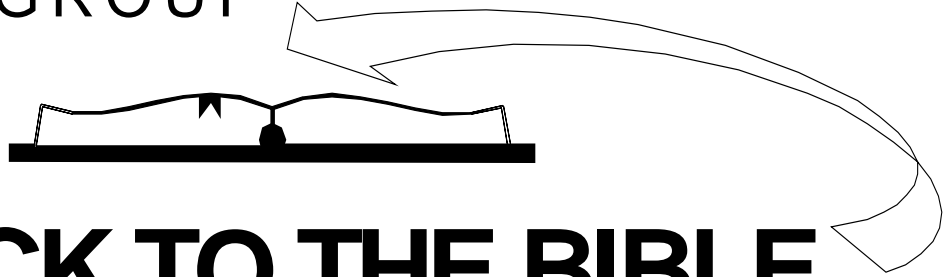


WORKGROUP



BACK TO THE BIBLE

Translation Dutch letter no 30, Kampen 24-08-06

Dear brothers, sisters, pastors and elders,

In our former letter dated 27-03-06 nr.29 we mentioned that we wanted to pay attention to the relation between the Bible and psychology. Meanwhile quite a number of questions from readers came in. We considered these to have great importance for other readers. So we decided to move on the subject to the next letter. Therefore this letter shall be entirely devoted to answering questions. We included the day of prayer on 06-06-06 (666) from Ana Mendez which took place in the same period. We shall start this letter with an e-mail we received in spring 2005 from Erica (fictitious name). We shall also take some time to describe the teachings and doings from the before mentioned prophetess Ana Mendez, because she will come to The Netherlands in 2007 for some conferences.

She is invited by and works together with The Ambassadors Ministries and the Kingdom Rule Ministries from Jan Willem Bakker. We as workgroup do not have anything personally against the persons we mention. Because of the false teachings and doings we see, we have to mention their names. As far as we know they live a good orderly life. It is not our business to criticise that.

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1...Life story from Erica spring 2005

"Dear brother van de Kraats,

A week ago I discovered your web-site while reading the Christian Monthly Uitdaging. Five years ago I came to know the Lord, after I followed an Alpha course in a orthodox church. As a child I was not educated in the Christian faith. On the contrary, my childhood was anti Christian. Though for myself I always thought there must be a God. When I was seven or eight years old, I had a kind of an experience that comforted me out of the blue. I walked from school to my home and was reflecting my life. This life looked not so good. While this

conclusion came home to me, I thought it would better to let it end. While walking alongside a park suddenly a very loud concert of birds burst out. Inside me something beautiful happened at the same time and I was comforted and filled with love. This was a kind of love I did not experience in my daily life. It did not occur to me that this could be God, because at home they did not speak about God.

But the primary school, I attended was a Christian school. I liked in particular the celebration of the feast-days of the year especially because of the hymn singing. Nevertheless the Christian faith disappeared to the background. And when I was at the age of twenty I actively started the search for the roots of my existence. Unfortunately I searched in the wrong direction, the supernatural direction during 35 years. It started with a visit to a fortune-teller, who became very cross at me; she said you know far too much, I do not want to say anything more!. Sadly it did not discourage me to go on on this road. I followed with a mandala drawing course, visits to a mesmerist and finally there was the most horrible thing: channelling. This I learned in Friesland, a special part of the Netherlands where they speak the Friesian language. Channelling involves speaking with angels. My contact with the angels was capricious, often it seemed kind and loving and sometimes the contact was dead scary. At the same time I experienced in my life that it got worse spiritually. I did not realise that channelling had something to do with it. During these sessions I very often felt fine and satisfied, because the angels wanted to help me. However at a certain moment very vehement information came for me, what became the turning point I understood one thing and that was: if I should go on in this way, I would end up in a madhouse.

After that a girlfriend invited me on the school yard for an Alpha course, I decided to register. This girlfriend did not know anything about the occult life I was involved in. After the course I still did not believe that God was the truth and not channelling. The leader of the course started a debate with me and said: channelling is not good, I shall look it up in the Bible. She did not have to search, for the bible fell open, three times on places where it stood written. Then she prayed with me and I could give my life to Jesus, just as I wanted. After that I decided to ask God to show me satan existed and channelling was indeed from him. A few nights later I dreamed that a small man was in my sleeping room; this is satan someone told me (I think it was God) Look at him carefully. I saw that it was a small man, smaller than myself about 1.40m. This figure looked at me with a gaze full of hatred. I thought actually I should be afraid, but I was not. The voice said to me: do not be afraid, for I am with you. The next day I disposed of everything connected with the occult. Within a short period of time I discovered that my depression was gone and also the restlessness. After that I often prayed that I should not be misled again. I as well told God that I wanted to help Him in warning people against the occult, for quickly it dawned on me that some Christians mingle these matters. They read Harry Potter, they draw mandala's, they exercise yoga, etc. I was rather naive and thought that they would be glad about my good advise, but to my great astonishment they were not. They more likely pushed off.

The persons Jan and his wife Tineke, who warned me through the Bible against channelling, took me three years ago to a conference from Ana Mendez in the LEG- church in Aalsmeer. The topics were spiritual warfare and setting free of certain areas, to make these accessible for the gospel. This Ana Mendez had some prophecies about the Netherlands. It was her second visit. The year before she prophesied that God would shake the Netherlands. After that Pim Fortuim was shot dead and the new parliament had to do without him. A certain

group, who had accepted with open arms the prophecies from Ana about the Netherlands, saw this as a confirmation that God had interfered!!!

This way of thinking gave me an awful feeling. The second conference of Ana Mendez where I myself was present, I experienced as tsunami coming towards me. I was browbeaten, I had a very difficult time. There was much speaking and praying in tongues. I did not like it because there was no interpretation of tongues. In the meanwhile I prayed myself, Lord if this happening is not from You, than protect me. But if this is really from You, forgive me that I cannot accept it and please lead me to the truth.

I shared my doubts with Jan and his wife, but they did not understand me. I had bought the book from Ana Mendez called: "The Shaking of the Heavens". This book did not convinced me, Ana used bible verses in a way I could not agree with. I myself never read in Paul's writings about spiritual warfare, about driving out demons above special area's to set these free for proclaiming the gospel. He just proclaimed the gospel. Jesus Himself cast out demons, but He did this only from men not from above area's.

Not until after 2 years I got the definite answer. I asked a girlfriend about the problem. She said immediately, this is all twaddle. At that time I experienced a complete rest, knowing that it were lies. Up till now I had been afraid, that it was possible that it was from God and in that case I should quench the Holy Spirit.

Last summer Tineke came to me to tell about another special conference she was excited about. She had been for a whole day to Pieter and Helen Bos. (see letter nr.21 dd. 01-03-001) These two proclaimed that all countries had their own kind of identity. So had the Netherlands with gifts and talents, but also sadly with sins, for these could be prayed for. If these sins would be confessed, God could fulfil his plan for the country. Immediately I thought this cannot be from God; the story looked like a kind of horoscope, a kind of identity you get, but it does not effect you. What do I have to do with a so called identity of a country. I am not even from this world as a Christian. And in Christ I am a new creature. I am bought free with very precious blood.

After a few months I went to Jan and his wife and told them, that I was convinced that the teachings from Ana Mendez and from Pieter Bos were heretical. That by these teachings the grace of Jesus Christ is made to go west; that I could not find these back in the Bible. That we ourselves cannot add to our salvation, that we had only to accept the cross for our personal sins and that we had to tell this gospel to others. Quite simple. And this I think so I find everywhere in the Bible.

I also told them that I worried about this, because many prayer and youth movements were infected. It is a big problem. Also the teaching from Pieter Bos, that God has made a covenant with every country is incorrect, because according to me God and Israel are the only bonds we know.

Jan and his wife did not receive all this with thanks. They told me I was very critical and forceful in my opinion. They were worried that I did not read the Bible enough!!!!!!

This however is my concern towards them; they take everything for granted and are not capable to come with good arguments from the Bible.

Since than there is much tension between them and me. Sometimes Jan preaches that we ought to stay in the truth and than I feel myself against the church roof. If he should apply this to himself it would help us a lot further. It makes me also worried from another angle; what happens to a person when year after year you mingle your faith with false teaching and allow this more and more room in your thinking? Does your salvation come in danger? Do these these Christians get bound?

These thoughts came to my mind during the conference from Ana Mendez. I felt a kind of pity. Ana , just like me had an occult background before she became a Christian. In her book you

can read how she was delivered from this. After that she took up the weapons towards the demons above certain area's, the so called territorial spirits. Than I thought if this is filling your life, you are still not free from this dark world. In this way they still have a grip upon you.

In my opinion these movements are growing; they complement and strengthen each other. Just like a virus. A few months ago I wrote to Pieter Bos. I asked him some questions, which he answered patiently. But as soon as I was critical, he found it difficult to stay friendly and to continue the conversation. He told me to become mature in the faith and just as Moses, have a desert experience of forty years before I should trouble him again. My counter-question was if he preferred that I should postpone 40 years to tell him that he was false teacher. I myself would rather hear this earlier.

I think in this way it becomes more difficult for God to make clear, that we ourselves are sinners. The focal point after all is directed on the entrance which satan should have above the Netherlands. The thought that satan has entrance to our own thinking by means of false teaching, a deception, is relegated to the realm of fancy. They use the argument that a born again Christian cannot be misled. (theology from Jan and his wife) Therefore it cannot happen with them. This is of course the ultimate deception. The standpoint that you cannot be misled is not biblical at all.

King Saul, he was anointed and started well, but he ended on the wrong track. He offered in his own way, without waiting for God. In the end he became totally confused. Jesus warned frequently for the wolves and the false teachers that would come. They shall come through the backdoor to rob and to steal. If we automatically should choose for the good, there should no need for these warnings. But according to Paul we need to make short work with the works of the flesh. Magic comes from the flesh, as far as I know. And some Christians are well capable to mingle these two, magic and Christendom. Where does this go wrong?

This has become a long mail, but I am very glad with your letters which are accessible to everyone. I thought that I and my girlfriend stood alone, when we looked with suspicion to the activities of Christian Holland. Very rare a contra sound is heard within the evangelical circles. Otto de Bruine (a well-known Dutch speaker) preached last year about the spiritual warfare in heavenly places. He warned the listeners to be careful not to go on the run with this teaching.

Again, thank you for your work and may God bless you. Perhaps someone from your work group will write me back. Greetings from Erica."

2...Prophecy Ana Mendez about the day 06-06-06 (666)

She is a converted voodoo-priest from Mexico. After her conversion she started witnessing about Jesus. Her conversion took place in her bedroom, when Jesus Himself appeared to her at the age of eighteen. In her book "Warfare at the highest level" she describes this encounter as follows: "Suddenly I could not see my surroundings any longer and found myself in terrific ecstasy. I did not understand what happened, but my eyes could see the Lord Jesus in all His majesty! I was baptised in Gods wisdom and love. During this experience I was able to see how all knowledge exists and is related to another and was revealed. Nothing was hidden for me.

While the Lord spoke to me I wrote in a clumsy way on a piece of paper. I do not know how many hours passed, before the vision gradually faded away. I found myself on the floor soaked with tears. In my hand there was the piece of paper written with the following words: "I am Jesus Christ, your Lord and I have come to say to you that at a certain moment I shall

reveal myself unto you. You will be my servant and I shall come to you by means of a man with blue eyes." (page 20 of the book)

The Tuesday in June 06-06-06 was an important day for Anna Mendez. According to her this day was very important, because this number consists of the number of the beast in Revelation. What she prophesied about the happenings on this day, is impressive. For us, Christians, the fulfilment of her prophesies is the criterion. Is she a real or a false prophetess? ---*"The world is in great commotion. Jesus is about to visit the world with His righteousness and glory. God is setting His people free to save souls, to start more churches, to have more care for the poor and to change the whole community we live in. We will see manifestations of His Holy Spirit. Complete cities will be saved in one day. The church is on the point to gather in the most fantastic harvest ever, while the powers of evil are busy to set free all the more antichristian spirits that try to hinder the Church to reach God's purpose. It is war!"*

---*"I am very sure, God told me prophetically, this is satan's plan and He wants the body of Christ over the whole world to undertake action to neutralise the powers of satan and to defeat him. I believe God wants a fantastic day of praise and worship over the whole world. Then a way will be opened from heaven to earth and He will be able to establish His throne everywhere on earth. God showed me very clearly how His glory descended on all places of the earth where people had listened to His voice and joined this celebration."*

God also revealed the strategy how all this is coming to pass:

---*"Summon the apostles, prophets and all saints over the whole world to form a mighty army, to bind themselves together and to sanctify 6 June 2006 as a day of worship over the whole world....It is important to keep the biblical numbers in mind, read Isaiah 66:6: Hear that uproar from the city, hear that noise from the temple! It is the sound of the Lord repaying his enemies all they deserve."*

---*" God has spoken and He said He wanted during that night of praise the horns signals of the sjofoar to sound over the whole earth, they must blow out the sound of the victory. I can see thousands of sjofoars that will be used. They will be used hour after hour and blow out the joy of our Saviour and Supreme Commander. "When I and all who are with me will blow our trumpets, then from all around the camp blow yours and shout: For the Lord and for Gideon. (read Ana Mendez, she is the prayer-general) Judges 7:18"*

---*" When we unitedly worship, praise and blow the sjofoar, the people who are in oneness together must speak God's apostolic words about their own region and about the whole world. This is a time of apostolic and prophetic declarations. God has given us the power to declare His sovereign will for this hour.*

We declare:

--*"The power of the Holy Spirit for a big harvest of souls."*

--*"More people will stand up to establish churches on all continents of the world."*

--*"The community will change and God's will be done on earth as it is in heaven."*

All the above written comes from the website: www.ambasmin.org. Mathijs Piet is the leader. He has close connections with Ana Mendez, organises her conferences in The Netherlands and wrote her complete prophecy on his site. Probably the report in the media about the 06-06-06-day is derived from this site.

Comments workgroup:

We just wait and see if this prophecy is false or real. A fact is that Ana Mendez uses texts that have nothing to do with the prophecy. Isaiah 66:6 and Judges 7:18 are taken out of context. To lean on numbers in the Bible is not common use. The mysterious Jewish Kabbala uses numbers and figures to explain the Bible. And as Christians we consider that to be occult. To use the number 666, the number of the beast in Revelation, is not logical viewed from the side of God. What connection has the holy God with the number of the beast? Why use this horrible number for a mass-offensive to harvest many souls? We think, something

here is not right. Also the number 06-06-06 is 666, we think this is used to back up a certain vision. About this vision we will talk in the next part of this letter.

PS. When this letter was published, there were no signs yet of fulfilment of the prophecies of Ana Mendez. On the website of Piet Matthijs we find from the 06-06-06day 14 reports from groups of Christians in The Netherlands. They write about the way they experienced this day. We think the contents are a shame for the Christian world and we do not want any part of it in our letter. If you want to know more, read the website.

3...The teaching of Kingdom Rule Ministries of Jan Willem Bakker.

The name of this ministry makes clear what is meant: To Reign/Rule in the Kingdom of God. According to this ministry, the Christians have to start reigning now on the earth, to prepare for the coming of the Kingdom, when Jesus returns for His reign of thousand years. This reigning/ruling has much to do with waging war against and subjecting the demons and their influences on earth. To realise this purpose the Christians first must work out which demons are involved and where they are most active. Different instruments are used, like spiritual mapping, the mapping out of the spiritual history of the place or region, reading in the history books about the bad conduct of our forefathers, receiving spiritual guidance from God about the demonic situation in a certain region.

The point of departure is: all evil on earth is caused by demons. They keep trying to disturb the work of God, cause wars and disasters. But the stories in the Bible offer a different view: the people themselves are the cause of much misery. Sin and men's sinful nature are not mentioned as cause. Man is influenced by the devil and his comrades and falls into sin, but this is not taught. J.W. Bakker has four articles, fifty pages, they all speak about the power of the demons that has to be broken. This is a one-sided and dangerous point of view. People get completely caught up in theories about the devil, while it seems that only man can do something about it. God Himself seems powerless and can only watch how the people try to save themselves out of this situation. Especially for this reason the Kingdom Rule Ministry has come and now goes to war. Prophetess Ana Mendez also believes this teaching. In her prophecy about 06-06-06 she shouts: "It is war!" (See first quote above) Her whole action of that day points to fighting the demons.

J.W. Bakker studied anthropology at the university, that means study of the spiritual development of mankind. In his above mentioned articles he claims they are based on examples from the Bible, the old history and past and recent times. But in reality practically nothing is based on the Bible, nearly all of it based on material he studied on the university. These lessons are of course not Christian but relate to heathen situations from the past. This idolatrous aspect is discussed extensively and causes disgust and aversion in the Christian reader. The purpose of the writer is to make clear that all people by their heathen past are contaminated by demons and have to be set free. And how these people were contaminated? Very simply, because they worshipped these demons and made sacrifices to them. All this according to the teaching of Jan Willem Bakker.

The Bible does not teach this. It teaches worshipping and making sacrifices to the false gods is a serious sin, God hates it. Several prophets warn against this sin and even ridicule these gods. Listen to the prophet Isaiah 44:6-20 The heading: "The Lord, not Idols" ... "*He cut down cedars....It is man fuel for burning....Half of the wood he burns in the fire...From the rest he makes a God, his idol; he bows down to it and worships. He prays to it and says: save me, you are my god. They know nothing, they understand nothing.... Shall I bow down to a block of wood? He feeds on ashes, a deluded hart misleads him he cannot save himself or say, Is not this thing in my right hand a lie?*"

In this periscope, handling about the process of making an idol and the result of worshipping it, nothing is said about the devil and his co-workers. This is about a person who sins and is desperate afterwards. And that we find in several places of the Bible. Is a demon living in every idol? We think this is invented by the liberation preachers, during the past forty/fifty years. Peter Wagner of the Global Harvest Ministry, Pieter Bos and now also Jan Willem Bakker and Ana Mendez want us to believe that everything or nearly everything here on earth is demonised and this is caused among other things by idolatry in the past. Now we know idols and spirit worship have links, it is sensible to keep away from demon dancing, calling up the spirits of the forefathers etc. The Bible does not teach us to subscribe all evil on earth to demons or demon networks.

People who believe this have discovered there are lower and higher levels they have to make war on. The lower level exists in Christians who are bound by demonic powers and or are occupied by these powers. They must be removed on the spot, hence the commendation of the movement The Cleansing Stream. They must cleanse the Christians in the church, working together with the pastor and specially trained church members. So this is waging war on a low level. The manual is written by Chris Hayward, the title is A Cleansing Stream. This title is clear enough. In the past (letters nrs.17,18,19,20,21) we wrote extensively about these matters. Our standpoint and conclusion was and is that we do not believe Christians need to be set free. We believe the Biblical truth that Christ delivered us from our sins because He died on the Cross at Golgotha. Kingdom Rule Ministries among others teaches their own inventions and absolutely deviates from the Biblical truth. We should reach out for sanctification, by conversion and turning away from sin, not by taking part of a liberation session on a low demon level. Sin is not caused by one or more fallen angels, but by our own self. Kingdom Rule Ministries, Cleansing stream Ana Mendez and other suchlike liberation movements have taken the initiative out of Jesus' hands and taken it into their own hands. Now the sanctification of the church members depends on them.

The above mentioned ministries go on with yet another unbiblical teaching: liberation on a high demon level. Ana Mendez wrote a book entitled "War on high level". What does this mean? Also in this matter Jesus has no say at all. The Christians have to attack and eliminate the high demons. While studying and researching the spiritual resistance in some areas on earth, one thinks to have discovered this is caused by very high and important demons. These demons have nested themselves on the spot in buildings, monuments, woods, lakes, mountains etc. Before God is able to break through and bring people to salvation, His Church must go to war and drive away or bind these high demons and then these regions can be liberated. To read about these matters, go to www.kingdomrule.org. You will find four articles on the website of Jan Willem Bakker.

3.1 Conclusion workgroup

Here also the Christians have taken the initiative into their own hands and God has to look on from the side and see if they are able to maule the high demons. Human fantasies, not agreeing with the Bible.

Jesus, still on earth, risen and glorified, gives His disciples the Great Commission:

"Then Jesus came to them and said: All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." (Matth.28:16) These were his last words and His disciples carried them out obediently. Were there demons to be driven away while they carried out this commission? No, this would have weakened the

commandment of Jesus. All power in heaven and on earth is in the hands of Jesus. When in this position of Christ we preach the gospel, people are saved and his Kingdom is built. In this way this Gospel reached you and me after 2000 years. No demons had to be driven out.

4...Who is Jean-Mark Bigler?

This is a French pastor, who also ministers in liberating Christians from demons or demonic bindings. He leads liberating conferences in France. He also preaches spiritual warfare against demons. On his website he advertises cassettes of divers foreign preachers, like Ana Mendez, Betty Freidzon, Carlos Anacondia, Derek Prince and John Bevere. These names nearly all indicate the same kind of ministries, when concerning demons. Also the names of Billy Graham and Nicky Cruz are mentioned. About these men we know they do not take part in liberation sessions or preaching about it. So Marc Bigler also mentions different minded people, which is an advantage. But on his site he publishes commending notes about Ana Mendez, so he sees in her a great prophetess. So far some news about this French brother. His website is: www.enseignemoui.com Here you can find more information, if you know some French at least.

5...Elders, apostles and apostolic team.

Finishing this subject, we will write about who stipulates all this. On the site of J.W.Bakker he writes he has received the spiritual authority in The Netherlands from the apostle Rony Chaves from Costa Rica. By that authority he leads the spiritual war in our country on a high level and trains other people to do so. On the internet there is a site of apostle Rony Chaves, but is all in Spanish, a language we do not speak. In his agenda we found he speaks on a regular basis about the theme: Profetica de Intercession de Alto Nivel, that is Prophetic prayer on a high level. That is all we know about him. Also the fact that for The Netherlands somebody is assigned by an apostle from Costa Rica is not logical to us.

Ana Mendez says she is shielded in her ministry by apostle Peter Wagner. Not only is Peter Wagner called an apostle, also since a few years he is the head of the International Coöperation of Apostles (see: www.globalharvest.org). He is called head apostle. Though most Christians do know little or nothing about this, it seems this group of Christians assume several things and proclaim these to be true. If we take the appointment of Peter Wagner seriously, all Christians should put themselves under his authority. And if we take seriously the authority Jan Willem Bakker given to him by Rony Chaves, we should accept the teaching of Kingdom Rule Ministry without any discussion.

You will understand the workgroup will not act in that way. Some Christians keep talking about the function of an apostle. So let us do an in depth study about the subject. This is the more urgent, because also in The Netherlands people talk about putting into action an apostolic team in specific situations. One of our readers brought this team under our attention via a booklet and a website of New Covenant Ministries (NCMI). Website:

www.coastlands.org

5.1...Elders.

The Bible is clear about how to appoint elders. In the first place the Word gives us the demands they have to live up to. We do not have to mention the texts concerning this subject, you did study that before. (see the following) I think your question is: whose authority is it to appoint these persons? For the answer we have to go to the biblical situations we find in the New Testament. The function of elders was already known from the coming into being of the nation of Israël. In Ex.3:16 Moses has to call together the elders of the people. *“Go, assemble the elders of Israël and say to them, The Lord, the God of your fathers- the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob- appeared to me and said.....”* When we study the Old Testament

further, the function is also found, but more restricted to religious matters, because of the Roman occupation. Jesus was ultimately sentenced to death by the assembled elders in Jerusalem. *“Then the chief priests and the elders of the people assembled in the palace of the high priest, whose name was Caiaphas, and they plotted to arrest Jesus in some sly way and kill him.”* Matt.26:3,4 How these elders were appointed is not known, but most likely it happened in the then-known way. Power and political friends policy will have played its part. Now back to the elders in the Christian Churches. About them the Bible does give us information. The first time we read about Christian elders is, when a collection was taken for a future famine (prophesied by Agabus) Acts 11:30. They had to supervise the dividing of the gifts. How and when these elders were appointed is not told. Later on in the in the history of these young churches we read about how Paul and Barnabas appoint elders in the churches in Asia. *“Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in each church and, with prayer and fasting, committed them to the Lord, in whom they had put their trust.”* Acts 14:23 These churches were founded before by Paul and Barnabas and they considered these commitments a rounding off of their evangelisation work. In Titus 1:5-16 we see the same thing happen, when Paul instructs Barnabas to appoint elders, while he himself travels on. *“The reason I left you in Crete was that you might straighten out what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town, as I directed you. An elder must be blameless, the husband of but one wife,....”* Looking at the demands they had to live up to, it becomes clear that the one appointing had to be well informed about the local situation in the church. Elders have to be: *“Blameless, the husband of but one wife, a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient. Since an overseer is entrusted with God’s work, he must be blameless- not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. Rather he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined. He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it.”* Titus 1:6-9

In the early history of the church we find that the function of an elder was a very important one. When Paul comes up to the problem of the circumcision of the new converts, he goes for advice to the apostles in Jerusalem. In a special meeting of the apostles en elders , this problem is discussed and they decide not to force the converts to be circumcised and not to keep the law of Moses. For Paul this was an important theological decision. The letter to the Galatians makes this very clear. This important decision was made by the apostles and elders present in Jerusalem. This has bearing on our subject. Even the whole church was concerned, because it says in Acts 15:22: *Then the apostles and elders, with the whole church, decided.....”* During Paul’s last journey in freedom, he says good-bye to the churches he passes. He summons the elders of these churches to come to him. They represent the members of the churches originally founded by Paul. Acts20:17 During these meetings he says: *“Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.”* Acts 20:28 Paul uses the term overseers, meaning the function was important. Paul knows he will not see them again. They will have to be independent and he warns them to be on their guard against false teachers, savage wolves. The elder also has to teach and to keep the church on the right track. So far some explanations about the task of the elders, now we will go back to our own time.

Conclusion workgroup:

---the position of an elder is an important task in the church, already present right from the start of the church.

---the elder must be a well-known person in the church.

---the elder must be appointed by a person, who is involved in the church and led by the Holy Spirit.

---that person used to be Paul himself, sometimes he did it together with his helpers Timothy, Titus and Silas, sometimes he told them to do it by themselves, while he went on his way. In all these cases the appointment took place by persons who were involved in the start of the church.

---we do not know if and how the church members were involved, but we believe they were heard about the matter in one way or another, considering the demands the Bible makes.

---somewhere during the start period an important elder came forward who at a certain moment became leader over the elders. Then we read words like the Greek ones presbyteros, episkopos, leading to the word bishop. These names took their place in the R.C. Church, but were not accepted in the Protestant churches. There we use the titles reverend, elder, pastor. Originally these persons were elders, who took upon them executive tasks in spiritual and theological matters.

5.2---Apostles

“Therefore, holy brothers, who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus, the apostle and high priest whom we confess. He was faithful to the one who appointed him”

Hebr.3:1 The Jewish rabbi's used the word sjaliach for apostle. This word was a technical term for a messenger with a mandate, that made him a substitute for the one who sent him. Jesus, Himself a sjaliach of God the Father, set apart out of the wider circle of his followers (pupils) twelve persons and gave them the name sjloechem apostles. To them in particular was given, just before He went to heaven, the well-known Great Commission. In the first place, Jesus says to them: *“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me”*. Actually He says: I am the sjaliach of God the Father, I am the apostle, as the writer of the letter to the Hebrews says. After that He continues speaking to the other sjloechem, the other apostles. He sends them out over the whole world to make disciples in His name and to baptise these disciples in the name of the Triune God. So an apostle in the time of Judas has a clear commission. Also His command holds a commission for teaching. *“and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.”* This has been worked out in practice, because much of the New Testament was written by the apostles. Their letters were much used and read out in the churches. From church history we know that the apostles, the sjloechem, were obedient and followed up the command of Jesus completely. Also we read about Jesus who took his own life after he betrayed Jesus. The open place was taken, after the casting of lots, by Matthias. Acts 1:15-26 So he became the twelfth sjaliach. When a few years later Jacobus was murdered by the Jews in Jerusalem, Acts 12:2, they did not choose a new apostle or sjaliach. Why not? We do not know. The Bible does not give an answer. A few years later Jesus appears to Saul, who is busy persecuting the disciples of the Lord. He also then is commissioned to preach the gospel via a message from Ananias: *“This man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel”*. Acts 9:15 His name Saul changed to Paul and so he also became a sjaliach or apostle to the Lord.

When the apostles died one after another no new ones were appointed. Apparently these functions were no longer necessary. Probably because everything the churches needed to know about the course of events in their communities was written in the writings of the apostles. These writings circulated and had great authority. Later on they were used for compiling the canon of the New testament. There is though a dissention of opinion between the Roman Catholic Church and the Protestant Churches. The Protestant Churches teach no expanding of teaching is necessary, the Bible is complete and is the only source of authority. But the Roman Catholic Church says that since the death of the apostles, the sjloechem, there has been a steady growth of teachings, the so-called tradition of the Church. This growth is kept growing by the apostolic fathers, the successors of the apostles and they are

represented by the bishops. They meet at set times in concilies and what they decide there is binding for the Roman Catholic.

When the churches came into being, were there no other apostles than the sjeloechiem? Yes, but they called themselves apostles or prided themselves on being apostles. *“For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, masquerading as apostles of Christ, and no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. It is not surprising, then, if his servants masquerade as servants of righteousness. Their end will be what their actions deserve”*. 2Cor.11:13-15 Paul did not waste much time on this, all the same it caused him much hindrance in Corinth.

5.3---Contemporary apostles, apostolic team.

Reflecting on the present time, we only meet apostles in the Apostolic Church. This movement started in 1833 on the country estate Albury in London. Twelve men acted as apostles and started communities in England and Scotland, Germany, Holland and America. Typifying for this movement: Jesus Christ is returning soon, longing for unity in the church, restoration of the Catholic services with much ceremony, a third sacrament: the sealing of the believers. Rev.7:4 Their pursuit of unity was not very successful, time after time the movement split up and nowadays we find more than one Apostolic Church. Every church has an apostle who plays a leading role in the events of the Church. Since the Apostolic Church came into being, there always was a big distance from the existing Christian Churches. We could stop at this point, but during the last fifteen years a calling for the office of an apostle came into being in the evangelical movement. Quoting Eph.4:11 one speaks about restoring the fivefold ministry. *“It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers.”* We will restrict ourselves to the ministry of apostle, because this is relevant to our article. In the evangelical bookshops you can buy a book with the title: *“The apostolic Dimension”*, with subtitle: *“Gods plan to lead his church to the end-victory”*. The writer is John Eckhardt, who calls himself an Apostle. (page 7 of the book) Dr.C.Peter Wagner writes an enthusiastic foreword and tells us he will indicate this book as required reading for his students at the Fuller Seminary in the U.S.A. We mention here a few quotes of Peter Wagner, because he thinks it absolutely necessary to reinstall apostles in the churches:

“During the years 1990 God started to reinstall the gift and office of the apostle. At first sight this seems to be a simple statement, but the implications are far reaching. The body of Christ has a considerably more complete form than ever, maybe even since the New Testament. This means God is now ready to accomplice things by his people on earth, things He has been delaying for a very long time.--I am thankful for a fast growing number of leaders who now start to walk in the apostolic gift and the apostolic office...John Eckhardt clearly has the gift of apostleship and the gift of a teacher.” We could discuss much of the contents of this book, but that goes too far and would make this letter less readable. We will limit ourselves to the following:

Short summary of the book

John Eckhardt believes, that since the death of the last apostles a gap has come into being in the Christian Church. This gap should have been filled, but that did not happen. This is the reason why the Church has not come to its full advantage right through the ages. We may consider ourselves lucky that the office of apostle, by the explanation of the five ministries (see text in Ephesians), has come forward anew. Thanks to that the Church will reach full glory again. That is why he recommends to appoint in every church an apostle and to give him the position of head of the church. This can be worked out by giving the leading elder the position of apostle or by close cooperation with an apostle outside of the church. This already happens in The Netherlands by the so-called Apostolic team. In this team world-wide about a

hundred apostles are united under the name: New Covenant Ministries International. (website: www.nemi.net)

What are the tasks of the apostles considered by John Eckhardt in his book? Very many, more than a complete alphabet, or rather 26 separate tasks, described by him. We will mention four:

---“*Imparting. Apostles are capable to impart spiritual gifts to the saints. This impartation enables the saints to fulfil their calling and destination. Rom.1:11*

---“*Bringing revelation. The apostolic ministry is a ministry of revelation. Apostles bring insight in the Body of Christ, concerning Gods plans and purposes.Ef.3:5,6*

---“*Overseeing, supervising. The apostolate is also called the supervisor ministry. Acts1:20 Apostles have supervision over the churches.”*

---“*Appointing. Apostles appoint capable leaders and give them their place. Titus1:5,6 This means selecting and confirming. They are appointed to be fruitful. John 15:16*

5.4...Conclusion workgroup

The description of the 26 tasks makes clear the apostles have a say in everything happening in the church. They form a new management layer over the sitting elders. How to handle in this matter? Is a drastic revolution indeed necessary in the church? Is John Eckhardt right with his new theory about apostles? Is dr.C.P. Wagner doing the right thing while promoting the office of apostle and obliging his students to study the book of John Eckhardt? We do not think so.

We as workgroup believe the present day structures follow broadly speaking the biblical examples and do not need to be changed. Also we do not believe that apostles must be created again, because the early Church did not deem it necessary to install successors of the apostles, the sjloechem. We consider this new apostleship theology of dr.C.Peter Wagner and his colleagues to be just a human invention. Also we think it is dangerous to launch new theologies without possibility of correction. Because who corrects the new apostles and examines if their teaching is a healthy one?

P.S. John Eckhardt is due to speak 22-24 march 2007 during an apostolic prophetic conference with Ana Mendez and Stacey Campbell.

6...What is soaking and where does it come from?

We studied the question about soaking extensively and were shocked to find it has its origins in the well-known Toronto Movement. We thought the so-called Toronto-Blessing was more or less ebbing away. Last year we read an article about soaking and it did not become straightaway clear to us that this is a new product of the Toronto Church in Canada of John and Carol Arnott. For more info about the Toronto-Blessing, go to our publications nrs 2, 3, 4, 5, and 7. Our conclusion was and still is: this is not from God. The leaders John and Carol Arnott have since that time gone on to spread the Toronto-Blessing worldwide under the name Catch the Fire Ministries. (www.tacf.org/tacforgame/CatchTheFireMinistries)

Last year, they then existed 10 years, they, John and Carol Arnott, lanced a new movement: The Soaking Prayer Centre (the SPC) Because they already worked worldwide their vision is to spread this new branch also all over the world. Every Soaking Prayer Centre , has to be in possession of an official certificate from Toronto. To obtain this certificate special courses for a long weekend or a week are organised in Toronto. Also you can order a special Soaking Kit consisting of study material and two dvd's about the subject. A retrospect is given about how God touched the Church in Toronto, ten years ago (the so called Toronto blessing.) This shows clearly the connection between “soaking” and the “Blessing”.

6.1 The contents of soaking

During the meetings where the Toronto-Blessing was exercised, people fell backwards on the floor after the laying on of hands and stayed there during a short or a longer time. This was called “carpet time”. It was assumed that during that time the Spirit of God was dealing with

these people. Sometimes people could not get up any more and stayed “glued” to the floor for hours. In the beginning some accidents happened when the people fell backwards. That is why so-called catchers were placed behind them, during the prayer time, to avoid injuries. While laying on the floor some people made strange animal noises, such as barking, bleating, cackling, roaring, neighing etc.

Passing over now to soaking, there are differences and similarities. In both cases the participants are laying on their backs on the floor (by soaking it is also possible to sit up on the floor). During the Toronto-Blessing it is rather noisy, during soaking it is quiet, except for the soft, soothing music, that is played. During the Toronto-Blessing people fall on the floor, after someone prayed for them. Soaking happens voluntary, it is possible to lay down, after a while somebody comes past, prays softly and sometimes touches you. The end result of the Toronto-Blessing is a refreshment in the Spirit, one feels touched by God. The end result of soaking is similar. It is called a special experience with the Lord.

6.2 The fruits of soaking.

What now are the fruits of the soaking? According to John and Carol Arnott there are several deep changes of the heart, marriages are healed, fears are leaving, depressions and illnesses are going away and lives are completely transformed. God made flow the River of Life during the outpouring of the Toronto-Blessing in 1995 and now He is doing so again by means of soaking. That is what the Arnotts tell us. The couple is so enthusiastic about this new strategy of God, they want to change a million of lives over the whole earth. They write: *“We praise God for this new possibility to equip you to bring the Kingdom of God effectively in your houses, your church and your Soaking Prayer Centre”*. All this is to be found on their website www.tacf.org

The Toronto blessing of 1995 is undergoing a revival, in a somewhat different way.

How was soaking received in The Netherlands? The youth movement Soulsurvivor has taken up soaking in their program and that does not amaze us. The movement which has its roots in Great Britain. The leaders are regularly mentioned as speakers or partakers of the Toronto-Blessing meetings. Unfortunately we do not have a clear view on meetings of Soulsurvivor because we could not lay hands on books, magazines or dvd's about the movement. We do have a number of worried inquirers among our readers. Especially parents with children who go to the conferences and come home with stories they think are strange. In The magazine *Herstel (Restoration)*, mai 2006, we noticed an announcement/recommendation about such a conference (30 June-4 July 2006). Here we see Soulsurvivor and the Navigators working together to get students acquainted with Soulsurvivor. (www.momentumfestival.nl)

6.3 Conclusion workgroup

Back to soaking. The idea to retreat into silence, to lay down on the floor and to empty oneself of all thoughts, is not a new one. Originally it stems from the Eastern religions and is practiced by (among others) monks in Buddhism and Hinduism. Also in New Age circles this is a well known phenomenon. The leaders of course know this and tell the people not to be afraid, because during soaking other people are praying for the soakers, so they will be protected against whatever wicked infiltration. We consider this a dangerous attitude, it looks a bit like tempting God. If people did not soak, certainly the evil one would not infiltrate. Also it amazes us that during the soaking everything happens without using the word of God. No reading from the Bible, no reading the Bible by the person him/her self. The attention is on the soaker. Even when he or she falls asleep, it is seen as refreshing. As the brochure indicates, an effort is made to defend soaking biblically. When reading this defence, one finds a number of texts from the Bible. These texts speak about living in God's presence, some people practise this at night on their beds. (www.soakingprayercenter.nl) Nothing at all is said about the necessity of soaking or about the effect of it. It looks like seeking texts to give

soaking a biblical appearance. It reminds us strongly of the Toronto-Blessing of 1995. Then also no biblical base could be given. We do not recommend soaking. Please stay away!