

**THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH IN A CHANGING
SOUTH AFRICA : A REFORMED PERSPECTIVE**

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SOLI DEO GLORIA

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANC	-	African National Congress
DRC	-	Dutch Reformed Church
DRCA	-	Dutch Reformed Church in Africa
DRMC	-	Dutch Reformed Mission Church
EEC	-	European Economic Community
ERJ	-	Empowering for Reconciliation and Justice
GKSA	-	Gereformeerde Kerk van Suid Afrika
IEC	-	Independent Electoral Commission
IFP	-	Inkatha Freedom Party
NGK	-	Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk
NGKA	-	Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk in Afrika
NGSK	-	Nederduitse Gereformeerde Sending Kerk
NP	-	National Party
NUM	-	National Union of Mine Workers
PAC	-	Pan African Congress
RCA	-	Reformed Church in Africa
RDP	-	Reconstruction and Development Programme
REC	-	Reformed Ecumenical Council
SACC	-	South African Council of Churches

SACP	-	South African Communist Party
SACTU	-	South African Congress of Trade Unions
UDF	-	United Democratic Front
URCSA	-	Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa
WARC	-	World Alliance of Reformed Churches
WCC	-	World Council of Churches

CHAPTER ONE

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 HYPOTHESIS

In this thesis, I envisage to present one set of efforts to analyse, evaluate and reflect upon the contemporary historical situation with particular emphasis on the role of the Church, inter alia, of Reformed tradition, in a changing South Africa. Realizing the new emerging realities in economical, political, social and religious spheres which will continue challenging us to be ever alert in exercising our prophetic responsibility as Christians and churches.

To be a part of the Christian church is to witness to God's redemptive concern for all people. There are no spectators in the fellowship of the faithful. The Christian witness is both an example and a challenge to the changing social context in which one lives. Sharing the depravity of the present age, one cannot refrain from testifying to a love that would not leave men alone in their misery. Caught up

in the tempo of one's time, one sees not success, but service as the motivation and objective of life.

The reality is that Christians do not exist unaffected by social change, which is taking place in our time. The winds of change are blowing at gale force in South Africa and we live in the midst of this change, we are effected by it and we are mutually responsible for it. When we become Christians we are ultimately free from the powers of the world and free to keep a critical relationship to its institutions and structures and yet God places us in the world as His witnesses to share His love with all human beings in His World. Apparently, this was the source of the indomitable initiative and exploring energy of the forebears of the Reformed tradition. That is why they stated rightly that the way of the Christian community lies always between the two dangers of conformism and compromise with the secular powers on the one hand and isolation and preoccupation with its own concerns on the other (Wilson, HS 1991:81).

Also, due to the fact that Christians are placed in the larger human community, it is inevitable that they will be

engaged in the problems affecting human society as well. As Christian stewards we share responsibility for the co-existence of all humankind because God does not want to abandon the earth and its inhabitants to evil. The task of the engagement in this regard is a secular one; the "res publica" has first to be a place where people are able to communicate among themselves as much as possible without the boundaries of power and status inequalities. Thus, it is the role of the Church to be attentive to the hopes and fears of the people and stand with them as they confront the winds of change in South Africa.

Therefore, I hope this study would coerce the Church in South Africa, to take its social context seriously in the face of the avalanche of events, movements and inner revolutions as a challenge to its witness and service. The responsibilities of the Church in the cross currents of hope and fear, of progress and danger, must certainly lead to concerted action as well as disciplined thought, particularly in a situation so tense and volatile as in South Africa.

Thereby, it is my hope that this thesis will contribute, in

some small measure to the on-going struggle in being faithful to our calling as Christians and Churches.

1.2 METHODOLOGY

In order to arrive at an accurate account, I intend to draw relevant material from those of the Reformed faith and tradition, who have spent those vital, formative years engaged in the mission of the Church in the South African context, which I am certain, will lend viability and authenticity to my humble efforts in providing a premise for Christian participation in this essential and vital change which is experienced in our country.

Although this study is of limited scope, it has embraced the contributions, direct and vicarious of many individuals, researchers, key church leaders as well as laity of the Reformed tradition at grassroots level. Simultaneously, with the completion of questionnaires, this research was strengthened immeasurably by the input and advice of a distinguished calibre of men and women from Church and academe whose expertise in a wide spectrum of knowledge and understanding of the South African context, helped to gauge, direct and confirm my endeavours.

Many in-depth studies have been accomplished on the subject under consideration, which has resulted in a plethora of valuable information. Thereby, this research involves the identification, collection and processing of WRITTEN SOURCES. Historical, ethnological, sociological, anthropological, economical, demographical and ecclesiastical reports, newspaper articles and books have been screened for relevant information which has proved to be of immense educational value for the purpose of this study. One's primary concern is to present as authentic and as objective a profile of the Churches of the Reformed tradition as one found to be possible, consistent with contemporary sociological theory which is relevant to the South African context and methodology, with the hope that clearer insights might make for a less simplistic understanding. To do this, we need to examine carefully the historiography and the findings of other social scientists as a backdrop for our own field of study, regarding the role of the Church, inter alia, of Reformed tradition, in a changing South African context.

You will notice that I subscribe to a specific tradition: the Reformed heritage. This does not mean that in this

thesis, my hermeneutical basis is prejudiced by a dogmatic approach to its teachings but rather that my study of Holy Scripture has increased my attachment to the Reformed tradition.

The Bible is by far the major source, if not the only source, of teaching and preaching for most grass-root Christians. It is their basic dialogue partner in understanding their faith and appears to be considerably more important than any other source (theological texts, publications in general, sermons and even liturgies very often). In this sense the Bible is truly a "people's book", and a key companion at base community level. (Cochrane, de Gruchy and Petersen 1991:20)

In order to recognise God's will today, how shall we relate the need for careful listening to the witness of the scriptures and involvement in the events of contemporary history? We should consciously reflect on our times from the perspective of the scriptures and, from within our current historical context, we should try to interpret the Holy Scriptures to discover workable criteria for today. We

should be aware of the cultural and ideological bias we bring to the reading of Scripture.

Although drawing socio-political conclusions from the biblical history of the Judeo-Christian identity remains problematic, biblical methodologies and pedagogics should free the text to question us, and free us to be receptive to, and interact with, the vitality of the text, relating to contemporary life. The historical experience of the Reformed tradition is that any time sound liberating methods which question both life and the Bible were used, we witness the appearance of communities with renewed ability to relate their meditation on the Bible to their public responsibilities. We cannot pretend to be experts in reading the Bible and yet be satisfied with being incompetent in assessing contemporary life. In order for the Church to fulfil its role vis-a-vis society, both its leaders and members should be better educated in social analysis and social ethics. The challenge then is to make appropriate choices within the vast ethical spectrum which lies between the radical will of God and the singularity of our personal needs and desires (Wilson 1991:83).

God is calling us through the dramatic and cataclysmic events in our country to hear anew what God requires of us, so that our personal and common life can be shaped by the Living Word of Christ among us. I am absolutely certain that this is the appropriate way into the future for those who wish to be true to the Reformed heritage.

1.3 MISSION : THEORETICAL FORMULATION

1.3.1 Introduction

All Christians have been called, redeemed, empowered and sent out with the privilege and obligation to participate in the mission of the Triune God. The mission of God (missio dei) expresses the concern of God for the salvation of the world in all its dimensions. However, numerous theoretical formulations exist, as to what this mission is and what more specifically, is the role of the Church, in relation to God's purposes for humankind.

On the one hand, some Christians perceive mission to be everything the Church is sent into the world to do, whilst others feel that such a definition is far too broad and maintain that Gospel proclamation and salvation of lost souls, is the specific mission mandate of the Church. Still

others do not see the need to proclaim the gospel with a view to the conversion of people and their incorporation into the Church.

Unfortunately, among Reformed Christians also, there is a misunderstanding about the nature of mission, its opportunities and challenges. The Reformed Confessions, being a product of the 16th Century, have little to say about mission in an explicit way. For the Church of that day, the marks of the true Church did not include the carrying out of the Great Commission (REC 1992:1-3).

We must concede due to Scriptural injunction that the Church has a variety of ministries both to it's own members and to the people beyond its boundaries. Thereby, in prophetic thinking and speaking, in priestly service and life-style and in her kingly promotion of justice, the Church must demonstrate what it means to be citizens of the kingdom.

1.3.2 Definition of Mission

In Missiological circles today, there are many theoretical formulations of what mission is all about. JJ Kritzinger

(1989:23) basically classifies them as the narrow and broader views of mission. The narrow definition implies that mission is first and foremost (and almost only), interested in the spiritual salvation of the sinner (the Soul). The means of mission are therefore preaching, witnessing and proclamation. J.H. Bavinck (1960:90) notes that there is scriptural basis for the approach in the broader sense. The scriptures view the question of approach in a very broad context and notes all sorts of factors. They are never concerned with preaching alone, but are concerned with all the other elements constituting the environment in which preaching takes place.

There has certainly been a re-evaluation of the situation where one has to now move away from the narrow confines of "converting Souls", in order to consider the whole reality of human existence. When mention is made of the "whole reality" it involves political, social, ideological, technological, economical, ethical, moral and spiritual.

The added dimension contributes to the broader view of mission which encompasses and addresses the whole of life, soul and body.

The Church is God's missionary agent in the world entrusted with an holistic mandate or the all comprehensive task of its mission.

Harry Boer advocates this view when He says that it would be folly not to take seriously the social, political, economical, cultural and religious milieu in which the Church in a given situation or with a given missionary task finds herself. The people whom the Church addresses live in the milieu, are affected by it, in turn affect it and are called to live the Christian life in the relationship in which they concretely stand. To these concrete, flesh and blood, living-in various relationships, men and women, the Church must speak the gospel in a manner that she will help them to be the salt of the earth at that time and place, in which they find themselves (Boer 1961:175).

Orlando Costas (1977:306) confirms that mission is interested in man's many life situations. It is within the context of a heterogeneous and changing world that God sent His Son. When the Spirit came, it was defined as the

dynamic movement from one to the many. It was out of this dynamic movement that the Church was born.

Merle Davis (1948:278) long ago, also supported the view of the Church's involvement in society from an holistic point of view. He postulates that Christian concern should be with all of life and with every condition of the individual in society which either restricts or supports the possibility of man's reaching the fullness of the nature of Christ and realising His concept of the "Kingdom of heaven".

In the document "Church and Society" (1986:8) the Dutch Reformed Church states clearly 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 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.

In these days that the Church cannot be solely concerned with its private values, although this is vitally

important. For they need to unite in fellowship of prayer and meditation if they are to deepen their understanding and commitment. But to fulfil the servant role as Jesus demonstrated it, the Church must go beyond an internal ministry to witness for Christ within existing situations and structures of society.

To meet the needs of such an age as ours, the Christian must be keenly aware of the fact that True Faith is related to something far more significant than political authority, economic advancement, scientific achievement, social acceptance, or even new physical orders. The Christian Faith is both an affirmation and a response which require the dedication of the WHOLE person to the WHOLE Gospel of Christ in WHATEVER setting we may find ourselves. The new age may demand new forms of witness. But for the Christian these forms will be authentic because they constitute channels of operation for the Divine grace dispensed to man in the creation (Baker 1965:18).

Based on this broader theoretical point of departure Kritzinger (1989:34,35) speaks of the three-dimensional understanding of mission.

In the first place, this approach portrays mission as involving the WHOLE person in one's TOTAL SITUATION in response to the WHOLE gospel.

The second reason emanates from a growing consensus in Missiological circles that three hermeneutical notions together delineate the essentials of mission in a remarkable way.

The term Kerygma (Preaching), Koinonia (Fellowship) and diakonia (service) in combination describes the main aspects of the witness (marturia) of the Kingdom. For the purpose of this study, it is essential to consider these three Greek terms to mean as follows:

kerygma - the task of bringing the Good News of salvation in Jesus Christ through evangelism.

The term Koinonia, is used to the task of building up and edifying the body of Christ to Maturity. This will involve striving for the expression of unity and healthy relations

as well. And diakonia, envisages the privileged task of faithfully serving people and actively participating in the repair of the broken reality. This also involves the necessity of venturing into difficult economic and even political issues.

Recently, another dimension was added to mission viz. Leitourgia. This Greek term means the liturgical act of worship; of Glorifying God.

For practical purposes, the abovementioned four-dimensional understanding of missions will be employed as a basis in this thesis.

1.4 OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS

This subject will be covered in five chapters. Chapter One deals with the Introduction and Methodology employed in this thesis. In Chapter Two, attention will be given to the many facets, reflecting the changing South African context with reference to the historiographical currents of change with special emphasis upon the political, ecclesiastical, cultural and socio-economical changes that are prevalent in our country.

The third chapter will contain an in-depth study of the Role of the Church, inter alia, from a Reformed perspective, with special reference to the three-dimensional, Holistic mission approach. Here attention will be given to the role of Kerygma in fulfilling the unfinished task of mission. The Church's diaconal or social responsibility, with reference to amongst other things, affirmative action, the Truth Commission, education and so forth.

We also look at the role of Koinonia, with considerable attention to Church Unity and the necessity of presenting a united front to a divided world, in a united Christian witness.

In the fourth Chapter, we look at the Road ahead. The challenges that the Christian witness must face in relation to the unfinished task of missionary activities amongst the Rainbow nation of South Africa.

And finally, Chapter Five will be devoted to conclusions which have been reached in the course of the research.

We have discovered that the task of the Church is comprehensive to Christian witness and if one has to make a meaningful contribution to Christian witness, one has to take into consideration the various developments within the South African context.

CHAPTER TWO

THE CHANGING SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT

2.1 INTRODUCTION

It must be stated at the very outset, that it is extremely difficult to give a concise account of the historiographical "currents of change" in this dissertation due to the fact that so much might be discussed that the problem of selection is awkward; moreover one runs the risk of limiting one's presentation by simply listing changes and failing to represent adequately their inter-relatedness. We need to also acknowledge that characterising historical change in South Africa these days has become controversial because difference in ideological standpoints envisage different historical perspectives.

The purpose of just mentioning concise historical developments in the process of change in South Africa is to show the reader the decisive role, the Church has played in these developments and how Christians today can be participants in the on-going process of change from the past into the future and the task of the Church and its theology becoming a vanguard of positive change.

2.2 HISTORIOGRAPHICAL CURRENTS OF CHANGE

2.2.1 Political Scenarios

In order to appreciate the positive changes, reconciliation and democracy that is being experienced in South Africa today, one has to take into consideration the progressive national history of the country.

In 1652, Jan van Riebeeck established a supply station for ships passing on their way to the East, on behalf of the Dutch East India Company. The Early Settlers were later joined by the French Huguenots and German immigrants. It must be clarified that long before 1652, the Cape was already inhabited by the Hottentots and Bushmen.

During the 19th Century "change" consisted largely of wars and conquests, the annexation of territory and the partial land dispossession of indigenous peoples; the large-scale movement of peoples both within the area and from abroad as immigrants, the destruction and creation of States and eventually the forging of a single major state in the area under White Control (Nurnberger, K 1979:51).

For instance, the Cape was taken over by British Settlers, which resulted in increased tension between British interests and the Earlier Settler's loyalties, which culminated in the Great Trek of the 1830's. Behind the schism lay a struggle for the land - a struggle which was to dominate the history of South Africa's nineteenth century frontiers. It answers not only the conflict between the Boers and the British but also the confrontation between Blacks and Whites.

As a result of the Great Trek, South Africa was divided politically into British colonies, Boer Republics and African tribal lands. 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, in the midst of the conflicts. Thus, the seed of Apartheid, planted by the Early Settlers began to grow steadily.

From 1860 to 1911, indentured workers from India were imported to work in the sugar plantations in Natal. As early as June 1894, the Indian community encountered the passing of a bill by the Natal Legislative Assembly, depriving the Indians of the right to vote and the Indians

were ignorant of the politics of the Colony, to oppose the bill. At that stage, Mahatma Gandhi, a London-trained lawyer was requested to take up the fight on their behalf. In that year he founded the Natal Indian Congress, of which he became the indefatigable secretary. Through this common political organisation, he infused a spirit of solidarity and approached the Government, the Legislature and the press with closely reasoned statements of the Indian grievances. Soon, Indians from Natal migrated to the Transvaal and the Republican Volksraad passed laws denying Indian civil and political rights. For example, they were forbidden to own fixed property, forced to register by finger-prints, so as to control the influx of Indians to the Transvaal and their residential quarters were confined to special locations.

The Indians in the Transvaal, inspired by Gandhi's doctrine of Satyagraha (the force of non-violence), launched a campaign of passive resistance. The Satyagraha struggle in South Africa lasted for more than seven years. Hundreds of Indians chose to sacrifice their livelihood and liberty rather than submit to laws repugnant to their conscience and self-respect. After the war, Indians hoped that these

laws would be repealed but to their dismay, they found that the laws were being implemented more strictly under the administration of Milner and Selborne (Muller, CFJ 1981:391).

The implementation of these laws brought about an immediate storm of protests. The Indians then, held a mass protest meeting at Johannesburg in September 1906 and under the Leadership of Gandhi, they took a pledge to defy the unjust laws. Gandhi produced his FIVE points, demanding inter-alia, the repeal of the Free State's Law against the entry of Indians, the abolition of the 3 pound tax, and the reform of the harsh laws concerning immigration, landholdings and licenses (Boyce, AN 1973:723).

In the final phase of the movement in 1913, hundreds of Indians, including women, went to jail and thousands of workers who had struck work in the mines, bravely faced imprisonment, floggings and even shooting.

It must be stated categorically that the blame for racial injustice in the twentieth century cannot be blamed solely on the Afrikaner, for if the British had bequeathed a

steadily widening non-racial franchise to the young Union, the history of South Africa might have been more humane. The new parliament had only White members. In 1911, it passed the Colour Bar Act, extending the Government's power to determine who could do skilled work in mining and engineering. In 1913, the Native Land Act was introduced, preventing Blacks from acquiring terrain outside the so called "reserves" which constituted just 13 percent of South Africa and was generally poor land as well (Hope, M and Young, J 1981:27).

Strong reaction to these blatant discriminatory laws was the order of the day. On January 8, 1912, the South African National Congress, the forerunner of the ANC was formed under the presidency of Dr John Langalibalele Dube and two years later an ANC delegation arrived in London to protest the Land Act. Then, in 1919, the Industrial and Commercial Worker's Union and the South African Indian Congress were formed. Two years later, the SA Communist Party was launched and passes were burnt throughout South Africa in protest.

Meanwhile, Afrikaner Nationalism gained momentum under Dr DF Malan in the 1930's. In 1938, the year of the Voortrekker centenary, Afrikaner nationalism received a strong emotional boost. The Voortrekkers were celebrated as the defenders of civilization, a task which then fell upon their descendants and was not only directed against the Blacks but against the English as well. Still in the 1930's, much of this Afrikaner nationalism was emotion. Little was yet hard-core organisation, as the dividedness of Afrikanerdom during World War II was to prove. Just as the "native problem" regained the foremost attention after 1945, so did Afrikaner nationalism. In a direct interrelatedness between the fear of the rising tide of colour and hope in Afrikaner nationalism, the electorate believed that the salvation of the White race in South Africa lay in entrusting the National Party with the defence by every possible means of their White heritage. Thus, in 1948, the National Party came into office (Florin, H 1967:9).

During the 1940's the African Mine Worker's Union, the ANC Women's league and the ANC Youth league were established. The latter organisation was headed by Anton Lembede with

Nelson Mandela as secretary. Among it's members, at that point in time were Oliver Tambo and Walter Sisulu. In the early 1940's the ANC set out to develop mass support and regain its primary position in African politics by establishing a well organised network voicing more assertive claims for justice. Under the vigorous leadership of AB Xuma, president general from 1940-1949, the Congress called for recognition of African trade unions, abolition of the colour bar in industry, abolition of pass laws, freehold tenure, equal welfare services, and a per capita allocation of funds from general revenue for education. Although World War II brought further integration of the economy, and people of different racial groups were mingling into the cities, Prime Minister Smuts turned a deaf ear to these claims (Hope/Young 1981:39).

The Blacks were not quiescent. The struggle began intensifying after hundreds of mine workers were cruelly suppressed and killed following a strike.

When the National Party came into power in 1948, they banned the Communist Party and disenfranchised Coloured voters. The ANC flexed it's muscles and launched a

nationwide defiance campaign to commit breaches of certain discriminatory laws. Rural action, industrial strikes and a final drive were to culminate in mass action.

Forced Removals under the Apartheid government began shortly after Albert Luthuli was elected president of the ANC in 1952. In Sophiatown 60 000 were evicted.

In 1955 delegates from the ANC, SAIC, the SA Coloured People's Organisation, the Congress of Democrats (leftist Whites), and the inter-racial South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU) met at Kliptown for a nationwide congress of the people. At these deliberations, the meeting adopted the Freedom Charter, which proclaimed that "South Africa belongs to all who live in it, Black and White", thus implicitly denying the idea of "Africa for the Africans". This alliance also proposed the transfer of mineral wealth, banks and monopoly industry to the ownership of the people as a whole. The Government responded with raids, political bans and the mass arrest of 156 leaders on charges of treason.

Between 1956 and 1958, the Black Sash demonstrated against the nationwide extension of pass laws to women. Although most of the protests were encountered by brutal force, on at least one occasion the women devised a successful nonviolent tactic : when ordered to disperse, they just fell on their knees and began to pray. The police did not know what to do (Luthuli, A 1962 : 219).

In April 1959 the PAC was formed with members from the ANC Youth league. With Anton Lembede at the helm, the PAC had as its objectives and views that Blacks should be in control of their own liberation struggle and should not be prompted by white liberals, including communists. At the outset, known as the Africanists, they rejected the Freedom Charter, due to the fact that it guaranteed minority rights which they perceived would entrench minority domination.

The Africanists believed that the land which the white settlers had subtly acquired from the indigenous people should be returned unconditionally to the people. They resolved that if the notion of liberation was correctly propagated by the leadership, resistance would be spontaneously created among the masses.

One of the first campaigns to be launched by the PAC was the "status campaign". This anti-pass campaign held on 21 March 1960, was organised by the charismatic leadership of Mangaliso Robert Sobukwe a teacher and Methodist Lay Minister. The results of this campaign changed the tides of history in South Africa. Peter Molotsi, a PAC organiser who fled into exile after the campaign said that "the idea was to fill the jails all over the country till they simply overflowed with prisoners demanding arrest for violating the pass laws. To get at least a million arrested. If there was no place to put us, we reasoned, the system would break down. We'd show our people they'd have nothing to fear. And when you remove that fear, you remove the whole basis of the system. The Whites only alternative would be to kill us. And they couldn't kill a million people, we thought. The other African states wouldn't take that" (Hope, M 1970:125).

In Sharpeville, police dispersed a well-disciplined and an orderly crowd of protesters by using tear gas canisters and armoured Saracen cars. The Blacks reacted angrily by throwing stones at the police. Then, without any warning the police opened fire, killing 69 men, women and children

on the spot, whilst 3 died later and 180 were wounded. The Sharpeville Massacre saw a state of emergency being imposed, the ANC and PAC being banned and some 2 000 people being detained.

In 1961, the ANC began to hit back by establishing a military wing called Umkhonto We Sizwe with Nelson Mandela as Commander-in-Chief and thereby the first acts of sabotage were committed. A year later, Mandela attended the Pan Africanist Congress in Ethiopia and received Military training. When he returned he was arrested, together with Sisulu, Mbeki, Kathrada, Maba, Bernstein and Goldberg at Rivonia. At the Rivonia trial, they were convicted for conspiracy to overthrow the Government. Mandela was sentenced to life imprisonment on Robben Island. Mr Mandela confessed "I had no epiphany, no single revelation, no moment of Truth, but a steady accumulation of a thousand slights, a thousand indignities, a thousand unremembered moments, produced in me an anger a rebelliousness, a desire to fight the system that imprisoned my people" (Daily News 17:11:1994-18).

Meanwhile, the Nationalists' new appeal to White unity against the twin forces of "Liberalism" and "terrorism" bore fruit, for in the General Election of 1966, they increased their parliamentary majority, by winning 126 seats, whilst 39 was won by the United Party and one by the Progressives.

The policy of "Apartheid" or "Separate development" was further unfolded when the Government decided to create self-governing States with the belief that they were restoring to Blacks a form of government rooted in their own soil. The constitution, interestingly was not drawn up in the self governing states but rather in Pretoria. The first of these States created by the South African Government was Transkei. Later in 1972 Lebowa and the Ciskei, as well as Bophuthatswana (which was a conglomerate of eight separate enclaves) spread across the North, and Kwa-Zulu (formerly Zululand), a nation consisting of ten fragments, became "self-governing" (a step towards ultimate "independence) (Hope M and Young J. 1981: 65-66).

After the banning of the ANC and PAC, a mass exodus of Activists began to take place and the ANC established

itself in Tanzania, formulating a new strategy, namely, a revolutionary people's war. The PAC's leadership was taken over by Potlake Leballo in exile. Initially the PAC pursued a military objective through the quasi-military movement, Poqo (meaning "blacks only"), which drew most of its support from the Vaal Triangle and the Western Cape. Poqo became Apla in 1968, as the militant wing of the PAC.

In the 1970's the youth continued the struggles which their leaders initiated, with the launch of the South African Student's Organisation. The Education Policy of the day, gave rise to the Soweto Uprising in June 1976 and a nationwide revolt erupted. This revolt was overtly a rebellion against the use of Afrikaans, the language of the hated oppressor, as the medium of instruction in schools, although it was clearly a furious rejection of the whole educational system.

Students burnt school property and hundreds were killed and wounded in repeated clashes with the police. As a result of the riots, foreign investors and tourists were afraid, immigration dropped, emigration soared, and the defence budget increased in South Africa. Soon afterwards, the

Black consciousness Movement and the Azanian People's Organisation (Azapo) emerged, in the midst the state of chaos still experienced in the Black educational system, particularly in the post-primary schools of the townships and in African universities.

In 1977, the security forces arrested and detained leaders of the Black Consciousness Movement and Steve Biko, its most prominent proponent who was detained under the infamous Section 6 of the Terrorism Act was subjected to abject humiliation and torture at the hands of the Port Elizabeth Security Police. On 11 September 1977, he was driven by the Security Police in the back of a police van, naked, dying and shackled, to Pretoria. He died on 12 September 1977, far away from home and alone.

Thereby, some members of the organisation who went into exile in the aftermath of the Soweto uprising, joined the ANC and PAC in Exile. Others took up arms under the banner of Azania. Many years of confrontation followed as MK stepped up acts of sabotage, namely, the Silverton Siege, attacks on Sasol, bomb blasts in Pretoria, whilst; the Security forces reacted with cross border raids.

At this point in time, there was also widespread dissatisfaction and outrage when the Bantu Affairs Administration Boards in the Western Cape and Port Natal demolished the so-called "illegal" shanty dwellings of thousands of Black squatters, during a particularly cold winter. The Government decided to replace Bantu Councils in Urban Black Townships with community councils, having virtually the same powers, thus making it unacceptable.

In the same year, Prime Minister Vorster announced his retirement for health reasons. He was succeeded by P.W. Botha. It must be mentioned that B.J. Vorster had been exonerated from the "Information Scandal" ("Infogate"), a complex affair that included many unauthorised expenditures by the Department of Information, such as the secret findings of the "Citizen Newspaper" which favoured Government Propaganda.

At the same time, South Africa was experiencing insurmountable pressure from abroad for multinational corporations operating here, to adopt one of the four "codes of conduct". viz the Sullivan (USA), that of the European Economic Community (EEC), the Urban Foundation or

the Canadian government. Pioneered by Leon Sullivan the codes envisage the desegregation of facilities, equal pay for equal work, training, hiring practices, improving the quality of life outside the work site, and the recognition of trade unions.

P.W. Botha in a meagre way, began to warn Whites to adapt to a new situation by accepting relaxation of some aspects of petty apartheid i.e. laws pertaining to segregation of sports, eating and toilet facilities, park benches, post offices, and the like, but not to fundamentals such as equal wages, marriage rights, residential rights and suffrage (Hope and Young 1981: 70, 71).

During the 1980's talk of "change" proliferated but it seemed more rhetoric than reality, because all the so called changes they envisioned lay within the grand policy of separate development or Apartheid.

It seemed evident that the government further designed a comprehensive national strategy to unite white and black "moderates" in a combined military and socio-economical assault on a common enemy, i.e. "Marxism". Thereby it

seemed a subtle ploy by P W Botha to shift power away from Parliament and party caucus towards his own cabinet machine. The "security planning budget" increased tenfold in 1980, being during his term of office (Gordon, L 1979:197).

Apartheid was further entrenched, by the ushering in of a "new political dispensation" of power-sharing where the constitution makes room for a State President, and also three houses of parliament (tri-cameral parliament) whose members were elected from the White, Coloured and Indian communities.

The President and Parliament constitute the legislative power of the Republic. It makes the distinction between own affairs and general affairs and to help the President with advice is the responsibility of the President's Council whose members are both nominated by the different houses, as well as the President (Du Pisani 1986:11-31).

This political dispensation certainly did not appease the vast majority of the South Africans due to the fact that

the Black majority was deliberately excluded from this constitutional body.

By 1983, new tactics were beginning to take shape within the country, by the forming of the United Democratic Front which called for a South Africa free from Apartheid, which can secure for all, their birthright to equality and justice; to peace and prosperity, that can only be a reality in a united, non-racial and democratic South Africa.

But within a year the leaders of the United Democratic Front were arrested and charged with treason. Another State of Emergency was declared as a call from Tanzania to make the country ungovernable was seriously heeded.

Economic sanctions, which were instituted and propelled by the United States were beginning to take its toll on the South African economy and the dawn of liberation for million of South African was in sight with the resignation of State President PW Botha. His successor, FW de Klerk, a verligte ("enlightened") State President was now faced with the tremendous task of manoeuvring the country out of

isolation, sanctions, violence and disintegration into a future of purposeful change, reconciliation and democracy.

Immediately, FW de Klerk initiated a meeting with Nelson Mandela, who was removed from Robben Island and transferred to Victor Verster Prison, at that point in time. After many private meetings between the Government and major political players, on February 2, 1990, the State President, FW de Klerk announced a reversal of policy of almost 300 years of white supremacy, to release Nelson Mandela, to unbanned the ANC, PAC and other political organisations. Thereby, he committed South Africa to a process of irrevocable change and reconciliation.

In May 1990, the most crucial talks in South African history, the "Groote Schuur talks" began the first round of discussions to clear the way for a new democratic constitution; thereby the process of dismantling apartheid had begun. Many exiles from various political organisations returned after many years away from home. The prevailing mood is one of forgiveness, hope and reconciliation. After many hours of talks in Pretoria, Nelson Mandela announced that the ANC would immediately suspend all armed actions

and related activity by its military wing, Umkhonto We Sizwe.

Then in September 1990, in a momentous break with the past, the government decided that in 1991 White state schools will be free to admit pupils of all races. At the end of a watershed year, the European Economic Community (EEC) lifted its ban on new investments in South Africa and agreed in principle to lift all economic sanctions as soon as all the discriminatory political legislation are repealed. Thereby, the pillars of Apartheid, viz. the Population Registration Act of 1950, the Land Acts of 1913 and 1936 and the Group Areas Act of 1966, which has caused untold suffering and humiliation to millions have been laid to rest.

With the escalation of Violence in the country, the historic signing of the Peace Accord by the Government, ANC, IFP and thirty other political organisations vowed to work towards stability and peace, by setting in motion the apparatus for constitutional negotiations.

In November 1991, before the biggest crowd ever in

cricketing history, South Africa, after more than 20 years of diplomatic and sporting isolation, returned to world of international sport at Eden Park, India. This event marks the first official contact between South Africa and India, since this country left the Commonwealth in 1961.

A month later, for the first time in South African history, Codesa I, the multi-racial, and multi-party gathering at the World Trade Centre, in Kempton Park, catapulted the Country into a new political era of negotiation, reconciliation and reformation.

At the same time, the Government introduced the New Business Act, resulting in loosening of bureaucratic restrictions and repealed 60 to 80 ordinances that governed business activity, thereby giving the hawkers and informal sector, the incentive to develop to their full potential.

March 1992 will be remembered, for FW de Klerk's fearless gesture in calling for a Referendum involving the 2,8 million White Voters, to endorse the reform process and terminating centuries of white-only rule. There was a landslide victory of 60,8% of the White voting population.

July and August 1992, herald dramatic changes in sporting activities which was greatly welcomed by the sporting fraternity. The visit by the Cameroon soccer team to South Africa boosted South Africa's return to the world of international soccer after 18 years of absence. The Olympic Games hosted by Barcelona will go down in the annals of South African history, due to its participation in the Olympics after 32 years of isolation from this greatest sporting event in the world.

The visit by the All Blacks Rugby team initiates the Springboks re-entry into international rugby after 16 years of absence. The International Amateur Athletics Federation decided to re-admit South Africa to international sport, resulting in Willy Mtshali winning the New York Marathon for South Africa.

In April 1993, the Multi-party Negotiating Forum, a successor to Codesa, convened at the World Trade Centre, with 26 participant delegations. It was without a shadow of doubt, the most inclusive and diverse political group ever to get together in such a manner in South Africa. In spite of the many differences and disagreements, political

parties at opposing ends of the spectrum were finally unreservedly facing and talking to each other.

September 1993 marks the commitment and yearning for peace in our land by the two great leaders of our Country, resulting in the Norwegian Nobel Committee announcing that President FW de Klerk and the ANC President Nelson Mandela would both share the Nobel Peace Prize for their tremendous contribution to the dismantling of Apartheid. Two months later, the cultural drought in our land was broken by the lifting of the 17 year ban by Equity on the sale of British material to South Africa.

With great ecstasy, in November 1993, the Multi-party Negotiating Council accepted the interim constitution, laying the foundation for a democratic South Africa and terminating the era of minority rule (Sunday Times 13:04:1994 : 16,17).

The Constitution begins with a preamble, declaring the need to create a new order. It is made up of 14 chapters, dealing with citizenship and the franchise, fundamental rights, parliament, the executive power, the judicial

power, provincial government, local government, finance, police and defence.

The constitution ends with these words:-

Nkosi sikelel' iAfrika, God seen Suid Afrika,
Morena boloka sechaba sa heso, May God bless our country,
Mudzimu fhatutshedza Afrika Hosi Katekisa Afrika.

The South African population were urged to participate in the forth-coming elections, no matter how imperfect the interim constitution would be, and how imperfect the various political parties may be, due to the fact that, in that rather very explosive situation, one had to find a way in electing a government which could exercise legitimate authority.

This culminated a long painful history, when millions of South Africans, irrespective of race, colour or creed, went to the polls in April 1994, to cast two votes: one for the national government and the other for a government of their region or province. This election, (86% poll), was declared free and fair by the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC). The ANC gained a majority of votes, by obtaining

62,5% of the votes. Thereby, President Nelson Mandela became State President of the government of National Unity, with Thabo Mbeki and FW de Klerk as deputy Presidents. The new Government has gained the respect of the national and international communities and has ushered in a new South Africa, promising a better future for all people.

Life will certainly improve for the disadvantaged South Africans, as it ought to, but there is no reverse side to the coin, which says that therefore it has to be worse for the privileged South Africans. This is a misconception.

The new government will bring with it legitimacy, stability and joint rule - the basis for sustained economic growth. Also, we must be aware that it does not necessarily mean that since the Apartheid regime is gone and has been replaced by a new Government, that democratic practices in this country is guaranteed.

The country is now in the process of fundamental change, in the midst of internal violence which continues unabated, unemployment remains at unacceptable levels and uncertainty.

The Government of National Unity now has a great responsibility to redress the past and present imbalances, with its Reconstruction and Development Programme.

With the changes taking place at such a considerable speed, I do hope that the issues raised and events presented thus far, will suffice for this section, in the historiographical currents of change in South Africa.

2.2.2 Ecclesiastical Scenarios

In the South African context, the Church has generally played a meaningful and in some respects a decisive role. Historically, the Reformed Churches have been divided on the issue of the Political system of the country. For instance, the three white Afrikaans Reformed Churches - the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk (NGK), the Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk van Afrika (NHKA) and the Gereformeerde Kerke van Suid-Afrika (GKSA) have explicitly created, developed and supported the policy of Apartheid whilst the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk in Afrika (NGKA); the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Sendingkerk (NGSK) and the Reformed Church in Africa, unambiguously opposed this

discriminatory policy which was forced upon the vast majority of the people.

In order to appreciate the positive contribution the dismantling of the Apartheid theology, today, has made to the solution of a rather intricate political situation, or a tactical change in the direction of church policy, we need to take a backward look at the Role, the church has played in these developments, in the course of history.

The ALPHA and OMEGA of Apartheid Ideology

The NGK originally decided to divide its so called "whites" and "coloured" members into different services of worship in 1857.

Preceding this, in 1855, in the congregation of Stockenstrom, a White member did not see his way open to partake of holy communion with Coloured members. 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 (Loubser 1987:12).

Although the NGK conceded, at that juncture, that this was unscriptural, it proceeded on the grounds of practicality, to resolve as follows:

"The Synod views 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 the 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."
(Borchardt 1986:76)

This resolution laid a basis, providing to some degree, moral and ethical justification for segregation which was to be the norm for the future; resulting in far-reaching consequences for the church in South Africa.

Thereby, alongside faith, colour began to function as a criterion for church membership, and a White aristocratic consciousness ruled supreme. (Esterhuyse 1979:36)

In its missionary endeavours, the NGK established separate churches for Coloured, Black and Indian members, forming the "family" of DR churches. This gave impetus to the NGK to seriously develop an exegesis of Scripture to

theologically justify apartheid in both Church and State. This position was clearly defined in two official documents which were published, namely., Human Relations in South Africa in 1966 and Human Relations and the South African Scene (Ras, Volk en Nasie en Volkereverhoudinge) in 1975.

The premise rested on the exegesis of five Biblical texts: Gen. 1; Gen. 11:1-9; Deut. 32:8; Acts 2:5-13 and Acts 17:26, the key text being Gen. Chapter 11. The documents interpreted the sin of the people in this text as a refusal to separate into different linguistic and therefore cultural and racial groups which God had shown to be God's will in creation; at Babel God therefore imposed His will to this effect (de Gruchy and Villa-Vicencio 1983:112-143).

For instance, Ds DP Botha in his address to the SACC Meeting in May 1988 confirmed the role that the NGK had played in formulating the Apartheid ideology. He showed conclusively that the policy of Apartheid is essentially the missionary policy of the White Dutch Reformed Churches, that these churches not only provided a theological justification for this policy, but also worked out, in considerable detail, the policy itself. It is these

Churches that worked hard to devise practical policies of apartheid that could be implemented by the government, while at the same time formulating a theological construction to justify the policy plans. It was these plans that the churches finally presented to the National Party in 1947 - which accepted them as a programme that became a winner at the polls in 1948.

Further, he remarked, the role of organisations like the FAK and the Broederbond fade into insignificance compared with the overwhelming role of the church (the White DRC) in preparing the Afrikaner to accept and vote for a socio-political programme that would revolutionize South African life.

In this light, the DRC proudly asserted in the Kerkbode that "as a Church we have always worked purposefully for the separation of the races. In this regard apartheid can rightfully be called a Church Policy". (Die Kerkbode 22:09:1948 : 664/665)

In the DRC document Human Relations and the South African Scene in the light of Scripture (1974:100) it states:

The Dutch Reformed Church is only too well aware of the serious problems in respect of inter-people, inter-racial and inter-human relationships in South Africa. It seeks to achieve the same ideals of social justice, human rights and self-determination for peoples and individuals; based on God's Word, as do other Churches. It is also convinced that it is imperative for the Church to fulfil it's prophetic calling, to be sympathetic, to give guidance according to Scripture and to intercede on behalf of man. If the Dutch Reformed Church does differ from other Churches, the difference is not due to a different view of moral concepts and values or of Christian ethics, but a different view of the situation in South Africa and the teachings of God's Word in this regard. There is no difference in ideals and objectives; but merely disagreements on the best methods of achieving these ideals.

John W. de Gruchy (1979:74) says the policy of separate development is not contradicted by Scripture, according to the DRC; indeed, the idea of diversity in the Bible lends some credence to the policy.

At the same time, says the Church, the policy must be "applied in a fair and honourable way, without affecting or injuring the dignity of the Person. (Landman 1968:32) We have seen precisely how the DRC stressed that all major pronouncements must be based upon principles drawn from the

scriptures. It is our Reformed heritage to use the Word of God as a standard by which one tests one's opinions and one's actions.

As an observation, it could be said that the hermeneutical practice of the DRC at that point in time, had little in common with the sola scriptura and the solus christus of the reformation but was rather reminiscent of the lex natura (natural law) of the opponents of the reformation. Thereby, condoning the natural diversity of the Human race. Yet, the question arises: How did the White Afrikaans Churches arrive at this interpretation, concerning the Apartheid ideology.

Douglas Bax (1979:64) is of the opinion that the DRC had read the scriptures through the spectacles of the Dutch neo-Calvinistic theologian, Abraham Kuyper (1837-1920). It must be mentioned here very clearly, that Kuyper was indeed influenced by the Romantic movement of the eighteenth century. For instance, Political Romanticism postulates an ideology which elevates one group of people, distinguished along territorial, ethnic, racial, cultural or religious lines, above all others. Gottwald (1979:13, 14) says, that

the Romantic movement opposes the progressivism and universalism implicit in liberalism and socialism, they build policy on the rhetoric, tradition and mythology of "purity of origins". In its benign forms, ethnocentric nationalism may function constructively in a transitional separatist mode, providing experiences in self-governance and the development of culture that produces self-confidence and pride, meeting the long-neglected needs of a downtrodden people who can eventually take their place in the family of nations. Sadly, however, states formed by the cultivation of such inherently chauvinist and xenophobic ideologies are highly vulnerable to demagogic leadership which justifies all manner of corruption and personal luxury in the name of national pride. He maintains that when ethnocentric ideologies appear in countries that are already ethnically mixed, "as in the South African context", the result may be the monopolization of state power by one of the groups, or they may relativize parochial rivalries by espousing transitional religious identities, typically of a Christian or any one of the other religions. In these cases, the bond between Church and State is apt to be intimate.

Thereby, Kuyper, reconciled Calvinism with Romanticism and its emphasis on the VOLK by adapting Calvin's doctrine of "common grace" (*gratia generalis Dei*). Common grace; he held, pertains to the whole of creation, determining its structure and preserving it in being. Specifically it blessed each VOLK with a unique culture. Each VOLK therefore has the God-given task of preserving it's own culture intact against any levelling down into bland uniformity with other cultures. Such cosmopolitan uniformity, Kuyper held, was the curse of modern life. (Bax, D. 1991:64)

Kuyper's ideas were introduced to South Africa by the Rev. S.J. du Toit. He had met Kuyper personally and corresponded with him. In 1882, Du Toit published "Our Programme" described as "the first comprehensive political document of the Afrikaner". (Loubser 1979:33) Thus, in South Africa, each ethnic group was seen as an organism which formed part of the body of humanity. As an organism a people had a rhythm and a law of its own as expressed by its language, history, biological composition and locality. Each group of people was seen as a collective whole, which was supposed to evolve harmoniously from its origin; it was thus,

sovereign and directly responsible to God for its own household.

The astonishing rise of Kuyper's school of thought in the Church characterises this period. His ideas initially only infiltrated the Church gradually until apartheid received its official go-ahead in 1935. Loubser says that for a time the pragmatic and ideological approaches co-existed harmoniously until Dr Ben Marais, a professor at the Pretoria Theological Faculty, registered a strong protest against this ideology initially in 1940 and again in 1947, which resulted in open controversy (Loubser 1979:39, 53).

This basically was the background to the formulation of the controversial document issued by the DRC entitled: *Human relations and the South African scene in the light of Scripture*. (1975)

In response to the document, the Reformed Church in Africa, the youngest in the family of DR churches, in 1980 stated, that the Dutch Reformed Church practised highly questionable exegesis, to those passages of scripture which was erroneously used to support their ideological views.

For instance, Human Relations (1975:14) states "Ethnic diversity does not have a polyphylogenetic origin. Whether or not the differentiation process first started with Babel, or whether it was already implicit in the fact of Creation and the cultural injunction (Gen. 1:28) makes no essential difference to the conclusion that ethnic diversity is in its very origin in accordance with the will of God for this dispensation". The cultural command, as Genesis 1:28 is often referred to, urges man to multiply and fill the earth". To say that this command contains traces or reference to ethnic diversity seems to be totally far fetched and creates the impression that much has been read into the text. This verse stands in close connection with and in the context of the creation of Adam and Eve. It therefore rather stresses the oneness of mankind being the descendants of one set of parents instead of implying ethnic diversity.

Also, according to the publication of the DRC, the reason for the events at Babel (Genesis Chapter 11) is to be sought in "a humanistic attempt at unity based on the arrogance of man". (Human Relations 1975:21) The RCA strongly differed from this interpretation by asserting

that it was not in attempting unity that the tower-builders sinned, but rather because they misused this unity and their cultural progress and sought their security in their own group identity, culture and power of achievements instead off; in God alone. (Bax, D 1979:3) Their unity is therefore lost not because God originally willed this at all, but because they abused this unity.

With reference to the occurrences on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:5-13), (Human Relations 1975:87) states: that "the great language Miracle of Whit Sunday confirms that it is the Will of God that each man should learn of the great deeds of God in his own language". The RCA, agreed that the language miracle did enable each of those present to learn of the great deeds of God in his own language, but finds it unacceptable when it is stated that "it is the will of God that each man should learn of these deeds in his own language".

What is obviously, and conveniently, forgotten and overlooked, is that when Peter preached the sermon, through which those present were convicted and converted (Acts 2:37-42) he used one language only. The Day of Pentecost

signifies the coming of the Spirit which unites the believers into the one body of Christ. That event does not serve to confirm, re-establish and uphold the divisions and separation between men (RCA Agenda 1980:271).

This is a concise response of the RCA to the DRC's racialistic interpretation of the scriptures. The intention not to use the Bible as "a scientific text book for empirical sociology or anthropology" (Human Relations 1975:9) is often violated in an attempt to elevate ethnic and linguistic diversity to the role of Biblical Keynotes.

Bosch, D (1979:16-17), a professor of missiology at the University of South Africa, sums up five characteristics of the NGKs response to racism and revolution:

- (a) a conviction of a manifest destiny;
- (b) a mystical identification with the people of Israel;
- (c) the idea of a "missionary calling" to other "less privileged" races - a call being extended to include defending "White Christian civilization";
- (d) maintaining the purity of the Afrikaner people; and

- (e) a positivistic attitude to law, a tendency to regard prevailing circumstances as inevitable because they have been willed by God.

These factors mentioned by Bosch, contributes in some small measure in explaining the internal conflict; and the resistance within the DRC to meaningful change. Even though a large number of adherents supported the status quo, there was however, a significant number of DRC members, who were continually lobbying for meaningful change.

In 1954, the World Council of Churches met in Evanston and discussed the subject of Racism, that threatens the relationship of Christians. The assembly maintained that all human beings must live together and not alienate one another. In relation to South Africa, it decided to encourage the White Churches of South Africa to join with each other in the common task. Thereby, a pastoral letter was addressed to the White Churches to reassess their position, due to the fact that apartheid is a clear manifestation of oppression. The Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk, at that time a member of the WCC, never discussed

this pastoral letter in its official assemblies, because it wanted the status quo to remain.

Soon afterwards, the Sharpeville Massacre took place, where peaceful demonstrators who protested against the evil of Apartheid were shot and many lost their lives. This event stirred the conscience of the Churches, and their need to eradicate the policy of Apartheid which has caused untold suffering to the vast majority of South Africans.

Then, through the intervention of the WCC, the Cottesloe Consultation involving the South African member churches (including the NGK of the Cape Province and the Transvaal) took place in Johannesburg in 1961. This was to become a major watershed in normative NGK ideology. The consultation arrived at the conclusion that the Biblical and theological justification of Apartheid is unacceptable. Thereafter, the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk (NGK) and Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk (NHK), disassociated themselves from their own representatives in the Cottesloe Consultation: Only Dr CF Beyers Naude, Ben Marais and a number of DRC theologians remained committed to the decision of Cottesloe. (Boesak A 1984:137-138). When the International Missionary Council

and the WCC united to form one organisation at the New Delhi General Assembly in 1961, the NGK terminated its membership with the WCC.

Initially, the WARC also expressed strong opposition to Racism in 1964 at Frankfurt, where it rejected it as idolatry, requesting the White influential church to inaugurate change among the churches in South Africa. Then in 1970 at the Nairobi, meeting, the WARC once again urged the Church to address the issue of racism in concert with the Black Churches. This assembly declared that a church which makes racism or racial segregation a norm, cannot be regarded as an authentic member of the body of Jesus Christ. The White Reformed Churches did not heed to this urgent request, but confirmed their support of the government in its policy and practice of racial segregation and white supremacy; and the lukewarmness of the other churches in South Africa, in opposing oppression and injustice (WARC 1970:226, 227).

During the years following 1970, the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands, Switzerland, Germany and others attempted to continue intensive dialogue with the White Reformed

Churches in South Africa concerning the unjust Apartheid policy but regrettably concluded that their noble efforts were fruitless.

Then, at the General Council of the WARC in Ottawa, in 1982, the delegates took up the matter of Apartheid seriously which then led to far-reaching consequences for the Churches in South Africa. The document contained three sections: the first explains why the situation in South Africa constitutes a status confessionis. The second part deals with the WARC's decision to suspend Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk and the Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk from the privileges of membership. The third section requests all member churches to examine their own relationship to pervasive racism. At this ecumenical meeting, it was resolved that Apartheid or separate development is a sin, and that moral and theological justification of it is a travesty of the gospel, and in its persistent disobedience to the Word of God, a theological heresy. (Ottawa 1982 Proceedings of the 21st General Council, Geneva WARC; pp. 177-178) Further, the General Council declared that the situation constitutes a status confessionis for the churches, which means that one regards this as an issue on

which it is not possible to differ without seriously jeopardizing the integrity of ones common confession as Reformed Churches.

In taking such a painful decision, it is stated that the General Council, reluctantly and painfully is compelled to suspend the NGK and NHK from the privileges of membership in WARC (i.e. sending delegates to General Council and holding membership in departmental committees and commissions), until such time as the WARC executive committee has determined that these two churches in their utterances and practice have given evidence of a change of heart. They will be warmly restored to the full privileges of membership when the following changes have taken place:

- (a) Black Christians are no longer excluded from church services, especially from Holy Communion;
- (b) Concrete support in word and deed is given to those who suffer under the system of Apartheid (separate development);
- (c) Unequivocal synod resolutions are made which reject Apartheid and commit the Church to dismantling this system in both church and politics (WARC - Ottawa 1982:179).

The delegates of the White Reformed Churches returned with a huge task to reassess their position in a renewed way. The Council acknowledged that there were many members in those churches who were busy making attempts to bring about the necessary changes.

It was stated that both the White Reformed Churches in South Africa reacted with pique and anger. For example, the NHKA charged the WARC with abandoning Reformed theology and resigned its membership (de Gruchy/Villa-Vicencio 1983:173-5). The General Synod of the NGK in 1982 resolved to charge the WARC with resorting to a liberation theology "in conflict with Bible and Reformed theology" and decided to suspend payment of its membership fees (de Gruchy/Villa-Vicencio 1983:183). At this point in time, it is interesting to note that a great number of delegates of the NGK at this Synod supported the withdrawal of the NGK from this ecumenical body, but this could not be implemented due to the fact that a two-thirds majority for this purpose could not be obtained.

In the meantime, the Dutch Reformed Mission Church (DRMC) adopted a draft statement on Apartheid and confession of

faith against apartheid, in the same year. But in 1986, the Synod of the said Church adopted this statement as the Belhar Confession, which as a matter of fact, contains much of the substance of the WARC's decision on Apartheid. I quote parts of the text, as follows:

We declare that Apartheid (separate development) is a sin, that the moral and theological justification of it makes a mockery of the Gospel, and that its consistent disobedience to the Word of God is a theological heresy.

The Confession gave the Unity of the Church primacy over against the "natural diversity" of people. This heavy emphasis on the unity is understood, in the light of the fact that system has polarised the South African population. It does more than merely keep them apart from one another. It moves them further apart from one another. It polarizes and creates conflict. In turn, this conflict is then used as an alibi to maintain this separation at all costs. So everyone is drawn into this vicious circle - which can only be broken by changing the point of departure (De Gruchy J and Villa Vicencio 1983:177).

The Confession thereby maintains:

that this unity must become visible so that the world may believe; that separation, enmity and hatred between people and groups is sin which Christ has already conquered, and that accordingly anything which threatens this unity has no place in the Church and must be resisted...

Therefore; we reject any doctrine which, in such a situation, sanctions in the name of the Gospel or of the will of God, the forced separation of people on the grounds of race and colour and thereby in advance obstructs and weakens the ministry and experience of reconciliation in Christ.....

It must be noted here, that in the family of Dutch Reformed Churches in South Africa, the Belhar document is considered a confession by the DRMC and DRCA whilst the NGK and RCA considers it a declaration. RCA-Acta 1994:201 postulates

"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 which, in fact, is doctrinal and a declaration of faith based on the Bible.

With 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 would 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."

Nevertheless, the "Belhar Confession" must be considered an important document in the South African context, but given a lesser status, probably similar to the one entrusted to the Barmen Declaration, which related also to a tragic political situation, in Nazi Germany.

Thereafter, the Dutch Reformed Mission Church, officially handed its decision regarding the status Confessionis to the NGK at its General Synod meeting in Pretoria. The DRMC regretted that its relationship with the NGK was seriously threatened. The Synod was of the opinion that the road of reconciliation can only be walked if the NGK confesses its guilt regarding the moral and theological grounding of Apartheid and concretely demonstrates her repentance by working out what the consequences of this confession of guilt means in both Church and State. In so doing the DRMC does not deny its own guilt in the situation and declares itself ready to walk in love and forgiveness with the NGK in seeking to develop and not to break the relationship

with that Church. The DRMC asked the NGK to work urgently together with them to make this possible. The DRMC resolved with pastoral compassion, to fulfil her role as prophet and priest toward the NGK in South Africa. With all the weight and channels at her disposal she will zealously endeavour with the NGK to the point where this Church will acknowledge her share and guilt in the realization and establishment of the pseudo-religious ideology of Apartheid and a political policy which has deprived and continues to deprive people of their humanity, and has resulted and continues to result in numerous acts of sorrow and suffering for countless people in this country (de Gruchy J and Villa Vicenio 1983:181-182).

The Reformed Church in Africa responded negatively to the WARC's decision on the South African situation constituting a *Status Confessionis*. It requested the Reformed Churches to clarify the meaning, consequences and criteria of such declarations, and to consider the relation of *Status Confessionis* to the task of common testimony as a whole.

For instance, some delegates returned from Ottawa in 1982, with the perception that the NGK was now a heretical church

guilty of classical heresy and thereby took the matter to its logical conclusion by severing ties with the NGK without taking this painful matter to Synod. The RCA acknowledges that the WARC "suspended" and did not "excommunicate" the NGK from the alliance, justifying the position that "heresy" was not used as "classical heresy" but rather as a "disciplinary measure", to coerce the NGK to abstain from justifying apartheid scripturally.

Though the RCA 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 the Scriptures and the divinity of Christ etc.), it supports Ottawa's strong rejection of the theological justification and moral support of Apartheid as sin. Fundamental to the recognition of a *Status Confessionis* is the declaration of apartheid as a "heresy". On that basis, the situation of Apartheid does not constitute a "*Status Confessionis*". (RCA-Acta 1994:284)

The pressure against Apartheid from within and outside the nation now began to tell on the NGK too. With the collapse of the ideology of Apartheid in the government in the mid-

1980's, the theology of apartheid suddenly lost ground in the NGK and the GKSA, though not as yet in the NHK (Bax, D 1987-66).

Thereby, the NGK Synod 1982, appointed a commission to reassess the whole issue of race relations. As a result, at the next meeting of the General Synod of the NGK in 1986, a new policy statement on racial affairs was adopted, entitled Kerk en Samelewing (Church and Society, a witness of the DRC). This was the result of two days of debate in which 97 speakers participated. Before accepting the draft document, prepared by a "strong" commission of the Church over a period of four years, 353 amendments were considered, replacing all previous statements by the NGK on racial affairs.

The NGK has come a long way on the road to change. Seen from the outside, the Church and Society document may seem an insignificant step forward but from within its ranks, it was a giant theological leap, a paradigm-shift. Eg. In the past it encouraged romantic nationalism, it propagated its hidden motif of division, and it was uncritical of the then political system and over-emphasised national diversity but

the document Church and Society now abandons the attempt to justify Apartheid from texts in the Bible.

Church and Society 1986:47 item 305, states:

Following the reflection that has taken place through the years in Church periodicals, conferences, committees and synods concerning the policy, which has become known as apartheid, the conviction has gradually grown that a forced separation and division of peoples cannot be considered a Biblical imperative. The attempt to justify such an injunction as derived from the Bible, must be recognised as an error and be rejected.

The NGK also went as far as opening its doors to anyone who wanted to become a member on condition they believe "in the Triune God, His revelation in Scripture and the expression of this, in the accepted articles of faith".

It further rejected the application of Apartheid as a political and social system by which human dignity is adversely affected and whereby one particular group is detrimentally suppressed by another, cannot be accepted on Christian-ethical grounds because it contravenes the very essence of neighbourly love and righteousness and

inevitably the human dignity of all involved (Church and Society 1986:47, item 306).

This document contains the desired intention of the church and its members to confess with "humility and sorrow" its involvement in the suffering of the vast majority of people as a result of people of different communities not accepting one another.

This document was then presented to the WARC, as an evidence of change, which has occurred in the NGK's relations. Thereafter the executive committee of WARC received the document at its Geneva Meeting in 1987, studied it, and circulated it to all member churches of the Alliance for study and response. It was noted that serious criticisms were levelled at the document. Many critics asked whether Church and Society has been only a tactical ploy or whether it represented a change of heart. Ultimately it will be the deed and not words which must show that meaningful change has taken place.

Thereby, the challenge which this document poses for adherents in the DRC, is for them, to give concrete

expression to the far-reaching decisions of their Synod and to work on the somewhat ambiguous decisions.

For instance, it does not really repudiate Apartheid or declare it sinful but concerns itself fundamentally with its implementation. Loubser JA (1987:117) speaks about the ambiguity concerning this matter by showing that there are three interpretations which could be offered here. Firstly, he mentions the "concrete interpretation". This concrete system of Apartheid as it is presently functioning, was rejected (Kerkbode 18 Feb 1987:2). Some proponents of this interpretation point out that no political party, not even the right-wing parties, seek to maintain the present system. Accordingly, there is only one apartheid; and that is apartheid as it developed historically and is presently applied as a system of forced segregation. It is ironic that some theologians on both left and right are favouring this interpretation, of course, drawing different conclusions as to its value.

Secondly, he speaks of the "hypothetical interpretation" which maintain that nothing in effect was said about the present situation, because they believe that force

segregation is no longer the policy of the Government. The intention of Apartheid was not to "detrimentally suppress" other population groups. This suited the conservatives who sought this interpretation so that they can still remain loyal to the Church.

The third interpretation, Loubser calls the "qualified interpretation" which is favoured by the Kerkbode and also by the General Synodical committee. Here, the General Synod did not offer an unqualified rejection of apartheid, but only rejected the negative type of apartheid which resulted in suppression. (Die Kerkbode 18 Feb 1987:6) This interpretation implies that there is a positive side to Apartheid, for example, the creation of the ethnic homelands. It emphasised that it did not reject a social and political system which seeks to protect minorities, thereby, the only criteria being that the system be applied justly. In other words, to a White person at grassroots level, this may mean that one can support apartheid as long as one does not hate black people and one does not apply apartheid with force. According to Loubser this last interpretation is regarded as the official position of the NGK.

This being the case, the WARC executive met at Belfast in 1988 and decided that the Church and Society document was inadequate and did not meet the requirements as laid down by WARC. One must concede that the ambiguities in the document of Church and Society were intended to avoid a split in the NGK, but unfortunately, this intended purpose could not be achieved. Thereafter seventy ministers and 15 000 members separated to form the Afrikaanse Protestantse Kerk.

On the other hand, the tension mounted between the NGK and its family of Churches in South Africa and Central Africa. This was clear in the REC meeting at Harare in June 1988, that the matters in question involved deep and painful emotions and were complicated by a broad spectrum of information, whose elements were not easily verified. Rather than leave Harare with a confrontation in which one might "win" over the other, the delegates chose rather that their churches should meet each other for a longer time in a separate consultation, in the hope that true peace and understanding might be found among them (RCA Agenda 1990:154).

In order to find each other again, the Interim Committee of the Reformed Ecumenical Council (REC) arranged a consultation at Vereeniging in March 1989 for the NGK and its eight "mission" churches from Southern and central Africa, to meet in a brotherly discussion on social and ecclesiastical issues which threatened their relationship. In the deliberations, two-world views emerged with regards to the political situation in South Africa and of the different responses to it. In spite of this, a key feature recorded was the expression of guilt by delegates of the NGK for its support in the system of Apartheid. "We confess with humility and sorrow the participation of our Church in the introduction and legitimation of the ideology of Apartheid and the subsequent suffering of people." (DRC Statement at Vereeniging - March 89:Point 2)

It must be noted that significant consensus had been taken by delegates to bring the Reformed Churches in South Africa, which has been separated by the gulf of Apartheid closer together.

For the first time the delegates from the DRMC, DRCA and RCA agreed on the terms, in which to condemn apartheid. The

principal motion of the consultation called on the Government to repeal all discriminatory and unjust laws and to withdraw its state of emergency and practice of political detention. It called on the Government to begin negotiations with the authentic leaders of the majority in the country.

In another major development all the Reformed Churches with the exception of the NGK pledged themselves to become "one united non-racial Reformed Church in Southern and Central Africa". Unfortunately, the NGK stated that they could not identify with this pledge, because their Church, while recognising the need for spiritual and visible unity, is not yet ready to say what the structural model of the one-church-to-be, will be. Thereby, the Consultation was deeply disappointed by this response and thereafter urged the NGK delegation to take this pledge to their Church as a matter of great urgency.

As far as the document Church and Society determining their present mandate, the Consultation urged the NGK to go beyond that position and spell out clearly and concretely

what is the task of Christians in this day and in this land.

Thereafter the WARC met at Seoul in 1989, taking note of the evaluation of Church and Society which was unfavourable, as well as the NGK's failure to adopt the Vereeniging statement, it decided to continue the NGK's suspension.

In reality, over a period of time the statements made by the NGK on Apartheid and especially on the theological argument behind apartheid, did undergo a gradual change. The Church and Society document was reviewed painstakingly at the Synod of Bloemfontein (1990) in the Orange Free State. For instance, although the delegation of the NGK at Vereeniging could not associate itself with the testimony of the consultation, the General Synod of the NGK 1990 denounced Apartheid as "an oppressive system which through the forced separation of people was in reality favouring one group wrongfully above others. In this way the human dignity of one's fellow man became adversely affected and was in conflict with the principles of love and righteousness. Any system which in practice functions in

this way, is unacceptable in the light of Scripture and Christian conscience and must be rejected as sinful" (Church and Society 1990, paragraph 284-5). The NGK also admitted and confessed that it should have distanced itself much earlier from "allowing forced separation and division of peoples in it's own circle, to be considered a Biblical imperative (paragraph 283).

This new stance, taken by the NGK came strongly to the attention of numerous ecumenical gathering afterwards but in the minds of some, doubts still existed, thereby the credibility of the NGK was at stake. For instance, Is the NGK unequivocal in its rejection of Apartheid?

Is the Church serious in its confession of guilt, especially on the issue of the "theologizing of apartheid" through the years? What about retribution after Confession?

Then, in November 1990, a National Conference of Church leaders in South Africa took place at Rustenburg, initially through the efforts of the then State President, FW de Klerk, who pleaded to the Church in South Africa to formulate a strategy conducive to negotiation,

reconciliation and change. This initiative was not readily accepted due to the differing opinions amongst Christians. For instance, some perceived the State President's plea as emanating from sincere Christian conviction, whilst others perceived it as a highly astute political move, and still others viewed it as bowing to the demands of the international community. However, with the advantageous position of Christianity, comprising over 70% of the population in South Africa, the Churches' influence cannot be underestimated.

At Rustenburg, an extraordinary event took place, where 230 Church leaders from 80 denominations and 40 para-church organisations met, in a reconciliatory manner, to work towards a united Christian witness in a changing South Africa.

This conference will be remembered in Church History for the many confessions made by various denominations - most notably, by the Dutch Reformed Church - of the complicity with Apartheid and the need for repentance (Alberts, L/Chikane F, 1991:13).

Prof Willie Jonker from the NGK, presented a paper at the Rustenburg Conference, stating:

I confess before you and before the Lord, not only my own guilt and sin, and my personal responsibility for the political, social, economical and structural wrongs that have been done to many of you, and the results of which you and our whole country are still suffering from, but vicariously, I dare also to do that in the name of the DRC of which I am a member, and for the Afrikaans people as a whole. I have the liberty to do just that, because the DRC at its latest Synod (1990) has declared apartheid a sin and confessed its own guilt of negligence in not warning against it and distancing itself from it long ago. (Jonker, WD 1990:4)

Immediately, following this confession, the Moderator of the NGK responded emphatically:

It became clear to us that there was at least some doubt at the Conference on the official position of the DRC regarding the confession of guilt by Prof Jonker. The delegates of the DRC want to state unambiguously that we fully identify ourselves with the statement made by Prof Jonker on the position of this Church. He has in fact precisely reiterated the decision made by our General Synod in Bloemfontein recently.

We would like to see this decision of the Synod as the basis of reconciliation with all people and all

Churches.

The issue of restitution after Confession has also been raised.

From the minutes of our Synod, it will be clear that we embark on a process of restitution, both in our relationship to our own family of Reformed Churches and to South African society in general. We could for instance, refer to the adoption of the Declaration of Christian Principles by Synod which includes a Bill of Human Rights.

(Statement by DRC delegation
at Rustenburg - Nov 1990)

Most notably, Archbishop Desmond Tutu responded with an expression of forgiveness. He stated with sincerity and in good faith:

Prof Jonker made a statement that certainly touched me and I think touched others of us, when he made a public Confession and asked to be forgiven. I believe that I certainly stand under pressure of God's Holy Spirit to say that, as I said in my sermon, when that confession is made, then those of us who have been wronged must say "We forgive You", so that together we may move to the reconstruction of our land. That confession is not cheaply made and the response is not cheaply given.

(Statement by Archbishop Tutu
at Rustenburg - Nov. 1990)

Although the DRC's confession of "sin and guilt" was favourably accepted by some, it provoked a negative response from the NGSK and NGKA delegates, who felt that the NGK should not be so easily exempted from its persistent equivocations about Apartheid and unity with their Churches. Thereby, the NGSK and NGKA issued a statement stating:

At the National Conference of Church leaders in South Africa in Rustenburg, Prof Willie Jonker confessed guilt for participation in Apartheid on behalf of the DRC based on decisions of it's last General Synod in October 1990. At the end of the session, Archbishop Tutu accepted the confession, apparently on behalf of the conference, and assured Prof Jonker of forgiveness. We, moderatures of the NGSK and NGKA, fully accept and rejoice in his personal confession and wish to state that we have personally forgiven him. The position of the NGSK and the NGKA will, however, be enormously compromised if the conference was to become a platform for the theological viewpoint of the White DRC and the acceptance thereof, regardless of the point of view of the NGSK and the NGKA. In view of the fact that we wish to steer away from the sectarian debate on matters of the DRC family, we request you to urgently clarify with the Conference the matter of acceptance of the confession of guilt.

The above statement is a rejecting of the DRC's Confession of Guilt by the NGSK and the NGKA.

The Conference produced a declaration that confessed the failure of the Church in South Africa for supporting, ignoring or being timid in resisting Apartheid. It called for the repeal of all apartheid laws, indemnity for political exiles, release of all political prisoners, return of expropriated land to the dispossessed, homes and essential services for the poor, and end to violence, a non-racial democratic constitution negotiated by a body clearly and fully representative of all South Africans and a new economic order geared to a more equitable distribution of wealth as well as economic growth.

Unfortunately, at the conclusion of the conference, the NGK released a separate press statement, referring to some comments in the declaration as "one-sided" and supported it only as far as it agreed with their document, Church and Society 1990.

Thereafter, the then Moderator, Prof Potgieter, even repudiated a Key statement in the declaration: "In this we

are all agreed, namely the unequivocal rejection of Apartheid as a sin". In reply to a question at the press conference he stated that the NGK did not accept the word "unequivocal" in this sentence.

This response was probably due to the insurmountable pressure exerted by many NGK ministers and members soon after the confession.

Soon thereafter a storm of right-wing protest and resignations of members from the NGK was the order of the day. (Cape Times 5:12:1990-P.2)

A previous Moderator of the NGK, Dr Kobus Potgieter and others organised a protest meeting in Pretoria, which was attended by One Thousand members. Dr Andries Treurnicht, a politician, who was a guest speaker at the meeting, denounced both Church and Society 1990 as well as Prof Jonker's confession. The meeting called on the General Synod to rescind the statement in "Church and Society" that Apartheid was a sin (Cape Times 3:12:1990 - Pg.7) and appointed a committee to meet with the Moderature to discuss these burning issues.

At that meeting, it was emphasised that the Church and Society document only condemned apartheid in a qualified way, i.e. as it had actually been implemented, that it had not made a choice in favour of any particular party political policy, and that everyone had the right to live in their own cultural milieu (Die Kerkbode 14:12:1990-P.1).

Here again, one sees ambiguity and a lack of clarity in an explicit definition of Apartheid. So, what is declared as sin by the DRC is not apartheid per se but "favouring one group wrongfully above the others (Church and Society 1990:284). Thereby, according to the NGK's response, the observations and resolutions of the Reformed Ecumenical Council (REC) in Athens - May - June 1992, with which the members of the NGK delegation identified themselves unreservedly, demonstrated that the NGK is unequivocal in its rejection of Apartheid. For instance, Observation 8 states that the NGK delegates required a definition of Apartheid beforehand and declared that Church and Society 1990, "attempted just that in circumscribing Apartheid and then rejecting it as a sinful ideology and practice". Observation 9 provided the definition requested. Apartheid

is defined as "an oppressive system which through the forced separation of people etc".

On the basis of those observations the REC assembly took some resolutions on Apartheid. All REC member Churches "reject apartheid unequivocally in all its ideological, politico-economic and religious manifestations as essentially and fundamentally a sin". NGK members who still have reservations about such an equivocal rejection are (pastorally) reassured that it need not jeopardize their cultural values, which, on the other hand, are not excluded from critical scrutiny in the light of scripture.

Thus, one can understand why the Testimony of Vereeniging (1989) until REC (1992) which was unacceptable to the NGK, is NOW (according to their interpretation) acceptable. In other words, the Testimony had to be interpreted in the light of the definition of Apartheid given in Church and Society 1990.

From the REC's observations and resolutions, it becomes evident why the NGK does not accept an unqualified rejection of Apartheid. It does not want to give up the

"ideal" of apartheid, nor the Afrikaner's right to segregate (to stay apart) and to defend their own cultural values. To stay apart and to defend your own cultural values (read: Afrikaner identity, unsullied by the values of other cultures, nations, or races) has nothing to do with Apartheid.

The NGK delegates at REC in Athens, said that there were many members of the NGK who struggle with the question: "If I reject apartheid, do I then reject my own culture? Do I turn my back on my Afrikaans language and heritage?" Because of this fear, REC unanimously declared: "The assembly pastorally assures all the members of the DRC who still have reservations about the unequivocal rejection of Apartheid need not jeopardize their own cultural values (Ned. Geref. Teologieses Tydskrif, Sept 1992:360).

One must concede that there is certainly a paradigm shift, as far as the NGK is concerned. Church and Society 1990 shows a remarkable change. Holtrop PN (1994:59) says the Church and Society document can be seen as "a movement closer to the border of the paradigm within which the DRC has operated in these matters for the past 50 years. But

does it really break away from the heart of Apartheid? Why does it still stress the Afrikaner people's right to defend their own values, the culture and group? Is the DRC not aware that it is precisely the insistence on being an Afrikaner, not to be contaminated with other cultural influences, that has been the heart of 50 years of oppression? And he also questions; how can a Church call itself a true heir of Calvin when it uncritically operates within the parameters of what "reality" dictates?

Thereafter, the WARC consultation in Johannesburg (March 3-5, 1993) was held to review church relations in South Africa, inter alia, the process of unification within the family as well as to see to what extent the NGK has complied with the requirements of Ottawa 1982, in order to be restored as full member of the Alliance.

The NGK responded in good faith to the three conditions. At the outset, the NGK acknowledged that in view of the changing circumstances, as well as criticisms levelled at the policy document, Church and Society - that it will have to be rewritten, but as a joint venture by the DRC family. To the first question, it assured the consultation that the

DRC is an open Church and that a congregation which, for whatever reason, fails to open its doors to whoever applies for membership, or as a visitor enters a service of worship, or wants to take part in Holy Communion, does so, in contravention of the DRC's stated policy. For so long as the DRC is still a separate church, it will be an open Church; when the DRC is a united Church with the other Churches of the DRC family, this will naturally be no issue of importance any longer.

To the second question, the DRC acknowledged that Apartheid, as it was theologically justified and supported by the DRC, has largely contributed to a situation of unequal, unjust distribution of economic resources, which has led to the serious discrepancy in income, standard of living, unequal education and training between Whites and Blacks. The DRC has, above all, compassion for the poverty and suffering of great numbers of people in our country and declares that it is prepared to co-operate in an ecclesiastical way in attempts to relieve the present need. For instance, the per annum expenditure of the DRC for subsidising the ministry of the other members of the DRC family, rose from R17,405,397 (1986) to R22,743,429 (1990)

to approximately R26,280,000 (1992). There was a notable willingness within the family of Reformed Churches to work together in addressing especially, the enormous poverty and unemployment in South Africa.

The DRC and the DRCA, in collaboration will take concrete steps, as soon as possible to discuss how they can work together to alleviate poverty as researched in the DRCA's document THE NGKA AND ITS COMMUNITY.

The DRC pledges to build a real and meaningful relationship between the congregations of the DRC on the one hand and the DRCA, DRMC and RCA on the other hand, to overcome injustices and serious discrepancies which have been imposed on the people of South Africa. Many congregations of the DRC throughout South Africa are involved in the informal settlement and they are busy helping the people to escape from their "poverty culture" by means of food and clothing and even legal assistance. The consulting rooms of the Social Workers of the DRC are open to all people in need. A lot of effort goes into the training of volunteers in the initiating of community development.

Members of the DRC are working together in an interdenominational initiative called Empowering for Reconciliation and Justice (ERJ), recognising the task and calling of the Church to activate reconciliation and atonement on micro- as well as macro- level between the struggling parties in the country.

To the third question, urging the DRC for "unequivocal synodical resolutions which reject Apartheid and commit the Church to dismantling the system in both Church and Politics", the General Synod of the DRC, is of the opinion, that it did just that when it declared that racism is a grievous sin; that Apartheid is an oppressive system and must be rejected as sinful, and that all forms of discrimination and suppression of peoples are to be condemned (Bloemfontein 1990).

With regards to the question whether the situation of Apartheid constitutes a *Status Confessionis*, in the sense that "in this issue the confession of Jesus Christ is at stake", it must be acknowledged that there exists a difference of opinion between the interpretation of the DRC (and the REC) on the one hand and the WARC on the other

hand, regarding this matter. The DRC is willing to allow this matter to remain on the agenda, in future discussions with other members of the DRC family.

The DRC is committed to the dismantling of the system of Apartheid in both Church and politics. In our frequent discussions with Political leaders we are candid about it and we have handed our general synod's Declaration of Christian Principles to amongst others, the then President FW de Klerk, and had talks with President N Mandela and Dr M Buthelezi. In the declaration it is stated "the Laws in a new South Africa, will not be discriminatory on the grounds of race, colour, sex, culture or religion".

The DRC was hopeful that the above answers which they provided carefully will, in some way, satisfy the consultation that there has indeed been a "fundamental shift" in the DRC's attitude towards issues like Apartheid over the past years, and that it would be possible for the WARC to restore its ecumenical relationship (Response of DRC at WARC Consultation - Johannesburg March 1993).

The WARC questioned the bona fides of the DRC and responded by challenging the white DRC to become one, united and non-racial Church with the other DRC family of Churches as the "acid test" of whether the DRC has finally distanced itself from the racism of Apartheid. The WARC awaited the outcome of the General Synod of the DRC 1994 with great expectations and conceded that decisions taken, were of great significance for the DRC.

For instance, a bold proposal was put forward, not only calling for firm commitment to unity, but setting in motion a process that, one hopes, will lead towards structural unity in the near future. The proposal was accepted by an overwhelming majority with only one, dissenting vote. The writer will give more information concerning the process of unification within the DRC family in a later chapter.

At this Synod, the visit of President Nelson Mandela was another highlight. It was the first time ever that a Head of State addressed a DRC Synod. He described Apartheid as the "greatest denial of the fundamental value of human beings in the history of the world, but he told delegates that he did not want to pour salt in the wound.

He conceded that the DRC document, Church and Society (1990) was an important step in the DRC's wrestling with Apartheid, but it was not an end in itself. He called for critical support of his government, and in particular for co-operation in the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP).

Prof Piet Meiring postulated that the NGK still has a long way to go and ridding itself from the albatross of Apartheid may yet take a long time. The Church has to regain its integrity; its right to speak. And this has everything to do with the way the Church remains true to its new conviction and commitment. He mentions also, that not everyone in the Church is that enthusiastic about the new direction the Church has taken. At Synod 1994, a memorandum was tabled in which a number of conservative members asked Synod to rescind its policy declaration on Church and Society (1990), where Apartheid was rejected by the Church. The Synod firmly refused to be put back on the old track and resolved rather to recognise the prophetic voices, over the many years who warned the Church against the evil of Apartheid. The DRC regretted treating these persons, in the past, in an uncharitable and unsuitable

way. Thereby, it was clear that prophets like Ben Marias, Beyers Naude, David Bosch, as well as a host of lesser known opponents of Apartheid, were at long last being recognised. The Synod apologised for the suffering and pain, the DRC had caused to these enlightened men of God and their families. Beyers Naude thanked the Synod, describing the statement of repentance as an answer to prayer where it brought a long struggle full circle, and he was glad that he had lived to see it whilst regretting that consistent internal critics like David Bosch and Bennie Keet had not lived to see this memorable day.

Further, after twelve years of suspension, the Synod of the DRC resolved that it would no longer be satisfied with a suspended membership and that it strongly desired to resume full membership with WARC. It envisages that membership would be discussed at its following synod in 1998, in the light of further developments, "amongst others the decision of the WARC Executive Committee in July 1995" (REC News Exchange Vol. XXXI, No. 11: Nov 1994).

For the remarkable changes experienced in the DRC, there have been numerous leaders within the DRC who were

attentive to the hopes and fears of the members of this Church and made a long and difficult pilgrimage away from the policy of apartheid, ultimately rejecting it and urging their followers to take a similar path.

Amongst others was Prof Johan Heyns, a one time convinced apologist of Apartheid who called for a national "liberation of the heart", saying that once this happens, "I use my hands, not to kill my neighbour, but to serve him". This he said with reference to how religion could help form the new South Africa.

Thus, he speaks to the DRC membership out of first hand experience. For most of his life he believed in Apartheid, it was part of his religious and political conviction and of his tradition; part of being a member of the Afrikaner establishment. Therefore, it was a slow process, over more than a decade, but his conversion was thorough.

At a time when turbulent political events forced the Broederbond, under his leadership, to consider new strategies for the country, Prof Heyns was motivated more purely by the Biblical insights which convinced him that

Apartheid was wrong rather than by pragmatism propelling the Church and Party into change.

Be that as it may, we see him as a leader, constantly looking over his shoulders to see that his flock followed, and adjusted his pace accordingly. In September 1994, in a Foreign Affairs article he reflected on the role of freedom by postulating "we need not remain prisoners of our history, we can detach ourselves from it, and as free, responsible beings, begin with a new history" (Sunday Times, 13:11:1994:P.19).

When one considers these steady changes that is taking place, there is certainly a feeling of moderate optimism that fills the South African air. It seems that, without a shadow of doubt, the Reformed family in South Africa finds itself at the beginning of a new chapter.

I do hope that this brief ecclesiastical survey will suffice to highlight the decisive role the Churches of the Reformed tradition have played in the South African context.

2.2.3 Cultural Changes

The South African population consists of groups of people from Africa, Asia and Europe, resulting in a mosaic of groups with differing cultural traditions, forming the so-called Rainbow nation of South Africa. The intense process of westernization takes place more easily in the South African context and the varied cultures are under indirect, if not direct Christian influence.

The culture of every society, inter alia, the South African society, is in a state of constant change. In other words, no culture is static. Therefore, we can say without any reservations that the cultures prevalent in our country has elements of both continuity and change.

If the Church is mission, it is by its nature an agent of cultural change. Luzbetak, LJ (1988:300) postulates that in anthropological or in purely human terms the work of the establishment of the Kingdom of God is culture change.

In this section, I envisage to give a concise meaning of the concept of culture and cultural change; a Christian

view on culture and provide some factors that give impetus to cultural change.

2.2.3.1 The Concept of Culture and Cultural Change

The Concept of Culture

Tito Paredes postulates that the concept of culture should not be confined to a group of people with privileged access to selected aspects of their culture. Culture should not be identified with knowing and listening to classical music, reading the classical literature of one's country, or having formal education. This limited view excludes from the group of "the cultured", the great majority of the people who have not had access to formal educational systems connected with the Western tradition and thereby should not be belittled just because they do not fit our own or someone else's conceptions of what culture is (Samuel, V and Sugden, C 1987:62).

In this regard, we need to seek a definition of culture although, we concede that an exact, concise definition for the said term is not easy to find. One of the papers from the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelisation, the Willowbank Report on Gospel and Culture, says that culture

is an integrated system of BELIEFS (about God or reality of ultimate meaning), of VALUES (about what is true, good, beautiful and normative), of CUSTOMS (how to behave, relate to others, talk, pray, dress, work, play, trade, farm etc) and of INSTITUTIONS which express these beliefs, values and customs (government, law-courts, temples or churches, family, schools, hospitals, factories, shops, unions, clubs etc.) which bind society together and give it a sense of identity, dignity, security and continuity (The Willowbank Report 1978:7).

On the basis of the above definitions, although inadequate to some degree, will contribute to our understanding of the cultural distinction which is demonstrated in the various communities in South Africa, that are repositories of a rich and varied cultural heritage which has developed through the centuries. Unfortunately, this research does not allow us to further outline the basic components of the cultural traditions of the various cultural groups in the South African context.

Definition of Cultural Change

Tito Paredes defines cultural changes as "a modification of

the ideas, society, technology, economy and ecology of a people due to factors working from within or without" (Paredes 1987:55).

From the above definition, one could say that it is an internal or external change which is brought about in a living culture. Internal changes are brought about from within the South African context and maybe either a technological or of a social nature. An example of technological influences and of social influences are those which involves different values, ideologies or social pressures. The external changes involves the borrowing of ideas from other societies in the sense of acculturation. Mayers states that change is that alteration brought about by interplay among the following forces and movements : tradition, drift, process tension, adaptation and innovation. Change is involved in tradition in the sense that the firming of a form with the dynamics of the change process effects a very subtle variety of change. (Mayers, MK, 1975:13) For example, in the past the DRC analysed Apartheid or "Separate development" as something good but the majority of the South African population responded to it immediately and automatically as an unjust evil system.

Thereby, the expression has remained the same but the meaning has changed across cultural boundaries. The two groups will have difficulty communicating simply because a form, utilized by two groups within the whole, refers to two different experiences of life: one positive and the other negative.

The process by which tradition effects change inconsistently and erratically for the desired effect, or for the undesired one, is termed drift. (Herskovits, M 1964:31) This process takes place when a number of people, adopt certain deviations from established norms and continue the tendency until it becomes a trend.

Process includes a series of interlinked events commencing under certain defined conditions and concluding under certain other defined conditions. Life and the continued association it brings are forever linking and interlinking parts of the whole of social interaction and thus forming new patterns and mosaics.

Tension results when two life-ways refuse to yield to each other. Thereby tension introduces change, since it causes

selection from alternatives in the decision-making process.

Adaptation to a second society or acculturation as the process is termed technically, occurs when two or more previously separated cultures come into contact with each other to a degree sufficient to produce significant change in either or both. The demand for acculturation may also be faced when one encounters another subculture within one's own society. Thereby ultimately every encounter becomes an opportunity to practice adaptation.

Innovation follows the introduction of anything new within the source society. Whereas acculturation introduces a flow of new items, practices, and ideas across cultural boundaries, innovation develops from within the society when any part of the society is re-arranged (Mayers 1975:14).

The above mentioned definition will suffice for a clearer understanding of the concept of cultural change.

2.2.3.2 The Christian view on Culture

From a Christian point of view, all cultures are a part of

God's good creation. By His Blood, Christ purchased for God men of every tribe and language, people and nations. He has made of them a Royal House, to serve our God as priests, and they shall reign on earth (Rev. 5:9-10). In other words, Christ honoured all cultures by entering fully into Jewish social and religious life with all its traditions. No culture is pure and holy, but we know from Christ's attitude towards it, that all have intrinsic values that can be redeemed and used as a basis for social transformation. therefore, if any culture is destroyed, a part of creation and of all humanity dies. In another development theory, however, the vital importance of the cultural heritage and creativity of all people is respected as a Biblical idea. Thereby, any change must be appropriate because it would arise out of the culture endogenously (Bragg Wayne 1987:45).

At the Lausanne II Conference, the following was said concerning Evangelism and Culture, which is the basic view of culture from a Christian perspective. "The development of strategies for World Evangelisation calls for imaginative pioneering methods. Under God, the result will be the rise of Churches deeply rooted in Christ and closely

related to their culture which must always be tested and judged by Scripture. Because man is God's creature, some of his culture is rich in beauty and goodness. Because he is fallen, all of it is tainted by sin and some of it is demonic. The Gospel does not presuppose the superiority of any culture to another, but evaluates all cultures according to its own criteria of truth and righteousness; and insists on moral absolutes in every culture. Missions have all too frequently exported with the Gospel an alien culture and Churches have sometimes been in bondage to culture rather than to the scripture. Christ's evangelists must humbly seek to empty themselves of all but their personal authenticity in order to become the servants of others, and Churches must seek to transform and enrich culture all for the Glory of God (Lausanne II 1974:37).

The above Biblical understanding of culture is more or less accepted by the Churches of Reformed tradition as a point of departure when encountering the various cultural groupings in South Africa with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

2.2.3.3 Factors that give impetus to Cultural Change

Change seriously affects the mission of the Church in

either Christian Growth or in evangelism. Therefore, it is of utmost importance that the Church takes note of the many factors in the South African context which give impetus to cultural changes such as exposure to other cultural heritages, economics, education, social mobility, industrialization, urbanization, secularism and so forth.

The factors that influence change in the cultural and traditional life of the people could be divided into three aspects; namely, motivation to change in the face of the Westernization process; competitiveness and individualism.

Firstly, Motivation to change is the consequence of the desire for economical progress. For example, in some traditions, the place of women is at home, caring and providing for the husband and children. One discovers that as the westernization process takes its toll, married and unmarried women are allowed to go to work. This is the growing trend among the women. Many women, due to their educational qualifications earn a remuneration which exceeds that of their husbands. Also the rising cost of living makes it necessary to break with tradition and seek employment to keep up with the standard of living.

There is also the desire for prestige. This desire gave birth to change in the very material structure of their existence: in their style of clothing, dietary habits, huge and stylish houses and speech patterns. No doubt, the Western cultural patterns assumed a superior position in the hierarchy of values.

More recently, the Role of women in the Church also underwent major changes. In the past, women were restricted and could not make their invaluable and unique female input in the offices and ministries of the Church. Reformed interpretation and implementation of the offices in the Church have always been dynamic and not static i.e. the offices were developing with the growth of the Church and as the Church was confronted by new situations and challenges. For instance, in the beginning only or predominantly males were elected in certain offices, but as the Church entered new situations and times, with a new context and new challenges, the Reformed Churches were always willing to rethink their position and practice and reform in line with Biblical principles.

Today, the Dutch Reformed Church and the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa have opened all offices for women whilst the Reformed Church in Africa at the 1994 Synod called for a study document on the question of opening the office of Elder to women. Each congregation of the RCA is to respond to the document and if two-thirds of the congregations give their approval, the offices of the Church will be opened immediately without waiting for the next Synod, scheduled for 1998.

Ultimately, the motivation to change is the consequence of the desire for economic, as well as spiritual progress.

Secondly, Competitiveness gives a strong incentive to cultural change. The high western educational achievements of others, which leads to elevated positions in society and better job opportunities have also driven previously deprived communities into the spirit of competitiveness. The competitive motive has undoubtedly led many previously deprived people to buy prestigious symbols that they do not really need; sometimes even when they cannot afford it, by purchasing goods on credit so as to compete with others. In other words, material things have become not just

necessities in a home but rather status symbols which constitute the "cultured civilized life".

Thirdly, The Growth of an individualistic spirit is prevalent amongst people who once treasured the collective principle of accomplishing exploits. With Western influence, change is clearly seen in the fact that individual goals are now the order of the day.

2.2.3.4 Conclusion

We have discovered that change in any living culture is inevitable. The South African population has been affected by acculturation due to the fact that all minority communities and majority communities are intimately involved with each other.

Therefore, in order for Christians to effectively communicate the Good News to everyone in the South African context, they must take the Cultural tenents of every community into account seriously.

There is no longer any question of whether cultural change includes evangelisation. There exists a direct relationship

between Evangelism and culture change. The question now is one of strategy, that is, how and when do we integrate the two.

2.2.4 Socio-Economical Changes

2.2.4.1 Introduction

It must be stated at the outset, that nowhere else in the world, is the encounter between the first and third worlds seen more profoundly than in South Africa. The vast gap on educational levels, economic activity, income and so forth glares at the beholder. The complex social structure is further complicated by rapid socio-economic, political, technological and social changes. This obviously creates a situation with an enormous potential for social unrest and conflict.

Although the political changes have brought about some normality, the pursuit of the preservation and survival of minority groups, coupled with the necessity for economic and social justice in the midst of violence and crime presents a unique challenge to the Church in its task of proclamation and reconciliation.

Therefore, it is essential to uncover the roots of a system which, despite the rapid economic growth which resulted during a hundred years of industrial revolution, continued to impoverish millions of South Africans. One must concede that the present situation has grown out of the past, and so if the future is to be different, it is important to understand the way in which the present has been formed, in order that we may act to overcome the past and thereby, using Biblical principles, reshape the so called "new South Africa".

2.2.4.2 Background

In this section, I do not purport to present a comprehensive economic policy but to highlight some strands of our history which contributed to an unjust socio-economic situation.

Wilson and Ramphela (1989:191-200) identified some of the strands in the past that affected the ongoing process of impoverishment in South Africa viz. the fact of conquest, slavery, the systematic assault on the industrial labour movement; the colour bar; the white-black power structure as it is manifested in the public sector and the extent to

which the political boundaries of the region failed to coincide with the economic borders.

Firstly, the politics of exploitation can be traced back to the origins of South African history in the 17th century. The Whites used their military superiority to conquer African tribes, dislodging them to take over valuable grazing land and thereafter imposed racial and class distinctions on society. White control of the land made a large labour supply available. The long process of conquest then culminated in the notorious Land Act of 1913, whereby the conquerors sought to ensure that the land won by conquest should not be lost through the market in the new industrial society that was emerging. In terms of the Act no African was allowed to purchase land outside the reserves or "homelands", resulting in an inequitable distribution of land. For instance, in South Africa 20% of the inhabitants possess 87 percent of the land whilst the 80 percent Black inhabitants are apportioned only 13 percent of the land. Thereby, some 77 years until its repeal in 1990, that law remained firmly as part of the basic scaffolding of the South African political-economic system.

The second historical fact most pertinent to this study is slavery. The majority of black South Africans were never slaves; but the first white Settlers, inbred with an established colonial power, soon needed slaves to meet their labour needs. For instance, in 1658, only six years after the arrival of Van Riebeeck, the first shipment of slaves for private ownership from the coast of Guinea and others from Angola, landed at the Cape. Within sixty years of the establishment of the European Colony there were more slaves than free burghers in the Western Cape. Over a period of time slaves were brought in from West Africa, Madagascar, South-East Asia and so forth.

Laws were introduced to control black labour. This control led to exploitation of cheap black labour backed by the law entrenching white economic privilege.

The third aspect of history which has reverberated today has been the systematic assault on the industrial labour movement. Initially, cheap black labour was also built into the foundations of South Africa's industrial revolution in the 19th century. The White workers were permitted to form trade unions and it was blankly refused to the blacks.

In 1883, for example, white workers on the diamond fields (supported by black workers) went on strike against management's practice of strip-searching workers for stolen diamonds. The strike was successful because employers feared losing all their black labour - who were liable simply to return home to the rural areas - if the strike continued (Turrell 1987:144).

Later, the strip-search was reinstated and an ensuing confrontation resulting in six white workers being shot, that led to the abolition of any further strip-searching for whites. But, for black workers, the shooting was a dramatic warning of employer power and determination. Thereby in 1885, closed compounds for Africans were instituted. (Turrell 1987:145), says the events created the right intimidatory atmosphere for the introduction of closed compounds, the means to control African labour more effectively. For the entire period they were contracted to the mines, black workers were to be housed in closed compounds, where they would stay without opportunities to see family or friends.

But, when gold was re-discovered in the Witwatersrand in

1886, the process of moving from Kimberley to Johannesburg, the mining capitalists brought with them the idea of housing all their black labour in huge compounds. These did not have to be closed type, for gold cannot be picked up and sold illicitly like diamonds. But, designed as they were for workers only, without their families, compounds were much the cheapest and most profitable way of providing the necessary accommodation for - and controlling the 100,000 black miners (Wilson & Ramphela 1989:193).

This deprivation of family life and ownership further lends itself to impoverishment in terms of social stability. In the 1970's the official view of the mining industry (and of other urban employers) towards unions began to change. Thereby in the 1980's mining groups conceded to the establishment of the national Union of Mineworkers (NUM).

The fourth aspect, which closely aligns itself to the detriment of black South Africans was the so-called "Colour Bar", the skin pigmentation used as a means of discriminating against potential competitors in the labour market. For instance, in 1893, the Transvaal Volksraad, enacted the first legal colour bar in the South African

economy. A clause in the first mining law stipulated, in effect, that only whites should perform the actual blasting. In 1907, White Miners, were instructed to prevent blacks performing skilled jobs. Thereby the unjust system of job reservations was entrenched. In the railways, for example, between 1924 and 1936 the proportion of Whites employed rose from 10 to 29 per cent. In the depression year of 1933, Black railway workers had their services terminated, to make room for more highly paid Whites, who then constituted 39 per cent of the labour force (Wilson and Perrot, 1973:330).

When the South African economy began to experience a boom and the development of the manufacturing sector through the Second World War and the years that followed experienced an expansion, we learn that more workers of all races were needed to turn the wheels of industry. Thereby, the Colour Bar was not practised so rigidly elsewhere, as in the mining or the railways. However, through the introduction of unjust laws and a discriminatory educational policy, the state effectively ensured that Whites were protected and gained preferential access to the more highly skilled, better-paid jobs in the upper levels of the economy; whilst

Blacks were subjugated to the unskilled and semi-skilled occupations on the lower rungs of the South African economy.

Another dimension that further lends itself to improvishment in South Africa, is the consequences of the White-Black power structure as it has manifested itself in the public sector of the economy. Here, in dealing with the causes of poverty one cannot ignore the consequences of a systematic and prolonged bias, favouring one particular group, inter alia, the Whites, in the allocation of public expenditure. In South Africa, this bias has been apparent in many areas, namely, in Education, housing, health, agriculture, job-creation, and energy. In all these areas, State Expenditure, per capita, on Whites has always been far higher than state expenditure on Blacks. Thereby, providing Whites with infrastructural resources, in both rural and urban areas, to boost their economic well-being.

To this extent, the National Party, since 1948 contributed substantially to the problem. It forcefully maintained, entrenched and defended white political and economic privilege. Wilson and Ramphela (1989:204), mentions six

major aspects in this connection, namely, the shift in policy from incorporation to dispossession; anti-black-urbanization; forced removals - both rural and urban; Bantu Education; crushing of organisations; and destabilisation.

By the beginning of the 1970's, after a century of industrialisation, a sufficient proportion of Black Workers had moved into skilled and semi-skilled positions throughout the economy, to give them enough leverage to organise without either employers or the State confronting them to the point of breaking the economy. One of the triumphs of the early 1970's was the success of the unions in establishing a democratic base. The rise of the National Union of Mineworkers is both a consequence and a cause of a fundamental shift that took place in the balance of power in South Africa.

In the 1980's, the opponents of Apartheid resolved to use Sanctions as a non-violent means to enhance far reaching changes in South African political economy. Sanctions imposed by the international community resulted in many people losing their jobs and thereby forcing them into

further impoverishment but it was regarded as the "end will justify the means" (Wilson and Ramphele 1989:195).

Probably, many more strands of our history should be added to the unjust socio-economic situation in South Africa, but this will suffice in giving the reader a glimpse of the socio-economic predicament.

2.2.4.3 Survey on Poverty - DRCA

In December 1990, the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa, conducted a survey on Poverty, in their context, with regards to economics, politics, education and so forth. This was done at grass-root level, involving 414 homes in the DRCA congregations and 406 homes in the communities.

As an example five DRCA homes and five community homes were used from 80 congregations. These 80 congregations were chosen out of 479 DRCA congregations across the country. The focus was on the views, experiences and causes of poverty of these people.

The aim of the questionnaire was to determine the statistics of these homes, the socio-economic circumstances

and to determine their attitudes towards politics, theology, the Church and poverty.

The most important figures emerging from the people questioned, were the following:

- 58% of the members receive less than R500 per month which is the total income of the home; this means about R69 per person, per month.
- An average home comprises 7,2 persons.
- The average income of the homes was R731 p.m.
- Only 40% of the homes had a water tap.
- Only 20% of the homes had a toilet inside the house.
- Only 47% are able to eat meat once or twice a week.
- 61% of Church members are women.
- 43% are older than 40 years and only 26% are youth.
- 36% of those older than 16 years had only passed Std 5.
- 23% were unemployed.
- 57% of those who were unemployed were labourers.
- 29% accept poverty as God's Will.

- 32% wish to change the situation but do not know how to go about it.
- 27% are deliberately seeking change.
- 19% believe that the Church must pray for the poor.
- 43% believe that the Church must educate the poor to overcome poverty.
- 17% believe that the Church should convey to the Government their demands with regards to change.
- 51% believe that their education should be improved to be able to obtain better employment to overcome poverty.
- 10% passively accept their poverty.
- 8% believe that Blacks must mobilise themselves politically to eradicate poverty.
- (Hunger and illness are seen as the first priority for the Church to face and then unemployment).
- 41% see God as protecting them.
- 14% see God as inspiring the oppressed to take action against poverty.

(DRCA - Supplement to the ligstraal - October 1991)

For the sake of our study, only the above statistics were selected and this projection of the people used in the research onto the Church as a whole is fairly accurate and might only change a few percentage points. The main focus of the research was to determine the true socio-economic situation, as well as the attitudes in the DRCA, to be able to consider future action.

The Dutch Reformed Church in Africa, presented the following recommendations as an attempt to find ways to deal with the problem of poverty:

Firstly, the traditional form of Charity will have to be re-evaluated. True Charity Service will have to include action towards justice. The Church will have to become part of Community Development with all its dimensions. The Church will have to become pro-active, and not only reactive, with regards to the present dependency relationships. Full-time Development officials will have to be appointed.

Secondly, the Psychological dimension of liberation ought to be coupled with an involvement in the socio-political and community development fields. The research has revealed

passivity and helplessness among the majority of our people. Our hope is that this situation will be changed fundamentally with the eradication of oppression and exploitation. A part of the liberation process would be when the Blacks begin to accept themselves as children of God created in His Image, taking responsibility for their own lives and well-being and just don't see themselves as "mission objects". Thirdly, they emphasise that all action plans and projects will have to be developed with a view to the vast problem of poverty (DCA - Supplement to the Ligstraal - October 1991).

2.2.4.4. Reconstruction and Development

At the very outset, we must acknowledge that Poverty is a structural problem. In other words, people are without jobs, not because they are lazy or don't have the potential to take the initiative or because of the population explosion, but rather enormous unemployment is a reality due to the structure of our economy, which needs to be changed. Separate Development was the outstanding example of an unjust structure, which perpetuated the poverty of millions of black people. Today, some have hinted that when the sanctions by the international community are lifted and

the economy begins to gather momentum, there will be a filtering down effect, so that ultimately the poor will reap the benefits. We must concede that if this happens, it would be nothing more than crumbs falling from the rich man's table. Thereby, we need an economic structure which fosters both growth and redistribution, in order to restructure the socio-economic imbalances in the South African context'.

The Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), initiated by the Government, aims to change the lives of millions of people, by elevating their serious social and economic problems, namely, mass poverty, gross inequality, a stagnant economy and enormous backlogs.

For instance, FW de Klerk on the 27 April 1995 during the Freedom Day celebrations said "The success of our newly won freedom will be determined by the degree to which the RDP succeeds in bringing about a better life for millions of our citizens".

Dr Dawie de Villiers, Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism said that "Tourism in South Africa has the

potential to create more job opportunities, generate more income, empower more people and contribute more than any other industry towards fulfilling the objectives of the RDP" (Tourism Budget Vote in the Old Delegates Chamber - 13 June 1995).

Jay Naidoo said that "We will be judged not by what happens this year or next year, but by where South Africa is 25 years from now. That is the vision of the RDP." (Promoting the RDP budget vote debate in the Old Delegates Chamber - 8 June 1995).

President Nelson Mandela said that Reconstruction and Development is the challenging task entrusted to us to change South African society for the better. Amongst the urgent tasks, the government has set itself is to work together, in the Spirit of Masakhane, with all citizens to improve the provision of education, health services, refuse removal, roads and so on. The Government has launched Presidential lead Projects aimed at improving the lives of especially the poor, women and children. (Preface to RDP Report - 27 April 1995 - compiled by the Ministry in the Office of the President).

It is a call for partnership between the Government and civil society to make the RDP successful. Transformation as the RDP sees it, effects all parts of society. In order to provide basic needs for the unfortunate millions and build the economy we need to appropriate all the available resources at our disposal. These would include:- Human resources - i.e. people and their organisations, with skills and experience; Natural resources - i.e. mineral, land, water, electricity and Financial resources - i.e. Government budget as well as the financial muscle of our economy. For this to materialise, a partnership needs to be established between the Government, the community, labour and the private sector at national, provincial and local level to redirect South Africa's human, financial and natural resources towards making the RDP programme a success story.

At present, the Land Reform Pilot Programme is addressing the problem of land acquisition and accompanying settlement needs in rural South Africa. For example, one pilot area per province was identified, involving the potential transfer of state and trust land to the poor and landless. In fact, land reform is a tool for redistribution of the

country's resources to the marginalised society. This programme also addresses the demands for small scale agricultural producers through broadening access to agricultural support.

In reality seven communities, involving 2 406 families are in the process of obtaining land and will now be given settlement support by means of the funds allocated through the RDP fund - Nhlwana Buthelezi trust; Amahlubi; Amaswazi; Thembalihle; Cornfields; Khumalo; Mekemeke.

Land restitution aims at restoring ownership to those communities who lost land because of Apartheid laws. This programme will complement the work of the Land Claims Court, and to facilitate the return of land under state and trust control to previous owners who were dispossessed. For instance, ten communities involving 4 164 families are returning to their land and will be given settlement support through the RDP fund, viz. Roosboom; Charlestown; Alcockspruit; Zulukama; Group 4; Zwelendinga; Schmidtsdrift; Riemvasmaak; Zwartrand; Goedgevonden; Bakubung; Doornkop (RDP Report - 27 April 1995).

LAND RESTITUTION AND REDISTRIBUTION 1994/1995

Project	Properties to be restored	Land in Hectares	Families Benefitting
Restitution	354	143,345	4,164
Redistribution	-	25,730	2,406
Total	354	169,075	6,570

(RDP report - 27 April 1995 - Compiled by the Ministry in the Office of the President)

As far as Health Care is concerned, the RDP aims to change the Health Care system of South Africa, which offers the world's best specialist care on the one hand but denies basic quality care to millions. Thereby, free Health Care Programme was initiated for children under six years and pregnant women. Four times more patients are now treated in the rural areas. The RDP fund has allocated R472,8 million and R500 million to the Free Health Care Programme in 95/96 and 95/96 financial years respectively.

CLINIC BUILDING AND UPGRADING PROGRAMME 1994/1995

PROVINCE	PROJECTS					94/95 Funds Allocated
	New clinic	Upgrade	Equipment	Vehicles	Total	RM
Western Cape	6	8	-	-	14	2,795,000
Northern Cape	4	3	3	4	14	2,780,000
Free State	1	2	-	8	11	2,482,000
Northern Transvaal	3	-	57	-	60	2,452,000
Eastern Transvaal	1	-	-	-	1	2,840,000
Gauteng	4	-	-	-	4	2,750,000
North West	-	19	-	-	19	2,791,025
KwaZulu Natal	5	2	1	-	8	2,800,000
Eastern Cape	-	18	20	15	41	2,767,000
Total	24	52	81	15	172	24,457,525

(Compiled by the Ministry in Office of the President - 27 April 1995)

In terms of education, South Africa needs a culture of learning. The RDP intends to fund school renovation; promote school governance structures, work to improve attendance and encourage parents, students and the broader school community to contribute to discipline, maintenance and ongoing improvement of schools. It intends to also rebuild the infrastructure in previously under-serviced

areas. In addition the RDP will give bridging support to the Education Department to equalise services in all areas. The budget of R100 million for 1994/1995 has been divided among the provinces on the basis of need and equity.

PROVINCES	SCHOOLS
Eastern Cape	52
Eastern Transvaal	66
Free State	Planning in Progress
Gauteng	1,500
Kwa-Zulu/Natal	Planning in Progress
Northern Cape	34
Northern Transvaal	174
North West	1,000
Western Cape	80

(Compiled by the Ministry in the Office of the President - 27 April 1995)

The RDP's Electrification Programme seeks to change the way of life for almost 11 million people profoundly. For instance, women can participate in productive activities, instead of spending many hours each day in collecting firewood. In 1994/95, it is stated that 377,609 homes and 562 school had been electrified.

It aims to also ensure rapid and visible improvements in the provision of municipal services and infrastructure. The RDP will give support to the Transitional Local Councils (TLC's) deliver these facilities to their local communities, which will be the key to the success of the Masakhane Campaign.

The RDP also initiated a Primary School Nutrition Programme, which has already benefitted 6,8 million children who would otherwise go to school hungry. Thus far, 12,800 schools have benefitted and 7,000 committees have been established at school level to ensure that this project become self-sustaining. This scheme has increased attendance and has led to greater concentration on learning among pupils.

In the Rural areas, it is estimated that almost 2 million households are without safe water supply. The RDP intends to meet the needs of South Africa's rural population by providing clean water to every person - at least 20 litres per person per day within 200 metres of where they live within 5 years. The RDP fund has assisted the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry to re-direct their resources, to

provide community water, as well as creating jobs and stimulating the rural economy. Thereby a total of R360 million from the Department's budget and R30 million from the RDP will go to community water projects.

The demographical data concerning the RDP projects have been obtained from the RDP's Report which was compiled by the Ministry in the office of the President.

Those who are concerned about the future of South Africa are of the opinion that the future of democracy in the country will be sustained if all the aims of the RDP is achieved. However, if the RDP programme fails, it could cause persistent instability. Therefore, it is of paramount importance that the Church fulfil its role in lending support to the RDP programme, so that the crisis in our socio-economical context may be normalised. In the next chapter we will look at the challenges facing the Church in regards to the socio-economical situation and what role the Church could play in eliminating the socio-economical injustices experienced in our country and to tackle the problem of poverty.

CHAPTER THREE

THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH : THE THREE DIMENSIONAL APPROACH

In this chapter of the thesis, I envisage to reflect on the significant role that the Church has to play in its mission endeavours of bringing the total gospel to the inhabitants of our country. Here, we consider the Kerygmatic approach as one of the dimensions of proclaiming the gospel. In the diakonial aspect, we would look at the Church's social and political responsibility in giving credence to the gospel and then we consider the Koinonial role of the Church in the South African context.

At the outset, an analysis of the population census of 1991 may provide the premise for a more detailed description of the religious scenario of South Africa. When one obtains a panoramic view of the Churches in South Africa in comparison to the vast, unfinished task of the Church, it will provide a basis from which the Churches can work towards fulfilling its mission obligation.

Although the statistical data presented below could change remarkably by 1996, it will to a certain extent be helpful

as a guide, from which, one can arrive at certain conclusions.

CHURCH/RELIGION	Total Population	White s	Coloureds	Indian s	Black s
Total %	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0
NG Kerk	10,4	31,6	17,2	0,0	4,8
GKSA (Reformed)	0,5	2,4	0,1	0,0	0,2
NH Kerk	0,9	4,9	0,0	0,0	0,1
Church of the Province SA	0,4	0,6	1,4	0,1	0,3
Church of England in SA	0,1	0,4	0,1	0,0	0,0
Church of England - so stated	0,5	1,5	0,1	0,0	0,4
Anglican - so stated	2,7	3,2	5,5	0,4	2,2
Methodist	5,9	6,6	2,9	0,2	6,4
Presbyterian	1,3	1,8	0,2	0,1	1,4
United Congregational	1,2	0,4	3,9	0,4	1,1
Lutheran	2,5	0,5	2,5	0,2	3,1
Roman Catholic	7,6	6,2	7,2	1,4	8,2
Apostolic Faith Mission	1,3	4,4	1,9	0,2	0,50, 7
Other Apostolic	1,4	2,5	4,6	0,1	0,7
Baptist	0,8	1,4	0,6	0,3	0,0

Pentecostal Protestant	0,2	0,9	0,6	0,1	0,0
Afrikaanse Protestantse	0,1	0,6	0,0	0,0	0,4
Full Gospel	0,7	1,3	0,7	2,2	0,0
Greek	0,1	0,5	0,0	0,0	0,0
Mormon (latter Day Saints)	0,0	0,1	0,0	0,0	0,0
Pentecostal	0,1	0,1	0,3	0,0	0,0
Salvation Army	0,1	0,1	0,0	0,0	0,1
Seventh Day Adventists	0,3	0,3	0,3	0,1	0,1
New Apostolic	0,5	0,4	3,0	0,1	0,3
Swiss	0,1	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,1
Assemblies of God	0,5	0,3	0,5	0,1	0,6
Zion Christian Church (ZCC)	4,9	0,0	0,1	0,0	7,0
Other Black Indepen. Churches	17,3	0,1	1,4	0,5	24,5
Other Christian	4,1	4,8	9,3	6,1	3,1
Jewish/Hebrew	0,2	1,3	0,0	0,0	0,0
Buddhist	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,1	0,0
Confucian	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0
Hindu	1,3	0,0	0,0	39,1	0,0
Islam	1,1	0,0	4,8	16,9	0,1
Other Beliefs	0,1	0,1	0,1	0,6	0,1
No Religion, no church - so stated	1,2	0,7	0,4	0,4	1,5
Nothing given or objection	29,6	20,0	30,3	30,2	31,8

In scrutinizing the relevant data at our disposal it is clear that the largest religious groupings in South Africa are the Black Independent Churches, the Dutch Reformed Churches, the Roman Catholic Church, Anglicans and Lutherans respectively.

In comparing the religious composition of the total population in historic South Africa in 1980 to the 1991 census, it is evident that the Christian population decreased from 77% to 66,5%. From this perspective, it is of paramount importance that the Church be alerted to the great unfinished missionary task entrusted to it, to reach those who are unevangelised as well as those who need to be re-evangelised. Also we need to take into consideration, the 29,6% who for some reason or another, did not subscribe to any religion whatsoever.

It must be mentioned that Christianity is not the only missionary or universalistic religion in South Africa. And even though the mission task seems to be insurmountable, the Christian is encouraged not to lose confidence but to become bold in conveying the Christian Gospel to the non-Christian community.

In my opinion, there is no place today, for a Church that is not aflame with the Spirit who is the Lord and Giver of life; or places value in a theology which is not passionately missionary. If there throbs through the Church, the vitality of a living union with Christ - and apart from this the Church has no claim to exist, no right to preach, it is merely cumbering the ground - if the Church can indeed say "It is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me", then the dark demonic forces of the age have their match, and the thrust of life is stronger than the drift of death.

Therefore the Church that knows its Lord and is possessed by its gospel cannot but propagate creativity, the life, that it has found. So, ultimately, Christians who take their faith seriously will inevitably evangelise, in whatever context they find themselves.

3.1 The Kerygmatical Approach

The Greek word, Kerygma, literally means proclamation or message and is intimately related to the Gospel or so called "Good News". In other words, with the Kerygmatic dimension of mission, we refer to the multifaceted forms of

the ministry of the Word. This approach, especially deals with evangelism and the building up of the Church which is the body of Christ, through preaching, teaching, witnessing, baptising and so forth. It must be reiterated, that Evangelism is proclaiming the good news that Jesus Christ died and rose again, to rescue the world from sin, satan and death. This Salvic operation for burdened, broken and bound people begins and ends with grace which works through faith. Thereby, after humankind is rescued from the world and its onslaughts, they are then, thrust back into the world to become a part of God's mission of reconciling and restoring His fallen creation.

Evangelism is the apostolic task of the Christian community, commissioned by Christ to proclaim the Gospel to all humankind. This commission is phrased in a multifaceted way in the scriptures. For instance, In Matthew, the Lord directs his followers to "go therefore and make disciples of all nations ... baptising and teaching" (Matt 28:19). In Luke, we are told that repentance and forgiveness are to be preached: to that message; the disciples are "witnesses" (Luke 24:47).

In the first letter of John, the terminology of witness and proclamation is put together with an emphasis on sharing an experience of Christ or so-called testimony, so that the hearers may share in the Christian fellowship, having a vital relationship with God. (1 John 1:1-3) This kind of sharing best describes and defines the reality of evangelism, which is our primary focus in this dimension of mission. It also relates to what Protestants call "the priesthood of all believers", for, according to Martin Luther 1959:310 the Gospel is shared also through "the Mutual conversation and consolation of the brethren".

As a means of Evangelisation, Preaching remains as one of the basic forms of communicating the Good News. It is significant that a sermon takes the Word of God which was addressed initially to a different context and redirects it to people in another context. Therefore, the situation to which the Biblical text is addressed must be taken seriously and then interpreted for another situation, so that the Gospel becomes relevant and practical for the new context.

Molebatse says that proclamation must be governed by and concerned with the wholeness of individuals. For instance, as with Jesus, the Church has been anointed by God to liberate, to give hearing to those who cannot hear; sight to those who cannot see or to bring about the downfall of evil structures. So, we must be concerned with the wholeness of individuals, challenging them to accept the love and the grace of God, that is made possible for us in Jesus Christ; calling them to personal faith and peace. But it is a proclamation that is not only concerned with the wholeness of individuals or persons, but also the wholeness of society. This is accomplished by bringing hope, love and trust, so that all are raised to the full dignity and stature of our humanity (Molebatse C 1991:211).

Weatherspoon postulates that the Kerygma points beyond itself to the movement of which it is the dynamic centre and suggest more than incidentally the spiritual demands on the preacher, the nature of his message and the inclusive objective of preaching. Preaching is talking face to face and heart to heart with people who need to hear, bearing witness, proclaiming as a King's herald who is the bearer of good tidings, prophesying as the Spirit gives light,

teaching divine truth and wisdom, and everywhere and always exhorting men to seek the higher levels where dwell purity and peace and overcoming evil. Set all of these, one upon another, in the frame of our Christian mission today, and there emerges a composite picture of the apostolic preacher - the preacher who, possessed by the Holy Spirit within, is able to persuade humankind and establish them in the service of Christ (Weatherspoon JB 1954:75-76).

Evangelism as teaching presents the Church's reflective theology in a learning environment where people can explore the evangel in their human situation. The basic authority and guidelines for Christian teaching are to be found in the scriptures, particularly within those parts, which records the ministry of Jesus and the New Testament Churches. The church must always assign a high significance to the ministry of teaching, since this was central to the life and work of Jesus.

Consider the following scriptural references:

"And He went about all Galilee, teaching";

"Seeing the crowds, he went up to the mountain ... and he opened his mouth and taught";

"He taught them as one who had

authority";
"And Jesus went about all the cities
and villages; teaching in the
Synagogues";
"Day after day, I sat in the temple
teaching and you did not seige me."

These are a few of the many teaching experiences of Jesus, mentioned in the Gospels.

No wonder, Jesus was called "Teacher", more often than he was called, by any other title in the Gospels, in fact, a total of sixty times. Luke sums up Christ's career by stating "In the first Book; Oh Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to teach" (Act 1:1).

The Early Church also considered teaching an important part of its ministry. After Pentecost, the new Christians devoted themselves to the Apostle's teaching and fellowship (Acts 2:42).

When Paul lists the gifts of ministry, Romans 12:7 which God has given to the Church, the ministry of teaching is prominent.

Therefore, since Jesus was known as a teacher, it is not strange that those who followed him, were called "disciples", which means "learners".

Christian teaching has often been identified with a concept of "nurture", which in a sense, is too limited. In other words, often, a limited concept of "nurture" has caused the Church to overlook its responsibility to train its adherents for mission and ministry. Nurture can be regarded in terms that are too introspective and self-centred. It can help to meet the needs of people, yet fail to motivate and train them, to witness and serve in the world.

Another aspect, in this Kerygmatic approach in evangelism, is witnessing. Witnessing is sharing the Good News, authenticating it within a relationship of love and concern. Every believer, in their efforts to witness for Christ, will have to concentrate on the qualitative dimensions of communication. The credibility of the bearers of the Gospel will first have to be established by Christian attitudes and actions. They have to be the light of the world and the salt of the earth in the given context. They are to be a powerful preservative against the

corruptions of our society and a lamp to shine in dark places. Thus, if we really want to communicate the most important of all messages to them, our credibility amongst them must be favourable. The relevance of the Gospel will have to be demonstrated, to meet the specific needs of the individual, bearing in mind the influence of other major religions, as strong contenders in the South African context.

Also, the contents of the Gospel will have to be communicated in a meaningful way. In reality, there's more to being a witness than merely reciting the contents of the Christian Faith. To be a witness is to be involved; to be speaking from the inside, as it were, to be declaring what you most heartily believe. It is often true that a simple sharing of your Christian experience is more magnetic and winning than the most elaborate arguments. We need to know clearly what the Gospel means.

The witness needs to be admonished to always present the Gospel with compassion and courtesy. The manner of our communication is important, as well as the matter. Harshness and manipulation are out. We are to treat the

non-Christian, as a person worthy of respect. Although, we must bear in mind that there is a definite offence to the Christian Gospel. But, that is not always the reason why people do not respond positively to our witness. There is a difference between preaching the offence of the Cross and preaching the cross offensively. In other words, we can badly misrepresent the Gospel of Christ, by our tone, our approach and our manner. Charles Spurgeon once said that from some people the Gospel seems more like "a missile shot from a catapult than like bread from a father's hand". Therefore, part of being a witness for Christ, lies in treating people with such sensitivity and genuine caring that we win the right to be heard.

Winning the right to be heard - or believed - is good strategy for personal evangelism. When our actions speak so loudly, that people cannot hear a word we are saying, we will certainly make an impact.

The Christian is called to take their mandate for Church growth seriously. When the Church does not grow, it is called upon to be honest with itself and to find reasons for this shortcoming and to do something positive about it.

When the Church becomes complacent and does not involve itself in mission and Evangelism, then decay sets in, and the logical conclusion is stagnation.

Therefore, the church needs to demand a Biblical standard of faith from its members, which will ultimately contribute positively to a dynamic, fruitful and a living Church. James Pike says their sole purpose is to maintain in their fullness the truth about God's redemptive act which is at the centre of the Church's continuing life, in faith. In every age, men are bound to work out a system in which the Gospel by which they live is related to the thought - forms, the particular needs, the climate of opinion, which are then prevalent. The great systematic theologians of the Church have performed this indispensable task from Clement of Alexandria, Origen and Augustine, through Thomas Aquinas, Luther and Calvin, down to our own day. The validity of these various systems is determined by their loyalty and their Kerygmatic approach to the Gospel (Pike/Pittenger WN 1973:15).

We have seen, that the task of the Church focuses on the proclamation of its message. More than anything else, the

bringing of the Good News shows the Church's apostolicity - that it is commissioned and sent into the world. The message of the Church is described and determined by Christ's Lordship over humanity. He is Lord of humanity because as a man, in the form of a servant, he was "obedient unto death, even death on a cross". That Salvific deed is the Church's word to all people. Through that Word, God gives forgiveness, freedom and life forever to His world.

Thus, in terms of this meaning, ministry and message; the Church understands its mission. The Church gains confidence and courage from its continuity and its ability, by the grace of God, to change and survive change (Quere, RW 1975:101-102).

We must concede that under the Lordship of Jesus Christ, God's people in the South African context have kept faithful to their Kerygmatic task among the various peoples of the country, although there remains a great unfinished task, as we will see in a later chapter. For instance, the Dutch Reformed Church was the original Church of the State. Only in 1824, under British rule, could this Church gather

for its first synodical meeting. Already during this first meeting, it was decided to appoint missionaries for work among the indigenous inhabitants, especially the mixed races which had developed through the relations of Europeans, Khoikhoi, San (Bushmen), slaves and blacks. In 1826 the first of these, Leopold Marquard, started work in the Clanwilliam area (Kritzinger, JJ 1988:17).

At this point, one needs to clarify that there could arise a misconception that the Dutch Reformed Church only started mission work 175 years after it came to this country. For instance, initially, it was Jan van Riebeeck and the Dutch East India Company, that considered it their Christian duty to bring the Christian faith to the indigenous peoples. He expressed this desire in a prayer used at the commencement of every meeting of his Council, namely, "the propagation and extension (if that be possible) of Thy true Reformed Christian Religion" among the inhabitants of the Country.

The first positive result of their Kerygmatic approach to the Hottentots came during the term of office of Wylant's successor, Pieter van der Stael. A young Hottentot girl names Krotoa became a servant of commander van Riebeeck's

wife. She and her husband took special interest in the girl's spiritual progress. As a result, on 3 May 1662 she was baptised as Eva, being the first indigenous person to become a Christian in South Africa (Cronje JM 1982:12).

It must be mentioned that at the very outset, the DRC in fulfilling its missionary obligation, co-operated with other missionary societies, namely, the London Missionary Society (LMS), and particularly through the South African Mission Society. It was HR van Lier and MC Vos, who endeavoured to awaken the Church to its missionary calling and who also started the drive for widespread local missionary work.

The mission enterprise then spread beyond the Cape Colony, with the exploits of the Swiss Henry Gonin and the Scot Alexander McKidd, who propagated the faith in the Western and Northern Transvaal. It was there that these men laid the foundation for the establishment of the NG Kerk in Afrika; which developed towards the Middle of the twentieth century. In the Cape the so-called "Coloured congregations" were already united into the NG Sending Kerk (NGSK) in 1881. As a result of the decision in 1857, the DRC decided

to gather the fruit of its mission work into separate Churches, resulting in the formation of the "family of DRC Churches" (The History of the DRC missions within South Africa is described by D Crafford : Aan God die dank. Deel 1, Pretoria : NGKB, 1982).

The DRC was active in its mission work locally and internationally, in promoting its rich Reformed tradition. Unfortunately, this dissertation, does not have room for a complete history of all the Churches that have originated from the mission endeavours of the DRC.

Below, I present a demographical picture of the Churches that make up the so called family of DR Churches, within and outside South Africa; which will suffice for our purpose.

CHURCH	DATE OF FIRST SYNOD	NO. OF CHURCHES	TOTAL ADHERENTS
1. NG Sendingkerk - now VGK	05:10:1881	265	678,000
2. NG Kerk in Afrika - now VGK	07:05:1963	482	1104,000
3. Reformed Church in Africa	28:08:1968	12	2,000
4. CCAP Synod of Nkhoma	03:08:1956	96	420,000
5. CCAP Harare Synod	01:05:1965	15	22,580
6. Reformed Church in Zambia	03:07:1943	65	165,000
7. Igreja Reformada em Mocambique	29:01:1977	9	16,650
8. Evangeliese Geref Kerk in Africa	03:07:1975	14	1,900
9. Reformed Church in Caprivi	11:05:1975	10	7,890
10. DRC in Botswana	20:11:1979	10	7,890
11. Church of Christ in the Sudan among the TIV	07:01:1957	Transferred to Reformed North America	the Christian Church of
12. Reformed Church of East Africa	July 1963	Transferred to Zendingsbond	the Geref. (Holland)
13. Ned. Geref. Kerk (DRC)	1824	1248	1694,000

The above statistical data was obtained from the 1995 Jaarboek van die NG Kerk No. 146 and Cronje J.M. (1982: 215 - 216;81)

In addition to the abovementioned mission work, the DRC also ventured to make a contribution to existing Churches, without establishing Churches in Sri Lanka; Japan (now defunct) and mission to Communists.

The other Reformed Churches in South Africa, are also busy with mission work but restricted to the South African

context. For instance, the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa and the Reformed Church in Africa are propagating the faith to all people, irrespective of race, and the new adherents are absorbed into the local congregations.

Prior to the unification of the NGSK and the NGKA, the NGSK, initially limited to the Cape Province, was compelled to reach the numerous members that moved to the other provinces in search of employment and so forth. Thereafter, the work extended to the following areas: the Transvaal (Gauteng) Natal (Kwa-Zulu Natal), Orange Free State and South West Africa (Namibia).

In 1954, the NGSK and the NGK initiated the formation of the Peninsula Mission Board to meet the great mission challenge. The NGSK resolved to combine mission and evangelisation in its Commission for "Getuienisaksie" (Witnessing Action), with a full-time secretary. Their primary concern was to find members of the Church who had come to the city or those being resettled and to get them organised into a congregation. This task is being done in

close collaboration with existing congregations and the Peninsula Mission Board (Cronje JM 1982:33).

As we have seen already, the first mission work among the black people was undertaken after a decision of the NGK Synod on 13 November 1857 with the availability of Henri Gonin and Alexander McKidd, who availed themselves for such a tremendous task.

Then, in the ensuing years, between 1955 and 1963, a revival concerning their missionary obligation was evident in the great increase of DRC missionaries in the Transvaal from 44 to 80 within two years. A stimulation of mission work through the whole province and the commencement of mission work by the DRC in the lowveld of Transvaal viz. The area from Kranspoort in the north along the eastern border of Transvaal to Barberton in the South.; It includes the Venda, Tsonga and Swazis, which had a low percentage of Christians. In four years, six new mission stations were erected.

Cronje (1982:57-59) says that a remarkable result of the enthusiasm aroused by the revival that young ministers in the DRC, volunteered to work in the lowveld - even without their salaries and allowances as missionaries being available or guaranteed. For example, four couples, viz. Rev. and Mrs CWH Boshoff; Rev and Mrs JT Jordaan; Rev. and Mrs JP Potgieter and Rev. and Mrs NJ Smith focussed their attention on the obligation of the Church to evangelise the unreached peoples in those areas. Consequently, their labour is evident in the following mission stations which were founded:

1. Tshilidzini (1956; in Venda - by Rev. and Mrs NJ Smith).
2. Nthume (1958) in Venda with Rev. and Mrs WF Louw.
3. Letaba in Gazankulu (1956) - Rev DS van der Merwe.
4. Nkhensani, in Gazankulu (1959) - Rev ECD Bruwer.
5. Rivoni (1958) - Rev. JT Potgieter, then succeeded by Rev D Crafford.
6. Lebone, in Lebowa (1958) - Rev IH Eybers.
7. Bakenberg in Lebowa (1958) - Rev JC Swanepoel.
8. Turfloop in Lebowa (1958) - Rev. WJJ du Plessis.
9. Meetse-a-Bophelo in Lebowa (1957) - Rev CWH Boshoff.

10. Goedvertrouwen-Lepelle in Lebowa (1961) - Rev P Conradie.
11. Maandagshoek (1922) - Rev AJ Rousseau.
12. Klipspruit (1948) - Rev EM Phatudi.
13. Kgapane (1971) - Rev JP Prinsloo.
14. Ratanang (1957) - Rev E Harrington
15. Gelukspan (1950) - Ev Petrus Mataboga and TI Ferreira.

Then, on 7 May 1963, the various "mission Churches" which were established among the Black community in all the provinces of South Africa having federal ties to each other, decided to unite and form a united Church called the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk in Afrika (NGKA).

The Reformed Church in Africa (RCA), also came into existence, as a result of active, mission endeavours of the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk. In 1946, the NGK made its first official attempt to evangelise the Indians in South Africa.

Up to this period, the work was sporadic and done by lay people from the NGK. When one considers the mission obligation among the Indians, the NGK was rather late on

the scene as compared with other denominations, such as the Methodists, Anglicans and Roman Catholics. Thus, missionary work was done in the different provinces and little congregations existed and operated more or less independently. On the 27 August 1968, a long cherished ideal was realised, when the convention of the Synod marked the end of the separate congregations of the RCA and the beginning of a united Reformed Church in Africa (Acta of first Synod of the Indian Reformed Church 1968:19).

Consequently, all congregations are involved in their missionary obligation, in their local context emphasising the concept that every Christian is a missionary.

Therefore, a Church that knows its Lord and is possessed by its gospel cannot but propagate creatively, the Life that it has experienced.

It is a Biblical imperative that every Christian bring the Kerygma to the centres of life which are subtly yet decisively insulated from the Church's historic witness. The Church has indeed, a message of hope for this troubled, lost world. As Kraemer (1958: 45) says:

The Churches, discovering their missionary obligation and suddenly becoming aware of the hugeness of the task, turn to the laity with the argument that every Christian is eo ipso a witness and a missionary: to discover next that a laity which has been so long neglected and left ignorant is in its majority unable to respond to such a demand.

It is a challenge to Christians in the South African context to focus on the spontaneous transmission of the gospel to the non-Christians, thereby fulfilling the great commission in this generation.

3.2 The Diakonial Task

3.2.1 Introduction

The Greek word diakonia, literally means service, ministry. In this section, attention will be given to the Church's social and political responsibility in the changing South African context. At the outset, it must be mentioned that this in no way detracts from the tremendous work being done by other religious groups and organisations in the area of social concerns. It is notable that despite its many limitations and failures, the Christian Church has a remarkable record down through the centuries, in creating

and nurturing organisations aimed at serving and harnessing the energies of people in need.

The Reformed Churches have long been active in different forms of organised compassion or "barmhartigheid". Historically, it was unfortunately done in a racially segregated way. Each of the Churches of the DR family has its own diaconal organisations, operating independently from each other, on the basis of separate development. I would like to now present a concise account of the various diaconal services of the Reformed Churches, so that new structures appropriate to the needs of the changing South African situation could be appropriated.

3.2.2 Diakonal Activities in the Reformed Churches

Firstly, the Dutch Reformed Church (Church and Society 1986:12) postulates that the exercise of compassion is part of the calling of the Church. It is grounded in the compassion of the Triune God. Jesus Christ, who came to this earth not to be served, but to serve, has entrusted the caring ministry to His Church. The Church is therefore a caring community, called to serve.

This calling is as all-embracing as the diversity of the physical, psycho-social and spiritual needs of life itself. This ministry of the Church whether through particular offices, official bodies, or through believers in all areas of daily life, is completely different from a mere humanitarian approach. It springs from and is motivated and qualified by the love of God which is revealed to us in the Gospel. As a witness through deeds, it is intended, together with and through the preaching of the Word, to lead to salvation in Jesus Christ and fuller experience of the communion of saints, to the glory of God.

This definition describes, in a broad sense the diakonal responsibility of the Church. In this way, the Dutch Reformed Church has made provision for a personnel, consisting of 99 Christian-social councils; 341 Social Workers dealing with family care; 14 Pastoral psychologists; 25 prison ministers and 15 Hospital ministers to cater for social concerns, namely, supervision of children, after care (children and young people), criminal offenders, psychiatric patients, abused children, dependent persons, workshy persons, selection of surrogate parents, strained marriage relations, material and other

assistance and orphans. Rossouw P (1990:22) reports that the DRC has the following institutions at its disposal:

94 institutions for the aged.

21 children's homes.

Youth centres; homes for alcoholics; drug addicts and unmarried mothers, special schools (for the deaf, the blind, epileptics), care centres; creches and nursery schools for the mentally handicapped and for spastics.

The Church renders these noble services according to its own structures of Church Council, Presbytery and Synod in collaboration with the State and the community. This ongoing programme of the DRC involves caring for those in need in a specialised and organised way.

Unfortunately, these professional services were limited to the Afrikaner and only now, due to political changes, in a limited way, some of the services are being extended to other racial groups.

Secondly, the Dutch Reformed Mission Church (DRMC) has come a long way to bring its social services to its current level of specialization and comprehensiveness where its

diaconal services developed to such an extent that two full-time secretaries are now involved. They cater for the needs of the destitute, handicapped and old-aged persons, alcohol and drug addicts, neglected Children and so forth. Some of the institutions which were initiated and developed by the DRC was later transferred to the care of the DRMC.

Cronje JM (1982:29), lists the following institutions of the DRMC, namely:

I) Homes for Children

Uitkomst Tehuis, which is the oldest home for neglected children, was established in 1916 at Cape Town, by Dr GBA Gerdener. This home was closed in 1928, due to lack of funds. Then in 1945, a farm called Steinhal, near Tulbagh, was developed for this purpose, and it grew to become a large institution, catering for almost 650 children where teaching is provided up to a Junior secondary level with specialised vocational training.

Other homes for children are the following:

Herberge at Pofadder, Witbank, Kammieskroon and Kliprand (Nuwerus) for 330 children from Namaqualand.

ii) Schools for the Physically Handicapped

In February 1933, a school for the deaf was opened; with Mr Izak Februarie as teacher. In 1981, it consisted of 302 pupils and 44 staff members. In 1976, a special section was opened for those who were hard of hearing but not totally deaf. Here, opportunities were given for carpentry, bricklaying, basket work, shoemaking and domestic science. In October 1962, a school for Epileptics was established at Worcester. Then in 1978, this school was transferred to Kuilsrivier, so that 250 to 300 children could be accommodated for this purpose.

iii) Unmarried Mothers

This project was initiated by Anna Tempo who was concerned about the girls, involved in prostitution. She tried to lead them to a new life in Jesus Christ and rented a small hall where they could stay. The DRC and the DRMC supported this excellent work and established the Nannie Home for unmarried mothers. Provision was made for the babies born in Nannie Home. Thus, in 1975, the Christine Revell Children's Home was opened which can cater for 50 babies.

iv) Rehabilitation of Addicts

In 1978, the DRMC established a rehabilitation centre called Toevlugsoord (Refuge), to cater for the needs of alcoholics, which had become a matter of grave concern to the so-called coloured community. For instance, in 1978-1980, a total of 233 patients were admitted.

v) Visiting the Sick

Rev. DJA Jordaan and Rev. BV Appollis, served as full-time workers in hospitals in 1963 and 1981 respectively, caring and ministering to the sick.

It is interesting to note that the diaconal services rendered by the DRMC functions as a registered welfare organisation under the supervision of the Church. There are almost 50 social workers in the various congregations, who were trained at the Minnie Hofmeyr College at Worcester.

This college was established in 1931 and is sponsored by the Woman's Auxiliary of the DRC, the DRMC and the State.

A four-year diploma course, which leads to admission as a registered social worker is offered. The training is from a Christian-orientated viewpoint and takes place in a spiritual atmosphere.

Thirdly, the diaconal work within the DRCA, is vast and extensive. Initially work was done by DRC missionaries regarding social concerns. They deemed it necessary for people to read the Bible and prior to the Government extending its educational work to rural areas, the mission stations played a pivotal role in establishing schools of learning, among the Black people. For instance, in rural areas of the former Transkei Cronje JM (1982:49) say that the comprehensive approach of the Church in evangelism, education, medical work, industrial and agricultural work, was a reality. Twelve well-developed hospitals was established to cater for the physical needs of people. These hospitals were later transferred to the government in 1975-1977. For the blind and deaf, the Efata School for the Blind and deaf was founded. Thereafter an aftercare facility was added to the school and various primary and secondary schools were established at Cala and Cicira

(Decoligny). These two schools later introduced teacher training.

Later, an organisation, called Mfesane, which means "charity" was founded. Mfesane was involved in numerous diaconal projects.

Health care was a high priority on the agenda, thus, hospitals were built at Sterkspruit (Empilisweni), Cala (Ethembeni) and Peddie (Nomphumelelo). At Peddie, a Home for the old-age and chronic sick people formed part of the hospital. A home for children, (Kayaletumba; meaning "home of hope") and a school for cerebral palsied and cripple children (Vukuhambe, meaning "rise and walk") was established at Umdantsane (East London). The DRCA formed a corporation called Ziphakamiseni, meaning "help yourselves", with the purpose of supplying employment for those people who resettled at Dimibaza and elsewhere.

Concern for the unemployed gave rise to agricultural development projects at Zithulele and Madwaleni; the tanning of skins and hides; Associated Leather (leather work); Zipha Industries (manufacturers of leather

articles); Zandla Manufacturers (producing covers for motor car seats and cycle bags); Bisho Builders and Kumkani Potteries.

The tremendous contribution made in the area of diaconal activities is listed as follows: 17 Hospitals (15 in Northern Transvaal and 2 in Western Transvaal, which is at present transferred to the Government); 4 Homes for the aged; 3 Schools for the Blind and Deaf; 2 homes for the physically handicapped; 1 Youth hostel; 18 creches for children; 1 home for ex-lepers; 2 Secondary schools and 1 Teacher Training School. In addition, a large number of primary schools. All schools, at present, have been transferred to the Government (Cronje JM 1982:61).

In the Kwazulu Natal region, with the assistance of the DRC and the Government subsidies, the Church was involved in the following diaconal projects: A Home for children (orphans and others) at Dingaanstat; A School for the Blind and Deaf (Vuleka); A home for the Old-Age citizens (Kwabadala) and a school for physically handicapped children (madadeni).

What we have seen thus far, is a far cry from what needs to be done to address the serious imbalances in this area of development. In the next chapter, we will once again address this issue as a challenge that faces the church for the road ahead.

Fourthly, as far as the Reformed Church in Africa is concerned, unlike the other Reformed Churches, it does not have an organised diaconal branch, with full-time workers within the Church. Due to the fact that it is a small Church by comparison, the diaconal activities are carried out by the local congregations, as the need arises. For example, the Laudium Declaration 1990: point 3, affirms that the congregation of believers should turn itself outward to its local community in evangelistic witness and compassionate service. It affirms that we must demonstrate God's love visibly by caring for those who are deprived of justice, dignity, food and shelter. It is brought to the notice of believers that 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.

Although, in the first instance, the Churches's various ministries extend to fellow believers, they also reach out to all people in need. In a Spirit of priestly compassion, care and support must be rendered in all cases of material, social, psycho-social, physical and spiritual need.

Although good work continues to be done, one has a sense that, whatever may have been done and is still being done, the Church has failed to respond adequately to the challenges which surround it.

It is easy to criticise, but worthwhile if such criticism is part of an urgent search for new forms of embodying the Christian mission: "To announce good news to the poor; to proclaim release for prisoners and recovery of sight to the blind; to set free the oppressed" (Luke 4:14).

Much of the best work of the Church consists of inspiring and strengthening individuals to work in secular organisations, but there is, however, still room for Church initiatives in setting up new structures appropriate to the situation (Wilson and Ramphele 1989:302).

As we have already discovered that Apartheid has deeply affected every stratum of life in the South African context, resulting in the social aftermath haunting the country even long after the legal demise of Apartheid. The suspicions, hurts and bitterness and attempts to bridge the great divide, will certainly be a gradual process.

Therefore, it is of paramount importance that the Church sees its service which it renders as not being limited only to diaconal assistance to those in poverty, physically disabled, sick or illiterate and so forth. The role of the Church should also encompass the correction of structural imbalances and injustices which causes impoverishment in a given context.

Thus, in this comprehensive understanding of the diaconal dimension of the task of the Church, Bosch says:

Those who know that God will one-day wipe away all tears will not accept with resignation the tears of those who suffer and are oppressed now. Anyone who knows that one day there will be no more disease can and must actively anticipate the conquest of disease in individuals and society now. And anyone who believes that the enemy of God and humans will be vanquished will already oppose him now in his machinations in

family and society. For all this has to do with salvation. (Bosch DJ 1991:400)

As, we have affirmed that the diaconal challenge of the Church also involves the Church's ministry of justice. Therefore, if it is the responsibility of the Church to address the structures, then it is inevitable that it becomes susceptible to political involvement.

3.2.3 Political Responsibility

The question that needs to be asked, is not whether the Church should be involved in politics or not, but rather, to what extent and how should the Church be involved in politics.

Prof WD Jonker, a Reformed theologian in his paper delivered at the National Conference of Churches in Rustenburg, said that the church has a prophetic task with regards to politics. For example, in abnormal times, when normal political action is made impossible by unjust laws, the banning of political organisations and the suspensions of democratic opposition, the Church will have to step into the void with its political prophecy, in order to take up

the cause of the helpless and victims of injustice. But that is not the normal task of the Church . When things return to normal and the democratic political process comes off the ground, the Church should return to its normal task and leave political actions to political parties. The normal task of the Church is the preaching of the Word of God in its fullness as gospel and law, calling on all men to repent of their sins, to turn to the Lord and to do His Will.

As far as the political sphere is concerned, the Church should proclaim God's general and abiding demands of justice, fairness and the protection of the weak and the poor. The Church should also not be afraid to criticise unjust laws and specific political models (Jonker 1990:6).

The Church is made up of people, who in turn, make up society, and political concerns are a part of daily life. Therefore, the task of the Church is to give serious attention to the burning issues of social and political concerns that do affect the daily lives of the citizens.

In the Dutch Reformed Church publication Church and Society (1986:33) it is stated that it is not the task of the organised Church to take over the activities and responsibilities of other social structures. It is not the task of the Church to prescribe a political programme for the State, an academic one for the university; an economic one for the bank, or a training schedule for sport. The Kingdom of God, however, does extend much further than the organised Church, and includes all social structures. Therefore the Church has the calling to proclaim to believers and all structures of society the demands of the Kingdom in terms of their daily lives and activities. The programme to fulfil these responsibilities is the task of able believers who are active in the various social structures.

Consequently, there is no single social sector nor deed, either of an individual or of a group, which must not be placed under the light of God's Word. However, the unique nature and mandate of the Church dictates the manner, in which, it must pursue its calling in this respect. The Church's primary task is to proclaim God's Word and to equip its members for their ministry in every sphere of life.

We have to concede that the Gospel of Christ must be applied to our lives and equally to the structures of society which is vital for the kingdom of God. This gives impetus to the reality that the Church needs to provide some blueprints for society. Consequently, a blueprint is in fact, the way, in which a political or economic system is structured and this system, blueprint or structure, is controlled according to basic principles and values of the system. In this way, the Church can apply the Gospel basis and contents of our values in structuring society and its blueprints.

One can understand the reluctance or cautious attitude of some Churches, not to become directly involved in politics or even prescribe so-called blueprints for politics in this country. This is due to the fact that it was the Dutch Reformed Church that provided the former government with the structuring of Apartheid and its blueprints. Thereafter, the Dutch Reformed Church made a confession of guilt concerning this matter and warned that the Church should not provide blueprints for society, in future. As Rudolph Meyer (1991:11) cautions that in this regard the Church should not throw the baby out with the bath water.

What was wrong was not the fact that the Dutch Reformed Church assisted with the structuring of blueprints as a Church, but that they provided, not the principles of the Gospel, but the principles of ethnicity, racism, nationalism and domination, whilst they claimed that these principles were directly in line with the Gospel.

Consequently, this leads to the kind of relationship that co-exists between the Church and State. In order for the Church to fruitfully fulfil its role in all spheres of society, it is of paramount importance to take this relationship into consideration.

3.2.4 Reformed view on Church and State

In the new South Africa, with its democratic political dispensation, the Church needs to reassess its relationship to the State. Historically, the Church, inter alia, the Dutch Reformed Church, unilaterally became bed-fellows with the State and thereby, couldn't fulfil the prophetic role that was entrusted to the Church by God himself. The challenge which faces the Church in South Africa, is that the Church plays a prophetic role in the political dimensions of the country. It certainly has a moral and

spiritual obligation to speak out against injustice or any moral issues that affects its people, because it is a Biblical injunction.

This brings me to the question: What precisely is the Reformed view of the relationship between Church and State? Firstly, the role of the Church and the task of the State must be clearly defined. Historically, the Church and State were one. During the Reformation there was a development in this regard, in which, political authorities were beginning to seek emancipation from the Church. With this distinction, the Reformers, like Luther, Zwingli and Calvin, saw this emancipation to be positive and they reinforced it. For instance, Luther emphasised this, when he speaks of secular authority and how far it must be obeyed (Luther, 1523:68,82). Zwingli (1942:40) postulates, that the justice of God to be proclaimed by the Church differs from the concern for human justice laid upon the Church as heaven differs from earth and God from man.

Also, Calvin, in his Institutio Christianae religionis (iv,20,1), insists that Christ's spiritual Kingdom and the civil jurisdiction are things completely distinct and that

we must not rashly mingle these things together, as many people tend to do (McNeill & Batles 1961:1486).

From a theological point of view, it is sound to affirm the specific spiritual role of the Church and also to insist that the Church recognise the differing specific role of the State. Busch, E (1991:20) is of the opinion that a Church which turned itself into a state, or even into a mere appendix of the state, rendered itself superfluous as a Church. The Church is God's Church and therefore, stands on its own over against the State. The Church will become superfluous if it gives in to conformism or compromise.

The State has a task which is not replaced by that of the Church, a task which the Church is not to despise, a task which the Church cannot do without. As Barth (1938:31) has restated this insight common to all the Reformers in contemporary terms as follows: The State would have to commit suicide if it wished to become the Church; and the Church cannot in its own interest or rather, in the interests of its task, want the State to cease to be the State. Certainly, the State cannot become the true church, if it were enough to want to become the true Church it

could only turn into a pseudo-Church; an idol. Likewise, only more so, the Church would have to commit suicide if it wished to become the State and thus to establish justice by force when its real task is to proclaim justification. It could not become a true State; it could only become a clerical state with a bad conscience about its neglected task.

Secondly, the role of the Church and that of the state stand in a definite relation to each other and are not to be separated. This was emphasised by Zwingli and Calvin. Thus, H. Scholl (1976:54) refers to Calvin's comment when branding as a "diabolical idea" the notion that the whole realm of politics has nothing whatsoever to do with the Christian faith. He stresses God's Justice and Man's, how they are and remain inseparably related. They were concerned about the autonomy of the State, or leaving a State to its own devices. This is due to the fact, that the common life of people within a state cannot be a matter of indifference for faith.

In other words, this is the relation, not of the Church, but of God, as to how the Church witnesses to the state. It

proclaims, the reality that God reigns over all the earth. He is Lord of all, even over the political realm. Thus, if God abandons His absolute rule over the world, so that everything happens blindly and senselessly, then He has ceased to be God. Calvin (1852, Vol. 2:197), comments that Isreal's God holds the reins of government of the world. Schmid H (1959:249) stresses that for this very reason, according to Zwingli, the state is not at liberty to rule over the Church nor the Church over the State, because God rules over both.

Therefore, as a citizen of the state, the Christian owes obedience, in the first place to God. In other words, the Christian must always, first of all obey God and only in the second place, obey earthly rulers. Acts 5:29 says, "We must obey God rather than any human authority". This was not just a rule for extreme cases but a fundamental rule of Christian life and action. Once again reinforcing the ideal that the representatives of the state have only relative and not absolute authority.

In reality, the Government or state is subordinated to God and our civil obedience therefore cannot take precedence

over our obedience to God. We concede that in order to govern, there must be a policy and laws would have to be passed. But Heyns (1991:1) postulates that in all this, the State has to be obedient to the Word of God, or at the very least it must not gainsay its message. Like the Church, in its own way the State is in the service of the Kingdom of God. Both the right to govern and the method of governing are thus derived from God.

Thirdly, from a Christian perspective, the State can be identified as a just State when it fulfills its responsibility in a way of similarity to God's saving justice. For instance, Calvin was of the opinion that God instituted earthly government so that it might administer the world with justice and law (Calvin, -tr. J. Owen 1849:479). Even though, we must concede that there can never be any parity between God's will and justice to any State justice, there can and should, however, be an analogy between earthly justice and the Will of God.

Heyns (1991:4) reinforces this idea by reiterating that the State's policy and its control of the whole of public life may not, take only Christians into account, making it

possible for them to live out their faith, but rather, in all aspects and to all people, it must be just and fair, conforming to the requirements of God's Word. It is not merely the well-being of its citizens that the State has to promote and maintain through the application of law and order; above all it must allow justice to triumph. For the State must not be a State of might, but a State of justice.

Therefore, justice and partially, social justice comprises those actions which create opportunity and, at the same time, so establish and entrench it with structures that within them, people are able conscientiously, to fulfil their obligations and resolutely to exercise their rights. Or to State it more succinctly: social justice is the structured space of life within which people can realise their God-given destiny to the maximum.

In South Africa, historically, the vast majority of Black South Africans suffered socially, economically, politically and religiously through the unjust and discriminatory laws that were applied by a non-democratic government. At present, the new democratically elected government is attempting to promote just laws that acknowledge that

before God all people are equal, and that any form of discrimination based on gender, race, language, or culture, and any kind of exploitation or oppression must be severely condemned.

Just laws acknowledge and furnish opportunities for the fact that human beings are called to liberty and responsible decisions, so that they may share in political decision-making processes and the like; that they must be able to develop and expand their gifts and potential in the service of the community; that the poor in their need will be supported and the rich will be generous in their charity. Just laws do not protect or favour one group or people above another, neither do they entrench the interests of one group or people at the expense of another.

Fourthly, the Church has a watchman's role to perform, vis-a-vis the State. The Church has a responsibility to address the State if it fails to do what it is instituted by God, to do. Consequently, the Church is not at liberty to endorse state injustice. For instance, the Reformed Church in Africa (Laudium Declaration: Acta 1990:150) "affirms 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."

Locher GW (1532:123) postulates that the prophetic office of the "watchman" is to fearlessly and frankly speak the truth according to God's Word and in doing so, to also call evil by its right name. We must take cognisance, here, that even in this office of "watchman" the Church is and remains the Church. As Busch E (1991:26) quite rightly points out the whole point of this office of "watchman" is that, in exercising it, the Church pressurises the State to be a just State.

Subsequently, in the event the State promotes unjust laws, Bock (1974:167) is adamant that the role of the Church as part of its task of challenging the conscience of society, is to protest against any law or arrangement that is unjust to any human being or which would make Christian fellowship impossible, or would prevent the Christian from practising their vocation. Some of its members feel bound to disobey such law. The Church does not contemplate lightly any breaking of the law, but it recognises the duty of a

Christian to do so, when one feels one has reached that point where the honour and glory of God command one to "obey God rather than man".

Finally the role of the Church is to demand from the State, the freedom to fulfil its calling. Certainly, a just State has a responsibility towards the Church. This does not mean that the State is at liberty to meddle in Church affairs. It simply implies that the State should show concrete interest in maintaining the Church's existence, by granting freedom of religious expression to its inhabitants. As Heyns (1991:4) stated, the State should act in such a way that the Church may remain the Church and be able to carry out the task which characterises the Church. This means that in general the state's administration will, as Paul says, be such that Christians will be able to "lead a quiet and peaceful life, godly and respectful in every way" (1 Tim 2:2). Concretely, this implies, inter alia, that Christians will be able to live out every aspect of their faith, not merely within the organisation of the Church, but in marriage and family life, in school and cultural affairs, in art and science, in economics and politics. In all these spheres, they will have the

opportunity to witness to Christ's Lordship. Deeply convinced, that Christianity may not be restricted to the secret, inner citadel of the human heart or to the private sphere of personal devotion or to the holy events of Sunday worship in the Church building for the essence of the message, the Church proclaims that the whole of public life must be obedient to God's Will, and thus subject to the discipline of His Word. This opportunity must not be accorded to Christians merely incidentally and sporadically; it has to be guaranteed.

The State may not interfere in the Church's internal affairs, since by its organisation and regulations, it gives expression to what is peculiar to its own being, for such interference would make it impossible for the Church to be the Church.

We must concede that much more could be said about the relationship between the Church and State, but this concise account will suffice for our understanding of the Church, regarding the state.

As far as the South African situation is concerned - especially concerning its transition from one political dispensation to another, the Church needs to formulate religious and ethical requirements for the new constitution clearly and unambiguously, and urge the various political parties to ascertain that those principles should be taken into consideration when the new constitution is finalised.

It is interesting to note that the South African situation consists of a multicultural and a religiously pluralistic population. With this reality in mind, the government decided that South Africa would be a secular State.

Initially, when this proposal for a Secular State was presented, there arose many misconceptions regarding this delicate matter. For instance, some perceived it as anti-religious. Which would mean that prayers and religious instruction at government schools will be banned; that the name of God will be removed from our national anthems; that any office bearer in the Church will not be able to hold public office; Church services in public schools on a Sunday would be terminated and so forth.

However, Carl Niehaus (1995: No.31) reiterated that South Africa as a secular State implies that all religions will be treated equally. While it is true that South Africa is an intensely religious community, it is equally true that we are a religiously plural country. The constitution must defend the rights of all its citizens to practise the religion of their choice or no religion at all. A Secular State is not anti-religious. It rather protects the rights of all religions without favouring any one religion. It is emphasised that the Constitution should protect all people to practise their faith, with respect and sensitivity for the beliefs of others, in private, at home and in public, in government buildings, schools and on State occasions, without fear.

Therefore, the Church should not be overly anxious concerning this issue, due to the fact, that Christian morals and principles are clearly not guaranteed just by mentioning God in the constitution. Yet, however, the Bill of Rights has already guaranteed the fundamental right of all South Africans to practise and propagate their faith without let or hindrance, as long as they do not infringe on the rights of others.

3.2.5 Education in a changing society

3.2.5.1 Background

Education forms part of the basic fabric of society. Historically, there existed a great disparity in the diverse educational systems affecting the various racial groupings in South Africa. It is interesting to take note that the Churches played an important role in education over the years. Prior to 1953, the Churches were deeply involved in establishing schools among the various population groups. In fact, during this period almost all African education was in the hands of the missionaries. The early schools were used by the Church to instil in the children the Christian religion, with the purpose of achieving intellect, obedience, discipline and submissiveness. It seemed that it was part of the missionary obligation of the Church to establish mission schools in reaching others with the Gospel of Christ. In fact, many of the present Black leaders in South Africa were products of mission schools. Statistically, it is said that, of the 7 000 schools for Black children, almost 5 000 were mission schools. Even the majority of the teacher

training colleges were managed by the Churches (Nolan. A - Challenge Magazine. No 25 dated Oct 1994).

The radical changes to the Educational policy, initiated by the National Party in 1948, had a profound impact on the role of the Church in terms of education. Consequently, the Bantu Education Act took black education out of the hands of the Church. It meant that state subsidies for mission schools would cease and all black schools would have to comply with an "inferior" syllabus, specifically designed for the "Bantu". The former Government's spokesmen at the time of implementation of the separatist philosophy underlying the government's policy of "Christian National Education" made it clear that the aim of that policy was to ensure that blacks were not educated for jobs beyond their proper station in an apartheid South Africa (Wilson and Ramphele 1989:148).

The Afrikaans Churches, inter alia, the Reformed Churches, had a powerful influence upon Education, due to their involvement in the overall policy of Christian National Education, by providing the theological justification of separate development in education.

The State-aided schools in the White and Indian communities were in a more advantageous position than the Coloured and Black schools. Black communities suffered tragically, due to the problems of large classes and poorly qualified teachers - many lacking in morale and thus compounded by the lack of facilities. Further in Black schools, the classrooms are overcrowded, insufficient desks, inadequate sports fields, broken windows, neglected toilets, textbooks unavailable, libraries, laboratories and the various teaching aids, used in modern education were seldom available.

In reality, the kind of Education foisted upon the Black majority in our Country has contributed to their poverty. For instance, the Education process in South Africa was such that Whites have had innumerable advantages over Blacks in acquiring the skills necessary to fill jobs at the upper levels of the economics ladder.

A further disadvantage awaiting children from the rural areas or farms is that they are growing up in an agricultural environment, where, due to mechanisation and the changing technology of production, the demand for

unskilled labour is steadily shrinking but where they are not getting the education that will enable them to make the transition to urban jobs (Wilson & Ramphele 1989:147).

From the inception, the Churches in the disadvantaged groups protested against this separatist educational policy and the struggle continued for some considerable time. Nolan A (1994:5) stated that during the 1970's it became more and more difficult for White private schools to justify their racial exclusiveness. Excuses like the unlawfulness of mixing the races in schools were beginning to be questioned in Church circles.

Consequently, the powerful rejection of apartheid education was manifested in the 1976 Soweto uprising. Thereafter, the gradual opening of those private schools to pupils of all races, since 1976, was totally new for the Churches and schools. The open schools struggle will go down in history as possibly the greatest contribution by these Churches thus far, to the struggle for a better education for all.

The Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa and the Reformed Church in Africa among the Reformed Churches,

added their protest against the Education system of the National Party. The Reformed Church in Africa produced a memorandum for the Consultation of Churches in Pretoria (March 12-16, 1980) concerning Education. The following principles were forwarded:

1. Education should serve the ideal of creating a common SA Society.
2. Education should be made compulsory for all sections of the community.
3. There should be equal educational opportunity for all, with special efforts made to help the less fortunate in society to qualify.
4. Schools, colleges, and universities should be opened to all persons, irrespective of race.
5. The Church in South Africa should strive actively and constantly to influence and shape the educational process (Agenda RCA. 1980:231).

3.2.5.2 Reflection on Future Education

As a South African nation, many are proud of the peaceful transition that has taken place in the political dispensation and one would hope for the same response for the currents of change in the Educational System. The

vision for radical change was highlighted by the Education chief, Prof Sibusiso Bengu (Sunday Times 12:06:1994). He called for parents, pupils, teachers and academics to become partners in the common struggle to eradicate apartheid in education and strive towards a free, non-racial, non-sexist, compulsory and democratic education system.

The present Government subsequently appointed a strategic management team to study ways and means of ensuring the smooth transition to a new education system. The team envisaged to work in close consultation with the previous Directors-General of Education to ensure continuity, plan and manage the rationalisation of existing education departments and to determine a reconstruction and development programme for Education. This served a two-fold purpose, namely to consolidate the different education departments into a single education system and to establish provincial education departments, devolving powers and functions to them.

In this way the future of education in SA is presented in

the Hunter Report, which, is in line with the changing South African situation.

The opening up of schools has led to an opening up of minds. The mixture of cultures, religious beliefs, gender and new ideas in a school, certainly opens up exciting new possibilities for the relationship between schools and churches, and for the development of a new culture of learning.

Fundamentally, the values and perceptions of Educationalists are amongst the most crucial elements in a society which is undergoing rapid change. In the South African context, many structural changes are envisaged over a period of time. EH Davies in an article in Education and Culture (Oct 1993, Vol. 16 No.3) lists the structural changes needed as follows: changes to the broad curriculum; changes to subject curricula; the possible introduction of completely new subjects; the elimination of existing subjects in the curriculum; an amalgamation of education departments which will demolish existing separate racial departments; arising therefrom, a rather different

clientele in schools, resulting in a need for the effective addressing of education from a multi-cultural perspective; a possible redistribution of financial and manpower resources; the adjustment of the ratio of pupils and teachers; and different configurations of personnel in schools.

Therefore, the teacher has a crucial role to play in the unfolding of a genuinely non-racial; non-discriminatory society in South Africa. The extent to which that role can be achieved depends largely on the dedication of the teaching corps to the accomplishing of those goals.

3.2.5.3 Religion in Schools

At the outset, we need to look at the Religious composition of the South African population. According to the 1991 census, it is seen as follows:

Christianity	66,5%
Hinduism	1,3%
Islam	1,1%
Judaism	0,2%

Almost 30% of the population for some reason or another did not fall into any of the above categories. Clearly, it is

seen that Christianity forms the majority of the population and thus confronted by a number of other religions.

Therefore, what are the possible options for Religion in Public education? An attempt to answer this question was made at a consultation in January 1994 where the Independent Forum for Religion in Public Education - consisting of a number of representatives of various religions (the multi-faith forum), educationalists and university teachers, drew up a report. This extensive consultation was a necessary gesture, due to the fact that the ANC had been unclear about what role Religion should play in the New Education policy.

With the dual problem facing the decision-makers, namely, the former government's record of imposing Christian National Education and facing the reality of Religious Pluralism in South Africa, the consultation seemed a probable solution.

This consultation formulated four options:

1. No religious education in school.
2. One religion only taught in a school.

3. Each pupil has access to his/her own religion in the school.
4. An optional multi-faith syllabus for all.

In reaction to these four possible models or options, the National Christian Education Forum, representing at least 80 Christian denominations and organisations, produced a memorandum on Teaching of Religion, in order to submit it to the present government.

As a matter of interest, the Uniting Reformed Church in South Africa; the Dutch Reformed Church, Reformed Church in Africa and the other two Afrikaans Reformed Churches supported the memorandum.

Some of the relevant issues raised in this document in terms of the Christian religion and education is as follows:

1. Christian education is the disclosure and the development of children, through the teaching of Biblical norms and principles, as they apply to all aspects of life, with the aim of attaining Christian maturity.

2. Religion is the most fundamental and comprehensive motivational force of God in the lives of individuals, families, particular communities and of large societies. It provides its adherents with a world view, and values and norms which issue in morality.
3. An education system should provide for the spiritual, intellectual, mental, physical, and social needs of learners.
4. The education of learners in their totality includes (inter alia) education in religion, for which a national education policy needs to make provision.
5. Although parents and religious institutions carry the primary responsibility for this, the State also carries a responsibility to make provision for religious education.
6. As South Africa is both a multi-cultural and a multi-religious society, the curriculum should make provision for options in terms of religious education.
7. The Christian Religion in terms of Education.
 - 7.1 We, as Christians, support the principle of religious freedom but not religious equality.
 - 7.2 As Christians, we acknowledge that the diversity of religions, and their numbers in South Africa, should

be considered in planning and education policy. The fact that Christians are vastly in the majority should also be taken into account.

- 7.3 As Christians, we maintain that the parent community of a particular school should decide about religious education and the ethos of that school. The syllabuses of all school subjects should comply with the ethos of that school.

Provision should be made for minorities.

- 7.4 As Christians, we reject the idea of a compulsory, neutral, multi-faith religious education for our children.

- 7.5 As Christians, we call for two subjects to be included in the school curriculum; that is, Religious Education and Biblical Studies. Religious Education should be adapted to the ethos of the school. Biblical Studies should be optional as an examination subject.

- 7.6 As Christians, we request the Government to make provision for including Christian Religious Education and Biblical Studies as optional subjects in the training of teachers.

- 7.7 As Christians, we request the Government to make sufficient provision for Christian orientated colleges of education.
8. Core syllabuses and adapted syllabuses for the two subjects under discussion (parr 7.5, 7.6) should be drafted in collaboration with acknowledged Christian Churches.
9. Finally, as Christians, we wish to state that we accept our dutybound responsibility to pray for the Government, "that we may live a quiet and peaceful life with all reverence towards God and with proper conduct" (Good News Bible, I Timothy 2:2).

(Memorandum : Teaching of Religion - compiled by the National Christian Education Forum for submission to the Government, inter alia. The Department of Education on 10 August 1995)

The challenge that faces education in South Africa can only be addressed by the Church if it commits itself wholeheartedly to attack, head-on, whatever new situation that may unfold.

Therefore, no matter what the situation is, what is

certain, is that religion and the Church, in particular, will continue to play a crucial role in education. It is of paramount importance, that our country at this Kairos, needs men and women of courage, men and women of vision, men and women who know themselves and who are willing to embark on a most exciting venture: that of preparing both themselves and our children for a world which is full of challenges and, within the very matrix of those challenges, full of hope.

It must be stated that one of the greatest challenge facing the changing South Africa is that of Education. Hundreds of thousands of South Africans will need to be educated and trained to respond to the socio-economic changes that are taking place. The church needs to gear its adherents to this realisation.

3.2.6 Development and Reconstruction

The measure of success in South Africa will be determined by the radical change in the quality of life of the millions of impoverished people. Specifically, it is those who, due to a lack of quality education, lack of basic skills and opportunities; those without jobs; individuals

who are experiencing sickness and disease due to poverty and living in squalid conditions, resulting in unaffordable health care; it also relates to those who do not have homes that they can call their own.

These issues relate to people and the Gospel addresses people in their human predicament, and therefore, the Church must remain as the conscience of the people and participate in the programme of Development and reconstruction, in order to boost the quality of life of people. The Church cannot divorce itself from the social upheaval that affect people.

Oosthuizen, GC (1993:138-139) observes that there are only a few Church-orientated associations active in programmes concerning the upliftment of people in our society through education/training and employments. In relation to the Youth, there is a great need for youth development programmes which need physical facilities, vocational guidance, learning materials, skills training, special employment programmes, in order to reintegrate the marginalised youth. The Young people face severe unemployment and the lack of completing their education and

training studies. Identification of their special aptitudes is important as well as practical vocational guidance. Recently, the desire to complete their school education to obtain their matriculation certificate is felt by many. The Church should make closer contact with existing institutions and schools, in order to assist in such ventures.

Oosthuizen (1993:138) further postulates, that illiterate persons should be assisted to obtain the ability to read and write. This could be done with the assistance of computers as supportive media.

For this vision to materialize, it is important to utilize the talents of people who identify the needs of their people in their own communities and through whom we could assist in serving those needs. Thus, if Jesus Christ is the answer to our situation, then the Christians and the Church should take the lead in producing effectively this answer.

This could be accomplished by establishing new channels of ministry such as teachers, social workers, welfare

institutions, economic planners with an agenda directed to the upliftment of our communities.

Oosthuizen (1993:139) stresses that mass involvement is necessary, those who pull up their sleeves in order to provide the necessary stimulus for real upliftment of the spirit, mind and body of everyone in need. Self-motivated and other congregations should become more dynamic in their areas; they must identify their own resources and abilities; plans of actions and goal setting have to be drafted. Therefore, the Church must have a holistic disposition in order to fulfil this need, by getting involved in the South African context more tangibly and more effectively.

3.2.6.1 The Masakhane Campaign

The Nguni term "Masakhane" which literally means "let us build together", has a direct reference to nation building. With the social aftermath haunting our country, due to Apartheid so deeply affecting all strata of life in South Africa, there was a desperate need to create a new culture of social responsibility and to attempt to re-organise our society. As a result of this, the Masakhane campaign was

initiated to provide the necessary stimulus towards the national process of normalizing community life and subsequently, making democracy a reality.

Basically, the Masakhane challenge was directed towards accelerating the delivery of basic services, promoting the resumption of payment towards rent, electricity, water and rates. The Government also came to the realisation that the Reconstruction and Development programme (RDP) can only come to fruition, if total participation of local communities can be obtained.

It was envisaged that community needs and concerns could be speedily addressed if the local governments, the private sector and the local communities could pool their resources together, in order to provide development and the delivery of basic services. In speaking of development, it relates to economic development and also community development. Thus, it is important that communities interact with the local governments in order to determine local priorities for development.

Therefore, the participation of the Christian Community in South Africa in this regard, is crucial. Due to its calling to create new beings out of the old, it can certainly be instrumental in building the new society.

Thus, the Church's participation in the Masakhane campaign would be viewed as its continuous challenge towards nation building. The Church, which labours in the context of the community, is in a unique position to support and promote the message of Masakhane.

In the past, the Church saw it as its task in terms of social responsibility, to find ways and means of contributing and participating in projects that resulted in the upliftment of society, and thereby, did not leave everything to the government of the day.

The Church also has a prophetic calling and a moral obligation to challenge the government about the desperate need for delivery on its election promises, such as housing, jobs etc.

3.2.6.2 Economic Justice

The reformed Churches have a rich tradition, characterised by people's participation, through which it is possible to reach mutual agreements in decision-making processes. It is a democratic tradition, which has influenced social political and economic life in the past. It has certainly contributed to enlighten peoples of many nations to become responsible for their actions on different levels of existence (Reformed World Vol. 45 No. 3 September 1995).

If the Reformed Christians, today in South Africa are faithful to this rich tradition, they will certainly contribute towards human development with the purpose of bringing about economic and social justice for the most disadvantaged people in the country. For instance Tebogo Klaas (1995:21) states, that, though we are free, we are still trapped in this vicious demon which entails the socio-economic disempowerment of blacks in particular.

In this regards, in order to make a difference to the lives of people in their impoverished circumstances, it is necessary to transform power relations; to shift the balance of power towards the poor, as well as to lay

foundations which can help to determine the shape of the society, as a long term measure.

Wilson and Ramphela (1989:267) state that in shaping this new society, based upon economic justice, the ANC as early as 1943, published a manifesto "African claims" and the Unity Movement announced its "Ten-Point Programme". Also, in the 1950's the Congress of the People crystallised thinking at the time, in formulating the Freedom Charter, which focused not only on political power and the rule of Law, but also on the need for redistribution of wealth (including the land) and the banishment of famine. Woven into this Charter was also a specific concern for education and the "enhancement of our cultural life".

With this ideal in mind the Rustenburg Declaration point 4.1.1 declared that

the Bible reveals God as a God of compassionate love who has a special care for the sinner, the downtrodden, the poor and all who suffer injustice. Obedience to Christ therefore requires that we develop an economic system based on justice, compassion and co-responsibility, so that those in need benefit more than those who have more than they need. More equitable wealth distribution must go hand in hand with economic growth.

4.1.2

After decades of oppression, removal of discriminatory laws will have to be accompanied by affirmative acts of restitution in the fields of health care, psychological healing, education, housing, employment, economic infrastructure and especially land ownership. For many years, greed has led to the taking of land from the poor and weak. Both Church and State must address the issue of restoring land to the dispossessed people.

To level the imbalances of the past, there is a desperate need for empowerment and not just co-option. It is a sore reality that, in many instances, that co-option rendered to the poor, makes them more dependent and powerless. For example, due to the fact that many Whites in South Africa have economic power at their disposal, they see themselves as philanthropic-givers and the poor seem to be developing a habit of dependency and apathy.

Therefore, this philanthropic approach with its destructive consequences needs to be rejected and what needs to be propelled is the concept that it is better to equip a poor person with "a fishing rod than a fish", as the saying goes.

Thus, the Rustenburg conference (1991) requested Churches and organisations to place on their agendas, as a matter of urgency the following matters: the need to work towards a new economic order, in which the needs of the poor can be adequately addressed; provision of work for the unemployed; provision of adequate homes and essential services for the poor; the need to work towards parity in standards of living between black and white people; the need to eradicate poverty and hunger; Affirmative action to enable transfer of some of the economic power presently in white hands; and Affirmative action in relation to women's rights.

It is important to remember, at all times, that genuine development work is that which empowers people. In this sphere, it enables them to build organisations that, like a hydro-electric dam, pool their resources and generate power, where previously there was none.

In empowering people, one needs to have a clear picture of the situation, in order to determine the kind of assistance that needs to be granted. The data which follows is based upon a survey of 9 000 households all over the country, co-

ordinated on the Southern African Labour and Development Research Unit at the University of Cape Town. According to statistics, 95% of the very poor (the lowest 20% of households in which income earners receive Less than R178 a month) are Africans. About 75% of the very poor live in rural areas, concentrated in the former homelands and independent states of Transkei, Ciskei, Bophuthatswana and Venda. In fact, about 92% of Transkei's population is poor. Nearly two thirds of South Africa's poor live in three provinces: The Eastern Cape (24%); Kwazulu-Natal (21%) and the Northern Province (18%). The unemployment rate in rural areas is nearly doubled (40%) and the rate in metropolitan areas (21%).

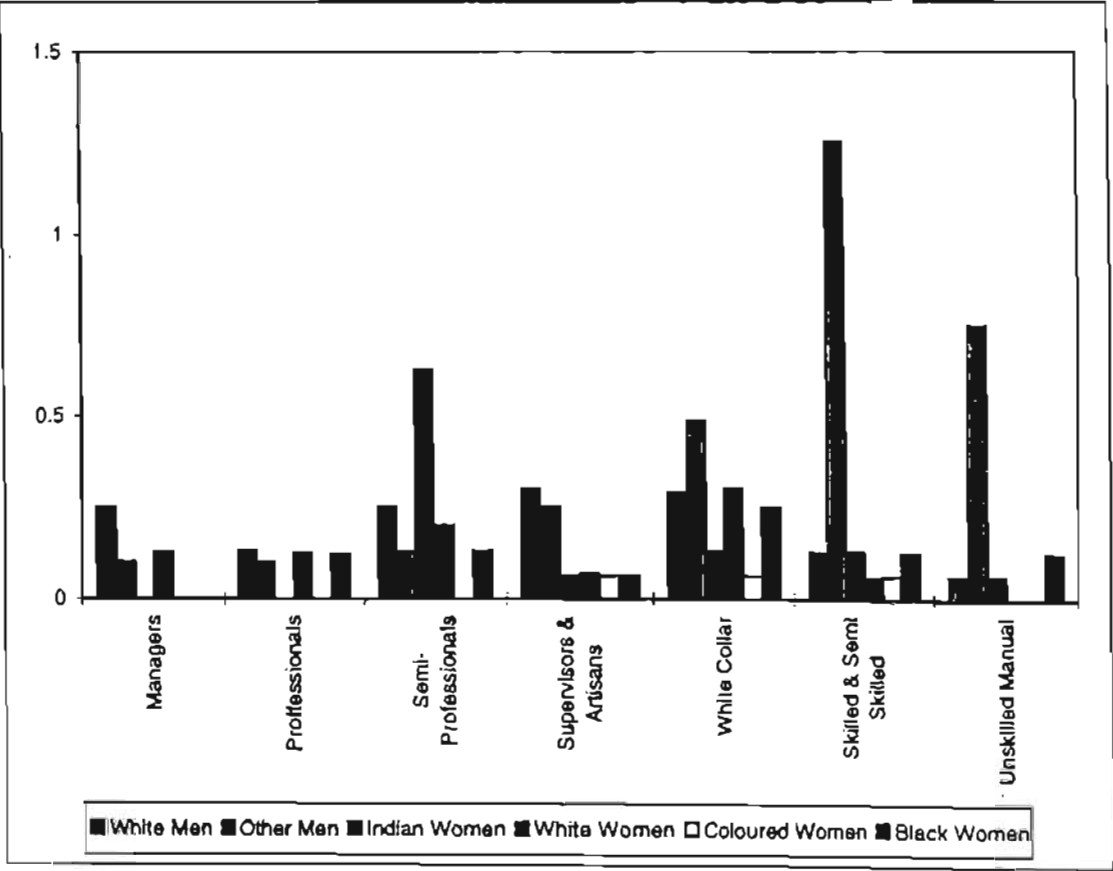
Unemployment and poverty are intertwined: the poor have unemployment rates of about 50% compared with about 4% for the richest 20% of households. The result is that less than 30% of the poor working-age adults are actually working and less than 23% of the very poor (who account for 29% of the population). Nearly half of the poor households are primarily dependent on a State pension (25%) or remittance from relatives (23%).

The average size of farm land used in poor families is 0,4ha, compared with 64 ha for the top 20% of households. Over 80% of the land used by the poor is communally owned, and much of it is of poor quality. Almost no poor farmers have access to irrigation water, while nearly half of the top 20% of households do.

Much of time of the poor is taken up with unproductive tasks: eg. Women in most poor rural African households spend more than four hours a day (i.e. 28 hours a week) fetching water and firewood. A third of the poor live in shacks or traditional dwellings and the vast majority have no access to basic services. Among the very poor, 85% have no electricity, about 80% no access to piped water on the premises and nearly 90% no access to modern sanitation. About half of the poor have no education or only incomplete primary education.

The burden of poverty is greater on women; and the children are the victims. Households headed by women have a 50% higher poverty rate than those headed by men. And although they account for just over a third of the population (36%), women represent nearly half (48%) of the poor. Women suffer

from substantially higher unemployment than men (35% against 25%) (Sunday Times 11:02:96 Page 24),



The above mentioned data is obtained from the Status of South African Women, a source Book in Tables and graphs, which sets out the Country's gender imbalance in a readable and accessible manner. (Daily New 10:12:1993) From the data

one can access the considerable discrimination that was imposed upon the women by society. In reality, women make up 53% of the electorate in South Africa, and with the political dispensation, women are gaining more positions of power. Also the absence of Black women from managerial positions while they form 86,3% of the domestic work force, must be addressed through appropriate, effective measures in the changing South Africa.

3.2.6.3 Affirmative Action

At present, Affirmative Action has become a prominent feature in the New South Africa. Whilst Apartheid was a policy designed to award benefits to Whites at the expense of other races, Affirmative Action is designed to rectify the inequalities of the past. In the light of the South African situation, it is acceptable, as long as it has its limitation. Unfortunately, this concept is being understood differently and implemented inconsistently by companies and institutions.

Fears about the misconception of the concept has caused concern in numerous circles. For instance, Tony Leon (Daily News 16:05:1995) says that proper Affirmative Action must

be applied, and not a new form of job reservation, and resources should be pumped into training and upliftment.

In a sense, this concept is not unknown in the South African context. For example, the "poor White problem" in the earlier part of this century in South Africa was solved by the former government by using considerable state resources to uplift this particular section of the population.

Archie Jacobs (Daily News 18:05:1995) prefers to speak of Corrective Action, rather than Affirmative Action. If Corrective Action means the upliftment and advancement of all the previously disadvantaged, then Corrective Action should seek to redress the imbalances created by such practices.

The disadvantaged would include the Blacks, women and the disabled. He argues that in the first category, the concept should favour all South Africans who were previously excluded from the mainstream political, social and economic development by a discriminatory system.

The second of the disadvantaged group is women. Having being marginalised and discriminated against in the workplace for most of this century, women almost came to accept the false and misconstrued perceptions of themselves. But discriminatory and exclusive company policies are still hampering women from reaching managerial, administrative and top management posts. Thus, Corrective Action should actively identify and develop the potential of this sector.

The third disadvantaged group is the disabled. Whilst there might be physical constraints and considerations amongst this group, little was done to explore the potential and skills they might possess. He concedes that a successful Corrective Action policy, coupled with qualitative training programmes will make the concept succeed.

It is interesting to note that Professor Nathan Glazer of Harvard University preferred to use the term "Affirmative Discrimination" rather than "Affirmative Action". (Daily News 24:10:1993) He sees Affirmative Action as a type of discrimination.

It is favourable, in so far as it is implemented as an interim or temporary measure. As a long term measure, it cannot be justified. Henry Lever (1993:unknown) says that Affirmative action can only work if its limitations are recognised. He questions the situation where the dedicated worker who is consistently overlooked for promotion whilst lesser qualified people are promoted above him simply because they are black. Thus, whether they are white and the dedicated worker was black does not make the process any less objectionable. Lever is of the opinion that in South Africa, Affirmative Action can only work if, firstly, there is an independent body to ensure the application of the policy does not exceed the bounds of reasonableness and secondly, if it is not permitted to over-ride the other provisions of the bill of rights permanently. After some ten to fifteen years its capacity to over-ride other basic rights in the constitution should be abolished and the policy phased out gradually thereafter. (Daily News 24:10:1993) If these steps are not taken, there will be a need for another policy of Affirmative Action to redress the disadvantages induced by Affirmative Action.

A recent survey by Management Consultants FSA-Contact shows that Affirmative Action is being widely put into practice by companies and in the public sector (Pretoria News 25:1:95). For instance, in 1995 84% of 86 public and private organisations surveyed had some form of Affirmative Action, compared with 74% in 1993 and 58% in 1992. The above statistics signifies a concerted effort by companies to redress imbalances in our society.

85% of those with Affirmative Action programmes said they were either promoting or employing more people from disadvantaged groups. About 65% said they were employing more non-white skilled administrative employees. 7% said that they had set racial quotas for administrative employees. There was a fall in the percentage of senior White employees from 91% to 68%. About 49% of the mid-level management positions are now held by Blacks. (25% Black and 24% Asian), compared with 31% in 1994 (i.e. 15% Black and 16% Asian). The percentage of White mid-level managers had fallen from 69% to 51%. The percentage of Black specialist staff had risen from 3% to 32% and that of Asians from 15% to 27%.

The above data confirms that Affirmative Action is gaining momentum in the South African Society. It is hoped that the injustices inflicted upon the disadvantaged people in the past will be redressed. The Church has a moral obligation to challenge the conscience of its adherents in this regard.

3.2.6.4 Reconciliation and Healing

The complex history of South Africa necessitates the twofold ingredient of Reconciliation and healing to become part of the process of transformation, in "healing a broken people" in our country.

For instance, the consequences of the wars of conquest in the eighteenth century, leaving many people scarred and wounded for life; Apartheid by means of forced separation conditioned one to think that Whites were superior and Blacks were inferior. The entire history of divide and rule, resulted in a hostile, divisive society. Violence and lawlessness have become endemic in our society. In this regards, the list can go on, but ultimately we concede that there is a desperate need for reconciliation and healing in our land.

The participation of the Church in this process is crucial if we are to assist this generation in their pain and suffering and create new beings out of the old.

Beyers Naude in his address at the Rustenburg National Conference in November 1990, pleaded to the Church in South Africa to rectify the injustice of Apartheid, of the suffering and pain caused by this policy to millions of our people. He stressed that no healing is possible without reconciliation, and no reconciliation is possible without justice, and no justice is possible without some form of genuine restitution.

He further admonished the churches in South Africa to participate in an expression of guilt. More so, the Dutch Reformed Church for its role in asking the government for specific laws and actions in order to promote and strengthen the policy of apartheid.

To effect the healing dimension of our society, in establishing genuine reconciliation, the Church can play a decisive role, due to the fact that truth and reconciliation, confession, repentance, forgiveness,

retribution and so forth are part and parcel of the Church's ministry.

One of the ways to initiate the healing process in South Africa is with an honest assessment and diagnosis of the sickness within our society in an attempt to give people, both perpetrators and victims, an opportunity to face the past and its consequences and to start anew.

It is a known fact, that people who have gone through dramatic experiences of gross human rights violations, viz. torture, assassinations and massacres and the like and reminiscent and make known their plight by talking about them, they experience healing.

Atrocities which are untold and left hidden in the heart soon becomes festering wounds which remain unhealed. From the perspective of Psychologists and Psychiatrists, the healing process consists of unearthing or bringing to the surface that which is hidden.

In order to facilitate this process of healing in our land the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was established to

serve this purpose. In a nutshell, in order to come to terms with the past, the Truth concerning gross human rights violations in our country cannot be suppressed or forgotten. Violations should be investigated, recorded and made known. It is a way to show that people cannot just get away with murder and other crimes and to ensure that such gross violations never happen again.

The Commission gives victims the chance to tell of the violations they have suffered. It would also make recommendations to the President about reparation. For persons who make a full disclosure of all relevant facts relating to acts, associated with a political objective committed during the conflict that took place between 1:03:1960 and May 1997 - the Commission shall facilitate amnesty. Further, the Commission has an investigation unit which has the power to subpoena witnesses, search for evidence and seize articles which may assist in their investigation.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission is committed to the need for understanding but not for vengeance; the need for ubuntu but not victimisation; and the need for reparation

but not for retaliation (Sunday Times, April 14, 1996).

Roberto Canas of El Salvador (Sunday Times 3:03:1996) is of the opinion that "unless a society exposes itself to the truth, it can harbour no possibility of reconciliation, reunification and trust. For a peace settlement to be solid and durable it must be based on Truth".

As much as the disadvantaged peoples of the country needed liberation, the advantaged people also need liberation from the illusion that what happened in the past was unavoidable. As Father Smangaliso Mkhathshwa (1994:5) says, people who were in positions of power and trust, misused their authority, divided the country, generated hostility and bitterness between black and white people, systematically oppressed, killed and exploited people. They destroyed their own humanity as well as that of their victims.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission would certainly address the victims, viz. the families of those killed, maimed and tortured and those who witnessed brutality,

which is a growing concern for the Church, because many of these people are part of the Church.

In this way, the commission could have a profound impact on a psychological level as it attempts to heal the wounds imprinted on the minds of thousands of ordinary South Africans.

The Church has a great input in the TRC by way of Personnel, experience and so forth and the role that it will play will be decisive. For instance, Churches can make their adherents aware of the TRC and the tremendous potential it has as a healing agent of our traumatised nation. The Church, as a healing community, can encourage perpetrators of gross violations against their fellow citizens to come forward and make their confessions. The Church also finds itself in an advantageous position, as peacemaker to arrange contacts between perpetrators and victims of apartheid crimes, in order to facilitate genuine forgiveness and lasting reconciliation among individuals and their families. The Church should offer counselling and pastoral care to those involved and it will certainly give

substance to the main thrust of the Truth Commission which is reconciliation and healing.

In conclusion, the diaconal task of the Church can only succeed with the full participation of the people involved. In other words, it depends on Christians becoming participants rather than spectators. Thus, in every area of our lives, there is a growing need for more players on the field and fewer spectators on the stands. This is particularly true of this dimension of Christian witness in our South African context.

3.3 THE KOINONIAL TASK

3.3.1 Introduction

The Greek word Koinonia literally means fellowship or Communion. In this section, we deal with the task of building up the body of Christ. In this process the striving for Unity and brotherly relations are an essential part of this dimension of mission.

As Bosch (1991:368-369) points out, "the missionary Church must become church-with-others and must truly incarnate the essential Koinonia of the body of Christ". It is clear that

Christians and Churches cannot live in isolation in a kind of Christian ghetto. This seems to be the problem with Churches in South Africa today. As Johan Heyns (1994) quite rightly pointed out, "the Churches in South Africa are on different islands and the task of the Church is to build bridges from one island to another".

The Church is also committed to the qualitative growth of the Church for its ministry in the world. Subsequently, the primary purpose of the building up of the Church should be the equipment of the saints for their ministry in the world. Kritzinger, Meiring and Saayman(1994:153) confirm that the above statement is the measure of success of the programmes in the Church. The missionary dimension should not only be part of every activity in the Church, but the intention should also be that the budget, the programme, the worship service, and the small group activities be geared to the main purpose of the Church life: the glorification of God through being His committed body working out His plan for his creation.

A further dimension of the growth of the Church which has a bearing on its missionary existence is its growth towards

other parts of the body, that is the ecumenical calling of the Church. The ecumenical movement is not only historically linked to the world-wide missionary enterprise of the Church, but also in principle. This ideal is expressed in the intercessory prayer of our Lord Jesus Christ for the unity of His followers. "Father, May they be one so that the world may believe that you have sent me" (John 17:21).

Therefore attention will be given to some of the obstacles that stifles the Church's united witness in the South African context and the necessity of unification, inter alia, with the family of Dutch Reformed Churches.

3.3.2 The Church as a Reconciled Community

At the very outset, to be a Christian is to be a part of a witnessing Koinonia which Jesus Christ Himself had created by His life and which he had sealed with His death and resurrection.

Thus, Church and Society (1986:13) re-iterates that as the unique new creation of God, the Church is a community of people, who through His Grace, have been reconciled with

Him. Therefore, believers are grateful and humble people, who know that all they are and possess is a gift of grace. As members of the Church and as Churches who have been reconciled to God, and to one another through the blood of Jesus Christ and have received His peace in their hearts, they must continue and persevere in the ministry of reconciliation and serve one another in a spirit of brotherly love and peace.

The implication this holds for the Churches in South Africa, in fulfilling their mission, is for the various Churches to express sincerely the spirit of reconciliation, peace and love. The Churches should not promote confrontation, but rather pray for one another and assist one another. They should not accuse one another in a spirit lacking in love but must be prepared to listen seriously to one another's witness.

They are challenged not to exclude one another but rather to accept one another in spite of doctrinal differences. The Christian must grow towards spiritual maturity and understand that reconciliation does not mean the glossing over of points of difference, nor the white-washing of what

is wrong, but the candid and ongoing discussion of such matters. Also the Churches must be admonished not to self-righteously regard their own standpoints as infallible, but to be prepared for humble self-examination, ongoing dialogue, confession of mistakes where necessary, and continual reformation.

The Reformed Churches have come to expression within the South African context, not as neutral observers, but as very much part of it all and in their own way are contributing their share in being witnesses to Christ's love and concern for all the peoples of this country. In this regard, it will be their own fatal undoing to assume a holier-than-thou attitude and to attempt, unconcernedly, to busy itself with their own affairs without taking thought of the wider context.

Therefore, in order for the Reformed Churches to be relevant and to grow, they will have to take note of the whole situation, with all their institution's and become actively involved in them and it will have to make clear their standpoints on important issues and constantly revise them when necessary. It will have to give fresh

perspectives on theological as well as confessional issues. It will have to surpass old doctrinal differences that are of little importance and seek to concentrate on such issues that are unifying.

Unity is essential, that is, unity which pertains to the essence (essentia wessen) of the Church. In other words, the various denominations in South Africa should express a common witness to the peoples of this country. It may be said that in that locus of the life of these separate Churches, where their essential being comes into expression, there in that locus, can be discerned a common link, a common origin and thus, a common future.

If this be true, then these Churches, although they have different identities, are one, and the terms of their unity, must be stressed again, are unashamedly based on a Christological basis.

On this basis of oneness in Christ, the world will believe, when the Christian Church which constitutes a purposed community conveys the good news of salvation to people who need to know Jesus as Lord and Saviour. However, in order

to fulfil this specific role, the members will have to develop a quality of life which will attract new believers to its membership. This is basically a way of life which derives both its essence and its meaning from the character and purpose of God.

Christians are also called to fulfil a double function. Charged with the responsibility to speak for God, one is likewise under obligation to intercede for others. Thus, the priesthood of all believers, which the Reformation emphasised so strongly, is a basic factor determining the role of the Church. So, we come to a real and vital issue. The character of the Church is not to be found in the fact that it is a desirable social institution, possessing the capacity to adapt itself skilfully and smoothly to the ravages of time and the successive revolution of socio-economical and political thought. But rather, its nature is to be seen in the kind of relationship which a community of committed believers hold, to Jesus Christ.

In conclusion, the Churches are called to fulfil the responsibility entrusted to it, for completing the kind of inter-locking relationships that make Christian living not

only possible but normal. In essence then, the Church is a community of loyal believers called of God and empowered of the Spirit to promote and work out the divine purpose on earth, inter alia, the South African situation, in accordance with the Saviour's concern for all people.

3.3.3 Obstacles to a United Witness

Realising that being a united witness, in obedience to Christ will certainly serve to honour the Lord and will benefit the country as a whole, it is of paramount importance, that we identify and deal with obstacles that form a wall between Christians. There are numerous obstacles affecting the united witness of the Churches in the South African context. Professor Willie Jonker at the National Conference of Churches at Rustenburg in November 1991, mentioned four distinct aspects that contribute to being obstacles to a united witness in South Africa. They are as follows: the isolation between Christians of different races; differences about the rejection of Apartheid; differences about the task of the Church in a polarised society; and the differences on the Churches' role in politics. We need to bear in mind that he referred to obstacles that may prevent us from coming to a united

witness regarding the socio-political position in South Africa.

Before he elaborated on these obstacles, he cautioned that the greatest obstacle would be our unwillingness to be changed by the Spirit of God and to let go of our stereotyped images of one another. It could be our unwillingness to break with the negative spirit of suspicion of one another and with the Spirit of confrontation. Then, he summed up the main obstacle to a united witness, in that, it is all related to the sinful division of the Church. The whole history of Church is a story of strife and dissent. Many denominational and confessional divisions were entrusted to us, as part of our heritage. For example, the racial issue, the friction between races and the system of Apartheid, have created new forms of divisions and have aggravated existing divisions between and within our Churches (Alberts & Chikane 1991:88).

John de Gruchy (1991:112) postulates that the divisions evident in our Churches have been a mixture of sociological, political, cultural, personality, as well as

theological factors. Thus, it would be a misconception to align the divisions solely to doctrinal or theological factors.

This is clearly evident in the Dutch Reformed Church, which allowed sociological and cultural factors to establish segregated mission Churches, although all shared the same reformed confessions. Subsequently, a theology was developed to support that ideology.

He further stressed that we need to recognise that the dehumanising divisions within Church and Society are the result of sin, that is, they contradict God's purpose. Sin is, after all, that which, in separating us from God, destroys human life, breaks up human relationships and communities, undermines those values which enable life to flourish, and separates us from the source and the Giver of life.

At the outset, the reality of the situation in the South African Society is openly reflected in the Church situation. The structured isolation of Christians from each other can be a great hindrance to a united witness.

The fact is that we live in two different worlds, although we are in the same country (as reflected in the Statement presented to the REC Consultation at Vereeniging in March 1989, by the NGKA - the struggle for liberation between the Two Worlds in South Africa). Thus, the Christians of the same denomination have different experiences, issuing in difference of perceptions. For instance, a negligible number of White or Indian Christians know what is happening in the Black townships or rural areas. Is it the fear of entering a Black township or the lack of love and concern that causes people to distance themselves from the pain and suffering, humiliation and injustice that exist in the so-called Black world?

As a result of the new political climate and radical changes evident, the process of bridging the wide gap between the two worlds has begun. The present reality is certainly conducive to a growing awareness within the Churches of the urgency to stimulate the Koinonia of believers in this direction. Realising that the change of direction must unambiguously mean a change of heart. That and that alone would lead to genuine and lasting reconciliation.

Even the so called multi-racial Churches that are not divided on the basis of colour are plagued by racism. Even though, at present, all discriminatory legislation has been repealed and there is a widespread acceptance that Apartheid is sinful, the struggle against racism will be a potent force to contend with for years to come. Racism is the theory that fundamental characteristics of race are preserved by an unchanging tradition (Great Encyclopaedic Dictionary (1962:727)).

Goba (1993:102) therefore says that the Churches have to confess that they have succumbed to the forces of racial formation that have shaped South African society. The sin of racism is so deep that Churches must openly confess their reluctance to remove the evil in their life. Declarations will not do it, but a commitment to non-racial patterns of ministry, worship and ecclesiastical organisation will demonstrate their resolve to eradicate racism. In the changing South Africa, the role of the Church is to set an example for the State, the new post-Apartheid society.

Another factor that hinders our united witness is the absolutising of culture and language. The multi-cultural population of South Africa are repositories of their rich cultural heritage, which has developed through the centuries and it is understandable that one should treasure it. On a positive note, cultural diversity can enrich the life of the Church. On the other hand, if it is absolutised, it can be destructive and divisive rather than a blessing of enrichment.

Another aspect that can hinder a united witness, is the economic disparity between the privileged rich Christians and the impoverished Christians. Also, in our South African experience, the reality of political allegiance and ideology has contributed greatly to the division among Christians. Basically, it was between those who struggled against the unjust system of Apartheid and those who supported the status quo. Thus, with the difference of political opinions within the Churches, confrontation was inevitable.

From a theological point of view, the differing way in which Christians interpret scripture adds to the obstacles,

which comprise and hinder our witness to the world. De Gruchy (1991:116) is of the opinion that the conflict within the Churches in South Africa is, theologically-speaking, a hermeneutical struggle - a struggle about the meaning of the Gospel within our particular historical context. The fact is that we all read scripture through our own spectacles, and these spectacles are coloured by our background, our Church tradition, our experience and by our own interests.

In conclusion, to the list of obstacles to a united witness, perhaps many more hindrances could be added, but I have tried to be as concise as possible by referring only to some of the socio-political, economical, cultural and theological factors.

3.3.4 Process of Unification - DRC Family

In this section, a concise account will be given of the process of Church Unity amongst the Dutch Reformed Church, the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa and the Reformed Church in Africa. Due to the sad reality of the separate development policy which has bedevilled the South African Society for centuries, we are in a position of not

finding quick cures or instant solutions to remedy our situation. It is going to be a painful process but a necessary one, to become a relevant witness in a changing South Africa. Basically, only by the decisive act of unifying the Churches of the DRC family can the process of unification begin.

The Reformed Churches in South Africa finds themselves in this dilemma, due to the fact that for centuries there was a difference of perception of what Church Unity entails. For instance, on the one hand, there is a deep cry for the Reformed Churches to become structurally one in essence. In other words, to make visible the unity which already exists in Jesus Christ. The Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa (Ligstraal, October 1991:1) say, that Church Unity is of the utmost priority. It is a holy matter of the Holy Spirit. The Church is Christ's body and He is the head of His unique creation which was bought by His Blood. What we do with His Church must be under the leadership of the Holy Spirit and according to the Living Word of Christ. He has only one body and desires the unity of His Church in fellowship, in service, in love and in suffering. No reasons of fear, meticulous order, racism, financial

struggle or even questions on confession should stand in the way of the Unity of the Church of Christ, which is God's supreme will.

On the other hand, the Dutch Reformed Church (Church and Society 1986:40) postulates that the family of Dutch Reformed Churches is essentially one Church because of their historical bonds with respect to their common origin, their common belief in, and union with the same Lord and His Word, and by virtue of their acknowledgement of the same Reformed confession and Church policy. In reality, however, they are institutionally separate: each has its own organisation, Church laws, liturgy, and decision-making authority to amend its own confessional basis, if necessary.

The Biblical doctrine of the unity of the Church and the Reformed view of its visible unity urges us to strive for a greater expression of the unity of the family of Dutch Reformed Churches. But, the DRC finds itself in a predicament, because of the uncertainty as to what form this visible unity should take.

Loubser (1987:185) clarifies the DRC's position by stating that, in the Apartheid theology, this unity was made relative to the natural diversity of peoples. For instance, a distinction was made between the visible and invisible Church. In other words, by means of this distinction, it was argued that Churches which are visibly separated can invisibly be one. Therefore, it was possible to have separate ecclesiastic institutions for different peoples, which nevertheless formed one invisible organism before God. The unity of the Church thus only manifested in the world as a diversity of visible institutions.

At this juncture, it must be said that the DRC is not uncertain, any longer, about its commitment to Unity.

In this regards Theron (1986:195) argued that in our situation, a structural unity of DRC Churches is the only possible corrective against a false doctrine of the Church. It is also necessary as a Christian testimony in a country breaking apart. If the institutionalized Church does not do everything in its power to effect reconciliation in our country, but leaves it to politicians, journalists, sports administrators and so forth, it is deserting that arena to

which God has called it, to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world.

Since the 1990's, the four Churches, inter alia, the Dutch Reformed Church, the Dutch Reformed Mission Church, the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa and the Reformed Church in Africa, endorsed the ideal of one denomination among the family of Dutch Reformed Churches.

The process towards Church Unity involving all the Churches gained momentum since February 1993. The Synodical commissions met at Bloemfontein and a declaration of Intent was issued and the DRC, DRCA, DRMC and RCA presented models or guidelines for Church Union which were discussed in groups. The gathering was unproductive in achieving the goals which the Churches envisaged. Nevertheless, at this juncture, it was affirmed by all four Churches that the unity of the Church is a priority.

Thereafter, at the WARC Consultation on the 5 March 1993 at Johannesburg, the DRCA and the DRMC produced their statement on unification.

- A. 1. Both their synods stated expressly their ultimate objective of the process, i.e. the unification of the DRC family.
2. In the meantime those churches that are ready to engage in the process and had taken the appropriate decisions should take the first active steps towards unity.
3. Such a unification shall constitute a first step in the process and not the end result of the process.
4. For this reason, i.e. that there is only one process unfolding in different stages, the standing invitation to the DRC and RCA will remain effective.
5. Since this process does not belong only to the DRCA and DRMC each and every decision taken by congregations, Church Councils, presbyteries and Synods in this regard must be in service of the major objective of multilateral unification in the DRC family.
6. Therefore, decisions will be as open-ended and unprescriptive as possible in order not to place unnecessary obstacles in the way of the major

objective.

7. It is accepted that full Church unity cannot be achieved overnight but in a process of faith and perseverance.
 8. Every step in the process should contribute towards the major objective of unification and not reverse the gains made in former steps.
 9. The Synods believe that in this way they can best serve the Lord Jesus Christ, Head of the Church who himself prayed that all who believe in Him may be one *"so that the world may know that You have sent Me and that you love him as you love Me."* John 17:23.
- B. The response of the DRC at the WARC Consultation 5/3/93 which accepts the invitation of the DRCA and DRMC and regards the unity as the acid test of their final break "from the racism of apartheid".
- C. The declared intention of the RCA to participate in the same multilateral unification process.
- D. That the contents of all the documents and discussions at the consultation indicated that the pertinent political matters of dismantling grand apartheid, status confessionis, affirmation of the exploited and

oppressed, restitution, confession of guilt, forgiveness and petty apartheid, etc. form a necessary part of the demands of a status confessionis.

Subsequently suggests the following:

1. That the uniting process is the place from which these can be effectively addressed.
2. that WARC accompanies the full process of structural unification and political redress of the DR Churches through a critical pastoral and visible presence in order to monitor the extent to which this process serves the demands of a status confessionis.

Thereafter, at the same consultation, the DRC committed itself to the unity of the DRC family, and agreed with the statement that this is the acid test whether the DRC has finally distanced itself from the racism of Apartheid and they were willing to be part of this process. Subsequently, they assured the DRCA and the DRMC of their prayers and good wishes on their process of unification.

Thereafter, the Moderatures of the four Churches met at Mamelodi, in Pretoria on the 18th May 1993 and resolved that the Actuarii of the various Synods prepare a

discussion document concerning the various models, stipulating the similarities and differences in these models for further discussions.

Thus, on the 16 September 1993, the Moderatures of the Churches met at Cape Town, and it was decided that all the sensitive issues be addressed, viz. Status Confessionis, Belhar Confession, the present position of the DRC on Apartheid, Joint formulation of "Church and Society", the Church and the reconstruction/transformation of Society, inter alia, Poverty, Violence, TBVC states Educational crisis, Ecumenical relations, the Broederbond issue, the confessional circle issue, the Laudium declaration and declaration of principles. So, at this meeting all these issues took precedence and thus, the models were left in abeyance.

Once again, the Churches met on the 13 October 1993 at Goudini and after addressing some of the above mentioned issues it was decided to suspend all multi-lateral talks on Church unity until the DRCA and the DRMC unify in April 1994. At this juncture, the DRCA made it clear that they "guard very jealously the process of unification with the

DRMC and would not want it to be jeopardised nor derailed by anything, not even by their relationship, fellowship and co-operation with the DRC and the RCA: "All of these expressions of our faith, should not even give an impression nor be interpreted to mean or imply that we are amenable to any idea on reopening, retardation or postponement of the envisaged unification with the DRMC" (DRCA - 16:09:1993).

In April 1994, the DRCA and DRMC united with the proviso that the door for the DRC and the RCA to enter into full acceptance within the URCSA stands wide open. The URCSA understood the dilemma confronting the DRC and RCA with their respective synodical resolutions. For instance, the DRC made it explicitly clear that while she accepts the ideal of unification, she remains bound (verbind) by the decisions of her synod. The RCA on the other hand, has some unresolved matters that need to be ironed out, before going into structural unity with the other churches. For instance, the RCA stated that before real structural unity can be achieved several matters of real concern in the minds and hearts of our people must first be satisfactorily resolved.

1. The RCA's Evangelical stand, Mission Vision and focus, Unique heritage and character, (Liturgy etc) and Ministry of Deliverance.
2. The Position of Belhar Confession.
3. The Legitimation of Rev. A Bhiman, Dr GJA Lubbe and Prof JNJ Kritzinger and the RCA property in Lenasia.

(RCA Acta 1994:198)

Thereafter, multi-lateral talks with the DRC, URCSA and the RCA resumed on the 9 November 1994 at Cape Town. The delegates of the three Churches were unanimous in the establishment of a joint commission, which will be responsible for drafting a Church Order for the one Church connection for the DR Church family. This joint commission will also give attention to the Doctrinal Standards, the name of the proposed new Church connection, the liturgical forms and practices, the Hymnbook and the order of the worship service, ministry needs, practical implications and function of one Church connection, transitional arrangements, boundaries, property, financial, administrative and related matters, composition of the establishing synod; regulations and other matters that the

three Churches Synodical committees will tender to the Commission.

At the following joint Commission meeting at Pretoria on the 7 March 1995, seven sub-committees with their tasks were appointed as follows:

- Sub-Committee 1 : Name, underlying principles, extent and nature of the new denomination.
- Sub-Committee 2 : The offices of the new denomination.
- Sub-Committee 3 : The assemblies of the new denomination.
- Sub-Committee 4 : Ministering in the new denomination and Media.
- Sub-Committee 5 : Supervision, admonishment and discipline; external relations.
- Sub-Committee 6 : Administrative; financial and related matters; transitional arrangements.
- Sub-Committee 7 : Co-ordination.

The process gained momentum on the 16 August 1995 when a working session on Church Unity was arranged for the various sub-committees to convene, and prepare working documents on their related subjects.

Soon afterwards, Sub-Committee One seemed to be bogged down, due to the fact that some of the sensitive issues, viz. The Belhar Confession etc. were intensely discussed. The difference of opinion seemed rife and a fresh perspective to go ahead, was urgently needed. As a result, another meeting was called for, on 26 March 1996 at Belhar, where the reports of Sub-Committee One and Sub-Committee Seven and other matters were discussed.

Although the way forward is sensitive and painful, one thing is certain and that is, that all the Churches are irrevocably committed to unity. In the interim the process continues and certainly, that is what really matters. The great challenge for the Church, says Dr Beyers Naude (1994), is to show how the unity of the body of Christ can be expressed in a community of different languages, cultures, genders and historical traditions.

In these times, it is becoming explicitly clear that before Christians can fulfil their calling, they will have to be freed from ideological prejudice, committing themselves to the Bible and seeking joint co-operation structures, demonstrating their unity in a visible way (Loubser 1987:188).

Finally, we pray for urgency in this matter, for wisdom, for patience for unity and eventual union, not a forced conformity but rather a union of love and respect for one another as we together face the challenges of the future.

3.4 The Liturgical Task

The Greek word "Leitourgia" postulates the public service rendered to God, specifically through worship. From this perspective, mission is seen as an act of worship; as glorifying God.

Saayman (1994:38) refers to Acts 13:2 and 2 Cor 9:12 to distinguish that this service can be rendered directly to God and also indirectly to God through serving fellow human beings respectively.

Whereas diaconal service is the essential expression of the sacrificial compassion and solidarity of Christians with suffering or oppressed human beings, LITURGICAL service is the expression of the Christian desire to praise and worship God, for who He is.

In Romans 15:16, for instance, Paul sees himself as God's *leitourgos* to the Gentiles. In other words, for the Apostle Paul the most important reason for proclaiming the Gospel to all is not just his concern for the lost, nor is it primarily the sense of an obligation entrusted upon him but rather a sense of privilege (Bosch 1991:138).

As a result, this liturgical approach is a significant dimension of Christian mission that needs to be given further attention in the future.

As Saayman (1994:38) so aptly puts it into perspective when he says that we proclaim the Gospel not because we know better; we serve not because we are more privileged; we have fellowship not in order to patronise; we do all this gladly, because the greatness of God's love leaves us no other option.

3.5 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, we looked at the four-dimensional approach of the role of the Church in the South African context. It remains to be added that, if the Christian message is to make a really decisive impact on the men and women of today, the Church must be prepared not only to preach it in word, but to demonstrate it in life, not only to proclaim it from the housetops but to go down and incarnate it, in social action and concern and in a compassion kindled with the flame of the Love of Christ.

This kind of holistic approach was propogated by the WCC as referred to by Bosch (1979:228-229):

The Church has borne witness in different times and places in different ways. This is important. There are occasions when dynamic action in society is called for; there are others when a word must be spoken; others when the behaviour of Christians one to another is the telling witness. On still other occasions the simple presence of a worshipping community or person is the witness. These different dimensions of witness to the One Lord are always a matter of concrete obedience. To take them in isolation from one another is to distort the Gospel.

In the next Chapter we will ascertain the challenges facing

the Church in fulfilling its unique role in the South African context.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. THE SOUTH AFRICAN CHALLENGE

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In this Chapter of the thesis, we are going to look at the road ahead or the challenges which confronts the Church, inter alia, the Reformed Churches, in the South African situation. As seen in the previous Chapter, the Church has a pivotal role to play, in its mission endeavours of bringing the total gospel to all people in this part of God's vineyard.

Three areas have been identified, in which the Churches' assiduous task of mission, needs to be seriously taken into consideration. Other writers, like Kritzing (1989:127) would refer to this challenge as the "unfinished task of the Church, but I have carefully selected the word "assiduous", meaning "persevering or diligent", which aptly describes the kind of challenge confronting the Church today. The three areas where we need to zero in, is as follows:

- i) The Challenge of reaching the 33,5%, so called non-Christian population of South Africa, with the Gospel

of Jesus Christ and further, the challenge of re-evangelisation, i.e. reviving the believers or so called nominal Christians, who do not yet live up to the expectations God has set, when He called them to be His children.

- ii) The challenge of the Church to face up to the socio-economical and political responsibility as an essential dimension of its mission.
- iii) The challenge of the Churches, being a united witness, in building up the body of Christ which has different parts with different functions, yet essentially one, i.e., the Reformed Churches and others cannot afford to be racially divided.

4.2 THE ASSIDUOUS THREE-DIMENSIONAL TASK

4.2.1 The Continuous task of Evangelisation

As stated already, the Church is challenged to reach the so-called "unreached people groups". In this regards, we need to bear in mind as Kritzinger (1989:128) points out that it is doubtful whether there still is a community in the South Africa of today, which has never heard the gospel of Jesus Christ. There may be individuals in some closed or isolated communities of whom this can be true, but by and

large, this is just not possible. For he says that even in the most remote areas the people have representatives in contact with the wider world. Although this may be true, it does not mean that all communities or individuals have heard the gospel in such a way that they could meaningfully respond to it.

Thus, the Church was given the awesome task of finishing the work of evangelism which was started by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. The whole world was their task. The Kerygmatical message of repentance and remission of sins must be preached in all the world. We are already aware of the fact that the great commission was central to the life of the Church in the New Testament. The unfinished task was entrusted to His people, and it is still in our hands. The call is strenuous and demanding but our response is a litmus test of the present vitality of the Church. For we have to concede that the exploding population is far more rapid than our outreach.

Therefore, every Christian is obliged to rise up to the challenge of reaching out to the lost world with the Gospel Message of Hope and Salvation. As Weatherspoon (1954:76)

postulates that we need to reach but by talking face-to-face and heart-to-heart with men and women who need to hear, bearing witness, proclaiming as a King's herald who is the bearer of good tidings, prophesying as the Spirit gives light, teaching divine truth and wisdom, and everywhere and always exhorting people to seek the higher levels where dwells purity and peace and overcoming power. Set all of these, one upon another, in the frame of our Christian mission and there emerges a composite picture of the bearer of good news, who possessed by the Holy Spirit within is able to persuade people and establish them in the service of Christ.

In the world today, there is an increasing emphasis on evangelism as the primary and perennial task of the church. This has been explicitly evident in the early Church. Therefore, Evangelism must always hold a central place in the life and activities of the Church.

In the South African context, Christians and Churches are challenged to recognise the reality that the urgency to evangelisation comes both from the gospel itself, as well as, from the needs of an unbelieving and perishing world.

Also, quite evidently, there is a deeper and more universal conviction that to make disciples or witnessing for Christ is the never ending task of every generation of Christians.

In this section, attention must also be given to the challenge of the church to re-evangelise the so called nominal Christians, where to some extent, spiritual decay has set in. There are many "later generation" Christians who assume that Christianity is part of their culture and tradition, but who never came to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. Such people need to be re-evangelised so that they can come to a living encounter with Christ.

It should also be emphasised that, for a Christian, the challenge to evangelise and re-evangelise comes from God Himself, through His Divine Word. Thus, it is explicitly clear that the Church is not the author of the challenge. Basically, we are challenged by the Kairos, in which we find ourselves and by the Good News of what God is doing and saying in this moment of Truth. Therefore, as bearers of the Good News, we concede that we are not its author but rather its servant and messenger.

Beyond a shadow of doubt, the role of the Church is to preach the Gospel, by its witness. In other words, the witness of the church is its activity of practising what it preaches. As Nolan (1989:210) states, the Church practices what it preaches by actions or campaigns and by social services etc. All of this is done by the Church, in certain circumstances, in order to preach the gospel by example. The specific task of the church, then is to make known, by whatever means, the Good News of how God is involved through Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit in the events of our time.

In practice, in South Africa today, there is considerable confusion about what the Churches are in fact doing and also about what the Churches are supposed to be doing. This finding was presented in a paper entitled "The Relevance of Evangelism in South Africa today - SACC 1986) reiterates that much of the confusion centres around the meaning of the gospel. Many different and even contradictory versions of the gospel are being preached and celebrated. Among other things, this leads to a bewildering variety of opinions about the role or mission of the Church.

Thus, it goes without saying, that a Church which is so terribly divided and speaks with so many different voices, will definitely lose its credibility.

This remains a challenge to all the Churches in South Africa, to come to a situation where the body of Christ can speak with one voice. The unity among the Churches, in the South African context, needs to be expressed in closer contacts between denominations; praying together, visiting each other's churches, expressing unreservedly our view of each other, working together in joint efforts to lead people to Christ. For as Christians, we need to recognise our oneness in our faith in Christ, one in our desire to live by the Power of the Holy Spirit, in lives of discipleship, one in our longing to form the great assembly of praise and worship before the throne of the Father. The same Jesus, who is the Lord of the Church, has renewed believers by pouring out His Holy Spirit on all Christians throughout the world, is certainly able to overcome barriers that divide Christians and Churches today, if only we allow Him. Denominational peculiarities, styles of worship, different doctrines and approaches to governing

the Church - all these points of division among Christians are absolutely no obstacle to the Spirit of God.

To me, it is clear that the Lord is reviving His people and he will bestow His power upon His children. He is equipping all of us, to proclaim His life-giving Word effectively, and to transmit His saving love to a dying World. This movement of us together towards the primary goal of preaching the Good News, to so many people who do not know Jesus Christ, as Lord and Saviour. Ultimately, it is absolutely necessary for us, as Christians, to present a united front to a divided society, for the sake of building God's Kingdom.

4.2.2 The Continuous Task of Social Responsibility

In the previous sub-section we have, in a small measure, highlighted the continuous, challenging task of evangelisation and re-evangelisation and now we consider the challenge of the Church in South Africa, to its socio-economic task, which is of great magnitude.

As we have already discovered that one cannot separate the spiritual needs of the people from the living circumstances

in which people struggle to survive. For instance, Odendaal (1987:151) says that to try to restrict the Church and its message to a "spiritual" level is to degrade the Gospel to the level of an ideology. But even when this is sought, one finds that, ironically, this "theology" has a social and political colouring. The danger of this for the Church is that it becomes blinkered and does not see the wrongs in society any more and therefore does not express its concern and opposition to them. Instead it concentrates on irrelevant and obsolete issues and in effect starts to support the status quo.

Therefore, it is the calling of the Church to become relevant and practical in its endeavours by realising that it is not enough simply to deal with these burning issues that challenge us "post eventum", that is to say only to re-act to events: to help people to rebuild, to pick up the pieces of broken families, to act as a midwife in the birth of the new South Africa. All these and many other acts are indispensable and important, but the preventative action may in some cases be even more important. That is part of the Church's ministry (Kritzinger 1989:135).

The assiduous diaconal task of the Church is great, due to the fact that just as it took years of struggle to overcome the evil of Apartheid, it is going to take much ardent work and commitment to realise our vision of a truly democratic and prosperous South Africa. In the present process of reconciliation and development, our Country is undergoing drastic and profound changes. For instance, thousands of new houses are being built, the provision of health care to undersixes and pregnant mothers have become a reality and four million children are being fed in the school feeding schemes. The Educational System that was segregated and unjust and unacceptable due to the quality of education being abysmally low has now been restructured so that no one can be denied the chance to obtain quality education or the chance to learn. Water and other essential services are being improved and provided in impoverished areas. But, perhaps, the greatest task would be to recognise the responsibilities of each of us as equal partners and equal citizens with one common interest and that is, to rebuild this nation.

A few areas of concern have been highlighted, in which the Church can fulfil its role meaningfully in the reality of

its context. The Church will have to accept all these areas of concern, as challenges to its missionary existence in South Africa and to conscientise its adherents in this connection.

Firstly, Poverty and Economic injustice remains a challenge to the Church, in the light of the fact that so much poverty in the midst of so much wealth in the country of South Africa is a travesty. This tragic paradox is highlighted by Malesela John Lamola in his publication entitled: *The International Monetary System and Poverty in Africa - A Challenge to Christian Mission* (1996). For instance, he states that 90% of the world's diamonds come from Africa - (Zaire, Ghana, South Africa, Sierra Leone and others) and 70% of the world's gold and 30% of the world's copper comes from this region.

Taking the above into consideration, the question still remains: Why is Africa so poor? Yet, the Christian Faith is spreading faster in Africa than any other part of the world and at the same time, poverty throughout Africa is increasing to a greater degree.

This is due to the fact of unfair trade practices. Africa has no control over the price of these raw materials that it exports. The theory is that prices are set by a free market, by supply and demand. Thus, the lower price changes always benefit the rich industrialised countries, to the disadvantage of Africa which then, gets poorer. In this regards, Zack Mokgoebo (1996:5) of the Uniting Reformed Church of Southern Africa, further implicates the economic system prevalent as contributing to poverty in South Africa. He says that it is an economic system created by the rich for the benefit of the rich. It aims is to maximise profits for the rich, so that the rich always become richer while the poor becomes poorer. Therefore, looking for solutions to poverty within this system, without a critical appraisal of it, will make it very difficult for us to break out of the cycle of poverty.

As a result, the author, asks the pertinent question, "Is Christianity not capable of tackling the problem of poverty? Does the Church have anything to say about economic justice for the poor?"

The calling of the Church in this regard, is to avail itself to becoming part of the solution instead of remaining part of the problem.

The Church needs to take the burning issue of poverty seriously and apply its mind to find answers as a matter of urgency. Charity and almsgiving, in which the Church has been involved for decades, is benevolent but not enough. The Church must begin to empower the poor to take action for themselves, through preaching and teaching. The Gospel can empower, affirm, encourage, inspire and motivate people to aspire to a better quality of life.

The Church can further organise special workshops and provide training programmes to equip people with skills and so forth. Realising the problem of poverty is too big a task for one denomination to handle on its own, it is paramount to face the crisis together in ecumenism and using every available resource, e.g. Relevant government bodies, welfare organisations and other development forums to achieve our goals.

In this regards, Archbishop N.W. Ndungane reiterates that the Church is the conscience of the nation and its prophetic role means that we must keep before society the vision that God has of a fully human life: adequate food, shelter, health care and work. It is also the responsibility of the Church to ensure that the Government exercises it's moral function of co-ordinating the resources that God has given to us, for our well-being (Sunday Times :9 June 1996).

Thus, for the Church to remain prophetic it needs to become part of the reconstruction process and become integral to the RDP. In this regards, the Reformed Church in Africa, added its voice to the other Reformed Churches in South Africa, in its support of the Government's RDP programme to attempt to reduce the level of poverty in South Africa:

We assure the Government of National Unity of our prayers for them and at the same time earnestly pray that God may bless and heal our land and bring about true reconciliation and well-being for all.

For this reason we also pledge our support for the implementation of the Reconstruction and development Programme (RDP) and shall seek to encourage members and Churches to support its objectives, promote its strategies and take part in its programmes 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. We also do so because in this way, we may demonstrate something of the love of God for humanity, as revealed in Jesus Christ Our Lord and Saviour. (RCA Acta 1994:117)

In view of all this, it is extremely important that our Christian presence in the impoverished areas must be changed into a constructive and holistic witness. While recognising that the RDP is designed to foster the building of homes, rendering essential services, creating jobs and infra-structure, the challenge is for Christians to heal broken, alienated and hopeless lives.

Subsequently, the future challenge to the Church, whilst supporting the RDP programme, would be to propagate programmes of moral reconstruction and spiritual development. This should be a grave concern for the Church, in the light of the fact, that the South African society is deeply effected morally, spiritually and psychologically.

Social structures, which were once intact, seem to be experiencing a heavy blow for both Black and White people.

Thus, Barney Pitjana, in his address to the seminarians at the College of Transfiguration in Grahamstown speaks of the signs of the human, physical and spiritual devastation caused by apartheid. One sees it, in the victims : the widows, the orphans and those who have been mentally and psychologically damaged. We see it in the breakdown of discipline at home and in our schools. It is seen in the breakdown of family life and in the rising statistics of violent crimes, including the abuse of women and children.

Evidently, the ministry of caring for people in calamity, viz. The sick, terminally ill, poor, lonely, traumatised, depressed or sorrowful, has always been an important function of the Church. For all who truly experience the power of the Gospel in their lives, it means a change of heart, a new way of living and relating to God and to their fellowmen.

As a result, the challenge facing the Church in a post-apartheid era, as a matter of urgency, is for the Church to develop programmes of moral reconstruction and spiritual development. The Church is in a unique position to instill moral and spiritual values in the lives of people. We need

to build a new moral society together, based on Biblical principles; such as, love, respect and care for one another; the need for honesty and compassion, sharing and generosity of spirit. We need to teach the ten commandments with renewed zeal.

How much we need the above, in the light of the country-wide problem of escalating violence. The DRC family met on the 4 December 1993, to discuss the problem of violence which was rejected unequivocally by all the Churches.

The challenge facing the Church is summed up in the joint resolution submitted by the Reformed Churches.

1. The message of the Church of Jesus Christ rises above party-political differences. It is a message of repentance, redemption, reconciliation and peace. The Church must give this message practical substance by means of its words and deeds.
2. The Churches of the DR family admit that in the past their members became involved in violence - whether structural or revolutionary - too readily, and that this has marred the Churches' image of messengers of

peace. The Churches acknowledge that the intolerance and distrust that at times occurred among them did not contribute towards creating a climate of peace in South Africa, and that the division in their midst has hampered their task of preaching reconciliation.

3. The Churches emphasise that it is the duty of the Church to nurture a spirit within the broader community in which violence cannot gain ground, by means of the message of reconciliation based on the expiatory death of Christ, and they commit themselves to single-mindedly pursuing this objective in future.
4. The Churches are convinced that the Church as such should not actively participate in violence and appeal to their members that, if they are in a position to avoid it, they should not become involved in violence. It is unacceptable for members to attend public worship on Sundays and to propound and commit violence during weekdays.
5. The Churches believe that the Church should proclaim the message of the Scripture regarding a just society in no uncertain terms, but are convinced that the Church as such, has no party-political function. However, Church members have a responsibility as

citizens of the country to participate in party politics in a manner that is accountable to the Christian faith.

6. The Churches are giving thought to establishing a joint peace programme in the future, and also wish to emphasise justice and peace in our entire community.
7. The Churches wish to assist the victims of violence in our country, in word and deed.
8. The option was expressed at the conference that the Goldstone Commission did well to investigate the possibility and implications of collective control over all the armed forces, security forces, paramilitary forces and self-defence units.
9. It is the collective, earnest prayer of the member Churches of the DR family that the peace of the Prince of Peace, Jesus Christ, be the lot of the people of South Africa.

In light of the above, it is seen that the challenge for the Church is to seek solutions for political and criminal violence by uncovering and addressing the root causes of such violence.

Thereby, it is hoped that in this challenge of moral reconstruction and spiritual development, a new vision for human relationships will be activated, that we would learn to walk and live together, in justice, that wounds of hatred and violence will heal, creating an atmosphere of mutual trust and accountability.

This renewed spirituality based upon reconstruction, reconciliation, renewal and healing, will enable all of us to forgive one another, but will also enable us to continue to be critical of those forces that promote hatred and violence. And one must concede that the Church, on a number of occasions, has played a pioneering role in analysing the causes of this rampant crisis, looking for possible solutions. It is also true, in dealing with many burning issues in South Africa, the Church has been invited from time to time, as a nurturer of consciousness to lead some discussions at a national level, in order to find ways and means or resolving issues in deadlock situations.

Another critical challenge facing the Church in South Africa, is the question that needs urgent answers: What is the Church going to do about the AIDS epidemic, which is

going to drastically effect South African society? The Church has a major role to play in conscientising its constituency that AIDS is an infectious disease caused by the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), which effects the body's ability to fight infections.

Besides preaching against promiscuous living and admonishing believers to live a clean and holy life, the Church has a responsibility to offer care and support to people with AIDS and their families. Subsequently, the Church has a benevolent tradition of caring for the sick and the dying.

The Church is challenged to look at practical ways, in helping people to become aware of the fact, that AIDS is incurable but certainly preventable and it is our responsibility to fight the spread of this killer disease. As a result, if the Church is going to deal adequately with the AIDS crisis, it has to be well-informed and sensitised about AIDS, and further, the Church needs to draw up a well co-ordinated plan and programmes in collaboration with AIDS Organisations.

In this connection and other social upheavals in our community the need for pastoral care and counselling, must be high on the agenda of the Churches plans and programmes. Today, Pastoral workers need to seriously take into consideration the impact of social change upon the people of South Africa. Also, by using the Church structures and gaining access into the grassroot situations, one is able to base their assistance upon the Christian faith. In this regards, the ministry of care, counselling and healing should not become a specialised job reserved for the minister of the congregation but rather this ministry must involve the whole Church community. In reality, basic to all pastoral care in our changing situation is the fact, that healing comes when we speak from the heart. Therefore, this is within the reach of every believer.

In conclusion, we have discovered that having a vision of improving people's human rights entails doing far more than ensuring their entrenchment in the constitution. It means getting involved as a Church and facing the challenges, in the various communities and working towards their upliftment, inter alia, by putting social responsibility into action.

In reality, no one can deny that South Africa has changed and in a great measure has improved the lot of the marginalised. However, whilst apartheid has been consigned to the scrap heap of history, its legacies of a culture of violence, of racial divisions in Church and society, of widespread poverty and deprivation remains with us probably for years to come. Therefore, the Church in South Africa, is challenged to be God's agent of Peace, and human dignity in these times.

4.2.3 Koinonia

The Church is challenged with the qualitative growth of the Church, which is an assiduous task, for its ministry in the South African context. It must be noted, that Growth is regarded as the sign of the presence of the Spirit and of a healthy, living and fruitful Church. Kritzing (1994:150) reiterates the sentiments of Donald McGavran, in speaking of the ideal for a Church, is that it must be a growing Church.

It is God's intention for the Koinonia, to grow in knowledge, in faith and love, so that it does not become deadlocked, in its selfish demands, nor the demands of the

already evangelised people but that it may fulfil its unfinished task of reaching the unreached and then incorporate them into growing local Churches. As a result, this repetitive process will be a continuous challenge for the Church. Subsequently, mission is not only the centrifugal task of the Church, but also the centripetal attraction of people towards Christ, the centre.

Thus, the church is challenged to live Christian lives that are accountable and transparent before the world, so that the Koinonia will become attractive. Similar to the Early Church that when the people outside the Church saw how they loved one another, when the walls of hostility were broken down between Jews and Gentiles and how they shared their belongings with each other, as an act of concern and brotherliness, "And everyday, the Lord added to their group those who were being saved" (Acts 2:47).

Goba (1993:105), in challenging the Church, urges the Church not to be trapped by its own agenda of maintaining the ecclesiastical status quo, but that it will promote justice and point to a new democratic vision for all South Africans of every background. This means that the Church

will struggle to engage in a ministry which seeks to expose the limitations and contradictions of a post-Apartheid society. It also means that the Church will continue to struggle with the sin of a divided Christian community.

As stated already, in Chapter three, the challenge remains for the Churches, inter alia, the DRC family, to strive for unification, and to make visible the unity, which already exists in Jesus Christ. Subsequently, the scriptures are clear that the Church is meant to be a unique Koinonia of believers, who are one, in body and soul, in life and in death.

Thereby, this special unity, which we already share in Christ, evidently, has to be realised, in practice.

Dr Beyers Naude (1995:4) is quick to point out that the Churches, in fact all the Churches, are now faced with a challenge greater than ever before. He says that the Church of the future will have to be an ecumenical Church. Trying to live in isolation as a separate denomination has no future in South Africa. Unless we give our full attention as Christians to the need for a form of reconciliation

which is based upon justice, our witness will become largely irrelevant.

It seems, therefore, that seeking diligently, this unity is for the Church, inter alia, the DRC family, a high priority, if its witness is to be relevant in the South African situation.

In conclusion, we must recapitulate that the visible unity for which the Dutch Reformed Church, the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa and Reformed Church in Africa are striving can hardly be underestimated. In South Africa today, the Reformed Churches cannot afford to be racially divided. We pray that the Lord will grant us the sense of urgency, to rise up to the challenge of bringing to an end the unification process as soon as possible.

Finally, some of the challenges confronting the Church, in terms of the continuous task of evangelisation and re-evangelisation; the multi-faceted socio-economical and political responsibility and the building up of the Body of Christ as a united front serving a divided world, will continue to remain a tremendous task to the Church in South

Africa. We need to seek the Grace of God to meet these challenges, certainly, not in our own strength, but totally dependent upon the power of God.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

In the course of this research, we have discovered that the Role of the Church is comprehensive and if one has to make a meaningful contribution to Christian witness, one has to take into consideration the various changes and developments prevalent within the South African situation.

We have come to the conclusion, that it is now absolutely necessary for the Church, in its assiduous task of mission, to give serious attention to defining broad descriptions of the context in which it exists and in which it has to give substance to its honourable calling. Bosch (1988), concludes that one should not see mission in the narrow terms of "soul-winning" or "Church planting". Not that these elements, properly understood, have become obsolete!

Precisely for the sake of God's Glory and the Salvation and liberation of the people of South Africa, we continually have to pursue these essential dimensions of the missionary mandate, but then only within the wider framework of

missionary approach, which is relevant to people's TOTAL needs and fears.

Taking the above into consideration, the Church is challenged to pursue the four-dimensional understanding of missions, as presented in this thesis, to fulfill its role in the South African context.

Another interesting feature observed by the Researcher, is that, in order for this approach to be effective, one has to recognise the emerging realities in economical, political, social and religious spheres, which will continue challenging us, to be ever alert in exercising our prophetic responsibility as Christians and Churches.

From the writer's perception, the importance of mentioning the historical developments in the process of change in South Africa is to show the decisive role that the Church has played in these developments and how the Church today can be participants in the on-going process of change from the past into the future and the role of the Church and its theology becoming a vanguard of positive change.

Subsequently, the Church as an institution has enormous potential to promote or to hinder social change.

In this thesis, much attention was given to the historiographical currents of change, inter alia, political ecclesiastical, cultural, and socio-economical, in order to take a backward look at the role the Church has played in these developments, so that mistakes of the past will not be repeated.

The challenges confronting the Church, in terms of evangelisation, social-responsibility and Koinonia, have been highlighted in this thesis, so that the Church can gain a thorough knowledge and understanding of the needs of the context, in which, the Church fulfils its missionary obligation. In a sense, this thesis gives a reader a wide panoramic picture of the Church and its activities and the challenges it faces in its holistic ministry, to the people of South Africa.

By no means, has the role of Church as presented in this thesis, been exhaustively expressed, but rather this is a

humble attempt to inspire the Church to new opportunities and possibilities.

The Reformed tradition of the Christian faith compels us to focus ecumenically and examine critically the opportunity we have to help shape the South African situation, in the direction of justice for all God's children. This will require that we examine our own motivation and commitment as Christians and Churches. Like our forebears in the sixteenth century, and on the basis of that tradition, we need to use the new democracy that we have victoriously obtained, in South Africa, for the constructive purpose of building a new and more just and humane society, in Christ.

From the writer's observation, he concludes that God calls us, through the dramatic and cataclysmic events of our time to hear anew what God requires of us, so that the Church can be shaped by the Biblical principles of God's Word. We believe that this is the appropriate way into the future, for those who wish to be true to the Reformed heritage.

It is hoped that this thesis will help fulfil an important function, in stimulating the Church, in the South African

context, to rethink the position of the Church and its missionary obligation, so that new perspectives might be obtained and a new vision on the role of the Church might be gained.

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APPENDIX AQ U E S T I O N N A I R EThe Role of the Church in a Changing South Africa -
A Reformed PerspectiveImportant Notes:

1. Your answers will be treated as strictly confidential.
2. Please convey your personal views candidly on all items.
3. This is a research for a doctoral thesis.
4. Mark the appropriate spaces by encircling the relevant number or by giving answers where required.

1. Surname: _____ 2. Initial: _____

3. First Name: _____ 4. Title: _____

5. Address: _____

6. Date of Birth: _____

7. Occupation: _____ Marital Status: _____

9. What is your highest academic qualification?

Lower than matric	1	Matric	2
Diploma	3	Bachelors' Degree	4
Honours Degree	5	Masters' Degree	6
Doctorate	7		

10. Denomination _____ 11. Office held: _____

15. How do you feel about the following issues in connection with the socio-political process in South Africa.

	Strong-ly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	dis- agree
Any feasible political dispensation for SA will have to be on ^{based} on the accommodation of ethnic/cultural groups	1	2	3	4
Members of the same church affiliation should belong to one Church and worship together irrespective of their race	1	2	3	4
The State should not give preferential treatment to any one religion	1	2	3	4
Churches should avoid political and controversial issues and concentrate on the spiritual welfare of their members	1	2	3	4
My religious convictions have definite influence on my views on other areas of life	1	2	3	4
Churches should do everything in their power to eliminate discrimination from society	1	2	3	4
Affirmative action programmes should be focussed on providing training opportunities for blacks in order to allow them to compete on merit for employment	1	2	3	4
Churches should co-operate to reconcile people and groups in the country to one another	1	2	3	4
Church can do little to solve social and economic problems	1	2	3	4

16. What are the HINDRANCES that you can identify in our Churches that hinders the Church in S. Africa from being an effective witness?

17. What are the issues which we have to clarify in our churches in order to fulfil our prophetic responsibility.

18. List some of the challenges you would like to put to the Christians in order for the Church to be relevant in the S.A. context.

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