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VAN DIE REDAKSIE 7

ARTIKELS

1. BEKKER, CHRISTELLE & HENDRIKS, H JURGENS, *Universiteit Stellenbosch* 9
Die gemeente as huishouding van God
The congregation as God's household
2. BEKKER, CHRISTELLE & PUNT, J, *Universiteit Stellenbosch* 22
Die huishouding van God volgens Jakobus: Onderweg na 'n patriargale identiteit.
The household of God according to James: Role models and friendship on the route to a post-patriarchal identity
3. CLAASSENS, L JULIANA M, *Stellenbosch University* 34
Human dignity in the prophetic traditions. Upholding human worth in a context of dehumanization
4. COERTZEN, P, *Stellenbosch University* 45
The Huguenots of South Africa. In history and religious identity
5. CONRADIE, ERNST M, *University of the Western Cape* 58
All theology is natural theology: The hermeneutic necessity of natural theology?
6. CONRADIE, ERNST M, *University of the Western Cape* 66
The necessity of natural theology? In conversation with John Calvin on the human senses
7. DU PREEZ, JANNIE, *Universiteit Stellenbosch* 83
Net maar diere? 'n Tematiese oorsig van die plek van die diereryk in die skepping volgens geselekteerde Skrifgedeeltes
Only but animals? A thematic survey of the place of the animal kingdom in God's world according to some Scripture passages
8. HARTNEY, JNM, *Universiteit Stellenbosch* 94
Eksegeties-teologiese ondersteuning van die Belydenis van Belhar
Exegetic- theological analysis of some Biblical concepts in the Confession of Belhar
9. HENDRIKS, HJ & SOKO, LUKAS, *Stellenbosch University* 105
Pentecostalism and schisms in the Reformed Church in Zambia (1996–2001)

10. HOFMEYR, JW, en KRUGER, P, <i>Universiteit van die Vrystaat</i>	118
Boustene vir die toekoms van die NG Kerk (Deel III)	
<i>Directives of the future for the DR Church (Part III)</i>	
11. JONKER, LOUIS, <i>Universiteit Stellenbosch</i>	128
“Lewend en kragtig”? Die hermeneutiese dinamika en implikasies van (her)interpretasie in die Ou Testament	
<i>“Alive and active”? The hermeneutic dynamics and implications of (re)interpretation in the Old Testament</i>	
12. NELL, IA, <i>Stellenbosch University</i>	148
Embodied leadership: Paradigm shifts in the leadership of a local URC congregation	
13. OLWAGEN, JM <i>Universiteit van Johannesburg</i>	
PUTTER, APJ, <i>Noordwes-Universiteit (Potchefstroom-kampus)</i>	161
Die liggaam-van-Christus-metafoor: bediening van die AGS-lidmaat op die voorgrond	
<i>The body-of-Christ-metaphor: Ministry of an AFM member on the foreground</i>	
14. PHILANDER, NC, <i>Universiteit Stellenbosch</i>	174
Die rol van die kerk as een van die instellings in die samelewing ten opsigte van die morele vorming van mense	
<i>The church as one of the institutions in society plays an important role in the moral development of people</i>	
15. PHILANDER, NC, <i>Universiteit Stellenbosch</i>	185
Enkele opmerkings oor die gestaltes en oorsake van die morele probleme in Suid-Afrika	
<i>A few remarks on the forms and causes of the moral problems in South Africa</i>	
16. PLAATJIES-VAN HUFFEL, MARY-ANN, <i>Universiteit Stellenbosch</i>	194
Die kerkreg en kerkregering van die NG Sendingkerk (1881–1915)	
<i>The church polity and church governance of the Dutch Reformed Mission Church (1881–1915)</i>	
17. SAAYMAN, WILLEM, <i>University of South Africa</i>	204
Constituting the Synod of the Evangelical Reformed Church in Africa: The last racially separated church in the Dutch Reformed Family of Churches	
18. SMIT, GUILLAUME, <i>Universiteit Stellenbosch</i>	214
Prediking in ’n multimedia kultuur – homiletiese beginsels vir ’n interaktiewe kommunikasiepraxis	
<i>Preaching in a multimedia culture – Homiletic principles for an interactive communication praxis</i>	
19. VAN COLLER, EH, <i>Rhodes Universiteit</i>	225
Die betekenis van ‘godsdienslike organisasies’ of ‘geloofsinstellings’: ’n regvergelende perspektief	
<i>The meaning of ‘religious organisations’: a comparative perspective</i>	

20. VERHOEF, ANNÉ H, Northwest University	238
Trinity, time and ecumenism in Robert Jenson's theology	
21. VERHOEF, ANNÉ H, Northwest University	247
Robert Jenson's ecumenical vision based on his Trinitarian thought	
22. WEPENER, CAS, Universiteit van Pretoria	257
Nuwe tendense buite-om die erediens van die 21ste eeu.	
'n Beskrywende liturgies-historiese en hedendaage verkenning.	
<i>New tendencies outside the worship service of the 21st century.</i>	
<i>A descriptive liturgical-historical and current day exploration.</i>	
23. YOUN, HEE-KYUNG & MÜLLER, JULIAN C, University of Pretoria	272
A discussion about university education for Korean missionary children	
REPLIEK	
Konferensie oor versoening	
NGTT, Deel 51, Nommers 3 & 4, September en Desember 2010	
1. Truth or reconciliation? A response to Theo de Wit (V Roodt, US)	286
2. Facing evil: theological reflections (G Brand, US)	289
Riglyne vir die persklaarmaak van die NGTT	296
<i>Guidelines for the preparation of articles for the NGTT</i>	
Riglyne vir keurders	298
<i>Guidelines for referees</i>	

“Om ’n ou tradisie nuut voort te sit.”

’n Nuwetydskrifredakteur moet hom (in hierdie geval is dit nie “haar” nie) oriënteer met betrekking tot die oorsprong en geskiedenis van die publikasie waarvoor hy medeverantwoordelikheid aanvaar. Ook en veral as hy tot op sekere hoogte ’n nuwe visie vir dié publikasie het, is dit noodsaaklik dat aansluiting by die bydraes en strewes van sy voorgangers gesoek word. ’n Historiese verhaal kan egter op verskillende maniere gekonstrueer en vertel word.

Die *Nederduitse Gereformeerde Teologiese Tydskrif*, wat in 1959 met behulp van die P De Waal Neethling Trust tot stand gekom het, se oorsprong word dikwels teruggevoer na twee voorlopers, *Die Ou Paaie* en *Die Gereformeerde Vaandel*, wat destyds as teenvoeter vir Johannes du Plessis en andere se tydskrif *Het Zoeklicht* (later *Die Soeklig*) bedoel is. Die sogenaamde Du Plessis-saak – wat daarop uitgeloop het dat Du Plessis nie meer aan die Kweekskool in Stellenbosch kon klasgee nie – het gedraai om die persepsie dat Du Plessis en sy kring ’n liberale teologie bevorder het waarin die gesag van die Bybel bevaagteken is.

Van die sake waarvoor Neethling en ander sogenaamde “Oupajane” besorg was – byvoorbeeld die idee dat die eerste vyf boeke van die Ou Testament nie deur Moses geskryf is nie, maar uit verskillende bronne saamgestel is – is vandag nouliks omstrede, en word deur die meeste NG-predikante en waarskynlik alle dosente aan die drie teologiese fakulteite wat ’n verbintenis met die NG Kerk het, onderskryf. Die standbeeld van Du Plessis, wat destyds deur sy verontwaardigde ondersteuners in Stellenbosch opgerig is om op ’n afstand as ’t ware verwyte na die Kweekskool te kyk, is inmiddels as ’n simboliese versoeningsgebaar na die gronde van die teologiese fakulteit self verskuif. Die geskiedenis stel dikwels ou konflikte in perspektief.

Dit is verder belangrik om in gedagte te hou dat die *NGTT* nooit amptelik of wetlik gesproke ’n voortsetting van óf die *Die Ou Paaie*, óf die *Vaandel* was nie, maar in ’n tradisie van Stellenbosse tydskrifte so ver terug as die 19de eeu staan. Die kerkhistorikus prof Pieter Coertzen het my onlangs daarop gewys dat ds Abraham Faure, wat allerweë beskou word as die “vader” van die Stellenbosse Kweekskool wat in 1859 gestig is, reeds in 1848 saam met Thomas Pringle en John Fairbairn die *Nederduitsch Zuid-Afrikaansch Tijdschrift* (waarvan iets in die titel van die *NGTT* resoneer) opgerig het. Dit moes as teenvoeter dien vir die destydse goewerneur van die Kaapkolonie se inperking van die pers, maar was ook ’n uitvloeisel van Faure se passie vir die onderwys. As sodanig het dit ’n vrydenkende en intellektuele gees geadem.

Teen hierdie agtergrond – en gesien die feit dat die *NGTT* tans, naas die reusebydrae van die Neethling-trust deur die jare, ook indirek uit staatsubsidies en met die ondersteuning van instansies soos die Fakulteit Teologie aan die US, die Christelike Lektuurfonds en BybelMedia, instandgehou word – kan ’n mens sê dat die tradisie waaruit die tydskrif kom verder terug as die Du Plessis-saak strek, en ook wyer raakpunte het. Ek wil my verstout om te sê dat ook *Het Zoeklicht* / *Die Soeklig* deel van daardie veelkantige tradisie uitmaak. Dit lê in die aard van tradisies dat dit nie eenduidig is nie, maar deur interne teenstellings en die spore van veranderende kontekste gevorm word.

Elkeen van die diverse publikasies wat tot die *NGTT* se historiese geheue behoort, sal steeds die karakter en klemtone van die tydskrif moet begelei: identifikasie met die gereformeerde tradisie, ’n verbintenis tot teologiese skoling, verbondenheid met die kerk en die Fakulteit Teologie van die US, en waagmoedige intellektuele besinning.

In die huidige konteks moet die redaksie van die tydskrif uiteraard met nuwe uitdagings en moontlikhede rekening hou, waarvan drie in die besonder aandag vereis:

- Die tydskrif se historiese verbondenheid met die NG Kerk moet gehandhaaf word, maar dan met inagneming van die soeke na sigbare eenheid in die NG Kerk-familie, en die Fakulteit Teologie van die US se ekumeniese strewes, wat onder meer gestalte vind in ooreenkomste met drie kerklike vennote uit gereformeerde kring.
- Die tydskrif moet, in lyn met sy ryke historiese erfenis, steeds die belangrike rol speel om meertaligheid in die teologiese en breër opvoedkundige en akademiese wêreld deur die publikasie van Afrikaanse en Nederlandse artikels, naas die Engelse inhoud, voort te sit, maar ook oorweging skenk aan die wenslikheid om nog meer tale (by name Suid-Afrikaanse tale) te betrek.
- In 'n veranderende en uiters dinamiese publikasiewêreld moet die beskikbaarheid, gehalte en profiel van die tydskrif deur optimale benutting van nuwe tegnologiese moontlikhede, veral op die gebied van die internet, verder uitgebrei word.

Aan my voorganger, prof Coertzen, 'n hartlike woord van dank vir u jarelange leiding van die tydskrif. Dit was 'n liefdestaak waardeur die genoemde waardes wat die tydskrif steeds sal kenmerk, gedien en versterk is. Ook u voortgesette betrokkenheid, onder meer by die P De Waal Neethling Trust, en die historiese kontinuïteit wat daardeur verseker word, word hoog op prys gestel.

DR. GERRIT BRAND (REDAKTEUR)

JUNIE 2011

Die gemeente as huishouding van God¹

ABSTRACT

The congregation as God's household

The article is an eco-feministic interpretation of James. It has the following hypotheses: the transformation of the patriarchal family is the key to the transformation of society. If friendship is the baseline structure of the relationship between people who understand their identity as being the missional body of Christ, equality and hospitality will result, creating space for congregations to be places where healing can take place and people can experience freedom. The concept household is defined and the implications of being a household of God, based on key concepts in James, provide more than twenty parameters for a theory of ministry.

1 INLEIDING EN HIPOTEESE

Ekofeministe werk met die uitgangspunt dat daar 'n direkte verband bestaan tussen patriargale kulture oor die algemeen en die onderdrukking van vroue en die natuur (Radford Ruether 2003:24). Androsentriese en patriargale denkraamwerke (veral binne die Christelike geloof) bly voortbestaan in die denke van mense, dwars oor die wêreld (Brock 1988:43, Nakawombe 1996:42) – ook in Afrika (Njoroge 1996:11).² In so 'n samelewing het mense gewoon geraak aan die feit dat vroue afhanklik moet wees.³ Ook vroue het die geldigheid van denkraamwerk aanvaar en pas hul lewens daarvolgens aan (Carlson-Brown & Parker 1989:1). Die arbeidsmark het reeds vordering gemaak om diskriminasie teen vroue uit te skakel, maar tog het die onderdrukking van vroue nog nie opgehou nie (Bloomquist 1989:64-65). Patriargie is diep gewortel in die samelewing en die menslike werklikheidsverstaan. Hierdie denkraamwerk word steeds telkens ook deur die kerk versterk⁴ en deur die patriargale gesin in stand gehou. Hoewel patriargie nie

1 Hierdie artikel is gebaseer op die skrywer se doktorsproefskrif (Bekker 2010). Prof HJ Hendriks was die promotor.

2 Juma (2007) berig byvoorbeeld dat 'n onlangse opname in Kenia, die volgende bevind het: 50% van die manlike deelnemers verkies vroue wat minder as hulle verdien en 35%, vroue wat dieselfde verdien as hulle. 50% Verkies vroue wat deelyds werk en 39%, vroue wat voltyds werk. Gladwin (1991:8) berig dat mans weier om aan die verbouing van voedsel vir die huishouding deel te neem, omdat dit as "vrouewerk" beskou word.

3 Dit laat vroue dikwels magteloos om hulle omstandighede te verander. Meer as twee derdes van die wêreld se onbetaalde werk word deur vroue gedoen. Vroue in Afrika is verantwoordelik vir arbeid ten opsigte van lewensonderhoud en die versorging van alle familieledes. Sy is verantwoordelik vir voedselvoorbereiding, versameling van hout en water, versorging van kinders ensovoorts wat tyd-armoede tot gevolg het en onder andere die bestryding van armoede strem. Tydens die siekte of dood van vroue neem ander vroue hierdie taak oor. Dit word meestal gedoen sonder om oor die rede hiervoor na te dink. Ook geweld en onderdrukking word as "onafwendbaar" verdra. Geweld en onderdrukking hou gevolge op psigologiese vlak vir vroue in, wat bydra tot vroue se magteloosheid om medeverantwoordelikheid vir die samelewing te aanvaar.

4 'n Voorbeeld van die handhawing van die patriargale denkraamwerk word gevind in die reeks: "Families

die enigste euwel is wat vir onreg en pyn verantwoordelik is nie, is dit in die Christelike godsdiens 'n wesentlike faktor (Brock 1988:43, Nakawombe 1996:42). Brock (1988:3) plaas die patriargale⁵ gesin in die sentrum van haar nadenke oor die Christelike geloof, omdat sy oortuig is dat die transformasie van die patriargale gesin die sleutel is tot die transformasie van die samelewing. Sy is oortuig dat konsepte rakende ras, klas en gender binne die huishouding vorm aanneem. Hierby kan die verstaan van die mens as deel van die skepping gevoeg word. Die huishouding staan in direkte verband met die mens se vorming van verhoudings. Die rede hiervoor verduidelik Baron en Bryne (2000:305) as volg: “Most parent-child interactions have later implications, because the family is the setting in which each of us learns how to deal with other people. Even the way in which parents play with their children provides youngsters with information about how to interact with others, thus enabling them to engage in cooperative play later on with their peers.” Hierdie visie vra 'n fundamentele herdink van elke soort verhouding binne die hedendaagse gesin, wat sentraal staan binne meeste huishoudings (*oikoi*).

Deur die interpretasie van Jakobus kan die vorming van 'n nuwe identiteit en werklikheidsverstaan voortkom wat eerder fokus op die handeling van die gestuurde as die individu se plek in die huishouding (*oikos*). Hierdie identiteit sal meewerk daartoe dat daar nie van mense verwag word om aan sekere rolverwagtings op grond van geslag te voldoen nie (wat dikwels lei tot onderdrukking en daartoe bydra dat mense nie individualiseer nie). Vriendskap as basis vir alle verhoudings van gestuurdes bring gelykwaardigheid en gasvryheid na vore as sentrale waardes binne die geloofsgemeenskap. Op hierdie wyse kan alle mense versorg word, omdat gasvryheid sal bydra daartoe dat niemand sonder huishouding sal wees nie. As deel van die transformasie van die gemeenskap stel die interpretasie van Jakobus sekere helende en bevrydende prosesse voor, soos die heling van dit wat mense se lewenskwaliteit inperk. Dit sou gepaard gaan met die emosionele heling van mense deur “emosionele uitlaatkleppe” (Jakobus 3:13-15). Die heling van mense kan bydra tot die heling van die skepping.

in die kragveld van die Gees” wat vir Pinkster 2008 vir die NG Kerk opgestel is deur Johan Pienaar, in samewerking met Marina Strydom, Kobus Myburgh, Colin Goeman, Ernst Endres en Willem Pretorius. Hierin word die volgende oor die huwelik gesê: “Murray Janson skryf êrens aangrypend dat vir die vrou die woord “onderdanigheid” ten diepste beteken om 'n dak oor haar lewe te hê. God sê vir die vrou dat sy haar man as 'n dak moet beskou wat Hy oor haar geplaas het om haar te beskerm. Die man moet haar dien deur vir haar 'n dak te wees! Sy moet die man dien deur hom toe te laat om vir haar 'n dak te wees. Met die besluite wat haar man neem, die rigting wat hy aandui en die leiding wat hy gee, moet hy sorg dat sy maksimaal kan groei. Soos die gemeente aan die Here onderdanig is en Hy hulle beskerm, so moet die vrou na die man kyk en vir hom sê: “Ek wil nie buite jou om en los van jou beweeg nie. Ek wil nie op my eie wees nie. Kom en beskerm my, asseblief. Ek waardeer jou as die dak oor my lewe!”... “Liefde is vir die man om vir sy vrou te sê: “Toe ek jou die dag voor die kansel ontvang het, was jou lewe ses en sewentig persent reg. Ek gaan jou so dien, jou so liefhê, so met jou praat, so oor jou dink en so met jou werk dat wanneer ek jou die dag vir die Here teruggee, jy vyf en tagtig persent geword het. Dit is die liefde wat die Here van 'n man verwag” (Pienaar et al 2008). 'n “Daniël-konferensie” word ook byvoorbeeld in die eerste kwartaal van 2010 in die Weskaap gehou en word as volg beskryf: “As ons kyk na hoe God wil hê dat ons manne teenoor ons gesinne en families moet optree dan kan 'n mens duidelik die rolle sien van 'n Koning – wat in liefde regeer, 'n Priester - wat intree by God vir sy gesin en die leiding neem geestelik en 'n Profeet - wat as leier voor stap in die rigting wat God se wil is (NG kerk Proteahoogte 2010).

5 Ackermann, Draper en Mashini (1991:130) omskryf patriargie as volg: “Patriarchy is the power of the fathers; a familial, social, ideological system in which men – by force, direct pressure, or through ritual, tradition, law and language, customs, etiquette, education and division of labour – determine what part women shall or shall not play, and in which the female is everywhere subsumed under the male.” Hoewel die “beheer van die vaders” dalk nie meer so algemeen vandag is nie, is die oorheersing van vroue deur mans wel algemeen (Edley en Wetherell 1995:123, Nakawombe 1996:42).

Die metafoor “liggaam van Christus” verwys na almal wat aan God drie-enig deur die verlossingswerk van Jesus Christus behoort. Diesulkes leef daagliks as gestuurdes (Matteus 28:19-20) op aarde. Die identiteit van gestuurdes wat deur individuasie⁶ gevorm is, is die bepalende faktor agter die handelinge van gestuurdes, en bring sin vir die individu. Die gemeenskap van gelowiges,⁷ in die verskeidenheid van gestaltes wat dit aanneem asook hulle interpretasie van die Bybel, vorm die identiteit (en daardeur handelinge) van gestuurdes.

Deur die loop van generasies, is groepe en mense deur ’n sekere verstaan van tekste soos 1 Timoteus 3 en Titus 1⁸ binne die Christelike geloof in spesifieke posisies van mag gevestig. Soos in meeste instellings, is daardie posisies hiërargies, met dié wat die belangrikste is bo aan die leer en die wat minder belangrik is onder aan die leer. Rondom hierdie hiërargie het ’n emosionele klimaat gevorm wat nie die mens van vandag se behoeftes aanspreek nie (Mead 1994:97). Ook die huishouding word geraak. Die sogenaamde “huishoudelike kodes” in Efesiërs 5 en 6 behels onder meer Aristoteles se huishoudelike teorie: die heers van keiser oor onderdane, eienaar oor slaaf, man oor vrou en pa oor kinders. Sy definisie vir die huishouding was dat huishoudings die basiese boustene van die staat vorm (Dunn 1996:49). Dit het so ’n integrale deel van die kultuur van die dag gevorm, dat die Bybelskrywers met hierdie ideologie as agtergrondkennis skryf (Browning 2004:4-5).⁹ Die eerste vraag wat die leser behoort te vra is *waarom* sou die skrywer hierdie keuse maak? Die eerste-eeuse kerk se keuse om hierdie riglyne te onderskryf, het bygedra tot hul getuïenis aan hul bure binne die konteks waar hulle as gestuurdes gewoon het. Hierdeur is aan buitestaanders gekommunikeer dat die Christelike geloof nie daarop uit is om die ordelike staat te versteur nie (Dunn 1996:57). Vir die moderne gestuurde sou die interpretasie van die rede waarom die *Haustafeln* gebruik is, beteken dat gesonde huishoudings vir vandag se konteks, as deel van hul getuïenis belangrik is (:58). Die volgende vraag wat hieroor gevra behoort te word is: “Wat *doen* ’n sekere verstaan van die teks aan die hoorders, wanneer aan die voorgestelde werklikheidsverstaan gehoor gegee word?” (Schüssler Fiorenza 1992:47). Dit is nodig omdat daar kragte en strukture in die kerk en samelewing bestaan wat keer dat vroue hul regmatige plek in die skepping inneem.

3

BASISTEORETIESE BEGINSELS UIT JAKOBUS

Die basisteorie wat op grond van die interpretasie van Jakobus gevorm is (Bekker 2010) wil die vestiging van ’n ekofeministiese werklikheidsverstaan deur ’n bewusmakingsproses bevorder. Met die formulering van die basisteorie is daar gestreef na die herstel van die magteloses se

6 Individuasie verwys na ’n lewenslange groeiproses waardeur die individu tot verstaan van haar unieke identiteit kom (Lemmer 2005:68).

7 Waar die lede van die liggaam saam is, vind gemeenskap van gelowiges plaas.

8 Van ouderlinge en diakens word volgens 1 Timoteus 3:1-13 verwag om hulle huisgesin te kan beheer, ten einde die sorg van die gemeente te kan waarneem. In Titus 1:7 word ouderlinge “bestuurders van die huishouding van God” genoem. Die aanbevelings verwag dat so iemand “onberispelik” sal wees en “getrou aan hulle vrou.” Dit wil voorkom of patriargale waardes mettertyd al meer na vore gekom het by die inrigting van die kerk. Die Nederlandse Geloofsbelijdenis (Artikel 30) verduidelik byvoorbeeld dat die kerk “geleer en regeer” moet word deur “betroubare persone” sodat alles “behoorlik en ordelik geskied” volgens die voorskrif in 1 Timoteus 3.

9 Volgens Grobbelaar (2008:361) kom Strecker tot die gevolgtrekking dat selfs “[t]he formal characteristics of the household codes...were already present in the pre-Christian Greek and Hellenistic Jewish traditions.” Hiervolgens kan die huishoudelike kodes nie as “suiwer Christelike” konsep verstaan word nie, hoewel dit in die eerste eeuse kerk opgeneem is.

posisie en rol. Dit wil hulle identiteit gelykwaardig met dié van alle mense formuleer en tot sy reg laat kom in helende en bevrydende ruimtes – in huishouding- en kerk-wees. In Jakobus is die huishouding van God deur die lens van vriendskap geïnterpreteer. Uit hierdie basisteorie moet 'n praktykteorie voortkom wat in 'n bedieningspraktyk gestalte kan vind in nuwe en eksperimentele gemeentes. Met die patriargale gesin wat volgens die navorsing van Castells (2004)¹⁰ in krisis verkeer (saam met globalisasie¹¹ en inligtingsmatigheid¹²), is die vestiging van 'n postpatriargale identiteit 'n heel nuwe paradigma wat vorm moet aanneem. Binne so 'n liminale fase is dit nie haalbaar of wenslik om 'n voorskriftelike praktykteorie uit te spel nie. Sou mens dit doen is dit 'n ontkenning van die waarde en gawes van 'n geloofsgemeenskap wat saam moet onderskei hoe God hulle wil gebruik as 'n helende en bevrydende ruimte. 'n Voorskriftelike praktykteorie sou die verstekopsie van 'n patriargale benadering wees, tipies van die institusionele model (Hendriks 2004:46). Daar behoort saam met die feit dat die voorstelle 'n heel nuwe paradigma verteenwoordig, aanvaar te word dat die “sosiale skuiwe” wat gemaak moet word om by die voorgestelde praktyk uit te kom 'n baie meer komplekse proses impliseer as wat beskryf word. Die bewusmakingsproses¹³ waarna feminisme streef om sosiale verandering te bewerkstellig (Schüssler Fiorenza 2001:94) kan nie in praktiese stappe uiteengesit word nie. Al die gestuurdes in 'n gegewe konteks behoort saam te besin oor watter implikasies Bybelse waardes in hul konteks sal hê. Voorstelle word dus alleen gemaak as poging tot illustrasie.

4 DIE HUISHOUDING AS PRAKTYKTEORETIESE ORIËNTASIEPUNT

'n Gesin se kultuur is tyd en konteksgebonde. Ons is nie geroepe of verplig tot 'n bepaalde vorm van gesinslewe nie (Müller 2002:12). Die patriargale kerngesinstruktuur wat nog algemeen in geloofsgemeenskappe as norm hanteer word, word dikwels gerig volgens tekste wat in die eerste-eeuse konteks ontstaan het. Huishoudings (waarvan die tradisionele kerngesin maar *een vorm* is) het egter 'n onvervangbare funksie en is steeds relevant vandag.¹⁴ Hoewel nie alle huishoudings kinders het nie, maak kinders huishouding (“housekeeping”) onafwendbaar. Op die ou end het alle mense 'n huishouding nodig ter wille van versorging. Familie is 'n verhouding, maar huishouding (*oikos*) is 'n plek. Breidenthal (1997:2) definieer huishouding (*oikos*) as volg: “...two or more people sharing the daily round of life to a significant degree and over a significant period of time, whether the sharing is freely chosen or not.” Müller (2002:12) verduidelik verder dat huishoudings deur verhale gekonstitueer word en hulle gesamentlike identiteit bepaal en nie deur objektiewe maatstawwe wat van buite besluit wat 'n huishouding is of nie is nie. Met hierdie verstaan word die geloofsgemeenskap bevry om 'n wye verskeidenheid saamwoonoreenkomste te beskou as ruimtes waar gestuurdes versorg word. Wat alle huishoudings in gemeen het, is 'n hoë mate van bekendheid – om te ken en geken te word. Dit sal tot gevolg hê dat die kerk nie meer die gemeenskap van gelowiges in terme van huisgesinne sal hanteer nie, maar eerder die

10 Die boek “The Power of Identity: The information age: Economy, Society and Culture,” is die tweede volume in 'n reeks van drie werke, deur Manuel Castells, 'n professor in Sosiologie.

11 Die vinnige groei van netwerke tussen rekenaars, nasies en gemeenskappe deur middel van die internet, media, vervoer en telekommunikasie, wat die planeet in een “groot dorp” verander het.

12 Die beskikbaarheid en reproduksie van inligting.

13 Schüssler Fiorenza 2001:94 verwys na hierdie proses as “Feminist Biblical Interpretation as a process of conscientization.” Hierdie proses behels die benoeming van vorme van onderdrukking en voorstelle tot 'n nuwe verstaan van die geopenbaarde waarheid uit die Bybel.

14 Wat wel uit eerste eeuse tekste duidelik is, is dat die getuienis van gesonde huishoudings aan die samelewing, ook vir die moderne gestuurde belangrik is. Hoe die huishouding saamgestel is en die wyse waarop die versorging van die huishouding geskied en verdeel word, sal anders daar uitsien as in die Bybelse konteks of patriargale samelewing.

verantwoordelikheid sal neem dat niemand sonder huishouding is nie. Uit Jakobus word die kerk (*ekklesia*) opgeroep om vir kwesbares op praktiese wyse verantwoordelikheid te neem: Plaaswerkers (Jakobus 5:1-12), weduwees en wese (Jakobus 1:27)¹⁵ en armes (Jakobus 2:5-15). Ook aan hulle moet die ruimte geskep word om 'n huishouding vir versorging te hê.¹⁶ Binne die kerk kan 'n seremonie ontwikkel word waar hersaamgestelde huishoudings geleentheid aan gestuurdes gee om hulle toewyding aan mekaar en die kinders in die huishouding voor die geloofsgemeenskap te bely.

5 TRANSFORMASIE PARAMETERS

Die huishouding word as die sleutel tot die transformasie van die samelewing hanteer.¹⁷ Die rede hiervoor is dat dit ook die ruimte is waar identiteit gevorm word. Identiteit is belangrik omdat dit die grootste faktor is wat mense se aksies bepaal en waardeur die mens sin maak uit die werklikheid. Ten einde 'n ekofeministiese werklikheidsverstaan te vestig sal die vorming van post-patriargale huishoudings nodig wees. Wat sou hierdie inhoud in 'n post-patriargale samelewing behels? Elk van die volgende paragrawe hanteer 'n beginsel uit Jakobus wat as 'n riglyn kan geld vir 'n bedieningspraktyk waar 'n huishouding 'n helende en bevrydende ruimte vir gemarginaliseerdes kan wees.

Volgens die interpretasie van Jakobus – deur die lens van die voorbeeld van Jesus - behoort die hiërargiese strukture van die tradisionele huishouding en huwelik vervang te word met 'n nuwe familie (*ekklesia*), wat op vriendskap gebaseer is. Soos Jesus gebruik Jakobus die terme “broers en susters” (2:15) en “vriende van God,” (2:23) eerder as man, vrou (eggenoot), kind of hoof. Deur te fokus op geloof wat in daede oorgaan, maak Jakobus nadenke oor byvoorbeeld vroue in terme van ordentlikheid en onderdanigheid irrelevant (Cargal 2004:112). Die klem is op die handelende gestuurde, nie die gestuurde se geslag of “rol” in die huishouding nie. Die “plek” van die huishouding sal nog bestaan, maar sal as *deel* van die *ekklesia* verstaan word. Jesus se bediening beskou byvoorbeeld nie bloedfamilie as sentrale struktuur nie, maar laat ook niemand sonder huishouding (*oikos*) nie. Hy gee 'n praktiese voorbeeld hiervan in Johannes 19:26-27 wanneer Hy vir Johannes aan Sy moeder as seun gee. Die daaglikse bekendheid en praktiese versorging van elkeen word nie opgehef nie, maar vind 'n nuwe betekenis binne die ruimte van die huishouding van God. Jakobus rig byvoorbeeld sy brief aan 'n gemeenskap en nie 'n familie, soos die wysheidskrywers van sy tyd nie. Huishoudings behoort die roeping van die gelowige te dien. Huishoudings wat so ingerig word dat dit gestuurdes se potensiaal inperk, behoort deur die *ekklesia* aangespreek te word. Dit behoort byvoorbeeld nie as uitsonderlik beskou te word indien 'n getroude vrou saam met kerkleiers gaan kamp nie. Sou sy byvoorbeeld kinders hê, maar geen ander volwassene in haar huishouding nie, behoort die gemeente voorsiening te maak vir die versorging van kinders.

Die mense in die eerste-eeuse samelewing het die wêreld beskou as opgemaak uit vriende en buitestaanders. Gasvryheid in hierdie konteks het nie gehandel oor die onthaal van vriende,

15 Weduwees en wese is tradisioneel beskou as magtelose en verwaarloosde mense (Deuteronomium 14:29; 24:17-22 en Jeremia 5:28). Weduwees en wese was arm en onderdruk omdat hulle nie hulself kon verdedig nie, en ook niemand gehad het om hulle te verdedig nie – hulle is deur mense in magposisies onderdruk. Die moeder van wese sou arm en sonder heenkome wees, net omdat sy 'n vrou is (Tamez 1994:385).

16 Prakties sal dit beteken dat die woord “gesin” 'n wyer toepassingsveld in gemeentes sal verkry. Wat tradisioneel as “gesinskampe” en “gesindienste” bekend gestaan en georganiseer is, sal so ingerig moet word dat mense uit diverse huishoudelike groeperings daar tuis kan kom en bedien kan word.

17 Naas die skool, kerk en televisie, is die huishouding die belangrikste ruimte waarbinne kinders gesosialiseer word en as bepalende faktor in die vorming van 'n werklikheidsverstaan funksioneer.

familie of kollegas nie, maar die innooi van die buitestaander en vreemdeling tot die posisie van vriend (Isherwood & Stuart 1998:58). Indien die verhouding tussen gelowiges verstaan word as vriendskap, sal gasvryheid deel wees van die praxis wat hulle leef. Om 'n maaltyd te deel is die mees algemene aktiwiteit wat vriende saam doen. Die plesier van lekker kos, humor en goeie geselskap met mense van wie jy hou, is helend en vervullend. In so 'n situasie beleef liggaam en gees op geïntegreerde wyse aanvaarding, vervulling en plesier – 'n tuiskoms. Kos is 'n meer inklusiewe plesier as seks, omdat dit met enige ander gedeel kan word (McFague 1987:167). In byna alle samelewings simboliseer iemand wat alleen eet, eensaamheid of vreemdelingskap. Gemeenskaplike maaltye nooi die vreemdeling en uitgeworpene in en ryk 'n hand van vriendskap uit. Die gedeelte maaltyd is 'n simbool van die gemeenskap waarna die kerk verlang: 'n vreugdevolle en inklusiewe saamwees van mense wat van mekaar hou en omsien na mekaar se basiese behoeftes (McFague 1987:172). Huishoudings behoort so ingerig te word dat dit vir die voordeel van die gemeenskap bestaan. Dit sal selfs beïnvloed hoe huise ingerig word. Word die huis van gestuurdes so ingerig dat 'n huishouding onverwagte besoekers (ook in terme van verblyf) kan ontvang? Op hierdie wyse sal daar ook 'n huishouding wees vir “die geringste van die wat honger, dors en sonder klere is, vreemdelinge sonder heenkome, siekes en gevangenis.” Die gasvryheid aan die kwesbare sal vra dat huishoudings as niegewelddadige en bevrydende ruimtes funksioneer.

Vir die huishouding (*oikos*) om as bevrydende en helende ruimte te funksioneer, behoort die grense tussen publiek en privaat (as kenmerk van patriargie) te vervaag. Die vriendskapsbeeld in Jakobus verteenwoordig 'n verhouding wat binne sy konteks oor die grense van publiek en privaat gestrek het.¹⁸ Deur die vriendskapsbeeld op huishoudings van toepassing te maak, sal huishoudings bystaan in die proses om toegekende “plekke” binne 'n huishouding af te staan en in nie-hiërargiese verhoudings teenoor mekaar te staan. Ook ouers behoort hulle kinders in terme van nie-hiërargiese verhoudings te verstaan. Dit hef nie die ouers se verantwoordelikheid tot dissipline en opvoeding op nie, maar laat geen ruimte vir 'n ingesteldheid dat die ouer die kind kan beheer of “besit” nie. Binne die vriendskapsmodel sal ouers nie meer kinders as “verlengstukke van hulself” sien nie, maar as vriende wat gasvry ontvang word.¹⁹ Ouers behoort hiervoor toegerus te word, omdat ouers selde 'n voorbeeld gehad het om hierdie nuwe ingesteldheid te kan uitvoer.

Die afhanklikheid van kinders en kwesbare mag daarom nie in die huishouding geëksploteer word nie.²⁰ Die huishouding (*oikos*) is 'n versorgende ruimte wat elkeen toelaat om hul volle potensiaal uit te leef deur individualisasie en daarom medeverantwoordelikheid te kan neem vir God se herskepping. Volgens Brock (1988:32) is die reaksie op mag as “om te beheer” of “om beheer te word,” beide uitvloeiels van mishandeling in die vroeë kinderjare en is 'n kenmerk van gebrekkige selfaanvaarding. So word magsmisbruik van generasie tot generasie oorgedra. Die werk van Rosenberg (2003) oor niegewelddadige kommunikasie, sal vir die toerusting van ouers van waarde kan wees. Hieroor behoort voornemende ouers reeds toegerus te word. Verwysings hierna kan ook in die doopbelofte bygewerk word.

18 Die klem op die familie sou vroue in hierdie konteks net weer teruggeskuif het na die privaatste.

19 Prakties sou dit beteken dat, omdat kinders die gasvryheid van ouers ontvang het, dit mettertyd vir kinders moontlik sal wees om aan ander gasvryheid te betoon – ook wanneer ouers van hulle afhanklik word.

20 Die funksionering van mag in die huishouding van God word juis deur Jesus met 'n kind geïllustreer. Die belangrikste in die koninkryk is mense wat in totale afhanklikheid van God, sonder om staat te maak op verdienste, Sy genade ontvang deur geloof. Jesus verwys verder na elkeen wat “een van hierdie kleintjies wat in My glo, van My afvallig maak ...” (Matteus 18:6-9). “Hierdie kleintjies” is ook gestuurdes wat soos kinders geword het. Om Jesus te volg vra dus om enige toegekende mag af te staan en liever daarop te let dat alle mense – selfs die kwesbare en onbelangrike van die sameleving – welkom en veilig is in die huishouding van God.

Schoeman (2004:1-31) skryf ook oor die oordrag van die simptome van geweld wat van generasie tot generasie oorgedra word.²¹ 'n Simptoom wat veral vroue onnodig stereotipeer en ontmagtig is fusie as keersy van individualisasie. Fusie het emosionele onvolwassenheid tot gevolg deurdat objektiewe denke deur emosionaliteit oorheers word. Verder gee dit aanleiding tot die gebrek aan grense of die gebrek aan individualiteit tussen twee of meer mense (:6). Vroue verloor byvoorbeeld hul eie identiteit en verstaan hulself nie as individue los van hul lewensmaats of kinders nie.²² Hierdie simptome strem die individu se individualisasie en weerhou hierdie vroue van gelykwaardige deelname binne die arbeidsmark en geloofsgemeenskap.

Die rolmodelle wat deur Jakobus aangehaal word, verteenwoordig huishoudings wat nie stereotipes versterk nie. Beide Job en Abraham het byvoorbeeld sterk vroue gehad wat duidelik gekommunikeer het (Genesis 16:2-6; 18:10-12; 21:6-12 en Job 2:9). Abraham het dikwels vir Sara as gelyke gespreksgenoot en onafhanklike besluitnemer hanteer (Genesis 16:2, 16:6; 21:8-10). Ook Ragab openbaar tipies "manlike" optrede in haar konteks. Sy besit 'n besigheid en staan aan die hoof van haar huishouding, wat haar ouers insluit. Sy neem besluite namens haar familie, gee strategiese raad en sluit ooreenkomste. Elia word deel van verskillende "huishoudings" ter wille van sy fisiese versorging. Hy openbaar ook sterk emosies wat in 'n patriargale samelewing by mans ontmoedig word. Hierin verteenwoordig hulle "huishoudings sonder essensie": 'n huishouding wat deur verhale gekonstitueer word en hulle gesamentlike identiteit bepaal en nie beïnvloed word deur objektiewe maatstawwe en rolverwagtinge wat van buite besluit wat 'n huishouding is of nie is nie.

Saam met die verandering in die huishouding, hang die aanpassing van huweliksverhouding.²³ Die eienskappe van getrouheid, toewyding en versorging, word vandag binne vriendskapsverhoudings as belangrik beskou. In 'n post-patriargale samelewing sal die onderskeid tussen vriend en geliefde vervaag. Die klem op vriendskap – eerder as geslagtelikheid – sal meewerk tot die gelykheid en beskerming vir albei partye, omdat vriendskap alle suggesties van eienaarskap uitskakel en klem lê op gelykwaardigheid. Die huwelik word getransformeer van 'n institusie met rigiede reëls wat die liggame beheer van diegene in die huwelik, na 'n saamleef van gelykwaardige lewensmaats (partners) wat nie die seggenskap oor hul liggame opgee nie. Dit is belangrik omdat die huwelik byvoorbeeld een van die gevaarlikste institusies vir vroue in Afrika is, waar die waarde van die huwelik dikwels hoër geag word as persoonlike welstand (Phiri en Nadar 2009:8).

Hierdie alternatiewe identiteit sal nie druk op lewensmaats plaas om verantwoordelik te wees vir die ander se behoeftebevrediging nie. Van 'n huweliksmaat word verwag om vriendin / vriend, vertroueling, geesgenoot én minnares / minnaar te wees. Die moderne huwelik beloof dat dit alles moontlik is met een mens. Perel (2007:194) stel voor dat daar aanvaar behoort te

21 Die gebrek aan selfdifferensiasie (die mate waartoe die persoon in staat is om objektiewe en verantwoordelike besluite te kan neem op grond van haar kognitiewe reaksie ten opsigte van emosionele aangeleenthede in haar omgewing en haarself as unieke individu beskou), verstoring van emosionele prosesse in die kerngesin (emosionele afstand en huweliks konflik, disfunksionering van die eglid of oordrag van die probleem na 'n kind), multigenerasie-oordrag (emosionele prosesse binne die kerngesin wat van een generasie na die volgende oorgedra word) en emosionele afsnyding (outonomie word verkry deur afstand te skep tussen een party en die kerngesin).

22 Vroue in Afrika se identiteit en status word dikwels nog bepaal deur hul verhouding met ander – as vrou of moeder – en nie deur besondere kwaliteite of persoonlike suksesse nie (Swart 1996:59).

23 Vandag word byvoorbeeld intimiteit, gedeelde waardes, gedeelde finansies en seksuele plesier as sentrale waardes van 'n huwelik beskou. Vrugbaarheid, bewaring van rykdom en familiebande is vervang deur romanse, intimiteit en emosionele- en seksuele versoenbaarheid. Hierdie waardes maak nie deel uit van die Nuwe Testamentiese beskouing van die huwelik nie en getrouheid in die huwelik sal hiermee meer insluit as slegs seksuele getrouheid.

word dat 'n individu behoeftes het wat nie noodwendig deur die huweliksmaat bevredig kan word nie. Binne 'n verhouding van vryheid kan grense van behoeftebevrediging onderhandel word ten opsigte van outonomie, geesgenote en vriendskap. Dit sal ook impliseer dat lewensmaats nie verplig sal voel om net vriende van dieselfde geslag te hê nie, maar vriende van beide geslagte en alle ouderdomme. Om dit moontlik te maak vir gestuurdes om 'n diverse groep mense te leer ken, sal die byeenkomste (formeel en informeel) op sensitiewe wyse gereël word. (Dit geld nie vir byvoorbeeld sekere terapeutiese byeenkomste waar homogene groepe 'n beter keuse sou wees nie.) In die kerk en huishoudings kan daarom met die reël van byeenkomste gelet word daarop dat die inrigting van aktiwiteite, uitleg van vertrekke en verdeling van werk nie geslagte verdeel en stereotipeer nie. Elke individu behoort met gemak kontak te kan maak met enige ander, terwyl almal vir die verloop van al die aspekte van die byeenkoms verantwoordelikheid kan neem. Die samewerking of saamwees van mense van enige geslag, seksuele voorkeur of huwelikstatus behoort genormaliseer te word en nie as onvanpas of verdag hanteer te word indien die betrokkenes getrou is aan hul huweliksmaat nie.

Om dit vir beide partye in die huwelik prakties moontlik te maak om tot beroep en huishouding te kan bydra, sal vereenvoudiging van lewenstyl vereis, wat die werkhoutiesie lewenstyl van talle gestuurdes sal inkort. Waardes soos 'n gesonde lewenstyl, genoeë rus en gesonde menseverhoudinge sal voorrang geniet. In 'n samelewing waar 'n skaarste-mentaliteit²⁴ heers sal die denkproses wees: Hoe meer jy het, hoe meer waarde het jy. Jakobus staan 'n teenoorgestelde denkraamwerk voor en noem Abraham 'n vriend van God (Jakobus 2:23), die gewer van elke goeie gawe en volmaakte geskenk (Jakobus 1:17).

Vir Jakobus begin boosheid by menslike begeerte na dinge, weens 'n gevoel van onvoldooidheid (Jakobus 1:4). Gestuurdes behoort bewustelik weer betrokke te raak by aktiwiteite wat 'n stadiger lewenspas aanmoedig. Die beoefening van 'n ekologies-vriendelike lewenstyl sal outomaties hierdie doel bereik: Deur niks aan te koop wat nie noodsaaklik is nie, liever te herstel as te vervang, eie groente te kweek, self produkte te vervaardig ensovoorts. Ook die regverdige verdeling van take onderling sal veral vroue bevry om 'n positiewe bydrae tot die gemeenskap te kan maak.²⁵

Teenoor vriendskap met die wêreld stel Jakobus vriendskap met God voor. Wanneer mense na heelheid en voltooidheid soek, moet hulle vir God om wysheid vra (Jakobus 1:5). Die wysheid wat van God kom is sonder bybedoelings, vredeliewend, inskiklik, bedagsaam, vol medelye en goeie vrugte, onpartydig en opreg (Jakobus 3:17). God se goeie gawes is onbeperk (Jakobus 1:17). Daar is geen rede vir kompetisie nie. Ook in hierdie opsig kan die kerk deur helende prosesse te fasiliteer, mense bevry van 'n gevoel van onvoldooidheid. Deur die aanleer van vaardighede en ontwikkeling van selfkennis, kan gestuurdes begelei word tot heelheid. Introspektiewe kuns- en skryfklasse, musiek-, drama- en dansonderrig en handwerk met die doel om selfkennis en vaardigheid te fasiliteer, sal mense help in hierdie strewes.

McFague (1993) is oortuig dat die agteruitgang van die natuur in direkte verband met die mens se minagting van menslike liggaamlikheid staan en noem die heelal "God se liggaam." Volgens haar behoort daar gestreef te word na 'n skeppingsgesentreerde teologie eerder as 'n

24 Malina noem hierdie 'n samelewing van "limited-good". Die ingesteldheid sou byvoorbeeld wees dat as jy ryk is, rykdom noodwendig ten koste van 'n ander bekom was (Malina 1993:43).

25 Blackden en Wodon (2006:1-12) skryf oor die tyd-armoede waaronder vroue in Afrika ly, weens die onregverdige verdeling van huishoudelike take tussen mans en vroue. Volgens Lim (1997:221) benadeel patriargale denke en onregverdige verdeling van huishoudelike take vroue, omdat vroue hulle genderrol aanvaar en daarom dikwels nie die motivering het om bemarkbare vaardighede te bekom nie. Hierdie gegewe word bevestig deur Blackden & Wodon (2006) en wys op die feit dat wanneer die armoede-vraagstuk aangespreek word, die onregverdige verdeling van werkslading (tyd-armoede) eers aangespreek behoort te word.

mensesentreerde teologie. In die verhaal van Job kom die mens nie na vore as die middelpunt van die skepping nie, maar bestaan as klein interafhanklike onderdeel daarvan. Job plaas die huishouding waarvan hy deel is, as onderdeel van die skepping. Die huishouding van God sluit die hele kosmos in.

Dit sal vra dat die mens haar selfsugtige soeke na behoeftebevrediging moet prysgee ter wille van ander, sodat alles en almal ewe veel geleentheid kan kry om hul volle potensiaal te kan bereik (Cumplings 1991:103). Die nagmaal funksioneer byvoorbeeld hierin as kragtige simbool, omdat aan elkeen dieselfde uitgedeel word. Dit sal vereis dat mense net sal leef met dit wat hulle nodig het, sodat daar genoeg sal wees en alle lewende wesens kan ontvang wat hulle nodig het. Heel mense sal 'n lewe van eenvoud kan leef, wanneer hulle weet wie hulle as beelddraers van God is. Praktiese onderrig vir die uitleef van eenvoud, behoort deur die kerk aangebied te word. Die organisasie *The Natural Step* doen reeds waardevolle werk in hierdie verband.

Ook die duidelike verband tussen die agteruitgang van die natuur (onder meer deur die misbruik van menslike mag en die impak van armoede) en gebrek aan kundigheid behoort deur gelowiges aangespreek te word. Ter wille van die voortbestaan van die mens en die bemagtigende invloed daarvan op vroue behoort die mens weer bewustelik binne die ritme van *glacial time* te leef. Dit beteken dat die mens die verhouding tussen mens en natuur en die evolusie tussen die twee partye sal respekteer.

Die kerk kan gestuurdes bystaan in hul strewe om hul ekologiese voetspoor te verminder deur toerusting en beskikbaarstelling van herwinningsprojekte. Interkerklike projekte kan byvoorbeeld geloods word om alle eiendom wat onder gestuurdes se bestuur staan, ekovriendelik te maak. Ook kerkeiendom kan aangepas word vir meerdoelige gebruik. Op hierdie wyse kan gestreef word na ekovriendelike gemeenskappe, terwyl eko-dorpe ook ontwikkel kan word. 'n Voorbeeld hiervan word gevind in die Findhorn Foundation, wat bekend staan as "geestelike gemeenskap, toerusting- en eko-dorp" (<http://www.findhorn.org/index.php?tz=-120>). In hierdie dorp word alle geboue gebou op ekovriendelike beginsels, die gemeenskap verbou hul eie groente en vrugte, suiwer hul eie water en maak slegs van son- en windkrag gebruik. Volgehoue toerustingseleenthede word deur inwoners aangebied en besoekers word vir kort en langer periodes gehuisves. Hierdie strewe sal ook armoede-verligting dien, deurdat mense bemagtig kan word om hul omgewing beter te benut en hulle eie voedsel te verbou. Binne so 'n gemeenskap kan gestuurdes ook by prosesse betrokke raak wat emosionele heling bevorder.

Die prosesse wat heling van gestuurdes ten doel het, word ook deur Jakobus voorgestel. Heling staan sentraal in die herskepping van die gebroke skepping, wat heling na liggaam en siel insluit (McFague 1987:147). Wanneer Jakobus in 5:14-18 na siekte verwys, behels dit alle toestande wat menslike lewenskwaliteit inperk, soos emosionele moegheid, gemarginaliseerdheid en gestremdheid. Wanneer die gelowige depressief is oor haar lyding, moet sy bid (Jakobus 5:13). Dié wat opgeruimd is, moet lofliedere sing (Jakobus 5:13). Hierin vind die gelowige "emosionele uitlaatkleppe." Hierdie "uitlaatkleppe" kan ook in 'n moderne idioom aangebied word byvoorbeeld deur meditasie, joernaalkuns en dans.

Die opdrag om sonde teenoor mekaar te bely (Jakobus 5:16) gaan gepaard met emosionele en geestelike heling, reeds nou (Sear 1983:134). Job en Elia het gekla oor hul lot. Job wil met tye opgee op die lewe (byvoorbeeld Job 3:1-26) maar het bly worstel om sin te maak uit sy omstandighede. Soos Job ly die hoorders van die brief ook onskuldig onder die mag van ander. Gestuurdes het geleenthede nodig om dieselfde soort proses te kan deurgaen. Dit sal veral vir mense wat gebuk gaan onder geweld, wat ly aan depressie, angstigheid, psigosomatiese siektes, eetversteurings, seksuele disfunksie en ander minder opvallende psigologiese probleme wat ontstaan as gevolg van geweld, waardevol wees. Die *ekklesia* kan 'n belangrike rol as helende ruimte speel in die lewens van sulke mense.

Wanneer Storr (1974:vii) se definisie vir psigoterapie in ag geneem word, naamlik “the art of alleviating personal difficulties through the agency of words and a personal professional relationship,” is dit duidelik dat die geloofsgemeenskap die potensiaal het om as helende ruimte te kan funksioneer. Hierdie definisie benadruk die feit dat psigoterapie nie bloot tegniek, manipulasie of ’n meganiese verbintenis is nie. Die gebruik van die woord “kuns” beklemtoon die feit dat emosionele heling nie langs die weg van rigiede tegnieke of meganiese betrokkenheid geskied nie. Wat nodig is, is kwaliteite soos empatie, intuïsie, ervaring, vaardigheid en goeie oordeel. Deur die gebruik van woorde word die persoon begelei tot ’n meer gebalanseerde en geïntegreerde lewenstyl. Dit vra ’n persoonlike verhouding van vertroue en egtheid, maar ook professionele optrede, wat deur toerusting gevestig kan word. Binne so ’n verhouding word die ander onvoorwaardelik aanvaar, en emosionele onafhanklikheid aangemoedig.

Die kerk voorsien hierdeur ’n veilige simboliese baarmoeder²⁶ waar die gebroke psige ruimte het om te herstel ten einde opnuut gebore te word. Balint (aangehaal deur Avis 1989:76) is van oortuiging dat die gebrokene terug gaan deur emosionele oordrag, na ’n posisie van passiewe liefde deur die verteenwoordiger van die terapeutiese ruimte vanwaar die individu ’n nuwe begin kan maak. Hierdie liefde behels vergewende en onvoorwaardelike aanvaarding sonder enige eise, wat deur elke mens van die “volmaakte ouer” verwag word. Hierdie konsep kan deur gestuurdes verstaan en toegepas word. Aan die einde van die proses behoort die verwonde die waarheid oor haar lewe te kan konfronteer ten einde sin te maak uit ’n gefragmenteerde gemoed en te individualiseer (Ahmed 1989:76). Jakobus moedig lydendes aan om geduldig te wees omdat God hulle sal help. Hierdie is egter nie ’n passiewe soort geduld nie, maar ’n strewe om sin te vind binne moeilike omstandighede. In ’n samelewing waar onreg voortbestaan, sal belydenis gedurig nodig wees.

Ook gebed bring heling en uitkoms in tye van lyding. Carmichael (2004:183) verstaan gebed as konteks waar die gestuurde as vriend deelneem aan God se ouerlike herskepping. Opregte gebed is ’n basiese element van ’n Christelike lewe en gemeenskap met integriteit (Jakobus 1:6-8; 4:3; 5:13-16). Praxis word versterk deur ’n lewe van gebed. Jakobus 1:6-8 en 4:3 wys op verkeerde maniere van bid. Albei wys op dubbelhartige mense wat hul eie belang soek. ’n Lewe van konsekwenheid is volgens Jakobus ware wysheid (Jakobus 1:5, 1:22 en verder). In Jakobus 5:14-16 word nie alleen ouderlinge nie, maar ook alle gestuurdes gevra om vir mekaar te bid. Kragtige gebed is nie alleen moontlik vir groot leiers soos Elia nie, maar vir almal (Jakobus 5:17-18). Deur te wys op die lewe van Elia, herinner die skrywer die hoorders hoe belangrik dit is om binne die wil van God te bid. Beide Elia se profesie en gebed was gegrond op die wil van God, wat sentraal staan (Warrington 2004:366).

Gemeentes kan meer ruimte skep vir voorbidding. Gemeentes maak reeds gebruik van gebedslyste en omsendbriewe, maar daar kan meer gedoen word om vir die gejaagde lewe waarin die gestuurde moet bestaan, gebedstyd in te ruim. Tydens eredienste kan byvoorbeeld ’n tyd van stilte gegun word vir voorbidding vir ander. ’n Gebedsvertrek of gebedshulpmyn kan by die kerkgebou of ’n gestuurde se huis beskikbaar gemaak word vir voorbidding. ’n Gebedsblog, Twitter- of Facebook-blad kan ook lei tot groter interaktiewe betrokkenheid by voorbidders.

26 Die woedende persoon benodig ’n veilige ruimte/baarmoeder waarbinne hy/sy die skade wat hom/haar aangedoen is of deur hom of haar aangebring is, te kan deel. Deur ondersteuning en herstellende samewerking kan hierdie woede konstruktief gekanaliseer word om iets beter te bereik, volgens Anthonissen (Openbare lesing, tydens ’n “Being-shop” oor konstruktiewe woede op 14 September 2004 te Stellenberg N.G. Gemeente, Bellville). In so ’n baarmoeder kan die verwonde tuiskom en tyd gegun word om te groei ten einde weer selfstandig die werklikheid van die lewe te kan aandurf. Binne hierdie baarmoeder word die individu die ruimte gegun om haar eie skadukant te konfronteer. Wanneer die individu deur haar skadukant in primitiewe aggressie teenoor die ander reageer, bied die baarmoeder ’n aanvaardende en vergewende ruimte van die “perfekte ouer” (Avis 1998:76).

Hierdie nadenke is 'n poging om 'n bydrae te lewer tot die vestiging van 'n ekofeministiese werklikheidsverstaan²⁷ as deel van 'n projekidentiteit binne die kerk, deur 'n bewusmakingsproses in antwoord op die volgende vraag: Tot watter mate funksioneer die kerk as helende en bevrydende ruimte in 'n tydperk van liminaliteit? Hierdie proses sal die benoeming van vorme van onderdrukking behels en voorstelle tot 'n nuwe verstaan van die geopenbaarde waarheid uit die Bybel. Post-patriargale ruimtes sal waardes soos niekompetering, niegewelddadigheid, samewerking en die meerdimensionaliteit van die menslike ervaring²⁸ voorstaan.

In die strewe na transformasie is die identiteit en individuasie van die gestuurde van deurslaggewende belang. 'n Post-patriargale gemeenskap van gelowiges en 'n ekofeministiese interpretasie van die teks Jakobus sal bydra tot die vorming van die identiteit van gestuurdes deur individuasie. Individuasie is moontlik indien die individu binne aanvaardende ruimtes toegelaat word om hulle volle potensiaal te bereik. Dit sal lei tot bevrydende en helende handeling en skepping van veilige ruimtes binne die gemeenskap van gelowiges.

Uit 'n feministiese perspektief leef kinders van God in afwagting dat God se huishouding op aarde gevestig word waar die mens en natuur in 'n gemeenskap van vryheid en verantwoordelikheid sal leef. Die huishouding van God (*ekklesia*) is nie alleen 'n fisiese plek nie, maar ook 'n verhouding waarbinne die wil van God gedoen word. Russel (1987:20) verwys na herinneringe van 'n toekoms waarin die onderdrukte, die gemarginaliseerdes en "die kleintjies" van God se huishouding in 'n herstelde skepping sal leef te midde van oorheersende strukture.

As die interpretasie van Jakobus oor die huishouding van God as helende en bevrydende ruimte, in 'n bedieningspraktyk gestalte kan vind, sal dit vir alle gelowiges, maar veral die onderdrukte en gemarginaliseerdes in die samelewing, 'n geloofstuiste en herstelruimte bied. Hierdeur sal alle mense kan tuiskom, saam met (histories) kwesbares en gemarginaliseerdes, in God se huishouding, in liminale plekke met 'n eie identiteit omdat niemand binne onderdrukkende strukture daarvan weerhou sal word om te individualiseer en medeskeppers saam met God te wees nie.

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27 Hiervolgens word gestreef na 'n praxis waar geen onderdrukking teenwoordig is nie, maar dit neem die verantwoordelikheid om veral vroue se bydraes tot hul reg te laat kom en die mens en die natuur in harmonie te laat leef.

28 Met veral klem op die heilsaamheid van menslike liggaamlikheid en intuitiewe vermoë.

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TREFWOORDE

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Die huishouding van God volgens Jakobus: Rolmodelle en vriendskap onderweg na 'n postpatriargale identiteit.¹

ABSTRACT

The household of God according to James: Role models and friendship on the route to a post-patriarchal identity.

Throughout the ages, clerical structures were developed according to the patriarchal family structure, modelled on examples to be found in the New Testament. Upholding a patriarchal (with the accompanying hierarchy) and hetero-normative way of thinking (with accompanying marginalization) within the community of believers, has the potential to wound, oppress and alienate people from the church. This principle has the implication that establishing a post-patriarchal identity in the household, as well as in the church is potentially a key to mutual transformation and liberation. In this article the friendship-model in the book of James is interpreted through the lens of the example of Jesus. Although first-century friendships must be interpreted within the context of patronship, James presents a further perspective: that people should be appreciated as full partners within the relationships.

1. INLEIDING

Die handelinge van gestuurdes² word deur Pieterse (1993:7), in navolging van Firet (1987:260), omskryf as kommunikatiewe handelinge in diens van die Evangelie. *Wat* die handelinge van die gestuurdes aan hul medemens kommunikeer, behoort voortdurend gemeet te word aan God se bedoeling met die skepping. In hierdie artikel gaan gepoog word om deur die interpretasie van die vriendskapsmodel in Jakobus 'n basisteorie vir die gemeenskap van gelowiges te formuleer vir vandag se liminale konteks. Die liminale konteks wat veronderstel word, is omskryf deur Castells (2004)³ en behels die invloed van globalisasie⁴ en inligtingsmatigheid⁵ op die planeet saam met die verskynsel dat die patriargale gesin in krisis verkeer. Met die draai van die millennium is daar begin om die geldigheid van die patriargale gesinstruktuur te bevraagteken. Die rede vir hierdie verskynsel juis nou, skryf Castells (2004:193-5) toe aan die volgende: Die beskikbaarheid van opleidingsgeleenthede aan vroue en hul toetrede tot die arbeidsmark en die invloed daarvan op die ekonomie. Hiermee saam ook tegnologiese veranderings ten opsigte van voortplanting, wat vroue beheer gee oor wanneer en hoeveel kinders hulle het. Laastens die

1 Hierdie artikel is gebaseer op die skrywer se doktorsale proefskrif (Bekker 2010). Prof J.Punt was die medepromotor.

2 Die term “gestuurdes” word verkies bo “gelowiges” omdat dit klem lê op die handelende en kommunikerende aard van gelowiges.

3 Die boek *“The Power of Identity: The information age: Economy, Society and Culture,”* is die tweede volume in 'n reeks van drie werke, deur Manuel Castells, 'n professor in Sosiologie.

4 Die vinnige groei van netwerke tussen rekenaars, nasies en gemeenskappe deur middel van die internet, media, vervoer en telekommunikasie, wat die planeet in een “groot dorp” verander het.

5 Die beskikbaarheid en reproduksie van inligting.

bewusmakingsprosesse van vroue-strewes (“struggles”) deur vrouebewegings en die opkoms van feminisme vanaf 1960. Die krisis waarin die patriargale gesinstruktuur verkeer, versteur die ordelike oordrag van vasgestelde kultuurinhoude van een generasie na die volgende. Hierdie model wat kan dien tot die vorming van ’n postpatriargale-identiteit, is ontwikkel uit die interpretasie van vriendskap in Jakobus, met die voorbeeld van Jesus as agtergrond en Abraham, Ragab, Job en Elia as rolmodelle.

Jenkins (2002) verduidelik dat die sentrum van die Christen-wêreld oor die afgelope eeu verskuif het vanaf die “globale noorde” (onder andere Europa en Noord-Amerika) na die “globale suide” (onder andere Afrika, Asië en Suid-Amerika). Terwyl die Christendom krimp in die globale noorde, brei dit uit in die globale suide (Jenkins 2002:2). Kenmerkend van die suidelike Christendom, volgens Jenkins (:7) is dat die meerderheid van gelowiges van die armste mense in die wêreld is. Daar bestaan ’n duidelike verband tussen armoede en die agteruitgang van die omgewing, soos deur die besoedeling van riviere, mere en oseane, die vernietiging van woude en die verspreiding van siektes (Castells 2004:190). Daar leef vandag byvoorbeeld na raming 16 miljoen vlugteling in Afrika. Uit hierdie getal leef die meeste vlugteling in Suid-Afrika (UN-INSTRAW/United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women 2008). 80% van hierdie vlugteling is vroue en kinders⁶ (UNFPA/United Nations Population Fund 1999).

’n Tweede kenmerk van die kerk van die globale suide is dat die leer en waardes van hierdie kerke konserwatief is (Jenkins 2002:8). Al speel vroue ’n deurslaggewende rol in die groei van die kerk in die suide, is die teologie ten opsigte van genderrolle konserwatief – veral in Afrika (:199). Die kans dat die bevrydende verstaan van gender en seksualiteit (met verwysing na gay-gestuurdes) aanvaar sal word in die globale suide, is skraal, omdat hierdie oortuigings as rede aangevoer word waarom kerke in Europa en Noord-Amerika kwyn (:201). Ook in die samelewing as geheel word vroue steeds onderdruk, al word wetgewing wat gelykheid bevorder, op die oppervlak toegepas. Geweld teen en misbruik van die vroulike liggaam kom onder andere na vore as prominente wyses van onderdrukking (Isherwood & Stuart 1998:15). Solank as wat die mens op aarde bestaan, sal mag deurslaggewend wees in die wyse waarop die samelewing funksioneer. Veral toegekende mag in die patriargale huishouding (deur hiërgargiese toegekende “plekke”) en kerkstrukture behoort bevraagteken te word.

In die blanke en bruin bevolkingsgroepe in Suid-Afrika kwyn die assosiasie met die Christelike geloof.⁷ In Mead (1994:16) se nadenke oor die rede vir die afname in kerklidmaat getalle in Noord-Amerika (as deel van die kerk van die globale noorde), is die bepalende faktor nie opgesluit in wat die kerk doen of nie doen nie. Die rede blyk eerder die karakter van die kultuur binne gemeentes te wees. Kerklike strukture wat deur die eeue aan die hand van die patriargale gesin ontwikkel het,⁸ het ’n emosionele klimaat gevorm wat nie die mens van vandag se behoeftes

6 Volgens statistiek van “the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.”

7 Die NG-Kerk vorm volgens Hendriks (2003) meer as 90% van die Gereformeerde kerkgroepe. Oor die laaste 20 jaar het feitlik ’n half miljoen blanke lidmate oorgeskuif na Pinkster- en Nuwe Onafhanklike kerke. Dieselfde tendens kom ook binne die bruin bevolkingsgroep voor.

8 Augustinus het byvoorbeeld geglo dat die vrou alleen die beeld van God weerspieël indien sy aan die man, as haar hoof, verbind is. Hierteenoor kon die man op sy eie die beeld van God verteenwoordig. Die oortuiging was ook gehandhaaf dat net mans Christus kon verteenwoordig binne die geloofsgemeenskap en daarom is net mans toegelaat om priesters te word (Radford Ruether 1989:32). Brock (1988:43), Sawyer (1996:66), Nakawombe (1996:43-44), Kanyoro (1996:150) en Woodhead (2003:103) is oortuig dat patriargale hiërgargie ’n dominante kenmerk van die Christelike geloof is. Paulus hanteer die huishouding (oikos) as sentraal binne die eerste gemeentes (Hand 16:15, 18:8, 1 Kor 1:16, 16:15, ensomeer) (Dunn 1996:55). Vroeë Christenskrywers, soos die skrywers van die briewe aan Timoteus en Titus, gebruik die huishouding as model vir die kerkstruktuur (Martin 2006:35). Dit behels onder meer

aanspreek nie (Mead 1994:97). Die wyse waarop die gemeenskap van gelowiges in Jakobus uitgebeeld word, mag moontlik 'n bydrae lewer tot die vorming van 'n postpatriargale identiteit in die kerk en huishouding.⁹

2. DIE WAARDE VAN JAKOBUS BINNE KONTEKS

Hoewel die boek Jakobus deur die eeue nie deur almal as belangrik geag is nie,¹⁰ is die boodskap van Jakobus vir hierdie konteks relevant, omdat hy 'n dringende waarskuwing rig aan gestuurdes wat hulself aan onderdrukking skuldig maak.¹¹ Hy skryf verder aan mense wat reeds tot geloof gekom het, om hulle te herinner dat hulle daede in ooreenstemming met hul geloof moet wees. Brown (1997:730) omskryf die hoorders as gestuurdes wat na die onafwendbare institusionalisering van die geloofsgemeenskap aan hul roeping herinner moes word. Daar is geen eenstemmigheid oor die outeur¹² of plek van oorsprong vir die boek Jakobus nie. Die teks behoort egter deurgaans gelees te word met die bewussyn dat dit uit 'n patriargale agtergrond kom.¹³ Daar behoort wel daarna gestreef te word om die bevrydende en helende God-geïnspireerde boodskap daarvan aan vroue én mans te ontgin.

Die geadresseerdes van die boodskap is “die twaalf stamme wat oor die wêreld versprei is” (Jak 1:1). Hier maak Jakobus gebruik van die beeld van die twaalf stamme van Israel wat as swerwende volk tussen ander nasies moes woon. Waarskynlik het die hoorders van hierdie brief hulself in soortgelyke omstandighede bevind (Tamez 1994:383). Vroeg in die eerste eeu is die Christene van Jerusalem vervolgt en moes hulle vlug (volgens Hand 8:1). Die eerste lesers van Jakobus was daarom waarskynlik gemeentelidmate wat aan hoof van 'n huisgemeente gestaan het (Scaer 1983:35). Die ontvangers is arm en word onderdruk (Jak 5:1-11).¹⁴ Tog is daar sprake van ryk gelowiges in hul midde (Jak 1:10 en 4:13-17). Ryk landheren het werkers geëksploiteer

Aristoteles se huishoudelike teorie: die heers van keiser oor onderdane, eienaar oor slaaf, man oor vrou en pa oor kinders (Dunn 1996:49). Die sogenaamde “huishoudelike kodes” soos vervat in Efesiërs 5 en 6 is 'n voorbeeld hiervan (Grobelaar 2008:361).

- 9 Die huishouding is belangrik omdat die primêre verhoudings in die huishouding alle latere verhoudings beïnvloed (Baron en Bryne 2000:305).
- 10 Met die samevoeging van die Kanonieke boeke, was Jakobus aanvanklik op sommige lyste weggelaat (Byvoorbeeld die sinode van Nicea 325 nC) (Painter 1999:235). Eers aan die einde van die vierde eeu is Jakobus as deel van die Kanon aanvaar (Tamez 2002:2). Die nalatenskap van Martin Luther in 1522 (Martin 1988:cv) dra by tot die miskende potensiaal van die boek. Luther het die boodskap van Jakobus gekritiseer omdat die kruisiging en opstanding van Christus nie direk verkondig word nie, en noem Jakobus die “epistel van strooi.”
- 11 Sy geskrif is dié boek in die Nuwe Testament wat die duidelikste die uitsprake teen onderdrukking, soos gevind in Eksodus, weergee (Hanks 2000:201).
- 12 Die waarskynlikste outeur van die boek is Jakobus, broer van Jesus (Kotzé 1990:6), maar die dokument is moontlik later deur 'n ander outeur geredigeer (Tamez 1994:382).
- 13 Duidelike tekens bestaan dat Jakobus binne 'n patriargale samelewing geskryf is. Vroue word nie pertinent genoem nie, omdat hulle nie as selfstandige individue hanteer is nie. Daar word byvoorbeeld na die mensheid verwys as man (anér) in Jak 1:8 en 12 en 3:2 (Tamez 2002: 20-21). Jakobus spreek sy gehoor aan as “broers” (Jak 1:2; 2:1,14; 3:1,10,12; 4:11; 5:7, 9, 10, 12, 19) en geliefde broers (Jak 1:16&19; 2:5). Die gebruik van broer of suster in Jakobus 2:15 is nie bedoel as inklusiewe taal nie, maar lê eerder klem op die armoede van veral vroue. Hy gebruik die Ou Testamentiese beeld van 'n huwelik tussen God en mens en noem 'n ongehoorsame gestuurde 'n egbreekster (Jak 4:4), bloot omdat dit by hierdie metafoer inpas (Tamez 1994:384). Wolmarans (1994:39) verstaan selfs hierdie beeld as die voortsetting van patriargale denke deurdat die vrou as gevaarlik getipeer word.
- 14 Hierdie sosio-ekonomiese omstandighede pas by die konteks van eerste-eeuse Palestina, maar was ook toepaslik deur die hele Romeinse ryk. Dit is wel duidelik dat Jakobus in 'n Joods-Christelike konteks hoort (Chester 1994:14).

en vroue was die armste van die armes. Jakobus se boodskap spreek die probleme aan wat ontstaan het in sy gemeenskap as gevolg van hierdie omstandighede (Moo 2002:89).

3. BYDRAE VAN JAKOBUS: DIE KLEM OP VRIENDSKAP

Die voorbeeld van Jesus wat die interpretasie van Jakobus beïnvloed het, kan as volg omskryf word: Stuart (1997:45) verwys na die wyse waarop Jesus mense uit die hiërargiese strukture van die familie en huwelik geroep het om 'n nuwe verstaan van familie te vorm, wat op vriendskap gebaseer is. Van die begin af identifiseer Jesus nie met sy bloedfamilie op 'n wyse kenmerkend aan die eerste eeuse konteks nie. Wanneer Sy ouers na afloop van hul besoek aan Jerusalem Hom (na drie dae) in die tempel vind, antwoord Hy (Luk 2:41-49): "Waarom het u my gesoek? Het u nie geweet dat ek in die huis van my Vader moet wees nie?" Jesus verlaat sy huishouding en moedig mans en vroue (Luk 8:1-3) aan om ook hul huishoudings te verlaat en daarmee saam hul identiteit (Punt 2005:13). Wanneer Sy moeder en broers en susters Hom laat roep sê Hy (Mark 3:31-35): "Elkeen wat die wil van God doen, is my broer en my suster en my moeder." Dit handel hier oor diegene wat Sy roeping wil strem, en diegene wat dit bevorder. Jesus antwoord 'n dissipel dat die dooies hul eie dooies moet begrawe (Matt 8:22). Hierdeur verwerp hy nie die biologiese familie nie, maar enige verhouding of verantwoordelikheid wat tussen die individu en die mens se verantwoordelikheid teenoor die hele mensheid staan. Die huishouding (*oikos*) staan ondergeskik aan die huishouding van God (*ekklesia*) (Breidenthal 1997:6). Die huishouding word eerder 'n versorgende ruimte wat elkeen toelaat om hul volle potensiaal uit te leef en medeverantwoordelikheid te kan neem vir God se herskepping.

Tog hou Hy nie op om in huishoudelike terme te praat nie (Moxnes 2003:6). Die hoof van die "koninkryk" in Matteus, is nie 'n koning nie, maar 'n Vader (Matt 13:43). Die groep wat rondom Jesus versamel, ontvang 'n identiteit as familie van God wat die wil van God doen (Matt 12:48-50). Jesus verwys na Sy volgelinge in huishoudelike terme: broer, suster, moeder (Markus 10:29-30) – maar nie as vader of vrou nie. Daar is by Hom geen aanduiding van hiërargie, voortplanting of patriërgie in Sy familie nie (Russel 1987:24). Hy verwys na hulle as vriende (Joh 15:13-15). Hier kom "dieselfde in opinie" na vore, omdat die dissipels Jesus gehoorsaam, nie as dienaars nie, maar omdat hulle Jesus se hart ken (Johnson 2004b:161). Dit verander die gesindheid waarmee Sy volgelinge Sy wil uitvoer, van verpligting na vrywillige keuse. Met hierdie ingesteldheid sal die hedendaagse mens kan identifiseer.

Jakobus spreek ook die ekklesia eerder as die oikos aan. Dit gaan vir hom meer oor gestuurdes wat handel op grond van hulle geloof, as die gestuurde se plek in die samelewing. Verseput (2000:104) wys op die duidelike onderskeid tussen ander Joodse diatribe-tipe geskrifte van die eerste eeu en Jakobus. Waar ander geskrifte aan 'n familiële opset gerig is, skryf Jakobus oor kommunale sake soos spraak, leierskap en die behandeling van armes by samekomste (Jak 2:1-13). Jakobus verwys na ekklesia wanneer hy mense onderrig byvoorbeeld in Jakobus 2:2 en 5:14. Hy gee instruksies aan ouderlinge en onderwysers in Jakobus 3:1 en 5:13. Jakobus gee geen aandag aan die huwelik of aanmoediging tot konformering met sosiale instellings, soos feitlik al die wysheidsliteratuur van sy tyd gedoen het nie. Die aandag aan die huwelik binne Jakobus se samelewing sou slegs gedien het om vroue as onderdanig teenoor mans te posisioneer en terug te plaas binne die oikos (en dus die privaatsfeer). Vir Jakobus is vroue nie 'n "probleem" wat onder manlike beheer hoort nie en hy maak ook nie onderskeid tussen publiek en privaat nie (Johnson 2004a:110). Vroue kan behoeftig wees net soos mans (Jak 2:14) en hulle kan gehoorsaam wees net soos mans (Jak 2:25). Deur te fokus op geloof wat in dade oorgaan, maak hy nadenke oor vroue in terme van ordentlikheid en onderdanigheid irrelevant (Cargal 2004:112).

Jakobus toon sterk ooreenkomste met wysheidsliteratuur uit die Ou Testament en die

tussentestamentiese tyd¹⁵ (Evans 2002:775). Jakobus se styl kom ooreen met wysheidsliteratuur wat praktiese raad en onderrig gee sodat die hoorders sal weet wat om te doen in 'n gegewe situasie en die regte pad te volg en kwaad te vermy (Chester 1994:9). Antieke wysheidsliteratuur het baie duidelik beskryf hoe die leser sy/haar "voorgeskrewe plek" in die wêreld kan behou deur die motivering van eer en skaamte.¹⁶ Om te konformeer met die algemeen geldende reëls van die samelewing is eervol. Jakobus se opdrag om alle mense as gelykes te hanteer (Jak 2:4, 9; 4:6-10, 11-12), is teenstrydig met die konteks se eer en skaamte-ryglyne (Wachob 2000:198). Om onbesmet van die wêreld te bly (Jak 1:27), dui op rituele reinheid en verwys na 'n weiering om die waardes van die wêreld wat hierdie lyding veroorsaak, te aanvaar (Tamez 1994:386). Hy ondergrawe die rangordes van sy tyd byvoorbeeld: Oud/jonk, vry/slaaf, mans/vroue, ryk/arm, leermeester/leerder en plaas wysheid binne bereik van alle mense (Jak 1:5). Hy verwys ook nie na die verskillende generasies soos gevind was in die tradisionele huishouding nie. God is die enigste gesag waaraan gelowiges moet gehoor gee.

In Joodse etiese tradisies was daar dikwels verwys na twee weë: die slegte en die goeie, as teenoorgesteldes. Jakobus werk ook met twee weë naamlik vriendskap met God en vriendskap met die wêreld (Jak 2:23, 4:4). Deur die verskeidenheid temas in die boek as onderdeel van hierdie twee weë te verstaan, kan bydra tot die verstaan van die boodskap van die geskrif. Vriendskap met die wêreld word gekenmerk deur aardse wysheid wat naywer en selfsug tot gevolg het (Jak 3:14-16). Sulke mense streef die hele tyd om hulself te verryk en veroorsaak wanorde en allerhande gemene dade, stryd en rusie (Jak 3:14; 4:1-3). Vir Jakobus begin boosheid by menslike begeerte na dinge, weens 'n gevoel van onvoldoende (Jak 1:4). Wanneer die mens verlei word deur sy/haar eie begeertes, ontwikkel die boosheid en gee dan geboorte aan sonde en die dood (Jak 1:15) (Rhoads 1998:476). Jakobus se uitsprake behoort verstaan te word teen die agtergrond dat die eerste-eeuse mens die wêreld as beperk beskou het (beperkte mag, beperkte eer, beperkte besittings ensovoorts). Hulle sou byvoorbeeld nie net iets soortgelyk as iemand anders begeer het nie, maar sou die spesifieke besitting van die ander wou wegneem. Dit het baie jaloesie en kompetisie in die samelewing veroorsaak. Jakobus wys op twee sondes wat hieruit voortkom: sonde deur woorde, byvoorbeeld die vloek van mense wat as die beeld van God gemaak is (Jak 3:9-10), kwaadpraat van ander (Jak 4:11), en sonde deur dade, byvoorbeeld deur armes met minagting te behandel (Jak 2:6) en die ryke bevoordeel (Jak 2:9), stryd en rusie (Jak 4:1-2) (Rhoads 1998:477). Hierdie sonde bring verdeeldheid en onrus in die gemeenskap.

Teenoor vriendskap met die wêreld stel Jakobus vriendskap met God voor. Wanneer mense na heelheid soek, moet hulle vir God om wysheid vra (Jak 1:5). Die wysheid wat van God kom is sonder bybedoelings, vredeliewend, insiklik, bedagsaam, vol medelye en goeie vrugte, onpartydig en opreg (Jak 3:17). Weer volg 'n geboorte: deur God. God se goeie gawes is onbeperk (Jak 1:17). Daar is geen rede vir kompetisie nie (Rhoads 1998:179). Ook ten opsigte van vriendskap met God, is woord en daad belangrik (Jak 2:12). Vriendskap met God bring voltooidheid (Jak 1:4) en laat ruimte dat mense hulle volle potensiaal bereik (Jak 3:18) (omdat onderdrukking onnodig sou wees). God gebruik die gemeenskap (en nie die huishouding alleen nie) om in mekaar se behoeftes te voorsien (Jak 1:27) (:481). Dit bring harmonie in die gemeenskap (Jak 3:17). Hiervolgens som Rhoads (:485) die boodskap van Jakobus op as, dat vriendskap met God sal lei tot woord en daad wat harmonie in die gemeenskap sal bewerk.¹⁷

15 'n Goeie voorbeeld uit hierdie periode is die boek van Sirag (Theissen 2003:91).

16 In die eerste eeu was eer ("honour") 'n persoon se aanspraak om waarde en publieke erkenning wanneer onder andere gepas binne sekere grense gehandel word. Die drie grense is: mag, geslag en "godsdienst" (Malina 1993:30). Skaamte ("shame") daarteenoor, is onder andere, die ignoreer van sosiale grense (:39).

17 Binne hierdie konteks was die deelwees van die groep as baie belangrik beskou. Malina et al (1995:19) interpreteer Jakobus 4:11 in hierdie lig: Deur nie vir jou broer kwaad te raak nie dien die beskerming van groeps grense.

Die wyse waarop Jakobus sy boodskap aanbied, laat oral suggesties dat hy die verhouding tussen God en mens as vriendskapsverhouding tipeer.¹⁸ Hierdie verhouding dien as model van verhoudings tussen gestuurdes.¹⁹ Vriendskap het by implikasie die hoorders se hele lewe geraak, aangesien vriendskapsverhoudings deel van die individu se privaat en publieke lewe beskou is (O'Day 2004:147). Vriende was binne hierdie konteks as deel van die uitgebreide familie beskou (Malina et al 1995:25).

4. ROLMODELLE IN JAKOBUS VIR DIE POST-PATRIARGALE HUISHOUDINGS

Die persone uit die Ou Testament wat in Jakobus as vriende van God voorgehou word, naamlik Abraham (Jak 2:21), Ragab (Jak 2:25), Job (Jak 5:11) en Elia (Jak 5:17) kan as rolmodelle dien in die nadenke oor die vriendskapsverhouding in die huishouding en kerk.

Die aksie waarna spesifiek in Jakobus 2:21 verwys word, is Abraham se gewilligheid om sy seun te offer (Gen 22). Abraham word hiervoor 'n vriend van God genoem (2 Kron 20:7 en Jak 2:23). Abraham is vriend van God omdat hy in geloof en ondubbelhartige toewyding geleef het en daarvolgens gehandel het. Hierdie optrede getuig nie van 'n persoon wat voortdurend in beheer moet wees nie, maar eerder van iemand wat bereid is om met onsekerhede saam te leef.

Abraham het ook dikwels opgetree binne die patriargale denkraamwerk van sy tyd. By twee geleenthede lewer Abraham vir Sara uit aan vreemdes om sy eie lewe te spaar en hy handhaaf die tradisie dat vroue nie saam met mans eet nie (Gen 18:8-9). Tog het Abraham dikwels vir Sara as gelyke gespreksgenoot en onafhanklike besluitnemer hanteer (Gen 16:2; 16:6; 21:8-10). Sara word deurgaans uitgebeeld as sterk vrou met 'n eie opinie, sy het daadwerklike besluite geneem en het dit dan gekommunikeer (Gen 16:2-6; 18:10-12; 21:6-12). Ook in terme van seksualiteit verskil Abraham en Sara se verhouding van die algemeen-geldende deurdat Sara seks met genot assosieer (Gen 18:12).

Vir die moderne leser kan dit verblydend wees dat Jakobus vir Abraham en Ragab albei as modelle van geloof voorhou, omdat dit die indruk van gelykwaardigheid skep. Jakobus verbind egter juis die name van Abraham en Ragab om kontras weer te gee (Kistemaker 1986:99).²⁰ Die feit dat Ragab as prostituut benoem word, tipeer haar volgens Humphries-Brooks (2001:140) as 'n kommoditeit – soos vroueliggame dikwels ook vandag gesien word. In die Joodse tradisie, was 'n prostituut 'n veragte (Levitikus 19:29; 21:7&14) – iemand sonder wysheid, godsdienstige

18 Hoewel Jakobus nie sê dat die mens en God “een in siel” is nie, verwys hy wel na die dubbelhartiges en die onstabiele mens (Batten 2008:266). Wanneer God byvoorbeeld in Jakobus 1:5 “sonder voorbehoud en sonder verwyf” gee, staan dit in ooreenkoms met hoe vriendskap in die eerste-eeuse Hellenistiese en Romeinse konteks verstaan is. 'n Vriend is verstaan as iemand wat met eerlikheid en eenvoud gepraat en gegee het (:265). Die toets van 'n ander is as kenmerk van vriendskap verstaan en word na verwys in die boek. Abraham en Job het as vriende van God, 'n toets deurstaan. So word ootmoed/nederigheid (Jakobus 1:21 en 3:13) ook met vriendskap geassosieer, met jaloesie as teendeel (:266-7).

19 Die model wat volgens verskeie feministe (onder andere Heyward 1989, Hunt 1991, Stuart 1995) die grootste potensiaal het om die strewende na gesonde verhoudinge te beliggaam, is vriendskap. Hulle kies vriendskap om onder meer die volgende redes: Vriendskap is inklusief en gebaseer op gelykwaardigheid en in die Westerse tradisie is vriendskap 'n verhouding wat geen suggestie ten opsigte van seksualiteit het nie (Isherwood & Stuart 1998:105). Nieteenstaande die ongebalanseerdheid van eerste-eeuse vriendskapsverhoudings soos meegebring deur die weldoenersisteme, is vriendskap die een gelykwaardige verhouding waarmee die moderne mens sal kan identifiseer en wat verdeeldheid sal kan herstel.

20 Die beskrywings wat Jakobus vir sy manlike helde gebruik, gee 'n aanduiding van 'n ereplek in die tradisie van die Torah. Abraham word “ons voorvader” genoem (Jak 2:21) en 'n vriend van God (Jak 2:23). Job word verbind aan profete (Jakobus 5:10). Elia word 'n gelowige genoem (Jak 5:16-17). In kontras word Ragab net as prostituut omskryf (Johnson 2004a:105).

kennis of waardes (Bird 1997:214). Sy word as gemarginaliseerde voorgehou.²¹ God lig haar eger uit die posisie as veragte objek tot handelende subjek (Bird 1997:213).

Voor die intog in die Beloofde land, gaan twee verkenners tuis by Ragab. Sy ontvang hulle gasvry in haar huis. Ragab neem beheer van die situasie en neem besluite namens haar familie. Sy waag haar lewe deur die twee mans weg te steek en die koning te mislei en stel voor dat hy "gou [maak] en [hulle] agtervolg" – wat die koning toe doen (Jos 2:5&7). Sy gee aan die verspieters strategies raad (Jos 2:16), voer 'n teologiese gesprek met hulle (Josua 2:8-11) en gaan met hulle 'n ooreenkoms aan (Jos 2:13). Sy openbaar hierdeur optrede wat in haar konteks tipies van mans verwag is. Haar huishouding verteenwoordig ook 'n nie-tradisionele struktuur, wat herinner aan die huishouding van Marta (Luk 10:38; Joh 11:1). As hoof van 'n huishouding en eienaar van 'n besigheid (Bird 1997:211), het sy ook haar ouers in haar sorg. Sy staan in die rol van patriarg binne die Joodse tradisie (Humphries-Brooks 2001:141). In Hebreërs 11:31 word haar geloof saam met dié van onder andere Henog, Noag, Abraham, Jakob en Josef genoem.

Van beide Abraham en Ragab word gesê dat hulle vrygespreek is op grond van hul dade (Jak 2:21, 24-25). Abraham en Ragab se handelinge was albei gekenmerk deur gasvryheid.²² Dit is gehoorsaamheid wat hierdie twee op die ou end gelykes maak (Kistemaker 1986:100).

Job bevind homself in 'n maglose en liminale posisie, in skrilte kontras met sy patriargale posisie van vroeër. Hy word gemarginaliseer en ly onskuldig, net soos vroue wat ly, net omdat hulle vroue is (Tamez 1994:387). Job se verhaal word in hierdie opsig in metaforiese terme as rolmodel gebruik. Die ideale liggaam in antieke Israel is verteenwoordig deur 'n rein en heel liggaam wat binne sekere grense funksioneer (Lev 12-15). Slegs heel liggame – sonder gebreke of "materie uit plek"²³ – is toegelaat binne familieverhoudinge. Job se sieklike liggaam (Job 7:5; 30:30) het die ordelike samelewing versteur, en daarom word hy uit die samelewing gesluit (Basson 2008:288). In hierdie familie-gebaseerde samelewing was oorlewing buite die samelewing feitlik onmoontlik en gelykstaande aan 'n sosiale dood: sonder regte, status, beskerming of identiteit. As gevolg van sy sieklike liggaam word Job verwerp en gemarginaliseer en as gevaarlik beskou (:294).²⁴

Wanneer God uit die stormwind met Job praat, troos hy hom nie. Hy neem hom na die skepping. In alles wat hy gesien het, sien hy nie een mens nie. Dale (aangehaal deur Habel 2001b:185) beskou hierdie aksie as 'n desentralisasie van die skepping. Die mens is nie die middelpunt van die skepping nie. God vra: verstaan jy wat jy sien? En: Kan jy dit beheer? Die skeppingsverhaal is dus nie normatief nie. Job 38 bied 'n ander perspektief op die skeppingsgebeure. Job vertel van 'n skepping-gesentreerde teologie.

Job sinspeel dat die aarde sy moeder is in Job 1:21. Die aarde is sy tuiste, sy ma, sy familie (Habel 2001a:66). Job 38 hou die aarde voor as huishouding wat deur God bestuur word. Hierdie

21 Haar huis is letterlik op die grens van die stad "in die muur" (Jos 2:15) – 'n liminale posisie. Hierdie afleiding kan gemaak word, omdat antieke stede hiërgies uitgelê is, met die koning se paleis en die tempel in die sentrum. Vanaf die sentrum na die buitewyke van die stad, sou 'n progressiewe daling in rykdom en status na vore kom (Humphries-Brooks 2001:140).

22 Abraham se gasvryheid spreek uit sy optrede wanneer hy drie besoekers naby sy tent sien staan. Hy draf nader en nooi hulle in. Hy berei 'n maaltyd voor (hopeloos te veel vir drie gaste) en stap 'n ent saam met hulle, met hulle vertrek (Gen 18:1-16). Hierdie verhaal staan in kontras met die ongasvryheid van Sodom en Gomorra (Gen 19:1-11), wat ook daarvoor bekend was dat hulle armes onderdruk het (Esegiël 16:46-49).

23 Reinheidswette volgens Malina (1993:153) het te doen gehad met materie (soos menstruasie) of mense "uit hul plek uit." Om uit plek te wees, veronderstel orde en grense. (Gebaseer op die teorie van Douglas (1966).

24 'n Posisie waarmee vroue kan identifiseer, onder andere deur tendense soos skuldgevoelens by vroue nadat hulle verkrag is, die van vrouebesnydenis en vroue wat ly as gevolg van obstetriese fistula.

huishouding het plek vir alle gediertes (:75) – sonder hiërgargie. Job plaas die huishouding waarvan hy deel is, as onderdeel van die skepping. Hierdeur word die grense tussen huishouding (oikos), die ekklesia en die kosmos verdof. Die skepping is die gestuurde se verantwoordelikheid, want soos McFague (1993:165) dit stel: “Nature is the ‘new poor’...”

Ook Elia se optrede wys God uit as ware natuur-God teenoor die vals natuur-god, Baäl. Hy leer God as God van die natuur ken deur Sy/Haar mag oor reën en vuur. Terwyl hy by die Kritispruit skuil, stuur God kraaie om hom te versorg (1 Konings 17:4). Die enigste verwysing wat Jakobus na God as Vader maak, is wanneer hy Hom/Haar die “die Vader wat die hemelligte geskep het” (Jak 1:17) noem. Wanneer so na God as Skepper (Ng 2003:43) verwys word, sluit die huishouding die hele kosmos in.

Elia leef nie ’n onafhanklike en selfvoorsienende lewe nie, maar leef in biddende afhanklikheid van God. God reël vir Elia huishoudings waar hy versorg kan word. Hy gaan by ’n weduwee tuis wat hom versorg met middele wat God midde in ’n droogte voorsien (1 Kon 17:9). Ook later met die engel wat hom besoek in die woestyn word ’n huishoudelike prentjie geskep deurdat die engel hom wakker maak om te eet (1 Konings 19:5&7). Dit impliseer dat gasvryheid ’n kenmerk van die gemeenskap van gelowiges sal wees. Gasvryheid sal vereis dat geen mens sonder huishouding sal wees nie.

In ’n gemeenskap waar armes leef is gasvryheid ’n belangrike waarde. Jakobus identifiseer onderdrukking as fundamentele oorsaak van armoede (Jak 1:9-11; 2:1-13). Hierteen spreek Jakobus hom duidelik uit. Hy bevestig die menswaardigheid van die arme en gemarginaliseerde (Jak 1:9-11; 2:1-13). Hy moedig die arme aan om geduldig te wees omdat God hulle sal help. Hierdie is egter nie ’n passiewe soort geduld nie, maar ’n strewe om sin te vind binne moeilike omstandighede. Wanneer Jakobus lydende Christene aanmoedig om op die positiewe in hul omstandighede te fokus, is dit ’n uitnodiging tot menswaardigheid, deur nie onder verontmenslikende omstandighede moed op te gee nie (Jak 1:2-3).

Die gedeelde maaltyd as simbool van vriendskap, bied ’n ruimte vir vreugdevolle en inklusiewe saamwees van mense wat van mekaar hou en omsien na mekaar se basiese behoeftes (McFague 1987:172). Dit impliseer verder dat niemand sonder huishouding sal wees nie. Vriende word hierdeur ’n uitgebreide familie. Binne hierdie familie gaan dit oor die gestuurde wat handel en nie oor die plek van die gestuurde in die oikos nie.²⁵ Jakobus gee geen aandag aan “plek” nie, en fokus alleen op bevrydende praxis wat uit ondubbelhartige toewyding aan God spruit (Jak 1:7-8; 2:14-26). Hy gee ook geen aandag aan die huwelik nie, en akkommodeer seksuele minderhede (Jak 1:27; 2:25). Hierdie familie (huishouding) word nie beperk deur die grense tussen publiek en privaat nie. So vind die mens sy/haar plek as onderdeel van die skepping met God alleen as hoof. Aan gesturdes word die ruimte gegun om te individualiseer sonder om tot gegewe rolverwagtings te konformeer (soos gevind in die lewe van Abraham, Ragab, Job en Elia). Dit sal vra dat die kerk daartoe sal streef om veral vroueliggame wat “gekolonialiseer”²⁶ is, te bevry.

Volgens McFague (1987:167) is die vreugde van saamwees die kern van die model as daar oor die verhouding tussen God en mens as vriendskap gedink word. Carmichael (2004:185) verwys na “the ‘unnecessary’ nature” van vriendskap, wat dit die mees vrygekose vorm van liefde maak. Dit impliseer volgens haar dat gelowiges nie as slawe van mekaar leef nie maar vrywillig op mekaar se behoeftes kan reageer. Dit maak ’n bestaan van “om saam met ander te wees” moontlik, eerder as om “daar vir ander te wees” (Carmichael 2004:187). Met hierdie verstaan word klem gelê op verhoudings as prioriteit. Vir ’n samelewing waar die nood van ander

25 Jakobus gebruik byvoorbeeld die terme “broers en susters” (Jak 2:15) en “vriende van God,” (Jak 2:23) eerder as man, vrou, kind of hoof.

26 Deur: vrees vir verkragting, vroueliggame te behandel as kommoditeit, geweld en om van vroue te verwag om alleen die versorging van die huishouding en kinders waar te neem.

daaglikse mense oproep tot hulpverlening, is dit 'n bevrydende vertrekpunt. Dit nooi mense tot verhoudings en nie meganiese betrokkenheid by ander nie. So 'n verstaan sal ook die hiërargie van "gewer" en "ontvanger" vermy. Hierdie soort saamwees bemagtig mense tot individuasie²⁷ en voorkom ongesonde afhanklikheid. Vir vroue sal dit veral betekenisvol wees omdat dit 'n ruimte sal skep waarbinne hulle hul eie identiteit kan ontdek ten einde medeverantwoordelike medewerkers in God se herskepping te wees. Op die ou end funksioneer individuasie en onafhanklikheid tot voordeel van die gemeenskap. Dit is juis hierdie gevolg wat individuasie van individualisme onderskei, omdat individualisme selfgerig is.

5. SLOT

Met hierdie klem op vriendskap tree uitsluitende waardes soos geslag, status en liggaamlikheid nie op die voorgrond nie. Niemand gee seggenskap op hul liggame op nie – ook nie in die huwelik nie. Aan elke mens word ruimte gegun om te individualiseer – ook aan kinders deur ouers. Gasvryheid as sentrale waarde van vriendskap nooi die vreemdeling in tot 'n vreugdevolle saamwees en wedersydse versorging. Vriendskap met God bring voltooidheid en bevry mense van afguns en kompeterende optrede. Heel mense kan in eenvoud leef en op hierdie wyse ruimte laat dat alle lewende wesens genoeg kan hê om van te leef. Die sleutel tot die uitleef van vriendskapsverhoudings, is die afstaan van toegekende mag. Hierdie argument wil bydra tot die vestiging van 'n post-patriargale samelewing en 'n ekofeministiese werklikheidsverstaan²⁸ in die kerk (*ekklesia*) deur 'n bewusmakingsproses.²⁹ Die vriendskapsbeeld kan huishoudings (*oikoi*) en die geloofsgemeenskap (*ekklesia*) bystaan in die proses om toegekende "plekke" af te staan en in nie-hiërargiese verhoudings teenoor mekaar te staan.

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27 Individuasie is 'n lewenslange groeiproses waardeur die individu tot verstaan van sy/haar unieke identiteit kom (Lemmer 2005:68).

28 Volgens Radford Ruether (2003:24) werk ekofeministe met die uitgangspunt dat daar 'n direkte verband bestaan tussen patriargale kulture oor die algemeen en die onderdrukking van vroue en die natuur. Ekofeministe streef na die bevryding van die natuur en vroue gelyktydig deur 'n skeppingsgesentreerde ("earth-honouring") spiritualiteit.

29 Bewusmaking as werkswyse is belangrik omdat mag in die laat modernistiese tydperk geherdefinieer is. Institusies (die staat), organisasies (kapitalistiese maatskappye) of die simboliese heersers (die kerk) beskik nie meer oor deurslaggewende mag nie. Die nuwe mag is opgesluit in inligtingsmatigheid en word gevind in die denke van mense. Dit wat die mens se denke kan beïnvloed, sal oor mag beskik (Castells 2004:425).

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Human dignity in the prophetic traditions: Upholding human worth in a context of dehumanisation

ABSTRACT

This article proposes that the theme of human dignity offers a fruitful avenue to explore the interrelated themes of justice, vocation and human responsibility in the biblical traditions. Human dignity is most evident in the notion of the *Imago Dei*, i.e., the claim in Genesis 1:26-27 that humans, both male and female, are created in the image of God. This powerful theological claim has led to some rich theological reflection by Christian and Jewish interpreters who have argued for the inherent worth of every human being whose dignity is a gracious gift bestowed by the Creator God. Nevertheless, in the Hebrew Bible there are numerous instances where this dignity of individuals and groups are threatened, obscured and violated. And yet, it is exactly in the midst of these situations of dehumanisation that the conversation on what it means to be human becomes most urgent. For instance, in prophets like Isaiah, it is within the depths of the social justice violations that threaten the well being of the society's most vulnerable members that one encounters the prophet's persistent critique that upholds the dignity of each member of the society.

1. RECONTEXTUALISING HUMAN DIGNITY

“Everyone has inherent dignity and the right to have their dignity respected and protected”
(Chapter 2.10, South African Bill of Rights)

So reads the constitution of South Africa – words that are particularly poignant in light of the dehumanising events and injustices that have marked South Africa's history of apartheid. Similar language is also found in the preamble to the United Nations declaration of Human Rights that affirms the inherent rights of all human beings in terms of “the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women.” This conviction offers the basis of the organization's resolve “to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom” for all peoples and all nations.¹

Even though these secular documents, including also the constitutions of countries such as Iceland, Greece, Guatemala, and South Korea all employ the language of human dignity as foundation for promoting people's universal and inalienable rights, they do so without giving much (or any) thought to its theological and biblical roots. Actually, the term “human dignity” is introduced as a foundational concept by Church Fathers such as Irenaeus in his reading of biblical traditions that pertain to the compelling image of the *Imago Dei*.² The powerful theological

1 R. Kendall Soulen and Linda Woodhead, “Contextualizing Human Dignity,” in *God and Human Dignity* (Eds. R. Kendall Soulen and Linda Woodhead; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 1.

2 It is important to note that the biblical traditions nowhere directly speak of the dignity of human beings. Church Fathers like Irenaeus took the language of human dignity over from Greco-Roman usage (in Latin – “*dignitas*”; in Greek “*to axioma, he time*”) and placed it into the context of Christian belief and practice, Soulen and Woodhead, “Contextualizing Human Dignity,” 3.

claim found in Genesis 1:26-27 that humans, both male and female, are created in the image of God has accordingly led to some rich theological reflection by Christian and Jewish interpreters who have argued for the inherent worth of every human being whose dignity is a gracious gift bestowed by the Creator God.³

Stripped from its original biblical and theological context, the concept of human dignity as used in the documents cited above has been decontextualised and hence has become quite vulnerable. For one, divorced from its original interpretative context that roots human dignity in a relationship with God, the worth or dignity of a human increasingly has shifted to come to depend solely on the individual's own attributes and achievements.⁴

Moreover, the fact that the notion of human dignity is cited with such regularity in the public discourse is problematic in itself. John Witte Jr. writes that the term of human dignity has become "ubiquitous to the point of cliché – a moral trump card frayed by heavy use, a general principle harried by constant invocation."⁵ To use the term haphazardly without attention to the context in which it first found its significance is to water down the meaning to the point where it can no longer speak with much force.

And yet there is something compelling about the idea that people regardless of factors such as race, class, gender, sexual orientation, physical or mental abilities possess intrinsic value and as such are deserving of equal and just treatment – perhaps explaining why this term has enjoyed such widespread appeal from national and international bodies as well as in the broader conversation with regard to fostering a universal human rights culture.⁶ It is the contention of this paper that the notion of human dignity has the potential to offer a valuable contribution to the discourse about human rights if one is able to move beyond a mere "cipher" or an "empty formula"⁷ by rooting it in a particular interpretative context that fills the concept of human dignity with meaning.

For instance, in his recent book, *Justice: Rights and Wrongs*, Nicholas Wolterstorff seeks to ground or root concepts like justice in a particular narrative context, by showing how justice forms an integral part of the Christian (Jewish) foundational story in the Old Testament (Hebrew

3 James Luther Mays notes that even though the "image of God" occurs only twice in the biblical traditions, "its actuality is a structural theme of the biblical account of God and humankind," "The Self in the Psalms and the Image of God," in *God and Human Dignity* (Eds. R. Kendall Soulen and Linda Woodhead; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 38-39.

4 Soulen and Woodhead, "Contextualizing Human Dignity," 12, 24.

5 John Witte, "Between Sanctity and Depravity: Human Dignity in Protestant Perspective," in *In Defence Of Human Dignity: Essays For Our Times*, (Eds. Robert P. Kraynak And Glenn Tinder; Notre Dame/ London: University of Notre Dame Press, 2004), 121.

6 With regard to the distinction between human rights vs human dignity, Mary Ann Glendon identifies the deficiencies of the "American rights dialect" that is characterized by an exaggerated absoluteness, individualism, and is independent of any necessary relation to personal, civic, and collective responsibilities." She argues as follow: "Our simplistic rights talk regularly promotes the short-run over the long-term, sporadic crisis intervention over systemic preventive measures, and particular interests over the common good," *Rights Talk: The Impoverishment of Political Discourse* (New York: The Free Press, 1991), 14-15. In response to Glendon, Patricia Lamoureux notes that "Glendon's critique is not an assault on specific rights or on the idea of rights in general. Rather it is an argument for a richer language and better attitudes than the habitual ways of thinking and speaking about rights. At the core, her argument is about what kind of people we are becoming and what kind of society we are in the process of creating," "Immigration Reconsidered in the Context of an Ethic of Solidarity," in *Made in God's Image: The Catholic Vision of Human Dignity* (Eds. Regis Duffy, OFM and Angelus Gambatese, OFM; Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1999), 109.

7 Michael Welker, "Theological Anthropology versus Anthropological Reductionism," in *God and Human Dignity* (Eds. R. Kendall Soulen and Linda Woodhead; Eerdmans, 2006), 327-328.

Bible).⁸ Indeed, the biblical prophets' persistent critique of social justice violations offers us a valuable resource to recontextualise the discourse of rights, justice, and in the case of this paper the related notion of human dignity – Israel's prophetic traditions forming the basis of a rich interpretative context that through many centuries past has inspired people to work for a more just society. For instance, throughout every socio-cultural context reflected in the book Isaiah – a composite volume that spans at least four centuries – it seems that the quest for justice is a primary concern.⁹

For the purpose of this article, I will consider the way in which the book Isaiah constitutes one possible interpretative context for human dignity, so recontextualising this term that is invoked with such regularity in the national and international arenas.¹⁰ Obviously one cannot do justice to the book as a whole in the limited space of a paper; however, it will be shown how selected examples may be fruitfully employed in a discussion on human dignity.¹¹ I will highlight three theological perspectives with regard to human dignity in the context of a theological engagement with the book Isaiah that may offer a thicker description of this important concept. These theological perspectives have profound implications for our sense of vocation that will be addressed in the concluding section of this article.

2. THEOLOGICAL DIMENSION OF HUMAN DIGNITY

2.1 Human dignity in a context of dehumanization

In her book, *Plantations and Death Camps: Religion, Ideology and Human Dignity*, Beverly Mitchell argues that it is precisely in those contexts of extreme dehumanization in which the dignity of individuals and groups are threatened, obscured and violated that the conversation on what it means to be human becomes most urgent. She goes on to show how, in ironical fashion, it is the indignity experienced by the African American slaves on the slave ships and on the plantations in the Southern part of the United States, as well as the humiliation suffered by the millions of Jews during the Holocaust, that reveals to us something about the incontrovertible and indestructible nature of human dignity.¹²

In this regard, it is not coincidental that the profound formulations upholding human worth in the South African constitution emerged out of the context of human rights violations that accompanied the apartheid regime. And it is precisely in reaction to the atrocities of World War II that one saw the national and international declaration of human dignity and rights by the

8 Nicholas Wolterstorff, "Justice in the Old Testament/ Hebrew Bible," in *Justice: Rights and Wrongs* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008), 65-95.

9 Thomas LeClerq, *Yahweh is Exalted in Justice: Solidarity and Conflict in Isaiah* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2001).

10 Cf. also Soulen and Woodhead who have proposed a "theological recontextualization of the concept." They argue that the notion of human dignity is not "a self-explanatory nor self-sustaining term. Its meaningfulness is dependent on its being embedded within a broader and more comprehensive cultural, conceptual and social framework," "Contextualizing Human Dignity," 2.

11 Particularly in the part of the book Isaiah known as Deutero-Isaiah and Trito-Isaiah, one finds a creative engagement with theological themes denoting God's creation, new creation and final consummation – themes that incidentally according to the church fathers such as Theophilus of Antioch and Clement of Alexandria very much constitute the context of human dignity. Cf. Soulen and Woodhead who show how the church fathers understood human dignity in terms of God's great works: (a) in God's work of creation of humankind as a whole; (b) the church and God's work of new creation in Christ (c) God's consummation as the eschatological goal of creation," "Contextualizing Human Dignity," 3.

12 Beverly Eileen Mitchell, *Plantations and Death Camps: Religion, Ideology and Human Dignity* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2009), 26-29.

United Nations and the constitutions of countries mentioned before.¹³

Also in the biblical traditions, one finds ample evidence that questions regarding human dignity arise out of situations that seriously impede people's quality of life and even right to life. So it is significant that the profound formulation of the Imago Dei in Gen 1:26-27 breaks into the broader context of alienation outlined in Genesis 1-11 that sees story after story of human disobedience, egotism, revenge, and fratricide. As James Mays suggests, it is indeed so that "... the image of God belongs to the human being beyond and through all the drastic failures of mortals recorded in Genesis 3-9."¹⁴

The book of Isaiah offers some good examples of how it is within the depths of the social justice violations that threaten the wellbeing of society's most vulnerable members, that one finds the prophet's persistent critique upholding the dignity of each member of the society. For instance, Isaiah 5:8ff presents a litany of social justice violations that highlights numerous examples of in which people have perverted justice, giving substance to the charge outlined in the clever wordplay in v 7 denoting God's disappointed expectations:

God expected justice (לְמִשְׁפָּט), but received bloodshed (מִשָּׁפַח);

God expected righteousness (לְצִדְקָה), but received an outcry (צִעֲקָה).

So in Isaiah 5:8, the greed of the people who confiscated the property of their vulnerable neighbours so destroying their property rights and their ability to make a meaningful existence, is cited as example of the injustice of which the people stand accused. As the outcry resounds: "Ah, you who join house to house, who add field to field, until there is room for no one but you, and you are left to live alone in the midst of the land!" And in v 23 it is clear that the very judicial and societal structures that were supposed to protect the poor have become the means that exploit and oppress these most vulnerable in society when Israel is indicted for "acquitt[ing] the guilty for a bribe, and depriv[ing] the innocent of their rights!"¹⁵

However, amid this long list of examples in which people's basic rights are violated; in which people are "bowed down," and "everyone is brought low" (v15), we encounter the bold claim in Isa 5:16 that the Lord God is exalted in justice, made holy by righteousness. This is a good example of how the image of God that is meant to be honoured and glorified in the world breaks into those situations of dehumanization in which people are trampled, indicating a God who identifies with people in the most dire of circumstances – a theological perspective that will come to be exemplified in the New Testament in terms of a God who identifies with the cross.

This divine image of a God who is closely associated with justice functions as a bright shining light in a world trapped in darkness; as a beacon held up of what the world is supposed to be. The bold theological claim in Isa 5:15-16 picks up on God's expectations that were vividly outlined in v 7: God expects justice and righteousness. In the reality of situations of bloodshed and outcry, the image of God who hears the cries of the victims and who is not blind to the injustices of those most vulnerable serves as a reminder that justice and righteousness truly glorify God.

In a very different socio-historical context reflected in Trito-Isaiah, we further see an example of the prophetic critique breaking into those circumstances in which people are downtrodden and disrespected. In Isaiah 58-59, we see how reality and potentiality co-exist side by side when

13 Soulen and Woodhead, "Contextualizing Human Dignity," 9.

14 Mays, "The Self in the Psalms and the Image of God," 34. Cf. also Psalm 8 in which the human being is honoured and held up as the means by which God's reign is glorified in the world is situated in the midst of a series of lament psalms (Ps 7, 9, 10) that directly speak of those situations in which the dignity and the worth of people are violated and/or disregarded (p 36).

15 Leclerc, *Yahweh is Exalted in Justice*, 57.

it is in a context in which justice is said to be far off and distant (v 9); a context in which people's "hands are defiled with blood," and in which wickedness is said to mark their thoughts and actions (vv 3-7) that people are called "to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke?" (Isa 58:6).¹⁶

As we will see in the following sections, it is the belief in human dignity as a gracious gift from the Creator God that inspires the prophets to advocate an unwavering belief in God's redemptive work through which God promises to mend a broken world.

2.2 Human dignity and the creator God

For the church fathers like Chrysostom, human dignity constitutes a gracious gift from the Creator God. Drawing inspiration from the rich tradition of the *Imago Dei*, to be created in the image of God focuses the attention squarely on God's activity rather than on human ability or achievement. This profound theological insight moreover implies that human dignity belongs to all people regardless of factors such as skin colour, gender, social status, physical or mental capabilities, sexual orientation, etc.¹⁷

Particularly in Deutero-Isaiah, in which themes of creation are utilized as the basis for the promise of redemption and new life for the despondent exiles, one finds that acts of creative redemption on the part of the Creator-Liberator God are not dependent on human ability or achievement. For instance, in Isaiah 43:1, one sees for example how the exiles are reminded that they are special in the eyes of the God who has created them. This belief that God has chosen *you*; formed *you* and knows *your* name holds particular significance for broken exiles who had to be convinced anew that God's favour is upon them. In v 4, the exiles are called precious and honoured and loved by God – probably some of the most profound expressions of human worth in the biblical traditions.¹⁸

Also in Isaiah 42, themes of creation, election and redemption are creatively interwoven when God's creative activity is manifested in v 5 in the act of giving spirit/breath to people. As in the first creation account in Genesis 2 according to which God breathed breath into the newly formed earth creature ('ādām – cf. Phyllis Trible's translation reflecting the wordplay of the 'ādām being formed out of the 'ādāmā)¹⁹, God's breath denotes the gift of life. One sees this notion vividly expressed in Ps 104:29, when it is said that all created life depends on the Creator God; when God takes away their breath they die and return to dust.

The undeserved gift character is particularly evident in this first servant song in Isa 42:1-7. In

16 Joseph Blenkinsopp outlines the miserable social conditions that were the norm during the first century of Persian rule (Neh 5:1-5; Hag 1:6, 9-11) which were responsible for the social justice infractions outlined in this passage. Due to a succession of bad harvests that proved fatal in a subsistence agrarian economy, many farmers were forced to borrow money at exuberant interests rates. If, or rather when, they were unable to repay, they were sold into indentured service, *Isaiah 56-66* (AB; New York: Double Day, 2003), 177-178.

17 Chrysostom writes in a sermon on Philippians: "Humans possesses dignity of rational nature, but this comes to them as a gift, not as something they have earned," (Homilies on Philippians 7), Quoted in Soulen and Woodhead, "Contextualizing Human Dignity," 6. Cf. also Hans S. Reinders, "Human Dignity in the Absence of Agency," in *God and Human Dignity* (Eds. R. Kendall Soulen and Linda Woodhead; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006), 139.

18 One should also note that as so often in the biblical traditions, things are not uncomplicated. For instance, the beautiful promises of God's presence, God's favour and God's redemption are complicated by the reference in v 3 that God sold the other nations (Egypt, Ethiopia and Seba) in exchange for Israel, raising questions with regard to whether all are then not equal in the eyes of God? In this regard, one should of course remember that this text that is intended to console a bereaved Israel is very much written from the perspective of Israel.

19 Phyllis Trible, *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality* (OBT; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1978), 77-78.

this song that highlights God's act of creative redemption, the servant's worth is not based on his own accomplishments or abilities. The individual (or people Israel depending how one construes the identity of the servant) is said to be a dimly burning wick and a broken reed – metaphors that strongly underscore the idea that God's favour and God's activity is by no means depended on human ability or worth.²⁰

For a despondent people who have been wounded by the hand of the powerful nations all around, these words serve as a source of hope. But more so, the perspective that human dignity is not dependent on anything humans are or do, is a profound belief that has important implications for how we view people of all walks of life, regardless of ability, moving the conversation away from achievement or utility value.²¹ In our own society in which race matters, class matters, gender matters, sexual orientation matters, the very idea of one's createdness as foundational to be treated with honour and respect is a compelling thought indeed.

2.3 Human dignity in relation

A third important perspective to consider is that human dignity is inherently relational rather than individualistic in its orientation. Closely associated with the undeserved gift character highlighted above is that human dignity as conferred by the Creator God is not an end itself but has the purpose of affecting others.²² As Kendall Soulen and Linda Woodhead formulate it: "Dignity consists not so much in self-possession as in dispossession, not so much in entering into

20 The undeserved gift of God's creation/election/redemption is a theme that repeatedly recurs in the biblical traditions. R. Kendall Soulen rightly points out that "God's election repeatedly falls not to those who by reason or natural descent occupy positions of strength and superiority, but to the unlikely to the unpromising, and indeed to those who could not exist at all by dint of the power of natural descent alone. God's election singles out the younger son, the weaker combatant, the aged woman, the one without form or comeliness," "Cruising toward Bethlehem: Human Dignity and the New Eugenics," in *God and Human Dignity* (Eds. R. Kendall Soulen and Linda Woodhead; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006), 108. Cf. also the important theme of power in the midst of vulnerability that underlie these metaphors. Because of God's spirit that works through him, the servant will not be broken or be quenched, rather he will faithfully continue his mission, Paul Hanson *The People Called: The Growth of Community in the Bible* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987), 244; "Divine Power in Powerlessness: The Servant of the Lord in Second Isaiah," in *Power, Powerlessness, and the Divine: New Inquiries in Bible and Theology* (ed. Cynthia L. Rigby; Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1997), 192.

21 This perspective in particular has important implications for how we think about the emerging field of theology of Theology and Disability. For instance, in his essay on human dignity, Hans Reinders refers to the example of Kelley, a severely mentally challenged young woman. The fact that her value is not situated in her achievements nor in her cognitive abilities is responsible for the fact that we are encouraged to see Kelly as she is seen by God: "a child of God who is lovable in his eyes just like any other of his children," "Human Dignity in the Absence of Agency," 139. Cf. also the important work done by Thomas Reynolds in the book he wrote regarding his experience with his son Chris who is living with Asperger syndrome, *Vulnerable Communion: A Theology of Disability and Hospitality* (Wheaton, IL: Brazos, 2008). For the theme of disability in biblical studies cf. the work of Jeremy Schipper, *Disability and Isaiah's Suffering Servant* (Oxford: Oxford University Press,

2011); *Disability Studies and the Hebrew Bible: Figuring Mephibosheth in the David Story* (New York: T & T Clark, 2006).

22 Reinders, "Human Dignity in the Absence of Agency," 123. Reinders says the following: "To be a creature is to be created, and to be created is to be created with a purpose. Human beings who themselves stand in relation to their Creator God are placed in relationship that is indispensable for their very being. Cf. also Christopher Schwöbel who argues: "We are related in order to relate," "Recovering Human Dignity," in *God and Human Dignity* (Eds. R. Kendall Soulen and Linda Woodhead; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006), 47.

oneself but in reaching out in love and care to the other.”²³

One sees something of this thought illustrated in the figure of the servant introduced earlier. The special relationship between God and the servant, and the dignity bestowed on the servant in Isaiah 42:6 by God taking him by the hand and keeping him is not an end in itself. God’s special favour upon the servant has the distinct purpose of reaching out to others, establishing justice in the earth. So in v 7, the servant is to serve as “a covenant to the people, a light to the nations, to open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison those who sit in darkness.”

It is noteworthy that the servant’s duty takes him to the worst instances of dehumanisation as imaged by the use of images such as dungeons and prisons. The servant’s actions are concerned with the dignity of others, to lift them up, to give life and light to those who are blind, freedom to those who find themselves in the oppressive circumstances – actions that would later be exemplified in the inaugural speech of Jesus of Nazareth (Lk 4:18-19 quoting Isa 61:1-2a).

However, as evident from the prophetic critique outlining social justice violations that threaten people’s wellbeing and existence, some members of the community have forgotten this communal aspect of human dignity. So we see numerous instances in which the community is impaired, in which the dignity of the most vulnerable members of the community (the widows, orphans and the poor) is violated. For instance, in Isaiah 3:14, the leaders of the community are accused of devouring the vineyard and harbouring the spoil of the poor in their homes. In the most violent language it is said that the leaders have crushed God’s people, and ground the face of the poor. These acts of violence and robbery and dispossession show a community in which human life, human worth and the wellbeing of the entire community is seriously threatened.

The communal aspect of human dignity furthermore implies that victim and perpetrator are inescapably connected so that both are in need of healing and restoration. We see for example in Isaiah 59:9 how the perpetrators of social justice violations also experience no justice when they say:

Therefore justice is far from us, and righteousness does not reach us; we wait for light, and lo! There is darkness; and for brightness, but we walk in gloom.

In this regard, our South African context with its painful history of apartheid is a prime example that it is not just the victim who is affected by injustice. So at the height of the struggle against apartheid, religious leaders, such as Desmond Tutu and Allan Boesak, insisted that liberation of black people would also lead to the restoration of the human dignity of the white members of society.²⁴

Finally, the relational aspect of human dignity is particularly evident in the context of worship where believers gather in the presence of God.²⁵ Worship offers the space in which people come together; in which the community is reminded of the communal aspect of their life together as

23 Soulen and Woodhead, “Contextualizing Human Dignity,” 6. Hans Reinders describes this relational aspect of human dignity as follows in light of the example of the young mentally challenged woman, Kelley, mentioned before: “It is a dignity that is communicated to her [Kelley] in the acts of people caring about her and about her well-being.” And because people in the eyes of God are considered worthy, regardless of their abilities, dignity-respecting actions such as exemplified by Kelley’s caretakers are indeed like Reinders suggests, “a genuine act of communion that glorifies God the Father,” “Human Dignity in the Absence of Agency,” 138.

24 H. Russell Botman, “Covenantal Anthropology: Integrating Three Contemporary Discourses of Human Dignity,” in *God and Human Dignity* (Eds. R. Kendall Soulen and Linda Woodhead; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006), 75.

25 Cf. Soulen and Woodhead’s assertion that “The indispensable context of human dignity is the church, the gathering of the faithful. Thus human dignity has an ecclesial rather than an individual horizon,” “Contextualizing Human Dignity,” 7.

well as how the regard they have received from God ought to extend to the others with whom they share space. In Isaiah 58 with its reference to the Sabbath and religious rituals such as the fast, it is thus so deeply ironic that the people engage in worship while continuing to disregard their fellow brothers and sisters in the form of the poor and the afflicted.

So we read in v 2 how they seek God's presence and search God's ways. And yet, reminiscent of the harsh words in Isa 1:11-15, condemning hypocrisy and worship without ethics, in Isaiah 58:3-7 Israel is indicted for engaging in religious practices such as the fast, withholding food on purpose while being oblivious to those who are truly hungry. It is deeply ironic that in v 3 God is said not to notice, which incidentally is the reason why the believers engaged in fasting in the first place. The problem with their actions is that their religious activities are completely self-serving, focusing on their own relationship with God without attending to the communal aspect of their life together. The community is indicted for oppressing their workers, for living in discord and according to evil inclinations towards one another. Poverty has become a yoke crushing the poor; the bonds of injustice making it impossible to escape.

3. VOCATION: CALLED TO REPAIR THE BREACH

The untenable situation of where the rights of some are violated according to which people in the community are still hungry, homeless, and without warm clothes calls for action on the part of the community. In Isaiah 58:12, we read the following charge: "you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to live in." Israel is called to restore and mend the divided community – in this way, mirroring God's restorative action outlined in the second part of the book of Isaiah, adhering to a key aspect of the belief that humans are created in the image of God is that humans are called "to represent and resemble God in the world." As James Mays formulates this charge: "The Israelites' identity and destiny as the people of the Lord is a movement toward the realization of humanity's identity and destiny as image of God."²⁶ Writing from the South African context with its painful history of apartheid, the now rector of Stellenbosch University, Russell Botman shows how this act of healing broken relationships or reconciliation indeed forms an important aspect of human dignity. He writes as follows about the necessity of reconstituting or repairing the relationship: "Through the practice of reconciliation, the victim and the perpetrator seek mutual embrace and freedom from conflict."²⁷

In this process, we can contemplate the role of the church of serving as the channel of "God's creative and re-creative action in constituting and reconstituting identity and dignity."²⁸ One avenue in which the church may live out this vocation is by helping people unlearn those thought-patterns that are at the root of dignity-defying actions such as racism, sexism and homophobia. At the heart of those actions that deny people's inherent worth as created in the image of God one finds a particular logic – what Peter Ochs calls a "logic of indignity," i.e. "humanly constructed diagrams of the rules of human reasoning" that in some way tarnish the image of God, causing people to suffer indignity. An important aspect of countering those situations of dehumanization is to interrupt the logic of indignity with a "logic of redemption,"

²⁶ Mays, "The Self in the Psalms and the Image of God," 39. Cf. also Welker who describes this vocation as "the involvement in the divine life itself, by way of being a witness, by becoming a mirror of God's purpose and glory," "Theological Anthropology versus Anthropological Reductionism," 330.

²⁷ Botman, "Covenantal Anthropology," 75.

²⁸ Cf. Schwöbel's essay, "Recovering Human Dignity," in which he writes: "...the church of Christ is committed to sharing the situation of those who have lost their dignity in human eyes and to communicating to them the message that their dignity is re-created by the one who first bestowed it upon them. In communicating this promise in speech and action, the church is called to become the witness of the recovery of human dignity because humans are dignified by God," 57- 58.

challenging and changing existing (harmful) thought-patterns – in the case of Ochs “reading Scripture for the sake of repairing humanly constructed logics.”²⁹

One sees how this regularly happens in the prophetic traditions, how the Isaianic prophet identifies the flawed logic of indignity and interrupts it with an alternative discourse that challenges the status quo. I mention three examples: First, in Isa 5:20, one finds a classic example of such a misguided logic when the Israelites are accused of calling evil good and good evil. According to this logic, they confuse light and darkness and bitter and sweet. As in the song of the vineyard (Isa 5:1-7), these are people who can see putrid grapes and call them good; who see bloodshed and call it justice, or hear despairing cries and call it righteousness.³⁰ It is the same logic according to which the people whom the prophet addresses expand their houses, take food from the poor, and fast while others go hungry.³¹

These injustices grow out of people’s lack of insight; from their inability to see whom the God is they are supposed to worship. Like people who are intoxicated by wine and strong drink, who live a life of self-indulgence and exuberant festivity, they are oblivious about what is going on around them (vv 11-12).

A second example comes from Isaiah 58, which indicates that social justice concerns continue to be important in a post-exilic community. In this text, we see evidence of a flawed logic, identified and interrupted with an alternative way of thinking when the logic of worshiping and fasting while engaging in acts of oppressing one’s workers or living in strife with one’s fellow worshippers in vv 3-5 are called unconscionable. In vv 6-7, in a first-person voice, God gives new content to the fast that God prefers, so offering a counter-argument rooted in the way the world is supposed to be:

Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin?

Finally, probably some of the best examples of identifying a misguided logic upholding injustice and offering an alternative way of engaging one another rooted in justice is to be found in eschatological texts such as Isaiah 65:17-23 (cf. also Isa 2:2-4, 11:1-10) in which the prophet imagines an alternative world.³² In this world where there will be no more weeping or the outcry of which we read in Isa 5:7, there will be no more infant mortality or people dying before their time (v 20). People will have adequate access to housing and nutrition (v 21), the right to work and to see this work come to fruition (vv 21-23). However, one only has to read the chapters surrounding this beautiful vision to know that the prophet’s words are rooted in and emerge

29 Peter Ochs describes this “logic” as the “visible mapping of patterns of activity in this world that would otherwise be merely implicit in our activities, and, in that sense, invisible,” “The Logic of Indignity and the Logic of Redemption,” in *God and Human Dignity* (Eds. R. Kendall Soulen and Linda Woodhead; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006), 143.

30 LeClerq, *Yahweh is Exalted in Justice*, 60.

31 Brevard S. Childs notes that what is at stake here is not “civil rights” but rather the “divine order of justice that, God established for his chosen people,” *Isaiah: A Commentary* (Old Testament Library; Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 48.

32 Fraser Watts writes that “enhanced respect for human dignity requires imagination. Such imagination can become impoverished or distorted in various ways, and we must locate current threats to human dignity more precisely to understand better exactly how failures of imagination bear on them.” Watts continues that if people are able to look differently one may succeed in opening up alternative possibilities in our world that were previously invisible to us, “Human Dignity: Concepts and Experiences,” in *God and Human Dignity* (Eds. R. Kendall Soulen and Linda Woodhead; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006), 259-260.

from a world that is marred by injustice, where people are robbed of their livelihood; where people's justice is perverted; where people are poor, homeless, and hungry.³³ It seems that it is exactly amidst assaults on human dignity that the prophet offers to us in Isaiah 65 a rich discourse regarding human dignity that upholds people's inherent right to live, to work and to eat. This vision of the world where dignity is the norm and not the exception has the effect of changing the conversation – and one would hope potentially also the way people think and act.

Many centuries have passed since the time the prophets writing in the name of Isaiah advocated for a more just society. And yet it seems that the more things change, the more they stay the same. All around us we find instances of where there is either a lack of imagination or a flawed imagination where racism, sexism, homophobia, elitism, ageism prevail. Our challenge is to help each other find creative ways to unlearn these negative thought patterns, substituting it with a logic of human dignity that is rooted in a particular interpretative context such as was outlined in terms of the prophet Isaiah that conceivably can help the church to live up to her vocation of mending the world.

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33 Blenkinsopp shows how this text holds up a "transformed existence in which past misfortunes will be forgotten" which is particularly poignant in light of the high mortality rate of especially young children, as well as the fact that the average life expectancy was 40 years for men and 30 years for women. *Isaiah 56-66*, 286-287; Carol L. Meyers, *Discovering Eve: Ancient Israelite Women in Context* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 112-113. Cf also John W De Gruchy, "A New Heaven and A New Earth: An exposition of Isaiah 65:17-25," *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 105 (1999): 65-74.

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KEY WORDS

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TREFWOORDE

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The Huguenots of South Africa in history and religious identity

ABSTRACT

The first aim of this article is to give an overview of some of the opinions that were expressed about the Huguenots of South Africa in history shortly before and after 1988 – the tercentenary year of their coming to South Africa. In this regard the aim of the article is also to analyse and evaluate some new historical information that was brought forward since 1988. The second aim of the article is to make a contribution to the efforts that were undertaken to establish the religious identity and heritage of the Huguenots that came to South Africa. The word “religious” is used in both the sense of their narrower church identity as well as their broader identity in life; in this regard one can also speak of their spirituality.

1. INTRODUCTION

On April 13 1688 the first group of French Refugees, that came to the Cape of Good Hope as part of an official colonisation scheme of the Netherlands through the Dutch East Indian Company (DEIC), set foot on land from the ship the at Saldanha Bay, about 70 km north of Table Bay. The Voorschoten was part of the so called autumnal fleet which sailed from the Netherlands at the turn of the year. Sailing with the Voorschoten were six other ships with French refugees on board: the Borssenburg, Oosterland, De Schelde, Berg China, Zuid-Beveland and Wapen van Alkmaar. On Sunday 25 April 1688 the Oosterland, with Huguenots on board, was the first ship of the fleet to sail into Table Bay although the Voorschoten arrived much earlier but in Saldanha Bay (Coertzen 1976:150-154).

A few months after their arrival Van der Stel writes to the Chamber of Middelburg about the huge task to help the colonists prepare the land to plant wheat, vines and other fruit. He writes that the land that they have to till has probably never been touched or cultivated since the beginning of creation and first had to be cleared of all kinds of brush. It will take two to three years before it can start to yield any kind of harvest. A very dismal outlook indeed. Most of the refugees arrived at the Cape with empty hands. In his letter Van der Stel states that all the material they needed for agriculture and to build their homesteads were much more expensive here than in the fatherland – a fact which necessitates them to be in debt with the Company (State Archives Cape Town: C502, Outgoing Documents (1688 – 1690): 15 April 1689 to Chamber of Middelburg).

Unlike some of the French refugees that fled to other countries like Germany, the Netherlands and England those that came to the Cape, with the exception of a few, were very poor people.

It is also very important to always distinguish between the Huguenots that came to South Africa on their own initiative and those who came to the southern tip of Africa as part of the official colonisation scheme of the Dutch East Indian Company. The larger part of Huguenots that came to South Africa officially as colonists came more or less during the years 1688-1689. Already in 1691 Van der Stel wrote to the Chamber of Middelburgh asking them to rather not

send any more refugees of the kind of the Huguenots to the Cape. His reasons were that the French were ill behaved; they did not have much knowledge of farming and were only a burden to both the Company and the diaconate because of their poverty. The last ship with a significant number of Huguenots on board was the Driebergen that left Holland on 25 May 1698 (State Archives Cape Town: C 423, Incoming Documents (1697-1699): 7 May 1698). With this ship we can say that the official colonisation scheme of the DEIC to bring Huguenots to South Africa was over. In fact already after 1688 we find that the Lords XVII never again officially discusses the matter of French refugees as colonists for the Cape.

From the facts and figures available to us it is not possible to say exactly how many French refugees arrived at the Cape. According to the lists of Huguenots who arrived at the Cape there were 9 up until 1687. They came on their own and not as part of the official colonisation scheme. The official colonisation scheme started in 1688. In that year the number of Huguenots at the Cape increased by 138 and in 1689 by a further 20. This means that by the end of 1689 a total of 158 Huguenots arrived at the Cape under the official colonisation policy of the Company. This figure agrees with that given in Van der Stel's Letter of June 12, 1690 to the Lords XVII in which he states that there were altogether 150 odd refugees. During 1690 another 9 Huguenots arrived and in 1691 another 11. This means that by the end of 1691 there were 178 French refugees at the Cape who had been sent out by the DEIC. According to the list from Batavia 171 Frenchmen were given assistance. This figure is reasonably close to the one of 178 mentioned above. After 1691 we know from available documentation of another 10 Huguenots that came to the Cape – in 1696 the Vosmaer with 5 Huguenots on board, arrived in Table Bay. Originally it was a party of ten but en route five died. (State Archives Cape Town: C 595: Day Journal 1696: 17 October 1696). In 1698 the Driebergen with five Huguenots on board left Holland for the Cape (State Archives Cape Town: C423 Incoming Documentation (1697-1699): 7 May 1698). This brings the total number of Huguenots at the Cape that came out as part of the official scheme of the DEIC to 193. Nevertheless we find that in spite of the termination of the official colonisation scheme French Refugees still kept coming to the Cape of Good Hope. By 1702 the total number had grown to 229; by 1726 there were 278 Frenchmen at the Cape. By 1729 another refugee arrived and this gives a grand total of 279 by 1729 of whom 193 came as part of the official colonisation scheme of the DEIC.

By 1692 the total European population at the Cape were about 856 freemen. If we work on a total Huguenot population of about 193 by 1692 it means that by that year they formed 22,54% of the total European population. By 1702 the number of Huguenots had grown to about 229 out of a European population of 1368, which means that by 1702 the Huguenots formed 16,73% of the total European population. These are significant percentages of Huguenots, enough for them to have had considerable influence on the southern tip of Africa during the early years of their settlement.

In his sermon at the bicentennial anniversary of the Cape of Good Hope the Rev Abraham Faure pointed out that in the 'establishment of the Christian Church in South Africa' God provided 'about eighty families (more or less 150 persons) who fled the bloody persecution in France – to find asylum at the Cape. God continues to use their offspring if one considers the fact that 16 of the 26 ministers of Cape descent, serving the Dutch Reformed Church in 1852 can trace their background to a French Refugee (Faure 1852:15,52).

During the course of time the religious influence of the original refugees and their descendants were felt throughout the whole of South Africa and even further north into Africa. In this regard we can think of the missionary travels of someone like Prof Johannes du Plessis, a Huguenot descendant and professor at the Theological Seminary in Stellenbosch. Du Plessis was not the only theologian of Huguenot descent at the Seminary. Up until 2009 we find the names

of at least 13 Huguenot descendents among the staff members of the Theological Seminary in Stellenbosch, later the Faculty of Theology of the Stellenbosch University, from a total staff of 56 between 1859 and 2009: JI Marais (23/8/1827–27/8/1919; J du Plessis 25/7/1868–16/2/1935; DG Malan 23/3/1880–3/3/1937, DW de Villiers 30/11/1919–15/5/2002; JL de Villiers 8/3/1922–2010; J du Preez 16/8/1927–; DA du Toit 8/1/1942–2/4/2010; PF Theron 4/8/1942–7/7/2010; BA du Toit 22/11/1937–; AEJ Mouton 21/1/1952–; J H Cilliers 10/8/1954–; I A Nell 28/4/1961– and AL Cloete 12/6/1971–. It is a question whether the names of D Lategan 23/2/1880–27/12/1953 and JPI Olivier 31/11/1945–25/3/1998 cannot also be added to this list. These academics of course had and still have a very far-reaching influence not only in the Dutch Reformed Church but also in other reformed churches and across the whole of Africa and further abroad (Coertzen 2009:161-165). The names of Huguenot descendants can also be found amongst the ministers and members of all Christian denominations in South Africa.

The results of a survey published in the Sunday Times Magazine on October 4, 1981 showed that amongst the 36 largest families of European descent in South Africa there are nine Huguenot surnames, namely Nel, Du Plessis, Coetzee, Fourie, Du Toit, Le Roux, Viljoen, Marais and Du Preez. In the first four volumes of the South African Biographical Dictionary there are articles on 25 people with the surname De Villiers, 17 on Du Toits, 12 on Malans, 9 on Jouberts, and 8 on Viljoens. The names of Huguenot descendants are found amongst the leaders and achievers in every area of life in South Africa — religion, social, economic cultural life, research and development, agriculture, sports and politics, as military leaders and as heads of state; as poets, writers, artists and composers. Alas, the names of Huguenots descendants can also be found among those who took wrong turns in life. Name any area of life and the names of Huguenot descendants will be found there, too many to mention. One must also remember that the Huguenot descendants are not only those people with Huguenot names. There are many South Africans who do not have French surnames but who nevertheless have a large percentage of Huguenot blood in their veins.

The Huguenots of South Africa originally came to South Africa as refugees and colonists to help provide for a Dutch supply station and trading post at the Cape. They settled largely in the district of Drakenstein and within four decades the French language disappeared and they completely became South Africans. They identified with their fellow Dutchmen in their new context and religiously they found a home in the Dutch Reformed Church, a church that was religiously and spiritually from the same root as the Reformed Churches in France and the Walloon Church in the Netherlands.

2. OPINIONS ABOUT THE HUGUENOTS OF SOUTH AFRICA SINCE 1988

In 1967 Beryl Anne Verner from the School of Librarianship at the University of Cape Town compiled a bibliography *Huguenots in South Africa*. The bibliography has 171 entries under various headings¹

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- 1 (A) *History* – (1a) General South African history, (1b).General Huguenot History, (1c) Travel Journals – (2) Huguenots in South Africa (2a) Books, (2b) Periodicals, (2c) Articles and pamphlets, (2d) Special issues of periodicals. ;
- (B) The Contribution of the Huguenots to South African Life: (1) General, (2) The French Language in South Africa, (3) Architecture, (4) Church History, (5) The wine industry.
- (C) The Huguenots in South African Literature: (1) Poetry, (2) Drama, (3) Fiction
- (D) Huguenot Monuments and Memorial celebrations
- (E) Genealogies and names: (1) General, (2) Genealogies of individual families, (3) Heraldry
- (F) Index to authors.
- (G) Index to serials. (Verner,1967,i)

Verner refers to the fact that there is indeed not very much 'official documentation' about the Huguenots and that it can be said with reasonable certainty that the existing documents have been thoroughly researched and are reflected in the published works (Verner 1967:iii). Verner also refers to 'very little literature' by and about the Huguenots, which are available in 1967.

Between 1925 and 1929 Prof Franken published various articles on Huguenot writings in French. In 1987 these articles were published in the *Yearbook of the South African Archives*, no 41. There are also collections of texts by C G Botha and CC Spoelstra, which were found in The Hague and in Amsterdam. In 1988 MJH du Plessis translated all the French texts that were available and made them available. This work of great value indeed opens new avenues on the Huguenots that wait to be explored. (Du Plessis 1988:Xerox copy)

In an article from 1988 'The French Refugees in South Africa and the Historiography of the nineteenth century' prof E Brown draws valuable conclusions in an attempt to understand the identity of the Huguenots in SA history. He points out that the contribution of the French Refugees was only seriously considered after the English took over the Cape at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Their influence were idealised within the context of distinctive situations, a historical awareness, and a historical development – be it to justify the British take over, to theologically and ecclesiastically accommodate the new situation or on the other hand to resist the English management and policy in favour of closer links with the Netherlands. Or be it to explain the emergence of the Afrikaners as a people with their language Afrikaans. Brown is also of opinion that it was only during the nineteenth century that the French Refugees became the French *Huguenots* or the *Huguenots* of South Africa (Brown 1988:93-95). The name can of course already be found in documents from the sixteenth century. It does remain a question why the name Huguenot was not used in South Africa until the nineteenth century.

In 2008 an article by R Britz 'The French Refugees in 20th century South African historiography' takes the historiography on the Huguenots further. In this he exposes valuable material. His conclusion is that one is struck by the positive evaluation and acceptance that the Huguenots received in SA historiography. He then continues, 'The collection and study of primary sources however did not prevent contextualised presumptions, suppositions, images and unreliable socio-historical and religious theories. The Calvinism /Calvinistic/Calvin paradigm especially needs meticulous investigation of primary sources, since it is also connected to the question of Calvin's direct influence in South Africa, a subject that has been presented in the past in terms of popular misleading assumptions, based on (questionable) secondary sources' (Britz 2008:21) It is certainly a legitimate issue that Britz places on the agenda and thorough research of primary sources has to be done as well as reformulations or closer formulations if necessary. Britz himself does not offer an answer except to point out that in the past the historiography of the Huguenots have been used to support all kinds of ideas of the day – from support of the British occupation to Afrikaner nationalism.

Britz is not the only one who questions the so-called 'Calvinistic' influence of the Huguenots in South Africa. Victor D'Assonville, Hermann Gilliomee and Richard Elphick also question their 'Calvinistic' influence. D'Assonville claims that 'The line from Calvin via France to the Cape of Good Hope is not as clear-cut or as straight as it has been stated in recent publications' (D'Assonville 2008:68). For Gilliomee and Elphick it has not been shown '...what aspects of Calvinist doctrine permeated what regions and classes at the Cape, in what forms, and in what areas. It has not even been shown that Calvinism was influential at all' (Elphick & Gilliomee 1979:363). Gilliomee and Elphick do not 'assert that Calvinist doctrine had no influence on social stratification at the Cape, only that the argument for such influence has yet to be made.' They also point out 'that the Cape was notoriously lacking in schools, churches and vigorous intellectual life' in those early years. (Elphick & Gilliomee, 1979,364).

Philippe Denis in his article 'The Cape Huguenots and Their Legacy in Apartheid South Africa' closes his article with the following words: 'South Africa has now entered another era. The Afrikaner people, who developed the Huguenot myth as a way of strengthening their identity, have lost their leading position in the government of the country. This new situation creates the conditions for a more critical appraisal of the role of the Huguenots in South African history' (Denis 2003:303). Apparently Denis sees the claims about the Huguenots as a 'myth' which Afrikaners invented as a way to strengthen their identity and now that they have lost their leading position in government it opens the way for a more critical appraisal of the role of the Huguenots in history.

One of the latest and also a much-acclaimed work on the history of South Africa is the book *The New History of South Africa*. (Tafelberg 2007, Eds. Hermann Gilliomee and Bernard Mbenga). The book recognises the contribution of the Huguenots to the history of South Africa. It mentions that the Huguenots were refugees due to religious persecution. It was the expressed policy at the Cape that they must assimilate with the Dutch and learn the Dutch language and ethos. They helped to stabilise the free citizenry at the Cape and it was their experience of religious persecution that prepared them and made them determined to overcome the obstacles with which they were faced in a new country. Their descendants in South Africa occupied leadership roles in South African society out of proportion to original number of immigrants that came to the Cape. Another contribution was the fact that with the Huguenots coming as families, more women came into the Cape society which eventually led to much more stable marital relationships in the Cape society. Between 1720 and 1790 four times more vineyards were planted at the Cape, the wheat harvest trebled and the net worth of estates also trebled. By 1730 a new class of 'hereboere', rich landowners, came into existence at the Cape. Measured in terms of land, vineyards, wheat harvests and livestock ownership, they formed about 10-20% of the rural citizen population. Of the most well-known of these families more than 50% were Huguenot descendants (Gilliomee & Mbenga 2007:60,66).

The forgoing statements and viewpoints pose challenges to church historians and must be taken note of. They all need serious and honest attention and continued research has to be done to really understand and open the history of the Huguenots of South Africa. This article tries to meet some of the challenges but surely much more research is necessary.

Historians must of course also be careful not to pose their questions just out of their own time and context, such as, for instance, that at the moment it is not popular at all to claim any heritage of Calvin in South Africa. Does this kind of questioning do justice to the historical documents, contexts and circumstances of the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries? Indeed a critical appraisal is necessary but also an honest and objective search to really understand the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries both in Europe and in South Africa, in all its facets of religion, economy, social life, ecclesiastical life and spirituality as well as political relations and policies – indeed to really understand the history of the Huguenots of South Africa and its real meaning.

3. NEW INFORMATION REGARDING THE HUGUENOTS OF SA

A remarkable thing about the Huguenots in the history of South Africa is that during the past decades all kinds of new information have been brought forward which sheds further light on the identity and heritage of the Huguenots of South Africa. I refer here the rerhyming of the Psalms by Pierre Simond and his introduction to the rerhyming, which was discovered round about 1996. It is the rhyming of the Psalms of David by the French Huguenot minister at the Cape Pierre Simond under the title *Les Veilles Afriquaines ou Les Pseaumes de David mis en vers*

François together with a *Preface*. We know that this work was published in the first years of the eighteenth century but for centuries no trace of it could be found until 1996, when a copy was found in the State Library of St Petersburg. This work together with its preface has opened a whole new set of information on the Huguenots of South Africa.

Between 1699 and 1701 Pierre Simond, did his rerhyming of the Psalms of David during the African nights on his farm Bethlehem in the Berg River valley and the joining valleys, where the Huguenots, the members of his congregation, were settled. Through this work Pierre Simond was responsible for the very first piece of religious and literary work written in South Africa and eventually published in Amsterdam (Vigne 1998:3; Pierre Simond's Psalms, 2). He started this work in 1699 in the midst of the congregation of Drakenstein (Vigne 1998:3, Pierre Simond's Psalms, 2) The work contains Simond's metrical versions of Psalms 1 to 51, 74, 79, 103, 130, 137 and 143 as well as the versification of the Ten Commandments and the Nunc Dimittis or the song of Simeon.

In 1701 Simond left the Cape to go and present his work to the Walloon Synod in the Netherlands. The French speaking European churches had been looking for a new version of the Psalms because the old version had become very difficult because of the changes in the French language. The churches in Switzerland had accepted the version created by Conrard and De la Bastide and requested all other French-speaking churches to accept it as well. The Walloon churches in the Netherlands however refused to accept the new Swiss version and decided to work on an own completely new version. (Bibliotheque Wallonne, stukke nr 60, Articles resolu au Synode de Rotterdam, le neuviemme Septembre et jours suivans de l, annee dix sept ans). It is this decision that brought Simond to return to the Netherlands with his version. However when he arrived in the Netherlands, Synod had already decided to abandon the whole project. Simond then had his version published under the title of *Les Veilleés Afriquaines ou les Pseaumes de David mis en vers Francais*. It was published in 1704 by Comelle de Hoogenhuisen of the Eglantiersgragt in Amsterdam and thus it became the first work not only of literature (Vigne 1998:3). But also of Reformed theology written in South Africa and to be published (Pierre Simond's French Psalms, 2). For nearly three hundred years we knew that this publication existed but had no copy of it. In 1996 it came to light through Mr Gertjan Buitink of Belgium that there was a copy of the book in the State Library of St Petersburg in Russia. Through the kind co-operation of the Library of the Stellenbosch University and the State Library of St Petersburg a photocopy was sent to South Africa in 1997. In 2000 the original copy was studied in St Petersburg. This helped to determine why a copy ended up *in* St Petersburg. It was namely one of the books in the library of the Saluzki brothers, both bishops in Warschau that went to St Petersburg by the end of the eighteenth century. Half of this library went back to Warschau between 1921 and 1933. These books were destroyed during the Second World War. Fortunately for South Africa and the world *Les Veilles Africaines* remained in St Petersburg (see Coertzen 2001). In 2002 a facsimile was published in Stellenbosch, a few kilometres from the place where it was originally written in 1699. This certainly was a remarkable contribution from the Huguenots of South Africa to reformed theology and liturgy and also to the literary history of South Africa and it is a good thing that after nearly three hundred years this remarkable publication has come home. It also needs to be mentioned that in 1708 a rerhyming of all the Psalms by Pierre Simond was published in Lille by Balthazar le Franq under the title *Les Pseaumes de David Mis en vers François*. It is a pity that this publication does not also bear the title *Les Veilles Africaines*, most probably because the full rerhyming was done in Europe after a positive response to *Les Veilles*.

In the mean time it has also come to light that there is a reference to the *Les Veilles Africaines* in a book by Jennet from 1706 *Les Pseaumes de David en vers. Nouvelle version, dans laquelle on a retenu les expressions de Marot & de Beze autant que l'usage moderne a pü le permettre*.

4. THE RELIGIOUS IDENTITY OF THE HUGUENOTS

The Huguenots made a large contribution to the growth of South Africa in many fields. This article wants to concentrate on their religious and spiritual heritage. Within all the fields of their influence their religious heritage was very important. In a sense it is not easy to determine and describe exactly what this heritage consisted of. *Les Veilles Afriquaines* and the *Preface* to it, which came to light during the past years, however does help us to grasp and understand this heritage in a better way. Like the Dutch who had arrived before them, the Huguenots were also bearers of the reformed religion and along with that also of the influence of John Calvin. Calvin had a very strong bond with the French Reformed Churches – he states it explicitly in the foreword to his *Christian Institutes* that he especially wrote that work for his fellow French countrymen among which there were many who hungered and thirsted for Christ (Calvin 1559:89). In the preface to his commentary on Daniel he states unequivocally that it would be a sin to forget the people of the country (France) to which he belongs (Calvin, Letter to the French People 18 August 1561). In other countries the influence of Calvin was spread by students, correspondence as well as through his writings. As a born Frenchman he gave his best abilities to France. He showed his concern for his fellow countrymen throughout his life. In the sixteenth century Calvin gave the French churches a stable organisation; he trained their ministers and drew up a confession of faith for them. He was a valued adviser to them. It stands to reason that the context and circumstances in France and the rest of Europe changed much since the death of Calvin in 1564 and the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685 and the coming of the Huguenots to SA in 1688. Much also changed in the spirituality and the way of thinking from the time of the Reformation in the sixteenth century to the Enlightenment and the call for a Second Reformation in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

As seen above it is often a point of discussion whether there is any real tangible influence of Calvin on South Africa through the Huguenots. There are historians who explicitly question the fact that the Huguenots were carriers of the influence of John Calvin to South Africa. There are however indications that the Huguenots, or at least some of them laid a bond between South Africa and John Calvin. When this is said it must be remembered that most of the Huguenots that came to South Africa were not highly educated people who did a lot of theological reflection and wrote long treatises on their worldview and spirituality. They were mostly farmers and artisans, and good ones at that, fathers, mothers, children, members of their local congregation. The question to answer is, what was the motivation of their life and to what kind of teaching were they exposed to, what were the ideas that influenced them, what was the ethos that they practised in their everyday life and work? To try and determine the religious identity and heritage of the Huguenots of South Africa attention is going to be given to three aspects: the theology of Pierre Simond, the spirituality of some of the Huguenots and the position and character of catechetical teaching in the congregation of Drakenstein up until about 1723.

With regard to the theological views of Pierre Simond the following is new and important information after 1988. Between 1699 and 1701 Pierre Simond, the Huguenot minister did his re rhyming of the Psalms of David. It was published in Amsterdam in 1704 as *Les Veilles Afriquaines ou les Pseaumes de David Mis en Verse François*. During the African nights on his farm Bethlehem in the Berg River Valley and the joining valleys, where the Huguenots, the members of his congregation, were settled, he did this work.

Psalms 8:4 he rendered as follows:

“Que’est ce de l’homme, alors dis-je en moi-même:
Qu’il en souviennne, ô Majesté suprême?
Qu’est du fils de l’homme, ô Dieux des Cieux
Que de son bien tu te montres soigneux?”

In 1706 one Jennet in the work *Les Pseaumes de David en Vers Nouvelle Version. Dans laquelle on a retenu les expressions de Marot & de Beze que l'usage moderne a pûle permettre* writes the following on Psalm 8:4 (It is found in the original version) 'O God what is man that you think of him, and the Son of man that you visit him. I have consulted various translations in French verse, none mention the Son of man. This is astonishing because the Son of man is depicted in the rest of the Cantique as having great power and the words used by the prophet are so magnificent that one cannot do otherwise than to attribute it to Jesus Christ, eternal God' ('Il se trouve dans le Pseaume 8.v.4. Il y a dans l'Original ô Dieu, qu'est-ce que de l'homme que tu te souviennes de lui, & du Fils de l'homme que tu le visites. J'ai consulté plusieurs traductions en vers François, aucune ne fait mention du Fils de l'homme. Cela est assez étonnant, car ce Fils de l'homme est peint dans la fuite du Cantique ayant un si grand pouvoir, & les termes, employés par le prophète, sont si magnifiques, qu'on ne peut les attribuer qu'à Jesus Christ, Dieu béni éternellement.'). He then continues to ask why the Son of man is not mentioned in a book which we use every day. He himself might have fallen into this trap if he did not have a discussion with a very wise and very well known theologian who wanted the fourth verse to keep this passage. Then he writes the following: 'The only version which expresses this place faithfully has the title *Les Veilles Afriquaines*, it was published two years ago. It is hoped that the author of this book also has the same good knowledge of French and the rules of poetry as well as the Hebrew and the force of that language; his version would prevail over all the ones that we have.' (*la Seule Version qui a pour titre Les Veilles Africaine, & qui parut il y a deux ans, exprime fidèlement cet endroit: Il seroit à souhaiter que l'Auteur de ce Livre eût aussi bien sçeu le François & les règles de la Poésie que l'Hebreu & la force de cette langue; sa Version l'emporteroit sur toutes celles que nous avons.*) (Jennet 1706:13).

According to Jennet, Pierre Simond succeeded in his rhyming to convey this very important phrase. The important question is do we find any of the theological ideas of John Calvin in this translation of Simond. Even if we cannot say that here is a literal rendering of the theology of John Calvin we can say with certainty that in his re rhyming of Psalm 8:4 in the way he did it, Pierre Simond is in line with the theology of John Calvin as it is found in his translation and exposition of Psalm 8:3-6 (Calvin 1855:99-107). That this translation by Simond, in keeping the phrase 'The Son of man' conveys the ideas of Calvin is confirmed even more strongly in Calvin's commentary on the Book of Daniel where he unequivocally states on the Phrase 'the Son of Man', 'without doubt this is to be understood of Christ' (Calvin 1853:40). In this John Calvin in Geneva during the sixteenth century and Pierre Simond in 1699 at the southern tip of Africa, in the Drakenstein Valley, concur. And this must have also been the kind of theological ideas to which the members of the Drakenstein congregation were exposed to, ideas, which must have influenced their way of thinking and the spirituality, which they exercised – their exercitia pietatis.

With regard to the theology of Pierre Simond it must also be remembered that the Huguenots that came to the Cape were most probably members of the Walloon Church in the Netherlands. We know for a fact that Pierre Simond was a minister of the Walloon congregation of Zierikzee before he came to the Cape. Of this Church it was said that their synodical structure that was formed by 30 to 40 particular churches, and this was used to protect the identity of a pure, reformed church, which desired not to deviate from pure doctrine in any point. Justly Colvius could say of these churches in 1705 'Although they recommend love in all things, they show, up to this point in time, disposition towards error and God has, up to now, granted them the grace that under them there is no discord in doctrine and there are no parties which distinguish themselves by name or method' (Van't Spijker 1990:71). Pierre Simond also did his theological training at the academy of Die, which was known as a reformed institution modelled on the academy of Genève.

We also find expression of the spirituality of those early Huguenots in some of their writings that were kept. Gideon le Grand, a medic (chirurgyn), starts his diary for the year 1710 with the words: ‘With the break of day start your day by blessing the holy name of the Eternal God. In the evening when your labour is done praise Him again and so pass the year’ – these words are written at the beginning of his diary for 1710, a diary in which he records his life as a heal master in his community and writes about his healing practice, his art of healing and the and the medicaments that he used. But the introduction to all of this is the confession of his faith in God and how he thinks that one should live in the presence of God. In his diary of words, which convey a strong spirituality, rooted in God (Le Grange Journal 1710, in Franken 1978:153-154). Another example of the spirituality we find in the notes of Maria Jeanne du Pré; notes which she made at the birth of each of her children as well as those of her sister Jacomina starting on 7 August 1698 and ending on 27 August 1718. For each of her own children she writes a biblical characterisation, which corresponds with the name of the child, followed by a prayer for the particular child. For the children of her sister she writes a prayer for the blessing of the child. She concludes all these little poems for each child with the following: ‘O Vader aller weezen bewaarder aller vromen./ Laat uwen segenshand tot deze kindren komen./ Brengt haar na volle jaaren in uwe genaderijk./ Dat zij u Eeuwig looven in de hemel al gelijk” (O, Father of all children, protector of the pious. Let your hand of blessing come to these children. After a full life bring them into your kingdom of grace. That they may all praise you eternally in heaven) (Copia in Franken 1978:167-168).

In both cases, that of Gideon Le Grand as well as that of Maria Jeanne du Pré it is a deep faith in God that finds expression, not only in a worship service but also in the happenings of everyday life. Their religious belief about how life should be lived everyday and the expression of their belief in God and their prayer for the future of a child at its birth. It is not the words of learned theologians but the words of the faith of ordinary people who heard the Word of God proclaimed to them and then went on to witness to it and proclaimed it themselves in their everyday life. This was the kind of spirituality of the Huguenots, which is not to say that all of them were in every way holy people on earth and that every one had this kind of spiritual expression; for that there is too much evidence to the contrary. But if we compare these expressions of spirituality, with the viewpoints of Pierre Simond and with the witness in official documents about the spiritual state in the congregation of Drakenstein we can most certainly conclude that a spiritual life and witness were not mere words amongst many of the Huguenots.

The Huguenot congregation as a whole also made its contribution to the spirituality of the Church at the Cape. In 1729 (K.K.A. G3 111 Resolutions of the Church Council of Drakenstein, 6 November 1729) the congregation was said to be to be seen as the most diligent in the country, an opinion which was confirmed on the 31st of January 1731 in a letter from the church council of Cape Town to the Classis of Amsterdam (Letter form the Church Council of Cape Town to the Classis of Amsterdam, 31 January 1731. In Spoelstra, Bouwstoffen Deel I, 135-136). In this they undoubtedly not only confirmed their own identity but also contributed to the growth of religious zeal and godliness within the Dutch Reformed Church as a whole.

This kind of spirituality, which finds its deepest roots in the reformation of the sixteenth century, was part of the heritage that they bequeathed to their new fatherland.

Another document that gives us insight to the kind of teaching to which the Huguenots were exposed to in those first years of their settlement are the catechetical books that was used in the congregation of Drakenstein – the so called Huguenot congregation. In this regard there was the catechism written and used by Paul Roux, *Belijdenis des Geloofs* (Confession of Faith). The exact date of this work is unsure. We do however have a handwritten copy of the work done by H C von Wieding in 1743. Paul Roux himself lived from 1665-1723 (Coertzen 1988:168). From

this we can at least deduce that the catechism must have been written before 1723. This is the oldest written question book, or catechism that has originated at the Cape. Dr V D'Assonville subjected the book to close scrutiny. He points out that the theological roots of Roux's catechism clearly goes back to the Dutch theologian Johannes d'Outrein (1662-1722) and from him there is also a link to the German theologian FA Lampe (1683-1729). Lampe published notes on the German translation of D'Outrein's commentary of the Heidelberg Catechism. These notes were translated into Dutch. D'Assonville is of opinion that due to historical reasons Roux was much more dependent on d'Outrein for his own catechism than he was on Lampe. Lampe's work *Erste Wahrheitsmilch für Säuglinge am Alter und Verstand* was published in 1717 while the first edition of d'Outrein's *Korte Schets* was already published in 1687. This book of d'Outrein was widespread as can be seen from the fact that it was translated into German, French, English, Malaysian and Portuguese. It is very interesting that we read in the minutes of the church council of Drakenstein under the date of 18 March 1718 that the Lords XVII had decided to send 100 'sketse', d'Outrein's *Korte Schets* and *100 Oostrums* – a commentary on the Heidelberg Catechism – as well as 50 Bibles to the Cape. These books could be on order (K.K.A.G3 1/1: Minutes of the Church Council of Drakenstein, 18 March 1718). By 1721 there is once more a need for these books and the congregation is asked to save money to buy the books from a bookseller (K.K.A.G3 1/1: Besluite Kerkraad Drakenstein, 2 Februarie 1721). From this information as well as from Roux's dependence on d'Outrein it is fair to state that at least the content of the Heidelberg Catechism must have been known in the Drakenstein congregation during the years that Paul Roux was there as teacher. While there are significant parallels between Roux's Catechism and d'Outrein's work there are also significant differences. D'Assonville comes to the conclusion that the catechetical education in Drakenstein during the first half of the eighteenth century indicates an influence of the Second Reformation (Nadere Reformasie) – 'i.e. a form of reformed orthodoxy' (D'Assonville 2008:67). He is also of opinion that it must be taken into account that the Voetius- and Coccejus traditions are united in d'Outrein which according to him means that the reformed orthodoxy of the seventeenth century '-- had started to be infiltrated by the ideas of the Enlightenment' (D'Assonville 2008:67). This leads him to the statement 'The line from Calvin via France to the Cape of Good Hope is not as clear-cut or as straight as it has been stated in recent publications' (D'Assonville 2008:68).

Perhaps another short note from the Preface of *Les Veilles Afriquaines* is appropriate at this point. In his Introduction to the rerhyming of the Psalms Simond gives us an interesting piece of information regarding the type of catechesis, which he used with his own children. He writes that on Pentecost Sunday 1699 he gave his children, as he was used to do every Sunday, a Psalm as task for the rest of the week. On that day the children themselves asked for Psalm 50. It is then that they discover that the new Psalm (the rhyming of Conrart and De La Bastide) have five verses and not four like the old rhyming of Clement Marot, in which Marot co-operated with Calvin. Simond then compares both the new version of Conrart and De la Bastide and the old version of Marot with the Scripture text and according to him he concludes that both versions are left wanting. This prompts him then to start his own rerhyming of the Psalms (Simond, *Les Veilles Afriquaines*, Introduction, 3 in sequence (unnumbered page). Apart from this very interesting information we also get a little insight into what the religious learning material for children in the congregation of Drakenstein must have been towards the end of the seventeenth century – at least for the children of the minister.

5. CONCLUSION

We should not over estimate the influence of the initial group of Huguenots on South Africa.

They have often in the past been credited with consequences that occurred only 100 or 150 years after their arrival at the Cape. They have also often in the past been and even in the present time are idealised, as though each one of them was a high-minded representative of French Calvinism or carriers of a certain sought after French lifestyle. The fact is that they were refugees, ordinary and mostly very poor and mostly not highly educated people who were often difficult to please and not easy to satisfy. They had their vices and sins, quarrelled amongst themselves and with their fellow people. There were those who had extra-marital affairs, who were accused of being dishonest and there were those who had to be reprimanded by the church council. The fact is that no kind of eugenic aims were applied in the selection of either the Dutch or French colonists for the Cape, so that not only the best people emigrated to the Cape (Besselaar 1934:292-297; Du Toit 1895:48-49).

It has been questioned in recent times whether they brought any Calvinistic influence to South Africa and evidence for such a Calvinistic influence is being asked. There is even talk of a Huguenot myth created by Afrikaners as a way of strengthening the Afrikaner identity. As far as the theology of the spiritual leader of the Huguenot congregation, Pierre Simond is concerned, there is a definitive concurrence between his theological views and that of John Calvin – and for this there is documentary evidence – this is no myth created by Afrikaners!

There is also evidence of a reformed devotion and piety from their ranks and of a deep faith commitment. This was seen in the writings of Gideon le Grand and Jeanne Marie du Prés, ordinary people inspired in their every day life by their faith in God. For this too there is documentary evidence, as shown.

With regard to the catechetical teaching in the congregation of Drakenstein we have seen what the method of Pierre Simond himself was – he gave Psalm verses to his children as their task for the week. We have also seen from the documents that the books of d'Outrein and Van Oostrum that was ordered and used in the congregation and that at least the Heidelberg Catechism must have played an important part in the teaching of the children. Through his analysis and evaluation of the Catechism used by Paul Roux, D'Assonville has pointed out influence of the Second Reformation as well as that of the Enlightenment. This conclusion must however also be seen against the background of the role that the Heidelberg Catechism apparently also played.

D'Assonville is right when he states that there is no direct and straight line from Calvin to South Africa. Much happened between 1564 and 1688 and 1723 (the date of Paul Roux's death). Nevertheless through the Huguenots of South Africa a line of connection can be established between Calvin and South Africa and this line, even if at times very vague, can be seen in the theology and work of Pierre Simond, the spirituality of ordinary people and the catechetical work in the congregation of Drakenstein. And all of this is part of the religious identity that those first Huguenots have left to South Africa. It is also very sure that even from them up to our own time there is no direct and straight line.

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All theology is natural theology: The hermeneutic necessity of natural theology?

ABSTRACT

This article first offers a brief overview of the history of what is understood under “natural theology”. The contrast between the Barthian critique against natural theology and the dangers of repudiating natural theology as stressed within the context of contemporary discourse on science and theology is highlighted. In response, the author offers a constructive proposal in which the hermeneutic necessity of natural theology is affirmed. This follows from a notion of that which is “natural” which includes human constructs (also ideas). In this sense all theology is by definition natural theology. However, the Barthian critique against natural theology may still be appropriate as a selection of those signs that can express the inexpressible with relative adequacy.

INTRODUCTION

The term natural theology has been used in rather different ways, also within the South African context. In this contribution I will add to this confusion by offering a constructive thesis suggesting that “all theology is natural theology” – at least in one sense of the word. My aim is twofold, namely to contribute to reformed discourse on natural theology but also to bring insights from Calvin’s *Institutes* into play in the context of contemporary science and theology discourse on natural theology.

This aim has to be understood from the observation that these discourses are scarcely in serious conversation with each other. In the context of reformed theology, also from within the South African context, debates on natural theology over the last 100 years or so have become largely focussed on the Barthian critique against natural theology and the aftermath of the Barth-Brunner controversy. This has helped to highlight the destructive potential of an uncritical form of natural theology – as is amply illustrated in the context of Nazi Germany and apartheid South Africa.

One cannot help but to notice that there is a completely different tone and set of assumptions at play in science and theology discourse on natural theology. It is also remarkable how little awareness of the dangers of natural theology, that Barth and others fulminated against, there remains in contemporary science and theology discourse. In fact, the dangers of *repudiating* natural theology (especially in Protestant theology) are highlighted. As Elizabeth Johnson (2000:9) observes: “However, the trajectory of Protestant theology shows increasing repudiation of anything remotely smacking of Catholic natural theology and its association with works’ righteousness. Human nature in its fallenness is depraved; nature as a whole can only refer to fallen creation, which is empty of God’s presence and in need of God’s sovereign act of salvation given only in Christ. Theology’s vision thus stays focused on humanity where the all-important saving

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action of God takes place.” My intention here is not to critique any sense of complacency on the dangers of natural theology, but to suggest a route, which may make conversation possible.

THE DIVERGING NOTIONS OF NATURAL THEOLOGY

It is important to situate this contribution within the history of discourse on natural theology in the Christian tradition in order to make meaningful conversation possible. I offer a few brief comments in this regard:

As Pannenberg (1991:73-82) observes, natural theology emerged from within the context of Stoicism where the focus was on reflection on the nature of God. Here the need was recognised to assess the many provincial claims to knowledge of God in mythic and political (pre-Christian) forms of religion. What claims can be taken seriously for a philosophically plausible notion of God? In this context a criterion was established that was later also applied to the message of Christianity. Christian theology had to explain why its confession of God was not restricted to the tribal God of the Jews but that the triune God was indeed the God of all peoples and the creator of everything that is. This criterion was accepted by early Christian apologists and by the church fathers. It was therefore also necessary to explain how the Christian notion of God related to the God of the philosophers. Since the existence and plausibility of belief in God was assumed, natural theology entailed *reflection on the nature of God* (on the basis of philosophical reflection). For many early and medieval theologians it was clear that, at least at a conceptual level, there are features that the Christian faith in the triune God had in common with the god of the philosophers. For example, the absolute transcendence and the unity of God were commonly accepted but not the threeness of faith in God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

A different notion of natural theology emerged when the question was raised how such claims to knowledge of God was possible in the first place. On what basis can such claims be made? The existence of a divine being was still taken for granted but it became necessary to explain where such claims come from and how they can be supported and defended. It is within this context that the famous proofs for God’s existence can be situated. However, it should be noted that the focus here remained on the need to clarify the common ground between the claims of the Christian faith and the knowledge of God that may be found elsewhere. This was not a debate on the question whether God exist but on the nature and characteristics of God.

The advent of modernity changed the assumptions of such discourse on natural theology. It became increasingly important to demonstrate the plausibility of any claim to knowledge of God on the basis of the two pillars of rationality and empirical evidence. I will deal with the first of these briefly.²

The rationality of Christian and other claims now had to be defended on the basis of an understanding of human reason and human subjectivity. The focus here was on the limits of human reason and the ways in which any knowledge is structured by human rationality (Kant). Given the limits of human knowledge it became less clear how any claims to knowledge of God could be made. Here natural theology focused on *reflection on human nature, therefore no longer on the nature of God*. The question now became: What kind of being is it that has a

2 See McGrath (2009:2-3) with reference to James Barr’s description of natural theology (in his Gifford lectures of 1991): “[T]raditionally, ‘natural theology’ has commonly meant something like this: that ‘by nature’, that is, just by being human beings, men and women have a certain degree of knowledge of God and awareness of him, or at least a capacity for such awareness; and this knowledge or awareness exists anterior to the special revelation of God made through Jesus Christ, through the Church, through the Bible.” Since 1750 an Enlightenment notion of natural theology dominated discussions, namely “a defense of the existence of God on the basis of those criteria that the Enlightenment regarded as authoritative and reliable – namely, reason and the natural order.”

consciousness of a divine being? Our shifting understanding(s) of human rationality became the criterion to judge any understanding of God – which also indicate the roots of atheism or agnosticism. Liberal Christianity accepted the task of defending the plausibility of the Christian faith on the basis of this criterion. As we will see below, later forms of natural theology not only inquired about the transcendental conditions for the possibility of such knowledge, but also investigated the underlying role of brain functions in the context of the evolution of the human species.

The second of these pillars is especially important for my argument. The question emerged how Christian and other claims relate to the knowledge that we have of the world around us. The roots of empiricism are of course complex but one can certainly trace that back to Roger Bacon and the early Franciscan tradition. Here a distinction was made between the so-called “book of nature” and the “book of Scripture”. Again, the question was how these two sources of our knowledge of God are related. What do they have in common? In Protestant discourse a similar distinction was later made between God’s “general revelation” (in the beauty and order of nature, through human reason and amongst other religious traditions) and God’s “special revelation” (in the history of Israel, in Jesus Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit in the early church). The question that was addressed in this form of natural theology remained how such knowledge of nature (“natural philosophy”) is related to the (Christian) faith in God. Natural theology is thus understood as *theological reflection on bio-physical nature*.

It is not necessary to trace the history of reflection on this question in detail. It may suffice to indicate a range of answers that may be given to this question. For some contemplation of nature (including human nature) provides the necessary foundation upon which any further claims about knowledge of the transcendent can be made. In order to assure the firmness of such a foundation, it is best developed into a philosophically coherent system of knowledge (as in Thomist metaphysics). For others the knowledge gained from the study of nature actually provides proofs for God’s existence. Typically such arguments are based on the “design” that is evident in nature. Here one may consider versions of the cosmological proof for God, William Paley’s form of natural theology, Gideon Joubert’s award-winning book *Die groot gedagte* or contemporary discourse on intelligent design (ranging from the notion of a “cosmic blueprint” (Paul Davies) to a vaguer sense of directionality in evolutionary history). Yet others do not find in such evidence any proofs, but they do look for a “new consonance” (Ted Peters and others), for confirmation of the plausibility of beliefs that they hold on other grounds (perhaps a form of *fides quaerens intellectum*). Accordingly, such evidence cannot lead to faith in the triune God but can strengthen such faith.

More recently, various exponents of the so-called new-style natural theology focus on the incompleteness of scientific knowledge of physical (non-human) nature. They argue that any knowledge is necessarily interpreted and that the so-called “laws of nature” remain incomplete – in two senses, namely that our knowledge of the laws remains provisional but also that physical reality is undetermined by such laws, allowing for contingency and random variation. Scientific knowledge is integrated in scientific paradigms and in larger interpretative frameworks, deeply influenced by cosmological and indeed by metaphysical assumptions. Scholars such as Ian Barbour, Arthur Peacocke and George Ellis suggest that this offers a new place for the role of ethics and religion in the “hierarchy of sciences”. The quest for transcendence is rooted in the very nature of any disciplined inquiry on nature. New-style natural theology is therefore no longer aimed at gaining knowledge of God from the so-called “book of nature” (alone). Instead, it seeks to portray Christian theism as a plausible and intellectually satisfying understanding of the sum-total of scientific knowledge (including the human sciences and the arts). Theological reflection may therefore provide resources for a single coherent account of reality as a whole,

a new metaphysics, a form of discernment through the eyes of the Christian faith (see Barrett 2009:179f). In his recent Gifford lectures Alister McGrath (2009, see also 2008) suggests that the Christian faith in the triune God may offer such a plausible interpretation. This approach to natural theology is perhaps best captured by CS Lewis's famous remark also quoted by McGrath: "I believe in Christianity as I believe that the sun has risen, not only because I see it, but because by it I see everything else."

NATURAL THEOLOGY: A CONSTRUCTIVE THESIS

The notion of natural theology as disciplined reflection on physical nature continues to juxtapose two sources for the knowledge of God (or two "means" as Article II of the Belgic Confession has it): the particularity of the Christian faith based on "special revelation" and what the Christian faith may have in common with other forms of knowledge and other religious traditions (based on "general revelation"). Karl Barth's vehement critique against natural theology has to be understood in this light. It rejected any form of theology that claims to interpret divine revelation where the subject matter differs fundamentally from the revelation in Jesus Christ and where the method employed differs equally from an exposition of Scripture (Barth 2002:74-75). It also rejected any external criterion for the adequacy (or plausibility) of the Christian faith, especially on the basis of the limits to human nature and human knowing. This critique against natural theology thus suggests that knowledge of the triune God has little if anything to do with truth claims in other disciplines. There is no need to find common ground or to explore commonalities since this would typically lead to the accommodation of the Christian faith to the dominant way of thinking at a particular time.

As Pannenberg (1991:69) astutely observes, this may come at the cost of the intelligibility of what Christians have to say about God. Jewish-Christian notions of God emerged on the basis of earlier concepts of God and cannot be understood without reference to these. Questions on the nature of God and therefore on the relationship between the Christian faith in the triune God and other notions of God therefore has to be addressed. This problem emerges again and again – in bible translation, in missiological discourse, in reflection on the relation between the Christian faith and African Traditional Religion and in contemporary debates on natural theology.

In this contribution I will question the distinction that is made between these two sources for the knowledge of God. I will argue that what is called "special revelation" in the reformed tradition forms part of the world of nature. The book of Scripture forms part of the book of nature. In this sense of the word *all theology is natural theology*. The constructive thesis that is offered here, going against the grain of much of reformed theology, is that reformed debates on natural theology all too often fail to come to terms with the hermeneutical insight that all the categories that we employ to speak of God and to God come from the world of "nature".³ The strength of the reformed critique against natural theology (to be illustrated through a rereading of Calvin's *Institutes*) may then be understood as a qualitative judgement on the actual content of such knowledge, on where such knowledge may *best* be found.

It may be helpful to draw an analogy with debates on contextual theology in the South African context in the 1980s. Those who used "contextual theology" as a self-description gradually had to recognise that *all* forms of theological reflection are contextual. Indeed apartheid theology may be regarded as one of the best, if extremely narrow, examples of contextual theology.

3 This would also apply to Barth's vehement critique of natural theology. To say that all theology is natural theology is, of course, not to adopt Barth's own definition of natural theology as described above. This hermeneutical approach to natural theology may also be contrasted with the brave attempts to explore a Barthian version of natural theology by Torrance (1980) and Hauerwas (2001).

Contextual theology therefore could not by itself be used to introduce a distinction between emancipatory and oppressive forms of theology.⁴ Yet, such a qualitative distinction remained necessary in order to guard against oppression, idolatry and indeed heresy.

In my view the hermeneutic inevitability of a form of natural theology cannot be denied. Intellectual history since the advent of modernity has made it abundantly clear that the only access which we have to God's revelation is from within our own historical epoch (the historical turn), through the categories of human reason (the turn to the subject), a particular preunderstanding (the hermeneutical turn), language (the linguistic turn), culture (the sociological turn) and our position in society in terms of gender, race, class and education. The categories, which we use to talk about God, come from below, not directly from above (Harry Kuitert). God's revelation necessarily has a "natural", an earthly character. A purist position on natural theology is therefore (*contra* Barth) scarcely tenable. As Jürgen Moltmann puts it, natural theology is the active presupposition of all Christian theology.⁵

Whenever we use categories such as "revelation" or "God's word", we do that at best as recipients and witnesses to insights that we have gathered within our own context. Instead of denying or hiding the use of categories derived from outside the Christian tradition, it is better to articulate the categories which we do employ as honestly as possible so that they can be open to public scrutiny. A failure to do so may lead to an authoritarian theology, which equates our words about God (from below) too easily with God's own word (as it were "from above"). Then we may be tempted to speak on God's behalf and with God's authority almost as if we were God.

There is also a second sense in which theological hermeneutics assumes some form of natural theology. Any theology that seeks to discern the "signs of the time" would need to grapple with issues of contemporary culture, art and science. This is necessary to understand the significance of the gospel, but such contextual considerations also shape one's understanding of the gospel itself. In an essay on preaching on the reign of God reformed theologian Arnold van Ruler makes this point forcefully. He says: "In actual fact the church of course always utilises such sources. Without natural theology the church cannot take any step into the world and cannot say a word over the things of the world, which is God's world. One will have to exercise extreme caution with such natural theology. That is obvious ... In any case, in my view one would also have to guard against the overvaluing of special revelation that is nowadays common. Without the Word of God I would not know how to live my life as sacrifice acceptable to God. But neither without reason, without the historical process or without science. The proclamation of God's reign is therefore not merely aggression towards heathendom but also synthesis with heathendom" (Van Ruler [1957] in 1978:51-22, my translation). In an essay on "the necessity of a trinitarian theology", Van Ruler (1978:23) reiterates this point: "Without some natural theology – if only

4 See especially the various contributions to the Festschrift for Albert Nolan (Speckman & Kaufmann 2001).

5 Moltmann (2000:68) explains the notion of an "active presupposition" in this way: "If we understand natural theology as the forecourt to the temple, which would not exist without the temple itself, this does not mean that we have given up its truth, retreating to revealed theology. For an active presupposition of this kind is essential for revealed theology if it is to be theo-logy, and hence aims to present its historical modality as universal. The God of Israel is the creator of heaven and earth, not a tribal God of the Israelites." Moltmann contrasts this view of natural theology with the notions that natural theology is the eschatological goal of Christian theology (when ecclesiastical faith will give rise to the universal religion of modernity based on rationality and human dignity) and that Christian theology itself is the true natural theology. The latter view is similar to the notion of new-style natural theology referred to above, except that Moltmann resists the abstraction of an overly generalised theology in order to address the political concerns of a theology of the earth – in terms of human rights, multi-faith co-existence and ecological destruction.

in the form of natural knowledge regarding the nature of worldly affairs – no church can exist. But it would be all too meagre to have nothing more than just a bit of natural theology. What rationality, history, human existence, the state and art entail, one would know, theologically, only on the basis of a fully developed trinitarian understanding” (my translation). For Van Ruler, such knowledge can only be understood pneumatologically, not in the first place christologically.

It should be noted that “nature” and “natural theology” is used here primarily as a *hermeneutical category*. We have access to the world around us and to God’s revelation only on the basis of that which is natural – which includes the history of nature, the history of life on earth, human histories, human culture and those aspects of human life that are invisible and may therefore appear to be immaterial, but that are fully dependant on material brain functions (thought, language or love).

NATURAL THEOLOGY AND THE NOTION OF “NATURE”

Although it is possible to distinguish humanity from non-human nature, such a distinction is at best tenuous. It is a truism, often underplayed, that human beings simply form part of that which is natural. The reduction of “nature” to non-human nature can only lead to a further alienation of human beings from the rest of nature. It is such alienation that has prompted much of current ecotheology. Larry Rasmussen (1996:75-89), for example, refers to the “apartheid habit” of distinguishing between humanity and non-human nature, leaving the impression that we are an ecologically segregated species – that we are somehow separate, hence “apart” from the ecosystems in which we live. Rasmussen adds that the same “apartheid habit” is also manifested in the “great divorce” of nature from (human) history and the distinction between the natural and the human sciences so deeply embedded in academia. Instead, the history of humanity should be regarded as a mere episode in the larger history of the cosmos itself and of life *in* (not on) this planet.⁶

This implies that any language, all forms of theological reflection and any God-talk are derived from that which is natural. Theological discourse is an expression of human consciousness. As Thomas Berry (1988:195) would evocatively add: “The human is less a being on earth or in the universe than a dimension of the earth and indeed the universe itself” and “the human might be identified as that being in which the universe celebrates itself and its numinous origins in a special mode of conscious self-awareness” (1999:19).

Once this sense of rootedness is granted, one may, of course, encourage a rich differentiation of various aspects within that which is natural, perhaps on the basis of evolutionary theories of emergence. Murray Bookchin (1988), for example, distinguishes between “first nature” (the non-human natural world) and “second nature” which includes aspects of human evolution such as rationality, language, communication, culture and the economy. He adds that natural evolution has left humans not only with the ability but also with the necessity to intervene in “first nature”. Such adaptations of “first nature” may be destructive but may also enhance biotic diversity and diminish suffering (see also Desjardin 2006:234f).⁷

6 The reformed ecotheologian Steven Bouma-Prediger notes five different reasons for rejecting such a dualism of nature and history: 1) The natural world is historical in its own right; 2) The natural world is deeply affected by human agency; 3) As corporeal agents humans are embedded in nature; 4) This dualism has led to disastrous consequences since it has been used to sanction various forms of exploitation; 5) It conflicts with the biblical notion of a single, all-embracing covenant with God. See Bouma-Prediger 1995:271, with reference to Rosemary Ruether’s views in this regard.

7 On this basis I would admit that the category of “nature” tends to become all-inclusive. This is in my view necessary to stress in order to preclude the dualism and alienation that emerge whenever that which is human is distinguished from the rest of nature. The only category that would be un-“natural” (not to

It is important to distinguish such a hermeneutical notion of “natural theology” from creation theology or a theology of nature. The term “creation” (either as *creatio* or as *creatura*) deals with questions of origin and creation theology explores the content and significance of the *Christian* confession in this regard. There is certainly a need for a “theology of nature”, typically understood as theological reflection on non-human nature from the perspective of the Christian faith. As Clingerman (2009) argues, this requires another form of hermeneutics, namely one that recognises that our experience of nature is mediated by language and that reading nature as a rich text (the “book” of nature) may therefore be appropriate in order to capture its revelatory potential, if not a reference to its Author. Remarkably, it is a text in which the reader finds herself incorporated as a character in the text (2009:82). In such theological reflection on non-human nature it is crucial to remind ourselves that what we know as “nature” is always already the product not only of God’s acts of creation (*creatio*) or of human distortion, but also of God’s acts of providence, salvation and the formation of the church. From the perspective of the Christian faith no scientific experiment with regard to nature has ever been conducted where such nature is not influenced by God’s work. Indeed, “nature” is necessarily interpreted; it is not self-evident or (in another sense) “purely natural”.

CONCLUSION

My concern here it not to show how Christianity may offer an interpretative framework to understand nature (as in new-style natural theology), but to reflect on how Christian convictions emerged in the first place, namely on the basis of sensory perceptions. My argument is that all theological reflection may be regarded as natural theology in the sense that we inevitably use categories (vocabularies) derived from the world around us (in this sense from “nature”), for better or for worse.⁸ We use that in being recipients of and witnesses to what we would afterwards call “God’s revelation”, in forming any apprehension of God, in reading the Bible, and in understanding the significance of the gospel for our culture. Of course, such theological reflection stands in need of correction, as the Barthian critique of natural theology amply illustrates. However, it is a hermeneutical mistake to explain the need for such a critique in terms of the different sources used in theological reflection. Again, a purist critique against natural theology is undermined by the recognition that humans, human words and thoughts (including ethical notions of how the world should be, our images and concepts of God and the biblical narratives), form part of “nature”.

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mention God) would be human sin if understood as something that does not exist by itself but only as the privation of the good (*privatio boni*).

⁸ See also Von Balthasar’s insistence that the concept of analogy (and some form of similarity) is indeed unavoidable: “For if we re-cognize God, this must mean that we see God using our prior views, concepts and words; thus we see God not as something totally Other. But in and with these means of images, concepts and words (the only ones we have), we truly do see God” (quoted in Hauerwas 2001:185).

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KEY WORDS

Hermeneutics
 Natural theology
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TREFWOORDE

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 Natuur
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The necessity of natural theology? In conversation with John Calvin on the human senses

ABSTRACT

This contribution explores John Calvin's position on natural theology. The point of departure is not so much the much discussed notions of a *sensus divinitatis* or of the *semen religionis*, but the role played by the human senses in coming to knowledge of God in the first place. How can God's presence be recognised? How can human language (that which is natural), from below, express the inexpressible? How is it possible to speak of God in the first place? This article suggests that Calvin's remarkably sophisticated understanding of signification is the clue to respond to these questions. His position is discussed on the basis of the reading strategy of *catena* and commentary. The author finally offers some concluding observations on the relationship between signifier, signified and referent in human language about God.

CALVIN AND "NATURAL" THEOLOGY?

I do not wish to claim Calvin's support for the position on natural theology constructed in the previous essay. Nevertheless, Calvin was evidently not oblivious to the hermeneutical problem of coming to knowledge of God. He was also aware how intertwined the Christian faith is with other forms of knowing. Instead, I will structure this contribution as a conversation with Calvin, realising that others may be overhearing the conversation. The aim of this contribution is not so much to engage in reconstructive work on Calvin's position, but to test this thesis in conversation with Calvin's views on the role played by the human senses. My intention is to make a contribution to reformed discourse on natural theology, but also to bring insights from Calvin's *Institutes* into play in the context of contemporary discourse on natural theology.

To explore Calvin's position on "natural theology" is to open a proverbial can of worms. Both Brunner (2002:35-50) and Barth (2002:94-109) appealed to Calvin to support their respective positions and criticised each other's reading of Calvin. I cannot hope to review or contribute to the voluminous Calvin scholarship with regard to his position on natural theology, or his notions of "accommodation" and of the *semen religionis*. Suffice it to say that his position is difficult to interpret since it is embedded in deeply intertwined theological contrasts between what is called "general and "special" revelation, between the knowledge of God and of ourselves and in the metaphor that Scripture provides us with the necessary spectacles to see God in the world of nature. Furthermore, all of these terms are influenced by theological positions on the relation between nature and grace.

Here I will not explore such a notion of "natural theology", that is, of knowledge of the triune God that may be derived from a contemplation of "nature" excluding God's revelation in Jesus Christ. Instead, my focus will be on the question whether Calvin's position on knowledge of God as Mediator (in Jesus Christ) can be affirmed if one maintains that all theology may be

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regarded as natural theology (as proposed above). More specifically, how can one hear with human ears God's word of forgiveness as indeed *God's* word? My focus will therefore be on Calvin's understanding of the role of the human senses, especially seeing and hearing, and the visual imagery that he employs.

For the sake of simplicity I will adopt here the style of catena and commentary and supplement that with some concluding observations.

CALVIN ON THE POSSIBILITY OF LANGUAGE ABOUT GOD?

a) *"Without knowledge of self there is no knowledge of God:* Nearly all the wisdom we possess, that is to say, true and sound wisdom, consists of two parts: the knowledge of God and of ourselves. But, while joined by many bonds, which one precedes and brings forth the other is not easy to discern." (I.1.1).

The famous opening sentence of Calvin's *Institutes* has elicited much discussion. I remember one night in my student years when I set out to read the *Institutes* and could not get beyond the first sentence. The creative tensions and antithetical structures that are so typical of Calvin's theology and rhetoric are nowhere more evident than here. I do not wish to comment on his understanding of the knowledge of God as piety (reverence) or on his own emphasis that "without knowledge of God there is no knowledge of self" (the title of I.1.2). Instead, his awareness of the hermeneutical tension is important for my purposes here. The argument of the very first section is that the knowledge of ourselves, "the feeling of our own ignorance, vanity, poverty, infirmity, and – what is more – depravity and corruption" leads us to seek God. But how is such knowledge of our misery possible? Calvin insists "man is never sufficiently touched and affected by the awareness of his lowly state until he has compared himself with God's majesty" (I.1.3). Given the human inclination towards self-delusion, self-admiration and flattery (II.1.2) such knowledge of human misery cannot be gained merely through introspection. Here too the knowledge of God seems to be the key to the knowledge of the self. Nevertheless, he does not resolve the tension all that easily; it remains "strangely ambiguous", resisting textual closure (Jones 1995:87, 94). This is indicated by the closing sentence of I.1.3: "Yet, however the knowledge of God and of ourselves may be mutually connected, *the order of right teaching* requires that we discuss the former first, then proceed afterward to treat the latter." What this "order of right teaching" amounts to can only be discerned from the structure of the entire *Institutes*. In I.15.1 he does return to this topic. Observing that "This knowledge of ourselves is twofold: namely, to know what we were like when we were first created and what our condition became after the fall of Adam." The knowledge of ourselves is therefore not based on introspection or on social analysis but on witness of Scripture. For the moment it may suffice to observe that Calvin is not unaware of the hermeneutical tension at play here. Indeed, knowledge of God is connected to knowledge of ourselves and, one may add, of our world.

b) "There is within the human mind, and indeed by natural instinct, an awareness of divinity. This we take to be beyond controversy. To prevent anyone from taking refuge in the pretence of ignorance, God himself has implanted in all men a certain understanding of his divine majesty" (I.3.1).

This is Calvin's equally famous and much debated notion of *semen religionis*. Calvin insists that "from the beginning of the world there has been no region, no city, in short, no household, that could do without religion, there lies in this a tacit confession of a sense of deity inscribed in the hearts of all" (I.3.1). Even idolatry provides ample proof of this sense of the divine. In words that pre-empt the critique of religion of Marx and Lenin by several centuries he adds that "it is

utterly vain for some men to say that religion was invented by the subtlety and craft of a few to hold the simple folk in thrall by this device and that those very persons who originated the worship of God for others did not in the least believe that any God existed" (I.3.2). Calvin eagerly concedes that forms of religion can be employed to strike common folk with terror, but insists that this would not be possible if our minds "had not already been imbued with a firm conviction about God, from which the inclination toward religion springs as from a seed" (I.3.2).

The question is what role this sense of the divine plays in obtaining knowledge of the triune God. The point of Calvin's argument is, of course, that any such knowledge is corrupted through ignorance and malice, that this cannot lead to true knowledge of God (since zeal for religion is not sufficient on its own – I.4.3) and that such "seed of religion" only serves to render us without the excuse of ignorance. Yes, the seed remains (there is some sense of divinity) and cannot be uprooted, but by itself produces only the worst fruits (I.4.4). It enables people to find sprinklings, droplets of truth. Whatever truth is seen in this way cannot and does not direct one to the truth (of God's favour) and does not enable one to attain it (II.2.18). In Book III Calvin also insists that there is no "seed of election" (a religious gene?), as if some are more inclined than others to piety and the fear of God (III.24.10). God's election is appropriated through God's call and this comes to human beings from outside themselves. However, the question remains whether this seed of religion plays any hermeneutical role in obtaining knowledge of the triune God? This question is less easy to answer since Calvin "does not investigate psychologically or metaphysically the nature of the act of cognition" (Parker 1995:14)!

c) "... wherever you cast your eyes, there is no spot in the universe wherein you cannot discern at least some sparks of his glory. You cannot in one glance survey this most vast and beautiful system of the universe, in its wide expanse, without being completely overwhelmed by the boundless force of its brightness. The reason why the author of The Letter to the Hebrews elegantly calls the universe the appearance of things invisible [Heb. 11:3] is that this skilful ordering of the universe is for us a sort of mirror in which we can contemplate God, who is otherwise invisible" (I.5.1).

The seed of religion is not only sown in the human mind; God is revealed in the glory of creation so much so that no one can open his or her eyes without being compelled to see God (I.5.1). The divine wisdom is displayed for all to see (I.5.2) – in the fields of astronomy, medicine, the natural sciences and structure of the human body (humanity as a microcosm) and of course also in history and in signs of God's providence. That this is evidently not seen or misunderstood has to do with humans being *blindfolded*, not with being blind.² This has led us to confuse creatures with the Creator. Calvin employs his considerable rhetorical skills to heap up adjectives to describe such ungratefulness, stupidity, malice, wickedness, corruption, vanity, superstition, idolatry and hypocrisy. Thus the abundant evidence of God in the created order is to no avail (I.5.11). The manifestation of God in nature speaks to us in vain (I.5.14). Although they bathe us wholly in their radiance, they cannot lead us towards the right path to find the knowledge of God.

d) "Just as old or bleary-eyed men and those with weak vision, if you thrust before them a most beautiful volume, even if they recognize it to be some sort of writing, yet can scarcely construe two words, but with the aid of spectacles will begin to read distinctly; so Scripture, gathering up the otherwise confused knowledge of God in our minds, having dispersed our dullness, clearly

2 See also Calvin's comment: "But although the Lord represents both himself and his everlasting Kingdom in the mirror of his works with very great clarity, such is our stupidity that we grow increasingly dull toward so manifest testimonies, and they flow away without profiting us." (I.5.11).

shows us the true God" (I.6.1).

Calvin uses the often-discussed image of "spectacles" to argue that Scripture is needed as guide and teacher in order to come to knowledge of God as Creator. Note that the image is reversed here: we do not need spectacles to read Scripture; we need the spectacles of Scripture to detect God's presence in nature (see Parker 1952:25f). This is, for example, reiterated in the work of Herman Bavinck (see 2003:340f) who followed Calvin closely in this line of argumentation. It should also be noted that Calvin insists that Scripture is required both for knowledge of God as Saviour and of God as Creator. The way in which Calvin distinguishes between the themes of creation and redemption is controversial (to say the least) as this also guides the structure of the entire institutes. For the moment it would suffice to note that the spectacles of Scripture are required in order to gain knowledge of God as Creator and to prevent us from seeking the creator in other deities through devious paths. The problem is not that we cannot see (that we are totally blind), but that we are short-sighted – that we cannot see clearly without the reading aid of Scripture (a point disputed by Parker 1952:39). We need not only eyes to contemplate God's works but also ears to hear God's Word (I.6.2). Without Scripture we fall into error (I.6.3).

It should be noted that the contemplation of God's works therefore does not necessarily direct us away from God's revelation in Jesus Christ; to know God in Jesus Christ redirects our attention towards the works of God – which supports and confirms the knowledge of God in Christ. God's Word provides us with the "spectacles" to heal our sight in order to see God's glory. As Schreiner (1991:107) puts it: "The noetic effect of sin is gradually corrected when the soul is reordered so that once again the cosmos can serve as a 'stage', 'theatre', or 'book' from which believers are encouraged to learn about their Creator." Reading the scripture does not replace or guide us away from contemplation of nature, but provides us with the spectacles precisely in order to engage in such contemplation (Zachman 2006:196). From the Bible we find the clues to identify God's presence in our own experience, in history, in creation and also amongst other faith traditions. As Postema (1992:429) suggests: "Obviously, the Bible does add to our knowledge of God ... but it does so only to clarify and untangle the cloudy and confused knowledge of God that we get from extra-biblical sources, to restore it to its original function."

On this basis it is also important to note that, for Calvin, this knowledge of God as Creator logically comes first. Unlike for Von Rad and others, knowledge of God as Creator is no mere extrapolation of faith in God as Saviour. Calvin says: "First in order came that kind of knowledge by which one is permitted to grasp who that God is who founded and governs the universe. Then that other inner knowledge was added, which alone quickens dead souls, whereby God is known not only as the Founder of the universe and the sole Author and Ruler of all that is made, but also in the person of the Mediator as the Redeemer" (I.6.1). He concludes "knowledge of God, otherwise quite clearly set forth in the system of the universe and in all creatures, is nonetheless more intimately and also more vividly revealed in his Word" (I.10.1). Here he comes close to but does not actually grant that such knowledge of God derived from the contemplation of nature also provides as with some preunderstanding that influences our reading of Scripture – for better or for worse.

e) "Certainly I do not deny that one can read competent and apt statements about God here and there in the philosophers, but these always show a certain giddy imagination. As was stated above, the Lord indeed gave them a slight taste of his divinity that they might not hide their impiety under a cloak of ignorance. And sometimes he impelled them to make certain utterances by the confession of which they would themselves be corrected. But they saw things in such a way that their seeing did not direct them to the truth; much less enable them to attain it! They are like a traveller passing through a field at night who in a momentary lightning flash

sees far and wide, but the sight vanishes so swiftly that he is plunged again into the darkness of the night before he can take even a steplet alone be directed on his way by its help. Besides, although they may chance to sprinkle their books with droplets of truth, how many monstrous lies defile them!" (II.2.18).

A number of aspects in this remarkable passage may be noted. Of course, Calvin's primary intention here is to emphasise that the knowledge of God that may be derived from the (philosophical) contemplation of nature is severely limited. It cannot even begin to imagine God's mercy and benevolence towards us. It provides no right knowledge of God but renders humans without any excuse for not obtaining such knowledge by claiming ignorance (II.2.22). Yet, Calvin's favoured visual imagery is striking. Human beings are blindfolded by sin but we are not blind. We cannot see because of the darkness of the night, but are indeed able to see flashes of light – but this is not sufficient to guide us on our way. Without the illumination of the Spirit we remain in darkness. As Calvin eloquently adds, "the sun rises upon the earth when God's Word shines upon men; but they do not have its benefit until he who is called the "Father of lights" [James 1:17] either gives eyes or opens them. For wherever the Spirit does not cast his light, all is darkness" (II.2.21).

Again, nature provides us with the eyes to see; that we in fact do not see is the result of being blindfolded. Here too Calvin stops short of exploring the hermeneutical significance of such an ability to see when seeing the light (when reading Scripture). His emphasis is clearly on the gift of God's revelation and illumination and not on the human ability to understand. Without the Light of the world shining upon us, we would not see, even if we were able to see. To focus on our seeing (which Calvin seems to take for granted) would misdirect the attention away from the guidance that we require when hopelessly lost in the dark of a cloudy night.

f) "Indeed, if we chose to explain in a fitting manner how God's inestimable wisdom, power, justice, and goodness shine forth in the fashioning of the universe, no splendour, no ornament of speech, would be equal to an act of such great magnitude. There is no doubt that the Lord would have us uninterruptedly occupied in this holy meditation; that, while we contemplate in all creatures, as in mirrors, those immense riches of his wisdom, justice, goodness, and power, we should not merely run over them cursorily, and, so to speak, with a fleeting glance; but we should ponder them at length, turn them over in our minds seriously and faithfully, and recollect them repeatedly. But because our purpose here is to teach, it is proper for us to omit those matters, which require long harangue. Therefore, to be brief, let all readers know that they have with true faith apprehended what it is for God to be Creator of heaven and earth, if they first of all follow the universal rule, not to pass over in ungrateful thoughtlessness or forgetfulness those conspicuous [sic] powers which God shows forth in his creatures, and then learn so to apply it to themselves that their very hearts are touched. The first part of the rule is exemplified when we reflect upon the greatness of the Artificer who stationed, arranged, and fitted together the starry host of heaven in such wonderful order that nothing more beautiful in appearance can be imagined; who so set and fixed some in their stations that they cannot move; who granted to others a freer course, but so as not to wander outside their appointed course; who so adjusted the motion of all that days and nights, months, years, and seasons of the year are measured off; who so proportioned the inequality of days, which we daily observe, that no confusion occurs. It is so too when we observe his power in sustaining so great a mass, in governing the swiftly revolving heavenly system, and the like. For these few examples make sufficiently clear what it is to recognize God's powers in the creation of the universe. Otherwise, as I have said, if I decide to set forth the whole matter in my discourse, there will be no end" (I.14.21).

One may regard this passage as one of the clearest examples in Calvin's *Institutes* of what

would elsewhere be deemed a form of natural theology. However, it should be noted that Calvin here focuses on knowledge of God as Creator, that his account is deliberately brief in order to avoid speculation, that he insists that Scripture is necessary to understand such knowledge of God as Creator clearly (as discussed above) and that the brevity of his account here should be compared with his elaborate discussion of knowledge of God as Redeemer.

In my view the true significance of this passage can only be grasped within the context of his theology as a whole – in the interplay between the themes of creation, sin, providence, redemption and the eschatological restoration of all things. Susan Schreiner (1991:121) is on the right track here: “As the perceptual breakdown caused by sin is healed through the Spirit and Scriptures, nature regains its revelatory function as a mirror, a painting, and a theatre of the divine glory.” In terms of the metaphor of being blindfolded that Calvin is so fond of, the natural ability to see is restored through redemption. It is not that we are given completely new eyes by listening to the Word of God. The Word helps us to see once again that which was before our eyes all the time. It removes the blindfold imposed by sin so that we can indeed see. As John McNeill (1960:liii) comments in his introduction to the *Institutes*, “Yet men [sic] are so damaged by the heritage of sin entailed by Adam’s fall that they miss this testimony of creation to the Creator, and grope blindfold in this bright theatre of the universe with only erroneous and unworthy notions of the God who made it.”

Another metaphor that Calvin is fond of is that of the mirror. In the passage quoted above creatures are portrayed as mirrors of the immense riches of God’s wisdom. The universe is the mirror in which we can contemplate the invisible God (I.5.1). This is portrayed with “very great clarity” (I.5.11). Humankind is also a clear mirror of God’s works (I.5.3). This also applies to the ministry of angels (I.14.5). Elsewhere Calvin uses the image with reference to God’s law as a mirror for the knowledge of sin (II.7.6, 7), with reference to Scripture as a source of the knowledge of our human arrogance (II.2.11, II.3.2), but also of the knowledge of God (III.2.6), and especially with reference to the incarnation of Jesus Christ as a bright mirror of God’s boundless love (II.12.4, II.14.7) and his resurrection as a mirror of Christ’s divinity (II.16.13). Elsewhere he speaks of faith as an act of seeing our future inheritance as if in a mirror (II.11.1), even though we see that now only dimly (1 Cor 13:12).

Here too Calvin consistently maintains visual imagery. The problem is not that we are blind but that we cannot see the image that we are looking at clearly. The problem is not that the image is too dim but that it is too bright – we therefore require a dimmed, reflected image of God, accommodated to our human sensibilities (Battles 1998:36). The clarity and focus of the image is only found on the basis of Jesus Christ, Scripture and the illumination of the Holy Spirit through Christian proclamation. The Spirit corrects the noetic effect of sin and enables the pious contemplation of nature as the mirror, the theatre of God’s glory (Schreiner 1991:122). This is consistent with Calvin’s insistence throughout the *Institutes* that nothing falls outside the sphere of God’s sovereignty. Our ability to see and to understand is not ignored or even downplayed; it is acknowledged and restored but only through God’s grace. If Calvin did not acknowledge the hermeneutical role of such natural knowledge in reading Scripture and hearing God’s Word, he might have taken that simply for granted.

In his work “As in a mirror” (*Als in een Spiegel*) Cornelis van der Kooi (2002:58-64) explores the metaphor of seeing an image in a mirror as the clue to Calvin’s understanding of knowledge of God (better: of knowing God). The point of the image is of course that we can know God only in a mediated way (by way of imitation), namely through God’s reflection in God’s works (including the heavens above, but also humanity, the incarnation and the full range of other traces of God’s presence). The possibility of seeing a reflection in the mirror is not so much a function of human capabilities but of that, which is, reflected in the mirror, namely God self. This possibility,

one may surmise, is a function of God's *accommodatio*. For Calvin the metaphor suggests that knowledge of God is not a matter of abstraction or demonstration but of immediate and intuitive knowledge (*cognitio intuitiva*). It is a direct form of knowledge based on the recognition of God's immediate presence, albeit the presence of a mirror image of lesser quality and not a direct *visio Dei*. Van der Kooi notes that mirrors in Calvin's day were made of plated metal allowing for a reliable but somewhat dimmer reflection than what is possible through glass mirrors nowadays. The reliability of the image is for Calvin crucial because it dovetails with his affirmation of the clarity of Scripture and of assurance of salvation. It is thus important to emphasise that knowing God requires from us to look at those mirrors in which God's is most clearly reflected. The image of God in the pond (God's non-human creation) is muddied by human sin, whereas the clearest image may be found in Jesus Christ and in the contemporary context through the sacraments (see below). At the same time it metaphor of a mirror image suggests that one should not focus on the possibilities of the mirror itself (although the mirror is indeed necessary), or on the image in the mirror but on the Person whose image is reflected. That can only be understood by way of following the direction towards which a sign points. This is only possible through the guidance of the Holy Spirit who uses the mirror images to establish communion between God and humans on this basis (Van der Kooi 2002:63).

g) "To sum up: When first even the least drop of faith is instilled in our minds, we begin to contemplate God's face, peaceful and calm and gracious toward us. We see him afar off, but so clearly as to know we are not at all deceived. Then, the more we advance as we ought continually to advance, with steady progress, as it were, the nearer and thus surer sight of him we obtain; and by the very continuance he is made even more familiar to us. So we see that the mind, illumined by the knowledge of God, is at first wrapped up in much ignorance, which is gradually dispelled. ... Thus, bound with the fetters of an earthly body, however much we are shadowed on every side with great darkness, we are nevertheless illumined as much as need be for firm assurance when, to show forth his mercy, the light of God sheds even a little of its radiance" (III.2.19).

In his discussion of the nature of faith Calvin emphasises that faith is based on knowledge, not ignorance, superstition or gullibility (III.2.2-3). Yet, faith as knowledge far exceeds human sense perception. It is not merely derived from a human capacity to understand. The knowledge of faith, Calvin insists, "consists in assurance rather than in comprehension" (III.2.14). Its certainty is based on the Word of God and more specifically on the sealed promises of God.

At the same time, faith is not independent of human sense perception but works through it. The Spirit works through the letter not alongside that. In the passage quoted above it is remarkable to observe the use of visual imagery. Faith is a matter of light and of sight, albeit that the emphasis is not on the human ability to see, but on the object that is seen and on the light that is cast to make such seeing possible. The problem, one may add, is not so much a lack of light but that the light is so overwhelming that we are blinded by it (see Hesselink 1997:48). God accommodates God self according to our human capacity so that we can measure God's immeasurableness by our small measure (Balzerak 2008, Battles 1998:35).

However, faith is more than seeing, it perceives the invisible, the not yet visible. Here, Calvin argues, faith needs the assurance of God's Word in order to take root and to bear fruit. Whatever we may see of God's presence and might is fleeting and would vanish without the confirmation of God's Word. This does not arise out of anyone's imagination (III.2.31). Calvin tirelessly explains that such faith is a gift from God that it is the work of the Holy Spirit that ensures that the seed of the Word becomes implanted, that faith depends on the promise of grace and that its certainty is not based on the strength of faith but on the promises that are sealed by God's signature. Yet, none of this takes place outside the human senses of seeing and hearing and even of "tasting

the truth" (III.2.33). In fact, the interplay between the senses is remarkable. With reference to Isaiah 40-45 Calvin remarks:

It often seems that, when he begins to speak concerning the hope of pardon and reconciliation, he turns to something else and wanders through long and superfluous mazes, recalling how wonderfully God governs the frame of heaven and earth together with the whole order of nature. Yet there is nothing here that does not serve the present circumstance. For unless the power of God, by which he can do all things, confronts our eyes, our ears will barely receive the Word or not esteem it at its true value (III.2.31).

Clearly, salvation through faith takes place in the realm of the (human) creature, making use of human capacities. Salvation hermeneutically presupposes God's creation, that which is natural and thus transforms it. Nevertheless, the imagery that Calvin deploys is remarkable in that it consistently avoids the impression that faith may be attributed to the human ability to see and to hear. Faith is the result of the *object* that becomes visible through the light that is cast on the object. Likewise, hearing is not the product of our fertile imagination but is primarily based on the *Word* of promise and forgiveness that is addressed to us. Indeed, Calvin insists that that we are blind (and deaf) in this respect. "The Word of God is like the sun, shining upon all those to whom it is proclaimed, but with no effect among the blind ... it cannot penetrate into our minds unless the Spirit, as the inner teacher, through his illumination makes entry for it" (III.2.34). Moreover, the problem is not so much our lack of perception: "the heart's distrust is greater than the mind's blindness" (III.2.36). That is why faith can only follow from the assurance of the Word that seals God's promises in our hearts so that we become assured of God's mercy. Yet, it is our hearts and minds (that which is "natural") that become thus assured. The object that becomes visible and the word that is heard remains within this world; within that which is "natural".

h) In his discussion of the Lord's Prayer in Book III.20.40 Calvin discerns the hermeneutical implications of such insights. Why, he asks, is the Father understood to be "in heaven"? Calvin is well aware that the Father cannot be crudely or literally positioned in the heavens, for the heavens cannot contain God. Indeed, God cannot be "confined to any particular region but is diffused through all things." Calvin then adds:

But our minds, so crass are they, could not have conceived his unspeakable glory otherwise. Consequently, it has been signified to us by "heaven," for we can behold nothing more sublime or majestic than this. While, therefore, wherever our senses comprehend anything they commonly attach it to that place, God is set beyond all place, so that when we would seek him we must rise above all perception of body and soul. ... Therefore it is as if he had been said to be of infinite greatness or loftiness, of incomprehensible essence, of boundless might, and of everlasting immortality. But while we hear this, our thought must be raised higher when God is spoken of, lest we dream up anything earthly or physical about him, lest we measure him by our small measure, or conform his will to our emotions. At the same time our confidence in him must be aroused, since we understand that heaven and earth are ruled by his providence and power (III.20.40).

This remarkable statement gets to the core of the hermeneutical problem of the knowledge of God. How can one know that which transcends oneself if it is indeed transcendent? How may the imperceptible be perceived? Calvin rightly sees that "heaven" here functions as the best available symbol of that which is sublime and majestic. This is a form of synecdoche where the part points beyond its immediate meaning in order to symbolise the whole (see Battles 1998:39-40). He also sees that God's transcendence cannot be confined to a particular location, but is diffused everywhere. However, this does not lead to a vague form of pantheism. The clue here is

that this prayer is taught to us by Jesus Christ and is prayer in the name of Christ. This is indeed the location where the traces of God's transcendence may best be found. In this way God is both exalted and very near to us (see Baars 2009, Smit 2009:70).

At the same time this qualitative assessment would not suffice on its own. The later Barthian emphasis, namely that God may be found in Jesus Christ and that the divinity of Christ does not merely say something about Christ but about the identity and character of God, addresses only one half of the hermeneutical problem. The question remains how we could say of Jesus of Nazareth that a manifestation of God's presence may be found here? Why and how could one claim that Jesus is anything more than an ordinary human being? What does it mean that Jesus is "truly God" (*vere Deus*)?³ The question thus returns: How can one even speak about God? Moreover, how can one speak on God's behalf with any degree of authority? How would one know that one's words about God are more than just that: one's own constructions about God?

The answer to the hermeneutical question is, of course, quite simple, namely that the point of departure is indeed that which can be perceived. The knowledge of God does not come from above but from below. It is derived from that which is natural. Hence, all theology is natural theology. This is not nullified by Calvin's seemingly Neo-Platonic insistence that in seeking God "we must rise above all perception of body and soul." Rising above perception (whatever that may mean) is only possible on the basis of perception. What is required are traces of God's presence, intimations of transcendence, a sense of the infinite in the finite – even if the finite cannot contain the infinite (the famous *extra Calvinisticum*). The Christian claim is that such traces may best be found in Jesus Christ and perhaps nowhere more clearly than in this prayer.

i) "We are not here discussing whether a human ministry is necessary for the sowing of God's Word, from which faith may be conceived. This we shall discuss in another place (IV.1.5). But we say that the Word itself, however it be imparted to us, is like a mirror in which faith may contemplate God." (III.2.6)

God's word is proclaimed through human instruments so that we would be able to hear that. Calvin is not merely stating the obvious here. He is arguing against a residual Gnosticism and Manichaeism, which maintain that fallible human instruments can only drag down the authority of the Word. Instead, Calvin argues, one should be grateful that God has opted to "consecrate to himself the mouths and tongues of men in order that his voice may resound in them" (IV.1.5). Spiritualising fanatics (Anabaptists), by contrast, may claim more immediate access to God's will, but thus refuse to hold unto God's word. It is on this basis that Calvin offers an elaborate discussion of the significance of Christian ministry, which, he maintains, remains primarily a ministry of God's word, that is, a word of mercy and forgiveness (IV.1-13).

j) "Here our merciful Lord, according to his infinite kindness, so tempers himself to our capacity that, since we are creatures who always creep on the ground, cleave to the flesh, and, do not think about or even conceive of anything spiritual, he condescends to lead us to himself even by these earthly elements, and to set before us in the flesh a mirror of spiritual blessings. For if we were incorporeal (as Chrysostom says), he would give us these very things naked and incorporeal. Now, because we have souls engrafted in bodies, he imparts spiritual things under visible ones" (IV.14.3).

3 Pannenberg (1991:68) rightly insists that "The designation of Yahweh as God and the Christian attributing of deity to Jesus Christ make sense only on the condition of an established pre-Christian and extra-Christian use of the word 'God'." He adds the Christian restriction of this general category obviously implied a correction to the connotations attached in extra-Christian use. This suggests a defect in Barth's understanding of the revelation in Christ. The latter presupposes that the world belongs to God and that humanity knows the God who is proclaimed by the gospel, even though a wholly new light is shed on this knowledge by the revelation in Christ (1991:75).

Calvin's famous treatment of the notion of a sacrament is of direct relevance for my exploration of the way in which that which is natural may serve as a carrier of God's word of forgiveness. Following Augustine, Calvin defines a sacrament as "an outward sign by which the Lord seals on our consciences the promises of his good will toward us in order to sustain the weakness of our faith" (IV.14.1). He insists that the sign is meaningless without the word – which has to explain the meaning of the sign. The purpose of the sign is to confirm and seal the promises of God.

Calvin develops this insight in two crucial further steps. He first argues that the material signs are by themselves worthless and nothing more than water, bread and wine. They are sacraments ("visible words") only in terms of that which they signify – which is explained through the Word. He says: "Indeed, the believer, when he sees the sacraments with his own eyes, does not halt at the physical sight of them, but by those steps (which I have indicated by analogy) rises up in devout contemplation to those lofty mysteries which lie hidden in the sacraments" (IV.14.5). The human senses are required in order to hear the word and to see the signs, but these signs are mere "mirrors in which we may contemplate the riches of God's grace" (IV.14.6). The purpose of the sacraments is only to come to our aid to ascertain the trustworthiness of God's promises.

The next step is to emphasise that the sacraments do not have any secret powers to impart God's grace. They become effective only through the illumination of the Holy Spirit. Only in this way do the sacraments help to establish and enhance faith in the heart of the believer – thus "[our] hearts are penetrated and affections moved and our souls opened for the sacraments to enter in" (IV.14.9). And; "For, that the Word may not beat your ears in vain, and that the sacraments may not strike your eyes in vain, the Spirit shows us that in them it is God speaking to us, softening the stubbornness of our heart, and composing it to that obedience which it owes the Word of the Lord. Finally, the Spirit transmits those outward words and sacraments from our ears to our soul" (IV.14.10).

Calvin then adds:

If the Spirit be lacking, the sacraments can accomplish nothing more in our minds than the splendour of the sun shining upon blind eyes, or a voice sounding in deaf ears. Therefore, I make such a division between Spirit and sacraments that the power to act rests with the former, and the ministry alone is left to the latter—a ministry empty and trifling, apart from the action of the Spirit, but charged with great effect when the Spirit works within and manifests his power (IV.14.9).

Calvin acknowledges that the human eye would not see anything, nor would the ear be struck by any noise, unless they were created and fitted for seeing and hearing (IV.14.9). His argument in this section is not that the senses are worthless without the word that is heard and the object that is seen (see above). Instead, he draws a complex analogy between such natural capabilities, which are necessary to hear and to perceive, and the necessity of the work of the Holy Spirit in our hearts, "which is to conceive, sustain, nourish, and establish faith". Without such illumination the sacraments would be worthless. Intriguingly, Calvin then adds: "There is only this difference: that our ears and eyes have naturally received the faculty of hearing and seeing; but Christ does the same thing in our hearts by special grace beyond the measure of nature" (IV.14.9). How should this "special grace *beyond the measure of nature*" be understood? Although one may suspect an unresolved Platonism here, one may also explore the relationship between a sign and that which it signifies (see below), precisely in order to take the human senses (and the letter of the law) as serious as Calvin does. For Calvin, it is through the Word of God that such connotations are attached, engraved upon the material signifier: "When they were inscribed by God's Word a new form was put upon them, so that they began to be what previously they were not" (IV.14.18). The sacraments confirm and seal that which is promised through the Word; it "effectively performs what it symbolizes" (IV.15.14).

Calvin applies this emphasis on signs and what they signify to the meaning of each of the sacraments. On the Lord's Supper he says for example: "our souls are fed by the flesh and blood of Christ in the same way that bread and wine keep and sustain physical life. For the analogy of the sign applies only if souls find their nourishment in Christ—which cannot happen unless Christ truly grows into one with us, and refreshes us by the eating of his flesh and the drinking of his blood" (IV.17.10). This quotation illustrates how the signification of signs is interpreted here along the dualisms of matter and ideas, of body and soul – albeit that the signified (human thoughts, ideas, that which is "spiritual"), although invisible, remains "natural" in the sense outlined above.

What is being signified can only be understood through the power of the Holy Spirit. Calvin says:

Even though it seems unbelievable that Christ's flesh, separated from us by such great distance, penetrates to us, so that it becomes our food, let us remember how far the secret power of the Holy Spirit towers above all our senses, and how foolish it is to wish to measure his immeasurableness by our measure. What, then, our mind does not comprehend let faith conceive: that the Spirit truly unites things separated in space (IV.17.10).

I therefore say (what has always been accepted in the church and is today taught by all of sound opinion) that the sacred mystery of the Supper consists in two things: physical signs, which, thrust before our eyes, represent to us, according to our feeble capacity, things invisible; and spiritual truth, which is at the same time represented and displayed through the symbols themselves (IV.17.11).

These observations calls for further reflection on Calvin's theory of signs (and of symbols⁴), on the relation between what Saussure would later call the (material) signifier and the (ideal) signified, but also between a sign and its referent. In terms of the use of the term "natural" above, the signified (as embedded in human thought processes) remains a function of cultural evolution and is in that sense "natural". The relation between sign and referent is far trickier. Can a sign refer to extra-linguistic realities – even when it is acknowledged that our only access to such a referent is mediated through language? Is human language a self-enclosed world? Can human language refer to God (a transcendent referent)?

These questions cannot be resolved here and Calvin's semiotics would require closer investigation. Suffice it to say that Calvin severely criticised the failure to distinguish between a sign and that which it signifies. He ridicules notions of transubstantiation precisely on this point (IV.17.14-30). He distinguishes between the "signification" (the promises of God), the matter or substance that is signified (Christ's death and resurrection) and the effect that follows from both ("redemption, righteousness, sanctification, and eternal life, and all the other benefits Christ gives to us") (IV.17.11). The last of these are understood pneumatologically and calls for further reflection in the discipline of hermeneutics, not only semiotics.

k) "It is not what is seen, then, but what is believed, that feeds" (IV.17.3, in a discussion of Augustine's position).

One last comment on the unresolved dualisms in Calvin's theology remains important here. The contrast between that which is visible and that which is invisible may be regarded as

4 Calvin recognised the distinction between signs and symbols (where the symbol participates in that which it symbolises). He says: "For though the symbol differs in essence from the thing signified (in that the latter is spiritual and heavenly, while the former is physical and visible), still, because it not only symbolizes the thing that it has been consecrated to represent as a bare and empty token, but also truly exhibits it, why may its name not rightly belong to the thing?" (IV.17.21). Following Augustine, Calvin thus concludes that sacraments have a certain likeness to those things of which they are sacraments. Otherwise they would not be sacraments at all (IV.17.21).

unproblematic. It would, incidentally, also appeal to contemporary African sensibilities. Likewise, one need not assume a Platonic or Cartesian dualism between the ideal and the material to distinguish between brain functions and thought, between signifier and signified. However, Calvin often juxtaposes this contrast with the ones between soul and body, the carnal and the spiritual, this earth and heaven,⁵ this life and eternal life. The sign is material and visible and differs “in essence” from the reality that is signified – which is not only invisible but also “spiritual” and “heavenly” (IV.17.21).

It should be noted that this contrast is built upon cosmological assumptions (see Schreiner 1991:7-37). The problem that Calvin addresses in his discussion of the sacraments is in what way Christ’s body, which is in heaven (see IV.17.26), could be present in the symbol of the bread? Calvin insists that Christ’s body is finite and remains in heaven, giving weight to the meaning of Christ’s ascension (IV.17.27. It therefore does not require a feigned miracle to make his body present (across a “great distance in space”) in the elements of sacrament (IV.17.26). It is ludicrous to consider two bodies of Jesus Christ – one visible in heaven and one hidden in secret under bread (IV.17.28). One can guard against such crude, superstitious and literalist notions by recognising the distinction between a sign and what it signifies. Christ becomes present primarily through the symbols and through the power of the Holy Spirit – through which God “pours down his grace from heaven through the Spirit upon us” (IV.17.28). Yet, the unresolved dualism in Calvin’s theology cannot be denounced as merely Platonic as he also insists that in his resurrection Jesus Christ received *the same true flesh* as when he was born from the virgin Mary, that it is Christ’s *body* that is in heaven, and that the hope for the resurrection of our bodies and (interestingly enough) for *our* ascension into heaven is based on that (IV.17.29). Accordingly, we need not “drag” Christ down from heaven; we may hope to be “lifted up” to him (IV.17.30).

From a contemporary perspective such weight attributed to the ascension of course does not resolve the cosmological problem. How may we fathom the distinction between earth and heaven? How did Calvin come to know about that which is “heavenly” (except by following the biblical vocabulary)? How can our words refer to (make present) that which transcends the natural? In short, how can our human words refer to God? How can we speak with any authority about God and God’s word to us?

The unresolved hermeneutical and cosmological problem is well illustrated by the following: Once more I wish to warn my readers to consider diligently the purport of our doctrine: whether it depends upon common sense or, having surmounted the world on the wings of faith, soars up to heaven. We say Christ descends to us both by the outward symbol and by his Spirit, that he may truly quicken our souls by the substance of his flesh and of his blood. He who does not perceive that many miracles are subsumed in these few words is more than stupid. For nothing is more beyond the natural than that souls should borrow spiritual and heavenly life from a flesh that had its origin from earth, and underwent death. There is nothing more incredible than that things severed and removed from one another by the whole space between heaven and earth should not only be connected across such a great distance but also be united, so that souls may receive nourishment from Christ’s flesh (IV.17.24).

5 Calvin distinguishes between “earthly” and “heavenly” things in the following way: “I call ‘earthly things’ those which do not pertain to God or his Kingdom, to true justice, or to the blessedness of the future life; but which have their significance and relationship with regard to the present life and are, in a sense, confined within its bounds. I call ‘heavenly things’ the pure knowledge of God, the nature of true righteousness, and the mysteries of the Heavenly Kingdom. The first class includes government, household management, all mechanical skills, and the liberal arts. In the second are the knowledge of God and of his will, and the rule by which we conform our lives to it” (II.2.13).

The preceding discussion has illustrated that Calvin was certainly not unaware of the hermeneutical problem of coming to knowledge of God (understood by him in terms of faith as piety, that is, as reverence, awe and trust). It is obvious that he emphasised that any "natural" knowledge of God, unaided by the witnesses of Scripture is severely limited and distorted due to the legacy of human sin, therefore cannot lead to adequate knowledge of God and only suffices to preclude human excuses on the basis of ignorance. What is less obvious is the role played by such human capacities, the human senses and our preceding vocabularies in order to come to "true" knowledge of God.

That we can actually hear the Word of God (the word of forgiveness) and that we can read the Scriptures can only be based on our "natural" capacities. However, that would be worthless without being confronted by the object that is seen and the word (the sound) that is heard. For Calvin, that word comes to us from outside our own capabilities. The heart of the matter lies in his insistence that the liberating word of God's forgiveness is not based on our merits, on our good works, on first becoming righteous before being declared righteous, on our penitence, or on our faith. It is based solely on God's mercy, on God's grace as expressed in the work of Christ, and, in the very final analysis, on God's election. Thus the emphasis is not on our hearing but on the word of forgiveness that is heard. Moreover, that word of forgiveness is precisely not merely a human word (that would imply that we are forgiving ourselves), but indeed God's word. But what could that mean?

This word of forgiveness does not come to us in some mysterious way. It is audible and tangible. The object that is seen and touched, the word that is heard, still forms part of our world (of "nature"). The bridge between the known and the unknown, the finite and the infinite is the Logos that was addressed to us and became flesh – visible, touchable, palpable (Battles 1998:24).⁶ It is a Word that is always already amongst us. This is communicated to us on the basis of the life and work of Jesus Christ, through the apostolic witnesses, the biblical texts, exegesis and proclamation. It is through the letter of Scripture that the word of forgiveness is spoken and heard. This is how God's mercy is made known to us. It is received through our human senses. As we have seen above, Calvin is very much aware of the role played by the senses and takes our "natural" capacities for granted.

God is therefore made known to us through the human senses. However, none of the objects of our senses would by themselves yield knowledge of *God*. Many people passing Jesus by on the road would see in him nothing more than another traveller. Many people today would hear in preaching nothing more than a speech delivered in a religious community. How, then, does something that is entirely "natural" convey the presence of God? How does that which is finite bear evidence of the infinite (even if the finite cannot contain the infinite)?

In the terminology of semiotics this begs complex questions about the ways in which signs and symbols function. What is the relation between a (material) signifier and a signified (the connotations attached to a signifier in human thought)? On the basis of the argument above, both the material signifier and the ideal signified remain part of "nature" and in that sense entirely "natural". That applies also to human thought patterns such as moral judgements and moral codes which are based on the assumption that what reality is, is not what it ought to be. Such judgements may *seem* to be other than "natural". To derive an "ought" from an "is" may even be regarded as falling in the trap of the naturalistic fallacy. However, in the sense that such moral codes are human constructs they form part of human cultural evolution and in that sense

6 See Battles (1998) on Calvin's rhetorical use of the strategy of accommodation: God accommodates himself according to human capacity.

part of nature as defined above.

The problem becomes more complex in the case of religious language where the signified tends to transcend human thought, indicating something that we cannot grasp, suggesting intimations of transcendence, of God's presence. Moreover, how should the elusive relation between a sign and its referent be understood? Where such a referent is said to transcend human thought, this poses special difficulties. Indeed, how can one refer to God and God's word of forgiveness at all? In the case of symbols, which already contain what they signify, this relation between sign and referent becomes even more complex. The easy option would be to regard such theological language as nothing more than a human construction. This would be to base theological language on anthropology along the lines of modern liberal theology. As I argued above, this is hermeneutically inevitable, but to leave it at that would be reductionist. It would not do justice to the claim that the intended referent of such language expresses Someone who transcends "nature" by virtue of creating it in the first place.

Obviously, I cannot hope to resolve such complex questions here. In Calvin's terminology such intimations of transcendence are only possible on the basis of the illumination of the Holy Spirit through which faith takes root in the heart of the believer. Yet, such illumination is also not portrayed as something mysterious but as taking place through the exegesis of the meaning (the letter) of the text in order to appropriate its usefulness (the spirit) within the context of Christian piety (IV.8.13). I do wish to highlight the complex problem that this poses for a forensic notion of justification: how may it be said that the human word of forgiveness (which forms part of "nature") on the basis of what Christ has done (in the history of "nature") is ultimately *God's* word of forgiveness (without which there would be no consolation) in such a way that the basis for such forgiveness is not attributed to our own doing (our good works, our faith)? Can such tension between the sign (the signifier and the signified) and its transcendent referent be sustained?

Nevertheless, such a sense of transcendence can be articulated in human thinking, speaking and writing. As many contributors to discourse on science and religion have observed, the use of symbols is one of the distinctive features of the human species. Indeed, even though this is an area where angels should fear to tread, discussions of the transcendent (as signified or as transcendent referent) fill theological libraries. All too often theologians, including Calvin (and Barth!), tend to become remarkably sure about that which transcend us and speak with considerable authority about that. The ensnaring danger is to speak about God on God's behalf and with God's authority.⁷

One may retort that such a sense of authority is not focused on the signified but on the signifiers that are deemed to be carriers of God's presence. Accordingly, and speaking with Barth, the focus should be on the threefold word (of God), namely Jesus of Nazareth (the incarnation of the Logos), the biblical texts (Holy Scripture) and preaching (the Word of God). In my view

7 In my view this argument is nevertheless based on a failure to grasp the nature of religious language.

When one engages with constructions of that which transcends "nature", it is not possible to maintain an objective distance from such a construction. One cannot view it as if from the outside precisely because such a construction is necessarily all-inclusive. Instead, one is urged to contemplate how the world would look like if its origin, destiny and meaning have to be understood in this light. One has to think, speak and live from within this universe of meaning. Typically, the mode of discourse then shifts to language about who God is, what God does and what God says – to the language of liturgy, preaching, paraenesis and doctrine. This may be sustained as long as the fragile nature of such discourse is recognised, as long as we acknowledge that we are attempting to give answers to questions that we have to ask but know that we cannot answer in any final way. Such language may form our last, ultimate words, the language of doxology (and of divine election), but cannot provide a firm foundation upon which an entire theological system may be built.

that would be entirely appropriate. However, it should then be noted that such signifiers form part of the world around us and are in that sense “natural”. Moreover, they are experienced in relation with other signifiers (in an ongoing differential play of signifiers which shape that which is signified) and through our senses and our preceding vocabularies. Any such theological language thus remains entirely human, fully natural.

One may, from another angle, re-describe the use of such signs as a function of God’s accommodation to our human capacity (the notion of *accommodatio Dei*). As Battles (1998) and Balserek (2009:372) observe, Calvin paid more attention to such accommodation than any other theologian except Chrysostom. Accordingly, God revealed God self to us in such a way that we would be able to understand that. Such accommodation would apply to each aspect of the threefold word of God, but especially to the incarnation. However, such a re-description, too, has to be understood as an attempt to view human understanding from God’s perspective. Such a perspective can only be obtained “from below”, from within our capacities, from within that which is natural. It does not and cannot come directly “from above”. How, one needs to ask, can one know that God decided on such accommodation? The key here, as Zachman (2006:209) recognises, is Calvin’s analogical and anagogical understanding of the relations between a sign and the reality signified. Zachman describes this in terms of the visible images of the invisible God – in the theatre of God’s glory, but also in terms of the cross of Christ.⁸

In recognising the role of an unresolved *complexio oppositorum* in Calvin’s theology, it seems to me that the only way to capture Calvin’s position is on the basis of a hermeneutical spiral. This spiral would move from the role of the human senses in order to gain knowledge of the world around us, which would provide some categories in terms of which the knowledge of God that emerges through an engagement with Scripture becomes possible, to the corrective role played by the Scriptures transform the connotations attached to such categories from within, in order to be able to see God’s presence for the first time in the world around us with the help of the spectacles of Scripture and to contemplate the wonders of God’s works. Crudely formulated: without contemplation of the heavens we would not have any notion of God; without God’s revelation in Jesus Christ we would have no clarity on God’s identity and no access to God’s path for salvation. This suggest that human knowledge of the world around us does not merely have a negative function (as many commentators wish to emphasise), but plays a necessary hermeneutical role in order to be able to hear the Word of God or to read the Scriptures in the first place. Moreover, the purpose of Scripture is to provide the spectacles to detect God’s presence in God’s works. The spectacles are not required to read Scripture, nor are we to be preoccupied with reading the Scriptures. We require Scripture in order to appreciate the theatre of God’s glory.

This does not imply that Calvin himself would have explained it in this way. Thomas (1992:135) may be on the right track in suggesting that Calvin simply does not concern himself with such a hermeneutical question: “He [Calvin] probably felt it too shrouded in mystery to warrant attention.” Calvin’s own view is perhaps best expressed in the following quotation picked up by Thomas (1992:136):

Therefore, as we cannot come to Christ unless the Spirit of God draws us, so when we are drawn we are lifted up in mind and heart above our understanding. For the soul, illumined by him, takes on a new keenness, as it were, to contemplate the heavenly mysteries, whose splendour had previously blinded it. And man’s understanding, thus beamed by the light of the Holy Spirit, then at last truly begins to taste those things, which belong to the Kingdom of God,

⁸ On the distinction between images and living images and the dialectic between word and image, see especially Zachman (2007).

having formerly been quite foolish and dull in tasting them (*Institutes* III.2.34).

CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS: THE (S)ELECTION OF SIGNIFIERS

Perhaps the underlying problem here is not whether such signifiers are natural, whether they come to us from the inside or the outside (including the word of forgiveness), or whether they are enmeshed in a web of meanings and interpretations. The issue at stake here is the *selection* of signifiers, the privileging of some traces of God's presence above others. It may true that we can find traces of God's presence elsewhere, indeed everywhere, but the witness of the Christian tradition is that God's presence can be found more clearly than anywhere else in the narrative of Israel's notion of God, in the life and work of Jesus the Christ, and through witnesses to the presence of the Holy Spirit in and through the ministry and mission of Christian churches. This can only be understood as a qualitative judgement, namely that these sources offer us the clearest available traces of God's presence. These signifiers are carriers of a signified that can help us to come to terms with the origins, destiny and meaning of the history of the entire universe, of our own lives and of our struggles with the demands of life, with suffering and with the evil that surrounds us and for which we are partly responsible.

In my view this would require from reformed theology to rethink distinctions made between the so called "book of nature" and the "book of Scripture" or between "general revelation and "special revelation". Such distinctions become problematic the moment such categories are compartmentalised as two distinct sources for reflecting on God's self-revelation. Then questions on the relationship between these two sources immediately arise. In my book the "book of nature" and the "book of Scripture" cannot be understood as two distinct sources. "If "special revelation" forms part of nature, as I argued above, then it should be regarded as a qualitative judgement in terms of which some traces of God's self-revelation are selected on the basis of their relative clarity. The locus of special revelation forms part of the locus of general revelation. In diagram form one would need a circle (or a few dots and a cross) within a much bigger circle instead of two circles alongside one another. Or perhaps one may picture this three-dimensionally as a funnel: with a wide upper rim and a small inner tube that nevertheless exercises all the suction power. To express this more acutely: God's special revelation in Jesus Christ (but also through the history of Israel and in the early church) forms one moment in the history of the universe / the world / nature (and in the evolution of species) – even if one wishes to maintain retrospectively that the universe itself was created through the wisdom of the divine Logos.

On this basis the critique of natural theology would suggest that a particular theological position does not do justice to God's self-revelation in Jesus Christ because it seems to value other clues to God's revelation higher than that (see Barth 2002:74-5). However, any access to God's self-revelation in Jesus Christ can only be through categories derived from "nature"

In the same way the axiom of *sola Scriptura* requires reconsideration. It cannot be understood as the only source of the true knowledge of God, but it can be viewed as the best available source and can be used to judge other sources (Scripture as norm). However, such judgement cannot be exercised in a purist way since the biblical texts are embedded in a network of other "texts" and meanings, including pre-Israelite notions of God, and are interpreted through our existing vocabularies. It is therefore necessary to consider the inverse of Calvin's image that Scripture provides us with the necessary spectacles to see God in the world of nature. It is also true that nature provides us with the spectacles to read Scripture and to discern God's presence in and through the reading of the biblical texts.

To insist that all theology is natural theology may in this way encourage a sense of theological humility. It may help us to see that we are here attempting to answer ultimate questions that

we cannot help but to raise, but know that we cannot answer, even if we have to live on a daily basis from the answers that we have received. It may help us to recognise that when we speak about God we can only do it from within the world of nature, from the humus where we came from and to which we shall return. Indeed, language about God can be nothing more than our last, final and ultimate words, the language of doxology.

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KEY WORDS

Calvin
Natural theology
Semiotics
Signification

TREFWOORDE

Calvyn
Natuurlike teologie
Semiotiek
Tekens

Net maar diere? ’n Tematiese oorsig van die plek van die diereryk in die skepping volgens geselekteerde Skrifgedeeltes

ABSTRACT

A thematic survey of the place of the animal kingdom in God’s world according to some Scripture passages

In a time of growing ecological awareness it may prove valuable to trace the place which the animal kingdom according to the Scriptures takes in God’s world. The relevant material unfolds as follows:

Every animal unique;

The Creator’s compassion on animals;

Animals as examples to humans;

Animal images for God;

Animal images for God’s people;

The messianic kingdom sketched by way of animal images;

The significance of animal sacrifices in salvation history;

Animal service during Jesus’ earthly ministry;

The “Prayer relationship” between Creator and animals.

As God’s image bearers, who have been appointed to rule over the animal world (Gen. 1: 27-28), it is our duty and privilege to behave in such a way towards them that they will thereby be better enabled to fulfil the significance of their existence in God’s world.

INLEIDING

In ’n tyd van groeiende ekologiese bewuswording (vgl. Vos & Müller 1991; Conradie & Field 2000; Conradie 1996 en 2009) kan dit sinvol wees om na te gaan watter plek die diereryk volgens die Skrif in die skepping inneem. Vanweë die omvangrykheid van die materiaal word van geselekteerde gedeeltes gebruik gemaak om hierdie plek te help bepaal.

Die relevante materiaal word soos volg ingedeel:

1. Elke dier uniek;
2. Die Skepper se deernis teenoor diere;
3. Diere tot voorbeeld vir die mens;
4. Dierebeelde vir God;
5. Dierebeelde vir God se volk;
6. Die Messiaanse vrederyk in terme van dierebeelde geskilder;
7. Die rol van diere-offers in die heilsgeskiedenis;
8. Dierediens tydens Jesus se aardse bediening;
9. Die gebedsverhouding tussen Skepper en dier.

1. ELKE DIER UNIEK

- **Genesis 2: 18-20.** Die Skeppergod, wat in die eerste skeppingsverhaal (1:1-2:3) met die gewone woord vir God aangedui word [*ʿĒlōhim*], en in die tweede verhaal (2:3-3:24) met die verbondsnaam HERE God (JAHWE *ʿĒlōhim*) skep uit die aarde al die diere en voëls en bring hulle na die mens om uit hulle geledere ’n hulp te soek wat as lewensmaat by hom sou pas. Maar al het Adam uit al hierdie wesens geen geskikte lewensmaat gevind nie, het hy terselfdertyd op bevel van God ’n groot taak verrig deur elke dier en voël ’n naam te gee. Vir die Hebreër was die naam meer as ’n blote etiket, want dit het persoonlikheid en karakter uitgebeeld (Ryle 1914:37; Kroeze 1965:41). Soos wat Adam die diere en voëls genoem het, het God dit aanvaar. Hiermee het Hy self reeds sy unieke verhouding tot die dieryek openbaar.

Uiteraard moet ook die *slang* getel word onder die geskape wesens. Die “listigheid” (Heb.: *ʿārūm*) waarmee dit in Genesis 3:1 getipeer word, is ’n woord wat op sigself sowel negatief (“listig”) as positief (“skrander”, “verstandig”) verstaan kan word. Maar omdat God self gesien het dat al die diere wat Hy geskape het, goed was (Gen. 1:25), en in Genesis 1:31 *alles* wat Hy gemaak het selfs as “baie goed” (*tōb mēʾōd*) getipeer word, moet die woord ook hier in Genesis 3:1 in gunstige sin verstaan word. Volgens die Hebraëuse spraakgebruik word dit in elk geval meesal in gunstige sin gebruik (onder andere agt maal in dié sin in Spreuke, bv. 12:16, 23). Jesus vermaan self sy twaalf apostels om “versigtig” te wees soos die slange, Mat. 10:16 (vgl. Aalders 1933: 127-128). Dit moet dus wees dat die slang hier, in terme van die Genesisverhaal, by implikasie deur ’n bose mag verlei is waarvan die herkoms nêrens in die Skrif deursigtig gemaak word nie (vgl. Durand 1978:73-78; 90-94).

- **Job 39-41.** ’n Tweede pregnante voorbeeld van diere-identiteit is die lys diere en voëls wat die HERE in sy twisgesprek met Job in hoofstukke 39-41 noem. (Die vertaling *ibis* en *haan* in 38:36, soos DGN, vgl. LSB voetnoot, en ander doen, is baie onseker; vgl. Pope 1973:302). Oor elkeen van hierdie wesens word een of meer eienskappe genoem om hulle unieke identiteite aan te dui. Oor sommige, soos die krokodil, word selfs breedvoerig uitgewei (40:20-28; 41:1-25). Die woord wat hier met “krokodil” vertaal word (*liwyātān*) lees letterlik ‘leviatan’. Maar volgens sy eienskappe word ongetwyfeld die krokodil bedoel. Israel het blykbaar nie ’n spesifieke woord vir die krokodil gehad nie (Kroeze 1964: 450). Om sy unieke identiteit verder te beklemtoon, maak die HERE hier selfs van meer as net ’n tikkie humor gebruik as Hy aan Job in 40:24 vra of Job hierdie gedierte sal probeer mak maak soos ’n voëljie en aan ’n lyntjie bind as ’n speelding vir sy dogters!
- In sy twisgesprek met Job gebruik God al hierdie unieke lewende wesens met hulle besondere unieke eienskappe om *in* en *deur* hulle sy onnaspeurlike en onnavolgbare grootheid des te meer vir Job en vir alle mense te laat besef.
- Deur die groot wysheid wat God aan koning Salomo gegee het, het hy insig in die uniekheid van plante en diere gehad en mense daarvoor ingelig en daarvoor gedig. Na aanleiding van die Oud-Hebraëuse indeling van die diere het hy oor hierdie vier groepe gehandel: eerstens veral oor soogdiere (vee), voorts oor alles wat vlieg, dan alles wat kruip en vierdens alle waterdiere (1 Kon. 4:29-33; vgl Van Gelderen 1937:99).¹

1 Die unieke identiteit van diere word soms treffend weerspieël in gewone letterkundige werke waarin egte diere die hoofrol speel. Wat die Suid-Afrikaanse letterkunde betref, dink ’n mens onmiddellik aan werke soos sir James Percy Fitzpatrick se *Jock of the Bushveld*; Eugene Marais se *Die siel van die mier*; Sangiro (AA Pienaar) se treffende beskrywing van die wel en wee van ’n leeu familie in *Uit oerwoud en vlakte*; die

2. DIE SKEPPER SE DEERNIS TEENoor DIERE

God se omgee vir die dierewêreld straal uit talle plekke in die Bybel.

- As die skrywer van Genesis 1:19 sê God het al die diere van die veld en die voëls van die hemel na Adam gebring om te sien hoe hy hulle sou noem, roep dit 'n tere omgeebeeld op. Dit is as't ware asof die Skepper met sy eie hand een vir een dier of voël tydsaam na Adam aanbring om hom rustig geleentheid te gee om elke dier of voël se uniekheid te deurgrond en daarvolgens die gepaste naam te gee.
- In 'n artikel oor Genesis 1:1-2:4(a) beklemtoon FE Deist (1987:14) God se besondere sorg vir die lewende skepping deurdat Hy vooraf 'n leefwêreld skep waarin hierdie lewende skepping sou kon oorleef.
- In die sondvloedverhaal in Genesis 6:5-9:17 spreek goddelike genade ook teenoor die dierewêreld. Die Skepper reël vir 'n oorblyfsel van die mensegeslag, maar terselfdertyd ook vir 'n oorblyfsel van diere en voëls, wat soos die mens weer die aarde sal kan bewoon. Treffend staan dit in Genesis 7:24-8:1 dat God ná 150 dae se oorstroming van die aarde aan Noag en aan al die diere in die ark *gedink* het, en die waters laat begin terugtrek het. Nadat Noag brandoffers geoffer het, het die HERE met hom, sy familie en al die diere en voëls by hom 'n verbond gesluit wat vir alle toekomstige geslagte sou geld: dat mens en dier nie weer op so 'n skaal deur vloedwaters verswelg sou word nie (8:21-9:11). God se reënboog sou hiervan die teken wees.
- Die Wet wat God deur bemiddeling van Moses gegee het, bevat 'n hele aantal maatreëls om die billike behandeling van diere te verseker. So byvoorbeeld beveel die HERE dat sy volk se werksdiere, net soos die Israëliete self en die vreemdelinge by hulle, op die Sabbat moet rus (Eks. 20:10; Deut. 5:14; vgl. Conradie 1996:81). As jy jou vyand se donkie onder sy vrag sien lê, moet jy hom dit help optel, en as jy sy verdwaalde bees of donkie raakloop, moet jy dit beslis na hom terugbring (Eks. 23:4-5). 'n Pasgebore kalf of skaap- of boklam mag eers op die agste dag van sy ma weggeneem word en 'n kalf of lam mag nie op dieselfde dag as sy ma geoffer word nie (Lev. 22:27-28). Wie afkom op 'n voël met 'n ma en haar kleintjies op die grond of in 'n boom, mag die kleintjies neem, maar moet die ma laat wegvlieg (Deut. 22:6-7).

In Deuteronomium 25:4 sê die HERE die Israëliet mag 'n os nie muilband terwyl hy graan dors nie. "Kindness was to be extended to all God's creatures" (Chianeque & Ngewa 2006: 243). Die Rabbyne het hierdie voorskrif beskou as een van die dinge waarin Israel hom gunstig van al die ander eietydse volke onderskei het (Strack-Billerbeck 1926: 382). As die apostel Paulus in 1 Korinte 9:9 vra of dit miskien oor die os is dat God hom bekommer, is dit binne die verband van hierdie gedeelte duidelik dat Paulus dit nie wil ontken nie (Kirstemaker 1993: 292), maar eenvoudig wil sê: as God billikheid teenoor 'n werkende dier verwag, geld dit des te meer van die menslike arbeider (J Ridderbos 1951: 57; Bouma 1953:98), hier in die Korintebrief in die besonder die apostels as dienaars van God (Groenewald 1980:114; Pop 1965:180; vgl. ook H Ridderbos 1967:140 by 1 Tim. 5:18). Die onderliggende bedoeling ten grondslag van al die wetsbepalings is die inprent van 'n egte omgeehouding teenoor die dierelewe wat uit God se hand voortgekom het (Ridderbos 1951:40).

- Jona se profesie handel in 'n besondere mate oor die HERE, die God van die genadeverbond, se stryd om sy hartelose profeet aan meer as net die veiligheid en heil van sy eie volksgenote te laat dink; om hom 'n priesterlike hart soos dié van sy Sender te gee, wat hom oor 'n stad met tienduisende kindertjies en baie diere ontferm. Tereg sê J Ridderbos (1949:49) dat die woorde "baie diere" op die oog af 'n vreemde slot vir 'n

Bybelboek is, maar dat dit in der waarheid 'n kragtige slotakkoord is “voor het loflied op die liefde Gods, dat de kern van deze geschiedenis uitmaak”.

- Psalm 84 is 'n lied van hartstogtelike liefde vir die tempel van die HERE en die digter se smagtende verlange om daarheen op te gaan want hy wil met sy hele wese óór God en vóór God jubel. Hy roep verruk uit dat God se liefde so groot is dat selfs 'n mossie en 'n swaeltjie vir hulle kleintjies daar by sy altare hulle nessesies kan maak (v4). Wat 'n tere beeld van goddelike ontferming selfs vir die geringstes van die HERE se lewende skepping! In die uitsending van sy twaalf dissipels in Matteus 10 wys Jesus hulle daarop dat, al is die mense soveel meer werd as die voëls van die hemel, God nogtans ook na die voëls in hulle daaglikse onbesorgde bestaan omsien (vv 25-26), sodat selfs nie een mossie, al is hy in terme van geld gereken byna niks werd nie, “hulpeloos op die grond sal val sonder dat julle Vader daarvan weet nie” (v 29, NLV).
- Die gedeelte oor Jahwe se deernis teenoor diere kan afgesluit word met 'n verwysing na Ps. 104:26, waar van 'n gemoedelike verhouding tussen die Skepper en sy skepping gespreek sou kon word. Die Hebreeuse uitdrukking *l'ešāḥeq bō* word naamlik deur talle nuwere uitleggers en vertalings só verstaan dat Jahwe die Leviatan, 'n gevreesde watermonster (Stradling 1968:729-730), gemaak het *om mee te speel* (bv. Noordtjiz 1973:153; Kraus 1989:303; JB; NLV; DGN; NAB; meer huiwerend Goldingay 2008:192). In ooreenstemming met hierdie speelse vertaling spreek die digter dan ook inderdaad die begeerte uit dat die werk van die HERE hom vreugde mag verskaf (v31).²

3. DIERE TOT VOORBEELD VIR MENS

In verskillende Skrifgedeeltes word diere se gedrag as voorbeeld vir die mens voorgelê. So kla God by monde van die profeet Jesaja (1:3) dat 'n bees sy eienaar ken en 'n donkie die krip van sy eienaar, maar Israel ken Jahwe nie, hy het geen begrip van wat die HERE doen nie. Daarom sê Snijders tereg (1969:20): “In de Bijbel kan over dieren gesproken word, dat mensen beschaamd worden. Ze weten meer van de echte orde van het leven af, dan de mens, de kroon der schepping.” Wanneer Jesus sy dissipels in 'n vyandige, gevaarlike omgewing instuur (Mat. 10:16) soos skape onder wolwe, moet hulle gedrag aan die een kant met versigtigheid soos dié van slange gepaard gaan. Hulle moet hulleself dus nie onnodig in gevaar stel nie. Terselfdertyd moet hulle gedrag egter ook opreg wees soos die duiwe, dit wil sê suiwer van bedoeling en opreg in hulle optrede (vgl. H Ridderbos 1941:202; Van Zyl 2009:1366). In Spreuke 6:6-10 stuur die skrywer die luiaard na die mier, om by dié te leer hoe daar geordend gewerk behoort te word.³

4. DIEREBEELDE VIR GOD

Treffende dierebeelde dien om God en sy heilshandeling te identifiseer.

2 Dit moet Bybelgedeeltes soos die voorafgaandes wees wat die kerkhervormer Martin Luther by geleentheid laat sê het: “Wys my hoe jy jou hond behandel, en ek sal jou sê watter soort mens jy is.”

Van die wêreldbekende Mahatma Ghandi kom die gevleuelde woord: “As jy wil weet wat die mentaliteit van 'n nasie is, kyk hoe hulle hul diere behandel (*Die Burger*, 02-02-2010, briewekolom).

Tydens 'n Christelike Sondagaandprogram oor bekering oor radio RSG gedurende Mei 2010, het 'n teologiese oudstudent vertel dat sy professor in Sendingwetenskap een oggend sy klas geopen het met die gebed: “Here, vergewe my, ek het vanoggend ons kat geskop.” Die verteller sê hierdie gebed het tot 'n ingrypende ekologiese bekering in sy eie lewe gelei.

3 In 'n artikel in *Leefstylburger* van 7 April 2010 word meegedeel dat uit die Amerikaanse hondekosmaker Pup-Peroni se vraelys aan meer as duisend honde-eienaars, meer as twee-derdes sê hulle kan eerder op hulle diere as op hulle beste vriende staatmaak.

- Toe Israel met sy vertrek uit Egipte regoor die Sinaïberg kamp opslaan, het God vir Moses gesê terwyl hy besig was om teen die berg uit na God te klim (Eks. 19:4): “Julle het gesien wat Ek aan Egipte gedoen het, en hoe Ek julle soos op arendsvlerke veilig gedra en na My toe gebring het.” In sy lied aan Israel voor Israel se intog in Kanaän, gebruik Moses die arendsbeeld vir God in uitgebreide vorm om dit vir Israel op die hart te druk dat die HERE alleen vir Israel na veiligheid gelei het (Deut. 32:11-12). Honderde jare later waarsku God egter vir Israel (Hos. 8:1-3) dat sy voortdurende verbondsverbreking sal meebring dat die HERE soos ’n roofvoël op hom sal afpyl deur middel van ’n agtervolgende vyand wat land, volk en tempel sal verower. In Hosea 11:10 is die HERE egter ’n brullende leeu tot redding ten spyte van Israel se aanhoudende ongehoorsaamheid. Op hierdie reddende brul sal die verstrooide volk terugkeer (Hos. 11:10-11): soos ’n swerm voëls na hulle neste (Israel uit Egipte) en soos ’n swerm duiwe na hulle neste (Israel uit Assirië). Maar later in Hosea (13:1-10) hoor ’n mens weer hoe God vir sy volk weens hulle afvalligheid soos ’n verskeurende leeu en luiperd word, soos ’n beerwyfie wie se kleintjies afgeneem is.
- Ook by die profeet Amos word die beeld van God as brullende leeu in verband met God se straffende geregtigheid gebruik. In die eerste geval is dit ’n beeld van straffende geregtigheid teen die volk se afvalligheid (1:2). In die tweede geval word die beeld so aangewend: soos ’n leeu in ’n boom en ’n jong leeu in sy skuilplek brul as hulle buit gevind het, só sal God se ware profeet met siddering spreek as die eintlike leeu, God self, gebrul het (3:3-8).
- In Joël 3:16 dien die goddelike brul vanuit Sion in Jerusalem in die vorm van ’n sinonieme parallelisme as ’n kragtige onheilsaankondiging aan die nasies rondom Israel (Prinsloo 1990:99 en vgl Jer. 25:30). Maar omdat die tweede deel van Joël 3:16 aan die ander kant eweseer deur middel van ’n kragtige sinonieme parallelisme God se beskerming van Israel aankondiging, sou ’n mens kon sê dat die brul van die leeu in vers 16(a) nie net op die oordeel oor omringende volke dui nie, maar by implikasie ook op die beskerming van God se eie volk Israel.
- In die Nuwe Testament word Jesus Christus sowel lam as leeu genoem. Johannes die Doper roep in verrukking uit: “Kyk! Die Lam (*amnos*) van God wat die sonde van die wêreld wegneem!” (Joh. 1:29, eie vert.). Dit het Hy gedoen deur homself deur die ewige Gees sonder smet aan God te offer (Heb. 9:14; 1 Pet. 1:19). Op Patmos sien Johannes ’n visioen van die troon van God, met ’n lam (*arnion*) wat êrens in die middel staan asof hy geslag is, met sewe horings en sewe oë. Hierdie lam is die eintlike leeu uit die stam van Juda (Gen. 49:9). Soos Overduin (1963:90) dit stel: “Onze logica zegt: Een leeuw is een leeuw, en een lam is een lam. Maar God zegt: De leeuw uit Juda's stam is een lam, en het Lam Gods, dat geslacht wordt, is de leeuw.” In Johannes 1:32 sien Johannes die Doper die Heilige Gees op Christus neerdaal in die vorm van ’n duif en op hom bly. Morris (1971:151) vind die simboliek “puzzling and perhaps inexplicable”. Die duif was nooit ’n erkende beeld van die Heilige Gees nie. Volgens Geldenhuys (1969:146) simboliseer ’n duif reinheid, onskuld en lieflikheid, en dat dit die simboliek is wat hier volledig en vir goed op Christus oorgedra word.

5. DIEREBEELDE VIR GOD SE VOLK

- In sy seënryke afskeidswoord aan sy volk het Moses onder andere die volgende aan sommige van die stamme gesê: “Josef, ja, die tienduisende van Efraim en die duisende van Manasse, is vol majesteit soos ’n eersgebore bul, met horings soos dié van ’n wilde os, om daarmee die volk te deurboor tot by die eindes van die aarde” (Deut. 32:17, eie vertaling).

Van die stam van Gad sê hy, geseënd is die een wat aan hom grondgebied afstaan; hy lê daar soos 'n verskeurende leeu; sterkes is sy prooi (33:20). Dan is 'n jong leeu wat van Basan af sy prooi bespring (33:22).

- In sowel die Ou as die Nuwe Testament word God se volk as 'n herderskudde getipeer. Wat die Ou Testament betref, dink 'n mens feitlik dadelik aan die bekende Psalm 23, waarin die digter homself as een van die HERE se kudde beskou. Die Ou-Testamentiese skrywende profete gaan deurgaans van Israel uit as herderskudde, met die HERE as Opperherder en die konings, profete en priesters almal as herders namens Hom. Enkele voorbeelde: Esegïel 34 is 'n aangrypende hoofstuk oor God se optrede teen vals herders en hoe Hy self sy kudde se herder sal wees. Die profeet Jeremia verlang dat die nasies sal hoor en weet dat die HERE wat Israel verstrooi het, hom sal vergader en bewaak soos 'n herder sy kudde (31:10). Jesaja 40:11 beskryf in tere herderstaal hoe die HERE die lammers van sy kudde in sy arms bymekaar sal maak en aan sy bors dra, terwyl Hy die lammerooie saggies lei (vgl. Miga 2:12).
- In die Nuwe Testament spreek Jesus van sy volgelinge as sy skape vir wie Hy sy lewe aflê (Joh. 10:11). Aan die apostel Petrus dra Hy dit op om hierdie skape op te pas (Joh. 21:15-17). Miskien word met die lammers in vers 15 (*ta arnia*) spesifiek die swakkes in die geloof bedoel, soos wat Petrus nog so kort tevore self was (vgl. Groenewald 1980:413). Op sy beurt dra Petrus dit later ook aan die ouderlinge onder sy sorg op om op voorbeeldige wyse die kudde van die Here te versorg (1 Pet. 5:1-4). In 'n aangrypende afskeidswoord dra die apostel Paulus dit aan die ouderlinge van Efese op om as herders hulleself sowel as die hele kudde op te pas wat die Heilige Gees onder hulle sorg gestel het; ja, die gemeente wat God vir homself verkry het "deur die bloed van sy eie Seun", letterlik: deur sy eie bloed. *Idios* (eie) kom ooreen met die Hebreeuse *yāhīd*: enigste, geliefde (vgl. De Villiers 1983:118).
- Wat ander beelde vir God se volk betref, sê die HERE by monde van Hosea daar was 'n tyd in Israel (Efraim) se geskiedenis toe hy soos 'n mak koei was wat algaande aan haar eienaar genoegdoening sou kon verskaf het (10:11). Wanneer Israel in ballingskap in Babel moedeloos wonder of die HERE hulle dan vergeet het, word hulle daarvan verseker dat dié wat op die HERE wag, nuwe krag kry om onvermoeid soos met arendsvlerke bo hulle skynbaar uitsiglose omstandighede uit te styg (Jes. 40:27-31). Uit Jesaja 41:14 kom hierdie bemoedigende woord van die God van Israel in terme van 'n tere dierebeeld: Al is Israel klein, Jakob niks meer as 'n wurm nie, die HERE, die heilige van Israel, Hy maak Israel 'n skerp nuwe dorslee met baie tande. Die profeet Miga verkondig 'n tyd wat sou kom wanneer Israel tussen die nasies sou wees soos 'n leeu tussen wild, of tussen 'n trop skape (5:7).

6. MESSIAANSE VREDERYK BY WYSE VAN DIEREBEELDE GESKILDER

Die Messiaanse vrederyk wat deur die profeet Miga voorspel word (4:1-4), word in drie ander Ou-Testamentiese profesieë treffend in terme van dierebeelde geskilder (Jes. 11, veral vv 6-9; 65:17-25, veral v 25; Hos. 2:13-22, veral v 17): vrede tussen diere onderling, vrede tussen mens en diere. Treffend, veral aangesien hierdie profesieë, al het hulle hul voorlopige vervulling êrens in Israel se geskiedenis gevind, hulle volledige vervulling eers in die voleinding plaasvind (vgl. onder andere Nsiku 2006:818; Sundermeier (1966:39-40).

7. DIE ROL VAN DIERE-OFFERS IN DIE HEILSGESKIEDENIS

Diere-offers neem so 'n geweldige plek in die gang van die heilsgeskiedenis in, dat dit eintlik op 'n studie in eie reg neerkom. 'n Mens dink byvoorbeeld dadelik aan die boek Levitikus waar, behalwe die spys-, drank- en reukoffer, die volgende diere-offers ook behandel word: die brandoffer, vrede- of dankoffer, sondoffer en skuldoffer (kyk o.a. Van der Waal 1970:78-94, Gorman 2000:147-152). Binne die konteks van die huidige artikel kan slegs daarop gewys word dat al hierdie offers elk op eie wyse deur eeue heen na die finale offer van Christus heengewys het en daarin hulle vervulling en afsluiting gevind het. Kan dit duideliker gestel word as in Hebreërs 9 en 10, veral 10:1-18? Is dit nie asof reeds hier uit die tienduisende voor-Christelike diere-offers iets opstyg van die sugtende skepping waarvan die apostel Paulus so treffend in Romeine spreek nie? Iets van die reikhalsende verlange na die komende heerlikheid?

8. DIEREDIENS TYDENS JESUS SE BEDIENING

- Die evangelie van Markus deel mee dat toe Jesus ná sy doop vir veertig dae in die woestyn moes deurbring om deur die duivel versoek te word, Hy daar saam met die wilde diere was (1:12-13). Uitleggers verskil redelik skerp oor die betekenis hiervan. Terwyl sommige die diere sien as 'n heenwysing na die komende paradystoestand wat deur Christus se gehoorsaamheid geskep sal word (bv. Jeremias 1964:141; Tolmie 2009:1430), sien andere dit as 'n bedreiging vir hom (bv. France 2002:85-87; Cole 2006:1174; Lane 1975:61). Dit is egter moeilik om die Griekse voorsetsel *meta* ("saam met") wat in verreweg die meeste gevalle so 'n sterk assosiatiewe karakter openbaar (kyk bv. Louw-Nida 1988:794, 803, 806), hier as 'n stryd tussen Christus en die wilde diere te verstaan. Dit suggereer eerder 'n vredige saamby van die diere met Jesus.
- In Kapernaum vang Petrus op bevel van die Here Jesus 'n vis met 'n stater in sy bek, wat as tempelbelasting vir Jesus en Petrus kon dien, al het hulle as Jode nie nodig gehad om dit te betaal nie (Mat. 17:24-27). Al vier evangelies vertel hoedat Jesus by 'n eerste geleentheid deur middel van twee vissies saam met vyf brode duisende mense gevoed het (Mat. 14:17; Mark. 6:38; Luk. 9:13; Joh. 6:9). By 'n tweede geleentheid was daar 'n paar visse saam met 7 brode beskikbaar, waarmee Jesus weer eens duisende gevoed het (Matt 15:34; Mark. 8:7). Al drie die Sinoptiese evangelies vertel van Jesus se intog op 'n jong donkie (bv. Mark 11:1-11) – die vervulling van Sagaria se profesie van die regverdige en nederige oorwinnaarkoning wat op die hingsvul van 'n donkie ry (9:9).

9. GEBEDSVERHOUDING "TUSSEN SKEPPER EN DIER"

9.1 Diere se roep na God

In drie unieke hoofstukke waarin die HERE in 'n twisgesprek met Job verkeer (39-41), vra God reeds aan die begin vir Job (v 3, NAB; vgl. Ps. 147:9):

Wie gee vir die kraai die kos
wat hy nodig het
wanneer sy kleintjies
om hulp roep na God,
rondskarrel vir iets om te eet?

Kroeze (1960:271) sê dit is nie bloot 'n digterlike vertolking van die kraaie se gekryns nie, maar wys ook heen na die voorsienigheid van God oor wilde diere. In sy lofoordenking in Psalm 104 roep die digter uit (v 21, NAB):

Die leeus brul op soek na prooi;
hulle vra hulle kos van God.

Vir Weiser (1965:669) is dit die psalmis se teosentriese geloof wat hom in staat stel om selfs die vreeslike gebrul van die leeus as hul gebed tot God te interpreteer. Burden (1991), wat ook die Skepperverbruikende karakter van die psalm beklemtoon en dit soos andere die “pêrel van die Psalms” noem, sê selfs die jong leeus is van God vir hulle prooi afhanklik, sodat hulle gebrul eintlik dien “as ’n tafelgebed vir kos” (pp. 54-55, 58).

Die boek Joël bevat ’n dringende oproep tot bekering weens ’n naderende dag van oordeel oor die sondes van die volk. Die profeet sê die diere in die veld wag op uitkoms van die HERE af (1:20), want dit is bitter dor en droog. Prinsloo (1990:37) wys daarop dat die Hebreeuse *ta’arōg* woord wat hier met “wag op uitkoms” vertaal word, nog net in Psalm 42:2 voorkom, waar dit van die wildsbok gebruik word wat na water smag. Die Nederlandse Bybelgenootskap (NBG) vertaal pragtig: “Zelfs de dieren des velds zien smachtend tot u op.”⁴

9.2 Ook diere opgeroep tot lof

Psalm 150 sluit soos ’n magtige slotakkoord Israel se jubelsang af en dra deur sy geweldige fortissimo hierdie loflied deur die eeue totdat die volle openbaring van die HERE se genaderyke verbondsheerlikheid aanskou sal word (Noordtjiz 1973:296). Met insluiting van die hallelujaroep aan die begin en aan die einde word die sangers dertien maal opgeroep om die HERE te loof deur die gebruik van die algemeen Semitiese Naam vir God in vers 1 (*’Ēlōhim*) saam met die Verbondsnaam Jahwe in vers 6, word sowel Israëliete as nie-Israëliete in die oproep tot lof ingesluit, saam met alles wat asem haal, dus, mens sowel as dier (kyk Burden 1991:195). Met “alles wat asem haal” sluit die meeste uitleggers net soos Burden ook alle diere in (bv. Noordtjiz 1973:296; Okorocho 2006:746). Dieselfde geld vir talle Bybelvertalings (bv. DGN, “alles, was atmet”; LSB, “tout ce qui vit”; REB, “everything that has breath”).

In Psalm 145, die laaste in die kort versameling Dawidpsalms (Ps 138-145), sê die digter in vers 21 hy sal die lof van die HERE verkondig, en roep daarmee saam letterlik “alle vlees” op (Heb: *qol basar*) om die HERE se heilige Naam te loof. Hoewel hierdie uitdrukking nie so uitdruklik alle lewende wesens insluit soos die een in Psalm 150 nie, verstaan talle uitleggers en Bybelvertalers dit nogtans in dié sin; dus, met insluiting van alle diere (Burden 1991:169; Weiser 1965:828; DGN, “alles, was lebt”; LSB, “toute creature”; DBX, “zonke izidalwa”; NIV, “everything that has breath”). Alles en almal wat in die skepping bestaan en leef, bestaan en leef sinvol deur onafgebroke lof aan die Skepper, sy dit onbewustelik of bewustelik.

9.3 Spontane lof aan God deur al wat leef

Waar die twee psalms in die vorige afdeling ’n *oproep* laat hoor tot al wat leef om God te loof, laat die troonvisioen in Openbaring 4 en 5 ’n spontane *uitroep* hoor van lof aan God deur al wat leef.

Daar is eerstens die visioen van die vier lewende wesens rondom die troon in 4:6. Hulle lyk agtereenvolgens soos ’n leeu, ’n kalf, ’n mens, en ’n vliegende arend. Alford (1861:598-599) noem dertien van die menigte verklarings vir hierdie gesig sedert die dae van Victorinus. Daar

4 In ’n digbundel getitel *Le mieux aimé*: “Die mees geliefde”, 1947, stel Carmen Bernos de Gasztold allerlei diere en voëls in gebede tot God aan die Woord. Die afgeleefde perd sê hy het as nuttelose dienaar nog net een versoek: “Mag deur u goedheid ’n sagte einde op my wag.” Die muisie sê hy is so klein en grys. Hoe kan die Here hom onthou? Hy vra van die Here net so ’n ietsie om aan te knibbel ... vér van die kloue van daardie groenogduiwel. Die donkie vra dat hy eendag sy broertjie van die kersfeeskrip mag ontmoet. Die skilpad se gebed begin met die versugting: “Net so ’n klein bietjie geduld o Heer, ek kom ...”

is verskillende ooreenkomste met die vier wesens in die roepingsvisioene van Jesaja (hfst. 6) en Esegïel (hfst. 1), soos byvoorbeeld die vierke. Maar Johannes maak op eie wyse van die beelde in die Ou Testament gebruik. Kenmerke soos die getal vier, en die mens- en drie diersigte, maak dit nog die natuurlikste om saam met die meeste uitleggers die vier wesens as verteenwoordigers van die hele lewendige skepping te sien. Dus met insluiting van alle diere (bv. kommentare van Greijdanus, Lenski, Groenewald, König, Osborne, Du Rand). Johannes hoor hulle dag en nag in spontane aanbidding die Here God, die Almagtige, prys as die Driemaalheilige wat was, en wat is en wat kom (4:8).

In die tweede deel van die troonvisioen, naamlik hoofstuk 5, hoor Johannes teen die einde daarvan (v13) 'n geweldige loflied spontaan uit die skepping opstyg tot God en die Lam op die troon. Johannes sê dis letterlik die hele skepping (Grieks: *pan ktisma*) en spesifiseer dit dan nog deur te sê alles in die hemel en op aarde en onder die aarde en op die see, alles daarin, sodat Du Rand (2007:260) tereg daarvan sê dat dit nie net van mense geld nie, maar op alles en almal wat geskep is. Keulers (1956:287) stel dit nog meer eksplisiet deur te sê ja, "ook de redeloze en levenloze" van die skepping. Hiervolgens kan 'n mens dus sê dat selfs die mikroskopies klein en sterrenagtig groot dele van die skepping op hulle eie wyse, hoe onhoorbaar miskien vir ons, saam met die res van die skepping hulle loflied sing. Maar dan kan 'n mens seker met des te meer sekerheid sê dat die ganse dieryk, met sy ontsaglike verskeidenheid van stemme, deel vorm van die heelal se spontane loflied tot God.⁵ Die derde strofe van lied 509 in *Liedboek van die Kerk* (2001) verwoord in alle eenvoud pragtig iets van hierdie dierelof aan God:

Die diere op die aarde,
die visse in die see,
die mossie en die arend,
die blomme, veld en vee,
met al sy ander werke,
verkondig dag en nag
sy goedheid sonder perke;
die grootheid van sy mag

As die hele skepping dan die diepste sin van sy bestaan vind in die spontane lof aan sy Skepper, soos wat so duidelik uit die bewoording van die loflied in Openbaring afgelei kan word, sou 'n mens moet vra: Is dit nie die heerlike ekologiese plig en voorreg van die mens wat as beeld en verteenwoordiger van God op aarde oor die dieryk aangestel is (Gen. 1:26), om teenoor diere, sowel individueel as kollektief, só op te tree dat hulle die sin ook van hulle bestaan hierdeur steeds beter sal kan verwerklik nie?

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5 Vergelyk hier ook "Het schrijverke" van die diep-gelowige Vlaamse priesterdigter Guido Gezelle (1830-1899) in sy bundel *Als de ziele luistert* (1949). As mense van die woelige waterkewertjie bekend as skrywertjie wil weet wat hy as "krinklende winklende waterding" daar so lustig in kringe op die staande water skryf, antwoord hy die vraer ietwat geïrriteerd of dié dan nie self kan lees wat God vir hulle as skrywertjies geleer het nie:

"Wij schrijven, herschrijven en schrijven nóg,
Den heiligen Name van God."

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Eksegeties-teologiese ondersteuning van die Belydenis van Belhar

ABSTRACT

Exegetic- theological analysis of some Biblical concepts in the Confession of Belhar

In the NGTT (Section 46, numbers 3 & 4, September and December 2005) Professor Piet Strauss of the University of the Free State's Faculty of Theology, mentioned in an article a few reasons why the Confession of Belhar cannot be seen or accepted as a confession. One of the reasons is that the Confession of Belhar deals with peripheral moral values only, and not with core Biblical values.

This contribution is an attempt to identify and analyse possible underlying Scriptural principles of the Confession of Belhar. The Confession of Belhar is structured around three (Biblical) concepts, i.e. church unity, reconciliation and justice. This contribution surveys the exegetic-theological meaning of these theological concepts. This survey reflects on:

- Church unity as portrayed by John 17, Jesus' prayer for His disciples;
- Paul's contribution in this regard: (a) the so called Baptism Formula, in Galatians 3:28; (b) Paul's metaphor for the body of Christ, referring to the church;
- Reconciliation in the New Testament seen against the background of the Old Testament and as seen by Paul and other authors of the New Testament;
- Justice described in the New Testament as seen against the background of the Old Testament; how Paul and other authors of the New Testament describe it.

How must we interpret their contributions? The conclusion is that all New Testament authors portray these words as core values, not only as believers experienced it in the early church, but also as stated by the Holy Scripture. This study shows that these facts have far reaching consequences for the church of today.

ABSTRAK

In die NGTT (Deel 46, nommers 3 & 4, September en Desember 2005) was daar 'n artikel deur prof. Piet Strauss van die Fakulteit Teologie, Universiteit van die Vrystaat. In die artikel bied hy redes aan waarom die Belydenis van Belhar nie as 'n vierde belydenisskrif aanvaar behoort te word nie. Van die redes is dat die Belydenis nie oor "kernwaarhede van die Bybel" handel nie, maar slegs oor "periferiese morele waardes". Met hierdie bydrae probeer die skrywer om moontlike Skriftuurlike bewyse wat ten grondslag van die Belydenis van Belhar lê te identifiseer en te analiseer. Die Belydenis van Belhar is rondom drie (Bybelse) begrippe gestruktureer, naamlik eenheid, versoening en geregtigheid. Hierdie bydrae stel onderseok in na die eksegeties- teologiese betekenis van hierdie begrippe:

1. Eenheid
Johannes 17

Paulus
Ander
2. Versoening
Paulus (verskillende tekste)
Ander

3. Geregtigheid
In die NT gesien teen agtergrond van die Ou Testament
Evangelies
Paulus

1. EENHEID

Dit is opvallend dat die eenheid van die kerk reeds in van die oudste belydenisse van die kerk, naamlik die Apostolicum, as een van die karaktereenskappe van die kerk genoem word. Oor die algemeen bestaan daar eenstemmigheid oor die eenheidsbeginsel van die kerk. Maar ten opsigte van hoe hierdie eienskap gesien moet word, bestaan daar uiteenlopende menings. Deur die jare is hierdie spanning tussen die gegewene (beginsel) en die werklike (veelheid van kerke) verskillend vertaal. Wat egter wel waar is, is dat hierdie veelheid van kerke vernietigend is – vir die kerk se getuienis na buite, sy sendingopdrag (*missio Dei*), en vir die geestelike opbou (gemeenskap/koinōnia) na binne. Die mistieke eenheid van die kerk is byvoorbeeld een van hierdie sienings. 'n Ander siening is dat die eenheid van die kerk diep geestelik van aard is.

Hierdie eksegetiese oefening is 'n poging om vas te stel hoedanig hierdie eenheidsbeginsel geïnterpreteer moet word. Die lig word nou vervolgens op enkele Skrifgedeeltes laat val wat die eenheid van die kerk benadruk.

1.1 Die sogenaamde hoëpriesterlike gebed van Jesus: Johannes 17: 20-23, veral vers 21

a) Die hoofdoel van die gebed is dat die Vader verheerlik mag word deur dit wat Jesus volbring het; b) Dit geskied deur die eenheid van sy dissipels. Dit geld nie net vir sy dissipels nie, maar ook vir diegene wat deur hulle eenheidsgetuienis tot geloof in Jesus sal kom (die latere kerk). Hier is geen sprake van blote eensgesindheid nie. Die konjunktiewe gebruik van die werkwoord “pisteuō” in die sinskonstruksie in vers 20, gevolg deur “hina” in vers 21, gee die noodwendige gevolg, maar ook die doel aan van dit waarvoor Jesus in vers 20 en vorige verse bid. Dit kan dus letterlik vertaal word: “Sodat hulle 'n eenheid sal wees”, dit wil sê iets wat organies bymekaar hoort en in al sy lewensuitinge en vorme homself as organisme een sal voel en vertoon. Dit is dus nie 'n toevallige of doellose eenheid nie. Dit is 'n doelbewuste en doelgerigte eenheid wat sy grond vind in die verhouding tussen die Vader en die Seun. Hierdie eenheid is nie net 'n gawe van God nie, maar ook 'n opdrag! Dit is 'n reeds bestaande werklikheid en het te make met die kerk se missionêre taak (17:21c). Hierdie Godgegewe opdrag is die rede waaraan die kerk sy bestaan te danke het – dat die kerk een is en sonder teenstrydigheid een behoort te wees; dat ht uit een heilsgebeurtenis en een boodskap afkomstig is. Daarom behoort die kerk één gemeenskap van getuies te wees (Joh.17:21c). Die vers kan met reg ook vertaal word: “met die doel dat die ...”

1.2 Eenheid by Paulus

1.2.1 Die sogenaamde doopformule van die oerkerk: Galasiërs 3:27-29, veral vers 28

Jesus Christus het alle teenstellinge opgehef, tussen God en mens en mense onderling. Daarom was hierdie teks in die oerkerk die formule waarvolgens die gelowiges hulle eenheidsgeloofte afgelê het. Hiermee het hulle ook hulle eenheid gedemonstreer tydens hulle toetrede tot die gemeenskap van die heiliges. Dit is duidelik in Paulus se betoog dat almal één in Christus is. Die

predikaat staan wel sonder die aanduiding liggaam of tempel. Maar dit is baie duidelik dat wat hier van belang is, is die idee van die eenheid wat hom konkreet in die kerk openbaar. Die doop fundeer hier die eenheid van die Christelike gemeente (1 Kor. 12:13). Deur hierdie binding wil Paulus aantoon dat God nie verdeeld is nie maar één! Die Heilige Gees, wat in die gelowiges woon, en die kerk vervul en bestuur, skep hier die wonderlike gemeenskap van die gelowiges. Hy verbind hulle in Christus so innig, dat Hy self die beginsel van die eenheid van die kerk is.

1.2.2 Die kerk as liggaam van Christus: 1 Korintiërs 10:17; 12:12vv; Rom 12

Met hierdie metafoer bedoel Paulus eintlik dat ekklesie nie slegs gesien moet word as 'n gemeenskap van mense wat aan mekaar gebind is deur 'n gemeenskaplike godsdienstige geloof of ervaring nie. Dit is meer as dit. Dit is 'n skepping (ktisis) van God deur die Heilige Gees en nie 'n skepping (poieima) van die mens nie. Daarom kan daar maar net "één ekklesie" wees. Die kerngedagte van die kwalifikasie van die gemeente as liggaam van Christus, is daarin geleë, dat die volk van God in Christus, sy eenheid en gemeenskaplike (koinōniale) bestaan te danke het.

Deur die beeld van die liggaam wys Paulus op die "bestaanswyse" van die kerk. Dit beteken dat dié eenheid nie vergeestelik of mistiek gemaak kan word nie. Dit is iets konkreets. Die aanduiding "liggaam" dui nie 'n onsigbare nie, maar 'n sigbare wyse van bestaan aan. Derhalwe konkludeer Paulus op grond van hierdie een-wees in Christus, die noodsaaklikheid van 'n sigbare en eenheidsopenbaring wat na buitentoe optree. Hierna verwys hy met die beeld van 'n liggaam (1 Kor 1:13; Rom 12:4; Ef 4:15,16 en 25; Kol 3: 14,15). Omdat alle gelowiges tesame in Christus één liggaam is, is die verdeeldheid van die liggaam van Christus in stryd met sy wese, want Christus is nie verdeeld nie (1 Kor 1:13). Hierdie eenheid kan nie tot die sfeer van onsigbaarheid (geestelik) en verborgenheid (mistiek) beperk word nie.

Die metafoer, liggaam van Christus (soma Christou), vergelyk mooi met Paulus se metafoer van die gemeente as gebou (oikodomēo) van God. Die idee is die bevestiging van die konkreetheid van die eenheid van die kerk. Paulus gebruik sowel die organiese beeld "groei", as die meganiese "opbou", om die Godbedoelde eenheid te demonstreer en te aksentueer. So word die direkte menslike aktiwiteit, verantwoordelikheid en betrokkenheid by die ideaal, maar ook die realiteit van die eenheid van die kerk, duidelik beskryf.

Die eenheid van die liggaam van Christus vind sy grond in die eenheid van die gemeenskap met Christus. Juis deur hierdie begroning is hierdie eenheid nie maar net van geestelike aard of het dit net 'n pneumatiese aspek nie. Dit het ook te make met die onderlinge verhouding van die gelowiges met mekaar en met Christus (Matt 10:40; 25:40; Hand 9:4). Hierdie verhouding vind sy uitdrukking in die kerk!

1.2.3 Die tafel van die Here: 1 Korintiërs 10:17

Paulus gebruik hier 'n beeld ten opsigte van die betekenis van die nagmaal wat goed by sy lesers bekend is. Ten diepste lê hier die waarheid dat in 'n maaltyd dit om sekere gemeenskapsverhoudings gaan wat daargestel en veronderstel word. Die beker is die teken van die bloed van Jesus Christus, waaraan die gelowiges gemeenskap het. Deur daarvan te gebruik, verbind die gelowiges hulleself met die bloed van Jesus, wat vergifnis van sondes bring. Dieselfde geld met die eet van die brood. Wie dus gelowig daarvan eet, tree in 'n geestelike gemeenskap met Jesus Christus.

Brood is gewoonlik gebreek om dit met iemand te deel. In die nagmaal deel gelowiges die brood met mekaar – simbool van hoe hulle die lewe met mekaar deel as gelowiges. Sodoende kom daar gemeenskap (koinōnia) tot stand, tussen lede onderling. Hulle word in 'n intieme verhouding aan mekaar verbind. Gemeenskap met die één liggaam (hen soma), van Christus

kom tot stand. Omdat die verskillende brokke uit één brood (eis artos) kom, bind dit ook die gebruikers saam tot 'n eenheid van liefde, in één liggaam (hen soma).

1 Korintiërs 10:17 spel dus uit: Almal wat by die nagmaal van die één brood (eis artos) eet, tree daarmee in gemeenskap met Christus en met mekaar. Hulle word onderling verbind tot 'n onverbreekbare eenheid. Die één liggaam (hen soma) is hier die organiese eenheid van die gemeente. Die veronderstelling is, ondanks die veelheid, is daar 'n eenheid in Christus. Daar is verskeidenheid in die eenheid, sodat hulle mekaar kan dien (Ef 4:16). Sodoende sou die kerk in die glansryke ou Griekse stad, Korinte, sy missionêre taak en roeping vervul. Ons kan dus hierdie teksgedeelte ook so vertaal: "Omdat ons wat baie is, één brood is, één liggaam ...". Die rede waarom Paulus hierdie beeld (soma christou) ten opsigte van die kerk gebruik, is om die behoorlike verhouding van die Christene met mekaar en met Christus vas te stel. Christus is immers Hoof van die liggaam (Ef 4:15; Kol 1:18). Die kerk is 'n gemeenskap van die heiliges, bely ons immers in die Apostolicum.

1.3 Samevattend

"Eenheid is die merkteken van al God se werke. Die gemeente is prinsipiële één enkelvoud: die bruid, die tempel, die één kudde. Opvallend van die kwessie oor die eenheid van die kerk, staan die uitsprake in die Nuwe Testament òf in die teken van gebed (Joh 17:21) maar meestal en veral in die konteks van vermaning" (1 Kor 1:10-13, 3:1-7; Ef 4:1-6; Fil 2:1-5; 1 Kor 12, Berkhof, 1979:422,424). Vandaar Paulus se goeie en volmaakte raad, dat slegs die liefde kan dien tot integrasie (1 Kor 13). Die alternatief is skisma (1 Kor 12:5), en dít is 'n gruwel voor God en sy kerk onwaardig!

1.4 Slotsom

Die hele Nuwe Testamentiese boodskap getuig van die één liggaam van Christus as die één skepping (ktisis) van die Heilige Gees.

Die eenheid van die kerk is geen skepping (poieima) van die mens nie. Dit is ook nie geleë in enige menslike kwaliteit of in die moontlikhede van die menslike vlees nie. Dit is 'n uitsluitlike gawe (charis) en opdrag (Imperatief) van God (Ef 4:13; 1 Kor 1:13). Daarom moet dit nie net gerespekteer word nie, maar ook biddend gehoorsaam en doelgerig nagejag word, om die sigbare realisering daarvan te verwesenlik.

Hierdie eenheid is nie eksklusief nie, maar, net soos die kerk self, inklusief. Daarom word die waarheid van die eenheid van die kerk juis geïllustreer deur die heilige nagmaal (1 Kor 10, en die doop in Gal 3:27-29). In 1 Korintiërs 12:13 staan letterlik, "ons is almal in één Gees gedoopt tot één liggaam."

Die kerk is die liggaam van Christus – dit wil sê die gestalte waarin Jesus Christus in hierdie wêreld en in hierdie bedeling sigbaar of konkreet teenwoordig wil wees. Dit is die instrument waardeur Hy die wêreld verder wil aktiveer tot sy doel met hierdie wêreld. Die uiteindelijke doel van Christus se verlossingswerk is om die orde en die eenheid, nie net van die kerk as sy liggaam nie, maar veral van sy ganse skepping wat deur die sonde vernietig was, te herstel (Ef 1:10). Deur die eenheid van die kerk wat homself sigbaar manifesteer, bevestig en verkondig hy dan ook hierdie kosmiese verlossingswerk van Jesus Christus.

Wie dus die sigbare of konkrete manifestasie van die beginsel van die eenheid van die kerk ontken, ontken nie net die eenheid van die kerk as een van die eienskappe van die kerk nie, maar ontken ook dat dit een van die kernwaarhede van die geloof is en daarmee ook dat dit die kosmiese verlossingswerk van Jesus Christus bevestig en verkondig.

2. VERSOENING

2.1 Versoening in die Nuwe Testament gesien teen die agtergrond van die Ou Testament

Om 'n goeie verstaan van hierdie baie omstrede begrip in die Nuwe Testament te kry, moet dit gesien word teen die agtergrond van die Ou Testament. Volgens Brown, Driver en Briggs (1976: 497) beteken die selfstandigenaamwoord “kopher” “the price of a life, ransom.” In die denominatiewe “pi’el” beteken dit “cover over (fig.), pacify, make propitiation.” In die geval van persone kan dit die bedekking van sondes of versoening deur middel van wettige rites beteken, byvoorbeeld offers. Ten grondslag van al die offers is daar die veronderstelling dat die persone se offers van dieselfde waarde is as die sondes wat teen Adonai gepleeg is. Op dié manier “bedek” die offers die sondes – dus versoening vir die sondes. Die plaasvervangende offer neem 'n sentrale plek in die Ou Testament in. In Levitikus 1-7 stel die Here die offerdiens in as die bediening van die versoening vir Israel. Dat die nadruk op die versoening val, blyk uit Levitikus 17:11. Die soenoffer is iets wat in die teenwoordigheid van die Here, wat in die tent van samekoms woon, gebring word (Lev. 1:3). Volgens die Ou Testament is die Groot Versoendag een van die “ontsagwekkende dae”. Slegs op dié dag mag die hoëpriester in die allerheiligste van die tabernakel en later die tempel, agter die voorhangsel, ingaan en daar die bloed van die offerdiere op die versoendeksel, bo- op die ark van die verbond sprinkel, want die ark het die direkte teenwoordigheid van die Here verteenwoordig.

2.2 Versoening in die Nuwe Testament

Net soos in die Ou Testament, dui versoening in die Nuwe Testament ook op die wegneem van die skuld van die sonde deur die soenoffer van Jesus Christus. Volgens die Ou Testament en Nuwe Testament is versoening geen goedkoop saak nie. Die Nuwe Testament verklaar dat die volmaakte Lam, deur God self voorberei (Joh 1:29), die eenmalige offer gebring het (Heb 10:12), deur sy lewe af te lê vir baie (Mark 10:45).

2.3 Versoening by Paulus

Paulus gebruik bepaalde uitdrukkings en begrippe wat vir ons verstaan, en besonderse ervaring van ons Christelike geloof en belydenis, besonder belangrik is. Een van hierdie woorde is “versoening”. Paulus maak gebruik van woorde wat samegestelde vorme is van die een-voudige Griekse werkwoord, “allassein”, wat beteken “om te verander”. Lukas gebruik ook hierdie woord, “allassein”, in Handeling 6:14, in die aanklag wat teen Stéfanus ingebring was, naamlik dat hy gepoog het om die gebruike van die Jode te verander.

In twee gevalle in die Nuwe Testament kom 'n besondere vorm van “allassein” voor. Dit verwys na die herstel van verhoudings tussen twee mense (Hand 7:26; 1 Kor 7:11). Daar word die woord “sunallassein” gebruik. In Handeling 7:26 verwys dit na Moses se poging om versoening (sun-allassein) te bewerk tussen twee Israeliete, waarna Stéfanus in sy toespraak verwys. 1 Kor 7:11 verwys na Paulus se raad oor die huwelik. Hy raai 'n vrou, wat van voorneme is om van haar man te skei aan om ôf ongehuud verder haar lewe voort te sit, ôf haar met haar man te versoen (sunallassein).

Paulus gebruik ook ander saamgestelde vorme van “allassein”, byvoorbeeld “katallassein”, “katallagè”, en “apokatallassein”. In die sekulêre Griekse wêreld het “katallassein” beteken om vyandskap te verander tot vriendskap. Dit ontwikkel later in die klassieke Grieks tot die betekenis van bymekaar bring wat van mekaar vervreemd geraak het. Paulus gebruik dus hierdie gelade woord om die waarheid van versoening, as 'n kernwaarheid van die Christelike geloof te beklemtoon. As ingeleide tot die “hallacha”, wat bekend was met die offerrites van die Jode, verbind Paulus hierdie woord met die soenoffer van Christus aan die kruis. Slegs by

Paulus kom hierdie groep woorde in die Nuwe Testament voor. Dit word veral gebruik in verband met die herstel van verhoudings tussen God en mens, met die verdere uitvloeisel dat dit ook intermenslike verhoudings affekteer.

Paulus gebruik twee keer die intensiewe vorm van hierdie woord, naamlik “apokatallassein”. In Efesiërs 2:16 wys hy hoedat Jesus se soenoffer Jood en heiden met mekaar versoen het, en albei groepe met God. Kolossense 1:21-22 wys hoe alle dinge en alle mense met God deur Jesus versoen is. In albei gevalle gebruik Paulus die intensiewe vorm, “apokatallassein”, en verbind dit met Jesus se soenoffer.

Paulus sien Jesus se werk eerstens, en veral, as ’n werk van versoening. Deur sy soenoffer is die verhouding tussen God en mens in die eerste plek herstel. Daarom verleen Paulus prominensie aan Jesus se lyding en sterwe in sy geskifte. By Paulus staan Jesus, as die gekruisigde, sonder enige twyfel in die sentrum van sy geloof (1 Korintiërs 1: 18–2:5. Hierdie oortuiging by Paulus het verreikende gevolge. Paulus bring byvoorbeeld Jesus se lyding in verband met begrippe soos regverdigmaking, “dikaiosunē” (Gal 2:21), en versoening, “katallage” (2 Kor 5:11-21). Die bloed van die verbond, (“diathēkē”) van Jesus Christus, bring ’n nuwe verhouding tot stand tussen God en mens. Dit skep bevryding en vernuwing in menseverhoudings. Dit open die weg na die toekoms. Alles word gesien teen die agtergrond van Jesus se soendood en opstanding. Die skuld is ten volle betaal (“apechein”). Die noodwendige gevolg is dat die mens daardeur verlos is. Hulle onderlinge verhoudings word hierdeur herstel. Nie God is met die mens versoen nie, maar die mens met God. Nie God nie, maar die mens het nodig gehad om hulle met God te versoen. En dit het Jesus met sy soenoffer vermag (2 Kor 5:18-20).

2.4 Uitdrukking wat by Paulus vry voorkom met betrekking tot hierdie soenoffer van Jesus

Dit kom voor in Romeine 3:23-25. Daar praat hy van die mense in hulle verlore toestand en hoe hulle gered is “in sy bloed”. Volgens Den Heyer moet ons hierdie uitdrukking “in sy bloed” sien teen die agtergrond van die ritueel wat hom afgespeel het binne die heiligdom. Dit sou dan beteken dat Paulus Christus vergelyk het met die versoendeksel van die ark (vgl Heb 9:5). Die kruisdood van Christus dra dus ’n paradoksale karakter: dit is ’n “vloek” en ’n “seën”. Dit is die plek van die gerig van God en tegelykertyd ... die begin van ’n nuwe skepping; en dus ook die plek waar die versoening tussen God en mens geskied het (Den Heyer 1997:71-72).

2 Korintiërs 5:17 vv beklemtoon Paulus, veral in vers 20, dat Jesus het “vrede gemaak deur die bloed aan die kruis” (vgl Ef 1:7). Jesus het diegene wat ver van God was, nader gebring (Ef 2:13). Daar is derhalwe een roeping wat die kerk nie durf versuim nie, wat aan hom opgedra is om nougeset uit te voer. Dit is die bediening van die versoening (2 Kor 5: 19-20). Die kern van Christenskap, volgens Paulus, is daarom ook die herstel van ’n verlore verhouding.

2.5 Gevolgtrekking

Paulus het hom in sy geskifte weinig aan historiese detail gesteur. Hy het veral gekonsentreer op die teologiese betekenis van die soenoffer van Jesus Christus.

Net soos in die Brief aan die Hebreërs speel die offerkultus ook by Paulus ’n belangrike rol in die beklemtoning van heilswaarhede. Hy verwys indirek na die voorhangsel wat nou geskeur is en toegang tot God moontlik maak.

Vir Paulus plaas die dood en opstanding van Christus die hede en toekoms in ’n ander perspektief. Wie in Christus glo, kom in ’n nuwe bestaanswyse tereg (2 Kor 5:17). Hulle is ’n nuwe skepping (kainē ktisis). Daarom het “in Christus” – ’n nuwe verhouding om met God te lewe – moontlik geword. (Vir ’n breër uiteensetting oor hierdie korporatiewe gedagte, sien Ridderbos: 1966:56 vv). Volgens Paulus is Jesus se dood nie maar net ’n dramatiese lewenseinde van ’n mens met goeie bedoelings nie. Danksy sy opstanding is dit veral ’n bewys dat God sy soenoffer

aanvaar het en is die volle vereffening van ons skuld “lutron/ lutroun/ apolutrōsis” verseker (Den Heyer: 1997: 69-79).

Versoening is die hart van die Christelike geloof. Dit vertel vir ons van nuwe lewensverhouding op alle terreine van die lewe wat deur Jesus se soendood tot stand gekom het. Ook in die kerk, want Christus is alles en in almal ondanks verskeidenheid en natuurlike verskille (Müller 1958:138-141). Derhalwe simboliseer Jesus se soendood dat God het met die mens ’n nuwe verbond (diathēkē) gesluit het. By Paulus is dit versoening, vrede maak met die mens en tussen mense onderling.

By Paulus vervaag alle grense tussen hede en toekoms; man en vrou; slaaf en vryman. Hulle het alles en almal in Christus ’n nuwe betekenis gekry. Hulle is één in Hom.

Paulus plaas die dood en opstanding van Jesus in ’n nuwe perspektief. Derhalwe, wie in Christus glo het in ’n nuwe bestaanswyse tereggekome. Wie “in Christus” is, leef in ’n nuwe verhouding met God en hulle naaste. Dit is ’n lewe van versoening (2 Kor 5:14-21).

Uit albei briewe aan die Korintiërs is dit duidelik dat die partyskappe in dié gemeente geweldig groot was. Daar was verskil van mening oor heelwat sake (1 Kor 8:1-13; 6:12-20). Paulus het in die oog om die groei in die eenheid in die gemeente te bevorder (1 Kor. 12-14). Teen hierdie agtergrond moet sy siening oor versoening verstaan word. Geen wonder dat die keuse van sy begrippe oor hierdie aangeleentheid afkomstig is uit die gewone sosiale verkeer tussen mense wat in die juridiese wêreld ’n groot rol gespeel het nie (Den Heyer 1997:69-79).

Paulus wys op die gevolge van die soenoffer van Jesus. God het die inisiatief geneem. Die kloof is oorbrug. Alle vyandskap is opgehef. Danksy Christus kan God en mens weer één wees! Dit het ook sosiale implikasies: herstel van verhoudings – versoening, tussen God en mens en mens en mens!

Versoening is nie net ’n kernwaarheid van die geloof waarna die wet (torah) en die profete (Neviim) verwys nie, maar is inderdaad ook die hart van die Evangelie. Dit gee die doel aan waarom Jesus sy hemelse heerlikheid verlaat en onder ons kom tent opslaan (tabernakel) het. Die Skrif laat geen twyfel daaroor nie dat hierdie versoening nie buite die gelowige mens omgaan nie. Die gelowige mens is ten volle by die dood van Christus betrokke (Kol 3: 3-4). In Jesus Christus het ons die ou sondige mens afgesterwe (Rom 6:2). Dit noem Paulus versoening. Daarom het die woord “alassein” in al sy vorme te make met die herstel van alle verhoudings, tussen God en mens, God en sy skepping en mense onderling.

Volgens Paulus het versoening ’n ruimer sosiale betekenis (Rom 5:11; 11:15) waarvan die oorsprong in God lê (2 Kor 5:18 vv). Dit lei tot ’n nuwe lewe voor die aangesig van God (“coram Dei”, Rom 6:11 vv.) en voor die medemens aan wie God die mens op grond van hierdie versoening vergifnis skenk (Matt 6:14 vv.; 18:21-35; Luk 7:47). God vergewe die mense hulle sondes op grond van die soenverdienste van sy Seun (Matt 26:28; Rom 4:7 vv.; Ef 1:7; Kol 1:4).

Kortom, hierdie kernwaarheid van die soenverdienste van Jesus Christus, sluit in dat alle vyandskap tussen mense opgehef is deur die soendood van Jesus. Die skeidsmure is afgebreek (Ef 2:14). Die mensheid is een in Christus, een in God (Kol 3:11; Gal 3:28).

Versoening kan nie tot ’n periferiese waarheid van die Christelike geloof of die Bybel gereken word nie. Dit is die hart van die Christelike geloof. Sedert die sondeval het God telkens begin om met die mens op pad te gaan na sy groot toekoms toe. Eers met Adam en Eva, daarna Abram, die Chaldeër, Noag, Moses, Dawid en uiteindelik Jesus van Nasaret. Hom het God aan die kruis verlaat sodat ons nooit meer deur God verlaat sou word nie, soos die ou nagmaalsformulier dit treffend uitdruk. So het Paulus Jesus se koms en veral sy soendood gesien as die offer deur die Vader selfberei tot ons genoegdoening. Daarom is versoening vir Paulus geen randgebeure nie, maar ’n kernwaarheid van ons Christelike geloof en van die Skrif.

3. GERECHTIGHEID

Volgens die Bybel is gerechtigheid een van die wesenstrekke van God (Eichrodt, *Theologie des A.T.* I – 7. Aufl., 1962; Durand JF 1976:76; Müller 1967:30). Gerechtigheid het onder Israel en die vroeë Jodedom 'n opvallende geskiedenis geken. Van 'n profane begrip het dit ontwikkel tot 'n godsdienstige, selfs sakrale begrip, om dan weer uit te loop in twee vroeg-Joodse rigtings. Enersyds ontwikkel dit tot 'n regverdiging alleen op grond van God se genade. Andersyds, van 'n menslike inset deur die onderhouding van God se gebooe. Dit vorm in 'n sekere sin die agtergrond vir ons verstaan van die begrip gerechtigheid, volgens sowel die Ou Testament as die Nuwe Testament, veral met betrekking tot hoe dit homself in die praktyk manifesteer.

3.1 Gerechtigheid in die Ou Testament

Die woorde vir reg en gerechtigheid in die Ou Testament, (tsèdèq, tsedāqāh, mishpāt) druk op God toegepas uit wat God doen as uitvloeisel van die verbondsverhouding wat Hy met Israel aangegaan het. Na buite beteken dit die beskerming van Israel teen hulle vyande (Rigters 5:11, tsedāqōt). Na binne, die nakoming van die verbondsbeloftes, veral jeens die armes en regteloses; maar waar nodig, die straf en teengaan van almal wat hulle verbondspelig verag. In die Ou Testament is veral die volgende duidelik: Omdat God se gerechtigheid primêr en oorwegend sy aktiewe verbondstrou is, kom die woord dikwels voor as parallel van guns, barmhartigheid, ens. In hulle verhouding tot die armes en die regteloses word die gerechtigheid van die mens geopenbaar (Ps 7:9; 18:21, 25; 119:121; Spr 21:21). In Daniël 4:27 blyk dat regverdigheid selfs saamval met ontferming of barmhartigheid teenoor die ellendige. God se gerechtigheid word dikwels in die Ou Testament in verband gebring met die nood van die arme, verdrukte, regtelose, die randfigure in die samelewing en met “rachamim”, barmhartigheid.

Nog 'n verdieping van die woordgebruik is die aanduiding vir God se verbondstrou teenoor die skuldige mens. Die gebruik van die hifil “hitsdiq” dui op regverdig verklaar. Dit word veral in Deutero-Jesaja gebruik om aan te dui dat God die skuldige mens regverdig verklaar kragtens die verbond wat Hy met die mens aangegaan het (Jes 50:8; 53:11). Daarom is die gerechtigheid van God 'n openbaring van die heilshandeling van God, ooreenkomstig sy toesegging en sy verbond, selfs in die gerechtigheid as straf (Ps 5:9; 9:9; 31:2; Jes 32:17). Die verlossingsdade van God word dan ook dikwels die gerechtigheid van God genoem (Rig 5:11; 1 Sam 12:7; Miga 6:5). Hierdie eenheid van barmhartigheid/genade en gerechtigheid het na die ballingskap verlore gegaan. Gods gerechtigheid word dan soos volg gesien: die wetsgetroues word beloon en die wetsoortreders gestraf (iustitia distributiva). In die tyd dat Israel selfstandig was, was die koning die een wat namens God reg gespreek het. Israel was teokraties; godsdien en maatskappy was een (Schillebeeckx 1977:117).

Toe Israel tydens die ballingskap sy selfstandigheid verloor het, het daarmee ook die eenheid van godsdien en maatskappy verlore gegaan. Die vreemde gesag het die uitoefening van gerechtigheid in hande gekry, waardeur die regverdigheid “gedesakraliseerd” geraak het en dikwels gemarginaliseer is binne die religieuse van die Joodse lewe. Die gevolg van hierdie verwickelinge was dat die oorspronklike betekenis van gerechtigheid, wat onder andere ingesluit het dat God vir die regtelose opkom, verlore gegaan het.

3.2 Gerechtigheid in die Nuwe Testament

Die grondgedagte van gerechtigheid, naamlik dat die persoon doen wat van hulle verwag word, staan net soos in die Ou Testament ook sentraal in die Nuwe Testament. In die Evangelies en die Pauliniese briewe is dit duidelik dat God Homself openbaar as die Een wat gerechtigheid en ware vrede onder mense wil bring.

3.2.1 *Evangelies*

Die Bergrede is 'n beskrywing van die geregtigheid waarna die volgelinge van Jesus moet strew, om sodoende die koninkryk van die hemele te beërwe (Vgl byvoorbeeld die antitese in Matt 5: 21-48, Ridderbos 1969:285). Volgens Durand sê Braun: God (sy koninkryk) is daar waar ek in liefde besig is; Hy is 'n bepaalde wyse van medemenslikheid (Durand 1976:46). Geregtigheid impliseer dus om in die korrekte verhouding met ander te leef soos God dit van ons verwag (Rom 3:24). Koninkryk en geregtigheid is sinonieme begrippe in Jesus se prediking (Ridderbosch 1969:286). Volgens Durand sê Barth dat God die Vader nie buite die lyding van die mens nie staan nie (Durand 1976:94).

Op dieselfde manier verbind Jesus ook Gods geregtigheid (dikaiosunē), en die oproep daartoe, met barmhartigheid (oiktirmos, Luk 6:27 vv). Lukas beskryf Jesus se koms as 'n goeie boodskap vir die randfigure in die samelewing.

3.2.2 *Geregtigheid volgens Paulus*

By Paulus kom dieselfde vroeg-Joodse en Ou Testamentiese opvatting oor geregtigheid sterk na vore. Paulus het heftig teen die kader van die Joodse denke gestry dat mense se eie geregtigheid hulle ooit regverdig sal maak of vryspraak van skuld sal verleen. Hy as voormalige wetsgeleerde bly binne die kader van die Joodse denke. Hy deurbreek dié denke deurdat hy ontken dat iemand se eie geregtigheid hulle ooit regverdig sal maak, of vryspraak van skuld aan hulle sal verleen. Alle mense staan skuldig teenoor hul naaste. Dit geld veral in die mate dat hulle reg laat geskied aan hulle naaste, in die besonder teenoor diegene wat verontreg word. Juis hieruit kom die oer-Bybelse en oer-Christelike oortuiging dat God die hulp van die hulpelose is. Hierin sien ons die betekenis van die geregtigheid van God as die aktiewe ingryp om te verlos en die reg te herstel (Smit 1984:65). (Vergelyk die verskillende wette oor die Sabbat- en Jubeljare.)

Volgens Paulus beteken geregtigheid (dikaiosunē) dat jy nie die soewereiniteit van God sal skend nie. Daarom moet jy getrou aan sy wet bly en dienooreenkomstig leef (Rom 3:10). Paulus verbind geregtigheid dikwels met begrippe soos barmhartigheid (oiktirmos, splanchnizomai), die goed doen of reg laat geskied aan die medemens. Vir hom is dit nie net die vervulling van die wet van liefde nie, maar word veral gesien teen die agtergrond van Jesus Christus se soenverdienste. Met sy dood en opstanding het Jesus aan Gods geregtigheid voldoen. As Paulus begrippe soos “dikaiōō; dikaiōsis en dikaiosunē” gebruik, bedoel hy daarmee, dat mense in die regte/behoorlike verhouding met hulle naaste leef. Paulus gebruik hierdie begrippe in die konteks van die verbondsverhouding, eerder as in die konteks van wetlike prosedures (Rom 3:24; 4:25).

Geregtigheid het net soos versoening in die Ou Testament en Nuwe Testament duidelike sosiale implikasies vir die gelowige (kerk). Die kerk is derhalwe geroepe om die evangelie te verkondig wat betrekking het op die hele mens. Daarom word die geregtigheid van God in die Ou Testament en Nuwe Testament, dikwels in verband gebring met woorde soos armoede, ellendiges, verontregtes, ens. “Ani” in die Ou Testament en “Ptōchos”, in die Nuwe Testament se eintlike betekenis word dikwels weg vertaal met 'n materiële konnotasie. Hierdie begrippe dui ook 'n situasie van sosiale minderwaardigheid en onreg aan.

Dikwels in die Nuwe Testament, net soos in die Ou Testament, is armes nie soseer die behoeftiges nie, maar ook die minderwaardige, verdruktes, hulpelose en verontregtes. Armoede het ook 'n sosiale konnotasie. In hierdie en talle ander woorde in die Nuwe Testament, soos in die Ou Testament, word die verontregte in Gods besondere nabyheid gesien. Lukas beskryf in verskeie gelykenisse hoe die koms van Jesus na hierdie wêreld vol onreg 'n goeie boodskap vir die randfigure is. Jesus het op 'n besondere manier Gods geregtigheid gestalte kom gee in die wêreld!

4. Gevolgtrekking

Volgens die Nuwe Testament het die geregtigheid van God nie slegs 'n eskatologiese strekking nie. Dit het ook te make met die hier en nou (gerealiseerde eskatologie – Dodd). Dit word geopenbaar in jou persoonlike verhouding met God en jou naaste. Die Nuwe Testament, net soos in die Ou Testament, verbind geregtigheid met gemeenskapsrelasies. “Dikaiosounē”, geregtigheid van God, het op vele plekke in die Nuwe Testament ook 'n maatskappy-kritiese strekking (Berkhof 1979:388).

“Dikaios” (Matt 1:19; 5:10; Rom 1:17; 5:18) beteken deurgaans in die Nuwe Testament om nie net in die regte verhouding met God te leef nie, maar ook met jou medemens. Hier geld die liefdesgebed ongeag wie jou naaste is.

Die leer van geregtigheid staan in sekere sin sentraal by die boodskap van Mattheus (vgl Bergpredikasie, Matt 5 en Matt 6:33; Johannes die Doper se boodskap by Jesus se doop in Matt. 3:15 vv;)

Lukas koppel male sonder tal geregtigheid aan die goed doen aan andere – veral aan die randfigure. God openbaar sy geregtigheid daarin dat Hy opkom vir die verontregte, arme, verdrukte en stemlose.

Omdat geregtigheid 'n wesenskenmerk van God is, hang dit saam met die Wet van liefde, want God is liefde. Daarom vereis dit ook van die verbondskind om reg te doen aan andere, veral die magtelose en ellendige. Deur dit te doen sal hulle sy vrede deelagtig word (Jer 9:24; Ps 85:10-14; 89:15).

Uit vele gegewens in die Ou Testament en Nuwe Testament is dit duidelik: geregtigheid is geen randsaak in die Heilige Skrif of van ons geloof nie. Dit is 'n kernsaak. Trouens, in die Ou Testament was dit vir die volk van God so 'n kernsaak dat dit die daarstelling van die *dekaloog* genoodsaak het, om die volk te help om God se wil te verstaan, in die najaag van sy koninkryk en sy geregtigheid!

4. BESLUIT

'n Belydenis, alhoewel dit “quia” is, kan nooit soos die Skrif die laaste woord spreek nie en is daarom nooit afgesluit nie maar het altyd 'n oop einde.

'n Belydenis is egter meer as *etiese uitsprake* van die kerk. Uit voormelde ontledings, is ons gevolgtrekking, dat die Belydenis van Belhar is na sy inhoud werklik 'n belydenis (“marturein” en “homologein”).

Die Belydenis van Belhar handel soos blyk uit hierdie studie, nie oor *periferiese morele waardes* nie, maar wel met *kernwaarhede van die Skrif*.

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Pentecostalism & schisms in the Reformed Church in Zambia 1996-2001; evidence from documentary sources¹

ABSTRACT

This article is descriptive in nature and a practical theological assessment of the schisms that took place in the Reformed Church in Zambia (RCZ) between 1996 and 2001. It analyzes the available documents to find an answer to the question why it happened. Pentecostal/charismatic tendencies have challenged the long inherited tradition of mainline churches in general and the RCZ in particular. Subsequently, Pentecostal/charismatic movements have caused intense conflict in the church between the pro-conservatives and pro-Pentecostals. In the RCZ this led to the formation of the Christian Reformed Church (CRC) in 1999 and the Bible Gospel Church in Africa (BIGOCA) in 2001.

1. INTRODUCTION

The article is a practical theological assessment of the schisms in the Reformed Church of Zambia (RCZ) that took place between 1996 and 2001. It focuses on the causes of the infighting in the Church that resulted in two break-away churches. The research was undertaken because of the researchers' interest to do an in-depth investigation and analysis of schisms in the RCZ. The research reported on in this article concern the primary church documents in Lusaka that helps one to understand what happened and why the schisms took place. The researchers believe that a better understanding of the cause of the infighting and differences in worship can help the Church's leadership to develop preventive strategies.

2. THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

The RCZ experienced two schisms that followed each other within a period of five years. The first started in 1996 and continued to 1999, when a minister was expelled and a number of members followed him. They formed their own Church called the Christian Reformed Church (CRC). The first split started as a small constitutional matter. The presbytery leadership accused the Mtendere congregation of insubordination when they rejected the minister whom the Synod had sent to them. The presbytery insisted that the Synod's authority was final and non-reversible.

In 2001, nine ministers in nine RCZ congregations were expelled, together with those members who supported their new worship practices. They formed the Bible Gospel Church in Africa (BIGOCA). The second schism started as a violation of the Church's tradition on worship. In urban areas, many congregations started new ways of worship. Individual ministers in various congregations started what was perceived as a violation of the established liturgical order that was gradually being abandoned. It was replaced with altar calls, singing of choruses and the

¹ The paper is based on Chapter 4 of the doctoral dissertation of Lukas Soko (2010:81-120). Prof Hendriks was the study leader.

clapping of hands, dancing, skipping of the Lord's Prayer, repeated shouting of "hallelujah" and "amen," mass prayers, and speaking in tongues. Thus, the constitution of the Church was refuted (Soko 2010:81-104).

Up to the end of the research project (2010), the Church has not yet attended to the root causes of the problem. Why did the Church leadership fail to handle the conflict and prevent the split?

3. SOCIOLOGICAL DIMENSION

The RCZ is one of the oldest pioneer churches in Zambia. In 1899, the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) missionaries founded it in the Eastern part of Zambia (Verstraelen-Gilhuis 1982). From a small missionary endeavour, the Church has grown with its membership cutting across cultural barriers. The RCZ has its administrative headquarters in Lusaka, the capital city of Zambia. The motivation to do this research emerged from the researchers' direct involvement, one as a serving minister at the time of the split, the other through NetACT².

4. PRACTICAL THEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

The research was conducted as a practical theological study. The studies of Heitink (1999), *Studies in Practical Theology: History, theory, action domains*, and Hendriks (2004), *Studying congregations in Africa*, were used. In this definition, they state that the Christian faith is embedded in the traditions of the community of faith. During the first century of the RCZ's existence radical political, economic and social changes took place challenging its inherited traditions.

The descriptive and analytical dimensions of the research captured the perspectives of what the RCZ understood to be the causes of the schisms, as substantiated in their official documents, and as opposed to a generalization of the problem. To capture this data, the researchers studied official Church documents such as minutes, letters that were written and still available and also the print media such as local newspapers.

The Church documents are:

- (1) Synodical minutes from the RCZ archives at the JMTUC in Lusaka.
- (2) Presbytery minutes from three presbyteries, namely Chelstone, Kamwala and Matero
- (3) Congregational council minutes from six congregations, namely Chaisa, Chawama Central, Chelstone, Garden, Mtendere and Matero
- (4) General correspondence with Church members.
- (5) Print media such as the local newspapers.

The value of this research is to provide a descriptive and practical-theological assessment of the RCZ schisms, relevant to the understanding of one of the most salient contemporary issues in the church in Africa (Cox 1995:243-262; Kalu 2008). Note has been taken of the fact that this kind of schism either takes place within congregations or between large bodies of Christian faith that all impact on the church's mission. The institutional model of being a church is facing immense pressure to change. The research aims to assist church leadership to understand what happened and why it happened in order to be able to deal with the phenomenon. However, the research was demarcated in a decisive way: it stays descriptive and does not attend to Pentecostal theology and its growth in Africa. It set out to establish what happened in Lusaka

² <http://academic.sun.ac.za/theology/netact.html> (downloaded 7 Dec 2010)

in order to have the baseline facts verified. The phenomenon of Pentecostalism in Africa³ is the broader framework against which this took place. As such this descriptive research needs to be complemented by research describing the deeper theological roots of the movement.

5. DOCUMENTARY SOURCES AND CHURCH GOVERNANCE

The documents and literature related to the RCZ must be understood and applied since they describe the governance of this Church. The polity of the RCZ recognizes its three councils, namely the congregation, presbytery, and the Synod (*The constitution, bylaws and procedures of the RCZ*, 2004 Articles 9, 21, 23, 24, 26: 5-16). These councils are responsible for the Church's management and welfare at their respective jurisdictional levels, including the administration of discipline in accordance with their character and authority, granted by the council.

The congregational council has two types of council meetings: the serving elders and deacons who meet on a monthly basis to administer the affairs of the congregation, while both the serving and resting elders and deacons usually meet twice a year. The resident or visiting minister chairs both of these meetings.

The second council is that of the presbytery that consists of all ordained but serving ministers in congregations within the boundaries of a presbytery, as well as one elder from each of the congregations. Presbytery councils meet once a year between March and April. The synod council, which meets every two years, has a representation of delegates, that is, all serving ministers and one serving elder from each congregation.

6. PENTECOSTAL TENDENCIES IN THE RCZ

The influence of Pentecostal tendencies in the RCZ seems to have started among the clergy in 1992 (*Dziwani*,⁴ 7:20 January/February 1994:14). One senior minister, Rev Samuel Phiri, claimed to have met Jesus on 16 November 1992. He then confessed his sins publicly. Much of his confession concerned his extra-marital relationships with women in the Church. The Church leadership was perturbed about what he had publicly confessed. Arising from his public confession, the synod leadership suspended him for a year. Because of this suspension, he resigned from the RCZ and joined a break-away group called "Grace Ministries," believed to have broken away from the United Church of Zambia (RCZ Synod Pastoral Letter,⁵ 13-18 August 1996:3).

In 1992, the Synod minutes (RCZ Synod Minutes: Western Synod⁶ 31 October to 7 November, 1993:21) reported that 33 youths from the Matero Presbytery had left the RCZ to join other churches. Differences between the youth and the Church leadership concerning the RCZ's

3 Missionalia 35:3 (Nov 2007) deals with the theme: "The Pentecostalisation of African Christianity."

4 *Dziwani* was a newsletter of the RCZ that the communication department managed. It mostly contained news and information of the activities and developments in the Church.

5 A Pastoral Letter in the RCZ is an official document containing the resolutions passed at the Synod and presbytery meetings. Their contents are not subjects for members or congregations' discussion - only for the Synod or presbytery. Resolutions contained therein are of immediate effect.

6 In 1991, the RCZ's Synod Meeting had an item on its agenda to have two Synods (Synod Minutes: 25 August to 1 September 1991). The result was as follows: 117 delegates voted in favour of the item on the agenda, and 14 opposed the motion. With this outcome, the RCZ was divided into two Synods: the Eastern and Western Synods. This meant that all congregations west of the railway line became part of the Western Synod, covering eight provinces. The Eastern Synod had only one province, that of the Eastern Province. The regional Synod would meet in the years between the meetings of the General Synod. On 22 December 1994, the Regional Synods were again abolished.

doctrine were reported to have caused the exodus of these youths. They (the youth) had demanded further clarification on issues, such as infant baptism, the mode of baptism, the baptism of the Holy Spirit, Holy Communion, overnight prayers, praying for the sick and demon exorcism. These doctrinal issues caused much confusion and tension. The Matero and Mtendere congregations then banned the entire youth groups from their respective congregations. Ministers and their elders perceived these youth groups as unpatriotic and insubordinate to the authority and teachings of the RCZ (RCZ Synod Minutes: Western Synod 31 Oct. to 7 November, 1993:21).

7. THE MINISTERS AND NEW WAVES OF PENTECOSTALISM IN THE RCZ

An impression seems to have been created in 1996 that the growth of Pentecostal and charismatic tendencies⁷ were spreading in the RCZ (*Dziwani* 11:28 1996:21; Correspondence: Rev. Japhet Ndhlovu 22 February 1996; Rev. Rodgers Nkhuwa 19 March 1996; and Rev. Cephas M. Mbewe 28 March 1996). Rev. Japhet Ndhlovu, then from the Kamwala congregation in Lusaka and Rev. Rodgers Nkhuwa, then the Youth Director of the RCZ based in Lusaka, both aired their concerns to the Synod's moderator, Rev. Edwin M. Zulu. Their separate letters to the moderator were titled as follows:

“Protest against the infusion and growth of Pentecostalism theologies and practices” (Japhet Ndhlovu: correspondence 22 February, 1996);

“My concern over the growth and tendencies of Pentecostalism and charismatic theologies in our Church” (Rodgers Nkhuwa: correspondence 19 March 1996).

Both ministers expressed shock that “Reformed Pastors” in the Church were perpetuating Pentecostal tendencies. They were allegedly performing practices associated with Pentecostalism without being checked, and some congregations were in support of it while others were confused by what was happening in the Church. The two, Ndhlovu and Nkhuwa, made their concerns clear that, if these tendencies were not checked and addressed, they had the potential to lead to divisions in the RCZ. The two ministers made a number of concerns and suggestions to the moderator. Rev. Ndhlovu's concerns were (Japhet Ndhlovu: Correspondence 22 February 1996):

“Where are we heading as a Church with this emerging crisis?

“What should we do or should be doing about particularly pastors who are in the forefront of promoting these theologies and practices?

“What about those students at Justo Mwale Theological College who seem to be never changing to Pentecostal theologies and practices as they are training?”

Rev. Nkhuwa suggested (Rodgers Nkhuwa: Correspondence 19 March 1996):

“That the Church must revisit its confessions of faith by openly and clearly admitting that it had erred and would like to start afresh.

“That all the serving ministers in RCZ to be made to reaffirm “Chibvomerezo chotsimikizira Abusa”

“That all students at Justo Mwale Theological College be taught deliberately the Reformed heritage in total.

“That the Theological and Current Affairs Committee be reorganised so that it could march with time and address issues that had crept in the Church unchecked.”

By the dates of the correspondence, one can deduce that the Church started to experience

⁷ Pentecostal and charismatic tendencies in the RCZ were witnessed in the way the traditional elements of the liturgy were being discarded. The initial experiences were phenomena such as speaking in tongues, prophecies, visions, healing, and miracles, that became part of the worship service. Those who promoted the foreign practices were called, “Pentecostals” and those supportive of the traditional liturgy, “A Dutch.”

these waves prior to 1996. In 1995, Paradise congregation wrote to the Matero Presbytery leadership complaining about pastors who were bringing confusion to the Church with foreign practices, such as mass praying, speaking in tongues, overnight prayers and healing sessions (Correspondence: Paradise congregation: 26 December 1995). The congregation pleaded with the Presbytery leadership to hasten in finding a lasting solution (*Chonde tithandizeni pankhani iyi chifukwa chipembezo cha chilendo chatenga malo mu RCZ*).

Until 2001, the problems concerning these new waves continued to cause disunity in the Church (Correspondence: Chelstone Presbytery 11 October 1999; 12 January 2000; High Court of Zambia: correspondence 11 May 2000; *Times of Zambia*: 9 May 1997, 31 January 2000, 8 February 2000, 2 January 2001; *National Mirror* No. 869: 27 January–2 February 2001; *The Post*: 7 March 2001).

By and large, the years that preceded the 1996 to 2001 period were the most significant in the RCZ's history. What was the position of the Synod at this stage? When did the crucial events of Pentecostalism start to appear on the Synod agenda? Fortunately, 1996 was the normal calendar year for this meeting. The Church had its successive Synod Meetings in 1996, 1998, 2000, 2002, 2004, 2006 and 2008. In between these years, two Extraordinary Synod Meetings were held - in 1999 and in 2001. The case for Mtendere was concluded during the 1999 Extraordinary Synod Meeting, and the 2001 meeting was called solely to discuss the way forward for the RCZ that faced a looming split

8. ON THE SYNOD AGENDA: PENTECOSTAL PRACTICES - THE RCZ'S DILEMMA

Although a comprehensive source that describes Pentecostal practices in the RCZ is not available, an examination of the resolutions passed, the minutes and reports of the 1996, 1998 and 2000 Synod meetings are crucial for understanding how the Church viewed the Pentecostal tendencies. The recommendations and resolutions of these Synods eventually led to an Extraordinary Synod Meeting in 2001 that finally excommunicated nine ministers from the Church and initiated a break-away Church. During these Synod meetings, the profile of the RCZ was as follows: in 1996, there were 138 congregations and 96 pastors; in 1998 the number of congregations rose to 145 with 74 pastors, and in 2000 there were 148 congregations and 82 pastors (RCZ Pastoral letter, 13-18 August 1996; RCZ Synod Reports: 21–29 August 1998; RCZ Synod Minutes: 21-25 August 2000; 27-31 August 2002).

At the 1996 Synod held from 13 to 18 August 1996 in the Katete Secondary School at the Mphangwe congregation, Eastern Province, the question of Pentecostalism was a point on the agenda. A report by one of the working synodical committees initiated this discussion (RCZ Synod Minutes: 13-18 August 1996:43).

However, after a lengthy discussion about the question of Pentecostal/ charismatic movements in the report called "The Kairos Movements' document," the Synod made the following observations (RCZ Synod Minutes, 1996:47):

"That, those Pentecostal tendencies in the Church had generated a lot of interest among the delegates.

"That Synod should continue teaching on the understanding and interpretations of Pentecostal and Charismatic tendencies from a theological point of view.

"That the Church should guard against emotionalism and personal fulfilling experiences.

"That Synod must accept and recognise the gifts of the Holy Spirit – Romans 12.

"That there should be orderliness whenever these are practiced in the Church.

"That the Altar Calls should be done on the rightful occasion."

When all the observations were made as a measure to accommodate these tendencies, the

Synod made two recommendations:

“That the Theological and Current Affairs committee do research on the doctrine of the Holy Spirit and present its report to the Synodical Committee.

“That all councils in the Church should seriously teach on the subject matter to avoid heretical practices in the Church.”

A question of interest is: What exactly did the Synod view as “Pentecostal tendencies” that needed further investigation? Many claims were made in the Synod about such tendencies. Some of these unusual practices were: singing of choruses, mass praying, the minister’s altar calls immediately after preaching, speaking in tongues, crying, jumping up and down, scratching the walls, beating of chests, and all kinds of movements. “Pandemonium” was the term used to describe these services. “As the spirit leads” became the order that characterized the Sunday services.

In 1998, the Theological and Current Affairs Committee (TCAC) presented its findings to the Synod meeting held at Ndola Rehabilitation Centre in the Copperbelt from 21-29 August 1998 (RCZ Synod Reports 1998:56). The report had the heading, “Dynamic worship in the RCZ by the year 2002.” Rev. Cephas M. Mbewe of the Garden congregation chaired this committee.

While this report agreed with the last Synod recommendations, resolutions and divisions among ministers, it denied allegations that there were two camps of ministers in the Church. The committee called such allegations “mudslinging” against pastors. However, the committee gave a number of reasons for the divisions and why their fellow pastors and the members had labelled some pastors as “Pentecostal/charismatic.”

Firstly, the divisions amongst pastors and name-calling were believed to be a result of their spiritual life and an approach to ministry. The report highlighted that some ministers were committed to a good Christian life: praying, fasting and reading the Word of God. On the other hand, other ministers were said to be committed to womanizing wherever they were sent.

Secondly, the report said that other ministers only maintained the status quo of their work and were not creative and sensitive enough to their members’ needs. Their role was to guard against any deviation of the Church from its tradition as it was at the time of “Umwini” (ownership). This group felt insecure and vowed not to allow any new practices to creep into the Church.

Thirdly, the report addressed the preaching of the Word of God. Some ministers were accused of not condemning sin, but telling people wonderful things about heaven. To them, pointing out adultery, witchcraft, hatred, and gossip was tantamount to destroying the Church, while the other group could freely preach - rebuking sin, exhorting and transforming the lives of many members.

Fourthly, accommodation of terms like “Alleluia” and “amen” during preaching divided the ministers. Those fond of such expressions became known as “Pentecostal pastors.”

Furthermore, there was the question of a Reformed identity of worship. Some pastors viewed “Reformed worship” to mean cold, stereotyped, dogmatic, inactive and pastor-centred worship. The committee said that, among pastors, this understanding was old fashioned as, by 2002, the Church was challenged to focus on life-giving and transforming worship.

In summary, the 1996 and 1998 Synods accepted that the Church was facing new challenges, mostly Pentecostal/charismatic tendencies that needed to be addressed. The 1996 and 1998 reports did not address the conflict with neither a conflict resolution theory nor a transformation process in mind. The Synod leadership made no analysis of the contextual influence leading to the problem of Pentecostalism. The report was initiated without an in-depth understanding of the political, economic, and social context of the Pentecostal practices in question. During the two Synod meetings, the Church’s leadership did not make an analysis of the degree to which the Pentecostal tendencies would make an impact on the RCZ.

9. PENTECOSTAL/CHARISMATIC PRACTICES AFTER THE 1998 RCZ SYNOD

After the 1998 Synod meeting, the influence of Pentecostal tendencies and practices continued and grew. Almost a month after the 1998 Synod meeting, confusion raged at the Garden congregation. Twelve elders who did not believe in any new forms of worship resolved to remove their pastor, Rev. Cephas M. Mbewe, by force (Correspondence: Chelstone Presbytery 11 October 1999; Ezekiel Phiri 22 October 1998; Garden congregation 11 November 1998; Luka Zulu 10 October 1998; Sinai Choir 28 August 1998; Synod Actuarius 18 October 1998, 28 December 1998, 22 February 1999, 8 June 1999, 15 September 1999).

The divisions and squabbles continued in many other congregations, especially within Lusaka - at Lilanda, Matero, Chaisa, Mandevu and Chawama, to mention but a few. These problems continued in the Church until the Synod of 2000.

The 2000 Synod meeting took place against the background of growing divisions in the Church. *Times of Zambia* (9 May 1997; 31 January 2000; 8 February 2000) and *Zambia Daily Mail* (26 June 2000) carried stories about the mode of worship, such as "RCZ wrangles rage;" "RCZ factions row deepens," "300 members break away," "Reformed Church splits." Tensions amongst the pastors and elders were already high as they went to this meeting, which was held at the Mphangwe congregation from 21 to 25 August 2000, with the theme, "Church renewal through unity in diversity."

In 2000, the Synod resolutions on Pentecostalism resulted in more misunderstandings among the pastors, as well as between the Synod leadership and congregational members (Document: The State of Affairs in the RCZ: January 2001). According to the RCZ Synod Pastoral Letter of 2000 sent to all congregations, Synod had accepted praise and worship activities during Sunday services and mass praying. It was further said that a committee would be established to formulate the guidelines in order to incorporate these new developments in the liturgy. On 15 September 2000, the Actuary wrote to all congregations and pastors asking them to disregard Synod's decision, as contained in the Pastoral Letter that the General Secretary, Rev. Moses O. Kanyenda had written (Correspondence: Rev. H.D. Nkhoma, 15 September 2000). He regarded the contents and resolutions on Pentecostalism as a misrepresentation of the Synod's resolution (*Mwa kalata iyi ndifuna kudziwitsa azibusa ndi mipingo yonse kuti kalata ya ubusa imene inatumidzidwa ili ndi colakwa pa mfundo ya CHIPEMBEDZO. Mfundo ya Synod ili motere*). This letter directed all pastors and congregations to disregard item 12 in the Pastoral Letter with immediate effect. He wrote saying that, after a lengthy debate on the issue of Pentecostalism, Synod resolved the following (Correspondence: Rev. H.D. Nkhoma 15 September 2000):

"A committee comprising for and against Pentecostalism be appointed to look into this issue thoroughly and come up with a balanced thought.

"The committee should advise the Church whether to have one liturgy or more.

"The appointed committee should report their recommendation to Synod for approval or rejection."

Nkhoma pleaded with the congregations and pastors not to deliberately violate this resolution. He further warned all members and pastors that anyone found doing so would face disciplinary measures (*Conde, conde tisapotolozwe mfundo iyi ku mipingo yathu. Tisadzilowetse dala pa bvuto limene tikadapewa. Mbusa aliyense, komanso mpingo uli wonse opotolozwa mfundo iyi ya Synod apalamula mlandu*).

Following the 1996, 1998 and 2000 Synod recommendations and their resolutions, the 2000 Synod's difference of opinion between the Pastoral Letter and the subsequent letter that the actuary wrote to refute what the Pastoral Letter had said about praise and worship and mass praying, caused havoc. The misunderstanding in the Synod leadership of the 2000 Synod

resolution resulted in many divisions among congregational members. In 2000, after the August Synod meeting, the state of affairs in the RCZ became known. The Church needed to take drastic and urgent measures to avert chaos. The situation in most of the Lusaka-based congregations was getting out of hand.

10. THE MARCH 2001 EXTRAORDINARY SYNOD MEETING

This was one of the most extraordinary Synod meetings in the RCZ's history. The venue was the Madzimoyo congregation, one of the oldest mission stations that missionaries had established in the Eastern Province of Zambia. It is approximately 500 kilometres from Lusaka, the capital city of Zambia. The meeting took place from 2 to 4 March 2001. The delegates to this meeting were those who had attended the August 2000 Synod. Also extraordinary in this Synod meeting was the large number of observers who volunteered to attend. The moderator, Rev. Peter Ndhlovu, the general secretary, Rev. M.O. Kanyenda and other ministers who were perceived to support and promote Pentecostal practices in the Church, did not attend this meeting. This meant that the vice-moderator, Rev. Dr. Edwin Zulu substituted as acting moderator of this Synod meeting.

This Extraordinary Synod Meeting had one item on the agenda: "The way forward for the RCZ." The deliberations centred on ministers who abrogated the RCZ's traditions and doctrines. Article 4 of *The constitution, bylaws and procedures of the RCZ* (2004:3) reads:

"The RCZ is founded on the Bible, the holy and infallible Word of God. Its doctrine is contained in the Doctrinal Standards namely the Belgian Confessions, the Heidelberg Catechism, and the Canon of Dort (1618-19) and its liturgy shall conform to God the father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit as the centre of worship".

The constitution, bylaws and procedures of the RCZ, Article 14(2) (2004:8) reads:

"A minister, who, regardless of the responsibility bestowed on him (her) fails to comply and/or observe the oath of allegiance and the Church doctrine may be excommunicated which leads to the withdrawal of the license".

During this Extraordinary Synod Meeting, this framework of understanding influenced the decision-making process. Names were presented and those in attendance were called upon to exculpate themselves and to make a public declaration for, or against, the RCZ. It was a structured Synod meeting with only one closed-ended question, the answer to which was either Yes or No. The question was, "Are you RCZ/Dutch or Pente?"⁸

When all the names were scrutinized, the Synod resolved that all those ministers who involved themselves with Pentecostal practices be expelled and excommunicated from the Church.

The Church hailed the resolutions passed at this Synod. Members welcomed the Synod's decision with mixed feelings as some viewed the decision as harsh and un-Christian. Two days later, on 6 March 2001, a break-away Church, the BIGOCA, was launched and drew its membership from the RCZ under the leadership of Rev. Peter R. Ndhlovu as its bishop.

In conclusion, the precursors of the Pentecostal and charismatic tendencies in the RCZ had been pastors and members within the Church. The differences of worship that pastors and their supporters started to bring into congregations as from 1996 onwards, created a platform for its popularity and practices. Subsequent to this, other elements, such as speaking in tongues, singing of choruses, sessions of healing, etcetera, started to gain recognition and acceptance among members as evidence of transformation.

⁸ The term "Pente" was an abbreviated name ascribed to those congregants who were believed to practice Pentecostalism. It was more vernacular amongst many members and easier to use than the full terminology of Pentecostals. It was a distinguishing designation between members of the RCZ and those in the group with new Pentecostal/charismatic tendencies.

It is ironic that at the RCZ's 2008 Synod, the issue that was the bone of contention of the conflict and expulsion, i.e. mass prayers, was allowed to be part of the liturgy (RCZ Pastoral Letter of the 25th Synod Conference 13-17 August 2008; Soko 2010:159-160).

Having discussed the Pentecostal tendencies in the Church according to various documents, the following section will examine the saga around the RCZ Mtendere congregation from 1996 to 1999.

11. THE SAGA OF THE MTENDERE CONGREGATION: 1996 – 1999

This section explores the saga of the Mtendere congregation's from 1996 to 1999. It serves to illustrate events in a specific congregation in more detail that culminated in the first schism in 1999 and as such set the scene for the much bigger split described above. In this section, the researchers will limit the discussion to those events that led to the saga that resulted in the excommunication of the minister. Consequently, a new Church, called the "Christian Reformed Church," was formed.

11.1 A brief background of the Mtendere congregation

In 1979, the Mtendere congregation was established in the Mtendere compound in Lusaka. It was the sixth congregation that was established in Lusaka after Kamwala in 1935 (RCZ Synod Minutes: Western Synod, 31 October to 7 November 1993). At the time of this congregation's problems, it belonged to Chelstone Presbytery, in which there were 11 congregations, including Mtendere. Many other ministers had served this congregation. On 10 March 1996, Rev. Mabvuto Ngoma was released from Mtendere when the Council of Churches of Zambia (CCZ) appointed him as relief coordinator for the refugees (RCZ Chelstone Presbytery extraordinary meeting minutes 1 February 1997).

As usual, the congregation was left without a resident minister. In the RCZ, two systems work hand in hand. When a congregation wishes to call a minister of their own choice, the Synod leadership does not interfere. On the other hand, when Synod transfers a minister to any of its congregations, it too does not seek approval from the congregations. **Synod** sent Rev. Amos Ngoma to this congregation in August 1996 and he was inducted on 10 November 1996 (*Dziwani* Vol. 14:31; RCZ Chelstone Presbytery extraordinary meeting minutes, 1 February 1997).

11.2 The beginning of problems at the Mtendere congregation

The problems at Mtendere started as a constitutional matter between the elders' council and Chelstone Presbytery's leadership about their refusal to have been given a minister by Synod. The elders' council, held on 20 September 1996, resolved not to accept Synod's decision. The Chelstone Presbytery was forthwith notified of their resolution (RCZ Chelstone Presbytery extraordinary meeting minutes 1 February 1997). In short and by implication, the council rejected Rev. Amos Ngoma. Now, the Presbytery was in an awkward position as it felt it could not reverse the Synod's resolution. This resulted in misunderstandings and witch hunting between the elders and the Presbytery leadership.

On 13 October 1996, a meeting was called between the Mtendere elders and the Presbytery leadership, the aim of which was for the Presbytery to discuss the way forward with the elders. At this meeting, the elders maintained their position of refusal. 29 voted against the Synod's decision and three voted in favour of the congregation's acceptance of the minister. This stance of the elders forced the Presbytery leadership into action. **The Presbytery** disciplined the 29 elders who voted against the minister's transfer and did not accept the Synod's decision to place Rev Amos Ngoma at Mtendere. The Presbytery ruled that for four years, none of them could

hold any position in the congregation. So far the Presbytery therefore supported the Synod.

Arising from this decision of the Presbytery, the congregation was compelled to receive Rev. Amos Ngoma as a resident minister. He was inducted on 10 November 1996 amid strife between the rival factions in the congregation.

The suspended elders did not accept the verdict of their Presbytery leadership and appealed to the Synod leadership to intervene (Correspondence Synod Secretary 27 November 1996; Chelstone Presbytery 4 December 1996). They challenged the decision to place anyone in the RCZ on a four-year suspension period as being unconstitutional. This appeal completely changed the level of conflict. The elders' actions by writing to Synod without consulting them upset the Presbytery leadership.

11.3 RCZ leadership differences and the Mtendere congregation

It is now clear that both the Synod and the Chelstone Presbytery's leadership had a major role in the conflict at Mtendere. The Presbytery leadership felt that the Synod leadership had betrayed them, as the Synod received direct complaints from the expelled elders, who were at this stage more in agreement with the Synod leadership. On the other hand, the Synod leadership felt that they were demeaned by both the Presbytery and Rev. Amos Ngoma, who had no kind words for the Synod leadership.

On 19 April 1997, the **Synod leadership** called a meeting to which the groups in the Mtendere saga were invited. The two faction groups were the Mtendere congregation and the Presbytery leadership. This meeting was initially fruitful insofar as the resolution was concerned. The resolution (first decision) was: "for peace and Christian testimony the offending elders should be forgiven, the suspension is lifted. They should be full members of the Church and can be chosen on any committee. Rev A Ngoma should continue as pastor of the Church and current elders should continue with their duties" (RCZ Mtendere Congregation report Sept 1998). For whatever reasons, those elders, who were previously on suspension, regarded this decision as unacceptable. They started slinging insults at Rev Ngoma and the Synod leadership. They stormed into the meeting, halted the proceedings and manhandled the chair of the meeting, deputy moderator, Rev. Japhet Ndhlovu.

In the absence of Rev Ngoma Rev Ndhlovu continued with the meeting and because of the pressure from the anti-Amos Ngoma group, the meeting rescinded its earlier decision. Their new resolution was as follows (RCZ Mtendere Congregation report Sept 1998):

"Rev Ngoma should be transferred and leave the Church the following day.

"Synod Moderamen should conduct the release (chimasulo) instead of Presbytery.

"Rev. Ngoma should not be allowed even to preach a farewell message to the Church.

"Current elders (supporting Rev Ngoma) to be dissolved"

Two members of the moderamen, in person, communicated the above resolution to Rev Ngoma. On the morning of 20 April 1997, as resolved in the meeting, the moderamen went to the Mtendere congregation to release Rev. Ngoma. Both Rev Ngoma and his elders rejected the second decision.

Arising from this deadlock, the situation at Mtendere was now out of control. The moderamen's failure to release Rev Ngoma fuelled widespread condemnation in the Church and Chelstone Presbytery leadership became frustrated and outspoken against the Synod leadership.

As though that was not enough, Rev Ngoma also had the courage to call Synod leadership "hypocrites" and "corrupt in their exercise of duty". This unbecoming behaviour of Rev. Ngoma annoyed the Synod leadership. The first measure that Synod took on 6 May 1997, was to dissolve the Presbytery leadership and, secondly, to transfer Rev. A. Ngoma to the Beteri congregation in the Eastern Province (Correspondence: Synod Secretary (office) 6 May 1997; *Daily Mail* 28 April

1997; *Times of Zambia* 24 April 1997).

As the Synod leadership tried to find a way of diffusing the Mtendere problem, and as wrangles and church closure persisted in the tug of war, Rev. Ngoma and his supporters opted to start worshipping in a rented unfinished building. This further deepened the crisis, because this splinter group continued to identify themselves as members of the RCZ, contrary to the constitution of the Church. The group called itself "RCZ Mtendere East."

By October 1997, relative peace had been restored at Mtendere. The new office-bearers (the elders and deacons) were chosen and confirmed. Arising from this breakthrough, the congregation now had to call a minister and Rev. Andrew B. Zulu from the Merwe congregation in the Eastern Province was called. He was inducted on 24 May 1998 (RCZ Synod Report 21-29 August 1998).

From December 1998 to April 1999, the newly instituted Presbyterian leadership made every effort to reason with both groups who now seemed to belong to two separate congregations. Rev. Ngoma's group refused to again merge into one congregation. They demanded to be established as one of the RCZ's congregations. The Mtendere group was sceptical of bringing back the break-away group who had already shown interest of becoming a Church. Arising from this, the Presbyterian leadership resolved (without Synod's approval) to establish a new congregation called "Mtendere East" on 24 April 1999, followed by the induction of Rev. A. Ngoma the next day, 25 April 1999 (RCZ Chelstone Presbytery extraordinary meeting minutes, 1999). The June 1999 Synodical Executive Council meeting rejected the Chelstone Presbytery's report on the establishment of the new congregation. The Presbytery's leadership committee was directed to revisit their decision and report to the Extraordinary Synod, which was held from 8 to 13 August 1999 at the Mphangwe congregation in the Eastern Province.

At this Extraordinary Synod Meeting (RCZ Pastoral Letter, 8-13 August 1999), the Mtendere problem was discussed and concluded; Rev. Ngoma was indefinitely suspended for gross insubordination. His members from the Mtendere East congregation were given three months to return, failure of which, they ceased to be members of the RCZ. Arising from the resolution of the 1999 extraordinary Synod meeting to suspend Rev. Amos Ngoma directly meant that his newly established congregation and members were detached from the RCZ. Since then, Rev. Amos Ngoma has remained the only ordained minister, and now has the title of bishop. They call themselves the Christian Reformed Church.

12. CONCLUSION

The researchers have discussed the 1999 and 2001 schisms in the RCZ descriptively. The aim was to understand what caused the schisms from that vantage point. What the various documents highlighted was the reality of Pentecostal / charismatic influences and the failure of the RCZ leadership to provide an environment conducive for dialogue and consistency in handling the issues. Leadership was more often than not divided. In both cases, the claims or statements about the situation, as well as the state of affairs at the time of the infighting in the Church, show how antagonism between the ministers and church councils developed. It needs to be pointed out that the evidence produced above, focuses on the leadership factor in the schisms. More factors are involved (Soko 2010).

In retrospect, the schism's bigger picture has more nuances to it than what was dealt with in this research. The answer to the question: What led to the schisms and how did it happen? can only be fully answered when the RCZ's history and identity is understood, as well as the global contextual changes that have taken place and literally transformed Zambian society and culture (Soko 2010:81-120). Pentecostalism was born at the beginning of the 20th century in

circumstances not much different from what is experienced in Zambia and in many countries around the world. Its style, music and ethos address the realities of our times (Cox 1995, Kalu 2008). The RCZ leadership is modeled on the missionaries' and local political leadership and ethos of the independence and post-independence periods. It was divided according to the lines of conflict that ran through the Church, i.e. Dutch and *Pente*. In a sense, the schisms were unavoidable; they played out like a tragic drama. This was also confirmed by the empirical research done in Lusaka (Soko 2010: 121-160).

The rise of Pentecostalism in Zambia is not the RCZ's problem alone. Other denominations are experiencing the same phenomenon that threatens the once cherished monopoly of the mainline Churches. The theological phenomena that play a role need to complement this research. What struck the researchers was that this aspect of the schism was not addressed by leadership. The goal of the research was to have a solid descriptive basis from where subsequent research can deal with the obvious theological challenges facing the church. It did highlight the fact that the Church lacks strategies to resolve conflicts in a win/win way as well as the ability to understand and address the context and deeper causes of the conflict.

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The Bible Gospel Church in Africa
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Boustene vir die toekoms van die NG Kerk (Deel III)¹

ABSTRACT

Directives of the future for the DR Church (Part III)

The DR(NG) Church, besides its own thinking and theologising, is influenced by the sphere of the new political and cultural situation as well as the sphere of the postmodern paradigm. These factors bring challenges for the way in which the DR(NG) Church understands itself as a church and its mission within the South African context. In meeting these challenges the church has to have a historical understanding of these influences within its context. From this historical understanding norms and values could be deducted to serve as contextually relevant directives for the future. Consequently they will also contribute to shaping the future of the DR(NG) Church.

1. INLEIDING

“Die sinikus sal bly sê dat wat die mens uit sy geskiedenis leer, is dat die mens nie uit sy geskiedenis leer nie. Natuurlik bestaan die geskiedenis nie uit ’n reeks ... eenvoudige “lessies” nie, maar deur die verlede ... te bestudeer, verkry ’n mens wel kennis en insig wat aangewend kan word om vraagstukke in die hede op te los en die toekoms te beplan.” (Wessels, 2001:257). Moltmann (1989:321, 323) meen ook dat ’n bewustheid van die geskiedenis die moontlikheid skep om oor die toekoms na te dink. As mense die effek van die geskiedenis beleef, begin hulle oor die betekenis daarvan en hulle lewensdoel nadink - óf ten goede óf ten slegte. Historiese bewustheid het vir Moltmann (1989:327, 330, 332) te make met ’n kritiese beskouing van die geskiedenis, sodat ’n persoon begrip kan hê vir die omvang van die invloed van dit wat voortvloei uit die verlede na die hede. Die wyse waarop daar omtrent die omvang van die invloed beslis word, hang saam met mense se hoop of vrees vir die toekoms. Die inhoud van hierdie hoop of vrees hang op hulle beurt saam met die dinge waarop mense se bestaan gerig is en waarop hulle vertrou.

Die effek van die tyd waarin die NG Kerk hom tans bevind, het in so ’n mate ’n invloed op die kerk dat dit uitgedaag word om oor die betekenis daarvan vir sy kerkwees en identiteit na te dink. Taber (2002:184) maak ’n opmerking oor die kerk in Suid-Afrika: “[T]he church cannot view itself as an agent of change in South Africa. It is itself an object of change.” Daarom wys Durand (2002:16) daarop dat die kerk inderdaad gedwing word om hom af te vra hoe hy verander, sonder dat hy deur sy politieke, ekonomiese en sosiale omgewing voorgeskryf word. Die kerk behoort dus te bepaal in watter mate die omvang van dié invloed vir die lewe en identiteit van die kerk behoort te geld, al dan nie. Burger (2001:15) sê dat die implikasies hiervan vir die kerk op minstens drie vlakke lê: die bediening van die kerk, die taak of missie van die kerk en die

1 Artikel gebaseer op ’n hoofstuk uit ’n MA-verhandeling (Teologie) by UP (2008) getitel “‘n Dowwe speël: ’n kerkhistoriese ondersoek na die resente stand van die NG Kerk, 1990-2006” en ingedien deur ds P Kruger van die NG Gemeente Nigel-Suid onder die studieleiding van prof JW Hofmeyr.

identiteit van die kerk. Hofmeyr (2002a:243) se opmerking bevestig dit as hy meen dat die era sedert 1994 die NG Kerk uitdaag om 'n sterker en duideliker historiese bewussyn te ontwikkel en dat die kerk se identiteit, gereformeerde en spiritualiteit hergedefinieer moet word.

In 'n poging om sy identiteit, taak en bediening te herdefinieer, is dit belangrik om te let op die konteks waarbinne die NG Kerk bestaan, want dit sal bydra tot die keuses wat die kerk gaan maak. Sodoende kan daar aan norme en waardes wat persoonlik en sosiaal rigtinggewend is, gebou word. Indirek sal dit ook bydra tot die vorming van 'n nuwe identiteit vir die kerk. Aan die hand van die volgende word gepoog om aan te dui hoe die nuwe identiteit van die kerk (NG Kerk) daar behoort uit te sien.

2. UITDAGINGS AS GEVOLG VAN DIE POLITIES-KULTURELE SITUASIE SEDERT 1990 WAT 'N ROL BEHOORT TE SPEEL IN DIE UITBOU VAN DIE NG KERK SE IDENTITEIT.

In die kritiese beskouing van die konteks van Suid-Afrika se polities-kulturele situasie sedert 1990 en die invloed daarvan op die NG Kerk, kom 'n historiese bewustheid na vore wat met die volgende verband hou:

Eerstens: Uit die NG Kerk se *historiese erfenis van apartheidsteologie* word dit duidelik dat daar 'n waaksaamheid teen teologie se vereenselwiging met politieke modelle moet wees, dat daar teen 'n sekulêre teologie ('n teologie wat deur sy konteks voorgeskryf word) gewaak moet word en dat godsdiens nie met die rassekwestie vermeng moet raak nie.

Tweedens: Die *proses van politieke transformasie* daag die NG Kerk uit om begrip vir lidmate se reaksie op radikale transformasie te toon, sowel as die weerstand teen verandering as gevolg van die groeiende diskontinuiteit met die gebruike en oortuigings van die verlede.

Derdens: Suid-Afrika se *nuwe kulturele situasie* vra 'n beslissing van die NG Kerk oor hoe hy hom identifiseer met die nuwe geldende politieke, sosiale en ekonomiese strukture. Dié situasie vereis van die NG Kerk kruis-kulturele dialoog met ander kerke en 'n beweging na ekumenisiteit.

Begrip vir hierdie bogenoemde sake wat voortvloei uit die verlede na die hede, bepaal hoe oor die invloed daarvan op die NG Kerk beslis behoort te word. Norme en waardes kan hieruit verkry word wat persoonlik en sosiaal rigtinggewend is deurdat dit boustene kan word vir die identiteit van die NG Kerk in sy huidige kulturele konteks. Hierdie boustene word vervolgens bespreek.

Bousteen 1: Verstaan die polities-kulturele psige van die Afrikaner.

Die NG Kerk het geleer wat dit inhou om 'n spesifieke politieke model teologies te ondersteun. Dis onwaarskynlik dat die kerk weer in so 'n situasie sal beland. Dit bring ook mee dat daar teen 'n sekulêre teologie (soos die apartheidsteologie) gewaak moet word. Ongelukkig beteken dit nie dat die teologiese idees en ou politieke waardes van apartheid in mense se psiges afgeskaf is nie. Hoewel moderne Afrikaners dalk nie meer die vroeëre idees nageset handhaaf nie, het die destydse kollektiverende kyk na die mensdom oorgebly. In 'n artikel in die Kerkbode van 21 Maart 2008, wat daaroor handel dat die NG Kerk en sy leierskap die uitdaging wil aandurf om rassisme te beveg, word dr Kobus Gerber, algemene sekretaris van die NG Kerk, aangehaal: "Ons was baie naïef om te dink dat dit sommer vanself weggaan. Dit is 'n reus wat doelgerig onder alle rasse beveg moet word." (Oosthuizen 2008:1). In die artikel word ook daarna verwys dat rassisme voorkom, omdat Suid-Afrikaners nog nie die veranderinge in die land volledig verwerk het nie. Die taak van die NG Kerk is om sy lidmate te begelei om hulleself daarvan te weerhou om andere kollektief binne kategorieë te beskou en daarvolgens veralgemenings te maak. Die nuwe kulturele situasie vereis 'n nuwe manier van dink en interaksie, waardeur die NG Kerk (en sy lidmate) se geloofwaardigheid by die res van die samelewing gewaarborg kan word.

Bousteen 2: Toon kritiese solidariteit met die belewenisse van lidmate in die nuwe Suid-Afrika.

As gevolg van die NG Kerk se begrip van die erfenis van die apartheidsteologie was die NG Kerk huiwerig om na 1994 opsigtelik solidariteit met die lot van die Afrikaner te toon. Maar die Afrikanervolk waarmee die NG Kerk vir baie jare geïdentifiseer het, soek steeds solidariteit met die kerk en dit is tog verblydend dat die NG Kerk hierdie verantwoordelike besef (Gaum 1997:75). Lidmate wil hê dat die kerk met hulle vereenselwig, want hulle is immers die persone wat die kerk in stand hou, met die kerk meeleeft en daarom ook solidariteit en geestelike leiding van die kerk verwag. Hierdie behoefte word verskerp as gevolg van lidmate se daaglikse blootstelling aan die markplein met sy ingrypende verandering. Daar is by lidmate dikwels 'n gevoel van bedreiging, diskontinuiteit en anemie. Jonker (1998:220-221) beskryf hierdie belewenisse: "Die droom van 'n reënboognasie wat in vrede en veiligheid lewe, is ... nog nie bewaarheid nie. Talle bekwame jongmense emigreer, omdat hulle geen vertrouwe meer in die toekoms van die land het nie. Hoe moet wit Christene oor hierdie dinge oordeel? Moet hulle toegee aan negatiewe gevoelens ... ? Dit wil soms voorkom asof daar 'n kollektiewe swartgalligheid by ... lidmate van die kerk aanwesig is. Dit word ongelukkig versterk deur die bewuswording van die ... armoede en ellende van groot groepe van die landsbevolking, asook van korrupsie en verval op verskillende terreine en van kollektiewe onmag om daaraan te ontkom ... " Hanekom (2007:9) skryf ook hieroor: "Twyfel bestaan of lidmate al genoegsaam geleentheid gehad het om te rou oor 'n era en paradigma wat verby is. Verder blyk dit dat lidmate die woord 'kerkhereniging' maklik verwar met sensitiewe en soms pynlike sake soos grondhervorming, regstellende aksie en misdaad. Ons mense is seer, voel ontnugter en rou. Hulle sal emosioneel en teologies begelei moet word." Vir Durand (2002:19) is hierdie onherroeplike politieke situasie van die Afrikaner die rede hoekom baie lidmate die kerk se solidariteit verlang en die kerk beleef as die laaste oorblywende vesting van die Afrikanerdom. Die solidariteit wat getoon behoort te word, is 'n kritiese solidariteit waarin die kerk nie koud staan teenoor sy lidmate se wel en weë nie, maar ook krities staan teenoor hulle sonde (ook kollektiewe sondes) sodat daar 'n gesonde afstand gehandhaaf kan word (Gaum, 1981:36).

Bousteen 3: Die kerk is 'n oop gemeenskap waarin ekumenisiteit 'n wesenskenmerk is.

Die NG Kerk het reeds die insig dat dit as wit, Westerse hoofstroomkerk nie meer alleen die Christelike norm in Suid-Afrika bepaal nie. Tesame met die voorkoms van groeiende pluraliteit en fragmentasie in die Nuwe Suid-Afrika, is 'n beweging weg van denominasionaliteit na ekumenisiteit onvermydelik. Hierdie beweging is noodsaaklik, omdat die kerk 'n belangrike versoeningsrol behoort te speel om mense met dieselfde waardes bymekaar uit te bring (Boshoff 1995:5). Vir Aleaz (2002:168) behoort kerke daarna te strew om 'n 'community of communities' te wees. Daar kan 'n veelvoud van identiteite op 'n nie-bedreigende wyse aanvaar word. In so 'n gemeenskap is sosio-politieke-godsdiensstige-kulturele werklikhede die hermeneutiese beginsel, omdat daar gepoog word om prosesse en ander tradisies te verstaan. Dit is noodsaaklik vir ekumenisiteit. In 'n proses soos die voortgaande herenigingsproses van die NG Kerk-familie (hoewel tans problematies) is dit noodsaaklik om voortdurend die hermeneutiese konteks daarvan te verreken - 'n konteks waarin prosesse, verskillende tradisies en die inhoud van mense se ervarings verstaan moet word. Lidmate van die kerke in die familie sal toenemend aangemoedig moet word om, soos met die eerste waarde, op 'n nie-partikularistiese wyse te dink.

Die eerste drie waardes (boustene) kom voort uit die resente politieke-kulturele situasie van Suid-Afrika. Vervolgens word aandag gegee aan waardes (boustene) wat deur die verandering in wêreldbeskouings na vore gebring word.

3. UITDAGINGS AS GEVOLG VAN DIE VERANDERING VAN WÊRELDBESKOUINGS IN DIE ERA VAN VERANDERING WAT 'N ROL BEHOORT TE SPEEL IN DIE UITBOU VAN DIE NG KERK SE IDENTITEIT.

Smit (2001:121) meen die mees fundamentele verandering wat in Suid-Afrika plaasgevind het, is die feit dat dit oornag deel geword het van die tipiese *[post]modernistiese*, demokratiese, sekulêre, vryemark, pluralistiese gemeenskappe wat elders oor eeue ontwikkel het. Aangesien die kerk nie uitgesluit is van die invloed van die postmoderne denkraamwerk nie, kan die uitwerking daarvan in die algemeen waargeneem word in die religie en die lewe van die kerk (ook die NG Kerk). In die nadenke omtrent die invloed hiervan op die NG Kerk, kom ook 'n historiese bewustheid na vore wat met die volgende verband hou:

Ten eerste is daar sekere sake wat die NG Kerk, soos ook die kerk in die algemeen, raak. Die kerk beleef dat sy prominente posisie in die groter samelewing dramaties verander het en dat daar as gevolg van sekularisasie 'n groeiende onverskilligheid teenoor die kerk ontwikkel. Die kerk is ook nie meer die beskermmer van absolute etiese waardes nie. In die algemeen beleef die kerk 'n onsekerheid oor die weg wat dit moet volg wat deurdring tot die dieptes van die NG Kerk se gereformeerde belydenis en spiritualiteit. Dit maak die kerk kwesbaar vir die invloed van nuwe vorme van spiritualiteit wat 'n subjektiewe individualistiese inslag het. Gevolglik word die geloof geprivatiseer en kom die kerk onder die invloed van die verbruikersera se verbruikersmentaliteit. So word gemeentes binne hulle eie kontekste gedwing om in sekere opsigte die beginsels van die marksamelewing toe te pas om voort te bestaan en dit lei tot toenemende kongregasionalistiese tendense in die NG Kerk (Kruger 2008:159-168).

Tweedens bied die era van veranderende denksisteme ook uitdagings aan die teologie (op verskillende vlakke). Die tendens van relativering het implikasies vir die konsep 'waarheid' en Skrifinterpretasie. Daar is ook invloede wat betekenisvolle skuive in die teologie te weeg bring: die skuif weg van logiese positivisme na kritiese rasionalisme; die beweging weg van die groter gemeenskap na privatisering; die oorgang van denominasionaliteit na ekumenisiteit; die oorgang van die Eurosentryse era na die era van die mensheid (menschdom) as 'n geheel. Daar ontwikkel ook die noodsaaklikheid om voortdurend die invloed van die historiese en teenswoordige bewussyn te verreken (Kruger 2008:101-113). Daarom daag die era van verandering die teologie uit omtrent die beklemtoning van die uniekheid en universaliteit van Jesus Christus; die noodsaaklikheid om die sosiale betekenis van die Christelike verhaal te herbeskryf; die uitbou van die rol van die publieke getuie van Christene en die kerk; die beoefening van 'n meer kontekstuele en buigbare teologie (Kruger 2008: 172-176).

Weereens is dit belangrik dat begrip vir hierdie bogenoemde sake sal bepaal hoe oor die invloed daarvan op die NG Kerk beslis sal word. Nog norme en waardes kan hieruit verkry word wat persoonlik en sosiaal rigtinggewend is deurdat dit boustene kan wees vir die identiteit van die NG Kerk in sy huidige konteks.

Bousteen 4: Desekulariserende missionêre verhouding moet gebou word.

Die bevoorregte posisie van die NG Kerk in die samelewing het dramaties verander as gevolg van die invloed van sekularisasie. Daar sit 'n nuwe geslag Afrikaners op die banke van die kerk wat, soos Durand (2002:60-61) aandui, in die algemeen weinig moeite het om by 'n meer sekulêre openbare lewe aan te pas. Die strewe om enige vorm van Christelikheid in die openbare lewe uit te leef, ontbreek in die algemeen by hulle. Daar is van hulle kant af min kritiek teenoor die sekulêre verskynsels in die samelewing. Vir Van der Walt (1999:7-8) is hierdie tendens 'n groot gevaar vir die Christendom vandag, aangesien sekularisasie aan godsdienste min betekenis gee in die publieke, openbare terrein. Dit word beperk tot die persoonlike geloofslewe en die kerk.

Hierdie tendens word baie maklik deur Christene aanvaar, omdat dit nie openlik die Christendom vervolg nie.

Durand (2002:64) meen egter dat die sekularisasieproses nie as iets negatiefs beskou moet word nie, omdat dit bydra tot 'n dekonstruerende proses waarin die Afrikaanewêreldvisie ont-ideologiseer word. Sodoende kan afstand verkry word tussen die Afrikaanse kerke en die samelewing waarin hulle staan en kan die NG Kerk opnuut fokus op sy roeping tot diens.

Die wyse waarop die kerk die sekulariserende tydsgees kan trotseer en sy posisie in die samelewing kan herstel, is deur *missionêre verhoudinge* tot stand te bring. In 'n artikel deur Erasmus (2004:7) waarin prof J Hendriks se strategiese prioriteite van die kerk in die toekoms bespreek word, word daarop gewys dat die kerk se missionêre wese herontdek moet word. Hunsberger (2002:103-104) wys daarop dat die kerk 'n gestuurde gemeenskap is vir die gemeenskap om hom. Die blote teenwoordigheid van die kerk behoort reeds iets van sy missionêre karakter te weerspieël. Die kerk kan dus nie 'n steriele afstand van die samelewing handhaaf nie, want die kerk behoort in die verkondiging van die Christelike geloof die relevansie daarvan vir die werklikhede van die alledaagse lewe aan te dui (Van der Walt 1999:47). Dit kan die kerk alleen regkry as dit kennis het van die ingewikkelde probleme van die moderne samelewing. Boshoff (1995:8) het 'n dekade tevore reeds aangedui dat die geloofwaardigheid van die Afrikaanse kerke toenemend gaan afhang van hulle betrokkenheid by die mens en sy alledaagse materiële en geestelike nood en sy soeke na sin en betekenis individueel en binne groepsverband.

Vir Durand (2002:71-72) kan die ontdekking dat die gemeente binne-in sy sendingveld leef, vir die Afrikaanse kerke een van hulle fundamenteelste vorms van transformasie beteken. Daarom moet die kulturele omgewing waarin die lidmate hulle bevind, ondersoek word en teologies oor nagedink word. Louis Becker, 'n lidmaat van die NG Gemeente Stellenbosch-Welgelegen, skryf in die Kerkbode van 13 Oktober 2006 dat verandering in die NG Kerk bewerkstellig kan word as Christene hulle rol in Suid-Afrika speel. Gemeentes wat reeds uitwaarts begin beweeg het, moet ook mekaar opsoek en hande vat om veranderinge in die kerk te weeg te bring. Dan sal die kerk 'n kragtige ontwikkelingsinstrument in Suidelike Afrika wees (Becker 2006:12). Dit is verblydend om te sien dat hierdie bousteen, om 'n gestuurde kerk te wees, reeds as 'n waarde geïdentifiseer is deur die Sinode Hoëveld (Handelinge van die Sinode Suid-Transvaal, 2005:234).

Bousteen 5: 'n Nuwe normatiewe Christendom moet gebou word.

Die NG Kerk en die kerk in die algemeen het met 'n oop samelewing te doen waarin die vryheid van die individu 'n groot rol speel (Boshoff 1995:19). Davie (1999:74) dui aan dat individualisme die kommunale basis van religieuse oortuigings en gedrag bedreig, omdat die normatiewiteit van godsdienstige oortuigings algaande in die private sfeer gebring word. Daarom het Christelike norme nou slegs betekenis in die persoonlike sfeer of hoogstens in 'n spesifieke groepsverband (Jonker, 1998:220). Omdat die oortuigings van die individu die maatstaf word vir wat normatief is, ontstaan daar wat waardes en norme betref, 'n subjektivistiese ingesteldheid wat lei tot relativisme, utilisme, pragmatisme en egoïsme (Van der Walt, 1999:9). Dit skep 'n tweërlei probleme vir die etiek. Enersyds word die kerk se outoritêre manier om morele en ander gedrag voor te skryf, uitgedaag. Andersyds veroorsaak dit 'n krisis in die gemeenskap, omdat normatiewe waardes in die openbare sfeer gerelativeer word en morele verlamming so na vore tree.

Vir Boshoff (1995:20) is dit vir die kerk nodig om 'n *Christelike etos met Christelike deugde* te vestig. Stackhouse (1995:31) bevestig dit deur klem te lê op die vernuwing van morele waardes. In dié proses behoort daarteen gewaak te word om hierdie riglyne in absolute sisteme te omskep, aangesien die postmoderne mens (en lidmaat) agterdogtig is teenoor totaliserende sisteme. Die bedoeling van 'n normatiewe Christendom gaan eerder oor die skep van 'n oorkoepelende

raamwerk wat mense help om sinvol binne die wêreld te leef - die daarstelling van lewensnorme wat rigting gee van wat behoort en wat nie (Van der Walt 1999:18). As ons God werklik *in* hierdie wêreld wil dien, dan is duidelike norme onontbeerlik en behoort die kerk die samelewing daarop te wys dat dit die medeverantwoordelikheid vir morele herstel het (Van der Walt 1999:47).

Bousteen 6: Gemeentes moet verstaan word as geloofsgemeenskappe.

Aangesien daar 'n waarde-diversiteit onder wit mense is, is daar nie meer sprake van 'n tipiese manier van dink en doen nie (Boshoff (1995:28). Daar is ook 'n geestelike fragmentasie wat volgens Durand (2002:60-61) lei tot die groot verskeidenheid godsdienstige en liturgiese gebruike in gemeentes van die NG Kerk. In dié verband verwys Steyn (2006:1) na vyf groot bewegings (neigings) omtrent spiritualiteit wat tans in die NG Kerk bestaan: tradisioneel (verwysend na die gereformeerde tradisie), charismaties, rasionalisties (intellektuele bewegings), mistiek (met 'n kontemplatiewe fokus) en sinkretisties (eie gekonstrueerde godsdiensiening). In baie gemeentes word gepoog om verskillende vorme van spiritualiteit te akkommodeer, omdat die fokus op die direkte godsdienstige belewenis is. Wanneer dié diversifisering die bediening van die gemeente begin bepaal, is die gevaar dat die gemeentelewe tot 'n tipe verbruikersgodsdienis vervlak word (Boshoff, 1995:34).

Hierdie geestelike fragmentasie bring nie net verskeidenheid binne gemeentes nie, maar ook tussen gemeentes van dieselfde verband. Gemeentes funksioneer ook al meer onafhanklik van die res van die kerkverband (Durand 2002:61). Die vryheid van keuse in die 'godsdienstige mark' wat aangehelp word deur utilisme en pragmatisme bring 'n kongregasionalistiese ingesteldheid binne die gereformeerde kerke tot stand. Die diversiteit van spiritualiteite en die individualiteitskarakter in gemeentes veroorsaak dat gemeentes iets van hulle karakter as geloofsgemeenskap begin verloor. Dit noodsaak 'n nadenke oor 'n saak wat volgens Hunsberger (2002:97,99) fundamenteel is vir die hedendaagse kerk - dit is die *herstel van die gemeenskap van gelowiges*. Die huidige generasie se verbintenisse tot sosiale instellings (soos die kerk) hang af van die mate waarin 'n individu se sosiale behoeftes sinvol bevredig word. Om die gemeenskap te herstel, word individualiteit nie misken nie, maar word veronderstel dat die individu juis tot sy reg kom as gevolg van sy sinvolle verbintenis met die geloofsgemeenskap. Hunsberger (2002:100) wys daarop dat die uitdaging vir die kerk is om 'n gemeenskap te wees wat deur die evangelie gevorm word. Sonder om te verabsoluteer, behoort daar 'n raamwerk van praktyke en denkpatriene gevestig te word wat dié van Jesus Christus insluit. Dit behoort gemeentes se grootste gemene deler te wees omdat dit die standaard is waarteen die kerk (en 'n gemeente) se oortuigings en aksies beoordeel kan word. Die postmoderne veranderinge maak dat mense soek na 'n demonstrasie daarvan (Hunsberger 2002:103).

Bousteen 7: Herwaardeer die NG Kerk se gereformeerde tradisie.

As die kerk relevant wil wees, behoort dit ook duidelikheid te hê omtrent sy identiteit waardeur dit gerig kan word. Daar is diversiteit in die NG Kerk wat positief aangewend kan word, maar sonder 'n duidelike identiteit waaraan die diversiteit georiënteer kan word, kan dit eerder verwarrend en verdelend wees (Burger, 2005:7). Burger (2001:17) formuleer dit soos volg: "Sonder 'n lewendige en diepgaande gesprek oor ons gereformeerde erfenis, gaan ons nie goeie vernuwing in die NG Kerk kry nie." 'n Belangrike deel van die besinning oor identiteit is die *herwaardering van die NG Kerk se gereformeerde tradisie*.

By die Algemene Sinode van 2004 word aanbeveel dat 'n omvattende ondersoek onderneem word omtrent die volgende: die wyse waarop die Gereformeerde identiteit van die NG Kerk tans funksioneer in die teologie en bedieningspraktyk van gemeentes; hoe die Gereformeerde identiteit verstaan behoort te word te midde van die verskeidenheid ten opsigte van teologie,

bediening en spiritualiteit in die NG Kerk; die wyse waarop daar in die toekoms gestalte gegee moet word aan die Gereformeerde identiteit met die oog op die opbou en groei van die NG Kerk (Handelinge van die Algemene Sinode, 2004:303).

Vir Burger is daar vanuit die gereformeerde tradisie self *bruikbare wesenskenmerke* wat die kerk in die toekoms kan lei op die pad van verantwoordelike verandering en vernouing. Hy noem die volgende (Burger 2001:18, 19, 21-22, 23-24):

In die gereformeerde tradisie is daar 'n soeke om God in alles sentraal te stel. Die uitdrukking van Calvyn dat daar voortdurend tyd ingeruim moet word om “die gesig van God te bedink”, behoort die kerk te rig om God self te eer en te verheerlik in alles wat dit doen. Hierdie oortuiging bied 'n teen-sekulariserende krag.

Ten spyte van die uitdagings van diversiteit is daar by die NG Kerk steeds *'n diep verbintenis aan die eenheid van die kerk*. Hoewel die kerk in die verlede bande verbreek het, het die NG Kerk nou die geleentheid om nader aan die verskillende kerke in die familie en ook ekumenies te beweeg, want die kerke het mekaar nodig as hulle in hierdie tyd 'n impak wil maak.

Burger meen dat *gereformeerde aityd 'n groter geskakeerdheid getoon* het as die meeste ander kerklike tradisies. Gereformeerde was nooit 'n monolitiese eenheid nie. Die NG Kerk verteenwoordig byvoorbeeld 'n gereformeerde met evangeliese trekke wat teenoor die stammer Nederlandse gereformeerde staan. Hierdie variasie binne die gereformeerde veroorsaak dat daar nie 'n oormatige regulering in die kerk en tradisie is nie. In 'n tyd waarin pluraliteit op so baie vlakke 'n werklikheid is, behoort dit ook te help om makliker met verskeidenheid saam te leef.

Die geskiedenis van die gereformeerde tradisie wys volgens Burger uit dat daar binne die tradisie 'n openheid is *om voortdurend, ook in nuwe situasies, te reformeer*. Vir Burger strook dit met die *Protestantse beginsel* wat behels dat 'n historiese instansie, tradisie, gebruik of selfs 'n belydenisskrif wat in die tyd ontstaan het, nie bo kritiek verhef kan word nie. Hierdie wesenskenmerk bring die vryheid om die teologie en die kerkpraktyk voortdurend te interpreteer in 'n poging om kontekstueel die historiese en teenswoordige bewussyn te verreken.

Burger (2001:48) verwys ook na Brian Gerrish wat meen dat gereformeerde nie in die eerste plek gaan oor 'n stel waarhede wat oorgedra word nie, maar oor *'n manier van dink* omtrent die waarheid van God en die lewe. Daar behoort gevra te word na die sentrale *religieuse motiewe* van die gereformeerde tradisie. Burger (2001:51-52) wys die *religieuse motiewe* aan wat die gereformeerde tradisie in beweging gebring het en steeds vir die NG Kerk belangrik is, aangesien dit te doen het met oortuigings, strewes en doelstellings wat vormend op die kerk kan inwerk:

'n Lewe voor die aangesig van God (Coram Deo):

Die Reformasie se soeke na God het opgekom uit 'n diepe behoefte aan sekerheid, vastigheid en vertroosting. Hoewel daar vandag baie mense is wat 'n misnoeë met die institusionele kerk het, is dit ook waar dat die hedendaagse mens 'n diep, ongeneeslike behoefte aan transendensie het (Burger 2001:58). Die skerp negatieweit van moderne mense teenoor die kerk kan egter as iets positiefs aangewend word wat bydra tot 'n suiweringsproses om die kerk skoon te maak van kerkgerigtheid en eerder mense voor God te bring (Burger 2001:61).

Gebonde aan die Woord:

'n Baie sterk gereformeerde beginsel is dat God deur sy Woord tot die mensdom spreek. Die postmoderne mens beleef egter 'n paradoks omtrent die Bybel, want enersyds word gestel dat die Bybel die Woord van God is en andersyds is die mens die vryheid veroorloof om dit krities te lees soos enige ander boek (Hofmeyr 2002b:46). Hoewel daar tans die vryheid is om uitsprake

oor sekerhede en onsekerhede te maak, is die reformatoriese motief dat die Woord gesagvol is vir die lewe, steeds vir die voortbestaan (en identiteit) van die kerk van belang. Hierdie besef vind weerklank in die NG Kerk se verklarings tydens die Algemene Sinode van 2004: die Bybel is die Woord van God en het daarom gesag oor die hele lewe; dit is betroubaar omdat God Homself daarin bekend maak; dit is duidelik en voldoende omdat dit alles leer wat die mens hoef te weet om in God te glo en om sy wil te gehoorsaam. Die noodsaaklikheid van verantwoordelike Skrifuitleg word erken asook die relevansie van die Woord vir die hedendaagse uitdagende tye, omdat God steeds sy kerk daardeur in die waarheid sal lei (Handelinge van die Algemene Sinode 2004:434-435). Daarom sê Burger (2005:7): “Mense kan nie oor Christus dink en sê wat hulle wil nie. Wat ons saambind, is die feit dat ons *Christene* is, mense wat glo in die Christus van die Skrifte.”

Gerig op die lewe:

’n Sterk punt in die gereformeerde tradisie is die oortuiging dat God nie die kerk wegvoer uit die wêreld nie, maar juis daarop rig. Die kerk word soms daarvan beskuldig dat dit nie altyd die kompleksiteit van die lewe verstaan nie. Vir Burger (2001:97-98) egter behoort dit een van die gereformeerde tradisie se sterkpunte te wees om op ’n dieptevlak na te dink oor die wêreld en dit te probeer verstaan. Interessant genoeg word daar gesê dat een van die redes waarom gereformeerde kerke tans ’n moeilike tyd beleef, juis daarmee saamhang dat hulle die komplekse wêreld probeer verstaan. Daarom meen Burger sal dit juis gereformeerdes wees wat die kerk van Christus gaan help om in die nuwe era ’n sosiale teorie daar te stel waarmee die kerk kan werk.

Bousteen 8: Verreken die groeiende onderskeid tussen teologie en belydenis:

Diversiteit van teologiese uitsprake is iets wat in die toekoms toenemend sal voorkom (Boshoff 1995:29). Hofmeyr (2002b:46) dui ook aan dat daar gedurende die laaste deel van die 20ste eeu (en sekerlik sedertdien) besliste teologiese aksentverskuiwings in die NG Kerk plaasgevind het. Hierdie verskuiwings hou verband met die teologiese ‘vervanging van paradigmas’ en het vir Kung (1989:4) te doen met die beweging weg van logiese positivisme en kritiese rasionalisme. Dit bring ’n mate van diskontinuiteit en konseptuele verandering van geldende oortuigings mee. Dit is sekerlik om dié rede dat daar by die Algemene Sinode van 1998 die volgende omtrent die teologie en sy verhouding met die kerk se geldende oortuigings gemaak word: “Daar moet duidelik tussen konfessie en teologie onderskei word, sonder om dié twee waterdig van mekaar te skei. ... [A]s sodanig bely die konfessies die gemeenskaplike geloof van die kerk, en nie die (wetenskaplike) mening van hierdie of daardie individuele teoloog nie. In die belydenis van die kerk gaan dit immers om die leer van die evangelie wat God in sy Woord geopenbaar het ... Daarnaas het die beoefening van die teologie, kragtens die wetenskaplike aard daarvan, dikwels met onsekere eksperimente, tastende beredenering en voorlopige resultate te make. Teoloë is altyd mense van hulle tyd met al die beperkinge wat dit vir hulle teologie meebring ... In die belydenisskrifte is ons konfessioneel aan die geloof verbind, nie aan die teologiese wetenskap nie.” (Agenda van Algemene Sinode 1998:62).

Die kerk besef die nodigheid van ’n vaste raamwerk van oortuigings wat die kerk behoort te handhaaf, om sodoende rigting en standvastigheid aan die kerk te besorg in die hedendaagse wêreld van relativisme en pluraliteit wat ook sy merk laat op die akademiese basis van die teologie. ’n Gesprek omtrent die voorveronderstelling van die verskillende strominge in die teologie behoort ook op ’n nie-bedreigende manier gedekonstrueer te kan word. Dit sal die geleentheid bied om die konseptuele verandering en verskuiwings in die teologie beter te begryp en te verreken.

Vir Hofmeyr (2002b:45) staan die identiteit van die NG Kerk ten nouste in verband met die vraag: Wat is die diepste wese en wortels van die kerk? Om getrou aan die wese van die kerk uitdrukking te gee, maak die kerk geloofwaardig. Diepgaande onsekerheid hieroor veroorsaak dat die kerk in die pluralistiese wêreld (ook die pluralistiese godsdiensstige wêreld) met sy veelvoud van alternatiewe, 'n onafgegrensde, plooibare identiteit ontwikkel wat maar net 'n afdruksel word van die wêreld om hom. Dit is dus belangrik vir die NG Kerk om duidelikheid te soek oor sy wese. In hierdie artikel is gepoog om by wyse van die 'boustene' waardes daar te stel wat duidelikheid bring omtrent wat vir die wese van die NG Kerk tans behoort te geld. Die waardes kom uit die geskiedenis van die NG Kerk en die konteks waarin dit bestaan, voort.

Middleton en Walsh (1995:28) wys daarop dat die hedendaagse wêreld besig is om nuwe antwoorde op die volgende vrae te soek en te formuleer: Waar is ons? Wie is ons? Wat is verkeerd? Wat is die oplossing? Toegepas op die NG Kerk kan die agt genoemde 'boustene' of waardes antwoorde bied op die bogenoemde vrae soos dit in die kerklike konteks gestalte kry. Op hierdie wyse kan daar verheldering kom vir die huidige situasie van die NG Kerk.

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“Lewend en kragtig”? Die hermeneutiese dinamika en implikasies van (her)interpretasie in die Ou Testament

ABSTRACT

“Alive and active”? The hermeneutic dynamics and implications of (re) interpretation in the Old Testament

Biblical interpretation remains a contentious matter. Not only are there regularly fierce debates in church circles on how the Bible should be interpreted on issues of dogma and ethics, but even the letter columns of newspapers and chatrooms on the internet are often full of discussions on all aspects of biblical interpretation. These debates cover the whole spectrum of opinions ranging from those who insist on the factual accuracy and credibility of the Bible and who cling to this belief with a passionate conviction as a guide to doctrine and to life, to those who think that the Bible no longer has any value in a scientific age and that it should therefore be rejected as a source which has any authority. In these debates there is not much room for nuance.

The conviction is expressed in this article that a study of how interpretation is undertaken *in* the Bible could open up important perspectives on the difficult questions of the interpretation *of* the Bible in our own time. In addressing the issue of interpretation *in* the Bible this article concentrates on the Old Testament, the field of specialisation in biblical scholarship of the author. The study starts with an overview of the research done in the discipline of Old Testament studies on the phenomenon of inner-biblical interpretation. In a subsequent section the phenomenon of inner-biblical interpretation is illustrated with reference to research on the books of Chronicles. This survey and the illustrations are followed by a section in which the hermeneutic implications of the dynamics of (re)interpretation in the Bible are spelled out for theology and the church. In the conclusion the article returns to the questions posed in the introduction.

1. INLEIDING: INTERPRETASIE /N DIE OU TESTAMENT¹

Bybelinterpretasie bly ’n omstrede saak. Nie net vind daar gereeld hewige debatte in kerklike geleedere plaas oor hoe die Bybel geïnterpreteer moet word oor sake van dogmatiese en etiese belang nie,² maar selfs die briewekolomme van dagblaai³ en gesprekruimtes op die internet⁴ is

1 ’n Verkorte weergawe van hierdie artikel is op 31 Maart 2011 deur die outeur as professorale intrede gelewer.

2 Een prominente voorbeeld wat vanuit NG Kerk-kring genoem kan word, is die debat oor homoseksualiteit, en veral of homoseksuele persone in die amp van predikant mag dien.

3 Dit blyk dat dit veral in Afrikaanse dagblaai is waar die debat telkens weer opvlam en hewig woed.

4 LitNet (<http://www.litnet.co.za>) blyk ’n gewilde ruimte te wees wat deur oorwegend Afrikaanssprekende deelnemers benut word. ’n Indringende debat in hierdie verband wat ’n tyd gelede op LitNet plaasgevind

dikwels gevul met gesprekke oor allerlei aspekte van Bybelinterpretasie.

Hierdie debatte dek 'n spektrum van standpunte wat strek vanaf diegene wat op die feitelike korrektheid en geloofwaardigheid van die Bybel aandring en wat met vurige geloofsoortuigings daaraan wil bly vashou as 'n riglyn vir leer en lewe, tot diegene wat meen dat die Bybel geen waarde meer het in 'n wetenskaplike eeu nie en dat dit daarom verwerp moet word as 'n bron van enige gesag.⁵ Vir nuanse is daar nie veel ruimte in hierdie debatte nie.

Die kernvraag wat in hierdie konteks aan ons opgedwing word – aan Bybelwetenskaplikes, teoloë en ander gelowige Bybelleesers tegelyk – is of 'n mens werklik nog in die taal van 'n Nuwe-Testamentiese skrywer in Hebreërs⁶ 4:12 kan bely: “Die woord van God is lewend en kragtig”⁷ Of is die Bybel dalk maar net 'n klassieke versameling tekste⁸ uit vervloë tye wat soos 'n museumstuk eerbiedig moet word, of klakkeloos in ons godsdienstige rituele en liturgieë, en ons teologieë, herhaal moet word?

Ek wil vir 'n oomblik hierdie vrae oor die interpretasie *van* die Bybel in die lug laat hang, voordat ek aan die einde van my lesing weer daarna sal terugkeer. Ek wil my in die grootste deel van hierdie lesing egter daartoe wend om eerder te praat oor interpretasie *in* die Bybel. My oortuiging is dat 'n studie van hoe interpretasie *in* die Bybel plaasvind, lig kan werp op die moeilike vrae uit ons tyd wat dusver in my inleiding aan die orde gestel is.

In my behandelings van die kwessie van interpretasie *in* die Bybel gaan ek konsentreer op die Ou Testament, my spesialisveld in die Bybelwetenskappe. Ek doen dit met die wete dat die interpretasieprosesse wat reeds in die Ou Testament – oftewel, die Hebreeuse Bybel in die Joodse tradisie – voorkom, ook beïnvloedend en rigtinggewend voortgespoel het in die Nuwe-Testamentiese tradisies van die Christelike kerk.⁹ Die oorname van die Hebreeuse Bybel van die Joodse tradisie as Ou Testament van die Christelike kerk is as sodanig al 'n aanduiding van die kontinuïteit wat in die Christendom tussen hierdie tradisies gesien word. Om enigszins 'n aanduiding te kan gee van die soort navorsing waarin ek spesialiseer, gaan ek egter op die Ou Testament konsentreer.

Ek wil begin deur 'n oorsig te gee oor die navorsing wat in die Ou-Testamentiese dissipline oor die verskynsel van binne-Bybelse uitleg gedoen is. Na hierdie bespreking sal ek die kerninsigte opsom en die gebruikte terminologie definieer. In 'n volgende afdeling sal ek dan hierdie verskynsel van binne-Bybelse interpretasie illustreer aan die hand van my navorsing oor die Kroniekboeke. Vanuit hierdie oorsig en illustrasie sal 'n afdeling volg waarin ek die hermeneutiese implikasies van die dinamika van (her)interpretasie in die Bybel vir teologie en kerk probeer uitspel. Ek sal afsluit met 'n kort afdeling waarin ek sal terugkeer na die vraagstellings oor interpretasie in 'n (post)moderne konteks wat in die inleiding aan die orde gestel is.

het, is selfs ook later in tradisionele boekvorm gepubliseer. Sien MOLLETT et al. (2004).

5 Sien bv. PELSER (2005) as voorbeeld van die eerste pool, en CLAASSEN (2007) as voorbeeld van laasgenoemde. Albei hierdie outeurs neem ook gereeld deel aan die debat in die briewe- en rubriekkolomme van Afrikaanse dagblaie.

6 Kommentatore wys deurgaans op die baie sterk Joodse wortels van die Hebreërboek. Sien bv. JOHNSON (2006:24–25).

7 Hierdie frase in Heb 4:12 volg na 'n gedeelte (3:7–4:11) waarin die Hebreërskrywer 'n paranetiese uitleg van Psalm 95 gee. Eers (3:7–16) word uit hierdie psalm aangedui dat die woestyngenerasie van God se rus uitgesluit is weens hul ongeloof en rebellie. Daarná (4:1–11) word dieselfde psalm herinterpreteer vir die Christengemeenskap om tot die gevolgtrekking te kom dat hulle erfgename van God se belofte van rus is. Vers 12–13 bring dan die paranetiese gedeelte tot 'n einde deur te verklaar dat die “woord van God” lewend (ζῶν) en aktief (ἐνεργής) is. Sien JOHNSON (2006:130–137) se bespreking.

8 Sien bv. Stendahl se 1983-SBL- presidensiële rede, gepubliseer in STENDAHL (1984).

9 Sien as voorbeelde die resente studies deur MOYISE (2001; 2008).

2. OORSIG OOR NAVORSING WAT FOKUS OP BINNE-BYBELSE UITLEG

Hoewel daar ook tekens hiervan in vroeëre studies bemerk kan word (soos aanstons aangetoon sal word), was dit veral Michael Fishbane wat met sy 1985-publikasie *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel*¹⁰ die aandag gefokus het op die verskynsel van binne-Bybelse uitleg. Uit die beskikbare oorsigte oor soortgelyke studies¹¹ blyk dit dat daar veral twee verskillende blikrigtings is waardeur 'n belangstelling in binne-Bybelse uitleg na vore getree het. Eersyds is daar Fishbane en andere wat terugvra na die wortels van dié soort uitlegtradisies wat in die latere Joods-rabbynse omgewings gefloreer het. Fishbane stel die vraagstelling van sy boek soos volg:

[I]t has seemed fundamental to me to investigate the following questions: When did the Jewish exegetical tradition come to be formed? What literary and historical factors contributed to its birth? Is the development of an exegetical tradition in post-biblical Judaism solely the product of internal tensions – or does the Hebrew Bible also reflect the prehistory of those post-biblical phenomena whose content are so new and often ‘unbiblical’?¹²

Fishbane kom tot die gevolgtrekking dat hierdie na-Bybelse uitlegtradisies inderdaad hul wortels in die geskrifte van die Hebreeuse Bybel het, en nie eers 'n vernuwendes tendens onder invloed van die latere Grieks-Romeinse kultuur was nie.¹³ Hy wys dus daarop dat die dinamika van tradisie en interpretasie nie slegs 'n na-Bybelse fenomeen is nie, maar reeds duidelik in die Bybel naspeurbaar is.

Andersyds kan daar ook 'n ander blikrigting onderskei word. In tradisionele histories-kritiese navorsing wat veral in die Duitssprekende akademiese wêreld gedy het (en steeds gedy), het daar algaande in sommige kringe die insig begin ontwikkel dat die groeiprosesse van antieke Bybelse tekste nie blote kompilasies was nie, maar dat daar onderskeibare motiverings was waarvolgens vroeëre tekste hergebruik, aangepas, bevestig en selfs verander is om nuwe tekste tot stand te bring. Aangesien die diakrone belangstelling by die tradisionele histories-kritiese benaderings baie sterk is, word die Bybeltekste noukeurig ondersoek om vas te stel watter lae in 'n teks voorkom en in watter chronologiese verwantskap hierdie lae tot mekaar sou staan. Dis veral in die vertakking van die histories-kritiese benadering, wat redaksiegeskiedenis genoem word, dat die insig al sterker na vore begin tree het dat hierdie verskillende lae nie die blote neerslag van historiese groeiprosesse is nie, maar inderdaad aanduidings is van onder andere diepe teologiese gesprekvoering en beredenering waardeur latere geslagte van hul oorgelewerde tradisies, maar ook van hul kontemporêre kontekste, probeer sin maak het. Hierdie blikrigting verskil dus van die eerste wat ek onderskei het in dié opsig dat die belangstelling in binne-Bybelse uitleg eerder gegroei het vanuit die diakrone onderskeiding van verskillende voorstadia in die Bybeltekste, en nie soseer deur die belangstelling in die latere na-Bybelse uitlegtradisies (soos by Fishbane en andere) nie. Hoewel ons twee verskillende blikrigtings kan onderskei, toon die eindresultaat daarvan merkwaaardige ooreenstemmings.

Ek begin die navorsingsoorsig by die tweede blikrigting, naamlik die groeiende klem op binne-Bybelse uitleg wat veral in Duitssprekende Bybelwetenskap ontwikkel het. Konrad Schmid verbind in sy oorsig oor die navorsingsgeskiedenis¹⁴ die nuwe belangstelling in binne-Bybelse uitleg met die onbehae wat algaande in Duitssprekende kringe ontwikkel het jeens

10 FISHBANE (1985). Sien ook FISHBANE (1992; 1998a; 1998b; 2003; 2004).

11 Sien bv. EDENBURG (2010), REVENTLOW (2009), LEVINSON (2008a), LOADER (2008), BAUTCH (2007), SOMMER (2004), SCHMID (2000), TULL (2000) en MCKENZIE (1999).

12 FISHBANE (1985:2).

13 FISHBANE (1985:525).

14 Sien SCHMID (2000).

die tradisionele *Literarkritik*.¹⁵ Hierdie spesialisemete wat sedert die 19e eeu in die stal van histories-kritiese benaderings tot die Ou Testament ontwikkel het, het veral ten doel om op grond van doeblette, spanninge en breuke wat in die tekste waargeneem kan word, teorieë te ontwikkel oor die historiese gelaagdheid van Bybeltekste. In die klassieke *Literarkritik* word daar dan dikwels onderskei tussen ouer en jonger tekstmateriaal en latere toevoegings tot meer oorspronklike tekste. Die sogenaamde krisis in die *Literarkritik*, soos Schmid dit noem,¹⁶ ontwikkel egter vanweë veral twee redes. Eersyds het daar in die tweede helfte van die 19e en die eerste helfte van die 20ste eeu soveel verskillende onderskeidings ontwikkel tussen wat as ouer en jonger tekstmateriaal sou geld dat eenstemmigheid oor die gelaagdheid van die tekste nie daaruit ontwikkel het nie. Andersyds is die belangstelling van die klassieke *Literarkritik* hoofsaaklik literêr van aard. Dit wil sê, die *Literarkritik* het sy taak voltooi wanneer 'n onderskeid tussen ouer en jonger materiaal in 'n bepaalde teks gemaak is. Daar word nie ook nog verder gevra na die motiverings vir die groeiprosesse in die tekste nie. Volgens Schmid het hierdie onbehae algaande daartoe gelei dat die analities-*literarkritiese* onderskeidings aangevul is met sinteties-redaksiehistoriese teorieë. Daar word dus nie meer net onderskei tussen verskillende lae in tekste nie, daar word ook gevra na die (teologiese) motiverings wat gegeld het in die redaksieprosesse wat hierdie lae uiteindelik tot een teks saamgewerk het. Dit is in hierdie konteks dat binne-Bybelse uitleg 'n nodige aanvulling tot die tradisionele *Literarkritik* kon bring.

Dit is egter belangrik om daarop te wys dat hierdie motiverings nie eers in werking getree het toe skriftelike materiaal saamgewerk en geredigeer is nie. Dit word algemeen aanvaar dat 'n fase van mondelinge oorlewering ten grondslag lê van die meeste skriftelike materiaal in die Ou Testament.¹⁷ Schmid wys daarop dat die kategorie van "uitleg/interpretasie" juis ook nuwe insigte geopen het om te begryp waarom sekere mondelings oorgelewerde tradisies algaande op skrif gestel is. In 'n prominente vertakking van die histories-kritiese eksegesis, naamlik die sogenaamde Tradisiekritiek, was dit veral Gerhard von Rad wat beklemtoon het dat daar in Ou Israel bepaalde mondelinge tradisiekomplekse ontwikkel het aangaande sekere kernbelydenisse wat in die geloofsgemeenskappe geleef het.¹⁸ Schmid beklemtoon dat daar dus ook algaande belangstelling ontwikkel het om hierdie oorgang tussen mondelinge tradisiekomplekse en skriftelike tekste nie net te sien as 'n meganiese ver-skrif-ting nie, maar dat daarin reeds teologiese uitlegoortuigings geïdentifiseer kan word.¹⁹

Schmid identifiseer vervolgens in sy oorsig vier nuwe insigte wat na vore begin kom het met die belangstelling in binne-Bybelse uitleg wat oor die afgelope dekade of drie ontwikkel het:²⁰ eerstens, die metodologiese beklemtoning dat die binne-Bybelse resepsiegeskiedenis ter aanvulling van *literarkritiese* onderskeidings moet dien; tweedens, die herwaardering van sekondêre gedeeltes in die Ou Testament wat in vroeëre studies teologies tot blote 'byvoegings' gedegradeer is; dertens, die insig dat tekste wat normaalweg redelik laat in die Persiese of Hellenistiese tydperke dateer word, ook tradisies en teologiese onderskeidings uit

15 Ek gebruik die Duitse term deurgaans om hierdie vertakking van die histories-kritiese eksegesis te onderskei van "literary criticism" (literêre kritiek), wat op die sinkrone gestalte van tekste fokus.

16 SCHMID (2000:1).

17 Sien bv. die werk van CARR (2005) en VAN DER TOORN (2007).

18 Sien FISHBANE (2004), waarin hy 'n aanduiding gee van die ooreenkomste en verskille tussen Von Rad se benadering en sy eie.

19 SCHMID (2000:18) dui aan dat die werk van Jörg Jeremias oor die profeteboeke ook hierdie aspek beklemtoon: "[D]arüber hinaus haben vor allem die Arbeiten von Jeremias deutlich gemacht, wie sehr der Prozess der Erstverschriftung bereits selbst Auslegungscharakter hat. Innerbiblische Schriftauslegung beginnt also nicht erst bei der redaktionellen Fortschreibung einer Grundschrift, sondern – bei Texten mit mündlichen Vorstufen – bereits beim Vorgang der Erstverschriftung".

20 SCHMID (2000:3).

vroeëre tydperke in hulself saamdra; en vierdens, dat die groei van die Ou Testament uit 'n redaksiehistoriese perspektief 'n sintese tussen die deeldisiplines geskiedenis, inleiding en teologie van die Ou Testament bewerkstellig.

Met hierdie klem, soos opgesom deur Schmid, het die aandag in die eksegetiese algaande begin wegskuif van 'oorspronklike outeurs' na die rol van 'redaktors', van *literarkritiese* onderskeidings na redaksiehistoriese perspektiewe. Reventlow som hierdie verskuiving soos volg op:

In the course of the investigation of Old Testament texts, scholars have increasingly recognized that these do not represent a single stage of development but rather have behind them a lengthy history of evolution. The recognition and explication of this evolution has been the task of redaction history. This method's essential argument has been that the present form of Old Testament books is due to the activity of editors. While their work was carried out anonymously, meaning that their names are not known, traces of their activity can be demonstrated in many places in Old Testament writings.²¹

Wanneer Schmid dan in 'n onlangse publikasie self poog om die literêre geskiedenis van die Ou Testament te beskryf, spits hy hierdie ontwikkeling nog verder toe deur sy uitgangspunt in "Redaktion als innerbiblische Rezeption" (redaksie as binne-Bybelse resepsie) te neem. Hy stel dit soos volg:

Die Redaktion der biblischen Bücher ist kein sachlich unkontrollierter Prozess der Textvermehrung, sondern in aller Regel ein textlich produktiver Vorgang innerbiblischer *Rezeption und Auslegung* vorgegebenen Textguts. In den Schriften des Alten Testaments sind in der Regel Text und Kommentar vereint, erst nach dem Abschluss des Kanons tritt die Auslegung neben den Text. Redaktionsgeschichte ist als innerbiblische Rezeptionsgeschichte beschreibbar, deren Rekonstruktion die innerbiblischen theologischen Diskurslagen in ihren historischen Differenzierungen wieder zum Vorschein bringen kann.²²

Om dus hierdie blikrigting op te som: Vanuit die onderskeiding van voorstadia in die ontstaan van Bybeltekste groei die insig algaande dat hierdie groeiprosesse as sodanig reeds die neerslag van interpretasie- en uitlegprosesse in nuwe kontekste.

Dit bring ons dan nou by 'n oorsig oor navorsing oor binne-Bybelse uitleg wat vanuit 'n belangstelling in die na-Joodse tradisies gemotiveer is.²³ Michael Fishbane neem sy vertrekpunt in die moderne tradisie-historiese benadering, wat veral gefokus het op die aktiewe verband tussen die verskillende tradisies in Ou Israel en hul oorlewering in verdere kontekste.²⁴ Fishbane beskryf hierdie benadering soos volg:

Fully appreciative of the long prehistory of many of the themes, legends, and teachings now found in Scripture, and the fact that over time these deposits of tradition were adapted to new situations and combined in new ways, the practitioners of this approach ideally seek to discern the components of a tradition-complex, to trace their origins or attribution to certain locales, and to show the profoundly new meanings which result as these materials were integrated into more comprehensive units. ... The integration and reworking of many types of tradition at many different times and places ... had the result of incorporating non-Israelite and local Israelite materials into a national corpus whose telling and retelling was a new basis for cultural memory.²⁵

Om onderskeid te tref tussen die inhoud van oorgelewerde tradisies en die prosesse van verdere

21 REVENTLOW (2009:5).

22 SCHMID (2008:57).

23 'n Onlangse publikasie van Bernard Levinson ('n student van Fishbane) bevat 'n baie volledige bibliografiese essay oor binne-Bybelse eksegetiese in die navorsingsgeskiedenis. Sien LEVINSON (2008a:95–181).

24 Sien weer FISHBANE (2004), waarin die outeur met die werk van Gerhard von Rad in gesprek tree.

25 FISHBANE (1985:6–7).

oorlewering, gebruik Fishbane die terminologie *traditum* en *traditio*.²⁶ Met *traditum* verwys hy na “(increasingly) authoritative teachings and traditions whose religious-cultural significance [was] vital and increasingly fundamental”, terwyl *traditio* verwys na “the concern to preserve, render contemporary, or otherwise reinterpret these teachings or traditions in explicit ways for new times and circumstances”.²⁷ Hoewel hierdie onderskeid fundamenteel is in Fishbane se vroeë werk, gee hy daár al toe dat dit ’n uiters moeisame taak sou wees om in konkrete tekste onderskeid te probeer tref tussen *traditum*, dit wil sê oorgelewerde gesaghebbende tradisie, en *traditio*, as die herinterpretasies van daardie oorgelewerde tradisie.²⁸ Trouens, in ’n latere publikasie gee Fishbane toe dat hierdie onderskeid moontlik kunsmatig is. Hy dui aan: “[T]he Bible is only tradition [dus *traditio* – oorgelewerde tradisie] in form and content. ... As we now have them, we have tradition producing tradition through the mediation of a silent redaction”.²⁹

In sy 1985-werk onderskei Fishbane tussen vier verskillende soorte binne-Bybelse eksegetiese strategieë. Hy motiveer dit soos volg: “[T]he relationships between *traditum* and *traditio* have produced a manifold of literary and historical types in the Hebrew Bible, and their analysis discloses the distinctive exegetical forms and features of ancient Israelite literature and culture”.³⁰ Die eerste soort wat hy onderskei, is “scribal comments and corrections”. In hierdie kategorie gaan dit oor veranderings van kleiner omvang wat in latere kontekste deur oorskrywers (“scribes”) aangebring is. Hierdie kleiner veranderings is ter wille van inhoudelike opklaring gemaak, maar ook om teologiese of juridiese eenvormigheid tussen tekste te bewerkstellig. Hierdie veranderings sluit die volgende soorte in: opskrifte, titels, generiese aanduidings, afsluitings, glosse, en dies meer. Die tweede soort, naamlik “legal exegesis”, het te make met die (veral) na-eksiliese pogings om oor die oorgelewerde Sinaï-tradisies te reflekteer, dit te interpreteer en selfs uit te brei en aan te vul met die oog op die nuwe sosio-politieke omstandighede na die ballingskap. Die derde soort, “aggadic exegesis”, wil nie bloot (soos die tweede kategorie van “legal exegesis”) die gapings in die *traditum* – soos dit ervaar word in ’n veranderde konteks – vul nie, maar wil juis hierdie oorgelewerde tradisies toepas en toeëien ter wille van teologiese en historiese verstaan in ’n nuwe tydsgewrig.³¹ Dit is veral in die profetiese literatuur dat Fishbane “aggadic exegesis” identifiseer. Fishbane se laaste soort is “mantological exegesis”. Hier gaan dit veral oor die invoeging van droom- en visioenberigte, omens en orakels

26 Fishbane gee krediet aan Douglas KNIGHT (1975), wat hierdie terme in sy tradisie-historiese benadering voorgestel het. FISHBANE (1985:6, vn. 17) dui egter die volgende belangrike onderskeid aan: “Knight has used it primarily with respect to oral materials ... In the following I shall adapt these terms, with necessary modifications, to written sources”. Fishbane verduidelik die onderskeid tussen tradisiegeskiedenis en binne-Bybelse eksegeese verder: “The dynamic we have just reviewed between *traditum* and *traditio*, characteristic as it is of traditions in ancient Israel, is also present in inner-biblical exegesis, but with one significant shift: whereas the study of tradition-history moves back from the written sources to the oral traditions which make them up, inner-biblical exegesis starts with the received Scripture and moves forward to the interpretations based on it” (FISHBANE, 1985:7).

27 FISHBANE (1985:8).

28 Dit is juis hierdie punt wat een van die vernaamste kritiekpunte van Lyle Eslinger op Fishbane se voorstel is. Sien ESLINGER (1992) asook SOMMER (1996) se reaksie op Eslinger se kritiek.

29 FISHBANE (1998b:18).

30 FISHBANE (1985:13).

31 Fishbane is bewus daarvan dat “legal exegesis” en “aggadic exegesis” met mekaar verwar kan word. Hy verduidelik die verskille breedvoerig in die inleiding tot sy derde afdeling, en som dit dan daarna soos volg op: “Legal exegesis and aggadic exegesis thus illumine different facets of a text’s inherent possibilities: the one, legal exegesis, shows how a particular law can be clarified and reinterpreted *qua* law; while the other, aggadic exegesis, characteristically shows how a particular law (or *topos*, or *theologoumenon*) can transcend its original focus, and become the basis of a new configuration of meaning” (FISHBANE, 1985:283).

ten einde die vertraging in die vervulling van profetiese uitsprake te probeer verduidelik.

Aan die einde van sy studie kom Fishbane dan tot die volgende gevolgtrekking:

[T]he texts and traditions, the received *traditum* of ancient Israel, were not simply copied, studied, transmitted, or recited. They were also, and by these means, subject to redaction, elucidation, reformulation, and outright transformation. Accordingly, our received traditions are complex blends of *traditum* and *traditio* in dynamic interaction, dynamic interpenetration, and dynamic interdependence. They are, in sum, the exegetical voices of many teachers and tradents, from different circles and times, responding to real and theoretical considerations as perceived and as anticipated.³²

Fishbane se werk oefen steeds uitgebreide invloed uit in Ou-Testamentiese eksegese en Joodse studies,³³ maar vind selfs ook neerslag in sekere benaderings tot die Nuwe-Testamentiese gebruik van die Ou Testament.³⁴ Soos hierbo genoem, is daar egter ook kritiek op Fishbane se benadering uitgespreek. Lyle Eslinger beweer, byvoorbeeld, dat Fishbane se diakrone benadering (d.w.s. dat 'n tydsvloer veronderstel word tussen ouer en jonger tekstmateriaal) in wese verdag is, omdat dit sterk op sekere historiese aannames berus. Eslinger stel dus voor dat binne-Bybelse eksegese eerder vervang moet word met 'n meer sinkrone benadering wat as sodanig oriënteer aan, wat hy noem, "inner-biblical allusion". Hy stel dit soos volg:

An alternative study, one that avoids these difficulties, is to study i.b.e. [inner-biblical exegesis] as i.b.a. [inner-biblical allusion]: as allusions and as biblical intertextuality. In the case of the former there should be some literary reason to assume a vector of dependence; in the latter, there is none and we must come at the semantics of the relationship from both ends (texts).³⁵

Benjamin Sommer, in sy reaksie op Eslinger, vind egter die onderskeid wat Eslinger maak tussen "allusion" en "intertextuality" onbevredigend. Sommer reageer soos volg:

The terms allusion and intertextuality are not entirely compatible. 'Allusion', as used by literary critics, does posit an earlier and a later text, so that the study of allusion necessarily involves a diachronic component. 'Intertextuality', as most literary critics use the term, focuses on manifold linkages among texts or on connections in which the text exists. These connections do not arise exclusively from an intentional and signalled use of an earlier text, such as citation (which might be studied under the rubric of influence and allusion). Rather, they also result from the way a text reflects its linguistic, aesthetic, or ideological contexts; other texts may share those contexts, and hence readers may notice links among many texts, whether the authors of the texts knew each other or not. Thus an intertextual approach differs markedly from approaches concerned with 'influence' and 'allusion'. Intertextuality is concerned with the reader or with the text as a thing independent of its author, while an approach oriented towards allusion is concerned with the author as well as the text and reader; the study of intertextuality is synchronic, the analysis of allusion diachronic or even historicist; intertextuality is interested in a wide range of correspondences among texts, allusion with a more narrow set; intertextuality examines the relations among many texts, while allusions represent specific connections between a limited number of texts.³⁶

Sommer gee aan Eslinger toe dat meer aandag gegee moet word aan die sinkrone intertekstuele verbande in Bybeltekste. Hy hou egter vol dat 'n benadering wat gefokus is op binne-Bybelse verwysing en eksegese ("inner-biblical allusion and exegesis") – soos dié van Fishbane –

32 FISHBANE (1985:543).

33 Sien bv. die werk van LEVINSON (2008a; 2008b).

34 Sien bv. KLOUDA (2004).

35 ESLINGER (1992:56).

36 SOMMER (1996:486–487).

eweneens nodig is. Hy gee toe dat 'n mens nie kan ontkom aan die voorlopigheid van teorieë oor die relatiewe ouderdom van tekste en tekslae nie, maar dat dit nie impliseer dat 'n diakrone benadering by voorbaat faal nie. Hy som dit soos volg op:

To be sure, the need to perform historical analysis may place the critic in a precarious situation ... However, the proper response to such difficulties is not a flight to the synchronic ... Developing criteria to decide what parallels can be termed allusions, citations, or the result of influence is the project of the study of inner-biblical allusion and exegesis – a project I think possible, and whose methods need to be refined ...³⁷

Hierdie debat tussen Eslinger en Sommer beklemtoon twee belangrike punte. Eerstens, wanneer Bybeltekste vanuit 'n binne-Bybelse perspektief beskou word, veronderstel dit noodwendig 'n diakrone benadering. Dat daar enigsins sprake is van herinterpretasie in veranderde kontekste noodsaak inagnome van die historiese dimensie van die tekste. Al sou dit nie beteken dat daar tot spesifieke daterings van tekste en tekslae gekom word nie, moet daar minstens rekening gehou word met die breër verloop van die *Literaturwerdung*, oftewel die groeiprosesse in literatuur oor tyd heen. Hierdie groeiprosesse het egter nie eenduidig vanaf ouer na jonger materiaal verloop nie. Ouer materiaal kon ook weer in die lig van jonger materiaal aangepas en hersien word.

Tweedens beklemtoon hierdie debat ook dat terminologie dikwels vaag en onnoukeurig gebruik word. In die konteks van besprekings oor binne-Bybelse eksegeese word noodwendig ook gebruik gemaak van verwante terminologie soos intertekstualiteit en verwysing (oftewel “allusion”). Die onderskeid dat intertekstualiteit vanuit die teks en leser gemotiveer word, terwyl binne-Bybelse uitleg en verwysing vanuit die outeur en teks gemotiveer word, lyk vir my nuttig.³⁸ Dit beklemtoon dat daar een of ander vorm van intensionaliteit³⁹ ter sprake is wat verband hou met die hertoe-eiening van oorgelewerde tradisies in nuwe, veranderde kontekste. Of die aansluiting by vroeëre tradisies eksplisiet gemaak word deur middel van verwysing (“allusion”), en of dit eerder meer implisiet gebeur deur die heropname, aansluiting, aanpassing of verandering van oorgelewerde tradisies (binne-Bybelse eksegeese), lei tot 'n meer akkurate onderskeiding van terminologie.

Voordat ek 'n samevatting van hierdie afdeling aanbied, is dit ook interessant om daarop te wys dat studies oor binne-Bybelse uitleg (in albei kringe wat hierbo behandel is) meestal om drie Ou-Testamentiese tekskorpora draai:

37 SOMMER (1996:489).

38 “Intertekstualiteit” word soms ook as 'n sambreelterm gebruik om na alle vorme van die interafhanklikheid van tekste te verwys, met inbegrip van ‘verwysing’ en ‘binne-Bybelse eksegeese’. Hoewel insigte met betrekking tot intertekstualiteit hoofsaaklik met die algemene literêre wetenskappe (en die werk van Kristeva en Bakhtin in die besonder) geassosieer word, is daar heelwat studies wat hierdie terminologie en insigte vir die Bybelwetenskappe diensbaar wil maak. Een van hierdie studies, dié van TULL (2000:59) gee eksEMPLARYS toe dat die gebruik van terminologie dikwels 'n mynveld is: “The concept of ‘intertextuality’, as the name implies, concerns interrelationships among texts. Thus far do theorists and practitioners concur, both in the area of biblical studies and in the wider world of literary theory. From this point on, however, the concept of intertextuality represents a battleground of differing emphases and claims, both linguistic and ideological.” Sien ook die volgende studies: EDENBURG (2010), LOADER (2008), BAUTCH (2007), SCHMID (2000), MCKENZIE (1999) en O'DAY (1999).

39 Hoewel ek deeglik bewus is van die sogenaamde “intentional fallacy” wat deur die New Criticism in histories-literêre interpretasie uitgewys is, is ek van mening dat ons nie sou kon ontsnap van die oorweging van die kategorie van intensionaliteit nie. Ek verstaan intensionaliteit egter nie as 'n individualistiese, psigologiese ingesteldheid van 'n outeur of outeurs nie, maar eerder as die kreatiewe wisselwerking tussen die resepsie en produksie van tekste in konkrete sosio-historiese omstandighede.

- die herinterpretasie van die wetteversamelings van die Ou Testament,⁴⁰
- van verskillende tradisies in die profetiese korpus,⁴¹ asook
- die hersiening van die geskiedenis wat in die sogenaamde historiese boeke van die Ou Testament plaasvind⁴² (waaronder die herinterpretasie van Samuel-Konings deur Kronieke 'n baie prominente voorbeeld is).

Ter afsluiting van hierdie afdeling wil ek eers die vernaamste insigte wat vanuit die navorsingsoorsig geblyk het, opsom. Ek doen dit in ses punte:

(i) Omdat die ontstaansgeskiedenis van die Ou Testament oor verskeie eeue strek, kan aanvaar word dat veranderde kontekste die herbesoek van ouer, gesaghebbende tradisies sou meebring.

(ii) Resepsie van Bybeltekste begin nie eers nadat alle geskrifte voltooi is en ná kanonwording nie. Die resepsie van ouer tradisies vind reeds plaas tydens skrifwording, en die produksie van nuwe tekste was meestal die gevolg van die resepsie van ouer tradisies. Die outeurs en redaktors was dus in die eerste plek lesers.

(iii) Om enigsins hierdie insigte te kan verreken, is dit nodig om 'n diakrone perspektief in ons ondersoek van Bybeltekste in te sluit.⁴³

(iv) Die eindproduk van hierdie groeiprosesse, naamlik die kanoniese gestalte waarin die tekste aan latere geloofsgemeenskappe oorgelewer word, doof nie die veelstemmigheid van die geïnkorporeerde herinterpretasieprosesse uit nie. Dit is juis 'n verdere ontwikkeling van hierdie binne-Bybelse prosesse.

(v) Die hermeneutiese dinamika wat die Ou Testament tot stand gebring het, skep terselfdertyd die moontlikheid om in telkens nuwe omstandighede en kontekste opnuut met hierdie tekste in wisselwerking te tree. Sommer stel dit soos volg: "Biblical authors bequeathed their successors not only a text, but ways of relating to that text, reacting to that text, recreating that text, and allowing that text to remain alive".⁴⁴

(vi) Binne-Bybelse uitleg het veral te make met daardie aanduidings wat in histories-gelaagde tekste gevind kan word van prosesse van herinterpretasie van oorgelewerde tradisies in nuwe en veranderde kontekste. Terwyl daar ook ander redes kan wees waarom daar veranderings in oorgelewerde tradisiemateriaal kan voorkom, het binne-Bybelse uitleg veral te make met daardie soort veranderings wat op groter skaal (en dus nie net in kleiner veranderings op woordvlak) aan oorgelewerde tradisies aangebring word om daarmee die ouer tradisies anders en relevant te dui vir die kontemporêre konteks van die leser.

In 'n volgende afdeling sal ek terugkeer na hierdie opsommende waarnemings. Ek wil egter nou eers hierdie insigte met 'n aantal voorbeelde uit my Kronieke-navorsing illustreer.

3. VOORBEELDE UIT DIE KRONIEKBOEKE

Uitleggers van die Kroniekboeke is in die uiters gelukkige posisie om toegang te hê tot die belangrikste *Vorlagen* van die boek (d.w.s. die tekste wat gebruik is in die totstandkoming van die boek). Die Kroniekskrywers, wat ons vir die moment as priesterlike literati uit die laat Persiese tydperk in die Jerusalem tempel identifiseer,⁴⁵ het hoofsaaklik gebruik gemaak van geskrifte wat ook in die Ou-Testamentiese kanon opgeneem is, naamlik Samuel en Konings, maar ook Genesis

40 Sien as voorbeelde OTTO (1999; 2007) en LEVINSON (2008a; 2008b).

41 Sien as voorbeelde STECK (1996; 2001), JEREMIAS (1996) en DEIST (1989).

42 Sien as voorbeelde WILLI (1972) en KRATZ (1995).

43 Sien veral weer LOADER (2008) se pleidooi in hierdie verband.

44 SOMMER (2004:1829).

45 Sien bv. die bespreking van KLEIN (2006:13–17).

en ander Pentateugmateriaal. Wanneer ons dus probeer vasstel hoe die Kroniekskrywers met hul brontekste omgegaan het, kan ons dit doen deur noukeurige vergelykings tussen die brontekste en Kronieke te maak, oftewel 'n sinopsis daarvan. Dit is dus nie vreemd dat Kronieke as 'n klassieke voorbeeld gebruik word om binne-Bybelse uitleg te illustreer nie.

In die navorsingsgeskiedenis van Kronieke is die boek aanvanklik redelik stief behandel.⁴⁶ Onder invloed van die groot belangstelling in geskiedenis (as feitelike verslag van gebeurtenisse van die verlede) soos dit aan die einde van die 19e eeu gedefinieer is, het die boek algaande wel meer aandag begin kry om te probeer vasstel watter weergawe van die geskiedenis van Ou Israel die betroubaarste sou wees.⁴⁷ Sedert die tweede helfte van die vorige eeu het daar egter 'n duidelik kentering in Kronieke-studies begin kom. Bybelwetenskaplikes het begin toegee dat albei historiografieë in die Ou Testament sogenaamde tendensieuse geskiedskrywing is, dit wil sê, geskiedenis wat met 'n bepaalde bedoeling en met sekere ideologiese voorveronderstellings weergegee word.⁴⁸ Dit sou impliseer dat hierdie historiografieë elkeen in eie reg en in die raamwerk van hul eie voorveronderstellings ondersoek moet word. Hierdie verskuiwing het meegebring dat daar deesdae heelwat meer klem op die eiesoortige retoriese en teologiese van Kronieke val, maar ook op die eiesoortige sosio-politiese konteks waarin dit tot stand gekom het.

Bybelwetenskaplikes het vroeg reeds die Kroniekboeke met latere Joodse *Midrash*-uitleg in verband gebring. Reeds die 19e-eeuse geleerde Julius Wellhausen het daarop gewys dat Kronieke die enigste boek van die Hebreeuse Bybel is waar die Hebreeuse woord *midrash* voorkom (in 2 Kron 13:22; 24:27). Die werkwoord waarvan die woord afgelei is, *darash* ("soek"), word ook baie prominent in die boek gebruik. "Om die Here te soek" is een van die duidelike teologiese lyne in die boek. Met die karakterisering van die boek as *Midrash* is reeds te kenne gegee dat Kronieke een of ander soort uitleg wou gee van die ouer geskiedenis-tradisie, soos vervat in die Deuteronomistiese geskiedenis.

Dit was egter in die 1970's dat die aandag duidelik begin verskuif het na die perspektief dat Kronieke 'uitleg' is. Die gepubliseerde proefskrif van Thomas Willi wat die hooftitel *Die Chronik als Auslegung* ("Kronieke as uitleg") dra, ondersoek die boek vanuit die perspektief dat die Kroniekskrywers interpreterend met hul historiese bronne omgegaan het, en hierdie interpretasie ten diens van hul konteks in Jerusalem in die laat Persiese tydperk wou doen.⁴⁹

In my eie bestudering van Kronieke vind ek sterk aansluiting by twee leidende eksegete, naamlik Sara Japhet en Gary Knoppers, wanneer ek die boek as "Reforming History" beskryf.⁵⁰ Die gebruik van hierdie beskrywing is doelbewus dubbelsinnig. Enersyds dui dit aan dat die Kroniekskrywers die oorgelewerde historiografiese tradisies wou hervorm ("reform") vanuit die insigte van hul nuwe, veranderde konteks. Hul beskrywing staan in kontinuïteit met die oorgelewerde tradisies, maar toon ook duidelike diskontinuïteite wanneer hulle die moed neem om die verlede effens anders te konstrueer as hul voorgangers. Andersyds beteken die frase "Reforming History" ook dat dit 'n soort geskiedskrywing is wat 'n verandering van denke (en teologiese beoordeling) oor die hede van die laat Persiese tydperk, maar ook oor die toekoms, wou teweegbring. Kronieke staan dus as't ware tussen die tye – tussen die verlede toe die Dawidiese monargie en Sionsteologie nog voor die ballingskap in takt was, en die hede waarin Jerusalem 'n onbeduidende hoofstadjie van 'n Persiese provinsie was. Die boek help die laat ná-ballingskapse geloofsgemeenskap in Jerusalem om opnuut na te dink oor hul identiteit

46 Sien die oorsigte van WILLI (2002) en DUKE (2009).

47 Sien JAPHET (1985).

48 Sien besprekings in die vernaamste kommentare: KLEIN (2006), DIRKSEN (2005), KNOPPERS (2003; 2004); MCKENZIE (2004) en JAPHET (1993).

49 WILLI (1972).

50 Sien veral JONKER (2007b).

as Godsvolk in totaal veranderde sosio-politieke, sosio-ekonomiese en sosio-godsdienstige omstandighede. En hierdie nadenke word in kontinuïteit en diskontinuïteit met hul oorgelewerde tradisies gedoen.⁵¹

Hoe help hierdie beskouing van Kronieke nou om die boek te lees? Ek wil dit graag probeer illustreer deur twee voorbeelde van koningsgeskiedenis te behandel: die beste en die slegste konings! Uitleggers van die Deuteronomistiese geskiedenis is dit eens dat die outeurs van daardie historiografie koning Manasse as die laagtepunt van die Dawidiese koningskap wou voorstel, terwyl koning Josia as die klimaks geïdealiseer word.⁵² Manasse was volgens 2 Konings 21 'n koning “wat net sleg gedoen het in die oë van die Here”, en daar word gesuggereer deur die ballingskapse skrywers van die boek dat hy eintlik die grootste skuld moet dra vir die feit dat die Koninkryk van Juda deur die Babiloniërs vernietig is en in ballingskap weggevoer is. Josia, daarenteen, word in 2 Konings 22–23 voorgestel as die groot hervormer wat die tempel in Jerusalem laat restoureer het, en wat allerhande godsdienstige hervormingsmaatreëls ingestel het nadat die sogenaamde wetboek van die Here tydens die tempelrestourasie ontdek is. Hy word as die ideale koning voorgestel waarop die ballinge moet hoop vir herstel.

Hoe behandel die Kroniekskrywers hierdie twee konings? Ons begin met die beskrywing van die ‘slegte’ koning Manasse.

In 2 Kronieke 33:1–20 word die verhaal van koning Manasse vertel. Die Kroniekskrywers het gebruik gemaak van die vroeëre tradisie oor hierdie koning soos ons dit in 2 Konings 21:1–18 opgeteken vind. Betekenisvolle verskille kan tussen die twee weergawes bemerk word. Ek lys enkele van die grootste verskille:

Die Kroniekskrywers laat vers 11 tot 16 van 2 Konings 21 uit in hul weergawe. In daardie verse word Manasse geblameer vir al die godsdienstige afvalligheid wat in Jerusalem plaasgevind het en word dit baie duidelik gemaak dat die komende ballingskapoordeel oor Jerusalem – wat soortgelyk sal wees aan wat Samaria getref het – hoofsaaklik Manasse se skuld is.

In die plek van die gedeelte wat uit die Koningsteks uitgelaat is, voeg die Kroniekskrywers egter hul eie materiaal in 2 Kronieke 33:11–17 in. In hierdie gedeelte word vertel hoe Manasse deur die Assiriërs in ballingskap geneem is, en dat hy daartydens hom voor die Here verootmoedig het deur tot Hom te bid, met die gevolg dat die Here hom vergewe en herstel het (v 11–13). Daarna gaan die gedeelte voort om aan te dui dat Manasse, toe hy na Jerusalem teruggekeer het, allerhande bouprojekte en godsdienstige hervormingsmaatreëls ingestel het (v 14–16). Die ingevoegde gedeelte eindig met 'n aanduiding dat die volk steeds op sekere hoogtes geoffeer het, maar net aan die Here hul God.

In 2 Kronieke 33:18 hervat die Kroniekskrywers weer die teks van 2 Konings 21:17, maar bring kleiner veranderings aan om aan te pas by die vermelding van Manasse se gebed (wat nie deur die Koningskrywers gerapporteer word nie). Die Kroniekskrywers brei in 2 Kronieke 33:19 verder uit om die gebed te beklemtoon.

Waarom hierdie verskille? Sommige uitleggers meen dat die Kroniekskrywers ongemaklik daarmee gevoel het dat Manasse eensydig aangedui word as die koning wat die langste oor Juda geregeer het (55 jaar – sien v 1), maar andersyds deur die Koningskrywers as die epitoom

51 Sien ook die volgende studies waarin ek die kwessie van identiteitsvorming in veranderde omstandighede prominent behandel: JONKER (2002; 2003a; 2003b; 2006; 2007a; 2008a; 2008b; 2008c; 2008d; 2009a; 2009b; 2010a; 2010b).

52 Sien bv. die bespreking in RÖMER (2007:158–163). Römer merk ten opsigte van Manasse op: “Manasseh belongs to the Deuteronomistic top list of the worst kings. Although he reigned for about 55 years, the Deuteronomists are only interested in his cultic counter reform, which annihilate (*sic*) the measures of Hezekiah” (2007:159).

van boosheid voorgestel word.⁵³ Die positiewer beeld van Kronieke sou dan ten doel hê om die relatiewe lang regering van Manasse te verduidelik. Ander studies sien egter heelwat meer in hierdie veranderings, weglatings en byvoegings.⁵⁴ Ons is bewus van ’n hele aantal buite-Bybelse geskrifte wat ook melding maak van Manasse.⁵⁵ In twee Assiriese koningsrekords (Prisma A en B, onderskeidelik) word Manasse as ’n lojale vasaal voorgestel. In ’n aantal Joodse Pseudepigrafie uit die tweede Tempeltydperk word verwys na Manasse, onder andere ook in ’n geskrif getitel “Die gebed van Manasse”, waarin die woorde van die gebed weergegee word. Nog ’n “gebed van Manasse” word weergegee in ’n fragment van ’n manuskrip wat tussen die Dooie See-rolle gevind is (4Q381 33).⁵⁶ Daar bestaan eenstemmigheid dat die Joodse Pseudepigrafie met Manasse se gebed (wat in Grieks geskryf is) beslis baie later as die Kroniekboeke sy ontstaan gehad het, en moontlik selfs deur die Kronieketekes oor Manasse geïnspireer sou wees. Hoewel daar nie eenstemmigheid is of hierdie teks ’n laat-Joodse of vroeg-Christelike oorsprong gehad het nie, meen uitleggers dat dit ’n poging was om te illustreer hoe God se vergifnis in die ou bedeling gefunksioneer het. Die Qumran-fragment bied egter ’n interessante beskouing van Kronieke, deurdat sommige uitleggers aanvaar dat dit ’n afskrif was van ’n teks wat heelwat ouer sou gewees het – selfs ouer as Kronieke. Die moontlikheid bestaan dan dat hierdie ouer teks aan die Kroniekskrywers bekend sou gewees het, naas die weergawe van Manasse se regering soos ons dit in 2 Konings 21 vind. Die vraag bly dan steeds waarom die Kroniekskrywers hierdie gebed in hul teks sou insluit. ’n Redelik neutrale antwoord hierop sou wees dat hulle bloot hul teks wou bywerk met inligting wat dalk nie tot die vroeëre skrywers se beskikking was nie. Ons sou egter ook ’n mening kon waag wat juis illustreer dat die Kroniekskrywers ’n herinterpretasie van hul oorgelewerde tradisies maak. Die veranderings aan die Manasse-verhaal is nie die enigste van hierdie soort in die Kroniekboeke nie. Sommige ander konings (bv. Asa) wat positief deur die Koningskrywers beoordeel word, kry in Kronieke weer sekere negatiewe kenmerke.⁵⁷ Die teenoorgestelde gebeur met Manasse wat vanaf die epitoom van afvalligheid en die een wat blameer moet word vir die ballingskap verander word in ’n boetvaardige koning wat vergifnis van die Here ontvang. As een stadium in die proses van ontwikkeling van die historiese tradisies van Ou Israel bemoei die Kronieketekes hom met sy eie tyd, terwyl dit tegelykertyd in wisselwerking tree met die beskikbare historiese tradisies wat kontinuïteit met die verlede verskaf. Die Koningsverhale word dus gebruik om ’n bepaalde boodskap in die kontemporêre sosio-historiese en sosio-religieuse konteks te bring – ’n konteks waarin die plek van die Jahwistiese monoteïsme bedink moes word te midde van die multigodsdienstige konteks van die Persiese Ryk. Die studie van Abadie interpreteer die Kroniekskrywers se weergawe van Manasse soos volg:

[O]ne sees how the theological writing of the chronistic narrative may be taken in a double manner, individually (through the experience of conversion of the king) and collectively (the exile of Israel and her restoration) without one interpretation excluding the other. By these theological and literary means, the Chronicler reintroduces the reality of Israel into the narrative, but in a completely different way than the deuteronomistic author in the book of Kings. It is less about realizing the reasons for the exile and its consequences, the collapse of the royal Davidic institution, than about suggesting to Israel that its return to the land depends on its return to God in faithfulness ... In this light, Manasseh appears with all his ambiguities as the reflection of Israel, the believing community that must always repent.

53 Sien die besprekings in JAPHET (1993:1002) en MCKENZIE (2004:353–354).

54 Sien bv. ABADIE (2003) en HULBERT (2008).

55 HULBERT (2008) se studie is veral nuttig om ’n oorsig te kry oor buite-Bybelse tekste waarin Manasse voorkom.

56 Sien SCHNIEDEWIND (1996).

57 Sien bv. my behandeling van die Asa-geskiedenis in Kronieke in JONKER (2006).

One understands henceforth the theological choices made by the Chronicler that led him to engage in a complete rewriting of this figure's reign.⁵⁸

Abadie se siening kom sterk ooreen met my voorstel dat die Kroniekskrywers primêr daarop ingestel was om deel te neem aan 'n proses van identiteitsvorming gedurende die laat Persiese tydperk.⁵⁹ Die Kroniekskrywers dra in die na-ballingskap tydperk daartoe by om – met verwysing na hul vroeëre historiografiese tradisies – na te dink oor die identiteit van “Die hele Israel” ('n frase wat baie prominent in die boek gebruik word). Hierdie identiteit word spesifiek godsdiensstig-teologies gedefinieer. “Die hele Israel” is dáárdie gemeenskap wat – te midde van die veranderde sosio-historiese omstandighede – die Here bly soek (*darash*) deur hulle aan hierdie God toe te wy. Dit vorm die grondslag van die Kroniekskrywers se kultiese en godsdiensstige selfverstaan. Die herinterpretasie van die Manasse-verhaal vind dus plaas in die dinamiese wisselwerking tussen oorgelewerde tradisies (wat ons beskikbaar het in die Koningsboeke, maar ook ander tradisies oor die gebed van Manasse wat waarskynlik in omloop was) en 'n veranderde konteks.

Dit bring ons dan by die tweede voorbeeld, naamlik die goeie koning Josia. Verskeie uitleggers dui aan dat die verhaal van koning Josia in 2 Konings 22–23 die hoogtepunt van die Deuteronomistiese geskiedenis vorm.⁶⁰ Josia word gesien as die vergestaltung van 'n koning wat die Deuteronomistiese ideale nagestreef het.

Hoe word Josia in Kronieke behandel? Dit is eerstens betekenisvol hoe die Kroniekskrywers die makrostruktuur van die Josia-verhaal verander het.⁶¹ Deur bepaalde veranderings aan te bring aan hoe die Josia-verhaal in Konings gestruktureer is, slaag die Kroniekskrywers daarin om hul eie aksent op die verhaal af te druk. Maar, laat ons eers die Koningsverhaal in oënskou neem. Die verhaal in 2 Konings 22–23 word omraam deur 22:1 en 23:28–30, wat die gebruikelike inligting oor die regeringstyd van die koning bevat. In 22:2 volg dan 'n positiewe beoordeling van Josia in die tipies Deuteronomistiese styl en volgens die teologiese kriterium of hy goed of sleg gedoen het in die oë van die Here. Hierdie positiewe beoordeling word herhaal in 23:25–27, wat tesame met 22:2 'n raam vorm om die inhoud van die verhaal. Die inhoud val in twee eenhede uiteen. In 22:3–20 word Josia se opdragte om die tempel te restoreer gegee (v 3–7), word vertel van die vind van die “wetboek” tydens die restaurasieproses (v 8–10) en word die koning se reaksie en die orakel van die profetes Hulda oor hierdie gebeurte verskaf (v 11–20). Hierna volg die tweede eenheid in 23:1–24. Daarin word vertel hoe die koning en die volk die verbond met die Here hernieu het in die lig van die wetboek wat gevind is (v 1–3), hoe die koning allerhande kultiese hervormingsmaatreëls in Juda en Israel geïmplementeer het (v 4–20, 24a) en hoe daar vir die eerste keer “sedert die dae van die rigters” weer Paasfees gevier is (v 21–23, 24b).

Die Kroniekskrywers bring op hul beurt betekenisvolle veranderings aan die makrostruktuur van hierdie verhaal aan.⁶² Die verhaal van Josia in 2 Kronieke 34:1–36:1 word weer eens omraam met inligting wat, met kleiner aanpassings, uit die Koningsteks oorgeneem is (34:1 en 35:20–

58 ABADIE (2003:103–104).

59 Sien veral JONKER (2003b; 2007a; 2009a; 2010a).

60 RÖMER som dit soos volg op: “Josiah appears as the perfect king on all points. He represents the Deuteronomistic ideal of kingship. Monarchy could have had a future if kings behaved like Josiah and conformed to the Mosaic (Deuteronomistic) Law” (2007:161).

61 Die beskrywings van die makrostruktuur van die verhale wat hier aangebied word, is gedoen op grond van narratiewe en kommunikatiewe aanduidings in die Hebreeuse tekste. Die indeling in groter en kleiner eenhede geskied op grond van kommunikasiemerkers, soos tydsaanduidings, veranderings van plek, veranderings van karakters wat optree, ensovoorts. Die indeling is dus nie slegs inhoudelike aanduidings nie, maar wel aanduidings van die kommunikasiemerkers wat in die Hebreeuse tekste voorkom. Sien JONKER (2003a) vir 'n verduideliking van die tekspragmatiese uitgangspunte wat in hierdie analise gevolg is.

62 Sien die besprekings in JONKER (2002; 2003a; 2003b).

36:1). Die sterfberig van die koning in die laaste gedeelte word egter betekenisvol anders vertel – maar hierna kom ek weldra terug. Na die openingsraam volg dan weer die positiewe beoordeling van die koning wat presies uit die ouer tradisie oorgeneem is (34:2). Die tweede beoordeling wat egter in die Koningsteks voorkom, word deur Kronieke weggelaat. Die Kroniekeverhaal se inhoud volg dan weer in twee eenhede. Die eerste (34:3–7) gee ’n aanduiding van die hervormingsmaatreëls van koning Josia. Hierdie weergawe is nie net heelwat bondiger as die ouer weergawe in Konings nie, maar dit staan ook in ’n ander posisie in die verloop van die verhaal. Waar die Koningsteks suggereer dat die hervormingsmaatreëls een van die gevolge was van die vind van die wetboek in die tempel, laat die Kroniekskrywers hierdie maatreëls op inisiatief van koning Josia plaasvind deur dit voorop te stel. Die tweede groot hoofdeel van die Kroniekeverhaal volg nou daarna (34:8–35:19). Hierdie hoofdeel kan egter weer in drie kleiner eenhede verdeel word. In 34:8–18 word aangedui dat die restourasie van die tempel ’n uitvloeisel was van Josia se hervormingsmaatreëls (v 8–13), en dat die “wetboek van die Here” daartydens gevind is (v 14–18). ’n Tweede onderdeel volg in 34:19–33, waarin die koning se reaksie en die Hulda-orakel (v 19–28), asook die verbondshernuwing, deur die koning en volk (v 29–33) ongeveer onveranderd uit die ouer tradisie oorgeneem is. Die derde onderdeel in 35:1–19 word volledig gewy aan die eerste viering van die Paasfees “sedert die dae van Samuel”. Hierdie weergawe van die Paasfeesviering is nie net heelwat uitgebreider as die Koningsweergawe (wat slegs effe meer as drie verse hieraan wy) nie, maar daar word ook inhoudelik heeltemal ander inligting voorsien.

Nadat ons nou die veranderings in die makrostruktuur van die Josia-verhaal bekyk het, wil ek graag ook op twee kleiner aspekte van die Kroniekskrywer se eie materiaal wys. Die eerste is die terminologie wat met betrekking tot die offerande van die Paasfees in die laaste onderdeel van die verhaal gebruik word. In 35:13 word vermeld dat die paaslam “in vuur gekook”⁶³ is (בֶּאֱשׁוּבָה וּבִשְׁלֵוֹ הַפֶּסַח). Daar word verder aangedui dat dit “volgens die voorskrif” gebeur het. In die Pentateug-wetgewing is daar twee weergawes van die pasgavoorskrifte. In Eksodus 12:8–9, wat deel vorm van die voorskrifte vir die eerste Paasfees met die uittog uit Egipte, word pertinent aangedui dat die paaslam nie rou geëet mag word nie, en ook nie in water gekook mag word nie (וּבִשְׁלֵוֹ מִבְּשֵׁל מִבְּמִים). Die voorskrif is spesifiek dat dit as vuurgebraaide vleis (עֲלִיִּיאַשׁ) geëet moes word. Die voorskrif in Deuteronomium 16:7 stipuleer egter dat dit gekook moes word (וּבִשְׁלֵוֹת). Hieruit word duidelik dat die Kroniekskrywers – juis in dié gedeelte wat nie van die ouer Koningstradisie oorgeneem is nie – nie slegs van een voorskrif uit die Pentateug gebruik gemaak het nie, maar juis beide Torah-tradisies in hul aanduiding wou kombineer.

’n Tweede betekenisvolle verandering in die verhaal kom in die sterfberig van koning Josia voor. Hoewel die Kroniekskrywers in die omraming aan die einde van die verhaal (35:20–36:1) van die ouer Koningstradisie gebruik gemaak het (2 Kon. 23:28–30), word die sterwe van Josia betekenisvol anders vertel. Die veldslag by Megiddo teen Farao Neko van Egipte word in die Koningsteks baie kort vermeld (v 29). In Kronieke word die berig egter uitgebrei, en word Farao Neko selfs ’n stem gegee. Volgens die Kroniekskrywers het hierdie Egiptiese koning die volgende deur ’n boodskapper aan Josia laat weet: “Ons het niks teen mekaar nie, koning van Juda! My veldtog is dié keer nie teen jou nie, maar teen ’n vyand. God het gesê ek moet gou maak. Moenie in God se pad kom nie. Hy is by my en Hy sal jou vernietig”.⁶⁴ Daar word verder berig dat Josia hom nie aan hierdie waarskuwing gesteur het nie, en dat hy toe in die veldslag met Neko gesneuwel het. Wat merkwaardig aan hierdie veranderde weergawe is, is dat koning Josia nie

63 Hierdie is my eie vertaling wat wel verskil van sowel die 1933- as die 1983- Afrikaanse vertalings, wat dit met “op/oor die vuur braai” vertaal. Hierdie vertalings het myns insiens nie raakgesien dat terminologie uit twee Pentateug-wetstradisies hier in een uitdrukking verenig word nie.

64 1983- Afrikaanse vertaling.

net in 'n heelwat negatiewer lig geskets word nie, maar dat 'n Egiptiese koning hier voorgestel word dat hy namens God praat, terwyl die koning van Juda, die Godsvolk, nie hieraan gehoor gee nie.

Weer eens moet ons vra: Waarom hierdie verskille? Dit is duidelik dat die Kroniekskrywers met hul weergawe in kontinuïteit wou staan met die oorgelewerde historiografiese tradisies in die Deuteronomistiese geskiedenis, maar ook responsief wou wees in die veranderde konteks waarin die Dawidiese koningskap nie meer bestaan het nie, en waar 'n nuwe godsdiensstig-teologiese identiteit in die na-ballingskapse tydperk onder Persiese beheer gevorm moes word. My interpretasie van hierdie verhaal het ek elders soos volg gestel:

The new situation under Persian rule (without a Davidic king) would have prompted a new reflection on their traditions which presented the Davidic lineage as one of the foundation stones of their being an elected nation by Yahweh. The evaluations of these past kings by their older traditions were not altered. King Josiah is still ... a good king ... However, their rewriting of this king's history within the new context assigned a new function to this king. He is no longer viewed, as was the case in their older tradition, as the one epitomizing and legitimizing the Deuteronomistic theological tradition. Rather, he now serves the role of accentuating the cultic tradition (the Passover, in particular). It is not kingship that is at stake in the new situation, but cult. Who they were no longer primarily depended on having a Davidic king, but on the presentation and observance of their cultic traditions. These traditions are then described not in a nationalistic context, but in a universal sphere. The institution of the Passover is not in the first place particularistic, applying to Yahweh's people exclusively *in opposition to* other nations and their gods. It is rather an institution characteristic of Yahweh's people *as part of a wider humanity*.⁶⁵

Kronieke idealiseer dus nie vir Josia as dié koning wat volgens Deuteronomistiese norme geregeer het nie. Josia word eerder geïnstrumentaliseer om aan te dui hoe die na-ballingskapse kultiese gemeenskap hul identiteit in die viering van die pasga moes vind, hoe hierdie gemeenskap die verskillende wetstradisies met mekaar moes verenig, en hoe hierdie kultiese gemeenskap hul plek moes vind in 'n wyer konteks wat deur konings uit ander nasies en 'n veelheid van godsdiens gedomineer word. Die Kroniekskrywers vind hul kontinuïteit in hul ouer oorgelewerde historiografiese tradisies, maar herinterpreteer en herformuleer hierdie tradisies sodanig dat dit responsief is ten einde hul godsdiensstig-teologiese nadenke in 'n radikaal veranderde konteks te fasiliteer.

Hoewel hierdie twee prominente voorbeelde, Manasse en Josia, met vele ander aangevul sou kon word, moet ek ter wille van ruimte hierby volstaan. Hierdie twee voorbeelde is egter genoegsaam om die volgende aan te dui:

Die Kroniekskrywers bring hul historiografiese werk tot stand in 'n sosio-historiese konteks wat dramaties verskil het van dié waarin die Deuteronomistiese geskiedenis gefinaliseer is.

In die veranderde omstandighede vind die Kroniekskrywers kontinuïteit in die oorgelewerde tradisies, en fasiliteer hulle hernude teologiese nadenke aan die hand van die oorgelewerde tradisies.

Die Kroniekskrywers was egter ook responsief in hul betrokke konteks, en skroom nie om uit vroeëre tradisies oor te neem, te verander, weg te laat en selfs by te voeg ten einde die nuwe konteks teologies te kan interpreteer nie.

Die Kroniekskrywers behandel die veelheid van wetsvoorskrifte vanuit die oorgelewerde wetstradisies (Deuteronomiese en Priesterlike tradisies) op sodanige wyse dat hulle hierdie verskillende tradisies met mekaar laat saamvloei ten einde hul kontinuïteit met albei aan te toon.

65 JONKER (2003a:86).

Dit bring ons nou by die vraag wat in die subtitel van hierdie lesing geïmpliseer word: Watter hermeneutiese implikasies hou hierdie dinamika van (her)interpretasie in die Ou Testament vir teologie en kerk in? Of, om dit eenvoudiger te stel, watter riglyne vir ons eie interpretasie van die Skrif sou ons kon aflei uit die dinamika van (her)interpretasie wat aanleiding gegee het tot die totstandkoming van die Bybel?

4. HERMENEUTIESE IMPLIKASIES VIR TEOLOGIE EN KERK

In die inleiding is reeds verwys na die talle kerklike en openbare debatte waarin die interpretasie van die Bybel in die spervuur staan. My waarneming is dat hierdie debatte dikwels gekenmerk word deur 'n statiese begrip van hoe die Bybel in daardie debatte behoort te funksioneer. Sommige meen dat die Bybel 'n statiese grootheid is wat genoegsame gesag dra dat tydlose riglyne vir leer en lewe bloot daaruit afgelees kan word. Ander meen eweneens dat die Bybel 'n statiese grootheid is wat met verouderde en uitgediende voorstellings werk en daarom goedsmoeds geïgnoreer sou kon word. My oortuiging is dat hierdie debatte daarby sou kon baat om vir 'n oomblik terug te staan uit hierdie keiharde posisies en te let op die dinamiese hermeneutiek wat die Bybel tot stand gebring het, en wat in hierdie lesing geïllustreer is.

Hierdie dinamiese hermeneutiek is, eerstens, 'n *hermeneutiek wat kontinuïteit met die oorgelewerde tradisies vind*. Die (her)interpretasieprosesse vind plaas in 'n konteks waarin sekere getuïenisse aangaande geloofsgemeenskappe se worsteling met die misterie van God reeds – juis deur middel van hierdie dinamiese prosesse – oor tyd heen gesaghebbende status aangeneem het. Die nadenke oor die misterie van God en God se handeling met die mensdom begin nie in elke nuwe tydsgegewig van nuuts af nie. Geloofsgemeenskappe vind kontinuïteit met diegene wat hulle oor eeue heen voorafgegaan het.

'n Tweede kenmerk van hierdie hermeneutiek is dat dit 'n *inklusiewe kanoniese hermeneutiek* is. Vir Joodse en Christengelowiges het die oorgelewerde tradisies oor tyd heen 'n bepaalde kanoniese gestalte aangeneem. Hierdie kanoniese gestalte weerspieël egter 'n inklusiewe aard waarin die (her)interpretasieprosesse nie die geïnterpreteerde tradisies van ouds elimineer of verberg nie. Die gelaagdheid van tekste en die veelstemmigheid van die oorgelewerde en geïnterpreteerde tradisies word in die kanon gestalte gegee. Die kanoniese gestalte word daarmee, soos een outeur dit stel, “the sponsor for innovation”.⁶⁶ Dit impliseer dan ook dat 'kanon' nie sinoniem met 'eenstemmigheid' kan wees nie, en ook nie met een finale, endvorm van die tekste gelykgestel moet word nie. 'n Inklusiewe kanoniese hermeneutiek sien die Bybelse kanon as 'n dinamiese, veelstemmige gesprek wat voortstu vanaf die gryse verlede tot in die hede.

In die lig van bogenoemde punt is hierdie soort hermeneutiek derdens 'n *diskursiewe hermeneutiek*. Dit wil sê, die dinamika van (her)interpretasie vind plaas in 'n ruimte waarin 'n veelheid van stemme met mekaar in gesprek gebring word. Nie net die oorgelewerde tradisies konfronteer die gelowige interpreteerder met 'n veelheid van perspektiewe nie; ook die kontekste waarin geïnterpreteer word, verskaf nuwe vroeë uitdagings. Die soort hermeneutiek wat die Bybel tot stand gebring het, sien hierdie veelheid van perspektiewe op God en die lewe voor die aangesig van God nie as bedreigend nie. Trouens, 'n diskursiewe hermeneutiek neem die uitgangspunt dat hierdie veelheid van perspektiewe juis nodig is om die onpeilbare rykdom en diepte van die misterie van God enigszins onder woorde te kan bring. Dit is juis in

66 Sien LEVINSON (2008a:89–94). Hy skryf met betrekking tot die kanon: “It invites innovation, it demands interpretation, it challenges piety, it questions priority, it sanctifies subversion, it warrants difference, and it embeds critique. Scholars across the humanities would benefit from deeper exploration of this rich paradox” (94).

gesprekmatige verstaan dat nuansering en verryking moontlik is. Dit is in so 'n verstaan waar gelowige interpreteerders aan hul eindige vermoë om tot finale kennis van God te kom, herinner word.

Die dinamika van (her)interpretasie impliseer, vierdens, 'n *histories-kontekstuele hermeneutiek*. Hierdie soort hermeneutiek neem deeglik in ag dat die Bybeltekste die produkte van oorlewering oor baie eeue heen is, en dat 'n diakrone beskouing van hierdie tekste onontbeerlik is. 'n Histories-kontekstuele hermeneutiek herinner ons verder dat die oorgelewerde tradisies vanuit bepaalde sosio-historiese omstandighede gerig is. Daarom kan hierdie tradisies waarmee kontinuiteit gevind word nie konteksloos verstaan word nie. Hierdie soort hermeneutiek verg dus 'n sosio-historiese sensitieweit vir die omstandighede wat die oorgelewerde tradisies tot stand gebring het. Terselfdertyd beklemtoon hierdie soort hermeneutiek ook 'n sosio-historiese sensitieweit vir die konteks waarin hierdie oorgelewerde tradisies (her)interpreteer word. Dit vermy interpretasies wat 'n blote klakkelose herhaling van tradisies uit die verlede is sonder dat dit tot 'n nuwe verstaan in veranderde omstandighede aanleiding gee. Met hierdie soort hermeneutiese uitgangspunt staan die interpreteerder as't ware tussen die tye: enersyds wel deeglik veranker in die sosio-historiese konteks van die verlede, maar andersyds ook veranker in die sosio-historiese konteks waarin (her)interpretasie plaasvind.

'n Implikasie wat hieruit voortvloei, is vyfde dat dit ook 'n *hermeneutiek van diskontinuiteit* is. Diegene wat betrokke was by die totstandkoming van die Bybel het die moed geneem om in hul veranderde omstandighede nuut en anders te interpreteer. Hierdie punt hef nie die eerste implikasie hierbo op nie. Diskontinuiteit en kontinuiteit met die oorgelewerde tradisies bestaan naas en gelyktydig met mekaar. Trouens, die dinamika van kontinuiteit EN diskontinuiteit met die oorgelewerde tradisies is juis die motor wat die tradisievormingsproses voortdryf. Kontinuiteit sonder diskontinuiteit het 'n klakkelose herhaling van ou inhoud sonder relevansie vir die hede tot gevolg. Diskontinuiteit sonder kontinuiteit loop die ernstige gevaar om kort voor lank sig self af te skei en verwyder te raak van die oorgelewerde tradisies. In albei hierdie gevalle word die dinamiese aard van die tradisievormingsproses gedoof.

'n Sesde en laaste implikasie wat vloei uit hierdie studie van (her)interpretasie in die Bybel is dat 'n *hermeneutiek waarin teks en teologie nie geskei word nie*, benodig word. 'n Hermeneutiek wat die bestudering van die Bybeltekste aan die Bybelwetenskappe as voorstudie oorlaat, en dan pas daarna deur middel van die Sistematiese Teologie eers tot teologiese interpretasie sou kom, is onsensitief vir die feit dat die Bybeltekste as sodanig reeds eeue lange teologiese interpretasie en herinterpretasie saamdra. Die bestudering van die Bybeltekste in hul historiese gelaagdheid en saamgesteldheid vra reeds na die teologiese onderskeidings wat aanleiding gegee het tot die tekste se ontstaan. Teologie kan nie 'n blote sistematiesing wees van tekstuele artefakte wat deur Bybelwetenskaplikes vanuit die tekste gemyn is nie. Bybelwetenskappe wat nie deeglik teologies van aard is nie, negeer die eng verband tussen teks en teologie. Eweneens negeer Sistematiese Teologie hierdie verband indien dit nie ook deeglike teksstudie inhou wat volledig rekening hou met die prosesse van (her)interpretasie in die Bybel nie.⁶⁷

5. SLOT: "LEWEND EN KRAGTIG"?

Is die Woord van God "lewend en kragtig" soos die Hebreërskrywer dit uitgedruk het?

In hierdie rede het ek die vraag vanuit Bybelwetenskaplike perspektief probeer beantwoord. Uiteraard is daar ook heelwat ander perspektiewe wat nodig is om hierdie uitspraak verantwoordelik te kan bedink, en ek nooi hiermee graag my kollegas in die ander teologiese

67 In hierdie siening sluit ek ten nouste aan by die standpunt van Eep Talstra. Sien TALSTRA (2003) en TALSTRA & OOSTING (2008).

disiplines om vanuit hul spesialisterreine hieroor saam te dink. Uiteraard moet daar gepraat word oor ons verstaan van die gesag en inspirasie van die Skrif in die lig van die prosesse van (her)interpretasie in die Bybel wat ek uitgewys het. En uiteraard moet deeglik besin word oor hoe ons die betrokkenheid van God se Gees by prosesse van interpretasie verstaan. Om hierdie kwessies te kan bedink, is egter nie die taak van ’n enkele dissipline nie.

Die antwoord wat ek deur hierdie rede op die vraag in die hoofitel wil gee, is ’n ondubbelsinnige “Ja”. Die Woord van God, verstaan as die selfverklaring van die misterieuse God in die wêreld van eindige mense, is lewend en kragtig. Die dinamika van God se Woord is gesetel in die eeue lange nadenke in geloofsgemeenskappe oor wat dit beteken om voor die aangesig van die misterieuse God te leef, dié God wat nooit gepeil of gedefinieer kan word nie. Hierdie nadenke was deur die eeue nooit eenvoudig en eenvormig nie, en dit was nooit sonder nuanse nie. Hierdie nadenke het ook nie probeer om die veelstemmigheid van baie eeue uit te doof of stil te maak nie. Die Woord van God is lewend en kragtig omdat gelowiges oor eeue heen weens hul geloofsoortuiging die moed geneem het om – in kontinuiteit en diskontinuiteit met die oorgelewerde tradisies – in die lig van veranderde omstandighede te herinterpreteer.

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TREFWOORDE

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Embodied leadership: Paradigm shifts in the leadership of a local URCSA congregation

Abstract

In South Africa the religious sector, through its leadership, has in the past and can still make a significant contribution to the transformation agenda, particularly by fostering leadership relationships across ethnic, cultural and socio-economic divides (bridging and linking social capital). Ethnographic empirical research into the leadership narratives of the Vlothenburg Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa, Stellenbosch, showed how the leadership in this congregation moved through different leadership paradigms in a relatively short time. An investigation using different theoretical frames was undertaken in an attempt to understand the impact that socio-cultural changes had on the functioning of the leadership in the congregation. The research also investigated the transformative influence the leadership had on the embodied ecclesiology of this congregation in a low-income socio-economic environment. Some suggestions are made on how the local leadership can cross cultural and socio-economic divides and contribute to South Africa's transformation agenda.

1. INTRODUCTION

The members of the church council are talking in the consistory before they enter the church for the morning service. An elder stands up and with a few tense words tells the rest of the council how disappointed he was the day before when no other church members arrived to help him dig a trench around the church (as part of the sewerage system). He explains that he had to hire labourers to help him – this after he asked for help during the service the week before to avoid unnecessary costs. He gradually becomes more and more passionate, and before long he is fired up to tell the entire congregation (waiting for the service to start) what he thinks of this tardiness.

A fellow elder stands up and admonishes his brother to stay calm. With a quiet voice he explains that this is not the way to talk to the congregation. The congregation belongs to Christ, not to the elder. It would be better to speak to them kindly, inviting them again, rather than to alienate them with his anger. Another member of the council prays, and we enter the church as the congregation sings a hymn.

I watch the elder tensely as he takes up his position behind the wooden podium. I fear the worst, but he calmly and pleasantly tells the congregation of the work done the day before. He expresses gratitude that he could find labourers to help him dig the trench. Without judgement or criticism he explains to the congregation why the trench is important, and invites them to view the progress after the morning service. The congregation sings another hymn.¹

1 | The mother tongue of the congregation is Afrikaans, which made it possible for the researcher, who is also Afrikaans speaking, to follow the conversations, sermons and hymns with ease. The congregation consists of mainly brown people who speak Afrikaans with a specific Western Cape accent making use of unique idioms, phrases and sayings. If one pages through the hymn book of the URCSA, the “Nuwe

This short fragment of events before and during the church service of the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa (URCSA) of Vlottenburg gives one a glimpse of the human interaction² in this marginalised congregation between the vineyards on the outskirts of Stellenbosch.³ It is through this fragment that we see something of the embodied leadership of this congregation, which was founded within the old mission paradigm and is constantly challenged by changing circumstances to adjust its identity and leadership.⁴ There is undoubtedly strong leadership, despite the fact that they do not have a permanent minister. A relief minister preaches every fortnight and acts as chairperson of the church council. But if one asks the church members who the minister is, they quickly reply that they are 'shepherdless'.

The research question of this study was: In what ways did the socio-cultural changes during the past 20 years have an influence on the change in embodied leadership and leadership paradigms, and did it contribute to the transformation agenda as part of God's mission to the world?

To answer the question I made use of different empirical and theoretical probes in an attempt to understand not only what is happening in the leadership of this congregation (descriptive empirical task), but also why it is happening (interpretive task). In the last section of the article I examine ways in which an embodied leadership can contribute to the transformation agenda within this specific context (normative and pragmatic tasks) (Osmer 2008:4).

2. EMBODIED LEADERSHIP

When I refer to embodied leadership, it is within a context of the so-called postmodern rediscovery of the body. The body as reference framework and identity construct is attracting renewed interest.⁵ Our bodies are in a certain sense our anchors, not only in terms of the appearance and feeding thereof, but also in terms of the public expression of the fact that we are some-body and not just some-one (Cilliers 2007:9). When one considers the fashion awareness of young people, one realises that it is about more than just being 'in' with the peer group, but that it also forms part of their self-understanding and self-realisation in a highly individualistic culture.

From a theological perspective, however, various scholars agree that the so-called anthropological turn in the mid 20th century concurs more with the Semitic (Biblical) anthropology than with the Greek-Hellenistic understanding of the body (Van der Leeuw 1949:9; Lukken 1990:6–7). Bonhoeffer's (1998:33) definition of the church as community is of interest

Sionsgesange" (New Sion hymns), one immediately notices this distinctive use of Afrikaans. Most URCSA preachers also prefer to make use of the 1933 Afrikaans Bible translation, rather than more recent translations.

2 It is these kinds of signals in a faith community that invite a process analysis of the community. Cf. Hendriks (2004:148–151).

3 For similar studies of one specific faith community, see Brouwer (2009) and Osmer (2005), who did an analysis of the URCSA Stellenbosch, Cloetesville, and named the study "Leadership in the spirit of Belhar".

4 The fact that the focus here is on one specific congregation is related to the researcher's conviction that faith communities have the necessary social capital not only to promote social cohesion (bonding and bridging capital) but also to influence the value systems of believers profoundly (linking capital). Congregations have during the centuries illustrated that they have the necessary infrastructure and in most cases they are sustainable. The question (also in this research) is of course the nature and quality of the (theological) leadership and leadership styles practiced in the communities. See also Swart (2010).

5 For example, in June and July 2010, the FIFA Soccer World Cup took place in South Africa. Thousands of bodies from all over the globe were packed into mega-stadiums watching bodies kicking around a ball, with many millions more following each bodily move on television screens.

here. He refers to *Christus als Gemeinde existierend* (Christ in the form of the congregation), which concerns divine self-presentation and human re-presentation. The Spirit is body, and without it we cannot experience the presence of God.

In this theological framework the body itself becomes the interpretative action of a person. So, proverbially, I do not only have a body, I am my body. Therefore, God reveals Himself through all our senses, not just one or two of them. The question of course remains which body we are talking about, especially if we want to link it to leadership.

In this regard, Caputo (1993:130) makes an important distinction between what he calls “philosophy’s body”, which manifests via the ancient philosophers in an active, athletic, healthy, white, male body, and the “distorted body” of lepers, cripple and lame people that reminds of elements of Paul’s anthropology and fails the classic paradigm of a ‘perfect body’. A theological understanding within the Christian tradition thus brings us to another understanding of the body, namely a broken body that is healed by an Other broken body (Cilliers 2007:12). Caputo (1993:131) expresses this movingly:

... by flesh let us signify everything that is both vulnerable or able to be wounded, which means bent, cut, lacerated, ulcerated, withered, inflamed, paralyzed, numbed, or finally killed, but also healed, bound up, made comfortable and fed, and able to enjoy jouissance. These bodies of flesh are attracted to Jesus by an almost natural gravitational pull, and he seems literally to be swarmed by them: they brought to him everybody like that ... Surely this is a case of like attracting like, because in the end Jesus ends up as one of these bodies. The one who has become flesh becomes the most famous case of vulnerable, crucified flesh (which is also transformed and transfigured) ...

Therefore, one of the implications of such an understanding of the body for embodied leadership is the fact that we are not searching for ‘successful’ leadership models, strategies or styles. Leadership is not only for the mighty and influential, but, to concur with Kehane (2010:15), is mostly about the “falling and stumbling” of ordinary people. In the case of the URCSA Vlotenburg, the leadership consists of ordinary believers who are chosen by fellow believers to serve in the offices of elders and deacons.⁶

The empirical data (and the interpretation thereof) indicate in various ways how the socio-cultural changes not only contributed to the marginalisation of this community, but also how it contributed to the ongoing process of ‘brokenness and healing’ in the leadership of the faith community. This leaves one with the idea of an ethos of vulnerable interdependence, in which believers are part of the bigger story, the story of a broken (and resurrected) body (Vosloo 2006:31).

3. METHODOLOGY FOR EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

Before I begin with a few cursory comments on the background and history of the URCSA Vlotenburg, I want to mention some thoughts about the methodology used in the study. The methods I used for data capturing included the standardised interview, but also discursively oriented interviews, where some of the interviewees,⁷ especially the elderly people, simply told the story of the congregation. I also made use of participatory observation, read some of the minutes of the congregation, made field notes while attending meetings of the church board, paged through the hymnal of the URCSA and read the articles on the offices in the URCSA (cf.

6 In the URCSA there is still much appreciation for the offices of minister, elder and deacon. The congregation looks up to the church council with respect, which does however not mean that they always agree with its decisions.

7 I use the terms *interviewee*, *respondent*, *speaker* and *participant* interchangeably.

Henning 2004:50–79). Generally speaking, one could classify this methodological approach as falling within the wider field of ethnographic studies.⁸

4. SOCIO-CULTURAL CHANGES

The social-cultural changes in South Africa since 1990 are described in various ways. Smit (2008:106) refers to a so-called collapse into modernity to explain that South Africa had to deal with the full impact of globalisation and modernisation in a relatively short time (20 years). De Gruchy and Ellis (2008:9) use another interesting image to describe it. They write that the context since February 1990 (the unbanning of the freedom movement and the release of Mandela) and again after 1994 (the first democratic election in which the ANC came into power) literally meant that we woke up in ‘another country’.

In this ‘other country’ the disintegration/dismantling of the apartheid politics happened so fast that it completely weakened the church’s ability to participate in the public discourse on social themes. De Gruchy and Ellis (2008:9) make the following comment about leadership in this regard:

To be sure, Christian leadership drew from what it had learned in the struggle against racism and apartheid to contribute to the themes of peace-making, reconciliation, and nation-building, but the ability to engage with the wider socio-economic and cultural themes of the new nation was lacking”.

The story of the leadership in the URCSA Vlotenburg occurs against the background of these radical changes that blew across the congregation like the black southeaster, and still blows from time to time. But it also occurs against the background of the inability of vulnerable (but willing) leaders to address the wider socio-economic and cultural themes (cf. Botman 2008, cited in De Gruchy & Ellis 2008:8).

5. A SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE URCSA VLOTTENBURG

The URCSA Vlotenburg seceded in 1963 from the URCSA Rhyns, situated in the heart of Stellenbosch. Initially, church services were held in a church hall in Devon Valley church, until the Vlotenburg church building was completed in 1967. The congregation consists of 500 members, with 150 regularly attending church services.

The church building is situated among the vineyards of luxury wine farms on Stellenbosch Kloof Road.⁹ The building is divided in two, with a part for worship on the one side and a church hall on the other. During the pressing season, the hall is let out to seasonal labourers from the Eastern Cape who work in the vineyards every year.¹⁰ Since the departure of the last minister,

8 Cf. Van de Waal (2009) and Brouwer (2009). See also an applied form of ethnographic studies by Marais and Taylor (2007).

9 The “history of inequality” (cf. Terreblanche 2002) is very prominent in this area with some of the largest wine farms in the Stellenbosch environment but also some of the poorest people in the province and a very high percentage of children born with foetal alcohol syndrome (FAS). Visit <http://fasfacts.org.za> for more information. From the website the following quote: “The continued focus of research based on communities such as Wellington in the Western Cape Province, and De Aar and Upington in the Northern Cape Province, once again underscored the enormity of the FAS problem in South Africa. The severity of the potential crisis facing the country is best illustrated by the results from the De Aar project that show a prevalence of FAS in the town of 122 per 1 000 school-entry children, thus 12,2%. This is officially the highest frequency yet reported in one population anywhere in the world”.

10 From this the conclusion can be drawn that 90% of the members are labourers who work on wine farms around Stellenbosch, including the areas Devon Valley, Stellenbosch Kloof, Stellenbosch Hills,

the manse is let out. The church board has been managing the weekly ministerial activities with the help of a relief minister¹¹ for the past 10 years, which means that most of the ministry (preaching, pastoral care, teaching) is done by members of the church council (local elders and deacons).

Across the road from the church is the Methodist Church and next to it is a general dealer selling everyday goods. Behind the church is a community of sub-economic housing for mostly farm labourers. Nearby is Vlottenburg Primary School with some 500 learners from Grade 1 to Grade 9. Further down the road from the school is a Vineyard congregation.¹² Many of the members are bussed in from various farms in the area for church services on Sundays. The bus departs again at a specified time, which means the service has a time limit.¹³

The most important identity markers of the congregation are to be found in the services on Sundays, the choir consisting of 25 members,¹⁴ the youth movement and the women's guild. Various festivals in the course of the year offer a further window on the faith community, including the church fête, the choir competition, Pentecostal services, and so forth. Regular congregation meetings give members the opportunity to be heard and group visits to the nine different wards ensure firsthand knowledge of needs and pastoral problems.

6. THE LEADERSHIP NARRATIVE

Although the leadership narrative of this community is unique, it is not so unique that many other faith communities will not recognise themselves in the narrative. From the empirical data it is very clear that the story of the congregation since its founding is closely linked to the ministers who served in the congregation. Particularly older members nostalgically long for the early days of the congregation, and they can remember the first ministers in extraordinary detail. I divide the history into three phases, metaphorically making use of three concepts homeland, independent and 'another country'.

6.1 Homeland phase

I use this concept because the congregation was founded in a time when apartheid theology was still flourishing and the so-called homeland policy, with the emphasis on separate development, had strongly taken root in church circles.¹⁵ During this time, evangelists, paid by 'mother congregations', ministered in many congregations similar to the URCSA Vlottenburg. The first evangelist (who according to one interviewee did excellent work) was later replaced by two white ministers (A and B)¹⁶ who altogether ministered for nearly 20 years in the congregation. Their salaries were also paid by the DRC.

The respondents (particularly older members) have good memories of these days; in their

Vlottenburg, Lynedoch, and so forth.

11 A relief minister is a minister that acts on behalf of the circuit when there is not a permanent minister in the congregation.

12 The Vineyard is a charismatic group with congregations world-wide.

13 The Western concept of time in which a service must be completed within an hour does not apply in most URCSA congregations. Because a private bus service is used, and the driver must have the bus back at the depot at a certain time, the length of the church service is limited.

14 Choir outfits create a unique identity.

15 The history of the well-known 1861 Synodical decision of the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) shows that racial separation was a practice in the DRC family long before the political developments that led to apartheid.

16 For the sake of confidentiality, the letters of the alphabet are used for the different ministers that served in the congregation.

interviews they used words like “true soul-winners”, making one aware of the “language of warm-hearted piety”, which is one of the characteristics of the URCSA spirituality (cf. Osmer 2005:151). The financing of congregational expenses was mostly done through generous donations from some of the wine farmers, most of them members of the DRC Stellenbosch West, who supported this so-called daughter congregation from the start.

6.2 Independent phase

According to the empirical data, a new phase dawned in the congregation with the arrival of Minister C in 1990. He was a member of the URCSA and completed his theological studies at the University of the Western Cape under teachers such as Dr Allan Boesak and Prof Gustav Bam. From the start it was clear that his theological principles would position him and the church council in a new relationship with the ‘mother church’. Without going into unnecessary detail, it was clear that he was not prepared to tolerate the servile, dependent labourer relationship towards the farmers, and within the first month of his ministry he ended all ties with the DRC.

Particularly the relationship with the DRC Stellenbosch West, which was the minister’s main source of income, deteriorated dramatically during this phase. In this time a manse was built next to the church hall. The sudden increase in debt and decrease in income as a result of the deteriorating relationship with the mother church not only put the congregation in a difficult financial position, but also increased the levels of conflict. Church attendance declined dramatically and eventually Minister C accepted a call to another congregation in 1998.¹⁷

In 1999 the congregation appointed Minister D as tentmaker. He was appointed by the Presbytery committee as youth minister for the entire presbytery, and worked part-time at the URCSA Vlotenburg. With his unique gifts of preaching and a charismatic spirituality, he managed to fill up the pews again. He also started a gospel band to lead the praise and worship and was himself musically gifted.¹⁸ He was only in the congregation for a year, but left a strong heritage and the respondents all have very good memories of his ministry in the congregation. At the end of the year he accepted a call to another congregation.

6.3 The phase of ‘another country’

I make use of the concept of De Gruchy and Ellis (2008) of ‘another country’, but adjust their use of the concept to describe a new phase of leadership in the congregation since the end of the 90s. This is the phase in which the local leaders (with the aid of relief ministers) started featuring strongly. The difficult financial position of the congregation and the accompanying conflict had the result that certain prominent families started taking the lead. While it can on the one hand be seen as a positive development in the light of the importance of lay leadership in the church, it was not without complications.

Longstanding feuds between these families became part of the church politics and to this day contribute to regular conflict. This was clearly visible during participant observation in various meetings. What is also significant is that the conflict is not hidden or suppressed. Sometimes the chairperson struggles to keep order. In this regard the relief minister plays an important role, but

17 The call to another congregation was surrounded by controversy. The congregation owed him money for unused leave, pension, and so forth, and the church council was under tremendous pressure in the coming years to rid itself of this burden of debt. In the interviews the hurt involved was evident. It had the further effect that the congregation since then has never been able or indeed wanted to call a full-time minister.

18 One of the respondents in the interviews was a minister with more than 30 years’ experience of ministry in the URCSA. He reported that he has found that poor communities are very susceptible to both liberation theology (freedom from oppression) and charismatic or Pentecostal forms of theology (as an escape from a life of poverty).

he does not come out of these battles unscathed. From the brief leadership narrative, one can recognise the following elements of the ethos of the congregation.

7. ELEMENTS OF THE ETHOS OF THE CONGREGATION¹⁹

7.1 Pietism and renewal

In the church services one finds a warm-hearted piety, expressed in the music, hymns, worship, prayers and Scripture readings. There is also a deep yearning for revival in the congregation. One of the elders told of how a few of them 12 years ago literally stretched themselves out on the floor before the pulpit in an attitude of prayer and prayed for revival long and seriously. In the following weeks, Minister D began to work in the congregation, and his ministry led to a revival in the congregation. This remains part of the genetic code of the congregation and is particularly revived and kept alive by the annual Pentecostal services.

7.2 Participation and decentralisation

One of the outstanding characteristics of the congregation is the participation by the church council and various members in worship services and other congregational activities. The arrangement of the worship service is not that of a “dominee se kerk” (minister’s church), as almost everyone participates in the service: The elders do the preaching themselves, ward members make the announcements, children take up the offerings, the choir leads the singing, and so forth. The congregational fête, group home visits, youth outreaches and other activities offer more opportunities for membership involvement.

7.3 Marginalisation and dependency

Most of the members’ physical participation in church activities is defined by various forms of dependence – dependence on the goodwill of the farm owner, particularly during press time in the vineyards, dependence for transport (private and public) and dependence on one another for pastoral support and accompaniment.

All of this makes this community a vulnerable one, largely at the mercy of powers over which they have no control. But, as clearly emerged from the narrative of the leadership, it does not leave them without agency (De Gruchy 2003:20–39). They refuse to be victims of their circumstances and accept the responsibility wholeheartedly.

7.4 Families and conflict

From the leadership story it is clear that families play a large role in these types of congregations. The central position of ‘fatherly’ (and ‘motherly’) figures from the more influential families (who act as patriarchs and matriarchs and exert control over programmes and finances) emerged clearly in the research. It was also obvious that they do not always agree, which often leads to conflict, as discussed above.

7.5 Engagement with wider socio-economic and cultural changes

The leadership story shortly narrated above also makes it clear that engagement with wider socio-economic and cultural changes is not always simple. When a faith community finds itself in a kind of battle for survival, there is not always enough energy and expertise to address the

¹⁹ The list of elements is not extensive. The elements discussed came from a content analysis of the interviews and the document analysis of minutes, bulletins, and so forth. My aim was to combine themes that relate to one another.

greater socio-economic challenges and to react to cultural challenges. I next strive to interpret aspects of the narrative with the aid of Manuel Castells's distinctions concerning identity.

8. THE POWER OF IDENTITY

In Castells's (2004) second book of his trilogy, he describes the changes that took place in late modernity. This includes the combined impact of globalisation, technology and informalisation. It is especially the flood of information through the Worldwide Web that reconstructs the economy (capitalism) and community. This has created a new world that he calls the "network society", a drama in which social movements are the main actors.

These social movements²⁰ construct identity. The basic hypothesis is that the social construction of identity and the content of that identity take place in a context characterised by power balances. According to him, identity is formed in three ways, and I relate these to the narrative of the URCSA Vlotenburg.

Legitimising identity: This form of identity is shaped by civil society and is usually created by the dominant institutions in society and those in positions of authority. It functions from the top down in various forms of domination. The best expression of it can be found in the nation state and churches from the Christian paradigm (Castells 2004:7).

The founding and first ministry years of the URCSA Vlotenburg are characterised by this form of identity. A strong mother church that sends missionaries and pay for a minister to work among the poor farm labourers (and in so doing exercises control over the work) created this identity. It also legitimises the status quo in terms of ministry, leadership, structures and theological points of departure.

Resistance identity: This is an identity created by actors who have often been devalued and stigmatised by the logic of domination. They usually form communities (political parties) or rebel groups with the goal of resisting the opposition or suppression they experience. This usually occurs by building on identities that have already been defined by history, biology, faith, race or ethnic group. It is a defensive identity and finds expression in religious fundamentalism such as the Religious Right in the USA and Al-Qaeda in Islam countries (Castells 2004:8).

With the arrival of Minister C, the URCSA Vlotenburg started to construct this form of identity. The minister's theological training and points of departure gave him the tools to initiate this. In the manner in which he and the church council approached this and the processes that followed, it emerges that the 'resistance' in the identity construct led to various complexities and conflicts.

Project identity: This form of identity is built when social actors construct a new identity that redefines their position in society and, by doing so, also participate in the transformation of social structures. There are many examples, such as ecological movements and feminism. This form of identity produces 'subjects', in which subjects should not be understood as individuals, but as "collective social actors" through which the individual develops a holistic meaning of his/her experience (Castells 2004:8).

In the story of the URCSA Vlotenburg, the research clearly indicates what happened during the past decade. The local leadership, in the absence of formal leadership in the form of a permanent minister, started working on a new identity and thereby also redefined its own position as faith community. In the process the leaders, as collective social actors, contributed to

20 Social movements are purposive collective actions of which the outcome, both in victory and in defeat, transforms the values and institutions of society. Because there is no sense of history other than the history that we sense, from an analytical perspective, there is no 'good' or 'bad' progressive or regressive social movements. (Castells 2004:104-111)

the transformation of social structures (bridging and bonding social capital).²¹

From this it is also clear that the forming of identity of the faith community moved through various phases of 'construction' and is still developing. This brings one to the challenge of how the embodied leadership, given the congregation's marginalised and vulnerable situation, can contribute to the transformation agenda by crossing socio-economic and cultural boundaries.

9. EMBODIED LEADERSHIP IN 'ANOTHER WORLD'

In the discussion of embodied leadership above I mentioned that I prefer to work with an understanding of leadership that does not entail a search for successful models or strategies, but that incorporates the awareness that leadership is often all about stumbling and falling. With this understanding of leadership I concur with the three elements that De Gruchy regards relevant when we reflect on leadership in 'another world', namely power, collaboration and a dialogical pedagogy, which I linked to the leadership of the URCSA Vlotenburg in the following section.

9.1 Power

According to Castells (2004:425-427), 'power' is in the process of being redefined and renegotiated all over the world. Various shifts are taking place, including shifts from physical power to intellectual power, from guns to information, and so forth. De Gruchy and Ellis (2008:18) are of the opinion that paying attention to power implies that relationship differences should be examined in terms of certain key factors. These differences include race, age, gender, language, nationality and professional status, and each has a unique influence on the exercising of power.

We all live with our own stories that are embedded in a greater social narrative encompassing differences in power and privilege, and we take these narratives with us into relationships. What is needed is greater transparency regarding these wider networks of power when we consider the future of embodied leadership. We must also be willing "to consciously frame them in a way that they can add to the richness of the tapestry rather than serve as barriers to dialogue and development" (De Gruchy & Ellis 2008:18).

In the case of the URCSA Vlotenburg, the congregation is connected not only to the relationship with the old mother congregation, but also to relations within the church council, among families in leadership positions and in terms of the employee role in which many members function from day to day. The 'dependence syndrome' must be addressed and the acceptance of responsibility as active change agents of every member in the transformation process must be tabled (De Gruchy 2003:23). The theological language of (and appeal for) "discipleship"²² can play a key role here.

9.2 Collaboration

Collaboration²³ entails the conscious decision to resist the temptation of individualism. It is about teamwork, supporting one another and the ability to build other's capacity. The capacity of others is also developed during the process of attaining one's own goals as a leader (De Gruchy & Ellis 2008:19).

21 From the empirical research one could see the social transformation taking place in the way in which members of the church board renegotiated positions of power in conversations with the DRC Stellenbosch West and other congregations in the circuit.

22 Cf. Cahalan and Nieman (2008:62-90).

23 Collaboration brings us to the theological importance of *koinonia*. See Brouwer (2009) for a lengthy discussion of the concept.

Friedman (2007:51–55) concurs with this in his well-known work *The world is flat*, and it is particularly in his fourth “flattener”, in the discussion of “uploading”, that cooperation is also addressed. Instead of individuals and communities involved in “downloading”, where the ideas and products of others are passively assumed or downloaded, “uploading” is a bottom-up approach. He writes: “Uploading is, without doubt, becoming one of the most revolutionary forms of collaboration in the flat world”. He therefore refers to it as “a revolution of collaboration ... a massively emancipating move” (Friedman 2007:51–55).

The empirical study in this particular faith community confirmed that this is already happening on an intuitive level. The collective identity (*koinonia*) and cooperation are expressed in various ways in the faith community. Given the history of oppression, poverty and hardship that emerges in the stories, one can understand the fact that the community members stand together.

In terms of tools that can help with collaboration, the South African Partnership for Missional Churches (SAPMC) worked during the past five years on different spiritual practices and disciplines specifically aimed at helping congregations with collaboration (not only within the congregation itself, but also with partner congregations). This includes “dwelling in the world, dwelling in the Word and plunging” (Hendriks 2010:6).

From a theological point of view (a *missio Dei* perspective), the first focus is to determine what is happening in *the world* that God is sending his children to – thus a kind of cultural hermeneutics that works with “discovery, engagement, visioning and practice and growth”. It in other words primarily concerns the development of “listening skills”.²⁴

The second focus is on the “dwelling in the Word”, which consists of the reading of a chosen text for personal reflection and then sharing the personal reflection with a “reasonably friendly-looking stranger”. This is later shared with the larger group, and the challenge is to discover the meaning of the text by asking: “What is God up to here?” and “What is the Word of God for us in this place and time?” The specific theological goal is to invite the participants into the world of the text, whereby they become part of the *missio Dei* (Keifert 2006:21, 36–37).

The second focus of “plunging” relates to the faith community’s ability to cross cultural boundaries (conceptual and geographical). The purpose is to connect the faith community to its context and to what God is doing in that context in a new way.²⁵ In the language of social capital, we have to do with both bridging and linking social capital.

9.3 Dialogical pedagogy

In the light of the first two challenges for embodied leadership, dialogical pedagogy refers to the attention that should be paid to the concerns and wisdom of ordinary people. In the words of Freire, with whom De Gruchy and Ellis (2008:18) concur: “The ‘teachers’ need to learn, and the learners’ need to ‘teach’”. Knowledge and wisdom develop from discussion and dialogue. According to De Gruchy and Ellis (2008:18–19), a number of key elements are relevant here. They distinguish the following four, which I relate directly to the URCSA Vlotenburg’s leadership’s challenge:

Intentional: Attention needs to be paid to the equipment and capacity building of a present generation of leaders, but also to that of the future leaders. If the long history of dependence (and inequality) is not addressed, it simply confirms the unequal distribution of power that lies at the heart of poverty, neo-colonialism and globalisation.

Inclusive: To build up the leaders and their capacity, use must be made of the talents, gifts and resources available in the community (1 Cor 12). This inclusivity crosses the boundaries of

24 Cf. Keifert (2006:36–37).

25 Cf. Walls (2002).

gender, race, ethnicity, language and class. In the case of the Vlotenburg community, these boundaries are linked to historical divides in terms of class and colour and are still a very complex issue. But one must remember there is a big difference between the search for inclusivity and dealing with the tensions related to these divisions, and refusing to address it from fear that the status quo will be overturned.

Investing: In poor communities, financial capital investment is not a simple matter, as people lack the necessary material means (monetary capital). The fact remains that the average member has gifts, talents and skills (social capital) that can be invested in other ways in terms of presence, participation and involvement in the community. There is also the option of utilising the expertise and contributions of non-governmental organisations, other civic organisations, local government, donors, the DRC family on presbytery and synodical level, and so forth.

Integrity: This is about the *manner* in which leadership is practised and the underlying values the community strives for. If the faith community visualises itself as a community in which unity, justice, reconciliation and human dignity are important, a leadership that thwarts those values cannot serve it. There is an intrinsic link between the goal and the means.

The important role that the *Belhar Confession* has played in the URCSA for almost three decades cannot be ignored. The central aspects of this confession have over many years formed the theological foundation for ministry and practice in congregations throughout Southern Africa. In fact, there are denominations like the Reformed Church in America in the USA that have also accepted the Belhar Confession as part of its confessional foundation. The fact that Osmer (2005:90) discusses his analysis of the leadership in the URCSA Cloeteville under the title *Leadership in the spirit of Belhar* confirms the influence this confession has had on the practise of leadership in these specific communities.

CONCLUSION

If one begins to summarise these perspectives, it is clear that the empirical context of a local faith community, in the words of Brouwer (2009:1–5), consists of “a multi-layered texture that consists of influences at the macro, meso and micro levels of society”. In this regard he uses the word *ecology* in the sense of geographic areas where people live, work, meet one another and entertain them. According to him, it is these *changing ecologies* that have an influence on faith communities.

He concurs with research by Ammermann²⁶ and Eiesland²⁷ and illustrates how faith communities react to these changes. Brouwer also points out the importance of understanding these changing ecologies. All kinds of factors can lead to the ecological changes of a faith community. Communities have to react and adjust to these changes. These adjustments lead to all kinds of dynamics and differentiations: It can lead to ‘decay or vitality’. To prepare a congregation (and her leadership) to function missionally, it is in Brouwer’s (2009:4) opinion necessary to do thorough empirical ethnographical research on the ecology of the community.

The different sources of data indicate that the community did not only react to ecological changes (at least in terms of the leadership), but also played a role in our country’s transformation agenda as part of God’s mission to the world. Different phases of leadership development occurred. Castells’s third form of identity, the so-called project identity, offers unique challenges to the building of leadership potential and capacity by particularly focussing on power, collaboration and dialogical pedagogy as part of God’s mission to the world. The

26 Ammerman, N.T. 2001. *Congregations and community*. Rutgers University Press: New Brunswick.

27 Eiesland, N.L. 2000. *A particular place: Urban restructuring and religious ecology in a southern suburb*. Rutgers University Press: New Brunswick.

research takes place with the awareness that these challenges form part of an embodied ecclesiology by people who are vulnerable and fallible in the light of a long history of inequality.

In the introduction I referred to the events in the consistory before and during the worship service. The discussion above makes it clear that this is nothing else but a form of dialogical pedagogy. It is in such moments of vulnerable embodied leadership that one finds hope for the potential and capacity for future leadership development in a faith community called to be part of God's mission to the world. In imaginative ways, God sometimes surprises us precisely at the point where we are prepared to hand the leadership back to Him.

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TREFWOORDE

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Die liggaam-van-Christus-metafoor: bediening van die AGS-lidmaat

ABSTRACT

The body-of-Christ-metaphor: ministry of an AFM member

Certain questions can be asked considering New Testament guidelines with regard to the functioning and expectations of an assembly structure surrounding the origin of the AFM church: Is the ministry of the AFM-pastor and member still relevant? Are the pastors successful in effectively guiding their assemblies in making use of their own members for voluntary acts of service? This entails the caring of their member and the execution of the assemblies' missional command? How can the pastors systematize their ministries in such a way that the equipping task of members can be made more effective? This task implies the discovery and equipping of members for voluntary acts of service in the assembly as described amongst others in Ephesians 4:12. The purpose of this article is to provide a better understanding concerning the body-of-Christ-metaphor: ministry of an AFM assembly member.

1. INLEIDING

Daar word in die artikel gepoog om breë lyne te trek rondom 'n strategiese ontwerp vir die mobilisering van dienswerkers in AGS-gemeentes deur die bediening van lidmate te gebruik vir die uitvoering van die missionale opdrag. AGS-gemeentes is gewoonlik in verskillende rade, diens- en bedieningsgroepe georganiseer. Die meeste gemeentes word vanuit 'n georganiseerde kerkkantoor bedryf en daar is vasgestelde, weeklikse byeenkomste. Heyns (1986:66) meld dat die herder die leier van die kudde is. Die kudde vertrou en gehoorsaam hom/haar ten volle. Die herder het getoon dat hy/sy 'n bekwame leier is en die vertrou van die gemeente waardig is. Daarby is hy/sy 'n behoorlik geskoolde en opgeleide persoon en word sy/haar leiding selde bevraagteken. Die verantwoordelikheid vir die opbouing, administrasie en organisasie van die gemeente rus grotendeels op sy/haar skouers en is hy/sy dikwels die laaste besluitnemende instansie (Putter 2003:1; 2009:154).

Die AGS omskryf die taak van die pastor in Artikel 297 van die kerkwette as: "Die pastor sal, waar toepaslik, ter bevordering van die Koninkryk van God en ter uitbreiding van die Kerk, die volgende pligte ooreenkomstig die Woord van God nakom (Konstitusie van die AGS, 2008:7):

- Bediening van die heilige Evangelie en die sakramente;
- herderlike versorging van die gemeente;
- administratiewe verpligtinge ingevolge die kerkwette aan sy/haar amp verbonde;
- enige sodanige pligte en verantwoordelikhede wettiglik aan hom/haar opgedra, en
- die handhawing van die gedragskode soos deur die Nasionale Leierskap Forum bepaal.

Daar word nou na 'n teologiese metafoor gekyk sodat die verskillende aspekte van bedienings in AGS-gemeentes beter verstaan kan word.

2. TEOLOGIESE METAFOOR

'n Metafoor word gebruik om verskillende aspekte van gemeentes te beskryf. Dit het daartoe gelei dat sekere metafore van die kerk, AGS-gemeentes se identiteit, geestelikheid en kultuur, teologie, ekklesiologie en bediening beïnvloed het. Metafore help ons om na dinge vanuit verskillende perspektiewe te kyk (Vos 2005:31). Volgens Minear (1960:222) is daar nie een absolute metafoor vir die kerk nie. Elke metafoor moet in konteks van al die ander metafore gesien word met deeglike inagneming van die werklikheid. Daar word gepoog om in dié artikel 'n voorlopige maar reeds gedefinieerde metafoor daar te stel wat die vrywillige dienswerk van AGS-lidmate ten doel het.

2.1 Liggaam-van-Christus-metafoor

2.1.1 Verklaring van begrip

Met die ontwaking van humanisme en demokratiese regeringskappe het die Renaissance en moderne Westerse kultuur die "top-down"-manier van dink en vorming van strukture uitgedaag deur 'n "bottom-up"-tendens. Die basiese behoefte aan gemeenskap en die afwesigheid daarvan in die "top-down"-kerkmodel, het die weg vir 'n invloedryke metafoor met 'n nuwe styl gebaan. Die liggaam-van-Christus-metafoor kon die nuwe identiteit verduidelik (Hendriks 2004:49). Heyns (1977:51) meen dat ons hier met 'n metafoor te doen het waarin die rykste betekenisakkeringe voorkom en daarom is dit vir die verstaan van die kerk van die allergrootste belang. Volgens Van Rensburg (1999:1569-1570) word die metafoor dwarsdeur die Efesiërbrief gebruik: "Die liggaamsbeeld wil ons leer van die eenheid wat daar in die kerk moet wees. Almal vorm saam as gelowiges die liggaam-van-Christus en saam doen hulle die werk waartoe Christus hulle roep."

2.1.2 Liggaam-metafoor as 'n lewende organisme

Die liggaam is 'n lewende organisme wat kan groei of kwyn (Van den Berg 2000:37). Die metafoor spreek van lewe in die kerk omdat elkeen besig moet wees om die gawe wat hulle ontvang het, aan te wend in belang van die geheel (Rom. 12:8; 1 Kor. 12). Paulus gebruik die organisme-gedagte parenteties om die onderlinge eenheid van die lede van die kerk en hul verantwoordelikheid vir mekaar te beklemtoon. Volgens Murphy (1975:308) funksioneer die liggaam soos 'n liggaam waar elke lid as belangrik geag word en lidmate hul eiesoortige, unieke funksies verrig.

2.1.3 Liggaam-metafoor vir dienslewering

Die kerk as liggaam-van-Christus se roeping is om diens te lewer; diens aan God, kerk en samelewing. Die kerk as liggaam is die instrument waardeur Jesus Christus Hom tot die wêreld rig (Heyns 1977:57-58). Vir die uitvoer van die taak om diens aan God, kerk en samelewing te lewer, gee Christus deur sy Gees die nodige gawes aan die liggaam en sy lede (1 Kor. 12:1-11 Ef. 4:7, 11). Roberts (1990:120) stel dit dat "die diens wat lidmate behoort te verrig, die opbou van die liggaam-van-Christus ten doel moet stel en daarom moet die toerusting wat daarmee gepaard gaan dieselfde fokus hê. Die liggaam-van-Christus-metafoor veronderstel ook dat die ideaal vir 'n gemeente is, dat elke lidmaat besig sal wees met die dienswerk wat God vir hulle bedoel het".

2.1.4 Kernteologiese bespreking

Die metafoor beklemtoon gemeenskap met mekaar en God in Christus waarbinne die Heilige

Gees 'n fundamentele rol speel. Die konsep van die gemeente as liggaam-van-Christus baan die weg vir 'n kommunikasiestruktuur binne die gemeente waarin alle lidmate op gelyke vlak in die gemeente betrokke kan raak. Die geleentheid word aan lidmate gebied om die genadegawes soos deur die Heilige Gees aan hulle gegee, te beoefen (Hendriks 2004:50).

2.1.5 Vrae en antwoorde rondom die metafoor

Die metafoor stel die volgende vrae :

- Hoe word eenheid tussen lidmate bereik? Hendriks (2004:50) verklaar dat eenheid bereik word deur lidmate wat getuig van hulle geloof in Christus en in die teenwoordigheid van die Heilige Gees en sy gawes.
- Wie word deur die metafoor bevoordeel? Lidmate wat wedergebore is, die Heilige Gees ontvang het asook die gawes wat Hy gee, word bevoordeel, omdat hulle nou deel van die liefde en van die gemeenskap in die liggaam is. Daarmee saam bevoordeel die metafoor alle ander lidmate, sowel as mense wat die teiken van die kerk se uitreiking vorm.
- Wat is die doel of missie van die metafoor? 'n Persoonlike verhouding met Christus en die Heilige Gees deur gemeenskap met God wat lei tot gemeenskap met ander gelowiges in die liggaam is die doel of missie.

2.1.6 Beoordeling van die metafoor

Die positiewe van die metafoor is dat dit 'n sterk Bybelse basis het wat gemeenskap met mekaar en God beklemtoon. 'n Verdere positiewe uitwerking van die metafoor is dat daar opnuut besin word oor die bediening van die lidmaat. Die metafoor sien mense nie primêr en bloot as sondaars nie, maar as mense wat gered is en gebruik kan word.

In gemeentebouteologie word gepraat van 'n paradigmaverskuiwing ten opsigte van die verstaan van die kerk (Louw 1990:3). So 'n verskuiwing vervang die statiese herder-kudde-model met die dinamiese liggaam-van-Christus-metafoor van kerkwees (Hendriks 1992:123). Ofskoon die kerk in die Nuwe Testament aan die hand van 'n rykdom van beelde of metafore getipeer word, is dit veral die liggaam-metafoor wat telkens in literatuur bespreek word omdat die metafoor verskeie moontlikhede bied met die oog op doeltreffende gemeentefunksionering (Nel 1994:243).

Putter (2006:77-78) en Olwagen (2007:56) stel die liggaam-van-Christus-metafoor as bedieningsmodel vir AGS-gemeentes voor. Hulle is van mening dat:

- Die liggaam-van-Christus-metafoor as bedieningsmodel die beste uitdrukking gee aan die plan en wil van God vir die funksionering van sy gemeente en die effektiewe uitvoering van die missionale opdrag (Matt. 28:19);
- Dit die nadele van instansionalisering die beste teëstaan en neutraliseer;
- Waar gemeentes die metafoor as bedieningsmodel gebruik, die grootste en mees dinamiese kerkgroei, kwalitatief en kwantitatief, plaasvind. Die rede daarvoor is omdat daar meer mense betrokke by dienswerk is.

3. CHRISTUS AS HOOF VAN DIE LIGGAAM

Die liggaam-van-Christus-metafoor is 'n organisme, bestaande uit gelowiges wat saamwerk en vir mekaar omgee te midde van hulle verhouding met Christus as Hoof (Olwagen 2007:57). Die lewe van die liggaam vloei vanaf die Hoof, en hulle is deur die Heilige Gees met mekaar verbind.

3.1 Lidmate as deel van die liggaam

Gelowiges word in gemeentelike verband korporatief aangespreek en nie van hulle individualiteit

ontneem nie. Alle gelowiges in die liggaam besit afsonderlik 'n eie identiteit, verpligting en taak (1 Kor. 12:12-31), alhoewel daar van individualisme geen sprake mag wees nie. Gelowiges vind hulle ware identiteit eers binne die Christelike gemeenskap. 1 Korintiërs 12:13 wys daarop dat mense deur die Heilige Gees in die liggaam-van-Christus ingedoop word. So word hulle deel van die liggaam.

Die begrip "lidmaatskap" kom as sodanig nie in die Bybel voor nie. Die gelowige word binne die konteks van die liggaam-van-Christus-metafoor 'n lid van die liggaam genoem. Alle lidmate staan gelyk voor die Here. Daar is egter lidmate wat vir besondere gawes geroep is (Ef. 4:12) om die gelowiges toe te rus vir hulle dienswerk.

Die term "leek" word nie in die artikel gebruik nie omdat dit nie voldoen aan die betekenis as lid van die kerk nie en omdat dit vatbaar is vir misverstande. "Leke" word dikwels in volksmond as "onwetend" en geestelik onvolwasse beskou. Die siening mag daartoe lei dat lidmate verval in die "leke"-rol van onaktiewe meelopers (Van den Berg 2000:37). Die gevolg is dat 'n "domineeskerk" geskep word waar die dominee en die ampte al die werk verrig. Die term "lidmaat" word verkies.

Die AGS-kerk maak 'n onderskeid tussen amptelike en nie-amptelike lidmaatskap. Vir administratiewe doeleindes is slegs gedoopte lidmate amptelik lidmate (Konstitusie van die AGS 2008:4):

"The members of the church shall be composed of persons: who are born again and have received the believers baptism; who are recognised members of a local assembly, and who adhere to and accept the 'Confession of Faith' as stipulated in P.3 of the 'Preamble' to the constitution".

Die grootte van die gemeente word ook bepaal deur die aantal gedoopte lidmate. In die praktyk egter is daar egter belangstellende mense wat nog nie gedoop is nie en wat hulle met die gemeente assosieer en as lidmate van die gemeente beskou. Die pastor van die plaaslike AGS-gemeente versorg ook hierdie mense. Strategieë behoort daargestel te word om alle mense, hetsy "amptelike" of "nie-amptelike" lidmate, in 'n potensiaalontwikkelings- en toerustingsmodel wat hulle in staat stel om hulle gawes te ontdek en te mobiliseer, op te neem om sodoende ten volle deel van die liggaam te wees.

3.2 Roeping van die liggaam

Liggaamsgroei vind plaas waar gelowiges as eenheid saamgevoeg is en hulle hul eie unieke funksies vervul (Louw & Nida 1988:69).

Deesdae het die mondigheid van die gemeente so op die voorgrond gekom dat daar selfs gepraat word van 'n tweede hervorming. Die eerste hervorming het die Skrifwoord in die hande van die gelowiges teruggeplaas. Die tweede wil die dienswerk in hulle hande plaas (Heyns & Pieterse, 1990:2). Deur middel van onderlinge bedienings (Van der Walt, 1979:20) oftewel korporatiewe dienswerk (De Klerk, 1978:9) bou die gelowiges mekaar op (Venter 1988:10-11, 20).

Die liggaam-van-Christus word die instrument, die kanaal waardeur die bediening van Christus hier op aarde voortgesit word. Volgens Langerman (1983:9) vind die bediening van die kerk in drie fases plaas. Die dissipels is eers geroep, daarna toegerus en dan uitgestuur om die koninkryk te verkondig. Hierdie roeping is tweeledig van aard, naamlik intern en ekstern.

3.2.1 Interne roeping

Snyder (1977:73) verklaar dat die vroeë kerk besig was met twee belangrike take:

- Die verkondiging van die evangelie
- Die opbou van die gemeenskap van die gelowiges Die bediening is aan die kerk gegee vir die

opbou van die gelowiges sodat gelowiges hul dienswerk kan verrig.

- Die einddoel van wedersydse bedienings in Efesiërs 4:13 is: “So sal ons uiteindelik almal kom tot die werklike eenheid in ons geloof en in ons kennis van die Seun van God. Dan sal ons, sy kerk, soos ’n volgroeide mens wees, so volmaak en volwasse soos Christus” (Olwagen 2007:142).

3.2.2 Eksterne roeping

Die identiteit van die kerk is in wese missionaal (Bosch 1991:392). Volgens Hendriks (2004:25) bestaan die gemeenskap van die gelowiges uit lidmate wat betrokke by die wêreld is. Die gebed, “laat U koninkryk kom”, vra ’n missionale praxis in gemeentes (Hendriks 2004:32). Murphy (1975:190) definieer die eksterne roeping van die kerk: “The mission of the church is to establish a rapport with people by our presence among them. Then we proclaim the Gospel to them. This implies to persuade them to make a clear-cut decision for Christ. Finally, we work to incorporate them into worshipping groups”.

3.3 Potensiaal van lidmate

Om lidmate optimaal te mobiliseer om hulle plek en funksie in die liggaam-van-Christus op te neem, sal dit nodig wees om elke lidmaat se potensiaal te ontdek en te ontwikkel. Met die begrip “potensiaal” word aan mense se talente, gawes of vaardighede gedink, die latente vermoëns waarvoor lidmate beskik en wat, indien dit geaktiveer word, aangewend kan word om belangrike doelstellings te bereik. Die vraag is of pastors die talente, gawes, vaardighede of potensiaal van die lidmate raaksien. Indien wel, kan hulle dit ontwikkel tot uitbreiding van die koninkryk? Volgens Olwagen (2007:61) sien die Bybel potensiaal in alle lidmate. God as Skepper het ’n bepaalde potensiaal in alle lidmate geplaas en lidmate behoort te ontwikkel om daardie volle Godgegewe potensiaal te ontsluit.

3.3.1 Karakter van die potensiaal

Olwagen (2007:61) meen dat God mense gebruik as sy instrumente om die goeie nuus te versprei. Derhalwe gee God ’n verskeidenheid genadegawes aan lidmate om in diens van die koninkryk te staan. Genadegawes stel lidmate in staat om onder leiding van die Heilige Gees spesiale take tot opbou van die gemeente te verrig. Schwarz (2001:42) beweer dat tot 80% van alle Christene onseker is oor hulle gawes wat aanleiding gee tot, soos hy dit beskryf, die kritieke toestand in die kerk. As ’n gemeente wil groei, behoort die pastors dringend aandag te skenk aan die ontdekking en toerusting van hulle lidmate. Die groei van ’n gemeente of liggaam staan in direkte verhouding tot die mate waarin alle lidmate van die liggaam hulle diens verrig soos onder andere in Efesiërs 4:12 uiteengesit (Murphy 1975:41). Maxwell (1993:103) is van mening dat mense die pastor se mees waardevolle bate is terwyl die groei van ’n gemeente of liggaam afhang van die mate waarin elke lid van die liggaam hul diens vervul. Conner (2000:107-108) meen dat die groei in gemeentes bepaal word deur die vermoë van ’n leier om deur mense te werk. Goeie leiers ontwikkel spanne waarin hulle saamwerk vir die uitvoer van die missionale opdrag.

3.3.2 Ontwikkeling van lidmaatpotensiaal

Daar is by wetenskaplikes uiteenlopende benaderingsverskille as dit kom by ontwikkelingsteorieë, juis omdat wetenskaplikes die probleem vanuit verskillende hoeke benader. Meyer en Van Ede (1990:51) wys daarop dat hierdie verskille in wese gegrond is in die mensbeskouing wat as uitgangspunt geneem word. Meyer en Van Ede (1990:97) is van mening dat optimaal ontwikkelde persone die vermoë het om hulle potensiaal ten volle te ontwikkel.

Oor die faktore wat tot optimale ontwikkeling lei is daar veral twee standpunte wat algemeen deur wetenskaplikes ondersteun word. Sekere psigoloë meen dat optimale ontwikkeling slegs onder gunstige omstandighede kan plaasvind, terwyl andere meen dat persone ten spyte van nadelige omstandighede optimaal kan ontwikkel (Meyer & Van Ede 1990:97-98). Wat van belang is, is dat beide uitgangspunte in werklikheid bevestig dat die lidmaat latente ontwikkelingspotensiaal het (Olwagen 2007:63). Richards en Bergin (1997:102) bevestig ook dat alle mense onbepaalde potensiaal het en stel dit soos volg: "As creations of God, eternal identities have noble, infinite potential".

Potensiaal dui op latente vermoëns wat, indien dit geaktiveer word, aangewend kan word om sekere doelstellings na te streef. Ontwikkeling dui daarop dat dit analoog is aan die ontwikkeling van 'n foto vanuit 'n negatief. Die volle potensiaal en eienskappe van die finale foto lê in die negatief opgesluit maar die potensiaal wat in die film vasgelê is, moet eers ontwikkel word voordat die volkome beeld bereik kan word.

Volgens Olwagen (2007:63) kan die twee begrippe saamgevoeg word. Potensiaalontwikkeling kan dan gedefinieer word as die proses waardeur die latente vermoëns van mense ontwikkel word. Die potensiaalontwikkelingsproses is 'n voortdurende proses aangesien alle mense voortdurend in 'n proses van groei en verandering is. In die lig van die studie beteken dit dat mense se ingeboude of latente geestelike gawes op sodanige wyse ontwikkel behoort te word dat hulle uiteindelik sinvol God se doel met hulle lewens kan bereik.

3.4 Gawes en bediening

Gawes en bediening is nodig vir die uitvoer van die sendingopdrag soos in Matteus 28:19 uiteengesit is. Om aan die roeping en uitvoering van die kerk se missionale opdrag gehoor te gee is daar volgens die apostel Paulus aan lidmate elkeen 'n gawe(s) gegee met die oog op die bediening van die liggaam en die bereiking van die wêreld (Murphy 1975:xi). Talle skrywers, waaronder MacArthur (1973:133), Banks (1980:63) en Pedersen (1984:32), stem saam dat alle lidmate in 'n gemeente 'n gawe(s) ontvang het en verantwoordelikheid behoort te aanvaar om dit tot heil van die gemeente uit te leef. Möller (1983:50) meen dat elke geestelike gawe gegee word met die oog op een of ander funksie wat in die liggaam-van-Christus verrig word.

3.4.1 Verskeidenheid van genadegawes

Die woord charisma is 'n breë en omvattende woord vir genadegawes, 'n guns wat iemand ontvang sonder enige verdienste van hulle eie (Möller 1997:57). Verskeie definisies is al voorgehou ter verduideliking. Paulus se bedoeling in die noem van die besondere gawes in Efesiërs 4:11 was nie om 'n volledige lys van dienste weer te gee nie (Hendriksen 1976:195). Dit gaan oor geskikte persone wat deur die Heilige Gees daargestel is om bepaalde take en dienste te verrig (Grosheide 1960:66) en om mense wat deur die Heilige Gees met gawes toebedeel is (Phillips 1993:117).

In sistematiese studies het dit die norm geword om die gawes te kategoriseer. Skrywers het hulle eie perspektiewe rondom die saak en daar bestaan nie eenstemmigheid nie. Groepering kan op verskeie maniere plaasvind, afhangende van watter uitgangspunt 'n skrywer het (Jackson 1982:181). Volgens MacGorman (1974:35) is die klassifisering van die gawes nie vanuit die Skrif gefundeer nie. Nêrens poog die Skrif om die gawes te klassifiseer nie. Van Schalkwyk (1988:29) waarsku dat die vrymag van God nie aan bande gelê moet word deur die baie kategorieë waarin die gawes van die Heilige Gees geplaas word nie. Dit blyk uit die bestudering van die Nuwe Testament dat sekere gawes nouer met mekaar skakel as ander. Daar is oorvleueling en ineenvloeiing. Sekere gawes word saam geklassifiseer vanweë die aard en funksionering daarvan. Met die liggaam-van-Christus-metafoor word die interafhanklikheid en onderlinge belang van

die gawes beklemtoon in die sin dat alle gawes essensieel vir die gesonde funksionering van die gemeente is.

Daar bestaan nie “hoër” of “laer” klas gelowiges nie, soos daar ook nie eksklusiewe voorkeurgawes bestaan nie. Daarom behoort alle gelowiges ’n bydrae tot diens in die gemeente te lewer. Die wese van dienswerk maak ook geen verskil tussen lidmaat en ampsdraer nie. Alle gelowiges beoefen hulle dienswerk deur middel van die gawes.

God gee aan individuele gelowiges verskillende gawes om verskillende dienste op ’n diversiteit van diensterreine te verrig. Alle gelowige beoefen hulle funksie ooreenkomstig die gawe(s) wat hulle ontvang.

3.4.2 *Verskeidenheid van bediening*

Wanneer word ’n bediening as funksioneel beskou, in die lig van Stedman (1972:41) se stelling, dat ’n bediening die sfeer is waarbinne ’n gawe deur ’n lidmaat funksioneer? Olwagen (2007:69) is van mening dat ’n latente genadegawe in die praktyk van weinig nut vir die koninkryk van God is as dit nie beoefen word nie. Die oomblik wanneer hierdie gawe beoefen word, vind bediening plaas, hetsy binne of buite gemeentelike verband, of dit deur die gemeente erken word of nie en of dit kortstondig, sporadies of voortdurend van aard is. Die ideaal is dat die beoefening daarvan op ’n voortdurende basis sal wees en dat dit deur die gemeente erken en bevestig word. Fenhagen (1977:21) verklaar dat ’n “bediening, handeling” alleenlik in sy Naam beoefen behoort te word en nie iets is wat lidmate uit hul eie behoort te beoefen nie. Hy meen dat dit iets is wat Christus in, deur en met mense doen. Warren (1995:16-17) meen dat gemeentes vanself sal groei as hulle gesond is, terwyl Fenhagen (1977:134) noem dat die liggaam alleenlik gesond sal wees wanneer die gelowige aktief betrokke is met die funksies waartoe God hulle geroep het.

3.4.3 *Verskeidenheid van werkinge*

Stedman (1972:42) definieer die verskeidenheid van werkinge as volg: “The term refers to the degree of power by which a gift is manifested or ministered on a specific occasion, and also to which gift manifests through whom on what occasion ...” Dit is die prerogatief van God om te bepaal wat deur die verskillende bedieninge en die beoefening van die gawes vermag moet word. So byvoorbeeld het Johannes die Doper nie een wonderwerk gedoen nie. Nogtans verklaar Jesus in Matteus 11:11 dat daar onder dié wat uit vroue gebore is, nie een opgestaan het wat groter as hy is nie. God bepaal deur wie Hy watter gawe wil gee. Vervolgens enkele gedagtes rondom die praktiese implikasie van die liggaam-van-Christus-metafoer.

4. BEDIENING VAN DIE AGS-LIDMAAT

Klemverskuiwings maak dit nodig vir die kerk om indringend haar selfverstaan te hersien en ’n nuwe prakties-teologiese ekklesiologie te ontwikkel. Onder ’n prakties-teologiese ekklesiologie word verstaan ’n metafoer vir kerkwees wat nie soseer konsentreer op die wese van die kerk nie, maar op die lewe van die kerk. Dit is ’n poging om die wese van die kerk in terme van haar funksie te verstaan. ’n Prakties-teologiese ekklesiologie toets die konfessionele basis van die kerk krities aan die gehalte, kwaliteit en volwassenheid van lidmate wat in die wêreld gestalte moet gee aan die boodskap van die kerk. Die vraag is nie of mense aan die ware kerk behoort nie, maar eerder of hulle ware en lewende lidmate van die kerk is (Louw 1992:121).

Vanweë die toenemende proses van sekularisasie, vertegniserings, rekenariserings, meganiserings en kommersialiserings vandag bestaan daar ’n toenemende behoefte by mense na humaniteit en intimiteit. Met die oog op dié belangrike eksistensiële behoeftes kies die prakties-teologiese ekklesiologie die liggaam-van-Christus-metafoer. Die verstaan van die kerk

as liggaam-van-Christus gee die beste uitdrukking aan die primêre funksie van die kerk in die een-en-twintigste eeu met 'n verwagte toename in probleme soos armoede en geweld en die uitleef van die funksie van die kerk deur versorging, diens en gemeenskap (Louw 1992:124).

In die liggaam-van-Christus-metafoor tree die pastor op die agtergrond en word die bediening van die lidmaat herstel. Waar lidmate se bydrae moontlik voorheen as minderwaardig beskou is, val die klem in die liggaam-van-Christus-metafoor op die priesterlike bediening en geestelike gesag van die gelowiges (Mark. 16:17; 1 Pet. 2:9; Op. 5:10).

Olwagen (2007:71) meen dat 'n gaping tussen pastors en lidmate oor die jare so ontwikkel het omdat die kerk van die Bybelse patroon van gemeente-wees afgewyk het. Die kerk het 'n instituut en organisasie geword in plaas van organisme. Dit het al meer gegaan om die elite, titels, status en professionalisme. Een van die grootste struikelblokke wat die plaaslike gemeente verhinder om as liggaam-van-Christus te funksioneer, die onderskeid is wat daar gemaak word tussen "geestelikes" en "lidmate". Alle Christene is geroep om volk van God te wees (1 Kor. 1:2; Ef. 4:1,4; 2 Tim. 1:9). Daarom is alle mense veronderstel om dienswerkers te wees.

4.1 Rol van die besondere ampte

Navorsing (Olwagen 2007:158-185) bevind dat 'n direkte verband tussen hoë vlakke van betrokkenheid van pastore en lae vlakke van lidmaatbetrokkenheid in bedieningsvelde bestaan. Die statistieke toon die dringendheid van die vestiging en verdere ontwikkeling van vrywillige dienswerkerspanne in gemeentes. Die klem op die dienswerk van die gelowiges en die ontwikkeling van die individuele gawes is gemik op die regstelling van 'n fundamentele probleem, "klerikalisme" (Hendriks 1994:187-188).

In die klassieke Reformatoriese model is die besondere ampte op gelyke vlak met gemeentelede en is daar geen sprake van 'n hiërargie of ampsbemiddeling nie.

Die besondere ampte word as essensieel beskryf. Die belangrikste rede waarom die besondere amp binne die Gereformeerde kerke met die term essensieel beskryf kan word, is omdat die amp in die Skrif gefundeerd word en nie van tyd en omstandighede afhanklik gemaak kan word nie. Oor die feit dat die besondere ampte as instelling 'n Bybelse gegewe is, is daar geen onduidelikheid nie (Heyns 1992:54).

Versteeg (1988:49-53) beklemtoon eweneens die essensie van die besondere amp deur 'n onderskeid te tref tussen amp en diens. Alle gelowiges is tot diens geroep, maar alle dienswerk het nie 'n amptelike karakter nie. In Efesiërs 4:11-12, kry diens volgens hom 'n amptelike karakter wanneer dit daarop gerig is om ander gelowiges (vgl. Ef. 4:11 - heiliges) te help om dienswerk te verrig. Versteeg (1988:53) stel dit dat die werk van besondere ampte die karakter het "van een dienst ten dienste van het dienen van alle anderen in die kerk".

Die besondere ampte verseker dat die dienste van lidmate sinvol gekoördineer word en nie kontraproduktief is nie. Die besondere ampte werk ook stimulerend en vormend, die besondere ampte voed die liggaam-van-Christus. Versteeg (1988:57) is van mening dat die diens van gelowiges afhanklik is van die besondere ampte. Hy gaan sover om te sê: "... zo kan en zonder de dienst van de ambtsdragers geen functioneren van de gelovigen zijn".

In die Reformatoriese model word die besondere ampte en die gemeente duidelik van mekaar onderskei. Die besondere ampte en die gemeente staan in 'n afhanklike verhouding tot Christus. Tog word daar 'n bepaalde gesag aan die besondere ampte gegee soos gesimboliseer in hulle ordening en bevestiging wat dikwels in die praktyk lei tot die ontwikkeling van "klerikalisme" en "hiërargieë".

4.2 Organisasie en strukture

Die liggaam-van-Christus-model sluit nie organisering en strukture uit nie. Dit verskil van die

meer institusionele kerk daarin dat:

- Die institusionele model nie tot die primêre verhef word nie, maar op sekondêre vlak die liggaam-van-Christus dien;
- Die besondere ampte in die kerk nie hiërargies bepaal word nie, maar funksioneel volgens die gawes wat Christus gee;
- Die onderskeid tussen die besonder ampte en die lidmate wegval;
- Die gawes van lidmate geïdentifiseer word en elkeen opgelei word om hulle bediening in die liggaam-van-Christus te vervul.

Deemer (1976:94) sê: “As the church sees itself more and more as the body of Christ, it will grow, strengthen, prosper, and lead its people; and it won’t have to worry about preserving the institution... I can envision nothing in the church of the future that would contribute more to its healthy spiritual growth”.

4.3 Eerste gemeentes na Pinksterdag

Reg in die begin van die eerste gemeente was daar persone wat as leiers en voorgangers in die gemeente na vore getree het, te wete die apostels. Gou is daar egter besef dat hierdie leiers nie in staat was om al die gemeentelike funksies te vervul nie. Diakens is gekies en aangestel om met die nodige taak van die versorging van die weduwees en die bediening van die tafels behulpsaam te wees. Die apostels kon hulle besig hou met gebed en die bediening van die Woord (Hand. 6:1-7). Renwick (1958:19) se waarneming is dat alhoewel in die breër kerk die tydelike ampte van apostels, profete en evangeliste, en in die plaaslike gemeente die meer permanente ampte van ouderlinge, en diakens bestaan het, die betrokkenheid van gewone lidmate saam met die voorgangers in die algemene aktiwiteite van die gemeente ’n kenmerk van die eerste gemeentes was. Neill & Weber (1963:29) beskryf hoe gewone lidmate ook deelgeneem het aan die liturgie, lering, dissipline, Christelike diens en getuigenislewering.

4.4 Waarom institusionalisering in die kerk plaasgevind het

Waarom het die kerk sy aanvanklike liggaam-van-Christus-karakter ten koste van institusionalisering of te wel die herder-kudde-karakter prysgegee? Wat was die rede(s) wat aanleiding gegee het daartoe dat die vroeë lewenskragtige gemeentes van Pinksterdag wie se godsdienstige lewe hoofsaaklik bestaan het uit ’n grenslose onderwerping aan die gesag en praktyke van die kerk, gegroei het tot ’n kerk waar die werking van die Gees plek moes maak vir menslike hiërargieë en uiterlike simbole?

Snyder (1975:49-50) meen die drie sentrale elemente van die Mosaïese verbond was die offer, priesterskap en tabernakel. Gekoppel aan die Mosaïese wet, het dit die basis vir die verbondverhouding tussen God en sy volk gevorm. In die Nuwe Testament verneem ons dat Christus self die vervulling van die offer, priesterskap en tabernakel is.

- Christus self is ons Hoëpriester (Heb. 4:14; 8:1);
- Die algemene priesterskap het oorgegaan op alle gelowiges (1 Pet. 2:9; Open. 1:6);
- So ook is Christus die ware en volmaakte offer (Heb. 7:27; 9:14) en die vervulling waarvan die tabernakel die heenwysing was (Heb. 8-9). Die gelowiges self, die kerk, word nou ’n lewende en heilige offer (Rom.12:1,2) asook die tabernakel of tempel waarin die Heilige Gees woon (2 Kor. 6:16).

Vir meer as ’n eeu het die kerk aan hierdie waarhede vasgehou, maar daarna toegegee aan die versoeking om die gemeenskap van die heiliges in ’n institusie te verander. Solm (1926:38-39) voer aan dat die natuurlike mens ’n gebore vyand van die Christendom is. Enersyds is daar die verlange na verlossing deur Jesus, maar andersyds is daar teenstand hierteen. Die natuurlike mens wil onder die wet bly. Hulle weerstaan die vryheid van die evangelie en begeer ’n wettiese

en sigbare institusie.

Kerkgeboue van goud en edelgesteentes, indrukwekkende gewade, plegtige seremonies en ander tekens van die gesag van klerikalisme en die hiërargie het hierdie neiging bevredig en die verwêreldliking en institusionalisering van die kerk aangeblaas tot op 'n vlak wat uiteindelik aanleiding gegee het tot die Hervorming.

4.5 Invloed van Montanisme op institusionalisering

Daar word laastens kortliks gekyk na die invloed van Montanisme op institusionalisering in die vroegste Kerk. Volgens Burger en Nel (1987:21-24) was daar reeds teen die middel van die tweede eeu 'n mate van wêreldgesindheid in die kerk en geestelike louheid te bespeur. Die inspirasie en leiding van die Heilige Gees wat kenmerkend was van die vroeë kerk het afgeneem. 'n Afname in die voorkoms van die gewaes van die Heilige Gees was te bespeur (Renwick 1958:34). Daar is begin om 'n onderskeid tussen "geestelikes" en "gewone lidmate" te maak. Voorgangers is al hoe meer gesien as priesters wat die heil deur middel van die sakramente aan leke meedeel. Die wederkomsverwachting het ook ernstig afgeneem. Die negatiewe invloed van Gnostisisme met klem op die rede het ook grootliks tot hierdie toestand bygedra. Al hierdie faktore het daartoe bygedra dat die kerk al hoe meer in formalisme verval het.

Die toestand het aanleiding gegee tot die opkoms van 'n vernuwings- of herlewingsbeweging. Montanisme kan waarskynlik gesien word as die eerste van sulke bewegings in die kerkgeskiedenis. Montanus het volgens Renwick (1958:34) beweer dat hy 'n spesiale openbaring van die Heilige Gees ontvang het en 'n begeesterde herlewingsveldtog begin. Die beweging het egter gekies om hulself te onttrek en af te skei om 'n eksklusiewe en geslote groep te vorm. Hy meen dat dit die hoofrede was waarom Montaniste in buitensporighede en fanatisme verval het.

Groeiende ontevredenheid oor die toestand van die kerk noodsaak Montanus om teen ongeveer 156 n.C. 'n nuwe beweging te stig. Hulle was uiters toegewyde Christene wat op die leiding van die Heilige Gees gesteun het. Die charismata het vrylik voorgekom, byvoorbeeld glossolalie, profesie en genesing. In hulle aanbidding en dienste het hulle teruggekeer na die eenvoud, vryheid en spontaniteit van die vroegste Kerk, waar alle gelowiges in die eredienste gedeel en meegeleef het. Die verwagting van die spoedige wederkoms van die Here bereik ook 'n nuwe hoogtepunt.

Montanisme het ook in dieselfde strik as menige reaksie-beweging teen die toestand van die kerk in die latere kerkgeskiedenis getrap. So 'n reaksiebeweging raak dikwels ongebalanseerd in hulle reaksie. Dit het in vele opsigte met die Montaniste gebeur. 'n Gesonde verwagting van die wederkoms is deur wilde spekulasies daarvoor vervang. Spontane aanbidding het in wilde ekstase, geesdrywery en entoesiasme met onbeheerste fanatisme verval. Vryheid het in ongebondenheid verander. Profesie is oorbeklemtoon ten koste van die Skrif. Ware heiligmaking het in wettisisme en onverdraagsaamheid teenoor ander ontaard. Renwick (1958:35-36) stel dit dat die leiers in die kerk verhef is en beskou is as diegene wat die sake van God in hulle hande gehad het.

5. VERANTWOORDELIKHEID VAN DIE PASTOOR

In die liggaam-van-Christus-metafoer word die verantwoordelikheid van elke lidmaat van die liggaam beklemtoon. Volgens die Nederduitse Hervormde Kerk van Afrika (1989:38) word predikante aangemoedig om hulle lidmate bewus te maak van die taak wat elkeen van hulle in die kerk behoort te verrig. Verder behoort predikante daarop te konsentreer om hulle gemeentelede te begelei tot die besef waar hulle self vir die opbouing van die gemeente verantwoordelik is.

In die AGS speel die pastore 'n belangrike rol in die vesting van 'n bedieningsmetafoer vir

vrywillige dienswerkers in gemeentes. Die navorsingsbevindings toon die hoë vlakke van betrokkenheid van pastore in die bedieningsvelde Olwageng (2007:179). Die statistieke toon verder die dringendheid van die vestiging en verdere ontwikkeling van vrywillige dienswerkerspanne in gemeentes. Die proses begin by hulle. Hulle is verantwoordelik om die paradigmaskuif na 'n liggaam-van-Christus-metafoorgemeente te maak deur die potensiaalontwikkeling en toerusting van hulle lidmate, en hulle dan te bemagtig om vrywillige dienswerk te beoefen.

Blackaby en Blackaby (2001:18-20) beklemtoon die verantwoordelikheid van pastore om God se doelwit vir hulle lewens na te streef as hy geestelike leierskap soos volg definieer: "Spiritual leadership is moving people to God's agenda". Die vraag wat gestel word is: Wat is God se agenda? Blackaby en Blackaby (2001:127) beskryf die hoofsaak van die pastoor soos volg: "It is to take their people from where they are to where God wants them to be." Daarom is dit belangrik dat pastore gemeentemobilisasie as 'n prioriteit sal sien en dit as een van hulle primêre leierskapsfunksies sal implementeer.

Conner (2000) verwys in sy boek: "Transforming your Church" veral na twee paradigmaskuiwe wat die pastor behoort te maak om die gemeente te mobiliseer deur "gewone lidmate" te bemagtig vir vrywillige dienswerk. Die implementering van paradigmaskuiwe word deur die skrywer as imperatief beskou vir die sukses van die doelwit. Die paradigmaskuiwe word soos volg gestel.

- "A leadership shift from ministers to equippers" Conner (2000:93-112);
- "A ministry shift from consumers to contributors" Conner (2000:113-134).

In kort beteken dit dat:

- Pastore meer lidmate sal toerus vir vrywillige dienswerk (vgl. Ef. 4:11-12);
- Toegeruste lidmate vrywillige dienswerk sal verrig (vgl. 1 Pet. 4:10).

6. SLOT

In die artikel kon daar gekyk word na die liggaam-van-Christus-metafoor, asook die AGS-kerkstruktuur en hoe die AGS histories deur sekere ontwikkelingsfasies gegaan het en dat daar binne hierdie algemene ontwikkeling ook 'n ontwikkeling in die bedieningspatroon was. Die kerk is as liggaam-van-Christus-metafoor ondersoek en as 'n Bybelse alternatief voorgestel. Lidmaatpotensiaal, die karakter en veral die ontwikkeling daarvan word as 'n noodsaaklikheid vir die effektiewe uitvoering van die missionale opdrag beskou. Die verskeidenheid gewone bedieninge wat aan die kerk gegee word, is ondersoek, ook besondere ampte wat gelowiges vir hulle dienswerk toerus. Om die missionale opdrag suksesvol uit te voer, behoort lidmate hulle dienswerk uit te leef. Die onderskeid wat daar tussen "geestelikes" en "gewone lidmate" ontstaan het, is uitgewys. Die pastor is verantwoordelik om die invloed van institutionalisme teen te staan deur "gewone lidmate" te bemagtig vir vrywillige dienswerk.

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TREFWOORDE

Liggaam van Christus
Roeping
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KEY WORDS

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Die rol van die kerk as een van die instellings in die samelewing wat mense moreel vorm

ABSTRACT

The church as one of the institutions in society plays an important role in the moral development of people

Throughout the ages, the church as one of the institutions in society has played an important role in the moral development of people; both in South Africa and abroad. However, since the recent political revolution in South Africa and the adoption of a new constitution, the state has been shifting into a neutral religious direction, so that no religion is favoured over another. This does not mean that churches have a less important role to play today. In fact, Christian churches still have a significant effect on communities. Therefore they have an even greater responsibility to convey Christian values and principles in order to educate their members in these matters in a dedicated way. For this purpose, the church needs a clear formulation of its moral message, as well as programmes by which to convey this message to its people.

1. INLEIDING

Die artikel hanteer die belangrike saak van die rol van die kerk in die post-apartheid Suid-Afrika – ’n vraagstuk wat om konstante besinning vra. Dit is ’n diagnostiese artikel wat ’n oorsig wil gee van die verskillende standpunte oor die rol van die kerk as een van die instellings in die samelewing wat die moraliteit van mense vorm. ’n Beoordeling van dié standpunte word aan die einde van die artikel gedoen aan die hand van Van der Ven se standpunt oor die rol van godsdiens en morele vorming.

In die artikel word die volgende bespreek: Enkele definisies van moraliteit, die kerk as morele gemeenskap en die verhouding tussen godsdiens en moraliteit.

2. DEFINISIE VAN MORALITEIT

Talle publikasies oor morele vorming het die laaste om en by drie dekades uit die pen van Protestantse teoloë verskyn. Van die belangrikste werke in dié verband is dié van die sogenaamde postliberale teoloë in Noord-Amerika, denkers soos veral Stanley Hauerwas. Hierdie denkers staan krities teenoor die sogenaamde moderne benadering tot moraliteit. Volgens hierdie benadering word moraliteit verskraal tot die neem van morele besluite op rasionele gronde. Op hulle beurt staan hulle weer onder die invloed van filosowe soos Wittgenstein, MacIntyre en Taylor wat eweneens die modernistiese idee van ’n tradisie-onafhanklike, outonome etiek verwerp.

Binne die raamwerk van ’n postliberale, tradisie-afhanklike moraliteit word die deur geopen vir die beklemtoning van die morele agent (spesifiek die vorming van daardie agent) tot ’n deugsame mens binne die geloofsgemeenskap aan die hand van die narratiewe van daardie

gemeenskap. Roebben (1997:436) is van mening dat moraliteit moet bydra tot sosiale kohesie: “De jeugd verkeert in moreel verval en dat is hoofdzakelijk te wijten aan de commercialisering van hun ontspanning, een gebrek aan ouderlijke interesse en autoriteit, en het fallen van morele en religieuse opvoeding”.

Kretzschmar (2004:86) handhaaf die opinie dat moraliteit as “obedience to the unenforceable” gedefinieer word. “If morality and moral formation must not be confused with legalism, neither must they be confused with moralism. Moralism is pure human effort to be moral, often an anxious attempt at self-improvement. It is neither motivated nor assisted by God’s grace. Christian morality, on the other hand, is good character and right action that develop out of faith and love for God.” Die woord moraliteit het sy oorsprong in die Griekse woord *ethos*. Die Griekse woord *ethos* dui oorspronklik op die skuiling of woonplek van ’n dier. Van dié woord word afgelei dat moraliteit gedrag volgens gewoonte is. Die begrip: moraliteit doen dieselfde vir die samelewing as wat die woonplek vir diere doen – dit gee sekuriteit, beskerming, standvastigheid en onderhoud. Moraliteit word dus die “gom” van die samelewing (Birch & Rasmussen 1989:38). Die Latynse werkwoordsvorm van *ethos* beteken “om te meet”. Die bedoeling is dat sake van morele aard geweeg en gemeet moet word. Daar moet ’n onderskeid getref word tussen wat reg of verkeerd, goed of sleg is. Vir Birch en Rasmussen en andere is die onderskeiding tussen moreel en immoreel dieselfde as die onderskeiding tussen wat moreel goed of moreel verkeerd of sleg is.

Die Nederlandse geleerde J Douma definieer die begrip moraliteit as die gebruike van die gemeenskap waar die onderskeid tussen reg en verkeerd van toepassing is. Filosofe soos Sokrates, Plato en Aristoteles het oor die eeue heen vrae gestel oor moraliteit. Dié vrae dui aan of dit reg of verkeerd, goed of sleg is. Die basiese vrae wat gevra word, is onder andere: “Wat is die sin van ons lewe, en hoe behoort ons te lewe? Wat moet ek met my lewe maak? Watter soort mense moet ons wees?”

AW Musschenga (1988) onderskei tussen breëre en engere moraliteit. Met “breëre moraliteit” bedoel hy daardie kwessies wat ook deel uitmaak van die etiese vrae, nl wat ’n goeie samelewing en goeie mense behels. Met “engere moraliteit” bedoel hy die voorskrifte of reëls vir gedrag wat die mense in ’n gemeenskap in staat stel om in harmonie en vrede te leef. Moraliteit slaan dus op die sedelike gedrag van ’n persoon volgens die waardes, norme en gewoontes.

Mense se lewenskwaliteit moet bevorder word om sodoende ’n stabiele samelewing te skep. In die soeke na die herstel van morele waardes in ons land, kan daar so maklik in moralisme verval word. Met moralisme word bedoel die oproep tot mense om goeie morele waardes na te streef om sodoende van die samelewing ’n beter en veiliger plek vir almal te maak.

Die filosoof Immanuel Kant verstaan moraliteit “als iets waartoe wij ons verplicht weten, ondanks alle neigingen die ons tot handelen aanzette. Karakteristiek voor moreel handelen is dat het handelen is uit plichtsbefes” (Leijen 1992:90).

Moraliteit ontspring uit geloofsgemeenskap, maw word bepaal deur jou verhouding met God. Baie toegewyde mense sonder moraliteit, dikwels veral teenoor groepe wat van hulle verskil. Die mense wat bv apartheid ondersteun het, het ook sg “verhoudings met God gehad” – en tog het hulle ’n totaal immorele politieke stelsel ondersteun. Moraliteit bestaan as deel van die gemeenskap se toewyding aan God. Vroeëre filosofieë het ingesluit die begeleiding van siele of die siel se morele vorming.

Birch en Rasmussen gee ’n spesifieke siening oor Christelike filosofie: “The commonality of moral practice schools and the Christian communities is often striking. Thus Galen, a non-Christian writer of the second century, speaks about ‘the Christian philosophy’ as one which has also led people to lives of self-discipline and strict control in matters of food and drink and sexual conduct; to pursuit of justice; and to a ‘contempt’ for death, i.e., a lack of fear of death.

And Justin Martyr, writing earlier in the same century, presents his conversion to Christianity as a conversion to this particular ‘philosophy’, albeit one in competition with the bioi (ways or styles of life) of other schools” (1989:24).

Volgens hierdie skrywers was vroeëre Christene se bekering ’n bekering tot ’n spesifieke gemeenskapsmoraliteit wat deur gepaardgaande geloofstelsels, lering en instruksies ondersteun is, asook jou afgerig het vir ’n spesifieke “way of life” (Birch & Rasmussen 1989:22-23).

Abraham Kuitert konstateer dat die moraal van Europa veronderstel is om Christelik te wees. Hy meen egter dat die Christendom nie die uitvinder van moraliteit was nie, maar slegs die beskermer daarvan. Moraliteit, sê hy, is so oud soos die mensdom self. Dit is die belangrike faktor as dit kom by die mens se sosialiseringprosesse (1999:284).

Verder meen Kuitert dat die mensdom moraliteit per definisie op ’n teenstrydige manier toepas (1999:284). Hy gebruik seksualiteit as ’n voorbeeld. Hy gaan van die algemene stelling uit dat alle mense ’n behoefte aan ’n maat het. Moraliteit word nou gebruik om die samelewing so gemaklik moontlik te maak. Aanwysings vir morele handelings kom nie van bo nie; dit is ook nie geopenbaar soos wat sommige Christelike gemeenskappe dit te kenne wil gee nie (1999:285). Moraliteit bevorder die sosialiseringproses deur die mens as objek te gebruik (Kuitert 1999:285). ’n basis van ’n morele beraad is aan die een kant die gemeenskaplike interpretasie van die tradisie. Aan die ander kant is dit dat elke mens in alle vryheid sy eie interpretasie sal doen. Albei interpretasies moet dan met mekaar geïntegreer word.

Kuitert is ook van mening dat ’n morele beraad nie met niks begin nie, of, soos hy dit stel, “begint niet bij nul” (1999:289). Moraliteit is volgens hom altyd gelyk aan die ander. Die verantwoordelikheid berus by die individu.

Kant verstaan moraliteit “als iets waartoe wij ons verplicht weten, ondanks alle neigingen die ons tot handelen aanzette. Karakteristiek voor moreel handelen is dat het handelen is uit plichtsbesef” (Leijen 1992:90). Sonder die morele tradisie, kan geen moraliteit bestaan nie, want moraliteit gaan oor die oorlewering en die instruksie van “die goeie mens” (Kuitert 1999:290). Hy gebruik die morele opvoeding, ens. Die bestaande morele tradisie vorm dus volgens hom die beginpunt van ’n morele beraad.

Kuitert is verder van mening dat die publieke moraliteit gedra moet word deur die deelnemers wat in die vryheid hulle bydrae lewer (1999:290). Die deelnemers vorm die basis van die moraliteit. Sonder outonome draers, kan die morele beraad nie begin nie (Kuitert 1999:290).

Louise Kretzschmar gee die volgende definisie van morele vorming: “Moral formation can be defined as a process of character that issues in right and good conduct. Moral formation involves both ‘being’ and ‘doing’ (see Kretzschmar 2000); it is the development of righteous character through the exercise of virtues such as integrity, goodness, fairness and caring. This leads to the formation of the bedrock of moral identity which can issue in moral conduct such as just and compassionate action” (2004:86).

3. DIE KERK AS MORELE GEMEENSAP

Lewis Mudge is van oordeel dat daar ’n paar belangrike, maar ook moeilike, ondernemings is wat die morele samelewing langsaam dra. Die kerk en ander geloofsgemeenskappe het ’n belangrike rol hierin te speel, alhoewel dit ’n breë samelewingsverantwoordelikheid is. Wanneer daar oor die kerk as morele gemeenskap gepraat word, vind Mudge sy posisie in ’n sakramentele verstaan van die kerk. Dit sluit die ekklesiologiese en morele realiteit in. Só kom hy tot die opvatting dat die kerk as *oikos* en *polis* in albei die Bybel en kontemporêre wêreld optree. Morele vorming binne die kerk bring gemeenskappe voort in voeling met die wêreld met al sy probleme, daaglik geskaaf deur die vertelling van die Christusverhaal. Sulke morele vorming, sê Mudge, maak

dissipels van geslag tot geslag. Daarom behoort die kerk homself te herontdek as die basis vir morele vorming.

Die rol van geskrifte in die gemeenskap, asook die besondere bewussyn dat hulle 'n volk is, was kenmerkend van sowel die Judaïsme as die Christendom. "Peoplehood" verwys nie na enkelgemeenskappe nie, maar na pluralisme en konfederasie. Die Jode glo aan die gemeenskaplike omsluiting van geloof in een God. Vroeëre Romeine sien die Christelike "Mense van die Weg" as 'n variant van die *Joodse* gemeenskaplikheid.

Downs meen "morality is, to a large extent, a matter of values. What a person values will shape the moral decisions he/she makes. So the church has been concerned with teaching people to value what God values and to hate what God hates. Unfortunately the approach normally used by the church of naming and communicating Christian values has not always been successful ... The values and moral perspective so carefully taught at home and at church were abandoned with relative ease when challenged by a secular society" (1997:96).

Smit beweer dat daar oor die algemeen duidelikheid is oor wat die "kerk" is of veronderstel is om te wees (1996b:120-121). Dit is redelik duidelik hoe "samelewings" en "samelewingsverbande" funksioneer of behoort te funksioneer en watter verbande saam 'n goeie samelewing behoort uit te maak. Dit is redelik duidelik wat dié soort kerk se *unieke*, dit wil sê eiesoortige, spesifieke, rol in dié soort samelewing behoort te wees (1996b:120).

Smit sê dat daar inderwaarheid nie iets soos "kerk" bestaan nie (1996b:120). Enige akademiese handboek of leerstuk van die kerk, maak dit met die eerste oogopslag baie goed duidelik. Reeds in die Nuwe Testamentiese tye en geskrifte kry 'n mens nie 'n enkelvoudige voorstelling van wat die kerk is of behoort te wees nie (Smit 1996b:120). Die kerk, volgens Smit (1996b:120), het deur die loop van eeue 'n versamelterm vir 'n oneindige verskeidenheid bewegings, institusionele en organisatoriese vorme, groepe en gemeenskappe geword. Die talle bekende pogings om iets van hierdie veelvoud te behou deur dit tot basiese trajekte of modelle te sistematiseer (sien Dulles 1989), sowel as die talle invloedryke pogings om keuses te maak en sekere manifestasies van die kerk met behulp van fundamentele eienskappe, kenmerke of merktekens as normatief te probeer verdedig, illustreer eintlik maar net die ingewikkeldheid en omstredenheid van dié onderneming verder.

Smit verwys na ses gestaltes van die kerk. Die eerste is die kerk as *aanbiddende gemeenskap* (byvoorbeeld in die sin van "Ons gaan Sondae kerk toe"). Die tweede is die kerk as *plaaslike gemeente* (byvoorbeeld in die sin van "Is julle aktiewe lidmate van die kerk?"). Derdens is die kerk as *denominasie* (byvoorbeeld in die sin van "Aan watter kerk behoort julle?"). Vierdens verwys hy na die kerk as (streeks- of nasionale) *ekumeniese liggaam* (byvoorbeeld in die sin van "Wat sê die kerk oor die werkloosheid in ons land?"). Dan volg die kerk as *vrywillige organisasie*, beweging, inisiatiefgroep, vereniging of diensgroep (byvoorbeeld in die sin van "Is die kerk aktief betrokke by die bewaring van die omgewing?"). Laastens noem hy die kerk as die *individuele gelowiges* (byvoorbeeld in die sin van "Die kerk is geroep om die lig van die wêreld te wees") (Smit 1996b:120). [Sien ook sy artikel (1996a) getiteld "Reformed Ethics and Economic Justice" in die *Nederduitse Gereformeerde Tydskrif (NGTT)* waarin hy ook die ses gestaltes beskryf. Al hierdie gestaltes het goeie potensiaal vir morele regenerasie. Sien verder Dulles se *Models of the Church. A critical assessment of the Church in all its aspects* (2nd edition) waarin hy die volgende gestaltes van die kerk onderskei: die kerk as instituut, as mistieke gemeenskap, as boodskapper en as dienskneg (1987: 34-89).

Bruce J. Nicholls (red.) (1986) onderskei die volgende gestaltes van die kerk. Die kerk (met spesifieke verwysing na die plaaslike gemeente) is die gemeente as lewende organisasie; die gemeente as georganiseerde gemeenskap; die gemeente as aanbiddende gemeenskap; die gemeente as delende gemeenskap en die gemeente as getuigende gemeenskap. Bush (1986:90)

is van mening dat die plaaslike gemeente die ruimte is waar God sy verlossingsplan aan die wêreld bekend maak.

Küng gaan van die voorveronderstelling uit dat die kerk ook as 'n "gemeenskap" beskou word (1973:84). Chapman is van mening "Community is one of those buzz-words which is used by religious and political thinkers throughout the world; it is often seen as the panacea for all the problems facing contemporary societies. If only we can give people face-to-face communities where everybody knows everybody else and where the communal values of family and tradition are upheld, so the argument goes, then all the problems of crime, lack of participation in politics, juvenile delinquency, teenage pregnancy, and other social disorder, will be almost solved" (2004:1).

Küng toon egter aan dat deur gemeenskap te benadruk, word die kerk (*ekklesia*) nie beskou as 'n abstrakte en verafgeleë superorganisasie met verskillende funksies wat bó die konkrete vergaderde gemeenskap geplaas is nie. Die kerk moet eerder gesien word as 'n gemeenskap van mense wat gereeld ontmoet op 'n gegewe plek en tyd met 'n gegewe doel (1973:84). Hy is van mening dat die kerk ook nie gesien moet word as 'n gediskonnekteerde, geïsoleerde en onafhanklike godsdienstige groep nie. Dit moet gesien word as 'n plek waar "the members, united through their individual service, of an all embracing fellowship" (1973:85) byeenkom.

Küng sê die term "kerk" word ook gewoonlik in verband gebring met die universele kerk (1973:85). Hy noem dat die plaaslike gemeente nie net tot die kerk behoort nie – die plaaslike gemeente *is* die kerk. Küng oordeel "the local church is not a small cell of the whole, which does not represent the whole and which has no purpose in itself. It is the real Church, to which in its own local situation everything is given and promised which it needs for the salvation of man in its own situation, the preaching of the Gospel, baptism, the Lord's Supper, different charisms and 89 ministries" (1973:85). Die kerk kan nie opgebreek of beperk word nie. Dit is die *ekklesia* van God en bestaan op alle plekke. Elke *ekklesia*, elke gemeente, die gemeenskap, is die Kerk van God (Küng 1973:83).

Omdat die kerk as 'n instituut binne die Suid-Afrikaanse samelewing nog steeds 'n beduidende invloed daarop uitoefen, is dit noodsaaklik dat die kerk die effektiwiteit van sy programme sal hersien, aangesien dit skynbaar nie die huidige morele verval kon verhoed nie. Die feit dat die staat tans geen godsdienstige bevoordeel nie, plaas 'n groter verantwoordelikheid op die kerk om sy boodskap en beginsels in die samelewing te laat geld en veral sy eie lidmate goed te onderrig in die waardes en norme wat hy voorstaan.

Om die rol van die kerk ten opsigte van morele vorming beter te belig, word verwys na die standpunte van internasionaal-erkende teoloë, byvoorbeeld Westerhoff, Merton Strommen (1979), Roebben, asook Suid-Afrikaanse teoloë soos Pityana en Villa-Vicencio, Burger (2000) en Jones.

Westerhoff reken dat die kerk vandag deur middel van effektiewe morele vorming die "gebroke ekologie" sinvol kan hervorm (1976:13). Met "gebroke ekologie" verwys hy na 'n situasie waarin die tradisioneel behoudende gesin, skool, kerk en die breër samelewing permanent verander is deur 'n pluraliteit van godsdienstige en sekulêre oortuigings. Rasmussen wys daarop dat die kerk, saam met die gesin, skool en woonbuurt as sogenaamde "communities of intimacy", 'n belangrike rol te speel het in morele vorming (1993:14). Rasmussen (1993:14) meen dat die benaming "kerk" dikwels beskou word as die deurslaggewende leidraad tot die ontbrekende wese en vorm van die samelewing. "Kerk" gee 'n naam aan die betrokke gemeenskap en onderskei dit van ander gemeenskappe (1993:14).

Aan die hand van twee voorbeelde verduidelik hy hoe dubbelsinnig die Christelike lewe kan wees: Die Afrikaner wat, ten spyte van 'n eerlik-geskoeide gewete wat met sorg en ywer deur moreel-toegewyde geslagte in 'n moreel-kragtige kerk gevorm is, apartheid verdedig. Vergelyk

ook die Amerikaanse televisiereeks *The Civil War*, en die prys wat hulle bereid was om te betaal vir hulle Christelike oortuigings (1993:14).

Pityana en Villa-Vicencio gaan van die voorveronderstelling uit dat ná die einde van die era van apartheid daar 'n nuwe uitdaging vir die kerk is om sy geloof in die lig van die maatskaplike, politiese en kulturele veranderinge en gepaardgaande strukturele armoede te herdefinieer. Dit is dus duidelik dat daar 'n sterk behoefte bestaan aan morele vorming.

Roebben sien morele opvoeding as 'n seismografiese funksie (1997: 436). Hy bedoel daarmee dat die jeug afstand doen van hulle waardes. Daar is dus 'n skerper demonstrasie van 'n beweging wat reeds in die samelewing aan die gang is. Roebben (1997:436) sê verder: "De stand van zaken in de hedendaagse theorievorming van de morele opvoeding is bij uitstek een seismograaf van de bewegingen in de sameleving: de moraalpedagogiek registreert de stilzwijgende veranderingen door methode ontwikkeling, zij vangt de schokgolven op door radicale standpuntbepalingen voor het welzijn van het kind en wordt ter verantwoording geroepen wanneer de samenleving uit haar legitimerend verhaal".

Mead gee 'n beskrywing van die paradigmaterskuiwing wat die kerk te wagte kan wees (1991:45). Hy meen dat die samelewingskonteks waarin die kerk hom tans bevind, grootliks verskil van dié van die vorige era. Dit beteken dat die kerk sy roeping en taak ten opsigte van die uitdagingen van sy tyd moet herdefinieer. In sy eie woorde: "In this society one has fewer and fewer opportunities to find community; congregations in the past have been important sources of community, and a major challenge to congregations everywhere is to feed the world's need for community of meaning and relationship"

Mead stel die volgende vraag: "Where is the community I knew as a child? What a tiresome refrain that has become. My nostalgia blots out things I'd rather not remember – such as living on the 'right' or 'wrong' side of the tracks, the systemic devaluation of women and girls, the inability to cope with ethnic diversity, the economy that favored me at the expense of many others, the racial phobias we breathed" (1991:45).

Volgens Mead het daar in die kerkgeskiedenis drie paradigmaterskuiwings plaasgevind (1991:45). Die eerste twee paradigmaterskuiwings verwys na die apostoliese paradigma (wat gegaan het oor die getuienistaak van die kerk) en die Christendom-paradigma (wat verwys na die uitbreiding na ander lande om die sendingtaak voort te sit). Die derde paradigma is nog in wording.

Mead sê die vernaamste uitdagingen van die kerk lê op die volgende terreine:

- die toerusting en opleiding van die amp van gelowiges;
- die herdefiniëring van die amp en rol van die predikant;
- die taak van teologiese beoefening; en
- die kerk se funksionering in sy administratiewe gestalte (1991:47).

Burger, 'n praktiese teoloog, bespreek die rol van die kerk in morele vorming aan die hand van vier belangrike vrae (2000:229):

3.1 Staan moraliteit sentraal genoeg in die Christelike geloof dat 'n mens só 'n bydrae van die kerk kan verwag?

Burger glo dat daar baie mense is wat nie werklik verwag dat die kerk 'n oplossing kan bied vir die morele krisis in die land nie. Volgens hom is die vraag eintlik of lede van die kerk die wil het om hulle lewe volgens ander waardes as dié van die wêreld in te rig. Hyself is daarvan oortuig dat die kerk 'n toonaangewende rol te speel het in die ontwikkeling van morele identiteit in die samelewing. Die kerk kan dus kan help met die oplossing van die morele krisis in Suid-Afrika.

Dit is vir Burger duidelik dat die kerk as geloofsgemeenskap, en in 'n mindere mate ook die skool by uitstek die omgewing is waar mense morele waardes kan internaliseer. Hy maan egter

dat ons altyd moet onthou dat die kerk slegs 'n instrument in die hand van die Heilige Gees is. Dit is slegs deur die werking van die Heilige Gees dat die mens die grondige hartsverandering en vernuwing van gedagtes kan beleef wat nodig is om 'n Geesvervulde lewe te voer en 'n moreel-goeie mens te wees. Die kerk bestaan dus nie in isolasie nie, maar moet goeie morele waardes in die wêreld uitleef en 'n verskil maak aan die nood van die wêreld.

Volgens Burger is dit belangrik dat 'n gemeente as geloofsgemeenskap met die oog op die skep van 'n beter samelewing meer aandag moet skenk aan die morele sy van die evangelie (2000:230-240). In die verlede, en selfs nou nog, gaan dit vir die gemeente eerder oor die regte geloof as oor die regte lewe. Mense dink dat die belydenis van 'n regte geloof outomaties lei tot die regte werke, terwyl 'n regte lewe en regte werke daagliks 'n doelbewuste keuse is. Dit gaan oor die keuse wat Christus sou gemaak het in bepaalde situasies en omstandighede. Christus se volgelinge moet immers in alles strewende om meer en meer soos Hy te wees.

In die verlede het bedieningspatrone, soos byvoorbeeld die sending, in so 'n mate beslag op gemeentes gelê dat ander aspekte soos die begeleiding van lidmate om 'n moreel-goeie lewe na die buite uit te leef, afsgekeep is. Dit het tot gevolg gehad dat die wêreld daarbuite die kerk begin kritiseer het as 'n groep skynheilige en apatiese mense wat met hulle monde bely dat hulle Christene is, maar wie se lewe nie daarvan getuig nie. Burger sê dat die kerk sodanig geloofwaardigheid verloor het en dat baie mense hulle nie meer aan die kerk se boodskap steur nie, omdat hulle nie ervaar dat kerkmense regtig anders is nie (2000: 232).

3.2 Hoe lyk 'n Christelike lewenstyl?

Hier gaan dit vir Burger oor die inhoud van die Christelike lewenstyl en die vraag na die uniekheid van die Christelike moraal in vergelyking met die algemene moraal wat ons as Christene met ander groepe deel.

As Christene glo ons dat ons moreel so moet leef dat die vrug van die Gees in ons lewe sigbaar kan wees. Ook verwag God van ons om in gehoorsaamheid heilig (moreel goed) te leef in ons strewende om gelykvormig aan Jesus Christus te wees. As Christene glo ons egter dat ook ongelowiges moreel goed kan leef omdat God die Skepper en Vader van alle mense is en sy wet in die hart van mense geskryf is.

3.3 Wat is die kerk se rol ten opsigte van morele vorming?

Volgens Burger het die kerk in die verlede baie moeite gedoen om mense te help om die geloofsinhoud reg te verstaan, terwyl min aandag aan die uitlewing van dié geloof gegee is. Daar is ook min aandag gegee aan die kerk se rol ten opsigte van morele vorming.

Met verwysing na Hauerwas se teorie oor morele vorming, sê Burger dat karakter nie in die eerste plek deur die rasonale oordrag van kennis gevorm word nie, maar deur sosialisering en modellering binne 'n gemeenskap aangeleer word (2000:237). In die konteks van die geloofsgemeenskap speel leiersfigure na wie as "modelle" of "helde" opgesien word 'n belangrike rol. Sulke gemeenskappe vind gewoonlik hulle identiteit, visie en energie in verhale wat oor die gemeenskap vertel word. Hierdie verhale speel 'n sentrale rol in die vorming en vestiging van waardes en deugde by die jongmense van die geloofsgroep.

Volgens Burger word deugde en deugsamheid ook gedeeltelik deur deelname aan die eiendommige (liturgiese) praktyke van die kerk gevorm. Dit is egter duidelik dat indien kennis nie met die nodige hartsverandering gepaard gaan nie, morele identiteitsvorming nie sal plaasvind nie en waardes nie sal internaliseer nie. Om hierdie rede is Burger se beliggamingsteorie baie belangrik (2000:239).

In die eerste plek wil hy in ooreenstemming met die reformasie ook binne die praktiese teologie daaraan erkenning gee dat geloofs- en morele vorming uiteindelik die werk van die Gees is.

Tweedens gaan hy van die veronderstelling uit dat die Gees sy vormingswerk doen terwyl ons in gehoorsaamheid aan God onself oopstel vir bepaalde geloofspraktyke.

3.4 Hoe vervul gemeentes en gelowiges die openbare funksie van die kerk?

Burger is van mening dat gemeentes en individuele gelowiges op ten minste vier vlakke 'n bydrae kan lewer (2000:241).

Die heel belangrikste is waarskynlik gereelde voorbidding vir die staat, owerhede en die openbare lewe. Dit is belangrik dat kerke hulle nie terugtrek in 'n ghetto-bestaan eenkant van die gemeenskap nie. Gemeentes en lidmate moet aangemoedig word om op konstruktiewe vlak betrokke te raak by hulle plaaslike gemeenskappe. Die kerk in die breë, asook plaaslike gemeentes en gelowiges, het die taak om aan die openbare gesprek deel te neem en te help met meningsvorming. Christene moet saampraat oor openbare kwessies en probleme en hulle perspektief daaroor deel maak van die gesprek. Christene het veral 'n plig om saam met die res van die samelewing erns te maak met die groot en knellende probleme wat die lewe van die samelewing bedreig. Die probleme en pyn van die land is ook ons pyn. Gemeentes en lidmate moet aangemoedig word om as Christene by openbare gemeenskapsaksies betrokke te raak en hulle gewig daar in te gooi.

Smit is van mening dat met betrekking tot ekonomiese geregtigheid, ons ook genoep word om te vra: "Beoefen ons ekonomiese geregtigheid? Beoefen ons kerk ekonomiese geregtigheid? Dra Suid-Afrikaanse kerke en gelowiges by tot die implementering van die Heropbou- en Ontwikkelingsprogram (HOP), of ondersteun ons net die visie en verwag implementering van ander (1996a:443)?"

Smit sê verder dat in die Belydenis van Belhar, die Verenigende Gereformeerde Kerk van Suider-Afrika erken het dat ons visie van God en sy geregtigheid ernstige implikasies vir onself, vir ons eie lewe as kerk en as gelowiges het (1996a:443-444).

Maar hoe raak die kerk betrokke in die bevordering van ekonomiese geregtigheid? Smit sê dat dit nodig is om versigtig onderskeid te maak wanneer ons die uitdrukking "kerk" in dié verband gebruik (1996a:444). "Kerk" het 'n verskillende betekenis vir verskillende mense en groepe.

In sy baie waardevolle studie oor die kerk, argumenteer Wolfgang Hüber dat verskeie mense verskillende assosiasies maak wanneer hulle die woord "kerk" hoor. Sommige dink aan die fisiese gebou waar aanbidding plaasvind, sommige dink aan ampsdraers soos die priesters self. Ander dink aan die lidmate, sommige dink aan aanbiddingsdienste, sommige dink aan streeks- en nasionale kerklike liggame, en nog ander dink aan ekumeniese liggame (sien die verwysing by Smit 1996a:444).

In 'n artikel "After ten years, public theology in post-apartheid South-Africa", spreek Koopman die mening uit dat die Suid-Afrikaanse sogenaamde "struggle"- en "status quo"-kerke kan voordeel trek uit Hauerwas se nadenke oor hoe en op watter maniere hulle betrokke kan raak in die samelewing. Hierdie kerke sal binne die samelewing betrokke moet raak, nie net om demokrasie te laat werk nie, maar om getrou te wees aan hulle roeping en aan die drie-enige God.

In die kerk se stryd om suksesvol by te dra tot die nuwe staat, moet die kerk waaksaam wees om nie in die strik van Konstantinisme te val nie. Dit is moontlik dat die vorige "status quo"-kerke gekoöpteer kan word om met die politieke en ekonomiese sisteem saam te werk as berouvolle gebaar vir hulle deelname aan apartheid. Hauerwas se teologie herinner die kerk egter aan sy unieke motivering en bydrae in die lig van die belangrike riglyne vir die rol van publieke teologie in die Suid-Afrikaanse kerke.

Jones (2005:8) by Burger (2000) aan wanneer hy sê dat ons in 'n wêreld lewe waar mense al hoe meer geneig is om self te kies tussen reg en verkeerd. Hierdie mense beskou hulleself as die

enigste bron vir die bepaling van moraliteit. Hulle kies doodgewoon die waardes waarmee hulle gemaklik voel.

Moraliteit kan egter nooit net 'n persoonlike saak wees nie. Waar individue nie deel is van 'n breër historiese, sosiale en godsdienstige konteks nie, kan 'n afgestompte moraliteit maklik ontstaan wat selfliefde, eiesinnigheid en eiebelang aanmoedig en versterk. Jones sê verder dat individue wat op grond van wat vir hulle voordeel inhou self besluit oor moraliteit, 'n etiek van verantwoordelikheid erg in die wiele kan ry. Waar moraliteit net op die self gerig is, ontstaan gewoonlik 'n stuk etiese egoïsme wat bitter min ruimte vir ander en vir God laat (2005:8).

4. GODSDIENS EN MORALITEIT

4.1 Die verhouding tussen godsdien en moraliteit

Godsdien het nie slegs 'n invloed op sogenaamde private morele aangeleenthede nie. Daar is oorgenoeg bewyse dat godsdien inderdaad mense se houding oor morele kwessies soos abortie, selfmoord, genadedood, die huwelik, egskeding en die gesinslewe asook hulle politieke en ekonomiese keuses, beïnvloed. Moraliteit is 'n integrale (en vir die meeste mense inderwaarheid die vernaamste) bepalende subteks, en dien as kriterium om te bepaal of 'n individu, sosiale groep of gemeenskap enigszins godsdienstig is (1998:13).

Moraliteit en godsdien is dus integraal verwant en kan daarom nie geskei word nie. Godsdienbronne moet binne hierdie raamwerk van intertekstualiteit ondersoek word om hulle morele waarde te bepaal. Van der Ven (1998:15) beskryf die verband tussen godsdien en moraliteit op 'n immanente sowel as transenderende vlak.

4.2 Die verhouding tussen godsdien en moraliteit op immanente vlak

Godsdien speel 'n drievoudige rol wat moraliteit op immanente vlak betref:

In die eerste plek integreer godsdien eksterne idees, oortuigings, waardes en norme deur dit in verband te bring met die Christelike hooftemas soos skepping, vervreemding, vrymaking en eskatologiese voleinding (1998:16). Hierdie integrasie het tot gevolg dat verskillende morele kategorieë by mekaar aansluit, soos vryheid en verantwoordelikheid, geregtigheid en liefde en skaamte en skuld.

In die tweede plek rig godsdien hierdie morele elemente in 'n nuwe rigting: hoop op die nuwe hemel en die nuwe aarde, die koninkryk van God, die nuwe Jerusalem (1998:16). Die ongebrokeheid van hierdie nuwe oriëntasie kan tot die herprioritering van godsdienstige elemente lei, byvoorbeeld morele waardes bo rituele, liefde bo orde. Hierdie nuwe oriëntasie voor sekerheid, vertroue en hoop aan (1998:16).

In die derde plek speel godsdien op immanente vlak 'n kritiese rol tov moraliteit (1998:16). Ooreenkomstig die intrinsieke waarde van die natuur en die mensdom soos God dit met die skepping bedoel het, verskaf dit morele kritiek op historiese ontwikkelinge soos die moderne kapitalisme (1998:16).

4.3 Die verhouding tussen godsdien en moraliteit op transenderende vlak

Godsdien dra nie inhoudelik iets by tot nie-godsdienstige moraliteit nie. Moraliteit, kan egter deur die integrasie daarvan met godsdien op transenderende vlak verryk word.

Die Christelike godsdien verskaf op radikaal-morele vlak nie net 'n raamwerk vir idees, 'n lys deugde en 'n waardestelsel nie – die godsdienstige opvatting van moraliteit behels ook die omkering van die algemene morele sin, gewoontes en gebruike, selfs die Christelike deugde, waardes en norme. Godsdien speel inderdaad 'n deurslaggewende rol in die openbare lewe.

Ons is van oortuiging dat godsdiens dalk selfs 'n groter substansiële bydrae tot die inhoud van moraliteit lewer as wat Van der Ven meen.

5. KONKLUSIE

Dit is vir ons duidelik dat die kerk, benewens appèlle uit verskeie instansies, ten diepste deur teologiese oorwegings gedryf word om by morele vorming betrokke te wees. Volgens die teoloë na wie ons hierbo verwys het, kan die kerk deur middel van effektiewe morele vorming die samelewing sinvol hervorm. Die uitgangspunt is dat die kerk 'n meer praktyk-gerigte benadering moet hê om sodoende kritiese denke oor die beskikbare sosiale prosesse te stimuleer. Dit beteken ook dat die kerk sy roeping en taak ten opsigte van die uitdagings van sy tyd moet herdefinieer. In post-apartheid Suid-Afrika bestaan 'n nuwe uitdaging vir die kerk om sy geloof in die lig van die maatskaplike, politiese en kulturele veranderinge en gepaardgaande strukturele armoede te herdefinieer. Die kerk kan 'n toonaangewende rol speel in die ontwikkeling van morele identiteit in die samelewing, en kan aldus help met die oplossing van die morele krisis in Suid-Afrika. Moraliteit kan egter nooit net 'n persoonlike saak wees nie.

Die Westerse kerke staan meer as ooit tevore in die middel van die krisis. Daar is egter ook ander faktore wat tot dié krisis bydra. Die vernaamste hiervan is: die veelvuldige keuses wat die modernisme aanbied; 'n sterk afname in kerklike en godsdiensige aktiwiteite; groter klem op die individu se persoonlike belange en voorkeure; die geloofwaardigheid van die kerk in 'n pluralistiese samelewing en 'n mentaliteitsverandering, veral onder die mense vanuit die Eerste Wêreld. Samelewingsveranderinge, die invloed van breër kultuurprosesse, die groeiende ervaring van pluraliteit, die blootstelling aan ander waardestelsels, ander kulturele erfenisse en ander godsdiens, dwing ons om opnuut oor ons eie waardes en wêreldbeskouing na te dink. Die modernisme, post-modernisme en globalisering word ook as bydraend tot die oorsake van die moraliteitskrisis beskou.

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TREFWOORDE

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Enkele opmerkings oor die gestaltes en oorsake van die morele probleme in Suid-Afrika

ABSTRACT

A few remarks on the forms and causes of the moral problems in South Africa

This article should be read as a review article in which the forms and causes of a number of moral problems in South Africa are discussed. The purpose of this article is to provide churches with a clear definition of the forms and causes of the moral issues in modern South African society. This article also attempts to offer some assistance in this regard. The argument is approached from a Christian ethical paradigm. In the article it is acknowledged that there are conflicting opinions within the broader Christian paradigm about matters such as what is to be seen as sexual morality. One of the duties of the church is that of moral development; to achieve this, churches have to develop a thorough understanding of moral problems.

1. INLEIDING

Die volgende onderafdelings word in die artikel aangebied: Eers word 'n breë oorsig oor veral populêr-wetenskaplike stof gegee een daarna word enkele morele probleme, naamlik seksuele verval, met spesifieke verwysing na prostitusie en geweld, as gesig van die morele krisis onder bespreking gebring. Die groot vraagstukke soos korrupsie en immoraliteit in die sake-etiek word nie vir die doeleindes van hierdie artikel ondersoek nie.

2. BREË OORSIG OOR ONDERWERP

As gemeentepastoor kry ek daaglik te doen met die morele verval wat duidelik waarneembaar is in post-apartheid Suid-Afrika. Volgens skrywers soos Van der Ven (1998), Newbiggin (1989), Anckaert (1991), Burger (2000), De Villiers (2003), en Smit (1993) is morele verval nie 'n tendens wat eie is aan Suid-Afrika nie, maar een wat wêreldwyd waargeneem word. In die negentigerjare is reeds gemeld dat daar wêreldwyd oor 'n baie lang tydperk 'n onrusbarende morele agteruitgang te bespeur was, veral onder die jeug. Lickona (1991:13). Dié morele agteruitgang by die jeug nie kan nie los van die situasie in die samelewing gesien word nie. Wat dus by die jeug waargeneem word, is 'n refleksie van wat in die samelewing aan die gebeur is.

Die talle ingrypende verskuiwings en veranderinge in Suid-Afrika, sowel as in die res van die wêreld, gee aanleiding tot 'n verskeidenheid morele probleme wat deur verskillende faktore veroorsaak word. Hierdie probleme stel groot eise aan die kerk se funksie van morele opvoeding en morele vorming.

Daar is verskeie redes agter die morele krisis wat ons tans in Suid-Afrika ervaar. Onder die skoolgaande jeug kan die volgende redes onder andere aangevoer word: swak selfbeeld, die onvermoë om probleme te identifiseer en op te los, die gebrek aan hulpdienste binne onmiddellike bereik, die gebrek aan positiewe rolmodelle in gemeenskappe, 'n gebrek aan

ontspanningsaktiwiteite en sportvelde, grootskaalse werkloosheid, en 'n gebrek aan dissipline in skole en binne gesinsverband.

Misdaad het ook 'n uitwerking op die samelewing: Dit skep 'n kultuur van vrees waarin agterdog en bitterheid, eerder as sorg en gasvryheid, mense se verhoudings kenmerk. Die voortdurende spanning en vrees wat deur geweld en misdaad meegebring word, sou deel kon wees van die oorsaak van padwoede, sport- en gesinsgeweld, geweld teenoor vroue en kinders, weerwraak, rassisme, moedeloosheid en immigrasie. Die negatiewe invloed wat misdaad op die landse ekonomie het, skrik voornemende beleggers af. Die gevolg is groeiende werkloosheid en armoede. Misdaad het ook 'n negatiewe impak op buurmanskap. Al hoe meer mense beveilig hulleself met hoë mure en elektriese hekke (Burger, Meiring, Van Niekerk & Wepener 2005:88 e.v.).

Die volgende psigologiese oorsake vir die morele krisis is oa: die voortgaande swart woede en wanhoop oor die nalatenskap van apartheid, die voortdurende armoede en ontneming deur swak dienslewering, die wanhoop en woede van bruin mense en Indiërs oor 'n hiërargie van lyding, wat sê dat swart mense meer as hulle gelye en 'n groter aanspraak op regstelsels het, asook wanhoop en woede oor die verlies aan mag en status by blankes wat nou, op ongeveer elke vlak in die samelewing, aan die agterspeen moet suig.

Boesak (2006:17) sê verder dat die Suid-Afrikaanse publiek net op hierdie geweldplaag reageer as dit hulle raak. Geweld, sê hy, "is 'n plaag wat ons hele land treiter, 'n leed wat ons almal soos 'n klam-koue miswolk bedek, 'n wond waaraan ons almal ons doodbloei, maar ons reageer in kampe daarop. Rassekampe, sosiale kampe, belangekampe. Ons verskans ons agter die gebarste mure van ons geld, ons geskiedenis, ons vooroordele, ons gebrek aan menslikheid, en loer oor dié mure heen na die plaag wat op ons val." Die taal van wanhoop, van radeloosheid, onredelikheid, die taal van vereensaamde verbroekeling, van liefdelose, losgeraakte menslikheid, sê Boesak (2006:17), is: "Die moetiemoorde laat ons gril: Moet dié nou oor ons regeer? Hang hom op! Bring terug die doodstraf! Moenie nog oor die hof *worry* nie, ons vat hom sommer self!"

Boesak (2006:17) skryf: "ons messel die pyn wat ons moet saambind in lae en vergelyk wie se laag die diepste, die ergste, die seerste is. Pleks van mekaar omarm en te troos en die geweldenaars hand in hand, skouer aan skouer in hul spore te stop, staan ons vanuit ons kampe op mekaar en gil. Dit is wat Martin Luther King bedoel, dié is wat ons moet leer, en dié is waarvoor ek pleit. Dit is die aanvaarding van ons lotsverbondenheid. Dit het niks te make met die ubuntu van politieke korrektheid, of die geforseerde bonhomie van ons 'trots Suid-Afrikaans-wees' nie. Dit is die onontvlugbare netwerk van ons menslike verbondenheid. Dit is een van die sterkste wapens waarmee ons die geweld in ons land die stryd kan aansê".

Orkin en Everatt (1993) verwys na 'n 'gebroke ekologie' waarin die jeug grootword. 'Gebroke ekologie' dui op 'n situasie waarin die tradisioneel-behouende gesin, skool, kerk en die groter samelewing permanent deur 'n pluraliteit van godsdienstige en sekulêre oortuigings verander is. Laasgenoemde veranderings het tot gevolg dat tradisioneel-gesaghebbende instellings nie meer 'n vormende bydrae tot die waardes en gedragswyses van die samelewing kan lewer nie. Van der Ven (1998:1) maak inleidend opmerkings oor hoe twee seuns, ouderdomme 10 en 11, in die herfs van 1994 te Chicago, Amerika, 'n vyfjarige seun met die naam Eric Morris van die veertiende verdieping gegooi het toe hy nie vir hulle lekkers wou steel nie. Derrick Morris, agjarige broer van Eric, het tevergeefs probeer keer dat hulle sy broer van die veertiende verdieping afgooi en kon net wanhopig toekyk. Volgens die verklaring van die polisie het Eric desperaat aan die relings vasgegryp, maar tevergeefs. Die ironie van die verhaal is dat beide seuns 'n lang kriminele rekord gehad het. Boonop was beide se vaders in die gevangenis. Die gruwelike optrede van die twee seuns is met afgryse en skok begroet. Die voormalige president

van Amerika, Bill Clinton, het tydens sy jaarlikse ontmoeting met die *International Association of Chiefs of Police* in Albuquerque, soos volg gereageer: “Dis na volwassenes in die land dat kinders opkyk vir voorbeeld en leiding, en waar bly hulle?”

Vervolgens gaan ondersoek ingestel word na die volgende gestaltes, seksuele verval met spesifieke verwysing na prostitusie, asook geweld as gesig van die morele krisis.

3. MORELE PROBLEME

3.1 Prostitusie as gesig van die morele krisis

Die meeste navorsing wat met betrekking tot prostitusie onderneem word, is sosiologies, sielkundig en antropologies van aard. Crausse en Botha (1977) het byvoorbeeld prostitusie as subkultuur in die hawegebied van Port Elizabeth bestudeer. Visser (1985) het prostitusie as maatskaplike verskynsel in Kaapstad bestudeer, terwyl Killian (1982) ’n psigo-sosiale ondersoek na die leefwêreld van die haweprostituut in Port Elizabeth gedoen het. Die Raad vir Geesteswetenskaplike Navorsing het sedert 1977 talle navorsingstudiestukke die lig laat sien, byvoorbeeld Schurink 1979a, 1979b, 1983, 1986, 2000, ensovoorts. Suid-Afrikaanse teologiese navorsing is uiters beperk. Slegs enkele Suid-Afrikaanse teologiese bydraes is gedoen, onder meer Spoelstra (1897), Grobler (1979), Victor (1983) en Plaatjies (1998). Verskeie etiologiese faktore vir prostitusie, soos swak behuisingstoestande, armoede, lae moraliteit, alkoholisme, seksuele molestering, werkloosheid, gebroke en onstabiele ouerhuise, kinderverwaarlosing, lae selfbeeld en verkragting, kan volgens Plaatjies (1998:46) aangedui word. Redes vir prostitusie sluit dus in: vroeë skoolverlating, ’n gebrek aan effektiewe veiligheidsmaatreëls en beskerming van kinders, ’n gebrek aan dissipline, emosionele aftakeling, seksuele misbruik van kinders, die hoë vlak van gesinsgeweld, grootskaalse verstedeliking, die onbetrokkenheid van ouers, armoede en disfunksionele gesinne.

Wanneer ons na prostitusie as verskynsel kyk, kan ons baie van ons samelewing leer. ’n Samelewing wat dinge soos pornografie, los sedes, ensovoorts, duld (met ander woorde ’n samelewing waar morele waardes gedeeltelik of grootskaals afwesig is), word ’n teelaarde vir prostitusie. Volwasse vrouens wat tot prostitusie toetree, is gewoonlik in ’n vroeër stadium in hulle lewe seksueel getraumatiseer. Dieselfde geld tieners wat tot prostitusie toetree. Vir die reeds getraumatiseerde individue bring prostitusie net verdere liggaamlike en sielkundige skade mee. Die sigbare skade aan die liggaam is soms grusaam, maar die onsigbare emosionele en psigiese skade is dikwels baie erger en neem baie langer om te heel.

Plaatjies (1998:73) toon aan dat daar in 1996 ongeveer 6 000 prostitute professioneel in Johannesburg werksaam was, terwyl daar dwarsdeur die land 50 000 professionele prostitute werksaam was, wat neerkom op ongeveer 36 miljoen dade van prostitusie per jaar teen ’n frekwensie van drie kliënte per dag uit ’n nasionale bevolking van 9 miljoen mans ouer as 18 jaar.

Volgens Plaatjies (1998:74) staan die moraal in Suid-Afrika op ’n helling. Sy is van mening dat daar ’n verskuiving in die seksuele moraal plaasgevind het en dat ’n groter swaai na ’n beleid van praktiese verdraagsaamheid met betrekking tot prostitusie as verskynsel plaasgevind het. Daar word groter klem gelê op die feit dat moraliteit ’n integrale deel van ’n mens se waarde-sisteem is. Die handhawing van moraliteit word, aldus Plaatjies, dus nie primêr as die wetgewer se verantwoordelikheid beskou nie (1998:74).

3.2 Geweld as gesig van die morele krisis

MacMaster (2003:59) is van mening dat bendegeweld ’n alledaagse realiteit in die Kaapse Skiereiland is. Omdat dit veral in minder goeie woongebiede voorkom, bepleit MacMaster (2003:69) ’n pastorale perspektief en ’n eko-hermeneutiese benadering wat rekening moet

hou met die sosiale konteks. Pedro (2001:44) konstateer dat bendegeweld die gevolg van alkoholmisbruik is. Hy is van mening dat geweld aan die orde van die dag is. Dit kom daaglik voor en gemeenskappe het geen ander keuse nie as om saam te leef met die hoë misdadafsyfers, moorde, verkrachtings, ensovoorts.

Dames (1999:3) is op sy beurt van mening dat die verkragting en sinlose moord op Valencia Farmer met afgrype bejeën moet word. Hierdie moord het skokgolwe deur die hele land gestuur. Dames (ibid.) vra vroe soos: “Watter veilige buffer het ons teen die bende-invloed van ons omgewing?” en “Hoe kon Valencia se moeder as enkelouer wat skofte gewerk het, haar kind teen dié omgewingsinvloede beskerm het?” Die slotsom waartoe hy kom, is dat die kerk ’n roeping en taak het om die krisis aan te spreek. MacMaster (2003) en Pedro (2001) vra dat die kerk in ‘lewensveranderende’ programme moet belê. Die vraag waarmee egter geworstel word, is: Hoe moet die kerk hierdie roeping en taak uitvoer?

’n Samelewing wat gebuk gaan onder misdaad, leef in ’n kultuur van vrees, agterdog en bitterheid waar gasvryheid en sorg ontbreek. Dit spreek dus vanself dat daar geen sprake van goeie buurmenskap kan wees nie (Burger, et al 2005:87). Daarby het misdaad ’n negatiewe invloed op die ekonomie van die land en dit lei tot grootskaalse werkloosheid en armoede. Volgens Jones (2006:9) is die buitengewone hoë vlakke van misdaad en geweld ’n groot bron van kommer.

In *Die Burger* van 3 Julie 2007 word onder die opskrif, *Misdadafsyfers styg én daal*, berig dat die aantal moorde wat tussen April verlede jaar en Maart vanjaar gepleeg is, met 2,4% gestyg het, terwyl aangemelde pogings tot moord met 3% gedaal het. Sommige mense sou sê dit is omdat moordenaars deesdae suksesvol is. Die aantal verkrachtings wat aangemeld is, het ook met 5,2% gedaal en kan daarop dui dat verkrachtings verminder het, of dat vroue deesdae banger is om verkrachtings aan te meld, of voel dat dit nie help om verkrachtings aan te meld nie omdat die hofproses te intimiderend is, of omdat hulle reken die verkragters sal nooit aan die pen ry nie.

Volgens Esterhuysen (2000) is misdaad nie net in Suid-Afrika ’n probleem nie, maar wêreldwyd. Om dit te staaf, noem hy ’n paar voorbeelde, soos die opkoms van georganiseerde misdadafsindikate met opgeleide mense aan die hoof daarvan, die omvang en karakter van korrupsie en witboordjiemisdad, die verval van die sosio-ekonomiese orde en die sigbare toename in ongelykheid.

Plaatjies-van Huffel is van mening dat daar in die postapartheidsera in Suid-Afrika meer waarde geheg word aan ’n sellulêre telefoon as aan die lewe van ’n mens. Sy wys daarop dat daar ’n moratorium op die statistiek oor geweld en misdaad in Suid-Afrika geplaas is. Dit is daarom nie moontlik om ’n volledige oorsig van misdaad en geweld in Suid-Afrika te skets nie. Die situasie in dié era is volgens haar ’n indirekte oorlog teen gewone burgers. Daar is ’n nasionale stryd tussen die magte van duisternis, misdaad en geweld aan die een kant en die magte van stabiliteit, sekerheid en ekonomiese vooruitgang aan die ander kant. Die uiteindelige doelwit van die magte van die duisternis is om Suid-Afrika onregeerbaar te maak – om die Suid-Afrikaanse politieke, ekonomiese en maatskaplike orde omver te werp.

In dié referaat konstateer sy: “In post-apartheid Suid-Afrika loop burgers ’n hoë risiko om voorvalle van misdaad te beleef. Die opname oor die slagoffers van misdaad het getoon dat in 1997 21% van alle huishoudings ten minste een huishoudingsmisdad beleef het en 15% van individue 16 jaar of ouer een individu-misdad beleef het. Die algemeenste huishoudingsmisdad in Suid-Afrika is, ook soos in die meeste ander lande, huisbraak en inbraak, wat in 1997 deur 7% van huishoudings beleef is. Byvoorbeeld, van die 2,4 miljoen huishoudings wat in 1997 motorvoertuie besit of toegang daartoe gehad het, het ongeveer 105 000 (4%) ten minste een voorval van motorvoertuigdiefstal beleef. Driehonderdduisend huishoudings (3% van die

algehele getal van 9,1 miljoen huishoudings in die land) het 'n poging tot huisbraak beleef. Drie persent van individue 16 jaar of ouer (809 000) het ten minste een voorval van bedrog beleef en een uit vyftig individue (2%) het in 1997 ten minste een voorval van korrupsie beleef. Een en twintig persent van huishoudings in Suid-Afrika het in 1997 ten minste een misdadig beleef. Huisbraak en inbraak was die algemeenste misdadig en is in hierdie tydperk deur 7% (652 000) van die huishoudings ten minste een keer beleef. Een uit elke 200 huishoudings het in 1997 ten minste een voorval van opsetlike dood of moord beleef. Die algemeenste soort misdadig teenoor individue was diefstal van persoonlike eiendom; 5% (1,3 miljoen) het ten minste een voorval van hierdie soort beleef. Een uit elke 250 individue van 16 jaar of ouer (0,4%) het in 1997 ten minste een seksuele misdryf beleef. Aangemelde misdadig in Suid-Afrika het vir die tydperk Januarie 1996 tot Desember 2000 met 5% per jaar toegeneem. Die grootste persentasie toename in aangemelde misdadig in Suid-Afrika in hierdie tydperk was 13% vir sowel ontvoering as algemene roof. Verkragting en gepoogde verkragting het van 1996 tot 2000 met 1% toegeneem. Die grootste persentasie toename in aangemelde misdadig in die Wes-Kaap was in vragmotorkaping (34%) en ontvoering (23%). ”

Plaatjies-van Huffel is verder van mening dat kindermishandeling 'n ernstige probleem is in ons samelewing . Kinders word aan hoë vlakke van geweld blootgestel. Die Suid-Afrikaanse situasie is nie uniek nie. Ander lande wat dieselfde transformasieproses as Suid-Afrika deurmaak, soos Sierra Leone, Liberië en lande in Sentraal-Amerika, ondervind ook hoë vlakke van geweld. In post-apartheid Suid-Afrika is die gevaar dat burgers slagoffers van misdadig kan word, groot. Met verwysing na die teologiese modelle in die Kairosdokument stel Plaatjies voor dat die Verenigende Gereformeerde Kerk in Suider-Afrika verskillende teologiese modelle ontwikkel wat die soort aktiwiteite bepaal waaraan dié kerk moet deelneem om te help om die probleme van misdadig en geweld op te los. Hierdie modelle is 'n staatsteologie, 'n kerkteologie en 'n profetiese teologie.

3.3 Armoede

Om armoede te definieer, is 'n komplekse taak wat verband hou met hoe die persoon oor sy/haar eie situasie voel. Mampela Ramphele en Francis Wilson (1989:302) is van mening dat die kerk die beste toegerus is om die uitdagings rondom armoede aan te spreek: “The Christian church has a remarkable record down the centuries in creating and nurturing organisations aimed at serving and harnessing the energies of people in need. We believe however that there is still room for church initiatives in setting up new structures appropriate to the needs of the situation.” Daar is byvoorbeeld mense wat hulleself as ‘arm’ beskou, maar in werklikheid baie meer het as ander. Hulle sal dit egter eers beseef wanneer hulle met ander in aanraking kom wat armer as hulle is (Potgieter 1998:197-198).

Rwiza (2001:36) beweer: “Poverty in modern Africa has a lot to do with deformation of conscience and identity crises. Poverty refers to the lack of means to provide the basic material needs. This is what Gustavo Gutierrez means by the lack of economic goods necessary for human life worthy of the name. In this sense poverty is considered degrading and rejected by conscience of contemporary person. Material poverty is a social problem. For many, being poor means to be of no value, to count for nothing, to be insignificant and an out-cast. It is a scandalous condition and leads to identity crises and deformation of conscience”. Potgieter (1998:197-198) definieer armoede as 'n vlak van inkomste wat so laag is dat 'n gemeenskap se lewenstandaard remediërende aksie van die openbare maatskaplike beleid verg.

Die voormalige aartsbiskop van Kaapstad, Njongonkulu Ndungane (2003:32) sê: “Julius Nyerere, a president of Tanzania, said in his address to the Maryknoll Sisters in New York in 1970 that poverty is not the real problem of the modern world. For we have the knowledge and the

resources which could enable us to overcome poverty. The real problem, the thing which creates misery, wars and hatred among men, is the division of mankind into rich and poor. The same is true in South Africa. There are so many destitute people amidst plenty. One only has to drive through the northern suburbs of Johannesburg to Alexandra Township to see that this situation exists”.

Volgens Veeran (2000:175-176) kan armoede in gemeenskappe wat ekonomiese ontneeming ervaar, gemeet word aan die bronne wat nodig is om ’n minimale lewenstandaard te handhaaf. Veeran (2000:177) sê verder dat ‘arm mense’ se definisie van armoede is om stemloos, magteloos en afhanklik te wees en blootgestel te wees aan uitbuiting. Kgarimetsa (1992:8) reken dat armoede op drie vlakke lê: Op ekonomiese vlak word armoede gesien in terme van ’n tekort aan hulpbronne, land-infrastruktuur en produksiemateriale en geen of minimale toegang tot krediet-, bemarkings- of produksiebates. Op maatskaplike vlak word armoede gesien in terme van toegang tot fasiliteite vir gesondheid, opvoeding, sanitasie, ontspanning en behuising. Op politieke vlak word armoede gesien as mense se gebrek aan mag en ’n verlies aan beheer oor hulle lewens.

Armoede is volgens De Beer (2000:7) grootliks ’n landelike verskynsel. Van die een miljard armes in die wêreld, woon 85% in landelike gebiede. In Suid-Afrika woon 75% van die armes in landelike gebiede. Mense beskou stede as plekke van geleentheid en verhuis in groot getalle daarheen. Ongelukkig lei dié migrasie tot stedelike armoede. Landelike armoede is inheems aan die arm huishoudings in die Derde Wêreld en manifesteer op verskeie maniere waarvan ondervoeding, honger en siektes ’n deel vorm (2000:19).

Van Niekerk (2005:149) sluit by De Beer (2000) aan: “daar word bereken dat ongeveer 6 miljoen mense in Suid-Afrika in informele nedersettings (dit wil sê plakkerskampe) woon. Ongeveer 40% van Suid-Afrika se bevolking kan hedendaags as arm gereken word, waarmee bedoel word dat hulle ’n jaarlikse inkomste van minder as R10 000 per huishouding van 4,5 mense het. Hoogstens 35% van arm werkende mense werk in die formele sektor van die ekonomie. Ongeveer 70% van arm mense het geen watertoevoer na hul huise nie. Ongeveer 80% van arm mense het geen spoeltoilette nie. Ongeveer 80% het geen elektrisiteit nie. Meer as 35% van die kinders onder die ouderdom van vyf ly tegniese honger. Hoofsaaklik as ’n gevolg van armoede, is geletterdheidsvlakke in Suid-Afrika besonder laag. Nie minder nie as 41% van Suid-Afrika se volwassenes is funksioneel ongeletterd, en in een derde van die 354 landdrosdistrikte (almal in die platteland) is die ongeletterdheidsyfer tussen 60% en 80%.”

Volgens Kgarimetsa (1992:10-11) kan *landelike armoede* die beste beskryf word as grootskaalse werkloosheid, ’n tekort aan voldoende grond, ’n toename in die bevolkingsyfer en ongeletterdheid, sowel as migrasie. *Stedelike armoede* word volgens Kgarimetsa (1992:11) gekenmerk deur ’n hoë werkloosheidsyfer, informele nedersettings, straatkinders en daklose mense. Hierdie faktore lei tot kindermishandeling, jeugmisdaad, alkoholisme, dwelmmisbruik en meer egskedings (Kgarimetsa, 1992:12).

Koopman en Vosloo (2002:148) is van mening dat die kerk ’n hoopvolle gemeenskap moet wees vir diene wat gebuk gaan onder grootskaalse werkloosheid, lyding in sy verskeie vorme, onsekerheid, depressie, ensovoorts. ’n Hoopvolle gemeenskap se “hoop is geanker in Christus se kruis en opstanding wat die kerk in staat stel om die moreel goeie na te jaag en uit te leef” (2002:148). Dit beteken dat die kerk nooit moet ophou om ’n gemeenskap van vrede en waarheid te wees in ’n wêreld van valsheid en vrees nie. Die kerk moet sorg vir die armes, die weduwees en die wese. Sulke sorg, vanuit ’n wêreldse perspektief, kan lyk of dit maar weinig bydra tot regverdigheid, maar die skrywers is daarvan oortuig dat tensy ons tyd spandeer aan sulke sorg, nie ons of die wêreld sal weet hoe geregtigheid lyk nie.

Artikel 4 van die Belydenis van Belhar (1986) wil hierdie waarheid bevestig: “... dat die kerk

daarom mense in enige vorm van lyding en nood moet bystaan, wat onder andere ook inhoud dat die kerk sal getuig en stry teen enige vorm van ongeregtigheid sodat die reg aanrol soos watergolwe en geregtigheid soos 'n standhoudende stroom; dat die kerk as eiendom van God moet staan waar Hy staan, naamlik teen die ongeregtigheid en by verontregtes; dat die kerk as volgelinge van Christus moet getuig teenoor alle magtiges en bevoorregtes wat uit selfsug hulle eie belang soek en oor andere beskik en benadeel". Dit is die roeping van die kerk om volgens die Belydenis van Belhar te staan waar God staan, naamlik aan die kant van die armes, weerloses, ensovoorts. Die kerk moet op 'n praktiese wyse hulp en bystand verleen waar nodig.

Van der Ven (1993:436) sluit hierby aan wanneer hy praat van die 'kerk van die armes'. Daarmee bedoel hy dat dit in dié kerk nie slegs oor geestelike armoede gaan nie, maar ook oor die materiële behoeftes van individuele lede en die kerk as sosiale verband – as 'n "kollektium". Anders as in die geval van ryk Westerse kerke, is die 'kerk van die armes' 'n kerk in 'n arm gemeenskap. Hendricks (2003) is van mening dat die kerk van die toekoms moet fokus op die nood van die gemeenskap, naamlik armoede, werkloosheid, MIV/Vigs, verslawing aan dwelm-middels, seksuele perversiteite, ens. Dit is die kerk wat restituisie of herstel kan uitleef teenoor almal op wie, op watter wyse ook al, neergesien en teen wie gediskrimineer word.

4. KONKLUSIE

Die ontleding van die gesigte en oorsake van die morele probleme wil die kerk help om 'n indruk te vorm van die omvang van die uitdagings op die morele gebied. As mense wat leef met Christelike hoop, verlam hierdie probleem ons egter, maar ons pak dit in die krag van die opstanding en die Gees aan. Armoede is tegelyk 'n gesig en 'n oorsaak van die morele probleme. Sommige mense se selfsug laat ander in armoede kreppeer. Misdaad en prostitusie word deels deur armoede veroorsaak. Die kloof tussen die kerk van die armes in die sogenaamde Derde Wêreld en die kerk van die ryk Westerse samelewing is so groot dat laasgenoemde geen kerk van die armes genoem kan word nie.

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TREFWOORDE

Morele krisis
Morele probleme
Morele vorming
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KEY WORDS

Moral crisis
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Die kerkreg en kerkregering van die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Sendingkerk (1881-1915)

ABSTRACT

The church polity and church governance of the Dutch Reformed Mission (1881-1915)

One can discern five church polity principles in this article to adjudicate the church polity and church governance of the Dutch Reformed Mission Church (DRMC):

1. The autonomy of the local church,
2. The character of the denominational ties,
3. The character of the power of the major assemblies,
4. The power to discipline church officials,
5. The right to appeal with regarding to the decisions of the major assemblies,

This article deals cursorily with the church polity development of the Dutch Reformed Mission Church (1881-1915). The foundational grounds and main notions on Doleantie Church polity are being drawn upon in this article. The Doleantie did not try to develop a new church polity system, but is rather a regression to a system of church polity as enacted by the National Synod of Dordrecht (1618-1619). The Doleantie church polity (*oud kerkrecht*) impacted the church polity and the church governance of the DRMC.

INLEIDING

Vyf kerkregtelike beginsels word in die artikel onderskei vir die beoordeling van die kerkreg en kerkregering van die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Sendingkerk (NGSK) te wete:

1. Die selfstandigheid van die plaaslike kerk,
2. Die karakter van die kerkverband,
3. Die karakter van die gesag van die meerdere vergadering,
4. Die tugreg ten opsigte van ampsdraers,
5. Die appèlreg ten opsigte van besluite van die meerdere vergadering.

Die artikel handel kursories oor die kerkregtelike ontwikkeling van die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Sendingkerk (1891-1915). In dié artikel word die grondslae en uitgangspunte van die Doleansiekerkreg aangeteken. Die Doleansie beoog nie om 'n nuwe kerkreg te ontwikkel nie, maar gryp terug na die sisteem van kerkregering soos vasgestel deur die Nasionale Sinode van Dordrecht (1618-1619). Die Doleansiekerkreg (*oud kerckrecht*) het die kerkreg en kerkregering van die NGSK onmiskenbaar beïnvloed.

DOLEANSIEKERKREG

Die ontwikkeling van die kerkreg in die NGSK kan nie losgemaak word van die kerkhistoriese ontwikkelings in Nederland asook in Suid-Afrika nie. Vanaf 1881 was 'n verbondenheid aan die

Nederlandse kerkreg kenmerkend van die NGSK. Vele raak vlakke met die Doleansiekerkreg en/of die gepaardgaande kerkregtelike diskoers die afgelope eeu, kan in die kerkregtelike ontwikkeling van die NGSK onderskei word. Drr A Kuyper en FL Rutgers asook AF de Savornin Lohman word beskou as die hoofeksponeerders van die Doleansie in Amsterdam. Voor tydens en na die Doleansie is 'n reeks konsepte deur Kuyper en Rutgers ontwikkel wat bekend sou staan as die Doleansiekerkreg. Die Dolerendes onder leiding van Kuyper en Rutgers herinterpreteer die Dordtse Kerkorde van 1619 met name op die punt van die selfstandigheid van die plaaslike kerk. Hierdie herinterpretasie en die proses van heroriëntasie word die Doleansiekerkreg genoem (Van den Broeke 2005:208).

Die Doleansie was uiteraard 'n stryd teen sinodokrasie. Reeds vóór die Doleansie was kerkregtelike beginsels geformuleer en uitgedra, wat voor oë gehou was by die afwerping van die sinodale juk en wat in die daaropvolgende tyd kragtig gehandhaaf sou word. Onder andere sluit die beginsels die selfstandigheid van die plaaslike kerk, die konfederatiewe karakter van die kerkverband en die prinsipiële onderskeid tussen die Kerkraad en die meerdere vergaderinge in. Die Doleansiekerkreg bring nie iets nuuts in vergeleke met die 16de eeu en of die 17de eeu na vore nie, maar dui eerder 'n terugkeer na ou gereformeerde beginsels: "Niets nieuws. Re-formatie, wederkeer, terugkeer tot de oude gereformeerde beginselen" (Deddens 1992a:57). Die kerkregtelike standpunt van die Doleansie was dat die *Algemeen Reglement voor het bestuur der Nederlandsche Hervormde Kerk in het Koninkrijk* (1816) die teendeel is van wat 'n Gereformeerde kerkinrigting behoort te wees. Die hoogste wetgewende, regsprekende en besturende mag word in artikel 61 van die *Algemeen Reglement* (1816) aan die Sinode toegeken: "met name het feit dat aan de synode 'de hoogste wetgevende, rechtsprekende en besturende macht' werd toegekend" (Bakker 1986a:134). Kuyper beklemtoon daarteenoor dat die hoogste kerklike regsbevoegdheid by die plaaslike kerk lê. FL Rutgers en AF de Savornin Lohman bou later met hul (kerk) juridiese vakkennis voort op Kuyper se aannames met betrekking tot die selfstandigheid van die plaaslike kerk.

Die Doleansiekerkreg staan teenoor die hiërargiese sinodale kerkregeringstelsel en leervryheid (Deddens 1986:57-58). Die artikel word dié fases bespreek met verwysing na bovermelde kerkregbeginsels van die Doleansie (*oud kerkrecht*). Die term *oud kerkrecht* verwys na die stellingname wat deur drr A Kuyper en FL Rutgers ontwikkel was voor, tydens en na die Doleansie. Dit staan ook bekend as Doleansiekerkreg. Die Doleansie beoog geensins om 'n nuwe kerkreg te presenteer nie, maar gryp doelbewus terug na die sisteem van kerkregering, wat sy klassieke uitdrukking vind in die kerkorde, wat deur die Nasionale Sinode van Dordrecht in 1618-1619 vasgestel was (*Golverdingen* 2001:Hoofstuk 6.1).

ONDERGESKIKTHEID AAN DIE NGK (1881-1915)

Drie fases kan in die NGSK se strewe na kerkregtelike selfverwesenliking onderskei word, naamlik Ondergeskiktheid aan die NGK (1881-1915), Beperkte outonomie onder die Grondwet (1915-1956) en Kerkregtelike selfverwesenliking (1956-1982). Ds DP Botha (1981:158-164) onderskei in CJ Kriel se *Die Eerste Eeu* drie fases in die kerkregtelike ontwikkeling van die NGSK te wete die tydperk van volkome ondergeskiktheid aan die Nederduitse gereformeerde Kerk (1881-1916), die tydperk van beperkte outonomie onder die Grondwet (1915-1958) en die tydperk van groei van Grondwet tot Akte van Ooreenkoms (1958-1975).

Op Maandag 22 November 1880 het die Sinode van die NGK die *Konstitusie* vir die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Zendingkerk van Zuid-Afrika goedgekeur (*Acta NGK* 1880:72). Die *Konstitusie* verskyn as art 217 tot art 226 in die *Kerkwet NGK (1881)* (Kriel 1981:158). Die Sinode van die NGK (1880) het aan die Binnelandse Sendingkommissie (=BSK) opdrag gegee

om die heel eerste Nederduitse Gereformeerde Zendingkerk van Zuid-Afrika, later bekend as Nederduitse Gereformeerde Sendingkerk (NGSK) byeen te roep (Kriel 1963:71). Kennisgewings met betrekking tot die eerste Algemene Kerkvergadering van die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Zendingkerk van Zuid-Afrika het in ses agtereenvolgende uitgawes van *De Christen* vanaf 5 Augustus 1881 tot 10 Augustus 1881 verskyn (Loff 1981:24). Die stigtingsvergadering is deur die Binnelandse Sendingkommissie vir 5 Oktober 1881, op Wellington belê. Die hooflyne van die agenda van die Stigtingsinode was deur die NGK bepaal. Die *Konstitusie* was vooraf aan die gemeentes en/of werkkringe gesirkuleer en hulle is sodoende in kennis gestel van die besluit van die NGK om 'n stigtingsvergadering byeen te roep. Die BSK het die gemeentes en/of werkkringe wat deur die NGK gestig is, of met die NGK in verband staan, versoek om kragtens art 221.2 van die *Konstitusie* afgevaardigdes na die Stigtingsinode te stuur

Die Sinode van die NGK (1880) het drie kwalifikasies vir die afvaardiging na die eerste Sinode van die sendinggemeentes bepaal:

- daar moet 'n wettige Kerkraad bestaan,
- die Kerkraad moet ten minste 'n derde van die sendeling se salaris betaal,
- die eiendom moes volgens art 221.2. (c) op óf die NGK óf op die sendinggemeente se naam getranspoteer wees (*Acta NGK 1880 art V bylae De Sending in De Christen 24 September 1880:8 asook Kerkwet NGK 1881 Hoofstuk 1:87*).

Met die twee stoflike voorvereistes (art 221.2 (b) en (c)) word 'n afwyking van die Gereformeerde Kerkreg gevind waarvolgens sittingsreg op meerdere vergaderinge aan ampsdraers van die plaaslike gemeentes op grond van geloofsbriewe verleen is ongeag die finansiële vermoëns van die betrokke kerklike vergaderings.

Na die openingsrede, deur ds JH Neethling, sekretaris van die Binnelandse Sendingkommissie, op 5 Oktober 1881 is die eerste Nederduitse Gereformeerde Zendingkerk van Zuid-Afrika Sinode, as gekonstitueer verklaar (*Acta NGSK 1881:6*). Slegs 4 gemeentes uit 'n moontlike sestig gemeentes het egter hierdie Stigtingsinode bygewoon (Kriel 1981:29-30). Elke gemeente is op grond van bovermelde vereistes op die Stigtingsinode getoets (*Acta NGSK 1881:7*). Eerwaarde Johann Kretzen (George), eerwaarde Dirk Jan Hendrik Ruytenbeek en ouderling Andries Overmeyer (Wynberg), eerwaarde Johannes Petrus Rossouw (Zuurbraak), eerwaarde Jacobus Cornelis Pauw en ouderling Jan Joeli (Wellington) is deur hul onderskeie gemeentes na die Stigtingsinode afgevaardig. Die sekretaris van die Binnelandse Sendingkommissie, ds JH Neethling, het deurgegee dat gemeentes, wat met die NGK in verband gestaan het en wat nie afgevaardigdes na die stigtingsvergadering gestuur het nie, te wete Beaufort-Wes, Elandskloof, Middelburg en Ceres, voortaan onder die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Zendingkerk van Zuid-Afrika sou resorteer. Daarteenoor sou Murraysburg, Graaf-Reinet, Victoria-Wes, Richmond uitgenooi word om deel te word van die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Zendingkerk (*Acta NGSK 1881:6-7*). Ds JH Neethling het daarop gewys dat op grond van art 221 en art 219 die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Zendingkerk wel gemeentes buite die NGK kon opneem (*Acta NGSK 1881:7*).

Eerwaarde Dirk Jan Hendrik Ruytenbeek is as eerste moderator van die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Zendingkerk van Zuid-Afrika gekies (*Acta NGSK 1881:6*). Hy het die *Konstitusie* voorgelees en verduidelik (*Acta NGSK 1881:6*). Eerwaarde Johan Kretzen is as assessor en eerwaarde Johannes Cornelis Pauw is tot scriba sinodi, actuarius en penningmeester gekies (*Acta NGSK 1881:6*).

Die bepalinge van die *NGK se Wetboek* was in sodanige gevalle waarvoor die *Konstitusie* nie voorsiening maak nie, van toepassing in die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Zendingkerk (Kriel 1981:33). Byvoorbeeld daar is geen bepaling in die *Konstitusie* met betrekking tot die byhou van doop- en lidmaatregisters nie. Tog was elke gemeente van die Nederduitse Gereformeerde

Zendingkerk van Zuid-Afrika verplig om genoemde registers by te hou en afskrifte van registers by die Sinode van die NGK in te dien. Die bewaring van die dokumente was die verantwoordelikheid van die NGK.

Op die Stigtingsinode het die selfstandigheid van die gestigte Sendingkerk ter sprake gekom, toe eerwaarde Paulus Teske, sendeling van Beaufort-Wes, beswaar aangeteken het teen die stigting en organisasie van die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Zendingkerk (*Acta NGSK* 1881:9-12). Paulus Teske het op 26 September 1861, saam met eerwaarde Jacobus Cornelius Pauw, uit Nederland in Tafelbaai aangekom het. Hy was gedurende 1862 in die werkkring in Beaufort-Wes deur ds Krige van die NGK Prins Albert georden. Hy was veral deur die Afscheiding en die kerkregtelike stryd in Nederland beïnvloed. Hy was assessor van die 2^{de}, 3^{de} en die 4^{de} sinodes van die NGSK. Hy sterf 1897 (Joubert 1932:230). Hy het die regsgeeldigheid van art 226 bevestig wat aan die Sinodale Binnelandse Sendingkommissie vetoreg ten opsigte van alle wette en bepalinge wat deur die Sendingkerk gemaak mag word, verleen het (*Acta* 1881:9-12 asook Kriel 1981:31). Hy het van die veronderstelling uitgegaan dat die oorspronklike gesag by die plaaslike gemeente lê en dat die meerdere vergadering slegs afgeleide gesag het. Teske se beswaar teen die daarstelling van 'n aparte sendingkerk op grond van die aanvaarde *Konstitusie* was vanaf Woensdag 5 Oktober tot Vrydag 7 Oktober 1881 bespreek (*Acta NGSK* 1881:9-12). Hy het op Vrydag 7 Oktober 1881 voorgestel dat die vergadering die Binnelandse Sendingkommissie (=BSK) versoek om by die NGK se eerskomende Sinode 'n beskrywingspunt met betrekking tot die wysiging van art 226 in te dien. Indien die BSK dit egter nie wou doen nie, het hy aanbeveel dat die vergadering sodanige beskrywingspunt by die eersvolgende Sinode van die NGK moes indien (*Acta NGSK* 1881:10-11). Teske het ook voorgestel dat die vergadering uitgestel moes word tot na die Sinode van die NGK (*Acta NGSK* 1881:10-11).

Die ouderling van Beaufort-Wes, Damon Titus, het Teske se voorstel gesekondeer (*Acta NGSK* 1881:12). Die Sinode van die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Zendingkerk van Zuid-Afrika (1881) het Paulus Teske se voorstel verwerp en het daarmee die konstitusionele riglyne, soos vasgelê deur die NGK, aanvaar. Paulus Teske was nie bereid om deel van die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Zendingkerk te word nie, aangesien hy van mening was dat die NGSK 'n onsuivere kerkbegrip huldig. Hy het gevolglik kennis gegee dat Beaufort-Wes nie lid van die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Zendingkerk van Zuid-Afrika kan word nie, maar dat hy graag, soos in die verlede, direk onder die BSK sou wou funksioneer: "Geeft kennis dat hy de Vergadering verlaat en van deze Zendingkerk geen lid kan zijn en dat hy als voorheen met zijne gemeente onder die H.E. Zending Commissie blijft" (*Acta NGSK* 1881:12).

Teenoor die besluit van die Sinode van die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Zendingkerk van Zuid-Afrika (1881) het Paulus Teske sy eie geworteldheid in die Gereformeerde Kerkreg en kerkregering beklemtoon. Paulus Teske gaan van die veronderstelling uit dat 'n Sinode die regsbevoegdheid behoort te hê om besluite te kan verander en dat sodanige bevoegdheid nie aan 'n subkommissie van 'n ander kerk gesekondeer kan word nie. Op aanbeveling van die scribe, eerwaarde Cornelius Pauw, het die Sinode eenparig besluit dat hulle aan Paulus Teske en Damon Titus adviserende stemme sou verleen. Teske en Titus het met adviserende stem die res van sittings bygewoon (*Acta NGSK* 1881:12).

1. SELFSTANDIGHEID VAN DIE PLAASLIKE GEMEENTE

Paulus Teske is van mening dat die art 226 afwyk van 'n suiwer kerkbegrip en dat dit gevolglik die selfstandigheid van die NGSK in gedrang bring (*Acta NGSK* 1881:10). Volgens Teske behoort 'n kerk vry en onafhanklik te wees. Hy is van mening dat die artikel wantroue by die sogenaamde gekleurde bevolking tot gevolg kan hê en dat dit uiteindelik tot gevolg kan het dat

ander gemeentes wat hul by die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Zendingkerk sou wou aansluit, daardeur afgeskrik kon word (*Acta NGSK 1881:10*).

Op die stigtingsvergadering is die *Konstitusie* aanvaar wat onder andere die selfstandigheid van die plaaslike gemeente as een van die grondbeginsels van die Doleansiekerkreg in gedrang gebring het. Die regerende mag hoort volgens art 226 tuis by die BSK deurdat die NGK en hul subkommissie besluite van die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Zendingkerk kon veto. Al die besluite van die NGSK sou onderworpe wees aan die goedkeuring van die NGK (Smith 1972:40). Daarteenoor staan die outonomieit en/of selfstandigheid van die plaaslike gemeente vir Teske sentraal. Paulus Teske pleit dat die selfstandigheid van die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Zendingkerk erken en eerbiedig sal word. Hy beskou die art 226 as in stryd met 'n gereformeerde kerkbegrip. Teske het op die Stigtingsinode gevra of die Sinodale Binnelandse Sendingkommissie (SBSK) nie afgeskaf kon word nie. Ds Botha, lid van die Sinodale Binnelandse Sendingkommissie het daarop geantwoord dat dit nie gedoen kan word nie, omrede art 221 waardeur die reg van sitting en stemreg aan die lede van die Sinodale Binnelandse Sendingkommissie op die Sinode van die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Zendingkerk verleen word, slegs deur die NGK self op hul eersvolgende Sinode verander kon word (*Acta NGSK 1891:2*).

2. DIE KARAKTER VAN DIE KERKVERBAND

Op die Stigtingsinode van die NGSK 1881 het die vier gemeentes: George, Wynberg, Zuurbraak, Wellington, gesamentlik 'n eenheid, 'n kerkverband gevorm. Die gemeentes is in lyn met art 220 van die *Konstitusie* in twee Ringe, naamlik 'n Oostelike Ring en Westelike Ring verdeel (*Acta NGSK 1881*). Met kerkverband word 'n eenheid in kerkregtelike sin veronderstel. Die kerkverband in die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Zendingkerk was 'n konfederasie van selfstandige plaaslike gemeentes en/of werkkringe wat vrywillig tot die verband toegetree het. Die plaaslike gemeentes en/of werkkringe het die reg gehad om tot die kerkverband toe te tree en/of uit te tree. Elke gemeente wat tot die kerkverband toetree, moes volgens art 221 oor 'n Kerkraad beskik wat die gemeente op die meerdere vergaderinge verteenwoordig en die gemeente plaaslik bestuur. Na die Stigtingsinode het Graaff-Reinet, Aberdeen en Middelburg by die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Zendingkerk aangesluit (Kriel 1963:83-84).

Paulus Teske is van mening dat 'n kerk tot stand kom deur middel van 'n aantal gelowiges wat onderling met mekaar in verband tree. Teske kon appelleer teen die besluit van die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Zendingkerk van Zuid-Afrika Sinode van 1881, maar hy het verkies om hom by die besluit te berus en sluit op die tweede Nederduitse Gereformeerde Zendingkerk van Zuid-Afrika Sinode 1891 met sy gemeente, Beaufort-Wes, by die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Zendingkerk van Zuid-Afrika aan (Kriel 1981:35). Teske het sedert 1891 onverpoos gepoog om die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Zendingkerk kerkregtelik van binne te verander. Op sy vraag op die Sinode van die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Zendingkerk van Zuid-Afrika (1891) of sy toetreding tot die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Zendingkerk 'n invloed sou hê op die verhouding waartoe sy gemeente met die Ringsendingkommissie staan, het die sekretaris van die Binnelandse Sendingkommissie, ds Botha, ontkenend geantwoord (*Acta NGSK 1891:2*). Op voorstel van ds W Murray, predikant van die NGK Worcester, en lid van die BSK het die Sinode besluit dat finansiële state wat die verskillende gemeentes jaarliks aan die BSK moes opstuur, voortaan deur die sekretaris van die kommissie van die Sinodale Vergadering van die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Zendingkerk, aan die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Zendingkerk Sinode voorgelê moes word. Die gemeentes wat nie onder die toesig van die BSK gestaan het nie, moes hul finansiële state direk aan die Sinode van die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Zendingkerk stuur (*Acta NGSK 1891:5*).

Geen Ringsvergadering het sedert die Stigtingsinode (1881) plaasgevind nie. In hoofsaak

het die Sinode van Nederduitse Gereformeerde Zendingkerk van Zuid-Afrika (1891) in sy werksaamhede as Ring gefungeer (Kriel 1981:39). Op dié Sinode, met twaalf sendelinge en tien ouderlinge van onderskeidelik sestien gemeentes as afgevaardigdes, was Teske as assessor gekies. Dié posisie het hy tot 1896 beklee. Eerw. C J Pauw is op dié Sinode as moderator gekies. Teske het op die Sinode voorgestel dat die Sinode 'n kommissie benoem om 'n eie kerkerde vir die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Zendingkerk op te stel (*Acta NGSK* 1891:4). Die voorstel was aanvaar en 'n kommissie, bestaande uit die moderatuur en lede van die Binnelandse Sendingkommissie, naamlik di Botha van NGK Philadelphia en De Wet van NGK Villiersdorp, was aangewys (Kriel 1963:107).

Die drang na kerkregtelike selfverwesenliking was volgens Kriel deurgaans aanwesig (1981:160). Teske het van die veronderstelling uitgegaan dat die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Zendingkerk 'n selfstandige kerkregtelike posisie behoort te hê daarom sy voorstel vir 'n eie kerkerde vir die sendinggemeentes wat met mekaar in verband gestaan het. Hy het 'n onderskeid gemaak tussen die selfstandigheid van 'n kerk en beheer van buite. Die wetgewende mag van die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Zendingkerk was volgens die *Konstitusie* gesetel in die NGK. Teske was van mening dat die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Zendingkerk nie 'n ondergeskikte posisie behoort te hê nie (Kriel 1981:39).

Op 7 Julie 1892, agtien maande na die tweede Sinode van die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Zendingkerk, het die derde sinode van die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Zendingkerk van Zuid-Afrika te Kimberley plaasgevind (Kriel 1981:36). Eerww C J Pauw is as moderator en Paulus Teske is as assessor herkies (*Acta NGSK* 1892:12-13). Op dié Sinode is daar oorgegaan tot die herverdeling van die gemeentes in twee Ringe naamlik die Westelike Ring (Wellington, Wynberg, Zuurbraak, Malmesbury, Ceres, Elandskloof, Kaapstad, Riebeeck-Kasteel en Montagu) en die Middellandse Ring (George, Beaufort-Wes, Middelburg, Graaff-Reinet, Beaconsfield, Kimberley en Richmond) (*Acta NGSK* 1892:20). Al bovermelde gemeentes was op dié Sinode verteenwoordig. Ds P Teske is as voorsitter en ds A Weich is as scriba van die Middellandse Ring gekies, eerwaarde C J Pauw is as voorsitter van die Westelike Ring gekies en eerw. B Pienaar as scriba (*Acta NGSK* 1892:22-23). Beide die Westelike Ring en die Oostelike Ring het op 11 Julie 1892 vir die eerste keer gekonstitueer (Kriel 1981:40). Op die derde Sinode van die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Zendingkerk (1892) het die kommissie vir die opstel van 'n vereenvoudigde wetboek, waarvan Paul Teske self 'n lid was, gerapporteer dat hul die opdrag nie uitgevoer het nie, aangesien hul van mening was dat die tyd vir 'n eie wetboek nog nie ryp was nie. Die Sinode het kennis geneem van die verslag van die kommissie (*Acta NGSK* 1892:15). Verder het die Sinode ook besluit dat artikels van die *Wette en Bepalings van die NGK* deur die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Zendingkerk handhaaf moes word (*Acta NGSK* 1892:17). Op voorstel van eerw. Teske dat die Sinode die BSK sal versoek om te verklaar of hul die transport en dokumente van die Beaufort Wes behoorlik ondersoek het en as eiendom vir die NGK gewaarborg is, het die BSK instemmend geantwoord (*Acta NGSK* 1892:18)

Teske het, onder andere by die Stigtingsinode die voorwaarde dat die eiendom aan die NGK volgens *Konstitusie* getranspoteer moes word, as kerkregtelik juis betwyfel (Kriel 1963:107). In 1892 het Teske die voorvereiste nagekom deurdat ook Beaufort-Wes se eiendom vir die NGK gewaarborg was.

Op 9 tot 11 September 1896 het die vierde Sinode Nederduitse Gereformeerde Zendingkerk te Wellington plaasgevind. Eerwaarde AF Weich is op die Sinode as moderator gekies (*Acta NGSK* 1896:5). Twintig gemeentes was deur hul afgevaardigdes, 15 sendelinge en 17 ouderlinge, op die Sinode verteenwoordig (Kriel 1963:87). Teen 1908 was slegs 10 gemeentes, te wete, Wellington, Wynberg, Ceres, Malmesbury, Ebenezer (Kaapstad), Paarl, Oudtshoorn, Beaconsfield, Calvinia en Britstown finansiële selfstandig. Al die ander gemeentes, wat alreeds 'n eie leraar besit het, was met 'n jaarlikse toelaag, vanaf £20 tot £60, uit die Binnelandse Sendingkas ondersteun

(*Almanak* 1908:27). Beaufort-Wes was dus een van die gemeentes wat afhanklik was van steun van die Binnelandse Sending. In samewerking met Binnelandse Sendingkommissie was in elke Ring 'n Ringsendingkommissie saamgestel wat binne die Ringsessort van die Nederduitsche Gereformeerde Zendingkerk die belange van die sending behartig het. Die finansies van die verskillende Ringe was deur die Binnelandse Sendingkommissie beheer (*Almanak* 1908:27). Op dié Sinode 1896 was geen beskrywingspunte met betrekking tot die daarstelling van 'n eie wetboek ingedien nie (*Acta NGSK* 1896:5-8). Eers op die Nederduitsche Gereformeerde Zendingkerk-Sinode 1908 het die kwessie oor die daarstelling van 'n eie wetboek vir die Nederduitsche Gereformeerde Zendingkerk weer aan die orde gekom. Eerwaarde S Weich, predikant van Malmesbury, het op die Sinode voorgestel dat die Nederduitsche Gereformeerde Zendingkerk moes oorgaan tot die opstel van 'n eie wetboek vir die omstandighede en behoeftes van die binnelandse sendingkerk: "De synode neme in ooverweging of de tijd nu niet gekomen is, dat er een ekstrakt uit het wetboek gemaakt worde, met nodig geachte bijvoegingen, geschikt en toepasselik voor de tegenwoordige omstandigheden en behoeften der binnelandse zendingkerk (*Acta NGSK* 1908:11). Die voorstel van eerwaarde S Weich, was deur die Binnelandse Sendingsekretaris, ds J du Plessis, gesteun (Kriel 1981:160). Ds Du Plessis het gemeen dat daar 'n reglement vir die Nederduitsche Gereformeerde Zendingkerk opgetrek kon word, mits dit nie indruis teen die wette en bepalinge van die NGK nie. Eerwaarde Weich het dit duidelik gestel dat dit nie sy bedoeling is om die *Wetboek van die NGK* oor boord te gooi nie, maar dat hy vir 'n ekstrak pleit vir soverre dit vir die Nederduitsche Gereformeerde Zendingkerk nodig is (*Acta NGSK* 1908:11). Twyfel het op die Sinode bestaan of die Nederduitsche Gereformeerde Zendingkerk hom van die wette en bepalinge van die NGK onttrek het (Kriel 1963:107). Die leraar van Wellington, eerw. J C Pauw, het gevra of die Nederduitsche Gereformeerde Zendingkerk die reg het om hom te onttrek van die wette en bepalinge van die NGK. Daar was gevolglik op die Sinode 'n kommissie benoem, bestaande uit die moderatuur, CJ Pauw, H Dekker, ID Pienaar, asook die leraars van Malmesbury, eerwaarde S Weich, en Woodstock, eerwaarde JP De Villiers, asook ds J Du Plessis, sekretaris van die Binnelandse Sendingsubkommissie, om 'n konsep wetboek op te stel en aan die volgende Sinode van die NGK voor te lê vir bekragtiging (*Acta NGSK* 1908:11).

Op die Sinode van die NGK (1903) is die ou Binnelandse Sendingkommissie getermineer. Die Algemene Sinodale Sendingkommissie is op die Sinode in sub-kommissies verdeel. Die Binnelandse Sending-subkommissie het tot stand gekom wat verantwoordelik was vir uitbou van die NGSK. Die Binnelandse Sending-subkommissie het sitting op die Sinode van die NGSK gehad (Kriel 1981:41). Op die Sinode van die Nederduitsche Gereformeerde Zendingkerk van Zuid-Afrika (1912) het 'n gedrukte vorm van die konsep wetboek gedien (*Acta NGSK* 1912:9). Dit het bekend gestaan as die *Wetten en Bepalingen voor het bestuur van de Nederduitse Gereformeerde Zendingkerk in de Kaapprovinsie van Zuid-Afrika*. Die Sinode het besluit om die behandeling van die konsep wetboek te staak, omdat slegs die NGK die bevoegdheid gehad het om kerklike bepalinge vir die Nederduitsche Gereformeerde Zendingkerk te ontwerp en/of te wysig (Kriel 1981:160 vergelyk ook art 226 van die *Kerkwet van die NGK 1881*). Die NGK was gevolglik deur die Sinode van die Nederduitsche Gereformeerde Zendingkerk (1912) versoek om 'n konsep wetboek te ontwerp (*Acta NGSK* 1912:10-11). Die Nederduitsche Gereformeerde Zendingkerk se verandering van die konstitusie was afhanklik aan die ratifisering, bekragtiging en/of goedkeuring deur die NGK se Binnelandse Sending-subkommissie.

3. DIE KARAKTER VAN DIE GESAG VAN DIE MEERDERE VERGADERING

Die lede van die Binnelandse Sendingkommissie van die NGK het sittingsreg en stemreg op die Sinode van die NGSK gehad (vergelyk art 226 van die *Konstitusie* asook Kriel 1981:161).

Op die meerdere vergadering van die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Zendingkerk was die NGK verteenwoordig deur die Binnelandse Sendingkommissie. 'n Meerdere vergadering is egter volgens die Doleansiekerkreg 'n vergadering van kerke wat vrywillig in kerkverband met mekaar staan. Die *Konstitusie* van die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Zendingkerk gaan nie van die primordiale reg van die plaaslike gemeente uit nie, aangesien groter mag aan die NGK se Binnelandse Sendingkommissie verleen is as die plaaslike gemeente.

4. DIE TUGREG TEN OPSIGTE VAN AMPSDRAERS

Reeds op die Sinode van die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Zendingkerk van Zuid-Afrika (1891) het Teske die vraag gevra in hoeverre die kerklike wette van die NGK vir die uitoefening van die kerklike tug vir die sendinggemeente bindend was. Die voorsitter, eerw. JC Pauw, het geantwoord dat volgens art 219 van die *Konstitusie* die bepalinge bindend is in soverre die omstandighede en behoeftes van die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Zendingkerk toepaslik was (*Acta NGSK* 1891:5). Geen voorsiening vir afsetting van ouderlinge, diakens en sendelinge was in die *Konstitusie* gemaak nie. Die NGK het alreeds in 1824 'n vierde amp ingestel, naamlik die amp van die sendeling. Die sendeling was iemand wat opleiding ontvang het om die evangelie aan die sogenaamde heidene te verkondig. 'n Reglement vir die ordening van sendelinge was in 1826 goedgekeur. Volgens prof CJ Kriel word reeds met art 221 en 222 van die *Konstitusie van die Sendingkerk (1881)* die dubbele lidmaatskap van sendelinge in die vooruitsig gestel (*Skema NGSK* 1978:70). Die sendelinge sou direk onder die opsig en tug van die NGK ressorteer (Kriel 1981:160). Met betrekking tot die tugreg oor sendelinge is die selfbeskikking van die NGSK deur bogenoemde bepalinge aan bande gelê. Die NGSK moes met betrekking tot die tug van sendelinge handel ooreenkomstig die bepalinge van NGK (Kriel 1981:33).

Die kwessie van tugreg ten opsigte van die sendelinge het 1908 aan die orde kom. Die Middellandse Ring het die Sinode versoek om hul besluit te bekrachtig insake die saak van die gewese leraar van Upington, JA Van Niekerk wat weens onsedelike gedrag afgeset was. Die Middellandse Ring het die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Zendingkerk-Sinode versoek om J A van Niekerk af te set van sy amp as leraar en sy status terug te trek, aangesien algehele afsetting alleen deur die Sinode kon geskied (*Acta NGSK* 1908:4). Die Sinode het eenparig besluit dat J A van Niekerk onbevoeg is vir die leraarsamp en het sy status ontnem: "De uitspraak van de Synode is, dat JA van Niekerk wegens het bedreven kwaad onbevoegd is tot het leraars ambt en hem mits deze zijn status ontnemt. Waardeur nu verstaan wordt, dat genoemde persoon ophoudt leraar te zijn" (*Acta NGSK* 1908:5).

Die Sinode van die NGK (1908) het die hele aangeleentheid met betrekking tot die tug van die sendelinge na hul Regskommissie verwys ten einde die Sinode met advies te bedien (Kriel 1963:108). Onder andere moes die Regskommissie vasstel of dit binne die bevoegdheid van die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Zendingkerk sou lê om 'n sendeling te skors en/of af te set. Die Sinode van die NGK (1909) het op aanbeveling van die Regskommissie besluit dat die Sendelinge onder die tug van die Ringe van die NGK wat hulle gelegitimeer het, staan (*Acta NGK* 1909:101). Die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Zendingkerk was dus nie bevoeg om ten opsigte van wangedrag sendelinge te skors en/of af te set nie. Die Sinode van die NGK (1909) het ook besluit om die hele aangeleentheid insake die uitoefening van die kerklike tug na die Binnelandse Sending-subkommissie te verwys wat by die volgende Sinode verslag moes lewer (*Acta NGK* 1909:92).

Sedert 1908 het die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Zendingkerk hom beywer dat die reg om die tug uit te oefen ten volle erken word. Die Sinode van die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Zendingkerk (1912) het na aanleiding van die uitspraak van die Sinode van die NGK (1909) 'n

mosie aanvaar (met die steun van ds DS Botha van die Binnelandse Sendingkommissie) dat die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Zendingkerk self die tug op die sendelinge behoort toe te pas (Botha 1981:160). Die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Zendingkerk beklemtoon met dié besluit op voetspoor van die DKO art 37 dat die tugreg van die Kerkraad van die plaaslike gemeente, nie op die Ring of Sinode of die Binnelandse Sending Kommissie oorgedra kan word nie. Die Sinode van die NGK (1915) het egter besluit dat hierdie reg alleen die NGK toekom.

5. DIE APPÈLREG TEN OPSIGTE VAN DIE BESLUIE VAN 'N MEERDERE VERGADERING

Die besluite van die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Zendingkerk was volgens art 226 onderworpe aan die goedkeuring van die NGK. Art 226 ken aan die Binnelandse Sendingkommissie 'n dwingende mag toe (*potestas definitiva*). Wetswysigings was volgens art 226 van die goedkeuring van die Binnelandse Sendingkommissie afhanklik. 'n Kommissie van die NGK te wete die Binnelandse Sendingkommissie het as 'n soort hoër bestuur, 'n *senatus ecclesiasticus* of super-kerkraad, gefunksioneer wat onderwerping vra. Die NGK het bestuursmag oor en buite die plaaslike gemeente *locus classicus* van die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Zendingkerk uitgeoefen.

Die vetoreg van die Binnelandse Sendingkommissie is tekenend van die beoefening van hiërargiese kerkregeringstelsel. In hiërargiese kerkregeringstelsel, anders as in 'n Gereformeerde kerkregeringstelsel is daar ruimte dat 'n laer bestuur se besluite deur 'n hoër bestuur vernietig en/of veto kon word. Die aard van die gesag van die Kerkraad, die Ring en die Sinode van die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Zendingkerk en dié van die Binnelandse Sendingkommissie van die NGK was nie dieselfde nie. Laasgenoemde kommissie het hoër gesag in vergelyking die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Zendingkerk gehad. In die Binnelandse Sendingkommissie van die NGK vind 'n kulminasie van mag plaas. Die kommissie kon oor sake handel wat uiteraard tot die bevoegdheid van die mindere of meerdere vergaderinge van die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Zendingkerk tuishoort. Die BSK het teenoor die plaaslike gemeente dwingende, beslissende mag gehad. Die BSK het nie slegs adviserende stem nie, maar kon ook besluite van die NGSK veto en/of nietig verklaar. Die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Zendingkerk kon gevolglik geen wysigings aan die *Konstitusie* doen sonder die goedkeuring van die NGK nie, aangesien die Binnelandse Sendingkommissie kassasiereg ten opsigte van besluite van die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Zendingkerk gehad het. 'n Nuwe formulering van die wette en bepalinge van die NGSK wat in enige opsig mag afwyk van die *Konstitusie* kon alleen plaasvind met goedkeuring van die NGK.

6. KONKLUSIE

Die NGSK toon 'n noue aansluiting by die Doleansiekerkreg met die sterke aksentuering van die selfstandigheid van die plaaslike gemeente, die konfederatiewe karakter van die kerkverband en die afwysiging van 'n hiërargiese kerkregeringstelsel. Die NGSK beklemtoon in hulle stryd om selfverwesenliking dat aan die kerke in korrespondensie of sinodaal gekombineerd die drievoudige mag naamlik, leer-, regeer- en tugmag toekom. Op voetspoor van die *oud kerkrecht* gaan die NGSK van die veronderstelling uit dat indien 'n plaaslike gemeente hom aan die uitspraak van 'n Sinode onttrek, het die meerdere vergadering nie die reg om self sy besluit in die plaaslike gemeente te voltrek en die Kerkraad af te set nie. Die NGSK gaan van die veronderstelling uit dat die aansluiting by die kerkverband die onderskeie plaaslike gemeentes verplig om uitvoering te gee aan die besluite van die meerdere vergaderinge; dat die bestuursgesag by die kerkraad berus en dat die toepassing van sensuur oor die wit leraars aan die kerkorde daartoe bevoegde verklaarde mindere vergadering oorgelaat behoort te word, dat die kerkraad tug mag uitoefen en ook bevoeg is om die daadwerklike skorsing en afsetting van ampsdraers te implementeer.

GERAADPLEEGDE WERKE

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The last racially separated church in the Dutch Reformed family of churches: Constituting the Synod of the Evangelical Reformed Church in Africa

ABSTRACT

The author describes the history and circumstances around the founding of the last racially separated “daughter” church of the white Dutch Reformed Church (DRC), the Evangelical Reformed Church in Africa (ERCA) in Namibia in 1975. He places this in the context of racial and ethnic church formation by the DRC subsequent to the publication of the Tomlinson Report. The DRC in Namibia needed a black partner church in the north of Namibia in order to counter the alliance between Swapo and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ovambo-Kavango. ERCA was miniscule in size in comparison to the Lutheran and Roman Catholic churches in the northern “homelands” of Namibia, which was one reason why indigenous elders as well as some missionaries considered it unwise to institute a separate church at that time. The objections were overruled by the “mother” church (the DRC) that held the upper hand since it funded mission work in the northern “homelands”. The author concludes with some critical comments about this episode of DRC mission history.

INTRODUCTION

The institution by the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) in South Africa of racially separated churches has been thoroughly documented (cf. Smith 1984; Saayman 1979; Saayman 2007). This article is not meant to cover that ground again. It is rather a first attempt to recount the history of constituting the last of these racially separated daughter churches², the Evangelical Reformed Church in Africa (ERCA)³. The constituting synod of this church took place from 3 – 9 July 1975 at the DRC mission station and Theological School at Orumana in Kaokoland, the north-western province of present day Namibia (cf. Strauss 1975). An in-depth analysis of the circumstances around the birth of this new church has not been attempted in an academic article yet, and this is the focus of this article. The only critical analysis of the constituting of the church (Lombard & Tjingaete 1995) deals more extensively with developments later in its life, especially after the liberation of Namibia in 1990. The authors note serious objections to the formation of a racially separated church in Namibia at the time (:21-23). The article was

1 Prof Willem Saayman is Professor Emeritus in Missiology at Unisa in Pretoria. He served as DRC missionary in Namibia between 1974 and 1978.

2 At the time I am writing about (the 1970s), the term *daughter churches* was already a contested concept. It was used to describe the younger churches which came into being as the fruit of mission work of the older churches in Western Europe and America, especially during the late 19th and early 20th century. I am going to use the term in this article, as it was the term used in discussions and conversations at the time. I am fully aware of the negative interpretations which can be connected to the term.

3 The Afrikaans acronym, by which the church was widely known, is “EGKA”. ERCA consisted at the time of three congregations, one in each of the three big “homelands” in the north of Namibia, namely Kavango, Ovambo and Kaokoland.

written in 1995, though, twenty years after the constituting of the church. Tjingaete, the main source of information (:21), was not present at or involved in the constituting of the synod, and therefore had no firsthand information about it. Furthermore, the article was written in 1995, in the context of a liberated Namibia, which was very far removed from the 1975 context of SWA in the midst of a vicious liberation war. Still, the objections of the authors must be taken seriously, and the present article is meant to clear up some of the contemporary contextual issues around the constituting of ERCA⁴, which also help to clarify some of the vexing issues of its later life discussed by Lombard and Tjingaete.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The historical background of DRC mission in South West Africa (present day Namibia)⁵ has been extensively documented by Kritzing (1972) and Buys and Nambala (2003). In very brief terms, the DRC did not engage in independent mission work in its early years in Namibia (after the First World War, 1914-1918, when the Union of SA was mandated by the League of Nations to administer the previously German colony and large numbers of Afrikaans-speaking South Africans settled there). It rather co-operated with two congenial mission societies already at work there, namely the (Lutheran) Rhenish and Finnish Mission Societies (cf. Buys & Nambala 2003:361-362). After the Second World War this co-operation was institutionalised in 1947 in the so-called “Driehoek-ooreenkoms” (Triangular Agreement), in terms of which the DRC provided financial and other assistance to the Rhenish and the Fins⁶. In 1955 the DRC (still in consultation with the Finns – Buys & Nambala 2003:251) started its own mission work in the Kaokoland, where neither of the two Lutheran societies was working at the time. Kaokoland, indigenous home of the Ovahimba/Herero, is a vast expanse of desert and semi-desert country, with a very low population density. The Ovahimba are very tradition-bound, and Christianity made very little inroads in the community – in the 1970s, less than 5% of the population of around 12,000 were Christianised. The Triangular Agreement fell into dispute in the late 1960s (partly as a result of disagreements about the DRC’s support for apartheid, :362), and the DRC started mission work in the late 1960s also in Kavango. The first mission station was situated about 50 km east of Rundu (the capital of Kavango Province) at Takuasa. Again this was done in consultation with the Finns. This was a very sensitive area, as Kavango was more or less divided in half between Roman Catholics (east of Rundu), and Protestants (Evangelical Lutherans, west of Rundu). So Takuasa was situated at the extreme east of Protestant influence in Kavango, mainly because the Lutheran Finnish Mission Society was not working so far east of Rundu⁷. Still, by the early 1970s, Takuasa congregation, with more than 500 confessing members, was the biggest DRC mission

4 The author was at the time Lecturer at the Orumana Theological School in Kaokoland, having served as missionary minister of the congregation in Kavango before. He was elected moderator of ERCA at the first synod, and therefore writes as participant observer.

5 It is important to keep in mind that historical developments in SWA itself, as well as developments in SA, have to be taken very seriously when analysing and evaluating DRC mission in SWA. This is so because it was difficult to characterise “Suidwes” (as it was referred to in colloquial Afrikaans) as either “foreign mission” or “home mission” in DRC terms. Theoretically this was a German colony placed under SA administration by the League of Nations after World War 1, but practically it was regarded as nearly a “fifth province”, first of the Union, and then later the Republic of SA. I return to this reality later on.

6 Buys & Nambala (2003:362) provide a very reliable brief synopsis of the content and aims of this agreement.

7 In the early 1970s ELOK and the DRC mission at Takuasa joined forces, for example in youth work in the Secondary Schools east of Rundu.

congregation in the three northern “homelands”⁸. As the Ovahimba people were nomadic migrants, the numbers of the Orumano congregation are even more difficult to determine – but it was certainly lower than those in the Kavango. DRC mission work in Ovambo was initiated only in 1973 near Onuno, close to the border of Angola, by Rev Paulus (on his own initiative, without any consultation with the DRC, :252), who had previously worked in Kavango.

The first incursion by armed insurgents belonging to Swapo (the South West African People’s Organisation, then a liberation movement, since 1990 the governing party of independent Namibia), took place in the north of Ovambo in 1966. From that time onwards relationships between the DRC and the Rhenish and Finnish mission societies, as well as the resulting autonomous churches, the Rhenish Evangelical Lutheran Church in SWA (ELCSWA) in the south, and the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Ovambo-Kavango Church (ELOK) in the north, became very strained. The main reason was that the DRC supported apartheid⁹, while ELCSWA and ELOK rejected it completely and supported Swapo¹⁰. The DRC therefore decided to go it alone, and started intensifying its mission work in the three big northern “homelands”. This was the cause of the DRC’s urgent intention to plant its own “autonomous” daughter church in the north of Namibia, and thus the direct cause of the constituting of ERCA in 1975.

PREPARATIONS FOR CONSTITUTING THE CHURCH

Under the leadership of Rev Strauss¹¹ the DRC in Namibia started its specific preparations in earnest in 1972. One of the pillars of this initiative was approaching Prof WJ van der Merwe, then Professor of Missiology at the (DRC) Theological Seminary at the University of Stellenbosch, to accept a call to come to Namibia once he retired at Stellenbosch at the end of 1974. Prof van der Merwe accepted the invitation, and spent June-July 1974 at Orumana to teach the evangelist students there, and prepare the way for constituting the church. The author was approached by Rev Strauss, in consultation with Prof van der Merwe, shortly before the conclusion of his theological studies in November 1973 at Stellenbosch to accept a call as missionary to a new “ministry point” (“werkkring” in Afrikaans) at Rundu in January 1974, with the aim of transferring him to the Theological School at Orumana in 1975. At the beginning of 1974 Rev Saayman in Kavango, Rev Paulus in Ovambo, Rev Sarel Visser¹² at Ohopoho (Kaokoland) and Prof van der Merwe at Orumana (at that stage the four ordained missionary ministers) had to start preparing the way for the constituting synod in July 1975. A preparatory conference of elders of the three congregations had taken place in July 1974 at Orumana. The elders were very ambivalent about the idea of constituting a synod. They wanted to know: did this imply that the

8 It is very difficult to provide accurate statistics for this time in Namibia. The government did not even have accurate statistics for the total population, as there was constant migration to and from Angola. The numbers are based on the author’s personal experience as minister of the Takuasa congregation, whose congregants lived on both sides of the Kavango river. I write “homelands” in quotation marks, because the homelands policy was an indigenous South African institution. Yet the policy functioned to all intents and purposes in the north of SWA in terms of the so-called “Odendaal Plan” (cf. Buys & Nambala 2003:320). This plan was an attempt to implement South African “Bantustan” policies in SWA. As a start, the 3 big northern areas of (from west to east) Kaokoland, Owambo and Kavango, where there had been a minimum of white settlement, were declared as exclusive “Bantu reserves”, separated by a so-called “red line” from the rest of SWA. Any workers or visitors to this area needed a police (later an army) permit to enter or leave these areas.

9 For the history to DRC support for apartheid, see Saayman 2007:69-75.

10 Buys & Nambala (2003:290-330) provide a detailed overview of this quarrel.

11 At the time Rev Strauss was Mission Secretary of the DRC Synod of SWA.

12 Rev Visser accepted a call to become a chaplain in the South African Defence Force (SADF) soon afterwards and took no further part in the process.

DRC was withdrawing its support? They were also concerned by the fact that the DRC mission had scarcely 1,000 members in total in the three “homelands”. How could we consider becoming a credible autonomous church in the midst of a sea of Roman Catholics and a sea of Evangelical Lutherans (in Kavango and Ovambo)? Many of the DRC members had either been born into one of these two churches (especially the Lutheran churches), or still had family connections to them. Starting an autonomous church did not make great sense to them.

In the light of these objections both Prof van der Merwe and the author orally cautioned members of the Mission Commission of the DRC about the advisability of going ahead immediately with constituting the church. Van der Merwe and Saayman added another objection. By that time it was quite clear that SWA would achieve independence at some stage in the foreseeable future. Once that happened, it would make far greater sense to negotiate incorporation back into ELOK. The Triangular Agreement led to the building over many years of very good relationships between the DRC, Rhenish and Finnish missionaries (Buys & Nambala 2003:362). Many of our own members maintained good relations with the Lutheran congregations, especially in the Kavango. Once a separate church had been constituted, such re-incorporation would become very difficult, if not impossible. For this reason we thought that there was no pressing need to constitute a separate Dutch Reformed church where none had existed before. The DRC “held all the aces”, however, as both of us were working as DRC missionaries and were supposed to carry out DRC mission policy, and the total funding for the work (especially also the stipends and salaries of the indigenous evangelists and co-workers) in all three areas came from the “mother church”. It was therefore very difficult to withstand DRC pressure that the time had come to institute their “own” daughter church. So despite our personal objections¹³, preparations went ahead. So preparations for the founding synod, to be held at Orumana on invitation of the congregation of Kaokoland (the eldest congregation) from 3-9 July 1975 were carried through. Each congregation would be represented by the missionary minister, the evangelists (unordained but trained co-workers), and a number of elders. The “ministry points” in Caprivi and Bushmanland would be represented by the resident missionary, while the “ministry point” in Walvis Bay would be represented by the evangelist. At that stage of the political history of the mandate territory of South West Africa, the Eastern Caprivi Zipfel was still administered as a separate entity, not integrated into the SWA administration. The position of the San (Bushmen) was still not clear: would they be incorporated into a basically black African synod, or would they get their own church, like the Dutch Reformed Mission Church for Coloured people in SA and the South of SWA¹⁴? The members in Walvis Bay were mainly contract workers in the diamond industry from Kavango and Ovambo, and preferred to be considered as members of their “home” congregations in these two “homelands”. In total it meant that the new church would have between 1,000 and 1,500 members only¹⁵.

13 The question can be asked why we did not arrange for the elders and evangelists to convey their objections personally to the DRC Mission Commission also. In response, I wish to raise two points: In the first place, at that stage of the development of the work the Mission Secretary was the only channel of direct communication with the DRC. Rev Strauss attended the preparatory meeting at Orumana in 1974, and was fully aware of the objections raised in his presence. He brushed the objections aside and argued that constituting an autonomous synod could only be to the advantage of the young church. In the second place, even we as white missionaries had very limited access only to the Mission Commission, where we had no voting rights and could only provide oral advice, which could be accepted or rejected at will by the Commission. None of the indigenous workers at that stage “qualified” in DRC terms to attend Mission Commission meetings.

14 A separate church was eventually constituted in Caprivi, while the San members eventually stayed with the DRC “mother” church – Buys & Nambala 2003:251-252.

15 I wish to point out again that we had no hard and fast statistics available. In Kaokoland the inhabitants

THE CONSTITUTING SYNOD

In line with DRC church polity at the time, the synod of SWA did not even have to be involved in constituting the new church; it was a function delegated to the Mission Commission (cf Saayman 2008). Rev Strauss (as DRC Mission Secretary) was the office bearer who had the authority to preside over the conventicle; as such a meeting of church councils to constitute a synod is called in Reformed church polity. He had the authority to test and approve the credentials of the delegates from the three congregations. Having done that, the meeting was officially constituted and the election of a moderamen¹⁶ took place. Rev Saayman was elected moderator, Prof van der Merwe was elected as assessor, and Rev Gerhard Buys (new lecturer at Orumana since April 1975 and delegate of the Kaokoland congregation) was elected as scribe. On taking the chair, Saayman immediately expressed reservations about the fact that only white missionary ministers were elected to the moderamen, but the delegates were adamant that race was not the issue – they chose those who they considered able to carry out their duty¹⁷ (cf. Strauss 1975:317). Synod then started their official business according to the provisional agenda, which was accepted by synod¹⁸.

The first issue on the agenda was the name of the new church. There was no disagreement in synod that the name should be Evangelical Reformed Church in Africa (DRC). Tjingaete (1995:22) is mistaken here in his statement that the name was nothing more than “another name for the black DRC [the DRC “daughter church” in SA] in Namibia”. The name was proposed by student delegates from Orumana, and was an attempt to give the new church a recognisable identity in the north of Namibia at that time. The use of the word “Evangelical” here therefore has to be understood in the context of a German-speaking colony, where the big denominational differential was between “Katholisch” (Roman Catholic) and “Evangelisch” (Protestant). It had no link whatsoever to the worldwide confrontation of the time between “evangelicals” and “ecumenicals”, and was not a word which signified DRC self-understanding. “Reformed” is self-explanatory – it reflected more than twenty years of mission history. “Africa” was chosen to express the church’s self-understanding as an *African* church, not simply a *South African* church (Takuasa congregation, for example, had a significant number of members living in Angola). The addition in brackets of DRC was the result of strong pressure by especially the black delegates to verbalise their historical background (in other words, fruit of DRC mission – perhaps to remind the “mother” of this historic link in difficult times in future?). In actual fact this addition soon fell into disuse and the church simply became known as “EGKA” in Afrikaans.

Another very interesting and important decision of synod was the decision by synod that the white missionaries had to become full members of ERCA (cf. Strauss 1975:317)¹⁹. At that time

were completely nomadic, so it was difficult to know at any given time how many members resided in the congregation. The work in Ovambo was still very new, and there was no reliable church administration system in place yet. In the Kavango our members lived on both sides of the Kavango river (dividing the territories of SWA and Angola), and many of them could no longer participate in a regular manner in congregational activities as a result of the burgeoning “border war”.

16 In Reformed polity the moderamen consists of the office bearers of synod duly elected by the approved delegates. In this case a moderator (who also acted as actuary or legal officer), assessor (or vice moderator) and a scribe were elected.

17 The synod consisted of 35 voting delegates; only 4 were white, the other 31 were black. The people elected to the moderamen therefore reflected the preferences of an overwhelming black majority.

18 I am not sure where the official documents and church records can be found at present. At the time they were kept in the offices of the DRC in Windhoek. Since that time the DRC has consolidated its archives in Cape Town, which is where they will possibly be kept now.

19 Here again Tjingaete is mistaken in his assumption that the missionaries led a dualistic existence in both

the DRC had the policy of allowing dual membership to missionaries working in black daughter churches. Ordained and lay missionaries were allowed to become ex-officio members of the black daughter churches, but retained their membership in white congregations. In case of a doctrinal or ethical trespass committed by the white missionary, the black daughter church could hold a preliminary inquiry, and make recommendations to the white presbytery under whose jurisdiction the missionary resorted. Final judgment could, however, only be delivered by the white presbytery or synod. This was obviously an untenable situation, rooted in racist presuppositions. The ERCA synod (actually the white missionaries working in ERCA) requested that missionaries should become members exclusively of the black daughter church. This request was communicated to the mission commission of the DRC, and the DRC synod of SWA approved this radical change in DRC church polity. So on the first Sunday after the synod all white missionaries with their families transferred their membership to their respective ERCA congregations – a huge step forward and a “first” in the reigning racist configuration of DRC church polity at the time.

Most of the other business of synod had to do with the mundane matters of the everyday running of church business, such as the establishment of ERCA as a “juristic person” in order to have title deeds to its own property, and to establish its relationships to local and national government. The congregations at the “ministry points” in Caprivi and Bushmanland did not join ERCA at this stage, as there were too many uncertainties about the socio-political realities. The newly elected moderamen sought to establish good relationships to ELOK immediately, and in August or September 1975 the moderamen had a meeting with the ELOK church leadership under the legendary Bishop Leonard Auala at the ELOK headquarters in Ovambo. A set of simple rules were adopted unanimously to govern working relationships between the two churches in Kavango and Ovambo, where they were working in the same geographical areas at the time. ELOK asked ERCA to look after the spiritual needs of the ELOK members working in Kaokoland (mainly as nurses and health workers). Soon afterwards, the associate bishop and eventual successor of Auala, Kleopas Dumeni, visited Orumana. He addressed our students and conveyed ELOK’s best wishes for the future of the young sister church. This was a big step forward, for in the south of SWA, especially Windhoek, relations between ELOK and the DRC were under severe strain because the DRC was widely regarded as the “Boerekerk”²⁰ in SWA at the time, ecclesial representative of the hated racist policy of apartheid²¹.

PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS

1. I have elsewhere (Saayman 2007) argued that DRC mission history over more than 350 years can be described as consisting of four distinct waves. ERCA was constituted at the tail end of the third wave, which lasted from 1954-1976 (:69-99). This wave concurred and was indeed inspired by the unfolding “homelands” policy of the apartheid National Party government elected in 1948 (cf Saayman 2008). The blueprint for this development was the Tomlinson Report (Saayman 2007:72-75). The writing was on the wall for this misguided attempt at social engineering on a massive scale with the outbreak of the Soweto uprising on June 16, 1976. The Tomlinson Report’s equivalent

the white and the black faith communities (1995:22). They indeed chose explicitly to “live in the world within which ERCA existed”.

20 “Boer” (literally: farmer) was the derogatory name applied to all Afrikaners because of their participation in the apartheid government system. The “Boerekerk” was therefore synonymous to “the apartheid church”.

21 Buys & Nambala (2003:290-346) provide a detailed analysis of this history.

for SWA was the Odendaal Plan (Buys & Nambala 2003:320). The Odendaal Plan fixed the 3 big northern “homelands” (Kaokoland, Ovambo and Kavango) behind a boundary called “the red line”: no white settlement would be allowed there, and the residents needed permits to visit or work in the southern parts of SWA (which they considered as their motherland). The similarities with the apartheid “homelands” policy are clear, and as there was strong correlation between apartheid policy and DRC mission policy (Saayman 2007:69-72), DRC mission policy in SWA closely followed the DRC pattern in SA. To a large extent this explains the urgency in the early 1970s to constitute racially separated churches behind “the red line”, in the big northern “homelands”, where the majority of the SWA population lived. If one accepts the old (19th and early 20th centuries) distinction between “home mission” and “foreign mission”, DRC mission in SWA was somewhat “betwixt and between”. It was not truly “home mission”, but it was not really “foreign mission” either. The SA government had been administering SWA as a mandated territory first under League of Nations since the end of the First World War, and then under the (disputed) auspices of the UN after the Second World War. There was a strong sentiment among many whites in SA and SWA that the latter should eventually be incorporated into the Union of SA as the fifth province. This feeling grew exponentially after the NP election victory in 1948. Many white South Africans settled in SWA on land provided by the SA government, and SWA received representation in the SA parliament by 6 members. These seats in the SA parliament were always won by the NP, thereby strengthening the NP’s hands in carrying out its policies in SA. In a certain sense, therefore, racially separated church formation by the DRC along the lines of the Third Wave of DRC mission history in the north of Namibia was a foregone conclusion.

2. There are observers who object to the formation of ERCA as a “racist institution” (Lombard & Tjingaete 1995). In 1975 unity between white and black Dutch Reformed churches was not even a point of discussion yet – so there was not the slightest possibility of incorporating ERCA congregations into the white DRC²². Unity with the Coloured Dutch Reformed Mission Church at the time was not a practical possibility. The closest DRMC congregation at the time was in Windhoek, more than 500 km from the southernmost ERCA congregation. There was also the problem of language: the DRMC in SWA at the time was largely an Afrikaans-speaking church, while ERCA used Ovambo, Kavango and Herero languages. Furthermore, I have pointed out above that the DRC considered the creation of an autonomous racially separated church in the “homelands” behind the “red line” as an important politico-theological priority, so they overrode the objections of the missionaries as well as the elders and evangelists. But in a real sense, the tragedy of separation from fellow Christians lay somewhere else. The real tragedy in terms of disunity of churches was, rather, the institutionalisation of the break from the Evangelical Lutheran Churches. The DRC had been working in fraternal fellowship with Lutheran Mission Societies and ELCSA and ELOK for decades in terms of the “Triangular Agreement”. Many of the ERCA members, as well as some prominent evangelists had indeed grown up in Lutheran families. The two indigenous Lutheran churches had, though, grown increasingly critical of the imposition of apartheid policies in general and the SA administration in particular during the independence struggle in the 1960s (cf Buys & Nambala 2003:290-358). This alienated them from the DRC, and

22 22 There were white DRC congregations in Kavango and in Ovambo. In Kavango it was a ward of the DRC congregation in Grootfontein, but in Ovambo there were so many civil servants that they had an autonomous congregation in Oshakati.

therefore there was no way to propagate re-incorporation with ELOK (which was the obvious partner church in cultural and geographical terms). The DRC denomination and its mission in the north actually existed as a *Fremdkörper* in the body of Christ in the SWA of the middle of the 1960s; far and away the majority of Christians belonged to the Roman Catholic and the Evangelical Lutheran churches. It is for this reason that I regard the final parting of the ways with our historic partners in the north, namely the Evangelical Lutheran churches, as the real tragedy in terms of church disunity.

3. It should be clear from what I have written thus far that the socio-political situation in SWA in the 1960s and 1970s played a very important role in the decision of the DRC to plant an autonomous racially separated DRC denomination in the sensitive northern border areas of SWA at the time²³. Since 1966 the South African Police had been tasked with containing the SWAPO insurgency, and in 1973-1974 the South African Defence Force (SADF) took over this responsibility. It was very clear that the SA government had chosen the northern border of Namibia with Angola and Zambia (in the Caprivi) as the “South African border” where a “last stand” would be made and insurgents of the liberation movements would be halted in their southward march. In line with the close interrelation between Afrikaner government and Afrikaner church in SA, especially since 1948 (cf Saayman 2007:69-137; Saayman 2008), the SA administration in SWA needed an ecclesiastical partner in the coming struggle, to counter the monopoly influence of the Roman Catholics and Lutherans, who were sympathetic to (and even openly supportive of) SWAPO. In the final analysis this provided the impetus for the urgent desire to institute the ERCA synod²⁴. Both Prof van der Merwe and the author regarded the objection discussed in points 3 and 4 as decisive arguments against instituting a new and racially separated church, but their objections were totally overruled by the strong demand generated by the DRC mission history and the socio-political circumstances at the time.
4. In a sense the constitution of ERCA with its very good (but very expensive) Theological School at Orumana was doomed to failure, given the fast-changing contextual factors. Orumana was provided with excellent infrastructure, which was very expensive to maintain. Of the three lecturers, which were appointed, Prof van der Merwe had a Ph D from Yale, and Rev Saayman and Rev Buys had M Th degrees from Stellenbosch (both also obtained their doctorates soon hereafter). The academic and professional level of its staff was therefore far higher than that at, for example, the main Lutheran Seminary, Paulinum. It was completely unthinkable that a small church with less than 2,000, mainly poor, members could afford this luxury. In the beginning all financial support was provided by the DRC in SWA, with occasional calls for financial support being issued to the DRC in SA²⁵. This was to change drastically in the next decade, as the political and military tide turned against South African hegemony in SWA and the south of Angola (cf Lombard & Tjingaete 1995:24-33). Members of the white DRC were disillusioned because of the overwhelming resistance to continued SA administration among the black population. So civil servants, farmers and business people emigrated, which weakened the financial position of the DRC in SWA itself. The ongoing war

23 I argue the background to this statement fully in Saayman 2008.

24 See the extensive discussion of the “missionary ministry” of the chaplains’ services as well as other political interventions of the DRC in Buys & Nambala 2003:341-346.

25 These appeals often had an openly ideological bias, as in the case of the “Rande vir Rundu” (Rands for Rundu) appeal of the early 1970s which used the Swapo insurgency as motivation to inspire members of the DRC in SA to financially support DRC mission work in Namibia.

between “white” and “black” also had a deleterious effect on DRC mission enthusiasm both in SA itself and in SWA (cf. Saayman 2007:119-120), which had a shrinking effect on DRC mission involvement in Southern Africa in general. So the availability of the necessary outside financial support to maintain Orumana and the ministry in the three congregations was drastically reduced. Since about 1978 ERCA's existence had become a continual struggle for financial survival. On top of that, Rev Saayman had to leave Orumana at the end of 1978 as a result of ill health, and Prof van der Merwe reached the end of his contract a few months later. This created a serious leadership vacuum in the church itself and also at Orumana. Barely a decade later Orumana was closed, and in the local congregations simple survival was the most urgent priority. It seems to me as if a very clear conclusion can be drawn: instituting a young church with all the accompanying paraphernalia demands big resources and the staying power of an ultra marathon runner. The shifting sands of changing historical and socio-political circumstances do not provide a strong enough foundation to justify over-hasty church planting.

EPILOGUE

With the benefit of hindsight it is obviously clear that the constituting of the ERCA synod was the last kick of a dying horse: the ebbing of the flow of the extraordinary Third or Tomlinson Wave in DRC mission history. For this reason it will always be (unjustifiably) remembered mainly because it was the last of the Dutch Reformed Church's racially separated daughter churches to be constituted. Obviously there was much more to it than this simple condemnation to the dustbin of history. Some of the indigenous Christians involved were very talented and gifted²⁶ people who made a lasting contribution to Namibian national life. The legacy of a racially separated church, daughter of the hated “Boerekerk”, remained an albatross around ERCA's neck, though. Today the few survivors are members of the Uniting Reformed Church of SA, playing a very small role in the Reformed family of churches mainly as a result of geographical and linguistic isolation. As a protagonist in the history of those many years ago, I cannot simplistically evaluate this as an insignificant (or “racist”) event in Christian history in Southern Africa. Yet I am also very aware of (some of) the mistakes made in the process. So this article is meant as a possible call for further research, which may be useful in the unfolding process of forming non-racial churches in post-apartheid South Africa. There is enough material, as well as fascinating topics, to provide a worthwhile research agenda for other researchers.

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²⁶ The son (Samuel Mbambo) of one of the elder delegates from Kavango to the constituting synod, Mr Ndjapau Mbambo, is, for example, today Namibian Ambassador to Russia.

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KEY WORDS

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Prediking in 'n multimedia-kultuur. Homiletiese beginsels vir 'n interaktiewe kommunikasiepraxis

ABSTRACT

Preaching in a multimedia culture. Homiletic principles for an interactive communication praxis

This article investigates the art of preaching culture from the perspective of the developing digital culture engulfing contemporary society. The demise of traditional preaching is discussed as problematic. A cursory investigation is launched into the impact of the developing digital culture on communication and homiletics. The attention then shifts to the communication model as developed by Heath and Heath, in their book, "Made to Stick." This model is subsequently adapted for the purposes of sermon preparatin and a digital-culture homiletic praxis.

PROBLEEMSTELLING

Dit word geruime tyd al gesê dat erediens en kansel openbare invloed verloor en in die spervuur van kritiek staan. Enersyds word gesê dat die erediens mense nie meer aanspreek nie omdat dit 'n versteende, selfs verstarde kleed uit die verlede aangetrek hou en nie pas by moderne beweeglikheid nie (Barnard 1981:4). Die manier waarop die kerk kommunikeer, het vir die meeste mense dood gegaan of betekenisloos geraak as "*impotent mouthings*" (Buttrick 1987:5). Boonop is gevind dat min preke relevant genoeg is om die evangelie as 'n krag van verandering voor te hou (Cilliers 1996:3). Die "arsenaal besware" wat in hierdie verband geopper word, wissel van vergelykings tussen predikers en openbare sprekers; predikers wat 'n ooraanbod van inligting gee en 'n semantiese geruis veroorsaak; die preek as wyse van kommunikasie in kontras met die informasie-aanbod deur moderne kommunikasie-netwerke; en uiteindelik word gekla dat die tydlose boodskap van die Bybel irrelevant geraak het vir moderne mense (Vos 1995:1-3). Uiteindelik word die laat-moderne kultuurverandering wat sedert die twintigste eeu plaasvind en nog teen versnellende tempo voortduur, uitgelig as oproep tot die transformasie van die erediens (Gibson 2004:11).

Die multimedia-ontploffing op die gebiede van satelliettelevisie en veral die internet word uitgesonder as "sondebokke" in die aftakeling van die krag van die prediking: Die laaste vyftig jaar het hierdie tegnologieë bygedra tot die aanhoudende en onophoudelike transformasie van die kulturele vesel van die samelewing, is die dinamika van verhoudings geskuif en is die wyse van inligtingsoordrag in die senuweestelsel van die brein verander (Babin 1991:55; Miller 2004:1). Die impak van hierdie transformasie is van so 'n omvangryke aard dat daar van 'n ekklesiologiese paradigmaterskuif gepraat word (Mead 1991:85).

Dit word aangevoer dat een van die teologiese uitdagings in hierdie tyd die uitbou van die leerbediening in die kerk is, spesifiek 'n herlewing in prediking en aanbidding (Osmer 1990:4-5). Die Christendom leef inderdaad teen die agtergrond van woorde: God het die wêreld tot bestaan gespreek, die Woord het vlees geword en goeie nuus kom sê, en die kerk word gebou op die

getuienis van apostels, martelaars vir die geloof en heiliges (Buttrick 1987:5-6) en die getuienis van die geloofsgemeenskap vind onder andere plaas wanneer die eer en heerskappy van God korporatief besing word. Daarom moet die evangelie in elke generasie op so 'n manier oorgedra word dat dit die lig op 'n ander manier reflekteer. Hierdie spreek van die evangelie vir elke nuwe kulturele tydperk is 'n teologiese aktiwiteit (Buttrick 2007:10).

Indedaad is hierdie teologiese aktiwiteit 'n missionêre een. Nie alleen is die Christelike geloof intrinsiek missionêr nie (Bosch 1991:8), dit is ook 'n deelname aan God se besig-wees met die wêreld, aan sy liefdevolle besluit om die gebroke skepping te genees. In die sentrum van die kerk se deelname aan hierdie missio Dei staan die kommunikasie van die evangelie (Güder 2000:49). Calvyn (1956:461) skryf in hierdie verband tereg dat die prediking van die evangelie niks anders uitspreek nie as dat sondaars deur die Vaderlike genadigheid van God buite hulle eie verdienste gered word en die hoofinhoud hiervan eindig in Christus.

Die intensie van prediking is daarin geleë om oortuiging te wek, God as 't ware vir hoorders aan te bied, of Hom aan hulle voor te stel (Marty 2007:100). Prediking raak immers die hele geloofsgemeenskap aan en beweeg hulle, in hulle bepaalde konteks as God se geroepenes, in God se rigting (Nel 2001:5). En prediking stel die Bybel aan gelowiges voor op 'n manier wat lewens verander en nie bloot inligting in mense se verstand indruk nie (Cilliers 1996:115; Peterson 2006:3). As sodanig beskik prediking oor 'n missionerende kwaliteit.

Hierdie artikel fokus gevolglik op die missionale kommunikasie van die evangelie in 'n multimedia kultuur. Vir hierdie doel word ondersoek ingestel na 'n kommunikasiemodel van Heath en Heath (2008), met die oog op prakties-teologiese toepassing. Die ses hoofbewegings van hierdie kommunikasiemodel lyk soos volg (Heath & Heath 2008:257):

- Eenvoud: om die kernidee van 'n tema vas te vang.
- Onverwags: om hoorders te laat aandag skenk aan die kernidee.
- Konkreet: om die kernidee verstaanbaar en memoriseerbaar te maak vir hoorders.
- Geloofwaardig: om hoorders in die kernidee te laat glo en daarby te laat inkoop.
- Emosioneel: om hoorders te laat omgee.
- Narratief: om hoorders te laat optree.

PREDIKING IN 'N MULTIMEDIA-KULTUUR

Die twintigste-eeuse ontwikkeling van die televisiestel, maar veral die rekenaar, het uitgeloop op 'n ontploffing in wetenskaplike ontdekkings en tegnologiese ontwikkeling. Onder die gemeenskaplike noemer Informasie Tegnologie behels hierdie tegnologie die manipulasie van groot hoeveelhede inligting op 'n uiters klein skaal. Die oorskakeling van 'n nywerheidsgebaseerde ekonomie na 'n informasie-gedrewe ekonomie is so omvangryk dat daar van 'n informasie rewolusie gepraat word (Saxby 1990:1): Dit het die manier waarop mense besigheid doen en werk, verander; dit affekteer verhoudings en verhoudingsnetwerke tussen mense; dit het die wyse waarop inligting ingeneem, geskep en verwerk word verander; en dit het 'n vloedgolf van nuwe eise en uitdagings oor die mensdom laat spoel wat nog nie tot stilstand gekom het nie, grootliks omdat rekenartegnologie daarin geslaag het die wyse waarop menslike interaksie plaasvind, fundamenteel te verander (Saxby 1990:3).

Tans is dit moontlik om te kommunikeer deur telefoon, selfoon en internet. Mense stuur teksboodskappe aan mekaar deur internetgebaseerde diensnetwerke soos Facebook, Twitter, Mxit of Skype. Digitale rekenarkameras maak direkte aangesig tot aangesig kommunikasie oor die internet moontlik vir mense op verskillende plekke in die wêreld. Meer belangrik, egter, is die verskynsel dat hierdie tegnologie binne 'n enkele dekade daarin geslaag het om 'n hoeksteen van die ontwikkelende kultuur te word. Gevolglik word die mensdom daagliks gebombardeer met

inligting. Nie alleen is die tradisionele televisie, radio, koerant en tydskrif steeds beskikbaar nie, dit is uitgebrei met 'n permanente vloei van nuus en inligting deur die internet.

Een van die uitstaande kenmerke van 'n multimedia samelewing is die toenemende behoefte aan die beskikbaarheid van inligting as grondslag vir besluitneming (Pettersson 1989:33). As gevolg van die ontwikkeling van multimedia-tegnologieë wat televisie en rekenaar met mekaar verbind, vind 'n radikale omwenteling in kommunikasie plaas – kommunikasie is nie langer net verbaal en kognitief gerig op die oordrag van feite nie, dit is ook oudio-visueel en emosioneel gerig op die verkryging van effek.

Hierdie ontwikkeling is veral gestimuleer deur navorsing oor die hemisferiese verdeling van die brein: Elke breinhelfte beskik selfstandig oor sensoriese persepsies, gedagtes, gevoelens en herinneringe alhoewel die brein albei hemisfere op gelyke wyse aanwend (Pettersson 1989:76). Die linkerhemisfeer van die brein funksioneer grootliks verbaal, met die vermoë tot spraak rekene en skryf, spesialiseer in abstrakte denke en analities, logies, gedetailleerd, sekvensieel en lineêr funksioneer. Dis gekontroleerd, dominant en krities, beskik oor gevestigde simboolverrekeningsvermoë, herken maklik positiewe emosies, is doelwitgeoriënteerd en leer by wyse van ontwikkeling. Dit is boonop tydsensitief, aggressief en beheer die regterkant van die liggaam.

Die regterhemisfeer van die brein is sonder spraak, maar in staat tot konkrete denke, huisves die persepsie van ruimte en het 'n begrip vir gekompliseerde verhoudingsnetwerke. Dit is holisties, spasiaal, intuitief, kreatief en ontvanklik. Dit het die vermoë om met nuwe simbole te werk, nuwe gesigte te onthou en inligting en negatiewe emosies te hanteer. Dit is kunstig, interpreteer hoorbare seine, emosionele ondertone en musiek. Dit verafsku tyd en boonop is hierdie hemisfeer geheel en al dominant bo die linkerhemisfeer in die waarneming van twee- en driedimensionele beelde. Die regterhemisfeer kontroleer die linkerkant van die liggaam.

Die verhouding tussen die twee breinhelfte kan soos volg opgesom word (Babin 1991:55):

LINKER HEMISFEER (Beheer regterkant van liggaam)	REGTER HEMISFEER (Beheer linkerkant van liggaam)
Spraak en verbaal	Ruimte-georiënteerd, musikaal
Logies en wiskundig	Holisties
Lineêr en gedetailleerd	Kunstig, simbolies
Sekvensieel	Gelyktydig
Gekontroleerd	Emosioneel
Intellektueel	Intuitief, skeppend
Dominerend	Stil
Aards, konkreet	Spiritueel, godsdienstig-simbolies
Aktief	Ontvanklik
Analities	Sinteties, beeldend
Lees, skryf, naamgee	Herkenning van gesigte
Opeenvolgende ordening	Gelyktydige begripsverkryging
Persepsies van betekensvolle orde	Persepsie van abstrakte modelle
Komplekse motoriese sekwense	Herkenning van ingewikkelde beelde

In die modernistiese paradigma van die Westerse kultuur is voorrang gegee aan die funksionering van die linkerbreinhemisfeer. Dit het uitgeloop op 'n inperkende burokrasie met die oordrewe fokus op reëls en regulasies waarin die ontwikkeling van nuwe idees effektief gekniehalter is (Pettersson 1989:77-78). Die gevolg is 'n samelewing waarin die heersende kultuur, waardestelsel en etiese norme toenemend deur beelding bepaal word eerder as regulering. Hierdie "broadcast

world” is geïnteresseerd in wat mense nie weet nie, omdat ’n vloed van vars beelde die mensdom se eens-gevestigde denkpatrone oorspoel met ’n appél op die sensoriese (Miller 2004:76-77): Die nuwe digitale wêreld is besig om ons begrip van tyd en geskiedenis te verander, want dit trek die toekoms binne-in ons onmiddellike bewussyn in en tap die beste uit die verlede op gelyktydige wyse. Die interaktiewe aard van digitale kommunikasie het inderdaad ’n dors na dieper konneksie laat by mense opborrel.

Die digitale kultuur het die volgende implikasies (Miller 2004:78):

- Die digitale kultuur se begeerte vir direkte, ongekontroleerde, eerstepandse ondervinding is besig om die gedrukte media en televisie se passiewe gestalt te vervang.
- Die digitale kultuur se afhanklikheid aan netwerke en persoonlike verhoudings is besig om televisie se vooroordeel ten gunste van kollektiewe hooftema-ondervindings te vervang.
- Die digitale kultuur se ope-bron tegnologieë (soos Wikipedia), organisasies en denke is in die proses om die gedrukte media en televisie se handelsmerkskepping en eiendomsregtelike aansprake omver te werp.
- Die digitale kultuur se vermoë om die verlede te herbesoek is besig om gedrukte media en televisie se verwerping van die verlede te vervang.
- Die paradigma-gebaseerde benadering tot komplekse kwessies en konflik van die digitale kultuur is besig om die politieke benadering van gedrukte media en televisie te vervang.
- Die multimedia taal van die digitale kultuur is besig om gedrukte media en televisie se visuele taal te vervang.
- Die digitale kultuur se integrasie van linker- en regterbrein prosesse vervang gedrukte media en televisie se afhanklikheid van regterbrein denke.

Die belangrikste verwickeling is egter dat die digitale generasie die wêreld deur ’n stel dinamiese modelle begin filter wat die algemene gedrag van komplekse sisteme beskryf, ontdek en plaas om in verhoudings en situasies toe te pas. Dit staan bekend as sisteemdenke (Miller 2004:81). Sisteemdenke is ’n dissipline om geheelbeelde te ondersoek (Senge 2006:68). Dis ’n raamwerk wat interverhoudings raaksien eerder as oorsaak-gevolg kettings en wat patrone van verandering identifiseer eerder as om op statiese gebeurtenisse te fokus. Deur sisteemdenke kan die onderliggende strukture van komplekse situasies raakgesien word en op hierdie wyse word ’n taal gegee wat kan begin om dit wat ons dink te herorganiseer (Senge 2006:69).

Tegelyk moet aanvaar word dat mense toenemend die plaaslike gemeente verlaat, hoewel hulle lewens die lewe en doestellings van Christus reflekteer en die koninkryk van God bevorder (Barna 2005:7). Die veranderende sosiale kultuur (waar die invloed van die moderniteit erodeer voor die invloedsgolf van ’n aanspoelende postmoderne kultuur), modernistiese-era eredienspraktyke, bedieningstrukture en geloofsgewoontes van hoofstroomkerke, en derdens die geloofsontwikkeling van lidmate binne hierdie kerke wat toenemend in ’n namoderne kultuurmilieu funksioneer, oefen ingrypende invloed uit op die bediening van die plaaslike gemeente - die besinning oor prediking in ’n multimedia kultuur ingesluit (Jamieson 2002:16). Hierdie veranderende kultuur sien ’n hele nuwe generasie mense wat kerk toe gaan om die werklikheid van hulle geloof te beleef voor hulle oor die inhoud nadink; deelneem aan die lewe van die kerk voordat hulle eers instemming betoon met die betekenis van geloof in Christus; en wat die waarhede van Christus utoeleef voor hulle dit aanvaar as ewige waarheid (Sweet 1999:215). Die kerk het as ’t ware ’n nuwe sendingveld betree omdat sy die taal van die opkomende generasie moet aanleer om die goeie nuus van Jesus se verlossing te vertel in ’n idioom van nie-verbale, simboliese kommunikasie (Richter 1998:80-81).

Hierdie veranderende konteks pleit om groter deelname aan die bediening van die gemeente

deur alle gelowiges. Die markplein-beweging na verpersoonlikte deelname en self-organisering in besluitneming en die sosiale dinamika van mense wat saam beter besluite neem as alleen, spoel ook oor na die kerklike kultuur en kerklike leierskap (Morgenthaler 2007:178). Verhoudings regeer die nuwe sosiale dinamika (Sweet 1999:195). Die homileties-liturgiese uitdaging is gevolglik om spanne te vestig wat saam werk om ruimtes te vorm waarbinne die Heilige Gees outentieke ondervindings van God kan skep (Sweet 1999:211). Om Sweet (1999:213) self aan die woord te stel: “Postmodern evangelists are electricians – they go around wiring people to the Spirit, getting them connected to holy energies. The power of connectedness is this: The more connections there are in a system, and the greater the strength in those connections, the greater the intelligence and the greater the consciousness.”

Die wegspringpunt vir ’n interaktiewe kommunikasiepraxis word gevind in die plaaslike gemeente. As lewende organisme word elke lidmaat van die kerk uit die gehoor uitgeroep om rolspele te wees – elke gelowige speel ’n noodsaaklike rol in die drama van verlossingsgeskiedenis, daardie drama wat deur God geskryf word (Ogden 1990:19). Chan (2006:14) praat hiervan as ’n teologiese ekklesiologie waar die gemeente funksioneer in ’n “perchoretiese” eenheid met die Drie-Enige God deur die Gees. Op hierdie wyse verkry die kerk haar ware merkteken as die kerk van Christus en word die visie van die kerk as ’n ontologiese werklikheid vasgelê.

Erediens en prediking kan geplaas word in ’n raamwerk van liturgiese diversiteit binne die plaaslike gemeente. Gemeentes wat die swaarste gebuk gaan onder die impak van die veranderende kultuur, is dié wat vasgevang bly in ’n “one-size-fits-all approach, typically proving that one-size-fits-nobody” (Barna 2005:63). Eie aan die dubbelring-klimaat van hierdie era, waar teenstrydige sake harmonieus naas mekaar kan bestaan (Sweet 1999:27), is dit noodsaaklik om liturgiese diversiteit in een gemeente te verreken.

Derhalwe kan eredienste vir die opkomende generasie (vgl Wepener 2009b:181) in ’n interaktiewe kommunikasiepraxis skematies soos volg geplaas word (Smit 2010:4):

Tradisioneel	Gesinsdiens	Opkomende Generasie
Formele liturgie Sang met klassieke begeleiding (orrel)	Informeel liturgie Sang met voorsanggroep	Onsigbare liturgie Sangbegeleiding reflekteer kultuurbelevens van die opkomende teikengroep
Praktyk-gerigte prediking wat fokus op die fasilitering van ’n ontmoeting met God	Praktyk-gerigte prediking wat fokus op die fasilitering van ’n ontmoeting met God	Gesprekmatige verkondiging met interaktiewe deelname deur gehoor
Min simbole en ritueel	Eksperimentering met simbole en ritueel	Ritueel en simboliek deur multimedia interaktiwiteit en deelname deur gehoor

’N INTERAKTIEWE KOMMUNIKASIEPRAXIS

’n Intieme verhouding bestaan tussen liturgie en prediking. Dit is veral in die gereformeerde lewensgevoel sigbaar as geglo word dat “die ‘lewende God en sy Christus’ ... by ons aanwesig is nié in die kerk self nie, en nié in ons eie subjektiewe gevoelens nie, maar deur die Heilige Gees, wat deur die beloftes van die gepredikte Woord, verseël deur die sakramente, geloof in ons hart werk” (Smit 2009:100). Gevolglik kan liturgie verstaan word as die ontmoeting tussen God en mens waarin God en mens na mekaar toe uitreik, met God in die primêre hoedanigheid, sodat dialogiese kommunikasies in en deur rituele en simbole gevestig word waaraan mense fisies

deelneem en God op hierdie manier die lof toesing (Wepener 2009a:21). In hierdie teonomies-resiproke ontmoeting is die preek daardie element van die erediens waarin die predikant - as hoorder onder die hoorders – as fasiliteerder optree in mede-kerkgangers se eie kommunikasie met die evangelie en agter dit hulle kommunikasie met God self (Dingemans 1991:50).

- Burger (2009:21-26) bied vier teologiese perspektiewe op die belang van die erediens:
- In die erediens kom mense in die teenwoordigheid van die lewende, opgestane Christus.
- Die erediens is die plek waar die Here sy seën en verlossing aan ons meedeel en deur die werk van die Gees in ons lewens indra.
- Die erediens is die plek waar ons die stukkendheid en patos van ons lewens voor die Here bring.
- Dit is die plek waar die Here ons laat tuiskom en deel maak van sy oop, sorgende familie.

’n Duidelike perspektief op die gemeenskaplike aard en karakter van erediens en prediking tree hiermee na vore. Die erediens is ’n ontmoetingsgebeurtenis tussen ’n geloofsgemeenskap en die lewende God. Omdat God die hele gemeente roep om die evangelie te verkondig, is die erediens en prediking ’n element van die gemeente se bedieningstaak (Long 1989:12).

Dit is waardevol vir die homiletiek om die basiese beginsels van die kommunikasieproses te verdiskonteer: Aangesien Praktiese Teologie sigself verstaan as kommunikatiewe handelinge, speel kommunikasiebenaderings wat deur die kommunikasiewetenskappe ontwikkel is, in veral die homiletiek ’n betekenisvolle rol (Barna 1995:138-139). Die groeiende besef dat die kerk ’n medewerker is in die missio Dei oefen ook ’n invloed uit op die wesensverstaan van die erediens. Veral word aanbidding gesien as die sentrale, openbare handeling waardeur Christelike gemeenskappe God se teenwoordigheid en beloofde toekoms met vreugde en danksegging vier (Niemandt 2007:141). Dit spruit uit so ’n ontwikkelende ekklesiologie voort dat die kerk ’n verbondsgemeenskap is, gesentreer op Jesus as die Bemiddelaar van die nuwe verbond met God. As sodanig word die episentrum van die Christelike geloof gevind waar gemeentes deelneem aan die verlossing wat Christus bring (Hirsch 2006:40-41). Hoewel die erediensbediening van ’n gemeente nie die somtotaal mag vorm van die gemeente se missionêre medewerking aan God se sending na die aarde nie, bly die erediens die vertoonvenster van die gemeente: Dit is in baie opsigte steeds die hartklop van ’n gemeente omdat dit die grootste saamtrek is van gemeentede en uitdrukking gee aan die kern-aspek van kerkwees – om God te verheerlik en Sy teenwoordigheid in die lewens van sy kinders te vier (Richter 1998:5).

Tog blyk dit dat eiesoortige eise aan erediens en prediking in ’n multimedia kultuur gestel word. Kommunikasie in die ontluikende konteks stel ander eise, en funksioneer in ’n onbekende paradigma. Dit veronderstel die inoefening van nuwe vaardighede om die eeue-oue boodskap van God se besig-wees deur Christus te laat vassteek by informasievoos hoorders en steeds te voldoen aan die teologiese verwagting wat aan die prediker gestel word.

OP SOEK NA EENVOUD

Die soeke eenvoud beteken gewoon om die kern van ’n idee - oftewel dit die belangrikste aspek van die idee verwoord - te identifiseer (Heath & Heath 2008:27). Dit is die gevolg van die besef dat verbale kommunikasie geneig is om te lank te wees en te veel inligting oor te dra, terwyl gehore passief is wat daartoe lei dat hulle verwar word omdat hulle nie om verheldering kan vra nie (Atkinson 2008:5-6). Deur ’n joernalistieke metafoer te benut – “finding the lead” - word ’n proses van gedwonge prioritisering beskryf om dit te bereik (Heath & Heath 2008:32). Gedwonge prioritisering vind plaas wanneer die spreker die belangrikste aspek van ’n voordrag identifiseer en sy/haar voorlegging daar rondom bou. In die prediking gebeur dit wanneer die prediker die Bybelteks toelaat om as leidende krag in die vormgewing van die inhoud en doel van die preek op te tree (Long 1989:48).

Gedwonge prioritisering word gevind in die erkenning dat die preek 'n kunsvorm is waar die prediker se verbeelding 'n kernaspek uitmaak van 'n inkarnasioneel-kunstige hermeneutiek (Hunter 2007:93-94). Dit word verwesenlik deur laterale denke. Laterale denke kan omskryf word as 'n manier om konseptuele patrone wat deur tradisionale denkprosesse ontwikkel is, te herstruktureer en nuwe alternatiewe te ontdek (De Bono 1970:13). Gevolglik is laterale denkprosesse gefokus op veranderende patrone, op die verskaffing van bykomende inligting wat georganiseer moet word sodat geïllustreerde organisasiepatrone wat deur die menslike brein geskep word, bevestigteken en verhelder kan word (De Bono 1970:48-51). Die proses om die kern van 'n preek vanuit 'n preekteks deur gedwonge prioritisering te vind, word dus deur laterale denke bevorder. In hierdie verband kan 'n laterale denksiklus wat die proses van gedwonge prioritisering in prediking kan verhelder, onderskei word (Skinner 1993:112):

- Ontginning van persoonlike kreatiewe potensiaal en verwerking van die inligting.
- Kreatiewe konneksie van verhoudingsnetwerke van hierdie inligting en konsepte.
- 'n Tydperk van onbewuste inkubasie.
- Intuïtiewe insigverkryging.
- Afronding van die proses deur die teologiese verifikasie van die kerninsig.

ONVERWAGSHEID

Onverwagsheid het te make met die spreker se vermoë om geïllustreerde denkpatrone te deurbreek (Heath & Heath 2008:64). Dit bevorder die geloofwaardigheid van die boodskap en keer dat die spreker die kernpunt verloor en die gehoor verwar (Davis 1991:20, 51). Dit word verwesenlik deur benutting van die elemente van verrassing (omdat dit mense se aandag trek – mits dit met die oog op verkryging van insig gebruik word) en belangstelling (omdat dit mense se aandag behou) (Heath & Heath 2008:65).

KONKREETHED

“Language is often abstract, but life is not abstract” (Heath & Heath 2008:99). Abstraksie veroorsaak dat 'n idee moeiliker begryp word. Daarom baat dit 'n kommunikeerder om op konkrete taalgebruik terug te val wanneer hy/sy nie seker is wat mense weet wanneer sy/hy begin om 'n idee te verduidelik nie (Heath & Heath 2008:104). Hierdie soeke na konkreetheid word gevind deur die vasstelling van die rigting van die boodskap en die primêre argumente wat gevoer moet word (Murphy 1997:83). Die volgende sake word aan die orde gestel in die konkretisering van die boodskap (Murphy 1997:83-84):

- Stel 'n bondige verduidelikende stelling op van die kern van die boodskap.
- Verfyn die stelling deur konsultasie met medewerkers aan die erediens.
- Stel vas wat die hoorders hieroor moet weet en wat hulle hiervolgens moet doen.

GELOOFWAARDIGHEID

In die huidige multimedia kulturele milieu word mense so gebombardeer met inligting dat hulle skepties geraak het oor die bronne van hierdie informasie, dat geloofwaardigheid aan idees verleen word deur die volgende (Heath & Heath 2008:136-157):

- Die outoriteit van vriende - Op hierdie manier word geloofwaardigheid gebaseer op die eerlikheid en betroubaarheid van hierdie bronne eerder as hulle status, of posisie in die samelewing;
- Die krag van besonderhede - dit verleen interne geloofwaardigheid aan die idee self in

- plaas van die kommunikeerder wat die idee oordra (Heath & Heath 2008:138);
- Die benutting van statistiek – die voorbehoud hierin is dat statistieke insigself betekenisloos is, maar wanneer dit gebruik word om ’n spesifieke verhouding met betrekking tot die idee aan te dui (Heath & Heath 2008:143), wanneer dit gekontekstualiseer word deur ’n analogie in alledaagse, menslike terme te trek (Heath & Heath 2008:145), en wanneer dit gebruik word as kreatiewe inset in die vormgewing van ’n idee eerder as argument ter ondersteuning van die idee (Heath & Heath 2008:147), word dit effektief benut;
- Die benutting van ’n enkele, onderskeidende voorbeeld wat insigself sterk genoeg is om die geloofwaardigheid van ’n idee te vestig ((Heath & Heath 2008:151); en laastens
- Falsifieerbare geloofwaardigheid deur die hoorders, oftewel, “sien vir jousef” (Heath & Heath 2008:157).

EMOSIONALITEIT

Emosionaliteit word nie verstaan as gevoelsmatige opsweping of eksploitering nie, maar die ontginning van hoorders se vermoë om werklik om te gee (Heath & Heath 2008:168). Drie strategieë om mense daartoe te beweeg om om te gee kan geïdentifiseer word:

Assosiasie. Hierdie vermoë word aangevuur deur ’n assosiasie te skep tussen iets waarvoor mense nog nie omgee nie en iets anders waarvoor hulle inderdaad omgee (Heath & Heath 2008:173).

Eiebelang. Heath en Heath (2008:182-184) omskryf hierdie assosiasie sielkundig van naderby aan die hand van Maslow se teorie van behoeftes. Volgens Maslow (1943) word mense gemotiveer deur ’n kombinasie van behoeftes wat wissel van fisieke behoeftes as mees basiese behoefte tot die behoefte aan transendensie as mees ontwikkelde behoefte.

Identiteit. Naas eiebelang speel groepsbelang ook ’n bepalende rol in mense se vermoë om om te gee (Heath & Heath 2008:189). Hierdie groepsbelang vorm die grondslag van mense se kollektiewe identiteit en dryf hulle om in die belang van mense wat soos hulle is, volgens hul eie definisie, op te tree. Die vraag “what would someone like me do?” word gevra.

NARRATIEF

Verhale is effektiewe hulpmiddels in die leerproses (Heath & Heath 2008:205-206): Dit help mense om te sien hoe konteks hulle kan mislei om verkeerde besluite te neem. Dit illustreer informele verhoudings wat nie voorheen ge-eien is nie en dit lig onverwagse, innoverende maniere uit waarmee mense probleme opgelos het. Die krag van ’n verhaal is tweërlei: Dit bied stimulering (oftewel kennis oor hoe om op te tree) en inspirasie (motivering om op te tree). Beide voordele het ten doel om aksie te genereer.

’n Narratiewe proses wat die natuurlike vloei van die Bybeldrama volg, is die gekose meganisme om die narratief in ’n preek te aktualiseer: “Like a good story, the Bible presents the problem, slowly demonstrates its power to undo the main characters and then takes our breath away with the sudden turn of events that shocks us with unexpected grace” (Belcher 2009:155). Die indikatief lei gevolglik tot die imperatief. Dit is die sleutel tot ’n goeie storie, sentraal tot die Bybel en in die hart van prediking wat relevant, aangrypend evangelie-gesentreerd en inspirerend is. Hierdie tegniek ontsluit ’n “aha-oomblik” - die lewensveranderende transformerende krag van God se verrassende genade deur Christus en die nuwe lewe wat Hy bring (Belcher 2009:156); Belcher praat hiervan as ’n “Christ-centered homiletical plot.”

’n Hedendaagse hulpmiddel in die vaslegging van hierdie “aha-oomblik” is die benutting van videorepe en ander digitale vorme van simboliese kommunikasie (Sellers 2004). Die aantal

individue wat digitale kommunikasie gebruik as primêre bron van inligting en kommunikasie groei teen so 'n tempo dat dit kan aanleiding gee tot 'n reeks rewolusionêre veranderinge wat organisasies en instellings forseer om by die nuwe kultuur aan te pas eerder as om dit te akkommodeer (Miller 2004:78). Deur die inkorporering van digitale media slaag predikers daarin om hulle narratiewe te vermeng met konkrete verhale uit die gedeelde ervaringswêreld van die hoorders sodat dit kruis met die ontvouende, voortgaande verhaal van God (Sweet, McLaren & Haselmayr 2003:207).

GEVOLGTREKKING

Uit hierdie bondige bespreking is dit duidelik dat 'n intensioneel-laterale ontwikkelingsproses noodsaaklik is om effektief te kommunikeer in die digitale kultuur. Die kommunikasie-model wat deur Heath en Heath voorgelê word, slaag daarin om 'n homiletiese praxis te vestig waarin prediking op 'n visuele en simboliese manier tot hierdie kultuur kan help spreek.

Dit is egter nodig om verder in te vra na die verhoging van deelname deur die hoorders van 'n preek. In die digitale kultuur het 'n interaktiewe imperatief ontwikkel wat luisteraars permanent getransformeer het van passiewe ontvangers van inligting tot integrale deelnemers aan die kommunikasieproses. Die sentrale rol wat digitale kommunikasie – selfoontegnologie, internetgebaseerde sosiale media en die nuwe sentraliteit van simboliese kommunikasie – in hierdie proses speel, moet eweneens teologies verreken word.

Uiteraard kan 'n sosiologiese kommunikasiemodel nie op lineêre wyse as 'n homiletiese teorie aangebied word nie. Die risiko om die preek te verskraal tot 'n effektiewe voordrag sonder dat die intrinsieke aard van die geloofsgemeenskap en die deelname van die hoorders as gevolg van hulle verbintenis aan die gemeente, of die hermeneutiese proses en eie-aard van die brontekste verreken word, is te groot. Heath en Heath se model kan dus dien as 'n aanvullende teorie om die finale vorm van die homiletiese boodskap te kontroleer aan die hand van die kenmerke wat hulle vir effektiewe kommunikasie geïdentifiseer het. 'n Mens moet altyd in gedagte hou dat die benadering tot kommunikasie bepaal word deur die doelwit met die kommunikasie (Stanley & Jones 2006:100): In prediking is die doel met kommunikasie lewensverandering. Meer bepaald is die doel met prediking om mense te leer hoe om 'n lewe te lei wat die waardes, beginsels en waarheid ewan die Bybel reflekteer. Die benutting van die kommunikasiemodel soos deur Heath en Heath ontwikkel, moet dus heeltyd gekorrigeer word deur hierdie onderliggende motief.

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TREFWOORDE

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Die betekenis van “godsdienstige organisasies” of “geloofsinstellings”: ’n regvergelijkende perspektief

ABSTRACT

The meaning of ‘religious organisations’: a comparative perspective

A pluralistic religious society pre-supposes various definitions of ‘religion’ and ‘religious organisations’. In order to attract constitutional protection in the form of the right to freedom of religion, organisations require an appropriate definition and application. In a legal context a functional and practical approach on the basis of a set of beliefs and characteristics is supported, rather than a formalistic, technical approach. Such a flexible approach is also in line with the Dutch approach in defining a ‘kerkgenootskap’ and ought to be followed to accommodate our multi-religious and multi-denominational society.

1. INLEIDING

Aangesien die behoeftes van godsdienstige organisasies dikwels anders is as byvoorbeeld politieke organisasies en vakbonde, sien ’n mens dat in verskillende jurisdiksies daar op verskillende wyses voorsiening gemaak word vir godsdienstige organisasies. Party sisteme maak voorsiening vir die spesiale regstatus van godsdienstige organisasies en ander sisteme stel weer registrasie voor as ’n vereiste vir sekere “voorregte” aan godsdienstige organisasies. In die lande van Oos- en Sentraal Europa (Tsjeggië, Hongarye, Pole, ens) sien ’n mens dat geregistreerde godsdienstige organisasies byvoorbeeld ’n spesiale status beklee wat hulle anders maak as ander gewone vrywillige verenigings. Geregistreerde godsdienstige organisasies kan aanspraak maak op onder andere die reg op godsdienstige onderrig in openbare skole, toegang tot gevangnisse, die weeromgesag en gesondheidsorg instellings, toegang tot die openbare media en selfs openbare befondsing vir salarisse (Schanda 2007:12).

In ander Europese lande soos België, Duitsland, Ierland en Nederland verkry godsdienstige organisasies regs persoonlikheid as gewone private vrywillige verenigings, maar word nie as “godsdienstig” aangemerkt nie. ’n Beroep op godsdiensvryheid behels ’n aparte vraag na die “godsdienstige” aard van die betrokke organisasie. In Ierland byvoorbeeld is alle godsdienstige entiteite, ingesluit geloofsgemeenskappe, vrywillige verenigings en verwys die term godsdienstige- of kerkverband na ’n “generic term wide enough to cover the various churches, religious societies or religious congregations under whatever name they wished to describe themselves...[and also]...that each religious denomination should be respected when it says what its ethos is” (Colton 2007:128).

In die Nederlandse reg hoef ’n selfstandige onderdeel van ’n kerkgenootskap nie gerig te wees op die godsdienstige besinning of verering om oor regs persoonlikheid te beskik nie, maar kan ook wel ’n organisasie wees met ’n liefdadigheidsoogmerk of selfs ’n kerklike tehuis vir bejaardes. Vir doeleindes van die beklee van ’n spesiale posisie en uitsondering van gelyke behandeling, wil dit voorkom uit die literatuur en hofbeslissings dat die *godsdienstige* karakter van die betrokke selfstandige onderdeel wel ’n belangrike element is. Indien van daadwerklike

godsdienstige uitoefening sprake is moet dit ook regstreeks te make het met byvoorbeeld erediens of geloofskwessies.

Moslem organisasies verenig dikwels as 'n stigting en godsdienstige organisasies kies soms selfs vir 'n trust of maatskappy. Die meeste Europese lande maak egter voorsiening vir 'n spesifieke organisatoriese struktuur vir godsdienstige organisasies, die sogenaamde *sui generis* godsdienstige organisasies. Hetsy na verwys as 'n kerk, organisasie, gemeenskap, vereniging, genootskap of iets dergeliks. Die rede hiervoor is volgens Potz & Wieshaider (2007:30) dat die organisasie nie net as "godsdienstig" aangemerkt word nie, maar dat dit kan aanspraak maak op "the guaranteed autonomy to freely administer its internal affairs" en "it is most likely linked with additional rights which are not necessarily considered to be the core of the exercise of religion, but very often go together as a result of co-operation between the State and the religious community in coping with societal challenges".

Die sogenaamde "belief associations" of soos hulle in die Europese Gemeenskapsreg bekend staan – "philosophical non-confessional organizations" geniet in die Duitse reg dieselfde status as godsdienstige organisasies.¹ Die term "kerk" sluit dan ook alle godsdienstige organisasies in.

Die vraag wat dus in hierdie bespreking beantwoord moet word is wat presies is 'n "godsdienstige organisasie"? Om hierdie vraag te beantwoord sal krities gekyk word na die begrip "godsdienst", veral vanuit 'n juridiese funksionele benadering aan die hand van sekere eienskappe asook die Nederlandse posisie ten aansien van die betekenis en posisie van "kerkgenootskappe".

2. KONSEPSUALISERING

Wanneer daar van 'n godsdienstgroep gepraat word verwys dit volgens Du Plessis (2002:216) na "meerdere mense wat om die een of ander *godsdienstige* rede byeen is en/of oor 'n bepaalde tydperk heen saamhoort en/of in 'n bepaalde struktuur saám georganiseer is." Dit kan ook 'n godsdienstgemeenskap insluit en in terme van 'n vroeë WCRP-SA Verdrag², word 'n godsdienstgemeenskap omskryf as:

A group of people who follow a particular system of belief, morality and worship, either in recognition of a divine being, or in the pursuit of spiritual development, or in the expression of a sense of belonging through social custom and ritual.

Volgens Du Plessis (2002:216) word anti- en nie-religieuse groepe wat aan hierdie beskrywing voldoen op gelyke wyse beskerm. Maar wat beteken "godsdienst"? In die saak van *Christian Education South Africa v Minister of Education*³ bepaal die hof by monde van Sachs R dat:

Religion is not just a question of belief or doctrine. It is part of a way of life, of a people's temper and culture.

Raath (1985:64) onderskei tussen godsdienst in die eng sin en religie soos volg:

Met sy gebed, psalm en gesang, verkondiging en verneming van Gods Woord, gebruik van sakramente, sending en evangelisasie, ensovoorts, wend die mens hom (vertikaal) direk en onmiddellik tot God. Ons noem dit godsdienst (in eng sin).

1 Artikel 137 ss 7 WRV (Weimarer Reichsverfassung – Weimar Grondwet van 1919) saamgelees met artikel 140 GG. Sien G Robbers The permissible scope of legal limitations on the freedom of Religion or Belief in Germany (2005) 19 Emory Int'l L. Rev 884.

2 'n Suid-Afrikaanse Verdrag rakende Godsdienstregte en Verantwoordelikhede wat goedgekeur is tydens 'n Nasionale Inter-religieuse Konferensie wat gehou is gedurende November 1992 onder die vaandel van die 'South African Chapter of the World Conference on Religion and Peace (WCRP-SA). Sien verder Du Plessis L "Current problems concerning Church and State relationships and Religious Freedom in South Africa. The viewpoint of a constitutional lawyer" in Warnink H (Ed) Legal Position of churches and Church Autonomy (2001) 15 en verder.

3 2000(4) SA 757 (CC) par 33

Die mens dien God óók met al sy ander aktiwiteite, waaronder alle kultuurvorming ... Die vervulling van hierdie omvattende roeping is ook 'n diens van God. Ons noem dit “religie”.

In die minderheidsuitspraak in *Prince v President, Cape Law Society*⁴ bepaal Ngcobo R soos volg:

Religion is a matter of faith and belief. The beliefs that believers hold sacred and thus central to their religious faith may strike non-believers as bizarre, illogical or irrational. Human beings may freely believe in what they cannot prove. Yet that their beliefs are bizarre, illogical or irrational to others, or are incapable of scientific proof, does not detract from the fact that these are religious beliefs for the purposes of enjoying the protection guaranteed by the right to freedom of religion. The believers should not be put to the proof of their beliefs or faith. For this reason it is undesirable for courts to enter into the debate whether a particular practice is central to a religion unless there is a genuine dispute as to the centrality of a practice.

Die betekenis van godsdiens is belangrik ook vir doeleindes van institusionele godsdiensvryheid om te bepaal wanneer al dan nie daar van 'n “godsdienstige” organisasie gepraat word. Volgens Van Rooyen (1978:96)⁵ het godsdiens dan ook 'n sterk kollektiewe karakter in sy wese en openbaring en omskryf hy godsdiens soos volg:

Godsdiens is die verhouding tussen 'n individu en/of groep en 'n persoonlike god of gode of in 'n wyer sin, 'n goddelike mag of voorwerp van 'n materiële of geestelike aard wat oor bonatuurlike krag beskik. Godsdiens kan verder as die diens en aanbidding van 'n god of godheid omskryf word, soos dit in die verskeie vorme van aanbidding en in die sisteme van geloof en aanbidding tot uitdrukking kom. Dit kan verder ook beskou word as die erkenning van 'n hoër of hoogste mag wat respek, liefde en dankbaarheid afdwing. Samehangend hiermee, bestaan daar altyd die belydenis en die uitoefening van die geloof in die godheid, die dogmas van daardie godsdiens, die gebruike en ander religieuse praktyke wat daaromheen gebou is.

Bogenoemde definisie word deur Rudolph (1991:263) geïnterpreteer as insluitende van die okkultisme in die begrip “godsdiens” en is sy siening selfs dat satanisme sou kwalifiseer as “godsdiens” na aanleiding van die beskrywing van “godsdiens” deur die Appèlraad oor Publikasies in die saak van *Fountain Source of Occultism*⁶ as

...the relationship between an individual or group and a personal god or gods in the wide sense of the word, or a godly power or object of a material or spiritual nature, which has, according to the view of the adherents, supernatural powers.

Ek is egter eens met Van Rooyen (1987:87)⁷ dat satanisme nie as godsdiens sal kwalifiseer nie uit hoofde van die feit dat dit deur die meerderheid van Suid-Afrikaners gesien word as 'n praktyk gerig op die uitleef en bevordering van wat gesien word as “duiwels” en “boos”. Uit Van Rooyen se definisie van “godsdiens” dui dit ook duidelik op die afwesigheid van respek, liefde en dankbaarheid as komponent van “godsdiens”.

Hierdie benadering en problematiek is duidelik geïllustreer deur die Nederlandse hof in die saak van Sint Walburga⁸. “De Kloosterorde der Zusters van Sint Walburga”, gevestig op

4 2002 (2) SA 794 (CC) par 42

5 Soos aangehaal in Labuschagne, JMT, 1997, Die begrip “godsdiens” in godsdiensvryheid: 'n Bewussensantropologiese ekskursie na die evolusiekern van die reg. De Jure, 118-119.

6 Soos aangehaal deur Rudolph, S, 1991. Sedes, Godsdiens en Publikasiebeheer in Suid-Afrika (ongepubliseerde LLD-proefskrif, Universiteit van Pretoria, op 264-265.

7 Na aanleiding van die Fountain Source of Occultism-saak is hy van mening dat ‘Occultism has thus been recognized as a religion. It is submitted that Satanism will not be recognized as a religion as a result of its promotion of what is regarded as evil by the vast majority of South African.’

8 HR 31 Oktober 1986, NJ 1987, 173 (ThWvV (Sint Walburga). Sien verdere bespreking in Santing-

die Amsterdamse “walletjies”, het hulle self voorgedien as ’n selfstandige onderdeel van die kerkgenootskap “Kerk van Satan”. Die aanbieder van “sex shows” het deel uitgemaak van die sogenaamde godsdiensbeoefening van die betrokke kerkgenootskap. Vir Sint Walburga was dit van uiterse belang om as selfstandige onderdeel van die kerkgenootskap erken te word, aangesien dit hulle sou vrywaar van gereelde polisie kontrole, soos blyk uit die volgende bepaling:

In de gevallen waarin krachtens dit wetboek het betreden van plaatsen is toegelaten, geschiedt dit, buiten het geval van ontdekking op heter daad niet:

(...)

2. In de lokalen, voor den godsdienst bestemd, gedurende de godsdienstoefening;”
(Santing-Wubbs 2002:20-21)

Die hof formuleer enkele verdere vereistes waaraan voldoen moet word om as kerkgenootskap te kan geld en vereis dat daar ten minste sprake moet wees van *godsdiens* en dat daar ’n *gestruktureerde organisasie* moet wees. Gevolglik kom die hof tot die gevolgtrekking dat “De Kloosterorde van Sint Walburga” nie as ’n selfstandige onderdeel van die kerkgenootskap kan geld nie, en bepaal soos volg –

De eerste vraag is of de Kerk van Satan als een kerkgenootschap in de zin van dit artikel (art. 2:2 lid 1 BW, ahs w) kan gelden. In de rechtsliteratuur wordt wel aangenomen dat de wetgever hier alleen aan de christelijke en joodse kerkgenootschappen gedacht heeft, zodat alleen deze een beroep op voormeld artikel kunnen doen. Vaststaat blijkens de overgelegde producties dat de Kerk van Satan ondanks het gebruik van kennelijk aan de rooms katholieke kerk ontleende woorden als kerkprovincie, zusters, moeder-overste en abdis niet tot de christelijke of joodse godsdienst behoort. Het hof is voorshands van oordeel dat gezien de huidige multiculturele samenleving van ons land en de in art. 6 Gr.w. en diverse internationale verdragen verankerde gelijkheid van alle godsdiensten teenover de Staat ook aan de aanhangers van andere dan de christelijke en joodse godsdienst het recht toekomt zich op voormeld artikel te beroepen. *Hieraan dient dan echter wel de eis gesteld te worden dat het om godsdienst gaat en dat de aanhangers een gestruktureerde organisasie hebben* (curs. ahs w).

Beide zijn voorshands onvoldoende komen vast te staan.

Geld hierdie benadering ook ten aansien van ateïsme en kwalifiseer dit as “godsdiens”? Volgens Van Dijkhorst in *Wittman*⁹:

It [religion] cannot include the concepts of atheism or agnosticism which are the very antithesis of religion. The atheist and agnostic is afforded his protection under the freedom of thought, belief and opinion part of this section. There is conceptually no room for him under the freedom of religion part. Freedom of religion does not mean freedom from religion. Remarks in United States constitutional case law which tend to describe atheism or agnosticism as religion are in our context inapplicable.

When therefore ...s 15(2) of the Constitution permit[s] religious observances, this is a reference to the Jewish, Christian, Moslem, Buddhist and other faiths practising their religion at State and State-aided institutions. Religious observances (Afrikaans: ‘godsdiens beoefening’) does not mean a practice which neither Jew, Christian, Moslem, Buddhist, Hindu, nor other faiths recognise as such; where the Supreme Being is neither the God of Israel nor the Holy Trinity nor Allah the Merciful etc but a vague nonentity.

In Swede word ’n kerkverband [denomination] gedefinieer as “a community for religious activities, of which an integral part is to arrange divine services”(Friedner 2007:217). Hierdie definisie sluit dus nie die Sweedse Humanistiese Vereniging, wat ’n vereniging vir Ateïste is, in

Wubbs, AH, 2002. Kerken in Geding,20.

9 Wittman v Deutscher Schulverein 1998 (4) SA 423 (T) op 449.

nie. Ateïsme word omskryf as die “afwesigheid van enige godsdienstige geloof, synde ateïsties, politeïsties of panteïsties.” (Labuschagne 1997:130). Feofanov (1994) voer verder aan dat dit absurd sou wees om ateïsme as ’n godsdienst te beskou. Devenish (1995:17) voer egter aan dat die reg tot godsdienstvryheid ook die reg insluit om geen geloof te hê nie en dat die begrip “godsdienst” ook die begrip nie-godsdienst insluit. ’n Reg tot godsdienstvryheid sluit dus dikwels ’n verwysing in na vryheid van gewete, denke, filosofiese oortuigings en selfs wêreldbeskouing in, sonder om hierdie denke as “godsdienst” te klassifiseer.

Verder moet ’n godsdienstige visie ook ten minste ’n mate van “cogency, seriousness, cohesion and importance” bevat en binne die “tradisionele” verstaan van godsdienst sal “geloof” wat hoofsaaklik gerig is op die verering en verspreiding van dwelms nie binne die reikwydte van die reg op godsdienstvryheid val nie. Binne die konteks van artikel 18 van die International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights van 1966 (ICCPR) word bepaal dat “a belief consisting primarily or exclusively in the worship and distribution of a narcotic drug cannot conceivably be brought within the scope of article 18 of the Covenant.” Dit sou dus ook geld vir die algemene reikwydte van die reg op godsdienstvryheid.

Verder impliseer godsdienstpluralisme ook reeds ’n verskeidenheid van interpretasies en bepaal Choper¹⁰ in hierdie verband soos volg:

[T]he scope of religious pluralism...alone has resulted in such a multiplicity and diversity of ideas about what is a ‘religion’ or a ‘religious belief’ that no simple formula seems able to accommodate them all.

Vir praktiese doeleindes ten einde die howe in staat te stel om godsdienstige kwessies effektief te kan hanteer maar ook om godsdienstige organisasies by te staan, stel Van der Schyff (2002:290) tereg ’n “funksionele” benadering voor vir die konseptualisering van die begrip eerder as ’n suiwer filosofiese of teologiese benadering. In die konteks van ’n regsbenadering sal hierdie benadering dan ook deurgaans gevolg word in terme waarvan ’n geloofsinstelling aan die hand van sekere uitwendige kenmerke en eienskappe gekwalifiseer en omskryf kan word.

3. EIENSKAPPE EN KENMERKE

Aangesien godsdienst in baie algemene terme omskryf word as “a collection of beliefs” is dit nodig om ’n paar eienskappe te identifiseer. Volgens Van der Schyff (2002:290) moet van die volgende eienskappe ten minste teenwoordig wees ten einde as ’n “godsdienst” te kwalifiseer: ’n geloof in ’n opperwese of wesens; ’n geloof in ’n transendente realiteit; ’n morele kode; ’n wêreldlike beskouing wat die menslike rol in die heelal verklaar en aan die hand waarvan ’n individu sy lewe inrig en organiseer; heilige rituele, dae en feeste; aanbidding en gebed; heilige geskrifte en tekste en die bestaan van ’n sosiale organisasie wat sodanige godsdienstige geloofsstelsel ondersteun en bevorder. Laasgenoemde is veral van belang vir godsdienstige organisasies.

Die Konstitusionele Hof in *Taylor v Kurtstag*¹¹ bepaal met verwysing na Witte (1993:24-25) dat

active religious rights require that individuals be allowed to exercise their religious beliefs privately and groups be allowed to engage in private worship assembly. More fully conceived, active religious rights embrace an individual’s ability to engage in religious assembly, religious speech, religious worship, observance of religious laws and ritual, payment of religious taxes, and the like. They also embrace a religious institution’s power to promulgate and enforce internal religious laws of order, organisation, and orthodoxy,

10 Soos aangehaal in Labuschagne, JMT, 1997. Die begrip “godsdienst” in godsdienstvryheid: ’n Bewussynsantropologiese ekskursie na die evolusiekern van die reg. De Jure, 118-119.

11 2005 (1) SA 362 (W) par 37.

to train, select, and discipline religious officials, to establish and maintain institutions of worship, charity, and education, to acquire, use, and dispose of property and literature used in worship and rituals, to communicate with co-believers and proselytes, and many other affirmative acts in manifestation of the beliefs of the institution.

Volgens Van Dijkhorst in *Wittman v Deutscher Schulverein*¹² is “godsdien” nie ’n neutrale begrip nie en die begrip behels ’n “system of faith and worship [as] the human recognition of superhuman controlling power and especially of a personal God or gods entitled to obedience and worship.” Religieuse kerkverband word dan ook gebruik as ’n “generic term wide enough to cover the various churches, religious societies or religious congregations under whatever name they wished to describe themselves...[and also]...that each religious denomination should be respected when it says what its ethos is.” (Colton 2007:128).

Vryheid van “godsdien”, soos geïnterpreteer in die lig van artikel 6 van die Nederlandse Grondwet en artikel 9 van die Europese Konvensie van Menseregte het ook slegs betrekking op die individuele of kollektiewe uitoefening van godsdien indien dit deel uitmaak van “zodanig erkende godsdienstige praktijk.” (Vermeulen en Kanne 2004:78). Volgens Vermeulen en Kanne (2004:78) moet die volgende praktyke teenwoordig wees om as godsdienstige praktyk aangemerkt te kan word:

- die teenwoordigheid van ’n bepaalde godsdienstige oortuiging;
- die uitleef en uitoefening van hierdie oortuiging in beide die individuele sowel as kollektiewe godsverering (kultus, rituele en gebruike), die huislike (privaat) en openbare godsdienstitoefening;
- Die uitleef en uitoefening van hierdie oortuigings in die onderwys, opvoeding;
- Die oprig en inrig van organisasies waarbinne genoemde manifestasies en uitlewinge kan plaasvind;
- Ander optrede uit hoofde van genoemde oortuiging wat regstreeks verband hou en uitdrukking gee aan die bepaalde oortuiging.

So is byvoorbeeld bevind in die saak van die Santo Daime Kerk in Nederland¹³ dat die gebruik van hallusinerende tee as die uiting van ’n godsdienstige praktyk kwalifiseer vir beskerming onder artikel 9 van die Europese Konvensie. ’n Benadering vergelykbaar met die Konstitusionele hof se benadering in *Prince v President of the Law Society of the Cape of Good Hope*¹⁴ dat die gebruik van cannabis ’n onderdeel uitmaak van die Rastafariër geloof, hoewel die hof bevind het dat ’n verbod daarop ’n regverdigde beperking van die reg op godsdienstivryheid daarstel.

Die Nederlandse howe volg ’n beleid van “interpretatiewe terughoudendheid” wanneer bepaal moet word wat ’n godsdienstige organisasie onder die beleidenis of uiting van hulle eie oortuigings en doktrines verstaan, vergelykbaar met die Suid-Afrikaanse howe se benadering van nie-inmenging in leerstellige kwessies, wat ongelukkige buite die bestek van hierdie bespreking val. Hierdie benadering van die Nederlandse howe is veral van belang in geskille met “uitheemse” of “vreemde” kerkgenootskappe en behels dat dit nie aan buitestaanders, veral owerheidsorgane oorgelaat moet word om te bepaal wat al dan nie deel uitmaak van ’n bepaalde godsdienstige organisasie se geloofsoortuiging of doktrine nie. So bepaal die Hoge Raad dat

de burgerlijke rechter geen partij mag kiezen in (...) geschillen omtrent geloof en belijdenis en met name ook niet (...) zijn uitspraak omtrent enig rechtspunt afhankelijk mag stellen van zijn oordeel met betrekking tot theologiese leerstellingen, omtrent welke juistheid, onjuistheid of gewicht aldaar verdeeldheid bestaat. (Vermeulen en Kanne 2004:79)

12 1998 (4 SA 423 (T) op 449.

13 Rb. Amsterdam 21 Mei 2001, AB 2001, 342 m.nt. BPV.

14 Prince v President, Cape Law Society 2002 (2) SA 794 (CC).

Die Europese Hof bevestig hierdie siening ook in *Metropolitan Church of Bessarabia* dat “in principle the right to freedom of religion [...] excludes assessment by the State of the legitimacy of religious beliefs or the ways in which those beliefs are expressed.” (Vermeulen en Kanne 2004:79).

4. DIE POSISIE IN NEDERLAND

4.1 Die howe se benadering

Die Nederlandse howe volg ook meer van ’n funksionele benadering as dit kom by die interpretasie en betekenis van die begrip “kerkgenootskap / kerkgenootschap” in die Nederlandse reg. Hierdie benadering kan dus ook die Suid-Afrikaanse howe leiding gee rakende die effektiewe hantering van godsdienstige kwessies maar ook om godsdienstige organisasies by te staan.

In die Nederlandse reg bestaan daar geen eenvormige omskrywing van die begrip “kerkgenootskap” nie en reeds met die aanstelling van die Anema-kommissie in 1921 bestaan die siening dat ’n omskrywing van die begrip “kerkgenootschap” nie wettelik omskryf moet word nie, maar aan die howe oorgelaat moet word vir interpretasie (Van der Ploeg:2008:83). Hierdie siening geld steeds, soos dit blyk uit kommentaar wat sekere wysigings aan die Burgerlike Wetboek voorafgegaan het:

Naar mijn mening verdient het geen aanbeveling in de wet een definitie van ‘kerkgenootschap’ op te nemen. De grenzen daarvan zouden niet minder vloeiend zijn dan die van het spraakgebruik. Men bedenke daarbij dat het aantal en de variëteit in religieuze stromingen in de afgelopen tijd hier te lande sterk zijn toegenomen, (...). Diepgaande verschillen maken een scherpe algemene wettelijke definitie thans bijzonder netelig; een globale omschrijving zal geen verduidelijking van het spraakgebruik brengen, en een te ruime roept gevaren van misbruik op. Daarom verdient het zeker vooralsnog de voorkeur in geval van twijfel *de rechter over een concreet geval te laten beslissen*. (Huizink 2005:par 3).(my kursivering)

Die howe word gelei in hulle interpretasie deur verskeie begripsomskrywinge en reeds so vroeg as 1935 vind die definisie van Duynstee (1935:15) wyd aanklank:

een kerkgenootschap is een blijvende vereniging van personen, welke zich de *gemeenschappelijke godsverering* van haar leden, op de grondslag van *gemeenschappelijke godsdienstige opvattinge*, ten doel stelt.’ (My kursivering)

In in ’n 1946 uitspraak van die Hoge Raad¹⁵ word hierdie omskrywing van Duynstee gevolg, maar sonder enige verwysing na die begrip “vereniging”. In die woorde van die Hoge Raad:

..., dat in een kerkgenootschap, hetwelk zich de *gemeenschappelijke godsverering* van de leden, op de grondslag van *gemeenschappelijke opvattingen*, ten doel stelt, (...) (My kursivering).

Asser-Van der Grinten – Maeijer (1997:par 205 ev) sluit aan by Duynstee:

Een kerkgenootschap is een organisatie van aangeslotenen welke zich de *gemeenschappelijke religieuze verering* of besinning van de aangeslotenen op de grondslag van *gemeenschappelijke godsdienstige opvattingen* ten doel stelt en welke als zelfstandige kerkgenootschap en niet als onderdeel van een kerkgenootschap wil gelden. (My kursivering).

Witteveen¹⁶ blyk ook geen voorstander te wees van ’n wettelike omskrywing van die begrip kerkgenootskap nie, en verkies om aan die hand van ’n paar eienskappe, die kenmerke van so ’n godsdienstige beweging te formuleer. Eerstens is daar volgens hom sprake van ’n vereniging van

15 HR 23 Julie 1946, NJ 1947, 1(D.J.V.) (scheuring Gereformeerde Kerk Houwerzijl).

16 sien bespreking in Santing-Wubbs 2002:18 ev.

persone, naamlik 'n soort van *samewerkingsverband*. Dis opmerklik dat Asser-Van der Grinten – Maeijer (1997: par 205 ev) in genoemde definisie verkies om nie van 'n vereniging van lede te praat nie, maar eerder klem te lê op die “organisasie van aangeslotenen”.

Die tweede eienskap volgens Witteveen verwys na die *grondslag* van hierdie samewerkingsverband. Opmerklik in al bogenoemde omskrywings is die klem op *gemeenskaplike opvatting* (sien my kursiverings) wat dan as't ware dien as die grondslag van die *gemeenskaplike godsverering* en wat volgens Witteveen vereis dat die lede ten minste ten aansien van die hoofpunte van die betrokke lewensbeskouing, dieselfde oortuiging moet handhaaf. Volgens Huizink (2005:par 3) sou daar egter ook organisasies bestaan wat kon aanspraak maak om as kerkgenootskap te bestaan en vir wie dit meer passend sou wees om te praat van “zamen beleven van een gemeenschappelijke godsdienstige oortuiging”,as bloot “gemeenschappelijke godsverering”.

Asser-Van der Grinten-Maeijer (1997:par 205 ev) handhaaf egter die siening dat “voor het zijn van kerkgenootschap is onzes inziens wezenlijk, dat de organisatie op verering van God is gericht. Gemeenschappelijke religieuze beleving of religieuze bezinning is naar onze mening onvoldoende.”

Hierdie kwessie is ook geopper in kommentaar tydens 'n parlementêre diskussie rakende die *Invoeringswet* waarin die betrokke Minister juis die vraag geopper het of die begrip *gemeenschappelijke godsverering* nie wyer geïnterpreteer moet word om ook voorsiening te maak vir *gemeenschappelijke religieuze beleving of religieuze bezinning* nie. Die kommentaar lui soos volg:

Met (...) ken men betwijfelen of in deze definitie het element ‘gemeenschappelijke godsverering’ wel typerend is voor alle kerkgenootschappen en of het niet moeten worden verruimd in de richting van een gemeenschappelijke religieuze beleving of religieuze bezinning.¹⁷

Asser-Van der Grinten-Maeijer (1997: 205 ev) het op sigself nie 'n wesenlike probleem met die wyer interpretasie nie, mits “men niet alles wat ook maar enigzins te maken heeft met (godsdienst of) levensovertuiging, als religie of als religieus aanduidt. Gemeenschappelijke religieuze beleving is iets anders dan uitsluitend (zo men wil: rationalistische) levensovertuiging.” Volgens hulle val genootskappe of organisasies op geestelike grondslag dus nie onder die begrip kerkgenootskap nie en meld ook tereg dat die betrokke *Invoeringswet* die kategorieë van “andere genootschappen op geestelijke grondslag” geskrap het. Hieronder val organisasies soos onder andere humanistiese organisasies of selfs die vrymesselaars. Hulle baseer hulle aanname op die feit dat hoewel artikel 6 van die Nederlandse Grondwet voorsiening maak vir die vryheid van godsdiens en *gewetensoortuiging*, die kerklike vryheid van assosiasie in 'n privaatregtelike sin tesame met die erkenning van regs persoonlikheid van kerkgenootskappe nie op artikel 6 van die Grondwet berus of steun nie, maar artikel 2 Boek 2 BW.

Witteveen¹⁸ meld verder 'n derde eienskap as 'n kenmerk van sodanige kerkgenootskap. Hierdie eienskap verwys na die *doel* van die samewerkingsverband deurdat van aanhangers verwag word om ook uiting te gee aan die geloofsopvatting in die praktyk. Aansluitend by die vorige opmerkings, steun hy 'n meer neutrale bewoording van die begrip *godsverering*, byvoorbeeld “het belijden van de gemeenschappelijke godsdienstige opvattinge.” (Santing-Wubb, 2002:20). Die laaste eienskap verwys na *die wil* van die betrokke organisasie en word gesien as 'n baie belangrike eienskap deurdat “de organisatie een – eigen – kerkgenootschap wil zijn”. (Asser-Van der Grinten-Maeijer 1997: 205). Hoewel dit nie 'n bepalende eienskap is

17 De MvA (Memorie van Antwoord) II Invoeringswet Boeken 3-6 NBW, Sesde gedeelte, Kamerstukken 17725, Nr 7, p 11.

18 sien bespreking in Santing-Wubbs 2002:18 ev.

nie, kan dit 'n bepalende rol speel wanneer die hof moet beslis of 'n betrokke organisasie 'n kerkgenootskap is al dan nie.

Wat ook in gedagte gehou moet word is dat godsdienstige organisasies wat nie noodwendig sy grondslag in die Christelike of Joodse geloof het nie, baie meer op die voorgrond is as in die verlede. In Nederland dink ons veral aan die opkoms van die Islam en daar sou geen goeie rede wees om Islamitiese geloofsorganisasies uit te sluit van die status van kerkgenootskappe nie. Of self Boeddhistiese geloofsorganisasies? Wat weereens duidelik blyk uit voorafgaande bespreking is dat daar steeds geen duidelikheid bestaan en geen eenvormige omskrywing van die begrip “kerkgenootskap” bestaan waaronder alle kerkgenootskappe gemaklik pas nie, en daar word ook geensins gepoog om so 'n beskrywing te formuleer nie. Dit beklemtoon weereens die moeilike taak opgelê aan die howe en bevestig maar net weereens die 1921 posisie van die Anema-kommissie dat 'n wettelike omskrywing van die begrip “kerkgenootskap” steeds nie gepas is nie maar aan die howe oorgelaat moet word vir interpretasie. Dit word gevolglik bevestig in die volgende woorde:

Een omschrijving waaronder alle kerkgenootschappen kunnen worden gerangschikt is wellicht niet te vinden. Dezerzijds zal in elk geval niet worden getracht een zodanige omschrijving op te stellen. In voorkomende gevallen zal de rechter aan de hand van de concrete omstandigheden, mede gelet op de opvattingen van zijn tijd, moeten vaststellen of hij met een kerkgenootschap te maken heeft. Daarbij heeft de wetgever aan de rechter een grote mate van vrijheid gelaten, nu de wet geen omschrijving van kerkgenootschap geeft. (Huizink 2005:par 3)

4.2 Die wettelike omskrywing

In Nederland het die begrip “kerk” of “kerkgenootskap” soos dit juridies benader word, 'n wettelike omskrywing (art 2:2BW) wat hoofsaaklik deur uitwendige kenmerke gekwalifiseer word, anders dan as die inhoudelike teologiese benadering vanuit die teologie (Van der Ploeg:2004:24). Die interne geloofsopvatting is vir die juris nie veel van belang by die toepassing van reëls nie, hoewel dit moet geskied binne die raamwerk van die reg op godsdienstvryheid, wat van toepassing is op alle geloofsgemeenskappe.

Om die “tradisionele” kerke te plaas en te identifiseer binne hierdie beskrywing van “kerkgenootskap”, is gewoonlik nie 'n moeilike taak nie. Twyfel bestaan egter dikwels ten aansien van ander/nuwe/buitelandse religieuse gemeenskappe of kerke en dit word dan oorgelaat aan die howe om 'n oordeel te fel na aanleiding van die spesifieke oogmerke en bestaan van die bepaalde organisasie. In 'n poging om hierdie onduidelikheid vry te spring, kies baie organisasies vir die sekerheid van regs persoonlikheid deur hulleself in te rig en te inkorporeer as stigtinge of vennootskappe. Privaatregtelike besit hulle dus wel regs persoonlikheid, maar beklee nie die unieke privaatreghelike posisie as kerkgenootskap nie (Van der Ploeg 2004:124-125).

Voorbeelde sluit in veral nuwe Christelike gemeenskappe en Islamitiese moskee gemeenskappe. Uit die oogpunt gesien van die reg op godsdienstvryheid het hierdie organisasies, hetsy in die vorm van 'n kerkgenootskap of die van stigting of vennootskap, dieselfde status. Wanneer 'n godsdienstige organisasie egter kies vir 'n regsvorm soos 'n stigting of vennootskap, is hulle onderworpe aan die reëls betreffende die interne organisasie en eksterne verhoudings

soos neergelê in Boek 2 BW, soos byvoorbeeld artikel 8¹⁹ en 15²⁰ BW.

In geval van konflik wat uitloop op 'n beroep op die howe, is hierdie organisasies (in die vorm van stigting of vennootskap), dus in 'n ongelyke posisie in die burgerlike reg, ongeag dieselfde status, gesien uit die oogpunt van die reg op godsdiensvryheid. Hulle is dus onderworpe aan die reëls en regulasies ten opsigte van die interne organisasie en eksterne verhoudings van die betrokke organisasie, soos byvoorbeeld oprigtingsvereistes, ledeverbod, bestuursbevoegdhe, verteenwoordigingsbevoegdhe en ander formaliteite.

Wat betref die verteenwoordigingsbevoegdhe van kerkgenootskappe, wyk die bevoegdhe ietwat af van die bevoegdhe normaalweg van toepassing op ander privaatregtelike regspersone. In die eerste instansie tref ons by kerkgenootskappe of hulle selfstandige onderdele of selfs die verenigde liggaam nie noodwendig 'n enkele bestuursraad beklee met verteenwoordigingsbevoegdhe aan nie. Dit word dikwels verleen aan meer as een bevoegde funksionaris. 'n Voorbeeld tref ons aan ten opsigte van die Protestantse Kerk in Nederland. Wat betref finansiële aangeleenthede, word die bevoegdhe gesamentlik verleen aan die sekretaris en die voorsitter van die *college van kerkrentmeesters*, terwyl die bevoegdhe in diakonale aangeleenthede berus by die voorsitter en die sekretaris van die diaconie, terwyl die voorsitter en die skriba van die kerkraad die gemeente in ander sake verteenwoordig. Grootliks vergelykbaar met die algemene funksionering van plaaslike gemeentes in Suid-Afrika, soos omskryf in die onderskeie kerkordes van die verskillende kerke en denominasies.

Wat betref belangrike besluite, word dan ook dikwels vereis dat die besluit geneem word deur 'n bevoegde orgaan (saamgestel uit betrokke funksionarisse of verteenwoordigers), soos 'n kerkraad, uitvoerende kommissie of selfs sinode. In die tweede instansie bepaal die interne kerklike bepalings rakende die besluitvorming en verteenwoordiging, soos neergelê in die betrokke kerkorde of konstitusie, die organisasie se verteenwoordigingsbevoegdhe na buite, hoewel nie gepubliseer nie. Indien iemand dus 'n regshandeling verrig namens 'n kerklike regspersoon, teenstrydig met die kerklike bepaling of sonder die nodige bevoegdhe as verteenwoordiger, sou die kerklike regspersoon teenoor die derde die verteenwoordigingsonbevoegdhe van die betrokke kon opper en aanspreeklikheid vryspring.

'n Voorbeeld in die regspraak vind ons in 'n beslissing van die hof in 's-Hertogenbosch²¹. Volgens die Algemene Reglement vir die bestuur van 'n parogie van 'n Rooms-Katolieke Kerk in Nederland, is dit 'n vereiste om vir die verkoop van onroerende eiendom 'n skriftelike magtiging te verkry vanaf die Biskop. Die betrokke Priester, wat voorsitter en sekretaris van die bestuur

19 Art. 8

1. Een rechtspersoon en degenen die krachtens de wet en de statuten bij zijn organisatie zijn betrokken, moeten zich als zodanig jegens elkander gedragen naar hetgeen door redelijkheid en billijkheid wordt gevorderd.
2. Een tussen hen krachtens wet, gewoonte, statuten, reglementen of besluit geldende regel is niet van toepassing voor zover dit in de gegeven omstandigheden naar maatstaven van redelijkheid en billijkheid onaanvaardbaar zou zijn.

Vastgesteld bij de wet van 22 juli 1976, Stb. 395 (i.w.tr. 26 juli 1976).

Gewijzigd bij de wet van 15 november 1989, Stb. 541 jo 1991, 605 (i.w.tr. 1 januari 1992).

20 Art. 15

1. Een besluit van een orgaan van een rechtspersoon is, onverminderd het elders in de wet omtrent de mogelijkheid van een vernietiging bepaalde, vernietigbaar:
 - a) wegens strijd met wettelijke of statutaire bepalingen die het tot stand komen van besluiten regelen;
 - b) wegens strijd met de redelijkheid en billijkheid die door artikel 8 worden geëist;
 - c) wegens strijd met een reglement.

21 8 Julie 1991, KG 1991, 368.

van die parogie Stein-Kerensheide was, het sonder die nodige magtiging 'n woonhuis met erf, wat eiendom van die parogie was, aan Buurenstein verkoop. Die koper was onbewus van die noodsaaklike magtiging van die Biskop, wat afwesig was. Die hof bepaal soos volg:

(Buurenstein) kan zich er ook niet op beroepen, dat hij de bevoegdheidsbeperking en de onbevoegdheid van de parochie tot de litigieuze verkoop niet kende. Buurenstein heft niet onderzocht, noch door zijn makelaar of notaris doen onderzoeken of de parochie bevoegd was. Toch had een dergelijk onderzoek in de rede gelegen, niet alleen omdat Buurenstein *wist met een rechtspersoon van eigen aard te handelen*, maar ook omdat hij verenigingen en stichtingen de Nederlandse wet in art. 44 en 219 boek 2 aan besturen de bevoegdheid tot verkoop van onroerende goed onthoudt, tenzij de statute anders regelen. De vraag naar de bevoegdheid tot vervreemding door een verkoper-rechtspersoon is dus geenzins ongebruikelijk en mag door de koper niet gepasseerd worden. (Van der Ploeg 2004:131-134). (My kursivering)

Die hof beklemtoon die eie aard van die kerkgenootskap en bevind gevolglik dat die kerklike regs persoon nie gebonde is nie. Die interne prosedures van die kerklike regs persoon dien dus as verweer, terwyl hierdie interne prosedures en reëlings meestal nie algemeen bekend is nie. In die praktyk is dit dus geensins 'n aantreklike opsie vir derdes nie en ook nie vir die kerklike regs persoon sou dit lei tot die situasie waar derdes nie meer kontrakte met kerklike regspersone wil sluit nie.

Van der Ploeg (2004:135) doen aan die hand dat waar so 'n kerklike regs persoon aan die regsverkeer deelneem, daar as't ware 'n verpligting (voortspruitend uit kerke se maatskaplike sorgvuldigheids- en betroubaarsheidplig) rus om die interne reëls en prosedures rakende besluitneming en verteenwoordiging aan derdes te verstrek, sodat hulle bedag kan wees op die voorwaardes. Op so 'n wyse word die kerklike regs persoon ook 'n meer deursigtige en minder ondeurgroendelike teenparty.

5. GEVOLGTREKKING

Godsdienpluralisme impliseer 'n verskeidenheid van interpretasies van die begrip "godsdien" en "godsdienstige organisasie". "Godsdienstige organisasie" is 'n baie breë konsep wat gemeentes aan die een kant insluit, maar ook meer algemene godsdienstige diensorganisasies as "faith-based organisations" aan die ander kant en wat 'n aparte bespreking op sy eie regverdig. In soverre dit gaan oor 'n begripsomskrywing word aan die hand gedoen dat die begrip "geloofsinstelling" gebruik word, in ooreenstemming met die terminologie in die (Konsep)Handves van Godsdienregte en Fundamentele Vryhede vir Suid-Afrika. Die gevolglike verwysing na "elke persoon" in die Handves sluit ook 'n godsdiensgemeenskap of godsdienstelling in en gevolglik sluit dit ook enige verwysing na kerk, religieuse entiteite, instellings en geloofsgemeenskap in. Die verhouding tussen Staat en Kerk verwy's dus ook spesifiek na die verhouding tussen die Staat en geloofsinstellings in Suid-Afrika.

Uit bogenoemde bespreking is dit duidelik dat so 'n geloofsinstelling beheers word deur 'n eie "kerklike reg" en waarom dit vir so 'n instelling belangrik is om aangemerkt te word as "godsdienstig", ten einde 'n "uitsonderingsposisie" te beklee as geloofsinstelling of kerkgenootskap. Soos reeds gemeld word 'n meer funksionele benadering voorgestaan eerder as 'n formalistiese of suiwer filosofiese of teologies definisie en begripsomskrywing. Dit blyk ook uit die Nederlandse perspektief dat

Het gemis van een zodanige omschrijving is nog nimmer in onze rechtspraak als een leemte gevoeld, terwijl iedere definitie noodzakelijk tot theologische disputen aanleiding moet geven. (Huizink 2005:par 3).

Aan die hand van sekere eienskappe kan belangrike kenmerke van so 'n geloofsinstelling dus geformuleer word en aan die hand van uitwendige kenmerke gekwalifiseer word. Uiteindelik sal die regter aan die hand daarvan moet beoordeel of 'n bepaalde geloofsinstellings in 'n bepaalde geval as geloofsinstelling kwalifiseer of nie vir doeleindes van die reg op godsdienstryheid.

In Nederland word die "uitsonderingsposisie" van kerkgenootskappe ook hoofsaaklik verdedig aan die hand van die skeiding tussen Kerk en Staat in die sin dat "de wetgewer behoort de kerk niet voor te schrijven hoe ze zich moet organiseren, aangezien daarmee de scheiding in gevaar zou kunnen komen." (Santing-Wubbs 2002:17). Dit blyk egter duidelik dat hierdie siening en die gepaardgaande verhouding tussen kerkgenootskappe en verenigings in Nederland steeds onderhewig is aan politieke spanning. Dit is te verstane gesien in die lig dat die erkenning van 'n unieke regsposisie van kerkgenootskappe die organisasie 'n bevoorregte posisie blyk te gee bo ander maatskaplike organisasies.

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TREFWOORDE

Definisie
Eienskappe
Geloof
Godsdien
Godsdienstryheid
Godsdienstige organisasie
Regspersoon

KEY WORDS

Definition
Characteristics
Belief
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Robert Jenson's ecumenical vision based on his Trinitarian thought

ABSTRACT

The American Lutheran theologian, Robert Jenson, is well known as an ecumenical theologian. He is also well known as a significant and prolific writer of Trinitarian theology during the last forty years. These two themes, Ecumenism and Trinity, are very closely interconnected in Jenson's life and work. We can say that his Trinitarian theology has been his leitmotiv and inspiration for his life-long ecumenical engagement, and vice versa, that his ecumenical vision and dedication has influenced and motivated his Trinitarian theology in many ways. In this paper I will explore the ecumenical perspectives and proposals Jenson has made as logical implications of his Trinitarian theology. I will argue that his understanding of the relationship between the Trinity and time helped to form his ecumenical vision and contributed to some of his ecumenical proposals. This will give an indication of how Jenson is searching for a theology of the one church of the future.

INTRODUCTION

Robert Jenson is not only well known as a Trinitarian theologian,¹ but also as an ecumenical theologian.² In this regard his books and involvement with the ecumenical movement testify about his life-long commitment to ecumenism. His more ecumenical focused books were mostly written later in his life and include: *Visible Words: The Interpretation and Practice of the Christian Sacraments* (1978), *Unbaptized God: The Basic flaw in Ecumenical Theology* (1992), *The Catholicity of the Reformation* (1996, with Braaten), *Jews and Christians* (2003, with Braaten), *In One Body through the Cross. The Princeton Proposal for Christian Unity* (2003, with Braaten), and *The Ecumenical Future* (2004, with Braaten).³

1 See my previous article in this regard: "Trinity, Time and Ecumenism in Robert Jenson's theology."

2 Colin Gunton was the editor of this festschrift about Jenson and the strong link between Trinity and ecumenism in Jenson's work is also here emphasised by Gunton: "The chapters in this Festschrift [*Trinity, Time, and Church* (2000)] offer eloquent tribute to the significance of this remarkable achievement of writing on dogmatics for the whole church in an ecumenical key" (Braaten 2000:8).

3 *The Princeton Proposal* (2003) is a remarkable book in the sense that it was written by a group of sixteen theologians from different church traditions. It gives an overview of the current ecumenical state and also investigates future possibilities for ecumenism. The proposals seek to steer contemporary efforts at church unity away from social and political agendas to what they consider to be the main goal of the modern ecumenical movement, namely the visible unity of Christians worldwide, of all those who are reconciled "in one body through the cross" (as the title says). The following quote from the book says something of this attempt: "We all suffer from the wounds of division. These wounds extend into our theologies, our institutional structures, and our very sense of what makes the church life-giving. Significant aspects of our traditions must be rethought if they are truly to witness to the one apostolic faith rather than to our divisions. Therefore we must examine our collective consciences and repent of actions, habits, and sentiments that glory in division" (Braaten & Jenson 2003:57-58).

The background papers of the *Princeton Proposal*, was published as *The Ecumenical Future* (2004).

Jenson's ecumenical commitment is also visible in his involvement with ecumenical centres and journals. In 1990 Jenson and Braaten founded the Centre for Catholic and Evangelical Theology, which were specifically ecumenical in its focus. In 1992 Jenson and Braaten started a new journal for this Centre, *Pro Ecclesia*,⁴ of which Jenson later said: "It quickly became a major forum for churchly theology from all wings of the ecumene. And we editors increasingly internalized the journal's stated goals" (Jenson 2007:52).

Jenson's ecumenical involvement also includes lively participation in inter-denominational discussions. In 1968 when Jenson went back to America from England,⁵ he was appointed to the first round of US Episcopal/Lutheran dialogue and helped to formulate important ecumenical perspectives regarding the *episcopé*.⁶ Later on in his life he was also involved with the Catholic/Lutheran discussion and was appointed permanent adviser to the third round of the international dialogue. There he worked, with other Lutheran and Catholic theologians, for more than ten years on the relation between justification and ecclesiology. Of this involvement he said: "I thought of ecumenical dialogue as the attempt together to think new thoughts, that might transcend otherwise intractable divisions... Nevertheless, those were exciting years, in the course of which I became more and more committed to the ecumenical movement..." (Jenson 2007:52). Furthermore, in 1988 he spent a year at the Centre d'Étude Oecuménique at Strasbourg where he did research about the ecumenical dialogues and blockades of the time.⁷

Gabriel Fackre wrote on the cover page of this book: "The future of ecumenism depends on the resolution of the issues discussed in this welcome work. Major figures in the recent history of the ecumenical movement, along with younger heirs, give a fresh slant on its problems and possibilities in this collection of background papers to the important *Princeton Proposal*. Read it and weep ... or hope." Jenson says in the preface of the book: "Ecumenism is a function of authentic Christian faith; the ecumenical quest for church unity is based on Jesus' high-priestly prayer in Chapter 17 of St. John's Gospel..." (Braaten & Jenson 2004: viii).

- 4 The purpose of *Pro Ecclesia* was ecumenical from the beginning. In the words of Jenson: "For many years the chief organ of high church Lutherans in America was a journal entitled *Una Sancta*. Indeed, in some loose sense this journal was the spiritual predecessor of *Pro Ecclesia*, the journal of the Centre for Catholic and Evangelical Theology. The great difference is that *Una Sancta* was a Lutheran journal, whereas *Pro Ecclesia* is an ecumenical journal, supported by theologians of many traditions" (Braaten & Jenson 1996: ix).
- 5 He lectured at Oxford University as the "Lutheran World Federation Lecturer in Theology" during 1966-1968 and 1972-1973. Of this time Jenson said: "We found ourselves in the heart of Anglicanism, then still possessing its seductive combination of *rabies*-free theology and the West's most faithful liturgical order, the Book of Common Prayer. And I found myself cast as a one-man ecumenical movement" (Jenson 2007:51).
- 6 I will discuss Jenson's proposals about the *episcopé* in more detail later in the paper, but it is interesting to note here what Jenson himself said about the US Episcopal/Lutheran dialogue about the episcopacy. Jenson wrote: "The group quickly decided that if each party could just accept where the other located its doctrine, the Lutherans in documents and the Episcopalians in prayers, there was little that divided us but 'historic episcopacy'. Thereupon Reginald Fuller and I worked out the distinction between necessary *episcopé*, oversight, and the possibly variable historical ordering of that function. For compelling reasons, we said, the Anglicans retained the historical order in the 16th century, and for equally compelling reasons most Lutherans let it go. Each side could affirm the other, and then consider what to do now. The distinction is now standard: ours seems to have been in 1971 the first official dialogue to propose it" (Jenson 2007:52).
- 7 Jenson's book, *Unbaptized God: The basic flaw in Ecumenical Theology* (1992), followed from this researched. About this book he later wrote: "At the time, it was thought that a "basic difference" between Catholicism and the Reformation might account for the frustrations of ecumenical dialogue. In *Unbaptized God: The basic flaw in Ecumenical Theology* we proposed instead that the problems stemmed from a "basic agreement" in an inadequately Trinitarian intuition of God." The link between Trinity and Ecumenism is thus here already very clear in Jenson's thought and it will remain so throughout his

For the last seven years before Jenson retired, he worked as the Senior Scholar for Research at Princeton at the Centre of Theological Inquiry, which Jenson described as the centre of a worldwide ecumenical network.⁸

Jenson's Trinitarian theology has been his leitmotiv and inspiration for his life-long ecumenical engagement, and vice versa, his ecumenical vision and dedication has influenced and motivated his Trinitarian theology in many ways.⁹ For example, although Jenson's *Systematic Theology* (1997, 1999)¹⁰ is mainly a dogmatic work, the second volume is an exposition of his ecumenical thoughts based on his Trinitarian theology of the first volume. It is this link between his Trinitarian thought and his ecumenical vision that I will explore in this article. In my previous article I focused on Jenson's Trinitarian theology and in this one I will focus on his ecumenical vision and proposals. In short the argument will show that Jenson's Trinitarian theology – and specifically his understanding of God and time – opens up some new possibilities for his specific ecumenical ideas and proposals.

JENSON'S ECUMENICAL VISION AND PROPOSALS

In developing his strong ecclesiology Jenson proposes several important ecumenical perspectives. In his and Braaten's book, *The Catholicity of the Reformation* (1996),¹¹ Jenson's preference for the term catholicity – instead of ecumenical – becomes clear.¹² Although these terms broadly include the same field of reference, the term catholicity represents a stronger faith and doctrinal perspective than the twentieth century's Protestant perspective often associated with the term ecumenism. In their book, *Catholicity*, Jenson explains that the Reformers aimed to reform a church that lived in continuity with the Church the Creed calls "one, holy, catholic and apostolic", but Protestant churches have not always understood themselves as catholic. Catholic though, means "whole" or "total" (it derives from the Greek *kata* (according to) and *holos* (the whole))

theological career. In *Unbaptized God* Jenson argues that Christian theology took over a Hellenistic divinity without 'baptizing' it. With that he means that God's impassibility and timelessness (as part of the Greek metaphysics) was not overcome in Christian theology and that it is exactly this problem that lead in a great extent to later ecumenical dividedness. His theology is therefore a reaction and correction to this timelessness of God, always with an ecumenical goal.

- 8 Jenson says that it was at the Center of Theological Inquiry where he came in conversation with a range of Christians and Jews (his book *Jews and Christians. People of God* (2003) was written in this time) and that he "learned to appreciate the Presbyterians across the street" (Jenson 2007:53). Jenson's wide scope of ecumenism is also apparent when he says: "It is an abiding conviction: theological discourse among Jews and Christians is *not* inter-religious dialogue" (Jenson 2007:53).
- 9 Jenson is very clear about this link between ecumenism and Trinitarian theology and how the one is done with the aim of the other and vice versa: "... it is a great blessing specifically to theology that we need not wait for the church to be undivided to do theology for and even of the undivided church. For theology is itself a form of the waiting we must practice. The present work [his *Systematic Theology*] is deliberately done in such anticipation of the one church, and this will be throughout apparent, in its use of authorities and its modes of argument" (*ST1*:viii), and "...the doctrine of Trinity is ever more decisively the key in all my thinking" (Jenson 2007:54).
- 10 *Systematic Theology, Volume 1: The Triune God* (1997) and *Systematic Theology, Volume 2: The Works of God* (1999). Hereafter referred to as *ST1* and *ST2*. Braaten says these books are undoubtedly the crowning fulfilment of Jenson's career and "when he [Jenson] is asked, 'How long did it take you to write it?' his answer is, 'The last forty years.'" (Braaten 2000:8).
- 11 Jenson and Braaten are the editors of this book which consists out of essays of different authors who tries to demonstrate the catholicity of the Reformers and who stresses the importance of recovering the church's catholic tradition for today.
- 12 In example, the centre Jenson and Braaten founded in 1990 was called the Centre for Catholic and Evangelical Theology.

and the catholicity of the church is thus its completed integrity and comprehensiveness, its wholeness. According to Jenson the “church is catholic when the living Christ is present” (Jenson 1996:vii). He says the catholicity of the church includes many things: the Scripture, apostolic tradition, sacraments, ecumenical creeds, worship, and the ministry. I will further investigate some of these aspects, namely the Eucharist and the prayers of the departed saints, as examples of Jenson’s ecumenical proposals as he is in search of the full catholicity of the church.¹³ The first aspect on which I will focus is the sacraments, especially the Eucharist.

The Eucharist

The incorporation into the risen Christ’s own body is according to Jenson enacted in the church’s celebration of Eucharist and not only through the community of the church. In his discussion of Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians, Jenson says we may ask which body of the Lord Paul intends: is it the bread and cup or is it the congregation? Jenson answers: “It is plain: Paul intends both at once, in dynamic identity” (Jenson 1996:5). Jenson thus agrees with the patristic interpretation of Eucharist as the commune (*koinonein*) with Christ, and the share in his body and his deity, as well as commune as the uniting with one another. With the patristic father, John of Damascus, he says “for because we all eat one loaf we become one body and one blood of Christ and members of one another; we may be said to be embodied with Christ (*sussomoi tou christou*)” (Jenson 1996:6).¹⁴ Jenson (ST2:212) says it has become a standard item of ecumenical consensus that churchly and Eucharistic communion is one, in that both are communion in the body of Christ.¹⁵ Jenson uses the term communion-ecclesiology to express this unique communion the church has and says that at Eucharist we receive one another with Christ and Christ with one another; “we are precisely ‘co-embodiments’ of Christ” (ST2:222). This communion-ecclesiology is a fully integral part of Jenson’s Trinitarian understanding of the church’s communion in the Trinity.¹⁶ For Jenson the church is already the *totus Christus*, but still exists in anticipation and what she anticipates is the full inclusion in the triune communion.

With the Eucharist established as central for our understanding of the church as communion-ecclesiology,¹⁷ Jenson acknowledges an important insistence by the Orthodoxy on the agency of the Spirit with respect to Eucharist communion – one that he thinks Protestants and Roman Catholics should incorporate. Jenson says the “old East-West controversy about the ‘moment of consecration’ in the Eucharistic liturgy... is in abeyance and we may hope will remain so. But Orthodoxy’s insistence that there *be* the Epiclesis – as in many Protestant rites and in old Roman

13 Not all of Jenson’s ecumenical proposals will be discussed here, but only some examples that will help us to see the clear link between his Trinitarian theology and his position on certain ecumenical issues. The scope of the article does not allow for a more comprehensive overview of all his ecumenical proposals.

In the second volume of his *Systematic Theology* (1999) Jenson wrote chapters on the Polity of God, the Great Communion, the Office of Communion, the Mysteries of Communion, the Word and the Icons and on *Anima Ecclesiastica*, which are all ecumenically focused.

14 See also ST2:212 where Jenson makes the same point as part of his *Systematic Theology*.

15 Jenson refers here to the statement made by the Anglican-Orthodox Dialogue in Moscow (1976) which says: “The church celebrating the Eucharist becomes fully itself; that is, *koinonia*, fellowship – communion. The church celebrates the Eucharist as the central act of its existence, in which the ecclesial community... receives its realization” (ST2:212).

16 He refers to the International Roman Catholic-Orthodox dialogue (1982) which formulation says: “the unity in love of plural persons... constitutes the... Trinitarian *koinonia*, which is communicated to humans in church” (ST2:222).

17 Jenson says: “The Eucharist promises: *there is* my body in the world, and you here eating and drinking commune in it. It promises: *there is* the actual historical church, and you are she. That the risen Christ is not merely ‘spiritually’ is itself a vital promise of the gospel, and the one made specifically by the bread and cup” (ST2:220).

canon there lamentably has not been – has vital content” (ST2:227). The reason for this, Jenson says, is because the elements and the community gathered around them need to be freed from their merely historical reality if they are to be *the body* of Christ. It is precisely the Spirit’s role to do that. This fits perfectly into Jenson’s Trinitarian understanding of the church’s communion: “As the church shares in the life of the triune identities, she shares in the relation of the Son and the Spirit to the Father” (ST2:227) and it also perfectly fits into his understanding of the Spirit (as the future in God) who is able to free him (and the church) from the past and present (from timelessness).

Another aspect of the Eucharist Jenson (ST2:215-220) investigates is the question if Christ’s sacrifice can be repeated or supplemented. The problem is that if the Eucharist is in any sense a repetition of the sacrifice on the cross, it is supposed to supplement or add to the sacrifice on the cross. Jenson says Catholics agreed that at the time of the Reformation there were “misunderstandings... in popular piety and theories of the mass in theology,” which indeed thought of the sacrifice of the mass in this way” (ST2:217). On the other hand the Reformation insisted that the mass is not a repetition and adds nothing to the sacrifice on the cross, and they denied altogether that the mass is a sacrifice of Christ. Jenson says that from the other side, Catholics were determined to maintain the hitherto universal recognition that the Eucharist is indeed a sacrifice and that Christ is its content. Jenson summarizes the problem and says (ST2:218) that the Protestants thought they could preserve the uniqueness of the cross only by denying Eucharistic sacrifice, and Catholics thought they could affirm Eucharistic sacrifice only by positing some, however minimal, distinct identifications of Eucharistic sacrifice and of the one sacrifice on the cross.¹⁸

Jenson’s ecumenical proposal here (ST2:258-259) is to make a constructive interpretation of the Eucharist as anamnestic¹⁹ sacrifice and it links up with the advanced ecumenical dialogues’ call for a return to the notion of memorial or remembrance. Jenson refers to the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission’s (1971) formulation of anamnesis or representation as “the making effective in the present of an event in the past” (ST2:258). This definition brings us back to temporal categories and it is here where Jenson’s understanding of the Trinity and time becomes relevant again. With the words, “Do this for my remembrance,” we may initially say that we celebrate Eucharist to remind someone of Jesus, but Jenson says it can also mean that we are to remind God. When someone remembers it is a present act and when it is God who remembers, his answer creates what it mentions. In this instance (of the Eucharist) the creative address is a response to a reminder; it creates the present tense of a past event. So is the sacrifice of the cross then repeated in the Eucharist? Jenson says (ST2:259) that with “remembrance” we moved from spatial to temporal categories, but space is only time’s present tense. He says: “The relations between the place that God is and his heaven and our earth are founded in relations between the future and the present and the past. And it is these temporal relations that *words* open and maintain” (ST2:259). In the Eucharist, the words spoken are between God and the congregation and it is at once narrative of the past and promise of the eschatological future – the past is narrated just as the identity of the promised goal. So Jenson concludes that in this discourse a word that opens the future “comes to” the remembered past to do this and so makes the past alive. And “insofar as this converse visibly embodies itself in the

18 The differences on this issue had many liturgical consequences. On the one hand the Protestants have tried by liturgical truncations to make it impossible to experience the Eucharist as sacrifice (removing those parts that are plainly directed to God), and on the other hand “Roman Catholicism sometimes seemed bent on proving that it indeed commit ‘the abomination of the mass-sacrifice’” (ST2:218).

19 Jenson says we may generalize about this term and say: “anamnetic being is present reality created by a word of God that simultaneously evokes a past event and opens its future, to make it live in the present” (ST2:258).

objectivities of the church's life [i.e. Eucharist], these become signs with specific meaning... The narrated past is 're-presented' in them... But this presence is hidden in them, by their own visible appearance as... mere bread and cup..." (ST2:259-260). It is clear that Jenson's understanding of God's relation to time is crucial for this interpretation and that our inherited metaphysical view of God as timeless would be a problem to accept this position.

The prayers of the departed saints

Another interesting example of how Jenson's Trinitarian theology, and especially the Trinity's relation to time, has an influence on his ecumenical proposals can be found in his view of "the mystery of departed saints' prayer for us" (ST2:267-269) – an issue of ecumenical ecclesiology with hardly any consensus. Jenson affirms that Christians may certainly not in the proper sense pray to saints as that would be idolatry, but the question is if they may ask saints to pray for them, and do the saints in heaven hear and honour such requests? According to Jenson "Orthodox, Catholics, and a few Protestants invoke the saints, together and individually, and most Protestants do not; opposite practice at this point is one of the most obtrusive signs of churchly division" (ST2:268). Jenson agrees with the Apology of the Augsburg Confession of 1530 (the paradigmatic Protestant document in this matter) and says that there can be no rule of faith that believers must invoke the saints. Jenson understands this position as a Protestant asceticism that belongs to a general pattern of piety whose restraint and biblical criteria must commend it within the church. Jenson however, chose (as part of the whole tendency of his theology as he himself explains) to take a riskier route and test the invocation of the saints to the fact that only communion with Christ establishes the communion of the church. For Jenson then, "whatever communion the church on earth has with the church in heaven is also so founded. The saints are not our way to Christ; he is our way to them" (ST2:269). So Jenson concludes that our communion with departed saints is not fundamentally different from our communion with living saints.²⁰ He says: "We may not ask Mary to bring us to Christ; because we are one with Christ we can address Mary" (ST2:269).

Jenson can make this conclusion because he sees the church as one communion through time – a community that cannot be broken by time's discontinuities because "it is founded in the eternal triune communion of God and is constituted in the Spirit who is the Power of eternal life. Thus the church is a single active communion of living saints and departed saints" (ST2:267). Here Jenson's temporal categories come into play again when he says saints are in heaven and heaven is the presence of the future Kingdom. As part of the Trinitarian-perichoretic dialectic he works with, he can say that "to speak to the saints would therefore be to intrude in the conversation that is the life of the Kingdom... the whole of the church, with all its discourse, is anticipation of our inclusion in that same conversation" (ST2:269). So from his Trinitarian understanding of God and the communion-ecclesiology understanding of the church he can conclude that to invoke the saints "no other miracle is required than the miracle of the church's existence" (ST2:269).

CONCLUSIONS

It is clear how Jenson, from the few examples mentioned here, attempt to open up new possibilities in the ecumenical debate with his proposals. What is also clear is the fact that his proposals are consistent with, and a result of, his whole Trinitarian theology. In a way his

20 Jenson adds that there is one question though and that is if the saints are aware and interested in us. His answer is that "in the Kingdom we will know one another by participation in God's own knowledge of us. If the saints know us at all, they know us infinitely better than we know ourselves; surely this makes them attractive – and fearsome – as intercessors" (ST2:269).

proposals are a continuation of one of his main ecumenical works, *Unbaptized God*, because he consistently works towards a theology without the concept of a timeless God. This age-old misunderstanding of God's timelessness, and eventually impassibility, is according to Jenson a result of the metaphysical speculation of the West under the influence of Greek philosophy.²¹ Jenson proposes a much stronger narrative view of God²² which is according to him much more biblical and helps us to understand God as a timeless and a present God (as in the Eucharist).²³ It is within this context that Jenson makes his, in my view, very helpful ecumenical proposals.²⁴ Jenson's proposals need therefore to get the attention it is due and should be considered seriously by the church. Of specific importance is how his whole Trinitarian theology underlies these proposals and the whole coherence found throughout it,²⁵ but that does not say that his theology and ecumenical proposals are without any problems.

A common point of critique is Jenson's location of Jesus' presence in our world. In his article, *Trinity, Time, and Sacrament: Christ's Eucharist Presence in the Theology of Robert W. Jenson* (2005), Jason Curtis convincingly shows that Jenson's "Trinitarian ontology, combined with more explicit language of bodily presence lends itself strongly to a biological presence..." (Curtis 2005:34) and "by pressing toward this temporal arrangement, Jenson implies a biological presence, despite a desire to avoid such a conclusion" (Curtis 2005:35). Curtis adds: "Jenson's Trinitarian ontology and his view of the Eucharist when pressed toward its logical end could unintentionally exclude the ascended, coming-again body, and in doing so may fail to grant his humanity its proper place" (2005:38). This problem links to the question of Jesus physical presence and his whole identification with the church and with the signs of the Eucharist. In Jenson's scheme the question of the Eucharist always revolves around where Jesus is temporally located and thus emphasizing the transformation of the elements. On the other hand Jesus identification with the church, as the *totus Christus*, is also problematic and Ian McFarland, in his article *The Body of Christ: Rethinking a Classic Ecclesiological Model* (2005), indicates how Jenson's stress on Christ's objective presence in the world risks collapsing Christ into the church.²⁶

21 Jenson says that in *Unbaptized God* he proposed that there was not a 'basic difference' between Catholicism and Reformation, but that "the problems stemmed from a 'basic agreement' in an inadequately Trinitarian intuition of God" (Jenson 2007:52).

22 This is a continuing theme for Jenson. See for example his: book *Story and Promise: A Brief Theology of the Gospel about Jesus* (1973. Philadelphia: Fortress Press), and his later article: "Can we have a story?" (2000. *First Things* 101:16-17). See also "How is Robert Jenson telling the Story?" (Verhoef, AH 2008. *Scriptura*, 2:231-243).

23 Curtis says for example: "Jenson's doctrine of Eucharist is directly dependent upon Trinity, who envelopes time – our time" (2005:35).

24 A lot more proposals have been made than the few discussed here. Jenson also contributed important ecumenical work about the historic episcopacy, the office of the pope, the justification by faith and on liturgical matters. Although they were not discussed here, the same coherence in his Trinitarian underlies his proposals in this regard (and therefore also the same critique on his theology is relevant).

25 Paul Carey (1999:133) says in this regard: "Jenson traces the problems which structure (and fracture) today's ecumenical theology to this most decisive conversation of the Christian tradition. The religious understanding of ancient Mediterranean Gentiles became an articulate theology in the writings of Greek philosophers, whose concept of the divine as timeless eternity was the most powerful rival to Jewish and Christian conceptions of God as historical redeemer. In locus after locus, Jenson's solutions to the problems of ecumenical theology involve uncovering an undigested nugget of philosophical timelessness (often operating as a hidden assumption common to both sides in a theological dispute) and suggesting ways to complete the evangelization the fathers started."

26 It is in the same line of thought that Pannenberg, Hart, Cumin, Burgess and Grenz criticises Jenson. Grenz formulates it strongly and says: "If I were to name what for me is the low point in the opening installment of the two volume set, it would have to be his equating of the resurrected body of Christ with

This has of course implications for Jenson's whole understanding of the church as communion-ecclesiology. None the less Jenson does in my view succeed to find some new middle ground for ecumenical disputes by rethinking the identification of the church with the body of Christ. An understanding of God that is according to the Bible not a timeless God, allows Jenson to explore these new (and often unorthodox) theological and ecumenical possibilities.

Positive critique on Jenson's Trinitarian theology and on his ecumenical proposals includes that Jenson manages not to be biased towards his own denomination. Jenson has, for example, been accused of being too Catholic and being too Reformed from both sides.²⁷ He says, for example, about his own Lutheran background that "it is really only for the sake of the Lutheran Christology that I continue to describe myself as a theological Lutheran" (Jenson 1992:23). It would be therefore wrong to describe Jenson's theology as denominational and a better description would be (like he himself said) to say that his theology is worked out for the one church of the future.²⁸ Philip Cary (1999:133) wrote very appreciative of Jenson's aim in this regard: "Arguably the most beautiful and important theology of our time is being develop between the various churches, in ecumenical discussions which elucidate the structure of thought and practice common to all the particular Christian traditions. Robert Jenson's recent work is situated in that between, inhabiting the common space of ecumenical theology and examining its problems. The solutions he proposes are bold and innovative, often idiosyncratic and unlikely to be widely accepted – yet instructive and immensely suggestive to anyone who thinks theology should solve its problems not by conforming to the agendas set by the world (modernity, post modernity, or any other age) but by renewing its attention to the Gospel of Christ." It is an ecumenical future which we should keep on praying and working for, as the current Pope (Benedict XVI when he was still Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger) said: "further major ecumenical progress depends on a new 'depth of faith' worked by a new initiative of the Spirit. That can happen at any time and is what we should pray for..." (Jenson 2006:33). Jenson's Trinitarian and ecumenical theology is indeed a prayer for that.

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the church" (2003:214). It can however be said in defence of Jenson that he does not explicitly choose for one of these options and his formulations are mostly open ended on these issues (and some may think contradictory as well).

27 Mattes (2000:485-486) says: "Jenson has attempted to develop not a Lutheran but an ecumenical theology particularly faithful to the catholic and orthodox traditions. Evangelical Lutherans will probably be apt quickly to note just how "Catholic" Jenson is: he argues for a pope, a historic episcopate, the Eucharist primarily as sacrifice, salvation as deification and other such matters. However, it is highly likely that Roman Catholic and Orthodox readers will, by contrast, find Jenson to be 'all too Lutheran.' Abraham, our example of a person of faith for Jenson, lives by faith and nothing else. Christian growth in charity is nothing other than a daily turning to baptism... Lutheran themes, then, are pivotal though not definitive in his construction of an ecumenical theology."

28 Jenson said: "... it is a great blessing specifically to theology that we need not wait for the church to be undivided to do theology for and even of the undivided church. For theology is itself a form of the waiting we must practice. The present work [his *Systematic Theology*] is deliberately done in such anticipation of the one church, and this will be throughout apparent, in its use of authorities and its modes of argument" (*STI*:viii).

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KEY WORDS

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TREFWOORDE

Robert Jenson
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Trinity, time and ecumenism in Robert Jenson's theology

ABSTRACT

Robert Jenson, an American Lutheran theologian, is well known as a Trinitarian and ecumenical theologian. In his Trinitarian theology he makes specific choices regarding the relationship between God and time as an attempt to overcome the Hellenistic influences on the early church's theology, especially about the timelessness of God. Jenson proposes a *temporal infinity* or timefulness of God, which is central to the relationships within the Trinity. Jenson temporally defines the unity of the Trinity in relation to the claim that God is in fact the mutual life and action of the three persons, Father, Son and Spirit as they move toward the future. In the Trinity's relationship to time the person Jesus fulfils a very specific role, namely the "specious present", and this temporal location of Him leads in Jenson's theology to a very strong ecclesiology and eventually to specific proposals regarding ecumenism. In this article I will investigate this link between Trinity, time and ecumenism in Jenson's theology.

INTRODUCTION

Robert Jenson is well known as a significant and prolific writer of Trinitarian theology and ecclesiology. He has written extensively and very creatively about the Trinity for more than forty years. Some of his main works as Trinitarian theologian includes his dogmatic works: *Systematic Theology* (1997, 1999),¹ *God after God: The God of the Past and the God of the Future, Seen in the Work of Karl Barth* (1969), and *Alpha and Omega* (1963, 1969). He also wrote the more comprehensive *Triune Identity: God according to the Gospel* (1982), *Christian Dogmatics* (1984),² and the short and popular *Story and Promise: A Brief Theology of the Gospel about Jesus* (1973). Of these books, his *Systematic Theology* should be singled out as his magnum opus in which he systematically synthesised his creative Trinitarian theology that has developed over many years.

It is not only Jenson's books that testify about him as Trinitarian theologian, but also the reaction on his books and other works.³ He is widely regarded as one of the foremost Trinitarian

1 *Systematic Theology, Volume 1: The Triune God* (1997) and *Systematic Theology, Volume 2: The Works of God* (1999). Hereafter referred to as *ST1* and *ST2*. Braaten says these books are undoubtedly the crowning fulfilment of Jenson's career and "when he [Jenson] is asked, 'How long did it take you to write it?' his answer is, 'The last forty years.'" (Braaten 2000:8).

2 *Christian Dogmatics* (1984) was written with his colleague Carl Braaten. Jenson wrote the chapters on the Trinity, the Holy Spirit and the Sacraments.

3 Some of the praises and perspectives on his *Systematic Theology* include: "Professor Jenson's *Systematic Theology Volume 1: The Triune God* is certainly a very important book that must be considered by all who are seriously engaged in theological reflection today. It is especially important as a contribution to contemporary discussions of the Trinity which have proliferated in recent years." (Molnar 1999:117); "With his *Systematic Theology* Robert Jenson offers the church a brilliant, robust, and enduring 'critically orthodox' theology that presents the faith of the historic creeds in dialogue with the concerns of modernity and postmodernity." (Mattes 2000:463), and: "Robert Jenson's two-volume *Systematic Theology* is a

theologians of the last half of the twentieth century. Wolfhart Pannenberg writes for example: "Since the 1960s, his [Jenson] books on the concept of God, on eschatological theology, on the Trinity, and on ecumenism have established him as one of the most original and knowledgeable theologians of our time" (Pannenberg 2000:49). Many other respected theologians from different denominations and from all over the world share this high esteem for Jenson's theology.⁴ Some regard him as one of the most significant American⁵ theologians of our day and even his most stringent critiques⁶ have a lot of admiration⁷ for his Trinitarian theology.

Robert Jenson is not only well known as a Trinitarian theologian, but also as an ecumenical theologian.⁸ The two themes, Trinity and Ecumenism, are very important themes and also very closely interconnected in Jenson's life and work. In my argument I will indicate how Jenson's Trinitarian theology necessarily leads to a strong ecclesiology and how it forms the logical basis for his specific ecumenical ideas and proposals. In this first article I will thus give an exposition of his Trinitarian theology and in a follow-up article I will discuss his ecumenical vision and proposals, which is based on this.

JENSON'S TRINITARIAN THEOLOGY

Jenson's theology can be summarized in three interrelated themes, which was also the title of the book on Jenson's theology namely: Trinity, Time, and the Church (2000).⁹ I would have

highly creative and individual synthesis of a number of often divergent strands of contemporary theology. An ecumenical and trinitarian theology, it is also a theology of narrative, hope, and of the word." (Watson 2002:201).

- 4 Although Jenson is sometimes described as an American theologian, he is well known and respected internationally as a theologian. In the book *Trinity, Time, and Church: A Response to the Theology of Robert W. Jenson* (edited by Gunton 2000), theologians from all over the world and from many different denominations contributed essays of appreciation and dialogue with Jenson's theology.
- 5 Stanley Grenz says for example: "Although the list of contributors to the contemporary renaissance in Trinitarian studies is legion... perhaps no one has offered a more thorough-going, challenging and far reaching trinitarian theology than Robert Jenson, who... may indeed be the most significant American theologian of our day." (Grenz 2003:211). Many other theologians from America, like David Hart, and from Europe, like Wolfhart Pannenberg, will agree with Grenz on this.
- 6 Some of the critique against his theology is that it is a quasi-Hegelian system (Hunsinger, Sholl, Mattes), that his argument against the timelessness of God is flawed (Burgess, Hart), and that his ecclesiology is collapsing Christ into the church (McFarland). Some of these critiques will be discussed in this paper, like those of Hart and McFarland. What is interesting though is that all of his critiques also appreciate a lot of his theological contribution. George Hunsinger (2002:161) says for example: "'Robert W. Jenson gives us the twentieth century's most accomplished systematic theology written in English. It has few peers in any language. It is concise without being trivial, learned but not inaccessible, ecumenical while still rooted in Lutheran confessions, and stunningly fresh and original in its approach to the major topics. No one at any level, whether advanced or neophyte, can fail to learn from this work or remain unchallenged by it. It is the consummate work of a lifetime. Its proper assessment by the ecumenical church will need to be wide-ranging, serious and prolonged. Without attempting to be as encyclopedic as Barth, Jenson has opted instead to be judicious, an endeavor that succeeds admirably.'"
- 7 A good example of this is found in the article of Hart (2005) "The Lively God of Robert Jenson" in which he criticises Jenson on many points, but adds then that: "I write neither as disciple of Jenson's, nor as a 'Jensonian,' but only as an admirer" (Hart 2005:32). See also his critique on Jenson in his book *The Beauty of the Infinite* (2003) on pp160-166.
- 8 See in this regard my article: "Robert Jenson's ecumenical vision based on his Trinitarian thought."
- 9 Colin Gunton was the editor of this festschrift about Jenson and the strong link between Trinity and ecumenism in Jenson's work is also here emphasised by Gunton: "The chapters in this Festschrift [*Trinity, Time, and Church* (2000)] offer eloquent tribute to the significance of this remarkable achievement of

chosen ecumenism (and not church) as the title, because Jenson (ST1:viii) himself says of his own theology that it is done in “anticipation of the one church.” In other words, his Trinitarian theology (specifically his choices regarding the relationship between God and time) and his ecclesiology are consistently written with an ecumenical aim.¹⁰ His whole theology leads thus to his specific ecumenical proposals, and to understand and evaluate that, a clear understanding of Jenson’s unique perspectives on the Trinity, the core of his theology, is necessary.

The immanent Trinity and the economic Trinity

The doctrine of the Trinity is for Jenson not a theological puzzle, but the framework within which to deal with theological puzzles. It is a doctrine that is nothing less than the comprehensive statements of the gospel’s most radical claims. A starting point in Jenson’s theology is his agreement with Karl Rahner (and other Trinitarian theologians like Karl Barth) that “the immanent Trinity is the economic Trinity and vice versa, that is, that God’s eternal triune life and his triune history with us in time are somehow one event, that God is not otherwise Father, Son and Spirit in himself than he is among us, and vice versa” (Jenson 2006a:32). It is thus important for Jenson that there will be no ontological chasm between God’s triune history in time and his eternal triune being. Jenson is fully aware of the critique that this argument so identifies God with his history among us that God is made dependent on us, but the alternative – of construing eternity by categories like timelessness – is for Jenson alien to the biblical account of God. This thesis of Jenson needs to be unpacked to understand his radical theological and ecumenical proposals and the coherence of his whole argument.

The first important aspect of Jenson’s theology is thus his notion that the immanent Trinity is the economic trinity. This viewpoint is not so unique of Jenson’s theology, but in Jenson’s presentation the difference between the “immanent” Trinity and the “economic” Trinity, almost vanishes¹¹ so that there is no “analogical interval” between the two.¹² David Hart explains: “Jenson, however, falls within a school of modern, predominantly Protestant thought that chooses to collapse this analogical interval, and to assert that the event of our salvation in Christ and the event of God’s life as Trinity are simply one and the same; what occurs in Jesus of Nazareth is in some sense the story of God becoming the God He is, within which story we are also included - for love’s sake” (Hart 2005:31). For Jenson there is thus no difference between the God of eternity (in his eternal life) and the God who became man in Jesus Christ in specific time (the Trinitarian God in the history of salvation) and this leads to questions about the relationship between God and time: how can God be completely the God who identifies himself through the

writing on dogmatics for the whole church in an ecumenical key” (Braaten 2000:8).

10 Philip Cary (1999:133) wrote very appreciative of Jenson’s aim in this regard: “Arguably the most beautiful and important theology of our time is being develop between the various churches, in ecumenical discussions which elucidate the structure of thought and practice common to all the particular Christian traditions. Robert Jenson’s recent work is situated in that between, inhabiting the common space of ecumenical theology and examining its problems.”

11 Pannenberg criticised Jenson on this point and mentioned: “It is certainly true that the trinitarian God in the history of salvation is the same God as in His eternal life. But there is also a necessary distinction that maintains the priority of the eternal communion’s explication in the history of salvation. Without that distinction, the reality of the one God tends to be dissolved into the process of the world” (Pannenberg 2000:50).

12 David Hart explains this “analogical interval” as the distinction between the immanent Trinity and the economic Trinity that has always been asserted by the Christian theology as “that what happens in the story of salvation is a perfect expression (or dramatic revelation) of how it would be even were there no creatures at all, but also that between his temporal expression and its eternal source there is a relation of grace. God is not affected by time, His eternal identity knows neither before nor after, and the incarnation of the Logos is in no sense necessary to or determinative of that identity” (Hart 2005:31).

history of Jesus (in a specific time), and be the God of creation (the past) and of fulfilment (the future)? If God is not timeless, as Jenson says, and part of this world in Jesus, how is it possible then that God is not dissolved into the process of the world? The answer of these questions, about God and time, is the second main focus point of Jenson's theology.

God is not timeless

Jenson's theology is in a great extent a reaction on the Hellenistic influences on the early church's theology, especially in regard to concepts like the timelessness and impassibility of God.¹³ The very definition of God's eternity as "timeless" is something Jenson regards as unbiblical and incompatible with the story of creation and redemption.¹⁴ God is not timeless, but God is "identified by specific temporal actions and is known within certain temporal communities by personal names and identifying descriptions thereby provided" (ST1:44). God is not timeless, but lively, active, an event. Jenson follows Gregory of Nyssa thoughts here and says "God... refers to the mutual action of the identities' divine 'energies', to the perichoretic life" (ST1:214) and "This being of God is not a something, however rarefied or immaterial, but a going-on, a sequentially palpable event, like a kiss or a train wreck" (ST1:214). Jenson prefer to use the term "infinite" (limitlessness) instead of "timelessness" about God. God is not infinite in the sense that he "extends indefinitely, but because no temporal activity can keep up with the activity that he is" (ST1:216). God is infinite not by having no boundaries, but by overcoming the boundaries. Therefore Jenson says God's being should be described as temporal infinity. For Jenson this term demonstrates God's self-liberation from temporal contingencies, without extracting him from history. This description of God is for Jenson more biblical than the Greek concept of timelessness, and says that the "biblical God's eternity is his temporal infinity" (ST1:217). It is a description of God that implicates that "while one might believe that divine temporality necessarily leads one to a god in process or one lacking sovereign lordship... it is precisely this 'overcoming' of boundaries that demonstrates God is Lord" (Curtis 2005:27). God is God because he overcomes all boundaries.¹⁵ He is therefore identifiable by his temporal acts of creation and redemption, but also infinite in the sense that he is not bound by temporality. The implication of this understanding of God is that he is not impassable or immutable, not immune to suffering and change, but a god who is alive and active and involved in the world and its history. God is present, loving, encompassing in our time and place – a timely and timeful God.¹⁶

13 Jason Curtis (2005:23) explains that: "According to Jenson, the Greeks, in an effort toward security of existence over against time's fleetingness, defined eternity in terms of timelessness. Since humanity cannot embrace our past, present, and future giving us the coherence of life that we naturally desire, the ancient Greeks projected that ability onto God and therefore defined deity in terms of persistence or immutability. Jenson asserts that while the early church did not simply assimilate Hellenism into its theology, it nonetheless failed to rid itself of certain debilitating features, the pinnacle of which is the notion of divine timelessness."

14 Pannenberg (2000:49) says: "Jenson is surely right in contending that the God of the Bible is identified by temporal events, and indeed by a history of such events. He boldly integrates this insight with his Trinitarian theology by conceiving of the biblical narrative as 'the final truth of God's own reality' in the mutual relations of God the Father, His incarnate Son, and the eschatological accomplishment of their communion by the Spirit."

15 Jenson explains: "Any eternity is some transcendence of temporal limits, but the biblical God's eternity is not the simple contradiction of time. What he transcends is not the having of beginnings and goals and reconciliations, but any personal limitation in having them... The true God is not eternal because he lacks time, but because he takes time" (ST1:217).

16 These terms are discussed in more detail by Peters, T 1998. God happens: The timeliness of the triune God. *The Christian Century* 115:1, 342-344.

The Trinity as temporal infinity

According to Jenson this temporal infinity or timefullness of God is not just something ascribed to God, but it is part of the being of God, it is central to the relationships within the Trinity - it defines God. For Jenson there is a clear connection between the poles of time and the mutual triune roles of Father, Son, and Spirit. According to him the "Father is the 'whence' of God's life; the Spirit is the 'whither' of God's life; and... the Son is that life's specious present" (ST1:218-219). So for Jenson, God possesses a past, present, and future in himself, not only as pure duration (as Karl Barth understood it, with no conflict but only peace between source, movement and goal), but also as a temporal infinity.¹⁷ Jenson says God "is temporally infinite because 'source' and 'goal' are present and asymmetrical in him, because he is primarily future to himself and only thereupon past and present for himself" (ST1:217). So to be God is not only to be infinite (by overcoming boundaries) but temporally infinite and for Jenson that means that time is functioning as a real past, present and future in God himself, and that it is only in the Spirit, the future, that God is able to be freed from the past and present, to be freed from "the timelessness of mere form or mere consciousness" (ST1:217). To be God is thus to be always open to a future and to always open a future.¹⁸ But Jenson is careful not to let the whence (Father) and wither (Spirit) fall apart in God's life and says this does not happen, God's duration is without loss, because "origin and goal, whence and wither, are indomitably reconciled in the action and suffering of the Son" (ST1:219). So it is in the Son, the specious present, that the Father and Spirit (source and goal) finds its unity and are reconciled. With this structure of time within the Trinity Jenson is trying to avoid timelessness on the one hand and try to maintain perichoresis on the other hand. In following Jason Curtis' argument we might agree that Jenson is perhaps overemphasising the temporal location of the Son. Curtis (2005:28) says: "It is an overemphasis in the sense that what becomes crucial for theology is to locate Jesus, not the Spirit of Jesus, but the male Jew who walked the earth." This stress on the temporal location of the Son has implications for Jenson's thoughts about Jesus' presence in the sacrament of the Eucharist and in the church.¹⁹

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE FUTURE

God as Jenson describes Him, as temporal infinity is clearly a God of the future. Pannenberg makes the remark that Jenson took "a 'futurist option' for theology by conceiving of the kingdom of God and the Holy Spirit in terms of the future of God Himself" (2000:49). Jenson says that it is in the Spirit that we find God's own and our future: "The Spirit is God as his and our future rushing upon him and us; he is the eschatological reality of God, the Power as which God is the active Goal of all things" (ST1:160). It is also not a mystery what the future will be, but according to Jenson "it is love that the Spirit brings as the End and as himself" (ST1:220). Jenson summarizes his whole reflection on God's eternity thus as follow: "The temporal infinity that opens before us and so embraces us as the triune God's eternity is the inexhaustibility of one event. That event is the appropriation of all other events by the love actual as Jesus of Nazareth"

17 Jenson agrees with the pure duration of Barth in the sense that "nothing in God recedes into the past or approaches from the future" but he differs from Barth when he adds: "But the difference is also absolute: the arrow of God's eternity, like the arrow of casual time, does not reverse itself. Whence and whither in God are not like right or left or up and down on a map, but are like before and after in a narrative" (ST1:218).

18 Jenson says that to be God is to "always creatively opens to what he will be; not in that he hangs on, but in that he gives and receives; not that he perfectly persists, but in that he perfectly anticipates" (ST1:217).

19 As mentioned earlier, this will be discussed in more detail in a follow-up article of me with the title: "Robert Jenson's ecumenical vision based on his Trinitarian thought."

(ST1:221). About this triune action of “love” Jenson explains how there are no boundaries (God as infinite) between the persons of the Trinity: “the Father’s love can embrace whatever the Spirit’s coming brings; the Son’s love can endure whatever his Father sends him to do; the Spirit’s creativity of love is inexhaustible” (ST1:216). God’s eternity is thus worked out in relation to the Spirit who is the futurity of God and it is the Spirit which brings the future Kingdom which Jesus came to establish.

In his explanation of God’s temporal infinity it is clear that for Jenson the temporal events of Jesus’ death and resurrection belong to his very deity (ST1:49). Jenson says that God is “not only in fact identified by certain temporal events but is apprehended as himself temporally identifiable” (ST1:49). Jenson makes the conceptual move “from the biblical God’s self-identification by events in time to his identification with those events” (ST1:59). Traditionally the doctrines of Christ and of the Spirit’s coming appeared only in the parts devoted to our history, to what God does to and for us, but now Jenson structure these doctrines to appear as teaching about God himself, as narrative of the history with us with which and by which he identifies himself (ST1:60). The more radical move Jenson then makes is to see Jesus the man as the eternal Son and Word of the Father. There is no *Logos asarkos* for Jenson - that is, no timeless and “fleshless” Word of God (Hart 2005:31). As Jenson states it: “The man Jesus, exactly in his personhood is defined by the life-story told in the Gospels, is the one called Son, the second identity of God. Jesus is the Son, with no qualifications” (Jenson 1999a:317). It is clear that for Jenson the events that constitute the story of Jesus’ life, death and resurrection directly constitute the being of the God revealed by them. For Jenson “God the Son is not somehow behind or other than what we are given in Christ, he simply is this Christ” (Cumin 2007:164).

This perspective does not only have advantages in terms of Jenson’s Christology,²⁰ but also in terms of what he wants to say about the identity of the Trinity. For Jenson the act of Jesus’ life is in no way incidental to the being of God. The opposite is true: “God is what Jesus does” (Cumin 2007:165). So here we see again how Jenson takes Rahner’s maxim with as much ontological severity as possible - the immanent Trinity is the economic Trinity. In other words, the event of Jesus’ life, death and resurrection are what establish the identity of God,²¹ but does so also in the sense that it brought closure and finality to the true identity of God. Jenson says about a person’s identity “for so long as the story simply continues the narrated individuality remains uncertain” and “until I die, it remains uncertain who I shall have turned out to be” (ST1:65). Death is thus necessary to finalise one’s identity, and with Jesus’ death God’s identity is settled because according to Jenson, God too can have no identity except as he meets the temporal end toward which creatures live (ST1:65). But Jenson explains further “the Lord’s resolve to meet and overcome death and the constitution of his self-identity in dramatic coherence are but one truth about him. For if death-and-resurrection occurs, this is the infinite dramatic crisis and resolution, and so God’s own” (ST1:66).

God’s identity as Trinity

So God’s identity is constituted by Jesus’ death, but his story (and our story with him) continues. This is not a problem for Jenson and he says since God’s self-identity is constituted in dramatic coherence, it is established not from the beginning, but from the end, and God is eternally

20 Cumin explains that, for Jenson, “Christology is not about crunching God and world together into the person of Christ, it is about confessing their essential union in him and getting on with the rest of the story,” (2007:165) and for Jenson “the unity of deity and humanity in Christ is something of a theological non-issue - Jesus of Nazareth simply is the eternal Son and that should settle it” (2007:166).

21 We can already sense something of the problem here that Curtis criticises Jenson for, namely that “Jenson’s trinitarian ontology pushes toward an ‘isolated present’ of the Son, to the unintended exclusion of the Father and the Spirit” (2005:28).

himself in that he unrestrictedly anticipates an end in which he will be all he ever could be (ST1:66). This end is well known. For Jenson this story of God continues until the Spirit, as the future of God, and us will bring fulfilment. The climax of Jenson's theology is that the end will be theosis. Jenson says: "God and only God is the creature's future. God the Spirit is God's own future and so draws to and into the triune converse those for whom the Trinity makes room" (ST2:26).²²

We can thus say that the unity of Jenson's theology lies in the fact that the Trinity is temporally defined, in relation to the claim that God is in fact the mutual life and action of the three persons, Father, Son and Spirit, as they move toward the future. This relationship between God and time is central to Jenson's Trinitarian thought, but the relationship between time and space - and consequently our space in God - needs to be clarified if we want to understand what Jenson means with a Trinity that "makes room" for us. As we have seen, for Jenson time is no longer what separates God and world, but time is what they have in common. But while time is something "outside" us, Jenson says that time is inside the divine subjective centre. Jenson follows Augustine that time is "the 'distension' of a personal reality... That is: the 'stretching out' that makes time is an extension not of finite consciousness but of an infinite enveloping consciousness" (ST2:34). So it is in this 'enveloping consciousness' of God that time is internal. So it is not outside God, but inside Him, asymmetrical in his perichoresis that time exists. Furthermore, for Jenson it is "exactly the divine internality of time that is the possibility of creaturehood at all" (Cumin 2007:173). And here we find the strong relationship of time and space when Jenson says: "for God to create is for him to make accommodation in his triune life for other persons and things than the three whose mutual life he is. In himself, he opens room, and that act is the event of creation... We call this accommodation in the triune life 'time'... creation is above all God's taking time for us" (ST2:25). So for Jenson created time is accommodation in God's eternity for others than God and therefore we can speak about "God's roominess" (ST2:25). The implication of this is that everything seems to exist in God and that there is no other way possible for things to exist. This has of course implications for the existence of sin and evil and leads to questions about the moral nature of God, but that is not part of the scope of this paper.²³

It is clear that in Jenson's understanding of the Trinity's relationship to time that the person Jesus fulfils a very special and specific role namely that he is the life of the Trinity's "specious present" (ST1:219). So present can mean here that Jesus is 'specious' in the sense that His presence is never truly realized but also that Jesus is 'spacious' in the sense that space is itself an aspect of time.²⁴ Brian Leftow (2003:73) explains: "...His 'specious present' is unlike ours. To experience an extended event in one 'specious present' is to presently experience a stretch of it, as when we seem to see motion. This seems to involve seeing a moving thing in a series of

22 Pannenberg says that it is at this point where Jenson's systematic unity of his theology is found: "unity is provided by the trinitarian perspective: from the beginning, the creation was intended for 'inclusion' in the triune community by virtue of union with Christ, the purpose being a 'perfected human community.' That is the promise of the gospel which is anticipated in the life of the Church and is finally achieved in the final advent of the Kingdom" (2000:49).

23 One of the most critical theologians in this regard on Jenson's theology is David Hart. He explains that the implication of Jenson's theology is that "inasmuch as God has eternally decided to determine His identity in this man [Jesus] - God has eternally elected the world of sin, death, and the devil 'alongside' His election of the Son as context in which the drama of triune love must play out. Thus, even the fallenness of our world falls within the story of God's life as Trinity, but only insofar as that fallenness is overcome by God in Christ" (Hart 2005:31). See also: Hart, DB 2003. *The beauty of the infinite: the aesthetics of Christian truth*. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans) pp160-166.

24 See also *ST1*:159.

positions in one present experience...” In this ‘specious present’ that Jesus is, comes together the infinite history of God and the fleeting temporality of the world.²⁵ On this point Curtis mentions that “Jenson’s trinitarian ontology pushes toward an ‘isolated present’ of the Son, to the unintended exclusion of the Father and the Spirit” (2005:28) and he concludes that this is precisely the tendency in Jenson’s version of the Eucharist. The question is how is Jesus present in this time if He is not here? Jenson argues that there is no *Logos asarkos*, so talking about the “Son as historical present is referring to the human, historical Jesus. Therefore, in order for Jenson’s view of Trinity and time to hold together, Jesus must be present in a sense that enables us to locate him temporally” (Curtis 2005:31). This temporal location of Him we find according to Jenson in the church and the Eucharist. So the fact that Jenson will have a very strong ecclesiology as part of his theology is thus expected.

CONCLUSION

The relationship between Trinity and time in Jenson’s theology leads to a very strong ecclesiology in which the suggestion from Jenson is that the risen Christ is simply identical with the Church and there is an equation of the resurrected body of Christ with the church throughout Jenson’s theology. Jenson says for example that “Christ is personally the second identity of God, and the *totus Christus* is Christ with the church; therefore the church is not the same way an *opus ad extra* as is the creation, even when it is perfected in God” (ST2:167). Although he is aware of the problem of this position, he maintains his viewpoint because it makes sense in terms of his understanding of the Trinity and time. He says that the church “is the body of Christ for the world and for her members, in that she is constituted a community by the verbal and ‘visible’ presence to her of that same body of Christ” (ST2:168). The church is thus truly and literally the revelation of Jesus Christ and if there is no unity in the church it undermines our whole theology and belief of our unity in Christ as His body.²⁶ The church as the *totus Christus* is thus very important in Jenson’s whole Trinitarian theology and that explains his strong ecclesiology and his continued emphasis on ecumenism.²⁷

Because Jenson’s Trinitarian theology forms the basis for his strong ecclesiology, critique against his ecclesiology should be directed against his theology. An important critique in this regard is about Jenson’s theological starting point, namely the collapsing of the analogical interval between the “‘immanent’ Trinity and the ‘economic’ Trinity”. Both Pannenberg and Hart’s critique about this issue have already been mentioned, and the problem is that, in Jenson’s words: “Those on the one side of the argument accuse those on the other of so identifying God with history among us as to make him dependent on us. Those of the latter party accuse those of the former of continuing so to construe eternity by categories alien to the biblical account of God – for example, by timelessness” (2006a:33). Of course the different sides have different implications, and Jenson admit that he is among those accused of confusing God and creation.

25 “That Christ has the divine nature means that he is one of the three whose mutuality is the divine life, who live the history that God is. That Christ has human nature means that he is one of the many whose mutuality is human life, who live the history that humanity is” (ST1:138).

26 Pannenberg says: “It is a merit of Jenson’s work that he takes Paul’s statements on the Church as body of Christ not only as a metaphor but literally.” But he also adds: “Yet the precise relationship between Church and body of Christ requires a more careful and differentiated treatment than it receives in these volumes [Jenson’s Systematic Theology]” (2000:52).

27 Jenson is in agreement here with Cardinal Kasper (and the general Catholic position presented in the book, *That they may all be one: the call to unity*) that “the great remaining dissensus among the churches, after decades of dialogue, is about the nature of the church itself, and so about the nature of the ecumenical goal itself” (Jenson 2006b:710).

Jenson's defence is however that this is an age old clash that "has recurred throughout theological history, between Alexandria – my side – and Antioch, East and West, Lutheran and Reformed" (Jenson 2006a:33) and it must be add that Jenson at least tries to develop a new understanding of God's relationship to time – the success of which might perhaps not be completed but is still very helpful in the church's development of an ecumenical theology. Jenson's own ecumenical vision and proposals are proof of that and that will be the theme of my follow-up article on Jenson, namely "Robert Jenson's ecumenical vision based on his Trinitarian thought."

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TREFWOORDE

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Nuwe tendense buite-om die erediens van die 21ste eeu. 'n Beskrywende liturgie-historiese en hedendaagse verkenning.

ABSTRACT

New tendencies outside the worship service of the 21st century. A descriptive liturgical-historical and current day exploration.

The main aim of this article is a description of both ancient and nascent ritual-liturgical developments and to ask the question whether these descriptions can assist in identifying possible worship trends in years to come. In order to focus the inquiry the article looks at the presence of crosses within the context of worship settings, but mainly as these rituals are performed outside of the traditional spaces of Sunday morning worship and church buildings. The two settings which form the focus of this article are firstly the early Medieval period in the history of liturgy and secondly the current South African ritual landscape. These descriptions are valuable for liturgical studies in South Africa as an attempt at answering the basic practical theological question, namely "what is going on?" Only after an attempt at answering this first question can the second question be posed, namely "why is this going on?" The article concludes with some preliminary observations with regards to the latter question which could serve as a preliminary attempt at identifying future worship trends.

INLEIDING

In hierdie artikel word op ontwikkelinge buite-om die erediens gefokus. In die lig van waarneming met betrekking tot bewegings op die rituele landskap word die vraag dan gestel of dit wat ten opsigte van aanbidding of ritualisering buite-om die erediens tans waargeneem kan word nie dalk tekens is van wat in die erediens self in die toekoms verwag kan word nie. Daarom word daar in hierdie artikel die verskynsel van die voorkoms van kruise vir rituele of liturgiese doeleindes in nie-tradisionele liturgiese ruimtes verken.¹ Eerstens word 'n liturgie-historiese verkenning gedoen word en daarna word die hedendaagse Suid-Afrikaanse sogenaamde rituele landskap beskrywend verken. Beide dele van hierdie verkenning maak op 'n doelbewuste wyse keuses om (vir sommiges) vreemde terreine, letterlik en figuurlik, te betree. Eerstens is die Christelike rituele en liturgie van die vroeë Middeleeue in Protestantse liturgiese navorsing 'n redelik onbekende en gevolglik ook 'n soms onbeminde wêreld. Tweedens het ritualisering wat buite om die tradisionele kerkgebou in Suid-Afrika plaasvind nog relatief min aandag gekry in liturgiese navorsing.²

1 Hierdie werk is deels gebaseer op navorsing wat ondersteun word deur die Nasionale Navorsingstigting GUN 73974. Enige opinie, bevindinge en gevolgtrekkings of aanbevelings in hierdie materiaal is die van die outeur en die NRF aanvaar geen aanspreeklikheid daarvoor nie.

2 Enkele voorbeelde van werk in hierdie verband of wat ten minstens verwysings daarna bevat sluit in Post

As praktiese-teologiese studie kom die vraag ‘waarvoor sal so ‘n verkenning kan help?’ gou na vore. Die waarde van hierdie verkenning is egter velerlei, enkele punte word hier aangestip soos wat dit in hierdie artikel ook aan bod sal kom:

Rituele wat op die rand voorkom of in nuwe ruimtes as waar dit tradisioneel voorgekom het of waar dit verwag word, is soms tekens van dit wat nog meer algemeen kan raak in die toekoms. Dit mag wees dat die opkomende rituele wat in hierdie artikel beskryf word, tekens is ten opsigte van dit wat in die toekoms nog meer algemene gebruike kan word met betrekking tot (Christelike) aanbidding.

Resente (Christelike) rituele ontwikkelinge in ruimtes buite die tradisionele erediens om stel uitdagings aan die tradisionele Sondag erediens (dalk is dit selfs moontlikhede?). Wat sommige van hierdie uitdagings of moontlikhede is, of wat dit in die toekoms dalk mag wees, kan vanuit ‘n beskrywende verkenning soos hierdie fyner omskryf word.

In kort wil hierdie artikel in die woorde van Rick Osmer eerstens ‘n bydrae maak ten opsigte van die eerste en onontkombare prakties teologiese navorsingsvraag naamlik “what is going on?” deurmiddel van ‘n beskrywing van die rituele landskap. Tweedens wil die artikel ook, alhoewel baie voorlopig en net ten dele, Osmer se tweede vraag aan bod stel te wete “why is this going on?” (cf. Osmer, 2008:4).³

Vir baie mense is beide bogenoemde ruimtes, die vroeë Middeleeue en die rituele landskap buite die tradisionele kerkgebou om, vreemde en onontdekte ruimtes.⁴ Net soos die vroeë-Middeleeuse rituele landskap, is die rituele landskap van Suid-Afrika wat buite kerkgeboue om lê ‘n haas onontdekte ruimte in liturgiese navorsing in Suid-Afrika. Tog is die Suid-Afrikaanse rituele landskap ryk en geskakkeerd. ‘n Gefokusde kyk sal dadelik velerlei fisiese godsdienstige simbole oplet, soos mense in liturgiese kleredrag, dele van diere op pale in townships, grafted met ‘n godsdienstige betekenis, vlae of blomme vir godsdienstige rituele gebruik. Saam met hierdie fisiese simbole is daar ook baie rituele in die buitelum soos ‘prayer walks’, pelgrimstogte, doopbedienings in die see of in riviere, begrafnisse en natuurlik huweliksluitings in/op/onder enige ruimte denkbaar. En benewens hierdie simbole en rituele is die kruis as simbool en gepaardgaande rituele ook alomteenwoordig. Daar is vele kruise wat langs die nasionale paaie opgerig is as merkers van ongelukstonele, op sommige plekke word groot houtkruise in die natuur opgerig en maak nie saak of dit nag of dag is nie, dit wil voorkom asof daar by elke dorp of stad in Suid-Afrika ‘n kruis op ‘n koppie geplant is.

Was hierdie kruise en gepaardgaande ritualisering so algemeen teenwoordig in die Suid-Afrikaanse landskap enkele dekades gelede? In die meeste gevalle wil dit voorkom asof hierdie ‘n opkomende verskynsel is wat inderdaad nie ongesiens aan die Liturgiewetenskap kan verbygaan nie. Vervolgens sal enkele metodologiese oorwegings genoem word, daarna sal die beskrywende verkenning volg en ten slotte sal enkele voorlopige gevolgtrekkings geformuleer word.

METODOLOGIESE VERTREKUNTE

Die rituele landskap is wêreldwyd bedrywig, of verskeie vorme van viering in die wêreld is, soos die Nederlandse liturgis Gerard Lukken (1999) met die titel van ‘n boek van hom tereg opgemerk het, “in oorfloed”. Dit is gevolglik dus noodsaaklik om goed afgebakende vertrekpunte te hê ten

(2008) en Wepener (2004 & 2009).

3 Osmer se derde en vierde vrae is onderskeidelik “what ought to be going on?” en “how might we respond?”, maar beide is vrae wat eers aan bod kan kom nadat die eerste tweede vrae aandag geniet het.

4 Dit is egter nie oral die geval nie. In Rooms-Katolieke en Ortodokse liturgie-historiese navorsing ontvang die vroeë Middeleeue heelwat aandag en wat die hedendaagse rituele landskap aanbetref is daar wêreldwyd liturgiste wat al vir ‘n geruime tyd aan hierdie verskynsel aandag gee. Sien o.a. die werk van liturgiste soos Marcel Barnard en Paul Post en ‘n rituele studies kenner soos Ronald Grimes.

einde 'n fokus te behou. Enkele vertrekpunte of sturende gedagtes vir hierdie verkenning, beide die liturgie-historiese en die hedendaagse, sluit in:

'n Fokus op handeling, spesifiek simboliese handeling, oftewel ritualisering.

Verder sal die fisiese ruimte van die handeling belangrik wees, veral ten opsigte van handeling wat buite tradisionele liturgiese ruimtes plaasvind.

Laastens sal verskeie rituele beskryf en bespreek word, maar veral rituele waarin 'n kruis voorkom.

DIE KRUIS IN LITURGIESE RITUELE VOOR DIE REFORMASIE

Daar sal in hierdie deel oorsigtelik diachronies en spesifiek liturgie-histories gekyk word na die kruis in vierings wat deur die eeue binne en/of buite plaasgevind het. In breë kwashale en met gebruikmaking van sekondêre bronne geskryf deur liturgiehistorici sal die periode vanaf die Nuwe Testamentiese tydperk tot en met die einde van die vroeë Middeleeue aan bod kom.⁵

Die Nuwe Testamentiese tydperk

Die beskrywings van Jesus se kruisiging in die Nuwe Testament word in die evangelies beskryf en in ander geskrifte na verwys. Ook Paulus se teologie van die kruis en die teologiese betekenis daarvan vir dissipelskap is redelik bekend. Dat die kruis egter direk gekoppel word aan viering of aanbidding of dat kruise in vieringe gebruik word, is egter nie bekend in hierdie vroeë periode nie.

Apostoliese tyd

Die kruis was ook vir 'n lang periode in die eerste eeue afwesig uit die Christelike en offisiële kuns. Die rede hiervoor was die uiters negatiewe konnotasie van die kruis in die Romeinse Ryk as 'n vorm van doodstraf vir kriminele en slawe (cf. Dinkler-Von Schubert, 1999: 734). In die liturgieë uit hierdie periode is daar ook min aanduidings met betrekking tot die gebruik van die kruis en die enigste heel vroeë aanduiding was die sogenaamde *sphragis* of seëling wat na die doop met die konfirmasie plaasgevind. Hierdie seëling was in die vorm van die kruisteken wat met olie op die voorhoof van 'n neofiet⁶ gemaak is (cf. Noakes, 1992: 122; Wepener, 2007: 313, 314). Hieruit het ook die gebruik om sigself te 'bekruis' gekom, maar presies hoe vroeg hierdie gebruik ontstaan en versprei het, is heeltemal onseker. Justinus Martelaar (†165) maak ook melding van die sogenaamde *typos staurou* wat gebed met uitgestrekte arms in die vorm van 'n kruis behels het (cf. Dinkler-Von Schubert, 1999: 735). Heel vroeg het die gebruik ook gekom om aanbiddingsruimtes soos kerkgeboue in 'n kruisvorm te bou wat 'n gebruik is wat vandag nog voorkom. Die kruis as 'n simbool of ritueel in aanbidding kry ons dus al vroeg binne- en buite die ampelike aanbiddingsruimtes van die Christendom. Hierdie is egter almal voorbeelde van kruistekens of argitektuur en nie vierings, binne of buite kerkgeboue, met werklike fisiese kruise nie en ook nie met die gebruikmaking van (dele van) Jesus se oorspronklike kruis nie. Vir sulke voorbeeld moet gesoek word vir die vierde eeu.

5 Wainwright (1992) noem die periode in die liturgiegeskiedenis na die Nuwe Testamentiese of Apostoliese tydperk die sogenaamde Patristieke tydperk. Die Patristieke tydperk verloop dus tot ongeveer 500 n.C. wanneer die Middeleeue aanbreek. Die presiese datering van hierdie periodes is 'n omstrede onderwerp op sigself, alhoewel daar nie hier in daardie debat ingegaan sal word nie. Wainwright (1992:61) verdeel verder die Middeleeue in die verdere sub-eras van vroeë-, hoë- en laat-Middeleeue op.

6 'n Neofiet is die tegniese term wat verwys na 'n persoon wat pas gedoopt is.

Vanaf die vierde eeu

Die heel eerste historiese aantekening en beskrywing van die kruis wat gebruik word in aanbidding en ook as sodanig vereer word, bied die non Egeria vir ons in haar reisverslag en beskrywing van die Goeie Vrydag liturgie in Jerusalem teen die einde van die vierde eeu waar sy tussen die jare 381-384 n.C. vertoef het (Van Tongeren, 1995:14). Die gebruik van die kruis in Christelike vierings en die ontwikkeling van 'n regte kruiskultus, het na alle waarskynlikheid in die loop van die 4de eeu ontstaan voorafgaande aan Egeria se besoek aan Jerusalem. Louis van Tongeren toon in sy proefskrif oor die onderwerp juis ook aan hoe die ontdekking van die kruis 'n belangrike stimulus vir hierdie ontwikkeling was in die vierde eeu, asook 'n visioen van Konstantyn en 'n brief van Cirilius van Jerusalem aan die keiser (cf. Van Tongeren, 1995:14).

'n Belangrike stimulus vir die opkoms van ritualisering wat verbonde is aan die kruis was 'n openbaring wat keiser Konstantyn gehad het en waarin dit aan hom getoon is dat die kruis die teken van sy oorwinning in die oorlog sal wees. Hy het daarom die kruis, in die vorm van die Christusmonogram of chi-rho (Van Tongeren, 1995:14), laat aanbring op die skilde van sy soldate. Konstantyn het inderdaad daarna groot militêre welslae behaal en so het die kruis 'n belangrike teken van oorwinning geword en het die liturgiese gebruik van die kruis ook in gewildheid toegeneem.

Volgens oorlewering is die kruis van Jesus deur Helena, die moeder van Konstantyn die Grote, in Jerusalem gevind. Hiervolgens sou Helena iewers na 312 n.C. na Jerusalem gereis het om daar die drie kruise te ontdek. In 'n openbaring is aan haar getoon watter een van die drie kruise Jesus se ware oorspronklike kruis was (cf. Vidal, 1996:36). Van Tongeren dui egter in 'n grondige studie oor die datering van die kruisvinding aan dat die presies datum moeilik bepaalbaar is, omdat die bronne problematies is en dikwels apologeties geskryf is. Al die bronne en veranderlikes in ag genome, is hy egter van mening 325 n.C. die mees waarskynlike datum vir die kruisvinding is (Van Tongeren, 1995:28-36). Hierdie kruisvindingslegende was 'n tweede belangrike stimulus.

'n Laaste en minder bekende stimulus is opgeteken in 'n brief aan Konstantyn se seun, Konstantius II, wat hy ontvang het van biskop Cirilius van Jerusalem. Cirilius beskryf aan die keiser in 'n brief hoe die kruis op 'n gegewe plek bo-kant die Olyfberg op die derde uur op 7 Mei 351 n.C. die hemel verlig het (Van Tongeren, 1995:14).

Binne hierdie konteks van kruisgebeure in die vierde eeu in Jerusalem het die sogenaamde Fees van die Kruisverheffing ontstaan op 14 September. Dit het saamgeval met die jaarlikse wydingsdiens van die twee kerke in Jerusalem, die Marturium (kerk van die lyding) en Anastasis (kerk van die graf/opstanding). Egeria beskryf die viering van hierdie fees teen die jaar 381 n.C. Tydens hierdie viering het die biskop die kruishoutrelikwie vasgehou, maar was omring deur diakens wat soos lyfwagte moes toesien dat niemand 'n stuk van die kruishout afbyt nie. Een vir een het die gelowiges dan langs die biskop verby geloop en eers met hulle voorkoppe en daarna met oë aan die hout geraak en laastens ook die kruis gesoen (Van Tongeren, 1995:118). Hier is die rituele wat gekoppel is aan die kruis nog fisies ruimtelik binne die kerkgebou en die amptelike liturgie.

In hierdie periode het stukkies van die oorspronklike kruishout, bekend as kruisrelikwieë, ook begin om hulle weg te vind na regoor die destyds bekende wêreld. So vroeg soos die jaar 402 n.C. het Paulinus van Nola van Melania 'n relikwie van die kruis ontvang wat sy gekry het van patriarg Johannes in Jerusalem tydens 'n besoek as pelgrim aan die stad (cf. Harpur, 2002:25). Paulinus stuur op haar beurt 'n jaar later 'n stukkie van haar kruisrelik aan Selpicius Severus in Primuliacum in Aquitanië (Van Tongeren, 1995:62-63). Hierdie soort verspreiding van kruisrelike het voortgeduur sodat daar teen die 6de eeu bewyse van kruisrelikwieë in Rome, Wene, Ravenna, Tours en Poitiers is.

Afgesien van die stukkies kruishout wat self as relikwieë vir liturgiese doeleindes gedien

het, het die kruisrelik nou sogenaamde brandea of kontakrelikwieë geïnspireer. Hierdie kontakrelikwieë het bestaan uit olie wat in kontak gebring is met die oorspronklike kruishout deur pelgrims wat na Jerusalem gereis het. Die olie is dan in mooi versierde flessies geplaas en die heilsame krag van die oorspronklike relikwie was sodoende oorgedra op die kontakrelikwie (cf. Van Tongeren, 1995:63).

Pas in die sewende eeu ontstaan daar ook 'n kruisverering- en verheffingsliturgieë in die Weste, te wete in Rome. Een van die kruisrelikwieë in besit van Rome is vir hierdie doeleindes gebruik. Die ontstaan van hierdie viering het saamgeval met die herowering van die kruisrelik uit die hande van die Perse en die nuwe impetus wat die oorspronklike fees toe in die Ooste ontvang het. As gevolg van hierdie herowering van die gesteelde kruisrelik wou die Christene die kruisrelike publiek vertoon en vereer (Van Tongeren, 1995:64).

'n Liturgies interessante gebeurtenis in hierdie tyd en wat saamval met die verdere verspreiding van die fees na die hedendaagse Frankryk, is die pogings van Karel die Grote om 'n uniforme liturgie in te voer in sy ryk (cf. Stringer, 2005:111-113). Hiervoor het Karel die Grote 'n versoek aan pous Hadrianus gerig om aan hom die standaard misboek te stuur sodat hy dit kon laat kopieër en regdeur sy ryk versprei met die opdrag dat almal dieselfde ritueel gebruik. Karel het uiteraard politieke motiewe gehad en het die liturgiese uniformering ten dienste van sy eie persoonlike motiewe gestel. Hoe dit ookal sy, vanuit hierdie ontwikkeling het die rituele rakende die kruisverering en kruisverheffing ook vanuit Rome verder Noord versprei.

Daar sou in die lig van hierdie historiese oorsig opgemerk kon word dat die kruis teen die einde van die eerste millenium 'n belangrike liturgiese voorwerp was. Beide kruistekens en die verskillende wyses waarop die kruis simbolies ingespan is, asook die oorspronklike kruis uit Jerusalem en kruisrelike en die liturgiese praktyke daaronder was gewild. Gelowiges wou graag in hierdie periode in die liturgiegeskiedenis in nabye kontak met die ware kruis of kruisrelike kom. Dikwels was daar nie 'n kruisrelik of ander belangrike relik in die nabye omgewing van lidmate nie en gevolglik het pelgrimstogte vir hierdie doeleindes ontstaan. Gelowiges het groot afstande afgelê, hulle het dus na buite beweeg en met behulp van 'n rituele wandeling weer binne in 'n kerkgebou ingegaan om naby die gegewe relik te kom en vieringe daarrondom mee te maak.

Dieselfde soort rituele het voorgekom ten opsigte van relikwieë van martelare of ander geestelikes en hierdie relikwieë is dikwels in die fundamente van die altare in katedrale en ander kerke ingemessel (Wegman, 1991:217). Deur stukkie relikwie in te messel in altare is die hemel en die aarde nader aan mekaar gebring – iets wat nodig was in daardie tydperk, omdat soos Wegman (1991:217) dit stel, daar 'n groot angst was vir die Kwaad en mense die kwaad wou oorwin. Woodward (1990:55-56) wys ook daarop dat daar byvoorbeeld geglo is dat martelare met hulle dies natalis (sterfdag) direk gebore is tot 'n ewige lewe. So 'n gestorwe martelaar is gesien as 'n vriend van God, wat nie diegene wat agtergebly het op aarde vergeet nie, en so as tussengangers tussen God en mense kon optree. Beide die rituele rakende die kruisrelike en rituele rakende relike van besondere persone het ook ten doel gehad om op 'n simboliese en rituele wyse die ervaring van 'n geweldige afstand tussen God en mens te verklein.

VOORLOPIGE OPMERKINGS RAKENDE DIE LITURGIE VAN VOOR DIE REFORMASIE

Hierdie beskrywings van rituele laat vandag by mense verskillende reaksies opkom en hierdie geskiedenis word soms ook insgelyks hanteer. In Protestantse kringe is daar ten minste twee soorte benaderings rakende die liturgie van vóór die Reformasie soos die liturgiegeskiedenis van die vroeë Middeleeue.

In baie geleedere is liturgiese gebruike uit die Vroeë Kerk besonder gewild en word dit met

oorgawe geïnkorporeer in vieringe. Hierdie benadering kan byvoorbeeld gevind word binne die sogenaamde 'Ancient-Future' paradigma wat in sommige kerke populêr is (cf. bv. Webber, 1993). Daardie vierings word soms geredeneer is naby die oorsprong, dit is digby die oerbronne, en is daarom liturgies belangriker as vieringe uit latere periodes. Naby die bron beteken soms naby God en sodoende word die afleiding gemaak dat God aanwesig was in daardie vierings.

Die liturgie uit latere periodes, soos dié uit die Middeleeue soos hier beskryf, is weer 'n periode in die liturgiegeskiedenis waaroor daar minder gunstig geoordeel word. Die liturgiegeskiedenis van die Middeleeue is in die geskiedenis van die Christelike liturgie die verhaal van bygeloof, van sinlose gewoontes, magiese rituele, van vreemde vierings en... indien God wel daar was, wat vir sommiges redelik onwaarskynlik is, dan was sy teenwoordigheid grootliks verduister. So word daar soms duisend jaar se liturgiegeskiedenis summier afgeskryf.

In hierdie artikel sal daar egter teen hierdie greine van vooroordeel ingegaan word en 'n poging aangewend word om 'n empatiese blik op die gelowiges uit die Vroeë Middeleeue en hulle rituele te werp. Daarom moet daar eerstens opgemerk word dat die Godsbeeld van mense tydens die Vroeë Middeleeue waarskynlik die van 'n veraf God was. Transendensie eerder as immanensie was die wyse waarop God se teenwoordigheid beleef is. Vanuit die Fees van die Kruisverheffing kan Van Tongeren self ook heelwat aflei rakende die teologie in hierdie tydvak. Die kruis self was vir die gelowiges die troon van Jesus, die plek waar Hy oorwinning behaal het en waar Hy verhoog is. Vir gewone gelowiges was die identifikasie via hierdie fees met 'n verhoogde Oorwinnaar aan die kruis. Later onder die invloed van Bernardus en Fransiskus het sake geskuif vanaf die gekruisigde Christus as oorwinnaar oor die dood, na die lydende aardse Christus wat aan die kruis gesterf het. Die identifikasie is nou veel eerder met 'n lydende Jesus as met die Oorwinnaar in die Laat-Middeleeue (cf. Van Tongeren, 1995: 270, asook Barnard, 2004). In die periode waarop hierdie deel van die artikel fokus, die vroeë Middeleeue, is dit egter steeds die gedagte van oorwinning en 'n verhewe bykans onbereikbare God en Christus en nog nie die vroomheid van die Man van Smarte soos Wegman (1991:171) die vroomheid van die latere Middeleeue tipeer nie.

Teologiese gespreke sou ons kon sê dat God dus in die ervaring van gelowiges ver en moeilik bereikbaar was en dat rituele daarvoor moes kompenseer. Rituele rakende relikwieë en heiliges was deurentyd pogings om God nader aan die mense te bring en om sy teenwoordigheid beter te beleef. Keith Pecklers skryf oor hierdie periode en merk op, "God was considered by many to be too far removed from normal, human experience. Mary and the saints, on the other hand, were far more accessible" (Pecklers, 2003:143). So byvoorbeeld het sekere heiliges ook mettertyd medies begin spesialiseer in byvoorbeeld oogprobleme of rugpy. Populêre devosies of liturgiese vieringe van gelowiges buite die kerkgeboue en amptelike voorgeskrewe liturgie, soos met die stukkie kruis, was pogings van gelowiges om op 'n ietwat minder verwyderde vlak met God te kommunikeer, om te soek na waar hulle 'n genadige God kan vind, selfs al sou dit behels dat die ruimte buite die kerkgebou betree moes word in hierdie soeke. Daar was selfs wat genoem was pia furta of heilige diefstal van relieke as pogings om deur middel van hierdie voorwerpe nader aan God te kon kom. Martin Stringer (2005:150-154) praat in hierdie verband van die demotiese diskoers wat in die laat-Middeleeue ontstaan het as reaksie op die belewenis in die vroeë Middeleeue. Hiermee bedoel Stringer dat die kerkvolk, die gewone lidmate, as gevolg van die magswanbalans wat oorheersend in die kerk in die hande van die geestelikes was, inklusief die liturgie (hegemoniese diskoers), hulle eie liturgiese rituele begin bedryf het. Hierdie vieringe van die gewone kerkvolk was pogings om los te kom van die oorheersing en om hulle eerlik uitdrukking te gee aan hulle eie geestelike behoeftes. Die kerk se reaksie was om dit te brandmerk as bygeloof, dit sodoende te verbied en gevolglik die mag te behou.

Sommige van die rituele wat in die verloop van die Middeleeue ontstaan het sou inderdaad

gesien kon word as oortredings van die tweede gebod van die tien gebooië (die beelde verbod), maar deurentyd oortredings wat verlang het om Jesus se grootste en eerste gebod na te kom. Dit was vorme van aanbidding wat spontaan ontwikkel het; rituele wat teen die heersende Godskonsepte van hulle tyd in dapper gesondig het. Sommige van hierdie rituele was ook voorbeelde van beswering. Daar was 'n ander wêreldbeeld en magte van buite was dikwels as bedreigend ervaar. Wegman (1991:165) gee in sy inleiding oor die Middeleeue as tydvak voorbeelde soos die pes en oorloë wat voorgekom het om van die vroeë Middeleeue 'n duistere tyd te maak. Op 'n soortgelyke wyse beskryf James White (1993:76-79) ook hierdie periode in die liturgiegeskiedenis.

Daar was verseker veel meer veranderlikes wat 'n rol gespeel het in mense se liturgiese belewenis en dit wat hulle beweeg het om te doen wat hulle gedoen het. Hier kan gedink word aan die radikale oorgang vanaf die Romeinse Ryk na die nuwe sosiale en politieke bestel van die vroeë Middeleeue (cf. Wegman, 1991), oorlog, armoede en peste wat bedreigend ingewerk het op gelowiges se bestaan en wat ook (deels deur) rituele besweer is. Die dogmatiese ontwikkelinge rakende die Skrif, die sakramente en dies meer het alles meegewerk om van die Middeleeue 'n onderskeie tydperk, ook binne die liturgiegeskiedenis, te maak. Verskeie van hierdie veranderlikes sou hier aan bod kon kom, maar die voorafgaande bespreking van die rol van rituele in die ervaring van God binne die kategorieë van afstand en nabyheid en die beswerende rol van rituele sal mee volstaan word.

In die volgende afdeling sal die oorbekende liturgiegeskiedenis van die verworping in die laat-Middeleeue gekenmerk deur die verkoop van aflate en wanpraktyke rakende die viering van die Mis en die Reformasie se reaksie asook latere liturgiese reaksies van die Konsilie van Trent gesystap word. Hierdie verkenning word verder geneem in die teenwoordige tyd in Suid-Afrika en die merkers van "handeling", "binne-buite" en van "kruise" bied weereens leiding.

DIE HEDENDAAGSE RITUELE LANDSKAP

In hierdie gedeelte word eerstens die rituele landskap van Suid-Afrika oorsigtelik beskrywend verken en daarna sal enkele vroeë geformuleer word.

Kruise op koppies en berge in SA

Is daar 'n dorp in die Wes-Kaap of Oos-Kaap wat nie vandag 'n kruis op 'n koppie naby die dorp het nie? Hier is foto's van twee kruise, die eerste buite Jansenville en die tweede by Unionsdale. Enkele ander dorpe waar daar ook kruise op koppies is, sluit o.a. in: Stellenbosch, Bellville,



George, Oudtshoorn, Sedgfield, Steytterville, en 'n deeglike ondersoek sal aantoon dat hierdie lys veel langer is. So byvoorbeeld is daar ook 'n kruis op Naval Hill in Bloemfontein en op Tygerberg in Kaapstad en nog vele ander stede en dorpe dwars oor Suid-Afrika. In die dag is die kruise gewoonlik goed sigbaar en in sommige gevalle, byvoorbeeld die kruis op Pappagaaienberg in Stellenbosch en die kruis teen die hange van die Outeniquaberge by George, word dit verder ook in die aand verlig. Gesprekke met mense van hierdie dorpe toon

ook soms verhale wat saam met hierdie kruise loop, byvoorbeeld in George word vertel dat die kruis deur 'n plaaslike besigheidsvrou geborg is nadat haar kind op 'n besondere/wonderlike



wyse genees is. Deeglike studie is egter nodig om aan te toon óf en indien wel in hoeverre hierdie verhale 'n algemene voorkoms het. Saam hiermee is verdere navorsing ook nodig om uit te vind wie of watter kerklike denominasies oorwegend verantwoordelik is vir die oprig van hierdie kruise, asook die motiewe daaragter.

Kruis op Stellenboschberg met klippe

Teen Stellenboschberg, net agter die dam by Coetzenburg, is 'n groot houtkruis opgerig. Rondom



die kruis is ook klippe gepak met boodskappe daarop geskryf. Die boodskappe is meestal gebede of ander godsdienstige woorde wat 'n duidelike bewys is dat daar aktiewe godsdienstige ritualisering rondom hierdie kruis plaasvind. Kruise en gepaardgaande ritualisering kom egter nie net voor op of teen die hange van berge en koppies nie.

Kruise langs paaie na ongelukstonele

Die verskynsel dat kruise langs ons land se paaie geplant word en versier word met ander



rituele voorwerpe soos blomme is deesdae 'n algemene en bekende gesig. Hierdie is 'n bekende en ook redelik omstrede voorbeeld van ritualiteit. Veral na 'n noodlottige ongeluk word kruise, blomme, of bordjies opgerig op die plek waar die persoon oorlede is. Een webwerf wat hieraan gewy is, stel dit so: "Roadside memorials are erected by people who are searching for more meaningful ways to express their grief and spirituality, outside the confines of religious institutions, during their most vulnerable moments in life. This website is dedicated to those people, and the memorials they erect so that they can grieve, remember, teach, and heal." <http://www.roadsidememorials.ca/>

Boer 'Genocide'

Noord van Pietersburg in die provinsie Limpopo het mense die inisiatief geneem om kruise in die buitelig op te rig ter nagedagtenis aan diegene wat in plaasmoorde omgekom het. En gedurende April 2010 was variasies op hierdie tema dikwels sigbaar in Suid-Afrikaanse dagblaaië na die moord op die AWB leier Eugene Terreblanche. Net soos die kruise by die plekke waar motorongelukke plaasgevind het, het hierdie kruise duidelik ook 'n pastorale kant as simboliese uitdrukking van rou emosies. In die lig van iemand soos Gerard Lukken (1999:66-67) se beskrywing van die beswerende dimensie van rituele, sou die vraag kon ontstaan of daar nie hier ook so 'n beswerende dimensie teenwoordig is nie? Laasgenoemde vermoede kan egter alleen deur aanvullende kwalitatiewe liturgiese navorsing vasgestel word waardeur die toe-eiening van hierdie kruise deur die kruisplanters en besoekers van die terrein vasgestel word.



Kruise na rampe

Dikwels word kruise ook opgerig nadat 'n groter ramp iewers plaasgevind het. Post *et al* (2003:215-226) toon foto's van sulke kruise en meegaande voorwerpe en aktiwiteite soos rituele in die boek *Disaster Ritual*. Hierdie is 'n foto van 'n vlekvrystaal kruis wat opgerig is na aanleiding van 'n vliegarampe by Erebus in Antarktika



Kruise op die internet

In sy boek *Liturgie voorbij de Liturgiese Beweging* gee Marcel Barnard (2006) interessante voorbeelde van liturgie of ritualisering op die internet. Hy bied voorbeelde van digitale altare en virtuele begraafplase. 'n Mens hoef ook nie lank op die internet as ruimte buite om die tradisionele kerkgebou te soek om kruise teë te kom wat funksioneer binne 'n soort aanbiddingskonteks nie.⁷ Ook hier word die ritualisering dus in nuwe of ander ruimtes uitgevoer as binne die tradisionele kerklike plasinge.

Tot dusver is daar in die beskrywing gehou by aanbiddingsvorme wat in die buitelig of in ruimtes soos die kuberruimte waargeneem kan word en kruise insluit. Om die beskrywende verkenning en die basiese vraag "wat gaan aan?" ook effens oper te gooi en ter wille van meer volledigheid met betrekking tot nuwer en opkomende rituele, kan ook gedink word aan ander rituele wat deesdae in gewildheid toeneem.

Pelgrimstogte

'n Eerste eue-oue ritueel is die herontdekking van en toenemende gewildheid van pelgrimstogte. Hoeveel (vermoënde) Suid-Afrikaners alleen lê nie jaarliks die pelgrimstog na Santiago de Compostella in Spanje af nie? Hier sou die talle toere na Israel, Egipte en Turkye wat jaarliks gereël word om die lande van die Bybel te besoek ook as 'n voorbeeld kon dien as 'n soort pelgrimstog. Laasgenoemde reise is voorbeelde van wat 'n voortsetting is van een van die gewildste pelgrimsroetes in die Vroeë Middeleeue, naamlik na die sogenaamde Heilige Land in die algemeen en na Jerusalem in die besonder. In Kaapstad word daar op gedurende

⁷ Neem as voorbeeld hierdie sogenaamde gebed met 'n "flash" by <http://www.theprayergarden.com/flash.htm>

Groot Lydensweek elke jaar 'n bedevaart of pelgrimstog aflê vanaf St. Mark's in Distrik Ses na die Anglikaanse katedraal, St. George's, in die middestad. Die uitnodiging vir hierdie gebeurtenis op 31 Maart 2010 lui: "A Holy Week Pilgrimage of reflection on the journey of Jesus to the Cross and the suffering within our city. Please join our reflective walk through the streets of Cape Town."

Die Tutu-Instituut vir Gebed en Bedevaart reël ook pelgrimstogte en hieronder is die program van hierdie instituut se voorgestelde pelgrimstog van vier dae in Suid-Afrika:

PILGRIMAGE Itinerary (subject to change)

DAY 1 – Registration and Orientation

DAY 2 – Visit historic Robben Island Prison where Nelson Mandela and other political prisoners were incarcerated. A scenic drive will be taken and end at a game lodge for an overnight safari experience.

DAY 3 – An early morning game drive followed by breakfast at the game lodge before return to Cape Town. Explore the District Six museum. A community built site that retells the story of one area demolished by the apartheid government.

DAY 4 – Experience Sunday worship with a congregation in one of the black townships. Enjoy a panoramic view of Cape Town from Table Mountain. Lunch and a closing ceremony mark the end of this mini pilgrimage.

Hierdie opkomende rituele repertoire is ook al vir 'n geruime tyd in ander lande die voorwerp van liturgiese navorsing. Hier kan gedink word aan werke soos *The Modern Pilgrim*, *Op Bedevaart in Nederland en Wonderlijke Ontmoetingen...* om enkele te noem. Oor die pelgrimstog na Santiago de Compostella skryf Herman Vuijsje (2001:141-142) "Meer dan ooit is de Santiago-pelgrimage een persoonlike onderneming geworden". Hy gaan voort en vergelyk die hedendaagse oplewing met die gewildheid van die roete tydens die Middeleeue. In die Middeleeue het die stap van die roete verligting gebring van al die onsekerhede van die lewe, intussen het die moderne mens volgens Vuijsje veel meer sekerhede gekry en is ons meesters van ons eie bestaan (Vuijsje, 2001: 142). Vandag is die gewildheid van hierdie roete volgens hom te wyte aan die ekonomiese voorspoed en die aantal keuse moontlikhede wat mense mee moet saamleef. "Wat hij ons nu te bieden heeft is niet meer een zweem van zekerheid, maar een gevoel van vrijheid. Vrijwaren van een teveel aan keuzen, en bevrijding van een teveel aan gedachten" (Vuijsje, 2001:142).

Die Instituut vir Versoening en Geregtheid stel in 'n onlangse publikasie ook pelgrimstogte voor na plekke waar wandade tydens die vorige bedeling plaasgevind het, dat geestelike leiers daar die mense help om heling by die plek te soek (cf. IJR, 2006:45).

Stille togte, 'Boom vir die Lewe'-dag, 'n 'Allesiele' wedloop, labarinte

Stille togte as verskynsel is 'n onderwerp waarvoor Paul Post al redelik navorsing gedoen het. Veral na geweldpleging waarin 'n persoon dood is, word stille togte daarna en as reaksie daarop gereël. So 'n tog bestaan meestal uit mense wat loop na die plek waar die misdaad plaasgevind het en daar kerse en blomme en boodskappe neersit. Hierdie stille togte is nie so algemeen in Suid-Afrika nie en meer 'n verskynsel wat in ander lande soos Nederland voorkom.

Benewens Stille Togte het Post ook navorsing gedoen oor die opkomende en jong verskynsel genaamd die "Bomen voor het Leven"-dag. Tydens hierdie geleentheid word mense wat aan kanker oorlede is herdenk in 'n bos waar 'n herdenkingsdiens gehou word, gevolg deur die plant van bome in die bos (cf. Post, 2005:195-212). Post noem dan enkele emosies en motiewe wat mense beweeg om hieraan deel te neem. Hierdie emosies en motiewe sluit onder andere in: 'n behoefte om medelye uit te druk, 'n behoefte om te herdenk, mense wil beide negatiewe en positiewe gevoelens uitdruk, dan is daar 'n behoefte om deel te wees van iets groters in 'n redelik godsdiensdig bepaalde sin en laastens is daar die belangrikheid van ruimte of plek, mense wat

sê dat hulle gewoon daar móés wees of móés deelneem aan die ritueel (cf. Post, 2005:204-205).

’n Tweedelaaste eg Suid-Afrikaanse voorbeeld is ’n wedloop wat elke Oujaarsaand in Kaapstad georganiseer word en in Seepunt plaasvind. Hierdie wedloop word spesifiek gereël om oorledenes van die afgelope jaar se gedagtenis te gedenk. Hier is dus weereens ’n nuwe soort ritualisering wat sterk gekoppel is die laaste oorgang in die lewe van die mens, naamlik van lewe na dood.

’n Laaste opkomende vorm van ritualisering wat in ’n verkenning soos hierdie genoem moet word, is die toenemende gewildheid van labarinte. Hierdie labarinte kom veral in die buitelig voor en is ook soms gekoppel aan retraitsentra.

VOORLOPIGE GEVOLGTREKKINGS

In die lig van hierdie oorsigtelike liturgie-historiese en aktuele beskrywing sal hier enkele vraende antwoorde as voorlopige gevolgtrekking geformuleer word. Die doel van hierdie voorlopige gedagtes is ’n poging om beter te verstaan, maar voordat ’n verskynsel beter verstaan kan word, is ’n beskrywing noodsaaklik. Om Osmer se taal te gebruik – nou dat ons ’n beskrywing het van iets wat aangaan moet ons volgende vraag tereg wees waarom dit aan die gang is? Daarom is die hoop dat hierdie beskrywing ten dienste kan wees van ’n beter verstaan van wat op ’n ritueel-liturgiese vlak aan die gebeur is en ’n beter verstaan kan weer ten dienste staan van die ontwerp van vierings in die toekoms om sodoende die reeds genoemde prakties-teologiese kring te voltooi. Daarom word hier afgesluit met enkele vraende opmerkings oor die motiewe wat agter hierdie bewegings op die rituele landskap sit:

- Dit is uiteraard nie moontlik of verantwoordelik om twee heeltemal verskillende historiese periodes met mekaar te vergelyk nie. Die beskrywings laat egter die vraag ontstaan of die verskuiwing in die ruimtelike plasing van Middeleeuse rituele, veral ook soos wat dit stelselmatig toegeneem het vanaf die vroeë- na die laat-Middeleeue, nie ook bespeur kan word in die aktuele beskrywing van die rituele landskap in Suid-Afrika nie? Is daar nie sprake vandag in Suid-Afrika van ’n subtile beweging van binne na buite met betrekking tot vierings nie? ’n Beweging na nuwe ruimtes in die opelug in die natuur, in die opelug in die stad of ’n dorp, in die kuberruimte, op ’n heuwel of langs ’n snelweg, maar telkens ’n uitbeweeg vanuit tradisionele ruimtes na buite. Ruimte is dus hier ’n kern kategorie om wat aan die gebeur is te beskryf in ’n poging om dit te verstaan, en dan spesifiek ook die oorsteek van ’n grens, ’n drempel, om ander ruimtes te betree. Die konsep liminaliteit resoneer hier in die agtergrond as ’n belangrike konsep vir die verstaan van liturgie in ons dag en in die toekoms (cf. veral Barnard, 2010 en ook Wepener, 2009:74-78).
- Die wyse waarop ruimte hanteer word, kan verder hier as soekend beskryf word. Dit wil voorkom asof dit ’n soeke is na nuwe (“oper”, “vryer”, “sagter” meer “betekenisvolle”) ruimtes. Is hierdie uitbeweeg en vryer gebruik van ruimte alleen net ’n voortsetting van ’n reeds bestaande beweging waarvan die afbreek van kansels in kerkgebou miskien ’n voorloper was? En sou dit dan ook iets te make hê met die idee van mag, soos die magsoorheersing deur die geestelikes in die vroeë Middeleeue en die gewone gelowiges se reaksie daarop deur middel van ’n demotiese diskoers (bygeloof!) die magsverspreiding teë te werk (waarvan die Reformasie die uiteinde was) (cf. Stringer, 2005:151). Die vermoede is dat hierdie nuwere tendense ’n soort soeke na vryheid is. Vuijsje (2001:139) skryf na aanleiding van die pelgrimstog na Santiago de Compostella, “Hoe minder je meeneemt, letterlijk en figuurlijk, hoe meer vrijheid de deel zal zijn”. Sommige van hierdie nuwe vierings is miskien pogings tot vryheid, pogings om die geestelike reis op aarde ligter te maak en minder (dogmatiese-, kerkregtelike- en ander teologiese bagasie) saam te

neem op die reis.

- Is daar in hierdie waarneembare proses ook sprake is van toenemende individualisering? Elke mens het toenemend sy/haar eie godsdienstige oortuigings wat die besonderhede van hul Christenskap definieër en al meer word die behoefte om dit in vryheid liturgies uitdrukking te gee ook beoefen. Post (2003:78) wys tereg daarop dat die ideaal binne die Liturgiewetenskap die van “aktiewe deelname” deur die hele gemeenskap is, alhoewel sy eie bestudering van ritueel-liturgiese bewegings daarop dui dat baie van die opkomende rituele repertoires meer individueel gerig is.
- Binne hierdie nuwe opkomende rituele is daar soms meer ruimte vir verstaanbaarheid en toeganklikheid, vir ’n direkte aansluiting by die omringende kultuur en gevolglik ook vir persoonlike belewenis, vir emosie en empatie (cf Post, 2006:118). Om ter nagedagtenis van ’n gestorwe geliefde op die promenade in Seepunt op Oujaarsaand te draf is ’n belewenis wat heelwat verskil van die belewenis wat deelname aan ’n hoogkerklike Allesiele-liturgie op ’n datum soos 1 November te weeg bring. Die binne-kerklike erediens en ander vieringe word dus miskien soms as kultuur-vreemd ervaar deur diegene wat daaraan deelneem en die nuwere rituele is miskien pogings om nouer direk by die kultuur aansluiting te vind.
- Nou gekoppel aan hierdie soeke vir ’n nouer aansluiting by die omringende omgewing en kultuur, wys Pecklers ook in sy bespreking van sogenaamde “popular devotion” op die belangrikheid van hierdie soort rituele vir armer mense. Volgens Pecklers (2003:148-150) is hierdie rituele juis meer toeganklik vir armer mense en toegankliker vir eenvoudiger mense en bemagtig dit hulle om ook op hulle eie outentieke wyse uitdrukking te gee aan hulle ervarings en hulle rol binne die kerk so kan bevestig. Vanuit die voorafgaande beskrywings sou hier ’n aansluiting by sosiale realiteite van die omringende konteks genoem kon word. Dit wil voorkom asof hierdie nuwere vieringe spesifiek op soek is na wyses om realiteite soos misdaad en geweld, padongelukke, rampe of ander lewensbedreigende realiteite te benoem.
- ’n Soeke na nabyheid in en deur die rituele, of nuwe pogings tot kommunikasie met God op ’n eie outentieke wyse aangesien die rituele of taal van die tradisionele rituele ruimtes van godsdienste nie meer akkuraat mense se belewenisse verwoord of ver-aksie nie, word ook vermoed. Hier is sprake van die spanning tussen immanensie en transendensie in die geloofsbelewenis van mense. Word God as te veraf beleef soos in die vroeë Middeleeue en kompenseer nuwere vorme van ritualisering vir hierdie ervaring? Of is dit dalk juis die teenoorgestelde, naamlik dat bestaande meer binne-kerklike rituele te swaar klem lê op immanensie en die nuwere vieringe eerder God se transendensie wil beklemtoon? Presies hoe hierdie aksente wel lê is baie moeilik aantoonbaar en empiriese navorsing is nodig om meer helderheid te bring.
- Verder is ook heelwat van die rituele moontlik beswerend van aard. Die ongelukstoneel of die misdaadtoneel word besweer deur ’n kruisplanting, soos byvoorbeeld die omstrede Boer ‘Genocide’. Saam hiermee sal dit interessant wees om te kan aantoon in watter mate die kruise op die koppies en berge nie moontlik ook simbole is wat in diens staan van sogenaamde ‘geestelike oorlogvoering’ wat in sommige Christelike denominasies beoefen word nie?
- Saam met die beswerende dimensie is daar by sommiges dalk ook sprake van ’n terapeutiese of ’n pastorale dimensie, soos byvoorbeeld die kruise langs die paaie. Is hierdie rituele gewoon net bykomend, of bestaan hulle omdat die kerk se pastorale aanbod in hierdie verband as ontoereikend ervaar word? In aansluiting by hierdie punt kan genoem word dat Stringer die diskoers van hierdie periode in die liturgiegeskiedenis

tot en met die jaar 600 AD, 'n periode wat 'n groot deel van die historiese periode wat in hierdie artikel behandel is insluit, tipeer as "the Christianization of public space" (cf. Stringer, 2005: hoofstuk 2). Sou iets hiervan ook waar wees in Suid-Afrika vandag, naamlik dat daar binne 'n relatief nuwe liberale demokrasie 'n behoefte ontstaan om die publieke ruimtes te verchristelik deur middel van kruise op koppies en ander sigbare Christelike rituele en simbole buite tradisionele Christelike ruimtes soos kerkgeboue?

- 'n Laaste vraende opmerking hier is of die huidige Suid-Afrikaanse rituele landskap nie 'n landskap is wat, indien 'n mens dit fyner met 'n ritueel-liturgiese lens bekyk, 'n ruimte is waar die toekoms van die liturgie van hoofstroomkerke alreeds beoefen word nie? Is dit moontlik dat hierdie perifere vieringe as 'n soort seismograaf kan dien vir dit wat in die toekoms miskien nog meer algemeen kan word? Ten einde hierdie vraag goed te kan beantwoord en verder te kan beweeg as blote spekulasie, is ritueel-liturgiese navorsing wat aan hierdie opkomende randverskynsels aandag gee noodsaaklik.

TEN SLOTTE

In sy boek *Rituelen in oervloed* haal Gerard Lukken (1994:98) Nijk se hipotese aan oor hoe rituele ontstaan:

"According to his hypothesis, rites arose in the first instance from no other cause than the consciousness of a lacunae, a hiatus, an undefined realization of 'having-to-act-without-knowing-how'. This realization contained within itself the want of 'something' that would make the action worthwhile. A second moment must have followed this realization, because it is clear that one is not brought to action simply by the feeling of 'having-to-act-without-knowing-how'. The only thing one can initially do is, to do something, experimentally. That is the only way in which one can determine how to act meaningfully, by doing something to discover which act replaces the realization of 'having-to-act-without-knowing-how' with the realization of 'this is it'. Evidently individuals and peoples have been able to find such actions, into which they packed their deepest reality. And evidently the realization that 'this is it', or 'this is the ultimate' or 'this is ultimately Him' was so radical that they have repeated these actions with great devotion. Thus rites arose."

In die lig van Nijk se hipotese kan tereg gevra word of die waarnemings wat in hierdie artikel beskryf word in die verlede en hede nie beskrywings van soekes is vanweë 'n 'having to act without knowing how'? En die uitdaging aan Rituele- en Liturgiese Studies as 'n vakgebied in Suid-Afrika is meer navorsing in hierdie verband sodat hierdie liturgiewetenskaplike braakland beter verstaan kan word en die vakgebied op 'n verantwoordelike wyse kan help met die vind van 'this is it'.

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A discussion about difficulties of university education for Korean missionary children

ABSTRACT

In this article, "a discussion about university education for Korean missionary children", the researcher describes the purpose of education for Korean missionary children and their issues of university entrance. The most significant problem encountered by Korean missionary children is identity. Regarding this, the Korea World Missions Association (KWMA) defined the purpose of education for Korean missionary children to be citizens of God, citizens of the world, and citizens of Korea. Since the definition was proclaimed, mission agencies and missionaries in Korea stimulate Korean missionary children to enter university in Korea, in terms of establishing these identities. Since Korea expended special admission allowances for university entrance in 1997 to missionary children, a tendency has arisen that Korean missionary children changed from a Western to a Korean college/university (Back 2007:1). However, the system of special admission allowance has recently been complicated and this system may be more stringent in future. This new attitude towards the special admission allowance for university entrance will influence Korean missionary children in future. Hence, Korean missionary parents and mission agencies need to be open minded instead of persisting in preconceived ideas concerning university education. Personal character and preference of college/university options must be seriously considered, as they see the idea of 'one-size-fits' is not appropriate for all. Alternative options are needed to offer to Korean missionary children for their university education.

1. INTRODUCTION

In this study, the purpose of education for Korean missionary children and their issues of university entrance will be discussed.

According to Hale (2003:13), many mission agencies have discovered that the dilemma of the education of missionary children almost always tops the list of problems incurred on the mission field. A proper investigation established that the most important issue missionary parents are faced with concerns the educational needs of their children on the mission field. Directors of mission agencies find themselves faced with resignations and requests for reassignment, all too often due to this issue (Kim in Park 1999:55).

Due to the fact that the number of Korean missionary children has rapidly increased since 1980, the need to reassess the educational requirements of Korean missionary children becomes imminent (Kwon 2006:4). Korean missionary parents experience more and more tension regarding their children's education. The most important issue Korean missionary parents are faced with, concerns the educational needs of their children on the field (Kim 1999:55).

2. THE TRADITIONAL WAY TO EDUCATE KOREAN MISSIONARY CHILDREN

2.1 The historical approach

The history of Korean missionaries abroad is not a long one (Oh 2008:21). Korean missionaries, having little previous experience, often have difficulty in deciding how to raise their children. They also have difficulty to know the educational options available and which to choose. In general, before going to the mission field, many Korean missionaries are often unprepared to make decisions concerning how they will educate their children (Park 1999:35). According to Jung (1999:35), Korean missionary parents were often not serious about the educational system and options for their children. Rather, they send their children to MK/International schools without first considering the impact of these institutions on their children (Back 2007:2). There are various reasons¹ Korean parents prefer to send their children to MK/International schools. However, Chan (1998:331) discovered that all MK/International schools are mainly based on the Western education system, are mostly English speaking and supported by Western teachers and staff. This causes several problems for the Korean missionary children regarding their education (Park 1999:35).

2.2 The rapid increase of Korean missionary children

“Since 1980 the missionary movement in Korea continues to grow faster than any other national missionary movement in the world” (Oh 2008:21). In 1979 there were 93 Korean missionaries abroad; by 2006 there were 14,905 Korean missionaries abroad² and 174 mission agencies serving in 168 countries (Kim 2007.10.8). According to the Korea World Missions Association (KWMA), there were 16,616 Korean missionaries in 2007 (Cha 2007). This number is conservative, for it includes only missionaries belonging to mission agencies, not independent missionaries sent directly by a local church. Nor does it include workers who have committed themselves to missionary service for less than two years (Moon 2007). As the number of Korean missionaries rapidly increased from 1980³, the number of Korean missionary children naturally increased (Park 1999:34). Today, there are up to 12,000 Korean missionary children around the world (Jung 2008.8.13). Of these, approximately 60% are in schools on the mission fields and 40-50% are at MK/International schools (Back 2007:1).

3. THE PURPOSE OF EDUCATION FOR KOREAN MISSIONARY CHILDREN

As Korean missionary children grow older, and the number of them increases, parents experience more and more tension. Therefore, it is necessary to understand, support and assist missionary children in their educational endeavours (Park 1999:34). Korean missionary children at MK/International schools face problems concerning their education, such as differences in educational values, deriving from different social and cultural milieus, between the westernized educational school system and the Korean school system. Several problems tend to crop up, such

1 These schools have advantages such as academically high standards, excellent facilities and equipment, enrichment and specialized programs. One of the greatest advantages of these schools is the diversity of the backgrounds of the students. Children develop relationships with peers from many different nationalities. These friendships open the door to knowledge and understanding of a much larger worldview (Pollock & Van Reken 2001:220-221).

2 There were approximately 5,000 Korean missionaries in 1999 (Korean MK Handbook 1999: 34), over 10,000 Korean missionaries in 2004 (Mission Journal 2004:31).

3 The turning point of the mission movement of the Korean church occurred during the 1980s (Oh 2008:43).

as the cultural adjustment on the parts of both the international school and the student, due to poor preparation for Korean higher education (Kwon 2006:3). Moreover, these schools have the purposes to 'bring up excellent American citizens' and 'help adjust into the American society in a natural way after graduation of college/university in America' (Lee 2007). Furthermore, in the past most of the Korean missionary children went to America and other Western countries for university education, while their life in the Western countries shaped their identity and they became westernized. Because of this, Korean missionary children found it difficult to return and settle in Korea, and this affects their relationships with their parents and relatives (Jung 1999:32).

Therefore, in contrast to their attitude in the past, mission agencies and missionaries in Korea have become more serious to concern about how they can educate Korean missionary children in terms of the formulation of their identities (Park 1999:9). Korean missionary children have little sense of their own personal identity, because they experienced much cultural or national confusion, while they were growing up. They often struggle with the answering of questions like 'who they are', 'where they are going' and 'where do I fit or belong' (Park 1999:12-13).

It is very important that Korean missionary children establish their identities and understands who they are (Park 1999:92). With this knowledge they may have the power to adjust to Korea and other countries (Park 1992:93).

Thus, in 1993 KWMA defined the purpose of education for Korean missionary children to be citizens of God, citizens of the world, and citizens of Korea. Since the definition was proclaimed by mission agencies and missionaries in Korea, they have tried to help Korean missionary children to establish these identities. Unlike the past, Korean missionaries have to consider where their children will live permanently in the future before making a decision as to how to educate their children. Once this has been decided upon, parents need to make a correct long term plan with a balance between the reality and the ideal, their financial position, which citizenship their children will have, and the subsequent need for their future (Jung 1999:29). In deciding where their children will go for college/university, the preparation at high school level is of importance.

4. REASONS FOR PROVIDING FOR THE EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF KOREAN MISSIONARY CHILDREN

4.1 The social atmosphere of education in Korea and its influence upon Korean missionary families

Most Korean missionary parents have high expectations for their children's education because the social demands concerning education takes high priority in the thinking of the Korean people. They consider a high standard of education to be the way to success in the life of their children. Thus, Korean parents put all their efforts into educating their children to send them to top universities. The social atmosphere in Korea also influences Korean missionary parents and thus they tend to follow this tendency for their children's education on the mission field. This causes Korean missionary families to use a lot of energy for their children's education on the mission field (Park 2002:38). However, they are not freed from this issue.

The social atmosphere concerning education in Korea will be discussed in 4.2 in order to understand a high fervour for children's education of Korean missionaries.

4.2 The high fervour for children's education in Korea

One of the hottest issues in Korea is the transition process from secondary education to higher education. High school students must undergo severe competition to gain entrance to prestigious colleges and universities. They believe that enrolment in a top-notch institution is their best chance to succeed in Korean society (Kim 2004:6). In Korea, most parents believe that

educating their children is their most important responsibility. Because of this, they are willing to endure any amount of suffering in order to provide their children with an excellent education. Parents devote their time to helping their children and fully support them by finance. They put all their efforts into educating their children to send them to top universities (Weidman & Park 2000). The social atmosphere in Korea also influences Korean missionary parents and thus they tend to follow this tendency for their children's education on the mission field. Hence, most of the Korean missionary parents have high expectations for their children's education as they expect children to have a good academic career after graduating from university. They place a great value on education, expect good marks, and force their children to study hard in order to enter top universities in America, Korea or any other country (Park 2002:38).

4.3 Missionary children are a potential resource for the church

According to Pollock (1998:31) and Lim (2004:9), missionary work and the education of missionary children are inseparable. Between 9% and 35% of missionaries attrition worldwide was related to issues involving their children, especially educational issues. Problems and tensions in schools attended by children of missionaries⁴ affect the entire mission community and the parents' work is influenced (Bowers 1998:31). In future, many mission fields will be situated amongst "Unreached People⁵ groups", without proper education facilities for missionary children. Thus, effective provision for the educational needs of missionary children is one of the key issues to be addressed before dispatching missionaries (Park 1999:56). The experience of missionaries' children abroad will enhance their potential⁶ in various ways (Bowers 1998:31). All educational enterprises worldwide are influenced by globalization and internationalization with worldwide perspectives developing. Pollock (1998:31) says that every country in the world has made at least some effort in this regard. Multilingualism is an asset in many cities of the world and there is a growing interest in developing the leadership potential of young adult missionary children, growing up in the "third culture" of an expatriate community (Park 1999:39). The solution of the situation missionary children face is part of the larger task of the church. Ward (1998:17) quotes Hill (1998:245) in saying that "missionary children are a potential resource" for the church. Hill emphasized that the mission needs internationalists who have grasped the larger vision of a world for God, and discovered that there is no group of people who has more potential of becoming internationalists than missionary children and third culture kids (Bowers 1998:244,245). In reality, Pollock and his co-workers (1998:31) discovered that 25% of missionary children went back as missionaries, and 17% became career missionaries. Therefore mission agencies and churches need to care for missionary children with a view to their future impact on the world for the Lord (Bowers 1998:110).

5. THE ISSUES OF UNIVERSITY EDUCATION FOR KOREAN MISSIONARY CHILDREN BECOME MORE CONSIDERABLE

5.1 College/university education in the Western countries

Until the middle of the 1990s, many of the Korean missionary children lacked the ability to

4 Given prevailing conventions this study will refer to 'MK schools', rather than (but implying) schools attended by children of missionaries.

5 Unreached People is a group of people among which there is no indigenous community of believing Christians with adequate members and resources to evangelize them. <http://www.joshuaproject.net/definitions.hp#unreached>.

6 Eidse and Sichel (2004), Pollock and Van Reken (2001), and Bowers (1998) determined that missionary children have various advantages such as cultural exposure, ability to adapt and linguistic skills which is sought after in many cities in this world.

speak the Korean language because they did not use it while they were at the MK/international schools on the mission field. The children had no opportunity to learn the Korean language at school, and were not motivated to study it by themselves while English was taught academically and used each day at school (Back 2007:1). As a result of the difficulty of the Korean language most of the Korean missionary children chose a college/university in America and other Western countries where English is spoken as a first language. Moreover, the different education system, the college entrance system and its admissions policy in Korea were other obstacles in terms of entering college/university in Korea.⁷ Korean missionary children who graduate from MK/International schools on the mission field have advantages when entering college/university in America and/or in the Western countries. However, since the number of Korean missionary children rapidly increased (Kim 2007.10.8), and the number of college/university children has also increased (Jung 2008.8.13), the mission agencies and missionary parents in Korea have become more serious in their concerns about the problems that occurred at college/universities in the Western countries. For instance, they are: 1) the high cost of academic expense and boarding expense. Korean missionary parents face financial difficulties to support their children for university education in Western countries (Jae 2002:16). Recently it escalated with the stronger UK Pound and the US Dollar against the Korean Won. It affects the life of Korean missionary families and their ministry who have to use a large percentage of their available funds for their children's education (Back 2007:2), 2) the western culture shapes children's identities and they have become westernized and this causes tensions their relationship with their parents and family, 3) children have a lack of knowledge in the Korean language (Jung 1999:32). Because of this, Korean missionary children found it difficult to return and settle in Korea, and this affects their relationships with their parents and relatives. With this regard, the mission agencies and missionary parents in Korea stimulate Korean missionary children to enter college/university into Korea through the special admission allowance (Jae 2002:15).

5.2 The contemporary tendency for university entrance

Since Korea expended special admission allowances in 1997⁸ to missionary children, a tendency

7 The college entrance system and the college admissions policy in Korea has been affected considerably by social and political changes. Korean parents have an extreme desire for their children to receive higher education, especially from a prestigious college or university. Therefore, issues relating to college admissions policies easily attract public concern and this fact may explain why so many changes are constantly occurring in the college entrance process. Over the years, the Korean government has tended to increase its control over the student selection process. However, since the late 1980s, higher education institutions have recovered autonomy in selecting students. High schools have played an increasingly important role in this process because student records have been used as criterion for admission since 1981 (Kim, 2003b). At 110 colleges and universities, high school records account for 40% ~ 49% of the student selection process. High school records are important to entrance to colleges and universities.

8 Since 1997 special admission to universities in Korea has been available for the children of Korean embassies and Korean residents abroad. As the number of overseas Korean students are increasing, the object is to extend education at universities in Korea to educate Korean leaders as representatives overseas. 163 Universities (27 National universities and 136 Private universities) in Korea had admitted Korean overseas students in 2009 according to the special admission requirements. Universities are allowed to select up to 10% of their subject courses and up to 2 % of their entry students each year. Moreover, the universities have no number limit to select students who have completed the course of study in overseas for over 12 years. (Nho, C R 2002:9, pp.87-120)

There are two patterns of special admission. One is applied to children who complete the whole education system from primary to high school for 12 years. The other is applied to children who complete school for a certain number of years overseas. Each university has different rules for application for special admission. (The important recruitment outline for an overseas Korean and Foreigner, Korean Council for

has arisen that missionary children changed from a Western to a Korean college/university (Back 2007:1). Many changes have occurred to the university entrance of Korean missionary children. Korean missionary children prefer to enter universities in Korea through the special admission (Jae 2002:15). Korean missionary parents were burdened financially with the support of their children's higher university education in western countries like America and Britain (Jae 2002:16). It became more difficult as worldwide economic depression increased; Korean missionary children had to consider university education in Korea instead of in a western country. On the other hand, since the purpose of education for Korean missionary children established by KWMA, Korean missionary parents promote their children to enter university in Korea regarding formulate their identities (Park 1999:9). For this missionary parents consider it an advantage for their children to gain a better understanding of Korean society and culture by studying at a Korean university (Back 2007).

5.3 The special admission allowance

The special admission allowance was originally established in 1977 for the children of a Foreign Service Officers in order to give them an opportunity to enter top college/university in Korea. However, this was expended its application in 1997 for Korean children abroad due to fact that many of them go abroad with their parents for immigrate, employment and study. Some of the reasons that Korea expended this application are as follows: 1) to give opportunities of getting university education in Korea for Korean nationals abroad, 2) to foster global leadership for them, 3) to strengthen their national consciousness as Koreans (Nho 2002:89). For these reasons, Korean missionary children have more opportunities to enter universities in Korea. Yet, it is considerable that this system is still changeable and the entering top universities in Korea are not easy for Korean missionary children. Nevertheless, the mission agencies and missionary parents in Korea stimulate university entrance into Korea for its advantages.

6. THE ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF UNIVERSITY ENTRANCE INTO KOREA

6.1 Advantages

6.1.1 Establish identity

Kim (1999:77) defines the meaning of self-identity as that which is formed by connecting the past, the present, the environment one lives in and what will happen in the future to identify oneself as a 'unique self'. According to Kim (1999:79) self-identification does not suddenly happen in one day. Rather, it is formulated by taking a fixed way of life and the requirements within one's environment into consideration. The process of identifying oneself is affected by a variety of knowledge and experiences such as those, which include both personal ones, together with that of the community. Some of these start from the moment of birth and are affected by the society's cultural, historical, economical and educational factors and the world becomes broader in this way. There are various factors playing various roles in the constitution of an identity and stated below are particular elements indicated by Kim (1999:79-83) that fulfil a very important role in the development of a personal identity: culture, history, society, language, and nationality.

Since KWMA (1993) defined the purpose of education for Korean missionary children as to be citizens of God, citizens of the world, and citizens of Korea, mission agencies and missionaries

University Education, 2008:132)

in Korea have tried to help Korean missionary children to establish these identities through education. It is very important that Korean missionary children to understand who they are (Park 1999:92). With this knowledge they may have the power to adjust to Korea and other countries (Park 1992:93). This is essential for the purpose of re-entering Korea for further education and settling down to a new life.

6.1.2 Obtain a degree of fluency in the Korean language

Today there is a universal recognition of the importance of mother tongue education as well as of multilingualism. Languages are now regarded as an integral part of one's identity. This will have a greater impact on the education of missionary children in the globalized world (Ng 2007:1). According to Lloyd-Sidle and Lewis (2001:42), language is the basic tool of communication among people and is a very important symbol of identity for people, and mastering it is a sign of respect. They are able to obtain a degree of fluency in the Korean language while they trained at college/university in Korea.

6.1.3 Understand Korean society and culture

Besides language proficiency, they can have a close connection with the Korean culture and society while they trained at college/university in Korea (Park 1999:81,93,94). Cultural value may be realized and accomplished when a person enjoys the ideology, beliefs and value systems that are impressed in the culture (Park 1999:79). Thus, their life experiences at Korean universities will help them make wise choices when they want to settle in Korea in future.

6.1.4 Building a close relationship with people in Korea

Most of missionary children have no close relationships with their relatives in Korea while they are on the mission field, and they are able to develop close relationships with them during re-entry. Furthermore, they can build close relationships with friends and other people in Korea. Building a good relationship with Korean people will be valuable for them in future.

6.1.5 Preparation for military work for male children

To take a military work of over two and a half years is an obligation for Korean men, and thus male missionary children need to concern this before they take this work. In many cases, missionary children struggle with the military work and face difficulties, as they have grown up in a different culture and society, and have language problems. Regarding this, experience Korean culture and society at university will help them to adjust better at the military.

6.2 Disadvantages

However, many problems have been raised in terms of entering university in Korea as below.

6.2.1 Lack of information and of study materials for the preparation for university entrance in Korea

Because of the situation on mission field, Korean missionary children in general have many difficulties to start at university. In many cases, it is difficult to collect sufficient and/or correct information about universities in Korea and in other countries, making preparation for entrance examinations not easy on the mission field. For instance, they need to take TOFUL⁹ and/or TOEIC¹⁰ tests when preparing for entering Korean universities and take SAT¹¹ tests or other

9 TOFUL is a test of English as a foreign language.

10 TOEIC is a test of English for international communication.

11 Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) is required to apply college/university in North America. <http://www>.

external examinations for universities in American and/or the other western countries. But to find materials for the tests and prepare for the exams is not easy on the mission field. There are institutes that give lessons for these exams in Korea, but it is difficult for Korean missionary children to take a chance for this study because of the expensive cost of lessons and airfare. Therefore, children need to prepare for the exams by themselves.

6.2.2 A limited knowledge of the Korean language and of academic skills

Children face many difficulties when they enter university in Korea with a limited knowledge of the Korean language, a different education system, and lack of academic skills. Children whose Korean is insufficient may suffer in their studies because the lectures are mostly offered in Korean. Some are able to take a specific course in English at the universities, but this is unusual. Thus, some of the Korean missionary children fail in the universities in Korea because of their lack of knowledge of the Korean language and of academic skills. In general, academic ability of missionary children is not good enough in comparison with the other students who had studied at high school in Korea. Hence, Korean parents need to consider their children's academic level and help them to prepare certain academic skills in terms of entering universities in Korea. Different education system also causes them (Jung 1999:29).

6.2.3 The financial insufficiency and the separation from parents

The academic and boarding expenses at universities should be a burden for Korean missionary families due to concern the high living cost in Korea. Most children are separated from their parents for university education in Korea and struggle with accommodation during school holidays because of the financial insufficiency. Therefore, they stay at relatives' houses and/or at other places and feel very tired in this situation. Recently, the mission agencies and the churches in Korea establish accommodations for re-entry children, but they are not enough. They also need their parents' support during the first year of college to help them settle (Pollock & Van Reken 2001:188).

6.2.4 Re-entry stresses

In general, re-entry into Korea is hard for missionary children. Some fear leaving their host countries as they feel as if they are losing some important parts of them. This causes re-entry shock (Pollock & Van Reken 2001:249). They also have cultural shock and feel as though they are strangers in their home country (2001:250). Children who have entered university in Korea and settled there are still in the minority and seem to be at risk in a strange land. In many cases children fell into despair through their cultural shock at the universities and with the Korean society. They realize that children at universities pursue very different goals from what they expect. They are often distressed with the environment at the universities and sometimes they leave universities because of many problems. They struggle with their incapacity to adapt to the Korean culture and separation from their parents (Seong 2006:191). On the other hand, they struggle with children at university who experience prejudice against them as they have entered university through special admission. Therefore, they need intensive care by their parents and/or people who they can trust (Nho 2002:114). However, it is culturally difficult for Korean missionaries going back to Korea to support their children during their time of re-entry to adjust to university education, due to the fact that most of the churches and mission agencies in Korea do not have a good understanding of the missionary children's need of their parents' support at re-entry (Park 1999:63).

Pollock and Van Reken (2001:241) say that good re-entry adjustment is not an event, but it

is a process encompassing the life of the cross-cultural sojourner. The inputs of family, school and Christian community have structured the missionary children's perspective regarding God, as well as keys towards adjustment regarding him- or herself. If care is to be made available to all the missionary children, there must be a certain concentrated effort by parents and mission agencies to take initiative to prepare the way and encourage their children to take advantage of available services (2001:241).

Regarding this, mission agencies in Korea suggest some of the following guidelines towards helping missionary children at re-entry to the country of their new residence as below (Park 2007).

6.3 Effective ways to help Korean missionary children with re-entry

6.3.1 The role of missionary parents

- Help children to understand what they will be going through in the future. Parents need to discuss things about university education in Korea while their children are young for their understanding of their plans for the future.
- Help children develop positive self-esteems, strong faith in God, and emotional stability. Parents also need to consider their children's academic level and ability in the Korean language, and help them prepare certain skills for university education in Korea.
- Develop practical skills to adapt to the new home country's transport, currency, shopping, and geography.
- Take time to discuss certain information about the culture, social, political issues, mass media, sports and fashion of peer groups. Inform them and help them to get to know how to engage in proper relationships with elders, families and peers in Korea.

Pollock and Reken (2001: 254) also suggested that parents need to prepare some practical steps to help their children get through this process in a healthy rather than a harmful way. They emphasize, "it is the parents' responsibility to make sure their children are protected under their supervision" (2001:255).

6.3.2 The role of the mission agencies and the churches in Korea

- Prepare hostel for re-entry Korean missionary children

Many of Korean missionary children struggle with accommodation at re-entry. This is because the financial condition of missionary parents. Therefore, children face difficulties when getting settled in Korea, and especially finding a suitable accommodation. Beside the financial reason, they also need to get intensive care at the early stage of re-entry. Regarding this, they need accommodation and specific care by adults. There are few hostels¹² that offer accommodation to re-entry missionary children, but they are not enough for everyone. For this reason, some of the churches and mission agencies in Korea have concerned to establish more hostels for Korean young adult missionary children (Jung 2008.8.13).

- Providing mentoring and care system

In general, missionary children have good understand each other and like to build a close relationship with them. Recently MKNEST¹³ and the Han Dong Global University¹⁴ have started

12 For the past few years, some Korean churches and mission agencies have established hostels for Korean young adult missionary children who reenter Korea for education.

13 MKNEST is established based on the vision of Helping Korean missionary children through Networking, Educating, Supporting and Training ministry. (<http://www.mknest.org>)

14 There are regular meetings for Korean missionary children at Han Dong Global University and in Seoul.

regular meetings for Korean young adult missionary children to help each other (Park 1999:44). Moreover, they also need a good mentor to share their difficulties and for support. The mentor also needs to understand that part of the mentoring process is helping the children learn the basic survival skills for their home culture (Pollock & Van Reken 2001:253). Young adult missionary children indeed need guidance about their future such as employment, date and marriage. But it is difficult to find a good mentor and/or counsellor who can understand their specific situation. Yet, providing mentoring and care system is essential for young adult missionary children due to concern their age.

- Providing re-entry program

Attending a transition or re-entry program such as seminar and/or conference is often extremely helpful for many missionary children during re-entry. These programs with other missionary children help them realize they are not alone and are not weird (Pollock & Van Reken 2001:254). By this missionary children are able to understand their problems in a better way and to accept themselves more.

- Consider a counter plan for university education

Many Korean missionary parents face difficulties to finance their children's education. They need financial support not only for their salaries and work funds, but also for their children's education (Oh 2008:167). Their financial concerns were the main issue among the Korean missionaries in Southern Africa as shown in the results of Oh's research (2008:169). According to his statistics the most important personal problems among Korean missionaries were financial concerns.

Therefore, missionary parents need to make a counter plan for their children's university education while children are young. On the other hand, the churches and the mission agencies need to allow support to be raised for the education of members' children and make a strategy in terms of supporting them. Some mission agencies in Korea have a good support system for the educational expenses of their member's children. For instance, The Paul Mission International¹⁵ has a good support system for the education of their member's children to help with educational expenses by providing a loan up to university level. A good long-term goal for Korean churches and mission agencies will be to raise funds for an education subsidy to support the education of Korean missionary children.

7. CONCLUSION

As the history of Korean missionaries abroad lengthens and the number of Korean missionary children increases, Korean missionary parents experience more and more tension about their children's education. Most Korean missionary parents have high expectations for their children's education because the social demands concerning education takes high priority in the thinking of the Korean people (Kim 2004:6). The social atmosphere concerning education in Korea influences Korean missionary parents to have a high fervour for children's education.

Thus, they send their children to MK/International schools for excellent education, but this causes several problems for children (Park 1999:35). Hence, in 1993 KWMA defined the purpose of education for Korean missionary children to be citizens of God, citizens of the world, and citizens of Korea. Since the definition was proclaimed by mission agencies and missionaries in Korea, they have tried to help Korean missionary children to establish these identities. According to KWMA, it is very important that Korean missionary children need to understand who they are (Park 1999:92). With this knowledge they may have the power to adjust to Korea and other countries (Park 1992:93). Considering this, the mission agencies and missionaries in Korea stimulate Korean missionary children to have university education in Korea. Also since Korea

¹⁵ The Paul Mission International: www.bauri.org

expended special admission allowances in 1997 to missionary children, many changes have occurred to the university entrance for Korean missionary children. A tendency has arisen that Korean missionary children changed from a Western to a Korean college/university through the special admission allowance (Jae 2002:15).

In fact, many of Korean missionary children are afraid to return to Korea for college/university education because of its disadvantages and they argue that studying in America and/or in other Western countries have more advantages to develop broader thinking and a globalized perspective, to experience western culture and customs, and to get to know the people. They are critical with shaping their identities as citizens of God¹⁶ and citizens of the world¹⁷ is value rather than just shaping identity as citizens of Korea (KWMA also emphasized on this fact). Bosch (1993:457) asserts, "the church is the Body of Christ that can only be one". Thus, the church is a kind of "universal hermeneutical community, in which Christians and theologians from different lands check one another's cultural biases" (Hiebert 1985b:16 in Bosch 1993:457). Regarding this, the importance of shaping identity for missionary children is to be citizens of God beyond their identity of their home country, in order to understand diversity in terms of different culture and race.

In general, many missionary children often feel they are "citizens of the world" (Eldse & Sichel 2004:12), and "feeling at home anywhere" (2004:12) is enough to comfort them. Often the missionary children live with a sense of being "in the middle" (Bowers 1998:49) between home and host countries. They are touched by both and identify with both, yet without a sense of being owned or owning either one. Lim (2004:12) insists that growing up globally, they often enjoy an expanded worldview, but may lack a particular national identity. The identity of missionary children is a combination of all the cultural influences they make their own.

Therefore, it is not obligatory for Korean missionary children to enter Korea for their university education. There should be more opportunities to experience Korean society and culture in the future. On the other hand, some missionary children prefer to go to college/university on the mission field, to stay with their parents.

Up until now, there are only few examples of Korean missionary children who have entered universities in Korea. There is another problem that a large number of Korean people criticize the special admission allowance. They feel this to be preferential treatment. The system of special admission allowance for university entrance has recently been complicated and this system may be more stringent in future. This new attitude towards the special admission allowance for university entrance will influence Korean missionary children in future. Hence, it is important that personal character and preference of college/university options must be seriously considered, as they see the idea of 'one-size-fits' is not appropriate for all. Korean missionary parents and mission agencies need to be open minded instead of persisting in preconceived ideas concerning university education. Alternative options need to be offered to Korean missionary children for their university education.

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KEY WORDS

Korean missionary children
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TREFWOORDE

Universiteitsopleiding
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Sendingveld
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Repliek

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1. Truth or reconciliation? A response to Theo de Wit

2. Facing evil: theological reflections

Truth or reconciliation? A response to Theo de Wit

ABSTRACT

In my response to Theo de Wit's paper, I first set out what I consider to be his most important claims about the relationship between evil and narrativity, before asking four questions about some of the implications of these claims: (1) Are we to presume that there is an absolute choice between reconciliation and a full recounting of evil, so that the latter would necessarily preclude the former? (2) Assuming that we are indeed faced with such a choice, what is proper response to it? (3) Is there any hope of a trustworthy account of evil at all, given that deception seems to be endemic in every such account? and (4) What status should we accord to victimhood in general and victims' narratives in particular?

This article is a response to Theo de Wit's argument in "The adornment of evil. Narrativity, evil, reconciliation". I will begin by saying what I take De Wit's paper to be about – or at least, what I consider to be the most important claims that make up his argument – before raising four specific questions that result from these claims.

In the most general terms, De Wit's topic is the problem of evil – particularly, how we are to think and talk about evil, and how we are to live with one another and ourselves in its aftermath.

To think and talk about evil is not merely to acknowledge that it exists. Rather, it involves telling the story of evil deeds in one form or another, putting them into a narrative, giving an *account* of them.

But this is precisely where the difficulty arises, for a coherent narrative of evil always runs the risk of putting evil in its place, so to speak – which is to say, making it more understandable, and hence more palatable to us, easier to live with, perhaps even easier to bear. A narrative account of evil, in so far as it presents even the greatest atrocities as subject to reasons, situated within a particular time, related to particular circumstances, may all too easily diminish or explain away the actual iniquity of these deeds and events.

This seems to me to lie at the heart of De Wit's concern: How can we understand evil, come to grips with it, tell the story of evil having been done, without thereby diminishing it, or reconciling ourselves to it – in other words, without making it somehow *less* evil?

The problem is compounded by the fact that, where the evil is our own, we are inclined towards self-deception. That is to say, we tend to tell the story of our own misdeeds in such a way as to cast them in a better light, so that they appear – to others and to ourselves – as having been excused and justified from the beginning.

So, this is the difficulty: On the one hand, any attempt to understand evil, to come to grips with it, involves a narrative account of how it has come to be. On the other hand, in so far as such narratives can make evil all-too-understandable, even justified, they often are barriers to a proper confrontation with actual evil. Paradoxically, then, the attempt to understand the phenomenon of evil can prevent the very understanding it seeks.

This difficulty is most visibly present in the realm of politics, where the problem of evil is not merely a matter of the heart, but a matter of how we live with one another in the world. De Wit then goes on to examine three narratives of evil, each of which has served either to explain and justify certain political misdeeds, or to reconcile us to them.

The first is a backward-looking narrative, where misdeeds in the present are cast in the vocabulary of the great and monumental deeds of the past – as an extension of the founding violence of those who originally established a particular nation or political order.

The second is a forward-looking narrative, where atrocities committed towards certain inhabitants of a state are presented as part of a world-historical process that will ultimately culminate in the reign of justice. So, evil now or in the past, but for the sake of a future without evil.

The third example is more complicated, and at the same time more pertinent to us in this country. It involves a seemingly more honest attempt to confront past evil by allowing perpetrators *and* victims to tell of what was done to them and by them, and to do so in a public forum. This is of course the model of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Unlike in the first two examples, the purpose of the TRC – on the face of it – was not to justify, excuse, or explain away political misdeeds, either by casting them in the vocabulary of past greatness or by appealing to a world-historical process. In this case, the victims had a voice, and could tell us what really happened to them, while evildoers had an incentive to tell the truth about their deeds, since this would qualify them for amnesty.

Nevertheless, as De Wit points out, the TRC process did serve a purpose beyond merely coming to grips with past evil, which was to effect political reconciliation. This is already evident from the founding law of the TRC, which is known as the *Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act*. From its inception, telling the truth about evil was to be instrumental in reconciliation and nation building. The truth shall set you free, as Desmond Tutu so often said to those who appeared before the commission: free from the burden of past evil-doing or suffering, and therefore free to sincerely embrace, unite, reconcile with one's fellow citizens, be they former perpetrators or victims.

If I read De Wit correctly, he is suggesting that this reconciliation has been at best premature and at worst, an illusion, in so far as it was based on deception. Given that the accounts of evil doing before the TRC were made to serve a new political building project, individual narratives of evil did not stand for what they were. They were always to be understood against the background imperative to reconcile. For this reason, there was selective pressure to allow, disseminate and remember – as well as to question and probe – only those accounts that did in fact serve this imperative. Hence certain evils and atrocities were spoken into silence; others never got a hearing.

The TRC, then, was an attempt to confront past evil in order to effect reconciliation, but it depended on deception regarding some of the very evils that made reconciliation necessary in the first place. If one wanted to draw a very bleak conclusion from De Wit's argument, it would be that the TRC, for all its attempts to come to grips with the misdeeds of the past, brought neither justice for the victims nor reconciliation for the country at large.

Assuming I have understood the argument correctly, let me now move on to some of the questions called up by De Wit's analysis of the link between evil, narrativity and deception.

My first question is whether we should take the failure of justice and reconciliation in the aftermath of political evil to be inevitable. It seems to me – at least in the way De Wit has portrayed the problem – that we are confronted here by an insurmountable either/or: *Either* we do justice to the victims by recounting the evil that was done in its fullness and severity, *or* we agree to forget, to overlook or to suppress at least some of the worst things that were done – for the sake of reconciliation. Or is there a third way? A way of coming to grips with past evil without deception, and yet, somehow still achieving reconciliation? What would be the conditions for the realization of such a possibility?

Secondly, given the choice between an unmitigated recounting of evil on the one hand,

and reconciliation – even sham reconciliation – on the other, which is better? Is honesty about evil, assuming that it is possible, necessarily preferable to hypocrisy – especially in the political domain?

This leads to my third question, which really follows from the first two, but now directed at De Wit's argument as a whole: Is there any hope of a trustworthy account of evil at all, given that deception seems to be endemic in every such account? How are we to think and talk about evil so that we may understand it, without this involving either self-deception or mitigation?

One answer to this question might be: Let the victims speak. But, and this is my fourth and last question, why would we assume that victimhood is a guarantee against self-deception? While it is relatively easy to recognize that we have a tendency towards self-deception regarding our own misdeeds, it doesn't seem beyond the realms of possibility that we might deceive ourselves about the nature and extent of our victimhood too. De Wit points out that our narrative understanding of the world tends to run away with us precisely when our deepest fears and longings are at stake. But again, this would hold as much for victims as for perpetrators. In light of this possibility, we have to ask: what would it mean to do justice to the victims of evil deeds? Would it mean to accept their own narratives without question? If yes, why would that be? If not, what is the alternative?

These are the questions that presented themselves to me in reading Theo De Wit's paper. This doesn't mean that he should necessarily be able to answer them in a heartbeat. Rather, they seem to me the kinds of questions that necessarily confront any attempt to think through the problem of reconciliation in the aftermath of evil.

In conclusion, then, let me thank him for his paper, in which he confronts us with the very intractability of the problem of evil. Of course, we might prefer not to think and talk about it at all, so that it remains some unexamined, monstrous thing hovering beyond the limits of our understanding. We might, in this way, avoid explaining it away, or deceiving ourselves about it. We will not, however, be in a position to prevent or resist or overcome it.

So, Theo, for making us face up to the difficult, but morally and politically important task of thinking through the problem of evil, thank you very much.

Facing evil: theological reflections

ABSTRACT

This article suggests some possible responses, drawn from the Judeo-Christian-Islamic tradition, to Theo de Wit's analysis of evil, narrativity and reconciliation. It is argued, first, that the problem of evil is rightly seen, not as a question relating incidentally to faith, but as an existential challenge arising from the human condition, to which the Judeo-Christian-Islamic tradition has sought, from its inception, to provide answers. Secondly, that the theme of not downplaying evil, but facing it in its full reality, is central to this tradition, inter alia in the longing for, and expectation of, the resurrection of the dead as a way of approaching the unresolved problem of past evil. Some related theological concepts and questions are also brought to bear on the questions raised by De Wit.

ABSTRAK

Hierdie artikel doen, uit die Joods-Christelik-Islamitiese tradisie, 'n aantal moontlike reaksies aan die hand op Theo de Wit se ontleding van die kwaad, narratiwiteit en versoening. Dit word eerstens betoog dat die probleem van die kwaad gesien moet word, nie as 'n vraag wat insidenteel met die geloof verband hou nie, maar as 'n eksistensiële uitdaging wat uit die menslike kondisie voortvloei, waarop die Joods-Christelik-Islamitiese tradisie reeds uit die staanspoor antwoorde probeer vind het. Tweedens staan die tema van die weiering om die kwaad "op te smuk", en van die noodsaak om dit in sy volle realiteit onder oë te sien, sentraal in hierdie tradisie, onder meer in die verlange na, en uitsig op, die opstanding van die dode as a manier om met die probleem van onopgeloste kwaad in die verlede om te gaan. 'n Aantal ander teologiese begrippe en vrae word ook met die vrae wat deur De Wit geopper word in verband gebring.

1. EVIL AS PRIOR TO FAITH

In a recent article Theo de Wit (2010) highlights the problematic moral and existential implications of the relations between narrativity, evil and reconciliation.¹ The impression left by the article, at least to this reader, is that De Wit ultimately gives a negative answer to his opening question, which he formulates as follows: "Are we able to *recognise for what it is*, that phenomenon which in contemporary political opinion, in our philosophical and theological traditions, but also in prayers such as the Lord's Prayer, is designated 'evil' ... are we able to *think it without betraying it*, without 'changing the subject', without reducing it to something more reassuring, not *reconciling it prematurely*, but at the same time without being seduced by it, by positing it as omnipotent or imbued with an implacable necessity, to see it for what it is?" (231; italics in original)

¹ See Martin 2010, Slenczka 2010, Thesnaar 2010, Van Niekerk 2010 and the article by Vasti Roodt in this volume for more discussions relating to the themes dealt with in De Wit's article.

A number of aspects of De Wit's argument are of great theological significance.

One of these is the focus on evil itself, and on the question of theodicy related to it. The so-called "problem of evil" is sometimes portrayed, in both theological and philosophical discussions, as one that arises only after a second order account of the faith of the Judeo-Christian-Islamic ("Abrahamic") tradition has been given – as if only at that point, when the merits of this faith tradition is being considered, one is suddenly faced with the unexpected question: "Yes, but what about evil?" Given that Christians, Jews and Muslims confess the omnipotence and perfect goodness of God, it is argued, how is it possible that there is evil in the world (see e.g. the structure of the arguments in Plantinga and Tooley 2008)?

Attempts to answer this question – including Augustine's classic and very influential so-called "free will defence" (see Brümmer 2006: chapter 21; and for a Thomistic critique McCabe 2007: chapter 6) – often start from the assumed validity of this manner of putting the question. By contrast, the Biblical narratives only very seldom approach the problem of evil starting from assumptions about how things ought to be, given, as the Psalmist puts it (Ps. 62:11b-12a), "That power belongs to God (and) to You, O Lord, belongs mercy". And where the question is occasionally approached in this way, as in the book of Job, the whole point of the narrative is to call that manner of posing the problem into question. Contrary to the impression created by many discussions of theodicy – whether in criticism or in defence of faith – the problem of evil is logically prior to, and historically the starting point of, faith.

Faith is in essence a response to evil (see Sarot 1999), not a speculative cosmological hypothesis about the nature of God that is subsequently challenged by the potential defeater of evil in the same way as, say, scientific discoveries of the origin of life or logical puzzles about the Trinity may function as such potential defeaters. Such defeaters may or may not be answerable. They differ from the problem of evil, however, in that they arise *from* a particular doctrine rather than being the original source giving rise *to* the doctrine in question. The confession in the Apostles' Creed that God is "the almighty Father", for instance, is (part of) Christianity's answer to the existential problem of evil. It acquires its meaning from within that existential context, and is not based on considerations wholly unrelated to that context. Put differently: the problem of evil arises prior rather than subsequent to the confession of faith.

2. FAITH AS REFUSAL TO 'CHANGE THE SUBJECT'

But precisely the fact that faith starts from the problem of evil, rather than facing it only secondarily – as illustrated in the Psalm already quoted, which has as its starting point the cry to the Psalmist's enemies: "How long will you assault a man?" (Ps. 62:3) – means that the tradition of Biblical faith (to which the Qur'an also belongs) has constantly struggled, from its inception, with precisely the kind of question posed by De Wit in his article: How can evil be looked in the eye? It is a characteristic element of this tradition at its best that it insists on (in De Wit's words) thinking evil "without 'changing the subject', without reducing it to something more reassuring, not *reconciling it prematurely*, but at the same time without being seduced by it, by positing it as omnipotent or imbued with an implacable necessity, to see it for what it is".

The cries of the psalmists can only be understood from this perspective: Evil is not good at some deeper level. Evil is evil. Evil should not be. Evil is against God's will. Evil must be overcome. At this point CS Lewis has it exactly right when, in reply to William Blake's *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, he writes his eschatological fantasy *The Great Divorce* (Lewis 2001). In the preface to the book he argues that the attempt to make a marriage between heaven and hell "is based on the belief that ... granted skill and patience and (above all) time enough ... mere development or adjustment or refining will somehow turn evil into good", and adds: "A sum can

be put right: but ... never by *simply going on*. Evil can be undone, but it cannot ‘develop’ into good. Time does not heal it.” (xiii)

In Christianity the central symbol of this insistence to see evil *as evil* is the cross, which, however its salvific power is interpreted, points to the conviction that evil cannot be somehow sidestepped or relativised, but must be dealt with, and that confronting evil inevitably leads to enduring and suffering it. This is the meaning of sacrifice: not that evil is to be accepted as a means to an end, but that evil can only be overcome if faced head-on, regardless of the consequences to oneself. It is to refuse evil by refusing to sacrifice others, even if that means sacrificing oneself instead (see Brand 2002: 160-169 for a more extended discussion).

3. REDEEMING THE EVIL OF THE PAST?

There is yet another aspect to this. As De Wit clearly indicates in his article, evil is not overcome once the evil of the past has been replaced by a better, happier situation in the present, for the suffering of those who have died without entering the promised land cannot be undone while they remain dead and buried. It is at this point that the Christian tradition offers its most audacious – and to many its most absurd – claim: that of the resurrection.

It is a notion that Christianity inherited from the faith tradition of Israel. It lives on in both Judaism and Islam, and probably first arose during the so-called “inter-testamentary” period when many Jews were martyred in the Maccabean revolt against imperial oppression and persecution. The faithful, as they may aptly be called, refused to accept that the death of the martyrs (note that the word “martyr” derives from “marturion”, meaning witness) was the last word. They insisted, not that the martyrs are now “in a better place”, as the cliché goes, nor that their immortal souls have survived their broken bodies, but that there will be a resurrection of the body, a setting right.

It is noteworthy that, among first century Jews, it was the Sadducees, the privileged priestly class who collaborated with the Romans, who did not accept the rabbinic teaching of the resurrection. As a privileged class who had the luxury of not having to face evil in its full horror, they had no need for a resurrection (Wright 2003: 332; see also Bartholomew 2004: 226). In fact, because the hope of the resurrection was linked, in Jewish teaching, with the expectation of God’s judgement – just as, in the Psalm quoted earlier, God’s power and (perhaps surprisingly) God’s mercy are linked with God’s judgement, and with the claim that God will “render to each one according to his work” (Ps. 62:11-12; see also Rev. 22:12) – it is understandable that those who benefit from the status quo will not be attracted to a rising from the dead (see Zeindler 2004 for a systematic treatment of the link between judgment, grace and resurrection). In the poetic words of Kurt Marti (quoted by Zeindler; English translation by GB):

It would perhaps suit many lords
if in death all were balanced out
the lordship of the lords
the servility of the servants
confirmed for evermore

it would perhaps suit many lords
if forever they
remained lords in costly private graves
and their servants
servants in cheap graves in a row

but a rising is coming
which is other wholly other than we thought
a rising is coming which is
the uprising of god against the lords
and against the lord of all lords: death²

To the subversive Jewish faith in resurrection the New Testament witness adds an even more audacious – and to many an even more absurd – claim: that the hoped for resurrection in the age to come has already occurred in Jesus Christ – not only his bodily glorification, but also God’s judgment.

The elements of resurrection and judgement are closely related in the New Testament. As the apostle Peter proclaims in Acts 2:36: “God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah.” The hearers understand the implication of Peter’s proclamation: “When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, ‘Brothers, what shall we do?’” (37) On the one hand, then, the resurrection reveals or unmasks the evil of the crucifixion: the One who has been resurrected is none other than the One “you” have crucified. At the same time the resurrection is God’s victory over the evil of the crucifixion, which represents all the crosses, all the injustices and cruelties in history in which Christ shares – especially since, in the New Testament, the resurrection is sometimes portrayed as (resulting in) “first fruits” (Rom. 16:5; 1 Cor. 15:20), and the gift of the Spirit flowing from the resurrection as a “first instalment” (Rom. 8:11; 2 Cor. 1:22), of the promised end, when God’s people will also “be changed” (1 Cor. 15:52) as Jesus has been. That is to say, in one and the same event, evil is both looked in the eye as pure evil with no redeeming quality and overcome in an act of grace.

4. 1 CORINTHIANS 15 AS A WAY BETWEEN DENIAL OF AND SEDUCTION OF EVIL

Of particular relevance with regard to the implications of the resurrection for the victims of the past whose sufferings are not erased by a better situation in the present is Paul’s argument in 1 Corinthians 15. The question Paul confronts there is stated thus in verse 12: “But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?”

Various suggestions have been put forward as to what was actually being denied by the “some of you” referred to in the question. Are those to whom Paul is responding denying that Christ was raised from the dead? This is highly unlikely, given that the proclamation of Christ’s resurrection was the centrepiece of the first Christians’ teaching – as is evident in all New Testament texts. Being a Christian meant confessing Christ’s resurrection. Moreover, it would make little sense to argue for the resurrection of Christ by referring to that very resurrection as evidence! Another theory is that Paul’s opponents in Corinth, while confessing, like all Christians, that Christ had been raised from the dead, denied that a similar resurrection was awaiting Christ’s followers; a view that would amount to a radical form of “realised eschatology” – the conviction that the end or *eschaton* has already been fully realised in Christ’s death and resurrection and that no further fulfilment is thus to be expected. Yet another hypothesis suggests that the bodiliness of the resurrection was the issue at stake in Corinth – that Paul’s opponents showed Gnostic

² “Das könnte manchen herren so passen / wenn mit dem tode alles beglichen / die herrschaft der herren / die knechtschaft der knechte / bestätigt wäre für immer // das könnte manchen herren so passen / wenn sie in ewigkeit / herren blieben im teuren privatgrab / und ihre knechte / knechte in billigen reihengräbern // aber es kommt eine auferstehung / die anders ganz anders wird als wir dachten / es kommt ein auferstehung die ist / der aufstand gottes gegen die herren / und gegen den herrn aller herren: den Tod”.

tendencies in that they could accept that Christ and the believers' spirits could survive death in a Platonic sense, but not that their bodies would be raised. Depending on which interpretation is correct, Paul would then be arguing either that Christ was indeed raised, or that the believers will also be raised like Christ, or that the resurrection is a bodily affair and not purely spiritual.

Taking leave of all three these accounts of what Paul's opponents were denying, Notger Slenczka (2003: 228-230) argues convincingly that the question at stake in 1 Corinthians is in essence the same as that in 1 Thessalonians, namely, whether those believers who have already died would share in the new glorified life when Christ returns. The early Christians, seeing Christ's resurrection as the inauguration of the promised day of the Lord, the arrival of God's kingdom, expected the last day to arrive at any moment and were looking forward to experiencing it. The problem of the "delayed parousia", as it is often referred to, was not merely that Christ's followers had to wait longer than expected, but rather that, because of the delay, they or their loved ones may no longer be alive when the Lord returns. Evidently, those in Corinth who claimed "that there is no resurrection of the dead" held that those believers who are no longer alive when Christ returns will not share in the *eschaton*.

As in 1 Thessalonians Paul wants to put at ease those in Corinth who are worried about this claim. Over against those who deny the resurrection of Christians who have already died, Paul claims: "We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed— in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed." (51-52) In other words, Paul relativises the difference between those who will be alive and those who will have died when Christ returns: the living will have to be "changed" just as much as the dead will have to be "raised", since "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable" (50).

While Paul's argument in 1 Corinthians 15 is a reaction to "some among you" who deny the resurrection of those who "sleep", his insistence that the dead will be raised, just as the living will be glorified, is clearly not an *ad hoc* solution to an unforeseen problem, but of central importance in his understanding of the Gospel. He goes so far as to say that if the deniers are right, "our preaching is useless and so is your faith" (14). Implicitly, then, Paul's position resonates with the question posed by De Wit concerning the evils of the past: Like De Wit (and like Walter Benjamin to whom De Wit appeals), Paul does not regard mere hope in a better future world as a satisfying answer to the problem of unresolved evil in the past: "If only for this life we have hope in Christ" – i.e. if the best we can hope for is that at least we will still be alive to experience the new world – "we are of all people most to be pitied." (19)

Apart from the pastoral purpose (those who die before Christ returns will also be raised) and the moral logic (the new world will only be good if the dead also share in it), Paul's position also has practical implications, as pointed out by Slenczka (234-236): If the believers' hope rests on the possibility that they may still be alive when the world is finally put to right, why would they put their lives at risk for the sake of proclaiming the Gospel? "And as for us, why do we endanger ourselves every hour? I face death every day—yes, just as surely as I boast about you in Christ Jesus our Lord. If I fought wild beasts in Ephesus with no more than human hopes, what have I gained? If the dead are not raised, 'Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.'" (30-32) In that sense the resurrection not only promises hope concerning the evil of the past, but also gives meaning to the present in the midst of evil (see Slenczka 240-242).

Paul's message, we may say in terms of De Wit's words quoted earlier, steers the believers between, on the one hand, the Scylla of "betraying [evil], ... 'changing the subject', ... reducing it to something more reassuring [or] *reconciling it prematurely*" and, on the other, the Charybdis of "being seduced by it, ... positing it as omnipotent or imbued with an implacable necessity". Believers should not deny or downplay the evil of the past by hoping only for a world to come

in which those still alive will be better off, nor should they give in to the hopelessness of not believing that evil can ever be overcome.

5. QUESTIONS REMAINING

In the above analysis of the cross and resurrection of Christ as one possible answer to the questions posed by De Wit, I have stuck to the logic of the texts discussed. If the message so vigorously proclaimed and defended by Paul is accepted, one can see how it might serve as such an answer. However, for many contemporary hearers that message is implausible. How can the dead become alive again? Do we not know from modern science that this is impossible? Does not the early church's confession of the resurrection fail to meet the criteria of modern historiography? Questions such as these deserve detailed attention and careful reflection on the relevant considerations, which cannot be provided here (see Sarot 2006: chapter 6 for a thoughtful and informed discussion of the epistemological questions involved in both scientific and historical questions regarding the resurrection). Broadly speaking, however, I would argue that it is unreasonable to measure religious faith by scientific or historical standards for the simple reason that faith is not a theoretical but an existential matter. This does not mean that questions of rational plausibility and truth can be avoided, but it does mean that the way in which these questions are considered should start from the primary function of religious faith, which is to provide meaning, rather than from the function of scientific or historical research, which is to provide explanations (on criteria of rationality in general and plausibility in particular as these relate to views of life, see Brand 38-45, 75-82). This applies not only to the Christian faith, but to all meaning-giving frameworks, including those that are "non-religious" in nature (on the inverted commas, see Brand 2011: 132-134).

Closely related to the previous question is the problem classically formulated by Gotthold Lessing (1729-1781) in his talk of the "ugly broad ditch" (Lessing 1956: 55): "Accidental truths of history can never become the proof of necessary truths of reason." (53) It is the strength of the Judeo-Christian-Islamic tradition – also with regard to the problem of evil at stake in this article – that it takes history, and therefore historical evil, seriously. However, it is also a weakness, since the historical outlook indeed takes leave of the kind of "necessary truths" required by Lessing. Christianity's answer, in terms of the cross and resurrection of Christ, to the problem of evil does not rely on timeless truths but on contingent facts of history that can be called into question. Unlike, say, Plato's solution to the problem of evil, which makes history irrelevant, resting, as it does, on what are taken to be purely logical conclusions about the nature of reality, Christians, like Jews and Muslims, base their faith on what they interpret as acts of God in the past – acts that might just as well not have occurred – and the expectations for divine saving actions in the future awakened by those memories. The hope of the resurrection is one that is always in question, one that can easily be denied. It does not provide a cheap answer, but one that demands commitment and risk.

Finally, the greatest challenge to the message of the cross and resurrection as an answer to the question of the evil of the past is neither that of scientific or historical plausibility, nor that of contingency, but rather the defiant statement by the character Ivan Karamazof in Fyodor Dostoyevsky's *The Brothers Karamazof* (1927). Ivan does not deny the existence of God or the truth of the resurrection. He grants this possibility: "I understand, of course, what an upheaval of the universe it will be when everything in heaven and earth blends in one hymn of praise and everything that lives and has lived cries aloud: 'Thou art just, O Lord, for Thy ways are revealed.' When the mother embraces the fiend who threw her child to the dogs, and all three cry aloud with tears, 'Thou art just, O Lord!' then, of course, the crown of knowledge will be reached and

all will be made clear.” (631) However, Ivan objects to this: “I can’t accept that harmony. And while I am on earth, I make haste to take my own measures ... Is there in the whole world a being who would have the right to forgive and could forgive? I don’t want harmony. From love for humanity I don’t want it. I would rather be left with the unavenged suffering. I would rather remain with my unavenged suffering and unsatisfied indignation, even if I were wrong. Besides, too high a price is asked for harmony; it’s beyond our means to pay so much to enter on it. And so I hasten to give back my entrance ticket, and if I am an honest man I am bound to give it back as soon as possible. And that I am doing.” (362-364)

One could, perhaps, ask whether Ivan’s refusal to accept the hope of resurrection is indeed a reflection of his “love of humanity”. Would that love not move him to long for the day when the mother and her little girl can have joy? Perhaps one finds comfort in the knowledge that God will not accept Ivan’s “entrance ticket” back so that Ivan will find when the day comes, despite his present refusal, that he can share in their joy: “perhaps it really may happen that if I live to that moment, or rise again to see it, I, too, perhaps, may cry aloud with the rest, looking at the mother embracing the child’s torturer, ‘Thou art just, O Lord!’” (632) Yet Ivan’s objection always remains a possibility, because it does not depend on scientific or factual considerations, but on “ultimate values”, as Vincent Brümmer (2006: 232-234) argues. Ivan’s objection is, after all, an expression of faith, not unbelief: “It’s not God that I don’t accept, Alyosha, only I most respectfully return him the ticket.” (634) What it shows is that faith is, as has already been pointed out, always in question. Dare one hope in the resurrection of the dead, as Paul suggests, or would one judge, even when the evil of the past will have been avenged and the victims restored, that it is “better never to have been”, as the philosopher David Benatar (2008) maintains? Does the latter answer amount to “being seduced by [evil], ... positing it as omnipotent or imbued with an implacable necessity”, or does it express “love of humanity”?

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TREFWOORDE

Theo de Wit
Die kwaad
Kruis
Opstanding
Verlede

KEY WORDS

Theo de Wit
Evil
Cross
Resurrection
Past

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Riglyne vir die persklaarmaak van die NGTT

Guidelines for the preparation of articles for the NGTT

U word vriendelik versoek om artikels aan te bied volgens die volgende riglyne. Artikels wat nie hieraan voldoen nie, sal ongelukkig teruggestuur word.

We cordially request that you submit articles according to the following guidelines. Articles that do not apply to these guidelines, must unfortunately be returned.

1. ALGEMEEN

1. GENERAL

1.1 Alle artikels moet in **drievoud** aangebied word sodat minstens twee kopieë beskikbaar is om aan keurders te stuur. / *All articles must be submitted in triplicate, so that at least two copies are available to be sent to referees.*

1.2 Alle artikels moet van 'n "abstract" in Engels van ongeveer 150 woorde voorsien wees. In die geval van 'n Afrikaanse artikel, moet die "abstract" ook van 'n Engelse titel voorsien word. / *All articles must have an English abstract of approximately 150 words. In the case of an Afrikaans article, the abstract must also have an English title.*

1.3 Die naam van die outeur mag slegs op een van die drie kopieë verskyn. Alle verwysings in voetnotas wat die outeur kan identifiseer, soos die aanduiding van waar die referaat gelewer is, mag slegs op die eerste kopie verskyn. / *The name of the author must appear on only one of the three copies. All references that could identify the author, such as an indication where the paper was read, may also appear only on the first copy.*

1.4 Geen CD moet aanvanklik saamgestuur word nie. / *No CD need to accompany the initial submission of the article.*

1.5 Ná die aanvanklike keuring van 'n artikel sal dit, indien nodig, met kommentaar na die outeur teruggestuur word, wat dan alle verbeteringe moet aanbring en die artikel weer in tweevoud moet aanbied. / *After the initial selection of an article, it will, if necessary, be returned to the author who will then implement all alterations. Thereafter, the article must be submitted in duplicate.*

1.5.1 'n CD van die verbeterde stuk moet nou ook die twee kopieë vergesel. Slegs die volgende rekenaarprogramme is aanvaarbaar: Microsoft WORD. / *A disk or CD of the final product must now be included with the two copies. Only the following computer programs are acceptable: Microsoft WORD.*

Meld asseblief op die plakker van die CD u eie naam, die naam van die artikel, van die legger (naam waaronder die artikel op die CD verskyn) en watter program u gebruik het. / *Please write your own name, the title of the article and that of the document (the code of the article on the CD) and which program was used, on the CD label.*

1.6 Die redaksie behou hulle eger die reg voor om ook die verbeterde kopie weer aan keurders voor te lê indien hulle dit nodig ag, en dit selfs 'n tweede keer terug te stuur na die outeur. / *The editorial staff retain the right to again submit the improved copy to the referees, should they deem this necessary, and even return it once more to the author.*

1.7 Indien die artikel ná die eerste keuring aanvaar word, sal die redaksiesekretaris die outeur versoek om ook die CD aan te stuur. / *Should the article be accepted after the first selection, then the editorial secretary will require the author to submit the CD.*

1.8 Daar word van alle outeurs verwag dat alle bydraes taalkundig goed versorg en finaal geredigeer sal wees. Indien daar ooglopende taal-, spel- en tikfoute is, sal dit teruggestuur word vir verbetering. (Weens die hoë drukkoste van die tykskrif kan die redaksie nie administratiewe

hulp hiervoor inkoop nie. As artikels vol foute verskyn, sal die akademiese standaard van die tydskrif verlaag word.) / *All contributions must be linguistically correct and be edited. Should there be conspicuous linguistic, spelling and typing errors, the article will be returned for correction. (As a result of the high printing cost of the journal, the editorial staff cannot afford special administration costs in this respect. And should articles teeming with mistakes be published, the academic standard of the journal will deteriorate.)*

2. DIE OPSKRIF BO DIE ARTIKEL

2. THE TITLE OF THE ARTICLE

Gebruik asseblief 'n eksemplaar van die NGTT as voorbeeld en gebruik dieselfde lettertipes. Die skrywer se naam kom boaan, gevolg deur die instansie waaraan hy of sy verbonde is (gewone hoof- en kleinletters). Op 'n volgende reël volg die titel van die artikel (in vetdruk: hoof- en kleinletters). / *Please refer to an edition of the NGTT as an example and use the same font. The author's name appears first, followed by the institution with which he/she is associated (in normal upper and lower case). On the next line the title of the article appears in bold, upper and lower case.*

3. DIE ARTIKEL SELF

3. THE ARTICLE ITSELF

3.1 Artikels moet breë kantlyne hê, in dubbelspasiëring en net aan die een kant van die blad getik wees. Artikels moet verkieslik nie langer as 5 200 woorde wees nie (sien punt 4 oor BLADGELD). Die eerste reël van 'n paragraaf na 'n hofie, tabel of blok (van bv 'n aanhaling van 4 of meer reëls of 'n lys met nommers of "bullets") word nie ingekeep nie, maar wel alle ander gewone paragrawe. Geen reëlspasie tussen paragrawe nie. / *Articles must have broad margins, be typed in double spacing on one side of the page only. Articles should preferably not be longer than 5 200 words (see par 4 on PUBLICATION FEES). The first line of each paragraph after a title, table or block (of eg a quotation of 4 or more lines, or a list with numbers or bullets) is not indented like normal paragraphs. No line spaces between paragraphs.*

3.2 Wanneer van hofies gebruik gemaak word, moet die belangrikste hofie getik word in gewone HOOFLETTERS, die tweede hofie in vetdruk in hoof- en kleinletters, en die derde hofie in kursief in hoof- en kleinletters. Voor alle hofies en slegs na 'n HOOFLETTERHOFIE kom 'n spasie van een reël. / *Main headings of sections of the article must be typed in CAPITAL LETTERS, the second heading in bold (upper and lower case), and the third heading in italics (upper and lower case). Before all headings and only after a heading in CAPITAL LETTERS a space of one line must be inserted.*

3.3 Indien van voetnotas gebruik gemaak word, moet dit korrek genommer wees en verkieslik onderaan die bladsy geplaas word. / *Should footnotes be used, they should be numbered correctly and, preferably, at the foot of the page.*

3.4 Afkortings kan in die voetnotas gebruik word (sonder punte), maar liefs nie in die artikel self nie. Afkortings mag wel in die artikel tussen hakies gebruik word. / *Abbreviations may be used in footnotes and in parentheses, but preferably not in the text of the article.*

3.5 Daar moet van die Harvard-verwysingstelsel gebruik gemaak word. / *The Harvard reference system must be applied.*

3.6 Die bibliografie aan die end moet volledig wees, maar slegs bronne bevat waarna in die artikel verwys word. / *The bibliography at the end of the article must be complete, but must contain only the sources referred to in the article.*

3.7 Alle Hebreeuse en Griekse woorde moet in getranskribeerde vorm weergegee word, behalwe as die outeur self met die uitgewer kan ooreenkom oor 'n "font" wat vir die drukker aanvaarbaar is. / *All Hebrew and Greek words must appear in transcribed form, unless the author has arranged with the publisher on a font acceptable to the printer.*

3.8 Aanhalings uit die Bybel word nie deur die redakteur gekontroleer nie en is die verantwoordelikheid van die outeur self. / *Quotations from the Bible will not be checked by the editor. These are the author's responsibility.*

3.9 Wenk: Skrywers word verwys na Jansie Killian se riglyne (Form and style in theological texts: A guide for the use of the Harvard reference system. Pretoria: University of South Africa) ingeval van probleme met formatering, ensovoorts. / *Suggestion: In case of problems with formatting, etcetera, authors can refer to Jansie Killian's guidelines (Form and style in theological texts: A guide for the use of the Harvard reference system. Pretoria: University of South Africa).*

3.9 Trefwoorde: Elke skrywer moet aan die einde van sy/haar artikel drie tot vyf trefwoorde voorsien. Skrywers moet asseblief kyk na die thesaurus van Religions Index ten opsigte van die standaardlys van trefwoorde. / *Key Words: Authors must provide three to five key words at the end of his/her article. Authors must please look at the thesaurus of Religions Index with regard to the standard list of key words.*

4. BLADGELDE

4. PUBLISHING FEES

4.1 Die huidige (2010) bladgeld vir publikasies in die tydskrif is R150 per bladsy. / *The current (2004) publishing fees for publications in our journal is R150 per page.*

4.2 Bladgeld word gevra vir die aantal gedrukte bladsye in die tydskrif. / *These publishing fees are charged for the number of printed pages in the journal.*

Riglyne vir keurders

Guidelines for referees

Lewer asseblief u kommentaar aan die hand van die volgende vrae.
Please provide your comments in respect of the following questions:

Opskrif of titel van die artikel (vul dit ook asseblief hier in):
Title of article (kindly repeat it here):

Voldoen die artikel aan die vereistes, ook wat taalkundige versorging betref, wat in die riglyne gestel word? Dui asseblief taal-, spel- en tikfoute aan.

Does the article meet the requirements, also in respect of the linguistics?

Lewer die artikel bewys van deeglike navorsing en bekendheid met die jongste debat en literatuur op die vakgebied?

Do you deem the article to be proof of thorough research and knowledge of the most recent debates and literature in this field of study?

Reflekteer die artikel 'n goeie wetenskaplike standaard van argumentering?
Does the article reflect a good scientific standard of reasoning?

Lewer die artikel 'n wesentliche bydrae tot die spesifieke vakgebied?
Does the article make a fundamental contribution to the specific field of study?

Wat is u mening oor die teologiese gehalte van die artikel?
What is your opinion of the theological quality of the article?

Wat is die wenslikheid van plasing in die NGTT?
What is the desirability of this article being published in the NGTT?

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Without alterations?

Met die volgende wysigings:
With the following alterations:

Liewer nie:
Preferably not:

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Any other recommendation(s)

Naam en adres van keurder:
Name and address of referee:
(U naam en adres sal nie aan die skrywer bekendgemaak word nie.
Your name and address will not be divulged to the writer.)

U word vriendelik versoek om u verslag in tweevoud aan die NGTT te stuur. Op die een kopie moet u naam ontbreek sodat dit net so aan die outeur gestuur kan word.
Please send your report in duplicate to the NGTT. On the one copy, which will be sent to the author, your name must not appear.