

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 RELEVANCE OF THE STUDY

South Africa has come from a past of Apartheid. A nation ripped apart by laws and by-laws, which not only kept people apart for decades, but also made life miserable for the majority of its inhabitants. More and more we have come to realise the full extent of the damage that has been done to people – physical and psychological. Frankly speaking there is little chance that the damage can be repaired. Many efforts from government and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO's) are only scratching at the scab of the wound. They're only applying a salve to the wound, but seldom reach the root of the problem. The study is made more relevant by the structure of the South African society with its different indigenous ethnic groups, each with its own culture and own experiences during the years of Apartheid in South Africa. In one way or another there are issues amongst these culture groups that need to be addressed, but the more important issue at the moment is the reconciliation between the white and other communities. A major concern is that a significant part of the white community does not really realise the damage that was done, not only to the other ethnic groups, but also actually to themselves by the Apartheid past.

On 3 July 2000, the *Sunday Independent* published an article by Helen Macdonald, political analyst and lecturer at Stellenbosch University on this issue. She is of the opinion that unless white South Africans reach a point where they can embrace the label that they were beneficiaries during the past, reconciliation will never become a reality in the country. "It is a label that encapsulates an important attitudinal recognition and sense of accountability that is essential for shaping behavioural patterns whether in the world of white business, private schooling or the leafy areas of white suburbia."

If white individuals can realise that they have benefited while many other people have suffered, then they are more likely to move on and ask how they can make contributions toward restoring the much needed balance in this country.

1.2 AIM OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to determine the contributions of the Afrikaans Churches to the process of reconciliation in South Africa. Reference will be made to the proposals, made by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), to the faith communities and especially the Afrikaans Churches in this regard. The churches under consideration are: Die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk (Dutch Reformed Church [DRC]); Die Nederduitse Hervormde Kerk van Afrika [NHK]; Gereformeerde Kerke van Suid-Afrika [GKSA]; Apostoliese Geloof Sending (Apostolic Faith Mission [AGS/AFM]) and Die Afrikaanse Protestantse Kerk [APK]. Mention will also be made of the Uniting Reformed Church of South Africa (URCSA) because of their specific historic links and ongoing negotiations with the DRC as well as the fact that a large percentage of the members are Afrikaans speaking.

During the hearings of the TRC the unwillingness of some of the Afrikaans Churches and the initial reluctance of the Dutch Reformed Church to testify was revealed. Since the process of reconciliation is of utmost importance in South Africa it was unthinkable that some of these faith communities did not see their way open to raise their voice for or against truth and reconciliation. The importance of the situation is reflected in the next few quotations:

Reconciliation is going to have to be the concern of every South African. It has to be a national project to which all earnestly strive to make their particular contribution (Tutu, 1999: 274).

Each of the faith communities in South Africa committed themselves to fighting hardship in society - poverty and unemployment, racism and prejudice, corruption and crime, violence and bloodshed (Meiring 1999:285).

Reconciliation is a complex exercise. The need for reconciliation embraces virtually every sphere of society (Meiring 2002:174).

Reconciliation requires that all South Africans accept moral and political responsibility for nurturing a culture of human rights and democracy within which political and socio-economic conflicts are addressed both seriously and in a non-violent manner.

Reconciliation requires a commitment, especially by those who have benefited and continue to benefit from past discrimination, to the transformation of unjust inequalities and dehumanising poverty (TRC Report, Vol. 5: 435).

In reading these and other comments, it is impossible to turn a blind eye to the reality of the situation in South Africa. There is a definite need for reconciliation, not only amongst racial groups in our country, but also in churches, families and amongst individuals.

1.3 RESEARCH PROBLEM

Research done by different individuals has revealed several problems, which intrigued the researcher to ask a few questions that have to be answered in order to contribute to reconciliation. These questions put the research problem to the table.

Charles Villa-Vicencio made the following remarks in the April 2003-edition of *The SA Reconciliation Barometer*:

Political reconciliation is, by definition, a modest exercise – the beginning of a journey away from a destructive past to the possibility of a different kind of tomorrow.

National reconciliation does not necessarily involve forgiveness. Politically, people live together quite well without necessarily having to work through all that forgiveness involves. It (national reconciliation) involves peaceful coexistence, as the first step towards greater, perhaps even more intimate unity later. It interrupts an established (often violent) pattern of events that prevents people from exploring creative ways to learning to live together.

Problem 1: How can churches develop a clear picture of reconciliation and their role in the process?

Yet another problem is pointed out in a document, *Principles of Healing and Reconciliation in Rwanda (September 1998)*, by Dr Rhiannon Lloyd - who is responsible for the reconciliation ministry of Mercy Ministries International, Geneva Switzerland. She ministers extensively in cross-cultural situations and has been working in Rwanda since the genocide in 1994. She laid down some principles that are relevant in the work of reconciliation and forgiveness in Rwanda:

1. The church as God's agent of healing and reconciliation must be recognised.
2. Cultural barriers that inhibit expressing emotion must be overcome.
3. People must be helped to find God in the midst of suffering.
4. It must be discovered that Jesus Christ is the pain bearer.
5. There is a need to hear and be heard.
6. Understanding of what real forgiveness entails must be created.
7. Jesus as Redeemer must be discovered.
8. God's way of dealing with ethnic conflict must be explored.

Dr Lloyd, on invitation from African Enterprise, also did some work in Kwazulu Natal, South Africa, found that the same principles are relevant here, although,

In South Africa, however, things *are supposed* to be all right now. Many think that since 1994 they are now reconciled and so there is not too much enthusiasm for attending a seminar on reconciliation. One does not have to look far beneath the surface, however, to discover that reconciliation is more needed than ever! Despair, fear, and judgmental attitudes abound, and (apart from some noteworthy exceptions) the various ethnic groups are retaining to their own ghettos. *Sadly, the church appears to be particularly slow in discovering their brothers and sisters in the other ethnic groups.* (Researcher's Italics).

The researcher argues that in African countries like Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the ongoing wars of the past decades spelled out that the need for reconciliation is more pressing than what we experience in South Africa. For them it is a matter of life and death not to be reconciled to one another, while we in South Africa can't see the need for it.

Problem 2: How can congregants of the Afrikaans Churches be empowered to become involved in reconciliation? Who must take responsibility for that?

Researchers from the Institute of Justice and Reconciliation made the following remarks with respect to the question: *Who must take responsibility for reconciliation?*

- Despite a decade of considerable political gains, there is much that needs to be done. The transformation, reconstruction and reconciliation process has only begun. The question that begs answering is who should take responsibility to drive these?

- Still the data reveals that 36% partaking in the survey believe that reconciliation should be the collective primary responsibility of business, government and individuals, with numerous other combinations of these role players being selected by a further 34%.
- The data reveal that only 19% of South Africans were willing to take considerable individual responsibility for reconciliation.
- In all likelihood, a greater portion of the 42% of South Africans claiming not to take very much or hardly any responsibility for reconciliation do so by choice.
- Thorough going transformation, development and reconciliation require the social energy flowing from a greater willingness to take responsibility. Success also depends on visionary leadership, and this should not be restricted to the political sphere. Business, civil society, labourers and *religious leaders* also have a responsibility.

(The SA Reconciliation Barometer, 2003: 4)

Problem 3: Why do the Afrikaans Churches struggle with efforts of reconciliation? Are there any valid reasons for not getting on with the task? What needs to be done for a greater percentage of people (congregants) to take responsibility for reconciliation in South Africa?

Considering the new situation in South Africa after the elections of 1994, the work of the TRC and the road he travelled himself, Prof. Amie van Wyk of the RCSA came to the following conclusions:

- Apartheid is past and a new future beckons, tantalisingly, to all of us. The first is for the Afrikaans Churches, should they wish to keep their trustworthiness and integrity (particularly regarding their prophetic-critical vocation within society), to confess, unequivocally, their guilt about the sins of the past. The longer the procrastination, the more difficult the confession becomes, but also the more necessary.
- The second is that all should strive towards avoiding repeating the sins of the past.
- Thirdly, a completely new situation of reorientation has dawned on all Afrikaners. As a minority group divided amongst itself, Afrikaners have to re-position themselves.
- Fourthly, Church unity, in the form of joint church assemblies with the younger (black) churches, is not an option for the Afrikaans-speaking churches; it is a principled theological responsibility and a practical necessity. It is my prayer and wish that the church, as a community of reconciliation, will not only lead society on the road of

hope, but will in its own existence exemplify that hope (Van Wyk 2001:11).

Problem 4: How can the process of church unity – the so-called ‘acid test’ for reconciliation – on Synodical and local level be enhanced? What should be the role of the local congregation?

1.4 HYPOTHESIS

During the Apartheid years (1961 – 1994) the Afrikaans Churches were often reluctant to exercise their prophetic calling to warn publicly against the system of Apartheid, that violated the rights of the majority of citizens of South Africa. Many reasons can be offered for their reluctance:

- the churches didn’t have a clear picture of what reconciliation entails and their role in the process;
- division within the Afrikaans Churches;
- misunderstanding of the essential message of the gospel of Christ;
- the inherent racism that dogged race-relations in the community at large, were reflected in the churches;
- ecumenical isolation - both nationally and internationally;
- negligence of church leaders (ministers) to convey the decisions of synodical meetings to congregants and to help them to understand the whole issue of reconciliation and to empower them to become involved in it on local level;
- the struggle in the DRC family of churches to unite, is the test of how motivated they are in the process of reconciliation.

The reluctance of some of the Afrikaans Churches to testify before the TRC has had a negative influence on church members and on Afrikaners in general. Also leadership in congregations has not paid enough attention or given enough help to their members to understand and implement the challenges of the TRC regarding the role of faith communities in South Africa. However, if the church does rise to the occasion it can

become one of the major role players and the champion of healing and reconciliation in South Africa.

1.5 METHODOLOGY

This study is primarily a reflection on the issues of reconciliation in South Africa. It will endeavour to collect information on the theme of the thesis, systematise and analyse the information and present a historical view of what contributions the Afrikaans Churches have made to the problem of reconciliation in South Africa. It is primarily a literature study combined with individual interviews. For the literature study books, news paper reports, magazine articles, research results of the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation and also the Agendas and Acta Synodi of the different churches were carefully researched. In the Bibliography books are included which were prescribed for study before the commencement of the research. These books are important because they helped the researcher to formulate his thinking about the subject.

One problem is that, due to the size of the church and the fact that most members of the “old South Africa” government belonged to Die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk (the Dutch Reformed Church [DRC]), much more material has been available on this church than of any of the others. Because of that it may seem as if the other churches have been neglected. Far from that. Care has been taken, as far as possible, to make a balanced study of the afore-mentioned Afrikaans Churches.

Interviews with the following persons have been conducted. They were elected because of the position they held in their respective churches or because of their contributions in the past, positive or negative, to help the church to understand its role in society.

- Brink, Dr Isak of the Afrikaanse Protestantse Kerk. He is a lecturer at the APK Theological Seminary and also responsible for the department of Congregational Ministry of the APK.

- Burger, Dr Isak, President of the Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa He and Dr. Frank Chikane played important roles in the unification of the white and black divisions of the AFM.
- Buys, Dr James, former Moderator of the URCSA and currently minister of the URCSA in Wynberg.
- Dreyer, Prof. Theuns of the Nederduitse Hervormde Kerk van Afrika (NHK). He acted as Moderator of the General Church Synod of the NHK. At present he heads the Theological College of the NHK at the University of Pretoria.
- Gerber, Dr Kobus, General Secretary of the DRC.
- König, Prof. Adrio of the DRC. Professor-emeritus of the University of South Africa (UNISA) and pastoral help in DRC Verwoerdburg-Stad. He was, during the Apartheid years, a well-known voice in the DRC against the Apartheid policy of the government.
- Mahlobo, Pastor George, General Secretary of the AFM.
- Nicol, Dr Willem DRC Universiteits-oord. For many years he was one of the younger voices in the DRC against apartheid (and all the pain it caused), and against violations of human rights.
- Swanepoel, Rev. Freek, Emeritus minister of the DRC and former Moderator of the General Synod. He also presented the submission of the DRC to the TRC.
- Uys, Rev. Koos, one of the co-ministers of the DRC Roodekrans, a middle-and upper class, mostly white, suburb of the City of Roodepoort.
- Van Dyk, Rev. Deon was for a long time the Moderator of the synod of the DRC in Zimbabwe and currently minister of the DRC congregation, Skuilkrans, in Pretoria.
- Van Schalkwyk, Mrs Marinda, wife of DRC minister of Lynnwoodrif. She was, for a few years, chairperson of the General Committee of the Dutch Reformed Church's Women's League. At the moment she leads a program in their congregation to assist with

reconciliation between the white church and its neighbours in Mamelodi and Eersterus

- Van Wyk, Prof. Amie, Professor-emeritus of the Gereformeerde Kerke in South Africa (RCSA). He played an important role in the training of ministers of the Reformed Church in South Africa and was also one of the people who, in his personal capacity, testified before the TRC

1.6 PARTICIPANT-OBSERVER

When I, as Researcher, look back on the road I have travelled until now, I can identify many places and people who have been part of my formation and moulding into the person I am today. I thank the Lord Jesus Christ that He made me His and that I can have an intimate relationship with Him and that He is using me to be involved in the reconciliation process in our country.

I grew up on a smallholding, two kilometres from the edge of Sharpeville just outside Vereeniging, a town in Gauteng, South Africa. My parents taught us, as children, to treat all people with respect, even if they are black. As far as I could judge, they had good relationships with black people, although I couldn't always agree with their actions. In retrospect I realise that, over the years, different incidents worked together to shape my present understanding of the need for reconciliation in our country. I describe here a few of the more outstanding incidents.

At the age of twelve I had to stay at home to tend to the livestock while my parents and younger brothers visited my grandparents. My father arranged with one of his 'boys' at the workplace to stay with me during that week. That experience awakened many questions in my mind. Why was old John not allowed to use the extra bed in my room, especially as he had to travel a long distance by bicycle to our place? Why was he told to wash his hands at the outside tap, using an old piece of cloth to dry them? Why did he

have to use a tin plate, cup and spoon, which were stored on the stoep, and not allowed to use our outside toilet?

Later I also realised the discrepancy between the situations of white and black scholars, and was bothered by several questions, such as: Why did we have the privilege of a school bus while the black children from Sharpeville and Top Location have to run kilometres to school? Why did we have free schooling while Anna, our housemaid, had to pay for her children's school fare, books, pencils, etc?

In 1960 I was an eyewitness of the Sabre- and Harvard aeroplanes that swept over Sharpeville. I still remember the tremendous noise as the aeroplanes dived down and then soared up into the sky, an attempt to instil fear in the hearts of the protestors. Naturally the white people were also terrified! Through this experience the sense that something was wrong in our country, grew. Still my father's opinion had a great influence on my way of thinking. As far back as I can remember, he was on the Church Council of our DRC congregation – first as deacon and later as elder, who was often called by our minister to help with difficult situations in families. He could really help people reconcile with one other. He was very disappointed about Beyers Naudé's stand, (Chapter 2, par 2.2.1.1), and was also annoyed by the local missionary who became 'too friendly' with the black people.

While visiting family friends I witnessed a black father attacking his ±6 year old boy with a piece of hose-pipe, while my father and his friend were looking on and even laughing! The farmer actually commanded the father to punish his child for not keeping the cows out of the wheat-fields – while the father himself was drunk at home. I was furious, grabbed the hose-pipe and pushed the father away. This created a tense atmosphere in my relationship with my father and his friend.

As a university student I joined regular 'missionary work' visits to Tembisa Township, as well as an outreach to Sekhukuneland in North-Eastern Transvaal. I discovered that black people are also people who love the Lord and that white people can learn something from their way of worshipping and expressing love for the Lord, and experienced how God

reveals Himself to any one who calls unto Him, irrespective colour, language, intelligence, or position in life.

I became a teacher in the current Limpopo province and, together with my wife, had the opportunity to act as judges at one of the annual Eisteddfods for black schools in the area. This was a very good experience for us, as we were the only white people amongst all the black children, their parents, teachers and even a black Inspector of Schools for music, who was also one of the judges. The experience of being accepted amongst them and having our meal and teatime together is something I never wish to erase from my memory.

In 1976, at the time of the Soweto uprising, we stayed in Roodepoort. Although we were only a few kilometres from Soweto, we had no idea what the real situation was. At that time irritation had grown in my heart because ‘they burn and demolish everything provided for them’. My eyes were opened when Ds. Mataboge of the DRCA in Dobsonville, Soweto, shared with the deacons of our church regarding the circumstances in the townships. I discovered that I myself would most probably have reacted the same way under those conditions! I couldn’t help wondering what was going on in a black person’s mind while passing the grand houses where white people stay. I began admiring people like Rev. Jan Hofmeyr’s and Rev. Willie Cilliers’s courage to continue working in the townships in spite of slander and being called “kaffer boeties” by their own people! Today I am sure that the history of our country could have been quite different if we, as church(es), had been open to all races during those years, and had taken our God-given calling seriously.

From 1977 to 1979 my wife and I were on the staff with Campus Crusade for Christ and were exposed to being part of a cross-cultural team for the first time. We learned to pray together, share in Bible study, eat and play together, and share the same accommodation during conferences. We welcomed black people into our home, and discovered more about what our co-workers had to face in daily life.

I went back to University and studied to become a minister in the DRC and while pastoring two congregations, I had the privilege, in 1994 and again in 1995, to be part of a trainer's team during Mission Ural outreaches to Russia, organised by Mission Europe. In 1998 this exposure resulted in becoming a fulltime missionary with Dorothea Mission. We immediately experienced a natural connection with our black co-workers, came to love and befriend them. During evangelistic campaigns in townships and on farms, I had the privilege of staying with black people in their homes, to bring the Word and visit numerous people in their homes. During one of our regular meetings, staff members from other Southern African countries shared the pain Apartheid had even caused them during annual conferences in South Africa. The Lord led me to ask forgiveness during the meeting on behalf of white staff members and that led to a difficult time for my wife and I because of the attitude of some of the older white staff-members.

Currently two of our children are missionaries, one in Zambia and the other in Kenya. When visiting them, we have opportunities not only to share the gospel, but also to build friendships with local people and even stay with them in their villages.

The Lord convinced us more and more that his plan for our future is cross-cultural ministry. At the moment we are fulltime staff-members of Mercy Ministries South Africa, an organisation that has as its goal ethnic reconciliation, community development and mission member-care (Chapter 6). The Lord has called us to make a difference in the lives of people, and we are committed to carry the torch of reconciliation in our country amongst its peoples. May the Lord receive all the honour!

1.7 DEFINITION OF TERMS

1.7.1 Reconciliation

What is the exact meaning of the word *reconciliation*? This is the question from faith communities, and especially the Christian churches, have been confronted with since the TRC commenced its work. The problem arose because the staff of the TRC was not a homogeneous group. There were lawyers, jurists and politicians, as well as clergy

amongst the commissioners and committee members. Even as the work of the Commission progressed, there were voices inside the TRC, raised from different sides of the societal spectrum, asking what is actually meant by it. According to the jurists *reconciliation has taken place when people stop fighting* and the dust has settled in the street. The theologians, on the other hand, posed that *reconciliation is a deeply religious concept*. Members of other faith communities hinted at using their own religious terminology when speaking about reconciliation. “But no matter in which corner you were, there was total agreement that reconciliation, *whatever it might mean, was a costly and very fragile exercise*” (Meiring, 2000: 129).

The concept *reconciliation* is used to describe the process that will bring healing to South Africa. It is probably also one of the most misused words in the recent history in South Africa. Religious groups, churches, political groups and others have found it a convenient word on which to hang their ideological clothing. The Apartheid regime meant one thing when it talked about reconciliation, but those in the struggle spoke about no reconciliation without justice (Hay, 1998: 13).

About twenty years before the establishment of the TRC, discussions were already taking place on the necessity of reconciliation in South Africa.

In 1985, the controversial *Kairos Document* was published which, inter alia, touched on the meaning of reconciliation. In Chapter 3 of this document, critique is given on the so-called “Church Theology”, which takes *reconciliation* to be the key to problem solving. It discusses the need for reconciliation between black and white, and amongst all South Africans. Reconciliation has been made into an absolute principle that must be applied to all cases of conflict or dissension. But not all cases of conflict are the same.

We can imagine a private quarrel between two people or two groups whose differences are based on misunderstandings. In such cases it would be appropriate to talk and negotiate to sort out the misunderstandings and to reconcile the two sides. But there are other conflicts in which one side is right and the other wrong. There are conflicts in which one side is fully armed and violent oppressor while the other side is defenceless and oppressed. There are conflicts that can only be described as the struggle

between justice and injustice, good and evil, God and the devil. To speak of reconciling these two is not only a mistaken application of the Christian idea of reconciliation, it is a total betrayal of all Christian faith has ever meant... (Kairos Document, Chapter 3)

In our current context in South Africa it would be totally unchristian to plead for reconciliation and peace before the present injustices have been removed. No reconciliation is possible in South Africa *without justice*. What this means in reality is that no forgiveness and no negotiations are possible *without repentance*...

Reconciliation, forgiveness and negotiations will become our Christian duty in South Africa only when the apartheid regime shows signs of genuine repentance.

There is nothing that we want more than true reconciliation and genuine peace – the peace that God wants and not the peace the world wants (John 14:27). The peace that God wants is based upon truth, repentance, justice and love... (Kairos Document 1985:17, 18).

Consciences were stirred inside and outside South Africa, and the document was reprinted and translated into several languages. But there were also voices from government, the Afrikaans churches and from outside the country claiming that the signatories had helped to intensify the conflict in South Africa, which had led to an increase in violence, because of their support for the armed struggle.

In 1988, the National Initiative for Reconciliation (NIR) defined reconciliation *as the agreement between two parties in a conflict to forgive and accept each other*. This presupposes that both parties are committed to removing the causes of the conflict as far as they can be removed, and bear with them as far as they cannot be removed. Christian reconciliation is based on the fact that God reconciled us to himself in Christ. Christ suffered for our iniquity on the cross, restored us to fellowship with God and with each other, and involves us in God's act of reconciliation by the power of the Spirit (Nürnberg & Tooke, 1988: 84).

With the coming of the new South Africa and the institution of the TRC, many definitions and opinions were aired as to what is meant by reconciliation.

On 9 December 1996, President Mandela signed the *Interim Constitution of the Republic of South Africa*. This set out the task that lay ahead for all South Africans, describing *reconciliation* as

...an historic bridge between the past of a deeply divided society characterised by strife, conflict, untold suffering and injustice, and a future founded on the recognition of human rights, democracy and peaceful co-existence and development opportunities for all South Africans, irrespective of colour, race, class, belief or sex.

The pursuit of national unity, the well-being of all South African citizens and peace require reconciliation between the people of South Africa and the reconstruction of society” (Quoted in Hay, 1998:14).

The Interim Constitution, without defining what it means by reconciliation, alludes to what it might include:

“It recognises that reconciliation is about the “...*need for understanding but not for vengeance, a need for reparation but not for retaliation, a need for ubuntu but not for victimisation.*” In spite of all these beautiful words, it is still not clear what reconciliation involves on a practical level” (Quoted in Hay, 1998:14).

How has reconciliation been understood in recent South African history? How does the government currently understand it? Hay went on to say,

“For some, reconciliation means ‘forgive and forget’. For others, it means the painful process of confronting the evil perpetrator and the violence caused. Politicians, religious leaders and people on the street all have their own understanding of what reconciliation is all about and how it can be realised. Because of a diversity of meaning of reconciliation in the churches, they too are not sure how to go about to be an instrument in reconciling the nation. This presents a challenge because many people expect the faith communities, and particularly the Christian church, to lead the way in reconciliation” (Quoted in Hay, 1998:14).

This is to be expected because so large a percentage of South Africans indicate that they are Christians. They are still looking to the church to act.

In his book *Reconciliation through Truth*, Cabinet minister Kader Asmal wrote about achieving genuine reconciliation, and made important statements about the different views on reconciliation.

Much public debate, over the TRC and elsewhere, has falsely pitted truth against reconciliation. Right-wing objectors have spoken as though the search for a morally accepted view of our history conflicts with, rather than advances, the several goals of reconciliation. They think reconciliation means a *painless forgetting*. This is a fundamental misunderstanding of the entire concept of reconciliation

The real meaning of reconciliation is something else. To reconcile is, according to the *Oxford Paperback Dictionary*, to:

“1. restore friendship between (people) after an estrangement or quarrel. 2. induce (a person or oneself) to accept an unwelcome fact or situation; *this reconciled him to living far from home*. 3. bring (facts or statements etc) into harmony or compatibility when they appear to conflict.

The heart of reconciliation, as this definition makes clear “...is the facing of unwelcome truths in order to harmonise incommensurable worldviews so that inevitable and continuing conflicts and differences stand at least within a single universe of comprehensibility.

In the political context, reconciliation is a shared and painful ethical voyage from wrong to right, and also a symbolic settling of moral and political indebtedness.

Reconciliation in its rich and meaningful sense is thus a real closing of the ledger book of the past. Reconciliation is part of a revival of the South African conscience.

Thorough reconciliation must reach all institutions. No political party or organisation must be seen as above the need to accept its culpability as author and implementer of apartheid.

Genuine reconciliation involves moral and political restitution in the sense of... to ‘make good again’ (Asmal, 1996: 46-53).

In 1995 systematic theologian, Adrio König, published a book *Versoening: Goedkoop? Duur? Verniet? (Reconciliation: Cheap? Expensive? Free?)* in which he gave his opinion of what reconciliation means. According to him, this is one of the most important words in the religious life of the Christian and the central truth of the gospel. But the concept has also become important in the political sphere. He poses the question: “...why public life has chosen this word? Is it right and good to take hold of a word central to the Christian faith?” (König, 1995:3).

König makes a case for the fact that the meaning of reconciliation is dependent on the situation in which it is used.

“Normally, when estrangement occurs between people, there is a need for reconciliation. In such cases the cause of the estrangement could long be forgotten, but there is still the

barrier that hampers good relations. In South Africa this came to the front, for example, when the statue of the “Father of Apartheid”, Dr H F Verwoerd was removed from its place and people danced around in jubilation” (König, 1995: 1-5).

This has also been seen in other places around the world. In the former USSR jubilant masses of people danced around the demolished statues of Lenin after an end was brought to communist rule.

As seen from the above there are multiple views of what reconciliation entails. But what emerged out from the TRC were actually the words of Archbishop Desmond Tutu. He often said, and others identified with him, that true reconciliation rests upon the apostle Paul’s statement in 2 Corinthians 5. Unless one accepts the gift of reconciliation from God which became ours through Christ, it is not possible to have proper reconciliation between human beings. In South Africa, with its large percentage of people indicating that they are Christians, this is the wavelength people operate on. When one speaks about Justice, reconciliation and truth are loaded terms and one can only really work with them when one sees them as being part of a religious process (Meiring, 2003: 124).

One of the members of the TRC, Prof. Piet Meiring, made the following remarks on the work of the TRC, as regards the question about reconciliation. He said that in spite of many mistakes in the reconciliation process in South Africa, reconciliation does occur, but that it is never to be taken for granted and is like a fragile flower that must be nursed. It does not come cheap and cannot be arranged or organised. At least six lessons may be learned from South Africa’s experience:

1. *Reconciliation needs to be clearly defined.* Right up to the end of the process, the commissioners – indeed, most South Africans – were still unclear about how the term should be understood.
2. *Reconciliation and Truth go hand in hand.* Finding truth is a prerequisite for reconciliation. The victims needed it because it was an important first step on the road towards reparation and reconciliation.
3. *Reconciliation requires a deep, honest confession – and a willingness to forgive.* For lasting reconciliation to occur it is necessary that perpetrators must recognise their guilt honestly and deeply, towards God and towards their fellow human beings and honestly ask for forgiveness.
4. *Justice and reconciliation are two sides of the same coin.* For reconciliation to occur there has to be a sense of justice being part and

parcel of the process. Lasting reconciliation can only flourish in a society where justice is maintained. Issues like unemployment, poverty, education, restitution, etc. need to be considered.

5. *For reconciliation, a deep commitment is needed.* History teaches that reconciliation is not for the faint-hearted. The annals of the TRC contain many stories of ordinary citizens who often reached beyond themselves to facilitate reconciliation.
6. *On the road to reconciliation, one should expect the unexpected.* The road to reconciliation is rocky, full of dangers and disappointments. But it is also full of surprises.

(Meiring, 2002: 286,287)

Throughout history and up to now, human beings have always been involved in processes of peace and reconciliation. Anyone who is involved in such a process should be committed to a personal involvement. One cannot stand aloof from the process. It takes a long time and it can cause a great deal of frustration and at times danger. One's eyes must be open to pick up signals from victims and perpetrators that indicate when they are ready to forgive or to be forgiven. Another fact that is of utmost importance when one is involved in the process, is to be aware of mechanisms that affect relations between people of ethnic and religious groups, such as disparity between black and white, poor and rich, majorities and minorities, etc. One's own prejudices towards an ethnic or religious group may also be a problem. There must at all times be respect for the 'othernesses' of others. (Folbert, 2002: 383-384)

In this study we examine the attempts made by government to start this process via the TRC. But true reconciliation primarily lies in the hands of the faith communities, especially the Christian faith communities. True reconciliation between people is only possible when there is lasting reconciliation between a person and his/her God, for the Christian reconciliation between man/woman and the Triune God of the Bible.

1.7.2 The Biblical mandate to reconciliation

Reconciliation is one of the most fundamental concepts of the Christian message. This fact assumes man's alienation from God and the message then proceeds to show how God, in his work of grace, works reconciliation between Himself and man. God took the

first step in the reconciliation process with man. He made man a new creation and because of that, every Christian is a minister of reconciliation.

Reconciliation takes place when individuals and communities begin to enjoy intimate fellowship with previous enemies, people who have tempted each other to bitterness by hurting each other. This is a miracle made possible by the cross of Jesus Christ. At the cross mercy triumphed over justice. At the cross a mighty flood of reconciling grace was released into the world. At the cross we ourselves were recipients of such mercy that it changed the way we view those who sin against us. Jesus heals our broken hearts through reconciling us to the Heavenly Father, but He also commissions us to the ministry of reconciliation. (Dawson, 2001: 229)

The mandate to reconciliation was given to the church. In 2 Corinthians 5: 17 – 19(NIV) we read: *“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone the new has come. All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation...”*

Through the years three theories about reconciliation had developed which made the whole issue in Christian faith communities more complicated because of its meaning. Suffice to take notice of these before looking at the Old– and New Testaments.

1. The *theory of Irenaeus* ($\pm 185AD$) holds that the devil must be reconciled. He asked the question: why had Christ come to earth? The answer: so that He could conquer sin, destroy death and give life to man. According to Irenaeus God created man to have life but through obedience to the devil, man lost life. If God let it be, He would have lost against the devil. But through the second Man, the strong man was defeated, man rescued and given back life. The work of Christ was a victory over the powers of darkness – sin, death and the devil. This to Irenaeus was the fundamental aspect of the reconciliation

work of Christ. Scriptures on this theory are, inter alia, Acts 10:38; 1 John 3:8; & 5:19; 2 Corinthians 4:4.

2. The *objective reconciliation theory*, worked out by Anselm (± 1098 AD), has as premise the fact that God must be reconciled. God's wrath was provoked and somebody has to pay – a human. Who else could do it but the God-man, Jesus Christ? Most Christians come to know this theory through the well-known words that Jesus Christ paid for our sins on the cross or that He paid the penalty for our sins. Some of the well-known verses of Scripture that are used to show that Jesus Christ saved us from the wrath and judgement of God are: 1 Thessalonians 1:10; Romans 4:15; 5:6 - 10; Ephesians 2:3.
3. The *subjective reconciliation theory* by Abelard (± 1130 AD). According to him it is not God who was estranged from man, but man from God and therefore man must be subjectively changed through Christ. Man must come into a new relationship with God. God revealed his love for man in Christ. Christ came to show man how to respond to this love, but because man's love cannot be perfect, Christ is man's representative at the Father. Abelard stressed the importance of the life of Christ as well as of the cross as a token of God's love for man. Some of the Scriptures that support this theory are: 1 John 3:16; 4:9-10.

From these three theories one can conclude that reconciliation has richness in itself and that no one can explain all the levels. This also shows us the richness and colourfulness of the Biblical message – so rich it is not always possible to harmonise all the different colours.

It is not necessary to choose between these theories. All of them are part of the history of the church and may be used as the situation at hand dictates.

(König, 1995:17-41; Berkhof, 1973:315-323)

Since it is not the aim of this study to do a thorough exegetical study of Scripture references on reconciliation, it is only mentioned along with a few remarks.

1.7.2.1 Reconciliation in the Old Testament

“The Old Testament is all about God and his Covenant relationship with his people whom He has chosen to relate to intimately. It is about how reconciliation is worked out in this relationship with his chosen people although the word ‘reconciliation’ per se doesn’t appear in the Old Testament. Different terminology is used, such as atonement, restitution, repentance, forgiveness and restoration to explain the healing of broken relationships” (Wessels, 2005:56).

In the creation story in Genesis 1, it is recorded that God created man in His own image (Genesis 1:27). Man is the image bearer of God and this has important implications for how man sees himself and his fellowmen. Right from the beginning creation implied that man is to live in relationships – with God, with himself, his fellowman and nature. Man is called to seek the image of God in others and to respect it. He must even help people who have forgotten that they are image bearers, to discover it again and to kindle it. Because we are his image bearers, his representatives on earth, we are the only carriers of his love in this world (Du Toit, 2001: 9, 10.)

The Pentateuch forms the basis for the whole of the Old Testament and it is here that the ‘method’ of working out reconciliation is found - sacrifices. The history of sacrifices went through three phases. During the first phase, offerings were part of normal living e.g. after the harvest or after healing had taken place. The second phase lasted from entrance into the Promised Land to the Captivity. During this time the offerings were handled by the head of the family. The third phase started after the Captivity and the priests were responsible for presenting the offering, which the head of the family had brought to them. Different kinds of offerings were made. We are primarily interested in the peace-offering and the guilt/reparation offering, as these were brought to obtain reconciliation. One of the important elements of this type of offering was the *blood*. In its

essence it is not the blood that worked reconciliation, but the *life* that was released through the blood (König, 1995: 42 ff.).

The relationship between God and Israel forms the basis of a social network of relationships. Yahweh is holy, therefore any person or thing standing in relationship with Him is also called holy (Leviticus 11:44- 45). Sin places a person's relationship with God in jeopardy. The sinner becomes unholy, unclean, impure and false. The person then has to carry this iniquity, the burden that accompanies the sin, in the form of either the penalty or the retributive punishment that attends a sinful act. The person experiences that burden as guilt. The actions to restore the relationship with God can take many forms. In Leviticus these measures include ritual as well as ethical acts. One of the main rituals is sacrifice. Sacrifices offered at the tabernacle were essential for Israel to find expiation from her sins and thus to continue to be acceptable to Yahweh. The presentation of a sacrifice is both sign and proof of Yahweh's placability. Yahweh guarantees that the ritual sacrifice the people present brings about atonement (Leviticus 17:11).

The question is: what was the significance of the blood? Blood is important because it is essential for life. As long as it flows in the body that body is alive. Although shedding of human blood is a capital offence, shedding of animal blood is allowed in the Old Testament. The animal which had to die, substitutes for the sinner. The blood is an element in atonement because it is the carrier and symbol of life. In Deuteronomy 12:23, blood and life are associated with each other, the one indicating the other. The blood rites performed by the priests enable the one who offers to approach the Lord without shedding his own blood. Because a person cannot approach God without blood, the animal blood takes the place of his own blood. When blood functions as a means of reconciliation, it not only signifies life as a gift of God, but also the life of the sacrifice itself, as a gift which God provides as a means through which man can be saved. In Hebrews 9:22 it is stated “...and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness”. To be reconciled to God means to be restored to life. Its ethical implication is restored relations with creation and with fellow human beings. It implies balance and equilibrium

in the life of the society and the individual. It can also bring reconciliation between fellow human beings (Venter, 2005: 19-30).

The Pentateuch and especially the book of *Deuteronomy*, talks about the covenant God made between Himself and his people. In this book we find the history of reconciliation between the Lord and the people of Israel. The forty years of wandering through the desert was the result of their disobedience. After forty years the Lord commanded them to turn towards the Promised Land. The time of punishment had passed and the Lord was about to make a new beginning with His people. He would again be their God and they should act as His people this time because they are “the people of his inheritance” (Deuteronomy 4:20) If they should go astray again, there would be punishment, including exile from the Promised Land. (Deuteronomy 4:27). Reconciliation with God would then again become possible, but repentance is highlighted as the prerequisite on their part. Reconciliation would begin on their part with the recognition of their evil ways, followed by repentance and conversion (Deuteronomy 4:29-31). On account of the reconciliation between God and His people, the people had to live within the boundaries of the restored covenant. This is made very clear in Deuteronomy 10:12-22. The reconciliation between Him and them also had implications for their relationship with one another. When the relationship amongst members of the people of God was disturbed, steps had to be taken to bring about reconciliation in one form or another. Such reconciliation could include punishment for the transgressor. Refer to passages like Deuteronomy 15:1-18; 16:18-20; 17:8-13; etc (Van Rooy, 2005: 10-17).

The *Prophets* in the Old Testament played an important role as agents of restoration. The important issues to be considered in discussing reconciliation and the role of the prophets are relationship and communication. Damaged or broken relationships lead to a lack of communication and therefore a lack of real community. The primary focus is on the relationship between God and his people. This relationship was intertwined with the social situations of everyday life. Mention is made in the prophets of the rich and powerful who exploited the poor and weak of society. But the idea that stands out is not that they called the people to reconciliation but only that they uncovered the unjust

situations in society. Examples are to be found in Isaiah 1:11-17 and 5:8-10; Hosea 12:8; Amos 5:7-12.

God's commands do not only demand loyalty and faithfulness to Him, but also involve every aspect of His people's actions and behaviour in society. There is interconnectedness between God and His people. In Micah 6:8 it is made clear that the Lord is not satisfied with rituals and simply going through certain motions to try and please Him. The Lord requires a particular attitude and a way of living: "*He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God*" (NIV).

At times the prophets had the difficult task of proclaiming God's judgement and had to call on the people to confess their wrongdoing and return to the Lord their God or to face the consequences of their sin. At other times they also had the privilege of announcing the Lord's mercy and his intention to renew the relationship with his people as is seen in Jeremiah 31 where God announces his "new covenant" via the prophet Jeremiah to his people: "*Behold the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah - not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers... But this is the covenant that I will make... I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people*" (Jeremiah 31:31-34)(NKJV). The people also had to express His care and convey the blessings He had in mind for them. The prophets not only served as witnesses of the efforts of the Lord to reconcile with his people, but also as instruments to bring it about (Wessels, 2005:55-67).

1.7.2.2 Reconciliation in the New Testament

Much work has been done in this field and as it is not the aim of this study to provide a full exegetical record of all the passages on reconciliation in the New Testament, a few remarks will suffice.

Christianity, as one of the world religions, has a tremendous influence on the morality and belief systems of people. It is no wonder that Christians often play key roles in the process of reconciliation. An undeniable fact is that the roots of Christianity are imbedded in what God in Jesus Christ has done to reconcile a world, which has gone astray, to Him (Van der Watt 2005: 96).

In the *Synoptic Gospels* the incarnation of Jesus as Son of God is portrayed. His life and work, His suffering, death on the cross, burial, resurrection and ascension are painted in vivid colours. By the time that Jesus and John the Baptist were born, the belief in a merciful God, full of grace and steadfast love was part of the faith of early Judaism. It is, inter alia, seen in Mary's song, the Magnificat, as recorded in Luke 1:46-55 which shows clearly that she knew about God's *favour* for her, and that "*His mercy is on those who fear Him from generation to generation*" (NKJV). In the song of Zechariah the role of John the Baptist was highlighted as his father sang about the fact the John would prepare God's people by giving them knowledge of salvation and *forgiveness of sin.*" *By the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will break upon us...*" (Luke 1:68-79). From this and other Scriptures it is clear that forgiveness is, in a sense, grounded in the mercy of God. God's mercy makes it possible for humans to be forgiven for their wrongdoing.

When *John the Baptist* started his preaching and baptising ministry, there were close ties between conversion, baptism and the 'forgiveness of sins'. John made it very clear that the fact that someone belongs to a religious community does not lead to forgiveness, but the fact that he repents. The repentance must become visible (cf. Luke 3:8; Matthew 3:8).

Jesus highlighted the spirit in which mercy is asked for. Forgiveness, which implies the acquittal of the supplicant, is requested by praying to the Lord with a crushed heart and a humbled spirit. In Mark 11:25, an example is found that forgiveness of trespasses is something to be prayed for in the belief that the answer is already given. Jesus made it very clear that the willingness amongst believers to forgive should be unlimited, provided they repent (cf. Luke 17:3-4; Matthew 18:15, 21 – 22).

Breytenbach summarises the witness of the Synoptic Gospels about Jesus and the forgiveness of sins as follows:

...we find that *Mark's* foundation for the forgiveness of sins lies with the authority of Jesus as the Son of Man. *Matthew* stresses the plight of the followers of Jesus to forgive not only the fellow members of the community, but humankind in general. He introduced the death of Jesus as basis for the forgiveness of sins into the synoptic tradition. *Luke* stresses that there is no debt, no guilt, which can be so great that it is unforgivable. Only those humbled in remorse by the vastness of their guilt can expect forgiveness, not the self-righteous (Breytenbach, 2005: 94).

Forgiveness is not for the self-righteous and impenitent. The Lord's forgiveness is for those who come to Him in remorse; those who know that they are guilty and bring their guilt to Him in prayer. The Lord's grace is bestowed on those who have repented, whose ways of thinking have changed (Breytenbach, 2005:84-95).

Van der Watt, in his study of reconciliation in the writings of John, *The Gospel according to John, the Johannine letters as well as Revelation*, gives a clear picture of what the apostle John understands under reconciliation:

- Reconciliation with God is only possible in and through Christ. This means that reconciliation is exclusive in nature.
- Reconciliation is also inclusive through the fact that God loved the world so much that He gave his only Son, Jesus Christ, and everybody is invited to believe in Him and his Son. Reconciliation amongst people is only possible if there has been reconciliation with God the Father through the Son. Everybody is invited to enter into the family of God.
- Reconciliation amongst people takes place in the framework of the family or kingdom of God. When a person becomes part of God's family, he experiences the effects thereof: love, peace and joy. Within this family true reconciliation is experienced.
- When conflict occurs amongst members of the family, the church, the problem is dealt with according to and on the basis of the teachings of Jesus, as found in the Word of God (e.g. Matthew 18). The church should protect the truth of the Word.

Now what does this tell us of our situation today and our efforts to create a better world through reconciliation? There is a huge difference between the reconciliation that John favoured and some present-day expectations. The socio-political idea is that as long as

people work together and are not at war with one other, the goal is reached and reconciliation is attained. But the problem is that Christianity (as is the case with Islam and Judaism) is by nature an exclusive religion. Christ stands central and the whole ensuing religious system is related to and conceptualised in the light of this central reality. In this case reconciliation is defined in terms of the relationship between God and God's people, based on and made possible by what Christ did. People who don't have a relationship with Jesus Christ cannot experience this true reconciliation (Van der Watt, 2005: 97-111).

What does *Paul*, the other great apostle, say about reconciliation?

On his way to Damascus to persecute the followers of Jesus, he had an encounter with the living Christ. His life was never the same again. He became converted and Christ turned him into a new creature (2 Corinthians 5:17). Paul knew that God had taken the initiative in this act of reconciliation in his own life and in the lives of others.

In 2 Corinthians 5:17-21, Paul emphasises that God took the initiative to effect reconciliation between Himself and the world. The death of Jesus Christ on the cross, on behalf of sinners, visibly embodies this divine act of reconciliation. Christ was made sin so that He could bring sinners into the right relationship with God. Therefore believers have the assurance that no condemnation awaits them in the future (Romans 8:1). Christ permanently reconciled all believers to God.

Paul emphasises the importance of faith, because he knows that all those who believe this message are one in Christ. Faith is nothing less than the believers' participation in the life of Christ, both in His earthly fate and in His exalted heavenly position. Those who were once estranged and hostile, Jesus has now reconciled by His death in order to present them holy and blameless before God. (Colossians 1:21-22). Faith is the channel along which God's reconciliation is internalised in the lives of people. Faith is an existential act, a personal decision to follow the living Christ. Without a human response to accept this gift of God, reconciliation remains a mere theoretical gift. People should let themselves be reconciled to God (2 Corinthians 5:20).

People are reconciled to God only through faith in Jesus Christ. Stefan Joubert shows that:

“There is no other way and in his letters Paul constantly show people the basic framework of God’s visible acts of reconciliation in Christ by emphasising that:

- God’s act of reconciliation has a very specific content, namely the giving of Jesus as a sacrifice for the sins of all, Jews and non-Jews alike;
- God’s act of reconciliation has a specific effect, namely the radical transformation of the recipients’ religious status from sinners to children of God;
- God’s act of reconciliation places the recipients thereof in permanent debt to him. They must continually express their gratitude for the gift of salvation in thanksgiving and deeds of obedience” (Joubert, 2005:117).

Reconciliation is an act accomplished by Jesus Christ, not only to bring peace between God and humankind, but also amongst fellow human beings. Reconciliation is a divine act, which brings together God and mankind. It unites old enemies. All hostilities are brought to an end once God touches the lives of those in need of peace. He also unites sinners into a new humanity in Christ. But ordinary people must proclaim this message. Every believer has a ministry – the ministry of reconciliation and this message must be proclaimed to everybody who has an ear to listen. And it must be accepted by faith. The church as a living organism is one where the message of reconciliation is proclaimed and believed (Joubert, 2005: 112-122).

In his study on reconciliation in the General Epistles, Gert Steyn (2005) makes the statement that reconciliation language refers to broken relationships that are restored. The technical terms that are usually used elsewhere in the New Testament for reconciliation are virtually absent in the General Epistles. Some of these words express a passive but positive attitude that creates an atmosphere conducive to reconciliation, such as tolerance, grace and Christian love. Others express an active action, such as atonement, propitiation, forgiveness, redemption, salvation, justification and sanctification. Others again, such as restoration, reunion and peace point to the result of the process, or the state in which the different parties find themselves after reconciliation. When one looks at the process of

reconciliation and related aspects as shown above, there is no doubt that the General Epistles can contribute significantly to our understanding of reconciliation.

Two clear dimensions can be distinguished in reconciliation – a vertical and a horizontal. The vertical describes the restored relationship between God and us and the horizontal describes the restored relationship amongst fellow humans. In the vertical dimension the mediatory role of Christ was crucial in the process of reconciling God with man. Because Christians bear His name they also ought to play a mediatory role in the reconciliation process on the horizontal level.

The master plan for reconciliation between people already exists. God gave us the example (Steyn, 2005: 123-133).

From this cursory paging through the Bible, it is clear that reconciliation is the “heartbeat” of the Triune God. First of all there must be reconciliation between Himself and us and then amongst people. This will be the path that the researcher takes during the latter part of this study.

1.7.3 The scope of reconciliation

According to Christian doctrine, we all live estranged from God, in conflict with our Creator. This conflict can become visible in the various relations in which human beings participate. These relations are (i) between man and God – the way people relate to God (ii) how man relates to himself (iii) amongst different individuals (man and man) and (iv) the way how man relates to his natural environment (man and nature). What is really at stake when we talk about reconciliation is the question how the relations between and amongst all the above mentioned will be healed and restored when there has been discord.

The reconciliation between God and man is the all-encompassing ground and creates the possibility for reconciliation on the other levels (Van der Kooi, 2002: 106).

As the church has the mandate for reconciliation, it has the responsibility to make sure that all these areas come into view in its preaching and teaching about reconciliation. In this study, consideration will be given to reconciliation of the broken relationship amongst people, as it crystallises in South Africa, with emphasis on reconciliation amongst various racial groups and the part being played by the Afrikaans Churches.

1.7.3.1 Reconciliation between fellow human beings

Reconciliation with God must work out in reconciliation amongst human beings. Matthew 22:37 – 40 indicates that love towards God is most important and love to our fellow human beings next. Romans 13: 8- 10 says that love to other people is important, because the presupposition is love to God.

One of the tragic aspects of the current moral discourse in South Africa “... is that while concepts such as repentance, forgiveness, justice, truth and reconciliation are inherently Christian notions, Christians and churches have often withdrawn from the public conversation – thus leaving it open to secularly construed meanings. Often this is accompanied by a type of detached criticism of the attempts to deal with these issues (for instance, the work of the TRC), rather than by a more constructive, albeit critical, engagement” (Vosloo, 2001: 26).

Vosloo quotes Miroslav Volf as saying “theologians *should concentrate less on social arrangements and more on fostering the kind of social agents capable of envisioning and creating just, truthful, and peaceful societies, and on sharing a cultural climate in which such agents will thrive*” (Volf, as cited in Vosloo, 2001:35) This implies that reconciliation has everything to do with the character of the self that engages with other persons. For reconciliation we need people who embody forgiveness and repentance. We need people who mourn in the light of brokenness, reach out in vulnerability to the other and have the courage to embrace or be embraced (Vosloo, 2001: 32).

How we as South Africans, and especially as faith communities, are going to confess or forgive others in the process of reconciliation, depends on the identity question: “Who are we?” There must be the will to make a way for others into our hearts, a will to embrace those that we see as wrongdoers.

When talking about reconciliation in South Africa, we must take into account the differences in cultural settings, for instance, the question of how different cultural groups see time. This is one of the problems we have with reconciliation. There is a difficulty in taking *the pace* of the other. Some want to get on “with the job”, while others want more time to reflect on the past and work out things for themselves. This leads to confrontation and many times goodwill is questioned because of this.

Dr Fanie du Toit, Program Manager of the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation, interviewed a gathering of unemployed squatters, a group of black entrepreneurs, some successful District Six land claimants, various Bishop’s Court residents, a group of policemen from Mitchell’s Plain, and youth groups along Klipfontein Road in Mowbray, Athlone and Gugulethu. All of them were asked about reconciliation and justice in South Africa. The *white youth* group defined reconciliation as “seeing another’s point of view”. The *coloured group* defined it as “coming together,” and the *black youth* group referred to it as “practical acts, not just hugs and kisses”. The *focus group* suggests that three issues impact directly on society’s dim outlook on South Africa – *unaccountable leadership, slow material development* and *violence*. Black, coloured and white groups all tend to see leaders, from the highest office down to their local councillor, as “corrupt, greedy and neglecting the needs of the people” (*Cape Argus, 12 August 2002*). In reading this article, the question came to mind: Where is the church – the one body that should be able to make a difference and be trustworthy?

On 15 June 2003, an article, *What do we mean by Reconciliation? A View from the University of Stellenbosch*, was published in the *Sunday Independent*. The author, Amanda Gouws, head of the Political Studies Department at the University of Stellenbosch, wrote:

The question that I want to grapple with here is how do we deal with, or what do we say to (white) students who claim that they were too young to have any memory of apartheid and also that they are innocent of any injustices of apartheid. I hear this regularly in my classes... Yet, at the same time for many black students of the same age the wounds of apartheid loom large but because they are in a minority the debate about reconciliation is always uneven and acrimonious in the classroom.

The issue of collective guilt is one that I find very difficult to explain to students who do not want to engage with apartheid history anymore and who are convinced that they should not bear the burden of the past. Inherent in this dilemma is the contentious nature of the concept reconciliation itself. For the students I engage with believe that reconciliation is a ‘feel good concept’ – the idea that the truth was told during the TRC process and that victims have forgiven the perpetrators for the most part and that we now all live happily ever after.

The idea that reconciliation may also have a socio-economic dimension through which we need to try and transform the inequities of the past to them smack of reverse discrimination where they have to ‘pay a price for political decisions that they were not involved in’. For them it is making the playing field uneven not even.

It is only through engagement with greater diversity of race, language, religion and sexual orientation that students start to experientially get to understand that their interpretation is not the only interpretation of the world...

A consequence of this perception of reconciliation is that white students can remain passive – they have to do nothing to change the status quo while black students have to be politically engaged to change it... This begs the question of how you bring reconciliation down to grassroots level – to the mundane of everyday living.

With reference to what Gouws found, the researcher wonders how many of these white students testify that they are “Christians” (as most people in our country do) and that they are in one way or another linked to a Christian church or faith community. Have they heard anything from pulpits or Bible Study groups, small groups, etc. of the need to be reconciled to others? What role did the church play or not play in the forming of the minds of these students and others in South Africa?

1.8 THE AFRIKAANS CHURCHES

This study is on the role of the Afrikaans Churches in the process of reconciliation. Who are these churches?

In 1652 a halfway station was set up at the Cape for the ships of the Dutch East India Company (Verenigde Oos Indiese Kompanjie [VOC]). The intention, from the beginning, was that ships could get fresh supplies on their way to the East. After a few years, however, farming started and that was the beginning of a settlement that mushroomed to a nation of \pm 45 million currently (Gerstner, 1997:16).

Jan van Riebeeck brought with him the Reformed Christian tradition and already, on 30 December 1651, he prayed that this tradition might grow and spread. He arrived at the Cape of Good Hope with the Bible, The Nederlandse Statevertaling (Dutch State Bible) and the three formulae of Reformed faith, The Canons of Dordt, The Heidelberg Catechism and the Belgic Confession (d'Assonville, 2000: 150,156).

In this paragraph, a short historic overview of the Afrikaans Churches under discussion is given.

1.8.1 The Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) (Die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk)

From the Cape Colony's beginnings as a garrison, the VOC provided for Dutch Reformed services led by officially recognised religious workers. The first permanent minister arrived in 1665. For more than a century this would be the only church and as the established church, the DRC exercised a virtual monopoly of Christian religion in the new colony. (Gerstner, 1997:16; Giliomee 2003:5)

The relationship between state and church was a problem from the beginning. There was just about no church activity that was free from state interference. During the first British Annexure in 1795, the interference from the state just continued. This was also the case under the Batavian Administration (1803 – 1806). A change, which guaranteed the independence of the DRC, only occurred in the twentieth century (Hofmeyr, 2002:30).

At the Cape, from its founding, it was considered imperative that all children known to have at least one European parent had to be baptised. A significant extension of the baptismal practice concerned the slaves owned by the VOC, on the grounds that the Company itself would serve as ‘witness’ to ensure the children’s training in Christianity. This practice was, however, challenged by a number of ministers at the Cape and repudiated by the Classis of Amsterdam in a letter received around 1697. As a consequence of this, the baptismal register after 1695 had two distinct lists. The one is a list of names of Christian children (from European descent) and the other a list of Slave children of the VOC. It was evident from this that being a Christian was still seen as related to ethnic descent.

At the turn of the nineteenth century, DRC missions were established and when Khoisan converts were baptised, there was a virtual revolt by some settlers who refused to partake of the same table with those not of European descent, or as they said, not ‘born Christian’. According to Gerstner (1997:26-27) this led to the beginning of formal church apartheid.

The one issue that had a very important impact on the DRC was race relations. From the beginning there had been no objection to the black and coloured workers of farmers worshipping together with their masters, in the same church building. In Ordinance 50 of 1828 it was specified that Koikoi and all free people of colour were equal with white people. In 1852 a pastoral circular made it clear to members of the DRC that the church could not discriminate against other people (of colour). In 1857, however, the synod decided the following:

The Synod considers it *desirable and according* to the Holy Scripture that our heathen members be *accepted and initiated into our congregations* wherever it is possible; but where this matter, as the result of the **weakness of some**, would stand in the way of *promoting the work of Christ* amongst the heathen people, then congregations set up amongst the heathen, or still to be set up, should enjoy their Christian privileges in a separate building or institution (Acta Synodi 1857:59, as quoted in Crafford & Gous, 1993: 288).(Researcher’s italics).

It should be noted that the decision was not taken, in the first instance, to divide the Dutch Reformed Church *ad infinitum* along racial lines. On the synodical agenda, a second issue was waiting: that the DRC was to embark on a new a missionary programme far beyond the borders of synod. Evidently the proponents of the abovementioned proposal were concerned that racial tensions would impede the decision on foreign missions. A compromise, for a limited time, seemed thus advised. Be it as it may, this decision for a very long time determined the course of history in the church. The result of the compromise decision was not merely that different communion services became the rule, but, sadly, that different congregations, finally separate churches, came into being. The one DRC evolved into a "DRC Family of churches": The Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk, The Nederduitse Gereformeerde Sendingkerk (NGSK coloured - 1881); The Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk in Afrika (NGKA black people –from 1910); Reformed Church in Africa (RCA Indians – 1965). Today the struggle to get these churches re-united continues. (Crafford, D 1982: 37 – 42)

After the Second British Annexure in 1806, the influence of English and Scottish ministers became stronger and the DRC couldn't escape it. The influence of the Murray family cannot be overlooked as they brought with them the evangelical impetus into the DRC. Today, as the DRC is going through a difficult time regarding its spirituality, the question is how much of the Scottish evangelical influence is still alive in the church (Hofmeyr, 2002: 78).

With the expansion of the church in South Africa, different synods came into being which were united in a "Raad der Kerken" in 1907. This was the forerunner of the Federal Council of Dutch Reformed Churches (white synods) which in 1964 became a joint body representing all of the churches of the DR family in South and Central Africa, called the Federal Council of Dutch Reformed Churches. The General Synod, which consisted of the different white DR churches in Southern Africa, was formed in 1962 (Adonis, 2002: 114).

Over the years the DRC sent out many missionaries to other countries in Africa – even into the current Zambia, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Namibia, Botswana, Lesotho,

Swaziland, Malawi, Nigeria, Kenya and Tanzania. (Cronje, J M 1981:3 – 5; Crafford, D 1982: 572 – 576)

In 2004, the DRC had 1 185 675 members who were worshipping in 1186 congregations and 1747 ministers (Kerkspieël 2004).

1.8.2 Die Nederduitse Hervormde Kerk van Afrika (NHK)

The Voortrekkers who settled in the Transvaal and Free State were bitterly disappointed that the Cape Synod disapproved of the trek in 1837 and sent them no minister. They still saw themselves as members of the DRC although they came to know that the Cape Afrikaners were asserting their own non-racial character without pressure from the government. But in due course the Cape Synod acted by sending Rev. A Murray to Bloemfontein and Rev. JH Neethling of Prince Albert to the Transvaal to assess the situation. During a Church board meeting on 21 May 1852, they had undertaken that the Cape Synod would pay attention to the calling of a minister from the Cape to the Transvaal. But the congregations were aware of the fact that they wouldn't receive a minister unless they became part of the Cape Synod. So they decided that, because they were free as citizens of the Transvaal, they also wanted to be free as church. This was the outcome of the Sand River Convention of 1852 between the British Government and the Voortekkers in which it was stipulated that emigrants north of the Vaal River would have political freedom (Dreyer, 2002: 112).

In the Free State, as far as the church was concerned, all congregations were absorbed into the DRC of the Cape Colony, accepting its policy of non-discrimination against people on grounds of colour or race.

The Zuid Afrikaansche Republiek (ZAR), Transvaal, however, accepted in 1858 a constitution, in which it was declared that the people were *not* prepared to allow any equality of the non-white with the white inhabitants, either in the Church or State. The person who took the lead in demanding the racial exclusivity was Rev. Dirk van der Hoff, a Dutch minister who had arrived from the Netherlands in 1852 and was for some years

the only minister in the ZAR. The Cape church sent a delegation to the Transvaal to try to incorporate the congregations, but they had to report back that the racial issue was the fly in the ointment. Rev. van der Hoff was determined to found his own church in the Transvaal and hence had his own agenda in advocating racial exclusivity.

The first General Synod (Algemene Kerkvergadering) gathered on 8 of August 1853. At this meeting it was decided to form a new church, Die Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk (NHK). It would be the state church and would not join the Synod of the Cape DRC. The Lydenburg congregation refused to recognise Van der Hoff as their minister, because they still wanted to have good relations with the Cape (Giliomee, 2003: 176,177).

As time passed, the NHK developed into the People's Church (Volkskerk) of the ZAR (Transvaal). This attempt led, in 1863-64, to an unpleasant situation, in which members of the NHK, with supporters of the establishment, opposed members of the Gereformeerde Kerk (GK) and other dissidents led by Paul Kruger. Eventually, in a political compromise, the NHK was assigned a place as one church amongst many (Hexham, & Poewe, 1997: 125,126).

Towards the end of the British Occupation of the ZAR (1877 – 1881) negotiations between the DRC and the NHK in the ZAR with respect to unification started. This was seen as a need to strengthen a common Boer identity in opposition to the British threat. On 7 December 1885 unification between the two churches did take place in Pretoria. A provisional name was decided on: Die Nederduitsche Hervormde of Gereformeerde Kerk (NH of G Kerk) also known as Die Verenigde Kerk (the 'United Church'). In 1889 the provisional name became the official name. The DRC in Transvaal kept the name NH of G Kerk van Transvaal until 1957. But the unification was short lived – from 1885 to 1892.

Many who had previously belonged to the NHK left the new United Church and linked up with the single NHK congregation Witfontein-Rhenosterpoort in the district of Pretoria. In effect the new NH of G Kerk turned out to be the DRC under a new name in the ZAR (Krüger, JS 2003:151-152). Some of the other reasons were that the NH of G

Kerk (the United Church) propagates mission work, the possibility of equalisation between white and black, and the possibility that there would be better relationships with the British. The fear also existed that the NH of G Kerk was actually the continuation of the DRC because of the few ministers of the NHK who were part of the united church (Hofmeyr, 2002: 150).

After the Anglo-Boer War of 1899-1902, the General Synod had regular meetings to give the necessary leadership and pastoral care to its members who were devastated by the war. In 1907 the *Almanak* and in 1909 *Die Hervormer* came into being. These two publications are still used in the NHK. In 1917 the NHK started a Theological Faculty at the then Transvaal University College, the current University of Pretoria. In 1943 the *Hervormde Teologiese Studies*, a quarterly magazine, saw the light and this is today the oldest Afrikaans theological periodical in South Africa.

In 2002, the NHK consisted of 315 congregations with 156 722 members and 347 ministers (Botha, 2002: 60-62).

1.8.3 The Reformed Churches in South Africa (RCSA) (Die Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika)

In due course the Reformed Church of South Africa (RCSA) was founded in 1859 by Rev. Dirk Postma. He came from the Netherlands where he had been a member of the Afscheiden Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerk, the Separated Christian Reformed Church (SCRC,) which sought to uphold traditional Calvinism against the inroads of theological liberalism. He arrived in the Transvaal in 1858 and sought to work in harmony with Van der Hoff of the NHK. He became aware of the struggle that existed amongst the people due to the singing of hymns, as there were those who wanted to sing hymns and those who didn't. He made contact with a group called Doppers, who were adherents of traditional Calvinist beliefs and practices. They also disliked the singing of evangelical hymns, and the liberal theology of Van der Hoff, as Postma himself did.

In 1859 the synod of the NHK decided to enforce the singing of modern hymns in all congregations. The Doppers argued that only the Psalms of David should be sung. A group of Doppers, led by Paul Kruger, left the Rustenburg congregation of the NHK and invited Postma to become their minister. Thus they formed the Reformed Church which quickly established congregations throughout the whole of South Africa.

Postma played an important role in Afrikaner history, encouraging education and a sense of national identity amongst the members of the church in the Cape, Free State and Transvaal. After the Anglo-Boer War members of the Reformed Church took a leading role in the Second Language Movement, Christian National Education and the development of the rising Afrikaner nationalist ideology. Between 1902 and 1915 it supported the rising Afrikaner nationalist cause, allowing, for example, its various publications and synods to support JBM Hertzog, the leader of the National Party after its founding in 1914 (Hexham, & Poewe, 1997: 126-128).

The NHK, although relatively liberal in its theological view, was opposed to missionary work amongst the black people, while the Dopper majority accepted missionary work as long as it avoided common worship (Giliomee, 2003: 179).

The Reformed Church didn't take long before it paid attention to the training of ministers. In 1869 a Theological School came into being in Burgersdorp. In 1905, it shifted to Potchefstroom, where the Literature Department of the Theological School developed the constitution of the Potchefstroom University of Christian Higher Education.

In 2001 there were 302 Reformed Churches in South Africa, Namibia and Zimbabwe (Bingle, 2002: 119).

1.8.4 The Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa (AFM) (Die Apostoliese Geloof Sending van Suid-Afrika)

On 14 May 1908 two missionaries, John G Lake and Thomas Hezmalhalch, from America, landed in Cape Town. They travelled to Johannesburg and started meetings in a small hall in Doornfontein. The date was 25 May 1908 – the date on which the AFM

officially started in South Africa. Two interesting issues are worth mentioning: firstly, the Pentecostal movement in South Africa had the same humble beginning as in Azusa Street, America. Secondly, as in America, black people were from the beginning involved in one way or another.

Within a few weeks the hall in Doornfontein was too small and the meetings shifted to a bigger building which could seat approximately 600 people. This became known as the Central Tabernacle.

Right from the beginning great emphasis was laid on true repentance. This was seen, as today, as the greatest miracle of all, greater than any bodily healing. A person that played an important role in the AFM was Pieter L le Roux, a Dutch Reformed missionary who had been a student of Andrew Murray. He was especially interested in Murray's views on divine healing. He joined the AFM in 1910 and soon became a leader.

The Pentecostal movement in South Africa initially grew amongst the disenfranchised black people and the poor white Afrikaners reeling from the aftermath of the Anglo-Boer War. The first services of the newly founded AFM were racially integrated. It was reported that all shades of colour and all degrees of the social scale mingled freely in their hunger after God. The white people, however, soon decided to separate the races in baptisms and like other churches in South Africa at this time, yielded to the pressures of white society to develop segregated churches.

The AFM prospered especially amongst African people and Afrikaans-speaking white people. Pieter le Roux was made president in 1913. In 1955 G R Wessels, a senior pastor in the AFM and its vice-president, became a senator in the ruling National Party, contributing to a serious schism in the white church. The white AFM was to become increasingly identified with and subservient to the apartheid politics of the government. From the founding of the church in 1908, white members had determined the constitution and power had been vested in an all-white executive council. The African, Coloured and Indian sections of the AFM were controlled by a Missions Department and a director of missions appointed by the white church. A series of discussions that started in 1985 led to an umbrella constitution with two sections of the AFM. There are now two presidents of the AFM: in 1993 Frank Chikane was elected by the Composite Division (black, coloured and Indian) of the church and Isak Burger by the all-white section, the Single

Division. In April 1995 the Single Division accepted the constitution for a united AFM, and the biggest stumbling block towards unity was resolved. In April 1996 the AFM became one church (Burger, 1987: Ch 7; Henderson, & Pillay, 1997: 229-234).

1.8.5 The Afrikaans Protestant Church (Die Afrikaanse Protestantse Kerk [APK])

The DRC will always remember the date 27 June 1987. On this day a new church, formed by a breakaway group, became a reality and the Afrikaanse Protestantse Kerk (APK) was born. This took place less than a year after the DRC's acceptance of the policy document *Church and Society* in which there was a radical change of viewpoint on apartheid and racism.

There was a long preamble to the foundation of the APK. From 1980 there were important voices that influenced the thinking and theology of the DRC. To name a few:

- The Reformation Day Witness of eight theologians in 1980.
- The publishing of the book *Stormkompas* in 1981.
- The Open Letter of 123 ministers and theologians in 1982.
- The World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) meeting in Ottawa 1982 which accepted the *Status Confessionis* and suspended membership of the DRC.
- The Confession of Belhar of the NGSK in 1982/1986.

Although leaders in the DRC minimised these events, their influence on the minds of people in the DRC cannot be ignored (Chapter Two). This led to the revision of *Human Relations in light of Scripture*, which in turn led to the new policy accepted in *Church and Society*. The DRC was now an open church. The church listened to the voices inside and from outside the church and decided on a new course. This decision led to a raging storm, which had in itself the potential for schism in the church.

Political leaders, especially from the right wing, took advantage of this and, because of the negative reaction from mostly right wing adherents, it became apparent that it was just a question of time before a new church would emerge. A mass meeting was arranged for 28 November 1986 to raise objections against the new direction of the DRC. Prof.

WJG Lubbe was elected as chairman. In 1983 there was already a meeting of 250 ministers in Silverton and 193 of them had signed a witness in which they reconfirmed the status quo of the church's view on Apartheid. The seed had been sown and it started to grow into a large-scale opposing body within the DRC.

On 27 June 1987 about 2500 people gathered in the Skilpadsaal in Pretoria and a decision was taken to found a new Afrikaans church, for white people only. Within 4 months there were 113 congregations and 30 ministers, most of whom had resigned from the DRC as well as emeriti from the DRC.

Within a short time the APK opened its own Theological School for the training of ministers. It has developed over the years and at the moment it is registered with government as the Afrikaans Protestantse Akademie, an institution that also trains teachers (Adendorff, 2002: 1- 11; Van der Merwe, 2002: 421 – 428).

1.8.6 The Uniting Reformed Church of Southern Africa (URCSA). (Die Verenigende Gereformeerde Kerk van Suid-Afrika)

The question might be asked why the URCSA is included in this study. It is because the URCSA is part of the DRC family of churches and because a large percentage of the members of this church are Afrikaans speaking. For the sake of reconciliation, the attempts to re-unite the DRC and the URCSA are of utmost importance in our country. It is therefore not possible to talk about reconciliation and the role of the DRC, if the relationship between the two churches is not taken into consideration as well.

The URCSA came into being when the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Sendingkerk (NGSK)(Dutch Reformed Mission Church – DRMC ‘coloured people’) and the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk in Afrika (NGKA) (Dutch Reformed Church in Africa – DRCA ‘black people’) amalgamated in 1994. Both the constituting churches had a long history behind them, but it will suffice for this study to give a short overview.

1.8.6.1 *The Dutch Reformed Mission Church (DRMC) (Die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Sendingkerk)*

Since the early days of the Cape Colony, the settlers had had the tradition that their slaves and workers took part in the so-called ‘house altar’ and that they could also attend church services, but they had to sit in specifically marked seats. That was actually seen as the normal procedure for Christians. But through the years this situation changed as more and more of the indigenous people became Christians and the white people found it more difficult to worship with them in the same building at the same time. (See also the discussion in par. 1.8.1).

In 1828 the Church Council of the DRC Somerset-West discussed an application from a certain Bentura Visser, a coloured (‘bastaard’) who wanted to become a member of the church. He was granted membership provided that he partook of Holy Communion after all the other congregants (white) had finished. At his first Communion he used the sacrament together with the rest of the congregation. The minister, Rev. Spijker, didn’t have any problem with this, but his congregants were very unhappy and they let it be known that “should such a thing happen again, they would rather stay away from Holy Communion”.

This whole issue dragged on and in April 1829 the Presbytery of Cape Town, to which Somerset-West belonged, advised that “according to the teaching of the Bible and the spirit of Christianity, the Church was forced to make no exception in this case: people should take Holy Communion together.” A decision was made to take the whole matter to the Synod meeting later in 1829. At the Synod no decision was actually taken. This led to a situation that for many years this question appeared on the agendas of Church Councils. The Synod of 1857 (see decision on p 51) tried to resolve the problem by saying that according to the Bible it was clear that differences of race and colour should not cause any difference to be made in the preaching of the gospel. However, it was also accepted that there was such a strong colour prejudice amongst some white people that they refuse to tolerate the black people in their midst, especially when it came to “Christian privileges” or to Holy Communion. This sinful predisposition of a section of the church, which came to be called a “weakness”, was accepted and encouraged by

people (white?) who were in a position of power in the name of the “question of Christ amongst the heathen”

This decision, which finally paved the way for separate Churches, was in fact a true indication of the spirit and the practice that had prevailed from early on in the DRC. Some congregations decided to build separate church buildings for black people. Through the years the situation became worse and the black church members were expected to accept the growing number of racist practices with the Christian virtue of humility.

The final solution to this problem was the establishment of the racially separate Nederduitse Gereformeerde Sending Kerk (Dutch Reformed Mission Church) on 5 October 1881. This meeting was the formalising of separate church services, which led to separate church buildings and separate congregations. It had far-reaching effects that are still haunting the DRC family to date (Loff, 1983:10-22; Loff, 2002:54).

1.8.6.2 The Dutch Reformed Church in Africa (DRCA) (Die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk in Afrika)

The DRC started its mission work after the Church had been allowed its own Synod in 1824. Up to that point, attempts to do mission work had been made by private initiative and also, since 1737, by missionary societies. At first the DRC was limited to the Cape Province, but since 1830 there had been a natural expansion to the north by farmers who settled north of the Orange River in search of better grazing for their livestock.

Another expansion to the north occurred with the Great Trek, which started in 1836 and lasted for a few years. This Trek was an organised protest movement, as the Trekkers wanted to free themselves from British rule. Eventually they settled in the Orange Free State (O.F.S), Transvaal and Natal. By far the majority of Voortrekkers were members of the DRC and by moving to the north, they had to make use of missionaries from other Churches who were labouring in the areas where they settled. In 1862 the High Court ruled that delegates from outside the Cape Synod jurisdiction could not be members of

the Synod. This decision divided the DRC north of the Orange River from that south of the river and separate DRC churches were eventually formed in the O.F.S, Transvaal, Natal, South West Africa (Namibia) and Rhodesia (Zimbabwe). It was only in 1962 that all DRC Synods again agreed to form one Church with a General Synod.

Through the years the different Synods of the DRC did mission work amongst the indigenous peoples, but there was no mission policy that could co-ordinate the work of the different Synods. During a mission congress in 1929, the DRC started to formulate such a policy and it became a reality in 1935. This policy included, inter alia, the following stipulations:

- The most important aim of the mission work of the DRC is to proclaim the gospel to non-believers (heathen) by using, for example, education and health services.
- Mission work has in mind the establishing of separate daughter churches. The DRC supports the process of becoming independent of these churches.

As a result of the mission work in South Africa and Southern Africa ten Mission Churches were established of which six were in South Africa:

- The Dutch Reformed Mission Church of South Africa (for coloured people) in 1881
- The Dutch Reformed Mission Church of the O.F.S (for black people) in 1910
- The Dutch Reformed Mission Church of Transvaal (for black people) in 1932
- The Dutch Reformed Bantu Church of the Cape Province (black people) in 1951
- The Dutch Reformed Mission Church of Natal (black people) in 1952
- The Indian Reformed Church (Indians) in 1968.

The situation of different churches in the “DRC family” led to much unhappiness in the different churches. It was pointed out that there is a similarity between the Mission Policy of the DRC and the election manifesto of the National Party in 1948.

The various Mission Churches established amongst the Black community in all the provinces of South Africa had federal ties with one other. On 7 May 1963, delegates from all these churches met and decided to unite and form a General Synod of a united Church called the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk in Afrika (The Dutch Reformed Church in Africa – DRCA). All the existing Synods then became Regional Synods of the DRCA (Cronje, 1982: 37-72; Adonis, 2002: 176).

1.8.6.3 Unification of the DRCA and the DRMC

In 1975 the General Synod of the DRCA discussed a report on the Bible and apartheid and for the first time in the history of the DRC family, this Synod formulated a clear standpoint on the fact that apartheid is unscriptural. Synod accepted this report although the DRCA was to a large extent dependent on the DRC for financial support.

At their Synod meeting of 1978, the DRMC took the same decision and with this they rejected the Mission Policy of apartheid and started to work for unification between the churches.

During the eighties there was great tension amongst members of the DRC family because of the *Status Confessionis* and the acceptance of the Confession of Belhar by the DRMC. This confession came as the culmination of a process of objections from the DRMC against the apartheid laws of the government. During 1978 the DRMC bluntly stated that apartheid was in direct opposition to the gospel of Jesus Christ. At that stage the DRC did not take the viewpoint of the DRMC seriously. All that remained was for the DRMC to call a *Status Confessionis* and to draw up a confession (Durand, 1984: 39-45).

During the late 1980's negotiations between the DRMC and DRCA were positive and the general feeling was that they would unite during 1990. This was not possible because the

DRCA had, up until then, not accepted the Belhar Confession as the fourth article of faith. The actual uniting occurred on 14 April 1994 at Belhar, near Cape Town and the Uniting Reformed Church of Southern Africa (URCSA) came into being.

It is the prayer of the URCSA that the other members of the DRC family will soon unite with them (Adonis, 2002: 176).

The uniting process between the DRCA and DRMC was not unanimous. Two of the Regional Synods of the DRCA, Vrystaat and Phororo (Northern Cape) decided not to unite. Not only were relations disturbed but there were also court cases on the ownership of church buildings. It lies beyond the focus of this study to elaborate on this.

Suffice to say that the two Synods of the DRCA acknowledged the URCSA as member of the DRC family just as they themselves are acknowledged (Du Toit, 2002:175f).

While the finalising this research, new developments occurred in the DRC family of churches, which is touched on in Chapter 5.

1.9 OVERVIEW OF THESIS:

In Chapter 2 an overview is given of the historical situation in the different Afrikaans Churches when the TRC started its work during February 1996. What were the defined and undefined issues? What events took place that had an influence on the different churches?

Chapter 3 examines the constitution and aims of the TRC and the reaction of the Afrikaans Churches to the work of the TRC.

Chapter 4 studies the submissions of the Afrikaans Churches before the TRC.

Chapter 5 discusses the challenges on the road to reconciliation in light of the proposals of the TRC as well as the initiatives taken by the Afrikaans Churches.

At present there are different groups, individuals and churches at work with respect to reconciliation in South Africa. Different models are being used to help congregations and individuals.

Chapter 6 discusses these models and makes certain proposals.

Chapter 7 presents this researcher's conclusions.

The Addenda consist of the interviews with different individuals as well as submissions from different churches and groups at the TRC.

A Bibliography concludes this thesis.