

**THE UNIFICATION PROCESS IN THE FAMILY OF THE DUTCH REFORMED
CHURCHES FROM 1975 - 1994:
A CRITICAL EVALUATION**

BY

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DECLARATION

I declare that *The unification process in the family of the Dutch Reformed Churches from 1975 - 1994: A critical evaluation* is my own work and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mansel', written over a dotted line.

SIGNATURE

A handwritten date '17:05:99' written over a dotted line.

DATE

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PREFACE

At the completion of such a task, one becomes aware of the fact that success can be achieved only because we form a family with one another.

In preparing this thesis, I have experienced some difficulties in obtaining material on this topic in English, because most of the information is written in Afrikaans.

I experienced a sense of relief that at last, after a long struggle of two and a half years, I am able to see the finished mini-thesis lying before me.

It is a pity that my parents, the late Mr and Mrs Nyatyowa, cannot share this wonderful feeling of relief with me. Although absent, their memory inspired me.

I want to thank my promoter, Professor JC Adonis who supported me with his help and encouragement, through friendship and good advice. He contributed significantly to my ecclesiastical development and inspired me to love church history more than any other subject.

I express thanks to my wife, Liziwe, my children, Thembisa and Lungiswa, for their understanding, support and patience. I dedicate this thesis to them.

I am deeply grateful to Dr WL Mazamisa, lecturer at UCT, and Dr HL Pretorius, lecturer at Huguenot College, for their assistance in reading through the thesis and for the valuable comments which they made.

Rev Petrus Bock, the Chief Administrator of the General and Regional Synods, has been a great support to me. I want to thank him for his support and understanding. I also want to thank my family and all friends who encourage me.

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In conclusion I want to thank God for the strength and wisdom He gave me in writing this thesis.

ABBREVIATIONS

ABRECSA	-	Alliance of Black Reformed Christians in Southern Africa
AICA	-	African Independent Churches Association
ASSK	-	Algemene Sinodale Sending Kommissie (General)
BK	-	Belydendekring
CI	-	Christian Institute
DRBC	-	Dutch Reformed Bantu Church (for blacks in the Cape)
DRC	-	Dutch Reformed Church (NGK for Whites)
DRCA	-	Dutch Reformed Church in Africa (NGKA for Blacks)
DRMC	-	Dutch Reformed Mission Church (NGSK for Coloureds)
JCDCU	-	Joint Commission for Dialogue for Church Unity
NGK	-	Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk
NGSK	-	Nederduitse Gereformeerde Sendingkerk
NGKA	-	Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk in Afrika
NHK	-	Nederduitse Hervormde Kerk
NUSAS	-	National Union of South African Students
RCA	-	Reformed Church in Africa
REC	-	Reformed Ecumenical Council
SACC	-	South African Council of Churches
SSK	-	Sinodale Sendingkommissie
	-	Synodical Mission Commission
UCM	-	University Christian Movement
URCSA	-	Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa (Verenigende Gereformeerde Kerk in Suider-Afrika)
WARC	-	World Alliance of Reformed Churches
WCC	-	World Council of Churches

1. TITLE

The unification process in the family of the Dutch Reformed Churches from 1975-1994: A critical evaluation.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 AIM

The aim of this study is to give a historical analysis of the developments between 1975 and 1994 within the four Dutch Reformed Churches regarding the unification process. A close examination of the process during this period will show that the unification of the "Daughter" NG Kerke and the "Mother" NG Kerk was by no means an easy task, but rather a process in which non-theological and theological factors played their part.

A further aim is to investigate whether or not such factors as racism, culture, religion and language played a role in the process of unifying the family of the NG Kerke. The same applies to possible theological factors such as the Belhar Confession and the structures for a unified church. This study will also examine to what degree the different views of each of the churches and the models opened the way for negotiations amongst these churches.

2.2 RESEARCH PROBLEM

Throughout the history of the Dutch Reformed Churches during this period (1975 - 1994), the unification of churches or denominations other than the DRC's has been a problem. In South Africa, the process has been hampered by almost insurmountable obstacles. Very few churches have succeeded to unite without generating new splits and controversies. A few examples will serve to prove the point.

During the previous century, the Ethiopian churches broke away from the mainline churches on the basis of racism. The Presbyterian churches have been discussing unification for the last thirty years. The three Reformed Afrikaans speaking churches, namely the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC), the Nederduitse Hervormde Kerk (NHK), and the Gereformeerde Kerk (GK) (Doppers) (both the last two churches in English are known as the *Reformed Church*) have had, over many decades, unity talks which never succeeded

to lead to unification. Recently, the Federal Theological Seminary, which was situated in Pietermaritzburg, fell apart because the four constituting churches, namely, the Anglicans, Methodists, Presbyterians and Congregationalists, could not agree on financial matters. The tremendously strong movement of African Independent Churches consists of more than 7000 churches, and has never found unity, despite serious efforts.

Within the four Dutch Reformed Churches (NG Kerke) we encounter a similar history. The four churches have been discussing unity, but ultimately only two of them, the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa (Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk in Afrika) and the Dutch Reformed Mission Church in South Africa (Nederduitse Gereformeerde Sendingkerk in Suid-Afrika) united. The Dutch Reformed Church and the Reformed Church in Africa are still outside the fold.

Superficially it seems as if the main problem in the family of the Dutch Reformed Churches is the division on racial lines. This will be investigated. The Dutch Reformed Church family was divided into Whites, Coloureds, Indians and Africans. There has always been a quasi form of relationship among the different members of the family of the Dutch Reformed Churches. This relationship found its expression in the Missionary Committees and the Liaison Boards, and most importantly, in the Federal Council of the Dutch Reformed Churches.

On the local levels there were voluntary links among the congregations of the family. The concepts "Sendingkommissies" en Skakelrade" were committees of the DRC whose task it was to be the link between the DRC and the "Daughter" churches. The Federal Council was a body established by the DRC with the aim of expressing unity among the family of the DR Churches.

2.3 METHODOLOGY

The research method will give an historical analysis of the developments concerning the unification process between 1975 and 1994. It will mainly involve a literary study in which the written sources will be the Acts and Minutes of the Synods of the four Dutch Reformed Churches and other published and unpublished papers on this matter. The official journals of the Dutch Reformed Church, "Die Kerkbode", and of the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa, "Die Ligdraer", will be used as sources. Interviews with people who were

directly involved in the unification process during this period were conducted, so as to gain insight into the unification process. I analysed and interpreted the data and gave a critical discussion thereof. Finally, I give an evaluation and conclude with possible recommendations.

CHAPTER 1

1. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE RELATIONSHIP WITHIN THE FAMILY OF THE DUTCH REFORMED CHURCHES (NG KERKE)

1.1 FOUNDATION AND GROWTH OF THE FAMILY OF THE DUTCH REFORMED CHURCHES

1.1.1 THE FOUNDATION OF THE DRC IN SOUTH AFRICA:

Under this heading I will very briefly discuss the foundation of the Dutch Colony and the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) in the Cape and its expansion. The different synods that led to mission work and the foundation of the three "Daughter" churches will be examined.

1.2 THE FOUNDATION AND GROWTH OF THE THREE "Daughter" CHURCHES

The three "Daughter" churches were established as a result of the missionary work of the DRC [here I will examine the establishment and growth of the first "non-white" Dutch Reformed Mission Church (DRMC), the establishment of the DRCA and the Reformed Church in Africa (RCA), as well as the mission policy and the mission practice of the DRC adopted in 1935 at Bloemfontein].

1.2.1 THE FOUNDATION OF THE DUTCH REFORMED MISSION CHURCH

1.2.2 THE FOUNDATION OF THE DUTCH REFORMED CHURCH IN AFRICA (DRCA)

1.2.3 THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE REFORMED CHURCH IN AFRICA

1.3 THE MISSION POLICY AND ITS PRACTICE

The mission policy and its practice will be studied.

1.3.1 BIBLICAL BASIS

1.3.1.1 THE MISSION METHODS

1.3.1.1.1 EVANGELISATION

1.3.1.1.2 RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER CHURCHES AND THE GOVERNMENT

1.3.1.1.3 THE PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF THE MISSION POLICY

1.4 THE RELATIONSHIPS

In terms of church law, the three "Daughter" DRCs were governed by the DRC (here I will examine the constitutions of these churches, other church laws and the Golden Rule of Emden 1571).

1.5 THE STRUCTURE OF THE RELATIONSHIPS

The structure of the relationship will be investigated, namely the "Mother" and "Daughter" as determined by the DRC (structures such as the Local Management, Mission Commissions, Liaison Commission and the Federal Council – "Plaaslike Bestuur", "Sendingkommissies", "Skakelkommissie" and "Federale Raad").

1.5.1 LOCAL LEVEL

1.5.2 CIRCUIT LEVEL

1.5.3 SYNODICAL LEVEL

1.5.4 THE FEDERAL COUNCIL OF THE DR CHURCHES

1.6 INTERPRETATION AND EVALUATION

CHAPTER 2

2. GROWING CONSCIOUSNESS

2.1 INTRODUCTION

2.2 THE COTTESLOE CONSULTATION

Discussions on church unity within the family of the DR Churches as from 1960.

2.3 THE CHRISTIAN INSTITUTE

Discussions to promote unity and ecumenism between Christians of different denominations in South Africa and abroad which focused on dialogue between Christians of all racial groups.

2.4 THE ROLE OF THE BROEDERKRING

Discussions of the role played by the Broederkring (BK) within the family of the DR Churches to bring about unity.

2.5 THE ROLE OF MINISTERS WHO STUDIED ABROAD

2.6 THE ROLE OF THE FEDERAL COUNCIL

2.7 CHURCH STRUCTURE WHICH PORTRAYS UNITY WITH THE FAMILY OF THE DR CHURCHES

2.7.1 CHURCH AND SOCIETY 1986

2.7.2 CHURCH AND SOCIETY 1990

2.8 DECISIONS BY THE DRCA ON CHURCH UNITY

2.8.1 SYNODS OF THE DRCA

2.8.1.1 WORCESTER 1975

2.8.1.2 UMGABABA 1979

2.8.1.3 BARKLY WEST 1983

2.8.1.4 UMTATA 1987

2.8.2 THE SOUTH AFRICAN COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

2.9 DECISIONS OF THE DRMC ON CHURCH UNITY

2.9.1 BELHAR 1978

2.9.2 BELHAR 1982

2.9.3 BELHAR 1986

2.9.4 THE WORLD ALLIANCE OF REFORMED CHURCHES (WARC) AND THE SUPPORT OF THE DRMC

2.10 INTERPRETATION AND EVALUATION

CHAPTER 3

3. DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN "MOTHER" AND "Daughter" CHURCHES ON CHURCH UNIFICATION

3.1 DISCUSSIONS ON CHURCH UNIFICATION

3.2 MODELS OF CHURCH UNIFICATION FOR THE DRCA, DRMC, DRC AND RCA

- 3.2.1 THE MODEL OF THE FORMER DUTCH REFORMED CHURCH IN AFRICA AND DUTCH REFORMED MISSION CHURCH
- 3.2.2 CONCEPT MODEL OF THE REFORMED CHURCH IN AFRICA
- 3.2.3 CONCEPT MODEL OF THE DUTCH REFORMED CHURCH
- 3.2.4 A CRITICAL DISCUSSION OF THE THREE MODELS
- 3.3 THE WORK OF THE DIALOGUE COMMISSION FOR CHURCH UNITY DURING 1986-1990
- 3.4 A CHURCH ORDER PROBLEM WITHIN THE DRCA PREVENT CHURCH UNIFICATION
- 3.5 INTERPRETATION AND EVALUATION

CHAPTER 4

- 4. FOUNDATION OF THE UNITING REFORMED CHURCH IN SOUTHERN AFRICA (URCSA)
 - 4.1 INTRODUCTION
 - 4.2 THE FOUNDATION OF THE URCSA
 - 4.3 CHURCH ORDER
 - 4.4 BELHAR CONFSSION
 - 4.5 INTERPRETATION AND EVALUATION

CHAPTER 5

- 5. A CRITICAL EVALUATION AND CONCLUSION

CHAPTER 1

1. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE RELATIONSHIP WITHIN THE FAMILY OF THE DUTCH REFORMED CHURCHES (NG KERKE)

1.1 FOUNDATION AND GROWTH OF THE FAMILY OF THE DUTCH REFORMED CHURCH (DRC)

1.1.1 THE FOUNDATION OF THE DRC IN SOUTH AFRICA

The Dutch Colony at the Cape was established in April 1652 on the arrival of 200 whites under the leadership of Jan van Riebeeck. At the beginning there was no intention to establish a congregation because these few white members were seen as members of the church in Amsterdam. Willem Barents Wijlant was responsible for the sick as "sieketrooster" and to give them spiritual care (Moorees 1937:11).

In 1665 the first congregation was established in Cape Town. This congregation resorted under the Circuit of Amsterdam. Its first minister was Johan van Arckel. The minister was in the service of the state and paid by the state. In church council meetings the state was represented by a political commissioner (Kommissaris-politiek).

The second congregation was established at Stellenbosch in 1686, and a third at Drakenstein (Paarl) in 1691. Another congregation was established at Tulbagh in 1743 and another at Malmesbury in 1745. Fifty years later, two more congregations were established, one at Graaff-Reinet in 1792 and the other at Swellendam in 1798.

Between the years of the arrival of the Dutch at the Cape (1652) and the synod of 1857, all "non-white" and white Christians worshipped God under the same roof, irrespective of colour and race. "In the early days at the Cape Colony discrimination practised between whites and blacks, free man and slave, was ostensibly based more on religion than race. Though racism and a European sense of cultural superiority were rife, the first Dutch commandant at the Cape, issued a proclamation in which it was decreed that everyone is ... earnestly admonished and ordered to show all friendliness and amiability to the natives" (De Gruchy 1979:7).

Towards the end of the 18th century, England and France were at war. In 1795 the British occupied the Cape Colony. In 1807 the Cape was in accordance with the agreement of Amiens returned to Holland under the reign of General Janssens.

Some voices at the synod of 1829 argued that "non-white" members should not be allowed to sit at the Holy Communion table simultaneously with white members. They should rather be served separately. However, the Synod of 1829 rejected this proposal and stood firm and undeterred. Holy Communion, it maintained, was to be administered "simultaneously to all members without distinction of colour or origin because this was an unshakeable principle based on the infallible Word of God" (De Gruchy 1979:7).

At the synod of 1857 the problem of separate buildings for "non-whites" was raised again by the minister of Tulbagh, R Shand. "Die Consulents (Ds Shand) verzocht zijnde daaromtrent eenige inlichting te geven, deed zulks door te verklaren wat het oogmerk van dat voorstel is geweest, als inhoudende hetgeen, naar zijn inzien, aandruischt tegen aanbevelingen van vorige Synodale Vergaderingen, daar het inhield om in het genot van Kerkelyke voorregten, de gekleurde leden der gemeente niet gelijkelyk, en in hetzelfde gebouw met de blanken, te doen deelen" (Handelingen 1857:58). The synod adopted the proposal of Andrew Murray, who was the minister of Graaff-Reinet, which read as follows: "De Synode beschouwt het wenschelik en schriftmagtig, dat onze ledematen uit de Heidenen, in onze bestaande gemeenten opgenomen en ingelijfd worden, overal waar zulks geschieden kan, maar waar deze maatregel, ten gevolge van de zwakheid van sommigen, de bevordering van de zaak van Christus onder de Heidenen, in den weg zoude staan, de gemeente uit de Heidenen opgerigt, of nog op te rigten, hare Christelyke voorregten in een afzonderlyk gebouw of gesticht genieten zal" (Handelingen 1857: 58). The proposal was accepted by the majority of the synod. Although De Cruchy (1979:8) argues that Murray's proposal was not simply for racist reasons, it is nevertheless important to take into consideration its racist consequences in the political ecclesiological history of South Africa.

1857 was a watershed year in the history in the mission of the DRC. Its missionary work expanded and more missionaries were sent beyond the borders of the Cape Colony. Although mixed congregations continued to exist, what in 1857 was meant to be an exception, became the rule. Separate parallel congregations were formed; eventually leading to separate mission or "Daughter" churches (De Gruchy 1979:8).

In 1824 the Dutch Reformed Church held its first synod. This synod was remarkable because it earmarked the Cape Church's independence from the circuit of Amsterdam. It nevertheless remained a state church, because the elders were appointed by the state and the ministers called and paid by the state. Since 1834, the year of the Great Trek, congregations were established in Natal, the Orange Free State and Transvaal. Some of these congregations formed part of the Cape Synod. However, as a result of the Loedolff court case in 1862, the representatives of the congregations outside the Cape Colony were prohibited from attending the synod. Ever since, separate synods of the DRC had been established in the four different areas.

The Great Trek took place during the period of 1834 - 1854 when approximately 6 000 whites left the Cape Colony to settle in the North (Muller 1968:133). The Great Trek was a reaction of the Afrikaner against the British social-political situation of those days. Amongst other things, the Great Trek contributed in the formation and establishment of DRC congregations and synods in Natal, the Orange Free State and the Transvaal (Van der Watt 1977:25). As from that period, four provincial synods were established. It was only in 1962 when the four churches united to form one general synod. The mission work of the DRC in the four provinces eventually developed into separate churches for separate national groups. It was the results of the working of the mission policy of the DRC (Gerdener 1951:8 - 92).

1.2 THE FOUNDATION AND GROWTH OF THE THREE "DAUGHTER" CHURCHES

The foundation history of the three "Daughter" churches is symbolic. Although they churches which were independently established, they remained client churches under the patronage of the white DRC.

1.2.1 THE FOUNDATION OF THE DUTCH REFORMED MISSION CHURCH (DRMC)

According to Prof D Crafford, the new Mission Commission of the DRC, elected at the Synod of 1857, did well in its mission task within the country. On Friday 12th November 1880 the Synod agreed to establish a separate "Nederduitsche Gereformeerde

Zendingkerk". The overwhelming majority accepted this proposal. "Die goedgekeurde konstitusie het in sy finale vorm in 1881 in die Wetboek van die Moederkerk verskyn" (Crafford 1982:99). On the acceptance of this proposal the Inland Mission Commission arranged the establishment of the Mission Church.

The synod of the DRMC then consisted of only four congregations, namely George, Zuurbraak, Wellington and Wynberg, and the very first moderation of the newly established Church were formed by four missionaries. The Mission Commission of the "Mother" church remained operative as a link between the "Mother" and the "Daughter" church.

The new church grew rapidly (Kriel 1961:63 - 67). Two congregations, St Stephens (Cape Town) and Stockenström (Eastern Cape) preferred to unite with the DRC. The St Stephens congregation remained a member of the DRC in South Africa until this day, but Stockenström later decided to become a member of the DRMC. By 1981 this church had 200 congregations (Kriel 1981: 55). In March 1981 the Dutch Reformed Mission Church was a hundred years old, and celebrated its birthday at Wynberg in Cape Town and elsewhere (Kriel 1981: 26). It expanded throughout South Africa until 1994 when it united with the DRCA to form the new Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa (URCSA).

1.2.2 THE FOUNDATION OF THE DUTCH REFORMED CHURCH IN AFRICA (DRCA)

The DRCA was the result of the mission work of the DRC in South Africa. In 1877 the Cape DRC started missionary work in Bechuanaland (now Botswana), in 1889 in Nyasaland (Malawi), in 1891 in Mashonaland (Zambia) and in 1908 in Nigeria.

In Natal (Crafford 1982:158 - 173) the first mission was founded at Greytown in 1887. In 1874 missionary work started in the Orange Free State at Witsieshoek, (Crafford 1982:128 - 132), to be followed in 1885 by work in the Transvaal. In 1899 the Dutch Reformed Church in the Orange Free State (Crafford 1982:300 - 310) started its own missionary work in the then Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia). This work was also extended to Lesotho, Kenya and Swaziland.

This church grew rapidly, especially during the nineteenth century. Four theological seminaries within the boundaries of South Africa were established, one in Umtata (Decoligny) for the AmaXhosa, Witsieshoek for the Basotho, Turfloop for the Batswana and Dingaanstat for the isiZulu speakers.

Before 1963 the different regional synods of the then Bantu DRC functioned as independent synods under the control of the white DRC. In 1963 the four regional synods of the African Church, the Cape, Transvaal, Orange Free State and Natal, formed one General Synod. The new church became known as the DRCA. However, it remained under the patronage of the white DRC, financially, theologically, politically and psychologically.

1.2.3 THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE REFORMED CHURCH IN AFRICA (RCA)

Among the Indians, the DRC started its mission work in 1946 through the efforts of the Reverends MW Theunissen and CWJ Pretorius of the DRC. At a later stage, the DRC took over the mission work from Theunissen and Pretorius. In 1951 A Murugan was given the status of an evangelist and worked among his people for the DRC. In 1957 Rev CWJ Pretorius was appointed to work full time among the Indians in Natal. Prof Crafford summarises the Natal situation as follows:

"Ons kan dus die posisie in Natal teen 1968 soos volg saamvat: daar is 'n gemeente vir Pietermaritzburg en Durban-Noord en 'n tweede vir Durban-Suid. In elk van die gemeentes was 'n sendeling werksaam wat die hulp van vier evangeliste gehad het. Kleiner werk is ook alreeds begin op plattelandse dorpe soos Harding, Colenso, Greytown en Glencoe. 'n Klein bende strydery vir Christus het voor die groot uitdaging gestaan wat die 400 000 Indiërs in Natal gebied het" (Crafford 1982:448).

In the Transvaal, mission work was started by Rev Chris Greyling in July 1957. In 1959 Charl du P le Roux was ordained to assist CWJ Pretorius. By 1961 Gopal Moodley has already been working as the first student evangelist in the Transvaal (Crafford 1982:449). A second evangelist, Bunyan Peter, came to his assistance. In November 1961 a church building in Germiston was inaugurated. In 1963 mej Eringa was appointed to work in Pretoria. (Crafford 1982:450)

In Cape Town, mission work among Asian people was started by Rev DJ Pypers in 1960 on the Cape Synod's request of the "Skiereilandse Sendingraad". In 1965 a church building was erected in Rylands and in 1966 the first Indian congregation in the Cape was established. The first convention of the Indian congregations was held on 27 August 1968. This convention accepted the church order and then constituted as the Indian Reformed Church. It changed its name in 1976 to the Reformed Church in Africa. This church gained independence from the onset.

The DRMC, the DRCA and the RCA for the Indians at that stage were independent churches in association with the DRC in SA. All these mission churches were established by the DRC. It was not the will and desire of the "non-white" churches to be established separate churches.

1.3 THE MISSION POLICY AND ITS PRACTICE

After discussing the establishment of these churches, we now turn to discuss the mission policy and how it was put into practice by the DRC.

Missionary activities by the DRC started late, compared to other churches and missionary societies in South Africa. The reason for this was that local churches could not do mission work because of the control executed by authorities in Cape Town and in Holland. The church could hardly satisfy the needs of the Dutch colonists. The requirements of these church members were a priority to the church. This became even more problematic when Afrikaner farmers travelled to the north to escape British control.

Another reason for the lack of an incentive to do missionary work among the indigenous people can be found in the teachings of Dordt. This confessional assembly of 1618 declared that the offspring of the heathen should not be baptised, even if they had become an integrated part of Christian (e.g. white) households (Hope and Young 1981:11).

In 1934 the Native Commission of the Federal Council of Churches called representatives of the DRC together to decide on a uniform policy on mission. In previous years, the Synods had already defined their own policies on mission. Because of this convocation, its Mission Policy came into existence. It is important to understand that by that time a different wind blew through the DRC. More outspoken supporters of racial segregation

occupied influential positions within the church. In 1935, the DRC adopted its first official mission policy in Bloemfontein which was formulated and prepared by the General Mission Congress of the DRC of the Orange Free State in 1929 at Kroonstad. The task of this congress was to formulate a mission policy in respect of the education, language, social, economic and spiritual aspects for the "natives and coloureds".

1.3.1 BIBLICAL BASIS

The DRC based its mission policy on the Bible, particularly the decision, the promise and the command of God as written in Mat 28:19 and Mark 16:15. From these verses the DRC deduced that it was the nation or "volk" of God sent to South Africa in 1652 to spread the gospel amongst the "non-white". The DRC strongly believed that it was its responsibility and privilege to do mission work among the "natives" and "coloureds" of South Africa and in Africa (Gerdener 1959:86).

The DRC acknowledged the fact that the nations of the world consist of different colour, culture and language groups. To prove this fact, the DRC quoted Acts 17:26: "From the one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the times set for them and the exact places where they should live". The method to implement this biblical view was worked out in the following:

1.3.1.1 THE MISSION METHODS

1.3.1.1.1 EVANGELISATION

In order to implement the mission methods, the DRC emphasised the proclamation of the Gospel with the intention of gathering souls as the first step. "Insameling van siele, sonder opbouing van 'n sigbare Kerk, voldoen nie aan die bevel van Christus nie" (Gerdener 1951:87).

The second step was the establishment of congregations and churches for the "natives" and "coloureds". Once churches had been established, they had to be taught and developed to be independent churches. By "independent" the DRC meant that these churches should be self-supportive, self-governing and self-growing. In this regard the DRC's aim was in line with that of the English-speaking missionary theorists of the 19th century. According to the

three-selves formula, propagated by Venn and Anderson, the goal of the mission and the planting of an indigenous church was to be self-supporting, self-governing and self-extending (Verkuyt 1975:184 - 187). In DRC circles too it was seen as the task of the missionaries to control and lead the "natives" and "coloureds" to independence. In the course of time "natives" and "coloureds" were to be trained to work amongst their own people. The DRC would play the role of supervisor.

The evangelisation of the "natives" and "coloureds" was not meant to lead them to de-tribalisation. Christianity should not rob the "natives" and "coloureds" of their language and culture but should rather retain and honour them (Gerdener 1951:88). The habits of the "natives" and "coloureds" which were in line with the Christian values should be kept, but those which in conflict with Christian values should not be recognised and should be seen as unchristian.

The mission field of the DRC was based on Acts 1:8. The missionaries would be witnesses to the end of the earth.

1.3.1.1.2 RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER CHURCHES AND GOVERNMENT

According to Gerdener the relationship between the church and the state should be kept carefully in accordance with the objectives of the church. There should be some type co-operation and unity between church and state. Concerning the relationship with other churches and societies there should be good relationships. Central to the objectives of the DRC was to plant the church and grow of the Kingdom of God. For Gerdener the relationship between the church and the state should be maintained so as to promote Christianity (Gerdener 1951:88 - 89).

(i) Education and Training

Gerdener's view is that the education and training of the "natives" and "coloureds" should be done according to the principles of the Bible.

In educating the "natives" and "coloureds", the following facts should be taken into account:

"Dat hy sy aangewese plek sal moet inneem in sy land en onder sy volk, wat hy nie sal kan doen as hy 'n blote na-aper van die blanke geword het nie.

Dat alle opvoeding en onderwys gebaseer moet wees op sy volkskultuur en dat sy taal, geskiedenis en (tensy hulle indruis teen die beginsels van die Christendom) gewoontes, tot hul reg moet kom. Onderwys moet nie denasionaliseer nie.

Dat volle geleentheid verskaf moet word om hom voor te berei om dit op die beste manier te kan doen.

Dat om in ons land die naturel ten volle toe te rus vir sy ekonomiese stryd, hy die offisiële landstaal of tale, benewens sy eie, sal moet ken.

Die Kerk gun die kleurling en die naturel op hul eie terrein 'n gelykwaardige opvoeding en onderwys met die wat die blanke geniet. In albei gevalle moet by die volksverlede aangeknoop en vir die volkstoekoms voorberei word" (Gerdener 1951:90).

According to the above, it is clear that "natives" and "coloureds" was supposed to have taken their rightful place in their own homelands and among their own nations.

Their education and training should be based on the traditions of their different nations and cultures. In other words, their education and training should recognise their language, culture, history and customs if these are not in conflict with Christianity.

However, the various languages of the "natives" should not be denationalised. They should know their vernacular besides the official languages of the country. "Die Kerk gun die kleurling en die naturel op hul eie terrein 'n gelykwaardige opvoeding en onderwys met die wat die blanke geniet" (Gerdener 1951:90).

(ii) *Social*

The DRC always opposed social equality and the mixing of races. "Die tradisionele vrees by die Afrikaner vir gelykstelling tussen swart en wit is gebore uit sy afkeer van die idee van rassevermenging" (Gerdener 1951:91). As a result, whites saw it as their calling to influence "natives" and "coloureds" to be very colour conscious and to differentiate amongst people on a colour basis. In order to succeed in this goal, they saw themselves as

guardians over the "natives" and "coloureds"; they were of the opinion that they had to rule them until they reach the age of maturity where they could do things for themselves. "Alle aparte behandeling word steeds deur die NGK verstaan en bedoel om lewe en selfstandigheid te bevorder" (Gerdener 1951:91). This is to be seen as the birth of development and independence of the "natives" and "coloureds".

"Die vrugte van die Christelike beskawing en die seëning van die Evangelie word die nie-blanke groepe van die samelewing ten volle gegun" (Gerdener 1951:91).

(iii) *Economy*

It was expected of "natives" and "coloureds" to build their own economy separated from that of the whites. It was expected that whites would help and encourage them by giving them work and a reasonable pay for the work done. "Waar die blanke ras egter in die posisie van voog teenoor die swarte staan, moet die sterke die swarte en swakkere help en aanmoedig, ook deur die werk en ontwikkelingsgeleentheid aan hom te verskaf en redelike vergoeding vir dienste aan hom te gee" (Gerdener 1951:91, 92).

1.3.1.1.3 THE PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF THE MISSION POLICY

This mission policy document propagated the development of the "natives" and "coloureds" separately. According to a study presented to the Synod of the DRMC in 1982, a delegation was sent to meet Colonel Reitz (then minister of Native Affairs) in connection with mixed marriages, separate residential areas and separate black University Colleges for natives. In this document Rev JR Albertyn addressed the issue of mixed marriages and separate residential areas. Rev HSM Botha pleaded that Native Affairs should not be included in party politics. Dr GBA Gerdener pleaded for separate training University Colleges for the natives.

According to this document, four proposals were put before the Synod by the Commission on mixed marriages in 1939 which recommended the following:

"Maatreëls teen buite-egtelike rassevermenging"

Die buite-egtelike rassevermenging is veel erger as die euwel van gemengde huwelike. Die bevinding van die Kommissie oor Gemengde Huwelike van 1939 was as volg: Vrywel elke getuie het ingestem dat gemengde huwelike slegs 'n klein aandeel het in die vermeerdering

van die kleurlingbevolking, want nog baie meer kleurlinge, word gebore deur onwettige geslagsomgang, 'n euwel wat op uitgebreide skaal plaasvind. Vermenging tussen 'n blanke en 'n naturel is vandag strafbaar deur die wet; waarom is vermenging tussen 'n blanke en 'n kleurling nie eweneens 'n strafbare misdaad nie"? (Handelinge 1982:710).

"n Streng verbod op gemengde huwelike

In verband hiermee stel ds PW Jordaan en oudl JG du Toit voor en die Vergadering besluit dat die Sinode die dank en waardering van die Kerk aan die regering oorbring vir sy moedige optrede teen gemengde huwelike; en verder beleefdlik versoek dat die Regering, ten einde rassevermenging in al sy vertakkinge aan bande te lê, die volgende stappe sal doen:

- (a) Wetgewing indien om ook buite-egtelike verkeer tussen blankes en nie-blankes te verbied;
- (b) Die segregasie van blankes, naturelle en kleurlinge in aparte woonbuurte so spoedig moontlik verpligtend maak;
- (c) Die aanwakkering van 'n gesonde rassetrots by blanke en nie-blanke rasse in alle blanke en nie-blanke staatskole aanmoedig.

Aparte woonbuurte - nie net tussen blankes en naturelle nie, maar ook tussen blankes en kleurlinge. Armoede is die groot gelykmaker van rasse en persone. Die saamwoon van blankes en gekleurdes in armoedige omstandighede moet noodwendig lei tot sosiale en rassevermenging. Met groot versigtigheid moet hierin te werk gegaan word om nie die skyn van 'n meganiese, abrupte verdeling van blankes en gekleurdes in aparte woonbuurtes te gee nie. Vergelyk hierby die verdeling tussen blankes en gekleurdes in die NG Kerk. Oorspronklik was die kleurlinge ook lidmate van die blanke gemeentes. Deur die stigting van aparte sendinggemeentes het egter 'n langsame, geleidelike en natuurlike verdeling tussen hulle gekom. So dien aantreklike kleurlingwoonbuurtes geskep te word wat hulle daarheen sal lok en 'n natuurlike verdeling sal bevorder.

Aparte Bedrywe

Sover enigsins moontlik behoort aparte bedrywe vir blankes, kleurlinge en naturelle geskep te word, waar elke ras saam met sy eie rasgenote kan werk, en beskerm sal wees teen konkurrensie met die ander rasse" (Handelinge 1982: 710).

In 1942 the Federal Council of Churches established the Federal Mission Council to replace the Native Commission. It had three objectives: to study the DRC Mission Policy, to plan a joint mission strategy and to organise mission conferences. Its outcome showed a break off with the past attitudes towards the separation of races in South Africa. We must keep in mind that one year before this Council came into existence, another Commission of the Federal Council of Churches, the predecessor of what is presently called the Commission for Doctrinal and Current Affairs, still denied a scriptural basis for the church's race policy. However, it believed that separate development could be justified on practical grounds. In contrast, the Federal Mission had a policy of separate development as the only just and scriptural solution to the race issue. It motivated this on the basis of the need for the Afrikaner people's preservation (selfbehoud) and on Christian compassion.

The DRC directed its benevolence to the mixed population, which would come into existence because of the fusion of races. Since as early as 1926, the DRC had denounced mixed marriages as a solution for the race issue. According to the DRC, these people would always occupy a position subordinate to that of white people. This inferiority revealed itself in a lack of racial pride, in moral and religious shortcomings, and most of all, in economic and physical weaknesses. A new element of this council's approach was the discussion of its racial position with the government and other institutions. The relationship between the church and the state increasingly became fused.

At the request of the Federal Mission Council, the DRC convened a conference in Bloemfontein in 1950 to discuss the whole question of race relations between black, white and coloured. This meeting accepted six pillars of apartheid within the church. The policy of mixed marriages was rejected because it could not protect the growth and identity of the white population. The policy of separate development was accepted and seen as the only way of black and white living side by side, as this would allow each of them to develop separately. A policy determining the future of the Bantu would be spelt out, Christian values were developed so as to help the Bantu control their birth, rate and to develop into a nation, and the Bantu should be taught that he had no say in white politics. Whites had also to be taught that they had no political rights in black areas.

The DRC Synod of 1951 found biblical texts to justify apartheid. Here are some extracts from the Acta of 1951:

- (a) "God het die bestaan van aparte volkere nie alleen gewil nie, maar ook bestendig.

- (b) Hoewel die Hoog Eerwaarde Sinode geen volksgroep ooit in minderwaardigheid wil hou nie, is dit tog waar dat die Woord van God geensins gelykstelling eis en is dit juis 'n onaanvegbare skriftelike beginsel dat daar in elke gemeenskapsordening 'n bepaalde gesagsverhouding bestaan" (Handelinge 1951:80f).

Mission work then aimed at the establishment of congregations for the coloured, blacks and other races living in towns and on the farms within the boundaries of the congregations of the mother church. Mission work primarily was the responsibility of the different congregations of the Synod of the mother church. "Die Sending het ten doel die uitbreiding van die koninkryk van God en word as Binnelandse en Buitelandse Sending behartig. Die Binnelandse Sending sluit in die arbeid aan die Kleurlinge en Bantoe wat binne die grense van die kerk woon en van sy geestelike versorging afhanklik is. Sendingwerk gaan in eerste instansie uit van die afsonderlike gemeentes en moet binne die grense van elke gemeente van die moederkerk behartig word onder kleurlinge, bantoe en ander rasse op die dorpe sowel as op die plase. Hierdie bearbeiding geskied in gevestigde sendinggemeentes of in sending werkkringe". (Bepalings en reglemente 1957:82).

The Synod of the DRC in SA established a commission known as the General Mission Committee (GMC), as a working forum. The constitution of the General Mission Committee consisted of one representative from each circuit, representatives of the Synod with a training knowledge and experts on any of the fields that were of assistance to the mission work. The organising secretaries appointed by the GMC were ex-officio members.

The Committee on its turn appointed at least three members on each sub-committee to administer the portfolios of finance, the interior mission amongst the coloureds, the interior mission amongst blacks and the foreign mission. There were also other committees like the Commission for Urgent Matters which was established to deal with matters that could not wait. "Sake van ingrypende aard, wat 'n besluit van die Algemene Sendingkommissie sou vereis, maar geen uitstel gedoog nie, word in die reses aan 'n Kommissie vir Spoedeisende Sake voorgelê. Die voorsitter van die Algemene Sendingkommissie, wat ex officio voorsitter van die Kommissie vir Spoedeisende Sake is, roep vergaderings, wanneer noodsaaklik, byeen en wel na oorleg met of op versoek van die Finansiële Kommissie wat saam met hom en die voorsitters van die permanente Sub-kommissie of hul plaasvervangers die lede daarvan uitmaak. Die Kommissie vir Spoedeisende Sake sal na gelang van omstandighede optree en verantwoording doen aan die Algemene

Sendingkommissie by geleentheid van die stemme van die lede teenwoordig is nodig vir 'n besluit" (Bepalings en Reglemente 1957:83).

The DRC also established mission commissions on synodical, circuit and church council levels. These commissions were known as synodical mission commissions, circuit mission committees and the church council mission committees. There were a number of people who were appointed to serve on each level so as to expand mission work among "non-whites".

The mission policy declared that mission work was more than mere evangelisation or preaching the Word of God. It required a comprehensive approach, which included education, medical services and agricultural, industrial and social activities. These were felt to be "lawful and proved accessory means of opening the hearts of the heathen to the Gospel" (Gerdener 1958: 270).

However, evangelisation does not assume denationalisation. On the contrary, Christianity should refine black nationalism. This meant that it should preserve and elevate "racial customs", which did not conflict with Christianity. Cultural differences were regarded as God-given. In consequence, the document advocated the separation of races as the best way to enhance cultural identity. Thus, the authors of the Mission Policy deduced a normative statement from the existence of different cultures and traditions.

In respect of the social sphere, the policy states: "The traditional fear of the Afrikaner of equality of treatment (gelykstelling) between black and white has its origin in his antipathy to the idea of racial fusion. The church declares itself unequivocally opposed to this fusion. Every nation has the right to be itself and to endeavour to develop and elevate itself. While the church thus declared itself opposed to social equality in the sense of ignoring differences of race and colour between white and black in daily life, it favoured the encouragement and development of social differentiation and intellectual or cultural segregation, to the advantage of both sections" (Gerdener 1958:272).

The document evidently expresses a superior perspective on the indigenous population of the continent. It considers education of the non-Europeans a main task of the church. One objective of teaching and instruction is: "The development of the mind of the Bantoe (or Coloured) in such a manner as to enable him not only to think for himself, but also and

especially to care for himself and to provide for his needs" (Gerdener 1958:271-272). This means that "he will have to take up his place in his country and among his people, which will not be possible if he becomes a mere imitator of the European" (Gerdener 1958:272). Thus, according to Gerdener education must not denationalise, but aim at the development of the Natives towards becoming self-respecting Christian nations.

The DRC submitted its mission policy to the government. According to the Native Commission, this policy influenced the government in developing apartheid, an influence the church was proud of. This document determined the DRC's missionary activities for almost three decades. Only in 1962, after the establishment of the General Synod of the DRC, did the "Sending Reglement" (Mission Rules) replace the mission policy.

At this point the church took other similar decisions, for example:

"Die gebeure by Sharpeville, Langa en Nyanga in 1960 waarin talle swartmense hulle lewens verloor het, was die direkte aanleiding tot die Cottesloe-kerkeberaad in Johannesburg in Desember 1960.

Die studiestuk van die Kaapse NG Kerke was die model na aanleiding waarvan uitsprake oor maatskaplike aangeleenthede duidelik geformuleer is. Hoewel nie een besluit tov die basiese filosofie van apartheid gemaak is nie, is die volgende onder andere gestel:

1. Ons erken dat alle rassegroepe wat permanent in ons land gevestig is, deel is van ons totale bevolking, en ons beskou hulle as inheems. Lede van al hierdie groepe het eweveel reg om hulle bydrae te lewer tot die verryking van die lewe van hulle land en om te deel in die verantwoordelikhede, belonings en voorregte wat daaruit volg.
2. Niemand wat in Jesus Christus glo, mag uitgesluit word uit enige Kerk op grond van sy kleur of ras nie. Die geestelike eenheid van alle mense wat in Christus is, moet sigbaar tot uiting kom in handeling van gemeenskaplike aanbidding en getuienis, in gemeenskap en konsultasie oor sake van gemeenskaplike belang.
3. Daar is geen Skriftelike gronde vir 'n verbod op gemengde huwelike nie. Die welsyn van die gemeenskap en pastorale verantwoordelikheid vereis egter dat die

nodige oorweging geskenk moet word aan sekere faktore wat sulke huwelike onwenslik mag maak" (Handelinge 1982:711).

These ideas set the trend for the coming decades. The Federal Mission Council more and more became involved in political and social processes. Increasingly, mission referred to a racial distinction because it supported the policy of segregation. The former contrast between European/Christian and indigenous people/heathen seems to have remained intact.

The DRC continued to do mission work among the "non-white" population, both inside and outside the borders of South Africa. Throughout its history, mission work remained one of the most important and highly elaborated aspects of the DRC. Of all the churches in South Africa, the DRC had the most extended mission programme, with a high financial contribution by its members. Besides that there was an assumption that the DRC also received financial support from the Nationalist government to set up mission hospitals and schools and to execute other missionary work.

In the nineteenth century the missionary movement came into existence on an international scale. This stimulated the interest for evangelisation of the native population of South Africa. Initially the missionary activities of the DRC concentrated on slaves and servants in the Cape Colony.

The General Synod of the Dutch Reformed Church held in Cape Town in 1986 reviewed the mission policy in the light of the contents of the document "Ras, Volk en Nasie" (of Agenda van die Algemene Sinode 1986:261-265).

According to the policy document "Church and Society," adopted at the 1990 synod, mission work was still a matter of the greatest concern to the church: "... in all circumstances, even in a situation of strained relationships, mission work must claim the highest priority in the programme of the church" (Church and Society 1990:7).

Mission practice of the DRC from the outset was based on Matthew 28:19-20: "Go then to all peoples everywhere and make them my disciples". This command was believed to come from God, and it made the DRC persistent in its attempts to christianise blacks in general.

In the DRC, it was the task of the minister and the church council to motivate the congregation and to empower it to become a missionary congregation by witnessing through word and life, praying and practising fellowship. In order to do mission work, the church council usually appointed a church council mission committee. Every church council undertook to do mission work within its boundaries.

Where necessary the circuit and the synod may have helped the church council in carrying out its mission work. The circuit mission committee and the Synodical Mission Commission were responsible for the mission work of the circuit and the synod respectively.

Mission work outside the boundaries of the congregations or outside South Africa was done in consultation and liaisoning with other churches and mission societies already working in that area.

The General Synod on its turn determined the mission policy of the DRC. The General Synodical Mission Commission advised the General Synod in this respect. The Federal Council of the DRC in turn advised the "'Daughter" churches" about the mission policy.

The DRC took on its shoulders the responsibility to train and to equip some of its members, ministers and other workers to become missionaries among other population groups.

The mission policy was put into practice by each of the mission committees appointed from General Synodical level to church council level. Schools were built to educate "non-whites" separately. Hospitals were erected to care for the health of "non-whites" and agricultural projects were established.

The Synod of 1990 redefined the objectives of mission. An attempt was made to abandon the route of unequal relationships between the DRCs. A distinction was made between mission, the up-building of congregations and inter-church support. The first aimed at converting people who had never been reached by the Gospel. As a consequence, new churches had to be built for the baptised. The last term (inter-church support) referred to the mutual support of DRC, whether financial or in other ways. The expression "missionary", used to denote (white) DRC ministers working in other DRCs, met with resistance. The

General Synod accepted the proposal to replace this with "dominee" ("leraar", the term used in all DR Churches for its clergy). The Synod also accepted the suggestion of the 1983 Western Cape synod to replace the phraseology of a "moederkerk" and "'Daughter" churches" by the term "sister churches" (Church and Society 1990: 29). All these amendments showed a change towards a more equal appraisal of all the DR Churches.

1.4 THE RELATIONSHIPS

In the previous historical preview of the "relationships within the family of the DR Churches" the following became clear:

The relationship between the DRC and the three Mission Churches for "non-whites" had been expressed in terms of "Mother" and "Daughter".

This "Mother" and "Daughter" relationship further expressed the subordination of the three Mission Churches and the domination of the DRC.

This domination and subordination was reflected in the structures of the Church Order.

This church order structure within the three Mission Churches defined biblical-theological consequences for the church being of the mission churches.

It is therefore necessary to test this relationship of domination and obedience within the four Reformed churches biblical-theologically and also against the Church Order of Emden.

(i) *The Bible*

It is not my aim to discuss the biblical-theological criticism of the relationships of domination and obedience in detail. The reference to Verkuyl will be sufficient in this regard.

In discussing the Bible on the relations between churches, J Verkuyl holds that there is a relationship between the congregation and Christ, and members of the congregation are dependent on Him. He maintained that the only reference used in the Bible to determine proper patterns of relationship is the body of Christ in which all members are equal, indispensable and useful (Verkuyl 1975:312). The congregations are to be true and faithful

to each other and loyal to Christ, the head of the church. They must be prepared to assist each other and to exchange gifts and goods in the service of God's Kingdom.

On reforming the patterns of relationships between the churches, Verkuyl criticised the mother churches for being paternalistic or materialistic towards the "Daughter" churches. He argued that such relationships should be changed. He suggested multilateral relationships without losing the positive benefits which bilateral relationships offered and could continue to offer, for these latter relationships were important and very worthwhile, as the churches in the developing countries continually reiterated (Verkuyl 1975:313 - 314). Verkuyl posited that there should be a relationship of equality and of doing things together rather than domination and dependence.

(ii) *Church Order*

In one of the oldest authoritative Church Orders of the Reformed Churches in the world, the Church Order of Emden (1571) this topic of authority is expressed in the following words:

"Gheen Kercke sal over een ander kercke, gheen Dienaar des woorts gheen Ouderlinck, noch Diaken sal d'een over d'ander heerschappie voeren, maar een veghelijck sal hen voor alle suspicien, ende sevlockinghe om te heerschappen, wachten" (Pont 1981:97).

Pont argues that the absolute authority of Christ over the church, is the basis of the Church Order of Emden. The equality of congregations and of ministers is clearly stated and that all ministers of the church are subjected to Christ. The word of God is the norm and the rule for the church, arranged by the Church Order: "Die absolute heerskappy van Jesus Christus, die Heer van die kerk, is die uitgangspunt van hierdie kerkorde. Dit is immers die bedoeling van die uitgangspunt van hierdie kerkorde waar die gelykheid van alle gemeentes en die gelykheid van alle dienare (van Jesus Christus) so duidelik gestel word. Dit is 'n gelykheid wat ontstaan omdat Jesus Christus die enige Hoof en Heer van die kerk is en al sy dienare in die kerk is gelyk aan Hom onderworpe, want almal buig onder die gesag van die Woord van God. Dáárdie Woord sal die norm en die reël van die kerklike lewe wees wat deur hierdie kerklike orde gereël word" (Pont 1981:110).

Perhaps the domination of the DRC over the three Mission Churches should be partly explained from the viewpoint that these churches were obedient to the white church.

Secondly, the colonial regime of the 19th century was oppressive. During this period the DRC was subjected to the Cape government and the "Kommissaris-Politiek" had a dominant role to play in their synods (Loff 1998: 204).

In applying the situation to the DRMC of South Africa, Loff says: "Ook onder die Britse gesag het die staatsoorheersing voortgeduur, totdat Ordonnansie 7 van 1843 die kerk uiteindelik vryheid in interne sake gegee het. Die NG Kerke het dus geweet wat dit beteken dat 'n kerk se vryheid en selfstandigheid aan bande gelê word. Tog het hierdie selfde kerk 'n stelsel ten opsigte van die Sendingkerk ontwerp wat 'n treffende ooreenkoms met die praktyk van die patronaatsreg vertoon het. Deur middel van die Constitutie is die Sendingkerk se vryheid en selfstandigheid ingeperk. Die Sendingkerk was dus van die begin af onderworpe aan die NGK kragtens 'n konstitusie wat op oorheersing gemik was, in weerwil van die "goue reël" van Emden. Met verloop van tyd is hierdie heerskappy in 'n meer verfynde vorm uitgedruk in 'n dokument wat as die 'Grondwet' bekend geword het" (Loff 1998:205).

This domination was not applied to the DRMC only but to all the DRC's mission churches, the NG Bantoe Kerk and the Indian Dutch Reformed Church. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, the christianisation of the non-whites by missionaries had developed tremendously. The "non-white" Christians were separated from the mother church but were still regarded as members of the mother church. Sacraments were served in separate buildings. In those days the governing power was with the mother church. In the mission field, the governing of the "Daughter" church was exercised by the missionary (in service of the mother church). With time, the mother church had a desire to give the "Daughter" church more say in governance.

The mission policy had been designed in a way that would defend the relationship of dependence of the three "Daughter" churches on the DRC. The mission policy of the DRC upheld dependence and domination. This was clearly revealed in the church orders of the "Daughter" churches. Deduced from the way these "Daughter" churches were established, it is clear that the DRC decided on their behalf and implemented its own decisions. The machinery by which this policy was to be implemented was through missionaries who served as ministers in the congregations of the three "Daughter" churches.

These missionaries were not full members of the "Daughter" churches, but of the DRC. However, they had the power and status to govern these churches. They filled the positions of moderators, scribes, actuarii, church administrators on synodical levels, chairpersons of circuits and church councils. The "Daughter" churches did not even have the authority to apply discipline to the missionaries at that time.

The relationship of the mother church toward the "Daughter" churches was paternalistic. The control of the mother church over the black "Daughter" churches was practised along four channels which were church law, office bearers, organisation and administration (as the following comments by Robinson prove):

(i) *The Law*

The mother church gave the "Daughter" churches a church law which dealt with doctrine, church government, the right to make their own laws, and administration of properties. However, the mother church had the right to approve the laws made by the "Daughter" churches.

(ii) *Office Bearers*

Within the black church, the training of ministers, evangelists and teachers was controlled by the mother church. In some cases the calling of the minister was even discussed with the intention of transferring him. The salary and the job description of black ministers were directly under the control of the mother church or a commission authorised by it (Robinson 1959:73).

(iii) *Organisation*

The mother church had representatives on church councils of mission congregations and on circuits so as to supervise and control the church councils (Robinson 1959:74).

(iv) *Administration*

Robinson further maintains that the mother church controlled the administration of the black church in doing, amongst others, the transporting of properties and the control of funds (Robinson 1959:74).

1.5 THE STRUCTURE OF THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN MOTHER AND "DAUGHTER" CHURCHES

In accordance with the establishment of the independent young churches with their different synods, as well as the furthering of the uncompleted mission work, it was necessary to build the relationships between the "Daughter" churches and the mother church by way of liasoning at different levels.

1.5.1 *Local Level*

On local level a commission known as the Local Management (Plaaslike Bestuur) was established. This commission consisted of ministers, church council members and congregations of the mother church. Its main task was to provide a service of compassion among the members of the "Daughter" churches on local level and to support the local "Daughter" congregations financially. It also arranged to have garage worship services for domestic workers in the back yards of the white members of the DRC.

1.5.2 *Circuit Level*

On circuit level, the Commission for Mission was responsible for the evangelisation and mission in the circuit. Its function was almost the same as that of the Local Management, but it emphasised evangelisation rather than mission work.

1.5.3 *Synod Level*

On synod level, a particular Regional Synod of the DRC liasoned with the Regional Synod of the "Daughter" synod within its jurisdiction. Synods of the DRC that started mission work outside South Africa, liasoned with the "Daughter" synod which it had established through its mission (Handelinge 1974:316).

1.5.4 *The Federal Council of the DR Churches*

This council met every two years to discuss matters pertaining to the relationship between the DRC and the "Daughter" churches. This Council was important because of its attempt to bring about unity between the Dutch Reformed mother and "Daughter" churches.

On General Synod level the liasing with the DRMC was done by two members from the broad moderation plus the Executive Committee of the General Synodical Mission Commission (ASSK). This structure was established on 21 March 1972. This forum

discussed the awarding of salaries and grants to congregations outside the jurisdiction of the Cape Synod, salaries for ministers, a pension fund and loans to ministers.

"Met die totstandkoming van Algemene Sinodes het dit egter nodig geword om ook op die vlak van Algemene Sinode as kerke met mekaar te skakel. Daar is met die jong kerke binne die Republiek van SA ooreengekom dat die skakeling van NG Kerk kant deur middel van die NG Kerk sal geskied: "Met die NG Sendingkerk in SA: Twee lede van die Breë Moderatuur plus die uitvoerende Komitee van die ASSK. Hierdie skakelligaam het in die reses tot stand gekom en op 21 Maart 1972 sy eerste vergadering gehou, waarby die volgende sake bespreek is: Toekenning van salaris-toelaes aan gemeentes buite die ressort van die Kaapse Kerk; die salarisse van leraars, deelname van leraars aan die pensioenfondse en leningsfondse vir leraars.

Met die NG Kerk in Afrika: Ook twee lede van die Breë Moderatuur tesame met die 5 lede van die UK van die ASSK. Die Algemene Sinode van die NG Kerk in Afrika het die inisiatief geneem om 'n afvaardiging van die NG Kerk te nooi om die sitting van hul Algemene Sinode in Junie 1971 op Tshilidzini, Noord-Transvaal, by te woon. Twee lede van die Breë Moderatuur (dr FE OB Geldenhuys en ds JE Potgieter) en drie lede van die ASSK was daar teenwoordig. Vir die goeie verhouding tussen die twee kerke was dit 'n baie heilsame skakeling. Hierdie Algemene Sinode sal ook met belangstelling kennis neem van die volgende besluite van die Algemene Sinode van die NG Kerk in Afrika daar geneem" (Handelinge 1974:316-317).

Liasing with the DRCA consisted of two members from the broad moderation and five members from the executive of the General Synodical Mission Commission. The first meeting between the General Synods of the DRC and the DRCA took place on 1 August 1943. Matters for discussion at this meeting were: financial problems of the DRCA caused by the former treasurer; a policy of doing mission work together; a three year service of ministers before being called to a congregation; service among ministers of the mother and "Daughter" churches; race relations; the year book; mission work among the communists and consultation before going to the press. "Op 1 Augustus 1973 het die eerste vergadering van die Skakelligaam van die Algemene Sinodes van die NG Kerk en NG Kerk in Afrika plaasgevind. Die volgende sake is bespreek: Finansiële probleme van NG Kerk in Afrika voortvloeiende uit die optrede van hul vorige Saakgelastigde; beleid oor gesamentlike sendingwerk, drie jaar diens van leraars voor beroeping; arbeid van leraars gelyktydig in

moeder- en dogterkerke; rasseverhoudings; die Jaarboek; Sending onder Kommuniste; en onderlinge raadpleging voor na die pers gegaan word" (Handelinge 1974:317).

Concerning the Indian Reformed Church, liaison consisted of the Indian Mission Liaison Committee of the General Synodical Mission Commission which represented the DRC. This body met yearly. "Met die Indian Reformed Church: Hierdie Kerk het versoek dat die liggaam met wie hy nog altyd in die verlede geskakel het, naamlik die Indiërsending-Skakelkommissie van die ASSK, sal voortgaan om die NG Kerk by vergaderings van die twee Kerke te verteenwoordig. Die Breë Moderatuur het, op aanbeveling van die ASSK, sy toestemming hiertoe gegee. Hierdie Skakelkomitee vergader elke jaar" (Handelinge 1974:317).

All these structures of relationships were approved and adopted by the General Synod of the DRC in Cape Town in 1974.

1.6 INTERPRETATION AND EVALUATION

In this chapter I looked at the foundation of the DRC and the three "non-white" churches and how issues of colour and race became increasingly prominent in missionary work. I also looked at the mission policy of the DRC and how it was put into practice. It is clear that the churches were established to separate the various population groups in South Africa.

A study of the mission policy and its practice makes it hard to distinguish between the mission policy of the DRC and other policies of this church. Its missionary documents deal with social and political issues. However, the reports of the mission committees reveal an attitude of white supremacy and black inferiority. A paternalistic attitude characterises the approach of the DRC to both inner-church concerns and broader social political matters. All these factors reveal that unity between the family of the DR Churches will not be an easy issue.

CHAPTER 2

2. GROWING CONSCIOUSNESS

2.1 INTRODUCTION

It is clear from the preceding chapter that the relationship between the Reformed Churches of the family of the DR Churches is of unequal status and problematic from a biblical-theological viewpoint. There originated, especially within the former DRCA and DRMC, a growing realisation that, on the basis of the Reformed Church order and biblical-theological insights, the unequal status and the domination in church relations were highly questionable.

This growing consciousness of the unequal status and the dominant relations within the church influenced many organisations and groups of people to play an important role in an attempt to find solutions to this problem. It is in this regard that the role of the following events and organisations will be discussed and evaluated critically.

2.2 THE COTTESLOE CONSULTATION

The Cottesloe Consultation should be situated within the political backdrop of March 1960. On 21 March 1960, sixty-nine blacks, mainly women, were shot and killed by the police in a township called Sharpeville. One hundred and eighty six people were wounded. During the same day, twenty-one people were shot and killed at Langa township in Cape Town. Black people were protesting against the discriminatory laws which were passed in 1945 (Karis and Carter 1977:333).

Powerful emotive reactions came from Joost de Blank, who was then Archbishop of Cape Town. He appealed to the World Council of Churches to expel the Cape and Transvaal Synods of the DRC, as well as the Nederduits Hervormde Kerk (NHK), from the WCC (De Gruchy 1982:62 - 63). However, some executive committee members of the WCC were against the expulsion of these two churches from the WCC. Instead, a "consultation on Christian race relations and social problems in South Africa" (Lückhoff, 1978) was held on December 7 - 14, 1960, at Cottesloe, Johannesburg.

The discussion document comprised three parts:

Part one dealt with the rejection of unjust discrimination. Part two dealt with migratory labour, low paid wages to blacks, job reservation, etc. Part three dealt with freedom of worship on a multiracial basis, freedom to preach the gospel and consultation and co-operation between the churches (De Gruchy 1979:66 - 67).

The response of the two churches was anything but dramatic. The NHK outright rejected the resolutions of the consultation. De Gruchy states that this delegation was in frequent consultation with political leaders, including Prime Minister Verwoerd (De Gruchy 1982:66). The DRC delegation, however, accepted the resolution, including Part Two, which embodied far-reaching consensus:

"We recognise that all racial groups who permanently inhabit the country are part of our total population, and we regard them as indigenous. Members of all these groups have an equal right to make their contribution towards the enrichment of the life of their country and to share in the ensuing responsibilities, rewards and privileges. No one who believes in Jesus Christ may be excluded from any church on the grounds of his colour or race. The spiritual unity among all men who are in Christ must find visible expression in acts of common worship and witness, and in fellowship and consultation on matters of common concern" (De Gruchy 1982:66).

Notwithstanding the delegation's acceptance of the Cottesloe resolution, the two synods of the DRC rejected it at the instigation of Prime Minister Verwoerd and conservative elements of the DRC. This led one of the leading Afrikaner academics, WA de Klerk to remark prophetically:

"The ghost of Cottesloe would return to haunt the Afrikaner's wayward theologizing. There was evidence that, in spite of the silencing, recantation, bowing of heads and deep cogitation, something remained. The church could never quite be the same again" (De Klerk 1975:255).

One of the most profound consequences of the DRC's rejection of Cottesloe came from Beyers Naudé, who was then acting moderator of the DRC in the Transvaal. He was keen to promote ecumenism among Christians of different denominations in South Africa. His

vision subsequently gave rise to the formation of the Christian Institute (CI) of Southern Africa which focused on dialogue between Christians of all racial groups. The thrust of the programme of the CI was to witness to justice and reconciliation among all the people of South Africa (De Gruchy 1982:69).

2.3 THE CHRISTIAN INSTITUTE

The CI was formed in 1963 by dr Beyers Naudé and others (Walshe 1977:31 - 33). It had two important functions to fulfil, namely:

First the CI was instrumental in bringing many of the African independent churches in relationship with one another and the wider church in South Africa. They experienced the need for some kind of theological education and training. They therefore turned to the CI for help. Supported by massive grants from Germany and Holland, the CI enabled the African Independent Churches Association (AICA) to come into being. After a few years the association broke its ties with the CI. Later it became related to the South African Council of Churches (SACC).

Secondly, the CI played a determinative role in the Study Project on Christianity in an Apartheid Society (Spro-cas 1). This, and its follow-up program, Spro-cas II, was the result of the Message to the People of South Africa, published by the SA Council of Churches and the CI in 1968. Spro-cas 1 was an attempt by the SACC and the CI to work out alternatives to apartheid in the South African society. Previously the emphasis had been on study, but it had now shifted to action and implementation. The CI attempted to become more visibly involved in the struggle of blacks who had rejected any co-operation with the system of separate development. A radical critique of the economic structures of South African society was presented. In 1972 the government instituted the Schlegelbusch Parliamentary Commission of Inquiry to investigate the activities of the CI, the University Christian Movement (UCM), the National Union of South African Students (NUSAS), and the South African Institute of Race Relations. The CI and UCM were declared "affected organizations" (De Gruchy 1979:110).

The support given to black leaders, and the publication of allegations of police torture and brutality, including protest at the death of Steve Biko in prison, eventually led to mass bannings on October 19, 1977. The CI was declared illegal, many of its black staff were

detained by the police, and the senior white staff, Beyers Naudé, Theo Kotzé, Brian Brown, Cedric Mayson, and former Spro-cas director, Peter Randall, were all banned. So was Pro Veritate. (De Gruchy 1979:108 – 111).

As we have already stated, the CI was a direct consequence of the response of the DRC to Cottesloe. In fact, it was chiefly political, as the first respondent was Prime Minister Hendrik Verwoerd. This was state theology at its worst. The Kairos Document states that the "South African Apartheid State has a theology of its own", and this theology is "State Theology". "State Theology is simply the theological justification of the status quo with its racism, capitalism and totalitarianism. It blesses injustice, canonises the will of the powerful and reduces the poor to positivity, obedience and apathy" (Villa-Vicencio 1986:252).

The CI was structured on two poles: the theology of ecumenism on the one hand, and the politics of justice and reconciliation which rejected state theology on the other hand. The spirit of this position is contained in the statement of the CI in 1973, called "Divine or Civil Disobedience, 1973" (Villa-Vicencio 1986:217 - 221).

The CI also encouraged a reform movement within the DRC "Daughter" churches. In the DRMC, the DRCA and the RCA younger ministers were beginning to voice discontent with a synod under the control of white pastors serving as missionaries. Several ministers of these churches were active public supporters of the Institute.

In 1974 an increasing number of DRCA ministers took an interest in the Institute, and in 1975 that church voted to eliminate the category "missionary", and drop the condescending term "Daughter" church. The DRC was asked to open its doors to black ministers so that racism might be dissolved and the two churches could stand side by side. Then the DRCA joined the SACC, from which the DRC had withdrawn in 1944 (Lombard 1981:52).

2.4 THE ROLE OF THE BROEDERKRING (BK)

In retrospect, it is necessary to state that the CI had a hand in the formation of the BK. The symbiotic relationship between the two organisations was born out of the fact that members of the BK first were members of the CI. Within the "Daughter" churches, there were black ministers who came out in the open to oppose the DRC's apartheid theology.

These ministers openly declared their allegiance to the CI. They argued that the CI's political witness was derived from the imperatives of the gospel and was thus an essential segment of the Christian calling and responsibility.

During 14 - 18 December 1973, a consultation organised by black resistance groups was held at Hammanskraal, outside Pretoria. The theme of the consultation was "Black Renaissance". There were members from the then DRCA and the DRMC who attended the consultation: Welile Mazamisa, Eddie and Rose Ngeva, Sam Buti, Elijah Tema and Lucas Mabusela, Allan Boesak, Sam Abrahams, Johannes Adonis and Abie Boer. At the start of the consultation, the chairperson declared that representatives of the Bantustans as well as ministers from the DRCA and DRMC were persona non grata and should therefore leave the consultation. However, the participants from both these churches refused to leave. During the evening, the participants held a meeting where the possibility of the formation of a resistance body within these churches was discussed. Lucas Mabusela was subsequently asked to act as secretary. He was mandated to invite ministers of both churches to a meeting in Bloemfontein on the 8th of February 1974. This was the formal launch of the Broederkring (BK) (W Mazamisa, Personal Communication 22/3/99).

This body grew very fast. Originally its members comprised of ministers of the Word and ordinary members from the three "Daughter" churches only. Later on membership was open to the whole family of the DR Churches.

The BK wanted to bring about unity within the family. However, some members of the DRC, the DRCA, DRMC and RCA opposed this body and caused division within the "Daughter" churches (Serfontein 1982:289 - 292). The BK, however, had brought about two important things which the Synod of the DRCA in 1983 heard about, namely:

"It has highlighted our differences and divisions and has achieved within its own ranks a remarkable level of unity and understanding among its members who come from the various divided NGK churches.

"The question was whether the black NGK churches, especially the moderation of the NGKA, really believed that the whole white NGK was interested in the unity of the church. The history of that church, its missionary policy, its ecumenical record, its official decisions on unity, and above all its support for apartheid, all testify to the contrary. Over

against this, one has to examine the record of the BK to notice the depth of its commitment to help achieve unity within the DRC family. The irony was that the BK took the decisions on the unity of the black churches more seriously than the DR Churches themselves.

"The only evident disunity for which the BK partly can be blamed is that it helped draw the lines in sharp relief between those who wanted to work for the unity of the church and those who did practically nothing to achieve this unity, while proudly parading the church's official decisions on unity as progressive steps forward. "Our unity will certainly not be achieved without conflict, conflict between black and white church, conflict within the black church itself" (Agenda en Handeling NGKA 1983:249).

Aims and Objectives

In an interview with Rev LE Ngeva of Kirkwood congregation about the aims of the BK, he responded as follows:

"Perhaps it is necessary to be reminded at this point of the original aims and objectives of the BK. They were:

- * To proclaim the kingship of Jesus Christ over all areas in church and in state, and to witness for his kingly rule.
- * To achieve organic church unity and to express it practically in all areas of life.
- * To take seriously the prophetic task of the church with regard to the oppressive structures and laws in our land, as well as the priestly task of the church with respect to the victims who suffered as a result of the unchristian policy and practice in the country.
- * To let the kingly rule of Christ triumph over the ideology of apartheid, or any other ideology, so that a more human way of life may be striven for.
- * To promote the evangelical liberation from unrighteousness, dehumanisation, alienation and lovelessness in church and state, and to work for true reconciliation among people.

- * To support ecumenical movements that promote the kingship of Christ on all levels of life."

Initially the main thrust of the struggle of the BK focussed on two things:

1. To "own" the NGKA and NGSK as "our" churches and black ministers as bona fide sons of these two churches. The two churches were "owned" by the white ministers who had come to these churches as missionaries (sendelinge). They were playing a leading role and were very powerful. They derived their power from two sources:
 - (a) They were better educated than the "bona fide sons" of the church.
 - (b) They came into these churches and immediately occupied a "comfort zone" in that they came with no personal financial problems. Their salaries were high and guaranteed by the DRC, and they were given financial support for their congregations, thus placing their congregations in a "comfort zone" for the rest of their lives.
2. The theological support given by the DRC to the Apartheid policy of the Government and the ethnic churches in the so-called DRC family.

"The BK played an important role in bringing to the attention of the NGKA, NGSK, and NGK the evil of the status quo" (Interview with LE Ngeva 15.10.98). The BK had the unity of the DR Churches uppermost in its mind. When it forged partnerships with overseas churches, it espoused unity and it was well aware that it was Apartheid that really hindered the unification of these churches. On every occasion when the Executive met, the unity of these churches' was on the table. So, when finally the two churches (NGKA & NGSK) united, the BK partners overseas were happy and diverted their focus to the newly united church.

During the past 20 years of the BK's existence, it has succeeded in creating a dynamic process of growing together into unity among ministers and members of the black DR Churches (Govender 1984:13 - 17). However, attempts at that stage towards structural unity among these churches were suspended. Also the unification planned for the DRMC and the RCA, scheduled for 1986, was very cleverly aborted by the DRC and its loyal allies within the RCA in 1984. This experience, as well as the negative report on the BK which the General Synod of the DRCA adopted at Barkly-West in 1983, prompted BK

members to ask whether structural unification of the DR Churches would ever be attained. It was clear that the DRC would leave no stone unturned in its efforts to prevent the unification of black churches from becoming a reality. Eventually, shortly before the final unification of the DRCA and the DRMC, the BK stopped its operations because the unification of these two churches meant that part of the BK's aim was attained.

2.5 THE ROLE OF MINISTERS WHO STUDIED ABROAD

Some of the ministers who studied abroad, mainly in the Netherlands, piloted contact between overseas churches and the BK. Some of them held leading positions in the church and could exert much influence in the church (e.g. Allan Boesak). Others like Z Mogoobo, though they were not in leading positions at that time, exerted influence in the church pertaining to unity.

The church that was leading the unity process was the former DRCA. As far back as 1975 it took a decision to seek and work for unity (Handelinge NGKA 1975:253). But because of changes in its leadership, this initiative lost steam.

Although there have been talks about unity within the DRMC, no strong influence in this regard was exerted before the Synod of 1978 when this church came out very strongly against political and church apartheid.

2.6. THE ROLE OF THE FEDERAL COUNCIL

In the previous chapter it has been made clear that the DRC's mission policy promoted the ideology and practice of the apartheid policy. Elsewhere in this chapter mention is made of the fact that the relationship of the "Mother" and "Daughter" churches of the family of the DR Churches is one of unequal status and domination by the DRC.

The instrument to implement this ideology was the Federal Council of the DRC. The implementation of the unity of the four churches was also to be worked out by the Federal Council of the DR Churches. This body was unacceptable to the "Daughter" churches.

According to the official mouthpiece of the DRC, *Die Kerkbode*, of 16 August 1978, the then DRMC Synod of 1970 resolved to advise the Federal Council of the DRC to change it

into a multi-racial Synod that would accommodate all races within the family of the DR Churches. This structure was to be known as a "oorkoopelende" Synod (*Die Kerkbode*: 16 August 1978:206 - 207). In that same year (1970) the RCA decided at their Synod to request the Federal Council of the DRC to unite the four churches of the DRC. This request was rejected by the DRC. In 1974 the Synod of the DRC resolved that:

"Die bestaan van afsonderlike NG Kerkverbande vir verskillende bevolkingsgroepe erken word as in ooreenstemming met die Skriftuurlike meervormige bestaanswyse van die kerk waardeur elkeen in sy eie taal-, kultuur en volksverband die groot daad van God hoor" (*Ras, Volk en Nasie en Volkereverhoudinge* 1974:83).

The resolution of the DRMC in 1970 about the multi-racial "oorkoopelende Sinode" implied that the standing structures, namely congregation, presbytery, Regional Synod and General Synod levels would remain, but that this "oorkoopelende Sinode" will be an additional structure to the existing one.

This idea of the "oorkoopelende Sinode" appealed to some scholars of the DRC who were in favour of the idea.

"Sedert die tyd (1976) het daar talle briewe van teen- en voorstanders van so 'n rasgemengde Sinode in *Die Kerkbode* verskyn. WD Jonker, D Crafford en CWH Boshoff, almal teologiese hoogleraars aan die Teologiese Fakulteite van die NGK, is almal voorstanders van so 'n rasgemengde 'oorkoopelende Sinode'" (*Jonker* 1962:52 - 53; *Crafford* 1966:384 - 420; *Boshoff* 1976:36).

However, Dr JD Vorster, in *Die Kerkbode* of 15/12/1976, rejected this idea because of historical, theological, practical and economical reasons. He maintained that the mission work of the DRC should develop independantly.

"Met die wese en karakter en eie reg van elke volksgroep. Die mense is nie uit die volksverband gelig en in een kerkverband saamgegooi nie. Die Godgegewe reg van elke volk om die Here volgens sy eie samestelling, aard en wese te dien, is ten volle erken. Hierdie beginsel van die inheemswording van die Kerk is deur alle Sendingkonferensies as sendingkundig gesond en gewens erken" (*Vorster, Die Kerkbode* 11/05/1977).

According to *Die Kerkbode*, the Federal Council of the DRC which met on 18 March 1978, rejected the idea of a multi-racial "oorkoepelende Sinode" for the family of the DR Churches Churches.

"Op hul vergadering van 18 Maart 1978 het die Federale Raad van NG Kerke andermaal die saak van kerkeenheid behandel. Na indringende besprekinge het dié Raad met 25 stemme voor en 12 stemme daarteen besluit om 'n rasgemengde 'oorkoepelende Sinode' vir die vier NG Kerke in Suid Afrika te vorm. Die 12 mense wat teen hierdie voorstel gestem het, was almal blanke lede van die NGK." (Die Kerkbode 19/03/1978)

The full decision of the Federal Council reads:

- (i) "Die huidige struktuur van die Federale Raad is nie doeltreffend om die doelstellings van die Kerke vir die strukturele uitdrukking van hulle eenheid weer te gee nie.
- (ii) Daarom beveel die Federale Raad die vorming van 'n Sinode in die plek van die huidige Federale Raad aan. Hierdie Sinode moet saamgestel word uit afgevaardigdes van die NG Kerk, die NG Sendingkerk, die NG Kerk in Afrika en die Reformed Church in Africa.
- (iii) Die Federale Raad kan behou word vir die breër interkerklike verhouding van die familie van NG Kerke.
- (iv) Hierdie Sinode behoort bevoegdheid verleen te word om bindende besluite te neem met 'n twee-derde meerderheidstem van die volle getal afgevaardigdes van die konstituerende kerke oor:

Die belydenisskrifte en leer van die Kerk.

Die Kerkorde,

Alle ander sake wat direk betrekking het op die gemeenskaplike belange van al die konstituerende kerke.

- (v) Hierdie Sinode moet so saamgestel word dat daar 'n billike verteenwoordiging uit al die samestellende kerke is" (Die Kerkbode 19/3/1978).

The Synod of the DRMC gathered on 20 September to 4 October 1978, the very year in which the Federal Council of the DR Churches took the abovementioned resolution. This Synod resolved to accept the unity amongst the DR Churches in principle, and to reject the concept of a "oorkoepelende sinode".

About this turnabout, Prof JC Adonis of the University of the Western Cape holds the following view:

"Hiermee het die NG Sendingkerk sy aanvanklike besluit van 1970 oor die instelling van 'n rasgemengde 'oorkoepelende Sinode' losgelaat en wel op grond daarvan dat so 'n Sinode die bestaan van rasgeskeide streeksinodes, ringe en gemeentes onveranderd sal laat. Hierdie nuwe besluit van 1978 beteken dat die vier NG Kerke moet verenig vanaf gemeente tot op rings- en sinodale vlak. Dit wil sê kerkvereniging moet vanaf die grondvlak of gemeentevlak geskied. Die 'nodige stappe ter implimentering' van die eenwording wat aan die Moderatuur opgedra is, bestaan uit die onderhandeling met die ander drie NG Kerke oor hierdie saak" (Adonis 1982: 210).

In response to the idea of the "oorkoepelende Sinode" and the new decision about the unity of the family of the DR Churches by the DRMC, the DRC, which met in Bloemfontein in October 1978, also rejected the idea of the "oorkoepelende Sinode", but for vastly different and opposite reasons:

- (i) "Die stigting van Sinodes het nie met die wese nie, maar wel met die welwese van die kerk te doen.
- (ii) Volgens die Gereformeerde kerkregtelike tradisie is daar geen grond om so 'n "oorkoepelende Sinode" te vorm wat bindende besluite vir outonome Sinodes kan neem nie;
- (iii) So 'n gesaghebbende "oorkoepelende Sinode" is geen waarborg dat die gemeenskaplike belange van die verskillende Sinodes bevredigend (gedien) sal word nie. Dit is ook geen bevredigende oplossing om uitdrukking te gee aan die eenheid van die kerke nie.

- (iv) 'n "Oorkoepelende Sinode" wat bindende besluite kan neem, beteken 'n skending van gesag van die onafhanklike Sinodes" (Handelinge, NGK 1978:386).

According to prof Adonis (1982:211) the reasons given by the DRC were unconvincing and only wanted to eliminate the fears of the white church.

The DRC Synod further adopted the following resolution:

"Die Sinode besluit om sy beleid van verskeidenheid van kerke van rasse groep (te handhaaf) omdat hierdie beleid ontwikkel het onder die voorsienige leiding van God met groot seënninge en tot voordeel van die verskillende NG Kerke gedurende 'n periode van anderhalwe eeu" (Handelinge NGK 1978:211).

The DRC had already at its Synod of 1975 questioned the role of the Federal Council and adopted a decision to unite the family of the DR Churches.

On its turn, the RCA at its Synod which gathered from 4 - 10 October 1980 in Durban, took the following decision on the question of unity:

"Although the RCA is ultimately striving for multilateral church union, Synod in principle decides, as a first step towards church union, to enter into full fledged union with the NG Sendingkerk leaving the door open for other members of the family of Dutch Reformed Churches. The Synodical Committee is instructed to negotiate with the moderation of the NG Sendingkerk on union, with special reference to the following: Acts of Agreement; Finance and Property; Training of Ministers; Other Related Matters (Minutes RCA 1980:78).

Prof Adonis asks why the RCA decided to unite with the DRMC first. Why not also with the DRCA who was in favour of unity too (Adonis 1982:211)?

The following section will attempt to contribute further to the question of unity.

On church unity the DRC confessed openly that the unity they desire should be oneness in Christ, but differentiation on the basis of race, ethnicity and colour.

It has become clear that the Federal Council, for diverse reasons, was no adequate expression of the union of the DR Churches in Southern Africa (Van der Merwe 1985:103).

2.7 CHURCH STRUCTURE WHICH PORTRAYS UNITY WITHIN THE FAMILY OF THE DR CHURCHES

2.7.1 CHURCH AND SOCIETY 1986

The idea of federalism is based on texts like 1 Cor 12:13; Rom 10:12; Gal 3:28 etc. The DRC in its document "Ras volk en nasie" (1974) theologically validate church apartheid. In 1986 the General Synod of the DRC adopted "Church and Society", a document that is a revision of "Ras, volk en Nasie", nothing new has transpired. The DRC merely rubber stamped the resolution on church unity which the Federal Council had already taken.

Douglas maintains in *Farewell to Apartheid* that "in 1986 the DRC produced a document entitled 'Church and Society' and presented it to WARC as evidence of change which had taken place in its church. The WARC executive committee received it at its Geneva meeting in 1987, studied it, and circulated it to all WARC member churches for their study and response. In a response sent to the DRC, the committee indicated that several member churches had already reported serious criticisms of the document: they believed it did not really repudiate apartheid or declare it sinful, but was concerned only with apartheid's implementation; furthermore, the DRC at that stage had not yet proposed how it wanted to establish Christian unity within one Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa.

"The next executive committee meeting in Belfast in 1988 agreed that 'Church and Society' was inadequate, and commented unfavourably on other, later statements by the DRC which did not comply with the requirements of Ottawa in 1982. A response to this effect was given to the DRC.

"The Belfast meeting was also preoccupied with the upcoming elections in South Africa and called upon the South African government to "create the conditions for a genuine new beginning" by lifting the state of emergency, releasing political prisoners, especially children, and initiating dialogue with representatives of the black majority" (Reamonn 1994:12).

2.7.2 CHURCH AND SOCIETY 1990

In the policy document of the DRC "Church and Society" accepted by its General Synod of 1990, the DRC had the following to say about the unity of the family of the DR Churches:

"The DRC subscribes to the ideal of one church (kerkverband) among the family of DR Churches. The structures in which this unity must be expressed, are at this stage not clear, but will be determined through discussions with the parties concerned. Within these structures provision must be made for pastoral needs, that is to say: due respect for the proper forms pertaining to the variety of languages, culture and worship must be taken into account. Seeing that changed attitudes must be the forerunner for changed structures and not the other way around, the DRC appeals to its members to strive for greater understanding, and mutual love, for one another.

"When congregations, circuits or synods of reformed confession express the wish to become part of the DRC, a proper arrangement can be entered into in consultation with those concerned" (Church and Society 1990).

2.8 DECISIONS BY THE DRCA ON CHURCH UNITY

2.8.1 SYNODS OF THE DRCA

2.8.1.1 WORCESTER 1975

With regard to the unification process within the DR Churches, the General Synod of the DRCA at Worcester in 1975 took a resolution in which it expressed the desire to become one united church with other churches in the family.

"Die Algemene Sinode wens om met die Indian Reformed Church, die NG Sendingkerk en die NG Kerk tot een kerk verenig te word, en dra dit aan die ASK op om met die oog hierop met hulle in verbinding te tree" (Agenda en Handeling 1975:253).

According to Sam Buti, then the scribe of the General Synod, the moderation at that time immediately made contact with the moderation of the Dutch Reformed Church in October

1975. An ad hoc commission was chosen to attend to this matter. The ad hoc commission presented its report at the meeting of the Federal Council held between 16 - 18 March 1978 in Pretoria (DRCA Action no 1/90 - 1990:2).

After the 1975 resolution had been taken, Prof Adrio König from Unisa asked the question. "Where does the solution of church unity lie"? He then motivated his question as follows:

"Gelukkig is dit eenvoudig. Die kerk hoef net sy eie besluite ernstig op te neem. In hoofstuk 4 van hierdie verslag word baie duidelik geleer dat daar net één NG Kerk in Suid-Afrika is wat in verskillende kerkverbande (vir wit, bruin, swart en Indiërs) georganiseer is, maar wesenlik saam één kerk vorm. Hierdie eenheid is ook 'n sigbare eenheid en hierdie sigbare eenheid moet op alle vlakke tot uitdrukking kom. Op sy allerminste beteken dit tog dat die kerk (en nie net die afsonderlike kerkverbande nie) 'n sinode moet hou. Op hierdie sinode sal alle kerkverbande saam die besluite onder leiding van die Heilige Gees kan neem" (Die Kerkbode no 27 - 1975: 865).

After having made a study of the request of the Synod of the DRCA, König came to the conclusion that one Synod was the answer to the problem.

"As ons (wit, bruin en swart kerkverbande) een kerk is, is dit net getrou aan ons eie standpunt - liever aan die NT - dat die hele kerk (dus al die NG kerkverbande) in een vergadering die besluite sal neem wat die hele kerk sal raak. Die katolisiteit van die kerk beteken die kerk uit alle volke. Die Here het dit sekerlik so gewil omdat elke volk in sy eie besondere situasie 'n ander faset van die evangelie helderder raaksien en so die hele kerk op die bepaalde punt help. Al sou óns Sinode (kerkverband) die liggaam wees, kan die liggaam in lelike slaggate trap sonder oë en in elk geval sonder voete wat nie vinnig beweeg nie. As ons één kerk is - en dit het die Sinode bo alle twyfel gestel - is die Bybelse stap verder: een Sinode" (Kerkbode 1975: 866).

The official response of the DRC to the decision of the DRCA Synod was:

"Ons dink ook aan die besluit om op organiese éénwording van die hele NG Kerk aan te dring. Dit is sterk besluite hierdie, en mense kan aanneem dat hul uit 'n drang ná of bewuswording van volle selfbeskikkingsreg geneem is. Dog oor sake van hierdie aard bestaan daar van die vroegste jare af onderlinge kontraktuele ooreenkomste tussen die NG

Kerk en die NG Kerk in Afrika. In terme daarvan kan die een of die ander van hierdie kerke nie kort en klaar besluite neem wat sonder goedkeuring van die ander tot finaliteit kom nie. Hoewel ál ons NG Kerke uiteraard 'n hoë prys op ons selfstandigheid, onafhanklikheid en outonomie stel, bly dit 'n feit dat ons interafhanklik van mekaar en in ons besluite deur onderlinge verstandhoudinge aan bepaalde beperkings onderworpe is.

"Die weg vorentoe sal dus langs die kanaal van samesprekings moet loop en dié sal met geduld, eerlikheid, omsigtigheid en liefde moet geskied. Dit sal ook tot sorgvuldige ontleding van ál die implikasies moet lei en dié sal deeglik onder die oë gesien moet word" (Die Kerkbode 1975: 2-3).

2.8.1.2 UMGABABA 1979

This Synod reiterated the decision of Worcester 1975. It requested the Synodical Commission to proceed with the negotiations on the issue of unity.

2.8.1.3 BARKLY WEST 1983

This General Synod discussed the issue of unity in more detail. It even went as far as drawing up some guidelines for negotiations with the other DR Churches (Handelinge 1983:344 - 346).

"Die Sinode kom tot 'n eenparige beslissing dat die riglyne vir onderhandeling die aangewese pad vir die NG Kerk in Afrika is vir sy soeke na kerklike eenheid van die kerke in die familie van NG Kerke" (Handelinge 1983:346).

"Die Sinode herbevestig sy besluit 1.2.2 van 1979 en gee aan die ASK opdrag om met die onderhandelinge in verband met die daarstelling van een Sinode vir die NG Kerk familie in die RSA voort te gaan" (Handelinge, NGKA 1983:346).

About church unity and the convening of a special General Synod, if necessary, the Synod resolved as follows: "Die Sinode besluit om die hele saak soos vervat in punt 5.1.1 op bl 70 van die Agenda weer na die Regskommissie te verwys met verslag aan die ASK" (Handelinge, NGKA 1983:346).

"Die Sinode besluit dat indien die onderhandelinge vir die reses afgehandel kan word en die ASK van oordeel is dat die saak dadelik geïmplementeer moet word, 'n buitengewone vergadering van die Sinode, indien nodig, deur die ASK byeengeroep kan word (vgl Kerkorde Art 33.2)" (Agenda en Handeling, NGKA 1983:346).

2.8.1.4 UMTATA 1987

The Synod of Umtata made it very clear that the expression of unity by the Federal Council was rejected. It was regarded as a unity that did not express the unity of the church sufficiently.

"The Federale Raad is om verskillende redes nie voldoende as uitdrukking van die eenheid van die NG Kerke in Suidelike Afrika nie. Daar sal dus ernstig gedink moet word aan die omskepping hiervan in 'n NG Ekumeniese Sinode van Suidelike Afrika. In 'n reglement van orde sal die sake waaroor hierdie Sinode mag handel, asook die aard van die gesag waarmee besluite bekleed sal wees, duidelik omskrywe moet word" (Agenda en Handeling 1987:383).

The moderation was then ordered to speed up this matter.

2.8.2 THE SOUTH AFRICAN COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

In 1975 there were moves by the DRC for an umbrella synod of the three Dutch Reformed "Daughter" churches to join the SACC as full members. In the end, the Mission Church and the RCA did not follow through, probably because the majority of their clergy were still white missionaries from the "Mother" DRC. The black DRCA, however, formed a militant caucus, and agreed that in future all white ministers in their church should become DRCA members and ceased to be "missionaries" who kept their membership in the DRC. The delegates also voted to take full membership of the SACC.

The ceremony celebrating the DRCA's admission to the SACC on July 22 1975, represented an historic breakthrough of the ecumenical movement into the family of DRC churches. Moreover, a "Daughter" of the church so closely linked with the National Party, had asserted its independence and was entering a community of peers. The assembly

vibrated with excitement as some one hundred and fifty white and black delegates rose to sing "Nkosi sikele Afrika - God Bless Africa" (Hope and Young 1981:89).

It is amazing to note that the blacks from the DRCA, who came from the poorest communities and were most oppressed and underpaid of all, were so bold as to join the SACC. They were not even afraid of losing their subsidies from the DRC.

2.9 DECISIONS OF THE DRMC ON CHURCH UNITY

2.9.1 BELHAR 1978

Concerning the matter of the unity of the family of the DR Churches, two proposals were made, namely, the one of the circuit of Wynberg and the other of the secretary for the commission of Evangelisation. These proposals read as follows:

"A) Die Ring van Wynberg: Beskrywingspunt 24 (B 24)

Aangesien die Nuwe Testament die eenheid van die Kerk as liggaam van Christus baie duidelik leer, besluit die Sinode om die beginsel van eenwording van die NG Kerke in Suid Afrika te aanvaar. Die Sinode dra dit aan die Moderatuur op om die nodige stappe te doen ter implementering van bogenoemde Bybelse beginsel".

B) Die Sekretaris vir Evangelisasie: Beskrywingspunt 47 (B 47)

"Die HE Sinode besluit: Die NG Sendingkerk in SA bevestig die besluit van die Federale Raad van NG Kerke in sake 'n oorkoepelende Sinode. Die Sinode beskou dit as basis waarop onderhandelinge gevoer sal word met die oog op die konkrete realisering van die Godegewe eenheid binne die familie van die NG Kerke. Die NG Sendingkerk in SA verkies eenwording met die ander NG Kerk familie; en indien een van die ander kerke (NGK; NGKA en RCA) nie die beginsel oor eenwording onderskryf nie, sal die Sinodale Kommissie die ideaal met die oorblywende kerk of kerke in die reses opneem en probeer verwesenlik".

After an intensive discussion of these proposals, the Synod took the following resolution:

"Die HE Sinode besluit gevolglik dat kerkvereniging vanaf gemeentelike vlak beskou moet word as die enigste Gereformeerde basis waarop onderhandelinge gevoer sal word met die

oog op die konkrete realisering van die Godgegewe eenheid binne die familie van NG Kerke. In die lig van B24 wat die standpunt van die NG Sendingkerk oor kerkeenheid duidelik stel en in die lig van die feit dat die Algemene Sinode van die NG Kerk hom nog nie hieroor duidelik uitgespreek het nie, word nou in B47 punt 4 voorgestel dat daar 'n bepaalde metode gevolg moet word wat neerkom op die onderhandelinge met die kerk of kerke wat die beginsel van B24 onderskryf. Indien een of ander kerk of kerke nie hul weg tot sodanige onderhandelinge oopsien nie, mag die onderhandelinge nie versand nie, moet daarmee voortgegaan word en moet die deur altyd oop bly vir die ander kerk of kerke vir latere aansluiting. U sal opmerk dat geen bepaalde formule met die oog op onderhandelinge aangebied word nie. Die rede is voor die handliggend nl: die betrokke kommissie van die NG Sendingkerk moet die wydste onderhandelingsmoontlikheid kry. Die onderhandeling met betrekking tot eenwording word aan die Moderatuur met verslag aan die Algemene Sinodale Kommissie van die NG Sendingkerk opgedra" (Handelinge NGSK 1978:495 - 496).

Due to the fact that the church had to live according to its witness in the apartheid society, the apartheid policy also came under discussion. After a very interesting debate, the Synod decided:

"Die NG Sendingkerk herbevestig sy diepste oortuiging dat dit nie op die weg van die kerk lê om 'n bepaalde partypolitieke beleid vir die Suid Afrikaanse situasie te ontwerp of voor te skryf nie. Kragtens sy profetiese roeping is die kerk egter verplig om kritiek uit te spreek en beswaar aan te teken wanneer 'n owerheid 'n beleid of beleide volg wat nie die eise van die evangelie kan deurstaan nie, veral as die owerheid daarop aanspraak wil maak dat hy 'n Christelike owerheid is. Die Kerk wil dit as sy oortuiging uitspreek dat die apartheidsbeleid en of afsonderlike ontwikkeling soos deur die owerheid gehandhaaf, in stryd is met die evangelie:

- (1) omdat teenoor die evangelie van Christus se gerigtheid op die versoening van die mens met God en met sy medemens, die gedwonge skeiding van mense op grondslag van ras en kleur ten diepste gebaseer is op die oortuiging van die fundamentele onversoenbaarheid tussen mense wat op so 'n wyse geskei is;
- (2) omdat die sisteem wat uit so 'n beleid na vore kom, noodwendig moes lei en gelei het tot 'n toenemende polarisasie tussen mense, veral omdat die praktyk oteenseglik aangetoon het dat binne die sisteem een bevolkingsdeel, nl die

blankes, bevoorreg is en dat daar gevolglik nie voldoen is aan die evangeliese eis dat geregtigheid aan almal sal geskied nie; en

- (3) omdat daardeur nie alleen die menswaardigheid van die nie-bevoorregte bevolkingsdele nie, maar ook die menswaardigheid van almal wat daarby betrokke is, aangetas is" (Handelinge NGSK 1978:399 - 400, 559, 618).

From the above it is clear that the DRMC rejected the apartheid policy on grounds of the Scriptures and the confession, and strived for the unity of one church for the family of the DR Churches.

2.9.2 BELHAR 1982

The question of unity was not discussed at this Synod but rather referred to the Synodical Commission which met in 1983. The Synodical Commission on its turn repeated the decision of Belhar 1978. In 1982 the Synod of the DRMC took the matter of apartheid or separate development further and declared apartheid a theological heresy:

"Omdat die sekulêre evangelie van apartheid ten diepste die belydenis van versoening in Jesus Christus en die eenheid van die Kerk van Jesus Christus in sy wese bedreig, verklaar die NGSK in SA dat dit vir die Kerk van Jesus Christus 'n Status Confessionis daarstel.

"Ons verklaar dat apartheid (afsonderlike ontwikkeling) 'n sonde is, dat morele en teologiese regverdiging daarvan 'n bespotting van die evangelie is en dat sy volgehoue ongehoorsaamheid aan die Woord van God, 'n teologiese kettery is" (Handelinge 1983, p 604, 706).

A draft confession was drawn up and ultimately accepted in 1986 as the Confession of Belhar.

In a meeting between the moderation of the DRMC and the Executive of the RCA, an agreement was reached whereby 1986 would have been the date scheduled for the unification of these two churches. "Die Sendingkerk en die Reformed Church in Africa behoort 1986, DV, een Verenigde Kerk te wees. Hierdie duidelike mikpunt is gestel op 'n vergadering van die Moderatuur van die NG Sendingkerk en die Dagbestuur van die

Reformed Church in Africa se Sinodale Kommissie op Vrydag, 18 Maart 1983 in die Kerkentrum te Belhar" (Die Ligdraer no 8: 1983:110).

2.9.3 BELHAR 1986

This Synod focussed more on the Belhar Confession, with its strong emphasis on the unity of the church.

The Belhar Confession consequently became an integral part of the discussions with the family of the DR Churches on the issue of unity. By way of this Confession, the DRMC requested from the other members of the DR Churches a relationship founded in the truths contained in it. Prof JJF Durand, in *A Moment of Truth*, says:

"On the issue of national diversity and the church, the DR Mission Church thus assumes in its confession a position diametrically opposed to that of the DRC. In the light of Holy Scripture no other witness is possible for this church but that 'the variety of spiritual gifts, opportunities, backgrounds, convictions, as well as the various languages and cultures, are by virtue of the reconciliation in Christ opportunities for mutual service and enrichment within the one visible people of God'. Similarly any doctrine which, either openly or by implication, claims that birth or any other human or social factor codetermines membership of a church, is rejected. The only condition for membership of the one holy, catholic, Christian Church is 'the true faith in Jesus Christ'.

"This does not mean that race and national differences are erased or ignored within the family of God. Indeed, the act of reconciliation makes it possible to incorporate these differences in a language which glorifies the kingdom of God. The confession rightly rejects those doctrines which absolutize national identity or natural diversity or wants to use this diversity as an excuse to dull the power of reconciliation and reduce it to a superficial and artificial bond. Christian reconciliation treats the reality of diversity and distinctiveness seriously, but only with an eye to eventual unity, the one new person in Jesus Christ, and not for the sake of separateness or self-esteem. Preoccupation with a single culture is only justified as a way by which a particular congregation can grow closer to Christ and more effective in their witness. National ties should never keep Christians apart. The new family of God is not constituted according to blood relationship but by virtue of the covenant, the sole and comprehensive category for establishing communion.

Only insofar as the church faithfully articulates this truth does it become a bearer of a message of hope to a painfully divided humanity" (Cloete & Smit 1984:4).

2.9.4 THE WORLD ALLIANCE OF REFORMED CHURCHES (WARC) AND THE SUPPORT OF THE DRMC

The General Council of World Alliance of Reformed Churches WARC met in Ottawa in 1982. One of the issues discussed was the question of Apartheid in South Africa and the role played by the DRC. Ottawa issued a statement on South Africa and the system of Apartheid

This statement was divided into three parts. The first part stated that the South African situation for the Reformed Churches represented a *status confessionis*. It then supplied reasons for this conviction. The second part contained the decision of the WARC to suspend the two white member churches of South Africa and the third part requests all its members to examine themselves.

Ottawa referred back to the resolutions of Frankfurt and Nairobi, and declared that Christians who aid the oppressor could not be regarded as authentic members of the body of Christ.

The churches which accepted the Reformed confessions of faith therefore committed themselves to live as the people of God and to show what this meant in their daily life and service. This commitment required a concrete manifestation of community among races, of common witness to justice and equality in society, and of unity at the table of the Lord. The Reformed Churches (Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk and the Nederduitse Hervormde Kerk), in not only accepting, but actively justifying the apartheid system by abusing the Gospel and the Reformed confession, contradicted in doctrine and in action the promise which they professed to believe.

"Therefore, the General Council declares that this situation constitutes a *status confessionis* for our churches, which means that we regard this as an issue on which it is not possible to differ without seriously jeopardising the integrity of our common confession as Reformed churches.

"We declare with the Black Reformed Christians of South Africa that apartheid (separate development) is a sin, and that the moral and theological justification of it is a travesty of the Gospel, and in its persistent disobedience to the Word of God a theological heresy.

"The General Council expresses its profound disappointment that despite earlier appeals by WARC General Councils, and despite continued dialogue between several Reformed Churches and the white Dutch Reformed Churches over twenty years, the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk (in the Republic of South Africa) and the Nederduitse Hervormde Kerk van Afrika have still not found the courage to realize that apartheid (separate development) contradicts the very nature of the church and obscures the Gospel from before the world; the council therefore pleads afresh with these churches to respond to the promises and demands of the Gospel.

"Therefore, the General Council, reluctantly and painfully, is compelled to suspend the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk (in the Republic of South Africa) and the Nederduitse Hervormde Kerk van Afrika from the privileges of membership in the WARC, i.e., (Mission Church delegates to General Councils and holding membership in departmental committees and commissions), until such time as the WARC Executive Committee has determined that these two churches in their utterances and practice have given evidence of a change of heart. They will be warmly resorted to the full privileges of membership when the following changes have taken place:

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

"The General Council pays respect to those within the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk (in the Republic of South Africa) and the Nederduitse Hervormde Kerk van Afrika who have raised their voices and are fighting against Apartheid; the General Council further urges member churches to pray that these efforts bearing witness to Christ, who frees and unites, may prevail within their churches.

"The General Council asks the Executive Committee of the WARC to keep this whole issue regularly under review" (Dunamis 1989:8 - 9).

Ultimately the WARC denounced Apartheid and suspended the membership of the DRC. In the meantime, the DRMC accepted the Belhar Confession at its Synod of 1986. However this action created more tension between the DRMC and the DRC, it also opened the way for negotiations about unity within the family of the DR Churches.

Within the family of the DR Churches matters relating to the process of unification have been given attention. The Federal Council of the DRC was slowly losing its objective of an umbrella synod. Whereas since the 1960's the DRC had become more and more isolated from the ecumenical body, the "Daughter" churches of the DRC became more involved in the ecumenical movements and showed a positive attitude towards the SACC.

2.10 INTERPRETATION AND EVALUATION

This chapter shows that a new and changed awareness within the DRCA and the DRMC developed and grew. This growing awareness had to do with the political and social circumstances in which members of the DRCA and the DRMC lived.

The interpretation of the Bible by these two churches and their witness in a situation of oppression and injustice was fundamentally challenged. The members of these two churches were also strongly influenced by happenings such as Cottesloe, and organisations such as the SACC, CI and the BK. The resolutions taken by the WARC in 1982 also played an important role.

An important effect of this growing awareness in the two churches against the Apartheid policy and the viewpoints of the DRC on this matter was demonstrated.

CHAPTER 3

3. DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN "MOTHER" AND "Daughter" CHURCHES ON CHURCH UNIFICATION

3.1. DISCUSSIONS ON CHURCH UNIFICATION

In this chapter I want to pay attention to the discussions on church unity that took place between the family of the DR Churches.

I will first name the proposed models of the four churches, namely: the DRCA and the DRMC, the DRC and RCA. Where the term "concept model" is used, it implies that the model in question had not yet been approved by the relevant synod.

At the end I will discuss the three models and evaluate them critically. I will then investigate the work of the Dialogue Commission for Church Unity and explore the obstacles in the way of the unification of the DRCA and the DRMC. In conclusion I will evaluate the discussion.

The DRC believed in an invisible, spiritual and essential unity, but not a unity in practice which involved fellowship of people in one church as the body of Christ. This belief resulted in the DRC refusing to accept the request of the DRCA to enter into an organic union. The process of unification between the DRCA and the DRMC intensified between 1987 and 1994. At a combined meeting between the moderatures of the DRCA and the DRMC and the executive of the General Synod of the DRC in Pretoria in December 1990, two decisions of the DRC were discussed: "Church unity" and "Open structures and Apartheid".

About open structures it was agreed that the documents dealing with this matter would be circulated among the other churches involved. Concerning church unity, it was confirmed that the DRCA and the DRMC had already agreed upon a model and that the DRC was requested to join the process.

The DRC stated: "Die NG Kerk meen dat die besluit oor oop strukture 'n konsekwensie van 'n oop kerk is en nie in die weg staan waarlangs die een kerkverband gestalte moet kry

nie. Hulle wys daarop dat die besluit oor oop strukture deur die RCA se navrae, afgesien van die navrae van die Streeksinode van Phororo, ter sprake gekom het. Dit is egter duidelik dat die kerkregtelike en wetlike implikasies van die besluit oor oop strukture nog nie deurgedring het nie.

"Lede van die NGSK versoek dat aansoeke vir inskakeling op grond van die oop strukture na oorleg met die betrokke kerke moet plaasvind. Die NG Kerk lede wys op die bewoording van hulle besluit in hierdie verband en bevestig dat dit juis die bedoeling is.

"Oor kerkeenheid word bevestig dat die NGSK en die NGKA se model reeds duidelik omskryf en reeds in die proses van uitvoering is en dat die uitnodiging aan die NG Kerk om hierby in te skakel, nog steeds staan" (Verslag van gesprek NGKA 1990:1).

On 18 - 19 August 1992 the DRC, DRCA and the DRMC met at Stellenbosch with the intention to advance the course of unification between the DRCA and the DRMC, but it was all in vain. The Reformed Ecumenical Council that had met in May and June 1992 in Athens had been attended by the moderatures of the DRC, the DRCA and the RCA. Already there it had been resolved that the two parallel processes of unification, that of the DRC on the hand and that of the DRCA and DRMC on the other hand, should continue undisturbed until completion. Only after completion of both processes would efforts be made to bring all the churches together to complete the unification of the entire family.

3.2 MODELS OF CHURCH UNIFICATION FOR THE DRCA, DRMC, DRC AND RCA

These models were discussed at Bloemfontein in 1993 by the General Synodical Commissions of the four churches.

The structures of the organisation of the church starts from congregation level to the General synodical level. All four churches had agreed that the church should unite and be one, but the question was: "What should the structure of the new church look like so as to accommodate all cultures and languages?"

To try and find an answer to this question, each of the four churches drew up models on which they could negotiate. These models were as follows:

3.2.1 MODEL OF THE FORMER DRCA AND THE DRMC

"Die Model vir Kerkeenheid soos aanvaar en voorgestel deur die NG Sendingkerk en NG Kerk in Afrika:

Die eenheidsmodel in enkele woorde

"Die eenheidskerk word gevestig deur sinodale besluite van die deelnemende afsonderlike kerke, kragtens hulle kerkordelike bevoegdhede en kragtens 'n nuwe eenvoudige kerkorde. Alle bestaande gemeentes van die deelnemende kerke word gemeentes van die eenheidskerk. Alle gemeentes word geografies in ringe ingedeel, en die ringe vorm geografiese gebiedsinodes. Die eenheidskerk vorm saam onder een naam één Algemene Sinode kragtens die een kerkorde waarin die gemeenskaplike belydenis vasgelê is.

"Hierdie bogenoemde kerkeenheidsmodel is ontwikkel met in agneming van die volgende beginsels of riglyne wat daaraan onderliggend is:

"Die naam

Daar is besluit dat die naam van die eenheidskerk sal wees: Die Verenigende Gereformeerde Kerk in Suider-Afrika. "Gereformeerde" dui aan dat die kerk kragtens sy historiese oorsprong en innerlike oortuiging ongetwyfeld 'n gereformeerde karakter dra. "Verenigende" dui op 'n voortgaande proses van groeiende eenheid wat na binne en buite gerig is. "Suider-Afrika" dui daarop dat die NG Familie buite die grense van Suid-Afrika nie uit die oog verloor is nie.

"Bou op die Bestaande

'n Verdere riglyn is dat daar so nou as moontlik vanuit die bestaande strukture en in aansluiting by die bestaande strukture aan die eenheid gebou word binne die eenheidsstruktuur wat as beginpunt gevestig word. Die gedagte was dat die eenheid maklik en eenvoudig moet wees, sonder om nuwe of revolusionêre strukture of veranderinge aan die bestaande kerklike vergaderings (kerkraad, ring, sinode) en ampte aan te bring. Niks moes die eenheid bemoeilik nie. Ons wou nie dat die aandag van die eenheid afgelei word deur vreemde of onbekende aanpassings wat die eenheid in die weg kon staan nie. Daarom is besluit om die bestaande gebiedsinodes se ligging as riglyn te neem en om die bestaande

plaaslike gemeentes se grense en integriteit te handhaaf vir die nuwe kerk. Dit sou maklik en eenvoudig wees. Hierdie model kan met die minste ontwingting geïmplementeer word.

"Alle gemeentes bestaan oop na mekaar"

Alle gemeentes moet oop vir mekaar wees sodat lidmate vrymoediglik sou kan inskakel by welke gemeente hulle ook al wil, volgens normale kerklike ordereelings, maar waarin ras, taal of historiese oorsprong geen dwingende faktor is nie. Alle leraars sal oor en weer beroepbaar wees. Hierdie beginsels, wat van die moeilikste struikelblokke kon wees, is reeds deur al vier die betrokke kerke aanvaar (Handelinge NGSK 1986:988 en Handelinge NGKA 1991:428).

"Van bo af of van onder af"

Die model van die NGSK en NGKA vermy die probleme wat kan ontstaan wanneer gewerk word met 'n van-bo-af-model waar die Sinode per besluit alles afdwing en selfs die gemeentes se samestelling bepaal, of 'n van-onder-af-model: waar die eenheid oorgelaat word aan die gesindhede en inisiatief van kerkrade met die moontlikheid dat óf niks gebeur nie, óf kerkrade deur hulle houding effektief 'n veto kan uitoefen op die groei en ontwikkeling van die eenheid.

"Die model van die NGSK-NGKA probeer juis die hele kerklike struktuur betrek van sinodale besluite af tot by kerkraadsinisiatiewe. Daarom word die eenheid bo alle twyfel bevestig deurdat die Sinode 'n eenheidstruktuur daarstel, maar die aard en ontwikkeling van die eenheid op kerkraads- en gemeentevlak word nie dwingend van bo af bepaal nie. Dit word aan gemeentes en kerkrade oorgelaat om binne die ruimte van die nuwe kerkorde en die eenheidstruktuur en met die belydenisse as rigsgoer self, na behoefte na mekaar toe te groei.

"Waar byvoorbeeld meer as een gemeente in dieselfde geografiese gebied val, staan dit hierdie gemeentes vry om hulle onderlinge sake en samestelling te reël volgens plaaslike behoeftes, deur byvoorbeeld ooreenkomste met mekaar aan te gaan, een gemeente te vorm of watter ander reëlings ook al te tref, solank dit in volle vryheid en sonder dwang van enige aard kan geskied.

"Die een groot beginsel wat hierby, in ooreenstemming met die kerkorde, gehandhaaf word, is dat daar net een lidmaatskap van een kerk sal wees en dat die geloof in Jesus Christus die enigste voorwaarde vir lidmaatskap is.

"Hier is ruimte vir soepele beweeglikheid, eie inisiatief en die vindingryke toepassing van beginsels. Kerkrade kan besluit om gemeentes by mekaar te laat inskakel, kan self besluit oor taalgebruik, liturgieë en gesangeboeke, of oor gemeentelike strukture wat die spesiale omstandighede en behoeftes op plaaslike vlak kan aanspreek. Dit is moontlik dat hieruit interessante herrangskikkings en verbintenisse tussen gemeentes of wyke uit die oorspronklike kerke kan groei.

"Dit hou juis sterk verband met die gereformeerde beginsels dat die gemeente volledig kerk is en dat die kerkverband nie sake moet hanteer wat deur die gemeentes self gedoen kan word nie. Vanselfsprekend sal ringe, waar gemeentes van die kerk saam vergader, 'n belangrike rol speel in die stimulering van en toesig oor die groeiproses binne die riglyne van die kerkorde.

"So word die kerkeenheid vir niemand 'n bedreiging nie, maar word dit 'n geleentheid tot onderlinge diens en liefdesbetoning. Die gelade saak van taal en kulturele tradisie word ook ontlaai omdat dit 'n saak word wat die kerkraad op die gemeentevlak die beste kan hanteer.

"n Eenvoudige Kerkorde

'n Eenvoudige kerkorde is opgestel wat die heel basiese gereformeerde beginsels van kerkwees verwoord het, beginsels wat ons met mekaar deel en wat bo alle twyfel was. Op hierdie eenvoudige "grondwet" kan die eenheidskerk verder ontwikkel deur binne die grense van die beginsels, sy bepalinge uit te werk met inagneming van die tradisies waaruit die kerke gegroei het en die bestaande bepalinge wat oor baie jare ontwikkel het.

"Hierdeur word die geleentheid geskep om nie voor die tyd in besonderhede vas te val nie, maar om groei en ontwikkeling vir die nuwe kerk toe te laat. Die ruimte is dus deur die kerkorde geskep, 'n ruimte wat die kerk in 'n groeiproses kan invul.

"In die kerkorde word bepaal dat die Algemene Sinode 'n beleidsinode sal wees met die minimum administrasie en uitvoerende werksaamhede. Die Algemene Sinode bepaal self

sy eie reëls en bepalinge. Die Gebiedsinodes kry baie meer die karakter van 'n werkende-uitvoerende sinode en bepaal self sy eie reëls en bepalinge binne die ruimte van die kerkorde.

"Die werksaamhede, bevoegdheede en bestuur van die kerk word afgewentel sodat die ringe uitgebreide werksaamhede en bevoegdheede kry en binne die ruimte van die kerkorde ook sy eie reëls en bepalinge vaslê.

"Hanteer van probleme en Eenheidsverband

Dit bring ons ook by die volgende beginsel en dit was dat om in plaas daarvan om vooraf aan allerlei praktiese probleme of struikelblokke aandag te gee en dit op te los, voorgestel is dat ons eers in gehoorsaamheid aan die duidelike Bybelse beginsel die eenheid vestig, aanvaar en beleef. Daarna kan ons in verbondenheid aan mekaar saam in eenheid die probleme aanpak. So sal ons na mekaar groei en in waardering en verantwoording vir mekaar ons gesamentlike probleme hanteer.

"As voorbeeld kan ons een van die mees omstrede probleme noem, naamlik die groot gaping in salarisstrukture van die kerke. As ons eers hierdie saak van ekonomiese ongelykheid vooraf wou oplos, voordat ons tot eenheid kom, sou die eenheid baie jare, indien nie permanent nie, vertraag word.

"Daarteenoor, as ons ons verbondenheid met en verantwoordelikheid vir mekaar as uitgangspunt aanvaar, dan word dit 'n gesamentlike probleem wat in gebondenheid en in eenheid opgelos word.

"Eerlikheid en Openheid

'n Belangrike beginsel wat in hierdie model toegepas was, was om in eerlikheid en openheid deurgaans die kerke op hoogte te hou om sodoende die lidmate ingelig te hou en met ons op die eenheidspad saam te neem. Daarom is veel moeite gedoen aan terugrapportering (en toetsing) na kerkrade van die model en veral die voorgestelde kerkorde" (Unpublished paper: Bloemfontein 1993).

According to the model of the former DRCA and DRMC, all congregations were to be open to each other so as to enable the members to link freely.

According to this model, race, language or any other historical origin would not play a dominant role. All ministers could be called to any congregation within the two churches.

All congregations were divided into circuits geographically, and the circuits formed Regional Synods. The Regional Synods then formed the General Synod.

The unified church would have a name with one church order wherein the binding confessions were spelt out.

3.2.2 THE CONCEPT MODEL OF THE REFORMED CHURCH IN AFRICA

"A united synod comprising of delegates of all the four General Synods, including delegates from the churches of the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk family outside the borders of the Republic of South Africa. The power and mandates of this synod must be of such a nature that the common concerns of the churches will be met and that the unity of faith will be protected and enhanced.

"The name of the church to be decided upon should have no racial connotation whatsoever but should express the unity of faith, such as Reformed or Evangelical. The name together with its logo should signify our union. The formation of this structure is the departure point of further growth in unity within the church.

"All official documents, such as membership certificates, to mention one, should carry the name and logo of the united church.

"From the inception of the united synod the separate churches will be one united church even though the various general and regional synods together with their presbyteries and church councils will still exist in their present form. The major difference will be that these synods, presbyteries and church councils will be interrelated setting in motion a powerful dynamic for growth in unity and union on all levels.

"Open congregational boundaries will fall away and members can take up membership privileges wherever their need in terms of ministry, liturgy and language are met. Congregations can merge but will not be coerced to do so. Joint councils could support this

process. Should they decide to do so it must be clear to which presbytery the new congregation will belong.

"Presbytery level: Congregations will be free to join the presbytery of their choice within the given area. Presbyteries could also merge with the approval of the various church councils. Joint presbyteries could also be established.

"Synodical level: The regional and general synods will still function by structures that are entirely open affording presbyteries the opportunity to join the regional synod of their choice. Synods can merge and joint, synodical committees can be established. Regional synods can join the general synod of their choice" (Unpublished paper at the Synodical meeting of 1993 in Bloemfontein).

3.2.3 CONCEPT MODEL OF THE DUTCH REFORMED CHURCH

The DRC in its unpublished paper presented at Bloemfontein maintained that: membership of the existing congregations of the family of the Dutch Reformed Churches should be open to all members who accepted and confessed the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism and the Canons of the Synod of Dordt. Unfortunately the DRC did not accept the Belhar Confession as a confession.

The Dutch Reformed Church proposed a model for unity that would preserve the four basic churches, but would create a synodical structure over them with limited power. The four churches would continue to decide policy matters in their existing local and national bodies. According to the Dutch Reformed Church proposal, membership and structures would be open, allowing for free movement of church members and bodies according to their own preferences within the new structures.

This implied that this model allowed members to move freely from a white congregation to a black congregation and vice versa. Congregations, circuits and synods within the families of the Dutch Reformed Churches could include congregations, circuits and synods of other churches and become part of that church.

Church councils, circuits, regional synods and general synods who chose to stay as they were, were free to do so. All the ministers within the family of the Dutch Reformed Churches could be called to any congregation.

The DRC maintained that a united synod for the DRC, the DRMC, the DRCA and the RCA should be an umbrella structure where matters of common interest could be discussed on the basis of consensus. This umbrella synod would be constituted from the existing synods of the four churches. Each of these groups needed to acknowledge that they had to be prepared to make room for other and to tolerate the different opinions and attitudes of one another.

In the DRC's view, the model decided upon by the DRCA and the DRMC was a forced unity from the top down.

"Riglyne van die Ned Geref Kerk vir 'n model van een kerkverband vir die NG Kerk familie Lidmaatskap van die huidige gemeentes van die Familie van NG Kerke is oop vir alle gelowiges wat die belydenis van die betrokke gemeente aanvaar. Dit beteken dat lidmate oor-en-weer by gemeentes van die ander kerke kan inskakel.

"Gemeentes, ringe en sinodes binne die Familie van die Ned Geref Kerk kan, na behoorlike ooreenkoms, inskakel by gemeentes, ringe en sinodes van ander kerke en word dan volledig deel van daardie kerk.

"Kerkrade, ringe en sinodes en algemene sinodes wat dit so verkies, gaan voort om te funksioneer soos dit tans die geval is, met behoud van huidige name, kerkordes bepalinge en reglemente.

"Strukture vir samewerking tussen gemeentes, kerkrade, ringe en sinodes moet tot stand gebring word sonder om die kerkregtelike posisie van kerkvergaderings in die gedrang te bring.

"Evangeliedienaars is oor en weer beroepbaar.

"As uitdrukking van die kerkverband, word 'n verenigde sinode vir die Ned Geref Kerk, die Ned Geref Sendingkerk, die Ned Geref Kerk in Afrika en die RCA voorgestel waar

daar oor sake van gemeenskaplike belang op 'n basis van konsensus besluite geneem kan word.

"Hierdie sinode word saamgestel uit al die bestaande sinodes van die vier kerke soos in punt 6 genoem, volgens 'n stelsel van proporsionele verteenwoordiging" (Unpublished paper: NGK Bloemfontein 1993).

3.2.4 A CRITICAL DISCUSSION OF THE THREE MODELS

Now that I have mentioned the three models of the four churches of the family of the DR Churches, it has become clear that each of these churches proposed different models, for which there are specific reasons. All four churches are reformed churches. One would expect that there should be no serious problems to find a common model.

In comparing the three models, it becomes clear that there is a high degree of agreement between the DRC and the RCA. Both churches prefer to keep the present structures and the church meetings, namely, church councils, presbyteries, regional synods and the general synod. Their model maintains the present structures, with the addition of an umbrella structure which will be known as the Uniting Synod where all four churches will be represented. Within this umbrella structure a great degree of freedom should be permitted, on condition that it does not collide with the "huidige name, Kerkordes, Bepalings en Reglemente nie" (unpublished document, Bloemfontein 1993). This model therefore pleads for the maintenance of the present church structures of the DRC and the RCA, with an additional, umbrella structure. The resolutions of the umbrella synod will be of an advisory nature only.

The model of the DRCA and DRMC is basically one of an organic church unity. These two churches ceased to exist as separate and racially divided churches. They united to form a new church, based on the confessions and a church order.

This unification represents a fundamental break with the past, and the entry of a new future together. It shows respect for the reformed heritage, for the confession that Jesus Christ is the Head of the church and that faith in Him alone is a condition for membership of the church. The DRCA and DRMC also believe that in this model, justice is being done to the

reformed principle that the congregation as an entity fully represents the church as a whole.

3.3 THE WORK OF THE DIALOGUE COMMISSION FOR CHURCH UNITY 1986 - 1990

The composition of the dialogue commission and its declaration

A joint commission elected from both the DRCA and the DRMC between 1986 and 1990 worked on a report on the unity of the two churches. This report was accepted by the respective synods in 1990.

The DRMC decided in 1986 that it should negotiate with the DRCA in connection with church unity (Handelinge 1986: 701, 761, 895, 913, 98 - 988). A Dialogue Commission comprising of delegates from both DRMC and DRCA churches was formed. On behalf of the DRMC the following representatives were appointed: dr AA Boesak (Moderator), Revds IJ Mentor, NA Apollis, Dr AJ Botha, Proff JC Adonis, JJF Durand, PJ Robinson, DJ Smit and Rev JJF Mettler. The DRCA had the following representatives: Revds SP Buti (moderator), LKC Mabusela, MM Maphoto, Dr LW Mazamisa, Rev RA Meyer, Drs TA Mofokeng, MS Pitikoe, Rev SO Skeen, Dr NJ Smith and Dr EM Tema (Handelinge 1990:32).

The Dialogue Commission held its meetings in Belhar (Bellville) and in Johannesburg. At these meetings both moderators from the DRMC and DRCA presided as chairpersons.

The Dialogue Commission was subsequently divided into three sub committees, a committee for Church Order, Theological Training and Administration.

At the first meeting of the Dialogue Commission on 9 September 1987 in Johannesburg. a declaration in principle on church unification was discussed and approved.

This declaration is an important document because it served as the basis for further dialogue. It is therefore important to note the contents of this document, because it forms the biblical and theological foundations on which church unification can be built. Three

concepts were emphasised, namely Church Unity, Reconciliation and Justice. These were also the central concepts of the Confession of Belhar (Addendum 1, Agenda DRCA 1990:15 -16).

It was the expressed wish of the two Synods that the activity of the Joint Commission for Dialogue for Church Unity (JCDCU) be initiated.

Resolutions of the General Synod of the DRCA and of the Synod of the DRMC made it possible for the two respective moderatures to start the discussions between the two churches on unification and the path along which this could be accomplished. With a view to these extremely important discussions the two moderatures set up a Joint Commission for Dialogue for Church Unity (JCDCU) with representatives from both churches.

Both Synods stated clearly that the ultimate goal was the unification of a family of Dutch Reformed Churches. At the same time, until the ultimate goal could be achieved, the Synods left the possibility open for the first steps towards church unity to be taken in the meantime among those churches who had already expressed their desire for unity and had taken resolutions accordingly.

The unification of the DRCA and the DRMC therefore was not seen as the final stage in the process of unity, but merely as a starting point. For this reason the JCDCU had invited the DRC and the RCA time and again to become part of the unification process.

The recommendations to congregations and church councils in this report serve to promote the principal goal of unification in the DRC family. The proposals were open and not intended to be prescriptive in order not to place stumbling blocks in the path to greater unity. The JCDCU believed that in this way it could be of service to Jesus Christ, the Head of his Church, who prayed that all who believed in Him could be completely one "so that the world can know that You have sent Me and love them just as You love Me" (Jn 17:23) (Handelinge NGSK 1990:43 - 44).

Church unity is not accomplished overnight, but is a process of faith and perseverance.

Just as the JCDCU formulated its proposals without losing sight of the ultimate goal of unity in the DRC family, it also kept in mind that history had shown that church unity was not a simple matter, even for churches who shared a similar confession. Churches which were uniting had to be given the opportunity to grow towards one another in the process. As far as possible, the proposals in this report attempted to create such an opportunity for a unification process. Existing customs in the two churches had to be touched or affected as little as possible; great freedom was allowed to congregations and church councils in particular to arrange their affairs according to their own circumstances. The JCDCU believes in this way congregations were given the necessary space to follow the route of unification without unnecessary obstacles.

Church unity is not imposed from "above", from the side of the Synods, on the congregations, without their participation.

Because of the nature of the JCDCU's work and its newsworthiness, articles about it appeared in church and other newspapers at various times. Congregations and church councils without doubt should have heard about the discussions between the two churches. It would be a great mistake, however, to think that everything "has been decided already" by the JCDCU and that unification would be imposed on congregations through synodical resolutions. The fact of the matter is that the JCDCU was busy preparing and drawing up proposals to the two Synods, but expressly wished to involve all the congregations of the DRCA and the DRMC in this task. The matter that it dealt with was so important that the normal procedure of commission reports to the synod could not be followed. Therefore the report was presented to all church councils for their consideration and comments. Even more: church councils were requested to comment upon the report in principle, and to instruct their delegates to the next meetings of the General Synod of the DRCA and the Synod of the DRMC to vote in accordance with their own church council resolution. Resolutions and recommendations of church councils should be forwarded to the JCDCU. The JCDCU would draw up its final report to the two Synods according to the feedback from Church Councils.

For purposes of the JCDCU's final report it is important that in their responses Church Councils should distinguish clearly between matters pertaining to the principle of unification and matters to which the JCDCU should give attention, but which do not affect the principle of unification.

Church Councils were requested to clearly indicate the following:

- Whether the principle of unification as proposed within the guidelines of this report is accepted or not;
- if the principle were not accepted, what proposals/suggestions in the JCDCU report were causing the objections.
- all other matters that did not prohibit the acceptance of the principle of unification, but which a church council felt the JCDCU should look at again.

The proposed church order is the most important document to be decided on.

The proposed Church Order was attached as an appendix to the report. It was an important document to be decided on because it stipulated the formal creeds of the united church and contained the order according to which it would be structured and organised.

The Church Order has a few characteristics which are important to know about when studying it.

- Reformed Scriptural principles are applied in drawing up the Order.
- To a certain extent it does have a contemporary character in so far as specific ideas/thoughts of the Confession of Belhar have been incorporated into it.
- The Church Order only lays down the basic guidelines for the order in the church. Any further essential rules or laws regarding the smooth functioning of church councils, presbyteries and synods are left to the relevant church meetings to decide upon themselves.

The great freedom which the Church Order allowed for confirmed the reformed principle that each local church fully represented the entire church. It gives broad guidelines for the order in the Church and is not prescriptive in everything. It enables the various ecclesiastical (church) meetings to retain their existing rules and stipulations unchanged until such time as they wish to make use of their freedom to make changes according to circumstances. The only proviso (condition) is that such rules shall not be at variance with the Church Order (Handelinge NGSK 1990:38 - 43). (The final text of the Church Order is attached as appendix D).

The boundaries and activities of congregations shall remain unchanged for the time being, and congregations themselves shall decide on changes, if any.

Concerning the boundaries and activities, the unification of the two churches could not take place overnight. After the first steps had been taken, a process of growing towards each other began. Such a process took place at all levels of church life, but especially at the local congregational level where the actual life of the church is lived. It is at this level that the unity of the church could best take shape.

For this reason the JCDCU did not want to provide all sorts of prescriptions. In particular the JCDCU did not want drastic changes made to congregations and their boundaries to be brought about, which might perhaps lead to unhappiness among some members. Therefore it was recommended that:

- * All the existing congregations of both churches should remain as they were and that all of them together should form the congregations of the one church.
- * These congregations should be mutually open to attendance (worship) and membership.
- * Where more than one congregation fell in the same area, these congregations should be free to arrange their mutual affairs and composition according to local needs, by entering into agreements with each other for instance, or forming one congregation, or making any other arrangements, as long as this was done in full freedom and without any coercion on either side.

The main principle that is adhered to here, in accordance with the Church Order, was that there should be only one membership of the one church and that faith in Jesus Christ was the only condition for membership.

Within a specific area the congregations shall be grouped into only one presbytery.

According to the proposed Church Order congregations within a particular area were grouped into presbyteries. This is a reformed practice to which everyone in the DRCA and the DRMC was accustomed. After the unification of the two churches greater visible change would initially take place on this level rather than on the level of congregations. There would no longer be two presbyteries within the same area, but only one. All the congregations within a particular area should form part of the same presbytery.

At Synodical level the present pattern of the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa, namely Regional Synods and a General Synod, is proposed for the United Church.

Because of the size of the uniting church and its diversity, it seemed inevitable that the church would divide into Area Synods for the sake of proper administration. The JCDCU preferred to speak of "Regional Synods".

For administrative reasons the JCDCU proposed that the structure of the DRCA with its Regional Synods and General Synods would be the most practical. The DRCA had a General Synod and the following Regional Synods: Northern Transvaal, Southern Transvaal, the Orange Free State, Natal, Phororo (Northern Cape) and the Cape.

Since the largest concentration of members of the DRMC were in the Cape and those of the DRCA in the northern regions of the country, no serious problems with the integration of presbyteries as they existed then were expected. It was expected that although the boundaries of some presbyteries would change, the end result would not differ very much from the following:

- * In Northern Transvaal the 1 presbytery of the DRMC the Presbytery of Pretoria, divided itself to integrate with the existing 18 presbyteries of the DRCA to form a Regional Synod.
- * In Southern Transvaal the Presbyteries of Witwatersrand and Lichtenburg of the DRMC divided to integrate with the existing 11 presbyteries of the DRCA to form a Regional Synod.
- * In the Orange Free State the Presbytery of Heatherdale of the DRMC divided to integrate with the 13 presbyteries of the DRCA to form a Regional Synod.
- * In Natal the Presbytery of Durban of the DRMC integrated with the 6 presbyteries of the DRCA to form a Regional Synod.
- * In the Northern Cape the Presbyteries of Kimberley, Kuruman and Upington of the DRMC and the 6 presbyteries of the DRCA integrated to form a Regional Synod.
- * In the Cape the 10 Presbyteries of the DRCA and the 23 Presbyteries of the DRMC integrated to form a Regional Synod.
- * The 10 congregations of the DRMC in Namibia could either integrate with the Regional Synod of the Northern Cape or of the Cape.

Synodical Administration shall take place mainly at the level of Regional Synods.

The JCDCU recommended that the General Synod of the uniting church should have a limited administrative structure. Synodical administration should take place mainly at the level of Regional Synods.

Firstly this recommendation is in accordance with the Church Order which stipulates rules for the General Synod regarding church policy, which do not imply an administrative burden. Regional Synods, however, are so-called "working" Synods that require administrative structures.

Secondly, this recommendation meant there would practically be no disruption of the existing services and administrations of the various Synods as they existed at the time.

There will be only one Theological Training but it shall take place in or at two places, one in the South and one in the North.

According to the proposed Church Order, theological training was the responsibility of the General Synod. The final decision on the final form of this training would be taken by the General Synod and put into practice, taking into account the circumstances that would prevail.

The JCDCU recommended that the number of theological training centres should be reduced to only two, one in the South and one in the North. Theological training should be under one central control by means of one Curatorium, despite there being two centres of training.

The Faculty of Theology of the University of the Western Cape was recommended as the Southern place of training. A final decision on the Northern place at that stage had still to be made, because the General Synod would have to negotiate with possible universities. Unisa or a Unisa accredited campus, or a second campus that could be accredited with the University of the Western Cape, were thought of as possibilities. With regard to academic qualifications, an arrangement whereby only one University awarded them was to be preferred.

The uniting church wishes to have only one theological training and similarly to have no discrimination against ministers regarding remuneration and pension.

The JCDCU was fully aware that the uniting church would not be a rich church and that at the there were still great differences in the salaries of ministers. The new church would have to strive purposefully to eliminate these inequalities.

Therefore the JCDCU proposed that:

- * The minimum of the Dutch Reformed Mission Church's official salary scale should apply to the united church as far as practically possible.
- * A salary scale be drawn up in the that would start with the minimum scale of the DRCA and end with the maximum of the DRMC, so as to make it possible to remunerate all ministers on the same salary scale.
- * A central salary fund be set up to help supplement congregations who could not afford the minimum salary of their ministers - without jeopardising the local congregation's responsibility in this regard.
- * The church should endeavour to set up one central pension fund.

The solution of other sensitive and contentious issues (problems) not related to the Church Order or the Confession of faith will be left to the new Uniting Church, such as the relationship with the DRC and other churches in the Dutch Reformed Family.

The unification of the DRCA and the DRMC is an ongoing process. Unity would never take place if there had to be an agreement right from the start on all matters. This, however, excluded the confession of faith and the Church Order, because there should be agreement on these.

Concerning other sensitive and contentious problems the JCDCU felt the new church should unite with the other churches in the Dutch Reformed family, including the churches outside the borders of South Africa.

- * The proposed Church Order and the recommendations on how the DRCA and the DRMC should arrive at unity confirmed the seriousness of how the above objective is to be pursued.

- * Neither from the DRCA nor the DRMC was it expected to give up their existing relationships with the DRC. All contractual and other agreements at congregational, presbytery and synodical level could continue unchanged in the uniting church. Any changes would only be brought about by the particular congregations, presbyteries and Regional Synod themselves, according to the particular circumstances.

In the light of the above, the JCDCU earnestly appealed to all church councils and presbyteries who had to give their delegates mandates to vote for the unification of the DRCA and the DRMC not to set conditions for unification that did not have a bearing on the confession or Church Order. If church councils and presbyteries were to raise all sorts of other conditions, unity would never be reached.

The JCDCU believed that no serious problems existed that could not ultimately be resolved within the united church. If the path of unity was followed in obedience to Christ, his Spirit would surely strengthen the perfect bond (unity) of love (Col 3:14) and mutual understanding.

The first General Synod of the newly established church would primarily rectify and finalise the principle of unification and appoint commissions to work out the integration during the recess of specific aspects of the church's activities. It would further make recommendations to the next General Synod about matters such as a central administration, theological training, ecumenical relations and a pension fund.

The proposed name for the United Church is provisional and attempts to express the ultimate goal that is being pursued.

The JCDCU proposed that the new church should provisionally be called the "Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa".

The concept "Uniting" was chosen rather than "United" to indicate that the unification was a *process* that had to be worked through. It also served to keep the door open for still more churches to join the fold.

The recommendations of the JCDCU were accepted at the General Synod of the DRCA held in Pretoria in 1991 (cf Agenda en Handeling NGSK 1991:390 and DRCA Action 1/90 July 1990:8 - 13).

3.4 A CHURCH ORDER PROBLEM WITHIN THE DRCA PREVENTS CHURCH UNIFICATION

The unification of the DRCA and the DRMC was supposed to have taken place at the General Synod held in Cape Town in October 1990, but a deadlock was reached here. The two churches could only hold a convent of unity, celebrating the *intention* to unite. "Die Sinode aanvaar die wettigheid van die konvent wat in Oktober 1990 te Kaapstad plaasgevind het" (Agenda en Handeling 1991:392).

The cause of the deadlock was that there were members of the General Synod who felt that the procedures of Article 36.1 and 36.2 of the Church Order of the DRCA were not followed. This Article reads:

"36.1 Die wysiging van die belydenis van die kerk kan alleen geskied met twee-derde meerderheid en nadat elke streeksinode afsonderlik, met 'n twee-derde meerderheid ten gunste daarvan besluit het en nadat alle kerke van Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerkverband geraadpleeg is.

36.2 Met uitsondering van die belydenis (Art.1) mag die Algemene Sinode die kerkorde wysig of aanvul met 'n twee-derde meerderheidstem" (Handeling 1987:448).

At the General Synod of Pretoria there were still members of the Synod who held that the procedures of this Article had not been followed, and therefore the Confession of Belhar could not be added to the confessional basis of the Church. It was then decided to amend the Church Order in order to add the Belhar Confession to the confessional basis of the new, uniting church. The Synod agreed to accept the amended Article (see further down). Later it was to be contested in court whether the Synod had the legal right to accept this amendment. At the time of completion of this mini-thesis the legal process had not been completed yet.

After a long discussion the Synod adopted the Belhar Confession and added it to the other three confessions in the Church Order of the DRCA: "Die Sinode besluit eenparig sonder teenstem om by punt 1.1 van die Kerkorde van die NGKA, die Belhar Belydenis soos vasgestel deur die Sinode van die NGSK in 1986 by te voeg" (Agenda en Handeling 1991:392).

Another problem that came to the table was the amendment of the confessional basis of the DRCA because Article 36.1 of the Church Order stated that amendments to the confessions could only be amended with a two thirds majority of the Regional Synods and of the General Synod.

To resolve this problem the General Synod of the DRCA held in Pretoria in 1991 decided to add a new article 61 which reads as follows : "Die NG Kerk in Afrika mag ter enige tyd met 'n twee-derde meerderheidsbesluit van die Algemene Sinode met een of meer van die kerke wat in Artikel 2 genoem word struktureel verenig. Wanneer sodanige besluit geneem is, hou die kerk op om as NGKA te bestaan en gaan op in die nuwe Kerk. Wanneer die NGKA sou besluit om met 'n ander kerk of kerke te verenig, moet die besluit deur die Algemene Sinode met 'n twee-derde meerderheidstem sowel as twee-derde meerderheidstem van die Streeksinodes geneem word. Alle regte, voorregte, eiendomme, bates en laste van die regspersone van die NGKA word daarmee oorgedra aan die ooreenstemmende regspersone van die verenigde kerk wat uit die vereniging ontstaan" (Handeling NGKA 1991:440).

Article 36.1 and 36.2 were then amended to give the General Synod powers to amend the Church Order and the confessions with a two thirds majority.

After the amendment in 1991 by the General Synod, Articles 36.1 and 36.2 read:

"36.1 Die wysiging en uitbreiding van die belydenis van die kerk kan alleen geskied met twee-derde meerderheid deur die Algemene Sinode. Enige besware van lidmate, Ringe of Streeksinodes teen sodanige wysigings of uitbreidings mag by wyse van Gravamina (beswaarskrif) en/of memoranda aan die volgende vergadering van die Algemene Sinode voorgelê word vir oorweging.

36.2 Die Algemene Sinode mag die Kerkorde wysig of aanvul met 'n twee-derde meerderheid.

36.2.1 Alleen sake in verband met leertug, leergeskille of geskille tussen streeksinodes onderling of tussen streeksinodes en ringe of kerkrade, kan by wyse van hoër beroep voor die Algemene Sinode dien.

36.2.2 In gevalle van leertug en geskille word 'n twee-derde meerderheidstem vir die bekragtiging van die uitspraak van die Algemene Sinode vereis"
(Handelinge 1991: 434).

In accordance with Article 61 of the Church Order the General Synod took the following resolution :

"Die Sinode besluit dat wanneer hy in uitvoering van sy besluit om struktureel met die NGSK in SA te verenig wettiglik saam met die verteenwoordigers van die NGSK tot 'n stigtingsinode gekonstitueer is, die Algemene Sinode van die NGKA kragtens art 61 van sy Kerkorde as regspersoon sal ophou om te bestaan en te ontbind, en dra al sy regte, voorregte, eiendomme, bates, laaste en verpligtinge niks uitgesonder nie, oor aan die Algemene Sinode van die verenigde kerk wat uit die vereniging van die NGKA en NGSK in SA ontstaan" (Handelinge 1991:393).

The DRMC on its turn experienced an obstacle with the question of the legal status of church property. These and other obstacles were cleared in 1990 when Synod adopted an amendment to its Church Order that bound all of its congregations to join the union. Individual congregations might dissociate themselves from the union but could not take property with them (cf Handelinge NGSK 1990:813 - 814). The DRMC allowed a long process of discussion in congregations and presbyteries and reported back to the Synod on their decisions.

3.5 INTERPRETATION AND EVALUATION

This chapter in more than one respect forms the heart of this mini-thesis because it addresses the real matter of church unity between the two DR Churches. In this sense the discussion on church unification in the family of the DR Churches is brought to a specific point. The different models proposed by the various churches are evaluated by their biblical theological qualities.

It has become clear that all four DR Churches at that stage were not prepared to take steps towards church unity. The DRC and the RCA did not see their way open to unity on the basis of a model different from their own. The other two churches, however, the DRCA and DRMC decided to continue with unification.

The importance of the Dialogue Commission is judged on its value. The most important aim of the Dialogue Commission was to execute church unification without making big changes to the church structures and government. The acceptance of the Belhar Confession by the DRCA caused a delay in the unity process because it was a problem of church law which, however, could be solved. Although the important church unification could not take place in 1990, it did materialise four years later.

CHAPTER 4

4. FOUNDATION OF THE UNITING REFORMED CHURCH IN SOUTHERN AFRICA (URCSA)

4.1 INTRODUCTION

It has become clear from the preceding chapter that the racial structures of the DR Churches had come under pressure by the demands for unity of the four churches.

On 17 February 1993 the Synodical Commissions of the four DR Churches met in Bloemfontein to discuss the various proposed models for the unification of these churches. At this historical gathering no consensus was reached.

The General Synod of the DRCA met at Kraaifontein on the morning of the 14th April 1994 to confirm the resolution made in Pretoria (1991). Likewise the DRMC also met in Belhar in 1994 before the formation of the new church.

At this Synod the DRMC adopted a union clause and added it to Art 4 of the Church Order in order to prevent those against the unification process to claim any property (Bepalinge en Reglemente NGSK: 1986:84). Sub clauses 94.4.3 (d) read:

"Om die praktiese werkswyse vir eenwording te bepaal insluitende die oorgangsbepalings met betrekking tot die samestelling van mindere en meerdere vergaderings, die stoflike, administratiewe, finansiële en ander aangeleenthede" (Acta Synodi Sendingkerk 1994:172). The Synod also decided that all standing resolutions and any other laws accepted before desolving will remain *mutatis mutandis* (with the necessary changes) (in power) as resolutions (Acta Synodi 1994:170).

4.2 THE FOUNDATION OF THE URCSA

The inauguration of the URCSA was presided over by Rev SPE Buti, moderator of the DRCA, and Rev NA Apollis, moderator of DRMC. After the opening devotions the meeting was constituted by two hundred and eighty nine delegates from the DRCA and

DRMC. The charter of the church amalgamation was read and accepted by both churches (Handelinge 1994:402 - 414).

On the 14th April 1994 the Synod constituted with representatives from the DRCA and the DRMC (Handelinge van die Stigtingsinode 1994:282 - 290). This gathering was held in the church building of the congregation of the SA Gestig at Belhar. After the constitution of the Synod, the moderators of both churches, Revds Buti and Apollis read the decisions of their churches about the acceptance in principle of the draft Church Order (Handelinge 1994:412), followed by the singing of the hymn "Die Kerk se hoop en ere". Rev MM Maphoto then led in prayer (Handelinge 1994:413). Rev Apollis read the "Charter of the Church Amalgamation of the DRMC and the DRCA". Both moderators signed it (Handelinge 1994:413 - 414).

After the signing of the documents, the URCSA had officially been founded. At last the uniting church between the DRCA and the DRMC had been formed. At this juncture there was great jubilation and hugging of one another amongst delegates and visitors to the occasion.

This newly formed unification brought an end to the DRCA and DRMC churches which were founded on the Apartheid policy. The terms "Dutch Reformed Church in Africa" and "Dutch Reformed Mission Church" were something of the past. Because Article 1 of the new Church Order was accepted with a two thirds majority, the new church's became the "Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa" (Handelinge 1994:417).

The URCSA elected Revds NA Apollis as moderator, SP Buti as assessor, LA Appies as scribe and JD Buys as actuary of its new moderation. Three were from the former DRMC, and one (Rev Buti) from the DRCA.

With this event these two reformed Churches completed a long process towards unity. Yet the unity process had not been finally completed, because the DRC and the RCA were still standing outside. But at least progress has been made in the right direction.

The birth of the Uniting Reformed Church was preceded by an intensive discussion between the two uniting churches. However, it was not a dialogue between the two churches only. Occasionally the DRC was also invited to participate in the dialogue, but it

could not be a regular participant due to its objection to certain issues on the agenda, like the Belhar Confession. This did not deter the two participants from producing a theological report on the dynamics of unification which was subsequently approved by the inaugural Synod of the new church.

Approval of the report of the Dialogue Commission for Church Unity

It is necessary to briefly discuss the report of the Commission in order to identify the underlying theological and political strands in the report. Three issues are prominent in the report, namely the unity of the church, reconciliation and justice.

Church Unity

The report of the Commission invited the two churches to declare their loyalty to the fact that the unity of the church was founded on the Bible. Secondly, this unity was central to the doctrine of the reformed faith which confessed the existence of a visible united church. The Belhar Confession underpinned this visibility of the church: "We believe ... that this unity must become visible so that the world may believe; that separation, enmity and hatred between people and groups is sin which Christ has already conquered, and accordingly that anything which threatens this unity may have no place in the Church and must resisted" (Cloete & Smit 1982:1).

Another issue addressed in the report is the disapproval of racism and racist institutions: "Dit beteken dat die bestaande institute sal moet verenig in 'n enkele instituut, georganiseerd volgens gereformeerde kerkreg en kerkverband. Rasse oorwegings sal geen rol speel in die kerkregtelike inrigting van hierdie kerk nie. Taal en kulturele verskille soos alle ander verskillende bedieningsbehoefte mag nie hierdie eenheid van die kerk aantast nie, maar sal langs die gewone gereformeerde weë hanteer word en sal dien tot die onderlinge verryking binne die een enkele sigbare kerk" (Agenda en Skema 1994:10).

The Commission admonished the two uniting churches to do introspection about their own contribution towards the upholding of separate institutions in the past, and thereby, preventing the birth of a visibly united church.

Reconciliation

The two churches were obliged to declare that reconciliation was a central tenet of the church. The church is meant to be God's unique new creation, a people whom Christ reconciled with God through his blood. Therefore, the two churches had to demonstrate the "egte, geleefde versoening" (Agenda en Skema 1994:10).

"Die twee afgevaardigings (kerke) verklaar dit as hulle hartlike oortuiging dat die styl van die kerk se optrede steeds dié van versoening, vrede en liefde behoort te wees. Die kerk is immers die unieke nuwe skepping van God, mense wat deur Christus se bloed met God en met mekaar versoen is en nou vrede het" (Agenda en Skema 1994:10).

Reconciliation proposed by the Commission was regarded as something interpersonal. It was not subjected to natural differences as proposed by FJM Potgieter "... daar is veelvormigheid in die skepping. Dit blyk ten oorfloed uit die formasieverhaal in Genesis. Daar is sprake van 'n aantal plante en diere wat morfologies van mekaar verskil het" On the question of differentiation on the human level, Potgieter postulates that "... wat die menslike geslag betref, is man en vrou nie homomorf nie maar verskil in liggaamsbou" (Potgieter 1998:11). He suggests that "natural" differences between man and woman must be respected as they demonstrate inequality between humans: "voor die val was daar ook oral ongelykheid. Adam is eerste gemaak en die hoof van die vrou. Die mens moes die aarde onderwerp en heers oor die visse en die voëls en die ander diere (Genesis 1:28)" (Potgieter 1998:11).

It is evident that Potgieter's understanding of the differences between humans does not allow for equality between man and woman, and for example, between black and white. Reconciliation therefore, becomes impossible. The report of the Commission negates the principle of differentiation as articulated by the DRC theologians because it resembles the principle of state ideologies of Apartheid: "Die twee afvaardigings bely dat God se Woord en Gees in staat is om mense so met mekaar te versoen ten spyte van alle natuurlike verskille tussen hulle en betreur dit dat hierdie versoening oor jare heen in ons land deur die gedwonge skeiding van Apartheid en afsonderlike ontwikkeling bemoeilik en selfs menslik onmoontlik gemaak is" (Agenda 1994:11).

Furthermore, the two churches are called upon to consider that reconciliation is not avoiding to address contentious issues. Reconciliation is "nie die toesmeer van geskilpunte

en die goedpraat van wat verkeerd is nie" (Agenda 1994:11). Cheap reconciliation would only affirm injustice in South Africa. This view is supported by David Bosch when he affirms that cheap reconciliation is the deadly enemy of the church. He goes on to argue that cheap reconciliation costs nothing. It can be obtained at a minimum expense. "It is a papering over of deep-seated differences. It is arguing that, after all, we are one in Christ - are we not? - and that therefore our existing differences do not matter" (Bosch 1998:100).

Reconciliation will be a painful process; it will cause everybody untold pain. It will require the dismantling of church and social structures that are deeply rooted in the collective consciousness of the two churches. Destruction of such structures is an imperative of the gospel. Everyone is therefore commanded to lead this imperative and demonstrate their willingness to walk the path of reconciliation (Agenda 1994:11).

Justice

The third issue that the report of the Commission discusses is justice. The new church has to confess that, "God Homself geopenbaar het as die Een wat geregtigheid en ware vrede onder mense wil bring; dat Hy in 'n wêreld vol onreg en vyandskap op 'n besondere wyse die God van die noodlydende, die arme en die verontregte is en dat Hy sy kerk roep om Hom hierin na te volg" (Agenda 1994:11). Justice is therefore to be understood practically. DJ Smit interprets justice as indicating that God, in a special way, is "the God of the destitute, the poor and the wronged" (Cloete & Smit 1982:53).

The justice the report alludes to, is contextual. It has to be understood within the framework of apartheid and social injustice. "... the ideology of apartheid did not merely legitimate and stabilize irreconcilability and racial prejudice, but it also approved of and stabilized relations and structures in society, which were unjust, humiliating, degrading of humanity and often oppressive" (Cloete & Smit 1982:53).

The two churches are asked to re-affirm their previous declarations about the ideology of apartheid, alias separate development, alias plural development, alias own affairs, etc., that it is sin. Human dignity and worth is compromised by the ideology, and according to the report, "dat dit daarom die beginsel van geregtigheid en naasteliefde verkrag; asook dat alle pogings om as sodanige politiek-maatskaplike beleid openlik of bedektelik op Bybelse gronde te regverdig, kettery is wat die christelike godsdiens ongeloofwaardig maak" (Agenda 1994:11).

In this regard, Desmond Tutu maintains that "apartheid or whatever this racist ideology is currently called is evil: totally and without remainder" (De Gruchy & Villa Vicencio 1983:39).

Section 3.3 discusses human rights. It declares that the two churches "verklaar dit as hulle gemeenskaplike oortuiging dat die Godegewe waardigheid van die mens gerespekteer moet word; dat, ter wille van geregtigheid, die handhawing van menseregte daarom dringend in ons land nagestreef moet word, verkieslik in die vorm van 'n afdwingbare regscode wat die regte van ook die weerlose beskerm" (Agenda 1994:11).

Underlying this section is the philosophy and theology of human rights. By including this theme in the discussion document, the Commission reveals a paradigm shift uncommon to the reformed churches in South Africa. The Commission therefore, identifies with the debates around human rights world-wide, and desires the new church to take a stand on human rights.

What are human rights? J Maritain states that "The human person possesses rights because of the very fact that it is a person, a whole, a master of itself and of the acts of itself which is not merely a means to an end but an end which must be treated as such. The dignity of the human person signifies that by virtue of natural law, the human person has the right to be respected, is the subject of rights. These are the things which are owed to man (a person) because of the very fact that he (or she) is a man (person)" (Maritain 1994:60).

HP Owen also states the following about human rights: "Men (human beings) live surrounded by a pattern of rights and duties whose claims upon them are quite independent of their attitude towards them and which lays upon them obligations which are binding upon them whether they choose to accept them or not" (Owen 1975:29).

The report goes even further than both Maritain or Owen when it suggests that there has to be a legal code which has to be enforced in order to safeguard the rights of the powerless.

Section 3.4 of the report addresses the question of violence in South Africa. The core around which violence coheres is identified as "Die twee afvaardigings spreek hulle diepe besorgdheid uit oor die huidige spiraal van geweld in ons land; oor die strukturele onreg en

geweld wat oor baie jare heen 'n ernstige aantasting van die menslike waardigheid is; oor die feit dat verreweg die meeste burgers van die land uitgesluit is van normale, redelike, politieke deelname, sodat by baie die gevoel groei dat geweldlose weerstand teen onreg al by herhaling ontgin is en tevergeefs geblyk het; oor die groot getalle aanhoudings om politieke redes en sonder verhoor insluitend die aanhouding van kinders; oor die feit dat die meerderheid van die bevolking in ons land nie vryelik kan deelneem aan die politieke debat nie, oor die talle voorvalle en gerugte van voorvalle van sowel rewolusionêre as onderdrukkende geweld in ons land; oor die gees van militarisme en gewelddadigheid in ons samelewing; oor die wyse waarop die leuen verkondig en die waarheid onderdruk word deur persbeheer, weerhouding van inligting, propaganda en die subtiele ideologiese indoktrinasië van die bevolking" (Agenda 1994:11,12).

The point argued in this report supports what Desmond Tutu understands by violence when he writes: "There are different kinds and degrees of violence. White South Africa regards violence and terrorism as that which normally emanates from the oppressed black community either internally or externally. They refuse to accept that the South African situation is inherently violent, and that primary violence is the apartheid system" (1987:74).

It is a theological and ecclesiastical imperative to put the question of violence on the church's agenda. The new church therefore, is called upon to refuse to accept the previous state's ethics that the oppressed and their liberation movements were solely responsible for the violence in South Africa.

Section 3.5 calls the two churches to pray for peace based on justice. It therefore "roep alle lidmate op om ewe-eens daarvoor te bid en te werk" (1994:12). This point closes on a liturgical note.

4.3 CHURCH ORDER

The second document which was adopted by the inaugural synod of the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa was the Church Order consisting of twelve articles. Articles 1 – 3 deal with the church; articles 4 - 8 discuss the congregation; article 9 is about the presbytery; article 10: the Regional Synod; article 11: General Synod and article 12 is

about the church's relationships. The intention of this section is not to do an in-depth discussion of the Church Order, but just to highlight the essence of each article.

The Church

The Church of Jesus Christ is the community of believers who are called together by the Word of God and by His Holy Spirit. Those who have been called and who form the "Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa" are part of this Church of Christ. Together with all the other churches who confess Christ, this church has been set apart as a nation; as the people of God who belong to Him and who have to proclaim the saving deeds of Him who called them from darkness unto light; as a new creation who lives in the light as He is the light (Handelinge 1997:776).

The essence of this article is that the church is a community founded by Jesus Christ. This article is congruent with 1 Peter 2:9 - 10. The concept of nation in this context has a surplus value. It transcends the narrow confines of political nationhood of class, gender and race. It also transcends cultural boundaries. The Uniting RCSA is therefore to be that church.

The Confession of Faith

This article is based on the confession of faith. 2.1 declares that the foundation of the URCSA's faith is the Triune God, that the Bible is the Word of God and that it is reliable. Moreover, the URCSA accepts the existence of other creeds which came into existence in other countries throughout history. These creeds are mentioned in 2.2. The Confession of Belhar (1986) is accepted as an authentic confession because it came out of the South African context. In 2.3 the URCSA accepts that the contexts of the confession is dynamic. History could demand the rewriting of a confession, or a re-confessing of a new confession.

Membership of the Church

The membership of the church is based on the following:

- belief in Jesus Christ (3.1);
- public confession of faith (3.2); and
- professing of faith by baptised children of communicants (3.3).

Responsibility of the Congregation

This article is about the responsibility of the congregation. The congregation is a community formed to serve God and the neighbour in the world (4.1). Service to God is the basis of all service (4.2). Service to the neighbour is the substantiation of the service to God. You cannot love God but hate your neighbour. This service is reminiscent of the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10: 25 - 36). Service to humankind is the congregation's proclamation of God's reconciling and liberating acts in the world (4.4).

Services in the Congregation

This article specifies services in the congregation. The nature of these services is spiritual. They include worship (5.1), instruction (5.2), care (5.3), witnessing (5.4) and service to the suffering and needy. This article identifies the spirituality that should prevail in the congregation.

Offices in the Congregation

This article is about the offices in the congregation. Those who are elected to serve the congregations must be elected on the basis of their spiritual gifts (6.1). Offices of elder and deacon are such offices (6.2). However, the office of teaching elder or minister, is different from the others because it requires special preparation and training (6.3). The congregation remains the custodian of these offices (6.4).

Management of the Congregation

This article discusses the management of the congregation. Jesus Christ is the Head of the church. He governs the congregation through an elected church council of elders and deacons.

The Link between Congregations

This article discusses the link between congregations. The connecting link in the URCSA is the Presbytery and the Synod.

The Presbytery

This article describes the presbytery. Its functions are clearly discussed by this Article 10.

The Regional Synod

This article discusses the functions of the Regional Synod.

The General Synod

This article discusses the functions of the General Synod.

The Church's Relationships

This article discusses the relationships of the URCSA. This is a theological statement of the church's understanding of its ecumenical relationships. This article is a theological foundation of URCSA in the ecumenical world (Church Order of the URCSA: 1997:1 - 7). (See appendix D).

4.4 BELHAR CONFESSION

A brief historical background of the Belhar Confession

The Belhar Confession is a theological response to the ideology of apartheid and its practice.

The WARC met in Ottawa in Canada from 17 - 27 August 1982. In the discussion on apartheid in South Africa the WARC decided that the ideology of apartheid was unbiblical and therefore constituted a *status confessionis*. The DRMC was then compelled to take a decision on the report of their representatives at WARC.

The Synod of the DRMC met at Belhar on 22 September - 6 October 1982. This Synod declared a *status confessionis* on apartheid as a sin and a heresy. The DRMC then resolved to draft a confession of its own. "The draft confession addresses three issues, namely, the unity of the church, reconciliation in Christ and the justice of God" (Cloete & Smit 1984:viii). I discuss these three issues elsewhere in this study.

The Synod adopted the draft Confession of Belhar with an accompanying letter where the need for a confession was explained to the congregations. "Die Begeleidende Brief bevat vier paragrawe wat agtereenvolgens handel oor die gesindheid (4), die gesag (5), die bedoeling (6) en die verwagting (7) van die Belydenis" (1982:2 unpublished address).

The draft Confession of Belhar was circulated amongst the congregations of the DRMC for their comments. Only ten of the two hundred and sixty seven congregations indicated that they were not in favour of adopting this confession (Smit 1982:14).

The Synod of 1986 decided to accept the Belhar Confession and adopt it as its fourth confession. Smit maintains that "slegs 24 van die aanwesiges, uit 498 sinodegangers, het dié aand nie die Belydenis in die openbaar onderteken nie" (1982:14). It was the desire of the DRMC that the Reformed Ecumenical Council (REC) should adopt the Belhar Confession, but the REC rather declared this confession to be a declaration at its meeting in Athens in 1992. The reason for this was perhaps the absence of the DRMC at the meeting.

The approval of the Belhar Confession

Two of the churches in the family of the Dutch Reformed Churches decided not to accept the Belhar Confession as a confession for their churches. The former DRCA which united with the former DRMC in 1994 accepted this confession (see discussion in chapter three).

The theological and political significance of the Belhar Confession

The Belhar Confession is a powerful statement with theological and political significance. Theologically it is the first time in the history of the church in South Africa that a mission church produced a confession that also had profound political significance. Its theology is both biblical and reformed. The political significance is that the politics of the day is situated and adjudicated within the framework of the Bible and reformed theology.

The DRC never denied the unity of the family of the DR Churches. However, it supported the practise of separate churches according to colour or race. This is contrary to church unity. Instead of joining the unification process, the DRC at its General Synod in 1994 decided to reverse the process.

In his opening address Prof Pieter Potgieter, the outgoing Moderator of the DRC, warned the General Synod not to move too fast with the unity process with the URCSA: "Hy het die Algemene Sinode gemaan om nie te vinnig te beweeg op die weg na eenheid met die VGK nie. Die Algemene Sinode sal hom deeglik daarvan moet vergewis dat hy sy lidmate inlig oor eenwording sodat hy hulle met 'n geruste hart kan saamneem op die pad na eenheid" (Die Kerkbode 1994:1).

The General Synod of the DRC decided at its meeting to work together with other member churches to draft a Church Order, a confession, a name, a liturgical formula etc for the new church it has in mind.

"Die Algemene Sinode spreek sy ernstige begeerte uit om saam te werk met die ander lede van die Familie van NG Kerke aan die daarstelling van een kerkverband op grondslag van 'n goedgekeurde kerkorde; saam te werk met die aanwys van 'n gesamentlike kommissie om te begin om 'n konsep-kerkorde vir hierdie voorgenome kerkverband op te stel; (Handelinge NGK 1994:569) dit aan dié Gesamentlike Kommissie op te dra om onder meer aandag aan die volgende sake te gee: belydenisskrifte, die naam van die voorgestelde nuwe kerkverband, liturgiese formuliere en gebruike, gesangeboeke en die orde van die crediens, bedieningsbehoefte, praktiese implikasies en werkswyse van een kerkverband; oorgangsreëlings, grense, stoflike, administratiewe, finansiële en verbandhoudende aangeleenthede; samestelling van die stigting/verenigingsinode; reglemente en ander sake wat die Algemene Sinode/Algemene Sinodale Kommissie aan hom opdra.

Elke lidkerk van die Familie van NG Kerke toets die konsepkerkorde en meegaande voorstelle op 'n geskikte wyse op sy vergaderings" (Handelinge NGK 1994:569).

The RCA was not willing to join the unification process because it maintained that the unification of the whole family should take place simultaneously and therefore they would wait until that time arose.

The response of the DRC needs to be investigated. Let us consider the response of the General Synodical Commission of the DRC in a letter dated 25 October 1996: "Dit blyk dat die ontstaansgeskiedenis van Belhar vir sommige lidmate 'n struikelblok is. Hierdie konteks is dié van 'n status confessionis wat, volgens diegene wat beswaar het, 'n sterk politieke konnotasie het en sy agtergrond vind in die bevrydingsteologie. Die ASK oordeel nogtans dat die Belydenis van Belhar nie as blote 'bevrydingsteologie' afgemaak kan word nie. Dit is noodsaaklik om te begryp dat, al sou daar sekere persone betrokke gewees het met allerlei politieke oorwegings, die Belydenis van Belhar gesien moet word teen die agtergrond van die lyding en nood van gelowige en toegewyde lidmate wie se geloof in die krisis gekom het vanweë die apartheidsbestel. Die 'onvoorwaardelike aanvaarding' van die Belydenis van Belhar as vierde belydenisskrif naas die Drie Formuliere van Eenheid - soos die ASK van die VGKSA in sy brief vra en dit 'n "ononderhandelbare vereiste vir die

voortgang van die eenheidsgesprek" noem - sal egter soveel onenigheid in die NG Kerk veroorsaak, dat dit op die oomblik nie 'n opsie is nie" (Handelinge 1997:73, 74).

4.5 INTERPRETATION AND EVALUATION

Chapter four discusses the foundation of the URCSA on the 14th of April 1994 at Belhar and the report of the Dialogue Commission for Church Unity, Church Order and the Belhar Confession and the approval thereof. Unity within the family of the Dutch Reformed Churches has been partially obtained.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

This study begins by first giving a description of the foundation of the DRC ("Mother Church") and the three "Daughter" churches which serves as the background whereby the historical relationships were founded and grew. The most important characteristic of this relationship between the DRC and the three "Daughter" churches was the dominant position of the DRC within this relationship. (J Kinghorn 1997: 151 - 154).

This dominant position is directly in conflict with the Golden Rule of Emden (Pont 1981: 9f). It expresses itself theologically, financially and administratively in the constitutions which the four "Daughter" churches received from the "mother" church (see Kriel's book 1981).

The domination of the DRC over her "Daughter" churches was also expressed in church relations and structures. Since the beginning of the nineteen seventies there developed a growing consciousness amongst the members of the DRCA and the DRMC that the existence of separate churches on racial lines was unbiblical and unreformed. The policy of apartheid and its ideology as well as the mission policy of separate race churches of the DRC was always questioned by some members of the two "Daughter" churches on account of the Scriptures and theology (Adonis 1982:103 - 119).

The Christian Institute of Dr B Naudé and the Belydendekring, which consisted mostly of ministers and members of the two "Daughter" churches, had a great influence in the growing consciousness of the abovenamed. It became clear, in spite of the existing agreement in the family of the DR Churches, that theological differences existed with regards to church unity, justice and reconciliation.

Whilst the DRC kept on referring to the Federal Council of Churches where the unity of the four churches could be accommodated, the DRCA and the DRMC decided in their respective synods against the proposed unity of the Federal Council (Oorkoepelende Sinode). The two "Daughter" churches, the DRCA and the DRMC, proposed that the four churches should unite in one church structure, starting from congregational level. This resolution was taken by the two respective "Daughter" churches - in 1975 by the DRCA

and in 1978 by the DRMC. Ever since these two churches went into dialogue with the DRC and the RCA on the theme of unity, but these negotiations were unsuccessful.

In 1982 the relationship within the family of the DR Churches in general, and in particular that of the DRCA and the DRMC reached a particular point. In those years the WARC condemned the policy of apartheid and suspended the membership of the DRC. In that same year the DRMC adopted the decision of WARC and drew up a concept confession known as the Confession of Belhar, and submitted it to the congregations for their approval.

Afterwards the dialogue on church unity entered a new phase. The DRCA took the initiative and invited the other three churches to negotiate church unity. The DRMC responded positively and therefore the DRCA and the DRMC came to the decision to unite. In the meantime the four churches drew up their models of unification and submitted them to one another. The DRCA and the DRMC agreed on a model, whilst the other two churches' models were different. On the ground of the agreement between the DRCA and the DRMC a dialogue committee for church unity was appointed to make preparations for the unification of the two churches. This committee completed its work between 1986 and 1990. In 1990 the two synods met with the intention to establish a new church. Because of problems with the church order, the establishment of the new church could not take place in that year, but materialised in 1994.

In the meanwhile the DRC on its synod in 1990 decided to reject the policy of apartheid, and that they also wanted to be part of the church unification process in the family of the Dutch Reformed Churches. Although they could not join the unification process at this point, they would join it at a later stage (Church and Society 1990). On the basis of their agreement on the confession and church order, the DRCA and the DRMC united and formed the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa in 1994.

This church unification is a deed of obedience to God, his Word and the Reformed Confession. It is a real expression of biblical unity, reconciliation, justice and obedience (Belhar Confession 1986). It is therefore also a witness which the church must hold onto in a South African society where unity, justice and reconciliation are very important. As such it is a challenge to all in general, and in particular to Christians within the family of the DR Churches.

A SUMMARY OF THE MINI-THESIS

This thesis is a historical-theological inquiry into the unification process of the family of the Dutch Reformed Churches, namely the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa (DRCA), the Dutch Reformed Mission Church (DRMC) and the Reformed Church in Africa (RCA), and the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC). The historical background of the relationship of the whole family of the DR Churches is discussed, as well as the theological and political dynamics underlying the ideology of separate churches.

The role of the DRC in establishing separate churches on ethnic and racial lines is discussed. Further, the unification process is situated within a theological and political framework in order to demonstrate that the unification process is not separated from the political framework of our day.

Chapter one deals with the historical background of the relationship within the family of the DR Churches. It examines the constitutions of the "Daughter" churches and compare these with the Church Order of Emden. This chapter also deals with the structure of relationships as determined by the DRC on congregational, presbytery and synodical levels. It also focuses on the foundation and growth of the three "Daughter" churches born out of the mission work of the DRC. It further discusses the mission policy of the DRC and its practice. The relationship between the church and state is also discussed.

Chapter two deals with the growing consciousness within the "Daughter" churches, and especially within the DRCA and the DRMC. Events that led to the emergence of this theological and political consciousness are discussed. These events were the Cottesloe Consultation, the establishment of the Christian Institute; the establishment of the Broederkring which later changed its name to Belydendekring and the influence of ministers who studied overseas. The role played by the Federal Council of the DRC to maintain apartheid, the decision of the DRCA and the DRMC to unite the family of the DR Churches and the support of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches against apartheid are discussed.

Chapter three focuses on the discussions that were held between the DRC as the "mother" church and her "Daughter" churches. It also deals with the models for unification of these churches and the role played by the Dialogue Commission for Church Unity. This chapter

closes with a church order problem within the DRCA that prevented the unification of the DRCA and the DRMC in 1990.

Chapter four focuses on the theological and political dimensions of the unified church, namely the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa. On the inauguration of the new church the charter of the Church Amalgamation was read and signed by both churches. The report of the Dialogue Commission for Unity which emphasises church unity, reconciliation and justice, the Church Order and the origin, approval and the theological and political significance of the Confession of Belhar is discussed.

In conclusion chapter five gives an overview of the relationship amongst the family of the DR Churches. This study wants to show that the unification process is possible, but its full materialisation will take time.

OPSOMMING VAN MINI-THESIS

Hierdie tesis is 'n histories-teologiese ondersoek na die proses van eenwording van die familie van die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerke, naamlik, die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk in Afrika (NGKA), die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Sendingkerk (NGSK) en die Reformed Church in Africa (RCA) en die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk (NGK). Die historiese agtergrond van die verhoudinge tussen die hele familie van die NGK word bespreek, sowel as die teologiese en politieke dinamika wat die ideologie van aparte kerke begrond. Die rol van die wit NGK in die ontstaan van aparte kerke op etniese en rassegronde word bespreek. Verder word die eenheidsproses binne 'n teologiese en politieke raamwerk geplaas om te demonstreer dat die eenheidsproses nie buite die politieke raamwerk van ons tyd is nie.

Hoofstuk een behandel die historiese agtergrond van die verhouding binne die familie van die NG Kerke. Dit ondersoek die grondwette van die "dogterkerke" en vergelyk hulle met die Kerkorde van Emden. Hierdie hoofstuk behandel verder die struktuur van die verhoudinge tussen die gemeente, ring en sinode soos deur die NGK bepaal. Dit fokus ook op die stigting en die groei van die drie "dogterkerke" wat gebore is uit die sendingwerk van die NGK. Verder word die sendingbeleid van die NGK en die praktyk daarvan bespreek. Die verhouding tussen die kerk en die staat word ook behandel.

Hoofstuk twee behandel die groeiende bewuswording binne die "dogterkerke" en veral binne die NGKA en die NGSK. Die gebeurtenisse wat gelei het tot die opkoms van hierdie teologiese en politieke bewustheid word bespreek. Hierdie gebeurtenisse was die Cottesloe Konsultasie, die stigting van die Christelike Instituut, en die Broederkring wat later sy naam verander het na die Belydendekring, asook die invloed van sekere leraars wat oorsee studeer het. Die rol wat die Federale Raad van die NGK gespeel het tot die behoud van apartheid word bespreek. Verder word die besluite van die NGKA en die NGSK om die familie van die NG Kerke te verenig en die ondersteuning van die Wêreldbond van Gereformeerde Kerke teen apartheid ook behandel.

Hoofstuk drie fokus op die besprekings wat gehou was tussen die NGK as "moederkerk" en haar "dogterkerke". Die modelle vir die eenwording van hierdie kerke en die rol wat die Gesprekskommissie vir Kerkeenheid gespeel het, word ook gestel. Hierdie hoofstuk sluit

af met die kerkregtelike probleem wat ontstaan het binne die NGKA wat die eenheid van die NGKA en die NGSK in 1990 verhinder het.

Hoofstuk vier fokus op die teologiese- en politieke dimensies van die verenigde kerk, naamlik die Verenigende Gereformeerde Kerk in Suider-Afrika. Tydens die stigtingsvergadering is die stigtingsakte van kerkvereniging voorgelees en deur die voormalige twee kerke geteken. Die verslag van die Gesprekskommissie vir Eenheid wat kerkeenheid, versoening en geregtigheid beklemtoon, die Kerkorde en die ontstaan, goedkeuring en die teologiese en politieke betekenis van die Belydenis van Belhar is bespreek.

Ten slotte bied hoofstuk vyf 'n slotsom van die verhoudinge tussen die familie van die NG Kerke. In konklusie wil hierdie studie wys dat die eenheidsproses moontlik is, maar dat dit sal tyd neem voordat dit ten volle realiseer.

KEY WORDS

1. Church
2. Reformed
3. Confession
4. Mission
5. Relationship
6. Belhar
7. Church Order
8. Unity
9. Reconciliation
10. Justice

APPENDIX A

THE COTTESLOE CONSULTATION, 1961

THE COTTESLOE CONSULTATION STATEMENT, 1961

I

We have met as delegates from the member churches in South Africa of the World Council of Churches, together with representatives of the World Council itself, to seek under the guidance of the Holy Spirit to understand the complex problems of human relationships in this country, and to consult with one another on our common task and responsibility in the light of the Word of God. Our worship, Bible study, discussion and personal contacts have led us to a heightened appreciation of one another's convictions and actions. Our next task will be to report to our several Churches, realizing that the ultimate significance of our meeting will consist in the witness and decisions of the Churches themselves in consequence of these consultations.

The general theme of our seven days together has been the Christian attitude towards race relations. We are united in rejecting all unjust discrimination. Nevertheless, widely divergent convictions have been expressed on the basic issues of apartheid. They range on the one hand from the judgment that it is unacceptable in principle, contrary to the Christian calling and unworkable in practice, to the conviction on the other hand that a policy of differentiation can be defended from the Christian point of view; that it provides the only realistic solution to the problems of race relations and is therefore in the best interests of the various population groups.

Although proceeding from these divergent views, we are nevertheless able to make the following affirmations concerning human need and justice, as they affect relations among the races of this country. In the nature of the case the agreements here recorded do not—and we do not pretend that they do—represent in full the convictions of the member Churches.

The Church of Jesus Christ, by its nature and calling, is deeply concerned with the welfare of all people, both as individuals and as members of social groups. It is called to minister to human need in whatever circumstances and forms it appears, and to insist that all be done with justice. In its social witness the Church must take cognizance of all attitudes, forces, policies and laws which affect the life of a people; but the Church must proclaim that the final criterion of all social and political action is the principles of Scripture regarding the realization of all men of a life worthy of their God-given vocation.

We make bold therefore to address this appeal to our Churches and to all Christians, calling on them to consider every point where they may unite their ministry on behalf of human beings in the spirit of equity.

II

1. We recognize that all racial groups who permanently inhabit our country are a part of our total population, and we regard them as indigenous. Members of all these groups have an equal right to make their contribution towards the enrichment of the life of their country and to share in the ensuing responsibilities, rewards and privileges.

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

3. The Church has a duty to bear witness to the hope which is in Christianity both to white South Africans in their uncertainty and to non-white South Africans in their frustration.

4. In a period of rapid social change the Church has a special responsibility for fearless witness within society.

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

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

7. We regard with deep concern the revival in many areas of African society of heathen tribal customs incompatible with Christian beliefs and practice. We believe this reaction is partly the result of a deep sense of frustration and a loss of faith in Western civilization.

8. The whole Church must participate in the tremendous missionary task which has to be done in South Africa, and which demands a common strategy.

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

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

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

12. It is now widely recognized that the wages received by the vast majority of the non-white people oblige them to exist well below the generally accepted

minimum standard for healthy living. Concerted action is required to remedy this grave situation.

13. The present system of job reservation must give way to a more equitable system of labour which safeguards the interests of all concerned.

14. Opportunities must be provided for the inhabitants of the Bantu races to live in conformity with human dignity.

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

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

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

APPENDIX B

DIVINE OR CIVIL OBEDIENCE, 1973

THE CHRISTIAN INSTITUTE ON TRIAL
 DIVINE OR CIVIL OBEDIENCE, 1973

THE RIGHT AND THE DUTY TO RESIST UNCHRISTIAN
 GOVERNMENTAL AUTHORITY IN THE NAME OF CHRIST

The believer in Christ not only has the right, but the responsibility to hearken to the Word of God and his righteousness rather than to the Government, should the Government deviate from God's will. Does not the responsibility lie with the Christian not to co-operate with the Government in a matter which is in conflict with the Gospel? By doing so is he not witnessing to Christ and his righteousness?

Civil disobedience is an act of protest by the Christian on the grounds of Christian conscience. It is only permissible when authority expects of him an un-Christian deed and pleas for a return to observance of the Gospel have not availed. 'The right of passive resistance can only be applied if it becomes apparent that no other method can overcome the emergency situation and restore righteousness' (*Die Stryd om die Ordes*, Prof. H. G. Stoker, p. 243). The State and its Commissions do have authority over the citizens, but in a moral sense the individual has a personal right towards the State for inasmuch as the citizen is part of the structure of the State, he is subject to the authority of the State; as a person before God even within the structures of the State he is, however, totally subject to God. 'In the last instance the Christian may not be bound by the State's authority because it is not the final dominion of God and therefore belongs to the being of the historical world which passes' (*Glaube in politischen Entscheidung*, Dr A. Rich, p. 161). Man never belongs totally to the State. He cannot be degraded into being a pawn of the State; the State exists for the benefit of man, not man for the benefit of the State.

Is it possible that the powers granted to this Commission by the Government and the results flowing from it reveal a totalitarian tendency? A totalitarian State usually wants complete control over its subjects. 'Its conflict with the Church is therefore not a coincidence, but is inevitable for as long as the Church remains a Church which knows the absolute necessity of its inner independence. Such a State can tolerate the inner independence of the Church even less than its outward independence, because it wants to control the soul of man. It is the soul that it wishes to control and shape after its own image' (*Gerechtigkeit*, Prof. E. Brunner, p. 216).

It must be remembered that the most important matter for the citizens of a democratic state is not blind *obedience* and servile *submissiveness* to the Government, but joint responsibility for the concerns of State in the sight of God. 'Democracy strives to curtail the freedom of the individual as little as possible

[Source: International Commission of Jurists, *The Trial of Beyers Naudé* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1975).]

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but that freedom must result in maintaining the joint responsibility' (Wessler, *op. cit.*, p. 142). Cf. also Wolfgang Trillhaas: 'Accordingly obedience is no longer the predominant problem of the citizen. Much more is it the responsibility (or the joint responsibility) for the success of the State in the political life' (*Ethik*, Wolfgang Trillhaas, p. 373).

It must also be remembered what Reinhold Niebuhr said about the Christian motivation of democracy, namely, that human strivings towards justice make democracy possible, but the human inclination towards injustice makes democracy essential.

It may be that this type of action on the part of the Government reveals tendencies towards fascism, and such a Government then no longer serves but dominates. In such a situation the tendency is to govern by means of arbitrary power and to control by force. Government becomes primarily a power structure. If such a Government continues in this headlong way, the logical outcome is that it becomes idolatrous because everything has to flow out of, through and towards the National State (cf. Revelation 13). The Government's task is not to create arbitrary law. Its task is to reduce to writing in the form of legislation the substantive will of God as revealed in the Gospel. A Government with fascist leanings, however, creates its own justice which it enforces by way of penal sanctions. Anything opposed to the will or policy of such a Government is then regarded as subversive or as dangerous to the State. Freedom is regarded as a concession from the Government and not the normal way of life. In this the Government as well as the Commission will have to answer to God in regard to the bannings and also in regard to punishment which may possibly follow for those who refuse on grounds of conscience to testify before the Commission.

The power of a State such as this is not only territorial and military but also moral. As a result everything has to be subjected to the authoritarian, co-operative State—nothing is outside its power and authority and it determines the norms, even in relation to conscience. As a result a person may be led to violate his conscience, make it conformable and sacrifice it to the State. 'The more sensitive such a conscience is and the more receptive to the will of God, the more dangerous it is to offer it in sacrifice. He who is more obedient to man than to God against his better judgment and his conscience, destroys the integrity of his being, his unity within himself, and sooner or later he falls victim to schizophrenia' (*Freiheit und Bindung des Christen in der Politik*, T. Ellwyn, p. 27).

In this kind of State the real issue at stake is not whether the Government is right or wrong, good or bad, but whether the order, the policy and the will of the State, fails or succeeds.

If the present Government, as shown incidentally by the appointment of this Commission, reveals the above-mentioned traits, should it not be called back to the Gospel of Christ? If we too are guilty, the same applies to us. If such a call is ineffectual . . . it becomes a matter of a clash between religious belief and Government, a clash in which man should be obedient to God rather than to the person in authority . . . (Prof. H. G. Stoker, *op. cit.*, p. 213). The believer can, however, only act outside the law and refuse to co-operate if he acts according to God's will which is being violated by authority. 'Without justification nobody

should claim the "right" to offer resistance against the authorities. This justification should, in my opinion, include the responsibility of resistance and must be included with the "Higher Authority" in whose name you are acting' (*Ethik*, Wolfgang Trillhaas, p. 373).

When reading Romans 13:1, 'Let every person be subject to the governing authorities . . .', it must be remembered that the Government does not have authority and power just because it is the Government as such, but because it is 'God's servant' (verse 4). 'The problem about the right to resist . . . is in fact contained in Romans 13. We ought to consider whether the term "God's servant" does not include the right to resist when the authorities exceed their God-given mandate and turn away from the clearly articulated commandments of God' (W. Schulze, quoted in *Politik zwischen Dämon und Gott*, Dr W. Kunneth, p. 301). Authority is only legitimate when it does not act contrary to God's will.

The same thought was expressed in the 1973 *Studies of the Christian Institute* as follows: ' . . . the concept of the Government of a country as a creation and system of God in itself, is false and a Government is always subject to the righteousness of the Gospel. "It is exegetically no longer possible to base obedience to Governments on some peculiar character in them" (H. W. Bartsch).

'1 Peter 2:13, "Be submitted to every human ordinance because of the Lord," must be correctly translated as "Be subject to everyone (every human creature) for the Lord's sake"' (H. W. Bartsch).

The words in Romans 13: "The Government is ordained by God" and "they are servants (ministers) of God" do not refer to a peculiar commission or dignity of the Government but to what it in fact is, whether it accepts Romans 13 or not. God did not give special commission to the Government as such. The trend, therefore, is to *debunk the false concept of Governments'* (*Poverty in Abundance or Abundance in Poverty?*, Roelf Meyer, p. 13).

Where such deviation from the Gospel occurs, it is therefore not only the right of the Christian to resist authority, but his duty to offer passive resistance in obedience to the Gospel, even if in so doing he has to disobey the Government. If a Government violates the Gospel, it loses its authority to be obeyed in its office as ruler. 'The Government loses its essential office because of its contradictory attitude towards God' (W. Kunneth, *op. cit.*, p. 294). And: 'As an extension of these thoughts the right, even the duty can be imposed on the subject to resist the tyrant who commits an act of violence against a private person by the misuse of his office' (W. Kunneth, *op. cit.*, p. 295).

Therefore one can only speak of Government and its authority ' . . . as long as it is said that it possesses the intention and the capability to accept responsibility for justice and righteousness. If this governmental function is distorted, however, then that Government has dissolved itself, its authority is no longer from God, and it is plainly in conflict with God. As a result of this, according to Romans 13, the Christian is no longer required to be obedient to the guilty (Government), but to a much greater extent obliged to resist such a Government which has degenerated' (W. Kunneth, *op. cit.*, p. 301).

The Calvinist John Knox also advocates the same idea. In his ' . . . conversations with Queen Mary he had declared not only the right of the nobility to

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resist in defence of the people but the right of the subject to disobey where the ruler contravenes the law of God' (*Calvinism and the Political Order*, G. L. Hunt, p. 14). Calvin championed this same truth in vigorous language: 'Because earthly princes forfeit all their power when they revolt against God . . . We should resist them rather than obey . . .' (*Lecture XIII*).

The authority of the Government and State as such is not rejected in general by these ideas but maintained, because it is still *de facto* the Government, even if it deviates in essential points from the Gospel and then it has to be resisted. 'Even a distorted governmental system still retains the remnants and elements of the stable order of God' (W. Kunneth, *op. cit.*, p. 302).

A step such as this of disobeying the Government, must be taken on grounds of Christian conscience. The Christian's conscience is that God-given ability to distinguish between right and wrong according to the criterion of the Gospel, which inwardly compels him to follow the right course. ' . . . Conscience also has the remarkable result that it can suddenly initiate resistance against the Government; an inner distress can also make itself felt when he allows the Government to force him to commit acts which he knows to be wrong.' Paul experiences a similar distress in Romans 9:1, 2 (*Christelijke Encyclopedie*, Deel III, Prof. H. Schippers, p. 218). Conscience is the inner will that urges one to respond to the conscious norms, and the Christian conscience is bound up with the Gospel.

When the Government deviates from the Gospel, the Christian is bound by his conscience to resist it. Even if this results in breaking the law, it has to be done because God's will must be maintained above the law of man (Acts 4). The Government is God's servant and this means that it cannot arbitrarily place itself above the rule of law without impinging on the highest authority. If it does it, it becomes the evil-doer. (Romans 13) which must be resisted in obedience to God.

CHRISTIANS MAY IN PRAYERFUL ANTICIPATION HOPE

Christians may in prayerful anticipation hope that a Government which does not conform to the Gospel with regard to a particular matter may be brought to 're-think' its attitude. They hope for even more; namely, that God's righteousness may become the criterion in every facet of their lives, and particularly in their political life in South Africa. For this they work and pray.

If, however, the Government persecutes a Christian who finds it impossible to co-operate when departure from the Gospel occurs, the pertinent question must be asked: What is the crime against Christ for which he has to be punished? For this the Government would have to supply an answer to God and to South Africa. The Government, already persecuting and punishing people in an un-Christian manner, must remember that when Saul persecuted some believers, Christ asked him: 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute Me?' (Acts 9:4). Is it not the duty of a Christian in such a situation constantly and in deep humility to call his fellow men to the same obedience in the light of the Gospel? And should a Christian not appeal to the Government in terms of the Gospel to turn away from its wrong course? 'Repent . . . even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees;

every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire' (Matthew 3).

In conclusion we wish to repeat that we have nothing to hide and that, if an inquiry is necessary (which we do not believe), we are willing to give evidence before a public, impartial, judicial tribunal and to co-operate. We do not wish to make ourselves heroes or martyrs as the Afrikaans press has implied; to us it is not a matter of martyrdom or heroism but a matter of obedience to Christ, the highest authority.

Through the Grace of God, we only want to remain obedient to Christ, the Word of God, because:

Verbum Dei manet in aeternum.

Signed: *Theo Kotzé, Roelf Meyer, Beyers Naudé.*

APPENDIX C

**REPORT BY BROEDERKRING EXECUTIVE,
THE ONSLAUGHT AGAINST US,
3 MARCH 1981**

ANNEXURE S

Report by Broederkring executive, The onslaught against us, March 3, 1981.

Introduction

During the first few months of 1980 the Broederkring found itself in the midst of a storm in the church. The anger of white leaders in the NGK and NGSK was apparently caused by a series of meetings of the executive of the Broederkring had with churches in Switzerland, Germany and Holland; but this is only partly true. The real reason for their anger lies much deeper: there was bitter dissatisfaction and frustration about a Broederkring which received money from overseas churches, which undertook its own projects, which made statements in the press, and which is seen by many here and overseas as the 'authentic' voice of the black NG churches in South Africa.

It is important to note that there are no differences in principle between the Broederkring and the three black churches on the issues for which the Broederkring stands. There is unanimity on matters such as the unification of the NGK Churches, condemnation of the policy of apartheid (or separate development) as un-Christian and indefensible in the light of Scripture. There is also full agreement over the struggle for a South Africa in which there will be more justice, equality and freedom for all the inhabitants.

The real point at issue — over which the official bodies of the NGK, the NGSK and the NGKA are upset — is their belief that the Broederkring is acting "beyond its competence" and is giving itself the right "to talk in the name of the church". This subtly-prepared attack, which can be clearly seen, makes it necessary for the Broederkring to discuss the real issues at stake in this memorandum.

1. The problems of the NGKA with the Broederkring

These problems are set out in the report of the Moderature, laid before the General Mission Committee of the NGKA on April 1, 1980. It is important to note that while the names of four members of the Moderature appear on the report, the compilation of this document took place without the knowledge or approval of the three black members of the Moderature. (Add. A). The ASK decided at its meeting of April 1 to refer to the document to the Permanent Study Commission for Scripture and Confession to draw up a report. And far as is known, this report has not yet been completed.

2. The problems of the NGSK with the Broederkring

2.1 In *Die Ligdraer* of February 1, 1980, an editorial article by Ds Dawid Botha, moderator of the NGSK, made a stinging attack on the Broederkring under the headline: "Broederkring and Church" (Add B.).

2.2 Dr A Boesak, as chairman of the Broederkring, answered the false accusation and the faulty suppositions of Ds Dawid Botha on February 25 (Add C).

2.3 On August 28, 1980, Dr Boesak received a letter from Ds L J de Bruijn, as clerk of an Ad Hoc Commission of the NGSK appointed by the ASK to investigate the Broederkring, with a request that Dr Boesak appear before the Commission on September 17, 1980 (Add D). Dr Boesak referred the letter to the executive of the Broederkring, which raised the matter with Ds De Bruijn in a letter dated October 24, 1980 (Add E), to which Ds De Bruijn answered on December 17, 1980 (Add F).

3. Public reaction to the Broederkring

It is particularly noteworthy that first the NGK and then the government, through Minister Louis le Grange, Minister of Police, entered the dispute at exactly this time.

3.1. On February 12, 1980 (11 days after the article by Ds D Botha appeared in *Die Ligdraer*), the *Kerkbode* published a sharply-worded article, full of insinuations, attacking the Broederkring, from which it was clear that the NGK had gone along with Ds Botha and supported him in his criticism of the Broederkring (Add G).

Dr Allan Boesak answered the *Kerkbode* on February 22 1980, but the editor refused to publish this answer. Dr Boesak's reply eventually appeared in *Dinamis* in the first

quarter of 1980 (Add H).

3.2 Attack by Minister Louis le Grange, Minister of Police

On August 12, 1980, Minister Louis le Grange, in his capacity of Minister of Police, made an attack on the Broederkring in a report in the press, in which he made the following points: "Dr Boesak and his friends had taken a strong attitude to civil disobedience and refusal to do national service and had said the church must initiate and support such programmes. They should reconsider their stand." (*Star*, 13/8/80)

We can clearly see how the well-known pattern is developing, as in the case of the Christian Institute, where the white leadership of the NGSK and the NGK prepared the way for the state to go over to the offensive before the final *coup de grace* is administered.

2. Comment on the contents of the attacks

We believe it to be necessary to refute the following theological and factual distortions of these reports and articles. The report of the Moderation of the NGKA covers practically all the points of criticism of the Broederkring which emanate from the NGSK and the NGK as well, and thus our comment will concentrate on answering this particular criticism.

4.1 False and non-Reformed theology in the NGKA report

4.1.1 The Broederkring is propagating "another theology" (1.5.8 and 1.5.12). We do not know where the compilers of the report come to this conclusion. The Broederkring is not propagating a theology of its own. Its theology is that which is reflected and is grounded on the confessional statements of the NG churches, as can be seen in all the statements of the Broederkring.

The members of the Broederkring are seen as so-called radicals. If by "radical" is meant that the Broederkring wants to apply the full implications of the Gospel in church and community, there can be no cause for complaint, because that is merely a recognition that the Broederkring is carrying out the true work of Christ. It is clear that these statements reflect a false, non-Reformed conception of the church. The Broederkring elevates itself to the position of "the true representatives of the church" (1.5.9, 1.5.11, 1.5.12). In the report the Broederkring is accused of exalting itself as the true representative of the church by involving itself in matters which belong to the sphere of the church. It is clear that these statements reflect a false, non-Reformed conception of the church, i.e. that only official executive bodies have the right to speak on behalf of the church since they represent the true church and they alone can proclaim the true voice of the church of Christ. The well-known Reformed truth that individual members and voluntary associations have just as much right to make their opinions known, to give individual or collective witness, to express justified criticism of the official leadership of the church and concern about unhealthy, doubtful and deviationist tendencies, is thereby totally negated or rejected. This charge is further answered in Add I as well as in Add J (1.5.9).

4.1.3 The Broederkring "already sees itself as an association in competition with the church" (1.5.14 cf also Add I). This statement is devoid of all truth. What the Broederkring does aim at on the grounds of its five clearly stated goals is to combat the false influences and the long-standing infiltration of the false theology or apartheid thinking and practice in the NG churches, which is stifling the life of the younger churches, and to exterminate it root and branch (see also Add J 1.5.14)

4.1.4 The Broederkring is accused of acting in an un-Christian and un-Reformed manner, and is causing confusion "which is aimed at sowing division in the church while ostensibly trying to further unity". (1.5.15) The whole aim of the Broederkring is to effect true unity. The problem is that the NGK does not want to support the unity which the Gospel demands. Why should the Broederkring be accused when it wants to realise the resolution of the three younger NG churches? (See further Add J 1.5.15).

4.1.5 This also applies to the false charge that the Broederkring wants to see itself as "the shadow leadership of the church" (1.5.16) which will at some time take over the leadership of the church. The Broederkring makes no secret that it questions the leadership of white missionaries who occupy key positions in the church, and on the grounds of long and painful experience, distrusts such people who, when things come to a crisis point, without exception choose the side of the NGK against the interests of the

younger churches, as grounded in the demands of Scripture. (See further Add J 1.5.16).

4.1.6 The Broederkring "hampers the leading the Holy Spirit" (1.5.17). Here we once again find a seriously mistaken view of the person and of the leading of the Holy Spirit, in that it denies the free working of the Spirit of God, which does not allow itself to be bound or directed by any human action or manipulation. Should the NGKA rather not refer to the numbers of historical instances in which decisions were taken by church meetings, with preliminary calls and claims on the leading of the Holy Spirit, which afterwards were seen as ridiculing of the truth of God's Word and the true essence of the Holy Spirit? (See further Add J 1.5.17).

4.2 Factual distortions in this report

4.2.1 "The Broederkring has no constitution" (1.5.1) The Broederkring has made its goals and basis clear, as set out hereunder:

- To achieve organic church unity on all levels congregational, circuit — and synodal — where unity must find expression in church life.
- To take seriously the prophetic talk of the church with reference to oppressive structures and laws in Southern Africa, as well as pastoral functions towards the victims of the fear-ridden oppressors who are suffering as a result of the unChristian policy and practice of these countries.
- To work for the triumph of the sovereignty of Christ over the ideology of apartheid or separate development or any other ideology so that a worthy human lifestyle may be pursued in Southern Africa.
- To advance evangelical liberation from injustice, de-humanisation, alienation and lovelessness in church and state.
- To support the ecumenical movement and all other organisations inside and outside South Africa which strive to promote the Lordship of Christ over all spheres of life.

In addition, the national conference regulates all organisational and administrative matters. The Broederkring does not believe it necessary to establish a constitution since that is merely an administrative regulation which has nothing to do with the essence of the Broederkring as movement.

4.2.2. The Broederkring is seen as a secret organisation (1.5.7). The names of all the ministers of the three younger churches to whom notices of all meetings (regional as well as national) appear on the address list of the Broederkring. To date every issue of the journal *Dunamis* has been sent free to all these addresses with a request for subscriptions. All regional and national meetings are open, and the activities of the executive are reported at national conference. It is clear that the idea of a secret organisation forms part of those suspicions sown by the *Kerkbode* in its editorial attack on the Broederkring. And what impudence this is coming from an editor who is himself a member of a secret organisation which does not have the courage to make public its convictions and actions in influencing the church!

4.2.3 The Broederkring "has made itself a pressure group within the church in order to force the church to carry out its aims" (1.5.13). The Broederkring denies the charge that it is a pressure group with that aim set out by the NGKA. For not one moment do we deny that we are a movement of a number of ministers and evangelists from all three of the younger NG churches who want to promote their clearly stated aims, as set out in 4.2.1.

It is self-evident that the official leadership of the three NG churches who oppose one or more of their aims or are afraid of promoting them, will reproach the Broederkring with being a pressure group when it takes the lead in saying clearly and openly what it believes on these matters.

The Broederkring is moreover, aware of the long history of ideological and financial bondage of the three younger churches, who are in the grip of the financial pressure and ideological line of the NGK. The Broederkring is seeking and striving to break this diabolical stronghold. The Broederkring can quote numerous examples of the reluctance or unwillingness of church leaders of official positions (especially under the influence or through manipulation of white missionaries of the NGK) to accept resolutions which are in line with the above-mentioned aims, or to water them down, to delay them and even to block them altogether. To name just one outstanding example in connection with the

resolution on church unity: This decision was taken as far back as 1975, but while there has been very little forthcoming from the side of the NGKA moderation the Broederkring was the only organisation which gave practical effect to the unity of brothers in the three churches. It is therefore very understandable that the moderation would see the action of the Broederkring as a threat and would try to oppose it. See further Add J (1.5.13).

4.2.4 The Broederkring and the KBB (1.5.6). It is clear that there is serious confusion about the position of the Broederkring and the existence and actions of the KBB. The facts are:

While the Broederkring draws its membership from all three of the younger churches, the KBB is an "apartheid-organisation" because it includes only ministers and evangelists from the NGKA. All members of the Broederkring who belong to the NGKA are automatically members of the KBB, which means that serious confusion arises about the actions and decisions of the KBB, but the Broederkring can certainly not be held responsible for that. It is high time that the KBB was suspended and disbanded.

4.2.5 The "control" of overseas bursaries by the Broederkring (1.5.10). It is general knowledge that the NGK has over the years attempted to maintain and strengthen its grip on the younger churches, as well as on their theological students, ministers and evangelists by means of the control which it still has over the financial affairs of the churches and of individual students, ministers and evangelists. Many examples can be quoted of the unwillingness and neglect by the NGK to give the leadership of the three younger churches opportunity to study overseas by means of bursaries; where this has happened, the NGK has attempted to determine at what institutions the students will study. The Broederkring sees it as its duty to do all in its power to break this dangerous control over monies, bursaries and study institutions for once and for all. The Broederkring is also the only organization which can represent all three of the churches when applications are made for overseas theological study. It is not true that all students who receive bursaries through the Broederkring are its members, and this is never made a condition for the granting of a bursary.

It must also be clearly stated that the standpoint of overseas churches is that they are not prepared to support any church in South Africa which defends, condones or promotes on an open or subtle basis, the sinful policy of apartheid (or separate development). It is for this reason that the Broederkring has taken on itself the function of deciding on the award of overseas bursaries, and will continue to do so until the deadly grip of apartheid-ideology, the paternalistic attitude of white missionaries, the manipulation of church meetings, executives and decisions is ended once and for all, and all three younger churches, which are at present held captive by this situation, are liberated to fulfil their task and calling as church of Jesus Christ in South Africa. Should the Broederkring for any reason no longer be able to handle the award of bursaries, that would not mean that that function will automatically be handed over to the apartheid churches.

Conclusion:

The executive of the Broederkring wishes to draw attention to the fact that on February 13, 1981, the ASK of the NGKA, made a positive assessment of the Broederkring on the basis of a report submitted by their Commission of Inquiry into the Broederkring. It reads as follows: "There can be no objection to the aims, theological statements and composition of the Broederkring.

"The activities and methods of the Broederkring could not be properly assessed since no meeting with the Broederkring could be arranged. An evaluation on the basis of a thorough enquiry was thus not possible, and your commission did not think it right to express itself without more consideration."

The ASK of NGKS even rejected the recommendation of the commission of inquiry that it be empowered to continue with its investigations. Instead the moderator and assessor were empowered to consult with the Broederkring in order to discuss and to try to clear up points of friction.

On behalf of the executive of the Broederkring.

APPENDIX D

**CHURCH ORDER OF THE UNITING REFORMED
CHURCH IN SOUTHERN AFRICA**

APPENDIX D

**CHURCH ORDER
OF THE
UNITING REFORMED CHURCH
IN SOUTHERN AFRICA**

(The English translation of the Church Order has been noted by the General Synod and is subject to comment and ratification by the next General Synod)

ARTICLE 1

1. THE CHURCH

The Church of Jesus Christ is the community of believers who are called together by the Word of God and by His Holy Spirit. Those who have been called and who form the "Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa" are part of this Church of Christ. Together with all the other churches who confess Christ, this church has been set apart as a nation; as the people of God who belong to Him and who have to proclaim the saving deeds of Him who called them from darkness unto light; as a new creation who lives in the light as He is the light.

ARTICLE 2

2. CONFESSION OF FAITH

- 2.1. The "Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa" believes in the Triune God - Father, Son and Holy Spirit - who revealed Himself in Jesus Christ. This church believes that the Bible is the Word of God and is the full and trustworthy (reliable) witness of this revelation. This Church accepts that at certain times and in accordance with the Word of God creeds came into existence which interpret and state the faith of the Church of Christ.
- 2.2. The Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa accepts the ecumenical creeds viz the Apostles' Creed and the Nicean and Athanasian Creeds, and by virtue of its own origins believes that the Confessio Belgica (Netherlands Confession of Faith), the Heidelberg Catechism and the Canons of Dordt, as handed down in history, give pure expression to her faith. It furthermore accepts the Confession of Belhart (1986), as demanded of her in the Southern African situation.
- 2.3. The Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa accepts that it has not completed its task of confession of faith. Changed circumstances and a better understanding of the Word of God in the future may lead to the acceptance of further articles of faith, or the revision of existing articles of faith.

ARTICLE 3**3. MEMBERSHIP OF THE CHURCH**

- 3.1 Belief in Jesus Christ is the only condition for membership of the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa.
- 3.2 People who wish to join this Church do so by publicly professing faith before the congregation and in the case of members from other recognised reformed churches by means of a membership certificate.
- 3.3 Baptised children of communicants (practising members) belong to the Church by virtue of the covenant of grace. Such members will affirm their membership of the church by professing faith before the congregation.

ARTICLE 4**4. RESPONSIBILITY OF THE CONGREGATION**

- 4.1 The congregation forms a community of believers in a particular place to serve God, each other and the world.
- 4.2 Service of God has a bearing on the whole life of the congregation and therefore includes service to each other and to the world. The nucleus or the core of the service of God is to be found in the coming together of the congregation round the Word of God and the sacraments. There God is worshipped and praised, His Word is listened to, sacraments are received, and all need are brought to God in order to strengthen the believers in their faith and to prepare them for their service to each other and the world.
- 4.3 The believers accept mutual responsibility for each other in their spiritual and physical needs. The congregation lives as family of God in which all are inextricably bound to each other and share each others' joy and sorrow. Each considers the other as higher than himself and no one only cares about his own needs, but also about the needs of others. In this way they share each other's burdens and carry out the law of Christ.
- 4.4 The congregation's service to humankind and the world consist in proclaiming God's reconciling and liberating acts in and for the world; living out the love of Christ in the world; calling humankind to reconciliation with God and reconciliation and peace amongst each other; imitating God, who in a particular way is the God of the suffering, the poor and those who are wronged (victimised), by supporting people in any form of suffering and need, and by witnessing and fighting against any form of injustice; by calling upon the government and the authorities to serve all the inhabitants of the country by allowing justice to prevail and fighting against injustice; by witnessing against all rulers and those who are privileged who seek their own interest out of selfishness and have power over other and injure (wrong) them.

ARTICLE 5**5. SERVICES IN THE CONGREGATION**

With a view to the congregation's service to God, mutual service and service to the world the congregation shall maintain certain services and shall take into consideration the variety of gifts in seeing to it that the whole congregation is involved. Each congregation shall take its own circumstances into account in determining the nature and scope of these services. However the following universal services shall exist:

- 5.1 **Worship:** The congregation shall come together publicly as a community to meet with God and with each other to hear the Word of God, to celebrate the sacraments of baptism and the Eucharist, to pray, to sing and to bring offerings as determined by each congregation. Each shall take into consideration the way this is done in other Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa so that at all times believers from congregations shall retain the freedom to worship with each other.
- 5.2 **Instruction:** In addition to instruction by the Word at the service of worship, baptised members and other persons who wish to make a public profession of faith shall be instructed in the Word of God and the teaching (doctrine) of the Church. There shall also be ongoing instruction of all practising members in a ways determined by each congregation in its own circumstances.
- 5.3 **Care:** There shall be mutual and communal caring for each other, both spiritually and physically.
- 5.4 **Witnessing:** Witnessing shall give expression in an organised way to the congregation's responsibility to proclaim the Gospel to the world and to the society in which it lives.
- 5.5 **Service:** The congregation shall serve all the suffering and needy with who they come into contact.

ARTICLE 6**6. OFFICES IN THE CONGREGATION**

- 6.1 In order to render the congregation's service more effective, members may be elected - by virtue of spiritual gifts (charismata) and Gods calling thereto - to serve in one or more of the congregation's services.
- 6.2 Such members shall officially take charge in the services for which they have been selected. The offices of teaching and managing elder and of deacon may be used for these purposes. The particular circumstances of a congregation or congregations should always be borne in mind in developing other offices.

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- 6.3 Although the office of teaching elder or minister of the Word is based on service in the community of believers and these persons are elected for this task by the congregation itself, this office has requirements which necessitate special preparation and training. The preparation and training are the responsibility of all the congregations since the service of a minister of the Word is not restricted to the congregation which elected him/her but may also be used in other congregations who call him/her.
- 6.4 Because office bearers perform a service in and to the congregation, the congregation shall decide who will fill the offices.

ARTICLE 7

7. MANAGEMENT OF THE CONGREGATION

Jesus Christ rules His Church through His Word and the Holy Spirit. The office of believers forms the basis of all other offices in the church. For this reason the congregation itself elects a church council consisting of deacons and elders from among its practising members. The church council is entrusted with the management (running), supervision and discipline of the congregation and the leadership in the various ministries in the congregation.

The church council

- 7.1 deals with all matters pertaining to worship, instruction, joint (communal) care, witnessing and service in the community;
- 7.2 disciplines members of the congregation with the exception of elected office bearers;
- 7.3 lays down procedures and rule for activities entrusted to it.
- 7.4 may, if desired, call a meeting of the congregation as a whole in a way decided by each congregation.

ARTICLE 8

8. THE LINK BETWEEN CONGREGATIONS

As an expression of the unity of the church, congregations come, by means of representatives, together in church meetings by virtue of Christ's command to serve each other. The purpose of these meetings is joint consultation on matters that affect all congregations. These meetings form a visible link between congregations. Two types to such meetings may be distinguished: the Presbytery and the Synod. Depending on circumstances, the Synod may have a broad or a narrow membership. In

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the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa there will be a General synod and Regional synods.

ARTICLE 9**9. THE PRESBYTERY**

Representatives of congregations shall meet as Presbytery at times and in a manner as decided by the regional synod. This meeting shall:

- 9.1 deliberate on joint action with regard to the responsibility of the congregations towards each other and towards the community and society in which the congregations find themselves;
- 9.2 deliberate on ways in which the congregations may be prepared and equipped spiritually and materially for joint service;
- 9.3 report on how the congregations have carried out their responsibilities;
- 9.4 deal with disciplinary matters regarding Ministers of the Word and the elected offices;
- 9.5 the founding and dissolution of congregations and the determination of the boundaries of congregations;
- 9.6 deal with matters of the calling and retirement of ministers of the Word;
- 9.7 lay down procedures and rules for the activities entrusted to it.
- 9.8 Regional synod shall determine the boundaries of the Presbytery.

ARTICLE 10**10. THE REGIONAL SYNOD**

The representatives of congregations shall meet as Regional synod at times and in a manner decided by the Regional synod. This meetings shall

- 10.1 deliberate on joint action by the congregations with regard to the activities that cannot be dealt with by the Presbytery;
- 10.2 decide on disciplinary matters and appeals;
- 10.3 give attention to the particular needs of congregations that cannot be handled by the Presbytery;

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- 10.4 lay down procedures and rules for the activities entrusted to it;
- 10.5 undertake other matters that are referred to it by the Presbyteries.
- 10.6 The general synod shall, on submission of involved regional synods, determine the boundaries of the regional synod.

ARTICLE 11**11. THE GENERAL SYNOD**

Representatives of regional synods, consisting of the four members of the Moderamen of each regional synod and one minister of the Word and one church council member from every presbytery within the boundaries of each regional synod, shall meet as General synod at times and in a manner decided by the General synod. This meeting shall deal with all matters pertaining to

- 11.1 The doctrinal standards of the church, on condition that any change to the doctrinal standards of the church can only be made after two-thirds of all the congregations have decided in favour thereof;
- 11.2 the church order, on condition that any change or addition thereto can only be made after two-thirds of the Regional synods have approved the change and the General synod has decided in favour thereof with a two-thirds majority
- 11.3 the formularies to be used in worship
- 11.4 training of ministers of the Word;
- 11.5 ecumenical relations with other Christian churches within or outside the area represented by the General synod;
- 11.6 the church's service to and involvement in the world and society;
- 11.7 procedures and rules for activities entrusted to it;
- 11.8 matters referred to it by regional synods;
- 11.9 in the matter of disciplinary action related to doctrinal matters adjudicate on appeals brought before it;
- 11.10 actively execute the Biblical instruction on Church Unity by involvement in and the initiation of church unity processes with other churches of the reformed confession.
- 11.11 The Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa is, in terms of its Constitution, a body corporate. Its legal person exists in the church meetings namely the church

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council, presbytery, regional synod and general synod each being the legal owner of its property and funds and having the right to act in civil law.

ARTICLE 12

12. THE CHURCH'S RELATIONSHIPS

- 12.1 The Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa is part of a society in which, as an institution among other institutions and social structures such as the state, the school, industry and others, it lives and works. In so far as the legal order that is in force in society does not conflict with the Word of God, the Church lives in agreement with it.
- 12.2 At the same time the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa demands that her inalienable right to freedom in exercise of her ministry and worship and the organisation of her institution by virtue of her own profession shall be recognised by the authorities.
- 12.3 The Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa sees it as her kingly task to be and set an example to humankind and society in obedient application of the demands of God's Word in regard to love of neighbour, the exercise of justice and realisation of reconciliation, and the pursuit of true peace in her own life. This Church sees it as her prophetic task to proclaim these demands of God's Word as they have a bearing on society as a whole and on individual institutions, particular the state without respect for persons. This Church sees it as her task to pray and intercede for the government and society and to intervene on behalf of the suffering, the poor, the wronged and the oppressed within this society, amongst others by way of organised service.
- 12.4 The Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa moreover has a special relationship with all other ecclesiastic institutions in society. This Church wishes to exercise communion with all these churches in so far as this is possible within the boundaries of the ecumenical confessions. In exercising this communion, which will take place at congregation, presbytery and synod level, the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa is striving towards the full revelation of the unity of the Church of Christ so that, in Jesus' words, "the world shall know that You have sent me and love them just as You love Me" (John 17:23).

APPENDIX E

THE BELHAR CONFSSION, 1986

The Belhar Confession, 1986

This is a translation of the original Afrikaans text of the Confession as it was adopted by the Synod of the Dutch Reformed Mission Church in SA in 1986. This followed the declaration of a status confessionis in 1982, in connection with the rejection of the defence of apartheid on moral and theological grounds.

1. We believe in the triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, who gathers, protects and cares for his Church by his Word and his Spirit, as He has done since the beginning of the world and will do to the end.
2. We believe in one holy, universal Christian Church, the communion of saints called from the entire human family.

We believe

that Christ's work of reconciliation is made manifest in the Church as the community of believers who have been reconciled with God and with one another;

Eph 2:11-22

that unity is, therefore, both a gift and an obligation for the Church of Jesus Christ; that through the working of God's Spirit it is a binding force, yet simultaneously a reality which must be earnestly pursued and sought: one which the people of God must continually be built up to attain;

Eph 4:1-16

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

Joh 17:20, 23

that this unity of the people of God must be manifested and be active in a variety of ways: in that we love one another; that we experience, practice and pursue community with one another; that we are obligated to

Phil 2:1-5

Cor 12:4-31

Joh 13:1-17

give ourselves willingly and joyfully to be of benefit and blessing to one another; that we share one faith, have one calling, are of one soul and one mind; have one God and Father, are filled with one Spirit, are baptised with one baptism, eat of one bread and drink of one cup, confess one Name, are obedient to one Lord, work for one cause, and share one hope; together come to know the height and the breadth and the depth of the love of Christ; together are built up to the stature of Christ, to the new humanity; together know and bear one another's burdens, thereby fulfilling the law of Christ that we need one another and upbuild one another, admonishing and comforting one another; that we suffer with one another for the sake of righteousness; pray together; together serve God in this world; and together fight against all which may threaten or hinder this unity;

that this unity can be established only in freedom and not under constraint; that the variety of spiritual gifts, opportunities, backgrounds, convictions, as well as the various languages and cultures, are by virtue of the reconciliation in Christ, opportunities for mutual service and enrichment within the one visible people of God;

that true faith in Jesus Christ is the only condition for membership of this Church;

Therefore, we reject any doctrine

people in such a way that this absolutisation hinders or breaks the visible and active unity of the church, or even leads to the establishment of a separate church formation;

which professes that this spiritual unity is truly being maintained in the bond of peace whilst believers of the same confession are in effect alienated from one another for the sake of diversity and in despair of reconciliation;

1 Cor 1:10-13

Eph 4:1-6

Eph 3:14:20

1 Cor 10:16-17

1 Cor 11:17-34

Gal 6:2

2 Cor 1:3-4

Rom 12:3-8

1 Cor 12:1-11

Eph 4:7 13

Gal 3:27-28

Jas 2:1-13

which denies that a refusal earnestly to pursue this visible unity as a priceless gift is sin;

which explicitly or implicitly maintains that descent or any other human or social factor should be a consideration in determining membership of the Church.

3. **We believe that God has entrusted to his Church the message of reconciliation in and through Jesus Christ; that the Church is called to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world that the Church is called blessed because it is a peacemaker, that the Church is witness both by word and by deed to the new heaven and the new earth in which righteousness dwells.**

2 Cor 5:17-21

Mt 6:13-16

Mt 5:9

2 Pet 3:13

Rev 21-22

That God by his lifegiving Word and Spirit has conquered the powers of sin and death, and therefore also of irreconciliation and hatred, bitterness and enmity that God, by his lifegiving Word and Spirit will enable His people to live in a new obedience which can open new possibilities of life for society and the world;

Eph 4:17; 6:23

Rom 6

Col 1:9-14

Col 2:13-19

Col 3:1;4:6

that the credibility of this message is seriously affected and its beneficial work obstructed when it is proclaimed in a land which professes to be Christian, but in which the enforced separation of people on a racial basis promotes and perpetuates alienation, hatred and enmity;

that any teaching which attempts to legitimate such forced separation by appeal to the gospel, and is not prepared to venture on the road of obedience and reconciliation, but rather, out of prejudice, fear, selfishness and unbelief, denies in advance the reconciling power of the gospel, must be considered ideology and false doctrine.

Therefore, we reject any doctrine which, in such a situation

sanctions in the name of the gospel or of the will of God the forced separation of people on the grounds of race and colour and thereby in advance obstructs and weakens the ministry and experience of reconciliation in Christ.

4. **We believe that God has revealed himself as the One who wishes to bring about justice and true peace among men; that in a world full of injustice and enmity He is in a special way the God of the destitute, the poor and the wronged and that He calls his Church to follow Him in this; that He brings justice to the oppressed and gives bread to the hungry; that He frees the prisoner and restores sight to the blind; that He supports the downtrodden, protects the stranger, helps orphans and widows and blocks the path of the ungodly; that for Him pure and undefiled religion is to visit the orphans and the widows in their suffering; that He wishes to teach His people to do what is good and to seek the right;**

Dt 32:4; Lk 2:14
 Jn 14:27
 Eph 2:14
 Is 1:16-17
 Jas 1:27; Jas 5:1-6
 Lk 1:46-55
 Lk 6:20-26
 Lk 7:22
 Lk 16:19-31
 Ps 146
 Lk 4:16-19
 Rom 6:13-18
 Am 5

That the Church must therefore stand by people in any form of suffering and need, which implies, among other things, that the Church must witness against and strive against any form of injustice, so that justice may roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream;

That the Church as the possession of God must stand where He stands, namely against injustice and with the wronged; that in following Christ the Church must witness against all the powerful and privileged who selfishly seek their own interests and thus control and harm others.

Therefore, we reject any ideology which would legitimate forms of injustice and any doctrine which is unwilling to resist such an ideology in the name of the gospel.

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| 5. We believe that, in obedience to Jesus Christ, its only Head, the Church is called to confess and to do all these things, even though the authorities and human laws might forbid them and punishment and suffering be the consequence. | Eph 4:15-16
Acts 5:29-33
1 Pet 2:18-25
1 Pet 3:15-18 |
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Jesus is Lord.

To the one and only God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be the honour and the glory for ever and ever

Accompanying Letter

1. We are deeply conscious that moments of such seriousness can arise in the life of the Church that it may feel the need to confess its faith anew in the light of a specific situation. We are aware that such an act of confession is not lightly undertaken, but only if it is considered that the heart of the gospel is so threatened as to be at stake. In our judgement, the present church and political situation in our country and particularly within the Dutch Reformed Church family calls for such a decision. Accordingly, we make this confession not as a contribution to a theological debate nor as a new summary of our beliefs, but as a cry from the heart, as something we are obliged to do for the sake of the gospel in view of the times in which we stand. Along with many, we confess our guilt, in that we have not always witnessed clearly enough in our situation and so are jointly responsible for the way in which those things which were experienced as sin and confessed to be so or should have been experienced as and confessed to be sin have grown in time to seem self-evidently right and to be ideologies foreign to the scriptures. As a result many have been given the impression that the gospel was not really at stake. We make this confession because we are convinced that all sorts of theological arguments have contributed to so disproportionate an emphasis on some aspects of the truth that it has in effect become a lie.
2. We are aware that the only authority for such a confession and the only grounds on which it may be made are the Holy Scriptures as the Word of God. Being fully aware of the risks involved in taking this step, we are nevertheless convinced that we have no alternative. Furthermore, we are aware that no other motives or convictions, however valid they may be, would give us the right to confess in this way. An act of confession may only be made by the Church for the sake of its purity and credibility and that of its message. As solemnly as we are able, we hereby declare before men that our only motive lies in our fear that the truth and power of the gospel itself is threatened in this situation. We do not wish to serve any group interests, advance the cause of any factions, promote any theologies or achieve any ulterior purposes. Yet, having said this, we know that our deepest intentions may only be judged at their true value by Him before whom all is revealed. We do not make this confession from his throne and from on high, but before his throne and before men. We plead therefore, that this Confession should not be misused by anyone with ulterior motives and also that it should not be resisted to serve such motives. Our earnest desire is to lay no false stumbling blocks in the way, but to point to the true stumbling block Jesus Christ the rock.
3. This confession is not aimed at specific people or groups of people or a church or churches. We proclaim it against a false doctrine, against an ideological distortion which threatens the gospel itself in our church and our country. Our heartfelt longing is that no-one will identify himself with this objectionable doctrine and that all who have been wholly or partially blinded by it will turn themselves away from it. We are deeply aware of the deceiving nature of such a false doctrine and know that many who have been conditioned by it have to a greater or lesser extent learnt to take a half-truth for the whole. For this reason we do not doubt the Christian faith of many such people, their sincerity, honour, integrity and good intentions, and their in many ways estimable

practice and conduct. However, it is precisely because we know the power of deception that we know we are not liberated by the seriousness, sincerity or intensity of our certainties, but only by the truth in the Son. Our church and our land has an intense need of such liberation. Therefore it is that we speak pleadingly rather than accusingly. We plead for reconciliation, that true reconciliation which follows on conversion and change of attitudes and structures. And while we do so we are aware that an act of confession is a two-edged sword, that none of us can throw the first stone, and none is without a beam in his own eye. We know that the attitudes and conduct which work against the gospel are present in all of us and will continue to be so. Therefore this Confession must be seen as a call to a continuous process of soul-searching together, a joint wrestling with the issues, and a readiness to repent in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in a broken world. It is certainly not intended as an act of self-justification and intolerance, for that would disqualify us in the very act of preaching to others.

4. Our prayer is that this act of confession will not place false stumbling-blocks in the way and thereby cause and foster false divisions, but rather that it will be reconciling and uniting. We know that such an act of confession and process of reconciliation will necessarily involve much pain and sadness. It demands the pain of repentance, remorse and confession; the pain of individual and collective renewal and a changed way of life. It places us on a road whose end we can neither foresee or manipulate to our own desire. On this road we shall unavoidably suffer intense growing pains while we struggle to conquer alienation, bitterness, irreconciliation and fear. We shall have to come to know and encounter both ourselves and others in new ways. We are only too well aware that this confession calls for the dismantling of structures of thought, of church, and of society which have developed over many years. However, we confess that for the sake of the gospel, we have no other choice. We pray that our brothers and sisters throughout the Dutch Reformed Church family, but also outside it, will want to make this new beginning with us, so that we can be free together, and together may walk the road of reconciliation and justice. Accordingly, our prayer is that the pain and sadness we speak of will be pain and sadness that lead to salvation. We believe that this is possible in the power of our Lord and by his Spirit. We believe that the gospel of Jesus Christ offers hope, liberation, salvation and true peace to our country.

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