

DRAWING NEAR TO THE 'QUICK' OF S. AFRICA

I have over the past two years been able to view South Africa from a distance.

A country divided

I seemed to see a country divided into compartments, each having its own Churches, Schools, Universities, Clubs, Societies, and even, in the sphere of mass media of communication, its own newspapers, films, and radio programmes. In this way the people were able to nurture their stereotyped views of each other; to protect themselves from what was not 'their line'; even to preach that inter-communication may be a sin! And worse, each Christian section, accustomed to thinking of itself more as a whole than as a part, was busy justifying itself to itself and to any who would care to hear, though few did, except to criticize.

One group said they tried to some extent to express what they thought to be Christian love and concern towards those in a different coloured compartment, but a third group looked on and thought that that love was hypocritical because, for one thing, it wasn't extended to them too, and Christian love should not be only one-sided. Then being accused of self love, this third section said it was better to be sincere than false, and even Jesus had worked first amongst his own people and provided for their needs. To neglect your own would not be right.

In another compartment, people were justifying their growing apostasy from their former allegiance to Christ, by saying that they were tired of being regarded as second-class Christians, although expected to show greater love to those in the other compartments than they — the two main white groups — were prepared to show to each other.

There was yet another small cell though, feeling too recent and keen a smart, to talk and cry out as the others did. They had once half believed they were loved. So they were the more deceived when they found that they too had been judged on their indelible caste. At least Jesus had been rejected for what he stood for as a person, but there is a hopelessness about being rejected no matter what sort of person one is — as if one's person were immaterial. I can't matter only to myself. I matter to myself only in

so far as I matter to you. This is relationship and the Bible is all about relationship — of God to me and you, and of me to you, and you to me. We are all one family really, but we live in separate homes. It's bewildering'.

It is virtually impossible to view one's own land dispassionately. One can't escape the love of it, the concern for it, and the desire to work always in hope of the best for it. As Jesus is our hope if we are Christians, our work, whatever it is, will not be without reference to Him.

Spiritual reserves

I have recently arrived home and have felt most encouraged by a new realisation of depth in our South African situation — an awareness of the existence of spiritual reserves, like the reserves of a Karoo bush which suffers long periods of drought, yet which pushes its roots ever deeper in search of spring water — and finds it!

In the past we honoured leaders whose physical endurance, courage and indomitableness of spirit made them press forward fearlessly to the unknown. These men would not have got far had they chosen to stay in the laager. They ventured courageously into every part of the land, having their Bibles with them as their mainstay. We are proud of this heritage, but should this remain only a heritage?

To-day we may follow the leaders of another trek — one which is a test of mental and spiritual, more than of physical adaptation and endurance — and we ourselves will not know whether later generations will call it "great", or whether it will be as decisive in our history as the first Great Trek. We can only answer the call to trek out of our laager security into a perhaps turbulent future, following the word of God. Our forefathers had only God to trust. They learned to live moment by moment. And to live increasingly in the present is to live increasingly in the light of eternity, which is reality, honouring God's name: 'I am that I am'. He is, from the beginning, a present God.

We may remember the great Old Testament prophetic practice of recollection and expectation that gave significance to their present. But by the

time of Christ the Jews had changed from the spontaneity of prophetic living and had reduced their life to the following of a code of rules designed to keep them religiously and racially pure. Thus they lost their election for they could not recognise the truth and life in Jesus. They had learned to judge only by a code. They saw that His love was indiscriminate and that he did not honour the old ways, so they rejected Him. "It was expedient that one man should die for the people that the whole nation perish not —. Then from that day forth they took counsel together for to put Him to death".

The ground of hope

At this time of the year we remember that Jesus "set his face to go towards Jerusalem". This way to the Cross meant for Him the breaking of lesser allegiances, the disappointing of many, and then apparent personal defeat. But He said to His disciples "Remember the word that I have said unto you, the servant is not greater than his lord". I quote Dr. E. Brooke's words: "What is invincible in love is not that it gets its own way, but that it keeps on loving. This is the power of love in the face of man's freedom to do wrong; it is the victory of the Cross". Our charge is not that we should be successful but that we should be faithful. Our faith is in the Resurrection of Christ, the King, whose victory has already been won.

This then is the ground of my hope. Men in their heart of hearts know what truth is and they know what love is — even though they may know it only when they see it. These things may become obscured for a time; they may become a matter of persuasion and not of joyful recognition — but they can never be destroyed, for each time there are found men to understand a situation and fearlessly to interpret the way of God in it, so truth and love will live on, but only in the hearts of those who recognise them, and who are we to say who may or may not recognise these Christian values? Could Calaphas have guessed it would be the Romans? Could those Romans have guessed it could be the Vandals and 'Goths'? — but St. Augustine did, and the Church went out to meet those Barbarians.

* From "Power, Law, Right and Love" p.16
* Miss Evelyn Miller, belonging to the Church of the Province, is at present teaching in the Cape Peninsula.

Die kerk in Afrika. WAT HET VERKEERD GEGAAN?

So vroeg as 1808, skaars twee jaar na die oorname van die Kaap deur die Britse bewind, is die kerkgebou van die gemeente Kaapstad deur die Kerkraad op versoek van die Anglikaanse Kerk oopgestel vir dienste deur die Anglikaanse Kerk. Hierdie dienste is aanvanklik vir die Engelse amptenare en besettingsmagte gehou, en het gewoonlik Sondagnmiddag om sesuur begin. Verder is elke Dinsdag en Saterdag twee uur lank in die konsistorie klasse vir die opvoeding van Engelse kinders in die Anglikaanse kerkleer waargeneem.

Reeds gedurende April 1806, skaars drie maande na die oorname deur die Britse bewind, is ds. Fleck van Kaapstad deur Engelsprekendes van die garnisoen genader om die doop aan hul pasgebore kinders te bedien en het die kerkraad geredelik toestemming verleen. In 1813 het eerw. Robert Jones skriftelik om sekere geriewe vir die Engelse dienste aansoek gedoen; toestemming is gevra om 'n draagbare preekstoel tydens dienste in die Kerk te gebruik; die inrigting van een van die syvertrekke as 'n doopvertrek is verlang; daar is gevra dat die kerkklok gelui moes word wanneer die Engelse dienste begin; die aanbring van 'n deur na Buroolaan sou ook waardeer word.

'n Goeie onderlinge verhouding moes geheersa het, te oordeel na die warme bedankingsbrief van biskop S. James van Kalkutta, die eerste Episkopale biskop wat Suid-Afrika ooit besoek het, wat hy op 24 Oktober 1827 aan ds. A. Faure gerig het. Dit het gebeur na aanleiding van 'n diens wat biskop James in die Kaapstadse kerk waargeneem het en waartydens lidmate van sy kerk belydenis van geloof afgelê het.

„Die Voorligter“, Februarie 1964. Uittreksel uit „Engelse Eredienste in ons Kerk“ deur ds. A. J. B. Rawlin.

AANTAL LIDMATE — NIKS OM OOR TE KRAAI!

In 'n onlangse Nuusbrief van die N.G. Kerk word die volgende syfers verstrek betreffende die lidmate van die Kerke in Suid-Afrika vir 1960.

Kerkgenoot.	Blan-	Kleur-	Ban-	In-
skappe	kes	linge	skappe	skappe
	42.9	29.3		
Ned. Gerof. Kerk	6.2	0.2	5.1	0.1
Ned. Herv. Kerk	3.3	0.5		
Gerformeerde Kerk	12.6	17.8	6.9	1.0
Anglikaanse Kerke	8.7	7.8	12.0	0.4
Metodiste Kerk	3.6	0.5	1.9	0.1
Presbiteriaanse Kerk	6.2	8.0	7.0	2.2
Rooms Katolieke Kerk	0.5	9.1	1.2	
Congregational Kerk	1.1	4.9	4.9	
Lutherse Kerk	3.4	4.6	2.8	0.2
Apostoliese Kerk	5.4	8.8	4.7	3.3
Ander Christolike kerke	3.8			
Joodse Geloof		6.2		20.6
Islam				20.1
Bantoe Kerke				65.1
Hindoe				2.3
Ander en ongespesifiseer	2.3	2.3	33.4	7.0

Uit 'n vergelyking met die syfers vir die jaar 1951 blyk die volgende: Tot die N.G. Kerk behoort die grootste aantal blankes en Kleurlinge; die persentasie vir die blankes het gestyg van 42 tot 42.9. Die aantal lidmate van die Ned. Hervormde en van die Gereformeerde Kerk het verminder, respektiewelik van 7 tot 6.2% en van 4.2 tot 3.3%. Die aantal blanke lidmate van die Katolieke Kerk het gestyg van 5.3 tot 6.2%.

Daar moet op gelet word dat hierdie getalle gebaseer is op 'n volkstelling deur die Regering onderneem en hulle stem, soos gewoonlik, nie ooreen met die Kerk se amptelike syfers nie. In die geval van die N.G. en die R.K. Kerk is die persentasies van die regeringstelling hoër.

Wat die Bantoe betref, hul sie Kerke het die grootste anhang, gevolg deur die Metodistekerk (12%). Onder die Asiate het die Hindoekerk en die Islam verreweg die grootste anhang (85.7%). Uit die syfers kan ook afgelei word dat ongeveer een derde van die Bantoes nog heidens is.

„Die Brug“, Februarie 1964.

clear thinking

side whether racial grouping will be national policy! This is nothing but dictatorship dressed up — rather inadequately — to look like democracy.

If the people of South Africa were overwhelmingly in favour of partitioning the country into Whitestans, Blackstans and Colouredstans, there could be little objection to this policy, providing that minorities were protected and the whole scheme was carried out in a reasonably fair and just manner.

But there is not the slightest intention of consulting the people about it, because it is known that the majority of South Africans may not desire such partition.

The results of the voting for representatives in the Transkei Parliament recently suggests that many Africans do not want it.

'Compulsory Apartheid' isn't 'Traditional Segregation'

Secondly, the policy of apartheid, as distinct from South Africa's traditional segregation policy, requires

rigid and ruthless enforcement even upon those who have no desire to remain separate.

We have no essential quarrel with those who wish to separate themselves from their fellow-South Africans of different racial origin, as many do. Let them be free to follow their own conscience in the matter.

But to bring compulsion to bear against those who believe that it is their duty to stand together irrespective of racial differences, as many genuinely do from Christian motives, is both unjust and at complete variance with that freedom which is the right of all men in civilised society.

Racial differences not all-important

Thirdly, it is essentially wrong deliberately to blind oneself to the many other differences in development between people — of education, culture, civilised standards, religion and political awareness — and to base policy on one difference only, that of race, as if it were all-important.

It is, of course, nothing of the kind.

Complete racial exclusiveness is an essential part of the doctrine of apartheid. This is illustrated by the fact that no African, whatever his fitness for the franchise, can vote for the government of his country. No European over 18 years of age, however ill-equipped to use the vote, can lose it except under very special circumstances.

If this is just and right and Christian, then words have lost their meaning.

Dr Whelan has presented an excellent case for voluntary, self-chosen segregation, but that is not the point at issue. He has not really dealt with the Christian attitude to apartheid.

Christians of all denominations would welcome a further statement from him on this crucial issue.

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