Boekbesprekings I

Book Reviews

word na die kultuur van Afrika as "voor-Christelik" (en nie bv voor-Boeddhisties nie) – iets wat net moontlik is om te sê as mens spesiale insae in die toekoms het. Nog 'n voorbeeld waar die kultuur van die ouer se teologie verklap word, is in sy bespreking van duiwels en bose magte (p 108-9). Die besondere waarheidskonsepsie van die Gereformeerde Christendom word onkrities oorgeneem in 'n konteks waar dit van die uiterste belang is om dit raak te sien. Vir sommige lesers mag dit ook as vreemd opval dat Van der Walt vanuit die Bybel in teologiese debat gaan met tipiese aspekte van Afrika-godsdienste, so asof daar enigsins 'n gemeenskaplike gesaghebbende verwysingspunt is. Van der Walt aanvaar dat Christelike etiek noodwendig deontologies is en dat die Christelike norme vir mense van alle godsdienste sou geld (as dit vir alle mense geld, geld die eerste norm, naamlik dat mense die God van die Christelike geloof moet dien, ook vir almal). Dit sal beteken dat ontwikkeling net suksesvol gedoen kan word as alle mense hulle tot die Christelike geloof sou bekeer. Een van die veronderstellings in die boek is dat as mens maar net die aangetoonde nonne gehoorsaam, dan sal alles in ontwikkeling reg verloop (geskiedenis loop immers van sondeval na herskepping!). Behalwe vir 'n vinnige verwysing (p 191) toon die outeur geen sensitiviteit vir die probleem van die lydende regverdige nie (soos in die protes-Wysheid) of vir die tema van geloof ten spyte van lyding nie (soos in groot dele van die Nuwe Testament).

Wingate, Andrew 1999 – Does theological education make a difference? Global Lessons in Mission and Ministry from India and Britain


Reviewer: Ernst Wolff

The aim of this publication is to share the author's experience in theological training. Andrew Wingate draws on his experience as lecturer at Tamilnadu Theological Seminary (TTS) in India and at the West Midlands Ministerial Training Course (WMMTC) in England. The exposition has a twofold nature: on the one hand the book is a personal account of the author's work; on the other hand he has made use of long-term case studies in which he describes the ministries of some of the students of the two programmes. This is supplemented by insights obtained from interviews with students and lecturers alike.

The layout of the book is as follows: In the first chapter Wingate explains how he got involved in the kind of theological training that takes challenges like indigenization, inter-faith dialogue and social problems seriously. The remaining chapters of the book can be divided into two sections, corresponding to the two fields in which he has worked. The particular contexts of the seminaries in India and in England are sketched. This includes expositions of the content of the courses, the social environment in which they operate, and the problems of the relation between the seminary and the official churches. The TTS provides its students not only with theological training, but also with a space in which to experiment in different ways to indigenize the Gospel. Training thus includes practical training like the programme on rural skills and the prison ministry, and confronts the students with questions pertaining to dialogue with Hindus and adapting liturgy to the local culture. Great emphasis is placed on the problem of caste. At the WMMTC training is given to lay members of churches with the aim of more effective involvement. The issues here focus more on the relevance of the Gospel in a context where the church is losing ground. An
attempt is made to explore the traditions and experience of the students, while improving their theological and socio-critical skills in the specific context.

The case studies show how students have been helped by their theological education to get involved in their respective areas. The conflicts with established interests of churches and the problems due to social prejudice are described alongside the successes to overcome these difficulties, to help the destitute, to promote inter-faith dialogue and to indigenize the gospel in meaningful ways.

Though the author is reluctant (and perhaps rightly so) to draw general conclusions from his experience, the book is worthwhile reading. The reader will gain insight into creative ways in which theological education could be approached in order to make the church relevant to its socio-political and religious context. The book is an easy introduction to questions of how theological training could be improved and it needs to be followed up by more systematic overviews.