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Diary from Rome

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Voorwoord / Preamble

In die vorige uitgawe is gemeld dat ons graag die agterstand wat met *Woord en Daad* oor die afgelope klompie jare opgebou het, wil uitwis. Hierdie dubbeluitgawe is bedoel om 'n groot tree in dié rigting te gee deurdat ons inhoudsgewys twee uitgawes in een vir u bied. Hiermee sluit ons die uitgawes vir 2012 af. Dit sluit ook die era van nêr papierweergawes af. Vanaf 2013 gaan *Woord en Daad* ook die digitale era betree. Meer hieroor in die voorwoord van die volgende uitgawe.

Die eerste deel van hierdie gekombineerde uitgawe bestaan uit vier artikels met taamlik vaste akademiese spys deur personeel van die Noordwes-Universiteit. Die eerste artikel het as mede-outeur die kampusrektor van die Potchefstroom Kampus, prof. Herman van Schalkwyk, wat saam met Johan van der Merwe skryf oor geneties gemanipuleerde voedsel en die morele keuses waarvoor hierdie wetenskaplike ontwikkeling ons plaas. Die tweede artikel deur Jan-Charl Venter is 'n terugskou op die rigtinggewende drie en vyftigste konferensie van die ANC in Mangaung. Die belangrikste agendapunte wat die regerende party as opgaaf vir sigself stel, word vir ons geskets. In 'n kort verslag oor sy doktorsale studie gee D. Nizonkiza ons 'n kykie op die verhouding tussen leksikale vermoë en tweedetaal-sprekers se vermoë om die betrokke tweede taal te beheers. Die vierde artikel stel die diagnose van 'n vertrouensbreuk as een van die belangrikste "malaises" vir ons tyd aan die orde. Daar word gewys op die effek wat dit het op onder andere die politiek en besigheidswêreld.

Die tweede deel van hierdie dubbeluitgawe van *Woord en Daad* gee 'n reformatoriese perspektief op die aanwys van 'n nuwe Pous deur die Rooms Katolieke Kerk. Renato Coletto, wat die redakteur is van hierdie gedeelte, sê die volgende oor hierdie bydrae: In the last few months Roman Catholicism made international headway with the resignation of Pope

Ratzinger (Benedict XVI), the gatherings of the cardinals to elect the new Pope (i.e. the "conclave"), and finally the election of Pope Bergoglio (Francis) to the Vatican throne. This issue of *Word and Action* offers a few articles on the Roman Catholic Church. Our readers will surely enjoy a Protestant point of view on these recent events and the more fundamental considerations on Roman Catholicism as a "system".

This issue is a journey through the ministry of three popes. The first article is written by B. J. van der Walt: it is a memory of a meeting with Karol Wojtyla, in Rome, before the latter became pope John Paul II. The article focuses on the intellectual contribution of pope Wojtyla (for example his encyclical *Humani Generis*) and also on the historical background of his life (Poland was then under a communist regime).

The rather lengthy article by Leonardo De Chirico is a "collage" of nine documents composed at different times, a sort of "diary" containing notes and reflections on the most important events in the Roman church in the last two years. Dr. De Chirico lives in Rome and is a pastor of a congregation of the Christian Evangelical Reformed Baptist Churches in Italy – (CERBI – Chiese Evangeliche Riformate Battiste in Italia). He is the adjunct director of the Istituto di Formazione Evangelica e Documentazione (IFED - Institute for Evangelical Formation and Documentation) located in Padua, Italy. In particular, he inaugurated a new branch of IFED dedicated to ethics and bio-ethics. Dr. De Chirico is also the vice-president of the Italian section of the Evangelical Alliance (Alleanza Evangelica Italiana). His Ph.D, completed at King's College, London (UK), was on Roman Catholicism. Since then, he has written several articles and books, among which I would like to mention one in English: *Evangelical theological perspectives on post-Vatican II Roman*

Catholicism (2003) edited by Peter Lang in Bern.

From Rome, Dr. De Chirico is wellpositioned to follow the developments of Roman Catholicism rather closely, in particular the developments of the Vatican Curia. De Chirico uses the word “Evangelical” more often than “Protestant”. With this, he underlines the fact that his point of view is not liberal, neo-orthodox or fundamentalist. It is rather a point of view in line with classical Protestantism, in particular with reformed Protestantism. Readers who come from a reformational background do not need, therefore, to feel excluded from the “Evangelical” family – so often mentioned by De Chirico.

My own article on statistics concludes this issue by returning “down to earth”, so to speak, to the numbers. Apart from and beyond the solemn Vatican ceremonies of these days – the conclaves and regalia – the Catholic Church is losing ground (in numerical terms) in the “global village”, while the “Evangelicals” are booming. (The media worldwide are skilfully ignoring this fact).

Since the 1960s, as De Chirico argues,

the Catholic Church has changed a lot though remaining the same. South Africa has also changed a lot in its attitude towards “Rome”. We moved from the “Roomse gevaar” approach to an attitude of tolerance and openness. Have we also moved to a rather tasteless relativism? What remains the same, in most cases, is a fragmentary, poor understanding of Roman Catholicism. The latter is not only a theology but a view of life, a religion with philosophical, social, ethical, economic and other implications and expressions. It would be important, therefore, to try to understand the impressive building of Roman Catholicism, its foundations, its design, its meaning. This is an ambitious project, which requires time. But perhaps this issue of *Word and Action* might, for some of us, be a starting point for further investigations and even studies - who knows? For reformational Christians it might even be a way to understand ourselves better, our own churches and our Christian life. Is not Calvinism a reformation of Roman Catholicism?

Michael Heyns & Renato Coletto

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Geneties gemanipuleerde voedselsoorte: Voor- en nadele

Herman van Schalkwyk & Johan van der Merwe
(Potchefstroomkampus van die NWU)

Inleiding

Genetiese manipulerings of genetiese modifisering is 'n allesomvattende term om laboratorium- en industriële tegnieke te dek om die genetiese samestelling van 'n organisme te wysig deur die DNS van verskillende gene en spesies te vermeng. Hierdie organismes word hoofsaaklik in die laboratorium gemanipuleer om verlangde eienskappe te verhoog of voedingsinhoud te verbeter. Genetiese manipulerings of modifisering kan plante baie vinnig en met groot akkuraatheid tot stand bring met die presies verlangde eienskappe.

Geneties gemanipuleerde organisme-(GGO)-voedselsoorte is vir die eerste keer in die vroeë negentigs op die mark geplaas. Die eerste kommersieelgekweekte GGO onverwerkte-kos-gewas was die tamatiepuree (genaamd FlavrSavr) wat deur die Kaliforniese maatskappy Calgene gemaak is om meer bestand te wees teen verrotting. Tans is daar 'n hele aantal voedselsoorte waarvan 'n GGO-weergawe bestaan.

Sommige voedselsoorte is gemanipuleer om hulle bestand te maak teen insekte en virusse en hulle tot 'n groter mate daartoe in staat te stel om onkruidodders te verdra.

Sommige voedselsoorte is gemanipuleer om hulle bestand te maak teen insekte en virusse en hulle tot 'n groter mate daartoe in staat te stel om onkruidodders te verdra. Gewasse wat vir hierdie doeleindes gemanipuleer is met die goedkeuring van die

toepaslike gesag in 'n aantal lande, sluit in: mielies, sojabone, oliesaad, koolraap (canola), sigorei, skorsies en aartappels. Sewe van die top tien lande verantwoordelik vir die meerderheid GGO-gewasaanplantings, is in die Westelike halfmond geleë wat meestal deur Amerikaanse regulasies in plaas van Europese regulasies beïnvloed word. Lande soos die V.S.A., Argentinië, Brasilië, Kanada, Paraguay en Meksiko maak deel hiervan uit. Ander lande sluit in Suid-Afrika, China, Indië, Australië en Roemenië.

Daar heers wetenskaplike konsensus, selfs in Europa, dat die GGO-voedselsoorte en -gewasse wat tans op die mark is, geen gedokumenteerde nuwe risiko's opgelewer het nie – nie vir menslike gesondheid of vir die omgewing nie. Europa het besluit om die gebruik van hierdie nuwe tegnologie te smoor, nie weens die teenwoordigheid van risiko's nie, maar weens die afwesigheid, tot dusver, van direkte voordele vir die meeste Europeërs. Aan die ander kant het die V.S.A. besluit om die gebruik van GGO-tegnologie aan te moedig, wat dit vir baie nuttiger nuwe tegnologieë moontlik maak om deur boere ingespan te word om uiteindelik hul opbrengste te verhoog. In hierdie lande is egter kleiner getalle boere en hulle is reeds hoogs produktief, selfs sonder die toepassing van GGO-tegnologie. Aan die ander kant is 60% van alle burgers in Afrika boere en hulle is nog nie hoogs produktief nie. As Afrika die keuse sou maak om nuwe tegnologie te smoor volgens die Europese regulasiestyl, sou dit veel ernstiger implikasies tot gevolg hê. Die uitwerking van GGO-voedselsoorte en -gewasse in Afrika sal afhang van die keuses van Afrika-regerings met betrekking tot die regulering van hierdie tegnologie.

Voordele en risiko's van GGO-voedselsoorte en -gewasse

Die potensiële voordele wat al deur die *Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO)* van die Verenigde Nasies (VN) voorgehou is vir die gebruik van GGO's in landbou, sluit in:

- Beter weerstand teen stres – As gewasse meer weerstandig teen uitbrekings van peste gemaak kon word, sou dit die gevaar van oesmislukking laat afneem. Soortgelyke voordele sou kon voortspruit uit beter weerstand teen strawwe weersomstandighede, soos ryp, strawwe hitte of droogte.
- Voedsamer stapelvoedselsoorte – Deur gene in gewasse in te voeg kan die voedingswaarde verhoog word. Byvoorbeeld, gene wat vir die produsering van die voorganger van vitamine A verantwoordelik is, is by rysplante ingevoeg wat hoër vlakke van vitamine A in hul korrel het. Aangesien rys meer as 50 persent van die wêreld se bevolking voed, sou dit kon help om vitamine A-gebrek, wat 'n ernstige probleem in die ontwikkelende wêreld is, te laat afneem.
- Meer produktiewe plaasdiere – Gene van vee wat meer melk produseer kan by ander minder produktiewe vee ingevoeg word om hulle melkopbrengs te verhoog.
- Meer voedsel uit minder grond – Verbeterde opbrengste van geneties gemodifiseerde gewasse sal 'n produsent in staat stel om 'n beter opbrengs op dieselfde stuk grond te produseer.
- Minder druk op die omgewing – Weens hoër weerstand teen peste en siektes, kan geneties gemodifiseerde gewasse minder chemikalieë benodig wat dus 'n geringer impak op die omgewing sal hê.
- Rehabilitasie van beskadigde of minder vrugbare grond – Groot oppervlakke besproeide gewasgrond het soutagtig begin word weens nie-volhoubare besproeiingspraktyke. Geneties gemodifi-

seerde gewasse wat meer souttolerant is, kan in hierdie gebiede geplant word, sodat opbrengste verhoog kan word.

- Langer raklewe – Geneties gemodifiseerde voedselsoorte wat minder waarskynlik in berging sou bederf, sou handelsgeleenthede kon uitbrei, asook vermorsing deur vervoer en verskaffing verminder.
- Biobrandstof – Dit kan dalk moontlik wees om plante te produseer wat enorme energiepotensiaal het wat spesifiek gebruik kan word vir die doel om meer biobrandstof te produseer.
- Entstowwe en medisynes – Plante word gemanipuleer om entstowwe, proteïnes en ander farmaseutiese produkte te produseer. Hierdie proses word "pharming" genoem.

Ekstrinsieke ongerusthede is gebaseer op die twyfel oor die tegnologie, en die nuutheid en toepasbaarheid daarvan op alle lewensvorme.

Omdat genetiese modifisering of manipulering algemeen as 'n nuwe tegnologie beskou word, is twyfel, vrese en ongerustheid egter geopper. Hierdie ongerusthede kan uit twee etiese oogpunte beskou word: ekstrinsieke etiese ongerusthede en intrinsieke etiese ongerusthede.

Ekstrinsieke ongerusthede is gebaseer op die twyfel oor die tegnologie en die nuutheid en toepasbaarheid daarvan op alle lewensvorme. Diegene wat ten gunste is van tegnologie meen dat genetiese modifisering 'n groot geleentheid bied vir die oplos van hongersnood, voedselsekureit en wanvoeding in die wêreld, aangesien dit aangepas kan word vir alle omgewings-toestande en kan help met die toename in die kwaliteit en kwantiteit van voedsel. Terselfdertyd is daar twyfel oor die veiligheid van die voedsel, omdat dit as 'n nuwe tegnologie beskou word en mense vrees

dat sommige van die gene na hulle oorge- dra kan word. Talle mense dink ook dat geneties gemodifiseerde voedselsoorte onnatuurlik is, wat 'n persepsie van "Franken Foods" geskep het. Hierbene- wens het talle NRO's in die wêreld die kommer uitgespreek dat, deur GGO- gewasse te kweek, die omgewing nadelig beïnvloed sal word en dat genetiese mani- pulering sal uitloop op "super onkruid". Daar word ook deur sommiges geglo dat GGO-gewasse onveilig is vir ander orga- nismes wat daarop leef. Uitgebreide we- tenskaplike navorsing het egter gevind dat hierdie bewerings vals is.

Intrinsieke ongerusthede, aan die ander kant, is gebaseer op hoe mense die lewe, die natuur, godsdiens, hul emosies en waardes beskou. Daar bestaan 'n gevoel dat deur gene in organismes vir ons gebruik te meng, daarop neerkom dat ons probeer "God speel", en dat menslike

wesens nie op God se terrein behoort in te meng nie. Die gevoel is verder dat deur natuurlike spesiegrense te oorskry, bete- ken dat nuwe lewensvorme en 'n nuwe wêreld deur die tegnologie geskep word. Genetiese manipulerings sou dus die prag, integriteit en balans van die natuur ver- steur en lewens kan skade aandoen. Ondersteuners van GGO-voedselsoorte redeneer egter dat hierdie ongerusthede ongeldig is en geen oplossings bied vir pragmatiese kwessies soos om die omge- wing te red en omgewingstoestande te verbeter, hongersnood en wanvoeding op te los en die verlies aan biodiversiteit en so meer te voorkom nie.

Ten slotte moet elke persoon hierdie voor- en nadele opweeg en 'n eie besluit neem of hy/ sy geneties gemodifiseerde voedsel- soorte wil verbruik of produseer, of nie. Dit sal hoofsaaklik afhang van elke individu se eie behoeftes en oortuigings.

Debbie Calitz met Ulrike Hill. 2012. **20 Maande in Gyselaars-Hel**. Johannesburg: Ultra Litho. Prys: R220. ISBN: 9780143530596

Resensent: Sandra Roode
(NWU, Potchefstroomkampus)

Debbie Calitz se boek - onder leiding van die spookskrywer, Ulrike Hill - *20 maande in Gyselaars-HEL* - is die skokkende, aftakelende verhaal van 'n vrou se sielkundige veerkrag- tigheid om deur trauma te leef. *Gyselaars-Hel*: speel af in 'n aanvanklike geromantiseerde moderne omgewing van 'n tipiese Johnny Depp-eeenoo-seerowerslewe in 'n blou seewater- milieu, aan die ooskus van Afrika. Die skrywer en hoofkarakter, Debbie Calitz, lei die leser tot binne-in die smart en pyn van gyselaars en hul legio aanhoudingskamers waar sy en haar lewensmaat, Bruno Pelizzari, oor 'n periode van 17 maande, vanaf Oktober 2010, hul eie simboliese ruimte moet skep ter wille van oorlewing. Sy, meestal geklee slegs in 'n onder- klere-lose dun rok en hy permanent met boeie om sy arms.

Die verhaal begin met 'n middeljarige matroospaartjie wat fanaties soek na hulle eie spiri- tualistiese identiteit - verkieslik uiteindelik in Indië. Die skrywer en haar lewensmaat se ooglo- pende naïwiteit, tekort aan goeie oordeel en afwesigheid van verantwoordelike sin laat mens onbewustelik wonder of die berigte van dagga en hallusinogene sampioene waarvoor Calitz in Desember 2012 in hegtenis geneem is, nie 'n rol gespeel het in hierdie lewenstog nie. Pelizzari en Calitz vaar alleen op die jag vanaf die Bluff in Durban, sonder 'n goeie navi- gasie-sisteem, hul is nie voorbereid op die totale ekonomiese, sosiale en politiek plofbare situasie in Somalië nie en verder sluit hul nie hul jag as hul op 'n afgeleë eiland aandoen om ure saam met die plaaslike bevolking te rinkink nie. Uit 'n sielkundige oogpunt gaan daar reeds onbewustelik wenkbroue op oor die vlak van volwassenheid van twee middeljarige mense, en of die krisis rondom adolessente identiteitssoeke nie hier na vore kom, in 'n tipie- se wegvlug van verantwoordelike sin nie. Calitz het immers nog jong minderjarige kinders

tuis in Suid-Afrika en was reeds op 19 die ma van Samantha. Calitz se pa was blykbaar oorbeskermend en aggressief – veral tydens alkoholmisbruik, en die moederfiguur in haar ouerhuis het nooit die paternalistiese figuur teengegaan nie. Calitz moet dus 'n mate van aggressie, rebelsheid en waagmoed in haar karakter beleef, ter wille van aanpassing in die samelewing. Die vraag is juis of dit hierdie eienskappe is wat haar in staat gestel het om die 20 maande gyselaarshel in Somalië te kon oorleef.

In teenstelling met die loskop-idee wat mens van Calitz sou kon vorm, kom daar egter 'n interessante beeld na vore van 'n introvert met dieper waardes wat lewensvreugde daarin vind om met die skole vislewe bestaande uit dorado's, rooiromans en barrakudas te kommunikeer. Later in die verhaal leer 'n mens ook die tipiese moederfiguur wat omgee ken, wanneer Debbie onoordeelkundig penisillien aan een van die seerowers oorhandig omdat hy dodelik siek is. Ongelukkig lei dit tot 'n fiasko, aangesien hy allergies is vir die medikasie. Te midde van oorskakeling tussen aanhoudingshuise, toon Calitz deernis vir jong verwarde tienerwagte. Sy ontdek by hulle 'n menslikheid en toon begrip ten spyte van hulle haglike omstandighede.

Die verhaal begin momentum kry wanneer die matroospaartjie deur Peter Eldridge, 'n alleenreisiger, gevra word om sy jag vanaf Somalië na Suid-Afrika terug te neem. Die paartjie gryp die geleentheid gretig aan, aangesien die finansiële gewin vir hulle in staat sou stel om hulle uiteindelijke doelwit van die unieke sielsondervinding in Indië te kan befonds. Net buite Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzanië, word hul egter deur 'n onverbidelike seerowergroep op see ingehaal en na drie dae se marteling en onsekerheid verlaat Pelizzari en Calitz die skip op hul ware sielstog vir 20 maande se soeke na menswaardigheid.

Gyselaars-Hel stel die leser in staat om konstant te volg hoe die paartjie aangehou en verneder word, hoe hul gedurig tussen seerowergroepe opgeveil word en op kaal vloere en stink matrasse moet slaap, moet oorleef op slegs rys en een liter water per dag en dat higiëne glad nie 'n rol speel nie. Konstante vernedering en seksuele aftakeling, asook 'n eenmalige verkragting laat die leser nuwe respek vir die vrouefiguur in die verhaal kry.

Die gyselaars word kort-kort onder groot geheimhouding verskuif, teen 'n spoed en gewoonlik in die nag. Die leser beleef die werklike beproewing. Verder is die skrywer se oënskynlike rebelsheid, aggressie en arrogansie moontlik juis die persoonlikheidseienskappe wat haar laat oorleef het. As die Emosionele Intelligensiemodel van Reuven Bar-On toegepas kon word op die skrywer se lewe, blyk dit dat sy wel 'n besondere goeie vermoë het om aan te pas en gebruik sy haar intrapersoonlike en interpersoonlike lewensondervinding om te onderhandel en hulle te help oorleef. Stresvolle situasies word hanteer en haar positiewe uitkyk van hoop dra by tot hulle effektiewe bevryding. Daarteenoor sak Pelizzari in die tipiese neutrale rol van Debbie se eie moeder in, waar sy in 'n huis van aggressie en 'n dominerende eggenote-figuur niks te sê gehad het en geen rimpelings op die seevlak veroorsaak het nie.

Die term "gyselaar" word duidelik aan die leser in hierdie boek uiteengesit, maar ironies genoeg het hierdie gyselaars geen geld nie en jag die seerowers dus vir 20 maande 'n paartjie wat tot geen rykdom vir hulle kan lei nie. Voorts verswak die spanningslyn ooglopend hoe verder daar in die boek gevorder word. Die werklike vrylating en detail rondom die finale oorhandiging aan die Italiaanse owerhede kom nie duidelik na vore nie.

Die leser wat nuuskierig is oor die haglike lewensomstandighede van gyselaars en seerowers, matrose en die donker seelewe en hongersnood in Oos-Afrika, kan gerus die boek koop. Die skrywer se emosionele ontwikkeling kan ook 'n aandagtrekker wees, maar letterkundig gesproke, is dit nie 'n meesterstuk nie.

'n Verslag na die afloop van Mangaung, 2012: perspektiewe op die toekoms

Jan Venter

(Politieke Studies, Potchefstroomkampus van die NWU)

Die aanloop tot die ANC se 53ste nasionale konferensie was vol onrus en ongemak. Bespiegeling omtrent president Zuma se tweede termyn, al dan nie, nasionalisering van veral myne, die ekonomiese beleid van die ANC oor die algemeen en kwelpunte oor grondhervorming, asook die uiteindelijke lot van Julius Malema en sy ondersteuners, het die politieke omgewing 'n oorverhitte aansyn gegee. Dié beeld is bevestig op 16 Augustus 2012 toe 34 mynwerkers deur polisie gedood en 'n verdere 78 beseer is in arbeidsonrus te Marikana in die Rustenburgomgewing. Onmiddellik is vrae gevra oor die mate van beheer wat die regering oor die land het, wat die ANC oor die regering het en wat Zuma oor die ANC het.

Die "kragte vir verandering" wat Zuma se tweede termyn teengestaan het, het nie nét gefaal in hul poging om tot die top ses ampsdraers van die party verkies te word nie; hulle is ook uit die Nasionale Uitvoerende Raad weggelaat.

Na afloop van die nasionale konferensie en in nabetraging daarvan is belangrike vrae beantwoord en sal hierdie artikel poog om enkele van die antwoorde kortliks weer te gee. Die eerste belangrike punt raak die mate van beheer wat Zuma oor die ANC het. Die "kragte vir verandering" wat Zuma se tweede termyn teengestaan

het, het nie nét gefaal in hul poging om tot die top ses ampsdraers van die party verkies te word nie; hulle is ook uit die Nasionale Uitvoerende Raad weggelaat. Tokyo Sexwale, Mathews Phosa, Thandi Modise, Paul Mashatile, Fikile Mbalula, asook Kgalema Motlanthe, is nie meer lede van die Raad nie. Hulle is almal vervang deur Zuma-ondersteuners wat insluit Malusi Gigaba, Lindiwe Sisulu, Collins Chabane, Jeff Radebe, Naledi Pandor, Derek Hanekom, Pravin Gordhan, Nathi Mthethwa, Max Sisulu, Tito Mboweni, Pallo Jordan, Sidumo Dlamini, en Fikile Majola.

Zuma is volledig in beheer van die ANC en wee die teenstander wat hom met argwaan bejeën.

Betreffende Julius Malema: 51 aanklagte van rampokkery, geldwassery en belastingontduiking en die opveiling van sy bates ter skulddelging het hom uit die politieke speelveld verwyder. Tot watter gevolgtrekking kan gekom word? Zuma is volledig in beheer van die ANC en wee die teenstander wat hom met argwaan bejeën. (Ten spyte van bogenoemde Malema-les, het Malema se argumente tog, veral onder die jeug, weerklank gevind wat nog lank sal bly eggo).

Betreffende die ANC se beheer oor die regering: Volgens die Suid-Afrikaanse Kommunistiese Party (die breinskrum agter vele inisiatiewe van die regerende alliansie) is die nasionale bevrydings-"offensief" 'n samesnoering van vele kragte, waaron-

der die arbeiders, die vakbondwese, die vroueliga en die jeug. Die funksie van die ANC is dié van mededinger in die politieke arena (aangesig van die alliansie) en gegewe sekere historiese faktore, as 'n *fait accompli* nadat die verkiesing (watter verkiesing ook al) gewen is, sal die organisasie die regering vorm en hierin ondersteun word deur die ander lede in die een liggaam. (Dié simbiose kan soms waardevolle kritiek van lede teenoor mekaar insluit, maar dit moet verkieslik nie in die openbaar, veral nie in die media nie en onder geen omstandighede in die howe, uitgespreek word nie¹.) Mangaung was 'n herbevestiging van hierdie sentrale waarheid. Van die bogenoemde lede wat nuut tot die Nasionale Uitvoerende Raad van die ANC verkies is, is daar lede uit die vakbondwese en lede van die SAKP (en almal is Zuma-ondersteuners) en so is die verbondenheid tot mekaar en tot die ideologiese en politieke doelstellings van die alliansie, ten spyte van soms felle onderlinge verskille, versterk. Die "felle onderlinge verskille" het hul oorsprong in faksies wat kernvraagstukke verskillend interpreteer. Een van die groot vraagstukke binne die breë alliansie gaan oor die interpretasie van die "Freedom Charter" wat dien as die ideologiese fondasie van veral ekonomiese en sosiale beleid.

'n Donkerder (korrupte) fenomeen wat met faksieverskille meegaan, is *patrimonialisme, of neo-patrimonialisme* waar een "patron" voordele (byvoorbeeld tenders of beskerming) aan ondersteuners verleen *in ruil vir* hulp en bystand (byvoorbeeld stemme of moord). In die Noordwesprovinsie is die sekretaris van die Kenneth Kaunda distrik in Desember 2012 vermoor, net voor die Mangaungkonferensie. Die verdagtes sluit in die ANC se Jeugligavoor-sitter in die provinsie, 'n wyksraadslid, 'n munisipale werker, 'n taxibestuurder, asook die ANC se tweede in bevel in die provinsie, China Dodovu. Gerugte wil dit egter hê dat mnr. Dodovu niks met die moord te make het nie. Sommige bronne sien Dodovu se arres "...as a strategic move by the ruling party's provincial chairperson, Supra Mahumapelo, as part of his quest

for higher power..." en so het die felle verskille ook dikwels met niks anders as persoonlike mag in ons eie weergawe van 'n "game of thrones" te doen nie.

Die lede wat uitgestem is te Mangaung, het die party, en veral ook Zuma, in die openbaar gekritiseer.

Hoe dit ook al sy, die lede wat uitgestem is te Mangaung, het die party, en veral ook Zuma, in die openbaar gekritiseer. Die post-Mangaung ANC staan na hul konferensie aan die hoof van 'n groot geslypte en gedifferensieerde organisasie wat ten doel het om die ANC die politieke beheer van die regering te besorg (en wat dit na alle waarskynlikheid in 2014 gaan regkry.)

Betreffende die party en die regering se beheer oor die land: In die "Strategy and Tactics of the ANC" van 2012, die beleidsdokument voortspruitend uit die Mangaungkonferensie, posisioneer die ANC homself soos volg ten opsigte van sy rol as regerende party: "*The ANC should locate itself at the centre of these pillars, improving its strategic approaches, organizational capabilities and its links with the motive forces in each pillar, appreciating the changing dynamics in society which are themselves a product of the progress society has made over the past 18 years.*" Die pilare waarvan hier gepraat word is:

- die skep van 'n demokratiese ontwikkelingsstaat,
- die transformasie van die ekonomie (wat die herverdeling van die besit van rykdom insluit),
- ideologiese werk genaamd die "Battle of ideas",
- internasionale werk en
- massamobilisasie en organisasie.

¹ Hierdie was van die groot oortreding van Julius Malema. Hy het nie die regte kanale gevolg in sy kritiek teen sy party nie.

Na regte behoort daar in 'n Westerse demokratiese model 'n onderskeid te wees tussen staat, regering en samelewing oftewel die private sfeer.

In dié verband is dit noodsaaklik dat die ANC die regering volledig moet beheer. Hierdie prosesse kan slegs van stapel gestuur word deur 'n sterk aktivistiese regering/staat. Hier lê die belangrike substrata wat in Mangaung bevestig is. Na regte behoort daar in 'n Westerse demokratiese model 'n onderskeid te wees tussen staat, regering en samelewing, oftewel die private sfeer. Die *staat* is die *onafhanklike* administratiewe en burokratiese amptenare, strukture en instellings wat na regte sonder regeringsinmenging moet funksioneer (dink hier aan die polisie en die howe), die *regering* is die politieke rigtingbepalers wat vervang kan word indien hulle nie presteer nie, en die breë *samelewing* word grotendeels gereguleer deur 'n grondwet (wat hulle teen die staat beskerm) en mindere wette (wat hulle teen mekaar beskerm). Mangaung plaas die ANC volledig in beheer van die regering, vandaar ook die ernstige maatreëls om elemente van die swak staat, soos korrupsie, te bekamp. Verder nog: die grense tussen party, staat, regering en nou ook burgerlike samelewing word oor en weer oorskry: *“The ANC seeks to mobilize all South Africans to contribute to the ongoing transformation of our country”*.

Na Mangaung is dit duidelik dat die werklike sosiale en ekonomiese verandering in en van Suid-Afrika nou begin.

Die transformasie wat hier beoog word, is 'n nasionale projek (waarby almal ingesluit moet word) wat belyn is met die Freedom Charter *“that should have the transformative outcome of creating a united nation with the requisite conditions which can enable South Africa and Africa to make their own contributions towards human pro-*

gress. To effectively achieve this people must be taken as a fundamental resource which is central to the development of the economy and the nation as a whole. In arriving at this united nation and keeping up with this general commitment to an egalitarian society, the dictum that the poor will always be with us should be rejected as poverty is created by society and it can therefore be eliminated by society”.

Ten slotte, na Mangaung is dit duidelik dat die werklike sosiale en ekonomiese verandering in en van Suid-Afrika nou begin. Die proses gaan gelei word deur die ANC wat hul beheer oor die (politieke) geregingsinstrumente die afgelope 19 jaar versterk het. Die prosesse wat aanvanklik ingespan gaan word om te help met die herverdeling van rykdom, soos beoog in die “Strategy and Tactics” van 2012, is belastingwetgewing, die versnelde pas van grondhervorming en ja, ook die petrolprys (waarvan die regering meer as R3,00 per liter kry). Die grootste teikens van die projekte is die landbou- en besigheidsektor.

Die prosesse wat aanvanklik ingespan gaan word om te help met die herverdeling van rykdom, soos beoog in die “Strategy and Tactics” van 2012, is belastingwetgewing, die versnelde pas van grondhervorming en ja, ook die petrolprys.

In die ANC se eie woorde: *“the structural legacy of Colonialism of Special Type including patriarchy remains deeply entrenched as reflected in the colonial, racist and sexist structure and character of our economy”*. Die waarheid is dat as landburgers nie sien dat die ANC bogenoemde situasie, soos deur hulle gedefinieer, daadwerklik hanteer nie, sal straatradikalisme, soos in Sasolburg en Marikana, al meer algemeen word. Mangaung was die groen lig vir bogenoemde prosesse, oftewel die groen lig vir die “tweede fase van die transisie”.

Predictive power of word knowledge over second/foreign language proficiency

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Introduction

This paper presents the findings of a PhD entitled 'The Relationship between Lexical Competence, Collocational Competence, and Second Language Proficiency' conducted on Belgian and Burundian English majors. The study, undertaken in the light of the steady growing research attention accorded to vocabulary over the past few years, explores the relationship between second/foreign language, hence L2 proficiency, and lexical/collocational competence and the measurability of knowledge of collocations acquired as proficiency develops. Both receptive and productive levels have been considered. Lexical competence should be understood as knowing words while collocations should be understood as *the way words combine in a language to produce natural-sounding speech and writing*. Strong wind, strong tea, powerful engine, heavy rain, strong argument, powerful argument, etc... are examples of collocations. It can be difficult for L2 learners to understand why the adjectives "strong" and "powerful" can be used interchangeably to modify the noun "argument", but not "tea" and "engine".

Lexical competence should be understood as knowing words while collocations should be understood as *the way words combine in a language to produce natural-sounding speech and writing*.

The same goes for "heavy" and "strong" that cannot modify "wind" and "rain" respectively even though the two are close in meaning. In these cases, there is no explanation other than it is the way native speakers put them, which explains why they are difficult for L2 learners.

Vocabulary constitutes an important component of language and its study has attracted the interest of second/foreign language (L2) teachers and applied language researchers, booming in the 1990s.

Vocabulary constitutes an important component of language and its study has attracted the interest of second/foreign language (L2) teachers and applied language researchers, booming in the 1990s. Among other things, this interest has been characterized by the attention paid to testing learners' knowledge of vocabulary, which has allowed researchers to track the considerable changes that have occurred as regards the place and role of vocabulary as a component of L2 proficiency. Vocabulary has moved from being peripheral to being an integral component of L2 proficiency.

Vocabulary knowledge is multifaceted in nature with two independent, but related research paradigms, i.e. the *separate trait model* that proposes studying all the aspects that constitute word knowledge separately and the *global trait model* also referred to as the dimensional approach.

The dimensional approach consists of three dimensions; i.e. size (how many words you know, irrespective of how well you know them), deep word knowledge (how well you know the words you know), and receptive-productive knowledge; proposes studying vocabulary at a global level and characterizing the word-stock in the human brain as a whole. At the vocabulary size level, the most intensively studied dimension, a predictive relationship between lexical competence and overall L2 proficiency has been established. This finding has led to the conclusion that the larger the vocabulary size is, the more proficient the learner will be, which proves that lexical competence is a reliable predictor of L2 proficiency. Put differently, the more words an L2 learner knows, the more proficient he is.

Vocabulary size is only one part of vocabulary knowledge and does not suffice in describing it.

However, vocabulary size is only one part of vocabulary knowledge and does not suffice in describing it. Therefore, a question worth raising is whether or not a relationship between lexical competence and L2 proficiency can be established at the deep word knowledge dimension. This relationship has been established by means of the Vocabulary Knowledge Scale, a test which requires participants to rate their knowledge of a word on a scale ranging from "I haven't seen this word before" to "I can use this word in a sentence". Scores from the test correlated well with an independent test of proficiency, TOEFL. It was therefore concluded that measuring vocabulary at the global level in order to characterize L2 proficiency was legitimate. This can be criticized for relying on unverified self-report, which may not be appropriate. Alternatively, Read (1993) proposed to use the Word Associates Test (WAT) in order to measure deep word knowledge. However, Read has neither linked deep word knowledge with L2 proficiency nor has he specified which of the three levels of deep word knowledge, i.e.

paradigmatic (hold some relationship such as synonymy, hyponymy etc.), syntagmatic (collocations), and analytic relations (represent one aspect, or component, of the target word and is likely to form part of its dictionary definition), could better characterize it.

I assume that lexical competence (i.e. knowing words) can reliably predict L2 proficiency.

In view of the above, it is obvious that some researchers have associated knowing words with L2 proficiency and have entirely considered it as its main component. The questions of what L2 proficiency consists of and how it should be tested are far from being solved and are still under heated debate. Testing L2 proficiency largely depends on the way proficiency is defined, meaning that the two are intimately linked. Unfortunately, controversies arise at this point because we lack a consensus as to the exact nature of language proficiency components. In this study, proficiency should be understood in Zareva *et al.*'s (2005) and Read's (2000) observation that some aspects of vocabulary knowledge such as quality and quantity of L2 lexical competence develop as L2 proficiency increases. I assume that lexical competence (i.e. knowing words) can reliably predict L2 proficiency. Since such a relationship has been established at the vocabulary size level (cf. Meara & Buxton 1987 among others), it might be logical to assume that the same holds for deep word knowledge. Even though a relationship between lexical competence and L2 proficiency has been established in the literature, the role of the different aspects of lexical competence - which have not received the same research attention - and the aspects of deep word knowledge in particular, has not yet been properly defined. This is where this study comes in as it will focus on deep word knowledge.

The present study was conducted on Burundian students majoring in English at

tertiary level. All the students are Burundi nationals with an age range of 20 to 26. They are fluent speakers of Kirundi, their mother tongue; and French, an official language in Burundi and the language of education. In Burundi, the schooling system is organized in French from kindergarten (3 years), through to primary school (6 years) and secondary school (7 years). Some of them are fluent users of Swahili, a *lingua franca* of the East African region. English majors are trained for the Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree organized in four years, after which they serve as secondary school teachers. It is worth noting that there is a new policy adopted since the 2011-2012 academic year to organize the BA degree in three years and allow the students to go up to the Master's, but the population involved in this study was trained in the old system. Participants in this study started learning English in their second year of secondary school at a rate of 4 to 6 hours a week and had 6 years of exposure to the language before entering university, where the language of instruction shifts from French to English.

Overall, the results indicate a predictive relationship between lexical competence, collocational competence, and L2 proficiency.

Lexical/collocational competence predicts L2 proficiency

The present study has examined the relationship between lexical/collocational competence and L2 proficiency – in five different but related studies – considering both receptive and productive knowledgeⁱ. At the receptive level, lexical competence, operationalized through deep word knowledge (collocations: words that co-occur; and analytic relations: part of the dictionary definition of the target word), has been tested by means of a Word Associates Test, which, along with a proficiency measure, was presented to Burundian English majors. The relationship between L2 proficiency, lexical competence, and colloca-

tional competence; and the role of frequency in collocations mastery were examined. The results indicate that (i) receptive lexical competence (words that are understood) develops alongside overall L2 proficiency, (ii) both frequent and infrequent collocations as well as analytic relations develop alongside lexical competence and L2 proficiency, and (iii) frequency plays a vital role in collocational competence, i.e. more frequent collocations are better mastered than less frequent ones. Overall, the results indicate a predictive relationship between lexical competence, collocational competence, and L2 proficiency.

The qualitative analysis of the items has shown that while the Word Associates Test can be considered as a reliable measure of lexical competence, the test has to be improved in order to be valid as a measure of collocational knowledge.

However, as participants in the study came from the same socio-cultural background and knowing that culture and language go hand in hand, the same study was extended to Belgian English majors from the University of Antwerp for a qualitative analysis of the items and validation purposesⁱⁱ. The Antwerp study affirmed results from the Burundian one that lexical competence can reliably predict L2 proficiency and frequency plays an important role in collocational competence. But, the relationships between collocational competence and lexical competence on the one hand, and collocational competence and L2 proficiency on the other, appeared less significant. A possible explanation is that while collocational competence increases with the level of proficiency at beginners and intermediate levels, it may slow down and even reach a plateau at advanced levels. This is in line with Li & Schmitt's (2009) findings that collocational competence does not seem to develop

alongside L2 proficiency at advanced levels. The collocations test construct may also be the cause because the selection of collocations was guided by frequency only. A qualitative analysis of the test items shows that other factors, i.e. lexical class of collocations' constituents, their individual frequency, the strength of co-occurrence, the direction of the collocation, and the span (distance between collocations constituents), are other factors on which knowledge of collocations depends. These findings support Handl's (2008) dimensional approach to collocations and Howarth's (1998) observation that frequency is not the sole variable by means of which collocations should be described. The factors which have been identified as influencing collocational knowledge suggest that it would be wrong to assume that the infrequent collocations were better identified than frequent ones because of socio-cultural reasons as partially explained in the first study. The qualitative analysis of the items has also shown that while the Word Associates Test can be considered as a reliable measure of lexical competence, the test has to be improved in order to be valid as a measure of collocational knowledge.

A new test aimed to exclusively test receptive knowledge of collocations was developed.

On the basis of the above results showing that knowledge of collocations depends on many factors, it was deemed necessary to test some aspects of collocations while controlling (i.e. excluding) others. A new test aimed to exclusively test receptive knowledge of collocations was therefore developed. Word frequency levels (the most frequent 2 000, the most frequent 3 000, and the most frequent 5 000 word levels, and the Academic Word List), the syntactic category of collocations' constituents (only verb-noun collocations such as *have + intention* were retained), the frequency of collocations' constituents, the strength of collocations, and the direction of the collocation (to the left or to the right), were taken into account. The test

was presented to English majors in Burundiⁱⁱⁱ. The extent to which L2 learners' receptive collocational knowledge can predict their proficiency level; how much receptive collocational knowledge is acquired as proficiency develops; and the extent to which receptive knowledge of collocations of L2 learners varies according to word frequency levels were investigated. The study points to the conclusion that (i) receptive knowledge of collocations can reliably predict L2 proficiency, (ii) receptive knowledge of collocations develops alongside L2 proficiency, and more significantly so at lower levels, and (iii) receptive knowledge of collocations grows according to word frequency levels and can be measured.

It is well established that word comprehension does not automatically predict its correct use.

The studies the results of which are summarized above, have tested collocational competence/lexical competence at the receptive level. However, it is well established that word comprehension does not automatically predict its correct use. The productive knowledge of collocations, i.e. collocations that can be used, was therefore tested. A test of collocations, modelled on Laufer & Nation's (1999), was designed and presented to Burundian English majors^{iv} and to both Burundian and Belgian English majors^v in order to test their controlled productive knowledge of collocations. Exactly (i) the extent to which L2 learners' controlled productive collocational competence develops with proficiency and (ii) the extent to which controlled productive collocational knowledge of L2 learners changes across word frequency levels, were pursued.

The same test items selection criteria considered when developing the receptive test of collocations (described above) were retained. Results show that (i) controlled productive knowledge of collocations develops parallel to L2 proficiency, but the gains from one level of proficiency to

another are neither the same nor always significant; (ii) word frequency determines controlled productive knowledge of collocations, i.e. the more frequent the collocations, the better they are mastered.

As the study only included beginners and low-intermediates, there was a need for a follow-up study ideally to include all the levels of proficiency from the very beginners up to the most advanced learners.

As the study only included beginners and low-intermediates, there was a need for a follow up study ideally to include all the levels of proficiency from the very beginners up to the most advanced learners. The study was therefore extended to Belgian English majors and more levels were obtained. The same research questions and the quantifiability of collocations gained from one level of proficiency to another were addressed. The underlying reason for extending the study is that quantifying collocations acquired from one level of proficiency to another may contribute towards modelling the teaching of collocations. The results suggest that (i) controlled productive knowledge of collocations develops parallel to L2 proficiency, (ii) frequency is found to play a fundamental role in controlled productive knowledge of collocations' growth, and (iii) collocational knowledge added can be quantified and the gains are dependent on both proficiency and word frequency levels.

Conclusion

As outlined above, the present study has explored the relationship between lexical/ collocational competence and L2 proficiency. It has confirmed the predictive relationship between lexical competence and L2 proficiency at the deep word knowledge level (Zareva *et al.* 2005), thus extending Meara & Buxton's (1987) predictive relationship established between lexical com-

petence and L2 proficiency at the vocabulary size level. The findings have also confirmed that receptive collocational competence can predict L2 proficiency, lending empirical support to Gyllstad's (2007) findings. The same predictive relationship between collocational competence and L2 proficiency has been identified at the productive level (controlled productive knowledge), extending and supporting Bonk's (2001) findings that a link between productive knowledge of collocations and L2 proficiency exists. Furthermore, the study has demonstrated that knowledge of collocations added from one level of proficiency to another can be quantified, which supports and extends Laufer's (1998) findings. The study has also shown that a plateau can be reached at advanced levels, supporting and extending Li & Schmitt's (2009) findings with regard to free productive knowledge of collocations. The fundamental role played by frequency in knowing words (Nation & Beglar, 2007) has also been confirmed and extended to receptive and controlled productive knowledge of collocations.

The added value of teaching collocations is helping learners avoid the errors that occur especially in writing even at advanced levels and will therefore help them sound native-like.

All in all, the present study has confirmed the hypotheses tested to varying degrees with considerable pedagogical implications arising. As a matter of fact, the study proposes a seven step model for teaching collocations, which is being explored now, with partial results indicating that teaching collocations explicitly indeed improves their being used. Among other things, the model suggests considering both word frequency and learning stages of participants when introducing collocations to students, the underlying reason being that collocations grow with both proficiency and word frequency levels. The added value of tea-

ching collocations is helping learners avoid the errors that occur especially in writing even at advanced levels and will therefore help them sound native-like. Possible future research avenues have also been proposed, implying that the area remains open to questions.

ⁱ Study one: Nizonkiza D. 2011. The relationship between lexical competence, collocational competence, and second language proficiency. *English Text Construction* 4(1): 113–146.

ⁱⁱ Study two: Nizonkiza D. 2012. Relationship between lexical competence, collocational competence, and second language proficiency: The case of Belgian English majors. In *Applied Linguistics Approaches - Language*

ⁱⁱⁱ Study three: Measuring receptive collocational competence across proficiency levels; paper submitted to *International Journal of Applied Linguistics* (still under review).

^{iv} Study four: Nizonkiza D. 2011. The relationship between controlled productive collocational competence and L2 proficiency. *Toegepaste Taalwetenschap in Artikelen*, 84/85: 29-37.

^v Study five: Nizonkiza D. 2012. Quantifying controlled productive knowledge of collocations across proficiency and word frequency levels. *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching* 2 (1): 67-92.

Jeanette Morton. 2012. **Die vlinder en die surfer**. Protea Boekhuis. Prys: R130. ISBN: 9781869198503

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Net soos die titel voorstel, is 'n vlinder en 'n branderplankryer van twee teenoorstaande pole in die natuur. So is Bea en Ryno van twee oorstaande pole in die samelewing. 'n Skoolhoof se dogter kan tog nie met 'n surfer bevriend wees nie. Mense word volgens hul uiterlike en omstandighede beoordeel. Niemand ken die werklike lewenspad wat iemand moes volg en die redes waarom daardie persoon aan die verkeerde kant van die spoor beland het nie.

So is Ryno, die surfer, nie die ideale maat vir Bea nie. Ryno bly immers in 'n 'pozsie' agter in iemand (wat soos Jack Parow lyk) se erf in die onderdorp. Bea is die modelskolier met goeie akademiese en sportprestasies en voorbeeldige dogter, waar Ryno met die rokers en laerklas uithang.

Andries aan die ander kant is die perfekte metgesel vir Bea. Hy is die rykmanseun, kaptein van die eerste rugbyspan en ook akademies 'n toppresterder. Bea is aan sy sy gekroon as rugbyprinses. Saam wil hulle medies gaan studeer.

Maar die liefde laat hom nie voorsê nie. Ook nie mense of omstandighede nie. Ten spyte van almal se kritiek, vermanings en waarskuwings, raak die vlinder verlief op die surfer. Die vriendskap veroorsaak wrywing tussen Bea en die mense in haar lewe. Ryno en Bea beleef avonture en gevare. Die jong man wat homself moet onderhou, word 'n steunpilaar wanneer Bea iemand die nodigste het in haar lewe.

Hierdie menslike verhaal handel oor verhoudings tussen tieners onderling en tieners en volwassenes en ook die bevooroordeelings van die samelewing teenoor mense in hul omstandighede. Met 'n goeie hart, hardwerkendheid en 'n gesonde verstand kan 'n mens ontstaan en homself bewys en sy plek volstaan in die samelewing.

Die lief en leed van die tieners van vandag word mooi uitgebeeld in hierdie boek.

Die vlinder en die surfer is 'n moet om te lees en sal enige tiener boei tot die verrassende einde. Die helder omslag pas by die titel en is 'n prikkel vir die oog.

Wanneer om prinse (nie) te vertrou (nie)

Michael Heyns

(Skool vir Filosofie, Potchefstroomkampus van die NWU)

Confucius het die stelling gemaak dat 'n regeerder op drie dinge moet konsentreer: wapens, kos en vertroue. As hy nie al drie onder beheer kan hou nie, moet hy die wapens eerste laat vaar, en dan die kos. Vertroue moet beskerm word tot die einde; sonder vertroue kan 'n regeerder nie staande bly nie.

Die groeiende aantal voorvalle van burgerlike onrus op grondvlak is sekerlik die sigbaarste teken daarvan dat gewone ANC-mense besig is om vertroue te verloor in hul bevrydingsbeweging.

'n Tyd van wantroue

In die lig van hierdie stukkie wysheid is Flip Buys van Solidariteit se diagnose ongeveer 'n jaar of wat gelede van 'n groeiende vertrouensbreuk tussen Afrikaners en die ANC-regering, insiggewend. Sy argument was dat die ANC-regering nie 'n veronderstelde kontrak met sy burgers (wat Afrikaners insluit) nakom nie en dat die ANC daarom al minder te vertrou is. Intussen blyk dit dat hierdie vertrouensbreuk ook besig is om uit te kring na die tradisionele ondersteuningsbasis van die ANC. Die groeiende aantal voorvalle van burgerlike onrus op grondvlak is sekerlik die sigbaarste teken daarvan dat gewone ANC-mense besig is om vertroue te verloor in hul bevrydingsbeweging.

Dit is egter nie net in Suid-Afrika waar vertroue in 'n krisis beland het nie. Die

populêre Nederlandse wysgerige tydskrif *Filosofie Magazine* het in 2010 aangekondig dat die trefwoord van die huidige dekade "vertroue" sal wees. Waarom sou die tydskrif hierdie opmerking maak? Die sigbaarste rede is die vertrouenskokke deur prominente makro-korporasies – hier kan die name van Enron, Parmalat en – meer onlangs – banke soos Barclays en die mediagroep van Rupert Murdoch genoem word. Verdagte aksies deur magtige regerings moet ook hier genoem word – 'n mens dink aan die VSA se inval in Irak onder die leiding van George W. Bush.

Mense verloor vertroue in leiers en instansies as leiers sigbaar en onboetvaardig algemeen aanvaarde norme oortree.

Mense verloor vertroue in leiers en instansies as leiers sigbaar en onboetvaardig algemeen aanvaarde norme oortree – laasgenoemde is 'n alte maklik-aanvaarde antinorm-norm vir heelwat laat-moderniste (dit is sogenaamde postmoderniste. Die vele beweerde aksies en transaksies van ons president en 'n groot deel van sy regeringslui wat deur die media as moreel-verdag voorgestel word, sou in laasgenoemde kategorie kon val. Dit was ook waar van George W. Bush se regering wat die Verenigde Nasies se weloerwoë beoordeling van die Irak-situasie geïgnoreer en op misleidende manier volgehou het dat Saddam Hussein 'n duidelike en ernstige gevaar vir wêreld-vrede ingehou het. Die algemene indruk vir baie is egter dat Amerikaanse ekonomiese belang by die olierykdom van Irak 'n belangriker oorweging was vir oorlogmaak. Vir hierdie

blatante misleiding is Bush beloon met die reputasie dat hy een van die ongewildste Amerikaanse presidente tot nog toe was.

Vertroue en moderne 'sterkmanne'

As die vroeëre sterkman-geloof vermeng word met die huidige normloosheid, het ons 'n wenresep vir ernstige wantroue.

'n Minder sigbare maar waarskynlik net so invloedryke rede as die bogenoemde opportunisme vir die bykans desperate soeke na vertroue in ons tyd, is een van die invloedrykste sienings van die moderne beskouing van die mens. Die vroeëre moderniteit het geglo aan 'n sterk individualis wat homself en die wêreld eiehandig kan verander en herskep. Hierdie *sterkman* vind dit nie nodig om enige iemand te vertrou of deur enige iemand vertrou te word nie, want hy kan alles self doen. Die huidige laat-moderne mens egter, is toenemend daarvan bewus dat hy/sy nie heeltemal so individualisties en kragdadig kan optree nie.

Die punt is wel: As die vroeëre *sterkman*-geloof vermeng word met die huidige normloosheid, het ons 'n wenresep vir ernstige wantroue.

Dit is daarom waarskynlik nie net die misleidende manier waarop Bush die Irak-situasie hanteer het wat gelei het tot die diepe wantroue wat teenoor sy regering ontstaan het nie. Die wantroue het ook iets te make met die individualistiese *sterkman*-beeld wat die Amerikaners onder sy leiding na die *Twin Towers*-tragedie geprojekteer het. 'n Parallel met die huidige ANC-bewind is nie vergesog nie. Die indruk bestaan dat indien die veelgeroemde Suid-Afrikaanse waardes van nie-rasigheid, verdraagsaamheid en versoening teenoor die waarde van *absolute mag* opgeweeg word, mag altyd sal seëvier. Die vrees word tereg uitgespreek dat as die huidige regering by die stembus onder druk gaan kom, Suid-Afrika homself gereed moet maak vir 'n era van politiekery

waaroor selfs Machiavelli skaam sou wees.

As Bush en sy raadgevers meer aandag geskenk het aan wat hul filosofiese antenas vir hul vertel het oor die veranderende ideaal vir menswees, sou hulle dalk 'n ander strategie gevolg het. Daar het naamlik in die laaste helfte van die twintigste eeu die besef gekom dat die menswees-ideaal van die vroeëre moderne tyd meer kwaad as goed vir die mensdom beteken het. Die vroeëre moderne ideaal was dié van 'n mens wat homself outonoom verklaar. Die bedoeling was om bevry te word van die paternalistiese en verdrukkende invloed van veral die kerk. In die proses is toe sommer ook verklaar dat die mensdom nie deur enige bande ingeperk behoort te word nie en nie onderhorig kan wees aan enige gegewe voorskrifte nie. Die mens moet homself laat lei deur dit wat hom sterk en onafhanklik maak: sy rede, drange of magsug. Hierdie individualistiese en (ir)rasionalistiese eiesinnigheid (selfs egoïsme) het sigself egter gewreek: Die twee Wêreldoorloë en die Koue Oorlog was 'n waarskuwing dat die mensdom homself gaan uitwis as die ongebreidelde sug na outonostiese krag nie herken word as die groot bron van gevaar nie.

Prognose vir vertroue

'n Veranderende siening van menswees kan deurslaggewend wees vir die praktyk van vertroue. Vertroue kan per definisie nie gedy in die nabyheid van 'n dominerende, eiesinnige, normverwerpende én selfsugtige mens nie. Byvoorbeeld: Gewoonlik is dit so dat die meeste kinders hul pa's absoluut en sonder huiwering vertrou. Dan is die voorwaarde egter dat die pa gesien word as iemand wat sy mag normatief gebruik – *ter wille van*, en nie *teen* sy kind nie. Dieselfde geld die verhouding bestuurders/werkgewers - werknemers: Otoritêre bestuurders/werkgewers wat primêr eiebelang najaag, sal waarskynlik al meer daarvan getuig dat hulle met 'n skeptiese werkerskorps te make het wat, in die ergste gevalle, hulle wend tot 'n ondermynende guerrillastryd of selfs oorgaan tot 'n openlike magstryd met die bestuurder/werkgewer.

Die gangbare beskrywing van vertrou maak veel gewag daarvan dat vertrou veral belangrik word as mense gekonfronteer word met magte wat hulle ernstige skade kan aandoen, maar dat dan vertrou word dat die sterker mag dit nie sal doen nie. 'n Betroubare mens is een wat hom- of haarself hou aan gegewe norme en wat 'n goed ontwikkelde sin vir medemenslikheid het, selfs al het hy/sy die vermoë om bloot sy/haar wil en belang af te dwing.

Die bevoordeeldes is die nakomelinge van die modernistiese *sterkman*-styl van Britse imperialiste en Afrikaner-nasionaliste.

Die Amerikaanse bevolking het met hul verwerping van die Bush-styl en aanvaarding van Obama se besef dat Amerikaners ook met ander mense op ons planeet moet saamleef, iets van hierdie basiese waarheid oor vertrou begin snap. Hierdie besef is onlangs herbevestig in die verwerping van die *sterkman*-beeld wat presidentskandidaat Mitt Romney probeer projekteer het.

Die huidige vertrouensbreuk tussen landburgers en die regerende party stel dieselfde uitdaging aan Suid-Afrikaners. Mense wat voorheen bevoordeel is deur die apartheidsbedeling in Suid-Afrika, behoort begrip te toon vir die feit dat hulle landgenote wat benadeel is deur hierdie ideologie, nog lank nie by die punt is waar hulle blindelings kan vertrou nie. Per slot van rekening, die bevoordeeldes is die nakomelinge van die modernistiese *sterkman*-styl van Britse imperialiste en Afrikaner-nasionaliste. En té veel van laasgenoemde se nakomelinge is steeds in hierdie kragmodus met sy breedsprakige standpunte oor hoe die huidige bedeling verwerp behoort te word, verstrengeel. Dit is egter ook so dat Suid-Afrikaners, wat gewone ANC-ondersteuners insluit, toeneemend nie die huidige magsugtige regime waarin onaanvaarbare vlakke van korrupsie, selfverryking en nepotisme oënskynlik botvier, vertrou nie – hoekom sal 'n mens mense wat meer bekommerd lyk oor hul eie magsposisie as oor die welsyn van die massas, vertrou?

Waarskynlik sal vertrou ook hier by ons, net soos by die Amerikaners, eers begin groei as ons deur pynlike ervaringe heen begin besef dat ons 'n land met mekaar deel ... en dat niemand soos 'n prins van ouds kan maak net soos hy of sy wil nie.

Hennie Aucamp. 2012. **Koffer in Berlyn – Essays oor kabaret.** Pretoria: Protea Boekhuis. Prys: R250. ISBN: 9781869198305

Resensent:: Judy Swart, Springs

Wanneer daar in Afrikaans oor kabaret geskryf word, is Hennie Aucamp seker een van die toonaangewendste figure. In die bundel essays oor kabaret uit sy pen – *Koffer in Berlyn* – word sy kennis en vaardigheid van en met die genre weer ten toon gestel.

Aucamp ontleed in die bundel *Koffer in Berlyn* talle fasette van die kabaret, onder andere die integrasie van beeld, musiek en woord met die tema en struktuur – alles rondom die ironie gesentreer.

Die bundel begin met 'n Kabaret-ABC met die subtitel *Vir Maestro Casper de Vries*. Hierdie ABC dien myns insiens as 'n woordelys van belangrike kabaret-terme. Skerpsinnig en omvattend: vanaf die A vir Adder in die boesem, U vir die uurglas wat uitloop tot by Z vir Zero. “Die spel is verby.” Daarna volg 'n essay wat die verskil van *Cabaret* teenoor Kabaret uitlig, met 'n nota van die skrywer dat hy die “akademiese benadering” tot die genre wil probeer vermy.

Vervolgens is daar 'n oorsig oor kabaret, vervat in die essay *Dans op 'n vulkaan*, wat soos 'n denkbeeldige kabaretprogram lees. Dié oorsig is volgens Aucamp vir hom soos 'n droom waarin hy 'n program mag saamstel waarin hy verteenwoordigende tekste oor die afgelope eeu mag inkorporeer. Hy vermeld dan ook kabaretiste en komponiste wat deel van die bakermat van kabaret vorm: Arnold Schönberg, Erik Satie, Benjamin Britten, Peter Louis van Dijk tot by die moderner Barbara Streisand en Herman van Veen, asook Suid-Afrikaanse name soos Elzabé Zietsman, Ilze Klink, Amanda Strydom en Coenie de Villiers, om maar net 'n paar te noem. Daar word verder aan Aucamp se leermeesters erkenning gegee – Stephan Bouwer en Con de Villiers – en daar is verwysings na die werk van Herman en Lettie Pretorius. Dan vind mens ook nog name soos David Kramer, Hendrik Susan, André Letoit, Nataniël en Kerkorrel. Verder noem hy dat Koos du Plessis een van die belangrikste digter-komponiste van Afrikaans is en is Koos Kombuis (“die Etienne Leroux van die moderne geslag”) se *Raka* volgens hom die eerste kabaretroman in Afrikaans. Deon Opperman kry spesiale vermelding in die essay “*Die Beiteljie*” klink ná in *Kabaret* wat op 13 September 2006 in die Vrye Afrikaan verskyn het. In dié opstel word verwys na Opperman se talent as dramaturg, toneelspeler en regisseur. Tog is die essay ook 'n credo vir alle kunste en kunstenaars.

In 'n essay oor Eitemal word die essensie van die liedteks as onderafdeling van die kabaret bespreek. Hierin beskryf Aucamp volksliedere as “wêreldwandelaars” en is dit volgens hom hoogs aanpasbaar in nuwe kulture.

Koffer in Berlyn is self die spreekwoordelike koffer vol kennis en die titel is daarom baie gepas. Berlyn is onlosmaaklik deel van kabaret omdat dit die setel was vir die ontstaan van kabaret as kunsvorm. In die gelyknamige essay oor Marlene Dietrich wat in 1987 in *De Kat* verskyn het, word die invloed van die Weimar-kultuur op Kabaret breedweg bespreek.

Hierby word ingesluit die invloed van veral Bertolt Brecht en Hildegard Knief. Berlyn, so word in die essay vertel, het aan die Weste sy “kragtigste kreatiewe impulse”, maar ook “grusamste skokke” besorg. In die essay word die “koffer” se Pandora-moontlikhede daarom ook uitgelig.

Die kabarettemas wat in die bundel vervat is, sluit liefdesfrustrasie, politiek en oorlog in en word in dikwels humoristiese vertellings vol interessante feite aan die leser gebied.

Die musiek-en-liriek-beweging van die tagtigerjare word eweneens bespreek. Dit speel, aldus Aucamp, 'n belangrike rol in die musiekgeskiedskrywing van Suid-Afrika. Hier moet daar natuurlik melding gemaak word van Aucamp se aanvanklike dilemma met die term “liriek” omdat dit met liriese poësie verwar kan word en daarom taalkundig nie korrek is nie.

Terwyl Lisa Appignanesi se werk *The Cabaret* voorheen die hoeksteen van Suid-Afrikaanse kabaret was, kan *Koffer in Berlyn* deur Aucamp nou as die fondament van kabaretstudie dien. *Koffer in Berlyn* is allermins 'n droë akademiese werk, alhoewel dit by uitstek vir leerlinge, musikante en navorsers van waarde is. Die bundel is 'n samestelling van essays van Aucamp wat oor die jare in tydskrifte en koerante verskyn het. Aucamp se begaafdheid is deurgaans op die voorgrond. *Koffer in Berlyn* lewer uiteindelik 'n breë perspektief oor die kunste as sodanig en nie slegs oor die kabaret nie. Hierdie boek bied leesplezier vir kabaretkenners en -belangstellendes.

Wat ons van Pous Johannes Paulus II kan waardeer en leer

Bennie van der Walt

(Navorsingsgenoot, Skool vir Filosofie, Potchefstroomkampus van die NWU)

Die afgelope aantal dekades het drie Pouse aan die hoof van die Roomse Kerk gestaan: Pous Johannes Paulus II (in 2005 oorlede), Pous Benedictus XVI (aan bewind vanaf 2005 tot 2013), asook die pas aangewese Pous Franciscus. Ek skryf graag iets oor die eerste van die drie wat beskou kan word as die invloedrykste pous – en Christelike leier oor die algemeen – van die 20ste eeu. Baie skrywers het hom selfs bestempel as die belangrikste pous die afgelope 450 jaar, sedert die Reformasie en die Kontrareformasie van die sestende eeu.

Wie was die man? Waar kom hy vandaan? Wat was die rede vir sy buitengewone grootheid en sy invloed oor die hele wêreld?

Baie skrywers het Pous Johannes Paulus II bestempel as die belangrikste pous die afgelope 450 jaar, sedert die Reformasie en die Kontrareformasie van die sestende eeu.

'n Ontmoeting in 1974

Tydens 'n internasionale kongres by die herdenking van die dood, in die sewende eeu, van die groot Rooms-Katolieke denker, Thomas van Aquino (1224/25 – 1274) in Italië (Rome en Napels), het die vorige Pous, Johannes Paulus I, ons nie net met sy teenwoordigheid vereer nie, maar ek het ook die man ontmoet wat hom sou

opvolg. Destyds was hy nog Karol Jozef Wojtyla (gebore 1920), Aartsbiskop van

Kraków in Pole. Toe was hy nog net 52 jaar oud, in die fleur van sy lewe. Reeds in 1974 het ek egter besef: hierdie is 'n man met groot potensiaal. Toe hy later as die 246ste biskop van Rome verkies is, het ek 'n briefie van gelukwensing aan hom gepos – en selfs 'n antwoord daarop van sy kantoor ontvang!

Vorbereidingsjare

Karol Wojtyla het in Pole te midde van wrede gruweldade, eers van Nazi-Duitsland en later van Kommunistiese Rusland, grootgeword. Albei hierdie ideologieë (ideologieë is verharde of gestolde lewensvisies wat op 'n samelewing afgedwing word) het aan die mense 'n utopie (hemel op aarde) belowe. Maar beide het vir die ongelukkige Pole op niks minder as verskriklike nagmerries uitgeloop nie. (Op internasionale konferensies het 'n hele paar mense uit dié land my van hulle swaarkry vertel.) Dit het daar – en elders – miljoene mense se lewens gekos.

Aartsbiskop Wojtyla het homself afgevra waarom sulke afskuwelike dinge in die sogenaamde Christelike Westerse wêreld kon gebeur. Reeds by die Tweede Vatikaanse Konsilie (1962 – 1965) maak hy sy gedagtes hieroor bekend. (Later sou dit nog breedvoeriger in verskeie van sy pouslike ensiklike verwoord word.)

Die oorsaak van die krisis in die Weste

Die begaafde Aartsbiskop van Pole het tot die konklusie gekom dat die mees fundamentele rede vir die krisis in die Westerse wêreld hulle verkeerde, valse en daarom

gevaarlike mensbeskouing is. Dit toon hy aan in die geval van die Nazi-ideologie, asook Kommunisme. Hy gaan egter verder. Ook die sogenaamde vrye Weste se individualisme (die individu se begeertes en belange staan voorop) en kapitalisme (waarin alles net om eie materiële welvaart gaan) is gebou op onbybelse sieninge van wie en wat die mens behoort te wees. Daarom het ons vandag in 'n morele moeras en geestelike woestyn beland.

Die hedendaagse sekulêre kultuur kan alleen vanuit 'n radikaal-Christelike lewensvisie ontmasker, bestry en verander word.

Drie basiese uitgangspunte

Om 'n nuwe visie vir die wêreld daar te stel, neem pous Johannes Paulus II sy vertrekpunt in die volgende drie grondliggende oortuigings: (1) Elke mens (nie-Christene ingesluit) soek na antwoorde op die laaste en diepste lewensvrae, soos Waar kom ek vandaan? Wie is ek? Wat maak ek hier? Waar gaan ek heen? (2) Ons hedendaagse kultuur is 'n regstreekse uitvloeisel of resultaat van hoe hierdie vrae beantwoord word. (3) Die sekulêre Westerse kultuur het die vrae verkeerd beantwoord en daarom die menswees van die mens aangetas. Die hedendaagse sekulêre kultuur (wat lewe asof God nie bestaan nie en sy geboorte nie saak maak nie) kan alleen vanuit 'n radikaal-Christelike lewensvisie ontmasker, bestry en verander word.

Hierdie drie grondgedagtes van die Pous laat 'n mens onwillekeurig dink aan die groot kerkvader, Aurelius Augustinus (354-430 n.C.) wat reeds in die vyfde eeu iets soortgelyks gesê het: (1) Elke mens dien een of ander god. (2) Die mens begin al meer en meer lyk soos die God of die afgod(e) wat hy dien. (Sy gode "slyp" hom na hul beeld.) (3) Vervolgens skep mense ook hulle eie samelewing (huwelik, gesin, staat ens.) – 'n hele kultuur – volgens hulle eie beeld van wat dit beteken om mens te wees. 'n Mens kan dus ook vanaf stap 3 teruggaan na stap 1: Uit hoe die same-

lewing (3) lyk, kan ons aflei hoe ons ons eie menswees beskou (2), en uit ons mensbeskouing kan ons ook (1) agterkom watter god(e) ons dien.

Die oplossing

Die Pous verwerp verskeie oppervlakkige oplossings vir die diep krisis van die Westerse "beskawing". 'n Bietjie moralisering sal nie help nie. (Mense wil deesdae mos alles met morele waardes reg dokter.) Dit sal ook nie help om – soos die Weste nog altyd probeer doen het – die mens self op die troon te verhef en van hom (byvoorbeeld sy verabsoluteerde verstand) die oplossing te verwag nie. Sulke "oplossings", het die geskiedenis reeds ten oorvloede bewys, is tot mislukking gedoem – die medisyne is trouens die kwaal.

Pous Johannes II wou 'n Christelike "radikaal", in die letterlike sin van die woord, wees. "Radikaal" kom van die woord *radix* wat "wortel" beteken. Die wortel-oorsaak vir die krisis van die Westerse mens is sy verleidelike maar valse, onbybelse lewensvisies of ideologieë.

'n Lewensvisie bestaan onder andere uit 'n mens se idee van God (of 'n afgod), die mens self, die gemeenskap, die natuur en die verordeninge wat vir die skepping geld.

'n Lewensvisie bestaan onder andere uit 'n mens se idee van God (of 'n afgod), die mens self, die gemeenskap, die natuur en die verordeninge wat vir die skepping geld. Johannes Paulus II lê in sy geskrifte en ensiklike die klem op veral die een faset van 'n Christelike lewensvisie, naamlik die mensvisie. (Dit is verstaanbaar in die lig van die onmenslikhede wat hy self in Pole ervaar het en later ook elders in die wêreld aanskou het.) Ideologieë, soos die rasse-ideologie van die Nazi's, die Kommunisme en Kapitalisme, verontmenslik die mens. Daarom het ons 'n Christelike lewensvisie nodig waarin die menswaardigheid van die

mens (volgens God se beeld geskape) weer tot sy reg sal kom. Sommige praat in dié verband van die pous se “Christelike humanisme”. Ek twyfel of dit ’n heeltelmal korrekte tipering is. Die Pous was daarvan oortuig dat Christus die finale antwoord is op alle menslike vrae. Indien hy wel ’n Christelike “humanis” is, is Christus die hoeksteen daarvan. In een van sy ensiklike (*Redemptor Hominis*, “Verlosser van die mens”) sê hy byvoorbeeld dat die mens in Christus eers werklik kan weet wie hy is, wat sy menswaardigheid behels en wat die betekenis of sin van sy lewe is. Hy dink dus duidelik Christosentries. Hy aanvaar ook die sentrale Bybelse waarhede (waarop die Reformatoriese tradisie soveel klem lê) van ’n (oorspronklik) goeie skepping, die tragedie van die sondeval, die hoop op verlossing en die uiteindelijke vernuwing van die skepping in Christus.

Die Pous was daarvan oortuig dat Christus die finale antwoord is op alle menslike vrae. Indien hy wel ’n Christelike “humanis” is, is Christus die hoeksteen daarvan.

Geen wonder dat Pous Johannes Paulus II se intellektuele kreatiwiteit saam met sy opregte geloof wêreldwyd groot invloed gehad het nie.

Ons kan ook van die Pous leer

Waarom skryf ek in *Woord en Daad*, die orgaan van die Reformatoriese Beweging van Suider-Afrika (REBSA), oor ’n Rooms-Katolieke leier? Net omdat hy byna 40 jaar gelede ’n groot indruk op my gemaak het?

Omdat ek my gereformeerde oortuigings prysgegee het? (In my studentetyd is ons immers deur sommige van ons teologiese professore ernstig teen die “Roomse gevaar” gewaarsku!)

Die meeste Christene – gereformeerdes ingesluit – is nie net baie onbetrokke nie, maar dikwels ook totaal onkrities oor hulle eie kultuur.

Nee, eerstens omdat die dinge wat hy oor ons hedendaagse Westerse kultuur gesê en geskryf het, waar en relevant is. Die meeste Christene – gereformeerdes ingesluit – is nie net baie onbetrokke nie, maar dikwels ook totaal onkrities oor hulle eie kultuur. Omdat ’n mens se eie kultuur soos die lug is wat jy inasem – jy is normaalweg nie daarvan bewus nie – is dit verstaanbaar, maar nog nie aanvaarbaar nie. Veral ’n Christen behoort krities te wees teenoor die moderne sekulêre kultuur – ook in ons eie land – wat gebou is op die beginsel dat God en sy gebooie van geen belang is nie.

In die tweede plek kan ons uit sy geestelike nalatenskap leer, omdat hy die dringende noodsaaklikheid van ’n omvattende, radikaal-Christelike lewensvisie beklemtoon het. Hoewel ons kerklik van hom verskil en ek self (as reformatoriese denker) nie in alles met hom saamstem nie, het hy sy vinger op die pols gelê van belangrike gebrek by die meeste – ook gereformeerde – Christene: die leemte aan ’n Bybelse-begronde kyk op die werklikheid. Daarsonder sal Christene en kerke weinig – indien enige – impak kan hê op die snel toenemende sekulêre samelewing van Suid-Afrika.

THE VATICAN FILES: A DIARY FROM ROME

Leonardo de Chirico
(Vice president of the Evangelical Alliance of Italy)

Reform-in-continuity?

Vatican II and the Roman Catholic Church

Rome, 24th May 2011

The Second Vatican Council is once again back in the global Roman Catholic agenda. The most important event in the history of the twentieth century Roman Catholic Church (1962-1965) is still a matter of dispute in these circles. The First Vatican Council (1869-1870) reinforced the clash between the church and modernity by insisting on the evils of the modern world and affirming the infallibility of the Pope. Vatican II re-addressed the same issue from a different perspective. Was it progressive or traditionalist? Did it intend to reform the church or to reinforce it? Was it doctrinally focused or more pastorally oriented? What was more important, its documents or its "spirit"? Was it primarily an "event" or did it initiate a "movement"? These are only a few of the questions that are still being debated, and the way one answers them is not just a matter of academic taste, but has heavy consequences on the whole Roman Catholic project in the global world.

Vatican II according to "left" and "right"

Generally speaking, there are two main schools of thought. For convenience we'll call them "left" and "right." On the one hand there is the interpretative school that sees Vatican II as breaking with the old traditional RC outlook and inserting a progressive trend within the Church. This has been the direction of theologians like Hans Küng and historians like Giuseppe Alberi-

go. According to this progressive interpretation, while Vatican II introduced significant "change", Paul VI, John Paul II and Benedict XVI have been silencing its potential in areas like ecclesiology, liturgy, and morality and imposing a rigid reading that squares with the traditional self-understanding of the RC Church. Curiously, this view was shared by traditionalists like Msgr. [= Monsignor i.e. "my lord", a title given to high rank Catholic priests – editor's note] Lefebvre who charged Vatican II of betraying Roman Catholic identity, having marred it with mortal doses of Protestant and secular poison. Therefore opposite reactions stemmed from the same interpretation of Vatican II being in discontinuity with the past.

At Vatican II the RC Church approached the modern world in more "pastoral" terms, without modifying its basic framework.

The mainstream interpretative school, on the other hand, has insisted that Vatican II stands in substantial continuity with Vatican I (1870-1871), actually completing what was left unfinished, and doing so with the great tradition of the Church (e.g. Trent and the Marian dogmas). No "real" change has occurred but only a dynamic re-statement of the well established RC heritage. At Vatican II the RC Church approached the modern world in more "pastoral" terms, without modifying its basic framework. According to this linear reading, Vatican II at most brought an "aggiornamento" (i.e. updating) to the language and the concerns of the Church, while still maintaining and reinforcing her fundamental stance.

Ratzinger's "hermeneutics of reform-in-continuity"

In recent years and months, the debate on Vatican II has been revived by different evaluations of what the present Pope thinks of Vatican II and how he is implementing it. Ratzinger was present at the Council and gave voice to the need for "renewal." Yet in later years he has become critic of reforming trends in areas such as liturgy, ecumenism and political involvement. As prefect of the Congregation for Sacred Doctrine, he fought against all tendencies that in his opinion were watering down the traditional beliefs and practices of the Roman Catholic Church. Now that he is Pope, Vatican II is at the center of his agenda.

Benedict XVI thinks that Vatican II simply reiterated the RC dogmatic system without altering it in any way.

Benedict XVI has been reflecting publicly on Vatican II since the beginning of his pontificate. In a 2005 speech he clearly set his course by saying that the Council needs to be read according to a "hermeneutics of reform-in-continuity". He has been using and expounding the same expression ever since. According to the Pope, Vatican II breached the traditional Roman Catholic understanding of the state and the temporal power of the Roman Church, thus acknowledging the value of religious freedom and a degree of separation between church and state, thus overcoming the subjugation of the state before the church. In this restricted sense it was a "reforming" Council. Benedict XVI, however, thinks that Vatican II simply reiterated the Roman Catholic dogmatic system without altering it in any way. In this sense, the Council is in real continuity with Trent and Vatican I. Therefore Ratzinger is neither a "left" nor "right" wing interpreter. In reality these categories are totally inadequate in coming to terms not only with Ratzinger, but also with Vatican II. The

Roman Catholic understanding of historical development entails "reform-in-continuity", "aggiornamento" without renouncing, addition without subtraction, expansion without purification. Unless one grasps this "both-and" approach, one will fall prey to fragmented and insufficient accounts of Roman Catholicism. "Reform-in-continuity" is the genius of this system.

Overcoming the Evangelical puzzlement

Vatican II has been the crux of Evangelical theology as well. Understanding and appraising what happened at the Council is still a task worthy of attention. The best Evangelical treatment of Vatican II (*Revolution in Rome*, 1972, by David Wells) is a series of question marks that show just how puzzled Evangelical theology was in dealing with modern Roman Catholicism. Its chapters' titles reveal the conundrum: "Authority: inward or outward?" "God: in the earthly or in the heavenly city?" "Christianity: a broad or narrow definition?" "The Church: the people or the Pope?" In approaching Vatican II some Evangelicals have taken the "right" wing interpretation saying that nothing has changed. The Roman Church is *semper eadem* (Latin: always the same), they say. Others have followed the progressive view claiming that at Vatican II the Spirit of renewal blew in Rome, turning it upside down in gospel terms.

It is time that Evangelicals learn to read Vatican II through appropriate lenses.

Neither interpretation is correct. Roman Catholicism is more complex than the usual labels in that it is neither static nor reforming *per se*. It is "always the same", yet in an expansive trajectory. It is a growing body, yet holding the same DNA. Unless we understand this point, we fail to grasp the basics of Roman Catholicism. It is time that Evangelicals learn to read Vatican II through appropriate lenses. There is still homework to be done. With his hermeneutics of "reform-in-continuity", Benedict XVI can certainly help in the task.

Beyond the Reformation in 2017?

Rome, 7th September 2011

Is the Reformation over? is the title of a much discussed book by Mark Noll and Carolyn Nystrom that was published in 2005. The answer of the book was not “yes” or “no” but a sort of yes and no at the same time. According to the authors, Evangelicals and Roman Catholics can agree on two-thirds of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, and their growing cooperation is a sign that relationships are not as polemical and bad as they used to be. Therefore their long-standing separation is no longer tenable. The answer is therefore open and the book witnesses a state of flux as far as the North American context is concerned (see the Appendix below).

Is the Reformation over? is also a question that will be on the Vatican agenda, especially the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, in the next few years.

2017 will mark the 500th anniversary of Luther's posting of his 95 theses on indulgences.

Towards a 2017 joint-statement on the Reformation

2017 will mark the 500th anniversary of Luther's posting of his 95 theses on indulgences. Conventionally, 1517 is considered the official and public beginning of the Reformation. That event gave rise to the controversy with Rome that eventually caused Luther to be excommunicated by pope Leo X.

As part of the celebrations that will take place, the Vatican and the Lutheran World Federation are planning to issue a joint-statement on the Reformation with three main goals:

1. Attaining a “shared memory” of what happened prior to the Reformation and after it, thus appreciating the common heritage of the first millennia and a half of Christian “unity” (at least in the West) and reconciling the conflicting narratives of 1517 and beyond.
2. Reaching an “admission of guilt” from both sides for the respective mistakes and sins. The Vatican stresses the fact that John Paul II already asked forgiveness for Catholic responsibilities in the division of the Church.
3. Re-launching the ecumenical initiative that, after the 1999 Joint Declaration on Justification, has been losing momentum. As a matter of fact the Declaration did not have any significant impact on the ecumenical process and the Vatican is looking for another symbolic event to foster its ecumenical agenda.

The imminent visit of Benedict XVI to his native Germany (22-25 September 2011) will be the opportunity to raise expectations about the 2017 events and the related joint-statement. The Pope will visit the city of Erfurt where Luther studied philosophy between 1501 and 1505 and will meet the representatives of the German Evangelical Church.

Remembering and fostering the Reformation: A few questions

All three goals of the joint-statement are positive in themselves. Yet they raise some questions because they run the risk of becoming absolute.

1. There is much sentimentalism about the Church being undivided before the Reformation. Prior to the Reformation unity was however as broken as it would become after it. The sober reality is that the apparent institutional unity was not and is not the guarantee of unity recommended in the Gospel. The “shared memory” and “undivided past” need to be less mystical and

more realistic, not only as far as history is concerned but also as far as the present and future of the Church are concerned.

2. Openness to confess one's own guilt is always a Christian attitude to be encouraged. Protestants have many sins to confess. Yet does it mean that questioning the authorities of the established church is always a sin? Is breaking ties with a pagan system a sin? Is using "open" language to denounce idolatry always a sin? Is proclaiming "here I stand" for the Gospel whatever the cost, a sin? The danger is blurring the lines to the point of being unable to distinguish between the gospel and false gospels and to come to the point of saying: all are guilty, all are forgiven!
3. The Joint Declaration on Justification has been a failure in many respects. On the one part, the Roman Catholic Church did not give the document any ecclesiological significance. It remained a 'dogmatic' statement without practical consequences. On the other, for some liberal Lutherans the Gospel is determined more by inclusiveness than justification by faith. For them the document did not really reflect the heart of the Gospel. Sooner or later inflated words deflate if they are not real. In themselves documents do not foster or hinder the ecumenical process. Will this also be the case for the proposed joint-statement on the Reformation?

The 2017 project is therefore ambitious and needs careful consideration. Yet the bottom line question is: with all the nuances considered and without unnecessary partisanship, was Luther fundamentally right or wrong according to the Gospel? The Reformation will be over only in two circumstances:

- if and when Luther will be judged wrong;
- if and when Luther's basic witness to the Gospel will be the witness of the world-wide Church.

Till then, the Reformation is not over but continues to be an important agenda for the Church.

Appendix

This review was published on *Themelios* 32/1 (2006) pp. 103-104. It concerned the book: *Is the Reformation Over? An Evangelical Assessment of Contemporary Roman Catholicism* (Mark A. Noll and Carolyn Nystrom, Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, Milton Keynes: Pater-noster, 2005, 272 pp., h/b., ISBN 1-84227-387-6).

Roman Catholicism is a pressing issue on the agenda of contemporary Evangelical theology. A lot of things are happening in the relationship between Evangelicals and Catholics worldwide and many observers are perplexed and feel the need to reflect theologically on the changing scenario. This book comes mainly from a North-American context and traces the stunning developments that have taken place from the widespread anti-Catholic attitude of many Evangelicals until the Sixties and the growing convergence reflected in many bilateral dialogues between the Roman Church and different Protestant bodies from the late Sixties onward. The North-American *Evangelicals and Catholics Together* initiative is just one of the instances of this historical shift. In light of the current situation, the authors ask themselves whether the Reformation is over and whether a new season of ecumenical rapprochement can be envisioned.

The strength of the book lies in the informative sketch it portrays. As for its theological significance, I have two main reservations.

First, while it surveys many similar initiatives, it does not discuss the only ongoing official dialogue between the Vatican and a self-defined Evangelical body like the World Evangelical Alliance (previously World Evangelical Fellowship). This dialogue was prepared in 1988 and started in 1993, the proceedings of its first meetings have all been published and one wonders how a historian of the calibre of Mark Noll has overlooked it. Therefore, the picture

offered in the book is not comprehensive enough because, while it suggests an “Evangelical assessment of contemporary Roman Catholicism”, it does not deal with a significant source of Evangelical theological engagement with Rome.

The second reservation has more to do with the theological analysis exemplified in the book. The authors recognise that they have produced “an impressionistic and rhetorical assessment” (229) waiting for an in-depth research. Their approach, however, reflects some weaknesses which can be found elsewhere in Evangelical writings on Roman Catholicism. In a useful chapter which highlights the contents of the 1994 *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, the authors argue that “evangelicals can embrace at least two-thirds” of it (119), that is what stems from “common orthodoxy” based on the ancient Trinitarian and Christological creeds. Later, they admit that when the *Catechism* speaks of Christ, it interweaves Him to the Church to the point of making them one (147; 149), which is unacceptable for Evangelicals who consider the exaltation of a created reality an instance of idolatry. So, on the one hand, there is an apparent “common orthodoxy”; on the other, there is a profound difference on the meaning of its basic words (e.g. Christ, the church, etc.). The question to raise is how can it be said that Evangelicals can accept “two-thirds” of the *Catechism* if this document speaks of the (Roman Catholic) Church whenever it speaks of Christ, the Spirit and, by extension, the Trinity? Are we sure that the real difference between Evangelicals and Catholics lies in ecclesiology given that the Roman Catholic view of the church is argued for in Christological and Pneumatological terms? In dealing with Roman Catholicism, especially in times of mounting ecumenical pressure, Evangelical theology should attempt to go beyond the surface of theological statements and attempt to get a grip on the internal framework of reference of Roman Catholic theology. From there we should try to assess it from an Evangelical perspective. While the book has many merits in laying out the overall picture, it does not fully help Evangelicals to think about Roman theology as a complex, yet coherent system.

Contrary to the ambiguous answer given by Noll and Nystrom, the Reformation is as urgent as ever, for both Catholics and Evangelicals.

Happy Birthday, Pope Ratzinger!

Rome, 27th April 2012

Last week saw the overlapping of two interwoven anniversaries: the 85th birthday of Joseph Ratzinger and the 7th year from the beginning of his pontificate. Special concerts, commemorative books, and scores of messages reached the Pope to wish him all the best. He even received a visit from the Italian Prime Minister Mario Monti and his cabinet ministers who wanted to wish him a happy birthday in a personal meeting. On the whole, though, the Pope did not “sell” his private celebration to the media and lived it in the usual reserved way.

The leadership of the Roman Catholic Church always relies on the delicate balance between the personal charisma and involvement of the Pope and the bureaucracy of the Vatican curia, now lead by the Secretary of State, Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone.

An octogenarian Pope

85 years is a remarkable age for the papal office. He is now the oldest pope since Leo XIII (1810-1903). He may well be the oldest “monarch” reigning on earth. In recent months, there have been rumors of his willingness to retire out of tiredness of old age. He has begun using a cane for walking on his own. For the long liturgical processions, he is now using a treadmill. After his international travels, he always makes sure that time is reserved to rest

and recover. Yet the pace of his daily schedule would defy the resistance of most 40-something men.

The leadership of the Roman Catholic Church always relies on the delicate balance between the personal charisma and involvement of the Pope and the bureaucracy of the Vatican curia, now lead by the Secretary of State, Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone. It seems that Ratzinger pays more attention to the preparation of his speeches, homilies and written works than to the daily operations of the Vatican organizational machinery. In recent months there have been various setbacks (e.g. leaks on sharp conflicts within Vatican offices and flawed financial projects) that have been partially related to Ratzinger's somewhat distant leadership.

A "Catholic" Pontificate

Perhaps the most interesting issue to reflect on is the trajectory of his pontificate, now in its seventh year. Benedict's reign cannot be properly assessed if it is not viewed in continuity with his previous career.

Ratzinger has been one of the pivotal figures in the theological and ecclesiastical scene following Vatican II. He has been considered "progressive" in his youthful theological engagement for the renewal of the Church, and then "conservative" in his long-term service to his Church as Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith (1981-2005). Ratzinger is often pictured as if he were the left wing theologian who became right wing in his mature years. These labels, of course, do not account for the "catholicity" of Ratzinger's theology, which is both traditional and *aggiornata* (i.e. updated). In assessing Ratzinger's pontificate and theology as a whole, it is unwise to contrast traditionalism and progressivism as if they were disrupting and conflicting trends within his work. There may have been different emphases and concerns at various stages of his career, but the tale of the conversion from radical theologian to the inflexible watchdog of orthodoxy is naive.

How do we account then for this change of attitudes and concerns? It depends on what kind of paradigm we use to interpret the theological flow of the Roman Catholic Church. In its theological genius, present-day Roman Catholicism is "catholic" in the sense of embracing both the highest respect for the given heritage of the Church, and the strenuous attempt to find new ways of articulating it and living it out. The outcome is a dynamic synthesis which holds different elements together within the all-embracing system. Ratzinger well epitomises this kind of catholicity – strongly rooted in the tradition of the Church and yet also vigorously engaged in the challenges of the modern world.

The motto of the theological journal *Communio*, with which he has been associated since 1972, neatly sums up his theological vision: "a program of renewal through the return to the sources of authentic tradition". In other words, it is not just repetition of a given heritage, but renewal through fresh re-appropriation of biblical, patristic, liturgical, and sacramental sources.

Catholicity can take many different turns. John Paul II's catholicity was more global in extension, Thomist in theology, charismatic in character, and Marian in spirituality. Benedict XVI's is more Western in focus, Augustinian in teaching, reserved in style, and liturgical in scope. But they both contribute to the overall catholicity of the Roman Church.

His on-going critical conversation with the dangers of cultural relativism and the typically Western tendency to get rid of its "roots" or "heritage" is the key to understanding the entire pontificate.

A "Western" Pontificate

The other prominent feature of this pontificate is its attention on the West. Whereas John Paul II stretched the globalization of

the Roman Catholic Church, Ratzinger has been putting the West at center stage of its focus.

His on-going critical conversation with the dangers of cultural relativism and the typically Western tendency to get rid of its “roots” or “heritage” is key to understanding the entire pontificate. While it is not always clear to what extent his critique of Western culture is also a defense of the constantinian *status quo*, he has somewhat corrected some positive, yet overtly sentimental views of the modern world which were instead present at Vatican II.

Ratzinger’s decision to create a brand new Pontifical Council dedicated to the New Evangelization is a move that has the West as its main target. What is at stake is the re-attraction of the millions of those baptized in the Church who are now wandering away from it. Although they are sacramentally part of the Church, many of them are far from it. The New Evangelization, therefore, is a means to recall them back to the fold.

John Paul II labored to stretch the borders of the Church, but Benedict XVI is working towards reinforcing its historical center. The bet on the West is Ratzinger’s bet. His pontificate will stand or fall on it.

How Visible Should Christian Unity Be?

John 17, Cardinal Kurt Koch and Martyn Lloyd-Jones in Dialogue

Rome, 12th December 2012

The priestly prayer of the Lord Jesus in John 17 is unanimously recognized as one of the foundational texts, if not the text *par excellence*, in dealing with Christian unity. There our Lord prays to the Father for His disciples to be one and the pattern of their unity is the relational life of the Trinity. As Father and Son are one, so Christians are prayed for so that their unity will be “as” the Triune God is one.

The consensus is shaken and eventually broken when different Christians spell out what this unity should be and how it should be lived out. One of the contentious issues revolves around this unity being “visible”. The fact that Christian unity should be somewhat visible is not what is at stake. What kind of “visibility” is required by the Lord’s prayer is where Christians begin to disagree.

In his address to participants at the plenary Assembly of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (15th November 2012), Pope Benedict XVI restated the basic Roman Catholic idea concerning the necessary visibility of Christian unity: “We must not forget that the goal of ecumenism is the visible unity among divided Christians”. The Pope later explained that “it is in full communion in faith, in the sacraments and in the ministry that will become concretely evident the present and active power of God in the world”. Visibility is therefore a threefold achievement whereby there is unity in the profession of the faith, unity in the celebration of the sacraments, and unity in the recognition of the same ministerial order.

Does John 17 support the fully orbed Roman Catholic view of unity?

The same conviction was argued for by Cardinal Kurt Koch, President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, in a recent public lecture at the Pontifical Lateran University (11th December 2012) entitled “Unity: Illusion or Promise?” The lecture was a learned commentary on John 17 which Cardinal Koch divided in six parts. According to John 17 as it was read by Koch, Christian unity has six dimensions: spiritual, visible, Trinitarian, eschatological, missional and martyrological (i.e. the unity of Christian martyrs). What is of interest here is that Koch insisted on the visible dimension of the unity for which Jesus prayed and which he rooted in the Trinitarian life. Since the Church is “the icon of the Trinity” so her unity reflects the unity of the Trinity.

Koch underlined the fact that Christian unity cannot be “invisible” but should always be recognizable in the usual threefold way: common profession of faith, common sacraments, common ministry.

Koch underlined the fact that Christian unity cannot be “invisible” but should always be recognizable in the usual threefold way: common profession of faith, common sacraments, common ministry. In other words, in order for unity to be Trinitarian unity you need the Roman Catholic Church that has kept the sacraments in their integrity and has transmitted the ministry in the proper apostolic succession. The visibility of the Trinitarian unity requires and demands the institutional (Roman Catholic) church, its hierarchy, and its sacramental life. In this view, other visible forms of Christian unity are imperfect and partial because they lack the (Roman Catholic) sacraments and ministry. According to this view, the visibility of unity will be achieved when other churches and ecclesial communions embrace not only the common profession of faith, but also the Roman Catholic sacraments and priesthood.

Does this understanding of the visibility of unity derive from Trinitarian life as it is found in John 17? It is hard to read this chapter and conclude that the reference to the Trinity as the pattern for Christian unity refers to a hierarchical and sacramental ministry. The latter seem added dimensions which are quintessential to the Roman Catholic understanding of unity, but are difficult to trace back to Trinitarian life *per se*.

Remark: The attempt to read back in the Trinity a particular view of the church (and therefore of her visible unity) is widespread. In his book *After Our Likeness: The Church as the Image of the Trinity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998) Miro-

slav Volf talks about the fact that Zizioulas, Ratzinger and himself claim that their respective ecclesiology derives from the Trinity.

A More biblically realist view of visible unity?

Listening to Cardinal Koch, another reading of John 17 as the basis of Christian unity came to mind. I recalled the 1962 sermons on the passage by Martyn Lloyd-Jones (1899-1981) which were later published (*The Basis of Christian Unity. An Exposition of John 17 and Ephesians 4*. London: Inter-Varsity Press, 1962). The contexts between Koch and Lloyd-Jones are very different, yet the comparison is evocative. From Jesus’ priestly prayer, Lloyd-Jones argues that unity embraces those who are given to Jesus by the Father by believing in Him. First and foremost, unity is unity of those who are believers in Jesus Christ (17:6-10), not unity of the baptized as the ecumenical understanding would suggest. One can be baptized and yet not be a believer. Christian unity applies to the latter, not necessarily to the former.

According to Lloyd-Jones’ reading of the passage, Christian unity starts within and then works outward. It is primarily unseen and internal, although it manifests itself visibly. The Trinitarian foundation speaks about the depth and scope of this union, but it does not spell out any given institutional path in which it is bound to express itself.

This interpretation of the text indicates that neither a particular form of apostolic succession nor a particular sacramental and hierarchical system can be derived from the Trinity itself as if it were the only or the absolute or the perfect pattern for Christian unity. Unity is based on the truth of the Word of God (17:16) and is aimed at witnessing to the world (17:21). The visibility of the unity, as important as it is, depends on the spiritual reality which is a reflection of the Trinitarian life and is above all a gift for the believers in Jesus Christ so that others too would come to Him.

As an aside, Cardinal Koch's lecture was followed by a prayer for Christian unity with a final intercession to Mary and by a song entitled "Mary, You Are our Mother" which said "... you (Mary) are our Advocate ... Queen of Peace". Even in this ecumenical event, there was no apology for deeply felt convictions. Roman Catholic ecumenism is not about reducing the claims of Catholicism but is a way of implementing them.

A Provision to Become Roman-and-Lutheran Catholics?

Rome, 31st January 2013

Every year, between the 18th and 25th of January, the Roman Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches organizes the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. Since 1958, the Week of Prayer has been a yearly exercise of "spiritual ecumenism" (i.e. joint prayer) involving both the official ecclesiastical bodies of and the grassroots ecumenical movements. Its main theological premise is a call to common prayer for the unity of those who are "baptized".

In his homily, the Pope stressed the fact that unity is both given by God and a responsibility for all Christians.

Remark: Though it usually runs only a week before, the Week of Prayer organized by the Evangelical Alliance is a different initiative. It began in 1846, more than a century prior to the ecumenical week, and has a very different theological premise in that it encourages prayer amongst those who are believing Christians. The difference should be noted. Not all those who are baptized are necessarily Christian. The phenomenon of "nominal" Christianity is widespread whereby large numbers of a given population is composed of those who are baptized, but there can be few Christians amongst them.

This year, at the end of the ecumenical week, Benedict XVI (Joseph Ratzinger) presided over the final liturgy at St Paul's basilica in Rome. In his homily, the Pope stressed the fact that unity is both given by God and a responsibility for all Christians. In their efforts towards unity, the doctrinal issues that cause the division between the Roman Catholic Church and other non-Catholic Christians should not be "neglected or minimized". In this occasion too, Pope Ratzinger insisted on the fact that ecumenism is not a watered down, sentimental unity but is unity in the profession of the same faith, in the celebration of the same Eucharist and under the same sacramental ministry in apostolic succession.

As the Week of Prayer was about to commence, however, a curious event provided another perspective on the big picture of Roman Catholic ecumenism.

A way forward for "LutheRomans"?

In presenting his latest book on the main themes of Pope Ratzinger's thought in a Roman bookshop next to the Vatican, Archbishop Gerhard Müller, who is Prefect of the Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith, made a comment on a possible prospect for the ecumenical process. Imagining a future scenario in which significant numbers of Lutherans would want to come in full fellowship with the Roman Church, Müller said that a specific "ordinariate" for them could be created in order to facilitate the transition. An ordinariate is a special diocese [i.e. a district under the supervision of a bishop – editor's note] which allows full integration into the Roman Church while, at the same time, granting the acceptance of some aspects of the previous liturgical and spiritual tradition.

The pattern of the ordinariate has been already envisioned and implemented. In 2009 Pope Ratzinger provided for the constitution of "personal ordinariates for Anglicans entering into full communion with the Catholic Church". In this case, the former Anglicans that are now Roman Catholics can celebrate the sacraments according

“to the liturgical books proper to the Anglican tradition”. The ordinariate achieves the integration in the Roman system while paying tribute to its “catholicity” that is able to accommodate different traditions.

Archbishop Müller conceded that “the Lutheran world is a bit different from the Anglican one, because among Anglicans there has always been a sector closer to Catholicism.”

Archbishop Müller conceded that “the Lutheran world is a bit different from the Anglican one, because among Anglicans there has always been a sector closer to Catholicism”. However, he said, some Lutherans hope for a restoration of full communion with Rome, and the Church should be ready to receive them. He suggested that, as with Anglicans, the Catholic Church might allow Lutherans to preserve “the legitimate traditions they have developed” while becoming members of the Catholic Church. The idea was severely criticized by Lutheran officials.

How does visible unity work?

Apart from the technicalities of canonical law, what is worth considering is the overall picture emerging from these comments. It is true that Archbishop Müller did not pronounce an official statement as if the decision was already made. Nevertheless, he expressed ideas that are given serious consideration in Vatican offices at both spectrums of the borders of the Roman Church. On her “right”, Rome is painstakingly trying to resolve the excommunication inflicted to the traditionalist bishop Msgr Lefebvre (1905-1991) and his followers in 1998. The means of achieving it is through an ordinariate whereby they could maintain their distinctive liturgical patterns while accepting that other Catholics would adhere to post-Vatican II developments. On her “left”, Rome is opening herself to former Anglicans and now, possibly, to groups of Lutherans wishing to embrace

the Roman “catholicity” while keeping some of their Lutheran heritage. The ordinariate is the means by which the catholicity of the Roman Church can stretch itself on all sides while preserving the unity of the system around the sacramental institution.

Other churches and communities are in one way or another “defective” in some important respects.

The fact that these ideas were publicly spoken of in the ecumenical week is intriguing, but perfectly legitimate if one understands what ecumenism is all about for Rome. On the one hand, the Roman Church prays with other Christians for unity and rejoices for the unity that already exists. On the other, she makes provisions so that the full unity will be achieved through the incorporation of other Christians into her fold. According to the Roman view of unity, there is no contradiction between the two moves. As recalled earlier, the Pope in his homily remembered that Christian unity is not a general “unity-in-diversity” type of union, but the full expression of Christian unity, i.e. professing the same faith, celebrating the same Eucharist, being governed by the same authorities. This full or perfect unity subsists in the Roman Catholic Church alone. Other churches and communities are in one way or another “defective” in some important respects. After the Anglicans, it is now the Lutherans’ turn to have a special provision made to enjoy a “fuller” Christian life.

The Last Lectio of Benedict XVI (before his resignation)

Rome, 12th February 2013

Benedict XVI shocked the whole world announcing his resignation from being the reigning Pope of the Roman Catholic Church. For centuries, no pope had resigned but has instead waited for his death while still holding the office. His announcement was in Latin, not exactly the *lingua*

franca of today's world. Before getting the attention of the media, journalists had to rush to experts in Latin to be sure of what was going on. In doing something remarkably new, Pope Ratzinger did it in a very old-fashioned way. Even in one of his last acts as Pope, he was both modern and traditional. In a way, he reflected the Roman Catholic way of doing things: by maintaining tradition, yet at the same time constantly changing.

There will certainly be other occasions to assess the trajectory of Ratzinger's pontificate. Suffice it for now to draw attention to the last *lectio* he gave to a group of seminarians in Rome on February 8th. This was not his last speech as Pope, but it was his last theologically engaging talk prior to his resignation. In a certain sense, this *lectio* is a kind of a prism where his biblical teaching can be seen in a nutshell.

The text was 1 Peter 1:3-5, a highly dense text full of theological richness, and Benedict XVI applied all his catechetical skills to expound it. His comment was profound as one might expect from a first class theologian. Yet it is also revealing of the particular Roman Catholic blend of his biblical teaching.

1st Peter as the first encyclical?

In introducing the letter, Ratzinger said that it was the "first encyclical" sent by the vicar of Christ to the Church. Let's pause for a moment. An encyclical is – generally speaking – a circulating letter, but – technically speaking – is a letter sent by the Roman Catholic Pope to bishops, clergy, the faithful and the people of good will of his time dealing with doctrinal and/or pastoral issues.

Historically, encyclicals have been regularly sent by popes from 1740 onwards. At the very least it is not historically appropriate to give 1 Peter a papal term that wouldn't be put into use for another 1700 years. Even if we take the more general meaning of encyclical (i.e. a circulating letter), 1 Peter is not the first New Testament text of the canon in terms of the chronology of its composition. Paul's first

letter to the Thessalonians is most probably the earliest document of the New Testament. So, even if the adjective "first" referred to the chronological priority of Peter's letter, this is not the case in that other apostolic letters were written before Peter wrote his first epistle.

Beyond historical details, the message that Benedict wanted to convey was that of an on-going continuity between Peter writing his letter and future popes writing their encyclicals.

Beyond historical details, the message that Benedict wanted to convey was that of an on-going continuity between Peter writing his letter and future popes writing their encyclicals. The Pope linked this biblical letter to modern encyclicals and Peter with modern Popes. This claim is hermeneutically loaded with the Roman Catholic understanding of Peter's office and succession, but does not stand out from the text of Scripture itself.

Although the Roman Catholic Church holds to the position of the Bible being a closed canon, because of its "organic" and "on-going" view of revelation, it has a dynamic understanding on the flow of divine revelation. According to Roman Catholicism, the Word of God is the combination between Tradition, the Scriptures and the living *magisterium* of the Church. [*magisterium*: the on-going teaching authority of the church – editor's note).

Peter as the vicar of Christ?

It is not by chance that in his *lectio* Benedict XVI talked about Peter as being the "vicar of Christ". After rightly recalling the way in which Peter introduces himself as an "apostle", he went on to say that Peter was commissioned to be "the first apostle, the vicar of Christ". He makes the case that Peter writes from Rome (the Babylon quoted in 5:13) and that his being in Rome has theological significance. As vicar of

Christ, and in view of his universal office, Peter had to preside over the Jewish church (Jerusalem) first and eventually the Gentile church (Rome).

The “vicar” title does not come from Peter himself. The apostle rather introduces himself as an “elder” (5:1) in the company of other elders, thus a fellow-elder. There is no hint in the text that Peter has received the title of “vicar”, whatever the term may mean. Peter does not think of himself as being someone or something that other fellow-elders are not. Moreover, it is rather the case that Peter calls the whole people of God as “a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation” called to declare the praises of God (2:9). The fact that Peter defines Rome as Babylon may have apocalyptic significance, rather than being a reference to his universal first papacy. Again, Ratzinger’s interpretation is loaded with meanings that belong to the Roman Catholic tradition but cannot be found in the text of Scripture.

There is much wisdom in Benedict’s last *lectio* on 1 Peter. Yet it is a wisdom driven by certain Roman Catholic presuppositions that govern his reading rather than being governed by Scripture itself. It is curious that his last theological speech as Pope revolved around Peter, the first Pope according to Benedict XVI.

Marks of a Pontificate

Rome, 25th February 2013

Assessing a pontificate is no easy task. Assessing Benedict’s pontificate (2005-2013) is even more difficult. The caliber of Ratzinger as a theologian, the muddy state of present-day Vatican affairs, and the complexity of global religious and moral trends, ... these are all factors that call for careful consideration, although his pontificate will perhaps be remembered more for the shocking way it ended than for what it achieved. Our task here will be more modest. It will take as parameters the main bullet points that characterized Evangelical perceptions of Benedict’s pon-

tificate. It will be an exercise to see to what extent they match reality.

It may be true that Benedict put a special emphasis on orthodoxy, but he has interpreted his orthodoxy in a Roman Catholic way, like all previous Popes.

Orthodox

A recurring comment from Evangelical circles is that Benedict XVI has been an “orthodox” pope. In this case, orthodox means maintaining Nicene Christianity, i.e. the Trinitarian and Christological confession of faith of the early church. In itself, being orthodox is not a distinct feature of any single pope because it is part of his service. The pope, or any pope, is to be orthodox. Bonifacius VIII, the pope that introduced the papal tiara in 1300 (the “hat” indicative of the temporal power), was orthodox. Pope Leo X, the one who excommunicated Martin Luther in 1521, was orthodox. The best and the worst popes were orthodox. Indeed, all 265 popes since Peter have been orthodox. The business of the pope is to be orthodox in this Nicene sense.

It may be true that Benedict put a special emphasis on orthodoxy, but he has interpreted his orthodoxy in a Roman Catholic way, like all previous Popes. He has been praying daily to Mary, he has granted indulgences, he has canonized new saints, he has maintained the church-state profile of the Vatican, etc. Contrary to what C.S. Lewis believed, there is no “mere orthodoxy” out there. Nicene Christianity is always colored by subsequent developments in Christian doctrine and practice. It never stands in isolation nor does it exist in an abstract way. Benedict’s pontificate has been a peak of Roman Catholic orthodoxy.

Biblical

It is true that in his catechetical efforts, Benedict has been dealing with the Bible much more than his immediate predecessors. His speeches have largely been biblical meditations and his recent writings on Jesus have defended the historicity of the Gospel accounts. Much of his reading of Scripture, however, was driven by post-biblical presuppositions derived from the ecclesiastical tradition rather than from Scripture itself. The heavily sacramental interpretations of Gospel stories and the over-arching interpretive grid that sees the relationship between biblical teaching and Roman Catholic practices in terms of linear continuity are only two examples of “how” biblical Benedict’s *magisterium* has been. During his pontificate, the point that distinguished Roman Catholicism from the Protestant tradition was no longer whether or not the Bible is accessible to the people, but “how” it is to be read and lived out.

There is still another aspect to bear in mind. The Pope’s most famous (and criticized) speech, i.e. the 2006 Regensburg lecture, was not about Islam, but revolved around the need to keep the Hellenized combination of “faith and reason” which Thomas Aquinas refined at its best and which the Roman Catholic Church holds onto. In denouncing the threats to the “classic” synthesis, Benedict indicated the “*sola Scriptura*” of the Reformation as a major breach that eventually caused theological liberalism and present-day relativism. It is interesting that a “biblical” Pope would have such a low view of the Reformation’s formal principle that brought the Bible back to the center of the life of the Church.

Benedict’s Church, however, did not perform well in terms of public transparency and integrity with regards to the sexual abuses scandals, the opaque financial maneuvers, and the appalling intrigues within the Vatican.

Public truth

Benedict has courageously stood for basic Judeo-Christian convictions about life, the family, and the welfare of society characterized by freedom and solidarity, even in the midst of criticism from secular intellectual circles. Like his predecessor, John Paul II, Benedict was commended by Muslim and other religious leaders for his tenacious defense of traditional morality in the global world. His Church, however, did not perform well in terms of public transparency and integrity with regards to the sexual abuses scandals, the opaque financial maneuvers, and the appalling intrigues within the Vatican. During Benedict’s reign the distinction between the standards of the official Church and those of the world has been thin if not impalpable. He is not to blame for all this, yet this poor “public” performance sheds light on the overall picture. This is perhaps one of the reasons why Benedict came to the almost unprecedented conclusion to resign from the papal office.

The Pope spoke of Christians as a “minority” and encouraged the Church to rethink its identity accordingly. The fact that he did not take any action to move his Church beyond the privileged status it has in many countries where Catholics are majority puts his record as a “public truth” teller in perspective. Would it not be a “public truth” argument to say that the Church wants to be the church only and not a religious agency with a built in state with its own politics, bank, army, etc., like any other state of the world?

New evangelization

The New Evangelization was an idea of John Paul II, but Benedict XVI started implementing it by creating a Vatican office dedicated to it and by making it the central theme of the 2012 Synod of Bishops. Pope Ratzinger has come to terms with the idea that the West is largely post-Christian and is in need of being evangelized again by a reinvigorated Church.

The future will tell what the New Evangelization will bring about in terms of spiritual renewal. Yet, so far there has been little

self-criticism on the Church's part as to why the West became more secularized.

Does the Church have any responsibility in the secular "schism" that has taken place? No clear answer has come from Pope Ratzinger who has instead blamed the modern world for it.

Does the Church have any responsibility in the secular "schism" that has taken place? No clear answer has come from Pope Ratzinger who has instead blamed the modern world for it.

In the meantime, Benedict has continued calling "sects" those that are engaged in evangelism, including Evangelicals in the Global South, not making the distinction between New Religious movements and Evangelical Christianity.

Beyond extremely positive assessments based on selected aspects of Benedict's pontificate, Evangelicals have food for thought in order to come to a more nuanced and perhaps realistic view of his office as a Pope.

Papabili

A Short Guide Waiting for the Conclave

Rome, 4th March 2013

The cardinals who are likely to become popes are called *papabili* (singular: *papabile*). The outcome of a conclave can be unpredictable. Whether or not one believes that the Holy Spirit actually works in the election of the Roman pontiff, its results defy easy previsions. As an absolute monarchy, the Vatican does not normally operate according to democratic procedures. The conclave, however, is one of the few instances where each vote counts and the total amount of them (two thirds is the

majority for the first 34 ballots) determines history. So there is room for political maneuvering and surprises.

Having resigned from office at over 80 years of age means that Benedict XVI will be cut off from the conclave.

The role of Benedict XVI

Having resigned from office at over 80 years of age means that Benedict XVI will be cut off from the conclave. During the conclave he will be living at Castel Gandolfo, the papal summer residence on the hills outside of Rome. Though physically absent, his influence will be powerful in a couple of respects.

First, as a living former Pope his shadow will be a major factor in determining what the cardinals will decide. It is likely that no cardinal will vote someone that the present Pope would not himself vote. It is unlikely that the conclave will elect someone who would radically depart from Ratzinger's trajectory, since he will still be around during and after the conclave. Following the new Pope's election, Benedict XVI will go back to the Vatican where he will live in a former monastery inside the Vatican walls. He will be *there* and *around*. The cohabitation with the new Pope suggests that the latter will be somewhat a prolongation of the former. Without voting and without using words, Benedict XVI will have a say in the next election.

Second, his input in the conclave is evident in considering the fact that during his pontificate he has nominated about half of the 117 electors. The composition of the conclave is largely shaped by men personally chosen by Benedict XVI whom he trusted.

There are two counter-elements to be considered. One is that the conclave will not be held in the emotional atmosphere that generally follows the funerals of the previous Pope. It will be more cerebral than sentimental. The other is that, given the

unprecedented decision by Benedict to resign and the shock that has caused in the curia, the conclave could be used as a showdown in the Vatican checkerboard. It is clear that Ratzinger's weakening condition that led to his resignation were hastened by internal fights and unresolved tensions in various Vatican departments. The conclave will have to decide what to do about them and the outcome could be surprising. Benedict surrendered to the stand-still situation, but the new Pope will have to act.

A list of candidates

After two non-Italian Popes (the Polish Wojtyła and the German Ratzinger) is it time for an Italian one? If this is the case, then the Archbishop of Milan Angelo Scola (72) is the first and perhaps only option. The Italian candidates, however, could pay the price of a possible showdown. Many of the recent scandals (e.g. Vatileaks and the Vatican bank's opaque financial maneuvers) originated in the Roman curia which is mainly governed by Italian prelates. Moreover, the Secretary of State Tarcisio Bertone (78), himself an Italian, is part of the on-going controversy. So the poor performance of the Italian hierarchy may result in leaving Italians out of the game to wait for the next round.

The fact that a growing number of Austrian priests is taking critical stances on the celibacy issue may falter Schoenborn's candidacy.

Two solidly "Ratzingerian" candidates are the Archbishop of Québec Marc Ouellet (68) and the Archbishop of Vienna, Christoph Schoenborn (68). The French-speaking Canadian Ouellet is the Prefect of the Congregation of Bishops and knows the Vatican machinery very well. His role of selecting the new bishops allowed him to have the pulse of the world-wide Church, though he is not a "charismatic" figure in Weberian terms. Schoenborn is a brilliant theologian that denounced some of the silences over the sex abuses scandal. His

bold exposition on this issue could find resistance in some traditional circles. Adding to that, the fact that a growing number of Austrian priests is taking critical stances on the celibacy issue may falter Schoenborn's candidacy. Another *papabile* in the same group is the Archbishop of New York, Timothy Dolan (63). Historically, North-American candidates have been excluded for the simple fact that the Roman Catholic Church did not feel comfortable with the idea of having a Pope coming from a super-power of the world. This emotional and political obstacle should be overcome before giving Dolan a chance.

Finally, there are three outsiders. Voices around the world repeatedly say that the time has come for a "black" Pope. Cardinal Peter Turkson (65), Ghanaian, is President of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace and a rising star in Vatican circles. A non-Western Pope would definitely come to terms with the reality of the Christian growth in the Global South and the need to move the axis of the Church toward it. In 2012, however, Turkson caused many eyebrows to raise when he launched a document evoking the creation of a global agency to preside over the world's economy. "Does he want a Soviet-type of control over the world?" people asked. Turning to Asia, the Archbishop of Manila (Philippines), Luis Antonio Tagle (56) is another option if the Roman Catholic would turn the page in a more radical way towards becoming a less Western institution. This smiling, apparently simple, yet engaging and charming young cardinal made a positive impression at the last Synod of Bishops for the New Evangelization and attracted immediate positive feedbacks. A middle way solution could be the Archbishop of San Paulo (Brazil) Odilo Pedro Scherer (63), the Brazilian bishop with a German name and European "heart". Latin America is perceived as being a continent of solid Catholic traditions (like the old Europe), yet expressing the spiritual vitality of the Global South.

An Evangelical preference?

Given the range of possible candidates, who is the more Evangelically inclined or

Evangelical-friendly? This is difficult to say. Here are three criteria that could form a list of Evangelical desires for the next conclave.

First, generally speaking, those ecclesiastical figures with first-hand experience among Evangelicals in their pastoral work tend to be more inclined toward friendly relationship with non-Catholic Christians. It is true that where the Roman Catholic Church is strongly attached to the national state in a privileged position, the leaders tend to have a more “defensive” attitude and inward-looking vision. On the contrary, where the Roman Church experiences the stresses and strains of being a religious institution in the midst of other movements and in the context of a separate political power, there the Church has a more positive attitude towards religious pluralism. To the extent that the next Pope comes from a background of interaction with the plurality of Christian experiences and orientations, the better he will be among evangelicals.

Second, those who have more global perceptions of the state of Christianity surely have a better consideration of Evangelicals than those who are grounded in regional areas where Catholics have a traditional majority status. The challenges of the persecution of Christians, global poverty, and the rising secularism of the West are common concerns that allow conversations and cooperation between different Christians. A pope who is aware of global trends and who has knowledge of the complex geography of the Christian Churches will be in a better position to appreciate the contribution of Evangelicals around the globe.

Third, some Evangelicals would naturally desire that the pope be a Bible-focused and Christ-centered leader, less attracted by traditions and devotional practices and more inclined to promote biblical literacy and personal faith in Jesus Christ. They would like to see a “reformer”-type of a leader, being willing to allow the Word of God to drive the Church in truth and love. In other words, a less “Roman” and a more “catholic” Pope would be the standard Evangelical preference. Other Evangeli-

cals would think that the best Pope will be the one who declares himself redundant, being Jesus Christ the Lord of the Church and the Holy Spirit his only vicar.

Is there such a *papabile* out there? We shall soon see.

The Three Tasks of Pope Francis

Rome, 18th March 2013

The election of Cardinal Bergoglio to the papacy responds to three basic concerns that the conclave felt it necessary to address. These concerns helped to sketch the profile of the new Pope and Cardinal Bergoglio fitted it.

The transitional task

No one in that curia will ever say the Benedict XVI's reign was a failure. Yet the impression is that the election of Pope Bergoglio is an implicit admission that the previous papacy achieved less than what was expected, especially as far as the main point of its agenda was concerned, i.e. the relationship with the secular West. After 8 years of Benedict's reign, the secular West has become more distant from the Church and critical of it. Moreover, the curial Church has given the poorest performance in terms of lack of Christian standards. The Church needed therefore a *different* Pope.

No one in the curia will ever say that Benedict XVI's reign was a failure. Yet the impression is that the election of Pope Bergoglio is an implicit admission that the previous papacy achieved less than what was expected.

Between the traditional yet secularized West and the vibrant yet still “young” Glo-

bal South, the conclave has chosen the classical “via media”, or “middle way”. Pope Bergoglio is an Argentinian born of an Italian family. He is Latin American but with a European background. He embodies the transition between the Western establishment and the Southern fervor. Perhaps the conclave thought that choosing an African Pope or an Asian Pope would have been a too long and unwarranted stretch. On the other hand, sticking to another European pope would have been too much of a geo-political conservative move that the Church could not bear. Pope Bergoglio is an in-between figure. Different but not so strange. Similar but not a replica.

The conclave did not commit the Catholic Church to a long papacy (like that of John Paul II), but has instead opted to keep the future in sight, waiting to see how this papacy will unfold.

He is also a transitional figure in terms of his age (76). He is not a “young” Pope with the expectation of a long papacy. Neither is he an “old” Pope with not much time in front of him. His papacy will test the willingness of the Church of Rome to move beyond the stand-still position of recent years, but perhaps it will not have enough time to see changes implemented. The conclave did not commit the Catholic Church to a long papacy (like that of John Paul II), but has instead opted to keep the future in sight, waiting to see how this papacy will unfold. All the while the hierarchy will retain the right to make changes if they deem it necessary.

Pope Bergoglio is presented as an outsider, but in fact he is not. Supported by Cardinal Martini, Bergoglio was the runner up in the 2005 conclave, the one in which Ratzinger became Benedict XVI. He is well known to the cardinals and was apparently considered “reliable” by the conclave. In the top list of candidates prior to

the conclave was the Brazilian Scherer, another transitional figure. Scherer, however, was apparently perceived as being too much involved in the politics of the Roman curia to be able to free himself from its maneuvering. Bergoglio is integrated but not organic to the curial world.

The apologetic task

The name chosen by the Jesuit Pope is Francis. He mentioned that Francis is a reference to Francis of Assisi (1181-1226). The international press put a lot of stress on this Franciscan symbolism and apparently liked it. Apparently he will combine the Jesuit wit with the emphasis on poverty and frugality. The Jesuit order, or Society of Jesus, is a religious order of the Roman Catholic Church founded by Ignatius of Loyola in 1534. Jesuits emphasize education (founding schools, colleges, universities and seminaries), intellectual research, and cultural pursuits. Franciscans, by contrast, are those people and groups (religious orders) who adhere to the teachings and spiritual disciplines of Saint Francis of Assisi (1181-1226) based on universal brotherhood and poverty.

The choice has to do with the willingness to mark an apologetic transition in dealing with the modern world. Ratzinger addressed it by lecturing as a professor, but the West does not like detached, top-down teachers. Ratzinger argued his positions in a very clever and intellectual way, but the West is looking more to celebrities who can ignite imagination. Ratzinger denounced the moral relativism of our day, but the West does not like people who do not practice the “political correctness” of accepting everything. Ratzinger’s strategy ended in a stand-still.

Pope Francis began his papacy with a very different apologetic style. Approachable, normal, ordinary, he likes to be with the people, speaking their language and making his message simple. Ratzinger stressed “faith and reason”, Francis is likely to stress “mercy and simplicity”. Ratzinger addressed the West as theologian, Francis is likely to underline the common humanity of all. The difference is significant.

Will the Church become poor and meek? Will it give priority to a simpler lifestyle? Will it put a stronger emphasis on its spiritual tasks than its secular interests? One thing is to be remembered, Francis of Assisi did not want to reform the whole Church, but wished to receive from the official church the right for his circle of friends to live in poverty. He wanted a niche to pursue his Evangelical ideals, leaving untouched the apparatus of the imperial church. The Church of his time readily gave him what he wanted because she did not feel threatened by him. We will see whether Pope Francis will transition Evangelical poverty from being a niche of the few idealists to being the standard of the worldwide Church. If this is the case, he will have to look at Peter Valdo (1140-1218) who like Francis practiced Evangelical poverty but challenged the official church to do the same. Francis was integrated, Valdo was persecuted.

[The Waldensian church of Italy, born from Valdo's preaching of the Gospel in the 12th century, regards itself as the first church of the Reformation and therefore as *Mater Reformationis* (mother of the Reformation). It joined the Calvinist ranks in 1532.

The Waldensians were among the first Protestants to flee to South Africa, with the French Huguenots.

[The Waldensians were among the first Protestants to flee to South Africa, with the French Huguenots. It is remarkable that all this refers back to the Italian province of Piedmont (Turin and surrounding cities)

from where Pope Bergoglio's family comes as well – Editor's note.]

The geo-political task

A final thought on the geo-political significance of the election. Pope Bergoglio comes from a country where, in recent decades, the secular *status quo* that saw Roman Catholicism being the dominant religion has been shaken by the growth of Evangelical churches and new religious movements of various kinds. This phenomenon designed a new spiritual geography of the country. The same can be said for other Latin American countries. It is interesting that the Catholic Church chose a Pope from Latin America giving him the task of monitoring and presiding over this continental religious border that has become fluid if not weak. The traditional response to the numerical growth of Evangelicals has been labeling them as "sects" and "cults", but this derogatory approach did not stop millions of people from leaving the Catholic Church. Now, the Pope himself will be directly involved in rescuing the continent. Something important is taking place in Latin America and the risk of losing the continent was considered in need of being addressed at the highest level.

Pope Francis is a transition figure. Time will show how Latin American, how curial, how Jesuit, and how Franciscan he will be. In his first short speech in front of the applauding crowd in St. Peter's square, the most quoted figure was the Virgin Mary to whom he committed himself and his predecessor. His first appointment in his first day of papacy was visiting the Marian basilica of St. Mary Major in Rome to pray to Mary for guidance and help. More of a Jesuit than a Franciscan way of beginning a papacy.

Protestants and Roman Catholics around 2010: some statistics

Renato Coletto

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Counting the Israelites? Biblical warnings and practical difficulties

Christians should be careful about counting their numbers. God announced to Abraham that his descendants would be numerous, as the stars of the sky (Gen.15:5). When King David wanted to count the children of Israel (1 Chron.21), he was severely reprimanded by God. Was it because such an operation implied some sort of arrogance? Was it an implicit “reduction” of God’s people to a “quantity”? Was there a hidden belief that big numbers mean more confidence? Or power? According to Jesus, the majorities are usually wrong (Matt. 7:14), and the fact that his followers were relatively few did not worry him at all. All this should sound like a warning for those who get excited too easily about counting people, filling benches, registering members and other passions which are sometimes even economically driven.

God himself requested, from time to time, to count the number of the Israelites and even the number of some specific sections of the nation, for example the Levites.

Nevertheless, God himself requested, from time to time, to count the number of the Israelites and even the number of some specific sections of the nation, for example the Levites (Ex.30:12; Num.3:40; 26:4, 51). Hopefully, therefore, there can also be good reasons to count heads,

and this may give us some confidence for talking about the size and distribution of the Christian communities around the world.

Some churches count as members all those who are baptised (including children). Others adopt adult baptism and count only the adults as members.

The complications are many: some churches count as members all those who are baptised (including children). Others adopt adult baptism and count only the adults as members. To be able to make some sort of comparison with other religions, adjustments have to be made. For example, Muslims are considered Muslims for the simple fact of being born from Muslim parents. In this case, the comparison should be made with the Christian “community”. In fact, most Christian statistics differentiate between:

- the “community” (all those who *claim* to be associated to a certain church, as well as their children),
- the “adherents” (those who *attend* some/most church activities), and
- the “members” (adult members who consciously decide to *commit* to a church).

Hereafter the numbers refer especially to the “community”.

It is important to remember that statistics are never completely “neutral”: they in fact

reflect the confessional “paradigms”, worries or purposes of those who compile them.

Different points of view: Roman Catholic statistics

This can be demonstrated by the following example: Roman Catholic researchers and institutions are especially concerned about the growth of Islam. They often compare the size of Christianity and Islam, and provide projections for the future. This is probably due to the fact that, during the 1980s, Islam has overtaken the Catholic Church as the most numerous religious group in the world (at present, Islam is a community of 1,6 billion people). Since then, Catholics can get some consolation from the fact that Islam is still “smaller” than *Christianity as a whole* (2,2 billion). The consolation requires, however, that several churches that Roman Catholics used to call “sects” in the past must now be recognised as Christian churches.

The “popular” Roman Catholic view on these issues is simple. Anglicanism and Eastern Orthodoxy are often regarded as appendixes to the Church of Rome. Others are Catholics *in pectore*, (i.e. without knowing it). In this way, the Church of Rome is often perceived as including almost the totality of Christians. In addition, a numerical comparison between Catholics and Protestants is regarded as a sort of puzzle. Does Protestantism really “exist”? What one can see are Lutheran, Methodist, Baptist and a variety of other denominations. But what are the differences? It looks more plausible, therefore, to compare the Catholic Church with each individual church. The result is a sharp contrast between “The Church” and “the churches”, the strong and the weak.

The federal nature of Protestantism is often missed and the doctrinal proximity of its “branches” is overlooked. Institutional unity seems to be the only acceptable form of unity. For some mysterious reason, traits of this approach have been adopted, to a certain extent, also by Protestant statisticians like David Barrett (Anglican) and by Patrick Johnstone

(Evangelical). As a consequence, Protestantism is usually divided into at least three blocks:

- Mainline Protestants,
- Anglicans and
- Independent churches.

Does it make sense to create a separate category like “Independent Churches”, even if it has no internal doctrinal coherence?

The second and third “block”, however, do not contain only Protestants (e.g. in Barrett’s statistics). For example, among the Independent Churches one finds independent Catholic or Orthodox communities. Among the Anglican churches one finds groups that might regard themselves as Catholic. As a consequence, one cannot sum up the three blocks together and obtain the number of “Protestants”. In this scheme there is no over-arching category like “Protestants”. The Protestants are somehow “reduced” to the Mainline Protestants (block 1 above). In practice, however, one cannot help suspecting that the Anglicans and Independents are still Protestant. In the end, therefore, this classification gives the impression that the Protestant community lacks a clear identity and its borders are very blurred.

Nevertheless, when one looks for example (again in Barrett’s statistics) at the churches constituting the Anglican Communion (2nd block above) one has to realize that the Protestant denominations constitute some 90% of the membership. In addition, the Independent Churches (3rd block), are constituted by Protestants (at least by 85%) and only by a few “independent” Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches. Therefore, the following question should be asked: does it make sense to create a separate category like “Independent Churches”, even if it has no internal doctrinal coherence? A more appropriate approach, I would say, would be to “restitute”

those churches to the confessional traditions to which they belong.

This is indeed done by the Pew Forum (which will be mentioned again later).

The growth of Muslims is not simply reported with concern, but is also compared to the growth of Evangelicals and it is found that the latter are growing even more rapidly.

Evangelical calculations

The Evangelical wing of Protestantism has its own way of calculating statistics and of interpreting the numbers. Patrick Johnston *cum suis* is probably the most significant contributor in this field. One of the main concerns of this group is to highlight the numbers of Evangelical and Pentecostal groups, who experienced an exceptional growth in the last 4-5 decades. The growth of Muslims is not simply reported with concern, but is also compared to the growth of Evangelicals and it is found that the latter are growing even more rapidly. In some cases, the numbers of Evangelicals for each country are questionably emphasized more than the numbers of Christians. I think an important reason why Johnstone borrowed the “3 blocks approach” mentioned above, is that he could place the Evangelicals in a special category (the “independent churches”) and highlight their successful growth.

Pentecostals are also depicted as a movement crossing all Christian traditions: one finds them in the Catholic Church and in the Orthodox Communion as well. All this is supposed to magnify the virtues of the Evangelicals, yet one cannot help wondering what doctrinal consensus there might be, for example, between Roman Catholic and Protestant Pentecostals. The other question would be to know whether, from this point of view, being a Pentecostal is

more important than being a Catholic or a Protestant.

A more acceptable approach

A few months ago, however, I finally found a type of statistical report which I consider more satisfying from a methodological point of view: the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life. The Pew Forum is more acceptable because it recognises the “federative” nature of Protestantism and it does not overemphasise the differences among its main “families”.

Although the “three blocks” mentioned above are somehow maintained, they are internal to the broader category of “Protestants”. In other words, the three blocks do not include “para-Catholic” Anglicans or non-Protestant independent churches. The Protestants are finally identified on the basis of doctrinal common ground. In fact, notwithstanding the differences, the Protestant churches believe:

“in grace through faith alone (known as *sola fide* or ‘by faith alone’), belief in the Bible as the ultimate authority in matters of faith and order (known as *sola scriptura* or ‘by scripture alone’) and belief in the priesthood of all believers”.

At this point it should be clarified that, although the strategies are different, the main researchers do not differ substantially about the numbers. In the next section I will therefore present some recent statistics provided by the Pew Forum.

Numerical classification

The Pew Forum recognises 4 main Christian groups within Christianity: The Roman Catholics, the Eastern Orthodox, the Protestants and Other Christians. The statistics reported here refer to the year 2010. The world population was then slightly less than 7 billion (6 912 billion). The Christian Community constitutes some 32% of the total, which means 2 184 billion. Numerically speaking, the Christian “traditions” have more or less the following size:

The Pew Forum recognises 4 main Christian groups within Christianity: The Roman Catholics, the Eastern Orthodox, the Protestants and Other Christians.

Table 1: Size of the main Christian confessions

Roman Catholic	Protestant	Orthodox	Other
1094 million	801 million	260 million	54 million
50,1% of all Christians	36,7% of all Christians	12% of all Christians	1,3% of all Christians
15,9% of world population	11,6% of world population	3,8% of world population.	0,4% of world population

One comment should be made at this point. During the last 50 years the world went through a demographic explosion, especially in Asia, Africa and South America. Only a few decades ago, the world population was half of what it is now. Christianity could have almost become a marginal group (numerically speaking) simply by *retaining* its numbers. In fact, Christianity counted 1,3 billion adherents in the middle 1970s, which constituted 33% of the world's population of the day (4 billion). The same number would constitute today only 19% of the world's population

Christians still make up 32-33% of the world population. The two major groups within Christianity are explained below.

Protestants and Catholics

Concerning Protestantism, it must be admitted that the evangelisation leading to numerical growth was mostly performed by the most under-appreciated section of the Protestant world, namely those Evangelicals and Pentecostals who are often regarded as marginal. They, however, did most of the job, while the most "established" sections of Protestantism did not participate. Of course the Evangelicals boomed, while others are often decreasing

in numbers (especially Liberals and para-Liberals). It is sufficient to have a look at the statistics of countries like Germany or Switzerland, to see the resizing of para-Liberal Protestantism in those countries and the simultaneous growth of the Evangelical communities. (Admittedly, the latter are often strong in number but weak in cultural impact – but this will be discussed later).

A second consideration about Protestantism: numerically speaking, it has never been so close to Roman Catholicism. Born at least 1 000 years later (1 500 years if we include the church of the first centuries), Protestantism is "only" 300 million people "away" from Roman Catholicism.

At the end of the 1970s the Church of Rome followers were almost double that of Protestantism. (It represented almost 60% of all Christians and almost 20% of the world's population). Yet the Catholic Church is now right on the verge, for the first time in history, of losing the absolute majority within Christianity (50,1% - see table 1).

Having said this, let us expand upon the statistics.

Table 2: Size and distribution of Roman Catholics and Protestants*

*All figures are approximated

Area:	Population (millions)	% Catholics	Catholics (millions)	% Protestants	Protestants (millions)
Europe	742	35,2%	261	13,5%	100
Americas	935	55,5%	519	28,2%	263,4
North America	450	33,5%	150	39%	175,5
Central + South America	485	76,3%	370	17,5%	88
Africa (Sub-Saharan)	824	21,3%	176	35,8%	295,4
Middle East	338	1,6%	5,5	0,5%	1,7
Asia + Pacific	4073	3,2%	131	3,4%	140
TOTAL:	6912	15,9%	1094	11,6%	801

Comments

It is often observed that the majority of Christians nowadays live outside “the West” (Europe and North America), which was its stronghold for several centuries. A second fact to consider is that the majority of African Christians are Protestants. This is the case in Australia and North America as well, but Australia counts only 30 million people and when we consider the Americas as a single continent, the majority is Catholic (see table 2). In addition, the conversion of Africa is relatively new and it certainly means something special for us in South Africa.

Europe and South America steadily remain Catholic, although in South America the number of Protestants has been growing considerably. At the beginning of the 20th century the percentage of Protestants in South America was virtually 0%. In the middle 1970s the number increased up to 7%. At the moment it is around 18%, and still growing.

The “big match”, I believe, is nowadays played in Asia, the continent hosting 4 billion people, almost 60% of the entire population of the planet. With relatively more political freedom there currently exists a possibility to reach 4 billion persons who were not easily reachable in the past. In Asia Protestants have a slight majority over Catholics. In both China and India the two countries make up 2,3 billion people.

At present Protestants are the major Christian group (54 million in China and 18 million in India). After decades of oppression, the Chinese are much inclined to Christianity and they seem to prefer the Protestant version of it. Should the growth continue, the face of Protestantism would change further and increasingly acquire Eastern traits.

Christianity in Africa is like a large river, but it is only a few centimetres deep. There is certainly much to be done, in terms of discipleship.

Conclusion

Recent Christian statistics tell us that there is much to be excited about. Of course numbers are not everything. As someone once wrote, though Christianity in Africa is like a large river, it is only a few centimetres deep. There is certainly much to be done, in terms of discipleship.

When I printed some of the statistics of the Pew Forum for our pastor, after a while he couldn't help wondering: “and how come that the influence of Christians is so little in today's world?” Good question indeed: how come that such big numbers seem to change so little in real life? I am sure many readers share this question. One might certainly answer that many of those who are counted as Christians have very little commitment to their faith. Others limit themselves to attending a service but know very little of any cultural expressions of Christianity. There is also a long secular tradition which “neutralises” Christianity regarding legislation, scholarship, politics and the like. But these are partial answers: the fact is that African Christians need to become much more aware of their task to be the “salt of the earth”.

Apart from Africa, worldwide Protestantism must also become more “wise” when it comes to the mass media. My impression is that it is still quite marginalized. While the Catholic Church receives a lot of attention and is given huge exposure (e.g. as far as television is concerned), the Protestant community appears as far more laid back. Is it because the Protestant Churches cannot speak with a single voice? Then they should find a way to do so. There probably is as much difference and disagreement within the Catholic Church as there is in the Protestant world. Yet the Catholics can present unified declarations.

I think making unified declarations could also be possible for Protestant Churches, notwithstanding their federal nature. One doesn't need a pope to do that: organisations like the World Evangelical Alliance could voice the concerns, beliefs and recommendations of hundreds of millions of Protestants. Perhaps this would still not re-

present the totality of Protestants but they would still be the overwhelming majority. Whatever the case might be, there is certainly a lot to do to “prod the slumbering giant”. This is not only about numbers of

course, but on a positive note, the harvest is still going on, and the Christian community should try and equip themselves as well as they can.

Dolf van Niekerk. 2013. **Bleek Planeet**. Pretoria: Protea Boekhuis. Prys: R150. ISBN: 9781869199210

Resensent: Wian Erlank
Fakulteit Regte (NWU, Potchefstroomkampus)

Bleek Planeet is Dolf van Niekerk se vyfde digbundel en 23ste publikasie wat op 16 Maart 2013 by Protea Boekhuis in Pretoria bekendgestel is. Die digbundel maak 'n waardige bydrae tot Van Niekerk se oeuvre wat beide prosa en poësie insluit en strek oor 'n tydperk van meer as 55 jaar.

Bleek Planeet word ingelei teen die agtergrond van 'n uittreksel uit Václav Havel (digter en voormalige president van Tsjeggo-Slowakye) se 1990-toespraak aan die VSA-kongres:

Without a global revolution in the sphere of human consciousness, nothing will change for the better in the sphere of our being as humans, and the catastrophe towards which this world is headed – be it ecological, social, demographic or a general breakdown of civilization – will be unavoidable.

Die tema van die bundel is uitdruklik een van kommer oor die mens se invloed en vergrype aan die aarde en die natuur. Met die eerste lees van die bundel blyk die titel dan ook haarfyn akkuraat te wees. Die inhoud is bleek – net so bleek soos die visioene van 'n bleek, dor en misbruikte planeet. Die gedigte is meestal nie 'n plesier om te lees nie, dit spreek 'n mens aan en koester jou nie. Hierdie bleek uitkyk kan verwag word van die tema van die materiaal en is juis daarom suksesvol. Klimaatsverandering vorm 'n sentrale deel van die digbundel en die gepaardgaande probleme en moontlike rampspoedige gevolge word sorgvuldig aangespreek sonder om te liries of te tegnies te wees.

Twee gedigte in die bundel staan veral uit. Die een is *Elegie vir verlore Aarde*, 'n akkusatoriese lamentasie van die (Christen) hoofman Seeathl na wie die stad Seattle vernoem is. Daar bestaan 'n legende wat Seeathl se beroemde toespraak weergee en waarna soms verwys word as 'n vyfde evangelie in natuurbewaringskringe. Die beroemde toespraak is egter die produk van 'n draaiboekskrywer wat dit in 1971/72 geskryf het vir 'n rolprent. Hoe dit ook al sy, die boodskap is 'n waardevolle een, selfs indien dit nie deur Seeathl geuiter is nie, en die digterlike interpretasie van die toespraak vorm 'n stewige kern van *Bleek Planeet*. By monde van Seeathl spreek Van Niekerk ons almal aan oor die manier waarop ons roekeloos met die natuur omgaan.

*Wat jaag die bleek velle
dat hulle die aarde in haar skaamte gryp,
haar wond en só laat lê,
haar los vir die vergeet
soos die grafte van hul vaders
wat hulle sonder omkyk net verlaat?
Net julle met die vaal oë weet
hoe 'n pa sy kind se asem steel
en vir wins in kwanselporsies deel –
lug en aarde brokkel in jul hande.*

Sinbad, die ander gedig wat my telkens roep om weer en weer te lees, is ietwat minder bleek as die res van die materiaal. Dit is een van die gedigte wat saam met 'n paar ander beminde gedigte vinnig gememoriseer kan word en inderdaad sy plek kan volstaan as een van die handjievul effektiëste en mees geliefde gedigte ooit. Die enigste ander gedig wat my ooit so aangespreek het in terme van die impak van die poësie is die gedig van Vergilius, in die *Aeneis* oor die dood van Dido, die koningin van Kartago – ironies genoeg gaan beide *Sinbad* en *Aeneis* oor swerwers en ontdekkers. Ek moet die feit uitlig dat die dood van Dido se impak juis net in die oorspronklike Latyn verkry kan word. In dié geval het Van Niekerk dit met Afrikaans reggekry. Dit is reeds die moeite werd om die bundel net vir hierdie gedig aan te skaf.

*in die nanag as die oog wat net lig ken
die kompas nie kan lees,
kaart ek met jou hand
die rondings van jou vasteland.*

Alhoewel dit moeilik is om verder nog gunsteling uit die kosbare groep gedigte uit te lig, is *Balade van die hande*, die twee *Brandskilder* gedigte en *Mastos* vir my besonder.

Dot Serfontein. 2012. **Die Laaste Jagtog**. Pretoria: Protea Boekhuis. Prys: R129. ISBN: 9781869195540

Resensent: Annamarie Mostert
Melkbosstrand (NWU – Navorsingsgenoot)

Die Laaste Jagtog, deur die vermaarde verteller Dot Serfontein, is die heruitgawe van 'n bundel kortverhale wat in 1983 bekroon is met die FAK-Helpmekaar letterkundige prys. Die reeds erkende gehalte van die kortverhale in die hersiene uitgawe word verdiep deur 'n treffende omslag en keurige taalversorging. Tematies word 'n soeke na lewenskwaliteit en geluk, na dit wat sin maak om te kan leef, saamleef, oorleef en selfs vreedsaam te kan sterf, verbeeld deur die metafoor van 'n laaste jagtog wat in elk van die vyftiental kortverhale afspeel.

Ter inleiding tot die bundel beklemtoon die veteraan Afrikaanse skryfster die waarde van 'n verantwoordelike omgang met Afrikaans. Sy dra haar bundel op: "aan 'n geslag vir wie die Afrikaanse taal en kultuur sinoniem met oorlewing is, en hulle daarom self verantwoordelikheid vir só 'n oorlewing sal aanvaar". Die kortverhale skets 'n dinamiese verkenning van verantwoordelike en onverantwoordelike omgang met lewenswaardes, mense, diere, materiële dinge en die natuur. In die eerste kortverhaal, "Die laaste jagtog", word die impak van Kosie Verster se onverantwoordelike obsessie met jag op Jeanne, sy jong vrou en op hul huweliksgeluk in gepaste Bybelse beeldspraak beskryf: "Dit word yskoud agter haar rug af: hof, regter, tronk! Uiteindelik het dit tot hier gekom. Hoeveel jaar gaan dit wees, Kosie, jou dwaas, wat ons geluk oor jou omgetrek het soos 'n Filistynse tempel?" Hierdie beeldspraak is veral gepas omdat Simson in die Bybelse verhaal deur sy geloof die krag gekry het om 'n leeu te verskeur. Deur die loop van die verhaal groei Jeanne se verantwoordelike sin tot 'n lojaliteit en geloof wat daarin slaag om die skanse van haar man se jagobsessie af te breek: "Toe weet sy seker dat as die Here net aanhou om haar sterker as alle leeus en hoër as alle duine te maak, Kosie sy laaste jagtog afgelê het."

Serfontein se meesterhand in geloofwaardige karakterontwikkeling en treffende beeldspraak wat in die eerste kortverhaal te sien is, is ook opsigtelik in die ander

kortverhale. Die skryfster slaag uitstekend daarin om die soeke na sin vanuit 'n wye verskeidenheid van perspektiewe toe te lig. So leer Bob, die visserman, in die verhaal "Vis en Skyfies" die verskil tussen gekunstelde en natuurlike skoonheid ken in sy soeke na 'n vrou met wie hy gelukkig sal kan saamleef. Die skryfster verleen nuwe en dieper betekenis aan die konvensionele metafoor waarin deugsame mense met die sout van die aarde vergelyk word. Magriet se deugsamheid word in die handelingsverloop van hierdie seeverhaal uiteindelik nie deur Bob gesien as die sout van die aarde nie, maar as die sout van die see: "Toe hy die skinkbord by Magriet neem, sluit sy hande 'n oomblik om hare. Hy kyk haar reguit in die oë, en die skielike lig wat in hulle flikker, kaats vreesloos en sout na hom terug."

Kontrasterend met die optimisme wat gepaard gaan met die vind van 'n potensieel deugsame lewensmaat, is die ontnugtering van Drien, die kleremaakster, se drome oor haar voorgenome huwelik met Petrus in die kortverhaal "Die Aansoek". Die skryfster verbeeld Drien se ontnugtering en aanvaarding van haar eie uitgestelde troue wanneer sy die trouokmateriaal van die skoolhoof se dogter teen haar hou en dan laat val. Dit is 'n treffende metafoor wat, myns insiens, een van die kragtigste in die bundel is: "Maar ten slotte word dit net lap, vernederend vasgespeld aan onwaardige sneepapier, verknip en na die behoefte van ander teen sy eie skering vasgestik".

Die bundel bied 'n mosaïek van verhale waarin die karakters, almal op jag na drome, ambisies en ideale, toenemend insig en verantwoordelike aanvaarding van hul realiteite verkry. So kontrasteer die skryfster die kind se fantasiewêreld van 'n gelukkige verhouding tussen haar ouers met die werklikheid van hul ontoereikende huwelik. Serfontein gebruik elemente en beelde van die sprokiesverhaalgenre in die kortverhaal, "Die Sprokiesprinses" om Babsie se ouers op 'n herontdekkingstog van hul verhouding te lei totdat hulle gereed is om mekaar vir die eerste keer werklik te aanvaar. In die kortverhaal, "Bethesda", bring Gerrie, Ouma Van Wyk se onverantwoordelike seun, haar laaste Kersfees saam met haar deur. Hy versin 'n bestendige lewe, maar die wete dat hy uit liefde bereid is om 'n tydelike realiteit vir hulle te skep en dit met haar te deel, laat Ouma van Wyk gelukkig sterf.

Die najaag van ambisie en die karakters se versoerende kennismaking met die werklikheid word sensitief, dog realisties, vanuit 'n verskeidenheid perspektiewe en milieus aangebied. Die wêreld van die filmbedryf, die gereg, besigheid en atletiek vorm die verkenningsvelde waarin die jagtogte plaasvind. Ironies, lei Diederik Venter se obsessiewe najaag van sy droom om 'n honderd duisend vuurhoutjiedosies te versamel tot sy dood net wanneer hy sy laaste vuurhoutjie verkry.

Serfontein se kenmerkende fyn sin vir humor vergesel die leser en die karakters op hul drome en verkenningstogte. In "Die laaste jagtog" het Tant Wyka haar man se geweerloop gebuig "dat dit grond toe kyk soos 'n slap pampoensingel." Sy het gekeer dat haar man, Oom Piet Jacobs, die draadhok oopskiet waarin drie jagters gevange gehou is. Serfontein skets humoristies Tant Wyka se nederige teregwyding van haar man: "Moenie jou verbeel jy's 'n Voortrekker nie, Piet Jacobs, ons leef in die twintigste eeu. Jy moet jou verstand gebruik of jy sal ons almal verongeluk. En askies vir die skade wat ek jou aangedoen het."

Die bundel, "Die Laaste Jagtog" span oor tydgrense heen, net soos die jagters die grense oorgesteek het op soek na jagtrofeë. Hierdie hersiene uitgawe word sterk aanbeveel as 'n sensitiewe en humoristiese verkenning van universele oorlewingswaardes deur middel van die Afrikaanse taal en kultuur.

Eben Alexander. 2013. **Bewys van die Hemel**. Penguin Books South Africa.
Prys: R220. ISBN: 9780143538349

Resensent: Christie Roode.
Afgetrede professor (UJ) en bestuurs- en loopbaankonsultant.

“Bewys van die Hemel” is die vertaling uit die oorspronklike Engelse teks, “Proof of Heaven” van die wêreldberoemde neurochirurg dr. Eben Alexander. Dit is die aangrypende vertelling van sy reis na die hiernamaals en terug tydens sy komateuse toestand van sewe dae waartydens hy met die dood geworstel het nadat hy *E. coli* bakteriële meningitis opgedoen het.

Hierdie beskrywing van sy nabydood-ervaring (NDE) is ‘n absoluut unieke vertelling van ‘n eens kritiese wetenskaplike wat taamlik sinies na vertellings van sommige van sy pasiënte wat ‘n NDE gehad het, geluister het en altyd ‘n “wetenskaplike verklaring” daarvoor aangebied het. Trouens, met sy jarelange ervaring as neurochirurg was hy by uitnemendheid toegerus om die werking van die brein te verstaan en hoe die “kollektiewe onbewuste” (om maar ‘n Jungiaanse term te gebruik) geprojekteer kan word in die realiteite van ‘n pasiënt se bestaan na so ‘n traumatiese ervaring soos ‘n skyndood.

Die vertelling begin met ‘n insident wat hy as valskermspringer gedurende die sewentigerjare gehad het toe hy ‘n mediese student aan die Universiteit van Noord-Carolina was. Tydens ‘n vryval sprong het hy daarin geslaag om ‘n botsing met ‘n medespringer te vermy terwyl beide van hulle teen meer as 150 myl per uur beweeg het. Dit het vereis dat hy kritiese reaksies binne mikrosekondes moes uitvoer om ‘n noodlottige botsing te vermy. Nadat albei van hulle veilig geland het, het hy begin om ernstig na te dink oor hoe ‘n buitengewone orgaan die brein is om hom in staat te kon stel om so ‘n komplekse reeks aksies te kon uitvoer op ‘n feitlik bo-natuurlike wyse. Na sy “terugkeer uit die dood” het hy dikwels teruggedink aan dié insident en begin besef dat die antwoord hierop veel dieper lê en dat dit nie sy brein was wat hom op dié betrokke dag gered het nie, maar iets veel dieper van hom, ‘n deel wat so vinnig kon beweeg “*omdat dit nie tydgebonde is, soos die brein en die liggaam nie*”. Dit was die slimste en diepste deel van die mens wat dit gedoen het – iets waarin hy vir die grootste deel van sy volwasse lewe nie geglo het nie maar wat na sy NDE sy lewe omgekeer het en hom genoodsaak het om sy ervaring en belewenisse tydens sy koma en sy wonderbaarlike herstel daarna, met ander te deel.

In die vroeë oggendure van 10 November 2008 word Eben wakker met ‘n geweldige rugpyn wat geleidelik vererger. Nadat sy vrou Holley hulle jong seun Bond gehelp het om klaar te maak vir skool, tref sy haar man in ‘n bewustelose toestand aan, ontbied die ambulans en vir die volgende sewe dae sou hy “*net in liggaam vir Holley en die res van my familie teenwoordig wees – my psige, my gees – wat mens ook al die kerndeel van die mens noem – was weg*”.

Die vertelling word dan voortgesit met ‘n uiters gedetailleerde beskrywing van sy herinneringe en terugflitste tydens sy komateuse toestand toe hy deur die “Ryk van die Erdwurmperspektief”, deur die “Poort” tot by die “Kern” beweeg het. Hy vertel hoe sy “bewaarengel”, ‘n jong meisie, saam met hom op die vlerke van ‘n vlinder sweef en die onbeskryflike mooi landskap onder hulle aanskou met die Poort wat toegang daartoe verleen terwyl die mooiste klanke van die “spiraalmelodie” hulle omring. Tydens dié ervaring kom hy ook weer in voeling met sy diepste emosies toe hy as volwasse uiteindelik sy biologiese ouers kon ontmoet (hy was ‘n aangenome kind en sy aangenome vader was ook ‘n neurochirurg). Hy beskryf ook hoe hy sy sterflike identiteit

so volkome kon vergeet dat hy toegang kon verkry tot die kosmiese wese wat hy – en elkeen van ons – werklik is en dat die Poort en die Kern glad nie soos ‘n droom was nie, maar ultra-werklik.

Tydens sy verskeie besoeke aan die Kern het hy **kennis** ontvang van dit wat werklik is en saak maak en sal bestaan vir ewig – *jy word liefgehe en gekoester; jy hoef niks te vrees nie; daar is niks wat jy verkeerd kan doen nie*. Dit word alles gereduseer tot een woord: **liefde**. Die skrywer som dit treffend op met die volgende woorde: *“in die suiwerste en sterkste vorm is hierdie liefde nie jaloers of selfsugtig nie, maar onvoorwaardelik. Dit is die grootste realiteit... die kern van alles wat bestaan of ooit sal bestaan, en niemand wat dit nie weet nie en in al sy dade uitleef nie, sal nie naasteby kan verstaan wie of wat ons is nie”*. Dit herinner sterk aan die skrifgedeeltes uit I Kor. 13.

Die vertelling sluit af met treffende, selfs hartroerende, onthullings van sy wonderbaarlike herstel en “terugkeer uit die dood”, sy vaste voorneme om sy ervarings op skrif te stel op ‘n objektiewe, wetenskaplike wyse en hom nie te laat beïnvloed deur vertellings van ander mense wat deur soortgelyke ervarings gegaan het nie. Wat die boek nog meer merkwaardig maak is die ongelooflike ooreenkomste wat dit toon met die vertelling van ‘n ander chirurg, dr. Mary Neal, wat in haar boek “Hemel toe en terug” ook soortgelyke ervarings geboekstaaf het nadat sy in die suide van Chili in ‘n kajak-ongeluk verdrink het.

Die boek is in alle opsigte lesenswaardig en sal selfs vir die geharde, objektiewe en siniese materialis tot ernstige nadenke en introspeksie stem. Ongelukkig word die boek ietwat ontsier deur slordige tegniese versorging met vele foute wat in die proefleesfase deurgeglim het – selfs op die voorblad van die omslag waar daar verwys word na ‘n **Neurochirurg!** Dit doen egter nie afbreuk aan die geheelindruk nie en dit is beslis ‘n boek wat almal moet lees wat nadink oor die sin van die lewe, die onbekende wat ons almal een of ander tyd sal betree en ‘n Opperwese wat alles geskep het en liefdevol onderhou.

Dot Serfontein. 2011. **Rang in der Staten rij**. Protea Boekhuis. Prys: R160.
ISBN: 9781869194543

Resensent: Louis Naudé
Bestuurskonsultant; navorsingsgenoot, UP.

Rang in der Staten rij deur Dot Serfontein is ‘n roman wat 34 jaar na sy eerste verskyning in 1979 in nuwe konteks gelees moet word. Hierdie nuwe konteks is breedweg die hoë kwaliteit van ‘n groot aantal nuwe publikasies oor die ABO wat betreklik onlangs verskyn het. Tydens die 100-jarige herdenking van die ABO en daarna het verskeie publikasies, TV-programme, films en dergelyke skeppings die lig gesien. Veral die publikasie *Verskroeiende Aarde* wat later as ‘n TV-program aangebied is, het daartoe bygedra dat ‘n ongelukkige en tragiese stuk geskiedenis in puik publikasies herleef het. *Rang in der Staten rij* staan stewig en redelik voor in ‘n nuwe literêre ry. Teen hierdie agtergrond is ‘n herdruk van die roman in 2011 duidelik te verstane. ‘n Belangrike literêre werk deur Dot Serfontein is ‘n welkome tweede kans gegun om in nuwe, of eerder opgedateerde, konteks tot lesers te spreek.

Die ietwat vreemde titel van die roman is afkomstig uit die eerste strofe van die ou Vrystaatse volkslied:

Heft, Burgers, 't lied der vrijheid aan²
 En zingt ons eigen volksbestaan!
 Van vreemde banden vrij,
 Bekleedt ons klein gemenebest,
 Op orde, wet en recht gevest,
 Rang in der Staten rij.
 Rang in der Staten rij.

Die volgende verklaring is insiggewend:³ “Al heeft ons land een klein begin,Wij gaan met moed de toekomst in, Het oog op God gericht.” ’n Klein boerevolkie het ideale en wil in dieselfde konteks as ander lande gesien word en dus die “rang in der staten rij” verdien. Hierdie strofe van die lied impliseer in wese ’n strewe om as klein gemeenskap iets groots te wees en met reg in ander state se liga te wees. Hierdie ambisie word in oordrewe vorm in Michal Ras se karakter gevind.

Die roman het twee hoofkarakters, naamlik Frank Ingram en Michal Ras, twee kweekskoolstudente in Stellenbosch wat besluit om tydens die ABO diens te gaan doen. Frank tree as verteller op, wat sy rol as die eintlike hoofkarakter verstewig. Vir Frank is Michal ’n heldefiguur met sterk ambisies en aspirasies, maar ongelukkig word hierdie beeld later as gevolg van dramatiese en tragiese gebeure tydens die oorlog vertroebel.

’n Kernvraag, aldus die uitgewersbrief, is: “Kan stryd, neerlaag en dood die kiem van lewe dra?” Teen hierdie agtergrond begin die roman tydens die uitbreek van die ABO. Op 11 Oktober 1899 verklaar President Paul Kruger van die Suid-Afrikaanse Republiek in alliansie met die Oranje Vrystaat oorlog teen die Britte. Die uitgewersbrief omskryf nog ’n kernaspek van die verhaal: “Vir Frank, ’n student in die teologie wat sy studies staak om te gaan veg, is dit ook ’n innerlike stryd wat hom afspeel rondom die absurditeite en ontnugtering van die oorlog. Later sal Frank homself afvra of die geweld van ’n oorlog ’n sluimerende behoefte aan wreedheid in hom bevredig. En uiteindelik kom die vraag: Wat was die uitwerking van die oorlog?” In die loop van die roman word hierdie vrae duidelik onder die loep geneem en noop die leser om gebeure binne die konteks van die ABO met sy wreedheid en ongeluk te evalueer. Om die religieuse raamwerk van die roman beter te verstaan, moet dit in gedagte gehou word dat die meeste Boere nie graag wou oorlog maak teen mede-Christene nie. Aan die ander uiterste was daar egter ook diegene wat deelname aan die oorlog as hulle goddelike roeping beskou het.

Die dramatiese opbou as kern van die roman kry beslag wanneer Frank in ’n relatief kort periode van teologiestudent tot volwassene met insig in sy lewenswandel ontwikkel. Die kommando beweeg noordwaarts en Frank besoek sy tuisdorp Patrysdraai in die Vrystaat. By sy aankoms vind hy uit dat sy ouers en ander inwoners besig is om te vlug. Terwyl Frank lojaal teenoor die kommando bly, besluit Michal om te dros. Frank ontmoet Christina en raak verloof aan haar. Later kruis die twee vriende se paaie weer toe Frank gevange geneem word deur veediewe. Frank word deur die oorlog met verskeie beproewing en teleurstellings gekonfronteer. Sy vader se besluit om nie aan die oorlog deel te neem nie, is teenstrydig met

² National anthem of the Orange Free State. Besoek op 12 Maart 2013.
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_anthem_of_the_Orange_Free_State

³ National Anthem of the Orange Free State (1854-1902). Besoek op 14 Maart 2013.
<http://www.noodle.org/learn/details/332582/national-anthem-of-the-orange-free-state-1854-1902>

sy eie waardes en oortuigings. Michal se vreemde optrede versuur die verhouding tussen hom en sy jarelange vriend.

As historiese roman is die boek waardevol vanweë sy stewige greep op die gebeure van die ABO (1899-1902). Die verhaal, met sy onverwagse en tragiese wendings, is plek-plek werklik aangrypend en mag selfs die sensitiewe leser ontstel. Daarbenewens is daar egter ook ligter momente waarin die skryfster se besondere vermoë om konkrete beelde deur woorde op te roep, na vore kom: "Haar wynrooi tabberd het 'n duiselingwekkende lae, kantomsoomde halslyn. Sy manipuleer haar vol rok, volstruiswaaier en krale-handsakkie met gemaklike swier. Sy geniet my beskroomde bewondering 'n paar oomblikke." Regdeur die roman word Serfontein se styl deur puik beskrywings en metafore gekenmerk. Hoewel ander resensente gevind het dat die narratiewe rykdom van die roman deur propagandistiese insetsels versteur word, het hierdie resensent dit minder steurend gevind. Naas die boeiende storielyne en puik historiese verantwoording is *Rang in der Staten rij* volgens my mening 'n kunswerk van hoë kwaliteit wat besonder lekker lees. Die lewe tydens die oorlog word omvattend en histories korrek aangebied. Sommige besonderhede word in die fynste detail verwoord wat die geloofwaardigheid van die roman binne historiese konteks verhoog.

Indien die beste romans wat tydens die ABO afspeel uitgesonder moet word, sal *Fees van die ongenooïdes* deur PG du Plessis, *Op soek na generaal Manneljies Mentz* deur Christoffel Coetzee, *Verliesfontein* deur Karel Schoeman en *Rang in der Staten rij* deur Dot Serfontein beslis hoog op die lys wees. *Rang in der Staten rij* bewys volgens my mening die feit, wat ook in uitgelese akademiese en literêre kringe gehuldig word, dat Dot Serfontein se bydrae tot die letterkunde onderskat word. Haar uitgebreide oeuvre het relatief min pryse en erkenning ontvang. *Rang in der Staten rij* bewys dat die storieskryfster in tydskrifte inderdaad 'n romanskepper van statur is.