

## NG Kerk in Oos-Kaapland

### Besoek van Prof Andrew Purves - 4 Aug 2008



Ons is bevoorreg om op Maandag, 4 Augustus 2008, besoek van prof Andrew Purves, en sy vrou, Catherine, wat ook 'n predikant is, te ontvang. Hy doseer Pastorale Teologie by Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. Prof Purves het in die laaste paar jaar twee uitstaande boeke oor predikantswerk geskryf: *Reconstructing Pastoral Theology* en *The Crucifixion of ministry*. Beide van die boeke vra vir 'n diep teruggrepe na en vertrou op die lewende Christus en sy werk in ons bediening.

Purves meen dat ons geloof in Christus soms nie veel meer is as mooi woorde nie. As ons bv oor ons bediening praat, dink ons onmiddellik aan ons eie bediening in die gemeente. Die eerste boek handel weliswaar oor predikantsbediening, maar die eerste helfte handel éérs oor Christus se bediening - want Purves glo dat ons bediening min werd is as dit nie 'n deelname en navolging van Christus se bediening is nie. Oor ons bediening skryf hy dat dit viervoudig van aard is:

- 'n bediening van God se teenwoordigheid;
- 'n bediening van God se Woord;
- 'n bediening van God se genade; en
- 'n bediening van God se heerskappy.

In die tweede boek spel Purves dit nog duideliker uit as hy sê dat ons 'n keuse het. Hy skryf die boek vir predikante wat teen die middel van hulle bediening doodmoeg is van probeer. Ons het 'n keuse: ons kan nog 'n klompie jare aansukkel en aansweet en probeer klaarmaak. Of: ons kan ons bediening kruisig, doodmaak! En deel word van die bediening van Christus.

Prof Purves tree op 4 Augustus in Port Elizabeth tydens 'n daglange konferensie vir predikante op. Kerkrade word versoek om dit vir hul dominees moontlik te maak om die dag by te woon. Hy is ook beskikbaar om 'n erediens in 'n gemeente te lei op 3 Augustus. Belangstellende gemeentes kan my kontak. Sy vrou, Catherine, kan ook 'n erediens lei - miskien 'n aanddiens indien die prof 'n oggenddiens lei. Belangstellende gemeentes kan my kontak.

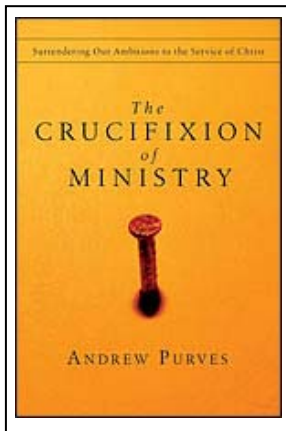
Volledige besonderhede rondom koste, plek en program word nader aan die tyd bekendgemaak.

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*Blaai om*

## Author Interview

Andrew Purves, author of *The Crucifixion of Ministry*



**IVP:** In what ways do you think ministry is lacking today?

**Purves:** Far too many ministers cast their ministry back upon themselves. The danger is ministerial messianism. The fact is, we can't raise the dead, heal the sick, forgive the sinner, comfort the afflicted and so on. It comes as a shock, I think, when we finally discover we are not the Messiah. When we think it is all up to us, our ministries have become a hindrance to the work of Christ because we have put ourselves into the place where only he should stand. When we do that, God kills our ministries—the crucifixion of ministry. But that's good news, for us and for our parishioners. Ultimately, they need a savior more than a minister. Jesus Christ is Lord, and as such he is the true and only minister.

The real failure in practical theology is timid and limited Christology. Our perception of a living, acting, reigning Lord is just not vigorous enough. Generally, we have turned Jesus into a long-gone moral influence whom we have to imitate, rather than a living Lord who is at work in every aspect of the world's life.

**IVP:** What are the effects of this lack in Christian ministry?

**Purves:** Burnout, depression, exhaustion, loneliness, etc. By mid-career it can become a major crisis—the burden is too heavy to carry. We come to the ministerial Jordan, so to speak. The Lord, in effect, says to us, "Let me carry you across and henceforth let me do the ministry, while you bear witness to what I am up to; or stay here, keep trying to do it by yourself, and you'll work your way to retirement embittered and weary." Thus I have developed the classical doctrine of our union with Christ: he joins us to himself so that we share in what he is up to.

**IVP:** What made you decide to write a book on the crucifixion of ministry?

**Purves:** Frankly, in part my own sense of inadequacy—I can't pray like Peter or preach like Paul. I am weary of people attempting to guilt me into ministry. I have also watched my wife, a Presbyterian pastor, struggle with big questions: How can I preach hard and true year after year and nothing seems to change? Why do the sore heads remain sore-headed? Why is ministry so terribly draining and as such becomes joyless? It is only when one is long in the tooth in ministry that one comes to see, to know in a deep way, that Jesus—in the freedom of his love and in the power of the Spirit—has to show up. So this has become the principal hermeneutical question for ministry: What is Jesus up to, here in this hospital room, with this congregation this Sunday morning, with this couple whose marriage is struggling? What does it mean to reframe ministry as bearing witness to a living, reigning and acting Lord at work among us? This means, of course, that at its core ministry is therefore a theological act.