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**The Reformed Church in Africa  
and the  
Policies of Separate Development  
Between 1950-1994**

By

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the  
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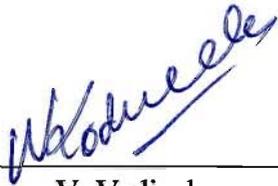
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## Declaration

I declare that this dissertation, its writing and fieldwork, is the result of my own research and that it has not been submitted for a degree at any other university.



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V. Vadivelu

## MOTIVATION

It is now the appropriate time for reconstruction, nation building and reconciliation in South Africa. We are living in a climate of tension and violence which is ravaging our country. The Church in the unrest climate is urged to deliver its prophetic utterances. Costas, in his book "The church and its mission" offers us an interpretation of the holistic imperative that is granted to the Church and its task to serve society. The researcher is of the opinion that the Reformed Church in Africa(RCA), the field of study which he has chosen, has for far too long isolated itself from the socioeconomic and political debate of our day.

The purpose of this study is to critically reflect on the historical development of the R.C.A. in the context of separate development within the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) in South Africa. There is a need to examine the past; in so doing, we have to analyse and understand the present and relate it to the socioeconomic and political climate in South Africa.

The researcher in this study examines the R.C.A. in its role as a Church in the context of an emerging nation. It contends that the Church has to be involved in the socioeconomic and political issues that shape the lives of all South Africans. This is an historical study, mainly which provides an analysis of the following :

a) Conservative Alignment

The perception that the R.C.A. has aligned itself with conservative politics is

analysed. There seems to be no indication from the R.C.A. that it has a holistic approach in the way it portrays the gospel to society. It may appear that the R.C.A. is a phototype of the D.R.C.

b) Financial Obligation

The saying "he who pays the piper calls the tune" is pertinent here. The researcher investigates whether the RCA is dependent on the DRC for financial assistance and if this is true, the extent to which it is obligated to the DRC. Financial dependency on the DRC has raised many concerns within the RCA Churches. Rev. Shun Govender's paper dated 03 February 1977 and presented at a Fraternal Meeting of the RCA ministers outlines the financial implications for the RCA. In his letter he notes that the Church in which he serves was utterly dependant upon the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk (NGK) in order to maintain its existence. He further points out that if the financial support from the NGK is withheld, then the separate structural identity and existence of the RCA would collapse and come to an immediate end. Thus the issue of the DRC's financial obligations to the RCA has become a crucial factor in determining the structural existence of this mission Church and for the maintenance of its ministry.

Rev. Govender's paper also observes that the structure and organisation of the RCA appear to be an imposed prototype of the NGK in a different cultural setting, separated from the NGK community by legislation.

c) **Influence of White Missionaries**

White Missionaries to the RCA have definitely influenced its theological outlook. The researcher intended to interview and hold discussions with as many of these ministers as possible. Within the RCA some have leanings towards Pentecostal practices and trends, whilst others remain steeped in the Reformed tradition. At times some of the RCA ministers have been influenced by modern theologians, and liberation and contextual theology, which has led to a questioning of their existence within the RCA. This resulted in members of the RCA joining the Belydendekring (BK) which motivated by the need to foster church unity.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The theoretical part of this study is located within the field of history of religion. The comparative historical method according to which the history of any religious movement must be understood from a sociopolitical perspective, is used in the study of the RCA. This method is described by Ninian Smart in his article on this subject in the *Encyclopaedia of Religions*, Vol. 13 pp 571-174.

The approach taken in this study is an historical one because the RCA must be studied within the context of the wider historical developments within in South Africa, including the policy of separate development. The study therefore employs

the historical method.

In addition to the historical focus of this study the researcher has also employed an “action research” or “participatory research” methodology in which one of the aims of this research project was to empower a group or a community to transform themselves.

The study of official documents in the archives of the RCA is mainly based on the statements of these churches as reflected in discussion by executive church councils, pastors, evangelists, and ministers. Books, newspapers, journals, unpublished dissertations, conference reports, church council minutes and pamphlets are consulted.

For the purposes of this study the researcher considers the rise and development of social concerns that are emerging from the current policies and practices, of the RCA. Comparisons will be made, noting any marked differences in perception regarding the clergy and laity. This will determine whether the RCA has leanings towards a more holistic approach regarding the gospel message in society.

In conducting research for this study the researcher is in many cases, a participant observer particularly as many relevant conferences and consultations by the RCA were attended.

Information and data for this research project were gathered through the following mediums:

1. Personal Interviews with the following:
  - a) Ministers
  - b) Pastors
  - c) Evangelists
  - d) Church Council members
  - e) A cross- section of RCA membership
  - f) ex-RCA ministers
  - g) Academics
2. Questionnaires
3. Personal participation and observation.

The writer who is a Christian, has been involved with the RCA for 22 years as a member, church council member and prospective candidate for the ministry in the RCA. In protest against apartheid within the RCA the writer subsequently left the RCA for 12 years to form the Confessing Community Church (CCC) as an alternative to the RCA. Thus for the writer to undertake this study he had to first establish his *bona fide* with the RCA membership.

In order to obtain an indepth understanding of the RCA, the writer adopted the role of a participant observer through his membership with the RCA. The writer tried to maintain enough distance in his

observation to comment objectively on the RCA. The writer is presently a member of the RCA in the Emmanuel congregation. His intention to rejoin the RCA is founded on the basis of reconciliation, development and reconstruction that were ushered in during the process of transformation and democratization in South Africa. With a Government of National Unity (GNU) in place, the researcher felt the need to initiate a reconciliatory process within the RCA, thereby playing a positive role in preparing the RCA to meet the challenges facing the it.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

It is the researcher's opinion that social and political developments have influenced the DRC in its history. This is evident in its structure: churches were founded for different population groups, although they based on the same confession, creed and doctrine. A separate church for Indian members, the Indian Reformed Church (IRC) now called the Reformed Church in Africa (RCA) was established in 1968. The DRC comprises three Afrikaner churches, viz. the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk (NGK), the Nederduits Hervormde Kerk (NHK) and the Gereformeerde Kerk (GK). The 1935 Mission Policy of the DRC, which according to the researcher was based on the principles of separate development, scrutinised in the present study which is to reflect critically on the emergence of the RCA within the context of separate development in South Africa. This history of the RCA as an Indian church of the DRC must necessarily be studied against the background of apartheid as manifest in the secular politics of the day, as well as the DRC'S own views on Apartheid.

The purpose of this research is to study the young church's relationship and reactions to its own socio-political context. It addresses and raises some crucial questions: How did this church accept the fact that it was organized as a separate "Indian" church? What was its prophetic witness in the times of apartheid? How did it practise the holistic approach in which the whole gospel is to be brought to the whole person in the totality of his/her circumstances? The study further analyses the several splits suffered by the RCA because of apartheid, which hampered the process of church unity. These splits must also be viewed within a socio-political context.

### **SPECIFIC AIMS OF THE STUDY**

The specific aims of the current study are as follows:

1. To examine whether the RCA is a prototype of the DRC; the study therefore examines the extent it has evolved from the theological outlook of the DRC.
2. To investigate whether financial considerations were crucial factors which encouraged the reinforcement of apartheid ideologies in the RCA.
3. To investigate the reasons for and circumstances surrounding the establishing of the RCA.
4. To examine any present changes in the RCA in relation to the policy of separate development.

5. To investigate the historical relationship between the R.C.A. and the D.R.C.
6. To establish the role of the RCA in furthering the process of church unity with the DR Family of Churches
7. To examine the status of the RCA.
8. To make recommendations to the RCA on the need for a holistic ministry.

The present study is timely given the new political order which also challenges outdated policies of segregation within the DRC. Thus far, no academic study described by the stated objectives, has been undertaken in this field.

It is expected that the findings of this study will make a valuable contribution to the RCA's focus on a holistic approach to society.

## LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The writer must place on record that not all leaders of the RCA cooperated with his requests for information or assistance, despite repeated attempts to contact them on several occasions. This was mainly true of the present R.C.A. churches in the Gauteng area, especially the Shanti and Western Transvaal congregations. There was no response from Rev de Beer and Rev. G Sooklingam, who could have assisted tremendously in this study.

The researcher also observed that when certain questions were put to members, they were considered too sensitive. It appeared to the writer that some members viewed him suspiciously because of the nature of the study, and on several occasions the writer had to declare his *bona fides*.

The writer also experienced difficulties in arranging interviews with the leadership. On several occasions interviews had to be postponed and rescheduled, which became time consuming.

The financial constraints placed upon the writer limited the writer in the number of interviews conducted.

## FOREWORD

This thesis is the result of much soul searching and personal concern at a time in the history of South Africa when the "winds of change" are blowing. Churches cannot go unaffected by the change that is sweeping over our nation. They are challenged more than ever to come to terms with the process of democratization and transformation in South Africa.

Many churches have aligned themselves to strong conservative theological views imposed mainly by their leadership. The writer's observations are that these churches have tended to align themselves to right-wing politics, thereby opposing the *status-quo*. These types of churches have isolated themselves from the socio-political and economic debate. Thus, it became taboo to have any political involvement whatsoever.

The RCA initially was a very prophetic church. During its latter years however, it has also isolated itself from current socio-political and economic debates. The apartheid system, it is evident, has caused much pain and tension within the RCA, influencing the RCA to isolate itself from the arena of struggle for justice and peace in our land. The reader is thus urged to understand the gospel message in its holistic dimension, and its implications in terms of its ecumenical and evangelical ministry.

The researcher chose this topic from a sense of conviction that the membership of the RCA has not yet been enlightened about the implications of a holistic gospel which is

all-embracing. The message of total liberation in one's total circumstance has not been preached.

The single event that rocked the RCA was the loss of status of ministers. The reader will notice that the writer deals with this issue at length. His intention is to demonstrate how the ideological aspects of apartheid at that point in time determined the destiny of the RCA.

This study is intended to inform the RCA and other churches which have fallen prey to the apartheid system, and to encourage them to now come out of the closet to take their rightful places in the South African context. It is asserted that only this form of action will engender responsibility and accountability in churches, making their role in all areas of life more relevant and meaningful.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are numerous persons to whom I wish to express my sincere gratitude for assistance during the period of my research. The completion of this study was only possible through their kindness. I place on record heartfelt thanks to the following:

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2. Professor CJA Greyling for his initial interest and motivation regarding the choice of my topic.
3. My typist Ms V Nagoor (Vanitha) for her sacrifice and dedication under tremendous pressure.
4. My cousin Ms R Bunsee (Radha) for assisting me during Vanitha's absence.
5. Rev. K Moodley for welcoming me back to the RCA and making sure that I received the information I required for this study.
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7. Mr P Asrie (Lawrence) for his unselfish assistance in driving me to the

Gauteng Region to undertake my research and conduct interviews.

8. To all those who filled in the questionnaires and granted me interviews.
9. Those in the leadership of the RCA who made time for the interviews held with them.
10. To all those in the UDW library staff,( especially Arvin), who were a tremendous source of inspiration and assistance to me during the period of my study.
11. To the agents C.S.D. and UDW for grants which made this study possible.
12. To my wife Anoratha for her unfailing support, sacrifice and inspiration;my daughters Shantal and Shonelle for their patience, and my son Brandon who missed out on things that children would really love to do with their dad; this research would not have been possible without the sacrifice of my family.
- 13 .Finally to the Lord Jesus Christ my Saviour and Sustainer who has provided me with consistent nourishment, strength, endurance, will and determination to undertake such a study. 15/1

## DEDICATION

This work is dedicated firstly to Rev Charles Nair who was a strong anti-apartheid leader within the RCA and who passed away under tragic circumstances leaving behind his wife Andrea Baare Nair. Rev. Nair was the first theological student who was ordained by the Confessing Community Church, which developed as an alternate church to the RCA. The writer expresses deep admiration for his courage as a young man who cherished the vision of a united church within the Dutch Reformed family of churches and who dedicated his short-lived life to this end.

This work is dedicated secondly to all those members of the RCA who resigned their membership, and those ministers who lost their status in protest against apartheid within the RCA. They are remembered for their bold, courageous and unpopular stand to relinquish ties with the RCA and the NGK.

This work is further dedicated to all those leaders who remained in the RCA and who believed that by working within the system they would achieve their goals.

Finally, this work is dedicated to my late sister, Saroj, who was a faithful believer and member of the RCA and who inspired me to continue serving the lord.

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANC	-	African National Congress
ASSK	-	Algemene Sinodall Sending Kommissie
BK	-	Belydende Kring
CSD	-	Centre for Science Development
CTAM	-	Committee for the Training and admission of Ministers
DEIC	-	Dutch East India Company
DR Family	-	Dutch Reformed Family
DR Church	-	Dutch Reformed Church
E/O	-	Extra Ordinary
EVANG	-	Evangelist
FMC	-	Federal Mission Council
GK	-	Gereformeerde Kerk
IRC	-	Indian Reformed Church
KZN	-	Kwa-Zulu Natal
LMS	-	London Missionary Society
NGK	-	Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk
NGKA	-	Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk in Africa
NGSK	-	Nederduitse Gereformeerde Sending Kerk
NHK	-	Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk
NRC	-	Netherlands Reformed Church
NT	-	New Testament
OFS	-	Orange Free State
OT	-	Old Testament

PCR	-	Programme to Combat Racism
PROP	-	Proponent
RCA	-	Reformed Church in Africa
RDP	-	Reconstruction and Development Programme
REC	-	Reformed Ecumenical Council
REV	-	Reverend
SA	-	South Africa
SACC	-	South African Council of Churches
SC	-	Synodical Committee
UDW	-	University of Durban-Westville
URCSA	-	Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa
VGK	-	Verenigende Gereformeerde Kerk
WARC	-	World Alliance of Reformed Churches
WCC	-	World Council of Churches

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## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The following terms used by the writer throughout this study needs to be clear in order to understand the usage of these terms in their social, political and theological content:

(a) **ecumenism : ecumenical**

The definition according to the "New Dictionary of Christian Theology (1983 : 172) states that in practical terms, ecumenism has been predominantly a phenomenon of the twentieth century and, until recently, of Protestantism. It is essentially a spiritual or religious commitment rather than a single clearly worked out theological position and moreover much of its impulse has always been pragmatic.

The Concise Oxford Dictionary (1990 : 372) has the following definition:

**"ecumenical"** - of or representing the whole Christian world.

**"ecumenism"** - the principle or aim of the unity of Christians worldwide.

The writer holds the view that God is interested in the total human world. According to Bosch (1980 : 35) salvation has to do with both personal and social liberation from everything that hinders man from attaining a true existence in justice and community.

The writer uses this term in the context of the RCA clinging to its "Indian" identity and

therefore not being able to reach out to other population groups to foster church unity. The term is also used to indicate the lack of the RCA's ecumenical ministry against the background of its total evangelical direction. The term ecumenical is also used in connection with the RCA's attitude towards social issues like: detention without trial; influx control and in general to work towards a just society in South Africa.

(b) **evangelism/evangelical**

The following definition is stated by the Dictionary of Pastoral Care and Counselling (1990 : 375) Evangelism is the witness of the whole church to the Lordship of Jesus Christ over the world.

According to Lida Vaccaro de Petrella (1986 : 37) the task of evangelism is complete if its sole interest is the spiritual life of those who receive the gospel.

The New Dictionary of Christian Theology (1983 : 191) states that the term came into use at the Reformation to identify Protestants, especially as they held to the belief in justification by grace through faith and the supreme authority of the scripture. Subsequently, the meaning tended to narrow, with evangelicalism referring to those who espoused and experienced justification and scriptural authority in an intensified way: personal conversion and a rigorous moral life, on the one hand, and concentration attention on the Bible as a guide to conviction and behaviour on the other hand, with a special zeal for the dissemination of Christian faith so conceived against the views of liberation theology.

A further extract from the New Dictionary of Christian Theology (1983 : 192) illustrates the

term evangelism in the following manner:

... people respond in different ways to the message, some positively, some negatively, some indifferently. The word evangelism has itself become a source of controversy, as Christians argue about the appropriateness of particular methods. Pejorative images of overly aggressive 'soul winners' cause many Christians to reject all evangelism as meaning and method and confused ... Others are concerned that a pietistic individualism may blind the personal salvationist to the issues of social justice which the gospel must address. The dichotomy between evangelism and social action is an unfortunate misunderstanding of the gospel, which demands that evangelism be both personal and social. The evangelistic approach that is concerned with reaching the whole person cannot overlook the social dimensions of a persons life or the context in which that life is lived'.

The debate in which this term arises concerns itself with the RCA being ecumenical, evangelical or both. The writer has found little or no evidence that the RCA has an ecumenical ministry, but instead is thoroughly engaged in evangelism.

(c) **"social involvement"**

The writer's view is that the church has a great role to play in society, therefore there must be

According to Boer (1961 : 175) it would be the folly for the church not to take seriously the social, political, cultural and religious milieu in which the church finds herself. Boff (1984 : 85) suggests that the church should raise the political consciousness of the people, help the people to open their eyes, participate in discussions and thus improve their government.

According to the writer, from 1983 the RCA had little or no social involvement with the struggles in society. The gospel is interpreted only in terms of "saving souls". The usage of the term "social involvement" or social action is used in the context of the church especially the RCA regarding their concerns for the underprivileged, oppressed, homeless, unemployed and the many other injustices that is experienced in society.

(d) **"soul saving"**

This term indicates the attempts of the church to bring people to accept Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour. The concentration is only on the spiritual process of conversion. The writer uses this term to indicate that the RCA is only concerned to save the persons soul and lack the ministry towards the persons social needs.

(e) **"conservative"**

The Concise Oxford Diction (1990 : 244) shares the following definition:

**conservative person** - averse to rapid change

**conservative views** - moderate, avoiding extremes

In this study the writer refers to people being conservative in a sense that they are not too open to change, culturally, politically, etc. Theological views could also be accepted as

conservative as against views of liberation theology. The writer would agree that in cases where people are conservative, it may suit them, but where people, especially Christians are not willing to change for the advantages of the majority, it will be difficult to accept. The writer uses this term in connection with the conservative theological views held by the leadership of the RCA.

(f) **"multiracial"**

According to the Concise Oxford Dictionary (1990 : 779) multiracial means, relating to or made up of many human race. The Pretoria unity initiative was aimed to extend the RCA beyond its ethnic orientation. It emphasised the essence of John 17 : 21-23. The researcher meant that the RCA should become more practical and proactive in developing a church of all races.

(g) **"racism"/"racist"**

The Concise Oxford Dictionary (1990 : 986) describes racism as follows:

- a belief in superiority of a particular race; prejudice based on this; antagonism towards other races, especially as a result of this.

The writer uses the term racism in connection with the mission policy of the DRC. Their mission policy is considered to be racist as it aimed to proceed with mission work on racial lines. The writer observed that this policy amounted to church apartheid. The DRC did everything in their power to avoid mixed worship. It did not matter to them if Indians, coloureds and blacks worshipped together as long as their worship services was for whites only.

(h) **"mother church", "daughter church", "young church"**

The writer uses these terms in connection to the DRC with its relation to the NGKA, NGSK and the RCA that have been the direct results of their missionary efforts. The NGKA, NGSK and the RCA are referred to as "daughter churches" whereas the DRC inherited the term "mother church".

The writer uses these terms throughout this study to bring out the relationship of the DRC with the NGKA, NGSK and the RCA. The writer refers to the RCA as the "young church" as it was established in 1968 after the NGSK and NGKA.

(i) **"radical views", radical men"**

The researcher's usage of these terms arise mainly in connection with the various views held by the RCA in the development and experiences of the RCA. Radical views is more related to ecumenical views in this study. It is used against the background of the RCA's total evangelical slant. The writer uses the term to relate to anti-apartheid views and to views that bear a message of liberation from oppression and bondage. The writer uses the term "radical men" especially in reference to the three ministers - Rev. Charles Roux, Rev. Klippies Kritzinger and Rev. Gerrie Lubbe who were totally committed to lead the RCA into becoming a relevant church.

(j) **"church order"/"yellow book"**

The reference to "church order" and "yellow book" is the church order of the RCA which includes the bylaws, rules of procedure, regulations and forms. This rule book has a yellow cover and therefore referred to as the "yellow book".

## 1.1 Various name changes of the RCA

At the outset the various name changes that occurred concurrently with the historical development of the present Reformed Church in Africa (RCA), need clarification.

According to the Acta of 1968, the first name of the RCA was "The Nederduitse Gereformeerde Indian Church". It is evident at this point that the Mission Committee of the General Synod was determining and mapping out the future of the Indian Church.

On page 69 of the 1968 Acta the first mention of the church as the "Indian Reformed Church" is made. It was on the 27th August 1968 that the first delegates of the Nederduitse Indian Congregation and the representatives of the Mother Church institutions gathered in the church building of the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Indian Congregation at Raisethorpe, Pietermaritzburg. On this day the elder G.S. Moodley and Rev CJA Greyling proposed that the church be called "The Indian Reformed Church". An amendment to this proposal by elder EJ Manikkam and elder JK Naidoo that the church be called "*The Dutch Reformed Indian Church*" was rejected, thus the name "*Indian Reformed Church*" (IRC) became the official name of the "Indian" church (Acta 1968 : p.79).

During the sitting of the 3rd Synod in 1976 there was yet another recommendation to change the name of the church. As the Indian church progressed it became aware of the ethnic connotation of the word "Indian" in the name of the church. Within the context of development both within the church and broader society, delegates felt that the church should now change its name. The decision of taking the name change appears in the Acta of the 3rd

Synod in 1976, in the following manner:

The decision of Synod which probably struck you first is the change of our church's name from "Indian Reformed Church" to the "Reformed Church in Africa". The motivation for this change was that the church of Jesus Christ may never limit itself to one group of people and that when its name seems to suggest such exclusiveness it becomes a stumbling block to the gospel and must be changed. With this bold step which has many far-reaching consequences, our church has committed itself to be an open community, welcoming and reaching out to all people in the name of Jesus Christ. Therefore all members are admonished to live this new life of love and openness to all men.

(Acta : 3rd Synod : 1976:106)

It is the write's considered opinion that the RCA did not do much to challenge the apartheid system in South Africa. This can be attributed to various factors that contributed towards the non-involvement of the RCA in political issues. Suggestions and proposals in decisions taken regarding certain social issues, but the RCA has generally maintained silence. It has to be understood that the DRC was the major single influence behind the creation of the RCA, and that the DRC was responsible for the blueprint of the Separate Development Policies. The Broederbond, an Afrikaner pressure group, supported apartheid to the hilt and influenced the DRC to maintain its position on separate development. In turn the DRC prepared the blueprint for the Nationalist Party Government. Loubser (1987:27) asserts that the ideal of apartheid as total segregation was formulated for the first time between 1924 and 1938.

## 1.2 RCA and Calvinistic Theology

Research indicates that the RCA is comfortable with the conservative theological influence that has been exerted upon them by the DRC. Conveniently the DRC latched itself to the principles of Calvinistic Theology. This trend has been maintained through the ministers of the RCA who have been propagating their ministry with an evangelistic thrust.

According to Rev PJP de Beer (1977:302), the denomination to which the RCA belong is the direct outcome of the Reformation of 1517 and especially the work of John Calvin. He further writes that it is part of Christ's true church and can be traced back to the DRC in the Netherlands, the Reformation and Pentecost. He also thanked God's Spirit for guiding the RCA and for helping her not to lose track of the principles of the Reformation in very confusing times.

Rev PJB de Beer (1977:238) discusses the meaning of Calvin's work in the following manner:

The central thought in Calvin's theology was the **sovereignty of God**. God alone saves, not we ourselves. We are saved only through the grace of God ministered to us by the Holy Spirit. Calvin earned the title of "**Theologian of the Holy Spirit**" for his clear explanation of the work of the Holy Spirit. His confession of the infallibility of Scripture for every aspect of life brought a change in the political and religious life of the people. Finally, he mentions the **Presbyterian church government** that Calvin established in Geneva. In his system nothing was to be introduced into the church, but what was positively sanctioned by the Word of God. Calvin also stood up for the principle, that in spiritual matters the church must be independent of the state. Church and state have

separate spheres.

Presently Rev de Beer is part of the Moderamen of the RCA and holds the position of clerk of Synod. He is one of the ministers who holds a strong evangelical view of the ministry.

Loubser, (1987:33) writes about a new kind of Calvinism that prepares the way for a 'Biblical' policy of segregation. He points out that although the missionary policy of 1935 justified apartheid on practical and historical grounds, the need was to supply it with a theological basis. Thus the new philosophy known as "Neo-Calvinism" was to provide the basis for the theological justification of apartheid.

Loubser, (1987:33) argues that this school of thought originated during a resurgence of national pride and of Calvinism during the second half of the nineteenth century, under the leadership of Groen van Prinsterer and Abraham Kuyper. It was Kuyper's ideas that were introduced to South Africa by the Rev SJ du Toit. The actual Calvinist influence in the DRC was to come from the professors of theology.

According to Loubser (1987:35), until the 1930's the spiritual climate in the DRC was characterised by the ministry of Rev Andrew Murray. He and his supporters promoted an evangelical Calvinism with an emphasis on personal faith and piety. They also represented the view that the church had to refrain from explicit political activities. It was this type of spirituality against which the new breed of Calvinists were to bring in the accusation of "pietism" and "non-nationalism". Loubser (1987:35) observes that with the return of students from Amsterdam and the contacts of the Calvinistic societies of South Africa, the tide turned

against the Murray-type evangelistic theological direction, by which social issues were approached mainly in a pragmatic manner.

The writer's observation is that the majority of the members of the present RCA hierarchy have leanings towards strong Pietist tendencies. Therefore lack of concern in political issues was not addressed. It is only after the April 1994 elections that some members came out in support of progressive reforms.

As the young Indian church began to emerge in South Africa, evangelical and ecumenical strands began to come to the fore. The cradle in which the RCA was nurtured was to become a matter of contention in times of high apartheid. As political awareness and consciousness began to make its way into the church, ministers of the RCA began to concentrate on the aspect of the disunited churches within the family of the DR churches.

The debate of the racial policies of separation within the RCA membership grew in intensity. It was during this period that democratic reforms and liberation movements geared themselves to intensify their struggle for freedom and democracy in South Africa. The biggest role player in the liberation struggle was obviously the African National Congress (ANC).

In the light of the ongoing struggle, the RCA was challenged to respond to the ills of apartheid within the family of DR churches. Because of the context of intensified struggle waged against the apartheid regime, some ministers within the RCA began to vigorously challenge the state, urging for the pursuit of total church unity within the family of the DR churches. More discussion of the struggle that emanated within the RCA and an analysis of

how the RCA was affected by the split, are provided in later sections.

If one views the RCA in its present form, the basis for its ministry and role in society is firmly supported and motivated by the evangelical standpoint. With respect to the process of unifying the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa (URCSA), the majority of delegates who attended the 7th Synod of the RCA expressed their fears that the RCA's evangelical witness would be compromised or even lost if the RCA pursued this process. There are strong perceptions that the RCA is geared for a ministry of deliverance from sin and the powers of Satan. The following were some of the comments made at the RCA's 7th Synod in Cape Town:

Will uniting be the end of our evangelical stand? Will uniting mean a great influx of others with different thinking? Will we just have to surrender?

(Acta 7th Synod 1994:168)

We affirm our commitment to the primary task of evangelism, of the preaching of the gospel to every creature. We affirm that evangelism is not an option but an imperative...

(Acta 7th Synod 1994:168)

We affirm that the Holy Spirit's witness to Christ is indispensable to evangelism and that without His supernatural work, new birth and new life is not possible and all our endeavours fruitless.

Though we may be a small church we believe we have a major role to play in ecumenical

relations standing firmly on our Evangelistic basis...

(Acta 1994:319)

The RCA adopted the Laudium Declaration at its Synod in 1990. This declaration was born from the resolution of the RCA in 1986 to maintain her stand as an Evangelical Reformed Church.

Although the writer considers the RCA to be an apartheid church created by the DRC , the following argument is reported in the "Current Affairs" document tabled at the 6th RCA Synod(1990 : 184).

“We reject with contempt the accusation that we have been created by the apartheid regime". Instead we want to confess that we have been brought into being as a church through God the father, Son and Holy Spirit and the Holy Gospel and therefore our allegiance is to Him, and Him alone. We rejoice in the RCA experiencing the Ecclesia Reformata Semper Reformanda Est. through revival and renewal through God visiting the RCA”.

This statement was a response to accusations made by Mr A Bhiman . The Synod noted that the statements expressed by Mr A Bhiman were not made on behalf of the RCA but of his own accord. The researcher sympathises with the RCA for being stigmatised as an "apartheid" or "state" church. Many members of the RCA did not expect that their church would be buffeted by its critics, while others believed that White control of the church would be the best option. It was during this period of crisis that the ecumenical element within the RCA became more pronounced. The writer provides an in-depth historical account and an

analysis of the years of turmoil and split suffered within the RCA, in chapter seven .

According to Rev. K Moodley (Tape : 25:09:94) the newly appointed Moderator of the RCA for the 2nd term, there were two strands of thinking within the Synod. A very small group believed in the true evangelical gospel and preached the message of deliverance to those that were bound by sin and the demons. According to Rev. K Moodly the larger group labeled the smaller group as "secterian". There were the evangelicals and the progressive people or these who believed in the holistic mission. The 1980 Acta provides evidence of the strong social content of issues raised for discussion. Rev K Moodley's conclusion was that politics became the order of the day.

There was a turning point at the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) in Ottawa (1982) when the NGK was suspended for defending the apartheid system from a theological basis. This theological justification of apartheid was declared an heresy and a sin. Both the NGK and the RCA have not as yet claimed and agreed that apartheid is an heresy.

According to Rev. K Moodley (Tape: 25:09:94) the division in the church into the two groupings ie. the evangelicals and ecumenicals. became more pronounced. There was thus a very strong movement to break all ties with the NGK as they were now labeled heretical. As a result of these developments three ministers lost their status in the RCA. Subsequently all the members of the ecumenical strand left the RCA. The RCA was thus left with a total evangelical influence and the direction from its present leadership was to maintain and hold on to their God-given evangelical witness.

The Dutch Reformed Churches (DR churches) has not yet achieved church unity. The whole aspect of church unity within the DR Churches has been dealt with in chapter eight. Both the "Coloured" church (NGSK) and the "Black" church (NGKA) have proceeded with the unity process towards the establishment of the United Reformed Churches in Southern Africa (URCSA). Both the RCA and the NGK have not yet joined this process.

The RCA has indeed developed within itself a climate of tension and uncertainty. According to the present leadership, the RCA has now consolidated itself after the years of turmoil. The writer therefore wishes to research historically the rise of the RCA from the ashes to what is now regarded as something beautiful.

In the next chapter the researcher will concentrate on separate development within the DR Churches before 1948. This exercise is necessary to understand the Afrikaner's frame of mind in the implementation of the apartheid system and how their mission policy mapped out the beginnings of the RCA as a separate Indian Church.

## CHAPTER II

### 2. SEPARATE DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THE DR CHURCHES BEFORE

1948

#### 2.1 HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF AFRIKANER NATIONALISM

The researcher will in this chapter trace the historical development of Afrikaner nationalism within the context of the Dutch, British and Afrikaner eras. Theological reflections also shifted on social issues in each of these three phases. The writer will consider also the impact of the DRC and its theological justification of the policies on separate development.

Loubser (1987:3) observes that since the whites set foot on African soil they were involved in a racial conflict and a struggle for survival which a European could hardly imagine. Having a European background they were totally unprepared. Though political apartheid is a product of the 1930's and 1940's, its roots date back to the very beginning of white settlement. It is within this setting that the writer wishes to trace the emergence of separate development within DR Churches before 1948.

The NGK is the oldest church in South Africa tracing its history to 1652 when Commander Jan Van Riebeeck landed with 200 people at the foot of the Table Mountain (Serfontein:1982:59)

Loubser (1987:3) divides South African history into three main phases viz.

- the Dutch (1652-1795)
- The British (1795/1814-1924/1948)

- The Afrikaner Era (1924/1948-?)

The writer has pointed out already that each of these periods experienced different theological reflections on various social issues.

Loubser (1987:3) notes that until the emancipation of slaves the church was subjected to the state and had no serious problems with the status quo. When slaves became emancipated the Bible was seen from a new perspective, this time from the context of the oppressed peoples themselves and from an emerging national consciousness which began to be felt in the church.

According to Regehr (1979:103), the Boers sought to build their own permanent nation on the conquered soil. Regehr further points out that the Boers sought separation from the natives and wanted their political and cultural autonomy.

De Gruchy (1979:19) records the outrage of the Boers in the words of a Voortrekker woman, Anna Steenkamp:

It is not so much their freeing which drove us to such lengths, as their being placed on an equal footing with Christians, contrary to the laws of God, and the natural distinctions of race and colour so that it was intolerable for any decent Christian to bow down beneath such a yoke, wherefore we rather withdrew in order to preserve our doctrines of purity.

It could be that the Afrikaner trekked in order to preserve his doctrines of purity, but the

element of fear also became a reality. The Afrikaner nationalism that emerged, was dominated by self interest and a lack of consideration for other peoples. Afrikaners perceived themselves as a nation with a different sense of self-interest. Regehr (1979:104) claims that theology has followed politics. By this he meant that the DRC's position on race relations derived from the political and social aspirations of the Afrikaner nation more than from Biblical precepts. Furthermore Regehr (1979:103) holds that Afrikaners have a notion of themselves as a people set apart, with a unique history.

## 2.2

### **The Dutch Period**

The Dutch East India Company (D.E.I.C.) decided to establish a refreshment station at the Cape and therefore dispatched Jan van Riebeeck to build a fort and establish a garden. Regehr (1979:105) mentions that the purpose of this was to increase the profit of the D.E.I.C. Regehr also notes that Jan van Riebeeck and the D.E.I.C. had no real interest of conquest and subjugation: their main purpose was trade and small scale farming and they neither feared nor sought domination. According to Serfontein (1982:59), the first resident minister, Johan van Arkel, arrived at the Cape in 1665, which is regarded as the founding date of the first NGK congregation in South Africa. In a sense the history of the NGK is also the history of the Afrikaner nation. The Afrikaner followed the white settler farmers as they moved northwards and eastwards in search of new territory and in so doing shared many encounters and endured with them the experience of conquest when the Cape became a British Colony in 1806.

The indigenous habitants encountered by the Europeans were a nomadic people who followed their herds of cattle and sheep to grazing areas. These people were "*yellow-skinned*" people who became known as the Hottentots, but referred to themselves as Khoikhoi meaning "**men of men**" (Regehr 1979:105).

The early Dutch settlers depended upon the Khoikhoi for their cattle. The Khoikhoi progressed and the Dutch settlers kept a careful eye on them. Regehr (1979:106) claims that it was the Dutch who initiated the first signs of apartheid by erecting a hedge that separated the Khoikhoi from the Dutch settlement. This meant that the Dutch settlers were not able to and prevented from entering Khoikhoi land and that the Khoikhoi could not set foot on their settlement. This was so because the Dutch viewed the measure of justice seriously: they regarded the Khoikhoi as not enslaved but free to pursue their liberty undisturbed. Furthermore Regehr (1979:107) mentions that when the Khoikhoi were converted to Christianity they were entitled to the same treatment under law, as settlers'. This showed that the settlers attitudes were not based on racial distinctions. However as time went on, especially during the eighteenth century, things began to change when laws were directed to slaves.

Even baptism became a problem. Regehr (1979:106) writes that a visiting clergyman baptised a European child, but not a slave child. The D.E.I.C. held the view that the clergyman had no right to do such a thing and asked him to baptize the slave child.

The first slaves at the Cape were natives who arrived only five years after van Riebeeck from the island of Madagascar. It was the Company's policy that the slaves be taught to read and write and Christianised. Once these objectives were achieved they would be able to go free.

It is interesting to see how the people who became known as the Cape coloureds of South Africa evolved at the Cape. With the absence of women from Holland the settlers took slave women as wives and Regehr (1979:107) reports that three-quarters of the children born to slave women had Dutch fathers. Slave men began to cohabit with Khoikhoi women and the descendants of interracial relationships developed into a distinct people known today as the Cape coloureds of South Africa.

The chairman of the D.E.I.C. preceded the affairs of the state by a prayer which included the following petition:

Since thou has called us to conduct the affairs of the East India Company here at the Cape of Good Hope, and we now assembled that we may arrive at such decisions as shall be of most service to the Company, and shall conduce to the maintenance of justice, and the propagation and extension (if that be possible) of Thy true Reformed Religion among these wild and brutal men, to the praise and glory of Thy name, we pray thee, O most merciful Father that would so enlighten our hearts with Thy fatherly wisdom, that all wrong passions, all misconceptions and all similar defects, may be warded from us, and that we may neither purpose or decide ought but that which shall tend to magnify, Thy

most holy name

(Regehr 1979:108)

Many slaves were emancipated as a result of being baptised and admitted into the church. Regehr (1979:109) observes that many of them became lazy and began to demand assistance. This was viewed as a growing burden to the community.

By 1717 the directors of the Company opted for the increased use of slave labour in favour of white immigration. Regehr (1979:109) informs us that this decision was very crucial in that it paved the way for South Africa to become a settlement of minority whites. In 1658 a small war broke out between the Khoikhoi and the settlers in which the Khoikhoi lost their grazing lands to the independent settler farmers near the Cape. Now the Khoikhoi was under no illusion as to what was happening to them. There was now the feeling that Europe was conquering Africa and that the whites had come to stay and the black man was losing his land. The war saw the Khoikhoi defeated. The remaining Khoikhoi were absorbed into the expanding settlement as farm labourers, domestic servants and herders (Regehr 1979:111).

### 2.2.3

### THE DRC AND THE COMPANY (DEIC)

The Dutch Reformed Church came to the Cape as the religion of the Company employees and clergymen. In van Riebeeck's opening prayer is a fundamental truth that the Company was now viewed as a special tool of "Divine Will" and that the church theology of "**primitive Calvinism**" emphasized the Old Testament's record of a "**chosen people**". This reinforced the idea that the "Reformed Christian was specially chosen by God" (Regehr 1979:112).

Loubser (1987:3) states that van Riebeeck's prayer on his arrival was the expression of the Reformed **"monoculture"** which did not distinguish between **"religious"** and **"secular"** spheres of everyday life. Furthermore Loubser (1987:4) writes that the **"Political Council"** which controlled the halfway station at the Cape, also controlled the church. The ministers of religion were officials of the company with the status of junior merchants. They were thus chaplains. The result was that no other church or deviant ideology was allowed in the Cape.

From the beginning the church was associated with the government. The church in exchange enjoyed total protection from the authorities. According to Loubser (1987:4) the idea of social segregation can be observed as early as 1655 when Van Riebeeck contested the claims of the native "strandlopers" in the Table Bay area.

The native tribes tolerated the visiting seafarers with a fair degree of equanimity, but the construction of a fortress as the first permanent structure of the Dutch evoked their fierce resistance. According to Loubser (1987:5), in the early days of the colony the relationships between the colonist, the freed slaves and the Hottentots were determined by cultural class differences rather than the difference of colour. The resolution in 1618 by the Synod of Dordrecht instructed that baptised slaves had to be freed and were not allowed to be sold to heathens by Christian masters. However many slaves being members of the church were not freed.

The early Europeans were not adversely race conscious and mixing of races continued on a fairly large scale. However Loubser (1987:5) observes that subsequently the whites began to view themselves as a group distinct from the rest. They called themselves "Christian" in contrast to people of colour. Loubser (1987:5) writes that in 1788 a number of Stellenbosch citizens protested against a corporal who was "dark of colour and of heathen descent". At the end of the eighteenth century race prejudice was firmly established everywhere and shortly after this the Afrikaans language had become a symbol of white identity.

Biblical foundation developed from Psalm 105 was immediately extrapolated to support the Afrikaners beliefs and practices. The following New Testament writings have to be considered in order to show how their minds were influenced:

- be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers (2 Cor 6 : 14)
- come out from among them and be ye separate (2 Cor 6 : 17)
- touch not the unclean thing ; and I will receive you (2 Cor 6 : 17)

The above quotations were extracted from the King James Version of the Bible

Thus these views were associated in the minds of the colonists with the obvious distinction between them and blacks around them. This then became the cornerstone of their beliefs and confirmed their theological justification to view themselves as God's elect, while all others were condemned to be "hewers of wood and drawers of water" (Joshua 9 : 21)

Things changed rapidly after the distinctions were made. Whereas before the slaves enjoyed

freedom, now with the adoption of Christianity the hopes for slaves seemed very dim. Regehr (1979:112) quotes Albie Sachs as saying.

**"From this time on, great social and legal divide was no longer between a Christian and non-Christian, white master and black slave or servant. A significant indication of the extent to which colour had superceded religion as the determinant of status was the instruction given in 1780 that the Company black servants were no longer to be sent to arrest white offenders"**

The ideals of the French Colonists gradually infiltrated the culture of the Afrikaners. This began to weld the Dutch colonists into a unified group the **"Cape Burghers"** who were organised in a people's movement to fight for freedom. One could observe that the spirit of Afrikaner Nationalism began to emerge at this stage. Regehr (1979:113) speaks about the trekboers who where a direct product of the Company's failure to respond to the needs of the colony's Burghers. The Bible was their only contact with literacy and they came to identify themselves with the chosen people of the Old Testament, whom God led to the promised land.

According to Loubser (1987:7) the church and the Bible did not play any direct role in the development of the Afrikaner's self consciousness. Thus the ground was prepared for a **"people's theology"** outside the official church. The earliest stage of this **"peoples theology"** was to take on the form of a scriptural legitimation of slavery. Gen 9 : 18-27 showed them that Ham's descendants were cursed to be slaves of Shem and Japeth , which

confirmed the existence of the slavery period. This was not formally adopted by any church body and was refuted by all responsible preachers. The abolition of slavery brought a new dimension that addressed a new Biblical perspective.

### 2.3

### **British Era**

According to Loubser (1987:10) within a single decade the Cape suffered a change of government three times (1795-1803-1806), and each time the church had to adapt itself to new situations. After the second occupation by the British in 1806 the previous church-state relationship was discontinued. The English church now became the official state church whilst the DRC was to be the official church of the colony. By 1930 the British became a settled community at the Cape. The French revolution by now had a tremendous impact upon the colonists. Land to the French Huguenots were given to them by the D.E.I.C on the same basis as it was given to the Dutch Burghers, but they made sure that the French were scattered among the Dutch farming areas.

Much more freedom was experienced by Blacks, who could now enter the colony freely under a pass system to sell their labour and trade. Ordinance 50 of 1828 granted Hottentots and freed slaves equal rights as whites. Loubser (1977:10) informs us that Ordinance 49 of the same year terminated all previous efforts to keep Black and White apart. Hope & Young (1981:14) note that it was Dr John Philip who influenced the government to issue Ordinance 50, declaring that vagrancy was no longer punishable, that the Khoikhoi could give or withdraw labour, and that all free persons of colour were to enjoy the same legal rights as white colonists. Regehr (1979:121) observes that Philip soon became as hated in the Cape

colony as he was admired in progressive circles in London. Although he advanced the course of the Khoikhoi, he felt that blacks should live separate from whites until such time as they could compete with whites in white culture on an equal footing. He also wanted the African chiefs to safeguard their land against the incursion of white farmers.

The Afrikaans language became dominant amongst the "Coloured" people. According to Regehr (1976:116) the DRC became the chief unifying element of the nascent Afrikaner. The Dutch Reformed Church grew as the D.E.I.C. grew. Regehr (1979:116) claims that the Dutch Reformed Church had embraced "**primitive Calvinism**" with its emphasis on predestination and the Old Testament. From the "Oxford History Vol. 1. pp. 229-230" it can be gathered that this doctrine of predestination suited the needs of the white community.

The Dutch were left impoverished and defenceless due to the border raids by the Xhosas. Republican ideas now influenced some of the colonists who began the Great Trek with the idea that they could live according to their own beliefs, customs and ideals.

In 1829 the church acknowledged that joint partaking of the Holy Communion by different race groups in the same church was seen as an irrefutable principle based on the infallible Word of God and that no discrimination was to be made "**in thought and action**" between Christians. In 1837 the synod expressly maintained that in each church enough seats had to be reserved for "**the heathen who attended the public worship**" (Loubser 1987:11).

In 1857 several coloured congregations were established by the missionary societies. There was an attempt by the English authorities to anglicise the Dutch Church, but this failed. The

one thing that was of great concern to the Dutch was the rapid growth of mission stations that were being set up due to the influx of English speaking missionaries. Hope & Young (1981:14) observe that the London Missionary Society (LMS) began to make progress in their mission endeavours, due to the arrival of Johannes Vanderkemp in 1799. When Vanderkemp established a place of refuge for the Khoikhoi at Bethelsdorp, the local Boers became very incensed. He dressed and ate like a native and eventually married a slave girl from Madagascar. This also became a cause of concern to the Boers who perceived this as a threat which would lead to social integration, mixed marriages and the baptism of slaves.

### 2.3.1

### **THE AFRIKANER AND A PEOPLE'S THEOLOGY**

The Dutch colonists were becoming increasingly conscious that their culture was being threatened. They resisted all forms of equality with people of another colour, and equalization of any kind. This laid the foundation for the development of a "people's theology": under these circumstances coloured people had no right to equal social or political status with whites (Loubser 1987:12).

Afrikaner fears now began to surface. The idea of "**Liberation Theology**", **Contextual Theology**" and "**People's Theology**" became the vehicle through which the Afrikaner sought liberation from foreign cultures. Thus began their liberation struggle. Having claimed that they were the chosen race and now facing the onslaught of other cultures, they embarked upon plans to secure their liberation.

According to Regehr (1979:116), it was at the beginning of the nineteenth century that the image of themselves as victims began to assert itself strongly within Afrikanerdom. From this

feeling the Afrikaners came increasingly to define their nationhood in opposition to the forces they considered a threat. The British and the Bantu tribes east of the Great Fish River were clearly posing a threat to the Afrikaners. This Afrikaner fear has to be considered as a reality with which they had to contend. They began to experience a profound change in mentality, developing a fear and suspicion of outsiders. Regehr (1979:17) argues that a rival cultural presence in 1820 of five thousand British settlers posed a further threat to the Afrikaner. They were not comfortable with the British idea of tolerance.

The missionary movement was part of the Evangelical movement that created a political force that led to the abolition of the slave trade in 1807. The abolition of the slave trade hit the white slave owners very hard because they depended upon their labour. Regehr (1979:125) includes in his analysis the news of Piet Retief's sister on why the Great Trek took place (Ref Page 11).

### 2.3.2

### **THE MORAVIAN MISSION**

In 1737 a Moravian Brother, George Schmidt was granted permission by the D.E.I.C. and the Dutch Reformed Church in Holland to do missionary work at the Cape. Schmidt was very patient in trying to convert the Khoikhoi. The greatest obstacle he faced was opposition from the DRC ministers to baptising the heathen. He was also forbidden to perform the sacraments, and thus out of frustration and disappointment in 1744 he returned to Europe (Hope and Young 1981:12).

In 1792 three Moravian Brothers came to build on what little Schmidt had accomplished.

Their strategy was to gradually gather the converts and introduce the Khoikhoi to a radical new way of life.

The converts were trained, educated and disciplined, something that had not happened before. They now experienced security and were settled on land withdrawn from the jurisdiction of the chiefs (Regehr 1979:118-119).

Whilst the Moravians catered for the converts in a more humane way, the DRC in South Africa supported an alternative programme in their mission policy. Their idea was that they would not want to bring the African into the Western cultural setting, but rather to develop them separately within their own cultural setting to Christianise them. The writer observes herein a subtle approach to racial segregation.

De Gruchy (1979:13) makes the following observation:

**The basic reason that the Dutch and English settlers alike resented the presence of some missionaries was thus precisely because the missionaries not only evangelized the indigenous peoples, but took their side in the struggle for justice, rights, and land. The missionaries, being White, regarded themselves as the conscience of the settlers and the protectors of the "natives"... but whatever the faults of the missionaries, from a black as well as white perspective, it is true to say that the church's struggle against racism and injustice**

**in South Africa only really begins in earnest with their witness in the nineteenth century.**

2.3.3

### **The Great Trek**

The trek, according to Regehr (1979:120), was a movement to escape British rule. He also confirms that Piet Retief, one of the major Trek leaders, observed that no one would remain in a state of slavery but that a proper relationship between master and servant would be maintained. Hope & Young (1981:15) report that a profound schism between Afrikaners and the British was growing, culminating in the Great Trek of the 1830's. Behind the schism lay a struggle for land, a struggle that was to dominate the history of South Africa's nineteenth century frontiers.

According to De Gruchy (1979:15), a number of Boers in 1834 decided to trek beyond British rule. Fear gripped the Boers further when language became an issue because English was now the official language of the colony. This language issue was very close to the heart of the Afrikaner. It is evident in present day South Africa how tenaciously Afrikaners want to hold on to the preservation of the Afrikaans language.

Another factor cited by De Gruchy (1979:19) as one of the causes of the Great Trek, is the economic aspect:

**After all the Cape was colonised in order to facilitate trade with the East Settlement necessitated the acquisition of land and labour. A critical development in this respect was the decision very early in the life of the colony**

to employ slaves. Thus when we come to analyse the reasons for the trek as well as the rationale for much else in the growth of racial discrimination in South Africa, the question of land and labour looms large. Was Anna Steenkamp only worried about the freedom of the slaves because this placed them on an equal footing with white Christians, was she and was the embryonic Trekker community, not equally concerned about the economic ramifications of such liberation?

When one considers the above observation there is no doubt that the Afrikaner did make a calculated move to change their destiny, which later brought them great prosperity. After considering the factors for their move, the writer would like to point out that the Great Trek began in 1836. Hope & Young (1981:15) inform us that the Trek began as five thousand hardy souls set out northwards in canvas-topped ox-wagons, leaving the eastern coasts, climbing the mountains onto the great interior plains. Many settled in the area between the Orange and the Vaal River and others rushed up across the Vaal into what is known today as Gauteng previously Transvaal. Hope & Young (1981:15) report that it was clear to the Boers that missionaries, Khoikhoi and the government formed a coalition against decent Whites. Piet Retief emerged as one of the group leaders, but was soon eliminated on a peace-keeping mission to the Zulu King Dingaan. A new Voortrekker leader appeared in the person of Andries Pretorius. Together with his followers a prayer meeting was held and a promise was made to God that if He granted them victory over the Zulus they would build a church and the victory day would be kept holy. At the battle of Blood River the Zulus were slain and the Trekkers gained their victory.

December 16 was thus set aside as the day of the Covenant. The Afrikaners interpreted this victory as a sure sign from God that the Almighty was on their side and that they were the chosen ones. According to Hope & Young (1981:16), the Great Trek divided South Africa politically into British colonies, Boer Republics and African tribal lands.

The integration plan by Christian mission stations and Sir George Grey did not meet with favour on the arrival of Theophilus Shepstone, who opposed the integrationist plan and believed that Africans should be gathered in vast "locations" where they could live according to their own laws and customs and yet be able to learn something about civilized life.

Hinchliff (1968:84) points out that there were pronounced differences in both political and missionary theory. There were those who believed that separation of Black from White was the only way to secure justice for the former or safety for the latter. Others believed that the races must live together, either because Africans should provide labour for White landowners or because peaceful coexistence was right and good.

Some felt according to their missionary endeavours that it would be best if Blacks could be converted from their "**heathen**" culture and settled where they could absorb civilization and Christianity simultaneously. Regehr (1979:134) is of the opinion that the political corollary of this strategy is separation, separate development or apartheid. Yet there were others who believed that converts should be left in their own communities, that they should be encouraged to go out as missionaries amongst their own people and that African tribes and the African way should be Christianised as a whole.

According to Hope & Young (1981:17), often political 'separationism' went with missionary beliefs of the second type, for if one maintains that African culture ought to be retained but Christianised, then it would seem that the only way to retain the culture was to isolate Western influence.

The Afrikaners were thus engaged in a liberation struggle. Loubser (1987:24) speaks of this struggle in the following manner:

Since the national awakening of the Afrikaners in 1861-1881, nationalistic ideas of the people were formulated in terms characteristic of nationalisms in the rest of the world. And it was almost inevitable that the Bible would play a part in this process.

The Afrikaners saw themselves as the "called" people or people elected by God. Loubser (1987:24) notes that this concept served as a legitimation for the liberation struggle. Thus in order to fulfil this calling the people had to be free and therefore could not stand under foreign authority. Botha (1984:273) mentions that a logical consequence of the idea of "calling" was that the people had to maintain their separate identity. The ideas of "calling" and "election" were thus looked upon as the main themes in the history since the Great Trek.

Loubser (1987:10) informs us that during the British period a "**people's theology**" began to emerge. Ordinance 49 of 1828 terminated all previous efforts to keep black and white apart. Loubser's view is that the whole matter of freeing slaves and offering compensation to the Dutch colonists, because it was done in an autocratic manner, came as a traumatic shock for

the colonists. The Dutch were also left defenceless in the face of Xhosa raids from across the border.

According to Loubser (1987:10), the Dutch colonists were finally embittered against the British authorities and the Black tribes. As a result one tenth of the colonists packed their wagons and began the Great Trek to the north. Their relationship with people of colour in future would be dominated by one rule only : "no equality". Loubser (1987:10) further writes that their republican ideas prompted them to strive after their own ideals, beliefs and customs.

In 1854 the Bloemfontein Convention established the Orange Free State as an independent republic. The Transvaal Republic was formed in 1860. These two republics began to develop along separate lines. The Transvaal Republic was better known as the South African Republic under President Pretorius and the OFS under President Jan Hendrik Brand. The three white settlements, Natal, Transvaal and the OFS developed race relations which was subsequently different from the system that had been developed in the Cape.

Regehr (1979:129) writes that in Natal, where, under the British, whites were outnumbered adopted apartheid structures were adopted thoroughly. African reserves were developed, but instead of chiefs, the British administration took control. Regehr (1979:129) notes that despite the fact that participation in the mainstream society was theoretically open to blacks, in practice they were effectively and permanently confined to the African 'locations' assigned to them by their original masters.

In the OFS Dutch was the sole official language. Citizenship was open to all whites who had

lived in the republic for at least six months, while the franchise was open to all male citizens who had registered for military service. Regehr (1979:130) describes the situation in the Transvaal as follows:

**The people are not prepared to allow any equality of non-whites with the white inhabitants, either in church or state...**

Regehr (1979:130) informs us that in the Transvaal it was government policy to have a “location” in each ward of each district, so that the African population would be divided into small groups and the labour supply would be distributed throughout the farming settlement. Generally the farmers had edged the Africans out of the more fertile and better watered lands. Furthermore the government required each “location” chief to pay taxes in cattle and to provide labour on demand. It was the military who assumed responsibility for maintaining peace and also to supply each white farmer with African labour. At times the Africans bore the full weight of oppression and abuse.

It remains necessary to trace the disunity amongst the DR family of churches. The role of the church in this whole saga of separate development was now becoming more prominent. The writer’s view is that this analysis of disunity within the DRC provides a background to this study and contextualises the different viewpoints, thus allowing the readers to see how the RCA had been created and how the views of the DRC were brought to bear upon the RCA's development.

**The Role of the Church**

Regehr (1979:132) documents that from the beginning the church was a prominent instrument of political domination, both for the Dutch and their Afrikaner descendants and for the British. Divisions existed between the DRC and the English speaking churches and these two groups of churches eventually took different positions on the racial mix of their churches. It has to be understood that the struggle of the Afrikaner against British imperialism was to be waged through the DRC. De Gruchy (1979:20) informs us that the Trekkers did not receive the blessings of the church and that in 1837 the Cape DRC Synod denounced the Trek. Furthermore no DRC ministers were allowed to go with the Trekkers, and thus went without the DRC clergy. According to Hope & Young (1981:19), the faith of the Trekkers was patriarchal. Thus, the patriarchal figure of the leader of each Trekker group became the prototype of the religious leader. All this created a schism in experience and viewpoint between the Trekkers and the Cape church.

**BIRTH OF THE NHK**

The Trekkers now felt like they were the people of Israel during the exodus period and that they were facing tests as the Israelites had faced them in the wilderness. De Gruchy (1979:20) writes that soon disention among the Trekkers was emerged. There were some who wished to remain faithful to the Cape church. In 1853 the Nederduitch Hervormde Kerk (NHK) was born. De Gruchy (1979:20) refers to this church as the Voortrekker Church thus becoming the 'volkskerk' of the South African Republic founded by the Trekkers in the Transvaal. Hope & Young (1981:19) refer to the NHK as a conservative offshoot of the DRC and which rejected organic union. Today the DRC and the NHK exist side by side in the Transvaal. The ZAR of

1856 not only recognized the NHK formally but also asserted that there was to be no equality of black and white in either church or state. Regehr (1979:132) writes that in the Transvaal the NHK became the official state church and approved Boer policies towards the indigenous population. A policy of temporary separation was adopted, so as to give Africans an opportunity to develop and meet the requirements of the western set up. It was believed that once this was achieved, then slowly they would be brought into the mainstream of the Christian community.

Regehr (1979:133) argues that another missionary strategy was based on the premise that Africans should be Christianised within their own cultural setting. In this context it was to be understood that the African should not be westernized at all. The DRC became the constant advocate of this missionary strategy. Regehr (1979:135) affirms that the ground on which the DRC implemented this was political and to this day, political separation and the reluctance to share political power must be regarded as the major motivation. He also mentions that the DRC was quick to adapt itself to isolation and by the middle of the nineteenth century the DRC was set firmly on the road to racially segregated church life.

### 2.3.6

### **BIRTH OF THE GK**

Hope & Young (1981:19) refer to the GK as the "**Dopper Kerk**" which had its roots in Potchefstroom. They further point out that the GK was strictly puritanical, and vowed adherence to the standards of faith and morals as laid down by the synod of Dort, and even

raised stringent objections to hymns, declaring that only the recitation of psalms was acceptable in the eyes of God.

The Dutch theologian, Abraham Kuyper, who fought for the separation of church and state became associated with the Doppe faith. Because Kuyper insisted that each sphere of life had a sovereignty over its own affairs under God, which paved the way and laid the theological foundation for the Afrikaner Nationalism that was to come.

From the above the researcher observes also how the DRC wanted to do mission work within the "Indian" cultural setting, set apart from other cultures. Another split saw the birth of the Gereformeerde Kerk (GK) which was not as a result of the Great Trek, but out of the theological controversy and schism in Holland. De Gruchy (1979:21) writes that the GK centered itself in Potchefstroom and adopted the neo-Calvinism of Kuyper. The Cape DRC or the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk (NGK) established its own synod in the Transvaal. Thus three separate white Afrikaner Reformed Churches with autonomous synods emerged. It was the DRC both at the Cape and Transvaal that took a more liberal position in order to do mission work.

#### 2.3.7

#### **HOLY COMMUNION : A CONTENTIOUS ISSUE**

According to Botha (1984:211), the DRC had developed from an open church in which all sorts of believers, slaves, French Huguenots, German soldiers and officials, were accommodated without regard for colour or descent, into a church identifying itself with one specific population group, the Afrikaners. Loubser (1987:22) states that it became evident

that romantic nationalism and Christian faith were integrated into one philosophy.

The first meeting of the Presbytery of Cape Town declared that the teaching of the Bible and the spirit of Christianity required that all Christians of whatever colour, should take communion together. It must be noted that when the researcher comments on the DRC it is in reference to the white NGK.

As the development of separate congregations increased, pressure grew on blacks to withdraw from the white churches and go to Black churches. The researcher adds that partaking of the Holy Communion became a very contentious issue. Not all segregation was based on concern for the cultural and social needs of the non-whites. Although the Cape Synod in 1829 declared that there should be no discrimination in taking the Holy Communion, blacks were able to take communion after the whites had finished. Regehr (1979:136) notes that a group of whites who had become members of a coloured church asked to partake of the Holy Communion separately from the others.

Accordingly to Loubser (1989:12), in the congregation of Stockenstorm in 1855, a white worshipper refused to partake of Holy Communion with coloured worshippers. Segregation at the communion was allowed, "as an accommodation of the prejudices and weaknesses" and was an anticipation of the historic synod resolution of 1857. At the meeting of the Presbytery of Albany in 1857, of which congregation Stockenstorm was a member, a request was made that communion be separately served to the white members by their own deacons with their own chalices. The exact wording of the resolution reads as follows:

The synod view it as preferable and scriptural that our heathen members are taken up and incorporated into our existing congregations, wherever it can be implemented; but where this measure, as a result of weakness of some, obstructs the promotion of the Christian cause amongst the heathen, the congregation established or to be established from the heathen should enjoy their Christian privileges in a separate building or institution...

(Loubser 1987:13)

According to Hope & Young (1981:18), after a long debate in 1857, the synod finally decided to allow individual churches to have separate communion and separate services. Yet the decision was seen as a concession to the "**weakness**" of white brothers who did not have the moral strength to accept the presence of coloureds and Africans. The idea behind this resolution was that when society became ready, then blacks would become more acceptable. The writer observes that the above decision paved the way for the DRC, which in later years established separate "daughter" churches for coloureds, Africans and Indians.

This resolution was to shape things for the next century.. Loubser (1987:13) confirms that this was to provide a certain moral justification for segregation which was later extended to political levels. Loubser saw this as a concession to the rampant colour prejudices of the whites. After 1870 colour began to function as a criterion for discrimination.

De Gruchy (1979:21) reminds us that the Anglicans and the DRC by the 1860's were both unhappy about too close a relationship with the State because both these churches were similarly involved in heresy trials, the Anglicans against Bishop Colenso and the DRC

against three of its theologians who were indicted on the charge of being theological liberals. In both cases the state upheld the appeal by the accused.

The NHK remained the state church of the South African Republic until 1910, but all the churches in the Cape became "free churches", free to pursue their affairs in their own way. A great deal depended on who was to be in political power (De Gruchy 1979:22).

The English - speaking churches became more multiracial in character but, De Gruchy (1979:23) notes discrimination still abounded. By 1880 tension broke out between the British authorities and the Afrikaners. This also affected the relationship between the English and Afrikaans speaking churches and thus each church sided with its own group. The British won the war waged against the Afrikaner in 1902. Gradually the British government began to create a Union of South Africa out of the British colonies and the Afrikaner republics.

In October 1914 an armed rebellion against the pro-British government erupted. DR DF Malan's draft proposals dated 28 January 1915 was tabled at a meeting held in Bloemfontein. The following statement appears:

The church has a special calling with regard to the Afrikaner people. The church sees it as its duty to be nationalistic, to guard the specific national interests and to teach the people to see the hand of God in its own history and to keep alive an awareness of its national calling and purpose. The church would serve its calling to the kingdom of God and the existence of the Afrikaner people best by keeping itself as a church and also the ministers in

their official capacity, strictly outside the arena of party politics unless religious and moral principles are at stake or the interests of the Kingdom of God justify such action.

(Botha 1984:217)

2.3.8

### **DRC AND ANDREW MURRAY JR**

Hope & Young (1981:20) inform us that in the 1860's and 70's the DRC in the Cape was subjected to a bitter, complex struggle between liberals and conservatives. The central figure in the drama was Andrew Murray, Jr., a Scotland-educated conservative who led a widespread revival movement. Due to the development of an indigenous seminary at Stellenbosch that produced "orthodox" ministers of strongly Calvinist fundamentalist persuasion, the number of liberals dwindled.

The researcher is of the opinion that the revival movement of Andrew Murray Jr. and the Calvinist fundamentalist persuasion that Hope and Young write about, appear to have rubbed off on some of the ministers in the RCA. This explains the great evangelical emphasis on its present day ministry.

2.4

### **Summary**

The historical developments of the DR churches and their response and experience within the Dutch and British Periods prove to be very significant in the shaping of the structure, policies and character of the DRC. The writer's intention was to outline these various factors and

viewpoints, showing how they impacted on the DRC during both the Dutch and British periods.

From the Dutch Period Loubser (1987:3) informs us that although apartheid is a product of the 1930's and 1940's its roots date back to the very beginnings of white settlement. Thus it was within this setting that the researcher intends to trace the emergence of separate development.

Loubser (1987:3) also asserts that once the slaves became emancipated the Bible was seen from the perspective of the oppressed peoples. Regehr (1979:103) pointed out that as the Boers become more settled they began to seek separation from the natives.

During this period the Christians could not accept the fact that the people of colour could be placed on the same footing as themselves. Thus there arose a sense of fear and white Christians became alarmed that their doctrines and customs would be defiled.

The advent of the D.E.I.C. at the Cape was to play a significant role in the history of the DRC. From the beginning the DRC was the church of the company. It was also noted that the Khoikhoi, on whom the white settlers relied for their cattle, now became progressive and prosperous which caused the white settler to keep a careful eye on them.

The interesting feature about mixed marriages and in particular the emergence of the "**Coloured People**", cannot be ignored. Settlers took slave women as wives. Slaves married Khoikhoi women and the descendants of these inter-racial relationships produced the "**Cape**

## Coloureds".

From the beginning the church was associated with the government and therefore received protection from it.

The visiting seafarers were met with resistance by the native tribes when the visitors planned to build permanent structures. Loubser (1987:5) notes that the relationship between the settlers, freed slaves and Hottentots were determined by cultural class differences rather than race differences.

Soon the Afrikaans appeared to be the symbol of white identity. Thus the Afrikaner began to unite around Afrikaner Nationalism.

The Cape during British rule suffered a change of government three times. During this period much more freedom was experienced by the blacks. Ordinance 49 and 50 of 1828 was like a thunderbolt to the Afrikaner. Afrikaner fear began to surface and they became conscious that their culture was being threatened. They began to develop resistance to all forms of equality with people of other colour. Afrikaners developed a "people's theology" in order to liberate themselves.

Missionaries also posed a problem to the colonists. Whilst the Moravians treated the slaves more sympathetically and humanely and educated them, the DRC wanted to do mission work within the cultural set up of the Blacks with a very subtle form of separate development.

In 1836 the Great Trek began, but it was not given the blessing of the DRC. Piet Retief and later Andries Pretorius emerged as Voortrekker leaders. The leaders of each Trekker group associated themselves with the religious leaders of the Old Testament. The Great Trek divided South Africa politically into British colonies, Boer Republics and African tribal lands.

The disunity amongst the Afrikaner churches is also significant to this study. These three churches were the NGK, NHK and the GK, each with its particular characteristics. The NHK became known as the Voortrekker church or "**volkskerk**". There were clearly differences in viewpoints between the Trekkers and the Cape church. The NHK was thus responsible for further fanning the flames towards the policies of separate development.

The GK, a conservative church rooted in Potchefstroom, adopted Kuyper's model of church and state governance. Holy Communion in the Stokenstrom congregation became an issue when certain Whites refused to partake of communion with peoples of other colour.

The debate that brought about the synodical resolution in 1857 had far reaching implications for the entire South African population. This led the DRC in later years to establish three "daughter" churches along racial lines.

Having viewed the historical development of the DRC within the Dutch and British periods the researcher will now turn to another interesting and significant period, ie. the Afrikaner period. This leads the writer into the third chapter of this study.

This deals with Afrikaner Nationalism and the emergence of the coloured and black "daughter" churches of the DRC. The writer also intends to explore how apartheid was viewed by DRC and how the DRC began to put this system into operation amongst the different race groups.

## CHAPTER III

### 3. THE DUTCH REFORMED CHURCHES AND APARTHEID

#### 3.1 AFRIKANER PERIOD

The 1857 Synodical decision allowing individual churches to administer Holy Communion separately for whites and blacks provided the platform henceforth for the DRC to operate within a mission policy of racial segregation.

The researcher will now consider the factors that led the DRC to implement separate development policies and see how the DRC viewed this system of apartheid.

British control of the Cape became solidified and English became the main language. The Afrikaner was not comfortable with this state of affairs. Thus the idea of a common volk was on the increase and the Bible was seen to play a big part in this process.

Loubser (1987:24) confirms that SJ du Toit made the first attempt towards a "**peoples theology**". Du Toit began to give scriptural foundations that the Afrikaners had a unique language and he went further to prove that God even maintains the diversity of nations and languages before his throne in heaven. The scriptures that were quoted in this regard were: Gen 11; Acts 2:5-12; Rev. 5:9,7:9 and 14:6.

The idea that each nation was elected by God and that each nation had a 'Special Calling' served

as a legitimation that the Afrikaners were regarded as a unique nation and therefore could be going into a liberation struggle against foreign masters.

There was an urgent need for the Afrikaner to save and rescue themselves from the poverty and anglicization. Loubser (1987:21) informs us that General CR de Wet in 1909 declared that the dividing line between black and white had been instructed by God and that the Blacks should refrain from entertaining any false ideas about equality. Thus, this idea of a 'special calling' became fixed in the mind of the Afrikaner.

General Hertzog declared the following:

"It is true that nationalism can become a curse, but if we took nationalism away, nothing else remains".

(Loubser 1987:22)

Loubser (1987:23) observes that the foundation was laid for the custom in later years of treating apartheid as a national issue beyond the range of party politics. He further points out that this is how the church could propagate the principles of apartheid without feeling that it was transgressing its own principles of non-interference in party political matters. For the DRC this became a serious matter because their whole future survival depended on the principles of apartheid.

This is what De Gruchy had to say about Apartheid.

"Apartheid has led to the subversion of fundamental human and Christian values. It has created a dehumanised and dehumanising culture and led to the disrespect for law and authority, the cheapening of life, the destruction of the family, wide spread violence, the subversion of the truth with lies, the manipulation of natural cultural differences, the abuse of human rights, and the strengthening of the rich through corruption at the expense of the poor"

(Missionalia : April 1992: Vol. 20. No.1. p.10)

### 3.1.1 AFRIKANER FEAR

As far as the Afrikaner was concerned at this point they feared for the extinction of their nation. Therefore, it became imperative for them to implement apartheid. Van Donk (1994:29) comments that in South Africa, the "**Afrikaner Volk**" considered itself God's "**chosen people**" endowed with a mission to evangelize and rule over the indigenous population. She also mentions that this nation was constantly under threat of "diabolic" customs or people with malicious intentions. Therefore, to preserve the purity of the Afrikaner population fusion of races on all levels of society had to be denounced. Thus legislation to ensure racial segregation was therefore supported. Villa-Vicencio (1988:26) observes that the white NHC has spawned its own separate black church with a clause written into its constitution excluding blacks from membership in the white church. In the same vein the GK with its ultra-Calvinist theology was convinced that God had decreed the separation of races.

Spoelstra in his book "**Die Doppers**" in Suid Afrika", makes the following interesting observation:

"In 1860 a congregation of the Gereformeerde church in the Orange Free State declared:  
"We did not learn in the word of God that we had to allow the blacks to share in the same social rights. Given the nations which surrounds us here, such a policy will lead to the downfall of whites and the corruption of blacks. Thus we consider it imperative for both us and them that they keep their religion separate and that their spiritual needs be met in a special way".

(Spoelstra : 1963:61)

When we consider this quotation, we see how deep the Afrikaner was in seeking for their own self interests. The following phrase by S.T. Kgatla in *Missionalia* further strengthens the view of the Afrikaners self interest.

"Over the years whites, especially the Afrikaners, have developed such a negative image as members of "apartheid" churches that their Christian witness is viewed with suspicion by some blacks. Because of their preoccupation with self-interest and the maintenance of Afrikaner identity and superiority, Afrikaner churches in particular have implemented inhumane policies which corroded the rights of blacks to the extent that effective Christian missionary work by whites among blacks is being affected adversely. To many white Christians the maintenance of apartheid in South Africa is a guarantee of the survival of the Afrikanervolk, which is considered essential for the survival of "Christian civilization" in South Africa'

(Kgatla 1989 : 151)

The writer agrees that the negative image that the Afrikaner developed has done untold damage

to the Gospel message of the Bible. It is still not easy to convince the victims of racial church congregation that the Afrikaner preached a false doctrine of separation. For Morphew (1989:111) the existence of separate DRC affiliations for the various population groups is recognized as being in accordance with the plurality of church affiliations described in the Bible.

The writer will consider just one more quotation from Loubser's book "**The Apartheid Bible**" to view how Dr DF Malan explained the idea of "**calling**".

"The history of the Afrikaner reveals determination and a definiteness of purpose which make one feel that Afrikanerdom is not the work of man, but a creation of God. We have a divine right to be Afrikaners. Our history is the highest work of art of the Architect of the centuries".

(Loubser 1987:27)

From understanding the quotation above the writer is of the opinion that it was not difficult to witness the measures taken by the DRC in relation to its apartheid ideologies. Botha (1984:287) concludes that indigenisation and segregation came to be related to each other.

Loubser (1987:52) informs us that pragmatic apartheid had already been sanctioned by the DRC in its missionary policy of 1935. It was Dr Ben Marais who registered a strong protest against the "apartheid bible". Strassberger (1974:10) informs us that the focus of the mission work of the DRC was on evangelisation and a subsequent aim was the establishment of congregations and eventually an indigenous, autonomous church. Strassberger (1974:13) further informs us that mission efforts within the DRC soon led to the extension of the churches membership by large

numbers of coloured and black people within the Union of South Africa. These new members were not seen as a threat to the White membership, as the ecclesiastical policy of establishing separate churches for the separate racial groups was well established by the time of the increased missionary zeal of the church.

Strassberger (1974:15) writes that the policy of separate worship subsequently resulted in the organization of the separate churches for different ethnic groups in South Africa. After 1877 no more Coloured congregations were affiliated with the DRC synods for whites. Until the beginning of the twentieth century a few Coloured Christians were still affiliated with the DRC congregations for whites. It has been claimed that this pattern of development subsequently influenced the racial policy of the South African Government. A detailed policy of racial separation was expounded by General Hertzog at Smithfield on November 13, 1925 sometimes before the formation of the Federal Mission Council, which was to some extent involved in finally formulating the policy of racial separation through its commissions and its representations to various cabinet ministers.

By 1910 the DR church had already established policies of thoroughgoing racial segregation in their own church affairs. Regehr (1979:146) points out that by the late 19th century the NGK "mother" church had three "daughter" churches: NGSK, NGKA and the RCA for Asians. According to Furlong (1988:7) behind the scenes, the Afrikaans churches had formed a joint Board Church Committee which had accepted a common policy of apartheid or legislated systematic segregation, including in the social sphere. It appeared to Furlong that this newly more coordinated concern was being orchestrated backstage by the secret Broederbond, to which most Afrikaans Reformed churchmen belonged.

In 1857 the synod ruled in favour of those who had a "**weakness**". Morphew (1989:101) contends that in 1881 this "**weakness**" became a missionary policy and a separate church was formed for reaching the "Coloured" people. Morphew suggests that this date should be taken as the official origin of apartheid as a social structure and therefore apartheid first and foremost becomes a church issue.

Van Donk (1994:30) claims that another source of influence on mission theology of the DRC was Abraham Kuyper. She asserts that the DRC theologians made selective use of Kuyper's views and his ideas of separate spheres of sovereignty could obviously find a base in DRC theology.

It was intended that the establishment of churches along racial lines was meant to be a temporary measure as black people would become more acceptable in society and thus church services should again become integrated. However as time went on this notion was far removed from reality as separation became the rule.

### 3.2 **BIRTH OF NGSK**

The first "daughter" church of the DRC was the Dutch Reformed Mission Church (DRMC) established for the "coloured" people in 1881. The writer prefers to refer to this church as the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Sending Kerk (NGSK). Hope & Young (1983:183) observe that the bond between the coloured and white was real because they share the same culture and language and also the DRC provides the Sendingkerk (NGSK) with large sums of money. Coloureds became tired of being associated with racial policies which were being practised within their own structures.

### 3.2.1

#### **BIRTH OF NGKA**

In 1910 a separate Black church was established to unite all those separate black congregation in the Orange Free State. This second "daughter" church of the DRC became known as the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk in Afrika (NGKA).

Villa-Viencio (1988:27) mentions that the policy of separate churches for separate races within the DRC began to harden into a theologized form of Afrikaner Nationalism in the 1920's and 1930's.

### 3.2.2

#### **BIRTH OF RCA**

The third and latest "daughter" church the RCA was established for Indians in 1968. According to Villa Vicencio (1988:28) the Reformed Church, a small separate church for Indians established in 1968 to counter any moves by Indians to join the congregations established for other racial groups, has in turn experienced several secessions by member churches precisely because this church has turned away from adopting a theological position similar to that of the Sendingkerk. The writer's view is that the RCA was created out of the apartheid mentality of the DRC and will therefore disagree with the RCA synodical resolution that the RCA was born out of God's will.

The establishing of these three "daughter" churches was indeed a diplomatic and deliberate move that proved to the world that the DRC was to play a major role in shaping the policies of the Nationalist Party Government. In 1948 the Kerkbode stated that:

As a church, we have always worked purposefully for the separation of races. In this regard apartheid can rightfully be called a church policy.

(de Gruchy & Villa-Vicencio p. 59)

Apartheid was now actively proposed by the DRC as a Biblical, ethical policy. Dr EPJ Kleyhans replied to a question put to him in an interview with Serfontein in the following manner:

"It is not the NGK which is following the government: it is the other way round. We were the first with a policy of separate development which began in the 1950's when separate church structures were provided for each separate racial group to enable them to listen to the Word of God among their own people and in their own language"

(Serfontein: 1982:63-64)

Serfontein (1982:64) goes on to conclude that the honour of being first with the concept of apartheid had to go to the NGK and not the National Party.

### 3.3 **OFFICIAL RESPONSES: STATEMENTS ON APARTHEID**

The writer agrees that the missionary policy developed by the NGK acted as a model for the Nationalist party government's policy of separate development. The researcher will now consider responses from the four racially separated churches within the DR family of churches. The report was presented by an ad hoc committee to the conference of Moderamina of NGK, NGSK, NGKA and RCA at its second meeting on 23rd-24th July 1981. Following are the replies of the official

stand that has been taken on apartheid.

### 3.3.1 NGK:

"Apartheid is a political system based on the autogenous or separate development of various population groups that can be justified from the Bible, but the commandment to love one's neighbour must at all times be the ethical norm towards establishing sound inter-people relations".

### 3.3.2 NGSK:

"The NGSK wishes to express its conviction' that the policy of apartheid and/or separate development which is upheld by the government is in conflict with the gospel for the following reasons."

"because over against the fact that the gospel of Christ is directed at reconciliation of man to God and man to his fellowman, the grounds of race and colour are basically founded on the conviction that people who are thus separated are fundamentally irreconcilable".

"because the system emerging from such a policy inevitably had to lead to and indeed led to increasing polarisation among people, especially as it was demonstrated in practice that within this system one population group, viz. the whites, are the privileged group and consequently the demand of the gospel that justice is done to all is not met, and

"because through this policy the human dignity not only of the non-privileged sections of the population is affected, but also of everybody involved by it.

### 3.3.3

#### NGKA:

"Politically the black man experiences the government policy in two ways: positively and negatively: (positively) The policy of separate development, which includes the independence of the homelands, is appreciated.

(negatively) Where the policy is based on discrimination on grounds of colour, it is experienced as a system by which the white man favours himself at the expense of the black man. This is selfish"

### 3.3.4 RCA

"The RCA has not officially expressed itself against apartheid in so many words, it has clearly distanced itself from this system by means of the following: The Group Areas Act; Law on Mixed Marriages, the Immorality Act, the practice of Detention without Trial and as well as the so called New Constitutional proposals."

"We felt compelled on the basis of God's word to firmly condemn all racialistic and discriminatory practices in our land and especially when such practices are to be found in the church".

(Acta 1980 p. 139)

Within the context of the racially divided "daughter" churches of the DRC many voices of resistance were heard both on the sides of those who portrayed conservative and liberal

characteristics. During this process these churches were plagued with tensions and splits. Apartheid really damaged and strained relationship of fellow workers who worked together..

The following is an extract from the report of the ad hoc committee to the conference of Moderamina that was held in Pretoria in 1981:

### 3.4 **Statements of Ad Hoc Committee**

The word "apartheid" is used in different ways. It varies in meaning from spontaneous and voluntary "birds of a feather flock together" to separate treatment of people and finally to a political system in which people are forced by law, regulation and state authority to live in separate political and social structures on an ethnic basis. Depending on one's experience this word has a positive or negative connotation.

The political system in our country which is known as apartheid or separate development can't simply be traced to the spontaneous desire of people to group together, but must be seen as the result of the application of a particular idea for the ordering of the racial and national relationships in our country, with a strongly idealistic tendency.

The origin of the "apartheid" idea lies far back in our history and was fed by various sources inside and outside our country. It found its first definite form in the mission policy of the NGK. This idea has always been supported by two contradictory motives. The first is the unselfish desire, born of Biblical love, to give to each national group (volksgroep) the full opportunity to develop itself fully according to its own character and giftedness. The second is the desire, born

of fear, to protect the interests and identity of the whites as the privileged and most developed minority group by social separation from the rest of the population. These two ideas give the apartheid idea its inherent ambiguity. It was transferred to the state when the church's mission policy, at its own insistence, was given political expression in government policy in 1948.

This inherent ambiguity of the apartheid idea also explains why its application elicits contradictory responses. Because the white Afrikaners exercised control especially during the past half century, they were the ones who applied this idea. Both motives played their role so that much of what was brought about by the apartheid regime bears the stamp of both unselfishness and selfishness. The other population groups in the country experienced the application of the idea in an equally ambiguous way. There are many things that are positive and beneficial to them, but many other things that are negative and deny their human dignity.

An extremely painful and dangerous polarisation has come about between those who apply the policy and those to whom it is applied. The two motives on which the policy rests are set in irreconcilable opposition to each other. Those who apply the policy defend their way of action solely on the basis of the first motive (ie. to give each group the fullest development opportunities) and they can't understand why the many things they have done and given are not being appreciated. What they claim for themselves, they see as their right. Those to whom the policy is applied (and the world which sympathises with them) strongly oppose the second motive (ie. to preserve the identity and sovereignty of the whites) and refuse to show appreciation for the comforts and advantages, which in their eyes don't compare with what they have to endure due to the selfishness of the whites and which they in any case regard as their legitimate share from the side of the state.

Since it is becoming increasingly clear that the two motives on which apartheid rests can never be reconciled and are becoming more and more polarised, it must be clear that the idea itself has as a result begun to lose its credibility. A Biblical motive of service to the neighbour and a freshly human motive of self-service can never be brought to a harmonious synthesis under the heading of Biblical justice.

The churches involved must acknowledge their share in the creation of the apartheid policy. The Mother Church for example doesn't have to feel ashamed (i.a.) of the first motive and what she has brought about as a result of it by making room for the young churches to come to full self-realisation. But, at the same time, she has to (i.a.) confess guilt for the sinful and permissive way in which she has allowed the second motive often to let white selfishness triumph over love and justice in church and state.

The young churches have the fullest right (i.a.) to oppose with holy wrath every expression of white selfishness and lovelessness which prevent Biblical koinonia. But, at the same time, they must (i.a.) confess guilt for the sinful ingratitude so often expressed by their members and church assemblies to the gifts coming to them from the Mother Church according to 2 Cor. 8-9.

As a result of the growing lack of credibility (and total rejection by some) of the idea and system of apartheid the NGK family must also jointly emphasize Biblical norms for living together in church and state, and call on the authorities to give expression to these norms.

Many inhabitants of South Africa experience apartheid negatively, i.a. because in the course of history it has been used as an ideology in which the idea of separateness was so absolutist that

it was enforced in all areas (political, economic, social and even religious). We shall have to give up the concept "apartheid".

(A Conference of Moderamina of NGK, NGSK, NGKA and RCA : 1992 : 52)

It is evident from this report that the "daughter" churches of the DRC began to consolidate their resistance to apartheid. Financial obligations to the DRC also influenced these churches to be cautious in the ways they responded to the separate development policies.

More interesting times were to be experienced after the National Party won the elections in 1948. Hertzog became the prime minister in 1924 and he gave black/white segregation a legal base and removed blacks from the voter's roll. In 1934 both Hertzog and Smuts were joined in a coalition government and they agreed the control had to remain with the Europeans. Hope & Young (1983:29) write that Hertzog began to feel that the time had come for a broader White unity. In 1936 despite black opposition blacks were removed from the voters roll on which they had been registered since 1853. Regehr (1979:154) informs us that individual multiracial churches did raise their protest led by the Anglican church.

The consolidation of National movement began in earnest. Apart from British domination during the wars between 1914-1918, in 1939 the British domination was resurrected and this saw the dissolution of the Smuts-Hertzog coalition and thus Smuts was left alone to support the war efforts. Hertzog died in 1942 and there was an impending election campaign at this point in time. NC Havenga now assumed the leadership and then collaborated with DF Malan and his nationalists to wage the 1948 election campaign. (Regehr 1979:159).

Cassidy (1989:129; 131) writes that DF Malan was a minister of the DRC and that he used theology to preach liberation, and that it was not much different from the liberation theology used by blacks. From 1950 to 1960 the DRC poured themselves into the task of justifying apartheid and seeking to reconcile it with scripture.

According to Marquard (1955:251) the Malan-Havenga coalition of the Nationalists and Afrikaner parties won the General Election of 1948 and in 1951 both the parties merged, with Malan as leader and for the first time since Union a party was in power whose members were almost entirely Afrikaans speaking South Africans. In 1958 Dr H.F. Verwoerd became the new leader after Strydom died and Dr HF Verwoerd withdrew his application to the commonwealth due to discussions about South Africa's racial policies. It was on 31st May 1961 that South Africa became a republic.

According to Smith H.L. (1979:3) the insistence on duty to the state developed as the Afrikaner rose to power and came to control the state apparatus. The state became synonymous with his party and the preservation of the one came to mean the preservation of the other.

The following extract from Furlong's work, "**The DRC of South Africa, Afrikaner Nationalism and the Mixed Marriages Act**" indicates the relationship that existed between the NGK and the state:

' By 1949, however, the Party had thoroughly caught up with the churches. The convergence of the NGK and Nationalist interests is illustrated by the statement of the Cape NG Synod in October of that year expressing "thanks and appreciation" for the "courageous action" of the Government against mixed marriages. The Synod went on to

request legislation against extramarital sex across the colour line (fulfilled by the 1950 Immorality Act), rapid compulsory residential segregation of Whites, Africans and Coloureds, and the wakening of a "healthy racial pride" among each group through the state schools. As the Synodical Missionary Commission of the Transvaal NGK put it "our policy of apartheid is to a large extent also that of the state'.

(Furlong: 1988:8)

Smith H.L. a Durban born journalist includes the following statement on apartheid soon after the 1948 National Party victory.

"With what glee it was that the doctrine of apartheid was announced to the world soon after the National Party came into power. This apartheid was to be segregation of the races on the basis of skin colour. It was to be a full-scale elaboration of a racial technique never before attempted to the same extent elsewhere in the world.

In theory each race was to be separate and equal. But a law soon was establishment stating that facilities reserved for a particular race or class need not be substantially equal ... The great beneficiaries of apartheid are the whites including even those many English-speaking whites and Afrikaner intellectuals who oppose the policy. They can but hardly help being beneficiaries".

(Smith, H.L.: 1979:10)

### 3.4.1 APARTHEID LEGALISED

After 1948 the legal machine of apartheid was unleashed. As the writer mentioned earlier on that the DRC was honoured to claim that the blueprint for apartheid was theirs and not of the Nationalist Party. Regehr (1979:161) mentions that after 1948 the race policy became officially premised on the notion that South Africa was a multinational, not a multiracial country in which separate peoples were to seek separate freedoms. Thus, the main tool of separation became legislation.

The Federal Council of the NGK in 1951 published a statement setting out the DRC relationship to the State as well as the bases for the DRC position on race relations. The statement issued by the council goes on to say that the state has been created by God and exists independently of its citizens, its authority over the individual is ordained by God and that it possesses the might of "the power of the sword"

Regehr (1979:165) writes that in 1951 the NGK Cape Synod actually gave a specific voice to this understanding to the franchise by passing a resolution to the effect that Africans were not yet capable of voting.

In 1950, 600 white delegates of the DRC met in Bloemfontein. This conference rejected the integration policy instead, they concluded that total separation was the only solution. Regehr (1979:166) points out that "separate development" as advocated by the DRC was recommended as the one path that held the promise of justice for all.

According to Regehr (1979:170) in their determination to separate the development of the Africans from the development of the European, Afrikaners were particularly concerned not to educate Africans to become "Black Englishmen". This view was shared by the DRC what was

previously known as Native Education now became "Bantu Education". Regehr (1979:171) cites Chief Albert Luthuli's speech in the following manner:

"The Bantu Education Act is a tool in the hands of the white master for more effective reduction and control of the Black servants. The declared aim of Verwoerd's legislation was to produce African's who could aspire to nothing in white South Africa higher than the "certain forms of labour".

The DRC was alone in fully approving the new legislation and regulations. During this whole exercise of releasing the monster of apartheid many people were brutalized and disadvantaged for life. There were among the Afrikaners some genuinely concerned theologians who were not supportive of the whole apartheid system.

#### 3.4.1.1 **Opposition by Theologians: Prof BB Keet and Prof Geyser**

Regehr (1979:177) states that Prof BB Keet of the theological seminary of the DRC at Stellenbosch was an outspoken critic against the theological justification of apartheid. In 1956 he published "**Wither South Africa?**" which was directed towards the Afrikaner Community. In his book he refuted Biblical arguments in support of racial discrimination and segregation. It was Prof Geyser from the NHK who challenged the church to test its membership restriction on ethnic grounds in the scripture. For this he was brought to trial for heresy, but when he appealed to the Supreme Court, his church agreed to settle out of court, to pay all legal costs and

reinstate him as a minister of the NHK.

### 3.5 **Black Response**

Whilst the apartheid policies began to take effect within the black community, the level of resentment began to germinate. Although the "**apartheid churches**" were holding a certain official autonomy, they were still fully dependant upon the "mother" churches for finance and personnel and were in fact firmly under white control (Regehr 1979:178).

Nationwide unrest gained momentum. Demonstrations against pass laws were increased. Hope & Young (1983:41) record that whilst the African National Congress (ANC) were preparing new demonstrations, it was the young Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) who seized the initiative and on March 21, 1960 began a nationwide campaign. According to Regehr (1979:188) a crowd between five and twenty thousand approached the police station and demanded arrest for violating the pass laws. The idea behind this demonstration was to get the jails filled and soon to see the collapse of the system. During this demonstration it was reported that 69 were killed and 178 wounded and that much of the police firing occurred after the people began to flee. This became known as the "Sharpeville Massacre".

The blacks experienced the wrath of the police like never before. The government however evaluated the situation very carefully and thus they began to implement banning orders of public meetings of all races in a large number of magisterial districts. This was carried out on the 24th March 1960. There was still more to come. On March 28th the government passed legislation effectively banning the ANC and the PAC and thus on March 30th a state of emergency was

proclaimed resulting in several arrests.

### 3.5.1 **The Sharpeville shootings**

According to Regehr (1979:188) a week after Sharpeville Shootings, 12 clergymen from three DR churches issued a joint statement rejecting the government's enforced apartheid policy as unethical, unbiblical and without any foundation in scripture, and expressing alarm at the way this policy was causing hatred, increasing racial tension and widening the rift between the races. Loubser (1987:141) observes that apartheid also cultivates damaging feelings of hate and revenge and thus it leads to revenge obsessions which in turn obstruct personality development. This then leads to the most dangerous aspects of apartheid which is the polarisation between white and non-white elite.

However, the DRC did not identify themselves with the denunciation of this Massacre. Soon after this both English and Afrikaans speaking churches were unanimous in calling on the World Council of Churches (WCC) to sponsor a consultation in South Africa on the issue of Christian responsibility in race relations (Regehr 1979:189).

### 3.6 **Cottesloe**

A consultation of the eight member churches of the WCC including the three Dutch Reformed Churches was held at Cottesloe Johannesburg, December 7-14 1960. The riots was received with different reactions by the English speaking churches and the DRC. In a work edited by Hofmeyr,

JW and others (1991:230) it is mentioned that on this occasion the church's role as regards racism was put under the spotlight by delegates of the WCC and representatives of South African member churches. The English churches recognized that pass laws, imprisonment for statutory offences, denial of political rights for urban Africans, low wages and the way Black people were treated by the police, the government and municipal officials were the major problems which were directly related to the implementation of the pass laws. (Regehr 1979:190).

Kinghorn (1994:150) mentions that the WCC chaired the convention and at the end they formulated a declaration which left the door open for a multiracial political arrangement, but it certainly rejected apartheid in no uncertain terms. Soon it became clear that the DRC delegates and other white Reformed Churches did not fully support the line and most of them withdrew their support of the declaration. The DRC took a different line of thought on these issues. For them they saw signs of a long term conspiracy in the disturbances. They now viewed that Black political organizations were bent to overthrow the ruling class and thereby establish a "people's government". The DRC saw the liberation struggle now being forged under the drive of the long term policy of revolution and communist agitation.

The memorandum of the Transvaal DRC stated that although the DRC would not claim that apartheid was the only solution to the racial problem the church was nevertheless satisfied that if implemented honestly, it was a fair and just policy. Furthermore, the DRC could not argue that any form of segregation is contrary to the Gospel. The memorandum said segregation could be degrading and uncharitable or simply spontaneous as a result of natural differences. The existence of separate churches for separate racial groups was no denial of the unity of the church (Regehr 1979:191).

Regehr (1979:191) informs us that the statement submitted by the Cape NGK study group, if

taken at face value, substantially reduced the differences between the Afrikaans and English-speaking churches on the racial issue. Their statement said that the church must cooperate in bringing Christians of different races, among whose groups serious tensions exist, together in order to give a common Christian witness.

It became clear from the NHK statement that the diligent application of separate development was to be the only acceptable fair system. They were against any process of integration.

The points of the statement were finally approved and released by the Cottesloe Consultation and it went a long way to repudiate the view put forward by the NHK. (Regehr 1979:192) however speaks of a compromise, a political compromise between the DRC and the English-speaking churches. The whites were in the majority at this Consultation, whereas the blacks, because of their representation, their aspirations did not find their way into the Cottesloe statement. Regehr (1979:193) claims that while the English-speaking churches asserted the right of all citizens to participate in the government of their country, they suggested only that coloureds should be represented in Parliament, and made no mention of African and Asian representation.

### 3.6.1 **Cottesloe Consultation Statement**

The spirit of the compromise is reflected in the parts of the statement quoted below:

We are united in rejecting all unjust discriminations. Nevertheless, widely divergent convictions have been expressed in the basic issues of apartheid. They range on the one hand from the judgement that it is unacceptable in principle, contrary to the Christian calling and unworkable in practice, to the conviction on the other hand that a policy of

differentiation can be defended from the Christian point of view, that it provides the only realistic solution to the problems of race relations and is therefore in the best interests of the various population groups.

Although proceeding from these divergent views, we are nevertheless able to make the following affirmations concerning human need and justice, as they affect relations among the races of this country. In the nature of the case the agreements here do not - and we do not pretend that they do - represent in full the convictions of the member churches... We recognise that all racial groups who permanently inhabit our country are a part of our total population, and we regard them as indigenous. Members of all these groups have an equal right to make their contribution towards the enrichment of the life of their country and to share in the ensuing responsibilities, rewards and privileges.

The present tension in South Africa is the result of a long historical development and all groups bear responsibility for it. This must also be seen in relation to events in other parts of the world. The South African scene is radically affected by the decline of the power of the West and by the desire for self-destruction among the peoples of the African continent...

The Church as the Body of Christ is a unity and within this unity the natural diversity among men is not annulled but sanctified.

No-one who believes in Jesus Christ may be excluded from any church on the grounds of his colour or race. The spiritual unity among all men who are in Christ must find visible expression in acts of common worship and witnesses, and in fellowship and

consultation on matters of common concern...

Our discussions have revealed that there are not sufficient consultation and communication between the various racial groups which make up our population. There is a special need that a more effective consultation between the government and leaders accepted by the non-White people of South Africa should be devised. The segregation of racial groups carried through without effective consultation and involving discrimination leads to hardship for members of the groups affected.

There are no Scriptural grounds for the prohibition of mixed marriages. The well-being of the community and pastoral responsibility require, however, that due consideration should be given factors which may make such marriages inadvisable.

We call attention once again to the disintegrating effects of migrant labour on African life. No stable society is possible unless the cardinal importance of family life is recognized, and, from the Christian standpoint, it is imperative that the integrity of the family is safeguarded.

It is now widely recognised that the wages received by the vast majority of the non-White people oblige them to exist well below the generally accepted minimum standard for healthy living. Concerted action is required to remedy this grave situation. The present system of job reservation must give way to a more equitable system of labour which safeguards the interest of all concerned.

It is our conviction that the right to own land wherever he is domiciled, and to participate in the government of his country, is part of the dignity of the adult man, and for this reason a policy which permanently denies to non-White people the right of collaboration in the government of the country of which they are citizens cannot be justified.

It is our conviction that there can be no objection in principle to the direct representation of coloured people in Parliament. We express the hope that consideration will be given to the application of this principle in the foreseeable future.

In so far as nationalism grows out of a desire for self-realization, Christians should understand and respect it. The danger of nationalism is, however, that it may seek to fulfil its aim at the expense of the interests of others and that it can make the nation an absolute value which takes the place of God. The role of the Church must therefore be to help to direct national movements towards just and worthy ends.

(Regehr 1979:192-193)

The writer's observations are that out of the Cottesloe Consultation the true colours of the delegates present, came to the surface. Those who wished to still maintain their conservative stance on the apartheid issue voiced their opinions and objections to the draft. On the other hand those who had courage enough stood up for their convictions and were thus counted with those who unceasingly fought for the eventual dismantling of the apartheid system that has brought about untold suffering, especially amongst the Black people of South Africa.

Cottesloe was not the end to highlight the practise of racism in South Africa, but in fact it gave impetus for other significant challenges to take the struggle against injustices further. The writer

now will deal briefly with the reaction to Cottesloe.

The compromise was of a brief duration. Both Church and State swung into action to discredit Cottesloe and the ecumenical initiatives that had led to it. The NHK delegates dissociated themselves from the Cottesloe statement, reaffirming their unshaken faith in racial separation as the best means of serving the ideals of Christianity.

### 3.6.2 PRIME MINISTER AND COTTESLOE

According to Hope & Young (1983:76) the effect on Prime Minister Verwoerd was electric. He summoned the DRC theologians to order and stressed that they had been unduly influenced by the "liberal" WCC and that they must remember the high purpose of apartheid and that they would have to recant. The establishment felt threatened by the publication of "**Delayed Action**" in which eleven DRC theologians refuted on biblical and moral grounds all arguments for apartheid and thus called for radical change in government policies.

The NGK delegates to the Consultation refused to back down from their support of the statement, even in the face of severe opposition from all four Nederduitse Gereformeerde churches. They added that if complete territorial separation was impossible then full rights, including political rights, could not be withheld indefinitely from coloureds and Africans who were permanent residents of the white areas. (Regehr 1979:194).

Cottesloe marked a turning point for Afrikaners and thus a division arose between the English and Afrikaans speaking churches. Their policy of isolation now began to be put into operation. The WCC affiliation now became a point of contention. The Cape Synod with an overwhelming majority decided to cut ties with the WCC. An NGK commission studying the Cottesloe Consultation recommended strongly their withdrawal from the world ecumenical body. The Consultation was rejected on the basis that its findings undermined the policy of separate development and was also in conflict with its traditional policy (Regehr 1979:195). Villa-Vicencio (1988:109) reports that ultimately they isolated themselves from the world church by resigning from the WCC and in 1982 their membership of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) was suspended.

Increased political repression followed. African resistance was caused by the government. The burden to oppose apartheid fell upon the church, student groups and academics. It now became apparent that the solution was not to be found within the context of denominational structures but a new kind of ecumenical thrust was needed. Hope & Young (1983:77) inform us that the Christian Institute came into being under the leadership of CF Beyers Naude who was a key figure in the DRC delegation at Cottesloe. After exploring the Bible more deeply and until he visited the locations himself he began to slowly understand the extent to which the DRC faith he espoused was a justification of White privilege.

In 1962 the ecumenical monthly magazine, "**Pro Veritate**" was launched with Beyers Naude as its editor and in 1963 he was instrumental in the formation of the Christian Institute. Regehr

(1979:196) informs us that by 1964, 28 churches and missionary societies became associated with the Institute. The DRC mounted campaigns to discredit the Institute. In 1966 the NGK General Synod resolved that the Christian Institute represented a false doctrine and therefore suggested the withdrawal of all NGK members. The Natal Mercury (October 19, 1994) an article written by Aggrey Klaaste portrayed Dr Naude as one of the few lonely inscrutable, and embittered Afrikaners who many years ago saw the evil of apartheid and probably started the doubts about the worthiness of this policy in the DRC which was the strong pillar of the volk. The report mentions that it was from these cracks in the Afrikaner theological intelligentsia that the volk began to split.

The spotlight again fell on the WCC. The following statement was made by Prime Minister Voster when he addressed the National Assembly regarding those churches and individuals who refused to dissociate themselves from the WCC:

"I would be neglecting in my duty as head of government if I did not take any action against them, if I allowed churches which are members of the WCC, and wish to remain members, to send representatives to conferences of the body, and if I failed to take action .... against clergymen who allow pamphlets (explaining the rationale behind the PRC grants)... or pamphlets with a similar tenor, to be distributed at their churches on Sundays".

(Survey of Race Relations: 1979:16)

### 3.7 MIXED WORSHIP

According to Regehr (1979:207) the prime minister's brother, Dr J Vorster, then moderator of the NGK told the church's synod that the WCC was "*not a church of God, but a church of the revolution*".

It was Ben Marais of the theology faculty of the University of Pretoria who showed a reconciliatory tone towards the WCC, but he was not supported by most of the whites in the DRC. Ben Marais reacted to the false impression that may have been created that only the communists have any concern for social justice and freedom. It appeared to Marais that the DRC tended to identify Christian social concern with Communism.

According to Regehr (1979:216) Dr Vorster the moderator of the NGK emphatically rejected the idea of mixed worship. "We must create separate facilities for blacks in their own areas" he said, "and if there is no alternative we must give them Sundays off so that they can stay in their own houses and worship in their own churches". Vorster also rejected the idea "that one bench will become two", he said and later three and four and in the end we will have totally integrated services. Regehr (1979:217) states that in the 1974 Synod Prof Ben Marais tabled a motion urging all church councils to open their doors to people of all races, but was rejected by an overwhelming majority leaving the decisions to the local church councils.

When we come into the 1980's, we notice that the struggle for freedom being trapped in the apartheid system has become much more intensified by the democratic formations. New role players also began to emerge from within the ranks of the church, government and political organisations. Morphew (1989:119) claims that the year 1986 should be noted as a crucial one in the history of South Africa for in this year the DRC, the original formulator of apartheid began,

albeit tentatively, to move away from its disastrous creation. It was said that during this period, politics of the country are first decided by dominees (DRC ministers) and only later by politicians. Therefore 1986 DRC Synod was viewed as marking the turning point of the tide.

At the 1986 DRC Synod more emphasis was placed on the unity of the church and the implications for this unity for inter group relationships whereas previously reports concentrated on the diversity of the church. According to Morphew (1989:121) these views are the expressions of progressives.

### 3.8 **JOHAN HEYNS**

Johan Heyns, as a seasoned church man became best known and respected in South Africa. He was a minister in the NGK. He was appointed to the staff of the theological seminary of the DRC in Stellenbosch. Few years later Prof Heyns took up the chair in systematic theology and ethics at the theology faculty, University of Pretoria. For 22 years Prof Heyns lectured in Pretoria, where hundreds of dominees now serving the DRC, sat at his feet.

According to Prof Piet Marais report in the Natal Mercury 11th November, 1994 Prof Heyn's career was launched when he was elected moderator at the general synod in Cape Town in 1986. The 1986 synod was viewed as a watershed experience for the DRC. It is reported that after years of agonizing over racial issues, this 1986 synod adopted a brand new policy document on church and society in which attitudes of the past were rejected and the DRC in no uncertain terms took leave of apartheid. The decision came as a surprise to many and an unwelcome surprise to

thousands of conservative DRC members. Prof Heyns thus became the man responsible for steering the DRC on its new course. In ecumenical meetings in many countries he led the DRC delegation.

However, his membership of the Afrikaner Broederbond caused many a raised eyebrow. He was blamed and reproached by many conservative Afrikaners as a man who more than others, led the Afrikaner astray. Death threats became the order of the day for him.

The Daily News (Monday, November 7, 1994) describes Prof Heyns as a person who created a stir in Afrikaner circles as far back as 1959 with his "verligte" statements. At the NGK's general Synod in 1982 he supported a motion condemning the Mixed Marriages Act and Immorality Acts. However, writes the Daily News correspondent, in spite of such "verligte" statements he remained loyal to the National Party's separate development policies for many years.

Prof Heyns it appears has paid the ultimate price for his "verligte" attitude. At the time of his death he was very much a man in retirement. The murder of Prof Heyns on 5th November as a decent human and an influential Christian *leader* is a national as much as a family tragedy.

President Nelson Mandela of South Africa appeared on television the next day and said that Heyns had been a soldier for peace. ***"His untimely death is a loss to the South African nation as a whole, black and white"***(Reformed Ecumenical Council 1994 : 12)

The 1986 General Synod took the first steps in publicly retracting the DRC's support of apartheid. According to the Reformed Ecumenical Council (1994: 12) in 1988 at the REC meeting in Harare, Heyns said "Apartheid was a sin" For the REC this was the first time a DRC official had

publicly made such a declaration and in 1992 he and the rest of the DRC delegation agreed to a REC statement that the theological defence of apartheid is a heresy.

According to Morpew (1989:121) it is possible that the most unfortunate factor in the whole history of apartheid is that the DRC has found it possible to say some of these things so late. In "**Church and Society**" (1987:47. para's 305-306) the DRC has claimed that the attempt to justify apartheid as derived from the Bible, must be recognised as an error and be rejected. The DRC declaration also mentions that to the extent that the DRC and its members are involved in , it confesses its participation with humility and sorrow. Morpew (1989:124) argues that most other theological treatments describe both racism and apartheid as a sin and place apartheid in the area of a heresy. He asserts that this is so, because it is usually recognized that apartheid began in the church. It is out of this view that Morpew wants to know what is preventing the DRC from making this assessment. Both the NGSK and the NGKA have accepted that the theological justification of apartheid is a heresy, but the NGK and the RCA have not as yet acknowledged this assessment.

The writer's observation is that Prof Johan Heyns was prepared to be the "**bridge**" for peace with the DR Family of Churches and in the country as a whole. Since he now has been eliminated by assassination, the whole process regarding church unity with the "daughter" churches has slowed down considerably, although certain initiatives are underway. It is with great anticipation that South Africa waits to see what the outcome will be regarding the current discussions on church unity. The researcher is focusing his attention particularly on the RCA. The researcher's opinion is that when the RCA decides to join the URCSA it will be a step in the right direction.

The Afrikaner period proved the most decisive period in the legislation and implementation of the separate development policies.

It was seen clearly that the Afrikaners viewed themselves as a unique nation. It appeared to them on their Biblical understanding that God had a "special calling" for them only. This idea of the "special calling, became fixed in their minds. They then went all out to preserve their identity at the expense of the other racial groups.

The whole concept of the volk gained momentum. They began to believe that they were the chosen people. To further their plans of racial segregation the DRC drew up a racialistic mission policy. This they viewed as ordained by God. They lost no time working towards this end. As a result of their missionary efforts the DRC has four racially segregated churches viz. NGKA, NGK, NGSK, and the RCA.

This chapter also brings out the influence of Abraham Kuyper on the DRC's mission theology. After the National Party's election victory in 1948, the whole machinery of the apartheid was unleashed. This chapter also includes the responses from the segregated churches on apartheid. They were also strong voices like, Prof BB Keet, Prof Geysers and others who rejected the theological justification of apartheid by the DRC.

The black response to apartheid was also noted. The ensuing strikes and boycotts led to a nationwide campaign against the apartheid regime. What resulted from all these demonstrations

is the "**Sharpeville Massacre**". The WCC in response to church leaders called for a conference to discuss the racial tension in South Africa. Thus from December 7-14, 1960 the Cottesloe Consultation received the spotlight. This Consultation brought out the characteristics of the various participants, many of which dissociated themselves from the resolution of the Consultation.

Beyers Naud'e also emerged as a strong opposition to apartheid within the DRC and he suffered the consequences for siding with the oppressed people in South Africa.

Prof Heyn's contribution in steering the new direction of the DRC in 1986 was considered a turning point for the DRC to officially move away from apartheid.

This chapter concluded with the anticipation of the outcome of the church unity discussions which will have a tremendous impact for the Family of DR churches.

The next chapter moves directly into the missionary efforts of the DRC amongst the Indian Community. The early beginnings of the DRC lay workers contribution will be noted.

## CHAPTER IV

### 4. DRC MISSIONS TO INDIANS 1950-1969

#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

In 1948 the National Party won the elections in South Africa. Apartheid policies now were being legislated and thus it became a legal instrument of discrimination in the hands of the Nationalist Party. The times of high apartheid began to emerge. The Afrikaner viewed this system as a trump card for their survival. The apartheid system was to permeate throughout the entire South African population. This was done without the consultations of the other race groups and thus it was viewed as a forced form of discrimination and injustice. In this process the military apparatus of the state was geared to terminate any form of resistance to the apartheid policies.

Together with the other race groups, the Indian community began to experience the subtle form of racial, religious segregation which formed the basis of the DRC Mission Policy.

In 1855 there is mention that Sir George Grey, then governor said that 'His Excellency believed that Indians in a country like this intermixed with Christian people as agencies would be likely to become converts to Christianity, and thus Natal might be the means of incalculable benefit to the people of India itself'

(Natal Mercury 9th November 1855)

#### 4.2 The Early Beginnings:

Greyling CJA and Moodley GS (1968) inform us from their press release of the Indian Reformed Church (IRC) the following facts: *The NGK commenced mission work amongst the Indians in 1925, when Rev. Abraham de Klerk was sent to Ceylon. He died however within a year and in 1926 the Rev. S.F Skeen followed up the work, but he returned the year after.* Rev de Beer (1977:295) informs us that Skeen began to work among the Blacks of Johannesburg. Greyling CJA and Moodley GS (1968) maintain that officially the work in the Republic commenced in 1946 by Mr NWS de Bruin in Pietermaritzburg and in 1968 there were four congregations with 391 communicant members, with 68 Sunday Schools attended by 1758 children. These congregations were served by six missionaries, seven evangelists and two trained evangelists.

#### 4.3 The Lay movement: - DRC

It must be noted that long before the church officially rose to the opportunity to preach the Gospel to the Indians, ordinary members or layworkers of the DRC felt called to do this work. Rev. de Beer (1977:297) reports that in many cases these layworkers opened the eyes of the DRC to enter into this work in its official capacity. Therefore the beginnings of the RCA is directly related to the lay movement of the DRC.

It is further reported that these men and women sowed the seed quietly and that it was remarkable that six members of the 'Youth Movement' labouring in Pretoria eventually become ministers of the RCA.

#### 4.4 Cape Province

The DRC in the Cape Province appointed Dr GBA Gerdener to minister to the Moslem community of Cape Town. This was regarded as the first initiative to do mission work amongst South African Indians. As the work grew Rev. AJ Liebenberg in 1916 followed him and soon in 1940 Rev. AC van Wyk had a passion to do mission work and he ended up at the Cape. It was in 1943 that Rev. PS Latsky of the St. Stephen's DRC took over the work as a part-time ministry. After a decision in the 1956 Synod of DRC Cape Province Rev. DJ Pypers in 1960 was appointed to minister exclusively to Moslems with the specific request that he gives special attention to the Indian Community.

Rev. de Beer (1977:298) reports that in 1961 the Rev. DJ Pypers was ordained as a minister to the Indian people of the Cape Province. In 1966 the NGSK of the Cape accepted responsibility for the ministry among Coloured and Malay Moslems in the Western Cape, thus leaving the DRC responsible for the ministry to Indian People. The Dutch Reformed Indian Church of the Cape Province was thus founded in Rylands which today is known as RCA Sunthosham. This congregation was constituted in 1966. It is evident from the IRC minutes dated 21/7/62 in Pietermaritzburg that Rev Manikkam accepted a call to the Cape Province and that his last working day in Durban North congregation was 30th November 1962. On the 25th November 1962 a farewell service was held in the Garage Mission Hall for him at which it was reported that hearts were touched as the congregation bade farewell to the evangelist and his family.

In 1971 Rev EJ Manikkam became the Indian minister of the RCA Rylands. An article in the Sunday Times (2nd Sept. 1984) refers to Rev Manikkam as South Africa's first Indian dominee.

As the work began to progress, the work extended to Cravenby where a church building was erected in 1974.

In 1965 work amongst Cape Moslems expanded when a group of young people started a ministry to Moslems in Port Elizabeth. Later Mrs Magda du Preez worked full time in this ministry. In their efforts in the Eastern Cape in 1974 a congregation was established in Port Elizabeth which is presently known as RCA CALVARY. The present minister of this congregation is Rev. Tobie de Wet.

Shortly afterwards a member of the church council of the Western Cape began an outreach work at Kimberley. The researcher was present in Cape Town where the RCA celebrated its 25th anniversary. Many exhibitions appeared in the Church hall. Between the various documents and photographs exhibited, a document which was undated and titled "History of the RCA Kimberley" gives us the following historical events of the work at Kimberley:

*"As early as 1957, Mrs Johanna May began work among the Indians in Kimberley. At that time, the Indian community was extremely small. Today there are about 1202 Indians in the entire city.*

*The work started in the home of a local Indian businessman (Mr Pillay) in Meyer Street as a Sunday School. When the prospect of a future church became a possibility, a missionary from the NGK, Sister Ina Uys was appointed to start an outreach on 1st February 1961. She immediately began with a door-to-door visitation to encourage the growth of the Sunday School. Then the*

*situation changed. The home of Mr Pillay no longer became available, but this did not hinder the work. The Sunday School was then held under a tree. Evangelism soon bore fruit, and an Evening Meeting was started for adults. The need for pastoral work become evident.*

*The outreach work was now rewarded with a small following of believers. At that time Rev. DJ Pypers also got into contact with the work and introduced the first open-air service in the Indian village known as "Mint" (an ex-army base used for the production of bullets-hence, the name). During this time a manse was built with a large "hall" as a front room. This "hall" provided a meeting place for the believers.*

*In 1972 Rev Pypers accepted a call to Durban. This then led to the calling of Evangelist S Sukdaven. He was to do pioneering work in Kimberley. After two years of working in Kimberly Evangelist S Sukdaven went on study leave for the ministry. During his leave Bro Jan van Tonder assisted with the work. When Bro. S Sukdaven returned from his studies the NGK helped with the raising of funds to make provision for a church building. On the 6th December 1976, after many years of hard work among the Indian people, Sis. Ina Uys retired. By the beginning of 1984, the building project was completed. On 31st March 1984 the church hall was dedicated.*

*Up until this period most of the support financially, came from the NGK. Unfortunately, the finances within the "mother" church took a plunge when*

*a split divided the local Presbytery. This meant that a cut in subsidies had to be enforced. During this period, Rev. Sukdaven accepted a call away from Kimberley. Bro. G Sebastian, was appointed by Synod in his place in August 1987. Finances still plagued the work, so the Evangelist had to go into "tent-making".*

The writer later on traced the author of this document and thus Evangelist G Sebastian should be acknowledged for his historical input of the work at Kimberley.

Evangelist S Sukdaven was accepted and appointed as a layman worker to assist mission work on the 12th December 1964 with a salary of R50 per month (Appointment Document 1964) According to the IRC minutes dated 21/11/64 in Durban South it was recorded that a Hindustani Convert, Surajlall Sukdaven has been accepted as a trainee Evangelist. Rev. S Sukdaven accepted the Lord on 15th April 1963. He was contacted by Evangelist J.K. Naidoo and introduced to Rev. J Pretorius, missionary in charge. In 1964 he was interviewed by the Mission Board to become a full time Evangelist. In January 1965 he began to take correspondence studies with Rev J. Pretorius and he continued his training with Rev. Bekker. In 1972 he went back to Durban to study for the ministry at UDW. On the 25th Jan 1975 he was ordained and served for 17 years in the congregation at Kimberley. He is presently on retirement (Interview 21/02/95 : Lenasia South).

In the Transvaal Miss E Hamman (later Mrs Kelber) on her return from a Student Christian Association Conference held in India 1928 began holding open air services for Indians in the Boksburg area. She was assisted by her sister and her mother to develop a Sunday School. Miss E Hamman also held a regular girls club. When the Hammans left, other Christians took their places. As some families moved to other areas, the Sunday Schools began to grow and to spread to Southern Transvaal. Gradually these Sunday Schools started to develop and spread in tandem with the spreading of the Indian community.

Rev de Beer (1977:296) makes mention of an event that occurred at the end of 1955 which had a remarkable influence on the development of the work in Pretoria. Dr J Oswald Smith from the 'Peoples Church', Toronto, Canada, toured South Africa and preached in various congregations in Pretoria. His message had a tremendous impact on various young people of the congregation of Hartebeespruit (Hatfield, Pretoria). The impact of the message urged people to devote their lives to mission work.

Rev de Beer (1977:296) writes the following in his analysis of the historical development of the RCA:

*"At this time the Rev JPW de Vries, minister of the Hartebeespruit DRC, mentioned to the "Church Youth Movement" the need of the Gospel to be brought to the Indian people of the Asiatic Bazaar (Boom Street, Pretoria). On the 10th of June 1956 a group of 30 young people set out in the Asiatic Bazaar*

*and began to visit the people. With the assistance and under the guidance of Rev CJA Greyling who became the first full-time missionary of the DRC to Indians of the Transvaal in 1955, the work was carried out by these young people. And though they were young and had little knowledge and experience, they had God's Word and an invincible faith in His saving power. At times their members dwindled but they carried on and throughout the last 21 years there was always a group of young people spreading the Gospel in Laudium and Pretoria".*

Rev CJA Greyling concentrated on the areas, Boksburg, Germiston and Benoni and payed periodic visits to Pretoria. In 1965 the **Congregation Transvaal** was established with three ministers and three evangelists working in Actonville, Benoni, Germiston, Lenasia and Laudium. In 1972 a second congregation was established in the Transvaal, the **Congregation Charisma**, (Laudium) and shortly afterwards a third, **Congregation Lenasia** was established (Rev de Beer 1977:298). Unfortunately both Congregations Lenasia and Actonville seceded from the RCA in the early 1980's. It was alleged that they took the church buildings along with them. This meant that the RCA congregations had to be reestablished. With the aid of the DRC these congregations were established at Palm Ridge in Southern Transvaal and Daxena in Western Transvaal. (Acta : 1994:343).

According to Charl le Roux (Interview : 20/2/95) in 1960 he began work with Rev CJA Greyling on the East Rand. Rev le Roux served the Transvaal Congregation. Rev. Gerrie Lubbe was called to congregation Transvaal in 1970 and was based in Lenasia congregation and from 1983 he had no further involvement with the RCA (Interview/02/95).

The DRC congregations in Pietermaritzburg found it necessary to establish Sunday Schools in the Raisethorpe area because it was too far away from the DRC buildings. It was in 1945 that Mr BL Mitchell of the DRC began to give attention to the Indian Children in their White Sunday Schools. Later he was joined by Mr NWS de Bruyn of the DRC who left the Apostolic Faith Mission to join the DRC. He then began to gather a small congregation in Raisethorpe. Rev NWS Theunissen, working among the blacks of Northern Natal started to conduct regular services for this small congregation. All this was happening in 1945 (de Beer 1977:296). The following year the Natal DRC accepted responsibility for this congregation (Acta 1994:343).

According to Rev de Beer (1977:297) the first official work of the DRC among the Indians of the Republic commenced in Pietermaritzburg. This was in 1946 when the Synodical Mission Committee of the Natal DRC decided to accept the work of Mr de Bruyn as their responsibility. Hence the Rev NW Theunissen conducted services, established a Sunday School with 18 scholars and commenced with building a church hall.

In 1947 the Rev J Pretorius was called to work among the Indians in Pietermaritzburg - Durban North and the South Coast including Raisethorpe. In 1951 the first full time Indian worker, Albert Murugan a son of a Hindu priest was employed. In 1957 the first congregation was established and Rev J Pretorius was ordained as a full time minister. From the IRC minutes dated 22/11/58 it is recorded that Rev J Pretorius was the Missionary Superintendent of the IRC. The Rev JJB Pretorius was called in to co-ordinate the Indian work and was officially welcomed on the 23rd March 1959 (IRC Minutes 23:03:59). In 1961 he accepted a call to Moltena due to the

humidity affecting his health.

The IRC minutes dated 22:11:58 indicates that James Kistnaswami was in full time work with Rev J Pretorius and that during this term he was elected as the secretary of the first church council.

In 1965 the congregation of Durban South was established with Rev DP Bekker as its first minister. After Evangelist EJ Manikkam accepted a call to the Indian Missionary Work in the Cape, the Evangelists position in the Durban North region became vacant. It was in 1962 that Kisten Moodley was introduced by Evangelist EJ Manikkam to the church council of the IRC. According to the IRC minutes dated 1:12:62 applications were received from Paul Muthusamy, Kisten Moodley and Rueben Stephen. K Moodley was eventually accepted and appropriately welcomed as the new evangelist for the Durban North Area. In a document reporting on news from Durban North it makes reference to Kisten Moodley as a convert from Hinduism who is "a real zealous soul winner". On the 23:02:63 he became an elder and on the 10:08:63 the council elected him as their secretary taking over from Evangelist James Kistnaswami. It is recorded that he was a gifted spiritual worker from 1943. (Acta 1976:87)

According to the IRC minutes dated 11:05:63 held at Durban South it was recorded that Kisten Moodley requested the church council to hold a Tamil School and that it was to be managed by Sydney Coopsamy. The writer attended this Tamil School and it was through this school that many were brought to acknowledge the Lord.

From the IRC minutes 26/05/62 we gather that a full time worker for Dundee was employed. In

the following years more congregations were founded.

1965	:	Durban South with DP Bekker
1971	:	Durban North (Emmanuel)
1979	:	Merebank (Moriah)
1981	:	Avoca Phoenix (Jeshurun)

(Acta 1994:343)

The researcher witnessed the establishment of the latest congregation North of Phoenix (Maranatha) on the 18th March 1994.

#### 4.7 **Summary**

The National Party gained a victory in the 1948 White elections. Therefore, the whole apartheid machinery was given a legal base. The DRC spearheaded their approach of racial discrimination through the implementation of their racially worked out Mission Policy.

Thus we witnessed how the White young lay workers developed a passion and a zeal to do mission work among the Indian Community. The NGSK and the NGKA by this time had already been racially established. The layworkers set the pace for formal mission work that was followed by the DRC.

The researcher has recorded how the work was initiated at the Cape, Natal Pietermaritzburg and

in the Transvaal. In each of these developments the DRC's vision was to establish churches for the Indian Community. According to Rev Kritzing (Interview : 20/02/95) the DRC had a guilty conscience that in actual fact they had supported the repatriation of the Indians of the National Party. They had to make up for their wrongs and they began to pamper this little church, budgeting for this church, out of proportion in comparison to the other sections of the DR family.

This chapter also deals with the various pioneer workers and their input in developing the RCA before establishment. Sunday Schools and evening 'open air services' proved to be very successful in the outreach programme.

The first official work among the Indians of the Republic started in Pietermaritzburg. The Indian evangelists that were employed really proved to be zealous soul winners. At a very early stage the evangelical witness became emphasised.

The DRC really meant business in their endeavours to establish the Indian Church within an ethnic mould. They provided the money and church buildings for the Indian work. This offer under the circumstances could not be missed. Beneath all this was a subtle tactic by the DRC to establish Indian churches just like the NGK but only in a different cultural setting.

In the next chapter the writer will deal with the official establishment of the Indian church. By this time the DRC had it mapped out as to what the RCA would be like.

## **CHAPTER V**

### 5. **THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE RCA**

The writer would like to make the point that in those early days of pioneering work many Hindus responded eagerly to the Christian message of deliverance. After the spontaneous beginnings of the RCA the mission work began to bear fruit. Every effort to establish an Indian congregation of the DRC began in earnest. In 1950 South African politics was steered by and determined by the Nationalist Party led Government that came into power in 1948 and this ushered a new epoch in the South African chapter. The government pursued their course of apartheid along the guiding principles as provided and propounded by the DRC's blueprint for a thorough separation of races. The Afrikaner saw this as a positive move towards their security and solving the problems in South Africa. Soon after the 1948 elections apartheid was given legal status. Behind the scenes a strong Afrikaner secret power block in the form of the Broederbond influenced and totally supported the policies of Separate Development.

Thus the apartheid system can be viewed as the masterpiece of the DRC which was driven by the Nationalist Government who firmly believed that this system would be the best solution to avoid racial integration.

The writer is of the opinion that once the Afrikaner put his national identity and self interest above God's plan, the vision of God for the peoples of South Africa became obscured.

By God's plan the writer wanted to show that it was not God who intended the Afrikaner to racially separate people and rule over them.

The researcher wants to mention that in order for this grand idea of apartheid's fulfilment the DRC was compelled within this framework to establish a separate Indian congregation. Therefore, the DRC had a watchful eye on the development of their mission work among Indians. A lot of time, effort and financing were eventually put to now consolidate this separate Indian "daughter church" of the DRC. Many may argue that this process embarked upon by the DRC was in keeping with scriptural teaching and that there was a compassion to save souls and spread the good news of the Gospel. However scriptural this endeavour was, it was conducted along the lines of the Separate Development policies. There is no scriptural teaching that converts had to become members of racially divided churches. The writer does not believe that it was in God's plans that a separate Indian church should be created for Indians only. In fact the DRC supported their claims by trying to theologially justify apartheid.

One may ask what was the real intention to establish a separate Indian Church. Can we conclude then that this young church had a biblical mandate to be established as a separate ethnic church?. This is exactly how the future scenario unfolded. It appears very defensive for the RCA to mention "We reject with contempt the accusation that we have been created by the "Apartheid Regime" (Acta 1990:57). Throughout the Synodical deliberations the RCA has denounced the evil of apartheid in no uncertain terms. The RCA already in 1980 decided:

***"Synod rejects the theological justification of the apartheid ideology as unscriptural and the practical supporting of the apartheid system as unchristian"***

***(Acta 1990 : 166)***

The REC states the following:

*"All member churches of the REC reject apartheid unequivocally in all its ideological politico-economic and religious manifestations as essentially and fundamentally a sin. The theological justification of apartheid is in conflict with scripture and a serious error"*

*(Acta 1994:83)*

By 1968 the coloured (NGSK) and the black (NGKA) were already successfully established along racial lines. Thus the establishment of the RCA made her the youngest "daughter" church of the DRC which is just twenty- five years old.

The writer's view is that for the success of developing and keeping the RCA in an Indian mould, suitable Indian evangelists had to be recruited. It was very crucial to the DRC that the right men would be employed to play a leading role in consolidating an Indian work for them. Thus the search for Indian evangelists produced men like:

A. Murugan

J.K Naidoo

E.J. Manikkam

Redji Moodley

S. Sukdaven

B. Peter

These evangelists recruited by the DRC conducted their work very seriously, committedly and zealously. Indeed they must be commended for their pioneering efforts within the Indian community. They also took the concerns of the Indian community to heart especially Rev EJ Manikkam who opted to represent the Indian Community on the most controversial government structure, the Tricameral Parliament.

The DRC thus met with favourable criteria in developing a work among the Indian communities with the assistance of the Indian evangelists. The DRC also took care of the work financially and thus caused the Indian work to advance further. Soon it became a reality that the Indian church was developing like the DRC, but only in a different cultural setting.

#### 5.1 **ESTABLISHMENT: RCA**

According to Dr S Govender (letter 03:02:77) in his critical moments concerning the ministry in the RCA, he states that the valid missiological concepts of church planting becomes in effect the creation of old patterns in a new setting, and catechism becomes a programme of learning how to function respectably with the set up. Prof WA Krige (letter dated: 1977) responded to Dr S Govender's statement in the following manner:

*"As a result of the mission policy of the NGK as continued in the "Algemene Sendinge Reglement" the whole structure and organisation of the RCA appears to be an imposed phototype of the NGK in a different cultural setting, separated from the NGK.*

From this background it becomes visible that the NGK now sought to consolidate all their Indian missionary endeavours into one established church viz. RCA. In the writers opinion, although this must have been a very emotional and joyful experience for the Indian church it was a victory for the apartheid system implemented by the NGK. The NGK had the administrative abilities and the financial muscle to undertake such a venture.

From the outset the RCA was known as the "Nederduitse Gereformeerde Indian Church". A draft constitution that was approved for the Indian Church by the NGK was produced. From the minutes of the ASSK 13th February 1963 mention is made that the Draft Constitution was prepared by the subcommittee appointed by the Mission Committee of the General Synod. This Draft Constitution comprising of 42 articles was prepared and tabled at the Convention, the first synod of the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Indian Church. The very first article proposed that the name of the church be called "Nederduitse Gereformeerde Indian Church" (Acta 1968:31). Thus the first Synod at which the RCA was established was held on the 27th August 1968 in the church building, Raisethorpe, Pietermaritzburg (Acta 1968:74)

In October 1966 the General Synod resolved:

1. To review its resolution to accept mission work amongst the Indians in the Republic as a whole as part of its mission activities.
2. To accept responsibility through the Mission Committee of the General Synod for the supervision of and the policy for Indian Mission Work in the Republic.

3. To make serious approach to the various Synods to voluntarily support mission work amongst Indians in Natal as generously as possible by a fixed annual amount as may be decided upon by each Synod.

Furthermore the General Synod approved in principle of the Indian congregation in Transvaal and the Cape Province being connected with the Indian congregation in Natal and directed the Standing Committee for Law and Order to show the way for a general ecclesiastical connection between the various congregation (Acta 1966: p.193,440,215,521)

According to the minutes of the ASSK on the 26th March 1968, the Mission Committee of the General Synod mandated Rev D.S. Snyman and Rev. I.J Haasbroek as its observers to supervise the convention and establishment of the Indian Church (ASSK Minutes: 26th March 1968. p. 69.8)

According to Rev K Moodley's report (Acta 1994:344) on the 27th August 1968 ministers and delegated elders of the four Indian congregations (Pietermaritzburg, Durban South, Durban North, Transvaal and Cape Town) and representatives of the DRC met in the historic church in Raisethorpe for the convention of the first Synod. A church order and agreement with the DRC were adopted and the Indian Reformed Church became the 14th younger church of the DRC. It was also the smallest church with 360 communicant members.

## 5.2 CALLING OF CONVENTION

The Transvaal church council agreed to a convention and decided that it should take place under

the chairmanship of the minister of the oldest Indian congregation. The church council of the Cape Province decided in full agreement to the suggestion to establish a Synod and also that Pietermaritzburg as the oldest congregation should be the calling congregation for the purpose of calling a convention to discuss the establishment of a Synod. They also requested that the convention be arranged for August 1968 (Acta 1968:22)

According to the convenor's report (27th Aug 1968) of the convention Rev. J Pretorius indicated that he approached the existing congregations regarding the issue of the convention, they said it was their wish to be mutually united in a single church. This desire was then conveyed to the Mission Committee of the General Synod. The General Synod had to grant authorization for the establishment of the Indian Church (Report 27th Aug. 1968). The Synodical Mission Committee of Natal offered to meet the costs of the convention. The ladies of the congregation with the assistance of Mrs EH Haasbroek had undertaken to arrange for the serving of refreshments during the Synod (Acta 1968 : 29).

After being mandated by the ASSK the convenor, Rev J Pretorius requested the Indian congregation to elect and send their delegates to the convention. This notice appeared in "Die Kerbode" of 12th June 1986.

From the credentials presented at the convention the various congregations were represented by the following persons:

(a) **Pietermaritzburg - Durban South - Delegates**

The Church council on the 18th May 1968 elected Kisten Moodley as elder and Rev. J Pretorius as the minister delegate.

(b) **Transvaal Congregations - Delegates**

(i) The church council on the 10th August 1968 elected Minister Dr C du Le Roux and elder GS Moodley.

(ii) The church council on the 10th August 1968 elected Minister PJP de Beer and elder R Govender.

(iii) The church council on the 10th August 1968 elected minister CJA Greyling and elder B. Peter.

(c) **Durban South - Delegates**

The church council on the 3rd November 1968 elected minister DP Bekker and elder JK Naidoo.

(d) **Cape Province**

The church council on the 18th August 1968 elected minister DJ Pypers and Evang. EJ Manikkam.

In the deed of agreement between the RCA and the NGK, 2.1 reads as follows:

*"In the event of the IRC not being able to operate in a specific area the NGK may undertake mission work in consultation with the report to the IRC. All converts in the area shall officially be accepted by the IRC"*

The writer's observation is that the NGK suggested in this agreement to do mission work among Indians only if the fruits of their labour would be attached to the IRC. The converts were thus led into the Indian church without realizing that this church was born within the apartheid system.

Once the RCA was established the church began to increase. The NGK did everything financially to support the developing of the RCA.

The first Synod approved the appointments and accepted the persons as their representatives on the Federal Council of the NGK. Rev J Pretorius and Dr C du P le Roux were appointed to attend the meeting of the Federal Council on the 11th and 12th September 1968 (Acta 1968:64).

After the approval of the constitution the IRC was constituted. The following persons were elected to the first moderation.

Rev. J Pretorius	-	Moderator	-	Pietermaritzburg
Rev. D.J. Pypers	-	Assessor	-	Cape
Dr C du Le Roux	-	Actuary	-	Transvaal
Evang. EJ Manikkam	-	Clerk	-	Cape

(Acta 1968:73)

The synod was addressed by his worship, the mayor of Pietermaritzburg, Mr White-Cooper.

The following representatives as observers were present:

Rev. DS Snyman : Synodical Mission Committee of the General Synod of the  
DRC

Rev. IJ Haasbroek : General Synod of the DRC

Rev. BJK Anderson : Synodical Mission Committee

Rev. MLJ van Rensburg of Natal

Rev. HM Janse van Rensburg : Synodical Mission Committee of Cape Province.

Rev. JP Theron : Synodical Mission Committee of the Northern Transvaal.

Dr CH Badenhorst : Synodical Mission Committee of the Southern Transvaal

Dr JDW Kritzinger :

(Acta 1968: 75)

The following salary scale was decided by Synod for Indian Evangelists:

R840 x 60 - R1,440 p.a.

- house allowance of R480 p.a.
- telephone allowance
- R180 p.a. as a minimum travelling allowance.

(Acta 1968 : 103)

Also railway concessions for Ministers and Evangelists of the IRC was proposed and accepted by Synod (Acta 1968 : 112) Rev de Beer was appointed as Administrator of the IRC. There was a proposal that the Government should be officially notified about this (Acta 1968 : 113).

The Pietermaritzburg congregation can be regarded as the "mother" congregation of the RCA being established in 1957 with Rev. J Pretorius being indicated as the first full time minister of this congregation.

(Acta : 1968 : 115)

Rev van Rooijen in his greetings to Synod made the following statement:

*"In establishing an independent Nederduitse Gereformeerde Indian Church, you have embarked upon a vastly important and very courageously endeavour ... Our "Mother" church has been roused by the spirit of God to the pressing need God has of the world of salvation in which we live, and the extreme privilege God has extended to us, to be the instrument of at His disposal, to bring the Gospel of Salvation to men in the tongue to which they were born and the ethnic environment in which they live ... I believe his spirit has led our Church to learn by experience, not to ignore the impediments of human diversity which tend to hamper mutual intercourse in an imperfect world, but*

*rather to avoid those impediments by acceptance of existing diversity within the unity of Gods creation. We have learnt to realize that Christ is the Shepherd of one united flock of redeemed men and women, but he elects to have his flock divided into various folds, and in leading His flock, He leads each of those folds to follow Him''*

*(Acta 1968: 121-122)*

According to the writer this extract provides the recipe for separate development. The discriminatory elements of racial separation are here clothed with God's blessing and leading, as it is put by the speaker. He further goes on to congratulate the IRC on becoming a separate "fold" of the flock and invites the IRC to join in, in their separateness to the family of the NGK. He also indicated that Christ is the Shepherd to all the separated folds of the flock. It may appear that the speaker had sincere intentions in spelling out these thoughts, but where it eventually led to, became a bone of contention within the RCA.

At the end of the convention Rev. DJ Pypers gave the closing speech on 30th August 1968 taking his reading from Ex 25: 21-22.

### 5.3 **SUMMARY**

An earnest attempt was made by the DRC to establish a separate Indian congregation. A draft constitution was drawn up, accepted by the General Synod and was presented at the Convention in 1968. After the draft constitution was adopted, the Indian church was officially established in 1968.

Indian evangelists played a very important role in pioneering work amongst the Indian community. They were financially supported by the DRC. The early beginnings of the Indian work, really started with the layworkers from the DRC. It was from their work that the DRC became inspired and thus sought to officially implement mission work.

The calling of the Convention was done by the oldest congregation. The convenor of this convention was the minister of the Pietermaritzburg congregation.

The DRC was successful in establishing their youngest daughter church along racial lines. This however had far reaching consequences for the RCA in its year of splits and turmoil. The ordinary membership of the RCA regret that a separate Indian Church was established, but they remain happy to have met the Lord during this process. This is what is important to them.

## CHAPTER VI

### 6. SOCIAL INVOLVEMENT AND THE RCA

#### 6.1 THE NATAL AND TRANSVAAL EXPERIENCE

When dealing with this issue within the RCA the writer's opinion is that the Natal and Transvaal experience needs to be analysed. The Indian community in Natal appear to be more conservative than the Indian community of the Transvaal. It also appears that the level to socialize is far greater in the Transvaal than in Natal. The majority of Indians of South Africa reside in Natal and therefore the group identity is much stronger than that of the Transvaal or any other place in the country. Many Indians went to the Transvaal in search of job opportunities. The Indians then came into contact with the other racial groupings and thus interracial marriages were easier concluded in the Transvaal than in Natal.

Out of this situation at the Transvaal racial integration became easier than the situation in Natal. These characteristics were also reflected in the "Indian" Christian churches. This also becomes true of the RCA congregations in Cape Town, Kimberley and Port Elizabeth where the level of sociability of Indians is greater than the Transvaal. The writer uses Transvaal and Natal because the majority of the membership of the RCA are from these two regions.

When the DRC embarked upon mission work amongst the Indian community, it was conducted within the ambit of their racist mission policy. At this point of the missionary work emphasis was on winning souls for the Lord's Kingdom. With the advent of Indian Evangelists into the mission

work of the DRC, pioneering work had to be done and this was only possible to win converts from Hinduism to the Christian Faith. During this period thorough evangelical work was being done. The writer himself was involved in this process and can testify that there was no social involvement during the stage of pioneering work.

The talk of ecumenical relations came up for discussion at the 1968 Synod and was referred to the Synodical Committee to report at their next Synod (Acta 1968:111). In 1970 a recommendation was made by Synod for the RCA to apply for membership or observer status of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) and the South African Council of Churches (SACC). Rev DJ Pypers and Rev EJ Manikkam were sent as delegates of the RCA to attend the conference of the WARC in Nairobi, Kenya from the 20th to the 30th August 1970 (Agenda 1970:25).

According to the to the RCA's synodical Agenda ( 1970 : 25) there was an intimation from certain members of the local Indian community to sponsor all expenses of Rev. EJ Manikkam and Rev. DJ Pypers and the sponsoring members wished to remain anonymous.

The WARC was constituted in London in 1875 concentrating its basis on the authority of the Old and New Testaments and Reformed Confessions and that the WARC emphasises the aspects of the Reformation heritage which is of permanent significance for the Christian church and whose preservation is of supreme importance for the Christian church and the secular order at the present time (Agenda: 1970 : 44).

The RCA believes that as an Evangelical and Reformed Church they have a vital role to play

within the WARC and the SACC testifying under all circumstances for the Evangelical Truths of the Word of God (Acta 1990:192).

In 1990 the following amendment regarding membership of WARC and SACC was tabled:

*"Resign from the WARC and the SACC because of political and a radical slant on almost every single subject dealt with had strong political overtones".*

*(Acta 1990: 42)*

This amendment was however rejected and the Synod decided to take observer status.

The 1994 Synod approved the appointment of Mrs P Shunmugam as the contact person to the Women's desk of WARC (Acta 1994: 26). In 1970 the Synodical Committee resolved to inform the **Federal Council** that it was in full favour of a broader Ecumenical Body and Confessionally related churches. (Agenda: 1970:26)

## 6.2 **THE RCA AND THE SACC**

According to the information supplied by C du Le Roux concerning the ecumenical bodies the basis of the SACC reads as follows: "A fellowship of churches which confesses the Lord Jesus Christ as God and saviour according to the Scripture and therefore seek to fulfil their common calling to the Glory of one God, Father, Son and Holy Ghost" (Agenda 1970: 45)

The Synod of 1976 requested to apply for full membership of the SACC since it was only

enjoying observer status at this body. The Federal Council of the NGK had to be informed accordingly (Acta 1976: 76). This proposal was voted upon and was defeated by a **casting vote** by the then Moderator, Rev. K Moodley who voted to maintain the status quo. This meant that the decision was in favour to remain as observers.

In 1980 the RCA unanimously joined the SACC (Acta 1980: 49). On the 8th October 1980, Bishop Desmond Tutu conveyed greetings to the Synod on behalf of the SACC. The following extract from his speech reflects the height of social concern.

*"But in a situation of oppression and injustice the Gospel for the victims of such injustices and oppression, for to them the Gospel must be liberation. They must know the God of the Exodus and of Jesus who came to set us free to pay a ransom, setting us free from all that would make us less than what God intends for us, to set us free from sin and its manifestations in political, economic and social depravation. To set us free to love and serve God by loving and serving our neighbour"*

*(Acta 1980 : 172)*

In 1986 Synod approved that the RCA still remain members of the SACC and in 1994 the Synod decided to maintain its membership within the SACC. The RCA considered 1983-1990 to be a difficult period during which the Synodical Committee decided not to attend the conferences, but rather to be in correspondence with the SACC. It was also recorded that the RCA did not receive any correspondence from the SACC administration. The clerk of Synod was informed by Dr Frank Chikane that this was an oversight and that the matter has been rectified.

*(Acta 1994:72).*

*The information received now placed the RCA in a much more favourable position to retain its membership within the SACC. It was reported that the SACC was for most of its existence involved in the struggle against racism and apartheid and positively in the struggle for democracy. This then forced the SACC on a road of confrontation. It was now envisaged that the SACC will have a new role in the new South Africa .*

*(Agenda 1990:129)*

*The following points from the Report of the SACC task Group to the National Conference are indicative towards the formation of a new SACC.*

- 1. The role of SACC in the new South Africa of the future has been the subject of much discussion during the past two years. The question to be answered is "What is the call of Christ for us now?"*
- 2. The SACC played a dramatic role during the apartheid era. It was a council of the churches in a situation where the government was hostile to the aspirations of the majority of the people of the land and had abdicated its responsibility towards them. It stood on behalf of the churches against the prevailing evil of apartheid and became the distributor of care and concern for the benefit of those who needed it.*
- 3. In November 1993 the National Executive Committee (NEC) appointed a Review Task Group. Its mandate was to present the NEC proposals for a new SACC.*

*(Agenda 1994:137)*

It was then in this new light that the RCA was able to unanimously agree at its 1994 Synod to retain its membership within the SACC. This was with the intention to testify to the RCA's Evangelical witness with the SACC (Acta: 1994:73).

Rev DP Bekker who was the moderator of the 1970 Synod stated the following in his speech at the end of the 1976 Synod:

*"We have spoken of preconditions which have to be fulfilled here and now before real reconciliation can be achieved. We wish to state clearly that reconciliation as the Gospel of Christ intends, it is indeed relevant to and includes, the social and political order, but the true brotherhood of mankind cannot be guaranteed exclusively from the political plane.*

*(Acta 1976: 196)*

The following words of encouragement were included in the RCA 1980 Synod's pastoral letter

*"As we enter the era of the 80's we call upon all the congregations to listen clearly and carefully to the voice of God and courageously obey His commands in all areas of life. This is a call for repentance where we have failed in our compassion and concern for the suffering through injustices and unrighteousness in our societies. Let us strive for reconciliation, mutual love, and a closer walk with God so that the Spirit of Christ will be recognized in our actions.*

*(Acta 1980: 105)*

### 6.3 REV CHARL LE ROUX: EVANGELISM AND SOCIAL ACTION

It was during the early 1980's that social concerns and political matters were placed high on the agenda. A paper on "Evangelism and Social Action" was delivered by Dr du P Le Roux at a Fraternal Meeting on Sunday 5th October 1980. The researcher considers this paper to be very relevant to this chapter regarding the RCA and social involvement. The writer's opinion is that the state (the Nationalist Party led Govt.) has politicised social concerns to such an extent that it was successful in making the vast majority of Christian churches in South Africa to believe that the churches must not get involved in politics.

In his introduction Le Roux (Acta 1980:147) states that during the 1920's some Christians (evangelicals) reacting to the extremes of the "social' gospel and reflecting the middle class values of society in which they flourished, reversed their earlier interest in social action and concentrated their efforts almost solely upon denouncing personal evils and proclaiming individual salvation. Conservative in their theology these Christians became increasingly conservative in their approach to politics, economics, cultural and social issues generally. They aligned themselves with right-wing political parties which were seeking to maintain the status quo and so frequently became deaf to the cries of the underprivileged, disenfranchised and politically oppressed. He also states that movements which sought change of oppressive structures, were identified as liberalism, communism or maybe the ultimate, "heresy" of other Christians (ecumenicals) with socio-political involvement where admittedly the danger threatens of dissolving evangelism in political action and salvation into social justice.

According to Le Roux (Acta 1980:147) a countering of this great reversal began in the 1950's and

in the 60's. The interest in social issues began to be reflected in the public pronouncements of evangelical conferences and in the 70's it has broadened to include not only social concerns but also social and political involvement expounded by such leading figures as Rene Padilla, Samuel Escobar and David Bosch. Le Roux (Acta 1980:147) states that in almost all denominations and para-church agencies there are significant groups which consider the new move a swing back to liberalism or a theology of revolution or liberation to be resisted at all costs. To the writer it appears that this situation prevailed with the leadership of the RCA towards the latter part of the 1980's and thus splits arose from these tensions.

Le Roux (Acta 1980:148) maintains that with the arrival of Jesus on the scene and the delivery of His message, salvation, redemption and peace became a reality. He further states that it was quite in order for the early Christians to take up the term evangelism to describe the message of salvation connected with the coming of Jesus. For Le Roux this was the central framework of Paul's theologies with the other NT writings following Paul in outline. For Paul it meant the familiar "good news", as it is in the Synoptic Gospels and the good news of the saving event in Jesus Christ, as preached in the church. Le Roux (Acta 1980:148) contends that God does not merely bear witness to salvation history, it is itself salvation history for the Gospel is charged with power and it creates faith. In the light and message of Jesus it is clear that especially in the Gospels the Kingdom of God takes a special place.

According to Le Roux (Acta 1980:149) the poor then represent not only those who are poor before God, who stand before God as beggars with empty hands, conscious of their **spiritual poverty**, but they represent as well the socially oppressed, those who suffer from the power of injustices of unjust political and social structures, and are harassed by those who only consider

their own advantages and influence. To these poor the Good News is proclaimed. For Le Roux (Acta 1980:150) the inclusion of sinners, the poor, those who suffer injustice, are oppressed, lost, lonely in the community of salvation achieved in the table fellowship, are the Gospel, the evangelism of the redeeming love of God.

### 6.3.1 SOCIAL ACTION

According to Le Roux (Acta 1980:151) we move into a world of social change, displaced populations, inner and outer migrations, shifts in the style of life, change and revolution, evolution and progress, differentiation and continuity, tradition and discontinuity, a world of ideological systems, a world of exploitative and oppressive structures, and a world where social change must at some point involve dissecting vested interests. In this type of circumstances the Christian is freed for responsible service in the world. For Le Roux (Acta 1980:150) we are ones that bring the Gospel of salvation, freedom from personal, social and political sins. Christ is the king over the world, king over church and state, church and cosmos. Therefore when we evangelize we proclaim God's Kingdom that concerns everything.

Le Roux (Acta 1980:151) observes that some Christians, in their evangelistic outreach, project the image that Christ is only Lord of the church and not Lord of the Cosmos. For them the world is despised, salvation concerns out of the world of renewal of the earth. Thus for them to be sanctified one must withdraw from everything worldly, no smoking or drinking, salvation is private. To these types of Christians, social or political involvement could be seen as treason to the Gospel. Evangelism can thus become like the height of cheap grace.

Le Roux (Acta 1980:152) states that giving alms to the poor is acceptable, but organizing to fight the causes of poverty is not acceptable. Even more social action, or political concern shows **theological liberalism**, spiritual coldness and lack of concern for evangelism.

Further in his paper Le Roux (Acta 1980:152) argues the fact the so-called evangelicals have a message for smoking, drinking, inculcating good morals and respect and promise all these people spiritual peace. Therefore he wants to know what does our evangelism or message have to say to the ones that cause house shortages to develop among the Indians, blacks and coloureds - what does our message say to **capitalist abusers**, to corrupt government officials who accept bribery, and to dishonest politicians? He asks "do we raise a prophetic voice about this in our evangelistic campaigns?"

According to Le Roux (Acta 1980:152) one's own piousness and religious dedication classes one to his fellowmen, then the work of the Holy Spirit is limited only to one's private life, when being a Christian only concerns holy actions at certain times. In this way what the Bible says concretely concerning human needs, is thus **spiritualised**. Le Roux (Acta 1980:152) concludes that if we treat a person who is saved and think that he has no social or political relationships, then we are dealing with an **unbiblical one - sidedness**. To say that the church in its proclamation should avoid politics is to bluff ourselves, for then the church openly or silently supports the existing political order and is thus politically involved.

There are dangers also on the other hand that could threaten ecumenical circles that salvation could become totally dissolved in socio-political liberation and sin is defined exclusively in categories of oppression and exploitation. In this context salvation is seen to take place nowhere

else than in the struggle for liberation. Thus according to Le Roux (Acta 1980:153) people would say that evangelism dissolves altogether in political action and salvation is only social justice. This should really not be the case because in this way repentance as a decision of man before God is ignored and avoided. The danger here is that the Gospel could be reduced to the right kind of political theology and practice (Acta 1980:153).

Le Roux (Acta 1980 :153) states that "Shalom" is more than a social happening, more than a political programme. He contends that the nearer we come to Christ, the nearer we come to the world.

According to Le Roux (Acta 1980:154) the correct relationship between the church and the world in our evangelistic outreach is of prime importance. The Church is not the world, for the Kingdom is taking shape in her and the church is not the Kingdom, because the Kingdom is only realized partly and imperfectly in her. Therefore says Le Roux (Acta 1980:154) the church is something strange. It does not fit anywhere. The old and the new overlap in here, therefore she stands in a dual relationship.

Le Roux (Acta 1980:154) maintains that without a faithful and continual contact with God the Church loses her external dimension. Without a real solidarity with the world, the church loses her relevance and only as a new fellowship distinguished from it and in solidarity with the world at the same time, can the church be evangelistic. Thus for Le Roux (Acta 1980:154) the church for others, the church for the world, called out of the world and sent into the world, the church is a new life fellowship with each other and Christ, and a life for others, is a church wherein evangelism, the proclamation of the Gospel is brought in connection with the total need of man.

Therefore to its members the church should speak prophetically opening their eyes to and sensitizing their consciousness to all existing forms of injustice and calling them, in the name of God to oppose injustice and to fight for justice in all wisdom (Acta: Le Roux 1980:155).

The RCA has taken the following position regarding a conscientious objection": The RCA upholds the right of those who are on the basis of scripture, compelled to disobey a law in order to obey Christ and to support them with its prayers and the solidarity of its fellowship.

(Acta 1980:42)

#### 6.4 SCHOOL BOYCOTT

The 1980 Synod expressed its solidarity with regards to the school boycott. The following motion was accepted by Synod

1. *Synod expresses solidarity with the youth of South Africa who were involved in school boycotts earlier this year, in as much as boycotts represented a protest against the evils in the South African Society. We regret however the suffering, violence and counter-violence which ensued.*
2. *Synod is concerned that these boycotts went far beyond educational grievances and was the culmination of deep-seated bitterness and frustration built-up over many years.*
3. *Synod regrets the polarization and corrosion of respect and discipline between children and parents which are caused by these boycotts. We ardently hope and*

*pray for a new South Africa free from the system of apartheid.*

*(Acta 1980:57)*

In the writer's opinion the RCA in the 80's acted correctly and would not term the above concern as political interference.

#### 6.5 **RESOLUTION: PRETORIA CONSULTATION**

The following resolutions of the Pretoria Consultation of churches (29-31 August 1986) as adopted by the RCA regarding involvement in society are:

- (a) *As defined by the Bible the church is involved in all aspects of human life, and its ministry therefore involves an integrated participation in the totality of life.*
- (b) *Since the present situation in South Africa does not incorporate adequate justice for all, we declare that social and political change is urgently needed in these areas.*
- (c) *All Laws should reflect the truth that God gives justice to those who are oppressed.*
- (d) *This justice is a gift of God in which His glory and the liberation and wholeness of all the people is central.*

*(Acta 1980:122-123)*

Among other resolutions, the consultation discussed matters like:

- detention without trial
- torture in interrogating detainees
- migratory labour
- Labour control
- Unemployment
- Trade Unions
- Mixed Marriages, etc.

The RCA expressed certain very serious reservations regarding to New Constitution Proposals of the Tricameral Parliament. It was recorded that the RCA believes that the voice of the Church should be heard when it concerns justice in the political, social and economic spheres of the nations life.

*"Race relations will be further strained, as the Plan leaves out of consideration the political future of the black community living in the urban areas. Coloureds and Indians will be seen to be aligning themselves politically with Whites and against Blacks"*

*(Acta 1980:129-130)*

We have witnessed the number of social concerns that were dealt with at the 1980 Synod. The writer considers the RCA's involvement during this period of high apartheid very relevant indeed. During these debates in the 1980's there were hardly any opposition from the delegates at the

Synodical meeting.

6.6 **REV CB ROOS - 1980 SYNOD SPEECH**

Rev. CB Roos, a minister of the Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk (Acta 1980:166) in his speech to the 1980 Synod, mentioned the following:

*"The Church, as everywhere, is divided in a left-wing and a right-wing, and there is also a growing group of Christians, whom we call grass roots who want to reform the church to become really prophetic, to become church of the poor. And there is another part in our church which says: 'First of all preach the Gospel and alles sal reg kom'. And they too proclaim a total renewal only in the name of Jesus."*

*You have the right to know that this is not my point of view. I believe in preaching the Gospel and in social action too. Both in the name of Jesus. There will be a time, and perhaps that time has now come, when social action will be understood by the poor all over the world... Social action is preaching the Gospel. That is the way on which the Lord was leading me"*

*(Acta 1980:166)*

## 6.7 REV. J PRAKASIM: SYNOD 1980 - SPEECH

Rev. J Prakasim on behalf of the Presbyterian church of Southern Africa made the following observation in his address at the 1980 Synod of the RCA:

*"But the years have witnessed against hours and I am proud to say that there is nothing but sincere admiration for your denomination, when I see my fellow brothers ordained into the ministry and the great funds poured into beautiful church buildings and into the work of evangelism. The number of congregation and full-time workers in the RCA is the largest amongst the established churches. You are doing a great work in our country, and it is unavoidable to notice that one of your ministers, namely, Rev Manikkam takes the risk to state the national issues. This does reveal the ecumenical, social and political and a theological stance which is wanting in our missionary situation at this critical stage of our country's history. Perhaps your church will lead our Christian community in this regard"*

*(Acta 1980:168).*

Here is evidence that the RCA had the capacity to be of a relevant witness in South Africa. During this period the RCA took a very positive stand with a strong prophetic voice within a society that was in the grips of apartheid structures.

## 6.8 DE BEER AND SOCIAL ACTION

From 1984 onwards there was a shift in emphasis. De Beer (1984:95) mentions that since the

RCA's inception in 1968 there was a desire for mission and evangelism and that the Kingdom of God would be brought in the hearts of the people. He mentions that the emphasis was suddenly shifted to what was coined at the 1980 Synod as "Social Action". Ecumenical activities quickly usurped a primary place on the agenda of the RCA and material foreign to the life and witness for the church cluttered up the agenda of our church. (Acta 1984:95)

It appears to the writer that Rev de Beer's approach to the Gospel was to win souls for the Lord. According to the 1984 Acta of the RCA de Beer mentions that it was the resolution of foreign bodies that were foisted upon the church that dictated the direction of the church. In the writer's view this could appear to be true to some extent in the times of high apartheid during which freedom of speech and expression and detention without trial was the order of the day. To an extent, Foreign bodies became the voice of the voiceless. Rev. de Beer saw this influence as negative and he therefore was not prepared to vigorously oppose the status quo. The writer wishes to point out that tremendous amount of international pressure was brought to bear upon South Africa in order that democracy could become a reality.

According to de Beer (Acta 1984:96) the Church must say "Thus saith the Lord, nothing less and nothing more". For the researcher this statement could be interpreted to mean that members of the RCA should not be involved in any social action at all besides winning souls. Again de Beer (Acta 1984:96) mentions that the church must act in the **spiritual realm**. Thus the church's actions will be that of a supernatural nature. The writer's view is that the "mother" church certainly did not practice this, but instead immersed herself in social action by fostering deliberately the programme of racial separation. For this, the NGK went all out to theologially justify apartheid with its evils. Finally regarding this issue de Beer (Acta 1984:97) sums up the

response of the church as "Prayer".

It is evident from the 1984 Extra Ordinary Synod that the leadership of the RCA after the turmoil within RCA, swung very strongly towards an evangelical stand point. Great effort was exercised to defuse elements of ecumenical influences. The marked difference from the 1980 Synod to the 1984 Extra Ordinary Synod becomes very transparent in terms of the swing towards evangelism.

#### 6.9 THE RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME: (RDP)

Today the RCA is faced with the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) of the Government of National Unity. The following statement regarding the spirit of reconciliation and support for the RDP was tabled by Rev. DJ Pypers and adopted by the 1994 Synod as follows:

*"The joint commission for witness in the Western Cape, comprising of representatives of the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa, the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa and the Reformed church in Africa has noted in gratitude that a spirit of reconciliation continues to be promoted in our country."*

*In this respect the meeting wishes to express its particular appreciation for the role being played by His Excellency the President, Mr Nelson Mandela in furthering this spirit of reconciliation and for the magnanimity he displays in dealing with crucial and difficult issues as well with individuals and groups even when they differ sharply from him.*

*For this reason we also pledge our support for the implementation of the RDP and shall seek to encourage our members and churches to support its objectives, promote its strategies and take part in its programme as much as the poor, oppressed and marginalized communities will benefit. We do so because we believe that as Christians, our love for God finds expression in the way we care for our neighbour and minister to the needs of others.*

*(Acta 1994:116-117)*

This then appears to the writer as a mandate from Synod that the leadership of the various churches within the RCA will urge their congregations to get actively involved in the social process of the RDP.

#### 6.10 REV VAN DER SPUY: ECUMENICAL MOVEMENTS

At the opening of the 5th Synod 1986 Rev. van der Spuy (Acta 1986:1) exhorted the delegates against the dangers of Liberation Theology and denounced the social gospel and ecumenical movements. This is in keeping with the NGK point of view. At this time it appears to the writer that the RCA leadership was not too keen to challenge the NGK and the State regarding the status quo. The reason for both the RCA and the NGK for being against ecumenical bodies may have been that its existence would be threatened and racial prejudices.

The writer observes that at the 1986 Synod the so called "radical" ministers of the RCA had lost their status and therefore were not present. It was in 1986 that there arose a strong emphasis to mobilise evangelical unity. It was as though the way was now cleared for the delegates to pursue this line of action. There was no ecumenical voice heard. The evidence of the RCA's swing

towards evangelical mobilization is indicated in the 40 pages of material dealing with evangelical bodies included in the Acta of the 1986 Synod.

Rev van der Spuy was mandated by the Synod to offer a critique on the Kairos Document. From the 1986 Acta the following extract reads as follows:

*"The answer of the Church to this challenge of Kairos is not just to write off this document in a negative way. As a church we have the calling not only to care for the people's souls but also for their physical and social needs. Special attention should be given to all serious social problems of the country. But we will have to do it in the light of the Gospel "*

*(Acta 1986:102)*

#### 6.11 RCA DURBAN SOUTH - ALLEGED POLITICAL MEETING

In November 1986 an Extraordinary Synod was convened in Durban. A statement was published in the Sunday Times Extra (19:08:84) by Christian Pastors and leaders who met on the 10th June 1984 at the RCA Chatsworth to discuss a Christian response to the New Constitution proposals for the Tricameral Parliament. This published statement called on Christians not to vote for the Tricameral Parliament for the following seasons:

1. *It blasphemes the name of God in the preamble*
2. *It insults and undermines the dignity of man, for we are all made in God's image.*

3. *It deprives 20 million of our African brothers and sisters the right to vote.*
4. *It entrenches apartheid, which is a heresy and ethnicity which are a sin.*
5. *It will force us to fight to defend apartheid*
6. *It will promote hatred, violence, discord and bloodshed.*

*(Acta Extra Ordinary 1986:45)*

At this point in time the Presbytery of Pietermaritzburg had been informed that the RCA Durban South had been used for a political gathering which a particular political party was involved. The Presbytery was grieved that the church was involved in such a manner and thus responded as follows:

*"Will you please let us know whether our information is correct and if so will you please explain the situation? You are instructed to desist from the further use of the Church building for political purposes" (Acta Extra Ordinary. 1986:44)*

It was at this meeting that a statement was drawn up and appeared in the Sunday Times Extra. The clerk of Presbytery responded in the following manner:

*"I have no choice but to state unequivocally my shock and disappointment at the way in which the whole RCA has been implicated by this irresponsible action. I refer you specifically to the mention of our church's name in the statement"*

*Would you please rectify the matter in a next edition of the Sunday Time Extra and inform us accordingly.*

*(Acta Extra Ordinary: 1986:44)*

The following response contained in a statement of the RCA Durban South to the Extra Ordinary Synod 1986 was recorded.

*"The so called "Political Meeting" is grossly mistaken. It was a meeting of concerned Christians and ministers in Durban and surrounding areas. The meeting led and addressed by serious minded Christians from the Full Gospel Church, The NG, Evangelical Church etc. It was not a meeting of the church council".*

*(Acta Extra Ordinary Synod 1986:99)*

*The writer agrees with the above statement as he was present at this alleged political gathering.*

Regarding the evangelical emphasis of the RCA Rev Kritzinger (Acta Extra Ordinary: 1986:71) replied that he had no problem with the Evangelical emphasis in the Church, but considers that the ecumenical and social action emphasis was badly lacking in the 1986 Synod and if he would remain in the RCA he would like to see that this emphasis would be given more attention.

On the 6th May 1988 the RCA summoned an Extra Ordinary Synod in Port Elizabeth to discuss matters pertaining to the church Order and Bye Laws. No socio-political matters were on the agenda.

## 6.12 THE RCA AND PROPHETIC WITNESS

In 1990 the Synod took a stand that **detention without trial** was unacceptable and that the practice should cease forthwith (Acta 1990:55). It is claimed that the RCA itself has become Evangelical, but it also claims to continue to proclaim her prophetic testimony to all in the area of social injustice, but with the added input of Evangelical concern for those that are lost. The RCA also affirms that it still remains a witness against injustice and other social evils in a prophetic way in obedience to the Holy Word of God (Acta 1990:57).

Regarding the RCA's prophetic witness in their Laudium Declaration (RCA's strong evangelical stand declared in this document) mentions the following in point 5. *"We affirm that the proclamation of Gods kingdom of justice, peace and holiness demands the denunciation of all injustices, oppression and immorality. We will not shrink from this prophetic witness."*

(Acta 1994:151)

The 1994 Synod did not deal with many socio political issues. This could be attributed to the democratisation process in the country that might have cleared up many of the social evils. The RCA took note of the changes in country in the following extract:

*"The RCA praises God for the political transition that took place in our beloved country during 1994 as well as for the peaceful way it happened. We continue to pray for and work towards true justice and peace for all in our country."*

(Acta 1994:114)

The RCA has decided strongly to identify with the contents of the **Belhar Confession** as a declaration, but they cannot accept it as a confession on par with the other confessions of the Reformed Tradition. The RCA also makes it clear that social issues are debatable and always in a process of change and its inclusion in the Belhar Confession cannot be regarded as confession (Acta 1994:201).

### 6.13 **SUMMARY**

The social experiences differ from province to province as indicated by the researcher pointing out the conservative nature of Indians living in the Natal-Pietermaritzburg area than those living in the Transvaal and Cape areas. This has also affected the process of racial integration regarding worship services in the RCA.

During the early beginnings and pioneering work of the RCA, thorough evangelical work was carried out amongst the Indian community by Indian evangelists and white workers from the DRC. At this point in time social issues were not really a concern. Ecumenical relations came up for discussion at the 1968 Synod and were referred to the next Synod. From 1970 the RCA began to get involved with ecumenical bodies like the WARC and SACC despite a few voices of opposition who were of the opinion that especially the SACC dealt with only political matters.

In 1976 a casting vote saw the RCA remaining as observers on the SACC. In 1980 the RCA unanimously joined the SACC as full members and still remain full members to date. The writer has indicated that the RCA had taken great interest in the SACC which was developing into a new SACC. The RCA feels much more secure with its evangelistic witness within the new SACC.

In 1980 the congregations of the RCA were encouraged to respond positively to any form of injustice and called upon its members to be compassionate to the victims of apartheid. This was a period of high apartheid. Therefore, it would be noticed that a lot of socio-political matters were placed upon the agenda of the 1980 Synod. This was viewed by some delegates as a negative move which would place the Evangelical witness of the RCA in jeopardy.

The writer has considered Dr C du Le Roux's paper on Evangelism and social action to be of great relevance to the RCA. In his paper Dr C du Le Roux (Acta 1980:152) maintained that if we treat persons who are saved and think that they have no social or political relationship then we are dealing with an **unbiblical one-sidedness** and that to say that the church in its proclamation should avoid politics is to bluff ourselves, for then the church will be seen to openly or silently support the existing political order and it thus becomes politically involved.

The researcher has also indicated that the RCA's response to the **School Boycott** showed its concern in the way things took a turn and at the same time took cognisance of what the evil system of apartheid had created.

The Pretoria Consultation of Churches also adopted resolutions that directed the church to not shy away from social involvement. Members of the RCA responded to the new Constitutional proposals for the Tricameral Parliament by asking Christians not to vote. These responses were also experienced by the Transvaal congregations on a greater scale. The then leadership of the RCA was peeved about this.

There was a time in the 1980's when the RCA was considered by many clergymen as a Church

that would lead the Christian community by revealing an ecumenical, social, political and theological stance in its struggle against apartheid.

The researcher has pointed out that from 1984 there was a sudden swing by the RCA leadership towards evangelism. A perception that the ecumenical matters may have clouded the RCA's evangelical stance could have existed. At this point in time those ministers who had lost their were no longer ministers of the RCA.

In contrast to the encouragement given to the congregation from the 1980 Synod, there was a marked difference in the message that issued forth from the 1984 Synod to the RCA membership. The clerk of Synod urged the membership to respond to apartheid and its injustices in a spiritual manner and that Prayer alone should be sufficient.

In 1994 the RCA took note of the transition to democracy in South Africa and responded positively to the peaceful transition. In the writer's view those who had left the RCA after the Ottawa experience worked through the RCA to see that there would be a peaceful transition to democracy. It is a pity that these members could not find a space to further their ecumenical activities within the context that was prevalent. In the writer's view it may now appear that those who previously curtailed ecumenical activities in the RCA are the ones who have been fighting for biblical justice and a democratic South Africa. The positive contribution that was made by those members who left the Church because of the apartheid policies should not be forgotten.

## CHAPTER VII

7.

### YEARS OF TURMOIL AND SPLITS

Essential to the comparative historical method chosen for this study is the legislation and the practical out flow of the policies of separate development. These policies were engineered by the Nationalist Party (NP) in order to entrench white superiority in South Africa. According to Serfontein (1982:7) the NP in 1948 unseated the United Party Government of General J.C Smuts in an unexpected shock victory and thus apartheid and an emotional appeal to Afrikaner nationalism became the twin pillars which supported the overwhelming political domination of the NP in the white political sphere.

There was a growing fear for the emerging black population. Serfontein (1982:7) states that the racial issue was linked to genuine fears about the survival of the Afrikaner volk as a separate cultural entity of the white South African nation.

Apartheid under the rule of Dr Hendrik Verwoed gave way to “separate development” and separate which involved the creation of “independent” and “semi-independent homelands known as Bantustans.

According to Serfontein (1982:9) the establishment of ten Bantustans called “homelands was crucial to the policy of apartheid and that is based on the principles of “diversity” “ethnicity”

and the “right to self determination” of each and separate group to control its own affairs.

The NP made sure that the method of divide and rule will be implemented to ensure that blacks do not consolidate on a common front. Bantustans have caused untold misery and suffering amongst the blacks. Black leaders were co-opted to participatory politics. The NP government did everything possible to encourage the Bantustans on self government and administration. The idea was that the ten groups should have the right to a separate state and separate political nationhood.

The policy of Bantustans was rationalised by Nationalist thinking so that Afrikaners could have the right to exist as a separate “volk.” and maintain their separate cultural and language identity. This then meant that the Afrikaners should be given the same “privileges” (Serfontein 1982:9).

This cleverly devised policy got off the ground as the different tribes against their will developed within the Bantustan that was created for them.

The severest reaction came from the African National Congress (ANC) since 1961 and they bitterly opposed and rejected the segregationist apartheid policies of the all white government. According to Serfontein (1982:10) the apartheid policies were viewed as a divide and rule policy which deprived Africans of their South African citizenship. The ANC have consistently advocated a unitary non-racial South Africa. The Bantustan policy thus had political and legal consequences for the blacks because they effectively lost their South

African citizenship (Serfontein 1982:10).

The Group Areas Act was designed and implemented to further the apartheid ideology of the NP. This act caused untold misery, frustration and hatred. This act forced upon the people by the NP ensured that Africans, coloured and Indians live in their own residential areas created for them.

The resettlement and relocation act affected the blacks. The NP was determined that blacks would not forge links with Indians and coloureds as they feared this possible consolidation. Further to this the implementation of the Influx control and pass laws also caused severe harassment to the Blacks.

The integral part of the whole apartheid ideology was the legislation of the Mixed Marriages Act that banned marriages contracted to between blacks and whites. Serfontein (1982:16) informs us that this act was introduced in 1950 as a specific request of the NGK. Sexual intercourse was forbidden between blacks and whites but it did not matter if Africans, Coloured and Indians violated this act.

Apartheid education was devastating as it has caused untold frustration, hunger and bitterness amongst the blacks. The legislation of an apartheid education system was considered a great evil that has robbed blacks from receiving a proper and normal education so that they will be in a position to occupy their rightful places in South Africa.

What now must happen to the non-African groups ie. Coloureds and Indians? Should they not also deserve the right to self-determination and self rule? This was the inevitable as the constitutional proposals of the Presidents' council clearly differentiated between Africans and non Africans. Thus, a new political dispensation was created for Indians and Coloureds. The NP co-opted the Indians and Coloured representation to engage in participatory politics. It was in the context that the Tricameral Parliament came into existence in which both the Coloureds and Indians were given the opportunity to share power with the white NP. Behind the NP thinking, it was clear to the NP that Coloureds and Indians would pursue their role in the Tricam and therefore they would not seek to form an alliance with the blacks. The blacks were left out from this power sharing system in the most blatant form of discrimination. Desai (1996:69) observes correctly that the new tricameral/parliamentary system marked a consolidation of the tentative attempts started in 1976 to move from the politics of control to the politics of co-opting Indians and Coloureds move formally as junior partners in the running of the apartheid machine. The Tricameral system not only split the community, but also the churches. The Tricameral elections polarised and tore apart the Indian communities in South Africa, and represented the direct course of the split in the RCA in 1983.

The RCA was affected very seriously by the implementation process of the Tricameral elections. This system was to further entrench church apartheid as pursued by the DRC's mission policy. The tricameral elections caused splits in the RCA with Rev EJ Manikkam placing him as a candidate for the tricameral parliament on the Solidarity Party electoral list. He had some support in the RCA, but he found resistance to the elections by the majority of congregation members together with Rev Klippias Kritzinger, Rev Gernie Lubbe and Rev

Charl Le Roux.

The Transvaal Presbytery sensed that the Coloured and Indian communities were set up against blacks and this is going to lead to confrontation and bad blood between the communities. The Transvaal presbytery therefore mobilized its congregations to reject this evil system and they campaigned in their communities against the implementation of the tricameral system. The pastoral letter of the Transvaal Presbytery called on the members of the RCA not to vote in the election Rev EJ Manikkam did not like this at all because he thought this his opportunity to enter parliament was going to be blocked by the resistance of the Transvaal congregations against the Tricame. He therefore grasped the opportunity at the right moment to work with Dr DCG Fourie from the NGK to play the “trump card” of “defrocking” the three Transvaal ministers.

The anti-tricameral mobilisation was also experienced in the broader community. According to Desai (1996:54), certain to this mobilisation was the formation of the United Democratic front (UDF) in August 1983. He also mentions that both the Natal Indian Congress (NIC) and the Transvaal Indian congress (TIC) played an important part in the formation of the UDF and were affiliated to the UDF. The UDF was able to bring about a wide range of organisations including civic organisations and trade unions under its non racial umbrella.

Balia (1988:112) mentions in his work that the UDF pledged itself to unite the people in their fight against poor housing, high rents, low wages, poor working conditions, forced removals and inferior education for blacks.

During this period the black consciousness movements began to assert themselves in mobilising their fight to the evil of the tricameral parliament. According to Balia (1988:112) black consciousness provided a very important context for black theologians to begin developing new theological insights and it further challenged to take up seriously the particularity of black experience.

The writer has attempted to trace the crucial political developments as the background to the RCA's woes.

The writer concedes that this was the most difficult and delicate chapter to write. From the research undertaken the vast majority of the present RCA membership know very little or nothing about the turmoil and splits that occurred within the RCA. However they have been reminded constantly by the present leadership that certain ministers tried to hijack the church due to strong political motivations and thus in the process the evangelical witness was in danger of becoming non-existent in the RCA. The majority of the membership have not heard or know about the loss of status of ministers of the RCA. Their side of the saga has not filtered down to the congregational level. The writer therefore will try to write about the years of turmoil and splits taking into consideration the information received regarding this sensitive period from both those who were considered to be the victims and those who were in leadership. The writer may appear to be biased in the sense that the controversy hinged around the three ministers who had lost their status as ministers in the RCA.

As the RCA developed, the stormy and acrimonious 1970 Synod in Cape Town was experienced

where serious power struggles erupted between white “missionaries” and the Indian evangelists about various issues, i.e. the route for an evangelist to become a minister. The licensing of Rev Manikkam by the DRC as the first minister of the IRC in order to accompany the DRC to the 1970 Nairobi Assembly of the WARC, was surrounded by enormous tension and controversy. The fact that there was no synod in 1970 was due to a bitter battle over the question whether ministers could serve as delegates to a Synod if they were not members of that church. It was only in late 1975 that the DRC agreed to allow white ministers to become members of the IRC, thus enabling the 1976 synod to be convened. These episodes are highly relevant expressions of the IRC/RCA’s entanglement with the apartheid policy, as well as its desperate struggle to escape from it.

The writer will now consider the issues raised by Rev S Govender in his letter dated 03.02.77. The issues raised in this letter has direct bearing to the “tent making” ministry, to the question of financial dependence of the RCA on the DRC and the tensions that arose between the white and Indian workers in the IRC between 1968 and 1976 which were due to the DRC’s missionary policy. The role and position of the “white missionary” are crucial in this regard, especially the expectations of them from the side of the DRC.

The question of financial dependence on the DRC played a crucial role in the RCA since the discussion was started on this by Rev S Govender’s letter in 1977.

The purpose and function of the minister in the RCA were questioned. It was pointed out that the RCA had a sound infrastructure and that it had well-trained ministers to promote and maintain

its work. Rev S Govender's observation is that the NGK was fully supporting every aspect of the RCA's functioning. He draws the comparison through historical observations that there are Indian churches which have achieved more results in the mission on less material input while the RCA achieved less results on more material input. Financial support remained one of the concrete ways in which relationships between the RCA and the NGK is maintained.

Rev Govender was also observed that there was certain amount of fear to disturb this relationship and that the unity process will also be hampered.

The critical spotlight was focused upon the ministers of the RCA and the financial commitment of the church for them, then automatically almost every other aspect of the RCA's life and relationship is automatically also questioned.

According to Rev S Govender's letter the NGK's missionary policy came under the spotlight and was thus evaluated for its ramification on the RCA Missions were determined by the NGK and with this came financial guarantees. Therefore Rev S Govender concluded that the RCA was measured by the criteria of money. It was expressed that it was morally wrong for the NGK to establish congregations which became sterile and a lifeless product of the mission and this process involved a lot of money. The researcher is in agreement with Rev S Govender when he mentions that the endeavours of the NGK mission resulted in leaving a small congregation with a highly paid minister and that the financial needs cannot be met by small congregations. This is the present dilemma of most of the RCA congregations where the pressure is placed upon the local congregations to support their minister. It is a present

fact in the RCA that the “calling” of a minister is determined by the availability of funds.

Rev S Govender suggested strongly that there has to be a change in the idea of missions in the RCA and therefore a programme of liberation should be implemented. The NGK missionary policy was viewed as the erection of old patterns in a new setting.

Rev S Govender points out that the RCA’s continued participation as a separate institution became more and more artificial and forced.

Rev S Govender did not criticise financial assistance, but financial dependence which he saw as eventually crippling the RCA.

It was within this context of the RCA’s financial dependence on the NGK that Rev S Govender declared that a crisis existed in the ministry of the RCA. Rev S Govender observations become very thought provoking and thus raised the crucial debate about the function and purpose of the ministers in the RCA. The question was raised as to where the ministers consciously or unconsciously positioned themselves in the RCA and whether the image that was inculcated within the congregation was threatening to become a serious obstacle to the mission of the RCA. Therefore Rev S Govender points out that this state of affairs is dangerous for the future life of the RCA and this needs to be altered.

Professor WA Krige responded to Rev S Govender’s observations by saying that it deserves various consideration and that the conclusions were fully justified.

Rev S Govender mentions that tensions arose between white and Indian ministers. The white minister's salary was guaranteed by the NGK whereas the NGK provided the basic minimum towards the salaries of Indian ministers.

The missionary calling was questioned and also whether the mission of the missionary became the mission of the congregation. The view expressed was that the missionaries were being submerged in the local congregation with ecumenical and administrative issues. This then blocked the primary concern for mission.

There were now an awakening and realization that a crisis indeed existed. It became clear that there was a total carry over pattern from the NGK to the RCA and that the massive injections of finance kept the structures of the RCA functioning. It also emerged that the congregations had to be educated to be involved with the total ministry of the church and that the congregation should not be burdened should not be burdened to pay high salaries.

The quest now was to consider viable, authentic biblical options for the expression of the ministry within the RCA and for more effective ways to relate to the congregation.

The missionary ideal of a self-supporting became the focus. It was within this context that the "white missionaries" opted for the "tent making" ministry, thus refusing to accept NGK money and encouraged their congregations to become self supporting. In the writers view, this space created for the congregation allowed those congregations to become more financially strong and thereby developed as a much more mature congregation to meet the

needs of its ministry.

Further detail of the “tent-making” ministry is included under 7.2.1 of this chapter.

It must be understood that the DRC was observing the RCA, its younger "*daughter*" church with great intent. At the early stages the RCA became totally dependent on the DRC for funding for missionary work, salaries and providing church buildings. It is the researcher opinion that the DRC would want their daughter church to develop ideologies which they espoused very well.

It was recommended that the RCA apply for full membership to the SACC. The 1976 Synod decided by a casting vote of the then moderator Rev, K Moodley to maintain the status quo. This meant that the RCA was not allowed to join as full members, but instead to enjoy observer status (Acta 1976: 167). This casting vote now proved that Synodical delegates had differing opinions regarding an important ecumenical body like the SACC. At this point in time the DRC was also not a member of the SACC, so it would have appeared ironical if their *daughter* approved membership with the SACC. In the writer's view, those who voted against membership with the SACC did not want to anger or alienate the DRC, the *mother* church.

It was at the Synod of 1980 that delegates expressed strong feelings against apartheid with all its injustice that was experienced by the majority of the South African population and how it affected RCA's relationship with the DRC.

During this time tension and provocation by the apartheid system, resistance and confrontational

attitudes began to emerge. What was being experienced by the society now began to have a tremendous impact upon the church of Jesus Christ. The RCA during this period wasted no time to pursue its prophetic calling which was ordained by God. Also at the 1980 Synod it was for the very first time that a paper on Evangelism and Social Action by Dr du P le Roux was included.

In the place of a Synodical Meeting in 1984 an Extra Ordinary Synod(E/O) was called for, which was held on the 23rd October 1984 in Durban. From the 1980 Synod up to this point several issues were placed on the table which then caused divisions between the conservative and liberal theologians within the RCA. The 1984 Extra Ordinary Synod and 1986 Synod records the responses of those whom the writer considers to be conservative theologians. Rev de Beer presented views on the official involvement of the RCA in politics. He states that the involvement of the RCA with politics and Liberation Theology has undoubtedly caused deep tensions and brought the church to the brink of a schism. In this report he also points out that the shift of emphasis from 1968 to 1980 where the emphasis was on social action and ecumenical activities. The feeling was that mission and evangelism was not considered. Rev de Beer also discouraged members of political involvement which had the potential to harm the church.

(Acta E/O 1984:95)

In the writer's opinion Rev de Beer did not appear to be an outspoken critic to the DRC's manner in which they indulged both politically and biblically to lead the people down the garden path. It is however evident in the Acta of 1984 whereby he takes a firm stand against those whom he perceived to be the ones that were harming the church.

During the 5th Synod in 1986 the following churches' did not attend:

1. Both congregations of Transvaal and Lenasia were absent without apologies.
2. Durban South did not attend in an official capacity.
3. The Cape Province did not attend and they unanimously decided to withdraw from Synod.

(Acta: 1986:3)

According to Prof PJ Maartens (Interview 19:10:95) the RCA was still in the euphoria of having been established as an independent church. The split came as a total climax and it was tantamount to a split with all the ramifications of intrigues. An extract from an interview with Prof PJ Maartens reads as follows:

*"The split tore the church apart. The Synod that is one symptom of it could not function. Communication between the church councils was nonexistent. Occasionally letters circulated at a later stage when the remainder of the church continued with the Synods, the documents and invitations were sent, but the Transvaal congregations did not see themselves linked in any way. The Transvaal presbytery was not in any way prepared to collaborate. They continued then independently... They felt that this was the dawn of their negotiations for unity. So thereafter the splits they sought refuge in the wider NKG family. Their ministers were ordained within that wider connection and they operated like any other ordinary church would and hence they could feel*

*themselves not obligated to respond to any sort of tiny split off as it was of the wider unity process. They would enter into unity discussions in the broader perspective.*

From Rev. de Beer's sermon in the Pietermaritzburg congregation during Synod he mentioned that the spirit of revolution had entered the very doors of our church and that liberation theology will pave the way for Christians to be trapped by its deceit (Acta 1986:4).

#### 7.1 **SWING TO EVANGELISM**

Rev Moodley reported to the Federal Council of churches that the Lord was beginning to create something beautiful from the ashes. While this may be the interpretation, to the writer it may appear also that something beautiful was destroyed. The writer observes that five very important established churches were absent at the RCA's 5th Synodical Meeting. This then should be viewed as significant to the impending split that was to take place within the RCA.

The opening statements from the leadership of the RCA during the 5th Synod indicates clearly their swing towards the evangelical emphasis. There was no opposition to this swing because all those who had ecumenical leanings were no longer in the RCA.

The following remarks are extracted from the Acta of the 5th Synod in 1986:

**Rev K Moodley:** "Anyone who does not stand upon the Word of God and the message to preach it for the redemption of men, belong to a **new breed** of people who has only one desire and that is to change the political situation".

**Rev GH Denysschen:** "if you do not know where you come from, you will not know where you're going"

**Rev S Sukdaven:** "In the initial years this church was concerned for the passion of souls. Then men and movements from outside changed the course of this church. Their concern was rather to become part of the ecumenical bodies such as the WARC and the SACC, etc".

**Rev PJP de Beer:** "Acknowledge the value of your heritage otherwise you would loose your future with reference to the genealogy of Christ, in Matthew. Even if our heritage has flaws we may never deny it".

**Bro Sooklingham:** "The work in Transvaal became virtually stagnant. Political gatherings in the church buildings caused wide concern. The Synod may know that they enjoy the support of some 35 people".

(Acta: 1986 : P5)

The writer's opinion is that Rev Denysschen's remarks appear to be very sincere, but he must also recognize in reality from where the RCA developed. According to the researcher the DRC, it

appears had political motivations to establish the RCA as a separate Indian Congregation. The majority of the RCA membership do not know about the DRC's theological justification and defence of apartheid. Therefore, the writer considers Rev Denysschen's statement as a half truth.

According to Rev Sukdaven (Interview 21:02:95) the RCA should become full members of the WCC and the SACC in order to benefit the church.

## 7.2 **CONTRIBUTING FACTORS TO THE SPLIT**

There were a number events and issues that contributed to the state of turmoil and splits within the RCA. The writer now intends to historically trace some of the major events which may also be linked to many other issues.

The executive committee of the Liaison Committee of the RCA in 1984 noted with concern the serious problems which threatened the unity of the RCA. The Committee cited the following problems:

- (a) The Transvaal Congregations and Presbytery did not recognize the SC and its actions such as the loss of status of the three ministers and the calling of the

Synod or a special Synod.

- (b) Mr Manikkam, who had lost his status, continued living in the parsonage and was for all practical purposes active in a tent making ministry.
- (c) Some students had declined to appear before the Committee for Training and Admission.(CTAM).
- (d) Attempts to convene a Synod or a legitimate meeting of the SC had not been successful.
- (e) There were deep **theological/ideological** differences separating the ministers of the Church. (Acta: 1986 : 52(a))

#### 7.2.1 **TENT-MAKING MINISTRY**

There arose this feeling amongst some ministers that their congregations were burdened to meet their portion of the ministers salary and in view of the financial situation of all the congregations of the RCA, Synod 1976 decided to give the option to a minister to take up another occupation and means of maintenance, on condition that:

1. Such a minister has obtained the permission of his church Council.

2. His Presbytery is informed and allowed to exercise strict control.
3. The standard of training for the ministry in the RCA as laid down by Synod, is in no way affected or lowered.
4. This option to a minister to take up another occupation as a means of maintaining himself is of a temporary nature and must be reviewed by the church Council and Presbytery.
5. Synod reviews this matter regularly and instructs the Church Council concerned to report annually to the Synodical Committee.
6. Synod authorizes the actuary to amended article 12 of the church order accordingly.

(Acta 1980: 22-23)

According to Gere Lubbe (Interview: 23/02/95) ex minister of the RCA Transvaal, he decided in 1980 to go into the tent making ministry.

### 7.2.1.1 TENT-MAKING MINISTRY - REV KLIPPIES KRITZINGER

Rev Klippies Kritzinger made the following remarks:

*"At the 1980 Synod the tent-making ministry was approved in principle. Gerrie then opted quickly into this, Charl also followed, but I waited a while because I did not establish myself well in the congregation. In March 1983 I completed my doctor's examinations. In June 1983 a post was advertised in Missiology and Religious Studies at UNISA so I applied for this job and got it. In October 1983 I become a tent-maker. After 2 years in the congregation I had very little time in the congregation... I did not want to get out of the ministry. It was a tent making job. I felt it was dishonest for us in the RCA experience to utter radical criticisms of the DRC not only in 1980 but also in local meetings of the mission boards of the DRC. In 1982 apartheid was declared a heresy. If this was true, then how can I receive my salary cheque from them, and also not to let the members be dependent on the NGK money for my side. I wanted to be consistent. With the present income we could run the church and that is why I became a tent-maker an (academic)"*

(Interview: 23:02:95)

Rev Kritzinger's information dated 24:12:86 informs us that the 5th Synod in 1986 took new decisions regarding his post which then made it untenable for him to stay on as a tent-maker. The following were drawn up by the 1986 Synod in considering applications for a faith ministry or the tent-making ministry.

- "1. The ministry must be of a nature that would not leave the congregation without provision or the means to make a replacement or fill a vacancy to continue such a ministry*
  
- 2. The ministry must be of a temporary nature which enables the congregation to grow financially strong enough to support a full-time minister and must be reviewed annually by the Church Council and the Presbytery.*
  
- 3. The salary earned by the tent-maker or by way of faith ministry must not exceed the salary and allowances as determined by the RCA to ensure parity. Income above this should be paid to the Administrator of Synod"*  
*(Acta 1986:20)*

There appears to be a new emphasis in the 1986 Acta from the 1980 Acta regarding the tent-making ministry.

From a correspondence dated 10:12:86 to Rev Kritzinger from the Presbytery the following points regarding the new conditions to the tent-making ministry emerges:

*\*The minister of the RCA can only apply for the tent-making ministry if the congregation does not have the funds to support him. That was the reason for the tent-making ministry.*

This then precluded Rev Kritzinger because he made it very clear that he would not accept NGK

funds and in this case the NGK made funds available for this post.

Also included in this letter dated 10:12:86 a subtle indication that once there is no tent-maker then only can Presbytery call a new full time minister. To the writer from the information gathered it appears that a group of members of the Charisma congregation pushed for a full time minister and this was taken up by the SC. Thus it would appear that the obstacle for a full time minister was the presence of a tent-maker.

Furthermore the letter also indicated that the incumbent should not have political, selfish or material motivations and negative attitudes towards any supporting church or body, as it shall be considered unacceptable. This point is well stated to suit the RCA receiving funds from the NGK, but this appears to go against the principles that Rev Kritzinger stood for.

The letter also showed concern for the parity in salary for all RCA ministers.

In the writer's opinion the above conditions may be considered a very tactical move. This was offered to Rev Klippies Kritzinger knowing full well that he would not compromise his stand not to receive money from the NGK. This is why Synod instructed the Presbytery committee that in the event Rev Kritzinger refusing the full-time ministry, a full time minister must be called as soon as possible. (RCA Presbytery 10 Dec 1986). According to Rev Kritzinger (letter dated 10:12:86) states that their clear intention was to offer him this ministry first, but if he did not accept it, they would call someone else.

Although Rev Klippias Kritzinger flew down to Durban and signed the oath of legitimation he finally did not choose to become a full-time minister because the new guideline's precluded him from his desire to serve his congregation. He signed the oath of legitimation with the understanding that no calling or induction was required and that this would not be a condition on becoming a full time minister. Rev Kritzinger also felt that teaching theology to correspondence students, became a calling. He is presently a minister in the URCSA (Interview: 20/02/95).

During 1986 the SC put out a response in a report dated 21-05-86 regarding the events that led to the loss of status. This report was intended to help in some measure to provide information and to clear up possible misunderstandings. The following extract is a response to the tent-making ministry:

*"The decision to allow ministers of the RCA to earn their living through secular occupations was not purely motivated by the proper motivations to help the congregations become financially independent. During the debate at a meeting of the 1980 Synod and on other occasions it was mentioned that you cannot criticize the NGK on the one hand and then receive the money with the other hand. The subsequent events proved beyond any doubt that the tent-making ministry was used by some to get at the NGK. The allegation levelled at the SC of having acted in an unchristian manner should rather be placed before the door of those that reacted so bitterly against the NGK. It is interesting that the status in the NGK after serving many years in the RCA was*

*only relinquished after they became tent-making ministers.*

*The way in which the financial support of the NG Synods was terminated in the Transvaal from the side of the RCA, causes concern because in the event of a vacancy there will be no support for the calling of a minister.”*

*(SC Report : 21-05-86)*

### 7.2.2 TENT-MAKING MINISTRY : TRANSVAAL CONGREGATION

According to the 1988 Extra Ordinary Synod held on 6th May 1988 the congregation of Transvaal would not compromise the tent-making ministry. This is non-negotiable as far as the RCA Transvaal is concerned and they will not be forced to accept NGK money. Their opinion was that the status of their ministers should be unconditionally restored. They also mentioned that Ottawa changed the course of the RCA. To this Rev K Moodley replied that it was a change as far as the then SC was concerned and not the Synod as such. The Transvaal preferred a congregational system to a presbytery system.

(Acta: Extra Ordinary: 1988 p9(a) & 9(b))

The tent-making ministry that would require the applicant to be full-time involved in another occupation for his livelihood will only be considered in **highly exceptional cases** eg. if the government requires ministers to be employed in a secular occupation and when a church council's funds are not sufficient to employ the minister in a full time capacity or part-time capacity. There has to be an acceptable timetable set by the church Council or Presbytery to

revert to full-time. (Acta Extra Ordinary 1988:16). This then takes care of the present ministers of the RCA. The writer's opinion is that the case of Rev JNJ Kritzingler could have been considered within the ambit of "**highly exceptional cases**".

### 7.2.3 **WARC: THE OTTAWA EXPERIENCE**

In August 1982 the WARC declared the Christian support of apartheid a **heresy** (false teaching which must be rejected) and suspended the membership of the NGK and NHK until such time as they repent of their support for apartheid.

It was in the same year that the RCA experienced a strong move from a group of ministers to **break all ties** with the NGK for the theological justification of apartheid.

A report dated 6:10:82 was presented to the SC by the RCA delegates to Ottawa. Their report indicates that the WARC consists of 150 member churches from 76 countries representing more or less 70 million Reformed Christians in the world. The delegates regarded membership with the WARC as a God given opportunity to make a positive contribution.

#### 7.2.3.1 **ABSTENTION FROM HOLY COMMUNION**

The report further informs us that the delegates abstained partaking of the Holy Communion at the opening service. The following reasons for their abstention were forwarded:

1. In South Africa Black people are not admitted by custom and church decision, defended theologically, to partake of the Lords Supper in the NGK and NHK.
2. The theological heresy which undergirds apartheid finds its origin in Holy Communion. To share communion with those who defend this theological heresy and live in disobedience to the Gospel, would mean eating and drinking judgement upon ourselves according to 1 Cor. 11:29).
3. Our refusal to participate, anticipates the day of our freedom when we shall all -blacks and whites drink from one cup and eat from one loaf.

(Report to SC: 6:10:82)

Rev JNJ Kritzinger in an undated document mentions that in November 1982 the RCA Synodical Committee met in Benoni and accepted the Ottawa decision by a majority of one vote (5 votes to 4), It also accepted the NGSK draft confession as a document to be sent to all church councils for study and comment.

The writer considers it most unfortunate that the Ottawa experience did not reach the majority of the then RCA membership. Ther is a perception that the abstention from Holy Communion was due to political motivations.

#### 7.2.3.2 **RESOLUTIONS SUPPORTED BY RCA DELEGATES**

The report also identified four major problem areas emerging in the preparatory documents of

the WARC.

- (a) **The problem of apartheid and racism**
- (b) **The problem of human rights**
- (c) **The problem of justice**
- (d) **The problem of peace.**

At this conference a composite statement emerged from the other bodies and it declared apartheid a sin and a theological heresy. In the light of both the NGK and NHK giving moral and theological justification to this ideology they were suspended from the privileges of membership in the WARC.

The following resolutions were supported by the RCA delegates:

The NGK and the NHK will be warmly welcomed once more when the following changes have taken place:

1. **Black Christians are no longer excluded from church services, especially from the Holy Communion.**
2. **Concrete support in word and deed is given to those who suffer under the system of apartheid.**

3. **Unequivocal Synod resolutions are made which reject apartheid in the spheres of church and politics.**

**(Report to SC: 6:10:82)**

The 1982 Ottawa resolutions and suspension of the NGK had far reaching ramifications for the RCA because the Presbytery of Transvaal called for suspension of ties with the NGK. The SC report (1986 :4) confirms that the SC decided to adopt the resolutions of Ottawa and inform the next Synod. It was felt that the resolution of an ecumenical body must first be reported to Synod and be accepted by Synod before they can be put into practice - especially a resolution with such far reaching consequences as that of Ottawa.

7.2.3.3 **REV DE BEER'S VIEW: OTTAWA EXPERIENCE**

The clerk of SC at that time Rev PJP de Beer (21/05/86 p. 4) uttered his personal opinion that the acceptance of Ottawa by the Presbytery of Transvaal, the instruction of their delegates to withdraw from all committees comprising of NGK and RCA delegates; to suspend ties with the NGK until the next Synod; to call for a special Synod; a **spirit of confrontation** at the meeting of the SC on 6/11/82, laid the basis for the sad events that followed. Rev de Beer further states that their actions were **tantamount to revolt, insubordination** and that it was **premature, unilateral** and **irregular**. Their action he said brought the RCA at that time already to the brink of a schism.

(Synodical Report 1986 : 4)

At a SC meeting on the 6th November 1982 the report of the RCA delegates to Ottawa was tabled and accepted by the SC and it was decided to recommend to Synod the approval of the resolutions taken at Ottawa.

#### 7.2.3.4      REFLECTIONS ON OTTAWA EXPERIENCE

##### Dr C du P Le Roux

*"The RCA felt very hurt. We came back cut to the bone. There was a concerted attack on the DRC. This became the turning point of division"*

*(Interview: 22/2/95)*

##### Rev Klippies Kritzinger

*"It was certainly a watershed. It was a victory for our little church and was deeply proud that Kisten read the resolution in the plenary that Sunday and they were not going to take part in the Communion because of the presence of the DRC. He certainly had the courage to read it from the pulpit. I was very disappointed to hear that Kisten had summersaulted and told the DRC that he was sorry and he retracted and that he was wrong, that he did not stand by that anymore ... but I think Ottawa led to the Belhar Confession when the NGSK held their Synod and that was the high point of creativity in Reformed history in South Africa"*

*(Interview: 20:02:95)*

**Prop. Victor Pillay**

*"The decision to suspend the NGK was rightly so. Individual churches took the matter into their own hands. They should have waited for a directive from Synod"*

*(Interview 23:05:95)*

**Rev Gere Lubbe:**

*"Our delegates were behind the Ottawa resolution. I think the DRC was dishonest in their ecumenical relationship. They were all the time very diplomatically to suggest that if there was change that they were at Ottawa. They got what they deserved. It was a strong action. They have been suspended and the acid test is the uniting process".*

*(Interview 23:02:95)*

**Rev Nobin Shunmugham**

*"The suspension was a fair decision because this was not the first time that the WARC spoke to the DRC with its involvement of apartheid. It was not a harsh decision".*

*(Interview 13:04:95)*

**RCA's Response**

*"Some delegates returned from Ottawa, with the perception that the DRC was a heretical church guilty of classical heresy and thereby took the matter to it's logical*

*conclusion by severing ties with the DRC without taking this serious, painful matter to Synod. The RCA acknowledges that the WARC "suspended" and not "excommunicated" the DRC from the alliance justifying the position that "heresy" was not used as "classical heresy" but rather as a "disciplinary measure" to coerce the DRC to abstain from justifying apartheid scripturally". Though the Synod refrains from calling apartheid a heresy (because of our understanding of heresy as the rejection or denying of the central and essential doctrines of the Bible eg. the inspiration of scriptures and the divinity of Christ, etc.), it supports Ottawa's strong rejection of the theological justification and moral support of apartheid".*

*(Acta 1994:201)*

**Rev Charl Le Roux**

*"Ottawa said that the theological justification of apartheid is a heresy. I agreed with it. It breaks up the one body of Christ and fragments it. It is contra the Apostles Confession.*

*(Interview 20:02:95)*

From the writer's point of view he agrees with Rev Klippies Kritzinger that Ottawa was indeed a watershed. The consequence of the Ottawa experience did polarise the RCA resulting in splits and severe tensions. The leadership was split by those who had conservative theological views and those who had radical theological views.

#### 7.2.4 **LOSS OF STATUS:**

The loss of status of ministers in the RCA has been considered one of the major contributing factors resulting in the split that occurred within the RCA. The reflections of both the radical and conservative ministers now began to take on concrete forms.

The following ministers lost their status in the RCA.

**Rev. JNJ Kritzinger**

**Rev. Dr C du P Le Roux**

**Rev. GJA Lubbe**

**Rev. EJ Manikkam**

**Rev. DP Bekker**

**Rev. S Govender**

It must be understood that the majority of the present membership of the RCA have not heard about these ministers or their loss of status. It appears that those who know about these ministers, have been updated by the present leadership of the RCA. Speeches of the leadership have alluded to the fact that especially the first three mentioned ministers were the ones who tried to disrupt the evangelical role of the RCA by their strong political views. The writer would therefore focus this chapter mainly on the loss of status of these three ministers so that their side of events that unfolded could also be placed in perspective. Whatever decisions and discussions have taken place since will also be considered as it appears in the various Actas of the RCA's Synods.

The official notification regarding the loss of status of the three ministers appears in the Actas as follows:

" **OFFICIAL NOTIFICATION**

**All church Councils and Presbyteries are hereby notified that the brothers C du Le Roux, GJA Lubbe and JNJ Kritzinger have lost their status as ministers as from 15 June 1983. They may not administer the Sacraments or Baptism and Holy Communion".**

(Acta E/O: 1984:39:4)

At a SC meeting held in RCA Charisma, Laudium Pretoria on the 18th March 1984, the following resolutions were taken regarding the loss of status of the three ministers.

1. **Synodical Committee resolved that the loss of status was due to the fact that in the first instance the Brothers concerned did not inform the appropriate Committee of the RCA of their intention to relinquish their status and forfeit privileges in the NGK and subsequently no arrangements were made by any Committee of the RCA for their Re-Legitimation.**
  
2. **By relinquishing their status in the NGK they also lost their status in the RCA by virtue of the withdrawal of the certificate of Legitimation by the**

**NGK. This became effective from 15th June 1983.**

**RCA Church Order-Bye-Laws and Regulations - Page 7 Pt 1.14.1. "A person who has lost his status as minister of the Word may request restoration from Synod. The request should be furnished with testimonials from the church councils of the congregations and Presbyteries where he was domiciled since his loss of status"**

It is reported that the SC decided not to refer this matter to Synod, but to take the risk to act immediately in the following manner:

- (a) There is no need to furnish Testimonials from the church councils and Presbyteries
- (b) If there was no objection to restore their status, then a colloquium doctum will be necessary.

(Acta E/O: 1984:40)

A **pastoral letter** to the congregations regarding the loss of status contained the following information:

*"The question of the status of the ministers in the Transvaal was approached with a mature and reconciliatory attitude culminating in a decision to open the doors for*

*these brethren welcoming them back into the church if they so wished. It is however painful for us to share with you the fact that Synod confirmed the loss of Rev. Manikkam due to his election in the Tricameral Parliament which according to the church policy automatically takes place in such a case. Synod also confirms the loss of status of Rev. DP Bekker as he has ceased to function as minister of RCA Durban South. These considerations were based upon the concern for the well being of the local congregations and that the work of God would not suffer.”*

*(Acta 1986: 119)*

Synod also affirmed that the **three ministers** defrocked themselves by their own action when they returned their legitimation certificate to the NGK. It was also stated that the SC gave them the opportunity to be reinstated by CTAM and furthermore Synod of 1986 went the extra mile in offering them to be reinstated without reference to CTAM. Only one of the **three ministers** reacted but was unwilling to accept the regulations of the RCA regarding the tent-making ministry.

*(Acta 1990:56)*

It appears to the writer that although Synod of 1986 went the second mile the regulations of the RCA itself precluded them from accepting reinstatement.

#### **7.2.4.1 DEVELOPMENTS IN CHARISMA CONGREGATION**

*Rev JNJ Kritzinger has documented the developments in the Charisma congregation of the RCA in the following manner.*

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE CHARISMA CONGREGATION OF THE REFORMED CHURCH IN AFRICA

*From 1st December 1985 until 31st October 1986 I was on study leave from Unisa. The church council of the RCA Charisma agreed that I could go on leave from my "tent-making" ministry in the congregation from 1st January until 1st October 1986. The church council arranged that during my absence no ordained minister would be asked to assist the church council in the ministry. The church council members decided that they themselves would be responsible for all the duties of preaching, visiting, etc. It was only once a month that one of a panel of three ministers from the NGK family in Pretoria would come to preach and serve the Lord's Supper. The church council members were convinced that they would be able to manage, despite some reservations from the side of one or two of them (and myself). It was agreed that if any serious problems arose in the ministry, one of the three ministers asked to serve monthly Communion would be approached for assistance.*

*For the first five or six months things went on reasonably well in congregation, but then the problems began. The members began to feel a leadership "vacuum" developing and became more and more dissatisfied with the fact that there is no minister in the congregation. At this point the members who had always been opposed to the "tent-making" ministry started using the opportunity to convince other members that the real cause of the problem was the tent-making ministry. A few members drew up an urgent petition addressed to the synodical committee of the RCA to call in their help. They requested (a) funds so that the church council would be able to call a full-time minister, and (b) an interim minister who could spend some weeks in the congregation to help with the ministry.*

*The synodical committee visited the congregation for a consultation with the church council during July and literally "took over". They simply announced that I had lost my status as minister in 1983 and could not serve the sacraments or be on the church council until I applied to the synodical committee for restoration of status. This referred to a decision taken at the June 1986 Synod. The church council members who objected to this were simply elbowed aside and the chairman of the church council became a mini-dictator who simply forced Synod's wishes onto the congregation. The church council then took two far-reaching decisions: (a) to call a full-time minister (b) to receive 75% of the funds for this from the NGKerk (white).*

*When we returned to Pretoria at the end of September 1986 after our five months stay in Holland, we were therefore confronted with a very difficult situation: (a) the church council under pressure from the synodical committee had gone back on its agreement with me that I should serve the congregation as minister, which means that they accepted the fact that I had lost my status in 1983 when I resigned my legitimation in the NGKerk (white). My position in the congregation was therefore simply that of a member. (b) the council had already decided to call a full-time minister with financial assistance from the NGKerk. Their clear intention was to offer this ministry first to me, but if I did not accept it, they would call someone else.*

*The June RCA Synod gave me a month after my return from Holland to decide whether I would sign the oath of legitimation or not. My two colleagues (Charl le Roux and Gerrie Lubbe), who were in the same position, had decided not to sign within the month given to them, and their congregations fully supported them in this. My position was more complicated,*

*because of the division in the church council and in the congregation on this issue. The different views among the members could be characterised as follows: 1. "We object to receiving NGK money and are happy with the tent-making ministry; if members are being neglected, let us get another tent-maker to help us . 2. "We need a full-time minister and we want Klippies for that position: the source of his salary is not important to us". 3. "We must have a full-time minister and should take NGK money because they are offering it to us in good faith; since we know that Klippies will not work for NGK money, we shall have to call someone else". The latter group had planned the petition sent it to the Synodical Committee and their approach was therefore in fact a neatly veiled strategy to get rid of me as minister. Many of the people in group 2. also signed the petition, but with the intention of getting me to work full-time in the church, not to get rid of me.*

*When I realised this situation, I had to decide whether I would allow the small group 3. to have their way. I decided not to do so but to "fight back" for the sake of my ministry and for the sake of the majority of the members who genuinely were not trying to get rid of me. When the church council therefore asked me to preach on Sundays and lead the weekly Bible study, I agreed to do so in order to show that my sense of calling was as strong as ever and that I wanted to continue serving the congregation. I also visited most of the members to ascertain how they felt about the whole situation. In the process I realised that I would have to make certain compromises if I wanted to keep the majority of the members together and help the congregation to grow out of the problems of 1986. I studied the decision of Synod regarding my status and decided that I would sign the oath of legitimation provided they did not require of me to be called and inducted again. The first step of my approach was to see if I could*

*“normalise” my position as minister in the congregation for the sake of the legality of the baptisms and other official duties I had performed over the past three years. The second step would then be to discuss the future ministry in the congregation with the church council. I convinced the church council to write to the synodical committee, asking whether a calling and induction would be required of me after signing the oath of legitimation. I explained that if no call was required by Snod, that would imply that the letter of call given to me by the church council in 1979 was still valid and that therefore the irregularity of my present position did not amount to a total loss of status but merely to a technical abnormality which could be rectified by a signature on a piece of paper.*

*The synodical committee replied that no calling or induction was required, and I therefore flew down to Durban on 4 November to sign the oath of legitimation in the presence of the Synodical Committee. They conveyed to me their new direction as a Synod ("no longer one political debate after the other", "returning to the evangelical roots of the RCA", concentrating on evangelistic outreach' etc.) and expressed the hope that I would soon be a full-time minister of the RCA again. I told them that I had not yet discussed the future ministry in the congregation with the church council and could therefore not discuss it with them as Synodical Committee. I clearly asked them whether a commitment to become a full-time minister was a condition for signing the oath, and they replied in the negative. I signed the oath and was welcomed back into the RCA ministry by them. They did hold back the Deed of Ordination, however, until after the Extraordinary Synod meeting the following weekend (14-15 November). At that Synod, which I did not attend, new decisions were taken regarding my position, which made it impossible for me to stay on as a tent-making minister: they would*

*hand over the Deed of Ordination (the official confirmation of the restoration of my status, in their view) only with the clear assumption' that I would become a full-time minister, something for which they gave me six months time. A few church council and congregation members (all belonging to group 3. above) attended the Synod, but did not convey this decision to the church council when we met on 23 November to talk about the future ministry. I did not attend the Extraordinary Synod, since the RCA regulations stipulate that the personnel of a Special Synod must be the same as that of the previous normal Synod (in this case the synod of June 1986, which I did not attend). Had I gone to the Synod (as an observer, like the other members of the congregation), matters would have come to a head earlier. Since I did not it took another month.*

*While visiting the members, I was asked by some of them why I was not prepared to accept NGK money for my salary. I had to face this question squarely, also in the light of the decisions of the recent General Synod of the NGK, since the members who asked me this wanted me to work full-time in the congregation in order to avoid group three from getting a minister to their liking. I realised that it is still not possible for me to accept NGK money for my salary, since the practice of the NGK remains racist, despite the decisions of their General Synod. Especially the NGK congregations in Pretoria, from whom we would receive the subsidy, are still blatantly racist. For me the issue of not receiving NGK money is a matter of principle, and it will remain so until the NGK is clearly seen to be "dismantling apartheid" (in the words of Ottawa) and to be in actual fact a non-racial church. The other dimension of my choice has to do with Unisa, in a sense that has also become a "calling" to me ... teaching theology (via correspondence) to students of all churches around the country. I would prefer*

*not to choose between Unisa and the congregation, but since I have been forced to do so and since I am not willing to work for NGK money, the only option for me is to stay at Unisa and use it as my base from which to operate. Since I also have a deep sense of calling to serve the Charisma congregation, I tried to combine the two callings by offering to stay on as a tent-maker in the congregation. The possibility of becoming a full-time minister while being supported by money from alternative sources has also been effectively cut off by a decision of Synod that any such funding body must first be approved by Presbytery or Synod. The "clamp-down" on dissident voices in the RCA is therefore complete: either you are driven out of the ministry by these totally unacceptable conditions, or else you have to conform to the rules and regulations laid down.*

*My offer to stay on as a tent-making minister while the church council calls a full-time minister (with 75% NGK subsidy as decided already) was gladly accepted by the church council on 23 November, and we immediately fixed a date to call a new minister so that we could begin the new year with the new minister. At that meeting I was not yet aware of the fact that Synod would not allow me to stay on as a tent-maker. My offer was to take responsibility for some specific area of ministry as allocated to me by the church council, so that the new minister would establish himself as the "pastor loci". My main role would be to provide continuity until the he is inducted and then to render additional, specialised service to the congregation when he has arrived. It was a compromise for my conscience to take part in such a call with an NGK subsidy, but it seemed to me the only way in which I could help to keep the congregation together and build it up. It would have been the easiest thing to force a split in the congregation, but I decided that I would not take responsibility for such an action.*

*On 7 December we held a council meeting to call, and Rev Schalk Albertyn was elected. He worked previously in the RCA in Port Elizabeth and is now in synodical service of the NGKA Synod of Phororo (in Mafikeng). In the week that followed we heard that the Presbytery Committee had declared the call invalid on two technical grounds. Firstly, I could not chair a meeting in which someone else was called, since according to Synod I signed the oath in order to become a full-time minister myself. Secondly, the Special Synod in November had decided that whenever a church council nominates ministers not presently serving in the RCA, their names must be submitted to the Presbytery Committee for approval before the church council may vote on them. We had not been notified officially of this latter decision, since the Acta of the special Synod has still not been published, and therefore we didn't act on it.*

*On 13 December I was invited to meet the Synodical Committee to receive my Deed of Ordination. The Synodical Committee (consisting of five members) was in Benoni to have informal discussions on 14 December with the church council of RCA Transvaal regarding their future ties with Synod. After some two-hour discussions I left without my Deed, since they insisted that they could hand it to me only if I gave them the assurance that I would become a full-time minister (within six months). Since I had made another arrangement with the church council and in fact another minister had already been called, this was impossible for me. They explained that the Synodical decision meant "everything or nothing", ie. if I am not prepared to become a full-time minister, I may not be a minister at all.*

*When I explained this to the congregation on Sunday 14 December, they were all shocked and deeply disappointed (except group three but they didn't show their joy) that the Synod could*

*have acted in such a high-handed way. They found it impossible to understand that the Synod could simply trample on the wishes and decisions of a responsible church council which has the support of the vast majority of its members. It is not only un "reformed", it is blatantly unjust and oppressive. Precisely what action the members and church council will take now is not yet clear to me. Daily still new aspects unfold of the totalitarian church structure which is busy evolving in the RCA. The latest concerns the function of an interim minister. Firstly the Synodical decision of 1976 that any church council member may be elected chairman has been revoked; when a congregation is vacant, the interim minister must be there to chair the meeting, otherwise it is invalid. This is one aspect of the strong "minister's church" character of the new RCA which is emerging. Secondly, in the case of a vacant congregation which is not near enough to another RCA congregation for the interim minister to visit it regularly during the week, the interim minister must work full-time in that congregation until the new full-time minister has been inducted. The two other RCA congregations in Transvaal are not cooperating with Synod, which means that the closest congregation to Charisma is in Durban. The interim minister appointed for us is Rev Greg Denysschen, a young minister from Durban who worked in Charisma for a while as a student and caused a major split at that time due to his particular practice of exorcism. The fact that he has been appointed, clearly reveals that Synod cares less about the unity and upbuilding of the congregation, and more about getting rid of me and forcing narrow evangelical/charismatic theology onto the members. With him working in the congregation for a month or two (depending on how soon a new minister accepts a call), the congregation is once again thrown into confusion and uncertainty. It remains to be seen how the church council will handle this latest development, but it is clear that more rough days lie ahead.*

*As a family we remain members of the congregation to wait and see whether there is any way in which we can still fruitfully serve the people. Much will depend on who the new minister will be and on how the church council will act in the near future. Now that I have been stripped of my ministerial "power" and status", we as a family are beginning to learn in a new way what Christmas and Golgotha is all about: When you are weak, then you are strong."*(Klippies Kritzinger: 24/12/86)

From Rev. Kritzingers information it becomes evident that he really did not wish to leave his congregation. It also appears that the majority of his congregation supported his conviction and that they sincerely wanted him to be reinstated as their minister.

Furthermore he indicates that the SC visited his congregation for consultation with the church council and that they literally took over and thereafter announced that he lost his status and therefore could not serve the communion. It appears from the information that those council members who objected to this were elbowed aside and the chairman of the council became a mini dictator.

#### 7.2.4.1.1 **REV KRITZINGER - CALL TO FULL TIME POST**

The writer recognizes the dilemma Rev Klippies Kritzinger was placed when two far-reaching decisions were taken by the local church council. They decided to call a full time minister and to receive 75% of the funds for this post from the NGK.

From a letter dated 10 December 1986, RCA Presbytery of Natal there is indication that money was available from the NGK for the post of a full-time minister. Logic will dictate that Kritzinger standing by his principle of not receiving money from the NGK, will definitely not accept the post that was offered to him and this he was precluded from reinstating his status as a minister.

It may appear that this decision was a very tactical move. It may have been sensed that Rev Klippiess Kritzinger would not compromise his stand on NGK money for his salary, and therefore Synod instructed the Presbytery committee that in the event Rev Kritzinger is not willing to come into full time ministry, a full-time minister must be called as soon as possible (RCA Presbytery 10 December 1986). In his information dated 24:12:86 Kritzinger indicates that their clear intention was to offer him this ministry first, but if he did not accept it, they would call someone else.

#### 7.2.4.2 **RESPONSES TO SC REPORT: 18TH MARCH 1984 - LAUDIUM**

The writer will now consider responses to the 30th Synodical Committee meeting held on Sunday, 18th March 1984, at 14h30 in the church building of the congregation Charisma at Laudium, Pretoria. This meeting was chaired by Rev EJ Manikkam and much time was devoted to the loss of status of the three ministers.

According to Dr C du P Le Roux (SC Minutes: 18/03/84) their resignation from the NGK was done to remove double status and that it was also embarked upon in the spirit of Reformed

Church Law. He pointed to the committee that great care should be taken as to how this matter should be handled because the constitution of the SC would be affected.

Rev Kritzinger (SC Minutes 18/03/84) appealed to the Committee to act immediately rather than to refer it to the Synod. He conceded that it was in the hands of the SC.

Rev GJA Lubbe indicated that he had nothing to add to what has already been said.

Elders BS Dadoo and C Bhiman did not agree that CTAM should re-legitimize these brothers. Subsequently both BS Dadoo and C Bhiman walked out of the meeting. The SC was alarmed at this walkout and referred these brothers to their respective Presbyteries for appropriate action to be taken against them. It was recorded at this meeting that the three ministers have lost their status as ministers of the Divine Word in the RCA as from 15th June 1983.

#### 7.2.4.2.1 RCA Durban South Responses (Shalom)

In its response RCA Durban South indicated that not one of the bye-laws regarding the loss of status is applicable to the case of the three ministers in the Presbytery of Transvaal. They were also of the opinion that the interim task of the SC in its capacity a committee for "Law and Order" to regularize their position. RCA Durban South went as far as suspending their synodical levies until the matter was to be resolved. (Letter RCA Dbn. South 17:4:84). The Chairman of the Durban South church council at that time was Rev DP Bekker.

The following is the statement of a committee of the Presbytery of Transvaal to all congregations of the RCA dated 2nd April 1984.

**PREAMBLE**

We the Presbytery Committee of Transvaal wish to respond as follows to the recent move of the Syndical Committee of the Reformed Church in Africa at its meeting on the 18 March 1984 at Laudium, Pretoria to defrock three ministers Reverend JNJ Kritzing, C.J.A. Lubbe and Dr C du P le Roux who have served the congregations of this Presbytery for 9, 14 and 26 years respectively, because they undertook to forsake their status within the NGK and the privilege of being called back to an NGK congregation, which is an act of solidarity with their colleagues of the Reformed Church in Africa whose status is not recognised by the NGK and who cannot be called into any White congregation.

1. The Presbytery committee expresses its dismay at the irresponsible manner in which certain members of the highly responsible Synodical Committee of the Reformed Church in Africa proceeded over the question of the status of the three ministers concerned and the subsequent decision to defrock them. The refusal to concede to the request of our delegate for the immediate regularisation of their status is yet another incident that shows the position of stalemate between the Synodical

**Committee and the Presbytery.**

- 2. We consider the whole move to defrock the ministers of their status as an unreformed and unchristian act and as an insult to our Presbytery which was not legally recognised in this matter in being completely bypassed and immediately confronted with the de jure situation of being without a single minister. Consequently it is an insult to every congregation and every member within our Presbytery whose rights as the Church of Christ have been trampled upon.**
- 3. Noting that the Chairman of the Synodical Committee being also Actuary of the Reformed Church in Africa did not give any notice of the matter at an earlier meeting of the Synodical Committee at Actonville, Benoni on the 12 November 1983, we are convinced that the whole move to oust our ministers is politically inspired, motivated by the NGK's designs within the Black Churches and against the three ministers in particular and utterly racialistic on the part of the so-called "Indian" ministers within the Synodical Committee.**
- 4. We regret and question the right of the NGK in the person of its Actuary to offer an interpretation of the status of ministers within the Reformed Church in Africa. The said ministers are full members with the Reformed Church in Africa and have been duly inducted by the Reformed church in Africa into its ministry. Consequently the Presbytery Committee expresses its deepest disapproval of the action of the Chairman of the Synodical Committee in giving such unethical and**

**illegal interference unchecked admission as a matter of grave urgency and for him as Actuary in taking up the cause of the NGK to such drastic conclusions.**

**WE THEREFORE AS PRESBYTERY COMMITTEE TAKE THE FOLLOWING DECISIONS:**

- 1. We express our sincere thanks to the Elder-Delegates of the Presbytery of Transvaal and Pietermaritzburg for their act of solidarity with our ministers in the refusal to participate further in the deliberations of the Synodical Committee and their walk out.**
- 2. We distance ourselves from the decision to defrock the ministers of their status, seeing that this action does not constitute a case for discipline and reaffirm our confidence in these three ministers and recognise them as legally still full ministers within the Presbytery.**
- 3. We call on all Church councils within our Presbytery to pass a motion of confidence in their ministers and ignore the latest communication from the so called Acting Clerk of Synod.**
- 4. We resolve and request all our member congregations to:**
  - 4.1 remain within the church connection and cooperate at Presbytery level only.**

- 4.2 to desist from any further cooperation at Synodical Committee level.
  - 4.3 to cease payment of Synodical levies.
  - 4.4 to withdraw delegates on all Synodical commissions and the CTAM.
  - 4.5 to ignore all further communication from the Synodical Committee.
5. We further request all church councils within Presbytery to pass a vote of no confidence in the Synodical Committee and the way in which the Actuary has failed to perform his duties.
  6. We call all our sister-congregations in the Reformed Church in Africa who support the stand of this Presbytery of the Transvaal to forthwith declare themselves for or against these incidents.
  7. We shall stand by what we have resolved until the Synodical Committee repents of its conduct, apologise to each to our ministers.Church Council of Presbytery and right their wrongs done

This document was signed by Rev A Bhiman on behalf of the Presbytery Committee.

7.2.4.2.3

#### **RCA CALVARY RESPONSE**

The church council of RCA Calvary on the 29th April 1984 discussed in detail the decisions of

the SC regarding the loss of status of the three ministers. In their response they expressed their utter shock and complete dissatisfaction with the way in which this matter had been conducted by the SC.

The response indicates their outrage that the ministers who had lost their status, with being so dedicated to the life of the RCA with such long services could be treated in such a manner. The legality of the SC that took these decisions was also questioned (Letter RCA Calvary: 15/05/84). The chairman of the RCA Calvary church council at this point in time was Rev SW Albertyn.

#### 7.2.4.2.4 INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE

A letter to these churches who have been considered for their ecumenical ties was written in the personal capacities of the three "*defrocked*" ministers.

In a letter, they pointed out the events that led to their loss of status. They made mention that the SC which met on 18th March 1984, the chairman then, Rev EJ Manikkam tabled a legal advice which he obtained from Dr DCG Fourie of the NGK. In terms of this legal advice they mentioned that with several years of service in the RCA they were no longer officially regarded as ministers.

An extract from their letter dated 26th March 1984 reads as follows:

*" Since the SC taken far reaching decisions in 1982, among others to endorse the decisions of the WARC in Ottawa and to suspend talks with the NGK, deliberate*

*attempts have been made to gain a majority in the SC which will be sympathetic to the NGK. These attempts include unconstitutional exclusion of a lawful delegate, the constitution of a meeting of SC without the necessary quorum and even intimidation of members of the SC by security police. At this point it also needs to be pointed out the Rev K Moodley a member of the SC and one of the two delegates of the RCA to the Ottawa meeting both of whom had actively supported all the resolutions had offered an apology on his stand and behaviour in Ottawa, to the NGK at the end of 1983 ...*

*Another factor which we regard as important and relevant is the fact that all three of us have, with the approval and support of our congregations declined financial support from the NGK and have taken up so-called "tent-making" ministeries thus providing for our own sustenance while we are still serving our respective congregations. Although this option is in full accordance with the constitution of the RCA, some of our colleagues have been experiencing it as embarrassing to themselves in the sense that they found themselves under pressure. The NGK views the steps we have taken with total disapproval".*

The contents of the above information are the responsibility of the three ministers who lost their status.

#### **7.2.4.3 INTERNATIONAL REACTIONS: LOSS OF STATUS**

Developments within the RCA have brought out reactions from beyond South Africa. Messages

and calls of support, sympathy and solidarity have come from various quarters.

7.2.4.3.1 REFORMED ALLIANCE OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY

According to correspondence dated 21st June 1984 to the RCA Synod from the Moderamen of the Reformed Alliance of the Federal Republic of Germany the following extracts indicates their response to the loss of status of the three ministers:

*"As the SC you came to the conclusion after the three ministers had in May 1983 renounced their status as ministers of the NGK from which they came. Their reason was that there is no mutual recognition of ministers between the NGK and the RCA, of which they have been ministers for several years. You base your decision on the formal church law of the NGK and it's interpretation by the Actuary of the General Synod of the NGK.*

*Up until now the resolutions of your Synod have pointed in a quite different direction. As early as 1980 the Synod of the RCA resolved to seek union with the NGSK without calling on the mediation of the NGK. In 1982 as the SC you endorsed the resolution on Apartheid passed by the Ottawa General Assembly of the WARC, which included the suspension of further negotiations and talks with the NGK.*

*Your latest decision to depose the three brothers from the ministry, thus constitutes a*

*juridical breach with previous resolutions of our church as well as a spiritual change of course which is in clear contradiction to the preceding development in the RCA and NGK*

*(Reformierter Bund: June 21:1984)*

*Signed by Pastor Joachim Guhrt - General Secretary.*

7.2.4.3.2

#### **NETHERLANDS REFORMED CHURCH: (NRC)**

According to their first correspondence dated 17:04:84 to Rev EJ Manikkam, the moderator of the NRC indicates that the matter of the loss of status of the three ministers has caused much rumour and many questions and thus he pleads for more information which may clear up the situation.

(Ref Appendix A)

There is an impression created that the above letter was not replied to. Therefore, the NRC dispatched a second letter dated 30:07:84 to Rev EJ Manikkam. The letter indicates that no reply was received from the letter dated 17:04:84 and they again made a plea for more information.

(Ref Appendix B)

#### **7.2.4.4 LOCAL REACTIONS: LOSS OF STATUS**

##### **7.2.4.4.1 ECUNNEWS RESPONSE**

According to Ecunews Vol. 3.1984 it was stated that trouble is brewing in the RCA after the

defrocking of three well-known White ministers of the church, Rev JNJ Kritzinger; Rev GJA Lubbe and Rev. Dr C du Le Roux. It is further stated that they undertook to forsake their status within the NGK and their privilege of being called back to the white NGK congregations "**which is an act of solidarity with their colleagues of the RCA, whose status is not recognized by the NGK and who cannot be called into any white congregation**". Ecunews also mention that the three ministers were members of the outspoken Belydende Kring (BK) It also mentions that the whole move to oust the ministers was politically motivated and also that the so called "Indian" ministers within the SC were utterly racialistic (Ecunews v.3: 1984)

#### 7.2.4.4.2 **ABRECSA RESPONSE**

All the key players in the Transvaal viz., S Govender, A Bhiman, G Lubbe, C le Roux and K Kritzinger belong to ABRECSA. The role of ABRECSA should not be underestimated because it also set the whole scene for the Ottawa Assembly since the expression "apartheid is a heresy" was first used in October 1981 at a conference in Hammanskraal, which was held in preparation for Ottawa. It was the well prepared theological initiative of this small group of theologians which took Ottawa by storm and led to Allan Boesak's election as the WARC president.

The minutes of ABRECSA's board meeting dated 23rd March 1984 cited the following issues which were considered irregular

**\* the lateness of the decision of the RCA SC (March 1984 against June 1983)**

- \* **the unquestioning acceptance by the RCA of the NGK's interpretation regarding their status in the RCA.**
- \* **the fact that the CTAM is made up of three RCA ministers and three NGK ministers**
- \* **the decision to enquire into the BK, proposed by Rev Manikkam of the RCA.**

ABRECSA's viewpoint was that, these were mere logical applications of ecclesiastical legalities. Furthermore the minutes disclose that it is clearly part of the whole struggle which is becoming more and more evident within the church scene in SA and that this is a struggle between those on the one hand who wishes to obey the demands of the Gospel and be faithful to their confession of Christ as true and only Lord, and those on the other hand who **manipulate the church and its institutional structures to support the status quo and prevent change within the church.**

(ABRECSA BOARD MINUTES 23:03:84)

The Abreca's Executive Committee response at their meeting on the 23rd March 1984 is as follows:

*"While not being fully conversant with the basis of the relationship between the RCA and the NGK in terms of ecclesiastical law, it would nonetheless appear to us that the SC's decision to strip you of your status not only goes against its own decision to endorse the Ottawa Resolutions on Racism and to suspend talks with the NGK, but also seem to deny the organizational autonomy of the RCA vis a vis the NGK. We are*

*further aware that this is an attempt by those who are in power in the NGK to counteract and contain your influence in the RCA, which so clearly flows from the courageous witness that you are giving, the stand you have taken regarding your relationship to the NGK and the price you have paid for that.*

*(Abreca Board Minutes: 23rd March 1984)*

#### 7.2.4.4.3 **BELYDENDEKRING (BK) STATEMENT**

According to the BK bulletin (15th April 1984 Vol. 12 No 4) it is mentioned that in the RCA White radicals, Lubbe, LeRoux and Kritzinger who have dared to identify more closely with the course of Blacks have been robbed of their status by *Indians* such as Manikkam and Moodley who have become the open managers of church apartheid... Those in the leadership of the NGK daughter churches are mostly conservative who consider ties (mostly personal and financial) with the White NGK more important than the unity of Reformed Christians in South Africa.

The BK further comments that this development is the clearest indication yet of the battles raging within the NGK family of churches. They state that the conservative leadership with the help of the White NGK has effectively began to consolidate it's power, to cast out those they consider radicals and even to split the churches.

Amongst the reactions the BK notes the following international reactions:

**\* Bremerhaven - West Germany (Helga and Burkhart)**

\* Algemeen Diaconaal Bureau, Reformed Churches Holland (GKN) (Bavinck)

\* WARC (Edmond Perret) Gen. Sec.

\* Study and Dialogue Group on South Africa of the EKD, AQG and CNFL

Germany - (Rudolf Hinz)

Netherlands - (Guus Hoelen)

Switzerland - (Martin Girsberger)

(BK Bulletin 1984:2)

#### 7.2.4.4.4 RCA DURBAN SOUTH - (SHALOM) RESPONSE

On 10:6:1984 the church council of Durban South issued a memorandum to NGK G.R.S.K. Following are extracts from the memorandum in reaction to the loss of status of the three ministers:

*"Three congregations of our church in the Transvaal and their ministers took a bold stand against the whole system, also as it reveals itself within our family of NK Kerke.*

*On the 18th March 1984 a meeting of the SC of the RCA was called up ... ministers have lost their status as ministers of the Divine Word of God in the RCA, and that because of a debatable technical point. We have reason however to believe that this move was premeditated in order to silence their voice effectively at the meeting of the SC. Our church council pointed out the absurdity and irregularities in the actions of the SC members responsible for the decision ... We believe that the crisis existing in the*

*RCA is to a large extent the result of the NGKerk's involvement in the affairs of the RCA. Perhaps unknown to you, but perpetrated and sanctioned in your name by the leadership of the NGK.*

*(Acta E/O: 1986 : 49)*

The memorandum also indicated that the NGK leadership in the person of the Actuary, Dr DCG Fourie was part of the whole development. It stated that the RCA only took action after Dr Fourie had furnished them with the technical advice (letter Dr. DCG Fourie, 6:12:83, addressed to Ds EJ Manikkam.

(Acta E/O 1986:49)

From the above reactions it is evident that the loss of status of the three ministers did indeed received wide international coverage and response and as well as local responses. Nearly all these responses were to stand in solidarity with the three ministers. According to the researcher very little has been written to support the action taken against these ministers, excepting what is recorded in the RCA's Actas and committee meetings. The writer has however held interviews with several of those who occupy leadership positions in the RCA including members of the RCA congregations and academics. The following are some responses:

7.2.4.4.5 RCA LEADERSHIP RESPONSES

Prop. Victor Pillay

*In deep apartheid times our church took on a very strong political agenda. I would not want to criticise this outright. Some churches became so politicised that the Christian Gospel was sidelined and some churches lost most of their members. Splits occurred in different ways. Congregations did not want to receive NGK money. Tensions were caused. Others felt that they should give their status away from the apartheid church. It was a noble view to be respected. This was a painful experience for the church"*

*(Interview 23:05:95)*

Rev Surajlall Sukdaven

*"It was a sad affair because they made a good input and they did so much. Although the church did offer reconciliation, but the RCA was not very lenient with them. They should not be hammered out"*

*(Interview 21:02:95)*

Rev K Moodley

*"The problem was the NGK people were heretics and we won't relate to heretics any more and now we must break ties with the NGK. There was one strong movement. As*

*a result of this three ministers lost their status in the RCA and they were really good brothers and I loved them."*

*(25th RCA Anniversary Spec. Cape Town: 1994)*

When considering Rev Klippies Kritzinger's response and explanation, it appears that he also speaks for the other two ministers who lost their status.

*Rev. J.N.I Kritzinger - (Klippies):*

*"It became clearer and clearer to me that as the 80's hotted up that it was not enough to have a reconciliatory attitude. You also have to act to oppose what is evil and it was out of that opposition of the evil of the Tricameral Parliament which was going to entrench apartheid and made coloureds and Indians part of the system and also the target of the Black community. It is going to be desperately bad for the Indian community apart from what it was doing for the Black majority. And it was after the resistance against the Tricameral System that the split in the RCA started, that was then the root cause of it. Manikkam wanted to go to Parliament and we knew that. He often indicated to it in a number of ways that he was heading for parliament. What always amazed us was that the Durban ministers never seem to notice, that Moodley was surprised when Manikkam stood for parliament and they had to remove him also from the ministry of the church.*

*Manikkam perceived us as a threat in the Transvaal as to his political ambitions and*

*that is why he played the trump card to get rid of us.*

*We submitted a pastoral letter of the Presbytery to the SC for approval so that the RCA as a whole will make such a statement to its members and Manikkam could not allow that to happen because it will jeopardise his chances of election. He had to get rid of us. We had resigned our status in the DRC in 1984 already and notified him accordingly and nine months later he had not say a word about it and suddenly he pulled the plug on us and said, well if you resigned your status in the DRC then you also have no status in the RCA because it was on that basis of the licencing of the mother church that you were called and inducted into this church. We said in our letter to the DRC and to Manikkam that we resigned our status with the DRC and that there will no longer be any misunderstanding as to where we belong. We are not missionaries of the DRC in the RCA. We are ministers in the RCA. We do this to identify with the church itself. We could no longer tolerate the fact that we were members of the white pension fund of the white church whereas none of our Indian colleagues were members of the pension fund. We were on the medical fund of the white church and there was no medical fund for our colleagues. We were being hammered by Rev Moodley and Manikkam on this and we said to them "You are right, but what do we do"? The only way out of this was to say "cheers" we burn our bridges with the white church and Charl Le Roux sacrificed thousands of rands in pension and me much less. He threw his pension away in order to do that. We did it to say that there is no way you can work truthfully in a church when some are on a white scale and others are on an Indian scale. So we said in our letter we do this so that it will be*

*clear that we enjoy our status thoroughly in the RCA. This is an act of identification with the church. For that we got chopped. Another was that Manikkam was not going to let the SC to make a statement against the Tricameral System. This was the other reason that he had to get rid of us.*

*So we have just been booted out and refused to go through the procedure they set before us. They wanted us to go to the CTAM, do a colloquium doctum and then be declared available and be called via a congregation. And that is a ridiculous proposal, quite frankly for people who have been in the church for 24 years, 17 years and nine years to suggest that a person must go for an examination of doctrine. We were not chopped because of running around with other people's wives or talking heresy or something. We lost our status on a technicality for identifying with the church. Manikkam wanted to get rid of us. Kisten did not understand Manikkam's motivation, nor did Sukdaven.*

*So the root causes of the split I think were the crises in the Indian Community at large in 1983/4/5 with the Tricameral election. It split not only the church. It split the community. It caused tremendous strains and it could not leave the church unaffected, not if there were contextual theologians in the church who was sensitive to what was happening and could not just keep on preaching the Gospel of salvation without taking a stand on this issue".*

*(Interview: 20/02/95)*

Dr c du Le Roux (Charl)

*"I always found it regretful. No one can be proud of this. It was a sad period. It seemed to be unavoidable".*

*(Interview 20:02:95)*

Rev N Shunmugam

*"Any split is disadvantageous because of breaking up the church. I think it was much more than saying that they wanted to identify with the RCA because in any case they were part of the church. They had only one document to say they were licensed. They took Ottawa's decision to it's logical conclusion, in other words to them they understood heresy to be classical heresy and what they do with the heretic, you cut a heretic, you have nothing to do with a heretic, this is why they implemented it immediately. So how can you sit with a legitimation or a licence from the White DRC, that means you are sitting with a heretical document.*

*Fourie is the law person of the church. He is working from the constitution or the church order. Now when they asked for the legitimation they took their legitimation out of the DRC. In other words they were sitting in our church without any licence. Now you can understand the predicament that we were put in. In other words a*

*minister if he has got a licence, he is governed with his preaching according to what the doctrine of the church is.*

*Fourie had their letter. He had to reply. He gave it because he had to reply to their legitimation. So our church had to receive the letter. So therefore in our SC which is the committee that works in the interim, that SC did approach these brothers, you are not holding a legitimation now in the DRC. Now you must regularize your position and the SC gave them their opportunity".*

*(Interview 13/04/95)*

*Rev Gerrie Lubbe*

*"Let me begin by saying realistically that there will always be two interpretations. The other side will insist on them being right. Maybe we are beating a dead horse by finding out what the truth really was. It all started around the legitimation of Alex Bhiman. He was called to the Transvaal congregation. There were irregularities as far as the SC is concerned. From here a lot of things took place. We gave up our status. The first SC meeting after Ottawa I recall that there was a report from Charl Le Roux and at first Rev Moodley did not want to associate with the report although he was there. In the end he signed. He also apologised to the DRC for the Ottawa declaration. It appeared in the Afrikaans paper that he publicly apologised. This then appeared from where he was pressured ... After that first meeting you could see the real division".*

*(Interview: 23:02:95)*

**Evang. Benette Shunmugam**

*"We had one group who felt very strong about the situation in the country and felt that the church should take a strong stand in that direction and to reject the NGK completely and break ties and whatever, but then the other group who felt its like chasing your mother out even though you don't agree with your mother, disregard her or disown her. That was the kind of conflict, but I think both parties felt strongly about their views so much so that they could not really work together. That is what caused the eventual split.*

The agenda is evident in the fact that they withdrew the act of legitimation of those three ministers. It would be interesting to know who consulted Dr Fourie. No independent church consults another church. The fact that they were consulted indicate the fact that there was already at that stage hidden agendas.

**Rev Greg Denysschen**

*"It was necessary I feel that there was an unbearable tension in the church with two fields being polarised and this was having a detrimental effect on the life of the RCA. It is also proved by the fact that when separation did take place, the RCA was released of a great burden and had gone forward.*

*I myself was present when I heard some of these men speaking and heard their motivations and so on, and it seemed to me to be a real desire for order, for the life of*

*the church to be maintained etc. I don't think there was a power struggle or personal gain. I think it would be unfair because all the reasonings and the arguments at that time were for the sake of the salvation of the church.*

*(Interview: 5:06:95)*

The writer would now include the views of Prof PJ Maartens who is presently the head of the department of Biblical literature of the Faculty of Theology at UDW. He was involved from 1961 as a student-lay preacher on the East Rand especially in an area called Kalamazoo which Paul Kruger had given to the Indians. This area was proclaimed a slum area. Because this area was not to be developed, the Indians eventually in 1967 moved to Benoni and Actionville. Prof PJ Maartens relates more to the Transvaal experience because he had his roots there and he was instrumental in witnessing to the youth and also the upliftment of the community as a whole in which he served together with the other Transvaal ministers. He eventually pursued an academic career and made his contribution to the RCA through his faculty in the training of students for the ministry. The various Synods showed their sincere appreciation for his contribution in the training and guidance of the RCA ministers. The following are Prof PJ Maartens views on the loss of status of ministers:

*"However in all fairness to Transvaal the very same argument may be reversed and surely the Transvaal congregation will do that in defence and so that the broader church let them down. Their ministers committed themselves to a process to which they would free their congregations from all obligations to a system which was placed upon on them and making demands upon them through committees with which they could*

*not live and having taken the boldstep all they asked was support. In return their legitimation was withdrawn when their acts of legitimation were returned to the NGK which was proper one cannot hold on to a dual membership of a church. In church order that was the proper way to go about it. It was a logical step subsequently following them becoming members of the RCA ... The intervention of Fourie and his interpretation was not correct at all. What was the true meaning of that decision was the fact that those three ministers were White and ministers in the RCA that were Indian were not subjected to any such agreements whatever that agreement implied. I don't know how an agreement with the NGK which is a separate Synod could impose upon them as an institutionalised church the acts of legitimation. It is therefore between the NGK proper and those three ministers. It was not a matter that any had implications for the RCA, because they were members of the RCA. I must be bold to say it is contingent upon the fact that they were White. For what other reason could their legitimation be contingent on the legitimation act of the NGK proper. It is only that they were White which goes to show that, that particular decision was viewed in terms of the ideology of the church at a particular stage. It may have been consistent with the ideology of the church at that stage ... It was a contract among the three ministers which was consummated with the RCA. It was then complete and fulfilled. The channel through which they came no longer of any relevance because they were members of the RCA at that particular stage.*

*A colloquium doctum can only be imposed upon a person if such a person had a loss of status due to any commitment of any particular sin or is being excommunicated for*

*some reason or the other suspended. Even in the cases of suspension they are not subject to a colloquium doctum. Colloquium doctum is significant of the fact that the church thought that they were off course. I would say that colloquium doctum was out of step, out of bounds, had no grounds within Reformed Church Order because these ministers and further that their withdrawal of their act of legitimation as well as their loss of status has no grounds in the Reformed Church Law. Not a single clause that one will be able to produce to support the NGK for their actions. They thought at that stage to have seen it as the logical consequence of their own act of instituting and totally a self dependent RCA.*

*The agenda is evident in the fact that they withdrew the act of legitimation of those three ministers. It would be interesting to know who consulted Dr Fourie. No independent church consults another church. The fact that they were consulted indicate the fact that there was already at that stage hidden agendas. The church was misled at that particular stage. It points rather to an inadequacy of misunderstanding within the church itself of its independent status at that time as a Synod with the responsibility of a commission of order and law that had the right of legitimation or ordination or withdrawal as such. So they had total jurisdiction as far as that was concerned. There was no need to consult. There was contact because membership of one church cannot be contingent on membership of another church. Thus whoever consulted had still the notion that this membership was contingent on the membership of another church. That shows that operative in the consultation of that intervention was the very same ideological sort of perspective that the NGK proper had. So it indicated complete acceptance of the ideology and consequently the tensions between*

*those ministers have been established with the newly established RCA. What actually happened in this process is clearly evident from the negotiations at that point. The ideology of the NG was rubbed off in the process and was to some extent influential in the desire of some ministers to excommunicate or suspend the ministers from the Transvaal. But there was no sin. There was no basis for the loss of status and hence the question of the WARC as to enquire the reasons for the loss of status of these ministers.*

*(Interview 19:10:95 No 93)*

Besides the three ministers who lost their status the following ministers also lost their status:

Rev EJ Manikkam

Rev S Govender

Rev DP Bekker

Rev Sookalingam

#### **7.2.4.5 Rev EJ Manikkam**

Rev EJ Manikkam is referred by the Sunday Times 2nd September 1984 as South Africa's first Indian dominee. He was the chairman of the SC in 1984. It is recorded that he placed himself as a candidate in an election campaign and subsequently was inducted as a member of Parliament. The SC that met on 22/09/84 at Port Elizabeth decided that Rev EJ Manikkam has lost his status from 01:08:1984. (Agenda E/O 1984:58). It was also noted at this meeting that according to

church order By-Laws and Regulations and Rules of Procedure of the RCA, the loss of status in this case was automatic. It was the onus of the one who sought a political office to sever his ties from his ecclesiastical office.

(Agenda E/O 1984:58)

Rev K Moodley the Acting clerk of the SC at that time corresponded with Rev EJ Manikkam to ascertain whether he had really committed himself as a candidate of the Solidarity Party running for elections in the constituency of Rylands, Cape Province. (Agenda E/O 1984:59) The correspondence was dated 2nd August 1984.

On the 7th August 1984 Rev. EJ Manikkam replied that although he was a candidate for the forthcoming elections, he did not place himself at the disposal of a political party in a nomination or election campaign and therefore Point 1.13.3 of the Bye Laws and Regulations were not relevant for the loss of his status (Agenda E/O 1984:60).

The Acting Clerk circulated this information via correspondence to the other members of the SC for their decision. Rev S Sukdaven in a letter dated 20th August 1984 indicated his disapproval in the manner that this matter was being handled through correspondence and also that he did not agree with Rev Moodley on the interpretation of the Bye Laws and Regulations 1.13.3.

(Agenda E/O 1984:62)

The Presbytery of Pietermaritzburg indicated that they were unanimous on the issue of Rev E.J. Manikkam's status that in the event Rev EJ Manikkam stands for election of a political party he

has regretfully lost his status according to Bye Law 1.13.3 of the RCA (Agenda E/O: 1984 :68)

Rev EJ Manikkam made the following remarks according to the Sunday Times.

*I regard the option as normal church policy and I subscribe to it. However it was a painful decision to have to relinquish my licence as an ordained minister, but then again I believe its Gods will that I serve his total constituency in this country, those of all colours, religions and faiths as MP in the House of Delegates".*

*(Sunday Times: 2nd Sept. 1984)*

Synod of 1986 thus confirmed the loss of status of Rev EJ Manikkam as from 1st August 1984. Synod also decided to request the NGK (Western Cape) to take possession of the church properties registered in its name and make it available to the continuing congregation and also in the event of Mr EJ Manikkam not being willing to evacuate the manse, Synod urgently requested the NGK to take the necessary steps to have an order of eviction served on him.

(Actas 1986:17)

#### 7.2.4.6 Rev S Govender (Shun)

It is reported that Rev S Govender sent a short letter to the SC wherein he informed the committee that he withdraws his request of status. It was on the account of this letter and act 6.7 of the Regulations that the committee decided that he lost his status.

(Agenda E/O 1984:75)

#### 7.2.4.7 Rev DP Bekker

The Synod of 1986 records the following:

*"Synod confirms the views of the Presbytery of Pietermaritzburg with regards to the ministry of Rev DP Bekker and decides in the view that fact that Rev Bekker has taken up a new occupation despite the objections of Presbytery, he has lost his status as minister in the RCA.*

*(Acta 1986:17)*

The Presbytery of Pietermaritzburg pointed out to Rev Bekker that if the church council accepted him as a tentmaker, they will regard it as untenable and unacceptable. They further pointed out to him that the Presbytery would not be in a position to exercise strict control and the congregation would suffer on account of the vast distance between his domicilium and the congregation (Acta E/O: 1986:43) The 1986 Extra Ordinary(E/O) Synod was informed in a statement to them by RCA Durban South that Rev DP Bekker had his membership transferred to the NGK Empangeni. Rev Bekker is presently a lecturer in Old Testament Studies at the University of Zululand.

#### 7.2.4.8 Rev G Sooklingam (Redji Moodley)

The 1984 Agenda of the RCA records that the CTAM took note of a letter received from the Clerk of the Transvaal Presbytery of the RCA advising that Rev G Sooklingam resigned as

minister of the RCA and therefore has lost his status as minister. (Agenda E/O 1984:75)

#### 7.2.5 CTAM : THEOLOGICAL STUDENTS

A crisis developed within the RCA when theological students trained under the supervision of the CTAM did not appear and recognize the legitimacy of the CTAM. The writer will now consider the alleged controversy that surrounded the composition of the CTAM.

In 1980 the RCA Synod adopted the following resolution which later became an issue for contention. This is also referred to as "Provision 3.4.3"

*"Synod decided that the NGK should be informed by the Synodical Committee that if the NGK persists in refusing to recognize the licensing of the ministers of the RCA, the RCA will no longer recognize the licensing of the NGK ministers. Any minister called from the NGK will then have to be licensed by the appropriate committee of the RCA. It should be pointed out to the NGK that since it is jointly responsible for the training of RCA ministers it ought to recognize its licensing"*

*(Acta 1980:15)*

At its meeting on the 5th and 6th November 1982 the SC of the RCA decided that the above resolution should now come into effect. Synod already in October 1980 had decided to inform the NGK on their position of recognizing the licensing of RCA ministers (Acta 1980:52). The writer wishes to point out that the Ministers who lost their status spearheaded this struggle for

recognition whilst they were ministers of the RCA.

It was within this context that GA Lubbe pointed out the fact that ministers of the NGK, whose legitimations are no longer recognized by the RCA are serving on the CTAM and therefore are now making the composition of the CTAM highly irregular. He further added that all actions taken by this committee in future should also be declared ultra vires. This correspondence was dated 29/11/82 (Acta E/O 1984:15).

Rev EJ Manikkam however took a different view to the correspondence of GJA Lubbe dated 29/11/82. In Rev EJ Manikkam's opinion, it was evidently totally untenable that the NGK ministers on the CTAM have been "defrocked" by a Synodical decision of the RCA. He further pointed out that these men were ministers of the NGK by virtue of their legitimation and recognition by the NGK and they may serve as proper representatives of the NGK on the CTAM in terms of the regulations. Therefore he concluded that the composition of the CTAM cannot be regarded as irregular on those grounds. He also contends that to state the question of "**licensed ministers**" does not arise to the validity of the composition of the CTAM and therefore the CTAM as presently constituted is in accordance with the Synodical decision of 1980. (Acta E/O 1984:12).

Subsequently Synod sent a letter of apology to Alec Bhiman stating that "**the decision of the SC, 6th November 1982 regarding the composition of the CTAM as highly irregular**" was incorrect. Furthermore Synod apologised for any suffering and inconvenience that may have been

caused by the incorrect decision (Acta 1986:104).

Due to the interpretation that the composition of CTAM was irregular, theological students viz, Alec Bhiman, Charles Nair, Randy Thaver, G Perumal Govender, as an act of protest refused to appear before the CTAM for licensing.

According to Rev K Moodley (Interview: 29:06:95) the CTAM was instituted by the RCA and because the RCA did not have professors they thus had to include men from the NGK. According to him you could have had anybody on the CTAM as long as the committee is the committee of the RCA and you can co-opt anybody on this committee because of their expertise.

Dr S Nadesen (Sagie) then practising law was consulted and requested to express an opinion on the validity of the correspondence dated 13th May 1983 emanating from EJ Manikkam in his capacity as Actuary of the Synod of the RCA. Dr S Nadesen made the following observations from the said letter:

1. On or about the 5th November 1982 and the 6th November 1982 the SC involved the provisions of point 3.4.3 of the 1980 Acta of the Synod of the RCA.
2. The SC at the said meeting in interpreting and applying the aforesaid provision determined that the CTAM was no longer validly constituted as the licensing of some members of the said committee was no longer recognized.
3. The Actuary is of the view that the provision of 3.3.4 has no bearing to and does

not in any way affect the CTAM. In this regard, the following arguments are advanced to support the Actuary's contention:

- a) The CTAM is directly responsible to Synod and as such, falls under the jurisdiction of Synod.
- b) The CTAM is governed by the regulations pertaining to the said committee and the said regulations are entrenched provisions.
- c) The Regulations pertaining to the composition of the CTAM does not specifically provide that "licensed ministers" serve on the CTAM, but rather to "members" or "representatives". In this regard the arguments that the qualifications for the eligibility of elders and deacons would also apply to the election of "members" or "representatives" to the CTAM.

4. The SC by its decision has **defrocked** the Ministers on the CTAM, which ministers however, obtains their status from the fact they, the said Ministers have been legitimated and recognized by the NGK.

(Opinion: June 1983: 1-2)

Dr S Nadesan who is the author of the document referred to as "Opinion", in his view has stated that it is a decision that can only be altered, amended or rescinded by a competent body, which

in this case would be a further meeting of the SC, or obviously a full sitting of Synod.

Dr S Nadesan was of the opinion that by invoking the provisions of 3.4.3 the following has been observed:

**"The licensing of the Ministers of the NGK was no longer recognized which in effect means that their status has been effected. Ipso facto, it follows that the ministers representing the ASSK were no longer competent to be members of the CTAM - Because in my opinion the non recognition of their status includes not only their titles as Ministers of the Word, but also whatever capacity and qualification they possess by virtue by their status"**

(Opinion: June 1983:9)

Therefore Dr S Nadesan's opinion remains that the SC correctly concluded that CTAM was no longer validly constituted in terms of its interpretation of the provisions of 3.4.3. Furthermore he contends that the conclusion was inescapable that it was the decision of Synod and not the SC to "defrock" the said ministers and that the SC merely executed a decision of Synod which was clear, unambiguous and free from any doubt.

(Opinion 1983:11)

The 1986 Synod accepted the advice expressed on 13th May 1983 by the previous Actuary Rev E.J. Manikkam as stipulated in his letter to the clerk of the SC at their meeting on the 5th and 6th November (Acta 1986:14).

It was within this context of the debate that ensued from provision 3.4.3 that theological students staged their protest.

A further difficulty that confronted the RCA was the legitimation of Alec Bhiman by the NGSK. This really stunned the leadership of the RCA.

In a letter dated 24:11:82 Alec Bhiman gave notice that he would not be attending the meeting of the CTAM on 1st Dec. 1982. The following is an extract from this letter.

*"I have noted with regret the "shelving" response of the NGK Synod 1982 to request of the RCA Synod 1980 for the recognition of the legitimation of it's Black Ministers.*

*I find it inconsistent with my convictions to accept legitimation by a committee consisting of members from the NGK subscribe to the policy of not recognizing the legitimation of Black Ministers.*

*(Acta E/O 1984:21)*

In a letter dated 3rd December 1982 from the clerk of the CTAM, Rev IJ Haasbrook indicates that from press reports and from members of the Training and admissions for Ministry that theological student A Bhiman in training under the supervision of the CTAM, was legitimated by the Examinations Committee of the NGSK. The clerk expressed that this was an irregular way of legitimation and mentioned that this will cause bad relationship between the churches. The church has requested to know on what basis this legitimation was done.

*(Acta E/O 1984:24)*

The following reasons were forwarded by the Actuary of the RCA, Rev EJ Manikkam for not recognizing the legitimation of A Bhiman:

- "1. A Bhiman was a student of the RCA.**
  
- 2. The theological training of A Bhiman was under the supervision of the CTAM of the RCA. This committee is also responsible for legitimation of theological students.**
  
- 3. A Bhiman declined to appear before the meeting of CTAM on 1:12:82.**
  
- 4. A Bhiman of his own accord and acting unilaterally, approached the NGSK for legitimation. It is regrettable that A Bhiman did not officially inform CTAM of the RCA of his intention. To the best of my knowledge no committee or institution of the RCA was officially informed of his intention. This unilateral action of A Bhiman displays on attitude of insubordination and in itself is highly unethical and indicates a total disregard for the RCA.**
  
- 5. It seems strange that NGSK did not consult with the RCA regarding A Bhiman's request.**
  
- 6. All relevant details regarding candidate A Bhiman could have been requested from the RCA, but this did not happen.**

7. **The action of the Examination Committee of the NGSK was therefore highly irregular and unethical and therefore also not conducive for good ecumenical relations between the two churches.**

The Actuary ended his letter advising the RCA congregations that A Bhiman may not be called as a minister of the Word in the RCA until the RCA requirements are met.

(Acta E/O 1984:18-19)

Although the CTAM received regularly favourable reports regarding A Bhiman's academic progress, Christian conduct and practical work from the University and the church council concerned, he did not appear before the CTAM for licensing.

In a letter dated 25th Feb. 1988 to the church Council RCA Charisma, Kritzinger mentions that the RCA take their own rules seriously only when it suits them to do so. The fact that they ignore their own rules is serious enough in itself. He further mentions this same set of rules was used to deny Br. A Bhiman the right to exercise his ministry in the RCA, since he was licensed by the NGSK (under very special circumstances). The argument put forward that he was licensed by a church of which he was not a member, something which was unacceptable. According to Kritzinger now the RCA itself licensed a person who was not one of its member and finds it perfectly acceptable. Special circumstances taken into account for other ministers were not considered for the four ministers. According to Rev N Shunmugam (Interview 13:04:95) proper

procedures were followed in legitimating the minister that Kritzinger writes about.

#### 7.2.5.1 CHARLES NAIR

Candidate Charles Nair also completed his B Theol and he did not recognize the composition of the CTAM as legitimate and therefore did not appear before them. He was the first student to be called and ordained as a minister of the break away congregation from the RCA which is known as the "Confessing Community Church". Soon after this he was awarded a scholarship to further his studies at the University of Chicago in America. Whilst studying towards his doctorate he suddenly was made aware that he had terminal cancer and was advised to come back to South Africa to spend time with his family as he was given only six months to live. It was after a year later that he died. Charles Nair was a brilliant theological student who would have had much going for him had he lived. At the time of his death he continued his leadership role in the Confessing Community Church.

#### 7.2.5.2 SM THAVER (RANDY)

He requested permission from the CTAM to be legitimated and this matter was referred to the Presbytery PMBurg. A letter dated 29th October 1985 reveals that Thaver did not accept the invitation to the meeting. It was reported that CTAM noted the attitude of SM Thaver with sorrow. The Presbytery was requested for their consideration on this matter .

(Acta E/O 1986:53)

Whilst Thaver was working with the congregation of Durban South (Shalom) he presented the reply of RCA Durban South to the Extraordinary Synod. It is recorded both SM Thaver and B Peter committed themselves to the Evangelical emphasis in the RCA and to abide by the decision of Synod. It is further recorded that both of them admitted to having made mistakes and that their coming back to the Synod implies their repentance .

(Acta E/O 1986:114)

SM Thaver was never licensed by the CTAM. He later joined the Presbyterian church whilst studying towards a master's degree at the University of Durban Westville. He is presently serving a Presbyterian congregation in Port Elizabeth.

#### **7.2.5.3 G PERUMAL GOVENDER (SEELA)**

He also did not appear before the CTAM for licensing 1983.

(Acta E/O:1984:74)

#### **7.2.5.4 D MOODLEY (KRISH)**

Candidate Moodley has also completed his B Theol. whilst working as a librarian at UDW. It is reported that he admitted to the CTAM that pressure was exercised upon him not to appear before the CTAM in 1982. (Acta E/O 1984) D Moodley however was not legitimated due to

personal reasons.

The RCA had indeed lost some very valuable future ministers due to the crisis and interpretation about the legitimate composition of the CTAM. Although the cries deepened with the loss of status of ministers and theological students, it is claimed that God did not ditch the RCA. It is declared that God raised up other men to come in and fill the vacuum that was created. Therefore it was viewed that God was on their side and presently the RCA is ever so thankful that God raised leaders from within their own ranks.

Men who now entered the scene were mainly interested in building and influencing the RCA in a totally evangelical direction.

### 7.3 **LEADERSHIP OF THE NEW RCA**

The following persons now began to emerge as leaders within the "new" RCA. There was a strong move also to rename the RCA as "**Reformed Evangelical church**".

- (a) **GS Moodley** was called and inducted in the Shanti congregation on 31:01:1988.(Acta 1990:18)

- Application made for licensing on 20th June 1986  
(Acta E/O 1986:62)

- decided to withdraw application 6th Nov 1986

(Acta E/O 1986:77)

- (b) **Bennette Shunmugam** was called and inducted as Trainee Evangelist in Jan 1991 and Ordained Evangelist on 14:2:93.
- (c) **Rev N Shunmugam** was called and inducted as Minister of RCA Moriah 1:9:91
- (d) **Rev de Beer** was called and inducted as Minister of RCA Charisma on 6:10:91.
- (e) **Laventheran Shunmugam** was served with the Oath of legitimation on 3:12:91.  
(Acta 1994:13)
- (f) **Victor Pillay** was legitimated on 11/12/93  
(Acta 1994:13)
- (g) **Evangelist G Sebastian** was admitted as evangelist on 1st August 1987 in Kimberley.  
(Acta 1990:29)

The following were legitimated and licensed as evangelists of the RCA on 11:12:93.

- (a) Poobalan Ganesh
- (b) Benny Naidoo
- (c) Johan Naude

The following members make up the present CTAM

- RCA** -
- (a) Rev PJP de Beer
  - (b) Rev K Moodley
  - (c) Rev N Shunmugam
  - (d) Rev J S de Wet

- DRC** -
- (a) Prof JH Smit
  - (b) Dr AM Hofmeyr
  - (c) Rev van Rooyen
- (Acta 1990:29)

The writer wishes to point out the sad passing away of Dr AM Hofmeyr in June 1995.

#### 7.4 SUMMARY

This chapter basically deals with the various crises that troubled and raged within the RCA. The writer considers the loss of status of JNJ Kritzinger, GJA Lubbe and Dr C du P Le Roux as the most significant crisis that devastated the RCA. This incident sent ripple effects throughout the RCA congregations.

During the years of turmoil and split those who wished to influence the RCA towards a greater evangelical thrust emerged strongly within the leadership formations. The writer's view is that the DRC supported and welcomed this evangelical initiative. The division between those who embraced conservative theological views and those who held "radical" theological views began to appear more distinctly.

These two theological motivations could not be experienced within the RCA and therefore tensions arose and eventually splits and loss of status of ministers. Majority of respondents remarked that the splits negatively affected the RCA whilst a few were of the opinion that the splits created space for the RCA to pursue and further its evangelical outlook.

The writer has also cited various local and international correspondence due to the loss of ministers status within the RCA.

The Tent-Making Ministry also became a bone of contention. The ministers who lost their status

were affected by the conditions of the tent-making ministry. It appeared to the leadership of the RCA that this ministry was being abused and thus they set into motion additional conditions to the tent-making ministry to ensure a greater stability to the RCA ministry as a whole. The ministers who lost their status viewed the new conditions as a further stumbling block to take up their respective ministry within the RCA. The writer's opinion is that the RCA did not want to take any chances whereby past experience would be effectively stopped.

The writer has observed that changes to the tent-making ministry in 1986 is in contradiction with principle issues that were operative regarding the experience in the Charisma Congregation.

The writer has also shown clearly the impact of the Ottawa experience on the DR family of churches, especially the RCA's response in terms of the conflicts that arose. Many members felt that the Ottawa experience was the turning point of the RCA away from the apartheid structures.

Another issue that is considered to have affected the RCA in terms of its ministry was the boycott tactics employed by theological students during the times of high apartheid by not recognizing the CTAM as a proper representative body of the RCA. Those students who refused to appear before the CTAM for licensing, considered it a worthwhile sacrifice in the anti-apartheid struggle that engulfed the church.

The result of this struggle saw many valuable and talented students out of the RCA. Thus a vacuum was created and according to the present RCA leadership God intervened in a wonderful way in raising new young men to study and enter the vacant spaces of ministry. These new men

who grew up in the RCA took the task to steer and rebuild the RCA with a greater evangelical thrust.

From the RCA viewpoint, through all the crises experienced God was on their side. Their claim is that the church is growing from strength to strength.. Many members of other denominations are also joining the RCA. Recently about seven families, longstanding members of the Rev L Hammond's congregation have taken up membership with the RCA Emmanuel Congregation.

In the next chapter the writer will concentrate on the issue of church unity as it unfolds within the family of DR churches and will closely examine the role of the RCA towards achieving church union.

## CHAPTER VIII

8.

### RCA AND CHURCH UNITY

The premise on which church unity is to be pursued is found in John 17:21-23.

*"21 that they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that thou has sent me. 22 The glory which thou hast given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, 23 I in them and thou in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that thou has sent me and hast loved them even as thou hast loved me".*

*(THE HOLY BIBLE: RSV: NNT p. 106)*

As far as the writer is concerned church unity becomes an imperative for the church of Jesus Christ to be recognized by the world with the approval of God the Father. Within the DR Family of churches the process of apartheid was very successful in consolidating the RCA, NGKA, NGSK and the NGK into the apartheid mould. Although the process of church unity was initiated by the RCA several problems crept in that caused this process to die off. The topic of church unity was always on the agenda of the RCA Synods, but only recently it has been challenged by the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa (URCSA) which constitutes both the NGSK and the NGKA. The unity talks have now been revived and therefore being pursued in a structured manner among the four churches.

The researcher will now proceed to historically trace this process of church unity within the perspective of the RCA.

With the bold step of changing the church's name from "Indian Reformed Church" to "Reformed Church in Africa" the RCA was now viewed as having far reaching consequences in that it was becoming committed to being an **open community**. This opened the way for NG ministers to be accepted as full members of the RCA.

(Acta: 1976 : 76)

*"Perhaps the strongest emphasis in this stand of the church as an open community was the repeated insistence on moving towards unity with the other churches in the NG Family viz. NGK, NGSK, and the NGKA".*

*(Acta 1976:106)*

It was reported in the 1976 Acta that strong decisions were taken among others in this direction that the Federal Council (FC) of the NGK should move in the direction of becoming one General Synod of one Reformed Church. The 1976 Acta also report the fact that the desire for church unity with the other three NG churches proved so strong that it was the main reason which kept the Synod from applying for membership of the SACC at that stage.

#### 8.1 **CHURCH UNITY : FEDERAL COUNCIL (FC)**

The Synod of 1970 decided to request the FC to consider becoming one Synod. This implies that the RCA had already in 1970 indicated its desire for church union and sought this via the FC (Acta 1976:76).

The following extract also indicates the NGSK's similar desire:

*"The matter towards union is now in the stage of definite action in such a direction. The Federal Council after discussion of the matter, decided against change at this stage. The means that since attempts via the FC has proved unsuccessful, the IRC should explore other avenues"*

*(Acta 1976:77)*

According to the 1976 recommendation the temporary committee advised that Synod empower SC to initiate discussions towards church union with the other churches of the NG Family.

*(Acta 1976: 77)*

The RCA 1980 4th Synod took the following decision:

*"For the present Synod decides that because of the fact that the RCA is committed to organic church union within the NG Kerk family of churches, Synod wishes to curtail the very existence of the RCA and therefore refrains from reinforcing and extending the present synodical structure of the RCA. In this light SC was mandated to give priority to church union".*

*(Acta 1980:7)*

In 1980 Synod decided that the constitution of a General Synod in the place of the FC of churches is ultimately a still inadequate expression of church union.

*(Acta 1980:10)*

There is a sense of unity that exists among the NGK, NGSK, NGKA and the RCA. Firstly they share the same Reformed Tradition and they adhere and are bound to the same confessional creeds. The only exception now is that both the NGKA and the NGSK have adopted the Belhar Confession as a confession, whereas the RCA and the NGK reject it as a confession but accepts it as a declaration. All these churches are governed by the same church order.

(Acta 1980:11)

It was decided at the 1980 Synod to extend a standing invitation to the NGK to attend all future talks on church union and to furnish the NGK with all the relevant documents in that regard. Furthermore this Synod decided that if some of the other churches are not prepared to negotiate at this stage, the interested churches should nevertheless proceed with negotiations and that the doors will be open for the others to come in at any time.

(Acta 1980:11)

It was also recommended in 1980 although the RCA is striving for multilateral church union the RCA would begin its first step to enter into fully fledged union with the NGSK leaving the door open for others. It was in this light that the SC was instructed to negotiate with the Moderamen of the NGSK. This eventually led the SC to accept the principle of one united church at the levels of the congregation, presbytery and Synod .

(Acta: 1980:94)

A pastoral letter from the 1980 Synod to the congregations included the following statement on church union:

*"Synod takes its mandate from Scripture for essential and organic unity with the other member churches of the DR Family of churches. We accepted the principles of union at Congregational Presbyterian and Synodical level as being the ideal towards realizing our God-given unity" .*

*(Acta 1980:139)*

## 8.2 PROBLEMS BEGIN TO SET IN

The legitimation of A Bhiman by the NGSK was viewed by the RCA as an irregular way of legitimation. In a letter dated December 1982 to the Examinations Committee of the NGSK, it was stated that due to the irregular manner of legitimating A Bhiman, bad relationships between the two churches will exist (Agenda E/O 1984:24). It is perhaps because of this that there was no discussion of church unity during the sitting of this Extraordinary Synod.

In 1986 a report of the committee on the unity of the church was presented by Dr P Rossouw, (who in many circle appears to be a conservative) served before the 1986 Synod. The writer's opinion is that this report must be contrasted with the recommendations of the Synod of 1976.

The RCA in 1970 indicated to the FC to consider becoming one Synod which was to be sought via the FC. It is reported in the Synod of 1976 that the FC after discussion of this matter decided against change at this stage. Thus church unity via the FC proved to be unsuccessful and there were sentiments that the RCA should explore other avenues. It was within this context that Synod of 1976 recommended SC initiate discussion towards church union with the other churches of the NG family (Acta 1976:77).

Furthermore Synod 1980 decided that FC was not an adequate expression of church union. Acta 1980 page 7 records that the RCA was committed to organic church union within the NG family of churches and wished to curtail the very separate existence of the RCA.

### 8.3 DR P ROSSOUW

Having mentioned the background to the 1976 recommendations parts of the report presented by Dr P Rossouw is now considered.

*"The accomplishment and maintenance of church unity of churches within the family of DR churches, may not be linked exclusively to the erection of a new structure of church organization. A new structure as such will not create the desired unity, nor guarantee its continued existence. The unity in the church of Christ is much deeper and richer than the mere existence of a comprehensive structure, which includes all believers.*

*Conversely: The greatest disunity and controversy can exist within an existing structure. The unity of the church and especially the institutional church, is in the profoundest sense dependent upon and determined by the unity of the members of the church. The inner opposition of the members is the prerequisite on which all contemplation of unity, or the beginning of the process of structural unity, is to be found.*

*Church unity may not exclusively be linked to new structures. But furthermore:*

*without any kind of structure, no church unity can be realized or even conceived. Therefore we must not primarily look for new structures in the unrealistic delusion that it can be created and immediately serve as an expression of unity. While the disposition of the members is an indispensable prerequisite for the realization of church unity, we shall be forced to start with the existing structures of the Federal Council and the diversity of churches in the DC family.*

*The FC is for diverse reasons no adequate expression of the union of the DR churches in Southern Africa. Serious considerations will have to be given to the transforming of it into an Ecumenical Synod of Southern Africa. In the standing orders, the matter which may be dealt with, as well as the nature of the authority of its decision can be clearly circumscribed".*

*(Acta 1986:49)*

To the writer it appears very clearly that Dr Rossouw wanted to maintain the FC at all costs. In 1976 the FC decided against change when it was proposed by the RCA that the FC becomes one Synod. The conclusion was that the FC could not be that vehicle for change. The RCA was committed to organic church union whilst Dr Rossouw proposed that a new structure will not create the desired unity. The RCA on the other hand decided to pursue unity talks with the NGSK and decided to leave the door open for the other churches to enter at any point in time. The writer observes that the unity talks were curtailed, firstly by the NGSK for legitimating A Bhiman. Furthermore a series of loss of status of ministers occurred, especially the loss of status of ministers who held strong ecumenical views. This strained the unity talks between the RCA and the NGSK.

From the writer's point of view Dr Rossouw's timing to introduce his report on church union was very apt, because those ministers who really supported the view of organic church union were no more ministers of the RCA.

It is reported in the Acta of the Extra Ordinary Synod 1986 that a combined Presbytery meeting of the DR congregations Pretoria that this body envisages alternative structures within the NGK family. On the request of the Charisma Church Council the SC advised that no official ties should be entered into with the proposed DR unity.

(Acta E/O 1986:7)

#### 8.4 **RCA SUSPENSION OF UNITY TALKS**

The crunch to suspend unity talks with the NGSK was decided by the 1986 E/O Synod in the following words:

*"Synod suspends the talks on church unity with the existing structures of the church"(Acta E/O 1986:18)*

The 1986 E/O Synod called on all its congregations to work towards unity within the existing structures of the church.

(Acta E/O 1986:126)

**GREETINGS: NGSK 1990 RCA SYNOD**

As usual the RCA invites the other "sister" churches to come and offer their greetings at the opening of the Synod. In 1990 the NGSK conveyed the following greetings:

*"The most important item on our agenda of our Synod was the unification of the NGSK and the NGKA. This will be a task in which these two churches will have to feel their way and we need your continued prayers. We do not forget the very first talks on church unity were between our church and your church, and many believed that the first step in the unification process of all the DR churches would be between our two churches. As you know things did not work out that way, but we still keep the fire of hope burning and hereby continue to reach out to you, our brothers in Christ. We pray that the day is not far away when we should be "perfectly one" in Jesus Christ and our Lord"*

*(Acta 1990:9-10)*

It is evident that from the start both the NGSK and the RCA in the early years worked together towards church unity. There is an indication also that something went wrong. To the writer it appears that the discontinuity of unity takes may have been due to the loss of status of those ministers who really went all out to secure church unity.

**GREETINGS: URCSA : 1994 RCA SYNOD**

The researcher will now consider the greetings by the URCSA at the 1994 Synod held in Cape

Town. It must be pointed out that at this stage both the NGSK and NGKA were united in the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa (URCSA). After the Rev John Hartney congratulated the newly elected Moderamen of the RCA, he went on to state the following:

*"It is very significant to me that the RCA has its meeting specifically here in the Cape Peninsula where the erstwhile DRC held its Synod in April 1984, which was also the venue for the founding of the Synod of the URCSA. We were delighted that one of your previous moderature could attend this momentous occasion. This year would stand out in the annals of history of the church in SA in general and the URCSA in particular as one during which major events occurred at the levels of both the church and state. Not only did our country pass our test of democracy with flying colours when we elected our first democratically chosen government, or the predicted blood bath from prophets of doom, nothing has materialized ... God has once more proved to us that He is and remains' one who hears and answers our prayers. Although things are not yet what they ought to be, indeed these are still early days and our new dispensation is still in its infancy stage. We believe that things will improve as we move along. We believe that the church in general and the URCSA and your church in particular have a significant role and responsibility with respect to establishing and consolidation of true democracy. We would therefore also as churches contribute to the RDP in order to help put in place a better future for our country and all its people. As church we extend our hand of true fellowship to you and invite you to rather soon than later join in the process of establishing unity and to in the near future complete it when all of the churches of the DR Family will be one again. I am reminded that not too long ago, in fact your church, along with the now defunct DR mission Church*

*initiated and were intensively engaged in the process of establishing unity. Nothing would be more appropriate than, that exactly your church will realize the conclusion of this ideal. You will note that the logo of our church contains an incomplete circle, exactly because we believe that the circle will be complete only when all our brothers and sisters of the family of the DR churches will be one as He and the Father and the HS are one. Only when we make His fervent plea in His priestly prayer in John 17:21 a reality, will the world know and believe that He has sent us".*

*(Cape Town 29:9:95 RCA Synod)*

When compared to the NGSK's greeting at the 1990 Synod to that of the 1994 Synod, we notice that a great deal of the unity process was achieved by both the NGSK and the NGKA. In both greetings it is evident that the RCA had played a very significant role towards the process of church unity as it unfolded in the early years. The writer's opinion is that while the RCA seemed to experience disappointments and difficulties within its own rank, both the NGSK and the NGKA did not waste any time to forge unity in the form of the URCSA, making room for the RCA and the NGK to go in.

#### 8.7 GREETINGS: NGKA : 1990 RCA SYNOD

The following greeting from the NGKA was conveyed at the 1990 RCA Synod:

*"The NGKA appreciates the existence of the warm relationship among the churches which together constitute the family of the NGK. It further appreciates the existence of Spiritual oneness of these churches in Christ. It however regrets the apparent*

*physical diversity of these churches, which is largely based on colour, race and status within the NGK Family.*

*It is for this reason that for more than a decade the NGKA has been pleading for unity, especially, unity of a structural nature within churches of the same family.*

*The view of the current and political reforms for the coming new SA, the importance of this unity cannot be overemphasised. The imminent changing structure of the future society will, I hope, necessitate a changing structure of the church.*

*The General Synod between the NGKA and the NGSK as from today will begin to address the very issue of uniting the two churches. It is our urgent plea that the Synod of the RCA will give serious attention to this fundamental issue.*

*(Acta 1990:10-11)*

It is no doubt that the NGKA was also seriously pursuing unity talks and that there was a pledge to unite with the NGSK.

#### 8.8 RCA SYNOD'S RESOLUTION: CHURCH UNITY. 1990

The 1990 Acta's record the following resolution that was adopted by the 1990 Synod:

1. Synod takes note of the developments regarding the uniting church and affirms its desire for one Reformed Church of Southern Africa.

2. Synod is saddened by the fact that only two members of the family of churches bilaterally decided to form the URCSA.
3. And we are also grieved that a member church of a family of NG churches adopted a new confession without the other member churches. We believe that such action is not conducive to the process of church union.
4. Synod affirms its conviction that such a union should be developed unilaterally by all members of the Reformed Family (South Africa).
5. Synod decides that its model for church union is an umbrella Synod for the Family of Reformed Churches.
6. Synod resolves that should certain churches refuse multilateral talks, the RCA would proceed talks with those churches who wish to continue talks on union.  
(Acta 1990:41)

The 1990 Acta also record that the unification of the NGKA and the NGSK is therefore not seen as a final point, but as a beginning. For this reason the Joint Discussion Committee had time and again invited the DRC and the RCA to become part of the unification process. (Acta 1990:77).

The RCA is also concerned and worried that in the process of church unity its evangelical witness will be stifled. An extract from the Laudium Declaration includes the following statement:

*"We affirm our God given unity at the deepest level with all born again blood washed believers. We determine to foster such unity across all denominational barriers. In the immediate circle of our church we will foster structural unity with those who share the same confession provided that such structured unity will not stifle the evangelical witness of the RCA"*

*(Acta 1994:150)*

#### 8.8.1

#### RCA 1994 SYNOD DECISION: CHURCH UNITY

This session on church unity was discussed in "camera" as it was felt that these unity talks are very sensitive and individual opinions should be safeguarded. The only person other than the delegates present was the researcher who himself at that point in time was a fully fledged member of the RCA. From the writer's point of view this showed that the RCA lacked transparency in the process of arriving at important decisions. The process of church unity was to have been workshopped by the various RCA congregations and fed into this discussion as a congregational response. To the writer, besides individual opinion, the opinions of the membership should have taken priority at Synod.

The Moderator in his opening statements mentioned that the DRMC violated the church order and that they flaunted the church law without consulting the RCA. From the writer's point of view this statement could have been avoided so as to foster a free deliberation on this issue.

The writer's impression from the unity discussion as recorded in the 1994 Acta, are that 90% of the delegates present felt that certain obstacles had to be sorted out first, before going into such

a union.

Most of the delegates expressed fear of losing their identity, especially their unique evangelical witness. They also feared being swallowed up. The RCA also felt that they were badly treated at Goudini. The "Belhar Confession" could not be accepted by both the RCA and the NGK. The URCSA put this "confession" as a nonnegotiable item in this process of unity. This had to be accepted as a confession by all churches before joining the URCSA.

The Synod of the RCA which met in the week of 26th September to 2nd October 1994 affirmed the churches' commitment to the process of the unification of the DR churches.

According to the 1994 Acta it is reported that delegates felt that real church unity should grow from grassroots level and the SC comprising of Rev K Moodley, Rev JS de Wet, Rev N Shunmugam and Rev PJP de Beer will be pursuing discussion with the other churches in an attempt to find each other around the RCA's model for unity. Synod also felt that before any structural unity could be achieved, several matters of real concern to the RCA need to be satisfactorily redressed. Furthermore this Synod encouraged congregations to establish fraternal relations with congregations of the other churches on grassroots level and to participate in joint ventures.

(Acta 1994:320)

This is what Prof PJ Maartens (Acta 1994:231) reported in the Theology Faculty's brochure:

*"The theological concerns expressed in this report are indicative of the neglect of the*

*issue of church unity at the local level. The pragmatics of church unity needs to be brought into discussion here. It is clear that most congregations adopted the policy that the issue of church unity is one which should be reserved for talks "from above" in the super committees of our church. Unity within the local church and unity "from below" is totally neglected. Unless we practice our unity in faith the attempts to unite the church will fail. The RCA can become the facilitator which concludes the unity of the reform tradition in Dutch Reformed circles. We need to make a much greater commitment to the challenges of the epistles and John 17."*

The writer tends to support the views expressed by Prof PJ Maartens.

#### 8.9 GREETINGS: DRC : 1994 RCA SYNOD

It was Rev Kobus van der Westhuizen from the DRC who brought the greetings from the DRC. His speech is to be considered as very significant regarding church union.

*"The church in Jesus Christ should never be unclear about the calling in this world. We recognize that the anti-Christ is active as never before. The best place to start our cooperation and unification is within our own family of churches. It is so that we experience difficulties and I think you are aware of it. To be drawn apart is much easier than to unite. There are enough witnesses in history to prove this statement. Maybe you will know that our trilateral talks with the Reformed Church and the NHK have already been going on for more than fifty years. But having said that it is quite clear that we have no reason to ignore the imperative of the Word of John 17:20-23.*

*If there are problems then we must tackle them. If there are hurdles, we accept the challenge to overcome them. As far as the RCA is concerned it gives me great pleasure, brothers to state it quiet frankly that we as DRC has the greatest appreciation for the evangelical and brotherly manner in which you handled that. I know that you have your disappointments, for good reasons I suppose, but brother chair my friendly and well-intended advice is, try not to get stuck on your disappointments .... Brother chair and Brothers we need you because we accept and respect you as part of the family. We need your presence and cooperation in continued trilateral talks to fulfil our dream of one united church. Our General Synod 1994 starting on the 11th October, will again take this burning issue of church unity on the agenda. I really hope and pray that we will pick up momentum and that in continued deliberations the RCA will be with us shoulder to shoulder and tackle any problem that may occur. Please let us not go alone. We need you brothers"*

*(RCA Synod 29:09:94)*

Rev N Shunmugum thanked Rev van der Westhuizen in the following manner:

*"As the RCA we never forget where we came from. We realize and acknowledge that we came about as the result of the mission endeavours of the DRC. Therefore we are grateful we have a relationship with you and for that we want to thank you for the cooperation that we have enjoyed with you through the years. Also we realized that the church has also walked the very faithful road and you walked with us. As a young church we appreciate it. With your cooperation and help as well, holding our hands along the way we have accomplished exploits for the Lord. Therefore we take this*

*opportunity to thank the DRC for the financial and moral support that we also enjoyed over the years and we do hope and pray that we will continue to enjoy the years to come".*

*(RCA Synod: 29:09:94)*

An article titled "Reforming the DRC" from the December issue of the Challenge magazine mentions that the **acid test** now is effective grass roots unity with the victims of apartheid in the Uniting Reformed Church (URC). It is reported that in effect this has been postponed once again while the White congregations are consulted about it. Furthermore the article reports that a tremendous amount of hard work will be needed to prepare the White members for real unity. The article states that no unity is possible until the Synod accepts the Belhar Confession about apartheid. (Van der Merwe 1994/5 : 9f )

#### 8.10 A PRETORIA CHURCH UNITY INITIATIVE

Whilst in Natal the RCA placed a moratorium on unity talks, a Pretoria initiative was in progress. A conference of DR congregations in Pretoria was held on 29-31 August 1986 at the Kilnerton Centre. According to the report of the above-mentioned conference, the committee for DR Unity in Pretoria held a special meeting on 19th May 1986 to decide on how to implement the "Declaration of Intent" that was accepted during 1985 by the participating congregations. It was decided that in place of a Presbytery meeting, there should be a conference of the DR Congregations in Pretoria. According to the report each congregation was asked to send four delegates, two church council members, one from the womens group and one member of the youth.

The Conference was attended by the following congregations: Mamelodi North; Mamelodi West; Mamelodi East, Eersterust, Laudium, Irene and Bronkhorstspuit.

Dr N Smith in his introduction of the theme of this conference mentioned that the purpose of this conference was to share their lives. Secondly he mentioned that the purpose of this conference was to demonstrate unity in a concrete way. "We must demonstrate that we belong together, that there is an alternative way in this country. For long enough the name of the Lord has been cursed". (3.2 Conference Report)

The following persons were elected to form the new committee for DR unity in Pretoria.

Chairman	:	Mr D Pillay
Scribe	:	Dr N Smith
Assistant Scribe	:	Rev K Kritzinger

This conference decided that the time has arrived to start a new non-racial DR congregation in Pretoria. The main purpose of this congregation will be to make visibly the unity of the church as the body of Christ as a non-racial, classless community united together by the love of Christ. The congregation will also be open to members of all churches and will be willing to give guidance to congregations towards becoming non-racial congregations of the church. In its endeavours to establish and implement church Unity of Dr Churches the committee for DR unity in Pretoria has found it fit to hold this conference as a via-media to further the aspirations towards unity of the DRCA, RCA and the DRMC in Pretoria and to ultimately set an example to the rest of the different DR Congregations in South Africa. This was a grassroots initiative.

## 8.10.1 **DECLARATION OF INTENT**

The committee for DR Unity in Pretoria formulated the following Declaration of Intent:

"We, congregations of the NGKA, NGSK and RCA in Pretoria, have developed a feeling of mutual affinity and involvement over the past three years as a result of regular services and meetings.

### 1. **Together we Believe**

- 1.1 that the whole of humanity was created in the image of God to form one community. Therefore we declare that the enforced separation of our communities is in conflict with Scripture.
- 1.2 that the Gospel of Jesus Christ calls us to unity. Therefore, we can no longer accept the enforced ethnic separation of our churches.
- 1.3 that our congregations are hereby carrying into effect the decisions of our respective synods that there should be only one DR church.

### 2. **Therefore we Declare our Intent**

- 2.1 to implement this unity, in spite of obstacles like separate residential areas, differences in church traditions, language etc.

- 2.2 to start acting like a united fellowship now by taking all the congregations into consideration when making decisions.
- 2.3 to start entering into joint service projects now for the benefit of those who are suffering.
- 2.4 to attempt to include the congregations of the NGK in this commitment to unity.

3. **WE PLEDGE THE ABOVE IN THE BELIEF THAT ONLY OUR UNITED WITNESS WILL CONVINCe PEOPLE OF THE FACT THAT JESUS IS THE MESSIAH (JOHN 17:21)**

(DR UNITY MINUTES: 21st OCT. PRETORIA)

From the declaration of Intent by the Pretoria churches the writer observes that a foundation for a multiracial congregation was being laid for the DR churches. This declaration has to be applauded for its courageous pronouncements advocating unity in the times of high apartheid. In the writers opinion it is regrettable that this Pretoria unity initiative was not followed by the Natal RCA congregations.

8.11 **REFLECTIONS OF CHURCH UNITY: RCA LEADERSHIP**

The following are opinions of the different leaders gleaned from interviews held with them by

the researcher.

1. **Rev K Moodley (Moderator)**

*"At the beginning we were facing a brick wall when the URCSA said that, you guys must leave everything and become like us. Now that is not possible for us, because unity, it really means the four churches talking together. I think there has been a movement from the hardstand especially in the light of the last meeting we had. In fact when we met earlier this year seven commissions were appointed and each are working on different aspects of the new church order, that is something, a movement away from the handstand that the URCSA has had.*

*It would not happen in the near future, but around the year 2000 in my view. The RCA has no intention to join the Uniting Church because the Synodical decision is that we must have discussions with our people. We think that they jumped the gun. They still should have remained as the NGSK and the NGKA and the four churches should have merged together. There is willingness and there is hope.*

*The questions of the properties alleged as stolen from the RCA has to be solved. We had a problem with Gerrie Lubbe. We tried to negotiate with him, but then somehow they went around and want to join the Uniting Church and that was something which was very unethical. On one hand we had the four churches talking about unity, on the other hand one of the churches accepted a break away church from the RCA. They also legitimated the minister. We took strong exception to that ... The solution for us*

*would be that Gere Lubbe must come back to the RCA and apologise for that which he has done and he must also be relegitimated by the RCA. He must bring back the church buildings to the RCA and then as the RCA we will join the Uniting Church. That is nonnegotiable because if the Uniting Church would not sort that out, we would not be part of the Uniting Church... I think that the Uniting Church must instruct Gere Lubbe to come and see the RCA. He belongs to them now. We told them that no way this unity talks can go on until you sort this out...*

*A the moment we are trying to bring the church order into existence. The point of the matter is that the RCA is still existing. They are out in the cold. They took away buildings and now they want to join another church behind our backs.*

*I saw Sam Buti. I said to him that he had taken our break away church and now how does he expect us to unite with him. He had no answer for me. This was unethical.*

*The OFS Synod wants to join the Uniting Church and they are pleading not to be taken into the NGK. How can they plead on one side to save their back and do the same thing to us the other side. As you feel about that Synod, we feel the same towards our break away churches. Our problem is that they must come back to the RCA and say sorry for what they have done*

*(Interview 29:06:95).*

From this interview with Rev K Moodely the researcher has been informed that the bottom line for the RCA to join the URCSA will only take place when Rev Gerrie Lubbe comes back to the

RCA with the church building and also be relegitimated in the RCA.

2. **Evang. Bennette Shunmugam**

*"Somethings are alarming. We are asking who is uniting whom and somehow those answers are not given. Is it we going and joining the Black and Coloured Church with their policies and with their views. I feel that there should come a new church from these four churches, completely a new united church... If we all say lets leave our own ideologies and start our own church. If that can happen I will be very happy.*

*(Interview 9:02:95)*

3. **Rev Greg. Denysschen**

*"Firstly I accept the church as unity in principle. In other words for me the church is one already because of Christ. If I don't accept that it means now I must make some effort at being one with the Presbyterian Church of Korea. It's far from us physically and all that. My answer is that false striving for unity, that's what I call, it a false striving amongst the sister churches of the Reformed Family in S.A. It's been driven for political reasons, not for true spiritual reasons or Biblical reasons. It's a political attempt to achieve a political goal and I am not behind that.*

*Well, what I do see is something that I wonder about. The RCA to me as an*

*Evangelical Church, that's my own spiritual home and I am comfortable here. I have a sense of anticipation that we will be swallowed up and we will lose our identity and lose our own unique form of worship. Even with the proposed RCA model I, don't think that we will stand a chance. The RCA has taken a decision to unite in principle that meant four churches uniting. Now that two churches have gone ahead with unilateral uniting, they are asking us to join. We have got no such decision on our table to join the Uniting Church. The principle was that all four churches would unite and that model for uniting was still up for discussion. Now we have no option. The gun is against our heads saying, You accept it or you leave it and that is not a brotherly way of doing things.*

*It depends on which model, depends on whether they are large hearted enough to give room for our own cultural identity"*

*(Interview 5; 06:95)*

4. Rev Laven Shunmugam

*"We should strive for this. There are certain issues that needs to be clarified. Those things must not be overlooked. Our beliefs and rights must be respected. It must be filtered down to the grassroots level. The people at the bottom know nothing".*

*(Interview 18:05:95)*

5. **Rev Surajlall Sukdaven**

*"There must be the unity. Within this there must be scope to reach out and meet the peoples of the different cultures. I don't think there is a fear to remove ethnicity from it. The evangelical witness should not be an excuse for not uniting, in fact it will be more effective.*

*(Interview 21:02:95)*

6. **Rev Nobin Shunmugam**

*"The process is bearing fruit. At our last meeting we have decided not to have joint commissions, we have one joint commission formulated from the 3 churches. We now have seven sub commissions which are involved in working out this process of unity. If all problems are removed, we should have union near 1988. I would say ultimately we would be one church"*

*(Interview 13:04:95)*

7. **Rev Gerrie Lubbe**

*"After the 1980 Synod the RCA was pushing for church union. It was only the Sendingkerk that was wanting to join us and at that time when we left the church, then we were already talking about a time schedule for unity. The NGKA said that they would not go in if the mother church and we said that we would keep the door open and we will keep on be talking. The RCA swung around and then the NGSK and the NGKA started to push for unity. I don't*

*think it's a matter that anybody was left out. I think it is just the matter to go ahead whilst others are still making up their minds. Why stop the process because certain people don't want to join?.*

*I think the DRC at the end in terms of the whole social and political set up of the country will have no option to join. I have no doubt that they will certainly join".*

*(Interview 23:02:95)*

8. Rev Klippies Kritzinger

*"The Black and Coloured church have now joined as the Uniting Reformed Church. The White church has also committed itself to church unity at the last Synod. I don't know what the RCA has decided at their Synod in Cape Town. I suspect when the Whites join, the RCA will just run along given its history of theological dependence I cannot imagine that they will do anything else.*

*I know that there are a number of concerns with Gere and the church he is supposed to have stolen and the fact that he was licensed by the URCSA without getting the permission from the RCA. So maybe there are obstacles for the RCA.*

*I think we should talk about it and reconcile us to one another. There are personal relationship that needs to be reconciled between individuals, because*

*they hurt each other in what they did and what they said, but I cannot see that, that could be an obstacle for the RCA in joining the URCSA.*

*In terms of the Reformed understanding of the church the local church is fully church. It is "ecclesia completa" and the ownership of the buildings lodges with the local church. So the Synod is not the catholic hierarchy. At any time the local church has the right to withdraw from the church connection. Lenasia has the fullest right in terms of Reformed understanding because all members agreed and signed the documents that they withdraw from the RCA. There was nothing illegal or underhand".*

*(Interview 20:02:95)*

9. Prop Victor Pillay

*"The RCA has a vital role to play, but has a unique ministry to Indian people which must not be lost in the URCSA".*

*(Interview 23:05:95)*

10. Rev Tobie De Wet

*"The RCA should be a leader. The RCA should be a fully integrated part of the URCSA"*

*(As per questionnaire)*

11. **Evang George Sebastian**

*"The RCA should take the opportunity to bury the past and press towards a unified future with the URCSA"*

*(Interview 13:12:94. No. 75)*

The researcher has observed the following responses from the laity of the RCA regarding church unity.

Church Unity

Favoured Church unity immediately	87%
Did not favour church unity	10%
No comment	3%

8.11.1 **COMMENTS**

(a) *"don't mind this unity as long as Triune God is worshipped"*

*(Interview 20:04:95 No.11)*

(b) *"whole church should have a workshop"*

*(Interview 12:03:95 No.22)*

(c) *"most definitely, but only when different ideologies is sorted out at a round table".*

*(Interview 15:07:95 No.37)*

(d) *"It will be good for the church and for the whole society".*

*(Interview No.52)*

(e) *"If we see ourselves as Indians, then I see it as racist. I have no fears. Personally I think the talks at Synod are going to be negative. It is terrible. It is almost as if they are going to lose their identity. That is their fear".*

*(Interview 30:09:95 No.81)*

The writer has observed that only one congregation viz "Calvary" in Port Elizabeth workshopped this unity issue and were mandated by their congregation to push Synod 1994 for unity with immediate effect. From the writers point of view it appears and is regrettable that other RCA congregations did not discuss church with their congregations before the 1994 Synod. It also appears to the writer that very little or nothing is being initiated by the majority of the RCA congregation despite Synods resolution that congregations establish fraternal relations with congregations of other churches on grassroots level and to participate in joint ventures.

(Acta 1994:320:321)

## 8.12 SUMMARY

The writer has indicated that the imperative for church unity is founded on John 17:21-23. It is evident that the RCA was the forerunner to engage in the unity process with the NGSK. Due to some difficulties experienced with the NGSK the RCA resolved in 1986 not to continue unity talks. In the absence of RCA and NGSK talks, talks between the NGSK and NGKA began to blossom and during their process of unity talks, they finally together consolidated and expressed

this union with the founding of the URCSA.

The RCA was not too happy that both the NGSK and NGKA formed the URCSA leaving out themselves and the NGK. It appears that the RCA and the NGK will join the URCSA together, sometimes in the year 2000.

The various Actas indicate that the RCA in the early years pursued unity vigorously but as years went by the RCA was caught up with difficulties within its own camp and therefore resolved to terminate unity talks.

The Federal Council (FC) was not recognized as a viable vehicle to foster church unity as it did not portray an adequate expression of unity.

Now that the URCSA is in place both the RCA and the NGK are challenged to go back to the drawing board and come up with practical solutions towards this unity process. There are fears expressed within the leadership of the RCA, that the RCA will be swallowed up in the URCSA, whilst there is tremendous support on the ground for a united church.

There appears to be a lot of good will now with the recent developments by the various negotiators for church unity. Although the RCA has a non-negotiable stance on certain issues there seems to be light at the end of the tunnel.

The Pretoria unity initiative with the DR churches in Pretoria needs to be applauded for its drive to attain church unity from the grassroots level and for forging joint ventures in the realization

of a multiracial church. Their declaration of Intent also stands out as a shining example to declare openly their God given unity in conjunction to John 17:21-23.

## CHAPTER IX

9.

### RCA AND SOCIAL INVOLVEMENT

The researcher wishes to examine the RCA in its role as a church in the context of an emerging new South Africa. It is therefore important to explain at the hands of Christian authors what the holistic task of the church is. It becomes necessary to view the Old Testament's moral tradition and to discover the biblical injunction for God's people to pursue social justice. According to Dempster (1987:129) social justice is not an explicitly ethical category within the New Testament's moral theology although it is certainly implied in the NT. But it is the OT that presents social justice as the will of God for society and mandates the people of God to pursue it. He further points out that from the Pentateuch in the OT we discover a strong care for the poor and that with a special concern for the poor and to prevent permanent poverty, God gave specific commands. For Dempster (1987: 131) the moral vision of God's justice provides the unshakable platform for the community of believers to involve itself in the pursuit of social justice. The OT not only provides a platform for social justice in God's own character, however, but it also establishes the parameters of social justice in the doctrine of the "Imago Dei".

Against this theocentric foundation which links theology, ethics and social life together, the unfolding of the revelation of God in history of Israel as recorded in the OT takes on crucial significance. Thus, the theocentric orientation is crucial to understand the basis of OT social ethics.

(Vadivelu 1990:43)

According to the writer who spent twenty two years in the RCA it appears that the RCA which adopted the evangelical stance in the latter years did not have much to offer regarding its social involvement. This took place soon after the Ottawa experience and the loss of status of ministers of the RCA in the Transvaal. It is the writer's intention to point out the RCA how the RCA can engage itself in social responsibility by following a solid biblical foundation. According to Bock (1974:19) the one who claims that the church has no Christian responsibility to society is rejecting much of the Christian heritage.

The following extract as contained in the RCA's pastoral letter of October 1994 reads:

*"Synod encourages the active involvement of our congregation through the Deacon's Board in the services of mercy and righteousness in the underprivileged communities within our jurisdiction. This should be done in conjunction with the rest of the DRC family of churches".*

*(Acta 1994:318)*

The RCA in a resolution praised God for the political transition that took place in our beloved country during 1994 and also vowed to pray for and work towards true justice and peace for all in this country.

*(Acta 1994:114)*

The following statement from the Fourth Assembly of the WCC who met in Uppsala, Sweden in 1968 reads:

*"The church is called to work for a world wide responsible society and to summon men and Nations to repentance. The churches are called in their preaching and teaching, including theological education, to set forth the biblical view of God -given oneness of mankind for the world wide solidarity of mankind and the stewardship of the resources of the Lord".*

*(The Uppsala Report 1968: 45-51)*

Harry H, Boer (1961: 175) is supportive of the view that the church cannot avoid involvement where man lives in concrete situations. Boer (1961:175) goes on further to mention the following: "In considering the place of the church in and her message for the world it would of course be foolish not to take seriously the social, political, economic, cultural and a religious milieu in which the church in a given situation or with a given missionary task finds herself".

Morphew (1989:38) suggests that the biblical world view is holistic. For him, it is holistic in the sense that the visible world and the invisible world are always held together as part of one reality. God the creator has established a system of delegated authority in both the visible and invisible realm.

The writer is of the opinion that the church has to make known the kingdom of God upon this earth and that the church has to be engaged in bringing the whole gospel to the whole world, to the whole of man as were read in Luke 4:18-19.

*18. Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of the sight*

*to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed,*

*19. to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.*

The above quotation suggests that Christ had in mind the holistic view of the gospel. The mission of the church is always to serve human beings especially those who, like the victim in the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:30) have fallen and are "half dead". According to Leonardo Boff (1988:33) the church finds its meaning of its existence in the prolongation of Jesus service to all women and men, particularly to the humiliated and the offended of our history.

Merle Davis (1948:278) agrees that the view of the church's involvement in society emerges from a holistic point of view. He further points out that Christianity's concern should be with all of life and with every condition of the individual in society which restricts or supports the possibility of mans reaching the fullness of the nature of Christ and realizing his concept of the "Kingdom of God".

Rev JNJ Kritzinger (Interview 20:02:95) had the following remarks to make regarding the RCA and it's holistic ministry:

*"According to the Synodical Resolution in 1976 and 1980, yes, we had a holistic gospel, most certainly. One picks up resistance from a number of people when one preaches the holistic gospel by people who come to church to be comforted because they have their own hassles and problems, they need to find a haven of peace. They don't want to hear that they must go out, do things for other people. In the practice of*

*the members, this has failed to a large extent. By and large it is an occasional thing.*

*Yes, there were elements of a holistic gospel".*

Siva Govender (Interview 29:09:95) mentioned that he really does not think that the RCA went out totally. He said that their motive was to see more people in the church.

Boff (1988:80) maintains that the mission of the church retains the same dimensions as those of the mission of its founder, Jesus Christ. He further goes on to state that the church evangelizes all dimensions of human existence.

The testimony of the DRC as contained in their publication "Church and Society" (1986:8) indicates clearly that the Bible focuses on God and his kingdom. It means that the new comprehensive relationship in which God has placed the people of his kingdom and especially his church as an instrument of his Kingdom in relation to himself, to each other were as fellow believers and to the world, imposes upon them a costly calling, which must guide them not only in church relationships, but in all areas of life.

According to the writer basic scriptural principles is a necessity in seeking Gods will for the challenge we have in society. De Gruchy (1987:52) maintains that theology be understood firstly in a holistic, integrated way in which the various disciplines (Biblical Studies, Church History, Systematic and Practical Theology) are regarded as integral parts of the same theological task. Further De Gruchy (1987:52) maintains that theology is a critical reflection on the churches confession of the faith and social praxis in the light of the word of God in order that we might better know and serve God revealed in Jesus Christ today.

Vadivelu (1990:12) points out that within the South African Churches there is much debate on the proper role of the church within the social areas. Thus while churches may agree on the need of justice in society they disagree on what justice entails in politically concrete terms.

Boff (1984:85) states that the church should raise the political consciousness of the people, to help the people to open their eyes, participate in discussion and thus improve their government. According to Boff (1984:86) the church should not support any particular party if there is more than one party working for the welfare of the people and that Christians should have the freedom to choose their party and their candidates.

From the writer's experience in the RCA, the leadership which is solely concentrated on winning souls have not encouraged its congregations concerning political debates or education. Members were rather discouraged from engaging and getting involved in politics. At the same time the researcher observes that due to the recent democratization and transformation process in our country, there is evidence that members of the congregations are becoming more politically aware and are keen to talk about these issues.

The DRC's publication "Church and Society" (1986:7) reflects the Bible as being exclusively a religious publication and thus not a text book on sociology economics or politics. This means that because the Bible speaks decisively of its message, it may not be used as a manual for solving social, economic or political problems.

## 9.1 **THE POOR**

The poor were the objects of social concern. According to Dempster (1987:136) God required more than simply prevention of harm to the orphan, the widow and the alien. The presence of the poor provided a constant opportunity for Israel to demonstrate its loyalty to the covenant "for the poor will never cease in your midst, therefore I command you saying, you shall freely open your hand to your brother, to your needy, and poor in your land" (Deut. 15:7-11)

According to Bosch (1980:50) the OT reveals that God has compassion on the poor, the oppressed, the weak and the outcast. It is true then that God shows special preference towards the cause of the poor. This is evident when one reads Ezekiel 16:3-7.

According to Vadivelu (1990:46) it was in Egypt that God heard the cry of his people and had compassion upon them. In the Exodus account, he liberated the slave, the servant, the widow, the orphan and the poor. The important thing to consider is that God did not leave them alone after their liberation, rather He acted in their historical context.

" The pulpit Commentary" (1980:195) states that God identified himself with their interests. Injuries done to them, he will resist as if done to himself. The poor cannot defend themselves. Their poverty makes them helpless, and the weakness which ought to commend them to protection commends them to plunder.

As we read in the OT, God did not ignore the needs of the poor in society. It was out of his divine wisdom and concern that for them be instituted the law through Moses to see that they are protected.

According to Dempster (1987: 144, 145) God provided four ordinances that provide concern for the needy and the poor. These ordinances are: the jubilee institution (Lev. 25 23), the Law of tithing (Lev. 19: 2, 9-10), the Sabbatical year (Ex 21:2-3) and the Law of Gleaning (Lev. 19:1-8).

According to Dempster (1987:145) that although these four ordinances of social justice may not go far in instituting justice for all, they do institutionalize a concern for the social welfare of the economically disadvantaged. He further states that these laws demonstrate that God's people were commanded to establish social mechanisms and structures to give concrete institutional expression to their special concern for the poor, the widow, the orphan and the alien. The codes demonstrated that biblical justice is biased towards the poor and the needy and therefore, the first step to social justice is to institute systems of distribution for the correction of oppression.

The Law also provided a solid basis of protection for slaves against their masters. The writer wishes to point out that he has dealt with the above-mentioned social concerns regarding the Law in greater detail in his master's dissertation in chapter two.

The prophets also took up the case of the poor and needy in society and they found the Law of the OT providing a solid foundation for this task. The poor were never overlooked because God secured this through the Law of Moses and thus now using the various prophets to continually proclaim God's compassion and care for the disadvantaged. Prophets like Amos, Micah and Isaiah were used by God to criticize the social order.

In the New Testament we read that Jesus preached the good news to the poor (Mat 11:5). The following extract from Saracco's article, "**The Liberating options of Jesus**" (1983:49) provides evidence of Jesus' concern for the poor and needy.

*"Jesus chose Galilee the land of the dispossessed as the place of his ministry, in preference to Jerusalem, the place of power. His message to the scribes and pharisees was mediated through his works in favour of the needy and his identification with their expectations. Jesus' option liberates God and the Gospel from the clutches of an alienating religiosity and from ideologies which maintain dehumanizing relationships. His option is not a struggle for power, but it dynamizes the conscience of the poor and the oppressed in a project of liberation, unmasking everything which prevents the full realization of being human and calls to conversion"*

*(Saracco 1983:49)*

Jesus activity was concentrated in Galilee. His words appealed to the rural poor and held out little consolation for the rich. It was the poor that were pronounced blessed and promised an

inheritance in the Kingdom.

When dealing with social ethics in the New Testament one has to consider the historical development of the God who cares for the disadvantaged people. It was also in the NT time that the poor, oppressed, rich, wealthy, powerful landlords, orphans and widows lived and therefore Jesus had to still contend with this Jesus does this in the book of Luke in his response to the disadvantaged people (Vadivelu 1990:81).

Jesus did not waste any time in addressing the wealthy and the powerful in the then society. According to Roland (1988:60) repentance comes about only if the rich man makes a careful disposal of all his wealth, leaving himself only the bare necessities of life or nothing at all.

The early Christian Church also cared for the poor. This is evident in Acts 2:45 and Acts 4:34-35.

According to Bosch (1980:61) the church should understand herself as a missionary movement whereas the Qumran Community withdrew from being involved in society. Bosch (1980:205) claims that for those churches who shy away from social involvement, the church is a fort, a bulwark and a sanctuary separated from the world. He points out that the deeds of Jesus questioned the existing social and religious order in practically every aspect.

For Bosch (1980:58) there are two very important elements which are: "God's compassion" and "God acting in history". He asserts that these elements form a sound biblical understanding that Christians and the church should be involved in what goes on in this world.

To the writer it appears that the RCA has to done enough in responding to the social needs of society. It is believed that the RCA can make a valid and positive contribution in addressing the social concerns that makes up part of her ministry.

#### 9.4 **SUMMARY**

The aim of this chapter was to site some biblical examples for social involvement. The writer has indicated that he has written about this subject in detail in chapter two of his Master's dissertation in 1990. The writer has included this chapter to show that social concerns as far as the Church is concerned is not motivated from any political ideologies, but rather from a biblical foundation.

The pursuit of social justice was initiated by God himself. God actually provided protection and care for the disadvantaged by instituting laws contained in the Mosaic Law. He also made sure that the prophets will use this as a solid platform to continually address and respond to the social needs of the people. God made sure that his social concerns were entrenched in the Old Testament.

The disadvantaged people were still contained in the New Testament times and Jesus never hesitated to respond to the needs of the poor. He also took the opportunity to address the powerful and wealthy.

The writer has indicated that the RCA could make a valuable contribution by getting involved with societies needs, besides soul saving.

In the next chapter the researcher will concentrate on the responses to his questionnaire and the interviews that were held. These data and information will then be analysed.

## CHAPTER X

10.

### RCA : RESEARCH ANALYSIS

#### **Introduction**

The writer will outline the sequence of the sections to this chapter by listing the topics on which he based his questions.

The opening question was aimed to ascertain the membership of the RCA.

The topics are arranged as follows:

- (A)                   - exchange of pulpits
- activities in thr RCA
- speakers
- combined services

The writer used these topics to gain from the RCA whether the RCA was striving towards an "open church", multiracial church; whether the RCA was relating to the other sister churches; whether guest speakers were of a racial mix, and if the RCA has a broader vision of its ministry towards society. All the above topics are related in a sense that they deal with interaction between the RCA and other race groups.

#### (B)    **The evangelical and ecumenical debate.**

The writer felt that after analysing section A above it was appropriate to include the evangelical and ecumenical debate.

- (C)
- **apartheid**
  - **separate Indian church**
  - **mixed marriages act**
  - **Tricameral System**
  - **stand against apartheid**
  - **church stand against apartheid**
  - **apartheid theological education (UUD)**

The above subjects were grouped together in order to demonstrate the effects of apartheid on the life of the RCA and especially the polarisation of the Indian community. The writer chose these topics as they are directly related to each other and are relevant to the implementation of the separate development policies.

- (D)
- **Broederbond**
  - **Belydende Kring**
  - **WCC**
  - **SACC**

The above organisations or bodies have impacted on the church one way or the other.

The Broederbond has undoubtedly manipulated the DRC in its relationship to the daughter churches. The WCC and the SACC are ecumenical bodies which were working towards the dismantling of apartheid in South Africa, whilst the Broederbond worked to maintain the system of apartheid.

(E) **- Finance**

All the topics under the section on finance are related to the Financial aspects of the RCA and are therefore dealt as a separate question.

- (F) **- prophetic voice**  
**- holistic gospel**  
**- nation building**  
**- church unity**  
**- women in office**

Each of the above topics has assisted the researcher to gain response from the RCA membership regarding its programme towards an ecumenical ministry. The points above are therefore related as they are intended to direct the church to an holistic ministry.

- (G) **- liberation theology**  
**- Belhar Confession**  
**- Laudium Declaration**

These topics have impacted on the RCA at various levels. Liberation theology is not accepted by the RCA. The Belhar Confession developed with the influence of liberal theological views. The RCA in its fear of being swamped by liberal theological views took a strong evangelical stand in the Laudium Declaration.

- (H) **- NGK suspension from WARC**  
**- splits in RCA**

The suspension of the NGK from WARC definitely impacted on the RCA especially in the splits that followed.

(H) The following topics stand on their own:

- new South Africa
- RCA Bible College
- Jevanadi
- Closing remarks.

Amongst the many interviews held by the researcher were, ministers of the present RCA, ex ministers of the RCA, academics, ex members of the RCA and mostly the ordinary membership of the RCA. It is the writer's intention to now analyse the valuable information gleaned from the various interviews and also the responses from the structured questionnaires. The analysis will be based on the responses under the appropriate headings. Some of the responses have already been weaved into the relevant chapters. Wherever it is necessary, the research will elaborate on the subject matter before the input of the response.

#### 10.1 How attracted to RCA?

The writer observes that there are many new members in the RCA, especially in the Kwa Zulu Natal region. In most of the congregations family ties are very predominant and thus many members are related to one another. The majority of respondents are members of the congregation.

### How attracted to the RCA

through marriage	20%
through friend / Minister	40%
through crusades	3%
through Sunday School	15%
because Evangelical Church	22%

According to the information at hand RCA's total membership is approximately  $\pm 1450$ . **RCA Membership October 1995**

NAME OF CONGREGATION	PLACE	MINISTER / EVANGELIST	NUMBER IN CONG.
Calvary	Port Elizabeth	Rev. J S de Wet	$\pm 100$
Charisma	Laudium, Pretoria	Rev P J P de Beer	$\pm 120$
Emmanuel	Sydenham, KZN	Rev K Moodley	$\pm 130$
Jeshuran	Phoenix, KZN	Rev L Shunmugam	$\pm 200$
Maranatha	Ottawa, KZN	Rev G Denysschen	$\pm 80$
Moriah	Merebank, KZN	Rev N Shunmugam	$\pm 160$
RCA Pietermaritzburg	Pietermaritzburg, KZN	Rev V Francis	$\pm 100$
Shalom	Chatsworth, KZN	Evang. Benette Shunmugam	$\pm 170$
Shanthi	Palmridge, TVL	*Rev G Sooklingam	$\pm 40$
Sunthosham	Cape Town	Evang. D Naidoo	$\pm 50$
RCA Western Transvaal	Daxena, Transvaal	*Rev S Sukdaven	$\pm 80$
<b>RCA Missions</b>			
New Life Outreach Centre	Clairwood, KZN	Evang. B Ganesh	$\pm 70$
Pearl Mission	Kimberley	Evang. G Sebastian	$\pm 30$

There are a few churches that have been recently established. The analysis will now be done under the following headings.

## 10.2 Exchange of Pulpits

The writer wanted to ascertain whether the RCA invited speakers from the other races. This exercise was also to determine to what extent "black" and "coloured" preaches from the DR Family were invited to preach in the RCA.

Once a year Rev Zondi is invited to the congregations in Kwa-Zulu Natal (KZN). Occasionally in the Emmanuel Congregation a "black" lecturer is invited. No "coloured" preacher from the NGSK was invited by most of the congregations whilst hardly any "black" ministers from the NGKA were invited. Majority of the responses indicated that most "white" ministers from the NGK came to preach. The research shows that the RCA makes most use of the ministers from the NGK as contrasted with the NGKA and NGSK.

## 10.3 Activities in the RCA

The writer wanted to test if any activities were aimed at social concerns. The following activities were recorded.

- (a) Youth club
- (b) Brothers fellowship
- (c) Sister's fellowship

- (d) Sunday School
- (e) Donation drive projects
- (f) Bible Study
- (g) Cottage meetings
- (h) Evening service
- (I) Deacon's Board
- (j) Intercessory prayer groups
- (k) Church clean up sessions
- (l) poor relief (Mainly Calvary)
- (m) Morning Worship
- (n) Mission group

Most of these activities are concentrated in the RCA congregations itself. As indicated in a point (l) Calvary is the only congregation that does poor relief work in the township of Port Elizabeth on a regular basis. According to Rev Nobin Shunmugam (Interview 13.04.95) the RCA is involved with informal housing via the Lungisa Mission. Rev Shunmugam is representing the RCA as the secretary of Lungisa Mission and states that this organization is still getting off the ground. Basically the congregations of the RCA are provided with a comfort zone whereby people come to church to feel comfortable and satisfied.

**DESMOND TUTU, BISHOP HURLEY, BISHOP HUDDLESTON, FRANK  
CHIKANE**

The researcher wanted to know if the RCA membership would invite the above-mentioned clergymen if they had the opportunity. The writer deliberately chose the above persons as they contributed a great deal towards the emancipation of the oppressed and preached God's freedom to them. It was through their theological insights within the South African context that they were prepared to teach about the injustices in our country and prepared the way for peace and liberation of the masses. These men were prepared to challenge the apartheid system whilst many South African clergymen did not lift up a finger to oppose the system. These men were not politicians, but they allowed the scriptures to evaluate political systems that were designed to deliberately disadvantage the majority of South Africans. As far as the NGK was concerned, these men were regarded as trouble makers, radicals, liberation communist theologians. Prior to the democratic elections in our country, it appeared to the writer that many in the RCA saw these men in a very negative light. They were viewed as participating in politics and therefore are not really preaching the Gospel. To the researcher it was important to see how the RCA membership now view these men.

Majority of the respondents had no problems if these men were invited to preach in the RCA. There was overwhelming support for this. A minority were negative about them. Members did not hear of Bishop Huddleston and Bishop Hurley. Most of them knew Desmond Tutu and Frank Chikane. The writer observed that the members in congregation are more enthusiastic than their leadership to have the above-mentioned clergymen to preach in their churches.

The following were remarks from interviews:

"As long as they believed in the Triune God"

(Interview 20/04/95 No.11)

"As long as they preach the Word of God"

(Interview 12/03/95 No. 19)

"Definitely not. They are not men of God, but politicians"

(Interview 20.02.95)

"I don't think they would have been given the opportunity. The RCA has too much of rules and regulations"

(Interview 29.09.95 No. 77)

"We would love to have these people here. It will be an upliftment to the congregation. I think more people will come to the church"

(Interview 29.04.95 No. 78)

"In the past because of tension in the church it made it difficult to have these men here. But now is the new situation, knowing that they are men of God, we don't see the problem to get them in to preach the Gospel message"

(Interview 9.2.95 No. 83)

"No problem at all. It will be an honour and privilege to actually have them"

(Interview 13.04.95 No.87)

### 10.5 Combined Services

This was again used to test whether the RCA had combined services especially with the NGSK and the NGKA. Most of the RCA congregations never held combined services with the NGSK or the NGKA. The majority responded that they only have combined services with NGK congregations, because these are the supporting congregations. An example of this is the Emmanuel Congregation in Sydenham who has members of the NGK congregation of the Free State coming to visit and worship because they support the minister's salary.

Very few churches have combined services with the NGKA once a year. As far as the Calvary Congregation in Port Elizabeth is concerned they have about 30% of combined services with the NGKA and about 70% with the white NGK.

Through his research, the writer was informed that the Congregations of Charl Le Roux, Klippies Kritzinger and Gerrie Lube had combined services with the NGKA and NGSK on a regular basis and that it became something natural for them.

### 10.5.1 Comments

The following remarks were recorded:

"Initially we had it once a month. This formed a very solid basis for church unity. We began to have joint services with Rev Nico Smith and Rev Lukas Mabusela in Mamelodi North.

(Klippies 20.02.95. No. 90)

"The church in Lenesia is multiracial"

(Gerrie Lubbe 23.02.95 No. 88)

"Our young people have regular camps within the DR Family of Churches with all racial groups"

(Tobie de Wet: Calvary No.36)

Basically the researcher has found that the RCA congregations in Kwa Zulu Natal have not yet got off the mark to organize combined services with the NGKA and the NGSK but it appears that they are more comfortable to worship with the White congregations because of historical ties. However, the majority of respondents would like to experience combined services and fellowship with the NGKA and NGSK. The researcher's view is that this could only be made possible if the present leadership of the RCA takes the initiative. The 1994 Synod mandated the leadership to do this.

### 10.6 Evangelical and Ecumenical debate

In the early years especially in the 80's there were ministers in the RCA who held strong ecumenical

views. During this period due to the strong ecumenical influence the RCA was in a position to respond and make recommendations regarding the injustices in our country. Thus, many resolutions in this direction were tabled at the 1980 Synod. Parallel to this ecumenical response, the RCA never stopped in its evangelical calling. According to the writer, a balanced theological approach towards bringing the good news to the people was evident. It must be emphasised that the church during high apartheid times could not remain silent in the face of harsh state repression, detention without trial, no freedom of speech or the press and the banning of organizations that sought to address these injustices and work towards a democratic South Africa. In the writer's opinion it was imperative for the RCA to become pro-active and to become the voice of the voiceless. This then for the writer did not mean that the RCA ditched its evangelical duties for engagement in politics. The writer believes that it was God's given right's to the church to respond to the injustices that were perpetrated in our land.

Tensions began to appear within the ranks of the leadership of the RCA, especially after the Ottawa experience that declared apartheid a sin and a heresy. The distinction between those who embraced ecumenical and evangelical positions began to emerge very rapidly. From the writers point of view, those who chose to adopt a strong evangelical position became very comfortable with the NGK. The NGK on the other hand praised and thanked these ministers for behaving in an evangelical and brotherly fashion. The NGK was satisfied with this position because there was now no concerted effort by the RCA leadership to challenge the apartheid system, so they took the RCA along with them and embraced their thorough evangelical endeavours.

Those ministers with a strong ecumenical position, soon gave up their status in the NGK as an act of identification with the RCA. They lost their status as ministers of the RCA on "technical" grounds and thus the ecumenical emphasis of the RCA went with them. It was then, when this vacuum was created

that strong evangelical influences became the order of the day in the RCA and still prevails in the present time.

The present membership of the RCA have not clearly grasped the meaning of being ecumenical. The writer's view is that, they are not being educated about an ecumenical responsibility, rather, they are informed that they must simply worry about the Gospel, which to them must mean soul saving only.

As far as the writer is concerned, both the evangelical and ecumenical characteristics should be prevalent in the church of God in order to have a balanced theological view.

David Bosch has written widely, about the all comprehensive mandate to the church. In his work **"Witness to the world: the Christian mission in theological perspective"**, 1980, Bosch examines the differences between evangelicals and ecumenicals. Various denominations in one way or the other, portrays either an ecumenical or evangelical position or even both.

There have however developed tensions between churches who experience the different positions. This tension was mirrored in the RCA. There were moves to push the RCA towards a strong ecumenical stand, whilst others saw this effort as dabbling in politics and thus began to push the RCA towards a thorough evangelical position.

In the writer's view the RCA should not distance itself from the holistic imperative as a mandate to preach the Gospel. The writer set out to test the feelings and opinions of the RCA as to how they viewed their church regarding the Evangelical Pentecostal and Ecumenical emphasis. The following responses were recorded.

## Ecumenical and Evangelical debate

RCA is Evangelical	85%
RCA is Pentecostal and Evangelical	8.5%
RCA is Pentecostal, Evangelical and Ecumenical	3.2%
No comment	3.3%

### 10.6.1 Comments

*"We have a bit of everything. Although we took an evangelical stand with the Laudium Declaration, we tried to the best of our ability to take a middle ground. The RCA is in the middle ground. We have our ties with the ecumenical bodies.*

*(Interview 13:04:95 N*

*"In practice it was ecumenical, Pentecostal and evangelical"*

*(Interview 21:02:95 No 85)*

### 10.7 Apartheid

The researcher put a set of questions that is connected to Apartheid to the respondents. This section will be analysed under the following headings:

10.7.1 **Separate Indian Church:**

The respondents were asked how they felt that the RCA was organized as a separate "Indian" church. The following responses were recorded:

**Separate Indian Church**

Not in favour	68%
Unsure	22%
No comment	10%

The following phrases were recorded:

- *"unhappy"*
- *"should not have been so?"*
- *"disappointed"*
- *"contradictory to word of God"*
- *"unjust to have segregation"*
- *"It was terrible"*

10.7.1.1 **Comments - Laity**

*"Very strongly against this. There should be a change. Although we have a democratic South Africa, we don't have a democratic church"*

*(Interview 11:02:95 No 26)*

*"Was not presentable in the sight of God"*

*(Interview 7:02:95 No 31)*

*"It was very ungodly for so-called Christian to mastermind such a move"*

*(Interview 15:07:95 No 37)*

*"I don't like this idea. I think it is time that the "Indian" church should and must stand on their own two feet and should make their own decisions to join the Uniting Church"*

*(Interview 1995 No. 38)*

*"I feel that this was one of the most evil practices that apartheid instituted, separating the brotherhood, forming separate development, thus forming descension in the Christian body itself"*

*(Interview 1995 No. 41)*

*"The church should not place distinction on colour, race and creed. It was sad to see that the church practised the policies of the Nationalist government and introduced apartheid into the church"*

*(Interview 1995 No. 60)*

10.7.1.2

### RCA LEADERSHIP COMMENTS

*Evang. George Sebastian*

*"Heretical! Indians who were converts of a White Church should have become full*

*members of that church and not be segregated because of culture, geography or colour"*

*(Interview 13:12:94 No, 75)*

*Prop. Victor Pillay*

*"Because of our demographic system mission started in an apartheid system. It is a specialized ministry. It was not the ideal situation".*

*(Interview 23:05:95 No. 76)*

*Rev Greg. Denysschen*

*"In South Africa it has a negative connotation because of the history of apartheid. But it is amazing elsewhere in the world where there has not been the history of apartheid, you have congregations that are founded on ethnic lines. The populations of those countries are quite happy with it, eg. in Singapore you get a Malay Church and you get a Chinese church and sometimes the same denominations have a Chinese, Malay and Indian congregations and that seems to have invited practical solutions to where languages have differed and cultural forms have differed"*

*(Interview 5:06:95 No 83)*

*Rev S Sukdaven*

*"In the Indian community at first the RCA was branded as working with the DRC to*

*support apartheid. Because of the link with the NGK we were not favourable in the Indian community. We were branded by non Reformed Churches as a "colour-bar church"*

*(Interview 21:02:95 No 85)*

*Rev K Moodley*

*"It is historical. They sent missionaries to work amongst the Indian people and the church began to take focus. Those days each group was among themselves. Even today it is like that. For the DRC, I would say it was a calling from God. One must accept that with thankfulness . Amongst all the other churches, they choose to do work amongst us"*

*(Interview 29:06:95 No. 86)*

*Rev Gerrie Lubbe*

*"The RCA played directly into the hands of those who designed the policy and it's theological training."*

*(Interview 23:02:95 No. 88)*

*Rev V Francis*

*" At that time it was very workable because of the apartheid system. One has to be wise enough in a particular situation, how to operate in a church. Although it was not the Kingdom of God and it was very workable in every given situation. One has to use the workable strategy, at that time it was workable."*

*(Interview 9:10:95 No 92)*

*Rev Charl Le Roux*

*"This was our problem all the time"*

*(Interview 20:02:95 No. 89)*

*Rev Klippies Kritzinger*

*"It should never have happened as a separate denomination. The DRC had a separate denomination. The DRC had a guilty conscience that in actual fact they had supported the repatriation of Indians which was mooted by the National Party. They had to make up for their wrongs. They began to pamper this little church, budgeting for this church out of proportion with the other section of the DR family. You cannot in any way in the Reformed understanding of the church justify the creation of a separate Indian Church".*

*(Interview 20:02:95 No. 90)*

The abhorrence of the apartheid system is clearly evident from the members that responded. As compared with the remarks of the present leadership there was a certain amount of reluctance to condemn apartheid outright. The writer has observed that Rev Denysschen in his response tried to justify the development of the RCA along the lines of ethnicity by quoting examples where ethnic churches thrived very well where apartheid was absent. To the writer it appears that Rev Denysschen saw this as overcoming language and cultural barriers, but he missed the point of deliberate racial segregation of the DR Family of churches.

According to Prof PJ Maartens (Interview 19:10:95) a separate Indian Church could not possibly be accepted as a biblical paradigm for missions. He further pointed out that it is contrary to the scriptures, and that God has no impartiality because the Gospel is universal. Prof Maartens had the following to mention:

*"All the Greek communities were viewed as Soma tou Christou indicating that the body of the church is singular. The church is always considered by Paul as a single church. The only justifications would be language barriers. If so the NGK may have considered the RCA as a partner or as part of the English Dutch Reformed Congregation with the same doctrine, confession, discipline and church order."*

*(Interview 19:10:95 No 93)*

#### 10.7.2 Mixed Marriages Act

According to Regehr (1979: 150) the NGK had begun its role of formulating palatable general principles to justify the separatist and segregationist policies of the successive Nationalist Government.

The Federal Mission Council (FMC) which was formed by the NGK in 1942 maintained a strict policy of racial separation. The FMC lost no time to petition the then government to transform church policy into a legislative program. It was in 1942 that the executive of the FMC urged the minister of native affairs that mixed marriages should be prohibited that measures be taken against the evil of extramarital, interracial sexual relations (Regehr 1979: 151).

The researcher wishes to point out that the FMC is constituted from the following churches; nine DRC

Synods, which is the four provincial Synods of the NGK, the three Synods of the NGK "daughter" churches the HNK and the GK. The FMC offered the following reasons why the White DRC wished to continue to follow the policy of racial separation.

*"It is the conviction of the majority of Afrikaans-speaking South Africans and the majority of the members of the DRC that the only way of ensuring the continued survival of the nation is by observing the principles of racial separation"*

*(Regehr 1979: 151-152)*

In 1915 the Cape NGK Synod instructed church councils strongly to oppose the marriage of Whites and 'Coloured' people because of the allegedly evil results of that would be produced by such a marriage. It is further recorded that in 1920 the GK General Synod not only condemned mixed marriages but required a White person who contracted such a union to join the local Coloured congregation (Furlong 1988: 2).

As far as the Afrikaans church's were concerned mixed marriages, legislation became imperative because there was insecurity that poor Whites were living in abject socioeconomic conditions amongst Black people who were considered to be aliens (Furlong 1988: 3).

The writer wishes to point out that the NGK was responsible for the introduction of mixed marriage legislation. The support for the mixed marriages legislation became a foundation for apartheid. The NGK thanked the Government in 1949 for their 'courageous act' against mixed marriages.

Furlong (1988: 16) informs us that scores of NGK ministers threatened to refuse to conduct mixed marriages. The conservative actuaries of the General Synod Dr Dirk Fourie supported this position.

According to Prof P Maartens (Interview 19:10:95) some of the central figures involved in this issue were members of the Transvaal congregation in 1965. The mixed couple was a Scottish man and a Coloured woman called Norma. Prof P Maartens had the following to comment:

"It became a problem of the church since its inception. The church in Transvaal were outspoken about the Mixed Marriages Act. Here I saw the hardship of apartheid. You can have a community torn apart. Mixed couples at that time had to go to Swaziland or abroad to legalise their marriage. I condemn it in the strongest terms. The RCA did not escape the hardship of apartheid.

(Interview 19:10:95 No. 93)

There is enough evidence that suggests that the NGK played a major role and undertook a persistent campaign to see that the mixed marriages act is legislated. The writer put this question to the RCA leadership to test their opinion on how they felt that the NGK, their "mother" church was responsible for pressurising the government to legislate on this issue. The following responses were recorded:

10.7.2.1 **RCA LEADERSHIP COMMENTS**

**Evang. Benette Shunmugam**

*"It was terrible using the Bible to back their argument. It was very unchristian which cannot be tolerated"*

(Interview 9:02:95 No. 80)

**Rev. L. Shunmugam**

*"It was wrong on their part. People should choose"*

(Interview 18:05:95 No. 84)

**Rev. S. Sukdaven**

*"This act was an act of sin itself"*

*(Interview 21:02:95 No.85)*

**Rev. N. Shunmugam**

*"The DRC should not have been close to the government"*

*(Interview 13:04:95 No.87)*

**Rev. Gerrie Lubbe**

*"It certainly was indefensible. There was a discussion that we give up our marriage officers' status in protest of the mixed marriages act. When we lost our status, we were not sad that we lost our marriage office status. It was a dilemma solved. There is no way in which the state can interfere into such an intimate sphere of human life. The interesting thing about 78/79 P.W. Botha said that his problem was that, the churches did not agree that he would amend the Act if the churches came to him with one voice. At that time it was a farce. Why wait for the church? In the end he did not wait for the church and he repealed the Act"*

*(Interview 23:02:95 No. 88)*

**Rev. Klippies Kritzinger**

*"I think this was very much influenced by the Nazi theology of the 1930's. In 1935 a mission board coming from Malawi or Zambia took a decision that mixed marriages should be forbidden. The racial purity idea came from Nazi Germany in the 1930's.*

*The DRC pushed it and the Nationalist Party ran with it and when they took power this was one of the first Acts that was passed. There is no biblical reason against mixed marriages. The Bible will be upset if you marry someone who is not a Christian"*  
(Interview 20:02:95 No. 90)

**Rev. K. Moodley**

*"This was one of the matters on the agenda when we went to see P.W. Botha. This Act is something that we did not want"*  
(Interview 29:06:95 No. 86).

**Rev. Greg Denysschen**

*"The way I see it, it was P.W. Botha bargained with the church and said, I would take away the bonus obligations if you allow me to take away the mixed marriages act and it was a kind of bargaining process that was going on there. The mixed marriage's Act was one of the cornerstones of apartheid. In my opinion there should never have been such an Act"*  
(Interview 5:06:95 No. 83)

The writer observed that the RCA leadership was in total agreement that the mixed marriage's Act was wrong and ungodly. It is however important to consider the historical development within this context. The writer belonging to the RCA for 22 years experienced harsh criticisms from critics who could not believe that he belonged to the daughter church of the NGK who masterminded this Act. The RCA has voiced its disapproval of such an Act as early as 1976. The 1976 RCA Synod adopted the following resolution:

*"Contracting a marriage is primarily a personal and family concern. Church and state should refrain from prohibiting racially mixed marriages because they have no right to limit choice of a marriage on the grounds of race or colour"*

*(Actas 1976)*

The writer is of the opinion that the mixed marriages act provided the seeds to facilitate the growth of apartheid and that it also began to flourish in the fertile soil of the RCA. Members developed a mind-set that was influenced greatly by the NGK.

### 10.7.3 TRICAMERAL SYSTEM

The writer wanted to determine how the RCA membership viewed the majority of those who were not included in the power sharing process with the Nationalist government.

#### **Tricameral System**

Strongly opposed system	70%
Favoured system	5%
No comment	25%

The following words and phrases were used to describe their response.

- *flop*

- *unjust*
- *disappointed*
- *heart sore*
- *stinking government system*
- *"Blacks" left out in the cold.*

10.7.3.1                    Comments - Laity

*"definitely not good because of racism. There was no democracy. Blacks were left out"*

*(Interview 9:02:95 No. 35)*

*"Utter trash, a waste of rate payers money. A group of monkeys"*

*(Interview 15:07:95 No 37)*

*"Too young at that stage to understand this concept. Now I view it with disgust"*

*(Interview 95 No 38)*

*"A bunch of puppets"*

*(Interview 95 No 42)*

*"As South Africans the Black community was denied representation at Government level. This was unfair to the majority of the South African population".*

*(Interview 95 No 60)*

RCA LEADERSHIP COMMENTS:

Evang. Benette Shunmugam

*"We did not like it. I thought that maybe an opportunity to start something different something new. Anything is better than nothing".*

*(Interview 9:02:95 No 80)*

Rev Greg Denysschen

*"When that thing was introduced, I thought it was the biggest mistake ever made"*

*(Interview 5:06:95 No 83)*

Rev K Moodley

*"In that time in which it came, there was a gap. I don't think SA was ready for a multiparty government. It began at a time where there was very little support for this peoples, but somehow they got in some form of power sharing. But I think it was only an interim period."*

*(Interview 29:06:95 No 86)*

Rev N Shunmugam

*"At that time I looked at it as a step forward compared to the past and I knew that sometimes there was going to be a shift from this, but it was a good step forward. In a certain sense the Blacks were catered for in the Homeland policy"*

*(Interview 13:04:95 No 87)*

Rev Klippies Kritzinger

*"So the root cause of the split, I think were the crises in the Indian community at large with the Tricameral election. It split not only the church. It split the community and followers apart. It caused tremendous strains and it could not leave the church unaffected, not if there were contextual theologians in the church who were sensitive to what was happening and could not just keep on preaching the gospel of salvation without taking a stand on this issue."*

*(Interview 20:02:95 NO. 90)*

10.7.4 Stand against apartheid and injustices in SA

The researcher introduced this question to find out whether their churches actively opposed the system and the injustices that were perpetrated through its implementation. RCA stand against apartheid and injustices was analysed as follows:

RCA did not take a stand	50%
RCA took a stand	22%
Unsure	3%
No comment	25%

Nobody mentioned that the church should not take a stand. The Calvary congregation is noted to take a strong stand as compared to all the other congregations. The older folk mentioned that the RCA took a very strong stand in 1980.

10.7. 4.1      **Comments - Laity**

*"The RCA supported the system. They went with the tide"*

*(Interview 16:03:95 No 17)*

*"Never hear the church's voice"*

*(Interview 12:03:95 No 23)*

*"Personally I think not, because of the segregation in the church itself. Perhaps individually we of the RCA made a stand by stating we wanted to join the URCSA"*

*(Interview 95 No 41)*

10.7. 4.2      **RCA LEADERSHIP COMMENTS**

***Evang. George Sebastian***

*"Yes to encourage at church level that apartheid is a heresy and not a Biblical doctrine"*

*(Interview 13:12:94 No 75)*

Rev N Shunmugam

*"The RCA had a prophetic voice all along and the church has to stand for what is just. The church did not accept injustice has evident in the Actas. The church should still speak out against injustices"*

*(Interview 13:04:95 No 87)*

Rev Greg Denyssen:

*"There have always been those in the RCA who have been very vociferous. They have always raised their voices and there had been in the past very strong attempts by pressure groups to sort of harness the RCA for a political agenda. There is still a presence in the RCA"*

*(Interview 5:06:95 No 83)*

Rev L Shunmugam

*"The church did make some attempt of trying to speak against it but via the Synod and not on the ground level"*

*(Interview 18:05:95 No 89)*

Rev Klippies Kritzinger

*"In this respect the Lenasia congregation was the strongest. Gerrie said that the Lord had called a new generation of prophets, the children of the streets of Soweto and they*

*are speaking to us. They are calling us to conversion. The RCA Lenasia addressed an open letter to the community of Lenasia regarding, their treatment of servants, maids and about apartheid".*

*(Interview 20:02:95 No 90)*

*Rev Gerrie Lubbe*

*"At the 1980 Synod there were a lot of pronouncements there. We bit of more that what we could chew at that time. But nevertheless I believe that a lot of prophetic statements came from there. It will be hard for me to say, but I think from the outside that the RCA is very cautious and that they try to steer clear of politics as was always the case from the side of the DRC that one should not mix religion and politics. To me it's been always a matter that the church should not keep quiet in the face of injustices. To me there are such clear mandates. I don't hear the RCA voice at all in that regard"(Interview 23:02:95 No 88)*

*Rev K Moodley*

*"When the RCA became a Synod, most of us were conscientised and we saw that the church had a prophetic role. Subsequently Synods took decisions. In 1968 we did not say much about apartheid. In 1976 I was part of the delegation to see the Prime Minister PW Botha".*

*(Interview 29:06:95)*

he researcher has observed that by and large the majority of the membership have indicated that the RCA

was not actively involved in opposing the injustices in our country. They also indicated their disappointment that they did not hear the voice of their church taking a stand against the apartheid system.

According to the responses from the present leadership there is indication of some form of resistance to apartheid, but in a very limited and cautious manner, but without congregational involvement.

The writer wishes to point out that after 1982 and the splits in the RCA, the RCA basically did nothing concrete to oppose the system, primarily because they were dependent on the NGK funds.

10.7. 5      **Should the church be doing this?**

The writer wanted to ascertain from the respondents whether the RCA as a church should be involved taking a stand against apartheid and injustices in society. Together with this question the writer also added the question whether the church should have any political involvement. It was explained to the respondents that this involvement actually meant social involvement and the opposing of injustices out of unjust political systems.

**Should the Church be doing this?**

RCA should be involved	55.5%
RCA should not be involved	25.5%
No comment	20%

10.7. 5.1      Comments - Laity

The following remarks were recorded:

*"but should not get involved in government structures"*

*"should not get involved in politics"*

*"A very delicate question"*

*"A very delicate question"*

*"On Biblical principles only"*

*"Social concerns, yes, but no politics from the pulpit."*

*"The church should voice its opinion against the injustices. When a community is disadvantaged by a political system, the church should say no"*

*(Interview 29:09:95 No 77)*

*"Politics affects everybody. People want spiritual upliftment, but it is also important they become realistic about the situation in the country. The RCA has a role to play"*

*(Interview 29:09:95 No 79)*

10.7. 5.2 RCA leadership Comments

Evang. Bennette Shunmugam

*"They are aware of the political situation. They are very conservative. Somehow they feel that the church should not forget preaching the message of the Gospel. In fact that was the sore point in the previous years. The church neglected the Gospel and concentrated more on the political awareness. Our belief is that we were primarily called to preach the gospel and at the same time speak out against injustices, but somehow we are more conservative and we are not radically opposing injustices"*

(Interview 9:02:95 No 80)

Rev Greg Denysschen

*"Well I suppose if the RCA is called of Jesus Christ, like the church has always been involved in the care of orphan children, alcoholics and many of the real social concerns. I would say to get involved in social concerns, it will be too one sided. I don't think that the church's job in politics. I think that politicians are doing a very special job, therefore leave them to it and let the church get on with its business"*

(Interview 5:06:95 No 83)

Rev Laven Shunmugam

*"That's our calling, to take care of the needy, oppressed and so on"*

(Interview 18:05:95 No 84)

**Rev K Moodley**

*"Every church has a calling as far as social concerns are concerned, but I think the problem is, how do we coordinate the social concerns, what do we do about it? You just cannot make statements about social concerns. In the past we were just making statements. My question is, what can we do practically*

*(Interview 26:09:95 No 86)*

**Rev Charl Le Roux**

*"There were prophetic voices, voices of conscience. We felt convinced that it was made alive by God's Spirit"*

*(Interview 20:02:95 No 89)*

**Prop Victor Pillay:**

*"The church has a role to address the suffering people in a political manner, but not to propagate a political stance, but from a Christian point of view"*

*(Interview 23:05:95 No 76)*

10. 7. 6

**RCA and Theological Faculty at the University of Durban-Westville (UDW)**

The writer was accepted as a candidate for the ministry of the RCA and thus took up his studies at UDW towards a B.Theol. degree. He subsequently changed his degree to a Bachelor of Arts degree because

it was brought to his attention that he should not be involved in the social gospel. It appeared to the writer that his mind was being hijacked to study theology in such a way as it would suit conservative ideological views. The 1980 Acta only mentions the name of the researcher and does not state any reasons for the researcher's change of direction.

The researcher arranged an interview with Prof P Maartens who is the head of the department of Biblical Literature at UDW to find out his views on this subject. He expressed the following view:

*"Let us be frank about it. What other option was open for the church. The church at that stage could not enrol Shun Govender neither in Pretoria nor Stellenbosch University, given the fact that you have not established a university which in any case reflects the state policy at a given time. I had no problems that the university, because the university's function is to teach the principles that governs all structures of a society. Theology is part and parcel of what goes into the making of a university and if the NGK due to circumstances were instrumental in establishing a faculty here, so be it. I don't see any problem in that. As a matter of fact, if God used a broken stick at that time to establish something that could serve the needs of the community of the future, I would only be optimistic about it, then at least some good has come"*

*The faculty has now grown into an ecumenical institution. It is fully ecumenical now. The NGK has a very small presence".*

**(Interview 19:10:95 No 93)**

It appeared to the writer that the NGK together with the RCA had monopoly of the theology faculty. The RCA also had a liaison committee in place to hold negotiations with the Rector of UDW and its theology

faculty.

It was in 1980 that the RCA Synod approved the actions of the liaison committee and the SC for negotiating the sponsoring of a lecturer/professor to the theology faculty at UDW (Acta 1980: 53). Professor CJ Wethmar was thereafter called, ordained and inducted for this purpose. Synod further recommended that Christian Indian Representatives should serve on the Council of UDW and on the Indian Representative Council (Acta 1980: 54).

The writer also observed that special courses were designed for the older evangelists of RCA at the theology faculty of UDW. It was at this stage that the RCA was finalizing its position of the various long serving evangelists to now become full time ministers in the RCA. Prior to 1986 all the existing evangelists did become full time ministers which they rightly deserved.

In 1990 the following resolution was passed by the RCA:

*"Synod decides to instruct CTAM for a deeper involvement of the NGK. Professor at UDW theology faculty in the area of training of ministers as well as that of evangelists and other related matters"*

*(Acta 1990: 30)*

After the splits in the RCA there was a vacuum in the RCA's leadership since the loss of status of ministers. The RCA therefore resurrected the positions of evangelists so that the rebuilding of the RCA could continue. In view of this the establishing of the RCA created an added advantage to develop evangelists.

#### 10.7. 6. 1 **Apartheid Theological Education Institutions**

The writer also observed that different education institutions were chosen to train theological students according to the race of the student. At UDW only Indian theological students were being trained for the ministry for the RCA. According to the writer this fitted very neatly into the apartheid structure because Indian students could only study at UDW which was established as an apartheid institution. Our theological students cannot be blamed for this, but it did appear that the NGK wanted it this way and that they were very influential with the Rector of UDW at that time. Apartheid in this way became a blessing in disguise for Indians because careers could be developed in a more secured and protected environment than the majority of oppressed people. The NGK really put all their effort into this project to see to it that Indian ministers are trained to reach and serve the Indian community only. This was attempted for the other racial groups as well. The candidates from the NGK could go and serve in congregations of the other racial groups, but not vice-versa.

The writer has also observed that special reports are presented to the Synods regarding the activities of the UDW theology faculty and also progress of theological candidates of the RCA. Usually two delegates or professors' turn up for Synod. Prof P.J. Maartens and Prof CJ Greyling were often represented at the RCA Synods.

#### 10.7. 6. 2 **RCA Negotiations with UDW Management**

Prof CJ Wethmar accepted a call to the theological faculty of the university of Pretoria. This now posed a big problem for the university because now they needed a qualified person at least with a doctorate with specialization in Dogmatics and Ethics in order to maintain the faculty at UDW. There was a long

delay in filling this vacancy and according to a meeting between the liaison committee and the Rector of UDW on the 2 December 1982, Prof Greyling informed the delegation that it was now becoming embarrassing to him as Rector by the long delay in filling this vacancy (Agenda 1984: 91, 92).

The writer has observed that there were several negotiations with the University management in order that the right persons are appointed to the faculty of theology to maintain the faculty. The leadership of the RCA were questioned to ascertain their views on whether the faculty of theology of UDW was an apartheid move and whether the faculty were biased towards the RCA. The following opinions were recorded:

#### 10.7. 6.3      **RCA LEADERSHIP COMMENTS**

##### **Prop. Victor Pillay**

*"If other churches require help, the faculty offers help in any way. The faculty was predominantly catering for the RCA training"*

*(Interview 23:05:95 No. 76)*

##### **Rev. Laven Shunmugam**

*"From my experience at UDW if there were separate courses for its students only then something would be wrong. We have the same courses for all students. I cannot say what the NGK had in mind. I think because we are students there they would require persons to report on students progress"*

*(Interview 18:05:95 No. 84)*

**Rev. Nobin Shunmugam**

*"I would not say so. I agree at Stellenbosch and Pretoria the DRC had its own Faculty but at UDW the only reason why they wanted somebody here is because of RCA students. The motive was not so much political. Well people could have a misconception. Other churches also had their ministers here. All the mainline churches have their ministers here and therefore the RCA felt someone was needed here"*

*(Interview 13:04:95 No. 87)*

**Rev. Greg Denysschen**

*"I don't see it biased towards the RCA because I think most of the lecturers there are not of the RCA. I don't even think that the faculty is in any way attached to the RCA. We have a minister's post, but that is about all"*

*(Interview 5:06:95 No. 83)*

**Rev. Lippies Kritzinger**

*"It was a part of the grand idea of apartheid. Prof SP. Olivier and Prof Greyling were Broederbonders"*

*(Interview 20:02:95 NO. 90)*

**Rev. Gerrie Lubbe**

*"I don't know what the situation now is. It was the question of funding. It was in line with apartheid. It had to provide special training for the RCA. It is a remnant of Apartheid very much so"*

*(Interview 23:02:95 No. 88).*

**Rev. Charl Le Roux**

*"We always had problems. Why must the NGK come in? It was a political fact.*

*(Interview 20:'02:95 No. 89)*

**Rev. K. Moodley**

*"I cannot agree with that. For me it was a place where I could go and get my theological education. In every university the NGK has a seat. There had to be a pastor there to guide them, away from liberation theology and all kinds of theologies.*

*University is a place where students can be misled"*

*(Interview 29:06:95 No. 86)*

**Rev. V. Francis**

*"They have done a very wise thing by establishing a faculty at UDW. Initially it was a good faculty and now I don't think it is doing justice because everything they do now, they want to accommodate the Blacks. It is not biased towards the RCA"*

*(Interview 9:10:95 No. 2)*

From the various views expressed the present leadership of the RCA do not see the faculty of theology being biased towards the RCA in anyway. According to the writer the NGK historically had great influence shaping the theology faculty to suit their ideological aspirations. It is really amazing how protective the NGK was towards the RCA theology students because according to the present Moderator of the RCA someone had to be there at the faculty to see to it that the RCA students are not influenced by liberation theology or situational theology and that a conservative theological outlook would be maintained. Probably there was also a fear that the students for the ministry would be influenced by socio-political and economic ideas.

#### 10.7. 6. 4      **Transformation - UDW Faculty of Theology**

The present theology faculty is undergoing a transformation. Prof Maartens (Acta 1994: 237) in his report to the RCA Synod made the following input:

*"The faculty of theology has a great opportunity to make a contribution in promoting relevant Christian leadership for our continent. The challenge is to begin identifying those areas which will enhance the total ministry of the church as well as to encourage creative involvement of Christians in shaping a democratic Ethos in South Africa."*

Prof Maartens further mentions that their challenge is to respond positively to our multi-religious context by developing interdisciplinary programmes to enhance dialogue and mutual understanding and to respond collectively to social problems confronting our society (Acta 1994: 237).

In the opening statement of the report in 1994 it is mentioned that during the past four years the faculty of theology had gone through a rapid period of transition in which it extended its services to the wider South African community.

#### 10. 8              **The Broederbond**

The writer is convinced that the Broederbond was a strong conservative force that influenced the NGK towards the policy of separate development.

According to Hope & Young (1983:30-31) lurking in the stage wings during the rise of the Afrikaner

nationalism was a stealthy actor, a secret organization known as the Afrikaner Broederbond. He further states that the five prime ministers since 1948 have been members of this organization.

Serfontein (1982:87) states that the tremendous force of the Broederbond was to be reckoned with especially in the NGK and also that it links these leaders from Parliament to church councils and local village communities in the smallest centres. All these are tightly knit together, each cell receiving regular directives from head office in Johannesburg. The secrecy of the Broederbond remained absolute.

Serfontein (1982:88) asserts that the Broederbond was the steel framework that kept the concrete structure of Afrikaner Nationalism together.

Hope & Young (1983:30) maintain that the Broederbond was originally designed as a service organization to help Afrikaner through the alienation they experienced as new comers to the Anglo-Saxon cities and it soon came to dominate the political sphere. It was further pointed out that the Broederbond used to tell the NGK what to do at church meetings.

(Hope and Young 1983:31)

This is what Serfontein had to say about the Broederbond.

*"In practice this means that practically half of all NGK ministers belong to the Broederbond. One can regard the Broederbond as a fantasy game of cowboys and crooks played by adults yearning back to their youth, when their play included secret clubs, meeting in caves, with secret votes and signs ... The destinies of the NGK and the Broederbond are closely interlocked and intertwined. The Broederbond establishment under the leadership of Professor Carel*

*Boshoff and the NGK establishment under the leadership of acting moderator Kobus Potgieter have identical ideals and visions of political and theological solutions ... With one single exception all 12 members of the Broad Moderature, which can be regarded as the cabinet of the NGK, are Broedebonders.*

*(Serfontein 1982:92-93)*

The following are the views of Prof PJ Maartens:

*"There have been major influences regrettably so. It is no longer an issue because it is turned into a open cultural organization. In as much as an organization is secretive, it is exclusive and becomes obstructive in the way of communicating God's Gospel. Historically since 1925 it was most certainly a pressure group and very selective group which had a very strong hand in determining the key holders both in political and virtually all sectors of the community and in that sense I see them as an evil organization.*

*(Interview 19:10:95 No 93)*

Serfontein (1982 : 94) mentions that time and again the grip of the Broederbond on the NGK has been demonstrated. Serfontein (1982:106) reported that in the late 50's Professor Albert Geyser rejected the moral basis of apartheid and opposed the influence of the Broederbond inside and outside the church and as a result he was charged with "heresy" by the NHK.

The writer included this question about the Broederbond to ascertain from the respondents whether they had any knowledge about this secret organization's influence over the NGK which is the "mother" church of the RCA.

*The Broederbond*

<i>Never heard about Broedebond</i>	<i>61.7%</i>
<i>Heard about Broedebond</i>	<i>23.3%</i>
<i>No comment</i>	<i>16%</i>

**10. 8. 1**      *Comments - Laity*

*"This should never have happened in the first place"*

*(Interview 11:02:95 No 26)*

*"should not have been tolerated?"*

*(Interview 13:12:94 No 30)*

*"Too young at that stage to understand, but I am shocked that my elders did not challenge this. How sad"*

*(Interview 1995: No 31)*

**10. 8. 2**      *RCA LEADERSHIP COMMENTS*

*Rev K Moodley*

*"It did not affect me in any way. It did not affect the RCA"*

*(Interview 29:06:95 No 86)*

Rev N Shunmugam

*Definitely there has been much influence. We disapproved with it.*

*(Interview 13:04:95 No 87)*

Rev Charl Le Roux

*"They were very strong. For them the separate development policies must be continued in the church"*

*(Interview 20:2:95 No 89)*

Rev Greg Denysschen

*"Undoubtedly, that has been a curse on the DRC. I believe they used the DRC as a front for their cultural and economic agendas and that was tragic day that ministers of the DRC became Broederbonders and that really killed the life of the church"*

*(Interview 5:06:95 No 83)*

Rev Gerrie Lubbe

*"Their influence has been considerable. They are no longer calling the tune. They are not in the driving seat. They have always been very strong. It was the political influence in the church. The Broederbond suggested a different loyalty, put loyalty to Bond first above God".*

*(Interview 23:02:95 No 88)*

It is clear from the various responses that without a shadow of doubt, the Broederbond was a negative influence on the NGK. The researcher's opinion is that the NGK then became successful in implementing the racial separation of the churches and especially establishing the RCA along racial lines.

#### 10.9 **Belydende Kring:**

Initially this organisation was known as the "Broederkring" but its name was subsequently changed to Belydende Kring in order to be representative of both men and women.

Rev Klippies Kritzinger (Interview 20:2:95) views the BK in the following manner.

*"For me the BK had been a beacon of light. If it had not been for the BK, I would not have known a whole host of "Black" colleagues and "Coloured" colleagues. It is a space where I discovered who I was where "Black" Christians were radically politicised would accept me as a human being and not hate me because I was "white" but accepted me because I was willing to be human together with them and learn what it is to be human and learn what it is to be African. In spite of everything that I represented as a person with a white skin for me it was the most humanising experience I had in my life, so I will be perpetually grateful to the BK. It was also a group of people who understood the gospel as freedom and liberation. I learnt my theology not in the theological faculty of Pretoria, I learnt it in the streets of Germiston and Laudium then in the BK where you really had to wrestle with what does it mean to be a Christian in a country which claims to be Christian.... So the BK I think is overrated, I think people linked the BK to a communist kind of image, it was a highly inefficient organization in many ways, but it was a vision of unity, a vision of humanity. So the BK after 10 yrs in 1984*

*published a booklet "Unity and Justice". Gerrie wrote an article on the unity discussion. It was overrated as a threat or something like that. It was a deeply committed group of people who said that we wanted to be Christian, fundamentally Christian, so Christian that we want to change the world. We want to have one church, we want to have a just society, so unity and justice were the focal points of the BK.*

*The BK is still in existence as a shell I think. It is like black theology. Because the cut of foreign funding, it has largely fallen apart, probably it suffers from its own success. The BK has been deeply successful in getting people who believe in church unity and justice into leadership positions of the NGSK and NGKA. In the RCA we were thrown out, so it failed within the RCA. Now the Churches seem to take over the task of the BK.*

*(Interview 20:02:95)*

Rev Gerrie Lubbe (Interview 23:02:95) shared the following about the BK:

"It is really nonexistent at the moment. It served its purpose. I'll be the first one to admit that we made mistakes. We did serve as a pressure group. It gave us an experience to know our brothers and sisters in the other churches, so I never regret that. One DRC minister alleged that the BK is busy with a coup d'etat. I had a laugh at that. We met together to foster the spirit of unity. At that time I think that it was very good".

(Interview 23:02:95 No 88)

According to Prof PJ Maartens (Interview 19:10:95) the BK at that particular time was the only haven for descending members of the RCA, not so much necessary in the Transvaal, because the Transvaal congregation constituted the nucleus of that particular perception. Prof PJ Maartens claims that he signed it with the Transvaal congregation. Furthermore Prof PJ Maartens mentions:

*"I never found myself obligated to put myself out and join the BK because I saw myself as part and parcel of the framework of what was constituted in the Transvaal... It was a pressure group that was necessary in areas especially in the Cape and I could see Natal, perhaps in Transvaal in the White communities. It was not necessary in Benoni, Germiston and the congregations which already joined the unity. The grounds for the BK fell away where we already had partial visible structures. I can say where there is no unity the BK can be justified and when the unity manifests itself eventually even if it is not fully implemented."*

*(Interview 19:10:95 No 93)*

### **10.9.1      Aims of BK**

The aims of the Belydende Kring are:

1. To proclaim the Kingship of Jesus Christ over all areas of life in church and state, and witness for this kingly rule.

2. To achieve organic church unity and to express this unity practically at all levels of the life of the church, namely at congregational, presbyterial and synodical levels.
3. To take seriously the prophetic task of the church with regard to oppressive structures and laws in South Africa, as well as to take seriously the priestly function with regard to the victims and the fear possessed oppressors who suffer as a result of the unchristian policy and practice in the land.
4. To let kingly rule of Christ triumph over the ideology of apartheid or "separate development" or any other ideology to the end that a more human way of life may be striven after in South Africa.
5. To promote the Evangelical liberation from unrighteousness, dehumanisation, alienation and lovelessness in church and in State, and nevertheless to work for true and proper reconciliation among all people.
6. To support ecumenical movements that promote the kingship of Christ on all levels of life, and all organisations within and without South Africa which strive for the above-mentioned aim.

The above information was gleaned from a BK membership application form.

## Bylendekring

Knew about the BK	15.5%
Did not know about BK	75%
Vaguely knew about BK	3.9%
No comment	6.6%

As for as the writer is concerned the BK really did put pressure on the NGK regarding its defence of apartheid. The BK tried in the times of high apartheid to foster the process of one united church. It appears to the writer that the conservative elements within the RCA leadership saw the BK as a thorn in the flesh. The researcher was the only member of the Emmanuel congregation who attended BK meetings and subsequently became a member. Most of the BK members from the Kwa Zulu Natal region came from the then known RCA Durban South. The majority of its membership was from Gauteng. From the research it is evident that the BK was not known among the RCA membership, especially in Kwa-Zulu Natal. Many in the RCA leadership view the BK as another political organization and thus many of them avoided the BK. The 1986 Synod recommended a committee to be appointed to study the constitution of the BK and report its findings to SC for recommendations to Synod.

(Acta 1986:41)

### 10.10 World Council of Churches (WCC)

The researcher intends to briefly outline the relationship between the World Council of Churches (WCC) and the NGK and trace how this impacted upon the RCA. The WCC was founded in 1948. Only the Transvaal and the Cape synods became members of the WCC. Things began to turn sour for the NGK

when the WCC decided to establish a special fund for the "**Programme to Combat Racism**" (PCR). The writer has written about the WCC and the Cottesloe Convention in Chapter III "**The Dutch Reformed Church and Apartheid**".

Regehr (1979 : 207) reports that the government hoped South African Christians would form a broad front against the WCC programme and demand, not only denunciation of grants to exiled organizations, but the withdrawal from the WCC itself. According to Serfontein (1982: 62) feelings against the WCC became particularly hostile after its PCR began making financial grants to liberation movements in Southern Africa from 1970 onwards. He further writes that since the Cottesloe Consultation both the Transvaal and Cape Synods rejected the Cottesloe conclusions and voted to withdraw from the WCC and the NHK soon followed in the same direction.

After the NGK rejected the findings of the Cottesloe Consultation they showed nothing but bitterness and enmity towards the WCC. The NGK viewed the WCC's theological stance as unsound and labelled them as a tool of Marxists and Moscow (Serfontein 1982 : 62).

Regehr (1979 : 195) the NGK found the resolutions of the Cottesloe Consultation be at a variance with church policy and an embarrassment to the government. Further he mentions that the Cape Synod rejected the findings as "**undermining**" the policy of separate development and as being in conflict with its traditional policy.

The researcher's opinion is that the NGK viewed the WCC as a terrorist and communist organization. This view has rubbed off on certain members within the RCA leadership. The RCA also did not take up membership with the WCC because of resentments from the leadership. Regehr (1979: 195)

mentions that in 1970 Dr J.D. "Koot" Voster, then the moderator of the NGK, told the Church that the WCC was not a church of God, but a church of revolution.

The writer's intention regarding the WCC was to gather from the RCA membership what they knew about the WCC and whether they ever heard about the WCC

### World Council of Churches (WCC)

RCA must join WCC	58.8%
RCA must not join WCC	5.5%
Never heard about the WCC	23.3%
No comment	12.4%

The RCA is not a member of the WCC, mainly because the WCC is a very strong ecumenical body which took up the challenge to work towards an apartheid free South Africa. The NGK really felt the crunch of the WCC programme to combat racism. In the writer's opinion the RCA simply followed the NGK on the issue of WCC membership. It is evident from the research that the people on the ground have no problems for the RCA to join the WCC.

#### 10.11 The South African Council of Churches (SACC)

The researcher has discussed the RCA and SACC relationship in Chapter VI "**Social involvement and the RCA**". The SACC was also a strong ecumenical force within the South African context.

## The South African Council of Churches (SACC)

RCA must continue membership in SACC	55.5%
Never heard about SACC	32%
No comment	12.5%

Once again it is evident that the majority of the respondents have no problem if the RCA takes up membership with the SACC. Because the SACC has taken a move towards evangelization and now that apartheid is being rapidly dismantled. The RCA views the SACC in a more positive light. The 1994 Synod has decided to continue its membership in the SACC. It is also evident that a large percentage of the respondents did not hear about a South African ecumenical body. In the writer's opinion the RCA congregations were not educated along ecumenical lines and therefore did not receive any information regarding the SACC. The leadership of the RCA were quite content to steer the RCA congregations away from ecumenical discussion.

### 10.12 Finance

Financial dependency on the DRC has really raised many questions with the RCA. In Rev S. Govenders' unpublished letter (3rd February 1977) he maintains that the RCA was utterly dependent upon the NGK in order to maintain its existence. He further points out that if the financial support from the NGK is withheld, then the separate structural identity and existence of the RCA would collapse and come to an immediate end. Rev S. Govender thus supported the view that the issue of the DRC's financial obligations with the RCA has become a determinative factor for structural existence of this mission

church and for the maintenance of its ministry (letter dated 3 February 1977).

Prof PJ Maartens (Interview 19:10:95) had the following input:

*"In all fairness no, but it was a source of confrontation yes because there were committees established in which ministers who would see themselves in a position where they could dictate to the 'daughter' churches. In some of the committees people could be abstinent, they were pushy. They dictated on matters of salary, status of many matters of the church, training etc. Often it became a committee which members of the committee dreaded because they saw this head on collusion constantly and many a times ministers have said if only they could get away from that system so there will be more direct link without sort of confrontation Thus financial aid in that sense, it was a source of confrontation. I don't think that the financial one is really much of an issue, yes it was because the place where these matters were sorted out, the budgets were discussed so it had to be done. Yes it was in some way that the "Mother" church dictated, but in fairness to the NGK I don't think that money was ever an obstacle or was ever a means by which it enforced certain things. I am just saying it was source of confrontation."*

(Interview 19; 10; 95 No93)

The researcher wanted to test whether financial considerations were the key binding factor to reinforce apartheid ideologies in the RCA.

The policy in respect of financial assistance to daughter churches reads as follows from the Acta of the

first RCA Synod in 1968:

1. *To promote increasing financial responsibility by the Daughter-Church, the assistance by the Mother Church institutions will be given by way of annual subsidies;*
  2. *this subsidy will be systematically be decreased in accordance with an agreement arrived at between the Churches;*
  3. *the Church Councils of Daughter-Churches will be given a voice in the Administration and Control over the Congregational Funds.*
- (Acta 1968: 68)*

In 1976 a trust fund for special projects was established for the RCA. It was reported that Rev D.J. Pypers and Rev E.J. Manikkam expressed the RCA's Synods' deep appreciation and thanks to the NGKA for the substantial contributions received (Acta 1976: 117). The total sum of money in 1976 was R2 487.47. It was interesting to note that these funds were made available from the NGKA.

#### 10.12.1 **Block Grant**

The RCA received finance from the NGK as a "Block Grant". This block grant was firstly meant for the extension of the RCA and for witnessing among non-Christian Indians (Acta 1986: 26). From the 1990 Acta there seems to be a different emphasis that gained priority regarding the finance of the "Block Grant". The following resolution by the 1990 Synod was passed:

*"Synod accepts the ASSK's decision of requesting SSK's to support a specific post in the RCA, and not send the finance to an impersonal Block Grant. Synod requests SSK's in their region to take full responsibility for the Ministers post in their region"*  
(Acta 1990: 47)

It appears to the researcher that the minister's salary requirements took precedents to the outreach work.

It is recorded in the 1990 Acta that the Administrator gave assistance from the "Block Grant" according to the needs of the ministers concerned (Acta 1990: 47).

The 1990 Synod resolved to terminate the "Block Grant" as such from April 1991 and that all the incoming funds will be kept in a special Synodical Fund for ministers or evangelist posts (Acta 1990: 64).

To further show how dependent the RCA was on the NGK the ministers were informed to communicate and keep close contact with the NGK congregations or committees who are sponsoring the post and also that relationships should not be strained unnecessarily by insensitive attitudes and actions. Furthermore the 1990 Synod resolved that the Presbytery Committee should see to it that at the establishing of new congregations, financial guarantees both by the NGK bodies and from the members, are fully provided for (Acta 1990: 63).

#### 10.12.2 RCA Financial Constraints

A certain Mahendra P. Sunghal requested support from the RCA to conduct seminars on Hinduism and the New Age with the Churches in South Africa. Although the SC indicated that they will warmly

receive him the following resolution highlights financial constraints in the RCA:

*"Synod decides that the Clerk of Synod write to Dr Sunghal offering accommodation and meals as well as love-offerings collected during the meetings or seminars and explain to him the difficult financial position of the RCA, regretfully rendering the RCA incapable of any other financial assistance"*

*(Acta 1994: 192)*

#### 10.12.3 **The Narollah Trust**

It is reported in the 1994 Acta that RCA Sunthosham is going through some financial crisis period and that this seems to be the problem everywhere, monies are coming in very slowly, even though fund raising is done (Acta 1994: 287). The **Narollah Trust** helped to fund the post by R15 000.00 until the end of 1993. The 1994 Acta record that the Western-Cape Synod may not be able to meet the required amount for 1993/94 without the contribution of the Narollah Trust and that Western Cape Synod will not be able to provide funds after the retirement of Rev Pypers, for both the post of a minister and evangelist (Acta 1994: 288).

#### 10.12.4 **JJ Boshoff Trust Fund**

Two amount of R6 098.93 and R2 797.97 was received from this estate for the RCA (Agenda 1994: 220). The 1994 Synod resolved to invest R6 098.93 until the compounded interest amounts to R30

000.00 and this amount will be invested in a fixed deposit. It was further resolved that the interest of this account will be utilized for theological student bursaries.

The researcher attempted to give an overview of how NGK finances are connected to the RCA. Now the writer will consider the responses from his interviews and questionnaires.

From his research the writer ascertained from the respondents that they were funded in the following ways:

- (a) tithes and offerings
- (b) donations from NGK
- (c) functions
- (d) tent-making ministry, e.g. driving school
- (e) bazaars and cake sales
- (f) curry and rice sales
- (g) love gifts
- (h) NGK funds

**Finance**

RCA is obligated to NGK funding and funds kept RCA in Apartheid mould	33.4%
RCA was not obligated to NGK funds and funds did not foster apartheid ideologies in the RCA	22.2%
RCA was financially obligated in the past	6.6%
Did not know about RCA funding	15.6%
No comment	22.2%

10.12.5      **Comments - Laity**

*"We are totally dependent on them. The RCA will be free. It will make the church poorer, but better for spiritual matters. The minister will work harder"*

*(Interview 19:03:95 No. 18)*

*"if it gives money, looks like it controls the church"*

*(Interview 7:02:95 No. 31)*

*"They run to the white church for money. The youth run there too"*

*(Interview 29:09:94 No. 82)*

*"Yes definitely. I think that the RCA should have made a difference long ago, but money is keeping them back"*

*(Interview 1995, No. 38)*

*"Not a major factor, but finance played a role in the separation"*

*(Interview 1995 No. 59)*

10.12.6      **RCA Leadership Comments**

***Evang. Benette Shunmugam:***

*"From what I observe nobody came to tell us how to work. After 1986 there was no restriction. The RCA always spoke to the NGK about their attitude. Our church will survive. The NGK spoilt us. We have to trust God"*

*(Interview 9:02:95 No. 80)*

Rev. V. Francis

*"Majority of the money comes from the local church. We are obligated to an extent. If the DRC don't contribute, the congregation will be under great pressure. They will have a guilt conscience that they now have to pay their minister a full salary.*

*God leads different people in different ways at different times and that God led those men at a cost to spread the Gospel and born in an apartheid system we had to live in that system and grow the church in the system because the country's system is like that. I doubt their intention was political"*

*(Interview 9:10:95 No. 92)*

Rev. Greg Denysschen

*"Well I don't know what was in their minds in the initial stages, but it seems clear to me even if that was the hidden goal it did not succeed. Historically the RCA was the one that spearheaded the opposition against the DRC.*

*It is a practical reality that their funds have almost stopped. I think there is a small trickling of funds still coming in. We can carry the can"*

*(Interview 13:12:94 No. 75)*

Rev. Nobin. Shunmugam:

*"Within the RCA I personally don't see it anywhere. I don't think the RCA saw it in that way because it was not forced upon the church. I would say there is a financial obligation"*

*(Interview 13:04:95 No. 87)*

Rev. L. Shunmugam

*"In the past Jeshurun received NGK funds. We don't receive any funds at the moment. I would not say that the church became obligated, but because of the situation of being established by the NGK. There is that possibility, but the individual church still could decide on their own"*

*(Interview 18:05:95 No. 84)*

Rev. Gere Lubbe

*"Money played a very big role. The money has strings attached"*

*(Interview 23:02:95 No. 88)*

Rev. Charle Roux

*"It was an ideological move. Even the Uniting Church is strongly dependent on the NGK. If the Confessing Church can survive, so can the RCA"*

*(Interview 20:02:95 No. 89)*

Rev. Klippies Kritzinger

*"It certainly had a very deep influence on the RCA. I am not sure whether the DRC deliberately orchestrated it like this. I think the dependency was largely in their minds of the RCA. The DRC was not pulling the strings all the time. So their minds were captive. They certainly did not want to anger their "mother" church. They wanted to*

*be nice good missionaries of the young church. They were very committed to the positions they had"*

*(Interview 20:02:95 No. 90)*

*Rev. K. Moodley*

*"We teach the congregation to tithe. At the moment the congregation cannot pay their minister unless we get subsidies so we have subsidies from the NGK Bloemfontein ... I don't think that their funding, reinforced apartheid ideologies. I think that the NGK is very sincere in spite of all their faults about their missionary calling. The RCA will continue if subsidies stop, this is why we lowered the salary scales"*

*(Interview 29:06:96 No. 86)*

#### 10.12.7 Subsidy Cuts : NGKA

The writer also enquired from the RCA leadership if foreign funding was received by them. Through the research it was established that RCA Emmanuel in Sydenham was the only congregation to receive funds from Germany.

There were subsidy cuts to the ministers of the NGKA because those ministers began to challenge the apartheid structures of the church. The researcher asked the leadership how they viewed this. Nearly everyone clearly felt that this line of action was not right at all.

10.12.7.1 Comments

Rev. Greg Denysschen

*"The DRC cut sponsoring of their own ministers. A number of churches had to merge, posts have been frozen, key posts were not filled. it is clear that the DRC was in dire financial straits and so I don't think that there was a vindictive attempt to punish people as it was for their outspoken view"*

*(Interview 5:06:95 No 83)*

Rev. Klippies Kritzinger

*"This happened frequently to the Black Church, especially in the rural areas where there is a local Mission Board with a funding agency. Our Synods guaranteed our cheques... When the ministers lost their income the BK stepped in and paid their salaries"*

*(Interview 20:02:94 No. 90)*

Rev. K. Moodley

*"We view the subsidy cuts in the NGKA with serious concern. I spoke to the commissions of the NGK and said to them that this was not fair"*

*(Interview 29:06:95 No. 86)*

As far as the researcher is concerned, from the response and the Acta of the RCA there is no doubt whatsoever that the RCA became obligated to NGK funds. At their 1994 Synod there were approaches

to the NGK representatives for financial assistance. There was indication also that the NGK spoiled the RCA because the RCA is now experiencing financial constraints as the NGK funds are diminishing. It appears to the researcher that the leadership of the RCA were not prepared to upset the NGK in any way because they were urged by a Synodical resolution to keep in close contact with the sponsoring churches and that relationships should not be strained. In fact in the writers opinion this could have been the reason why the RCA remained almost silent in challenging the NGK on the injustices perpetrated through apartheid.

10.13            **Prophetic Voice**

The writer’s intention was to see if the membership of the RCA witnessed any form of prophetic utterances, especially those if any was directed at the injustices in our land. The following responses were recorded:

**Prophetic Voice**

RCA has a prophetic voice	24%
RCA has no prophetic voice	39%
RCA had prophetic voice in the past	6.5%
Not sure	10.8%
No comment	19.7%

10.13.1 **Comments**

*"We try to follow this approach"*

*(Interview 1995 No. 36)*

*"The church council don't get involved with community issues that are lacking in our community"*

*(Interview 29:09:94 No. 79)*

The writer's observations are that during the early years up to 1982 there was a clear voice heard regarding the social injustices in South Africa. This seemed to have disappeared in the ongoing years of the RCA as it adopted a very low profile in speaking out. This could be attributed to the fact that the NGK had a rescue operation in place for the battered RCA after the splits she experienced.

The following statement of the RCA's prophetic witness is recorded in point five of the Laudium Declaration:

*"We affirm that the proclamation of God's kingdom of justice, peace and holiness demands the denunciation of all injustices, oppression and immorality. We will not shrink from this prophetic witness"*

*(Acta 1994: 151)*

The above statement was adopted by the delegates of the 1994 Synod in Cape Town. It is significant to see that the majority of the RCA membership have not heard their church's voice in what is encapsulated in the above declaration. The writer wishes to point out clearly that the leadership does not

encourage their congregations to voice their opinions on social justice, but rather it is guided towards reacting to prostitution, abortion, homosexuality, etc. There are leading figures in the RCA who up to now maintain that the RCA should not make any prophetic utterances regarding social injustices. Their view is that apartheid is dead therefore there is no need now to interfere in social issues. The writer's observation is that even when apartheid was rife there was no prophetic voice that could be heard by the membership especially after 1982/83.

10.14            **Holistic Gospel**

This topic is closely related to the concept of the church's prophetic witness. The writer wanted to find out if the RCA was involved and concerned only with soul saving and avoided the socioeconomic and political issues. The writer had to explain to most of the respondents what was meant by the term "**holistic Gospel**". The following responses were recorded:

**Holistic Gospel**

RCA pursues Holistic Gospel	27%
RCA does not pursue Holistic Gospel	43%
RCA pursued Holistic Gospel in the past	5%
No Comment	25%

**Comments - Laity**

*"we can assist by collecting clothes for the needy"*

*(Interview 19:04 No. 1)*

*"only to win souls"*

*(Interview 7:02:95 No. 31)*

*"We have reached a unanimous decision, Solo Scripture. Following the Bible only.*

*In my opinion this approach should minister to the whole Christian being"*

*(Interview 1995 No. 41)*

*"They don't practice this. Just go to save the person's soul, bring him to church, then preach the Gospel to him"*

*(Interview 9:02:95 No. 35)*

*"I really don't think the RCA went out totally. The motive was the number in the church. They just wanted to see a number. The flock has got no shepherd to lead them in the right way. We have a lot of wolves in sheep's clothing"*

*(Interview 29:09:95 No. 77)*

**RCA Leadership comments:****Evang. Benette Shunmugam**

*"We recognize that we must cater for his spiritual need, but also his physical needs. Our biggest problem is funds. We can do more, we realize that, that has to become. We keep that in mind".*

*(Interview 9:02:95 No. 80)*

**Rev. V. Francis**

*Every RCA congregation is struggling to up keep its local responsibility. We don't have the money. To feed the poor we need the money.*

*(Interview 9:10:95 No. 92)*

**Rev. S. Sukdaven**

*"Socially the RCA was backwards whilst the preaching of the gospel and social concerns should go hand in hand. The holistic ministry was more pronounced in the Transvaal experience"*

*(Interview 21:02:95 No. 85)*

**Rev. Klippies Kritzinger**

*"According to Synodical Resolutions in 1976 and 1980, yes we had a holistic ministry, most certainly"*

*(Interview 20:02:95 No. 91)*

It is evident from this research that the majority of the RCA membership indicated that the holistic ministry was absent in the RCA. The researcher would also like to mention that certain congregations, very especially the Calvary congregation of Port Elizabeth has done well in pursuing a holistic ministry. It appears to the writer that the majority of congregation of the RCA is not yet involved in the holistic ministry. It was ascertained from the leadership of the RCA that funds are lacking in order that the RCA to develop this holistic ministry.

10.15            **Nation Building and the RDP**

This topic is also related to the holistic ministry of the church. The researcher asked if the RCA should involve itself in the nation building process in South Africa and in what way the RCA could make a contribution to the RDP. It is evident from the 1994 Acta page 117 that the RCA has accepted and pledged itself to support the implementation of the RDP. It also accepted to encourage its members and churches to support the objectives of the RDP. According to the researcher this message has however failed to reach the members of the congregations. The following response was recorded:

**Nation Building and RDP**

RCA must be involved with RDP	90%
No comment	9%
Not sure	1%

10.15.1 **Comments - Laity**

*"We should all join hands together and pray"*

*(Interview 1995 No. 52)*

*"Yes, but only if we focus on man's needs and don't act too holy, where we become of no use to the rest of the world"*

*(Interview 15:07:95 No. 37)*

*"Yes, by making sure that the Lord occupies a place in the lives of the people of this country"*

*Interview 1995 No. 50)*

10.15.2 **RCA LEADERSHIP COMMENTS**

**Rev. Tobie de Wet**

*"RCA can be a mediator in bringing Black and White closer together"*

*(Interview 1995 No. 49)*

**Rev. V. Francis**

*"If they got somebody, who can do the work effectively. I think every church should be involved in the future building of the country"*

*(Interview 9:10:95 NO. 92)*

**Rev. Greg Denysschen**

*"Once again the problem is finance. I fully support the RDP. I am very happy. I will put my whole heart in the upliftment of the poor, those who are really suffering. I think of the high medical expenses, the high cost of education. I fully support the RDP. I think it's time that we build our nation and it's time that we lift up the poor, give everybody a respectable life. The RCA is financially limited"*

*(Interview 5:06:95 No. 83)*

**Rev. K. Moodley**

*"I must be very honest. This is a very theoretical thing. Where does the church begin? What do you go and do? We know there are needs in society. We know there are needs everywhere. A new government has come into place. There is no apartheid now. People are suffering, everywhere. The church still has a role to play in society, but I think the church is struggling financially, it is very difficult. If every member of the RCA can tithe, it will be no problem for us to take a tenth of that money and give it to the RDP"*

*(Interview 29:06:95 No. 86)*

The indication from the membership shows that the RCA could best contribute to the RDP by seeking church unity. Some of the members feel that prayer only should be a contribution. The leadership responded by saying that finance is their biggest problem, otherwise they could really get involved in the RDP. From the writer's point of view, the RDP is not only about giving money. Any organization can do this. To the writer there are more practical ways in which the church can develop its support for the RDP. The best possible way in which the RCA could begin is by achieving organic church union with the other racially divided churches.

#### 10.16        **Church Unity**

The question on Church Unity has already been analysed in **Chapter Eight** of this work.

#### 10.17        **Women in Office**

This is a current debate that is engulfing many a church today. The RCA took this up for discussion at their 1994 Synod. After discussion the Synod appointed Rev P.J.P. de Beer, G.H. Denysschen, J.S. de Wet and N. Shunmugam to draw up an intensive study document concerning women in office of elder. The Church Councils were mandated to study these documents and submit their decision to the Synodical Committee by the end of March 1995. The church Councils were further instructed that this decision would only be implemented if a two-thirds majority is obtained (Acta 1994: 204).

Rev P.J.P. de Beer and Rev. G.H. Denysschen prepared a paper together with a view that women should not occupy the office of elder whilst Rev J.S. de Wet and Rev. N. Shunmugam in their paper argued for

women in office.

For some of the RCA congregations this topic and discussions set the cat amongst the pigeons. The RCA Calvary Congregation was the only congregation who had workshopped this topic prior to Synod and came up with a unanimous position from the congregation to accept women in office.

The following resolution was taken by the Church Council Calvary:

*"We find the present situation where we have elected very able women as deacons but therefore have to meet separately as elders and deacons not only impractical but also discriminatory.*

*We propose that the elders and deacons in principal function as one Church Council and that women be eligible and worthy to be elected for either of the two offices"*

*(Agenda 1994: 300)*

The researcher was present at the Emmanuel Congregation when both the position papers were read and discussed. For the first time in the Emmanuel congregation the ladies took up courage and boldly began to stand up and speak. The vast majority of the women together with the rest of the congregation were in full support for women in office. The Rev. K. Moodley the minister of this church was not supportive of this view, but he recognized what the majority of the congregation felt and said that this view would be passed on for SC to decide.

At the same discussion held (21:05:95) by the RCA Jeshurun Congregation the researcher observed that

the ladies of this congregation were very vibrant in their support for women in office. The women just got up one after the other to support women in office. They were also backed up by a number of men. Those who were not for women in office were in the minority. In fact only two young men voiced their opinion that the Bible does not indicate anywhere that women should be in office.

The writer also observed that many ministers in the RCA supported women in office. The WARC made the following recommendations to the member churches:

*"Since the 1970's some African WARC member churches have been ordaining women. Others are yet to ordain women and yet others do not elect women to be elders or even deacons. We call upon member churches who do not at present ordain women to follow other members of the reformed family in doing so. All women (married or single) who feel called to God's mission should be given the chance to have the theological training which prepares them for this mission.*

*Partnership of men and women should be taken very seriously in order to enhance the mission of the church. Pastors should take the lead in ensuring that this biblical mandate for working in partnership is learned"*

*(Acta 1994: 80)*

In an interview dated 19:10:95 Prof PJ Maartens shared the following view with the researcher:

*"We have a lot to confess. We have created a male dominated patriarchal system within the church and we are persisting in the wicked ways of ours. It goes to show that we have Synods and Presbyteries which are male orientated and which have given*

*women no scope without any exegetical sound reasons. I know about women must be silent and so on, but the context in which that is spoken are not examined in the arguments. When we look close at them and balance them with the acknowledgements of Paul in Romans and Ephesians of women in office we will discover that we have been blind and that we have simply glanced over many passages in the NT indicating to the contrary and misunderstood Paul. Paul was addressing problems within Corinth which were problematic, so he was dealing with specific problems in those congregations. I would say that the discrepancies that we are seeing, the fact that we are not yet on level grounds with women indicate a weakness within the church which we have overlooked because of its male orientation and that the Gospel must still work its way through the structures and I think that as much as women are being liberated in the process so should men be liberated to see women as counterparts, as equals and as human beings primarily and not attach all sorts of gender connotations to people in our relations. I think it is time we look into this as it will be to own advantage.*

(Interview 19:10:95 No 95)

The following responses were recorded from this research:

#### **Women in Office**

Yes to women in office	72%
No to women in office	25%
No comment	3%

The respondents indicated that women were included in the 'Deacon's Board', youth leadership, sisters league, Sunday school teachers and superintendents.

10.17.1 Comments - Laity

*"There still has to be time"*

*(Interview 20:04:95 No. 11)*

*"The Bible says that women are subjected to men"*

*(Interview 16:03:95 No. 17)*

*"I believe God uses women in the same way he uses man. It is man who limits the qualities of women"*

*(Interview 15:07:95 No. 37)*

*"I never seen women being given the chance to preach, only in sisters meeting. They could have objected to a women minister"*

*(Interview 29:09:95 No. 77)*

10.17.2 RCA Leadership Comments

**Evang. Benette Shunmugam**

*"They are the ones on whom we can depend upon. If God calls a person irrespective of whom they are, bless them with a ministry, I would not stand in their way. I accept women in leadership positions"*

*(Interview 9:02:95 No. 80)*

**Rev. Greg Denysschen**

*"To me I am very firm in my conviction that women should not be ordained as ministers and should not serve in the office of elders. To me there is biblical evidence that women can serve as deacons"*

*(Interview 5:06:95 NO. 83)*

**Rev. V. Francis**

*"I am against women in office. Women want to hold on to certain leadership positions but not into office. I am not in favour of women being ordained as ministers"*

*(Interview 9:10:95 No. 92).*

**Rev. K. Moodley**

*"Women are accepted as deacons. Some congregations have done that. My personal view is, I cannot see in the Scriptures anywhere that women had leadership positions. We must admit with a thankful heart that women play an important role in the church. From the early years they were the backbone of the congregation. In the future women will be allowed in all offices. We cannot stop that"*

*(Interview 29:06:95 No. 86)*

It appears to the researcher that the most conservative men on this issue are occupying prominent positions in the leadership of the RCA and thus wield a lot of influence in their congregations. This was not true for the RCA Emmanuel Congregation. The RCA functions along the lines of a Presbyterian system as opposed to a congregational system. Thus for the RCA to implement the decision of women in office a two-thirds majority must be required for the Synodical Committee to decide upon this issue.

Many members of the congregations are dismayed by the SC decisions against women in office because a two-thirds majority was not obtained. In the writer's opinion it is a sad day for those churches who fully supported women in office. It is a pity that they are blocked by the Presbyterian system of governance. The letter bearing the decision to the congregation is attached (Ref. Appendix C).

10.18        **Liberation Theology**

The researcher asked this question because this concept of theology and the very term liberation theology is viewed in a very negative light by many Christians and especially by the RCA. Liberation theology appears to pose a threat to the RCA because it is viewed as having political overtones and elements of Marxism and Communism entwined with it. They also view liberation theology as advocating violent revolution.

Prof PJ Maartens (Interview 19:10:95) views Liberation Theology in the following manner.

*"Liberation Theology is not in conflict with the Bible at all. I would say it would be synonymous with the word salvation. It is one of the implications of what we understand as Kingdom. It manifests the point of the Gospel. If we say that Liberation Theology is synonymous with Salvation, it ties up with the entire message of the Gospels which is all embracing. It includes the liberation of man. It means bringing the entire culture to the obedience to God. It is revealed in Jesus' ministry. When you look closer of the miracles at that in John's record, it emphasises the entire humanity. Liberation in this sense does not mean only liberation in terms of whatever, it is a total*

*liberation. It implies healing. It implies the care for individuals. When Jesus cured in the miracles, the people cured become benefactors of this process of salvation. It is a total liberation. It ties in directly demands, implications and ethical issues which will arise from any situation which we will have to take responsibility.*

*I am pleading for an inclusive theology so that one does not isolate one another. It is the human being in his totality which is liberated, his health, mind condition, Salvation and every aspect of humanity. Salvation has social implications and liberation defines and articulates the social implications of Salvation. It is not two different things. It is one and the same thing. It is that we misunderstand it and don't read the Gospels adequately.*

*The Gospel is a human Gospel. If we read John 1:14, it says that He became flesh. Incarnation Theology which is famous for which Reformed Theology is famous is really that. It is the message of God penetrating our human existence. The entire Gospel of Luke is directed as it was to the poor. Every statement of Jesus could be analysed in terms of it's universal significance.*

*Jesus was crucified because He will not conform to Jewish Nationalist aspirations which wanted to limit him to the temple of Jerusalem. He is the 'bread' from above. He is not the 'bread' of Jerusalem. He is the 'light' of the world. He reaches out to humanity in it's totality. He does concern Himself with humanity as a whole. The entire world as too liberated. It is all embrative. It is a total interaction within the history of humanity to claim humanity and its culture as a whole.*

*A government which has policies which diametrically opposes or resists the iending of God's Kingdom has to be addressed. That is the prophetic task of the church. It is a prophetic task which is being articulated in terms of Liberation Theology over and*

*against the injustices of a society enforced by its legislation. The Christian calling is to preach a message of hope. How do you preach a message of hope if you are not showing the way forward?*

*If you want to save the soul you must be equally interested in saving the society, so it is not a dangerous thing. Liberation Theology is the universalisation of Gods grace to humanity, liberating not only the individual, but the individual within the totality of his whole existence."*

*(Interview 19:10:95 No 93 )*

The writer has no problems with the views expressed by Prof PJ Maartens. His views and statements on Liberation Theology are worth considering for the future development of the RCA.

According to the writer the conservative ministers within the RCA will not be comfortable with Prof Maarten's view, however his view poses a tremendous challenge to the RCA.

The question was mainly aimed at the leadership of the RCA. The following comments were recorded.

#### 10.18.1 RCA LEADERSHIP COMMENTS

##### Evang. George Sebastian

*"Such theologies are temporary and usually leave a stigma once that peculiar situation had been addressed"*

*(Interview 13:12:94 No. 75)*

**Evang. Benette Shunmugam**

*"I know they say that you must take the gospel and apply it to the situation. I have a problem with that. It does apply in a situation, but you cannot change it completely. If you preach the whole gospel as it is, it will change lives, it will change people from oppressing people and treating people badly. You don't need a new gospel for today. You need the old gospel. The problem is that people don't want to listen to the old gospel.*

*They look at it relevantly because you identifying with them completely with their local situation. For them it was this that they should hear because it was relevant to them based on their situation. One can use the same gospel and make it applicable to people without making it too liberal and contextual. Once the people are liberated, does theology change now?"*

*(Interview 9:02:95 NO. 88)*

**Rev. Greg Denysschen**

*"I myself am at opposite poles with a liberation and contextual theology. I look at it differently. I look at it evangelically. I find liberation theology in conflict with scripture. Liberation theology to me is based on Marxist-Leninist philosophy"*

*(Interview 5:06:95 No. 83)*

**Rev. V. Francis**

*"Liberation theology is very politically oriented, but it gives a voice to the suffering and that is not a complete theology. Liberation theology is not so much God conscious, it's more liberating the people from the political struggle and the pressures*

*of life, then it has achieved its purpose. If anything that is not whole-dimension then it's in conflict with the Bible. There are aspects of liberation theology which is real theology. You cannot rule it out completely"*

*(Interview 9:10:95 No. 92)*

**Rev. L. Shunmugam**

*"To my understanding I found liberation theology never addressed the issue of sin. It looks at sin as apartheid and injustices and so on. We should have a more balanced view of it"*

*(Interview 18:05:95 No. 84)*

**Rev. S. Sukdaven**

*Liberation theology is in conflict with the Bible to some extent, e.g. it equates men as Christ"*

*(Interview 21:02:95 No. 85)*

**Rev. N. Shunmugam**

*"At one stage during the political situation we thought that liberation theology destroyed our church. The Reform Church split when liberation theology was preached as the gospel in the RCA. Liberation theology is definitely related to the oppressed people and I can understand why they actually support it. To a certain extent liberation theology may be in conflict with the Bible. I would not be too critical with liberation theology. There are different shades to it"*

*(Interview 13:04:95 No. 87)*

**Rev. Gerrie Lubbe**

*"No, I don't think it is in conflict with the Bible. You find it throughout the Bible. It depends on the emphases on liberation theology. I would like to see a balance between the socio and spiritual emphasis and I don't think there is any conflict"*

*(Interview 23:02:95 NO. 88)*

**Rev. Charle Roux**

*"It was largely politicised by someone else. There is no conflict with the Bible. Certain Marxist ideas slipped in. We have to do something as Christians with oppressive structures"*

*(Interview 20:02:95 No. 89)*

**Rev. Klippies Kritzinger**

*"I think there are different liberation theologies and I don't agree with everything the liberation theologians have said, but in my own understanding of Christian missions, I view it in terms of liberation, where I am also quite prepared to accept personal liberation from evil habits and spirits, but through to liberated communities where people are free and open and a liberated society where there is as little oppression as possible"*

*(Interview 20:02:95 No. 90).*

**Rev. K. Moodley**

*"I don't subscribe to liberation theology. The theology that I believe in is Biblical Theology. I won't say it is in conflict with the Bible, but it is very humanistic"*

*(Interview 29:06:95 No. 86)*

The 1990 RCA Synod resolved to reject the theological approach to scripture in using a hermeneutical key of an ideological nature. Synod repeats its position that it rejects the apartheid ideology. Synod now also affirms the rejection of liberation theology (Acta 1990: 54).

Rev J.C. van der Spuy (Acta 1986 : 1) hits out against liberation theology and also denounces the social gospel and ecumenical church movements. The following extract is taken from his opening speech on the first day of the session of the 1990 Synod:

*"His Word is unchangeable in spite of the attempts of liberation theologians to change the Word of god. Christ is unchangeable as our Redeemer in spite of the attempts of radical groups to turn Him into a revolutionary through their so called situational theology. Jesus is the answer to all our problems. In Him is our only solution. The answer is not in political power, or in science or in education or in ecumenical church movements with their social gospel and liberation theology"*

*(Acta 1986: 1)*

The 1990 Acta contains the following:

*"The RCA is deeply thankful to God for its liberation from the scourge of Liberation Theology"*

*(Acta 1990: 57)*

The researcher has observed a mixed response from the RCA leaders. It appears to the writer that some of the leaders have not studied liberation theology or know very little. Liberation theology is not taught

in the RCA Bible College because there appears to be a fear that members will become politically orientated. One respondent mentioned that liberation theology was politicised by someone else while another mentioned that there are various liberation theologies and besides the spiritual liberation he would like to see a liberated society. Another respondent mentioned that he would not like to be too critical with liberation theology. It was also mentioned by the respondents who did not see liberation theology in conflict with the Bible that Marxist ideas slipped into liberation theology. Some responded by saying that liberation theology is relevant to the oppressed people and that liberation theology is in some extent in conflict with the Bible. The researcher also observes that there is a shift amongst the RCA leadership from their conservative stance on liberation theology. For the researcher theology must have the elements of liberation otherwise how are peoples lives going to be changed. There are some people who don't identify with liberation theology because it is applied not only to the spiritual realm, but also to the physical realm. The greatest liberation act in the Bible is recorded in the book of Exodus. The writer's view is that members and the leadership of the RCA should not look at liberation theology in a totally negative way. They have to realize that liberation theology was viewed as a threat by the oppressive regime who were Christians. Under the Nationalist Party rule many Christians enjoyed benefits and enjoyed comfort and security and therefore could not identify with liberation theology to set them free from the oppressive structures in our society. The writer sees no conflict with a biblical liberation theology. Even if one says that there is only one theology the liberating element of the Gospel message is still present. The researcher's observation whilst scanning through the various Actas, is that the names of Rev. K. Moodley, Rev. J.P. de Beer, Rev. van der Spuy and Rev Greg Denysschen surfaces as the chief opponents to Liberation theology.

The Belhar Confession came into being just after the WARC Conference in Ottawa in 1982. At this conference apartheid was declared a sin and a heresy. The RCA went as far as accepting that apartheid is a sin and not a heresy. It appears to the writer that the RCA followed their "mother" church the NGK in voicing this opinion. The unification process between the NGSK and the NGKA presupposed the acceptance of the Belhar Confession as one of their confessional statements. For them the Belhar Confession became the adequate confession to meet the "**status confessions**"

According to Prof PJ Maartens (Interview 19:10:95) the Belhar Confession addresses a particular heresy which is not universal. It is a declaration. The church in Holland and Germany will never accept it. A confession must be universally accepted. As a declaration it is correct.

The official response of the RCA is as follows:

*"The RCA accepts this as a declaration with which we can identify but we do not accept it as a confession. We do not include social issues in the confession of faith which in fact is doctrinal and a declaration of faith based on the Bible.*

*We have social issues that are debatable and always in a process of change. We strongly reject the idea that the Belhar Confession be given that status, as this will be an adulteration of the theological meaning of a confession.*

*On this basis the RCA has decided to strongly identify with the contents of the declaration, but cannot accept the Belhar Confession as a confession on par with the other three confessions of our Reformed tradition*

*(Acta 1994: 201)*

The researcher has observed that the vast majority of the membership of the RCA have not heard of the Belhar Confession. Nothing whatsoever reached the grassroots level. In the writer's informal discussions with church council members of the RCA there was an indication that they did not know about the Belhar Confession. The discussions about this confession was probably discussed at Presbytery, Synodical Committee and Synodical level only. The researcher therefore aimed this question the Belhar Confession to the leadership of the RCA. The following opinions were recorded.

#### 10.19.1 RCA LEADERSHIP COMMENTS

##### Evang. Benette Shumugam

*"Still to work through it. As a church, they want us to accept this as confession"*

*(Interview 9:02:95 No. 80)*

##### Rev. Greg Denysschen

*"I just feel that it should not be called a confession. It is not a purely theological biblical issue that was there, but a social and a political issue. Maybe as a document or a declaration it has value. As a confession I don't accept it"*

*(Interview 5:06:95 No 83)*

**Rev. S. Sukdaven**

*"did not study the Belhar Confession"*

*(Interview 21:02:95 No. 85)*

**Rev. K. Moodley**

*"The RCA has no problem with its content. We accept it as a declaration of the church but we cannot accept it to the position of a confession. They insist on Belhar Confession becoming a confession or unity talks will come to an end. At the moment now their position is nonnegotiable. Amongst their own churches every minister must sign that as a confession. If you don't sign, you must go"*

*(Interview 29:06:95 No. 86)*

**Rev. V. Francis**

*"The Belhar Confession is good to be a confession, a state of faith, but not a confession of the church. It could be a declaration"*

*(Interview 9:10:95 No. 95)*

**Rev. Nobin Shunmugam**

*"I will still stay with the RCA decision that we strongly agree with the Belhar statement, but we will not accept it as a confession, but as a declaration"*

*(Interview 13:04:95 No. 85)*

**Rev. Gerrie Lubbe**

*"It's still in line - liberation of the poor. I have no problem of it being accepted as a confession. Jesus was very humanistic"*

*(Interview 20:02:95 No. 89)*

**Rev. Klippies Kritzinger**

*"It is the height of hypocrisy because if you look at the Canons of Dort I don't know whether a single member of the RCA understands it. The Belhar confession is home grown. It speaks to this century. It comes from the heart of the church struggles to be Christian in an unjust society. The Cannon of Dort had the same type of life in its time and I can identify with some of the sentiments expressed in it certainly, but to say that, that is a confession which has the force of law almost... in the church together with the Belgic Confession is known a bit more because it has got the question and answers stuff, but those confessions in the present charismatic and evangelical church what the RCA has become, I don't think that those notions function at all in the church, so to then turn around and say that these are confessions and Belhar cannot be a confession I think is dishonest. The other confessions are not functional!"*

*(Interview 20:02:95 No 90)*

The RCA is prepared to identify with the contents of the Belhar Confession and will accept it only as declaration and not as a confession. This was endorsed by the entire present RCA leadership. Their point was that the Belhar Confession should not include social issues. A few of the RCA ministers have not as yet studied the Belhar Confession.

The three ministers who lost their status in the RCA indicated that they have no problem with the Belhar Confession being accepted as a confession. For them the confession comes from the heart of the church that struggles to be Christian in an unjust society. In other words the Belhar confession, because it is home grown becomes more relevant as a confession in the South African context. The URCSA has urged the RCA and the NGK to accept the Belhar Confession as a precondition for church unity. The

RCA leadership has indicated that if this precondition is nonnegotiable then they will not join the URCSA.

#### 10.20        **The Laudium Declaration**

This declaration of the RCA was born from the 1986 Synod and the main purpose for this declaration was to maintain the RCA's stand as an Evangelical Reformed Church. The writer has included a copy of this declaration as Appendix D.

The following resolution regarding the Laudium Declaration was adopted by the RCA 1990 Synod:

***"Synod adopts the Laudium Declaration for consideration of the RCA congregations and report to the Synodical Committee and finalizing by the SC of the RCA"***

***(Acta 1990:59)***

At the 1994 Synod in Cape Town the Laudium Declaration was approved and included as part of the Church order (Acta 1994 : 152).

The writer's observation from members of the various congregations is that they did not hear about the Laudium Declaration. Some of the church council members also did not hear of the Laudium Declaration. From the writer's point of view, this is sad because the resolution to draw up the

declaration was adopted by the Synod in 1986.

There has always been a perception that the RCA was silent on matters of social justice and that the RCA only concerned itself in saving souls only. According to the researcher, point five of the Laudium Declaration which spelt out the RCA's intention to proclaim God's Kingdom of justice, peace and holiness this following affirmation contained in the declaration appeared not to have reached the membership:

*"We affirm that the proclamation of God's Kingdom of justice, peace and holiness demands the denunciation of all injustices, oppression and immorality. We will not shrink from this prophetic witness"*

*(Acta 1994: 151)*

The following comments were recorded from the RCA leadership.

#### 10.20.1 RCA Leadership Comments

**Prop. Victor Pillar**

*"it is a fairly comprehensive view of RCA"*

*(Interview 23:05:95 No. 76)*

**Evang. Benette Shunmugam**

*"We accepted it. That is what we stand for. That is what we believe"*

*(Interview 9:02:95 No. 80)*

**Rev. V. Francis**

*"It is a simple declaration of the church. I am fully in agreement with the Laudium Declaration. I don't think the congregation is aware of it but I think the council is aware. We cannot bring it down to the people who don't understand about declarations. We rather discuss it with people who know something about declarations and confessions"*

*(Interview 9:10:95 No. 92)*

**Rev. Greg Denysschen**

*"I was part of the meeting that drew the declaration and I supported it"*

*(Interview 5:06:95 No. 83)*

**Rev. L. Shunmugam**

*"It shows what the RCA believes in, our stand and faith. It would not be accepted as a confession. The church council and congregation do not know about it. At Synod things are discussed. A guide book is now available to every member. From now on the church will know what is happening"*

*(Interview 18:05:95 No. 84)*

**Rev. K. Moodley**

*This expresses the life of the RCA and I think it is a very important document that underlines the strong evangelical stand of the RCA. I don't think that it will be*

*imposed on anybody, but I think within the NGK and the Uniting Church there are strong evangelical believers there who will subscribe to the Laudium Declaration"*

*(Interview 29:06:95 No 86)*

**Rev. N. Shunmugam**

*"We accept it as a declaration. We do not force it on anybody else. In 1990 we read it to our congregation but don't know whether they still remember. We read the pastoral letter as well as the Laudium Declaration"*

*(Interview 13:04:95 No. 87).*

**Rev. Gerrie Lubbe**

*"I just heard about it"*

*(Interview 23:02:95 No. 88)*

**Rev. Charle Roux**

*"I am not familiar with it"*

*(Interview 20:02:95 No. 89)*

**Rev. Klippies Kritzinger**

*"I heard of it but have never seen a copy of it"*

*(Interview 20:02:95 No. 90)*

Only one minister interviewed indicated that in 1990 he had made known the declaration to his congregation. In 1986 the shift of the RCA towards a thorough evangelical standpoint became apparent.

Prior to 1986, the last Synod was held in 1980. During the period between 1982-1986 saw the turning point towards an evangelical position for the RCA. It was during this period that the turmoil and splits began to occur. This period also saw the loss of status of ministers who held strong ecumenical positions and this made it easier for the RCA to pursue an evangelical stance. The researcher's point of view is that the ecumenical emphasis that was prevalent in the RCA at that time could have served to supplement the intended evangelical thrust and thus a balance theological view of the good news could have been exercised. In this light the affirmation in the Laudium declaration regarding point five would have become more relevant. Although it was indicated that the RCA has produced a guide book for the members, in the writer's view, this came too late (April 1995).

#### 10. 21 NGK's Suspension (WARC)

The writer intended to test the RCA leadership reaction towards the suspension of the NGK from the WARC during the Ottawa experience. Unfortunately the membership of the RCA were left in the dark regarding the Ottawa experience. The researcher has also interviewed the Moderator, Rev. K. Moodley more in depth than others because his response was seen to be very crucial to this aspect of the research and also because he occupied a central position in the events that unfolded and criticisms were levelled against him. The writer will therefore include sub headings for the clarity of the different issues surrounding the suspension of the NGK from the WARC and also to afford Rev. K. Moodley the opportunity to put his views forward.

10.21.1

**NGK: Suspension**

The following RCA leadership remarks were recorded:

**Evang. George Sebastian**

*"Although a harsh decision, it was still in the best interest of the Body and Church of Christ"*

*(Interview 13:12:94 No. 75)*

**Evang. Benette Shunmugam**

*"They were expelled for good reasons. They were given opportunities to adjust themselves but they refused. We felt that we could still speak to them"*

*(Interview 9:02:95 No. 80)*

**Rev. Greg Denysschen**

*"I personally feel that it was a political agenda"*

*(Interview 5:06:95 No 83)*

**Rev. V. Francis**

*"I don't know the basis of how the WARC operates. Different people had different views about apartheid. Now having that kind of view, they may be justified in saying that it is a heresy"*

*(interview 9:10:95 No. 92)*

**Rev. L. Shunmugam**

*This all is very vague to me. I just hear people's comments"*

*(Interview 18:05:95 No. 84)*

Rev. K. Moodley

*"The people at Ottawa at that time were trying to justify apartheid theologically, so it was very painful for us to see these brothers going there and trying to justify apartheid. We rejected that. You cannot justify apartheid theologically. They deserved that treatment. The way they treated them is not according to the findings as guilty of classical heresy. You don't suspend a person who is guilty of classical heresy"*

*(interview 29:06:95 No. 86)*

Rev. Gerrie Lubbe

*"Our delegates were behind it. I think the DRC was dishonest in their ecumenical relationship. They were all the time very diplomatic to suggest that if there was change that they were in opposition to apartheid. This was exposed at Ottawa. They got what they deserved. It was a strange action. They have been suspended and the acid test is the uniting process and I am not sure what is going to happen now"*

*(Interview 23:02:95 No. 88)*

*Prof P Maartens (Interview 19:10:95) viewed the NGK suspension in the following way:*

*"I regretted that it happened because the contact would have been beneficial, but the frame of mind of the NGK at that time necessitated the step. The step was justified. For many decades they have negotiated with the NGK with the hope of changing the structures of the NGK. It proved to be futile due to distance. There has always been this distance from the continent. Ministers would agree in principle but when they were back on home soil they*

*perpetuated the old structures. If that did not come about, we would not have heard the voices loudly and clearly enough. It was the pressure that was needed at that time".*

*(Interview 19:10:95 No 93)*

It has been observed that the majority of the RCA leadership felt that the decision of the WARC to suspend the NGK was justified

#### 10.21.2 **WARC Resolution: NGK Suspension**

From Rev Klippies Kritzingers' interview (20:02:95) there is an indication that Rev. K. Moodley read the resolution in the plenary that Sunday morning and that he certainly had the courage to read it from the pulpit. According to Rev. K. Moodley (Interview 29:06:95) he claims that he was honestly tricked into reading the resolution and that he did not mind it, but believed it with all his heart. Rev. K. Moodley expressed that his feelings were genuine at that time when he read out the declaration.

#### 10.21.3 **Holy Communion - Abstention**

The RCA delegation including Rev K. Moodley decided not to partake in the Holy Communion because of the presence of the NGK. It was felt that the Lord's table was defiled because the NGK delegates who sat there theologically justified apartheid. The Lord's table was to serve as a unifying symbol. Rev. Greg Denysschen (Interview 5:06:95) indicated that that was the RCA in the person of Rev. K. Moodley who refused to take communion and therefore spearheaded the aggression against the DRC.

### 10.21.3.1 Rev K Moodley : Apology

Rev K. Moodley claims that when he came back home someone asked him whether his abstention from the Lord's Supper could be theologically justified. He was further told that theologically it should have been the sinner that should abstain from the communion and not the righteousness person. In this case it was explained that the NGK delegates were the sinners and that they should have abstained from the Lord's Supper and not Rev. K. Moodley. Rev. K. Moodley realized after this reasoning that he really did make a mistake by abstaining from the Lord's Supper.

Rev. Greg Denyssen's (Interview 5:06:95) view is the Rev. K. Moodley went through a soul searching and realized that if he still carried this conviction and therefore he should not have withdrawn but the DRC. It was also mentioned that he came back and apologised because he realized that he was not the sinner. This apology of Rev K. Moodley was viewed as selling out the RCA delegation to Ottawa. Rev. K. Moodley was then viewed as a man with double standards.

There was resentment and disappointment to hear that Rev. K. Moodley had allegedly summersaulted, told the DRC that he was sorry, that he retracted, that he was wrong and that he did not stand by his decision anymore. It was also alleged that someone had put Rev K. Moodley under pressure .

(Interview 20:02:95 No. 90)

Rev. Moodley (Interview 29:06:95) responded in an interview held by the researcher that he was pressurised by his own conscience and Bible believing. He also indicated that he was a young man at that time and he went along with Dr Le Roux and both of them went to Ottawa armed with a 1980 decision. He also mentioned that, at that time he even agreed with abstaining from the Lord's Supper.

Rev. K. Moodley's agreement for his decision was backed up by the fact that he had been in the field for 27 years and never in all his life had he taken Holy Communion with the NGK congregation and therefore he did not think that it was right for him to do it then. These were the words of Rev. K. Moodley.

*"If you look at it politically, you may look at it as a somersault, but they can say what they want to, but in my mind and Heart I believed that I had to come back to the Lord and repent. It was actually a sin on my part".*

It was also alleged that Rev. K. Moodley made an apology in an Afrikaans newspaper. During an interview (29:06; 95) with Rev. K. Moodley he responded by saying that he wrote an article and gave to the NGK a complete story as to what he believed and how he had made a mistake in using the Lord's Table as a place of demonstration. He stated that this was his own conviction.

It appeared that Rev. K. Moodley was further attacked by the BK and was labelled as an "apartheid manager". Rev. K. Moodley offered the following response:

*"The BK has said many things about me. I am not responsible for what they are saying. None of them came to me personally and asked me what was my reason. So they are writing from what they can see and obviously it looks like a somersault, it does look like you are siding with apartheid, but in my heart we don't do that. As Christians if you made a mistake and you have realized that you have isolated the Lord's Table, I had to make an apology. I could not pray. After the apology my new ministry began"*

(Interview 29:06:95 No 86)

The writer believes that Rev K. Moodley's critics really did have cause to suspect him of double standards. For the writer it was also sad that Rev. K. Moodley had sent an article containing his apology to the NGK. It may have been so because the NGK was paying his salary and that he felt a sense of financial insecurity. From the researcher's opinion, Rev. K. Moodley should have been open to his congregation about his experience and that he should have recorded his apology in the newspapers of the day that could have been read by ordinary church members.

For Rev. K. Moodley, he believes that when he apologised for his mistake a burden from his shoulders had rolled away and that he was able to discover his new ministry. However, the Ottawa experience has left many persons on different sides with opposing views that really impacted upon the RCA. To the writer the healing process is still to be experienced and there are indications of willing contributions.

#### 10. 22 Splits in RCA

The researcher has dealt with splits in the RCA in chapter VII. The purpose for this question was to find out from the membership of the RCA whether they knew about splits in their church. Comments and viewpoints from the leadership about these splits were also recorded.

## Splits in the RCA

Were not aware of splits	57.7%
Were aware of splits	24.4%
Were vaguely aware of splits	5.7%
No comment	12.2%

10.22.1

### Comments - Laity

*"Men who stood walked out. It was a correct thing to do. Those who remained were opportunists"*

*(Interview 23:04:95 No 2)*

*"Very encouraging. People have made a stand for justice. The defrocking of those ministers was done for selfish reasons".*

*(Interview 11:05:95 No 8)*

10.22.2

### RCA LEADERSHIP COMMENTS:

*Rev Tobie de Wet*

*"Very sad part of our history. Should not have happened. Political motivations on both sides. Misunderstandings and intolerance on both sides".*

*(Interview 1995 : No 36)*

*Evang. George Sebastian*

*"It is a pity it had to go to the courts to decide. A more tolerant approach was initially necessary within the RCA. Pride and personality also played a destructive role. While some were politically minded, others were not willing to back off from the status quo"*  
(Interview 13:2:94 No 75)

*Evang. Benette Shumugam*

*"It affected the RCA tremendously that for such a division of the church, personal accusations and counter accusations hurt the church"*  
(Interview 9:02:95 No 80)

*Rev K Moodley*

*"I was in Ottawa in 1982. I knew exactly what took place there. Ottawa accepted the fact that the support of apartheid based on scripture was a heresy. Our problem is that when you come back from there you have to report back to the SC and in turn you have to place this on the Synod itself. Any ecumenical decision is not ex cathedra a decision for a local congregation, unfortunately congregations began to act. The unity talks are taking place and they want to come back now. We are talking to the same NGK and they want to join the unity talks now".*  
(Interview 29:06:95 No 86)

According to the researcher the impact of the split was not felt by the membership as such, but the leadership that remained in the RCA after the split were the ones who became traumatised as a result of the splits. All the discussions about the splits were mainly contained within the SC and the Synod. It was surprising that many office bearers of the RCA did not know what was going on. The reason for the majority of the membership not knowing about the splits may be attributed to the fact that many new members have joined the RCA congregations. Many of the older members joined other churches. The other reason could be that none of the information about the split filtered down to congregational level.

From the response of the leadership, it came out very clearly that the Ottawa experience had influenced the splits within the RCA. It must be recorded that the ordinary members were not happy at all with the defrocking of ministers from the RCA. To many of the respondents, it appeared that the ministers who lost their status were harshly dealt with in order to uphold the status quo within the RCA. On the other hand some of those who knew about the splits mentioned that the RCA was being hijacked for political purposes by ministers who had political agendas.

The researcher's point of view is that the then leadership of the RCA that remained after the split felt that a burden which the RCA was carrying was lifted. It also appears to the writer that the NGK was also pleased that ministers of a radical nature were defrocked.

As a result of the split many RCA members in the Kwa-Zulu Natal region regrouped as the Confessing Community Church, whilst the Lenasia RCA Congregation has joined the URCSA. The RCA Benoni Congregation since opting out of the RCA are still worshipping as the Confessing Reformed Church.

We are indeed living in a period of transition in South Africa. The democratization process underway affects all of us and especially poses challenges to the churches. After 40 years of National Party rule there was a sigh of relief when a Government of National Unity (GNU) was put in power on the 28 April 1994. There was great anticipation of a better life to come and the birth of a new South Africa fascinated everybody. The writer wanted to find out from the RCA membership and leadership how they viewed the birth of a new South Africa.

The writer also wanted to ascertain what challenges the new South Africa had for the RCA:

### **New South Africa**

Positive about new S.A.	71%
Negative about new S.A.	3.3%
Mixed feelings about new S.A.	4.4%
Not sure about new S.A.	4.3%
No comment	17%

The writer spoke to Prof P Maartens who expressed the following about the New South Africa:

*“We must appreciate it that it is a liberating force. People who were left out from the vote have now the vote. They are partners in determining the future of the country. Yes it has tremendous implications for the RCA and therefore I think it would challenge the church. We should then ask what role our church members fulfil in the society. Are anybody standing for elections? What is happening in the local communities there? How often did we say that it's just the NP at prayer. Why don't we see something like that in the new dispensation?”*

*Our church has prophetic calling. The new political structures that are opening as an*

*advantage and we did have a major influence in the past, why now opt out of it, why not fully engage... Why not engage, negotiate and exercise of Christian calling there. We are only going to be enriched"*

*(Interview 19:10:95 No 93)*

Some mentioned that the birth of a new South Africa has no challenges for the RCA whilst the majority of the respondents mentioned that the changes definitely urges the RCA to open its doors and become pro-active in encouraging membership of the other race groups and to mix up more with other races.

10.23.1 **Comments - Laity**

*"It was the best thing that could have happened in our country"*

*Interview 1995 No. 60)*

*"It is still early to tell. The leaders of the different political parties are not clapping hands together. How do we get the people to live in peace? I pray that it does change for the better"*

*(Interview 1995 No. 52)*

*"The new South Africa has to undergo many changes in its growth before we can really benefit from the new South Africa"*

*(Interview 1995 No. 45)*

*"Don't like Black government"*

*(Interview 12:03:95 No. 23)*

*"Open eyes of the RCA of what could have been done in the RCA"*

*(Interview 11:05:95 No. 8)*

*"As the congregation we now have the right to stand up and offer our views"*

*Interview 11:02:95 No. 26)*

*"the RCA's attitude must change to a certain degree"*

*(Interview 13:12:94 No. 30)*

*"Exciting, but is going to take more than 40 yrs to regain balance in the sense of change"*

*(Interview 1995 No. 38)*

*"We have become more open especially to our brothers in the township"*

*(Interview 1995 No. 41)*

*"The new South Africa is what we will make of it. Follow the teachings of Christ and we shall succeed. We should work as a team. I think the new South Africa has passed a tremendous challenge to the RCA"*

*(Interview 29:09:95 No. 77)*

**RCA Leadership Comments****Evang. George Sebastian**

*"A privilege to share in a landmark in the history of our country. It impacts very much for the future in terms of unity in the DRC family"*

*(Interview 13:12:95 No. 75)*

**Rev. Laven Shunmugam**

*"Something that was overdue. I have hope. Changes what people were fighting for and working for"*

*(Interview 18:05:95 No. 84)*

**Rev. S. Sukdaven**

*"The challenge is great. The RCA must identify itself with society. Under the present circumstances the RCA should move faster to witness and accommodate other people without racial connotation. Evangelism must not be concentrated by the Indian church to Indians only. This is not within the context of the Uniting Church"*

*(Interview 21:02:95 No. 85)*

**Rev. Nobin Shunmugam**

*"I am quiet excited. There is justice and fairness for all people. It has its advantages now that everything is open for us. Now we have freedom to go across the racial barriers and try to bring reconciliation and healing"*

*(Interview 13:04:95 No. 87)*

**Rev. Klippies Kritzinger**

*"The alignment of the RCA to the apartheid system is really catching up with them and it never had a great credibility in the broad community. It can keep going with its church-centred theology, but the challenge it faces is to get out of the narrowness to become part of the process of restructuring"*

*Interview 20:02:95 No. 90)*

**Evang. Benette Shunmugam**

*"It was what everybody was waiting for. People gave their lives for this. Definitely it has many challenges. The RCA can lose its ministry. The RCA can be swallowed up in this unity process. There are many problems that will come with the new South Africa and the message of the RCA, the Gospel that it preaches definitely will be very relevant for them especially the deliverance ministry, simple faith and prayer. The democratization process could help the RCA. The opportunities are there for new membership"*

*(Interview 9:02:95 No. 80)*

**Rev. Greg Denysschen**

*"I have mixed feelings. On the one hand I am glad that the old system has passed away. It has brought freedom for both Blacks and Whites. I think whites have been living with the burden of the Blacks for a long time with the gun sort of pointed at their head. They are all free from that now, but there are other concerns that I have. Suddenly the doors are open to pornography. You are going to have abortion on*

*demand. Eventually it will be euthanasia, gambling is legalised prostitution is decriminalized. The flood gates are open for every vice that you can imagine"*

*(Interview 5:06:95 No. 83)*

**Rev. V. Francis**

*"I don't see any difference with the old dispensation. There is lots of uncertainty. It is the same. Any nationalism is non sense*

*(Interview 9:10:95 No. 92)*

**Rev. K. Moodley**

*"In the first place there is a liberation in the hearts of everyone of us, that there is no doubt that the yoke of apartheid is lifted. Thank God that bloodshed has been averted ... For me the biggest problem of the new situation is violence and hijacking. You are not safe in your own home. We do believe with the new South Africa things can happen.*

*I think that the RCA must impact on the new South Africa. Changes can take place, they take place only outwardly, but the Gospel has to reach the hearts of men so that men will not murder or steal. There is corruption in government circles also"*

*(Interview 29:06:95 No. 86)*

Nearly all the leaders hail the new South Africa as a landmark in South African history which was long awaited. The vast majority of the membership as well indicated that there was hope and light of the end

of the tunnel. There is a strong awareness amongst the leadership that together with the freedom experienced in the new South Africa the flood gates are left open for pornography, abortion and prostitution, etc.

An interesting remark was made by Rev. Greg Denysschen that the whites also received their freedom from the burden of the Blacks in the new South Africa. The observation from the majority of the ordinary members is that the RCA must now open its doors and work towards a multiracial church. This did not come out clearly from the response of the leadership.

#### 10.24 RCA Bible College

The report at the 1994 Synod of the RCA Bible College reads as follows:

*"We want to thank the Lord Jesus Christ for His blessings and for guidance in the establishment of the RCA Bible College in February 1991. The facilities cater for all the RCA and other churches in the Ka-Zulu Natal region. The impact of the Bible School is indeed a blessing to the RCA in this area of the Lords work. For its effects are being experienced by the local congregations and this can be safely said from the reports we have received from the work and input of the Bible School students in their respective congregations. We praise the Lord for such a testimony.*

*The Bible School is now in the fourth year, having completed one cycle of three years, which produced a group of graduates. Thus we can be grateful that the Lord is*

*equipping His people through this humble project of the Bible School to do His work"*

*(Acta 1994: 33)*

The principal of the Bible School is Rev. Nobin Shunmugam and the registrar is proponent Victor Pillay. There are also recommendations that the RCA Bible School should offer a diploma course on a Distance Education System.

The writer wanted to find out if the Bible School included courses to equip the students to face the challenges of our society in regards to an ecumenical outreach. The following comments were made by the RCA leadership.

10.24.1      **RCA LEADERSHIP COMMENTS**

**Evang. George Sebastian**

*"I have not been aware of the school. Perhaps it was not a need at this point in time since it has limited funds and staffing"*

*(Interview 13:12:94 No. 75)*

**Prop. Victor Pillay**

*"They are not exposed to Liberation Theology. It prepares for evangelism. They should know about all theologies"*

*(Interview 23:05:95 No. 76)*

**Evang. Benette Shunmugam**

*"It was a tremendous step to cater for our members and other churches and other people. I thought that it was long overdue and that we should have a Bible School many years already ... Liberation theology and contextual theology should be good exposure for them. One should not put cotton wool around the people. At least let them know what is going on. After all they are going to be out in the world. They need to make a decision and face these things. There is no course regarding church and society for the moment. Maybe they need to look into this area for the future. Definitely one must be exposed to all the trends"*

*(Interview 9:02:95 No. 80)*

**Rev. Laven Shunmugam**

*"I don't think that they are exposed to liberation or contextual theology. I don't think it will do any harm. Knowledge is for everybody. Depends what one makes of it"*

*(Interview 18:05:95 No. 84)*

**Rev. V. Francis**

*"It is a blessed thing. Well if you don't expose them to liberation or contextual theology you cannot say that you have decided right. I have been exposed to all kinds of theology and I still can think straight now because I've been exposed. I think that the college should not do liberation theology but the students must have full knowledge of it, maybe as an assignment. The students should have knowledge of the different theologies. If they are doing a straight and narrow evangelical course then they*

*should keep away from these things. Not for the students to get involved in liberation theology but to know for clarification"*

*(Interview 9:10:95 No. 92)*

**Rev. Greg Denysschen**

*"It started of with a big bang. We had tremendous enthusiasm, lots of participation. We had our first graduation and everybody was excited. The numbers have dwindled a bit, not because of lack of enthusiasm but everybody jumped in when the chance was there. I suspect that it is going to grow. We will gain more credibility. The evangelists are getting their training here. Students are not exposed to liberation or contextual theology. We don't do that here. A social concern course is not my particular field, but be dealt within the apologetics"*

*(Interview 5:06:95 No. 83)*

**Rev. Nobin Shunmugam**

*"It was developed to train evangelists. Open it to lay people and other denominations. Liberation theology is mentioned in passing, but not as a course. I speak about the holistic approach. Ecumenical courses may be in the future. We equip them to serve as evangelists. We must find a new word for evangelism and ecumenicalism and thus need to bring this two extremes to the centre. In the book of Acts the social aspects are all there"*

*(Interview 13:04:95 No. 87)*

**Rev. K. Moodley**

*It's been a very exciting development in the RCA. Many lay people have come and they have benefitted from that and spiritual progress been made. I don't think liberation theology will be taught here"*

*(Interview 29:06:95 No. 86)*

The striking observation was that the younger ministers of the RCA did not mind if the students are exposed to liberation or contextual theology for the sake of knowledge. The older ministers indicated to tread very cautiously regarding this issue. There was an indication also that a course towards the ecumenical emphasis could be offered in the future. The researcher views the RCA Bible School as an ideal opportunity to develop evangelists towards a holistic ministry. For the future the researcher sees a space for evangelists and lay people to develop a broader vision of their ministry. The writer views the holistic form of ministry as imperative for the RCA's future development.

10.25      **Jevanadi**

The researcher was under the impression that Jevanadi was part of the RCA and therefore was responsible to the RCA regarding its ministry and operation. It was observed that no discussion or report was tabled regarding Jevanadi. The researcher therefore wanted to clarify the position of Jevanadi, how it operates and who is responsible for its functioning. The researcher thus questioned some members of the RCA leadership to ascertain the above-mentioned concerns. The following leaders were able to respond to the writer's questions about Jevanadi.

**RCA LEADERSHIP COMMENTS****Rev. Laven Shunmugam**

*"Rev. Greg Denysschen was called with Rev. de Beer to Jeshuran. It seems that the issue of Jevanadi was the problem. The problem arose when one person wanted to take the whole thing and when incorporation into the RCA was discussed. It would be good if it was part of the RCA. They have their own services. Legally speaking Rev Greg Denysschen is still a minister of Jeshuran"*

*(Interview 18:05:95 No. 84)*

**Rev. K. Moodley**

*"The official position is that Jevanadi is not part of the RCA. We tried to unite, did not happen. In 1986 we had lengthy discussions"*

*(Interview 29:06:95 No. 86)*

**Rev. Greg Denysschen**

*"Jevanadi is independent and therefore it is not directly part of the RCA. The RCA does not have any jurisdiction over it and does not fall into the ambit of any bodies, presbyteries or Synods of the RCA. I am the resident minister over there and the minister of the RCA. The RCA has been grateful for the fact that Jevanadi has provided me this accommodation and I am able to work from there as my field is the North Coast and during the time I was staying there and working from there, the work group in Ottawa which is a church planting endeavour materialized and by God's*

*grace we managed to establish a congregation there recently.*

*Jevanadi is a spiritual clinic. In other words people with all kinds of spiritual needs including physical, e.g. alcoholics, drug addicts and people troubled by evil spirits, they come and stay there. We preach Gods word everyday making it applicable to those situations. There is a whole team of 30 workers, some of them are counsellors. They see the people for counselling after every service. They stay free of charge. Their meals are free. We never take up an offering. We don't ask for a cent.*

*Jevanadi is a separate ministry. You have many people there, families from different churches who have come to work together in this effort of rehabilitation. The co-workers are all by faith. They trust God daily for their sustenance. The mission itself trusts God for its sustenance. We are dependent on the goodwill of people as God moves them to give. We don't have any foreign funding as such. So it's all the people who have been helped there have been led by God to give off their own free will"*

*(Interview 5:06:95 No 83)*

The writer was able to receive first hand knowledge from Rev. Greg Denysschen as he is the person at the centre of this mission. According to Rev. Denysschen Jevanadi is a separate ministry and from an interview with him the writer observed that the RCA has nothing to do with this Mission accepting that one of its full-time ministers is involved with Jevanadi. Rev. Greg Denysschen has been called as a full time minister to the newly established RCA congregation, Maranatha. It also appeared to the researcher that there were several discussions with Rev. Greg Denysschen to incorporate Jevanadi into the RCA, but to no avail.

The researcher managed to get another first hand perspective on Jevanadi Mission station from Rev. V. Francis the RCA Pietermaritzburg minister. The following was recorded as Rev V. Francis' input:

*"I was an elder in the church council in the times of Jevanadi. Initially the church (Jeshuran) wanted to pray and look for small chalets outside to pray for the sick. At that time there were a lot of demonic cases. Though there was no need for a second minister they insisted to call a second minister because Rev. Greg Denysschen and Rev. de Beer were friends. Somehow I pushed for an Indian minister because we already had a White minister, but there were no Indian ministers trained at that time. Against my desire, the church council was forced to call Rev. Greg Denysschen into office. It was a forced thing. It was decided to call this minister because we can get funds for him. His funds were not channelled in the right line. It was like coming from private sources. The church council asked many questions, actually they wept over many things. It was all ironed out eventually. His funds was guaranteed and he was then called. While we were praying for a place God opened a way for Jevanadi. At that time Rev. Pypers was telephoned to find out where we could get a place and he said that there was a certain White man in Verulam and we must ask him if he could give us a small ground to build the chalets. He offered a hotel to us which he was to have redeveloped and was not using at that time. It was the Shortlands Hotel. When they got this hotel Rev. de Beer, Rev. Greg Denysschen and Piet Smith got together and it became a private matter. Three of them were heading to establish the work and three of them were supposed to be the leaders. For me this was a depressing thing because it started in the church council but when the positions came it became a private thing and Piet Smit and Rev. Grey Denysschen were not members of our church at that time. They tried to work towards establishing Jevanadi as an independent thing. Then the things went sour between Rev. Greg*

*Denysschen and Rev. de Beer. Different people wanted the mission to be a different thing and there was a difference of opinion and then tension developed between them. Now Rev. de Beer wanted the church council to get involved. I insisted that we must not be part of it because it was not part of the church. Rev. de Beer insisted since Rev. Greg Denysschen and himself are part of the church, the church must handle it. In the church council it was now constituted that Jevanadi was an arm of the church, but the church council had nothing to do with it. I could conclude then the reason was that they could get DRC funds. When the things went sour Piet Smith withdrew. Piet Smith wanted to make it more like Dorothea Mission and Rev. Greg Denysschen wanted to make it like Kwa - Sizabantu. Rev. de Beer wanted it to be more like Dorothea Mission. Eventually Piet Smith and Rev. de Beer withdrew from there and Rev. Greg Denysschen alone was continuing with it. It was an outside matter. It was not a church matter, but later Rev de Beer wanted the church council to help in the matter. I insisted that the church council should not get involved because it was a private affair. If they brought it initially to the church council, we were happy to have it. I would say, they wanted to be the leaders, they did not want the church council to control it. I would not say it had a racial connotation, I would say they wanted to be in charge.*

*Somehow it came to the church council because Rev de Beer said it was an arm of the church and he dragged it and came. If it is the arm of the church then we must be responsible and he put it into the men that, that is our thing and those people believed him. That is not true. I was in the committee, I interviewed everybody and told them that the problem is solved and the three men can go and operate separately. It still could be the arm of the church in a sense that we don't have any authority and control over that and they make their own decisions. We cannot tell them what to do. This was a very tactical thing of Rev. de Beer. Then they still*

*could not operate. There was such a split and he went to Rev. Moodley and said that this was the arm of the church. It came to such a stage that Rev. de Beer went to Rev Moodley to get Rev. Greg Denysschen out of the church.*

*Eventually it was decided that Jevanadi become an independent thing outside the church, but Rev. Greg Denysschen was allowed to do mission work for Jeshuran and therefore he was not a recognized minister of RCA Jeshuran. In the RCA he has been one of the leading victims.”*

It appears from Rev. V. Francis' account that there was an area of split in the ministry regarding RCA Jeshuran. This then could have been the reason why Rev. Greg Denysschen played a very low profile in Jeshuran. Nevertheless, his missionary effort north of Phoenix appears to have been fruitful and his work at Jevanadi also appears to be a relevant ministry.

Rev. Greg Denysschen has accepted a call to be a minister of RCA Maranatha in Ottawa. This then will mean that he will also be the resident minister of Jevanadi. It will be interesting to follow the future developments of both these responsibilities under the care of Rev. Greg Denysschen. It is believed that he works by faith and he will not be receiving a salary from his congregation. To the researcher it could mean that Rev. Greg Denysschen would not be too obligated to Maranatha and thus could be more available to undertake his responsibilities at Jevanadi. It will also be vital then for Rev. Greg Denysschen to report on his work at Jevanadi as he will be a full time minister of the RCA.

10.26 **Advice, Suggestions and Closing Remarks**

The writer gave an opportunity to the respondents to offer any advice, suggestions or any other remarks that they wished to make in order to contribute to the future development of the RCA. The following was recorded from the input made by both the RCA leadership, the laity and academics.

10.26.1 **Comments - Laity**

*"There should be more intermingling of churches at one venue. This will make unity easier"*

*(Interview 23:04:95 No. 2)*

*"The RCA should be moved by the anointing of the Holy Spirit and should develop a Pentecostal style. Should develop the five fold ministry. Ladies should be elders and also preach"*

*(Interview 11:04:95 NO. 7)*

*"There is a need for the church to contribute effectively to the RDP by means of social and economic development. The RCA needs to move faster in its endeavours"*

*(Interview 11:05:95 No. 8)*

*"We should not just be an Indian church. We should seek unity"*

*(Interview 7:02:95 No. 15)*

*"The minister should be in touch with the people on the ground and there should be grassroots level communication"*

*(Interview 16:03:95 No. 16)*

*"We should like to see a multiracial church, more Black and Coloured preachers. Should abolish the Yellow Rule Book and make our own book"*

*(Interview 19:03:95 No. 18)*

*"The RCA is very closed in it's ministry. Should develop a holistic ministry and be very practical"*

*(Interview 12:03:95 No. 19)*

*"Be more open in important issues"*

*(Interview 12:03:95 No. 22)*

*"They contradict themselves by saying they want National peace and unity amongst churches but do nothing about it"*

*(Interview 11:02:95 No. 26)*

*"Women should preach. The church should make us as Christians play an important role in what to do about injustices of apartheid. As a church we must be more active. We should visit other churches of different racial groups"*

*(Interview 13:12:94 N. 30)*

*"There should be more sporting activities and planned outings"*

*(Interview 7:02:95 No. 31)*

*"Apartheid has been abolished but no change in the RCA is recognizable"*

*(Interview 9:02:95 No. 35)*

*"Beside the fact that a more evangelical approach is needed in our community, unity amongst the members is a priority. All members must take individual responsibility to make a difference in our church and community"*

*(Interview 15:07:95)*

*"A quarterly brochure or booklet should be introduced with interesting news and events"*

*(Interview 1995 No. 42)*

*"Subcommittee should each have different members, not overlapping"*

*(Interview 1995 No. 47)*

*"A greater effort should be made to nurture and educate the youth"*

*(Interview 1995 No. 50)*

*"Join hands with the Coloureds, Whites and Blacks to live in peace and harmony"*

*(Interview 1995 No. 52)*

*"Convenors should stick to praise and worship only and not try to squeeze in a sermon"*

*(Interview 1995 No. 53)*

*"The RCA should shed the role of a follower and become a leader or emerge with the other sister churches to become one strong church"*

*(Interview 1995 No. 60)*

*"We need more members. Every family should bring a new member"*

*(Interview 1995 No. 61)*

*"Don't use message to hurt people's feelings. They can throw stones from there. Some of the people stand up and tell the minister so"*

*(Interview 29:09:94 No. 78)*

*"I would be very honest and sincere. The present minister and evangelist should in my opinion be replaced. If the RCA wants to grow at the Cape, bring in new ministers. The present leadership has created a very big vacuum and a big problem. They had treated people like enemies. My prayer will be for the people of the RCA everywhere. They must become committed. My desire is to see them not as RCA members but as a member of the church of Jesus Christ"*

*(Interview 29:09:95 No. 77)*

*"Cravenby wants their own minister. There is the only way our church is going to grow. He must not be a conservative person. He should educate conservative people"*  
(Interview 29:09:94 No. 79)

*"There are hardly people in the church. The minister throws things back from the pulpit. There is no confidentiality. The young people are leaving the church. The church must never be closed. We must get a minister to bring all the people together. We must get a new minister. I want people to be untied and come together"*  
(Interview 29:09:94 No. 82)

*"Elders should be allowed to serve communion. The pattern of the liturgy should change. The wife of the minister must visit with him"*  
(Interview 19:04:95 No. 1)

10.26.2 **RCA Leadership Comments**

**Evang. George Sebastian**

*"Pursue unity with the URCSA and don't delay any longer. Get more guest speakers from abroad. Develop a retreat centre for conferences, seminars, etc."*  
(Interview 13:12:94 No. 95)

**Prop. Victor Pillay**

*"It was an enriching experience in the RCA. The RCA has a role to play in the uniting process, to reach the large majority of the Indian population and would like to see this continuing. It is not necessarily an ethnic ministry"*

*(Interview 23:05:95 No. 76)*

**Rev. Tobie de Wet**

*"The RCA should be a full integrated part of the URCSA"*

*(Interview 1995 No. 36)*

**Evang. Benette Shunmugam**

*"Maybe getting the congregation more involved in decision making. Somehow the Synod makes the decision for the people. After all it's the people's church. Have discussions with the congregation regarding the agenda of the Synod. See how the congregation feel. The people must know what is going on in the church. We must be transparent.*

*I regret that the church has suffered in the past and we can from different points of view work together, whether that will be possible and not to become personal in our differences. We must accept each other's view, disagree, but at the same time we are brothers. We keep a very social level with the people"*

*(Interview 9:02:95 No. 80)*

**Rev. Laven Shunmugam**

*"The changes that took place really enlightened me and opened my eyes to a lot of things and this research will have a lot on paper. It will help me a lot. We hope in the new South Africa we will be the church that God wants us to be especially in the RDP. We must not jump on the bandwagon when others start the changes"*

*(Interview 18:05:95 No. 84)*

**Rev. S. Sukdaven**

*"It should not shy away that they are a Reformed Church. Therefore should not try and entertain Pentecostal type worship. Should not feel ashamed of being reformed"*

*(Interview 21:02:95 No. 85)*

**Rev. Nobin Shunmugam**

*"The RCA has a role to play. Because of the evangelical sense and the pioneering situation which it has been in and even for the future for the demographic changes. So the RCA has a role to play even to educate the DRC about their missionary obligation"*

*(Interview 13:04:95 No. 87)*

**Rev. Gerrie Lubbe**

*"RCA, please join the URCSA. You have a different emphasis in the church"*

*(Interview 23:02:95 No. 88)*

**Rev. Klippies Kritzinger**

*"I would hope that the RCA will get out of its narrowness. It painted itself into a corner. It must get out of the corner even if the paint has not dried. They will definitely be alone if they continue to be an Indian Charismatic Church outside the amazing things that are happening in South Africa. Let's build the future together"*

*(Interview 20:02:95 No. 90)*

**Rev. K. Moodley**

*"The most important thing for me in the RCA is that the congregations of the RCA may become self supporting. My desire is that the RCA become completely independent financially. The RCA must continue in the strong evangelical standpoint. There is no room now to go and fight against the past, but I think the RCA has a valuable contribution to make in the society today"*

*(Interview 29:06:95 No. 86)*

**Rev. Greg Denysschen**

*"I think that the RCA should be full church of Jesus Christ in the full biblical sense of the word. We have a biblical mandate and that is a holistic mandate. The RCA is not a hospital, so we don't practice medicine. We don't do cattle farming. That is why we should leave the politics to the politicians. They are qualified to do that. They get paid to do that. Let us get on with preaching the Gospel"*

*(Interview 5:06:95 No. 83)*

**Rev. V. Francis**

*"I would like to see that the RCA is a missionary church and a church that will work*

*in all conditions to build the kingdom of God"*

*(Interview 9:10:95 No. 92)*

*Prof P Maartens (UDW)*

*"The Reformed Church in the past was privileged and played from a privileged advantage point, exercised enormous influence upon the constitution of our country which resulted in legislation which today we regret. I would challenge our church that we charge the church not to recede now, step back and say we have wronged and we let the reigns go totally and let it be a democratic and be dictated at. Let us hold hands with the majority in our country. Let us examine our prophetic calling and when we do that never as in the past do it in a spirit of pride, let us do it humbly and let us do it in love. It is only in love that we exercise our own humanity. We are humane as much as we love and let us never forget we are here to serve and the paradigm of our service is given in Jesus Christ Himself".*

*(Interview 19:10:95 No 93)*

From the remarks especially by the laity the leadership of the RCA will benefit greatly. The researcher's point of view is that the leadership has to put its ear to the ground and hear what comes up. The major concerns from the laity are that of church unity. They want no time to be wasted for the RCA to merge with the other sister churches. They are also of the view that the RCA has to work towards a multiracial

church and that the RCA must become involved with the RDP.

The other major concern from the laity is that communication at grassroots level is missing very badly. It was suggested that there should be timeous updates and information in brochures or booklet form. The laity came out very strongly in favour of women being in office. It was also mentioned that there is need for youth education.

The researcher also observed that the laity were concerned about the issue of confidentiality of the minister and that stones are thrown from the pulpit. There was also an indication that the RCA Sunthosam in Cape Town needs a breath of fresh air in terms of the ministry and the leadership. The leadership in its response mentioned that the church needs to maintain its strong evangelical stand and that they need to become financially independent. It was stated that the RCA can play an important role in the new South Africa. The RCA was also urged to be proud of its Reformed tradition.

## CONCLUSION

There is no doubt that apartheid has affected the RCA in various ways that are even prevalent today. Historically the Dutch and the British period proved to be very significant in the shaping of the character of the DRC. There has been a problem for Christians to accept that people of colour could be placed on the same footing as them. The splitting of the Afrikaners into three separate churches viz NGK, NHK and the GK with their own ideological views also had an influence on the future development of the RCA. It was because of the apartheid ideologies that was masterminded by the NGK that saw the establishment of their three "daughter" churches along racial lines.

The Afrikaner period proved the most decisive period in the legislation and implementation of the separate development policies. The Nationalist Party's election victory in 1948 mandated them to go ahead with the implementation of apartheid in the church. Their endeavours were frowned upon by the membership of the RCA. The Afrikaner went all out to preserve their national identity at the expense of other racial groups. They feared that the emergence of the Black population will be a threat to their future existence.

In 1968 the IRC was established in Pietermaritzburg and the scene was set for further missionary activity among the Indian population. The NGK developed its missionary policy of 1935 along racial lines.

The leadership of the RCA have remarked that God's calling was involved in the NGK's missionary endeavours and that there was nothing sinister about this. It was mentioned that the

NGK acted and was prompted out of love and concern to bring the Gospel to the Indian people. From the writer's point of view, the NGK's concerns may have been genuine, but they failed in accommodating those that were saved through their efforts into their White Churches. So from the beginning the apartheid mould was used to minister to and serve people of colour, thus preserving their identity at the cost of the Gospel message. The writer must add that this was done in the most loving and caring manner, but unfortunately they were guided by racial prejudice. They considered themselves chosen by God to bring light to the Southern tip of Africa.

The majority of the respondents acknowledge that it was wrong for the NGK to establish a separate Indian congregation. They say that it should not have been so. The writer agrees that the apartheid system especially in the churches also made the Indians to develop within their own cultural boundaries. At the beginning of the RCA the ethnic mould in which it was established was not questioned in so many words. Perhaps there were enlightened leaders at that time, but saw that it was not the proper time for any formalised resistance to the apartheid system. While the RCA developed it got used to the Indian identity of the church and the RCA was proud that it was established as a separate, independent Synod. This was the high water mark for the RCA.

Although the unity negotiations germinated earlier on, it was from 1972 onwards that a more concerted ethos of the RCA began to take shape to resist the ethnic orientation of the IRC as it was then known. Thus in 1976 a landmark decision was taken to change the name of the church from IRC to RCA to publicly announce that all races could take up membership in the RCA. This research has shown that the Transvaal congregations were more successful in this endeavour than the experience in Kwa-Zulu Natal.

From now on many social issues were put on the agenda of the forthcoming Synods especially at the 1980 Synod. There were strong ecumenical views expressed regarding the demoralizing effects of apartheid. The RCA at this stage began to live up to its true prophetic calling. The NGK was now challenged from the RCA to look into its racial policies and build an apartheid free society. In keeping with the atmosphere at this stage the NGK began to take note of the ecumenical developments within the RCA. The writer would like to point out that the Indian evangelists at that time did not show any particular political orientation. The early evangelists were drawn from a Pentecostal or thorough evangelical backgrounds into the RCA. As far as these workers were concerned, they considered themselves called by God to save the unsaved and thus all their energies were concentrated here in their pioneering work amongst the Indian communities. According to the researcher it was within this context that they did not respond vociferously to the strong ecumenical influence in the RCA.

The younger White missionaries who came into the RCA appeared to be more knowledgeable in politics, social concerns, evangelism and ecumenism than their Indian counterparts and all these men together worked in love and harmony producing a relevant ministry within the RCA.

The impact of the impending split was heightened in 1982 with the WARC resolution to suspend the NGK from the WARC. At that point in time the RCA delegation to Ottawa was unanimous with the WARC resolution and they developed solidarity by abstaining from the Lord's Supper because of the presence of the NGK delegates who insisted on theological justification for apartheid.

Soon after the Ottawa experience there was a concerted effort from certain quarters to break all

ties with the NGK because now the NGK appeared to be a heretical church theologically justifying their position on apartheid. There were however some concerns that the "mother" church should not be treated in this way although she justified apartheid theologically. The RCA delegation to Ottawa which upheld their solidarity, now experienced this solidarity eroding away. It has been alleged that Rev K Moodley was contacted by the NGK to be accountable for his actions in Ottawa. Rev K Moodley informed the writer that he was troubled by his conscience and he was prompted by God to make an apology to the NGK for abstaining from the Lords Table. From then onwards the division and split began to take roots in the RCA because the other delegates felt that Rev K Moodley sold them out. To the writer it appears that the NGK pressurised him and now that it boiled down as a bread and butter issue Rev K Moodley opted not to offer any further resistance to the NGK and cooperated with them. This followed the loss of status of Rev Gere Lubbe, Rev C du P le Roux and JNJ Kritzinger. The writer wishes to state clearly that the intervention of Dr Fourie and his interpretation on this matter was not called for. This intervention proved without a shadow of doubt that this was the decisive blow that was dealt to the three ministers who lost their status. The writer also can conclude that the manner in which Rev EJ Manikkam handled this issue leaves much to be desired, because it appeared that he was working towards his own interests. After the saga of the loss of status those who remained in the RCA experienced the impact of the splits that followed. The Transvaal congregations developed as a greater solidarity, whilst the congregations in the Kwa-Zulu Natal region knew very little of what was going on. There was an international outcry against the loss of status of those ministers. The loss of status has indeed seen the exit of the ecumenical arm of the RCA out of the RCA and from the writer's point of view this would have suited the NGK for the future development of the RCA. The leaders of the RCA presently are of the opinion that God's work could just not come to a standstill.

Rev K Moodley claims that it was during this stage the Lord began to develop a new ministry for him and thus he has mentioned on numerous occasions that out of ashes God has produced something beautiful. The NGK wasted no time in offering their assistance to the RCA by being instrumental to set up alternative congregations in the Transvaal to replace those congregations who withdrew their affiliation from the RCA. The writer considers this move as a very diplomatic move. From now onwards after the Synod began to function once again, the leadership of the RCA began to map out its future in line with a thorough evangelical principle. In the writer's view, the NGK was pleased with this direction of their "daughter" church and it now appeared as the "new RCA". The RCA thus began to isolate itself from the ecumenical world and therefore did not give serious attention to the social concerns that were placed on the agenda of the 1980 Synod. If there was any concern at all for those issues, then it merely appeared in the Actas as statements. The writer does admit that there are still some signs of ecumenism which needs to further clarify its position within the RCA despite the major shift in emphasis.

#### 11.1 **OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The writer has also observed a number of issues that have emerged from this research and where necessary suggestions or and recommendations will be offered. The observations will be dealt with under the following headings:

### 11.1.1 Communication Gap

The research clearly indicates a huge communication gap between the clergy and the laity. This gap is also experienced between ordinary church council members and the Presbytery. The majority of the RCA congregations are not updated on very important and crucial issues of the church. All this is locked up within the Synodical Committee and at Presbytery levels.

Because of an authoritarian imposition over the congregations, many members tend to fear their minister. Instead of the minister becoming their friend and their humble servant the minister is viewed as a dictator and thus becomes unapproachable. It may appear that some of the ministers are raised to the status of ecclesiastical dictators in which they are far removed from the lives of the ordinary people in the congregation. According to the writer this seems to hinder the process of grassroots communication. Some ministers have allocated to themselves such high levels of piousness that they find it very difficult to reach down to members who have faults. It also emerged from this research that although the leaders were mandated by Synod to discuss certain important issues with the various congregations, this has not happened. A good example is the discussion of the Laudium Declaration. Some of the church council members don't even know about the contents of this important declaration. It is only recently in October 1995 that members were encouraged to purchase the booklet on RCA guidelines, especially to now look at the Laudium Declaration.

The researcher recommends that the RCA encourages its congregations to have open and free discussions on matters that affect the church and their Christian lives. The leaders in the church must take the responsibility to stimulate such discussions. In this way the process of

communication can be encouraged. The leaders of the various congregations should programme relevant seminars and conferences on a regular basis thereby actively engaging the members in healthy discussions.

Although Synod has mandated its leaders to produce a magazine for their church this has not emerged as yet. The writer recommends that a newsletter should be developed which will serve as a regular source of information. Each congregation could take its own initiative. In this newsletter the membership should be informed about important decisions that affect them and their church. Maybe the article could ask for comments and contributions. This will open the way and allow space for the ordinary members to be engaged in a grassroots communication process. Members should also be informed about interesting events that occur to its leadership or anybody else from the congregation.

The newsletter should also indicate its aims and objectives of certain projects it might want to undertake, thus encouraging the congregation's involvement. Sporting and social events could also serve as entertaining news items with the inclusion of appropriate photographs. The writer is certain that the membership of the RCA will also want to be updated as to what is happening in the other member congregations of the RCA. The researcher suggests that a newsletter should be designed so that the ordinary membership will eagerly await its next publication. It must be reader friendly.

### 11.1.2 Evangelical and Ecumenical Issues

It is observed that certain key figures in the leadership of the RCA have been motivated to lead the RCA in an evangelical sense. There may be right reasons for this attempt. The researcher expresses dissatisfaction when this is pursued to such an extent that ecumenical issues are pushed out of the church completely or exists in the RCA in some shadowy way.

The writer is of the opinion that through the process of evangelism ecumenical issues could be addressed adequately. The writer recommends that the leadership of the RCA take a proactive stance to educate their membership as to what evangelism and ecumenism entail. The writer has observed that many members have the notion that ecumenism has a negative connotation. When the researcher explained to the respondents what is meant by ecumenism they immediately responded by saying that the RCA should develop an ecumenical ministry which in their view was absent in the RCA. It is within this context that the leadership should educate its membership, besides Satanism, humanism, abortion, etc. which are also very important matters of exposure and education.

It has also been observed that the word or term "politics" if mentioned in the RCA attracts a storm of protest and negativeness. This word is almost viewed as a swear word with evil connotations. Why should the membership not engage in healthy discussions about the church's role in politics? The more the RCA avoids this, the more curious the membership becomes, especially the youth. According to the researcher the leadership discourages its membership from political involvement. The RCA should not be afraid of this for the future..

### 11.1.3 Social Concerns

The writer has observed that the RCA is not very much involved with holistic ministry in the society that it is called to share the Gospel with. This has emerged from this study. It's only one or two congregations of the RCA that have links with community projects outside the church. The writer has also picked up that influential members in the congregation tend to say that the government should be fully responsible as far as social concerns go and that the RCA is only called to preach the Gospel. The researcher has observed that some members have a very narrow and conservative view of the Gospel message. If they have a particular mind set of how they view the Gospel then this must be the case for all other Christians. The writer wishes to make the point that the Gospel message has social implications. The writer suggests to the leadership not to impose a narrow-minded concept of the Gospel message on the RCA because the Gospel message deals with the total liberation of a person and offers salvation.

The 1994 Synodical resolution has indicated clearly that the RCA will give support to the RDP and that the leadership must encourage its congregations to do so. There has been an overwhelming response from the membership that the RCA must be involved with the programmes of the RDP. This research shows that the leadership of the RCA are in favour of getting involved in the RDP, but they cited the lack of finance as the only obstacle that prevents this involvement. While there is certain amount of truth in their perception, it fails to take into consideration some important issues. The RDP is not only about financial assistance although this is the single most important factor. The researcher recommends that the RCA should put together a select team, not necessarily of church council members only, to do something positive towards the nation building process and thereby create a better image of the RCA. A much more

positive attitude needs to be developed towards the concerns of the disadvantaged people.

The writer recommends that the RCA pursue interdenominational contacts and fellowship with other churches within the community. Together as a joint action the needs of the community can be accessed. The leaders and congregation of the RCA should consult with Rev Nobin Shunmugam's Masters thesis especially on the topic of social responsibility and political responsibility. Rev N Shunmugam's (1992:154) advocates that the church buildings could be used for community projects and thus stimulate community action whereby a respect for communal activity and responsibility can be restored.

The RCA could become part of a process whereby it could together with other churches assist in drawing up recommendations to authorities to highlight the needs in their communities. They could begin to be the voice of the voiceless. The writer sees the potential in the RCA to initiate such moves, providing the leadership allows such formations. According to the writer the RCA would be developing a balanced ministry in society.

The Natal Mercury (6:06:95 p. 6) includes an article about a pastoral letter from the KZN's church leaders indicating their commitment to the full range of the church's ministry regarding its evangelistic, pastoral and a prophetic ministry.

## 11.2 ISSUES OF CONCERN

The writer is concerned with certain issues that are prevalent in our country and is of the opinion that the RCA could play a major role regarding the following issues:

### 11.2.1 Tension and Violence

According to the writer's knowledge there were concerted efforts via a campaign by Christian churches to pray before the 1994 elections and the result thereof was that the country experienced the wonderful way in which the Lord undertook for our land. The 1994 RCA Synod responded in the following way:

**"The RCA praises God for the political transition that took place in our beloved country as far as the peaceful way it happened."**

(Acta 1994:114)

In the above statement which was adopted, the RCA indicated its assurance to pray and work towards true justice and peace for all in our land. The writer considers this statement to be in keeping with the ecumenical aspect of the Gospel message.

The article in the Natal Mercury (6:06:95) adds that prayer and action led to a wonderful outpouring of God's Spirit of peace on the whole province at that time. In this light the RCA is also called to be a peacemaker at work places, communities and churches.

The writer recommends that the RCA make use of the Vuleka Trust courses that are offered at Bothas Hill in order to acquire training for its members in conflict resolution. Beside being a Spirit-filled person with Biblical knowledge or qualifications, attending these courses would be an added advantage to their skills as peacemakers and reconciliators which is desperately required in the challenge amidst the breath-taking times that we are living in.

Christians have been granted a divine mandate to be peacemakers. The RCA needs to broaden this mandate and thus will be able to be the salt and the light in a more relevant sense. The writer suggests that the various congregations consider putting a team in place to assist the RCA to facilitate this process as it has the potential to deliver the goods and also will make contacts in the community. In this way people will get to know that the church exists in their community and they will come to the church for guidance and help. This will then make the process of a relevant witness much easier.

#### 11.2.2 **Local government involvement**

This type of government is closest to the community and it feels the heartbeat of the community. The RCA has taken a firm stand in its Laudium Declaration not to stop working for peace and justice in our land. In keeping with the above, the writer recommends that the RCA seriously considers encouraging and supporting suitable members for local government elections. The RCA needs its voice to be heard in this type of forum. This can bring the RCA to influence the decision making process in a given community. The NGK did this effectively in the past and the writer is of the opinion that the time is now right for the RCA to make a positive intervention in government circles. The RCA should not waste any time about this because it now has the

opportunity to come out of its conservative theological outlook and from the shadow of the past to assert itself as a progressive church in our South African context. Prof PJ Maartens (Interview 19:10:95) in an interview shared similar sentiments of the RCA's involvement at local government levels. The RCA also needs to get involved in joint prayer sessions with other denominations for the local elections and also be able to encourage their communities to vote. This could also serve as a programme of action for the future.

#### 11.2.3 **Newspaper Advertisement**

The writer recommends that the RCA advertise its services in the Newspapers on a regular basis. In this way the various sectors of the community will respond and church growth can be ensured.

#### 11.2.4 **Refugees**

The Natal Mercury (6:06:95) indicates that a forum with strong church participation is being established in Durban to coordinate a ministry to refugees and make sure that this is done in a sensitive way. The writer recommends that the RCA in the relevant province support this initiative.

### 11.3 **ECUMENICAL STRUCTURES**

The researcher recommends that the RCA in the Kwa-Zulu Natal region make their presence felt in ecumenical structures, especially the Kwa-Zulu Natal Christian Council. The RCA must join in this effort to offer a Christian response to the ecumenical challenges. Membership with

Diakonia is highly recommended. By engaging in these structures there should be no fear whatsoever that the RCA's evangelical stand will be endangered. The researcher's opinion is that the RCA must not use this fear as an obstacle to involvement in ecumenical structures. Jesus' himself, the Saviour of the world, was ecumenical in his approach to the societies in His time. This holistic ministry is so vital to the progress and the future development of the RCA. God needs the presence of the RCA at society level. The researcher has observed that the RCA is guided by a church centred theology. This has been going on for years already. The RCA still has goodwill that can be worked upon to undertake a balanced ministry towards society.

#### 11.4 **THE WRITER'S DILEMMA**

The writer does not want to be misunderstood regarding the line in which he has made the above suggestions and recommendations. It is his concern that the RCA needs to focus its ministry without avoiding its interaction with the social needs of society. According to the writer an avoidance of this will be considered as an injustice to humanity. The writer considers himself to be a born again Christian who has grown up in the RCA for 22 years experiencing the evangelical thrust upon the congregation and he does not regret it all because an evangelical influence has kept him in a sound frame of mind. However the writer felt that something was missing while he was developing into an adult Christian who became more mature in his thinking. As the writer became exposed to the Belydendekring and the Ottawa experience, the ecumenical yearnings became part of this Christian experience. It is within this context that the researcher will want to see the RCA opening up to society from its position of isolation and non-involvement. The writer therefore argues for a balanced theological approach within the ministry of the RCA.

## 11.5 **POWER ANALYSIS OF RCA'S CONGREGATIONS**

### 11.5.1 **Power dynamics in the RCA**

According to the writer the RCA needs to be run by sound democratic principles therefore it is important to be aware and not be ignorant of the power dynamics in the different congregations. For the future of the RCA the issue of power needs to be taken seriously by its leaders. They need to come to grips with power and authority issues.

### 11.5.2 **Overuse of personal power**

Oswald, RM (1992:1) admits that as a leader he had little insight into the reality that others needed to act with power in order for their investment in the church to be sustained and also that he did not sense the need to empower the alienated, powerless members of his congregation. He also confirms that usually those with high verbal skills got rewarded with positions of power and he also recalls that the misuse of personal power in his case in the long run has rendered him ineffective with certain congregation members. He felt that by the misuse of power one could possibly hinder members from continuing to grow in faith and knowledge.

According to Oswald (1992:2) the leader must first come to terms with his self-interests and the self-interests of others and states that self-interest is the prime mover of people. Thus, he saw the need to come to grips with his feeling of power and his theology of power.

The writer does not consider the use of power to be a negative force, but it must be exercised

without being detrimental to others. Oswald says "**Deep down I felt the use of power always meant coercion or manipulation and that ultimately power corrupts**" (Oswald 1992:2)

The minister in the congregation is considered to be as a servant and an enabler. All people are called in unique ways to be effective. Oswald (1992:2) says that in order to be effective we need to be powerful. According to Oswald (1992:2) power is not a dirty word. It is the ability to get what you want and also the ability to mobilise resources to be effective towards specific ends.

### 11.5.3 Factions in Congregations

From the writer's view it will be beneficial to the RCA congregations to determine where members of a faction are united and where they are divided. There may be in the RCA congregations various divisions into factions. Therefore, it becomes important to identify them. Members may belong to a liberal faction, a fundamentalist faction, a charismatic faction and a social activist faction (Oswald 1992:9). The minister has to take the responsibility to identify sub groups in his congregation even if it exists formally and informally. The minister must then be able to hold healthy discussions with these groups. The objective of this exercise is not to get rid of any groups.

By doing the above the minister will have a clearer idea as to where to do his homework. Through this exercise the minister may need to develop trust and understanding with certain individuals. There has to be mutual submission. According to the researcher there is a desperate need for this exercise within the RCA.

Oswald (1992:14) mentions that when one group has a stronghold on a piece of the church and people are hurt in the process, the leaders should be concerned whilst a group can also provide the right kind of energy to keep the church moving.

#### 11.5.4 **Power, Families and Groupings**

Power is also concentrated in families in most of the churches. A large family which may act as a "power block" in the church could have advantages and disadvantages. The writer has observed that this is evident in the RCA. It is therefore important for the ministers of the RCA to do a power analysis in their congregations. The writer is also aware that because of differences of opinion members of particular families resign from the church or are harassed by the minister to leave the church because of their views. Ministers also tend to favour certain groupings within a congregation provided that these groupings' aspiration coincides with that of the minister. The minister therefore have to analyse power in groupings that may differ with his point of view. Once the minister does an analysis and also views his self interests then he will be in a favourable position to have open discussions with the different groups that have power and see how each can contribute to the life of the church.

The writer is of the opinion that if ministers of the RCA carry out a power analysis exercise in their congregations they will be able to develop a healthy congregation. Oswald (1992:14) says that it takes power not only to produce a vision, but to make that vision a reality. This is to be the true quality of the leadership of the RCA that is called for the churches today.

## 11.6 FINANCIAL OBLIGATION

It has been determined that the NGK played a big role in its financial contribution towards the development of the RCA and in a certain way were able to map out the future of the RCA. It has also been observed that the RCA is still relying on the NG to fund certain posts. There is a constant plea for funds from the NG structures.

The writer's observation is that the NGK has spoiled the RCA financially and that the NGK put a lot of money to establish the RCA along ethnic lines. This was in keeping with the grand idea of apartheid. The leadership of the RCA do not see any ulterior motives in these financial implications, but that the NGK has acted purely out of love and concern.

The RCA leadership has denied that their financial obligations with the NGK caused the NGK to impose the ideologies of apartheid upon them. Presently it has been established that the RCA depends on funds from the NGK and that the RCA will still continue if this funding stops. However it must be recorded that a few congregations have become financially self supporting where NG funds have stopped coming in. The 1994 Acta also indicate that there is a financial constraint within the RCA.

From the writer's point of view, the ideal situation is that congregations work towards becoming financially independent. The writer recommends that this be brought to the attention of the congregation. Each congregation should get a monthly statement reflecting the financial status of the congregation. There should be a breakdown of how the money is utilised. The Ministers' stipend should also be reflected. The writer has observed that there is a struggle in most of the

congregations to meet the minister's stipend. The congregations are put under certain amount of pressure to meet the minister's stipend. According to the writer the white ministers of the NGK earned a higher salary than the Indian ministers in the RCA. After negotiations parity in the salary scales was achieved. This meant that the salary scale of the Indian ministers went higher. Because of financial constraints the RCA in 1994 decided that their ministers take a cut in their salaries. The writer has also observed that before a congregation can call a minister they must guarantee the minister's stipend. If the minister has a church manse then the telephone, light and water accounts has to be reflected. The writer recommends that the church council should budget certain amounts for telephone, light and water and whatever is in excess of this amount must be borne by the minister. Funds and donations or gifts must also be reflected. There must be an indication where the budgets for certain items or projects have not been met. In this way the congregations will become proactive in relating to contributions to the development of the church. The financial statement should therefore be made available to the entire membership. This type of transparency will be of benefit to the RCA. This type of transparency is already currently in practice by certain congregations of the RCA. The church council members must take a proactive stand in this matter. The congregation must not be told that they are free to examine the financial records of the church. This is why a bulletin board can serve an essential purpose. Once members are exposed to the church business matters they will be able to make suggestions to the relevant church councils. The members must therefore be encouraged to offer their suggestions and views about matters in the church.

#### 11.6.1 **TITHING**

It appears to the writer that preferential treatment is given to members who give their full tithe to the church. The ministers who are guilty of this should refrain from doing this. There is no magical value in giving tithes except God's grace and blessing. The minister should not make a differentiation in the congregation between those who contribute and those who don't or cannot contribute as these might lead to a polarization in the congregation. Although tithing is a Christian responsibility, members ought not to be embarrassed and picked upon in sermons for not tithing. The writer encourages the leadership of the RCA to treat this matter with the diplomacy it deserves. The congregation members should also develop a positive response towards their contributions to their churches.

#### 11.7 **MINISTER AND CHURCH COUNCIL**

It has been observed that a father figure image is prevalent in some of the congregations. The writer recommends strongly that a Minister should not serve for more than three years as a term of office in the same congregation. There should be a healthy rotation of RCA ministers within the various congregations. The writer is of the opinion that a much better type of congregation will emerge if this exercise is put into practice. No minister should feel that he will be in charge of a congregation permanently. Each minister will have the opportunity to further and broaden his leadership skills. It is not intended that members must think and act exactly like their minister thinks and acts. The writer is also sure that the ministers of the RCA do not seek their own conveniences for their posting, but are prepared to live a sacrificial life wherever they are called. The calling must not turn out to be a mockery. The members of the congregation must learn not

to place ownership on their ministers as this may hamper their development.

#### 11.7.1 **BLOOD RELATIONS: CHURCH COUNCIL**

The 1994 Synod emphasised that congregations have to take note when electing blood relatives to leadership positions in the church, especially to the church council. The writer concedes that there may be cases where those blood relatives in the church council cannot be avoided. The writer recommends that the church council should actually train and prepare members to be trainee deacons and elders. The Church council should also not impose too many regulations and be too prescriptive on those that they choose to be on the church council.

#### 11.7.2 **CHURCH COUNCIL AND CONGREGATION**

It should be incumbent on the members of the church council to hold discussions with the membership prior to church council meetings. They should meet with the congregation and spell out to the congregation how they view certain issues and what contribution they are going to make on behalf of the congregation. After all they are there to serve the needs of the congregation. There should also be a process of accountability to the congregation because decisions taken at the church council meetings will definitely affect the membership. The researcher has found this to be lacking in congregations where it is left entirely to the church council to determine the development of the church. Members of such congregations unquestionably accept what their church councils decide.

The writer strongly recommends that the various congregations of the RCA work towards the process of achieving church unity. Something similar to the Pretoria Unity initiative could be started. The researcher has witnessed that members of the RCA are more comfortable with whites. The researcher has shown that if combined services are held, they are held with the NGK. Some members in the RCA have a very narrow and conservative mind towards other race groups, especially coloureds and blacks. It is about time they allow God to speak and minister to them through the encounter of Peter and Cornelius in Act 10.

The writer admits that minor problems exist. He also supports the mandate of the 1994 Synod that the RCA should become proactive and foster unity at grassroots level with the sister congregations. The researcher stresses the fact that this is the responsibility of the various church councils and that they ought to be in the driving seat. It has been suggested by some members that individuals must do this in their own capacities. This to the writer is a possibility, but the leadership of the congregations simply cannot leave such an important task to individual members alone. The church council must not escape this responsibility. By fostering this type of initiative the RCA will be acting within the spirit of their Synodical mandate to promote the nation building exercise. In the wake of the transformation process that is unfolding in South Africa the church unification process will be an added advantage.

The exchange of pulpits in the RCA should reflect this sort of change. It is high time that ministers of the coloured and black sister churches are invited to preach in the RCA. Social activities could also be developed and could become a common feature with the DR family of

churches. The ordinary members should support their leadership in these endeavours. Now that the RCA has managed to forge solid links with whites, it should turn its focus on forging links with coloureds and blacks within the DR family. The writer also recommends that even if ministers have an ecumenical slant the RCA should not avoid inviting such ministers to share their pulpit.

#### 11.9 **RECONCILIATION: THE WAY FORWARD:** -

Apartheid has definitely left its mark on the RCA. The effect of apartheid is still a present reality within the RCA. The RCA has to accept the fact the apartheid has a negative influence in the life of the church. The membership of the RCA from its time of establishment have faced the ravages of apartheid, knowingly and unknowingly setting people on opposite ends. It is amazing how the membership have survived and kept their faith so strong despite the challenges to their faith. The writer's opinion that although this has occurred there appears to be a certain amount of goodwill within the membership of the RCA and also those who split from the RCA.

According to the researcher the rift that was caused in the RCA was due to the evils of apartheid that had had cast a strong shadow upon the RCA. The writer believes that due to this system all those leaders of the RCA, present and past, have failed in the fundamentals of Christian love. The rift and differences could have been handled in a better way, but the writer's view is that the climate was hostile at that point in time. The writer has also observed that members in the present RCA are reluctant to reconcile with those that have split from the RCA, especially with those ministers who lost their status in the RCA. These ministers indicated to the researcher that

mistakes have been made. They have now joined the broader formation within the Uniting Church and the writer sees that it may now be impractical for those congregations who left the RCA to come back and be part of the RCA. The present leadership of the RCA are pushing for reincorporation of these congregations back into the RCA. There is a perception that these congregations must come back into the RCA and then the RCA as a whole can join the Uniting Church.

#### 11.9.1 **JOINT INFORMAL FELLOWSHIP**

The researcher recommends that the present leadership of the RCA and those ministers who lost their status should seek to find each other as brothers in Christ as it originally was. The writer believes that the healing process could start from such a fellowship. Arch political rivals have come together in order to discuss the problems of South Africa and have decided to map a way forward by compromises and negotiations. According to the writer if political opponents could forge a process of reconciliation, why should not minister of the Word of God decide to meet without preconditions. They should simply trust God and let go of their hard stand and be prepared for the Lords' sake to give and take and allow the blood of Christ our Saviour to wash the sins and misconceptions of the past.

#### 11.9.2 **TELEVISION COVERAGE: RECONCILIATION**

The writer is of the opinion that a breath of fresh air is needed in the RCA as the wind of change is blowing in our country. There is no need for a truth commission to settle disputes and to see who was right and wrong in the RCA saga. The researcher recommends that the leadership of the

RCA should televise the reconciliation with their Brothers in a special television broadcast, for the world to see, for their congregation to see and for their international critics. By taking this bold step, the researcher believes that future negotiations could lead to a greater unity towards affiliation to the URCSA or the present form of unity which is known as the Verenigende Gereformeerde Kerk. For the writer and those who have been affected by the split, what a sigh of relief and what a day of rejoicing that will be.

The researcher's sincere prayer is that the reconciliation process could become a reality. Those ministers who lost their status could be invited to minister in our congregations as in years gone by. The writer is confident that this research will assist the RCA to look forward for greater things to come and that the RCA will create an impact upon the challenge that face them in the climate of transformatory climate that they are experiencing in our land. The writer is also prepared to assist in any way to get the reconciliation off the ground.

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Acta	1980	4th Synod	4-10 Oct	Durban
Agenda	1984	Extraordinary Synod	23 Oct	Durban

Acta	1986	5th Synod	15 June	PmBurg
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Acta	1988	Extraordinary Synod	6 May	Port Elizabeth
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Report to the SC of the RCA on WARC 6 : 10 : 82 Transvaal

SC Report on reasons for the loss of status 21 : 05 : 86 Red Hill

Report of Conference of DR Congregations 29-31 Aug 1986 Kilnerton Centre Pretoria



## NETHERLANDS REFORMED CHURCH

9, CARNEGIELAAN, THE HAGUE, THE NETHERLANDS, TELEPHONE (070) 65 89 15\*

R.C.A., Synodical Committee,  
a/o Rev. E.J. Manikkam,  
P.O. Box 1,  
GATESVILLE CP 7764,  
Rep. of South Africa.

The Hague, 17. APR. 1984

of. 13.7 (680)

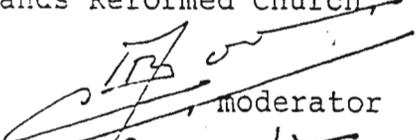
Dear Brothers,

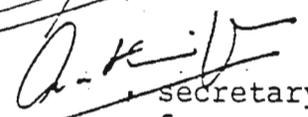
We were highly surprised to receive information about the fact that Dr. Ch. du P. le Roux, Rev. G.J.A. Lubbe and Dr. J.N.J. Kritzinger lost their status of minister of the R.C.A. This should be a direct consequence of their own decision of March 25, 1983. This decision has been taken in order to create clarity and to be considered as ministers only of the R.C.A. in future. By doing this they declare their solidarity with the other ministers of your church for whom it is impossible to be called as a minister of the N.G.K.

Is our impression correct that this fraternal solidarity is paid now by the synodical committee of the R.C.A. by depriving their status of minister? Although we can hardly imagine this we can get to no other conclusion considering the papers we received. Based on the fact that both our churches have an official relation since 1980, in which for example has been stated that ministers are to be called in our churches reciprocally, we urge you to give us clear information about this matter.

The above mentioned matter has caused much rumour and many questions, so we ask you to reply ultimately in the first week of May due to the absolute necessity of clearing up the situation.

For the moderation of the  
Netherlands Reformed Church,

  
moderator

  
secretary  
for general affairs

cc.  
Dr.Ch.de P. le Roux,  
Rev.G.J.A.Lubbe,  
Dr.J.N.J.Kritzinger,  
Dr.A.Kruyswijk.



## GENERALE SYNODE DER NEDERLANDSE HERVORMDE KERK

Bij beantwoording gaarne ons nummer en datum vermelden

Ons nummer : 13.7(680)

Ons kenmerk : dK/dB

Uw brief van : --

R.C.A., Synodical Committee  
a/o Rev. E.J. Manikkam  
P.O. Box 1  
GATESVILLE CP 7764  
Rep. of South Africa

2502 LS 's-GRAVENHAGE,  
Postbus 29721

30. JULI 1984

Dear Brothers,

On April 17th, 1984 we wrote you a letter, asking you for information about the position of Dr. Ch. du P. le Roux, Rev. G.J.A. Lubbe and Dr. J.N.J. Kritzinger within your Church. We had the impression that they were deprived of their status as minister of the R.C.A.

We requested you urgently to send us a reply ultimately in the first week of May since we wanted earnestly to have clarity about the situation in your Church.

As you may understand everything which happens in the RCA is of the utmost interest to us in view of the special relationship between our two Churches, especially since the visit of our Chairman Rev. C.B. Roos.

May we ask you to answer our letter as early as possible?

On behalf of the moderation of the  
Netherlands Reformed Church,

, moderator

, secretary-general.

cc. Dr. Ch. du P. le Roux  
Rev. G.J.A. Lubbe  
Dr. J.N.J. Kritzinger  
Dr. A. Kruyswijk.



SYNOD OF THE  
REFORMED CHURCH IN AFRICA

144 AMOS STREET COLBYN PRETORIA 0083 SOUTH AFRICA TEL (012) 43-4977

August 21, 1995

TO ALL CHURCH COUNCILS AND MISSIONS  
REFORMED CHURCH IN AFRICA

Dear Brother

WOMEN IN THE OFFICE OF ELDER

Greetings to you in the blessed Name of Jesus.

We are now in receipt of the replies of all the church councils of the RCA in connection with the above matter.

On behalf of the Synodical committee we can now inform you that the required majority for allowing women into the office of elder was not obtained and that the status quo therefore remains.

Thanking you for your co-operation in this weighty matter.

Yours in His precious Name

CLERK RCA SYNOD

## **LAUDIUM DECLARATION OF THE REFORMED CHURCH IN AFRICA**

DRAFT ADOPTED BY SYNOD 1990, LAUDIUM, PRETORIA AND  
SUBSEQUENTLY FINALIZED BY THE SYNODICAL COMMITTEE

This declaration was born from the resolution of the RCA in 1986 to maintain her stand as Evangelical Reformed Church.

### **1. BIBLICAL GOSPEL**

WE AFFIRM that the biblical Gospel is God's enduring message to our world, and we determine to defend, proclaim and embody it.

WE AFFIRM our commitment to the primacy of evangelism, of the preaching of the Gospel to every creature. We affirm that Evangelism is not an option but an imperative.

WE AFFIRM that men are born in sin and guilty, and lost without Christ and totally depraved.

WE AFFIRM that other religions and ideologies are not alternative paths to God, and there is no other name given among men whereby we can be saved but the name Jesus.

WE REJECT as derogatory to Christ and the Gospel every kind of syncretism and dialogue which implies that Christ speaks equally through other religions and ideologies. To proclaim Jesus as the Saviour of the world is not to affirm that all men are either automatically or ultimately saved.

### **2. HOLY SPIRIT'S WITNESS**

WE AFFIRM that the Holy Spirit's witness to Christ is indispensable to evangelism and that without His supernatural work new birth and new life is not possible and all our endeavours fruitless.

WE AFFIRM that we who proclaim the Gospel must exemplify it in a life of holiness and love, otherwise our testimony loses its credibility.

WE AFFIRM the constant need for revival and determine to seek God's face constantly for revival in our own lives, in the life of the RCA, and in the Church of South Africa at large.

WE AFFIRM that nothing commends the Gospel more eloquently than a transformed life and nothing brings it into disrepute so much as personal inconsistency. We determine to live worthy of the Gospel of Christ.

### 3. EVANGELISTIC WITNESS AND COMPASSIONATE SERVICE

WE AFFIRM that the congregation of believers should turn itself outward to its local community in evangelistic witness and compassionate service.

WE AFFIRM that God has committed the whole Gospel to the whole Church and to every member the task of making Christ known throughout the world. We long to see all lay and ordained persons mobilised and trained for the task. We determine to proclaim the Gospel faithfully, urgently, passionately and sacrificially, until He comes.

WE AFFIRM that we must demonstrate God's love visibly by caring for those who are deprived of justice, dignity, food and shelter.

Governments, religious bodies and nations will continue to be involved with social responsibilities but should the church fail in her mandate to preach the Gospel no other body will do so.

### 4. UNITY

WE AFFIRM our God given unity at the deepest level with all born again bloodwashed believers. We determine to foster such unity across all denominational barriers. In the immediate circle of our church we will foster structural unity with those who share the same confession provided that such structural unity will not stifle the evangelical witness of the Reformed Church in Africa.

WE AFFIRM that we who claim to be members of the Body of Christ must transcend within the Church the barriers of race, gender and class. We affirm that racism within the church constitutes a denial of the Gospel and deterrent to evangelistic witness.

## 5. PROPHETIC WITNESS

WE AFFIRM that the proclamation of God's kingdom of justice, peace and holiness demands the denunciation of all injustice, oppression and immorality. We will not shrink from this prophetic witness.

WE AFFIRM the freedom in Christ of the church of Jesus Christ and refuse the alignment of the church to any ideology or current political trend, power or movement.

WE AFFIRM our solidarity with those who suffer for the Gospel and will seek to prepare ourselves for the same possibility.

WE AFFIRM the right of the believer to conscientious objection. In our demonstration and witness against evil we determine not to use carnal weapons but to act in the spirit of Christ and through spiritual warfare and constant prayer enter into Christ's victory over the principalities and powers of evil.