

DISCERNING GOD'S JUSTICE IN CHURCH, SOCIETY AND ACADEMY

A detailed oil painting of an elderly man with a white beard and mustache, wearing a grey suit and a dark tie. He is looking directly at the viewer with a serious expression. The background shows a large, multi-story building with a red-tiled roof and a staircase leading up to it.

EDITORS
ERNST CONRADIE
CHRISTO LOMBARD

Festschrift for **Jaap Durand**



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Ernst Conradie & Christo Lombard



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Cover: Jaap Durand by Julia Teale, oil on canvas. Reproduced with the kind permission of the artist

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Foreword

DESMOND MPILO TUTU

I was honoured to be invited to become Chancellor of the University of the Western Cape in 1988. In many ways it would have been an oxymoron to feel honoured to be associated with such an institution for it was spawned by apartheid with its obsession for separation. It was designed as the university for Coloureds as, for instance, the University of Zululand was meant for Zulus – all tertiary institutions that had been rejected contemptuously as merely bush colleges by nearly everyone in the Black community. UWC was turning this bizarre policy on its head, a process begun under the leadership of Professor Van der Ross, its first coloured rector, when it jettisoned the ludicrous policy of ethnic entrance qualifications, replacing it with the conventional one of academic qualifications. UWC was establishing its credentials by being involved in protests and demonstrations against the brutal apartheid police when the student body marched against apartheid's minions. Frequently the students were headed by the Rector and his academic colleagues. Professor Van der Ross was succeeded by a younger, quiet but charismatic person, Jakes Gerwel, who accelerated the transformation process throwing down the gauntlet even more spectacularly by declaring at his installation as Rector that he intended UWC to become “the intellectual home of the Left”. That was really throwing the fat into the fire for an oppressive Government obsessed with its so-called anti-communist stance. UWC was rapidly establishing its credentials as a genuine site of the struggle against apartheid. Hence being honoured to become its Chancellor. This was in the turbulent 1980s when apartheid repression was at its most vicious and our people were dying like flies.

It was a great privilege to be associated with such a vital institution. It would have been so easy to drive wedges between members of the university community, and the apartheid “system” was adept at sowing dissension and suspicion. It was exhilarating to be the Chancellor of an institution that was becoming the pride of the oppressed as it took on the apartheid phalanx as if presenting an icon of the kind of society we were striving for, to have a young Coloured rector supported to the hilt by his white vice-chancellor, an Afrikaner to boot, in Professor Jaap Durand. They spoke volumes about the sort of society we were striving for just by them being there together. I am delighted and honoured to pay my warmest tribute to someone who was such a critical element in our struggle and in our efforts to make UWC the scintillating and exciting place it has turned out to be.

JAAP DURAND FESTSCHRIFT

Baie dankie, Boetie – this Festschrift from your colleagues is the least we can do to thank you. God be praised that you were obedient to the imperatives of the Gospel.

DESMOND MPILO TUTU is Archbishop emeritus of the Anglican Church in South Africa and Chancellor of the University of the Western Cape.

ERNST CONRADIE & CHRISTO LOMBARD

Professor Jaap Durand, former professor of Systematic Theology and Vice-Rector of the University of the Western Cape, celebrated his 75th birthday on 5 June 2009. For this occasion we wish to honour him with this Festschrift.

There is no need in this editorial to elaborate on the significance of Jaap Durand's life and work – in the fields of pastoral work, Christian theology, the Uniting Reformed Church, ecumenical relationships, prophetic witness, university administration, justice and peace, and institutional transparency. This is abundantly evident from the various contributions collected in this volume of longer and shorter essays.

We do need to say a word about the limited scope of this Festschrift. For the sake of coherence we opted to honour Jaap Durand's legacy from the perspective of Christian theology only, even though his own work extends much wider than that. Moreover, we invited contributions only from within the South African context although there may have been many colleagues, especially from the Netherlands, who could also have contributed.

In order to ensure the feasibility of the project we invited a limited number of senior academics to contribute a substantial essay to this Festschrift. We are grateful for those essays that could be included in this volume – often written under immense pressure. A special word of gratitude is due to Archbishop *emeritus* Desmond Tutu who, as long-standing Chancellor of UWC, paid fitting tribute in the form of a foreword.

In addition, we also invited a larger number of Jaap's South African friends, colleagues in the church, the university and former students to contribute some shorter reflections to this Festschrift. Again, we are most grateful to those who have added their voice in honouring the legacy of Jaap Durand. For these shorter reflections we especially welcomed contributions in either Afrikaans or English.

We also encouraged differences in style and genre. Some of the contributions are indeed more personal and narrative in style, including the biographical essay by Jaap Furstenberg, Phil Robinson and Daan Cloete. Others are more academic in content and style with extensive references. Given the very nature of the shorter contributions, these tend to invite such more personal recollections.

We are grateful to Woldemar Cloete who assisted with the proofreading of the manuscript and to the staff of SUN PReSS for ensuring that the manuscript could be published timeously.

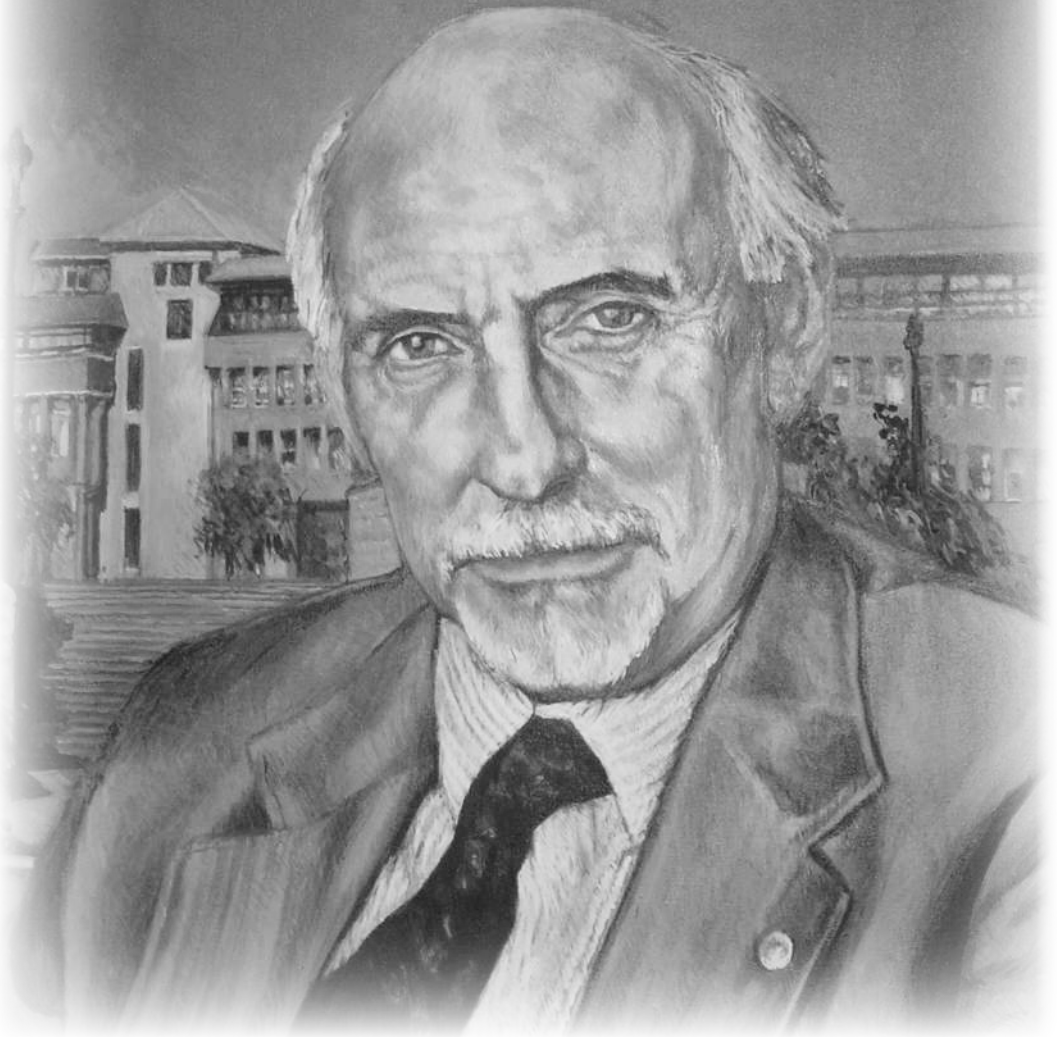
JAAP DURAND FESTSCHRIFT

We offer this volume of essays to Jaap Durand as our mentor, role model and friend in gratitude for his dedicated contribution to discern God's justice in the church, in society and in the academy in the South African context.

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Essays



So het ons Jaap leer ken ... Indrukke van drie vriende

JAAP FURSTENBERG, PHIL ROBINSON & DAAN CLOETE

Ons wéét Jaap is wars van enige “hulde” aan mense, en ons neem dit in ag. Op sy beurt moet hy asseblief aanvaar dat liefde nie net blind is vir ’n vriend se foute nie, maar ook siende maak, heldersiene vir sy vele gawes, waarvoor ons alleen die milde Gewer roem.

Jaap Furstenberg ken Jaap die langste, dus gee ons hom die eerste woord. Hy begin by hulle hoërskooldae.

1941-1951: Skooljare, Dealesville

Jaap (Johannes Jacobus Fourie) Durand het grootgeword en skoolgegaan op Dealesville in die Wes-Vrystaat waar sy vader aan die hoërskool verbonde was, later as vise-hoof. Oom Jonnie was ’n uiters bekwame wiskundige wie se hart in sy vak was. Met sy helder, logiese en geduldige verduidelikings kon hy trefseker vir ons die weg wys te midde van vreemde konsepte en taai probleme. Op dieselfde wyse kon hy as kategeet fundamentele sake soos Christus se volkome genoegdoening deur sy plaasvervangende soenoffer uiteensit (vgl Heidelbergse Kategismus by vraag 60). Dit was na aanleiding van ’n vraag van Jaap wat dieper geboor het as waartoe ons ander standerd ags selfs kon droom!

Sy moeder, tannie Anna, onthou ek as ’n energieke en bedrywige persoon, lewensbly, musikaal, ’n lojale lewensmaat aan die stiller oom Jonnie se sy. En dan Jaap se ouer broer Ben, ’n rooikop, ondeund, ongelooflik gevat.

My eerste ontmoeting met Jaap was aan die begin van ons hoërskooljare – op die skoolgronde waar ’n klompie verdwaasde groentjies van Soutpan geamuseerd bekyk is. Nadere kennismaking – darem nie fisiek soos in ’n losskrum nie! – sou spoedig volg deurdat ons die enigste twee in daardie jaargroep se Latynklas was – by *Mrs Chief*, die moeder van Tommy Bedford wat later jare Springbokflank en -kaptein geword het. ’n Lewenslange vriendskap het begin, verstewig as kamermaats toe Mnr en Mev Durand die volgende jaar inwonende koshuisouers geword het.

Herinneringe uit daardie jare storm oormekaar ... Episodes propvol pret; verleenthede waaroor ek nou nog bloos, terwyl Jaap hom daarvoor sal verkneukel; verliefdhede, skoolkyse ... Terugskou laat egter een sentraliserende gegewe vir my uitstaan: Ons vriend se buitengewone veelsydigheid wat hoe langer hoe meer sy lewe en arbeid sou kenmerk. Om dit toe te lig:

- ∞ “Hoogs intelligent!” Dit was die reputasie wat hom vooruit geloop het. Sy portuurgroep sou dit eerstehands meemaak: deurgaans die hoogste persentasie in die klas – met ’n besonder gerieflike speling! Maar nié omdat hy ’n nerd was nie! Wél konsensieus – meestal! Ek weet van een keer toe hy in kort pouse iemand se Latyn-huiswerk moes ... leen? oorneem? wat ook al.
- ∞ Met sy lenige liggaamsbou word hy ’n uitbinker in hoogspring, tot op die podium by die streekinterskole, tweede na ’n atletiese frats van Boshof. Dieselfde veerkrag maak van hom ’n gedugte flank. Kon hy ránk in ’n lynstaan! Met sy veilige hande, ’n goeie skopvoet en instinktiewe posisionering speel hy later heelagter vir die eerste span. ’n Geskeurde kuitspier bring sy skoolrugby tot ’n vroeë einde. Verder: ’n uitmuntende skaakspeler, deur sy vader touwys gemaak. Sy talente vir tennis en tafeltennis, snoeker en gholf sou later begin blom.
- ∞ Inisiatief, verbeeldingskrag, leierskap. Oor naweke was daar volop ledige ure in die koshuis. Jaap was vindingryk om nuwe speletjies uit te dink én die spel te organiseer. In plaas van konvensionele gewigstoot byvoorbeeld, het Jaap ’n manier bedink om die gewig vanuit ’n reeks ongewone liggaamsposisies te gooi. Dit het tot die koddigste aksies gelei en ewe veel pret as mededinging tot gevolg gehad. Een Saterdagandaand het hy ’n “moord”-drama laat afspeel. Rolle is toegewys, die “moord” het plaasgevind en die “speurder” (Jaap self) is ontbied. Die oorsaak van dood is vasgestel en ooggetuies ondervra. Geen teks nie, ons moes op ons voete dink. Met ’n slinkse voorwendsel en ’n misleidende vraag het slim Japie sonder moeite vaal Japie as die skuldige ontmasker en gearrester. Voorbeelde van dergelike tydverdrywe deur Jaap geïnisieer sou vermenigvuldig kon word. Wat van die “sirkus” wat aangebied is, kompleet met die drie “leus” Jasper, Kasper en Rasper! Of die laataand staptog spookhuis toe! Bouvallig, onbewoon, aan die uiterste rand van die dorp. Die uitdaging aan mekaar is om in te gaan en enige spook te konfronteer. Op pad in die donker toon Jaap hom ’n meester in die kuns om ’n grillige atmosfeer te skep. Toneel van ’n grusame misdaad, lank gelede, weet hy te vertel. Nooit opgelos nie. Naam van die plek Journey’s End(!). Lendelam voorhekkie knars op sy skarniere. Die adrenalien pomp. Jaap klop aan om seker te maak die plek is leeg. Eers niks. Dan begin die deur beweeg! Swaai stadig, krakend oop. ’n Verskyning in wit! Gelukkig herken Jaap die nuwe skoenmaker in sy slaapklere en blitssnel versin hy ’n storie oor ’n skoen wat hy wil kom afgee. Duidelike verligting aan albei fronte: nié spoke nie, gewone mense! Lag, dalk met ’n tikkie histerie, heelpad terug koshuis toe. ’n Lekker verhaal om te gaan oorvertel, van helde wat nié geval het nie, al was dit so hittete! Ook dít is Jaap: kon selfs in so ’n onvoorsiene en byna-weghardloop situasie nog flinkdink. Almal weet hoeveel kreatiewe denke en verbeelding dit van standard neges verg om ’n matriekafskeid te reël. Ook in dié opsig was Jaap

'n steunpilaar. En les bes, in ons matriekjaar vertolk hy die hoofrol in Die laaste van die takhare van Langenhoven.

☞ Skeppende vermoë. Sou hy nie jou waarlik in standerd 6 reeds 'n speurverhaal skryf nie: Rokers pasop! Die manuskrip eiehandig getik en van 'n omslag voorsien. Heel oorspronklike intrige. Ongelukkig net die een kopie! Rofweg volgens die opset van Monopoly, toe nog 'n nuuttjie, het Jaap sy eie bordspel ontwerp: Easy money. Vir dié wat met of sonder 'n geldige rede nie skool bywoon nie, sou dit ure se vermaak verskaf. Met die kreatiewe drang gaan handvaardigheid gepaard. 'n Geliefkoosde tydverdryf van hom was die bou van modelvliegtuie uit balsahout. Met 'n toutjie aan die plafon geheg, sou hulle sierlik in sy kamer rondswaef.

Leesywer. Behalwe 'n bibliofiel is Jaap ook 'n snelleser, en was hy dit toentertyd al. Gevolglik het hy eerstehands kennis gedra van skrywers en titels wat vir die meeste van ons nog onontginde terrein was. Die mees ongehoorde vir ander Jaap was egter dat hy toe ook al 'n menigte *Engelse* boeke gelees het! Al het dit vir my teen 'n veel traer tempo geskied, het ek dit aan Jaap te danke dat ek met PG Wodehouse en “the inimitable Jeeves” kon kennis maak; ook met Agatha Christie; en die immergroen treffers van PC Wren oor die Vreemdelingelegioen! Danksy die onoortreflike reeks *Classical comics* wat Jaap besit het, darem ook met Dickens en Sir Walter Scott, Victor Hugo en Dumas, en andere. Wat 'n verryking en verruiming des geestes! En het ons nie G Sutherland se *Weerlig in die Weste* saam geniet nie! Die wandelaar wat op 'n verlate stuk pad 'n plaaswerker raakloop en 'n geselsie aanknoop. Dan weer groet met “Nouja, *nil desperandum*, ou Herman!” “Dankie meneer, vir meneer ôk!”

Sou 'n mens, oorskouend, van 'n harmonies geïntegreerde persoonlikheid kon praat? Uitsonderlike vermoëns gepaard met gewoon menswees; 'n balans tussen erns en spel; vaste oortuigings en die moed om daarvoor op te staan, maar sonder moralistiese meerderwaardigheid; met ander woorde, alles behalwe “a good person in the worst sense of the word” (Mark Twain); 'n duidelike roepingsbesef (reeds op hoërskool het hy hom op sy knieë tot die sending verbind) én 'n verfrissende humorsin. Hoe ons dit ook al probeer tipeer, dit gaan om 'n lewe wat ander s'n op 'n besondere manier geraak en verryk het – en dit steeds doen.

By die prysuitdeling in matriek stap hy met 'n arm vol toekennings weg. Bloktyd en die skooleindeksamen breek aan – en die wag op uitslae. As een van die drie top matrikulante in die Vrystaat, met vier onderskeidings, word die Thomas Robertson-beurs vir tersiêre studie aan hom toegeken. Dit neem ons na sy volgende lewensfase.

1952-1955: Studentetyd, Bloemfontein

Steeds kamermaats, boek ons in by die Reitzsaal Kamerwonings (Bungalows), waar Phil ook was. (Sal dit help om te sê Reitzsaal het toe darem nog nie die reputasie van later gehad nie?)

Phil skryf: By die lees van Fursie se opmerking “waar Phil ook was” het die woorde ’n interessante sleutel geword in die geskiedenis van my verhouding met Jaap Durand. Ja, ek was daar toe “Jaap en Jaap” hulle intrek in Kamerwoning 3 geneem het. Ek het in Bungalow 4 skuins oorkant hulle gebly. Die “hartlike verwelkoming” wat hulle saam met die res van die eerstejaars deurloop het, het trouens plaasgevind “waar Phil ook was”. Toe hulle bewus gemaak is van die sosiale kloof tussen seniors en nuwelingte het dit gebeur “waar Phil ook was”. Dit was enkel my historiese voorsprong – ek was reeds tweedejaar – wat ons in hierdie onderskeie “stande” laat beland het. Vir wie van ons die Gy-sêery die grootste verleentheid was, bly ’n ope vraag. Die feit dat ons al drie vir Admissie I ingeskryf was, glo ek, het versagterend op hierdie sosiale kloof ingewerk. ’n Vol en bedrywige vierjarige akademiese en sosiale studentelewe het teen die soms meer en soms minder sigbare agtergrond van “waar Phil ook was” ontwikkel.

Die jare neem ’n lang sprong. Ons is by die Universiteit van Wes-Kaapland in die Komiteekamer van die rektor. Dit is Jaap, wat besluit het om af te tree, se laaste vergadering van die Senaat se Uitvoerende Komitee. Die rektor het namens die komitee kort en gepas waardering en goeie wense uitgespreek. Dit alles het gebeur “waar Phil ook was” – net mooi 43 jaar na my aandeel aan die “verwelkoming” van Jaap by UOVS! Ek kon nie anders nie, ek moes die komitee wys op my “ongeëwenaarde rol” in Jaap se roemryke akademiese loopbaan! Dit was 1995.

Jaap Furstenberg hervat: Terug na ons veelbewoë eerstejaar: Tien dae (aande, nagte!) van wrede ontgroening. (’n Interessante woord, *ont*-groening – het ons regtig na tien dae minder groen gevoel? Ook wat die heimlike vreesfaktor vir seniors betref? Om geen oomblik, bedags of snags, te weet wat om volgende van hulle sadistiese vindingrykheid te verwag nie?) Slaafse onderdanigheid – die ouhere het dit “die deug van nederigheid” genoem – is in oordrewe militaristiese styl op jou afgedwing. (Êrens diep in jou weet jy darem alles is opsetlik aangedik en kan jy selfs die humor van die situasie geniet – so nou en dan!) Groen strikkie as onderskeidingsteken om die nek, pap soos ’n hangsnor na die eerste aand se uitmergelende sweetsessie van bakboud en paddaspring. Ter afsluiting van elke aand se “verrigtinge”, so teen middernag, die eerstejaars, of “sotte”, op hulle knieë met die kop onder die bankies teen die mure en die sing van *Home, sweet home* – met ’n snik in menige stem, meer eersgenoemde as Gigli s’n. Vroeg op en atletiekbaan toe vir bietjie losmaak van stywe spiere op plekke waar ons nie eens geweet het ons het spiere nie. Deeglik afgerig in die unieke studentekuns om met die minimum slaap te oorleef. Klaskraf met leepoë, en iets probeer wys word van wat die geleerde here agter die kateder kwytraak.

Byvoorbeeld: Grieks kon net so wel Sjinees gewees het. Boonop aangebied deur ’n bloedjong dosent, vars uit Nederland. Phil onthou dit so: Behalwe dat Grieks vir ons Grieks was, het dié man met sy onmiskenbare Hollandse tongval Grieks in Engels aan ons doseer! Om die waarheid te sê, ons kon nie een van die drie tale verstaan

nie. Dit was gevolglik 'n waagstuk om te dink dat jy in jou leeftyd iets van Ritchie se *First steps in Greek* sou begryp. Alle eer dus aan dr Paap dat hy sommige van ons wel deurgekry het. Te midde van sy eie aanpassingsproses het sy gelate aanvaarding van studentespot en sy milde humorsin vir ligter oomblikke gesorg. Een skreeusnaakse voorval: Ons het pas in die lesinglokaal met sy skuins oplopende rye banke ingestap en was nog aan die rondstaan en gesels toe een van die studente sê: “Daar kom Paap!” Ons dosent kon jy ver hoor aankom. Hy het met sterk treë gestap en sy hakke het soos tipiese Hollandse klompe op die gangteëls geklap. Terwyl ons inskuif in ons sitplekke, beweeg Johan van Vuuren tot almal se verbasing na die ongebruikte binnedeur naby die dosent se tafel. Daar het kaarte van die antieke wêreld gehang. Johan neem posisie in, trek die kaart voor hom af tot op sy voete. Ons is almal geaktiveer vir 'n historiese lagbui wat net met uiterste selfdissipline onderdruk kon bly. Dr Paap merk onraad, maar begin met die lesing. En toe praat die gees: “Dr Paap, die geeste roep jou!” Dr Paap kyk ons ondersoekend deur. Is hier 'n buikspreek? Die gees roep weer. Paap stap langs die banke op en loer agter die skorte in op soek na die gees. Toe die gees sy derde oproep maak, pyl Dr Paap op die kaart af, trek dit vinnig op en hier staan “die gees”, wit geskrik! Paap ken egter sy naam: “Ve Vure kom't eruit! Je weit nog so bliksems min van Grieks ouk!”

Jaap Furstenberg gaan voort: Senior mans word as “Gy” aangespreek, senior dames as “Geagte Gy”. Bewaar jou as jy sou verbyloop sonder om te groet – met neergeslane oë – al het jy die persoon al tien keer die oggend gesien! In gelid saal toe vir aandete na 'n hekelsessie voor die koshuis waar studente-*wit* sonder inhibisies vlieg.

So saam met Jaap deur dik en dun ... Die opwinding van eerstes: Jool, Dalrymple, Intervarsity, serenades oor en weer, die Vishuis-*rally* (fietswedren aangebied deur Abraham Fischer-tehuis) en Bungalows se Donkie-*Derby*, die Nonniewedstryd (nie-rugbyspelers van die twee manskoshuise) waar ek in die doodsnikke die gelykmakende drie kon druk – en Jaap dit verwyf! Daarna deur ooms(!) skouerhoog van die veld gedra.

Eksamentyd en 'n láááang vakansie

Ons tweede- en derdejaar verloop in hoofsaak volgens dieselfde studentेरitme van druk en pret. Groot Sakkie van Zyl, spoedig Vrystaatstut, later Springbok, en rietskraal Bennie de Kock, albei Dealesvillers, is kamermaats in dieselfde Bungalow as ons. Wanneer Jaap hulle twee langs mekaar sien stap, kom dit spontaan: “Ta-té, ta-té, tafa-tefe, tafa-tefe!”

Jaap en ek sluit albei aan by die Opmetingsbattery, 'n artillerie-eenheid van die weermag. Bywoning van drie opleidingskampe te Potchefstroom tydens die Junie- en jaareindvakansies was 'n aantreklike opsie om loting vir ononderbroke militêre opleiding van nege maande vry te spring. Ook UP en PU vir CHO het so 'n eenheid gehad. So ontmoet jy tydens kampe verskeie persone van ander universiteite wie se

paaie later weer met joune sou kruis. Ons eerste kamp, in die hittige Potchefstroomse somer, het hoofsaaklik uit basiese opleiding bestaan, dit wil sê paradedril. Uiteraard was nie alle instrukteurs (permanente weermagde) ewe bekwaam nie. 'n Jong bombardier (in die artillerie die ekwivalent van 'n korporaal) wat 'n ander peloton as ons s'n moes afrig, ondervind skynbaar probleme om dissipline te handhaaf. Sy wraakmaatreël: om die manne na 'n baken daar doer en terug te laat hardloop, gewere en al. Dit gebeur so herhaaldelik – tot groot vermaak van die res – dat hulle spoedig *the flying squad* gedoop word. Aan die einde van die kamp ongetwyfeld die fiksste van ons almal – in dié konteks egter 'n twyfelagtige eer.

Met die volgende twee kampe ontvang Jaap onderskeidelik opleiding as kanonnier en kwalifiseer hy vir 'n swaarvoertuiglisensie. Na weke se *army rations* maak die manne 'n punt daarvan om op die trein terug die restaurant se smaaklike spyskaart stelselmatig van bo tot onder te plunder – met komplimente van die weermag, oftewel die belastingbetaler. Drank is nou wel nie gratis nie, maar vir sommige is dit nie eens amper 'n beletsel nie. Terwyl die trein deur Orkney stoom, wil een van dié manne net met alle geweld die dorpie koop. Sy drinkebroer wil egter niks daarvan hoor om te verkoop nie! *In vino veritas??*

Jaap se tennis begin vorm kry. So ook tafeltennis en snoeker. Soms bietjie krieket in die nette saam met Pottie. Sy *forte* is egter skaak. Kovsies het daardie jare 'n besonder sterk skaakklub gehad. In die toernooi om die klubkampioenskap skakel hy sterk aanspraakmakers uit om uiteindelik met punte gelykop te trek met 'n ander uitbinker, Johan Steyn. Johan dring aan op 'n uitspeelwedstryd waarvoor Jaap glad nie lus was nie – die eksamen was om die draai – en Johan wen.

In die verenigingslewe op kampus speel Jaap 'n aktiewe rol. In die loop van sy studentetyd dien hy op die redaksie van *Inter Nos*, die blad van die Admissiebond; van *Die Calvinis*, orgaan van die Calvinistiese Studentevereniging, later as redakteur; en van *Shimla*, studentebld van die universiteit, in sy finale jaar as redakteur; hy word bestuurslid van die Admissiebond; die plaaslike tak van die Afrikaanse Studentebond; voorsitter van die Skaakvereniging; word op die Huiskomitee van Reitzsaal verkies en, in dieselfde jaar, as lid van die Studenteraad. Merkwaardig hoe mense se lewenspaaie kruis – en herkruis! Ook Sonja (Bell), tans Jaap se vrou, word in daardie jaar tot die Studenteraad verkies, met Christoff Hanekom, later haar eggenoot, as voorsitter.

Jaap verwerf die BA-graad (Admissie) *cum laude*, met onderskeiding in albei hoofvakke. Sy besluit was toe reeds geneem om met honneurs in wysbegeerte voort te gaan. Uiteindelik word dit ook my besluit. Sommige in die groep van vyf studeer buitemuurs, dus word die wekelijkse seminaarbesprekings saans gehou. Vormend en stimulerend, hierdie aandessies in Prof Rassie Venter se kantoor. Vroeg in die jaar het Jaap, in oorleg met Prof Venter, reeds op die onderwerp vir 'n meestersverhandeling besluit. Op kenmerkend planmatige wyse verdeel hy voortaan sy studietyd tussen

die voorbereiding van sy volgende seminaarinleiding en navorsing vir sy M. In die loop van die jaar maak hy met laasgenoemde reeds beduidende vordering.

Ook die honneursgraad behaal hy met lof. Die jaar daarop (1956) is ons op pad Stellenbosch toe vir studie in die teologie.

1956-1958: Teologiese Kweekskool, Stellenbosch

Losies as primêre nood!

Phil vertel: 'n Goeie vriendin van my suster, wat saam met haar in Kestell Dameskoshuis was, het met haar tannie op Stellenbosch ons driemanskap se nood gedeel. Gewapen met tant Nonnie Roux se adres (Noordwal 34, Stellenbosch) is ek en Rensia vroeër as wat die Universiteit sou begin na Stellenbosch. Tant Nonnie vertel ons van die probleem om op Stellenbosch goeie losies teen 'n billike prys te kry. Sy het egter met 'n vriendin daar naby gepraat en hulle het twee kamers beskikbaar. Ek is na Die Laan 5 met tant Nonnie se beoordeling van die gesin as waardevolle leidraad: "Die man is moeilik, maar sy vrou is baie gaaf!" Dit was inderdaad so. Toe ek klop, het 'n man met 'n rooi gesig die deur half ergerlik oopgemaak. Ek was nog besig om my sending te verduidelik toe roep hy oor sy skouer: "Hier's 'n student wat kom kyk na die kamers!" 'n Vriendelike donkerkop vrou het my ingenooi en die kamers op die eerste verdieping gaan wys. "Dit is net waarna ons soek", kon ek die transaksie beklink. Vir Jaap en Jaap kon ek laat weet: "Ons hét blyplek!" In plaas daarvan dat ek die kleiner kamer en hulle twee die groter een neem, besluit ons om die kleiner kamer die studeerkamer en die groter een die slaapkwartiere te maak. Ons het die twee kamers ingerig, die een met drie beddens en klerekassies en die ander, smaller vertrek met drie studeertafels en boekrakkies. Dit sou ook dien as ons "sitkamer" wanneer nodig. Etes neem ons aan huis van die alomgeliefde tannie Bess Joubert, op die winkelhaakhoek van Die Laan.

In dié tyd het ek die voorreg gehad om albei Jape nader te leer ken. Jaap Durand was altyd eerste uit die bed en het nooit laat sit en werk nie. Ek en Fursie kon (moes!) tot ounag werk. Jaap was ook altyd eerste klaar voorberei, maak nie saak wat dit was nie. Sy bed was eerste opgemaak en niks het onder die bed uitgesteek nie. Sy klere was reg versorg, sy studeertafel was ordelik en skoon, sy optrede gedissiplineerd met 'n immer aanvoelbare gedreweheid. Jaap kon moeilik wag, en sy stapspoed was dié van iemand wat laat was, maar uit bedagsaamheid vir die wat saamloop nie voluit hardloop nie! Hy het ook nooit, sover ek kan onthou, geloop en sing, fluit of raas nie. Ons het lekker saamgewoon, stimulerende gesprekke oor teologie, politiek en sport gevoer, heerlike grappe gedeel en dit ook geniet om stil te bly.

Teen September het Gert Marais my genader en gevra of ek nie sy stoepkamer in Groeneweide 4 wil oorneem nie, aangesien hy geleentheid kry om na die CSV-gebou terug te gaan. Hy het vooruit betaal tot die einde van die jaar en hy dra dit net so aan

my oor. Op daardie stadium het ek al vir my twee kameraats begin aandui dat die verhouding met ons huisbaas onnodige hitte opbou en dat ek oorweeg om 'n alternatief te soek. Die moontlikheid het my dus gepas. Ek is na Groeneweide 4 en hulle vanaf die begin van ons tweedejaar na die historiese Erfurthuisie wat in Ryneveldstraat 3 beskeie agter die groot eikeboomstam uitloer.

Nog 'n anekdote oor Jaap se stapspoed. Op 16 September 1958 het ek en Rensia verloof geraak. Ons het by Groeneweide 4 vir naaste vriende so 'n klein geselligheid gehad. Een van die vriendinne wat op pad was, vertel dat sy pas met haar fiets by Jaap verby is. "Hy kom met sulke lang galoppe aan!" sê sy so half uitasem. Sy het nie besef hy stap maar so nie!

Jaap Furstenberg vervolg: Kweekskool: Soveel verwagtings, indrukke, ontmoetings, geleenthede ... In die gemeenskaplike klasse van al vier jaargroepe is 'n mens getref deur die verskeidenheid: in universitêre agtergrond en vooropleiding; in ouderdom en senioriteit: van jangroentjies tot byna-dominees; in die tipe spiritualiteit; daar was die stilles en die veelvraers ... En tog 'n gemeenskap deur één roeping saamgesnoer.

Een van die dinge wat vir my uitstaan, is die vormende impak wat die professore op ons gehad het. Dikwels in die klasse, ja, maar ook met bidure wat hulle gelei het. Enkele boodskappe, in die besonder van Prof Pieter Verhoef, is steeds onuitwisbaar: oor Jara: 'n Besondere huwelik in Israel; of Maria Magdalena: Die klag van die liefde (sommige daarvan te vinde in die preekbundel van hom en sy skoonvader, Ds. ID Kruger: *Vrede op aarde*. Potchefstroom: "Die Evangelis", 1962). Dié waardering, weet ek, word volledig deur Jaap gedeel.

Ons was die kleinste Kweekskoolklas in baie jare, voor én na. Tog kon ons met interklas-krieket en -rugby ons behoorlik laat geld! Jaap se eerste liefde wat sport betref, bly egter tennis – tot vandag toe. Sy reputasie as skaakspeler bereik die ore van die Maties, en voor die intervarsity word hy genader om vir hulle deel te neem. Jaap is verras deur die versoek, maar ook onseker omdat hy nie gereeld speel nie en in Bloemfontein laas sterk teenstand gehad het. Eindelik laat hy hom tog ompraat. Hy moet boonop as nommer een speel. Om alles te kroon is Ikeys se nommer een Suid-Afrika se junior kampioen, ene Isaacson. Oor dit alles kon Jaap maar net lag. Dalk het die Maties gereken hulle gooi maar die onbekende faktor, Durand, vir die wolwe; niemand sou in elk geval die kampioen kon klop nie. Hoe dit sy, die Vrydagaand breek aan. Twaalf spelers oor ses borde gebuig. Heelwat belangstellendes. Mos Venter en ek sit by Jaap-hulle se tafel. Jaap trek swart. Met sy deeglike kennis van die teorie besluit hy op 'n minder gewone verdediging, maar een waarvoor hyself nogal lief was. Stille in die saal, net die afdruk van die skaakhorlosie se knoppie na 'n skuif. 'n Uur en meer van intense konsentrasie. Toe Jaap daarin slaag om 'n pion te wen is die skrif aan die muur. Na 'n verbete maar vergeefse eindpoging gee Isaacson die stryd gewonne. Die Maties

is jubelend. Nou lag Jaap éérs. Hy staan daarby dat die Hollandse sigaar wat hy gerook het Isaacson dronk gehad het.

In dieselfde jaar word Jaap as die klas se kandidaat vir die Kweekskool se redenaars-kompetisie gekies. Sy toespraak handel oor die vakbondwese, ook as politieke drukgroep. Willie Human, derdejaar, word as wenner aangewys vir sy netjiese hantering van die onderwerp *Die Christendom en die ateïsme*.

In die loop van sy eerste Kweekskooljaar rond Jaap sy M-verhandeling finaal af. Dit handel oor Calvyn se beskouing oor die reg van burgerlike vernet teen onregmatige optrede van die owerheid (sien bibliografie in hierdie bundel). Is die grondslag hier reeds gelê vir sy latere onverskrokke insette teen die apartheidsideologie en -praktyk? Op grond van sy verhandeling word 'n Uniebeurs vir gevorderde studie in die buiteland in 1957 aan hom toegeken. Op sy versoek word uitstel verleen om die beurs na voltooiing van sy derde studiejaar in teologie op te neem. Hy kan hom dus reeds op doktorsale studie in Nederland begin instel: Sendingwetenskap onder die gevierde JH Bavinck.

Teen die einde van 1957 voel Jaap buitengewoon uitgeput – met die uitgerekte tweedejaarseksamen wat voorlê. Prof Potgieter, met sy sielkunde-agtergrond, raai hom aan om dit in die komende weke net baie rustig te neem en sy voorbereiding heel vlugtig te doen. Jaap neem dié advies ter harte, en – dít mag ek nie nalaat nie, al is dit dalk sy bes bewaarde geheim: Terwyl ons ander alles insit (vir my was dié eksamen die veeleisendste van almal!) verwyf Jaap sy ure met Agatha Christie! Met sy spoedleesvaardigheid en die dorpsbiblioteek gerieflik naby, verorber hy (geen ander woord sal pas nie!) gedurende die eksamentyd nie minder nie as – 18? 21? – slapband Christies. En die uitkoms? Hy haal die vakansie, rus behoorlik uit, en – reg geraai – behaal loshande die hoogste persentasie. *You just can't keep a really good man down!* Korreksie! Jaap self sou eerder wou sê: Genade, onbeskryflik groot ...

Uit ons derdejaar noem ek Jaap se klaspreek oor Hosea 2:14: “Dan sal Ek ... gee ... die dal Agor tot 'n deur van hoop ...”, met die tema: *Deur verbryseling tot verlossing* – 'n preek wat by baie van ons onuitwisbaar bly vassteek het (later, enigsins verwerk, opgeneem in *Die Volle Raad*. Bloemfontein: Sacum, 1972). Verder, sy referaat oor Calvyn en die ekumene, gelewer by 'n Teologiese Dag op Stellenbosch. Die saak van die ekumene is toe reeds by hom 'n teologiese impuls. Vanaf sy proefskrif in 1961 (sien bibliografie) sou dit hoe langer hoe meer tot ryping kom.

Ook aan die Kweekskool neem Jaap aktief aan die verenigingslewe deel. Hy dien op die redaksie van *Polumnia*; as bestuurslid van die Konfessie-vereniging, die Calvinistiese Studentebond en die TSSV (Teologiese Studente Sendingvereniging). Sondagoggende sit hy agter die stuur van die lang slap Hudson op pad na Langa vir persoonlike gesprekke in die mansverblyf.

JAAP DURAND FESTSCHRIFT

In die loop van ons derdejaar oorreed Jaap my om hom vir verdere studie in Nederland te vergesel. Ons voorbereidings begin en Amsterdam en die Vrije Universiteit begin wink ...

1959-1961: Doktorale studie, Amsterdam

Op 28 Desember 1958 vertrek ons uit Kaapstad-hawe, aan boord die *Bloemfontein*. 'n Baie emosionele afskeid vir Jaap en Randu wat toe pas verloof geraak het! Sy sou later eers by Jaap kom aansluit.

'n Vyfstervakansie op die boot – lees, tafeltennis, brug en ander speletjies en kompetisies. Ons land in 'n witgesneeude Antwerpen. Per bus na Amsterdam waar Bethel Müller ons ontmoet. Ons bekom *pension* (losies) by Roemer Visscherstraat 36, twee hoog. Spoedig ontmoet ons van die ander Suid-Afrikaners wat, in verskeie vakrigtings, in Amsterdam of elders in Nederland studeer. Dit gebeur veral by die maandelikse Koffietafel in die gebou van die NZAV (Nederlands-Zuid-Afrikaanse Vereniging), rondom 'n boterham en koffie. Mettertyd leer ons, behalwe Hollandse, ook ander buitelandse studente ken – uit die VSA, Kanada, Korea, Switserland ... Groot name aan die VU het destyds studente van oraloor gelok.

Ons eerste klasse in Kuyper se stigting aan die Keizersgracht – beroemdes in lewende lywe! Oor en tong begin aan die Hollandse tongval gewoon raak. Spoedig volg afsprake met professore om bestekke vir ons eerste byvakke te kry, en sake neem 'n ernstige wending! Fietse word bekom by die rommelmark op Waterlooplein. Jaap is meer bedrewe om die tremspore in die middel van die straat te ontwyk, maar ek besorg hom 'n “binnenpretje” met my eerste val – voorwiel in 'n tremspoor! Hoofmaaltye by die studentemensa waar ons naas ander eksotiese disse andyvie en postelein leer ken – redelik effektiewe eetlusdempers, selfs vir 'n honger student! Gaan stort by die openbare badhuis; anders as in antieke Rome, wél private hokkies. Wasgoed eichandig, drup-en-droog.

Vroeg in 1959, op vriendelike uitnodiging van oom Dawid en tannie Anna de Villiers, bring ons saam met hulle 'n blitsbesoek aan Engeland en Skotland – rondom oom Dawid gebeur alles blitsig! Ervaringshorisonne vinnig aan 't verruim. Bibber in 'n tentjie op die walle van die Firth! Teen die middel van die jaar arriveer Randu, en sy en Jaap word deur oom Dawid in die huwelik bevestig. Prof en Mev Bavinck maak kennis met 'n Boerebruilof! Phil haal uit sy lêer 'n koerantfoto van die huwelikspaar: “Dit het julle vir my en Rensia nog na Stellenbosch gepos!”

Wat ek lankal geweet het, bereik in Holland 'n nuwe hoogtepunt: die verbluffende tempo waarteen Jaap werk, kennis absorbeer en insig ontwikkel! Hy handel die tentamens een na die ander af, byvakke én hoofvak, en skeduleer die doktorale eksamen teen die einde van 1959. Deurtastende vrae oor al die betrokke vakke deur die paneel professore. Dan gee Bavinck hom die opdrag vir die berugte “swartweek-

skripsie” – ’n akademiese eufemisme vir ’n Middeleeuse martelmetode. Dit moet afgehandel wees vir die tweede byeenkoms presies ’n week later, met ’n kopie wat op die laatste die vorige aand aan elke professor voorsien moet word. Die onderwerp: “Die sendingbegrip van Karl Barth”. Praat van studentesolidariteit! Almal skarrel biblioteke toe (ook dié van die Stedelijke Universiteit) vir relevante literatuur; sommige probeer help met leeswerk. Ek vermoed ons ander was meer in Jaap se pad as iets anders; ons werklike hulp was so ongeveer omgekeerd eweredig aan ons oorywerigheid, maar wellewende aristokraat wat hy is, laat Jaap daar niks van merk nie! Met sy kenmerkende planmatigheid en vlugheid van verstand word die opdrag betyds en keurig uitgevoer. Die finale bespreking vind plaas, en Jaap is voortaan doktorandus Durand! Soos in sy honneursjaar, doen hy tussendeur reeds leeswerk vir sy proefskrif. Sy onderwerp is reeds helder in sy kop, en relevante data word aangestip en sistematies georden.

In die somer van ’60 deurkruis Jaap, Randu en ek Wes-Europa in ’n Volla. Ons draai eers by Sorrento terug. Enkele flitse uit ’n reeks wonderlike indrukke: ’n foto van hulle twee voor die naambord van ’n rivier in die land van hulle albei (Randu was ’n nooi du Rand) se Hugenote-herkoms: *La Durance*; ’n staptog in die Alpe, mistig, koeiklokke in die verte; Schiller se *Wilhelm Tell* op ’n opelugverhoog; met die tandrattrentjie na die kruin van die Jungfrau; Michelangelo se Pietà, nee, álles van hom! En van Da Vinci! Klein teleurstellings: ’n Lek band verhinder ons om Capri te besoek; en voor die Fra Angelico-museum in Rome moet ons omdraai met die lire-deel van ons begrotings uitgeput. Behoue terug, en ’n warm bad aan huis van Bethel en Helen!

Tussendeur die akademiese program, ander, kort wegbreke: ’n weektoer van ons drie plus Emil Pretorius na Parys; hulle twee saam met Hennie en Hester Rossouw Engeland toe; ’n naweek na Friesland en Groningen, vergesel van Koos en Annemarie Stofberg. Diep in gesprek, as ek reg onthou oor die situasie in Suid-Afrika, herinner Jaap ons by ’n kruising dat ons darem op die verkeersligte moet let! Onmiddellik kom dit van Koos: “As hulle ons aanvat, sê ons net ons is van Suid-Afrika – ons het daar net wit en swart ligte!” Nog selde was ’n lag met ’n traan só waar! Dit was die jaar van Sharpeville!

Onder Amsterdam se vele uniekhede, ’n wandeling deur die sprokieswoud van ’n Vondelpark na ’n nagtelike sneeuval gevolg deur vriesweer – die takke met ’n dof-glimmende yslagie bedek; onvergeetlike uitvoerings in die Concertgebouw wat ek saam met hulle kon meemaak: Bach se Matteus-passie; Beethoven se vyfde en negende simfonieë; ook die film *Porgy and Bess* (met Sidney Poitier) was vir ons ’n aangrypende ervaring.

Jaap se navorsing vorder intussen flink. Finale afronding geskied, onderhandelinge met ’n uitgewer vind plaas en op 27 Januarie 1961 verdedig hy sy proefskrif *Una sancta catholica in sendingperspektief* onder promotorskap van Prof Jan van den

Berg (Prof Bavinck het toe reeds uitgetree). Jaap het Hennie Rossouw gevra om as *opponens* op te tree. Hennie se kritiese vraag en Jaap se beredeneerde antwoord verseker dat die plegtigheid op 'n hoë noot afskop. As "*Hora est!*" presies 'n uur later klink, kan die *promovendus* die podium as *Doctor Theologiae* verlaat.

Enkele dae na bereiking van hierdie besondere mylpaal in Jaap en Randu se lewe vertrek hulle per boot terug na Suid-Afrika.

1961-1964: NG Sending, Cala, Ciskei

Insake kerkeenheid en -verdeeldheid en die impak daarvan op die sendingsituasie, ook in Suid-Afrika, bevat *Una sancta* verskeie vernuwende, Skrifgefundeerde insigte en aksente. Terwyl dit by sommige vreugdevolle instemming vind, veroorsaak dit ook rimpelings van argwaan by invloedryke figure in die NG Kerk. 'n Sendeling moet vir Port Elizabeth beroep word. As dinamiese persoon met 'n sterk aangetrokkenheid tot stedelike sending is Jaap 'n logiese kandidaat. Besware uit die geleedere van die Sendingraad van Port Elizabeth, ongeartikuleerd, verhinder egter dat dit realiseer. Skynbaar speel die verweefdheid van politieke beleid en kerklike praktyk 'n meer bepalende rol as die *sola Scriptura* wat ook deur die beswaarmakers bely word. Jaap is deur dié wending redelik stom geslaan. Met kerkpolitiekery-agter-die-skerms was hy immers nog nie vertrouwd nie. Later sou hy besef, in die oë van sommige was hy toe reeds "iemand om dop te hou"! Dit verg 'n heroriëntering toe die beroep na Cala volg, en Jaap en Randu begin hulle instel op sending in die Ciskei.

Dit was in hierdie tyd, so vertel Phil, dat Jaap en Randu van Villiers af deurgery het na Vanderbijlpark "waar Phil ook was". Ek en Rensia was in die NG-gemeente Vanderbijlpark-Oos. Ons het net ingetrek in die pasgeboude pastorie in Evereststraat 50. Behalwe vir die koerantfoto van 1959 sien ons Randu vir die eerste keer. Ons het die dag lekker gekuier en wyd gesels oor sy proefskrif en die land se verwikkelde kerklike en politieke sake – Sharpeville en Cottesloe was nog vlak in die geheue. Ek was saam met hom verwonderd oor die beroep na die Baai wat so raaiselagtig nek omgedraai is.

Jaap Furstenberg hervat: Cala in die Ciskei: 'n Sendingstasie met 'n uitgebreide personeel: Die voorsitter van die Ciskei Sendingraad, Hannes Venter en sy gesin woon op die stasie; 'n sendingboer en -bouer en hul eggenotes; verpleegsters, geestelike werksters en die matrone van die damestehuis. Vir Jaap as stasiehoof beteken dit 'n veeltal verantwoordelikhede: Benewens die gereelde eredienste en bidure, elke oggend vroeg Bybelstudie met die personeel, besoeke aan evangeliste by die buiteposte in die uitgestrekte gebied, toesig oor die bouprogramme, betrokkenheid by die skool, plaasskole en die teringhospitaal, reëlings vir die jaarlikse vergadering van die Sendingraad met sy kommissies en verslae, bespreking en aanbevelings – kompleet 'n mini-sinode ...

Begin '62 het ek die voorreg gehad om vir 'n leerryke praktiese ervaring 'n maand lank op Cala deur te bring waar ek die werkprogram en normale gang van sake op 'n sendingstasie eerstehands kon meemaak, onder andere 'n veldtog in 'n "rou" gebied: Persoonlike besoeke aan huise bedags en saamtrekke saans in die groot markceent waar die saad van die blye boodskap gesaai word, begelei deur baie sang, soos bekend die Xhosa se *forte*. Gedurende dié maand tref dit my hoe skynbaar moeiteloos Jaap 'n greep het op soveel uiteenlopende werksaamhede. Piet Jonas, self 'n deurwinterde sendeling, maak op 'n keer die raak opmerking: "Jaap Durand maak 'n mens jaloers met die manier waarop hy werk".

Akademie lees-, dink- en skryfwerk bly intussen nie agterweë nie. Behalwe artikels in bundels en tydskrifte (vir die jare 1961-64, sien bibliografie) werk hy aan *Christelike sending – allesomvattende roeping* wat in 1964 verskyn. Verrassend en verruimend, deurdat hy hierin op oorspronklike wyse die gereformeerde aksent: die eer van God op alle lewensterreine met die sendingwetenskaplike konsep van die *comprehensive approach* integreer! Tipies Jaap – immer vernuwend besig.

Sy bediening op Cala word einde 1964 afgesluit met sy beroep na Kwazakhele, Port Elizabeth – eindelik wel! Hier sou Jaap op 'n nuwe wyse waarlik in sy element kom. Daarmee word dit tyd om aan Phil die woord te gee.

1965-1973: Kwazakhele, NG Kerk in Afrika

Toe ons as gesin aan die begin van 1965 in Port Elizabeth aankom, was Jaap en Randu tot ons verrassing reeds 'n paar maande daar. Dit was die eerste keer dat ons mekaar sedert 1961 weer sien. Wat die verrassing nog groter gemaak het, was die ontdekking dat hulle binne ons gemeentegrense woon. Aangesien ons onderskeie werkterreine ons redelik besig gehou het, het ons mekaar nie te dikwels gesien nie. Jaap het meer gereeld met Piet Jonas van Alexandria geskakel vanweë gedeelde belange in die gemeentes en ring. Ons het mekaar meer begin sien soos wat ons kinders groter geword en oor-en-weer begin kuier het. Verder het ek Jaap se bydraes by die Sending- en Evangelisasierade van Port Elizabeth insiggewend en stimulerend gevind. Dit was in dié tyd dat een van my gemeente-ouderlinge Jaap met 'n diep vraag vasgepen het. Hy wou van Jaap weet waarom hy nie ook verder gaan leer het en 'n dominee in die NG Kerk geword het nie. Jaap, op daardie stadium die enigste leraar in Port Elizabeth met 'n doktorsgraad in teologie, was half onduidelik oor die antwoord wat hy die broer gegee het! Ek kon Jaap daarna wanneer probleme opduik daaraan herinner dat hy nie ver genoeg gaan leer het nie!

In 1968 word ek na die NG Kerk in Afrika, Newbrihton beroep. Nou is Jaap en ek leraars in buurgemeentes. Ek léér Xhosa, Jaap práát Xhosa. Hy is voorsitter van die ring van Alexandria, ek word skriba. Ons sien mekaar nou meer dikwels – ook

as gesinne. Jaap nooi ons saam om sy vorige werkplek Cala te gaan besoek. Dit was duidelik dat hy in die sowat vier jaar daar heelwat vermag het.

Terwyl ek stoei met die Xhosa-konstruksies en die klapklanke sonder om my vingers te wil gebruik, beny ek Jaap se gemaklike gebruik van die taal in gesproke en geskrewe vorm. In sowel die gemeentelike as ringswerkzaamhede was dit duidelik dat Jaap almal se vertrouwe geniet het en moeitevry kon kommunikeer. Die weeklikse Bybelstudie met kerkraadslede en ander werkkragte wat ek met hom meegemaak het, was uitsonderlik, sowel as sy vermoë om by ringsvergaderings of konferensies ingewikkelde sake te ontleed en op 'n verstaanbare wyse oor te dra. In sy Bybelstudies met die kerkraad het hy onder andere gebruik gemaak van 'n katkisasieboekie wat reeds te Cala opgestel en gebruik is. Hierdie *Lisisibane izwi lakho* (U Woord is 'n lamp) is in sewe ander Afrikatale sowel as in Afrikaans vertaal, en baie duisende daarvan is mettertyd versprei. Verder was dit veral met tugsake wat voor ringskommissies of ringsvergaderings gedien het dat Jaap se insig in die kerkreg sowel as in die kulturele agtergrond van die betrokke partye na vore gekom het. Sy gawe in konflikhantering het toe reeds deur die eerste proeflopië gegaan. Gedurende die latere gedeelte van sy bediening in Port Elizabeth dien hy in die NG Kerk in Afrika as moderator van die Streeksinode Kaapland en aktuaris van die Algemene Sinode. Benewens die weeklikse werkdrag, was Jaap ook sistematies besig met die empiriese opname oor swart mense se siening van hulleself en hulle lewe in die stad. Dié navorsing is tot 'n publikasie verwerk en in 1970 gepubliseer as *Swartman, stad en toekoms*. Die boek het wye mediadekking geniet en baie wit Suid-Afrikaners se oë geopen vir die haglike sosio-ekonomiese bestaan van hulle swart stedelike landgenote – en die politieke implikasies daarvan.

In 1972 skei ons paaie. Ek gaan na die Teologiese Opleidingskool vir Evangeliste en Leraars van die NG Kerk in Afrika te Decoligny en Jaap vertrek kort daarna na die Teologiese Skool vir die NG Sendingkerk aan die Fakulteit Teologie, Universiteit van Wes-Kaapland. Tot sover Phil.

1973-1995: Fakulteit Teologie, UWK

Jaap Furstenberg voeg in: Spoedig ontvou steeds nuwe talente. Met sy sistematiese aanleg, filosofiese agtergrond en jarelange intense belangstelling in dogmatiek, het Jaap reeds in sy Kwazakhele-periode vir 'n tweede rondte doktorsale studie ingeskryf. Sy bestudering van Thomas Aquinas en grondlyne wat van Thomas af deurgetrek word na die modernistiese subjektivisme sedert die *Aufklärung* stel hom in staat om sy teologiese vleuels wyd te span. In 1974 promoveer hy onder Prof FJM Potgieter, met Prof WD Jonker as mede-eksaminator, op die onderwerp *Heilsgeskiedenis en die dialektiek van syn en denke*.

Nog is 't einde niet. 'n Tekenbord en bybehore word aangeskaf, en hy ontwerp self hulle huis in Stellenbosch. Daarna word hy genader om 'n kerksentrum vir die destydse NG

Sendingkerk in Port Elizabeth te ontwerp. Later sou hy en Sonja ook hulle huidige tuiste in Koloniesland self beplan.

Phil hervat: Aan die einde van 1975 word ek ook na die Teologiese Skool vir die NG Sendingkerk aan UWK beroep. Dit bring mee dat Jaap en ek vanaf April 1976 weer saam in dieselfde werkplek is. Jaap se geskiedenis in die akademie, spesifiek by UWK, speel dus vir die volgende negentien jaar af teen die agtergrond van die moontlik onbenullige frase “waar Phil ook was”. Die onbenydenswaardige lot het my getref dat ek pas na ’n maand gekies word as sekretaris van sowel die Fakulteit as die Raad van Dosente van die NG Sendingkerk. In 1978 het Jaap by Prof Ernst Holzapfel oorgeneem as dekaan. Dit was moeilike tye. Studente se gemoedere loop hoog, klasse word ontwig, indringende gesprekke word met studentegroepe gevoer, die personeel het meer nood- as geskeduleerde vergaderings, die viering van die 50-jarige bestaan van die Teologiese Opleiding vir die NG Sendingkerk word deur slegs ’n klein groepie oudstudente bygewoon, terwyl die jonger garde dit eenvoudig boikot. Dit is ook die tyd dat ernstige aandag aan ’n geïntegreerde model vir teologiese opleiding gegee word aan die hand van ’n ontwerp wat deur Jaap en my opgestel is. Twee nuwe kollegas sluit by die Fakulteit aan, te wete Prof Chris Botha in Kerkgeskiedenis en Kerkreg en Prof Daan Cloete in Nuwe Testament. In 1981 word Jaap aangestel as adjunk-*vis*-kanselier van die UWK en Prof Chris Botha word in sy plek as dekaan gekies. Dr Dirkie Smit word as Jaap se opvolger in die departement Dogmatiek en Eteiek deur die kerk beroep en deur die universiteit aangestel. Dit is ook die eeufeesjaar van die bestaan van die NG Sendingkerk. Die feesvierings word in omstredenheid gedompel en deur alternatiewe byeenkomste geboikot. Ek gaan in die tweede semester met studieverlof om my proefskrif te voltooi. In 1982 word die kampusonrus sterk aangevoel in die Sinode van die NG Sendingkerk. Die Sinode neem op voorstel van Dr Allan Boesak die besluit en verklaring van die Wêreldbond van Gereformeerde Kerke te Ottawa oor en verklaar ’n *status confessionis* met die NG Kerk. Die NG Kerk se reaksie hierop ruk die Teologiese Skool tot stilstand met die studente wat die verwydering van alle voltydse en deeltydse NG Kerk gelegitimeerde dosente eis, asook dat alle literatuur wat deur NGK teoloë geskryf is uit die leerplanne en van die rakke van die biblioteek verwyder word. Jaap moet telkens van die sentrale kampus oorkom om te kom help bemiddel.

Aan die einde van 1984 kom Prof Botha se dekaanskap tot ’n einde. Ek word verkies vir die tydperk 1985-86. Nou is ek en Jaap weer saam in verskeie senaatskomitees waarvan die Uitvoerende Komitee en die Aanstellingskomitee die belangrikste was. Onnodig om te sê, alle vergaderings van die senaat en senaatskomitees, fakulteitsrade en -komitees is deur die gespanne kampus- en landtoestande in ’n openlike of bedekte strydterrein omskep tussen diegene met begrip vir die situasie en dié wat niks daarvan wou weet nie. Buitengewone hoë eise is aan Jaap gestel. Telkens moes hy in die brandpunte intree en beslissings neem wat uiteraard nie alle partye tevrede kon stel nie. Desondanks het hy die studente se vertroue behou en

'n sleutelrol gespeel om die UWK deur die krisis te help lei. My tweede termyn as dekaan, 1987-1988, het beteken dat ek vir die duur van die diepste krisis op kampus en in die land deel was van die amptelike besluitneming. Gedurende dié tyd het ons in een week nie minder nie as 89 uur aan vergaderings en noodvergaderings bestee – dit het die Saterdag en die Sondag ingesluit. Na my dekaansdiens het ek 'n jaar dekaansverlof gehad – Prof Gerwel het dit “siekteverlof” genoem.

In 1994 is Prof Daan Cloete wat toe dekaan was, deur die Raad gevra om as waarnemende rektor op te tree en het ek in sy plek eers waarnemende en spoedig volle dekaan geword. Weer was die Fakulteit Teologie se koors hoog. In Maart is die eenwordingsinode van die NG Sendingkerk en die NG Kerk in Afrika in Belhar gehou en het die Verenigende Gereformeerde Kerk in Suider-Afrika, nie sonder die nodige drama nie, tot stand gekom. In April is die eerste landswyse verkiesing in die nuwe bedeling gehou.

Op daardie stadium was die voortbestaan van die Fakulteit Teologie as sodanig vanweë verskillende ontwikkelinge ernstig onder bespreking. In 'n eerste stap het die universiteit by monde van Jaap 'n aanbod aan die kuratorium van die VGKSA (Kaapland) gemaak om die gronde en geboue by die kerk oor te neem. Terwyl die kerk nog daarvoor aan die dink was, is die fakulteit deur die rektor Prof Abrahams, gesteun deur die vise-rektor Prof Ndebele, gekonfronteer met die onaantvaarbaarheid van so 'n fasiliteit vir 'n enkele kerklike denominasie aan 'n staatsondersteunde tersiêre inrigting. Die fakulteit is ingelig dat die voortbestaan daarvan getermineer, en godsdiens- en teologie-studies as 'n departement binne die Fakulteit Lettere ingerig gaan word.

Hierdie woelinge rondom die kerklike teologiese opleiding het nuwe spanninge geskep. Dit was Jaap egter gespaar om enduit hierdie tussengrond tussen die universiteit en die VGKSA te beman, aangesien hy besluit het om aan die einde van 1995 uit diens te tree. Dit alles het gebeur “waar Phil ook was”. Ek kon dus teenwoordig wees om Jaap te groet. Mooi loop, Jaap!

(Vir 'n groot deel van Jaap se UWK-jare het Phil en Daan albei 'n pad saam met hom geloop. Dit is daarom sinvol om ook Daan se perspektief te verneem.)

1981-1994: Vise-rektor UWK; waarnemende vise-kanselier

My eerste ontmoeting met Jaap Durand het saamgeval met my aanvaarding in 1979 van die pos in Nuwe Testament in die Fakulteit Teologie aan die UWK. Tog was hy voorheen vir my geen vreemdeling nie; sy naam was toe al onder ons bekend as iemand wat duidelik laat blyk het waar hy staan in die kerklike en politieke stryd van dié jare.

In die periode 1968-1972 was ek predikant te Worcester-Suid. Tydens die Sinode van die NG Sendingkerk wat toe nog in Worcester vergader het, is die Broederkring in ons pastorie gestig. Dit was die samesmelting van twee predikanteverenigings wat onderskeidelik in die NG Kerk in Afrika en die NG Sendingkerk bestaan het, en die voorloper van die latere Belydende Kring. Die doel was die bevordering van eenwording van die NG Kerkfamilie. Toe reeds is uit die Oos-Kaapse geleedere van die NGKA die naam van Jaap genoem. Kort daarna is ek na Nederland waar my pad op 'n interessante wyse met dié van Jaap gekruis het. Hy was toe reeds professor aan die UWK en saam met 'n kerklike afvaardiging op besoek in Nederland. Hulle sou ook 'n besoek aan Kampen bring, waar daar destyds 'n hele aantal Suid-Afrikaners met verdere studie besig was. In dié tyd was daar by byna alle tersiêre inrigtings in Nederland 'n vuurwarm diskussie oor die akademiese boikot van Suid-Afrika aan die gang. Die vraag was: Gaan ons die delegasie ontmoet en te woord staan of nie? Met die steun van die plaaslike studente was die antwoord natuurlik 'n ferm Nee! Ek het nie heeltemal saamgestem nie, maar moes my by die meerderheidsgevoele neerlê. Later sou ek verneem dat dit Jaap nie eintlik ontstel het nie en hy heeltemal begrip daarvoor gehad het – 'n aanduiding van die soort persoon wat hy is.

Jaap was al 'n tyd lank dekaan van die fakulteit toe ek in 1979 daar aansluit en hom vir die eerste keer van aangesig tot aangesig ontmoet. Dit was baie gou vir my duidelik dat hy alreeds 'n geweldige invloed binne die fakulteit uitgeoefen het, veral vanweë die proses van herstrukturering wat aan die gang was. Aanvanklik het die fakulteit naamlik die tradisionele patroon gevolg van 'n vooropleiding in lettere, gevolg deur die teologiese opleiding. Onder sy leiding is daar toe na 'n geïntegreerde model omgeskakel, met teologiese vakke reeds in die vroeëre opleiding vir die B.Th.-graad. Dié model is later deur ander teologiese fakulteite in die land nagevolg. My aanstelling was juis deel van hierdie herstrukturering. Maar ook Jaap se teologiese kennis en benadering het sterk tot die groeiende aantal *struggle*-bewuste studente gespreek en hulle standpunte van 'n deeglike teologiese grondslag voorsien. Hy het nie maar net die tradisionele en in baie opsigte irrelevante gereformeerde dogmatiek gedoseer nie, maar saam met hulle tekste gelees wat direk aangesluit het by die vrae waarmee hulle aan die worstel was.

Op die breër front van die universiteit as sodanig was egter nog groter dinge aan die gebeur waarby Jaap ten nouste betrokke was. Die ideologiese grondslag waarop die universiteit tot stand gekom het, is nou bevraagteken, nie net deur swartbewussynstudente nie, maar ook deur krities ingestelde dosente. Van owerheidskant was die ideologiese oogmerk: UWK moet 'n universiteit vir die Kleurlinge wees. Vir die studente daarenteen, was die universiteit 'n ideale saamtrepunt om juis hierteen te protesteer, terwyl dit vir krities ingestelde dosente die geleentheid gebied het om teoretiese vrae oor die wese van 'n universiteit aan die orde te stel.

Hierdie omstandighede het tot boeiende debatte gelei, veral in die Senaat. Senaatsittings is in die teologiese saal gehou met die rektor, Prof Van der Ross, as voorsitter. Die swart/bruin gesigte op die Senaat kon jy destyds op jou twee hande tel. Die meerderheid dosente het dit as hul roeping beskou om ten alle koste die universiteit se missie binne die owerheidsraamwerk van apartheid te verdedig. Teenoor hulle het die klein minderheid gestaan wat 'n verbete stryd gevoer het om die UWK tot 'n internasionaal gerespekteerde universiteit te omskep. Hierin het Jaap 'n leidende rol gespeel, gesteun deur persone soos Ulrich Pluddemann, Jannie Malan, Stan Ridge, Pieter le Roux en andere. Dit was 'n stryd wat deur die sewentiger- tot in die negentigerjare geduur en baie spanning meegebring het.

Jaap was die eerste vise-rektor aan die UWK. Vanweë UWK se beeld as 'n sentrum van groeiende verset teen die apartheidsbeleid het die universiteit geweldig populêr geword. Selfs vanuit die noorde van die land het studente in groot getalle daarheen gestroom. Dit was ook die tyd van die opkoms van die swartbewussynsbeweging, 'n beweging wat die staat aanvanklik heeltemal verkeerd gelees het as sou dit in lyn wees met die apartheid Bantostan-denke. Toe dit gou duidelik word dat dit eerder aansluit by die bevrydings- en swartmagdenke onderskeidelik van Latyns- en Noord-Amerika, het die owerhede hard probeer toeslaan by die UWK. Studente (insluitende teologie-studente) is aangehou by Victor Verster en Jaap moes hulle gereeld gaan besoek. Toe 'n groep van agt swart dosente waaronder Prof Gerwel ook aangehou is, het Jaap met ondersteuning van 'n groot groep akademici op kampus 'n direkte skrywe van protes aan Staatspresident PW Botha gerig, waarop 'n bedekte dreigende antwoord ontvang is.

Maar daar moes deeglik beplan en bestuur word by 'n vinnig groeiende instelling. Jaap was daarvoor die aangewese persoon. Wat almal verbaas het, was die wyse waarop hierdie teoloog nie net insig getoon het in die akademiese beplanning nie, maar ook in finansiële strategie en veral in die oprigting van nuwe fisiese geriewe, in so 'n mate dat die universiteit uit hoë kringe vir sy argitektoniese gehalte erkenning gekry het.

Alhoewel Jaap se verantwoordelikheid as vise-rektor sy volle aandag vereis het, het hy tog nog tyd gevind om betrokke te bly by die kerk waar die worsteling om tot kerkeenheid te kom onverpoos voortgeduur het. Jaap was lid van die Belydende Kring wat hom beywer het vir eenwording. Dit was ook die dae waartydens diegene wat lede was van die geheime Broederbond ontmasker is.

Die jaar 1982 was 'n dramatiese een op kerklike gebied. Die Wereldbond van Gereformeerde Kerke het in Augustus in Ottawa, Kanada vergader. Alle Suid-Afrikaanse kerke van gereformeerde belydenis was lid daarvan. Voorafgaande aan die byeenkoms het dit al internasionaal gegons oor die kwessie van die teologiese regverdiging wat die wit kerke aan die apartheidsbeleid gegee het. Dit het ook die

bespreking op die Sinode oorheers en gelei tot die aanvaarding van 'n *status confessionis* asook die verkiesing van Allan Boesak as president van die Wereldbond. Kort daarna vergader die NG Sendingkerk se sinode in Belhar en word die besluite van Ottawa goedgekeur. Die Sinode word toe gekonfronteer met die behoefte om teenoor hierdie teologiese kettery die waarheid duidelik te maak. Die sinode stel hierop 'n kommissie saam om 'n konsep-belydenis op te stel. Dit het bestaan uit dr Boesak, ds Mentoor en proff Bam, Durand en Smit. Dit was vanselfsprekend dat die twee dogmatici met die opstel hiervan 'n belangrike rol sou speel. Vandag word algemeen aanvaar dat die outeurs wat die grondwerk vir die Belydenis van Belhar gedoen het, Durand en Smit was. In 'n *Oomblik van Waarheid* (1984) wat daarop gevolg het, het hulle bydraes waardevolle toeligting bevat.

Met die aftrede van prof Richard van der Ross het die universiteit 'n nuwe era binnegegaan. Dit het gelei tot die aanstelling van prof Jakes Gerwel saam met wie Jaap 'n besondere tweemanskap gevorm het. Vanweë hulle uitstekende verstandhouding en goeie vriendskap kon hulle die universiteit deur baie moeilike vaarwaters stuur. Onder andere het dit meegebring dat hulle, met die ondersteuning van ander dosente, in krisistye soms letterlik tussen betogende studente en avontuurlustige polisiemanne in Modderdamweg moes gaan staan (Jaap het as aandenking 'n rubberkoeël wat hom 'n keer rakelings gemis het); met studente moes onderhandel wat slegs eise stel en akademiese werksaamhede ontwig as daaraan nie voldoen word nie; met werkers moes worstel wat altyd maar weer hoër lone eis; met 'n owerheid moes stoei wat dreig om die inrigting finansieel te straf as daar nie aan hulle eis om "die kommuniste op kampus" uit te lewer, gehoor gegee word nie; onder die heimlike arendsoë van die veiligheidspolisie moes leef en werk; meeluistering moes hanteer; ensovoorts! Intussen moes die normale werksaamhede aandag kry, wat ingehou het dat goedgekwalifiseerde aanstellings gemaak word; hoë gehalte akademiese aktiwiteite voortgaan; wyse finansiële bestuur verseker word; visioenêre fisiese beplanning gedoen word; betekenisvolle nasionale en internasionale kontakte opgebou word; ensovoorts. In dit alles het die tweemanskap besondere leierskap getoon.

Dit was veeleisende tye, in vele opsigte. Vir Jaap was dit sekerlik geen grap om soms op die nippertjie na fisiek aangeval te word nie; om by tye in die nag uit jou bed gehaal te word om by hostelle botsende partye uitmekaar te gaan haal nie; om by sommige kollegas verdag te wees omdat jy die landsbeleid nie wil steun en bevorder nie, of met ander te make kry wat steeds nog jou opregtheid betwyfel; om teenoor mense standpunt in te neem met wie jy dit ten diepste eens was oor die saak waarvoor hulle veg, maar vir wie jy dan ook daarvan moet weerhou om nie alles te vernietig nie. Dit is die soort worstelinge waarmee Jaap in dié tyd te kampe gehad het en wat waarskynlik sy gedagtes 24 uur van die dag besig gehou het. Daarby kom dan nog sy intense betrokkenheid by die kerk, met name sy insette om die proses van kerkeenheid te probeer bevorder. Onthou, dit was ook die spanningsvolle tyd van die afkondiging van 'n *status confessionis* in die

NG Sendingkerk (1982), die totstandkoming van die Belydenis van Belhar (1986) en van die Verenigende Gereformeerde Kerk in Suider-Afrika (1994) – keerpunte in die resente Suid-Afrikaanse kerkgeskiedenis waarby Jaap, soms onopsigtelik, direk betrokke was. Ook in die opstel van 'n nuwe kerkorde vir die VGKSA het hy 'n sleutelrol gespeel.

Wat die landskrisis in die breë betref, verdien die befaamde besoek aan ANC-leiers in Dakar (1987) vermelding. Op uitnodiging van Van Zyl Slabbert was Jaap deel van die groep wat bereid was om verguising te verduur ter wille van die dringende noodsaak van kontak en kommunikasie oor die skerp politieke skeidslyne heen.

'n Mens kan ook maklik sy persoonlike en huislike probleem vergeet. Te midde van dit alles word Randu siek en moes hy haar bystaan tot aan die einde, sy persoonlike smart verwerk, sy kinders begelei. Jaap sal die eerste wees om te bely: Dit was alles genade van omhoog.

Dit ly geen twyfel nie dat UWK onder Jakes en Jaap se leiding tot 'n akademies gerespekteerde inrigting ontwikkel het. Toe die land in 1994 'n demokrasie geword het, het dit opgeval hoeveel oudstudente in strategiese posisies binne die nuwe landsbestuur geplaas is, onder wie Jakes self die beste voorbeeld is. Maar hy kon dit ook doen omdat hy vertroue in sy vriend Jaap gehad het om verder leiding te gee. Jaap het toe reeds sy aftrede aangekondig, maar het sonder huiwering voortgegaan om die demokratiseringsproses wat binne die universiteit aan die gang was deur te sien. Dit was gepas en verdiend dat die UWK 'n eredoktorsgraad aan Jaap toegeken het. In die annale van die geskiedenis van hierdie universiteit sal sy naam aangeteken staan as iemand wat 'n besondere bydrae gelewer het om die transformasie daarvan te inisieer en te help begelei.

Dié van ons wat Jaap op 'n meer persoonlike vlak ken, was verbaas dat Jaap nog tyd en moed gehad het om saam met wyle Prof Willie Jonker van tyd tot tyd dele van hul gesamentlike reeks *Wegwysers in die dogmatiek* te laat verskyn, behalwe nog ander teologies-akademiese artikels en bydraes (sien bibliografie vir hierdie jare). En as jy by hulle aan huis kom, laat hy graag sien waarmee hy hom in sy vrye tyd (!) besig hou – die pragtige replikas van bote wat met groot vaardigheid aanmekaar gesit is, een vir elke kleinkind. Ondertussen sorg hy dat sy deelname aan sport – tennis, selfs op ligavlak, en gholf – nie agterweë bly nie.

Tot sover Daan.

1995-hede: Uttree is intree in konflikoplossing

Jaap Furstenberg gaan voort: Reeds gedurende 1992-94, in die aanloop tot die verkiesing van '94, tree hy op as voorsitter van die Vredeskomitee van die Wes-Kaap. Vanaf 1998 tot 2002 dien hy as assessor vir die Nasionale Minister van Opvoeding, met die ondersoek van probleme en spanninge by tersiêre inrigtings as opdrag. Sodanige ondersoeke word gedoen by Vaaldriehoek Technikon in 1998 en Mangosuthu

Technikon in 2000. Op uitnodiging is hy in 2001 betrokke by konflikbeslegting by die Universiteit van Malawi.

Die rektor van US nader hom om as ombudsman van die universiteit op te tree, en Jaap verrig dié taak twee jaar lank, gedurende 2002-2003. Op die huidige tydstip is hy steeds betrokke as voorsitter van die plaaslike komitee wat na straatkinders in Stellenbosch omsien.

Akademie skryfwerk bly sedert aftrede geensins agterweë nie. In 'n helder geskrewe artikel, "Hoe my gedagtewêreld verander het: van ewige waarhede tot gekontekstualiseerde metafore", gee hy in 2002 rekenskap van sy wysgerig-teologiese denkweg sedert sy studentejare. In 2002 verskyn die publikasie *Ontluisterde wêreld* en in 2005 neem hy in *Doodloopstrate van die geloof* die sogenaamde Nuwe Hervorming krities in oënskou. 'n Indrukwekkende monografie *The many faces of God* sien in 2007 die lig, die resultaat van jarelange navorsing oor Godsbeskouinge in die geskiedenis van die Christendom vanaf die eerste tot die sewentiende eeu. In die reekse *Woord teen die Lig* en Buvton se *Preekstudies* lewer hy verskeie bydraes. En daar is alle rede om te vermoed dat "die skryf van baie boeke" (Prediker 12:12) steeds nie tot 'n einde gekom het nie.

Jaap neem dikwels nog preekbeurte waar. Hy geniet goeie gesondheid en speel nog gereeld sy potjie tennis. Graag wens ons hom en Sonja nog vele jare van gelukkige samesyn toe!

Met hierdie bydrae wil ons erkenning gee aan een van die persone wat die demokratiese Suid-Afrika lank voor die aanbreek daarvan gevisualiseer én uitgeleef het, en sodoende vele van ons tot 'n hoopvolle visie geïnspireer het.

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Metaphor, mystery and paradox: Orientations for Christian spirituality

DENISE M ACKERMANN

The reality of “uncertainty”

The spiritual life is an experience of knowing and not knowing, of accepting the reality that we live by metaphor and paradox, laced with mystery. A statement such as this is anathema to those who trade in absolute certainties about the nature of faith, God, and the Bible. I write to honour a friend and colleague whom I believe has embraced metaphor, mystery and paradox in his theology and in his spiritual life. Jaap Durand's theology is profoundly aware of the dangers of unreflected “certainty”, and it is nurtured by the riches of Christian sources in which “The deep sense of the inexpressible of the mystics is crucial”.¹ What can pursuing the “inexpressible” mean for life in the Spirit? My attempts to address this question are an expression of gratitude to Jaap, the theologian, who has been willing to live, to write and to believe within the ambit of “uncertainty”.

“Uncertainty” is a code word for the acceptance that all of life is lived within the tension between what we think we know and what we do not know, and that mystery and paradox are inherent to living the life of faith. What is deemed “certain” is a matter of faith. For example, I believe that God is worthy of total trust, that God is a God who wants abundant life for all human beings and that God in Christ defines what love is. I cannot prove these faith certainties and as I hold to them, mystery and paradox invade my awareness, revealing just how “uncertain” such “certainty” is. Ultimately, like Jaap, I too believe that there is “one metaphor that cannot and will not be replaced, the cross”.² What follows are tentative thoughts on how metaphor, mystery and paradox nurture a spirituality that can weather the vicissitudes of life lived with faith, in which God's absence and compelling presence, prayer, darkness, silence and fullness are all experienced. Failing to acknowledge that “uncertainty” and contradictions are inherent to the life of faith is both a theological travesty and spiritually impoverishing.

1 Jaap Durand, “When theology became metaphor”, *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 111 (2001), p. 15.

2 Durand, “When theology became metaphor”, p. 16.

The “certainty” of fundamentalism

Metaphor, mystery and paradox are attempts to express what cannot adequately be described – that which Jews and Christians believe to be the “I am who I am”. Attempts to speak about the indescribable call for a subterfuge. Mine is to start from the other end of the scale – with the kind of “knowingness” or “certainty” that is currently prevalent in certain circles. Emboldened by right-wing political ideologies, and by no means restricted to the Christian faith, what is termed “fundamentalism” is a familiar phenomenon on the religious landscape.

Before the term “fundamental” acquired an “-ism” it was not a term of abuse or even criticism. In the early part of the twentieth century, two devout Christians, Milton and Lyman Stewart, sponsored a series of pamphlets entitled *The fundamentals: A testimony of truth*.³ They were written by leading conservative American and British theologians and were aimed at stopping the perceived erosion of what was considered to be the fundamental beliefs of Protestantism: the inerrancy of the Bible, the direct creation of the world and human beings *ex nihilo* by God (in contrast to Darwinian evolution), the virgin birth, and so on.⁴

Today, however, the term “fundamentalism” describes a religious force and a major source of conflict in the twentieth century. It has come to imply an “orientation to the world that is anti-intellectual, bigoted, and intolerant”.⁵ When fear enters the realm of conservative religion, fundamentalism is born. It thrives on conspiracy theories, it views conflict as apocalyptic and itself as an embattled faith fighting for survival in a hostile world. Fundamentalists are sympathetic to nationalist causes, practise religious exclusivism, are resistant to dealing with difference and are thus often characterised by sexism and homophobia. Fundamentalism thrives on an inerrant sense of its chosen texts that are interpreted literally. It is also highly successful in employing modern technology to propagate its views.⁶

These few comments on the nature of fundamentalism are, as I have said, a ploy for making the case against a particular kind of “certainty”. Why? Blame it on George W Bush and his ilk; or on the brand of American evangelicalism that is sprouting up in parts of Africa, or on the interpretations of scripture that have blighted the lives

3 Baker Books, Grand Rapids, published a reprint of the 1917 edition in 1993.

4 Malise Ruthven, *Fundamentalism: Th search for meaning* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 11. Three million copies of these pamphlets were distributed on both sides of the Atlantic.

5 Ruthven, *Fundamentalism*, p. 7.

6 Kenneth Leech, *Spirituality and pastoral care* (Lawrence, MA.: Cowley Publications, 1989), p. 7-8, analyses certain characteristics of fundamentalism, commenting that it does not allow for the honest struggle of mind and heart in which truth is revealed, and that it is the religion of a crusading rather than a crucified mind. He is also critical of the fact that its selective use of scripture results in focusing “more on issues such as homosexuality and abortion, on which the Bible says little or nothing, and ignores issues such as poverty and wealth, on which it says a great deal”.

of women and gay people.⁷ Currently fundamentalism thrives in many guises. When a two-term president of the most powerful nation in the world and with the most lethal army in the world laces his messages with apocalyptic, moral and theological statements, I have to take note. “This is a national tragedy. An act of war. Liberty and democracy have been attacked ... The war that awaits us will be a monumental struggle of good versus evil ... Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists ... God is on our side ... God bless America” (Bush after the attacks of 11 September 2001). “Anyone who is not with us is against us. We know that God is not neutral ... For many years and all around the world, we are going to have to fight evil. It is our mission, and we are sure that we will win” (Bush speaking to the military destined for Afghanistan, 21 November 2001).⁸ Inevitably these views raise reactions that are equally apocalyptic and threatening. Mr Bush’s convictions share their breathtaking certainty with the New Christian Right, the Moral Majority and other groups whose ideologies are similar to his. What troubles me, in essence, is the question what kind of spirituality such certainty reflects.

Fundamentalism leaves little or no room for mystery or for wrestling with metaphor in the life of faith. It tends to deal in certainties – certainties that are often determined by dominant ideologies. Thus the spirituality of fundamentalism can be dogmatic, uncritical and unreflective. Once we think we know how things really are, we live out of the naïve certainty of the fundamentalist. In contrast, a critical consciousness arises out of “a renewed awareness of the pervasiveness and inscrutability of mystery”.⁹ Commitment to our most profound orienting symbols as well as the meaningful critical reconstruction of these symbols in the face of the mystery of life produce a reflective spirituality which enables us to live out of the truth that does not know the finality of who we are or how we will arrive at what we hope for – life in the fullness of God.

Christian spirituality

Today “spirituality” is an eclectic label describing anything from the popular to the scholarly, from a new-age type of experience to monasticism and the life of prayer. Attempting to define spirituality is not easy. As a field of study it should be capable of definition. If spirituality has no conceptual limits, it effectively means nothing,

7 The Anglican Communion (to which I belong) is presently threatened with a split on the issue of homosexuality based on questionable interpretations of scripture. Different factions with different agendas that range from cultural prejudices to blatant homophobia and the lure of wresting power from the “north” for some of the African bishops concerned have formed an unholy alliance expressed in fundamentalist language and intolerant actions.

8 Quoted from Jaume Borey Vallès, *Bush and his God: The theological roots of the policies of George W. Bush* (Barcelona: Christianisme I Justícia, 2005), p. 4.

9 Gordon Kaufman, *In the face of mystery: A constructive theology* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), p. 55.

comments Philip Sheldrake. He continues: “It appears that spirituality is one of those subjects whose meaning everyone claims to know until they have to define it”.¹⁰

Throughout Christian history, “spirituality” has changed shape and the very word itself has a relatively short pedigree in theological writing. In the early part of the 19th century the term appeared in French Catholic writings. The term “spirituality” was preferred as more comprehensive than descriptions of spiritual experiences as “ordinary” or “extraordinary” (meaning mystical).¹¹ There are a myriad of ways to explain what is meant by Christian spirituality, ranging from the broadest – Christian spirituality embraces all of life – to the more narrow understanding that spirituality refers specifically to prayer and contemplation. My understanding is that Christian spirituality is about a living relationship with God in Jesus Christ through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, lived out in the community of believers and in the world. Spirituality draws on and is formed out of prayer, practical Christianity and theology. Since Western theology has reflected more seriously on human experience in its contextual and cultural particularity, spirituality is no longer viewed as abstract, spiritual theology but as a dynamic, central ingredient for the life of the faithful.

According to Sheldrake,¹² Christian spirituality is characterised by the following features: First, it is not exclusive – in other words, it is not associated with only one Christian tradition but with the Christian faith as a whole. Secondly, at present solid, respectable theology emerges from reflecting on spirituality which is no longer simply the application of “dogmatic principles of life”.¹³ Thirdly, contemporary spirituality is no longer concerned so much with defining perfection but with delving into “the complex mystery of human growth in the context of a living relationship with the Absolute”.¹⁴ Fourthly, this spirituality is not limited to concern with the inner life but seeks to integrate all aspects of human experience, including social and ethical issues such as discrimination in all its forms. Fifthly, spirituality is keenly attuned to the natural environment and its preservation. Lastly, for Christian spirituality the Bible is *the* central source.¹⁵ Through the Spirit, the Bible witnesses to God’s redeeming grace in Jesus Christ.¹⁶

10 Philip Sheldrake, “What is spirituality?” in Kenneth Collins (ed), *Exploring Christian Spirituality* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2000), p. 21.

11 See, among others, the *Revue d’ascétique et de mystique* (1920) and the *Dictionnaire de spiritualité* (1932). See also Gordon S Wakefield (ed), *A dictionary of Christian Spirituality* (London: SCM Press, 1983), p. 362-363.

12 Sheldrake, “What is spirituality?”, p. 37.

13 Sheldrake, “What is spirituality?”, p. 37.

14 Sheldrake, “What is spirituality?”, p. 37.

15 This is so despite the fact that throughout the history of the church there have been times when biblical texts have been used to reinforce oppression, gender discrimination, violence and injustice in the powerful interests of mostly dominant social classes and groups.

16 Of course Scripture is read from different contextual experiences and with different interests in mind. This leads to seeming contradictions, an experience I know only too well as a woman reader.

Metaphor, mystery and paradox

Durand has written about his interest in *metaphor* as a means of expressing the inexpressible: “Metaphors say and bring to light that which cannot be brought to light in any other way, both by means of words and phrases and by means of dramatised stories. The Bible itself makes use of imaginative metaphors in an effort to say what cannot be said in any other way. Thus theology without metaphors is unimaginable. To be precise: theology itself is metaphor.”¹⁷

Our theology is always an interpretation of the gospel in a particular place and time. The heart of the gospel, it is widely believed, is encapsulated in the idea of the “kingdom of God”. What this means is never directly explained but rather suggested by the parables about the kingdom. The parables use secular language and tell stories about ordinary people and social issues. They show us how our ways of being are not consonant with the ways of the kingdom and set out expectations identified with the kingdom. The parables are metaphorical statements about issues of faith. When God is spoken of as a farmer who plants and nurtures seeds, or separates wheat from tares, we are speaking metaphorically. Quite simply, metaphor is a figure of speech whereby we speak of one thing in terms that are suggestive of another.¹⁸ Sallie McFague explains: “Thinking metaphorically means spotting a thread of similarity between two dissimilar objects, events, or whatever, one of which is better known than the other, and using the better-known one as a way of speaking about the lesser known.”¹⁹ She points out that metaphorical thinking is characterised by “... ordinariness, incongruity, indirection, scepticism, judgment, unconventionality, surprise, and transformation or revolution ...”²⁰

Is all religious language therefore metaphorical? Religious language that refers specifically to the being and the works of God is by its very nature metaphorical for no eye has seen God and no finger has pointed God out. I have never ceased to be amazed at the certainty with which the church and many believers choose certain terms to speak about

At the same time (could it be because the Spirit breathes life into the Word?) I am surprised by the ability of the texts to criticise themselves, rendering “reading” an enduring hermeneutical challenge. All reading requires critical reflection and an awareness of the context, culture and metaphor – in sharp contrast with fundamentalist readings.

17 Durand, “When theology became metaphor”, p. 15.

18 Janet Martin Soskice, *Metaphor and religious language* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), p. 54.

19 Sallie McFague, *Metaphorical theology: Models of God in religious language* (London: SCM Press, 1983), p. 15.

20 McFague, *Metaphorical theology*, p. 19. McFague also explains that another conceptual form used in religious language is that of the model: “The simplest way to define a model is as a dominant metaphor, a metaphor with staying power”, p. 23. Soskice states that a model “... can be distinguished from and related to metaphor in this way: an object or state of affairs is said to be a *model* when it is viewed in terms of some other object or state of affairs. A model need not be a metaphor, for a model need not be linguistic at all, as with a model train” (*Metaphor and religious language*, p. 55).

“God”, a word that is itself no more than a metaphor, and hold to them as immutable. So much God-talk is modelled on patriarchal and hierarchical models that permeate our world.²¹ No wonder male models and male assumptions permeate God language. Even attempts to conceal such assumptions end up being comical: “God is not male. He is Spirit”! However, the serious question is: How can exclusively hierarchical and androcentric language for God nurture a spirituality that is transformative, guiding *all* human beings to our authentic potential and to new redeemed possibilities of being human? I doubt that it can.

Our God-talk is not merely a private exercise in juggling tropes. It is drawn from a mixture of experience, community and particular interpretative traditions. Our experience in our particular communities provides the context for referential claims. Our experience is interpreted by our sacred texts which, in turn, are reinterpreted by our experiences, often founded on centuries of devotional practices. Christianity is indeed a religion of the book, but not a book made up wholly of concrete facts. Our sacred texts convey experiences clothed in metaphor that are meant to draw us deeper into metaphor, and thus into the realm of mystery.

Metaphor is not unconnected to *mystery*, for both raise the issue of “uncertainty”. Gordon Kaufman mentions that “All human life proceeds in the face of profound mystery that leads us to creating symbolic meaning to give order and orientation to life in different situations.”²² What is mystery? Benedictine Sister Jeremy Hall bravely describes mystery as follows:

By mystery I mean the inexhaustibly intelligible, the endlessly alluring, the depth of reality that invites us to enter again and again, to penetrate deeper and deeper, and that rewards us, not with a terminal or even a provisional solution, but with nourishment for our minds, our hearts, our spirits. God is mystery; the human person is mystery; love, whether marital or parental, the love of friendship, or divine love is mystery; beauty is mystery, we ourselves are mystery to ourselves.²³

Mystery is not the same as mysticism, a term that raises mixed emotions. I remember a student from the Reformed tradition saying in class: “Prof, that word gives me the creeps!”²⁴ Mysticism is a many-layered term. It can mean anything from a touchy-feely notion of spirituality, or religious strangeness, to a tradition that runs deep

21 See Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Sexism and God-talk: Toward a feminist theology* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1983), p. 66: “The proscription of idolatry must also be extended to verbal pictures. When *Father* is taken literally to mean that God is male and not female, represented by males and not females, then this word becomes idolatrous”.

22 Kaufman, *In the face of mystery*, p. 54.

23 Sister Jeremy Hall, OBS, *Silence, solitude, simplicity: A bermit's love affair with a noisy, crowded and complicated world* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2007), p. 84.

24 “Prof, daai woord laat my gril!”

in Christianity.²⁵ In the General Introduction to his monumental work on the history of Western Christian mysticism, Bernard McGinn points out that those who define mysticism in terms of a certain kind of experience of God seem to forget that historians have no direct access to experience.²⁶ “Experience as such is not part of the historical method”. What is available is the evidence contained in written records recorded through the Christian ages.²⁷ Mysticism needs to be understood against the broader historical development of Christianity – a subject that merits more than a mention in this contribution.

Suffice it to say that McGinn prefers to understand the term “mysticism” by discussing it under three distinct headings: “... mysticism as part of or element of religion; mysticism as a process or a way of life, and mysticism as an attempt to express a direct consciousness of the presence of God”.²⁸ Taking another tack, William Johnson states that mysticism is a profoundly human phenomenon that appears in all the great religions. He describes it “... as wisdom or knowledge that is found through love; it is loving knowledge.”²⁹ A mystical experience, he explains, is ineffable because it is an affair not of the head but of the heart. Things of the heart, like love, defy all definition. Christians cannot drum up this love by some superhuman effort. It is, according to Johnson, called forth by God who takes the initiative. “We love because he first loved us” (1 John 4:19). Mystery is of course part of the mystical experience. However indefinable and inexplicable such experiences and concepts are, their validity is tested with regard to the extent that they empower praxis that is just and loving. Acts of charity, the affirmation of human dignity, the uplifting of the poor and the marginalised, the ability to live with acceptance across our differences, are among the touchstones of the mystical experience.

To return to the theme of mystery: Spirituality bows to the notion of God as ultimate mystery. We are in a relationship of both “knowing” and “unknowing” with God.³⁰ We

25 For a discussion on the problems of terminology, see Charles André Bernard, SJ, “The nature of spiritual theology” in Collins (ed), *Exploring Christian Spirituality*, p. 229-241.

26 Bernhard McGinn, *The foundations of mysticism, origins to the fifth century*, vol 1 (New York: Crossroad, 2003), p. xiv.

27 As an example, see Teresa of Avila: “I used sometimes, as I have said, to experience in an elementary form, and very fleetingly, what I shall now describe. When picturing Christ ... and sometimes even when reading, I used unexpectedly to experience a consciousness of the presence of God of such a kind that I could not possibly doubt that he was within me or that I was wholly engulfed in him. This was in no sense a vision: I believe that is called mystical theology”. In Teresa of Avila, *The life of Teresa of Jesus: The autobiography of St. Teresa of Avila*, translated and edited by E Alison Peers (New York: Doubleday Books, 1960), p. 119.

28 McGinn, *The foundations of mysticism*, p. xv-xvi.

29 William Johnston, *Lord teach us to pray* (London: Harper Collins), p. 153. See also his *Mystical way* (London, Harper Collins, 1993).

30 These terms are in themselves common mystical themes – see the classic *The cloud of unknowing*, edited by W. Johnston (New York: Image Books / Doubleday, 1973).

speak of the mystery that is God, for speak we must, in images and metaphors, limited by our own experiences and biases. “God” is in a sense a humanly constructed symbol, for biblically speaking, God gave Godself only one name – “I am who I am”. Thus Aquinas rightly stated: God is the *Qui est* – the I am who I am. This biblical phrase encompasses the total incomprehensibility of God. God is beyond description. John Chrysostom described this mystery as follows (although he could not avoid the usual gender certainty when speaking about God): “Let us invoke him as the inexpressible God, incomprehensible, invisible and unknowable; let us know that he surpasses all power of human speech, that he eludes the grasp of human intelligence, that the angels cannot penetrate him nor the seraphim see him in full clarity, nor the cherubim fully understand him, for he is invisible to the principalities and powers, the virtues and all creatures without exception; *only the Son and the Holy Spirit know him*.”³¹

Living with mystery (uncertainty, not knowing) inevitably leads to confronting the paradoxes in our faith. *Paradox* in the spiritual life is a holding together of polarities. It is an exercise in living with contradictions. “We find that we have to make room for divergent forces within us, and that there is not necessarily any resolution of the tension between them” writes Esther de Waal.³² These poles are not necessarily antagonistic; on the contrary, each makes the other possible, she explains.

Christians live with:
A God who became a man
A victor who rides on a donkey in his hour of triumph
A saviour who is executed like some common thief
A king whose kingdom is not here but to come
A God who tells me that “when I am weak I am strong”
A God whose promise is that “in losing my life I shall find it”³³

The power inherent in these paradoxes of the Christian faith presents us not with a closed system but with a series of open doors through which we can choose to go, depending on the way in which we experience life and faith. We all know the conflicting claims of being male or female, of being child or adult, of heart and head.³⁴ Though not easy to live with, they express the human condition and point to the limits of our understanding. The mind cannot appreciate the full truth of paradox and contradiction in our faith – only the heart can, driven by our longing for God.

Take the contradiction between faith and doubt.³⁵ Paul tells us that we walk by faith, not by sight (2 Cor. 5:7). Walking by sight stands for certainty – we know where we

31 Quoted from Thomas Merton, *Contemplative prayer* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd), p. 100.
32 Esther de Waal, *Living with contradictions: Reflections on the Rule of St Benedict* (London: Collins, 1989), p. 33.
33 De Waal, *Living with contradictions*, p. 34.
34 De Waal, *Living with contradictions*, p. 34.
35 I am grateful to Harry Williams’ *Tensions: Necessary conflicts in life and love* (London: Collins, 1989), for the following insights.

are going. Often people confuse sight and faith, implying that perfect faith consists of complete certainty, the absolute inability to doubt. But we dare not anaesthetise our critical intelligence by putting to sleep the awkward questions. This can result in a disguised form of fundamentalism about what the Bible purports to say, what the church is supposed to say – expressed with irresponsible complacency. There is no real faith without real doubt. “Those who believe they believe in God”, wrote Basque Catholic Unamuno, “but without passion in their heart, without anguish of mind, without uncertainty, without doubt and even at times without despair, believe only in the idea of God, not God himself [*sic*].”³⁶ We forget Jesus’ cry on the cross – “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (Mk. 15:34). With this cry, he was loyal to the totality of his experience at that moment. Thomas Merton was unambiguous about the role of doubt in the life of faith.

You cannot be a person of faith unless you know how to doubt. You cannot believe in God unless you are capable of questioning the authority of prejudice, even though that prejudice may seem to be religious. Faith is not blind conformity to a prejudice – a “prejudgement”. It is a decision, a judgement that is fully and deliberately taken in the light of a truth that cannot be proven. It is not merely the acceptance of a decision that has been made by somebody else.³⁷

Truth about our doubts, feelings and experiences lies at the core of mature spirituality. Take the tension between knowing and not knowing.³⁸ There are inevitable tensions which are part of our ways of knowing. We know only partially. In order to know we have to put ourselves into the mental frames of space and time of that which we seek to know. We then proceed to know, not the thing in itself, but the thing as it appears to us. We can only speak or think of the things of the spirit in terms that are linked to our experiences, here and now. Our doctrines of faith are not photographs of spiritual reality – they are attempts at describing (with hints and guesses) that which is indescribable. What does this mean for our spirituality? It means that we approach our speech about God, the *eschaton*, the nature of human beings and their salvation, with greater humility, as our knowledge is partial. Our faith symbols are the product of our creative imagination checked by our critical intelligence. When, on the one hand, critical intelligence or discursive reason is vanquished by creative imagination, people will believe anything to be literally true. When, on the other hand, creative imagination is entirely vanquished by critical intelligence, rationalisations will flatten what is held to be truth, making it dull and even funny: “... the five thousand are fed by everybody suddenly remembering that they have picnic baskets, an odd thing to remember when you are hungry ... [or] while at Cana the amount of wine created was excessive for the occasion.”³⁹

36 Williams, *Tensions*, p. 49-50.

37 Thomas Merton, *New seeds of contemplation* (London: Burns & Oates, 2002), p. 77.

38 See Williams, *Tensions*, p. 63-76.

39 Williams, *Tensions*, p. 75.

Take the paradox between dependence and autonomy.⁴⁰ We are entirely dependent on God, yet there is a sense in which we must learn to be independent of God. Spiritual maturity is the acceptance of the paradox of being utterly dependent on God while knowing that to become fully ourselves in all our frail humanity requires independence – a willingness to stand up and be counted for who we are. Like Jacob, we too must take the appalling risk of wrestling with God in order to be blessed. Since God is the ground of our being, our very origin, it is not surprising that the feelings we channel to God are often those of a child to a parent. But children, while feeling love and obedience, also know resentment, rebellion and self-assertion – in short the bid for independence.⁴¹ We know that this kind of conflict is necessary for a child's progress towards maturity. And so it is in our relationship with God. One only has to read the psalms to find evidence of the struggles of God's people to grow to maturity in faith. They are full of feelings of longing, love, awe, obedience, resentment, anger, rebellion, revenge, and remorse. The paradox lies in the spiritual truth that I cannot know God unless I know myself. In the words of Augustine: *Noverim te, noverim me.*⁴² To know myself I have to find my independence in my selfhood. Then I am capable of letting go of all that is reckoned to be "me" in order to find the core of my total dependence on God. The greatest sinners make the greatest saints. We cannot save our lives unless we risk losing them. Spirituality is risky. As Harry Williams says:

Respectability is not only a sociological phenomenon – suburban middle class and all that. Far more insidiously it is a spiritual phenomenon, a state of heart and soul. Whatever God wants in our relationship with Him it certainly isn't respectability. I imagine that the church in Laodicea treated God in the most respectable way. The divine reply to this treatment is invective worthy of youth at its most rebellious: "I'll spit you out."⁴³

These examples of paradox illustrate the danger of an attitude of absolutist, often bourgeois, narrow certainty in matters of faith, the arrogance of "we know the whole truth" that characterises so much of fundamentalism. At the same time they teach us humility as we confront our finitude, by inviting us to be open to the limits of our understanding and teaching us utter reliance on a loving God whose nature is always to have mercy.

Finally, a phrase that neatly captures the relationship between metaphor, mystery and paradox is Dietrich Bonhoeffer's description of God as the "Great Beyond in the midst of us". Laced with paradox, it points to the mystery of God's immanence and transcendence. I am not implying that fundamentalism does not embrace the transcendence and immanence of God. What I am saying is that this kind of paradox is

40 Williams, *Tensions*, p. 27.

41 Williams, *Tensions*, p. 31.

42 May I know you, may I know myself.

43 Williams, *Tensions*, p. 34.

ultimately mysterious to the extent that we cannot pin God down in human language in our attempts to describe with certainty what is indescribable. I am critical of the attitude described by Anglican bishop David Jenkins as that of “certainty-wallah”. Tying God up in a box stamped “God” is arrogant, untrue, and spiritually devastating. Accepting metaphor, mystery and paradox is being willing not to know and yet to believe. Once we are aware of our unknowingness (which is our spiritual poverty)⁴⁴ we are set free from all “achievements” in faith. All that is left to do is to trust God – in itself a liberating and life-giving moment – and to demonstrate this trust in acts of justice and love towards others.

When we contemplate the mystery we call God, it evokes not only wonder, awe and bafflement but also trust and confidence for we recognise the truth of our human condition – our frailty and finiteness. The acceptance of this reality goes to the core of Christian spirituality as does the inevitability of paradox, mystery and metaphor. Then we are able to live in faith and faithfulness – not with the questionable certainty of the fundamentalist.

Telling the truth “slant”

Writing about the “inexpressible” is no more than a groping to express that to which words cannot do justice. Metaphor, mystery and paradox fall into the category of “uncertainty” that challenges our theology, our God-language and our spirituality. Rather than groping further, I am grateful for the pithiness of the poet. In the words of Emily Dickinson, let’s “tell it slant”, knowing that “success in circuit lies” and that “uncertainty” is the bedrock of a spirituality that is life-giving for it comes out of simple trust in God in all things. In her words:

Tell all the truth
 But tell it slant,
 Success in circuit lies,
 Too bright for our infirm delight,
 The truth’s superb surprise
 As lightning to the children eased
 With explanation kind,
 The truth must dazzle gradually
 Or everyone be blind.⁴⁵

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⁴⁴ See Thomas Merton, *Thoughts in solitude* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1988), p. 43, 53.

⁴⁵ From the *Collected poems* (Boston: Little Brown & Co, 1924), p. 7-8.

The inclusiveness of God's embrace: The homosexual reality and the Confession of Belhar

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The consequences of confession

There are perhaps two main reasons why Jaap Durand towers so mightily in the history of progressive Reformed theology in South Africa and why his was such a key role in the formation of the Confession of Belhar now more than twenty-five years ago. One is obviously the vast theological knowledge and critical understanding and interpretation he brought with him to the Faculty of Theology of the Dutch Reformed Mission Church (DRMC) at the University of the Western Cape. As a teacher, he helped to shape a whole generation of ministers and theologians for that church in ways that were fundamental in those crucial years of the 1970s and 1980s; ways that shifted theological thinking in the church, preparing and equipping the church for an unprecedented role in the ecumenical community and in South Africa's political life. Another reason is the unquestionable integrity of his commitment to issues of justice. For Jaap Durand, there was no dichotomy between these two realities, and this is what he taught his students.

Together these attributes helped to fashion the environment which was necessary for the flourishing of the theological and political sensitivity in which Belhar was to find its grounding. It was therefore fitting that Jaap Durand was asked to serve on the commission charged with the writing of the confession, and no less fitting that in the first public *apologia* on the confession, Daan Cloete's and Dirkie Smit's *A moment of truth*, (1984), he made two telling contributions. In both those contributions Durand, understanding the essential nature of a confession, in general, and of the Confession of Belhar, in particular, held up a challenge to the DRMC which turned out to be prophetic both in its far-sightedness and in its truthfulness.

In 1994, the DRMC united with the larger part of the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa to become the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa. The new united church embraced the Confession of Belhar as a fourth confession alongside the older Reformed standards of faith. For the new church, Belhar increasingly came to express the theological self-understanding of the church, especially in the emotional and pitched battles with the Dutch Reformed Church in the drawn-out and seemingly unending struggle over church unification.

In many ways, those increasingly bitter battles which centred on the standing and character of Belhar were about the questions: how necessary is Belhar now for the unity

of the churches of the DRC family? How relevant is Belhar “now that apartheid is over”? Is Belhar a confession at all? What else can be said about Belhar except that it is a painful reminder of the oppression of apartheid, of the betrayal of the gospel and the Reformed faith, and of the struggle against both? In the ill-fated and disastrous debates on URCSA’s position on homosexuality these questions, quite separate from the issues with the DRC, once again took centre stage.

Crucially, the prophetic insights of Jaap Durand answered those questions even then. But by the same token his insights came to haunt the church in ways not many of us had foreseen or imagined. In 1984, in that first contribution entitled “A Confession – was it really necessary?”, this is what Durand stated:¹

A confession dare not engage with mere trivialities. It can only be an extension of the church’s ancient confession that Jesus is Lord. This is the guarantee of the continued relevance of the confession ... For this reason I am convinced that the Confession of Belhar will outlive apartheid and the heresy that led to it and will retain its message. The three core issues at stake here, unity, reconciliation and justice, are close to the heart of the gospel. (p. 46)

A true confession rises above the circumstances of its time. (p. 46)

[We] do not simply confess with the immediate situation in mind, but with an eye on the future. (p. 46)

We cannot yet foresee the consequences of the formulation and acceptance of this confession for the Dutch Reformed Mission Church, if it is indeed ready to accept those consequences for itself ... (p. 48)

But in the end, for the church it cannot be about concerns about the sympathies it gains or loses, or concerns about the fortunate or less fortunate consequences the confession creates for its continued existence. These concerns are unnecessary, because according to Matthew 10 the confessing church *always* lives in the shadow of the cross, and not without the assurance that the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. But no one can find comfort in this promise if he flees from the cross. (p. 48)

In the second contribution entitled *The Confession of Belhar: A crisis for the Dutch Reformed churches?*, Durand drives the point home:²

Is the Dutch Reformed Mission Church prepared to fully face the consequences of its confession, not only in its relationship with the (white) Dutch Reformed Church, but also *within itself*? (p. 133)

And on the crucial article which speaks of God as the One who promises justice to the poor and calls upon the church to stand where God stands, namely on the side of the poor and the wronged:

1 See JFF Durand, “A confession – was it really necessary?” in GD Cloete & DJ Smit (eds), *A moment of truth: The confession of the Dutch Reformed Mission Church* (Grand Rapids: WB Eerdmans, 1984), p. 33-41.

2 See JFF Durand, “The Confession of Belhar: A crisis for the Dutch Reformed churches?” in Cloete & Smit (eds), *A moment of truth*, p. 116-126.

The real question is *how* the DRMC will embody this confessional conviction in its continued critical confrontation with the political powers in South Africa. (p. 133)

It is remarkable, from my point of view, how devastatingly relevant Durand's questions are at present for the church and how they constitute the very challenge URCSA is facing in the debates on homosexuality. I will argue that these three core issues in Belhar (unity, reconciliation and justice) should guide the church in its continuing reflection on its public testimony, and that they are particularly pertinent in the debate on homosexuality. I will also argue that homosexuality is precisely one of those issues (as is gender justice) on which the confession rises above and beyond the immediate circumstances of its formulation and so prove Durand's point that the confession can "outlive" those circumstances.

Some will perhaps make the point that the "consequences" Durand was referring to were directly related to three burning issues at the time:

The relationship with the DRC, especially in respect of the DRMC's financial dependence on the white church.

The confrontation with the apartheid government ("the political powers in South Africa") as the Mission Church participated more actively and gave leadership in the struggle against apartheid.

The internal theological and political tensions with which the church had to grapple. There were some in the DRMC who were distrustful of the theology that informed Belhar. This was mainly a generational problem, I think, compounded by the presence of those in the DRMC who had strong loyalties toward the DRC and the Afrikaner nationalist cause. There were those who, despite the church's own strong convictions on apartheid, found it harder to translate those convictions into practical political action. There were those who supported the apartheid government, and there were those who were simply afraid.

All of these would play themselves out in the tumultuous decade that lay ahead and in events which at times threatened to pull the church asunder, and Durand was indeed acute in his understanding of the impact of the Confession of Belhar on these matters. But this clearly could not have been his only concerns. If it were so, Durand himself would have remained captive of the paradigm created by apartheid and its attendant circumstances. As it is, the foundational argument which gives rise to his prophetic insight is his insistence that Belhar would "outlive" apartheid and its circumstances because it bases itself upon the ancient confession that "Jesus is Lord"; it grounded itself upon the "core issues at the heart of the gospel", namely unity, reconciliation and justice, and that therefore it is a confession not only for the immediate present but indeed for the future. Such an understanding explicitly leaves room for an application and understanding of Belhar which rises above matters of race only. In this way,

Durand would have no problem in seeing clearly the continued relevance of Belhar for the situation of wealth, poverty and the intense inequalities in present South African society. Nor would he, I suspect, have difficulty in understanding the power of Belhar for the struggle for gender equality.

In recalling these statements in connection with the debates on homosexuality I do not mean to suggest that Durand is in total agreement with the Homosexuality Task Team's report submitted to the General Synod of URCSA in October 2008. I am not claiming him "for our side". I do contend, however, that his understanding of the value and applicability of Belhar far beyond the issues of racism and apartheid is crucial, and that in missing and in fact denying that understanding the synod, in its rejection of the wider validity of Belhar, had fatally undermined its own claim on the Confession of Belhar.

In my contribution to the report on the matter of homosexuality and in the debate at the synod, the church was, for the first time perhaps, directly confronted with the consequences of its embrace of the Belhar Confession beyond the issue of race, apartheid and the relationship with the Dutch Reformed Church. Every question Durand raised twenty-five years ago stands as a challenge to our understanding of the confession and its validity for the current situation in which we live in South Africa.

Belhar as defining presence

Unlike other churches which have grappled with the issue of homosexuality, the URCSA does not only have the understanding and interpretation of Scripture and the legacy of ecumenical wisdom to work with. We have, as fundamental to all our theological deliberations, also the Confession of Belhar. It brings with it a burden of responsibility URCSA can neither deny nor avoid. The Confession of Belhar, together with the three well-known confessions we have inherited from our Netherlands Reformed roots, form the confessional basis of the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa. Together these four confessions are required to be believed, accepted, embraced by all members of URCSA, and signed by those who wish to enter her ministry as pastors. For URCSA Belhar is the continuation and affirmation of the ecumenical creeds, and stands within the Reformed theological tradition. It is our understanding of how this tradition with its particular dynamic theology could be applied to a specific situation in the times in which we live. In essential ways, Belhar is for URCSA the validation of the Reformed tradition in the South African context. Increasingly this contextualised reality is also becoming true for other global situations, as Belhar continues to gain acceptance and to become a theological point of reference for churches in the worldwide Reformed community and the broader ecumenical church.

But for URCSA Belhar is more. It has fundamentally changed the life, outlook, and witness of the church. Together with Scripture, the ancient beliefs of the Christian church, and the Reformed theological tradition it has become the bedrock of all our theological reflection and action. Through Belhar we have sought – and it has placed us in – the company of believers who have, in life-threatening situations of the distant and more recent past, turned towards the Word of God and the Reformed tradition to seek a way of witnessing to the Lordship of Jesus Christ, the life-giving Word of God and the Holy Spirit in situations where, in the judgment of the church, the integrity of the gospel and the witness of the church in the world were at stake. The Theological Declaration of Barmen *vis-à-vis* the Nazi heresies in Germany addressed such a situation. The idolatry of racism in South Africa was ours.

In the debates with the Dutch Reformed Church, for example, the point was often made that Belhar confirms in a special way the identity of URCSA, that its formulation and acceptance was a defining moment for us. That is to say, it is not the exclusive identity or even founding identity of our church: that identity was, is and forever will be Jesus Christ. But Belhar, more than any other document perhaps, *confirms* that identity. That is true. I need to express it even stronger: Belhar was not just a defining moment, it is a *defining presence* for us. By “defining presence” I mean that Belhar cannot and will not be confined to a single moment in our history, as if itself defined by that moment. In other words, Belhar cannot and will not be regarded only as a response to racism, and even more narrowly, to apartheid only. The confession is thus not a captive of a given historical moment. Rather it gives meaning to that history by allowing the present to lay claim upon that history from within the dynamics of the present. Belhar still continues to define who and what we are, our understanding of the demands of Scripture, our response to the realities of the world we live in, our obedience to Christ in terms of the great challenges currently facing the church. And because that defining presence is not only parochial but also ecumenical, Belhar can play the role it does for the worldwide Reformed community as is evident in its influence on the Accra Declaration on globalisation, economic and ecological justice, for instance.

I would go further: because the confession is a defining presence, it is also a legitimising presence. Now that the church has embraced it, fought for it so passionately in the struggle with the Dutch Reformed Church, made the confession its foundation for its stand on justice and God's preferential option for the weak, the poor and the destitute for a quarter of a century, it can no longer selectively withdraw from the fight for justice whenever it feels like it. To withdraw would in effect delegitimise any prophetic stand the church would wish to take on public issues. To rule a call on Belhar in the struggle for the rights and human dignity of homosexual persons illegitimate would, in turn, delegitimise a call upon Belhar “to stand where God stands” in the ongoing struggle of the poor for example, or the re-

emergence of racism in current South African society. Viewed in this light, Belhar's defining presence becomes an intensely self-critical presence.

Like all true confessions, we believe, Belhar was born out of the hearts of the faithful, and in a situation of deep despair and uncertainty, of trial and tribulation, of crisis and testing; a time in which the fundamental tenets of the gospel and the heart of our faith were under so severe a threat that no mere religious statement or even a theological declaration, no anxious repetition of doctrinal certitudes would suffice: the church could only turn to the rare and radical act of confession to proclaim the gospel anew. It was a moment of truth, a *kairos* of being overpowered by the Word of God and being empowered by the Holy Spirit of God. It arises in a specific situation, but like all true confessions, because of its rootedness in the Word of God and its sensitivity to the human situation, it speaks to a universal reality. Its necessity was parochial; its application is universal and ecumenical. The gospel was at stake, our very lives were at risk and the testimony of the church was in jeopardy. We could only call upon the One who is the Source of it all. Hence the confession speaks to the human situation everywhere.

Belhar indeed rises above and lives beyond the situation which was the immediate cause of its coming into being. Durand was absolutely right in making this claim. The affirmation of the unity of God's people as gift and obligation, the message of reconciliation God has entrusted to the church and the truth that through Jesus Christ we are the light of the world and the salt of the earth, called to be peacemakers, cannot be confined to apartheid South Africa. In all situations of oppression, rejection and exclusion we celebrate the good news that God is a God who brings true justice among all humankind and that the church as the possession of God, not of human beings or cultural groups or earthly powers, must stand where God stands: against all injustice and with the wronged and that we are empowered to stand with the powerless against the powerful. God's embrace of humankind and of the human condition in the incarnation of Jesus Christ has far-reaching and radical consequences for our own being human and the relationships we foster and nurture. This the church celebrates. We believe that we are called to confess all these things not through our earthly power, arrogance or recklessness, but in obedience to Jesus Christ, even though it may provoke the wrath of earthly authorities and human laws, because above all we know: Jesus is Lord.

The joy of belonging to Christ and to the community of believers, the joy of knowing one's rootedness in the love of Christ and the love of one's brothers and sisters, the joy of sharing that community in its fullness and the sharing of the fullness of one's own humanity within that community and in the world, that joy is not to be denied to any member of the body of Christ, in whom we all find our "only comfort in life and in death". That sense of belonging, in Christ and as a consequence with each other, is unbreakable and untouchable by any human law or cultural or personal prejudice.

It is within this context also that Belhar calls upon us to remember that “we are obligated to give ourselves willingly and joyfully to be of benefit and blessing to one another (since) we share the one faith ...” As true as this is of our racial relations, so true is it of our other human relationships as well, especially in the church. And having testified to itself, the church testifies to the world by setting an example to the world in these and all other matters.

Context and situation

It is important to emphasise that the context of racism and apartheid may have been the original *casus confessionis*, the immediate cause of the confession, but it certainly does not proscribe it, nor does it denote the limits, or exhaust the depth and scope of the confession. We have already made the point that Belhar is universal in its applicability and in its inherent ability to speak to different situations in the world. The theological truth Belhar proclaims transcends borders, geographical and otherwise, cultural, political and human situations. The fact that Belhar is so understood by Christian churches from Korea to Palestine, from Africa to Europe to the United States, testifies to this. In other words, while Belhar indeed defines racism from the viewpoint of faith, Belhar is not defined by racism, nor is the confession contained or exhausted by it.

Much of the misunderstanding that surrounds Belhar, from others certainly, but also often from within URCSA circles, stems from the fact that Belhar is understood solely as a testimony against apartheid, bound historically and theologically to a particular political situation that existed at a particular time, and hence proscribed by that situation, and only applicable to that situation. However, the theological basis of Belhar, the structure and the intentions as well as the language of the confession argue strongly that this is an impermissible reduction. It is a matter that touches the heart of the confession, and it is crucial in our understanding of the impact of the confession on the life and witness of the church.

The historical contexts of slavery and colonialism, racism and apartheid are not the only contexts Belhar addresses and to which it speaks so powerfully. The confession lives by the affirmation with which it begins, that concludes Article One, and which deals with the unity of the church, namely that “true faith in Jesus Christ is the only condition for membership of this church”. “This church” is not in the first instance URCSA, but rather the church of Jesus Christ. This is the faith of all who call upon the name of Jesus Christ, who find in Him their “only comfort in life and in death”. This affirmation has much more radical consequences than might hitherto have been admitted to, perhaps because the confession is too readily read as a document responding to a “racial” situation.

It is perhaps important to emphasise the point Durand made as early as 1984: the confession, for good reason, never mentions the word “apartheid”, for the issue never was apartheid, but rather justice, unity, reconciliation; the integrity of the Gospel, the faith of the church and the Lordship of Jesus Christ. A point almost always forgotten is the fact that in this regard Belhar was conceived in a totally non-racial context. Those who fought for it were not just black and those who rejected it were not just white. Those who stood for Belhar did not do so out of some racial motivation, but purely on the basis of their commitment to Christ and the ministry of compassionate justice to which Christ calls us. In that sense the matter of “race” was rendered completely irrelevant and impotent. Focusing on apartheid and the race issue would have fatally removed the focus from Christ and would, both spatially and historically, have parochialised the confession beyond redemption.

Notice that the “forced separation of people on the grounds of race or colour” is mentioned for the first time and only in Article Three which speaks of the “enforced separation of people on a racial basis” and in the “rejection” which follows. The affirmation of the “true faith in Jesus Christ” is related first to the rejection of any “absolutization” of “either natural diversity or the sinful separation of people” that “hinders or breaks the visible and active unity of the church”, and next to the kind of belief that professes that genuine spiritual unity is truly being maintained “in the bond of peace whilst believers of the same confession are in effect alienated from one another for the sake of diversity and in despair of reconciliation”. In other words, our alienated reality cannot be condoned, tolerated or alleviated by our “spiritual unity”. The latter means nothing if the former is not real. This holds not just for racial matters. It pertains to any other reality or perceived reality that “breaks the visible and active unity of the church”, and it certainly cannot be contested that the unity of the church is seriously threatened by the refusal of the church to truly embrace its homosexual members.

Diversity, dignity, humanity

More should be mentioned about the language of Belhar in this instance. Belhar disputes against an understanding of “diversity” that is abused for reasons of negativity and rejection, instead of a diversity that celebrates the other and the richness of difference. The diversity that is absolutised is the diversity which seeks to find a negative “otherness” that comes with enmity, distance, aversion, discrimination and degradation. In doing so it eliminates dignity and the bond of humanity. The diversity that Belhar celebrates is the diversity that comes from celebrating both the richness of the creation of God and the dignity of the difference we see in the other. To “absolutise” this diversity is to make it the foundation of the other’s existence. The foundation of the other’s existence is not the difference of skin colour, or gender, or culture, or sexual orientation. Rather it is their being human, their being created in

the image of God, sharing humanity in all its fullness with us. We dignify both the difference and the togetherness with our respect and love and the embrace of our common creatureliness as image bearers of God. The dignity of difference is the dignity of personhood. This is what the church celebrates and embraces. And this embrace is not the glorification of our ability to be “tolerant”. It is the celebration of the inclusiveness of the embrace of God.

Absolutising this natural diversity which we should in fact embrace and celebrate not only breaks the visible and active unity of the church, but also accepts that the church must live “in despair of reconciliation”. This is an attitude Belhar utterly rejects. On the contrary, it is our calling, gift and obligation to live together as reconciled community. There is nothing that falls outside of this call and gift; nothing that makes us “despair of reconciliation”.

This goes indeed far beyond the issue of race. This addresses quite profoundly the historical and actual contexts of oppression, rejection and exploitation of gay persons, but also the mentally and physically challenged (whom we used to call “disabled persons”), and women. It begins with the recognition that Belhar’s understanding of the diversity mentioned above is a holistic, positive, enriching one, as opposed to the understanding of “diversity” that is negative and therefore leads to “natural” separation that should be enforced by law and then sacralised by the church. Or conversely, a diversity that is considered to be contrary to the will of God, but enforced on an unwilling church by a secular constitution.

Belhar rejects the sinful absolutisation with a view to inferioritise, separate and discriminate, but expressly celebrates the diversity that affirms humanity and welcomes it as a gift from God for the richer life of the church. Belhar embraces that diversity as enriching and building the visible and active unity of the church. In this regard rejection of gay persons or the degrading of women as if their “true faith in Jesus Christ” is not enough, but is in reality subjected to some form of human approval, something extra, or subject to their ability to “change” and become “more acceptable” (to us), is part of the sinful “doctrine” that Belhar rejects. Not only is our rejection of them a sin, but a sin also is, according to the confession, the “refusal earnestly to pursue this visible unity *as a priceless gift*”. The hallmark of this very strong language is its inclusiveness. Inclusiveness is also its intention. All manifestations of the sinfulness that “breaks the visible unity”, “despairs of reconciliation”, causes “alienation from one another”, blesses the “enforced separation of people” on whatever grounds, are as applicable to the situations of separation and oppression and discrimination of gay persons and women as they are to the realities of racial oppression and separation.

We must also consider the implications of our confession that all human beings are created in the image of God. The Confession of Belhar grew out of the increasing theological understanding of the church on these matters since the early 1970s. We

came to understand, by contrast to earlier times, that with regard to racism, we could no longer speak of it simply in individual, personal, that is to say, attitudinal terms. We also understood racism in its historical, structural, and systemic dimensions and manifestations. Racism is all the more devastating when it is linked with power and powerlessness. Dealing with racism means dealing with power relations. This same maturity of insight is called for in the matter of homosexuality. The injustices and suffering inflicted upon homosexual persons are not merely personal, a matter of attitudes; it is severely systemic and structural. In this instance, power relations are at play. This insight is even more important since it is the once powerless who are in positions of power over homosexual persons. It might be the power of the state, the power of structures in the church, or the sheer power of cultural prejudice. It is for this reason that the Constitution of South Africa regards discrimination against homosexual persons as a criminal act, and the recognition, honouring and protection of their rights are also considered a civil, legal and political responsibility.

The church began to speak of racism as “sin” because it denies, as stated previously, the creatureliness, and hence the humanity of others. It denies the truth that all human beings are created in the image of God, people whose humanity is confirmed and made sacred by the incarnation of God through Jesus Christ. We are human in the likeness of God, which means not a physical likeness, but our unique, dynamic relation to God and hence to one another. Our humanity is confirmed by and in the humanity of the other; our own humanity is affirmed by our recognition of the humanity of the other, and therefore our existence is incomplete without that human recognition and reflection. Cultural, racial, ethnic, linguistic, sexual or any other difference cannot invalidate the basic truth that constitutes human life. In Jesus Christ, these considerations become utterly compelling.

We called racism a form of idolatry in which the one dominant group assumes for itself a status higher than the other, and which through political, cultural, military and economic power, as well as socio-economic and psychological structuring, seeks to play God in the lives of others, demanding from them a “correction” of their humanity that is in fact God-given: to be celebrated, not denigrated; to be embraced, not discriminated against; to be dignified with love, not vilified by ignorance and abuse.

And so we called apartheid racism a pseudo-gospel and a heresy because it claimed to have salvific power, made demands in the name of the gospel that the gospel itself does not make, claimed to know better than God the way of salvation. We rejected the apartheid pseudo-gospel because it claimed that the most important thing about a person is not that he or she is a human being created in the image of God the Liberator with inalienable rights, but his or her racial identity. It meant that racial identity determines, with an overwhelming intensity, everything in a person’s life. This pseudo-gospel was perhaps willing to admit that God created us all, but added

a “but ...” That “but” was the seed of the heresy, the human hubris and arrogance that dared to question the completeness and rightness of God's creation.

That view, we further determined, has all kinds of bitter consequences. Because it dehumanises others, reduces them to the caricature we, not God, created, they are stripped of their human dignity, of the freedom of choice and options. Dislodged from the image of God, they are not fit to be considered in terms of pain or humiliation, dreams or aspirations, human degradation or human fulfilment and human rights. They become, in our sinful minds, the completed and completely distorted “other”, the product of the perverted, racially-obsessed imagination of the dominant group, the object of our scorn. All the above-mentioned arguments which we used in the struggle against racism are applicable to the situation of homosexual persons.

This same process of thinking and action can be detected in homophobic prejudice. When Belhar rejects “any ideology which would legitimate forms of injustice and any doctrine which is unwilling to resist such an ideology in the name of the Gospel”, this is what our confession also points to.

Justice and inclusivity

Moreover, Article Four as a whole, which deals with God as “the One who wishes to bring about justice and true peace on earth”, speaks to the situation of gay persons and women. The situation of the homosexual person is, in its deepest reality, a situation of injustice. Their search for the recognition of their humanity is a search for justice. In their woundedness, their vulnerability to the denial of their rights, the enmity of many in society and the church, and the rejection of their true and full humanity, homosexual persons have an inalienable right to call upon the God “who in a special way [is] the God of the destitute, the poor and the wronged”. Their suffering is no less wrong than the suffering of the widows and the orphans and it is in respect of their right to justice that God “wishes to teach the people of God to do what is good and to seek the right”. Therefore, with regards to gay persons and women, in their struggle for the recognition of their rights to full humanity, the church must also learn “to stand where God stands”, to witness and strive against “any form of injustice”, so that for those members of the body of Christ “justice may roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.”

As the church seeks to follow Christ in the struggle for justice for the poor and the discriminated against, so the church must follow Christ in this matter. This not only means that the church ought to support, uphold and implement those rights afforded homosexual persons in the Constitution of South Africa, the church ought to seek to actively safeguard and promote those rights within its own structures, its preaching and living, its worship and witness. Rejecting, as Belhar enjoins us, “any ideology

which legitimates forms of injustice ...” means by the same token, or better still, by the same conviction, rejection of any form of oppression of women, or any form of homophobia, blatant or subtle.

This is the way in which the inclusiveness of the Confession of Belhar reflects the inclusiveness of the embrace of God. I further believe that this is the meaning and interpretation of the 2005 General Synod decision on this matter when synod spoke of its “embrace” of homosexual persons into the body of Christ. “Embrace” is inclusive. It does not tolerate any notion of distance. Not in terms of membership, nor in service or in ministry in any sense of calling recognised by the church. The only yardstick in this instance, as with all members of the church, is “true faith in Jesus Christ”. That is the meaning of unity, reconciliation and justice.

The confession states: “We believe that, in obedience to Jesus Christ, its only Head, the church is called to confess and do all these things, even though the authorities and human laws might forbid them and punishment and suffering be the consequence. Jesus is Lord”. I argue that it is wrong to restrict this sentence to “governmental powers and authorities” only, even though this statement remains only too painfully true. Most West African states criminalise homosexuality, and most recently according to news reports, the Gambian president Yahya Jammeh warned that all homosexual persons should leave the country “within twenty-four hours” otherwise “their heads would be chopped off”. Since President Yahya Jammeh threatened that his country’s laws would be made stricter “than those in Iran”, many gay persons have been arrested and otherwise persecuted. “All homosexuals, drug dealers, thieves and other criminals” have to leave the country, says the president. In Zimbabwe President Mugabe described homosexual persons as “dogs” and “pigs”, “not worthy of human consideration”. In this instance the dehumanisation goes hand in hand with the association of criminality. In Christian circles the added element is the denial of the image of God in those whose sexual orientation differs from the heterosexual norm. And it is this deadly trio which creates the climate and provides *a priori* the justification for the inhuman treatment of homosexual persons. In South Africa the horrific violence visited upon women because they are women is just as regularly visited upon homosexual persons *because* they are homosexual. Often this violence is regarded as “sports”, or treated as a joke, entertainment for macho men. If possible, this trivialisation of violence is even worse than the violent deed itself.

But there is also the tyranny of cultural chauvinism, homophobic prejudices and societal perceptions in many cases driven by the media and propagated by churches, which exert enormous pressure over what we know to be the call of the gospel. These are powers and authorities Belhar calls us to resist. There are frightening reasons why so many homosexual Christians suppress their identity and even allow themselves to be forced into heterosexual marriages in order to hide their being gay, causing untold suffering to themselves, their spouses, their families and in the end, the church. This is

not a church reflecting the love Christ demands, the respect and dignity homosexual persons deserve or a testimony to the glory of God.

It is worthwhile to quote Article Three as a whole, reading it not as a statement of faith about racial injustice, but as a testimony against *all* forms of injustice, prejudice and exclusivity, and affirmation of the fundamental truths of the Gospel of Jesus Christ for any human situation:

We believe that God has entrusted the church with the message of reconciliation in and through Jesus Christ;

That the church is called to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world, that the church is called blessed because it is a peacemaker, that the church is witness both by word and deed to the new heaven and the new earth in which righteousness dwells;

That God's life-giving Word and Spirit has conquered the powers of sin and death, and therefore also of irreconciliation and hatred, bitterness and enmity;

That God's life-giving Word and Spirit will enable the church to live in a new obedience which can open new possibilities of life for society and the world;

That the credibility of this message is seriously affected and its beneficial work obstructed when it is proclaimed in a land which professes to be Christian, but in which the enforced separation of people ... promotes and perpetuates alienation, hatred and enmity;

That any teaching which attempts to legitimate such enforced separation by appeal to the Gospel, and is not prepared to venture on the road of obedience and reconciliation, but rather, out of prejudice, fear, selfishness and unbelief, denies in advance the reconciling power of the Gospel, must be considered ideology and false doctrine.

In my view, the above considerations in light of the Confession of Belhar cannot but bring URCSA to accept and embrace homosexual persons in the fullest sense of the word. That means that the church accepts:

That homosexual persons, on the basis of their faith in Jesus Christ as personal Saviour and Lord of their life and of the church, are without any reservation full members of the church of Jesus Christ.

That homosexual persons deserve justice in the same way the church claims justice for the destitute and the wronged, both before and under the law, in civil society and in the church, and the church commits itself to actively seek that justice in all areas of life.

That our commitment and calling to unity and reconciliation require that homosexual persons, as confessing members of the church, have access to all the offices of the church, including the office of minister of the Word.

This access should, in the interests of both justice and pastoral concern, not be prejudiced by demands for celibacy if the relationship is one of love, respect and real

commitment. Should the criteria for heterosexual married persons apply, URCSA must then take a decision on support for homosexual civil unions as allowed by the Constitution.

It is perhaps best to conclude with two paragraphs from the report of the Task Team to the URCSA synod.

We have also discovered, inasmuch as those who are themselves not gay or lesbian can, just how deep are the pain and estrangement felt by homosexual persons; just how horrifying for some of them is the prospect of being “discovered” and “exposed”; just how debilitating the humiliation they experience in the ways they are being discriminated against and talked about; just how destructive is the helplessness felt by the daily injustices done to them; and just how devastating the feelings of rejection and alienation they experience from the church and Christians. Most of all we have felt their total disorientation in the myriad ways church and society have questioned, undermined and denied their childhood of God. We have also felt the painful disillusionment of parents and family members, and with all of them, the loneliness no child of God need ever feel while there is such a thing as “church”.

As a church who experienced the pain and dejection of legal and personal discrimination and through the grace of God have found the courage to resist and destroy it, URCSA is in a unique position to understand the reality with which homosexual persons, their parents and family have to live, and to respond to it. We have come to know the God of compassionate justice and personal and political liberation, so the cry for justice from others in similar situations resonates with us. We know just how uplifting and empowering it is to know where God stands. Above all, we have come to know the power of the confession that Jesus is Lord, and how that enables us to work for justice, liberation and the humanisation of society and the world.

As nothing since the birth of the Confession of Belhar in 1982, the issue of homosexuality has forced URCSA to face the consequences of confessing our faith in Jesus Christ in new situations, and concerns about the well-being of the church once again abound. But it is as Jaap Durand’s words will remain as prophetic challenge before us:

These concerns are unnecessary since a confessing church *always* lives in the shadow of the Cross and not without the assurance that the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. But no one can find comfort in this promise if he flees from the Cross.³

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3 Durand, “A confession – was it really necessary?”, p. 48.

Oor eenheid, geregtigheid en versoening by Jaap Durand

RUSSEL BOTMAN

Sol iustitiae

Die dag is vergete, maar ek onthou nog so goed die eerste keer toe ek die pragtige gebou van die Fakulteit Teologie aan die Universiteit Stellenbosch gesien het. My oog het verblydend op die hoofgewel geval. Op my eie manier vertaal sien ek toe dat die “Son van Geregtigheid hier oor alle mense skyn”. My eerste aanvoeling was dat dit waarskynlik na die regbank verwys. Die gebou was oorspronklik tog ’n drosdy. Hier is die reg vir die eerste keer op hierdie platteland gepleeg. Ek dag toe dit klink mos net soos die Vryheidsmanifes: “All people shall be equal before the law”. “Dit verklaar natuurlik waarom hulle dit met moeite in hierdie taal uitgegrawe het”, dink ek toe by myself. Dit moet ’n sekulêre siening van die reg verteenwoordig.

Eers later toe Dirkie Smit se artikel oor die leuse van die US se Fakulteit Teologie verskyn het, het ek geleer dat die aangesig van die Fakulteit Teologie hier aan die Universiteit Stellenbosch die gees van die Universiteit van Utrecht in Nederland verteenwoordig: “*Sol Iustitiae ...*” soos vervat in die seël aan die hoofgewel van die fakulteit se gebou.

Dirkie Smit help my toe sien dat die leuse aan die hoofgewel eintlik ’n gebed is. Ek ontdek toe met ’n skok dat die verwysing terugryp op die Bybel, nie die regbank nie. Dit gaan hier, so moes ek verstaan, om die Seun van God wat die eintlike Son van Geregtigheid is. Die interpretasie is heel besonders: Daardie Goddelike “Son van Geregtigheid”, so sou ek toe maar moes glo, “skyn hier oor almal van ons”.

Vroeg het ek die insig ontwikkel dat die belangrikste vraag oor geregtigheid aan die Universiteit Stellenbosch is die “ons”-vraag. Daarin lê die valse of die ware leer van die teologie opgeteken.

Dit het my toe begin interesseer om te weet wie almal onder hierdie seël deur gestap het. Daardie deur is immers ’n heilige poort van die gebed dat geregtig oor almal sal skyn. Maar voordat ons daarvoor praat moet ons vra na die implikasies van die leuse uit Nederland.

Implikasie van die keuse vir die vroeë Utrechtse stempel

Nadat Erik van den Bergh in die jaar 2001 'n voorondersoek gedoen het na die bande tussen die Universiteit Utrecht en Suid-Afrika¹ het Henk van Rinsum dit opgevolg met sy bekende *Een geschiedenis van die banden van de Utrechtse Universiteit met Zuid-Afrika* gepubliseer in 2006. Die geskiedenisboek van Henk van Rinsum bring die breër interpretatiewe bevinding binne 'n groter historiese raamwerk en fokus heel skerp op die bande tussen die Universiteit Utrecht en wat vandag bekend staan as die Fakulteit Teologie van die Universiteit Stellenbosch.

Op een punt vra hy na die rede waarom Utrecht die uitnemende bestemming vir bepaalde Suid-Afrikaners was selfs bo die Vrije Universiteit van Amsterdam. Uit 'n historiese vergelyking kom hy tot die slotsom dat daar wesenlik twee motiewe bestaan wat Utrecht die voorkeur akademiese instelling vir hoër onderrig in Nederland gemaak het vir bepaalde wit studente uit Suid-Afrika.

Utrecht het twee sterk spanningsvelde bymekaar gehou wat uitgemond het in, enersyds, 'n eties-irenieese tradisie en, andersyds, 'n konserwatief-liberale grondhouding. Die konserwatiewe dog liberale grondhouding is vergestalt deur 'n sterk konserwatiewe vroomheidsbenadering (piëtisties) tot die geloof, terwyl die liberale tendense gevind kan word in die gewilligheid om nuwe teologiese ontwikkelinge te volg en te ondersoek. Die eties-irenieese tradisie waarbinne dit ingebed was, is die kalme, ortodokse volkskerkbeskouing. Goeie etiek en goeie vreedsame naasbestaan ontspring uit die ongetwyfelde eenheid van die volk, soos onder andere ook vergestalt in die volkseie van die kerk.

Binne die volkseenheid moet 'n sterk konserwatiewe volksvroomheid gedy en tog moet daar 'n liberale openheid bly voortbestaan vir die nuwere ontdekkinge van die wetenskap en die etiek. Die "ons" in die seël verteenwoordig die konserwatiewe gebed om die eenheid van die etniese volkskerk. Die etiese gebed om geregtigheid verteenwoordig die wil om die beperkte geregtigheid van die etniese volk voor die aangesig van God te soek.

Henk van Rinsum vind die neerslag van bogenoemde Utrechtse impak op die teologie in Suid-Afrika by MC Vos, Andrew en John Murray, Nicolaas Hofmeyer en andere. Die hoogste uitbeelding daarvan vind hy by Daniel Francois Malan, wat later verantwoordelik sou wees vir die vestiging van apartheid as 'n politiese bestel. DF Malan kon dit ewe gemaklik sy politieke roeping maak om apartheid in die politiek te bestendig terwyl hy hom teologies by die liberale stroom aan die Kaap geskaar het. 'n Voorbeeld van laasgenoemde is dat hy in die jare twintig direk met die progressiewe Johannes du Plessis, destydse professor aan die Fakulteit Teologie

1 Erik van den Bergh, *Over de band tussen de Universiteit Utrecht en Zuid-Afrika: Voorondersoek door Erik van den Bergh* (2001).

van die Universiteit Stellenbosch, saamgewerk het. Du Plessis het gehandhaaf dat die tradisie van die “Utrechtse Hoogeschool” die ware gees van die teologiese kweekskool te Stellenbosch verteenwoordig. Met hierdie siening het Du Plessis hom die vyand van die destydse “establishment” van die NG Kerk gemaak. Hierin het DF Malan aan Du Plessis se kant gaan staan teenoor die NG Kerk se leierskap en haar voorste teoloë. Die verskil tussen Du Plessis en Malan is dat laasgenoemde die teologiese liberalisme op ’n vreemde manier kon versoen met die valse behoudendheid van die volkseenhed binne die volkskerk as die heiligste vorm van daardie eenheid en geregtigheid ter uitsluiting van almal wat swart was. Die “ons” wat die sogenaamde pond van die leuse moes opmaak, was polities uitsluitend vertolk, ongeag van die uiters liberale teologie wat die onderbou moes vorm.

Menige verligtes kon so maklik met verkrampptes saamleef in die eenheid van die wit volkskerk aan die Kaap die Goeie Hoop. Hul sou selfs soms uit hul pad gaan om die sogenaamde “swakheid van sommige” te akkommodeer in belang van sodanige eenheid.

Die jongste denkers en leiers in die NG Kerk ly steeds aan die knelling van die vroeëre Utrechtse effek: die liberale teologie wat in vreemde versoening leef met die absolute verbintenis tot die eenheid van die kerk van die volk: bewustelik by sommige, onbewus by die meeste. Selfs die mees oortuigde ondersteuners van kerkeenheid stuit telkens teen hierdie volksvreemde moontlikheid: die implementering van strukturele eenheid in getrouheid aan die evangelie selfs ten koste van die eenheid van die volkskerk. Die rasonale toegewing dat ’n liberale posisie waar en reg is, kan alleenlik geïmplementeer word as dit steeds die eenheid van die volk in die kerk kan dien.

Hier lê een van die groot Suid-Afrikaanse dilemmas: Die onaantasbaarheid van die eenheid van die volkskerk en die onfeilbaarheid van die geregtigheid vir die volk self.

Versmelte verkramptheid en verligtheid

Daar word gereeld met groot verwagting gepraat oor die NGK in die Wes-Kaap as die bakermat van hoop vir kerkeenheid. Sommiges verwys hoopvol na die vooruitgang wat gemaak is op die gebied van kerkeenheid tussen die NG Kerk en die VG Kerk in Wynberg en soms ook na die Wes-Kaap se ooreenkomste oor ’n Konvent van Eenheid in die onlangse verlede. Ander soek desperaat na simbole in die sterk besluite wat in die Wes-Kaapse sinode van die NGK geval het oor allerlei belangrike teologiese sake sedert die aankoms van die demokrasie in Suid-Afrika (1994). Mense verwys gereeld met verwagting na die progressiewe aard van sodanige besluite. Daar is groot verwagting dat die NG Kerk in die Wes-Kaap as koersaanwyser vir kerkeenheid na vore sal tree.

Desnieteenstaande dra die NG Kerk in die Wes-Kaap ook die tekens van die ou Utrecht stempel: Progressiewe teologie versoen met die onaantasbare eenheid van die volkskerk as uitgangspunt.

Is kerkeenheid en volle geregtigheid 'n denkbare moontlikheid in hierdie konteks?

In die konteks van teologiese of selfs filosofiese denke wat deur die idee van die volkskerk gedryf word, is daar maar net twee vorme van kerkeenheid wat haalbaar en verantwoordbaar geag word: die federale eenheid en die geestelike eenheid. Die federale eenheid is uiteraard 'n strukturele vorm van kerkapartheid. Die geestelike eenheid is 'n vorm van fisiese apartheid onder die sogenaamde onsigbare hand van die Heilige Gees. Die eerste kom neer op die moontlikheid dat daar 'n struktuur geskep word bo-oor die bestaande kerklike besluitnemingsliggame. 'n Klein oorsiggroep vergader op bepaalde tye as uitdrukking van die eenheid soos die direksie van 'n houermaatskappy terwyl die sake van die ondergeskikte maatskappye deur afsonderlike outonome direksies en besture bedryf word. Die geestelike eenheid beteken dat die kerke aan hul rasverdeelde uitgewer is met dien verstande dat hulle vir doeleindes van die eenheid hul kan beroep op die Heilige Gees as eenheidstigter van alle kerke. Beide modelle het dieselfde gevolg: Die volkseeneheid bly onaantasbaar en sy eie-geregtigheid onfeilbaar.

Jaap Durand se uitdagings aan kerk en teologie

Die Fakulteit Teologie aan die Universiteit Stellenbosch het deur vele uitdagings in sy 150-jarige skoene gegroei. Die enkele grootste ekumeniese geregtighedsuitdaging het in 1960 plaasgevind.

Op 21 Maart 1960 voer die Suid-Afrikaanse apartheidsregering sy groot menseslagting in Sharpeville uit. Die Wêreldraad van Kerke reël daarna sy beroemde kerklike beraad hieroor te Cottesloe naby Johannesburg. Byna al die kerke, insluitende die NG Kerk, woon die beraad by. Die Cottesloe Verklaring word deur die beraad uitgereik. In hierdie verklaring word apartheid veroordeel as in stryd met die Bybel. Vir die eerste keer word die "versoening in Christus" as die bybelse teenpool van apartheid uitgewys. 'n Progressiewe teologie moet uitmond in kerkeenheid vir mense ongeag ras en politieke geregtigheid vir mense van alle gemeenskappe.

Heeltemal los van hierdie gebeure verdedig Jaap Durand op 27 Januarie 1961 sy proefskrif voor die Fakulteit Teologie aan die Vrije Universiteit te Amsterdam. Kyk vir 'n slag, sê hy, na die kerkeenheid vanuit 'n missionêre perspektief. Hyself was nie bewus van hoe radikaal hierdie teologiese vooruitgang op die Fakulteit Teologie aan die Universiteit Stellenbosch sou inwerk nie. Vanuit sendingperspektief gesien, kan jy nie meer die onaantasbaarheid van die etniese volkskerkraamwerk handhaaf nie en

dan kan jy ook nie meer die noodlottige band van 'n verligte teologie en 'n verkrampde politiek nastreef nie, want die "swartmens" is nou jou broer en jou suster in Christus. 'n Kerk wat op rassegrondslag verdeeld is, het Jaap Durand geargumenteer, kan nie die toets van die Christelike evangelie wat almal tot Christus bekeer, deurstaan nie.

Jaap Durand sou van dag een af hierna nie welkom wees aan die Kweekskool te Stellenbosch nie, omdat sy ganse teologie verraad teen die Utrechtse denkkeelde wat hier posgevat het, sou beteken. Die breuklyn tussen die Amsterdamse denkskool en die Utrechtse denkstroom is toe op die spits gedryf deur een van die netjeste denkers wat die NG Kerk opgelewer het. Sedertdien sou die sendingteoloë aan die Fakulteit Teologie aan die Universiteit Stellenbosch almeer prominensie verkry in hul verset teen apartheid. Dit kom alles tot 'n hoogtepunt in die bedanking van Prof Nico Smith as professor aan die Universiteit Stellenbosch.

Hierdie trajek van moderne teologies-politieke onderdrukking het met Jaap Durand begin. In 1961 probeer die Fakulteit Teologie aan die Universiteit Stellenbosch 'n openingskonferensie hou om die Cottesloe Beraad se anti-apartheid uitkomst te bespreek. Die Cottesloe Beraad wat deur die Wêreldraad van Kerke belê is, het kragtige kritiek teen die teologiese regverdiging van apartheid gelewer. Die destydse Eerste Minister, Hendrik Verwoerd, stuur 'n direkte opdrag dat die teologiese meriete van Cottesloe nie behandel mag word nie. Na alle waarskynlikheid was ds Kosie Gericke, 'n oudstudent van die Fakulteit Teologie en vise-kanselier van die Universiteit Stellenbosch, die amptenaar wat hierdie opdrag moes uitvoer. Kosie Gericke en Hendrik Verwoerd het egter nie rekening gehou met 'n sekere Prof Kolie Kotze nie. Op 15 Februarie 1961 ontmoet 'n groep evangeliedienaars van orals uit die toenmalige Suid-Afrika en teologiese studente van die Kweekskool van Stellenbosch en van die Sendinginstituut te Wellington om na aanleiding van twee referate te praat oor rasseverhoudinge in Suid-Afrika uit die oogpunt van die Heilige Skrif. Oom Kolie daag toe die politieke verbod van Hendrik Verwoerd uit deur na Jaap Durand se proefskrif te verwys as die teologiese bevestiging van die standpunte van die Cottesloe Beraad.

Oom Kolie se stelling was meer 'n aanduiding van sy passie oor die goeie saak as van die korrektheid van die stelling. Daar is nie so 'n direkte verband tussen Jaap Durand se tesis en die Cottesloe Verklaring nie. Hy is egter reg daarin dat die NG Kerk en die Fakulteit Teologie toe beter sou doen deur na die suiwer teologie van Durand te luister as na die dwaling van Hendrik Verwoerd. Die weg van Jaap Durand sou die NG Kerk na haar dogterkerke lei eerder as verder weg van hulle. Oom Kolie het reg gesien dat die wegbreek uit die liberaal-konserwatiewe denkkees van die volkskerk op hierdie pad lê. Wat Verwoerd gesien het, is die kritiek wat dit op apartheid sou meebring. Vanuit sendingperspektief gesien, is kerkregtelike apartheid net so sondig as grondwetlike apartheid. Jaap Durand se eerste groot teologiese nalatenskap is geleë in hierdie teologiese insig. Innoverende denke is egter net so kragtig as wat die konteks toelaat. Die saad

het ongelukkig destyds in die NG Kerk en die Fakulteit Teologie aan die Universiteit Stellenbosch op onvrugbare grond geval. Die gevolg is dat Jaap Durand die gevolge van sy innovasie self moes dra deur 'n predikant te word van die destydse NG Kerk in Afrika, die swart “dogterskerk” van die NG Kerk se sendingvrug. Sy vrou, tannie Randu, en kinders sou met hom die juk van die waarheid verduur.

Die NG Kerk sou toe in volslae navolging van die Verwoerd-waarskuwing in hul Jaarboek aandui dat Jaap Durand die bediening verlaat het. Hierdie jaarlikse verklaring van die NG Kerk is alleenlik moontlik in die lig van die volkskerk se eiegeregtigheid. Vele ander predikante van die volkskerk het in die swart “dogterskerke” tereg gekom en was nooit aangeteken asof hulle muiters van die kerklike bediening was of is nie. Die gees van Verwoerd het teen die gees van Durand oorwin in die NG Kerk sedert die sestigerjare. Elke jaar dat die NG Kerk herhalend stel: Jaap Durand het die bediening verlaat toe hy na die swartmense se kerk oorgeloop het, wen Verwoerd. Jaap Durand kon egter niks meer verloor nie. Die waarheid van sy innoverende denke word vandag dwarsoor die wereld en veral in die geloof van swartmense in Suid-Afrika bely.

Kerkeenheid met die NG Kerk bly 'n vae ideaal vir solank die eenheid en die kerkreg in hierdie kerk nie vanuit 'n sendingperspektief benader word nie. Om kerkeenheid vanuit sendingperspektief te benader, vra 'n gewilligheid om die onfeilbare eenheid van die volkskerk te relativeer.

In die daaropvolgende dekade, die sewentigerjare, sou Jaap Durand sy aandag fokus op geregtigheid as eties-teologiese vraagstuk. In 1970 verskyn sy veelbesproke boek *Swartman, Stad en Toekoms*. In daardie tyd was daar 'n wyse predikant aan die NG Moederkerk te Stellenbosch, ds Attie van Wijk. Hy nader Jaap Durand om die hoofstuk oor die situasie van die swartmense vir 'n sinodale verslag van die NG Kerk te skryf. Die verslag dien voor die 1974 Sinode van die NG Kerk in Kaapstad. Koot Vorster, die konserwatiewe predikante-broer van Ben John Vorster, staan in die sinode op en verhoed dat Jaap Durand die inleiding op sy hoofstuk kon doen. Nog iemand stel voor dat die sinode nie eens kennis neem van die verslag oor die toestande waaronder swartmense lewe nie. Op hierdie manier vestig die volkskerk 'n vergaderingprosedure wat daarop neerkom dat 'n saak wat wel voor 'n vergadering gediën het, terugwerkend vernietig word. Die sinode kies hier die dwaalpad wat deur Koot Voster aangewys word teenoor die teologiese weg wat Jaap Durand op versoek voorberei het. Weereens is dit egter nie juis Koot Voster wat wen nie, maar die volkskerk se siening van geregtigheid as eiegeregtigheid en nie gedeelde geregtigheid nie. Die oer-Utrechtse instink het gewen.

Die ergste gevolg vir alle mense in Suid-Afrika was dat die NG Kerk in 1974 die historiese dwaling *Ras, volk en nasie in die perspektief van die Skrif* sou aanvaar. In hierdie verklaring word die oer-Utrechtse instink en die Verwoerdiaanse politiek die sturende grondhouding. Apartheid, rasse-segregasie en -selfontwikkeling vind

uiteindelik hierin teologiese regverdiging. Hierdie teologiese uitwas sou nie in die NG Kerk moontlik wees indien die kerk die pad van Jaap Durand gevolg het nie.

Sedertdien het die teologiese ondersoek na die gerechtigheidsvraag oral buite die NG Kerk toegeneem. Jaap Durand sou een van die belangrikste leiers van hierdie nuwe teologiese innovasie word. Die gerechtigheidsvraag was sedertdien nie meer slegs 'n grondwetlike vraag nie, maar het ook 'n kerklike vraag geword.

Terwyl die eerste vlag wat hy aan die mas gespyker het op sendingkundige vlak gelê het, was die tweede vlag op die vlak van die etik.

Op die vooraand van die tagtigerjare, meer spesifiek in 1978, sou Jaap Durand sy mees fundamentele bydrae tot teologiese innovasie in Suid-Afrika lewer met die ontdekking van die teologiese kern van die sonde van apartheid.

Teen hierdie tyd was Durand professor in Dogmatiek aan die Universiteit van Wes-Kaapland. Ek was een van die bevoorregte studente in een van sy nagraadse klasse. Hy het ons navorsing laat doen oor die siening van Karl Barth ten opsigte van die versoeningsvraagstuk in die teologie. Hiermee het Durand sy innoverende teologiese drukgang tot 'n volgende vlak geneem, die vlak van die geloofsleer. Die vraag was nou nie meer wat mens oor die eenheid en die gerechtigheid mag bedink nie. Die vraag het nou gegroei tot die volgende: Kan 'n mens vanuit alles wat jy uit sendingperspektief oor kerkeenheid ontdek het en uit gerechtigheidskontekste oor swartmense ontgin het, werklik glo dat dit met die waarheid oor God self te doen het? Is daar 'n verband tussen kerkeenheid en gerechtigheid in Suid-Afrika, enersyds en die geloof in God deur Jesus Christus, andersyds?

Die antwoord was 'n ondubbelsinnige "Ja!"

Die toegangspoort lê in die versoeningsleer. Apartheid en versoening in Christus bots met mekaar. Jy kan slegs een teenoor die ander kies. Gelowige mense kan nie aan apartheid en versoening vashou nie.

Sedertdien verstaan almal duideliker dat apartheid anti-evangelies is, want dit gaan uit van die onversoenbaarheid van mense.

Om soos Jaap Durand te bely

Later, in die oorgang na die negentigerjare, sou hierdie groeipunte in Jaap Durand se teologie uitmond in een van die kragtigste belydenisse van die moderne tyd, die Belydenis van Belhar. Die historiese beregting van Jaap Durand se lewensbydrae tot die teologie aan die lewe van alle mense kom wanneer hy aangewys word as die voorsitter vir die komitee wat die Belydenis van Belhar moes formuleer. Dit is in die Belydenis van Belhar dat hy die volle bloei van sy teologie sou sien manifesteer: Kerkeenheid, gerechtigheid en versoening. Dat hy deel was van die Sinodale Kommissie wat vorm moes gee aan die

JAAP DURAND FESTSCHRIFT

geloof van die swartmense in die destydse NG Sendingkerk en dus in die hedendaagse Verenigende Gereformeerde Kerk is goed te verstaan.

Die toekomstige uitdaging aan die wit NG Kerk het alles te doen met die uitdaging van die teologie van Jaap Durand. Selfs al sou die NG kerk nie die Belydenis van Belhar aanvaar nie, lê die uitdaging elders in die teologie van een van die uitnemendste teologiese denkers vanuit die NG Kerk. Die teologie van Durand lê waarskynlik te diep in spanning met die instink van die NG Kerk.

Elke jaar dat die NG Kerk Durand as muiter uit die kerklike bediening voorstel in die Jaarboek en die Belydenis van Belhar as grootste struikelblok vir kerkeenheid, geregtigheid en versoening voorhou, oorwin die oer-Utrechtse instink en die gees van Verwoerd en Vorster.

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In praise of courage

JOHN W DE GRUCHY

I thought hard and long about what to write in honour of Jaap Durand, my friend of many years. Images flashed through my mind, beginning with our first meeting in 1974 when we were both involved in a discussion group on relations between the Dutch Reformed and the English-speaking churches. Increasingly frequent occasions followed as our paths crossed in ecumenical, theological and academic circles; the sombre day when he shared the tragic news that his first wife had been diagnosed with cancer, and that scary moment captured in newspaper photographs when he was shot at by police during a protest march on the UWC campus. I also recalled Jaap's role in preventing a possible right-wing military coup during those heady and violent days before our first democratic election in 1994. As I recalled this and much more, I searched for the right word that would encapsulate who Jaap is for me and many others. Undoubtedly a man of faith and integrity, a humble able scholar, a perceptive theologian, a family man ... yes, indeed, but I finally settled on courage as the virtue that stands out.

Shortly before the demise of apartheid, Diana Russell wrote a book about South African women who were engaged in the struggle. Entitled *Lives of courage*,¹ it told the stories of twenty-four women, drawn from different backgrounds and engaged in a variety of spheres, who were united in their commitment to justice and the overcoming of racism. If I were to write a similar book about the men I have known who exhibited similar courage, Jaap's story would certainly be high on the list. It is a story of courage in the struggle for justice, courage in opposing racism in the church, courage in coming to terms with his wife's cancer, courage in dealing with the challenges of university leadership, courage in ensuring a peaceful transition to democracy ... However, in what follows I do not propose to tell Jaap's story, but to offer a brief excursus on courage as a Christian virtue to salute Jaap on this auspicious occasion.

I have chosen this more academic way of honouring Jaap for two reasons. In the first place, Jaap has been an outstanding academic even though his life circumstances have, time and again, demanded that he engage in tasks that have taken him away from the study and lecture room. So an academic meditation is appropriate, especially for a volume such as this. In the second place, I think the topic is a timely one that we in South Africa need to think about as we face the challenges that confront us at so many

1 Diana EH Russell, *Lives of courage: Women for a New South Africa* (San Francisco: Harper, 1989).

levels. Our country presently needs men and women of courage in just the same way as the struggle against apartheid demanded that of us and of which Jaap is a rightly celebrated example. But what is courage and how do we recognise its contours when we see it?

Courage among the virtues

In his long analysis of virtues and vices in the *Nichomachean ethics*, Aristotle places courage at the beginning. This does not imply that it is the most important of the virtues, but it does indicate its importance. Courage, Aristotle writes, “is a disposition which aims at the mean in situations inspiring fear and confidence”.² By mean Aristotle does not imply mediocrity, but the “golden mean” between opposing vices. In the case of courage, it is the mean between cowardice, on the one hand, and foolhardiness, on the other. This, I suggest, is fundamental to courage as a virtue, and lies behind much of what follows. In addition, for Aristotle, courage is not simply a philosophical construct, but a way of life, a way of being in the world. This leads us on to the next observation.

Ultimately, courage is defined in relation to death, for life-threatening situations make us most fearful and often prevent us from doing what is right, good and just. For this reason much of Aristotle’s discussion centres on the bravery of soldiers, especially those who freely and selflessly volunteer to defend their city. But courage is not foolhardiness, taking daring yet irrational risks in order to demonstrate one’s fearlessness, nor is it to be confused with a natural temperament that flourishes in dangerous circumstances. In fact, true courage does not mean fearlessness, for often it is expressed most powerfully by those who are by nature afraid of danger, yet willing to act courageously despite their fear of what might happen to them.

So how, according to Aristotle, are we to understand true courage? True courage takes account of the risks involved in striving for what is right, good and just, but accepts them as necessary in order to achieve these greater ends. Courage is defined, in other words, by ethical considerations, by its purpose and end. This fundamental insight into the nature of courage as a virtue, derived from Aristotle, shapes Thomas Aquinas’ discussion in his *Summa* which brings the subject into a distinctly Christian framework:

... the principal activity of courage is not so much attack as endurance, standing one’s ground in the midst of danger. Virtue is by definition concerned not with the difficult but with the good. The stature of virtue is to be measured by how it contributes to the good, rather than by how difficult its matter is.

2 Aristotle, *The ethics of Aristotle: The Nichomachean ethics*, edited by JAK Thomson (London: Penguin, 1955), p. 93.

While courage in military service remains laudable, for Thomas martyrdom is the template for assessing courage from a Christian perspective. So he continues:

In the very nature of martyrdom, the martyr stands firm in truth and justice against the assaults of persecutors. Clearly then martyrdom is a virtuous act, an act of courage. The courage of good citizens is a steadfastness in human justice, to preserve which they will endure mortal danger; and the courage given by God is a steadfastness in *God's justice, which comes through faith in Christ Jesus*. So faith is the goal to which martyrs remain steadfast, while courage is the virtue disposing them to do so.

But, Thomas continues, the motivating power for courage, such as exemplified in martyrdom, is charity or love, for it is this, from a Christian perspective, that evokes the virtue of courage.³

This Thomist blending of Aristotelian thought and Christian conviction thus helps us connect courage and the other cardinal virtues of wisdom, temperance and justice, to the theological virtues of faith, hope and love. Courage, guided by wisdom, has to do with endurance, standing one's ground against what is wrong, doing what is good no matter how difficult and therefore struggling for truth and justice – and doing so on the basis of faith motivated by love. Understood in this way, courage becomes far more than bravery; it is the outworking of faith, but also of love and hope – but more of that later.

The Aristotelian-Thomist depiction of courage fits well with the biblical view. The ancient heroes of faith described in the letter to the Hebrews (chapter 11) are all men and women of courage. So the author invites us to consider the stories of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David and Samuel, as well as the prostitute Rahab, the only woman named among the collective “women” who performed acts of valour. “Through faith they conquered kingdoms, administered justice, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions, quenched raging fire, escaped the edge of the sword, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight ... others were tortured, suffered mocking and flogging ... were killed by the sword ...”. While the author of Hebrews is not specifically praising their courage as he is their faith, clearly it is their courage that demonstrates their faith. Their faith is not the pious attribute usually associated with “religious people”, it is faith working itself out courageously as testimony amidst the realities of the world where the principalities and powers seek to thwart God's purposes for the common good.

3 St Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae: A concise translation*, McDermott, Timothy (Westminster, Maryland: Christian Classics, 1989), p. 423.

The courage of free responsibility

In his essay “After Ten Years”, which functions as a Prologue to his *Letters and papers from prison*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer makes some incisive comments on what he refers to as “civil courage”, and these help pursue our exploration.

“After Ten Years” was written at the end of 1943 as a New Year’s gift for Bonhoeffer’s colleagues in the resistance against Hitler. Within weeks of completing it, Bonhoeffer together with his brother-in-law and fellow conspirator, Hans von Dohnanyi, was arrested and incarcerated in Tegel Military Prison in Berlin. In the section on “civil courage” in his essay, Bonhoeffer laments the lack of it in German society at the time. Lots of bravery and self-sacrifice are in evidence, but no civil courage, that is, the courage to take a stand against the abuse of power. This is not due, he says, to personal cowardice, but rather to the fact that the need for obedience had been so instilled in the national psyche that subordination of all personal wishes and ideas for the sake of the Fatherland had come to dominate. He continues:

The readiness to follow an order from “above” rather than one’s own discretion arises from and is part of the justified suspicion about one’s own heart. Who would contest that, in relation to obedience, commission and vocation, Germans have again and again accomplished the utmost in bravery and life-commitment ...⁴

So what, for Bonhoeffer, has been the missing ingredient? It was the failure to recognise that the virtue of obedience to superiors could be “misused in the service of evil.” This failure undermined all the basic ethical concepts that had shaped German civil life. Most tragically and decisively, it prevented the ability to act freely and responsibly in ways that sometimes went contrary to one’s training and calling. In other words, it prevented acts of civil courage. For “civil courage” Bonhoeffer argues, “can grow only from the free responsibility of the free human being ... It is founded in a God who calls for the free venture of faith into responsible action and who promises forgiveness and consolation to those who on account of such action become sinners”.

This free venture of faith in responsible action is, of course, precisely how Bonhoeffer came to understand his own and his companions’ involvement in the plot to assassinate Hitler. He elaborates at length on this in his *Ethics* where he describes it as vicarious representative action, that is, an act on behalf of others in obedience to Christ.⁵ It was a risky action, but not quixotic; it was an act of civil courage based on

4 The new translation from the forthcoming edition of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Letters and papers from prison*, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works Vol. 8*, translated by Lisa E Dahil, Isabel Best & Nancy Lukens, general editor: Victoria J. Barnett, volume editor: John W. de Gruchy, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, in press).

5 Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Ethics*, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works Vol. 6*, translated by Charles C West, Douglas W Stott & Reinhard Krauss, general editor: Wayne W Whitson, volume editor: Clifford J Green (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005), p. 257ff.

careful planning, measured calculation, and with due consideration of the moral, political and personal implications. It was an act of faith that demanded courage.

Several of those who were involved in the plot were military men whose bravery was beyond doubt, but what was required was something other than bravery understood as action on the war front. Planning such an “act of free responsibility” went counter to all that they had been trained to do, namely obey authority and serve the Führer and Fatherland with total commitment. It was an act of treason, yet paradoxically an act of profound patriotism in seeking to rid the nation of evil and bring an end to a disastrous war. As such it demanded a courage greater than that required of those on the battlefield, for not only was the risk of death certain if the plot failed, it would be death in ignominious circumstances as a traitor. No medals, no glory, no hero’s welcome home whether in a flag-draped coffin or on parade. The courage demanded was moral courage that was able to weigh up the situation and take decisive action. But that courage, let it be said, was not a thing of the moment. As in the case of Bonhoeffer himself, it had been deeply nurtured as part of his formation both through his family and his faith journey.

Recently I came across the name of Hans de Beaufort, a twenty-seven-year-old Dutch resistance fighter against the Nazis, who was eventually captured in France and shot in April 1942. In a letter to his father written from Dijon prison shortly before his execution he wrote these words:

You know that I once said that I most feared to have lived in vain and to have achieved nothing? I still mean that and I hope profoundly that my walk through life has not been useless. There is much that I definitely would have done differently, if I would have been given a second chance with what I now know, but most of it I wouldn’t possibly have been able to do differently.⁶

The entire letter is deeply moving, but this final sentence has struck me in particular. As I understand what de Beaufort is saying, he engaged in what he was doing not out of any sense of bravado, but out of a deeply ingrained sense of what was right and just. He could not do otherwise, because that is who he had become, that is what had shaped him. Courage is not a sudden gift, but something that is nurtured in us through the years of our formation as human beings and Christians. But it was a different formation to that of those who, as Bonhoeffer described it, had also been trained and nurtured – in civic duty, but not the freedom to act responsibly in terms of the right and the just when duty was manipulated by evil.

The civil and moral courage required of those in the resistance against Hitler was a courage that was particularly demanding and costly, but it has been no less so for many others faced with similar circumstances. Consider, for example, Nelson Mandela’s years of struggle against apartheid, or Mahatma Gandhi’s struggle for

⁶ Sent to me by a friend. Publishing details not known.

India's independence and the rights of its outcast population. Mandela's long road to freedom and Gandhi's passive resistance campaign certainly demanded the same kind of courage as that displayed by the German resistance, and by many others across the globe and the centuries who have engaged in a struggle for liberation from oppression for the sake of justice and peace. Many of their names are unknown except perhaps to a small circle of friends and colleagues. But the names of others trip off the tongue the moment one begins to reflect on this remarkable legacy of human courage in pursuit of the common good in times and places where evil is seemingly invincible.

In his book entitled *Courage*, Gordon Brown, the British Primer Minister provides us with eight portraits of men and women whose courage has impressed him over the years. Mandela and Bonhoeffer are among them, but his biographical snapshots also include Martin Luther King jnr Edith Cavell, and Aung San Suu Kyi, the Burmese civil rights leader. In the introduction to his book Brown writes:

The kind of courage that fascinated me went beyond physical bravery, though almost always it did involve that admirable quality. It was not just risk-taking, and definitely not risk-taking in a doubtful cause. Here was altruistic courage: sacrifice and determination for a higher purpose; the courage that endures and prevails, and dignifies all humanity. It was an expression of both strength of character and strength of belief.⁷

Brown's comments are pertinent to our discussion. Courage is not just physical bravery, though it usually includes that; it serves a noble purpose; it endures and enriches humanity; it is both strength of character and belief that has been nurtured over the years. Indeed, in the case of Mandela, it was not just the courage required to fight apartheid and suffer the consequences of capture, but the courage that was formed and fashioned through years of imprisonment – the courage to forgive one's enemies and ensure reconciliation. In the words of Donald Shriver:

Cherishing hope for revenge is one way sufferers of atrocity cope with their memories. But there is another way: the facing of still-rankling past evils with first regard for the truth of what actually happened; with resistance to the lures of revenge; with empathy – and no excusing – for all the agents and sufferers of the evil; and with real intent on the part of the sufferers to resume life alongside the evildoers or their political successors. That is the moral courage of forgiveness.⁸

Such courage separates these exemplars from the rest of us, they are icons of courage. So what about the rest of us? This raises an important issue in our exploration. For is courage only evident in circumstances such as those confronting Bonhoeffer and his colleagues, or Mandela, Desmond Tutu and others who brought about the transition

7 Gordon Brown, *Courage: Eight portraits* (London: Bloomsbury, 2007), p. 1.

8 Donald W Shriver, *An ethic for enemies: Forgiveness in politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 67.

to democracy in South Africa? What about the courage of the grandson of one of our close friends who recently died of a rare form of cancer after months of excruciating pain, and yet showing such amazing courage? Or the courage demanded of so many people in so many places of poverty and oppression when simply to survive and care for one's children requires a courage and strength far beyond what most of us seem capable of?

The courage to be

In the genealogy of courage there are at least two trajectories. One trajectory has sometimes been called the heroic-aristocratic, the courage of those who have become symbols of courage for the rest of us. This is courage for the sake of a noble cause, a courage that inspires others in struggle for the same ends. The other trajectory could be referred to as the universal or democratic; this refers to the courage of every man and every woman when faced with the daily realities of life and the inevitability of death. This is an important distinction because we may feel, rightly, that courage is something different from simply learning to cope with adverse circumstances. However, the point is not that they learn to cope, but *how* they in fact do so. It is in this regard that the two trajectories, of which Tillich reminds us, help to clarify the nature of courage.

Whereas the heroic-aristocratic trajectory of courage can be traced back to the Greek philosophers Plato and Aristotle as well as to the Stoics, what Paul Tillich calls the "rational-democratic" trajectory is part of the "heritage of the Christian-humanistic tradition."⁹ This latter refers to what Tillich aptly named the "courage to be" – the courage of affirming life and affirming self over against the powers of nihilism and death. "Courage" he writes, "is an ethical reality, but it is rooted in the whole breadth of human existence and ultimately in the structure of being itself."¹⁰ In other words, to understand courage as an ethical concept we have to understand what it means to be a human being. This is indeed what Tillich sets out to do in his classic study which interprets Christian faith "through an analysis of courage."¹¹

Tillich approaches his task by first considering the nature of anxiety, for it is in relation to anxiety that we begin to understand the meaning and significance of courage. Anxiety, which is more than specific fears we might have, is the threat of non-being, that is, "the awareness that nonbeing is a part of one's own being."¹² This sense underlies all our fears and, as integral to our nature, it cannot be eliminated. It appears, says Tillich, in three forms: fate and death; emptiness and loss of meaning;

9 Paul Tillich, *The courage to be* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1952), p. 5-6.

10 Tillich, *The courage to be*, p. 1.

11 Tillich, *The courage to be*, p. 9.

12 Tillich, *The courage to be*, p. 35.

and guilt and condemnation.¹³ Of the three, “the anxiety of death overshadows all concrete anxieties and gives them their ultimate seriousness.”¹⁴ The loss of meaning in life, the sense of guilt that arises out of failure, together with the attendant despair and remorse, are all integrally connected to this overshadowing awareness of non-being. Such anxiety is “potentially present in every individual” and becomes more “general if the accustomed structures of meaning, power, belief, and order disintegrate.”¹⁵

In making this latter observation, Tillich indicates how this has worked out in different historical epochs and contexts, and why nihilism became such a potent threat during the course of the twentieth century. In trying to overcome this sense of meaningless, human beings either exalt self-interest at the cost of the common good (“eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die”), or else they surrender personal freedom for the sake of the security of some absolute authority, something to live and die for, hence the attraction of ideologies such as Fascism, National Socialism, or Communism. This would account in large measure for what happened in the Third Reich and why it was that Germans generally lacked the “civil courage” to engage, as Bonhoeffer observed, in acts of “free responsibility.”

This, then, is our human condition, and while it may become, as Tillich shows in his ongoing analysis, pathological, as in surrendering personal freedom in clutching onto some absolute or in committing suicide, it is essentially part of what it means to be a human being – it is, in Tillich’s description, “existential anxiety.” The “courage to be” is therefore the courage necessary to counter the threat of non-being as we face death, meaninglessness and guilt. It is the courage needed to overcome despair and to affirm our own freedom in acting wisely and responsibly. This is the courage we need in order to become more truly and more fully human.

Dag Hammarskjöld, a former Secretary General of the United Nations, is surely another of those courageous men and women who became an icon of courage during the post-Second World War years. In that remarkable passage from his journal *Markings* where he describes that moment in his life when he committed his life to “Someone” and discovered that life has meaning in self-surrender, he also speaks about courage. Yet he does so in a way that leads to the demise of the word from his frame of reference. He writes:

... I came to a time and place where I realized that the Way leads to a triumph which is a catastrophe, and to a catastrophe which is a triumph, that the price for committing one’s life would be reproach, and that the only elevation possible to man lies in the depths of humiliation. After that, the word “courage” lost its meaning, since nothing could be taken from me.¹⁶

13 Tillich, *The courage to be*, p. 41.

14 Tillich, *The courage to be*, p. 43.

15 Tillich, *The courage to be*, p. 62.

16 Dag Hammarskjöld, *Markings* (London: Faber and Faber, 1964), p. 169.

Although more the mystic than the orthodox church-going Christian, Hammarskjöld's insight in this instance goes to the heart of the mystery of Christian faith. This becomes more evident in the words that follow: "I learned, step by step, word by word, that behind every saying in the Gospels, stands *one* man and *one* man's experience", namely the experience of self-offering that led to the cross.

Courage lost its meaning for Hammarskjöld precisely because, through self-offering in service to others, fear lost its power because nothing could be taken from him. He had given all away freely. Yet in doing so, Hammarskjöld actually gives deeper meaning to the word courage. Courage redefined as self-giving in service of others, which takes us to the heart of the gospel and the significance of the cross. Such courage results in acts of free responsibility and is, as Bonhoeffer would have said, the outworking of formation in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This takes us to the heart of the matter.

The heart of the matter

The English word *courage* is derived from the French and that, in turn, is a compound which is built on the Latin word *cor* or heart. For that reason one possible translation of the French is "greatness of soul" or "of heart." The man or woman of courage is typified by John Bunyan's character "Greatheart" in *Pilgrim's progress* who inspires Bunyan's hymn about "true valour" which remains "constant come wind or weather."¹⁷

Courage, from this perspective, is the outworking of "faith active in love," a matter of the heart. This does not necessarily or often result in great acts of "free responsibility" as evident in the lives of those men and women of courage whose names have been mentioned. More often than not, it is the courage that is evident in daily acts of compassion and love. It is the courage of the unsung heroes who attend the needs of those dying of cancer or HIV/AIDS in the hospices and clinics of our land; it is the courage of parents who care for children living with disabilities and chronic illness; it is the courage of those who stand by the refugees whose homes have been torched in acts of xenophobic frenzy, and give them shelter; it is the courage of those pastors and priests who stood for the truth against the falsehood of apartheid, and who now seek to build inclusive communities of compassion that embrace the outsider.

Again, let me stress, that the heart of the matter is not simply that people learn to cope with such adverse circumstances. The heart of the matter is *how* they do so. It is this to which Bunyan refers. All of which leads me to one last observation that, yes, really takes us to the heart of the matter in thinking about the need for people of courage in our country and world at present. From Aristotle through

17 "Who would true valour see."

Thomas to Bonhoeffer and Bunyan, courage is a virtue that is fashioned and shaped both through a person's formation and experience. Courage does not just happen; courage is bred and nurtured by communities of courage (whether family, or school, or church, or the wider society) in which icons of courage are recognised and celebrated. That is why we celebrate Jaap's contribution to our understanding and appreciation of courage.

Soon after I had finished this essay Jaap, not knowing that I was writing it or even that there was a Festschrift in the pipeline, gave me a copy of his autobiographical account of the key moments in his life written "only for his children and close family and friends". Entitled "Sommige Dinge is die moete werd om te Onthou", and nearly a hundred pages in length, I could hardly put it down once I had begun. In an understated way it was gripping stuff! I have honoured Jaap's wishes not to quote from it as it was not intended for a wider readership, but on every page there is evidence of Jaap's courage, confirming everything that I have written. But let me take the liberty of quoting one word that recurs, it is "bang". Jaap has never seen himself as a courageous person or leader; he has never sought publicity for his deeds; he has often in dire circumstances felt decidedly afraid of what might happen. But it is precisely in this way that his courage has become so evident to us all. And that is why it is appropriate that on this occasion we should reflect on courage as a human and Christian virtue.

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Public theology in South Africa: Lessons from the theology of Jaap Durand

NICO KOOPMAN

We are privileged to know Jaap Durand, to continue to share in his life, to enjoy exposure to his theological work, and to say thank you in a humble way through this *Festschrift*.

I met Jaap Durand in January 1980. Standing in the B-Block lecture halls at the University of the Western Cape, I was asking for directions to the office of the dean of the Faculty of Theology, Professor Jaap Durand. I wanted to know more about the new so-called integrated course in theology for ministerial purposes. Coincidentally oom Jaap was about to address the new group of about sixty first-year Theology students in the B-Block. So I was at the right place at the right time. I met oom Jaap within minutes after asking for directions. He enthusiastically invited me to accompany him to the lecture hall (Lecture Hall B1, I remember) where he was to address the first-years. I accepted the invitation enthusiastically. Today it is clear that I did not only accept the invitation to attend that first meeting with new Theology students. The invitation that I had received was an invitation to a life-long journey of exciting theology.

A few days after our first meeting we started to attend oom Jaap's theological encyclopaedia classes. We soon learned that theology was the reflection upon the revelation of the triune God in Jesus Christ, and specifically upon Scripture as testimony to the self-revelation of God. We learned that Christian faith is at its heart Trinitarian faith. We also learned that theology is, as oom Jaap formulated it in class, a practical, existential, scholarly discipline. As a practice that reflects upon Christian faith, theology is practical and existential. This is the case because the triune God that Christians confess is practically and existentially involved in all facets of our lives. In those first-year classes with Jaap Durand we learned so much. These two central themes I do emphasise: Christian faith is Trinitarian faith, and Christian faith impacts on all walks of life.

In that year, 1980, oom Jaap was appointed Vice-Rector of the University of the Western Cape. I remember the response of my local pastor in Lime Acres/ Danielskuil, Rev Pat Petersen, when he heard this news: *Nico, wil jy vir my sê daai reus van 'n teoloog sal nie meer in 'n klas staan nie?* (*Nico, do you mean to tell me that that giant of a theologian will no longer give lectures?*) Our explanation that oom Jaap would live out his calling as theologian in the context of the management of a university, and our hope that he would still be involved in doing formal, scholarly theology, indeed materialised in the ensuing years.

As Vice-Rector, Jaap Durand was honoured and trusted across racial boundaries by both staff and students. He gave crucial leadership during that time. He also actively guided the protest actions at the university. His photo in a Cape newspaper where he, during a protest march in 1985, confronted the police in their Casspirs in front of the main gates of UWC, remains one of the best illustrations of this theologian's courage and passion for compassionate justice. This active involvement as member of the University management team was based on his faith in the triune God, and on his conviction that this faith has a practical, existential character.

During his years as Vice-Rector Jaap Durand continued to do formal scholarly work and published various monographs and essays. He helped us to reconcile sound academic work with the struggle for liberation. Currently universities seek ways to reconcile transformation quests with academic excellence. In the 1980s universities such as the UWC sought ways to reconcile academic excellence with the quest for liberation. To that end Jaap made an indispensable contribution.

Many lessons can be learned from the work of Jaap Durand. In this essay I explore the lessons that contemporary public theological discourse can learn from his theology. I argue that public theological discourses can be enriched by Durand's emphasis on the central importance of a Trinitarian approach to theology. Durand always portrayed the church as those who witness to the triune God. In a second round, therefore, the ecclesial nature of Durand's theology is investigated. Lastly, Durand's portrayal of Christian faith as practical and existential, as well as public is discussed.

Public theology – a Trinitarian approach

In various publications Durand develops a case for a Trinitarian approach to theology. In his famous monograph on the doctrine of God, *Die lewende God*,¹ he expresses appreciation for the renewed attention to the doctrine of God in theological discourse. He argues that for centuries, since the Middle Ages until the early to middle twentieth century, there were no new developments in the thinking about the doctrine of God.² The innovative thinking of the Reformation on Christology and soteriology was unfortunately not accompanied by a speculative medieval doctrine of God. In opposition to the status quo during the period of the early church, the reflection upon God had taken on a sterile, fixed and rigid framework in the Middle Ages. God's Person and work were separated. The doctrine of God became a subsection of dogmatics with limited or no relatedness to the other doctrines.

1 JF Durand, *Die lewende God* (Pretoria: N.G. Kerkboekhandel, 1976). In a more recent publication on the development of the so-called orthodox idea of God up to the eighteenth century, Durand reiterated some of the key ideas of *Die lewende God*. See J Durand, *The many faces of God* (Stellenbosch: Sun Press, 2007).

2 Durand, *Die lewende God*, p. 9-10.

The new theological development is that the unity of God and his works is maintained. This implies that the doctrine of God becomes more dynamic. It is integrated more adequately with the other doctrines. In fact, the doctrine of God begins to function again as the central doctrine in dogmatics. Durand welcomes this development.³ He argues that it is a confirmation of the theological approach in the early church when there was no strict division between so-called economic or revelation Trinity and the immanent or essential Trinity. Neither was the doctrine of God developed separate from the doctrines of Christ and salvation. He even states that this renewed affirmation of the unity of God's revelation and his essence, of his work in Jesus Christ and his being, confirms Calvin's attempts to restore the unity, an attempt that was unfortunately not followed up by Calvin's successors.

It is notable how the trends that Durand had identified in 1976 have been pursued increasingly in recent theological thought.

Durand is convinced that the doctrine of the Trinity did not develop in a speculative manner with a focus on a general image of God. Instead, it developed as the result of the wrestling of the early church with the evidence of Scripture about the person of Jesus Christ. This biblical evidence not only consists of the two so-called triadic texts (Matthew 28: 19; 2 Corinthians 13:13), but the biblical evidence of trinitarian faith resides in the fundamental biblical witness that in Jesus Christ we have to do with God Himself, in fact Jesus Christ is God. Dutch theologian, Gijsbert van den Brink,⁴ affirms this scriptural approach to Trinitarian discourse. He argues that early Protestant theologians should have been more consistent in their use of the notion of *sola Scriptura*, and that they should have reflected on the doctrine of the Trinity with an appeal to scriptural content and terminology.

South African theologian Dirkie Smit⁵ refers to Calvin who also emphasises the relationship between Scripture and the Trinity. Calvin, however, explains how the doctrine of the Trinity illuminates our understanding of Scripture. This doctrine provided the only and unavoidable way of thinking and speaking according to the message of Scripture. By referring to the terminology of various authors Smit explains that the doctrine provides believers with a "structure" or "framework" or "biblical grammar", with the only way to think Old and New Testament together, and to speak

3 Durand, *Die lewende God*, p. 63-64. Durand cautions that the emphasis on the unity of God's revelation and essence does not imply that we can say more about the essence of God than Scripture provides. We cannot make God the object of our thinking and we cannot deal with Him in a calculating way. Although God is not different from His revelation, He is always more than His revelation. God's self-revelation does not imply His self-surrender. See Durand, *Die lewende God*, p. 10, 43, 75.

4 G van den Brink, "De hedendaagse Renaissance van de Triniteitsleer: Een oriënterend overzicht", *Theologia Reformata*, Vol 46 (2003), p. 211.

5 DJ Smit, "The Trinity in the Reformed tradition", *Journal of Reformed Theology* 3 (2009), p. 60.

of the *one* God of both Testaments. This does not in the first instance mean to quote disparate texts as proof texts, but rather to discern a pattern, a scope, an underlying reality within scripture.

Referring to Noordmans, Smit states:

... Trinitarian language offers a way to tell the story of the scriptures, to know God as the living God, acting as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, graciously, loving, saving, and comforting us *and* calling, claiming, and renewing us, in rich and complex ways – always in the plural.⁶

Gijsbert van den Brink emphasises the importance of the integration of Trinitarian thinking and soteriological thinking. In his discussion of the renaissance of the doctrine of the Trinity Van den Brink argues that Trinitarian thought is again viewed as central for soteriology. The Trinity has been restored to its original home, i.e. soteriology.⁷

Smit explains how a Trinitarian focus enriches reflection upon any theological theme. His illuminating remarks are worth quoting at length:

Whether one speaks about the knowledge of God, about creation, about being, about time, about human beings, about salvation, about sin and suffering, about election, about the church, about baptism, about the Lord's Supper, about eschatology, about the Christian life, about discipleship and ethics, about calling, about hermeneutics, about love, yes, about Jesus Christ, about his cross, his resurrection and his threefold office, as well as about the Spirit, about worship and liturgy, about piety and spirituality, about prayer – a Trinitarian account always seems to help to speak in more differentiated ways about the rich and complex, dynamic and surprising ways of the biblical account. Contemporary examples of all of these abound in theological literature ... Reformed treatments of the last few decades of all these themes, and many more, have typically often followed a “Trinitarian spread” (in Dutch, a *trinitarische spreiding*, in the famous expression of Noordmans, but with the same spirit also to be found in Van Ruler). Whatever the question, it seems that the biblical grammar calls for a threefold response.⁸

Durand's prophetic perspectives about the importance, nature and significance of a Trinitarian approach in theology offer helpful insights for the development of a public theology, i.e. a theology that focuses upon the inherent public nature, the public rationality and the public impact of Christian faith.

To focus upon the Trinity is to focus upon the heart of Christian faith. A public theology that is developed in this Trinitarian fashion is therefore constituted by more substantial theological convictions. When public theology engages various public challenges it does so from the perspective of more substantial, particularistic, Christian theological convictions.

6 DJ Smit, “The Trinity in the Reformed tradition”, p. 76.

7 G van den Brink, “De hedendaagse Renaissance”, p. 218-221.

8 DJ Smit, “The Trinity in the Reformed tradition”, p. 67-68.

A Trinitarian approach also ensures that we take Scripture very seriously. Not only individual texts but also the thrust, focus, scope, pattern and reality of Scripture are on the agenda in public theological endeavours that take the Trinity seriously. This emphasis on the biblical contents does not exclude the fact that we also drink from the wells of the Christian tradition as expressed in the confessions and doctrines of our tradition, as well as from the wells of reason and experience.

A Trinitarian approach enables us to develop a comprehensive, biblical and theological engagement with the rich contents of Christian faith.

In emphasising the unity between the economic and the immanent Trinity, we have the courage to reflect upon God and to make responsible remarks about the triune God who reveals Himself in Jesus Christ. This unity, however, does not imply that we pretend to know more than what God has revealed about Himself and what Scripture testifies to. Although we have courage to engage in so-called God-talk, we also fulfil this task with humility and the awareness that God is not different from his revelation but indeed greater than it. Moreover, the freedom and sovereignty of the triune God is in no way surrendered by His act of self-revelation. In no way can we dissect and even manipulate Him. He remains the totally Other who is simultaneously immanent and transcendent.

This healthy awareness of our finitude and limitedness as human beings over against the infinite all-perfect God cautions us to guard against wrong ways of relating Trinitarian thinking to ecclesiology, anthropology and ethics. In the next section we briefly discuss three ways in which Durand makes the move from Trinitarian thinking to ecclesiology and ethics.

Public theology – an ecclesial approach

We may briefly consider three ways in which Durand applied Trinitarian thinking to the church and to Christian moral living in the world, namely the Confession of Belhar, of which he is a co-author; the Church Order of the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa, of which he is the main author, and his views on the role of church unification in the quest for reconciliation and justice.

Durand contributed to the formulation of the Belhar Confession. Belhar tells us about God, and based on what it confesses about God, Belhar teaches us about the church and Christian ethics. The move in Belhar from Trinitarian faith to ecclesiology and ethics is consistently made by way of the notion of the church that is called by God to confess, to witness, to participate, to stand where God stands, to obey, and to trust. Ecclesiology and ethics are expressed in faithful response to this call of God. Faithful response entails the development of an ecclesiology and ethics of confession, witness, participation, holy partiality (to stand where God stands), presence where God is present, obedience and trust.

Durand helps us to develop an ecclesiology and ethics of confession, as explained above, as well as an ecclesiology of embodiment. We are called to confess and embody the Trinitarian faith. The notion of embodying is enhanced by the church order. One of the central articles of the church order, one on the various practices of the church, demonstrates how Trinitarian thinking, ecclesiology and ethics are intertwined in the theology of Jaap Durand, and may I say of the Reformed tradition. Article 5 of the Church Order⁹ states that the various practices of the church are aimed at the service of God, the service and well-being of the congregation, and the service and well-being of the world. These congregational practices include worship, instruction, care, witnessing and service.

In the church as the community of the called ones, the triune God is worshipped and honoured for the sake of the well-being of the church and her members, and for the sake of the world.

Durand's decade-long commitment to the re-unification of the members of the so-called Dutch Reformed Church family constitutes one more example of the ecclesiology and ethic that are inferred from Trinitarian faith. Durand specifically spells out the significance of church re-unification for the quest for reconciliation and justice in South Africa. When the URCSA was established Jaap Durand joined the plea of Beyers Naudé¹⁰ that members of URCSA, who come from a variety of ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds, be brought into contact on congregational level. Apartheid has deliberately estranged people from different language, cultural, ethnic and economic groups. In the quest for unity deliberate efforts should be made to bring together people who were previously separated. Durand argues that structural unity helps to address problems of practical and attitudinal nature that exist among a diversity of people, and especially among those who were estranged from each other for long periods of time.¹¹

Public Theology is indeed enriched by the Trinitarian-based ecclesial and ethical perspectives in Durand's theology.

Public theology – modes and models of public engagement

Jaap Durand enhances public theological discourse by means of his Trinitarian, ecclesial and ethical perspectives. However, he also contributes to public theological

9 Church Order and Regulations of the General Synod of the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa (Bloemfontein: CLF Publishers, 2001), p. 7-8.

10 See CFB Naudé, "Support in word and deed" in P Réamonn (ed): *Farewell to apartheid? Church relations in South Africa* (Geneva: World Alliance of Reformed Churches, 1994), p. 71.

11 See JFF Durand, "Church unity and the Reformed Churches in Southern Africa" in P Réamonn (ed), *Farewell to apartheid?*, p. 66. In the years that he wrote this article Durand fulfilled a leadership role in the work of peacebuilding in the Western Cape during the difficult transition years which led to the first democratic elections in South Africa in April 1994.

endeavours in various other ways. He first offers a very helpful description of public life in contemporary South Africa. This description of the contemporary *Zeitgeist*, culture, public thinking in South Africa provides lessons for the modes of public engagement of South African churches. He also developed models of church and state engagement, which until today assist churches to define their public role in the context of a democracy. In the last part of this essay these two aspects are investigated.

a) In a more recent publication Durand describes the rapid public changes among white Afrikaans-speaking people in South Africa.¹² His ideas about this group of people are also relevant for other groups in South Africa. Durand refers to the overwhelming speed at which we have moved from a pre-modern to a modern society.¹³ Various structural changes pave the way for a speedy modernisation process. Among these are the adoption of a democratic institution, with a bill of rights, overseen by a constitutional court, strengthened by other democratic institutions such as a commission for human rights and public protector, as well as the free press, freedom of speech practices, and the liberal market economy.

He explained how the process of physical pluralism, i.e. the greater physical exposure of people from various cultural, linguistic and religious backgrounds to each other, and the process of what we may call electronic pluralism, i.e. the greater exposure of a diversity of cultures, languages, worldviews, epistemologies and religions to each other by means of the modern communication media in the context of globalisation, has led to pluralism as a state of mind, a way of thinking, a central element of the contemporary *Zeitgeist*.¹⁴ In the context of exposure to a plurality of views there is the risk that central theological and moral convictions are relativised.

Durand identifies typical elements of modernisation and secularisation in South African society.¹⁵ Among these is a way of thinking that emphasises the rational capacities of human beings, which leads to the development of science and technology. Secondly, the emphasis is on the value, worth and dignity of the individual, which paved the way for the adoption of democratic measures and institutions. Another characteristic of secularisation as it manifests itself in South African society is, according to Durand, the fact that religion does not disappear altogether, but that it is limited to the private spheres of life.¹⁶ Secularisation manifests itself in the privatisation of religion. It manifests as the compartmentalisation and fragmentation of society into separate spheres each with its own sets of values, norms and autonomy. In the context of an identity and orientation crisis caused by the rapid social and cultural changes,

12 JFF Durand, *Ontluisterde wêreld: Die Afrikaner en sy kerk in 'n veranderende Suid-Afrika* (Wellington: Lux Verbi. BM, 2002).

13 Durand, *Ontluisterde wêreld*, p. 56.

14 Durand, *Ontluisterde wêreld*, p. 30-31.

15 Durand, *Ontluisterde wêreld*, p. 23-24.

16 Durand, *Ontluisterde wêreld*, p. 55-56.

Durand states that members of churches focus less on public life.¹⁷ They withdraw into themselves and develop a spirituality that is manifested as an inner emigration. In the context of this uncertainty about identity many Christians focus less on the ecumenical and denominational church and are even less interested in church reunification processes. The authority of denominational church structures and decisions are also increasingly questioned. These believers focus increasingly only on the local congregation. Such focus is intensified by the dominant culture of democratisation and local decision-making. Durand even mentions that this focus on the local, inner, and individual is evident from the fact that Christians were not that concerned whether South Africa adopts a secular or theocratic constitution.¹⁸ What mattered more is that the constitution protects individual rights such as property rights.

In developing public theologies the manifestation and impact of the processes of pluralism, modernisation and secularisation upon churches and upon the broader society deserves serious attention. In such a context, Durand suggests, the church should fulfill her task in the mode of servants in the world.¹⁹ Churches should open themselves to the transformative work of the Word and confession. The church should also be opened to be transformed and purified for her missionary public task. She carries out this task by means of thorough cultural analysis, theological reflection and the mission of the congregation. Durand offers various suggestions on ways in which the focus on the local congregation can be transformed into fruitful congregational and public practices.

b) In addition to these modes of public involvement in the context of secularising pluralism and modernisation, Durand discusses models for the public involvement of churches in contemporary societies. He analyses the works of major confessional traditions and theologians on the public involvement of churches, and constructs four models for the public involvement of churches. Although this work was done in the 1980s, its relevance for contemporary South Africa will become clear in the following brief analysis. Although the focus is mainly on the political dimension of public life, some inferences can be drawn for other spheres of public life in a democracy, namely economic life, civil society and the dimension of public opinion formation.

The first model which Durand discusses is the *Roman Catholic nature-grace model*.²⁰ According to him, this model came to expression in the so-called *Corpus Christianum*,

17 Durand, *Ontluisterde wêreld*, p. 60-62.

18 Durand, *Ontluisterde wêreld*, p. 59-60.

19 Durand, *Ontluisterde wêreld*, p. 63, 65-70.

20 JJF Durand, "Kontemporêre modelle vir die verhouding van kerk en samelewing" in *Teks binne konteks: Versamelde opstelle oor kerk en politiek* (Bellville: University of the Western Cape, 1986), p. 14-19.

i.e. Christendom period.²¹ Society was described as the *congregatio fidelium*, a mystical body, governed, on the basis of ecclesial-canonial and Roman-civil law, by the pope and Caesar as earthly representatives of the invisible Chief, Jesus Christ. In this joint ecclesial and civil government, which formed an ontological unity, the church enjoyed priority. The church served as institute of salvation and mediator of the grace of God, which does not nullify nature, but perfects it – *gratia non tollit naturam, sed perficit*. Static natural law, in particular, which was not contaminated by sin, had to be put under the rule of grace.

In the light of the virulent secularisation processes initiated by the Enlightenment, Vatican II reconsidered the ecclesiology of the Christendom era.²² In *Gaudium et spes* the church is described as a *sacramentum mundi*, a sacrament of the world, which embodies the redemption that God is fulfilling in human history through the elevation (*elevatio*), perfecting (*perficere*) and completion (*consummatio*) of the world. As institute of grace the church no longer mediates grace to nature by being a guardian of nature, but by penetrating nature. This penetration, according to *Lumen gentium*, takes place via the church which, like Christ, serves especially the poor and suffering as a humble servant.

Durand mentions that Roman Catholic theologians in the tradition of Liberation Theology, such as Gustavo Gutierrez, argue that the status of the church as *sacramentum mundi* implies that the church participates in the liberation struggle of oppressed people.²³ This participation is in itself a redemptive activity reflecting the universal redemptive reign of Christ. Durand also refers to Roman Catholic theologians in the tradition of political theology, such as Johann Baptist Metz, for whom it does not suffice that the church penetrates the world by way of its exemplary living, but, with its eyes on the *eschaton*, the church is present in the world in a subversive, disturbing, critical manner.²⁴

Contemporary public theological discourses can learn from this classical model that churches do have a sacramental, exemplary, penetrating, elevating, transformative, liberating, critical, subversive and disturbing function in the world.

The second model is called the *Lutheran two kingdom model*. Durand explains Luther's conviction that the church, on the one hand, and family, government, workplace, government and politics, on the other, exist under the rule of God, even though they are separated into the spiritual and earthly regiments, governed by

21 Durand, "Kontemporère modèle", p. 14.

22 Durand, "Kontemporère modèle", p. 14-16.

23 Durand, "Kontemporère modèle", p. 17-18.

24 Durand, "Kontemporère modèle", p. 18-19.

the gospel and the law and sword, respectively.²⁵ Christians live in both regiments, which exist as altar and throne in harmony.

Durand²⁶ refers to Lutheran theologian, Helmut Thielicke, who states that Christians live in the tension field between the old aeon and the new aeon. In this space the church does not accept the old dispensation of injustice passively. On the other hand, it does not suggest that it can embody the new dispensation of justice and love perfectly. Instead, the church is willing to make compromises when it participates in the worldly regiment. Thielicke argues that God made a compromise with the world. As was the case with the covenant with Noah, God promised that he would sustain the world for the sake of the proclamation of the gospel. For this purpose He would use the means available in the sinful world. Because Christians participate in the world in the context of a compromise and imperfection, Thielicke argues that a political party can never be called Christian. The only thing that can be called Christian is the noble intentions with which Christians live in the worldly kingdom. Through individual Christians the church engages in the infiltration (*Unterwanderung*) of the world. This infiltration has as purpose the conversion of persons and through them the transformation of social structures. Thielicke states that in proclaiming the reign of God in all walks of life, the church enters the world like a strange body (*Fremdkörper*) enters an organism.

The third model that Durand identifies is the *Reformed Christocratic model*. In presenting this model Durand discusses the ideas of John Calvin, Abraham Kuyper and Karl Barth.

Calvin adhered to the idea of a Christocracy.²⁷ Christ rules over both the spiritual and earthly kingdoms or regiments. The gospel and law function in both regiments. The grace of God does not elevate nature, but it does redeem and heal nature. Though both regiments resort under the kingship of Christ, the church that is governed through the Spirit and Word enjoys priority and forms the inner circle. It prophetically proclaims the reign of Christ over the world to the outer circle, i.e. the earthly kingdom.

Kuyper distinguishes between the particular and the common grace of God.²⁸ The particular grace of salvation is at work in the church, and the common grace of creation in the world. In line with his doctrine of sovereignty in own circle, the autonomy of every sphere of life is respected. The church as institute cannot speak prophetically to any of these spheres. The task of the church as institute is to proclaim the gospel and administer the sacraments to Christians for the sake of their eternal and spiritual salvation. The prophetic task is fulfilled in the world through the church as organism,

25 Durand, "Kontemporère modèle", p. 19-20.

26 Durand, "Kontemporère modèle", p. 22-24.

27 Durand, "Kontemporère modèle", p. 24-25.

28 Durand, "Kontemporère modèle", p. 26-28.

i.e. through individual Christians who form Christian organisations and even a Christian political party.

Karl Barth opposes the idea of the two regiments.²⁹ He interprets reality Christologically. All spheres of life should be understood in terms of the central confession of Christian faith: Christ the Crucified and Resurrected is Lord and King of God's kingdom and of all kingdoms of this world. The universal work of salvation of Christ also involves the state. Both church and state wait upon the full actualisation of God's kingdom in the *eschaton*. The state, as the outer of two concentric circles, is called to be a servant of Christ, giving a relative, fragmentary and incidental reflection of the political order of the kingdom. In the light of the expectation of the coming kingdom the church, as inner circle around the centre which is Christ and his kingdom, does not isolate itself from the earthly kingdoms. It proclaims the kingdom of God to the state, lives exemplary and challenges it to reflect the kingdom, to be an *analogon* of the kingdom, albeit in imperfect ways. This exemplary living entails that because God became human the church is politically concerned about the well-being of human beings; because God establishes his right to human beings in Christ, the church rejects anarchy and tyranny, and supports the notion of the human rights state; because Christ came to save those who are lost the church seeks social justice for the vulnerable, the poor and the wronged.

Barth³⁰ suggests concrete ways in which the church may participate in political life. The church impacts on the political sphere by being faithful to its calling. The church as institution challenges the political role-players and processes by means of her proclamation, pulpit announcements and other ecclesial declarations and actions. The church's more direct involvement in party-political life takes place through its individual members who act anonymously, and who are not qualified as "Christian", in political activities. Barth opposes the idea of a Christian party. The only Christian institute is the church. Other institutions that use the adjective "Christian" always run the risk of compromising the Christian message.

The fourth model that Durand identifies is the *revolutionary-eschatological model*. This model has developed since the 1960s in the circles of so-called political, liberation, revolutionary, and secular theologies. These theologians were dissatisfied with the inadequate way in which churches actualised the constructive insights of the three classical models discussed above. They all have a strong eschatological orientation which does not make them withdraw from the world, but which motivates them to confront and challenge the injustices in the world in a revolutionary manner. They reject conformity and advocate the total negation of the political and economic

29 Durand, "Kontemporère modèle", p. 29-30.

30 Durand, "Kontemporère modèle", p. 30-31.

systems. The *pro-missio* of Christ's universal kingship mobilizes the *missio* of the church in the world.

Despite their limitations exposed by Durand, various insights from each of these models enrich contemporary public theological discussions on the role of churches in public life. By identifying these models Durand renders a great service to public theological discourse.

Conclusion

Jaap Durand served theology well in this country, and he continues to do so. Public theological discourse is enriched by his Trinitarian focus, his ecclesial approach, and his willingness to spell out ethical implications for all walks of life. Contemporary work in public theology can draw from his social and culture analysis, and from his concrete suggestions for the involvement of churches in public life. In his writings and in his concrete quests for justice, peace and reconciliation he confirms that theology is a practical and existential endeavour.

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Inclusion and exclusion: Some remarks on the use and abuse of a theological trajectory

BERNARD LATEGAN

Introduction

It is a privilege to be part of this festive celebration of the person and the work of Jaap Durand. He has had – and continues to have – an enduring influence on family, friends, colleagues, and students, but also far beyond these circles. He has contributed in many ways to the development of theology as a discipline and to the establishment of a democratic, free and more just society. The concept of “justice” features prominently – and rightly so – in this *Festschrift*. It is worth noting that in the biblical tradition, where this concept has a rich and multi-layered history, it is often treated in a special way. A good example is the beatitudes of Matthew. Those who are poor in spirit, the mourning, the meek, the merciful, the peacemakers, the persecuted or the insulted are mentioned without any explanation of what motivates these different attitudes. In the case of righteousness or justice, however, we are given a glimpse of what drives the quest for justice – it is fuelled by an intense desire, by a “hunger and thirst”.¹ This is a timely reminder that justice – whatever theoretical or theological reflection the concept may generate on a secondary level – is in the first place something that has to be *done*, that has to be satisfied in concrete terms in a concrete situation. In a quite different context, Manfred Max-Neef, the Chilean developmental economist, prefers to talk of basic human *needs*, instead of basic *values*. He does so to emphasise that in order to have any impact at all, a value system must by definition be dynamic. We can learn from this secular insight that justice is in essence a deep-seated existential *need* that cries out to be satisfied in our relations with God (“Wie finde ich einen gnädigen Gott?”), with others (“do unto others ...”) or with nature (“caring for creation”). Justice does not exist *in abstracto*. Theoretical reflection on the concept of justice is per definition a secondary task. Its true nature is its directedness toward the achievement or approximation of righteousness in a specific situation.

The quest for justice therefore has far-reaching ethical implications, but also raises some intriguing questions about the way in which we do theology. What triggers theological reflection? God, revelation, reality? All three, no doubt, and perhaps also some other impulses. Even more problematic is the question of sequence: Is

1 “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled” (Mat 5:6). Biblical quotations are from the New International Version (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978).

theological reflection a secondary response to a primary impulse or is theological thinking the source of new insights and a new understanding of reality?

One can put such questions (or non-questions) to Jaap Durand and he will most probably tolerate them with an amused smile – and then defuse them with a completely different take on the matter. One of the most rewarding experiences is doing theology with him – as many colleagues, students and members of his congregations will attest. I will not attempt to describe in any detail the nature of his theology nor the process he follows in pursuing theological challenges. That might be a promising topic for a future doctoral dissertation. I shall list a few characteristics that come immediately to mind – concentration, context, reality, freedom, reconciliation – and then concentrate on one trajectory of which he is such a prominent exponent.

With concentration I mean the focused way with which he penetrates to the heart of an issue. Perhaps his early training in the “wysbegeerte van die wetsidee” has something to do with this, but it is more likely due to his refusal to be distracted by the secondary or trivial aspects of a problem. He is averse to superficial or contrived argumentation and is not satisfied until the root causes of an issue or a phenomenon have been exposed. This relates to his uncanny awareness of context. Long before “contextual theology” became fashionable, he understood the importance of the way theology never happens in a vacuum, but always in interaction with a specific situation. In fact, he became a master of contextual analysis. In his doctoral dissertation he offers a very different description of developments in the “mission-field” than what was the current understanding at the time. *Swartman, stad en toekoms* is a classic analysis of the situation of urban blacks in the middle of the previous century and of the devastating effects of the apartheid system. This study testifies – beside the theological insights – to Durand’s sociological, anthropological and political abilities. Experts from these disciplines praised the book as a model of this kind of analysis. In *Ontluisterde wêreld* he traces with great clarity the effects of secularisation on the church and on the religious experience of Afrikaners, and of the challenges they face to remain relevant in a secular age. This interaction between a changed reality and doing theology illustrates another characteristic of Durand’s theology – the constant interplay between reality and theology in his thinking.² His development of theological themes is never mere theorising, but always a response to a concrete situation or question. This also explains the freedom with which he deals with theological issues and the creative way in which he explores new possibilities. He is always seeking a different angle for an original solution. This does not mean that he ignores tradition. In fact, by going back into the history of dogma and to biblical texts he is able to expose what really lies behind tradition, what the challenge was that a specific formulation tried to address.

2 This interplay between reality and theological reflection sometimes took extreme forms – such as the time when, early on icy mornings at Cala, Durand started up the old Lister engine – and then buried himself in the study of Kittel’s *Theologisches Wörterbuch*.

This enabled him to uncover the thrust of biblical trajectories and to spell out their implications for the present.

In the rest of this brief contribution I shall trace the development of only one of these biblical trajectories – that of theological inclusion and exclusion – in order to place Durand’s own contribution in context. I shall first discuss the broad contours of the trajectory and then (in a final section) return to Durand’s own specific application thereof.

Inclusion and exclusion as a theological trajectory

The dialectic between inclusion and exclusion runs through the entire biblical tradition. It represents a dynamic trajectory that changes with time and context and that provides a clear example of the historicity of the biblical tradition itself.³ The first five chapters of Genesis are breathtaking in their universal scope. The stories of creation provide an account of how “the heavens and the earth” came into being (Gen 2:1). It includes all of nature and presents “the man” (2:20) and “the woman” (3:2) in their most generic roles as the ancestors of all of humankind. In the same way, all of nature is affected by the deception of the serpent and all of humankind from now on will eat their food by the “sweat of your brow” (3:19). The transition from Adam to Noah is painted with the same universalistic brushstrokes. In the end “all the people on earth” become corrupt and the entire earth is “filled with violence” (6:11-12), leading to the decision to “destroy both [the people] and the earth” (6:13).

At this point the first instance of exclusion occurs – Noah (the righteous man – 6:9) and his extended family are excluded from the impending disaster. But this event of selection is at the same time accompanied by explicit measures to include “all creatures that move along or on the earth” (8:19). Noah is to take with him representatives of all animals, clean and unclean, as well as of every kind of bird, with the clear intention to restock all of creation after the flood. In the same vein the covenant with Noah is phrased in universalistic terms: “Never again will I curse the ground ... and never again will I destroy all living creatures. As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, will never cease” (8:21-22). The rainbow forthwith will be “the sign of the covenant I have established between me and all life on earth” (9:17).

This dialectic between the narrowing of the conduit of God’s blessing – even down to one individual – while maintaining the universal impact of this blessing remains from now on a recurring theme in the unfolding biblical tradition. The calling of

3 Durand was always very conscious of the historical nature of the revelation. In his second doctoral dissertation he offers a fundamental critique of the “de-historization” that characterises both the theology of Thomas and important exponents of modern Western theology (JJF Durand, *Heilsgeskiedenis en die dialektiek van syn en denke* (D.Th. Thesis, Stellenbosch University, 1973).

Abraham (12:1: “Leave your country, your people and your father’s household and go to the land I will show you”) takes the form of a separation and signals the start of an enduring contrast to other groups, nations and countries. Like Adam, Abraham is an iconic figure. However, he is no longer representative of all of humankind, but only of a specific group. His mission is couched in narrower, nationalistic terms: He is to become the head of a “great nation” whose members will be blessed through him (12:2). But at the exact moment that this contraction of the channel of God’s blessing takes shape, the universalistic perspective is – paradoxically – maintained: “All the peoples on earth will be blessed through you” (12:3). This dialectic between a universalistic and a particularistic perspective, and between the accompanying strategies of inclusion and exclusion, lies at the heart of the problem we are exploring. The ambiguity inherent in the figure of Abraham, being particularistic and universalistic at the same time, is a rich source of hermeneutical ingenuity and of creative theological reflection. As we shall see, it provides the pivotal point for Paul’s reinterpretation of the history of Israel and for his argument to develop an inclusive view of the church.

In the wake of the calling of Abraham and in the course of the subsequent history of Israel (patriarchs, exodus, Sinai, the promised land, the prophets, exile and return), the narrower, particularistic understanding of salvation remains the dominant line of interpretation. To the outside, the integrity of God’s people is safeguarded by keeping a distance from foreign gods, heathen nations and ungodly practices. Internally, loyalty to the Covenant and the Torah is maintained by removing unwanted elements from the midst of the assembly of God and by rooting out idolatry. The preferred strategies are those of separation, exclusion and excommunication. This type of thinking provided the basic matrix for all later variations and aberrations of “God’s chosen people”, of the select few, of a privileged position close to God, superior to those “outside” who do not meet the criteria for inclusion to the inner circle of the elected – with devastating consequences.

Yet, the universalistic, inclusive perspective is not entirely lost. The so-called nature psalms echo the first chapters of Genesis. The first section of Psalm 19, the revelation of God in nature, is couched in unrestrained universalistic terms, before turning to the Torah in the second part of the hymn. Psalms 8, 24, and 29 contain similar elements. Ecclesiastes and much of the book of Proverbs are written in the same generic style, but it is especially Job that is reminiscent of the universal language so typical of the first part of Genesis. Here God is in conversation first with Satan and later with Job in what is generally recognised as a classical treatment of the universal theodicy problem. No mention is made of the Covenant, Israel or the Torah – those distinctive markers that set a specific nation apart from humanity in general. Job is introduced merely as a “blameless and upright” man who “feared God and shunned evil” (Job 1:1) and after

he repents and acknowledges his lack of insight, God makes him twice as prosperous as before (42:10).

With the transition to the New Testament, the paradox of the narrower and the wider contours of salvation intensifies. On the one hand, there is the concentration in *one* person and the narrowing down to *one* name – “for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). But Jesus himself widens the perspective with his focus on the other, the stranger, outside the circle of the chosen people, those on the edge of society. The Canaanite woman (Mat 15:21-28), the parable of the great banquet (Luke 14: 15-23), and the healing of the slave of the Roman officer (Mat 5-13) testify to a more inclusive approach. Even more subtly, the attention to women, the powerless, the marginalised, the last rather than the first signals the wider scope and intention of God’s blessing.

This widening of the horizon is accompanied by Jesus’ intense criticism of the use of tradition and of the current state of the interpretation of the Torah. According to the programmatic statement of Mat 5:17, Jesus is not intent on abolishing the Torah, but on making clear its true intention. This calls for both a transformation of current ethical practices and a radicalisation of the implications of the Torah. A righteousness is required that “surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law” (Mat 5:20). This implies following evil to its roots – beyond the act of murder to the underlying anger, beyond adultery to the desire that triggers it. But it also implies a new mode of dealing with conflict and injury. An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth expresses the current understanding of justice. While this may to a certain extent constitute fair compensation, it also demonstrates the hopelessness of a retaliatory concept of justice. Such concepts feed the war syndrome, led to countless tragedies of senseless blood feuds through the ages, and prevents to this day any long-term solution to the situation in the Middle East. In order to transcend this constrained concept of justice a new way of thinking and doing is needed.

By far the most radical *Umdeutung* of the tradition by Jesus is the reversal of the conventional rule that neighbours should be loved and enemies hated. It is replaced by the outrageous suggestion that *enemies* should be loved and that one should pray for one’s persecutors “so that you may be *sons* of your Father in heaven” (Mat 5:45). These sons should emulate the example of the Father who “causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous” (5:45). A more complete redefinition of what it means to be “children of God” is hardly possible. It entails an inclusivity that was previously unconceivable. A righteousness that goes beyond the normal practice of being civil and fair to members of one’s own group (such as family or even tax collectors among themselves) is at stake. What is needed is a concept of righteousness that encompasses conventional opposites, that crosses existing boundaries in order to include the formerly excluded and in doing so achieves an inclusiveness that was previously unthinkable.

Inclusivity, transcending existing divisions, and reconciling opposites are therefore the elements of a new understanding of righteousness of which Jesus himself becomes the personification. But the consequences of this approach did not materialise immediately. During Jesus' own ministry, the emerging movement stayed within Jewish parameters. Even in the first phase after Pentecost, Peter and his fellow apostles are – according to Acts – directing their message to “all of Israel” (Acts 2:36). Their persecution is portrayed as an inner-Jewish matter. It is instigated by the high priest and his associates, and Stephen's death is sanctioned by the Sanhedrin. It was only with the outbreak of the general persecution in Jerusalem that the movement began to spread to other regions of Judea and Samaria and finally entered the wider Hellenistic world. At this stage questions of inclusion became acute. Peter is faced with the dilemma whether he should associate with a gentile, even if he and all of his family were “devout and God-fearing” (Acts 10:1). A three-fold vision was needed to overcome his scruples to enter the house of Cornelius (Acts 10:9-29). But once these gentiles received the Spirit, nothing can hold Peter back to baptise them. Nonetheless, he had to explain his actions to his brothers in Jerusalem. It was only after hearing that this gentile family received the same gift of the Spirit as they did that the objections fell away and the conclusion is reached: “So then, God has even granted the Gentiles repentance unto life” (Acts 11:18).

Realities on the ground thus forced a fundamental rethink of existing theological positions. No one played a more decisive role in this process than Paul. The former persecutor of the church was destined from the outset to fulfill a wider mission “before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel” (Acts 9:15). Yet he almost invariably made the local synagogue the starting-point of his ministry (Acts 13:4, 14; 17:2). It is only when he meets with opposition from the Jews, like in Antioch and Thessalonica, that he shifted his focus more specifically to the gentiles – with spectacular success. Those who were (according to current theological thinking) excluded from God's special gifts and salvation are those who most ardently accept the message of the apostle. The power of an inclusive approach is thus demonstrated not by theological principles, but by people who “vote by their feet” as it were, by outsiders and gentiles who accept the message of salvation without hesitation. It is this new reality that forces a reassessment of accepted doctrine and that triggers new and innovative theological thinking about what really constitutes the church.

It is at this point that a critical move is made by the opponents of inclusion. Some members of the Jerusalem congregation conceded (grudgingly it would seem) that gentiles can be included in the community of faith, but only on one strict condition: They must accept the Jewish way of life, that is, they “must be circumcised and required to obey the law of Moses” (Acts 15:5). This is the first example of the notorious “plus” that was to assume many different forms and guises and that was to play such an

important role in the subsequent history of the church. Faith is fine, but in order to be truly saved some additional criteria must be met ...

For Peter and Paul this is the denial of what they have personally experienced. The gentiles – like the apostles – received the Spirit on the basis of faith and not by fulfilling any other obligation. God “made no distinction between us and them, for he purified their hearts through faith” (Acts 15:9). Likewise, his children should also make no distinction. All who believe should be included in the community of faith. The gentiles should not be burdened with a yoke which the Jews themselves were not able to bear (Acts 15:10).

Unfortunately, this clear spiritual insight is notoriously difficult to maintain in practice. When visiting the church in Antioch, Peter himself avoided socialising with gentiles out of fear of criticism from the “circumcision group”, forcing Paul to expose this hypocrisy for what it is (Gal 2:12-13). In Galatia, Paul had to fight an uphill battle against the same insistence that the converts from the gentiles should observe the law. In this instance the situation is even more complex.⁴ His gentile followers in Galatia already accepted the gospel as proclaimed by Paul, but his authority is now undermined by opponents who claim that the apostle is not telling the full story. According to them, Paul is presenting a softer version of the gospel in order to be popular. He makes things easier by not insisting on the difficult task of observing the law. In this respect, the Galatians are vulnerable in a double sense. As newcomers to the faith, they have the drawback that they are not familiar with the long tradition of the Torah. They are also in need of explicit ethical guidelines to shape and to give content to their newly found faith – guidelines which (the opponents suggest) the Torah can readily provide. This gives rise to a different variation of the “plus”. By adding further requirements to the basic condition of faith, the radical inclusive nature of the believing community is subtly qualified and in fact narrowed down by excluding those who do not observe the Torah.

History thus overtakes theology. The influx of non-Jewish believers rendered long-treasured positions obsolete and necessitated a re-examination of the basic premises of traditional Jewish thinking. It is typical of Paul’s way of doing theology that he does not abandon the tradition in which he stands, but that he goes back to its very roots. The central position of the Covenant and of the Torah in the history of Israel cannot be denied. He is forced to retrace the trajectory of the special and privileged position of Israel to its origins. Has he missed something? What was prior to the Torah? This leads him to the figure of Abraham. In him Paul discovers (to his surprise) someone who at the time of his calling is uncircumcised, that is,

4 For a more comprehensive discussion, see BC Lategan, “The argumentative situation of Galatians” in Mark D Nanos (ed): *The Galatians debate* (Peabody, Mass: Hendrickson, 2002), pp. 383-395.

living without the Torah. The overwhelming importance of the Torah in the period after Sinai has obscured this important fact and for all practical purposes obliterated it. But the fact of the matter is that Abraham's righteousness rested on his faith, not on being circumcised (which he was not). He is the father of all who believe, circumcised or uncircumcised (Romans 4:11-12). Faith is the only requirement for inclusion in the family of God. The issue of kinship forms the central theme in Galatians 3-4.⁵ Paul reveals a previously obscured or forgotten route for Gentiles to identify directly with Abraham and to claim with full justification that they are true descendants of the patriarch. The original universalistic trajectory is reclaimed and the promise of God to Abraham fulfilled: "All nations will be blessed through you" (Gal 3:9). Instead of being portrayed as dividing the Jews and the Gentiles, Abraham is recognised for what he really is, the father of the inclusive family of faith.

What we note in this instance – through creative and original thinking – is the restitution of an almost forgotten theological trajectory. But Paul's hermeneutical move has wider ramifications. Through the redefinition of kinship relations, he sets in motion an involved process of re-socialisation, in which a transition between two theological positions, between two worldviews, between two ways of understanding reality is mediated. By addressing the Galatians as "brothers" (Gal 4:12, 6:1) Paul as it were activates this new reality and constitutes the Gentile believers as true-blooded children of Abraham.⁶

What is achieved by means of the family metaphor in Galatians has consequences for a wider set of social relations, all of which linked to the issue of inclusion and exclusion. In redefining the position of the Gentiles, Paul is not only dealing with the relationship of the Galatians to the Jewish tradition, but also with the way in which the alternative view of reality he is proposing affects other social relationships. In this regard his programmatic statement in Gal 3:26-28 is of fundamental importance: "You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have been clothed with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave of free, male or female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus."

What evokes this radical inclusive statement from Paul are once again – in at least two of the examples – historical realities that overtake existing theological positions. His own experience in Galatians and elsewhere puts paid to the proposition that there is a fundamental difference between Jews and Gentiles as far as the church is concerned. His dealings with Onesimus who left his master Philemon as a slave, but is now returning as a brother, make class distinctions irrelevant in the family of God (if not in practice, then at least in theory). Surely this must also have implications for

5 See Lategan, "The argumentative situation of Galatians", pp. 388-389.

6 "One becomes what one is addressed as". NR Petersen, *Rediscovering Paul: Philemon and the sociology of Paul's narrative world* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985), p. 165.

discrimination based on gender? In this instance the experience of Paul and his own socialisation go in the opposite direction. His statements about women elsewhere in his letters (the notorious “swyggebod” of 1 Cor 14: 34 and the subordinate position of women in 1 Cor 11: 2-16) show how much his thinking reflects the cultural norms of the day and how far he still is from internalising the consequences of his own theology. No wonder that he is still considered by many as a prime proponent of male chauvinism. But the thrust of the inclusive trajectory which he himself discovered with regard to the Gentiles and to slaves such as Onesimus is bound to challenge this – as his (perhaps unguarded) statement about the equality of men and women before God in Gal 3:28 indicates. Paul is a classical example of someone who is embracing a new paradigm, but who is still hampered by the ramifications of the old, unable to break free from it.

Paul nonetheless laid the groundwork for a powerful inclusive theology that was to follow in the subsequent history of the church. The insistence on faith as the only basis of salvation became the hallmark of Protestantism and found its classical expression in the fivefold *sola*: *Sola scriptura*, *sola fide*, *sola gratia*, *solus Christus*, and *soli Deo Gloria*. The *sola* emphasised the rejection of *any* further criteria of qualifications for belonging to the community of faith. It signified a *minimalistic* approach to membership of the church and a powerful expression of the inclusive trajectory. It belongs to the great paradoxes – and eventually to the great tragedy – of the history of theology. What was originally intended as an unqualified articulation of an inclusive approach eventually turned into an instrument of exclusion. This happened when the focus shifted from the *sola* as *means* to the *sola* as *content*. Not faith as the means of salvation but the content of that faith was the centre. Faith is of course never without content, but in the long history of repetitive schism, separation and seemingly unending division of the church that have affected Protestantism in particular, each group treated the *sola* as meaning faith *as we interpret it*, grace *as we interpret it*, the scripture *as we interpret it*.

The full unfolding of an inclusive approach was hampered by a constant falling back on the mindset of exclusion – which dominated the history of salvation before the ministry of Jesus as we saw. The freedom that faith brings (Gal 5:1) is indeed a demanding thing, requiring courage and strength to uphold. The security of rules, of supporting structures are all too attractive to resist, it would seem.

The real tragedy is that resorting to an outdated paradigm is apparently of a repetitive nature. The same basic line of argumentation, the same macabre process is repeated every time the *sola* becomes obscured or is again augmented with additional qualifications of membership. In the Dutch Reformed Church, race was added to faith as an additional requirement for membership and provided the basis for dividing the “family” along racial lines. The theological justification of *apartheid* was eventually – and reluctantly – relinquished, but not without a long and painful process which caused untold harm to individuals and communities alike. Confession, retraction, and

apology for misinterpreting and abusing scripture were inevitable in order to make a new beginning possible. A similar process repeated itself with regard to the position of women in the church – first exclusion from leadership and office, then the reluctant concession to allow women as deacons, then as elders and eventually as pastors. The same mindset of exclusion can be observed with regard to sexual orientation and to the Belhar confession. As far as the former is concerned, the church is divided at this stage on the issue of gay people as office bearers. And Belhar remains unacceptable for numerous members – ironically not because of its content, but purportedly because of its origins and its alleged political connotations. The end result seems to be predictable. We are likely to see the same process repeating itself – admission over time that current positions are untenable, that Scripture was misunderstood, apology for the pain caused – and the (reluctant) acceptance of gay people and of the Belhar confession.

What is disheartening – and the DRC is certainly not the only denomination plagued by these problems – is the tenacity of the exclusivist mindset and the apparent inability to finally break free from an outdated paradigm. The thrust of the inclusive trajectory through the many phases of the history of salvation and of the church points in a different direction.

Durand's contribution to the articulation of inclusiveness

The work of Jaap Durand is of enduring significance in this respect. He is one of the most courageous and consistent exponents of the inclusive tradition. To mention two examples: In his doctoral dissertation he is concerned with the paradox that the pious confession of the *una sancta catholica* does not tally with the hard realities of the church in its historical manifestation. Especially since the Reformation the pluriformity of the church is manifest – caused, on the one hand, by confessional disruption and, on the other, by cultural, national and language differences. When transferred to the mission field, the situation is exacerbated from two sides. Historical and denominational differences are exported by the sending churches to the mission field, regardless of whether these differences are of any relevance to the new situation. But the mission field itself encourages indigenous differentiation in order to be kerygmatically effective. This tendency is compounded by a reactionary *interpretatio Africana* in response to the transmission of Western denominationalism and by the phenomenon of separatism within the younger churches themselves in the form of Ethiopian, Zionist and Messianic movements.

In such a situation of disruption and fragmentation, Durand takes his cue from the *given* unity of the church which he finds especially prominent in the theology of Paul – not so much (interestingly enough) in the concept of the family of God as in Galatians, but in the body metaphor developed by the apostle in Corinthians. Paul talks about the unity in indicative terms as an existing reality. It is not something to be created,

but a unity to be preserved. From this indicative flows a powerful imperative to sustain and strengthen this unity. This requires a re-orientation of the goals of missionary activity – away from the narrow aim of the expansion of a (specific) denomination to the wider interest of the Kingdom as a whole. The implication is not confessional elimination, but greater confessional concentration so that the barriers between various churches are kept as low as possible – a practice that has been implemented with great success by several younger churches. Durand also explores the possibilities opened by the ecumenical movement and suggests – prophetically – that the younger churches are better placed to take the lead in achieving actual unity: “The younger churches have shown that the recognition that the true church does not coincide with a particular denomination, can be *acted* upon. How the Western churches will respond to this challenge, remains the question.”⁷

The quest for unity, for inclusivity, for breaking out of the confines of restricted thinking and to find creative solutions to real-life problems were characteristic of Durand’s work from the outset. But his greatest service to theology and the church is probably his contribution to the birth of the Confession of Belhar. It was a contribution driven fundamentally by his passion for the unity of the body of Christ and his deep desire to overcome divisions between people and churches. Already as a student he was deeply unhappy about the official government policy of apartheid and its consequences. What compounded the situation was the *theological* justification for this policy provided so readily by the churches, especially the Dutch Reformed Church. Ironically enough, the contextual pluriformity of the church in missionary situations because of the influence of culture, language and situation (to which Durand refers in his doctoral dissertation) provided one part of the argument. To this was added the moral argument of “separate but equal”: Separation is in order provided equal rights, privileges and opportunities are granted to each group. In other words, apartheid as such is not problematic as long as it is applied correctly.

From his first-hand knowledge of the hard realities in Kwazakhele, Durand knew that the ideal of “separate but equal” was a fiction, existing only in the dreams of apartheid apologists. But the question that consumed him was: Why is apartheid theologically wrong and how can one convince Christians that it is indeed a grave error? Things came to a head at the 1974 synod of the DRC when Durand’s report on the untenable situation of urban Blacks was summarily rejected by the synod and the justification of apartheid – be it in a refined form – retained. This experience led Durand to re-examine the hermeneutics underlying *Ras, Volk en Nasie* in search of an irrefutable theological argument as to why apartheid contradicts the gospel. His students at UWC formed part of the quest. At that time, they were engaged in a critical reading of Wiersinga’s *Verzoening als verandering*. It suddenly struck

7 JFF Durand, *Una sancta catholica in sendingperspektief* (Amsterdam: Ten Have, 1961), p. 263.

Durand: Apartheid is in conflict with the whole idea of reconciliation because it is built on the fundamental conviction that people are irreconcilable – therefore they have to be kept apart. The focus on equality by the proponents of the “separate but equal” doctrine is meaningless as long as the fundamental flaw of separateness remains. This is also what lies behind the DRC’s unwillingness to unite with the other members of the family. The reconciliation in Christ is understood as something that happens “apart” – therefore real reconciliation among people and among the different churches remains unattainable.

Durand shared his discovery with his students⁸ who immediately took it further. It eventually resulted in a famous resolution of the 1978 synod of the DR Mission Church. From there it spread to the World Alliance of Reformed Churches where it played an important role in the decision that apartheid is a heresy, and in the declaration of a *status confessionis* on this matter.

At the synod of 1982, the report of the WARC was intensely discussed and the decision to declare apartheid a heresy endorsed. But a *status confessionis* surely calls for an alternative confession. The task is entrusted to Durand, with Allan Boesak, Dirkie Smit and Sakkie Mentor as co-members of the committee. The committee asks Durand and Smit to prepare a draft and the two soon agree on the basic content as proposed by Durand: The confession will speak to the unity of the church, to the reconciliation of people among themselves and to justice. Overnight Smit fills out the framework with a remarkable text, consisting mainly of scriptural formulations. The end product is accepted with minor alterations and so the historic and deeply significant Confession of Belhar is born. The younger churches – as Durand predicted in 1961 – in this case took the lead to open up a new chapter in the history of the church.

The *Wirkungsgeschichte* of the Confession is another story. Suffice it to say that it is perhaps one of the most powerful articulations of the theological trajectory of inclusion. It is also perhaps the greatest tribute to Durand’s creative and innovative ability as a theologian, inspired by his deep commitment to inclusion, reconciliation and justice. It would be a true tribute to him if coming generations of theologians would emulate this way of doing theology – focusing this time on the challenges of their own generation.

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8 Russel Botman, Leonardo Appies and many other future leaders formed part of this class.

Belhar as public theology – Honouring Jaap Durand

CHRISTO LOMBARD

Introduction: Jaap Durand and “public theology”

With this essay I wish to pay homage to my mentor, Jaap Durand, “Prof Jaap”. My own development as a person and theologian has been deeply influenced by his person, example and writings. I shall simply share a few selected stories about our journeys in “public theology”, which, at least for me, met at decisive points, and which were fundamentally defined by what can be called the miracle of “Belhar”.¹

I remember the excitement when I discovered Jaap Durand’s *Swartman, stad en toekomst* (1970) in Boekhandel Wever while preparing to move from my studies in Philosophy (and other “admission subjects”) to the Kweekskool at Stellenbosch; also how I struggled through the detail of his – for those times! – unorthodox, but (in terms of the contemporary acclaim of the critical co-existence of Humanities and Social Sciences) also cutting-edge research into the deeply dehumanising realities of urban black existence in our “beloved country”.² I remember how a small group of willing but clueless Afrikaner students, who dreamt of making a difference in the desperate situation unfolding in South Africa, keenly followed his move from missionary in the Eastern Cape to professor of Theology at the University of the Western Cape; how he finished in record time (under Prof Potgieter!) his phenomenal second dissertation on the dialectic of being and knowledge, in 1973.³ In that same year he was also responsible for teaching a course in Missiology at Stellenbosch: on the question of Christian mission and Judaism. The lecture series became an amazing experience in Biblical Studies: he simply read the text of Romans 9-11 with us, providing the hermeneutics, exegesis and theological implications as we went along, seemingly

1 Much has been written about the Belhar Confession of the Dutch Reformed Mission Church (1986) and this contribution does not intend to take the debates further. It simply adds a few narratives to the ongoing story of a Christian confession, and a certain type of contextual theology, inspired by a specific understanding of the gospel and the Christian community living in the world. If the reflection delivers some new insights, that will be a bonus.

2 In this he was a forerunner of the by now famous “see, judge, act” hermeneutic, used by the Institute for Contextual Theology in developing the theology behind the Kairos Document in the eighties.

3 It was in utter amazement that I read the article based on his doctoral study, as it appeared in my final year at Stellenbosch, in September 1974, since he wrote with such ease about the deepest issues we were trying to sort out in our postgraduate studies in Philosophy, under another respected mentor, and friend of Durand, Prof Hennie Rossouw. See “Skrifgesag, heilsgeskiedenis en die subjek-objek-polariteit”, *NGTT*, September 1974, 251-260.

effortlessly, while thoroughly dealing with all the questions and details. We could see a new age dawning right in front of our eyes, when we learnt with great joy, in 1976, about the series in Systematic Theology (*Wegwysers in die Dogmatiek*), planned and written by Willie Jonker (who started teaching at Stellenbosch in the same year that I registered for my first year B.Th. in 1971) and Jaap Durand (who was by then firmly based at UWC).⁴

Looking back at the 1970s, I still believe it was a special gift of God to our generation that we could be formed intellectually by the combined talents of mentors such as Jaap Durand, Willie Jonker, Hennie Rossouw, Nico Smith, Bernard Lategan and Dirk Odendaal. For me, Prof Durand's three contributions to *Wegwysers in die Dogmatiek* (on *The Living God*; *Sin*; and *Creation, humanity and providence*⁵) integrated in an almost mysterious way the critical theology of Karl Barth and the Trinitarian, down-to-earth approach of Dutch Protestantism.⁶

In 1987, in the aftermath of the Kairos Document and the Belhar Confession, Dirkie Smit edited eighteen selected essays of Durand, which we would currently call essays in "public theology", under the title *Teks binne konteks: Versamelde opstelle oor kerk en politiek* (*Text within context: Collected essays on church and politics*).⁷ At that stage, after nine years at UWC, I had moved back to Windhoek, where I spent my youth, to help start a Department of Religion and Theology. In the war-torn Namibian situation I was soon forced by circumstances (and hopefully also the Spirit!) into a career in "public theology". In what follows I share a few selected episodes in this career, which I now realise resemble, to a small extent, some of the experiences and convictions that gave birth to Jaap Durand's remarkable career as a public theologian of stature in the Southern African context.⁸ Most of these

4 I was indeed fortunate to finish my Licenciate dissertation under Jonker in 1974, to start working on Van Ruler's theology under him, and then to transfer my Masters studies to the University of the Western Cape, under Durand's supervision, when I started teaching there in 1975 – fortunately with the blessings of both.

5 These excellent monographs were published between 1976 and 1982 – at the time when I was working under his guidance on my Masters, on the theology of the Dutch theologian AA van Ruler, as one of the first white students registered at the University of the Western Cape.

6 The latter in terms of the former, as explained by Piet Naudé in his contribution.

7 JF Durand, *Teks binne konteks: Versamelde opstelle oor kerk en politiek* (Belville: UWK, sa, most probably 1987).

8 Having been offered a lecturing position in Philosophy at Stellenbosch, after eight years of study in Philosophy and Theology, I was led to a position in Biblical Studies at the University of the Western Cape in 1975, in the dramatic period of the mid-1970s (thus also leaving the Afrikaner "kraal", like Jaap Durand, to encounter the "other South Africa"). After nine most challenging and rewarding years of teaching at UWC, and a thorough initiation into the world of "the struggle", tear gas and smoke on campus, etc., I was then called (in 1984) to help develop Namibia's first university, being "promoted" to tough management positions in a hostile political context, with new rounds of security police, phone tapping, attempts at removing me from the university, smear campaigns,

stories are related to the influence of the Confession of Belhar on Christian praxis in Southern Africa, and that is why my contribution centres around the theology and impact of “Belhar” – a theological blessing to the world in which Jaap Durand played a decisive role.⁹ Initially, I focused my contribution to this Festschrift on Durand’s development of models for doing public theology and other such contributions, but since this aspect has been covered excellently in Nico Koopman’s reflections on public theology in South Africa, I shifted my focus more towards the practical implications of the Belhar Confession for “public theology”.¹⁰

While studying at the Center of Theological Inquiry, at Princeton, I was asked to present (in June 2004) an address to the Synod meeting of the Reformed Church in America (RCA), at Wheaton College near Chicago, on “The practical implications of the Belhar Confession”. The next Synod, we were told, would decide, after a period of study and reflection, whether the RCA would accept the Belhar Confession as one of its own confessions. The main points of my reflections on Belhar and Jaap Durand, worked out below, are based on that presentation, which forced me to think, in a different context, about the implications of Belhar for the ecumenical church and the world at large; about “Belhar as public theology”.¹¹

Before reflecting on the theology behind the Belhar Confession, and especially the implications of Belhar for public discourse in South Africa and the world at large, it seems to be in order to briefly deal with the development of the relatively recent “discovery” of what is called “public theology”. During a two-year career break and study period in Princeton (New Jersey) I spent some time studying this new theological development. I was also asked on several occasions to speak on Belhar. The Christian faith was of course always intended to be a “public faith”, a faith whose light was not to be hidden under the bed or behind a bushel; whose

and damage to property. After several involvements, as a member of the DRMC (and later of URCSA), with the Dutch Reformed church in attempts at reconciliation and re-unification on the basis of Belhar (e.g. also the launching of Koinonia Windhoek), I became involved in various human rights problems, stemming from the 23-year war in Namibia. Whenever meeting Prof Jaap in connection with my doctoral studies or other business, during these years, he would listen to these stories of engagement with an understanding smile, some comments and an attitude of “just keep the faith”!

9 See the contributions of Daan Cloete, Russell Botman and Dirkie Smit for some details on this aspect.

10 In November 2004 I presented a paper at the American Academy of Religion on “Belhar as public theology” in which I analysed Durand’s models for doing public theology.

11 Obviously, I was more than pleased when Dr Allan Janssen, who was responsible for my invitation, informed me last year that the RCA accepted Belhar as its own confession, reconfirming my conviction, in line with Durand’s, that Belhar filled a crucial gap in the Reformed confessional tradition. See also WD Jonker, *Bevrydende waarheid. Die karakter van die gereformeerde belydenis* (Wellington: Hugenate-Uitgewers, 1994), pp. 166-170, and Boesak’s contribution on “The inclusiveness of God’s embrace”.

salt was intended to be mixed into the broth of real life, to flavour it and bring it to its full aroma. However, because of fundamentalisms from left and right, there has developed a certain uncertainty and hesitancy about the notion of a public faith and a public theology.¹² It is as though the faithful realised that “religion and politics” have different potentially dangerous mixes that should be avoided, while simultaneously a “naked public square” without spiritual and moral values also seemed disastrous.¹³

During the past decade or so various publications from top academics and theologians, not only in Europe but also in America, in which the dilemmas of a Christian public voice in a secularised, globalised and post-modern world were addressed, appeared in the press in quick succession. This became evident to me during the two years at Princeton (from July 2003 to June 2005). I simply mention a few publications from this period: Cornell West’s *Democracy Matters*; Jeffrey Stout’s *Democracy and tradition* (President of the American Academy of Religion at that stage); *Public theology for the 21st century* (edited by William Storrar and Andrew Morton), and of course, Jim Wallis’ *God’s politics*.¹⁴ While avoiding the one-sided and intolerant approaches of public theologians of the “Religious Right”, such as Jerry Fallwell and Pat Buchanan, followed by a host of televangelists imitating the same over-simplified “truths”, as well as the gnostic and dualistic apocalypticism of the “Left Behind” theology, these academic publications caught the popular attention with their serious grappling with the issues involved.¹⁵

Building on the earlier work of people such as Martin Marty,¹⁶ various “public theologians” stepped forward over the past decade to claim the Martin Marty Prize for groundbreaking theology in and for the public domain. Even though Stanley Hauerwas has been campaigning for a Christianity “doing its own thing”, without any overt claims to influence in the “secular”, public realm, ironically his mix of Barthian theology “for the

12 For an honest and revealing analysis of the fundamentalism of the so-called tolerant and politically correct “liberal view” in the USA, see Jeffrey Stout, *Democracy and tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), Part 2: “Religious voices in a secular society”, pp. 63-179.

13 See RJ Neuhaus, *The naked public square. Religion and democracy in America* (Grand Rapids: WB Eerdmans, 1984).

14 Cornell West, *Democracy matters: Winning the fight against imperialism* (New York: The Penquin Press, 2004); William F Storrar & Andrew R Morton (eds), *Public theology for the 21st century: Essays in honour of Duncan B Forrester* (London: T&T Clark, 2004); Jim Wallis, *God’s politics: A new vision for faith and politics in America* (Harper San Francisco, 2005).

15 They studied the initiatives of academics such as Robert Bellah (*Habits of the heart*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), Allan Bloom (*The closing of the American mind*, New York: Simon & Schuster, 1987) and Harold Bloom (*The American religion*, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982).

16 See his *The public church* (New York: Crossroad, 1981), in which the concept “public church” was developed, leading to reflection on “public theology”.

church” and Yoder’s politics of pacifism has had a tremendous “Christianising” influence in the American culture of “business as usual”. Christians have been enthused to live their lives as self-conscious “communities of character” in the midst of rampant secularism, materialism and individualism, and who will say that such an attitude and lifestyle did not have an (unexpected and unintended!) impact as a form of “public theology”?¹⁷

One can easily ask critical questions about these new attempts at engaging in public theology. Where does Cornel West get his three-pronged solution from, namely his particular mix of Socratic curiosity, Judaic prophetic courage and blues-like patience and hope, and how do these blend into a viable theology of praxis? Does Jeffrey Stout not over-idealise “democracy” by defining it as “a form of moral and spiritual association” (with Dewey), and linking it so closely with “tradition”, described (with Le Sueur) as “folk accumulation called sense and the faith we have in that collective experience”?¹⁸ Does he not force the issue by his attempt to show how characters as different as Hauerwas, Rorty and MacIntyre were all, in their rhetorically over-stated ways, contributing to what public theology is all about: seeking a common morality that can inform our social practice?¹⁹ This train of questioning immediately calls to mind experiments such as those of Hans Küng and friends, exploring the possibilities of a “global ethos” within a globalised world.²⁰ This, in turn, prompts the next question: A globalised world according to a sceptical but still positive Giddens, or a more critical Bauman, or an affirming Max Stackhouse?²¹ No doubt, the notion of public theology is challenged from all sides by the realities and crises we face daily.

To address this dilemma of being caught between unrealistic poles of “Left” and “Right”, both of which cannot do justice to the politics of the Kingdom, Jim Wallis in 2005 wrote his insightful book on “God’s Politics”, beginning in this way: “Many of us feel that our faith has been stolen, and it’s time to take it back. In particular, an enormous public misrepresentation of Christianity has taken place. And because of an almost uniform media misperception, many people around the world now think Christian faith stands for political commitments that are almost the opposite of its true meaning. How did the faith in Jesus come to be known as pro-rich, pro-war, and

17 See, for instance, from his almost 30 books: *A community of character* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981); *The Hauerwas reader* (J Berkman & M Cartwright (eds); Durham: Duke University Press, 2001) contains most of his recent work.

18 Stout, *Democracy and tradition*, pp. 1-15, 37, and the quotation before the contents page.

19 Stout, *Democracy and tradition*, pp. 10-11.

20 Hans Küng, *A global ethic for global politics and economics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

21 Anthony Giddens, *Runaway world: How globalization is reshaping our lives* (New York: Routledge, 2000); Zygmunt Bauman, *Globalization: the human consequences* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998); Max Stackhouse (ed), with Peter J Paris (Vol 1), Don S Browning (Vol 2) and Diane B Obenchain (Vol 3), *God and globalization* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press, 2000, 2001, 2002); *Vol 4* (New York: Continuum, 2007).

only pro-American? What has happened here? And how do we get back to a historic, biblical, and *genuinely* evangelical faith rescued from its contemporary distortions? That rescue operation is even more crucial today, in the face of a deepening social crisis that cries out for more prophetic religion ... The religious and political Right gets the public meaning of religion mostly wrong – preferring to focus only on sexual and cultural issues while ignoring the weightier matters of justice. And the secular Left doesn't seem to get the meaning and promise of faith for politics at all – mistakenly dismissing spirituality as irrelevant to social change ... But the popular presentations of religion in our time (especially in the media) almost completely ignore the biblical vision of social justice and, even worse, dismiss such concerns as merely 'left wing'. It is indeed time to take back our faith."²²

Wallis then proceeds to chart a way of doing exactly that: reclaiming the public biblical faith that brings about *metanoia*, reconciliation and social justice, offering a positive scenario towards a solution of the fruitless either-or politics of our day. Now, some five years later, with a totally different political atmosphere and scenario under President Barack Obama, it appears that these concerted efforts in the US context to re-activate the more liberal Christians to de-privatise their religion and get involved in public discourse have paid off.

From the European context similar developments towards a critical but also constructive theology of change, social transformation and justice can be traced. Without discussing these developments further, a few names can simply be mentioned: Duncan Forrester, William Storrar, Hans Küng, Wolfgang Huber, Heinrich Bedford-Strohm, Martien Brinkman, Jürgen Moltmann ... too many to mention. Texts on public theology from all these theologians make for interesting reading, and although not the focus of our attention in this instance, can be read as parallel and supporting ecumenical texts for "Belhar as public theology" – with the exception, of course, that Belhar is not a treatise or a statement, but a confession; a confession, nevertheless, with public implications and a theology with such intent.

What is relevant in all of this, for the few points I wish to make regarding the Belhar Confession in South Africa, as an example of an attempt (similar to that of Jim Wallis) at a meaningful "public theology", is that Belhar also addresses serious crises in politics and culture; it also sprang from a profound evangelical and Reformed commitment, and it not only delivered negative blows of criticism and protest (although, as with Jeremiah, there was a distinct element of "tearing down in order to build up again!"); it indeed helped provide a vision of justice and reconciliation for the future – not a detailed political plan, which quickly becomes a new ideology,

22 Jim Wallis, *God's politics*, pp. 3-4.

but a vision of God's own Trinitarian way towards God's own politics, God's own "kingdom".²³

I wish to suggest that Belhar's inspiration was from the Protestant confessional tradition as exemplified by "Barmen" (or if you will: "Barth", "Bonhoeffer"), representing a critical prophetic faith, a faith clearly saying "No!" to any autonomous human attempts at "redemption". Its *vision*, however, was that of "every square inch" of reality, in our case: of the troubled South Africa outside of the Synod hall at Belhar (the positive Calvinist and Dutch Reformed vision of God's kingdom in our earthly affairs, day by day, inch by inch: as exemplified by the different public theologies of "Kuyper", "Van Ruler" and "Noordmans").²⁴

In what follows, I wish to address five aspects of the Belhar Confession as public theology, while referring briefly to Jaap Durand's theological legacy and its relevance for this kind of public theology, also for my own involvements.

Biblical roots of "public theology"

From Nico Koopman's exposition it is obvious how Jaap Durand has developed very useful theological, church-historical models for dealing with the relation of church and state, one of the central issues in public theology. What should not evade our attention, even when we know that Durand was responsible, as chairperson of the small committee tasked with formulating the new confession, for suggesting the "three points" of the content of the Belhar Confession, viz. "unity", "reconciliation" and "justice", is the excellent and striking biblical filling these more formal points were given in the Confession.²⁵ His systematic theology was profoundly grounded in and saturated by biblical motives and details, as we experienced in the course on "Mission and Judaism", offered at Stellenbosch in 1973.

Indeed, in Reformed circles models of what is now called public theology were frequently linked to and inspired by biblical discourse. Public theology from a Reformed angle is almost not thinkable without Calvin's emphasis on the three

23 To grasp these intentions of the confession, one must read the Accompanying Letter (see note 25), written to explain the purpose and scope of the confession to all congregations who are to make it their own, and to the world at large. The Trinitarian introduction and the doxological conclusion also illustrate this vision of God's reign over all.

24 In this regard it may be almost symbolical that what is called the "Reformed Collections" at Princeton Theological Seminary has two wings: the Barth Collection ("left") and the Kuyper Collection ("right"), but what is probably also not without significance is an even larger section housing Puchinger's extensive library of Dutch Reformed theology and literature – somehow keeping the balance, it seems!

25 See DJ Smit & GD Cloete (eds): *A moment of truth. The Confession of the Dutch Reformed Mission Church 1982* (Grand Rapids: WB Eerdmans, 1984) for the text of the confession and various exegetical excursions, especially by Smit, into the relevant Biblical backgrounds.

Biblical “offices”, namely that of priest, prophet and king, with special emphasis on the prophetic role of the church over against the state.²⁶ Where God’s people did not heed old Samuel’s warning that the king would simply abuse his power and use the people for his own wars, taking their horses (and women!), taxing them to death, and making them toil for his own glory (I Samuel 8), they had to see for themselves how the king (even and, in particular, the great Solomon) abused his power. In the wake of these lessons, repeated and rivalled in “secular history”, a wariness about “royal theology” has been with us. This is frequently accompanied by an uneasiness about a “priestly theology”, since this other domain of power, that of the temple, was usually too closely associated with the regal theology of the palace. Together, these could all too easily be consolidated into a status quo theology of glory and triumphalism, over against which a courageous prophetic theology (Amos, Isaiah, Jeremiah) had to stand guard.²⁷

Aware of the fact that there were not only power-hungry kings, but also false prophets and corrupt priests, Calvin in his balanced assessment of these Biblical perspectives developed a hermeneutic whereby the church in its political role *vis-à-vis* the state, as the body of Christ in the world, would combine the roles of a priestly, prophetic and kingly ministry, as Christ had done in his own person and ministry. Robert Sherman recently offered a constructive proposal that connects the Trinity with the rubrics of king, priest and prophet in such a way that we should recognise a certain correspondence and mutual support between the three persons of the Trinity, the three offices of Christ, and the three major models of his atoning work (*Christus Victor*, vicarious sacrifice and moral exemplar).²⁸ Whatever rough edges such a construct may have, it is evident that the believer, both as individual Christian (*Corpus Christiani*) and as a member of the church (*Corpus Christi*), is called to *be* priest, prophet and king, in his or her personal life, but also as “citizen” in God’s kingdom.²⁹

There are also other biblical “models” employed in public theology. David Bosch, in a gem analysis of the political situation in Jesus’ time, has shown how Jesus, linking his own ministry very closely with the prophecies of Deutero and Trito Isaiah, and the suffering servant of the Lord figure, and especially the message of the jubilee to the marginalised (Isaiah 61; cf Luke 4), has deliberately chosen a politics of an “alternative community of

26 See the analysis in R Sherman, *King, priest and prophet: A Trinitarian theology of atonement* (New York: T&T Clark International, 2004): “king”, pp. 116-168; “priest”, pp. 169-218; “prophet”, pp. 219-261.

27 See F Deist, *Die noodlottige band* (Kaaipstad: Tafelberg, 1975), for an excellent analysis of the “fatal bond” between palace and temple in the Old Testament.

28 R Sherman, *King, priest, and prophet*, for Calvin: pp. 64-69, 75, 110, 152, 244-245, 253, 255; for integrating these perspectives with atonement theories: pp. 262-280. For a balanced assessment of office in contemporary theology, see AJ Janssen, *Kingdom, office and church. A study of AA van Ruler’s doctrine of ecclesiastical office* (Grand Rapids: WB Eerdmans, 2006).

29 AA van Ruler, “Grammar of pneumatology” in *Calvinist trinitarianism and theocentric politics*, J Bolt (ed) (Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1989), pp. 73-81.

love”, against the available political options in his time.³⁰ He chose against the politics of “isolation” and “flight”, as practised by the Essenes, who thought they could escape the realities of earthly life by avoiding contact with “normal human living”, by living a holy life of isolation and dedication. He chose against the opportunistic elitism and status quo alliances with the powers to be, as advocated by the “realism” of the Sadducees. He chose against the legalism and “justification through works” of the Pharisees, which simply became a tremendous burden on the ordinary person, already bogged down by an oppressed life and the sheer struggle for survival under the Roman yoke. In spite of sympathies with the oppressed people, he also emphatically rejected the Zealot option of the sword, of violent revolution, which would simply breed more violence and continue a spiral of hate, revenge and further oppression, retaliation and suffering.

As Walter Wink has shown convincingly in his series of studies on “the Powers”, Jesus’ politics was one of empowering people from within, through a change of mind which made them strong enough to even love the enemy and conquer the enemy “outside” because it could conquer the enemy (of selfishness and fear) “within”.³¹ His disciples were forced to develop “a spirituality of the road” (Bosch), not necessarily a Christian worldview.³² “God’s politics”, as Wallis (2005) recently reconfirmed, is one of the reign of God and its righteousness, a justice especially evident in the empowerment of the marginalised and the weak, which does not mean that God is simply “on the side of the poor”, as though God does not have a special role for the rich and the privileged! This kind of approach, of linking justice and peace as the core concepts of the kingdom, may be developed as another biblical model for public theology.

Obviously there are many other biblical *motifs* that could be and are employed. In Durand’s own analysis of the church and its functioning in the world, Paul’s metaphor “one body and many members” was a favourite, as was the overarching reality of reconciliation.³³ Arnold van Ruler, agreeing that the whole of history, in biblical perspective, could be viewed, experienced and lived as “a syntax of guilt and reconciliation”, added the biblical perspective of the work of the Spirit, in and through us, making the reconciliation in Christ our own human reality.³⁴ Doing public theology in a Trinitarian way would thus include an emphasis on the work of the Spirit in and through the human agents. Only in this way do we become part of God’s history; in fact, in such a biblical perspective, *we* are (the incarnation, embodiment of) the

30 DJ Bosch, *The church as the alternative community* (Potchefstroom: Institute for Reformational Studies, 1982).

31 For a concise summary of his insights, see Walter Wink, *When the powers fall. Reconciliation in the healing of nations* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998).

32 DJ Bosch, *A spirituality of the road* (Scottsdale: Herald Press, 1979).

33 JFF Durand, *Una sancta catholica in sendingperspektief* (Ten Have: Amsterdam, 1961).

34 AA van Ruler, *De vervulling van de wet* (Nijkerk: GF Callenbach, 1974²), p. 535.

meaning of God in history.³⁵ In our own public theology we will do well if we follow Durand, Bosch, Wink, Van Ruler and others, in modelling our theological constructs on biblical examples and bases.

Church-historical models for public theology

It is interesting to note the similarity between the major Christian models for the church's involvement in politics (or for a Public Theology) which my theological mentors, JJF Durand and AA van Ruler, have developed. Since Durand's version has been dealt with by Nico Koopman, in his insightful analysis of Jaap Durand as a public theologian, I shall briefly typify the differences between these approaches, as given by Van Ruler.³⁶ This is done as a background for their preference for a Trinitarian model, centred on Christ (as worked out further by Barth), while including the comprehensive view on "every inch" of Dutch Protestantism, but avoiding the pitfalls and dualism of both Kuyper and Luther.

In spite of the renewal of Catholic thinking by Vatican II, Van Ruler maintained that even in this more dynamic and historical view on "nature" the problem was that nature still had to be elevated, perfected and consummated through grace, which was embodied in the church as *sacramentum mundi*. This implied that creation, "nature", was not really "good" (as proclaimed by the Creator in Genesis 1), and had to become something else by the addition of a *bonum superadditum* (an added "gift" of grace), and that humanity and creation somehow had to "return" into God, had to be divinised, by participating in the inner-Trinitarian life of God, to find their real being and meaning.³⁷ In the more progressive model of the church in Latin America's world of Catholicism, where a whole new notion of "liberation" was developed (by e.g. Gutierrez, Assmann and Segundo), within a dynamic view of history (linking to Hegel, Marx, Freud and Marcuse), humanity has now been called to take responsibility for the historical process in a permanent cultural revolution. What was previously regarded as meaningful towards the coming of the kingdom of God (viz. working towards a just society) has now become part and parcel of the redemptive work of God's reign. Through the "subversive memory" of the new life in Christ (Metz), the church was participating in and accompanying humanity's history of liberation, as though the fulfillment of the eschaton had already been reached.³⁸ This brings the new

35 AA van Ruler, "De mens, de zin van de geschiedenis" in *Theologisch Werk VI* (Nijkerk: GF Callenbach, 1973), pp. 67-84; AA van Ruler, "The Kingdom of God and history" in *Calvinist trinitarianism and theocentric politics*, pp. 89-104.

36 I am confident that Durand would agree on most points, as their analysis of this specific issue is very similar.

37 AA van Ruler, "Christ taking form in the world: the relation between church and culture" in *Calvinist trinitarianism and theocentric politics*, pp. 105-148, see especially p. 130.

38 See Durand's excellent analysis in "Kontemporère modellen vir die verhouding van kerk en samelewing" in *Teks binne konteks*, pp. 14-19.

brand of Catholicism (or Protestant ideas, such as those linked to typical Anabaptist impatience for the kingdom) in close proximity with the revolutionary-eschatological model. Van Ruler accuses Moltmann, for instance, that he views the “new creation” as a *nova creatio*, a totally new creation, as though the old creation can have no continuity, and thus no reality, in the eschaton – again ending in a gnostic, docetic “heaven”.³⁹

Although Van Ruler agrees with Luther’s discovery that the domains of work, family and politics could be emancipated from the hegemony of the all-powerful church, while still retaining a direct contact with God, he disagrees with him on the point of the “two-fold regiment”, a spiritual domain of grace and a worldly domain governed by law and the sword. This led to a deadly dualism: a Christian thus lives in two completely different worlds, but can graciously and thankfully accept God’s “second order”, brought about under the discipline of the law, since not all human beings belong to the reign of Christ and the world cannot be governed by the principles of the Sermon on the Mount. Even though Luther brought a refinement in the Augustinian notion of the *Civitas Dei* and the *Civitas Terrena*, with God still in control of both the “kingdom of Christ” and the “kingdom of the world” (“the domain of Satan!”), in God’s rule a strict (Lutheran) distinction was made between church and state, between piety and politics, between a private Christian morality and a public professional morality.⁴⁰

This distinction, however, also ensured a good working relation between “throne” and “altar”: the church ensured the inner strengthening of citizens for their “work” in the state, and the state guaranteed the external existence of the church. Within such a dichotomy between the private and public spheres of existence, it is understandable that the German churches in 1933 could enthusiastically welcome the national revitalisation under National Socialism. When the harsh ideological realities of the new dispensation started to dawn, even the “Bekennende Kirche” fought in the first instance for doctrinal purity and the “own place” of the church, and only in the second place against the injustices in society under the totalitarian rule of Hitler.⁴¹

Of course, apart from Karl Barth (with whom we shall deal in a separate section), Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s theology and life offered a unique exception to this dualistic approach to politics. During the early days of the Third Reich he propagated the conviction that the churches’ integrity was fully at stake in its willingness to intervene on behalf of the persecuted Jews and communists: “The church may only chant Gregorian songs when she simultaneously also raises her voice for the Jews and the

39 AA van Ruler, “Christ taking form in the world” in *Calvinist trinitarianism and theocentric politics*, pp. 129-130; see also AA van Ruler, “Bijbelse toekomstverwachting en aards perspectief” in *Theologisch Werk II* (Nijkerk: GF Callenback, 1971), pp. 222-225 en 239-240.

40 Van Ruler, “Christ taking form in the world”, pp. 130-131; see Durand, “Kontemporêre modelle vir die verhouding van kerk en samelewing”, pp. 19-20.

41 Durand, “Kontemporêre modelle vir die verhouding van kerk en samelewing”, pp. 20-21.

communists.” This courageous stance is only understandable in view of Bonhoeffer’s departure from the Lutheran two-kingdom tradition, in his deeply incarnational theology, according to which there is only one “kingdom”: the reality of God in the realities of this world, a kingdom in which the church is there simply “for the other”, “for the world”. The events of Nazi Germany meant a decisive watershed in the theology of the Western world: it resulted in the realisation that it was impossible to think of any sphere of human life falling outside of God’s reign.⁴²

Calvin also distinguishes between a spiritual and a civil regiment (*Institutes* III.19.15), but emphasises the intimate bond between them, resulting from the intricate mutual relatedness of law and gospel (over against the Lutheran dialectical tension between them). In addition, for Calvin the confession of Christ’s kingly rule, as the rule of God’s law over every aspect of life, is central. In this way, he tried to avoid the Lutheran danger of leaving certain spheres of life to their own “autonomous” normativity. For Calvin Christian politics is merely “Christianising” the world, including state and society, from the “spiritual side”. Grace did not come to elevate “nature” (e.g. to divinise it), but “only” to heal, save and sanctify it. State and church both “stand” alongside each other, each with their own kingdom task, domain and function, but both also under the reign of Christ. In this instance there is no hint of “churchifying” the state or society.⁴³ Since the church was the place where the Word of God confronted the whole of life, the confrontational tension in the church was far more possible and probable than within Lutheranism. Guided by Word and Spirit, the church formed the inner circle of the rule of Christ, with the state and society forming a second concentric circle around it.⁴⁴

With the disintegration of the *corpus christianum*, the question can be posed whether Calvin’s “solution” for the relation of church and state could still be viable in the centuries following him, namely in the time of rampant secularisation. Two modifications of the Calvinist model, directly relevant for current Christian politics,

42 Thielicke’s theology is an example of a new kind of Lutheran compromise, within this realisation: Yes, God’s law of love should be and is being fulfilled, but within the structural laws and restrictions of the Noahite “order”. See Durand, “Kontemporêre modelle vir die verhouding van kerk en samelewing”, pp. 21-24; also AA van Ruler, “Vragen door Bonhoeffer aan de orde gesteld” in *Theologisch Werk V* (Nijkerk: GF Callenbach, 1972), pp. 171-187.

43 Van Ruler, “Christ taking form in the world”, pp. 130-132. Did Calvin opt for a “Christian” state and society, alongside the Christian church? Did he sanction the idea that the church could participate in getting rid of a non-Christian government? The answer to these questions probably lies in his accentuation of the spiritual power of the church, which is nothing but the power of God’s Word. The church “only” had this power, and thus could not participate in power-play of a different kind; however, this spiritual power also had a certain priority: the church has the prophetic task of reprimanding the government when it did not fulfil its tasks according to God’s Word. See Durand, “Kontemporêre modelle vir die verhouding van kerk en samelewing”, pp. 24-25.

44 Durand, “Kontemporêre modelle vir die verhouding van kerk en samelewing”, p. 25.

and thus also for our discussion of Belhar, are those of Abraham Kuyper and Karl Barth. They will be discussed separately, as was done by Durand under the heading of Calvinist Christocracy, since they are specifically relevant in our understanding, assessment and application of Belhar.

Since the sixties a new model developed alongside the three traditional ones sketched above. What Durand calls the “revolutionary-eschatological model”, Van Ruler describes as a new form of the Anabaptist dream of a *nova creatio*.⁴⁵ As Durand observes, representatives from all the traditional paradigms for public theology, but concerned about their viability in the face of the crises confronting the modern church have turned this new model into a point of convergence in ecumenical theology.⁴⁶ Gutierrez and Metz adapted the Roman Catholic model significantly in the direction of the revolutionary-eschatological model. From the Protestant perspective, Shaull, Alves, Cox and Moltmann argued that we presently live in a revolutionary situation, where the positive elements of the Reformation (such as the idea of God’s rule in all areas of life, of the whole of life standing under the judgment of God, and the call of Christians to be involved in changing governing structures in the world, etc.) simply did not make the difference, as expected, and that a new paradigm of thinking had become necessary. The individualist approach, through individual conversion, without changing the oppressive structures in the world, will simply not work. We live in truly “revolutionary times”, as announced by the Frankfurt Schüle (Horkheimer, Habermas and Adorno) and Marcuse (in the USA). Technocratic society has created a “one-dimensional man”, trapped in the status quo of the system, which will self-perpetuate unless humanity, through a critical consciousness, aware of the possibilities of saying no, of negating the suction of the structures of technology, refuses to go along and works for a truly new future (Bloch). By contrast to the Biblical myth of transcendence, which sanctions the status quo, a new apocalyptic figure, Jesus, the Son of Man, a political Messiah, brings his kingdom with fire and the sword, whereby the past is replaced by the future and the theocratic God is replaced by humanity.⁴⁷

45 Van Ruler, “Christ taking form in the world”, pp. 129-130.

46 Durand, “Kontemporêre modelle vir die verhouding van kerk en samelewing”, pp. 31-32.

47 Durand’s analysis of this convergence of revolutionary ideas and a radical eschatological vision is breathtakingly concise and to the point, see “Kontemporêre modelle vir die verhouding van kerk en samelewing”, pp. 32-36. He also deals with Moltmann, Hoekendijk and Cox. Moltmann’s theology, which remains a theology of the Word and the Spirit, derives from the *pro-missio* (the promise of Christ’s universal kingship) the *missio*: the mission of the church in the world, to give new hope to the world, hope that the structures of injustice can indeed change. Hoekendijk deeply influenced the report of the World Council of Churches (1967) with his revolutionary eschatological missionary vision, whereby the world sets the agenda for the church, and the churches can simply recognise and affirm what God is doing in the world. The church thus becomes a bridge to the world, a wagon being pulled by God through world history, a mere

Obviously, this brief sketch cannot do justice to the intricacies involved in all these positions. The question for us, now, is where does Belhar fit in? From Durand's own writings about Belhar⁴⁸ it is easy to observe that his own inspiration did not come from this "revolutionary" model which, in the popular mind, has become known as "liberation theology". His reference to the two concentric circles shows his affinity to the Barthian model of "Christengemeinde und Bürgergemeinde".⁴⁹ The question to such an approach will always be about the "place" of creation, humanity, history, in God's eschatological story, in God's kingdom, in the eschaton.⁵⁰ This is the reason why, in Reformed approaches to public theology, the "every inch of our reality belongs to God" emphasis of Kuyper and the entire Dutch Reformed tradition will always remain a challenge to such a Christocentric approach. While it is well-known that Durand broke out of the confines of the "life circles" as defined in neo-Calvinism (the so-called Philosophy of the Idea of Laws or Principles for all areas of life, "Wysbegeerte van die Wetsidee"), it is a serious question how he now deals with "creation", "nature", and "humanity" to do justice to the "dialectic of being and thinking" without losing the vision of Calvin, that all aspects of life belongs to God, is lived directly in front of God, and has its being and meaning in the goodwill and pleasure of God. I shall be bold and introduce the Princetonian dilemma of the two wings in the library: bridging the gap between "Barth" and "Kuyper".⁵¹

function of God's mission in the world. Harvey Cox then developed the idea of the church as the *avant-garde* of the "City of Man", the "Secular City".

- 48 JF Durand, "A confession – was it really necessary?" in DJ Smit & GD Cloete (eds): *A moment of truth: The Confession of the Dutch Reformed Mission Church 1982* (Grand Rapids: WB Eerdmans, 1984), pp. 33-41; and "The Confession of Belhar: A Crisis for the Dutch Reformed Churches?" in *A moment of truth*, pp. 116-126.
- 49 For a handy English version of Barth's views on church, state and community, see Karl Barth, *Community, state and church* (with translations of Barth's three famous essays, "Rechtfertigung und Recht", "Evangelium und Gesetz" and "Christengemeinde und Bürgergemeinde", and an introduction by David Haddorff (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2004).
- 50 In an ongoing research project, involving many international scholars, my colleague Ernst Conradie is investigating how various leading scholars such as Barth, Moltmann, Van Ruler, Kuyper, etc. have integrated the elements of creation, history, culture and human endeavour into their "story" of God's work. It appears that, in the process, suspicions against the viability of Barth's grand Christological construct to really address these issues, expressed by e.g. Van Ruler many years ago, seem to be confirmed. See AA van Ruler, "Kritisch commentaar op de theologie van Karl Barth", unpublished paper from 1967 in the Van Ruler archive, Kampen.
- 51 Personally I believe that the Kuyperian model, attractive as it presently seems to some American scholars with their strict division of church and state, falls into similar traps of dualism encountered by the broad Catholic and Lutheran traditions, undermining real prophetic involvement of the church as such. The Calvinistic view, in which creation and the work of God's Spirit is integrated into a truly Trinitarian theology, seems to run via Bavinck, Noordmans and Van Ruler, rather than Barth, because of Barth's lack of an encompassing and integrating pneumatology. See Van Ruler's plea for a relative independent pneumatology in his essays "The necessity of a trinitarian theology"; "Structural differences between the Christological and Pneumatological perspectives"

Belhar between Barth and Kuyper

Barth's connection to the original Calvinistic position is quite clear, but his agenda was to get rid of the last remnants of Luther's "two kingdoms" approach. Barth's vision for a Christian politics is based on two principles: the Christological foundation of the state and the relationship between law and gospel. His concern was to show more clearly than Calvin did how the state and the law not merely rested on God's creational and providential order, but that political power was based in the power and rule of Christ. The central Christian confession thus had to be made active politically: Christ the Lord, crucified and risen, the King of the Kingdom and of all the kingdoms of the world! In Barth's eschatological view the state is not a product of sin, but an "order" of God's grace. In the state we are not dealing with God "the Creator in general", but with God the Father of Jesus Christ, the Lord. Contrary to Kuyper's notion of the state having its own "independent" life, the state has its role, place and function within God's "economy". In the crucial confrontation between church and state, in Jesus meeting Pontius Pilate, it became clear how the legal order of the worldly state had a crucial role to play in the redemptive order of God's kingdom.⁵²

Behind this "monistic view" lurks Barth's other radical definition: the law is the unmistakable form of the gospel, with grace as its content. When this is true, then the normal distinction between separate areas, such as the "worldly" domain of the state where the "law" rules, or the "spiritual" domain where the "gospel" applies, falls away. When the law is a form of the gospel, then human life is lived under the gospel, church and state are pointing to one another, and the kingdom and the world are viewed as correlatives. The church is deeply concerned about the earthly kingdoms, since they are supposed to be (relative, fragmentary, incidental) mirrors of the kingdom of God.⁵³ In *Christengemeinde und Bürgergemeinde*, Barth explains the role of the church (the inner circle of Christ's reign) as analogical and exemplary: being an *analogon* of the kingdom, the church should act as an *exemplar* to the state and society. According to Barth, the church is really the "Christian party", living exemplary in the world, listening to the deeply "political gospel" (which always stands alongside the weak, the poor, and the threatened), and acting "anonymously" in the political arena, since the church, as church, is a political reality of the first order, simply by being there and being what it is.⁵⁴

Kuyper's motto, that there is "no square inch of life" upon which Christ's sovereign claim does not apply, is well known. Less known is the fact that this vision is only

and "Grammar of Pneumatology" in *Calvinist trinitarianism and theocentric politics*, pp. 1-26, 27-46 and 47-88, respectively.

52 Durand, "Kontemporêre modelle vir die verhouding van kerk en samelewing", pp. 28-31.

53 See Karl Barth, "Gospel and Law" in *Community, state and church*, pp. 71-100.

54 See Karl Barth, "The Christian community and the civil community" in *Community, state and church*, pp. 149-189.

applied in a limited way within his views on church and state, and what we would call “Public Theology”. His doctrine of common and particular grace leads him to a position very close to Luther’s two-kingdom model, especially Thielicke’s version thereof. Common grace finds its basis in God’s preservation of God’s original creation. This initiative of God, preventing the spread of sin and facilitating life as such, embraces all people, believers or not, and thus has a conserving rather than a renewing function. This is where the state’s origin lies. The church, of course, has its origins in the regeneration resulting from God’s special grace. The Kingship of Christ, as mediator of redemption, is restricted to the sphere of special grace and the church as the only possible, though imperfect, organisational form of the kingdom of God.⁵⁵ All other “organisation” of human life is found in the sphere of common grace, which does not fall under the direct rule of the Redeemer. In the worldly life outside of the church, Christ exerts his influence not as Mediator of redemption, but as Mediator of creation, as second person of the Trinity. Thus, the spiritual rule of Christ, as Head of the congregation and King of the kingdom, finds its place *next to* the rule of worldly authorities, who receive their deduced authority not from Christ, but from the Trinitarian God, making the notion of a Christian state impossible.⁵⁶

Kuyper’s retention of the Reformed idea of the sanctification of “every inch of life” forced him to produce a mechanism for influencing state and society in a Christian way. Kuyper’s answer to this challenge rests on two principles: sphere sovereignty and the church as organism. According to Kuyper’s notion of autonomous spheres of life, each such “sphere” (“church” or “state”) has its own capacity and function, given by God. Each thus has to adhere to its God-given mandate, and respect the “boundaries” of other autonomous “spheres”: the church’s function (as institution among other institutions) is to preach the Word and administer the sacraments, and *not* to get involved in politics. The church, however, also exists as an organism, as the (invisible) body of true, born-again believers, who have the task to influence all spheres, where they may move in a Christian way, for example by forming Christian organisations, such as Christian political parties. Through Christian parties Christ may then facilitate the influence of particular grace into the areas of common grace. Christian influence into society (or “Public Theology”) is thus always mediated not through the church as institution, but merely through the church as organism. The prophetic call of the church is thus primarily a function of the church as organism, thus minimising the tension and friction between church and state.

55 For a critique of Kuyper’s narrow notion of “special grace” and his whole construct, see AA van Ruler, *Kuyper’s idee eener Christelijke cultuur* (Nijkerk: Onze Tijd series 12-13, 1939).

56 For a contemporary appropriation of Kuyper’s model, see Luis E Lugo (ed): *Religion, Pluralism and Public Life: Abraham Kuyper’s legacy for the twenty-first century* (Grand Rapids: WB Eerdmans, 2000).

The danger of this carefully worked out position is that the “official church” is *de facto* silenced *vis-à-vis* the state, as has disastrously happened in the Southern African context, where the church as organism was taken over by a so-called “Christian” Broederbond with its own, sometimes very selfish and sinister, agendas, based on racism and nationalism. Hoedemaker’s (and Van Ruler’s) criticism against Kuyper, that he effectively withdrew the state from the prophetic criticism of the church, was in fact even more relevant in the South African context where no visible and accountable Christian organisations were set up according to Kuyperian principles. In South Africa theologians (who were also politicians), such as Andries Treurnicht, allowed the “official” church only to preach the general Christian principles to be applied in “real life”. The church as such, however, could not concretise these principles. It could not be prescriptive on issues such as “work allocation, salary scales, working hours, parliamentary representation, voters’ qualifications, viable housing or the application of group areas legislation”.⁵⁷ These were issues to be fought out politically, on the basis of Scriptural principles. Through the working of “salt” and “leaven” the Christian was supposed to work through existing political parties or structures to “apply” Scriptural principles in practice. Of course, what is missing in this instance is the idea of the light shining on the mountain, illuminating the issues in such a way as to expose cheap compromises and to demand concrete justice in each specific case. The principle of justice for all cannot be preached without risking concrete moral judgments re appropriate application. This, at least, is what we have learnt from Amos and Isaiah.

The Belhar Confession, when understood against the background of Durand’s analysis, can be read as a document inspired by Barth’s understanding of the church as an exemplar of God’s rule, a sign of the kingdom of God in the world, serving God’s purposes directly, like the state. However, it can and should also be read as a document coming from a Calvinistic tradition in which “politics is a holy matter”, in which there are no dualisms between body and soul, between holy communion and the bread and wine on the mid-week table, between nature and grace.⁵⁸

Belhar and Barmen as reformed confessions

In summarising what the co-author of the Belhar Confession, Dirkie Smit, has to say about the relationship between Barmen and Belhar,⁵⁹ I wish to draw attention not only to the striking similarities between these classical documents of public theology (in terms of origin, motivation, content, formulation and impact), but also to some important

57 JFF Durand, “Kontemporêre modelle vir die verhouding van kerk en samelewing”, pp. 26-27.

58 Obviously this needs to be worked out. In this contribution I merely wish to read between the lines of Durand’s own analysis. For such a bold attempt, see AA van Ruler, “Politiek is een heilige zaak” in *Theologisch Werk IV* (Nijkerk: GF Callenbach, 1972), pp. 119-129.

59 DJ Smit, “Barmen and Belhar in conversation – A South African perspective”, unpublished paper, 19 October 2004.

differences which are not without consequences for their *Wirkungsgeschichte* in the world at large.

“The Belhar Confession is *the product of a conversation* with the Barmen Declaration. Without Barmen there would have been no Belhar, in its present form.”⁶⁰ Belhar was born in a struggle with Barmen – its historical context, its insights and contributions, the theologies and movements informing and inspiring it, the evangelical claims expressed in it, and its own ambiguous reception during the ensuing decades.

Belhar would also not have been born without the role of Beyers Naudé, the Christian Institute, and the South African Council of Churches (including leaders such as Bishop Tutu, Wolfram Kistner, John de Gruchy and Douglas Bax), and its *Message to the people of South Africa*. Reformed theologians such as Willie Jonker, Jaap Durand, David Bosch, Dirkie Smit, Allan Boesak, and others (all to some extent influenced by Calvin, Barth, Bonhoeffer and Barmen), the Belydende Kring, the Alliance of Black Reformed Christians in Southern Africa, and a whole range of theologians in the Reformed Churches (in particular the Dutch Reformed Mission Church and the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa) played a major role in the formative work behind Belhar.

To my mind, these backgrounds, which could be outlined only very briefly here, indicate that Belhar should not merely be read as a “mirror text” to Barmen: Belhar echoes Barmen’s basic resistance against any other gods to whom we may belong and whom we should serve, but it goes far beyond Barmen in identifying what should be done and avoided, and how the church should get involved in the ideological battles surrounding it. There are elements to Belhar that can only be understood against the background of a Calvinistic and Reformed struggle with a public theology that knows only one Lord both of the church and of society.

There are many *formal similarities* between Barmen and Belhar: structural elements, positive claims and negative rejections, appeals to Scripture and dependence on the Heidelberg Catechism. Both were documents of the church and not of individuals; both targeted false doctrines, not specific people; both were binding and authoritative, not optional; both were born in a situation of *status confessionis*, a moment of truth, responding to an already existing crisis of faith. Although Belhar’s context and aim are much more apparent (targeting the unjust structures of apartheid in church and society), there is no elaboration on the context within the text itself. Both confessions shared an understanding of what a confession is: it is not a political document but a positive statement of faith. Both included an accompanying letter which was meant to

60 Smit, “Barmen and Belhar in conversation – A South African perspective”, p. 1.

be read with the confession itself, explaining the background, intent and motivation of the confession in a pastoral way.⁶¹

The most important point of similarity is that both confessions share a common faith position, a common confessional viewpoint and claim. Both responded to specific, and in some ways similar, historical challenges, which were regarded as symptoms of deeper, more fundamental theological and ecclesiological problems and temptations, that eventually rested on a false understanding of the gospel itself.⁶² For the future, this point of contact between Belhar and Barmen may be the most fruitful one to explore: asking about the continuing challenges embedded in such a Reformed understanding of confession and of God.

Like Barmen, Belhar should be read and understood as one single claim, one single text (not as 6 disparate points in the case of Barmen, or 3 disparate points in the case of Belhar). The central claim of both concerns the church (in Barmen this becomes very clear in points III and IV): the message of the church must be reflected in the form of the church. Barmen digs much deeper than Belhar into the Christological, evangelical definition of the church, but then again mentions less about the context and application. It is clear that Barmen was grappling with the real essence of the church of Christ, and not in the first instance with all the details of the context. It was clearly a moment of *kairos*, but the focus was on getting into the deeper theological layers of what the church was about, exactly since its existence was threatened in ways not so apparent to all. With Belhar it is evident that things were being confessed about the church in its situation, under apartheid, which were already quite apparent and simply now had to be confessed clearly and courageously. The central claim of both Belhar and Barmen, however, remains the refrain of Barmen: The church belongs to Jesus Christ, who assures the church of joyful deliverance and claims the church with a mighty claim. The church is not simply a religious organisation of like-minded people, who can decide and determine for themselves how to organise themselves, what to do and whom to serve. The order, the structures, the ministries, the offices of the church should all visibly serve the truth of his message, the content of his good news. The church should hear, trust and obey Jesus Christ in every aspect of its life. In almost every respect this central claim was being denied by the thought, practices and structures of the official church and its leaders at the time – a denial in which confessing believers recognised false doctrine and false theological convictions that had grown among them over many decades until a moment of decision arrived.⁶³

61 Smit, “Barmen and Belhar in conversation – A South African perspective”, pp. 1-2.

62 Smit, “Barmen and Belhar in conversation – A South African perspective”, p. 2.

63 Smit, “Barmen and Belhar in conversation – A South African perspective”, pp. 3-6.

According to Smit, the crucial question about the Reformed confessions, including Barmen and Belhar, is the one concerning obedience, on listening to the Spirit of God speaking to us through these confessions.⁶⁴ He identifies three related and crucial questions:

∞ “Do we still hear and trust these claims today as God’s good news for us?”⁶⁵ The symptoms of the temptation, the visible manifestation of false doctrine and the deviant theology differ over the years; they do not appear in the same form again – but do we have the spiritual discernment to read the signs of the times and recognise them for what they are (new forms of natural theology, idolatry, cultural usurpation, becoming a state-like church)? As Bethge has stressed, time and again, having a confession is not the point, but confessing it, ever anew. A true confession becomes a self-critical voice, especially addressed to those who think they have and live by this confession. The Dutch Reformed Mission Church knew this well, from the outset. It distinguished the fact of Belhar and the content of Belhar. It did not expect any church, including members of the Dutch Reformed Church family, to simply accept Belhar as their own confessional document. That would have been contrary to the old Reformed practice and custom concerning confessional documents; contrary to the fact that it was precisely the confession born in the heart of the DRMC itself, expressing its own identity and understanding of the gospel (exactly as with Barmen, where the exact way of appropriating this confession never became the major issue). This was, again and again, also emphasised by the church’s “Gesprekskommissie” (Commission for Dialogue) – that the “fact” of Belhar should not be an obstacle in achieving what Belhar was about. “Having” a confession was not the point. The DRMC and later the Uniting Reformed Church did, however, take the content of Belhar seriously. It wanted to hear what other churches had to say about its content. It wanted its ecumenical partners to advise it, whether the Word of God was heard, and where they stood as far as this content was concerned. The unity the church was seeking was only to be achieved along the lines of the confession that was forged from its heart. “We therefore needed to know whether our brothers and sisters also heard the same gospel, trusted the same promises, and wanted to obey the same claim on our lives – and only on that basis could we re-unite, we said.”⁶⁶ Merely clinging to a document as document would mean that the church was becoming state-

64 For Karl Barth’s theological reflection on the Reformed confessions, see *The theology of the Reformed confessions* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), translated and annotated by DL Guder & JJ Guder.

65 What follows in this paragraph is a summary of the important points raised by DJ Smit in “Barmen and Belhar in conversation – A South African perspective”, pp. 6-8.

66 Smit, “Barmen and Belhar in conversation – A South African perspective”, p. 7.

like, attempting to deal with others primarily by means of legal and judicial means, by dominion rather than service.

- ☞ “Do we truly obey these claims, today?” In the process of implementing the consequences of Belhar in the church, it has become clear that Protestant and Reformed confessions, in particular, call for embodiment.⁶⁷ According to Smit, the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa now has the task to develop, like Wolfgang Huber did on the basis of Barmen, “an ethics and ecclesiology of freedom”, based on Belhar.⁶⁸ This would be to give flesh to Belhar as “public theology”! This would mean to develop an ethics and ecclesiology of living unity, real reconciliation and compassionate justice. The church would then become the place where these signs of God’s reign will be practised and experienced. The church would then also become the voice that actively and publicly speaks and pleads for these forms of unity, reconciliation and justice, whenever and wherever necessary. “This is our acid test, also for a new, reunited church in our family – not whether we find the best formulations for including Belhar in the confessional basis, since that will be easy, and certainly not whether we use a confessional document in un-Reformed, inquisitorial ways to test the personal faith of individual members, but whether this new church as a whole hears, trusts and obeys this faith, today.”⁶⁹
- ☞ “Can we develop a new common language, an adequate way to speak about our world?”⁷⁰ Following Ernst Lange’s description of the church as a “language school for freedom”, a school where we learn to speak the language of freedom, and Huber’s attempts to do that through the language of Barmen, it may not be unrealistic to work along the same lines with the “text of Belhar”. In the next section I shall try to suggest a few “words” in this direction.

Belhar as “public theology” – also in new contexts

I can merely summarise a few pointers, starting with the obvious initial impact of Belhar in its immediate context, in South Africa, and briefly referring to the text that displayed such “power” in the face of the indestructible apartheid ideology and its

67 Smit, “Barmen and Belhar in conversation – A South African perspective”, p. 8. As with Barmen, the one Word we hear must be practised in all areas of our life (II), in our structures and order (III), including financial and material structures, in our ministries and services (IV), in our public witness and deeds (V), and in our mission and proclamation (VI). Jaap Durand was also involved, after the acceptance of the Confession, in drafting the new Church Order, which had to give “body” to the new confession in everything the church does.

68 See Wolfgang Huber, *Kirche und Öffentlichkeit* (Stuttgart: Ernst Klett Verlag, 1973), *Kirche in der Zeitwende: Gesellschaftlicher Wandel und Erneuerung der Kirche* (Gütersloh: Bertelsmann Stiftung, 1998).

69 Smit, “Barmen and Belhar in conversation – A South African perspective”, p. 8.

70 Smit, “Barmen and Belhar in conversation – A South African perspective”, p. 8.

machinery of oppression, and then, on that basis, suggest a possible *Wirkungsgeschichte* in an ecumenical context.⁷¹

Belhar as a product of “public theology” within the ecumenical world

The Lutheran World Federation declared apartheid a sin and a heresy in 1977, the World Alliance of Reformed Churches announced a *status confessionis* in Ottawa in 1982, the ecumenical partners launched the Programme to Combat Racism, as early as 1969. In a sense the stage was set, ecumenically, for something decisive to happen, and what happened was the sudden and timely birth of a confession which in a few paragraphs summarised the relevant points of faith for the hopeless situation. The effect of the Belhar Confession and, almost simultaneously, the Kairos Document, was that all the oppressed people – not only the “church people” – immediately sensed that finally a word of justice was spoken which became a word of hope, a word of empowerment. This moment of truth was prepared and preceded by a long process of suffering and protest: Mandela in prison for half a life-time, Beyers Naudé banned and under house arrest for years for his courageous work in the Christian Institute, Desmond Tutu smeared, harassed and ridiculed, the South African Council of Churches bombed ... Important to acknowledge in this regard is that this theological pressure, this “public pressure” was exerted in the Reformed world from where the white churches in South Africa came, and where they belong ecumenically.⁷²

Belhar as the last blow to the ideology of apartheid

Belhar has been experienced, right from the outset, as a powerful tool in the hands of the Spirit. The simple fact is that ordinary church members, who over many years succumbed to the injustices of apartheid society, and for many of whom church and religion perhaps became little more than a pain-stilling comfort, suddenly saw and experienced for themselves how the Biblical truths of God Almighty were setting us free, liberating our minds, our politics, our relationships, our future. Thus, Belhar’s reception, in its original context, was experienced as something like a miracle: this enormous release of the light of the biblical truth illuminating the chaotic quagmire of apartheid South Africa. Of course, economic sanctions started hurting the apartheid economy; the war efforts in Angola, Namibia and other frontline states (to keep out the real or perceived threats of the cold-war days) were running into serious problems; and the black youth were systematically making

71 The remainder of this article is based on the paper I delivered to the Synod of the Reformed Church at Wheaton College, Chicago, in June 2004, entitled “Practical implications of the Belhar Confession”.

72 For some of this history of ecumenical involvement, see CJA Loff, *Bevryding tot eenwording* (Kampen: Theologische Universiteit, 1997).

the country ungovernable, in spite of the enormous security system developed to suppress all opposition. But who would have guessed that one of the deadliest blows would come from the same church family which for years used the Bible and its so-called Reformed theology to sanction the separation of people on the basis of race? Who would have expected this to happen in the form of a new confession – in the form of a few pious paragraphs, strung together from a selection of biblical texts, and for such a little “David” confession to have the power to shatter the seemingly impregnable “Goliath” of the injustices of apartheid in church, state and society?

It is only by quietly reading those innocent-looking words of the confession and seriously contemplating the consequences of the words that one can understand what is really being said and confessed in the face of the world (note especially the italicised phrases and ponder their widespread application in many diverse and concrete situations worldwide):⁷³

On *unity*: “We believe that this unity must become visible so that the world may believe; that separation, enmity, and hatred between people and groups is sin which Christ has already conquered, and accordingly that anything which threatens this unity may have no place in the church and must be resisted”; “that true faith in Jesus Christ is the only condition for membership of this church”, and...“therefore, we reject any doctrine which explicitly maintains that descent *or any other human or social factor* should be a consideration in determining membership of the church.”

On *reconciliation*: “We believe that God by his life-giving Word and Spirit has conquered the powers of sin and death, and therefore also of irreconciliation and hatred, bitterness and enmity; that God by his life-giving Word and Spirit will enable his people to live in *a new obedience which can open new possibilities of life for society and the world*”; “that *any teaching* which ... is not prepared to venture on the road of obedience and reconciliation, but rather *out of prejudice, fear, selfishness, and unbelief, denies in advance the reconciling power of the gospel, must be considered ideology and false doctrine.*”

On *justice*: “We believe that God has revealed himself as the one who wishes to bring about justice and true peace among men; that in a world full of injustice and enmity *he is in a special way the God of the destitute, the poor, and the wronged* and that he calls his church to follow him in this; that he brings justice to the oppressed and gives bread to the hungry; that he frees the prisoner and restores sight to the blind; that he supports the downtrodden, protects the stranger, helps orphans and widows, and blocks the path of the ungodly...”, “that the church as the possession of God must stand where he stands, namely *against injustice and with the wronged*; that in following Christ *the church must witness against all the powerful and the privileged*

73 The text is from *A moment of truth* (see note 25).

who selfishly seek their own interests and thus control and harm others”; “therefore, *we reject any ideology which would legitimate forms of injustice and any doctrine which is unwilling to resist such an ideology in the name of the gospel*”.

When reading these texts, little more than a paraphrase of key gospel texts, it is not possible to avoid the final impact: that the specific ideology at issue is in God’s eyes nothing but “sin” and “heresy”. As WA de Klerk had written about the Afrikaner people and their coveted ideas of “manifest destiny” and “chosenness”: what started out as an ideal of social justice for all, ended up, not as a mere mistake or miscalculation or human error, but as a totalising, sinful ideology. When this insight was brought home to pious Calvinists, the walls came tumbling down.⁷⁴

The Uniting Reformed Church movement

In spite of many obstacles and uncertainties (with the exception of some congregations that are still locked in tragic court cases), the Belhar Confession resulted in a new Uniting Reformed Church in 1994, and the same process took place in Namibia in 1997. In the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa strong initiatives have been launched, especially in the Synod of the Western and Southern Cape, to follow up on the decisions of a “Convention for Unity”, as held in 2001:⁷⁵ “... that the Convention for Unity take the three ancient ecumenical symbols, the Reformed Formulars of Unity and *the Belhar Confession* as basis and guideline for the dialogue on church unity; that the Belhar Confession be taken up in the confessional grounding of a bigger uniting church in a way that serves the unification process with the Uniting Reformed Church and all the other churches of the Dutch Reformed family, as well as the urgent wish that such unification will take place as soon as possible.” Various additional strategic decisions, for example dealing with internal communication with congregations and information sessions, were also taken, all indicating the seriousness of purpose to let the unifying process of Belhar be completed. The fact that ten years down the road we are still waiting for these almost inevitable processes to really break through in the life of the church is frustrating, especially when one realises that other Reformed churches worldwide have discussed Belhar and have taken the decision to acknowledge and embrace it as their own confession. Nevertheless, as stated previously, the confession as such embodies a theological vision which people can share and embrace and whereby action for justice and peace in the world can be inspired through the power of the Spirit of God. Those who have experienced the impact of Belhar on the desperate situation in church and society in the mid 1980s do believe and will keep on believing that the same power

74 WA de Klerk, *The Puritans in Africa* (Penguin, 1980).

75 Text translated from: “Konvent vir Eenheid: Verklaring van voorneme”, a document that spells out the resolve of the Uniting Reformed Church and the Synods of the Duched Reformed Church in the Western, Southern and Eastern Cape to carry on conversations about unity on the basis of Belhar, 2001.

of God's liberating Word will result in a movement of unification, reconciliation and justice, in church and society.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission

Although this commission was set up by means of a political process and illustrates the will of the new South African government to address the injustices of the past by a process of recovering the truth and of reconciliation, it cannot be denied that the keywords of Belhar became operative in the TRC: truthfulness, justice, and reconciliation. The presence of various church figures, including Archbishop Desmond Tutu, introduced a priestly dignity and gravity to the process. In fact, the truths that were uncovered would have been unbearable without the will to forgive and reconcile. It is indeed sad that the SWAPO government in Namibia deliberately avoids this route towards national healing, thereby making the announced process of "national reconciliation" a mockery of what Belhar, and the Christian tradition at large, would understand under reconciliation. To "forgive and forget" does not constitute "reconciliation", because it wishes to accomplish what is impossible, theologically and humanly: to have unity and reconciliation without truth and justice. Forgiveness as such is neither tantamount to reconciliation, as some Namibian church leaders claim. Forgiveness is a Christian duty and may help to move the process of reconciliation forward, but reconciliation as such is a process involving admission of guilt and restitution, and open, face-to-face processing of the past. Reconciliation cannot simply be announced by authorities, especially when their own hands are dirty. Belhar as a public theological text, and not merely the "property" of one church, functioned as a shadow text for the TRC's operations, and can play a similar role in many similar contexts of disunity and irreconcilability.

Namibian experiences of Belhar as public theology

When I accepted the position of Head of the Biblical Studies Department at the University of Namibia in 1984, and my family joined the congregation of the DRMC in Windhoek, soon to be followed by a few other white "Protestants", Belhar immediately became the tower of strength that continued the difficult work of bringing down the walls of separation, prejudice and fear in this "mixed" Christian community. Through shared meals in the white, black and so-called coloured townships of Windhoek, organised by "Koinonia Windhoek", which I started with others who shared the communion of faith, we brought Christians together in the spirit of Belhar. The Confession was studied, preached, and lived, until in 1995 we published a book, *Kom ons word EEN (Let us become ONE)*, whereby the Uniting Reformed Church (the old DRMC in Namibia) invited the white DRC and the

black Evangelical Reformed Church of Africa (ERCA) to become one.⁷⁶ In spite of severe manipulation by the white DRC, especially financially, the ERCA, inspired by the vision of unity, reconciliation and justice of Belhar, courageously took the step in 1997, leaving the DRC with more money than ever but still outside the fellowship of real communion. We have ever since been watching the DRC with sympathy as they struggle through a desert phase, with numbers and enthusiasm dwindling, but, according to Belhar, reconciliation and unity can only be chosen in freedom. So, also in Namibia, the Belhar-people remain patient and try to deal with their own in-house discrepancies (similar to the painful court cases concerning property in South Africa).

Another personal example of the effect of Belhar is the inspiration it provided for me and a few other white Namibians to help break the deadlock in the Namibian peace process. We mustered the courage to fly to Lusaka, in August 1986, to speak to the SWAPO liberation movement's leadership and to discuss ways of getting the United Nations peace plan for Namibia (UN Security Resolution 435 of 1978) back on track – that being the only viable and just plan for a ceasefire, withdrawal of South African troops, return of 40,000 Namibians from exile, and peaceful campaigning and elections for a Constituent Assembly. Through carefully planned peaceful marches, demonstrations and information campaigns, the newly formed Namibia Peace Plan 435 group, of which I became a founding member and vice-chairperson, managed to overcome the severe ideological and smear campaigns of the South African “dirty tricks department” and to help mobilise the majority of the Namibian people, also by means of publications,⁷⁷ so that within three years the South Africans were probably even relieved to withdraw from Namibia “with some honour”, to be able to deal with their own volatile situation. We still believe that it was the Belhar-like spirit of reconciliation and the sense of justice that helped Namibia to make its enormous transition in such a peaceful and orderly manner.

Unfortunately, I must mention another instance, where the spirit of Belhar, until now, could not help to make a crucial ecumenical breakthrough, but nonetheless has remained the prime mover of a small Christian human rights group to deal with an unresolved and serious problem stemming from the war of liberation. After the Namibian war of liberation, with SWAPO returning home as heroes, settling in and providing the leadership for the new government, SWAPO ex-detainees revealed severe human rights abuses and atrocities within SWAPO. (These “ex-detainees” were members of the Movement who were detained for extended periods in dungeons under ground

76 C Lombard & J Hunter (eds): *Kom ons word EEN* (Windhoek: EIN Publications, 1995), including articles on the Belhar confession.

77 *The choice! Namibian Peace Plan 435 or Society under siege!* edited by B O'Linn & C Lombard (Windhoek: NPP 435) and a pamphlet in five languages, *Why should we look forward to 435?* (Windhoek: NPP 435).

level in SWAPO camps in Angola, where many of them died, and where they were also severely tortured). These atrocities were related to a so-called spy-drama – that was never proven and probably had more to do with critical factions inside the movement and the authoritarian control of members by the “old guard” leadership. When an attempt to use the ecumenical church body, the Council of Churches in Namibia, failed to mediate this crisis with SWAPO, a *Report to the Namibian People* was published and the media spent some time on the issue.⁷⁸ However, the excitement about independence and a new future soon overtook these serious issues, and the detainee issue was buried for a while. Then a German pastor who worked with SWAPO in exile, Pastor Siegfried Groth, wrote a book, *Namibische Passion*, translated into English as *Namibia, the Wall of Silence*, telling the stories of approximately 100 SWAPO members and their sufferings at the hand of their own liberation movement.⁷⁹ This was after Groth had repeatedly and secretly tried to convince church authorities in Namibia, in Germany and in the ecumenical world to take seriously the testimonies of, for example, a Parents’ Committee and his own earlier reports about the atrocities to church authorities. Although the CCN promised to hold an ecumenical conference about the issue, this never materialised since the bishops were called in by the Namibian president and warned against collaborating with “enemies of the state”, and threats were made against the individuals who formed a “Breaking the Wall of Silence” movement, of which I became the secretary.

It was a sad experience to see all the prophetic courage of the churches, which before independence acted as a voice of the voiceless, disappear in the mist of political expediency, but it was also interesting to observe that the majority of these few pastors, who stood up individually for the truth and who came forward to be counted, came from the Uniting Reformed Church.⁸⁰ They had a confession linking the church’s work with the difficult task of reconciliation, through truth and the ongoing quest for justice. These pastors also plucked up the courage to speak out against the president’s tirades against gays and lesbians as “foreigners who do not belong in our country”. They indeed had a confession speaking of inclusive community, based on reconciliation.⁸¹

I can mention a last Namibian-based instance of an “implication” of Belhar: the paradigm that was developed in public schools regarding the teaching of religion in Namibian schools. As chairperson of the new curriculum committee for Religious and Moral Education, established by the Minister of Education soon after independence, I

78 *Report to the Namibian people* (Windhoek: BWS, 1996).

79 Siegfried Groth, *Namibia, the wall of silence* (Wuppertal: Peter Hammer).

80 See C Lombard, “The role of religion in the reconstruction of Namibian society: the churches, the new kairós and visions of hope and despair”, *Journal of Religion and Theology in Namibia* 1/1 (1991), pp. 38-87.

81 Thus anticipating as early as 1997 in Namibia what Dr Allan Boesak writes about this challenge to the Uniting Reformed Church in South Africa, on the basis of Belhar, in this *Festschrift*.

was faced with the task to chart a new course in this crucial sphere. The committee had the new Namibian constitution as a guideline, together with the resolve never again to privilege one religion above others. However, we did not want to throw the child away with the bathwater, and thus decided to develop a curriculum in which all major religious traditions would be taught, with an emphasis on their ethical teachings, in order to foster real understanding and respect (not only “tolerance”!), and to prepare our learners to make informed ethical choices in their lives.⁸² Thus, on 11 September 2001, we were sitting in a multi-faith meeting with the Muslim imams of the local mosques, together with Jews, Christians of evangelical and ecumenical persuasion, Baha’is and representatives of other religions – preparing the agendas of working together towards better understanding and a “common ethos”. Belhar’s emphasis on God’s justice in all spheres of our worldly existence provides a very powerful theological back-up for such uncharted terrain – terrain which, worldwide, we can no longer avoid, not even under the First Amendment of the American Constitution, which seeks to separate church and state, and thus tends to force religion into the sphere of the private individual only.⁸³

The Palestinian struggle for independence and justice (and similar struggles)

At the June 2004 synod of the Reformed Church in America (RCA) meeting at Wheaton College, I had the privilege to speak on the ecumenical “implications” of the Belhar Confession. It was heart-warming for me to see the seriousness with which the RCA, with typical Reformed thoroughness (i.e. a five-year plan!), has embarked on a journey with Belhar. As someone with a passion for our confessional heritage, including this gift of God to his church worldwide, I expressed the wish, when I spoke about the Belhar Confession at the synod in 2004, that the RCA may ultimately benefit from the power of the Spirit released through this simple text of confession of the lordship of Jesus Christ in all our worldly affairs, in a similar way as we have experienced it in our context. I added: “I cannot but see that the struggles within the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and the World Council of Churches to come to grips with new difficult issues, e.g. the new threats to world peace by those who hunger for war and dominance; issues of sexual orientation and of the discrepancies of globalization and a thwarted global economy, can only benefit from an ecumenical affirmation and embrace of Belhar.”⁸⁴

82 C Lombard, “Contextual and theoretical considerations in the Namibian curricular process” in T Andree *et al* (eds): *Crossing boundaries: Contributions to inter-religious and inter-cultural education* (Utrecht: Utrecht University and the Comenius Institute, 1994).

83 For all the issues involved in this debate, see Philip Hamburger, *Separation of church and state* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002).

84 Indeed, the issue of globalisation, embedded as it is (according to the perception of the third world) in “empire”, is receiving thorough attention. A working group of church delegates from South Africa and Germany, under the leadership of Prof Allan Boesak, is investigating further responses to the Accra Declaration and the AGAPE initiative of the ecumenical world.

At the same meeting I was surprised to hear a Palestinian Lutheran from Bethlehem, Mitri Raheb, express his conviction that the Belhar Confession was a source of inspiration and hope for the Palestinian people in their struggle. The Palestinians believed that they were facing a similar oppressive regime, like the people of apartheid South Africa, and in spite of the fact that Belhar was written for a Christian context, and was formulating a public theology for a specific church (family), Raheb was confident that the vision of Belhar was not only ecumenical but also global: the concepts of unity, reconciliation and justice, as explained in Christian terms in this document, were accessible and inspiring to people who were not necessarily Christian, but who were facing similar crises as the South Africans did in their struggle against apartheid. Such a reception of Belhar indeed underlines the fact that the confession may have multiple “applications” in the world, not the least of which may be to conscientise churches to also consider a *status confessionis* on situations that are similar to the well-known apartheid situation of South Africa.⁸⁵

A processus confessionis on the global economy

Since 1992, when the Executive Committee of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, in a letter to member churches, called for a study on faith and economic life, and thus signalled that worldwide economic justice would be high on the WARC agenda, a process has been initiated which resulted in a study text on economic justice and ecological destruction, which served at its 23rd General Council in Debrecen in 1997. At a meeting of the World Council of Churches in Harare in December 1998, the WCC expressed its appreciation for the two programmes presented by the WARC during the *padare* of the 8th General Assembly, and encouraged its members to join the process. Various other WARC meetings followed up on this initiative, including *Serve God, not Mammon* (Budapest, 2001), and *Economy in the Service of Life* (Soesterberg, 2002). The increasing cooperation between the ecumenical organisations based in Geneva led to the formation in 2000 of an Ecumenical Coalition for Alternatives to Globalization (ECAG), with a vision to “restore the place of people as the centrum of all human life” and to “create an alternative economic paradigm, which ensures the fullness of life for the whole creation, and a ‘new creation’ wherein God-given life is guaranteed, economic justice is assured, and there is peaceful and harmonious coexistence between humans and humankind and the rest of God’s creation”. More

85 The theological question, which is central to such endeavours, is whether the strict Christological focus of Barth, as inclusive as it may be, provides the appropriate theological apparatus for issues involving what *we* as human beings should do regarding these problems. According to Van Ruler, this is the proper scopus of the work of the Holy Spirit: God dwelling in us and working through our agency!

recently the Accra Declaration and the AGAPE initiative of the WCC have taken these debates further.⁸⁶

The question when one hears such idealistic visions is whether the Christian church has any confessional or theological basis to tackle these intricate and complex issues of justice on a global scale; issues affecting billions of people? One line from Belhar draws our attention: “We believe, that in following Christ the Church must witness against all the powerful and privileged who selfishly seek their own interests and thus control and harm others.”

Belhar as generator of ongoing prophetic theology?

In this section I wish to briefly address the question as to whether Belhar, coming from a very specific context of crisis, can in fact be useful in different contexts, where the focus, interests, urgency and passion levels may differ. To address this question within the tradition of Reformed confessions, I use Dirkie Smit’s short analysis, after listening to the expert opinions of three respected mentors.

John de Gruchy, emeritus professor of Christian Studies at the University of Cape Town:

The Belhar Confession is the confession of a particular denomination, but it has important ecumenical significance and potential ... It has, in fact, opened up fresh possibilities for the emergence not only of a united Reformed church but also of an ecumenical confessing church that transcends traditional confessional boundaries. But, by the same token, it recognizes other boundaries of division and conflict in the same way as the Barmen Declaration did. Whether or not the Belhar Confession actually achieves its potential is another matter, of course, one that has to do with whether or not the opportunity it offers is grasped.⁸⁷

Willie Jonker, in life professor of Systematic Theology, Stellenbosch University:

The Belhar Confession is a gift of God to our churches. It enriches and deepens the historical confessional treasure of the church. As Reformed people we have always known that God not only is the God of justification through faith, but also the God of sanctification; not only the God of the individual, but also of the community; not only the God of worship or private piety, but also of politics and social justice. God does not only save us from the guilt of sin, but also from enmity and the many forms of suffering and injustice people inflict on one another. God wants the sanctification of the whole of life. Nevertheless, these insights have found little concrete expression in our historical confessions. At least, they are not spelled out in them. It took the evil and suffering of the political situation

86 All these documents and debates are reflected on the website of the World Council of Churches. For an analysis of the effect of the relentless globalisation and the ethical issues involved, see C Lombard, *An ethics of listening* (Utrecht: Utrecht Unitwin Network publication nr. 7, 1999).

87 John de Gruchy, *Liberating Reformed theology* (Grand Rapids: William B Eerdmans, 1991), pp. 218-219. See also DJ Smit, “Die belydenis van Belhar: ontstaan, inhoud, reëpsie, relevansie”, paper, 15 May 1998, p. 25.

in South Africa to call forth this aspect of our confession from the heart of the church. That through this a crucial contribution to the confessional treasures of the Reformed world was made, has been an unexpected gift of God to all of us in this land, and to all Christians worldwide ... The message of the Belhar Confession is universal. Through God's grace it is a contribution from our soil to the confessional heritage of the world church.⁸⁸

Jaap Durand, co-author of the Belhar Confession and emeritus professor of Systematic Theology at the University of the Western Cape:

Whatever the specific background of Belhar, we cannot ignore its content. I wish to state it categorically that the Reformed churches, not only from South Africa, but of the world – let us say all the member churches of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, will be significantly poorer without the confession as formulated in Belhar. The implications of Belhar stretch far wider than its original context. I wish the Reformed family will acknowledge this and would not only view it as something with relevance only for South Africa. I am convinced that the traditional Reformed confessions from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, in spite of their value and significance for the church, are not adequate to fully express the substance of the Reformed faith. The three main themes of the Belhar Confession – the unity of the church, the reconciliation amongst people and God's justice vis-à-vis the poor and needy – are not addressed in these confessions. Very little is said about the unity of the church. Mutual reconciliation of people and justice for the poor are totally absent. The Confession of Belhar is not only meant for South Africa ... What have we done with it? What are we going to do with it? ... If we have the Belhar Confession to boast around with it, it is not worth the paper it is written on. Otherwise, it can become the most remarkable document ever written in the Reformed tradition, since the Reformation.⁸⁹

From these quotations and assessments of Belhar, a number of *paradoxical ambiguities* can be identified – which can in fact be counted as strengths: the fact that one church's very specific, *contextual* confession can also be a genuine *universal* message to the world church, with many applicabilities, exactly because it is grounded truthfully in a serious engagement with the truth of God's word in real circumstances; the fact that a simple act of *human obedience* in dependence of God can bring forth a precious *divine gift*; the fact that a normal act of confessing faith can become a world-changing miracle; the fact that a theology that takes the concrete *world of politics* seriously ("Politics is a holy matter!" – AA van Ruler) is the only kind of theology that can discover something of *God's reign* on this earth, and the secret of Christ's lordship over all flesh; the fact that faithfully following Jesus' way in respect of *one ethical issue* (namely apartheid) opens our eyes to *many other unresolved issues* (including violence, power relations in politics, economics, families, poverty, marginalisation of the "other"); the ironical situation that sometimes "a plan comes together" in such a way that what was anticipated and

88 Quoted in DJ Smit, "Die belydenis van Belhar", p. 25 (my translation). See also WD Jonker, *Bevrydende waarheid*, pp. 166-170, for Jonker's assessment of Belhar.

89 Quoted in Smit, "Die belydenis van Belhar", p. 25 (my translation).

prepared through years of suffering and guarded by the whole ecumenical world could come to a head in the space of a few days' intensive theological and Spirit-guided work of a *small band of the faithful*, vicariously performing a "miracle" *on behalf of the entire catholic church*; the further irony that what was genuinely done *in utter dependence and humility*, without any ulterior motives (consider again in this regard the "Accompanying Letter" to Belhar!), can be transformed by the Spirit into a *remarkable faith, strength, trust and assurance, which can move mountains!*

When asked to draw up a short guideline paper on "confession" from a Reformed perspective, with a view to assessing Belhar's "usefulness" in the ecumenical world, Dirkie Smit, one of the authors of the Belhar Confession, together with Jaap Durand one of the prime interpreters of the Belhar debate, summarised a few points that may be helpful in our own assessment of Belhar and its implications in the wider, global context. One of the backgrounds for his helpful summary was of course the new movement, within the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, towards a so-called *processus confessionis* in the face of the powers in and behind *globalisation*, of which we from the third world know all too well that it does not only have the wonderful benefits promised to those who bow before the new god of the market. In this context only a few major points can be summarised:⁹⁰

The Reformed tradition has always been a *confessional tradition*. Creeds and confessions have played a major role in defining our churches as members of the catholic church and have expressed our understanding of the *one gospel* for our times and circumstances. Our confessions (now including Belhar) serve as "declarative affirmations" of what we believe to be the Triune God's truth and how we understand ourselves to be bound by the basic confession that Jesus is Lord. As indicated by Jonker, our confessional documents play *diverse roles* in the life of Reformed churches:⁹¹

- they provide the language to proclaim God's praise;
- they become hermeneutical lenses for reading the Scriptures;
- they express identity and thereby establish unity;
- they help to instruct and form new believers;
- they help to distinguish truth from falsehood;
- they serve as forms of public witness to Jesus Christ the Lord.

Under *normal circumstances* our existing confessional tradition (including a variety of confessions not necessarily shared by all Reformed churches) serves as a "confessional hermeneutic" to interpret Scripture *and* the "historical context". All our confessions are regarded as historical and contextual documents; not even the World Alliance of Reformed Churches has one common confession shared by all member churches. These

90 DJ Smit, "On 'confession' from a Reformed perspective", paper, Stellenbosch, 10 December 2002, pp. 1-4.

91 See WD Jonker, *Bevrydende waarheid*, pp. 1-15.

confessions have a *relative authority*, always subject to the sole and final authority of God's Word, the living voice of the living God, still speaking to us through his Word and Spirit, and guiding the whole Church in the truth, through time and history. The confessions, crucial as they are, are historical and contextual in nature, and may in fact be found wanting ("not to be sufficient to interpret and respond to new situations, questions and challenges that may arise in the life of the Church"). They are indeed the products of fallible human activity, which implies that they may need correction, revision and even replacement. In brief, the Reformed churches know that they are continuously in a struggle, together with the whole church, *to understand the one gospel ever anew*.⁹²

To illustrate these ideas about "confession in Reformed perspective", under *normal circumstances*, Karl Barth's reaction, in 1925, to the question whether it was not necessary for the World Alliance of Reformed Churches to adopt a common, universal Reformed creed, is instructive. Barth responded: "A Reformed creed is the statement, spontaneously and publicly formulated by a Christian community within a geographically limited area, which, until further action, defines its character to outsiders; and which, until further action, gives guidance for its own doctrine and life; it is a formulation of the insight currently given to the whole Christian church by the revelation of God in Jesus Christ, witnessed by the Holy Scriptures alone."⁹³ Thus, Reformed confession can only be based on the revelation of God in Jesus Christ, witnessed to by the Holy Scriptures, and not on any other cause or motive; it is intended to address the whole Christian church; it gives guidance regarding faith and life; it is both authoritative and provisional, and it provides orientation regarding both identity and calling.

However, under *abnormal circumstances*, in the face of radical challenges to the gospel (such as with Barmen in 1934, against Fascism and Nazism, and Belhar in 1982, against apartheid), Reformed churches may sense that their confession, the integrity and credibility of their witness to the gospel, is at stake: then a situation of *status confessionis*, a moment of truth in which nothing else than the gospel itself is at stake, arises. In the words of Debrecen (WARC): "Any declaration of a *status confessionis* stems from the conviction that the integrity of the gospel is in danger. It is a call from error into truth. It demands of the church a clear, unequivocal decision for the truth of the gospel, and identifies the opposed opinion, teaching or practice as heretical. The declaration of a *status confessionis* refers to the practice of the church as well as to its teaching. The church's practice in the relevant case must conform to the confession of the gospel demanded by the declaration of the *status confessionis*. The declaration of a *status confessionis* addresses a specific situation. It brings to light an error which threatens a specific church. Nevertheless, the danger inherent in that error also calls

92 Smit, "On 'confession' from a Reformed perspective", pp. 1-2.

93 Smit, "On 'confession' from a Reformed perspective", p. 2.

in question the integrity of proclamation of all churches. The declaration of a *status confessionis* within a particular situation is, at the same time, addressed to all churches, calling them to concur in the act of confessing.”

In the Reformed confession, as is clear from this statement of the WARC, there is an important and reciprocal relationship between truth and life, or between faith and ethics. On the one hand, the need for confession arises because of moral crises or ethical challenges, based on a worldview or lifestyle that presents itself as based on the gospel, but which needs to be unmasked. On the other hand, any such act of confession calls for embodiment, for practical implementation. This is the reason why in Reformed circles a new confession is almost invariably followed by a new church order, new liturgies, new catechisms, new moral guidelines for public life, etc.

In considering the question concerning “Belhar in other contexts,” I believe we have to deal with Barth’s obviously time-tested and valuable definition of a Reformed confession (emphasising the notions of *kairos*, locality, contextuality, listening to God’s Word only, with no other motives driving us than confessing Christ’s Lordship faithfully over against a heresy or ideology or false doctrine) in a dialectical, paradoxical way, as suggested above in the positive assessments of the three South African theologians. It is clear from their comments that Belhar represents a gift of God, not only to the Uniting Reformed Church in its struggle against apartheid, but also as a gift to the world church in struggles that may in many ways also differ.

It is important to acknowledge that we have very few other confessions dealing with the type of contextual issues that fill our agendas daily. As Durand observes, the traditional Reformed confessions are simply silent on many of the crucial points. Belhar does not only function with extremely relevant keywords (such as “unity”, “reconciliation” and “justice”), but also provides a broadly based biblical hermeneutic which makes the application of these fundamental “words” of faith in different contexts possible: it speaks of “irreconcilability” and “justice” in such a way that many forms of “exclusion”, “hatred”, “enmity”, “fear”, “suspicion”, “alienation”, “despair”, “selfishness”, “unbelief”, “prejudice”, “bitterness”, “control and harm of others” (all forms of “injustice” against the other) are included and suggested; forms that may transcend the crucial issue of racism which is directly addressed. Belhar also brings into play other keywords, by association, such as “truth”, “truthfulness” and “peace”. In the processes of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission these associated confessional “words” have been invaluable.

Are these principles, working positively for reconciliation wherever there is estrangement or exclusion (“women”, “children”, “gays and lesbians”, “foreigners”, “Muslims”, “white middle-aged males”!) and sensing God’s way of justice and peace in the world, not treasures because they are part of what we believe, *of what we confess, and thus live?*

Another “universal” aspect of the Belhar confession is its Trinitarian format, its focus on the living Word of God and the work of the Spirit, and the doxological tone, which makes it fit for various liturgical and educational applications, in different contexts. In spite of its “anathemas”, clear condemnations of the heresies and false doctrines it addresses, it basically operates on a very positive tone of faith, hope and forward vision. As Barth himself requires from a good Reformed confession, Belhar is written not *as* a Reformed confession, but as a confession for the whole body of Christ, based on a careful listening to the *viva vox evangelii*.

A poignant final point is obviously that confession is always a free activity of a church. It cannot and should not be forced. It is up to the Christians in Palestine to consider confessing Jesus as Lord in their grim circumstances, in the language of Belhar or in different words. It is up to the Reformed Church in America and other churches worldwide to confess the Lordship of Christ in their specific context(s), via Belhar or their own confession.

One matter has definitely changed since 1925: the world has indeed become a “global village”. Belhar was possible in South Africa in 1982 because of the love, care and interest of brothers and sisters around the *oecumene*, and these brothers and sisters have indeed rejoiced, with intense enthusiasm, when the walls of apartheid came tumbling down and justice started flowing like rivers. Because of the positive aspects of globalisation (such as fast communication), we also know much better about the negative aspects of this same process (manipulation, exploitation and extreme vulnerability of the economies of “left behind” countries). We know that all is not well in our global village: we do not behave like good neighbourly villagers; our market does not treat all customers fairly and equally; a harsh new god of the market is worshipped, and a new law obeyed: consume, grab, live for today! In spite of the dreams of Harry Potter and Lord of the Rings and Whale Rider, where a magical world of love and harmony seems possible beyond all the struggles, a new ugly dream is taking shape right in front of our eyes: one of power, domination and self-assertion.

Perhaps the time has indeed come for an ecumenical *status confessionis*, one in which we declare our faithfulness to God’s purposes on this earth: simply to walk humbly with our God, to do justice to one another and to live with faithful love and compassion.⁹⁴ This is the command which Jesus our Lord also “left behind” for us. This is the reality that the Spirit can and will work in and through us. In Jaap Durand we are fortunate to have a powerful example and inspiration for such a transparent Christian life in the world.

94 In the famous word of Micah 6:8.

Conclusion

It was neither my task nor my intention to investigate all the unresolved issues with which we, as Christians and human beings, struggle, and offer Belhar as a “solution”. It seems to me that the inclusiveness of the confession and the deep concern with all forms of marginalisation and exclusion are aspects of Belhar that present a powerful hermeneutic of “justice for all”. Thus the confession challenges us not to dwell inside the “safe” walls of the church, but to step into the world courageously, especially the world of the “other” – so easily viewed and ostracised as the enemy or the stranger. This is an aspect of Belhar which to my mind surpasses the narrower vision of Barmen, and which shows the broad (Dutch) Reformed basis of this confession. In my introduction I hinted at the fact that Belhar may have been inspired by Barmen, and I think there is no doubt about that, but I also suggested that Belhar is deeply embedded in a long historical struggle for the vision of “no square inch” of life that falls outside of Christ’s regime. In the historical section, where I briefly reviewed several time-tested paradigms for a public theology, I dealt with the fact that the various Christocentric visions for the relationship of church, society and God’s reign – as represented by Calvin, Kuyper and Barth, and, to a lesser extent, Luther – are all grappling with ways and means of defining what it means to be church, the body of Christ, in the world. In reading the text of Belhar and reflecting on it as “public theology”, one is certainly struck by the presence of many of the elements from this ongoing debate between our spiritual fathers. Let us not lose sight of how these quite disparate positions move closer to one another when they all focus on the central position of Christ as Lord, on this world as a gift from God, and on humanity as God’s agents in this world.⁹⁵

I hope I have sown some seeds that may blossom in the “middle ground” between “Barth” and “Kuyper” (where I believe someone like Van Ruler has been “playing” theology). How interesting that Kuyper on “this world” appears closer to Luther (and, in terms of nature that needs some “supplement” of grace, to the Catholic tradition!), and that Barth seems to be on some points closer to the “eschatological revolution”, with Calvin and the Calvinists still struggling to overcome their own dualisms.⁹⁶ Perhaps we should remind ourselves that we are all “theologians” (God-sayers), all very limited, very fragile, but also all still “on the road” to our destiny, juggling the theological bits and pieces from our tradition, searching for meaningful combinations, even in our confessions, where we are most confident, where we sometimes have a *kairotic epiphany* (Van Ruler).

95 To deal with *these* aspects we *must* speak of God as trinity; public theology is only possible as trinitarian theology!

96 AA van Ruler, “Perspectieven voor de gereformeerde theologie” in *Theologisch Werk II* (Nijkerk, GF Callenbach, 1971), pp. 99-100.

So, what are we to do? The Essene flight into pious isolation from the world means that we forsake our mission. The Sadducee adaptation, with the reckoned and the elite, to the standards of this world, to the privileges of *status quo*, also translates into forsaking our mission. The Pharisee attempts at creating a just world by our own action and by keeping to rules and laws, always end in disappointment. The Zealot revolutionary, and if need be, violent and “final” apocalyptic attempt at realising “the kingdom” (of “man”?) will throw us onto the never-ending treadmills of Camus, and the route of self-destruction. Our route will have to be following Jesus, like his first followers, on a “spirituality of the road”, with a handful of “words of freedom”, words such as “love”, incarnated in the witness of a community, a community of “unity”, “reconciliation” and “justice”.⁹⁷ We can jumble these words and even have a few words to say in the public square, but these words will be meaningless, especially when blown up into a massive “worldview”, if we cannot incarnate the powerful realities of these words into our own *communio sanctorum*.

“Our church, which has been fighting in these years only for its self-preservation, as though that were an end in itself, is incapable of taking the word of reconciliation and redemption to mankind and the world. Our earlier words are therefore bound to lose their force and cease, and our being Christians today will be limited to two things: prayer and righteous action among men.”⁹⁸ These famous words of Bonhoeffer are a call to the practice of a public theology performed in humility and sincerity. In this we can thankfully follow Jaap Durand.

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97 See DJ Bosch, *A spirituality of the road* (Scottsdale: Herald Press, 1979).

98 Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Letters and papers from prison* (New York: Macmillan, 1972), p. 300. See Eberhard Bethge, *Prayer and righteous action in the life of Dietrich Bonhoeffer* (Belfast: Christian Journals, 1979).

Historiese bewussyn?

Wat maak Jaap Durand so ’n besondere denker en teoloog? Wat maak sy bydrae oor jare heen – tot die kerklike lewe, die teologiese nadenke, die akademiese omgewing en die openbare lewe in Suid-Afrika – so uniek, dikwels verrassend en indrukwekkend? Wat lê agter dit alles, waarin wortel dit, hoe moet dit verstaan word? Waarskynlik skuil die antwoord in sy historiese bewussyn.

Weinig ander Suid-Afrikaanse teoloë oor die afgelope dekades is deur so ’n radikale historiese bewussyn gekenmerk as Durand. Meer as die meeste van sy tydgenote – ook in akademiese én openbare kringe ver buite die grense van die teologie self – het hy die diepgrypende implikasies van die historiese bewussyn van die moderne tydsges begryp en deur dink. Meer as die meeste ander – selfs van sy geesgenote in baie ander opsigte – het hy die dieper agtergronde van kontemporêre filosofiese en teologiese ontwikkelinge verstaan en eerlik met die radikale gevolge daarvan geworstel. Meer as die meeste – selfs van sy nabye vriende en jarelange kollegas in die kerk en die akademie – het hy telkens weer vanuit ’n radikale historiese besef gepraat, geskryf en gehandel, en op konkrete sosiale en politieke uitdagings gereageer op wyses wat tereg as kontekstueel en profeties beleef en beskryf sou word.¹

Hy het van vroeg af – in bewuste reaksie téénor die denkraamwerk en intellektuele tradisie waarin hy opgevoed is² – gesoek na ’n alternatiewe wyse van dink wat reg sou

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- 1 Sowel Willie Jonker as Hennie Rossouw, twee van sy geesgenote wat hom waarskynlik die beste verstaan het, verwys na sy historiese bewussyn, as hulle inleidings tot sy werk skryf. In WD Jonker se baie nuttige inleiding, “n Nuwe weg?”, tot Durand se versamelde opstelle *Teks binne konteks* (Bellville: UWK, 1986), pp. 7-12, beskryf hy Durand as ’n “bybels-historiese” denker en baie tipies Gereformeerd. Ook sy baie verhelderende metafoor van ’n “weg” – wat hy telkens terugvind in Durand se denke – dui tereg al op die historiese karakter van Durand se denke en werk. In HW Rossouw se eweneens verhelderende voorwoord tot Durand se latere werk, *Doodloopstrate van die geloof* (Stellenbosch: African SunMedia, 2005), pp. 1-4, beskryf hy akkuraat hoe Durand enersyds “die oudste ekumeniese tradisies van die Christelike kerk onderskryf” maar andersyds tog nie “halstarrig vashou aan duidelik agterhaalde voorstellinge” nie, en merk dan op dat Durand iemand is met “n ope oog vir die relativerende krag van die geskiedenis”, p. 1.
 - 2 Ons is bevoorreg om die voordeel te hê van verskillende bydraes waarin hy self terugkyk op sy lewe en werk en dit self probeer dui. Sien JFF Durand, “Discovering the implications of reconciliation”, *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* (December 1982), in Afrikaans herdruk as “Teks binne konteks” in *Teks binne konteks: Versamelde opstelle oor kerk en politiek*, in die reeks *Teks en konteks* (Bellville: Universiteit van Wes-Kaapland, 1987), pp. 191-197; JFF Durand, “How my mind has

laat geskied aan die historiese bewussyn wat toe reeds duidelik by hom aanwesig was, al was dit nog meer intuïtief en ongeartikuleerd as begrond en verwoord.³ In talle van sy vroeëre bydraes en optredes blyk dit dat hy eintlik alreeds konsekwent werk met 'n groeiende historiese bewussyn en alle uitdagings en vraagstukke in dié gees benader, ook al verwoord hy dit nog nie uitdruklik en selfbewus in sovele woorde nie.⁴

Uiteindelik sou hy in sy tweede doktorsale proefskrif, dié keer in dogmatiek, in 1973 aan die Stellenbosse Fakulteit – ná sy eerste proefskrif, in sendingwetenskap, reeds meer as 'n dekade vantevore aan die Vrije Universiteit in Amsterdam⁵ – dié denkraamwerk

changed: From eternal truths to contextualized metaphors”, ongepubliseerde voordrag voor die Theological Society of Southern Africa, in verkorte weergawe gepubliseer as “When theology became metaphor”, *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* (November 2001, Vol 111), pp. 12-16, effens gewysig ook in Afrikaans herdruk as JFF Durand, “Hoe my gedagte-wêreld verander het: Van ewige waarhede tot gekontekstualiseerde metafore”, *Nederduits Gereformeerde Teologiese Tydskrif* (43/1&2, 2002), pp. 64-70; selfs ook JFF Durand, “Modernism, mysticism and the challenge of theological language”, ongepubliseerde voordrag tydens 'n openbare lesingsreeks aan die Universiteit van Wes-Kaapland. In hierdie outobiografiese oorsigte maak hy baie duidelik hoe hy oor die jare heen bewus op soek was na 'n bevredigende teologiese denkraamwerk.

- 3 Dis moeilik om vas te stel wanneer en waarom dié verset teen sy agtergrond en dié intellektuele soeke presies begin het. 'n Interessante moontlikheid vir bespiegeling sou kon wees of die invloed van professor BB (Bennie) Keet nie tog ook in hierdie opsig selfs meer beslissend was as wat Durand self te kenne gee nie? Keet het naamlik reeds in 1913 aan die Vrije Universiteit gepromoveer onder Herman Bavinck, en wel oor *De theologie van Ernst Troeltsch* (Amsterdam: Swets & Zeitlinger, 1913)! Dit was uiteraard pas na Troeltsch se beroemde lesings oor die betekenis van die Reformasie in die ontstaan van die moderne wêreld, net na sy invloedryke studie oor die sosiale leringe van kerke en in die tyd dat hy al hoe meer die historiese metode sou beoefen en sy historisiese sieninge sou ontwikkel. 'n Mens sou dus kon verwag dat Keet iets van hierdie historiese besef met hom sou saambring en aan die studente oorgedra het, maar alhoewel Durand dikwels vermeld dat Keet die grootste invloed van al die Stellenbosse dosente op hom gehad het, is dit meesal in die konteks van Keet se eie politieke oortuigings, en nie met verwysing na enige historiese besef nie. Keet se klaslesings was skynbaar gebaseer op Bavinck, en nie op Troeltsch nie. Durand verwys eerder na Berkouwer as die vroeë teologiese invloed op sy denke, wat uiteraard ook tot sy historiese besef bygedra het. Sien byvoorbeeld ook sy terugskoue in JFF Durand, “Afrikanerpiëtisme en andersdenkendheid” in *Teks binne konteks*, pp. 172-176.
- 4 Reeds Durand se eie magisterverhandeling was 'n historiese studie oor Calvin, te wete JFF Durand, *Die wysgerige grondslae van die ius resistendi by Calvin* (Bloemfontein: Universiteit, 1956), maar reeds die titel toon dat dit nog gefokus was op “wysgerige grondslae.” Sy benadering om probleme in historiese perspektief te plaas was egter van die begin af aanwesig, soos byvoorbeeld blyk uit sy doktorsale proefskrif *Una sancta catholica in sendingperspektief* (Amsterdam: Ten Have, 1961), asook uit sy vroeë *Christelike sending – Allesomvattende roeping* (Bloemfontein: Sacum, 1964). In sy eerste groot boek, die opspraakwekkende en in baie opsigte indrukwekkende studie *Swartman, stad en toekomst* (Kaapstad: Tafelberg, 1970) word sy uitsonderlike sosiaal-historiese aanvoeling en insig glashelder gedemonstreer, alhoewel die teoretiese raamwerk daaragter eers later geartikuleer sou word.
- 5 JFF Durand, *Una sancta catholica in sendingperspektief* (Amsterdam: Ten Have, 1961), onder begeleiding van JH Bavinck. Verreweg die grootste deel van die argument berus op gedetailleerde historiese inligting en analise.

ontwikkel in ’n diepsinnige interpretasie van die mees invloedryke denker van die Middeleeue, Thomas Aquinas.⁶

Daarna sou hy die implikasies van dié denkraamwerk uitwerk in talle geskrifte en op talle fronte. Op mees diepsinnige wyse sou dit sigbaar word in sy nadenke oor die Godsleer sêlf, in talle geskrifte deur die jare. Op telkens verrassende en ontblotend eerlike en (self)-kritiese wyse sou dit egter ook male sonder tal blyk uit sy reaksies op die mees praktiese en uitdagende vraagstukke van die dag.

Maar wat beteken “historiese bewussyn” en hoe funksioneer dit in Durand se denke? Miskien word dit ten beste duidelik uit dié tweede doktrale studie, *Heilsgeskiedenis en die dialektiek van syn en denke: Strukturele verbindingslyne tussen Thomas Aquinas en die teologie sedert die Aufklärung*.

Die huidige teologiese toneel – so begin die inleiding – word oorheers deur ’n dubbele vraagstelling, die hermeneutiese en die heilshistoriese, en dié twee hang ten nouste met mekaar saam. Daar bestaan ’n groeiende konsensus dat Gods openbaring nie bestaan in “die onthulling van ’n aantal tydlose waarhede” nie, maar dat die openbaring “in die geskiedenis ingegaan” het. Omdat ook die Skrif “nie tydlose, en dus geskiedenislose waarhede” bied nie, maar ’n berig aangaande historiese gebeurtenisse, is die vrae rondom die uitleg van die Skrif so dringend vir wie ook al oortuig is dat “die historiese verlede tyd van God se openbaring van betekenis is vir die hede” en “op een of ander wyse verband hou met die historiese praesens.”⁷

In hierdie woorde – sou ’n mens dalk met reg kon sê – sit Durand se hele teologiese program saamgebundel. Hy reageer ten diepste téénoor opvattinge dat dit in die openbaring, in die Skrif en in die Christelike geloof gaan om “’n aantal tydlose waarhede”. Só verstaan hy die tradisie waarin hy self grootgemaak is en dáárvan wil hy weg beweeg na ’n meer toereikende denkraamwerk. Hy is saam met die breër tradisie van die eeue én met die groeiende teologiese konsensus van die hede oortuig daarvan dat die historiese verlede van God se openbaring van deurslaggewende belang is vir ons lewe in die historiese hede – maar hóé?

Dít is die uitdagende intellektuele en teologiese vraag. Hóé hou die historiese verlede van Gods openbaring “op een of ander wyse” verband met die historiese hede waarin ons leef? En as ons die historiese verlede van Gods openbaring slegs ken in die vorm van ’n “historiese dokument”, as “berig aangaande historiese gebeurtenisse”, hoe “verstaan en vertolk” ons dan dié dokument, dié berig, dié openbaring “wat in

6 J.J.F. Durand, “Heilsgeskiedenis en die dialektiek van syn en denke: Strukturele verbindingslyne tussen Thomas Aquinas en die teologie sedert die *Aufklärung*” (Stellenbosch: Universiteit, 1973, ongepubliseerde doktrale proefskrif), onder die studieleiding van F.J.M. Potgieter.

7 Durand, “Heilsgeskiedenis en die dialektiek van syn en denke”, p. 1.

die geskiedenis ingegaan het” verantwoordelik in ons eie konkrete en wisselende hedes?

Dis duidelik dat *hermeneutiese*, *teologiese* en *historiese* vrae hier inéénvloei, sodat die een nie sonder die ander beantwoord kan word nie. In die verdere ontwikkeling van sy probleemstelling word dit nog duideliker uitgespel. Die adressaat van die Woord van God – skryf Durand – is “nie die mens in die algemeen nie, maar die mens as ’n historiese wese wat lewe binne ’n konkrete historiese situasie.”⁸ Daarmee is vir hom – alhoewel hier nog net implisiet – alle moontlikhede afgesny tot tydlose waarhede, afgeronde sisteme, kontekslose uitsprake, universele beginsels, finale formulerings, absolute aansprake. Herhaaldelik sou hy oor dekades heen op hierdie fronte sy teologie beoefen en sy historiese bewussyn demonstreer.

“Die Christelike boodskap” – vervolg hy – “is dus histories in ’n dubbele sin, vanuit sy oorsprong en vanuit sy adressaat.”⁹ Dalk kan dié drie terme – *boodskap*, *oorsprong* en *adressaat* – dien om agtereenvolgens die *diepe bedoelinge*, die *innerlike logika* en die *praktiese implikasies* van sy werk effe uiteen te haal en in herinnering te roep.

Boodskap het dan te make met *hermeneutiese* vrae en met sy diepe *bedoelinge* om die Reformatoriese denke te dien en te bevry van ’n vreemde suigkrag wat vanaf Nederland ook in Suid-Afrikaanse kringe die Gereformeerde teologie en lewe begin oorheers het. *Oorsprong* het te make met *teologiese* vrae en met die innerlike teologiese *logika* agter sy werk, geleë in sy verstaan van die Christelike God as die Lewende, Drieëنية God van die geskiedenis. *Adressaat* het te make met *historiese* vrae en met die praktiese *implikasies* van sy werk, wat hy telkens in wisselende historiese kontekste opnuut sou verwoord en uitleef. Tesame maak dié drie fasette duidelik wat Durand met historiese bewussyn bedoel en hoe konsekwent hy dit self beoefen.

Boodskap? – “Die lewende Woord”

In “Heilsgeskiedenis en die dialektiek van syn en denke” – sou ’n mens samevattend en interpreterend kon sê – lê hy die grondslae om die vraag te kan beantwoord of die hedendaagse, moderne, kontemporêre, eietydse, huidige – of hoe ’n mens dit ook al wil beskryf – teologie wel oortuigende antwoorde bied op hierdie ineengeweepte hermeneutiese, teologiese en historiese vrae. Hy gebruik ’n verskeidenheid van voorbeelde van invloedryke en aktuele teologiese strominge en stemme op dié tydstip in die geskiedenis, te wete die 60er en 70er jare van die vorige eeu, waaronder byvoorbeeld die eksistensialisme, die personalisme en die nuwe hermeneutiek, maar hy is nie daarin geïnteresseerd om hulle afsonderlik te beoordeel nie, maar eerder om hulle as ’n soort gemeenskaplike beweging te begryp en te beskryf, in hulle gedeelde wortels en

8 Durand, “Heilsgeskiedenis en die dialektiek van syn en denke”, pp. 1-2.

9 Durand, “Heilsgeskiedenis en die dialektiek van syn en denke”, p. 2.

oortuigings.¹⁰ Trouens, sy vraag is nog meer fundamenteel, naamlik óf hulle werklik daarin slaag om te breek met dit waarteen hulle hulself (na sy oordeel tereg) verset, naamlik ’n sogenaamde *theologia perennis*, ’n ewige, tydlose teologie?

(H)et die moderne teologie met sy klem op die historisiteit van die Christelike geloof en op die verstaanssubjek van hierdie geloof, met sy afkeer van die metafisika en tydlose waarhede, met sy reaksie teen die openbaringsobjektivisme van ’n objektiverende teologiese denke, werklik struktureel gebreek met ’n *theologia perennis*?¹¹

Sy eie oordeel is dat die moderne teologie in talle dominante gestaltes en strome juis nié daarin slaag nie, en wel omdat hulle steeds vasgevang bly in dieselfde “basiese struktuur” as dié waarvan hulle probeer wegbreek. Ten einde dié kritiese punt te kan maak, is die hoofdeel van sy proefskrif ’n kreatiewe en insiggewende analise van Thomas Aquinas se denke, wat hy as “skoolvoorbeeld” van so ’n “tydlose teologie” beskryf. Teen die agtergrond van hierdie analise word duidelik dat die moderne teologie nie met hierdie denkstruktuur gebreek het, soos wat hulle wil nie, maar steeds slegs voortbeweeg in die verlengde daarvan.

Ons (moet) ’n opvallende parallel konstateer by sowel Thomas se objektiverende denke as by die subjektiverende denke van die nuwe teologie ten opsigte van die heilshistoriese karakter van die openbaring. By beide vind daar ’n bepaalde *onthistorisering* plaas, in die geval van laasgenoemde, sy beste bedoelings om die historisiteit van die openbaring te honoreer ten spyt ... Thomas (het) ’n bepaalde teologiese struktuur opgedring aan die Weste waaraan hy hom nie kan ontworstel nie. Selfs die skerpste reaksie teen Thomas en die tipe teologie waarvan hy in ’n sekere sin die verpersoonliking is, vind plaas *binne* die raamwerk wat deur hom neergelê is.¹²

Sy eie bedoelinge met die proefskrif is om ’n denkraamwerk te ontwikkel waarin wél met enige *theologia perennis* gebreek kan word, waarin die historisiteit van die openbaring wél gehonoreer word, waarin daar nié ten prooi geval word van die onthistorisering van die boodskap soos in die denkstruktuur van sowel Thomas as die hoofstroom moderne teologieë nie.

Die heilsgeskiedenis moet ernstig geneem word – in navolging van die bedoelinge van die Hervorming vóór die terugkeer van die skolastiek binne die Protestantisme – op maniere wat nié die heilsgeskiedenis herlei tot tydlose waarhede, beginsels en dogmas nie, nié tematiseer in metafisies-ontologiese terme nie, nié oorsit in intellektualisiese openbaringspositivisme nie, wat in reaksie daarteen egter ook nié die heilsgeskiedenis

10 Hulle lê – byvoorbeeld – almal veel klem op die historisiteit van kennis, geloof en verstaan; hulle fokus daarom almal op die verstaansmoontlikhede van die subjek; hulle is geïnteresseerd in vrae van waarheid en veral waarheidstoeëiening; hulle deel ’n grondige afkeer van enige openbaringsobjektivisme (insluitende dogmatisme); hulle deel ’n duidelike anti-metafisiese tendens; kortom, hulle worstel almal met die sogenaamde subjek-objek verhouding.

11 Durand, “Heilsgeskiedenis en die dialektiek van syn en denke”, p. 6.

12 Durand, “Heilsgeskiedenis en die dialektiek van syn en denke”, pp. 8-9.

redukeer tot die verstaansvoorwaardes van die subjek nie, nié ophef tot suiwer mistiek nie, nié tot a-historiese innerlikheid herlei nie.

Kort ná “Heilsgeskiedenis en die dialektiek van syn en denke” spel hy sommige van die implikasies van hierdie insigte en van hierdie denkraamwerk uit vir die Reformatoriese teologie en spesifiek vir die Gereformeerde denke in Suid-Afrika. Hy publiseer naamlik in die *NGTT*’n diepsinnige bespreking van die aard van die Skrifgesag en van maniere van Skrifberoep en Skrifgebruik in Gereformeerde kringe in Suid-Afrika, “Skrifgesag, heilsgeskiedenis en die subjek-objek-polariteit.”¹³

Hy ontleed die invloed van Nederlandse gedagterigtings en spesifiek van Kuyper in Suid-Afrika en sny tot op die been van destydse debatte. Alhoewel hy in die proefskrif self geen woord gerep het van hierdie verreikende kerklike en teologiese implikasies vir die plaaslike konteks nie, word die plofkrag van sy argument in die proefskrif hiermee opeens glashelder. Waarskynlik het die artikel – soos trouens ook die ongepubliseerde proefskrif – nie so wyd aandag getrek soos wat dit verdien het nie, maar vir enkele van ons wat destyds self nog teologiese studente was, was dit bevrydende leesstof. Hy het skielik die teoretiese apparaat en rasonale argumente verskaf wat ons nodig gehad het in ons eie worstelinge met maniere van die Bybel gebruik en van teologie beoefen in dominante kringe binne die wit Afrikaanssprekende Gereformeerde kerke.

Hy sluit aan by ’n opmerking van WD Jonker in sy huldiging vir GC Berkouwer, waarin Jonker sê dat Berkouwer se bekende korrelasie-beginsel “die enigste manier (is) waarop dit moontlik is om die reformatoriese skrifprinsipe in die teologie tot sy reg te laat kom, sonder om aan die een kant (soos die skolastiek) in ’n objektiverende en intellektualistiese, of aan die ander kant (soos die teologie sedert Schleiermacher dikwels gedoen het) in ’n subjektivistiese denke te verval.”¹⁴

Waarom dié uitspraak Durand sou boei, is glashelder. Jonker beweer immers dat Berkouwer se metode van korrelasie die enigste manier is waarop deurgestuur kan word tussen presies dieselfde twee versoekinge waartussen hyself ook wil deurstuur, te wete objektivistiese en intellektualistiese skolastiek (in sy geval, Thomas Aquinas) en subjektivistiese modernisme (in sy geval, talle kontemporêre ontwikkelinge). Volgens Jonker (en Berkouwer) is dit trouens die enigste manier waarop reg kan geskied aan die sleutelrol van die Skrif in die Reformasie, wat presies is wat Durand ook wil bereik.

13 JF Durand, “Skrifgesag, heilsgeskiedenis en subjek-objek-polariteit”, oorspronklik gepubliseer in die *NGTT* van September 1974 maar herdruk in *Teks binne konteks*, pp. 58-68. Ter wille van maklike naslaan verwys ek vervolgens na alle opstelle wat in hierdie versamelbundel herdruk is volgens hulle bladsye in hierdie herdruk en nie in die oorspronklike bronne nie.

14 Durand, “Skrifgesag, heilsgeskiedenis en subjek-objek-polariteit”, p. 58. Sy verwysing is na WD Jonker se opstel “Dogmatiek en Heilige Skrif” in J Bakker en ander (reds): *Septuagesimo Anno* (Kampen: Kok, 1973), pp. 86-111, wat net die vorige jaar verskyn het.

Volgens Durand is dit “die gewigtigste uitspraak van (Jonker se) hele leersame artikel” omdat Jonker hiermee aandag vra vir “die probleem van die reformatoriese teologie as sodanig.”¹⁵ Kortom, dís die vraag van die Reformasie, en daarom, wat bedoel Jonker (en Berkouwer) dus met hierdie metode van korrelasie?

In sy eie beantwoording van dié vraag gaan hy uitdruklik verder as Berkouwer en probeer hy sowel die probleem as die Reformatoriese weg nóg duideliker uit spel. Dis een en dieselfde “denkpatroon” wat telkens weer – in talle wisselende historiese gestaltes, Thomas, Skolastiek, Protestantse skolastiek, moderne teologieë sedert Descartes, moderne Protestantisme sedert Schleiermacher – die teologie op die valse spoor lei, ten spyte van alle pogings om die Skrifgesag wel getrou te bely.

Maar wat gebeur nou? Die handhawing van die Skrifgesag ten spyt, vind daar ’n *onthistorisering* (sy eie klem) van die Skrifboodskap plaas en kan die vraag gestel word of die inhoudelike gesag van die Skrif nie in gedrang kom nie.¹⁶

By Thomas is die rede vir hierdie onthistorisering duidelik – dit het die proefskrif immers reeds in indringende besonderhede aangetoon.

Waarom doen Thomas dit? Myns insiens hoef ons nie verder te soek nie as die feit dat daar vir die geskiedenis geen plek ingeruim kan word binne die aristoteliese wetenskapsbeskouing nie. Die aristoteliese wetenskap is gerig op die universalialia, m.a.w. dit wat konstant, noodsaaklik en ewig is. Die geskiedenis daarenteen het te doen met die nie-konstante en veranderlike. Daarom is dit vir die rede nie toeganklik nie. Die geskiedenis moet gevolglik “syn”, “dingfest” gemaak word om vir die rede toeganklik te kan wees. Die konkrete gestalte van die Bybelse heilsgeskiedenis word gesien as die *modus* waardeur die ewige *ordo ad deum* as genade-orde binne die horison van die tydelike en immanente verskyn.¹⁷

Hier kom die subjek se sleutelrol ter sprake. Die subjek as redewese herken die ewige orde wat agter die kontingente geskiedenis skuil. Tussen subjek en objek bestaan daar een of ander korrelasie – in hierdie geval Thomas se siening van rasionaliteit – wat herkenning en kennis moontlik maak, ondanks alle kontingensie en historisiteit. Die kennende subjek ontdek die ewige waarhede in en agter die geskiedenis, en transponeer wat verganklik lyk na wat ewig is. Dis dié denkpatroon wat hom telkens weer herhaal, oordeel Durand.

Met hierdie denkstrukturele uitgangspunt van Thomas het die teologie van later tye, veralgemenend gestel, nie gebreek nie ... In die subjek-objek-polariteit kry die subjek ’n kreatiewe oorwig en gepaardgaande met hierdie subjektivisme vind daar ’n onthistorisering van die Skrifopenbaring plaas.¹⁸

Hierdie denkpatroon word byvoorbeeld klassiek verwoord by Lessing. Hoe kan die gapende kloof, die “garstige breite Grabe” tussen die historisiteit van die openbaring

15 Durand, “Skrifgesag, heilsgeskiedenis en subjek-objek-polariteit”.

16 Durand, “Skrifgesag, heilsgeskiedenis en subjek-objek-polariteit”, p. 60.

17 Durand, “Skrifgesag, heilsgeskiedenis en subjek-objek-polariteit”, p. 61.

18 Durand, “Skrifgesag, heilsgeskiedenis en subjek-objek-polariteit”, p. 61.

van God destyds en ons eie hede tog ooit oorbrug word, sodat ons enige sekerheid kan hê oor wat destyds gebeur het, so ver en vreemd en onbekend? Nooit nie, op geen manier nie, dis nie moontlik nie, antwoord hy self. Toevallige historiese waarhede, aldus Lessing, kan nooit die absolute grond van sekerheid wees nie. Sekerheid kan slegs gebied word deur rasionele waarhede, wat (reeds) immanent aan ons eie bewussyn is. Sekerheid word dus eers moontlik as waarheidsaansprake van buite analoog is aan wat ons eie bewussynstruktuur (reeds) as waarheid in homself berg. Sodra ons insien dat die historiese waarheid beantwoord aan die rede-waarheid van ons eie bewussyn kan dit daarom losgemaak word van die geskiedenis wat dit aan ons betuig het, waarna ons die geskiedenis ook nie langer meer benodig nie. So is die Christelike geloof volgens Lessing nie waar omdat die apostels dit verkondig nie, maar hulle verkondig dit omdat dit waar is, en ons glo dit nie omdat ons hulle apostoliese gesag nie aanvaar nie, maar omdat ons hulle verkondiging herken as inderdaad tydloos en rationeel waar in ons eie insig en rede. Soos kinders het sommige mense tydelik allerlei historiese en kontingente hulpmiddels nodig om hulle die tydlose waarheid te help sien, maar as hulle eers mondig word, is die historiese gestalte van die lering verder onnodig, oorbodig, en bly slegs die “ewige, reine Evangelium der Vernunft” oor. In Lessing se beroemde formulering kán die gapende kloof dus nie oorbrug word nie, maar dit hoef ons geensins te pla nie, want die ewige redelike waarhede in ons is genoegsaam vir sekerheid, ons benodig nie die toevallighede van die geskiedenis nie.

“Hierdie struktuurmodel van Lessing” – sê Durand – “keer telkens terug in die teologie sedert die Aufklärung.” Telkens word teruggevra na die subjek se transendentale moontlikheid om die openbaring noëties te ontsluit. Dit maak nie saak hoe die subjek gedefinieer word nie. Telkens word die openbaring ondervra vanuit die subjek – en “*telkens kom hierdeur die heilshistoriese karakter van die openbaring in die gedrang.*”¹⁹

Die probleem van hierdie tipe denke – vervolg Durand – “is nie in die eerste plek die vraag na wat kon of nie kon gebeur het nie, maar die vraag of dit wat wel gebeur het in die verlede enige betekenis kan hê vir die hede”. Dit is die hart van die uitdaging waarvoor ’n werklik historiese bewussyn te staan kom. “Die vraag klem” – sê hy – “omdat wat gebeur het, ’n eenmalige en onherhaalbare karakter dra.” Al die oënskynlik uiteenlopende teologieë (van Thomas tot Schleiermacher) wat hierdie probleem probeer ontkom met behulp van die een of ander subjek-objek-polariteit gee uiteindelik aan die subjekpool (hoe uiteenlopend dié ook al gesien mag word, vanaf rede tot afhanklikheid tot ervaring tot behoeftes tot sedelikheid tot eksistensiale) die prioriteit, met die onvermydelike gevolg dat die historiese slegs op die een of ander

19 Durand, “Skrifgesag, heilsgeskiedenis en subjek-objek-polariteit”, p. 62.

wyse dit wat ons reeds is of weet of het of ervaar of ken, illustreer of bevestig. Kortom, dit lei “telkens tot ’n onthistorisering van die openbaring.”²⁰

Maar is daar inderdaad ’n ander weg? Hierin lê die erns van die historiese vraag. “(W)at beteken dit konkreet om in die teologiese besinning erns te maak met die heilshistoriese karakter van die openbaring?”²¹

Hy is oortuig dat ’n ander weg nie so eenvoudig is nie en illustreer dit aan die hand van twee groot pogings om inderdaad reg te laat geskied, enersyds aan die heilsgeskiedenis, in die geval van die omvangryke Katolieke dogmatiek uit die skool van Karl Rahner, *Mysterium Salutis*, en andersyds aan die Skrif as enigste kennisbeginsel (*principium cognoscendi*) van die teologie, in die geval van Abraham Kuyper, in sy *Encyclopaedie der Heilige Godgeleerdheid*.²²

Gegee sy eie intellektuele agtergrond en historiese konteks is hierdie kritiek op Kuyper die werklike dinamiet in Durand se eie denkontwikkeling en in sy historiese bewussyn. “Vind ons nie hier by Kuyper ’n nawerking van die aristotetiese renaissance van die ortodoksie, wat met sy visie op die aard van die teologie wegbeweeg het van die diepste intensie van die reformatoriese scriptura nie?”²³

Daarmee is hy terug by die eintlike motivering agter sy eie soeke. Wat is die “diepste intensie van die reformatoriese scriptura”? Waar en hoe het dit skeef geloop in die teologiese ontwikkeling binne die Gereformeerde tradisie tot waar hy self opgevoed sou word in ewige waarhede – en kan dit herstel word? “Wat het die Reformasie bedoel met sy belydenis van die Skrifgesag en watter verskuiwing het daar gekom in die ortodoksie?”²⁴

Die Reformasie – antwoord hy self – het geen behoefte gehad om enige soort kontinuum vanuit die subjek te poneer ten einde die Lessing-kloof tussen die tyd van die openbaring en ons konkrete hede te oorbrug nie. Volgens hulle vind die oorbrugging plaas in die Woord van God wat as Skrifwoord tot die hoorders kom, in die hede. Vir hulle is die Skrif “die onfeilbare en gesagvolle spreke van God in die hede in sy gerigtheid op en appél vanuit God se konkrete heilshandeling in Christus.”²⁵

Feitlik elke woord in hierdie formulering is vir Durand van groot belang, anders word die Reformasie se bedoelinge, én sy eie, dalk misverstaan. Dit gaan om God wat spreek, dit gebeur in die hede, en dit hang saam met die gerigtheid van die Skrif op *Christus*, wat beteken die konkrete heilshistoriese *handelinge* van God in Christus.

20 Durand, “Skrifgesag, heilsgeskiedenis en subjek-objek-polariteit”, p. 62.

21 Durand, “Skrifgesag, heilsgeskiedenis en subjek-objek-polariteit”, p. 62.

22 Durand, “Skrifgesag, heilsgeskiedenis en subjek-objek-polariteit”, pp. 62-63.

23 Durand, “Skrifgesag, heilsgeskiedenis en subjek-objek-polariteit”, pp. 63-64.

24 Durand, “Skrifgesag, heilsgeskiedenis en subjek-objek-polariteit”, p. 64.

25 Durand, “Skrifgesag, heilsgeskiedenis en subjek-objek-polariteit”, p. 64.

Hy spel hierdie bedoelinge verder uit. Die gesag van die Skrif staan gevolglik nie los van sy inhoud nie, sy gesag is juis met sy inhoud gegee.²⁶ Daarom is die *sola Scriptura* nie ’n afsonderlike beginsel, los van die *sola gratia* en die *solus Christus* nie. Binne só ’n Skrifbeskouing is daar geen ruimte vir ’n selfstandige subjek wat betragkend, objektiverend teenoor die Skrifopenbaring staan nie, maar “(h)ier is slegs ruimte vir ’n luisterende subjek wat in die geloof buig en in beslag geneem word deur die Woordopenbaring”. Daar is geen korrelasie moontlik “waarin die subjek objektiverend ’n denkgreep op die Skrif kry nie, maar (slegs) ’n korrelasie wat deur die openbaring opgeroep word en waardeur die openbaring sy greep op die gelowige subjek kry”, “gegee in hierdie werking van die Openbaringswoord, as ’n werking van die Gees deur die Woord”.²⁷ Hierdie greep en hierdie werking hang altyd saam met die skopus van die Skrif, “met die gerigtheid op en appél vanuit God se konkrete heilshandeling in Christus”.

Vir Durand self is die weg daarom duidelik. Die boodskap van die Skrif kom deur die werking van die Gees as lewende Woord wat in die geloof gehóór word.

(S)legs vanuit die belydenis van die inhoudelike gesag van die Skrif (kan) die heilshistorisiteit van God se openbaring ten volle gehandhaaf word. Hier is nie ruimte vir ’n subjek wat, vanuit ’n bepaalde verstaan van hulself, die brug moet slaan na die tyd van die openbaring nie. In die gesagvolle duiding van die heilsgeskiedenis deur die Heilige Gees in die Skrifwoord, oorbrug hierdie Woord die eeue en kom die perfectum van God se heilshandeling op ons af, op so ’n wyse dat dit ’n praesens word, sonder dat dit daardeur sy perfectum-karakter verloor. Deur die werking van Gods Gees in die hoor van die evangelie word die openbaringsgeskiedenis geaktualiseer op so ’n wyse dat dit selfweer geskiedenis maak. Die Openbaringswoord roep die geloof op en maak só geskiedenis, die geskiedenis van God se omgang met die mens.²⁸

Dit is presies in hierdie sleuteloortuiging van die Reformasie aangaande die boodskap dat verskuiwings tydens die Protestantse Ortodoksie sou plaasvind – wat die teologie as kennis van God self sou ondermyn en boonop byvoorbeeld in Suid-Afrika (maar uiteraard ook elders) tot rampspoedige konsekwensies vir die kerklike en openbare lewe sou lei.²⁹

26 Destyds was dit ’n punt van intense debat in Suid-Afrikaanse Gereformeerde kringe, onder andere ook omdat dit soveel klaarblyklike implikasies gehad het vir die Skrifgebruik in die regverdiging van apartheid.

27 Durand, “Skrifgesag, heilsgeskiedenis en subjek-objek-polariteit”, p. 64.

28 Durand, “Skrifgesag, heilsgeskiedenis en subjek-objek-polariteit”, pp. 67-68.

29 Die verskuiwing vind plaas in die visie op die aard van die Skrif en sy gesag, argumenteer Durand. In ’n poging om weer aan die reformatoriese insigte ’n wetenskaplike vormgewing te gee vind ’n soort aristoteliese renaissance plaas binne reformatoriese geleedere. ’n Sterk metafisiese interesse lei tot ’n soeke na konstante, tydlose vorm in ’n proses van teoretiese abstraksie. Die klem val op die definiërende ratio van die kennende subjek wat die kennisobjek objektiveer en in hanteerbare begrippe omlin. Die gesag van die Skrif word nou formeel (nog afgesien van enige inhoud, skopus of gerigtheid) veilig gestel in (die *a priori* van) ’n bonatuurlike orde. Die Skrif word toenemend

Die diepsinnige argument van hierdie opstel sou onmiddellik dramatiese praktiese toepassings vind.

Feitlik net ná die verskyning van hierdie artikel vind die NG Kerk se Algemene Sinode in Kaapstad plaas, waar die sogenaamde Landman-verslag dien en ná enkele verreikende besluite en wysigings in die vergadering self – wat Durand persoonlik óók sou raak³⁰ – gefinaliseer word as die bekende *Ras, volk, nasie en volkereverhoudinge in die lig van die Skrif*.³¹ Groot ontsteltenis heers wyd in ander kerklike kringe, veral ekumeniese geleedere, en talle reaksies volg, maar Durand se eie teologiese analise oor die problematiese hermeneutiek wat ágter die verslag skuilgaan en sulke argumente hoegenaamd móóntlik maak, selfs ondanks talle mense se goeie persoonlike bedoelinge, bly waarskynlik steeds die mees indringende en verhelderende respons van almal – en wéér eens berus dit van begin tot einde op sy heilshistoriese bewussyn en die teologiese raamwerk van sy proefskrif.³²

Die “deursnee-teologie in die wit Afrikaanssprekende kerke in Suid-Afrika” met betrekking tot rasse-aangeleenthede – sê hy – verskil wel hemelsbreed van die siening van die res van die Gereformeerde wêreld, maar dit is te oppervlakkig om te dink dat dit gewyt kan word aan “blote vooroordele en ’n onwilligheid om na die Skrif te luister”. Wie met sulke beskuldigings sou werk, peil nie werklik die dieper teologiese aard van die probleem nie. Dit gaan naamlik eerder om “’n wyse van teologiseer” wat dit vir hierdie deursnee-teologie moontlik maak om “allerlei latente vooroordele en motiewe te akkommodeer” – sonder om self ook bewus te wees daarvan dat hulle dit doen. Hulle meen opreg dat hulle na die Skrif luister en die Skrifgesag eerbiedig, en as gevolg van hulle “wyse van teologiseer” sien hulle nie raak dat hulle dit nié doen nie. “Sonder hierdie teologiese moontlikheid sou dit baie moeiliker vir hulle gewees het om hulle vooroordele, nie soseer vir ander nie, maar vir hulleself weg te steek.”³³

Wat gebeur in die dokument van die Sinode? Die verslag verduidelik self dat die NGK “die situasie in Suid-Afrika en die boodskap van die Woord van God

gesien as onfeilbare bron van bonatuurlike waarhede wat tydlose *principia* vir die teoloog bied. Sien Durand, “Skrifgesag, heilsgeskiedenis en subjek-objek-polariteit”, pp. 64-65.

30 Durand was genooi om ’n deel van die oorspronklike verslag by te dra, oor die situasie van swart mense in die stede en veral oor trekarbeid. Dit is opgeneem in die oorspronklike stuk en hy was gereed om dit in die Sinode te hanteer, maar deur baie vaardige optrede in die vergadering kon lede wat dit nie bespreek wou hê nie – omdat dit klaarblyklik tot kritiek op die beleid aanleiding kon gee – daarin slaag om te verhinder dat dit hoegenaamd ter sprake kom. In die besluite en in die gepubliseerde dokument het dit dus nie eens verskyn nie; sien ook sy opmerkings in “Teks binne konteks”, p. 196.

31 *Ras, volk, nasie en volkereverhoudinge in die lig van die Skrif* (Kaapstad: NGKerk, 1974).

32 J.J.F. Durand, “Bible and race: The problem of hermeneutics”, oorspronklik gepubliseer in die *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* (September 1978), maar in Afrikaans herdruk as “Die hermeneutiek van ’n rasseteologie” in *Teks binne konteks*, pp. 75-87.

33 Durand, “Die hermeneutiek van ’n rasseteologie”, p. 75.

daaroor” anders sien as ander Gereformeerde kerke. Maar waarom dan? Omdat hulle dié situasie vanuit ’n ander hoek beoordeel – “(e)n hierdie hoek word in ’n groot mate deur historiese faktore bepaal”. Hoe so? “In die historiese ervaring van die Afrikaanssprekende gemeenskap in Suid-Afrika het die idee van volksidentiteit ’n sentrale en toonaangewende waarde gekry” en “dit is hierdie historiese ervaring wat ’n baie duidelike rol speel in die Afrikaner kerke se evaluering van die Suid-Afrikaanse situasie en hulle teologiese standpunt daaromtrent.”³⁴

Tot hiertoe is dit egter nog alles algemene kennis, en ook selfkennis, wat die NGK betref. Die hermeneutiese vraag wat hierdeur opgeroep word, is egter van beslissende belang, naamlik: “(W)aarom speel hierdie historiese ervaring so ’n sterk rol in ’n kerk wat tog bely dat die Heilige Skrif die hoogste gesag en norm is vir die teologiese denke en nie die geskiedenis nie?” Effens anders gestel, word dit ’n vraag van kritiese belang vir die Gereformeerde tradisie en geloof, want “Kan met ander woorde die luisterende omgang met die Skrif en die kritiek van die Woord van God nie histories-gegroeide gedagteforme deurbreek nie?”³⁵

Die eenvoudigste antwoord – sê Durand – sou wees dat daar dalk geen werklike luisterende omgang met die Skrif plaasvind nie, maar so ’n reaksie sou totaal misplaas en misleidend wees. Inderdaad vind daar in die NGK ’n “intense worsteling met die Skrif” plaas. Die waarheid is veeleer “dat die NG Kerk in sy omgang met die Skrif die onwrikbare oortuiging het dat die Skrif ruimte bied vir sy offisiële standpunt en inderdaad sy histories-gegroeide gedagteforme ten opsigte van die Suid-Afrikaanse situasie sanksioneer.” Op die vraag hoe dít dan moontlik is, antwoord Durand met die insigte van sy dissertasie. Dis “die teologiese metode”, dis “die wyse van Skrifhantering” wat dit vir die NGK moontlik maak om teenoor alle kritiek vol te hou dat hulle standpunt Skriftuurlik is.³⁶

Hoe gebeur dit? Alhoewel die Sinode se verslag uitdruklik erken dat die Bybel nie ’n wetenskaplike handboek is nie, beweer dit tog ook dat die Skrif wel “fundamentele gegewens en beginsels (bied) wat vir alle lewensterreine normatiewe betekenis het, ook vir rasse- en volkereverhoudinge”. Vir Durand is dit “’n merkwaardige stellingname” – een waarmee gegewens in die Bybel losgemaak word van die inhoudelike en heilshistoriese samehange van die Bybel se boodskap self. Die gegewens van die Bybel word losgemaak van Christus en van God se heilshandeling, waarvan die Bybel getuig, en as tydllose “beginsels” hanteer, beginsels wat die lesende subjekte egter reeds met hulleself saambring na die Bybel toe, vanuit hulle eie historiese ervaringe.

Kortom, die NGK herken die feit van “volkereverskeidenheid” in die Bybelse gegewens, maar maak daarvan ’n “beginsel”, buite verband met die Bybelse boodskap.

34 Durand, “Die hermeneutiek van ’n rasseteologie”, p. 76.

35 Durand, “Die hermeneutiek van ’n rasseteologie”, pp. 76-77.

36 Durand, “Die hermeneutiek van ’n rasseteologie”, p. 77.

“Volkereverskeidenheid word verhef tot ’n Bybelse *beginsel* (sy beklemtoning) wat ook vir vandag gehanteer kan word, sonder om die heilshistoriese verbande daarvan in ag te neem.” Dit blyk nog selfs vreemder te wees “as ons per kontras let op ’n ander Bybelse gedagte wat in ’n bepaalde sin die teenpool is van volkereverskeidenheid, naamlik die eenheid en solidariteit van die menslike geslag. Hierdie *gedagte* (sy eie klem) funksioneer in die Skrif onteenseglik geheel en al binne ’n heilshistoriese raamwerk,”³⁷ maar dit pas nie die historiese ervaring van die lesende subjekte nie en daarom word dit geïgnoreer.

In besonderhede demonstreer Durand dan in die res van die bydrae hoe hierdie “beginsels” – wat hy as ’n rasse-teologie beskryf – deurlopend in die verslag aanwesig is en telkens die deurslag gee op belangrike momente in die argument.³⁸ Van groter belang as wat gesê word, is egter die vraag hoe dit moontlik is. “(V)anwaar kom hierdie hermeneutiese idee?” Die antwoord is nou reeds bekend. Agter die rasse-teologie wat apartheid in kerk en samelewing vanuit die Skrif regverdig, skuil “’n algemeen-aanvaarde hermeneutiese metode wat binne die gereformeerde wêreld tot baie onlangs aan die orde van die dag was en wat veral via Nederland ’n teologies-metodologiese deel van die Afrikaanssprekende teologie van Suid-Afrika geword het.”³⁹ Om met hierdie Gereformeerde Ortodoksie te breek, is die werklike en moeilike uitdaging.

Belangriker as die pluriformiteitsgedagte is die hermeneutiek wat ten grondslag daarvan lê ... Dit het tyd geword dat die gesprek sal verskuif na ’n meer fundamentele vlak: wat is die aard en omvang van die Skrifgesag en op welke wyse (sy eie nadruk) wil die Skrif ’n lig op ons pad wees?⁴⁰

Oorsprong? – “Die lewende God”

Ten diepste is die hermeneutiese vraag vir Durand ’n teologiese vraag. Agter die vraag na die wyse waarop die Skrif ’n lig op ons pad is, skuil die dieper vraag na hoe God met ons handel en praat, ten diepste, die vraag na wie en hoe God is? Oor dekades heen word Durand deur dié mees teologiese van vroeë geboei.

In April 1974, pas ná die voltooiing van “Heilsgeskiedenis en die dialektiek van syn en denke” en pas vóór *Ras, volk, nasie* hou Durand sy intreerede as professor in Dogmatiek aan die Universiteit van Wes-Kaapland. Hy verkies doelbewus om tydens dié geleentheid tot openbare verantwoording te praat oor *Kruisteologie en die lydende God*.⁴¹

37 Durand, “Die hermeneutiek van ’n rasseteologie”, p. 79.

38 Durand, “Die hermeneutiek van ’n rasseteologie”, pp. 79-84.

39 Durand, “Die hermeneutiek van ’n rasseteologie”, p. 84.

40 Durand, “Die hermeneutiek van ’n rasseteologie”, p. 87.

41 JFF Durand, *Kruisteologie en die lydende God* (Bellville: UWK, 1974).

In moderne teologie word die Godsleer – sê hy – gekenmerk deur ’n verbreide reaksie teen alle Platoniese en neo-Platoniese metafisika. God word nie langer gesien as die onveranderlike en apatiese, ongevoelige Syn-in-sigself nie, maar veeleer as “die lewende God wat geskiedenis maak en op weg is met die mens” – en selfs ly ter wille van mense. Hierdie bevraagtekening van God se *impassibilitas* of nie-lydensvatbaarheid is egter nie ’n nuwe problematiek nie, maar ’n saak “wat die kerk vergesel het in sy lang geskiedenis van dogma-ontwikkeling”.⁴²

In detail volg hy dié historiese ontwikkeling – by die teopaschitiese stryd in die vroeë kerk, by Martin Luther, by Karl Barth, en veral by Jürgen Moltmann.⁴³ Ná simpatieke analise van kontemporêre teopaschitiese standpunte is sy beoordeling skerp, omdat die historiese karakter van die heil na sy oordeel nie genoegsaam gehandhaaf word nie. “(O)ns het aan die kruis nie te doen met ’n binne-goddelike drama nie, maar met die krisispunt van die geskiedenis waarin God werklik die *mens* in Jesus Christus ontmoet in toorn en genade”.⁴⁴ Vanuit dié oortuiging argumenteer hy – téénoor populêre hedendaagse interpretasies – dat dit ook by Konstantinopel in 533 n.C. “nie alleen gegaan het om die handhawing van die *impassibilitas Dei* nie, maar juis ook om die handhawing van die menslike natuur van Christus in sy soteriologiese onontbeerlikheid”,⁴⁵ om “’n soteriologiese besorgdheid”.⁴⁶

As Durand dus die teopaschitisme afwys, is dit nie om ’n apatiese God te leer nie, maar presies die teenoorgestelde, om die historiese karakter van die kruis as Gods heilshandeling werklik ernstig te kan neem, om die werklike lyding van Jesus Christus in sy menslike vlees ernstig te neem, om die medelydende ontferming van die God wat met mense in die geskiedenis op weg is ernstig te neem, om God as die lewende God ernstig te neem.

Ons afwysing van ’n theopaschitiese denke waarin God self metterdaad aan die kruis gely het sonder die uitdruklike belydenis van die menslike vlees as die lydensmedium, beteken nie die aanvaarding van ’n apatiese God nie. Dit is nie ’n wysgerige keuse vir ’n God wat aan lyding en smart onthewe is nie. Ons weier om hierdie keuse aan ons te laat opdring, juis vanuit die oorfloedige getuienis van die Skrif self dat God, in die woorde van Pascal, waarlik nie die God van die filosowe is nie, maar *die lewende God van Abraham, Isak en Jakob*. Die Bybel laat ons nie ’n onbewoë God ken nie, maar juis dié God wat in die benoudhede van sy volk, self *benoud* is (Jes. 63:9); wie se ingewande oor Efraim in *beroering* kan kom (Jer. 31:20); wie Hom waarlik *bekommer* oor die geslag van Abraham (Hebr. 2:16). Uit sy openbaring leer ons Hom ken as die God wat liefhet en dáárom ook weet wat gekrenkte liefde is. Hiervan is die boek Hosea tot oorloeps toe vol. Wie hierdie God maak tot ’n onbewoë Regter wat alleen maar eis, vergryp sig aan die

42 Durand, *Kruiseologie en die lydende God*, p. 1.

43 Durand, *Kruiseologie en die lydende God*, pp. 1-18.

44 Durand, *Kruiseologie en die lydende God*, p. 18.

45 Durand, *Kruiseologie en die lydende God*, p. 19.

46 Durand, *Kruiseologie en die lydende God*, p. 20.

wonder van sy ontferming waarin Hy sy eie Seun nie gespaar het nie maar Hom oorgegee het (Rom. 8:32) ter wille van ’n wêreld wat na Hom nie gevra het nie.

In sy eie Godsleer, wat twee jaar later verskyn as eerste band in die nuwe reeks *Wegwysers in die dogmatiek* wat hy saam met WD Jonker sou uitgee, werk hy dié gedagte verder uit. Hy kies as titel juis *Die lewende God*. Dié oortuiging weerklink soos ’n refrein deur die hele werk.⁴⁷

As hy die Godsleer van die Patristiek en Middeleeue behandel, word duidelik hoe die belydenis van Christus as ware God en die belydenis van die Drie-eenheid onversoenbaar was met die transendent-deïstiese inslag van die Grieks-filosofiese opvattinge. Die onveranderlike en apatiese beeld van God het die moontlikheid en werklikheid van God se openbaring in die geskiedenis op die spel geplaas. Reeds by Augustinus word die heilsekonomiese benadering egter alweer basies versaak ter wille van “spekulatiewe voortreflikheid” en by Thomas Aquinas bereik “die abstrakte kilheid van die Godsleer in die middeleeuse skolastiek” ’n hoogtepunt in ’n teologie van “God in sigself” wat tot met die Reformasie maatgewend sou wees in die Westerse wêreld.⁴⁸

As hy die Godsleer van die Reformasie behandel, dan word dit beskryf as “protes teen ’n teologie van ‘God in sigself’”.⁴⁹

Die Reformasie was in sy wese ’n protes teen die synsmetafisika van die middeleeue, ’n protes teen die mens se eimagtige poging om vanuit die bekende werklikheid op te klim na God en so te spekuleer oor sy wese in sigself. Vir die Reformatore het hierdie teologiese spekulاسie niks minder as Gods openbaring op die spel geplaas nie: teenoor God se wese in sigself, die “eintlike” God, staan die *oneintlikheid* van die openbaring. In plaas van die *Deus apud se* wil hulle gevolglik die *Deus erga nos* in die teologie tot gelding bring.⁵⁰

By Luther sou die *theologia crucis* daarom teenoor die *theologia gloriae* van die spekulatiewe skolastiek staan.⁵¹ By Calvin word die Woord die spieël waarin die geloof deur die werking van Gods Gees die genadige aangesig van God die Vader aanskou in Christus Jesus, die liefde van God jeens ons in sy openbaring.⁵² Die Reformatoriese Triniteitsleer word daarom streng aan God se openbaringshandelinge gehou, enige skeiding tussen wese en openbaring word afgewys, die wesenstriniteit

47 JJF Durand, *Die lewende God* (Pretoria: NGKB, 1976; tweede hersiene uitgawe in 1985. Die tweede druk is nogal aansienlik verander na aanleiding van die ervaring wat in doseer-situasies met die *Wegwysers* gemaak is, maar die bladsyverwysings hier is steeds na die oorspronklike 1976-uitgawe).

48 Durand, *Die lewende God*, pp. 12-24.

49 Durand, *Die lewende God*, p. 30.

50 Durand, *Die lewende God*, p. 25.

51 Durand, *Die lewende God*, pp. 25-26.

52 Durand, *Die lewende God*, pp. 26-27.

kan slegs vanuit die openbaringstriniteit benader word, die oriënteringspunt is God se openbaringshandelinge.⁵³

As hy die periode van die Ortodoksie en daarna behandel, tot by die neo-Protestantisme en Schleiermacher, erken hy dat 'n mens hier opnuut te make kry met “wysgerige abstraksies”. Die Skrifberoep het skaars nog 'n ander funksie as om reeds verworwe insigte gesagvol te bevestig. Die Godsleer word “abstrak en koud” en feitlik sonder enige relasie met die Christologie en die soteriologie, met ander woorde met die heilsgeskiedenis. Die enigste uitsondering is Herman Bavinck. “In Bavinck se triniteitsleer is genoemde skolastieke invloede opmerklik afwesig ... Die Triniteit laat ons God ken as die *waaragtig lewende* en met hierdie belydenis staan en val die ganse Christendom, aldus Bavinck.”⁵⁴

As hy daarna op sogenaamde “nuwe weë in die Godsleer” ingaan en telkens “riglyne” bied, bly hierdie oortuigings aangaande God as Lewende telkens die sleutel – ongeag of dit gaan om transendensie en immanensie,⁵⁵ om die personaliteit van God,⁵⁶ om die wese en hoedanighede van God,⁵⁷ om die lydende God,⁵⁸ om die ateïsme,⁵⁹ of om die drie-enige God.⁶⁰ Dis egter veral in die bespreking van God as drie-enig dat dit nog

53 Durand, *Die lewende God*, pp. 28-30.

54 Durand, *Die lewende God*, pp. 32-37.

55 Durand, *Die lewende God*, pp. 40-49. “Teenoor die abstrakte Godsleer van die hellenisme waarin God gesien word as die in-sigself-rustende Syn, ontmoet ons God op feitlik elke bladsy van die Bybel as die *lewende* en die handelende”, p. 46.

56 Durand, *Die lewende God*, pp. 50-62. “Die God van die Skrifte het werklik 'n Naam. Hy is nie 'n idee en daarmee ten slotte naamloos nie ... Deur van God as 'n Persoon te praat, probeer die teologie uitdrukking gee aan die essensiële en onvervangbare moment in die evangelieboodskap dat God en mens in 'n *lewende* verhouding staan waarin God die mens as mens aanspreek, hulle aanspreek en hulle opneem in sy gemeenskap”, pp. 59-60.

57 Durand, *Die lewende God*, pp. 78-91. “In die hoedanighede van God gaan dit nie om 'n wat-vraag na God nie, maar om 'n hoe-vraag. Nie: wat is God? nie, maar: *hoe* is God? In die selfopenbaring van God word nie die wat van die syn van God geopenbaar nie, maar sy hoedanigheid teenoor ons. Dit gaan dus basies om 'n verhoudingsvraag ... God is steeds méér as sy geopenbaarde hoedanighede, maar Hy is nie anders nie. In die openbaring gaan dit immers om sy waaragtige selfopenbaring”, p. 86.

58 Durand, *Die lewende God*, pp. 92-101.

59 Durand, *Die lewende God*, pp. 102-118. “Die ateïsme kan nie ontsenu word met die sogenaamde Godsbewyse nie ... 'n 'Bewese' God is nie die *lewende* God, die Vader wat Hom in Jesus Christus geopenbaar het nie”, p. 116.

60 Durand, *Die lewende God*, pp. 63-77. “Die wydverbreide mening dat ons in die triniteitsleer met spekulاسie te doen het, is daarom nie korrek nie. Inderdaad kan die triniteitsleer die dogmatiek in sy besinning oor God van spekulاسie bewaar, omdat ons daarin te doen het met die God wat Hom in Christus geopenbaar het ... (Dit is) die fundamentele leerstuk van die kerk waarin die eenheid van God en sy openbaring gehandhaaf word ... Ten slotte wil dit nie meer sê nie as dat God in die eintlikheid van sy Godwees van ewigheid af en daarom ook in sy openbaring, *drievuldig as die Een, Enige leef, handel en regeer*”, pp. 71-72, 76.

eens glashelder blyk waarom God as die Lewende bely word wat volgens die Woord in die geskiedenis handel en so met die mens op weg is.

Nie lank hierna nie, word Durand in 1979 genooi om ’n hoofvoordrag te hou tydens ’n konferensie by Unisa oor probleme met die duiding van die geskiedenis. Die konferensie sou om ander redes die koerantopskrifte haal, maar van die meer blywende belang was sekerlik geleë in sy voordrag oor “God in history – An unresolved problem.”⁶¹

Sy eerste paragrawe herhaal nou reeds bekende gedagtes. Teologiese denke in die 20^{ste} eeu word gekenmerk deur die herontdekking van die idee van die geskiedenis in God se openbaringsdade. Die hart van die Bybelse geloof is geleë in die oortuiging dat God Godself bekend maak in sekere beslissende oomblikke van die geskiedenis. Die God wat Israel ontmoet – in radikaal nuwe onderskeid van omliggende kulturele en godsdienstige siening van ’n sikliese en geslote lewe waarin niks nuuts regtig gebeur nie – is in die mees ware sin van die woord die God van die geskiedenis. Ook die Nuwe Testament getuig dat God op ’n beslissende wyse binne ’n bepaalde historiese opset met hierdie wêreld gehandel het deur die lewe, dood en opstanding van Jesus Christus. Vanuit dié Bybelse perspektief word die toekoms die kroon van alle geskiedenis, die voltooiing van die geskiedenis, die konsummasie van alles by die uiteindelijke en heerlike openbaring van hierdie Jesus en van ’n wêreld wat nuutgemaak is. God se nuutskepende en reddende werk is dus nog nie ten einde nie. Nuwe ontwikkelinge word nog verwag en ons is deel van ’n groot historiese proses waarin ons onafgebroke vorentoe kyk, in ’n oop toekoms glo, die onverwagte verwag en die nuwe waag.⁶²

Die Bybelse taal wat hierdie oortuigings bevestig en onderstreep – sê Durand – is die belydenis dat God ’n lewende God is wat in vryheid handel. Alhoewel God getrou bly aan Gods eie beloftes, is God nooit die slaaf van enige plan of bloudruk waarvolgens die geskiedenis bloot afwentel nie.

God se handeling is vry, nuut, skeppend en dikwels onverwags. God se handeling in die geskiedenis is *kontingent* (sy eie klem) in die sin dat hulle formalisering en programmering weerstaan.⁶³

Dan begin hy hierdie gedagtes te problematiseer. Hierdie opmerkings handel – oënskyklik – immers net oor die sogenaamde heilsgeskiedenis, maar wat van die

61 In ’n skandalige optrede het lede van die Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging onder leiding van Eugène Terre’blanche ’n ander spreker, die bekende historikus Floors van Jaarsveld, op die verhoog oorval en met teer en vere besmeer omdat hulle nie tevrede was met sy duiding van die gebeure by Bloedrivier nie. Die verrigtinge is gepubliseer as *The meaning of history*, geredigeer deur A König & H Keane (Pretoria: Unisa, 1979), ook met Durand se bydrae. Hier word aangehaal uit ’n Afrikaanse weergawe, “Die vinger van God in die geskiedenis – ’n Onopgeloste probleem” in JFF Durand, *Teks binne konteks*, pp. 91-99.

62 Durand, “Die vinger van God in die geskiedenis – ’n Onopgeloste probleem”, pp. 91-92.

63 Durand, “Die vinger van God in die geskiedenis – ’n Onopgeloste probleem”, p. 92.

sogenaamde profane geskiedenis, en wat is die verhouding tussen dié twee? Daar is slegs één geskiedenis, antwoord hy, onverdeelbaar en universeel. Die idee van universaliteit is juis inherent deel van die Bybelse konsep van die geskiedenis. Dis juis weselik deel van die aanspraak, dis juis die punt. Die skepping is een, die wêreld is een, die mensheid is een, die geskiedenis is een, ook die geskiedenis ná die opstanding van Jesus Christus.⁶⁴

Dat die totale geskiedenis in 'n misterieuvolle wyse geskryf word deur die vinger van God, hetsy deur middel van die mens en in bondgenootskap met die mens, hetsy ten spyte van die mens, is 'n voorveronderstelling van die geloof wat noodwendig volg vir diegene wat Gods openbaring aanvaar soos dit vir ons in die Bybel oorgelewer en opgeteken is.⁶⁵

Presies dié voorveronderstelling – gaan hy voort – “skep egter meer probleme as wat dit oplos met betrekking tot die *interpretasie* (sy klem) van die geskiedenis”. Selfs al is die geskiedenis 'n storie geskryf deur die vinger van God, dan bly dit vir ons ondeursigtig en dubbelsinnig, trouens, nés die geskiedenis van God waarvan in die Bybel vertel word, indien dit nie vir ons gedui word nie. Openbaring beteken juis dat God sy anonimiteit aflê en deur die Woord vir ons die dubbelsinnige en ondeursigtige geskiedenis van die heilsgebeure dui, maar vir die res van ons een, universele geskiedenis beskik ons nie oor dié duiding nie. Oomblikke en ontwikkelinge wat vir óns van groot belang mag lyk, is dalk glad nie van groot belang in God se verhaal nie.⁶⁶

Die mees algemene manier om uit historiese feite gevolgtrekkings te maak wat méér as histories is, is die neiging om katastrofes of groot rampe in verband te bring met Gods oordele en straf, maar presies dié tipe interpretasie van die geskiedenis is juis nié tipies van die Hebreuse godsdiens nie, inteendeel, dis eerder die uitstaande karaktertrek van die ou heidense teologie en in die Heilige Skrif word sulke naïewe verklarings van gebeurtenisse eksplisiet verwerp.⁶⁷

Nie God se regering oor die geskiedenis word in twyfel getrek nie, maar wel enige duiding van hierdie gebeure asof die vinger van God daarin vir ons herkenbaar sou wees.

Om te bely dat die geskiedenis 'n storie is wat deur die vinger van God geskryf word, is een ding; dit is 'n totaal ander saak om sekere dele van die storie uit te lig, hulle te identifiseer, te interpreter en 'n spesifiek Goddelike betekenis daaraan toe te skryf.

Wat is die gevolg hiervan?, vra Durand. Ons skep ons eie patroon “om die fragmente te akkommodeer” wat ons graag wil interpreter. Dit geld van die populêre interpretasie van die Slag van Bloedrivier onder Afrikaners, maar presies dieselfde word ook gedoen deur

64 Durand, “Die vinger van God in die geskiedenis – 'n Onopgeloste probleem”, pp. 92-93.

65 Durand, “Die vinger van God in die geskiedenis – 'n Onopgeloste probleem”, p. 93.

66 Durand, “Die vinger van God in die geskiedenis – 'n Onopgeloste probleem”, p. 93.

67 Durand, “Die vinger van God in die geskiedenis – 'n Onopgeloste probleem”, pp. 93-94.

die meeste Westerse volke, sê hy. Op een of ander wyse word gesoek na ’n “metahistoriese agtergrond” of ’n “metahistoriese patroon” wat op die kontingente geskiedenis afgedruk word, ten einde ons te help om een of ander sin daarvan te maak, op sódanige wyse “dat ons die geskiedenis moet laat stol.”⁶⁸

Vir die Westerse Christendom was dié neiging tipies, sê Durand, en hy vertel weer eens die verhaal hoe die geskiedenis “geontologiseer” is as ewige Goddelike orde.⁶⁹ Met die Verligting kom daar ’n groot verandering, maar dis ook meer kompleks as wat dit met die eerste blik mag blyk. Die werklikheid word nou al meer ervaar as iets dinamies, oop en onafgehandel. Die geskiedenis is gevolglik nie meer langer iets wat “is” nie, maar iets wat “gemaak word” – en nié deur God nie, maar deur die mens. Die ontdekking van die relatiewiteit van die historiese proses open nuwe moontlikhede vir mense om hul eie bestemming, hul eie toekoms uit te werk. “God en die geskiedenis begin minder met mekaar te doen hê.”⁷⁰

Kortom, dit begin lyk asof die idee van God se betrokkenheid in die geskiedenis slegs kan funksioneer so lank die geskiedenis gesien word as die uitdrukking van ’n ewige bloudruk. Sodra die geskiedenis as kontingente openheid gesien word, as werklik histories, is dit asof die idee van God se betrokkenheid nie langer gehandhaaf kan word nie.⁷¹

Die opkoms en invloed van Hegel se sisteem versterk hierdie indruk, sê Durand. Hy probeer met ’n geweldige filosofiese en teologiese kragtoer God en die geskiedenis weer by mekaar uitbring, en wéér eens geskied dit – soos vroeër – ten koste van die idee van egte geskiedenis self, van openheid, toekoms en kontingensie.⁷²

’n Mens sou kon sê dat die ontwikkeling in die Westerse denke sedert die Verligting daarmee voor die uitdaging staan om weer ’n soort greep of beheer te kry oor die radikale relatiewiteit van die historiese proses, maar nou sonder die moontlikheid om op God in beroep te gaan. Dit word ’n “dringende behoefte” om die magte van die geskiedenis wat lyk asof hulle dreig om heeltemal buite beheer te raak – soos in die Franse Rewolusie – weer onder die een of ander kontrole te kry, sodat “onsekerhede en onreëlmatighede” uitgeskakel kan word en die historiese proses weer “voorspelbaar” en “voorwerp van die mens se manipulasie” kan word.⁷³

Dis gevolglik geen verrassing dat nuwe vorme van “historiese navorsing” die instrument word wat die revolusionêre kragte en magte van die geskiedenis moet help tem nie. Hiervoor is die positivistiese wetenskapsideaal uitmunterend geskik. “Die verlede kon

68 Durand, “Die vinger van God in die geskiedenis – ’n Onopgeloste problem”, pp. 94-95.

69 Durand, “Die vinger van God in die geskiedenis – ’n Onopgeloste problem”, pp. 95-96.

70 Durand, “Die vinger van God in die geskiedenis – ’n Onopgeloste problem”, p. 96.

71 Durand, “Die vinger van God in die geskiedenis – ’n Onopgeloste problem”, pp. 96-97.

72 Durand, “Die vinger van God in die geskiedenis – ’n Onopgeloste problem”, p. 97.

73 Durand, “Die vinger van God in die geskiedenis – ’n Onopgeloste probleem, p. 97.

onder beheer gebring word deur te postuleer dat slegs die feitlike, die bewysbare en die demonstreerbare, regtig *was* (sy klem).” Dieselfde metode word ook aangewend op die hede en die toekoms. Deur wetenskap en tegniek word ook oor die toekoms beheer gesoek. Op dié manier word die geskiedenis “objektief” – die objek van beheer en manipulasie. Wette wat die historiese prosesse en gebeurtenisse beheer, word gesoek en geformuleer. Die gevolg is dat die interpretasie van die geskiedenis weer net so onproblematies word soos vroeër, maar nou sonder God.⁷⁴

Die nuwere teologie – vervolg Durand – probeer op hierdie situasie reageer. Nuwe denke oor “die probleem van God in die geskiedenis” is nodig – en móóntlik, maar tegelyk gevaarlik én positief. Die nuwe strewes is om te praat oor God se teenwoordigheid in die geskiedenis terwyl erns gemaak word met kontingensie en met ’n oop toekoms. God regeer nie in transendente majesteit volgens ’n vaste en voorafbepaalde plan nie, maar is “iemand wat met die mens as bondgenoot geskiedenis maak en self in ’n sekere sin deel is van die historiese proses”. Die Hegeliaanse invloed is duidelik, sê hy, en die gevaar is dat God eenvoudig opgelos word in die historiese proses. Die positiewe noot hierin, gaan hy voort, is egter dat dit tog iets laat sien van “die Bybelse boodskap van ’n *lewende* God (sy eie klem).”⁷⁵

Dit maak klaarblyklik die interpretasie van historiese gebeurtenisse vanuit ’n teologiese gesigspunt uiters moeilik, is sy finale gevolgtrekking. “God is sy eie plan. As lewende persoon handel God in vryheid, dit wil sê in ooreenstemming met Godself.”⁷⁶ Om die geskiedenis te interpreteer is problematies, nee, gevaarlik. Ons kan geen sekerheid vind deur ’n patroon te soek, òf in wat kom òf in wat was nie. Ons het slegs die moontlikheid om te midde van alle ondeursigtigheid van die hede te vertrou op die *teenwoordigheid* (sy klem) van die hemelse Vader.⁷⁷

Wanneer Durand in ’n soort *magnum opus* in 2007 nog eens oor die Godsleer skryf, dan is dit volledig in die verlengde van hierdie vroeëre insigte en oortuigings. *The many faces of God: Highways and byways on the route towards an orthodox image of God in the history of Christianity from the first to the seventeenth century* is ’n veel uitvoeriger weergawe van dieselfde fundamentele verhaal waarmee hy vir etlike dekades besig was.⁷⁸

Nou skryf hy in veel groter besonderhede en gaan hy dieper in op die “highways and byways”, maar steeds is dit ’n verhaal wat diep gestempel is deur dieselfde oortuigings: God

74 Durand, “Die vinger van God in die geskiedenis – ’n Onopgeloste probleem”, pp. 97-98.

75 Durand, “Die vinger van God in die geskiedenis – ’n Onopgeloste probleem”, p. 98.

76 Durand, “Die vinger van God in die geskiedenis – ’n Onopgeloste probleem”, p. 98.

77 Durand, “Die vinger van God in die geskiedenis – ’n Onopgeloste probleem”, pp. 98-99.

78 JF Durand, *The many faces of God: Highways and byways on the route towards an orthodox image of God in the history of Christianity from the first to the seventeenth century* (Stellenbosch: Sun Press, 2007).

het Godself geopenbaar in die Jesus-gebeure, in die lewe, sterwe en opstanding van Jesus Christus; dié openbaring in die heilsgesbeure bly normatief vir die Christelike siening van God, alhoewel die kerk deur die eeue nooit die invloed van sogenaamde nie-teologiese faktore, wat historiese, politieke, kulturele, sosiale en sielkundige faktore insluit, kon vermy nie; dié openbaring in die heilsgesbeure kan nooit afdoende deur die kerk verstaan of verwoord word nie, en daarom is die geskiedenis een van soveel wisselende pogings om stameland te reageer op dié gebeure, omdat die geloof nie anders kan nie, en nie bloot durf swyg nie; die taal wat die kerk deur die eeue gebruik om dié openbaring in die geskiedenis te probeer artikuleer, is onvermydelik analogies, metafories, beeldend, on-eintlik, en daarom is ánder artikulering en ánder formulering altyd weer moontlik, en nódig; as gevolg van die pluraliteit van ons historiese kontekste en ervaringe en as gevolg van die ambiguïteit van ons taal verkry dié God wat in die heilsgesbeure geopenbaar is onvermydelik talle gesigte deur die eeue, wat nie ’n nadeel is nie, maar ’n verryking; agter al dié wisselende gesigte van die één God skuil daar immers tog ’n kontinuïteit, die kontinuïteit van ’n ortodokse voorstelling van God, alhoewel dit vanweë die pluraliteit van die geskiedenis en die ambiguïteit van taal nie in één formulering vasgevang kan word nie; wat verál daarom verleidelik is vir die kerk, is pogings om hierdie ortodokse belydenis aangaande die God wat Godself in die heilsgeskiedenis geopenbaar het tog wel in ewige waarhede te probeer vasvang, in sluitende sisteme, in absolute aansprake, in finale formuleringe, in tydlose proposisies; téénoor al sulke sisteem-denke oor God en al sulke ewige waarhede staan die oer-belydenis dat Jesus Christus die Heer is, vrý in sy liefde en trou, en dat God die Lewende God is, wat in die geskiedenis as genadige Vader teenwóórdig is, ook al sien ons deur ’n spieël in ’n raaisel.⁷⁹

As ’n mens sou aflei dat dié radikale historiese bewussyn die kerk en die teologie tot swye sou bring, tot relativisme en apatie sou verlam, het ’n mens die krag van Durand se historiese bewussyn nog nie goed begryp nie. Die Christelike boodskap is immers histories in ’n dubbele sin, vanuit sy oorsprong én vanuit sy adressaat.

Adressate? – “Onvermydelike konsekwensies vir die ganse lewe”

Wat beteken dit dat ook die adressaat van die evangelie histories is? Dit beteken dat die evangelie telkens nuut gehoor word, deur konkrete en lewende mense, in die historisiteit van hul eie lewe, en wel in die konsekwensies van dié boodskap vir die volle werklikheid en die volle lewe.

Reeds in 1970 handel een van sy gevolgtrekkings in *Swartman, stad en toekoms* oor die roeping van die Skrifverkondiging in die kerk se sending.⁸⁰ “In die *Woordverkondiging*”

79 Heelwat van hierdie oortuigings word in soveel woorde in die eerste hoofstuk van *The many faces of God* uitgespel, maar in die geheel is hierdie opsomming ’n poging om die veronderstellings onderliggend aan die werk saam te vat.

80 JFF Durand, *Swartman, stad en toekoms* (Kaapstad: Tafelberg, 1970).

– só skryf hy – “bind die lewende Christus die gemeente aan Homself vas, ’n binding wat sy *onvermydelike konsekwensies vir die ganse lewe* het. Daarom sal die verkondiging die ganse lewe bestryk”.⁸¹ Reeds hier is al drie die aspekte van sy historiese bewussyn uitdruklik byeen: die *lewende* God praat deur die *lewende* Woord met *lewende* hoorders en wel oor die ganse lewe.

Maar hoe gebeur dit? “Die gevaar is wesenlik” – skryf hy – “dat die verkondiging kan ontaard in abstrakte lesings”, in “’n klaar uitgewerkte patroon”, in “abstrakte lesings oor beginsels”. Só verloor die verkondiging “nie net sy karakter as die direkte, konkrete aansprake van God nie, maar ook en juis daarom, boet dit aan doeltreffendheid in”.⁸² Reeds hier hoor ’n mens die afkeer van alle sluitende sisteme, ewige waarhede, tydlose beginsels, wat ewegoed deur enigeen aan enigeen voorgehou kan word. Die lewende Woord van die lewende God spreek lewende hoorders veel meer konkreet en direk aan, in die ingewikkeldhede van hulle eie lewenskontekste. Sy eie woorde sê dit nog die beste:

Die toerusting van die liggaam van Christus deur die verkondiging vra om konkrete, aansprekende Christusverkondiging vir elke lewensituasie waarin die gemeente hom mag bevind. Hierdeur word ’n basiese lewens- en hartsgerigtheid geskep wat, voortdurend gevoed, die gemeente ten slotte nie in die steek sal laat as hulle in hul praktiese lewe die verkondigde Woord moet verwerk en toepas nie.⁸³

Die openbare relevansie van die kerk wat leef van dié soort Woordverkondiging – ook vir die toekoms van swartmense in die Suid-Afrikaanse stede van apartheid Suid-Afrika – is vir hom duidelik. In byna profetiese woorde formuleer hy dit.

Die krag van die groep se verkondiging lê daarin dat die buitestaander gekonfronteer word met ’n gemeenskap waarin die Woord wat gebring word, self lewend is. Dit is die bediening van die versoening deur ’n gemeenskap in wie se midde die werklikheid van die versoening besit en ervaar word. Daarom is die appél van die verkondigde Woord terselfdertyd ’n *uitnodiging* om opgeneem te word in ’n gemeenskap – nie in die abstrakte nie, maar konkreet in *hierdie* gemeenskap wat in *hierdie* huis teenwoordig is (sy klem).⁸⁴

Die lewende Woord het ’n skopus, ’n gerigtheid, maar daarom ook ’n appél, vanuit die heilshandeling van die lewende God in Christus is dit ’n skopus wat gerig is op die skep van ’n *lewende gemeenskap van versoening* wat as konkrete uitnodiging sal dien tot mense – óók die swartmense in die stede van Suid-Afrika – om in dié gemeenskap van versoening opgeneem te word.

In die jare daarna sou hierdie basiese oortuigings op talle wyses uitgespel word – en dít sou Jaap Durand so ’n besondere denker en teoloog maak, en sy bydrae tot kerk

81 Durand, *Swartman, stad en toekoms*, p. 159.

82 Durand, *Swartman, stad en toekoms*, p. 159.

83 Durand, *Swartman, stad en toekoms*, p. 159.

84 Durand, *Swartman, stad en toekoms*, p. 162.

en teologie, tot akademie en openbare lewe, so merkwaardig. Ander bydraes tot hierdie huldiging sal hopelik in groter detail op talle van hierdie konkrete gestaltes ingaan. Dit is ook nie nodig om hulle almal hier in herinnering te roep nie. Almal wat hom ken sal summier weet hoe hy dié oortuigings verder uitgespel het, telkens in konkrete situasies. Agter dit alles, skuil sy radikale historiese besef, wat beteken sy diepe vertroue op die lewende God wat deur sy lewende Woord met lewende mense praat en hulle roep tot ’n lewende gemeenskap van versoening, getuienis en diens.

As hy in 1972 genooi word om op die Sendingkonferensie van die Algemene Sinodale Sendingkommissie van die NG kerk in Kaapstad te praat oor “Bybelse taal en menslike taal in die Suid-Afrikaanse konteks”, blyk dié vertroue in die lewende Woord wat met lewende hoorders in die kompleksiteit van hulle konkrete lewensituasies praat, glashelder.⁸⁵

Al sou dit moontlik wees (wat ek sterk betwyfel) om byvoorbeeld in ’n Europese land in die abstrakte te praat oor “die moderne mens” of “die mens van vandag”, is dit in Suid-Afrika heeltemal uitgesluit. Hier het “die mens van vandag” talryke gesigte ... (D)it gaan om ’n interaksie tussen die lewende Woord en die lewende gemeente wat vir hulleself en vir die wêreld waarin hulle woon, die Woord moet vertolk in ’n taal wat verstaanbaar is omdat dit ’n *betrokke* taal is. Maar hiervoor kan ons gewoon die Bybel vertrou, omdat dit die *één* woord is wat altyd verbysterend betrokke is, dit wil sê as ons nie in die weg van hierdie woord gaan staan nie.⁸⁶

Wanneer staan ons in die weg van die lewende Woord? As ons ’n sisteem van beginsels in die plek van die boodskap en skopus van die Woord probeer stel, wat in baie tale die harte van konkrete mense kan aanspreek.

Dit doen ons wanneer ons die Bybelse betrokkenheid wegselekteer of van sy baie konkretheid algemene beginsels maak wat niemand se gewete meer aanspreek nie. Laat ons eger die Woord toe om sy vrye loop te neem, sal ons verbaas staan oor die baie tale waarin hy die hart van die mens aanspreek. Die eenvoudige en gesofistikeerde, die arme en die ryke, die magtelose en die magtige sal almal móét luister, omdat dit kom in ’n taal wat verstaan kan word en dáárom nie geïgnoreer mag word nie.⁸⁷

Dié historiese bewussyn – en dié vertroue – blyk alte duidelik as hy met geloofs- en leerstellige vrae besig is. In 1980 praat hy met ’n saamtrek van vroue op Worcester oor “Jesus en lewensituasie”.⁸⁸ Hulle vraag, naamlik: wie verkondig ons?, wie is die Jesus wat ons verkondig?, sê hy, kan “miskien as dié probleem van teologie en Christendom” beskryf word.⁸⁹ Die verwarrende is dat daar soveel verskillende Jesusbeelde in die geskiedenis en in die verdeelde ekumeniese Christendom is.

85 JFF Durand, “Bybelse taal en menslike taal in die Suid-Afrikaanse konteks” in *Teks binne konteks*, pp. 38-48.

86 Durand, “Bybelse taal en menslike taal in die Suid-Afrikaanse konteks”, pp. 39, 48.

87 Durand, “Bybelse taal en menslike taal in die Suid-Afrikaanse konteks”, p. 48.

88 JFF Durand, “Jesus en lewensituasie” in *Teks binne konteks*, pp. 100-106.

89 Durand, “Jesus en lewensituasie”, p. 100.

As ons na die 2000-jarige geskiedenis van die Christendom kyk, maak ons die ontdekking dat daar in verskillende tye en onder verskillende lewensomstandighede verskillende Jesusbeelde na vore gekom het. En elke keer het die Jesusbeeld van 'n tyd tot 'n groot mate die inhoud van die verkondiging in daardie tyd bepaal.⁹⁰

Hoe verloop sy argument dan? Hy bied hulle eers “'n voëlvlug oor die baie eeue van ... variasies in die Jesusbeeld” om aan te toon hoe “die geskiedenis homself herhaal”.⁹¹ Ons het geen ander keuse nie. As konkrete en lewende hoorders hoor ons telkens weer Gods lewende Woord in óns lewensituasie en in óns taal, uitdrukkings, beelde, voorstellinge. Wie dink daar is ewige waarhede, tydlose formulerings en sluitende sisteme, is op 'n dwaalweg. Beteken dit egter dat alles om 't ewe is, dat enige Jesusbeeld deug, dat ons willekeurig Jesusbeelde na ons eie wens en voorkeur kan vorm en kies, dat alle geloofsuitsprake dus relatief is en daar geen waarheid bely kan word nie? Hoegenaamd nie – en dít is presies die egte hermeneutiese, historiese en teologiese uitdaging.

Ook die Bybelse boodskap kan ons nooit reduseer tot 'n enkele en tydlose antwoord op ons vrae nie, sê hy. Die verrassende is immers dat die Bybel self “vol variasie in sy spreke oor Jesus is”.⁹² Dis nie vir ons om die Bybelse gegewens te orden tot 'n sisteem of te herlei tot 'n enkele proposisie, wat dan vir ewig die antwoord is nie. In die Bybel kry ons wel kriteria waaraan ons Jesusbeelde moet voldoen, anders betree ons 'n “gevaarsonse”, byvoorbeeld “as in enige verkondiging aangaande Jesus die betekenis van die kruis weggesyfer word.”⁹³

Ons eie lewensituasie sal altyd meespeel in ons eie Jesusbeelde, en “(h)ierteen kan nie beswaar ingebring word nie. Juis omdat God in Jesus die menslike situasie ernstig geneem het, laat elke nuwe situasie 'n ander faset van sy Persoon en werk na vore kom.”⁹⁴

Sy konklusie is duidelik en konsekwent. Daar is duidelike skopus en gerigtheid, kontoere en grense, perspektiewe en kriteria in die Bybelse verkondiging, waaraan ons ons moet hou, maar omdat dit die lewende spreke van die lewende God in ons eie historiese situasies en taal bly, kan ons as konkrete hoorders bly luister, met die vaste vertroue dat ons in ons eie hede waarheid, perspektief en hoop sal ontvang.

Wie verkondig ons ten slotte? 'n Jesus wat in sy vernedering en sy verhoging, in sy dienskneggestalte en sy majesteit, in sy kruis en sy kroon alle teologiese begrippe-apparaat te bowe gaan, maar wat juis daarom geen lewensituasie uitsigloos maak nie.⁹⁵

90 Durand, “Jesus en lewensituasie”, p. 101.

91 Durand, “Jesus en lewensituasie”, pp. 101-103.

92 Durand, “Jesus en lewensituasie”, p. 103.

93 Durand, “Jesus en lewensituasie”, p. 105.

94 Durand, “Jesus en lewensituasie”, p. 106.

95 Durand, “Jesus en lewensituasie”, p. 106.

Deur die jare sou hy hierdie selfde denkvorm en argument herhaal ten opsigte van feitlik elke geloofs- en leerstellige vraag waarmee hy werk. Eers is die historiese bewussyn nodig wat ons laat sien dat die eeue talle antwoorde gebied het, gestempel deur die tydstip en die taal, en dán moet ons sáám en afhanklik luister na die lewende Woord in óns hede, om die waarheid te kan bely.⁹⁶

In die dogmatiese studies saam met WD Jonker is dit die denkvorm en argument,⁹⁷ in sy toesprake is dit feitlik elke keer weer die denkvorm en argument,⁹⁸ in sy

96 Sien sy twee bydraes tot die bundel opstelle van NGSK-dosente aan die Universiteit van Wes-Kaapland ná die NGSK se afkondiging van die (konsep-)belydenis van Belhar in 1982: JFF Durand, “n Belydenis – was dit werklik nodig?” en “Belhar – Krisispunt vir die NG Kerke”, oorspronklik gepubliseer in GD Cloete & DJ Smit (reds), *’n Oomblik van waarheid* (Kaapstad: Tafelberg, 1984), en herdruk in *Teks binne konteks*, onderskeidelik pp. 141-150 en pp. 151-162. Soos wat die titels al suggereer, handel albei bydraes met die belang van die historiese oomblik vir Gereformeerde belydenisvorming, maar ook met die historiese noodsaak om soms met belydenis op die oomblik te reageer. “(D)it blyk dat die Belhar-belydenis, soos elke ander belydenis, beslissend bepaal is deur ’n historiese konteks. Vandaar moet nie alleen die belydenis se aktualiteit nie, maar ook sy omstrengtheid verklaar word ... Die bewering dat ’n ware belydenis alleen ’n uitbreiding kan wees van die kerk se oerbelydenis dat Jesus die Here is, is korrek ... Daarom is ek oortuig dat die Belhar-belydenis apartheid en die dwaling wat daartoe gelei het, sal oorleef en sy boodskap sal bly behou. Die drie kernsake waarom dit gaan, naamlik eenheid, versoening en geregtigheid, lê dig by die hart van die evangelie ... Die feit dat die belydenis geen direkte verwysing na die apartheidsideologie bevat nie ... is ’n aanduiding van die besef dat ’n ware belydenis die omstandighede van sy tyd te bowe kan gaan. Die NG Sendingkerk bely nie net met die oog op die onmiddellike gevaar wat die kerke in Suid-Afrika in hierdie bepaalde historiese situasie bedreig nie, maar ook met die oog op die toekoms ... In sy belydenis wil ’n kerk nie die partikuliere mening van ’n partikuliere groep vertolk nie, maar maak hy daarop aanspraak dat hy die waarheid namens die universele kerk uitdra, al is dit in ’n bepaalde en partikuliere situasie”, pp. 147-149.

97 Sy eie bydraes tot die *Wegwysers*, naamlik *Die lewende God* (Pretoria: NGKB, 1976/1985), *Die sonde* (Pretoria: NGKB, 1978) en *Skepping, mens, voorsienigheid* (Pretoria: NGKB, 1982) getuig duidelik van die twee skrywers se historiese benadering. Elkeen begin met ’n uitvoerige dogmahistoriese agtergrond, voordat aktuele temas gekies en elkeen weer in hulle huidige historiese belang uiteengesit word, en dan word Bybelse riglyne gegee – nie finale antwoorde nie. Hulle historiese benadering verskil byvoorbeeld opsigtelik van die metodologie en styl van dogmatiese handboeke wat ander Afrikaanssprekende teoloë in dieselfde tydperk uitgegee het, byvoorbeeld JA Heyns en A König.

98 ’n Laaste voorbeeld is nog weer die Tweede Willie Jonker Gedenklesing van die NG Kerk se Ring van Kaap die Goeie Hoop, wat hy in 2007 lewer oor “Calvinistiese aktivisme en piëtistiese mistiek – sluit hulle mekaar wedersyds uit en wat beteken dit vir Suid-Afrika vandag?” Hy hanteer die vraagstuk deur “’n historiese perspektief op elkeen van hierdie twee temas te gee en aan te toon, uit die geskiedenis, dat dit onjuis is om die een teen die ander sonder meer af te speel”, p. 3.

studieverslae,⁹⁹ in sy klasaantekeninge vir die studente, selfs in sy studiebegeleiding¹⁰⁰ is dit elke keer weer die denkvorm en argument. 'n Sterk historiese besef en 'n diepe respek vir historiese kennis, agtergronde en ontwikkelinge word gekombineer met 'n ewe sterk aanvoeling vir en insig in die konkrete hede en 'n – dikwels profetiese – soeke na die lewende Woord vir hier en nou.

As hy in 1977 'n sleutelvoordrag lewer tydens 'n kongres by Unisa oor “Kerk en samelewing” doen hy dit vanuit hierdie sterk historiese bewussyn. Ons raak alte makklik “verdwaal in 'n doolhof van modelle en standpunte met min hoop op uiteindelijke helderheid” as ons met die talle tydlose “vooropgesette skemas” werk, met a-historiese teoretiese abstraksies. Die indruk word geskep dat die verskillende standpunte in sulke skemas “sonder enige historiese wortels uit die lug uit geval het”. Geen standpunt kan egter “sonder blootlegging van sy historiese wortels na ware begryp word nie”, sê hy, en bou sy hele toespraak verder op dié historiese benadering, wat “kontemporêre” modelle blootlê vir wat hulle werklik is.¹⁰¹

As hy in 1980 die Gereformeerde Ekumeniese Sinode in Nîmes op uitnodiging toespreek oor “The prophetic task of the church *vis-à-vis* the state”¹⁰² en ook in 1980 op uitnodiging met die Sinode van die Evangelies Lutherse Kerk in Suidelike Afrika in Kaapstad praat oor “Die Lutherse en Gereformeerde tradisies in Suid-Afrika vandag”, sien 'n mens telkens weer dieselfde historiese bewussyn aan die werk.¹⁰³ In verskeie bydraes oor die rol van die kerk in die openbare lewe in Suid-Afrika dink hy na oor die historiese ontwikkelinge en invloede, byvoorbeeld van

99 Dié historiese besef en spesifiek sy sensitiwiteit vir die “swart ervaring” speel ook 'n sleutelrol in die verslag wat hy in 1975 vir USSALEP skryf na sy studiebesoek aan die VSA, sien “Afrika en Swart Teologie in die VSA” in *Teks binne konteks*, pp. 69-74, asook in sy bydrae in dieselfde jaar oor “Swart Teologie binne die Suid-Afrikaanse konteks”, oorspronklik in die *RES Theological Bulletin*, herdruk in *Teks binne konteks*, pp. 49-57. In laasgenoemde sluit hy aan by Sundermeier en Bosch wat in Swart Teologie 'n soort ekwivalent sien van Ebeling se hermeneutiek: “(D)ie bybelse teks is nie 'n objek wat deur my geïnterpreteer word nie, maar is die subjek wat my interpreteer. Swart Teologie is 'n poging om die lewenservaring van die Swartmense *Coram Deo* te interpreteer met behulp van die bybelse teks”, pp. 54-55.

100 Selfs in die temas van sy nagraadse studente herken 'n mens dieselfde historiese bewussyn, alhoewel 'n mens nie te veel daaruit kan aflei nie, aangesien hulle sekerlik ook hulle eie belangstellings gevolg het. 'n Mens dink byvoorbeeld aan Fanie Herholdt se magister-tesis oor die kruisteologie van Luther in sy *Heidelbergse disputasie*, en aan die doktorsale werk van Andries Botha oor apartheid en Stiaan van der Merwe oor die belang van kontekstualiteit in die teologie.

101 JFF Durand, “Kontemporêre modelle vir die verhouding van kerk en samelewing” in *Teks binne konteks*, pp. 13-37.

102 JFF Durand, “The prophetic task of the church *vis-à-vis* the state” in P Schrottenboer (ed), *Church and nation. Theological Conference Papers* (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformed Ecumenical Synod, 1981), pp. 3-15.

103 JFF Durand, “Die Lutherse en Gereformeerde tradisies in die Suid-Afrika van vandag” in *Teks binne konteks*, pp. 107-116.

die Calvinisme, die piëtisme, en die sogenaamde burgerlike godsdiens.¹⁰⁴ Telkens probeer hy die tradisie verstaan ten einde die hede beter te kan verstaan.

’n Goeie voorbeeld is te vind in sy plasing van die verhouding tussen kerk en staat in Suid-Afrika teen die historiese agtergrond van die invloede van Kuyper en Barth onderskeidelik, in “Church and State in South Africa: Karl Barth vs. Abraham Kuyper”.¹⁰⁵ Hy sluit met ’n lang gedeelte oor “The South African situation and the hermeneutical problem” waaruit sy klem op die (ook dalk self-kritiese en geváárlike) hóór in die konkrete historiese hede teenoor die (onskuldige en onskadelike) herhaling van tydlose beginsels nog eens blyk.

The very real danger remains that the prophetic voice of the church in political matters will be buried beneath generalities. Precisely because general principles and not specifics are proclaimed the church forsakes its hermeneutical task of understanding and interpreting the Word of God for a given historical-political situation. The responsibility for such an interpretation is left to the individual Christian. (This) is of course not wrong. On the contrary, such an idea is part and parcel of the Reformed tradition ... It was never the intention of the Reformers, however, to eliminate the church and the ministry of the Word. The ministry of the Word is, inter alia, a safeguard against an individualistic and arbitrary interpretation of the Bible. The Word of God stresses the fact that we can know only “with all God’s people” (Eph. 3:18), that is, within the community of the church. To maintain that the church should proclaim only “general Christian principles” or “eternal truths” without the necessary hermeneutical process of trying to understand what “general Christian principles” means in a specific

104 Sien byvoorbeeld sy voordrag in 1983 by die kongres van die Afrikaanse Calvinistiese Beweging, gepubliseer as “Die Suid-Afrikaanse spanningsveld van kerk en politiek” in *Teks binne konteks*, pp. 131-140; sy huldiging aan Beyers Naudé, wat tegelyk ’n poging is om die verset binne Afrikaner kerklike geleedere in historiese verbande te verstaan, “Afrikaner piety and dissent” in Charles Villa-Vicencio & John W de Gruchy (eds), *Resistance and hope* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1985), pp. 39-51, in Afrikaans herdruk as “Afrikanerpiëtisme en andersdenkendheid” in *Teks binne konteks*, pp. 163-178; sy historiese oorsig oor denke oor vrede en geweld in die Suid-Afrikaanse kerke, in JJJ Durand & DJ Smit, “The Afrikaner Churches on war and violence” in Charles Villa-Vicencio (ed), *Theology and violence: The South African debate* (Braamfontein: Skotaville, 1987), pp. 31-50, in aansluiting by die geannoteerde historiese dokumente in JJJ Durand & DJ Smit, *Kerk en geweld* (Bellville: UWK, 1995); sy bespreking van die verhouding tussen Christene en Marxiste in Suid-Afrika, “Christians and Marxists in South Africa” in Gerrit Loots (ed), *Listening to South African voices* (Port Elizabeth: Woordkor, 1990), pp. 96-115, waarin hy nog eens argumenteer dat “(a)n a-historical approach which does not consciously take into consideration the specific situation in which the meeting between Christianity and Marxism takes place tends towards generalizations and a type of stereotyping that in no way do justice to either”, pp. 99-100; asook sy huldiging vir Willie Jonker, naamlik JJJ Durand, “Willie Jonker en die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk” in PF Theron & J Kinghorn (eds), *Koninkryk, kerk en kosmos* (Bloemfontein: Pro Christo, 1989), pp. 64-73. In elk van hierdie voordragte volg hy ’n historiese argument.

105 JJJ Durand, “Church and State in South Africa: Karl Barth vs. Abraham Kuyper” in Charles Villa-Vicencio (ed), *On reading Karl Barth in South Africa* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), pp. 121-137.

historical situation is to undermine the ministry of the Word or to make it a caricature of what it should be.¹⁰⁶

Na sy oordeel is die problem in baie Suid-Afrikaanse kerke presies hierdie gebrek aan aandag vir die situasie van die konkrete historiese adressesate.

This is what happened and is still happening to a great degree in the Afrikaner churches. It is not unusual to listen to lofty sermons about social justice within these circles, but very seldom is it spelled out what social justice entails for us in South Africa today ... The end result is that the church is reduced to silence, and by its very silence endorses things that cannot be tolerated on moral grounds and in the light of the gospel.¹⁰⁷

Te midde van die groeiende verdeeldheid van die apartheid samelewing word sy oortuiging dat die skopus, die gerigtheid van die evangelie juis met versoening te make het, en wel met daadwerklike, konkrete historiese versoening binne 'n gemeenskap wat die versoening beleef en uitleef al hoe sterker – en sy uitsprake gevolglik ook al meer krities en profeties. As hy in 1977 die afsluitende respons moet lewer tydens die Jaarvergadering van die Missiologiese Vereniging, bely hy dat hy geen ander moontlikheid sien as dat die kerk bevry sal moet word tot versoening nie, in “Bevryding tot versoening”.¹⁰⁸

(S)oes u glo ek ook aan die kerk en aan die gemeenskap van die heiliges in die taal van ons geloofsbelofte. Maar my nood is dit: hierdie kerk as geloofsrealiteit is nie 'n platoniese idee nie, maar is ook hierdie historiese kerk wat ons almal leer ken het in sy swaakheid en in sy mislukkings. Dit is my nood, gebore uit die ongelooft van my eie hart.¹⁰⁹

In 1978 dra sy klasgesprekke met sy dogmatiek studente aan die Universiteit van Wes-Kaapland direk by tot die NG Sendingkerk se verwerping van apartheid as in stryd met die evangelie van versoening¹¹⁰ en in 1982 speel hy self 'n rol in die sentrale plek

106 Durand, “Church and State in South Africa: Karl Barth vs. Abraham Kuyper”, p. 133. In 'n ander verband sou hy aantoon dat ook kerkregtelike beginsels só tyd- en konteksloos hanteer kan word om aan die konkrete gerigtheid van die evangelie in die hede te ontkom. As hy nadink oor die destyds hoogs omstrede vraag of kerkverband vir Gereformeerdes tot die wese (dus: nodig) of tot die welwese (dus: kan ook nagelaat word) van die kerk behoort, is sy gevolgtrekking “Wie hier wil begin goël met 'n onderskeiding tussen 'wese' en 'welwese' van die kerk op só 'n wyse dat dit van 'n kerkverband 'n opsionele saak maak ten einde bepaalde rassevooroordele te akkommodeer, bevind hulle nóg op Gereformeerde erf nóg binne die grense van die Skrif”, JFF Durand, “Kerkverband – wese of welwese?” in P Meiring & HI Lederle (reds), *Die eenheid van die kerk* (Kaapstad: Tafelberg, 1979), p. 77.

107 Durand, “Church and state in South Africa: Karl Barth vs. Abraham Kuyper”, p. 133.

108 JFF Durand, “Bevryding tot versoening”, oorspronklik gepubliseer in *Missionalia*, herdruk in *Teks binne konteks*, pp. 88-90.

109 Durand, “Bevryding tot versoening”, p. 89.

110 Sien byvoorbeeld sy eerste outobiografiese bydrae, JFF Durand, “Discovering the implications of reconciliation”, oorspronklik in *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa*, Desember 1982, en in Afrikaans herdruk met die titel “Teks binne konteks” in *Teks binne konteks*, pp. 191-197.

wat die boodskap van versoening speel in die *Ope Brief* van 123 ondertekenaars aan die NGK se afwysing van apartheid. Hy motiveer die argument van die Ope Brief – wat hy as “ongemaklik konkreet” beskryf, omdat dit oor wette soos rasseklassifikasie en groepsgebiede en oor aangeleenthede soos gedwonge verskuiwings, trekarbeid, onderbesteding aan swart onderwys, behuising en lone praat – in sy bydrae “Die kerk se profetiese roeping: Versoening en samelewing”.¹¹¹

As hy in 1983 ’n byeenkoms van Gereformeerde vroue toespreek oor “Koop die tyd uit” gee hy aan dié uitdrukking ’n betekenisvolle teologiese inhoud. Hy gebruik die bekende onderskeidinge tussen fisiese tyd, psigologiese tyd en historiese tyd om te sê die uitdrukking vra eintlik: “Besef (psigologiese tyd) dat die tydsomstandighede waarin jy nou leef (historiese tyd) só belangrik is dat jy die beste gebruik maak van die tyd (fisiese tyd) tot jou beskikking.” Dis dus nie ’n abstrakte vraag nie, sê hy. Christene word daarby gekenmerk deur hulle merkwaardige gemeenskaplike ervaring van die verlede, naamlik “die besef van vergewing, baie spesifiek die vergewing deur die kruis van Jesus Christus. Vir Christene staan hulle verlede in die teken van die kruis ... Hierdie ervaring van die verlede stempel op ’n beslissende wyse hulle ervaring van die hede. Hulle weet dat hulle van die vergewing af kom en juis dit maak hulle vry tot handeling in die hede ... Hulle beslissings en hulle daade van die hede word bepaal deur die vergewing waar hulle vandaan kom en die liefde waarheen hulle op pad is.” In dié lig roep hy daarom die Christelike kerk van destyds op om aan te dring op “skulderkenning, nie in ’n soort sieklike beheptheid met die verlede nie, maar om die toekoms oop te maak sodat met waagmoed in liefde en in geregtigheid gehandel kan word.”¹¹²

As hy in 1986 die organisasie Reform in Pretoria toespreek oor “Die kerk as draer van hoop” sê hy dat niemand teenwoordig waarskynlik “van my verwag om op hierdie tydstip in die geskiedenis van ons land ’n teoretiese voordrag te hou oor ’n teologiese onderwerp wat nie onmiddelik en direk te doen het met die gebeurtenisse wat hulle rondom ons afspeel nie”.¹¹³ In hierdie branding waarsku hy nog eens teen die gevaar van “teologiese cliché’s”, die ewige waarhede van vroeër in sy loopbaan.

Slegs die erkenning dat die kerk en teologie onafskeidelik betrokke is by die spiraal van geweld en teengeweld wat ons gemeenskapslewe stempel – meer nog: slegs die erkenning dat die chaos en die pyn, die haat, die lewensontwrigting part en deel van die kerk se eie lewe self geword het, kan ons bewaar van goedkoop

111 JFF Durand, “Die kerk se profetiese roeping: Versoening en samelewing”, oorspronklik gepubliseer in DJ Bosch, A König & W Nicol (reds), *Perspektief op die Ope Brief* (Kaapstad: Human & Rousseau, 1982), herdruk in *Teks binne konteks*, pp. 117-125.

112 JFF Durand, “Koop die tyd uit” in *Teks binne konteks*, pp. 126-130.

113 JFF Durand, “Die kerk as draer van hoop” in *Teks binne konteks*, pp. 179-190. Hierdie toespraak is trouens van besondere belang om sy siening van tyd en historisiteit te verstaan, aangesien hy hier meer doelbewus as op enige ander plek ingaan op die vraag hoe om vanuit die geloof in die hede oor die toekoms te dink en te praat.

en oppervlakkige teologiese cliché's. En daar moet ook geen misverstand wees oor wat 'n teologiese cliché is nie. *Die mees verbewe teologiese uitspraak word 'n goedkoop cliché as dit nie grond raak in die realiteite van die dag nie, of en veral as dit op 'n subtile en selfs onbewuste wyse gebruik word om van hierdie realiteite weg te kom of om mense met mooi klinkende woorde as 't ware uit te nooi om dit te probeer ontvul.*¹¹⁴

Soos wat verwag kan word, hou hy met hierdie denkraamwerk vol ná die dramatiese sosiale transformasie in die Suid-Afrikaanse samelewing met die val van apartheid en die aanbreek van 'n demokratiese bestel. Dieper as veel ander begryp hy immers wat op die spel is. Oornag ondervind Suid-Afrika nou – ten minste wat sy institusionele aspekte betref, van byvoorbeeld politiek, ekonomie, regspraak, onderwys, openbare lewe, mening en moraal, asook georganiseerde godsdiens – die impak van die modernisme wat oor eeue heen in Westerse samelewings ontwikkel het. Die mees opsigtelike gevolge daarvan is sekularisasie en pluralisme, met die gepaardgaande implikasies vir die openbare plek, funksie en selfverstaan van godsdiens, insluitende kerke, maar dalk minder opsigtelik vorm 'n sterker historiese bewussyn natuurlik 'n integrale deel van hierdie moderniseringsprosesse. Vir die eerste maal – kan 'n mens byna beweer – word talle Suid-Afrikaners nou as 't ware sonder dat hulle begryp wat met hulle gebeur, gekonfronteer met die groeiende historiese gevoel sedert die 19de eeu in die Weste. Vir kerk en teologie is dit alles van sleutelbelang. Die konkrete, lewende adressate van die boodskap is aan die verander, hulle bewussyn en selfverstaan verander as gevolg van die sosiale transformasie rondom hulle, en daarmee ook hulle verstaanshorisonne, hulle vrae, behoeftes, belange, keuses.

Weer eens – soos so dikwels vantevore – is Durand die één Suid-Afrikaanse teoloog wat hierdie veranderende historiese situasie met groot erns bejeën en sowel vir mense probeer verduidelik wat aan die gebeur is met hulleself asook probeer om opnuut vanuit die gerigtheid van die Bybelse boodskap oriëntasie te verskaf, terwyl ander nog swyg en toekyk. Weer eens bring hy meer fundamentele perspektief as vele ander kommentators as gevolg van die historiese raamwerke waarbinne hy die ontwikkelinge plaas.

114 Durand, “Die kerk as draer van hoop”, p. 179. Hy sou vroeër self sorg vir 'n baie dramatiese toepassing van hierdie kriterium as hy in 1981 in sy reaksie op 'n bydrae in die bundel *Stormkompas – Opstelle op soek na 'n suiwer koers in die Suid-Afrikaanse konteks van die jare tagtig* (Kaapstad: Tafelberg, 1981), geredigeer deur NJ Smith, FEO'B Geldenhuys & P Meiring, pp. 21-23, sê: “Ek het 'n probleem met dié bydrae; met geringe wysigings kon dit net so goed geskryf gewees het oor die kerk in ... sê, Lapland. Die abnormale tydsomstandighede waarin die bundel die lig sien en met die oog waarop dit geskryf is, pleit vir 'n bespreking iets minder 'normaal’”. Hy wys dan op talle aspekte van die krisis-situasie, maar beskryf dit merkwaardigerwyse as “teologiese vrae” wat nie vermy kan word nie, en nié byvoorbeeld as bloot historiese of kontekstuele of selfs politieke vrae nie – dís juis vir hom die saak wat op die spel is.

In sy huldiging vir sy vriend John de Gruchy beskryf hy die historiese agtergronde van die prosesse van sekularisasie en pluralisme en die spesifieke vorme en invloed daarvan op Suid-Afrika, in “Secularism, pluralism, and the Afrikaner Churches in the 21st century”.¹¹⁵ Hy tipeer wat aan die gebeur is as “’n vertraagde Verligting” en sê:

(T)he secular forces that engulfed Europe were kept at bay in South Africa. But this could not continue forever. South Africa’s turn has come ... The same forces are at work. Whether the outcome will be the same is of course another matter ... The outcome is not predictable, because history is not predictable.¹¹⁶

In 2002 werk hy hierdie gedagtes veel uitvoeriger uit in sy *Ontluisterde wêreld: Die Afrikaner en sy kerk in ’n veranderende Suid-Afrika*.¹¹⁷ Die titel ontleen hy aan Max Weber se bekende beskrywing van die moderne wêreldbeeld en -bewussyn as een van *Entzauberung, disenchantment*, ontluistering. Dit is wat na sy oordeel nou hier aan die gebeur is, en in groot besonderhede werk hy dit uit in ’n historiese oorsig oor dié tendense en kragte, met uiteindelijke toepassing op die spesifieke kontoere van die komplekse Suid-Afrikaanse situasie.

In 2005 reageer hy in *Doodloopstrate van die geloof* nog eens op historiese ontwikkelinge in Suid-Afrika, as hy in reaksie op gepubliseerde internet-debatte oor God en op die openbare menings van figure wat hulleself as die Nuwe Hervorming beskryf weer eens in eenvoudige taal aantoon hoe diep die modernisme en sy historiese bewussyn Suid-Afrikaanse mentaliteite en gesprekke begin beïnvloed, ook by mense wat hulleself postmodern noem en meen dat hulle nié meer onder die invloed van die modernisme is nie.¹¹⁸ Hulle begryp eintlik nie self wat hulle dink en doen en waar hulle werklik vandaan kom nie, juis vanweë ’n gebrekkige historiese besef. Soos altyd eindig hy met konkrete gedagtes oor “onvoldoende reaksies” op die suigkrag van die moderne lewensgevoel en met suggesties vir “Godsgeloof en spiritualiteit” vir ’n tyd soos nou.¹¹⁹

115 JFF Durand, “Secularism, pluralism, and the Afrikaner churches in the 21st century” in L Holness & RK Wüstenberg (eds), *Theology in dialogue* (Cape Town: David Philip, 2002), pp. 175-189.

116 Durand, “Secularism, pluralism, and the Afrikaner Churches in the 21st century”, p. 189.

117 JFF Durand, *Ontluisterde wêreld. Die Afrikaner en sy kerk in ’n veranderende Suid-Afrika* (Wellington: LuxVerbi. BM, 2002).

118 JFF Durand, *Doodloopstrate van die geloof. ’n Perspektief op die Nuwe Hervorming* (Stellenbosch: African Sunmedia, 2005).

119 Durand, *Doodloopstrate van die geloof*, veral pp. 65-110. Van besondere belang is die rol wat die “eintlike boodskap, die gerigtheid van die Bybel, die betekenisfokus of die skopus daarvan” uiteindelik in sy argument speel: “Met die gedagte van die skopus van die Skrif word niks anders bedoel nie as dat die Bybel in sy geheel ’n *saak* het waarom dit in die inhoud van die Bybelteks gaan. Die Bybel het ’n sentrale bedoeling van waaruit die totaliteit van die Bybelteks gelees en geïnterpreteer moet word: die *boodskap* van God se verlossende handeling in die koms, sterwe en opstanding van Jesus Christus wat as *lewende Woord van God* tot ons kom. Deur die Bybelse verkondiging van Jesus Christus ontmoet God Self die mens en vra van hierdie aangesproke mens ’n antwoord. Om die Skrif reg te vertolk

Toenemend word dit deur die jare vir hom duidelik dat déél van die historiese werklikheid wat raakgesien en benoem moet word, die lyding is, die verskrikking van leed en droefheid en nood, tot by die werklikheid van die dood. Oor baie jare heen het hierdie teologiese vrae hom diep geboei, ook om persoonlike redes. In 1977 reeds skryf hy oor “Waarheid en leuen in ’n terminale situasie – ’n dogmaties-etiese besinning”.¹²⁰ In 1981 bespreek hy “Life and death as a theological problem”.¹²¹ In 1986 skryf hy oor

betekem om te vra op watter manier God in Jesus Christus my met hierdie Bybelteks aanspreek en wat God vir my in hierdie teks wil sê. Om die Bybelteks los van hierdie bedoeling van God te probeer interpreteer, kan lei tot ’n verdraaiing van die eintlike betekenis daarvan *wat die werklike hoor van die lewende Woord van God versteur en blokkeer*”, pp. 106-107. Dat Durand volkome bewus is van die metaforesie aard van hierdie woorde van hom spreek vanself – wat egter nie beteken dat hulle nie waar is nie, intendeel. Dis juis deel van sy kritiek teen sommige onder diegene wat hulleself hier te lande as sogenaamd postmodern beskryf, te wete dat hulle verval in linguïstiese relativisme omdat hulle nie die aard en krag van metaforesie wáárheid begryp nie. Die wydverbreide probleem in plaaslike kerklike kringe was en bly egter, soos hy deur die jare duidelik gemaak het, “dat die kerk soms self daaraan skuldig is dat die geloof, hier by die sentrum, hier waar ons die werklike skopus van die Bybelboodskap ontdek, ondermyn word deur sake van die periferie te behandel asof dit tot die sentrum behoort. Hiervoor word regverdiging gevind deur ’n bepaalde Bybelgeloof waardeur lidmate soms, gelukkig nie altyd nie, onder die indruk gebring word dat die Bybel ’n soort reliëflose boek is waarin alles ewe belangrik is ... Die verkondiging en hantering van die Skrif en die beoefening van die teologie wat nie vanuit die skopus van die Skrif gedoen en gekontroleer word nie, bring die gevaar mee dat die Skrif ’n soort wetboek of handboek vir ’n reeks dogmas word, almal van gelyke waarde en betekenis ... Ongelukkig leef daar onder baie lidmate ’n soort Bybelgeloof wat nie hierdie essensie van die Skrif raaksien nie. Selde word hulle deur dominees en die kerklike leiding reggehelp omdat genoemdes self nie altyd hierdie wesenlike element van die Reformatoriese Skrifbeskouing verstaan nie. Hierdeur word van die Bybel ’n dogmatiese teksboek gemaak waarin alles van gelyke waarde is. Dit het tot gevolg dat baie teologies-denkende lidmate probleme optel by aangeleenthede wat nie die skopus en funksie van die Skrif in gedrang bring nie”, pp. 109-110. Dis duidelik hoe Durand vandag se aktuele probleme in die kerk steeds raaksien en aanspreek met behulp van die historiese bewussyn en die denkraamwerk wat hy dekades tevore reeds ontwikkel het. In die hart daarvan is die oortuigings aangaande die lewende God se lewende Woord aan lewende hoorders, *wat in die geskiedenis, in die wêreld ingaan*: “Die verkondiging van God se verlossende handeling in Jesus Christus is ’n skat wat in ’n kleipot, in die broosheid van menslike getuienis, *die wêreld ingaan* ... (D)ie sestiende eeuse Reformasie (het) die Skrif gesien as ’n preekteks waarin die lewende Woord van God tot ons kom, dit wil sê waarin God aktueel, vandag, tot ons spreek en waarin God Godself in Jesus Christus deur die werking van Gods Gees onder ons teenwoordig stel”, p. 109. Hierin skuil dan ook die ware self-kritiese uitdaging aan die plaaslike kerk vandag. “(Niks) mag die kerk daarvan weerhou om haarself telkens weer krities af te vra of sy reg laat geskied aan haar Reformatoriese erfenis waarin die Bybel weer sy eintlike funksie teruggekry het as lewende Woord van God in die verkondiging daarvan nie. Die kerk moet bereid wees om elke keer weer die vraag te stel of die wyse waarop die Bybel gebruik word in diens staan van God se bedoeling met sy Woord, sodat die een wat daarna luister deur die Gees van God aangegryp sal word en in geloof sal antwoord”, p. 110.

120 JFF Durand, “Waarheid en leuen in ’n terminale situasie – ’n dogmaties-etiese besinning”, *Woord en wetenskap* (Bloemfontein: VCHO, 1977), pp. 73-80.

121 JFF Durand, “Life and death as a theological problem”, *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 36 (September 1981), pp. 18-26.

kruis en lyding as hy moet praat oor hoop, in “Die kerk as draer van die hoop”.¹²² In ’n baie belangrike bydrae om sy denke te verstaan skryf hy in 1993 oor “Theology and resurrection – Metaphors and paradigms”.¹²³ Op indringende manier peins hy egter ook oor lyding in sy huldigingsbydrae vir sy jarelange vriend en geesgenoot, Hennie Rossouw, naamlik “In bewuste herinnering”.¹²⁴ “(E)k wil aandag vra vir wat die bewuste herinnering van pyn kan beteken, nie alleen individueel nie, maar ook kollektief, nie alleen persoonlik en privaat nie, maar ook polities en publiek.”¹²⁵

As historiese wesens word ons identiteit gevorm deur ons geskiedenis, maar dan op besondere wyse deur die pyn van ons geskiedenis, sodat dit patologies kan wees as ons, individueel óf gesamentlik, die leed van die verlede probeer vergeet of ontken. Ons benodig ’n bewuste herinnering, gesamentlike pogings tot “kommunikatiewe handeling” waarin ons die lyding van die verlede in bewuste herinnering roep, nie met gelate berusting nie, nie met oppervlakkige regverdigings, selfs teodiseë nie, maar as “onvervulde hoop” wat vashou aan “’n geopende hemel in die lyding” en aan “’n opstanding in die laaste groot lyding van die dood.”¹²⁶

Weér eens is sy historiese besef, sy aanvoeling vir die verleidinge wat konkrete, lewendende adressate van die boodskap juis op hierdie punte ervaar, sterk aanwesig in hierdie probleembewussyn, want “(ons) leef in ’n tyd waarin die tegniek en die tegnologiese vooruitgang skynbaar daarop ingestel is om die pyn te marginaliseer, en waarin die sosiaal-politiese oproep om te vergeet al hoe dringender word”.¹²⁷ Teenoor die vergeet staan die noodsaak van onthou.

’n Weg tussen onthistorisering en relatiwisme?

Jaap Durand noem glo die ongepubliseerde en persoonlike herinneringe wat hy vir sy kinders en kleinkinders se private gebruik neergeskryf het *Sommige dinge is die moeite werd om te onthou*. Miskien word die hart van sy teologiese loopbaan in dié woorde saamgebundel. Hy was voortdurend aan die soek na ’n weg tussen die a-historisme en die historisme, alhoewel hy dié terme self nie dikwels gebruik het nie.¹²⁸

122 Durand, “Die kerk as draer van die hoop”, pp. 179-190.

123 JFF Durand, “Theology and resurrection – Metaphors and paradigms”, *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 82 (March 1993), pp. 1-20.

124 JFF Durand, “In bewuste herinnering” in AA van Niekerk, WP Esterhuysen & J Hattingh (reds), *Intellektueel in konteks* (Pretoria: RGN, 1993), pp. 289-304.

125 Durand, “In bewuste herinnering”, p. 290.

126 Durand, “In bewuste herinnering”, pp. 292-303. Vir die belangrike vraag wat hy inhoudelik met hierdie laaste Bybelse metafore bedoel, sien veral Durand, “Theology and resurrection – Metaphors and paradigms”.

127 Durand, “In bewuste herinnering”, p. 290.

128 Ek sou graag meer wou sê oor die invloede op sy werk en oor verwante ontwikkelinge gedurende sy leeftyd, maar hy het ’n diepe afkeer aan voetnote en onnodige woorde en uit respek daarvoor

Vir die grootste deel van sy lewe was hy aan die worstel met a-historisme in verskillende gedaantes. Volgens die a-historisme is die geskiedenis onbelangrik en is dit nie nodig om enigiets te onthou nie, want ons beskik oor bo-tydelike beginsels, ewige waarhede, sluitende sisteme, finale formuleringe, tydlose teologie. Die meeste van sy kritiek was op sulke standpunte gerig, en op die verleidelike en invloedryke gestaltes wat hulle in Suid-Afrika aangeneem het. Self wou hy die kontingensie, die nuutheid, die kompleksiteit, die openheid van die geskiedenis ernstig neem – maar nié tot by die radikale konsekwensies van die historisme nie.¹²⁹

Volgens die historisme is die geskiedenis eintlik ook onbelangrik vir lewensoriëntering en is dit ook nie nodig om enigiets te onthou nie, want alles is relatief, verganklik, verby, vreemd, vergange, volledig situasie-bepaald. In die finale instansie is die geskiedenis verklaarbaar en deursigtig en die wêreld geslote en sonder verrassings. In die laaste jare word Durand se kritiek al meer teen sulke standpunte gerig, teen posisies wat eintlik baie gemeenskaplik het met sy eie diepste oortuigings omdat hulle ook histories bewus is, maar wat na sy oordeel te vër gaan, omdat hulle die relativisme en verlies aan waarheid verbonde aan hulle eie posisies nie peil nie.

Teenoor sowel die a-historisme as die historisme is Durand oortuig dat sommige dinge wél die moeite werd is om te onthou. Sommige dinge is wáár – en dáárom die moeite werd om te onthou, ook al kan ons net stamelend en altyd ontoereikend in ons

het ek doelbewus my voetnote hier ook vir een keer tot die absolute minimum beperk – en daarby so bondig as moontlik probeer skryf!

129 Die een werk van Troeltsch waarmee Durand reeds in die laaste dele van “Heilsgeskiedenis en die dialektiek van syn en denke” gewerk het, was juis sy “Die Krisis des Historismus” (*Die Neue Rundschau*, 1922), saam met die omvattende studie van Troeltsch deur J Klapwijk, *Tussen historisme en relativisme* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1970).

“kontekstuele metafore” daaroor praat¹³⁰ en nooit die volheid daarvan uitdruk in ons beperkte, menslike taal nie.¹³¹

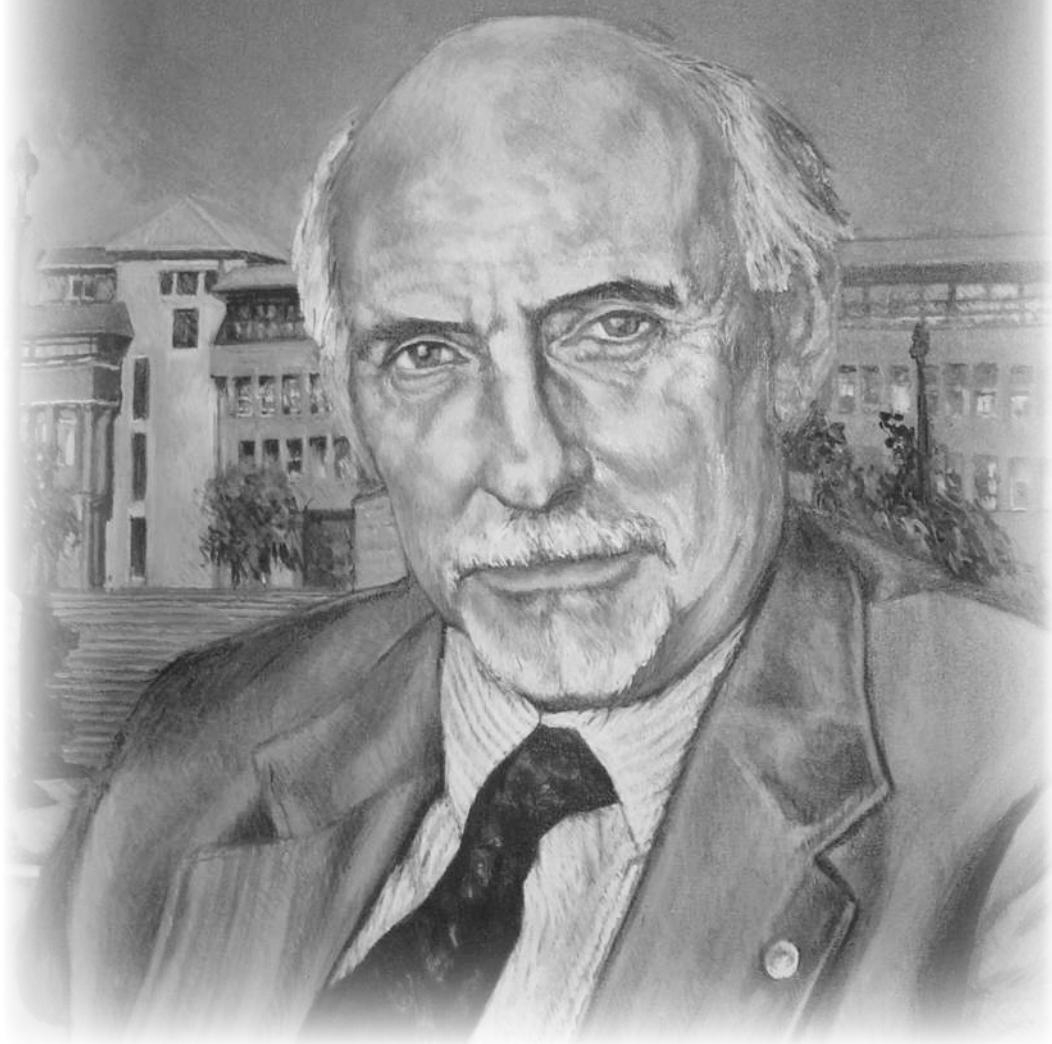
- 130 In sy outobiografiese terugskoue het Durand elke keer drie fases in sy eie ontwikkeling onderskei – die ewige waarhede, die historiese kontekstualisering, die metaforiese taal – maar ’n mens moet versigtig wees en sy bedoelinge nie misverstaan nie. Dis dalk selfs effe misleidend om van “fases” te praat, asof die een die ander vervang het, en asof sy belangstelling in taal in die plek van sy bewussyn van die geskiedenis gekom het. Dit sou ’n totale misverstand wees. Dis nie sonder rede dat hy na David Tracy verwys as die denker in wie hy iets herken het nie – en nie byvoorbeeld na selfs Lindbeck, of een van die ander postmoderne of postliberale denkers by wie die linguïstiese wending eintlik as ’n wegkeer van enige historiese belangstelling gelees kan word nie. By Tracy – soos in *Plurality and ambiguity* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987) – gaan die radikale pluraliteit van taal en die radikale ambiguïteit van die geskiedenis saám, dis twee kante van dieselfde problematiek – en presies so by Durand. Dis nie sonder rede dat hy sy terugblik tipeer nie as “Van ewige waarhede tot gekontekstualiseerde metafore”. *Die kontekstualiteit van alle teologiese duiding van die geskiedenis en die metaforiese aard van alle teologiese taal is één*. Hy was dan ook altyd van die ontoereikendheid van ons teologiese taal bewus, soos wat ’n mens uit sy werk oor al die jare kan aantoon, as integrale déél van die relatiewiteit van ons historisiteit, maar oor die laaste jare het hy die implikasies daarvan net nog duideliker gesien, bedink en uitgespel in sy werk. Tereg sê hy daarom self “(h)iermee het die derde fase begin waarin ek ’n poging aangewend het om die tweede fase van historiese kontekstualiteit te kombineer met die wyse waarop Tracy die gedagte van taal vir teologiese refleksie lewend probeer maak het” (JFF Durand, “Hoe my gedagte-wêreld verander het”, p. 69). Hy vat saam: “Ek het besef die konsepte analogie en metafoor kan ’n dieper betekenis gee aan die idee van historiese kontekstualiteit soos ek dit tot op daardie stadium gehanteer het” (p. 69).
- 131 Die groeiende besef van die blywende ontoereikendheid van al ons geloofs- en teologiese taal het hom ook ’n nuwe waardering vir die *mistiek* gegee. In verskeie van sy latere voordragte, soos ook in *The many faces of God*, word hierdie waardering duidelik. Byvoorbeeld: “Bo alles het ek begin leer om waardering te hê vir die diep besef van die onuitsprekbare by die mistici. Die mistisisme van die ewige Woord by Origenes, die naaktheid van die siel in gebed by Evagrius, die taalverdwende stilte van die Goddelike by Dionysius, die hart se verlange na God by Augustinus, die reinheid wat die onverstaanbare verstaan by Bernard van Clairvaux, Bonaventura se kontemplasie van die Goddelike voetstaple – hierdie en baie ander, soms weersprekende pogings om metafore te vind wat op die een of ander wyse die metaforiese wêreld van die Bybel probeer reflekteer en internaliseer, leer ons om diep nederig te wees in ons eie soeke na God” (“Hoe my gedagte-wêreld verander het”, p. 70). Ook dit moet egter reg begryp word. Hy bedoel weer eens nie – soos talle sogenaamd postmodernistiese denkers of diegene wat hy beskryf as “moderne mistici” – om daarmee teologie minimalisties te reduseer tot net ’n vae vorm van spiritualiteit oorbly nie. Op geen manier was dit byvoorbeeld die geval in die tradisie met iemand soos Dionysius, op wie se werk hy meermale ingaan, nie. “This cannot be said of the theology of Dionysius. The apopathic side of his theology ... was never the result of a complete surrender to the demands of the human intellect, but rather a theological acknowledgement of the greatness and incomprehensibility of God. Moreover, the apothetic side of his thought never restricted the scope of his symbolic theology” (Durand, “Modernism, mysticism and the challenge of theological language”, p. 9). Die dissipline van die apofatische teologie is daar om ons te herinner dat ons staan voor die geheimenis van God wat leef “in the darkness of unknowing” en dat ons metafore presies dit is, metafores; dis nie daar om ons te laat vrees dat ons metafore nie wáár is, ás metafore nie. Herhaaldelik waarsku Durand daarom in sy laaste geskrifte teen enige oormoedige oorskatting van ons taaluitinge oor God – sóós vroeër, sou ’n mens kon sê, maar nou nie net vanweë die relatiewiteit van die geskiedenis nie maar ook vanweë die ontoereikendheid van ons taal. Terwyl hy dit doen, bely hy egter ook steeds telkens – sóós vroeër

Ten diepste wortel dié historiese bewussyn in sy Reformatoriese oortuiging dat die openbaring “die geskiedenis ingegaan het”, “die wêreld ingegaan het”, dat die lewende God deur sy lewende Woord lewende mense aanraak. Vanweë dié belydenis het Durand sêlf ook as teoloog en denker die geskiedenis ingegaan, die wêreld ingegaan soos min ander van sy tydgenote en ’n verskil gemaak, en daarom word hy met reg gehuldig en sal sy naam só die geskiedenis ingaan, vir die wat bevoorreg is om hom te ken.

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in die betroubaarheid van die Lewende wat met ons geskiedenis maak, ondanks ons gebrekkige kennis en taal. Sy eenvoudige storie oor Jesus, *Iemand soos ek en jy* (Stellenbosch: T Wever, 2003) – vertel vir en opgedra aan sy kinders – eindig: “In hierdie mens soos ek en jy het God self gewoon. Moenie vir my vra om dit te verduidelik nie. Moenie vir my vra om dit in teologiese formules vas te lê nie. Daarvoor kan ek nie ’n storie vertel nie. Ek kan net in aanbidding buig”, p. 14. Sy outobiografiese storie eindig: “Ek is nie langer meer so seker van myself en my teologie nie ... Ek is egter daarvan oortuig dat daar een metafoor is wat nooit verplaas kan of sal word nie – die *kruis*, God se grootste metafoor vir die wêreld, die diepste uitdrukking van die mees onuitspreekbare, sy liefde vir ons” (“Hoe my gedagte-wêreld verander het”, p. 70). Dié metafoor is immers ’n moment in die geskiedenis.

Sharter reflections



Jaap Durand: Lojale vriend, spelende professor en bemiddelaar

CAREL ANTHONISSEN

Dit was vroeg in die lente van 1985 dat Jaap Durand my op 'n betrokke aand uit die bloute gebel het. Hy was ontsteld en wou my kom sien. Ek het vermoed waarom die besoek gaan, maar nie presies geweet waarheen dit alles sou lei nie.

Jaap was op daardie stadium vise-rektor van UWK asook 'n lidmaat van die Rynse kerk op Stellenbosch en nou betrokke by die stryd teen apartheid. Ekself het twee dae vroeër my paspoort verloor as gevolg van 'n omstrede poging om saam met 8 studenteiers gesprek te voer met die verbode ANC Jeugliga in Lusaka.

Teen die agtergrond van die groter politieke woelinge van destyds, was hierdie beplande gesprek 'n relatief klein, indien nie onbeduidende inisiatief nie. Maar vir die president van die land, wat destyds ook kanselier van die Universiteit was, was dit 'n daad van verraad. Vandaar sy ingrype om ons paspoorte te konfiskeer. Die insident was destyds groot nuus in die Afrikaanse pers. Ek het verskeie dreigoproepe ontvang. Mense, selfs ou vriende, het nie verstaan nie, was kwaad en het ons opsigtelik vermy. Skynbaar was die hart van Afrikaner-wees vir sommige hier op die spel.

Ook in die Stellenbosch Studentekerk waar ek destyds leraar was, het die emosies hoog geloop en het dit vir etlike weke gegons. My kollegas het hulle onmiddellik in die openbaar van ons optrede gedistansieer – iets wat vir baie jare tot diepe vervreemding tussen sommige van ons sou lei. Hans Müller, tans dosent aan die Departement Inligtingwetenskap aan die Universiteit Stellenbosch en destyds voorsitter van die Kerkjeug-aksie, was deel van die studentegroep wat na Lusaka genooi is. Ons is voor 'n kerkraadskommissie gedaag en moes verduidelik. Buiten met die kerkraad was daar ook ander ontmoetings, onder andere met die rektor wat ons, skynbaar onder druk van sy kanselier, probeer uitpraat het uit die “onbesonne poging”.

Die ontmoeting met die kerkraad en kollegas was egter die meer dramatiese een. Ek het my bes probeer om my posisie, my persoonlike geskiedenis wat die gebeure voorafgegaan het, te verduidelik, asook my geloof dat die kerk in hierdie kritieke tyd van die land se geskiedenis 'n bemiddelende rol moes speel. Ek was (moontlik naïewelik) oortuig dat dit die geweldige kloof, fisies en persepsioneel, tussen die NP en die ANC sou help oorbrug en selfs op die lang duur 'n belangrike teken van hoop vir die jeug kon wees.

Maar daarvan het die destydse kerkraad, met 'n paar gewaardeerde uitsonderings, min verstaan. Die versoek was dat ons moes afsien van ons voorneme, verskoning moes vra en ons onbehoorlike betrokkenheid by die politiek as 'n "sonde" bely. Die begrip wat ons wel gekry het, het uit onverwagte oorde gekom.

Jettie Degenaar het namens haar en Johan blomme gebring; Victor en Hester Honey, wie se kinders aktief by die End Conscription Campaign betrokke was, het kom inloer; André du Toit, politieke filosoof, wat meegehelp het aan die SPROCAS projek van die Christelike Instituut, en sy vrou Mareta het ons omarm en oorgenooi, ook later toe Beyers Naudé vry was en in die Kaap op besoek gekom het. Bernard Lategan het kom aanklop en bemoedig. Jeanette Groenewald het 'n brief van protes geskryf. So kan 'n mens 'n hele paar ander opnoem. Dan was daar ook nog Jaap Durand. Terugskouend kan ek vandag eerlik sê dat ek en my familie heelwat swaarder, spesifiek binne die kerk, sou gekry het as dit nie vir Jaap was nie.

Meer as wat ek besef het, het Jaap Durand die verwickelinge rondom ons noukeurige gevolg en dopgehou. Behalwe dat dit vir hom 'n barometer was van die gevoelens in die Afrikaanse gemeenskap, het hy vanuit sy eie geskiedenis die koue skouer van die kerk en die verwerping en veronregting wat dikwels daarmee gepaard gaan, goed geken – dit ook herken waar dit met ander gebeur het ... en dan het hy die moed gehad om op te staan en in te tree. Dit is waarom hy die aand gebel en by my kom sit het.

Jaap was verontwaardig oor die manier waarop die kerkraad ons hanteer het. Hy was oortuig dat hulle optrede, spesifiek soos dit verwoord was in 'n breedvoerige verklaring teen ons, onkerkregtelik, onregverdig en kwetsend was. Dit het die gees van tuggeadem terwyl daar geen standaard klagteprosedure gevolg is nie. Om seker te maak dat hy nie onnodig bevooroordeel was nie, het hy tydens ons gesprek sy jarelange vriend Willie Jonker gebel vir 'n afspraak. Jonker het ons dieselfde aand nog ontvang en ná hy die kerkradsverklaring deurgelees het, Durand se aanvoeling bevestig.

Vir my was Prof Jaap, soos ek hom toe geken het, se bystand en ondersteuning op daardie tydstip 'n geweldige bron van bemoediging en gerustelling. Trouens, sy laaste woorde met sy vertrek daardie aand was dat ek die saak in sy hande moes laat en rustig moet aangaan met my lewe. Later sou ek uitvind dat hy my ouer kollega, vir wie ons geaborteerde versoeningspoging 'n persoonlike verleentheid was (miskien ook omdat hy goed bevriend was met verskeie nasionale LP's en weekliks by die parlement gaan bidure hou het), kort daarna gaan opsoek en streng aangespreek het. Hy het hom daarvan bewus gemaak dat die kerkraad se optrede nie net onregverdig, onnadenkend en kortsigtig was nie, maar dat dit gevaarlike konsekwensies vir die verhoudinge binne die plaaslike NG familie ingehou het.

Dat hierdie vermaning betekenisvolle effek gehad het, was gou duidelik. Die betrokke kollega het oornag versag en sy gesig was skielik weer, in Bybelse terme, "soos gister en eergister". By die volgende kerkradsvergadering is na die aangeleentheid verwys

asof daar 'n bewussyn was dat die kerkraad oorreageer het en dat die saak 'n ligte verleentheid geword het, een wat hulle so gou moontlik van die agenda af en in die vergetelheid gedryf wou hê. Ek het die skielike hand van vrede en oënskynlike hartverandering nie heeltemal vertrou nie. Daar was geen persoonlike gesprekke nie, net vae openbare verkларings van 'n verbondenheid tot vrede en versoening. Dit het nogal die reuk gehad van kerklike opportunisme, gebore uit die vrees om invloed en aansien te verloor, dié slag nie soseer by die maghebbers van die tyd nie, as by gerekendes binne die bruin en swart gemeenskap. Een ding is wel in die proses by my bevestig: dat Jaap Durand op daardie stadium besondere invloed en respek oor alle grense heen geniet het.

Vir myself was die uitkoms van hierdie betrokke aand selfs meer betekenisvol. Dit was die begin van 'n besondere vriendskap, een waarop ek vandag steeds met verwondering en diepe waardering terugkyk.

Tot op daardie stadium het ek Jaap nie van naderby geken nie. Om die waarheid te sê, as student was ek reeds lugtig vir hierdie formidabele, selfs intimiderende figuur met sy uitgesproke sendingagtergrond, indrukwekkende akademiese rekord en ruie bos swart hare wat hom kompleet soos 'n streng Ou Testamentiese profeet laat lyk het. Hierdie bos hare sou, terloops, oor die jare minder word en meer grys, sodat hy, ewe merkwaardig, plek-plek aan die akteur Sean Connery herinner het! Maar dit tersyde ...

Belangriker was dat ek in hierdie kritieke jare van my jong bediening, 'n soort profetiese vaderfiguur met 'n hart ontmoet het; iemand wat, alhoewel hy heelwat ouer as ek was, bereid was om 'n goeie vriend en vertroueling te wees. Teken hiervan was dat hy spoedig aangedring het dat ek hom op sy voornaam noem. Hierna het ons meer gereeld ontmoet, soms by vriende, soms alleen, meermale op die tennisbaan – 'n hele reeks goeie momente het gevolg wat ons vriendskap versterk het.

Deel van die goeie oomblikke saam was 'n wintervakansietoer saam met die Jonker- en Smit-gesinne na Namibia in die laat tagtigerjare, waartydens ons saans onder die sterreheem potjiekos gemaak, speletjies gespeel en dan die land en die kerk se probleme bespreek en probeer uitpluis het. Op die toer het ons mekaar se gesinne, kinders inkluis, goed leer ken en het my vrou, Christine, 'n ewe besondere band met Jaap se vrou, Randu, gesmee.

Tuis op Stellenbosch het ek meermale as ek gekonfronteer is met belangrike keuses of vrae, my tot Jaap gewend – soos die keer toe die Wêreldraad van Kerke my via Beyers Naudé saam met 'n paar ander NG leraars (onder andere Nico Smith, Johan Kinghorn en Willem Nicol) genooi het na hul eerste ontmoeting met die sogenaamde bevrydingsbeweging in Harare, en my kollegas my later verbied het om die uitnodiging aan te neem. Of soos later, toe ek deur die kerk vir 'n deel van my tyd gesekondeer is na die Sentrum vir Christelike Spiritualiteit en ek duidelikheid oor my kontrak moes

kry. By sulke geleenthede het hy my altyd hartlik ontvang, tyd gemaak, geduldig en aandagtig geluister en dan vanuit sy ryk ervaring, oorwoë raad en bystand verleen.

Dan was daar ook die tye wanneer ons sommer net gesellig gekuier of saam gefliek het. Ek onthou een so 'n middag in die middel van die week toe net ek en Jaap saam na Dead Poet Society gaan kyk het. Dit was spesifiek in die tyd wat ek 'n ander, en nogal baie belangrike kant van Jaap Durand ontdek het, naamlik dat hy nie net die gewigtige akademikus, vername vise-rector, of gerekende ombudsman was nie, maar by uitstek ook 'n splende mens, 'n ware *homo ludens* soos sy goeie vriend Hennie Rossouw hom meermale beskryf het.

Hennie Rossouw het oor hierdie minder bekende kant van Jaap Durand 'n veelheid van heerlike stories. Daar was veral een wat hoogs amusant was. Dit was toe die twee professore en hulle gesinne as vriende op 'n stadium in Durban saam vakansie gehou het. 'n Student wat later van die ekskursie gehoor het, het op 'n stadium teenoor Prof Hennie opgemerk dat hy darem graag 'n vlieg teen die muur sou wou wees om al hulle diepsinnige gesprekke te kon gehoor het. Wat hy natuurlik nie geweet het nie, het Prof Hennie agterna met 'n glimlag vertel, is dat die twee professore, spesifiek op Jaap se inisiatief, nie 'n woord teologie gepraat het nie, maar heeldag speletjies gespeel het – van kaartspel en bordspele tot “scalectrix” karretjies op die vloer.

Hierdie spelende kant van Jaap Durand moet nie onderskat word nie. Spel of sport het nie net vir hom noodsaaklike ontspanning en afwisseling in sy veeleisende program verskaf nie – dit was hý. Sonder begrip vir sy onverbloemde liefde vir spel het jy 'n groot deel van Jaap Durand gewoon nie leer ken of verstaan nie. Dit het ek begin agterkom toe hy een middag by sy huis met groot entoesiasme vir my en Christine die miniatuur skepe wat hy eiehandig gebou het, gewys het. Ek was verstom toe ek agterkom dat my professor-vriend dit regtig geen skade aan sy reputasie geag het om by geleentheid soos 'n opgewonde kind heerlik op 'n mat met sy elektriese treintjies te speel nie. Dit was egter veral ons gemeenskaplike liefde vir sport en met name tennis wat ons meer gereeld bymekaar gebring het.

As toegewyde lede van Vlottenburg se tennisklub het ons baie genoeglike middae, meestal Saterdag, saam op die windstille bane van die ou boereklub deurgebring. Van ons lekkerste gesprekke oor die sake van die dag, die kerk se nuutste skandes en die jongste teologiese diskussies het gewoonlik op pad terug in die motor plaasgevind. So het ek by hom nuwe perspektief gekry op die vraag na lewe anderkant die dood en die lig wat Christus se opstandingsverhale hierop kan werp – iets waarmee hy kort na die ontydige dood van Randu intens geworstel het. Tydens een van ons gesprekke het hy my ook vertel van sy boek *Ontluisterde wêreld*, min wetende hoe sy analyses en insigte in die boek weerklank sou vind in 'n lesing wat ek later op 'n studiebesoek aan Hamburg gehou het.

Ten opsigte van ons gemeenskaplike liefde vir sport is daar wel een deel waaroor ek vandag 'n klein bietjie spyt het. Naas die tennis was Jaap, saam met sy tweede vrou Sonja, ook 'n ywerige en kranige rolbalspeler. Hulle was oortuig dat ek en Christine die spel saam met hulle sou geniet, en dat dit, soos in hulle geval, ook die kameraadskap tussen man en vrou kon versterk. Gevolglik het hy en Sonja ons by meer as een geleentheid kom haal en touwys probeer maak. Ek het redelik gou die slag gekry en die spel toenemend geniet, maar dit was ook gou duidelik dat ons, met 'n program wat voller geword het, sou sukkel om rolbal ook nog in te pas. En daaroor voel ek tog vandag nog ietwat spyt.

Daar is 'n ander belangrike, byna epiiese episode wat die aard van ons vriendskap en veral Jaap Durand se rol in die ontplooiende lotgevalle van ons land in die vroeë negentigerjare duidelik sou markeer. Ek vertel die storie ten slotte omdat dit een van die baie interessante agter-die-skerm-stories uit daardie tyd is – ook omdat dit wys hoe skynbaar klein inisiatiewe, aangepak deur gewone, maar moedige mense, soos wat Jaap nog altyd was, die toekoms van 'n land positief kan help stuur.

Dit het weer eens begin met 'n onverwagse oproep van hom teen die aand se kant, dié keer 'n paar jaar nadat Mandela reeds vrygelaat was en ons op die vooraand van 'n eerste demokratiese verkiesing gestaan het. Daar was egter knooppunte en Jaap Durand, wat op daardie stadium binne die ANC kamp vertrou geniet het, moes raadgee en weë deur 'n moeilike politieke landskap help vind. Sy eerste vraag toe ek die telefoon optel, het my half onkant gevang – “Hoe naby beweeg jy aan jou skoonpa?” Toe ek bevestig dat ons wel op goeie voet verkeer, het Jaap my meegedeel dat hy binne vyf minute by my sou wees. In die privaatheid van ons sitkamer het hy sy dilemma en die doel van sy besoek verduidelik.

Skygbaar was die ANC kort voor die 1994-verkiesing bewus van die gevaar van militêre verset uit die geleedere van wit konserwatiewes. Die situasie was uiters plofbaar. Die probleem het spesifiek betrekking gehad op die posisie van oud-generaal Constand Viljoen, eertydse hoof van die Weermag en leier van die destydse Vryheidsfront. Die Vryheidsfront was skepties ten opsigte van die opkomende verkiesing en traag om deur deelname 'n proses te legitimeer wat hulle sou marginaliseer. Beter waarborge vir die beskerming van hulle regte is gesoek. Genl Viljoen was onder groot druk om die verkiesing te boikot en militêre verset te lei wat die politieke prosesse tot stilstand sou bring en die land in voortslepende chaos en konflik kon dompel. Dit was die boodskap wat van sy tweelingbroer, Braam Viljoen, wat ANC-gesind was en Dakar destyds meegemaak het, deurgekom het. Sy advies was dat iemand invloedryk en gematigd soos Carel Boshoff Constand sou kon oortuig om af te sien van die gevaarlike koers en sy volgelinge mee te neem in die verkiesing. Nadat met Boshoff gepraat is, was sy onverwagse en verrassende advies: “Praat eers van ANC kant met my vriend Chris Jooste (my skoonpa) – sy mening kan help, dit kan selfs van deurslaggewende belang wees”.

Chris Jooste was in die sewentigerjare direkteur van SABRA (Suid-Afrikaanse Buro vir Rasse Aangeleenthede) en het op daardie stadium afgetree in Vredendal gewoon. Hier het hy heelwat nagedink en geskryf oor die wenslikheid en praktiese uitvoerbaarheid van 'n sogenaamde volkstaat vir Afrikaners. Hy was 'n naby vriend van Boshoff en is deur Boshoff beskryf as “die belangrikste denker en teoretikus” oor die volkstaatgedagte. Vir Boshoff was sy opinie en advies binne die bestaande krisis van die grootste belang.

Ek het my skoonpa se sentimente oor baie jare redelik goed leer ken, ook kennis geneem van sy boeke oor die volkstaatgedagte. Ek was egter nie op hoogte met sy posisie en invloed binne daardie geleedere nie. Hy is 'n stil, beskeie man met sterk oortuigings, maar iemand wat homself nooit op die voorgrond sou stoot nie. Nou moes daar op advies van Boshoff en op aandrang van Jaap Durand bemiddel word. Jaap en Braam Viljoen was bereid om die rit van Kaapstad Vredendal toe aan te pak om te praat oor die moontlike voorwaardes en terme waaronder die generaal oortuig en moontlik oorgehaal kon word tot deelname aan die verkiesing. En hierin was my skoonpa nou 'n sleutelpersoon.

My skoonpa het min verbasing laat blyk met my oproep, en alhoewel hy, trou aan sy eie beskeie geaardheid, aanvanklik gewonder het waarom hy onder die omstandighede skielik 'n uitverkore gespreksgenoot sou wees, het hy ingestem tot so 'n ontmoeting. Die gevolg was dat Durand en Viljoen een laatmiddag afgesit het Vredendal toe om daar weg van enige openbare verhoog, 'n redelik belangrike onderhandeling in die ontluikende geskiedenis van die nuwe demokrasie te gaan voer. Daar is, soos ek dit verstaan, wedersyds verneem wat die ononderhandelbare kwessies sou wees, watter versekerings wedersyds van die onderskeie partye vereis sou word. Enkele weke daarna is die knoop deurgehaak. Die Vryheidsfront het sy toetrede tot die verkiesing aangekondig en die militêre opsie eenkant toe geskuif. 'n Volkstaatraad is later met die instemming van die ANC in die lewe geroep om die konserwatiewe Afrikaner-minderheid se belange te verteenwoordig.

Sedertdien het Jaap my al meermale gewys op die waarde van hierdie skynbaar onbenullige ontmoeting. Dit was maar een van verskeie soortgelyke inisiatiewe van diplomatie agter die skerms wat hierdie merkwaardige man oor die jare onderneem het om ons land 'n goed bewoonbare plek te help maak, asook om die NG Kerk familie tot 'n meer geloofwaardige getuie te help vorm. Jaap, ons eer jou hiervoor en dankie vir jou altyd toegeneë en lojale vriendskap.

CAREL ANTHONISSEN is Direkteur van die Centre for Christian Spirituality.

Teologie is lewensbelangrik vir gister, vandag en môre

JOHAN BOTHA

In 1974 was ek 'n eerstejaar Teologie student aan die Kweekskool op Stellenbosch, in die lokaal links van die groot voordeur, geïnteresseerd in alles, nuuskierig en leergierig, in die tweede ry van voor af, juis om behoorlik te kan meeleeft. Ek was toe al 'n senior student op die kampus, want BA Admissie was reeds agter my rug. Ons was pas klaar met die eerste van 'n gereelde dubbelperiode by ons senior dosent in die Sistematiese Teologie, Prof Pottie (FJM Potgieter). Hy was besig om Herman Bavinck se *Handleiding bij het onderwijs in den christelijken godsdienst* met ons te behandel. Sy metode was jaar na jaar om saam met ons deur 'n handboek te lees-blaai. Hy het ons deurgaans belangrike fokusse laat onderstreep en daarop korter of langer mondelinge kommentaar gemaak. As jy 'n student voor jou se boek gebruik het, was dit soos myne alles klaar vir jou onderstreep. Prof Pottie se fokus op dié betrokke dag was op Bavinck se standpunte met betrekking tot die verbond van genade in paragraaf 11, punt 42. Bavinck beklemtoon dat “die genade iets anders en hoër as die natuur is, dat dit by laasgenoemde aansluit, dit nie vernietig nie maar herstel. Die genade stroom voort in die bedding van die natuurlike verhoudinge van die menslike geslag en word voortgesit in families, geslagte en volke op 'n historiese en organiese wyse”. Ons professor het dié formulering benadruk en vir ons aangedui dat dié die afsonderlike ontwikkeling van volkere en groepe by ons in kerk en samelewing syns insiens duidelik en fundamenteel teologies begrond het.

Van huis uit en komende vanuit die NGSK was ek teologies en sosiaal fundamenteel anders georiënteer. Ek en twee klasmaats het aan Prof Pottie ons ongemak met sy gedagtelyk te kenne gegee. Ons was oortuig hy het Bavinck se teologiese perspektief verwring en dié teologiese formuleringe dus verkeerdlik gebruik om die Suid-Afrikaanse rasse apartheidsbestel goed te praat. Ons het self geoordeel dat Bavinck eintlik die besondere punt wou maak dat God in liefdevolle genade ons ou menslike natuur nie vernietig nie, maar dit as Herskepper herstel sodat ons as nuwe mense kan leef en werk, dien en getuig in koninkryksbelang. Ek en my twee klasmaats kon dus nie die verband tussen Bavinck se fundamenteel teologiese klem en ons professor se apartheidsdenke insien en toegee nie. Ek was persoonlik ontstemd en het geoordeel sy interpretasie was misleidend, met nadelige gevolge vir ons lewe in kerk en samelewing.

In die paar minute tussen die twee klasperiodes, het ons drie ons vraaggereg met hom voortgesit. Prof Pottie het ons vriendelik aangeluister. Hy het egter gemeen ons verstaan nie mooi nie, want na sy oordeel was ons teologiese kennis nog beperk. Toe

versoek hy ons om asseblief nie verder in klastyd vrae te vra nie, maar om hom liefste toe te laat om ons eers in die wêreld van die sistematiese teologie in te lei. Hy was seker dat ons mettertyd beter insig sou ontwikkel, ook in sy toepassing van Bavinck se teologiese perspektief. Hy was natuurlik in een opsig heeltemal reg. Die saak sou inderdaad later weer ter sprake kom.

Dié insident met Prof Pottie het daartoe bygedra dat ek vir baie lank gesukkel het om geïnteresseerd te bly in die sistematiese teologie en die belangrike konsekwensies daarvan vir ons lewe en werk in die kerk en samelewing. Ek het wel enduit Prof Pottie se lesings bygewoon en sy toetse en eksamens afgelê tot hy in 1977 afgetree het, maar sonder my aanvanklike toewyding. Ons jonger dosent in dié vakgebied, professor WD Jonker, se besondere entoesiasme, sy uiters knap beheersing van die lesingmateriaal en sy moedige prediking het my wel geïnspireer om belangstelling te bly behou.

En toe, in 1977 sit ek as finale jaar Teologie student, in die tweede ry van agter af, saam met my klasmaats in dieselfde lokaal as in 1974. Een uitkoms van die NGK se Jeug tot Jeug aksie was 'n reuse eerstejaarsklas wat net in ons tradisionele vierdejaarsklaskamer aan die bokant van die Kweekskool se trap kon inpas. Ons klas moes dus weer af ondertoe na daar waar ons met ons teologiese studies begin het.

Tydens iemand se sabbatsverlof was Prof Jaap Durand daardie jaar vir een semester lank ons gasdosent. Sy eintlike werkplek was die NGSK se Teologiese Skool aan die UWK waar hy Sistematiese Teologie doseer het. Komende uit die NGSK was ek self baie dankbaar dat iemand uit daardie geweste en van sy formaat by ons kon kom klasgee. Dit was bekend dat hy uitsonderlik knap was. Daarby het ek toe al sy besonder openbarende boek *Swartman, stad en toekoms* (1970) gelees en ek was onder die indruk van sy insig in en sensitiwiteit vir die wêreld van ons swart broers en susters en ons verhoudingsvraagstukke. Sy oopskryf van hierdie, vir myself onbekender, swart kant van ons samelewing het by my fyner aanvoeling vir reg en geregtigheid in ons konteks help ontwikkel. Ons tyd was inderdaad een van beroering. Op 16 Junie 1976 het die swart jeug byvoorbeeld landwyd teen Afrikaans as gedwonge onderwysaal in opstand gekom. Slegs enkele dae later is die Erika Theron Kommissieverslag se sensitiewe en moedige aanbevelings oor die politiek-sosiale toekoms van die bruin gemeenskap gepubliseer. Die wese daarvan is reeds in 1976 in 'n tussentydse memorandum deur die regering van die dag afgewys met ras en volksgroep gebaseerde argumente en in 1977 deur hulle verwerp. Dít het diep wonde geslaan en saam met ander soortgelyke gebeure ons Suid-Afrikaanse samelewing se landskap en geskiedenis fundamenteel gerig. In Kaapstad het die Gereformeerde Ekumeniese Sinode (GES) net na die Junie 1976 opstand vergader en daar was die NG Kerk se teologiese denke en ekklesiologiese strukture uiteraard onder die ekumeniese vergrootglas. Ek het vir die eerste maal sittings van só 'n openbare ekumeniese vergadering as waarnemer bygewoon. Teen hierdie agtergrond was ek dankbaar oor en besonder afwagkend op Prof Jaap se interaksie met ons finalejaarsklas in Sendingmetodiek.

Hy het die grondslae van en die probleme rondom die NG Kerk se sendingreglement met ons behandel en 'n wye reeks handboeke en dokumente met die oog daarop as leeswerk aan ons voorgeskryf. Proff WJ van der Merwe se *Gesante om Christus wil*, CWH Boshoff se *Kerklike verhoudinge in die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk*, WD Jonker se *Sendingbepalinge van die NG kerk in Transvaal* (1962). Twee 1977 NG Kerk Uitgewers pamflette deur Prof FJM Potgieter was hierby. In die een oor *Gesamentlike aanbidding* is sy standpunt dat die skepping die herskepping struktureer, nogmaals aan die hand van Bavinck se genoemde aanhaling hierbo begrond. Twee *NGTT* artikels van BC Lategan en JA van Wyk met gedeeltes uit Durand se eie doktorstesis in die sendingwetenskap oor die *Una Sancta Catholica in Sendingperspektief* (1961) en die lewendige *Kerkbode* korrespondensie van 1975 en 1976 in dié verband is ook deur ons bestudeer.

In die klas het Prof Jaap die grondliggende probleme met die kerkbeskouing van die NG Kerk vir ons helder en teologies uitgewys. Sy klem op die openbaringshistoriese aard van die teologie en die heilshistoriese aard van die hermeneutiek het my nuuskierigheid oor die verhouding tussen sistematiese teologie en ons keuses en handeling binne ons eie *lewenswêreld* opnuut aangewakker. Hy het my en my Stellenbosch klasmaats uitgedaag: Wat en hoe dink julle self teologies oor *Ras, volk en nasie, volkereverhoudinge in die lig van die Skrif*? Die NGK se 1974 Algemene Sinode het soos nog nooit tevore nie, in dié beleidstuk 'n sistematies en Bybels teologiese grondslag gegee vir apartheid in kerk en staat. Nie geografiese bepaaldheid nie, maar die volkereverskeidenheid, “verskillende bevolkingsgroepe”, oftewel biologiese afstamming is tot dié hermeneutiese beginsel verhef. En die verhouding van die plaaslike kerk en die kerkverband is in dié lig bepaal. Prof Jaap het ons uitgenooi om openlik te sê wat ons daarvan dink en ons daarvoor laat debat voer, nes met sy studente aan UWK. Julle is eersdaags predikante, het hy ons herinner. Hoe verantwoord julle julleself oor die beleidstuk se teologiese en ekklesiologiese uitgangspunte? Ons moes fundamenteel teologies dink en saampraat oor die inkonsekwentheid in die beleidstuk, die implikasies vir ons kerk en samelewing, en oor ons eietydse uitdagings.

Ek het Prof Jaap se eie onderskeidende en rigtinggewende teologiese opmerkings in ons 1977-klasdebat vir myself neergeskryf. Ek was beïndruk en bemoedig deur sy uitnodigende, ondersoekende en moedige styl om fundamenteel teologiese diskoers in verband met die heersende kerk- en landsvraagstukke in klastyd te stimuleer en ons daarin te help fokus. My besluit om doktorsale studie in die 1980's juis onder sy leiding by UWK te onderneem, is diepgaande deur hierdie lesingreeks by ons beïnvloed. Uiteindelik kon hy die formele toesig oor my studie nie self deursien nie. Toe hy die vise-reaktor van UWK word, moes hy noodgedwonge dié verantwoordelikheid oorgee aan sy kollega Prof Dirkie Smit. Ek was wel baie dankbaar dat hy as mede-eksaminator my verhandeling finaal kon beoordeel. Daarin het ek oor Dietrich Bonhoeffer se teologiese denke en praxis binne sy eie historiese verband van Nazi Duitsland nagedink met die oog op ons uitdagings in ons eie apartheidskonteks.

As eksaminator was dit vir Prof Jaap belangrik en bevredigend dat die teologiese refleksie in die verhandeling oor *skuldbelydenis en plaasbekleding* direk met die sosio-historiese konteks van die 1980's en ons gepaardgaande uitdagings en stryd in kerk en samelewing verband gehou het. Teologie is immers lewensbelangrik, juis met die oog op ons lewe en werk binne verskillende verbande, gister, vandag en môre.

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The unification/re-unification process in the reformed churches: Is there still time for the DRC to pass the acid test?

NICO BOTHA

Recently I was asked by the URCSA moderature to be part of a delegation to meet with a contingent from the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC). The WARC was invited by URCSA and by the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) to mediate in the deadlock on unification talks at the national level. In a way the situation is quite serious with the moratorium on talks decided upon by the URCSA General Synod in October 2008 still intact and the DRC suggesting that this is exactly what causes the delay in the unification process. The DRC for its part appears to be caught between being very close to unification as far as the leadership is concerned and a very reluctant membership, particularly on the issue of the Belhar Confession.

The Benoni talks between URCSA, the DRC and WARC from 4 to 6 March 2009 reminded me strongly of a brilliant little article written by Jaap Durand in the early 1990s in which he expresses a feeling of *déjà vu* in dealing with issues of church unity. It is that feeling of I have been there, have done it all and I have a T-shirt to show.

The brilliance of the article referred to does not lie so much in its academic prowess – it was not meant to be a scholarly article, I suppose – but in the sharpness of focus on what it is that causes the DRC to constantly delay the unification with the black Dutch Reformed churches. The strength of the presentation is the remarkable balance between not becoming cynical, nor being judgmental and yet exposing the actual motivation for the delay on the part of the DRC in a manner that is profoundly prophetic. An example *par excellence* of speaking the truth in love.

Durand's article is simply entitled "Church unity and the Reformed churches in Southern Africa", giving nothing away of what is to follow. Essentially Durand identifies racism to be at the root of the reluctance by the DRC to move faster on the issue of church unity between the members of the DRC family of churches. He does so in a radical fashion. If one were to do a reading "in front of the text", the category which features most strongly in the article is "racism". It strikes one as extremely remarkable that in a little presentation of five pages or so, the term "racism" appears eighteen times in one form or another. Even a superficial rhetorical analysis of the text will reveal that the core issue for Durand in trying to answer the question on why it is so difficult for the DRC to make rapid progress with the unification, is racism.

What is the alternative to racism in the framework of the unification process? In what Durand considers to be the crux of the matter, the acid test for the DRC, he suggests that the test to be passed by the DRC is the rapid movement to a restructured unified and non-racial church. The notion of a united non-racial church is raised by Durand almost as profusely as the issue of racism. A count shows that it features ten times in the article. Perhaps the most profound sense in which the notion of a united non-racial church appears in the article is in reference to the March 1989 Declaration of Vereeniging where the ideal of “one, united, non-racial Reformed church in Southern and Central Africa” finds expression.

In all fairness to the DRC, the question to be asked in this instance, sixteen years after Durand wrote the article under discussion, is whether they had not moved significantly closer to unification now, if the following developments are taken into consideration: the lifting of the suspension of 1982 by WARC in Debrecen, Hungary in 1997, in particular the advancements made at Esselen Park and Achterberg 1 and 2 in recent times, the manner in which the DRC is trying to deal with racism internally and specifically also the way in which it tries to deal with the Confession of Belhar.

As then with the article of Durand, so now the argument remains: If indeed the DRC has made all of these advancements, if indeed “there had been a fundamental change in the theological thinking of the Dutch Reformed Church”, why is it so difficult to take the next step in passing the acid test of entering into a uniting, non-racial Reformed church with others? This will be the ultimate proof, if Durand is understood correctly, that the DRC has finally distanced itself from the racism of apartheid.

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Vernuwing en kontinuïteit

VINCENT BRÜMMER

In die vyftiger jare van die vorige eeu, toe Jaap en ek in die Kweekskool was, het die skaduwee van die Du Plessis stryd nog oor die inrigting gehang. Baie van die dosente het dit as hulle taak beskou om die teologiese ortodoksie (en vir sommiges ook die politieke ortodoksie van die tyd!) te handhaaf en te verdedig. Een van die professore het byvoorbeeld vir ons geen handboeke voorgeskryf nie, maar aantekeninge gedikteer in die klas. Soos hy verduidelik het, was daar helaas geen handboeke beskikbaar wat “vanuit ons standpunt geskryf is nie”. Blykbaar het hy dit as sy opdrag beskou om ons te vertel wat ons standpunt is! Akademies was dit ’n baie onbevredigende manier om ingelei te word in die teologie. Tog was dit leersaam om bewus te word van sowel die gevare as die waarde van teologiese ortodoksie. ’n Ortodoksie wat die tradisionele leer tot ’n stel ontwyfelbare aksiomas maak, vereis nie alleen van ons ’n voortdurende *sacrificium intellectus* nie, maar verander die evangelieboodskap ook tot ’n tydllose en onveranderlike “waarheid” wat nie relevant of toereikend kan bly vir die aktuele eise van die lewe en die veranderende werklikheid waarin gelowiges hulle bevind nie. Aan die ander kant maak die ortodoksie ons bewus van die kontinuïteit van die tradisie in terme waarvan gelowiges hulle ervaring van die wereld interpreteer en aan hulle lewens vorm gee. Teoloë wat in hulle vernuwingstryd hierdie kontinuïteit verontagsaam, loop gevaar om hulle boodskap ’n vorm te gee wat dit onherkenbaar maak vir die gemeenskap van gelowiges vir wie dit bedoel is. Op die Kweekskool het ek dus geleer dat teologie altyd beoefen word in die spanningsveld tussen vernuwing en kontinuïteit.

Die starre ortodoksie waaronder Jaap en ek deurgeloopt het, was nie altyd tiperend vir die Kweekskool nie. Vir die vaders van die Kweekskool, John Murray en Nicolaas Hofmeyr, voor wie se standbeeld Jaap en ek elke dag by die Kweekskool langs geloopt het, was die vroomheid belangriker as die leer. Die liefdesrelasie tussen die hemelse Vader en sy gelowige kind is ’n lewende relasie wat nuwe vorme aanneem onder nuwe omstandighede waarin die kind met nuwe uitdagings en nuwe vrae te make kry. Volgens Hofmeyr “verouder die maatskaplike vorm en het die menslike gees behoefte aan nuwe vorme wat nuwe insigte en beskouings uitdrukking gee”.¹ Die kind het daarom steeds nuwe woorde nodig om sy geloofservaring onder nuwe omstandighede te bely. Hofmeyr beklemtoon egter ook die kontinuïteit tussen die nuwe en die oue. “Ek sê nie dat op dié wyse die oue uitgedien raak, dat alles tot niet gedaan word en dat van *vooraf aan iets nuuts begin moet word nie* ... Verandering is nie

1 NJ Hofmeyr, *Teenstellinge in die lewe en leer van die Christen* (Stellenbosch: CSV, 1946), p. 112.

louter verwoesting nie, maar ook vernuwing”² Die veranderingsproses in die denke van die kinders van God vind daarom plaas in die spanningsveld tussen vernuwing en kontinuïteit. Daarom gaan hierdie proses ook dikwels gepaard met stryd. “Soms word die een en ander kind van God tot ’n *besondere* getuienis geroep, as vir hom naamlik ’n waarheid duidelik word, wat vir andere nog verberg is, altans deur hulle nie bely word nie ... So ’n getuie wek in die reël groot weerstand op, selfs by Gods kinders wat in ander sake met die getuie saamstem. So ’n getuie is in die reël sy tyd en omgewing vooruit. Geen wonder dat sy getuienis, altans in die begin, selfs deur die bestes verwerp word. Alle groot waarhede moet deurgaans ten koste van baie lyding die oorgelewerde dwalinge oorwin.”³ Jaap was so ’n vernuwer in die kerk en die samelewing en kan daarom saampraat oor hierdie stryd waarvan Hofmeyr getuig het.

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2 Hofmeyr, *Teenstellinge*, p. 113.

3 NJ Hofmeyr, *Niet knecht maar kind* (Kaapstad 1896), p. 288.

Oor die eenheid van die kerk

COENIE BURGER

Terwyl ek die afgelope Januariemaand saam met ons kinders in Cambridge sit en wag het op die aankoms van ons eerste kleinkind, het ek Jaap Durand se proefskrif *Una Sancta Catholica in Sendingperspektief* weer gelees. Ek het dit saamgeneem as leesstof vir die tyd met die stille verwagting dat ek weer hoop en moed en dalk ook wysheid sou kry vir die sukkelende verenigingsproses tussen ons Familie van NG Kerke.

Jaap was sy lewe deur diep verbind aan die eenheid van die kerk – nie net as ’n teologiese gedagte nie, maar as iets wat in die praktyk gedoen behoort te word.

Die boek het my gehelp om te verstaan waar dit vandaan kom en hoe diep dit by hom gelê het. Die lees van die boek was baie goed vir my en het my in meer as een opsig bemoedig en gehelp. Ek sal graag vier (noodwendig kort) opmerkings wil maak rondom van die groter temas van die boek.

Eerstens, het die boek opnuut die vermoede by my bevestig dat daar min dinge in die kerk is wat so belangrik is as juis die eenheid van die kerk. Baie ander goed wat ons doen en waaraan ons ons lewens wy, loop gevaar om feitlik geneutraliseer te word in waarde as ons nie die belangrikheid van die eenheid verstaan en genoeg energie daaraan gee nie.

Wie onbevange luister na die getuienis van die Skrif kan geen twyfel hê dat die eenheid van die kerk te doen het met die wese van die kerk nie – nie maar net die welwese nie. Ons glo in één kerk omdat daar net één God en Heer, net één Gees en liggaam, net één Doop, één geloof en één hoop en roeping is. As ons die verskeurdheid van die kerk aanvaar – of van die pluriformiteit ’n gelyke beginsel as die eenheid maak – rys die vraag lewensgroot of ons enigsins waardige getuies van hierdie een God kan wees.

Tweedens, het die boek my weer oortuig dat juis die sending een van die diepste teologiese, maar ook praktiese motiverings vir die eenheid van die kerk is.

Die boek speur juis die verhouding na. In die middelste deel van die boek word aangetoon hoe die wonderlike verhaal van die sending van die kerk gestrem, gekompliseer en by tye feitlik verongeluk is deur die gebrek aan eenheid. Aan die ander kant hoor ons in hoofstuk 5 hoe juis die behoefte aan ’n eenheidsgetuienis by die jonger kerke van hulle (onder andere die kerk in Indië) geïnspireer het om tot kerkverenigings te kom waaroor hulle moederkerke nie eens sou kon droom nie.

By die lees van die hoofstuk het ek weer onthou hoe Jaap in ’n informele gesprek tussen NG en VG leiers ’n paar jaar gelede vir ons gesê het: “Julle gaan dit nie

prakties regkry as julle nie 'n groot "saak" (cause) het nie". Waar woorde – wat ek met my hele hart glo.

Die derde motief wat Jaap ter sprake bring – weliswaar meer sydelings – is die vraag na die rol van belydenis of waarheid in die ekumeniese proses. Synde 'n gereformeerde (en 'n dogmatikus) sou 'n mens nie anders kon verwag nie. So belangrik as wat die eenheid is, weet almal dat ons nie die waarheidsvraag in die gesprek oor eenheid kan ignoreer nie.

Ek het na die lees van die dele in die boek wat hieroor handel tog gevoel dat ek graag met Jaap verder hieroor sou wou praat. Nie omdat ek verskil met wat hy daar sê nie, maar omdat ervaring in ons eie proses die afgelope dekade my geleer het hoe maklik die waarheidsmotief misbruik kan word. Ek wil waag om te sê dat die deursnee gereformeerde predikant in ons land (NG en VG – en te meer nog die ander!) dink dat waarheid belangriker is as eenheid en dat belydenisverskille (wat dit ookal mag wees!?) meer as legitieme grond vir kerkskeuring is. Met hierdie standpunt het ek persoonlik groeiende probleme – tot op die punt dat ek soms voel dat ons die Reformasie se skeuring te maklik verdedig.

Ek meen die verhouding waarheid en eenheid is kompleks as wat ons huidige definisies suggereer. Ons sal hieroor verder moet praat – ook oor die rol wat belydenis en belydenisskrifte in die proses speel.

Vierdens is ek baie jammer dat Jaap nie die geleentheid gekry het om 'n klompie ekklesiologiese perspektiewe of stellings wat hy hier en daar in die proefskrif aanstip verder prakties uit te werk nie. Dit is te meer jammer omdat Jaap iemand is wat baie praktykervaring het en wat – weet ek – wel deeglik oor 'n klompie van die vroeë gedink het.

Ek is lankal van oortuiging dat ons 'n te verbeeldinglose ekklesiologie bedryf omdat ons die werk van die Gees in dié verband nie ernstig genoeg neem nie. Ons sukkel met gestaltegewing – ook aan die eenheid – omdat kerkordelikes ons soms verlei om aan historiese modelle van kerk-wees en kerk-verband ewigheidswaarde te gee.

Dalk is dit nog nie te laat om met hom hieroor in gesprek te gaan nie!

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Huldigingswoord aan Jaap Durand

BERNARD COMBRINK

Dit is 'n besondere voorreg om erkenning te probeer gee aan 'n heel besondere vriend, akademikus, gereformeerde teoloog en gelowige mens.

Toe ons aan die begin van 1976 na Stellenbosch verhuis het, was JFF Durand bloot 'n naam van wie ek as 'n Tukkie wel geweet het, maar nooit persoonlik ontmoet het nie. Weens gemeenskaplike vriende, het ons redelik gou ontmoet. Gaandeweg het ons kontak vermeerder, enersyds deur akademiese skakeling tussen die teologiese kollegas van die Universiteit Stellenbosch en die Universiteit van Wes-Kaapland (UWK), andersyds deur uitstappies as gesinne oor naweke na onder meer die Sederberge en kusdorpe. In dié ontspanne sfeer het ek hom leer ken as 'n fanatiese speler van elke moontlike spel, om nie van sy stokperdjie soos die bou van modelle van antieke skepe, asook sy gawes as ontwerper en tekenaar te vergeet nie (wat ook vir die UWK later ten goede gekom het). Jaap kon en het die lewe saam met sy gesin en vriende geniet.

In die bewoë laat sewentiger jare het ek die geleentheid gehad om vir enkele jare gereeld op 'n deelydse basis aan die UWK te doseer. Ons het dikwels saamgery en tussen Stellenbosch en die UWK is daar oor 'n wye reeks onderwerpe gesels en teologies argumenteer. Dikwels het die sistematikus en die eksegeet lekker koppe gestamp, maar my waardering vir die wyse waarop hy as dogmatikus steeds deeglik met die teks van die Woord rekening gehou het, het algaande gegroei. Dit was ook die tyd van Durand en Jonker se gesamentlike *Wegwysers in die dogmatiek* en daar is dikwels oor problematiese aspekte van die publikasie in wording gesels.

Die jare waarin ek bevoorreg was om Jaap en sy gesin steeds beter te leer ken, was bewoë jare in die land, in kerke, veral in die Ned Geref Kerkfamilie, en ook aan die UWK. Dit was die tyd waarin die bekende foto geneem is van die rubberkoeël wat rakelings by sy kop verbyvlieg. Dit was 'n spanningsvolle tyd waarin hy dikwels op onregverdige en ongegronde wyse deur talle (NG) kerklike kollegas gewantrou en verdag gemaak is. Tog het hy en sy kollegas steeds voortgegaan om die studente soliede gereformeerde en op die Skrif gefundeerde teologie te leer, iets wat al hoe meer ook in die sinodale debatte van die NG Sendingkerk en later die Verenigende Gereformeerde Kerk deurgewerk het. Hierdie teologiese onderbou en kritiese en indringende gesprekke ook in die teologiese lesinglokaal, het uiteindelik die terrein help voorberei wat kon lei tot die konsepblydenis van Belhar in 1982 en die aanvaarding daarvan in 1986 as Blydenisskrif van die NG Sendingkerk en later die Verenigende Gereformeerde Kerk.

JAAP DURAND FESTSCHRIFT

Elders in hierdie bundel sal wel ook verwys word na sy reuse rol as administrateur in die Fakulteit Teologie en die Universiteit van Wes-Kaapland as geheel. Ook hierdie rol het Jaap met dieselfde onkreukbare integriteit as alle ander fasette van sy lewe vervul. Samevattend wil ek verklaar dat my lewe, saam met dié van tallose ander, oneindig verryk is deur die lewe, gawes, integriteit, geloof en vriendskap van hierdie besonder begaafde mens.

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An early prophet of the impact of consumerism

ERNST M CONRADIE

As a theology student at Stellenbosch University in the mid-1980s I was deeply influenced by Jaap Durand's contributions to systematic theology. I was continuously impressed with the crystal clarity of his intellectual grasp of the material. During that time I also read his controversial book *Swartman, stad en toekomst* (Tafelberg, 1970). I wish to pay tribute to a chapter in this book, entitled "Stad en sekularisasie" (city and secularisation). In this chapter Durand expresses some remarkable foresight on an issue that was scarcely at the forefront of his engagements in the 1970s or the 1980s, but that is becoming increasingly more significant after the transition to democracy in 1994: the influence of materialism and the rise of consumerism as a dominant ideology in the South African context.

After 1994 there has been a very rapid transformation of the demographic profile of the affluent in South Africa with more and more people of colour joining the consumer class. However, the poorest 40% of the population is left further and further behind. Many have obtained access to housing and electricity but, crucially, not to employment or to education in good public schools. The stark economic inequalities have spurred on not only pervasive levels of crime and corruption but also a rampant form of consumerism, if not naked greed, not only among the wealthy elite but also among the lower middle class and the poor. In this context the prosperity gospel thrives. Consumerism was the topic of the Nelson Mandela Memorial lecture, delivered by the then President Thabo Mbeki on July 29, 2006. He noted:

Thus, everyday, ... the demons embedded in our society, ... advise, with rhythmic and hypnotic regularity – get rich! get rich! get rich! And thus has it come about that many of us accept that our common natural instinct to escape from poverty is but the other side of the same coin on whose reverse side are written the words – at all costs, get rich! ... In these circumstances, the meaning of freedom has come to be defined not by the seemingly ethereal and therefore intangible gift of liberty, but by the designer labels on the clothes we wear, the cars we drive, the spaciousness of our houses and our yards, their geographic location, the company we keep, and what we do as part of that company.

Whenever I engage in contemporary South African discussions of consumerism (which is with increasing frequency), it seems to me that Jaap Durand's early observations have lost nothing of their astuteness. In the abovementioned chapter Durand describes the religious impact of the process of urbanisation among the Xhosa in the Eastern Cape by the late 1960s. He observes a tendency that has puzzled demographers more recently, namely the lack of overt religious affiliation among a sizable sector of the

African population. This evidently does not suggest the absence of religious beliefs, some form of intellectual scepticism or the complete abandonment of the ancestral cult. Instead, Durand argues, this may be understood in terms of people who have adopted Christianity as a subconscious strategy to gain access to a Western way of life, the material wealth associated with that, and the cultural acceptability according to Western notions of civilised standards in an urban context. When the shallow veneer of Christianity was subsequently abandoned as not quite essential for such purposes in an urban environment, this led to an African form of secularisation, understood primarily in terms of a lack of overt religious affiliation.

Durand argues that this tendency should be understood in terms of the process of urbanisation and the economic motivation that prompted rural people to seek a better life in the city in the first place. It is a lack of money and therefore the need for jobs that attracted people to the city. The dominant aspiration of city dwellers is to obtain money, to find a point of entry to the world of financial power and to gain access to the ways of acquiring money, for example through education and training.

Although he acknowledges the role of status symbols associated with increasing wealth, Durand is careful not to characterise such cultural aspirations in terms of crass materialism. Instead, in a remarkable few paragraphs he associates this with the deepest intuitions of an African worldview. The quest for money is an expression of the typically African desire to gain control of processes that seem so far beyond one's own locus of control. Although the traditional African worldview is deeply spiritual, the spirit world is a world of powers that have a very obvious material impact in terms of sickness and health, rain and drought, fertility and barrenness. The focus is not so much on the supernatural but on the hidden forces within nature and the pragmatic need to manipulate these forces in one's own interest, admittedly within the wider horizon of the need to ensure cosmic harmony. The spirit world is therefore not far removed from the sources of power (energy) that drive material processes. Such sources of energy are often less than obvious and therefore "spiritual" – partly because these include strength of character, partly because of the role of chance and indeterminism.

On this basis Durand describes money as being far more than a dead means of transaction: it is a carrier of immense power. It is money that makes the world go round. Indeed, the presence of money lures more money. He shows how Western forms of materialism became easily intertwined with the materialist assumptions of an African worldview. He concludes that "The latent secularization, which remains an undercurrent of a cosmocentric worldview, awakens, amidst the processes of secularization experienced within this population group [the urbanising Xhosa in the Eastern Cape], a willing ally in Western secularism and materialism" (my translation). Durand finally observes the deep irony that this group of urbanised Xhosas tend to put their trust and their hope in that of which they have so desperately little: money.

It is indeed not only the affluent who are caught in the trap of consumerism. Tragically, the whole “global village” has come under the spell of the “American dream” of the pursuit of happiness here and now. Consumerism has become the dominant cultural trend in the whole world, certainly also in Africa. And, as Richard Foster once commented about the love of money: “Those who have it the least, love it the most.” The hope and yearning of South Africa’s poor is to achieve the standard of living that is so visibly portrayed by the affluent. They desire the affluence which they do not have and probably have little hope in obtaining. As William Gibson observes in the North American context, this is tragic: “The unhappiness often felt by persons of limited income is their sense that they have failed to meet the standards of success held by society and by themselves. They are not affluent but they wish they were. They want far more of the abundance displayed in the television commercials. They are saddled with debt because they have succumbed too frequently to the lure of the ads.”¹

With pastoral insight, theological acumen and analytical sharpness Jaap Durand, as early as 1970, identified and described the deepest roots of the Africanised form of consumerism that we are only now beginning to fathom.

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1 See William Gibson, “The lifestyle of Christian faithfulness” in M Schut (ed), *Simpler living compassionate life: A Christian perspective* (Denver: The Morehouse Group. Gibson, 1999), p. 133-134.

Wat beteken profetiese getuienis in die nuwe politieke bedeling?

ETIENNE DE VILLIERS

Jaap Durand word tereg – vanweë sy kritiek en optrede teen apartheid – as ’n eietydse profeet beskou. Wat beteken dit egter vandag, in die nuwe politieke bedeling, om profetiese getuienis te lewer? Op dié belangrike vraag kan ek onmoontlik in hierdie kort bydrae ’n behoorlike antwoord gee. Ek volstaan met die stelling dat ons in die nuwe demokratiese bedeling nie ver sou kom met ’n interpretasie van profetiese getuienis soos die een wat in die Kairos-dokument aan ons voorgehou word nie. In die Kairos-dokument word die profetiese benadering op ’n radikale wyse teenoor die hervormingsbenadering gestel en voorgehou as die enigste legitieme Christelike benadering. Die hervormingsbenadering word afgemaak as niks meer as die aanbring van ’n paar kosmetiese veranderinge aan ’n politieke stelsel wat ten diepste boos en onhervormbaar is nie. Christene word opgeroep om die profetiese benadering te volg, om die apartheidsregime radikaal te verwerp en die bevrydingstryd ondubbelsinnig te ondersteun.

As ’n mens die tyd en omstandighede in ag neem waarin die Kairos-dokument opgestel is, is so ’n radikale teenstelling van die profetiese- en hervormingsbenaderings verstaanbaar. Dit beteken nou egter nie dat die Kairos-dokument se siening vir alle tye geldig is nie. Om in ons samelewing nog steeds profetiese getuienis te verstaan as die radikale verwerping van die huidige regering en alle hervormingspogings van die regering af te maak as blote kosmetiese veranderinge, sou tog absurd wees.

Wat sou dan in die huidige politieke bedeling ’n bevredigende verstaan van profetiese getuienis en van die verhouding van die profetiese- en hervormingsbenaderings wees? Na my mening kan Walter Brueggemann se verstaan van bybelse profetiese getuienis in sy boek *The prophetic imagination* (1^{ste} uitgawe 1978, 2^{de} uitgawe 2001)¹ ons hier help. In die inleiding van die tweede uitgawe van sy boek onderstreep hy dat Bybelse profetiese tekste “are acts of imagination that offer and purpose ‘alternative worlds’”.² Hy werk daarom in sy boek die hipotese verder uit: “The task of prophetic ministry is to nurture, nourish, and evoke a consciousness and perception alternative to the consciousness and perception of the dominant culture around us”.³ Sy interpretasie van die sentrale boodskap van die profetiese boeke is dat hierdie alternatiewe bewussyn die

1 Walter Brueggemann, *The prophetic imagination* (second edition) (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001).

2 Brueggemann, *The prophetic imagination*, p. x.

3 Brueggemann, *The prophetic imagination*, p. 3.

weg wys na 'n alternatiewe godsdiens van die vryheid van God en 'n alternatiewe politiek van geregtigheid en medelye. Dit dien aan die een kant om die dominante bewussyn te *kritiseer* en te ondermyn. Aan die ander kant dien dit om individue en gemeenskappe te *inspireer* deur die belofte van 'n beter tyd en situasie.⁴

As ons die uitgangspunt neem in hierdie interpretasie van Bybelse profesie, hoef ons nie tot die gevolgtrekking te kom dat Christene 'n keuse moet maak tussen die profetiese- en hervormingsbenaderings nie. Indien dit die doel is van die profetiese benadering om 'n alternatiewe bewussyn te kweek wat ons in staat stel om die dominante kultuur te kritiseer en ons inspireer om te ywer vir 'n alternatiewe wêreld wat deur geregtigheid en medelye gekenmerk word, en dit die doel van die hervormingsbenadering is om konstruktief en stap vir stap te werk vir die optimale verwerking van hierdie ideale wêreld, kan ons dié twee benaderinge sien as wedersyds aanvullend en in 'n demokratiese politieke bestel is beide ook onontbeerlik.

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⁴ Brueggemann, *The prophetic imagination*, pp. 3-9.

Identity, God-given substitute and divine forgiveness (reconciliation)

PIETER JJS ELS

My aim with this presentation is quite limited, namely to put a few concepts (or rather realities) on the table which we should all take seriously and discuss with each other so as to understand the glorious facets of God's acts of love, justice and salvation in history.

It is for various reasons a privilege for me to make a contribution to this Festschrift in honour of Jaap Durand. We were inducted at the same occasion, in February 1973, as professors of Theology at the University of the Western Cape. We have over many years shared theological convictions on how vital it is to clearly and effectively communicate the biblical concept of God in a well-reasoned and friendly inter-faith dialogue with reference to other religious concepts of God. This common approach in terms of conviction and orientation is for example reflected in the recent publication by Jaap Durand, *The many faces of God*, and in this essay.

We should, irrespective of whether we are Christians or Muslims, appropriate the following revealed truths of the God of Abraham, Isaac, Ishmael and Jacob, in order to have a peaceful and secure future as children and servants of the one and only true God.

The first important reality is that of discovering one's true identity as believers in God.

∞ Abraham is obviously the supreme example and paradigm of a human being who could be a blessing to other people and to whole nations, during the course of world history. He was indeed such a blessing, as the spiritual father of all true believers, because he did accept and subsequently acted in accordance with his true identity which God spelt out for him when He called him to commit himself to Him in faith. Abraham / Ibrahim did indeed exercise the necessary faith and courage to follow God's command to act in terms of his (primary) faith identity which superseded all other (secondary) identities (ethnic, family and cultural). He was even willing to leave his father's house and social circle since his pagan father did not adhere to the new religious truths (knowledge) which the One and Only true God revealed to him. Thus, acting in terms of his faith identity, he did not allow inherited social relationships to keep him in captivity, but was willing to go to the far-away promised land to become such a blessing for millions of believers who became his spiritual descendants

(see e.g. Gen 12:1-5, Gen 22:15-18, Sura 16:120-123). As a consequence of his obedience, God made his name (his enduring significance) great – as promised and as it is up to this day, for all to see.

- ∞ Passages from the Old Testament and from the Qur'an which reflect this demand of God in terms of true identity include Gen 12:1-4 and Sura 60:4-6. According to the Qur'an (Suras 6:74, 19:41-50), Ibrahim argued and pleaded with his father to accept the newly-revealed divine knowledge in order that he could also believe in and obey God and no longer serve Satan; but he also prayed for his father (Suras 9:113-114 and 26:86).

The second important reality is contained in the theology of the Exodus narrative concerning the redeemed and liberated people of Yahweh. There are especially three important aspects of the revelation of this God of Moses and of Joshua, who lead oppressed slaves into a new situation of *rest* (see the book Joshua) in order to be a blessing also to other oppressed and disadvantaged peoples.

- ∞ God is the great liberator and saviour who, in terms of His love and grace (see Deuteronomy), always wants to rescue people who are victims of sin, oppression and enslavement (Ex 6:1-7).
- ∞ God's people (the 'am Yahweh) are liberated and redeemed in order to be in a personal relationship with Him and to serve, as His priests, the well-being of other people(s) (see especially Ex 19:5-6).
- ∞ In Joshua 24:2, 14-15 we read about the extremely important truth that God, according to the message delivered by Joshua (after the entry of the Israelites into Canaan), wants people to have freedom of choice in terms of religion. The central truths concerning divine salvation (also historically ascertainable) are to be presented. In terms of the divine revelation in the Bible people are then allowed to choose whom and how they want to worship and serve God. This will also determine their true identity. Any religious system which does not allow such freedom to make a personal choice in terms of one's religion, and the manner in which it is to be exercised, is inherently oppressive and is unacceptable in modern times.

It is also very important to realise that the message(s) of God's revelation (*tanzil*) should be viewed in terms of the overall configuration (i.e. theological structure) of such revealed truths (and not merely as isolated verses or truths). It should also be interpreted in terms of the historical context and circumstances in which the prophets lived when they claimed to have received the Word of God, in order for us to correctly determine the particular content and orientation of their messages and conduct. This of course also applies when one studies and evaluates the lives and messages of Jesus Christ and of Muhammad.

A third important truth which forms an inherent part of the revealed message of God consists of two closely-interrelated aspects which determine the personal relationship and hence the hoped-for reconciliation between God and human beings.

The Old and New Testaments portray the relationship into which God entered with believing human beings, (i) as initiated by God, by grace; (ii) as made permanent, from God's side, by means of a contract/a covenant. Hence, like a legalised marriage contract, the divine covenant is both a personal love relationship and a legally-binding contract which involves both privileges and responsibilities (see for example the Ten Commandments in Ex 20 and Deut 5).

Since the divine covenant(s) (to which the Qur'an also refers, without really dealing with its nature and theological meaning, Sura 2:83, 86, 93, 5:12-13,73) is both a love relationship and a judicial contract, it entails both gracious privileges (divine gifts) for those who are the children and servants of God as well as legal obligations – which should be adhered to as expressions of gratitude and of obedient service, in response to the gracious divine acts and gifts of salvation and the privilege of belonging to the *'am Yahweh*, the people of God.

In addition, on account of the nature of the divine covenant of election as a legal contract, it follows that when human beings fail to fulfil their covenantal obligations they incur debt/guilt which cannot merely be ignored or written-off by God, because that would counteract and break down His own created cosmic order of moral perfection, righteousness and justice. Even God's own supreme will cannot contradict His own moral nature and perfect standards of morality and justice.

Hence the incurred debt/sins of human beings must be acknowledged and addressed. Because nothing which human beings can do is ever perfectly accomplished, one can never totally make amends for one's sins (guilt) and repay one's debts before a holy God of justice.¹ On such a basis, one's future and reconciliation with God (i.e. salvation) will always be uncertain.

But it is exactly at this point where the amazing and all-encompassing love and mercy of the covenant God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Ishmael is reflected at its brightest. The other central aspect is that God Himself provides a ransom, a substitute, to pay the debt and the penalty for our sins: This is clearly reflected in the Holy Scriptures in the following passages:

In the Qur'an, in the story of Ibrahim being willing to sacrifice his son, this concept of a God-given substitute is mentioned without being further developed, namely in Sura 37:99-111 (see verse 107: "And we ransomed him with a momentous sacrifice").

1 See Da'ud Rahbar, *God of justice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

In the Old Testament (Taurat) this concept is already present much earlier in the historical process of God's progressive revelation, namely in the same Abrahamic narrative in Gen 22 as well as in the prophecy about the coming suffering servant in Isa 53 (approximately 500 years before the birth of Jesus Christ). In the New Testament it is also explicitly mentioned, for example in 2 Cor 5:14-15, 19.

In this regard the following aspects should be noted:

- ∞ God takes the initiative (as usual) and He provides the substitute.
- ∞ God actually takes the debt/the penalty upon Himself in Jesus Christ, the incarnate second person of the Triune God. A correct understanding of the concept of the Trinity is of central significance at this point.
- ∞ This theological trajectory of a substitute provided by God (who, in terms of His adopted human nature as the historical person Jesus Christ, then dies in place of human beings so that they could be forgiven and be reconciled to God) runs like a golden thread through the Bible.

This concept of a God-given substitute is evident throughout the centuries-old revelation of God as contained in His Holy Books (the Taurat, the Zabur, the Injil and the Qur'an) (see Sura 3:84 and the Letter to the Hebrews 1:1), for example (i) in Gen 3:21 (God, clothing sinful man with animal skins); (ii) in the divinely instituted sacrificial system (Lev 16:5-10, Lev 17:11-12); (iii) in the already mentioned narrative of Abraham/Ibrahim called upon by God to sacrifice his son in obedience to His command (in Gen 22 and Sura 37:99-111, see especially verse 107), and (iv) in Jer 23:5-6 and Isa 53:4-11 where the Suffering Servant of God is portrayed – who dies vicariously because God causes the punishment for human sins to come down upon Himself. Through his vicarious death, the guilt/debts are eradicated and cancelled before a Holy God. On this basis He can forgive the sinner who is therefore reconciled to Him and so the believer henceforth has a secure and peaceful future. But something even more amazing then happens to the believer, who is thereby spiritually, psychologically and physically restored and healed (see Isa 41:8-14). In Jer 23:5-6 the One who is to be born from the dynastic family of king David is called by and is therefore identified with Yahweh, the One and Only God. Persons who are identified with Him in faith thereby receive righteousness (*sēdaqah*) as a gracious divine gift.

This Servant is in fact Immanuel, "God with us" (Isa 7:14, 9, Jer 23). This amazing truth means that God Himself in terms of His sovereign self-sacrificing love for us, both as the righteous Judge and the Loving Father, takes the pronounced sentence for the sins of his children upon Himself. In so-doing He liberates (redeems) them from the captivity of sin and self-centredness and changes their very being into becoming grateful children who devote their entire life to their Father's business.

There is another wonderful truth which emerges from these redemptive acts of God, namely that the status of a believer in terms of this process of forgiveness and reconciliation is changed from being a mere servant or subject into becoming an (adopted) child of God. They are called by name according to what God says in Isaiah 43:1 and 44:1-5. The New Testament states quite clearly that a believer is adopted as a child of God (John 1:14, 14; see also what Jesus said in John 14:6-7, 10:14-18, 27-30).

To sum up: we must realise that saying that you worship God does not suffice to bring peace of mind and assurance of a positive future of eternal reconciliation and salvation in the presence of God. The basic and ultimate question remains: Am I reconciled to God, are my sins/my guilt before God eradicated and forgiven, am I acceptable to God, and if so, on what basis?

If I am not certain that I am reconciled to the one and only almighty God of justice, then I face an uncertain future of fear and possible damnation because I have not taken cognisance of the total package of forgiveness and reconciliation which the merciful but just God has revealed to humankind and which I will understand and accept in faith if I take the contents of all of His divinely revealed books into account (to which the Qur'an also refers as essential to consult). The two theological focal points, namely the covenant of grace (in its Old and New Testament formats) and the God-given substitute (as the "vicarious sacrificial Lamb"), form the basis for this divine plan of salvation. Not law-keeping and good works as such, but divine grace and a faithful and trusting obedience to God forms the basis to find "the straight way" (cf Sura 1: 6-7) to Him and to salvation (see also John 14:6).² Although the divine covenant is initiated by God in grace (as symbolised by circumcision in the Old Testament times and by infant baptism in the New Testament) human beings must also respond in faith to God's invitation to become a child and a servant of Him, in order to make the covenant effective in their lives.

It must be remembered that the true *millat Ibrahim*, the "religion of Abraham" which is referred to in Sura 2:130,135 entails not only a monotheistic belief in God like Ibrahim had, but also justification by faith, according to the Taurat (Pentateuch), as reflected in Gen 15:6: "Abram believed the LORD, and He credited it to him as righteousness."

This plan of God, proclaimed over at least twelve centuries during the Old Testament dispensation, was, as intimated earlier, implemented in and through the unique historical person, Jesus Christ. What His nature was and what He came to do cannot be determined merely in terms of the New Testament or the Qur'an alone

2 See once again the paradigm of the conduct of Abraham/Ibrahim as a supreme example of obedient faith in the One God and of justification by faith (see Gen. 15:6 and Rom. 10:1-4:2, Cor. 5: 14-15, 17-19).

but should be ascertained in the light of the total revelatory message of God, from the earliest parts of the Old Testament and throughout history. It must then be regarded as fulfilled in the era when Jesus Christ came into this world as Immanuel (God with us) and as the victorious Suffering Servant (see Isa 53:11-12, Jer 23:5-6, Micah 5:2, Mal 3:1-4).

As a final conclusion concerning this third concept and reality we should state that this Suffering Servant is, as seen in the brilliant light of the Isaianic divine revelation, Immanuel, God with us (see Isa 7:14, Isa 9:1-6, Isa 11:1-5, 10, Jer 23:5-6, Isa 61:1-3, 6, Isa 62:11-12, Isa 43:10-13, Isa 44:8, 45:5-6). He is therefore, essentially as the second Person of the Trinity, an eternal pre-existent part of the One and Only God and Saviour known in the Old Testament as Yahweh. The clearer revelation, in the New Testament, of this great mystery of the concept of the Trinity is obviously a part of what God already announced in the Old Testament times as the new and amazing things which He would reveal and do in the future, namely in the New Testament era and beyond (see Isa 48:6-7).

So it is actually God Himself who, in His wondrous grace and as an expression of His inconceivable love for us as undeserving, self-centred creatures (sinners), is both the righteous Judge who has to sentence us (cf Gen 3, Hosea 7:10-14) and the Loving Father (see Hosea 11 and 14:2-6) who takes the judicial punishment (sentence) for the transgressions and guilt of his rebellious child upon Himself (like a loving mother who dies in flames to rescue her child) (see Isa 53:1). God Himself and His Messiah (al-Masih) become His people's faithful Shepherd (cf Ezek 34:11-12, 24 and John 10:11-14, 25-38), as Jesus, the Messiah who as the Good Shepherd sacrifices his own life for his sheep.

The fourth important reality which we should bear in mind is the absolute necessity to distinguish between true and false prophets, in order that we would truly understand and adhere to God's message of reconciliation, salvation and service.

In terms of the theology of the Old and New Testaments there are basically three tests whereby people can determine whether a person who claims to be a true prophet of God is indeed what he or she claims to be, namely:

- ☞ whether the prophecy/prediction proclaimed is indeed fulfilled in history (see eg Deut 18:17-22, Jer 23:25-40);
- ☞ whether key aspects of the message of the new prophet are indeed in accordance with or in contrast to the messages which the previous prophets of God proclaimed, in terms of which such a person could then be judged to be a false or a true prophet (Jer 26:12-20; Micah 2:6);
- ☞ If the message of a prophet is tendentious in its orientation (like that of the nationalistic false prophets, who during the history of Israel only emphasised

certain aspects of God's covenant and expectations and disregarded other essential elements), then the message of that prophet is false and his proclamation will serve only his own selfish purposes or those of the people and definitely not the calling and cause of God. This is the reason why such a false prophet would some time or other come under the judgement of God.

In the time of Jesus Christ the majority of the Jewish leaders and theologians adopted such a tendentious and one-sided message by emphasising only one aspect of the coming Messiah, namely to be a royal saviour who would save his own people from oppression by other nations. They thus ignored and neglected the prophecies about Him as the spiritual saviour of people of all nations by being willing to be the Suffering Servant – who would die vicariously and thereby take upon himself and carry away their sins in order to redeem and reconcile them with God. This is the reason why, although some Jews rejected Jesus as Messiah in terms of his true nature and calling, other Jewish people, led by the Spirit of God, recognised him as being the recreating God, the true Saviour and LORD (see e.g. the attitude and confessions of Simeon and Anna in Luke 2:25-39).

Even Jesus may, in a sense, be put on the scale so as to ascertain whether he is indeed the Messiah and Saviour and Divine Lord whose coming in history was announced by the God of Abraham, Isaac Ishmael and Jacob during Old Testament times and promised through His prophets, long before Jesus' actual birth. In other words, the question was whether Jesus, in terms of his very being and ministry, fits this eschatological picture of the "One that was to come."

And so also the life, proclamation and conduct of Muhammad must be put on the scale and evaluated to determine whether he fits in with the messages of the previous God-sent prophets to which he refers for support concerning the claims of his message.³

In conclusion I want to refer to a final truth which pertains to the attitude and conduct which God requires of us in our dialogue with each other as people who believe in Him as the monotheistic God, who is introduced in the so-called "Abrahamic Faiths", namely Judaism, Christianity and Islam. This I do by using a metaphor of the two foci of an ellipse which are both necessary, without overemphasising the one focus or the other: "To speak the truth and remain in it, in love" (Eph 4:18). This means that one must investigate and share the truth(s) about God and His way of salvation in a friendly and loving manner so as not to, on the one hand, become merely relativistic "so that anything goes", or to, on the other hand, be intolerant and aggressive in proclaiming what we have heard and have become convinced of regarding the divine truth. In other

3 See also what Jesus Christ said about himself and what the Bible in Heb. 1:1 and 2 Cor. 5:18-19 mentions about Him. Concerning the certainty of salvation and forgiveness of sins which entails from all of this, see Rom. 10:8-13.

words, we must have the integrity, courage and perseverance to investigate and pursue the truth about God and the “total package” of salvation and peace which He offers us, but then “on His terms”. Truth/s has/have objective and subjective dimensions and can indeed, historically speaking, be ascertained and does/do not merely have to be purely subjective wishful thinking or one’s own “uncertain” creations, based on one’s emotions or rationalistic thinking.

Remember what Jesus (Nabi ‘Isa) said and assured us of, according to John 8:31-32 and 36: To the Jews who believed him, Jesus said, “If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free” (32). So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed (36).

PIETER JJS ELS taught Old Testament Studies in the former Faculty of Religion and Theology at the University of the Western Cape.

Integriteit in donker tye

PIETER GROVE

My lewenspad het ongeveer 29 jaar gelede met dié van Jaap Durand gekruis. Tydens die laaste maande van 1979 het 'n staking van swart en bruin werkers by die Fattis en Monis fabriek in Bellville uitgebreek. Die “onwettige” vakbond Food and Canning Workers Union, se bruin leierskap is ontslaan en die swart werkers het op 'n staking gegaan ter wille van hul kollegas. Die jaar 1979 was die nadraai van die groot studente-opstand van 1976 en 'n paar van ons teologiese studente het ondersteuningsbyeenkomste by die teologiese skool vir die werkers gereël. Daar was 'n gees van militantheid teen apartheid in die lug. Sleutelleiers onder die teologie-studente is die vorige jare tydelik geskors vanweë politieke betrokkenheid. Binne hierdie klimaat was daar sware suspisie teen enige wit akademikus. Die uitgesproke vermoede was dat “hulle” òf die apartheidsagenda òf die NGK se sendingbeleid bevorder. Ek het 'n meer senior student uitdruklik gevra wie Jaap Durand is en hy het my verwys na sy boek *Swartman, stad en toekoms*. 'n Wit akademikus, dienend in 'n swart “township”, besig om 'n gereformeerde gemeente onder die “surplus-mense” te bou toe instromingsbeheer op sy felste toegepas is. Ek het met nuwe oë na Jaap Durand gekyk.

Daar was 'n volslae afwesigheid van wantroue teenoor hom by die teologiese skool. Kerkleiers en studente het sy akademiese gawes waardeer. Jaap Durand was tuis op UWK. Hy het geen ander agenda gehad as om studente na die beste van sy vermoë toe te rus nie. UWK was geen halfwegstasie na 'n meer uitgelese leerstoel nie. UWK studente het met trots begin praat van die kwaliteit opleiding wat ons ontvang het. Die konsekwente aksente weg van 'n teologie van onversoenbaarheid en etniese oriëntasie het 'n diepe vertroue ingeboesem. Vir my het die teologiese skool een van die weinig plekke in Suid-Afrika geword, waar die saad van 'n nie-rassige, inklusiewe kerk en samelewing gekoester is.

Jaap Durand het as akademikus verder as die meeste ander in die geledere van die familie van NG Kerke, wit of swart, gegaan. Vir baie gelowiges én leiers, is dit steeds moeilik om buite 'n volks- of etniese paradigma te dink. Ek het Jaap Durand ervaar as 'n mens wat die werklikheid ken van Christelike geloof as 'n transformerende krag in die persoon én die gemeenskap. Ek meen dat sy teologie beter geanker is in die onpeilbare werklikheid van God as in die verbygaande “werklikhede” van die samelewing. Durand se bediening en leierskap herinner my aan Bonhoeffer se nadenke in *Life together*. Bonhoeffer bespreek die versoek van die twee seuns van Sebedeus, in Mark 10:35-45, om aan Jesus se regter en linkerhand te sit in sy koninkryk. Bonhoeffer sien hierdie versoek as die tipiese strategiese denke van die

aardse mens om vir hom/haarself 'n spesiale plek van invloed en voorreg te verseker. Maar Bonhoeffer is ook oortuig dat die nederigheid om te dien en laaste te wees eenvoudig nie in ons aanwesig is nie. Ons ware gemeenskap van diens, liefde, reg, ontsag en wedersydse agting word bemiddel deur Christus self.

Jaap Durand het sekerlik die strategiese posisies prysgegee, die spesiale gunste verloor, omgang met magtiges en welvarendes verbeur, en in vele opsigte weggedraai van die belange van "sy mense", die Afrikaners. Maar vir ons was en is hy 'n geloofsleier van integriteit, getrouheid en geestelike inspirasie, 'n ware broer in Christus. Sy voorbeeld sal baie inspireer jare nadat die bekendes in die vergetelheid verdwyn het.

PIETER GROVE is medeleraar in die VGK-gemeente van Sarepta, was voorsitter van die Kuratorium van die VGK Kaapland en is verbonde aan die Buro vir Voortgesette Teologiese Opleiding en Navorsing aan die Universiteit Stellenbosch.

Jaap Durand – Familie-mens en mentor

BRAAM HANEKOM

Ek het die voorreg gehad om Jaap Durand op 29 Desember 1991 in die huwelik te bevestig. Sy bruid dié dag was my ma. Op die warm somersdag in Desember in die Rynse Kerk op Stellenbosch, is 'n verbintenis gemaak wat ons gesin se lewe 'n kosbare wending laat neem het en betekenisvol verruim het. My pa, Christof, se skielike hartaanval en tannie Randu se dood aan kanker, was by ons almal nog diep ingeprent.

Ek was deeglik bewus dat dit 'n besondere man is wat die dag voor my staan om trou aan my ma te beloof. Daarvoor het die dramatiese kontoere van Suid-Afrika se sosio-politieke landskap en Jaap se betrokkenheid daarby, gesorg. Jy kon dit nie mis nie. Die gelukwensings van die gaste en die wyse waarop dit gedoen is, het dit vir my deeglik onderstreep en was 'n eerste aanduiding van wat ons later op soveel vlakke sou ervaar.

Die afgelope 17 jaar het ek die voorreg gehad om iemand te leer ken wat veel ruimer kante van menswees openbaar as bloot 'n formidabele akademikus, teoloog met 'n enorme taalvaardigheid en formuleringsvermoë, administrateur en bemiddelaar in van die mees komplekse tye in die Suid-Afrikaanse geskiedenis.

Ons het hom leer ken as liefdevolle en deernisvolle eggenoot vir my ma, en toegewyde oupa vir al sy kleinkinders. Sy voortgaande liefde vir en lojaliteit aan sy vorige vrou, Randu, se familie is opmerklik.

Sy hartstogtelike en met reg trotse liefde vir sy eie kinders, maar terselfdertyd die besondere wyse waarop hy langs ons, Sonja se kinders, leef en deurentyd ondersteun, het deur die jare 'n besondere gevoel van geborgenheid geskep.

Sy besondere mentorskap vir my persoonlik die afgelope tyd sal ek nie maklik vergeet nie. Tê midde van uitdagende en komplekse uitdagings vir die NG Kerk en die VGK die afgelope jare, was Jaap nooit verder as 'n telefoonoproep vir my nie. Daar was altyd 'n gewillige oor, helder wysheid en die ervaring van diep geestelike integriteit. Soms het hy hard gepraat, gewaarsku, vermaan, maar altyd op so 'n manier dat ek die vrymoedigheid gehad het om weer en weer die telefoon op te tel, of sommer by Koloniesland aan te ry.

Sy handvaardigheid verdien vermelding. Martinus Versfeld het op 'n dag gesê, dat as jy wil weet of iemand regtig slim is, jy hom moet vra om 'n huis te gaan bou. Jaap kan hom moeilik uit enige bouery of regmaak- of regruk poging hou. Die wyse waarop hy bouprojekte by UWK bestuur het in 'n tyd toe die kampus vanweë die apartheid-subsidiebeleid aan die kortste end getrek het, slaan vandag nog jou asem

JAAP DURAND FESTSCHRIFT

weg. Meermale het hy op Franskraal egter 'n boor of hamer uit my hand geneem en gesê: “Kom laat ek jou help.” Jaap kan in meer as een opsig moeilikheid sien kom ...

Sy liefde vir sport en uiters kompeterende gees op die tennis- of rollalbaan is eweneens onmisbaar. Jaap is 'n baie nederige mens, maar op die sportveld is dit nooit vir hom lekker om te verloor nie!

Sy liefde, dissipline en deursettingsvermoë grens soms aan hardkoppigheid. Die dag toe Jaap Durand egter ons pad gekruis het, het ek, naas my eie ouers, een van die grootste moontlike geskenke denkbaar uit God se hand ontvang. Ek eer God daarvoor.

BRAAM HANEKOM was moderator van die jongste sinode van die Ned Geref Kerk in Suid-Afrika (Wes-Kaapse sinode).

“The little green book” Jaap Durand’s bestseller

PIET JONAS

In 1969 the DRC Mission Press published 5000 copies of a booklet of 64 pages written by Jaap Durand in Xhosa: *Lisisibane Izwi Lakho* (Your Word is a lamp). Additional impressions of 5000 copies followed in 1971 and 1973, respectively. Since then, many more thousands of copies have regularly been printed. In the years following its first publication, this booklet has been translated into Afrikaans, English, Sotho, Tswana, Pedi, Venda, Tsonga and Zulu. And today, exactly forty years later and after more than 95000 copies, it is still regularly being reprinted in all these languages in response to a sustained demand.

Equally remarkable is the context in which this booklet originated. In 1965, when Jaap started working as the minister of a Black church in Kwazakhele, Port Elizabeth, it was with the firm conviction, eloquently expressed by his promoter in Holland, that no mission work, however costly or impressive, can succeed without being supported by a congregation that has learnt to display the love of Christ. He followed this lead, focused on the congregation, and particularly on the leaders, gained their confidence and worked with them and more often under their guidance. The full story will, no doubt, be told in the biographical essay.

The result of this approach to his ministry in Kwazakhele was a regular addition of converts, recruited by church members during the week and introduced to and warmly welcomed by the congregation during the Sunday morning service. This regular flow of newcomers who responded to recruitment by the congregation emphasised the problem of their instruction in Christian life and knowledge – at the time a pertinent question in all congregations, where the summary of the catechism was still the only catechesis material officially available.

It was then that *Lisisibane Izwi Lakho* “saw the light”, first in roneoed form, but as from 1969 printed by the Mission Press at the request of the Cape Synod. In essence the booklet is, in the words of the sub-title, a summary of the history and doctrine of the Bible and the origin of the church. It is a brief outline of the doctrine of salvation as revealed in salvation history, set out in 32 short chapters. Each chapter is followed by 10 questions which the catechumen answers in writing. It is written in clear, simple language, fully attuned to the fact that many of the newcomers enjoyed only a minimum level of education – reflecting the sensitivity of the author to those for whom he wrote, and the greatness of a mind that is at home in the company of the most learned, but also of the most humble.

JAAP DURAND FESTSCHRIFT

The booklet fulfilled a need, not only in his own congregation, but also in the wider church, as is evidenced by the many languages into which it was translated. Through this booklet Jaap Durand indeed touched the lives of thousands of Christians, but especially of those who were, and are, taking their first steps in following their Master.

PIET JONAS was a pastor of the then Dutch Reformed Church in Africa in East London and Alexandria and is emeritus professor in Anthropology at Unisa.

My waardering vir die vroeë Jaap Durand, die sendingwetenskaplike

DONS KRITZINGER

Ek gaan in hierdie kort bydrae gewag maak van slegs drie vroeë (Afrikaanstalige) publikasies van die jubilar wat my beïnvloed het.

Gedurende my teologiese studies aan die Universiteit van Pretoria, en veral tydens my nagraadse studies het Jaap Durand se 1961 proefskrif (*Una Sancta Catholica in Sendingperspektief: 'n Analise van die probleme rondom kerklike pluriformiteit en ekumenisiteit in die sending*) 'n onuitwisbare invloed op my gehad. Die eenheid van die kerk was gedurende die sestigerjare nie juis 'n populêre onderwerp in die Afrikaner gemeenskap en kerke nie, soos 'n herinnering aan die Cottesloe debakel duidelik sal toon. Maar die rustige, sterk akademiese stem van Durand kon nie geïgnoreer word nie, veral ook die wyse waarop hy nie die verskeidenhede in kerk en samelewing onderspeel het nie, maar klem gelê het op die primêre bybelse en teologiese eis van die sigbare eenheid van die kerk. Hy was nie die enigste stem nie, maar sy benadering het my saamgeneem.

Dit was eers teen die tagtigerjare dat die debat oor die reikwydte van die Christelike sending min of meer tot rus gekom het. In die sestigerjare was die holistiese benadering nog nie op die kaarte nie. Sending was Woordverkondiging, punt. Die ander dimensies van die tradisionele sendingaksie (skole, medies, landbou, ens.) was hoogstens “hulpdienste” vir die (ware) sending. Jaap Durand was een van die vroeë stemme (in Afrikaans) wat met sy *Christelike sending – Allesomvattende roeping* (Bloemfontein: SACUM, 1964) die “allesomvattendheid” van die sending beklemtoon het. Trouens, hy het steeds daaraan herinner dat koninkryksbetrokkenheid nog veel wyer gaan as kerkwerk ... dit is die taak van elke Christen individu waar hy/sy ookal in die beroeps- of gemeenskapslewe doenig is. Sending het dus 'n “politieke” dimensie. Geregtigheid moet gesoek word, en daaraan moet gewerk word, in die openbare lewe.

Intussen het Durand sy plattelandse werkterrein vir die stad verruil. Jaap het aangesluit by wat reeds onder Christene geleef het, en hulle bemagtig om te wees wat hulle in Christus reeds was. Hy het begin navorsing doen, en by wyse van talle individuele en groeps gesprekke 'n beeld begin vorm van die Xhosas in die stad. Sy boek *Swartman, stad en toekomst* (Tafelberg, 1970) het baie materiaal gebied vir 'n nuwe kyk na die kerkwerk in die stad, maar dit was nie sy hoofdoel nie ... hy wou die mense verstaan, en aan die Afrikaanse lesers voorstel. Die feit dat die boek by 'n nie-teologiese uitgewer verskyn het, was al klaar 'n aanduiding dat hy 'n breër

boodskap wou uitdra. In ieder geval, die boek het opslae gemaak. Waarskynlik was die groot rede daarvoor sy eenvoudige boodskap dat die swartmense na die stad gekom het om te bly. Meer nog: hulle het (op 'n ambivalente manier, weliswaar) die Westerse tegnologie en kultuur hulle eie gemaak, en het geen begeerte getoon om terug te keer na 'n vroeëre lewenswyse nie. In 1985 het die Nasionale Party regering instromingsbeheer opgegee, en 'n permanente politieke rol vir die stadswartes begin bedink, maar in 1970 (toe die boek verskyn het) was dit nog amptelik politieke kettery!

Baie dankie, Jaap Durand, vir jou eerlike, deurdagte en gefundeerde bydraes!

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Jaap Durand – Man of good hope

KLIPPIES KRITZINGER

Jaap Durand is an earthy, courageous and just human being. He is one of the South Africans who sustained my hope during our struggle against apartheid – and in our joyful, ambiguous journey as a young democracy. In this volume to honour him I want to make a few remarks about hope.

Jaap Durand was a member of the committee that drafted the Confession of Belhar in 1982. In seeking a creative acronym that could make the message of Belhar easy to remember and to put into practice – something like the TULIP acronym for the Canons of Dordt – it struck me that Article 1 of Belhar contains a healthy dose of hope: “We believe in the triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, who through Word and Spirit gathers, protects and cares for the church from the beginning of the world and *will do to the end*.” The sting of the statement is in its tail: The confession not only gratefully acknowledges God’s work of gathering and nurturing the church in the past, but also expresses the firm belief that God will continue to do so “to the end”. Throughout the Bible it is looking back at God’s dealings with Israel and Jesus, and looking around at the cloud of faithful witnesses like Jaap Durand, that nurtures our courage to take a few more steps into an uncertain future.

The Confession of Belhar calls us to a way of life, as much as to a way of belief. The URCSA today needs to hear this confession as a call to action, and to do that I wish to emphasise that Belhar is not a moralistic document that engenders shallow and optimistic activism. The action into which Belhar calls us is the gracious action of the triune God, who is gathering, building and sending the church to participate in God’s own work of unifying, reconciling and restoring broken human communities. It is action in and from grace; not the modernist notion expressed by Karl Marx that, whereas philosophers try to *understand* the world, it is our duty to *change* it. Belhar shares Marx’s faithfulness to the earth and his concern for justice, but not his boundless optimism in human progress and the makeability of a classless society through sheer human effort. Belhar’s call to action for unity, reconciliation and justice is embedded in the confession that God is graciously at work in society – from the beginning of the world and to the end. The perseverance of the saints in their struggle for a better world is based on the promises of God and on the delicate work of the Holy Spirit, who opens up the space for human action to become (part of) God’s work in this world. Belhar is indeed a political document, but not in the way that its detractors in the NGK keep on shouting. This is a politics of humble

hope, rooted in God's promise that there will be a new heaven and a new earth – in which justice will finally be at home.

The acronym that I propose to highlight the focus of Belhar's five articles, and to make it a living document in our communities is H.A.N.D.S, conceived as five instructions:

- ∞ Hope in God's faithfulness
- ∞ Accept one another
- ∞ Nurture peace
- ∞ Do justice
- ∞ Serve one Lord.

The way we use our hands will show whether we are living this confession: Empty hands to receive God's gracious promises; Open hands to embrace one another; Clean hands, washed through the painful process of confessing our wrongs and forgiving those who harmed us; Working hands, with rolled-up sleeves, to redress the wrongs of the past and build a humane society together; Hands raised with an open palm to take the "oath of office", in loyalty to the liberating Lord of history.

Jaap Durand has shown us this way of life. He gives me hope.

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Jaap Durand as teacher and preacher

DOUGLAS LAWRIE

I have never had the opportunity to get to know Jaap Durand very well; that, I suspect, is not something accomplished in a few meetings. I did – rather briefly – experience him as a teacher many years ago when I was a student at Stellenbosch. More recently, I have heard him preach fairly regularly in the Rhenish congregation of the URCSA in Stellenbosch, the congregation to which he and I both belong. When I started teaching at UWC, he was Deputy Vice-Chancellor and something of a cult figure in the struggle – a famous photograph serves as a lasting reminder of that. But lowly junior lecturers do not mix much with the august personages on the rectorate. We were colleagues only on paper.

It is always interesting to note how eminent theologians fare as preachers and to try to find the links, sometimes not immediately apparent, between their teaching and their preaching. Although Barth preached regularly and strictly according to his theological tenets, I sometimes feel that his best sermons are those that crept into his less formal academic writings. Bultmann's existential theology, still shocking when I first encountered it, became, on the pulpit, a form of pietism far from unfamiliar to people who grew up in the Dutch Reformed Church. Von Rad, like Barth, preached regularly and had an abiding interest in homiletics. His flair with words enabled him to preach with elegant erudition, lucid profundity and calm enthusiasm. Not many have this gift. Perhaps there should be a law forbidding theologians from doing to one another what I intend to do to Durand in this instance.

When we heard that Durand, known to be an outspoken critic of apartheid, was to teach in the place of Willie Jonker while the latter was on sabbatical, the few Stellenbosch students of theology who opposed apartheid were overjoyed. The year was 1975 or 1976 and the atmosphere at the Kweekskool was intensely “broederlik” – and not only because there were no sisters! Since he was set to teach us the doctrine of the church, we expected sparks to fly. One could, stretching it a little, argue that theology should steer clear of national politics; one could not banish questions concerning church unity from theology.

What we got was not quite what we had expected. Durand did not in fact spend time criticising or questioning apartheid either in the church or the state, as some other lecturers sometimes cautiously did. Instead, he took it for granted throughout that apartheid was simply wrong: that was the presupposition, not the point, of his lectures. The prescribed readings did not, as far as I can remember, introduce us to radical new voices. Such voices were not needed, for the errors of apartheid within

the church (and by implication within the state) suddenly seemed clear from the reading of such conservative theologians as Berkouwer. Indeed, I came to believe (and have believed ever since) that apartheid, far from being the conservative view, constituted a radical innovation, a break with tradition.

I shall not pretend that I remember with any clarity what was said in the lectures or what I read for the course. The atmosphere in the classroom, however, remains fixed in my mind. Durand was not necessarily the most engaging lecturer I have ever heard, yet we listened with attention – even I, known to cut classes without qualms. Because he spoke with stern authority, the rabid rightists, who heckled some lecturers mercilessly, seldom spoke up.

There were, as I have said, no diatribes against apartheid – merely a few cutting asides. Apartheid, we were given to understand, was criminal¹ in a rather drab, everyday way. Of course, it wreaked havoc with the lives of people *as all crime does*, but it lacked the allure of the demonic. This too has remained with me. The atrocities committed to uphold apartheid tell us very little about the roots of the policy. Long before Vlakplaas, the architects of apartheid believed that they could play fast and loose with ordinary matters of right and wrong, fair and unfair. Supposedly they were motivated by a grandiose dream, but the actual policies pandered to the commonest and basest human motives: greed and selfishness, envy and old resentments, bossiness and self-importance. Sordid – and exceedingly human. That is why the spirit of apartheid is never far from any of us.

Durand as teacher helped some of us see more clearly what we had for some time suspected. How he struck others, I do not know, for they remained silent. Perhaps a certain gruffness in the voice and a dangerous light in the eyes² warned them off: Durand has retained both these qualities. In any case, nobody doubted that, having taken his stand, Durand would not turn tail at the first hint of opposition. In the very ordinariness of his discourse, stripped of the need for theatrical display, there was something so solid that those who could not quite stand beside him shied away from directly opposing him.

The Durand to whose sermons I listen from time to time is obviously a much older man. Nor are the issues the same at present. Still, in most respects I could still hear the old Durand speaking.

1 The following dictum regarding forced removals, which I quote from memory, was ascribed to Durand: “Theft does not become less culpable or more attractive when it is perpetrated by a government.” Whether or not he ever uttered words to this effect, the style is definitely his.

2 It is not irrelevant – even theologically – that these “harsh” qualities, coupled with a smile that often broke through unexpectedly, could also captivate. I have it on the authority of my wife that he was extremely attractive! Even the most uncompromising “no”, even when it is directed at the most manifest evil, will, if it is really inspired by the gospel, be infused with the captivating grandeur of God’s “yes”.

Why, then, was I initially somewhat surprised at his style of preaching?

His delivery is nothing very special, just as his teaching style was not very energetic. He tends to eschew showiness and rhetorical flourishes. On the pulpit he converses rather than declaims, yet his sermonic conversations are formal rather than “chummy”. I cannot remember hearing him employ any tricks with the structure of the sermon or, indeed, any tricks to capture the attention of the audience. Formally these are pretty standard sermons in the Reformed tradition. If there is anything in the presentation alone that holds the attention, it is his personal presence, the “ethical appeal” (in Aristotle’s terms) of the preacher. Even before he has said anything much, one gets the impression that this is someone worth listening to.

Regarding content too, his sermons are solidly within the Reformed tradition. As one would expect from someone who still comes to church with his Greek Bible (taking the safe bet that the text will be from the New Testament), his sermons are backed by sound exegesis, which, however, is not flaunted on the pulpit. As one would expect of one deeply influenced by Barth, he emphasises God’s grace and steers well clear of moralising. In the interest of his listeners, many of whom are not highly educated, he avoids “learned” digressions and arcane theological terms (though I suspect he sometimes finds this difficult). For the rest, the flavour of his sermons is distinctly orthodox, if not conservative. The Reformation is never far away; the “New Reformation” is not even a speck on the horizon.

None of this *should* have surprised me. Durand never was a showman, nor was he given to the pursuit of novelties for their own sake. Probably he would say that he simply took his stand on the gospel then and that he does exactly the same now. The quiet firmness with which he opposed then is not different from that with which he now poses the core beliefs of the Reformed tradition. Without compromise, without apology or wrangling, he speaks not about or for his faith, but *from* it. As to the note of authority in his sermons, he might say that the authority is not his but that of God’s word. I am not going to gainsay him on that.

This does not imply that he is hide-bound – he never was. He once said in a sermon that one could preach in many different ways on any given biblical text, thereby rejecting the notion that each text has a singular *scopus* (as we were taught). A saying attributed to him that I heard many years ago suggested a similar flexibility regarding interpretation. Concerning sermon preparation, he apparently said that one should make up one’s mind regarding a text before checking one’s finding against the commentaries. Then, if one finds no confirmation for one’s view in any of the commentaries, one should simply ignore them. Again, even if the story is not authentic, the sardonic common sense is typical. Could it be that a firm stance on a few basics is a precondition for

flexibility on a myriad of other, more murky issues, even a protection against becoming cocksure about imponderables? This seems highly likely to me.³

Durand the teacher was, by the quirky definition of an evil time, a “liberal”; Durand the preacher is, by the equally skewed definition of a time that has but little to boast of, a “conservative”. Yet undeniably the teacher and the preacher are the same man, hewing to the same line. Thus the first sentence requires us to think before we express surprise.

Let us say that Durand as a preacher is uncompromising, hard in his clarity, definite as to his beliefs. Let us say that, unlike Mr Eliot of the poem on himself, his sermons are not so nicely restricted to “What precisely and If and Perhaps and But”. Let us say that in this respect he is a disturbing foreign presence in our postmodern world of “undecidables” and “indeterminacies”.

Let us ask then what a suitably re-educated Durand would have said during the apartheid years. That Western society (not to mention other societies) has always shunned otherness and that apartheid is therefore nothing but a special case of a general phenomenon? That questions of right and wrong are invariably undecidable? That the whole matter is so unbearably complex that nobody will ever be in a position to make a definite pronouncement about it (this *was* often said)? That if God is dead everything, Vlakplaas included, is permitted? Perhaps we may even ask if the malleable spirits of today, in trading dour foundationalism for the gay rollercoaster of postmodernity, were indeed motivated by a dream or simply by the same dreary motives – sordid and all too human – that motivated apartheid.

Let us *not* ask anything about those who oscillate between vicious, mean-spirited moralism and paeans on “the innocence of becoming”. After all, we might embarrass ourselves. Let us rather celebrate those – like Jaap Durand – whose voices have always had as an undertone “No retreat, no surrender”.

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3 Similarly, those who know that they can hold up their end in a fight are more willing to back down occasionally than those who need to prove something to themselves.

Teologiese identiteit as missionale gerigtheid

BETHEL MÜLLER

Die soeke na die ware, Skrifgefundeerde identiteit van die teologie en die kerk bly 'n blywende opdrag, veral in die beoefening van 'n Gereformeerde teologie. Dit is veral noodsaaklik in 'n tyd waarin allerlei sekulariserende modelle, byvoorbeeld van 'n “nuwe” hervorming, ontwerp word om ruimte te skep vir die sogenaamde “post-moderne” denke. Die gevaar is egter dat hierdie “post”-moderne ontwerpe dreig om vervreemd te raak van die teologiese aard en identiteit van die teologie. Die uiteinde van so 'n teologie is wat Jaap Durand noem die “doodloopstrate van die geloof”.

Die soeke na die ware identiteit van die teologie, van die Christelike geloof en die kerk as geloofsgemeenskap, is inderdaad die soeke na die lewende God. Teologie is die rustelose soeke na God van mense wat alleen rus kan vind by Hom (Augustinus). Dit gaan daarom in die teologie *primêr* om die vraag: *wie* is die God vir en met ons en *hoe* is Hy 'n God vir ons? Die identiteit van die teologie handel dus om die identiteit van die God wat *aanbid* word; dit lê ingebed in die gebedsverhouding met die lewende God. *Teologie is primêr aanbidding, gebed!* Teologie is nie selfversekerde manipulerende omgang met God nie, dit is liminale drumpel-teologie in die sin van Psalm 84:11. Hierdie *primêre* vraag na God bepaal en rig die *sekondêre* vrae van die teologie: hoe ontmoet ons *God* in sy Woord; hoe is die kerk die ruimte waarin hierdie God ervaar, beleef en geleer word; hoe word in die kerk en erediens in gehoorsaamheid geluister; watter implikasies hou dit in vir verantwoordelike optrede, ook in die sekulêre ruimtes van die openbare lewe; wat behels die roeping tot dissipelskap, al beteken dit lyding en selfverloëning (Bonhoeffer)? Ten diepste moet die teologie, as beoefening van die “gesonde leer” (1 Timoteus 1:11), worstel met hierdie vrae in sy belydeniskrifte, in sy Kategismus, in sy prediking en in sy openbare uitsprake.

Teologie is *in opdrag van die evangelie* provokatief, soms selfs subversief. Daarom is dit in elke tyd geroep tot 'n permanente soeke na heroriëntasie, na profetiese en, indien nodig, protesterende transformasie as opdrag van hierdie evangelie – en nie soseer primêr as 'n sosiaal-politieke opdrag nie! Daarmee vervul die teologie sy profetiese rol om die ore van die geloofsgemeenskap oop te maak vir die stem van die lewende God, en om die oë oop te maak vir Sy leiding op pad na die toekoms. Juis daarin help die teologie ook die sekulêre wêreld om met ander oë, naamlik van die geloof, te kyk na die sogenaamde “onveranderbare realiteite”. Inderdaad is teologie niks anders as om die “Onsienlike te sien” nie (Hebreërs 11:1v). Dit is hierdie identiteit van die teologie wat juis sy missionale gerigtheid bepaal – teologie as missionêre perspektief op die werklikheid! En in teologie as sending gaan dit om

meer as sendingtegnieke en kundigheid – dit gaan om gehoorsaamheid aan God, as betrokkenheid by die omvattende *missio Dei* in hierdie wêreld.

Teologie as belydenis van die trou aan God en sy Woord gaan dus missionaal oor die grense van ras, kultuur en kerklike verdelings, organisasies en strukture. Daarom weier dit om vasgevang te raak in allerlei vorms van teologiese ivoortorings, sê dit die stryd aan teen allerlei vorme van ideologiese versmallinge en versperringe. Dit is juis die *gevaar van 'n ideologie* dat dit 'n totale dampkring skep wat teologiese denke laat verstik. Hierdie verstikking en inperking van die teologie lei uiteindelik tot die verdraaiing en vervalsing daarvan. En daarmee word, dikwels op subtiele wyse en met oppervlakkige teologiese argumente, eintlik geweld gedoen aan die basiese teologiese en morele waardes. En dit werk mee aan die verkramping van alle denke en lewensperspektiewe, in die wêreld, *maar veral in die kerk!*

Jaap Durand se teologiese arbeid het bestaan in die soeke na die identiteit van die teologie waarmee hy dit kon waag om bestaande en inperkende ideologiese, kulturele en politieke versmalling en grense te oorskry. Christelike sending, as 'n allesomvattende roeping was die hartstuk van sy teologiese denke: dit het vir hom die gerigtheid van die teologiese identiteit bepaal. En dit het hy in leer, in voorlesings en geskrifte, ja in sy openbare lewe uitgewerk en uitgeleef! Daarin het die Woord van God en die belydenis, nee die God van die Woord en die belydenis, sentraal gestaan. Die opskrif van sy proefskrif toon reeds sy lewensworsteling aan: hoe die klassieke belydenis van die *una sancta catholica* die perspektief op die sending van die kerk in die wêreld dien. In die diens aan die Woord op Cala worstel hy onder andere met 'n handleiding vir die verstaan van die belydenis; en in Kwazakhele met die evangeliese verstaan van die nood van die “swartman” in die stad. In sy post-doktorale studies is hy telkens op soek na die ekumeniese (oer)wortels van die teologie, soos onder andere gevind by die kerkvaders. As dosent in die Dogmatologie werk hy in die opstel van die Belhar-belydenis saam aan die *teologiese* begronding en verwoording van die kerk se soeke na eenheid, versoening en geregtigheid. Weereens: nie teologie primêr in diens van sosiale bevryding en geregtigheid nie, maar teologie in diens van die hartstuk van die evangelie, van die boodskap van die allesomvattende versoening in Christus. As vise-rektor van die Universiteit van Wes-Kaapland loop hy moedig oor die ideologiese en politieke grense wat die destydse regering aan dosente en studente gestel het. Weereens 'n openbaring van sy *teologiese integriteit* in sy kritiek op die beleid van apartheid omdat dit in stryd is met die evangelie van Christus. Hy konfronteer al die teologies gesproke ongegronde suspisies teen hom vanuit sy trou aan die lewende God – al sou dit dikwels lei op die pad van selfverloëning en pyn. In sy antwoord op die sekulariserende post-moderne versmalling in die teologie wil hy in sy laaste geskrifte die geloofsgemeenskap help om die ontluistering en doodloopstrate van die geloof te vermy. *Miskien is dit 'n opsomming van sy hele teologiese oeuwe en lewenswerk oor dekades heen.*

Jaap Durand was geen naper in die teologie nie, omdat hy by die oorsprong daarvan gebly het. Daarin word hy een van die weinige oorspronklike teoloë, indien nie die enigste nie, op Suid-Afrikaanse bodem. Daarom eer ons hom, in dankbaarheid aan die Oorsprong en Bron van alle gesonde teologie.

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Two vivid pictures of Jaap Durand

PIET NAUDÉ

When I was asked to offer a short contribution to Professor Jaap Durand's *Festschrift*, two vivid pictures of him immediately came to mind.

The first is a meeting of the URCSA leadership in Port Elizabeth late in 2008. Prof Jaap was invited to lead the Sunday morning service to close off a weekend of prayer and deliberations. The setting was a holiday resort with about sixty people in attendance. Older and greyer, he took to the make-shift pulpit, and recalled with joy his first years as white minister of the black church in Kwazakhele.

He then surprised us by announcing that he would deliver the same sermon – slightly adapted for our time – which he preached at his inauguration. This he did in Xhosa, with short English and Afrikaans summaries as he went along. The crux of the message from Isaiah was the same: God protects and leads his people – even if it would include times of exile. The future of the URCSA, with its dwindling financial resources, fewer pastors and struggle to regain unity in the DRC family, was in the hands of God. To God we should look – away from ourselves. His is the church, not ours.

This was Prof Jaap as pastor, as preacher, as prophet, as deeply spiritual leader who always understood the Scripture in relation to the signs of the times.

The second picture is that of Prof Jaap, the fine systematic theologian. His dogmatic series with Willie Jonker played a huge role in shaping my spirituality and theological thinking. I started theological studies in the late 1970s from a predominantly pietistic background. The strengths of this formation were a deep sense of personal faith and commitment to Jesus Christ; a missionary zeal to fulfil the call of the great commandment, and a focus on Bible reading in the context of a fundamentalist hermeneutic. Its weakness was the blind spot for the social and public dimensions of our Christian faith.

Prof Jaap's views opened my eyes to the religious ideology in which I was raised. It was with a sense of disturbance, but also liberation, that I read his views: Afrikaner civil religion, he argued, was formed and sustained by both Scottish evangelicalism and Kuyperian neo-Calvinism. Kuyper's cosmology and emphasis on the order of creation was:

... combined with orthodox Reformed Christology in such a way that any effort to subject theology to a Christological criticism was defused from the start. As a result the dominant natural theology was never recognized for what it was. One of the great tragedies in the development of Afrikaner Reformed theology in the three decisive decades of its evolvment (1930-1960) was that Karl Barth's

criticism of religion and natural theology was never really heard or given the opportunity to be heard in those Kuypertian circles that needed it most.¹

Prof Jaap assisted many of us to see that the “public” value of Barth’s theology resided in its ability to, on the one hand, dismantle the natural theological elements in neo-Calvinism, which provided the theological basis for apartheid and, on the other, to expose the anthropocentric tendencies of pietism as an inner-focused religion.

He therefore empowered a whole generation of younger theologians to stand in the tradition of the confessing church to struggle for a social order based on unity, reconciliation and justice.

I herewith salute a pastor and a theologian who continues to be a blessing to our country and the Christian church.

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1 Jaap Durand, “Afrikaner piety and dissent” in Charles Villa-Vicencio & John W de Gruchy (eds), *Resistance and hope* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1985), pp. 41-48. Also: Jaap Durand, “Church and state in South Africa: Karl Barth vs Abraham Kuypert” in Charles Villa-Vicencio (ed), *On reading Karl Barth in South Africa* (Grand Rapids: WB Eerdmans, 1988), pp. 121-138.

Ons moet nou ophou baasspeel

KLAUS NÜRNBERGER

As ek aan Jaap Durand dink, kan ek dit nie verhelp om aan die tagtigerjare te dink nie. Hier was ons – ingebed in ’n vinnig ontwikkelende maar skynbaar hopelose situasie. Sommige van ons was bang, sommige was onverskrokke, sommige het hulle oë toegemaak vir die realiteit. Wat sou van Suid-Afrika word? Watter rol kon ons nog speel? Hoe kon ons mekaar aanmoedig? Jaap Durand was een van ons fundamente.

My bydrae tot hierdie bundel bestaan in ’n lesersbrief wat ek in 1986 aan *Rapport* gestuur het. Tot my verbasing is dit op 24 Augustus in die oggenduitgawe sonder korting en onder ’n groot opskrif *Ons moet nou ophou baasspeel* gepubliseer. ’n Paar leserbriewe wou my daarna “reghelp” met die feite. “Ons kom al van Weenen, Bloukrans en Bloedrivier af. Waar was u?” Maar daar was opvallend min reaksie. Het mense al gevoel wat kom?

[Hier volg ’n paar aspekte van die toestand in 1986. Blankes was 14.7% van die bevolking (insluitende “onafhanklike swart state”), maar het oor 55% van die inkomste en meer as 90% van die eiendom beskik. Meer as 90% van poste in akademiese beroepe was in blanke hande. Besteding per kind in blanke skole was R2746, vir Indiërs R1386, vir Kleurlinge R891 en vir swartes in blanke gebiede R387. In blanke skole was die verhouding van onderwysers en kinders 1:16, in swart skole in blanke gebiede 1:42.

Die blanke regering het absolute kontrole oor ’n arm, bitter en rustelose swart bevolking uitgeoefen. Blanke steun vir die regerende party was oorweldigend. Die Nasionale Party het 127 setels in die blanke Volksraad gehad teenoor 27 vir die Progressive Federal Party. ’n Tweede noodtoestand is uitgeroep. ’n Sterk weermag en verskillende polisie-eenhede het wet en orde gehandhaaf.

Blanke Suid-Afrika het baie vinnig sy internasionale erkenning en steun verloor. Die ekonomie het agteruit gegaan. Sanksies het begin byt. Kapitaal het die land verlaat. Inflasie was hoog. Droogte het die landbou geteister. Werkloosheid het die hoogte ingeskiet. COSATU is gevorm. Spanning het geheers tussen die United Democratic Front en AZAPO. Inkatha het ’n dubbelsinnige rol gespeel en Natal het op ’n burgeroorlog afgestuur.

Eerste pogings om met die ANC te praat is deur progressiewes geloods. President PW Botha het verkondig dat die regering in die rigting van gelyke regte en demokrasie wou beweeg, maar hy kon geen vertroue en steun onder swartes kry nie. Die ANC se

Umkhonto we Sizwe het van 'n beleid van installasie-sabotasie na 'n beleid van “people’s war” oorgegaan.

Swart mense het begin boikot en demonstreer. Onluste het versprei. Dit het dikwels in “necklacing” en ander gruweldade ontaard. Blanke vigilante-groepe is gevorm. Anti-apartheid aktiviste het in lewensgevaar verkeer. Nee, ek was nie een van hulle nie. My sensustelsel was te swak vir daardie soort van ding.

Met Zimbabwe het ek my ernstig misgis. Dit was 1986 nog geensins duidelik dat dié land op 'n ramp sou afstuur nie. Ek bewe nou nog as ek dink wat met ons alles kon gebeur het as ons daardie soort leierskap gehad het. Dit is pure genade. Hier dan my brief aan *Rapport*.

“Iemand moet weer 'n slag sê wat almal weet: Ons blankes gaan nie in alle ewigheid hierdie land van ons regeer nie. Binne die volgende twee dekades gaan ons net nog 10 persent van die bevolking van die land uitmaak. Die vraag is nie of verteenwoordigers van die meerderheid aan die bewind gaan kom nie. Die vraag is slegs wanneer dit gaan gebeur en wat intussen gaan gebeur.

Die noodtoestand kan die maatskaplike organisasies van die swartes weereens verpletter en hulle leiding weereens uitmekaar dryf – maar dit kan nie die groeiende frustrasie en woede onder die swart bevolking uitwis nie. Intendeel, 'n massa-beweging wat van sy leiers en sy maatskaplike kanale beroof word, verloor sy gestalte en word chaoties. Dit is baie gevaarliker vir die land as 'n goed georganiseerde politieke beweging.

Ons het die punt verbygegaan waar 'n paar hervormings van die ou stelsel die dinamiek van die situasie nog kan opvang. Elkeen weet dat ons geen vrede sal hê voordat die meerderheid sy volle burgerregte verkry het nie. Volle burgerregte beteken 'n regering wat deur swartes gelei word. Daar is geen pad wat by hierdie feit verbygaan nie.

Wat sê hierdie feit vir ons? Óf ons gaan nou met 'n doelbewuste program 'n vreedsame en geordende magsoorgawe aan 'n regering bewerkstellig wat deur al die burgers van die land verkies is, óf ons gaan ons land deur dekades van burgeroorlog vernietig en aan die einde 'n gedwonge en chaotiese magsoorgawe moet verduur.

As ons Suid-Afrika vir ons en vir ons kinders wil red, moet ons doen wat in elk geval gedoen moet word – en ons moet dit nou doen, nie ná dekades van verwoesting en agteruitgang nie. Die blanke bevolking is nou op sy sterkste. Die vakkundigheid, die ekonomiese organisasie, die kapitaal, die administrasie, die militêre mag, die meeste buitelandse betrekkinge is in sy hande.

Hierdie bedingingsmag maak dit nou nog moontlik om te verseker dat met die instelling van 'n meerderheidsbewind demokratiese beginsels en ekonomies

produktiwiteit gehandhaaf sal word – sover dit in ’n land van die Derde Wêreld soos Suid-Afrika moontlik is.

Ná dekades van burgeroorlog, internasionale sanksies en ekonomiese agteruitgang sal die bedingingspotensiaal van die blanke haglik wees – om nie eers te praat van die ellende onder die swart bevolking en die skrikwekkende vooruitsigte van die land as geheel nie. Nóú kan ons die chaos nog voorkom – dán nie meer nie.

Toekomstige swart leiers stel nie in ’n ekonomiese ineenstorting of ’n onbeheerbare maatskaplike situasie belang nie. Hulle wil net soos ons ’n bloeiende land regeer. Daar kan dus verwag word dat hulle in eie belang nie sal poog om die voorvereistes van voorspoed en orde te ondermyn nie. Soos Zimbabwe geleer het, sal beplande hervormings geleidelik ingevoer word. Blankes het nou minder rede om ’n swart magsoorname te vrees as nadat die land eers in ’n puinhoop verander is.

Ek sê nie dat dié stap maklik vir ons gaan wees nie. Ek sê net dat dit later oneindig moeiliker vir ons gaan wees. Ek sê nie dat dié stap die oplossing van al ons maatskaplike probleme sal meebring nie. Ek sê dat hierdie probleem in die pad staan van die oplossing van die meeste van ons ander maatskaplike probleme. Ek sê nie dat dié stap die hemel op aarde gaan bewerkstellig nie. Ek sê dat die versuim van hierdie stap Suid-Afrika in ’n nagmerrie sal verander.

As ons nóú handel, bepaal ons self ons geskiedenis. As ons dit uitstel, sal ons die slagoffers van die geskiedenis word. As ons nóú handel, bou ons ’n toekoms vir ons kinders. As ons dit uitstel, laat ons aan hulle ’n situasie na wat hulle nie meer kan hanteer nie. Toekomstige geslagte gaan òf dankbaar wees vir ons wysheid òf hulle gaan ons vervloek vir ons kortsigtigheid en selfsug.

As ons nóú handel sal ons weer instaat wees om ons rol in Afrika en in die wêreld te speel. As ons uitstel, sal die veragting en vyandskap al hoe vinniger teen ons opbou en ons uiteindelik op die ashoop van die geskiedenis laat beland. As ons nou ons trots begrawe, sal God ons verhoog. As ons nou trotseer, gaan ons uiteindelik so verneder word dat ons nie maklik weer op ons voete tereg sal kom nie. Dit verg moed en vertroue om te doen wat reg is. Kleinmoedigheid en ongeloof vernietig ons toekoms.”

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Journeys with Jaap

STANLEY RIDGE

Some of the most influential things in one's life happen by the way. I first met Jaap Durand through the mundane arrangements of a UWC lift club from Stellenbosch in July 1979. In those days, we had to take the long way around through Kuils River and Sacks Circle to UWC. There was no Stellenbosch Arterial Road. That gave us 45 minutes in the car and plenty of opportunity for conversation. It was a wonderful introduction to some fine colleagues, with Jaap prominent among them as an original thinker and a highly competent man of action.

Jaap was Dean of Theology at the time. UWC had no vice-rector position, so the Executive Committee of Senate was even more important than it is now. Soon Ulrich Plüddemann, the meticulous and intellectually curious professor of German, joined Jaap as a dean. For the rest of us, the conversations on high policy, always handled by Jaap and Ulrich with a fine scrupulousness, provided an introduction to the complexities of running a university, especially one with high intellectual ambitions and a growing commitment to work against the political grain. It was a time of new starts. Pam Versveld was starting the Physiotherapy programme, at that time located in the Faculty of Dentistry, and moving the basic qualification for practice from a diploma to a degree. Alan Channing was deeply into the world of frogs and had already discovered a number of new species in South Africa and in the Americas. Dirkie Smit was developing a phenomenal reputation in a Systematic Theology fully engaged with the world debates but anchored in our present. Andre Gouws was quietly building Educational Psychology from a new base in what was the Broederbond stronghold of the Faculty of Education. Niel Broekmann was tackling the challenges of doing Psychology in a new environment, and leading a department which changed the face of the discipline in South Africa. And I was taking the English Department in a new direction which attracted some superb staff, three of them later to be professors at Natal, Wits and York (UK). It was a time of vigorous renewal, rethinking, strategising, and wrestling to give acknowledged shape to what we were doing. The car journeys were invaluable for that purpose. Jaap always brought a particular challenge and edge to the conversations. He was arguably the most progressive among us, but he was never going to be party to the flattening of language. "I am conservative", he said against the grain, creating the space for real thinking in an ideologically overcrowded context.

1980 brought the first major student protest, with a long class boycott. The lift club needed no special workshops to address issues. The challenges of maintaining the intellectual at the heart of struggle were a daily theme in the car, and major

innovative ideas for supporting learning while honouring the boycott led to strategies which gave UWC an edge in academic development later. There were frustrations, of course, and Jaap as a seasoned campaigner cast a clear philosophical light on them. Ever vigorous and exemplary in his own intellectual field, he was exceptionally efficient in management and making decisions, and wise in the ways of the world. And he was disciplined. Despite the punishing demands to which he responded with distinction, he continued to write and to supervise the research of others, and to play a formidable game of tennis.

Before long, Jaap was appointed UWC's first ever Vice-Rector. That ended our daily companionship. The university gained its autonomy and the next few years were a time of intense activity, giving new shape to the academic programme and setting new ideals. They were also a time of major growth and an ambitious building programme. As Vice-Rector, Jaap took the academic strategic plan under his wing, and when the various contributions had all to be integrated he took some days off to be free to write. The result defined UWC's trajectory. All later plans have built on this pioneering strategic redefinition. He also took charge of the construction programme, directing and managing the building of the impressive central square with its prize-winning Library, elegant University Centre and reinvented administration building. The vibrant hub of the university is his more visible legacy.

Looking back now, having recently had several years in the executive portfolio which Jaap Durand shaped, I am vividly aware of the debt which UWC and South African academic life owes to this innovative thinker, astute administrator, ethical but politically savvy leader, and generous human being. It is a great honour still to know him as a friend.

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Leadership in a period of transformation

COURTNEY SAMPSON

Leadership played a critical role in South Africa's period of transformation. This leadership emerged from various sectors of society and represented a variety of points of view. In this way, there were those leaders who were either committed to maintaining the status quo or to bring about fundamental change in the structural and ideological basis of South African society.

In South Africa's final drive to rid itself of the burden of the devastating ideology of apartheid, many of these leaders played critical roles, some emerging from this process with greater prominence than others. The writings of Prof Jaap Durand bring this aspect of our national reality into sharp focus.

As early as 1978 he referred to "sporadic voices within (the) Afrikaans-speaking churches" which challenged the normative responses to race in those churches. These normative responses were not unambiguous in their condemnation of the apartheid ideology based on race. Durand concludes that:

These voices however are not clearly reflected in the official statements that are made from time to time.¹

The suggestion is clearly that the leadership that was required had to be prepared to move beyond the spaces of comfort in which many of us prefer to remain.

In 1981 he raised the following question in a response he wrote to the acclaimed Reformed theologian Prof Johan Heyns:

Hoe is dit nog moontlik dat binne kerklike kringe sodanige skeiding voorgepraat kan word en geleef kan word as die wil van God en in ooreenstemming met die evangelie?² (How is it still possible that within church circles such separation can still be justified and lived as the will of God and in line with the gospel?)

Exceptional leadership has been a determining factor in South Africa's transition to democracy. Apart from the special kind of leadership represented by individuals such as Durand, this country has also produced internationally acclaimed and iconic leaders in the persons of Nelson Mandela and Desmond Tutu.³

1 Jaap Durand, "Bible and Race: The Problem of Hermeneutics", *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 24 (September 1978).

2 Nico J Smith, FEO'B Geldenhuys & Piet Meiring, *Stormkompas – Opstelle op soek na 'n suiwer koers in die Suid-Afrikaanse konteks van die jare tagtig* (Kaapstad: Tafelberg-Uitgewers, 1981), p. 22.

3 The Barack Obama phenomenon in the United States of America is another such example.

Abraham Maslow⁴ refers to this kind of individual as being a “self-actualized” person.

I put forward the thesis that now, in the fifteenth year of South Africa’s democracy, the outstanding and unprecedented nature of the leadership of these two figures presents itself as both a blessing and a curse. It then becomes critical that other levels of leadership be strengthened and heard.

Any country that is in the process of remaking itself – against the background of the highly politically charged environment that could so easily have degenerated further from the dire situation South Africa found itself in the 1980s and early 1990s – is blessed to have leaders like Mandela and Tutu.

The blessing is obvious in that Mandela and Tutu presented an incredible example of an alternative way to deal with the devastating effect that apartheid had on all the people of South Africa of whatever race or ethnicity. They displayed the greatness of spirit that laid the foundation for the new state to begin to build its new character.

The curse is that such individuals are not found in abundance in any society and may emerge only once in a lifetime. It is the most difficult challenge for anyone to emulate such a phenomenal benchmark. This kind of leadership can aptly be described as a phenomenon of a special kind. The curse is that other good, sound, solid leadership will always be found wanting.

The greatest contribution South Africans can make in response to such a perceived vacuum of phenomenal leadership is to contribute their own graciousness and honesty and to aspire to an ever higher personal moral standard. We need many contributions to offset the unacceptable and structurally immoral Gini coefficient⁵ of 0.73.⁶ Each South African must contribute to a more caring and compassionate society.

COURTNEY SAMPSON is an Anglican priest and the Provincial Electoral Officer for the Independent Electoral Commission in the Western Cape.

4 A. Maslow, *Motivation and personality*, second edition (New York: Harper, 1970).

5 The Gini coefficient is a measure used to indicate the inequality of wealth and poverty in a society and is measured on a scale from 0 to 1.

6 *Institute for Security Studies Occasional paper* 178 (Jakkie Cilliers, January 2009).

Glo jy in God?

AMIE VAN WYK

“Glo jy nog in God? Kan jy as intellektuele persoon nog met integriteit in God glo?”

So lui ’n e-posbrief wat ek eendag van ’n onbekende persoon ontvang in reaksie op ’n artikel van my wat in die dagblad *Beeld* verskyn het. Later stuur die persoon (AL Pellencin) ’n boek aan my wat hy geskryf het, getitel *Ateïsme: Die saak teen God* (2007).¹

Dit is duidelik dat ateïsme as vraag aan die kerk en die Christelike geloof veral sedert die *Aufklärung* van die agtiende eeu gekom het om te bly. Die vraag na God is trouens die belangrikste vraag in die lewe en nie sonder rede nie begin Calvyn sy Geneefse Kategismus met hierdie vraag: “Wat is die belangrikste doel van die mens se lewe?”, om daarop te antwoord: “Om God te leer ken deur wie die mens geskape is”. Om kort hierop te laat volg dat ons God uit sy Woord en in Christus ken.

In 2004 het Alister McGrath in sy insiggewende boek *The twilight of atheism² begin dink aan die val van ateïsme, net om twee jaar later deur Richard Dawkins verras te word met sy veelbesproke The God delusion.*³

Om in God te glo is tog nie wetenskaplik, nie bewysbaar, nie kontroleerbaar en nie verifieerbaar nie, in kort, ’n bewys van ’n primitiewe geloof – so redeneer Pellencin en Dawkins. Moderne, wetenskaplike en ingeligte mense distansieer hulle van so ’n primitiewe geloof. Bowendien, wie kan in ’n God glo wat samelewings laat verwoes, mense laat ly en vir ewig laat verlore gaan?

Die ateïstiese kritiek rig hom veral teen twee leerstellings van die Christelike geloof, naamlik die providensie en predestinasie van God (wat verband hou met die pyn en lyding in die wêreld asook dat God mense vir ewig laat verlore gaan – en dit alles moontlik selfs beskik).

Pellencin en Dawkins staan in die denkradisie van groot ateïste: Feuerbach (1804-1872) (God as projeksie), Marx (1818-1883) (God as opium), Freud (1856-1939) (God as illusie), en Nietzsche (1840-1900) wat die (metafisiese) God dood verklaar het.⁴

1 AL Pellencin, *Ateïsme: Die saak teen God* (Pretoria: Publiself, 2007).

2 Alister McGrath, *The twilight of atheism: The rise and fall of disbelief in the modern world* (London: Rider, 2004).

3 Richard Dawkins, *The God delusion* (London: Transworld Publishers, 2006).

4 Kyk Danie Goosen, *Die nihilisme: Notas oor ons tyd* (Dainfern: Praag, 2007), pp. 207-274.

Wie die geskrifte van Jaap Durand naslaan, sal opmerk dat die vraag na God hom diepgaande besig gehou het. Reeds van vroeg af in sy dogmatiese besinning hou hy hom besig met die tema van *Die lewende God* (1976),⁵ met 'n slothoofstuk oor die ateïsme. Meer onlangs skryf hy oor *The many faces of God* (2007)⁶ en in sy apologetiese geskrif oor die Nuwe Hervorming, *Doodloopstrate van die geloof* (2005)⁷ kom die Godsvraag ook herhaaldelik ter sprake.

Dit is duidelik dat die ateïsme diepgaande beïnvloed is deur die (moderne) rasionalisme en positivisme, maar die kritiek teen hierdie denksisteme nie genoegsaam wetenskaplik verwerk het nie. Die ateïsme voorveronderstel baie duidelik 'n geslote wêreldbeeld, dit opereer met 'n versmalde mens- en wetenskapsbeskouing asook met 'n sterk gereduseerde epistemologie. Dit is nie in staat om die grootste vrae in die lewe (intellektueel) bevredigend te beantwoord nie, soos byvoorbeeld die vraag na die oorsprong en bestemming van die skepping, die vraag na die sin van die lewe en die hoé-vraag om goed te lewe.

Die Christelike geloof sal egter moet besef dat die tyd van goedkoop antwoorde vir goed verby is.⁸ Sonder om van sy getuieniskarakter afstand te doen, sal die Christelike geloof die moderne ateïsme ook op die terrein van die denke moet tegemoetree. Die Christelike geloof sal egter diep daarvan deurdronge moet wees dat ons nie oor die God van die Bybel kan praat buite sy openbaring in Jesus Christus om nie. Uiteindelik is die antwoord op die Jesusvraag ook die antwoord op die Godsvraag – soos Durand tereg telkens aanvoer.⁹

Ons sê baie dankie aan Jaap Durand vir sy belangrike teologiese bydrae en veral vir sy fokus op die vraag van alle vrae: “Wie is God – vir my, en vir die wêreld?”

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5 Jaap Durand, *Die lewende God* (Pretoria: NG Kerkboekhandel, 1976).

6 Jaap Durand, *The many faces of God: Highways and byways on the route towards an orthodox image of God in the history of Christianity from the first to the seventeenth century* (Stellenbosch: Sun Press, 2007).

7 Jaap Durand, *Doodloopstrate van die geloof: 'n Perspektief op die Nuwe Hervorming* (Stellenbosch: Sun Press, 2005).

8 Kyk H Küng, *Bestaat God? Antwoord op de vraag naar God in deze tijd* (Hilversum: Gooi & Sticht, 1978).

9 Kyk Durand, *Die lewende God*, pp. 115-117; *Doodloopstrate*, p. 106.

Eerste treë in die bediening en kort daarna

HANNES VENTER

Dit is vir my en my vrou, Isabel, 'n baie besondere voorreg om vir Jaap Durand vir 48 jaar te ken en onder sy vriende te tel. Hy het op Dealesville in die Oranje Vrystaat grootgeword en skoolgegaan. Ons het ook die voorreg gehad om sy Godvresende ouers op Villiers te ontmoet waar hulle na aftrede gewoon het, en waar Jaap georden is as bedienaar van die Woord. Sy vader was 'n opvoeder in murg en been en sag van geaardheid. Sy moeder was spraaksaam en uitgesproke en besonder joviaal. Hy is 'n goeie mengsel van die rots waaruit hy gekap is.

Ons paaie het op die NG Sendingstasie Cala, in die Transkei, vir die eerste keer gekruis. Hy is in 1961 deur die Binnelandse Sendingkommissie van die Kaapse NG Kerk beroep en op Cala geplaas as my medeleraar. Hy het toe so pas sy doktorsale studies in Sendingwetenskap aan die Vrije Universiteit in Amsterdam, Nederland voltooi.

Aangesien die tweede pastorie nog nie voltooi was nie, het hy en Randu vir bykans 'n jaar lank by ons ingewoon. Dit was 'n uitstekende geleentheid om mekaar van naby te leer ken en so is die grondslag gelê vir 'n lewenslange vriendskapsverhouding. Ons het gedeel in die vreugde van die geboorte en grootword van mekaar se kinders. Behalwe sendingwerk, het ons ook saam sport beoefen, veral tennis. Maar ons het ook saam getreur toe Randu jare later siek geword het en aan kanker gesterf het. Ons dank die Here vir kosbare herinneringe aan haar wat ons as 'n kleinood bewaar. Ons bring graag hulde aan haar nagedagtenis. Sy was 'n goeie mengsel van sagmoedigheid, doelgerigtheid en intellek. Dit is ook vir ons 'n bron van vreugde dat Sonja Randu se plek ingeneem het en volledig vol staan. Jaap en Randu het drie begaafde kinders in die wêreld gebring, naamlik Aninka, Jannie en Jaco. Hulle is ook besig om hulle plek in die samelewing vol te staan en die Here en die gemeenskap met hulle talente te dien.

Om terug te keer na die begin. Na sy aankoms op Cala het daar onmiddellik groot verantwoordelikhede op sy jong skouers gerus. Hy moes al die verpligtinge van die sendingstasie met sy skole en koshuise, die teringhospitaal, die mobiele kliniek en die boerdery oorneem. Gelukkig was daar vir elke afdeling bekwame en verantwoordelike personeel, maar hy moes hulle bestuur – wat hy uitstekend gedoen het. Hy moes ook die verantwoordelikheid vir die gemeente oorneem wat, benewens die sendingstasie, ook nege buiteposte ingesluit het. Ek het nog op Sondae dienste gehou, maar was voltyds verantwoordelik vir skakelwerk tussen die Sendingkantoor en die Sendingpersoneel in die Ciskei, asook met die regering in verband gesubsidiëerde inrigtings in die Ciskeigebied.

Jaap het sy taak as leraar van die gemeente en stasiehoof met onderskeiding uitgevoer. Een van sy prioriteite aan die begin was om die Xhosa-taal aan te leer. Hy het in 'n rekordtyd die taal so bemeester dat hy sonder tolke kon dienste hou. Huisbesoek en kerkraadsvergaderings een maal per kwartaal het nie agterweë gebly nie. By drie buiteposte was daar voltydse evangeliste: evangelis Crediston Nqoko by Tsengiwe, evangelis Wilmoth Fihla by Mbenge en die onvergeetlike en merkwaardige evangelis Alvin Tyutu by Rebelskloof. Hy was 'n moderne Henog wat met die Here gewandel het. Almal het die hoogste agting en respek vir umvangeli Tyutu gehad.

Jaap het baie aandag aan die jeug gegee. By elke buitepos was daar 'n tak van die Jeugvereniging (*Umanyano lolutsha*) en 'n Sondagskool. Die studente in die Onderwyskollege en die leerlinge in die Sekondêre Skool en die koshuise is ook deur hom geestelik bedien. Elke buitepos het ook 'n tak van die Vrouevereniging (*Umanyano lwamakosikazi*) gehad. Randu het hierdie vertakking van die gemeente met groot bekwaamheid gehanteer.

Jaap het ook nog tyd gevind om drie buiteposkerke op te rig. Hy was die inisiëerder van 'n nuwe konsep van 'n buiteposkerkgebou, naamlik die sogenaamde dak op pale. Die Sending voorsien 'n dak, hetsy van gras of sink en rig dit op. Dan maak die gemeentelêde stene van klei en bou die mure op, en pleister dit met klei. Wanneer die mure mettertyd verweer, is dit maklik en goedkoop om dit in stand te hou. Op die buitepos Mceula het hy en die gemeente 'n reuse rondawelkerk gebou wat 200 mense kon huisves. Hierdie konsep het deur die Transkei en Ciskei pos gevat. Die kerkgebou op die sendingstasie is ook in sy tyd opgerig.

Daar was 'n aansienlike personeel wat Jaap moes bestuur, sommige baie ouer as hyself, en hy het dit meesterlik gedoen. Ek noem 'n klompie name om dit aan vergetelheid te ontruk. Behalwe ek en Isabel, was daar: Oom Hoffie Theron, die boer, en sy vrou Tannie Hoffie; Oom Hannes Rothman en sy vrou Malie, die tesourier van die Ciskeisending; Pieter en Joey van Heerden, die nutsman; Danie en Philpa Kapp, die bouheer; asook Oom van Niekerk en sy seun wat grootliks verantwoordelik was om die kerk op die sendingstasie te bou. Verder was daar Rene de Kock (Kokkie soos almal haar ken), die hospitaalmatrone; Thea de Koker, die hospitaalsuster; Rina Germishuys, die mobiele klinieksuster; Nanci Els, die koshuismatrone; Tannie Maggie van Rooyen, die dameshuis huismoeder; Kitty Coetzee, die geestelike werkster; Miss Margaret, die koshuismoeder in die koshuis vir dogters, en Tata Alfred Tsengiwe, die koshuivader in die koshuis vir seuns. En laaste maar nie die minste nie, Buks van Biljon, 'n boemelaar wat by Pieter en Joey in die huis nes geskop het, en vir Pieter met sy pligte gehelp het. Japie sal hom baie goed onthou, veral ten opsigte van een besondere aand. Jaap sal weet waarvan ek praat. Daar was ook noue samewerking tussen die personeel van die onderwyskollege en Sekondêre Skool op die Sendingstasie. Die hoof was mnr WC Murray (Oom Bill) en sy vrou Tannie Louise (sy lewe nog – 95 jaar oud); die onderhoof mnr Lieb Liebenberg en

sy vrou Hettie, Siegfried Schwartz, Erna Gerber en Trula Kemp. Laasgenoemde drie het ook op die Sendingstasie gebly.

Terwyl Jaap op Cala was, het ondermeer twee belangrike publikasies uit sy pen die lig gesien. *Christelike sending, allesomvattende roeping* was baie aktueel vir die sendende kerk asook vir die sendelinge. Dit is inderdaad waarmee hy elke dag te doen gehad het. Hy het ook 'n klein katkisasieboekie die lig laat sien, te wete *Lisisibane Izwi Lakho* (U Woord is 'n lamp). Hierdie boekie het die hele Evangelieboodskap in eenvoudige taal aan die katkisante tuis gebring. Uiteindelik is die boekie in sewe tale vertaal en deur die Christelike Lektuurfonds versprei. Daar is etlike honderde duisende eksemplare deur die jare verkoop. Die boekie is nog steeds in gebruik in die kerk.

Na vier jaar op Cala kry Jaap'n beroep na die gemeente Kwazakhele in Port Elizabeth, wat pas afgestig het van New Brighton. Voordat Jaap na Cala beroep is, het hy 'n beroep na New Brighton-gemeente in Port Elizabeth aanvaar en was op pad daarheen. Maar hy het dieselfde ervaring as die apostel Paulus gehad toe hy deur die Heilige Gees verhinder is om na Asië en Bithinië te gaan (Hand. 16:6-9). Die Here werk soms op onverstaanbare maniere. Die Here wou waarskynlik hê hy moet eers ondervinding opdoen van die swartmense in hulle tradisionele omgewing, dan sou hy hulle beter verstaan in die stadsomgewing. Daarom moes hy die draai op Cala en in die Transkei maak. Die personeel op Cala was baie hartseer om hulle te sien gaan. Ons het gedink hulle moes baie langer bly, want daar was nog so baie werk om te doen en ons het so lekker saam gewerk. Maar hulle het soos Filippus van ouds tussen ons uit verdwyn om in Port Elizabeth en later by die Universiteit van Wes-Kaapland die Here se plan met hulle lewens te volvoer (Hand. 8:26-40).

Sy ondervinding met die tradisionele en verstedelike swartmense het hom genoop om nog 'n boek te publiseer, *Swartman, stad en toekoms*. In hierdie boek wys hy daarop dat die verstedeliking van swartmense uit tradisionele gebiede onstuitbaar en onomkeerbaar is. Die regering van die dag het nie van hierdie publikasie gehou nie, want dit het direk ingedruis teen die regering se "tuislandbeleid". Die verloop van die geskiedenis van Suid-Afrika het bewys dat hierdie boek eintlik 'n profetiese karakter gehad het.

Jaap het die vertroue van die NG Kerk in Afrika geniet. Hy het gedurende die jare 1971 tot 1973 op die moderatuur van die streeksinode gedien in die hoedanigheid van moderator en in die moderatuur van die Algemene Sinode as aktuaris. Die aanstelling by die Universiteit van Wes-Kaap het hierdie dienswerk van hom kort geknip.

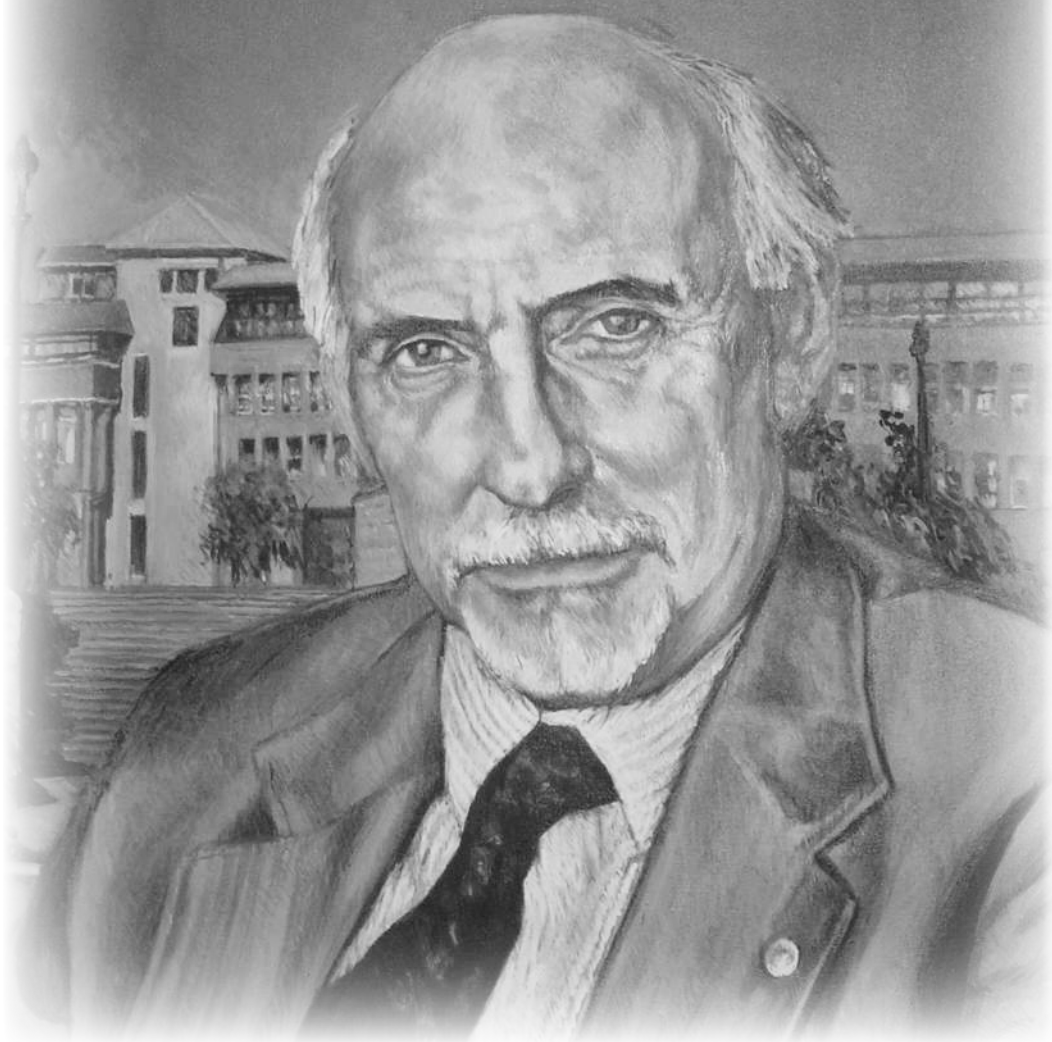
Toe hy die aanstelling as professor aan die Universiteit van Wes-Kaapland ontvang, het sy kollegas en vriende geweet hy is op die regte plek, want hy is by uitnemendheid 'n akademikus. As vise-rector van die Universiteit van Wes-Kaapland het hy baie

diep spore getrap toe Suid-Afrika en die universiteit in besonder deur gevaarlike politieke vaarwaters gegaan het. Ek glo sy ondervinding in die Kerk het hom goed voorberei vir die versoeningsrol wat hy toe moes vervul.

Ons wens vir Jaap en sy vrou, Sonja, saam met hulle kinders en kleinkinders die ryke seën van die Here toe op die pad vorentoe. Die fisiese gesondheid is nie altyd na wense nie, maar hulle is verbasend fiks wat betref die mentale en geestelike gesondheid. Mag die Here hulle seën met geestelike krag en fisiese gesondheid om nog vir baie jare baie mense se lewens te verryk.

HANNES VENTER was voorsitter van die Ciskei Sendingraad en leraar van die NG Kerk in Afrika in die gemeentes Cala en Rhini (Grahamstad).

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Jaap Durand*



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PROFESSOR JAAP DURAND, former professor of Systematic Theology and Vice-Rector of the University of the Western Cape, celebrated his 75th birthday on 5 June 2009. For this occasion we wish to honour him with this Festschrift.

In the essays gathered together in this volume, Jaap Durand's legacy in the fields of pastoral work, Christian theology, the Uniting Reformed Church, ecumenical relationships, prophetic witness, university administration, justice and peace, as well as institutional transparency provides a point of departure to reflect on contemporary challenges. We wish to honour his life and work by seeking to discern anew what God's justice entails in the church, in society and in the academy within the South African context.

This volume includes a foreword by Desmond Mpilo Tutu, the long-standing Chancellor of the University of the Western Cape. There is a biographic essay (in Afrikaans) by Jaap Furstenberg, Phil Robinson and Daan Cloete and leading essays by Denise Ackermann, Allan Boesak, Russel Botman, John de Gruchy, Nico Koopman, Bernard Lategan, Christo Lombard and Dirkie Smit. In addition, there are 22 shorter reflections from Jaap Durand's friends, colleagues and former students.

We offer this volume of essays to Jaap Durand as our mentor, role model and friend in gratitude for his dedicated contribution to discern God's justice in church, society and academy.

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