

**Reconciliation in Southern Africa: The role of the Afrikaans Churches.**

**A Historical and Analytical Study of the Contributions of the Afrikaans Churches to the Process of Reconciliation in Southern Africa, with special Reference to their Response to the Work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.**

**By**

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## SUMMARY

### **Reconciliation in Southern Africa: The role of the Afrikaans Churches.**

**A historical and analytical study of the contributions of the Afrikaans Churches to the process of reconciliation in Southern Africa, with special reference to their response to the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.**

This study investigates the role of the Afrikaans Churches in the quest for reconciliation in South Africa. Since it is a historical and analytical study, much use has been made of the relevant historical material. It is important in a study like this that there be a relevancy for this kind of study. South Africa is a nation with a complex society, who were weighed down for about forty years under an Apartheid policy, necessitating a probe into the influence of apartheid on society at large but also on the Afrikaans Churches. The different cultural groups in our country need to be reconciled to each other. But what kind of reconciliation? Many different definitions of reconciliation are given depending on who defines it. The politicians' definitions were different from that of the church. Because reconciliation is a biblical term, it is necessary to look at the biblical mandate and how reconciliation is defined in biblical terms.

Short overviews of the history of the origin of the different Afrikaans Churches under discussion are given. (Chapter 1)

In order to understand the reaction of the different churches to the announcement of the constitution of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), it is necessary to look at those events that happened in the churches during the years of Apartheid. The fact that the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) is the largest church under the Afrikaners, explains why more space is given to occurrences in the DRC than to the others. Because Afrikaners work together in many situations, belong to the same clubs, etc. it is also clear that the occurrences in the DRC would have some effect on members of the other churches. Attention is paid to the polarisation and tension amongst churches due to race relations as it manifested itself within South Africa and also globally. (Chapter 2)

Through Parliamentary legislation, a Truth and Reconciliation Commission was established for South Africa. It is important to take note of the mandate of the TRC and its method of work. Different reactions came from the faith communities and especially from the Afrikaans Churches. This researcher investigates the different attitudes in the churches as made known through correspondence in the different church magazines and daily newspapers. Attention is paid to the different reactions of the churches to the special hearings and the question whether churches must confess before the TRC or not. (Chapter 3)

The reactions in the churches on the submission of evidence before the TRC are investigated. Only the DRC and the Apostolic Faith Mission (AFM) of the Afrikaans Churches and four theologians from the Reformed Churches of South Africa (RCSA) made their submissions. The other churches did not make use of this opportunity to clear their slates. The submission of the Uniting Reformed Church of South Africa (URCSA) is also mentioned as many of its members are Afrikaans speaking. (Chapter 4)

The TRC suggested some proposals on reconciliation for the faith communities. This chapter looks at the responses of the churches to these proposals. There are wonderful things happening where churches were obedient and involved in their surroundings. Mostly they are helping in the areas of poverty relief and unemployment. The question about unity between the 'sister' churches amongst the Afrikaners and unification between the DRC and URCSA is discussed. (Chapter 5)

Is there hope for our country for reconciliation? This question was addressed to a few leaders in the different churches and their responses are given. Churches do not always know how to go about helping their congregants working on reconciliation. Three models are currently being presented in South Africa on how reconciliation can become a reality and are briefly discussed. A new model is then worked out and proffered for use in and by the church to help congregants in the quest for reconciliation. (Chapter 6)

Chapter 7 concludes this study by proposing a few conclusions.

An extensive Addendum is given. This researcher interviewed church leaders. Their responses and other relevant material e.g. submissions by churches etc. to the TRC are given.

A bibliography concludes this dissertation.

## **OPSOMMING**

### **Reconciliation in Southern Africa: The role of the Afrikaans Churches.**

**A historical and analytical study of the contributions of the Afrikaans Churches to the process of reconciliation in Southern Africa, with special reference to their response to the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.**

Hierdie studie ondersoek die rol van die Afrikaans Kerke in die soeke na versoening in Suid-Afrika. Aangesien dit 'n historiese en analitiese studie is, is daar baie van historiese materiaal gebruik gemaak. Dit is belangrik in so 'n studie dat besin sal word oor die relevansie daarvan. Aangesien Suid-Afrika 'n land met 'n komplekse samelewing is, wat vir ongeveer veertig jaar onder 'n beleid van Apartheid gebuk gegaan het, is dit nodig om ondersoek te doen na die invloed daarvan in die gemeenskap as geheel, sowel as op die Afrikaans Kerke. Die verskillende kultuurgroepe in die land moet met mekaar versoen word. Maar watter soort versoening? Daar is baie verskillende definisies vir versoening afhangende van wie die definisie gee. Die politikus gee 'n ander definisie as die kerk. Aangesien versoening eintlik 'n Bybelse begrip is, is dit nodig om na die Bybelse mandaat te kyk en hoe versoening in Bybelse terme gedefinieer word. 'n Kort oorsig oor die ontstaan van die verskillende Afrikaans Kerke word gegee. (Hoofstuk 1)

Om die reaksies van die verskillende kerke op die aankondiging van die daarstelling van 'n Waarheids- en Versoeningskommissie te verstaan, is dit allereers nodig om te kyk na wat in die kerke gebeur het gedurende die Apartheidsjare. Die feit dat die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk (NGK) die grootste kerk onder die Afrikaners is, verduidelik waarom daar meer aandag aan gebeurtenisse wat 'n invloed gehad het op die denke en praktyk in die kerk gegee word as in die ander. Aangesien die Afrikaners in baie gevalle

saam werk, dieselfde klubs besoek, ens is dit te verstane dat dit wat in die NGK plaasvind ook 'n effek op lidmate van die ander kerke sal hê. Aandag word geskenk aan die polarisasie en spanning wat binne en buite Suid-Afrika ontstaan het as gevolg van die rasse-verhoudinge tussen verskillende kerke. (Hoofstuk 2)

'n Waarheids- en Versoeningkommissie (WVK) het as gevolg van parlementêre wetgewing in Suid-Afrika sy beslag gekry. Dit is belangrik om na die Kommissie se mandaat en werkswyse te kyk. Verskillende reaksies het vanuit die geloofs-gemeenskappe gekom en spesifiek uit die Afrikaanse Kerke. Die verskillende reaksies, soos geopenbaar is deur korrespondensie in kerkblaaië en die dagblaaië is ondersoek. Aandag is gegee aan die verskillende reaksies van die kerke ten opsigte van die spesiale verhore en die vraag of die kerke voorleggings moet maak of nie. (Hoofstuk 3)

Die reaksies in die verskillende kerke met betrekking tot die voorlegging van getuïenisse voor die WVK word ondersoek. Van die Afrikaanse Kerke was dit net die NGK, die Apostoliese Geloofsending (AGS) en vier teoloë uit die Gereformeerde Kerke van Suid-Afrika (GKSA), van Potchefstroom wat voorleggings gemaak het. Die ander kerke het nie van die geleentheid gebruik gemaak om hulle aandeel aan die verlede bekend te maak nie. (Hoofstuk 4)

Die WVK het aanbevelings vir die geloofsgemeenskappe gemaak met betrekking tot versoening in die land. In hierdie hoofstuk word gekyk hoe die verskillende Afrikaanse Kerke daarop gereageer het. Pragtige dinge is besig om te gebeur waar kerke gehoorsaam was en in hulle omgewing betrokke geraak het. Meesal word klem gelê op die verligting van armoede en werkloosheid. Dan word die vraag na eenheid tussen die "susterskerke" en die Kerkhereniging tussen die NGK en die Verenigende Gereformeerde Kerk (VGK) bekyk. (Hoofstuk 5)

Is daar hoop vir ons land met betrekking tot versoening? Hierdie vraag is aan 'n klompie leiers uit die verskillende kerke gevra en hulle antwoorde word verskaf. Kerke weet nie altyd hoe om te werk te gaan om lidmate te help om met mekaar en met ander versoen te

word nie. Modelle word voorgehou wat in ons land en in ander lande van die wêreld gebruik word om daarmee te help. 'n Eie model word ontwikkel en voorgestel om gebruik te word in en vir die kerk. (Hoofstuk 6)

Om die studie af te eindig, word in Hoofstuk 7 tot 'n aantal gevolgtrekkings gekom.

'n Uitgebreide Addendum met onderhoude met kerkleiers en ander relevante materiaal, bv. sommige van die voorleggings van kerke aan die WVK word aangebied

'n Bibliografie sluit die studie af.

## GLOSSARY

<b>Afrikaans Churches</b>	Those churches in South Africa to which most Afrikaans speaking whites belong.
<b>Apartheid</b>	A political system in South Africa in which members of different races had different political and social rights and lived, travelled, etc. apart from each other.
<b>Biblical Mandate</b>	The authority to do something given by the Bible. In this case the Biblical authority to reconciliation.
<b>Forgiveness</b>	The action of stopping anger or bitterness towards somebody or about something. To stop blaming or wanting to punish.
<b>Justice</b>	Right and fair behaviour or treatment. Used as retributive justice i.e. focus on punishment and restorative justice i.e. restoring victims, etc.
<b>Reconciliation</b>	The most common meaning is to change from enmity to friendship.
<b>Reparation</b>	The action of compensating for wrong or damage done.
<b>Restitution</b>	The action of giving something that was lost or stolen back to its proper owner. Reparation/restitution are sometimes used interchangeable.
<b>Submissions</b>	To formally present something (a document, petition) for consideration or a decision to be made.
<b>Truth and Reconciliation Commission</b>	A commission established by the South African parliament to start a process of healing and reconciliation in the post-apartheid era in South Africa.





## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.

<b>AB</b>	Afrikaner Broederbond ( Now: Afrikaner Bond)
<b>AE</b>	African Enterprise.
<b>AFM</b>	Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa.
<b>ANC</b>	African National Congress.
<b>APK</b>	Afrikaanse Protestantse Kerk.
<b>ASC</b>	Afrikaans Sister Churches.
<b>CC</b>	Christian Council.
<b>CI</b>	Christian Institute.
<b>CS</b>	Church and Society.
<b>DRC</b>	Dutch Reformed Church (Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk).
<b>DRCA</b>	Dutch Reformed Church in Africa (Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk in Afrika).
<b>DRMC</b>	Dutch Reformed Mission Church (Nederduitse Gereformeerde Sendingkerk).
<b>GSC</b>	General Synodical Commission.
<b>HRS</b>	Human Relations in light of Scripture.
<b>ICC</b>	Inter Church Commission.
<b>NHK</b>	Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk van Afrika.
<b>NIV</b>	New International Version (Bible).
<b>NKJV</b>	New King James Version (Bible).
<b>PAC</b>	Pan Africanist Congress.
<b>RCSA</b>	Reformed Churches in South Africa (Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika).
<b>RES</b>	Reformed Ecumenical Synod.
<b>SACC</b>	South African Council of Churches.
<b>TRC</b>	Truth and Reconciliation Commission.
<b>URCSA</b>	Uniting Reformed Church of South Africa.
<b>WARC</b>	World Alliance of Reformed Churches.
<b>WCC</b>	World Council of Churches.
<b>ZB</b>	Zimbabwe.

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