

**Afrikaner Identity and Responses to Mormon Missions in the Cape Colony,  
1852–1865**

**by**

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## Summary

This dissertation explores the utility of employing Afrikaner concepts of the biblical covenant between God and His people as a paradigm for understanding Afrikaner history in the Cape Colony, especially in relation to the Afrikaners' reaction to Mormon proselytising in the mid-nineteenth century. Mormon efforts in the Cape during this period were concentrated on people with European ancestry and were disproportionately more successful among English speakers than the Colony's Dutch/Afrikaners.

Beginning with a discussion of competing theories of Afrikaner history in chapter 1, the study moves into a review of Afrikaner history from pre-Reformation Europe until the time under consideration in chapter 2. Special attention is given to the origins of covenant theology and its applications in Reformed Zurich and Geneva and also in the South African context. Chapters 3 and 4 explore the covenant milieu of the 1850s and 1860s, when Mormon missionaries were active in the Cape Colony, and the Afrikaner response to Mormon proselytising. Afrikaner reactions to Mormon proselytising are found to be in harmony with a covenant paradigm on the part of the Afrikaners.

## Key Words

Afrikaner  
Baker  
Bullinger  
Calvin  
Covenant  
Dutch Reformed Church  
Missiology  
Mormon  
Raath  
Zwingli

## Declaration

I declare that the dissertation, which I hereby submit for the degree Magister Artium at the University of Pretoria, is my own work and has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other tertiary institution.

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## **Chapter 1 Introduction**

### **1.1 Statement of the Problem**

On 18 April 1853 three Mormons landed at Table Bay, beginning their work of proselytising the peoples of the Cape Colony. Ministers of all stripes preached against the newly arrived missionaries, and laymen mobbed and harassed them. Finding a lack of English proficiency among the Afrikaners (the majority of the colony's white population), the missionaries began learning Dutch. After the first missionaries, more were sent, some of whom were chosen specifically to proselytise the Afrikaner population. Despite the Mormons' efforts, the Dutch-speaking community proved particularly resistant. The Mormons' failure among the Cape's Afrikaners provides an interesting case study for understanding aspects of Afrikaner identity in the Cape Colony of the mid-nineteenth century. The purpose of this study is to investigate one aspect as potential reasons for the Mormons' lack of success.

Historians and others writing about South Africa have long discussed religion's role in the Afrikaner understanding of nation and self. The Calvinist paradigm of Afrikaner history was largely accepted as the basis of Afrikaner history after Scottish missionary David Livingstone asserted the notion in the nineteenth century (du Toit 1983:939). Irving Hexham (1980, 1981), André du Toit (1983, 1985), and others have called the long-standing hypothesis into question. Another rejection of this paradigm is not helpful. What is needed is a paradigm to replace it.

In more recent years, a new hypothesis has been advanced to explain the Afrikaner's idea of nation and self. Andries Raath (2000 & 2002) argues that the key to understanding the early

Dutch/Afrikaner history at the Cape is not the French reformer Jean Calvin but the Swiss reformer Heinrich Bullinger. The Afrikaner people exist not because of Calvinist ideas of election but because of Bullingerian ideas of covenant. Raath credits J. Wayne Baker for originating the argument that Bullinger be identified as the head of a second strain within the Reformed tradition separate from the Calvinists. Raath sees his contribution as his application of the Bullingerian hypothesis to Afrikaner history and especially civic polity.

Raath's argument raises the question of religion's role in national identity — a people's very concept of its own peoplehood and the relationship between the church and the people. In this case, if the Bullingerian idea of Afrikanerdom in the Cape Colony as a Christian commonwealth holds true, a rejection of the dominant religious confession within that community could mean an end to an individual's Afrikaner identity. Would Afrikaner proselytes to another faith cease to be Afrikaners?

## **1.2 Aims of the Study**

This study investigates the utility of Raath's Bullingerian hypothesis as an alternative to the Calvinist paradigm of Afrikaner history to explain the disparity of English- and Dutch/Afrikaans-speaking converts to Mormonism in the Cape Colony between 1852 and 1865. There are few historical treatments of Afrikanerdom and Mormonism and those that do exist are insufficient or out of date. A need exists for an updated, scholarly treatment.

In filling the need for a new treatment with a mission history, I am aware of the common pitfalls of the genre and I have aimed to avoid them. Mission histories tend to be denominational, telling the story of one missionary, a particular group of missionaries, or a

single mission — usually all from a single denomination or institution. Institutional histories are especially weak in their contextualisation of the phenomena they interpret (du Bruyn and Southey 1995:30 and Elphick 1995:12). This situation need not necessarily be the case, however, as mission histories can escape their notorious parochialism if church historians couch their studies in the broader *milieux* of both ecumenical and secular history.

Samuel Maluleke (1989:13) has criticised mission histories for their one-sided approach, faulting them for viewing history solely through the eyes of the missionaries and thus suffering from the lack of indigenous voices. Adapting Maluleke's argument to the situation of the Cape Afrikaners, this investigation of Mormonism's *entrée* into South Africa was undertaken with the worldview of the Afrikaners in mind and in the context of their religion and identity. In that sense, I have attempted to make the study just as much a study of Afrikanerdom in the Cape Colony as it is of Mormonism.

My study investigates Cape Afrikaner identity in the mid-nineteenth century, when the Mormons arrived, and the historical, cultural, political, and religious environment of the time. Further, it examines an important theme in ecumenical church history: the inter-denominational and inter-cultural conflict inherent in denominational proselytising, pitting as it does one denomination against another — in this case The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and the Dutch Reformed Church in the Cape Colony.

It is difficult to pinpoint when an Afrikaner identity emerged at the Cape. Historian Hermann Giliomee (2003:51) writes that 'a sense of being Afrikaners rather than being Dutch or French or German had crystalized by the end of the 18th century'. F. A. van Jaarsveld (1961:44) stated that before the 1870s 'the Afrikaners were a "people" but not yet a

“nation”. The difference being that peoplehood is a cultural concept while nationhood is political (Degenaar 1975:13). According to Adrian Hastings (1997:3), peoplehood ‘constitutes the major distinguishing element in all pre-national societies’. While Afrikaner identities are generally agreed to have existed when the Mormons arrived, it is also generally agreed that neither a pan-South African Afrikaner identity nor nationalism spanned the sub-continent during the 1850s and 1860s. There was no one Afrikaner people when the Mormons arrived and one cannot discuss a monolithic Afrikaner community. Afrikaners existed as separate communities at the Cape, the Free State, the South African (Transvaal) Republic, and Natal with each group possessing its own identity. The present study will thus be confined to examining pre-national Afrikaner identity in one area — the Cape Colony.

### **1.3 Hypothesis**

I began with the question of why the Mormons’ efforts to proselytise Afrikaners in the nineteenth century were disproportionately less successful than they were among English speakers. My hypothesis is that membership in the Dutch Reformed Church played a significant role in Afrikaner group identity at the Cape in the mid-nineteenth century because of Bullingerian ideas of the covenant; as such, Afrikaners were uniquely resistant to Mormon proselytising. To prove the above hypothesis, I asked three questions: First, is there evidence of Bullingerian thought among Afrikaners in the Cape Colony? Second, can membership in the Dutch Reformed Church be proven as a significant factor in Cape Afrikaner identity? Third, can a religio-ethnic identity be proven as a reason for rejecting Mormon mission work among the Cape Afrikaners as a result of Bullingerian thought?

Analysis of the data led me to conclude that there is, indeed, evidence of covenant theology at the Cape, but Zwingli and others must be given credit for some of the ideas present, and this keeps me from declaring the ideas I encountered solely ‘Bullingerian’. To question 2, I answer an unqualified yes: membership in the Dutch Reformed Church can be shown to have played a significant factor in Afrikaner identity in the Cape Colony. Finally, for the same reason given in answer to question 1, the answer to question 3 is yes, but it must be qualified to include Zwingli’s and others’ ideas as part of the Cape Afrikaners’ overwhelming rejection of Mormonism in the mid-nineteenth century.

#### **1.4 Research Process and Methodology**

Both primary and secondary sources are consulted in this study. As a large body of work is available on the general history of the Netherlands and the Cape, I used secondary sources to recount the history there. In the particular case of Mormonism in South Africa, the secondary literature is much more limited, and I had to rely more heavily on primary sources.

##### **1.4.1 Primary Sources**

Where possible, I used primary sources from the persons involved. Particularly useful among the primary sources were the translated and collected works of several of the Reformers discussed in this study. Because translations often bear the marks of the translator’s own personal and cultural (including religious) biases, I have tried to compare multiple translations where possible.

The Mormon missionaries' journals were also helpful. Mission president Jesse Haven's interest in proselytising the Afrikaners and their reaction to his efforts are detailed throughout his journal. Other missionaries' journals, particularly those of Miner Atwood, William Fotheringham, and William Walker, also record Mormon efforts among the Afrikaners. The missionaries' letters and reports also betray their respective opinions on the prospects of successful proselytising among the Afrikaners. The Mormon materials are readily available at the LDS Church's Church History Library in Salt Lake City, Utah, USA.

By themselves, the Mormon sources mentioned above tell a rather one-sided tale. And, as I have stated, my aim is to understand the events described from the standpoint of the Afrikaners as well as the Mormons. Understanding Afrikaner identity must be done from the standpoint of the Afrikaners themselves. For that reason, I attempted to find materials written by the Afrikaners involved. Inquiries to archives in South Africa did not locate any diaries of Afrikaners reacting to the Mormon presence but I did find several newspaper references to the Mormons in the Cape Colony. These references, coupled with an understanding of Afrikaner history and other events occurring around the time of the Mormons' arrival, help us understand Afrikaner sentiment toward Mormonism and balance the history, which otherwise, like so many mission histories, would have been told solely from the missionaries' point of view.

Other sources include correspondence and records of church bodies—many of which are available online or on microfilm through interlibrary loan, some of which have been digitised and are available online.

## **1.4.2 Secondary Sources**

Secondary sources for this dissertation are grouped into three categories: theoretical sources on competing theories of Afrikaner history, Dutch and South African histories, and sources on Mormonism in South Africa.

### **1.4.2.1 Competing Theories of Afrikaner History**

The major theories of Afrikaner history can be divided into three groups: the frontier/degenerative theory, the Calvinist paradigm, and what I call the Bullingerian hypothesis.

#### **1.4.2.1.1 The Frontier/Degenerative Theory**

The frontier/degenerative paradigm theorises that after the Dutch East India Company (*Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie* or *VOC*) allowed for private cultivation and stock farming outside the immediate vicinity of Cape Town, those who took advantage of this opportunity and their descendants became isolated from the civilising influence of the Cape's primary settlement. In this isolation they developed a degenerate culture based on physical and intellectual independence and perhaps most notably an enmity toward the non-white population surrounding them. This supposed worldview of the Afrikaners, according to this theory, then shaped all of their history and by extension the history of South Africa.

The frontier/degenerative theory is at least as old as Simon Van Der Stel's administration at the Cape between 1679 and 1699 (Legassick 1972:14). Eric Walker (1930:3) argued in 1930

that the rugged conditions of the frontier shaped Afrikaner culture and it was only after 1870 that the region was able to step into 'latter-day civilization'. Walker's interpretation of South African history was shared by others, including Sheila Patterson (1957:6), who wrote that the isolated Boer was to become 'the most active maker of South African history' and 'was to determine the form of the South African society to be'. C. W. de Kiewiet (1941:17) argued that the Afrikaners' isolation kept them from the influences of the Enlightenment and modern liberalism. He further argued (1941:71) that with the union of South Africa and the integration of the former Boer republics and their economies, the Afrikaner 'habits of mind' moulded on the frontier put the 'stamp of their thought upon the whole of South Africa'.

Martin Legassick (1972:11) argued against the frontier tradition, pointing out that the situation for non-whites was actually better on the frontier than in the more 'civilised' Cape Town, where the white population was thought to be more thoroughly influenced by the civilising effects of the city. In addition, Legassick (1972:18) showed that several Afrikaner families moved onto the frontier, demonstrating that they did not view the non-white population as universally hostile.

Regardless of the merits or deficiencies of this theory, the Dutch-speaking Afrikaners discussed in this study lived primarily in or near towns, many of them in and around Cape Town, where the influences of the frontier were minimal. For this reason, the frontier/degenerative theory, though used in several major studies in the past, is of lesser use here.



#### 1.4.2.1.2 The Calvinist Paradigm

Since at least the late nineteenth century, the most significant theory of Afrikaner history has been what André du Toit calls the ‘Calvinist paradigm’. According to this theory the early Dutch settlers at the Cape imported a primitive form of Calvinism obsessed with ideas of election and foreordained damnation, thus creating a dichotomy between the Europeans, who would be saved, and the Africans, who would be damned.

In his influential review of the literature in this vein, du Toit (1983:938–939) traces the theory to the 1858 publication of David Livingstone’s *Missionary Travels and Researches in South Africa*. One earlier account, that of French naturalist Adulphe Delegorgue, who lived among the Voortrekkers in Natal during the 1840s, mentions a sense of divine election during that time but does not credit it with being the basis of all Afrikaner action. Du Toit could find no evidence to support the paradigm from the early Dutch settlers or later Afrikaners before Delegorgue or Livingstone.

There is no shortage of material available in the tradition of the Calvinist paradigm, though as du Toit points out (1983:939), the paradigm frequently goes unstated. T. Dunbar Moodie focused his major study of what he calls the Afrikaner ‘civil religion’ in the early twentieth century, citing Calvinism as the basis for the prologue leading up to the time period he considers and recounting the events preceding the time period of his study as a foundation of what came later. He (1975:12) argues that Afrikaner ‘civil theology is . . . rooted in the belief that God has chosen the Afrikaner people for a special destiny’ (i.e., election). Sheila Patterson (1957:177) specifically states that the Old Testament and the doctrines of Calvin shaped the Afrikaner psyche.

In opposition to these are several authors, such as Irving Hexham (1980:197), who call into question the very Calvinism of early Afrikaners, arguing that no continuous Calvinist tradition existed in South Africa before 1870. It is important to note that Calvin's writings have not been identified at the early Cape (Raath 2002:1012).

Robert Vosloo (2013:251), who places heavy stock in Moodie's work, states that 'an oversimplified description and uncritical acceptance of the "Calvinist paradigm" is problematic'. A serious concern is that those of the Calvinist school have failed to produce evidence proving Calvinism's influence before Delegorgue's 1847 assertion or Livingstone's in 1858. Livingstone, according to du Toit (1983:941), was the source for most if not all of the Calvinist assertions since. Hexham and du Toit's work, though influential, have not been universally accepted. J. Alton Templin (1994:466) has called du Toit's argument a 'revisionist (hence largely erroneous) analysis'. Moodie (1981:403) has called Hexham's definition of Calvinism (by which he excludes the early Cape's residents from Calvinism *per se*) 'exceedingly narrow'. Notwithstanding these objections, even Templin (1976:81) concedes that Moodie's descriptions of the 'Calvinism' which gave rise to the Afrikaner civil religion in the twentieth century is not strictly Calvinism but Kuyperian neo-Calvinism.

#### **1.4.2.1.3 The Bullingerian Hypothesis**

This study focuses on Andries Raath's Bullingerian hypothesis. Raath is not alone, nor was he the first to name covenant theology as the foundation for ideas of Afrikaner peoplehood. He was beaten to that conclusion by Jonathan Neil Gerstner's 1985 doctoral thesis *The Thousand Generation Covenant: Dutch Reformed Covenant Theology and Group Identity in Colonial South Africa, 1652–1814* and his 1991 book by the same name. Instead, Raath's

contribution is crediting the origination of the covenant thought at the Cape to Heinrich Bullinger. In addition, Raath (2002), a legal scholar, describes how Bullinger's covenant theology served as a basis for the early political institutions at the Cape.

In doing so, Raath is highly dependent on J. Wayne Baker's 1980 *Heinrich Bullinger and the Covenant: The Other Reformed Tradition*. Baker seeks to prove that Bullinger was the first of the Reformers to use the covenant as an organising principle for understanding God's dealings with humanity. Baker elevates covenant theology, and particularly Heinrich Bullinger's contribution to it, to a separate branch of the Reformed tradition, distinct from Calvin's work. 'Calvinism', therefore, according to Baker (1980), should not be used as a synonym for all Reformed theology, but as a part of the larger whole.

Raath (2000) clarified this argument for covenant theology as a means of understanding the South African situation by applying Baker's work to Cape history and identifying Heinrich Bullinger as the source of the covenant theology at the Cape. He seems unaware of the criticisms of Baker's attempt to elevate Bullinger's work to status as the 'fountainhead' of covenant theology. Rudolph Britz (2007) cautions against assuming the influence of Bullinger's work at the early Cape based on Bullinger's popularity in the first half of the seventeenth century. However, Britz's argument is based on the availability of other literature at the Cape and neglects the implementation of Bullinger's ideas in church polity and the Afrikaner community. It is not simply a question of whether other ideas were available to the Cape Afrikaners but whether they were actually implemented.

Both Baker and Gerstner did their work in a time of special interest in the covenant. The kernel of Baker's book was his 1971 doctoral thesis at the University of Iowa; Gertner's book

too began as a doctoral thesis, being completed at the University of Chicago in 1985. Richard A. Muller (2012:iii) describes this time as a period when ‘analyses of covenant theology as either a positive strand of the Reformed development alternative to the Genevan line or as a problematic deviation from the supposed norm set by Calvin’s *Institutes* seemed to dominate the field’. Baker and Gerstner both fit the description of the covenant as an alternative strand in Reformed thought. Alternately, Andrew A. Woolsey’s 1988 doctoral thesis at the University of Glasgow explored the covenant within the Reformed tradition not as a competitor to Calvin’s election doctrine but as part of a comprehensive whole. Woolsey’s work was finally published in 2012 as *Unity and Continuity in Covenantal Thought: A Study in the Reformed Tradition to the Westminster Assembly*.

#### **1.4.2.2 Dutch and South African Histories**

For an overview of Dutch history, I turned to several sources, particularly Jonathan Israel’s *The Dutch Republic: Its Rise, Greatness, and Fall, 1477–1806* (1998). For South African history, I necessarily probed much more deeply, consulting Giliomee’s *The Afrikaners* (2003) and Hofmeyr and Pillay’s edited work, *A History of Christianity in South Africa* (1994), particularly Donaldson’s chapter ‘Christianity in the Period of English Colonisation’ and Strauss’s ‘The Boer Emigrants and their Church’. Adding to that is Gerstner’s ‘A Christian Monopoly: The Reformed Church and Colonial Society under Dutch Rule’ in Elphick and Davenport’s edited compilation *Christianity in South Africa* (1997). Other chapters in this work were also helpful.

### 1.4.2.3 Mormonism in South Africa

Several works have been produced on The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in South Africa. Evan P. Wright's three-volume 'A History of the South African Mission' (1977, 1985[?] & 1987) and Farrell Ray Monson's master's thesis, 'History of the South African Mission of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1853–1970' (1971), are the most complete works available from Mormon authors. Neither was ever published, nor do they specifically address the missionaries' efforts with the Afrikaner in much depth. The earliest work of much length on Mormonism written from a Dutch perspective seems to be J. Beijer's Dutch-language *De Mormon in Zuid-Afrika: eene waarschuwing aan allen, die de waarheid in Christus Jezus lief-hebben*, published in 1863 at the time of the third Latter-day Saint mission to South Africa. Beijer's work is more polemic than history. All three are one-sided investigations and are out of date. The most recent and most focused on the interaction of Afrikaners with the early Mormon missionaries is my own 'Mormonism's Jesse Haven and the Early Focus on Proselytising the Afrikaner at the Cape of Good Hope, 1853–1855' published in the *Dutch Reformed Theological Journal* in 2007.

### 1.4.3 Historiographical Methodology

Notwithstanding the many specialist works on the topic cited above, religion has been largely ignored in general histories of South Africa. While generalist historians elsewhere have examined individual and group religiosity as the trend has moved toward less institutional and more personal aspects of history such as family and gender, South Africanists have lagged behind. Part of the problem, according to historian Richard Elphick (1995:12–13), is

religion's seeming irrelevance to the secular world. The twenty-first century, however, has seen religion move to the forefront of social interaction and consciousness.

To remedy the dearth of religion's treatment in South African historiography, Elphick (1995:11) makes two suggestions: first, the thought and actions of religious peoples and individuals must be studied with seriousness and empathy; and second, religious phenomena must be viewed within their political, intellectual, social, and economic milieu. In this way the thoughts, feelings, and beliefs of religious persons can be made understandable and relevant to readers of general histories. If religionists are made to appear as though they live in a vacuum, devoid of outside influence and without influencing their surroundings, their experiences will lack significance for those interested in a broader history. As religious persons do not live in a vacuum, it is doubtful such insular histories will be capable of fully understanding the topics of their own investigation. As such, I have attempted to place Afrikanerdom and the Mormon arrival into the full context of the mid-nineteenth century Cape Colony — into the world in which the events discussed take place.

An admitted weakness is the lack of women's voices in this study. All of the primary sources used were written by men or are presumed to have been. Some of the sources in Dutch-language newspapers were published anonymously. These unidentified authors were most likely male. One woman's perspective in particular would be especially interesting. Johanna Provis (née Longeveld) was the first known Dutch-speaking convert to Mormonism. She figures prominently in chapter 3 but only from records written by others.

#### **1.4.4 Bias and Objectivity**

No attempt has been made herein at evaluating the truth claims of either the Dutch Reformed Church or The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. It is, however, necessary for authors to acknowledge their own biases in their studies. Without an author's self-awareness of his or her biases, he or she cannot compensate for them. I freely acknowledge my own biases relevant to this study. From 1998 to 2000, I served as a missionary of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in South Africa and am presently employed by the church.

Bradley and Muller (1995:49–50) argue that historians must not totally separate themselves from the emotion of history, since doing so also removes from history its importance. It is bias and emotion which attract the historian to the topics he or she studies in the first place. Rather, objectivity is a methodological concern. Objectivity arises out of a willingness to let the materials of history speak in their own terms. I have attempted to do just that. As discussed above, my aim has been to write this study from the perspective of the Cape Colony's Dutch Reformed Afrikaners of the nineteenth century, paying special attention to their voices.

#### **1.4.5 Note on Terminology**

The language we use to describe ourselves and others can be exclusive or inclusive, malicious or benign. In addition, what is often intended without malice can sometimes be misunderstood. What qualifies as offensive is not always universally agreed upon and anachronisms may be prohibitively difficult to avoid without causing other distractions within the text.

Because the term *Afrikaner* is widely understood today as describing the mostly-white descendants of Dutch, French, and German immigrants to the Cape and because the term was in use to describe white persons at the Cape at least by the early eighteenth century, I have chosen to use it herein, though terms like *burgher* and *Boer* might have been more popular at certain times. I also use the terms *Dutch* and *Dutch speakers* in places, as Dutch was the term most commonly employed by the Mormon missionaries to identify the Afrikaners they met. In contrast, I use the terms *English* and *English speakers* for immigrants to the Cape from England and their descendants.

Persons of predominantly African and mixed ancestry are frequently mentioned in the sources as ‘colored’.<sup>1</sup> This was a generic term and could not be understood reliably in the later meaning of persons descended from a mixture of African, European, and Asian ancestry. For lack of a better term, I have reluctantly chosen to call these persons *non-white*, though the term is sometimes seen as offensive.

Finally, I have used the terms *Mormon* and *Latter-day Saint* (LDS) interchangeably for members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The word *Mormon* has at times been identified as pejorative and the church has had an uneasy relationship with it. However, it is commonly accepted and used.

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<sup>1</sup> The spelling used here is the accepted American orthography. Though South African usage is preferred in this study, I use the American spelling here as a quotation from the American writers. Original spelling, punctuation, and grammar are retained in all direct quotations.



## 1.5 Chapter Outline

Following this introductory chapter, chapter 2 explores the cultural and religious history of the Afrikaners in the Cape Colony from the period leading up to the Reformation through the time of the Mormons' arrival at the Cape. This second chapter gives special emphasis to the question of covenant theology's origins, whether in the thought of Heinrich Bullinger or elsewhere. Chapter 3 focuses on the state of the Afrikaner community when the Mormons first arrived and the Afrikaners' reaction to them in the 1850s. The Mormons' second decade in Africa is discussed in chapter 4, which further investigates some of the issues from chapter 3, including the struggle between theological conservatives and liberals. Also, new issues are introduced, such as the revival of the 1860s, and their relation to the covenant in Afrikaner thought is discussed. My fifth and concluding chapter reviews the data and conclusions of the previous chapters and discusses their implications, making suggestions for further research.

## Chapter 2 Afrikaner Cultural and Religious History

When Mormon missionaries first arrived in the Cape Colony, the Afrikaner culture that greeted them had been developing for centuries. Afrikaner cultural history began long before 1852 and long before Jan van Riebeeck landed at the Cape. Any attempt to understand the world of the Afrikaners into which the Mormons arrived must begin in Europe.

Long before the Afrikaners called themselves Afrikaners, Christianity was a part of their culture. Christianity, and particularly Reformed Christianity, was the religion of the Netherlands and part of the culture the Dutch brought with them to Africa. This chapter examines the religion of the Afrikaners and its Dutch antecedents from the years leading up to the Protestant Reformation in Europe; through the Company period at the Cape; and into the British period, in which the Mormons arrived. By the time of the Mormons' arrival, the Cape Afrikaners' religion constituted a necessary condition of Afrikaner identity in the Colony, creating a deterrent to the Afrikaners' conversion to the new faith.

It must be noted that the ancestors of the nineteenth-century Afrikaners who received the first Mormons were not all Dutch. The immigration of French Huguenots in 1688 is well known. Less well known is that during the eighteenth century, most immigrants to the Cape were German. In fact, during the 1730s and 40s, the 'typical' immigrant was a single German male. Nevertheless, the Netherlands wielded a much stronger influence over the Cape (Giliomee 2003:4–5). As such, the Afrikaners' cultural, and particularly religious, history can be traced back largely through the history of the Netherlands, though a future study of the German influence on Afrikaner religion may prove useful.

## 2.1 Prelude to Reformation

The Protestant Reformation of the Christian church which produced the Dutch Reformed Church of the Afrikaners did not burst onto the scene *ex nihilo*. It grew from seeds planted all over Europe, and one particularly fertile garden was the Netherlands.

### 2.1.1 The *Devotio Moderna*

One Dutchman, Geert Groote, can be said to have planted one of those seeds in his role as a founder of the *Devotio Moderna*, or modern devotion. The *Devotio* was a movement from within the Christian church seeking a renewal of genuine piety, humility, and obedience. Groote was born in Deventer in October 1340. He studied at Aachen and eventually the University of Paris, where he studied theology, scholastic philosophy, canon law, medicine, and astronomy. After his graduation in 1358 he set out on a prosperous career as a teacher and was appointed teacher at the Deventer chapter school in 1362. By 1374, however, he had grown dissatisfied with his lifestyle and began the life for which he would become known. He turned his home over to poor women seeking to serve God and took up residence at a Carthusian monastery. Groote turned himself over to a life of preaching and in doing so attracted a considerable body of followers. One of his followers, named Florins Radewyns, a Dutchman from the city of Utrecht, was influential in the founding of the Brethren of the Common Life, a teaching order steeped in the *Devotio* that supported itself largely from proceeds earned copying books as well as teaching.

One of the Brethren was Thomas van Kempen (or à Kempis), a German who came to Deventer in 1392 to study at the Latin school there. To him is commonly attributed a classic

of *Devotio* literature: the *Imitation of Christ*. Appearing about 1418, the book reached an increasingly literate audience, spreading its message of a more intimate devotion than the institutional worship of the church. That is not to say, however, that van Kempen or his readers advocated a separation from the church as was later seen in the Reformation. Instead, *Imitation*, as an example of *Devotio* piety, advocated a more personal devotion centred on the mass as the climax of Christian worship. Attendance at mass by *Devotio* adherents actually increased.

### **2.1.2 The Rise of Humanism**

Contemporary to the *Devotio Moderna* was the rise of Christian Humanism, a resurgence of Classical studies and knowledge. This movement began in Italy and spread throughout Europe, including the Netherlands, spreading even more rapidly with the advent of movable type. The word *humanism* was not used at the time to describe the movement but was, rather, a moniker affixed to it by scholars in the nineteenth century. Twenty-first-century historian Diarmaid MacCullough (2003:77) describes humanists as, among other things, ‘lovers and connoisseurs of words’. This love of words led to a search for words’ meanings, their ancient antecedents, and an appreciation for their artful use, especially by classical authors, like Cicero.

Eventually, this study turned to a detailed study of the Bible itself. Humanists discovered through their study of Hebrew, Greek, and Latin that the common Bible translation (Vulgate) made by Jerome was lacking in its accuracy. The quest for a more accurate translation began.

### 2.1.3 Erasmus of Rotterdam

A new Latin translation of the New Testament appeared in 1512 and a Greek translation in 1516, both prepared by a Dutchman calling himself Desiderius Erasmus Rotterdamus.

Erasmus was a synthesis of the *Devotio Moderna* and Christian Humanism. He was born Gerrit Gerritsoon, the son of a parish cleric also named Gerrit Gerritsoon and Margaretha Rogers, a woman recognised (if not officially) as Gerritsoon's wife. Both parents seem to have died of the plague in or around 1483.

At the age of nine, the younger Gerrit started school in Deventer and eventually entered clerical orders — a vocation which, although he never relished, he grew to detest. He took vows as a canon regular at the canonry of Stein in South Holland and was ordained a priest around the age of 25. His education (which some sources assert to have been undertaken under the tutelage of the Brethren of the Common Life) was steeped in humanism, which prepared him for his future career as one of the foremost humanist scholars in Europe.

Due to Gerritsoons's reputation as a man of letters, Henry of Bergen, the Bishop of Cambrai, gave him a post as his private secretary and granted him a temporary dispensation releasing him from his monastic vows. The dispensation was made permanent by Pope Leo X, though Gerritsoon remained a priest throughout his life.

Bergen sent Gerritsoon to study at the University of Paris in 1492 where he came under the influence of Italian humanist Publio Fausto Andrelini and others. From 1510 to 1515 Erasmus was resident at Queen's College, Cambridge. There, the Dutchman developed friendships with some of the most prominent men of English humanism: John Colet, Thomas

More, John Fisher, Thomas Linacre, and William Grocyn. Colet's mastery of Greek inspired Gerritsoon to spend three years mastering the language in order to study the ancient texts more thoroughly.

Eventually taking on the name by which he was known — a name that inextricably connected him to his Dutch roots — Desiderius Erasmus Rotterdamus published translations of ancient texts, including his Latin New Testament. These provided source material for the Reformation of the church that was to come. Although Erasmus was supportive of the church's reform, he rejected the wholesale creation of new churches, separate from the ancient church.

## **2.2 Reformation**

The popular image of the Protestant Reformation beginning with Martin Luther nailing his *Ninety-five Theses* to the church door in Wittenberg neglects both the many species of the Reformation and the events which prepared the ground, including the important role played by the Netherlands. Luther's was not the only voice calling for reform, nor was it the first. Including Jean Calvin in the tale does not complete the record either.

Our purpose here is not to recount the events of the Reformation but to examine the covenant idea in the thought of several of the Reformers. As the central question of this study is whether the covenant thought originating with Bullinger is a useful lens through which to study Afrikaner history, it is appropriate to explore the question of whether that thought was originally Bullinger's and whether it was his alone. George Marsden (1970:99–100) has written that

[t]he covenant doctrine was emphasised [by more than one Reformer] primarily because it was discovered to be a central biblical concept. It was emphasized in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (rather than in some previous era) because the Protestant Reformers studied the whole Scripture intensively and demanded that it all be taken seriously and, whenever possible, literally. This was particularly important with regard to the Old Testament . . . where the idea of the covenant (*berith*) appears hundreds of times. . . The development of the covenant doctrine was basically one more instance of the Protestant recovery of biblical teaching. That this is the case is supported by the fact that the covenant doctrine began to appear in numerous places almost as soon as the Reformation had begun. Zwingli, Oecolampadius, Bullinger, Bucer, Tyndale, and several lesser figures developed early formulations of the concept. The connections among these . . . are not entirely clear. But a major part of the explanation is most likely that they all read the same source.

(Marsden 1970:99–100)

Our search for covenant thought among the reformers begins with Martin Luther and the Wittenberg reformation before moving on to Zurich and finally Geneva. Baker (1980:xxi–xxii) acknowledges both Luther and Calvin used the word *covenant* but argues they meant something different by it. Three elements of covenant thought are important to this study: unity between the Old and New Testament periods, required action on the part of both God and human participants, and multi-generationality. We will look for these elements.

In many instances, the works which we will review were written in reaction to a challenge coming from within the reforming community itself — by the men and women who would

come to be called Anabaptists. It is helpful, then, to understand something of the Anabaptist movement in order to understand the other material.

Conrad Grebel and others had studied Hebrew and Greek with Zwingli at Zurich and supported his reforming project. However, when Zwingli chose restraint in the face of reluctance by the city council to abolish the mass in 1523, Grebel and others accused him of betraying the Reformation. A particular contention was the Anabaptists' insistence on a believers' baptism, meaning that infants (who they claimed could not possibly confess Christian faith) should not be baptised and thus any infant baptisms that were performed were invalid and needed to be repeated when the candidates could properly confess their faith. The word *Anabaptist* means re-baptiser.

But Zwingli had not abandoned his reforming program. On 17 January 1525 the council opened the question of infant baptism to a public disputation in which Zwingli and others participated. Zwingli found himself on the opposite side from the Anabaptists. Following the disputation, the council ruled that all who refused to have their children baptised would be expelled from the city. Grebel refused to present his infant daughter for baptism and went a step further when he baptised the adult George Blaurock after a confession of faith. The following year, the council made rebaptism punishable by death.

Zurich's opposition to the Anabaptists prompts the question of why such violence was considered warranted. The issue at hand is more than the baptism of infants. The Anabaptists also eschewed institutions of state, such as the civil courts and the army, and rejected the system of oaths and covenants on which the Swiss communities were founded. Illustrative of the Anabaptists' non-participation and rejection is the following excerpt from the Schleithem



Confession written in 1527, which listed participation in civic affairs as ‘an abomination which we should shun and flee from’ (ed. Leith 1963:286).

. . . it will be observed that it is not appropriate for a Christian to serve as a magistrate because of these points: The government magistracy is according to the flesh, but the Christians’ is according to the Spirit; their houses and dwelling remain in this world, but the Christians’ are in heaven; their citizenship is in this world, but the Christians’ citizenship is in heaven; the weapons of their conflict and war are carnal and against the flesh only, but the Christians’ weapons are spiritual, against the fortification of the devil. The worldlings are armed with steel and iron, but the Christians are armed with the armor of God, with truth, righteousness, peace, faith, salvation, and the Word of God.

(ed. Leith 1963:289)

Anabaptism was not only a radical theology; it was a political heresy from which the Lutheran and Reformed theologians sought to separate themselves. Being painted with the same brush as the Anabaptists meant being labelled a traitor, which was punishable by death. Lutherans and Reformed Christians feared that being identified with the Anabaptists would both lead to their own executions and put an end to their reforming work.

### 2.2.1 Wittenberg: Luther and the Covenant

Martin Luther could incite violent opposition too. In 1523, the monastery of Luther's fellow Augustinians in Antwerp was torn down and two of the monks were burned at the stake because of their sympathies for Luther. Erasmus, who was initially supportive of Luther, was horrified by his brash personality. Others of Erasmus's fellow Dutchmen also found the former monk's ideas dangerous, and some linked Erasmus and Luther together, causing Erasmus no small amount of anxiety. The Dutchman found the association unacceptable, and he refused Luther's pleas to join Luther's movement. Erasmus feared such entanglements would jeopardise the scholarly work he saw as his true calling. Eventually, Erasmus was forced into a public refutation of Luther on theological grounds. In 1524 he published his *Diatribes on Free Will* and two lengthier volumes in 1526 and 1527 explaining his objections. In the end, Erasmus wrote, 'I will put up with this Church [i.e., the Catholic church] until I see a better one; and it will have to put up with me, until I become better' (ed. Trinkaus 1999:117). Erasmus had no intention of following Luther into the wilderness of excommunication.

Despite this violent opposition in the Netherlands and elsewhere, Luther penned what is perhaps one of the most important arguments for Reformed theologians' acceptance of infant baptism. It became a hallmark of the theology which is at the heart of this study and which is clearly evident in the Netherlands and later at the Cape. In a 13 January 1522 letter to Philip Melancthon, Luther (ed. Krodel 1963:371) described infant baptism as a Christian equivalent to circumcision. The reference was peripheral; he mentioned it almost in passing and it was clearly not central to his larger argument. He had made no mention of this rationale or circumcision at all in his longer 1519 *Treatise on Baptism*. Perhaps that is

because, as Henry Jacobs (1915:51) noted, the Anabaptists had not yet forced him into a debate on paedobaptism in 1519, so there was no need for a long defence of the practice.

Regarding baptism's efficacy, Luther (ed. Jacobs 1915:65), like Zwingli after him, placed it into a covenantal context in his 1519 *Treatise*. There he wrote that in a person's baptism, 'God has there made a covenant with him to forgive all his sins, if only he has the will to fight against them, even until death'. Here, in the idea of fighting against evil, Luther hints at a bilateral covenant, similar to what we see in Baker's version of Bullinger. Luther, however, denies an inter-testamental covenant<sup>2</sup> in his 1520 *Treatise on the New Testament*, calling the old covenant 'obsolete and worthless' (Bachmann 1960:84). He thus shows he does not believe in a single covenant as is characteristic of Zwingli and Bullinger.

From the above we see that the covenant idea is present in Luther's writings, but it is substantially different from the Zurich version. We should expect, then, that Luther's vision of the Christian community should be different as well. For Luther, the church existed wherever the pure gospel was preached. Entrance into the church came through baptism; 'thereby', as Luther wrote, the baptised are 'known as a people of Christ' (Bachmann 1960:29). This 'people', however, is a spiritual people, not a temporal one. Luther's early thought on the relationship between the church and state is reflected in his 1520 *Open Letter to Christian Nobility*. In it he cited both Romans 13:1 and 5 and 1 Peter 2:13 and 15 for authority in arguing that all Christians are bound to obey the law and magistrates are bound to enforce it, whether the offender is a priest or a layman (ed. Atkinson 1966:131).

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<sup>2</sup> In both the 1915 and 1960 translations Jeremiah J. Schindel actually uses the word 'testament' rather than covenant (1915:299 & 1960:84).

The distinction between priest and layman for Luther was only one of function, for in his doctrine of the priesthood of all believers, all Christians bear the same priesthood by virtue of their baptism. In a slightly different vein, he quoted Romans 13:4 in calling the civil magistrates ‘the ministers of God for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well’. Punishment is the exclusive right of the civil power; he interpreted 2 Corinthians 10:8 (‘God has given us authority not for the destruction, but for the edification of Christendom’) to mean that the church lacked powers of punishment. In citing Romans and 1 Peter, Luther implies that the civil power need not be a Christian one, since the Roman authorities in the time of Paul and Peter were pagan.

When the civil powers did not comply with exactness to Luther’s vision, he again wrote on the subject of civil power in his 1523 *On Temporal Authority: To What Extent Should It Be Obeyed*. In this work he clearly sets out his ‘two kingdoms’ doctrine, in which he argued that ‘if all the world were composed of real Christians, that is, true believers, no prince, king, lord, sword, or law would be needed’ (Brandt 1962:89). But since the wicked (including the nominally Christian) outnumber the righteous, ‘God has ordained two governments: the spiritual, which by the Holy Spirit produces Christians and righteous people under Christ; and the temporal, which restrains the un-Christian and wicked’ (Brandt 1962:91). And thus there cannot be a truly Christian commonwealth. In this we see a clear separation of spiritual and temporal authority and a lack of even the possibility of a Christian community in the Zurich sense.

### 2.2.2 Zurich: Zwingli, Bullinger, and the Covenant

Reformed Christianity is often seen as originating in Jean Calvin's Geneva, but another city's reformation predated Geneva's and demands our attention. The city of Zurich was home to two reformers important to this study: Huldrych Zwingli and Heinrich Bullinger. Zwingli has the honour of being named the father of Zurich's reformation but Bullinger too played an important role in maturing and carrying out Zwingli's reformation program. This section explores the contributions of these two men individually and together.

Neither Zwingli nor Bullinger was born in Zurich. Zwingli arrived as a 33-year-old priest in late 1517. Born in Wildhaus, he received at least part of his education in the humanist tradition. He studied Hebrew and Greek while pastoring his earlier congregations in Glarus and Einseideln. While there, he began publishing satires and other works betraying his penchant for reform. He preached his first sermon at Zurich on his thirty-fourth birthday, 1 January 1518. On 11 October 1531 he died from wounds sustained in battle.

Bullinger was born in Bremgarten on 18 July 1504 to a parish priest and his common-law wife. He received an overwhelmingly humanist education and encountered the writings of Martin Luther while at university in Cologne. By 1522 he was a convert to the Reformation, and after receiving his master's degree, he took a post as a teacher at the Cistercian monastery at Kappel, where he set about on a reform program of his own. It was while he was based at Kappel that he began publishing his thought and that he first met and began collaborating with Huldrych Zwingli. In 1529 he was called to the ministry in his home town of Bremgarten, but he was banished under the terms of the treaty which ended the war that

claimed Zwingli's life in 1531. After Zwingli's death, Bullinger was appointed to the same pulpit in the Grossmunster at Zurich.

The covenant theology that passed through Zurich to the rest of the world is attributed to these two men. As we have seen, neither Zwingli nor Bullinger invented the covenant. A covenant of some kind is apparent in the Old Testament and writings of the entrance rite for Christian society. A parallel between baptism and circumcision had already been drawn in Christian theology, as we saw in Luther's use of it; thus, the inter-testamental hermeneutic was not entirely new to Zwingli or Bullinger (McGrath 1989:126).

Ignoring or discounting the 1523 *Commentary* allows Baker to make two arguments, though neither is entirely convincing. First, by focusing on the 1525 *Reply to Hubmaier*, Baker (1980:4) can assert that Bullinger's inter-testamental hermeneutic in his November 1523 *De Scripturae Negotio* was evidence of Bullinger's developing unified covenant scheme in advance of Zwingli. Second, Baker (1980:5–6) uses the later *Reply* to argue that Bullinger's introduction of new, more advanced elements to the covenant scheme in his *Von dem Touff* in late 1525, so close on the heels of Zwingli's *Reply*, necessitates an earlier and independent development of the ideas by Bullinger.

We have seen how the three elements of the covenant discussed did not originate with Bullinger and we turn now to how those elements were put into practice within the city of Zurich. Prior to Zwingli's arrival, Zurich already considered itself a *corpus christianum* or *res publica christiana*. When in December 1523 Zwingli was willing to wait for the city council's permission to proceed with the abolition of the mass, it was not simply a result of fear but a consequence of this thought. Zwingli regarded the city council as the legitimate

representatives of the people of Zurich, whom he saw as being the church itself. He demonstrated the unity of the civil and religious community in his *Commentary on the Sixty-seven Articles*. There he argued that in addressing the New Testament Christians, Paul greeted them under the name *ecclesias*, for which Zwingli gave the German translation *gemeinden* (i.e., *communities*). He translated the greeting to ‘the church of God which is at Corinth’ in 1 Corinthians 1:2 as to ‘Der gemiend, die in Corintho ist’ (eds. Egli & Finsler 1908:58). ‘The Christian man is nothing other than the faithful and good citizen’, he wrote to Ambrosius Blarer in 1528, and ‘the Christian city is nothing other than the Christian church’ (eds. Egli & Köhler 1905:466; quoted in Baker 1985:6).

Baker (1980:167) argues that although both Zwingli and Bullinger called for magisterial sovereignty over the Church, Zwingli’s rationale was not based on a covenant community. According to Baker, Zwingli did not connect the idea of the Christian commonwealth with the Christian magistracy. I find this argument untenable in light of the evidence. In the first place, Zwingli’s connection of the church as a continuation of covenant Israel and the Christian city has already been demonstrated above in his *Reply to Hubmaier*. Secondly, we have also seen how Zwingli equated the church and the Christian state, especially the city council as representative of the church. The synonymy of the covenant church and the state, particularly in Switzerland where the covenant figured so prominently in public life, requires us to understand Zwingli’s *gemeind* as covenantal.

Within the Christian *gemeind* Zwingli and Bullinger prescribed the sovereignty of the civil magistracy over both secular and spiritual matters. On 9 October 1523 Zwingli wrote to Ambrosius Blarer that the city officials in Zurich were the highest authority there in matters both civil and ecclesiastical (Walton 1972:506). Zwingli was himself a member of that

council, further conflating the civil and ecclesiastical power. His participation led the canton into the war that resulted in his own death on 11 October 1531. Bullinger was appointed to Zwingli's pulpit in his stead, though never took a seat on the city's councils.

Humiliated after their loss in the Kappel Wars, the Zurich city council sought assurance that their new pastor would not lead them into more wars as Zwingli had done. The areas under Zurich rule outside the city proper (*Landschaft*) demanded certain reforms, including assurances the city would not go to war without their consent and that pastors should be barred from civic participation or preaching on political topics from the pulpit. Bullinger refused to consent to any limitations on the freedom of the pulpit but agreed that pastors would not involve themselves in civic matters.

Again and again, Bullinger would reaffirm his belief in the theory and longstanding reality of magisterial sovereignty at Zurich. As he saw it, the Reformation was a renewal of God's one and only covenant with His people, Israel. The Reformed church was the heir of that covenant and as such was subject to the polity of ancient Israel, with the magistracy taking the role of the king and elders (ed. Harding 1844:326). The Christian magistrate, as ruler of the Christian commonwealth, was the effective ruler of the church. In 1532 Bullinger and Leo Jud produced council legislation providing for a synod composed of eight councilmen from the city and all the pastors. The synod would have jurisdiction over the church and its pastors, including their lives and their preaching. The order, which was in part based on suggestions from Zwingli, mandated that the council participate in the appointment of pastors, who were required to swear allegiance both to scriptural authority and Reformed doctrines, but also to the magistracy (Walton 1972:508). In this way, Bullinger placed the church in Zurich under the direct control of the magistracy. Thus also the terminus of the church coincided with that



of the commonwealth—a situation preceded by Israelite polity and which would be repeated in a modified form at the Cape.

Having discussed how one becomes a part of the *gemeind* and how it is governed, we now turn to how one is excluded from it. In 1525, during Zwingli's pastorate at Zurich, the city council formed a civil body known as the *Ehegericht* to decide marriage cases. In time its jurisdiction was expanded to more general cases of moral infraction. As we have already seen, Zwingli saw the city council as a legitimate representation of the church, making their judicial decisions and those of the *Ehegericht* effectively the decisions of a church body. An adapted form of the *Ehegericht* was adopted by other Swiss cities as they accepted the Reformation (see Speelman 2014:26–29). When Johannes Oecolampadius proposed a separate ecclesiastical court for Basel, Zwingli was originally open to the idea but eventually rejected separating the disciplinary power between spiritual and secular authorities. Bullinger concurred with Zwingli's later thought (Baker 1985:13–15). In this way he preserved the unity of the church and city during Zwingli's tenure and also after he was succeeded by Bullinger.

One result of the longstanding polity in Zurich can be seen in the 1796 *Political Handbook for the Adults and Youth of the City and Countryside of Zurich* by Zurich Bürgermeister David Wyss.<sup>3</sup> In it Wyss explicated a theory of the relationship between church membership and citizenship, arising out of the polity established in the days of Zwingli and Bullinger. Wyss made it clear that citizenship and church membership were inextricably connected. In his theory, those who left the established church or married a Catholic forfeited their

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<sup>3</sup> Walton incorrectly dates this book as 1798 (Walton 1972:512).

citizenship (Walton 1972:513–514). A similar theory on the nature of citizenship is apparent (if not explicit) in the Afrikaner community at the Cape.

### **2.2.3 Geneva: Calvin and the Covenant**

The Afrikaner community, as has been noted, is reputed to have its basis in the thought of Jean Calvin. It is often asserted that the organising principle of Calvin's work is the doctrine of predestination. This view, however, according to Alistair McGrath, is something of a caricature of Calvin's teachings. According to McGrath (2001:68, 467–468) Calvin was pre-eminently concerned with the sovereignty of God and the doctrine of his grace. Göhler disagrees, stating, 'There is no central doctrine in the theology of Calvin; rather all his doctrines are central in the sense that their aim is to understand independently from their several viewpoints what is central and essential' (Niesel 1956:19). In any case, Calvin was not the originator of the predestination idea, which can be traced at least as far back as Augustine. Its survival in later interpretations as the centre of Calvin's doctrine is owed to Theodore Beza, Calvin's successor at the Genevan Academy, which trained pastors who later served throughout Europe, including the Netherlands.

It is this caricatured predestinarian 'Calvinism' that is cited as the thesis of the Calvinist paradigm of Afrikaner history and of which Hexham, du Toit, and others have been so critical. It is also this caricature which the Bullingerian hypothesis is meant to replace. Van den Bergh (1879) and Lillback (2001) argue for the covenant as one of the many recurring themes in Calvin's thought, while Ryrie (1965:180; cited in Woolsey 1988:314) and Lincoln (1943:131; cited in Woolsey 1988:314) fail to see the covenant as being of any importance at all. Hoekema (1967) argues that the covenant is crucial to understanding Calvin's thought.

Baker (1980:xxii), as we have noted, argues that Calvin's use of covenant is too different to be considered the same thing as Bullinger's usage.

While Calvin may have differed in the particulars of the covenant idea, it is apparent that his usage was not all that different from Zwingli and Bullinger. Concerning the antiquity and unity of the covenant, Calvin (*Inst.* II.10.II) wrote, 'The covenant of all the fathers is so far from differing substantially from ours, that it is the very same; it only varies in the administration'. This excerpt from book II, chapter 10 of the *Institutes*, titled 'The Similarity of the Old and New Testaments,' is only a sample of the inter-testamental covenant apparent in Calvin's writing. This chapter and the next in particular are rife with such language. So too are included proof texts such as Leviticus 26:12. Citing this verse, Calvin wrote, 'For the Lord hath always made his covenant with his servants: "I will be your God, and ye shall be my people"' (*Inst.* II.10.VIII).

In terms of the bilateral covenant apparent in Zurich, the caricature of Calvin unbendingly adhering to a strict soteriology of unilateral election does not hold. In his *Commentary on Romans*, Calvin (ed. Sibson 1834:365–366) wrote that 'the covenant is conceived in a certain number of express and solemn words, and implies a mutual obligation'. Comparing baptism and circumcision, Calvin called it in his 1546 *Commentary on I Corinthians* 'a contract of mutual obligations: for as the Lord by that symbol receives us into his household, and introduces us among his people, so we pledge our fidelity to him, that we will never afterwards have any other spiritual Lord' (Woolsey 1988:II.4).

Concerning the third element pertinent to this study — the internal holiness of children passed down by means of the covenant — Calvin, like Zwingli, discusses this in terms of

children entering into the covenant community as did the children of Israel. He hinted at this idea when he wrote that God ‘deprives not the dead of the blessing of his mercy, which for their sakes he diffuses through a thousand generations’ (*Inst.* II.10. IX). He stated it more explicitly in the 1536 *Confession of Faith* for Geneva: ‘Now since our children belong to such an alliance with our Lord, we are certain that the external sign is rightly applied to them’ (ed. Reid 1954:30). Calvin’s use of ‘alliance’ in the French original could also be translated as *covenant*.

Calvin, then, contrary to what Baker argues, did use the covenant in his theology, and his meaning was not radically different from Zwingli and Bullinger. That Calvin’s soteriology should be so similar to Bullinger’s should not surprise us. It is doubtful Bullinger would have campaigned to install and retain Calvin at Geneva if the two differed as radically as Baker would have us believe. Calvin did include the covenant in his soteriology in a way very similar to Zwingli and Bullinger. Woolsey (1988:290) argues the real difference is one of emphasis.

Having established the covenant idea in Calvin’s thought, it is important to understand too his ideas concerning the relationship between the church and the state. It would be easy to accept the prevailing thought that Calvin advocated for a church independent of secular authority. Herman Speelman (2014:15), however, invites us to reevaluate Calvin’s views on the relationship between the magistracy and the church. Willem Dreyer (2010:171–172) also sees an important role of the covenant in Calvin’s thought regarding the magistracy and its role interwoven into the *corpus christianum*.

Calvin was relatively late on the scene, and by the time he took up his work at Geneva, a church polity was already in place in Reformed Zurich, Bern, and elsewhere. As we have seen, the polity in Zurich consisted of a symbiosis between the church and city council, with the pastors interpreting the scriptures and the council ruling both the city and church (the *gemeind*) based on the pastors' interpretations. Calvin can be seen to have at least partially accepted this model in the 1536 *Confession of Faith* written with Farel (ed. Reid 1954:26–33). There, the two demonstrate their acceptance of the 'supremacy and dominion of kings and princes as also of other magistrates' (ed. Reid 1954:33). In their *Articles Concerning the Organization of the Church*, written to the city's governors, Calvin and Farel note that it is a 'part pertaining to your office' to determine the form of the church in the city (ed. Reid 1954:49).

Once the church was established, Calvin and Farel argued the city government should continue in its involvement in church matters. Concerning the power of discipline, Farel and Calvin proposed the city council appoint pious Christians to watch out for iniquity and report it to the ministers, who would determine the course of action. In the case of repeated impropriety, the offender's sins would be announced to the church and excommunication imposed. Where the case was especially grievous and the offender particularly impenitent, 'it will be your [the city council's] duty to consider if you must for long tolerate and leave unpunished such contempt and mockery of God and his gospel' (ed. Reid 1954:52–53).

Calvin himself, without the influence of Farel in co-writing the proposed ordinances above, can be seen to have at least partially accepted this model in his exegesis of the New Testament (Speelman 2014:116). For example, in the *Institutes* (IV.20.IV) Calvin cites Paul (1 Corinthians 12:28) in asserting that kings and magistrates are put in power by God as an

office of the church. Further, it is their duty to ‘cut off the wicked from the earth, and banish all workers of iniquity from the city of God’ (*Inst.* IV.20.X). These are hardly the arguments of a man bent on separated spheres of influence for the magistracy and the church.

For two years, Calvin attempted to reform the doctrines and morals of the Genevan church. In 1538, however, the Genevans had had enough of his unbending ways and both he and Farel were banished. Calvin then spent three years pastoring congregations in Strasbourg. In 1541, his supporters in Geneva had gained ascendancy in local politics, and, with no small amount of encouragement from Bullinger, Calvin returned to complete the Genevan Reformation for which he would be known.

After Calvin returned to Geneva, his writings show a tension between civil and ecclesiastical power. His exile had forced him to reevaluate the role of the state, but he was also under the necessity of appeasing the city council in order to continue the city’s reform. Though he begins his 1541 church order stating the offices of the church are only those of pastor, doctor (teacher), elder, and deacon, he proposes a little later that the magistrates may settle doctrinal disputes among the company of pastors and elders, making the magistrates in a way ecclesiastical officers as well (ed. Reid 1954:58, 60). Serious ministerial impropriety, including heresy, was also to be adjudged by the ministers and elders and a guilty verdict delivered to the magistracy, which would depose the offending minister. Elders, upon recommendation from the ministers, were to be appointed from the city’s governing councils to watch over the church (ed. Reid 1954:63–64).

Nevertheless, one power not given to the magistracy in the proposed 1541 ordinance was excommunication, which, unlike in Zurich, was the right of the church and reported to the

council later for civil punishment (ed. Reid 1954:70). The right of excommunication is also placed on the church in Calvin's *Institutes* (IV.11.II). Calvin continued to develop his polity, separating the powers of the state from the church, and by the time of his final edition of the *Institutes*, he argued that the church 'stands in need of a certain spiritual polity; which however is entirely distinct from the civil polity' (*Inst.* IV.11.I). Further, he devoted the entirety of book IV, chapter 11 to an argument for the separation of civic and church governance.

#### **2.2.4 The Netherlands**

The Protestant thought that flowed into the Netherlands came to be associated with the Dutch nationalism that developed before and during the Revolt. Much of that thought was Lutheran, and it was met with violence. Much of it, though, was Reformed, and it was the Reformed Protestants who eventually came through victorious. The Reformed theology that won out was also decidedly covenantal. As evidence, Dutchmen Johannes Anastasius Veluanus's 1554 *Guide for the Laity to Christian Faith* and Gelius Snecanus's 1584 *A Methodical Description of God's Grace* were both steeped in the covenant (Baker 1980:211–3). Schrenck (1929:36) found covenant theology's influence in all the Reformed universities in the Netherlands. Between 1563 and 1622 the Dutch translation of Bullinger's *Decades* went through thirteen full or partial editions (McCoy and Baker 1991:30).

Additional evidence for covenant theology's significant influence in the Netherlands can be found in the relationship between the church and the Dutch state. As was noted in Zurich, the unity of church and state in the covenant community was a hallmark of the covenantal ideal. As early as 1568 the Reformed church in the Netherlands approached the government

requesting the state's involvement in church affairs. This is an important point, as it demonstrates the church's desire for state involvement and not, as one might assume, the state asserting that power itself. Zwingli's and Bullinger's calls for the involvement of the magistrates in church matters were undoubtedly attractive to secular leaders but it was not a one-sided proposition.

The church welcomed and in some cases initiated state involvement. The Provincial Synod of Dortrecht (1574) provided for the government's giving its authority to church decisions, including the appointment of deacons for new congregations. Beyond that, the government was given authority to approve or reject a pastor after his election by a church council. The National Synod at the Hague (1586) gave even more influence to the government in church deliberations, declaring that the government could send two delegates to meetings of church councils (Raath 2002:1008). Speelman (2014:230) sees the Dutch church moving more and more toward a symbiosis with the state. In line with the Zurich order but unlike the Genevan situation, the Dutch Church Order of 1576 did not require the government to consult the minister before imposing excommunication (Speelman 2014:227). These provisions for magisterial involvement in church affairs would be further codified at the Synod of Dort (1618–1619) discussed below.

Especially important to an understanding of covenant theology's influence on the Dutch church and its relationship to the state was the government's insistence on universal baptism — a position mirroring that of the Zurich city council during the Anabaptist controversy. The States of Holland and Zeeland in their church order of 1576 called for the baptism of all who were presented. In contrast, though the Dutch delegates to the Synod of Dort (1618–1619) disagreed, many of the foreign delegates argued for the right of children born to non-



Christian parents to be baptised. The Dutch delegates argued that children born to two non-Christian parents ‘stand outside the covenant. . . . [and] have no part of the promise’ (Kaajan 1914:251). As such, they would need to wait until adulthood to be baptised after making a confession of faith.

In a move that evidences the belief that the Christian church/commonwealth was the heir to ancient Israel in the Dutch mind, it was decided at Dort that since an Israelite could not hold another Israelite in bondage, a Christian could not hold another Christian as a slave.

Therefore, slaves who were baptised must be set free. Jonathan Gerstner argues that this unique position of the Dutch church was inextricably tied to the Dutch understanding of the covenant (Gerstner 1991:200). It is also evidence of the doctrine of internal holiness in the Dutch church antedating the South African context.

#### **2.2.4.1 The Formularies of the Dutch Reformed Church**

In distinguishing between the peculiarities of late Calvinism’s church polity and the consistent polity of Zwingli and Bullinger within the generality of Reformed theology in the Netherlands, it is necessary to examine the foundational documents of the Dutch church. The faith of the Dutch Reformed Church is founded in the Bible and three formularies that bring unity within the church and separation from the outside. They are the Belgic Confession, Heidelberg Catechism, and the Canons of Dort. Jonathan Neil Gerstner (1991:10) writes that all three ‘demonstrate how much the Dutch Reformed Church was influenced by the broader Reformed community’. We examine them here to demonstrate the relative acceptance of Zwinglian/Bullingerian and Calvinist ideas within the Reformed church of the Netherlands.

#### 2.2.4.2 The Belgic Confession

The Belgic Confession is traditionally attributed to Guido De Bres but there is evidence that De Bres was part of a committee responsible for its authorship. De Bres was born in 1522 in the Southern Netherlands town of Mons, now in Belgium but then under Spanish rule. Raised by Roman Catholic parents, he was trained as a glass painter, like his father. He converted to the Reformed faith as a young adult and took refuge in England from 1548 until 1552. In England, he was exposed to the preaching of Jan Łaski and Martin Bucer. He later studied in Geneva under Jean Calvin and Theodore Beza. On 31 May 1576 he was hanged for heresy at Valenciennes in France.

The Belgic Confession first appeared anonymously in De Bres's base of Doornik. It was written as a plea for tolerance by King Philip II of Spain. The anonymity of its author witnesses to the fear that held Protestants in its grip. At the time, Philip's forces were engaged in a pogrom determined to root out Protestantism as an enemy of the Catholic Church.

Despite Philip's opposition, Reformed ministers met in Antwerp in June 1565 and accepted the Belgic Confession as normative for the churches in the southern Low Countries (roughly today's Belgium). Three years later, a conference at Wesel concurred and the 1618–1619 Synod of Dort completed the normalisation process for the Dutch Reformed churches.

The document was based on the largely Calvin-authored Gallic Confession. It is not overly covenantal in its theology. It does, however, present doctrines in common if not originating from Zwingli and Bullinger. Gerstner (1991:16) writes, 'One sees that the Belgic Confession

was clearly composed from an internal holiness view of covenantal holiness'. His conclusion, however, is drawn not from the text itself but from other writings of De Bres. Case in point: Gerstner (1991:15) cites De Bres's argument that 'Abraham had the righteousness (that is to say the forgiveness of sins) through faith, and his Isaac had the same righteousness without faith, through the means of the gracious covenant'. Thus De Bres sees Isaac as internally holy, having been born into the covenant.

Gerstner misses two important elements of covenant theology in the Confession. While it is true that covenant theology is not the central theme of the Confession, it is not entirely absent. In section 34, on baptism, the confession states that children of believers

ought to be baptized and sealed with the sign of the covenant, as the children in Israel formerly were circumcised, upon the same promises which are made unto our children. And indeed Christ shed his blood no less for the washing of the children of the faithful, than for adult persons; and therefore they ought to receive the sign and sacrament of that, which Christ has done for them; as the Lord commanded in the law, that they should be made partakers of the sacrament of Christ's suffering and death, shortly after they were born, by offering for them a lamb, which was a sacrament of Jesus Christ. Moreover, that circumcision was to the Jews, that baptism is to our children. And for this reason Paul calls baptism the circumcision of Christ.

(Evangelism Committee n.d.:29)

In this way the Confession echoes Zwingli's argument in acknowledging the continuity of the Old Testament covenant with the covenant of the New Testament and stating an internal

holiness view. That internal holiness stems from the covenant made between God, believers, and the believers' children.

The covenant community is further supported in the Belgic Confession in its discussion of the Christian magistrate. Regarding the magistrates, the confession states that 'their office is, not only to have regard unto, and watch for the welfare of the civil state; but also that they protect the sacred ministry; and thus may remove and prevent all idolatry and false worship' (Evangelism Committee n.d.:30). Thus the magistracy was to maintain the covenant community by ensuring a strict orthodoxy as defined by the established church.

#### **2.2.4.3 The Heidelberg Catechism**

The contents of the Heidelberg Catechism were certainly the best known to Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) congregants at the Cape. Church law endorsed its use for catechising children and for preaching on Sundays. Thus, it was not only taught to children; adults and children alike heard it in their weekly worship services.

Like the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism was born in strife. It was commissioned by the Palatine elector Frederick III who hid his Reformed leanings behind an official Lutheranism. Lutheranism was protected by the Peace of Augsburg, but it was unclear whether the Reformed faith would be similarly tolerated. The elector ordered the theological faculty at Heidelberg's university to produce a document proving Reformed theology was not as radical as Anabaptism. Several of the staff contributed, though chief authorship is generally accredited to Zacharius Ursinus.

Ursinus was born in Breslau (now Wrocław, Poland) as Zacharias Baer. He enrolled at the University of Wittenberg at fifteen, where he boarded with Luther's successor, Philipp Melancthon. He later studied at Strasbourg, Basel, Lausanne, and Geneva. A tract he wrote on the sacraments was viewed as too Reformed and not Lutheran, and he was driven to seek refuge in Zurich, where he took up a friendship with Heinrich Bullinger. He was appointed professor in Heidelberg in 1561 at the age of 27, and it was there he received the commission to write the catechism.

Given the context in which it was written and the intellectual pedigree of its primary author, it is unsurprising that the catechism is not overtly covenantal or even Reformed. Instead, it presents a careful synthesis of Protestant thought. It does, however, contain some hints of its primary author's ties with Zurich.

After establishing humanity's depravity and need for salvation in the first three questions, question 4 asks (Evangelism Committee n.d.:1), 'What does the law of God require of us?' To this inquiry, the catechism responds with Christ's words in Matthew 22:37–40, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. This is the first and the great commandment; and the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets'. Following Bullinger (1534:113), love, then, is the stated first condition of salvation. This doctrine is supported further in the catechism by cross references to Deuteronomy 6:5, Leviticus 19:18, Mark 12:30, and Luke 10:27. The breadth of these texts covering both the Old and the New Testaments utilises Bullinger's hermeneutical principle of explaining scripture with scripture and manifests a difference with the Anabaptists, who rejected the Old Testament as binding on Christians.

The inter-testamental hermeneutic is also apparent in the answer to question 19 (Evangelism Committee n.d.:3). There, using *gospel* as a synonym for the word *covenant*, the catechism's authors make clear the teaching of a single covenant, echoing the Zurich theologians. The answer states that 'the holy gospel' was made known 'which God himself first revealed in Paradise; and afterwards published by the patriarchs and prophets, and represented by the sacrifices and other ceremonies of the law; and lastly, has fulfilled it by his only begotten Son'.

Question 5 asks 'Canst thou keep all these things perfectly?' The respondent must then confess his imperfection, to which question 6 responds, 'Did God then create man so wicked and perverse?' Again we see Bullinger's influence in the reply, 'By no means; but God created man good, and after his own image' (Evangelism Committee n.d.:1). Bullinger (1850:362) writes in Decade 3, sermon 10, 'For God, which created all things, did also create the nature of man, and made it good, even as all things else which he created were also good. Therefore the nature of man was good. For it is an accidental quality that happened to man either in, or immediately after, his fall, and not a substantial property, to have his nature so spotted with corruption as not it is'. This doctrine of humanity's fall from a perfect state is not entirely unique to Bullinger, but its presentation in the catechism bears marks of Bullinger's more positive attitude than Calvin's negative attitude.

The most overt invocation of the covenant comes in the catechism's discussion of baptism. A covenant defence of infant baptism is at least as old as Zwingli's 1525 *Reply to Hubmaier*. As we have seen, Bullinger, too, made use of this argument, including an internal holiness aspect to it.

#### 2.2.4.4 The Canons of Dort

The Reformed Church in the post-Spanish Netherlands was never a state church so much as a public church. Other religions were officially tolerated, though full civic participation and political office were restricted to members of the Reformed Church. Tolerance, however, was not extended to heterodoxy within the Reformed Church. The case of Jakob Hermanszoon, which led to the creation of the Canons of Dort, is an interesting illustration of popular religion, the developing polity of the Dutch church, and the church's relationship to the state. The aftershocks were keenly felt in South Africa.

Hermanszoon, better known by his Latinised name, Jacobus Arminius, was a man of impeccable Reformed credentials. He studied at Leiden University and moved on to Geneva, where he studied under the tutelage of Theodore Beza — a man Oxford historian Diarmaid MacCullough (2003:364) calls 'the High Priest of Calvinist orthodoxy'. Hermanszoon served the church in Amsterdam from 1587 to 1602, when he accepted a faculty appointment at the University of Leiden.

It was at Leiden that the controversy that brought Hermanszoon fame began. Hermanszoon questioned the doctrines of unconditional election, limited atonement, and irresistible grace. His teaching soon came under suspicion and his orthodoxy was questioned, most prominently by his fellow professor Francois Gomaer (Franciscus Gomarus), who accused him of Pelagianism, a heresy unduly emphasising salvation through human works over divine grace. Arminius's death in 1609 saved him from the controversy that would bear his name.

In 1610 Arminius' followers, under the leadership of Johannes Uytenbogaert and Simon Episcopius, submitted a 'remonstrance', or declaration, delineating and defending Arminius's teachings to the States of Holland. The States's role here in settling a theological dispute is interesting. By 1618 the debate between the Gomarists and Arminians had reached the brink of civil war. The issue was not solely theological. The Arminians were prevalent among the merchants and favoured a federal union of the Dutch lands while the Gomarists were favoured by the monarchist nobility and peasants who favoured a national union (Coertzen 2012:79). These factions were led by the prime minister, Johan Oldenbarneveldt, on the side of the Arminians and the stadtholder Prince Maurice on the side of the Gomarists. In 1617 Maurice's forces removed Arminian office holders from their posts, effecting a sort of *coup d'état*. To settle the matter, a synod was called, inviting theologians and churchmen from all over Europe to convene at Dortrecht (Dort, as it is commonly known in English). Though Arminius's name figures most prominently in the controversy, the issues also involved the proper interpretation of both Calvin and Bullinger. Both sides claimed Bullinger as a theological ancestor (Baker 1980:28–29).

The synod met from 13 November 1618 to 9 May 1619 and the Gomarists held the upper hand from the beginning. Only three Remonstrant ministers and elders were seated as delegates, and when more were called and subsequently questioned the synod's legitimacy and procedure, they were dismissed. The earlier three left in protest (Coertzen 2012:81). Arminianism was officially declared a heresy, and predestinarianism became the defining characteristic of the Reformed faith in the popular view. The soteriology which emerged was decidedly based on election. However, the familiar doctrine of internal holiness of children born into pious families within the covenant makes its appearance in Article 17 of the First Head, assuring parents that their children who die are elected and saved.



Since we are to judge of the will of God from his Word, which testifies that the children of believers are holy, not by nature, but in virtue of the covenant of grace, in which they, together with the parents, are comprehended, godly parents have no reason to doubt of the election and salvation of their children, whom it pleaseth God to call out of this life in their infancy.

(Evangelism Committee n.d.:34)

The high Calvinists may have won the debate for a soteriology with a predestinarian emphasis, but the polity apparent in the church order the synod produced bears the clear marks of Zwinglian/Bullingerian thought. Article 4 stipulated that ministers were to be appointed with the approval of the local Christian government. Article 37 gave the government the right to appoint representatives to the church council. Of particular interest is Article 28, which defined the relationship of the church to the state. It was the province of the state to protect and promote the church in its ministry. In return, it was the church's responsibility to inculcate in its members a respect for the state (Coertzen 2012:82). There can be no doubt that the delegates intended government involvement only when the government was Christian. Thus, the relationship was one of a Christian church within a Christian state, reminiscent of Zwingli, Bullinger, and early Calvin. Coertzen (2012:87) calls this a 'Constantinian' model, implying it was forced upon the church, without considering that in Zwingli's and Bullinger's thought, the situation was not only politic but in accordance with scripture.

### 2.3 Jan van Riebeeck and the Company (VOC) Period

Every South African school child knows the story of Jan van Riebeeck's landing at the Cape of Good Hope on 6 April 1652. Similarly, every American pupil knows at least some version of the Mayflower's landing at Plymouth Rock and the first Thanksgiving. One critique of the Calvinist paradigm is the fact that unlike America's Puritan Pilgrims, the early settlers at the Cape were not engaged in a religious enterprise, *per se*. It was never their intent to create a religious (i.e., Reformed) utopia in Africa (du Toit 1983:922). Rather, the Lords Seventeen's intent at the Cape was primarily commercial.

But even prior to van Riebeeck's landing at the Cape, religion was a consideration in the area's settlement by Europeans and their relations with the native peoples. The advancement of the Reformed faith was the Company's stated policy if not its *raison d'être* (Coertzen 2012:83). When the Dutch East India Company (*Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie* or *VOC*) ship *Haarlem* was shipwrecked at the Cape in 1648 and its crew forced to remain for five months, several of them found the site desirable for settlement. Two of the seamen, Leendert Jansz and Nicolaas Proot, presented a remonstrance to the Company's directors, the Lords Seventeen, arguing that among the benefits of establishing a refreshment station at the Cape was that native peoples could be taught Christianity (Wilson and Thompson 1969:188). Whether Jansz and Proot truly felt any sort of missionary zeal we cannot tell, but their appeal to the Lords Seventeen's Christianity is telling of the latter's perceived religiosity.

### 2.3.1 Dutch/Afrikaans Religion at the Cape

The perception of piety among the Lords Seventeen was a product of that body's own doing. The VOC made provision for the religious needs of its employees both aboard ship and at the Company's outposts overseas. In larger settlements, ordained ministers were installed. More commonly, however, at sea and in the smaller outposts, the Company employed *ziektroosters*, alternately translated as 'sick comforters' or 'comforters of the sick'. These unordained laymen were trained outside of the university system established for the preparation of churchmen and were under specific instructions for their work.

Among the instructions provided by the Company were lists of materials to be used in their Sunday worship services. Contrary to what one would expect in light of the often-employed Calvinist paradigm of Afrikaner history, Calvin's works were not prescribed for the comforters' use. What was mandated was reading from Heinrich Bullinger's *Decades*, which Geerhardus Vos (1980:236) points out is 'structured entirely by the covenant idea'. Also prescribed was reading from the Heidelberg Catechism. From these works, a theology heavily influenced by the doctrine of the covenant was imparted to the inhabitants of the Cape.

Preaching from the pulpit does not always result in any real piety in the pews or in the lives of congregants. But some real piety is evident at least in the persons and families of the Cape's first two commanders. Just before or just after setting foot on African ground, van Riebeeck's legend tells of his invocation of heaven to bless not only the commercial enterprise in which they were engaged but also the church. Van Riebeeck's 1652 prayer demonstrates both his piety and his and the Company's economic purposes for being at the Cape. Neither of these should be forgotten.

Jan van Riebeeck's family was certainly influenced by the missionary ideal as well. His wife, Maria, is believed to have taught the first Khoikhoi convert to pray to the Christian god. The woman, known as Eva, in turn taught others.

The settlement's second commander, Zacharias Wagenaer, followed in the patterns of the first. Before arriving at the Cape, he is known to have ordered secret Christian services in Japan, against Company policy. At his death, Wagenaer left money to the Cape's deacons to be given to the poor (Gerstner 1997:24). These men and the Company they served are primarily responsible for the Bullingerian church polity that came to be at the Cape.

J. P. Jooste and others have argued that no independent church was formed at the early Cape (Raath 2002:999). Andries Raath accepts the lack of a separately organised church while arguing that the church, inextricably connected to the Company acting in a quasi-state, followed a Bullingerian model of church polity in which the church and Company were virtually indistinguishable (2002). Raath's incomplete if not incorrect identification of Bullinger as the source of this model has already been discussed.

The church at the Cape nevertheless did follow the model developed at Zurich. Under the VOC, the Dutch Reformed Church operated almost as an extension of the Company itself. DRC polity appointed the consistory composed of the pastor, elders, and deacons of the local congregation. The primary governing body and the next level of government was the classis. In South Africa and many other colonial outposts, where a classis was not constituted, the congregations were under the authority of the Classis of Amsterdam.

Amsterdam's distance made effective government of the Cape church difficult, and the VOC's Council of Policy became the *de facto* governing body of the local church. In a situation rarely seen in the Netherlands, the VOC appointed all candidates for local consistories. When the Rev E. F. le Boucq attempted to replace VOC-appointed members of his congregation's consistory in 1708, the Council of Policy sent him to the Governor-General of the VOC outpost in Indonesia rather than allow him to argue his appeal to the Classis of Amsterdam (Gerstner 1997:20). This action demonstrates the power of the VOC, acting in its role as the *de facto* state, governing the church within its territory.

Polity is, however, of little importance to the average church member. The faith of the everyday church member is experienced in the sacraments rather than church councils. The sacraments provided by the quasi-state church were an important community event for city dwellers and frontier farmers who would often travel for days to have their children baptised or to attend the quarterly communion service. Baptism and communion were essential to Afrikaner group identity. While personal piety was rooted in the devotional services practiced at home, the sacraments provided a community with which to identify as a group. The baptismal form, itself, bearing marks of an internal holiness theology, implied that that group was redeemed by right of birth (i.e., lineage or ethnicity) (Gerstner 1997:26–27).

Children born to European parents were entered on the baptismal register at Cape Town under the category 'Names of Christian Children'. Children born to slave parents were entered under 'Slave Children of the Honourable Company'. The connotation was clear: a white child was internally holy — a Christian based upon parentage. A black child could be saved, but salvation was conditioned externally. Salvation was, at least in part, a function of racial election (Gerstner 1997:25). This carries on a tradition born of the States Bible which

used the word *heiden* (heathen) for what English translators have rendered *gentiles*, *nations*, and *peoples* as a source of the separation between the Afrikaners and non-Afrikaners (particularly non-whites) (Gerstner 1997:3). Of particular importance in this regard is the word which has become so pejorative in South African usage that it has attained the status of one of the world's most hated words: *kaffir*. This word, which was first used by Arab Muslims, originally meant non-believer or heathen and was used by them for pagan (i.e., non-Muslim) Africans. It was adopted by VOC employees in Batavia to describe imported slaves from Angola and Mozambique. In contrast, echoing Zwingli's usage, the word *gemeente* came to be used for the Christian church.

### **2.3.2 Huguenots and Non-Reformed Religionists Arrive at the Cape**

The Dutch East India Company, under direction of its charter, supported the DRC alone as the public church in its colonies. Jonathan Israel (1998:952) points out that 'the VOC's intolerance of Catholicism, and measures against Catholic priests, were thus a major plank of imperial policy'. Although Catholicism was tolerated in the Netherlands, Catholics found a much less hospitable situation at the Cape. Six Jesuit priests were allowed to come ashore at Table Bay in 1688 because they were also astronomers but were not allowed to exercise their religious vocation. They report being met by several closet Catholics who showed them their rosaries to prove their Catholicism. The priests were not allowed, however, to say mass on shore, and the Catholic inhabitants were not allowed to go aboard ship to worship there (Brown 1960:4).

Even Protestants who found themselves out of step with the Dutch church at the Cape encountered difficulty. The October 1685 Edict of Fontainebleau in France ended toleration

of Protestantism in Catholic France. For nearly one hundred years Protestantism had been officially tolerated following the Edict of Nantes of 13 April 1598. But toleration was to be no more, and thousands of Protestant families fled France. Many fled to the Netherlands, where urban centres clamoured to welcome the new immigrants. Some even set up pastorates for French ministers affiliated with the Dutch Reformed Church, but overseen by the Synod of the Walloon Church in an effort to encourage immigration (Israel 1998:628–629). In 1688 180 Huguenots arrived in the Cape of Good Hope.

French Protestantism, like that in the Netherlands, had been influenced by covenant thought. The Scottish covenant theologian, John Cameron, who had been influenced by the leading Scottish churchman and also a covenant theologian, Robert Rollock, took up a chair at one of the premier Protestant institutions in France, the Academy of Saumur, in 1618. One of Cameron's students, Moïse Amyraut, later took up a chair at the same institution, teaching alongside others of Cameron's students Louis Cappel and Josué de la Place (McCoy & Baker 1991:41–42). Thus the Huguenots who landed at the Cape in 1688 would have been similarly influenced by the ideas of covenant theology.

Cape officials, however, had no intention of allowing a rival European culture even if it was Reformed. Governor van der Stel instructed that the newcomers be interspersed among Dutch settlers 'so that they could learn our language and morals, and be integrated with the Dutch nation' (Böeseke 1964:95, quoted in Giliomee 2003:11). This included integration into Dutch congregations; Van der Stel refused the new immigrants' request to establish their own French-speaking congregation. The refugees' pastor, Pierre Simond, appealed to the Lords Seventeen and won approval for his congregants to meet and worship in French. The French colonists did eventually join with Dutch congregations after Simond's departure in 1702, but

they had made their point: having been subject to the Catholic king of France and no history in the Zurich tradition practiced in the Netherlands and codified in the Dort Church Order, they had no tradition of subjection to their civil magistrates and would not unquestioningly subject themselves to the Council of Policy in church matters (see Speelman 2014:143–208).

In reaction to the Huguenots' resistance, Governor van der Stel asked the VOC to send German colonists instead of French, believing that the German Lutherans would be more easily integrated into Dutch Reformed congregations (Gerstner 1997:20–21). German immigrants, after all, had been meeting in Dutch Reformed congregations for years without major difficulty.

As the German population at the Cape grew in the eighteenth century, the pious Lutherans among them began petitioning for a Lutheran congregation. The Company refused repeatedly. Finally, in 1780 a congregation was allowed and a warehouse was converted for the purpose of holding services. By then, however, as with the case of the Huguenot French immigrants before them, the children of the German immigrants spoke mostly Dutch and had been integrated into the Dutch culture at the Cape. Few returned to Lutheran pews.

The experience of Catholics and Lutherans as well as the Huguenot episode demonstrate an important difference between the situation at the Cape and that in the Netherlands. The Cape government was far less tolerant of religious heterodoxy, reflecting a greater adherence to the Zurich principle of the coterminality of the church and the Christian commonwealth.

Hermann Giliomee (2003:14) has argued that before the late nineteenth century the term 'race' was not exclusively a marker of biology. Instead, the distinguishing factor was culture. It is understandable, then, that the Cape officials were so intent on denying Catholic and



Lutheran worship and integrating the French Huguenots and German Lutherans into existing Cape culture, a distinguishing factor of which was the monopoly of the Dutch-speaking Dutch Reformed Church. Efforts to acculturate the Huguenots' descendants appear to have been effective. By 1750, no one under forty could speak French (Botha 1939:40–49).

## **2.4 Afrikanerdom in the British Empire**

‘The last decade of the eighteenth century and the first three decades of the nineteenth was a period of rapid transition in the culture — economic, political, religious, and legal — of the South African Boers’ (Templin 1968:283). During this time, possession of the Cape changed hands three times: from Dutch to British, back to Dutch (under the Batavian regime), and again back to British. The Batavian regime was far less interested in maintaining the Dutch Reformed monopoly at the Cape, and Governor-General Jacob Abraham DeMist declared tolerance and freedom of religion for all those worshipping ‘the Almighty God’ in 1804. Three Dutch Catholic priests were sent to the Cape in 1805 but were soon expelled when the next British governor, Sir David Baird, a devout Scottish Presbyterian, took command at Cape Town in 1806.

After the British took the Cape for the final time in 1806, they began a sustained effort of creating the Cape in their own image. Laws were passed requiring English be spoken in important aspects of public life and enforcing English ideals (including and especially those concerning race relations). In 1821 the administration announced its intention to phase out the Dutch language and require English in official life. Dutch was not allowed in Parliament beginning in 1854, and the School Act of 1865 banished Dutch from all government schools. A decree in 1828 declared equality for white and coloured inhabitants and slavery was

abolished in 1834. The 1853 constitution allowed for universal male suffrage for anyone with more than £25 of property, including black and coloured men. However, although Afrikaners dominated the electorate, the lack of proficiency in English barred as many as seventy percent of them from serving not only in Parliament but in 4,500 other positions in government (Giliomee 2003:202, 203).

#### **2.4.1 Afrikaner Reactions to British Rule and Anglicisation**

The first three decades of British rule saw few signs of rebellion (Giliomee 2003:195). Beginning in the mid-1830s, however, a large component of Afrikaners at the Cape famously left Cape Town in what would be known as the Great Trek. This event has become a seminal event in Afrikaner and South African history generally. But what of those Dutch-speaking colonists who stayed behind? They and their descendants were those who greeted the Mormons on their arrival in 1853.

Hermann Giliomee cites ‘several cultural and economic factors’ for the ‘political submissiveness of the Afrikaners’ and it is important to note that he is mostly referring to the Afrikaners at the Cape rather than the Voortrekkers, who quit the Colony. First, the Company officials at the Cape largely kept their previous positions and thus remained beholden to the new regime for their employ. Second, the western farmers benefitted from increased market possibilities, and the eastern farmers were too far removed to be much affected by British policies. In addition, Giliomee (2003:198) cites several contemporary observers pointing out a certain submissiveness apparent in the Afrikaners as a sort of national character. ‘Among the Reformed clergy’, Giliomee writes, ‘there was an almost instinctive tendency to remain loyal to the government of the day as part of a God-will social order’. As evidence of this, he

notes that a majority of ministers at the 1837 synod opposed the Great Trek as rebellion against a God-established government. Giliomee seems unaware that this ‘tendency’ as he calls it among the Afrikaners who remained in the Cape Colony was likely a manifestation of the Zwinglian/Bullingerian ethos of obedience to magistrates as God’s representatives in the *gemeente* which had developed and lodged itself in the Afrikaner cultural zeitgeist (Baker 1980:255n35). This submission to secular authority was preached annually by the ministers at the synod in the answer to the 104<sup>th</sup> question in the Heidelberg Catechism and had been codified at Dort (Article 28) as a binding law to the church.

The burghers who remained at the Cape may have more or less accepted their political domination by the British but they did not accept them into the Afrikaner community. The experience of the nineteenth-century Rev Johannes Jacobus Kotzé is illustrative of how the Afrikaners of the nineteenth century saw themselves in relation to the British. Kotzé reported hearing a farmer say of two approaching Afrikaners, a Khoi servant, and an Englishman, ‘Here comes two Christians, a Hottentot and an Englishman’ (Gerstner 1991:252). This statement has often been cited as evidence of the Afrikaners’ use of religion to identify themselves apart from black Africans, but it also demonstrates the use of religion to mark the difference between English and Afrikaners. It was not simply that Christians were white; Christians were Dutch (Reformed) and white. Anglicanism and the dissenting churches of the English did not qualify as Christianity — at least not the same kind of Christianity as that of the Afrikaners. In Zurich fashion, the limits of the Afrikaner community coincided with the limits of the Afrikaner church.

As the English colonists dominated political and social life at the Cape, including the new Parliament initiated in 1854, the Dutch Reformed Church became an increasingly important

Afrikaner institution. The arrival of the British coincided with a religious revival for the Afrikaners. Whereas in the eighteenth century, an apathy toward religion prevailed, by 1830 one traveller noted, ‘There are certainly no people in the world who are so truly God-fearing as the Afrikaner’ (Giliomee 2003:41–42).

The new British masters recognised the importance of the Afrikaners’ church and retained it as a public church, although not as the sole public church. As one might expect, Anglicanism took its place as a public church as well. The administration subsidised both Anglican and Dutch Reformed clergy salaries and the costs of constructing and maintaining church buildings. Retaining the Zurich model (although likely unintentionally), the administration also retained the right to station, transfer, and depose ministers, making them in a way civil servants as they had been under Company rule. Dissenting Protestant churches were not supported from public funds but were tolerated as they were in England. English religion at the Cape was never as monolithic as that of the Afrikaners and was not as closely associated with English identity.

When a shortage of DRC clergy required new ministers for the colony, the administration first sought to fill the posts with churchmen from the Netherlands. When not enough could be found, the administration turned to Reformed Protestant Scots, who were then required to learn Dutch. These new Scottish ministers were also encouraged to start holding church services in English as part of Somerset’s Anglicisation efforts. Here the DRC drew the line. The synod of 1824 refused the move by the Scottish clergy for English services. Continued attempts at establishing English services in the DRC led the *Zuid-Afrikaan* to write, ‘to change the language of your religion you would be taking the first step to betray your belief and your religion’ (Scholtz 1970:133; quoted in Giliomee 2003:199).

Despite the obvious intent by the British administration to use the Scottish ministers to anglicise the Afrikaners in the Cape Colony, there was a significant strain of covenant thought running through Reformed Scottish Protestantism as well. The covenant's inclusion of the children of believers is literally writ large on the walls of the seventeenth-century Mariners' Gallery of Burntisland parish church: 'Gods [*sic*] providence is our inheritance', it reads (Todd 2003). The first rector of the University of Edinburgh, Robert Rollock, published his *Treatise of God's Effectual Calling* in 1603, which exhibited a great deal of influence from Bullinger's writings on the covenant (McCoy & Baker 1991:41). The covenant theology of Andrew Murray Jr., the son of one Scottish minister imported to the colony, will be discussed in greater detail in chapter 4.

#### **2.4.2 An Evolving Church Polity**

When the Dutch handed over the Cape to the British in 1795, the articles of capitulation mandated that the Dutch Reformed Church remain the public church. Under the Batavian regime's short rule of the Cape, Commissary-General Jacob Abraham de Mist promulgated a Church order on 25 July 1804 titled 'Provisional Church Regulations for the Batavian Colony at the Cape of Good Hope'. De Mist's church order emancipated the Cape church from the church in the Netherlands, but rather than giving it greater autonomy, it placed the DRC more firmly under local control by the colonial administration.

F. W. Sass (1956:8) called de Mist's church order 'thoroughly Erastian' after the Swiss theologian Thomas Erastus, who advocated for the Zurich model of church polity and discipline and who was part of the committee that drafted the Heidelberg Catechism. Church courts under the new order at the Cape were subject to approval by the administration. The

government reserved the right to establish new congregations, appoint ministers, and call deliberative assemblies. Government representatives were to be present at meetings of the consistory and were responsible to report deliberations to the government for approval.

Again upon capitulation of the colony to the British, the Dutch stipulated that ‘public worship as at present in use shall also be maintained without alteration’ (Sass 1956:198). De Mist’s church order stood until 1843, when new church regulations were promulgated by Governor Sir George Napier.

The Church Order of 1843 came about because of a controversy in the church occasioned by the suspension and reinstatement of Rev Robert Shand of Tulbagh during the administration of Napier’s predecessor, Benjamin D’Urban. Shand refused to baptise the son of H. F. Conradie, a church deacon, because Shand believed the deacon profaned the Sabbath by riding his horse on Sundays. Conradie complained to both the governor and the presbytery at Swellendam. The presbytery suspended the minister on 14 March 1836 and the governor concurred. Upon hearing Shand’s pledge to uphold the usual baptismal practice, the Synod of 1837 agreed to lift the suspension. However, the governor refused to lift the suspension and the synod’s decision was overridden.

A long period of appeal and deferral followed. Shand appealed to the Secretary of State for War and the Colonies, Lord Glenelg, in London. Glenelg deferred to the Committee of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland for Colonial Churches. Shand had, after all, been ordained in the Church of Scotland to begin with. The Scottish assembly’s response left little doubt of their disdain for the level of government interference thus far employed, and Shand was reinstated in his ministry.

The Scottish church was Reformed and heavily influenced by covenant theology, but it had also, like the church at the Cape, been subject to the government of England — a foreign and episcopalian power. It is not surprising, then, that the presbyterian Scottish church would reject English power over the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa. Zwingli stated in his *Sixty-seven Articles* that unfaithful magistrates may be deposed (ed. Jackson 1901:115). The covenant theologian and founder of the Saumur Academy Philippe de Mornay theorised that when the government did not uphold the conditions of the covenant, the people were bound to revolt (McCoy & Baker 1991:48–49). While all-out revolution was not warranted in this case, emancipation from government control was desirable.

In the midst of all this, Rev William Robertson moved for a revision of the church order at the synod of 1837. No doubt, Robertson was at least in part motivated by a desire to lessen the British colonial government's interference in church affairs. He was not alone. It was a position held by many of the Scottish ministers at the Cape (Sass 1956:202–203).

Unfortunately for them, though the motion passed, it was quashed by the governor's refusal to give ascent to the proceedings.

It was not until the 1842 synod appointed a deputation to negotiate with the governor that Napier consented to a new church order. The new Church Ordinance was promulgated the following year as Ordinance 7 of 1843. It ended the government's right to appoint political commissioners at synods and the requirement of obtaining ascent from the governor. It did not, however, completely divorce the church from the state, as we will see in chapter 4. The government still wielded the power of the purse and retained the power to appoint ministers.

## 2.5 Chapter Summary and Conclusion

The Netherlands provided a fertile field for the ideas and events that led to the Reformation. Movements which started on Dutch soil spread to other parts of Europe, where they matured before returning to bear fruit. Humanist work by Erasmus and others led to the Reformation. Reformers like Luther, Zwingli, Bullinger, and Calvin all found the covenant a compelling theme in scripture and utilised it in their hermeneutics and exegesis. So prevalent was their use of the covenant idea that I reject Baker's identification of Bullinger as the 'fountainhead' of covenant theology.

Raath's argument for Bullinger's theology forming the foundation of Dutch society at the Cape is then necessarily suspect. What we find is that the evidence bears Bullinger's fingerprints — but not as the hands that formed the ideas. Instead, Bullinger's fingerprints are present because he handled and continued shaping the ideas before handing them off again to eventually find their way to the Cape. I find strong evidence of Bullingerian thought but credit Zwingli and others for their origination. We see in Zwingli and Calvin a bilateral covenant spanning the Old and New Testaments and even a doctrine of the internal holiness of children. These ideas, which are so important to the crux of this study, lead me to conclude that Bullinger should not be credited (as in Baker and subsequently Raath) with originating the covenant theology at the Cape.

Once the covenant theology had been introduced at the Cape, local realities shaped it into something unique. The Dutch Reformed faith came to be the line of demarcation between European and African communities and later even between Afrikaner and British



communities. The Afrikaners were Christian and the Africans heathen. The British too were some kind of Other existing outside of the Afrikaner *gemeente*.

### Chapter 3 The 1850s: A Tumultuous Decade

When the Mormons arrived in Africa, the Afrikaner culture in the Cape Colony had been developing there for two hundred years and in Europe before that. Afrikanerdom was still developing in the 1850s and continued to do so throughout the Mormons' first decade on the continent and beyond. This chapter explores the intersections of Cape Afrikanerdom and Mormonism in the milieu of the 1850s. The debates over proselytism and the divide between conservative and liberal theology provide a window into the covenant thought through which the Cape Afrikaners interpreted the Mormons' arrival.

The 1850s brought an opportunity for reflection to the Afrikaner community in the Cape Colony. The bicentennial of Jan van Riebeeck's landing was 6 April 1852, and the synod of the Dutch Reformed Church asked the colonial administration to declare the day a religious holiday to memorialise the establishment of Christianity at the Cape (Faure 1852). The request was denied (Montague 1852). Differing observances and reactions to the day's events are telling of the very different opinions of those within and without the Colony's Dutch-speaking community.

An editorial in the *South African Commercial Advertiser* (3 April 1852:2) noted the anniversary, emphasising unity in Cape society:

[T]he points in which we all agree, have proved sufficient to secure internal peace, and to make society act harmoniously as a whole. . . . Thus the things in which [we] differ are superficial, and by no means inconsistent with social unity. The things on which

[we] are agreed are the everlasting foundations of social life — of nationality, of combined action, of peace, prosperity, strength and greatness.

The author clearly saw the colony's existence as a political and commercial establishment rather than the religious society (*gemeente*) advocated by the Dutch Reformed Church.

Dutch-speaking voices spoke in a different tenor. In anticipation of the day, the editors of the *Kerkbode* (6 March 1852:71–74) printed excerpts from a sermon preached on the occasion of the centennial celebration — edited, of course, to support the editors' position. The unnamed preacher implored his audience to give thanks for the bountiful blessings of heaven upon them as a people and the triumph of the 'pure Evangelical doctrine' (zuiver Evangelisch-leer). The self-imposed identity of an Israel in the wilderness is apparent, the author even calling out to 'O Cape Israel' (O Kaapsch Israël).

These themes of divine blessings for an Israel in Africa were continued in the bicentennial sermon of the Rev Gottlieb Willem Anthonie van der Lingen of Paarl. Van der Lingen took for his text Genesis 45:7, in which Joseph of Egypt says to his brothers, 'And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance' (*Kerkbode* 17 April 1852:128). Manifesting his Zwinglian theology, he acknowledged the Afrikaners' foreign rulers, saying, 'It has pleased God to place us under a foreign people', yet he lambasted the administration for its refusal to appropriately commemorate the day, calling it 'scandalously unthankful', 'impolite', and 'insulting' to the Dutch-speaking community. The administration was not his only target, however. Van der Lingen also had words for those Afrikaners who 'forget the language and customs of their ancestors, . . . [who] prefer to speak a foreign tongue, no matter how badly and ridiculously;

have their children taught in a foreign language, without ever taking trouble to have them learn thoroughly the language which God had given them'. He pled with his audience, 'I commend unto you to hold firm to the old, as the Rechabites did' (Ross 1999:68–69).

The Rev Abraham Faure used his bicentennial sermon for another purpose. Responding to the repeated criticism of Anglican and other clergy in the colony, he defended the DRC's missionary record. For his text, Faure took Psalm 68:31,<sup>4</sup> 'Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God', outlining 200 years of DRC proselytising among the indigenous peoples (*Kerkbode* 17 April 1852:128). Faure, a man who had been driven out of Natal for offering a toast to Queen Victoria at a dinner attended by a phalanx of Voortrekkers, offered no hint of Afrikaner nationalism, no call to ethnic mobilisation (Ross 1999:68). Though differing in their particulars, van der Lingen and Faure were clearly influenced by covenantal ideas of the *gemeente*. Both recognised a divine mandate given to the secular authority in the Cape.

### **3.1 The Dutch Reformed Church and the Proselytisation of Native Peoples**

Synthesising the positions expressed that day, an anonymous commentator noted a common theme in the observances was the question of a divine calling for the nation. He argued for a calling to increased mission activities, and in doing so made pointed references to 'our people' (ons volk) and 'our church' (ons kerk). Noting the exclusion of Roman Catholics, the anonymous author wrote, 'We are a people with one pure Evangelical church and confession' (Wij zijn een volk met eene zuivere Evangelische kerk en belijdenis gezegend) (M. 1852:210).

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<sup>4</sup> The 1637 Statenvertaling numbers this verse as Psalm 68:32.

A focus on proselytism pervaded the 1850s and led to some of the most significant events in South African history. Mission work brought more non-white parishioners to the pews, and with them heightened debates on how to accommodate them. While the DRC's policy had always been that race and colour should not be a deterrent to either baptism or confirmation, the reality in South Africa was quite different. During the Company period, the VOC insisted that the children of its slaves be baptised, but slaves held by private citizens were often denied baptism owing to a fear or deliberate misinterpretation of the Synod of Dort that baptised slaves would have to be freed (Giliomee 2003:43–44). Thus the faces in the pews in Cape Town were white and various shades of brown. However, in the eastern districts, where the Company had less control, there was much less variation — the white faces were the unquestioned majority in most congregations.

The discourse surrounding proselytism in the 1850s was largely shaped by the young Rev Nicolaas Hofmeyr, who was appointed minister at Calvinia in 1851. There he began pushing for his mission-minded position and was shocked to hear the biblical story of Ham used to excuse a lack of support for proselytising non-white Africans. Hofmeyr's proselytising brought more non-white congregants, to the consternation of existing parishioners.

Hofmeyr's classmates at Utrecht and fellow conservatives Andrew Jr. and John Murray and Jan Neetling were also pushing for proselytism in their own congregations.

Beginning in March 1853, Hofmeyr brought his arguments to the pages of the *Kerkbode*. In a series of articles, he argued for an increase of proselytism in the church while attempting to calm the agitation of those who feared racial integration. He acknowledged 'a sad prejudice against missionaries and their work' (een treurig vooroordeel tegen zendeliagen en hun werk) in his very first sentence (1853a:65). For support, he invoked the covenant of grace

(genadeverbond). With Jesus, he wrote, and with the coming of the Holy Spirit, the covenant of grace was no longer made only with Israel but given to all (Hofmeyr 1853a:67).

Employing the hermeneutic common to covenant theologians of using the New Testament to comment on the Old, Hofmeyr railed against those who invoked the Ham story as a rationale for refusing to support proselytising black Africans. He (1853a:71) turned to Peter's second epistle (1:13) to show an expectation of a new dispensation and to Mark (16:15) for Christ's commission to 'Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature'.

Perhaps with an intentional irony, Hofmeyr's articles made frequent references to 'Christians' (christenen) and 'heathens' (heidenen), the traditional labels for the white and non-white peoples in the colony. 'But how can you bear the name Christian', he asked, 'and have no feelings of love in your heart for the heathen' (maar hoe kunt gij den naam dragen van Christen, en gene liefde in het hart gevoelen jegens den Heiden?) (Hofmeyr 1853a:72).

Though he accepted at least the theoretical proposition that non-white church members could be called Christians (Hofmeyr 1853b:168), his usage throughout the series seems to deny it.

Hofmeyr did not argue for equality or a practical integration of the different races. Instead, he argued for a middle way between integration and a total exclusion of non-whites. Each congregation would have a minister and a missionary. The minister would hold services in the church for white and non-white congregants and the missionary would separately tend to the needs of the non-white congregants in a small building near the church called a *gesticht*. The *gesticht* would also host baptism, confirmation, and communion rites administered to non-white congregants by the minister, while white congregants would receive the same in the church proper. Hofmeyr's solution was debated for the rest of the decade. Its practical conclusion, however, came with the synod of 1857.

The 1857 synod made a very different decision from the one arrived at eighteen years before, when the 1829 synod declared there would be no racial segregation in the church. The synod in 1829 was asked to settle a controversy in Somerset West where the elders favoured separate communion but the pastor did not. The synod's decision read in part, 'that it is compulsory, according to the teaching of Scripture and the spirit of Christianity, to admit such persons simultaneously with born Christians to the communion table' (Livingston 2013:23). Though the synod decided in favour of racial inclusion, note the internal holiness idea apparent here of white church members as 'born Christians'.

In 1857 the synod was presented with a similar case — that of the Ceres congregation, in which proponents of proselytising the coloured and black population had proposed the construction of a *gesticht* to meet the needs of the expected influx of new, non-white parishioners while not offending the current white members. The church council approved the request, but the pastor objected, seeing the request as a violation of the decision of the 1829 synod. The 1857 synod's decision read in part

The Synod considers it desirable and according to the Holy Scripture that our heathen members (non-whites) be accepted and initiated into our congregations wherever it is possible; but where this measure, as a result of the weakness of some, would stand in the way of promoting the work of Christ among the heathen people, then

congregations set up among the heathen, or still to be set up, should enjoy their Christian privileges in a separate building or institution.

(*Acta van die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk* 1857:60;  
translation in Plaatjies-Van Huffel 2013:334fn18)

Note the use of the word *heathen* in reference to baptised Christians. Also note the provision that not only could separate buildings be constructed but separate institutions could be established.

The practice of segregation preceded the 1857 document, but there is a symbolic importance in the fact that after 1857, policy finally reflected longstanding practice. It has been observed that this move made possible the establishment of the racially divided churches of the Reformed confession in South Africa (Plaatjies-Van Huffel 2013:334). In effect, the synod of 1857 opened the door not only to segregation but to finally drawing the boundaries of the church to unequivocally represent the Afrikaner community as a separate *gemeente* within the Cape Colony.

By purging the Cape church of racial outsiders, the borders dividing in-group and out were strengthened. The Afrikaner community in the Cape Colony became both racially and confessionally homogenous. As the Cape Afrikaners distanced themselves from non-whites no longer part of their congregations, Cape Afrikaner identity became more closely aligned with religious boundaries. The Zwinglian ideal of a coterminous church and community had been achieved.



### 3.2 The Struggle between Liberal and Conservative Theology

The majority of the Afrikaner community may have confessed a single faith, but what that faith meant was a different matter. Another debate within the Cape DRC and the Dutch-speaking community more broadly was between theological liberalism and conservatism. Among the points of contention were the divinity of Jesus, the fall of Adam and Eve, and the inerrancy of the Bible. Several Dutch-speaking clergymen from South Africa, including van der Lingen and Hofmeyr, had returned from their theological studies in the Netherlands horrified by the liberalism of the Dutch church. Some believed the only way to curb liberalism's influence at the Cape was to found a seminary in the Colony where candidates for the ministry could be trained without the corrupting influence of Dutch liberalism. Abraham Faure argued for the establishment of such a seminary as early as 1824. The *Kerkbode* ran several articles encouraging a seminary's establishment as well as publishing records of money contributed to the cause. The *Zuid-Afrikaan's* columns ran submissions from the liberal Dutch minister the Rev Dr Antoine Nicolas Ernest Changuion opposing a local seminary. The synod voted in 1857 to establish it and the first students began their studies in 1859. That same year, a group of theologically conservative Afrikaners in the north bolted from the church because of liberal influences there to create the Reformed Church (Gereformeerde Kerk).

Not only was conservative theology important to the seminary's mission but a commitment to Dutch culture as well. The seminary's mission to train conservative, Dutch-speaking pastors was apparent from the start. A narrowly-defeated measure would have required the professors to exemplify the ideal Dutch-speaking Christian, even requiring they speak Dutch in their homes. Theological conservatism was closely tied with a Dutch cultural conservatism.

Van der Lingen and John Murray were elected the first professors, but van der Lingen turned down the appointment because he objected to the school's establishment at Stellenbosch, rather than his own Paarl. Nicolaas Hofmeyr was appointed in his place. Van der Lingen, instead, accepted an appointment as one of the examiners, ensuring that graduating seminarians would meet his standard of conservative theology. Having declined the professorship at Stellenbosch, van der Lingen was free to pursue the establishment of another educational institution, the Paarl Gymnasium. Founded in 1858, it too served to indoctrinate young Dutch-speaking students. The Gymnasium was the only Dutch-medium, Dutch Reformed school in the colony but was followed by others, including one in Stellenbosch in 1866.

Other means were also used to sound the conservative trump. The *Kerkbode* was founded in 1848 in part as an opposition to the more liberal *Zuid-Afrikaan*. Contrasting the different reactions to Mormonism in the two papers demonstrates the liberal-conservative divide. While the *Zuid-Afrikaan* took a rather neutral position, the *Kerkbode*, in addition to recurring essays denouncing liberalism, condemned Mormonism in particular. In 1854, an editorial was published decrying the heresies of liberalism and identifying Mormonism as one of its fruits — and perhaps the pinnacle of its dangerous fecundity (Het mormonisme is de vrucht — welligt de laatste — van het rationalism der 18de eeuw) (*Kerkbode* 1854:281).

### **3.3 Mormonism before 1852**

The religion the Latter-day Saints brought to the Cape was undeniably peculiar. Founded in America and embracing extra-biblical scripture, Mormonism was barely more than three decades old in 1852.

### 3.3.1 Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism

The story of Mormonism begins in rural upstate New York, USA, in approximately 1820. In the midst of the Second Great Awakening, Joseph Smith Jr., the young son of poor farmers, found himself pondering the subject of religion and wondering which of the competing Christian denominations he should join. His prayerful queries, as he reported, led to a series of visions, beginning with the appearance of God and Jesus Christ in or around 1820.<sup>5</sup> For the rest of his life, Smith recounted this experience as a turning point — one which convinced him that the primitive church founded by Christ had drifted into apostasy and was in need of a restoration (Smith 1844:405). Smith founded his church as the Church of Christ on 6 April 1830 in the home of a friend in Fayette, New York.

Theophanic experiences subsequent to Smith's first vision led to the discovery of what he described as 'gold plates, giving an account of the former inhabitants of [the American] continent, and the source from whence they sprang' (Smith circa June 1839–circa 1841:5). The plates reportedly contained a record written in what Smith called 'reformed Egyptian' (Book of Mormon, Mormon 9:32), which he translated into English by 'the gift and power of God' (Smith 1830:iii). In 1830, just a few weeks before Smith founded his church, the book was published as *The Book of Mormon*.<sup>6</sup> In 1833 a second volume of Smith's revelations expounding on his doctrine and church polity was collected and printed as the *Book of*

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<sup>5</sup> Joseph Smith's own accounts of his experiences differ in the dating his first vision of God as well as the particulars of what he saw. His 1838 account, which was canonised in 1882, dates this experience to the early spring of 1820 (Smith 1838–1856:3). This version is best known by the church's members but is not universally accepted as inerrant. Smith's 1832 account states he was 15 (Smith 1832:2 & 3). In later accounts, he said he was "about fourteen years of age" (1844:404).

<sup>6</sup> Latter-day Saints do not typically italicise the titles of their unique scriptures: the *Book of Mormon*, *Doctrine and Covenants*, and the *Pearl of Great Price*. The latter work was adopted as canon after the nineteenth-century proselyting ventures in Africa discussed in this study.

Commandments. Expanded compilations were printed in Smith's lifetime in the years 1835 and 1844 as the renamed Doctrine and Covenants.

The church Joseph Smith founded was not uncontroversial. Persecution arising from the church's peculiar doctrines and practices caused him and his followers to move from New York to Ohio, from Ohio to Missouri, and from Missouri to Illinois, gathering more followers as they went. On 27 June 1844, Joseph Smith and his brother Hyrum were killed by a mob in Carthage, Illinois.

### **3.3.2 Brigham Young and the Utah Church**

Left without an accepted succession plan, the Latter-day Saints splintered. The largest faction supported Brigham Young as president of the church's Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. Facing continued persecution, Young led his followers across the Great Plains of North America and into the Rocky Mountains, settling in the Great Salt Lake Basin — then Mexican territory but now comprising primarily the American state of Utah. It was from there that Young sent the first Mormon elders on proselytising missions to the Cape of Good Hope. It was expected that proselytes from all over the world, including those from South Africa, would emigrate from their home countries and gather to this location. As the missionaries would learn, this expectation proved especially hard for the Cape's Afrikaners to accept.

### **3.4 Mormons in the Cape Colony**

The first LDS missionaries to Africa were active between 1853 and 1855. A second group came from the end of 1857 through the beginning of 1858. The missionaries were successful in raising a Mormon outpost on the continent made up almost entirely of English speakers. Despite efforts targeted at Dutch-speaking Afrikaners, the missionaries' preaching yielded little success amongst them. Afrikaner responses to Mormon proselytising demonstrate the result of covenant theology and church polity on the Afrikaner community.

#### **3.4.1 The First Missionaries Are Appointed**

It was common practice under Brigham Young's leadership for missionaries to be appointed from the pulpit during conferences of the church, without prior warning to the missionaries or their families. The church's clergy was, and continues to be, composed of untrained male members who are almost universally ordained to one of the several offices in the Mormon priesthood. Any one of them could be called upon to exercise nearly any function within the church.

Such was the case on 28 August 1852 when church leaders called a special conference to appoint more than 100 men on missions all over the world. In calling the conference to order, Heber C. Kimball, an assistant to Brigham Young in the church's governing First Presidency, noted that holding the conference a month earlier than the usual semi-annual conference held in October was meant to allow the missionaries time to get underway before winter. At the beginning of the second session, the names of Jesse Haven, Leonard I. Smith, and William H. Walker were read, along with their assignment to the Cape of Good Hope.

Like others in their position, the first missionaries called to South Africa had no formal training and no qualifications other than ordination to the church's priesthood. All three held the office of seventy. This unique position among Christian churches is based on a passage from Luke (10:1 & 17) in which Jesus called seventy men to preach the gospel. The office is expanded upon in the church's scripture the Doctrine and Covenants (107:25, 34 & 38). Another distinctive Mormon doctrine based on biblical principles and expounded upon in Mormon scripture was the practice of polygamy.<sup>7</sup> Accusations of unorthodox marriage practices among the Mormons arose early in the church's history but were routinely denied until the very conference in which South Africa's first missionaries were called. The new missionaries, then, were responsible not only to preach their unique interpretation of the Christian message but also to defend the unpopular marriage system of the Saints.

### **3.4.2 Early Dutch-speaking Reactions to Mormonism**

South African historian Eric Rosenthal (1938:100) describes what may be the first Dutch reactions to Mormonism at the Cape in his *Stars and Stripes in Africa*. In a chapter devoted to Mormonism and its history on the continent, he notes that a Dutch clergyman at the Cape published an anti-Mormon tract in 1836. Rosenthal states that the tract was written in an apparent response to Mormon activity at the Cape but cites no source and gives no title or description of the tract's contents. News of the then-six-year-old church and its peculiarities may have reached the Cape through sailors and printed materials, but LDS records do not indicate any official mission or congregation at the time.

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<sup>7</sup> Joseph Smith's revelation authorising polygamy was not canonised until 1872 (Woodford 1974:1737). Though the polygamous aspects of the document were suspended by an official declaration in 1890 (Doctrine and Covenants Official Declaration 1), the doctrine of eternal marriage between a husband and wife remains, and the revelation is still part of the LDS book of scripture the Doctrine and Covenants, as section 132.

The first documented Latter-day Saint activity in Africa came with the arrival of Joseph Richards, a missionary assigned to Hindustan. Richards arrived at the Cape *en route* to his assignment sometime in mid-1852. The entirety of his report on his experience consists of two sentences: ‘I stopped at the Cape one month, and distributed some pamphlets, and talked with a number of the people, who were glad to hear the truth. It would be a good place for a mission; there is one third Romans, one third Mahometans, and the rest all sorts’ (1852:542).

### 3.4.3 Haven, Smith, and Walker Arrive

An unassuming notice in the *Zuid-Afrikaan* (21 April 1853:4) noted that the ship bearing Haven, Smith, and Walker, dropped anchor in Table Bay on 18 April 1853. The paper did not make any significant note of the men and their novel religion until its 28 April issue. A short paragraph printed in both Dutch and English reported that ‘[t]hree disciples of the sect of Mormons, lately arrived here from America on a special mission’. Their first public meeting at the town hall was broken up by ‘exclamations of denial and indignation from every corner of the hall. And a commotion and confusion ensued which rendered it necessary for the company to break up’ (*Zuid-Afrikaan* 28 April 1853:7).<sup>8</sup> After having this first meeting broken up by unruly listeners, the Mormons were denied the further use of the hall (*South African Commercial Advertiser* 27 April 1853:2).

The *Zuid-Afrikaan* turned its attention to the Mormons again on 5 May when it printed a translated article from the *Commercial Gazette* (5 May 1853:6) characterising Mormonism’s founder Joseph Smith as an opportunist and the religion he founded a fraud. This article may have been among the material Walker’s journal (10 May 1853) references being read aloud

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<sup>8</sup> The quote here comes from the English version on page 7. The Dutch version is printed on page 5.

by detractors at their meetings. Perhaps because it was already available in English in the *Commercial Gazette*, the *Zuid-Afrikaan* did not print an English translation of this article, as they did with many others. Its translation and inclusion in the *Zuid-Afrikaan* was certainly intended as a specific service to the Dutch-speaking community.

Like the *Zuid-Afrikaan*, the *Kerkbode* also noted the Mormons' arrival, but as a religious publication, the editors understandably took a more explicit stand on the Mormons' presence in the colony. They warned their readers not to be deceived by the Mormons' appearance of piety and their use of biblical terms to preach their 'pernicious doctrines'. In conclusion, they 'remind[ed] our readers of the admonition of the Apostle John in his second epistle, verse 10', which reads, 'If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed' (*Kerkbode* 4 May 1853:153).<sup>9</sup> William Walker reported the various ministers of religion went house to house warning their congregants to avoid the Mormons and not to give them food or lodging (ed. Wight 2003:22).

Indeed the prospects for Mormon success at the Cape seemed bleak. In this nadir of bad feelings, the missionaries ascended the Lion's Head on 23 May to pray and officially organise the church in the colony according to Mormon practice. As they descended, they were approached by a man requesting baptism — their first (Haven journal:23 May 1853).

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<sup>9</sup> The full article reads:

HEILIGEN DER LAATSTE DAGEN.—Onder deze benaming zijn onlangs drie mannen uit America alhier aangekomen, voorzien met eene aanbeveling van den Gouverneur, Brigham Young, en getuigschrift van de Kerk waarvan zij verklaren "Ouderlingen" te zijn. Zij zeggen van den Heer Jezus gezonden te zijn, om de bewoners des lands te waarschuwen dat Zijne komst nabij is:—dat zij zelve vol zijnde van den Heiligen Geest, voor den naam des Heeren uitgaan, voor zijnen naam lijden, en in *zijn* naam, waar zij komen, voorziening eischen in hunne dagelijksche behoeften. Zij bezigen én in hunne gesprekken en in de geschriften, welke zij verspreiden, vele Bijbelsche uitdrukkingen, waardoor zij, onder den schijn van vroomheid, de gemoederen der zwakken en eenvoudigen ligtelijk voor zich zouden kunnen innemen, om die tot het omhelzen van hunne verderfelijke leerbegrippen en gevaarlijke wangevoelens over te halen. Wij willen daarom de leden onzer Kerk, en allen gewaarschuwd hebben, op hunne hoede te zijn tegens lieden, de hun schipbreuk zonden kunnen doen lijden aan het geloof en een goed geweten—en herinneren onze lezers aan de vermaning van den Apostel Johannes, in zijnen Tweeden Brief, vers 10.



Three days later, the first baptisms occurred as Joseph Patterson and John Dodd accepted the ordinance at the hands of Leonard Smith (Haven journal:26 May 1853). From there Mormonism continued to spread through the colony, though acceptance by Dutch speakers lagged behind that of English speakers.

The realities of proselytising in a multi-lingual country like the Cape Colony appear to have become apparent to the Mormons at least by August of 1853, four months after their arrival. On 20 August, Jesse Haven wrote to a Mormon leader in Utah, telling him of their plan to separate and establish church outposts in Grahamstown and Port Elizabeth as well as Cape Town. Haven's rationale for choosing these two areas appears to have been based on information he had received indicating their relatively large populations of English-speaking residents. Haven was also informed of a large number of English speakers in the surrounding towns and countryside (Haven 20 August 1853). William Walker's experience traveling through the countryside, however, revealed a much larger Dutch-speaking population than Haven seems to have been led to believe (Walker journal:21 November–27 December 1853).

As Smith and Walker departed Cape Town for their respective assignments in Port Elizabeth and Grahamstown, Haven remained in Cape Town to proselytise and to send and receive correspondence and supplies in the colony's main port city. While there, his interest in proselytising the Dutch speakers increased.

Haven had no facility with the Dutch language, and neither did a majority of the local converts. Thomas Weatherhead, a local man baptised 24 July 1853, is the only male convert

around Cape Town known to speak Dutch, though the level of his proficiency is unknown<sup>10</sup> (Haven journal:24 July 1853 & 20 January 1854). Because proselytising at the time was mostly restricted to male church members, Dutch-speaking women, such as Johanna Provis and any others, were not obvious options for helping spread the Mormon gospel.<sup>11</sup>

Weatherhead was ordained a priest less than two months after his baptism, and the following month he invited Jesse Haven to accompany him in conversing with a Dutch-speaking woman who had requested an interview for 16 October (Haven journal:13 September 1853 & 16 October 1853).

The outcome of the appointment was little different from appointments with some English-speaking Europeans in the Colony. When the two Mormons arrived, the woman declined to keep the appointment at the urging of her friends (Haven journal:16 October 1853). This sort of rejection mirrors what took place in an English-speaking household only a few weeks earlier when Haven was turned out of a house by an English-speaking woman because her friends objected (Haven journal:28 September 1853). While these two incidents may just as easily have been played out in either Dutch- or English-speaking homes, it is apparent that similar situations occurred disproportionately more often among Dutch speakers.

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<sup>10</sup> Weatherhead requested his translation of ‘A Warning to All’ be checked by a Mr Waldeck (Haven journal:14 July 1854), and on 10 March 1855 Haven engaged someone else to do the translation work for ‘The Voice of Joseph’ (Haven journal:10 March 1855). Haven later asked Joseph Ralph to check the earlier translations (Haven journal:4 July 1855), all of which implies a lack of confidence in Weatherhead’s abilities as a translator.

<sup>11</sup> The main work of proselytising was restricted to male church members who were ordained to priesthood office, but opportunities for women were not unheard of. On 13 September 1853 three women—Mary Coley, Sarah Hawkins, and Amelia Paine—were appointed to distribute tracts in and around Cape Town (Cape Conference:5). On 12 September 1854, ‘Sister Parker’ in Fort Beaufort visited her neighbours in a proselytising attempt (Walker journal:12 Sep 1854).

### **3.4.4 The Beginning of Dutch Proselytising**

Despite the disparity in receptivity, Haven continued to believe the Dutch speakers would be eager converts if he could only get through to them. Thomas Weatherhead's ordination on 13 September coincided with a commission to go to the mostly Dutch-speaking town of Stellenbosch. It does not appear, however, that he went immediately. Instead Leonard Smith undertook the assignment and left Cape Town on 16 January (Haven journal: 16 January 1854). Smith spoke no Dutch, but a mission to Stellenbosch was undoubtedly intended to proselytise Dutch speakers in the area.

There is no record of Smith's experience in Stellenbosch, but the Mormons must have been encouraged or at least not totally dissuaded. Jesse Haven and Thomas Weatherhead returned to the town a year later on 19 January 1855.

#### **3.4.4.1 The Mission to Stellenbosch**

Stellenbosch is one of South Africa's oldest European settlements and its name is nearly synonymous with Afrikaner conservatism. Invoking the Christian/heathen dichotomy, a group of early Dutch farmers there wrote to the Lords Seventeen complaining of van der Stel's failure to protect the 'Christians' from their 'heathen' neighbours (Gilomee 2003:17). P. B. Borcherd wrote in his 1861 memoir how the church played a role in establishing and manifesting status within the community. The people, he recalled, were 'tenacious of rank and ambitious to be elected as heemraden, or militia officers or church wardens'. Families had their own pews and were seated according to the rank of the father (Borcherd 1861:205; quoted in Gilomee 2003:16). It was in Stellenbosch that the first recorded instance of self-

identification as an Afrikaner occurred when a young Hendrick Biebow declared himself ‘*een Afrikaander*’ in 1707, and there it was that the Mormons made their first major push to proselytise the Afrikaners.

In the year between Smith’s time in Stellenbosch and Haven and Weatherhead’s arrival, the Mormons had been busy. Haven had started taking Dutch lessons from Johanna Provis and Weatherhead had translated two Mormon tracts into Dutch. The first was given to the printer in July 1854 and a second was at the printer when Haven and Weatherhead left for Stellenbosch.

The first item chosen for translation, titled *A Warning to All*, was written by Haven and published in English on 8 October 1853. It was a ‘warning’ to the inhabitants of the Cape Colony that the return of Christ was near and that the missionaries had come to testify of the true doctrines of Christ as taught by Joseph Smith. The pamphlet further invited the inhabitants of the colony to repent and be baptised while urging them not to believe the negative reports of others concerning them (Haven, et al. 1853). Translation efforts for this tract began in May 1854, the month after the *Kerkbode* (15 April 1854:117) published an article naming Mormonism along with Catholicism as fulfilments of Paul’s prophecy (2 Thessalonians 2) concerning false preachers in the last days. Although Haven could not read Dutch himself, he may have heard of the *Kerkbode*’s accusations and chose to respond by having his already-published tract translated.

Haven collected the Dutch translations from the printer on 3 August 1854 and they were debuted in a canvassing effort in the largely Afrikaner town of Wynberg (Haven journal:3 & 13 August 1854). Their efforts did not go unrewarded. The fifteenth brought a midweek

service attended by fifty curious onlookers. The number was so great that they could not all fit into the home where the meeting was held (Haven journal:15 August 1854).

Five months later, Haven and Weatherhead arrived in Stellenbosch on 19 January 1855, and their experience seems to have been positive. On their first night, they were given lodging by a man with the Dutch-sounding name of Nyburgh. On the next night, their lodging was provided by a family with the French Huguenot-sounding (by then Afrikaner) name of Roux. Weatherhead preached in Dutch on the 21st, 24th, and 28th, and the remainder of their time was spent in visiting the surrounding farms. With one exception, Haven reports the farmers to have been friendly, some showing interest in their message and their literature (Haven journal:18, 21, 23, & 28 January 1855).

The town's people were not all amiable to their presence. Opposition in Stellenbosch came from three sources. First were hecklers who interrupted the Mormons' preaching, second was the town jailer, and third was the town clergy. Haven was somewhat accustomed to heckling and gave it little notice in his journal except on their second day in the town, when the heckling came from the town jailer, Mr Rolley. Rolley's opposition did not end at heckling; he also instructed the policemen that the magistrate had ordered they must not be seen associating with the Mormons. When Haven and Weatherhead met with the magistrate, however, he denied he had given such instruction, which was found to have come from Rolley alone (Haven journal:24 & 25 January 1855). Though he lacked the magistrate's support, Rolley's actions were in harmony with the Zwinglian principle of the state's authority to police and regulate the church, protecting it and the commonwealth from 'apostates, idolaters, blasphemers, heretics, false teachers and mockers of religion' (Baker 1980:118–119). Four months later, the *Kerkbode* (12 May 1855:156) would publish a short

notice approvingly reporting a coordinated effort by Danish police and the church there ‘to halt the progress of Mormonism’ (om den voortgang van het Mormonisme te stuiten), calling it a ‘duty of both church and state’ (pligt, van kerk en staat beiden).

The third source of opposition came from the local clergy. When Haven and Weatherhead first attempted public preaching in Stellenbosch, they were told by a missionary the ground they occupied belonged to the missionary’s church. Haven soon found this information to be untrue (Haven journal:21 January 1855). Other clergy, too, got into the action. Haven’s journal records them instructing their congregants to stay away from the Mormons. Consequently, later public meetings held by Haven and Weatherhead were poorly attended. They left Stellenbosch on 28 January without adding a single name to church membership rolls (Haven journal:28 January 1855).

It should be noted that the Dutch Reformed Church was not the only religious presence in Stellenbosch. The *Kerkbode* (9 December 1854:396–397) reported the inauguration of a Lutheran chapel in November 1854 — less than two months before the Mormons arrived. The Lutherans had long before claimed their place as a sanctioned exception to the DRC monopoly under Company rule. Also present at the inaugural events were missionaries of the Rhine and Wesleyan missionary societies. These groups, however, had little interest in proselytising Dutch speakers and were of little concern to the DRC.

It should also be noted that clerical instructions are not universally followed in almost any situation. The DRC clergy, however, seem to have incited remarkable adherence in this circumstance. The Anglican clergy were particularly active in warning their people against the Mormons. The dean travelled through the country preaching against Mormonism and the

Rev Mr Lamb of Cape Town preached several sermons against Mormonism (Walker journal:27 November 1853; Haven journal:7 & 14 July 1853). The dean was successful in keeping the George town hall closed against Mormon lectures in December 1853 (Walker journal:9 December 1853), but Lamb must have found it particularly galling when Amelia Paine, a young woman living under his roof, was baptised a Mormon (Haven journal:14 August 1853). Almost all of the Mormons' converts came from English-speaking churches.

#### **3.4.4.2 The Mission to Paarl, Malmesbury, and D'Urban**

Shortly after returning from Stellenbosch, Jesse Haven wrote to Samuel Richards, the Mormon mission president in England, reporting on his experience. Haven (1855a:348) told Richards of his intent to visit 'two or three villages from thirty to fifty miles from here', and asking 'cannot something be done toward furnishing this colony with Dutch books?' The towns Haven intended to visit included Paarl, Malmesbury, and D'Urban.

Hermann Giliomee (2003:206) describes Paarl as the 'conservative heartland'. It was home to the Rev GWA van der Lingen and eventually became home to his Paarl Gymnasium. Van der Lingen and his theology held considerable sway in the town.

Haven arrived in Paarl on 16 February with Richard Provis, the husband of his Dutch tutor, Johanna. His journal entry upon arrival indicates his seeming surprise at the preponderance of Dutch speakers, though it is unlikely Provis and the other Mormon proselytes would have been unaware. They spent little time there and were gone the next day. A man Haven identifies as a 'Dutch farmer' took them toward Malmesbury and left them with another Dutch farmer, whom Haven records treated them like 'black boys' (Haven journal:17

February 1855). This poor treatment was unusual but demonstrates the vehement opposition to the Mormons' message from some Dutch speakers. Haven recognised their mistreatment as a signal of their low social standing. The comparison to 'black boys' put the Mormons on equal footing with a group the Dutch speakers called 'heathen' (*heidenen*), outsiders to the 'Christian' community of the Afrikaners or *gemeente*.

The people of Malmesbury were slightly friendlier, if ultimately uninterested. The Mormons arrived on 18 February and were kindly received by Provis's father-in-law, Wilhelmus Langeveld. From this friendly base of operations, Haven and Provis set to work. As in Paarl, they found the majority of the townspeople were Dutch speakers, but they were able to lend or sell several of their tracts (Haven journal:19 February 1855). As they did in Stellenbosch, the missionaries attempted to make an appointment to preach at the policeman's house. The policeman's wife initially agreed to the appointment, but when the missionaries returned to keep it, she refused at the urging of her friends (Haven journal:20 February 1855).

Continuing his practise in other towns he visited, Haven made a point in Malmesbury to visit the local clergy. On their second day, he and Provis attempted to meet with a Scottish minister in Malmesbury but found the man was not home. It was on their third day in the town that the missionaries met with the Dutch minister in the area. There, Haven reports they were treated very poorly (Haven journal:20 & 21 February 1855).

The final leg of Haven and Provis's journey was to the predominantly Dutch-speaking town of D'Urban (now Durbanville). There they distributed their tracts and met again with the local clergy. The Rev J. J. Beck, the Dutch minister, treated them kindly but had no interest in



leaving his pulpit for Mormonism. ‘Mr Parker’, a former Wesleyan minister turned independent, was not as kind (Haven journal:24 & 25 February 1855).

Again, Jesse Haven returned to Mowbray without new proselytes to show for his efforts. But, also like with the mission to Stellenbosch, he seems encouraged. Two weeks after his return, he commissioned another translation (Haven journal:10 March 1855). His journal (20 April 1855) records that he sent copies of his Dutch tracts when they were finished to Daniel Roux and M. N. Louw in Stellenbosch.

#### **3.4.4.3 William Walker in Grahamstown and Fort Beaufort**

William Walker was sent to Grahamstown because the missionaries believed the area to be dominated by English speakers. The presence of the 1820 British settlers gave them good reason to believe such. Walker’s journey to the area, however, brought him into constant contact with Dutch speakers in the countryside (Walker journal:21 November 1853). He wrote in his journal while staying at the home of a Dutch family *en route* to Grahamstown that ‘I feel myself very awkward when in the presents of respectable Ladys & and gentlemen and cannot speak to them’ (Walker journal:13 December 1853).

While Haven attempted to remedy the situation by learning Dutch from Johanna Provis and had the advantage of Thomas Weatherhead’s assistance in proselytising and translation, Walker lacked the benefit of bilingual friends willing to help him in his efforts until January 1855 (Walker journal:24 January 1855). On 21 January Walker advertised that the next LDS meeting in Fort Beaufort would feature Dutch preaching. Walker had established his base of operations there rather than Grahamstown upon finding the people of Grahamstown

particularly unreceptive. On 24 January he ordained the bilingual Joseph Ralph to the Mormon presbytery. Ralph promised he would fill the appointment to preach the following Sunday; however, he failed to keep the appointment. He did not arrive until the following day and then accompanied Walker to meet with several Dutch residents in the area, but to no avail. No one was interested in their message (Walker journal:28 January 1855). This seems to have been the bulk of Walker's efforts in proselytising the Afrikaners around Grahamstown.

A lack of sources leaves us without much of an historical record of Leonard I. Smith's efforts with Dutch speakers. No journal and few letters are known to be extant. However, we do know that Mormon proselyte George Kershaw (1854:30) said he was 'generally very well received, both by Dutch and English'. We also know that Smith ordered Dutch tracts for distribution near his base at Port Elizabeth (Haven journal:26 February 1855) and that one of his proselytes, Thomas Jenkins, was 'a most useful man in distributing books and tracts, both in Dutch and English, and teaching wherever he gains an opening' (Haven 1855b:782). It is unclear whether Jenkins could actually converse in Dutch or simply distribute tracts.

#### **3.4.4.4 Local Mormon Efforts with Dutch Speakers**

Thomas Weatherhead's efforts at proselytising the Dutch speakers at the Cape with Jesse Haven were not his only attempts. On 6 August 1855, while Haven was in Port Elizabeth visiting the new Mormons in the area before returning to Utah, male church members near Cape Town were meeting to discuss a mission of their own to Paarl. They appointed Weatherhead and another man, Thomas Tregidga (Cape Conference 1853–1890:14). Without the meticulous journal writing of Jesse Haven on the mission, we are left without a detailed

account of the mission. Church membership records, however, are still devoid of Dutch names during this period, indicating no baptisms took place.

Fortunately, we have a rare glimpse of the Afrikaner reaction to this mission from within the Afrikaner community itself. In a Sunday sermon 19 August 1855, the pastor preached a sermon against the Mormons who had recently arrived in the town. Beginning with an exposition on Christ's warning of false prophets, the sermon continued on to discuss the history of false teachings in the Christian church from New Testament times through the Reformation. He then discussed the history of Mormonism and a few of the church's doctrines in comparison to the doctrines of the Dutch Reformed Church. Aside from the unflattering retelling of Mormon history and accusations of heresy expected of a non-Mormon discussion of Mormonism, one section is especially telling (*Kerkbode* 11 July 1863:213–219 & 25 July 1863:229–236). The unnamed preacher notes the Mormons' anathematisation of infant baptism. In his reply can be heard the distinct echo of Huldrych Zwingli's 1525 *Reply to Hubmaier*. He argued that paedobaptism is necessary and scriptural in that the church was founded in the Jewish covenant, the sign of which was infant circumcision (*Kerkbode* 25 July 1863:230–231).

The South African converts to Mormonism were left to themselves after 15 December 1855, when Jesse Haven left Table Bay aboard the *Cleopatra*. Smith and Walker had already left aboard the *Unity*, a 169-ton brig purchased by three Latter-day Saints to service what they assumed would be a constant stream of Mormon emigrants from the colony in the years to come. In the days before their departure, the missionaries from America gave their converts instructions and supplied them with the necessary materials to carry on their work, including copies of the materials Haven had had printed in Dutch (South African Mission:folder 6).

Indeed, the spread of Mormonism continued unaided by foreign missionaries. Local member Edward Slaughter (1856:172–173) wrote to church leaders in Britain on 30 October 1856 describing their activities, including successful missions to the Kat River district and Mauritius. A mission had recently begun to Cradock, Graaff-Reinet, and Somerset.<sup>12</sup> Slaughter wrote that these missions were ‘liberally supported’ by ‘our little Church’. He reported, however, that ‘[w]e can do nothing with the Dutch as yet. It will require one of their own countrymen to preach to them, and he must be from the fountain head, they are so wrapt up in their reformed Church’.

### 3.5 ‘Something About Our Church’

Edward Slaughter’s description of Dutch speakers’ being ‘wrapt up in their reformed Church’ echoed what Haven had written about them to Brigham Young in January 1856. *En route* to Utah via England, Haven wrote, ‘The Dutch here. . . are very much attached to the country, and the idea of emigrating, frightens them. Their religion is the Dutch Reformed, and only to suggest the idea that perhaps their Church is not the true Church, they look with astonishment, and seem to say,—“Is it possible!”’ (Haven 1856a:18).

That same year, the *Kerkbode* demonstrated the Dutch attachment to their land, their language, and their church in an eleven-part series titled ‘Something About Our Church’ (Iets Omtrent Onze Kerk), in which the editors dealt with the Cape DRC’s relationship with the church of the Netherlands, requirements for membership, and proselytism, among other topics.

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<sup>12</sup> Presumably Somerset East, based on the other two locations mentioned.

Of particular interest is the instalment on the place of the English language in the church. The author begins by acknowledging that the idea of English in the DRC is almost anathema to many clergymen and members, notably G. W. A. van der Lingen. The editors argued that the DRC must use English in its public worship so as to not alienate the rising generation that was being educated in English from the ‘church of their fathers’ (de kerk hunner vaderen). As could be expected, a series of responses followed in later issues of the paper as well as other publications, making apparent the widespread folksodoxy in which the popularly accepted links between the Afrikaner community, its language, and the Dutch Reformed Church had become nearly a doctrine of the church. Demonstrating the Zwinglian coterminality of church and people, one writer, identifying himself as ‘J. H. N.’ (possibly the conservative pastor at Stellenbosch, Johannes Henoeh Neethling), argued the language was sanctified by its relationship to the church and pled for his readers to teach ‘the sons and daughters of the Dutch Reformed Church their native language’ (J.H.N. 1856:86). The idea of sons and daughters of the church hearkens back to God’s covenant with Abraham that He would be both Abraham’s god and that of his children (see Acts 3:25). The phrase also alludes to the internal holiness of children idea coming from several theologians discussed above and is a hallmark of covenant theology.

### **3.6 Missionaries Return**

Mormon leaders in Utah had no intention of leaving their African outpost unstaffed for long. In April 1857, three more men were assigned to the Cape at the church’s semiannual general conference: James Brooks, Martin Littlewood, and Ebenezer Richardson. They started from Salt Lake City on 23 May and travelled to the Cape by way of England. Brooks and Richardson arrived in Liverpool on 4 August and left the following month. Meanwhile

Littlewood worked his way across the United States, earning money for his passage as he went. By the time he reached England, however, events that would become known as the Utah War prompted church leaders to call the missionaries home, and Littlewood never reached the Cape. Brooks and Richardson arrived in November 1857 and by 5 February 1858 had been informed of their recall to America. The scant record of their time in the Cape Colony does not discuss any attempt at Dutch proselytising.

### 3.7 Chapter Summary and Conclusion

As the 1850s came to an end, the debates over proselytising non-white Africans and the liberal-conservative divide continued, but the decade's events included significant steps toward resolution. Owing to 'the weakness of some', Nicholaas Hofmeyr's middle way led to the unintended consequence of a near total segregation of DRC congregations and the eventual founding of Reformed churches for non-white Christians under the patronage of the all-white DRC. In this way the DRC became almost synonymous with the Dutch-speaking white community.

The founding of the seminary at Stellenbosch and the Gymnasium at Paarl ensured conservative theology and Dutch culture would be instilled in their students for generations. Conservative teachers and examiners made their mark on graduates, their families, and others within their sphere of influence. That mark was an important element of the Afrikaner *gemeente* in the Cape Colony based on covenant theology and decidedly not on Mormonism.

## Chapter 4 The 1860s: Revival, Revolt, and the Return of the Mormons

During the 1860s, the boundaries of the Dutch Reformed Church and the Afrikaner community in the Cape Colony coalesced and were strengthened in their unity. The decade brought a continuation of the struggle for ascendancy between the theological liberals and the conservatives within the DRC. Their war was fought in print, in the pulpit, and in the courts. In addition, a remarkable revival swept the colony, horrifying the liberals, who sought a more rational, unemotional faith (Giliomee 2003:210). Mormon missionaries returned from America after a four-year absence to find that if anything the Afrikaners had retrenched in their opposition to the Mormons' gospel.

### 4.1 Revival

'Pitiful' was the word G. W. A. van der Lingen used to describe the state of the DRC in 1848. He continued, saying it would 'fall into the deepest misery unless it pleases God to send His light, and truth, and His Spirit to quicken her to spiritual life' (Sass 1956:104). Christians in South Africa read reports of revivals sweeping England and North America and prayed for a revival in their own land. Their ministers urged them to pray harder. The 8 October 1859 issue of the *Kerkbode* carried an appeal from van der Lingen and thirteen others exhorting readers to 'earnestly pray to God one hour every week either with others or in private that in his mercy He may also give us and our country the blessing of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, as he is giving it at present in other parts of the world' (Faure et al. 1859:334).

Three months later Professors John Murray and Nicholaas Hofmeyr and the Rev Johannes Neethling (1860:32), the conservative triumvirate of Stellenbosch, invited 'Christian friends'

to a conference in Worcester to discuss various topics, including revival. Delegates to the conference discussed and pondered the state of the church as papers were delivered on various topics. But perhaps the conference's most memorable moment came when the young Rev Andrew Murray Jr. stood to pray. One young attendee at the conference reported that 'Mr. Murray's share in (the earlier part of) the conference of 1860 was confined to a prayer, but it was a prayer so powerful and so moving that souls were instantly brought under deep conviction of sin, and we may safely say that the revival which ensued dated from that moment' (du Plessis 1919:199).

Andrew Murray was the son of the Rev Andrew Murray Sr. and Maria Susanna Magdalena Stegmann Murray. His sister Maria remembered their father praying one hour each Friday night for a revival in South Africa for many years (Sass 1956:105). At last, the senior Murray saw his prayers answered in his own son.

It began on a farm. According to tradition, a young woman by the name of Van Blerk had been leading prayer meetings for months among the farm's coloured workers when one night a spirit spread over the assembled group, inciting a highly charged response. Miss Van Blerk was so stunned she fled to the town. When she returned a week later, she was greeted by a throng of singing farmhands celebrating her return. Andrew Murray Jr. attended one meeting and tried to bring order but was rebuked by one of the attendees, a coloured man with the sobriquet Saul die Profeet (Saul the Prophet). The revellers were not interested in restraining the spirit which had overtaken them. The revival spread to the neighbouring farms and soon to the town itself. A young Jan Christiaan de Vries, who later entered the ministry, was present at the prayer meeting at which the revival is said to have entered the town.



On a certain Sunday evening there were gathered in a little hall some sixty young people. I was leader of the meeting, which commenced with a hymn and a lesson from God's Word, after which I engaged in prayer. After three or four others had (as was customary) given out a verse of a hymn and offered prayer, a Coloured girl of about fifteen years of age, in service of a farmer from Hex River, rose at the back of the hall and asked if she might propose a hymn. At first I hesitated, not knowing what the meeting would think, but better thoughts prevailed and I replied, yes. She gave out her hymn-verse and prayed in moving tones. While she was praying, we heard as it were a sound in the distance, which came nearer and nearer, until the hall seemed to be shaken, and with one or two exceptions, the whole meeting began to pray — the majority in audible voice, but some in whispers. Nevertheless, the noise made by the concourse was deafening. A feeling which I cannot describe took possession of me. Even now, forty-three years after these occurrences, the events of that never-to-be-forgotten night pass before my mind's eye like a soul-stirring panorama. I feel again as I then felt, and cannot refrain from pushing my chair backwards and thanking the Lord fervently for his mighty deeds. At that time Rev. A. Murray was minister of Worcester. He had preached that evening in the English language. When the service was over, an elder (Mr. Jan Rabie) passed the door of the hall, heard the noise, peeped in, and then hastened to call Mr. Murray, returning presently with him. Mr. Murray came forward to the table where I knelt praying, touched me, and made me understand that he wanted me to rise. He then asked me what had happened. I related everything to him. He then walked down the hall for some distance and called out, as loudly as he could, People, silence! But the praying continued. In the meantime I too kneeled down again. It seemed to me that if the Lord was coming to bless us, I should not be upon my feet but on my knees. Mr. Murray then called again aloud, People, I

am your minister sent from God, silence! But there was no stopping the noise. No one heard him, but all continued praying and calling on God for mercy and pardon. Mr. Murray then returned to me, and told me to start the hymn-verse commencing *Help de ziel die raadloos schreit* (Aid the soul that helpless cries). I did so, but the emotions were not quieted, and the meeting went on praying. Mr. Murray then prepared to depart, saying, ‘God is a God of order, and here everything is confusion’. With that, he left the hall.

(du Plessis 1919:194–195)

Murray’s reservations gave way to support, and the revival spread. Even the staid van der Lingen was reported to have fallen down in a trance during a Pentecost celebration (Giliomee 2003:209). Van der Lingen had initially viewed the reports of revival abroad with suspicion. In time, he softened and longed for the same in his own country. But when the revival came, he was shocked by the behaviour he witnessed. Men, women, and children called out in anguish for forgiveness of their sins. Van der Lingen warned that unruliness would only invite ridicule and send doubters into total disbelief. But he, too, longed for forgiveness in his own life. He noted in his private diary: ‘Unclean, unclean from head to toe, and the tiniest mercy and blessing undeserved’. On Pentecost Sunday, while leading the last of several prayer services, van der Lingen began to weep loudly and called out, ‘Father! Father! Look!’ He described the experience and a vision of Jesus descending to make it possible for the assembled congregation’s prayers to ascend to God (Nel 2008:131–132, 135 & 138–139). The dark night of his own searching was over too. The authenticity of these experiences is, of course, a matter of faith. However, van der Lingen’s public participation and role in the

revival is important. A man of van der Lingen's reputation being part of these events lent credibility to the movement and helped it spread.

Murray's involvement was noted and he was invited to preach throughout the colony. His message at one early conference (and likely others) was unexpectedly but decidedly covenantal. Rather than preach on scriptures relating to prayer, delivery from sin, the day of Pentecost, or gifts of the Holy Spirit, as one might expect, Murray took a surprisingly different tack. In his home town of Graaff-Reinet in April 1861, he took for his text 2 Chronicles 15:12, which reads, 'And they entered into a covenant to seek the Lord God of their fathers with all their heart and with all their soul'. Here Murray invokes both the covenant and the multi-generational 'God of their fathers' motifs emphasised in the covenant theology notion of internal holiness. By using an Old Testament verse, he concedes one of covenant theology's central tenets: that God's covenant extends from the Old Testament, through the New, and into post-New Testament Christianity. Bullinger is most specific on this point in his *One and Eternal Covenant* (eds. McCoy & Baker 1991:117–120).

Once the initial fervour of the revival subsided, Murray and others sought to keep the newly committed in the path they had begun. Murray published scores of articles, tracts, and books. One of particular note was his 1864 publication of *Blijf in Christus* which was translated into English and published in 1882 as *Abide in Christ*. In Dutch editions, chapter 30 is titled *Blijf in de Liefde als Borg voor het Verbond*. The title of this chapter printed in English translations (1888:210) is *As the Surety of the Covenant*, however, a more literal translation from the Dutch would be *Abide in love as security for the covenant*. Of course, Murray's immediate audience, readers in South Africa, would have been exposed to the more Bullingerian language present in the Dutch version. Man's obligation to abide in love

hearkens back at least to Bullinger's argument that love was one of the conditions of God's covenant with Adam. To this end Bullinger employed the language of Deuteronomy 10:12 in his *One and Eternal Testament*: 'And now, Israel, what does your Lord ask of you, except that you fear the Lord your God and walk in his ways, love him and serve the Lord God with your whole heart and with your whole soul?'<sup>13</sup> For Bullinger, loving God and walking in His ways are closely tied. In the same chapter on man's obligations to God, Bullinger writes 'the phrase "to walk" according to Hebrew usage is the same as "to live," which we express idiomatically, "Prepare yourself to walk and to live uprightly"' (eds. McCoy & Baker 1991:111–112). The implications for a sustained piety, rather than the fleeting conversion and return to a reprobate life, are clear.

Murray, like Bullinger before him, used the language of Hebrews 7:22. Here again, the Dutch text, which appears at the beginning of the chapter, conveys a more covenantal meaning: 'In zoverre is Jezus ook van een beter verbond borg geworden'. This was rendered in the English translation (1888:210) as 'Jesus was made a surety of a better testament', which translation comes from the King James Version. Baker (1980:xxii–xxiii) argues that while some authors use the words *covenant* and *testament* interchangeably, Bullinger explicitly differentiated between the two ideas. The word that Dutch translators rendered *verbond* has a more Bullingerian reading than the English translators' use of *testament*. Zwingli, as we saw in his 1523 *Commentary on the Sixty-seven Articles* quoted in section 2.2.2, used the terms more interchangeably.

The revival brought Murray fame within the colony and allowed him to preach his covenant theology to Dutch speakers in the DRC. Ironically, however, he was not raised in a Dutch-

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<sup>13</sup> The biblical text here comes from McCoy and Baker's translation rather than the King James Version of the English text generally used in this dissertation.

speaking home. His father was a Scottish missionary and his mother was the daughter of a German Lutheran pastor who later turned Dutch Reformed. At the age of ten, Andrew Jr. was sent to Scotland with his brother John to study at his father's *alma mater* at Aberdeen and later entered the University of Utrecht to learn Dutch and study theology. Despite his decidedly un-Dutch parentage and upbringing, he is credited with helping the DRC along its way to becoming the Afrikaner *volkskerk* (Anderson 1998:481–482). The covenant theology evident in his sermons and writings shows why.

## **4.2 The Continuing Struggle between Conservatives and Liberals**

Andrew Murray's influence was felt in other areas of importance during the 1860s as well. He became a leader in the struggle against theological liberalism in the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa.

### **4.2.1 Defining the Boundaries of the Church**

An important series of events occurred in the liberal-conservative struggle at the Synod of 1862, and Andrew Murray and his covenant theology were in the middle of it. During the roll call, Hugo Hendrik Loedolff, a liberal elder from Malmesbury, challenged the right of delegates from outside the Cape Colony to sit in the synod. The delegates in question were decidedly conservative but had remained in the DRC rather than joining the more fractious conservatives in the Transvaal who established the conservative Reformed Church (Gereformeerde Kerk) at Rustenburg in 1859. Their presence weakened the position of the liberal faction in the synod (du Plessis 1919:212). When the synod, with Andrew Murray as

moderator, decided to keep the delegates from outside the colony in the synod, Loedolff appealed to the colonial Supreme Court.

Several covenant principles, seemingly at odds, can be seen in this instance. First, it was because of a Zurich-like ecclesiology that the synod's decision could be, and was, appealed to the civil authority. Neither side disputed the government's right to become involved in the case. In arguing for the colonial boundaries as the boundaries of the church, the liberal party essentially argued that it was the civil power that defined the church. In a similar way, the boundaries of the Israelite nation and polity defined the boundaries of the Old Testament church.

The conservative argument, on the other hand, was that the church's boundaries were defined by its membership. As the Dutch Reformed Church maintained congregations outside the colony and the congregants considered themselves members of the DRC, the synod's authority and the right of the churches to send delegates extended that far. The community was defined by the faith (i.e., the covenant), not the boundaries of the colony.

In a similar way, the Christian covenant, as the continuation of the Israelite covenant, extended farther than the political kingdom of Israel in the New Testament church. Jesus' commission to preach the gospel to all nations (Matthew 28:19), Peter's vision and subsequent preaching to the household of Cornelius (Acts 10), and Paul's proselytism among non-Israelites showed that the covenant defined the Christian church and community. It was not, as the liberals argued, political boundaries that defined the covenant's reach. To support his position on this matter Bullinger cited Galatians 3:29: 'Those who are Christ's are the offspring of Abraham' regardless of their 'carnal' parentage (eds. McCoy & Baker:107–108).

As this was the position of the majority of ministers and other delegates, it was the position taken by the synod. Bullingerian arguments aside, the court decided in favour of the liberals and the delegates from outside the colony were excluded.

#### **4.2.2 Heresy: The Case of Johannes Kotzé**

The move to exclude the delegates from outside the colony was only one volley in the battle then underway. The proceedings of the synod were again interrupted when Rev Johannes Jacobus Kotzé of Darling stated his refusal to preach from a section of the Heidelberg Catechism, which he claimed was in error. The catechism, as noted in chapter 2, is one of three documents considered normative for all DRC ministers, to which they were required to ascribe assent upon their legitimation. It is divided into fifty-two sections, one of which is to be expounded upon during each Sabbath service. The practice of preaching or reading from the Heidelberg Catechism had been in effect at the Cape since the Company period and in the Netherlands since at least 1574 (Gerstner 1991:22). At issue for Kotzé was question 60, in which the answer confesses that humanity is ‘inclined to all evil’. Kotzé declared that if he were required to preach upon this question, he would be conscience-bound to inform his congregation he believed the catechism to be in error on this point. His actions initiated a series of events that would bring the matter not only to the supreme court of the colony, but to the Privy Council in London.

In the midst of the synod’s shock over Kotzé’s refusal to uphold the Heidelberg Catechism came the judgment of the Supreme Court in the case concerning extra-colonial delegates. The decision called into doubt the legality of the synods of 1852 and 1857 in which the delegates from outside the colony had been allowed to sit. The liberal faction informed the synod they

intended to take their case once again to the civil courts, and the synod had little choice but to adjourn until the court ruled in the matter. On 13 April 1863 the court ruled the previous synods' decisions were valid and the delegates reconvened in October.

The day after the synod reconvened, it again took up Kotzé's case. In hopes that Kotzé's objection may have come from a misinterpretation and not outright heresy, they invited him to sign a declaration which would satisfy the committee. He refused, and on 21 October, by a vote of 56 to 24, the synod decided to suspend his ministry until the Synodical Committee met the following year.

Upon Kotzé's suspension, his pulpit became officially empty and ministers from the presbytery were assigned to visit the congregation and provide for its pastoral and sacramental needs. The people, however, informed the presbytery that their visitors would be denied access to the pulpit and would not be received. Andrew Murray Jr. visited Darling on 22 November and found the church door locked in his face. Undaunted, he found another place to deliver his sermon, but only his hosts attended. Such actions by the congregation at Darling show the influence of a pastor and the fealty of a congregation.

Kotzé was unrepentant. On 19 April he appeared again before the Synodical Committee and, declaring his intent to continue with his ministry regardless of the committee's decision, he again refused to recant his earlier statements on the catechism. The synod's full censure was placed upon him and he was officially defrocked. On 1 May he climbed into his pulpit as if no sentence had ever been pronounced against him.



The Supreme Court convened on 24 August 1864, and because the synod's legal counsel had taken ill, Andrew Murray was called into service to represent himself and the synod. Kotzé's appeal was based on three points: (1) the synod acted improperly in taking up his case because the proper court of first instance was the presbytery, (2) he was not given a proper trial according to the synod's own rules, and (3) he was not guilty of heresy insofar as his objections to the Heidelberg Catechism were in keeping with scripture. Murray conceded some irregularity in the synod's process but defended the synod's actions as reasonable in Kotzé's case and in doing so recognised the state's authority and competence to rule on procedural matters as they were not theological and could be adjudicated by laymen. However, Murray argued the Supreme Court was not competent to rule on doctrine and the central matter of Kotzé's guilt or innocence in regard to the charge of heresy. By doing so, Murray aligned himself and the church with Bullinger's position that the state was responsible for maintaining an environment where the church could function (ed. Harding 1864:323–324) but that the state had no authority over what the ministers of the established church preached. In fact, Bullinger treated the relationship between the magistracy and the ministry in the case of a synod specifically, writing 'that the proper office of the priests is to determine of religion by proofs out of the word of God, and that the prince's duty is to aid the priests in the advancement and defence of true religion' (ed. Harding 1864:331). In the end, the court ruled in Kotzé's favour and he was reinstated.

The court's rulings led to a crisis for the DRC. The Church Ordinance of 1843 had not solved the tensions between the church and the colonial government. The centuries-long connection between church and state had to be rethought. As an established church, the DRC enjoyed state subsidies which paid for pastors' salaries and building and maintaining churches, just as Bullinger and Zwingli envisioned it (ed. Harding 1864:330). However, when the colonial

administration ceased to function as the (conservative) church leaders wished, they were faced with a choice to retain their established status and accept sometimes undesirable interference or reclaim their autonomy, accept a wholly new ecclesiology, and go it alone financially. Eventually, the decision was made for them when, in 1875, the DRC was disestablished through an act of the colonial parliament, forcing the church to support its activities from the voluntary contributions of its members. This served to strengthen the evolving character and folksodoxy of the church as an ethnic body (*volkskerk*). In the Zurich model, in which the boundaries of the church coincided with those of the political state, the boundaries of the church increasingly coincided with the Cape Afrikaner community rather than the Cape Colony. In contrast, Afrikaners in the Transvaal, who had already demonstrated a history of fracture by their departure from the Colony during the Great Trek, and perhaps because of the absence of the British colonial administration as a constant foil to unite them, suffered from internal divisions and the church and community fell victim to schism.

#### **4.2.3 A Battle Waged in Print**

The war between conservatives and liberals was not confined to the synod and the courts but was also waged in the press. Publications like the *Volksblad* (established in 1856) allowed the liberals to spread their message. The conservatives responded in kind. In 1857, the Revs Philip Eduard Faure, Servaas Hofmeyr, Gottlieb van der Lingen, John Murray, and others founded *Elpis*, and the *Volksvriend* newspaper was added to the conservative arsenal in 1862. The *Volksvriend* owed its success to Jan Hendrik Hofmeyr, the nephew of Rev N. J. Hofmeyr. The younger Hofmeyr took the paper's reins at the age of seventeen and later edited *Ons Land* and the *Zuid-Afrikaan*. He went on to lead Afrikaner nationalist

organisations such as the South African Farmers Protection Union (Zuidafrikaansche Boeren Beschermins Vereniging), which merged with the Afrikanerbond in 1883, and the South African Language Association (Zuid Afrikaansche Taalbond). He was elected to the Cape House of Assembly for Stellenbosch in 1879 and served until 1909. Though he served in the cabinet for only six months (as minister without portfolio), he was widely considered the real power within the party. His work spread his conservative ideals and those of his mentors throughout the colony.

### **4.3 Resumption of Mormon Proselytising**

Mormon missionaries again stepped onto the dock at Table Bay on 16 December 1861. Local Mormons George Ruck and Isaac Whitley heard of their arrival and hired a boat to meet the missionaries aboard their ship and bring them ashore. The missionaries were then conveyed in Ruck's cart to Mowbray, where they were welcomed by more local church members (Fotheringham 1861:92). The African Mormons had waited a long time for missionaries from the church's headquarters in Salt Lake City to return. It had been four and a half years since the last missionaries left.

With the benefit of two previous missions to the Cape, the choice of missionaries this time seems to have been dictated by the voice of experience. Jesse Haven (1856a:18–19), in his January 1856 letter to Brigham Young and his counsellors in the church's First Presidency, recommended that a Scot or a Dutchman would be uniquely qualified to proselytise the Afrikaners. Haven made no special recommendations for working among the English speakers. The missionaries called in 1861 were William Fotheringham (a Scot), Martin

Zyderlaan (a Dutchman), and Henry Dixon and John Talbot (both born to English-speaking families at the Cape but able to speak Dutch).

#### **4.3.1 Martin Zyderlaan**

Zyderlaan's appointment was an obvious effort to proselytise the Dutch speakers at the Cape, and his assignment was almost immediately realised upon his arrival. Only three days after arriving, he was inviting Dutch speakers to Mormon services and preaching in his native Dutch (Fotheringham journal:19 December 1861). He was to remain alone at Cape Town while the other missionaries went to the eastern province in search of larger English-speaking populations (Fotheringham 1861:92).

Zyderlaan worked in Cape Town and the surrounding areas for about a year (Fotheringham 1863a:110). As part of his introduction to the Dutch-speaking community in the Colony, he translated a prophecy of Joseph Smith dated in 1832 that seemingly predicted the American Civil War then raging. Zyderlaan had it printed in several newspapers (Fotheringham journal:3 & 4 January 1862), and five hundred copies in English and Dutch were later printed and distributed (Atwood n.d.:99–100).

Sundays found Zyderlaan preaching in Cape Town's Government Gardens, where he had 'a few peaceful hearers' but was periodically heckled (Fotheringham n.d.:445–446). He did not concentrate exclusively on Cape Town, though. He also preached in Paarl, Simonstown, Somerset West, Stellenbosch, and Wellington (Atwood n.d.:99). On a visit to Stellenbosch 23 March 1863, Zyderlaan advertised that he would give an outdoor sermon. His signs made no

mention of his Mormonism and, despite rain, the sermon was well attended and his listeners attentive (Zyderlaan 1862:122). Still, he was unsuccessful in making any new converts.

Martin Zyderlaan left no known journal, but conference minutes in his hand and brief accounts from his fellow missionaries, particularly the mission presidents, William Fotheringham and Miner Atwood, give us an idea of his activities and his successes and failures. Zyderlaan desired to ‘make a stir’, he told his fellow missionary Henry Dixon, but he was unsuccessful (Fotheringham journal:12 February 1862). Fotheringham described Zyderlaan’s efforts in a letter to the British mission president: ‘Elder Zyderlaan labored in [Cape Town] for ten months, preaching in Dutch and English but without making any impression. As he was the only Dutch Elder in the Mission, I felt there was no use for him to spend any more time there’. Fotheringham attributed Zyderlaan’s lack of success to an exceptional clericalism among Dutch speakers. ‘They are very much bound up in their ministers’, he wrote, ‘and it is hard to make an impression upon them’ (Fotheringham n.d.:445). Fotheringham’s observation about Afrikaners’ loyalty to their ministers is evident as well in the Darling congregation’s actions during the suspension of their pastor, Rev J. J. Kotzé.

With little prospect for success in Cape Town, Fotheringham took up a collection to buy Zyderlaan a pony and have him travel by land on a preaching tour to Port Elizabeth. The journey took nearly a month and yielded a single convert — an unnamed man from the Netherlands. Zyderlaan also encountered the *Nachmaal* service at Alexandria but could find no one to listen to him there (Fotheringham 1863d:814).

While in the eastern province of the colony, Zyderlaan was assigned to visit Dutch-speaking areas there. At a meeting on 20 January 1863, it was decided he would go to Graaff-Reinet, Somerset,<sup>14</sup> and elsewhere (Atwood n.d.:100). He also visited Humansdorp in March 1863. He organised a small congregation there, where he baptised ten new Mormons, all of whom appear to have been English speakers. Upon returning from this assignment, he was so ill that mission president William Fotheringham decided to have Zyderlaan accompany a group of emigrating Mormons who set sail on 31 March (Atwood journal:31 March 1863).

That Zyderlaan baptised a fellow Dutchman and no African Dutch speakers during this time is interesting and telling. Mormon proselytising in the Netherlands, which started only two years earlier, was more successful than it was among Dutch speakers in South Africa. An article in the *Latter-Day Saints' Millennial Star* (1865:126–127) reported the success of the LDS missionaries in the Netherlands, saying ‘the brethren are sanguine of the progress of the Work of the Lord among the Dutch, in whose midst many of the Israel of God, and who have better chances of hearing the Gospel than the inhabitants of many of the neighboring countries, owing to the greater liberality of the laws, and the toleration of the people in religious worship’. This situation evidences a difference in national character between Dutch speakers in the Netherlands and those in the Cape Colony after two centuries apart.

Another explanation for Zyderlaan’s lack of success among Dutch speakers at the Cape could be that he was simply ineffective at spreading Mormonism because of a lack of skill or a defect in his personality. He did baptise non-Dutch speakers in Cape Town, however, including a German man named Carl Hoffmann (Cape Conference record:234–235). He also baptised an English sailor named James Stafford in Simons Town (Cape Conference 1853–

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<sup>14</sup> Presumably, this would be Somerset East, owing to its apparent proximity to Graaff-Reinet.

1890:121), and there was the small congregation in Humansdorp formed from his labours (Fotheringham 1863d:814). All of this indicates no deficiency on his part.

#### **4.3.2 John Talbot Takes over as Missionary to the Dutch**

After Zyderlaan's departure, John Talbot took over proselytising activities in Cape Town. A native-born, bilingual missionary, John Stock, who returned to settle his business affairs in the colony in December 1862, had been appointed to go to Cape Town at the 20 January meeting, but he left with Martin Zyderlaan and the emigrating Mormons. Talbot, too, had been born in the Cape Colony, the son of Henry and Ruth Talbot, farmers. John's brother Henry James Talbot (n.d.) later wrote of their experiences growing up in the Cape Colony and their friendly association with Dutch speakers.

Of the nineteenth-century Mormons in the Cape Colony, Talbot was the most successful among the Dutch. Church records indicate he baptised at least three persons with Dutch names. His brother Henry baptised one before emigrating in 1861 (Port Elizabeth Branch:9, 13 & 25). Nevertheless, unlike Zyderlaan, Talbot was not called to the mission specifically to preach to Dutch speakers (*Cape Argus* 7 January 1862:2). Not long after their arrival, Talbot left Cape Town with William Fotheringham and Henry Dixon to preach in the Eastern Province, where Dixon had been born and raised. He employed his Dutch-speaking ability when called upon in the Eastern Province but was mostly assigned to English-speaking towns.

He was not as successful in Cape Town as he had been in the Eastern Province, nor was he any more successful than Zyderlaan had been. Records for the Cape Conference do not show

any Dutch names in the baptismal record attributed to Talbot's proselytising. He became discouraged and in January 1864 wrote to William Fotheringham, telling him that he had 'no faith for the people' (Fotheringham journal:2 February 1864). His melancholy did not last long, however, and he soon wrote to Fotheringham telling him all was well (Fotheringham journal:3 February 1864).

### **4.3.3 William Fotheringham's Work among the Afrikaners**

William Fotheringham did not come to Africa blind to the mission's past. He had been appointed a missionary to India at the same conference in which the first African missionaries were called, and he corresponded with Jesse Haven during their respective appointments (Haven journal:10 January & 25 July 1854). Haven almost certainly told Fotheringham of the eccentricities and exigencies of his assignment at the Cape. Haven likely wrote to Fotheringham of his fondness for the Dutch speakers and his belief that they would be excellent converts, just as he had in letters to others (Haven 1855:7 & 1856b:318).

Fotheringham, though, was not as hopeful in the prospect of converting large numbers of Dutch speakers to Mormonism. Within six months of his arrival, he was writing of his dismay to George Q. Cannon, the mission president in England. He also wrote to Brigham Young, informing him that they had 'met as yet with very little success. The Dutch population of this Colony are very much built up in their ministers, and are very much afraid of innovations' (Fotheringham n.d.:445). He continued this theme in another letter to Cannon on 14 April 1863, writing that Zyderlaan had 'found the Dutch to be a very stiff-necked people, and far in the rear of the times. . . . The African Dutch pride themselves in obeying their (Predicant) minister's counsel. They are perfectly willing to leave their salvation in their



priests' hands, and if they lead them astray they will have to answer for it — so say they. It is very likely the Lord will have to preach a loud sermon to the Dutch, in the shape of judgments, before they will realize how they stand' (Fotheringham1863b:382). Many of those ministers, as we have seen, were heavily influenced by covenant theology.

As a Scotsman, Fotheringham, like the Dutch Zyderlaan, was likely chosen because of the recommendation from Jesse Haven. Haven had suggested a Scotsman would be better able to connect with the Dutch speakers and could easily learn the language. Such was not the case with Fotheringham, whose letters and journal betray no special love for the Dutch speakers and for whom there is no evidence of his trying to learn Dutch. Instead, he abdicated the majority of the work with the Dutch first to Martin Zyderlaan, then to John Stock, and finally to John Talbot. Whatever work he did was incidental, in contrast to the focused efforts assigned to others and the extraordinary efforts of Jesse Haven a decade earlier.

Fotheringham did not entertain high hopes for proselytising Dutch speakers at the Cape, and his hopes for English speakers were not much more optimistic. When he received a letter from George Q. Cannon asking the advisability of sending more missionaries to the Cape, Fotheringham confided in his journal (17 December 1863), 'I think from the success we have had, there would hardly be any use'. In his response to Cannon, Fotheringham wrote that '[t]he Gospel will not make much more progress in this land until the present spell is broken, by the fierce and telling judgments of the Almighty, and the moral atmosphere is purified, and when the righteous, but timid, who may survive the calamities, have an opportunity of investigating the truth and embracing it, without being scandalised by the corrupt. There is little inquiry, from any quarter, respecting the Gospel. The minds of the people seem entirely

engrossed with other things than the kingdom of God' (1864:219–220). Scathing though this assessment may be, Fotheringham's harshest criticisms remained for the Dutch speakers.

#### **4.3.4 Miner Atwood: The Last Missionary**

Miner Atwood arrived a year after William Fotheringham and company and acquired the same opinion of the Afrikaners as Fotheringham within only a few weeks. He landed at Algoa Bay on 30 December 1862, and on 27 January 1863, he wrote in his journal that '[t]he Dutch are very hard against the Latter Day Saints'. Four days earlier, Atwood embarked on a preaching tour with Stock and Talbot. Along their journey, the three men stayed with several Dutch families who treated them kindly. Atwood's comments are not an indictment of Dutch hospitality, only an assessment of their receptivity to Mormonism. His opinion changed little in the ensuing years. His manuscript 'History of the South African Mission', which was written after his return to Utah and submitted to the LDS Church Historian's Office, calls them 'very slow to act, being priest-ridden' and 'hardened against the truth' (n.d.:98–99).

His journal gives little indication that he made any special efforts with the Dutch speakers or paid them much attention. In fact, Atwood's journal does not record much proselytising at all. By the time William Fotheringham transferred the presidency of the mission to Atwood on 20 March 1864, the missionaries had lost hope of success in South Africa. At a conference of the European missions (the South African and European missions were subordinate to the British mission) held 31 December 1863, it was reported that 'the labour of the Elders [in South Africa] at present is principally directed towards emigrating those who have already embraced the Gospel' (*Millennial Star* 6 February 1864:89).

#### 4.4 Grahamstown: A Notable Exception

Nowhere in the Cape Colony was especially inviting to the Mormons; one place in particular, Grahamstown, which was one of the biggest cities in the colony, was notable for another reason. Populated largely by English speakers, it was no Afrikaner stronghold. Mormon missionaries in both the 1850s and 60s would have been justified in hoping to find converts there as they had in other English-speaking areas. Haven (1856a:16) noted a large number of Methodists in the city, which could have given further encouragement. Converts from Methodism to Mormonism were disproportionately high in Britain, Canada, and the United States (Jones 2009:2–5).

William Fotheringham was likewise optimistic about Grahamstown upon his arrival in the colony. He noted the citizens of Grahamstown had been resistant to Latter-day Saint missionaries during the first mission. He wrote to George Q. Cannon that the ‘town has the name of being the most pious one in the colony, — so much so, that brother Walker could not get a night’s lodging out of them’. Jesse Haven (1856a:16), alluding to New Testament precedent (Matthew 10:14 & Acts 13:49–51), believed Walker ‘would have been justified if he had washed his feet as a testimony against them’. Nevertheless, Fotheringham expected that since Talbot and Dixon had been born there, the situation might be different and that they would be ‘considerably changed in their feelings since brother Walker visited them’ (Fotheringham 1862:251). He was wrong. He sent Talbot and Dixon there but they found little success. ‘Their old friends and acquaintances wished to shun their company’. They soon left for Eland’s Post, where they were more favourably welcomed (Fotheringham n.d.:445). In time, Grahamstown’s coolness warmed.

Fotheringham's hopes for a change of heart in Grahamstown were not totally misplaced. By 15 April 1863 Brother Elliston had prepared a room in his home for holding meetings, which were 'well attended, people anxious to hear' (Atwood journal:15 April 1863). Several non-Mormon hearers attended their meetings in May and 'a good Spirit prevailed' (Atwood journal:10, 16, 24 & 28 May 1863). Nonetheless, Atwood recorded in his journal: 'this is a Wicked place, and a very Pious Town, they are like the people in Christ[']s] day more piety, then good works' (31 May 1863).

The thawing in Grahamstown continued in June, as Atwood recorded in his journal (4, 7 & 14 June 1863) that their listeners, who had previously left before the end of the meeting, stayed long enough to receive some of the missionaries' literature. On 14 June he recorded 'a few investigating'. On 21 June he wrote, 'Some are believing'. One of those believers he expected to baptise on 24 July, but the young candidate did not keep the appointment (Atwood journal:24 July 1863). This is not to say that their meetings were undisturbed by hecklers, but it was quite different from when William Fotheringham reported preaching indoors while their listeners all remained outside (Atwood journal:28 June, 5 & 7 July; Fotheringham 1863c:590).

Grahamstown is notable because, over time, the people softened in their opposition to Mormonism, though they never embraced it. Such could not be said for the Dutch speakers in the colony during the nineteenth century. Dutch-speaking opposition to Mormonism continued unabated.

## 4.5 The DRC Responds

With Mormon missionaries again in South Africa and several of them proselytising in Dutch, the DRC was sure to take note. In July 1863 the editors of the *Kerkbode* (11 July 1863:214–219 & 25 July 1863:229–236) devoted fourteen pages to the August 1855 sermon noted in chapter 2. Clearly, the same rebuttal, including the covenantal argument for infant baptism, was still seen as relevant. As the sermon was published in order to reach a larger audience, perhaps the threat was seen as being greater than it had been in 1855, or perhaps the Afrikaners had actually hardened in their opposition.

In the 5 March issue the next year, the *Kerkbode* printed a paragraph once again describing Mormon activities in Denmark. This time, rather than discussing the actions of the government and local churches to stop Mormonism's spread in Denmark, the focus was on the emigration of Danish Mormon converts and their concentration in the less-developed area of Jutland. The implication was that only the uneducated would fall victim to Mormonism's lure.

## 4.6 The Missionaries Depart and the Mission Closes

South Africa saw Miner Atwood, the last of the nineteenth-century Mormon missionaries, sail away with a group of Latter-day Saint emigrants on 12 April 1865 (Atwood 1865b:443). Only two Mormon congregations remained inside the borders of the Cape Colony, one at Cape Town and the other at Winterberg. Both congregations were composed of English speakers. No other area had a concentration of Mormons large enough to form even a small

congregation (Atwood 1865a:334). The rest of the Mormons were spread throughout the colony. New missionaries were not sent to bolster the flagging church until 1903.

#### **4.7 Chapter Summary and Conclusion**

Two topics preoccupied the Cape Colony's DRC community in the 1860s: the revival that spread through the colony and the continued struggle between liberals and conservatives. The events surrounding both were shaped by the covenant theology brought to the Cape and matured there. Those events in turn strengthened Afrikaner insularity against outsiders, including Mormons.

The revival was dominated by the person of Andrew Murray Jr. His sermons and writings show a definite covenantal thread running through his thought, which was spread and shared with the DRC's other ministers and lay members. The resurgence of religious resolve throughout the Afrikaner community was flavoured by the covenantal thought apparent in Murray and others.

The 1862 synod and the court actions stemming from it further reveal the covenantal basis of the conservative faction's theology. The conservatives' arguments for inclusion of all those who shared in the covenant (the DRC delegates from outside the colony) were clearly based on a covenant theology. When court actions favoured the liberals, the conservatives retrenched and the church became ever more important as an Afrikaner institution separate from the English colonial state.

The retrenchment was gaining momentum just as the Mormons returned. The revival of religious piety and the growing conservative faction — both rooted in ideas of the covenant — strengthened the Afrikaner resolve to maintain their culture against all outside forces. The most explicit response for which we have record (the Paarl sermon printed in the *Kerkbode*) shows the underlying covenant-based opposition to the Mormons. Despite the Mormons' pointed efforts at proselytising the Afrikaners using Dutch-speaking missionaries and Dutch translations of Mormon literature, the Afrikaner *gemeente* resisted.

## **Chapter 5 Conclusion**

The Calvinist paradigm was used to explain Afrikaner history in South Africa for more than a century. Arguments for a Bullingerian covenant paradigm are an intriguing prospect to replace the historiographical schema which has become largely defunct. The purpose of this study has been to investigate the utility of the Bullingerian hypothesis as an alternative to the Calvinist paradigm of Afrikaner history insofar as covenant theology contributed to Afrikaner identity in the Cape Colony. The disparity of English- and Dutch/Afrikaans-speaking converts to Mormonism at the Cape between 1852 and 1865 has served as a case study.

### **5.1 Summary and Analysis**

To understand the above disparity, this study posed three questions for consideration: (1) Is there evidence of Bullingerian thought among Afrikaners in the Cape Colony? (2) Can membership in the Dutch Reformed Church be proven as a significant factor in Cape Afrikaner identity? And (3) can a religio-ethnic identity be demonstrated as a reason for rejecting Mormon mission work among the Cape's Afrikaners as a result of Bullingerian thought? A summary and analysis of the data appear below.

#### **5.1.1 Chapter 1**

Chapter 1 of this dissertation discussed the problem being researched, previous paradigms for understanding Afrikaner history, and a methodology and outline for the present study.



Why does such a pronounced disparity exist between Dutch- and English-speaking South Africans within the Cape Colony in the nineteenth century? Several historical paradigms exist in which to pursue an answer to this question. First is the frontier/degenerative theory of the rural Afrikaners' separation from an urban centre which supposedly allowed them to fall into a degenerate state on the frontier, where they developed an enmity toward the Other. I reject this paradigm as a framework for understanding the Mormon experience because of the relative urbanity of the Afrikaners under consideration.

Another theory is the Calvinist paradigm, which relies on a distorted idea of Calvinism in positing that the Dutch settlers brought with them ideas of election to salvation for themselves and damnation for the surrounding African population. The Calvinism of the Dutch and Afrikaners has rightly been questioned, however, and a lack of literature from Calvin's own pen has been noted.

A third paradigm, the Bullingerian hypothesis, is the subject of the exploration of this study. I investigate the questions arising from the Mormon experience in light of Gerstner's work on the covenant in South Africa and Raath's arguments for a Bullingerian covenant community at the Cape following Baker's identification of Bullinger as the founder of covenant theology.

## **5.1.2 Chapter 2**

In chapter 2, I reviewed the cultural and religious history of the Afrikaners in the Cape Colony from the period leading up to the Reformation in Europe through the time the Mormons arrived at the Cape. The Dutch played a significant role in the Reformation of Western Christianity. From the development of the *Devotio Moderna*, to the rise of Christian

humanism, to their adoption of Protestantism, the Netherlands produced men and women who both accepted and advanced the cause of the Reformation. During the Dutch revolt from Spain, Protestantism began to be associated with Dutch nationalism. Following the revolution, heterodoxy within the Protestant church was violently opposed. The Protestantism and church polity that developed around the time of the 1618–1619 Synod of Dort was heavily influenced by the covenant theology of Huldrych Zwingli, Heinrich Bullinger, and other covenant theologians who were either contemporary to them or who followed after them.

Covenant theology and the ideal of the Christian commonwealth (*gemeind*) that grew out of it became an integral part of Dutch life in the Netherlands and later at the Cape. Especially important was the doctrine of the internal holiness of children as manifest in the baptismal theology that developed. Zwingli's argument for baptism as the Christian equivalent of circumcision as a sign of the recipients' entrance into the covenant led to the covenant taking on the ethnic quality that later developed at the Cape and excluded especially non-whites but also Anglicans and Mormons.

Further manifestations of the covenant idea at the Cape are seen in the literature brought and used by mandate of the Dutch East India Company and in the church polity initiated and maintained during the Company period. Bullinger's *Decades* and the Heidelberg Catechism both bear the earmarks of covenant theology, including the ideals of how the church and state should relate to one another. That ideal relationship was instituted at the Cape and served to inculcate a mindset of a covenant-based community (*gemeente*). Outsiders, such as non-whites, Anglicans, and eventually Mormons, were excluded.

### 5.1.3 Chapter 3

Beginning in chapter 3 and continuing into chapter 4, I discussed the Mormons' activities in the Cape Colony in the context of the history discussed in chapter 2 as well as events then occurring in the Colony. Chapter 3 focused on the 1850s while the focus of chapter 4 was the 1860s. Three hundred years of covenant thought had left their marks on the Afrikaner community when the Mormons arrived at the Cape. These chapters examine those marks.

Two heated and highly consequential debates raged in the Cape Afrikaner community when the Mormons arrived in the 1850s. First was the debate over the proselytising of non-whites and how non-whites should be integrated into the Dutch Reformed Church. Second was the debate between proponents of liberal and conservative theology.

Debates about proselytising the non-white inhabitants of the colony revealed existing attitudes about the Cape Afrikaner community and its relationship with non-Afrikaners of all races. Two hundred years of identifying the Dutch community at the Cape as Christian and the others as heathen made it difficult for some in the DRC to accept non-white congregants in their churches. The fateful decision by the Synod of 1857 to allow separate congregations based on race was the fruition of that thought. The internal holiness of 'Christian' (which was interpreted as European) children made the covenant their birthright. Non-European children and adults had no such birthright. By the 1850s, Europeanness was a necessary but insufficient qualification for inclusion in the *gemeente*. British Anglicans were excluded, just as Swiss Anabaptists were in Zwingli's Zurich. So too were Mormons at the Cape.

The struggle between the theological liberals and conservatives within the Dutch Reformed Church during this same period raised questions among Afrikaners concerning just what the covenant entailed. What were the essential characteristics of the gospel which defined the covenant? Combatants on both sides built arsenals to wage their war. Both sides battled in the press, establishing newspapers and journals devoted to their respective positions. Those papers made special note of the Mormons' arrival and warned their readers against the new religion. The *Kerkbode*'s first mention of the Mormons in the colony made sure to point out that their message was one of a different gospel (i.e., covenant) and should be rejected. Even the *Zuid-Afrikaan* took special care to warn the Afrikaner community against the Mormons.

A particular point of contention in the papers was the establishment of a theological seminary in the Colony intended to train candidates for the ministry in an environment where they would not be influenced by the liberalism in the church of the Netherlands. Arguments on both sides appeared in print. In the end, the conservatives got their seminary, established at Stellenbosch. Stellenbosch and conservative schools, like G. W. A. van der Lingen's Paarl Gymnasium, helped shape generations to come in the conservative mould. As we saw in chapter 4, that conservative theology was shaped by the covenant.

#### **5.1.4 Chapter 4**

The liberal-conservative struggle continued into the 1860s and in chapter 4 I explored the revival of that decade and its fruits grown in the fertile soil of covenant theology. Andrew Murray Jr.'s centrality in the revival gave him a platform from which to spread his covenant theology. It is clear from the popularity of his discourses and writings that his theology was well received and widely accepted. Murray's celebrity propelled him to the moderator's chair

in the Synod of 1862, where his covenant theology and that of the majority of synod delegates was on full display.

When the Cape Colony's civil courts overrode the synod's majority decisions in the cases appealed to them, the DRC's resolve to maintain its covenant relationship with the state was tested. Integration with the English state had produced unintended consequences for the church. The Afrikaners were already effectively barred from much civic participation in the colony because of colonial policy requiring English be spoken in the courts, Parliament, and other official institutions. The DRC, as the largest Dutch cultural institution in the Cape Colony, also took on the quality of being its most important, over and above the state as a marker of identity and institution worthy of their allegiance. Mormons were rejected as part of the larger retrenchment of the Afrikaner *gemeente*, which also rejected Anglicans and non-whites.

## **5.2 Contributions of this Study**

This study's contribution lies in its critique, synthesis, and modification of Baker's, Gerstner's, and Raath's work and its analysis of the data surrounding the Mormon experience at the Cape in the nineteenth century. Through that work, we have seen the evidence and the effects of covenant theology among the Afrikaners of the Cape Colony. I have modified Raath's argument for Bullinger as the originator of that theology to include Zwingli and others (including Luther) as co-contributors. Drawing on primary sources from the mid-nineteenth century, I have used the Mormon experience in the Cape Colony during that time as a case study, which has allowed us to discern the covenant thought apparent in the Cape Afrikaner *gemeente* and see its effects in the Afrikaner response to outsiders in the Cape

Colony. The baptismal theology first explicated by Huldrych Zwingli played a considerable part. As such, Gerstner's and Raath's work have been validated if modified. I do not accept Baker's thesis that Bullinger is solely or primarily responsible for the advent of covenant thought in the Reformed tradition. Zwingli, especially, must be credited for the internal holiness argument derived from his defence of infant baptism which was then very influential in developing the ethnic component of DRC membership. Notwithstanding these caveats, a more broadly defined covenant paradigm, as opposed to a strictly Bullingerian one, is an effective tool in studying Afrikaner history in the Cape Colony.

### **5.3 Suggestions for Further Research**

In chapter 2 of this study, I suggested that further research was needed on the influence of German immigrants on Dutch religion at the Cape. We have seen how Luther's argument for infant baptism was modified and used by Zwingli and its effects on the Afrikaners at the Cape. How were other Lutheran arguments and doctrines appropriated and adapted at the Cape? How were Dutch-speaking Lutherans accepted by the community?

The experience of Mormon proselytising at the Cape illustrates the prevalence of covenant thought in the Afrikaner community there. What of Natal and the Boer republics? Little is known of the Afrikaners' reactions to Mormon Henry Dixon's work in Natal. An evaluation of Afrikaner-Mormon interactions in Natal could uncover more of the story there as well as the reaction of Afrikaners in another British colony. Comparing Afrikaner reactions to Mormonism in the two British colonies could provide more data from which to draw conclusions about the broader Afrikaner experience within the British Empire.

In contrast are the two Boer republics. Comparison of Afrikaner attitudes toward Mormonism in the British- and Boer-controlled areas of South Africa could be fruitful. Though there was no significant Mormon proselytising in either the Transvaal or the Free State in the nineteenth century, warnings were raised against Mormonism by at least one DRC minister in the Free State, Rev Johannes Beijer of Reddersburg. The Netherlands-born Beijer published his warning against Mormonism in 1863, while the Mormons were active in both the Cape and Natal colonies. Was Beijer's position representative of the rest of the DRC clergy in the Free State? Hermann Giliomee (1989:25) has stated that the imported Dutch ministers and other foreigners served as a substitute for a native Free State intelligentsia. What about the South African-born residents? Can their position be explained by an identity formed through adherence to covenant theology? Andrew Murray Jr. spent ten years in the Free State. Did his covenant theology manifest itself there, and what impact did that have on the theology of the people?

A confirmation of covenant theology as a prevalent strain and driving force in Afrikaner thought at the Cape can serve as a basis for further study of other aspects of Afrikaner history, religion, and culture. This study has sought to answer the question of why the disparity existed between English- and Dutch-speaking proselytes to Mormonism in the nineteenth century. Part of the study has dealt only tangentially with the non-white inhabitants at the Cape. Jonathan Neil Gerstner has largely treated the interaction between Afrikaners and non-whites in the nineteenth century. Further exploration could be done on the presence of covenant theology and its effects on Afrikaner race relations in other time periods.

## 5.4 Questions and Answers

In answer to the questions with which this study began, (1) is there evidence of Bullingerian covenant thought among the Cape Colony's Dutch-speaking population, (2) can membership in the Dutch Reformed Church be shown to function as a significant factor in Cape Afrikaner identity, and (3) can a religio-ethnic identity be demonstrated as a reason for rejecting Mormon mission work among the Afrikaners in the Cape Colony as a result of Bullingerian thought? I conclude that the answer is a qualified *Yes*.

The hypothesis with which I began was that membership in the Dutch Reformed Church played a significant role in Afrikaner group identity at the Cape in the mid-nineteenth century because of Bullingerian ideas of the covenant. The evidence supports a modified finding in the affirmative: that DRC membership did play a significant role and that Bullingerian thought was a driving force in Afrikaner ideas of a covenant community in the Cape Colony but that several theologians, not just Heinrich Bullinger, must be credited with originating the thought, which was further developed by Bullinger and others. Questions of origination aside, the covenant is a viable alternative to the 'Calvinist paradigm' through which to study Afrikaner history in the nineteenth-century Cape Colony.



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