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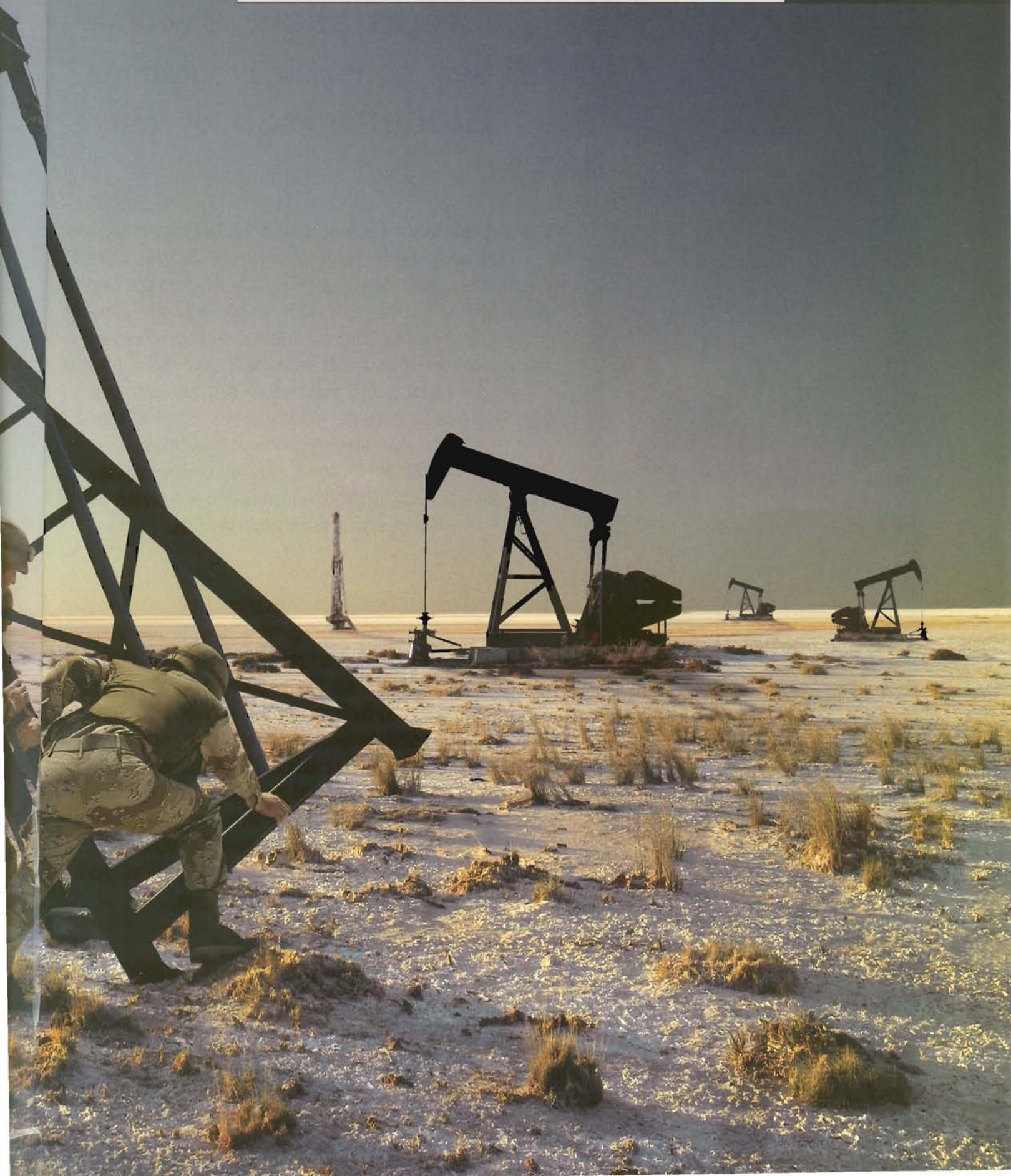


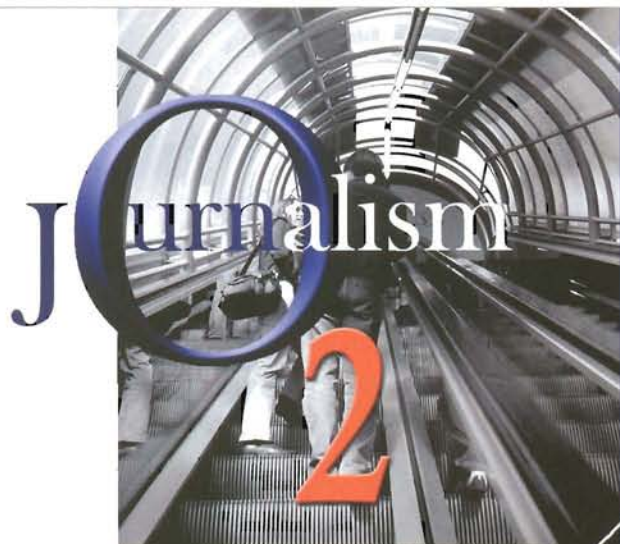
Wat sê jy?

Die Burger is die Wes- en Oos-Kaap se leidende dagblad vol feite, opinies en aktuele nuus wat saak maak. En omdat elke argument twee kante het, sal ons jou al twee vertel, sodat jy met selfvertroue en drif kan saampraat.

DIE BURGER

Praat saam





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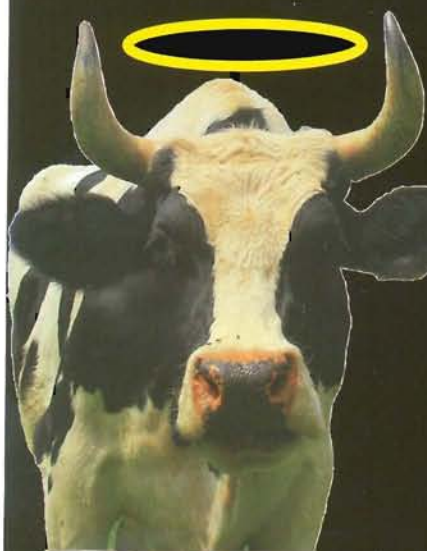
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redakteursbrief



When the High Court ruled that the *Sunday Times* may not publish cartoons about the prophet Mohammed, it sent out a powerful message: religious people have a constitutional right to be protected from hate speech and discrimination.

This right, however, does not guarantee immunity from debate and criticism.

Godsdienste se skynbaar onaantasbare

status is nie 'n reg nie, maar 'n tradisionele voorreg.

'n Heilige koei.

Godsdiens is relevant omdat sommige godsdienstige groepe die gebruik van kondome teenstaan terwyl die wêreld die grootste pandemie nóg in die gesig staar.

Dit is relevant omdat sangoma's en tradisionele geneeshere lakseermiddels toedien om duiwels uit te dryf, MIV met vrugte en groente bestry en onkunde aanvuur.

Religion is relevant because religious groups contribute to the social security and moral fibre of society. It is relevant because the neo-conservative leaders of the only remaining superpower deem it their "God-given duty" to eradicate the "Axis of Evil". Religion is relevant because international terrorism is a reality.

En godsdiens is uiters relevant vir die media omdat dit die lewens van 'n oorweldigende meerderheid Suid-Afrikaners rig.

To avoid the discussing of the pro's, con's and influence of religion, would be like ignoring politics in a democracy.

Vanjaar se *SMF* het dus ten doel om te ondersoek hoe die media dié uiters sensitiewe maar belangrike onderwerp hanteer.

Dit is nie 'n opsomming van die jaar se nuusgebeure op die godsdiensterrein nie. Dit is ook hoegenaamd nie objektief of gebalanseerd nie. In kort – presies hoe die Suid-Afrikaanse media se godsdienverslaggewing lyk.

SMF is die vrug van 'n paar maande se debat, herkou, stoei en selfs bakleiery onder redaksielede met uiteenlopende geloofsoortuigings.

We hope that this issue will be a mirror for all the gatekeepers in the media who are confronted with religion on an everyday basis.

Die redaksie het oor koeitjies en kalfies geskryf, ou koeie uit die sloot gegrawe en – natuurlik – in die proses 'n paar heilige koeie afgeslag.

Bon appétit!

Herman

die SPAN

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Heilige koeie (afgeslag)

PUBLISHED BY:

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26 Crozier Street
Stellenbosch

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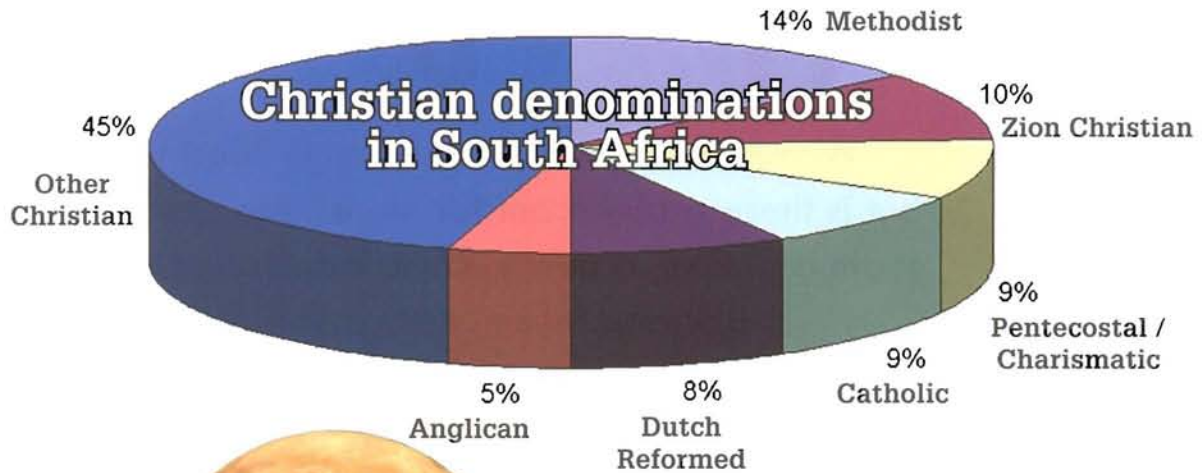
The opinions expressed in this magazine do not necessarily reflect those of the editorial team, Department of Journalism or the University of Stellenbosch

Cover design: André-Pierre du Plessis

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religion

1 N N U M 3 E R S



7 600

permits
awarded to
South African
Muslims for hajj
in-Mecca last
year after pres.
Thabo Mbeki
intervened.



number of
witches in
Cape Town

X 11

100 000

number of Zionist Christians attending the
annual congregation in Bloemfontein last year

144 000 000

Google hits for 'God'

6 767 786

NUMBER OF NON-RELIGIOUS
SOUTH AFRICANS

Number of listeners to the
biggest Christian
community radio station
- Radio Tygerberg:

**3 07
0 00**



458 000

gecombineerde
leserskap van *Finesse*
en *Léef*, twee
Christelike
vrouetydskrifte

4

religious
stations on
DStv



SOURCES: Die Burger,
Volksblad, Census 2001, Circle of
the African Moon, SAARF

Naughty but nice



Women's magazines continue to flood the market, but is there really room for more? Yes, says the editorial team of *Intiem*, a newly-launched Afrikaans publication. Because *Intiem*, they say, is different. Alida van Niekerk finds out why.

O... O... *Orgasmes!*" reads the lipstick-red page. "*Min dinge kom by daardie lieflike, lyflike ervaring...*"

Page a little further and "*Orale seks kraai koning in die slaapkamer*" may catch your eye.

Or, should the proposed techniques fail to arouse your curiosity, turn to page 108 for a mini-catalogue offering the latest sex toys.

Loslyf?

No.

Not even a torrent of sexual material dimly veiled between the covers of a "magazine for the modern man".

No, this is *Intiem*: a new Afrikaans women's magazine. Specifically: A publication for the modern, married, Christian woman.

Ah, and here's the difference: Between the Durex lubricants advert and the publication of readers' sauciest bedroom tales, you will also find articles on the importance of a healthy sex life for a healthy marriage, what to do should the children make untimely bedroom appearances and the debate around whether or not sex before marriage is strictly taboo.

Annelize Steyn is breathless when she answers the phone.

"Sorry," she says between little gasps for air, "I just came back from the pharmacy." She speaks from her bedroom, as a difficult first pregnancy has restricted her activities. "I can't wait for the little guy to come now!" she says.

Annelize is the editor of *Intiem*, published by Media in Africa, which launched its first shelf edition in May this year. Previously only available to subscribers (recruited via sms and e-mail campaigns), the editorial team recognised a significant market demand and pushed for its eventual retail distribution.

"Regarding tasteful sex in the media, it's not that Afrikaans women have had less reading matter than English women – we haven't had *any*," Annelize says. "Although things have slowly started changing in the past decade, the image of a Calvinistic Afrikaans woman in a *Voortrekker* dress persists and the media are still nervous of tackling this subject."

So, where any mention of sex was previously subdued to a whispered euphemism behind a manicured hand or a hushed conversation behind closed bedroom doors, *Intiem* provides direct and straightforward information.

"Married Christian women buy the magazine because it speaks openly but makes them comfortable in knowing its information

is safe and not in opposition to their religious beliefs," Annelize says.

Liesel van der Merwe, who conceptualised *Intiem* and is the managing editor, agrees. "Before, women only consented to sex at request," she says.

"Now, the modern Afrikaans woman also initiates it. Our market research – comprising mostly of interviews with sexologists and women hosting sex talks – showed us the need to move away from this strictly narrow-minded approach to sex."

Intiem does, but both women emphasise an important distinction: *Intiem* is *not* a spiritual or religious publication; it is, however, a publication for Christian women.

"A religious publication functions strictly according to the Bible's framework and what it can justify. It will rarely contain an article that's unrelated to a Bible text," Annelize says. "*Intiem* often features articles about subjects not addressed in the Bible, so we can't always look there for rules."

"For instance, nowhere in the Bible is judgement delivered on S&M [Sadism and Masochism] or swinging. But we do know within our Christian framework that God is against causing pain, which automatically eliminates certain subjects."

This means that journalists write from a "religious perspective", placing emphasis on issues that Christians deem important and that certain topics, such as homosexual sex, will never be discussed.

There are, however, many issues subject to conflicting opinions and here the magazine staff rely on "the guidance of the Holy Spirit".

"What may be unthinkable for one couple may be part of another's daily – or nightly! – routine," Annelize points out. "Who are we to say S&M is wrong if a couple enjoys it to a light extent within a marriage?"



Photo: INTIEM

So, *Intiem* stays between broad religious guidelines and any risky subject is first run past a sexologist or *dominee*. To keep the magazine tasteful at all times, no explicit photos are published, scientific sexual language is used and experts and theologians are regularly consulted.

Besides the tricky topics, there are also issues, such as rape, which are categorically excluded to keep the publication a "feel-good" one. "Part of our mission is to show the Christian woman that sex is a God-given gift and not something that needs to weigh her down with guilt," Annelize says. "We want *Intiem* to inspire our readers and make a positive difference in their marriages."

Should "heavy" material – such as features on pornography addiction – appear, articles will be limited to one per edition and will be "handled positively" by offering help or advice. And, Annelize says, it will always be written from the perspective of, "How does this influence my marriage?"

Besides its sexual content, *Intiem* will also always contain four to six articles dealing with important marital or Christian issues. These are usually "emotional" articles, Annelize says, whereas the rest of the magazine is more "advisory and humorous".

“ It doesn't matter how liberal a Christian woman is, she still doesn't want her mother-in-law to open *Intiem* and see that her son's wife won a Pocket Rocket vibrator by sharing her story about oral sex ”

In addition, a special section is set aside for men. In the autumn edition, they could learn how to become "the king of foreplay". These pages, mostly compiled by Annelize, offer men advice from a female perspective. "Men get enough advice from the boys around the *braai*!" she says.

Elmari Craig, a Christian sexologist and marriage counsellor who regularly contributes to *Intiem*, believes that Christian women have become gradually – but significantly – more open regarding their sexuality. "The media is full of articles about sex, which serve, to a certain extent, as desensitisation. Especially after the launch of Viagra, people started speaking more often and honestly about sex," she says.

Which is why, in Elmari's opinion, *Intiem* can contribute to cultivating a healthy attitude towards sex. Although there is already a myriad of sexual material available in the media, *Intiem* provides accurate scientific knowledge in an easily understandable way and from a Christian perspective.

"*Intiem* helps to show Christian women that you *can* talk about sex, that you *are* allowed to enjoy it and that a healthy sexual relationship is 'spiritual warfare' to protect and strengthen your marriage," Elmari says.

However, she continues, there's still a long way to go and many women are still cautious of fully embracing their sexuality.

Could this be why, despite moving from frigid to forthcoming, *Intiem* still guarantees strict anonymity for reader contributions and emphasises discreet packaging ("no one will ever guess!") when ordering special toys?

No, says Annelize. "We find Christian women very open-minded. The problem is that society as a whole isn't ready for this. It doesn't matter how liberal a Christian woman is, she still doesn't want her mother-in-law to open *Intiem* and see that her son's wife won a Pocket Rocket vibrator by sharing her story about oral sex."

And the only reason for the A5 "discreet handbag size", Liezel says, is because it's popular internationally and the magazine is one you "want to carry with you all the time".

While the editorial team is considering an English version, they first want to establish the Afrikaans edition and will probably keep it a quarterly publication. "There's enough in there to keep you busy for three months!" Liezel says.

And readers, apparently, are doing just that. As an anonymous reader sums it up:

"*Intiem* feels like a new Bible to my improved marriage!" **SMF**

Above: Annelize Steyn, editor of *Intiem*.
Photo: Sonja Hilton



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FOOD

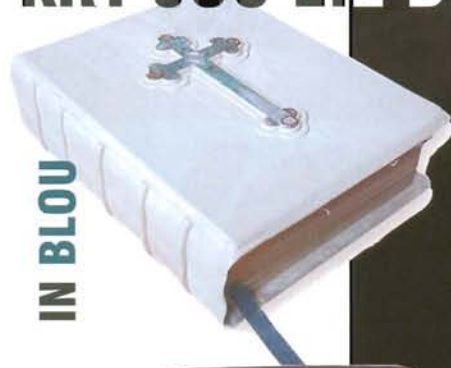
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LUNCH
WITH
FRIENDS**



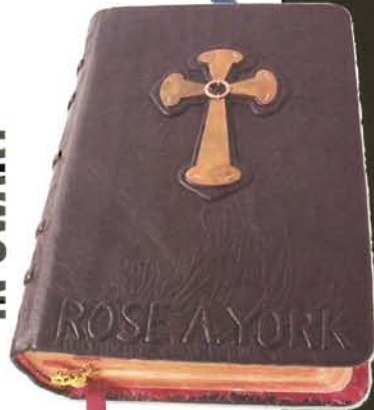
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PARIS**



IN BLOU



IN SWART



OF SELFS PIENK

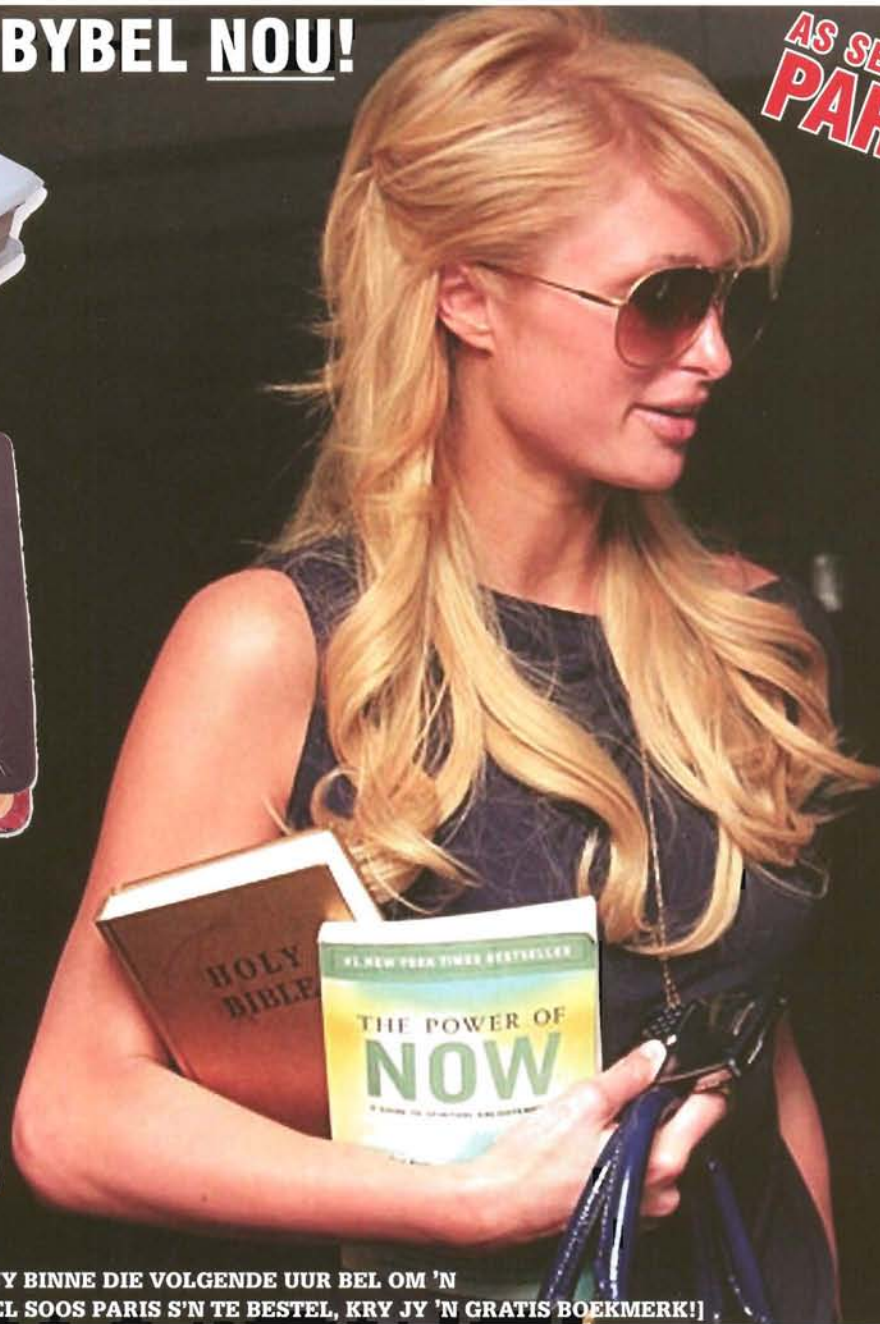


Foto: Pacific Coast News

[AS JY BINNE DIE VOLGENDE UUR BEL OM 'N BYBEL SOOS PARIS S'N TE BESTEL, KRY JY 'N GRATIS BOEKMERK!]

GELOOF:



In Frankryk word sy lede deur die regering ondersoek. In Duitsland is dit 'n filosofie, in Brittanje 'n sekte, maar in Hollywood is Sciëntologie dié geloof van die een-en-twintigste eeu. André-Pierre du Plessis kyk hoe iets wat nie eers 'n godsdiens is nie, dié bykomstigheid van die jaar geword het.

"It's official - Tom Cruise is divine."
"Paris dumps doggy for Bible."

Dié twee opskrifte, in prominente koerante, verklap Hollywood se jongste bykomstigheid: geloof. Dié foefie is besig om vrugte af te werp. Aanhangers se aandag word nou meer as ooit gehou deur hul gunsteling oorsersadige kultusfigure (én hul geloof).

10 SMF

Grootkoppe in die Kerk van Sciëntologie het in Januarie aangekondig Tom Cruise is die nuwe Jesus. Dit is immers voor die hand liggend: As Jesus se water-in-wyn-wonderwerk vergelyk moet word met Tom se kroegtoertjies in die fliek *Cocktail*, kan 'n mens begin om te begryp hoekom dié "geloof" Nicole Kidman se eks as die nuwe Jehova wil aanvaar.

Sciëntoloë meen die *Mission Impossible*- ster toon vele ooreenkomste met die Verlosser. Soos Christus is Tom al gekritiseer vir sy oortuigings

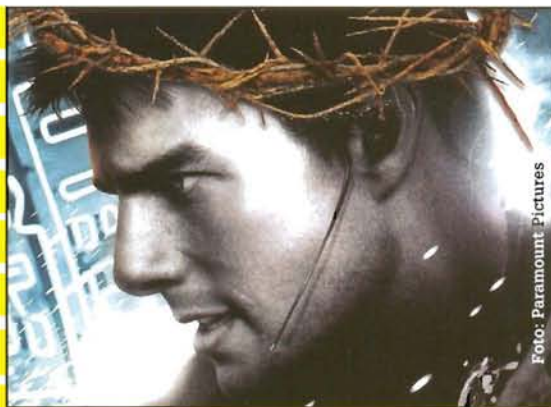


Foto: Paramount Pictures

Sciëntoloë meen die *Mission Impossible*-ster toon vele ooreenkomste met die Verlosser. Soos Christus is Cruise al gekritiseer vir sy oortuigings. Toekomstige generasies Sciëntoloë sal meneer Jerry McGuire uitwys as die Een Wat Eintlik Reg Was.

Britte is verlede jaar verder gebluf toe Londense polisie die middestad gesluit het vir iets wat sommige gedink het die Britse weergawe van die Oscars kon wees. Reuse-plasmaskerms is aan weerskante van 'n vyf-verdieping gebou opgerig wat in 2006 met £24 miljoen opgeknep is om die jongste kerk in dié stad tot stand te bring.

Die marmervloere, Korintiese suile en goue letters aan die atrium van die gebou het meer na 'n installasie vir die Tate Modern-Kunsgalery gelyk as 'n kerk wat die St Paulus Katedraal probeer gas gee. Altesame 5 000 mense het opgedaag vir die opening van die Kerk van Sciëntologie se jongste woning in die middel van Londen.

Sciëntologie het reeds 'n geskatte volgelingsstatus van nagenoeg 10 miljoen lede wêreldwyd, waarvan 123 000 in die Verenigde Koninkryk deur dié kerk bedien word.

Teen een van die mure in dié nuwe kerk is die woorde van L Ron Hubbard gegraveer: "Writing for a penny a word is ridiculous. If a man really wants to make a million dollars, the best way would be to start his own religion."

Hubbard het Sciëntologie in die 1950's begin. Beter bekend as LRH (wat veral nie in Brittanje met LHR – Heathrow Lughawe – verwar moet word nie), het hy sedertdien 'n kultusgevolg opgebou deur sy 200

van 'n Hollywood wat besig is om die woord "geloof" te herdefinieer.

Wat die Sciëntologie sedert sy ontstaan besef het, is die ongelooflike bemarkingspotensiaal van bekendes. Naas Cruise en sy Katie, is John Travolta, Kirstie Alley én die stem van Bart Simpson, Nancy Cartwright, belydende Sciëntoloë.

Die rede hiervoor is dat LRH (onthou, nie die lughawe nie) van die begin af geglo het bekendes is "baie spesiale mense met baie spesiale verspreidingskanale waartoe ander nie toegang het nie". Daarom het dié kerk *Celebrity Centres* op die been gebring om dié bande te smee.

Volgens Factnet.org word aanhangers van dié sterre egter bedrieg. Dié webwerf, waarvan die feite glo nagegaan word, beweer die Kerk van Sciëntologie betaal kommissie aan sterre wat aanhangers na dié geloof lok. John Travolta word na bewering \$1 000 per uur betaal om saam met lede van die kerk te toer.

Maar 'n mens moet darem nou nie onregverdig wees nie. Dis nie die hele Hollywood wat Sciëntoloë is nie, al staan dit in sommige kringe as Scientologywood bekend. 'n Mens wonder net of, as die Hari Krishna's ook spesiale *Celebrity Centres* gebou het, dié geloof nie nét die Beatles nie, maar ook Boyzone sou oorval.

Die voorbeelde van die vervlakking van geloof kan regdeur Hollywood en sy sterre uitgeken word. Madonna en Kabalah, Richard Gere en Boeddhisme, Mel Gibson en Judaïsme. Elkeen van hulle herdefinieer die onderskeie

DIE DING OM TE HÊ DIÉ SOMER

wetenskapfiksieromans en 31 kerkverwante boeke.

Die bekendste Sciëntoloog het, tot die teleurstelling van duisende toeskouers, nie die opening van die kerk bygewoon nie. Sommige Sciëntoloë was teleurgesteld in Tom. Buitendien, dit was tog Sciëntologie wat Tom gehelp het om 'n swak selfbeeld, disleksie, gesinsprobleme en gay-gerugte te oorkom, soos hy reeds in etlike onderhoude verklap het.

Hoe dit ookal sy, die geleentheid kon net sowel die bekendstelling van Tom se jongste flik gewees het. Die kamera's, die mense en die opwinding was tekenend

geloof en sy dogma, en skep 'n nuwe opvatting by ander rondom wat dit eintlik is. 'n Mens moet dit seker probeer verstaan. Sterre is ook mos mense, of so word ons gedwing om te glo.

In die woorde van Religiousfacts.com: "The rich and famous wonder about the meaning of life just like everyone else.

"Most of the celebrities possess everything that is traditionally thought to bring happiness — beauty, success, money, power — yet many find themselves asking: 'Is this all?'" **SMF**

Méér as 'n

kopdoek

"Hoogmode" en "burka". Twee woorde wat nie aldag langs mekaar verskyn in die media nie, maar wat *marie claire* onlangs saamgevoeg het in 'n modeartikel.

Riëtte Grobler het met 'n paar Moslemvroue in die mediabedryf gepraat oor hoe die media hulle uitbeeld.



Sy sit met haar bene uitlokkend oor die tydskrifblad gestrek. Tiervelrekkouse verklap 'n welgevormde kuit en donker, gegrimeerde oë staar vol belofte uit die glansblad.

Haar swart kopdoek vou sag om haar gesig. Sy is 'n Moslemvrou en modebewus. Glad nie skaam oor haar vroulikheid nie. Nóg minder oor haar geloof.

Die vrouetydskrif *marie claire* het in Februarie vanjaar 'n modeartikel getiteld "The Gulf Club" gepubliseer waarin vier modelle in 'n kombinasie van burkas, sexy modes en bykomstighede poseer.

Die artikel is gebaseer op 'n soortgelyke een wat in 2006 in die Amerikaanse *marie claire* verskyn het, sê die redakteur, Kate Wilson. Die tydskrif het inspirasie geput uit die verskeidenheid van die wêreld se Moslemkulture.

Suid-Afrikaanse Moslemvroue in die mediabedryf sê dié verskeidenheid behels dat Moslemvroue véél meer is as gesigte agter kopdoeke. Of, soos die Westerse media en regeringsamptenare dit soms sou wou hê, moontlik gevaarlike terroriste. Hulle is ook vriendinne, verliefdes, huisvroue, dokters, ma's én sakevroue.

Kate sê die foto's is ook beïnvloed deur die oordadige verbruikerskultuur van stede soos Doebai. "Vroue dáár spandeer enorme bedrae aan hoogmode-items wat hulle dan binne die konteks van hul godsdienstige drag aantrek," sê sy. "Dit was hierdie teenstelling wat ons geïnteresseer het. Ook die feit dat godsdienstige simbole en modes selde langs mekaar vertoon word in die hoofstroom-media – tensy jy natuurlik Madonna is!"

marie claire het die tradisionele burka, wat vroue se koppe, hare en liggame

bedek, beskryf as 'n eenvoudige kledingstuk wat die perfekte pasmaat vir dié somer se sjeik modebykomstighede sou wees.

"Ons het geweet dit sou 'n reaksie uitlok," sê Kate.

"Dit was boonop 'n slim en effektiewe manier om die seisoen se metaalbykomstighede teen 'n eenvoudige agtergrond, die burka, ten toon te stel."

Dit is 'n heel ander blik op 'n kledingstuk waarna Jack Straw, voormalige Britse minister van buitelandse sake, in 2006 as 'n instrument van "onderskeid" en "afsondering" verwys het, aldus *Beeld*.

Kate het in haar redaksionele voorwoord verwys na debatte soos dié wat in die Westerse wêreld rondom godsdienstige drag woed. Dié debatte vind egter grootliks plaas in Europese lande soos Duitsland en Frankryk waarheen Moslem-immigrante stroom, soos blyk uit die tientalle artikels op die gesaghebbende nuustydskrif *The Economist* se webwerf.

Dit is ook dié soort debatte wat volgens Munadia Karaan, die programbestuurder van die Kaapstadse Moslemradiostasie The Voice of the Cape (VOC) selde op Suid-Afrikaanse Moslemvroue van toepassing is. "Daar is soveel verskillende Moslemtradisies en kulture," sê sy. "Ek weier om in Suid-Afrika aan Pakistanse of Afgaanse standaarde gemeet te word. Dit is lande waar vroue dikwels eerder vanweë tradisie as geloof onderdruk word. En die kopdoek is, eerder as wat dit 'n onderdrukkingsmiddel is, iets wat Suid-Afrikaanse vroue uit vrye keuse dra of nie," beklemtoon sy.

Dit was een van die belangrike kwessies wat *marie claire* deur die foto's wou aanroer. Volgens Kate voel talle feministe die burka ontnem vroue van hul reg tot vryheid en identiteit. Lesersbriewe wat die tydskrif in reaksie op die foto's gekry het, het egter op die teendeel gedui. "Suid-Afrikaanse Moslemvroue het daarvan gehou dat die tydskrif hulle as modieus en individualisties uitgebeeld het, ten spyte van die keuse om hulself te bedek," sê sy.

Ook Zeenat Abdool, 'n joernalis by Radio Islam in Lenasia, Johannesburg, glo dit is veral die internasionale media wat Moslemvroue dikwels op stereotipiese, negatiewe maniere uitbeeld. "Dit is in Suid-Afrika ons grondwetlike reg om ons geloof vrylik te beoefen. Daarom het ons nog nie werklik hier teen ernstige uitdagings te staan gekom nie."

Layla Smith, 'n joernalis by VOC, sê Suid-Afrikaners is gewoond aan kulturele diversiteit. Die interpretasie van godsdienstige voorskrifte, soos vervat in die Koran, is dikwels die faktor wat bepaal hoe teenoor Moslemvroue opgetree word, sê sy. "Elke kontinent, elke land, elke dorp het hul eie unieke probleme en uitdagings."

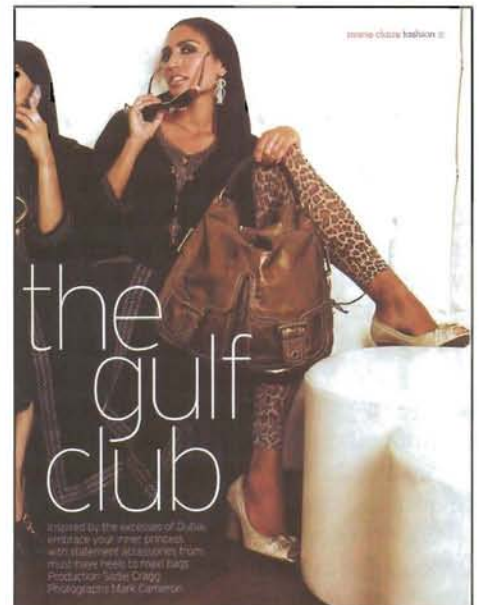
Die Moslemskrywer Rayda Jacobs vertel per e-pos hoe sy 'n paar jaar gelede by die Internasionale Skrywersfees in Durban met dié tipe verskeidenheid van Moslemtradisies- en persepsies te doen gekry het. 'n Egiptiese skrywer het met haar baklei oor die kopdoek. "Sy het gevoel Moslemvroue word wêreldwyd gedwing om hulself te bedek en vodde stukke lap oor hul gesigte te dra as gevolg van mans," sê Rayda. Sy voeg by vroue in Egipte, Afghanistan en Irak werk selde en is daarom heeltemal afhanklik van mans.

"Dié insident het dit duidelik gemaak die ervarings van vroue in dié lande verskil heeltemal van dié in Suid-Afrika," sê sy. "Suid-Afrikaanse vroue kies om hulself te bedek uit liefde vir God. Hulle doen dit vir hulself, nie vir hul mans nie."

By VOC, waar tradisionele Indiese musiek uit 'n ateljee stroom, staan vervaardigers en joernaliste nader om die *marie claire* deur te blaai. Tasneen Mohammed is 'n joernalis in haar twintigs. "Die foto's is 'n goeie ding," sê sy. "Dit wys dat om beskeie aan te trek, mooi kan wees."

En al voel een van die vier mans in die kantoor, Kashif Gamielidene, sommige van die modelle staar net té verleidelik na die kamera, is die konsensus dat die foto's met heelwat stereotipes afreken. Bloot omdat dit aantoon hoeveel ooreenkomste vroue in kopdoeke en burkas met alle ander vroue toon.

Kate sê die bedoeling was allermens om uitlokkende foto's te skep. "Die modelle is geklee in volle burkas sodat die enigste aanduiding dat hulle dalk onbeskeie kan wees, uit die konteks afgelei kan word," sê sy.



"Die **kopdoek** is ons reg om beskermd, trots en mooi te voel. Dit laat my boonop toe om 'n slegte **haardag** te beleef sonder dat iemand daarvan weet"

“Die konsensus is dat die foto’s met heelwat *stereotipes* afreken”



Sy sê daar bestaan heelwat teenstrydighede ten opsigte van die beskeidenheid wat deur die burka verkry moet word en die duur ontwerpersetikette wat sommige Moslemvroue onder die burka dra. So word beskeidenheid, op die oog af, behou, sê sy.

Die burka word ook binne 'n ander dimensie as bevrydend beskou, meen Kate. “Baie van die vroue wat vir ons geskryf het nadat die foto’s gepubliseer is, het gesê hulle voel bemagtig deur hul burkas.”

“Dit lewer kommentaar op die wyse waardeur die slaafse navolg van modegiere vroue kan ontmagtig,” sê sy. En net soos die vroue van VOC aangedui het, het lesers van *marie claire* ook hul dankbaarheid uitgespreek dat hulle as “normaal” binne die konteks van *marie claire* as Westerse tydskrif uitgebeeld is.

Nabewaya Malick, mediawoordvoerder van die Moslem Juridiese Raad (MJR), sê die Weste het juis 'n probleem met die manier waarop Moslemvroue aantrek omdat dit 'n teken is van krag en beginselvastheid. “Ons trek nie aan waarvan mans sal hou, of wat hulle tevrede sal stel nie.”

Sy sê Moslemtradisies kan daarom 'n bemagtigende invloed hê op Suid-Afrika as geheel. “Dit is 'n gemeenskap wat smag na 'n morele herlewing.” Sy voeg by talle invloedryke vroue in die geskiedenis het kopdoeke gedra, of gekies om beskeie aan te trek.

“Vroue soos Moeder Theresa en Moeder Maria het hul koppe bedek. Hulle was nie Moslem nie.”

Munadia beskou haar kopdoek ook as bevrydend, juis omdat sy kiêns om dit te dra. “'n Moslemvrou bedek haarself omdat haar liggaam 'n tempel is en 'n mens tog nie so 'n kosbare besitting met almal wil deel nie,” sê sy. “As twee meisies langs mekaar sou staan, die een heeltemal kaal, die ander een in 'n bikini, sou die meeste mense eerder na die een in die bikini kyk. Die ander een sou niks aan die verbeelding oorlaat nie.”

Dit gaan egter oor veel meer as verbeelding. “Die kopdoek simboliseer my identiteit,” sê Zeenat. Layla stem saam. “Die kopdoek is ons reg om beskermd, trots en mooi te voel,” sê sy. “Dit laat my boonop toe om 'n slegte haardag te hê sonder dat enige iemand daarvan weet!”

Net soos min mense Layla se hare sal sien, sien en weet die hoofstroommedia volgens Nabewaya, Zeenat en Rayda, nog heeltemal te min van Moslemvroue. Rayda sê Moslemvroue word grootliks negatief uitgebeeld in die

media wanneer hulle wél uitgebeeld word. “Dit is omdat die nie-Moslemmedia niks van ons weet nie en ook nie probeer uitvind nie,” meen sy. “Het jy al ooit 'n vroulike televisie-aanbieder met 'n kopdoek gesien?”

“Moslemvroue word voortdurend uitgebeeld as skaduagtige figure wat altyd drie treë agter hul mans moet loop. Asof hulle nie 'n sê het nie,” sê Rayda. “Dis nie waar nie. Islam is die enigste geloof wat pertinent fokus op vroue en hul regte.” Sy sê egter daar word selde, indien ooit, in die hoofstroommedia hieroor gepraat. “Volgens die Koran kan vroue eiendom besit en hoef 'n vrou nie haar man se van te gebruik nie,” sê sy. Moslemvroue neem egter ook hul rol as ma's baie ernstig op en besluit daarom dikwels om nie te werk as hulle kinders het nie, sê Nabeweya. “Dit is iets wat mense dikwels nie verstaan nie.”

Die Moslemgemeenskap het egter 'n stewige media-platform van hul eie geskep, sê Zeenat. Dié platforms sluit in 'n Moslem-vrouetydskrif, *Sisters*, en radiostasies soos Radio Islam en The Voice of the Cape (VOC). Layla sê gemeenskapsradiostasies vervul 'n belangrike rol om aandag op Moslemvroue te vestig, sonder om hulle te stigmatiseer.

Die programsedule van VOC, waar daar soggens tussen 10:00 en 12:00 op vroue gefokus word, weerspieël dié ingesteldheid. “Toe ons destyds met vroueprogramme begin het, was die fokus op die tradisionele rol van vroue: kos, kook, huis en haard,” sê Munadia. “Deesdae fokus ons ook op onderwerpe wat moderne vroue in alledaagse omstandighede kan help. Wat moet sy byvoorbeeld doen as haar kind 'n dwelmverslaafde is?”

Die klem is dus nie meer souseer op outydse opvattinge van wat vroue móet doen nie. “Jy kan leer hoe om 'n koester te bak, maar jy hoef dit nie elke dag te doen nie,” beklemtoon Munadia.

Ten spyte van die veranderende idees oor vroue se rol in Moslemgemeenskappe, is nie almal by VOC dit eens dat die *marie claire*-foto's 'n akkurate blik op Moslemvroue bied nie. Dit het die hele kantoor aan die stry oor die identiteit van die moderne Moslemvrou. Waaroor almal wél saamstem, is dat hulle nog nooit so iets gesien het nie.

En hulle hoop dit is nie die laaste keer nie. **SMF**

* Sadie Craig, moderedakteur van *marie claire*, was genomineer vir 'n Sanlam Modejoernalistiek-toekenning vir “The Gulf Club”. Dit is die eerste jaar dat dié kompetisie aangebied is.

Alle foto's gebruik met vergunning van *marie claire*.

Eers was ons in jou hart,
nou pas ons in jou skouersak oppad klas toe

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The Vision Mary



Francesca Zackey (17) claims to have seen the Virgin Mary.

Photo: Brenda Veldtman/Beeld

Benoni: home to the Crazy Monkey crew (who produced a movie with the same name), Charlize Theron and the occasional mullet, has also become home to the Virgin Mary. It all started on 12 June this year when John Robbie from Talk Radio 702 interviewed Father Barney McAleer about a teenager's claims of seeing the Virgin Mary.

According to Father Chris Townsend from the Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference (SACBC), this was the first time that the story was broken, which caused the huge media interest.

Fr Townsend is the Information Officer at the SACBC, which is located in Johannesburg. Since the Francesca Zackey story broke, Fr Townsend has been a guest on Talk Radio 702 and the story has featured several times on the radio station's schedule.

The sensation surrounding Zackey spread in a manner similar to contagion, as Fr Townsend explained.

Contagion, according to the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, means the spreading of a disease by people touching each other. And like a disease the Zackey story moved from radio to television, when it was aired on *Carte Blanche*.

On 17 June 2007, *Carte Blanche* broadcast an exposé on the Zackey story. The *Carte Blanche* website states that the story was produced by Sophia Phirippides and presented by Derek Watts. Viewers watched Watts visit the Zackey home and listen first-hand to her account of the apparitions. Zackey said that the apparitions first came to her on 7 May, when she saw the first of her many visions.

Fr Townsend says that it is the Church's mission to investigate such claims to discount the possibility of psychological illness, manipulation, profiteering and so forth.

Carte Blanche featured a psychologist, Dr Saths Cooper,

She shocked South Africans with her claims of having seen the Virgin Mary in her backyard. Yet, was Francesca Zackey's 15 minutes of fame an act of devotion or a media hoax? Siyabonga Africa investigates the media frenzy surrounding this Catholic schoolgirl.



paper explains that it's not just Zackey's visions that are being treated with circumspect. He gives the example of Sister Mary Faustina Kowalska's apparitions of Jesus during her years in a Polish convent in 1925.

Even such visions, which led to mass devotions, have to be investigated thoroughly, says Simmermacher. This begs the question of whether Zackey can be trusted. According to both Simmermacher and Fr Townsend, the Zackey family has not asked for any money during the many prayer meetings held at their house. The family has even been asked to remain quiet during the Church's investigation as to not prejudice the outcome.

Fr Townsend says that even though Zackey's 15 minutes of fame are over, the media attention continues unabated. Simmermacher attributes this to media spin. He believes that the media covered the story in such a way that it gave the perception that Catholics were gullible.

In his view this doesn't correspond with reality. He believes such a sentiment could have international repercussions.

The United States news channel Fox News reported on the people that visited the Zackey home since her visions began. The report focused on

the description of Zackey's visions and ignored the contents of the message that was in the vision. According to Fr Townsend the message in Zackey's apparitions is not contrary to the teachings of the Church and thus it is hard to refute her visions.

Who would be the one to believe: the Church or the media? As Simmermacher stated, the media has added their own spin to the visions and the meaning for devotees.

At the same time Fr Townsend says that the media has done its best to expose the facts surrounding the story, as well as adding their own feelings on it.

The media hype has somewhat settled on the Zackey story and the last reports about the visions focus more on the fact that people are damaging their eyesight by looking into the sun upon Zackey's instructions.

This was the topic on Talk Radio 702 on 19 June. There are sporadic reports on the Church's investigations into the matter, but nothing is conclusive.

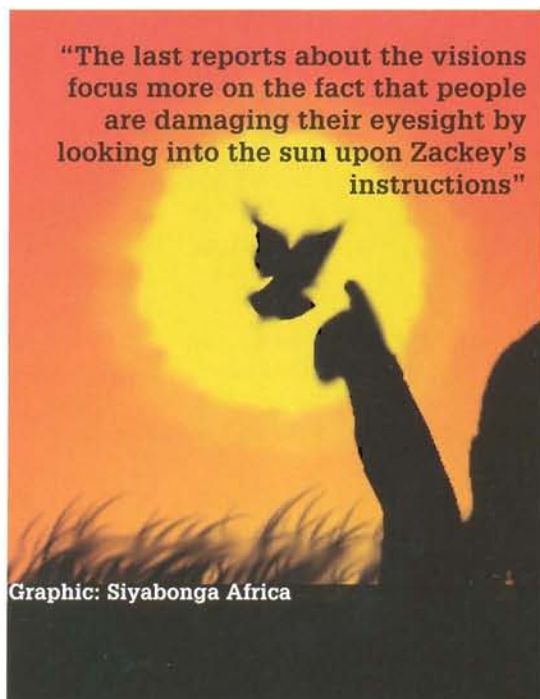
Fr Townsend says that he will continue updating the media about the investigation, and once it is completed, the Archbishop of Johannesburg may choose to make the findings public.

In the meantime, one has to wonder whether this is the calm before – or after – the storm. **SMF**

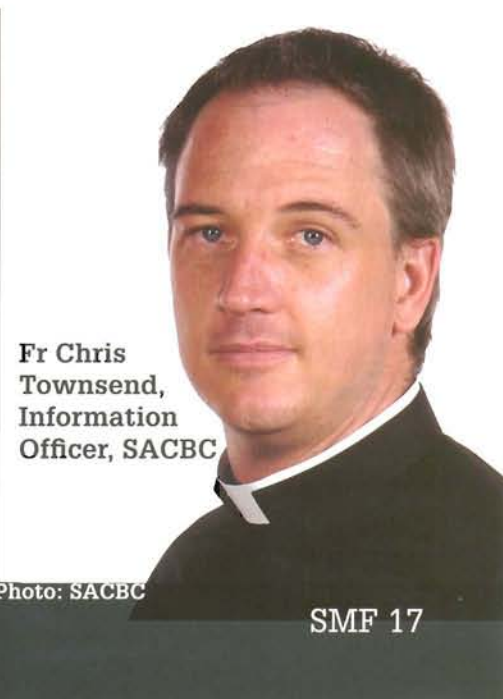
on the insert about Zackey. Cooper said in the insert that the reality of Zackey's apparitions was more of a personal reality to her than to anyone else.

Archbishop Buti Tihlagale from the Johannesburg diocese said during the insert that the Church was not easily convinced by Zackey's vision. Fr Townsend says that the Church regards such claims as a "private revelation".

The editor of *The Southern Cross*, Günther Simmermacher, concurs with Fr Townsend's statement that Zackey's visions are private experiences. The editor of South Africa's only Catholic news-



Graphic: Siyabonga Africa



Fr Chris Townsend, Information Officer, SACBC

Photo: SACBC

Die NG Kerk en die

VAN TAFEL EN BED GESKEI?

Dis algemeen bekend dat die Afrikaanse pers, die NG Kerk en die Nasionale Party in een kooi was.

Tobie Wiese, wat van 1982 tot 1986 'n kerksakeverslaggewer vir *Die Burger*, *Beeld*, *Volksblad* en *Oosterlig* was, sê dit is belangrik om die konteks van die tyd te onthou.

"Die NG Kerk het apartheid help ontwerp en dit daarna Bybels regverdig, maar teen die jare tagtig was apartheid en die land diep in die moeilikheid. Die kerk, die Nasionale Party en Naspers het begin 'second thoughts' kry," sê hy.

In die middel van die huwelik was die Afrikaanse hoofstroompers.

"Naspers se koerante het deurgaans die meer verligte denke binne die Nasionale Party en die kerk bevorder," sê Tobie.

"Sommige mense sal sê dit het neergekom op steun vir 'n soort vaartbelynde, minder aanstootlike apartheid. Redakteurs uit dié tyd sê nee; Daarmee het hulle die wittes voorberei vir die onvermydelike veranderinge wat moes kom."

Wat ookal die motiewe van die Afrikaanse pers was – die winde van politieke verandering het die huweliksbootjie na die rotse gedryf.

Die nuwe, sekulêre Suid-Afrika het aangebreek en was nie afhanklik van die Nasionale Party, die NG Kerk of die Afrikaanse pers nie.

Die huidige moderator van die NG Kerk, Piet Strauss, sê die kerk se doen en late is ná 1994 polities na die rand geskuif.

Ook Tobie meen die kerk is magteloos gelaat deur politieke hervorming en die onvermydelike egskending tussen die kerk en staat wat gevolg het.

"Dit het natuurlik ook 'n invloed op die NG Kerk se verhouding met die media," sê Tobie. "Vroeër sou 'n moderator maklik die redakteur bel en oor iets kla, maar ek twyfel of so iets nog gebeur. Die dominee verteenwoordig nie meer 'n magsblok nie."

Nie een van die Afrikaanse koerante sal vandag wil toegee dat hulle hulself by enige politieke party skaar nie. Tog is die skeiding tussen die Afrikaanse pers en die NG Kerk nie so duidelik nie.

Al drie die kerksakeverslaggewers waarmee SMF gesels het, sê die NG Kerk kry die meeste blootstelling in hul onderskeie publikasies. Die feit

dat die NG Kerk die grootste Afrikaanse kerk is, verklaar tot 'n mate die hoeveelheid dekking wat dié kerk geniet.

Marlene Malan, wat tot onlangs vir *Rapport* geskryf het, sê "tot (haar) spyt en verskoning het ander kerke en gelowe heeltemal te min aandag gekry".

Johannes de Villiers, voormalige kerksakeverslaggewer vir *Die Burger*, sê ook hy het probeer om meer blootstelling aan ander kerke en gelowe te gee, maar "die NG Kerk suig jou in".

Hy sê die feit dat die NG Kerk "organisatories uitstekend en deursigtig is", verseker ook meer blootstelling aan dié kerk.

Die Burger, wat verskeie Moslemlesers het en ook daaglik 'n vers uit die Koran publiseer, dek weinig nuusgebeure uit dié geloof.

"Dit is bloot omdat dit so moeilik is om oor die Moslems verslag te doen. Dit is 'n ingewikkelde struktuur en die mense praat nie maklik nie," sê Johannes.

Beeld se Neels Jackson sê weer sy dekking van die onderskeie kerke is siklies, soos wanneer algemene sinodale sittings gehou word. Dit is ook afhanklik van kerklike kulture.

"Party kerke praat moeiliker met koerante oor interne debatte as ander," sê hy.

Nie een van die verslaggewers kon met sekerheid sê wat die demografiese samestelling met betrekking tot geloof en kerkdenominasies van hul lesers is nie.

Die aanname van wie hul lesers is, is maar bloot 'n "aanvoeling".

Peet Kruger, redakteur van *Beeld*, sê hulle doen verslag daaroor "omdat ons lesers daarvan hou".

"Ons sien dit telkens in die reaksies op godsdienstories en in ons briewekolom," sê hy. Peet sê die belangstelling is spesifiek in die Christelike geloof, maar "kerkverband is minder belangrik as ooit tevore".

Die Burger het nog nie spesifieke navorsing oor hul lesers se geloofsoortuigings gedoen nie.

Frieda le Roux, navorsingsbestuurder by *Die Burger*, sê die laaste navorsing wat gedoen is in Mei 2006 toon dat 60,1 persent van hul lesers in die Wes-Kaap en 71,3 persent van hul lesers in die Oos-Kaap hulself as "diep gelowige persone" klassifiseer.

"Ek dink die media moet simpatiek teenoor die NG Kerk en sy probleme staan"

– Johannes de Villiers

"Die verhouding tussen die NG Kerk en die Afrikaanse pers moet geskoei wees op 'n begrip en respek by beide"

– Piet Strauss

Afrikaanse pers



In 'n konferensiekamer van 'n Afrikaanse dagblad hang die getuienis van 'n onheilige drie-eenheid – oorkondes van die NG Kerk en die Nasionale Party, “Vir 'n effektiewe samewerking”. **Herman Scholtz** vra of die Afrikaanse pers se huwelik met die NG Kerk op die rotse is.



Skets: Ian McNaught Davis

Die lesers is nie gevra watter geloof hulle aanhang nie.

“Dit is nie uitgesluit dat ons dit wel in die toekoms by navorsing kan insluit nie, maar tot op hede was daar nog nooit nodigheid vir só 'n vraag nie,” sê sy.

Om die Afrikaanse pers enersyds en die NG Kerk andersyds oor een kam te skeer, is problematies.

Al drie kerksakeverslaggewers is dit eens dat daar verskillende denkrigtings en strome binne die NG Kerk is. Dieselfde geld vir die Afrikaanse pers.

Piet sê sommige verslaggewers is “meer onpartydig as ander”. Dit is ook duidelik dat verslaggewers nie noodwendig saamstem nie.

Neels sê byvoorbeeld Marlene het 'n jaar of wat gelede baie prominensie aan sekere strome binne die NG Kerk verleen. “My gevoel was dat 'n mens die

verskillende stemme in die kerk volgens hul gewig moet evalueer as jy besluit hoeveel aandag jy aan hulle wil gee."

Marlene sê weer baie mense sien *Beeld* "as 'n soort spreekbuis van die NG Kerk-topstruktuur".

"En as daar wel kritiese berigte teen die NG Kerk is, is dit uiters versigtig, pap en sag," sê sy.

Kerkverslaggewing in die Afrikaanse pers word blykbaar soos politieke verslaggewing bedryf. "Daar is 'n driehoek binne die NG Kerk. Die linkses gaan na een koerant, die regs na 'n ander, en die bestuur na nóg 'n ander koerant 'om die feite reg te stel'," sê Johannes.

Die kerkverslaggewers se persoonlike geloofsoortuigings kom ook ter sprake wanneer vuil wasgoed in die openbaar gewas word.

"Daar is van topstruktuur se kant af aan my gesê ek het 'n agenda teen die NG Kerk en dat die kerk my seker as mens seergemaak het en ek nou die NG Kerk wil terugkry," sê Marlene.

Johannes sê "dit is seker nie 'n landsgeheim dat ek nie 'n über-teologiese mens is nie". Die gevolg is dat baie "liberale en oopkop" mense hom nader.

Neels sê sy situasie "is so dat ek self ook 'n lidmaat van 'n NG gemeente is en uit die aard van die saak standpunte, en soms sterk standpunte, oor kwessies binne die kerk het," sê Neels.

Al drie hou egter vol dat hulle altyd probeer om billik en gebalanseerd oor die kerk verslag te doen.

Die duiwel was oor die afgelope paar jare behoorlik los tussen die NG Kerk en die Afrikaanse pers.

Sommige lede van die NG Kerk was omgekrap oor die media se dekking van veral die gay-kwessie en kerkeenheid.

"Ek dink die verhouding tussen leidende figure in die NG Kerk en die media het in die algemeen oor die afgelope aantal jare baie verbeter," sê Piet.

Marlene sê sy het baie swaargekry as kerksakeverslaggewer omdat haar verhouding met sekere hooggeplaastes suur was.

"My kop is dikwels gewas – nie oor verkéerde beriggewing nie, maar omdat ek dit gewaag het om 'n stem te gee aan die 'underdogs'.

"Dit is steeds hoofsaaklik die stem van die topstruktuur wat in die pers gehoor word. Ek sou sê die verhouding het wel in 'n mate verander (vanaf die vorige bedeling), maar nog nie genoeg nie," sê sy.

Johannes sê ook die verhouding tussen die Afrikaanse pers en die NG Kerk was in 'n stadium baie stram, maar het weer verbeter. "Ek dink die media moet simpatiek teenoor die NG Kerk en sy probleme staan."

Ook Piet Strauss glo die verhouding tussen die NG Kerk en die Afrikaanse pers "moet geskoei wees op 'n begrip en respek by beide".

Neels meen sy verhouding met kerklui is "redelik goed".

"Ek dink die meeste ouens weet dat ek omgee vir die kerk, maar dat ek my onafhanklikheid as joernalis behou."

Vir nou lyk 'n algehele egskeiding onwaarskynlik.

"Ek persoonlik sien die media as 'n bondgenoot wat getaak is om noodsaaklike nuus te versprei," sê Piet. **SMF**



verduiiewelse

‘By’geloof



Die laaste
van die
ligwagters

10

Redakteur: Liza Albrecht

Saterdag 15 Septemb

Aquila is trots om Kaapstad se enigste oorspronklike sa
waar jy 'n wildrit kan beleef tussen loslopende olifant
luiperds, renosters, buffels en oor 'n duisend stukke



WAARLIK AFRIKA...



Grafika: Daniëlla du Plooy



'n Oorlog is aan't woed in *By*. Die blaaie is die slagveld; woorde die wapens. Daniëlla du Plooy stel ondersoek in na dié publikasie se rol in godsdiensverslaggewing.

Eers was dit evolusie versus kreasionisme. Toe was dit die "gays in die kerk"-debat. Meer onlangs 'n woordewisseling of, en in watter gedaante, die duiwel bestaan.

By, die bylaag wat Saterdag in Media24 se Afrikaanse susterdagblaaie *Beeld*, *Die Burger* en *Volksblad* verskyn, het intussen 'n mondstuk vir sommige van sy lesers geword: 'n podium waar openbare debatte oor netelige kwessies – veral dié wat handel oor geloof – gevoer word.

Bykans 'n ieder en 'n elk kan hier 'n mening lug – van dr Coenie Burger, die vorige moderator van die NG Kerk, tot die leser wat 'n brief skryf of 'n sms stuur.

Dié publikasie is, toe dit die eerste keer in Oktober 2006 ook in *Beeld* en *Volksblad* verskyn het, aan lesers bemark as leesstof vir dié wat hou van dink, debatteer,

deklameer en draaksteek.

"*By* word gorig op lesers wat deeglik nagevorsde, indiopte-artikels versvind én uitdaag. Dit bied 'n stewige porsie leesstof vir 'n prikkelende naweek," is in *Beeld* geskryf.

En lesers prikkel, hét dit.

Maar *By* het ook begin krap – veral sommige van die artikels en rubrieke oor godsdiens wat geplaas is, het aanstoot gegee. Briewe van beswaardes wat voorgeneem het om "nooit weer *Die Burger* op Saterdag te koop nie," het meer algemeen geword.

Volgens Liza Albrecht, nasionale redakteur van *By*, is daar nie 'n vaste riglyn wat stel daar móét noodwendig soveel rubrieke en artikels oor godsdienssake verskyn nie. Dit spruit gewoonlik uit lesers se behoeftes.

"En ja, dit is inderdaad so dat *By* byna op 'n weeklikse basis dié soort stories plaas," sê sy. "Die inhoud word immers grotendeels bepaal deur die 'onderwerp van die oomblik'."

Volgens Liza ontstaan só 'n brandpunt-onderwerp spontaan en het sy nog nie 'n "enkele keer" in haar vyf jaar-lange redakteurskap van *By* 'n artikel met 'n godsdienstige onderwerp aangevra nie.

"Omdat sulke artikels meestal kontensieus is, veroorsaak die plaas daarvan dikwels 'n rimpel-effek. So het die ope brief wat Laurie Gaum destyds aan Coenie Burger gestuur het, gelei tot bydraes in drie daaropvolgende weke."

Sy voeg by die gereelde plaas van repliek is moontlik aangesien *By* 'n weeklikse publikasie is en die debat nie met die volgende uitgawe reeds vergeet is nie.

"Dit is ook vir ons noodsaaklik om 'n gebalanseerde debat en/of diskoers te vestig."

'N Groot deel van *By* se inhoud word aan lesers gewy – die briewekolomme is byvoorbeeld veel langer as talle ander publikasies s'n en die gewildheid van die sms-blaaie het die redaksie genoop om in sommige uitgawes 'n volle bladsy nêr daaraan af te staan.

Daar is dikwels ook protes van lesers oor artikels wat oor geloofsake handel en aanstoot gegee het. Sal *By* ooit om verskoning vra, sou daar "genoeg" mense aanstoot neem?

Liza sê verseker nee.

Spesiale Kersaanbod

**Die hemel se hekke is remote control
Met 'n Wimpy binne
met genoeg sitplek vir almal
wat gatvol geshopping is.
Maria
in die kombuis waar sy hoort
bak tjips en french fries
Sy het vatlappe aan
want daarsonder kan sy bokkerol
voel.
God
met 'n vonkel in sy oog sê
neem, eet en drink
alles is op die huis
want so lief het ek die wêreld
dat ek my sagste lam laat opsaag
en mince het
vir vanaand se super dooper
grabba-burger
Cheers, sê God
en lig sy beker bloed.**

Jeanne Goosen

**Links: Dié gedig van Jeanne Goosen wat 'n storm
ontketen het. Dit is in *By* se uitgawe van
26 Desember 2006 gepubliseer.**

"Ontleed 'n mens die klagtes behoorlik, kom jy gou agter dis 'n klein groepie wat hard protesteer. 'n Ander algemene verskynsel is die georkestreerde veldtog waarin 'n mens eensklaps 50 briewe vanuit dieselfde gemeente ontvang. Sulke reaksies word nie as verteenwoordigend beskou nie."

Dit beteken egter nie lesers word nie in ag geneem nie. Liza wys daarop dat hul reaksies lei tot idees vir die volgende uitgawe. "Dis myns insiens een van die redes vir *By* se gewildheid – dat dit 'n afsetgebied word vir uiteenlopende menings."

In Desember 2006 is 'n gedig van die skrywer Jeanne Goosen in *By* gepubliseer wat talle lesers na die pen laat gryp het. "Spesiale Kersaanbod" is op verskillende maniere geïnterpreteer, en veral Christene het aanstoot geneem.

"Vryheid van spraak beteken nie jy kan goed wat vir ander heilig is, vertrap nie. Saam met vryheid kom verantwoordelikheid!" het Karin Theron van Somerset-Wes in 'n protesbrief aan *By* geskryf.

JR Cilliers van Knysna het ook gemeen die koerant het te ver gegaan.

"Ek lees *Die Burger* nou al die afgelope tien jaar en het dit geniet, ook *By*. In die afgelope paar maande verskyn daar egter al hoe meer dikwels sinies-kritiese artikels wat die Christelike geloof aanval en afbreek. Geen ander geloof word aangeval nie. 'Spesiale Kersaanbod' is openlike, blatante godslastering. Maar dis genoeg, ek koop en lees nooit weer *Die Burger* nie, en sal die rede daarvoor bekend maak waar ek kan."

'n Ander leser wou weet waarom *By* nie by dié soort omstrede artikels 'n "vrywaring" plaas dat die menings wat daarin voorkom, nie noodwendig die standpunt van die koerant weerspieël nie.

wat in Januarie vanjaar in *By* verskyn het, ondersteun en verwys na die gesegde "'n goeie koerant is 'n nasie in gesprek met haarself".

Volgens haar is dit die doel van dié omstrede publikasie.

"Soms lei dit tot 'n stimulerende gesprek, soms 'n gebelgde een, soms 'n amusante. Feit is: Dit bring iets in die openbare arena..."

Van die lesers glo egter die koerant moet steeds sy lesers en hul voorkeure in gedagte hou.

Dr IW Ferreira van Kaapstad skryf in Junie 2007 in die briewekolom hy meen die meeste van *Die Burger* se lesers is Christene.

"Indien dit so is, is dit duidelik dat wanneer Claassen-hulle demokraties gesproke nie in hul nuusblad skryf wat die meerderheid van die mense graag wil lees nie, hulle in teenstelling met internasionale beginsels van verslaggewing optree."

Ferreira argumenteer verantwoordelike joernalistieke beginsels vereis dat die koerant te alle tye bedryf moet word met die lesers se



'Myns insiens is een van die redes vir *By* se gewildheid dat dit 'n afsetgebied word vir uiteenlopende menings'

George Claassen, die ombudsman van *Die Burger*, het in Februarie vanjaar in een van sy rubrieke verwys na dié vraag.

"Die koerant plaas nie net menings van bydraers, rubriekskrywers en kundiges oor diverse onderwerpe waarmee die redaksie, of die redakteur as hoogste uitvoerende redaksionele bestuurder van die koerant, saamstem nie," skryf hy.

George verwys voorts na media-ontleders wat die pers se rol as verskaffer van 'n forum vir debat benadruk.

"Die media en 'n koerant soos *Die Burger* skep 'n platform, 'n markplein waar idees gewissel word en waar selfs ernstig met mekaar verskil kan word. Dié forum sal dikwels lesers konfronteer met 'ander' waarnemings van die omgewing as wat hulle ken of selfs bereid is om waar te neem," skryf hy.

Goosen se gedig word beskryf as slegs een van dié idees.

Prof Lizette Rabe, hoof van Universiteit Stellenbosch se joernalistiek departement, het dié "markplein"-idee in 'n artikel,

behoefte in gedagte.

In 'n brief deur dr Bernhard Ficker wat in dieselfde maand verskyn het, skryf hy *By* het afgedwaal "vanaf 'n posisie van gebalanseerd-krities na humanisties-sekulêr".

Volgens Liza is hierdie beskuldigings, asook dié dat *By* "sommer enigiets" sal plaas, ongegrond.

"Ja, natuurlik is daar grense. Die bepalinge in *Die Burger* se etiese kode moet gelees word tesame met dié oor vryheid van spraak en uitdrukking," sê sy.

"Maar tensy 'n mens jou inhoud beperk tot *sweet nothings*, gaan jy altyd iemand êrens aanstoot gee."

Sy beklemtoon die doel van goeie joernalistiek, en 'n etiese kode, is nie om almal gelukkig te hou nie.

"Dis gewoonlik juis die ongemaklike – die krappertjie – wat mense laat nadink." **SMF**

Die Klets is deur die Kerk

Wat bly oor???

Niks nie. Net 'n klomp storie.

Ek is 'n sekswerker en hoop en bid dat God

my ook sal vergewe en sal liefhe

soek jy 'n vooraf-verpakte kloplossing, kompleet met 'n strikkie?

of soek jy die waarheid

God is slegs die kerk-geplante stemmetjie in jou kop en bestaan nie vir Groot Mens te glo.

Jy is van kleins af geïndoktrineer om in 'n Vader Krumm

As daar 'n God was wat sy kinders liefgehad het, sou hy tussen paradystuis gestel het om te kyk wat hulle maak nie.

hulle geleef het en nie traps vir hulle in 'n denkkeeldige

Instead of trying to build huge amounts of faith to simpler method is to remove our fears by cutting off "child-like" faith that remains will do the job.

overcome our fears and unbelief, a their source, then our simple It doesn't take big faith--just pure faith.



Na 'n wyd gepubliseerde skeiding tussen *Die Kerkbode* en die webwerf Kletskerk, is dié geselsruimte steeds springlewendig en gesond. Jean Oosthuizen het vir **Joanita Cillie** vertel van die merkwaardige groei van dié webwerf – waar gelowiges en ongelowiges hul vrese, hartseer en blydskap met mekaar deel.

“**E**k het steeds *Die Burger* se plakkaat met die woorde ‘Kletskerk vandag gesluit?’ in my kantoor.”

Dit is net ná 17:00 op 'n wintersdag. Die man voor my is Jean Oosthuizen, moderator en stigter van Kletskerk. Ons soek warmte voor die kaggel in 'n Stellenbosse eetplek. Ons gespreksonderwerp oor 'n koppie koffie is Kletskerk en die webwerf se nuwe lewe.

Waar dit gelyk het asof Kletskerk se deure gesluit sal word, het dit soos 'n feniks uit die as verrys, 'n nuwe fondasie – 'n webwerf van sy eie – is geskep.

Voorheen die geselsruimte op die webwerf van *Die Kerkbode*, waar Jean 'n joernalis is, is Kletskerk 'n plek waar gelowiges en ongelowiges met mekaar kan debatteer oor enigiets onder die son. En gesprekke vind altyd hul pad terug na een onderwerp: geloof.

Dinge het egter kort ná die ontstaan in 2005 begin warm raak, want op dié webwerf word “robuuste debatte” gevoer. *Die Kerkbode* – en dus ook die NG Kerk – het hulle van die webwerf gedistansieer ná hulle gevoel het die artikels en gesprekke wat gevoer word, ruk handuit. Alle skakels van *Die Kerkbode* se webwerf na Kletskerk is mettertyd verwyder.

Jean, wat voorheen 'n politieke korrespondent by Gautengse dagblaaie was en later joernalis by die SAUK, sê hy probeer om die besprekings so min as moontlik te reguleer. Hy meen die webwerf en sy gespreksgenote moet eintlik self die reëls maak.

“Dis die kerk se loss,” sê hy. “Dit was tot Kletskerk se voordeel.”

Die vryskutjoernalis en voormalige godsdienstverslaggewer van *Die Burger*, Johannes de Villiers, het onlangs op sy blog geskryf: “Self neem ek nie deel nie, want ek probeer minder vloek en ek wil self nie gevloek word nie”. Hierop het Jean Kletskerkers vermaan: “Ek hoop die vloekendes hier neem kennis dat hulle goeie insette mis as gevolg van hul aanhoudende gevloek.”

Vra hom hieroor uit, en hy skud sy kop.

“Dit is 'n plek waar mense gaan vloek en godslasterlik wees. Dis soos 'n dorp se markplein of die Kaapse Parade – goed en sleg vermeng. Wanneer 'n leser nie van iets hou nie, moet hy maar net aanblaai.”

Jean het wel onlangs twee inskrywings wat 'n “bietjie te erg” was afgehaal – hy kan ook sommige gebruikers se toegang tot die webwerf blok (indien hulle té veel kwytraak), maar dit is die uitsondering op die reël.

“In Moreletapark was daar een ou en toe die gemeente het gekla oor die taalgebruik. Dan was daar ook 'n ou in Pietermaritzburg wat ongelukkig was.”

Dié gebeure het die NG Kerk se besluit om hulle nie meer met Kletskerk te assosieer nie, voorafgegaan.

“Dis die kerk se loss,” sê hy. “Dit was tot Kletskerk se voordeel. Die een ou wat ge-*moan* het se naam is Oom Cor. Deur al die mediablootstelling wat Kletskerk hierdeur gekry het, het hy meer vir die webblad gedoen as wat enige advertensie ooit sou kon.”

Alhoewel Kletskerk volgens hom al van die begin af “geboom” het, het die aantal besoekers verdubbel nadat die stories die koerante gehaal het. Die groei het nie gestop nie, en in Mei vanjaar is die hoogste getal besoekers in die geskiedenis van Kletskerk aangeteken.

Die meerderheid mense het deur die groot bohaai in koerante en tydskrifte daarvan te hore gekom. Jean vertel ongeveer 80 persent van die geregistreerde Kletskerkers, wat onlangs bymekaar gekom het vir 'n braai, het ook so van die webwerf te hore gekom. Stories oor die skeiding is in tydskriite soos *Insig*, *Léef* en *Vrouekeur* gepubliseer.

Daar was ook artikels in die Afrikaanse koerante, asook in *By*, Saterdag-bylae van die Afrikaanse susterpublikasies.

Op *Die Kerkbode* se webwerf is 'n meningspeiling gedoen om te bepaal wat die gebruikers van Kletskerk oor die verwydering van die skakel dink. Meer as tweehonderd mense het gestem.

Nagenoeg 60 persent was jammer daaroor, terwyl 30 persent hul kruisie vir die verwydering van die skakel getrek het. Hierdie onderwerp was een van dié

Koeëls

(deur die Kletskerk)

Gesprek tussen Die Filadelfieer en Johan:

"Ek verstaan 100% Johan. Ek vermoed ons verstaan egter verskillende dinge."

"Ja natuurlik, jy kyk deur die letterlike oog, die sesde oog en ek deur die sewende oog wat die waarheid weerspieël. Wees geduldig en volg die skrywes en jy behoort te verstaan, probeer verstaan."

Nathan Bond oor die opstanding:

"This is probably the reason why Jesus, having solemnly promised his followers that he would return expeditiously after a brief visit to dad, had not been back – he had not survived the ascension. He's dead. The Ascension. A quadrillion miles through the vacuum of space. On a cloud. Clothed in a loose fitting jellaba. Not even Monty Python could come up with a skit like this!"

Attie oor "die beeld van God":

"Vir my, as ateïs, beteken dit dat iemand 'n karakter wou skep. Of dit nou 'n karakter was wat 'n karakter wou skep en of dit nou iemand was wat homself wou vergoddelik of in die posisie van krag oor iemand anders wou aanstel is irrelevant. Dit bly 'n mensgemaakte verhaal of fabel."

Martli aan Godzilla:

"Dan gaan niks wat ek sê jou anders oortuig nie. Soos Van Wyk Louw in 'Ons kan nie praat nie' dit verduidelik. Slegs God kan jou van opinie laat verander. *Anycase*, ek glo God het jou ekstra spesiaal gemaak as jy voldoende kritiese denke het om uit te kom waar jy is. *Nice challenge* vir Hom en jou. Interessant dat jy steeds behoefte het om in hierdie debat deel te neem."

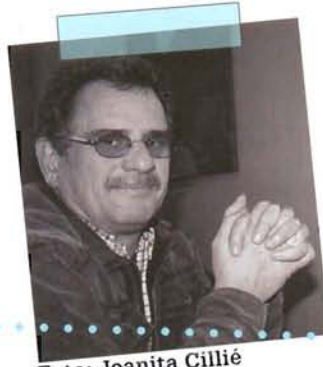


Foto: Joanita Cillie

"Die tyd van 'n predikant wat voor 'n gemeente staan en vir die lidmate preek, is verby. Deesdae wil mense *engage* en vrae vra. Hulle wil debatteer oor kwessies"

– Jean Oosthuizen

wat die meeste reaksie (in vergelyking met ander meningspeilings wat op die webwerf gedoen is) uitgelok het.

Waar 'n mens moontlik iemand sou verwag wat dalk verbitterd is, is Jean presies die teenoorgestelde. Hy sal selfs wil hê die skakels moet teruggeplaas word na *Die Kerkbode* se webwerf, indien die kerk dit sou wou hê. Hy voel die kerk begaan 'n groot fout deur nie na die debatte wat gevoer word, te luister nie.

"Die kerk moet leer dat debat nie gesmoor kan word nie. Hoe op dees aarde gaan gelowige mense weet waaroor ongelowiges dink as hulle nie *face to face* wil debatteer nie en eerder eenkant in die hoekie gaan sit?"

Hy vertel talle predikante besoek ook die webwerf en leer daaruit. "Predikante wat deelneem, word verwelkom, want dit is belangrik vir mense om te besef hulle het ook vrae en onsekerhede. Een predikant het onlangs selfs gesê hy voel Kletskerk se debatte moet verpligte leesstof vir alle teologies studente en selfs teoloë wees."

Nadat hy die LitNet-debat oor godsdiens begin volg het, het Jean die leemte in Christelike kletskamers geïdentifiseer en besluit om Kletskerk op *Die Kerkbode* se webwerf te begin.

Jean sien die webwerf as 'n plek waar mense eerlik met mekaar kan gesels. Daar is al oor die 100 000 artikels gepubliseer, en daar is reeds meer as 1 000 gebruikers geregistreer. Die gemiddelde "Kletskerkers" is in hul vroeë dertigs en is professionele mense van regoor Suid-Afrika sowel as oorsee. Daar is tans 'n gelyke mengsel van gelowiges en ongelowiges.

Jean vertel hy het voor die begin van Kletskerk 'n wanopvatting oor ongelowiges gehad. "Ek het agtergekom alhoewel hulle anders glo, sommige van hulle die *grootste* mense ooit is."

Wat die webwerf selfs meer uniek maak, is dat interaksie nie slegs tot die kuberruimte beperk word nie. Daar is reeds 'n paar Kletskerk-partytjies by van die lede se huise gehou. Die eerste was in Somerset-

Wes, waar Jean ook woon. Ander het reg oor die land gevolg – van Oudtshoorn tydens die KKNK, tot in Pretoria tydens die sitting van die NG Kerk se Algemene Sinode.

Wat ongewoon van dié partytjies is, is die feit dat mense wat mekaar in die kuberruimte openlik kritiseer en veg oor wat hulle glo, nie skaam is om mekaar te ontmoet en in die oë te kyk nie. Dit nadat hulle allerlei opmerkings vanuit die veilige hawe van 'n skuilnaam kwytingeraak het.

"Die mure val weg en almal kuier saam," sê Jean. "Een van die ongelowiges het sy vrou deur Kletskerk ontmoet. Die mense deel ongelooflike stories met mekaar. Onderling baklei hulle soos kat en hond, maar op die ou einde skep dit die gevoel van 'ons loop hiër kerk'."

"Die tyd van 'n predikant wat voor 'n gemeente staan en vir die lidmate preek, is verby. Deesdae wil mense *engage* en vrae vra. Hulle wil debatteer oor kwessies."

Jean voel die toekoms hou baie vir dié webwerf in. "Op dié stadium loop Kletskerk sy eie pad, en staan op sy eie voete." Dit bestaan nou as 'n webwerf in sy eie reg en daarom hoef Jean aan niemand verantwoording te doen oor die besprekings nie, soos in die verlede met *Die Kerkbode*.

Hy bestuur die webwerf tans alleen in sy vrye tyd, en hoewel dit baie van sy tyd in beslag neem, verkies hy dit só. Kletskerk hou hom op hoogte van alle nuwe ontwikkelinge en daarom vul dit sy werk by *Die Kerkbode* aan, in plaas daarvan om daarop inbreuk te maak.

Indien dit in die toekoms onmoontlik word om dit alleen te doen, sal hy nie skroom om nog 'n moderator te kry wat hom kan help om die gesprekke in toom te hou nie. Hy dink egter nie dit sal sommer gebeur nie.

Jean vou sy hande saam en kyk my in die oë wanneer hy sê: "Godsdiens is deel van 'n ou se lewe en dit sal oor die eeue heen so wees. Ek wil hê Kletskerk moet 'n brugbouer wees. Een wat help brue bou tussen mense van verskillende agtergronde." **SMF**



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Beeld

Jou wêreld, Jou koerant

Jerome Thion en die losvoorspeler
Thierry Dusautoir hulle na die
naweek se eindstryd van die Fran-
se liga weens beserings aan die
toer onttrek. Volgens die Franse
"Ek dink nie 'n mens moet pro-
beer om te veel hieruit wys te
word nie. Ek onthou toe hulle on-
der Harry (Viljoen, gewese Bok-
afrigter) met 'n jong en onervare
Maar die... die nuns gelos is.
ertroue in die volgende groep
spelers het. En ja, hulle mag 'n
bietjie tam wees, maar dit sal af-
hang van hoe die Bokke...
loef teen 'n
en tam" span
staan kom nie
Sedert die F
Suid-Afrika

Geloof in die proefbuis

In 'n tyd
waarin al
hoe meer
wetenskaplike
bevindings
nie noodwendig
ooreenstem met
gelowe nie, bots die
teenstrydige
wêrelde van geloof
en die wetenskap al
hoe meer. Die media
word ook gereeld
vasgevang in dié
spervuur.

Anri van der Spuy
gesels met George
Claassen, ombudsman
van *Die Burger* en
skrywer van die boek
*Geloof, bygeloof en ander
wensdenkery*:

*perspektiewe op
ontdekkings en
irrasionaliteite**, oor
die wyse waarop die
media verslaggewing
oor geloof en die
proefbuis benader.



Die rye wit plastiekstoel is volgepak en mense staan in elke oop hoekie van die boekwinkel. Klaarblyklik het veel meer mense opgedaag as wat verwag is, só op 'n Vrydagaand. Die skrywer is onsigbaar tussen die boeke, maar iemand bestempel sy boek as "een van die mees belangrike boeke in 'n lang tyd".

Die gesiglose stem van George Claassen sweef deur die rye boeke en weergalm in Protea Boekhuis. Hy wat onlangs aangewys is as die Suid-Afrikaanse Wetenskapkommunikeerder van die Jaar. Hy sê hy het oor die afgelope ses jaar wat hy as ombudsman by *Die Burger* werk, besef hoe "uiters oningelig" die samelewing is oor die "waarde van wetenskap". En indien dié vlak van wetenskaplike onkunde behou word, ons samelewing "verdoem" is.

'n Mens wonder – moet dit werklik die een of die ander wees? Of die media soos Petrus óf vir godsdiens óf vir die wetenskap moet soen. Of dit nodig is dat een van dié gekruisig moet word sodat die ander kan voortbestaan.

Dit is onvermydelik dat godsdiens en die moderne wêreld swaarde sal kruis – veral in 'n land soos Suid-Afrika waar 85 persent van alle mense op die een of ander wyse gelowig is. Die media is gewoonlik die forum waarop dié bitter kruisgevegte plaasvind, en ontsnap self selde sonder 'n paar steekwonde.

George skryf in sy boek verslaggewing oor wetenskaplike uitvindings veroorsaak gereeld "venynige teenstand" vanaf *Die Burger* se lesers. Waar 'n groot persentasie lesers die *Die Burger* sal prys vir verslaggewing oor wetenskaplike aangeleenthede, soos byvoorbeeld evolusie, is daar ook gereeld ernstige kritiek oor dié kwessies.

Hy blameer dié teenstand op stik-sienigheid. "Onkunde", skryf hy, "ongelukkig in die meeste gevalle gewillige en gekose onkunde, (bly) een van die bedreigendste donker wolke wat sy versmorende kleed bly werp oor die psige van 'n duidelik groot persentasie Afrikaanssprekendes."

George sê in 'n latere e-posgesprek *Die Burger* skenk steeds "deeglike aandag" aan wetenskaplike ontwikkelings ten spyte van die feit dat dit nie met godsdienstige argumente ooreenstem nie. "Ons rapporteer wat in die wêreld aangaan," sê hy. "As dit moet beteken dat ons ook die spieël van die werklikheid moet ophou wat die foute van godsdienste en hul aanhangers toon, dan doen ons bloot ons plig."

Hy vertel wyle Piet Cillié, *Die Burger* se redakteur vanaf 1954 tot 1977, en 'n uitgesproke agnostikus, het gesê hy kon nie toelaat dat Afrikaanssprekendes "oogklappe opsit om liewer nie van onaangename feite kennis te neem nie".

Dit wil blyk asof *Die Burger* egter die enigste haan is wat werklik kraai oor wetenskaplike ontwikkelings.

George het tydens sy boekbekendstelling gesê daar is 'n "skamele verwaarloosing" van wetenskapsjoernalistiek in Suid-Afrika – tot op hede is *Die Burger* byvoorbeeld die enigste Suid-Afrikaanse koerant met 'n weeklikse wetenskaprubriek.

Hy glo die media het die potensiaal om 'n "ongelooflike belangrike rol" te speel om mense "meer kennis van die wetenskap te gee" en om só "grense af te breek".

Tans moet wetenskaplikes egter gereeld "op hul tande byt", sê George. By die boekbekendstelling vra iemand of daar regtig 'n botsing tussen godsdiens en die wetenskap is. "Hulle bestaan naas mekaar", sê Claassen, "maar hulle moet net uit mekaar se sake bly. Godsdiens foeter die hele tyd in die wetenskap in."

Godsdiens "foeter" klaarblyklik ook by die media in. Tydens die onderhoud vertel George daar word dikwels deur gelowiges aan die media "voorgeskrif". Alhoewel *Die Burger* se lesers ook "baie sterk gelowig" is, glo hy koerante bestaan nie om godsdiens te dien nie. "*Die Burger* is 'n sekulêre koerant, soos Suid-Afrika 'n sekulêre staat is. Ons (en die land) mag wel baie godsdienstige lesers hê, maar ons verkoop nuus as kommoditeit."

George meen die media word steeds beïnvloed deur godsdienstiges wat voel hulle verdien 'n vorm van "spesiale beskerming". Hoewel George sê dit is uit die aard van die saak "goed" om respek teenoor enige godsdiens te toon, kan *Die Burger* dit net doen "solank godsdienstebeoefenaars respek verdien".

"Godsdienste is heeltemal te sensitief oor kritiek," meen George. Hy verwys na die NG Kerk se debat oor homoseksualiteit in die kerk. "As ons kritiek uitspreek omdat die kerk nie gays wil toelaat nie, is dit nie ons wat 'n bespotting van godsdiens maak nie; ons tree op in lyn met die bepalings van ons Grondwet."

George ervaar die houding van sekere godsdienstige instansies as paternalisties teenoor die media. "En vanuit hoge redaksionele kringe," sê hy, "geskied dit ongelukkig ook te veel waar senior redakteurs sensor speel en nie toelaat dat 'lelike maar waar' dinge oor gelowiges geskryf word nie, al is dit ook hoe gepas."



Foto: Die Burger

"Godsdiens foeter die hele tyd in die wetenskap in"

En in die vol, klein boekwinkel op die koue Vrydagaand voorspel George die wetenskap gaan "nog baie mense op hul neuse laat kyk". **SMF**

* GELOOF, BYGELOOF EN ANDER WENSDENKERY: PERSPEKTIEWE OP ONTDEKKINGS EN IRRASIONALITEITE, deur George Claassen. Protea Boekhuis, 2007.

Indien jy meer wil weet oor die verhouding tussen godsdiens en die wetenskap, lees:

Sam Harris: *The End of Faith: Religion, Faith and the End of Reason or Letter to a Christian Nation*.

Leon Rousseau: *Die Groot Avontuur*

Richard Dawkins: *The God Delusion*

Francis Collins: *The Language of God: A Scientist presents evidence to Belief*.

GOD se bemerkers



Sportpersoonlikhede, die media en godsdiens.

James-Brent Styan bekijk die drie se interaksie en vra of die mengsel nie gevaarlik is nie.

Die oom met die ring deur sy neus dra Maandae 'n sekuriteitswag-uniform. Die tannie met die blou hare werk by 'n tuisnywerheid in Valhalla. Die drie studente met die Blou Bul-truie het al halftyd op iemand anders se stoele gaan sit. Niemand kla nie, want dié drie ouens ken al die woorde van Gé Korsten se "Liefeling". En as Derick Hougaard punte aanteken, lei dié drie die sang.

Dis blou waar jy kyk en soveel horings het 'n mens laas gesien in daai IMAX-dokumentêr van die Serengeti. (Ja, die een waar duisende blouwildebeeste deur krokodille gevreet word.) Gaan 'n mens Nuweland toe in Kaapstad of Absapark in Durban, is die ondersteuners nét so fanaties. Dit is net die kleure wat strepe word en die horings vinne.

Daar is weekliks meer as 50 000 ondersteuners wat Loftus se banke vol pak. En hulle kom uit alle dele van die samelewing. Vir die meeste mense op Loftus se Oos-pawiljoen is die weeklikse opruk na die tuiste van die Blou Bulle-rugbyspan 'n ou tradisie. Vir R40 kan enigeen vir 80 minute lank vergeet van die werklike lewe.

Dit is 'n anderse soort kollekte dié.

Die ooreenkomste wat getrek kan word tussen sport en godsdiens is talryk. In 'n artikel in *The Times of India* skryf Ruphine Obare van die Sheffield Universiteit in Engeland oor sommige van dié ooreenkomste. Sy verwys byvoorbeeld na woorde soos "helde" en "gode" waardeur sportsterre soos die Amerikaanse 30 SMF

basketbalspeler Michael Jordan beskryf word. Ander frases of woorde wat die grense tussen sport en godsdiens verdof is "verafgod", die daaglikse "bestudering" van die sportbladsye, die "verering" van oudspelers en die versameling van "simbole van oorwinning" soos trofee, medaljes en handtekeninge.

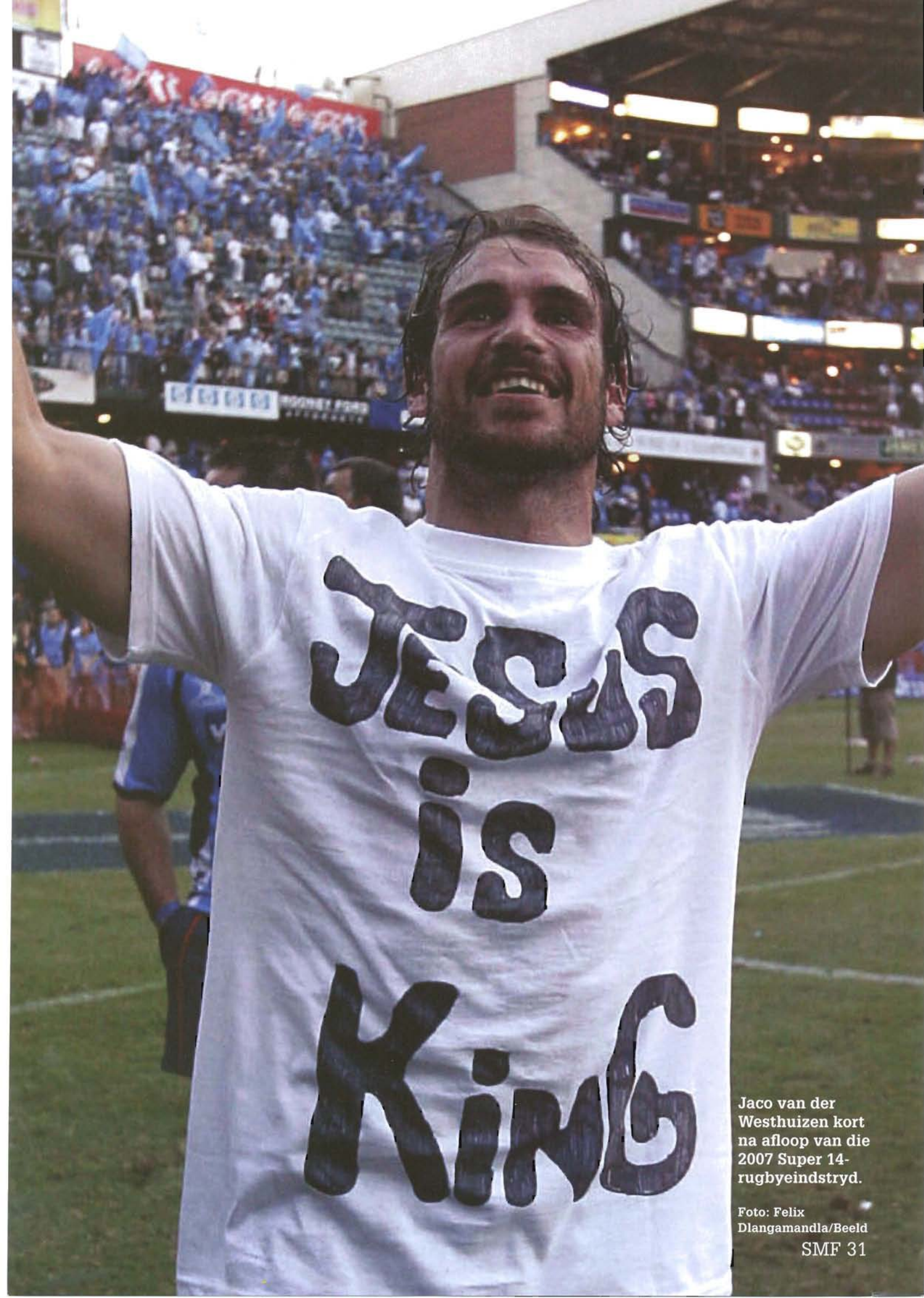
Is sokkerboelies nie 'n hedendaagse kruistog nie? Volgens die webwerf *sportsillustrated.cnn.com* het daar in 1985 39 sokker-ondersteuners in België omgekom in 'n gewelddadige geveg tussen sokkerboelies van die verskeie spanne by 'n wedstryd tussen Liverpool en Juventus.

In 1991 is 40 ondersteuners in Orkney, Suid-Afrika, doodgedruk toe hulle probeer het om 'n geveg tussen twee strydende groepe sokkerboelies te ontvlug.

Meer onlangs, tydens die 2006-sokkerwêreldbeker in Duitsland, is sowat 200 sokker ondersteuners gearresteer deur die Duitse polisie as 'n voorkomingsmaatreël. Die bydrae van die media in hierdie gevalle is onkwantifiseerbaar. Die manier waarop die gedrukte media ondersteuners van sokkerspanne in die oploop na wedstryde opswee, moet egter sekerlik 'n invloed op die geweld hê?

Kerkgeboue en sportvelde word onderskeidelik deur kerkgangers en wedstrydbywoners met groot agting betree. Soos die sokkerondersteuners van die klub Manchester United wat hul sokkerveld, Old Trafford, as heilige grond beskou. Die Duitse Bundesligaklub Hamburger HSV bou tans





Jaco van der Westhuizen kort na afloop van die 2007 Super 14-rugbyeindstryd.

Foto: Felix Dlangamandla/Beeld

hul ondersteuners – reg langs hul geliefde sokkerstadion. Dit is nie vreemd om Sondag meer ondersteuners by sportvelde te sien as in kerke nie.

En die media, soos predikante, lewer getrou die godsdien van sport aan ondersteuners – die Evangelie van sport.

Sportmanne en -vroue begin toenemend die trefkrag van die media besef en soos wat mediadekking van sport verander, verander sportpersoonlikhede se hantering daarvan.

Só het hulle mediadekking begin gebruik om hul eie gelowe te verkondig. In die sestigerjare het die wêreld se bekendste bokser, Cassius Clay, die media gebruik om sy godsdien wyd en syd te verkondig.

Clay het sy naam in dié tyd verander na Muhammed Ali en het Islam daardeur na die sportarena gebring. Die media het daarop floreer. Ali het as't ware die eerste sportman geword wat sy sport gebruik het om sy geloof openlik te verkondig.

Toe die rugbyspeler Jaco van der Westhuizen vanjaar tydens die Super 14-eindstryd sy Bulls-trui afpluk, het die Sharks-spelers al nader beweeg om trui te ruil.

Dié ou tradisie van trui ruil ná die wedstryd kon egter die laaste ding in Van der Westhuizen se gedagtes gewees het toe hy breëbors gepronk het met 'n wit T-hemp met dié boodskap: "Jesus is koning".



Sportondersteuners is natuurlik ook nie die enigste aandeelhouers in sport nie. Wat van die borge van sport en sporttoernooie? Vodacom sou byvoorbeeld met reg vies gewees het oor die Van der Westhuizen-vertoning.

Keohane het na die wedstryd in 'n artikel op sy webblad geskryf dié T-hemp het die aandag afgetrek van Vodacom se advertensieveldtog tydens die Super 14-finaal.

Geloof bly ook nie uit krieket uit nie. Toe Hashim Amla die eerste keer ingesluit is in die Protea-krieketspan, was die grootste nuus die feit dat hy toestemming ontvang het om sonder die Castle Lager-kenteken op sy krieketklere, te speel. Moes Castle Lager, wat miljoene rande betaal om die span te borg, toelaat dat so iets gebeur?

Die rede vir hierdie stap was Amla se geloofsoortuigings as Moslem. Die media het gefokus op die geloofsaspek van sy besluit.

Die publiek het min aandag gegee aan die feit dat Amla die eerste Suid-Afrikaanse krieketspeler van Asiatiese afkoms was.

Sportpersoonlikhede geniet in hul oomblikke van glorie baie mediadekking. Indien sportmanne en -vroue dus kies om deur hul sport 'n boodskap aan ondersteuners oor te dra, kan daar verreikende gevolge wees.

Rodney Hartman het in Junie van-

"Wat sou gebeur het indien Jaco verkondig het dat iemand in sy span gay is?"

'n Paar dae later het Ricardo "Kaka" dos Santos Leite, een van wêreldsokker se beste spelers, na die 2007 UEFA-sokkerfinale ook sy hemp afgepluk en sy geloofsbodskap aan die wêreld verkondig. Hierdie keer het miljoene mense wêreldwyd gesien dat Kaka aan Jesus behoort.

Maar dit is hier waar die vonk in die kruitvat beland. Is dit nie gevaarlik om sportmanne en -vroue vrye teuels te gee om die media te gebruik vir hul boodskappe nie?

Baie kenners, soos Mark Keohane, redakteur van die rugbywebwerf keo.co.za, sê ja – want die bevordering van een geloof kan ander individue of dele van die samelewing, wat nie dieselfde geloof aanhang nie, uitsluit.

Wat beteken Van der Westhuizen se daad byvoorbeeld vir Moslem-rugbykykers?

Ondersteuners betaal almal dieselfde hekprys om hul sporthelde in aksie te sien, ongeag wát hul geloofsoortuigings is.

Sal hulle dus kwalik geneem word as hulle verkies om vir Kaka te sien waar hy hulle bedank vir hul ondersteuning, pleks van Kaka se bedanking en prysing van 'n entiteit wat hulle as ondersteuners moontlik nie in glo nie?

jaar in 'n artikel in *The Sunday Independent* getiteld "Does religion belong on the sports field?" verwys na dié gevaar. Volgens hom mag die gevaar wat sulke boodskappe inhou daartoe lei dat skeidsregters voor 'n wedstryd alle spelers se klere moet ondersoek vir vreemde boodskappe.

Die probleem met hemde soos Van der Westhuizen s'n is, volgens Hartman, nie soseer wat hy daarop gesê het nie, maar liever die presedent wat hy geskep het. Daar was nie juis 'n groot probleem met sy spesifieke boodskap nie, maar wat gebeur indien iemand 'n hemp dra met 'n selfs méér omstrede boodskap?

Dit is belangrik dat die media voortdurend hul rol in die vertolking van sport moet bevraagteken, om sodoende te verseker sportdekking gee nie aanstoot aan enige sportondersteuner nie.

Hierdie taak word egter bemoeilik wanneer individue soos Jaco van der Westhuizen sonder waarskuwing hul geloofsoortuigings aan die wêreld verklaar. **SMF**

Bronne: Iol.co.za • News24.com • <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com> • Beeld • Neels Jackson, "Jaco's message: Fair or foul", [News24](http://News24.com) • <http://www.thegoal.com> • "Gods and games: Is sports a religion? Is religion a sport?", www.religionlink.org



Does Opus Dei need a spin doctor?

Opus Dei. Some see it as a cult comprised of albino monks; others see it as a divine path to righteousness. Yet how do the media portray this Catholic organisation that is experiencing a surge of interest in its activities? **Siyabonga Africa** questions the relationship between the media and "The Work", as the organisation is also known.



It might have been an unintended spin-off from the hype around the mega-bestseller *The Da Vinci Code*. Whether intended or not, the spotlight on a mysterious Catholic organisation called Opus Dei has created another hype. Who are they? What are they? And will we ever know the truth?

At a conference of Opus Dei – the literal meaning is "Work of God" – in late April 2001, over 100 public relations specialists working for the Catholic Church heard that their first rule should be: "Never, never, never tell a lie." This came from Joaquin Navarro-Valis, the spokesperson for the late Pope John Paul II.

On the other side of the divide is the Opus Dei Awareness Network (ODAN), an organisation that warns people about The Work. And their credo sounds quite similar to that of Navarro-Valis. It is a quotation from the Bible: "You shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free."

Whose truth then should one believe? Which role has the media played in spreading either lies or the truth? And if the media has the public's best interest at heart, then who should one believe?

According to its website ODAN is an organisation that was founded in 1991 to meet the growing demand for accurate information about Opus Dei. It was founded by Tammy Di Nicola who was a member of Opus Dei for two years. She has made it her personal mission to provide support for those who have had a painful experience as a result of their association with Opus Dei. ODAN relays its information to the media.

Günther Simmermacher is the editor of South Africa's only Catholic newspaper, *The Southern Cross*. He says it distributes 11 000 copies per month. One would think that Simmermacher has a clear stance on the matter – but during an afternoon interview in downtown Cape Town it's not clear what his own views are. On the one hand he wouldn't work for Opus Dei, "not even as a cleaner"; on the other he commends

the good work that they do, especially the manner in which they handled the hype surrounding *The Da Vinci Code*.

In a nutshell, Opus Dei is not a separate church from the Catholic Church. According to the Opus Dei website it's a personal prelature of the Pope. What this means is that regional missions answer to the bishops of the countries they operate in. As a whole, Opus Dei is accountable only to the Pope.

Andrew Woghiren, a spokesperson for Opus Dei based in Johannesburg, concurs by saying that Opus Dei is just another organisation within the grand hierarchy of the church. He says Opus Dei seeks to sanctify daily life by devoting everything done to God.

This doctrine has been expounded in a detailed book about The Work by American journalist John Allen. He has been working within the Catholic Church and has written for *Newsweek* and *Time*. According to Allen's book, *Opus Dei: Secrets and Power inside the Catholic Church*, the sanctification of daily life is what St. Josemaría Escrivá, the founder of The Work, saw as God's wish. This became the doctrine of Opus Dei and all its members, whether they are numeries or supernumeraries. Numeries are members who live within Opus Dei missions and supernumeraries are those who live outside and are allowed to marry. Woghiren describes himself as a numery, even though he lives like a supernumerary.

According to ODAN, one of the "main tricks" that Opus Dei employs is using supernumeraries to answer the media's questions because the supernumeraries themselves have no idea of the inner workings of the Opus Dei.

They are merely members who practise the teachings of The Work in their daily lives. Hence any secrets of Opus Dei would not be divulged to the media by supernumeraries. This is an example of Opus Dei's secretive nature.

This adds to the ordinary citizen's dilemma: can The Work be trusted? Simmermacher says, "It's Opus Dei, it is right to be suspicious."



St. Josemaría Escrivá, the founder of The Work



Günther Simmermacher,
Southern Cross Editor
Photo: Annu Hattunen

He states the various cases of suspicion against Opus Dei: from Robert Hanssen, the ex-CIA agent and Opus Dei supernumerary who leaked US government information to the Soviet Union; through to St Josemaría Escrivá's relationship with General Francisco Franco, the leader of the Nationalist Party during the Spanish Civil War in the 1930s.

Thirty years after his death in 1975, Escrivá's organisation is now fictionalised in a book that makes the presumption that Opus Dei deals in espionage, murder and conspiracy. Dan Brown, the author of *The Da Vinci Code*, focused on the aspects of The Work that give it its notoriety: secrecy and self-mortification.

Opus Dei published a paper called "Three years with *The Da Vinci Code*" that chronicled its media response to the book. The Work's media relations department, based in New York, states on its website that it only found out three weeks before that the book was to be published.

By then The Work's machinery had kicked in: its media department chose to formulate a media plan to address the mania – Simmermacher admires Opus Dei for this. It seems the plan was to initially ignore the book. They would claim that it was a work of fiction and had no basis on reality. Yet by 2004, the book was being made into a film and something had to be done.

According to The Work's media department's website, "Operation Lemonade" was conceived to address the release of the movie and the subsequent media backlash. Members of the media department met during December 2004 to draw up the two phase plan.

Opus Dei firstly attempted to negotiate with the film's production company, Sony Pictures, in order to have the movie's referral to Opus Dei labelled fictitious. When Sony refused to meet with The Work, the second stage of the plan was initiated.

The second phase began at the end of 2005. In this part of the plan Opus Dei engaged the public directly to refute the negative image that resulted from the book and film. The organisation took advantage of the media hype and interest in The Work to present its view through the now available channels of communication.

ODAN states on its website that "Operation Lemonade" was a light-hearted name that masked the controlled environment that exists within The Work. They believe that Opus Dei used the Church to piggyback their cause by stating that the book and film was an attack on the history of the Church and Christianity.

Opus Dei was thus able to hide behind these institutions whilst fighting the book and movie. According to ODAN, Opus Dei chose to focus on the extremes of the film and book, namely corporal mortification and the existence of monks, and used these to mask the real problems within The Work.

Retired British academic Philip Knight describes *The Da Vinci Code*, in a paper he presented to senior members of the Church at the Vatican in 2005, as "an unparalleled phenomenon". Some religious critics in *The New Zealand Journal of Christian Thought and Practice* have tried to dismiss it as a "glamorous story" that taps into society's "need to undermine historical Christianity".

Yet Opus Dei's best move, according to Simmermacher, was to en-

gauge the movie and book in the positive manner that it did. By engaging the media and inviting them to their centres, Opus Dei created an image that it was more open than what *The Da Vinci Code* proposed. *Time* reported in 2006 that membership for The Work has increased after the release of *The Da Vinci Code*. Simmermacher even says that Opus Dei ended up thanking Dan Brown for the hype – and maybe indirectly, a more positive image. Woghiren says that as small as the mission is in South Africa, there was a significant increase in membership and interest in The Work. This was evident judging by the number of requests for interviews from radio stations such as Talk Radio 702 and several newspapers.

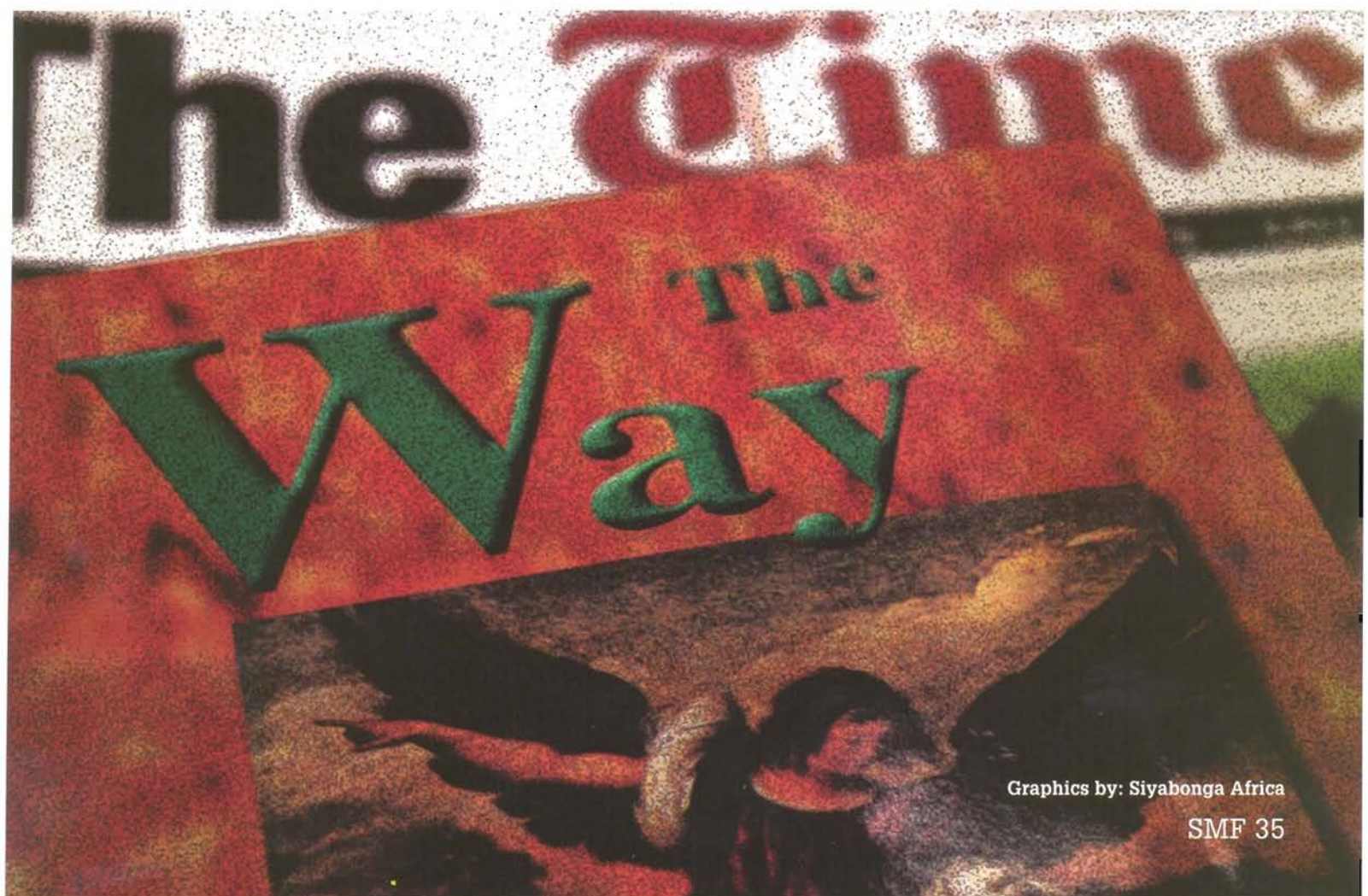
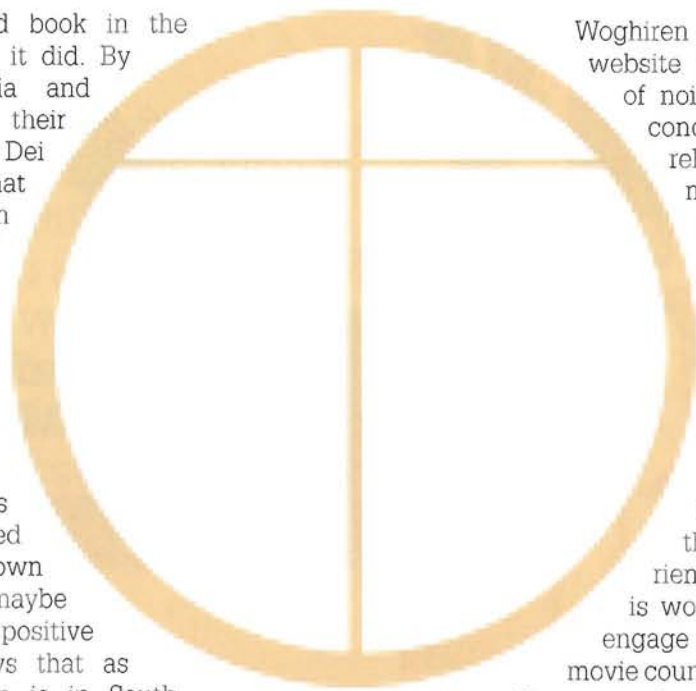
Woghiren appreciates this newfound contact with the media because in the past “the media did not always contact us directly, but went to their old files”. It is this reliance on old information coupled with the fact that journalists have short deadlines that Woghiren attributes to the negative image of Opus Dei.

Woghiren describes ODAN as “a very small website run by a few people making a lot of noise”. They are, he believes, “of little concern”. He states that the relationship with ODAN is like that of a married couple after a divorce: when people leave, some “get over it and move on” and others take a long time to come to terms with it. This is why, he says, Opus Dei tries to treat ODAN with “affection” because The Work is about being good Christians.

It is no lie that members of The Work are covertly secretive or hostile. Simmermacher points out that his paper has had no bad experiences with The Work. And for what it is worth, the fact that The Work chose to engage with the media about the book and movie counts as a point on their side. According to

Simmermacher they didn't hide, as most Catholic dioceses did, when scandals of child molestation surfaced. Yet as the old, clichéd saying goes: where there's smoke, there's fire. The fact that “counter-organisations” such as ODAN exist is an indication that there is a level of mystery and deception somewhere in the structure of The Work. Opus Dei might have done a good job stifling that image, even benefiting from it in the increased numbers of members worldwide.

And the mass media may have even benefited from this newfound engagement with The Work. What is safe to say is that the two are on speaking terms, for now. And maybe it's a fad, and it might not last. **SMF**



Graphics by: Siyabonga Africa

SMF 35

OH MY

GO...SH

For some, blasphemy in the media, especially films, has almost become a normality. For others, this is where they draw the line.



Naudé van der Merwe
takes a closer look.

“**O**h my God!” (Said very slowly with an extremely nasal tone). This was the phrase that the character Janice, in the hugely successful sitcom *Friends*, was recognised by. Did it offend, or did people watch the show anyway because it was funny and “in character”? It is a calculated guess, but the answer seems to be leaning to “people watched the show”. That doesn’t take away the fact that it left a lot of people feeling offended.

Religion is always a very personal thing and if you offend someone’s “god” or “creator”, some may interpret it as a personal attack. The “attackers” may feel that it is their right to freedom of speech. These two sides of the story, however, create a never-ending debate that has many obstacles yet to overcome.

A new symbol, “B” for Blasphemy, has been added on movie posters around South Africa for films that contain scenes of blasphemy. According to the website of the Films and Publications Board (FPB), the main categories in which movies are classified are violence, sex, nudity, language and prejudice. There have, however, been some exceptions where a B-symbol has been added. This is according to Rev Jannie Pelser, organiser of the “Jesus Project” who was one of the main lobbyists for the B-symbol, to be added to age restrictions.

Although some films carry a “P” for Prejudice warning, a lot of activists say this is not enough. According to Pelser the use of the B-symbol is now official, and has been for almost seven months. Films like the Bruce Willis blockbuster *Die Hard 4.0* and the crazy British comedy *Hot Fuzz*, have received the blasphemy sign on their posters. Pelser says “the criteria for judging films that contain blasphemy is very subjective” and there are different panels that make these decisions, but he feels it is a step in the right direction.

He says South Africa has a huge morality

problem that stems from the “political morality problem” that can be detected in the way the leaders of the country choose to rule. He also says that the entertainment industry’s celebrities serve as the role models for the youth of the country, which helps create this morality problem.

“Respect for God” is his answer to the problem. By giving Christians the ability to choose between a movie that might be blasphemous and one that is not, it encourages people to make the correct “moral” choice. As a Christian, he says, he does not want to see something that is going to be blasphemous, and no Christian should.

“Unfortunately,” he says, “a lot of Christians are apathetic and not involved.” And although the “Jesus Project” is getting a lot of positive feedback, it is difficult to monitor exactly what is happening on ground level.

The FPB has been very active in the past few years. One of its main fights has been the one against child pornography. It has considerably tightened its grip on the porn industry in South Africa in recent years. This has also motivated different groups of society to appeal to the board with their concerns, such as regarding blasphemy in films, and they have the right to.

Well-known film critic and an advisor for the FPB, Leon van Nierop, says that under the current system the FPB has in place, any person has the right to know whether something in a film or a television show might offend them. But he also feels that people should be taught to see films in a context that would allow them to “endure” the aspect of a film that they could find offensive.

“People tend to only hear the ‘Oh my God!’-cries”, and they discard the storyline and meaning of the context of those words.” And it is not only Christians that feel offended when someone uses the Lord’s name in vain. He says he has received a lot of complaints on blasphemy from people who

do not see themselves as religious and who do not necessarily belong to a specific church.

Overall he thinks that age restrictions are very well-balanced, but there are some problems. "Children see and know a lot more than when I was a kid. We live in an extremely violent country; violence is the norm and it is becoming part of our everyday lives.

Children have a greater tolerance for that. I think that the really cold-violence movies like *Saw* and *Hostel* should get stricter age restrictions and I have already told that to the FPB.

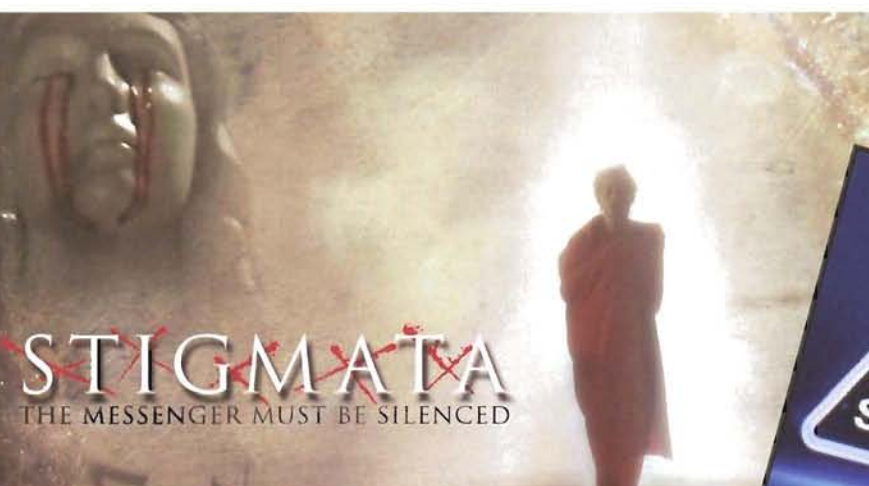
But these restrictions mean nothing when it comes to DVD's, because children are more eager to watch when the restriction is higher."

Van Nierop says that teaching audiences from school-level about the social context of films and how to be "visually educated", would help to solve the problem.

He thinks the B-symbol is necessary (in contrast to essential), because a lot of individuals need a warning against blasphemy, but he still feels that one should try and put it in context first.

He jokes and says, "I wish there was a warning system against 'kommen' to warn us against crude Afrikaans comedies." **SMF**

"I wish there was a
warning system
against *kommen*
to warn us against
crude Afrikaans
comedies"



ABOVE: *Saved!* (2004, MGM) and *Stigmata* (1999, MGM) are films with religious themes that offended many bloggers and internet users. Films like these might have received a B-symbol had they been released in 2007.

BOTTOM: A scene from *Hot Fuzz* (Universal Pictures)



Wie se Woord is

Een van die plaaslike Christelike boekwinkels in Somerset-Wes het veertien verskillende weergawes van dieselfde Woord op die rak. Dan het elke groep weergawes nog verskillende vertalings, verskillende uitgewers, verskillende skrywers en aanslag en verskil elke Bybel inhoudelik.

Een van die grootste verskille tussen dié weergawes is die vertalingsmetodes. Sommige van die vertalings is direkte vertalings van die grondtekste in Grieks, Hebreeus en Aramees. Ander vertalings is eerder parafrases van die oorspronklike tekste. Ook die vertalingstegnieke verskil.

Die vertaling van 'n Bybel is 'n langdurige proses en kan tot vyftien jaar neem om te voltooi, maar ander Bybels – soos die *Nuwe Lewende Vertaling* – maak daarop aanspraak dat dié weergawe in slegs vyf jaar vertaal is.

Of die gemiddelde Christen – en veral diegene wat die Bybel letterlik interpreteer – verstaan waar die verskeie weergawes vandaan kom, is 'n ope vraag. Twee van die kenners waarmee SMF gesels het, dink nie so nie.

Die Suid-Afrikaanse Bybelgenootskap publiseer die vernaamste Afrikaanse Bybelvertalings en stel hom ten doel om bekostigbare Bybels in mense se moedertaal beskikbaar te stel.

Die genootskap was verantwoordelik vir die sogenaamde 1953-vertaling, asook die 1983-vertaling, oftewel die “nuwe vertaling”. Volgens die hoof van die genootskap se vertaling- en teksverwerkingsafdeling, Manie van den Heever, het die genootskap reeds begin beplan aan nóg 'n nuwe Afrikaanse vertaling. Dié vertaling is nog in die beginfase en hy wil hom nie uitlaat oor wanneer die nuwe Bybel gepubliseer gaan word nie. Volgens hom neem 'n vertaling gewoonlik tussen tien en vyftien jaar om te voltooi.

Manie verduidelik dat 'n nuwe vertaling van die Bybel 'n omslagtige proses is. “Hoewel party mense nie so dink nie, word elke vertaling deur die genootskap vanaf die grondtekste vertaal en nie vanaf ander vertalings nie.”

Sommige mense dink byvoorbeeld dat die 1983-vertaling 'n hersiening is van die 1953-vertaling, soos blyk uit die hordes klagtes wat op Manie se tafel

opeindig.

“Mense sê altyd ons het die Bybel verander, maar hulle besef nie die nuwe vertaling is opnuut vanaf die grondtekste vertaal nie. Intussen was daar weer nuwe ontdekkings van geskifte en ander vertaalmetodes wat gebruik word.”

Manie gaan haal die grondtekste waarvan die Bybel vertaal word. Dit is nie die Dooie See-rolle nie. Ook nie papyrus nie. Om die waarheid te sê, dit is nie eers outyds nie. Dit is twee klein boeke – so groot soos die Bybel op menige Suid-Afrikaners se bedkassies. En dit lyk soos die Bybels op die boekrak – uitgegee deur die Duitse Bybelgenootskap – maar net in Grieks, Hebreeus en Aramees.

Enige nuwe vertaling word gedoen op die versoek van kerke in Suid-Afrika. 'n Kerklike advieskomitee sal dan vertalers nomineer. Enige denominasie of kerkgroep mag deelhê aan dié komitee en vertalers nomineer. Die kerkgroepe nomineer vertalers in verhouding tot die aantal lidmate van die kerke.

Volgens Manie is daar geen minimum-kwalifikasies nodig om as vertaler te werk nie – net 'n nominasie deur 'n kerk.

Dit is ook nie net vertalers wat aan 'n vertaling werk nie. Manie verduidelik dat daar ook taalkundiges, digters en skrywers, koördineerders en kontroleerders by die proses betrokke is.

“By die vorige vertaling was daar sowat vyftien tot twintig grondtaalkenners, hoofsaaklik akademici en verskeie ander taalkenners betrokke,” sê hy. Nadat die brontaalkenners die vertaalwerk gedoen het, sal die taalkundiges begin redigeer en skaaf aan die taalgebruik van die nuwe Bybel. Digters se kundigheid word ingespan om poëtiese gedeeltes, soos die Psalms, aan te pas vir Afrikaanse ritme en rym.

Elke boek van die Bybel het 'n eie span wat bestaan uit vertalers en taalkundiges. Die vertalings van die onderskeie boeke word dan gekontroleer vir konsekwentheid en wêér gekontroleer, aldus Manie.

Die twee Afrikaanse vertalings wat reeds deur die

Evangelie?



Die topverkoperboek van alle tye kom in verskeie tale, kleure, vorme en weergawes. Herman Scholtz het gaan uitvind wie dié Bybels skryf en hoe hulle verskil.

Foto: Phillip Martin

genootskap gepubliseer is, asook die derde een wat tans beplan word, volg verskillende vertalingsfilosofieë en -tegnieke.

"Die 1953-vertaling was 'n vormvertaling en die 1983-vertaling 'n betekenisvertaling," volgens Manie.

Eenvoudig gestel beteken dit dat die 1953-vertaling byna woord-vir-woord of letterlik vanaf die grondtekste vertaal is, terwyl die 1983-vertaling sekere betekenis, eerder as direkte woorde, vertaal.

"Beide vertalings is egter 'n gesaghebbende vertaling van die grondtekste, maar net met verskillende tegnieke."

Met die nuutste Afrikaanse vertaling wat kom, gaan 'n middeweg tussen dié twee gevolg word.

Dié vertaling sal alledaagse Afrikaans gebruik, maar nie die kultuur van die grondtekste vertaal nie. Ogeveer 120 mense sal aan die vertaling werk.

Die grootte van die vertalingspan en die verskillende vertaaltegnieke veroorsaak die inhoudelike verskille tussen die vertalings. "Ons probeer om so getrou as moontlik aan die grondtekste te bly. Enige vertaling behels maar 'n mate van interpretasie."

Maar, sê Christo van der Merwe, "dit is maklik om fout te vind met enige vertaling van 'n antieke teks". Hy is 'n professor in

Bybelse tale aan die Universiteit van Stellenbosch se antieke studie-departement.

"Dit is belangrik om 'n vertaling van die Bybel te toets aan die aansprake wat dit maak," sê hy. 'n Vormvertaalde Bybel kan dus nie vergelyk word met die hordes parafrases wat tans op die mark is nie.

Ook hý meen die gemiddelde kerkganger besef nie waar die Bybel op hul boekrak vandaan kom en hoe betroubaar dit is nie.

Christo het die *Nuwe Lewende Vertaling* wat verlede jaar verskyn het, bestudeer deur 'n paar steekproewe te doen. Volgens hom is dié vertaling oor verskeie kwessies nie konsekwent nie. Die vertaling gebruik byvoorbeeld "vergewe" en "verdra" vir dieselfde Hebreeuse woord.

Die vertaling is geskoei op sy Engelse eweknie, *The Living Translation*, wat in Amerika uitgegee is. Volgens die promosiemateriaal van dié vertaling is dit 'n "skrifgetroue, dinamies-ekwivalente vertaling" uit die Engelse weergawe, "met verwysing na die grondtekste".

Sowat nege vertalers het dié vertaling in vyf jaar voltooi.

Christo glo die tyd is ryp vir 'n nuwe Afrikaanse vertaling. Hy sê die voorstel vir 'n nuwe vertaling kom al sedert die vroeë 1990's, "veral deur mense wat nooit regtig die 1983-vertaling aanvaar het nie". Die feit dat die 1953-vertaling steeds goed verkoop, is bewys hiervan.

Hy noem ook verskeie ander faktore, soos die behoefte aan voetnota's om sekere vertalings te verduidelik, asook die dinamiese aard van Gebruiksafrikaans as rede vir die behoefte aan 'n nuwe vertaling.

Die Afrikaanse Bybelmark sal dus oor 'n paar jaar nóg 'n Bybel bied. Elkeen met 'n eie styl, aanslag en taalgebruik – elke uitgewer en bemarker wat daarop aanspraak maak dat hulle weergawe die gesaghebbendste is.

So wie se Woord is evangelie?

"Mense wat hulle kaarte op die tafel sit. Hulle moet jy glo." **SMF**

THE BATTLEFIELD BETWEEN Catholics

Across the board the media has widely covered the Roman Catholic Church's uncompromising stance towards condoms. Its statements about condoms have drawn further criticism from the media as it literally becomes the barrier between life and death.

The Church's opposition to condoms has had its severest impact on the continent of Africa. "It is here, where the Aids crisis is at its worst, that the Church is at its most uniformly dogmatic and here also where it can expect the most unquestioning adherence from its followers," writes Peter Gill in his book, *Body Count*.

According to Gill, the late Pope John Paul II never used the word condom in public, but he did speak of "the essential evil of the contraceptive act". Public discussion of the Vatican's position on condoms and Aids in the developing world remained low-key until the BBC television programme *Panorama* chose to mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Pope's accession with a film called *Sex and the Holy City*. The film examined the human impact of the Pope's conservatism in the areas of abortion and contraception, and devoted its final section to Aids. The Roman Catholic Archbishop of Nairobi, Raphael S. Ndingi Mwana's Nkeki, is shown in the programme. He responded to the Aids calamity in Kenya by saying that condoms were causing the spread of the disease because "young people believed they were protected when they were not".

In his article "Vatican: Condoms don't stop Aids" on the Guardian website, Steve Bradshaw said the World Health Organisation has condemned the Vatican's views, saying, "These incorrect statements about condoms and HIV are dangerous when we are facing a global pandemic which has already killed more than 20 million people, and currently affects at least 42 million."

Panorama returned to the subject with a film called *Can Condoms Kill?* Gill maintains that the risk seems to be somewhere between the theoretical and negligible because scientists from institutions that the Cardinal had quoted denied the implications placed on their work.

The film concludes with the story of 40 SMF



The Roman Catholic Church is in the firing line because of its stance on HIV/Aids and condoms. However, the Church is changing its tactics. Margaux Petersen examines the media's coverage of this stance.

Photo and graphic: André-Pierre du Plessis



Harriet Nakabugo, a Ugandan woman who married a man with Aids and now fears that she too is HIV positive. She believes that her faith means she cannot even ask her husband to use a condom. "As Catholics we are not allowed to use them," she said.

Bradshaw asked Cardinal Emmanuel Wamala, Archbishop of Kampala, about Harriet's case. "Well, Christ's teaching has never been easy, has it?" responded Wamala when Bradshaw enquired if he was really of the opinion that it is better to die than use a condom. Gill feels that this lack of pity has condemned thousands to sickness and death as more than two in five marriages in Uganda are "discordant". "This is the reality: a married woman living in Southern Africa is at higher risk of becoming infected with HIV than an unmarried woman. Extolling abstinence and fidelity, as the

REALITY AND MORALITY & condoms

consider themselves to be Catholic follow the teachings of the Church, which stipulates abstinence before marriage and sex only within the confines of marriage. In light of this, and the context of the HIV epidemic, the use of the condom is both necessary and justified. The problem of an increase of discordancy within marriages where one partner is infected with HIV and the other is not, is another valid reason to use a condom. According to the previously mentioned article, Alsan says that "many of the clergy and laity involved in treating people with AIDS, who otherwise fully ascribe to the church's teachings on sexual ethics and the sanctity of marriage, nevertheless endorse the use of condoms. They argue that the preservation of human life is paramount". Bishop Kevin Dowling of South Africa has been imploring the Vatican to view condom use as "curtailing the transmission of death rather than precluding the transmission of life".

In the article "Seeking a new Catholic lead on condoms," South African journalist Justin Peace says that there are those that believe that the teachings of the Church are misunderstood. South Africa's largest non-governmental Aids prevention programme is run by the Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference (SACBC). It does not distribute condoms but does provide education and counseling on HIV prevention. "The teaching is not against the use of condoms, but against the casualisation of sex," said a SACBC worker.

Under increasing pressure from the media and civil society, the Church's rigid opposition to condoms is starting to undergo revision. The magazine Christianity Today reported in an article "Bush Discusses Iraq and AIDS with Pope in First Meeting" which appeared on its website in June 2007, that a statement by the Vatican said that the "cordial discussions" on international politics also focused on "the critical conditions in which Christian communities find themselves". **SMF**

Catholic Church does, will not protect her; in all likelihood she is already monogamous. It is her husband who is likely to have HIV. Yet refusing a husband's sexual overtures risks ostracism, violence, and destitution for herself and her children," writes Marcella Alsan in an article titled "Catholic Church condom prohibition comes face to face with reality of AIDS in Africa". The article appeared on the website catholic.org. She poses the pertinent question: "Given these realities, isn't opposing the use of condoms tantamount to condemning countless women to death?"

There is also an internal battle going on in the Catholic Church as some members have challenged the Vatican's view that condoms must not be used to prevent the spread of HIV. Not all people who

DO YOU HAVE AN asbestos SUIT?

Jesus has been called many things. Among them the most liberated person on earth. How then did his church and followers come to be perceived by some as judgemental, rigid, hypocritical or just plain crazy? Simone Gregor finds out.



How often have you been told by a Christian that they hope you, as an unbeliever, have "an asbestos suit" because it's going to be hot in hell?

According to an article titled "Everyman and his God" by Lin Sampson in the Lifestyle supplement of *Sunday Times*, as a non-believer, you will be told this by Christians. If you are a Christian in a charismatic church, the way in which you worship God will be described as "almost amphetamine-like adoration". The message brought in the service will be described as "standard charismatic pap".

South African media might have set high standards for themselves, but in this case it seems to have fallen short by being one-sided and unbalanced, and, in the process, perpetuated a stereotypical image of Christians.

It is so easy to ridicule Christians and their "foreign behaviour". Speaking in tongues, giving away their hard-earned money to the church, dancing and clapping in a church service as if they were in a mosh pit – these are all things which are regarded with suspicion and scepticism.

Canadian journalist Andrew Wagner-Chazalon writes in the publication *Christian Week* of the tension between the "rational" people and the people of faith. He quotes Peter Desbarats, the former Dean of Journalism at the University of Western Ontario, as saying that the "great and growing void between rationalists and fundamentalists cannot be covered by journalists who are both liberals and religious illiterates". According to Desbarats, journalists do not deliberately ignore faith issues – they are often just ill-equipped to see the spiritual side of a story.

The nature of the more charismatic churches has led them to be seen as slick marketing schemes which are out to exploit. Sampson writes in her article that competition among churches is "fierce" and that "the target is youth and the aim is to get as many bums on chairs, or hands in the air, as possible".

The media have had a field day, finding all kinds of creative ways to describe what they see as abnormal behaviour. In Sampson's article, a person filled with the Holy Spirit's behaviour was described as resembling "a combination of Tourette's Syndrome and an epileptic fit".

It is understandable that those who are not acquainted with this kind of behaviour may misconstrue it as cult-like and deluded. It is, after all, something which does not lend itself to being readily integrated into popular culture. Prize-winning Portuguese religion journalist Antonio Marujo said on the Ecumenical News International website that the secular media are often suspicious of religion and have shown great ignorance towards it.

One could ask: in a society which prides itself on being tolerant, where is the tolerance in situations like these? Granted, there have been occasions where Christianity has been horribly

"Journalists do not deliberately ignore faith issues – they are often just ill-equipped to see the spiritual side of a story"

let down by its followers. The consequences have often hurt people, sometimes driving them far enough from the church to turn them against it.

South Africa's apartheid regime, which caused immeasurable damage to the fabric of society was, according to its founders, based on biblical principles. If those biblical principles are what God intended, one could assume that his popularity ratings would surely plummet. In this there lies a resolution which often fails to be seen. In the Bible, Jesus taught that in humility, people should consider others better than themselves.

Christians should come with a disclaimer which reads: we are (definitely) not perfect and only by the grace of God have we been

redeemed of our sins. Maya Angelou writes in her poem *I am a Christian*: "When I say... 'I am a Christian'; I don't speak of this with pride. I'm confessing that I stumble; and need CHRIST to be my guide." Unfortunately this valuable piece of information sometimes gets "lost in translation" between the church and community.

This perception of Christian superiority combined with over-zealous evangelising has given Christianity a bad name.

In his column in the *Sunday Times*, Barry Ronge writes about Sam Harris' book titled *Letter to a Christian Nation: A Challenge to Faith*. Harris asks what gives Christians the right to take the moral highground.

In his book *Soul Survivor*, American Christian author Philip Yancey writes about his childhood experience in a fundamentalist church in the Deep South of the United States of America. He describes the church as "having a corner on the truth, God's truth, and everyone who disagreed with them was surely teetering on the edge of hell". Because of this, he has spent most of his life "in recovery" from the church.

Sampson's article got a large response from Christians who felt that their faith had been misrepresented. One of the complainants, Peter Hill, suggested that Sampson should "do what all good investigative journalists do and investigate with both eyes open" before passing judgements on the church.

Ed Shishi, another complainant, wrote that Sampson's article illustrated that "a number of journalists have a tendency to embrace a liberal bias on social issues that is obtuse and borders on intellectual arrogance". Does objectivity get overlooked once the subject itself is identified as being incongruous with modern society?

In *Sunday Times*' letters column, a respondent to Sampson's article who identifies him/herself as KK says that s/he is confident that an article about Islam written in a similar tone would have resulted in firing or suspension for the writer. Perhaps there is some truth in this.

There was an enormous uproar when a cartoon depicting the Prophet Mohammed was published in a Scandinavian newspaper.

After publishing the cartoon in the *Mail & Guardian*, editor Ferial Haffajee received death threats from offended Muslims. Many were quick to point out that this representation of Islam was disrespectful.

Christianity has not been quite so lucky. Perhaps the media's way of reporting about Christianity stems from rebellion against a Western tradition of Christianity which is associated by many liberals with stifling rules – a kind of post-modernist, anti-establishment sentiment.

Michael Green, a Senior Research Fellow at the University of Oxford, echoes this when he writes in his book *I'd Like to Believe, But* that "church" seems to be dull and inflexible to people.

He also points out people's desire for self-expression and the fact that the church fails to cater for this because its services are dominated by a predetermined pattern.

The media tend to be quick to forget the positive aspects of Christianity. At the 1998 Faith and Media conference in Canada, journalist Richard Handler said that national news organisations are usually a "secular, sceptical and hard-sell bunch who see religious groups as just one interest group among many that often don't do anything to earn its place in the news line-up".

The majority of liberal Western society sees individualism as a highly prized commodity. The editor of *TART Remarks* and self-confessed radical atheist Nathan Bond believes that Christianity infringes upon people's individualism. He quotes Nathaniel Branden to further his argument: "In any culture, subculture or family in which belief is valued above thought, and self-surrender is valued above self-expression, and conformity is valued above integrity; those who preserve their self-esteem are likely to be heroic exceptions."

Perhaps one of Christianity's greatest strengths is its emphasis on community. A healthy church community is likely to present a phenomenon which would baffle most sceptics.

To understand the concept of community in the way Christianity ideally sees it, one could look to the concept of ubuntu. Former South African president Nelson Mandela describes ubuntu in the following way: "A traveller through our country would stop at a village, and he didn't have to ask for food or for water. Once he stops, the people give him food and entertain him." According to the Bible, people should be "devoted to one another in brotherly love" and we should practice hospitality.

It is ironic that in a society which places such value upon individualism, stereotyping is still so rife. Bond does not think that Christians are stereotyped in the media per se but that religion is stereotypical.

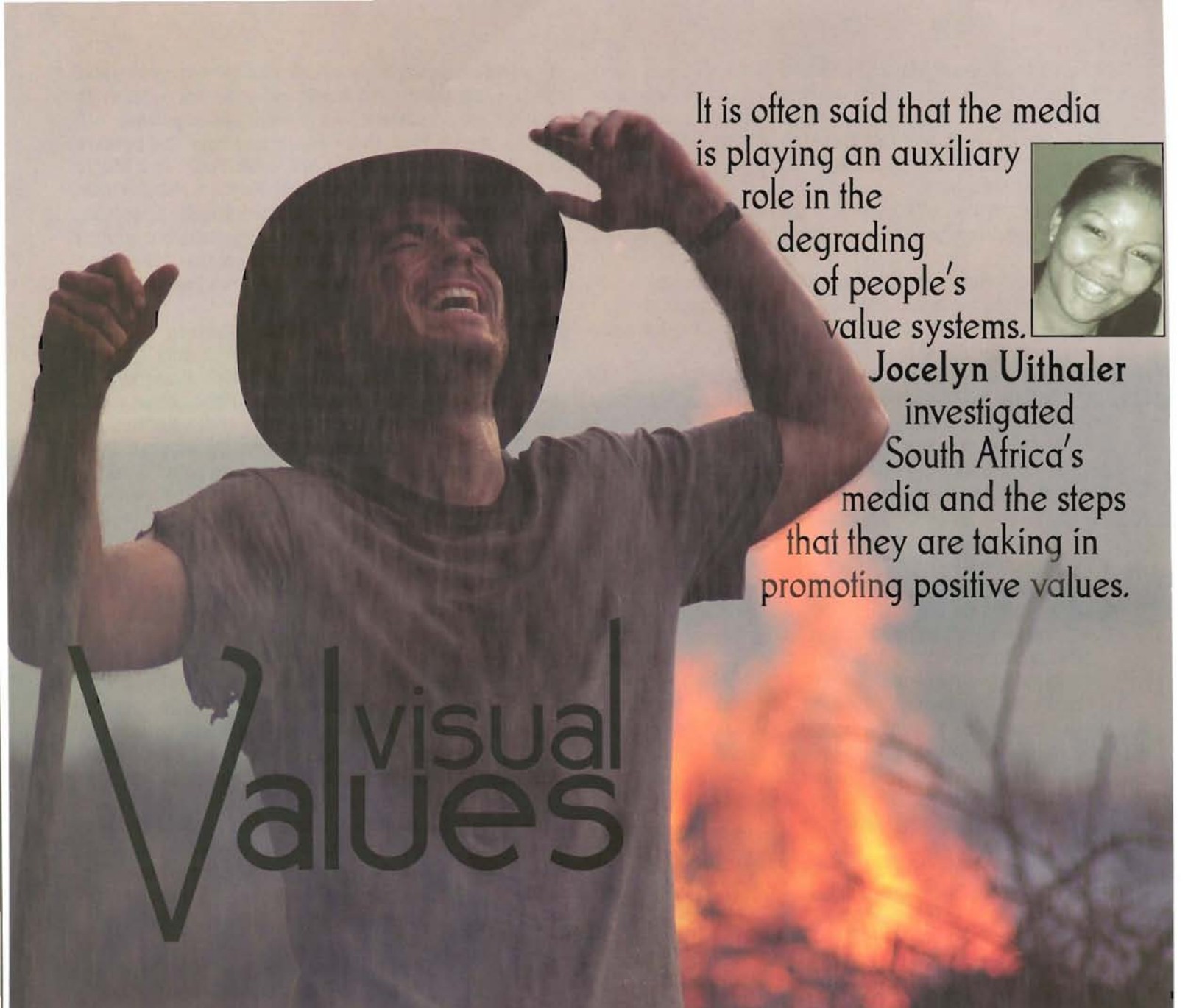
He says all religions are stereotypical in that they believe in God and that "this conviction reduces them to mere babes in walkers in an ideological crush-pen".

Freedom of speech is a constitutional right. Religious freedom is a constitutional right. Put the two together and you could get problems.

But with some respect and critical thinking from both sides, things might just work. **SMF**



Left: Photos such as these often end up representing Christians in the media.
Photo: Ian McNaught Davis



It is often said that the media is playing an auxiliary role in the degrading of people's value systems.



Jocelyn Uithaler investigated South Africa's media and the steps that they are taking in promoting positive values.

Visual Values

Photo: Leigh Rautenbach

Acceptance, perseverance, forgiveness, honesty, responsibility, self-control, compassion and second chances. These values are being highlighted by Heartlines, with the aim of challenging and transforming South African society.

Heartlines is an initiative using multimedia to focus on universal values. This initiative was launched four years ago, says Val Pauquet, Head of Communications at Heartlines. The aim of this initiative, according to Heartlines, is to connect people by addressing key barriers that divide them.

By doing this, a sense of positive community will be re-established and people will join in collective action rooting out elements which destroy communities.

This non-profit organisation's website defines values as "core beliefs or desires that guide or motivate attitudes and actions".

They also define the things we prize and value and therefore provide the basis for ranking the things we want in a way that elevates some values over others."

These values can be found in a new trend in South African movies. *Faith like Potatoes* and *Amazing Grace* are Christian movies promoting strong values and are being distributed by Glob-

al Creative Studios (GCS).

These movies differ from international blockbusters such as *The Da Vinci Code* and *The Passion of the Christ*. The Heartlines initiative follows a similar trend to the movies being distributed by GCS.

According to Peter Morgan, marketing manager of GCS, these value-based movies are being hailed by the local media and it has now been "proved that there is a huge market for inspirational, faith and value-based films".

Heartlines was launched under the banner, "8 weeks, 8 values, 1 national conversation".

This initiative screened a series of hour-long television dramas in partnership with the SABC. For the first time, these dramas were broadcast on all three national television stations in the same week.

Pauquet says that this was a first

in the broadcaster's history. Heartlines received mass media coverage also being advertised and discussed in print media and radio.

According to Heartlines, this initiative incorporates all the official languages of the country so that everyone can be included. The dramas are produced in a combination of South African languages, with English subtitles. After the movies were screened, a talk show would discuss the value with a live audience, thereby making this initiative more interactive with society.

This initiative is being funded by several foundations. Among these are the John Templeton Foundation and the Nelson Mandela Foundation. The primary sponsor of the initiative is First National Bank (FNB) and according to Vicki Trehaeven of Communication Services at FNB, "it is through 'living' these common values that society can transform and unite".

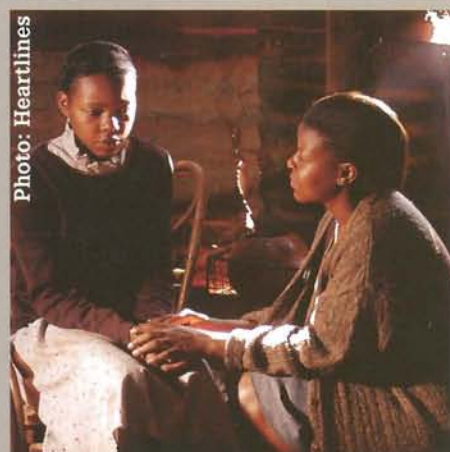
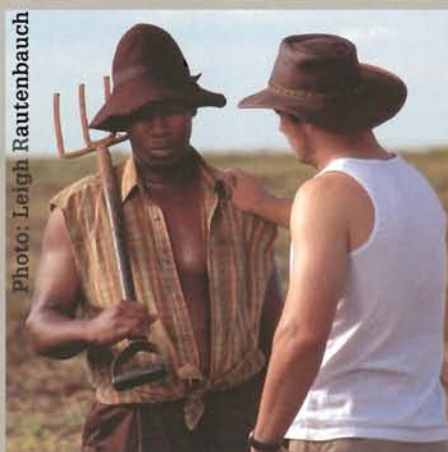
An advantage of this value-based initiative is that no religion is excluded: it is an inter-denominational project. "These values transcend all cultures and religions," says Trehaeven. The Heartlines initiative has received support from Christian, Hindu, Jewish and Muslim leadership, including organisations like the South African Council of Churches, South African Christian Leadership Assembly and the International

story focusing on the values promoted in the movies. This book, *Stories that Talk*, includes ten picture stories, each centred around a single value. These books are available from the organisation. There are also future plans for producing this book in several South African languages.

In 2006, the book *Faith like Potatoes*, published in 1988, was turned into a movie by GCS. Morgan says that the owner of GCS, Frans Cronjé, had read the book and approached the author, Angus Buchan, about turning the book into a movie. Movie houses were not sure what the response would be to a value-based movie, and initially Ster-Kinekor only released the movie in five cinemas.

However, the movie turned out to be quite a success and Ster-Kinekor released it in more cinemas, says Morgan.

This story is a true account of Buchan and tells the story of how Buchan's faith grows. The movie was an



From left to right: A scene from the Heartlines series, "The Good Provider", *Faith Like Potatoes*, and Heartlines' "The Good Fight".

Federation of Christian Churches.

The success of the movies has proven that there is a huge market for value-based movies, says Morgan, and a second phase of Heartlines is being planned.

As a result of the national conversation which was generated, says Pauquet, the Heartlines strategy is set to continue over the next three

years. By this time the organisation is hoping that values would have transformed society. According to Pauquet, these universal values is a key component of the Heartlines vision.

In addition to the eight original values being promoted, the second phase of Heartlines has added an additional three. One of these values is courage, which will help people to stand up for their values. Respect for other people by living your own values is also being promoted. The last theme is hospitality – something which will be very important in 2010.

Heartlines says initially the project was aimed at a general viewing public, aged between 15 and 45. However, the needs of younger children were realised and subsequently also catered for. An illustrated storybook has been produced, with each

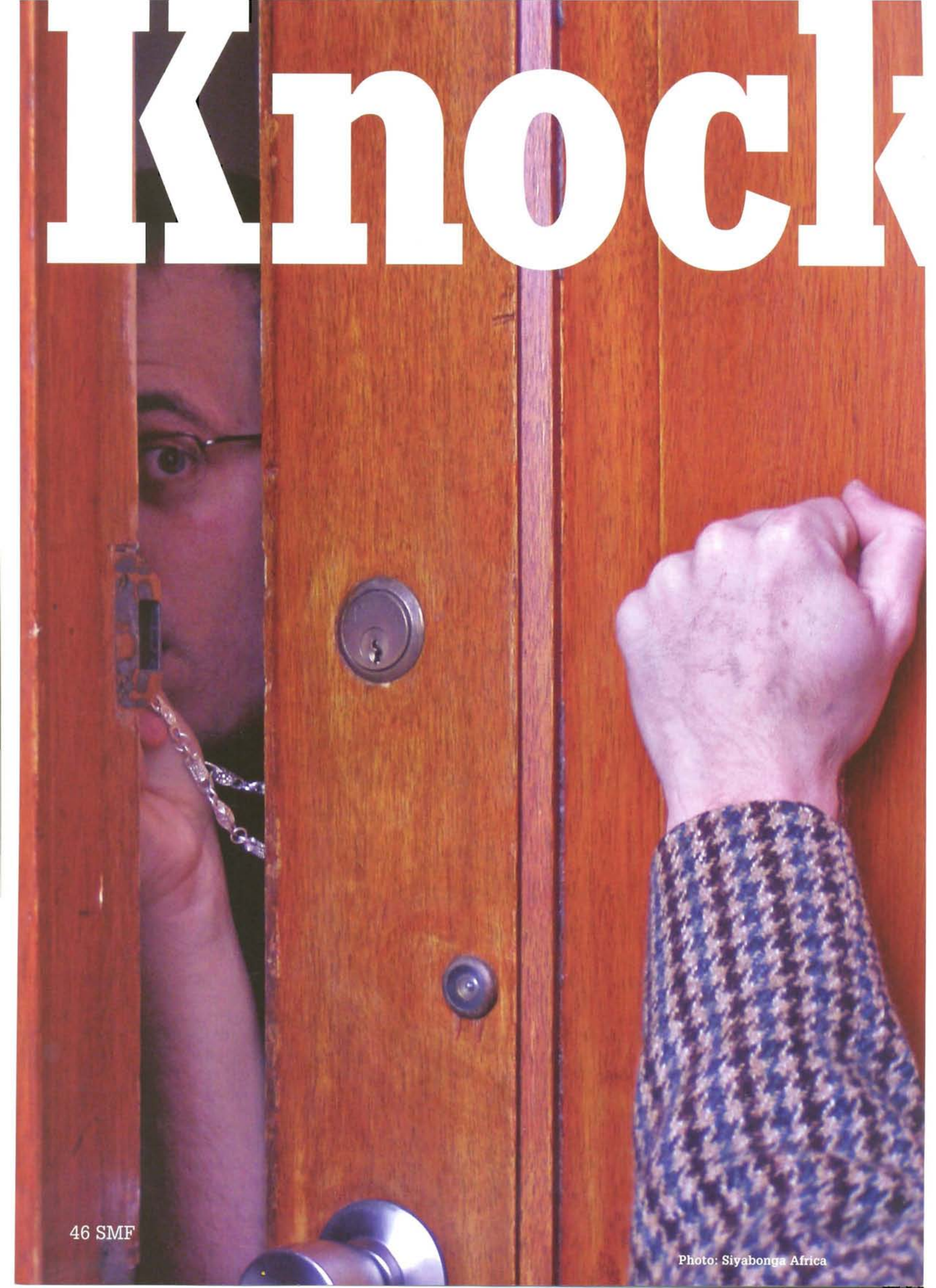
"These values transcend all cultures and religions"

international success and was an official selection at the Fort Lauderdale International Film Festival as well as The Australian International Film Festival. *Faith like Potatoes* also won the People's Choice Award at the 2006 Sabaoth International Film Festival in Italy.

These movies have proved successful in a society where it could be said that people's value systems are eroding.

With the help of print and broadcasting media, positive values were communicated. In South Africa the media is being used as a platform for disseminating universal values. And it is through this initiative that people are starting to take note and pay attention to values such as acceptance, forgiveness and hope. Through the media there are second chances at promoting these values that could have a significant impact on society. **SMF**

Knock

A photograph of a wooden door with vertical panels. On the left, a person's face is partially visible through a crack, looking out with wide eyes. A silver chain is attached to the door handle on this side. On the right, a clenched fist is pressed against the door handle. The door has a keyhole and a small circular vent. The overall tone is dramatic and suspenseful.

Knock

Despite countless failed prophecies and without charging any fees for their magazines, the Watchtower Society boasts an annual revenue of \$951 million. Ian McNaught Davis opens the door to The Watchtower magazine, a media phenomenon on your doorstep, where journalism meets fundamentalism.



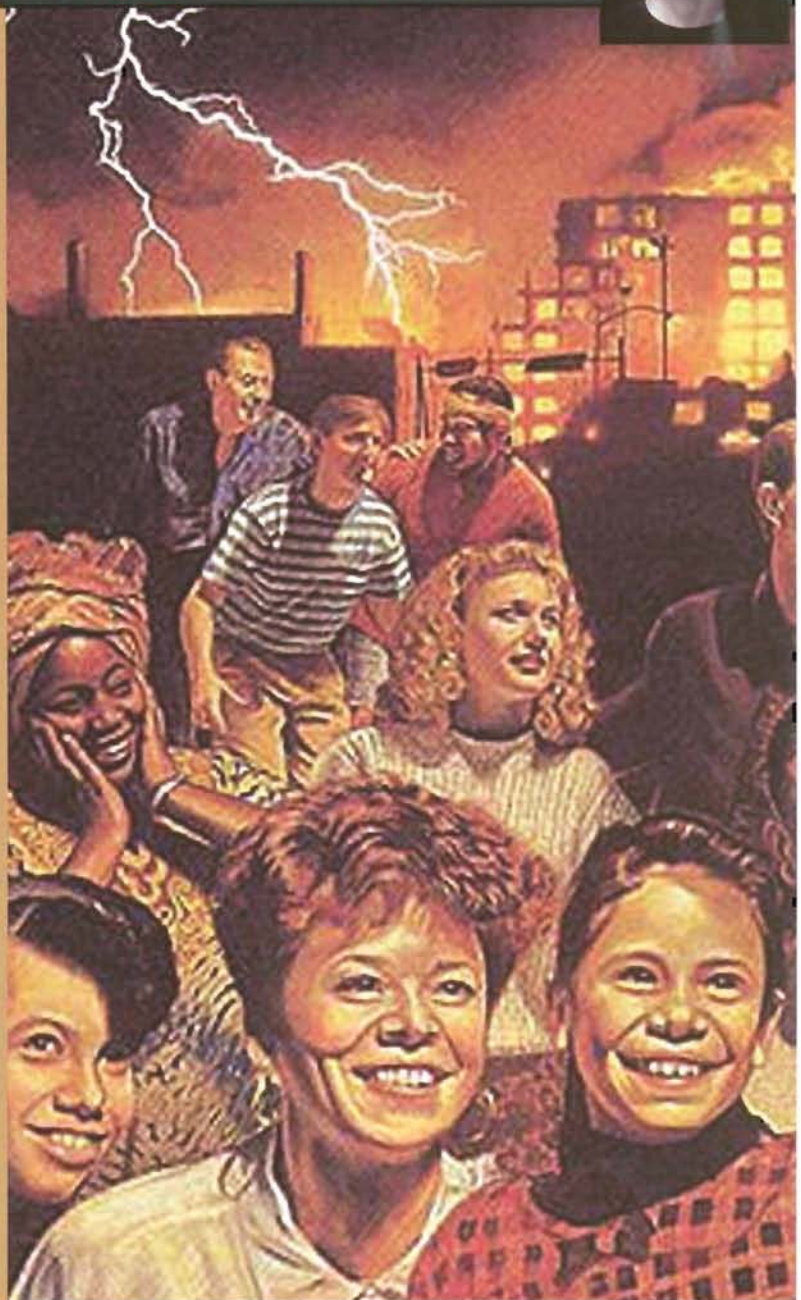
Jehovah's Witnesses consider the distribution of their magazine a public service. This usually takes place in the form of door-to-door ministry and, occasionally, if the doors are opened, interpersonal ministry. Magazines are also distributed by approaching people in public places. The Watchtower Society discourages Jehovah's Witnesses from placing magazines in postboxes or in large stacks in public places. Many owners of such postboxes discourage this practice too.

According to the official Jehovah's Witnesses website, the religion originated from a Bible study group started by Charles Taze Russell in the early 1870s in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Russell met Nelson H. Barbour and adopted his doctrines and prediction of the return of Christ in 1873. When Christ failed to return, Barbour tailored his prediction to 1874, giving the Messiah a generous twelve months to appear. After the second disappointment, he, and subsequently his group, decided that Christ had in fact returned to Earth in 1874, but in an invisible form.

In July 1879, Russell broke with Barbour and published his own magazine, *Zion's Watch Tower and Herald of Christ's Presence*. This publication became known as *The Watchtower* and has a suitably more concise masthead than its predecessor.

He became known as "Pastor Russell" and formed The Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania in 1881, currently headquartered in New York City. As president, he wrote the six-volume series *Studies in the Scriptures* and predicted that Armageddon would culminate in 1914. But modern science has shown us that it didn't. Not even invisibly.

Russell died on 31 October 1916 and his last will and testament declared that an editorial committee of five must supervise the writing of *The Watchtower* magazine. In 1917 Josef Franklin Rutherford (also known as "Judge Rutherford") became the second president of the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society. During 1933, it was decided that 1914 was the beginning of Christ's presence on earth and not the year of the Apocalypse as was originally decided. The "Last Days" were imminent and during the



ARMAGEDDON OUTTA HERE!!! Brochure Illustration from, "Does God Really Care About Us?" by the Watchtower Bible And Tract Society of NY & PA, Artist unknown, 1992

beginning of the end, Rutherford disbanded the editorial committee and assumed control of the publication. Under the editorial pen of "Judge Rutherford", Jehovah's Witness membership grew from approximately 21 000 in 1917 to 115 000 in 1942, the year of his death.

Various references that Christ's thousand-year reign on Earth might begin in 1975 were made in Jehovah's Witness literature. This resulted in a drop in membership from 1975 to 1980 after the failure of this prediction. In 1980, the Watchtower Society admitted that they were responsible for building up the expectations of readers. Since the postponement of Christ's reign on earth, a governing body was elected in 1976 to make doctrinal and organisational decisions and to supervise the writing of *The Watchtower*.

Today, *The Watchtower* is published twice a month and is printed in 158 languages. According to this issue of 1 May this year, the average print run of *The Watchtower* is more than 25 million. *The Watchtower* is printed in Braille and video messages in sign language are also distributed. This way, the disabled also stand a chance of making the final 144 000 residents in the afterlife.

Articles primarily deal with Bible topics and their interpretations. News of the organisation and biographies of prominent Jehovah's Witnesses are also included. From the beginning of 2008, the first issue of the month will be available to the general public. The second issue will be strictly for Jehovah's Witnesses, focusing on congregational

Randall Watters of Free Minds Inc, a non-profit organisation that is "keeping a critical eye on *The Watchtower*", wrote in a news letter, "... since *The Watchtower* is a strong hierarchical system, run by several old men in Brooklyn who grew up long before women's lib affected our modern society, it is not surprising that many of their attitudes towards women would be passed off to others in the organization, especially those who have a proclivity towards ill-treatment of women."

Other publications include *Awake!*, a general interest magazine with a religious perspective on science, nature and geography. *Awake!* is published monthly, printed in 81 languages and boasts a total worldwide circulation of over 30 million. Earlier titles for the magazine were *The Golden Age* and the aptly-named *Consolation*, presumably released after another Apocalypse was delayed or aimed at the Jehovah's Witnesses that aren't included in the 144 000 that will receive immortal life in heaven with Jesus, as prophesised in previous editions.

The Watchtower and *Awake!* were traditionally sold for a small fee. However, on 17 January 1990, the Supreme Court of the United States declared all sales of religious literature subject to taxation. This meant that the Watchtower Society would have to pay tax on the prices of magazines. From 1 March 1990, Jehovah's Witness journals were distributed at no cost and only on a "freewill donation policy" in the United States. The sales of *The Watchtower*

Earlier titles for the magazine were *The Golden Age* and the aptly-named *Consolation*, presumably released after another Apocalypse was delayed or aimed at the Jehovah's Witnesses who aren't included in the 144 000 that will receive immortal life in heaven with Jesus, as prophesised in previous editions.

study articles and other inter-organisational information.

Regular sections in the magazine include "Life Story", "Questions from Readers" and "Would You Welcome a Visit?" (presumably a rhetorical question). "Do You Remember?" appears once every four months to summarise information from recent issues in case the reader did not answer the doorbell last month. These articles reflect *The Watchtower's* emphasis on interactivity with the reader, embodying the dynamics of interpersonal ministry. Every November issue lists the many ways in which donations can be made to the Watchtower Society.

A writing committee researches, develops and edits all of the articles in *The Watchtower*.

Writing committees from branches across the world submit their articles.

Women are allowed to write articles for *The Watchtower*, as long as they are not of a spiritual kind. The names of authors are never published in the magazine, except in the case of first-person life stories.

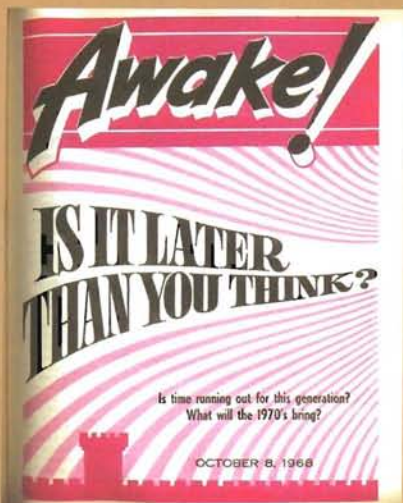
around the world gradually faded and *The Watchtower* is now distributed freely across the world, with its printing costs covered by voluntary donations.

According to the official website for Jehovah's Witnesses, the door-to-door distribution of *The Watchtower* is inspired by the Gospel: "The apostle Paul taught in public places, in the marketplace, and from house to house. We follow [his] example. Other religions have acknowledged the Christian obligation to preach in public places and from house to house, although this is often left to a limited group of missionaries or clergy to fulfil."

In 2001, the not-for-profit publisher of *The Watchtower*, Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania, was one of New York City's largest revenue-generating companies, with an annual revenue of \$951 million.

The official website for Jehovah's Witnesses media insists that the shipping and printing of all Jehovah's Witness publications are funded by donations. The website adds, "It is a personal decision to donate, whether toward local expenses, worldwide expenses, or both. Financial reports are regularly given for the information of the entire congregation."

With such a thriving industry, it is no wonder that the date of the next Apocalypse is yet to be confirmed. But if history repeats itself, do not be surprised if you see a man in your doorway with the latest edition of *The Watchtower* - a month after the world's expiry date. **SMF**



Above left: An *Awake!* magazine from 1968.

Tokkel die TOKKELOS snaar

Foto: Cobus Adriaanse



In 'n verligte eeu, waar hoofstroom-geloofsfigure soos Jesus Christus teen Richard Dawkins se Vlieënde Spaghetti-monster vir gewildheid moet veg en die profeet Mohammed deur strokiesprente aangeval word, is daar sommige bygelooffigure wat 'n nuwe lewe in die media geniet.

Cobus Adriaanse ondersoek die tokkelos en ander vreemde figure se mediabeeld.

Die wêreldbekende ateïs, Richard Dawkins, vergelyk in sy gewilde en omstrede boek *The God Delusion* vir Christus met die Vlieënde Spaghettimonster. Dit is duidelik dat daar druk op gelowe is om relevant te bly. En al aanvaar die NG Kerk deesdae gay lidmate (mits hulle selibaat bly), is die kerk se soeke na die duiwel 'n volgende omstredenheid. Dit terwyl die duiwel se handlangertjie, die tokkelos, op voorblaai pronk.

Een van die gewildste bygelooftokkels in Suid-Afrika is die tokkelos. Hierdie mitologiese figuur geniet die afgelope tyd baie aandag – veral in die poniepers.

Vir 'n gedierte met so 'n klein lyfie voer die tokkelos vir die afgelope paar eeue in veral die Zoeloe- en Xhosa-gemeenskappe van Suidelike-Afrika 'n moeilik verklaarbare skrikbewind.

Volgens vanhunks.com, 'n webwerf wat mites en legendes van Afrika versamel, is die tokkelos 'n kwaadaardige watergees wat meestal deur hekse aangehou word. Hy is dwergagtig in liggaamsgrootte en harig soos 'n orang-oetang. Alhoewel hy slegs een boud het, kompenseer hy hiervoor met 'n reusagtige penis wat hy oor sy skouer dra. Met dié stuk kragtoerusting bevredig hy gewoonlik sy minnares, maar gebruik dit ook om onskuldige meisies te verkrag. Dit is veral dié deel van die mite wat op poniepers-voorblaai pronk met byvoorbeeld 2006 se "The Tokoloshe took my virginity!"-voorblad in die *Daily Sun*.

Hoewel sy penis sy mees berugte eienskap is, is die tokkelos ook in besit van vele ander bonatuurlike magte. Een hiervan is die towerklippie wat hy in sy kies dra sodat hy onsigbaar kan word. Dit is die rede waarom hy nog nooit gevang kon word nie. Net soos talle demone uit ander kulture, soos die Inkubus en Sukubus van Europa, kan die tokkelos as gees in 'n mens invaar en jou gedrag beïnvloed.

Dit is egter met sy reuse-toerusting dat die tokkelos vir homself 'n ereplek in die poniekoerante oopgekap het.

Volgens Elliott Sylvester, assistent-redakteur van *The Daily Sun*, het dié publikasie al meer as ses tokkelos-stories gepubliseer. Hoewel hierdie berigte in 'n humoristiese styl geskryf word, neem die "slagoffers" die stories, volgens Elliott, baie ernstig op. "Ons kry gereeld oproepe oor die tokkelossie, maar net 'n paar van die oproepe is 'n storie werd."

Elliott meen die tokkelos is soos die Skotse Loch Ness-monster, Amerika se Bigfoot en Asië se Jety. "Mense gaan steeds mal oor hierdie legendes. *The Daily Sun* is 'n poniekoerant en stories soos hierdie is soos soetkoek vir baie van ons lesers."

Dit is egter onbekend hoeveel mense al as gevolg van Bigfoot of enige van die ander monsters moord gepleeg het. Volgens die nuuswebwerf IOL is 'n 35-jarige man van Pietermaritzburg, Phathisa Gabuza, in 2001 vrygespreek van moord op sy ma. Hy het haar vir 'n tokkelos misgis.

'n 56-jarige man, Siphon Khumalo, het in 1999 in Durban sy meisie se babadogtertjie eers met 'n panga aangerand en toe met tradisionele moeties vergiftig, omdat hy vas geglo het sy was 'n tokkelos. Hy het vir die polisie gesê die kind sal weer ná drie dae as 'n seuntjie opstaan. Khumalo was as 'n toordokter in sy gemenskap bekend en is lewenslank tronk toe gestuur.

Anders as kinders wat in Kersvader of die Tandmuis glo, is die bygelooftokkelos 'n verskynsel wat by jonk en oud voorkom. Dit is juis dié vrees van ouer mense wat negatiewe gevolge kan hê. 'n Fokusgroep van Zoeloe-studente aan die Universiteit van Stellenbosch

Dit is soos ons 'Jesus lives in my toilet'-storie

meen dié bygelooftokkelos kom veral by armer of meer landelike gemeenskappe voor. Alhoewel hierdie studente daaroor lag, verstaan hulle hoe die mense steeds in sulke bygelowes glo. Dit is bloot 'n geval van nie van beter weet nie. Soos mense in ander kulture in spoke of buiteruimtelike wesens glo, is die tokkelos vir baie mense 'n realiteit.

In baie van die landelike of armer gemeenskappe is daar toordokters wat kure teen die tokkelos verkoop. Alhoewel hierdie middels na bewering die bloed of velle van regte tokkelosse bevat, is daar mense wat meen dit is blote uitbuiting van oningeligte mense. Deur daaroor verslag te doen as die waarheid, gee poniekoerante die bygelowe 'n mate van geloofwaardigheid vir hulle lesers.

Volgens Elliott berig *The Daily Sun* ook oor spoke. Die spookstories word op dieselfde humoristiese manier as die tokkelos gerapporteer en beteken nie die poniekoerante is verantwoordelik daarvoor om mites soos dié te stop nie.

"Ons sê nooit dat tokkelosse wel bestaan nie. Ons rapporteer maar net wat mense in die gemeenskap glo. Dit is soos ons 'Jesus lives in my toilet'-storie. Dis moeilik om te glo dat Jesus Christus wel in 'n Lavender Hill-toilet kom bly het, maar honderde mense op die Kaapse Vlakte het dit wel vas geglo. En dit is hoe ons die storie dan skryf."

Volgens Herman Wasserman, voormalige medeprofessor in Joernalistiek aan die Universiteit van Stellenbosch en nou by die Newcastle Universiteit in Engeland, is daar verskeie redes hoekom mense in die bonatuurlike glo. "Veral in die platteland waar mense as gevolg van verskeie redes soos armoede en MIV/Vigs nie in beheer van hulle eie lewens voel nie, is bygelowe 'n manier om sin te maak van die wêreld."

Volgens Wasserman moet 'n mens versigtig wees om nie die geloof in die bonatuurlike tot suiwer kulturele terme te beperk nie. "As 'n mens terugstaan en rasioneel daaroor dink, is dit waarin Christene glo om sin te maak van hulle wêreld, net so irrasioneel soos meeste bygelowe."

Wasserman meen ook 'n mens moet nie aanvaar verligtingsdenke gee noodwendig 'n beter raamwerk vir mense om die wêreld om hulle te verstaan nie.

Alhoewel Wasserman voel dat die dilemma van bygelowe in sosiale, sowel as materiële omstandighede verstaan moet word, beteken dit nie dat 'n mens nie krities daarna kan kyk nie.

Die tokkelos is egter nog op vrye voet. Met verskeie boeke soos prof. Pieter Scholtz se *Tales of the Tokoloshe*, flieks, toneelstukke en selfs die Tokoloshe Demystifyer wat op YouTube geadverteer word en kinders in staat stel om hul beddens vir tokkelosse en ander monsters te toets, lyk dit asof hy nog 'n geruime tyd deur middel van die media gaan oorleef. **SMF**



Somewhere in the middle of nowhere, Pastor Kobus van Rensburg heads up the Spirit Word Ministry. An old drive-in screen now calls people to the church.

Photo: Jo-Ann Scholtz



A South African pastor, also called Prophet, has people streaming to his Ministry in Stilfontein. Partly because he claims to miraculously heal anything from arthritis to Aids and partly because even those who have never heard of him can watch him go to work with a click of the remote control. Alida van Niekerk finds out more.

A woman stands hunched at the front of the church, her eyes tired. She teeters slightly and looks up weakly at the pastor in front of her as he clasps her shoulders and shakes his head.

"Look at you, man," he says. And then: "All pain will leave your head right now."

The woman stands expressionless. The congregation behind her is silent. Moments later her head starts lolling slowly from side to side and then, surprised, she quietly murmurs, "The pain is moving."

Pastor Kobus van Rensburg steps slightly away and proclaims, "I command the HIV virus (sic) to die!"

The woman suddenly sways backwards and her eyes start rolling. Pastor Kobus pulls her forward, lets go of her arms and she walks along the front of the church, her former frailty vanished and her hands covering her mouth in disbelief. She looks up, falls to her knees and raises her arms. From somewhere, music starts playing in the background...

And then it's time for an ad break.

This is the Spirit Word Channel, the first Christian television channel to broadcast from South Africa 24 hours a day. Officially launched in July 2004 by the Spirit Word Ministry in Stilfontein in the North-West Province, the channel broadcasts to selected African, European and Asian countries. It can also be freely accessed via internet from anywhere in the world.

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"This," they say in an informational brochure, "is in accordance with Matthew 28:19, where we are commanded to go into all the nations and teach the nations the word of God."

If your DStv decoder is compatible, a simple setting can allow you to tune into "quality Christian material" should you tire of Series Channel re-runs or Gordon Ramsay's repertoire of profanities on BBC Food. Alternatively, the variety of programmes – from "anointed teachings" to topical discussions and international talk shows – can be accessed by buying a customised decoder.

"In South Africa the channel currently has approximately one million viewers tuning in through their DStv decoders and about 70 000 houses with separate decoders,"



A vision for television

says Anria Swanepoel, who works in the Administration Office at the Spirit World Channel. "The countries with the most viewers are Zimbabwe and Botswana."

Anria says the main purpose of the channel is "to get people to realise that God is bigger than the devil". The channel not only "reaches the unsaved" and converts many to Christianity, she says, but also draws people to their ministry in Stilfontein, a small mining town about 180 km south-west of Johannesburg, where the channel's final control centre is also situated.

The Spirit Word Ministry is headed up by Pastor Kobus, and this large white building stands out starkly against an otherwise arid and uneventful landscape: Stilfontein, situated somewhere on the N12 between Klerksdorp and Potchefstroom, is an unlikely setting for anything spectacular. On the one side of the building looms a large white screen; a remnant from the drive-in that made way for the church. On the other, a little further off, is a mine dump.

There's little else.

But on the inside, in contrast to the nothingness on the outside, the ministry reports itself to be remarkable. According to their website, miracles were always evident in the Spirit Word Ministry but the phenomena intensified after Pastor Kobus – also known as Prophet and Teacher in his congregation – visited Prophet TB Joshua in Nigeria five years ago.

"More than 5 000 cripples have miraculously thrown away their crutches and stood up out of wheelchairs," the website says. "Cancers and HIV have become regular weekly healings."

You can tune in to the Spirit Word Channel to see for yourself: the Saturday services of "Worship, Word and Wonders" are broadcast live and then edited and re-aired in hour and half-an-hour slots during the week.

Pastor Kobus's Sunday services are aired in a similar way.

Why?

"Because our vision was a television station," Anria says.

Miracle meetings and sermons aside, Anria says the staff decide on the rest of the programme schedule together "under the guidance of the Holy Spirit". An important duty, according to their website. "It is the church's responsibility to flood the airwaves with the good news of our Lord Jesus Christ," it says.

And so, you can catch a glimpse of Pastor Kobus tackling arthritis, urinary tract infections, sinus and depression.

Now, as programming resumes, he's walking along a row of congregation members, each with some form of neck ailment, lined up in the front of the church. He touches each for a moment on their forehead; some fall over backwards, others clutch each other for support. "Your neck, your neck, your neck, your neck..." he repeats as he moves along... **SMF**

Prat

my (media)TAAL



Kerkdienste dra die stigma dat hulle "oude doos" en formeel kan wees.

Jongmense gaan nie huis toe skryf oor 'n orrel nie. Inteendeel, die orrel gaan hulle waarskynlik by die huis laat bly.

Rozanne Els stel ondersoek in na die toenemende gebruik van multimedia in kerkdienste en wat dit beteken vir leë kerkbanke.



Grafika: Dan  l Malgas

Ek en jy is media-afhanklik. Die moderne mens word oorweldig deur beeld en klank in elke beskikbare medium. Hoe meer mense kry, hoe meer wil hulle hê. Die samelewing se media-afhanklikheid neem toe soos hul behoefte na media toeneem. Die media beïnvloed hoe jy die wêreld ervaar en selfs meer: hoe jy dit wil ervaar.

Ds. Theo Geyser, hoofleraar van Stellenbosch Gemeente, meen die media skep 'n wêreld waarby die kerk móét aanpas – as dit wil oorleef. Die kerk verander deurentyd om die veranderende behoeftes en vereistes van die samelewing, soos deur die media bemiddel, te ontmoet. Die media skep dus die realiteit waarby die kerk moet aanpas om verstaan te word.

Of hulle dit moet doen, is nie meer 'n keuse nie. Media-afhanklikheid maak dit 'n vereiste om die boodskap oor te dra op 'n manier wat nie vreemd is vir die samelewing se kultuur nie.

Dit word egter al duisende jare gedoen, verseker Theo 'n mens. Hy haal Paulus aan in 1 Korintiërs 9: "Vir die Jode het ek soos 'n Jood geword om Jode te wen. Vir almal het ek alles geword om in elk geval sommige te red."

Theo is vasbeslote dat wat belangrik is, is om die boodskap van Christus oor te dra. Solank dit gedoen word, maak die manier waarop jy dit doen, nie saak nie. 'n Britse joernalis, Denise Winterman, sê in *BBC News Magazine*: "Sitting in a church doesn't make you a Christian any more than sitting in a car park makes you a car."

Die vraag is eerder hoe suksesvol kerke is om wêl die boodskap oor te dra, veral tydens die diens. Die redes waarom mense kerk bywoon, is relatief – deesdae hang dit af van wat vir jôu werk.

Ds. Pieter Roeloffse, hoof van kreatiewe sake by Stellenbosch Gemeente, sê ons moet aanvaar "verskillende goed praat harder met verskillende mense".

In die Bybel vertel Jesus Sy boodskap deur stories, op 'n manier wat relevant was vir die mense van Sy tyd. Vandag moet kerke ook praat in 'n taal wat relevant is. Selfs al is dit via basketare en 'n dromstel.

Ja, meen Pieter, die samelewing word beïnvloed deur die media-afhanklike wêreld waarin ons leef. "Ons raak gefrustreerd as ons *Rambo* kyk, want ons het intussen gewoon geraak aan die bevrediging van spesiale effekte in nuwemedia-gelaaide rolprente." Net só is die tradisionele kerkdiens 'n frustrasie vir 'n media-afhanklike generasie. Dáárom, sê hy, is "multimedia 'n brug wat Bybelse vreemdhede laat grondvat in ons lewens".

Maar, sê Pieter, die kerk moet pro-aktief eerder as reaktief wees, en daar moet gewaak word teen heeltyd vorm rondom die media en die behoeftes wat deur hulle geskep word. Die gevaar,

volgens Pieter, is wanneer ons afhanklik raak van multimedia in die kerk – wanneer die kerk mense se Sondag-vermaak word. Theo verskil van hom en sê daar hoef nie 'n streep getrek te word ten opsigte van wat mense wil hê die kerk vir hulle moet wees nie – "die kerk moet aan mense se behoeftes voldoen".

Beteken dit kerkdienste word "produkte" waarvan verbruikers kan kies en keur? En dalk ander produkte op die rak kies wat hulle kan weglok? Is dié nuwe multimedia-gelaaide dienste dus volhoubaar en geloofwaardig genoeg om die verbruiker te behou?

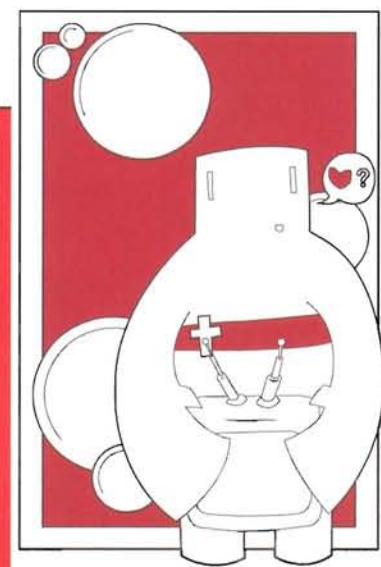
Theo voel mense moenie 'n "either/or-denkpatoon" daaroor hê nie. Volgens hom beteken kommunikasie ook om te vermaak. Al wat verskil, is die manier waarop dit gedoen word. Die gevaar is as vermaak die boodskap oorskadu – as mense begin kerk toe gaan vir die aantreklike man agter die tromme eerder as die boodskap. En om vermaak gelyk te stel aan God. Daarom, meen Theo, word geloofwaardigheid net gestroop as vermaak die doel is, maar nie as dit die middele tot die doel is nie. Kritiek daarteen is egter te verwagte, want "ons wil altyd reëls en dogmas neerlê wat vir ons sê: 'dit is reg' en 'dit is verkeerd'".

Wanneer mense keuses maak, ook ten opsigte van waar en hoe hulle loof en prys, is die bevrediging van begeerte 'n menslike faktor.

Die feit dat die media en godsdiens mekaar gebruik, is 'n vereiste van die kulturele realiteit van die tyd. Die media is 'n groter sosialiseringagent van die samelewing as ooit tevore – mediagebruik is hemelshoog en generasies word groot in 'n era van visuele stimulering. 'n Liniêre boodskap blyk nou volksvreemd in die hedendaagse aanbiddingstyl te wees. Professor Stewart Hoover, 'n joernalistiekdosent aan die Universiteit van Colorado-Bouldor, het dié argument saamgevat tydens 'n openbare lesing oor media en teologie in 1997:

"A religious tradition that has little or nothing to look at, listen to and touch, cannot sustain us for very long." **SMF**

"VANDAG MOET KERKE OOK PRAAT IN 'N TAAL WAT RELEVANT IS. SELF AL IS DIT VIA BASKITARE EN 'N DROMSTEL"



Faith @ your Fingertips

Who would have thought you could go to church in your office, your bed, living room or even your car?

Tsholofelo Segage investigates how the communications revolution, especially the internet, has changed the way people practice their religion.



Thanks to the technology explosion following World War II new forms of communication were created. Television and the internet changed the way people communicate with each other. Today, the world has reached a stage where people are dependent on these technologies. It's not all bad news because technology has brought the world a lot of good. If it took you two weeks to send a letter, it now takes you seconds to send an e-mail. If you had to sit in a library, going through thousands of books, to look for specific information you can now just google a topic. If you had to wait until Sunday to hear a sermon or wait until your weekly Bible study group to find encouragement, all you have to do now is log onto the internet and you're set.

According to the American psychologist Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs the need to belong is very important for human beings. People need to know that they are not alone, that there is someone that understands them, someone that is on the same level as them. The internet not only provides information on any subject under the sun, it is also a place where people go to find fellowship.

There are thousands of Christian websites that are dedicated to bringing the "good news" to the people. Websites such as biblegateway.com, bible.com and bibleinfo.com offer an online Bible to users.

Then there are websites for everything else under the sun. You can find churches, Christian magazines and even Christian search engines. Cellphone service providers have also caught onto the trend. People can now buy gospel ringtones and subscribe to a service that will send a scripture to your cellphone every morning. Those that can access the internet on their cellphones also have an advantage: they can use their cellphones anytime, anywhere. If the 1990s was the decade for instants, this decade is all about using your fingertips.

The Bible advises Christians to always keep and live by the Ten Commandments in the book of Deuteronomy, chapter six verses 4-9. The version on www.biblegateway.com reads as follows:

"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.

Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates."

Technology has certainly made it easier for dedicated people to practise their religions. This is evident in all the thousands of chain e-mails that are out there. The Bible also says that Christians should go out and tell people about Jesus Christ.

Now all they have to do is sit in their offices creating and forwarding those PowerPoint presentations to everyone on their mailing list and they're done.

It all seems a bit too easy, though.

Rev Douglas Mashego, President of the Baptist Convention of South Africa, does not agree. "These are just tools and resources made available; the commission relies on personal witness."

People used to say that television and radio were going to be the new church, but that has not happened. Mashego says that it is because the media can never replace personal witness: "It is the most powerful and most real."

A Christian Web Trend Blog says that the Barna Group published a study that found that 72 percent of Americans say they are born-again Christians. Only 17 percent of these Americans believe that "a person's faith is meant to be developed mainly by involvement in a local church". Internet churches such as godfocus.net and other media provide a service for the other 55 percent of the population.

Mashego does not see the media as being entirely negative. He says it works, but "the majority of black Africans do not have the resources and never really have the money to go to internet cafés" for the internet.

Technology is all about accessibility. The more access you have, the quicker it is and the easier it is. Perhaps Mashego is correct in saying that we should view technology as a tool or resource that can help along "the cause".

Christians and other religious groups can use "tools" to reach out to their members and also to more people. The questions remain then: "How do the churches reach out to everyone and not just some and how do they make their services available to all?" **SMF**

"If the '90s
were all about
instant things this is
the decade for the
fingertips..."

Photo: Old Shoe Woman



Photos: Laihu

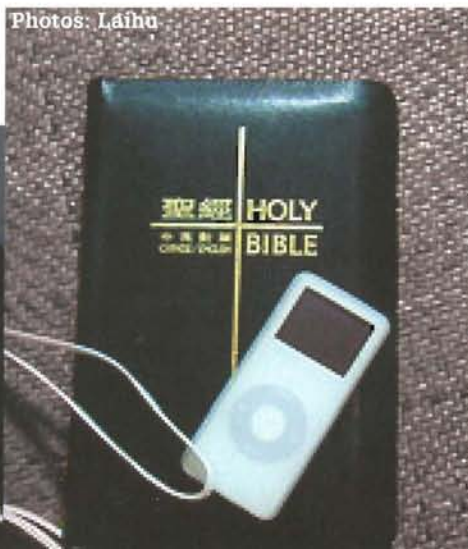


Photo: Sir Asian



Christenskap oor



Foto : Illana Frantz



Die pers gons oor
godsdien.
Maar radiostasies
hoef beslis nie terug
te staan wanneer dié
sensitiewe onderwerp
aangeraak word nie.
Illana Frantz het
gaan ondersoek
instel oor hoe geloof
by 'n radiostasie
hanteer word.

Radio Tygerberg is 'n suksesvolle Christelike gemeenskaps-radiostasie in die Wes-Kaap. Die South African Advertising Research Foundation (SAARF) het in Augustus vanjaar bepaal dié stasie het 'n luistertal van 307 000 mense. Dié statistiek maak Radio Tygerberg 'n sterk mededinger vir kommersiële radiostasies soos Goodhope FM (575 000 luisteraars) en Heart 104.9 FM met 494 000 luisteraars.

Sedert Radio Tygerberg in 1993 gestig is, is dit sy visie om die boodskap van verlossing aan talle Christene in die Wes-Kaap te bring. Die leuse, "Ons verkondig Christus", moet almal by die stasie daaraan herinner dat alles wat hulle doen vir 'n groter doel is.

Gerhardus Zevenster, hoofuitvoerende beampte van die stasie, sê die span werf sedert Radio Tygerberg se ontstaan luisteraars deur positiewe veranderinge aan hul program te maak.

"Bykans 80 persent van ons programme is Christelik. Daar is ook verskeie aktuele programme soos regs-, opvoedkundige- en buitelug-programme om Christene by te staan om 'n gesonde balans tussen geestelike en ander lewensterreine te handhaaf."

As seun van Emanuel Zevenster, een van die stigterslede van die stasie, sê Gerhardus die behoefte aan 'n evangeliese radiostasie het tot die ontstaan van Radio Tygerberg gelei.

"Dié konsep is gebore nadat 'n stigterslid een aand vanaf Tygerbergheuwels na die miljoene liggies in Kaapstad gekyk het. Dit het hom laat dink die liggies verteenwoordig mense wat met die Evangelie gelei moet word."

Naomi Engelbrecht, Radio Tygerberg se programbestuurder, beaam dat aktuele programme die stasie se gewildheid bevorder. "Ons saai 24 uur per dag uit in hoofsaaklik Afrikaans en Engels, maar ons het onlangs ander tale soos Xhosa, Duits en Portugees by ons uitsaaitale gevoeg."

Berading is ook vir luisteraars beskikbaar. Inbelsessies waarin

luisteraars voorbidding vir hul probleme kan vra, is een van die stasie se gewildste programme.

Hulle kan hulp vra vir enigiets van geestelike ontwikkeling, finansiële probleme tot gesins- of huweliks-probleme.

Raad en leiding vir verkragting en molestering asook MIV/Vigs- en traumabering is van die dienste wat by die stasie beskikbaar is. Mense kan ook 'n afspraak maak en persoonlike leiding van beraders ontvang.

Riana Hanekom, hoof van administrasie by Radio Tygerberg, sê die sukses van die radio-stasie is aan hul luisteraars te danke. "Ons fondse word gegenereer uit advertensies en donasies vanuit die gemeenskap. Baie luisteraars maak bydraes in die vorm van maandelikse debietorders."

Behalwe vir die werk wat die stasie doen om Christene te bemoedig, doen hulle ook gemeenskapsdiens in die Wes-Kaap.

"Die volgende grootprojek is ons jaarlikse *Adopt a Child*-projek. Dit is daarop gemik om 'n verskil te maak in die lewe van elke weeskind in ons uitsaaigebied," sê sy.

In dié daglange projek word weeskinders met 'n partytjie vermaak en geskenke word deur Kersvader uitgedeel.

Radio Tygerberg het nog geensins met die NG Kerk gesprekke gevoer rondom die gay-debat nie. Hulle het egter al inbelsessies gehad waarin luisteraars hul menings oor die kwessie kon lug.

"Radio Tygerberg voel homoseksualiteit is 'n sonde voor God, maar Hy veroordeel nie mense nie. Ek glo Hy kan dus ook vryheid van enige sonde gee, selfs homoseksualiteit," sê Gerhardus.

Diversiteit binne die geloof, in terme van verskillende kerke, is 'n realiteit in die samelewing. Dié feit belemmer egter nie die stasie se uiteindelijke doel om mense te help nie, maar hulle voel egter die verskeidenheid van kerke neem die krag weg van die boodskap.

"Ons fokus geensins op die verskille tussen kerke nie. Ek glo dit is een van die redes waarom die kerk soveel krag verloor het. Alle kerke is welkom by Radio Tygerberg. Ons enigste vereiste is egter dat hulle Jesus Christus as enigste verlosser moet erken en dien," sê Gerhardus.

Hy sê ook die stasie het reeds talle projekte saam met verskillende kerke aangepak en hulle vind dit wonderlik om te sien hoe Christene oor verskillende kerkgrense heen kan saamwerk.

Die stasie bestaan egter nie net uit ure en ure se preek nie. Alhoewel boodskappe uit die Bybel 'n groot deel van die stasie se uitsaaiprogramme uitmaak, speel die omroepers ook gospelmusiek.

Die stasie probeer ook om Suid-Afrikaanse kunstenaars te bevorder deur 'n groot persentasie plaaslike musiek te speel. Indien daar 'n program of spesifieke diens was waarvan 'n luisteraar gehou het, kan hulle ook opnames daarvan aankoop.

Dit is hoe die stasie dit laat werk: "Deur die volgehoue gebed en ondersteuning vanaf ons werkers en luisteraars, help ons om 'n verskil in die gemeenskap te maak," sê Gerhardus.

Vanaf Radio Tygerberg se eerste uitsending, sê hy, is dit deur "die genade van die Here" gedra om suksesvol te wees. **SMF**

Kitsfeite oor Radio Tygerberg

- Radio Tygerberg is in 1993 deur Emanuel Zevenster gestig.
- Die stasie saai uit op die golflengte 104 FM.
- Die stasie se uitsaaigebied sluit die hele Wes-Kaap in – sover as Malmesbury en Caledon.
- Radio Tygerberg het 'n luistertal van 307 000.
- Die stasie het 31 personeellede wat die administrasie behartig, 22 omroepers en 60 vrywillige beraders.

"Deur die volgehoue gebed en ondersteuning van ons werkers en luisteraars, help ons om 'n verskil in die gemeenskap te maak."

Ander Geestelike Radiostasies

- Radio Kansel in Pretoria het 100 opgeleide personeellede en saai 24 uur per dag in al elf amptelike tale uit. Sowat 331 000 luisteraars skakel daaglik in op die kortgolflengte 657.
- Sedert die stasie se lugtyd op Radio 2000 in Februarie 2006 ingekort is, is hulle in 'n geding met die Onafhanlike Kommunikasie-owerheid van Suid-Afrika (OKOSA) gedompel. Hul lisensie-verhoor duur voort.
- The Voice of the Cape is 'n Moslem-stasie in die Wes-Kaap. Hulle saai uit op die golflengte 100 FM. Die stasie het ses administratiewe personeellede, ses advertensieverkopers, vyf lede in die nuusspan, 22 omroepers, meer as 80 vrywilligers en het 'n luistertal van 142 000.
- Radio Islam in Johannesburg se eerste radiouitsending was op 10 April 1997. Die stasie het 25 000 luisteraars en saai in Engels, Arabies, Afrikaans, Zoeloe en Xhosa uit.

The *Sounds* that *shape* society



Photo: Teddy (Exodus Photography)

Plato once said: "Give me the songs of the nation and it matters not who writes its laws." Music is thought to be a powerful tool as it has the ability to shape culture, influence thoughts and enhance moods. *Claire Conchar* examines the power behind the lyrics.



Assuming music is as powerful as it is said to be, then Christian music should have an increasingly positive affect on its listeners. But is it given enough exposure to have this affect?

Christian music can be classified into sub-categories of gospel, worship, alternative, rock, messianic, contemporary and modern. This genre of music proclaims a Christian message in its lyrics.

The music could be about what is happening in the artist's life concerning God, Jesus or the Holy Spirit. These form the basis of what is required for a song to be regarded as religious, according to Marilyn Durr from the Christian bookshop, CUM books.

Marilyn says that while sales of Christian music may not compare favourably to secular sales, it has its niche. The reason for this is that many South African gospel artists start out in church choirs and do not tend to commercialise as secular artists usually do.

Some artists do make a profitable income from their music because they are linked to a record company. These artists are also given good exposure in terms of advertising.

Marilyn says that shops like CUM books endorse artists who are associated with acclaimed record labels. According to sales at CUM books, Afrikaans singer Juanita du Plessis is the most profitable local artist.

Marilyn also says that the media portrays Christian music in a negative light. This is often because of the incomparable music sales and the amount of airplay it receives.

With this in mind, three radio station managers spoke about their policies regarding the airplay of Christian music.

Martin de Abreu is the station manager of MFM 92.6, a community radio station based in Stellenbosch.

MFM has a permanent slot on a Sunday between 12:00 and 14:00, called the FrequenC, which only plays Christian music. He says they tend to stay away from traditional worship songs and play mostly pop, adult contemporary and rock. Martin also says that if a Christian song is radio-friendly and commercially viable then it could make the station's play-list.

Otherwise, it will be relegated to the Christian music show. He says that Christian music has a large market because gospel buyers are very loyal to their favoured artists and will therefore spend money on their CD's.

Ian Bredenkamp is 94.5 Kfm's programming manager and says that the station does not have a dedicated slot for

Christian music. Kfm's licence agreement with ICASA (Independent Communications Authority of South Africa) does not stipulate a requirement to play Christian music.

Shana Kilbee is the programming manager of OFM radio station in central South Africa. They play Christian music on Sundays in their Christian lifestyle programme with singer Phillip Kotze from 21:00 until midnight.

OFM also plays cross-over Christian artists like Tree 63, Amy Grant and Michael W Smith during the day. Shana does not believe that Christian music is any more influential than other genres. Shana says that if a song is popular, it will be popular regardless of its origin or message.

"Gospel music absolutely moves people. I just hope for the better."



In January, DMX music announced a new addition to DStv's audio bouquet – a dedicated gospel music channel. Craig Cesman, the CEO of DMX Music Africa, says that gospel music is one of the biggest selling music categories in South Africa.

"This genre has proven extremely popular on both a local and international scale across a wide demographic, therefore making it a very good addition for the bouquet," says Craig.

With this in mind, it would seem that Christian music is paving its own way in the industry.

Marilyn believes in the power of Christian music and its ability to change lives. She says that people either buy it to anchor themselves or just to find solace in good music.

"Gospel music absolutely moves people, I just hope for the better", she says. **SMF**

PROTESTANT VS KATOLIEK

— EN DIE MEDIA



Een van vele kruise wat opgerig is langs die kus van Die Ring van Kerry, met die Stille Oseaan op die agtergrond.

Foto's: Naudé van der Merwe en Hilda van der Merwe



Noord-Ierland se Protestante (pro-Brits, eenvoudig gestel) en die Rooms-Katolieke (anti-Brits) het vrede gemaak. Ná eeue van 'n bitter en bloedige geloofstryd is die wapens amptelik neergelê op 8 Mei 2007. Noord-Ierland het 'n koalisie-regering gekry met eerwaarde Ian Paisley as premier, en sy vorige vyand, Martin McGuinness, as adjunk. NAUDÉ VAN DER MERWE was self in Junie daar en het dié “wonderwerk” meegemaak.

Ierland is onder konstruksie. Letterlik én figuurlik. Daar is nie een provinsie, “county” genoem, waar daar nie padwerke of een of ander vorm van bouwerk is nie. Dit lyk of die land besig is om reg te maak vir iets groots.

En ja, Ierland het polities en godsdienstig gesproke 'n nuwe blaadjie omgeslaan.

Hoe vang 'n mens die gees van 'n land vas wat so lank deur konflik en geweld geregeer is? Kan jy die koerante, boeke, webwerwe, televisie -en radiostasies gebruik om te sien en te hoor wat aan die gebeur is?

Natuurlik gaan jy veel wys word, maar die mense, die geboue en die atmosfeer sê meer.

Ierland se geweld, soos ook ander lande se konflik op die oomblik, word direk gekoppel aan geloof. En hoe baie oorloë is nie al in die naam van geloof gevoer nie? In Ierland is dit egter dieselfde geloof – die Christelike geloof – wat die kwaad stook. Dit klink belaglik, maar dit is nie, want vir 'n Ier is dit nie belaglik nie. Hulle word groot in 'n kultuur van geweld. Die konflik is immers deel van hul identiteit.

As 'n mens die rede vir dié konflik so verstaanbaar as moontlik wou maak, sou jy dit heel waarskynlik só begin en eindig: In Ierland hou die Katolieke en die Protestante nie van mekaar nie.

Dis so eenvoudig. Maar dan begin die “maar’s”. Brittanje, hoofsaaklik Protestant, het Ierland net na die Hervorming in ongeveer 1654 oorgeneem. Die Iere, hoofsaaklik Katolieke, was uit die aard van die saak ontevrede hiermee. Die grootste gedeelte van Ierland het sedertdien onafhanklikheid verkry, maar tot vandag toe nie Noord-Ierland nie. En dit is waar dit so rof gegaan het.

Die gebied funksioneer apart van die res van die eiland omdat dit deur Brittanje regeer word. Die Republikeinse Iere – met ander woorde die Katolieke – wat hier woon, het geen ooghare vir

die “indringers” van Brittanje nie, en andersom.

Die woorde “Katolieke” en “Protestant” word aan die twee “vyande” gegee, maar dit het lankal nie meer enigiets met geloof te doen nie. Dit het ná eeue in 'n ingewikkelde politieke situasie ontaard wat nou vir die eerste keer tot rus kom.

Tydens 'n toer deur Belfast, die hoofstad van Noord-Ierland, ry 'n mens deur 'n straat wat twee geboue van mekaar skei. Die een gebou huisves *The Irish News* met 'n onlangse sirkulasie van 49 046. Die ander een is die tuiste van die *Belfast Telegraph* (jongste sirkulasie van 94 540). Volgens die toergids weet 'n mens dadelik dat jy 'n Katolieke is as jy *The Irish News* lees, en Protestant as jy die *Belfast Telegraph* verkies.

Dit is een van die dinge wat die meeste opval van Belfast: die twee pole langs mekaar. Die “Peace Walls” van ses meter hoog, wat steeds deur die hele stad gesien word, is iets wat 'n mens nie verwag nie. Dié mure is opgerig om Protestante en Katolieke woonbuurte van mekaar te skei, “want as die Katolieke en die Protestante mekaar nie kan sien nie, kan hulle mekaar nie doodmaak nie,” sê die toergids.

Die mure is tot die uiterstes beproef tydens die 1970's tot 1990's, toe konflik 'n klimaks bereik het. Volgens 'n artikel wat tydens die totstandkoming van die nuwe regering op 10 Mei in *The Economist* verskyn het, is die meeste mense steeds ten gunste van die “Peace Walls”. 'n Mens ervaar wel nog spanning in Belfast se strate; die mure is dus nog nodig.

Want oral is daar nog tekens van die geweld wat die Noord-Iere verteer het. In Belfast se hoofstraat is daar gate waar geboue was. Die geboue is doodeenvoudig opgeblaas.

Die afwesigheid van die nuus oor dié grootse gebeurtenis in Ierland se geskiede-

**Belfast
Telegraph
Newspapers**

**The Belfast
Telegraph**

**Sunday
LIFE**

**Ireland's
Saturday
Night**

**COMMUNITY
Telegraph**

www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk



Links bo: Die kantore van *Belfast Telegraph*, die “Protestantse”-koerant in Noord-Ierland.

Middel: Muurkuns wat in Belfast tydens tye van konflik verskyn het. Regs: *The Irish Times*, die “Katolieke”-koerant.



Die Thanksgiving Square in Belfast (heel links) met 'n beeld van 'n vrou wat die Ring van Danksegging vashou, is 'n moderne simbool van hoop vir die toekoms, met tipiese Ierse tonele op die ander foto's.

nis in Ierse koerante in Junie was opmerklik. Die nuwe regering in Noord-Ierland, waar Sinn Féin (die "Katolieke") saam met die DUP (Democratic Unionist Party, oftewel die Protestante) 'n regering vorm, het op 8 Mei vanjaar in werking getree.

Eerw. Ian Paisley van die DUP en Gerry Adams, leier van Sinn Féin, nou 'n politieke party en voorheen gesien as die politieke vleuel van die Ierse Republikeinse Leër, het vrede gemaak en sit vir die eerste keer nie net saam aan tafel nie, maar moet saam regeer.

'n Mens is dus verbaas as jy nie in die koerante kry wat jy soek nie. In onder meer *The Irish Times* en *Irish Independent*, die twee koerante met die hoogste sirkulasiesyfers in Ierland, is min oor die situasie in Noord-Ierland geskryf.

Die *Irish Independent* het volgens 'n opname wat deur die webwerf finfacts.com in Augustus 2006 gedoen is, 'n sirkulasie van 162 582 koerante 'n dag, die grootste in Ierland. *The Irish Times* het 'n daaglikse sirkulasie van 117 797. En teen einde Junie was daar in dié koerante nie veel te lees oor Ierland se nuwe vredesproses nie. En 'n Britse koerant soos *The Guardian* se fokus was uit die aard van die saak meer op Gordon Brown se oornam as eerste minister, want dit was toe nuus.

Waar gemeenskapskoerante soos die *Dundalk Democrat* en die *Fingal Independent* in dorpie soos Dundalk uitgegee is, het hul hulself hoofsaaklik besig gehou met gemeenskapsnuus.

Jy't dalk gedink jy gaan na die nuusfront, by wyse van spreke, om 'n artikel te skryf oor die wapenstilstand. En dan lyk dit of dit gewoon 'n geval is van gewone mense wat met hul gewone lewens wil voortgaan.

Die hoofnuus in die koerante was alledaagse stories, soos die toestand van die onderwys. En die bomdreigemente in Londen, soos seker in die meeste ander koerante van daardie tyd. Daar was hier en daar verwysings na die Ierse politieke situasie, maar min daarvan in-diepte.

Die internet vertel egter 'n ander storie. Op *The Irish Times* se webwerf is daar ongeveer 70 stories wat handel oor Noord-Ierland se politieke situasie tydens Junie, Julie en Augustus, die maande nadat die amptelike vredesproses in werking getree het.

Op 31 Julie vanjaar verskyn twee groot stories waarin die einde van die Britse weermag in Noord-Ierland aangekondig word. In die ander storie noem die joernalis Fintan O'Toole

dat 28 000 Britse soldate in 1972 in Noord-Ierland gestasioneer was. Dit is vier maal meer as die hoeveelheid soldate wat Brittanje tans in Irak het. En Noord-Ierland beslaan 'n baie kleiner gebied.

Op 17 Augustus skryf die joernalis David Adams in *The Irish Times* dat baie mense glo versoening sal slegs plaasvind indien Noord-Ierland deur 'n "waarheidsproses" gaan. 'n Buitestander sal dit moeilik verklaar, maar as Suid-Afrikaners behoort 'n mens iets van dié konflik te verstaan.

In die Ierse skrywer Jamie O'Neill se roman *At Swim, Two Boys*, wat hom afspeel teen die agtergrond van die Ierse soeke na onafhanklikheid van Brittanje in 1915, verduidelik een karakter aan 'n ander dat die Boere tydens die Anglo-Boereoorlog van die doringboom as "Wait-a-bit thorn" (wag-'n-bietjie-bos) gepraat het. Hy sê dan: "Strange class of people."

Maar dit is presies hoe 'n mens oor die Iere voel. Vreemd. En jy weet nie altyd of jy al die fynere nuanses van taal en politiek kan begryp nie. *Gaelic football? Hurling?* Ierland se nasionale sporte wat volksvreemd vir hetsy Afrikaner of Suid-Afrikaner is.

Maar dan besef jy ook dat konflik en oorlog universele eienskappe het – eienskappe waarmee die meeste mense op aarde hulself kan vereenselwig.

As 'n persoon wat al in verskeie dele van Ierland gewoon het, sê Linda Butler, 'n dosent aan die Dundalk Instituut van Tegnologie naby Dublin en 'n boorling van Cork in die Suid, 'n mens moet dit self ervaar. Sy sê die konflik het niks meer met geloof te doen nie. Sy vertel hoe haar suster, 'n Katoliek van Cork, stilgebly het toesyn in 'n Protestantse deel van Belfast was om nie haar aksent te laat blyk nie.

Volgens die toergids sou jy ongeveer ses jaar gelede nie met jou motor op dieselfde dag in 'n Protestantse en dan 'n Katolieke buurt kon ry nie. Jy sou dit nie lewend uit maak nie. Vandag is dit anders – selfs 'n toerbus ry daar rond. Eers verby al die Britse vlae, dan al die Ierse vlae. Die skeiding is duidelik, maar daar is vordering. Katolieke en Protestante kinders gaan vir die eerste keer in Belfast saam skool.

"Noord" en "Suid" voel asof hulle nooit van mekaar se bestaan geweet het nie. Die twee is wêreld van mekaar, maar tog op dieselfde klein eiland wat nie veel groter as die Vrystaat is nie. **SMF**

Die Ierse koerante wat vir navorsing gebruik is: Sunday Times, Irish Independent, The Irish Times, The Dundalk Democrat, Irish Examiner, Cork Independent (gratis), The Argus, The Irish Sun, Fingal Independent, The Guardian (Engeland), The Irish News (Noord-Ierland) en Belfast Telegraph (Noord-Ierland).



mnet
WHERE MAGIC LIVES

No news from

China

Forget about braving the gates of hell: in China you will be braving a firewall, especially if you want to read about or report on religion. **Gina Schreuder** reports.



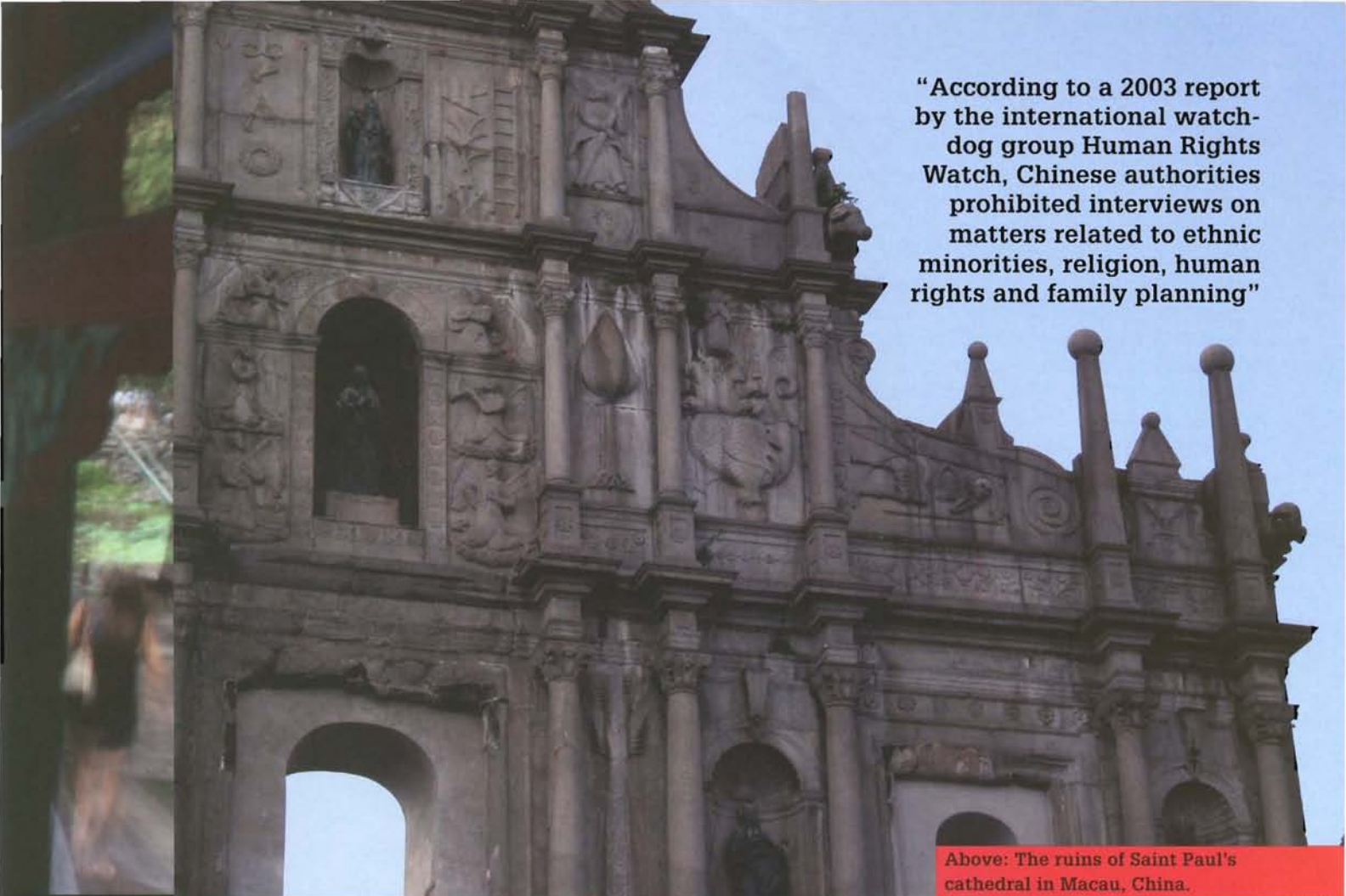
Photos: Gina Schreuder

Below: Lighting incense (an integral part of life) for worshipping at the A-Ma temple in Macau, China.

In July this year a trivial news report had the Asian continent abuzz from Hainan to Hong Kong. It appeared to be one of those ethnocentric anecdotes you tell someone over lunch: a Chinese reporter has uncovered a deceiving culinary plot: Beijing dim sum (dumpling) stalls replaced the pork filling with pieces of cardboard and sold it to unsuspecting customers on the streets of the Chinese capital. What followed in the story, though, was the icing on the cake: the Chinese authorities swept in, arrested the reporter for fabricating stories and squelched the entire incident, which was by then being overshadowed by several other international incidents involving Chinese food quality standards.

China is synonymous with many things but, sadly, press freedom is not one of them. You experience the lack of political freedom when standing on Tiananmen Square, Mao Zedong's chubby face juxtaposed with the colossal countdown clock to next year's Olympic Games, knowing that your visa clearly stated that "one should not participate in any form of political activism whilst in the People's Republic of China".

The contrasts between the present-day modernity and the past are everywhere, but nothing highlights it as much as the clampdown that still exists in the media. Reporters are continuously being arrested; news stories censored. In central Beijing, CCTV, China's state-controlled television network's new headquarters, designed by liberal Dutch architectural visionary Rem Koolhaas (another subtle hint of detected irony), loom over the smoggy city,



"According to a 2003 report by the international watchdog group Human Rights Watch, Chinese authorities prohibited interviews on matters related to ethnic minorities, religion, human rights and family planning"

Above: The ruins of Saint Paul's cathedral in Macau, China.

reminding comrades that Big Brother is still in control of this new Great Leap Forward towards economic prosperity.

How does one then report on religion, the most intangible and sensitive of subjects, in a country known for its intolerance towards dissident views?

With difficulty.

According to a 2003 report by the international watchdog group Human Rights Watch, Chinese authorities prohibited interviews with "elements" of the banned Falun Gong religion and on matters related to ethnic minorities, religion, human rights and family planning.

Falun Gong, meaning "the practice of the wheel of the Dharma", is an exceptional example of the difficulty of reporting on religion in China. Most Western people's knowledge of the religion is limited to crumpled petitions being forced in your hands coupled with emotional demonstrations to end its banning in China, held on street corners in cities like New York and London.

The religion, which claims to have 100 million members in China, according to the Falun Dafa Information Center, and preaches slow-motion exercise and traditional beliefs centred on compassion, has been the focus of international attention since July 2000 when the Chinese government banned the group for "jeopardizing social stability".

The government immediately began a nationwide onslaught, except in the special administrative regions of Hong Kong and Macau, where it is tolerated. Several governments, international human rights organisations – such as Amnesty International – and scholars consider the persecution a human rights violation.

In November 2001, police officers in China detained a German television crew and a CNN cameraman filming a Falun Gong protest. They confiscated film, press cards, residence permits and equipment. In Hong Kong though, you can still observe members practicing their meditative exercises on sunny afternoons in Victoria Park and information booths about the religion are dotted around Tsim Sha Tsui, a well-known promenade and tourist hub.

Local newspapers, most notably the largest English paper, *The South*



China Morning Post, regularly report on the discrimination and victimisation of Falun Gong followers in Hong Kong.

"Reporting on religion will become systematically even more difficult in China, but Hong Kong has never really been a part of China," says James L. Watson, Fairbank Professor of Chinese Society and Professor of Anthropology at Harvard University. Watson is a Hong Kong veteran, if you may, and has conducted more than 40 years of fieldwork in villages in Hong Kong's New Territories.

Watson argues that the Chinese people are not even very religious, in a Western sense anyway, and that Buddhism, which is practised by most Chinese, centres on common moral values as opposed to aligning with strict dogmatic codes. "Ancestral worship is extremely important to especially the rural Chinese. It is an active way to keep the deceased alive in the memories of their family by continuously thinking and talking about them. During the Cultural Revolution, Mao's regime banned all forms of religion. Ancestral halls were converted into canteens where members of the communes ate. This disregard of religion was carried over into the People's Republic. Coupled with the still communist approach of a lack of press freedom, reporting on religion is basically impossible."

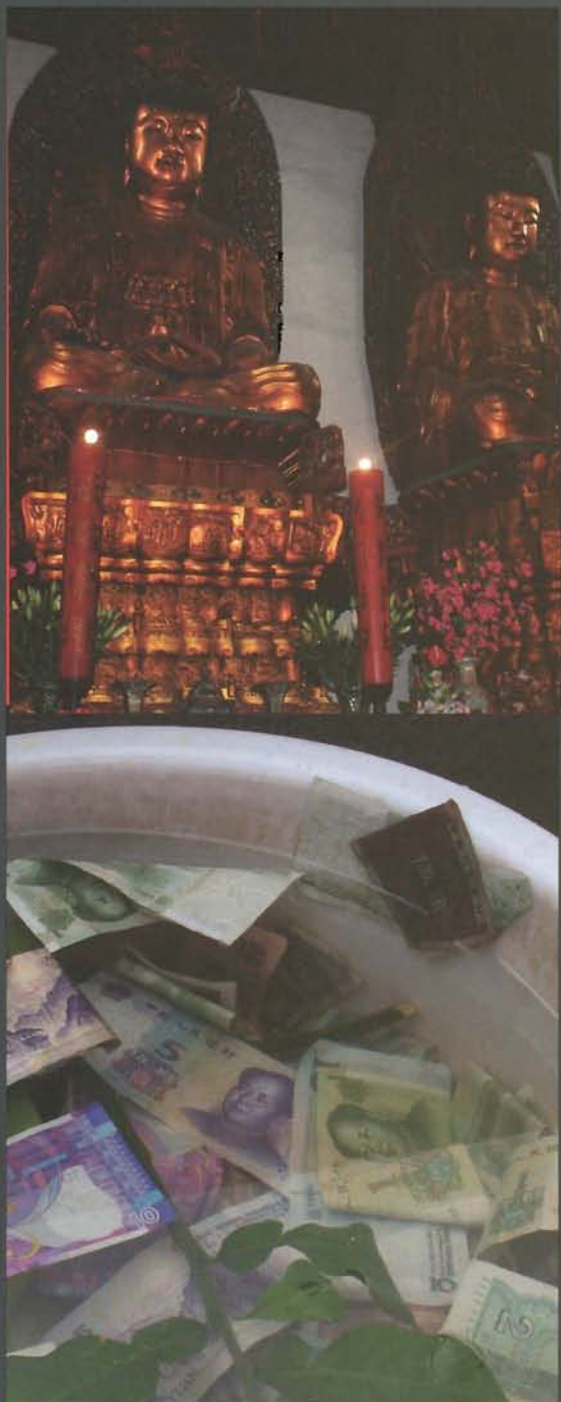
Watson recommends that journalists write for publications outside China, and thus raise awareness. He also implores Chinese to broaden their horizons. "Most graduate students from China I lecture go back to Beijing or Shanghai with a totally fresh perspective on their country."

"When they start their undergraduate studies at Harvard, many of them are unaware of basic facts about their country's history I teach in my classes on Chinese culture. They experience a harsh wake-up call, but with many students it leads to them writing critical albeit sensitive pieces when they return."

Media24, whose affiliate company MIH holds a "strategic" 9.9% interest in the Chinese company Beijing Media Corporation (BMC), is, at first glance, directly implicated in the religious reporting debacle.

But Francois Groepe, chief executive officer of Media24 Newspapers, disagrees. Groepe says that although BMC operates the leading Chinese newspaper, *Beijing Youth Daily*, the company has no control over editorial content and that MIH merely assists BMC with developing "new business opportunities and increasing efficiencies".

I was standing in a hotel lobby in Beijing, gawking tourists swarming around me, when I overheard a group of Americans complaining about their internet access: all video clips on *cnn.com* which covered religious topics were blocked. "You read about the censorship, but you don't realise it's actually happening," a young man exclaimed. **SMF**



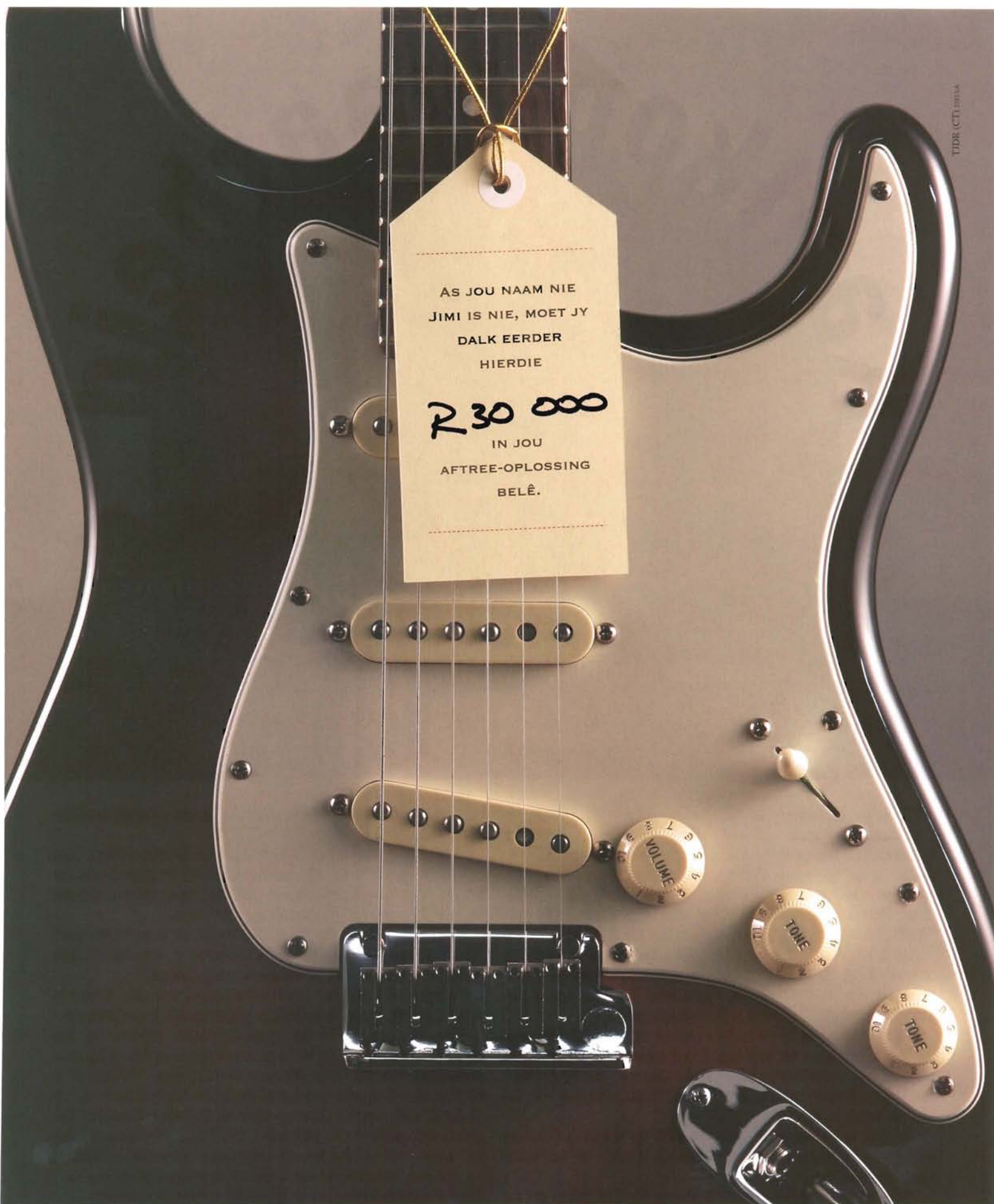
Above: Yuan notes placed as an offering in a bowl at a temple in Beijing and Buddhas in Shanghai.

Falun Gong and the media...

As with other special interest groups, and perhaps more than others, the Falun Gong (FLG) movement has developed ways of using the internet and the media to advocate its cause. FLG goals, influenced by their teachings, inform and influence their presentation of information and news. After Falun Gong was banned by the Chinese government in 1999, the group used press releases to counteract the official campaign against it and over the years increased its use of internet and media as protest tools. One protest technique is to hijack Chinese television broadcasts.

Followers have, on a number of occasions, beginning in 2002, hacked into Chinese television cable or satellite signals and replaced programming with FLG videos promoting their views. According to Chinese reports, this included an interruption of the 2002 satellite broadcast of the soccer World Cup game and celebrations of Hong Kong's return to China. In October 2003 another interruption broke into coverage of China's first manned space mission. The content of these videos are meant to counteract government accusations and promote FLG views.

Sources: www.faluninfo.net, www.religioustolerance.org



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Foto: Cabeza Rapada



Johann Rossouw is 'n Afrikaan, mediarolspeler en filosoof. **Sarietha Engelbrecht** het agtergekom die gesig van die Federasie van Afrikaanse Kultuurvereniginge (FAK) sit beslis nie met 'n bek vol tande nie.

Johann Rossouw is 'n mediamens. Hy skryf in koerante soos *Beeld*, *Die Burger*, *Volksblad*, *Rapport*, die gewese *Insig*, asook op *LitNet*, oor onderwerpe soos rolprentontledings, maatskaplike vraagstukke, populêre kultuur, globalisering, etiek, politiek, godsdiens, letterkunde en filosofie. Hy was ook 'n aanbieder van "Spookstasie", 'n voormalige program oor die filosofie op RSG.

Op sy CV sal 'n mens sien hy het ook al gewerk in boekwinkels, as taalpraktisyn, as navorsingsbibliotekaris, as deeltydse dosent en as organiseerder van die Klein Karoo Nasionale Kunstefees se lesingsreeks.

Johann is egter beter bekend vir sy rol by die FAK waar hy as navorsings- en kommunikasiebeampte gewerk het. Hy was ook verantwoordelik vir die stig van die FAK-blad, *Die Vrye Afrikaan (DVA)*, met die Afrikaanse bylae van *Le Monde diplomatique*.

En nou is hy voorsitter van die FAK en woon in Pretoria saam met sy vrou, Rika, haar elfjarige dogter en hul seun van tien maande.

Johann is 'n rustige, diplomatese ou. Hy praat graag oor godsdiens in die algemeen, en die dekking daarvan in die media. En hy het beslis sterk opinies.

Hoe 'n groot deel van *Die Vrye Afrikaan* word aan godsdiens gewy? Volgens Johann word daar nie 'n kwota aan godsdiens afgestaan nie, maar wél aan aktuele sake. Wanneer 'n godsdienslike kwessie aktueel raak, sal DVA daaroor skryf. "Ons aanvaar nie die idee dat religieuse

oortuigings 'n private saak is en dat jy dit daarom nooit in DVA aanraak nie."

Twee jaar gelede het DVA 'n ondersoekende artikel, "Die NG Kerk en sy tyd", wat heelwat kritiek in godsdienstige kringe ontlok het, gepubliseer. Johann meen dit was omdat die voorbladartikel 'n omstrede artikel was.

Daarna het hy in die openbaar verskoning gevra en gesê "die prentjie wat van die kerk geskets is, was nie in alle opsigte 'n korrekte of volledige weergawe nie".

Volgens Johann het kerkleiers gevoel van die probleme is aangeraak, maar 'n volledige prentjie is nie geskets nie.

Hy sê ook DVA se godsdienstige inhoud is nie altyd Christelik nie, en as 'n groot debat aan die gang is in ander gelowe, sal hulle daaraan aandag gee. "Religie is 'n belangrike deel van gemeenskapslewe en ons probeer op 'n kreatiewe manier daarvoor dink en debatte stimuleer. Dit word nie gedoen om polemieke te ontlok nie, maar eerder om saam met ons lesers oor religieuse kwessies te besin."

Johann sê in terme van kwantiteit is daar goeie dekking oor religieuse kwessies in die Suid-Afrikaanse media. "My probleem is die dekking wat gegee word, is dikwels baie gebrekkig en nie goed deurdag nie."

Johann voel ander gelowe as Christenskap moet meer aandag geniet, maar daar is tog soms artikels van hoogstaande kwaliteit. "Die probleem in Suid-Afrika is enige ander geloof, buiten die Christelike geloof, is natuurlik 'n minderheidsgeloof. Jy gaan baie minder

daaroor te lese kry." Hy meen egter dit is nie doelbewus nie, maar 'n nuwe-effek van die oorsig wat 'n mens kry.

Volgens hom sal dit goed wees as 'n mens in die hoofstroom-media meer kan lees oor aktiwiteite of debatte wat plaasvind in kleiner gelowe.

"Jy gaan by mense 'n groter begrip en belangstelling vir mekaar se tradisies wek. Daardie gesprek kan dikwels vir mense se eie geloofspaaie baie beteken." Maar dit, sê hy, is dalk 'n bietjie idealisties.

Hy sê daar is in Suid-Afrika 'n hoë godsdienstige verdraagsaamheid tussen verskillende geloofsgemeenskappe. "Ek lees min goed waarin daar 'n ooglopende verdraaiing of onkunde bestaan."

Maar Johann het ook 'n bekvot te sê oor meningsvormers aan die ander kant van die geloofsmuur.

Met George Claassen, ombudsman van *Die Burger* en uitgesproke skeptikus, het hy 'n byltjie te slyp. George het pas 'n nuwe boek oor geloof, bygeloof "en ander wensdenkery" geskryf. Johann voel George se wetenskaplik-gegronde uitlatings is "ontoereikend en positivisties" en dat hy 'n "irrasionele inslag tot die godsdienst het".

"Sy skryfwerk getuig van 'n baie swak kennis van die religie."

Volgens Johann is wetenskap en godsdienst heeltemal versoenbaar. "Die terreine het te doen met verskillende waarhede. Wetenskap het te make met die verifieerbare en die religie met die metafisiese." Hy meen godsdienst is 'n tradisie wat oor eeue tot stand gekom het. "Dit is 'n persoonlike ervaring en is nie iets wat minder geldig is nie."

Johann glo in die oerknal-teorie vir die ontstaan van die aarde, maar glo ook daar is geen rede waarom 'n God nie daarvoor verantwoordelik kon wees nie. Hy voeg by dat die geskiedenis al verskeie vorige teorieë verkeerd bewys het en dat daar geen rede is hoe dit nie weer kan gebeur nie.

Johann meen godsdienst is onderliggend aan verskeie vraagstukke in die samelewing. Ook die gay-debat word aangevuur deur godsdienstige argumente, veral in die NG Kerk.

Hy meen 'n mens moet eers kyk na hoe dit ontstaan het. Volgens hom het Afrikaans die afgelope 150 jaar deur drie groot tegniese omgewings beweeg. Dit is die era van die gesproke woord (die logosfeer), die era van die gedrukte woord (die grafosfeer) en die era van die audiovisuele woord (die videosfeer), laasgenoemde vanaf 1975 met die koms van televisie.

Johann sê die kerk het weg-beweeg van 'n grafosfeer na 'n videosfeer en dit het probleme veroorsaak, want lidmate se kennis van die Bybel neem af.

"Dit is ironies, want mense lees

minder, maar hulle kennis en besluite is meer absoluut." Volgens hom is die NG Kerk in 'n krisis, want dit beleef institusionele en kulturele onsekerheid.

Johann voel die Bybel het 'n belangrike rol om te speel in die samelewing. "As 'n mens kyk na religieuse twispunte, waar die Bybel ingespan word as 'n maatstaf om standpunt in te neem oor die debat, dink ek sien 'n mens iets positief en negatief." Hy meen die positiewe is dat mense dit wel as 'n maatstaf gebruik, maar die negatiewe is dat dit so ondeurdag is "dat jy begin wonder of dit regtig nog met die Bybel iets te doen het".

"Ek dink die groot krisis van die Christendom in Suid-Afrika is die dun teologiese basis daarvan." Hy meen dit het te doen met die opkoms van die videosfeer en dat dit groot skade doen aan die Christendom. Volgens hom word 'n tradisie van twintig eeue "baie skrams" in plaaslike debatte weerspieël. "Mense maak uitsprake in die naam van Christenskap en dan kan jy maar net jou kop skud omdat hulle hul eie tradisie so swak ken."

Ook oor die swanesang van *Insig*, 'n Media24-tydskrif wat onlangs weens marksdruk moes sluit, het hy 'n siening. "'n Grappie doen al 'n geruime tyd die rondte dat *Insig* net vir afvallige *De Kat*-lesers was."

Hy meen *Insig* het probeer om 'n intellektuele leefstyltydskrif te wees. Om dit te doen, moet daar 'n duidelike intellektuele lyn gehandhaaf word en volgens hom het *Insig* nie geweet wat dit wou wees nie.

Hy meen "vervlakking is die grootste gemene deler", en daarom is dit moeilik vir intellektuele publikasies om winsgewend te wees. "Jy gaan nooit ryk word nie. Jy moet maar bydra tot die simboliese kapitaal van die gemeenskap."

Johann sou baie graag wou sien dat die Afrikaanse Christelike wêreld geplaas word binne 'n groter konteks van veral Afrika. "Ek lees nou die dag daar kom elke dag 20 000 mense in Afrika tot bekering. Daar is fassinerende goed in Afrika aan die gang en ek sou baie graag meer daarvan wou weet."

Volgens hom is dekking van ander gelowe in die media "skaflik tot goed", maar daar is ruimte vir verbetering."

'n Mens moet besef die bronne wat vir intellektuele publikasies in Afrikaans beskikbaar is, is baie beperk."

Johann meen ook die kwessies wat die afgelope agt tot tien jaar in die Afrikaanse media gedebateer is, dui daarop dat die Afrikaner se intellektuele lewe oor veel meer as godsdienst handel.

Dié eens-kaalkop-Afrikaner, mediarolspeler en filosoof het nou wel van voorkoms verander vandat hy aangestel is as voorsitter van die FAK, maar sy menings is sy eie kaalkop-waarheid.

Of dit oor geloof of Afrikaans is, Johann hét 'n mening. **SMF**



Foto: www.vryeafrikaan.co.za

"Mense maak uitsprake in die naam van Christenskap en dan kan jy maar net jou kop skud omdat hulle hul eie tradisie so swak ken"

SPIRITUAL

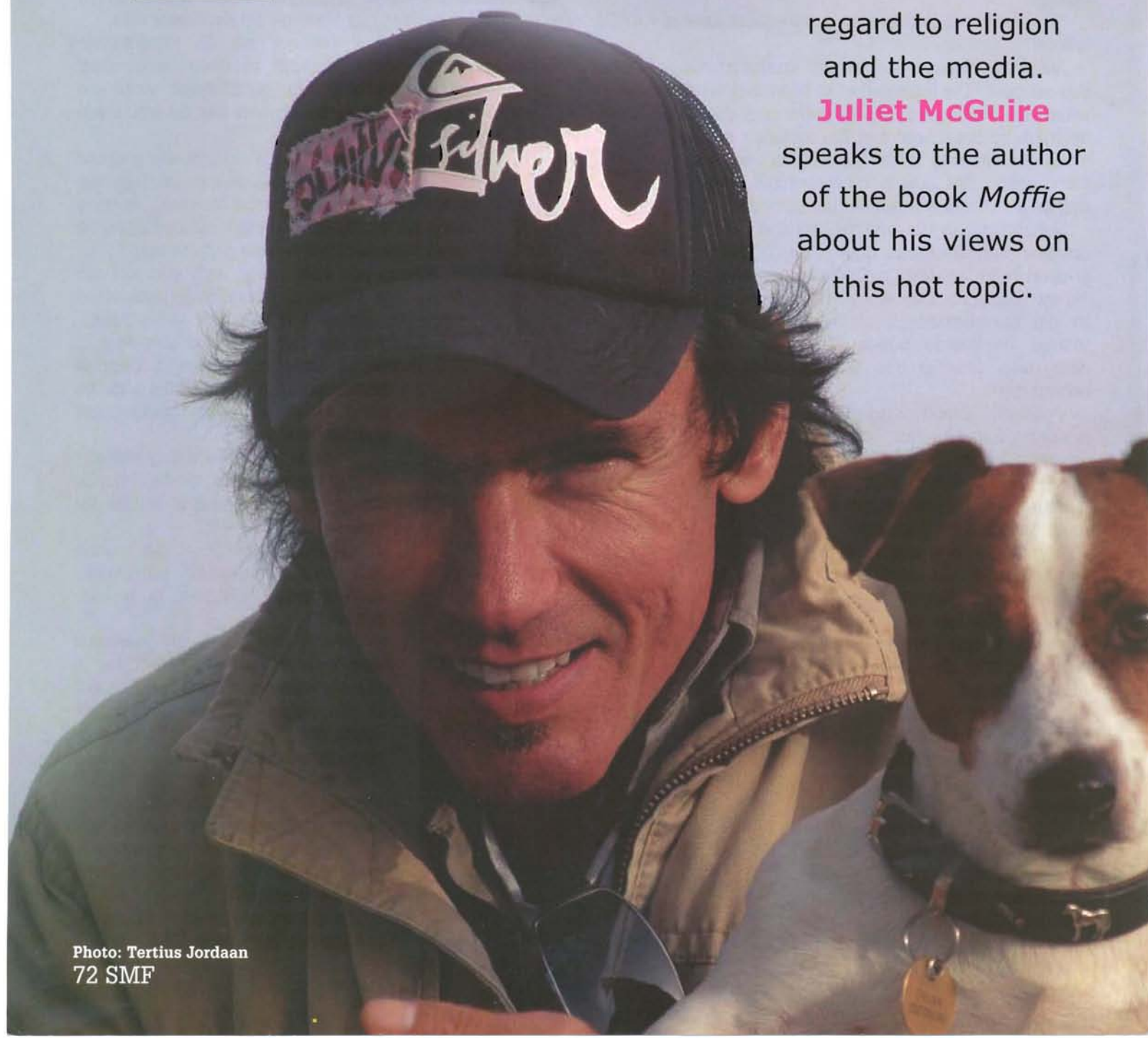
MOFFIE

IN THE MEDIA



It is well-known that gay people have had a tough time with regard to religion and the media.

Juliet McGuire speaks to the author of the book *Moffie* about his views on this hot topic.



André Carl van der Merwe is a South African author who knows all too well how the media portrays homosexuality and religion, especially being a young gay man. His best-selling novel, *Moffie*, is about to be made into a movie and he hopes that the religious aspects are portrayed correctly.

In the acknowledgements of the book André says, "As a gay man with deep spiritual desires, my only way of processing the confusion I felt about my sexuality was to write about it. The church regarded me as sinful, the government told me it was unlawful and the rest of society considered it offensive."

André says that the book, in part, deals with the struggle that a person faces when his genetic coding places him on the opposite side of what religion regards as pure or holy. The story describes the turmoil that a child faces when his entire frame of reference is telling him that he is evil and doomed to hell.

Although *Moffie* is a work of fiction, it is based on the journals that André wrote whilst serving in the South African Defence Force during the 1980s. The story follows Nicholas van der Swart, the son of an Afrikaans father and Catholic English-speaking mother. From an early age he realises that he is different, and when he doesn't meet his

"Think of the Christ you read about in the Bible, a gentle dude that sides with the riff-raff of society, fought the system, was friends with prostitutes, beggars and lepers"

father's expectations, he is called a *moffie* and told to act like a real man. Things soon get worse when Nicholas is called up for national service, a place where homosexuality is forbidden. It was regarded as a sin against God and the country.

André says that the difficulties he went through as far as religion is concerned were more difficult than the army. He feels that it is important that the pressure religion put on him – and still does put on many people of different sexual orientations – must be clearly portrayed in the movie-version of the book.

André makes a differentiation between being religious and being spiritual. "I think it's important to clearly identify the difference of worshipping a 'vehicle' (religion) or embarking on a path of spiritual awakening. I think people are caught up in the 'rules' of religion and forget to focus on the essence of connecting to 'The Master of the Universe', whoever He or She may be to you." He says that people must remember that a vast number of people died in wars in the name of Christ when Jesus preached "love your enemy".

"Think of the Christ you read about in the Bible, a

gentle dude that sides with the riff-raff of society, fought the system and was friends with prostitutes, beggars and lepers. Then look at the Pope in all his pomp and grandeur – they seem very far apart," emphasises André.

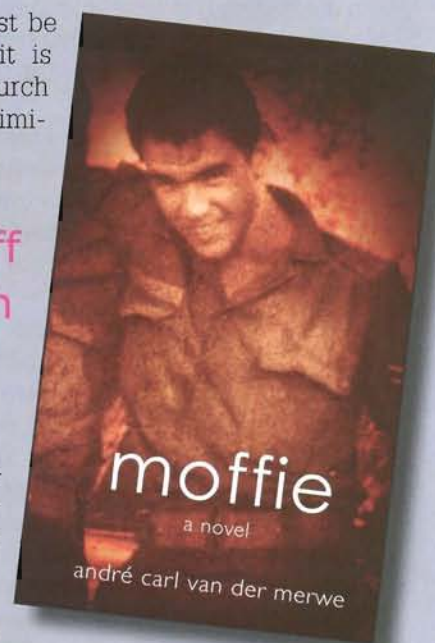
André's feeling towards the media has changed vastly from when he was a young boy. "I think free speech is important and I like to think that we live in a society where that is mostly the case, as far as mainstream media is concerned," he says. He believes that the media is a business and is just the voice of the people.

"I don't really see them as having a social conscience, but rather they report on what is taking place and what they believe people will want to see or read," he says.

In the dedication of his book André wrote, "May we all one day live in a world of compassion rather than self-seeking superiority."

He feels that the gay debate that is going on in the media with regard to the Dutch Reformed Church is ludicrous.

He says this issue must be fought hard against as it is absurd to think that a church can condone such discrimi-



nation, particularly referring to its history of human rights abuses in its "murky past".

"I don't know how a church that preaches 'do not judge' can justify this judgemental behaviour."

He believes that their argument, which is based on the Bible, cannot be justified. "The Bible also condones slavery and says that women are not allowed to talk in church or even ask a question – they must be subservient to their husbands, something that is now considered socially unacceptable. In the Old Testament the Bible even condones stoning another human being."

André is happy with the publicity his book has received and believes that the South African media has been generally fair, open and enlightened. When it comes to religion and the media, André is satisfied with the way they have handled his book, especially in such a "conservative society as South Africa", he said.

André wants his book to portray a slice of history with a subtle message of acceptance and open-mindedness. "What a world it could be if everyone opened their minds just a fraction and accepted those who are slightly different." **SMF**

N Godsdiens se nemesis

Die enigste manier om mense se aandag te kry, volgens Nathan Bond*, is om beledigend en opdringerig te wees. En dit is wat hy is.

Nathan veg onverpoos om die invloed van godsdiens op die samelewing te bevraagteken en te beveg. Hy doen dit op die internet, in briewekolomme en in sy tydskrif

Koerantlesers sal hom herken aan die briewe in die pers, en internetgebruikers sou hom moontlik raakgeloop het op *Kletskerk*.

Hy monitor reeds vir etlike jare die verslaggewing oor godsdienstige aangeleenthede. En hy skryf. Aan elke koerant, elke tydskrif en elke internetforum wat wil luister.

Nathan skryf weekliks sowat 30 bladsye vol briewe aan die media. Volgens hom word sowat 6 persent daarvan gepubliseer.

"Ek neem nie redakteurs kwalik dat hulle nie al my briewe publiseer nie – hulle moet immers hul produk verkoop en nie lesers vervreem nie. Maar dan moet hulle ook nie hul luisteraars verdom deur snert te publiseer nie".

Nathan het 'n broertjie dood aan die algemeen-aanvaarde Christelike aanslag van die Afrikaanse pers en glo die koerante en die kerk is saam in die bed.

Hy verwys as voorbeeld na die verwydering van *Die Burger* se ombudsman, George Claassen, se joernaal op dié koerant se webtuiste. Claassen se weblog, *Prometheus Ongebonde*, het gehandel oor logiese denke, sogenaamde "onsinverklikkers" en waarom mense in 'n god glo.

"Dit was té omstrede vir *Die Burger* om 'n wetenskaps-redakteur en ombudsman te hê wat nie in feëties glo

nie. Daarom het hulle 'n man van onkreukbare integriteit en wat ontsaglik baie vir wetenskap in die joernalistiek beteken, se mond gesnoer. *Die Burger* het daardeur nie net hul logiese lesers vervreem nie, maar ook die gelowiges verdom," meen Nathan.

Nathan Bond skryf met sy hart in sy keel. "Ek volg 'n beledigende aanslag. Dit help nie om te praat as jy nie skok nie". Nathan sê hy het nog nooit sensasie gebruik om sy mening te lug nie. Hy wys bloot vir mense uit hoe belaglik godsdiens is.

Volgens hom is gelowiges "bang, lui of dom".

Hy wil nie die wêreld verander nie. Dit is, volgens Nathan Bond, Mission Impossible. "Niks wat ek of enigiemand anders sê sal godsdiens verander of vernietig nie. Ek wil net hê dat iemand, een of ander tyd, vir 'n vlietende oomblik dink: 'Daar is iemand wat van my verskil en dink ek is absoluut belaglik'."

Nathan sê hy wil nie bekendstaan as die Suid-Afrikaanse Richard Dawkins nie. "My naam kan nie eers in dieselfde paragraaf genoem word nie. Ek loop maar net agterna." Hy gee ook nie om as hy mense beledig nie. "Ek soek nie dissipels nie. Jy moet hulle êrens langs die pad begin voer."

Dit was nie altyd sy houding nie. Nathan Bond het grootgeword in 'n konserwatiewe Sewendaagse Adventiste-kerk. En hy wou 'n kerkleier word.

Nathan het sy graad in teologie deur die Andrews

*WAT IS IN DIÉ NAAM?

Nathan Bond is nie sy regte naam nie. Die man agter Nathan Bond is Drewan Baird, 'n sakeman van Oudtshoorn. Nathan Bond ontleen hom aan twee karakters, Nathan die Wyse en natuurlik Bond, James Bond.

"Nathan die Wyse" is 'n leergedig deur Gotthold Ephraim Lessing van die agtiende eeu. Die karakter moes op die sultan se bevel sê watter een van die groot gelowe van die tyd – Judaïsme, Mohammedanisme en Christendom – die ware een is.

Nathan was in 'n moeilike situasie, aangesien 'n keuse tussen enige van dié gelowe tot sy dood of verstoting sou lei. Nathan het toe 'n staaltjie uitgedink van 'n man wat al drie sy seuns ewe lief gehad het, maar sy waardevolle ring slegs aan een seun kon nalaat. Hy het toe drie identiese namaaksels laat maak en elke seun een laat erf. Nie een van dié ringe, of gelowe, was dus eg nie.

Die van "Bond" is, volgens hom, die banale deel van die naam. Hy het dit gekies oor James Bond se droë martini-kuns in *Casino Royale*. En ook oor die karakter in die Bond-fieks Miss Money Penny se opmerking: "James is such a cunning linguist".





Die naam is **Bond. Nathan Bond.** En hy is op 'n missie:
Om gelowiges te laat besef hoe belaglik dit is om in 'n god te glo.
Herman Scholtz het met hom gepraat oor sy vete teen godsdiens.

University in Amerika behaal. Hy is nie spyt oor sy teologiese opleiding nie. "Dit het my geleer om vrae te vra en antwoorde te soek".

Ná sy studies het Nathan vir twee jaar militêre diensplig gedoen. Die indoktrinasie van die weermag het hom verder ontnugter. "En dit álles was in die naam van God," voeg hy by. Die tydperk wat gevolg het, was vir hom een van ongeërgdheid. Hoewel hy hom nie meer as gelowig beskou het nie, het dit hom ook nie gepla dat ander mense gelowig is nie.

"Die gebeure van 9/11 het 'n reuse-ïnvloed op my gehad. Ek onthou dat ek na die televisie gestaar het. Al wat ek heeltyd gedink het, was: Dis gelowige mense hierdie!"

In 2003 het 'n persoonlike krisis sy ongeërgdheid in uitgesproke protes verander. Die alias Nathan Bond is gebore en hy het aktief begin deelneem aan die godsdiensdebat. Hy het ook in dié tyd begin speel met die gedagte van 'n eie tydskrif waarin hy kon sê wát hy wil, wánnéer hy wil. Dit sou uiteindelik lei tot 'n e-tydskrif van sy eie.

Theological Antiretroviral Therapy (TART Remarks) het ten doel om die invloed van godsdiens op die samelewing te ondersoek. Nathan is die redakteur en uitgewer daarvan.

Die naam hou verband met Richard Dawkins se stelling dat godsdiens 'n meem is, 'n soort virus van die brein wat homself gedurig vermenigvuldig om te oorleef. Die tydskrif dien dus as anti-retrovirale middel vir die "godsdiens-virus".

Die Afrikaanse woord vir "tart" beklemtoon die styl van die publikasie as beledigend en uitdagend.

TART Remarks het die eerste keer in Augustus verlede jaar verskyn. Sedertdien ontvang intekenare elke Sondag 'n afskuif van die tydskrif in Pdf-formaat.

Die tydskrif het tans 5 000 intekenare, waarvan sowat 'n derde Suid-Afrikaners is. Die res van die intekenare is hoofsaaklik in Groot-Brittanje en Amerika.

Die inhoud van *TART Remarks* bestaan uit berigte oor godsdiens uit die vorige week se media, boek-resensies, verslae oor konferensies en toesprake, humoristiese staaltjies, prentjies en redaksionele kommentaar.

Een van *TART Remarks* se uitgawes (16 April 2007) het veral omstredenheid veroorsaak. Die hoofstorie het gelui: "Professor Russel Botman has been inaugurated as the rector of the University of Stellenbosch. I object!".

Nathan se kapsie teen Botman se inhuldiging spruit uit die feit dat Botman 'n teoloog is. "Hierdie man staan aan die hoof van een van die grootste en belangrikste universiteite van die land. As iemand vir jou sê hulle gaan besluite neem deur raad te vra van hul denkbeeldige vriend, êrens daarbó, is dit rede tot kommer. Niemand het nog ooit dié vriend gesien nie. Niemand weet of hy bestaan nie. Maar jy gaan dat hý jou lei. Ons móét bekommerd wees," sê Nathan.

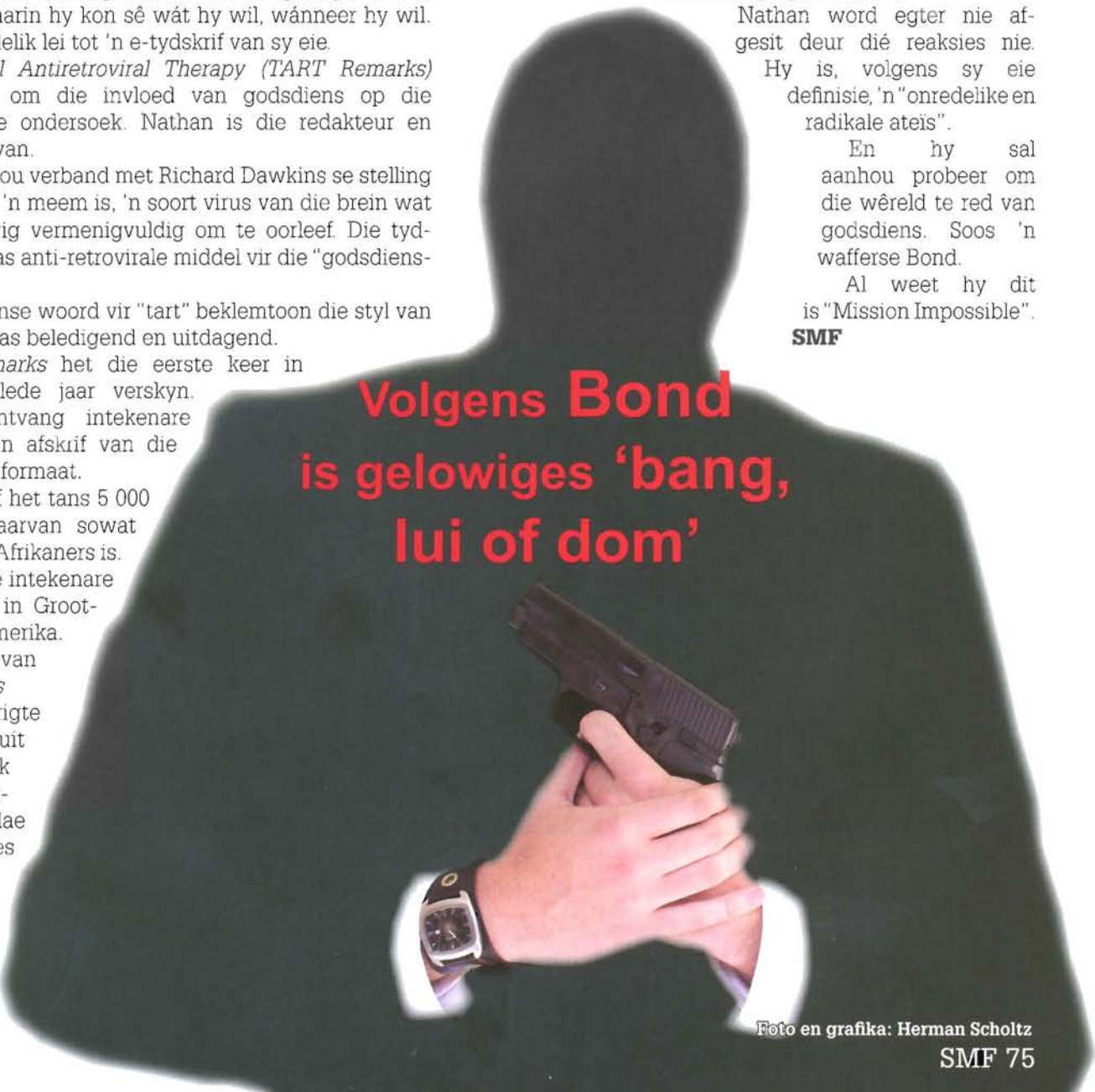
Sowat 'n honderd intekenare het Nathan laat weet dat hy nou té ver gegaan het, en het hul intekeninge gekanselleer.

Nathan word egter nie afgesit deur dié reaksies nie. Hy is, volgens sy eie definisie, 'n "onredelike en radikale ateïs".

En hy sal aanhou probeer om die wêreld te red van godsdiens. Soos 'n wafferse Bond.

Al weet hy dit is "Mission Impossible".

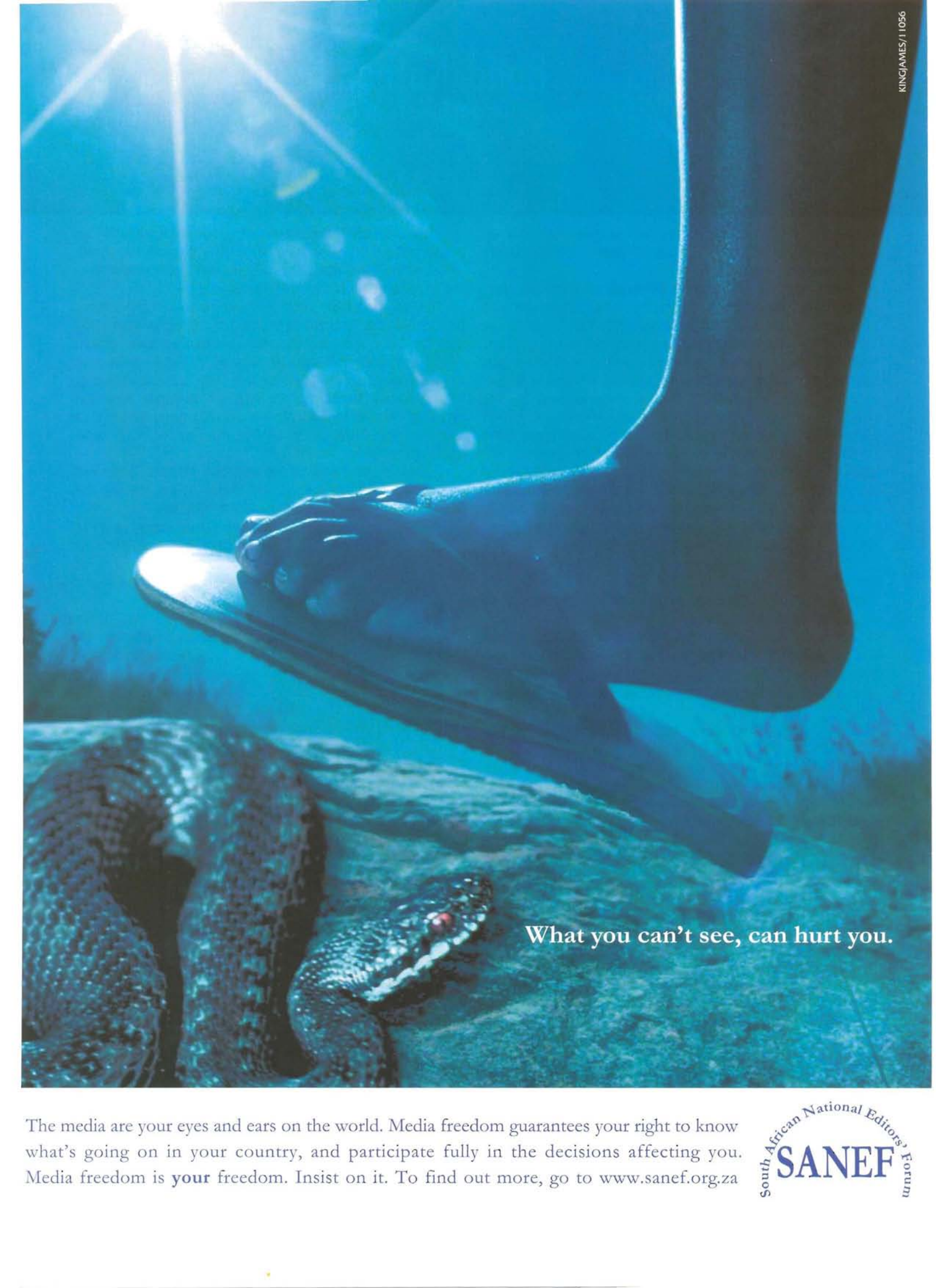
SMF



**Volgens Bond
is gelowiges 'bang,
lui of dom'**

Foto en grafika: Herman Scholtz

SMF 75

A dramatic, low-angle shot of a person's foot in a flip-flop, poised to step on a cobra snake. The scene is bathed in a strong blue light, with the sun creating a bright lens flare in the upper left corner. The snake is coiled on the ground, its head raised with its characteristic hood flared. The overall mood is one of danger and the hidden threats of the world.

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South African National Editors' Forum
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WITCH HUNT!

Donna Darkwolf Vos bears the job title of "Archpriestess of the Circle of the African Moon". Ian McNaught Davis spoke to her and returned relatively unscathed.

Photos: Ian McNaught Davis



Durbanville sprawls over the hills of the northern suburbs of Cape Town. It is a place where everyone's child is in cycling distance from school and guinea fowl can roam freely in the parks. Each street could be a film set for *Desperate Housewives*.

If you lived here and ran out of sugar or incense, you could simply knock on the door of the Archpriestess of the Circle of the African Moon, Donna Darkwolf Vos.

Her garage door bears a Wiccan star whilst the neighbour's house flaunts a crucifix. A concrete gargoyle at the front door replaces the traditional Beware of the Dog sign. I am hit by a gust of incense smoke as she welcomes me inside. Armed with her first glass of the Boland's finest boxwine, she shows me to her lounge where we sit whilst her two dogs, Gremory and Borg (short for Cyborg, not the Swedish tennis player), play at our feet.

Reclining in her sofa, she recounts her pilgrimage to archpriesthood. From the age of four she knew she "was going to be a Joan of Arc". At the age of 11, she became involved in a Christian youth organisation, "singing and dancing and doing conversions all over the show". "I was particularly good at conversions," she adds. After obtaining a Masters degree in Theology, she started preaching to congregations.

After rejecting the Christian faith, she worked as a librarian in Soweto and discovered Zen Buddhism, but her path to Wicca was steered by the book, *The Way of the Disciple* by Alice A Bailey.

Donna Darkwolf, now divorced from a prominent businessman, has been practising Wicca for 14 years and teaches beginners classes for a minimal fee "just to see if they are committed". She has received phone calls from slightly overcommitted people asking her to kill the wife of the person they are having an affair with. Fortunately, Darkwolf is from the White side of Magic. "If we could do all that, why do 99 percent of witches have day jobs?"

Upon meeting her, most people ask her to perform a miracle or two. "I'm not Jesus, I'm a witch!" she replies.

The enigmatic Darkwolf is no stranger to the media. She has appeared on 19 television shows; from being questioned on *Carte Blanche* to being subjected to the chattering of Felicia Mabuza-Suttle on her



**"I'm not
Jesus,
I'm a
witch!"**



show.

Vos has certainly mastered the art of the interview, with her unnervingly fixed stare and her wagging finger – a la PW Botha – she weaves through the questions, dictating and revising what must be mentioned in the final copy. “I love the media,” she says, “and I love what they can do for me.”

The subject of witchcraft has always permeated into the storylines of popular culture, from Sabrina the Teenage Witch to Harry Potter and Charmed.

In an academic paper by Dr Dale Wallace, regarding the construction and articulation of the Pagan identity in South Africa, she states that these films and television shows have “presented a range of identities for witches, witchcraft and magical practice; from individuals who command special powers, cast (even evil) spells, to benign ‘good’ witches whose practices are aimed at self-protection and self-enhancement.” Donna Darkwolf neatly classifies these characters: “Hulle’s almal poepholle”.

In general, Vos is satisfied with the gradual exposure of Wicca in the media, although she says Wiccans and their customs are still misunderstood.

She praises the efforts of the Daily Voice for their recent double-page feature on the Wiccan community and their rituals.

Despite increasing interest in witchcraft, there is still an ongoing battle of sorcery and semantics. Vos says Wiccans have finally managed to reclaim the word “pagan” from its former Satanic connotation.

The next task is to establish the definition of a “white witch”, a concept that is frequently lost in translation; confused between acts of good magic and the pigment of a witch’s skin. She stresses the importance of the public understanding the difference between the Eurocentric and Afrocentric definitions of the word “witch”. The ambiguity of the word has caused Wiccan witches to come under fire, following the proposed act to ban witchcraft in Mpumalanga.

“There is no such thing as a good black witch,” she says, referring to those that practise evil magic. Statements like these are regularly misinterpreted, especially if they are uttered in the border town of the Boerewors Curtain.

Donna Darkwolf embarks on a guided tour of her home with a fresh glass of wine. Her house is a blend between Aladdin’s Cave, the Owl House and Pandora’s Box, adorned with works of art made by students who cannot afford to pay for her Wicca classes.

She has prepared an altar especially for the interview, a large pentagram engraved into the middle of her tiled lounge floor is colourfully contrasted by the statue of Aphrodite cloaked in candlelight.

A malevolent-looking Madonna glares from the wall. An idol of Anubis, the Egyptian god of the dead, moves around the house (not as a result of telekinesis, but from the maid’s dusting) and guards the coffee table.

Fairies and Liewe Heksie stunt doubles hang from the roof. A picture of a horned Messianic-looking man hangs in her bedroom shared by three idols of her personal Hindu gods. Framed Egyptian souvenir hieroglyphics line the walls and idols invade the kitchen in places usually reserved for





Her garden is
enclosed by eight
 foot high walls,
 allowing **Wiccans**
 to celebrate **kaalgat**
 tussen die deities
 during **significant**
nights of the lunar
 cycle

Mrs. Balls.

Outside, the horns of a buffalo watch over her braai, but they may not have magical properties as most built-in braais in South Africa are adorned with either buffalo horns or a photograph of Joel Stransky's winning kick from the Rugby World Cup of 1995. Her garden is enclosed by eight-foot-high walls, allowing Wiccans to celebrate kaalgat tussen die deities during significant nights of the lunar cycle. These rituals are performed "skyclad" although Vos says some of the more "prudish" witches prefer to keep their clothes on.

She insists that all that is sacrificed at rituals are bread and herbs, and the occasional scarecrow. "The only thing different between us and the church is that they do koekies en terté and we do alcohol and happiness," she says.

Spells are cast at rituals to cure addictions, increase fertility and divinity, and for love and money. Vos says with love spells, magic can remove barriers between people and give them "a cosmic kick up the arse" – only if they are meant to be together, that is.

Donna Darkwolf, now progressively more possessed by the spirit of Dooswyn, waxes lyrically about ex-lovers and karate. Not being an expert in either field, I decide it's time to leave, only to be met by a car with a lifeless battery and which proceeded to lock all the doors with the keys inside. Was it a spell or just another day in suburbia? **SMF**



HORINGS & HALO'S

▪ 'n Horing vir *Carte Blanche* se sensasionele en ongegronde insetsel oor die vermiste Gert van Rooyen-slagoffers.

▪ A horn for the proposed amendment to the Films and Publications Act which would amount to censorship.

▪ 'n Horing aan die seksblogger Juan Uys. Nie net het hy die reputasie van die geïmpliseerdes geskaad nie, maar hy het byna sensorskap en regulering vir alle bloggers veroorsaak.

▪ A horn for the SABC blacklisting saga which continued this year and led to the resignation of radio news anchor John Perlman.

▪ A horn for the *Cape Argus*' "Perman" (sic) frontpage headline covering the said issue.

▪ 'n Horing vir die nuwe Sondagkoerant *Sondag*. As jy 'n *tabloid* wil wees, moet jy regtig 'n *tabloid* wees – wat skryfstyl en uitleg betref.

▪ A horn for the SABC's resignation from Sanef over the Manto Tshabalala-Msimang saga. If you attack "the media", be sure to realise that you too, contrary to popular belief, are part of "the media".

▪ 'n Horing vir *Die Burger* se hamerlogo's by die Inge Lotz-stories. Dit is in swak smaak.

▪ 'n Horing vir Media24 wat *Insig* gesluit het.

▪ A horn to the *Daily Voice* for publishing child pornography.

▪ 'n Horing aan al die Media24-publikasies wat hul syfers gekook het, en sommer ook aan diegene wat nie reputasiebestuur kon toepas nie.

▪ 'n Halo vir Sanef, die FXI en al die belangegroep wat die wysiging van die Rolprent- en Publikasiewet teenstaan.

▪ A halo for CNBC Africa as Southern Africa's first business news channel.

▪ 'n Halo vir *Daily Dispatch* se dekking van die probleme in die Mt Frere-hospitaal.

▪ A halo for Ed Linington who served as press ombud for ten years.

▪ A halo for Jonathan Shapiro for always having his finger on the ball (point) with those brilliant cartoons.

▪ 'n Halo vir Okosa wat nog vier uitsaailisensies vir private televisiestasies toegestaan het.

▪ A halo for *Sunday Times*' coverage of the Manto Tshabalala-Msimang story and for overall good reporting.

▪ A halo for *The Times*, the first of its kind in South Africa. It is setting the trend for tabloid-sized newspapers and converged newsrooms.

▪ 'n Halo vir Facebook – die mees revolusionêre mediaproduk wat elke dag duisende mediavorme tot ons beskikking stel.

▪ 'n Halo aan die redakteur van die *Daily Dispatch* wat 'n joernalis wat plagiaat gepleeg het, afgedank het.

★ Previously known as Akkers/Acorns & Aikôna's



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