewetensgetroue konformisme, die gelate uitdienting van die amptermyn as ordelik verkose kerkraadslid, geesdriftige ywer ten dienste van amptelik erkende en slaafse be-aming van 'n quasi-kerklik gesanksioneerde volksmite en -ideaal) het 'n algemeen aangeprese „Christelike“ deug geword. Die verswelging van die individuele gewete deur die konsensus van „Christelik-Nasionale“ opinie is verhef tot die status van 'n **sine qua non**, 'n simbool van algemene aanvaarbaarheid.

Maar wat dit alles met werklike Christenskap te make het, is 'n raaisel!

POSITIEF

Maar dit is nog bloot die **negatiewe** sy van die saak: verskynsels soos hierdie is slegs simptome van 'n diepgewortelde **nie-Christenskap**. Wat beteken dit om **positief** 'n Christen te wees? Wat word daar daadwerklik van my vereis, aan my opgedra, my as verantwoordelikheid opgelê,

my as lewensuitdaging en -ideaal gestel?

Hieroor kan daar natuurlik boekdele geskrywe word en ek is weereens verplig om my te weerhou van die versoeking tot groot-skaalse teksaanhalery. Laat ons volstaan by die (noodwendig veralgemeende en daarom ook gedeeltelik vervalsende) definisie van Christelikheid as Christelike **verantwoordelikheid** en die verantwoordelikheid, konkreet gesien, as **medemenslikheid** of **vervulde naasteliefde** (omdat ek die onsigbare en ontasbare God slegs dan „bo alles“ lief kan hê as ek my naaste lief het „soos myself“.)

In die lig van hierdie definisie staan ons hedendaagse „Christene“ totaal skuldig voor God. Van 'n werklike naasteliefde, van 'n vervulde verantwoordelikheid teenoor die medemens en daarom ook teenoor God, na Wie se beeld en gelykenis my naaste, my medemens, geskape is, van 'n onselfsugtige oorgawe aan die Ander is daar feitlik geen sprake meer nie. Persoonlike selfsug en die eksklusiewe belange van die groep waartoe elkeen behoort het die afgode van ons tyd geword. Aksiomaties en assulks totaal aanvaarbaar is die verguising van dié wat weier om blindelings mee te loop en die verkragting en vertrapping van die kleine, sagte stem van die gewete, sy dit dié van die individu of dié van die volk waartoe hy behoort.

ONTNUGTER

Geen wonder dat 'n toegewyde Evangeliedienaar onlangs, in totale ontnugtering, teenoor my bely het dat die sg. „Kerk van Christus“ „jare gelede“ reeds alle werklike kontak met die lewende Christus en Sy gees verloor het nie. Geen wonder dat ons kerke, ons vormlike, aardse groepsbelangdienende kerke, begin leegloop — eenvoudig omdat daar nie meer genoeg werklik oortuigde en gelowige Christene is om hulle vol te maak nie. Geen wonder dat die Kerk skynbaar geen rigtinggewende boodskap meer het vir die wêreld in ons gekwelde tyd nie . . .

Dit is egter so maklik (en veroordelenswaardig) om te oordeel en te veroordeel. Die proef op die

som moet 'n mens in die lewensveld self gaan soek.

Nou onlangs het ek my op 'n Transvaalse plattelandse dorp bevind i.v.m. 'n noodlenigingsveldtog gemik op slagoffers van die onlangse katastrofale droogte en het ek met 'n vooraanstaande inwoner van die distrik die ellende van plaaslike hulpbehoevendes bespreek: beide dié van Bantoe-suigelinge en oues van dae wat besig is om werklike hongersnood in die oë te staar, en dié van blanke kleinboere wat op die rand van bankrotkap en dreigende broodsgerek staan.

Hy het teenoor my opgemerk:

„Hierdie armbanke kleinboertjies moes lankal uitgeboer het en, sover dit hulle aangaan, is die droogte eintlik 'n bedekte seën. Hulle moes lankal van die land af gejaag gewees het. Nou het die droogte dit vir ons gedoen. Dis erg genoeg dat hulle 'n las op die staat sal bly. Gelukkig het hulle nou feitlik almal hier uit die distrik getrek, sodat hulle nie ook nog 'n las op die kerk se skouers hoof te wees nie.

„En wat die kaffers betref: ek is nog steeds oortuig dat die beste raad wat die Regering kan volg, is om aan elke witman 'n geweer en patrone uit te reik met die opdrag om minstens agt kaffers dood te skiet. Dan het ons geen rasseprobleem hoegenaamd meer nie!“

Is dit wat deesdae bedoel word met „Christelike“ naasteliefde en medeburgerskap? Is dit waartoe ons gekom het na drie eeue van „kerstening“ van die barbaarse heidendom? Is dit die selfsugtige en eiegeregtige groepsideale wat ons nastreef onder die vaandel van 'n „Christelike“ Beskawing en 'n „Christelike-Nasionale“ volksideologie?

En as ek enige heimlike simpatie nog in my eie hart koester vir so 'n simplistiese standpunt en oplossing vir ons kwellendste landsprobleme, durf ek dan nog werklik aanspraak maak op die naam „Christen“?

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 inleidingsartikels en redaksionele verklarings nie.

Inleidingsartikel:

Kerke voor Belangrike Beslissings

Die jaar 1966 gaan nie net op staatkundige maar ewe seer op kerklike gebied een van groot betekenis wees vir Suid-Afrika. Wat die staatkunde betref, is daar, naas die algemene verkiesing op 30 Maart, ook die verwickelinge in Rhodesië en ander gebiede van Afrika wat verreikende gevolge vir blank sowel as nie-blank in Suid-Afrika gaan hê en wat die Kerk van Christus in ons land voor beslissings gaan plaas waar sy uitsprake aan swaar eise van Christelike geregtigheid teenoor alle bevolkingsgroepe onderwerp gaan word.

Maar dis veral op kerklike gebied dat belangrike besluite geneem sal moet word. Ons dink hier aan die ernstige beslissing waarvoor die Christenraad van Kerke en elkeen van sy agt-en-twintig individuele lid-kerke geplaas is as gevolg van die Regering en die Munisipaliteit van Roodepoort se besluit insake losies van nie-blanke afgevaardigdes tydens die bywoning van kerklike konferensies te Wilgespruit. Vir elkeen wat die posisie noukeurig ontleed, moet dit tog duidelik wees dat deur hierdie owerheidsopptrede nie alleen die geestelike verkeer binne die kerk belemmer word nie, maar dat die Bybelse eis van Christelike gasvryheid (Hand. 10 en Galasiërs 2) deur hierdie owerheidsverbodings in sy wese aangetas word. Dit kom ons voor dat in hierdie, vir baie minder belangrike, inperking deur die owerheid al die kerke in Suid-Afrika ten diepste getoets word ten opsigte van hulle gehoorsaamheid aan God en aan sy Woord. En as ons sê al die kerke dan bedoel ons ook dié kerke wat nie deel vorm van die Christenraad van Suid-Afrika nie. Deur hulle stilswye sowel as deur hulle spreke sal hulle moet toon in hoeverre gehoorsaamheid aan God vir hulle meer tel as gehoorsaamheid aan mense.

Ons dink verder aan die Algemene Sinode van die Ned. Geref. Kerk te Bloemfontein in Oktober vanjaar waar baie belangrike beginselbeslissings gevel gaan word — beslissings wat verreikende gevolge vir die hele kerk en gemeenskap van ons land gaan hê. Politieke ontwikkelings buite sowel as in Suid-Afrika bring steeds meer die gevaar mee dat, op die vlak van omstrede vraagstukke van ras en kleur, blanke sowel as nie-blanke kerklike byeenkomste wat geskeie van mekaar vergader, besluite neem wat meer polities ingesteld as Bybels verantwoord is. Hierdie gevaar sal ook nie 'n denkbeeldige vir dié Sinodale vergadering wees nie en daarom is dit die plig van elke Christen om in gebed ook hierdie byeenkoms aan God op te dra. Daar is nog 'n vlak waarop die Kerk van Christus in al sy dele vanjaar getoets sal word — en dit is t.o.v. interkerklike samewerking in vraagstukke wat die individuele kerke baie diep raak maar wat alleen deur gemeenskaplike samewerking effektief aangepak kan word. Gesinsverbrokkeling, sekularisasie, toenemende groepspanninge — al hierdie en baie

(Continued on page 6)

Editorial:

Important Decisions Facing the Church

Politically and ecclesiastically the year 1966 will be of great significance to South Africa; politically because besides the general election on the 30th March, there are the developments in Rhodesia and in other parts of Africa, all of which will have far reaching affects on both white and non-white in South Africa. These developments will bring the Church of Christ face to face with decisions where her findings will be subjected to the different demands of Christian justice for all groups of the population.

It is in the field of the Church's life in particular that important decisions will have to be taken.

We think of the serious decision facing the Christian Council of South Africa and each of her twenty-eight individual member churches concerning the ruling of the Government and the Roodepoort Municipality on non-white participants during Church Conferences at Wilgespruit.

Anyone who carefully analyses the situation should surely be able to discern clearly that this action on the part of the authorities, not only interferes with spiritual communication in the Church, but basically challenges the Scriptural demand for Christian hospitality (see Acts 10 and Galatians 2). It seems to us that this restriction, which many may consider to be less important, will test all the Churches' obedience to God and His Word. When we say all churches we include those churches which are not members of the Christian Council. Their silence as well as their statements will show how far obedience to God is more important than obedience to man.

The Church of Christ, in all her sections, will be tested on yet another point — that concerning inter-church co-operation when dealing with problems deeply touching each individual church, but which can only be dealt with effectively together. The disintegration of families, secularization, increasing group tension — all these and many other problems call for an urgent confrontation by the Church. The longer individual church denominations try to deal with these problems separately, the longer it will take the church to assist a world yearning for life and light.

Or must one crisis after another break on the Church before in human despair we will give each other the hand in Christ?

We, further, think of the General Synod of the Dutch Reformed Church to be held at Bloemfontein in October this year where very important fundamental decisions will have to be taken — decisions with far reaching consequences for the whole Church and society in our country. Political events outside and inside South Africa bring the danger

(Vervolg op bladsy 6)

"DIE WARE JAKOB"

DR. CALVIN COOK

(In the previous edition Dr. Cook looked at the lives of Jacob and the woman at the well of Sychar, and using them as examples he analysed the tension between man's search for provision and his need for Providence. The hunt for provision in both these cases suddenly become the revelation of Providence. Dr. Cook now goes on and looks at the stages in this change.)

Note then the stages in this change.

1. **For both Jacob and the woman, grace began with facing the truth.** Jacob had to face the fact that his means of providing for himself involved supplanting others. His struggle over facing this fact left him limping. By herself, the woman could not face the truth about herself. It was too shattering to live with. She buried it in self-defence. But both she and her ancestor find that when confronted with the truth, it not merely hurts, but heals. Later she was to report with delight that "he told me all that I did", when in fact he had made her face the unsavoury core of her being.

The covenant of grace rests on the truth and begins with the truth. The politics of provision always involve supplanting others because we are anxious for our lives. To pursue such politics requires self-deception. Nations and individuals easily talk themselves into justifying the aggressions they think necessary to provide for themselves. In order for the Trekker Republic to survive, there could be no equality in church or state. Hitler claimed lebensraum for his people at the expense of others. Pre-war Japan similarly justified its expansion at the expense of the rest of the "Greater Asian co-prosperity sphere." Thus the first step in the replacement of provision by Providence is to face the truth about ourselves and our claims. Such confession not only faces us with our sins; it looses us from them. In admitting them, we lay hold through forgiveness of the grace of God. Grace begins with truth: it begins with the truth of forgiveness.

Every Christian and any Christian people must start here. But how far we are from accepting this. Recently a minister of a Central African state alleged that Livingstone's descriptions of his country a century ago had brought what he might have termed "unjustifiable odium" upon his country. As he told it, until the coming of the white man, Central Africa was a tribal paradise. His motives for such self-justification are clear enough: they have parallels and precedents in the Trek. But why should we try to trek from the truth? Surely it is wonderful that in a century a people has journeyed from slavery and inter-tribal warfare to independent nationhood. This is much more remarkable than silly myths of injured innocence.

Again, consider the Zambian jokes by which the white man revenges himself on Black Africa. To make the attempts of people to educate and develop themselves an object of derision is sick humour.

What civilized man can laugh bitterly at the mistakes of children or pupils? Absurdity and pretension are legitimate targets; hypocrisy has always magnetized satire. But surely the mark of a civilized person is the ability to see the truth even when it is incongruous, and above all to laugh at himself. Divine comedy, like divine charity, begins at home. It is a singular sign of hope when van der Merwe jokes are told by van der Merwes.

2. **This woman had next to face the fact that the truth of religion could not be settled conclusively in terms of the past.** The just live by faith; therefore the past, and particularly the traditions of men, cannot be decisive. The demand that men worship in spirit and truth is always superseding the forms and places of the past. Creeds, confessions and traditions have their place. But they are not supremely important. When we stand on Iona, or in Rome or Jerusalem, or on the bend of Blood River, we know that here is holy ground. It is holy because in these places men have found the presence of God. Yet it is not the place, but the presence which is holy. And this God is a jealous God. He will not tolerate idols, even when they are fashioned from the signs of his presence. He

(Vervolg op bladsy 7)

Kerke voor Belangrike Beslissings

(Continued from page 5)

ander verskynsels roep om dringende konfrontasie deur die kerk. En hoe langer individuele kerkformasies hierdie vraagstukke net afsonderlik wil aanpak, hoe langer gaan dit neem om 'n wêreld om ons te hulp te kom wat smag na lewe en na lig. Of moet die een krisis na die ander eers oor die kop van die kerk breek voordat ons in menslike rade-loosheid mekaar in Christus die hand gaan reik?

Important Decisions Facing Church

(Vervolg van bladsy 5)

that both white and non-white church meetings, when meeting separately, may take decisions on disputed questions of race and colour more in accordance with political belief than Biblical demand. This will not be an imaginary danger for the General Synod either, and therefore each Christian has the duty to commend the meeting to God in prayer.

"Die ware Jakob"

(Vervolg van bladsy 7)

acts independently of man's most sacred traditions, even to the point of destroying them. The bronze serpent that once saved the people had to be destroyed. Temple and city of Jerusalem had to be destroyed. The claims of Rome had to be shattered. In this ecumenical age, the sanctity of all our shrines and idols is being questioned. For this is what the cross does. It challenges not only the worst in us, but the best in us, and finds the best wanting. Not even our best is good enough or can provide what we need. The mercy of God alone can, and does. For when he raised Christ from the dead, God assured us that even when our own capacity to provide for ourselves ceases completely in death, his providence will meet our need for life.

Like a zipper, human tradition sometimes slides to unite, and sometimes to separate. We are here in this place today because we disapprove of the manner our neighbours celebrate this day. At this time, in the name of tradition the whole machinery of the state is busy manufacturing unconscious differences into conscious ones; making final and explicit that which was only implicit and tentative; calcifying that which was flexible. On the choice of Jerusalem or this mountain, we are not being permitted to remain indifferent, and all this when we should know better. God has served the clearest possible notice upon us all that he is no longer interested in this shrine above that. He is interested solely in whether our worship is in spirit and in truth. These qualities — also his gift — are the only qualities which matter in our response to him. Anything else is to trade insults instead of receiving living water. And it is by such means that we have not only turned our politics, but our religion into a desert.

3. **The change becomes obvious when the woman leaves her waterpot, the means by which she provides for herself, and returns to the village to tell of the presence of the Messiah, the one whom God has provided.** Her whole demeanour has changed. In place of withdrawal, self-justification, complaints and bitterness, she has a story about the gracious presence of God.

That village, like our world, had

its ideas about the Christ. They thought they knew what to expect. Something about her made them go and see for themselves. They realized that to have appealed to her, holiness must have been combined with grace. Have we made it impossible for people to believe in this combination? Mother Kirk all too often sounds like a shrill tongued shrew. People keep out of range of her tongue. They do not wish to involve themselves in the scandal of her domestic affairs. But once let her tone change and become one of invitation, wonder and joy, and they can hardly help themselves listening. This tone is always news: reporters cannot find enough of it. When the tone of the church changes from one of complaint against life and neighbours, from echoing the sour platitudes of the age, and instead becomes one of joy and thanksgiving; when eucharist ceases to be merely a liturgical game and becomes the core of worship and fellowship, then we may expect the world to turn out to find the Christ. They will discover their own village at this present moment is being visited by the source of new, eternal and inexhaustible life.

* * *

Let us summarize the experience of these two who were turned from their insatiable hunt for provisions to a joyous acceptance of the gracious providence of God. For this is the order of the new covenant.

1. **Providence had nothing to do with the possession of the land.** The old covenant promised possession of land and was based on possession. But the new is not the same as the old. Land alone cannot satisfy our desires. Blood River arose in part because of an insatiable desire for land. Are the trekkers' descendants secure? The conflict between belief in providing for oneself and trusting providence is seen in our laws. We have made possessing land the basis of national life. So law conflicts with gospel. For faith demands justice, whereas the desire to possess will not allow equitable sharing with others. So when we base our lives on the possession of land, we deny the new covenant.

The new covenant is for the landless and the rightless. It is for the city dweller who has no property of his own. Who gave or who possesses the well is no longer of primary importance. Once it mattered supremely. Now it does not.

Holy worldliness depends upon our living by this tremendous change: as having nothing, yet possessing all things. This is either eye-wash or the truth: we must have the courage to face which we really believe it to be. The poor have the gospel preached to them, and the poor are always landless. Theirs is the kingdom of God. The Holy Spirit dwelling in man determines economic arrangements, not economic arrangements the spirit in man. Our world now accepts this priority, often without realizing its origin, whenever it calls for justice in human affairs and equity in economics. Such a view lies behind Afro-Asian impatience, whether those who agitate are aware of it or not. Economic arrangements reflect spirit; the economics of our country is the mirror of its morals, and increasingly it depicts a double standard. For of what else do the differences and distinctions between land tenure regulations and wage levels speak?

2. **Race becomes secondary in the new covenant.** Jesus ignores neither its power, nor its positive and negative sources. To relegate race to second place within the new covenant is not liberalism, (an absurd anachronism which has passed into currency in some quarters here), but simply the exchange of living water for well water. If not even the Jew has wherewith to boast of in his ancestry, who else may?

Such a relegation is the basis of the church's life and the secret of its life. Until this exchange happens, we are simply indulging in ancestor worship. Jesus did not ask the woman to recognize his superiority as a Jew. Instead, he offered the astounding truth: he was not only the common hope of Jew and Samaritan alike, but also of the world as well. After this, the question of Jew and Samaritan is not mentioned again. Those who live by the new covenant cannot compel recognition for themselves on the grounds of human superiorities. All they can do is to receive and to offer the truth of God's gracious providence: the gospel of Christ, the gospel of this Messiah is for all men.

3. **The incentive for our changing from hunting for provision to trusting Providence lies in the gracious character of the covenant itself.** What it offers is beyond our attaining. By making grace supreme, this covenant reorders all life graciously.

(Vervolg op bladsy 8)

"Die ware Jakob"

(Vervolg van bladsy 7)

No human provision can match the providence of God. In the case of Jacob, God not only dealt with his uncontrollable fears about his brother, but with the elements in the brother that caused the fears. The woman was transformed from one who avoided the company of others for good reasons, to one who sought them in order to share her good news with them.

We too are bedevilled by fear of one another. There is much to cause that fear in past, present and future. But God purposes not only to remove the fears from our minds, but also to change those of whom we are afraid. Thus he reconciles the world to himself and to one another. We realize with amazement and awe that these places of seemingly irreconcilable strife are where God was "and we knew it not."

Where the disciples expected hunger, Jesus saw harvest. Therefore I wish to close this address with a prophecy. When the history of our times comes to be written, I believe that men will say of our land and of our time that here

was "Peniel". Here God faced men with every reason to fear for their lives, families and fortunes because and established in place of fear and of their dealings with one another, torment a community that lives with unique depth of understanding. Our situation is not one of unique drought in human relations, but one of unique opportunity for harvest. Nowhere have the fields been whiter or more ready for harvest than here and now. Into this harvest, into which so many have laboured so hard and so long, we are now commanded to enter with joy.

But how?

Nothing is more personal than the provision we must make for our lives. Are we in this most crucial matter prepared to trust the providence of God as this is revealed in Christ?

No group can make this choice for another, much less force it upon another. In the end, we must decide this for ourselves. Just as everyone dies alone, so he must make alone this choice for his life. The flocks and herds must go on ahead. Even the family has to go on ahead. We must stand alone and face to face with God. In the end, our name will be determined not by what we call ourselves, or others call us, but the name we receive in that moment

when we faced the truth, wrestled with God and allowed him to overcome us with the truth not only about ourselves but the truth about himself: covenant maker, covenant keeper, gracious provider, reconciler of men. In trusting this providence ourselves, our name changes; we become the agents of his providence for others instead of rivals for provision.

* * *

Look finally at the first of the apostolic miracles. The lame beggar sits outside the gates of the temple. He is forbidden to enter because of his disease. Watch him scrutinizing the worshippers, trying to decide which will give cash and which a curse. But there was a day which brought not simply provision on the meagre scale of human almsgiving, but Providence in the form of healing. Now he could enter the Holy place; praise and thanksgiving consecrated his life. The ancestral defect was healed. Surely the name of this man is "Die ware Jakob". Is it too much to expect of the Providence of this God that this nation of ours, this people of the limp, will yet leap for joy in the discovery of what God has done for, and in, and through our brothers and we knew it not?

OPE BRIEF AAN PRO VERITATE EN DIE CHRISTELIKE INSTITUUT

— DS. A. M. PIENAAR

Die name van Pro Veritate en die Christelike Instituut word reeds geruime tyd in ons land op kerklike en politieke gebied in verband gebring met alles wat liberaal, sektaries, verraderlik, ondermynend, on-Suid-Afrikaans en sommer in die algemeen boos is. Die atmosfeer rondom hierdie twee instansies het opheldering nodig wat, so vrees 'n mens, nie meer kan plaasvind op sterkte van wat hulle van hulself sê nie. Enersyds ontbreek dit hulle noodwendig aan 'n mate van objektiwiteit en andersyds het die oor wat hulle aansprake moet verneem bot geword van begryplike en onbegryplike vooroordeel.

Hierdie skrywe word aan u gerig in die vertroue — miskien selfs in die wete — dat u welmenende kritiek teen die blad en die Instituut sal ontvang en publiseer met 'n seldsame openheid van gemoed en uself die vryheid sal veroorloof om in dieselfde gees daarop te reageer. Ter inleiding 'n opmerking rakende die verhouding tussen Pro Veritate en die Christelike Instituut. Toe die blad tot stand gekom het en deur baie verwelkom is, was daar nog geen sprake van die Christelike Instituut nie. Ná die stigting van laas-

genoemde, het Pro Veritate ook nadruklik verklaar dat hy nie met die Christelike Instituut verband hou of 'n lyfblad daarvan is nie. Gaandeweg egter word hierdie twee name nie slegs deur die kritici daarvan in dieselfde asem genoem nie, maar ook deur die beheerders. Dit het die vraag by vele laat ontstaan of Pro Veritate nie maar 'n wegbereider en later mondstuk van die Christelike Instituut moes wees nie. Op grond van hierdie twyfel het baie mense dan ook hul aanvanklike entoesiasme vir die blad verloor, want die

assosiasie tussen die twee is groter as wat die toevallige redakteurskap van die een en direkteurskap van die ander, bekleed deur dieselfde persoon, 'n mens van wil oortuig. Opheldering op hierdie punt sal waardeer word.

OOR PRO VERITATE

Die verskyning van hierdie blad was 'n welkome gebeurtenis. Daar was lank reeds 'n behoefte aan 'n onafhanklike medium waardeur Christene op organiese vlak óór die skeidsmure van belydenis en kleur heen met mekaar 'n gesprek kon voer oor sake waarin hulle met mekaar saamstem of ookal mag verskil. Dit sal niemand durf ontken nie. Daar het, erg ongelukkig, ook in 'n ander opsig 'n behoefte aan kommunikasie binne die N.G. Kerk ontwikkel omdat die amptelike or-

(Vervolg op bladsy 9)

Ope Brief aan Pro Veritate en die Christelike Instituut

(Vervolg van bladsy 8)

gaan van hierdie Kerk onder die huidige bedeling geen ruimte of duurtte het vir teologiese standpunte wat volgens die oordeel van die redaksie nie strook met die politieke denkbeelde van die Afrikanervolk nie. Dit moes noodwendig tot ongesonde bedompigheid lei en Pro Veritate was 'n welkome venster wat oopgegaan het. En hy het hom die rol van ventileerder laat welgeval. Dit op sigself was nie laakbaar nie, hoewel 'n mens met grote nadruk wil herhaal dat dit 'n ongelukkige toedrag van sake is omdat daar binne eie kring onbelemmerde gespreksmoontlikhede behoort te bestaan.

Die doelstelling van die blad was mooi en loflik: om op grond van Gods Woord die vraagstukke van ons dag te ondersoek en te beoordeel . . . Eintlik is dit natuurlik die taak van die kerk, maar gelowiges het die reg en plig om elkeen individueel oor hierdie sake te besin en hul bevindings met mekaar deel.

'n Mens moet dan ook in alle billikheid erkentlik melding maak van vele artikels wat sedert sy ontstaan in Pro Veritate verskyn en aan sy doelstelling beantwoord het. Enige leser daarvan moet homself gelukkig ag, al is dit dan slegs weens die feit dat die artikels nêrens anders te lese was nie.

Maar daar het ook baie verkeerde en swak artikels in Pro Veritate verskyn. Onder die verkeertes was daar dié wat openlike onwaarhede bevat het, ander waarvan die vooropgesette vooroordeel in die oog gespring het en nog ander wat ultratendensieus was. Onder die swakkes was daar dié wat teologies onverantwoord was en ander wat somer uit beginsel swak was omdat hulle niks gesê het nie. Nie dat artikels van bogenoemde beskrywinge in ons tyd uitsonderlik is nie — selfs nie in kerklike blaaië nie — maar dit hoort nie in 'n blad wat hom aandien om „vir die waarheid” te getuig en die Woord van God sy maatstaf te maak nie.

Nou begryp 'n mens die dilemma van 'n redakteur wat sy stof uit 'n bonte verskeidenheid van bronne ontvang en aan almal tog 'n mate

van tevredenheid moet verskaf, maar dit is 'n probleem wat van die begin af vóórsien moes gewees het.

Dit help ook weinig om 'n verklaring in die blad te druk dat die menings daarin bevat nie noodwendig dié van die redaksie is nie. Dit spreek tog vanself. Die verklaarde uitgangspunt van die blad is egter 'n beperkende faktor wat met eerbiediger omsigtigheid bejeen moet word.

In alle billikheid moet gemeld word dat die gehalte van die blad teenswoordig verbeter en 'n mens hoop dat dit in die toekoms sal beantwoord aan die doel waarvoor dit opgerig is.

OOR DIE CHRISTELIKE INSTITUUT

Waar 'n mens m.b.t. die bestaan van Pro Veritate veel kon opmerk wat positief is, is dit i.v.m. die Christelike Instituut ongelukkig nie moontlik nie. Laat ons die saak ordelik en prinsipiël probeer benader.

Ten aanvang moet dadelik toegegee word dat daar in die kerklike lewe in ons land oorfloedige provokasie aanwesig was om 'n groep ongeduldige Christene wat die belange van Gods Koninkryk onbetwisbaar swaar op die hart dra tot die stigting van so 'n organisasie te laat oorgaan. Trouens, die erns van die aanleidende oorsake sou selfs sterker optrede kon regverdig as dit maar langs die voorgeskrewe bane sou geskied. Niemand durf dit ontken nie. Om maar 'n paar sake te noem: tergende uitsprake van oningeligte of moedswillige Engelstalige kerkfigure en -vergaderinge wat van die situasie op Suid-Afrikaanse bodem nie die vaagste blyk van verstand of aanvoeling openbaar nie; gehawende interkerklike verhoudinge tussen verskillende denominasies; 'n uiteenlopende siening van ekumeniese betrekkinge met kerklike liggame buite ons landsgrense; 'n tragiese spraakverwarring tussen Afrikaans- en Engelstalige Kerke oor rasse-aangeleenthede, veral op kerklike gebied; 'n vermeende nagraat van die landsregering se ideologieë deur die Afrikaanse Kerke en die gevolglike versuim om teen sekere praktyke te waarsku; die aanduidings dat die Afrikaanse Kerke inderdaad vele trekke van die volkskerk vertoon; die politieke bedrywighede van dubieuse geheime organisasies waarvan geglo word dat hul invloed na die Kerk deursypel, ens.

GEEN EIE KEUSE

Wanneer dit egter om God gaan, om sy eer en sy Koninkryk, selfs as daarvoor gestry en gestrewe moet word, het sy kinders nie 'n eie keuse oor hoe dit gedoen moet word nie. Christus het sy Kerk op aarde geplant en dit voorsien van 'n volmaakte vorm van uitlewing en 'n volledige voorskrif vir optrede onder alle denkbare omstandighede. Hierop het Hy die seël van sy Gees geplaas wat hy spesifiek aan Sy Kerk gegee het (en nie aan soveel enkelinge nie). Daarby is ook sy ryke beloftes meegegee van bystand in nood. Dit is hierdie voorskrifte van God wat kandidate gelewer het vir leeu-arenas, brandstapels en pynbanke. Hulle het uit die Kerk gekom en God wou Homself juis só deur hulle verheerlik.

Hierdie Kerk is in 'n instituut georganiseer. Daarvoor het God ook die voorskrifte gegee. En hoe tragies die feit van sy verskeurdheid en hoe sondig die aanleiding daartoe, weet ons dat God nog altyd sy heilige gawes en sanksies aan elke stuk van sy uitmekaargeslane Kerk meegee —sover ons weet aan dié wat Hom as Koning erken, hulle heil van Hom verwag en na sy wederkoms uitsien. Dan bly dit nog altyd deel van die één ondeelbare Kerk van Christus.

BINNE DIE KERK

Elke sodanige instituut is dus geroep en potensieel in staat tot die volle uitoefening van Gods wil op enige terrein waar institutêre optrede wenslik mag wees. Hieruit volg logies dat op die gebied van die Christelike godsdiens daar geen organisasie buite en los van die Kerk kan bestaan sonder om die deur God verordende beginsels ten opsigte van die opbou van sy Koninkryk geweld aan te doen nie. Daar kan geredeneer word dat onafhanklike verenigings soos sendinggenootskappe en ander in die verlede werk van onberekenbare waarde vir Gods Koninkryk verrig het. Dit is waar. Maar wie sou kon bereken wat die wins sou wees as die geestelike energie, die geloof, die gebede, die selfopoffering, die lyding en nood wat die werk van hierdie organisasies vergesel het, aangewend sou gewees het ten opsigte van die Kerk, wat by uitstek deur God toegerus en verorden is om die draer van sy heilige

(Vervolg op bladsy 10)

Ope Brief aan Pro Veritate en die Christelike Instituut

(Vervolg van bladsy 9)

gawes aan die ganse mensdom te wees? Dit is 'n treffende verskynsel, wat waarskynlik aan die sondige individualisme van die menslike gees gewyt moet word, dat Christene binne die Kerk bereid is om baie minder teenstand te gedoog as wat hulle hulself by eventuele individualistiese optrede met gelatenheid, selfs met trots, laat welgeval. Is dit nie basies verkeerd nie? Woordgetuïenis, ook binne die Kerk, het immers altyd 'n tweeledige effek: dit werk heilsaam in op dié deel van die Kerk wat dit aanneem, maar dit werk ook vernietigend ten opsigte van dié wat dit verwerp. En hierdie laaste proses so goed as die eerste, is goddelike bestel, want dit voorsien die „natuurlike” wyse waarop die Kerk van Christus homself voortdurend moet reinig. Dit laat die boosheid tot volle verwerking kom sodat dit in die lig moet tree en aan alle mense duidelik word. Solank hierdie proses egter belemmer word deurdat Christene hulself nie ten volle tot beskikking wil stel as voorwerpe van die boosheid nie, moet die kerk noodwendig daaronder ly. Dit geld eweseer van die meer populêre stilsweye van andere „om die Kerk nie in verleentheid te bring nie”... **Een van die Kerk se grootste verleenthede in hierdie dae is, ironies genoeg, juis die feit dat sy dwalinge nie uitgewerp en openbaar word nie. Hy is dus genoodsaak om daarmee saam te lewe in 'n ongesonde atmosfeer. Dit tas hom aan en verlam hom in al sy lede. Dit kanselleer ook sy getuïenis teenoor die wêreld.**

Die brandende vraag is natuurlik wat Christene te doen staan wanneer die Kerk waaraan hulle behoort in een of menige opsig uit onkunde, onverskilligheid of moedswilligheid die wil van God versaak en weier om na herhaalde oproepe en waarskuwings te luister. Wanneer dit tot hierdie punt gekom het, pas alleen die grootste ootmoed en beskeidenheid want, hoe 'n mens ookal daaraan dink, niemand kan homself uit die hoogte uit losmaak van die verval in die Kerk asof sy sonde en onvolkomenheid nie ook daartoe bygedra het nie.

Wanneer dit egter gesê is, moet dit dadelik gestel word dat ootmoed en beskeidenheid nie verwar moet

word met swakheid en vreesagtigheid nie en as die beswaarde lidmaat deur die genade van God homself daarvan vergewis het dat sy besware inderdaad hul oorsprong het in 'n innige begeerte om die wil van God te doen, dan kan verdere stappe oorweeg word, eers deur die implementering van al die toerusting deur God daargestel binne die Kerk. As dit nie vrug afwerp nie bly daar niks meer te doen as om voortdurend 'n getuïenis binne die Kerk daarop na te hou nie. **Die geskiedenis het egter geleer dat wanneer 'n Kerk gedaal het tot 'n sekere graad van verval — tot dié waar dit kerkregtelike beginsels wederregtelik verdraai en sodoende 'n oneerlike monopolie oor die lotgevallen van lastige lidmate verkry, dit selde gebeur dat die beswaarde sy getuïenis lank binne die Kerk hoeftewer omdat ekskommunikasie veel eerder plaasvind. Slegs dan kan daar sprake wees van 'n spreke van buite die Kerk.** Tot op hierdie punt word dit ook nooit onmoontlik om vanuit die Kerk te spreek nie; die Woord van God, altans, weet nie van so 'n situasie nie. Dié verklaar duidelik dat wanneer die mens weens fisiese omstandighede aan die einde van sy getuïenis gekom het, God juis ingryp en die toestand van sy onvermoë verhef tot die grootste getuïenis wat gelewer kan word: „Ander weer het die proef van bespottings en geselinge deurstaan, ook van boeie en gevangenis. Hulle is gestenig, in stukke gesaag, versoek, deur die swaard vermoor. Hulle het rondgeloop in skaapvelle en bokvelle, hulle het gebrek gely, hulle is verdruk, mishandel — die wêreld was hulle nie werd nie — hulle het in woestyne rondgedwaal en op berge en in spelonke en skeure in die grond.” (Heb. 11: 36-38). Die getuïenis van hierdie mense word deur niemand minder as die Skrif nie oorgeneem en aan ons as maatstaf voorgehou.

OORWEEG WEER

'n Fout wat ons as Christene dikwels begaan, is om in „ekonomiese” terme te wil bereken hoeveel ons op 'n bepaalde tyd en plek vir die Koninkryk werd is. God kan goedsikks sonder ons dienste klaarkom, maar Hy kan ons die beste gebruik op die plek waar dit sy wil is dat ons sal wees. As wat tot dusver gesê is, korrek is, dan volg dit dat al die oproer, onsmaklikheid en nyd wat tot dusver rondom die Christelike Instituut

plaasgevind het nie geregverdig kan word deur die feit van sy bestaan nie, al sou dit dan ook nie om beginsels gegaan het nie of al was die prinsipiële besware daarteen eintlik maar 'n rookskerm oor die ongeneentheid teenoor sy getuïenis.

Met alles wat gesê is, wil 'n mens ook nie 'n streep trek deur die positiewe invloed wat die Christelike Instituut tot dusver mag uitgeoefen het nie. God gebruik dikwels 'n krom stok om 'n reguit hou te slaan, maar ons moet altyd onthou dat dit nooit tot eer van die stok strek dat hy kom is nie. Telkens wanneer dit gebeur, is dit, antropomorfies gesproke, vir God 'n verleentheids-handeling. As ek dus met die lig wat ek meen te hê by u mag pleit ter wille van die Koninkryk, sou ek u dringend wou versoek om hierdie aangeleentheid nog 'n keer ernstig te oorweeg. Die pad terug is ek ongelukkig nie by magte om vir u aan te dui nie. Tog maak dit geen sin om op 'n weg te volhard wat na nêrens lei, bloot omdat die terugtog onbegonne lyk nie. Laat almal wat glo dat daar onhoudbare ideologieë en praktyke in die Kerk is, tuis begin om daarteen te getuig en **aanhou** totdat wat ookal gebeur.

Mag God ons almal hierin genadig wees!

(Ds. A. M. Pienaar is sendeling van die Ned. Geref. Kerk te Kentani, Transkei. Ander beskouings oor die bestaansreg van die Christelike Instituut sal in later uitgawes van *Pro Veritate* geplaas word. Wat die verhouding tussen die Instituut en *Pro Veritate* betref, voorlopig slegs die volgende. Hoewel *Pro Veritate* 'n onafhanklike maandblad is en verkeerdelik soms beskou word as die orgaan van die Christelike Instituut, is daar in die doelstellings van albei tog so 'n groot mate van ooreenkoms dat dit verklaarbaar is dat die Instituut en die blad met mekaar geassosieer word. Die vernaamste gemeenskaplike doelstelling is om 'n geleentheid vir Christene in Suid-Afrika te skep om met mekaar tot 'n gesprek te kom. Die redaksie en direksie van *Pro Veritate* steun die Christelike Instituut, maar dit beteken geensins dat die blad die orgaan van die Instituut is nie. Talle lesers en ondersteuners van *Pro Veritate* het geen verbintenis met die Instituut nie, en om van die gespreksgeleentheid wat *Pro Veritate* bied gebruik te maak, is dit hoegenaamd nie nodig om ook van die gespreksgeleentheid gebruik te maak wat die Instituut bied nie. Waar 'n blad en 'n organisasie, hoewel onafhanklik van mekaar, egter soveel gemeenskaplik is, is dit nie vreemd dat hulle aan dieselfde oordeel onderwerp sal word nie. Dit kan daarom ook nie verwag word dat *Pro Veritate* sal swyg as die Instituut uitgelewer word aan misverstand, moedswilligheid en dikwels ook kwaadwillige onwaarhede nie. — Redaksie).

An Ecumenical Notebook

by "TYCHICUS"

FROM RUSSIA

Prof. Georges Casalis, of the Paris Faculty of Protestant Theology, said after he returned from a visit to the U.S.S.R., that he had found "an unusual intensity in the religious life of Russian Christians" and "a general hunger for religion".

He reported that a congregation of more than 8,000 persons took part in Annunciation Day services in the Orthodox cathedral at Leningrad, and that of these more than 2,000 received communion.

With regard to Russian Baptists, he said 780 congregations had been formed in 1964, making a total of 5,280 throughout the Soviet Union. He said the Baptists also are hoping soon to obtain permission to open a theological seminary in Moscow.

However, Prof. Casalis said, some Russian churches are still being closed and Russian Christians are still being subjected to numerous kinds of vexations although the severity differ from one region to another. For instance, baptism in private ceremonies which until recent was subject to no official control, is now being prohibited, and only public baptism is allowed.

— (D.D.E.E.C.)

FROM HUNGARY

Bishop Tibor Bartha, president of the General Synod of the Reformed Church of Hungary said in an interview that the good relations between his church and the Hungarian government are partly due to the church's efforts to "draw a clear line of demarcation between socialism as social order and programme . . . and the atheism of the official ideology which is behind it."

"The Reformed Church in Hungary has been able to accept and support with good conscience the objectives of the social programme — those of social progress", he declared. "That has never meant that our church has ever taken a temporising stand or made a compromise with the atheistic ideology of Marxism. We cannot accept this ideology. But as a church we must ask the question: Is not this close connection between social progress and atheism a

great critical problem for the Church — or, to express the question in theological terms: Is not this close connection simply a warning of God to us?"

— (D.D.E.E.C.)

FROM THE U.S.A.

Roman Catholics and Presbyterians met on the 26th and 27th November in Philadelphia and agreed on the general format of a joint prayer book to be used at ecumenical meetings. This book in three parts will include non-eucharistic worship, Bible devotions and Bible discussion outlines. The book is to be ready by October, 1966.

A statement, issued after the meeting, said the committee found "acceptable" three working principles: "The Trinitarian Faith as confessed by the early ecumenical councils; God's will that all men be saved, as manifested in the God-man Jesus Christ, the mediator for all men; and "the renewal and the reform of the Church as the work of the third person of the Godhead, Who is the Spirit of the Father and the Son present in the Church". — (The Pilot).

RULES FOR DIALOGUE

1. Each partner must believe that the other is speaking in good faith.
2. Each partner must have a clear understanding of his own faith.
3. Each partner must strive for a clear understanding of the faith of the other, and corollaries of this
 - (a) there must be a willingness to interpret the faith of the other in its best light rather than its worst;
 - (b) each partner must maintain a continual willingness to revise his understanding of the faith of the other.
4. Each partner must accept responsibility in humility and penitence for what his group has done and is doing to foster and perpetuate division.
5. Each partner must forthrightly face the issues which cause separation, as well as those which create unity.
6. Each partner must recognise that all that can be done with the dialogue is to offer it up to God.

— (Study Encounter)

AN ECUMENICAL GLOSSARY

ATONEMENT (literally, at-one-ment), "implies a reconciliation after a period of estrangement . . . In general theological usage, however, the word 'atonement' has come to denote, not so much the state of reconciliation with God into which Christians have been brought by Christ, as Christ's reconciling act itself, viz. His death and rising again. (Alan Richardson, *An Introduction to the Theology of the New Testament* p. 215). The significance of the Cross, as God's act of atonement for the sins of all men, is interpreted in a variety of ways in the New Testament and in the history of Christian doctrine. No one theory has been generally accepted to the exclusion of others, but they all seek to explain certain central facts of Christian experience, of the depths of human sin and our consequent alienation from God and of the infinite power and love of the Father to win us back to himself, even at the cost of Christ's death. — (The Life and Mission of the Church).

PRO VERITATE

Verskyn elke 15de van die maand.

Korrespondensie en Administrasie:

Alle briewe vir die redaksie en die administrasie aan:
Posbus 487, Johannesburg.

Redaksionele Bestuur:

Ds. A. W. Habelgaarn,
Ds. E. E. Mahabane,
Ds. A. L. Mncube,
Ds. J. E. Moulder,
Mnr. J. Oglethorpe,
Ds. R. Orr,
Prof. dr. A. van Selms.

Assistent-redakteur:

Dr. B. Engelbrecht,

Redakteur:

Ds. C. F. B. Naudé,

Intekengeld:

Republiek van Suid-Afrika, S.W.A., die Rhodesië en Protektorate:
R1 per jaar vooruitbetaalbaar.
Oorsee: R1.50 per jaar vooruitbetaalbaar.

Tjeks en posorders moet uitgemaak word aan „Pro Veritate” (Edms.) Bpk., Posbus 487, Johannesburg.
Gedruk deur Prompt Drukkers Maatskappy (Edms.) Bpk., Harrisstraat 11, Westgate, Johannesburg.

DIE KERK BUITE SUID-AFRIKA

DIE PROBLEEM IN VIËTNAM

PROF. B. B. KEET

In Bangkok is op uitnodiging van die East Asia Christian Conference 'n konsultasie tussen die E.A.C.C. en die National Council of the Churches of Christ in the Verenigde State (N.C.C.C.) van 1 tot 4 Desember 1965 gehou, om te beraadslaag oor die probleem van Viëtnam.

'n Baie belangrike rapport oor die samespreking is gepubliseer, waaruit ons enige gegewens van Ecumenical Press Service oorneem. In die aanhef word verklaar dat hulle as kerkmanne met verskillende agtergrond, maar verenig deur 'n gemeenskaplike geloof, dankbaar is vir die verryking en vernuwing van gemeenskap wat deur hierdie vergadering moontlik gemaak is. Maande- en jarelank was hulle deur korrespondensie, wisseling van dokumente en persoonlike kontakte in voeling met mekaar, sodat hulle nie aan mekaar onbekend was nie. Hulle was bewus daarvan en het dit by vernuwing besef, dat elkeen verwickel was in sy eie agtergrond en dat, as gevolg, hulle van verskillende voorveronderstellinge uitgegaan het, grondlegend vir die interpretasie van die feite in die hedendaagse wêreld met al sy probleme. Byvoorbeeld, belangrike verskille het duidelik geword in die diskussie oor die verantwoordelike gebruik van mag. Sommige het gemeen dat in die afwesigheid van internasionale masjinerie om aktiwiteite van buite wat die vrede, orde en sekuriteit van 'n land bedreig, teë te staan, die Verenigde State 'n plig het om antwoord te gee op 'n uitnodiging om hulp deur 'n wettige regering. Ander het volgehou dat die volke van Asië vry moet wees om hulle eie verhoudinge en bestemming uit te werk; daarom is die huidige beleid van Amerika in Viëtnam 'n ongeoorloofde daad van inmenging.

Dié verskille wil hulle nie oor die hoof sien of oorbeklemtoon nie. Daar was 'n openhartige en gesonde wisseling van gedagtes wat soms ook uitgeloop het op 'n verandering van opvatting. „Ons dank God vir die ekumeniese gemeenskap waarin ons nie slegs ons saamhorigheid in die Christelike Geloof ondervind het nie, maar dit ook moontlik vind om gesamentlike wêreldprobleme te benader, in hierdie geval by name die probleme van Viëtnam” — so lui die verklaring.

Hulle spreek nie namens die kerke en rade wat hulle afgevaardig het nie; tog wil hulle verslag doen van hulle diskussie en bevindinge. Die bevindinge en aanbevelinge lui soos volg: Almal het saamgestem dat die volk van Viëtnam die reg van selfbeskikking het, 'n reg wat erken en uitgevoer moet word. Die militêre skeidslyn wat deur die Geneefse konferensie in 1954 voorgestel is, was provisioneel en moet nie beskou word as 'n politieke of territoriale grens nie. Oor die vraag of die reg van selfbeskikking alleen op Viëtnam as geheel, of afsonderlik op Suid-Viëtnam en Noord-Viëtnam van toepassing is, was daar verskil van gevoel. Maar hierdie verskil het iets van sy skerpte verloor deur die besef dat die staat van oorlog dit onmoontlik maak om die reg van selfbeskikking onmiddellik in beoefening te bring.

Gedurende die periode waarin die voorwaardes vir vrye keuse vasgestel word — en die interim moet so kort moontlik wees — kan die wyse waarop die reg van selfbeskikking in die beste belange van die volk uitgeoefen word, duidelik word. Van een ding is hulle egter seker: vrye keuse sal nie moontlik wees voordat alle vreemde militêre magte teruggetrek word en waarborge teen dwang van elke aard verleen word nie. Bowendien sal vryheid van keuse bevorder word, as gedurende hierdie periode die internasionale gemeenskap royaal bydra tot die herstel en ekonomiese ontwikkeling van die hele Viëtnam. Aangesien die tragiese lyding van Viëtnam uit langdurige onreg sowel as militêre aksie ontstaan, moet die poging om lyding te versag, gepaard gaan met 'n soektog na billike oplossings wat deur die staking van militêre aksie vergemaklik sal word. Hulle wil nie probeer om hierdie probleme ten volle of in hulle tegniese aspekte te behandel nie. Tog het hulle oor sekere maatreëls eenstemmigheid bereik, wat ten spyte

van verskille in besonderhede, vir oorweging gegee word:

1. Alle partye word aangemoedig om elke moontlike inisiatief te neem en elke geleentheid te gebruik om die hele saak van die slagveld na die konferensiesaal te bring.
2. Daar word by Amerika en die Suid-Viëtnamese magte aangedring om die bombardering van Noord-Viëtnam te staak ten einde hindernisse te verwyder en beter omstandighede vir onderhandeling daar te stel.
3. By alle partye word aangedring op selfbeheersing in militêre krygsverrigtinge — (a) ter voorkoming van uitbreiding van die konflik — (b) deur as bewys van goeie trou die beweging na die konferensietafel aan te moedig — (c) die lyding en verlies van menselewens te beperk.
4. Die outoriteite van Hanoi en Saigon moet meer toegewendheid betoon in hul houding teenoor die kwessie van terugtrekking van troepe en onderhandeling.
5. Wanneer die geleentheid tot onderhandeling kom, moet die partye mekaar se erns toets en nie met vooropgestelde oordele kom nie.
6. Ondersteuning moet verleen word aan die Sekretarisgeneraal van die V.V.O. waar hy op alle vlakke die moontlikheid van onderhandeling ondersoek.
7. Verdere studie van die Genève konferensie (1954) moet onderneem word ten einde die belanghebbende partye in die huidige situasie nader aan mekaar te bring.
8. Asiatiese lande wat nie direk met die konflik te doen het nie, moet hulp verleen en van hul dienste moet gebruik gemaak word om die probleem op te los.

(Vervolg op bladsy 13)

Die Kerk buite Suid-Afrika

(Vervolg van bladsy 12)

9. Regerings, kerke en vrywillige instansies, moet groter pogings aanwend om die menslike leed wat deur die stryd veroorsaak is, te lenig.

Na aanleiding van hierdie verslag is deur die Raad van die N.C.C.C. 'n beleidsverklaring uitgegee van nagenoeg dieselfde inhoud, met 'n boodskap aan die kerke waarin drie dinge aanbeveel word:-

1. Die eerste en miskien die moeilikste taak wat vervul moet word, is om ons geestelike en morele gevoeligheid te handhaaf en die bindende eise van die evangelie voor oë te hou. In tye van oorlog, soos die bekende gedagte gaan, is dit die eerste ongeval. Ons weet wat die eise is, want hulle staan duidelik in die Nuwe Testament opgeteken: Julle moet jul vyande liefhê en bid vir die wat julle vervolgt. As jou vyand honger het, moet jy hom voed. En Hy het uit een bloed al die nasies van die mensdom gemaak om oor die hele aarde te woon. Laat jou nie deur die kwaad oorwin nie, maar oorwin die kwaad deur die goeie.
2. Laat vrede die vernaamste van ons Christelike getuienis wees om waarlik kinders van God te wees in hierdie moeilike tye.
3. Ondersteun die Nasionale Raad van Kerke wat aansluit by die Wêreldraad van Kerke en Rome om 'n gemeenskaplike poging van die wêreldwye Christendom aan te wend ten einde 'n regverdige alternatief vir oorlog daar te stel.

Aan President Johnson is die volgende kabelgram deur Dr. Frederick Nalder, direkteur van die Wêreldraad se kommissie vir Internasionale Aangeleenthede, gestuur: Met waardering is kennis geneem van u voorneme, wat gister herbevestig is, om alle moontlike vooruitsigte op vrede in Viëtnam aan te wend.

Terwyl ons slegs kennis dra van openbare berigte in die pers aangaande die vuurstaking gedurende Kersfees, vra ons dat alle kanse gebruik word om dié moontlikhede te benut. As die vuurstaking slaag, is dit ons bede dat dit gevolg sal word deur 'n staking van bombardemente op Noord-Viëtnam en van militêre infiltrasie uit Noord en Suid, sodat die hindernisse tot onderhandeling weggeneem en 'n gunstiger klimaat daarvoor geskep kan word.

KARL BARTH OOR DIE VERHOUDING ROME-REFORMASIE

Die Reformatoriese Studente-Vereniging, S.S.R., het deur middel van die voorsitter van sy kongres, onlangs 'n voorbereidende gesprek met Karl Barth gehou. Die volgende word ontleen aan „Trouw”. Dit het gegaan oor die verhouding Protestants-Rooms-katoliek. Hy begin deur te sê: „Soos ek aan u geskryf het, is ek eintlik verleë met die vrae wat u my gaan stel oor die probleem Rome-Reformasie. Nie alleen omdat ek my omrede van my gesondheid moet ontsien nie, want ek was baie siek en is nog onder doktersbehandeling, maar die tema as sodanig waaroor ons gaan praat, is vir my problematies. Immers, wat verstaan ons vandag onder „Rome” en wat onder „Die Reformasie”. U gaan blykbaar daarvan uit dat dit vaste groothede is, maar dit is **geen** vaste, **geen** welomlynde groothede nie. Tot die Reformasie behoort immers Lutherane, Anglikane, Baptiste en Metodiste. Dat die Reformasie geen eenheid vorm nie, weet u as Hollander eintlik nog beter as ek.

Maar hoe kan ons dan oor eenheid met Rome spreek? **Wie** sal namens **wie** spreek? U is gereformeerd, maar daar is in Holland ook Hervormdes. Die onderneming van 'n gesprek met Rome het vir my dus nog veel wat duister is. En dit alles te meer omdat ook „Rome” in beweging is. Want wat is Rome vandag? Moet ek dit opmaak uit „Denzinger” of uit wat die pous sê, of moet ek dit konkludeer uit die konsilie-uitsprake en dit terwyl die konsilie nog nie eers afgeloop het nie. Of moet ek miskien na die progressiewe rigting **binne** die Rooms-katolieke kerke luister, na manne soos Ratzinger, Urs von Balthasar en Küng?

Ja, wat is „Rome” vandag? Die hele tema Rome-Reformasie vorm deur al hierdie faktore 'n groot onbekende; die x en die y is nog nie daarin gedefinieer nie. Elke poging om Rome en die Reformasie te herenig, is daarom vandag nog te vroeg. Eers moet daar 'n eenheid kom tussen die Protestante onderling; dan moet die progressiewe en die konserwatiewe binne die Rooms-katolieke kerk dit nog onderling eens word; en eers **daarna** kan ons verder gaan.

Dit is my verleentheid; maar ek wil u vrae desondanks tog beantwoord, al kan dit nie lank wees nie, want ek was baie siek en moet my dus ontsien.

Die groot knelpunt in die verhouding tussen Rome en die Reformasie, vind Barth, lê in die Rooms-katolieke leer oor Maria. **Ons** sê: „Jesus”. **Hulle** sê: „Jesus en Maria”.

Op die vraag watter vooruitsigte daar volgens my mening bestaan, het Barth geantwoord: „Ek kan maar net sê dat ek geen profeet is nie. Maar oor sommige dinge is ek wel verontrus. Ek glo selfs dat ons teologies weer by 'n **dieptepunt** gekom het, waarby dit lyk of ons terugsink na die probleme van die negentiende eeu. In Duitsland is daar die Bultmannkontrovers. Daar is sowel as in Frankryk — **mirabile dictu** — ook Rooms-katolieke Bultmanniane! In Engeland het 'n boek van Robinson verskyn, 'n geeslose boek, waaroor ek my skaam dat dit in honderd-duisende eksemplare gedruk en gelees word. Dit word blykbaar nie begryp nie dat die teologie geen baat vind by Robinson nie. So word die spoke van die vorige eeu weer opgeroep deur middel van eksistensialisering en mitologisering. Ja, wat dit betref is dit 'n sorglike tyd in die teologie. Wanneer ek in toorn aan hierdie mense dink, dan noem ek hulle die bende van Korag; wanneer ek in rustiger stemming aan hulle dink, dan volstaan ek met by myself te mompel: Tuinkaboutertjies van alle lande, verenig julle! Aan die ander kant staan die feit dat daar in sommige lande veel en veel beter gespreek word as vroeër. Wat ons egter almal nodig het, is dat ons teruggaan na die bronne wat onself weer rustig moet lees en tot ons moet **laat** spreek. Oor verdere toekomsverwagtinge kan ek my moeilik uitlaat, tensy dan met die aloue woorde waarmee ek wil eindig: „Veni Creator Spiritus”.

BOEKBESPREKING

Book Review

"RISK" AND "STUDY ENCOUNTER"

As far as I know the Youth Department and the Division of Studies of the World Council of Churches did not consult each other when they decided to revise their old publications, *Seek and Study Bulletin*. Nevertheless, not only are the two new titles appropriate when taken together (Study Encounter always involves Risk if it is done with openness and integrity), but both are fresh attempts to come to grips with problems confronting the whole Church in its task of bringing the Gospel to the whole world.

Study Encounter is edited by Victor E. W. Hayward and is published quarterly in English, and also in German and French. Its aim is to serve study groups in colleges, local churches and church councils which desire to participate in ecumenical thinking and discussion. The first issue deals with "Man in One and Many Worlds" — the emphasis being on the need to recognise that in a pluriform society (which is different from a pluralistic society!) the Church can only exist in many forms. The second issues examines "secularization" and "conversion" — the emphasis being on the need to relate the Biblical concept of conversion to the twin processes of "secularization" and "secularism". If you do not know the difference between the two then you definitely need to subscribe to *Study Encounter!* — (R1.50 per year).

Orders may be sent to the Publications Office, World Council of Churches, 150, route de Ferney, 1211 Geneva 20, Switzerland, or 10 Eaton Gate, London S.W.1., Great Britain.

J.E.M.

have themselves to blame when they wake up to the fact that both the Church and the world have moved on without them.

One of the hopeful signs that South Africa is not yet condemned to the maintenance of the *status quo* in the churches and society is the way in which discussion groups are "mushrooming" all over the country. These are appearing, not only under the auspices of an organisation like the Christian Institute, but spontaneously — in local churches and parishes, amongst the laity and the clergy, in the universities. These groups have a common concern — "what is Christianity for us to-day"? All these groups (and individuals who wish to begin such groups but who do not have adequate study material) will find *Risk* and *Study Encounter* stimulating because they have the same concern.

Risk is edited by Albert van den Heuvel and motivated by a question which appears in the Report of the Third Assembly of the W.C.C. at New Delhi (1961) — In this situation are we not constrained by the love of God to exert pressure on the limits of our inherited traditions, recognising the theological necessity of what we may call 'responsible risk'? It is not a magazine for youth workers only (although they should read it) but it wants to cater for all younger churchmen (and women!), lay and clerical, who are committed to the ecumenical movement. *Risk* No. 1 is an English translation of Prof. Josef L. Hromodka's "A Gospel for Atheists". *Risk* No. 2 examines the problems, frustrations, hopes, victories and defeats of the ordained ministry. Each bishop or theological professor who is engaged in preparing younger churchmen for the ordained ministry should take *Risk* No. 2 and "read, mark and inwardly digest" it. The first two issues of *Risk* (it appears quarterly) are "on the ball" and anyone who subscribes (R1.35 for one year) should back-date the subscription. Those who do not subscribe are only going to

sola gratia, Christo solo. And within the field of the theology of justification it will surely not be news to Dr. Cook, as a university theologian, that Karl Barth and Hans Kung have between them opened up the possibility, and it is of course so far only a possibility called into question anew by Ehrlich's still more recent book, that on the main points the theology of justification of the Council of Trent and of the Reformers differed in appearance rather than in reality. It is not my purpose here to demand that Dr. Cook (or SCA) fall in with the theological opinions of Aulen or Barth: I wish only to suggest that those who have gone before us (from both the Reformed and the Catholic side) in the difficult yet necessary field of ecumenical theology may have a word of encouragement for the workers of the eleventh hour.

NEW EXPERIENCE

The unwary reader might gather from Dr. Cook's third paragraph that scripture study together for "Romans and other christians" will be a totally new experience made possible, if at all, by the decree on ecumenism of Vatican II. Dr. Oscar Cullmann ("The Bible in the Council" in "Dialogue on the Way" Minneapolis 1965, quoted from "Herder Correspondence" Nov. 65) offers us a rather different (and Reformed?) viewpoint: "Without the intensive Catholic biblical studies of the last decade the present Council is scarcely imaginable. We ought not to forget that the ecumenical dialogue began as a conversation between biblical exegetes before it became a dialogue between theologians in the stricter sense of the word. The ecumenical studies of the last thirty years have been intimately connected with the renewal of Roman Catholic biblical studies". Scripture and theological study together was not unknown, even in this country, before Vatican II's decree, both at a professional, and at a more amateur level. I do hope indeed that Vatican II's decree will open up further possibilities. But perhaps our sense of the immense distance to be traversed should not lead us to forget those who commenced the pilgrimage together, in Christ who is our only way.

PRACTICAL CHRISTIANITY

Dr. Gerrit M. Mes, Krugersdorp.

Dr. W. Bruckner De Villiers' articles are what I — and I expect many like me — have been hoping for. No pre-formed opinions; no doubtful, but still 'self-evident' truths; no emotional, moral indignation that only a saint could have the right to feel, let alone express; no vituperations for those who, as honestly, and maybe even more honestly, see things in a different light; no twisting of texts to fit the personal ideals — but a straightforward path of argument along a well fingerposted way towards an honourable and unavoidable although catastrophic conclusion.

UNATTAINABLE IDEAL

In a world that is still, under all its draperies and hypocritical make-believe, a place where the survival of the fittest is the rule, the way of the true Christian is one which amounts to suicide in protest against its selfish sinfulness.

LETTERS / BRIEWE

STILL TROUBLED

Fr. Jerome Smith, St. Peter's Seminary, Hammanskraal.

I would like to thank Dr. Calvin Cook for his reply to my letter. I must confess that I am still troubled by Dr. Cook's attitude. I deeply appreciate and share his desire for contact and meeting and reconciliation. I am aware, too, that an analogy is an analogy.

To my dismay I find we are offered a further one: the Reformed Churches (or is it only SCA? may I suggest to Dr. Cook that sometimes this distinction may be relevant?) are the wild olive of Romans 12, which suggests that the Catholic Church is the branches broken off. I gather that Dr. Cook, who speaks of a superiority of some people (reformed churchmen?) to some others (Catholics?), does not wish to suggest

that the Catholic Church is the root which is holy. With all respect, I think our projected scripture study together will have to find a greater sense of discipline than this. Mindful always that "these things . . . were written down for our instruction" we must be willing to let Paul speak of that which he does speak, and let him speak of it in the way in which he does speak of it.

NO NEWS

It is indeed no news to me that those in the Reformed tradition are concerned to uphold the sole mediatorship of Christ, nor that there have been, since the 16th century, apparent profound differences in soteriology. It is no news to me either that these appearances have come under review of recent years. Bishop Aulen's book, to which I referred in my last letter, is written from the viewpoint of a soteriological Christology: he states the equivalence of *sola fide*,

If, by our passive self-destruction, even one soul that would otherwise have been lost is saved, the price is not too high for "The Kingdom of God is not of this world". It does not really matter what happens to us here below — if we are really Christians.

It, however, is a human characteristic that we build up an unattainable ideal for ourselves and, from there on, go about with a more or less marked aching of our consciences, while doing "what comes naturally". At least, one then has the ideal — and it is not one's fault that one is not "perfect".

But the 'fault' is not that one is not perfect! It is that one, intentionally or not, has put one's ideal so far out of reach that its very unattainability becomes a ready excuse for not even trying!

In this way one has it coming and going. One has the ideal and can feel edified by that, but, at the same time one can lever a competitor out of his job by fair means or foul, one can cheat the customer or the employer or underpay and overwork the employee. One can be a Christian *and* still tell lies about one's neighbour, or start a whispering campaign against a rival in the congregation.

WHO?

Who amongst our Christians even tries to follow the instructions so explicitly laid down in the Sermon on the Mount?

How many of the publicly vociferous pillars of our churches honestly accept that the man who is 'merely' angry with his brother without cause "shall be in danger of judgement?" How many see real "harm" in divorce? How many refuse to take the oath? How many would even think of turning the other cheek or adding the cloak when the coat has been taken away? How many grant a loan to every supplicant, bless those who harm them and do not try to get rich at the expense of others, taking no thought for the morrow and the things that rust erodes?

The list is very much longer but in few of these will one be able in daily life, to know the Christian from the Heathen and the Atheist.

When one tackles the man who considers himself to be a true believer on these points, he will say: "But God knows that I am only a weak man! He does not expect me to be a 'saint'! He will forgive me my failings. Christ died for me too, you know. God does not ask that I shall not get angry with a fool who keeps on pestering me and, when a robber comes into my house, I'll most certainly shoot him. God cannot want me to stand idly by while what I have worked and slaved for is taken away from me! I am convinced that if I believe in God and do no more harm than I can help, I will find my place in heaven. After all, I am a Christian! I am one of God's own flock!"

And now Dr. Bruckner de Villiers has added another ideal — another duty.

No one can gainsay his arguments or his authorities, but he could, with as much right and possibly with more advantage, have proved that Jesus was in deadly earnest when He said to the rich young man that he should "go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasures in heaven, and come and follow me", because "A rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom

of heaven", and that that applies as much to us as to the poor rich man who at least had the moral honesty to 'sorrowfully' turn away.

CONFESSION AND PRACTICE

If it were really the intention to begin with making us into Christians, we should not start a Confessional Church but a Practising Church.

And, if we do that, we must begin the gigantic task of trying to live up to our professed ideals, *not* by beginning with the most difficult one which shakes at the roots of all our instinctive prejudices, but with something more simple — like refusing to bear false witness against others, not only not against those of our own congregation, but also not against those in other compartments of the family of Christ — and not even against heathens and atheists.

How can one expect of a man who does not fear to tell a lie where God can hear him, that he should contaminate himself by sitting next to a coloured Christian in church?

Or as that is possibly too much to ask — we should at least make an attempt at visiting the sick, or personally visiting those in prison, instead of paying a man with the taxpayer's money to do it for us. We could also begin by *personally* practising charity by *helping* those who need help.

It is hardly the intention of our religion that we should be satisfied with dropping the occasional coin into the beggar's hat or buying freedom for our consciences by donating amounts that do not hurt to impersonal 'treasure chests' and 'charity funds', thus leaving the "work" to others who, often, have to make a 'living' out of it.

That we do not perform these simple, primary if onerous, Christian duties which Jesus asked us to perform, but that we *do* get hot under the collar about mixed congregations, shows all too clearly that we are not really concerned about the 'Christianity' of the thing. We do *not* get excited about a very rich 'Christian' who refuses to give more than ten cents per person in alms.

The trouble here is that this development in our country is exposing the hollowness of our belief.

As Dr. Bruckner De Villiers says so clearly in his closing paragraphs, and as I am more cruelly underlining here — "The question is if we really and honestly mean it."

And *that* is what is so upsetting.

This is a task to which we cannot only pay lip-service on Sunday. It has invaded that Sunday! We have openly to confess that we will not and shall not follow the teaching of the Bible because it endangers our safety and our established way of life.

COMPROMISE

With that, however, we also endanger the safety entailed in being Confessing Christians even if, being also human, we are not Practising Christians. We suddenly can no longer get our eternal salvation for nothing!

Or so it would seem.

Naturally there is a way out. There always is. We can compromise by being Confessing Christians and *Practical* Christians — which would mean that, as we have always done, we try and fit as much Christianity into our lives as the

traffic will bear and (what is not so pleasant) *that we admit it!*

When we can bring ourselves to that minimum of honesty, however, most of our troubles are over. As Dr. Bruckner De Villiers himself has shown most clearly, mixed congregations are 'unpractical'.

They will lead to more trouble than they are worth in the way of symbolical acceptance of our coloured brethren. It is neither practical nor wise to expose oneself to harm with no earthly advantage to be gained either by ourselves or, as the happenings up North have shown, the others.

There the Church has had to fight for its existence, it has had to compromise and balance the one against the other.

Has "freedom" and "one man one vote" brought *one* coloured soul nearer to our Christian God that would not have come there otherwise? And have not many been prevented from finding their salvation? And will this not get worse?

It is like the story of the little Dutch boy His finger in the hole in the dyke could easily hold back the sea. Why therefore, try to make him pull it out? At first there will only be a little stream, but soon there will be Malcolm X.

That certainly would not be *practical* at all!

Even if it was "Christian".

INESCAPABLE RESPONSIBILITY REMAINS

Dr. W. Bruckner de Villiers,
Johannesburg.

So much of what Dr. Mes states is all too sadly true. We who call ourselves Christians — even the most sincere and dedicated among us — do indeed, by and large, live a life of casuistic compromise: a compromise, from moment to moment, between the ideal and the practical, the divinely desirable and the humanly feasible. That we succumb all too easily to the temptation of living by the more or less conscience-appeasing rule of compromise (on the strength of the universally established "fact" that the large majority of Christians have, tacitly, though by common consent, decided that practical idealism or confessionalism is not a workable proposition) does still not mean that Christianity is a hopelessly unpractical religion, nor that idealism must ultimately be dispensed with in the daily crises of Christian living. It is not Christianity which is unpractical; it is the sinful and selfish weakness of those who profess Christianity which precludes its ideals from being translated into practical reality — simply because, for convenience and comfort's sake, they insist on having their cake as well as eating it. It is not God who is hopelessly too idealistic in calling upon man to do His will; it is man who is too engrossed by the imagined reality presented by the immediate pleasures and satisfactions of sin to make any determined attempt at obeying God's call. Here on this earth, to be sure, the ideal-negating effects of sin will always be with us. This happens to be the strife-ridden arena on which we shall remain embattled for as long as we live. St. Paul realised it all too well: "for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I". But this does not entitle us to resign ourselves to the

inevitability of compromise. The battle between good and evil, between God-given ideal and sinful reality, is still on, and we dare not relinquish either our ideals or our belief in their practical attainability, whether it be this life or the next. Only if I keep on fighting the good fight, having given of my utmost, dare I pray, after having suffered a temporary setback: "Lord, have mercy upon me, poor sinner!"

GEVOLGTREKKING OOR DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING

J. J. Beukes, Westaid Mansions 503, Smitstraat, Johannesburg.

Na aanleiding van die artikel „Die Vrye Universiteit en Martin Luther King” deur Prof. B. B. Keet in *Pro Veritate* van 15 Desember 1965, word Luther King opgehemel en voorgehou as 'n voorbeeldige Christen na wie opgesien moet word as 'n kampvegter vir 'n regverdige saak. Ek is ook daarvan bewus dat dit die mening is van die Christelike Instituut.

Na 'n deeglike studie van Luther King en sy bedrywighede het ek tot die gevolgtrekking gekom dat hy 'n kommunist is en dat sy Christelikheid slegs as 'n rookskerm dien vir sy ondermynende bedrywighede. Amerikaanse regerings-ondersoek het aan die lig gebring dat Luther King aan sestig (60) kommunisties-gesinde organisasies behoort. Om my bewerings te staaf, wil ek 'n paar aanhalings uit Amerikaanse geskifte gee, die meeste afkomstig van Amerikaanse negers.

„How long will we let Martin King cause innocent negro children to be used and killed needlessly. He and the N.A.A.C.P. must share responsibility for the death of the Birmingham children.”

„Martin Luther King himself has amassed the staggering total of more than sixty (60) Communist-front affiliations since 1955.”

George S. Schuyler, die neger-redakteur van die Pittsburgh Courier het die volgende gesê nadat die Nobel Vredesprys aan King toegeken is:

„Neither directly nor indirectly has Dr. King made any contribution to the world (or even domestic) peace. Methinks the Lenin Prize would have been more appropriate for him, since it is no mean feat for one so young to acquire 60 Communist-front citations, according to the U.S. government. Only W. E. B. Dubois and Paul Robeson surpassed that record if we exclude Eleanor Roosevelt.” Laasgenoemde drie persoonlikhede is almal erkende kommuniste.

Karl Prussian, 'n voormalige spioen vir die F.B.I., het die volgende beëdigde verklaring gemaak:

„I further swear and attest that at each and every one of the aforesaid (Communist) meetings one Martin Luther King was always set forth as the individual to whom Communist should look and rally around in the Communist struggle on the many racial issues.”

'n Aanhaling van 'n ooggetuie oor die optog na Selma deur die „Freedom Riders” onder leiding van Luther King, die voorbeeldige Christen, sal as onsedelik beskou word.

Ek kan ook melding maak dat Prins Bernhard van Nederland voorsit op vergaderings wat deur die Bilderberger-groep

— 'n ondermynende organisasie — gehou word.

Is dit die persone wat die Vrye Universiteit vereer?

Prof. Keet, ek dink nie ons in Suid-Afrika is so onvolwasse soos u beweer nie, maar dat u en die aanhangers van die Christelike Instituut onvolwasse optree, is 'n voldonge feit.

PROF. KEET ANTWOORD:

J. J. Beukes se brief is 'n tipiese voorbeeld van die metodes wat aangewend word om mense in verdenking te bring. „Na 'n deeglike studie van Luther King en sy bedrywighede het ek tot die gevolgtrekking gekom dat hy 'n kommunist is,” skryf hy. En waaruit bestaan die deeglike studie? 'n Aantal aanhalings uit Amerikaanse geskifte wat seker nog deur talle ander kon aangevul word, maar wat net die uiting is van persoonlike oordeel en veroordeling sonder 'n enkele bewys. 'n Mens sou graag iets meer wil weet van die Amerikaanse regerings-ondersoek wat aan die lig gebring het dat Luther King aan 60 kommunisties-gesinde organisasies behoort.

EN DIE REDAKSIE MERK OP:

Ons wil graag aan al ons briefskrywers die geleentheid bied om hulle menings vryelik uit te spreek. Ons wil egter dringend versoek dat daar by verskil van mening nie beledigende opmerkings aan eerbiedwaardige persone gerig sal word nie.

VAN HOORSE^A GEPRAAT

Mnr. A. J. J. Burger, Pk. Witvlei.

Ontvang hiermee my waardering vir u blad asook vir die insiggewende artikels wat daarin verskyn. Ek is aangenaam verras met die inhoud daarvan, en met die mooi gees en sterk Christelike beginsels wat daarin geopenbaar word.

Ek kan ook amper soos Job uitroep: Van hoorsê het ek gepraat!

In die artikel DIE EER VAN DIE KERK (15 Oktober 1965, bl. 5) stel die skrywer dit duidelik en onbetwisbaar hoe die groot leuen i.v.m. die Christelike Instituut vandag versprei en geglo word. As dit net onkundiges is wat dit glo, kan dit nog verstaan word, maar wanneer selfs sogenaamde kerkmanne dit ywerig propageer, voel jy nie alleen geskok nie maar loop jy gevaar om sulke manne die rug toe te keer. Persoonlik wil ek graag hierdie artikel woordeliks onderskryf.

Die saak van die kerk in Suid-Afrika en van die Godsryk word nie deur hierdie mense met hul verdagmakery gesteun en bevorder nie, al bedoel hulle dit ook opreg; want dit is duidelik dat hulle of onkundig of moedswillig is. Ek meen dat ek ook 'n woordjie kan meepraat. Vir 'n hele aantal jare al volg ek hierdie saak so getrou as moontlik, veral sedert die Cottesloe-beraad toe 'n vlag van vrees oor baie gekom het en hulle gesus is met: „Die Sinode het nog nie uitsluitel gegee nie.” Tot baie ander se verbasing het die Transvaalse Sinode wat gevolg het, die vreesagtiges toe wêl gerus gestel. Die gevaar vir ONS VOLK is afgeweer.

In dieselfde gees en gesindheid is daar kennis geneem van die boek „Vertraagde Aksie”. Dié wat die grootste keel oor die verskyning van die boek opgesit het, altans baie van hulle, het dit nie eers in hulle hand gehad nie. Wat ek hier skrywe, berus nie op verdenking nie. Ek weet selfs van kerkrade wat dit in die ban gedoen wou hê, wat op 'n vraag erken het dat hulle op hoorsê wil handel. Intussen het die lasterveldtog teen die Christelike Instituut toegeneem.

Intussen het ook die ekumeniese vergadering van Gereformeerde Kerke in Duitsland plaasgevind en is dit deur ons Kerk se afgevaardigdes bygewoon. Omdat hierdie vergadering ONS BELEID nie na ons wens ondersteun het nie, of krities betrag het, weet ons wat daarop gevolg het. Hierdie manne is beslis nie as gunsteling terug verwelkom nie, altans dit is die indruk wat dit op my gemaak het. Dit skyn vir my dat almal wat bots met ons beleid, weggee moet word, en die beste metode is: skel hulle uit vir liberaliste. Oorheers die volksidee saam met 'n politieke sienswyse die kerklike terrein nou al so, dat ons van slinkse metodes gebruik moet maak om mede-Christene wat van ons verskil, uit die weg te ruim? Dan het dit voorwaar tyd geword dat ons ons ernstig moet afvra of ons ons nog op die pad van Christelike liefde en regverdigheid bevind.

Daar kan bladsve vol oor hierdie saak geskrywe word. Maar nog net dit. Wanneer ons te doen kry met mense wat die Christelike Instituut en sy direkteur, ds. Naudé, met agterdog bejeën, dan word jy pynlik getref deur die bitsigheid waarmee hulle jou te woord staan. Daar is net een rede voor, nl. om 'n swak argument met woede aan te vul om indruk te maak.

Net so maak die korrespondensie in ons kerklike blaai 'n swak indruk op die ernstige Christelike leser. Die gees en gesindheid wat dikwels daaruit straal, kan 'n mens nie stig nie; nee, dit ontstig voorwaar en pas heel dikwels nie daarin nie, omdat dit so 'n blad onwaardig is. Reeds van die begin af het hierdie korrespondente my voor die vraag geplaas: WAAR GAAN DIT NOU EINTLIK OM? Is daar nie belangriker werk en vraagstukke in verband met die Kerk en die Godsryk nie? Verspil ons nie ons tyd en kragte nie? Die saak en die mense wat ons beveg, sock in alle opregtheid om die Koninkryk van God te bevorder. Ons mag, en het ook die reg, om van hulle te verskil, maar sekerlik nie om hulle te beveg en sleg te maak, ja selfs onskuldig te belaster nie. Hulle was nog nie voor die kerklike regbank gedaag en daar is nog nie ontwyfelbaar bewys dat die Christelike Instituut 'n gevaar inhou vir die uitbreiding van die Here se saak of dat daardie manne ons belydenisskrifte in twyfel trek of die Heilige Skrif wil verwater nie. Wanneer hulle, soos dit maar te duidelik is, slegs wil doen wat in hulle oog tot eer van God dien, mag ons hulle nie behandel soos dit mode geword het onder baie van ons kerkmense nie.

Dit behoort duidelik te wees dat dit nie die Godsryk is wat hier in die gedrang is nie, maar ONS BELEID. Mag ons langer so voortgaan? Wat dink die wêreld van ons as ons, as Christene, so 'n treurige gesindheid teenoor ons mede-Christene openbaar? Mag die Here gee dat daar spoedig 'n einde aan sal kom.