

Workgroup "Back to the Bible"

Translation Dutch letter nr. 4

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Dear brothers, sisters, pastors and elders,

Many greetings in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ. It was a real joy to us to meet with a number of you in the Ark in Nijkerk on October 14th and to have fellowship not just by phone or by letter but in person. You too, have met many brothers and sisters that day, who, just like you, are worried about what is happening in the churches in Holland and Belgium. Through the intensive discussions with each other during the breaks and also by the reactions our team received, we felt that the day was a help to you. And an encouragement like this was necessary for us, because as a group of people who are opposed to the "Toronto" manifestations, all of us also meet opposition. The powers of darkness are not happy with you and us and are trying to oppress us. That we also sometimes lose longstanding friendships is very difficult for us. Some of us see their church come apart or are forced to leave our church. These things are very sad and touch us deeply. After the Forum day in Nijkerk we wondered, as a team, if we had been able to help you sufficiently in the sadness you experience. If we fell short in this, we hope and pray that the Lord will help you where we failed.

Evaluation of the Forum day in Nijkerk

With the exception perhaps of what we just mentioned, we believe that this day fulfilled its purpose, that is, to meet each other and have discussions together. Many people came; the caretaker estimated about 220. We had a good time of singing, led by Rev. Charles Groot. It sounds great in a real church building. Both speakers gave us a detailed study of their subject. In the morning Charles Groot spoke about the Bible as our foundation. "Do we have itching ears? Are we prepared to handle a truth that is built on The Truth- Jesus Christ? Healthy words make healthy people!" These are just a few sayings from his lecture or rather bible study. In the afternoon Hans Frinsel gave a message with as subject "The Bible as the means to test the truth. "Church leaders, you not only have to feed your flock, but also to protect it. David knew very well that lions and bears were lying in wait for his flock. In the Netherlands we sometimes pay more attention to the nice green grass for our flock than to the spiritual dangers that threaten it". There was no lack of questions when the opportunity was given and there were no jarring notes. There was a lot of interest for the videos, in spite of the fact that the pictures shown sometimes caused anger and tears. Rev. Jan van Petegem closed the meeting with a short word of encouragement and a prayer of thanks.

Reactions by letter. 1995

Since we sent out our first letter on Jan. 17th, we have received many reactions by phone and by letter. A few people were angry or very sharp, others were very encouraging.

Others again, were worried and asked questions, reacting from a confusing situation in their own churches. We like to share a few of the comments with you. For the sake of confidentiality we are leaving out the names and addresses.

- "Re your letter data Sept. 11 with your opinions about the "Toronto-Blessing" and your unbalanced pronouncements about servants of God, I request that you do not send me any more letters, because I believe that you through such letters, are touching people who have been anointed by the Lord. You Bat down on the throne of God and think that you can get rid of these people and their God given ministry". (part of a letter) - "I am very sorry that I cannot be present on the Forum day in Nijkerk. Would it be possible to send me the

cassettes?" - "Many churches here in Belgium have gotten themselves into trouble by letting these teachings come in. If I can help you in any way, for example by giving you titles of helpful books, please let me know. United in our Lord, your fellow soldier". (2 paragraphs from a letter from Belgium) - "First of all we would like to thank you for the good work you are doing. Because our main task is producing evangelistic programmes for local radio stations, we are very interested in what you are doing. Please keep us informed". (part of a letter from Belgium). - "Since we had a small group of people who were very attracted to the Toronto-Blessing, my husband decided to go with them. He came back full of enthusiasm. He had ordered a video so that I also could join in. Unfortunately the only thing I felt after seeing the video was disappointment and a feeling that not all was right. This brought division in our family, So I began trying to find out what the reason was for this feeling. To tell you the truth, I rather wanted to become convinced that the Toronto Blessing was alright. But although I kept seeking and reading articles about it, nothing could convince me. I also received your letters, which agreed with my own growing conviction that the Toronto-Blessing is not from the Lord. I am glad to say that my husband also became convinced. What is really tragic too, is that in the process we lost almost all our friends and acquaintances. Fortunately we got new contacts in its place and our own relationship in the Lord has been renewed. We also have decided to go to a part-time bible school. Why I am telling you all this? Because the work your group is doing, has helped us to find the way back. With our greetings". (part of a letter)

The Toronto-Blessing abroad.

In the letter of Euro- spirit, dt. September '95, we read that Rodney Howard-Browne only gets opposition in the Netherlands and Norway. The following facts contradict this. - In Northern Ireland Cecil Andrews leads the "Take Heed" Ministries. In the beginning of 1995 he organized a conference against the Toronto Blessing. There is a video available of this conference. - In England there are important organizations known, who oppose the Toronto Blessing. Diakrisis in Crich under the leadership of Alan Morrison. A video of his lecture opposing the Toronto Blessing is available and he also publishes pamphlets. Intercessors for Britain in Moreston, Merseyside. This organization has a pamphlet with as title "Toronto Blessing or Blight?". In June 1995 they organized a meeting in the Westminster Chapel in London, opposing the Toronto Blessing, where 500 people were present.

- Ireland. Here Tony Simpson in Cork wrote a pamphlet, in which he clearly shows on biblical grounds, that the Toronto Blessing cannot be from the Lord. - Switzerland. The Christian publisher Walter Trachsel in Trutigen published a pamphlet against the Toronto Blessing. - Germany. The magazine Topic, in her December 1994 copy and also in a special edition in January 1995, reacted against the Toronto Blessing. - United States. In this country we know three Christian organizations, who have spoken out against the Toronto Blessing. 1. Christian Research Institute with as its director Hank Hanegraaff, the author of among other books "Christianity in Crisis." 2. The Berean Call with director Dave Hunt, author of, among other writings, "The Seduction of Christianity" 3. Spiritual Counterfeits Project (SCP) in Berkeley. One of their well known articles is "Holy Laughter or strong Delusion?" written in the fall of 1994. 4. In an eight pages long article the general secretary of the Assemblies of God gave a clear warning: "The Laughing Revival" (written in the beginning of 1995).

The Toronto Blessing in Belgium and the Netherlands.

From what we heard from Belgium, most Pentecostal churches keep their distance from the Toronto Blessing. In November 1995 the Union of Flemish Pentecostal churches spent time to discuss this issue. Without us realizing it, the conclusion was the same as the one we came to on our Forum day in Nijkerk. Ashley McGuicken, one of the so-called faith teachers in South Africa, who is clearly in favor of the movement, regularly says that he is going to conquer Belgium. This is supposed to happen from Schelle near Antwerp. In his letter dated November 22nd, 1995 he says about the past year: "This was a year that Belgium will never forget." He is also active in The Netherlands. - In The Netherlands a lot is going on. We keep getting phone calls and letters from worried people, who see their churches being torn apart because of the Toronto Blessing. In other cases pastors or elders tell us that they are taking a stand against the Toronto Blessing. On the Forum

day in Nijkerk a number of them were present. - Some leaders who are in favor, sent letters around. Brother Pool of the Berea church in Haarlem tries in his letter dated October 23rd 1995 to pour oil on the troubled waters, so that the Christians in The Netherlands would be less worried. However, his letter is full of praise for the Toronto Blessing and the ministry of Rodney Howard-Browne. - Brother de Ruiter of the Pentecostal church Elim in Hilversum tells in his letter dated September 13th, 1995 of his meeting with the Australian president of the Assemblies of God churches. This took place in the home of brother Pasterkamp of the Berea church in Haarlem. In Australia all 800 churches of the Assemblies of God are supposed to be right behind the Toronto Movement. We, as work-group, have our doubts about this statement, because of the fact that these churches are more or less autonomous and do not have to go along with the convictions of their president. (See point 4: the Toronto Blessing in the United States). - The Pentecostal church Zuidwijkkapel in Amsterdam, sent out a letter last month from pastor Barendse. In it he writes a statement consisting of several points against the Toronto Blessing. He is asking the pastors and elders, who agree with this statement, to sign and send it back to him. - The Brotherhood of Pentecostal churches had a meeting on November 9th to discuss the theological aspects of the Toronto Blessing. As a result they will shortly announce their point of view in this matter, according to the leader, brother van Amerom. - Youth with a Mission sent an apology around, on January 1995, concerning the part they played in organizing the Toronto meetings in Zwolle and Veenendaal, at the end of 1994. But in spite of this letter, Bart Doomweerd and others working with Youth with a Mission continue to propagate the Blessing and to organize study courses about the Holy Spirit. We believe that this is a task that Youth with a Mission should not undertake (that is something to think about) Note: in England 28 charismatic leaders published a statement in August 1995, in which they declared to be in favor of the Toronto Blessing. Lynn Green is listed with this group as representative of Youth with a Mission - We, as work-group, hope and pray that all of us may continue to walk in the right way.

The Toronto Blessing in the Media.

- Het Nederlands Dagblad clearly states that she is not in favor of the happenings in Toronto. She regularly publishes articles that are against. - On the second day of the meetings with Rodney Howard-Browne in Amsterdam, TV2 sharply criticized in a short broadcast the actions of the South African. - The BBC aired a programme, at the end of September 19 95, that among other things dealt with "The Gigggle Church in Toronto. At the end of the programme Mrs Arnott tried to make the reporter fall. She did not succeed. The EO broadcasted on radio five programmes of half an hour each about the Toronto Blessing. Because this was done on radio, not on T.V., these programmes made the impression that they were quite in favor of the Toronto Blessing. We doubt that this was the EO'S intention.

Future Plans

In 1996 we are planning a second Forum day. We will let you know more about this in our next letter. In that letter we are planning to discuss point 11 of our letter dated January 17th, 1995 in more detail: "Prophets ought to get a lot of attention these days, because the churches need to know the now-will of God in this end-time we are living in." This is a subject that has directly to do with the Toronto Blessing. It needs a lot of study and insight. If you feel that you could assist us in any way in this, for instance by sending us testimonies about prophecies, you are very welcome.

From the workgroup,

Rien van de Kraats