

FAITH AND PROTEST (1987)

The publication of Church and Society evoked a strong reaction among the more conservative members of the Ned Geref Kerk. Under Prof W J G Lubbe this reaction was formulated in a document called 'Geloof en Protes' (Faith and Protest). It was prepared by a group who called themselves 'the continuation committee of objecting members of the NGK'. This group eventually seceded to form the Afrikaanse Protestantse Kerk (Afrikaans Protestant Church). This document endorses the policy of apartheid as Scriptural and rejects statements made in Church and Society that are contrary to this policy:

FAITH AND PROTEST

WE BELIEVE

9.1 We believe, in humble recognition of God as the almighty Giver of all gifts, that human beings and ethnic groups (volke) are called to maintain definite boundaries (Gal. 2:3-5; Acts 17:26). Thereby they will best be able to develop their Godgiven gifts and to serve God and each other with those gifts, with the necessary respect towards each other as bearers of the image of God.

9.2 We believe it to be Biblical that people join those of their own ethnic group (volksgenote), and thus exclude others, through a feeling of belonging and of ethnic consciousness which wants to preserve and develop their ethnic character (volkseie), including their own language and culture (Rom. 10:1; 9:1-3; Acts 22:3; 21:20-26; CAS 113).

9.3 We believe that these forces which pull people towards their own ethnic groups to the exclusion of others, do not have to imply that ethnic groups are pitched against each other in enmity (Eph. 2:14), but that they are to be seen positively in the light of Rev. 21:26: "The people will bring the treasures and the wealth of the nations there (to the new Jerusalem)." From this (text) it transpires that believers of each nation may work for the enrichment of their own ethnic treasures and wealth which are not limited to the earthly and temporal.

9.4 We believe that to do justice to the above-mentioned enriching gifts and forces in different ethnic groups, the necessary distances and delimitations must exist, in other words, the necessary spiritual and physical boundaries. Inherent spiritual values must, for instance, prevent believers and unbelievers to be yoked together (II Cor. 6:14), men and women who are not equals (who do not fit together - Gen. 2:18 - 1933 Afrikaans translation), to marry. If that does not happen, something of the anti-Christian global empire of Dan. 2:43 becomes visible: "You have seen that the iron is mixed with clay: there will be intermarriage between peoples, but they will not form a unity, just as iron does not mix with clay."

9.5 We believe that the survival of an ethnic group (volk) is intimately linked to its obedience to God. Whenever the survival of a people or a city or a congregation was threatened or terminated, this was, according to the Scriptures, the judgment of God on sin; for instance Sodom and Gomorra (Gen. 18-19); Niniveh (Jona 3); the peoples of Canaan (Lev. 18:25; Deut. 9:4-5); Israel (Lev. 26; 11 Kings 17:18ff); Jerusalem (Matth. 23:37-38); Ephesus (Rev. 2:5).

9.6 We believe that according to the Scriptures ethnic groups will retain their ethnic identity (volkseie) as a gift of God even in the hereafter under God's graceful providence, and therefore that they should serve what belongs to their ethnic identity (volkseie).

9.7 We believe that peoples (volkere) in Southern Africa are each entitled to their own soil and their own boundaries, just as it is granted to peoples in Europe and elsewhere (Acts 17:26).

9.8 We believe that we should regard the full Scriptural image of marriage, the guidance of God through family, relatives and ethnic bonds to be of paramount importance. The neglect of these fundamental connections with the inevitable cultural and other tensions must be rejected in the strongest terms (Neh. 13:23ff).

9.9 We believe the Afrikaner people, in particular, which has grown here on African soil under God's providence and blessing, has been a stabilising factor in Southern Africa as far as the boundaries have been maintained in the past, because through the unique contribution of this people:

9.9.1 the gospel has been preached and brought a rich harvest;

9.9.2 the eradication of different weaker black ethnic groups by certain more powerful ethnic groups has been prevented;

9.9.3 employment opportunities have been created which have provided means of livelihood to millions of black people in Africa

9.9.4 hospitals and schools etcetera have been established and maintained which have provided for the needs of just as many millions;

9.9.5 various peoples have already been settled on their own soil to live there according to the will of God.

WE REJECT

9.10 We reject the discriminating way in which CAS (Church and Society) deals with "apartheid" as a political model by treating only "apartheid" from among all other political models, and then picking on only the most negative form of "apartheid" for condemnation (CAS 306).

9.11 We reject the confession of sin concerning the part played by the churches in causing the suffering of people through, amongst other things, apartheid (CAS 307). This confession of sin takes place in the context of the political, communist and ecclesial insistence on integration and the condemnation of apartheid.

It is also the question whether this confession of sin is really derived from true remorse or whether it is derived from a certain desire to please certain churches or even a certain political party and thus evokes an artificially created consciousness of guilt.

The view of the Synod concerning "apartheid which commits injustice" and the direction which is followed in this regard, is evident in the following:

- the rejection of amendments by the General Synod in which it was attempted to put aside this wrong confession of sin and this artificially created consciousness of guilt;
- the rejection of amendments by the General Synod in which it was attempted to do justice to the advantages of separate development;
- the decisions in which the General Synod continues with its negative attitude towards any measures of separation, as evidenced, for instance, by the opening of church membership (CAS 270), the possibility of calling ministers on a reciprocal basis (CAS 272), the recommendation of joint meetings (278), the insistence on equal job opportunities for all people (CAS 352), freedom of choice on the labour market (CAS 354), the acceptance of racially mixed marriages (CAS 368), the propagation of a global diaconate (CAS 290).

9.12 We reject the allegation (CAS 111) "that questions such as a policy of ethnicity or the maintenance and abolition of ethnic identity are not points of discussion in the Bible" with the implication that a people, by abandoning the principle of separate development, may freely dissolve into a greater whole and thus terminate its unique ethnic identity.

9.13 We reject the concept of the church in CAS which does not consistently and clearly cater for the natural bonds of kindred, family and ethnic group which is given by God and which is of the utmost importance for the "effective proclamation of the word" (CAS 116, 118).

9.14 We reject the point of view (CAS 12.2.4) that provision "can" be made (instead of "must" be made) in the structuring of the church for language and cultural differences, because this point of view contradicts the fifth commandment (Heidelberg Catechism 104), and also the covenant idea (baptismal formula).

(Source: Nurnberger & Tooke 1988:41-42)