
Pro Rege

Volume 9 | Number 4

Article 7

June 1981

Dr. Hendrik Woldring Visits Campus

McKendree R. Langley

Dordt College

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcollections.dordt.edu/pro_rege



Part of the [Christianity Commons](#), [Higher Education Commons](#), and the [Law and Society Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Langley, McKendree R. (1981) "Dr. Hendrik Woldring Visits Campus," *Pro Rege*: Vol. 9: No. 4, 41 - 42.

Available at: https://digitalcollections.dordt.edu/pro_rege/vol9/iss4/7

This Incidentally is brought to you for free and open access by the University Publications at Digital Collections @ Dordt. It has been accepted for inclusion in Pro Rege by an authorized administrator of Digital Collections @ Dordt. For more information, please contact ingrid.mulder@dordt.edu.

Perhaps the most striking thing about Boesak's presentation was his keen insight into the attitudes and outlooks of both blacks and whites in South Africa—an insight that is usually missing from representatives of those respective racial groups. Boesak's insight is undoubtedly due, in part, to what he called the "experience of schizophrenic inbetweenness" that stamps the so-called "colored" people of South Africa. The "coloreds" come from white/black intermarriages and illicit sexual unions dating back as much as 300 years. Culturally the "coloreds" are whites, but government and church laws treat them as a separate racial group. Until last century they shared many rights and privileges (including church membership) with whites. But beginning with racist theology in the Reformed Churches, and ending with public apartheid laws after 1949, the "coloreds" have been

demoted and segregated by whites. Not being tribal blacks, these South Africans find themselves caught between two cultures and races. The pain has been great, as Boesak (a "colored") explained, but the insight and wisdom achieved by God's grace among His people might yet become a source of genuine justice and reconciliation for the peoples of South Africa.

Boesak urged the Dordt community to realize that easy talk of reconciliation and forgiveness is hypocritical when it does not go hand in hand with real changes in habits and in institutional structures. God is at work through His Son, Jesus Christ, in South Africa, but much of that work is judging and condemning racism, forced oppression, and hypocrisy. Where do Christians stand in South Africa? In America? Is blessing or judgment coming?

James W. Skillen

Dr. Hendrik Woldring Visits Campus

During the week of February 9, Dr. Hendrik Woldring, Associate Professor of Social Philosophy at the Free University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands, visited Dordt's campus. Dr. Woldring is the co-author of an important, comprehensive study on Calvinistic social philosophy in the Netherlands during the past 150 years entitled *A Reformational Critique of Society* (1980). He has also been associated with several Christian Democratic political parties and research institutes.

Dr. Woldring gave two public lectures on "Key Problems in a Reformed Social Critique" dealing with societal differentiation and pluralism. These important problems were discussed in relation to the attempts by thinkers in the Kuyperian tradition to provide

theoretical answers to them. He began with a helpful historical overview of the social thought of G. Groen van Prinsterer, Abraham Kuyper, Herman Dooyeweerd, Hendrik van Riessen, and Bob Goudzwaard. He pointed out how these thinkers developed a Reformational social philosophy that was in self-conscious opposition to the secularistic and unbelieving spirit of the modern age. These Christian thinkers saw the basic relationship between the ordinances of God found in the structures of creation and those found in scripture. On this foundation Dooyeweerd constructed a comprehensive and systematic social philosophy based upon presuppositionalism and a transcendental critique of all systems of social thought both Christian and

secular. Dooyeweerd's pupil, Hendrik van Riessen applied this viewpoint to the problems of modern technology, arguing for a normative view of technology while rejecting the humanist view of an autonomous science. Then in recent years Bob Goudzwaard developed a normative view of economics that embodied a Reformational critique of both *status quo* capitalism and democratic socialism. Dr. Woldring has developed his own viewpoint from within this philosophical tradition as a "transcendental realism" in an attempt to further refine and enrich Christian thought.

"Dostoevski: Man of Mission," an evening public lecture by Dr. Woldring stressed the importance of this nineteenth century Russian Orthodox novelist. For quite a few years the lecturer has been interested in this author. Recently he co-authored a book on Dostoevski under the title *Monks and*

Murderers. The author of *Crime and Punishment* and similar novels is important because, as a Christian believer, he struggled with the problems of social injustice and the rise of socialism. For Dostoevski the suffering Christ of the Scriptures is seen in the sufferings of the Russian peasants. Dr. Woldring concluded that the confrontation between Christ and the Grand Inquisitor in *The Brothers Karamazov* is the modern struggle between serving the idols of science and politics and the worship of the true Lord.

Dr. Woldring continued the discussion in several classes, in a KD-CR-FM interview, and in an informal presentation at a faculty dinner. He also attended a long meeting of the Lectureship Institute and gave valuable advice on problems and perspectives of mutual interest.

McKendree R. Langley