

**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE CONGREGATIONS OF THE AFRICAN  
METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH AND THE DUTCH/REFORMED MISSION  
CHURCH IN PIKETBERG, 1903 – 1972**

**BY**

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**A mini-thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of  
Philosophy in the Department of Religion and Theology at the University of the Western  
Cape.**

**OCTOBER 2004**

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Declaration	(i)
Acknowledgement	(ii)
Abstract	(iii)

### **CHAPTER ONE** **INTRODUCTION**

1.1 Motivation for the study	1
1.2 Historiographic considerations	2
1.3 Statement of the research problem	4
1.4 Statement of the research hypothesis	5
1.5 Research procedures	5

### **CHAPTER TWO** **THE DUCH REFORMED MISSION CHURCH: A BRIEF HISTORY**

2.1 Introduction	8
2.2 The DRC, 1652 – 1824	9
2.3 The emergence of the DRM Church, 1824 – 1881	12
2.4 The growth of the DRM Church after 1881	18
2.5 Conclusion	19

### **CHAPTER THREE** **THE AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN SOUTH AFRICA: A BRIEF HISTORY**

3.1 The origin of the AME Church	21
3.2 The formation of the AME Church	25
3.3 The origin of mission and independent churches in the South African context	28
3.4 The rise of Separarist Church Movements in South Africa	29
3.5 The Ethiopian Movement	30

3.6 The merging of the Ethiopian Movement with the AME Church	36
3.7 Conclusion	37

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **THE ORIGIN AND GROWTH OF THE AME CONGREGATION IN PIKETBERG**

4.1 Introduction: The town of Piketberg	38
4.2 The Anglo Boer War (1899 – 1902)	40
4.3 Secession from the DRC	40
4.4 Establishing links with the AME Church (1902 – 1903)	41
4.5 The establishing of the AME Congregation in Piketberg	42
4.6 A period of church planting (1905 – 1939)	43
4.7 The legacy of J J Links as school principal (1929 – 1959)	45
4.8 A period of continued developments (1940 – 1970)	46
4.9 Conclusion	49

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **THE DRMC IN PIKETBERG**

5.1 Introduction	50
5.2 The establishment of the DRM Church	51
5.3 Ministers serving the congregation until 1970	51
5.4 The building process	53
5.5 The school	54
5.6 Church life	55
5.7 The Group Areas Act	56
5.8 Conclusion	57

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE AME CHURCH AND DRMC IN PIKETBERG**

6.1 Introduction	58
6.2 The Anglo Boer War: 1899 – 1902	59
6.3 Counter measures by the DRC	60
6.4 The new division	61
6.5 Conclusion	67

## **CHAPTER 7**

### **POSTSCRIPT**

7.1 Further developments within these two congregations	68
7.2 The first sign of reconciliation	69
7.3 The process of reconciliation comes to fruition	70
7.4 Conclusion	71

<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	72
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## DECLARATION

I, Adonis Carolus Booyse, hereby declare that the work done in this mini-thesis is my own work, that has not been submitted to any other institution for degree purposes and that all sources, references or quotes have been indicated and acknowledged.

Signed: Ad. Booyse.....

Date: 25/10/04.....

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I hereby wish to extend a sincere word of thanks to the following people...

- Prof. EM Conradie, my thesis supervisor, who made an immense contribution to the shaping of the thesis and what insight it may contain.
- Edward Smith for the editing and proof reading of the thesis.
- Ellsforth Booyse, my son, for his unselfish help and assistance with the computer programming of the thesis.
- All those who generously assisted me during personal interviews. Your invaluable information is highly appreciated.
- Elsabie and Ashley Booyse, my wife and son, for their unselfish sacrifice, advice and support. It is for this, and much more besides, that this thesis is dedicated to my wife and children.
- Thanks be to the Almighty who makes all things possible.

## ABSTRACT

This research project focuses on the relationship between the congregations of the African Methodist Episcopal Church and the Dutch Reformed Mission Church in Piketberg, 1903 – 1972. It investigates the factors contributing to the tense relationship between these congregations. The problem that is investigated in this research project is a social, historical and religious one of determining which factors contributed to such tension.

Blacks and coloureds worshipped in the same church namely the Dutch Reformed Church. By 1824 the inclusion of people of colour in white dominated churches became a controversial issue within the DR Church. Although synods held after 1824 decided to serve Holy Communion to blacks separately from whites and that blacks had to occupy the backseats during worship services, it did not resolve the problem. This eventually led to the formation of the DRMC in 1881. The DRM Church emerged with only four congregations. Through this action it can be assumed that most people was not in favour of a separate church for blacks and coloureds. It is thus obvious that tension between whites and blacks would have prevailed for a long time. Furthermore, the advent of the Anglo Boer War (1899 – 1902) brought the simmering tension between whites and blacks to the fore since black people supported the British effort during wartime, whilst whites supported the Boer cause.

Prior to 1902 all people in Piketberg were members of the DRC. Although the DRM Church was established in 1881, the DRC in Piketberg found it difficult to establish such a mission congregation. The reason for such difficulty and eventually the reluctance on the part of the DRC must be understood against the background of previous unsuccessful attempts to establish the DRMC in Piketberg. In this theses the reasons for such reluctance is discussed briefly.

Both the AME congregation and the DRM congregation were established in 1903 in Piketberg. The AME congregation was established approximately three months after the DRM congregation. The reason for the establishment of two coloured congregations in a small town as Piketberg had been investigated. Amongst others, the DRC suppressed the formation and establishment of the AME congregation as it was identified as a black empowerment group. Tension between black and white during the Anglo Boer War made whites suspicious about the formation of a church governed by blacks. Whites used their economic power to obstruct the growth of the AME congregation. On the other hand they supported every effort in establishing the DRM Church in Piketberg. They furthermore morally supported the DRMC and made every effort to win over the dissident group.

The relationship between these two congregations must therefore be understood in the light of the context within which these two congregations originated. In this thesis the reasons for the tensed relationships will be outlined. The secessionists (AME group) were related to the group joining the DRMC. This brought another split, but this time between coloureds and coloureds. This weakened the already strained relationships.

No ecumenical bonds existed between these two congregations as from 1903. Instead, a cold war prevailed between them for decades. They never supported each other during church functions. Instead they competed against each other. It is thus evident that an unhealthy situation prevailed between the AME- and DRM congregations for more than seven decades as discussed in this thesis.

As from 1970 none of the two congregations, DRMC and AME felt the need to restore former relationships. Each congregation continued to work on its own although their respective schools were amalgamated due to the Group Areas Act in 1968.

It was only in 1903 that these two congregations seriously considered its relationships towards each other. The approaching centenary anniversaries of these two congregations paved the way for negotiations. This resulted in a working relationship which was established early in January 2003. The purpose of this relationship was twofold: to bring members of these two congregations together during combined services and to raise funds for community projects in Piketberg. The result of these combined services was that the need was felt to also include the DR congregation of which all formed part one hundred years ago. A committee was established between these three congregations to negotiate a working relationship. For the first time in one hundred years a tree planting ceremony was conducted to demonstrate the congregations' seriousness towards reconciliation. Furthermore, a combined Communion Service was held in the Dutch Reformed Church, the worship place where these congregations' paths split in 1903.

The aim of this study also shows that congregations in one town do have the ability to restore broken relationships. This study furthermore proves that ecumenical relationships can greatly contribute towards the alleviation of poverty in a community.



# CHAPTER 1

## Introduction

### 1.1 Motivation for the study

I was born in 1954 and grew up in the town of Piketberg. My youth experience was that tension between members of the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church and the Dutch Reformed Mission Church (DRMC) in Piketberg was always evident. This unhealthy situation prevailed on almost every level in community life. Whenever schools in the Piketberg area came together for cultural functions and competitions, one could feel the uneasy relationship between the members of the AME Church and the DRM Church. This was the experience at athletic meetings, rugby and netball matches. Almost the whole town was brought to a standstill when the AME Primary School and DRM School in Piketberg competed against each other. As a member of the AME Church and a descendant of the founder of the church in Piketberg, I always had a keen interest in the factors that contributed to this tense situation. These circumstances were prevalent until 1968 when the Group Areas Act forced these churches to relocate and amalgamate their separate schools. It was only after the process of amalgamation that a gradual change of attitude between members of these two churches became evident. The reasons why these two churches responded in such a way always puzzled me.

The centenary celebrations of both the AME Church and the Uniting Reformed Church (URC)<sup>1</sup> in 2003, gave impetus to the need for reconciliation. In an attempt to restore former relationships the AME Church invited the church councils of both the URC and the DRC to discuss ways and means to restore former relationships. The result of this invitation is that a reconciliation committee was established. Amongst others, the celebration of Holy Communion was celebrated in each of the three churches during 2003, as well as a tree planting ceremony at the Piketberg museum.

This thesis will focus on the factors that contributed to the tensions between the congregations of the AME Church and the DRM Church in Piketberg from 1903 – 1970. It will investigate

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<sup>1</sup> In 1994 the name of the DRM Church was changed to the Uniting Reformed Church.

the reasons why two congregations of colour in a small town as Piketberg were established. The chapters that follow will offer a survey of these historical developments.

## 1.2 Historiographic Considerations

The significance of this study has to be understood against the background of a number of historiographic considerations:

- A number of authors have already contributed towards the history of the DRM Church. Amongst others, CJ Kriel's (1981) book, "*Die Eerste Eeu*", sketches the formation and growth of the DRM Church after a century of existence. He gives an outline of the problems in the way of Church growth such as the Anglo Boer War (1899 – 1902) and schism amongst members which eventually led to the formation of other denominations out of the DRM Church. JC Adonis (1982) in his dissertation, "*Die Afgebreekte Skeidsmure Weer Opgebou*", portrays the history that eventually led to the formation of the DRM Church in South Africa. In this study he describes the origin of the DRM Church as an attempt by the whites to establish a church along racial lines. C Loff's (1981) "*Dogter of Verstoteling*", is not only a critique on the work of Kriel (1981), but also tries to put the history of the DRM Church in perspective. Along with Adonis (1982), he is of the opinion that the formation of the DRM Church was an attempt of the DRC to establish a church along racial lines.
  
- GBA Gerdener (1958) in "*Recent Developments in the South African Mission Field*" gives an outline of the establishment of missions from the earliest times in the history of South Africa and the role played by various missionary societies in spreading the gospel to the indigenous people in South Africa. He also explained the vital role played by the DRC in its missionary endeavors.
  
- Among the authors that contributed to the history of the AME Church in South Africa is JS Coan (1987). In "*Flying Sparks*" he portrays the factors, which gave rise to the Ethiopian Movement, and the eventual merger with the AME Church in 1896. In his work he describes

the history, development and growth of the AME Church from its inception till 1980. In his dissertation "*Our Father, Our Children*", Campbell (1989) not only sketches the history of the AME Church in South Africa, but also documents the origin of the separatist movements in South which gave rise to the Ethiopian Movement and the merging of this movement with the AME Church. In his "*A History of the Order of Ethiopia*", T Verryn (1957) discussed the reasons for a certain group within the AME Church who broke away in 1899 to form the Order of Ethiopia under the Anglican Church.

- Brown (1973) in his introduction to "*Gemeente Geskiedskrywing*" argues that if the formation of the church is situated in the local congregation, and through the witness of its members, it is self-evident that the history of the church should start with the local congregation.

This study will make a contribution to the writing of local church history and will contribute to an emerging corpus of literature on the history of specific congregations. The following contributions may be mentioned in this regard:

Long before the official establishment of the DRM Church, a separate congregation for coloured people under the auspices of the DRC was organized in Beaufort West in 1818. Amongst others, the membership growth, gave impetus to the establishment of a congregation separate from whites (cf Van der Ventel 1984:49). Evangelist Paulus Teske was ordained as minister for this newly formed congregation by Rev. WA Krige in 1862 after the Cape Synod agreed upon his ordination to enhance the work in Beaufort West (cf Viviers 1975:91).

In January of 1881 the church council of Wynberg also decided to establish a DRM Church for coloured people. At least fifty members were present and the congregation was officially established with Rev. Ruytenbeek as its first minister (cf Loff 1981:27). With the official establishment of the DRMC in Wellington on 5 October 1881, four congregations sent representatives. They were George, Zuurbraak, Wellington and Wynberg (cf Kriel 1981: 29-30). DRM congregations that immediately joined after the official establishment were

Middelburg, Beaufort-West, Elandsbloof, Ceres, Murraysburg, Graaf-Reinet, Victoria West and Richmond (cf Kriel 1981: 30).

Another congregation of importance is that of Porterville, approximately twenty kilometers from Piketberg. This congregation of the DRM Church was established in 1882 (cf Albertyn 1979: 81). The establishment of this congregation obviously had a bearing on the formation of the DRM congregation in Piketberg.

### **1.3 Statement of the research problem**

This research project will focus on the relationship between the congregations of the AME Church and the DRM Church in Piketberg, 1903 - 1972. More specifically, it will investigate the factors contributing to the tense relationship between these congregations. The problem that will be investigated in this research project is therefore a historical one of determining which factors contributed to such tension.

The statement calls for further clarification:

- The AME congregation in Piketberg was established in 1903. Its first appointed minister was Rev. William C Collins in 1905. He was instrumental in organizing the first day school for pupils. Rev. Andrew W Phigelandt succeeded Collins in 1912. Rev. Phigelandt was instrumental in expanding the church and school. His successor, Rev. John C Johannisen not only erected a church hall under his administration, but also instrumental in the erection of a cookhouse to accommodate the feeding scheme of the Department of Education then in operation. Since its inception, the church membership has grown from 75 in 1903 to 750 in 2000. Other ministers who played a significant role were SP Johannisen and AJ Jacobs. The former, after relocation due to the Group Areas Act, erected a church hall for worship services in 1968, and the latter completed the church building in 1993.
  
- The DRM Church congregation in Piketberg was also officially established in 1903. Under the administration of Rev. GJ Enslin the first church and school were erected. The

congregation started in 1903 with approximately 90 members and at present has a membership of 3 000. This congregation also relocated due to the Group Areas Act and erected a church hall under the administration of Rev G Basson and a church building under the Rev. W van der Merwe respectively in 1970 and 1980.

From 1903 until 1970 a tense relationship between these two congregations prevailed and the reason for this will be investigated in this thesis. It was only after 1970 that a change in attitude could be noticed between these two congregations. The relocation and the amalgamation of the two schools brought members of these two denominations together. On educational level, members of these two congregations had to meet frequently which eventually led to a change in attitude towards each other.

#### **1.4 Statement of the research hypothesis**

In this study, I will argue that the DRC suppressed the formation and establishment of the AME Church as it was identified as a black empowerment group. Tension between black and white during the Anglo Boer War made whites suspicious about the formation of any black church. Whites used their economic power to obstruct the growth of the AME congregation. They refused them job opportunities within the town, prohibiting them from using stones from the mountain for a church building (see Johannisen 1953) and refusing that they bury their dead in the official graveyard (see Johannisen 1953:8). This thesis will investigate the way in which the above-mentioned factors contributed to the strained relationship between these two congregations.

#### **1.5 Research procedures**

Chapter 2 provides a brief history of the DRC leading to the emergence of the DRM Church in 1881 and the establishment of various congregations of this church soon thereafter.

Chapter 3 provides a brief history of the AME Church, which emerged in the United States of America in 1816. The AME Church in South Africa was formed in 1896 when the Ethiopian Movement established formal relationships with the AME Church in the USA.

The congregation of the AME Church in the town of Piketberg was established on 12 October 1903. In chapter four the history of this congregation between 1903 and 1970 against the background of the history of the town itself is documented. The focus will be on the establishment of this congregation and its subsequent growth during the ministries of various Pastors.<sup>2</sup>

The congregation of the DRM Church in Piketberg was established a few months earlier on 12 July 1903. In chapter five the history of this congregation during the same period is documented. I will focus on the reasons for the establishment of the congregation in Piketberg. Furthermore I will describe church and school life, the building process as well as how the Group Areas Act<sup>3</sup> had an effect on this congregation.

On the basis of the discussion in chapters four and five, chapter six will investigate the relationship between these two congregations in more detail. It will describe the root causes for the tensions that existed between these two congregations during this period. The role that the local congregation of the DRC played in this regard will be outlined. The impact of the Group Areas Act, which eventually forced these congregations to merge their respective schools, will also be indicated.

This discussion will be followed by a brief postscript on the developments since 1970. During this period the relationship between the AME Church and the DRMC (now the URC) in Piketberg became normalized.

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<sup>2</sup> In the AME Church the term Pastor refers to a minister who is in charge of a specific congregation, whilst all other ministers not appointed to that congregation are called "Reverends" within that congregation.

<sup>3</sup> See Roux (1978: 372): "The Group Areas Act of 1950 and the Group Areas Consolidation Act of 1957 were aimed at the complete separation of the various races, African, Coloured and Asian from each other and from the whites, in separate residential areas in all urban and rural areas throughout the country"

In the chapters that focus on the history of the AME Church and the DRMC, I will rely on the availability of the minute books of the DRC, DRM and the AME Churches since little official documentation is available. Furthermore, I will make use of published material on the Anglo Boer War (1899 – 1902), which caused a rift in relationship between whites and coloureds in Piketberg. Works like “*Abraham Esau’s War*” Nasson (1991), “*Between the Wire and the Wall*” Lewis (1987). “*A history of South African Coloured politics*”, De Gruchy (1979) “*The Church’s Struggle in South Africa*”, Roux (1978) including his book “*Time longer than Rope: The Black Man’s Struggle for Freedom in South Africa*” and Elphick (1979) including his book “*Christianity in South Africa*”, will be investigated to prove the validity of the hypothesis. Interviews will also be used to substantiate my arguments.

In the concluding postscript, I will discuss the relations after 1970 that eventually leads to the restoration of former relationships.

## CHAPTER 2

### The Dutch Reformed Mission Church: A brief history

#### 2.1 Introduction

A number of socio-historical factors contributed to the establishment of the DRM Church. These factors must be understood against the social, historical and religious background of the Cape Colony between 1652 and 1881.

The first contributing factor was the establishment of a “class system” in the Cape. The Dutch East Indian Company (DEIC) faced two serious problems: Elphick (1990:6) argues that although the DEIC granted settlers permission to become farmers, they had to sell their produce to the company at an extremely low price. This resulted in smuggling with traders from the company to ensure better living conditions for the settlers. In this way the DEIC suffered great losses. To combat this problem, the DEIC banned at least thirty settlers and at least one-hundred-and-three received legal permission from the Company to leave. Approximately two-hundred-and sixty settlers remained (cf De Wet 1981:28). The DEIC had to deal seriously with the shortage of farm labourers.

A second problem with which the DEIC had to deal was how to convince the original inhabitants to enter into trading contracts with it since they were owners of large stocks of cattle. Giliomee (2003:3-7) argues that these inhabitants, the Khoikoi<sup>4</sup> and the Bushmen, were unwilling to enter into any trading contracts with the DEIC. Furthermore, they refused to become labourers for the DEIC. The situation in the Cape Colony deteriorated so much that the DEIC had no other choice but to import slaves to combat the shortage of labourers.

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<sup>4</sup> The term “Khoikhoi” means “men of men”. They were the original inhabitants when the DEIC landed in the Cape. Every Khoikhoi member was fully accepted Khoikhoi community. They were herdsmen and the group had their own dialect. The colonists referred to them in a degrading term as “Hottentot” (cf Adonis: 1982: 6-7).



The first group of slaves arrived at the Cape in 1658 (cf Giliomee 2003: 7). Though it was not the idea of the DEIC to create a class situation within the Cape with the arrival of slaves, it eventually contributed to the separation between blacks and white. Coinciding with the importation of slaves, the situation of the indigenous people who were stripped from their cattle and grounds became economically so bad that they were eventually forced to offer themselves as labourers to the white settlers. Gradually a workers class began to develop amongst slaves and indigenous people. Whites, as farmers, raised themselves to the level of the “upper class”, and developed an attitude of despising manual labour (cf Smith 1972:24). Giliomee (2003:45) reflects on a letter written by governor General Baron Van Imhoff in 1743: “Having imported slaves, every common and ordinary European becomes a gentleman and prefers to be served rather than to serve.” Giliomee further argues that any burghers who could not afford to own slaves enjoyed the privilege of the dominant “upper class.” To this effect, a proclamation was published at the Cape in 1794 that all slaves must behave in such a manner that even the poorest European might feel that he/she is a dignified person (cf Giliomee 2003: 45). In this way Europeans gradually believed that submissiveness was the proper condition of the blacks. Whereas in Europe, social differences were based upon class, in the Cape it was based upon colour. It is therefore understandable that this attitude would later have an impact upon church life.

## **2.2 The DRC, 1652 - 1824**

The DEIC was in control of both governmental affairs as well as church affairs. Loff (1981:12) notes that the DEIC had a policy that if the church becomes a threat to the economic business of the company, the DEIC will then act accordingly.

De Gruchy (1979:1) argues that the DRC started in South Africa with the arrival of Jan van Riebeeck in 1652. De Gruchy further notes that although a small Catholic Church existed in Mossel Bay prior to 1652, it was long been forgotten with the arrival of Van Riebeeck. He is however of the opinion that the DEIC would anyway never have allowed the practice of Roman Catholicism. De Gruchy’s argument is substantiated by Gertstner (1997:16) who argues that the DEIC in conjunction with the DRC in the Netherlands maintained the

monopoly of Christian expression in the Cape Colony as from 1665. Gersten (1997:16) maintains that since the arrival of the DEIC, the “Reformed Church life and theology played a formative role in the development of South African culture and society... and it contributed greatly to the formation of a distinctive identity among the white settlers and to their conviction of superiority to indigenous people and slaves” (Gersten in Elphick 1997: 16). Ministers for the DRC were imported from Amsterdam from 1665 and the DEIC in conjunction with the Amsterdam Classis of the DR Church in the Netherlands, ensured that the importation of ministers from Holland be done on a regular basis (cf Gersten in Elphick 1997:16). In this way the DR Church exercised a monopoly over Christianity in the new colony.

The Cape Colonial government ensured that all ministers assigned to the DRC adhere to the doctrine and discipline of the church. They had the authority to dictate to the church and its ministers. So severe were their actions against ministers who did not abide by the rules, that they expelled a minister for misconduct in 1760 (cf Gersten in Elphick: 1997:20).

It is thus evident that the DRC was under strict control of the church in Holland. Loff (1981: 17) argues that this kind of control was a painful experience to the DRC since it was controlled by local governmental authority and was also accountable to the church in Holland.

The DRC in the Cape Colony furthermore had to abide with the strict and rigid form of the Calvinist style of worship as prescribed by the mother church in Holland. This in effect meant that the church could not make any decisions without the sanction of the church in Holland. A commissioner, appointed by the government of Holland attended all meetings in order to ensure that the will of the colonial government in church affairs be adhered too. The DEIC even designed a baptismal form for converts and only the DRC’s method of baptism was recognized (cf Elphick 1997:19). Adonis (1982:22) shares Loff’s opinion when he describes the relationship between the DRC and Holland as a “complicated intertwinement.” Adonis (1982:23) notes that the DRC received financial support from the government and therefore expected absolute obedience. This in effect meant that the church could not develop on its own terms. It is therefore obvious that the DRC could not so easily embarked on missionary

programmes for indigenous people. Smith (1972:21) has it that as early as 1678 representatives of the DEIC complained that non-whites has been a shame to the Netherlands and the Christian belief. It resulted in the announcement of a law, which prohibited marriages across the colour line to ensure a “pure white race.” This was in fact the first attempt to officially divide the society into two groups. The DEIC furthermore ensured that no socialization between blacks and whites took place. To this end, Governor Rijk Tulbagh tabled an infamous act in 1754, which prohibited blacks to gather in the foyer of the church. Barnabas Shaw’s letter to the Earl of Aberdeen in 1770, discloses the opinion of whites regarding the black race in the Cape: “The moral state and habits of the blacks are such that they have a very indistinct notion of the rights of property and they are fearfully reckless of the destruction of human life” (Smith 1972:23).

Furthermore, the colonial government was under instruction to guard against all other denominations wished to start missionary work in the Cape. The first attempt in this regard came from George Schmidt, a Moravian, who commenced with missionary work under the indigenous people in 1738. The colonial government prohibited this missionary work within ten years since the evangelical approach of George Schmidt, was regarded a threat to the theology of the DRC (cf De Gruchy 1978:2). Gerstner (1997:21) describes the situation in the following way: “George Schmidt, the first Moravian minister in South Africa, was admitted into the colony only for the purpose of converting the Khoisan to Christianity. When Schmidt baptized his converts, the DRC pressed successfully for his removal from the colony.”

In 1795 Britain invaded the Cape. The Cape colony was not in a position to combat the invaders. The British Colonial powers eventually took control over the Cape Colony in September 1795 after a one-hundred-and-fifty year period of DEIC in control (cf Freund in Giliomee 1990:332). This in effect meant that the Cape was now free from the control of Holland and immediately opened the doors for other missionaries to enter the South African mission field. The Lutherans in 1779 used this opportunity and erected its own church building (cf. Adonis 1982:22). In 1799 the South African Missionary Society was established for church expansion in the Cape (cf Adonis 1982:37). The Wesleyan Missionary Society started its missionary program in 1799. Other missionary societies included the Glasgow

Missionary Society, the Parish Missionary Society, the Berlin Missionary Society and the Rhenish Missionary Society (cf Kriel 1981:10-11). Although there was no official bond between the South African Missionary Society and the DRC, ministers from the latter were employed to do evangelization amongst the indigenous people.

During the first period of missionary expansion, the DRC had to deal with a serious problem. Until 1823 they were still under the control of Holland and therefore could not embark on any missionary program for indigenous people. Almost all its members were white (cf De Gruchy 1979: 3). The DRC only gained autonomy from Holland in 1824. This coincided with their first independent synod in the same year. This step marked the establishment of the first independent church in Southern Africa (cf De Gruchy 1979: 3). The reason for the church to gain autonomy was that Britain would no longer allow any foreign country to have control in the Cape Colony. The DRC became free from the control of Amsterdam, but its synodical decisions remained subject to the scrutiny of the Anglican governor in the Cape. The DRC's freedom from Amsterdam in effect meant that they were now ready to make decisions without interference from the local government and of the church in Holland. The British government with two representatives during its synods only sanctioned the decisions made by the church (cf Loff 1981: 19). Furthermore, freedom for the DRC meant that the British authorities in future would no longer allow ministers from Holland to serve here. In this sense the church became totally free from the rigid Calvinist style of worship and a more evangelical approach was then embarked upon (cf De Gruchy 1979:4).

### **2.3 The emergence of the DRM Church, 1824 – 1881**

The inclusion of people of colour in white dominated churches became a controversial issue within the DRC at that time. Loff (1981:17) describes this controversy as follows: “Teen 1824 was daar een saak wat sonder enige twyfel besondere aandag geniet het: die teenwoordigheid van swart mense in die gemeente.” Loff (1981:17) furthermore draws attention to the warning signals identified by van der Walt: “Die optrede en beleidsrigting van sommige genootskappe en hul sendelinge (bv. Die Londense Sendinggenootskap) het gou aanstoot gegee sodat die

Ned. Geref. Kerk daadwerklik aangespoor was om met krag onafhanlike en selfstandige sendingwerk te onderneem.” The main reason for the controversy was, amongst others, the serving of Holy Communion to all races in the church at the same time. To most of the whites this was an unhealthy practice.

To address the problem of joint worshipping during the first synod in 1824, synod endorsed the implementation of missionary workers (cf Adonis 1982:38). The implementation of missionary workers should be interpreted as the first step of the DRC to separate blacks from whites, though no official recommendation to that effect was made.

The synod of 1826 took it a step further. Missionaries were ordained for the sole purpose of working amongst indigenous people. The synod made it clear that ordained missionary workers would not be allowed to work within the boundaries of white members (cf Adonis 1982: 39). In this way, the DRC gradually worked towards the establishment of congregations for blacks. It must be emphasised that blacks were still worshipping in white churches at that time, but were spiritually administered by missionaries.

Smith (1972: 29) notes that a number of representatives to the 1829 synod again raised the issue of Holy Communion with black worshippers. Although the synod was not in favour of serving Communion separately to whites and blacks, they could no longer ignore the question, since this became a serious concern to its white constituency.

At the same synod of 1829 the posts of missionary officers were officially implemented. Adonis (1982: 38) argues that the implementation of missionary officers was interpreted differently. According to Adonis, Smith was of the opinion that this act paved the way for the formation of separate congregations for blacks under the auspices of the DRC, whilst Gerdener was of the opinion that the way for blacks to organize their churches independently from whites was now open. According to Adonis (1982:38), this decision boiled down to the same idea of having blacks worshipping separately.

The debate on Holy Communion continued for a long time. To complicate this issue, the question was raised at the 1829 synod why black members of the DRC in Stellenbosch and Caledon are receiving Holy Communion separately from the whites, whilst at Somerset West no separation was practiced. Debate on this issue was allowed, but in the end the synod remained with its decision that Holy Communion may be served to black and white at the same time (cf Loff 1981: 19). When this issue came under discussion also at the 1830 synod in Cape Town, the representatives from the government intervened since according to the government separation would mean that the idea of race discrimination would then be allowed. Such an idea could have been an embarrassment to the government since the 1828 law ensured equality for all races. The synod between 1830 and 1856 did not address this delicate issue, although it remained a serious matter of concern for many congregations (cf Loff 1981:20). Adonis (1982:40) shares the opinion of Loff that the government was optimistic, if not cautious on this matter since it would then have meant that it had denounced Ordinance 50 of 1828.

To save embarrassment, the 1834 synod endorsed the official biblical training of all its members of the black race (cf Adonis 1982:40). Missionary institutes were organized and ministers had to motivate its members to enroll. Another decision of the 1834 synod was that indigenous persons, who were baptized by the missionaries, could become members of white congregations if no such congregation for blacks existed in their respective areas of living.

Another factor, which contributed to the establishment of the DRM Church, was the abolition of slavery. The abolition of slavery in 1834 aggravated the already strained relationship between blacks and whites in the DRC. The decision of the DRC to establish a mission church for people of colour seemed to be unavoidable. A growing number of whites within the church openly showed their discontent with these colonial laws, especially the abolition of slavery. The DRC now seriously had to consider the presence of blacks within the confines of the church. This resulted in continuous debates during synods as to how blacks can be accommodated within the church. The debates eventually resulted in the decision to establish the DRM Church in 1881.

In retrospect, 1834 can be called the “watershed year” in the history of the DRC: the abolition of slavery caused discontent within the church since all races, especially blacks, were at that time free to worship with their white counterparts. So severe was the discontent within the white church that a number of whites propagated that the abolition of slavery was one of the reasons for the Great Trek (cf. Loff 1981: 20). Gerdener (1938: 14) is of the same opinion that the abolition of slavery left the Boers no other choice than to leave the Cape Colony: “waarom wij onze erven en plaatsen, goed en bloed verlaten hebben, dat dit nie soseer die vrymaking van die slawe was wat hulle beweeg het, als hunne gelykstelling met de Kristenen, strijdig met de wetten van God en ‘t natuurlijk onderscheid van afkomst en geloof, zodat het onverdragelyk was voor elk fatsoenlike Kristen onder zulk ‘n last te buigen, waarom wij dan ook ons liever verwijderden om des te beter ons geloof en de leer in zuiverheid te houden.”

Loff (1981:17) draws attention to the warning signals of van der Walt which forced the DRC to seriously consider the establishment of a mission church: “Die sendelinge se liberale beskouing van gelykheid, vryheid en broederskap en hul lewenswyse van sosiale integrasie (byvoorbeeld huwelike met nie-blanke vroue) het spanning gewek by die Afrikaner wat gelykstelling en gemengde huwelike verfoei het.” The DRC now had to deal with this situation. In the same year during the synod more seriously discussed the problem of accommodating people of colour in separate churches within the DRC.

At a special synodical meeting in 1837, a decision was made to allocate back seats to blacks until separate buildings were erected for them. This practice however, was already, although not officially, in operation prior to 1837 in a number of DRC’s. The congregation of Swellendam for instance, used two types of pews: pews with backboards were used by whites only and those without backboards for blacks. In 1838 a building for blacks was completed in Swellendam for separate church services. Since 1838 the congregation of Riversdal allocated seats for blacks in the vestry, but when whites members complained about blacks being in the building, services were conducted outside in the shadow of the vestry (cf Loff 1981: 22). This left the DRC with no other choice than to spearhead the establishment of separate congregations where blacks could worship.

Loff (1981:20) notes that all these political developments within the church caused a rift in many congregations, especially on the eastern border of the Cape where a controversy over the Holy Communion erupted in the middle of the 1850's. Forty-five white members of this congregation submitted a memorandum to the church council in which they complained about receiving communion with black members. They advised the church council to conduct separate communion services. Since the church council denounced their request, they forward this matter to the Circuit of Albany. Although the Circuit of Albany also denounced this request, it advised the church council of Kat River to have separate tables for blacks and whites. Even to this request, the church council of Albany did not adhere to (cf Loff: 1981: 20). To combat this situation, whites left the church and started their own whites only congregation in 1862. The most important issue at that time was the refusal of whites to have communion with blacks at the same time. The Kat River situation obviously must have had a bearing on other congregations who felt the same way.

Another point of consideration for the DRC was the influence of Andrew and John Murray. They received their theological training in both England and Holland. Back in South Africa, they embarked on a new form of evangelical approach within the DRC. De Gruchy (1979:4) has it that the church accepted this kind of enlightenment enthusiastically. With the influence of the "Murray revivals", missionary work within the confines of the DRC culminated in 1857 when work in all earnest commenced amongst people of colour (cf De Gruchy 1979:5). Although the synod of 1857 could not agree on the formal establishment of a Mission Church, it nevertheless continued with its program of the erection of separate church buildings. It tabled an infamous resolution to the effect that: "the synod considers it desirable and scriptural that our members from the heathen be received and absorbed into our existing congregations wherever possible; but where this measure, as a result of the weakness of some, impedes the furtherance of the cause of Christ among the Heathen, the congregation from the Heathen, already founded or still to be founded, shall enjoy its Christian privileges in a separate building or institution" (De Gruchy 1979:8).

However, this synodical decision of 1857 was interpreted in different ways. One of the sources has it that: "GBA Gerdener is van mening dat die NGK hom in 1857 amptelik op die



standpunt van aparte kerke vir swart en blank gestel het. In die lig hiervan verklaar hy “daardeur het die Kleurlinge outomaties die blanke gemeentes verlaat en hul eie gemeentes gebou wat in 1881 uitgeloop het op die stigting van ‘n selfstandige sendingkerk” (Adonis 1982:56). Smith (1972:25) argues that separation between people of colour should not be measured against an unchristian attitude on the side of the whites: “die spontane ontwikkeling in die maatskappy gedurende die voorafgaande anderhalf eeu, het reeds sodanig vaste patroon van afsonderlikheid (skeiding) aangeneem dat dit nie weer ligtelik gewysig sou word nie.” According to Smith, this was a practice already in use long before the DRC made such a decision. Smith (1972:30) furthermore stressed the fact that the decision at the first synod of the DRC to establish the office of missionary workers, must be seen as the first step towards the formation of separate congregations for people of colour, as discussed above.

During the same year (1857) the synod tabled two requests from blacks to worship separately. The synod voted in favour of both St. Stephen’s congregation in Cape Town and the congregation in George to become black congregations with full status. Ministers were immediately assigned to both congregations (cf Loff 1981: 22).

In the meantime the DRC spearheaded the establishment of a Theological Seminary. This seminary opened its doors in 1859 in Stellenbosch for the theological education of students (cf De Gruchy 1979:5).

In 1876 the Wellington Institute was established. This institute became the feeding scheme for missionaries to be trained as workers under the auspices of the DRC. It is interesting to note that the official establishment of the DRC took place at the same Institute (cf Kriel 1981:25).

Between 1857 and 1880 a number of blacks requested the same status as the congregations of St. Stephens and George. Separate buildings for blacks to worship gradually became the order of the day. Furthermore, the establishment of the “Binnelandse Sendingkommissie” continued its investigation to the establishment of more congregations for blacks (cf Kriel 1981: 26). It

is therefore obvious that the way was finally paved for the formal establishment of the DRM Church in 1881, a decision, which was finally endorsed at the 1880 synod.

The establishment of the DRM Church officially took place on 5 October 1881 in the Wellington Missionary Institute. Only four congregations with six representatives from George, Zuurbraak, Wellington and Wynberg sent representatives to this historic occasion. The official ceremony nevertheless took place. Loff (1981: 26) has it that Rev. Paulus Tseke and a representative from Beaufort West only arrived during the afternoon session of the synod. He openly doubted the validity of the meeting and the eventual establishment. After a lengthy debate on this issue, he and his delegate left the synod without being enrolled. Representatives nevertheless continued with its meeting and discussed pertinent issues such as registration, the establishment of a synodical commission, the division of circuits, the election of members for the local church council, etc. (cf Kriel 1998:32–33). After all the logistical issues were attended to, the group officially and formally established the DRM Church. Six persons in the names of D J Ruytenbeeck (chairperson), J Kretzen, J P Rossoux, Jan Joeli, Andries Oormeyer and J C Pauw (scribe) signed the letter for the official establishment on behalf of their respective congregations (cf Kriel 1998: 34).

#### **2.4 The growth of DRM Church after 1881**

The newly formed church did not have an easy task to convince other congregations to join. Loff (1981:28) is of the opinion that the problem in recruiting new congregations must be understood against the background of the “Binnelandse Sendingkommissie”, which took control over the newly formed church with a strict and rigid hand. According to Loff (1981:28) no healthy relationship existed between the missionaries and the “Binnelandse Sendingkommissie.” Loff made this assumption from a letter written by J C Pauw: “Daar word eensydige besluite geneem en uitgevoer. Die kerkstigting van 1881 het dus eintlik nie vir die sendelinge (en hul gemeentes) meegebring wat hulle gehoop het nie, nl. Enige vorm van onafhanklikheid en die reg tot selfstandige besluitneming nie” (Loff: 1981: 28). One can therefore assume that although Pauw was one of the signers of the official document to

establish the DRC, his disappointment in the handling of church affairs by the “Binnelandse Sendingkommisie”, made him reluctant in furthering the aim of church expansion.

The “Binelandse Sendingkommissie”, in co-operation with the newly elected moderator, nevertheless continued their efforts to win over congregations for the newly established church. They were instrumental in recruiting at least three congregations, Graaff-Reinett, Aberdeen and Middelburg in 1883 (cf Kriel 1981:35). The 1883 synod of the DRC was informed about the slow progress in recruiting congregations. This synod endorsed at least two resolutions: that all congregations of colour, which were financially supported by the “Sendingkommissie” be encouraged to enroll and that the congregation of Beaufort West be reprimanded for not joining the DRMC (Loff 1981:28).

The situation was such that no synod for the DRMC could be held within the first ten years. Eventually the second synod met on 21 January 1891, again in Wellington. At this synod sixteen congregations applied for membership (cf Kriel 1981:35). Ironically, at this synod, Rev. Paulus Teske was elected assessor of the synod. During the 1892 synod held in Kimberley the congregations of Montagu and Richmond applied for membership (Kriel: 1981:36).

Membership only gained momentum as from 1908. During that time 40 congregations formed part of the DRM Church. In 1916 it grew to 48 and in 1978, the synod held in Belhar, reported two-hundred-and forty-three congregations (cf Kriel: 1981:49).

## **2.4 Conclusions**

The formation of the DRM Church was no easy task. A number of factors contributed to this struggle. Certainly, the most important problem was the conflicting ideas within the membership of the DRC and the opposition from the side of the blacks who resisted being labeled as second-class members of the white DRC. Loff (1981:30) argues that the formation of the DRM Church in 1881 must be seen as the starting point of an extended period for the DRC to organize a church on racial grounds. Loff’s assumption is substantiated by Kriel who

summarized the situation as follows: “Gedurende die jong jare het die jong kerk ‘n stryd gevoer teen vooroordeel by Moeder- en Sendinggemeentes – daar was wantroue in die stigting van die Sendingkerk (Kriel: 1981:37). Loff (1981:31) furthermore draws attention to the fact that the DRM Church was in later years again divided into the DRC of Africa and the Reformed Indian Church. This division eventually forced the DRM Church in 1978 to enter into serious debates on the re-unification of all Reformed churches.

External factors also contributed to the slow progress of the newly formed church. According to Kriel (1981:38) the Anglo Boer War (1899–1902) made it almost impossible to move freely from town to town to continue the church’s program in registering more congregations. Furthermore, the influence of the Congregational Church during that period prohibited the steady growth of the church. This congregation worked with great success in Upington and Kenhardt and took over almost all the members and its buildings during 1899. Fortunately a court case ruled in favour of the DRC and they regained their buildings. Even the Ethiopian Movement<sup>5</sup>, which by then merged with the AME Church, took advantage of the war to recruit members (Kriel 1981: 38). In this regard Gerdener (1958:165) accused the AME Church for not evangelizing to recruit members and for simply taking over members of established churches.

The DRM Church ceased to exist under this name in 1994 when it united with the DRC in Africa to form the Uniting Reformed Church.

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<sup>5</sup> Du Plessis (1911: 302) has defined “Ethiopianism” as the endeavour to establish a native church independent of European control and was therefore seen as a threat to the government.

## CHAPTER 3

### **The African Methodist Episcopal Church in South Africa: A brief history**

#### **3.1 The origin of the AME Church**

Singleton notes, “The rise of African Methodism in the United States during the latter part of the eighteenth century was no mere accident. It grew out of the spirit of the times and represents in a concrete way the doctrine of the Rights of Man – a social and political philosophy in England and Europe, and whose influence was felt in America” (Singleton 1985: 1).

Coan (1987) supports the argument of Singleton and notes that; “the rise of the African Methodist Episcopal Church must be seen against the background of the African American’s struggle for freedom and equality of opportunity in the United States” (Coan 1987:1). The Black American’s involvement in the Revolutionary War for the independence of the USA became the gateway to their struggle for freedom. Coan’s argument is substantiated by Wesley (1935:vii) who argues, “the history of the American nation is from one point of view a record of the efforts of individuals and peoples in their pursuit of freedom. Blacks constructively organized developments amongst themselves to address their social and economic circumstances.”

It was during these times that the colonies under the control of Great Britain made every effort to rid them of British domination, which in America, eventually led to the American Revolutionary War (1775 – 1783). This war led to a new nation, namely the United States of America. For more than ten years tension had been building between Great Britain and the American colonies since the British government passed a series of laws to increase its control over the colonies. The American colonies strongly rejected the new laws, especially the tax laws and the fact that they had no representation in parliament. The fact that the American colonies disagreed with these new measures forced upon them, angered the British

government. A revolution seemed unavoidable. George Washington managed to unite all thirteen colonies against Britain and entered into dialogue with the French government for support if war should have been the only option to remedy the evil (cf Dunan 1973:196). After Britain ordered its troops to Boston to take action against the rebels, the Revolutionary war broke out soon afterwards (Milbank 1992: 142). It was only in 1783 that Britain recognized the United States' independence with the Paris peace treaty signed on 3 September 1783 (cf Milbank 1992: 142).

This resistance against being controlled by others soon awakened a spirit of opposition amongst the blacks in churches in the USA. The first Black Church to be organized during the war was the Black Baptist Church in 1782. The Methodists, Episcopalians, Congregationalists and Presbyterians followed the example of the Baptist Church from between 1787 and 1822 (cf African American Jubilee Edition of the Bible 1999:198).

Prior to the formation of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, a number of Blacks were members of the St. George's Methodist Episcopal Church in Philadelphia. These Blacks (or Negroes as they were called) had to occupy the back seats during worship services. They were not allowed to take Holy Communion with their white counterparts and were refused the opportunity to kneel at one altar with whites during prayer sessions. This practice, which in the beginning was acceptable to Blacks, led to severe dissatisfaction soon after the American Revolution in 1783. Baldwin argues that in 1784 Black Methodists started to hold their own meetings without the permission of their white superiors in the Methodist Church (cf Baldwin 1983: 26). When whites became aware of this practice, they allowed it with the provision that "proper white persons" be chosen to oversee the meetings. The intention of the whites was to minimize discontent and to curb any possible idea of revolt amongst the Blacks (cf Baldwin 1983: 26). Discontent and an eventual revolt became unavoidable. I concur with Foster who maintains that: "The African Methodist Episcopal Church was born in the midst of the American Revolution. While the colonists were busy shaking the chains of ecclesiastical tyranny and economic oppression, descendants from Africa were in the process of removing the tentacles of slavery and establishing the truth that all men should be free" (Foster 1987:

20). Foster further argues that the establishment of a “New Nation” gave impetus to the establishment of a “New Church” for Blacks in America (cf Foster 1987:20).

Richard Allen, founder of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, played an important role in these developments. He was born on 14 February 1760 as a slave to Benjamin Chew of Philadelphia in Pennsylvania. He was of African descent. Foster notes “Philadelphia became a city of historic bearing in 1776 when the colonies united in faith, courage and determination to declare a new nation. Richard Allen, at that time was sixteen years of age” (Foster 1987:25). These uniting forces in the USA influenced Allen’s thinking about slavery and therefore worked towards his own freedom since he could no longer endure the hardship and second class citizenship thrust upon slaves. Fortunately for Allen, his slave owner was a good, kind, affectionate, tender and humane person (cf Wesley 1935:17). Chew allowed all his slaves to attend prayers meeting every Thursday, but the slaves would not attend any meeting without finishing their crops for that specific day. Chew greatly respected this kind of attitude amongst the Blacks (cf Gregg 1987:13). Allen was the first to purchase his freedom in 1777 and soon thereafter he was converted into the Methodist Society and was later admitted to preach at their meetings.

Allen’s first obstacle after his freedom was to secure a living for himself. Wesley argues that in slavery a man’s occupation was secured and his living was assured. Many Negroes who became free had been kept in such dependence in slavery that it was exceedingly difficult for them to develop an initiative for themselves in freedom (Wesley 1935:19). Gregg concurs with Wesley that a free slave faced all kinds of restrictions: “Prior to 1780 free Negroes faced practically all restrictions and regulations imposed upon them. For the slightest offence they could be arrested. They were not equal to white men before the law, had very few rights of citizenship, and politically Negroes were regarded as a non-entity” (Gregg 1987:18). Since Allen purchased his freedom by saving money from cutting wood, he used such experience for his first occupation. His best opportunity for a new job came when civil government needed ox wagon drivers to transport salt. Allen used the opportunity to make stops on his journeys and preached to small groups on the road for he was convinced that his ultimate profession would be to seek and save his lost brethren (cf Wesley 1935:23). This afforded

Allen the opportunity to advance his preaching skills. In 1799 Bishop Ashbury of the Methodist Church as America's first Black Methodist deacon ordained him. He was consecrated a bishop in 1816 (cf Gregg 1980:41).

This is how Richard Allen expressed himself why they severed ties with the St. George's Methodist Church in Philadelphia: "One Sunday, as these Africans, as they were called, knelt down to pray outside their segregated area; they were actually pulled from their knees and told to go to a place which had been designated for them. This of course, adding insult to injury, and the Negroes said: 'Wait until prayer is over and we will go out and trouble you no more.'" (Gregg 1980:13).

After prayer, Richard Allen and fifteen others left the St. George's Methodist Church. Gregg (1987:7) notes that: "as Allen walked out of the St. George's Church in Philadelphia in 1787, this act represented a protest against unequal treatment and this bold stroke was the first recorded incident of a Negro who questioned the right of whites to treat him as they desired." This demonstration of Allen further led to an awakening to other Negroes to organize protest movements in their respective denominations.

Before the African Methodist Episcopal Church was organized, Allen and Absalom Jones formed the "Free African Society" in 1787. It was the first independent black group in America to work towards the abolition of slavery and to provide help to one another. (cf Campbell 1989:4) Furthermore, Richard Allen and Absalom Jones established the first insurance company for Blacks in Philadelphia. It was a mutual aid society to provide protection for the care of widows and orphans of deceased members (cf Foster 1987:30).

Coan argues that from the offset the movement met with stubborn opposition, which came from individuals who belonged to the parent body. The struggle lasted until 1799. In that year the Supreme Court rendered a decision, which gave the group legal rights to separate from the Methodist Church and to form an independent church (cf Coan 1978:4).



Though the “Free African Society” was not a religious body, they continuously engaged in religious activities. This gave Allen the opportunity to propagate a proper structure for church organization. Notwithstanding the fact that the Methodist Church was suspicious about Allen’s movements, Allen remained a loyal Methodist. Gregg summarized the feelings of Allen in this way: “Richard Allen was fundamentally a Methodist. Allen saw no religious sect or denomination that would suit the capacity of the coloured people better than the Methodist Church. The Methodist doctrine or Christian beliefs is plain and understandable. It was the Methodists who first brought glad tidings to the coloured people” (Gregg 1987: 41). The result of Allen’s convictions was that he persuaded a number of the members of the Free African Society to form a church with Methodist traditions and beliefs. Those who did not share his sentiments joined up with the Episcopalian Church (cf Wesley 1935:49).

### **3.2 The formation of the AME Church**

A meeting to formally organize the African Methodist Episcopal was called together in April of 1816. Although William Paul Quinn, a future AME bishop and an influential leader for the church, was present at this meeting, his tender age prohibited him to take part in the deliberations (cf Singleton 1985:23).

After lengthy deliberations and debates, it was decided to form the African Methodist Episcopal Church, which will stay in line with the doctrine, discipline and order of the Methodist tradition. As an indication of this allegiance, Wright notes: “As proof that there was no theological difference with the Methodist Church, they adopted the 29 Articles of Religion, the Catechism of Faith, the General Rules, and the polity of the Methodist Episcopal Church” (Wright 1963:14).

Since black people in Baltimore in Virginia and elsewhere experienced the same treatment, they established contact with the dissident group in Philadelphia. These contacts enabled the fledgling church to spread its wings at a very early stage following its establishment.

A resolution to merge these two groups, those in Philadelphia and Baltimore, into one was formulated in Philadelphia: “the people of Philadelphia, Baltimore, and all other places, who should unite with them, shall become one body under the name and style of the African Methodist Episcopal Church of the United States of North America, and that the book of Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church be adopted as our Discipline until further orders” (Singleton 1952:21).

This fledgling church was severely criticized by its Methodist opponents. To combat the attacks on the AME Church, Coppin, an AME minister, who later became a bishop, was at one stage in conversation with a white Methodist member who tried to convince the secessionists to return to the St. George’s Methodist Church. Coppin defended their action as follows: “: “We would be glad to merge; but we could not join a segregated church. We prefer to struggle along in our poverty. And with a twinkle in his eye said: “Some day you may be asked to merge with us, and have a non-racial Christian church” (Wright 1980:16).

Soon after the establishment of the church, Richard Allen and his followers embarked on a missionary program. Congregations were established in Philadelphia, New York, Boston, Newport, New Jersey, eastern Pennsylvania, the District of Columbia and the eastern shores of Maryland (cf Campbell 1989:13). In 1818 Morris Brown went to Charleston, South Carolina, and in less than a year organized a congregation with 1,848 members (cf Coan 1987: 9). Campbell further notes that the AME Church grew in its first hundred years to more than half a million members. Campbell (1989:vii) comments that by the opening of the twentieth century, it had become, in the words of WEB DuBois, “the greatest Negro institution in the world” (Campbell 1989:vii).

Today, the African Methodist Episcopal Church embraces twenty Episcopal Districts of which the first thirteen are located in the USA and the remaining seven Episcopal Districts in Africa, England and Europe.

It is important to dwell for a moment on the significance of the name of the A M E Church since its inception was within in the United States of America.

- The word “African” refers to the origin of members of the church. The members and their forebears were slaves imported from Africa. It is important to note that its originators were Africans in America. Coan (1987:3) argues that it was never the idea of the founders to start a “segregated church “, but a church, which is inclusive of all races. He substantiates his argument that with the notion of “Man our Brother” as part of the church’s credo, the church is open to all races and colour.
  
- Methodist refers to the Methodist Church from which the founders took over their doctrine, discipline and church order. The African Methodist Episcopal Church thus belongs to the Methodist family.
  
- Episcopal means that the church is under the control of bishops, which is the highest authority in the church.

The “motto” of the church represents its doctrine. Daniël Alexander Payne formulated the doctrine of the AME Church. He was the Director of Education for the AME Church and later became a bishop. Substance was giving to the doctrine by James Cone, a respected American Black theologian from amongst the AME ranks. The motto “God our Father, Christ our Redeemer and Man our Brother” embraces the doctrine of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. Payne’s affirmations speak volumes of the church’s commitment to equality: “I am oppressed to slavery, not because it enslaves the black man, but it enslaves man. And were all slaveholders in this land men of colour, and the slaves white men, I would be as thorough and uncompromising an abolitionist as I now am; for whatever and whenever I may see a being in the form of a man, enslaved by his fellowman, without respect to his complexion, I shall lift up man, without respect to his complexion, I shall lift up my voice to plead for his cause, against all claims of his proud oppressor; and I shall do it not merely from the sympathy which man feels towards suffering man, but because God, the living God, who I dare not disobey, has commanded me to open my mouth for the dumb, and plead the cause of the oppressed” (Coan 1976: 13).

### **3.3 The origin of mission and independent churches in the South African context**

According to Du Plessis, the majority of Africans in South Africa did not have any church affiliation at the beginning of the nineteenth century (cf Du Plessis 1911:29). The Moravians in 1738 were the first missionaries to evangelize the indigenous people. "Indeed, the first European missionary specifically sent to minister to the indigenous population at the Cape was not Dutch Reformed but a Moravian, George Schmidt, who in 1738 commenced his work at Genadendal,..." (De Gruchy 1979:2). Elphick observes that by 1911 at least 26% of Africans were affiliated to white missionary churches (cf Elphick 1997:1). Evangelization amongst Africans seriously commenced when Britain took over the Cape Colony. The first missionary society to commence work in the Cape Colony was the London Missionary Society in 1799. Soon after the London Missionary Society, the Wesleyans embarked on a similar program. The evangelization of indigenous people gained momentum in 1820 with the arrival of the British Settlers (cf Pretorius 1911: 91).

By the end of 1835 the Wesleyans, Congregationalists, Presbyterians and Anglicans were well established in South Africa. Other denominations in South Africa were the Roman Catholics, Evangelical Protestants, Methodists and the Lutherans so that by the end of 1890 approximately twenty church denominations were scattered around South Africa (cf Du Plessis 1911:91-119).

Missionaries often could not come to grips with the cultural and religious beliefs of the African people. To them these beliefs were uncivilized and unchristian: European missionaries denounced African customary practices and the church opposes African family practices. Their African dress and language were regarded as being uncivilized (cf Gyekey 1978:5). To estrange them from their beliefs system, the missionaries opened mission schools in order to "Christianize and civilize" blacks.

It is important to emphasize that European missionaries did not understand the African religious beliefs. To them these were heathen practices. In this regard Pityana argues: "Blacks

are religious people. Religion permeates the depths of life so fully that it is not easy or even possible sometimes to speak of a secular over against a spiritual life. To the Black people, religion is their whole system of being” (see Motlhabi 1999:58). The argument of Pityana is supported by Biko when he notes that: “We (also) believed in one God, we had our own community through whom we related to our God and we did not find it compatible with our way of life to worship God in isolation from the various aspects of our lives” (Motlhabi 1999:145) The argument of both Pityana and Biko is therefore that God is not worshipped in isolation, but is present in their everyday lives. However, the European missionaries could not condone these practices.

A strong paternalistic attitude towards the indigenous people was prevalent amongst the missionaries. Blacks who became converted and attended school, were afforded the opportunity to become pastors in their respective churches, but was never afforded the opportunity to administer the sacrament of baptism and Holy Communion. Money collected by them had to be forwarded to the head of the missionary stations, which were led by whites. In this regard Campbell summarized the situation as follows: “the African was a child and the missionary a stern and demanding father.” (Campbell 1989:84)

### **3.4 The rise of Separatist Church Movements in South Africa**

The submissive role imposed on blacks in the life of the missionaries gave impetus to the rise of separatist church movements. Black pastors were only allowed to minister to their own people. Tiyo Soga was the first black priest to be ordained by the Free Church of Scotland in 1856 (cf Skota 1932:34) By the end of 1866 a number of black priests, amongst others, Mangena Maake Mokone – a future leader for the AME Church, was ordained by the Wesleyan Missionary Society.

It is important to define the term “separatist” since this term has brought about much confusion. Sundkler defines “separatist” as sects, which broke away from mainline churches due to doctrinal differences (cf van der Walt 1963: 178). To Sundkler the separatist movement is “the symptom of awakening Bantu race-consciousness and nationalism and is

therefore the logical reply to the white policy of segregation and separation within the church” (cf Coan 1987: 36).

The submissive role blacks had to endure became unbearable to some and they decided to secede from missionary movements to form their own churches. Nehemiah Tile was the first to secede from the Wesleyan Methodist Church when he organized the Tembu Church in 1884. He was followed by Mokone who formed the Ethiopian Church Movement in 1892, by Mzimba who formed the African Presbyterian Church in 1898 and by Morris who formed the African Coloured Baptists Church in 1899. By 1933 government statistics had on record 272 independent African churches. It is against this background that Roux suggests that if all black churches could have been united into one single church, they should have been a factor the government could not afford to ignore (cf Roux 1978: 77 – 86).

### **3. 5 The Ethiopian Movement**

The emergence of the AME Church in South Africa has to be understood against the background of the Ethiopian Movement. The roles played by Mangena Maake Mokone and Charlotte Manye Mxeke in this regard deserve some special attention.

a) Mangena Maake Mokone was born in 1852 in Bokgaga in the Old Transvaal Province. His father was a local Swazi chief. While still very young, Mangena’s father was killed in one of the tribal wars that raged during that time. As a result of this, Mokone had to leave home before he was twelve years of age. He began work in the sugar cane fields of Pietermaritzburg (cf Roux 1978: 79). Mokone was encouraged by his employer to attend church services and class meetings of the Methodist Church in Aliwal North Street. Mrs. Steel, his employer, also encouraged him to enroll for the night classes, which were then offered by the Methodist Church School. One night in 1874, while attending a class meeting, Mokone had a profound experience with God. The preacher compared the work of the devil to that of a hunter who digs a pit for unexpected animals to fall in. This sermon turned his life for the better.

Rev. Hlongwane baptized Mokone.(cf Roux 1978:79). Mokone then decided to devote the rest of his life to the work of God.

In 1875 Mokone started to attend night classes in preparation for his entry into the ministry. He was an outstanding student and was soon appointed as a teacher. His leadership qualities were also recognized and after two years of teaching, he was appointed a school principal.

Mokone became a lay preacher who was especially endowed with spiritual power. Sundkler notes that Maake Mokone was a distinguished preacher of the Methodist Church (Sundkler 1948:39). During one of his fiery sermons, Mokone had the congregation on their knees, shouting and singing for Jesus. The neighbouring whites rushed into the church building and shouted "Vuka, boys! Vuka!" (Get up boys! Get up). Whites could not understand that this was not a pagan act, but a powerful manifestation of the work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers. Roux argues that the European missionary superintendent was sent "to replace Mokone by a better person who would not frighten the poor creatures with hell fire" (Roux 1978:80). The ignorant whites demanded that Mokone be replaced for inciting a riot.

After six years of teaching and preaching, Mokone became an ordained preacher. He was recommended by his Superintendent as a "superior preacher ... a man with wisdom, whose pity was real and who was anxious to preach the Gospel to his countrymen" (see Souvenir Brochure 1996:19). Mokone served the Methodist Churches Newstead in Natal, Prudery and Pretoria. He was also instrumental in translating the catechism book in Sepedi in 1885. His first attempt to improve the educational level of the Blacks was with his appointment as Principal of Kilnerton Institute.

As principal of Kilnerton Institute, Mokone soon realized that whites discriminated against blacks. Black ministers were obliged to yield on all points to white ministers. In addition, most of the privileges enjoyed by white ministers were denied to blacks. Mokone realized that the only solution to this problem was that blacks in future have their own conferences to discuss matters concerning them. The Methodist Church was in favour of such an arrangement, but considered it appropriate that a white chairperson should conduct their

meetings (cf Campbell 1989: 103). It should however been obvious that black ministers were still under strict control of their white leaders. Such a disclosure on the part of the white leaders became unbearable for Mokone and he and his followers resigned from the Methodist Church in October 1892 (Dwane 1989: 86). In 1892 Mokone submitted a list of fourteen complaints to his superiors. This letter later became known as the “Founder’s Declaration of Independence”. In his declaration he made known his disappointments with the Methodist Church. In this manifesto he submitted fourteen reasons for him and others severing ties with the Wesleyan Methodist Church and handed it to the minister of the Wesleyan Church in Pretoria (cf Campbell 1989:104-106). Amongst others, he attacked the Methodist Church for conducting meetings for blacks separately from whites but still have to abide with a white chairperson and secretary. Financial allowances were only given to white widows and orphans of deceased ministers. The salaries of white ministers were 80% more than that of black ministers. Black ministers were prohibited to solemnize marriages, administer the baptism and Holy Communion. Furthermore they had to provide their own homes, whilst the church provided parsonages for white ministers and their families (cf Mbiti 1969:70-71). On 20 November 1892 Mokone and fifty others broke away from the Methodist Church and started the Ethiopian Movement (cf Campbell 1989: 104 – 106).

b) Charlotte Manye was born on 7 April 1873 was born at Fort Beaufort in the Cape Colony (cf Coan 1987: 47). Since her parents belonged to the Wesleyan Church, she received her early school training at the Wesleyan School in Uitenhage. From Uitenhage she embarked to continue her studies at Edward Memorial School in Port Elizabeth. Whilst in Port Elizabeth, her family moved to Kimberley for better job prospects. Upon completion of her courses, she joined her parents and started teaching and music lessons (cf Coan 1987:47).

Charlotte’s true joy was music. A certain Mr. Bam from Kimberley took cognizance of her singing talents and invited her for an African tour to England and then to the United States. The tour was organized to raise funds to build an industrial school for Africans (cf Xuma 1930:9). The England tour however failed, not because of poor performances, but due to non-payment by the organizers. Campbell (1989) has it that “From the offset, however, the choir was dogged by recriminations and allegations of broken promises” (Campbell 1989:29).



When the promoters announced a second tour to the USA, Charlotte again joined the group. This time the tour lasted a whole year, but again it was faced with failure. The group disbanded in Cleveland, Ohio. Some came back to South Africa and others decided to stay in America. Charlotte was one of the people who wanted to stay to further her own education (cf Campbell 1989:129). In a sense, the failure of the tour and the accompanying hardship was a blessing in disguise. Charlotte realized her dream to be educated in America (cf Coan 1987:47).

The group was destitute in Ohio. Here they met up with the Reverend Reverdy Ransom, an ordained elder of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. He took pity on them and accommodated them in one of the settlements his congregation had established for the destitute. (cf Campbell 1989:129)

With the help of the AME Church Mission Department, the group registered at the University of Wilberforce in Ohio. During her first year at university in 1894, under the influence of Bishop McNeil Turner, she wrote to her aunt, Ms Kate Makanya, living in Johannesburg. At the time of writing the letter, she had no idea what far-reaching missionary effect this letter was going to have. She described life in America; the progress blacks were making, their fine homes, their educational institutions and naturally the AME Church (see Souvenir Brochure 1996:23).

Ms Kakanya showed the letter to her uncle, the Reverend Mangena Mokone, who was then an ordained minister of the newly formed Ethiopian Movement. He was very impressed and wanted to know more about the independent African Methodist Episcopal Church in America. This letter was the instrument that brought African Methodism to South Africa. Reverend Mokone and Bishop Turner started corresponding and exchanged information regarding their respective churches (cf Coan 1987:48). Charlotte completed her BA degree, married Marshall Maxeke, a fellow student of South Africa, and returned home to start a school for boys in Pietersburg.

c) The history of the Ethiopian Movement is imperative for this study as this movement merged with the AME Church in 1896. Long before this movement was started, the Blacks in South Africa felt an urgent need to break away from white dominated churches. In connection with the rise of Black Independent Churches, Gerdener (1958:194) notes that "...we must sooner or later so reform Church dogmas as to bring Christianity away from European cultural ideologies, down to within reach of black cultural life."

Soon after the establishment of the Ethiopian Movement, a controversial figure, James Mata Dwane, became a member of the Ethiopian Movement in 1894 (cf Verryn 1957:68). According to Roux, Dwane was a man of outstanding ability and energy, but one with an opportunistic streak in him. He and Mokone struggled for leadership (Roux 1978:81). Verryn concurred with Roux by arguing that Dwane seriously challenged Mokone's popularity amongst the laity (Verryn 1957:68).

Dwane left the Methodist Church because of funds that he personally raised in England for a college for Blacks, but the Methodist Church decided to use the money as general church funds. Coan has it that by 1896 the Ethiopian Movement had approximately 3000 members and twenty ministers. It was soon discovered that a lack of infra-structure, the establishment of a number of other Black Churches, the lack of funds and the members' quest for self determination sooner or later forced them to join up with another church. (cf Coan 1987: 47)

d) The merging of the Ethiopian Movement with the AME Church must also be understood against the background of the AME Church's attempts to expand its missionary programmes to South Africa. Approximately eight years after the formation of the AME Church in the United States, a program was designed to extend its borders outside of the country. The Voice of Missions, one of the official publications of the church announced the following: "the earliest conferences in the infancy of the connection passed resolutions and entered upon discussions looking to the organization of missionary work" (Voice of Missions, March 1894:1). To this end, a general fund was established for mission purposes. To give further impetus to the church's missionary endeavors, a "Foreign Missionary Society" was established which coincided with the General Synod decisions of 1896 which stated:

“Whereas, we further remember with the deepest emotions the last command of our ascended Lord: ‘Go yea into the world and preach the gospel’, and desiring from the great depth of our souls to prove our love by our obedience, we therefore, as a body of evangelical Christians, concluded to form a society (General Conference Minutes 1860:26). This decision resulted into the establishment of “The Parent Home and Foreign Missionary Society,” which was entrusted with the task of raising funds for missionary expansions.

The extension of the church’s boundaries to South Africa was greeted with mixed feelings. Bishop Turner and his followers were optimistic about missionary expansion to South Africa. Turner’s article on the “Redemption of Africa” was also published in one of the church’s periodicals, the “Voice of Missions”. It explained the African mission as follows: “The Ethiopians were not beggars, but mature churchmen who will ask only some temporary help on the educational front. Indeed, the AME Church in America would one day be supported financially by South Africa” (Voice of Missions July 1896.) The temporary help refers to correspondence between Mokone, then minister of the Ethiopian Movement in South Africa. Turner’s notion on “... supported financially by South Africa”, refers to the rich minerals such as diamonds, gold and iron then delved in this country by that time.

Contrary to Turner’s view, Bishop Payne and his followers warned the church to be cautious. He reminded the church of the heavy financial burdens incurred through its expansions to West India (Payne 1891:293). Furthermore, with the American policy on emigration to Africa, Payne warned the church not to get involved: “Payne thought that the attempt to extend the AME missions into Africa at that time or within the near future was to allow zeal to outrun common sense.” “He also thought it was an endeavor to establish African Methodist Imperialism” (AME Review July 1884:5).

Though the church, according to Payne, was in financial trouble, it could not afford to ignore the opportunity to spread its wings to South Africa. In this regard, the contact built up by the church through Mokone, Manye and Turner was of vital importance for the church to embark on this important mission, hence its further contact with the Ethiopian Movement.

### 3.6 The merging of the Ethiopian movement with the AME Church

Charlotte Manye brought the Ethiopian Movement into contact with the American AME Church. For Coan (1987), the similarities between these two churches gave impetus to the merging procedure: "It is to be noted that the beginnings of the AME Church in Philadelphia in 1787 and of the Ethiopian Church in Pretoria in 1892 had striking similarities. Both arose out of Methodist bodies as African protest movements against unchristian discrimination" (Coan 1987:43). He furthermore notes that both churches followed the doctrine of the Methodist Church, which made it easier for them to merge.

James Dwane became instrumental in the merging process of the Ethiopian Movement with the AME Church. On 17 March 1896 a meeting of the Ethiopian Movement was held to discuss the possibility of merging with the AME Church. After a lengthy debate and due consideration, the Ethiopian Movement resolved to seek affiliation with the AME Church. Three men were elected to consolidate the union of the Ethiopian Movement and the AME Church. They were Mokone, Dwane and Xaba. Since the Conference did not have the money to send these men to America, each one had to raise their own funds. In the end, Dwane went alone (Roux 1978: 81). A special session to discuss the resolution of the Ethiopian Movement was held on 19 June 1896 in Atlanta, Georgia. At this meeting the Ethiopian Movement ceased to exist and was absorbed by the AME Church. At the merging session Dwane was also appointed leader of the South African AME Church. At the same meeting Dwane was promised that he will become the next bishop for the AME Church in South Africa and that the AME Church in the USA will secure enough money for the prospected college (cf Campbell 1990:139). Bishop Turner had visited the newly constituted AME Church in South Africa to have discussions on the administration of the AME Church in 1893. Here he found a membership of more than 11 000 (cf Campbell 1990:138).

In 1899 James Dwane seceded the AME Church because the promises made to him during the merging process did not come to fruition. In the same year he started "The Order of Ethiopian Church" under the auspices of the Anglican Church (cf Coan 1987: 125). Roux argues that: "Dwane himself maintained that it was implicit in the agreement between himself and the

priests of the Anglican Church who had urged him to break away from the AME Church, and he continued for years to campaign for the right of the Order of Ethiopia to manage its own affairs and have its own bishop. In the meantime he and his followers found themselves once more working under white supervision” (Roux 1978:83). This gives enough reason for Roux and others to believe that Dwane was an opportunist.

The secession of Dwane did little to stop the AME Church to advance. During the period 1896 – 1903 AME congregations were established in the Transvaal and in the Cape Peninsula congregations were established in District Six, Worcester, Athlone, Goodwood, Simonstown and Chatsworth near Malmesbury. Elphick notes that although a considerable number of secessionists left the AME Church with Dwane, its membership grew to 10,800 by the end of 1899 (Elphick 1997: 214).

### **3.7 Conclusion**

The AME Church in South Africa soon made its presence felt. Official permission for the church to operate in the Transvaal Republic, was given by the President of the Transvaal, Paul Kruger (Coan 1987:79).

Elphick (1997) argues that the AME Church became a threat to the South African government since many of its leaders played vital roles in the political arena. Amongst others, Charlotte Manye organized the first Women’s League of the ANC and was elected the first President of this body, Henry Ncayiya became senior chaplain of the ANC, Dr. A B Xuma became president of the ANC and R W Msimang drafted the constitution of the ANC (cf Elphick 1997:215).

## CHAPTER 4

### The origin and growth of the AME congregation in Piketberg

#### 4.1 Introduction: The town of Piketberg

The original inhabitants of the area that is known as Piketberg today were the Khoi-San people, more specifically the Gonjemans. Soon after the advent of colonialist rule in 1652 in the Cape, the area was utilized as a military post to protect the settlers against attacks from the indigenous people. One source has it that the name Piketberg is derived from the use of “piketten” during one such military operation against the Gonjemans (cf Van Riebeeck Uitgawe 1952:4). According to Burger (1975: 26), the name is derived from a French card game called “piquet”, hence the spelling Piquetberg.

Piketberg became a town in 1832, which coincided with the secession of the DRC from the Malmesbury-Tulbagh congregation. It was still governed by the magisterial District of Stellenbosch. The government allocated the farm “Grootfontein”, which was considered central, to the DRC for the erection of a church building. In the beginning no boundaries were set for the different race groups. Housing schemes developed round the church and all people in the area belonged to the DRC. Burger (1975:91) reflects on the development of the housing scheme as follows: daar was in daardie jare ook net een beskaafde bouplan, die langwerpige strooidak-gewelhuis...”

With colonist rule also came the systematic process of subjugating the indigenous people and the alienation of their land rights. As the colonists continued to satisfy their land-hunger, there developed an upper class of Whites and a lower class of Coloured people, who incidentally constituted the majority in Piketberg.

The first building in Piketberg was that of the DRC which was completed and dedicated in 1836. Burger (1975:47) describes the influx of people on the day of dedication as follows: “die gebou was te klein vir die gehoor wat by die onvergeetlike geleentheid in karre en waens

uit alle hoeke van die gemeente saamgekom het om die eensame Godshuis, van ver af sigbaar, op die hoogte van twee beboste klowe, in te wy.” The first day school for all races was opened in 1846 with Mr. LJ Fick as first teacher. With the retirement of Fick, Mr. Thomas Quirk succeeded him as principal in 1862. It is not known how the Episcopal Church got control over the school, but the children of Afrikaans speaking parents, resisted Quirk as principal (cf van Riebeeck Uitgawe 1952:16). A second primary school was then opened to accommodate Afrikaans speaking pupils. At first it was used as a primary school, but with the progress of the building process, it combined with the High School in 1947 (cf Centenary Edition of Piketberg High School 1846–1946). It was only in 1881 that the school became an “all white” school (cf Van Riebeeck Uitgawe 1952:17). According to Burger (1975:57) the first school for coloured pupils was opened in 1874. Miss E Hartogh became the first teacher with an enrollment of forty-one pupils.

To enhance the development of the town, the neighbouring farms Zuurfontein (1841) and Kleine Vogel Vallei (1843) were attached to Piketberg. These farms were used as wheat and cattle producers (cf Burger 1975: 48). It was only in 1848 with the development of the town that Piketberg became a magisterial district on its own (cf Van Riebeeck Uitgawe 1952:7). In 1858 the first “Agricultural Society” was established in Piketberg. This society assisted in the improvement of agricultural methods and the usage of modern agricultural implements used in those days (cf Van Riebeeck Uitgawe 1952:20).

The Berg River flows south of Piketberg. As a result, the town was cut off from towns such as Malmesbury. Long distances from the south had to be traveled to reach Piketberg and vice versa. The completion of the Berg River bridge in 1862 permitted easy access to Piketberg (cf Van Riebeeck Uitgawe 1952: 20).

In 1875 the first public library was opened in Piketberg. The library was used as a source of information towards agricultural improvement since Piketberg was cut off from the rest of developing farms in the nearby Malmesbury area (see Gedenkuitgawe Afrikaanse Taalfees 1975:4). In 1901 the first town council was established to control the business and development of Piketberg. Its first priority was to ensure that communication through

transport be improved. This resulted in the completion of the railway line from Cape Town to Piketberg in 1902.

#### **4.2 The Anglo Boer War (1899 – 1902)**

The advent of the Anglo Boer War (1899–1902) brought the simmering tensions between whites and the coloured people in the Piketberg area to the fore. The coloured people supported the British effort because they resented the submissive roles that were required from them. Lewis (1987:15) notes that a Black newspaper, “The South African Spectator”, published an article in which Mr. Chamberlain and Lord Milner assured the Blacks that they would help them from the rod of oppression to a glorious heritage of free men. Due to this promise, many Blacks in the Cape supported the British war. No wonder that coloured people left the farms in droves to enlist in the British army in supporting roles. The situation in Piketberg became so acute that not even an increase in the daily allowance for farm workers to 25 cents could deter the coloured people from joining the British army (cf Burger 1975:134).

Most Whites supported the Boer effort and used the church as a platform to condemn the British war effort and to raise support for the Boer cause. When it became known that Rev. Vlok, after twenty-one years of service in the DRC in Piketberg, sided with the British and was, in addition, an active member of the “Piketberg Mounted Troops”, his services were summarily terminated (cf Burger 1975:63).

#### **4.3 Secession from the DRC**

The advent of the Anglo Boer War just exacerbated the strained relations that were developing over a period of time in the DRC in Piketberg. Johannisen (1953) captured the situation of coloured people during that time as follows: “They were obliged to occupy the back pews during services. With pain they came to realize that their presence at church services had become an intrusion” (Johannisen 1953: 6).



Towards the middle of 1902 relationships between white and Coloured people within the DRC was so bad, that a group of coloureds broke away to form their own cottage church. Burger summarizes the situation as follows: “Hierdie Vryheidsoorlog van Cecil John Rhodes het ook die omgewing van Piketberg baie pynlik geraak: dit het onmin en tweespalt aangeblaas tussen leraar en gemeente en ‘n breuk geslaan tussen Blank en Gekleur...” (Burger 1975:133).

The secessionists met at the home of Ousie Muis Javan in Rooidraai, a so-called Coloured settlement in Piketberg. Frans Esau and Klaas Dirks were elected as leaders of this group (cf Johannisen 1953:6). Their secession from the DRC afforded them the opportunity to reflect upon their future. Their main object however, was to serve God without the constraints that membership of the DRC placed on them (cf Johannisen 1954:6).

#### **4.4 Establishing links with the AME Church (1902-1903)**

Micheal Bell, an inhabitant of Piketberg, was working as a bricklayer in Diep River, Cape Town during 1902. When he heard about the secession of a group from the DRC, he came into contact with the AME Church in Diep River. He informed the group in Piketberg about the new church in Diep River, which is governed by coloured people. He therefore became the link between the AME Church in Cape Town and the group in Piketberg. The break away group in Piketberg wanted to gather first-hand information about the AME before they made a decision whether to join up or not.

The leaders, Frans Esau and Klaas Dirks, were delegated to visit an AME Church Conference in 1903 in Wellington to gather more information about the church. Their report back was favourable about what they had seen and heard. Additional confirmation came from a member of the AME Church in Cape Town, a certain Mr Auret, who visited the dissident group in Piketberg. He confirmed the information brought over by Frans Esau and Klaas Dirks (cf Johannisen 1953:6).

According to oral tradition, Frans Esau, in the beginning, was uncertain about whether God had a hand in the establishment of the church at Piketberg. His conviction about the authenticity of the church came, according to him, through divine revelation: "Frans, Frans, this is "My will and My church" (Johannisen 1953:8). This revelation did not only remove Frans Esau's doubts about the genuineness of the AME Church, but also formed his own theology - through which he could find justification for the founding of the new church.

#### **4.5 The establishment of the AME Congregation in Piketberg**

When the news of a possible church for Coloured people became known, the Church Council of the DRC came together in 1903. At this special meeting they decided to establish a congregation of the DRM Church in Piketberg (cf Joubert 1932:89). This history will be discussed in the next chapter in more detail. It should be noted here that the Church Council did everything they could to convince the secessionists to return with the promise of a coloured church under the auspices of the DRC, as well as better job prospects for those who wish to return (cf Johannisen 1953:8). A number of secessionists returned to the fold of the DRC. This however, did not stop the remaining group to continue with their effort in starting another congregation.

The AME congregation was finally established on Monday 12 October 1903 in Piketberg with seventy-five members (cf Messiah 1983:3). Bishop Levi Jenkins Coppin, first resident bishop in South Africa, officially established the congregation. The first hymn "If God before us, who can be against us?" was sung, and is until today recognized as the founding hymn of the congregation. Coppin took his scripture from Revelations 3:8: "I'll give unto you an open door that no man can shut." It is indeed against the background of the founding hymn and the scriptural text that the congregation in Piketberg stood firm and united against the onslaughts to kill the fledgling church.

The name "Mount Olive Chapel" was given to the newly established church. Bishop Coppin most probably gave this name to the new congregation. He was ordained as minister in 1880 in the Mount Olive African Methodist Episcopal Church, Wilmington, North Carolina, USA.

Furthermore, the church at the foot of the Piquet mountain probably also convinced him that “Mount Olive Chapel” would be the appropriate name.

According to Johannisen (1953:8) Frans Esau was appointed leader of the newly formed congregation until such time as the Annual synod of the AME Church could appoint a minister. On his shoulders fell the task of spiritual guidance to all members of the congregation, and inducting them into the ways of African Methodism. The more daunting task was to firmly establish Mt Olive congregation against tremendous odds.

#### **4.6 A period of church planting (1905 – 1939)**

Rev. William C Collins was the first minister assigned to this congregation. His period of ministry extended from 1905 to 1912. Rev. Collins was a political leader and first president of the African People’s Organization (APO) (cf Lewis 1987:20). His political involvement made it almost impossible for him to regularly attend to his pastoral duties. However, during his administration the flat roof building was reconstructed to that of a pitched building structure (Johannisen 1953:10).

Further impetus was given to the day school, which opened its doors in 1905. Rev. Collins became the first manager of the school. It was at first administered as a private school. The first principal was Ms Sarah Bell, assisted by Ms Sarah Brand. The curriculum consisted of reading and writing. The children of Piketberg, as well as Moravia (south of Piketberg) and Pools (north of Piketberg) availed themselves of the opportunity to learn how to read and to write. Instead of a salary, honorariums were given to teachers on special occasions.

Rev. Andrew W Phigelandt succeeded Rev. W C Collins in 1912. During his period he served both the Chatsworth congregation near Malmesbury and the Piketberg congregation. He was resident in Chatsworth and traveled either by rail or ox-wagon to Piketberg.

In Piketberg he found a community which started off in 1903 but which battled to come to grips with the consequences of their actions. They had a low esteem and struggled to prosper

as a community of God. Rev. Phigelandt immediately started on a campaign to build self-pride among the church members. Although they were still referred to in derogatory terms as a “Kaffir Church”, he intentionally embarked on a campaign to raise the morale of church members. This he did by trying to normalize relations with Whites and by fostering pride in what the members had achieved. He was also instrumental in mobilizing his congregation to equip themselves with a self-help attitude by enabling them to prosper independently from outside help. With this initiative the congregation raised sufficient funds to purchase amongst others, new church pews and raised funds for the building project.

Because the AME School fell within the boundaries of the white exclusive area and it was situated near the all-white school, there was much friction between the coloured and white pupils of that time. The situation had become volatile and fights were common. In order to ease the tension between the two schools, Rev. Phigelandt took the initiative to arrange for talks between him and the white school. This helped much to improve the situation and the relationship between coloureds and whites (see Booy's: profile of Rev. Phigelandt).

Rev. Phigelandt led the congregation in building a parsonage on prime land and acquired an additional plot for the school principal. An entrance lobby was attached to the church and a gallery was built for the church choir. A double-storey building, as well as two extra classrooms were erected to accommodate the school with its constant increasing enrollment (cf Johannisen 1953: 10).

According to the financial records of the church dated 1904 – 1925 it can be ascertained that the first organ for the church was bought in February 1910 since this was the day of the first payment. This “Sherlock Morning Organ” was bought from Cooper, Gill and Tomkins in Cape Town. The total cost of the organ was fifteen British pounds, ten shillings and ten pennies. The down payment was made in April of 1912. This organ can be viewed at the Piketberg Museum.

Rev. Phigelandt placed a high premium on education. His first task was to officially register the school with the Department of Education. It was only in 1918 that the school was

recognized as a state subsidized school. From then on teaching posts had to be advertised and qualified teachers had to be employed wherever possible (cf Johannisen 1953: 10).

Mr Mtombini was appointed the first official principal of the AME School in 1919. Special recognition was given to the role of Sarah Bell and the Department of Education decided to pay her salary. During the early 1920's a "Pupil Teachers Course" was introduced at the school. This in effect meant that pupils after the completion of standard six could embark on the training course offered by the school for two years (cf Johannisen 1953: 10). For their third year they had to attend a Teachers Training College. Most of the Pupil-Teachers of the AME School in Piketberg, attended the Battswood Training College in Cape Town to complete their third year. These students were encouraged to come back upon the completion of their courses as teachers of the AME School in Piketberg.

Mr Makanana succeeded Mr. Mtombeni as principal. The date of his appointment is unknown. In the beginning, principals did not serve very long. When Mr. Makanana's term expired, Mr van Boom succeeded him. Other principals were Mr. P D Johannes, Mr. A J Ayliff, Rev. J J Jethro, Rev. E A Lawrence and Ms. H Coetzee. It is thus obvious that the continuous exchange of principals did not assist the school in making steady progress (see Booy 1978: profile of Phigelandt)

#### **4.7 The legacy of JJ Links as school principal (1929 – 1959)**

Rev. Andrew W Phigelandt and the Church Council made every effort to ensure that somebody with a long-term vision be appointed as principal of the AME School. After a long and thorough search for the appropriate candidate, the mantle fell on the shoulders of a young man from Carnarvon who was at that stage a member of the DRM Church. He was John J Links. It must be stated that the custom those days was to first secure teaching posts for members of the congregation itself.

When the post was offered to Mr. Links, he immediately withdrew his membership of the DRMC and became a member of the AME Church in Piketberg. Since Rev. Phigelandt placed

a high premium on music and no principal without musical skills was appointed, Mr. Links was the ideal person for the job. The job description of a principal further entailed that the successful candidate should also be the official organist and choir director of the church. Mr. Links was therefore the appropriate candidate for this post. He commenced work as principal at the AME School in Piketberg on January 1929.

Mr. Links' first priority as principal was to raise funds for a piano. Concerts were held on a monthly basis and the proceeds were utilized to buy the long needed piano. The "Banier", then the official newspaper of the erstwhile Department of Coloured Affairs in 1960 has it that that the term of Mr. Links as principal of the AME School in Piketberg, at least twenty-three pupils of his school qualified as teachers. Amongst others, he was also Superintendent of the Sunday school and the Church treasurer.

Mr. Links was an outstanding choir director. The Cape synod of the AME Church in those days held annual Choir Competitions. The Bonner floating trophy was awarded to the best choir. During 1950, the AME Church Choir under the directorship of Mr. Links won the trophy, which is still in the possession of the church.

Mr. Links also started the "Brass Band" in the AME Church at Piketberg. This gave new inspiration, not only to the members, but also to the youth of the church.

During the 1940's Mr. Links became keenly interested in the ministry of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. Upon the completion of his ministerial studies, he was ordained and served the AME congregations in Porterville, Malmesbury and Firgrove. He retired as principal of the AME School in 1959 (cf Booyse 1978: profile of Links).

#### **4.8 A period of continued development (1940 – 1970)**

Rev. John Cornelius Johannisen succeeded Rev. Phigelandt as minister of Piketberg at the end of 1939. He served both the congregations of Malmesbury and Piketberg. He was also instrumental in establishing a congregation in Elands Bay, approximately sixty kilometers

from Piketberg. One of his first tasks was to start “The Independent Order of True Templers” (IOTT), an organization, which focuses on ways to combat alcohol abuse

Rev. J C Johannisen was commonly known as the builder-pastor. During his term of office in Piketberg, the Department of Education started a feeding scheme for children. It became the responsibility of Rev. Johannisen to secure a kitchen for this project. Furthermore, a school hall was erected as a multi-purpose building. He served the congregation for fifteen years and died on 14 January 1954 (see Booy 1978: profile of Johannisen).

Rev. Alexander M Kadalie succeeded Rev. J C Johannisen in 1954. Kadalie had a keen interest in church administration and the total involvement of members in church affairs. He established the Laymen’s League, previously a male organization to foster church patriotism within the members of the congregation, then a predominantly male auxiliary, on 24 July 1955. No minister in the AME Church is allowed to become a member of this auxiliary, but since it was fairly new to the members of the Piketberg congregation, he presided over this auxiliary for a couple of months to train the members. Under his administration in Piketberg, Samuel M Paulse became the first president of this local auxiliary. After this auxiliary was well established in the Cape synod of the church, S M Paulse was also elected the first president at the 1956 synod meeting.

Kadalie also established the “Trustee Helpers” as a vehicle to support the Trustees with the renovations of the buildings. He was an outstanding preacher and started the “Lay Preachers Training Program” in Piketberg. He served the congregation until 1961 (see Booy 1978: profile of Kadalie)

Rev. Stanley Purvis Johannisen succeeded Kadalie in 1961. Johannisen became the first chairperson of the Coloured Sports Board in Piketberg. During the tenure of Johannisen the church was forced to relocate due to the Group Areas Act. The congregation bought a plot from Albertyn Smit in Loop Street for the sum of R6 000-00 (see Booy 1978: profile of Johannisen). To raise funds, the ground was planted with peas. During 1967 a parsonage was

completed on the grounds to accommodate the minister and his family who also had to relocate.

Due to the implementation of the Group Areas Act, the members held its last church service in the “all white area” on 28 July 1968. It was a sad moment for members since the church owned that property from 1904 – 1967. According to the minutes of 10 March 1968 the church registered a bond with Boland Bank for the sum of R10 00-00 to erect a church hall, which was used for both church services as well as cultural functions. Since the members of the church erected the building themselves, the need of a truck to transport building material, became necessary. The church raised the necessary funds and bought a truck. The new hall was completed and dedicated on 3 August 1968 (see souvenir program dated 29<sup>th</sup> March 1969).

The school also closed down and merged with the DRMC School, which was erected by the government, in July 1968. The AME School had served the community for sixty-three years.

S P Johannisen was instrumental in the organization of the Mount Olive Group, a male choir, which first was known as the Special Group in 1966. The Mount Olive Group performed on the Protea Radio program on Sundays and also became regular visitors to the welcome reception of the mayor of Cape Town every year. To redeem the bond with Boland Bank, S P Johannisen introduced the “Annual Fair.” This annual event was extremely successful financially and drew a number of visitors from all over the Western Cape (see Booy's 1978: profile of S P Johannisen).

The Group Areas Act and relocation of the AME Church ministry had a profound negative affect on the church members. Many members together with the church were removed from their land and they struggled to understand the impact and the humane character of the law and to cope under the strain of adapting to new living conditions.



#### **4.9 Conclusion**

The establishment of the DRM congregation Piketberg congregation in July 1903 did little to stop the momentum of the AME congregation to continue its work. On the contrary, it proved added impetus to continue with the task of forming a church free of white control.

The establishment of the DRM Church in 1903 brought about another split, this time among the coloured people. Tensions between these two coloured congregations were unavoidable. Whites exacerbated this tension by supporting the DRMC financially and logistically, while actively denying members of the AME congregation economic opportunities.

Through all turmoil, tension and suffering the AME congregation stood firm and united. The bold step of a small group of people to walk out of the DRC in 1902 to form their own church is remarkable. They obtained land to build a church and school under difficult conditions and amid racial tension. Others tried to withhold education from their youth, but the youth showed tenacity in becoming ministers, teachers, doctors, lawyers, social workers, administrators and artisans.

## CHAPTER 5

### The DRM Church in Pkietberg

#### 5.1 Introduction

According to Dreyer (1934), Reverend Christiaan Rabie accepted the appointment as minister of the DRC in 1871 to Pkietberg. One of his prime concerns was to establish a mission church for coloureds. From his own diary the following information is documented: “Het was mijn streven om het Evangelie ook tot de gekleurden te brengen, en ik begon voor dit doel met de huur van een kleine gebouw. Later kocht ik een andere, beter gebouwd, voor \$100, dat my door Alg. Sinodale Zend. Kom. geleend werd en dat ik later terugbetaalde. Binnen een jaar waren al de gekleurden verzameld in een kleine gemeente van omtrent 70 lidmaten. De aanneming geschiedde echter nog in de moederkerk en ook daar werden de Sakramenten aan hen bediend. Ik preekte iedere Zondag drie malen” (Dreyer 1934:57-58).

Burger (1975) has it that Rev. Rabie in 1874 started a Coloured School with 41 learners and one teacher. (cf. Burger 1975:57) This church and school however, was not long lived. (cf. Van Niekerk 1983:20).

Another attempt to form a mission church in Pkietberg was discussed at a council meeting of 8 April 1901: “Na eene lange discussie wordt besloten met een zendingwerk ons aanvang te maken” (minute book of DRC, Pkietberg). Although a commission was established to such effect, conditions during the Anglo Boer War were not favorable for immediate action. It was only after the Anglo Boer War in 1903 that the DRC once again paid serious attention to this matter. This decision was hastened because rumours were spread of another denomination, which sought membership in Pkietberg. According to Joubert (1932), on 20 April 1903 a deputation of coloureds met with the DRC to inform them of discontent within the coloured community concerning the possibility of another church, the African Methodist Episcopal Church, to be established in Pkietberg (cf Joubert 1932:89). A commission to investigate the

establishment of a coloured congregation was established. The commission included J Eksteen and S Myburgh as members.

## **5.2 The establishment of the DRM Church**

The DRM Church was officially established on 13 July 1903 to suppress the establishment and work of a possible AME congregation in Piketberg.

The Rev. Geo Enslin was appointed the first minister of this newly formed congregation of the DRM Church. Its first church council meeting held was on 22 September 1903. At this meeting Willem Daniëls was elected as the first elder and David Abrahams and Pieter Erasmus as the first deacons. This congregation started with eleven members from the DRC (cf Dreyer 1934: 96). Families involved in the establishing of the DRM congregation in Piketberg were the Erasmus', Van Wyk's, Van Rooy's, Otto's, Chrisjan's and Daniëls'. To improve the membership of this fledging congregation, mission work was started in earnest on the surrounding farms and domestic servants in white households. During 1934 the membership increased to 1137 and those baptized totaled 1017. At present the membership is approximately 3000 and this congregation is the largest in the entire Piketberg.

## **5.3 Ministers serving the congregation until 1970**

Under the administration of Rev G Enslin, who served the congregation from 1903 to 1912, the first church building was completed in 1905. Apart from the financial contributions of the DRC, individual members within the Dutch Reformed from time to time secured funds for the erection of the building. Amongst them were the Liebenberg's, Wiid's, Burger's, Fick's, Eksteen's and a number of farm owners. To raise funds, Rev. Enslin went from farm to farm to conduct slide shows and the annual bazaars became a great source of income. Rev Enslin also started the day school for the children of the congregation in 1906.

Rev W A Booysen served the congregation from 1913 – 1921. The congregation remembers him as a humble and dedicated minister. His main aim was to keep the existing flock together

and encouraged members not to leave when disappointed with church matters, but rather try to find solutions. Rev. Booysen was also instrumental in registering the day school under the Department of Education in 1921.

Rev P B Botha served the congregation from 1922 – 1926. Due to ill health he could not embark on any new projects. He nevertheless built on the foundations laid by his predecessors. He died on the pulpit due to a heart failure.

Rev. O P Malherbe served the congregation from 1927 – 1944. He was known as a humane person. He started a soup kitchen from his parsonage and delivered it from door to door to the sick and elderly. During his term of office he negotiated with the DRC for the appointment of a social worker. This worker had to address the social problems within the confines of the congregation.

Rev S A De Villiers succeeded Rev. O P De Malherbe from 1944 – 1952. With Rev. De Villiers' arrival, he left no stone unturned to redeem the congregation from outstanding debts not paid for a long period. His administrative style was as such that the congregation was stimulated to work excessively in order to ensure a debt free congregation.

Rev M J Basson served the congregation from 1953 – 1960. This was his first congregation he served. Under his administration the church building was renovated and he was also instrumental in the erection of a new vestry. During his term of office, the congregation of Eendekuil was formally detached from Piketberg.

Rev C T Smith succeeded Rev M J Basson from 1960 – 1963. Tradition has it that he was also the sick comforter and male nurse of his congregation. Whenever a member got ill, they could call on Rev Smith and he would attend immediately. He normally used a red light, which was directly shined on the part of the body with the pain and always left this patient with some pain tablets.

Rev D J Venter served the congregation from 1963 – 1967. He is described as a gentleman with a passion for people. He was troubled with the idea that so many youth appeared before the church council due to motherhood. This eventually led to the establishment of the “Young

Daughters' Union" where the girls could be prepared for future and instructed about the extra responsibility of parenthood.

Rev G J Basson served the congregation from 1968 – 1978. He was the brother of Rev M J Basson who previously served this congregation. He was a humble man and firmly believed that church growth could only be stimulated by house visitations. During his period one could see him almost on a daily basis, walking with his stick from door to door. He did not even neglect his farm members. Rev Basson was instrumental in erection the first church hall, which was also used as church building after relocation due to the Group Areas Act.

#### **5.4 The building process**

At first the building purchased under the administration of Rev. Dreyer was used as a church building. This building however became inadequate since the membership increased in large numbers.

With the financial assistance of the mother church, property for the erection of a church building was secured. On 26 June 1905 the DRC called together a meeting for building the church. The tender for the erection of the edifice was given to a certain Mr. N Liebenberg. As building committee, Pieter Christiaans, Jan Kaister, Marthinus Pieterse and Rev Geo Enslin were elected. A special donation of \$600 for the erection of the building was received from Ms. Maria Wiid, provided that her name appeared on the gable of the building (cf Ligdraer: Feb. 1960).

The church was also used as a day school. It was only during 1939 under the administration of Rev. O P Malherbe that the church building was expanded. The school was then built on a separate premise in order to utilize the church building for church services and council meetings only.

## 5.5 The School

The church officially opened its doors for a school in 1906; one year after the AME Congregation opened its school. The total number of learners who attended the school as well as the name of the first principal is unknown. However, with the Union of South Africa's fiftieth birthday, a brochure was compiled known as "Piketberg 1910 – 1960: Union Festival Memorial Brochure". From this brochure certain information was captured concerning the DRM School in Piketberg. In this brochure Mr S Human, principal of the DRM Church in Piketberg for twenty-nine years, argues that the principal in 1910 was a certain Mr C Taljaard and that the school had approximately eighty pupils. Sofie Dirks assisted the principal, though she had no educational training.

The school operated in the vestry of the church before a proper building was erected. The church held functions and the parents had to pay school fees to pay the salaries of the teachers.

From 1912 to 1915 the number of learners in the school increased to such an extent that another teacher had to be appointed. During the end of 1915 Mr Taljaard resigned as principal and a certain Mr F B Abrahams was appointed in 1916. The growing numbers of the school once again compelled the church to assign another teacher so that the teaching staff increased to four in 1918. During 1918 the church building was used as a school since the vestry became inadequate.

Negotiations with the Education Department to register the school started in 1920. The effect was that the school became a state subsidised school in 1921. The Department of Education paid the salaries of the teachers from then onwards.

The newly erected school was completed in 1933. The school then consisted of four classrooms and a hall, which was also used for church functions. Mr. J de Jager succeeded Mr Abrahams as principal in 1932.

By this time the Council of the DRM Church was serious about a principal, who would not only give long and outstanding service to the school, but would also be somebody who can become actively involved in church affairs. After a thorough search the mantle fell on Sebastiaan Human who succeeded Mr J de Jager in 1933. He came from the Moravian Church in Genadendal, but immediately seceded his church membership to become member of the DRM Congregation in Piketberg. He was appointed under the administration of Rev. O P Malherbe.

When Mr Human took over as principal, he left no stone unturned to ensure progress and growth in both the school and church. The pupil enrollment increased from 130 in 1933 to 230 in 1943. Mr Human also became the Sunday school Superintendent, organist and choirmaster for the church. He was instrumental in ensuring that the project to electrify the church came to fruition. A great "hallelujah" was sung when the lights were switched on for the first time whilst Mr Human was conducting the choir.

Outstanding students during the tenure of Mr Human were W Mentoor, P Nel and S Lawrence who in later years became principals of school. C J Human, his son, became a medical practitioner.

When Mr. Human retired in 1962, the teaching staff consisted of 7 teachers and the curriculum made provision for pupils to attend school until standard six (grade 8).

## **5.6 Church life**

The DRM congregation followed the pattern of all DRM Church congregations in South Africa. Church organizations are on par with what is done elsewhere. One of the normal practices was to elect evangelists to work on the nearby farms. Their job description was to visit the members, conduct prayer meetings, visit the sick, conduct funerals and to report to the church council. The first evangelist appointed by the congregation in Piketberg was Koos Voster. Mr. Stuurman and Mr. Gerrie Erasmus succeeded Koos Voster.

The brigade also played an important roll in church life. The Piketberg brigade was organized during the administration of Rev. O P Malherbe. The Malmesbury brigade had given ample assistance to ensure that the brigade be properly organized and a commander, a certain Mr Louis, head of the Brigade in the Western Cape, then resident in Maitland, conducted the official opening of the Piketberg Brigade. This brigade is still in operation.

One of the ministers who played a vital role in the Piketberg congregation was Rev WC van der Merwe who served the congregation from 1980 - 1985. Under his administration the present church building was erected.

### **5.7 The Group Areas Act**

During the beginning of 1961 the DRM Church received notice that, due to the Group Areas Act, they had to relocate to a site, which was designated for Coloureds. A three- year grace period was granted to them to relocate orderly.

A flow of correspondences emerged between the church, the local government and the state. Amongst others, the DRM Church brought it to the attention of the local government that, due to the vast numbers of members and the lack of funds, it will take them at least 10 – 15 years to relocate orderly. Furthermore they argued that the church building was in such an area that whites would not be disturbed by their presence on Sundays. To them the church building formed a gateway between the white- and coloured areas. They also argued that the church and school building were only in trust to them, but is in fact the property of the Interior Mission Commission, which is controlled by the white DRC. The local government advised the church to forward the same letter to the minister of Coloured Affairs, Mr. J J Loots.

Another concern for the DRM Church was the fact that gatherings across the colour line were prohibited. By then the DRMC could not afford to move since they were financially exhausted and was in fact financially supported by the white church during functions such as bazaars and choir festivals.



The Minister of Coloured Affairs graciously permitted them to stay until such time they would be ready to move, provided that the principal of the day school immediately relocate to a coloured area. (correspondence between the Church, Local Government and the Minister of Coloured Affairs dated 13 March 1961; 3 August 1961; 7 October 1961).

In the meanwhile negotiations between the DRM Church and the local government continued. Through these negotiations they received a piece of land in order to erect a church building, provided that the church pay all administration costs attached to it (letter dated 10 May 1961). The piece of land donated by the local authorities was utilized to erect a church hall, edifice and parsonage. Furthermore, three houses on the premises were renovated for church officials. Such correspondence was forwarded to the Interior Mission Commission who paid all administration costs on behalf of the DRM Church (letter dated 18 November 1961).

## **5.8 Conclusion**

It is evident that the DRM Church in Piketberg was established to suppress the work of the newly formed AME congregation. To ensure church growth and steady progress, the DRC financially and otherwise supported the DRM Church. Furthermore, farm owners within the DRC were encouraged to convince farm workers to become members of the DRM congregation. This was done with great success to the effect that the congregation became numerically very strong. Their existence was to a large extent secured by the DRC and whenever decisions had to be made, it had to be sanctioned by the latter.

Nevertheless, this congregation made numerous contributions to the growth and moral and ethical transformation to the entire Piketberg community. Amongst others, they produced outstanding scholars and artists.

## CHAPTER 6

### The relationship between the AME Church and the DRMC in Piketberg

#### 6.1 Introduction

The relationship between the congregations of the AME and the DRM in Piketberg, 1903 – 1972 must be understood in the light of the context within which these two congregations originated. The tense relationship was stimulated by the influence of the DRC, which established the DRM congregation to counter the formation and advancement of the AME congregation in Piketberg. These factors contributed to the tense relationship between the DRM- and AME congregations in Piketberg.

Prior to 1902 all people in Piketberg were members of the DRC. Although the DRM Church was established in 1881, the DRC in Piketberg found it difficult to establish such a mission congregation in Piketberg. The reason for such difficulty and eventually the reluctance on the part of the DRC must be understood against the background of previous unsuccessful attempts to establish the DRM congregation in Piketberg.

The first attempt to accommodate people of colour in Piketberg in a separate building was in 1871. A building was allocated and within the first year seventy coloureds worshipped there. The DRC however was cautious to encourage those coloureds that remained worshipping in the church to join the seventy. A coloured school was also opened in 1874 in the same building. The school started with 41 pupils and one teacher. This school and the church were short-lived (cf Van Niekerk 1983:20). It can therefore be assumed that with the official establishment of the DRM Church in 1881, the congregation of Piketberg was not ready to form such a mission congregation by that time. It therefore allocated backseats for Coloureds in the church.

The second attempt from the DRC was in 1901. It can be assumed that the strained relationship between black and white during the Anglo Boer War would have played a vital role in this decision. The meeting between Coloureds and imperial officials in Cape Town in 1901 with its promises of equal rights for all races should Britain win the war, must have presumably spread over to Piketberg (cf Lewis 1987:15). Although no official records confirm this assumption, it can be ascertained that the DRC now seriously considered the establishment of a congregation of the DRM Church in Piketberg to counter the promises made by the imperial officials, thus their second attempt in 1901.

Although a commission was established to such effect, conditions during wartime were not favorable to continue with such plans.

## **6.2 The Anglo Boer War: 1899 - 1902**

Most of the coloureds in Piketberg supported Britain during the war because of the submissive role they had to play in the colonial government in the Cape. They hoped that with a British victory their economic and social conditions would change tremendously (cf Lewis 1987: 15). According to Burger (1975:134), Coloured people left the farms of Boers in droves to enlist in the British army. By 1901 convoys of British troops passed through Piketberg to suppress a rebellion in the Northwest and Coloured people openly declared their support for the British effort. Nasson (1991:20) notes that a commandant remarked the ease with which Coloured people in Piketberg joined the British effort. According to Nasson (1991:20), this situation had a lot to do with the ill feelings that existed between the Whites and Coloured people (cf Nasson 1991:20).

Whites, on the other hand, supported the Boer cause during the war. The advent of the Anglo Boer War therefore just exacerbated the strained relations that were developing over a period of time in the DRC in Piketberg. It brought about tension and conflict between black and white worshipping in the same church building. Johannisen (1953:6) captured the feelings of the Coloureds during that time: “so here in Piketberg, Whites and Coloureds worshipped God in the same church, namely the DRC, but to the great disappointment Coloureds had to endure treatment as inferiors.”

The relationship between black and white in Piketberg was such that in 1902 a group of coloureds broke away from the DRC to form their own cottage church. This group of almost seventy found the situation in the DRC to be intolerable and chose “exile” over the continued humiliation and control by whites. It is therefore understandable that the remaining coloured group within the DRC would have been influenced by the whites to counteract against those who left.

### 6.3 Counter measures by the DRC

The secessionists marked a new era in the history of Piketberg. When it became known that a possible church for coloureds under the auspices of Methodism would be established, the DRC made every effort to convince the secessionists to return with the promise of a coloured congregation under the auspices of the DRC. At that time Methodism was regarded as a threat to the political aspirations of the Boer Republics. Elphick (1997) argues “The Boers, too, took a strong dislike to Methodism, identifying it with the growth of political consciousness among Africans...” (Elphick 1997:129). Furthermore, Abraham Kuyper placed the outbreak of the Anglo Boer War squarely on the influence of Methodism during that time. This assumption was substantiated by J D du Toit who denounced Methodism as the cause of innumerable ills, particularly the erosion of distinctions of race and class (see D du Toit in Elphick 1997:129). It is therefore understandable that the DRC in Piketberg should have done everything they could to convince the secessionists to return. They could not have afforded another political split at that time.

Alongside the threat of Methodism, whites also had to guard against Ethiopianism, of which the AME Church is an offspring. From its inception, this movement became heavily involved in the politics of the country. James Dwane, Samuel Brander, Khanyane Napo, Marshall Maxeke and Charlotte Manye were prominent AME church leaders and whose political aspirations were felt in South Africa. On them, Meli (1989) remarked “... some of whom had just come back from Europe and America – worked and educated the people on their rights, duties and obligations to the state and to themselves, individually as well as collectively, and to promote mutual help of brotherhood and a spirit of togetherness among the” (Meli 1989:36).

Another factor for the DRC to act promptly was the termination of the service of Rev. J N Vlok in 1901. He strongly supported the British effort during wartime and to the embarrassment of many of his members, he openly preached on 1 Peter 2:7 “Fear God and honour the King” – referring to the British throne (cf Burger 1975:63). Such tense situations could no longer be endured within the DRC. Burger (1975:65) captures the tense relationship between Coloureds and Whites as follows: “... maar as gevolg van die oorlog en die invloed van gesante van die AME onder hulle, is die verhouding tussen

Blankes en Kleurlinge baie vertroebel. Selfs in Ds. Vlok se laaste jare is 'n kommissie benoem om met hulle te onderhandel; dit kon eers in 1903 geskied.”

The DRC now had to use all its energy and time to ensure that the DRM congregation is established in Piketberg. Joubert (1932:89) notes that on 20 April 1903 a deputation of Coloureds met with the Council of the DRC, informed them of discontent within the Coloured community due to the possibility of another congregation, the African Methodist Episcopal Church, to be established in Piketberg. Prior to this meeting, no immediate attempt by the DRC was made between 1902–1903 to organize a mission church. It is therefore against the aforementioned background that one can assume that the meeting between a group of Coloureds and the Council of the DRC in 1903 must have been orchestrated by the latter.

The meeting held with a deputation of Coloureds resulted in a decision that immediate action be taken to formally organize the DRM Church in July of 1903. This action was done in the hope that it would suppress the establishment of an AME congregation. For the DRC, in one sense, this worked out well since a small number of coloureds returned to the flock of the DRC for the official organization of the DRM Church.

#### **6.4 The new division**

As no official records of the strained relationships between the Coloureds of these two congregations are available, I had to rely on interviews with the elderly people of Piketberg from whom I received valuable information in regards to the relationships between these two congregations. Furthermore, having grown up in Piketberg, I can still recall some of the stories and activities, which had a bearing on the tensed relationships between the DRMC and the AME Church. The fact that most of secessionists were related to the other group who either returned to the flock of the DR Church or never broke away, weakened the already strained relationships. The return of some of them to the DRM congregation brought about another split, but this time between coloureds and coloureds. Family relationships were scattered since in both congregations one would find the Joubert's, Van Rooys, Erasmus', Dirks', Coetzee's, Van Wyk's, Paulse's, Jager's, Farao's, etc. This was a situation, which a small town as Piketberg could not have afforded during those years. In a memorandum handed over to the AME congregation on Saturday 27 December 2003, the following remarkable statement was made by the council

of the Uniting Reformed congregation: “Na aanleiding van die skeuring tussen die AME, NGSK, NGK in 1903, erken die VGK die skade wat hierdie skeuring tussen die drie kerke berokken het. Ons erken die vyandskap wat dit veral tussen die VGK en AME tot gevolge gehad het. Ons erken verder dat dit ons voorvaders was, volgens notules, wat by die NGK gekla het oor broers van die stad wat in die woonbuurt met ander kerkgenootskappe betrokke is. Ons bely ons aandeel in die gebrokenheid van God se kerk hier in Piketberg” (abstract from memorandum).

The members of the DRMC were financially and economically supported by the DRC, whilst the AME members had to struggle to survive. Whilst the DRM congregation received enormous financial and economic assistance from the whites, the AME congregation had to struggle to erect its buildings.

From the minutes of the DRM Church in Piketberg it is evident that members of the Dutch Reformed congregation to pay the bond on the church and school donated large amounts of money. The minutes of 20 October 1943 has it that Christiaan J Liebenberg donated 200-00, Henry Charles Liebenberg 500-00 and Maria Wiid 500-00. In 1956 Mr J Eksteen donated 75-00 towards the building project. The DRC also decided to generously support the Mission Church during its bazaars, concerts and other function to pay off the bond. Furthermore, the DRC paid the salaries of the ministers in the DRMC, a practice in use in many congregations across the country.

With the redemption of the bond, the Church Council of this mission church decided to forward a letter of thanks to the manager of African Mutual Bank, a certain Mr Du Toit for his assistance in redeeming the bond. From the minutes of 1 April 1944 one can ascertain that Mr Du Toit as manager of the bank, also dealt with the compilation of the wills of the white people in Piketberg. He always negotiated with his clients to allocate in the will some financial contribution to the DRM congregation.

On the other hand, the AME congregation had to organize a number of functions to raise funds for its building projects. They organized “socials”, informal gatherings of families belonging to Mt Olive, to sell whatever was prepared and the proceeds were then added to the building fund. At these socials, usually conducted around an open fire, they would open their “kopdoeke” and take from their meager finances to contribute towards the building fund. It sometimes took them years to achieve whatever they wanted. According

to the financial records of the church dated 1904 – 1925, it took the congregation twenty-one years to pay off its first organ, which only costs fifteen British pounds, ten shillings and ten pennies. This just showed the determination of the AME members to achieve their objectives and goals. Its successes awakened further animosity.

Persecution against the AME congregation was unavoidable. Though no official records apart from the view of Johannisen (1953) are available to substantiate this argument, one could assume, as Burger (1975:134) has it, that the AME congregation met with stubborn opposition since after several attempts to convince the dissident members to return. Frans Esau, one of the founding members of the AME congregation, was a landowner and recognized the need for a church building. He sold part of his land to the new congregation for ten British pounds (cf Johannisen 1953:10). He promptly donated five British pounds to the building project. When this fledging congregation wanted to erect a church building, permission to remove stones from the mountain was refused by the local authorities. Despite the opposition, the members persevered. In this regard the women stood out in their support. They carried stones, balanced on their heads, for long distances. These women were chased and the stones taken from their heads by the local police. They were brave enough to gather other stones until the local authorities had no other choice than to allow them to continue their work (cf Johannisen: 1953:10). Their argument was that since the DRMC was allowed to do so, why should they then be refused. Furthermore, AME members at the beginning were refused job opportunities and they had to go as far as Cape Town in the south and Van Ryhnsdorp in the north to secure jobs. A number of AME members had to grow crops for a living.

The new congregation was also refused entry to the graveyard to bury their dead. Frans Esau and his followers, in an act of civil disobedience, broke down the locks of the gate to get entrance to the graveyard to bury their dead. According to Johannisen (1953: 8), no charges were laid against the church due to the sympathetic attitude of several whites. One of these whites was the “field cornet.”

Vigilantes destroyed at least three church bells in between 1906 – 1910. Against all these odds, the members stood firm and in 1905 its mortar structured stone church building was completed (cf Johannisen 1953: 10). At last the new congregation had its own building to worship God in the way they wanted, free of white control and the inferior status assigned to them. In the same year, the DRMC also completed its church building. It is thus evident

that competition between these two congregations was not only visible, but also boiled down to unhealthy relationships. So severe was the competition and unhealthy the relationships between these two congregations that interaction with each other, was almost non-existent. Even the children of these two congregations were affected by these unhealthy relationships. Nevertheless, it is striking that no violent animosity was prevalent between these two groups. Wedding ceremonies, funerals and the confirmation of new members compelled them to associate. Outside the boundaries of the congregation they would converse to each other, but not for long because there was a feeling that a distance between them must be maintained at all cost.

No ecumenical bonds existed between these two congregations as from 1903. Instead, a cold war prevailed between them for decades. They never supported each other during church functions. Instead they competed against each other. The minutes of the AME congregation do not reflect any of these tensed situations, but the oral tradition has it that AME members were always reminded to keep quiet whenever acquisitions or insults were meted out to them. This assumption still has to be tested since I cannot believe that the AME's would have folded their arms in ignorance when accused.

By contrast, the minute books of the DRMC do contain reflect information on the "cold war" which existed during that time. At the church council of 26 of November 1942 the question of serving Holy Communion to visiting members of the AME congregation was discussed. Though the minutes do not reflect the occasion, I assume that this was during confirmation ceremonies in the Dutch Reformed congregation. During that specific meeting one of the board members was upset about the fact that AME members participated in the sharing of the Holy Communion. The church council under the leadership of Rev O P Malherbe resolved that in future no AME members should be allowed to participate in the Holy Communion with it's DRMC members and that the minister will in future make this announcement before the service of the Holy Communion. This decision further estranged the already deteriorated situation, which prevailed between these two congregations.

The church council of 2 October 1943 addressed another issue with regards to the work of the AME congregation in Piketberg. When Rev. JC Johannisen was appointed minister of the AME congregation in Piketberg in 1940, he became aware of the fact that the community was steadily deteriorating due to the abuse of alcohol. After thorough



investigation, he initiated “The Independent Order of True Templers”, also known as the IOTT. This organization focuses on combating alcohol abuse. This organization was started on 21 July 1940. This was not a church organization, but a community based entity. Johannisen firmly believed that a sober mind could assist in building the kingdom of God. This IOTT was so successful, that a similar organization for the children was organized, namely “The Band of Hope.” Children were spiritually prepared to abstain from alcohol and any other similar substances. It can be ascertained that a small number of the DRMC enrolled with the IOTT and Band of Hope, since this organization was considered by the council of the DRMC to be a threat. It resulted in a resolution made by the council of the DRM congregation to address this issue with Rev Johannisen. A committee was established to have talks with him to ensure that no member of the DRMC would be allowed to become members of his newly formed organization. It is, however, interesting to note that although this decision was made, the DRMC struggled with its own members who abused alcohol and some of them had already been summoned to appear before the church council.

To remedy this evil the church council decided in 1943 that members under the influence of alcohol would be denied the privilege of celebrating the Holy Communion. But if these two congregations would have joined hands, the abuse of alcohol in the community could have been resolved in a more integrated way.

The DRMC at its council meeting on 19 March 1944 raised another issue of concern. It was brought to the attention of the council that AME members were visiting the sick belonging to the DRMC. To them, this was an unhealthy practice, which could have estranged members from the DRMC. In response, a commission of five was delegated to communicate with the minister of the AME congregation on this issue.

So severe was the discontent between these two congregations that two council members were suspended in 1948 and 1954 from the council for three months each because it became known that their grandchildren were baptized in the AME congregation. Another issue which enhanced the already weakened situation was that a certain member of the DRMC in 1948, accused of misconduct and insulting the minister in public, was placed under suspension when it had become known that the letter of apology to the minister and church council, was written by an AME member.

Such a disclosure of Christianity formed the breeding-ground for discontent and tension, which prevailed for decades. It is therefore understandable that no co-operation could have been existed between these two congregations. Instead, each congregation behaved in such a way that their children opposed each other. As children we were exposed to and indoctrinated against the so-called evils of the other congregations.

Since each congregation has its own day school and formed part of the erstwhile “Plattelandse Skole Vereniging”, these two schools had to compete occasionally against each other in rugby and netball matches, as well as athletic meetings. Whenever these two schools competed, almost the whole coloured community was brought to a standstill. Everybody wanted to be on the field to support their own school. Often matches were disrupted because of the influence, interference, emotions and misbehaviour of the spectators. This sometimes led to fights between players. To me as a child it was always a frightening experience when the whistle was blown for the end of a match. Spectators then verbally and sometimes physically attacked one another.

One of the outstanding features in school life was the annual music festival competition. The best school was awarded with a floating trophy. Tradition has it that when the master of ceremonies at one stage announced the AME School as winners of the trophy, the DRM School choir director went to the stage and claimed the trophy for his school. On another occasion, members of the AME congregation openly accused the choir director of the DRM School of witchcraft because he conducted his choir by standing on a chair.

The amazing thing was that all the other participating schools, whether it was rugby, netball, athletics or choir festivals did not encounter similar experiences.

From my boyhood experiences I can still remember how the children of these two congregations have physically beaten each other to show which congregation is best. Whenever informal rugby- and golf matches were played, it was always AME's against DRMC's. No mixing of players were allowed or even tolerated. Most of these matches resulted in heavy fights. The losing team always started these fights. Parents normally heard of these dealings afterwards.

## **6.5 Conclusion**

From this account it is thus evident that an unhealthy situation prevailed between the AME- and DRM congregations for more than seven decades. This situation gradually changed as from 1968 when these two congregations were forced to amalgamate its school due to the Group Areas Act. This is a result of the fact that members of both congregations had to meet together for school meetings. Furthermore, they had to work together for school functions and to support the school in all its extra-mural activities. Since one governing body from members of both congregations was formed, the tensed situation, which prevailed in the beginning, gradually normalized and this was of great help in stabilizing the school life. It is therefore quite ironic that in spite of the trauma associated with the Group Areas Act, the relocation created an atmosphere for the two congregations to improve their relationships.

It was only until 2003 with the centenary anniversaries of these two congregations that a working relationship was established. Pentecostal services are being held jointly and the quarterly Holy Communion services between these two congregations have improved relationships.

## **7. Postscript**

### **7.1 Further developments within these two congregations**

As from 1970 none of the two congregations, the DRMC and AME felt the need to restore former relationships. Each congregation continued to work on its one. As from 1970 each congregation concentrated on the erection of their own church buildings in their newly relocated areas.

The Dutch Reformed Mission congregation completed its church building under the administration of Rev. W C van der Merwe. He served the congregation from 1980 – 1985. Rev. Van der Merwe was also instrumental in the erection of the parsonage. Rev. D A Nel, a Piketberger by birth and an ex-school teacher of the erstwhile Dutch Reformed Mission School, succeeded Rev. W C van der Merwe in 1985. He only served this congregation for one year and could therefore not embark on major development programmes within the congregation. During 1986 Rev. R J Finck succeeded Rev. Nel. He served the congregation till 1991. His first priority was to ensure that the bond on the church building and parsonage be paid off. He served this congregation until 1991 but could not succeed in redeeming the bonds. It was only with the arrival of Rev. P de Villiers that both the bond on the church and parsonage could be redeemed. He served the congregation from 1992 – 1999. Under his administration he organized a “Praise and Worship” team whose purpose it is to set the tone for the worship service through chorus singing. In the beginning the congregation did not take this kind of change very well. It can be assumed that, due to the way in which the congregation received the reformed tradition, they still had to come to grips with the idea of chorus singing during church services. Rev. Walter Philander succeeded Rev. de Villiers in 1999 till present. He emphasized the importance of youth involvement in the congregation and promoted a program whereby the youth forms an integral part of the congregational life. He furthermore introduced various educational programmes for the officers, married couples and annual winter schools for the congregation’s matriculants (see Swartland Herald 13 March 2003: 12).

After the departure of Rev. S P Johannisen in 1970, several ministers served the AME congregation in Piketberg. Rev. Richard Mothibi served the congregation from 1970 – 1975. He was a keen church organizer and church law interpreter. He also contributed greatly to the church bond. Rev. Benjamin Sass who served from 1975 – 1977 succeeded

Rev. Mothibi. The bond was redeemed during his administration and he also had plans prepared for a new church building. He never managed to erect the church building. From 1977 – 1978 Rev. Henry Legolie served as minister. Under his administration a concrete wall behind the hall was erected to prevent water seepage. Rev. John Lackay succeeded Rev. Legolie from 1978 – 1979. During his short period of administration he could do nothing to visibly uplift the spiritual life of the congregation. From 1979 – 1986 Rev. Paul Messiah served the congregation. He was a keen community worker and spent most of his time in uplifting the community life through meetings where he inspired community members to play an active role in changing the morale of the community.

Rev. Carl Emmanuel Burns served in 1986 as an emergency measure. During his term the church choir was robed and curtains were bought for the church hall. The S P Johannisen Memorial Hall signboard was also installed in memory of his work in Piketberg.

Rev. Anthony Jacobs was appointed to the congregation from 1987 – 2001. He was still a very young minister with great potential. Under his administration the construction of the church building was promoted as a priority and became a reality. Later he was also responsible for the newly erected alter and the fencing of the entire premises. His approach in the ministry inspired many stalwarts of the church to support him and many dissident members returned. Though the times were hard and though many church members experienced financial difficulties, they could not resist the temptation to support and contribute towards the building of the church.

## **7.2 The first signs of reconciliation**

The relationship between the DRM Congregation and the AME Congregation gradually improved when the schools of these two congregations had to merge in 1968 due to the Group Areas Act. Although no visible change in attitude prevailed during the first years, it became evident that in order to ensure the smooth running of the school, parents of these two congregations had to work together. In a certain sense one can be assume that the implementation of the Group Areas Act had a positive influence in the relationship between members of these two congregations.

The end of the apartheid regime in 1994, which brought together all races also contributed to the reconciliation process. It can be assumed that the members of the URC-, AME- and

DRC congregations in the local government frequently and in an unofficial way reflected on the past, which separated them. During these meetings they interacted and worked together towards the improvement of the community life. However, momentum towards reconciliation only reached its peak during the centenary anniversaries of the URC and AME congregations. The first step towards reconciliation took place during the millennium festival in which these three congregations conducted a combined service on the sports field in 2000. As from 2000 – 2003 no further efforts were made to reconcile these congregations.

### **7.3 The process of reconciliation comes to fruition**

Early in 2003 attempts were made to bring together the congregations of the Uniting Reformed Church and the AME Church. This meeting took place on Sunday 23 February 2003 (see Swartland Herald: 12). In his opening remarks Rev. A. Booyse expressed himself as follows: “Beide die AME en die VG gemeentes moet groot genoeg wees om te erken dat hulle ’n kerk trots in plaas van ’n Koninkryk trots oor die jare heen gehandhaaf het, daarom die ernstige soeke tydens ons honderdste bestaansjaar na eenheid en versoening. Dit is daarom teen hierdie agtergrond dat die kerkraad van die VG en AME gemeentes bymekaar gekom het om te besin oor hoe die pad van versoening daaruit gaan sien sodat ons terselfdertyd van Piketberg ’n beter gemeenskap kan maak” (Swartland Herald 13 Maart 2003: 12). This effort marked a new era in the relationships between the Uniting Reformed Congregation and the AME Congregation. A working relationship was established between these two congregations early in January 2003. The purpose of this relationship was twofold: to bring members of these two congregations together during combined services and to raise funds for community projects in Piketberg. In 2003 these two congregations for the first time celebrated the week of Pentecost together. This celebration was also utilized to raise funds for two community projects within the town of Piketberg. At the closing service of the Pentecost members shared in the Holy Communion which was concluded with a fellowship hour where the members of the two congregations could interact with each other. This has now become an annual event.

The result of the Pentecost service was that the need was felt to also include the Dutch Reformed congregation of which we all formed part one hundred years ago. A committee was established between these three congregations to negotiate a working relationship. The first official gathering was in July 2003 when a tree planting ceremony on the grounds

of the museum was conducted to demonstrate the congregations' seriousness towards reconciliation. This occasion marked the first step toward reconciliation between these three congregations. Furthermore, a combined Communion Service was held in the Dutch Reformed Church on 16 November 2003. A combined choir was established to give impetus to the need of joining hands. During this service emotions were high since we have met on the premises where we once worshipped together.

#### **7.4 Conclusion**

The working relationship, which now exists is proof of the fact that the will of the people to come together weigh much heavier than the powers which can destroy them. In his remarks, Rev. Martin Goosen of the Dutch Reformed Church during the centenary celebrations of the AME Congregation has it that the baby whom was supposed to be stillborn, referring to the AME Congregation, has outgrown a number of congregations in Piketberg and stood the test of difficult times.

These three congregations now meet on a regular basis and discuss issues relating to the ongoing working relationship. To this end these congregations are now engaged in a project "The Peace Garden" which will be done on the grounds belonging to the AME Congregation. This "Peace Garden", where crops will be planted, is a project aimed at the alleviation of poverty within the Piketberg community.

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*Sarah Pietersen*: born 12:08: 1916. Oldest living member of the Uniting Reformed congregation in Piketberg.

*Elizabeth Gordon*: born 30:04:1929. Member of the Uniting Reformed congregation in Piketberg.

*Elizabeth van Rooy*: born 06:12:41. Member of the Uniting Reformed congregation in Piketberg.

*Gerty Paulse*: born 09:03:1937. Member of the Uniting Reformed congregation in Piketberg.

*Helen Dirks* : born 16:10:46. Member of the Uniting Reformed congregation in Piketberg.

*Grace Basson*: born 03:08:1924. Member of the AME congregation in Piketberg.

*Francina Somers*: born 02:10:1924. Member of the AME congregation in Piketberg.

*Wilhelmina Fortuin*: born 18:09:1924. Member of the AME congregation in Piketberg.

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