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# Words Words Words

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MAY 1964 BRING FORTH a life of Volksleier Hendrik Frensch Verwoerd. We offer a title: *Verward-Verwader-Verwoerd*, the comparison of the Afrikaans adjective for "confused" stuck on to him by a hostile fellow Nat in the Doctor's *Transvaler* days. A thorough study of Verwoerd will explore the liberal Netherlands background, the involvements in Leipzig, Hamburg and Berlin in the mid to late nineteen-twenties, when rival groups of philosophy students were toying with the ideas that brought forth Nazism. It is time to assess the academic career, leading to the revealing Inaugural when he accepted the newly instituted chair of Applied Psychology at Stellenbosch; the building up of *Die Transvaler* under his editorship from 1935; the bitter wartime conflicts of *gesuiwerdes*, O.B.'s, the New Order, between Krugerism and its enemies, told so clearly in Roberts and Trollip's *The South African Opposition*. And the post-war years with the premiership as a constant goal. Is it true that on Malan's retirement, Dr. Verwoerd cabled Strijdom, who was holidaying in Europe, warning him to come back and take the premiership from Malan's nominee, Klasie Havenga, or he, Verwoerd, would take it? The biographer will know. How much Leipzig influence is there still? Or has its inner logic been destroyed by the needs of applying psychology to Nat politics and to the 106 nations who voted against his policies at UN? Certainly the "P.M.", as his English South African admirers call him, has said good-bye to the logic of his case for "separate development" under world pressure. 1964 should be a good year to assess the effect of this all-important break, of which Transkei "self-government" under a one-man-one-vote constitution was the most clear indication.

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WE REGRET THE DEMISE of *Torch*, the Non-European Unity Movement weekly newspaper. Its stern and righteous incorruptibility had an absurd side, and the comic mixture of punning, high-sounding vituperation, and malapropisms in its style took any sting out of the weekly floggings it administered to all who differed with its hard-core position. An old *Torch*-ism for the deluded followers of the late Dr. Buchman was "morally re-armed reptiles", which was presumably not meant to be funny, where its well-founded gibe at the recent Transkei elections, "one-piss-one-vote", successfully was.

## Joost de Blank

### A Farewell Interview

*Joost de Blank retired as Archbishop of Cape Town at the end of 1963. Before leaving for England he was interviewed by The New African.*

THE NEW AFRICAN: During the past fifty years many people feel it's very difficult to say that there has been real progress. In fact, a leading Negro writer makes rather a depressing statement that "We human beings now have the power to exterminate ourselves; this seems to be the entire sum of our achievement." Would you say that this is a fair appraisal of the last half century?

DE BLANK: I don't think it's a fair appraisal of the last half century: I think it's perhaps the most important thing that has happened in that time. I think it is true that humanity now has the ability to exterminate itself and this ability of course has been secured chiefly in what we call the western world . . . All the powers of mass destruction have been uniquely a white man's preserve. And he has secured this and has done this, and the black man, I think, in America and elsewhere, feels this is of very doubtful credit to the western civilisation which is so strongly advocated. I don't think it's a fair appraisal; there are all sorts of things like surgery and medicine and the whole art of healing where there have also been tremendous strides over the last half century. It would be quite unfair to say that the *only* achievement of the last half century is the destructive one.

N.A.: The same writer also feels that Africans and Negroes have suffered so very much from cruelty and destruction that they may prove to be the redeemers of the twentieth century.

DE BLANK: I think that is a little bit extravagant. I think it's true that black people have suffered enormously — particularly Africa and the slave trade over the last four hundred years or so—I think they have endured a tremendous amount at the hands of both the Middle Easterners and the Westerners. I think that if they could rise to their true greatness they might act as the sort of mediatorial element in the world.

But I don't think this comes naturally, it isn't because of their suffering that it comes. It depends what a man does with his suffering—whether it makes him bitter and resentful and therefore angry, whether he's angry as your writer has been angry; or whether he becomes redemptive in outlook and believes that his experience, his agony, can be used to redeem a situation.

N.A.: The grip of Islam at the moment—do you think this will sharpen the distinction between black and white, and, if so, will it make reconciliation more difficult in the long run?

DE BLANK: . . . I don't think that Islam is necessarily anti-white . . . I think that in the near East, with the Manroft case in London, you do find a great Pan-Arab sense, but you don't find it outside the near East.

N.A.: Today there is much discussion about the secular effects of Christianity. What secular changes would you like to bring about the kingdom of God on earth?

DE BLANK: I don't think any of us believe that the kingdom of God can be established on earth in a convenient political programme way. What I believe the Church's job to be is to proclaim the Gospel which has to do with a man's *total* personality, which means his physical situation as well as his spiritual being. In this I imagine peace and unity are almost cliché words, which do, however, indicate what the Christian Gospel would like to see in effect in the world. It believes that peace with God is actually unachievable and is a *heresy* if it is divorced from trying at the same time to establish peace and unity with your neighbour. The two things hang and fall together. There's a text in the Bible which says that if a man says he loves God whom he has not seen, he's a liar if he doesn't love his brother whom he has seen. This seems to me to be absolutely axiomatic to Christianity. Christianity seeks to bring about a situation where