

CHAPTER 2: BEYERS NAUDÉ FROM HIS BIRTH TO HIS ‘CONVERSION’, SOUTH AFRICA, FAITH BASED ORGANISATIONS AND APARTHEID

2.1. INTRODUCTION

What is all the fuss about Beyers Naudé? It is sad that he died, yes, but it's not as if he was tortured or spent time in jail or led a liberation movement. Why do people hail him as if he was a national hero of the caliber of Walter Sisulu? (The Star, 9 September 2004).

This question as summarized by Max du Preez above is dominant in the minds of some people. It comes to their minds when they notice the respect the majority of people especially the victims of oppression had for Beyers Naudé. They fail to understand that he ministered to them (victims) in a unique way which brought meaning into their lives. It is therefore true that one such victim, Prof Russel Botman (2004) described him as “a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and a deep faith. His sermons were always expressions of hope. The courage to hope and to give account of one's hope were the cornerstone of his ministry.” Randall (1982:1) adds that

...those who know Beyers Naudé well will not doubt the deep sincerity of the motivation or of the convictions which have led him almost inexorably over the period of twenty five years to his position. And many will not hesitate to say that they see in his example something of God's plan for South Africa.

The ministry of Beyers Naudé is better understood if we take cognisance of his making. There are factors in his upbringing which will pave our way for understanding his ministry later in this study. Important pillars among these are his early life and ministry within the context of the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC). Concerning his early life, important aspects will include (among others) his parental background, childhood and youth, theological formation, his spirituality and the political climate during his youth. As far as his ministry in the DRC is concerned, attention will be paid to the background ministry approach of the DRC especially around the race question and a look into his ministry in all the six DRC congregations he served.

2.2. EARLY LIFE

2.2.1. Parental background

The parental background of Beyers Naudé will be of assistance in the understanding of his ministry in this study. Christiaan Frederich Beyers Naudé was born in Roodepoort, Johannesburg on 10 May 1915. One can appreciate how his birth and childhood in the city might have influenced his choice of strategic areas for his ministry in both the DRC (2.3.2) and later the victims of oppression (3.2.3). He shares the same year of birth with Mr John Vorster, a nationalist who later became Prime Minister and leader of the National Party and played a role in his life (D'Oliveira 1977:9). He had one brother, Jozua (jr) who was also a *dominee* and six sisters, one of whom was married to a *dominee*, Rev Frans O'Brian Geldenhuys. He was raised in what Cedric Mason (Business Day, 8 September 2004) calls "the heart of Afrikanerdom." His father, Jozua Franchoise was a founding member of the Afrikaner-Broederbond³, the organisation that supported apartheid and of which attention will be paid later in this chapter (ibid). While he was considered a brave soldier, he also acted as a chaplain during the Anglo-Boer war by ministering and comforting the Boer soldiers on Sundays when they had time (Ryan 2005:6). In the words of Villa-Vicencio (1995:18; cf Randall 1982:2), Beyers Naudé's father was "of conservative Voortrekker and Dutch stock". His mother Adriana (Ada) Johanna Zondagh van Huyssteen like his father Jozua, was a person of profound religiosity, an ardent member of the DRC.

Beyers Naudé's father Jozua was born in Middelburg, Cape on 20 March 1873, a teacher by profession and the town's catechism master during the war who later (1909) qualified as a *dominee* from the DRC Theological Seminary in Stellenbosch. He was born from a family that was described as "conservative, religious Afrikaners, faithful members of the DRC who brought up their children in accordance with the strict Calvinist and evangelistic traditions of their faith. Everyday there was family worship and on Sundays the whole family attended church" (Ryan 2005:4-5). Beyers Naudé was born during a period categorized by Saayman (2007:63) as the

³ Hereafter to be referred to as the Broederbond throughout this thesis except in quotations and headings.

Second Wave (1867-1939). Although he acknowledged that DRC membership declined because of disillusionment as a result of the economic hardship of the Afrikaners at the time, Beyers Naudé's parents would be among those described by Saayman (2007:63) as follows: "By the early 1940s a survey done in Johannesburg showed that less than 30% of DRC members still attended church services and Holy Communion and still upheld the custom of family prayers."

His father's friend and role model was a Boer general, Christiaan Frederich Beyers. The influence of this general on Beyers Naudé's father was strong in such a way that he went outside their Afrikaner custom and named his son Beyers after him instead of his maternal grandfather (Randall 1982:3). Villa-Vicencio (1995:18) indicates that General Christiaan Frederich Beyers was a rebel Afrikaner general who drowned in the Vaal river while trying to evade arrest by the British colonial government forces.

Striking characteristics about Beyers Naude's father which might be of value in the understanding of his ministry approach in South Africa are the fact that he was strongly committed to the DRC's evangelism and believed in the urgent need to spread the gospel, fought for the independence and development of Afrikaans as a language and culture, was a rebel who refused to accept the Vereeniging peace treaty (on 31 May 1902) and refused to hand over his rifle after the war. He was a radical who regarded General Jan Smuts as a traitor to the Afrikaner cause. His father, while a *dominee*, was touched by the poverty of his congregation. After the Broederbond was formed in 1918, Jozua was elected its first President. He never had much time to spend with his family as he was deeply involved in national political issues, except after he accepted a call to Piet Retief DRC congregation (Ryan 2005:5; cf Randall 1982:5).

The background of Beyers Naudé's parents as judged by their relationship with the Boer general, who, like other generals of the time, represented a conservative political thinking, might have strongly influenced him. The fact that his parents moved away from the tradition of naming their son from a close family member, further stressed the high level of the influence in question. The fact that he never denied or shied away from his Afrikaner identity and heritage in his ministry to the oppressed proved the deep dimension of the parental nationalist influence. To demonstrate

Beyers Naudé's connection to his Afrikaner heritage, Villa-Vicencio (1995:18) quotes him likening himself with St Paul who didn't want to divorce himself from his Jewish heritage in his ministry thus:

I can identify with St Paul who once observed that if anyone could boast in his Jewishness it was he. Well, if anyone could be so foolish as to want to boast about Afrikaner identity in this day and age, then it is me. My roots are strong and my heritage pure.

Later in this study, it will be indicated that because of his ministry approach, his fellow Afrikaners turned against him. Despite this, his love for his Afrikaans language was 'written on the wall for all to see'. He was not ashamed of it nor denied that he was an Afrikaner.

What influence did his parents have on him? The answer to this question would unfold in the next chapter of this study. However, it is worth mentioning the similarities between Beyers Naudé and his father Jozua. In the words of Ryan (2005:5),

...both were deeply religious with strong convictions and a sense of justice, not afraid to go against the stream and to risk criticism when they felt their principles were at stake. Jozua displayed great energy and drive and piled on himself numerous commitments and responsibilities, a characteristic people would also recognize in Beyers.

2.2.2. Childhood and youth

What lessons can one learn from his childhood and youth in the quest for understanding his ministry approach? His mother's ethics of child upbringing provides a picture of a childhood foundation in the Naudé family as echoed by Beyers Naudé (in Villa-Vicencio 1995:20) himself:

She had strong views on the way in which her children should be raised. We were required to be well educated, religious and obedient to our parents. She

showed an unbending prejudice against the British and never questioned the rightness of the Afrikaner cause or their goal of eventual political dominance. It was not until later that I questioned her values or the control she exercised over my life.

Out of this scenario, one sees a strict and conservative upbringing rooted in deep religious convictions and obedience to parents. It is also apparent from the above quote that a child brought up in this environment will be a strong Afrikaner nationalist who will support the political cause and struggle of his people. The animosity against the British will become part of the mental shape of children raised in his situation. Beyers Naudé did not escape this Afrikaner nationalistic trappings against the British. It would be seen as we proceed in the following chapters how this trend influenced the life and struggle of Beyers Naudé when judged against his love for the Afrikaner people and his proud Afrikaner identity despite the mistakes they made which shaped his ministry and struggle for the victims of apartheid later on.

Beyers Naudé's father also had tremendous influence on his eight children especially his two sons. Villa-Vincencio (1995:20) described him as "a determined and zealous nationalist with an uncompromising sense of divine mission...in his understanding of the promises of God to the Afrikaner nation. He instilled within them the stories of the British military aggression and their flagrant disregard for the human rights of the Afrikaner people."

As a youth, he was among those who "were discouraged from questioning a system which they were told was sanctioned by God to ensure their nation's continued survival" (Ryan 2005:4). This situation makes it difficult for any member from this group especially the youth to deviate from their national 'moral' code of conduct.

Beyers Naudé was taught to differentiate between the roles of males and females at home and in life in general. The girls were expected to perform domestic chores while the boys did related roles such as gardening (Ryan 2005:14). Plaatjies-Van Huffel (2006:109; cf Naudé 1995:13) stated that in the Naudé family women were "...portrayed in traditional roles as mothers, pastors' wives and sisters; helping,

serving and/or attending to the needs of males. His sisters for example, tended to the clothes of their brothers, while the males were slaughtering goats.”

The scenario as depicted above has the potential of yielding a person with a conservative frame of mind in a nationalistic sense, coupled with a negative perception of the British. It is no surprise therefore that Beyers Naudé, having been brought up in similar political circumstances, found it hard to come out of this kraal. Ryan (2005:4) should therefore be understood from this background that like most Afrikaner youth. Beyers Naudé was loyal to his people and the nationalist cause for a period of 45 years. Like most others, he was happy and did not question it when the Nationalist Party took over in 1948 and introduced what he called “hardship and suffering for the black majority” (ibid). The parental resistance of Beyers Naudé against the British colonialists which was inherited by his children enabled Beyers Naudé to be loyal to his people and their nationalistic cause. This resistance empowered him to defy the apartheid system for the victims of oppression as it would be seen later on in this study.

2.2.3. Encounter with children of other races

Beyers Naudé had limited contact with children of other races. In the light of the general political spirit of the time which discouraged contact among races, Beyers Naudé’s contact with Blacks might have been done behind the back of his parents especially when they played during the day. Saayman (2009:17) opened a window of the childhood life of Nico Smith which gives a picture of how Afrikaner children of the time were taught with regards to race relations. When Nico Smith tried to befriend Aia Lena, their domestic assistant, his mother Maria reprimanded him strongly, “a White person does not stand and chat with a Black person. You only chat with them when you instruct them to work” (my translation). When Nico Smith and his sister tried to play with the children of Aia Lena, Saayman (ibid) uses the following expression to demonstrate her harsh dislike of this practice with anger, “was die vet heeltemal in die vuur⁴.” On that day she reminded her children of the teachings they

⁴ Loosely translated as: *The oil (petrol) was completely on fire*, meaning that the situation completely exploded.

seem to have ignored: “You do not play with small kaffirs and you do not shake hands with them. They are dirty” (my translation, *ibid*).

This scene provides a clear picture of what the children of those days were taught with regards to racism. These racist teachings, translate themselves into racial attitudes against other people leading to what Mpako (1999:237) referred to as “a general attitude of superiority...and...avoidance of contact, not engaging with black people as equals.” Adding to this view, this kind of teaching leads to what Beyers Naudé (2005:55) outlined as the general attitude of the Afrikaner that is, the character of

...seeing himself and his people as a nation apart from others, separate first of all from the other white cultural groups (especially the English-speaking South Africans of British descent), but also from the non-white national groups in our country.

This also resulted into the attitude of looking at people who are not White as inferior and the responsibility the Whites have over them, i.e. of acting as their guardians and to regard them as ‘children’ who need to be guided to maturity, who cannot do anything without the assistance of Whites. However, this view has changed over the years (*ibid*: 55-56).

One among the few contacts allowed with Blacks was when they were to spread the gospel to them and give them work. Despite this limited opportunity for contact with other races, Beyers Naudé during the time when his father was a *dominee*, moving from place to place, opportunities for contact with other races appeared. For instance, when his parents were ministering to a congregation in Piet Retief, he was exposed to Zulu speaking children. According to Ryan (2005:11), “he spoke Zulu better than he did Afrikaans, but knowledge of the language soon faded from his young mind.”

At Genadendal he had a more profound contact with the ‘Coloured’ community and another church other than the DRC. Randall (1982:10) summarised Beyers Naudé’s first experience of inter-racial contact in Genadendal mission station well thus:

Visiting Genadendal was an important experience for Naudé. There he had his first real contact across the colour line, meeting and talking with 'Coloured' people on a basis approaching equality. As a schoolboy in Graaff-Reinet he had played with children from the local township, swimming with them in the river, but this was his first real contact at an adult level.

Genadendal mission station played a significant role in the racial orientation of Beyers Naudé. Another important role played by this mission station was the way in which it provided a platform for him to experience and attend the first non-racial Christian community during his courtship of Ilse Weder between 1936 and the beginning of the Second World War. Genadendal community provided him with a different picture which was contrary to his beliefs then and his cultural upbringing which promoted racial divide (Bredenkamp & Ross 1995: ix; cf Nash 2005:32).

While his father was ministering the DRC congregation of Graaff-Reinet, there was a Dutch Reformed Mission Church (NG Sendingkerk) in the local township but contact between Blacks and Whites never existed (Naudé 1995:30). The fact that Beyers Naudé was an extrovert as a boy, energetic and more sociable (Ryan 2005:13) than his brother named Jozua, indicates that it was easy for him to play and socialize with children of other race groups.

Another racial contact of Beyers Naudé with people of other races behind his parents' knowledge was when his father was a *dominee* in the Cape. His congregation had 'Coloureds' although they were only allowed to occupy the back pews. Despite the fact that contact with children (as it was also the case with adults) of other races was not allowed, Beyers Naudé during the day played with 'Coloured' children and even swam with them on Sundays River (Ryan 2005:18).

Despite the fact that the political atmosphere during the time of his upbringing did not encourage racial contact, Beyers Naudé was able to meet and play with children of other races. It appears that his parents like the majority of White parents then, obeyed Dr D.F. Malan (in Ngcokovane 1989:95), who contended that "whites and blacks must be separated socially, politically, residentially and industrially as far as

possible.” The fact that his parents taught them apartheid, resulted in this situation. Ngcokovane (1989:84) is therefore correct in saying that *apartheid* has been understood by its supporters “as a solution to South Africa’s racial problem which they believe has been created by the fact that two distinct groups of people with distinctive characters and values have come together.” This has disadvantaged Beyers Naudé to experience the wealth of contact with other people.

2.2.4. Theological formation: University student

Having looked into his childhood and youth, it is important to focus on another area of his making which relates to his theological formation as a university student. This is essential as one of the bridges that lead to our understanding of Beyers Naudé.

Beyers Naudé attended the University of Stellenbosch and enrolled on 15 January 1932 after matriculation in 1931 (Naudé 1995:23). The aim of his enrolment was to study theology in order to become a minister in the DRC. The practice of sons following the footprints of their fathers as ministers was also common during the period which Saayman (2007:62) called the Second Wave (2.2.1). He quoted Du Plessis (in Saayman 2007:65) who indicated, with regards to this period “that ministers became more actively interested in mission, and that the sons of ministers came forward in large numbers to offer themselves for service in new and distance fields.” Saayman (2007:65) adds that

...the DRC mission in Central Africa, especially in Malawi and Zimbabwe, is characterized by the many family members who became missionaries in the same field.... Remarkable is also the number of children of missionaries who followed in their parents’ footprints.

The University of Stellenbosch played an important role in his theological formation and in the general development of his leadership qualities. This university was the bastion of Afrikanerdom and intelligence. Many Afrikaner leaders were trained in this institution. According to Ryan (2005:19), this university shaped generations of Afrikaner elite. In the interpretation of Randall (1982:6), this university was “the oldest and proudest of the Afrikaans universities.”

By 1932 when Beyers Naudé enrolled at this university, it was still conservative in terms of maintaining the strict Afrikaans tradition. But for Beyers Naudé it was a taste of fresh air from strict family rules. Beyers Naudé started university education at Stellenbosch with his brother. He was an extrovert while his brother was an introvert. The difference between him and his brother became clear in the nicknames they got at university, 'Oorlog and Vrede' (war and peace) (Ryan 2005:21). It was at this university where Beyers Naudé “for the first time in his life was free to choose, to explore, to socialize, go to dance, meet girls, to read and be challenged by new views” (Ryan 2005:20).

Beyers Naudé as an extrovert was active in most respects at the university. Following his father's footsteps, he stayed in Wilgenhof residence, a custodian of proud Afrikaans traditions. The active lifestyle of Beyers Naudé at the university is captured by Ryan (2005:20; cf Randall 1982:7):

Beyers became a well known figure in the hostel and was later elected its *primarius* or student chairman. The brothers spent their university days with many Afrikaners who were destined for top positions in church and political life, including future Prime Minister John Vorster, one of Beyers Naudé's adversaries in debating circles.

Beyers Naudé became active in many respects at the campus, For instance, he was a prominent member of the debating societies on campus and regularly debated against a team that was led by John Vorster. His active life in public speaking earned him the position of the presidency of the Student Representative Council in 1937 (Cape Times, 16 Sept 2004). He was “a personable and charismatic campus personality” (Randall 1982:7). Beyers Naudé also became a member of the hiking club *Berg en Toer Klub* to which he became chairperson (Ryan 2005:20-21). His leadership style could further be described from the fact that he “was more inclined to hear out the views of other people and use gentle persuasion to try and change their minds” (Ryan 2005:21; cf Randall 1982:7).

There were early signs of resistance to the status quo in Beyers Naudé. At one stage he and several students established an anonymous newspaper that propagated liberal views and questioned some of the tenets of traditional, conservative Afrikanerdom. This paper was called *Pro Liberate*. This had influence thirty years later in the journal called *Pro Veritate*, which contributed to his friction with his church and 'volk' (Randall 1982:7-8).

For his studies, after three years he earned a BA degree followed by an MA after an additional year. It was after eight years when he qualified in Theology from the Stellenbosch School of Theology.

The fact that Beyers Naudé's parents enrolled him at this 'proudest' university indicates that they wanted the best education for their children. In addition to this scenario, the hall of residence that he occupied represented a strong statement in terms of prestige and association with some of the most respected leaders who stayed in the same residence. This university did not only prepare Beyers Naudé for academic life but gave him a platform to develop his leadership qualities and his skills as an orator which were demonstrated by his debating skills. He also participated socially by joining clubs and other cultural activities like his presidency of the Student Representative Council. The fact that he was prepared to listen and hear other peoples' views became an added advantage.

2.2.5. Involvement in youth movements

Beyers Naudé was involved in an active church life and Christian youth movements. Some of his involvements were during his university days. During that period, he was a member of the *Christelike Studentevereniging (CSV)* (Students Christian Union (Ryan 2005:21).

It is striking that in most of the organizations which he attended, he assumed leadership positions. This could also be seen from his time as a member of the Student Representative Council where he was chosen chairperson, and the same applied to the hiking club or *Berg en Toer Klub*. Judged from his involvement in other

areas, it made it difficult for Randall (1982:7) to understand why he was not involved in the *Afrikaanse Studentebond*.

2.2.6. Beyers Naudé and his spirituality

Beyers Naudé graduated from the DRC catechism class at the age of sixteen. Though he was a Christian before his graduation from catechism, he also experienced a personal connection with Christ afterwards. It all started during Pentecostal services which involved prayer meetings and church services leading up to the day of Pentecost. During those prayers and church services, he was touched by the sermons of his father which were preached in May and June 1930 and gave himself to Christ afresh. His new Christian experience however, did not neutralise him from his rebellious attitude. This was shown when he joined other boys who protested against the ‘authoritarian’ nature of the principal while at high school (Ryan 2005:18).

At this age Beyers Naudé’s new Christian experience did not cause him to view the world differently as he did later in his years. The fact that he reflected differently on the Bible happened afterwards. It would be seen later that “he began to examine his Bible and theology more critically, and reluctantly admitted to himself that apartheid was not scriptural, that its effects were unacceptable, that Christians were one people throughout the world....” (Business Day, 8 September 2004).

2.3. MINISTRY IN THE DUTCH REFORMED CHURCH (DRC) 1940-1963

2.3.1. The Dutch Reformed Church in perspective

In order to pave a better understanding of Beyers Naudé’s ministry especially as a champion of the victims of apartheid racism, it is important to unearth the background of the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) policy on race relations. This will build the foundation in our understanding of the theological background from which his church expected him like other ministers of this church, to base their ministry.

Beyers Naudé served six congregations of the DRC from 1940 to 1963 before he underwent a radical ‘conversion’ and embarked on his ministry to the victims of apartheid. Before looking into each of the congregations he served, it is important to understand factors that contributed to the DRC’s race policy. This is because this church was not born racist, but this system came on board in the process.

Beyers Naudé was a Minister of the DRC. When one addresses his early ministry it is important to understand the approach of his church on race relations then. It will therefore be easy to see how his church’s race teachings or policy might have had a bearing on him becoming a champion of the victims of racism and oppression under the apartheid government.

The story of the support for apartheid was not part of the DRC agenda. It is therefore necessary to understand some indicators that led to its eventual support of apartheid that played a role in the life of Beyers Naudé especially during his ministry in the DRC from 1940 to 1963. The following areas address the indicators in question:

- *The Dutch Reformed Church synod decision of 1857*

The DRC synodical decision of 1857 forms the basis of this church’s approach on race relations. It became clear that the church was aware that racism cannot be biblically justified and is thus un-Christian. Before 1857 the DRC accommodated all people regardless of race until a time when a small group of White members complained that they cannot partake in Holy Communion with other races. The race approach to solve this problem as seen from the decision of 1857 was not an easy one. The racist decision was taken due to “the weakness of some” (Müller 1993:121; cf Naudé 1995:133; see Ngcokovane 1989:40).

This decision had far-reaching consequences in terms of race relations in church and government. The so-called daughter churches (1.3.4 (i)) which later on were born as a result of the DRC mission were the results of this decision. On the other hand, the official apartheid policies of the National Party that came into power many years later, were also indirectly influenced by this decision.

- *Dr (Reverend) D.F. Malan and the Nationalist Party*

Dr (Rev) D.F. Malan was a Minister of the DRC and his influence in the politics of this country during the early ministry of Beyers Naudé is enormous. At one stage he was a Minister of the DRC congregation of Graaff-Reinet from 1913 to 1915 (Naudé 1995:20). Beyers Naudé's father was also at some stage a DRC minister in the same congregation (Graaff-Reinet). It is known that Dr D.F. Malan resigned from active church ministry by the time he became a leader of the Nationalist Party but his background as a minister, like other *dominees* then, was enormous in politics and the Nationalist Party in particular.

Already during the 1930s, he was described as someone who “emerged as a new leader of Afrikaner nationalism” (Ryan 2005:24) and in 1934 he established the Purified Nationalist Party (ibid). Ryan (ibid) reasoned that in 1948 when the Nationalist Party came to power, it provided the institutional pillar of apartheid, the Broederbond provided the ideological pillar and the DRC provided the religious and moral pillar.

- *Dutch Reformed Church and the Afrikaner-Broederbond*

There has always been a link between the DRC, Broederbond and Beyers Naudé. The immediate link of Beyers Naudé with the Broederbond could be traced from his father who was both a co-founder and active member of this body. Beyers Naudé himself joined the Broederbond in 1940 at the age of twenty five and on his first year as a minister of the DRC (Randall 1982:10; cf Naudé 1995:33).

The association of DRC with the Broederbond could be traced from its establishment in 1918 during which Ministers of the DRC like Dr D.F. Malan played an important role. At some stage the DRC Ministers dominated the Broederbond. This was also confirmed by the reaction of Rev V. de Vos who protested by leaving the DRC, reasoning that it dominated the Broederbond.

There was a time when the Ministers of the DRC were counted at 357 members of the of Broederbond above other professionals such as lawyers and members of parliament (Ngcokovane 1989:63).

Another example of the relationship between the DRC with the Broederbond could be seen from the Minister of Lands, Senator Conroy (in Ngcokovane 1989:65) when speaking in parliament in 1946 spoke “of the hundreds of ministers of religion in the Dutch Reformed Church who had dragged politics into the church and that ninety percent of the Afrikaners churches had been brought under the influence of the Broederbond.”

The relationship that existed between the DRC and the Broederbond judged by the big number of ministers from this church who enlisted as members is a point at stake. Ministers of this church were not mostly ordinary members, but occupied positions of leadership and were co-founders of it. This meant that DRC ministers were influential in most of the decisions taken in that organisation. Beyers Naudé, like other ministers, was also a member of this organization from the early age of twenty five.

2.3.2. Ministry in the Dutch Reformed Church congregations

2.3.2.1. Wellington: 1940-1942

Beyers Naudé arrived in the congregation of Wellington as an assistant minister in December 1939. However, he was installed on 27 July 1940 in that congregation and the induction service was conducted by his father. This was his first congregation after training (Ryan 2005:30; cf Naudé 1995:32; see Randall 1982:10). He entered the Wellington congregation, a young and energetic man of God. During his service in this congregation, Beyers Naudé accepted the status quo. In his own words he stated: “I accepted the religious, social and political status quo and set out to be a good and successful minister” (Ryan 2005:31).

There are quite a number of activities which Beyers Naudé was involved in at Wellington. From the onset he determined his areas of focus as youth work,

evangelism and mission work (Ryan 2005:31). He was therefore involved in youth ministry and built contacts with the theological students of the college in town. His focus on evangelism was an influence from his parents who also had a sharp emphasis on this, as well as the evangelical influence in the DRC by Scottish Pastors, such as Andrew Murray. He always remembered his father who injected in him the need to win new converts. In Wellington he set himself three main ministry goals namely youth work, evangelism and mission work of which remained eminent in his thinking and activities (Ibid). There were other areas that enhanced his missionary zeal like his visits to the Genadendal mission station and the DRC Mission Institute in Wellington where White students were trained as ministers of the 'Coloured' wing of the DRC. He was concerned that the training was inferior than the one meant for White DRC as offered in Stellenbosch. Beyers Naudé's observation of the difference in training is clear when he stated:

I discovered for the first time the deep feeling of inferiority which a number of these students had, about their status, about their future and therefore also about their commitment. They felt...they were regarded as second-class people, and that it imposed an attitude of subservience and a hidden aggressiveness on the part of some of them (in Ryan 2005:31).

2.3.2.2. Loxton: 1942-1945

Beyers Naudé's second congregation in 1942 was Loxton and it was situated in the middle of the Great Karoo (Randall 1982:11; cf Naudé 1995:34). Loxton was one congregation where he particularly enjoyed his work as a minister. The congregation had many outlying farms that gave Beyers Naudé insight into the life and worldview of a rural Afrikaans community (Randall 1982:11). This might be because it was a small town at the periphery of everything. In his own words he wrote: "I enjoyed preaching, doing house-visits, visiting the famers on the wide stretch of land and I was back on the Karoo, and I felt it was my world" (my translation, Naudé 1995:35).

One of the major political challenges during his ministry at Loxton was the tension that existed between the National Party and the Ossewa Brandwag (OB). This tension also showed itself in his congregation where an OB group dominated. The

division between these groups also showed themselves in the Broederbond where the OB also dominated. During his ministry in this congregation, Beyers was challenged to maintain a neutral position and to pray for this tension not to lead to an explosion. He also advised and warned them that their political views and divisions should be handled in such a way that it does not cause damage to their Afrikanerdom and the interest of the Afrikaners in general (Naudé 1995:36).

During his ministry in this congregation there were two areas that became prominent. Not in their order of priority, the first one was his maintenance of neutrality over the political tensions that existed between the aforementioned two groups. The second one was his nationalism as an Afrikaner when judged from the advice he gave to the two groups to remember not to taint the Afrikaner interest and identity in their quest for political truth. It is important to see later in this study how this impacted in his ministry to the victims of oppression.

2.3.2.3. Pretoria South-Olifantsfontein: 1945-1949

As his third congregation, Beyers Naudé accepted a call to the congregation of Pretoria South in 1945. While the previous congregation was ministered during the war, this congregation was ministered after the war and he had to deal with post war trauma. This congregation was situated in Irene and started as a wing of the Bosman Street Dutch Reformed Church. However, it grew rapidly and soon became an independent congregation. Senior politicians such as General Jan Smuts were members of this congregation. But surprisingly, although his house was in Irene, he kept his church membership in Bosman Street (main church) where his friend Rev Johan Reyneke was a minister. This did not bother Beyers Naudé because he understood their friendship (Naudé 1995:36; cf Randall 1982:11).

As a result of the fast growth of this part of the congregation, two church halls were constructed, one in Lyttelton and another one in Olifantsfontein. Pretoria South congregation was divided between these two areas with Dr. Danie Louw remaining the minister of Lyttelton and Beyers Naudé ministering Olifantsfontein.

The war concentration camp in Irene was situated within the boundaries of the congregation of Beyers Naudé. It also included the military community of Robert Heights (currently Thaba Tshwane). Beyers Naudé had to deal with the hate that existed between the British and the Afrikaners as a result of the war and the British treatment of the Afrikaners in the concentration camps.

The approach that he used to deal with the situation is explained by him thus (Naudé 1995:36-37):

More than once, I read Biblical texts which were about reconciliation more especially in the New Testament and asked myself: Does the gospel have the inherent spiritual power to change bitterness, fruits of many unjust and suffering on so many innocent women and children into forgiveness and reconciliation? How could it happened? What should happen afterwards? (my translation).

Apart from a reconciliatory message that Beyers Naudé conveyed to this congregation as part of his ministry, there were some other challenges that he faced. This touched on the friction that resulted from the civilian members of his congregation who did not want to accept soldiers who wore a uniform with red bands when they attended the church service on Sundays. Beyers Naudé succeeded in adding sense into the disgruntled in order to accept those members who according to military culture then, were forced to wear a uniform with the red bands (Naudé 1995:37). In the light of what has been seen above, striking features of Beyers Naudé's ministry in this congregation were reconciliation of the Afrikaners with the British and acceptance of the military part of this congregation by the civilian section.

2.3.2.4. Pretoria East 1949-1954

Beyers Naudé accepted a call to this congregation in 1949 as a student minister (chaplain) and joined two other colleagues, Dr Ben Marais and Rev Johan Luckhoff. In this congregation there were three things that had a lasting impact in his life (Naudé 1995:38; cf Randall 1982:12):

- Book by Dr Ben Marais: *Die Kleurkrisis en die Weste*.

Dr Ben Marais wrote a book entitled *Die Kleurkrisis en die Weste*⁵ which appeared in 1952. In this book he questioned the Biblical justification of racial segregation (apartheid) but contended that it (racism) can be justified on certain practical considerations. This book caused a lot of storm not only among the Afrikaners and the DRC, but also in the Broederbond circles. Beyers Naudé supported some views contained in this book concerning race relations but was unable to disclose his views for the sake of his good relationship with his colleagues.

- Kerk Jeugvereniging (KJV) of the DRC.

Beyers Naudé's ministry in Pretoria East coincided with the establishment of the *Kerk Jeugvereniging (KJV)*⁶, of the DRC and the 1954 KJV in Heidelberg. The decision of the KJV Headquarters to elect Beyers Naudé with Rev W. de W. Strauss to make an intensive study (for six months, June to December 1953) about youth work in Europe and North America became a highlight of Beyers Naudé's ministry and was an eye opener for him on matters of race relations.

This first overseas visit of Beyers Naudé enabled him to intermingle with youth of all races with Protestant church backgrounds from thirteen countries. During the visit they received heavy questioning on church, the DRC in particular and apartheid. As a result of this experience, this visit had tremendous impact in different ways on Beyers Naudé as could be deduced from his comments (Naudé 1995:38): "The new vision of church unity, race and human relations, as well as the ecumenical movement was born in me" (my translation).

From the above, it became apparent that his exposure to the KJV and his overseas visit offered him an opportunity to have practical encounters with the youth of all races. The experience of a mix with other races placed him far ahead of most Whites particularly Afrikaner youth in South Africa who did not have an

⁵ The title means Colour Crisis and the West

⁶ Church Youth Organisation.

opportunity to meet their South African Black counterparts then. Worse of all Beyers Naudé himself had to have this experience overseas after having failed to have it in his own country. The fact that they had serious discussions around church and racism as well as the possible role that the youth can play left him with an indelible mark that made him a champion of the oppressed as would be seen later in this study.

- Friendship with theologians of all races

Beyers Naudé's ministry at Pretoria East afforded him an opportunity to meet theologians at the University of Pretoria and brought him closer to the DRC racially based so called daughter churches (1.3.4 (i)). He also met theological students who were to become ministers in the above-mentioned categories of racially based 'daughter' churches (Naudé 1995:40; cf Masuku 1998:12).

The Pretoria East congregation opened more doors for him and became an eye opener in many ways. Firstly he acknowledged that as a student minister, this opportunity ignited his interest to work with the youth. Secondly, the DRC mission work in Africa in which he invested interest and the wave of political independence of countries to which the DRC had mission projects sent a strong message in his mind in terms of change. Thirdly, his interest in evangelism which placed his focus on pastoral work. This venture enabled him to have a golden opportunity to build the KJV (Naudé 1995:40).

The Tomlinson report was another thorn in Beyers Naudé's side. This report was welcomed by the apartheid government for it supported apartheid in terms of separate development and thus limited Blacks to 13 percent of South Africa. The report denied integration at all costs (Müller 1993:487-488; cf Ngcokovane 1989:112,113; cf Naudé 1995:40; see Saayman 2007:72). Though the apartheid government welcomed it, they did not accept the financial recommendation of it.

Pretoria East congregation was fertile ground for Beyers Naudé's exposure to different theological debates. This was due to his close proximity to the University,

coupled with his appointment as a student minister. This scenario prepared him to be one among great thinkers and orators as reflected in the preceding parts of this study.

2.3.2.5. Potchefstroom: 1954-1959

From Pretoria East, Beyers Naudé was called to the congregation of Potchefstroom to join Rev Gert Worst. Potchefstroom congregation was embroiled in party political divisions where a parallel congregation Mooi-river was established within the same congregational boundaries.

His stay and ministry at this congregation, like at the Pretoria East congregation, the University of Potchefstroom afforded him an opportunity to engage in theological debate in search for answers. He also had an opportunity to reflect on his first overseas experience. During his time there, the Reformed Ecumenical Synod had a session at Potchefstroom. Although he was not an official delegate of his church, he had an opportunity to attend the open sessions. During this synod, debates ranged around church unity, the Word and apartheid (Naudé 1995:41; cf Randall 1982:15).

Beyers Naudé (1995:41-41) as a result of this encounter, had time to reflect on the following five scriptural texts used by DRC ministers in their justification of apartheid:

- Gen. 1:27. About the meaning of people who are made in God's image.
- Gen. 11:1-9. About the meaning of the story of the tower of Babel.
- Deut. 32:8-9. About boundaries which were pronounced by God for people and nations.
- Acts. 2:5-11. About the functions of the Holy Spirit and the explanation thereof.
- Acts. 17:26. About St. Paul's pronouncement on the Areopagus that God created all nations from one image.

On the other hand, Beyers Naudé (1995:42) studied other texts which carried an opposing message from the above as reflected below:

- How to handle strangers (Lev 19:33, Jes. 56:3, 6, Mark 11:17).
- The case of Jesus and the Samaritan woman (John 4:1-42).
- Christ's prayer for the unity of the church (John 17:20-23).
- St. Paul's judgment on Peter's actions in Antioch and his double standard towards non-Jewish believers (Gal. 2:11-21, Gal 3:28).
- Where St. Paul gives Christians a new meaning of circumcision (Phil. 3:1-11).

It was all these conflicting views of the Bible by the DRC, to which he was a minister, which impacted considerably in his mind and formed a new perception of the theological truth. Beyers Naudé gradually realized that it is impossible to justify apartheid biblically. The situation at Potchefstroom, according to Randall (1982:15) deepened his inner conflict and doubts about the theology of the DRC. There were very few other DRC ministers (such as Rev. Bertie Brink) who saw things the same way as Beyers Naudé did. They were however aware that it will take a long time for the DRC to 'convert'. Rev. Bertie Brink (in Naudé 1995:43) in his response to Beyers Naudé's questions on this matter wrote: "Brother Beyers, I just want to advise you that it is still going to take years and years before our church realizes that apartheid cannot be scripturally justified. Therefore, we must be patient" (my translation).

Beyers Naudé was elected to the position of moderator of the then Transvaal Synod of the DRC in 1958 (Randall 1982:15). While in Potchefstroom, he enjoyed regular visits by former University of Pretoria students who were at the time of the visit, working in the DRC 'daughter' churches. They invited him to their congregations to see the situation. While he was impressed by the love of those Black members, he was appalled by the horrific situations in which they were subjected by apartheid (Randall 1982:15; cf Naudé 1995:44; see Adonis 2005:117).

Beyers Naudé's ministry in Potchefstroom congregation marked a milestone in his struggle for theological truth. It was while in Potchefstroom where he gathered more facts and answers to the fact that apartheid was biblically unjustifiable. He wanted to act on this new found truth by pronouncing his disagreement with his church on this but kept on postponing as he thought of the consequences. Worst of all, he did not

by this time even inform his wife about his inner struggle (1995:43-44). He was walking with a time bomb which was ready to explode anytime.

2.3.2.6. Aasvoëlkop: 1959-1963

Beyers Naudé accepted a call to Aasvoëlkop congregation in November 1959, his last DRC congregation. This congregation was established from the congregation of Linden which was ministered by Rev. Gideon Boshoff (Randall 1982:16). It was a congregation in a wealthy suburb of Johannesburg. In the light of his new found truth, Beyers Naudé had an inner struggle as to whether he can accept the call to this congregation or not. The question that came to his mind could have been “Should I continue to minister from the platform of my church’s biblical justification of apartheid which is in conflict with the will of God?”

The inner struggle of Beyers Naudé continued in this congregation. At this congregation he had already gathered more facts in his quest for truth on the questionable marriage between the apartheid system and the Bible. There were doubts as to when to speak out his heart on this matter. The events and times of his ministry in this congregation made it difficult for Beyers Naudé to continue to hide within himself what he believed to be the gospel truth on the subject of race relations.

Two events forced Beyers Naudé to speak out. These were the World Council of Churches’ meeting at Cottesloe, Johannesburg with their South African member churches from 7 to 14 December 1960 and the 21 March 1960 anti-pass peaceful marchers’ massacre in what came to be known as the Sharpeville Massacre (Ngcokovane 1989:157; cf Naudé 1995:46). Mason (in Business Day 8 Sept 2004) and Mutambirwa (in WCC 1991:7) also acknowledged that this tragedy, during which 69 people were killed and 187 injured was a turning point in Beyers Naudé’s life (De Grunchy 1986:62.63).

In 1963, the DRC as a result of his ministry forced him to choose between the church and the Christian Institute. According to Mason (in Business Day 8 Sept 2004) “it was a choice between obedience in faith and subjection to the authority of the

church. He must obey God rather than man. He hung his gown on the pulpit and walked out, a reluctant rebel, 48 years old.”

It was in this congregation where Beyers Naudé decided to reveal his standpoint in the sermon preached on 22 September 1963 to which the congregation had mixed reaction (Naudé 1995:68). The DRC and Aasvoëlkop congregation could not accommodate him anymore with these views that were deemed contrary to the church’. His farewell function (which looked like a funeral service with tears on the faces of people) at Aasvoëlkop congregation took place on Friday 1 November 1963 after which he worked for the Christian Institute from Monday 4 November 1963 (Naudé 1995:70, 72).

Beyers Naudé’s departure from the Aasvoëlkop congregation marked the beginning of his effective ministry to the victims of oppression in South Africa as could be seen later in this study. He demonstrated great courage especially with the risk that he was putting his family in. Worst of all, he even stated that he did not have money to buy a house when removed from the church manse. He had to be assisted by Dr. Jan van Rooyen from Parkhurst for a cheaper house in Greenside (Naudé 1995:69). The fact that he took this risky decision despite his poor financial status, confirmed what Botman (2004) said about him in outlining his character as a man of integrity that, “he was one of those who could not be diverted from his sacred duty and obedience neither by financial gain nor political and ecclesial ambition.”

2.4. THE ‘CONVERSION’ OF BEYERS NAUDÉ

2.4.1. The ‘conversion’

What is it that changed a Pharisee of the Pharisees (cf Gal 1:4; Phil 3:4-5) into Christ’s apostle to the Gentiles, a persecutor of the early Christian movement into its protagonist, a person who perceived Jesus Christ as an impostor and a threat to Judaism into one who embraced him as the center of his life, indeed of the universe? Paul himself gives only one answer; it was his encounter with the risen Christ (Bosch 1991:125)

In our quest for the reasons behind Beyers Naudé's 'conversion', similar questions as the one asked by Bosch above come to mind when one recalls that for forty five years of his early life he supported apartheid (Ryan 2005:4). The 'conversion' of Beyers Naudé from biblically supporting apartheid into being a faithful servant of God in the fight for justice has been a long and a painful one. He had an inner struggle with his conscience whether to continue blessing apartheid scripturally or to listen to his Christian convictions. He ultimately reached his 'conversion' through several processes and events. These included his encounter with ministers of other races and churches, the Sharpsville massacre of 1960, the Cottesloe consultation of 1960, the role of the Christian Institute and the reaction of the DRC afterwards.

Beyers Naude's contact with ministers of other races and churches was an important step in the process of his 'conversion'. The times of Beyers Naudé's upbringing which was characterized by strict laws which discouraged racial contacts made it difficult for him to meet other ministers. His parents, who were supporters of racist organizations such as the Broederbond as seen in this study, limited his opportunities to have contact with other peoples.

The first contact between him and ministers of other races and churches did not take place in South Africa but overseas during his first visit abroad on Kerk jeugvereniging (KJV) mission in 1954. There he was able to meet Protestant youth ministers of all races from thirteen countries, an experience which left a lasting impact on him. During that encounter, he had to respond to heavy questions hurled on the DRC race policy (Naudé 1995:38; cf Heaney 2004:39).

Another situation that brought him closer to meeting ministers of other races and churches was while he was a minister at the Pretoria East congregation (1949-1954). He met student ministers who were to become ministers in the racially based so called daughter churches of the DRC (Naudé1995:40).

Another closer contact was while he was a minister at the DRC congregation of Potchefstroom after 1954. Ministers who were students at the University of Pretoria who made contact with him while he was a student minister, who were working as missionaries in the so called daughter churches, paid him visits for advice on

problems they experienced in Black congregations. Some of those ministers invited him to their congregations to have first hand information and experience (Randall 1982:15-16).

The Sharpeville massacre of 21 March 1960 touched Beyers Naudé deeply. This tragedy happened while he was a minister of the elite DRC congregation at Aasvoëlkop, Johannesburg from 1959 to 1963 (Randall 1982:17). The impact of this tragedy was not only felt by Beyers Naudé but affected many areas of human society. For instance, Mandela (1998:47) referring to the massacre concluded that, “South Africa was never to be the same again.” The DRC delegates to the Cottesloe consultation when asked as to why they rejected apartheid by signing the consultation statement, in their response they quoted the impact of the Sharpeville massacre as what occupied their minds during the consultation session. They reasoned that their “aberrant stand had been due to the shock of the Sharpeville massacre” (Ngcokovane 1989:158). De Gruchy (1986:104) wrote, “Nothing quite like this had happened before to disturb the apparent tranquility of white South Africa and the confidence of foreign investors.”

Referring to the extent of the impact of Sharpeville on the ‘conversion’ of Beyers Naudé, Archbishop Denis Hurley (in Randall 1982:17) looked at Sharpeville as: “The culminating event in the process of ‘conversion’ experienced by Beyers Naudé, ‘out of that tragedy God spoke to Beyers Naudé.’”

For Beyers Naudé, ‘conversion’ meant a new approach to ministry different from the traditional approach in the DRC which he had pursued for more than twenty years. The new ‘conversion’ for him meant “a growing involvement on the basis of ecumenical collaboration in the social and political issues of South Africa, culminating in a far-reaching identification with the cause of the oppressed” (Randall 1982:71-72). Sharpeville for Beyers Naudé, meant a God-driven justice for the downtrodden oriented ministry. Referring to the injustices meted out against the oppressed that culminated in Sharpeville, his children indicated the impact of Sharpeville as follows: “Most of all, it was the events of Sharpeville, the killing of 69 school children (sic) involved in a peaceful protest, that finally turned the tide” (Tribune 12 September 2004).

The Cottesloe consultation held in Johannesburg from 7-14 December 1960 marked a turning point in Beyers Naudé's inner struggle on race relations and apartheid justification by the DRC. According to De Gruchy (1986:65), this consultation was presided over by Dr F.C. Fry, Chairperson of the central committee of the WCC. It was attended by delegates of South African member churches and representatives from their WCC counterparts. Also in attendance were eighteen Black participants, eight lay people, ministers and theologians. Representatives of the Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk (NHK) were all White and tended to keep apart. It was alleged that they were in regular contact with Prime Minister Verwoerd. The DRC delegation was at the centre of things and even supported the consultation statement that rejected apartheid because it was based on their preparatory document (*ibid*).

The action adopted by the DRC delegation received a negative reaction from Prime Minister Verwoerd and the conservative group within the DRC. The DRC decided to withdraw from the WCC as a result of this controversy. Some of the DRC delegates attending this consultation recanted and reasoned that they signed the statement under pressure. Beyers Naudé, one of the DRC delegates was disappointed by the DRC reaction on the Cottesloe statement and refused to join his fellow delegates in dissociating themselves from the statement. This marked Beyers Naudé's 'conversion' from biblically supporting apartheid into following his Christian convictions.

The next two years until 1963 had not been easy years for Beyers Naudé as he continued with internal conflict. According to Randall (1971:26), the first part of 1963 must have been a time of intense personal conflict for Beyers Naudé. Despite the fact that for more than twenty years he was a faithful member of the Broederbond, he had increasingly grown unhappy about his position in this organization.

He was also forced by the DRC synod to make a decision if he wants to continue serving as editor of the *Pro Veritate* and Director of the Christian Institute (CI) as well as keeping his status as minister of the DRC. Beyers Naudé's decision to take the position of directorship of the Christian Institute and Editor of the *Pro Veritate* would cost him his status as a minister and Moderator of the Southern Transvaal DRC synod (Randall 1982:27-29).

Beyers Naudé made his decision to remain Director of the CI and announced this during his final sermon at his Aasvoëlkop congregation on 22 September 1963. He took up his position at the CI and became a member of one of the 'daughter' churches of the DRC in Alexandra.

When interviewed by the ABC News Nightline broadcast of 21 March 1985 referring to his 'conversion' twenty five years ago he responded as follows:

I came to the conclusion on the basis of my theological study, on the basis of my personal contacts with 'blacks' and 'coloureds' and Indians, that the policy of apartheid was unchristian, it was immoral, and it was unfeasible, and the events since 1960 have more than proven that fact (in Ngcokovane 1989:158).

2.4.2. The Christian Institute

Beyers Naudé was made to choose between the DRC and the Directorship of the Christian Institute (CI) in 1963. He ultimately chose the latter. It is therefore important to understand the character and the function of this organization which played an important role in Beyers Naudé's process of decision-making.

The pillars of the CI which was officially established on 13 August 1963 was declared as being the Word of God and the faith in the Trinitarian God. The CI started with 150 members in 1963 and grew to 1000 by 1964. Their line of action was study and prayer groups. The focus of the study groups was on materials concerning the South African race and church situation. The job profile of Beyers Naudé was to promote inter-racial contact among Christians, the promotion of ecumenism and to expose Afrikaners to other Christian approaches. Therefore, the character of this organization remained interdenominational, inter-racial Christians who believed that all human-beings are equally part of God's total creation and that no race group should regard itself above other racial groups. It was a prophetic forum of individual members from different denominations. At the same time, the CI wanted to be part of the churches and encouraged members to be loyal to their own denominations (Heaney 2004:82-84).

The DRC and other Afrikaans speaking churches stood up as the main opponents of the CI while the approach of English-speaking churches was positive. The reason for the opposition by the Afrikaans churches led by the DRC could be traced from the way in which Heaney (2004:84) refers to them as “the great supporters of apartheid” (my translation) and the Institute standing in contrast against apartheid.

2.4.3. The reaction of the DRC and the *volk* to Beyers Naudé’s ‘conversion’

The route taken by Beyers Naudé has been a difficult one since it created more enemies for him from the ranks of his church, the Broederbond and the ‘volk’ in general. Ngcokovane (1989:158) is correct in saying that “by his stand, he struck at the heart of the Afrikaner civil religion.” He further stated that this was the beginning of his hard road as he was rejected by the DRC and his ‘volk’ and called him “kaffir boetie” (‘nigger brother’) (ibid).

The reaction of the DRC to Beyers Naudé’s position and how this will affect him is interpreted by Randall (1982:29) to mean the loss of his status as a minister in the DRC, the automatic loss of his position as moderator of the Southern Transvaal synod, the end of any other prospects in his church and the wrath of his *volk*.

Beyers Naudé’s congregation of Aasvoëlkop was the first to know of his decision to leave the DRC before the higher church organs. The great day was on 22 September 1963 when he preached his last sermon to this congregation. The theme of his sermon was “Obedience to God” and his text verse was from Acts 5:29, “We must be obedient to God more than to man” (My translation, Naudé 1995:68). The unfolding of events during that day is captured by Randall (ibid) as follows:

There followed his farewell sermon, delivered to a packed congregation. The ‘*Akte van Demissie*’ was officially read out from the front of the church. Then Beyers Naudé, officially *dominee* for the last time, stepped down from the pulpit and in a gesture symbolizing the stripping off of his status, took off his robe before the silent congregation, many of whom were weeping.

In the view of Kistner (1995:42), Beyers Naudé's choice of the route of obedience to God and resistance to injustice meant loneliness and isolation from people of his own Afrikaner family and cultural background. Most of those who were close to him came to regard him as a traitor to his people and church.

2.5. THE MISSION FIELD: POLITICAL CLIMATE IN SOUTH AFRICA DURING THE MINISTRY OF BEYERS NAUDÉ IN THE DRC (1940-1963) AND TO THE VICTIMS OF OPPRESSION (1963-1994)

2.5.1. SOUTH AFRICA DURING THE MINISTRY OF BEYERS NAUDÉ IN THE DRC: 1940-1963

2.5.1.1. An overview of the political landscape of South Africa

At the time of and preceding Beyers Naudé's birth, politically, South Africa was still fresh from the government of the Union of South Africa led by Prime Minister, General C.L. Botha. In 1915 when Beyers Naudé was born, the new Prime Minister, General J. B. M. Hertzog just took over from Prime Minister Botha accusing the latter of leniency on the English.

During both Botha and later Hertzog governments, racism was entrenched in the law of the land. The Native Land Act (No. 27 of 1913) was introduced during the term of the first parliament as a result of what was called "Black encroachment on White areas" (Müller 1993: 393). This racist Act received a strong and negative reaction from Black leaders that in February 1914 they even sent a deputation to Britain to force the British government to intervene (Müller 1993:396).

During Beyers Naudé's youth in 1924 when General Hertzog of the National Party won the Whites only election, the situation of Blacks remained unchanged and they continued to place them at the periphery of political activities. The question of poor Whites was the main focus for the new government. Blacks were barred from owning farms. Laws to preserve jobs for Whites only, were passed, such as the Wage Act of 1925 and the Mines and Works Amendment Act of 1926. Some major developments of 1925 were that South Africa obtained its own flag that flew alongside the Union Jack and Afrikaans was recognized officially as a language. Blacks were considered

backwards and primitive during those times. Whites were made to understand themselves as political masters while Blacks were their servants meant to occupy inferior positions in society. Afrikaners regarded themselves as having a duty to spread the gospel and civilization to Blacks, yet, guarded against social mixing of races (Ryan 2005:17).

Whilst being a minister of the DRC in Graaff Reinet, Beyers Naudé's father also did mission work to the Coloured community but converts were made to join the Coloureds only *Sendingkerk*. The few 'Coloureds' who attended the DRC when Beyers Naudé's father arrived in Graaff Reinet, while he was a boy, were only permitted to occupy the back pews. The parents of Beyers Naudé supported this racism and their children believed they were correct (Ryan 2005:17-18).

The situation above indicates that Beyers Naudé was born and bred into a political scenario that propagated a huge political divide among races. This political picture developed into many shapes throughout his life that in 1948 was coined and termed apartheid. This is a situation which he saw and supported as a young man and fought against later in his life.

- *The Afrikaner-Broederbond as a political tool*

If one wants to understand the true character of Afrikanerdom and also to interpret the very soul of Afrikaner nationalism, it is essential to have a knowledge and understanding of the *Broederbond's* 'nature, philosophy, actions and machination (Ngcokovane 1989:59).

In the study about Beyers Naudé, it is important to study this movement. This is because in addition to the fact that Beyers Naudé became a member of this movement, his father was its founding member and first president (Ryan 2005:10).

Even if the Broederbond was formed three years after the birth of Beyers Naudé, his father who was influential in this movement might have also influenced him when he brought him up. Beyers Naudé joined the Broederbond with excitement at the age of 25 in 1940 at his first congregation of Wellington.

Already during that time, the Broederbond was known for its unwavering support of a Biblical justification for apartheid (Naudé 1995: 32-33).

The characteristics of the Broederbond centered on the promotion, unity and development of the Afrikaner nation from the inferiority they suffered from the British. Serfontein (1979:29) explained this when he stated that “more bitter for the Afrikaners than the fact of physical inequality was the English attitude of superiority, arrogance and contempt for the Afrikaner and his language.” The grounds for the birth of this movement had further been defined by Serfontein (ibid) as the prevention of the disappearance of the Afrikaner *volk* as a separate political, language, social and cultural entity. In the midst of poverty after the First World War, the Afrikaner had to ensure that they were not swamped by the English who were economically and culturally stronger than them at the time. Ryan (2005:10) called the Broederbond “a pro-Afrikaner organization.” In explaining what he meant by this, he reasoned that “it was to be a service organization for the reconciliation of all Afrikaners in a single brotherhood, an organization in which Afrikaners could work together for the survival of the Afrikaner people in South Africa and the promotion of its interest” (2005:10).

Ryan (2005:10) contends that this movement nurtured and championed the policy of apartheid to ensure the survival of Afrikaners and was supported by Ngcokovane (1989:64) who stated that “the aims of the Broederbond bear a striking resemblance to those of the National Party of SA as stated in its ‘Constitution and Programme of Principle’....The ‘think-tank’ of the Broederbond designed basic government policy.”

Qualifications required for membership of the Broederbond were people of high profile within the ranks of Afrikaners such as politicians, church leaders, teachers, medical officers, business and provincial administration (Serfontein 1979:79). Ngcokovane (1989:65) also concurs that “a fair number of important posts in the public services, the defence force and the police were occupied by members of the Broederbond.” It was in 1940 while at Wellington when, at the age of twenty five, Beyers Naudé joined the Broederbond (Naudé 1995:33). As to how this period and its characteristics might have influenced him, this would be seen later in this study.

Beyers Naudé's youth was dominated by the influence of the Broederbond. His father was among the main players in this organization as its first president. He applied this movement's policies in the upbringing of his children. It appears to have been a common practice for Beyers Naudé's father to bring public politics into his home-life in the upbringing of his children. For instance, his hatred for the British reflected in his family and the upbringing of his children when he taught them to call the English "die Rooinekke" (Naudé 1995:11).

His membership to the Broederbond also influenced the way in which he reared his children. Beyers Naudé's father influenced by the Broederbond became a champion in the struggle for the survival of Afrikaner culture and language. He played an important role in the development of Afrikaans in the Transvaal. His calling to the DRC congregation of Graaff-Reinet was an attempt to salvage this language and culture from dilution by the Cape dominated English culture (Naudé 1995:12-13).

Beyers Naudé inherited the love for Afrikaner nationalism from his Broederbond father. Another indication of the Broederbond influence on him was seen in his love for the Afrikaner language and culture even when later on in his life he became a critic of the Afrikaners' promotion of apartheid and his subsequent rejection by his *volk*. Ryan (2005:4) states that

...even though his *volk* turned their back on him, he never lost his deep love for the Afrikaans language and never became ashamed, nor tried to deny, that he was an Afrikaner. His family was long rooted in South Africa and his father had been closely associated with the emergence of Afrikaner nationalism.

- *The impact of World War 2*

The impact of the Second World War (1939-1945) is another area that can assist in the understanding of Beyers Naudé's activities and thinking as embraced in his ministry to the people of South Africa. The question asked is what impact did the Second World War have on Beyers Naudé? During the First World War, Beyers Naudé was a baby. The impact of that war might not have directly affected him. But

during the Second World War he was a youth aged twenty four at the beginning of this war in 1939. The political landscape and thinking of the time could have left an indelible mark in his life.

Apart from politics, the impact of the Second World War was also predominantly in the area of economy which grew alarmingly as a result of the industrial boom which was meant to produce goods for the war. This economic scenario was captured by Müller (1993:449) thus:

A noteworthy aspect of the South African economy during the years 1939-1945 was the rapid development of industry. To encourage the establishment of industries the government founded the Industrial Development Corporation (I.D.C.) in 1940, and in 1941 the development of industries was further stimulated by the founding of two more important institutions, the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (C.S.I.R.) which was to help solve various difficulties encountered frequently by industries, and the South African Bureau of Standards (S.A.B.S.) which was to test the quality of locally manufactured industrial goods.

This saw an influx by Blacks into cities, something which threatened the White working class. The political party that was in power then was the United Party led by General Jan Smuts. This party apparently did not have a plan acceptable for Whites to deal with the White insecurity as a result of the Black influx.

Commissions were set up to address the influx of Blacks into the cities but did not yield the desired results. One of those commissions was the Native Law Commission (or Fagan Commission) to address what came to be known as the “Native Question” (Ngcokovane 1989:33-35).

The fact that Beyers Naudé was twenty four years old when the Second World War started in 1939 and thirty years when it ended in 1945 suggests that he was old enough to understand the political activities of that period, and open to be influenced by them. Two years into the Second World War saw him starting to work in his first congregation (of Wellington) (Naudé 1995:32) and this is indicative of the fact that he

was even academically mature enough to understand and to read about events of the time.

- *The birth of the Apartheid Era in 1948*

The official introduction of apartheid after the victory of the National Party in 1948 marked another era in the political landscape of this country. During this time Beyers Naudé was thirty three years old and an adult enough to learn something from that period. By this time he was not yet 'converted' to justice but was still enjoying and supporting apartheid. His state of mind with regards to his allegiance to the political order of the day is well captured by Ryan (2005:5) who indicated his support for the nationalist cause of the Afrikaner people and the victory of the National Party in 1948.

One of the reasons why the National Party won the 1948 elections was because it promised the White electorate apartheid. Beyers Naudé as a Nationalist Party and Broederbond member at the time, as well as a minister of the DRC congregation of Olifantsfontein, was very happy about his party's victory (Naudé 1995:37). They had a plan to prevent the Black workers' influx into the cities of South Africa, something which the defeated United Party did not have (Müller 1993:463; cf Ngcokovane 1989:33). Since the National Party took over in 1948, a stream of repressive laws were introduced to deal with the "Native Question" (appendix I).

The victory of official apartheid in South Africa through the Nationalist Party in 1948 saw the reinforcement of resistance from the oppressed masses. This coincided with and was informed by the global trend where "it was felt that it was wrong for European powers to have colonies in Asia and Africa and for whites to rule over other races in those colonies. Non-whites in Asia and Africa should be given the right to rule themselves" (Müller 1993:463). Oppressed communities in South Africa increased their fight through political organizations such as the African National Congress, Pan Africanist Congress, South African Indian Council, to mention but a few.

2.5.1.2. Selected apartheid legislations passed during the period under review

The Nationalists came to power in 1948 on a minority vote...The new government moved swiftly to systematize and entrench racial separation through the Population Registration Act, Group Areas Act and the immorality Act. The suppression of Communism Act was to penalize opposition. These four laws alone were enough to start changing, with painful effect, not only the social geography but also human relations and the sense of dignity of most people in the country (Nash 2005:33).

In order to better understand the reasons that led to the unique ministry of Beyers Naudé and the factors that led to his 'conversion,' it is important to understand the apartheid legislation package and have it in mind as we proceed with this study. The apartheid legislations in question passed during the period under review is listed in appendix I.

All these Acts constituted what came to be known worldwide as apartheid. The Biblical justification of these Acts which formed the huge package of apartheid, shaped the ministry of Beyers Naudé to the people of South Africa, particularly the victims of apartheid.

An analysis of the spread of these acts over the years indicates that only one law was passed in 1949. This suggests that there had not been apartheid laws passed during the first year of ascension into power of the Nationalist Party government in 1948. Most apartheid laws were passed in 1950 during which time five were passed. During 1951 three laws were passed. The same applies to 1953, 1959 and 1961. There were only two laws passed in 1952. The remaining years (1954, 1955, 1956, 1967 and 1970) were like 1949 with only one law passed in each of them.

It should be noted that the Acts passed in the last two years (1967 and 1970), were passed when Beyers Naudé was no longer a Minister of Religion in the DRC. During this time he was ministering to the people of South Africa, especially the victims of apartheid. Although all the legislations ignited reaction from the oppressed, the following Acts caused even more:

a. The prohibition of mixed marriages Act of 1949

This Act forbade marriage between people of different racial backgrounds. The focus was between Blacks and Whites. Related to this Act was the Immorality Act of 1950. This Act prohibited inter-marital relations between Whites and Blacks. It did not only focus on the Africans but all the Black racial groups i.e. 'Coloured' and Indians as well (Ngcokovane 1989:107).

b. Population registration Act of 1950

This Act formalized racial classification by introducing identity cards for people over the age of eighteen and specifying their racial groups. Ngcokovane (1989:107) correctly puts it that it was aimed at defining the borderline of colour. He further stated that this Act would record the racial classification of every individual in order to effect the separation between Blacks and Whites in all spheres with precision and certainty.

c. Group Areas Act of 1950

This Act was passed on 27 April 1950 and it partitioned South Africa into different areas with each allocated to different racial groups. This law was the basis upon which political and social segregations were constructed. Ngcokovane (1989:107) explained this Act thus:

Under this Act, the Nationalist Party zoned this country by race. This Act requires that the population be assigned to separate areas and territories meant for different races. If, for example an area is proclaimed by government for any race group, people of other races can neither own nor occupy property in it. The Act also implied forcible removal of people who might be where they are not 'supposed' to be.

This Act affected many victims of apartheid including Dr Allan Boesak's family which was forcefully removed from Somerset West during the 1950s to comply with it (Gastrow 1992:11). Related to the above Act was the Prevention of illegal squatting

Act of 1951. This Act enabled the government to demolish Black shack-land slums. Ngcokovane (1989:30) indicated that competition for jobs prevented Blacks from a decent living and forced them to live in slums.

d. Pass Laws of 1952

By this Act, Pass-books were issued to Africans. They were forced to carry them wherever they went and were used as instruments to control their movements in the so-called White areas. The Act was met with resistance as it would be seen later in this study when dealing with responses of the victims of apartheid.

The Act saw a lot of mass demonstrations against the issuing and carrying of these books and the most notable one being that of Sharpeville which came to be known as the Sharpeville massacre. It took place on 21 March 1960 during which 69 people were killed by the security forces (2.4.1). As part of their participation in the protest, Mr Mandela burned his pass-book in Orlando while Chief Albert Luthuli burned his in Pretoria, both on 26 March 1960 (Mandela1998:46).

e. Bantu Education Act of 1953

By this Act, a separate education system was crafted for African students under 'Bantu' Education Department. According to Ngcokovane (1989:107), this Act transferred responsibility of education from the provincial education authorities to the Department of 'Bantu' Education and compelled Africans to attend ethnically divided African schools which were divided along old 'tribal' lines as an attempt to reinforce ethnic loyalties. A Church Historian Hildebrandt (1981:223) described this Act as:

...one of the most far-reaching 'apartheid' measures which took African education out of the missionary control and made it an instrument of government policy of reshaping men's minds....Africans, therefore, were to be given an inferior kind of education, to fit them for their chief function in South Africa, that of labourers. For more than a hundred years, church leaders and missionaries had sought to give the best and most helpful education to the

Africans in South Africa, but after 1953 the South African government no longer allowed them to help Africans in this way.

Closely related to this Act was the Extension of University Education Act of 1959. Ngcokovane (1989:108) states that this Act prescribed that no Black students could be admitted to a 'White university' without permission from the minister.

Separate universities were established along racial and ethnic lines. For example, the University of Zululand was for the Zulus, University of the North for the Bapedi, Basotho, Batswana and Venda while the University of Fort Hare was for the isiXhosa speaking students. The universities for the 'Coloureds' and Indians were established one in the Western Cape and another one in Natal respectively.

The above scenario was outlined by Mandela (1990:65) in 1957 as follows:

An inferior type of education, known as Bantu education, and designed to relegate the Africans to a position of perpetual servitude in a baasskap society, is now in force in almost all African primary schools throughout the country and will be introduced in all secondary and high schools next year. The Separate Universities Education Bill, now before Parliament, is a step to extend Bantu education to the field of higher education.

f. Reservation of separate amenities Act of 1953

This Act prevented Black people from using the same public amenities such as restaurants, restrooms and swimming pools. It would be seen later in this study as we will be looking at the response of the victims of apartheid how this Act was challenged. Mandela (1998:30) indicated how defiance campaigns were organized against this Act. For instance, he wrote; "in the first stage a small number of well trained volunteers would break specially chosen laws in some urban areas. They would use toilets, waiting rooms, railway compartments and post-office entrances that were for whites only."

g. Bantu Urban Areas Act of 1954

The Act curtailed Black migration to urban areas. Ngcokovane (1989:30) states two reasons that forced Blacks to move to urban areas; firstly they did not have land because it was taken away from them forcefully and secondly money tax for Blacks was introduced. For this reason, they were forced to work in urban areas for White industrialists in order to pay for those taxes. In addition, the hope of a better life was also a driving force.

According to the apartheid government, Blacks had a limited role to play in the urban areas. For instance, the then Prime Minister, Dr D.F. Malan (in Ngcokovane 1989:93) stated that they were only temporary workers and that all surplus (Africans) must be taken away from the urban areas as soon as possible. Mandela (1990:59) narrates a painful story of a woman who was arrested and deported from Krugersdorp to her home village far away despite the fact that her husband (who had worked thirty years for the municipality) just collapsed and died. This happened while she was also to prepare for the funeral of her husband. This behaviour demonstrated the unsympathetic nature of the system towards its victims.

The effect of this Act could well be understood from Posel (in Swilling et al: 1991:22) who reasoned thus: "The city was merely a temporary base for the purposes of taking up employment. Any labour 'surplus' among the 'tribalised' groups could be eradicated by expelling the unemployed back to their areas of origin."

h. Mines and Work Act of 1956

This Act reserved jobs along racial lines, which meant that better jobs were reserved for Whites and dirty type of jobs for Blacks. An excellent scenario of this is outlined by Ngcokovane (1989:30, 31) who indicated that when both Black and White unskilled labourers came to the cities to look for employment in the mines during the twenties, the latter had political power and enjoyed preferential treatment at the expense of Blacks.

i. Bantu Homelands Citizen Act of 1970

This Act falls outside the period under review. My attraction to it was the fact that it further deepened the detachment of Blacks from South African citizenship and fast-tracked tribal division among Africans. This Act which was referred to by Mandela (1990:77) as “Verwoerd’s tribalism”, created a ‘homeland’ system for Africans based on their ethnic lines. It denied Black Africans South African citizenship by making sure they belonged to all the ten Bantustans based on different African groups. It was encouraged that they should take ‘independence’ in order to fully take away their citizenship although at the end not all of them opted for ‘independence’. The strategy was to create a space in South Africa in which Whites would be in the majority. The then Secretary of the Department of Bantu Administration and Development, Dr W.W.M. Eiselen (in Mandela 1990:77-78) puts it as follows: “All the Bantu have their permanent homes in the Reserves and their entry into other areas and into the urban areas is merely of a temporary nature and for economic reasons. In other words, they are admitted as work-seekers, not as settlers.”

This Act also attracted comments from other ministers. The Prime Minister, Dr H.F. Verwoerd commended it as “a supremely positive step towards placing Africans on the road to self-government” while the Minister of Bantu Affairs, Mr De Wet Nel stated “the people in the Reserves would gradually be given more powers to rule themselves” (in Mandela 1990:79).

2.5.1.3. Response by the victims of oppression to government apartheid policies

Victims of apartheid from the general civil society took up arms against the apartheid government. In this section, focus will be on organized events and incidents that were related to actions against apartheid during the period under review. It should be noted however that during the limits of the period in question, the African National Congress (ANC) was a dominant political organization and as such she occupied a bigger space in action against apartheid than any other organizations then. This may not mean that all victims of apartheid were members of this organization, but whenever she organized action throughout the country, the majority of people

responded positively. It would therefore be understandable that in the discussions that follow, most voices will be from this political organization. Mandela (1998: 27) demonstrated this scenario when he wrote that:

Malan wasted no time, he quickly built the foundation of the apartheid system, brick by brick....The ANC could no longer sit back and watch from the sidelines. The Youth League drafted a Programme of Action calling for strikes, stayaways, passive resistance, protest demonstrations, and other forms of mass action. For the ANC, this was a big break with the past. Up until this time, it has always kept within the law.

- *The Period of Defiance Campaigns*

Defiance campaigns represented a formidable weapon in the fight against apartheid. The ANC in May 1952, in alliance with the Indian Congress organized campaigns in defiance of unjust laws. The campaigns were divided into two stages. The first one was by a small number of volunteers who would break certain laws in urban areas such as the use of toilets, waiting rooms, railway compartments and post office entrances that were meant for Whites only. The second phase was for mass action which included strikes across the country. In order to guarantee the success of this action, the ANC and the Indian Congress formed a National Volunteer Committee to drive the campaigns (Mandela 1998:30).

- *The Congress of the People (COPE): 1955*

Another form of response against apartheid was a national convention that was called “the Congress of the People” (Mandela 1998:36). It took place on 25 and 26 June 1955 at dusty Kliptown, southwest of Johannesburg. The congress represented all people of this country regardless of race, colour and gender. It was to draw up a Freedom Charter for South Africa. Not less than 3 000 delegates of all race groups attended the congress. The first part of the Freedom Charter that was formed by the congress read as follows:

We the people of South Africa, declare for all our country and the world to know...that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white...and that no government can justly claim authority unless it is based on the will of the people (Mandela 1998:38).

On the afternoon of the second day the police stormed into the Congress and suspected delegates for committing treason. They destroyed papers, pushed people around and searched them one by one as they (the people) were later allowed to leave the area (Luthuli 1989:142-143).

- *The adoption of an armed struggle*

After continuing with peaceful means without making an impact in the government, the ANC decided to adopt an arms struggle. They reminded themselves of the Sesotho saying that, “the attacks of a wild beast cannot be stopped with only bare hands” (Mandela 1998:55). After repeated attempts by Mr Nelson Mandela to convince his colleagues to adopt the arms approach, the National Executive Committee ultimately accepted it.

The army under the control of the ANC was formed in 1961. It was called Umkhonto We Sizwe (Spear of the Nation) and Mr Nelson Mandela was elected Commander-in-Chief of the new army. It made the first strike on 16 December 1961. After the first explosion, a pamphlet of an Umkhonto We Sizwe manifesto was distributed and an extract from it which reads as follows:

The time has come in the life of any nation where there remains only two choices; submit or fight. That time has now come to South Africa. We shall not submit and we have no choice but to hit back by all means within our power in defence of our people, our future and our freedom (Mandela 1990:122).

The distribution of the manifesto, particularly after the first strike by this armed wing, suggests that the ANC was not sure if the masses would support this wing. The manifesto is dominated by the introduction of the wing and reasons for its existence. The reasons to write it, as well as the timing of its distribution might have been

influenced by the struggle that Mr Mandela (1998:53-56) had in convincing the ANC internal structures about the necessity of such a body.

- *Formation of leftwing political organizations*

The intransigence of the apartheid government ignited another response in the form of encouraging the formation of left-wing political organizations. One example of this was the formation of the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) on 6 April 1959 (Mandela 1998:45).

The birth of this new organization that broke away from the ANC was a response to the view that the ANC was diluted by its acceptance of Whites within its membership. Mandela (1998:45) puts it thus: “But the main cause of their break-away was their objection to the Freedom Charter and to the presence of Indians and whites in the struggle.” Mr Robert Sobukwe was elected its first President.

- *Mass Demonstrations*

The apartheid government indirectly triggered mass demonstrations against itself all over the country and abroad. Two protests became prominent . The first one was the women’s protest against the pass law and they marched to the Union Buildings on 9 August 1956 (Gastrow 1992:282). The second one was a protest in Sharpeville which attracted world attention. It made headlines because of the heavy handedness on the part of the security forces. The demonstration was organized by the Pan Africanist Congress. The date was 21 March 1960 during which police killed 69 Africans. More than 400 people including women and children were wounded. Most of the victims were shot in the back as they tried to flee from the police (Mandela 1998:47).

The Sharpeville incident left South African society in a crisis. De Gruchy (1986:104) explained it thus; “Post-Sharpeville South Africa was a society in crisis. Nothing quite like this had happened before to disturb the apparent tranquility of white South Africa and the confidence of foreign investors.”

- *The All-African Conference and stay-at-home 1960-1961*

Another response by the victims of oppression demonstrated itself with the organization of the consultative conference of African leaders on 16 December 1960 in Orlando, Soweto. The aim of the conference was defiance against the celebration of Republic day, 31 May. The resolutions of this conference revealed a clear line of onslaught on racism as seen below:

The congress (Mandela 1990:95) agreed on the urgent need for African unity and

- The removal of the scourge of apartheid from every phase of national life.
- The immediate establishment of a non-racial democracy.
- The effective use of non-violent pressures against apartheid.

Another meeting by this body was called in Pietermaritzburg on 25-26 March 1961 by the Ad hoc committee. It was motivated by the Sharpeville tragedy of 21 March 1960. During that meeting, Mr Nelson Mandela was appointed honorary secretary of the All-In-National Action Council. He was tasked to organize demonstrations against the proclamation of South Africa as a republic on 31 May, to campaign for a national convention, and for a three-day-stay-at-home strike on 29, 30 and 31 May 1961 (Gastrow 1992:145).

2.5.2. SOUTH AFRICA DURING THE MINISTRY OF BEYERS NAUDÉ TO THE VICTIMS OF OPPRESSION: 1963-1994

2.5.2.1. An overview of the political landscape of South Africa

In South Africa, the years 1960-1977 saw untold developments in socio-political and economic areas. This was the period during which apartheid was applied in the lives of millions of South Africans and where the ideology and theology of apartheid was developed in all circles. The decade started with the traumatic events at Sharpeville when a great number of Black people openly took action against apartheid (my translation, Heaney 2004:49).

The previous period focused on the political climate in South Africa during the period of the ministry of Beyers Naudé in the DRC from 1940 to 1963. That political landscape was very important in the understanding of what built up to the ‘conversion’ of Beyers Naudé. This period connects from his ‘conversion’ in the early 1960s onwards when in 1963 he got involved in what Meyer (2006:124) referred to as his “public career,” meaning his ministry to the entire South Africa, especially the victims of apartheid.

The main area of difference between these periods was in the political climate and the ministry approach of Beyers Naudé. The political climate was different in the sense that during the previous period (before the 1960s), the government was still formulating laws and was at the initial stage of implementing them. Reaction from victims of oppression was still peaceful, and the armed struggle was not yet adopted. More adults than youth participated in the fight against apartheid. This means that protest matches and other forms of resistance were an adult matter. The ministry of Beyers Naudé was still in the DRC and for a greater part of this period, he supported apartheid.

Differently, the period under review was marked by turbulent action, vibrancy and violence on the side of the apartheid victims in their response to apartheid violence. The adoption of an armed struggle was made during this period. This period also saw participants in the struggle dominated by the youth, some of whom inexperienced in terms of military practice. Their level of inexperience led Ellis and Sechaba (1992:33) to describe them as “the army of amateurs, hardly any of whom had knowledge of weapons. Some of them caused civilian casualties and even blew themselves up with their homemade bombs.” The state on the other side was more brutal in terms of torture to the victims of oppression and all who oppose it. The ministry of Beyers Naudé zoomed into this most difficult period in South Africa based on the nature of the political climate. The struggle participants transformed from those of dignified adult men and women in formal suits and hats during protest matches in the 1950s into that of youth action, the so called stone throwing ‘comrades’ since the mid-1970s (International Defence and Aid....1988).

Most of the legislations passed during the late 1940s and the entire 1950s were fully implemented and operational. Their impacts were already felt by the victims of apartheid. The difference between these periods in terms of political dynamism, with regards to the freedom struggle by the then dominant freedom organization, the ANC has also been noted by Dubow (2000:85) when he wrote that “the 1980s were not the 1950s, and the domestic political landscape which the ANC confronted was infinitely more complex and crowded than it had been twenty years earlier.” Meyer (2006:124) regarded this period as that of crisis in the life of Beyers Naudé. He outlined the different perspectives for both Black and White South Africans with regards to the political situation in the country. He stated that for Whites it was a ‘Christian’ Separate Development and from Blacks it was an ‘unchristian’ apartheid. Meyers (2009) regards this period as an exciting, sad and dangerous time, a time for a new society and opportunity for Beyers Naudé, a time for a breakthrough towards a new South Africa. The climax of this period was during the 1980s, and Saayman (2009:12) described it as follows:

The mid-eighties of the previous century in SA marked the high point of the struggle against apartheid in SA. It was the time when everything was conceived in terms of the ‘total onslaught’ of the liberation movement against the illegitimate state, and the ‘total strategy’ of the state to overcome the ‘terrorist’ onslaught.

This period was marked by dynamic political changes in South Africa. Among them were the imprisonments of the main Black political leaders on Robben Island, the birth of the Black Consciousness movement, Black on Black violence, the peoples’ war, boycotts and stay-aways, sanctions, the effects of the arms struggle by the victims of oppression and the dawn of democracy in 1994. The 1994 democracy was preceded by violent racist killings, banning of Black political organizations and large scale political violence. Beyers Naudé’s ministry coincided with the most challenging period in South Africa. He was regarded as God-sent to this situation at the most appropriate time. Heaney (2004:2) noted this when he wrote: “...to dr Beyers Naudé. You were the correct person at the right time in South Africa. This is how God wanted it to be. You made yourself available to be used by God. Therefore I dedicate this thesis to dr Beyers Naudé” (my translation).

Beyers Naudé's ministry to South Africa was understood by him as part of his mission responsibilities to God. He regarded himself as the subject of God's mission in South Africa. He had a strong interest in mission and evangelism. His deep interest in mission was personally articulated in the interview conducted by Prof Lammert Leertouwer between him and Dr Dorothee Solle⁷ on 20 June 1986. When explaining factors that led to his 'conversion' he stated:

The first is a theological one. When, after the Second World War, in looking at what was happening in Africa, the whole process of decolonization, freedom, political freedom, coming to Africa, the cry of millions of Africans throughout the continent to throw off the yoke of colonialism, with my deep interest in mission, in evangelism, and in the youth work of the church, I asked myself: 'what does this say to us in South Africa?' (WCC 1986:4-5).

In order to fully understand the ministry of Beyers Naudé, which he understood as "the hand of God guiding me into a new direction" (WCC 1986:6), it is important to first look at some of the dynamics of this period that shaped and characterized his mission field, South Africa.

2.5.2.2. Political dynamics of South Africa

a. Government strategic action against the victims of oppression

The entry of Beyers Naudé into his ministry to the people of South Africa must be understood within the context of the life imprisonment of Black political leaders such as Mr Nelson Mandela in 1964 (Dubow 2000:vii). This imprisonment left a wide gap in Black leadership and in the fight for freedom in the years preceding the incarceration. For some times it appeared as if the government was in control of the situation. Dubow (2000:70-71) outlined it as follows:

For at least a decade after 1964 the ANC virtually ceased to exist in South Africa and the prospects for liberation appeared more remote than

⁷. A German theologian on behalf of IKON Television, the Dutch ecumenical broadcasting company.

ever....This sense of despair was shared by all but the most optimistic observers. Under the leadership of Hendrik Verwoerd white minority rule seemed more secure and arrogant than ever. During the 1960s South Africa's annual 6 per cent economic growth rate was exceeded only by Japan, and white South Africans had become among the most affluent groups in the world.

Referring to the imprisonment of mainly ANC leadership during this period, Dubow (2000:73) commented that "the period after Rivonia was particularly hard" while Mandela (in Dubow 2000:73) called it "dark years." Ellis and Sechaba (1992:41) judged the mid-1960s as "the most depressing period in the history of the ANC, and were very difficult for the Communist Party too. Internal supporters were neutralized or imprisoned, senior leaders were sentenced to life imprisonment, and many exiled members were demoralized." Meyer (2006:124) called it a time for crisis. Beyers Naudé's ministry to the people of South Africa after he left the DRC in 1963 was faced with this political leadership gap. Max du Preez (The Star, 9 September 2004) explained the role of Beyers Naudé during this period as follows:

Exactly because Black South Africans knew that he was a murgen-been Afrikaner, he became a symbol of hope during the dark time between the 1960s and the late 1980s. His presence meant that not all Afrikaners and Whites were intractable racists and oppressors, with some pressure and persuasion the rest could one day follow.

The ministry of Beyers Naudé to the people of South Africa was also shaped by the wrath of the security forces. In their quest to quell resistance from the victims of apartheid, they were not merciful to the people who questioned the government's oppressive policies. Imprisonment without trial was enforced and suspects were tortured in every means in order to force them to speak out the 'truth'. The nature of state violence through the security forces is captured by Kane-Berman (1993:15) as follows:

When Black people demonstrated against pass laws at Sharpeville in 1960, it mowed them down with sten guns. When school children demonstrated

against Bantu Education in Soweto in 1976, it shot them down too. It banned and house arrested people after stigmatizing many of them as communists, and several dozen of them it beat to death or drove to suicide in detention.

The fact that the father of the Black Consciousness (BC) movement, Mr Steve Biko “was brutally killed while held in police detention in 1977” (Dubow 2000:81; cf Ellis & Sechaba 1992:114) is an example of torture as meted out by the security forces to the victims of apartheid. Powers given to security forces during the state of emergencies went along with the wrath of untold torture. For instance, state of emergencies “permitted the security forces to detain suspected troublemakers (sic) at will without fear of legal recourse. Torture became widespread as over 24 000 people were detained in the second half of 1986” (Ellis & Sechaba 1992:163). The security forces also had powers to kill the enemies of state as it happened with their attempt to assassinate Mr Steve Tshwete (Ellis & Sechaba 1992:179). Beyers Naudé is not strange to the wrath of the security forces and had a particular link with Biko and the BC.

Beyers Naudé’s ministry period was marked by banning orders especially for political parties, media and individuals. The action of government was described by Kane-Berman (1993:15) as follows:

It banned and house arrested people after stigmatizing many of them as communists, and several dozen of them it beat to death or drove to suicide in detention. Not content with the banning of people it closed down newspapers and banned numerous political organizations.

The early 1960s saw the banning of three political organisations namely ANC, PAC and the Communist Party (Dubow 2000:vii; cf Kane-Berman 1993:11). The banning of these three organisations was made under the Unlawful Organisations Act. This means that they were unable to function lawfully in the country until 2 February 1990 when political organisations were unbanned (Ellis & Sechaba 1992:30-31). When Beyers Naudé started with his ministry he was faced with this political vacuum within the ranks of the victims of apartheid.

The period (1963-1994) saw three states of emergencies imposed by the apartheid government as a means of quelling down violence. The first state of emergency came as a result of the Sharpeville massacre in 1960. During the first state of emergency, about 20 000 victims of oppression were detained (Ellis & Sechaba 1992:30). The second state of emergency came as a result of the activities of the United Democratic Front (UDF) in 1985. This was declared over large parts of South Africa. According to Dubow (2000:90) there was a massive crackdown by the security forces during which many activists were arrested. The last state of emergency was in 1986 after the largest ever national stay away (Ellis & Sechaba 1992:163; cf Dubow 2000:viii).

During the period in question in the ministry of Beyers Naudé (1963-1994), the Christian faith continued to be used by government as an oppressive strategy. The political approach was a further development of what Ellis and Sechaba (1992:80) called “an old-fashioned, Bible-quoting Calvinist fundamentalism of Dr D.F. Malan, the first National Party prime minister.” By 1976, Deputy Minister of Bantu Education and Administration and a former DRC dominee, Dr A. Treurnicht’s ideology was described as “based on a racialist interpretation of the Bible and a deep attachment to the Afrikaans language and Afrikaner- nationalism” (ibid).

This situation was influenced by a close link that existed between the DRC and apartheid as well as the role this church played in coining this term (apartheid) and blessing what it stood for. Saayman (2007:70) concurs because after having implicated all White groups and churches in apartheid practices, he continued to stress that

...it is necessary to recognize that the Afrikaner academics, the NP and the DRC did play the most important role in *perfecting* the system. As far as the NP and the DRC specifically are concerned, the origins of the term ‘apartheid’ remain a bit of a chicken-and-egg situation: it is very difficult to come to a decisive conclusion as to who should be regarded as the originator.

Saayman (ibid) however, indicated that the first appearance of this term was in a paper read by a DRC dominee, Rev J.C. du Plessis at the mission congress of this

church held in Kroonstad, Free State in 1929. He also indicated that by the end of the 1920s, the mission secretary of the Free State DRC, Rev. Valie Strydom characterized apartheid “as the DRC’s mission policy” (ibid:71). Such a close relationship between party political ideology and the DRC cultivates fertile grounds for the manipulation of the Christian faith for political means. For instance, when the DRC missionary, Rev J.P. Roux had a misunderstanding with Chief Mabie of Mabieskraal, Pilanesberg area in the 1880s, he approached a local commandant, Malan “who laid down the law for Mabie” (ibid:65).

The relationship between the church and state and the former’s blessings for the unjust practices of the latter, could be located from the time of Constantine. During the Middle Ages, the marriage was even stronger between the pope and those who ruled the Holy Roman Empire. This relationship was so strong that even if the head of the church and the Roman Empire were at odds, they cooperated within the framework of what Bosch (1991:274) refers to as “*corpus Christianum*.” Another *corpus Christianum* in Africa which lasted for more than sixteen years was Ethiopia. There was no separation between church and state in such a way that the priest can become an emperor and vice-versa. The *corpus Christianum* practice in Ethiopia ended in 1974 with the dethronement of Haile Selassi (Kritzinger 2009:98). In Europe, this type of relationship which continued even after the Reformation period made it easy for the church to oppress other people in the name of Christianization. The result of this type of relationship was outlined by Bosch (1991:275) as follows:

It was difficult to differentiate between political, cultural, and religious elements and activities since they all merged into one. This made it natural for the first European colonizing powers, Portugal and Spain, to assume that they, as Christian monarchs, had the divine right to subdue pagan peoples and that therefore colonization and Christianization went hand in hand but were two side sides of the same coin.

Beyers Naudé’s ministry also coincided with the political reforms in South Africa. The strong resistance to apartheid forced the government to embark on reform programmes since the mid-1970s. This process came to be called “a new constitutional dispensation” (Dubow 2000:87). This reform dispensation started after

Prime Minister P.W. Botha took over as president. Referring to apartheid he stated that it had to “adapt or die” (ibid:88). Some of the reforms included the beginning of the process of the ‘Coloured’ and Indians in the political process of the country, a move that was greatly opposed by the United Democratic Front (UDF). This was because most of the reforms were deemed cosmetic. The reform programmes of Botha did not succeed and were deemed a failure as could be seen from Maguire (1991:29):

Botha’s reform programme failed because it was too little and too late. The electoral turn-out for the Coloured and Indian elections was very low, thus casting doubt on their legitimacy and the issue for the political representation for Blacks was ignored. The Black reaction to Botha’s new constitution was extremely hostile and led to widespread anti-government violence in the townships. Caught between a growing challenge from the right from the Conservative Party and the Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging (AWB) and from growing Black unrest on the left, Botha attempted to appease the right and repress the left but ended up failing to achieve either objective.

Apart from the tri-cameral parliament politics, reforms were attempted in other areas of peoples’ lives. For instance, official recognition of Black trade unions, increased resources for Black education, provision of greater security and improved amenities for Africans with urban ‘insider’ rights, introduced changes in government administration, and helped to forge closer ties between big business and the state were some of the reforms (Dubow 2000:88).

b. Victims of oppression’s strategic response to government action

- *Sanctions*

Sanctions of all kind against South Africa dominated the context of this period. As early as 1964, a call for economic sanctions against South Africa was made at the Mindolo Consultation in Kitwe, Zambia. The conference was also attended by Beyers Naudé (Ryan 2005:98-99). During the presidency of Mr P.W. Botha in the mid-

1980s “an international arms embargo deprived SA of external supplies of weapons and the international isolation of the republic was growing” (Maquire 1991:27).

Calls for the boycott of South Africa at all fronts including sports and economy were made. Apart from these calls, the violent nature of South Africa at the time scared investors to the point that some of them voluntarily pulled out of the country. According to Beyers Naudé (Pro Veritate, 15 November 1966:1) the image of South Africa abroad was negative. This picture carried negative and unfavourable conditions for investors. Increasing the isolation of South Africa from the outside world as well as the increasing economic pressures made an impact in the lives of South African Whites according to Beyers Naudé (2005:92-93).

- *Townships as battlefields*

The strategists of the guerilla army had always conceived of the liberation of South Africa taking place as a result of urban insurrection in which, under the influence of the ANC-Communist Party-SACTU alliance, with its armed and trade union wings, the oppressed people of South Africa would finally cease collaboration with the government and big businesses totally, and would be prepared to turn to violence *en masse* (Ellis & Sechaba 1992:145).

The ministry of Beyers Naudé was played out in a reactionary movement that saw townships as strategic places to fight for freedom. Comparison between rural and urban areas on matters of best strategic battlefields for freedom indicates that the latter were convenient sites. Because Blacks were limited to townships in urban settlements, these areas became sites for the war for freedom. The majority of the youth who fled the country in the mid-1970s came from the townships. This was confirmed by Kane-Berman (1993:11) who stated that “when several thousand youngsters fled Soweto and other townships in the second half of 1976 the South African organization best equipped to receive them outside the country was the ANC.” The battles in townships were not limited to those that were against the state but also between rival Black political groups (Ellis & Sechaba 1992:86).

In recognizing the role played by townships in preparing freedom fighters for resistance against apartheid Dubow (2000:82) acknowledged this when he stated that “hardened by urban warfare and inspired by revolutionary enthusiasm, they fled South Africa.” Although all townships where in one way or another involved in action against apartheid, two townships namely Soweto and Alexandra are of particular significance. The uprisings of 1976 started in Soweto before spreading to other parts of the country (Dubow 2000:81; cf Kane-Berman 1993:11). Ellis and Sechaba (1992:143) indicated that “in September 1984, the Vaal townships exploded into unrest. Crowds went out into the streets demonstrating and throwing stones and were met by the police with their usual brutality.” Many freedom fighters were associated with townships in terms of residence and family or friendships links. The significance of Alexandra is because Beyers Naudé became an assistant minister of a Black church congregation in this township during the last part of this period (1963-1994) . Having this in mind, his wish was that his ashes be spread on the streets of Alexandra (Botha 2009).

It was not only the ANC that saw townships as strategic battle grounds against apartheid but other organizations like the PAC also saw the value of townships in this regard. Ellis and Sechaba (1992:156) referring to the importance of townships as battlefields confirms that, “they saw the townships as an opportunity to re-assert its claim for radical leadership and to activate its long-dominant support.”

- *Emergence of new political organizations*

Among the political dynamism that characterized the ministry of Beyers Naudé was the formation of new political organizations. To mark some of the political organizations that emerged during this period was the United Democratic Front (UDF) in 1983. It was one of the post-1976 organizations. According to Dubow (2000:87), the reason for the creation of the UDF “was the need to fight government proposal for a new constitutional dispensation as well as tough new legislation designed to regulate the freedoms of African city-dwellers.” The constitutional reforms co-opted ‘Coloureds’ and Indians into the political process and excluded Africans.

With the political gap in Black freedom leadership, new political formations emerged. The birth of the Black Consciousness movement came in the early 1970s. A medical student then at the University of Natal, Steve Biko was the mastermind behind the birth of this movement (Maguire1991:118). The focus of this movement was on the mind of the victims of apartheid who have been dehumanized and made to feel inferior by the apartheid philosophy. Dubow (2000:80) correctly puts it when he stated that this movement “defined liberation as a state of mind rather than in narrow political terms....[I]t focused on the need to counter internalized feelings of black inferiority with a determined sense of pride and self-assertion.” Ellis and Sechaba (1992) also correctly reasoned that the aim of the BC was “to restore to Blacks, the sense of self-esteem and self-confidence which had been severely dented by apartheid.”

Steve Biko’s call “Black man you are on your own” was demonstrated by Sono (1993:106) who argued that the strategy of BC as epitomised in Steve Biko “was to marginalize the liberal role in the Black ranks.” Naudé during his ministry to the victims of apartheid played a prominent role in the life of this movement as he did with other liberation organs.

- *Students’ action: “Freedom now, education later”*

The fight for freedom appeared to have been an adult affair. This was apparent when judged by the age of the Mandelas, Sisulus and others then and by looking at the pictures of participants in mass protest actions. The ‘adults only’ outlook changed with the students uprising in 1976 when they protested against the government’s use of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction in African schools. This laid the foundation for “the popular cry for liberation before education” (Dubow 2000:92).

The protest started in Soweto on 16 June 1976 and spread to many parts of the country and resulted in death and injuries. According to Dubow (2000:81), the first student killed in this government propelled violence was Hector Peterson whose picture was paraded round the world. He further indicated that more than 600 students lost their lives. The ministry of Beyers Naudé coincided with this period of students’ action.

- *Black on Black violence*

Although most of the deaths in the disturbances in Soweto and elsewhere in 1976 and 1977 were at the hands of the police, in the later 1980s and 1990s conflict between different groups of black people has been a major cause of fatalities (Kane-Berman 1993:29).

The so called Black on Black violence characterized the period of Beyers Naudé's ministry. Those who did not cooperate with the 'comrades' were attacked or even killed. The so-called sell-outs (impimpis/collaborators) suspects were identified, attacked or burned down. Dubow (2000:92) wrote as follows about the nature of the killings:

The most gruesome form of killing was 'necklacing', placing a burning tyre filled with petrol round the neck of a supposed enemy of the struggle. This practice was notoriously supported by Winnie Mandela, the then wife of Nelson (sic), who told a mass rally in 1986 that the oppressed masses would liberate the country 'with necklaces and our little boxes of matches.'

Kane-Berman (1993:36) indicated how "hundreds of Black people have been necklaced to death on suspicion of being 'collaborators', 'sell-outs', 'informers', and the like, sometimes by frenzied mobs, sometimes on the sentence of self-styled 'peoples' courts'."

From 1985 the violence took another level of ethnic lines between Inkatha of Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi in Kwazulu (former homeland) fighting with COSATU in Natal (currently Kwazulu-Natal). This violence spread to the Witwatersrand and turned into friction between Inkatha and the ANC. In the process, a third force element was also suspected as a source of the violence that spread throughout the country with special concentration in the Witwatersrand⁸. Ellis and Sechaba (1992:173) indicated how equipped and effective the security forces were in torture which was used trying to prevent anti-government agitation or violence. They also indicated how the

⁸ This is the area covering most industrial parts of what is today called Gauteng province.

government had means of "...setting Black communities against one another by encouraging the formation of vigilantes" (ibid).

A person who suspected a 'third force' element was Mr Nelson Mandela (in Kane-Berman 1993:16) who referred to "a strategy of state terrorism in which the IFP had 'permitted itself to become an extension of the Pretoria regime, its instrument and surrogate.'" In December 1992 Mandela referred to the "fact that the state security services, using certain Black organizations, have been responsible for the death of no less than 15 000 people since 1984" (ibid). Despite this assertion, no evidence of this allegation has been found (ibid:17).

- *Massive exile recruitment drive*

The period of Beyers Naudé's ministry coincided with the massive exile recruitment drive. Since the imprisonment of the Black political leadership and the formation of MK in the early 1960s, a recruitment drive of men and women to join the latter became strong. This was in response to a call for volunteers earlier made by the MK High Command, Mr Nelson Mandela (Ellis & Sechaba 1992:33). Another pulling drive for the recruits was in the role of commissars who "were also looking for promising candidates for recruitment to the Party" (Ellis & Sechaba 1992:88). Men and women 'illegally' left the country for different parts of the world to acquire military training.

One notable exodus into exile was seen after the 1976 students uprising. Dubow (2000:82) stated that, "...[A]s many as four to five thousand students, hardened by urban warfare and inspired by revolutionary enthusiasm, fled South Africa." The biggest recruitment into the ANC was recorded as early as 1984. For instance Ellis and Sechaba (1992:177) highlighted the point that

...after the start of 1984 township uprising, there was an influx of young fighters into the ANC on a scale not seen since 1976, especially from the militant Eastern Cape townships of Mdantsane in East London and Kwazakhele in Port Elizabeth. In the neighboring countries of Botswana, Swaziland, Lesotho and Zambia, many of these exiles were greeted by ANC

operatives who directed them to MK training camps in Tanzania, Angola and elsewhere.

- *Armed struggle intensified*

This period of Beyers Naudé's ministry also saw the intensification of the armed struggle. "As many people predicted, repression bred violent reaction" (Kane-Berman (1993:11). With the incarceration of the Black political leadership in the early 1960s, exodus to join the newly formed military wing of the ANC, Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) and other military formations increased. This marked the beginning of violence as a means of combating apartheid. Kane-Berman (1993:11) confirms the outcome of banning both the ANC and PAC that "a sabotage campaign was launched, Mr Nelson Mandela was jailed, and an 'armed struggle' was planned from the bases in neighbouring states set up by the two banned movements." The direction of the line of action to follow was summarized by Ellis and Sechaba (1992:33) in the policy of MK as follows:

Umkhonto we Sizwe policy was to target buildings and strategic targets for sabotage and to avoid casualties as far as possible....Umkhonto we Sizwe especially avoided attacking whites at a time when the PAC was encouraging attacks on white by Poqo, a populist insurrectionary and anti-white movement which spread in the Eastern Cape.

In the beginning, the situation was not favourable for those military formations to make advances and strikes within South Africa. Dubow (2000:74-75) reasoned that "flat terrain, well-defended borders, a declining independent peasantry, and a vigilant white farming population did not favour the sort of guerilla war that was so important a feature of liberation struggles in Mozambique or Zimbabwe."

The armed struggle against South Africa was also echoed during the Mindolo Consultation in Kitwe, Zambia in 1964, also attended by Beyers Naudé (Ryan 2005:98-99). The role played by Beyers Naudé in the liberation armed forces will be discussed later in this study.

- *Boycotts and stay-aways*

The ministry of Beyers Naudé during this period (1963-1994) also saw boycotts for consumer, rent and schools as well as stay-aways from work (Kane-Berman 1993:33). Boycotts of White business or towns identified to be racist were common during this period. The boycotts also embraced businesses of Black people who were suspected to be collaborating with the government. Apart from this category, businesses of Black people who were connected to the government in terms of work like those working as town councilors in Black Local Authorities were also boycotted or even burnt down. At some stage, the boycotts took another dimension as people were forced into taking part in the boycott action. The worst was when students were taken out of classes as reported by Kane-Berman (1993:33):

Within a month of the outbreak of violence in September 1984, reports began to come in of school children being ordered out of class by members of the United Democratic Front (UDF) and the Congress of South African Students (COSAS), of gangs of youths building barricades in the townships to stop people from going to work, and of activists throwing petrol bombs at the police.

This dimension of violence carried with it an element of fear in the minds of people because it is characterized by intimidation. Kane-Berman (1993:33) reported that “people were being dragged screaming into the struggle.”

- *The Peoples’ War*

The ministry of Beyers Naudé also coincided with the so-called Peoples’ War. In June 1985, a call was made by the ANC in Zambia to render South Africa ungovernable thus turning the whole action into a ‘People’s war’ (Kane-Berman 1993:41). Some powerful statements were made to accelerate the process towards the ‘People’s War.’

There was a call to overthrow the apartheid government and everything that was related to it like Black town councilors. This meant meeting the reactionary violence of the government with revolutionary violence, homelands to be overthrown with a view to transforming them into bases for the advancement of the people's war. Mr O.R. Tambo, speaking in Britain in 1985 said: "We are reaching a level of conflict where the innocent are hit. It is unavoidable. Now there is going to be more bloodshed than ever before" (Kane-Berman 1993:41).

2.6. FAITH BASED ORGANISATIONS' RESPONSE TO APARTHEID

2.6.1. Background

Since 1948, the synods, conferences, and assemblies of the churches have protested against every piece of legislation they have considered unjust....The churches have spoken against race classification; the forced removal of population groups due to the Group Areas Act; the Immorality Act and Mixed Marriages Act, designed to preserve racial purity; the various education acts which have created separate kinds of education along ethnic lines; job reservations.... (De Gruchy 1986:88).

The above pillars of apartheid (2.5.1.2) triggered different reactions from various sections of South African society including the religious communities (appendix J). De Gruchy (1986:58) referring to Christian communities wrote that "some regard racial separation as scriptural, some as blatantly unscriptural, and others as pragmatically necessary but not ideal."

Reaction did not only come from the victims of apartheid but also from some members of the communities that benefited from the system meaning both Black and White. The example from the latter group is Beyers Naudé who forms the nucleus of this study. Another figure in the same category is Willem Saayman, an Afrikaner whose Afrikaans accent according to Kgatla (in Karecki 2002:46) "testifies to this fact because his 'r' sounds are prominently pronounced" and who according to Nico Botha (in Saayman 2007:vii) was so trusted that he was elected ANC chairperson of the Pretoria branch at some stage. There are many examples of people who while

they were from the privileged communities that introduced and benefited from the system, ended up being champions in the fight against the injustice meted out by apartheid.

The reactions were also marked by divides between the victims with regard to the approaches to fight this system. The divisions also reflected themselves in churches as they did not see things the same way. The churches were divided between those who embraced apartheid, those who rejected it and those who assumed a neutral position or 'quiet diplomacy'. The following pointers clearly outlined the situation:

2.6.2. Apartheid is embraced by churches

Indeed the analysis of the NGK...shows that all its conferences from 1950 to the present (i.e. 1989) have more than proven that apartheid was conceived in the womb of the NGK in 1857. Thus, the election of the NP to political power in 1948 meant that the NGK would monitor the implementation of a policy that it had long advocated and practiced within its own structure. Consequently, apartheid was not only defended by NP ideologues such as Malan, Strijdom, Verwoerd, Vorster, Botha and others, but also by prominent NGK leaders and theologians (Ngcokovane 1989:180).

Apartheid triggered different reactions from churches and some of them adopted and supported it. The DRC stands prominent in this regard. Although other Afrikaans speaking churches did not adopt an official position in support of apartheid as did the DRC, individually their members supported the system. This could be judged by the continuous large voter support for the NP by predominantly Afrikaner electorates, the majority of whom were Christians. The majority of Afrikaners formed part of what Bredekamp and Ross (1995:1) called "the approximately three- quarters of the SA Christians" who form the dominant part of the entire South African population. This point becomes clear in the reasons offered by the Federal Mission Council (FMC) of this church as to why the DRC followed the policy of apartheid (Strassberger 2001:190):

It is the conviction of the majority of Afrikaans speaking South Africans and the majority of the members of the DRC that the only way of ensuring the continued survival of the nation is by preserving the principles of racial separation. Racial integration on an extended scale, on the other hand, must result in the lowering of standards, culturally, morally and spiritually.

It would be unfair to state that all members or ministers of the DRC supported apartheid. Already during the Federal Council in 1953 at the peak of apartheid, figures such as Prof B.B. Keet (in De Gruchy 1986: 58), a teacher at the Dutch Reformed Seminary at Stellenbosch demonstrated to holding an opposing view to apartheid when he was conducting the opening address of the council. He contended:

Personally, I believe that our brethren who want to maintain apartheid on biblical grounds are labouring under this misunderstanding. They confuse apartheid, which is an attitude of life, with a diversity which includes unity. Christian unity, I know, will include diversity but it must never be seen as separation; and apartheid is separation.

Other voices opposing apartheid within the DRC, in addition to Prof Keet and others, were those of thinkers like Prof Ben Marais (ibid: 59). The problem was that those opposing voices were in the minority within the sea of apartheid supporters.

The link between the DRC and apartheid is very close in such a way that Saayman (2007:70) found it difficult to trace the origin of *apartheid* between the Nationalist Party and the DRC. He compared it with the case of a chicken and egg. This makes it difficult to reach a decisive conclusion with regards to the originator of apartheid. The fact that the term 'apartheid' was coined by a DRC minister and theologian Prof Jeff Cronje, further cemented the marriage between this church and the Nationalist government which implemented it in the political arena in South Africa (Smith1989:39).

Members of the DRC because of their large membership and access to political power, were influential in every sphere of life in South Africa. De Gruchy (1986:69)

observed that the DRC members dominated every aspect of life such as in Parliament, provincial and local government councils. He further noted that members of this church also dominated the public servants force such as the police and the military.

2.6.3. Apartheid is rejected by churches

While there were churches that supported apartheid, others adopted a prophetic position against this policy. The predominantly English speaking churches are a point in case in this approach. For instance, the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of South Africa in September 1948 “criticised proposed legislations aimed at depriving Africans of their limited Parliamentary representation as a retrograde step contrary to the claims of the Christian responsibility” (De Gruchy 1986:54). On the same position, the General Assembly’s prayer was “that white South Africans may be saved from the contempt in the eyes of the world which such actions is bound to produce” (ibid).

During the same period as above (September 1948), the Methodist Church of Southern Africa also had a conference which released a statement that declared its position regarding the question of racism in South Africa,

...no person of any race should be deprived of constitutional rights or privileges merely on the grounds of race and morally binding contracts protecting such rights or privileges should be regarded on a high level of a pledged word (De Gruchy 1986:54).

The Methodist Church during this conference also advocated for the development of political and social rights especially for underprivileged groups. They contended that the rights of the underprivileged should not be reduced but rather expanded to the level of greater usefulness (ibid). Another church that added her voice against apartheid was the Congregational Assembly which wrote, “It is our sincere conviction that the Government’s policy of apartheid has no sanction in the New Testament Scriptures....” (De Gruchy 1986:54).

The most formidable response against apartheid came from the Anglican Church of South Africa. The Episcopal Synod of the Church of the Province of South Africa issued a statement as early as 1948 in which they indicated that they identified themselves with the Lambeth Conference that declared that “discrimination between men on the grounds of race alone is inconsistent with the principles of the Christian religion” (De Gruchy 1986:55). The bishops also emphasized that human rights is rooted in Christian doctrine and apartheid should therefore be condemned at all costs.

This church action against apartheid could also be seen in the activities of the Anglican missionary, Father Trevor Huddleston who worked in Sophiatown in Johannesburg. Father Huddleston published a book in 1956 in which he told the story about the painful experience of his Black parishioners as meted out by apartheid. Many Anglican missionaries were deported by the government because of their strong opposition to apartheid, (De Gruchy 1986:60). The critical role played by Father Huddleston against racial discrimination in South Africa could be seen in the way Smith (in De Saintonge 1989:41) referred to him as, “that turbulent priest from the Community of the Resurrection, who has been a thorn in the flesh of the present regime for the last forty years or more.”

2.6.4. Churches adopt a neutral stance (quiet diplomacy) on Apartheid

Apart from the position taken by other religious communities as discussed above, there were other churches that adopted a neutral position on the apartheid question in South Africa. Neutrality qualified those churches that were characterized by a soft approach towards apartheid, adopting an ignorant position and accepted the political status-quo without questioning it.

Churches that belonged to this category were those from Pentecostal or Evangelical movements. Barret (in Knitter 1985:77) lists three types of Evangelicals:

- Fundamentalists, who still carry on the founding spirit of the *Fundamentals* and insist on the seven fundamental doctrines of authentic Christianity; inerrant verbal inspiration of the Bible, virgin birth, miracles of Christ, physical

resurrection, total depravity of the human being, substitutionary atonement and ,pre-millennial second coming.

- Conservative Evangelicals who want to carry on the intent of Fundamentalism but in a more open, critical style; most of them belong to the World Council of Churches.
- The Ecumenical or New Evangelicals.

The first two categories above represent the overriding characteristics of the Evangelicals. These characteristics could be seen from the criticism leveled against them by the New Evangelicals as summarized by Knitter (1985:77) that: “they (New Evangelicals) claim that Evangelicals in the past have been socially and politically naïve and have aligned themselves with the oppressive status quo.”

This is still true today as could be seen from the critics leveled by the New Evangelicals to mainline churches. The Evangelicals believed that mainline Christianity eroded the heart of the Christian faith (ibid: 76) and stated that the:

New belief in evolution that questioned the veracity of the biblical accounts of creation; the recently born study of comparative religion and psychology that seems to place Christianity on par with other religions and the emergence of the “Social Gospel” within the Protestant churches that seemed to imply that God’s kingdom could be brought about by social action rather than by spiritual transformation.

The Apostolic Faith Mission (AFM) of South Africa stands as an example of the Evangelical or Pentecostal Movement. Members of churches with Pentecostal characteristics regard themselves as passers-by in this world. They do not get involved in ‘things of this world’, commonly referred to as ‘worldly things’. Their concern is mission, to get as many converts (with personal commitment to Jesus Christ) as possible before the return of Christ. In contrast to the DRC that adopted the government racial policy, the AFM did not officially adopt it nor questioned it, but

“accepted the general racial pattern customary in South Africa” (Strassberger 2001:85). Different races were served in different congregations based on racial lines.

Another church that initially adopted a ‘quite diplomacy’ approach to apartheid was the Roman Catholic Church. De Gruchy (1986:97) puts it thus:

Neither the Roman Catholic Church nor...have been in the forefront of the struggle against racism in South Africa until fairly recently. At least it may be more accurate to say that they have not been as visible in this regard as the English-speaking churches.

The reason for this was the dominant Reformed Protestants in South Africa as represented by the DRC which had anti-Roman Catholic elements. The oppression of the Roman Catholic Church by the DRC could be seen in a Church Leaders’ Conference held by the DRC in 1953 to which ‘non-Roman Catholic’ bodies were invited (Ngcokovane 1989:46). As a result of this anti-Catholic approach by the government, the Catholics suffered a strict control from a predominantly Protestant South African government (De Gruchy 1986:97). During the Cottesloe consultation, the Roman Catholic Church was not a member of the World Council of Churches (WCC) (Randall 1982:18). This was an indication that they adopted a ‘quiet diplomacy’ approach on apartheid.

The Roman Catholic Church issued two statements on race relations in South African in 1952 and 1957 respectively. In both statements, one sees a soft approach if not a contradiction on the condemnation of apartheid. While they seemed to condemn apartheid in principle, in the same breath they strongly recommended that apartheid should not be abolished once but through a process, evolution or gradual change. An extract from the 1957 statement reads thus:

The condemnation of the principle of apartheid as something intrinsically evil does not imply that perfect equality can be established in South Africa by a stroke of the pen. There is nothing more obvious than the existence of profound differences between sections of our population which make

immediate total integration impossible. People cannot share fully in the same political and economic institutions until culturally they have a great deal in common. All social change must be gradual if it is not to be gradual....It would be unreasonable, therefore, to condemn indiscriminately all South Africa's differential legislations (Hofmeyr, Millard & Froneman 1991::211).

The Lutheran Church on the other side may be grouped to this category because during the 1970s, she was predominantly involved in internal struggles to unite the Black and White sections of the church. The Black synods that went their way in the 1970s tried to speak against racism but their energy was devoted to the struggle for unity which was complicated by what De Gruchy (1986:100) called, "the conservative position adopted by most German-speaking Lutheran congregations."

Another silence on the condemnation of apartheid could be noted in the so-called daughter churches of the DRC. The DRC dominated these churches in different spheres including finance. De Gruchy (1986:69) referring to this point adds that, "it has also considerable influence over the nearly one million members of its black 'daughter churches'." Ngcokovane (1989:46; cf Adonis 2005:120-121) indicates that the 'daughter' churches depended on 'mother' church for money and personnel. Already, in 1982 the DRC spent R12 million annually on the 'daughter' churches as a means of assistance (Cronje 1982:7). The DRC was usually referred to as 'mother' church or "Big Mama" (Buti 1982:63) in her relation to these churches. For this reason they were unable to speak out against the system adopted by their 'mother'. Under these circumstances, what Cronje (1982:5) referred to as a regular statement by leaders of the 'daughter' churches becomes questionable. The statement reads: "Autonomous in all respects we are; as to our origin, we have been born out of the DRC mission."

Taking one of the 'daughter' churches, the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa (DRCA) as an example, although it was established as autonomous, after many years of existence, Buti (1982:63) wrote concerning the continued domination of DRCA by ministers who were missionaries of the DRC:

The large number of whites serving as missionaries in this church naturally leads to a strongly domination role of such persons in controlling positions and decisions of the younger churches in the moderations, synods, crucial synodical commissions, theological lectures in theological seminaries of the DRCA and theological faculties of the state controlled Black universities.

This situation limits any opportunity for these churches to make their voices heard against their 'masters' who were controlling important areas of their lives. It was easy for DRC ministers to become members and in particular ministers in the DRCA and the other way round was not allowed (Masuku 1998:76). Ministers of the DRCA were always looked at with suspicion by fellow Black ministers from other churches because of their association with the church that was seen to be aligned with the DRC (ibid: 76). Although there were small voices such as the 'Black Ministers' Caucus' (Buti 1982: 87; cf Masuku 1998:76) in the DRCA, they did not represent the official stand-point of this church on race relations. They were a small minority and like the Lutherans, they were mainly focused on an internal struggle to bring unity within the racially divided DRC family.

The African Initiated Churches (AICs) also belong to this category. For those who may not be familiar with this type of churches called the African 'Initiated' Churches (AICs), a brief explanation is necessary. The most acceptable definition of these churches is by Hendriks (in Hofmeyr et al 1991:26) who wrote:

An African Independent or Indigenous Church is a purely black-controlled denomination with no links in membership or administrative control to any non-African church. In contrast to the black congregations that have been given self-supporting status by their missionary parents, the AICs have completely broken the umbilical cord with the Western missionary enterprise.

An additional definition is given by Masuku (1996:442-443) who shed some light on the confusion caused by the 'I' used for example as in 'Independent'. He warns that some of the AICs prefer each of these terms; '*Independent*', '*Initiated*' or '*Instituted*.' He further indicated how they have been divided into three main groups namely; the Ethiopians, Zionists and Messianic. Masuku contends that the first group places

more emphasis on independence but with the retention of pre-existing church patterns. The second group places more emphasis on the activities of the Holy Spirit in relation to African cultural practices. The last group represents those who built themselves around one leader, who claim special powers and who seems to 'eclipse' or replace Christ in the mind of followers.

During the period under review, these churches' voice against apartheid was not heard. The fact that they failed to attract Black intellectuals within their ranks provides an answer on this matter. Masuku (ibid: 445) indicates that "the 'educated' looked down upon them as 'uneducated' and the 'sophisticated' viewed them as 'primitive'." Masuku (1998:403) further indicates that "the general perception about these Christians (AICs) in South Africa is that they represent the constituency of the uneducated." They are referred to as 'red people' to indicate that they are fresh from tribal areas with almost no schooling (ibid).

Although these churches did not openly attack apartheid, they assisted the victims of apartheid during migration to urban areas when they did not have food, accommodation and other needs. Hendriks (in Hofmeyr et al 1991:26) captured the situation when he wrote that

...the process of urbanization was highly disruptive, because of the political and economic system forced on them. However, the African ethos of the extended family, of the tribal unity and care, was reincarnated to a certain extent in the African Independent Churches.

2.6.5. Ecumenical Bodies

Apart from individual responses from churches, there were also responses from the ecumenical front. For instance, the first ecumenical conference soon after the official introduction of apartheid was the Rosettenville Consultation that met in 1948. Rosettenville represented an official attack by the English speaking churches on the apartheid policy. (De Gruchy 1986: 56).

The second ecumenical body of note that convened during this period (1940s-1960) was the Cottesloe consultation. This body met in Cottesloe, Johannesburg from 7 to 14 December 1960 (Ngcokovane 1989:157). It was a meeting of the World Council of Churches (WCC) and her South African member churches to address, “the worsening racial situation in the country” (Randall 1982:18). The DRC delegates participated actively during the consultation and even accepted and signed the consultation statement against apartheid. This behavior angered Prime Minister Verwoerd and the conservatives in the DRC. As a result of pressure from the Prime Minister and the DRC, the DRC delegation except Beyers Naudé recanted their stance and signatures against apartheid (Ryan 2005:64ff).

The third ecumenical move to address apartheid was through the formation of the Christian Institute (CI) of Southern Africa (Randall 1982:28). This body was formed by members from various races and denominations who met in the Central Methodist Hall in Johannesburg. The meeting took place on 13 August 1963 with an aim to; “meet together to try to work out the implications of the Kingdom of God for the people of the country” (Randall 1982:28; cf 2.4.2; see Heaney 2004:82). This purpose is further outlined by Kistner (1995:41) thus: “To draw attention to the injustice and disruption caused by the apartheid system in South African society and in the churches. It was founded to strengthen the resistance of Christians against that system.”

2.6.6. Main minority religions

There are many minority religions in South Africa but Islam, African Traditional Religions (ATR) and Hinduism stand supreme in terms of their numbers compared to other minorities. Kruger (1996:30) is correct in including some of these religions when he refers to “Africa’s triple heritage.” This heritage comprised Christianity, African Religion (meaning ATR) and Islam but he unfortunately excluded Hinduism. In my analysis of responses by Faith Based Organizations against apartheid, attention will be on Islam and ATR due to their bigger number of adherents in South Africa, compared to other minority religions.

Muslims played an active role against apartheid through their organized religious structures. For instance, the Muslim Judicial Council (founded in 1945), was not only meant to promote Muslim unity, but also to “form a united front against oppressive laws of the day” (Kruger 1996:228). The Muslim Youth Movement of South Africa also made a mark against apartheid. Although this body initially encouraged self-and-group study of the Quran, “eventually, this group also became active in the political arena in the struggle against apartheid” (ibid).

As far as African Traditional Religion was concerned, during this period (1940s-1960), it was difficult to see any contributions they were making in the fight against social injustice. It was not easy for adherents of this religion to come out proudly like members of other faiths because of the stigma that was attached to them and their religion by missionary Christianity and the ‘Christian’ aligned apartheid state. The foundation of the stigma was laid during the early encounters between Western missionaries and indigenous communities in Africa. For instance, the latter’s religion was referred to as “heathen cultures,” “religion of the lower races” or “uncivilized” people and statements such as “the heathen in his blindness bows down to wood and stone” were common on the lips of missionaries (Setiloane 1976:104). They were deemed “archaic, barbaric and backwards” (Masuku 1998:21).

Another point of note is from Kruger (1996:34) who contended that African Religion forms an integral part of social life. The fact that religion and other social activities merge, makes the visibility of this religion low. This low visibility is due to the fact that most of the rites are performed in private. He continues to point out that even where the religious element is present in public, it is difficult for outsiders to identify it as such.

Adherents of ATRs have an open mind to other religions due to the absence of an intellectual statement of religious belief in dogmas (ibid: 36). This leaves adherents open to syncretism. It leaves the possibility that they, like in the case of the Hindus, might not have fought apartheid through their religious structures, but through organized social actions.

2.7. CONCLUSION

This chapter looked at Beyers Naudé from birth to his ‘conversion’ the political landscape of South Africa and the response of Faith Based Organisations (FBOs) to apartheid. The scope of this chapter was divided into two i.e. the period of his ministry in the DRC (1940-1963) and another one of his ministry to the victims of apartheid (1963-1994). The difference between these two periods was outlined. This chapter provided enough background with regards to a better understanding of Beyers Naudé, his world and how other organizations responded to apartheid challenges.

The chapter that follows will usher us into his active ministry to the people of South Africa, particularly the victims of apartheid. It will provide reasons as to why Beyers Naudé came to be such a respected and well- known figure even in the dusty streets of South African townships. The period starts from 1963 and ends in 1994. The chapter in question attempts to ask the dominant question in this study as to what *muthi* Beyers Naudé used to win the love and trust of the victims of oppression.